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CULTURES OF ESCHATOLOGY

2 BOOKS

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Cultures of Eschatology 1

Cultural History of Apocalyptic Thought/ Kulturgeschichte der Apokalypse

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Cultures of Eschatology

Volume 1: Empires and Scriptural Authorities in Medieval Christian, Islamic and Buddhist Communities

Edited by
Veronika Wieser, Vincent Eltschinger and Johann Heiss

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Preface and Acknowledgements

Cultures of Eschatology is a result of the SFB (Spezialforschungsbereich) "Visions of Community: Comparative Approaches to Ethnicity, Region and Empire in Christianity, Islam and Buddhism (400–1600 CE) (VISCOM)", funded by the Austrian Research Fund (FWF) during the period 2011–2019.[1] In this interdisciplinary research cluster, historians, social anthropologists, philologists and art historians worked together in order to examine, in a comparative and cross-cultural perspective, the role of universal religions in the formation of particular communities in medieval Eurasia.[2] This thematic and methodological approach has inspired much of our research on eschatology and apocalypticism. Our intensive interdisciplinary exchange within the VISCOM project was carried out in the framework of the "transversal working group" "End Times"; its results were subsequently presented and discussed at the international conference "Making Ends Meet: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on the End of Times in Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism" that took place in the "Theatersaal" of the Austrian Academy of Sciences on 24–26 September, 2015.[3] These two volumes, which are the somewhat expanded proceedings of this event, include contributions by members and associated researchers of the VISCOM project team as well as by invited scholars whose expertise allowed us to address a wide range of topics in different religious and political contexts. We are very grateful to all of them for their enthusiastic participation, their contributions and their willingness to share their research results with us. We are also very grateful to the FWF and the SFB's two host institutions, the Austrian Academy of Sciences (AAS) and the University of Vienna, for their generous support. The Institute for Medieval Research (AAS)

1 See Introduction, n. 1.

2 First results have been published in the volume *Meanings of Community across Medieval Eurasia*, edited by Hovden, Lutter, Pohl (Brill, 2016), which addresses problems of comparative methodology, see Pohl, "Introduction: Meanings of Community in Medieval Eurasia", and the thematic issue of *History and Anthropology*: *Visions of Community: Comparative Approaches to Medieval Forms of Identity in Europe and Asia* edited by Gingrich and Lutter (Taylor & Francis, 2014). Other joint publications are the volumes *Medieval Biographical Collections*, edited by Ó Riain, Vocino, Mahoney (Brill, forthcoming 2020), the six-volume series *Historiography and Identity* (Brepols, 2019 and forthcoming), the volumes *Practising Community in Urban and Rural Eurasia*, edited by Hovden, Kümmeler and Majorossy (Brill, 2021) and *Rethinking Scholastic Communities across Medieval Eurasia*, edited by Kellner and Hugon (forthcoming 2020/2021). Important for the project was also the publication *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World*, edited by Pohl, Gantner, Payne (Routledge, 2012). For further information see https://viscom.ac.at/home/ and https://viscom.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/ONLINE_EDITION_viscom_PUBLIKATIONEN_17072019.pdf. [Last accessed, 1 July, 2019]

3 A section of the project's midterm conference in November 2013 was also dedicated to eschatology and apocalypticism. Some of the contributions in the present volumes were originally presented there. See https://viscom.ac.at/fileadmin/mediapool-viscom/pdfs/programm_midterm_web.pdf [Last accessed, 1 July, 2019]

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has provided an excellent institutional hub for our work. We would like to express our thanks to the institute's staff and its VISCOM partner institutions, the Institute for Social Anthropology (AAS) and the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia (AAS) for providing a fertile environment for exchange and discussion. For their help with organising the conference we would like to thank Anna Denkmayr, Sophie Gruber and Jelle Wassenaar. For their diligent work with copyediting we would like to thank Peter Fraundorfer, Thomas Gobbitt, Cinzia Grifoni, Diarmuid Ó Riain, Brita Pohl, Christina Pössel, and Bojana Radovanović. Erik Goosmann created the maps, and Dagmar Giesriegl was responsible for the wonderful cover illustrations and for the visual preparation of all pictures included.

The editors

Note on the transcriptions of Arabic words: Readers will notice that the transcription or romanisation of Arabic words generally follows the rules of IJMES (International Journal of Middle East Studies) but are not consistently handled across all articles. If geographical or other names have a commonly used form in English, this is used, e.g. Mecca (not Makka), Medina (not al-Madīna). Instead of Coran, Qur'an or Qur'ān is used.

The transcription of Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese expressions fully conforms to the generally recognised international standards: for Sanskrit, the latinisation system adopted at the 10th International Congress of Orientalists held in Geneva in 1894; for Tibetan, the Wylie system; for Chinese, the pinyin romanisation method.

Notes on Contributors, volume 1

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Cinzia Grifoni was a Postdoc Researcher in the SFB "Visions of Community" project. Therein, she investigated the development of understanding and use of Latin ethnic designations in the medieval West and was responsible for the contents of the online resource "GENS – Group Terminology and Ethnic Nomenclature: A Semantic Database (Latin Europe c. 400–1200)". The output of the early medieval scriptorium of the Wissembourg monastery is another important focus of her research. She has published with Brepols the *Glossae in Matthaeum* ascribed to Otfrid of Wissembourg (CC CM 200) and written several contributions on early medieval exegetic production at Wissembourg and St. Gall. Currently, she holds a Marie Jahoda Grant from the University of Vienna.

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Notes on Contributors, volume 2

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Veronika Wieser and Vincent Eltschinger

Introduction: Approaches to Medieval Cultures of Eschatology

1. Medieval Apocalypticism and Eschatology

In all religions, ideas about the past, the present and the future were shaped and made meaningful by beliefs and expectations related to the End Times. Such beliefs in the Last Things, *ta eschata*, have been integral to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, especially in the pre-modern era,[1] and range from the final battle between good and evil and the dawn of a new, divine order to death, divine judgment and eternal afterlife. They also include the dreadful tribulations that every human will supposedly have to face before salvation. In the medieval West as in the East,[2] eschatology seems to have been part of the foundation upon which societies were built.[3] This period is often associated with anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ (*parousia*) or the advent of messianic figures such as the Hindu

1 This is well exemplified in the range of contributions to Walls, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, comprising articles about Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu eschatology.

2 In spite of various efforts on the part of – mainly – Indian scholars to accommodate the notion of "medieval" to South Asia, its relevance remains highly questionable, as is that of "Indian feudalism" and many scholars' inclination to interpret, mostly for nationalistic reasons, Gupta India as a golden age not unlike Greek and Latin Antiquity. The use of categories such as "(early) medieval (India)", though very often uncritical, is a matter of convention rather than conviction, and such it should probably remain. On the presuppositions and dangers of the use of "(early) medieval", see Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 28, and Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*, 58–66. Thus, we are aware that the concept "medieval" does not apply to all past communities under scrutiny here. It is therefore rather understood as a loose technical term and rough historical periodisation that can facilitate comparison; on trans-cultural comparison and comparative methodology see Pohl, "Introduction: Meanings of Community in Medieval Eurasia," and Pohl, Gingrich, "Medieval Worlds."

3 For recent appraisals of the extent to which apocalyptic thinking was prevalent in the Middle Ages see: Landes, *Heaven on Earth*; Bynum, Freedman, eds., *Last Things*; Fried, *Aufstieg aus dem Untergang*; Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*; Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*; Ryan, ed., *A Companion to the Pre-Modern Apocalypse*; Lawson, *The Quran, Epic and Apocalypse*; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*; Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*.

Note: The two *Cultures of Eschatology* volumes are part of the SFB *Visions of Community. Comparative Approaches to Ethnicity, Region and Empire in Christianity, Islam and Buddhism (400–1600 CE)* or VISCOM, an interdisciplinary research cluster financed by the Austrian Science Fund FWF from 2011 to 2019. Publication has been funded by the FWF project F 42–G 18, copy-editing has been co-funded by the FWF project *Bible and Historiography in Transcultural Iberian Societies, 8th to 12th Centuries* (P 27804–G16).

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Kalkin and the Buddhist Maitreya that could bring both hope and fear.[4] There was also a strong concern with the dates and exact circumstances of these events. In Islamic eschatology, stories about death, the afterlife, and the end of the world play a vital role in the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* literature,[5] as almost "every *sūrah* refers to eschatology, particularly to the physical rewards and punishments of heaven and hell"[6], reminding believers that earthly deeds had an everlasting impact on the fate of the soul. From an anthropological and phenomenological point of view at least, this belief has much in common with Hindu and Buddhist conceptions about retribution for actions and the type of punishment or reward one can expect to experience in hell or in heaven.[7] Parallels to the Christian expectation of Christ's Second Coming can be found in the prediction that the community of Muḥammad would last for 167 years and thirty-one days after his death, creating a general atmosphere of expectancy or fear.[8] Quite similarly, Hindus and Buddhists throughout Asia engaged in sophisticated calculations concerning the beginning and end of the *kaliyuga*, the advent of Maitreya or the final demise of Buddhism.

In Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu theologies, ideas regarding the end of the world and the advent of messianic figures developed alongside chronological models, revelatory literature, apocalyptic imagery from holy texts and the ongoing process of commenting on them, particularly in exegetical and historiographical works.[9] These visions can not only be seen in a wide variety of theological and historiographical sources but also in hagiography, sermons and poems, and even in sources that we would nowadays group under the moniker of "pragmatic texts", such as charters and maps. In the Bible, the Books of Daniel and Ezekiel, the

4 On the expectations of Christ's return and the belief in the resurrection of all people, which are well exemplified in 1 Corinthians 15:51–57, 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 and 5:1–11, Matthew 24:42–44, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3 and 16:15, see Walls, "Introduction," 3; Yarbro Collins, *Apocalypticism and Christian Origins*; Bynum Walker, "Introduction;" Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*. On the advent of the Hindu and Buddhist messiahs see Deeg, "Das Ende des Dharma und die Ankunft des Maitreya;" Zürcher, "Eschatology and Messianism in Early Chinese Buddhism," and Zürcher, "Prince Moonlight."

5 See Chittick, "Muslim Eschatology," and the comprehensive collection on paradise in Islam in Günther, Lawson, eds., *Roads to Paradise*, in particular, Günther, Lawson, "Introduction," and Lawson, "Paradise in the Quran and the Music of Apocalypse." See further the studies by Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions,* and Lange, "Introducing Hell in Islamic Studies."

6 Waldmann, "Eschatology: Islamic Eschatology." See also Lawson, *The Quran, Epic and Apocalypse*, and Sinai, "The Eschatological Kerygma of the Early Qur'an."

7 Chappell, "Early Forebodings of the Death of Buddhism."

8 Cook, "The Apocalyptic Year 200/815–16;" Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*.

9 For a discussion of apocalyptic time, in particular on the apocalyptic significance of specific dates in Western European history, see besides the works of Richard Landes and Johannes Fried: Brandes, "Endzeiterwartung im Jahre 1009 A.D?," (especially on the discussion about the importance of the year 1000), and in general Pezzoli-Olgiati, "Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Weltende und Offenbarung." For a treatment of this topic in Islam see n. 8 and Hoyland, "Early Islam as a Late Antique Religion," and in Judaism see Novak, "Jewish Eschatology."

Revelation to John, and in the Qur'an, sura 18, 33, 41 and 81–84, which all mention the Last Judgment and the Hour among other things, offered key tools to decode God's plan for the community of believers. This plan would be revealed at the end of time, but would also be presaged on earth by signs and wonders. These texts provided central models for the medieval perception of the world and its peoples,[10] for the interpretation of socio-political changes, for the understanding of astronomical and natural phenomena,[11] and for the individual's path to salvation.[12] In much the same way, narrative and/or normative Hindu literature such as the *Manusmṛti*, the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas record End-Time-related interpretations of the health and morality of Brahmanical society, the legitimacy and relevance of royal policies, taxes, life expectancy, and cosmic and military events etc. At the same time, these bulky documents provided the Brahmanical elites with a rich repertoire of ready-to-use images and symbols that could give meaning to people's social, economic, political and religious experiences.[13] This also applies to Buddhist canonical literature, which the Buddhist literati constantly resorted to in order to locate the present on the "timetables of decline"[14], to find criteria to estimate the degree of the community's degeneration and to develop potent rhetorical tools to enjoin its repristination.

Texts containing divine mysteries and knowledge that could only be obtained and understood by true believers or insiders are central aspects of Jewish and Christian apocalypses, a Greek word referring to a divine secret (about the imminent end of time and of history, and the fate of the dead) that has to be revealed.[15] Thus, in the context of Jewish and Christian apocalypses, the term "apocalypse" refers to both a particular prophetic literary genre in the widest sense incorporating specific textual phrases and motives, and a scenario that gradually unfolds at the end of time.[16] This concept of a divine truth that is revealed to a prophet can also be found

10 See the contributions in Voß, Brandes, Schmieder, eds., *Peoples of the Apocalypse*, and in Seyed-Gohrab, Doufikar-Aerts, McGlinn, eds., *Gog and Magog*.

11 Palmer, "Climates of Crisis;" Wieser, "The Chronicle of Hydatius of Chavez."

12 See the contributions in Bynum, Freedman, eds., *Last Things*; for the role of eschatology in early ascetic life see Moschos, *Eschatologie im ägyptischen Mönchtum*, and Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*.

13 Eltschinger, "Apocalypticism, Heresy and Philosophy," 29–85, and González-Reimann, *The Mahābhārata and the Yugas*.

14 Nattier, "Buddhist Eschatology," and Nattier, *Once upon a Future Time*.

15 See Collins, McGinn, and Stein, "General Introduction;" Webb, "Apocalyptic," and the contribution of Heil in *Cultures of Eschatology*, vol. 1.

16 See the influential attempt to define apocalypse as a literary genre in Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature?," with a later reappraisal in Collins, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 150: "An apocalypse is a supernatural revelation, which reveals secrets of the heavenly world, on the one hand, and of eschatological judgment on the other." On the establishment of "apocalypse" as a narrative and literary genre see besides the works of John J. Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins: Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, and Frankfurter, "Early Christian Apocalypticism." On the creation of the corpus of apocalyptic literature and nineteenth-century efforts, see Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature;" Zolles, Zolles, Wieser, "Einleitung;" Donner, "Typology of Eschatological Concepts."

in the Qur'an, and is known and referred to as *The Revelation (al-tanzīl)*, God's message sent down to Muḥammad.[17]

In both Islamic and Christian theology, eschatology is bound up with a linear understanding of time, colliding at the end of the world.[18] Time, history and the world itself, individuals and earthly powers, kingdoms and nations were thus subject to a divine plan. Eschatological ideas on temporal mutability, the transience of the world and political communities were often used to explain periods of political transition, scenarios of social decline or catastrophic events. To be sure, stories about the rise and fall of any empire could be framed with dates and decisive events, or according to the success or failure of its political and military leaders. However, the same stories could also be told as part of an apocalyptic scenario, as can be observed for the Late Roman Empire or in contemporary Byzantine commentaries on the expansion of Islam.[19]

The Christian centuries have seen many different ways of proclaiming that the end was nigh, that the world was teetering on the brink of disaster or on the edge of a new epoch. Declarations of this type were the subject of numerous controversies over the course of medieval history, which connected religious authorities, theologians, ascetics, historians, radical thinkers, rulers, reformers or prophets of doom. The calculation of the end of the world using passages from the Bible or the interpretation of the Book of Revelation and its integration into the developing Christian canon were – and would remain – highly controversial issues.[20] Central to many of these medieval debates was the question of whether apocalyptic visions or motifs were to be interpreted in a literal or in a spiritual sense. The belief in the imminence of the end of the world reverberated persistently throughout the Middle Ages and found its most prominent expressions in the expectation of the real advent of a messianic age coinciding with the return of Christ and the establishment of a one-thou-

17 Although in recent scholarship the apocalyptic aspects of the Qur'an have been discussed more prominently, the Qur'an and Islam have not, in general, received that much attention in the field of apocalyptic scholarship; for a detailed discussion including the different approaches of modern scholarship, see Lawson, "Paradise in the Quran and the Music of Apocalypse," 93–136; Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 118–136.

18 For an overview, see the contributions in Baumgarten, ed., *Apocalyptic Time*, analysing Jewish and Christian apocalyptic calculations as well as apocalyptic concepts of time in Islam and in Buddhism. See further Eco, "Die Zeit ist eine Erfindung des Christentums?," 241–245, and Sherwood, "'Napalm Falling like Prostitutes'," esp. 39–44.

19 See for instance Brandes, "Gog, Magog und die Hunnen," for the final years of the Western Roman Empire; Meier, "Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.," and Cameron, "Late Antique Apocalyptic," for Islam and the Byzantine Empire.

20 On the topic of calculating the end of the world, see Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 1–24, 42–50; Palmer, "The Ordering of Time," 605–618; Landes, "Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled;" Landes, "Millenarismus absconditus;" Fried, "Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende;" Fried, *Dies irae*, 86–94.

sand-year-long saintly reign on earth,[21] which, in Muslim belief, has its equivalent in the appearance of the Mahdī[22] and in the idea of paradise on earth.[23] These concepts encouraged the establishment of parallels between apocalyptic motifs, such as the Antichrist/*al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl*[24] and Gog and Magog, and real-world events or peoples, creating an apocalyptic topography spanning from Jerusalem via Dabiq to the Caspian Gates, where the various prophesied End-Time scenarios could eventually unfold.[25] Much the same can be said of Indo-Tibetan ideas pertaining to the city of Shambhala as it appears in Kālacakra literature. Here, the dominant apocalyptic narrative, Kalkin's destruction of Muslim troops in Mecca, could be interpreted exoterically as referring to future events in the macrocosm and esoterically as reflecting processes at work at the level of the devotee's subtle physiology. And although apocalyptic ideas have often been held to convey dread and terror, destruction and devastation, their use and interpretation in reference to contemporary circumstances was not merely a theological reaction to political events.[26] Apocalyptic imagery also concerned the very souls of believers living through what was thought to be the End Times and could be a driving force behind movements of reform as well as of personal transformation.[27]

A question that occupied the minds of many medieval religious authorities was how to integrate apocalyptic imagery into religious identity. This need not have stemmed from a conscious decision on the part of the authorities to control "the" apocalyptic discourse but rather from an awareness of potential spiritual challenges

21 On millenarianism or millennialism as the umbrella term for various Christian beliefs, see the contributions in Wessinger, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*; influential is the work of Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*; a comprehensive overview and analysis is provided by Landes, *Heaven on Earth*, and also McGinn, "Wrestling with the Millennium." One of the most prominent representatives of this belief in the Christian Middle Ages was Joachim of Fiore. On the role of messianic figures in Judaism and Christianity in general, see Ehrmann, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*, and Yarbro Collins, Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God*.

22 Filiou, *Apocalypse in Islam*, 30–65.

23 On the belief in Sunni Islam that the heavenly Jerusalem would be realised on earth, see Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions*, esp. 246–256.

24 See the contributions in Brandes, Schmieder, eds., *Antichrist*; McGinn, *Antichrist*, and Filiou, *Apocalypse in Islam*, 104–121.

25 Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions*, 245–266. On the role of peoples and otherness in apocalyptic, political narratives see also the upcoming volume of the 2019-conference "Politics – History – Eschatology. Functional, Inter(con)textual, Structural, and Comparative Approaches to Gog and Magog," organised by Georges Tamer, Lutz Greisiger, Julia Wannenmacher at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg: https://www.zfl-berlin.org/veranstaltungen-detail/items/politics-history-eschatology-functional-intercontextual-structural-and-comparative-approaches-to-gog-and-magog.html [last accessed 1 March, 2020].

26 Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, esp. 4–6, stresses the function of apocalypse as a specific narrative and mindset.

27 Gabriele, Palmer, eds., *Apocalypse and Reform*; Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*; Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*; Baun, "Last Things."

facing the community.[28] In general, pondering the relevance of apocalyptic notions to medieval societies belonged not only to intellectual controversies and doctrinal disputes but was also a matter of establishing authority and orthodoxy (if not orthopraxy), of balancing political power and social cohesion.[29] Apocalyptic literature certainly contains a clear revolutionary potential, with its visions of the destruction of earthly powers and its promise of divine justice and liberation from oppression (Rev. 20; Dan. 2).[30] These texts not only depicted scenarios of crisis and violence but could also be used to instigate political action, social change or revolutionary violence in pursuit of the millennium.[31] In medieval Christian and Islamic communities, conquest, mission and expansion would be grounded in eschatology, with the crusades and *jihād* being the most prominent examples.[32] On the other hand, apocalyptic literature could also be used to express and overcome trauma, and to find relief and consolation.[33]

Eschatology is often perceived as being inextricably connected to monotheistic religions, especially to the revelatory religions of the Book and their linear concept of time. However, eschatology and the drive to give history meaning by reference to existing prophecies and scenarios of the end are also integral to Hinduism and Buddhism, in spite of the fact that these religions operate with cyclic time. For, cyclic as time may be, the periods in which it unfolds are so big that their repetition makes no difference in terms of the devotee's and the community's conception of their present-day experience: that Maitreya will discover and preach Buddhism anew in a few billion years does not make the imminent loss of Buddhism less dramatic; that a new *kṛtayuga* or "golden age" will rise at the consumption of the present *kaliyuga* or "iron age" does only little to alleviate the miseries of those suffering from terrible illnesses, the ferocity of soldiers, natural cataclysms and unrighteous kings. In other

28 Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*, 140.

29 Pagels, *Revelations*, on the potential of the Revelation to John against opponents; Landes, *Heaven on Earth*, 37–88; Fried, *Dies irae*, 148–155; Doniger O'Flaherty, "The Origin of Heresy in Hindu Mythology."

30 Schüssler-Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*.

31 Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 111–164; Wessinger, "Apocalypse and Violence;" Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. On the radical social aspects in apocalyptic traditions, see also Rowland, Bradstock, "Christianity: Radical and Political;" Collins, "Radical Religion and Ethical Dilemmas of Apocalyptic Millenarianism," and Arjomand, "Messianism, Millennialism and Revolution in Early Islamic History."

32 For a reappraisal of the connection between apocalypse and violence, see Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*; Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*; Whalen, *Dominion of God*; Cook, *Understanding Jihad*; Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihād," and Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars." On the concept of *jihād* and its significance in medieval society, see also the contributions by Buc, Christys and Shoemaker in *Cultures of Eschatology*, vol. 1.

33 On the question of trauma – both individual and collective – and prophecy in the Book of Revelation, see Pagels, *Revelations*, and Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 99–104; for the Book of Ezekiel, see Poser, *Das Ezechielbuch als Trauma-Literatur*. On the social-psychological interpretation of apocalyptic thought in general, see Wilson, "The Biblical Roots of Apocalyptic."

words, the cyclic time of dogmatic cosmologies is by no means incompatible with the linear time of human experience.[34] Buddhists reckon with cosmic eras or eons organised into smaller periods, during which human life expectancy increases from ten to 80,000 years, before decreasing back to ten. According to their dogmatics, the final phase of a period of decrease is characterised by a set of five "degenerations" or "corruptions" (*kaṣāya*), which operate at the level of cosmic conditions (warfare, illnesses, famine), life-span, morality, wrong opinions and defilements. Down to the present, these five *kaṣāya*s have been read as unmistakable signs of the End whenever Buddhist communities going through times of crisis and hardship thought that they perceived them in their immediate environment. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same can be said of the imagery of the "demise of the good law (= Buddhism)" (*saddharmavipralopa* in Sanskrit; 末法, *mofa* in Chinese and *mappō* in Japanese), perhaps the most central motif of Buddhist apocalypticism, according to which Buddhism, the very means of human salvation, is going to disappear after a period of gradual decline of 500, 1,000, 1,500, 5,000 etc. years.[35] Again, that a new cycle will start, or that Buddhism will be "renovated" after a period of extinction, does not make those events less dramatic and their experience less linear.[36]

Given this plethora of topics and different approaches, eschatology and apocalypticism constitute a dynamic field of research and have received much scholarly attention over the past forty years, especially from the beginning of the new millennium onwards. The results of this renewed interest appear in a number of important publications combining studies in the literary traditions of apocalypticism with research on the social functions and cultural history of and the theological elaborations on apocalyptic imagery. For example, the three volumes of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (1998), the *Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* (2007), the *Oxford Handbook of Millennialism* (2011), the compendia *Abendländische Apokalyptik* (2013) and *Penser la fin du monde* (2014), and the *Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* (2014) offer systematic, encyclopedic treatments of eschatology and apocalypticism from the ancient world up to the present day, from Jewish and Christian traditions to secular, post-apocalyptic appropriations. Building on the results of these substantial studies, the present volumes aim to introduce new, pre-modern perspectives to the field by comparatively addressing eschatology and apocalypticism in Christian, Islamic and Buddhist communities.[37] While many studies so far have focused primarily on Europe, *Cultures of Eschatology* actively engages in cross-cul-

34 Nattier, *Once upon a Future Time*; von Stietencron, "Kalkulierter Religionsverfall."

35 Eltschinger, "Apocalypticism, Heresy and Philosophy."

36 Nattier, *Once upon a Future Time*; Seiwert, "End of Time and New Time in Medieval Chinese Buddhism."

37 See also the upcoming volume of the 2017-conference "End(s) of Time(s)" at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, organised by Klaus Herbers, Christian Lackner, Hans-Christian Lehner with a similarly comparative approach, including Christian, Islamic and Far Eastern traditions: https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-7622 [last accessed 1 March, 2020].

tural comparison in order to shed light on specific literary, iconographic, intellectual and religious traditions. Apocalyptic thought is analysed from a multi-disciplinary and "trans-areal" angle, including contributions from history, social anthropology, religious studies, Christian theology, art history and philology. Through expanding the geographical scope from medieval Europe to the Mediterranean world, the Near East and Asia, including India, Tibet, China and Japan, the contributions seek to come closer to an understanding of: how apocalyptic thought influenced and factored into the political and religious perception and self-definition of communities; what role it played in the construction of a community's identity or in the perception of an "other"; how eschatology contributed language, images, metaphors and models for framing history; how it impacted on individual perspectives on life, the world and the afterlife. Bringing together scholars with different research backgrounds provides a unique opportunity to reflect on the various ways in which divine presence was felt in the course of history.

The volumes *Cultures of Eschatology* paint a multi-faceted picture of End-Time scenarios in medieval communities. While providing their readers with a wealth of information and a broad array of source material, these volumes also testify to the scholars' ongoing efforts to address the theoretical, methodological and terminological challenges of dealing with eschatology/apocalypticism. The terms "eschatology" and "apocalypse" have been subject to many scholarly debates in the past, and all attempts at providing them with generally applicable definitions remain controversial and problematic.[38] Furthermore, even if Christian eschatology is not the primary focus of our volumes, we are aware that the terms and concepts we use in order to describe apocalyptic traditions and phenomena, including non-Judeo-Christian ones, are deeply rooted in Jewish and Christian cultures and scholarly traditions,[39] as well as in the traditions of an "enlightened Bible"[40]. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that, in general, we are using eschatology and apocalypticism as low-threshold terms in order to allow for a more pragmatic approach to comparison,[41] even though some authors engage actively with the question "what is eschatology/apocalypse/apocalypticism?" from the perspective of their respective fields of research (Appel, Bergmeier, Günther, Heil, Lobrichon, Shoemaker, Zolles).

However, the heterogeneous understanding of "eschatology" and "apocalypse" may reflect not only different scholarly traditions but also the polyvalent and polysemic character of apocalypticism/eschatology itself in its different historical con-

38 See Webb, "Apocalyptic;" Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature?," and the contribution of Heil to *Cultures of Eschatology*, vol. 1.

39 Nattier, "Buddhist Eschatology."

40 On the establishment of an academic programme for interpreting and appropriating the Bible in the 18th and 19th centuries, see Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*, 28–33.

41 See Gingrich, "Medieval Eurasian Communities by Comparison."

texts.[42] Our aim is thus not to generate new and disputable definitions or to advocate hermeneutic unity but to provide concretised perspectives. We therefore focus on five important features of pre-modern eschatology that could serve as vantage points for comparison in all religions under scrutiny and that are reflected in the individual sections of the volumes:[43] first, collective eschatology provided medieval societies with a hermeneutic tool for understanding and deciphering the past, the present and the future, a universal and "divinely" foreordained framework for history and historiography, in which socio-political events were thought to unfold. Unravelling the meaning of historical events, change and crises often involved bringing the exegesis of holy scriptures, symbols and prophecies to ever deeper levels, the revealed texts being in turn, as it were, validated by history. Second, and in close connection to the above, eschatological scenarios tended to generate and to structure conceptions of cosmological time, be it linear (with or without Final Judgment and like events) or cyclic (often involving a degeneration process). Third, eschatology defined and transformed space, differentiating between otherworldly and thisworldly dimensions and bringing together the universal/cosmic and the local. This could comprise a cosmic as well as a concrete earthly dimension, as when cosmic entities such as angels or demons were believed to interfere in earthly events or otherworldly, divine places were sought to be located or established on earth. Fourth, eschatology had a strong bearing on the constitution and strengthening of communities, providing them with powerful tools for identifying and fighting against disruptive forces, threats and enemies and expressing their concerns about their fate (salvation or restoration of a nation, a people or a group). Fifth, eschatology is not only concerned with the fate of empires and nations but also of individuals. All religions provide scenarios and itineraries for the personal afterlife that are mapped onto traditional, at times mystical cosmologies (certain areas of which can be strongly debated, such as Purgatory or some "karmic" destinies) and are conditioned by divine or purely mechanical retribution for individual deeds. Ideas of retribution and redemption combine the fear of death and salvation with ideas of judgment, repentance, reward or punishment in the hereafter.

Keeping these intersections in mind, we are not looking for direct parallels and *prima facie* similarities between Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist eschatology. This is important insofar as the establishment of literary traditions, which could flourish for centuries, and the (re-)use of similar apocalyptic motifs and language over a longer period of time could result in longue-durée patterns of apocalyptic thought emerging that might at the same time obscure changing underlying concepts of time, identity and community at a specific point in history. Therefore,

42 Zolles, Zolles, Wieser, "Einleitung," and recently the overview in Donner, "A Typology of Eschatological Concepts."

43 Sherwood, "'Napalm Falling Like Prostitutes'," 39, provides a lucid summary of the concept of apocalypse, which is reflected in our features for comparison.

our aim is to trace the social dynamics and discursive strategies behind phenomena that either actually were or could be subsumed under the heading "apocalyptic" in order to construe heuristic hypotheses regarding possibly overlapping/converging scenarios, motifs and strategies.[44]

2. The Contents of the Volumes: An Overview

The present volumes explore the many ways apocalyptic thought and eschatological visions intersected with the development of medieval political and religious communities, with social changes and with the emergence of new intellectual traditions. The chronological range runs from the early Christian communities of the first century through the times of the Islamic invasion and the Crusades and up to modern receptions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The geographical focus spans from Carolingian Spain to the Byzantine Empire and from South Yemen to the legendary Caspian Gates, and also encompasses the Hidden Lands of Tibetan Buddhism and Japanese Shintō culture. The contributions bring together topics that are central to eschatology, such as death, resurrection and afterlife, the end of time and musings about the transience of the world or of an empire, and consider them all as elements integral to visions of the Last Things rather than as separate phenomena.

The case studies draw on material from various historical contexts. They include the results of new fieldwork carried out in Tibet, India, Italy, Greece and Turkey (Bergmeier, Eltschinger, Gelle), as well as new findings from the study of ancient and medieval manuscripts – such as translations of newly found or underappreciated sources as well as a first critical edition of one recension of a well-known apocalyptic text – or of material culture (Chen, Däumer, Dunn, Grifoni/Gantner, Heiss/Hovden, Kramer, Lobrichon, van Oort, Warntjes). While some contributions offer overarching perspectives on the different types of apocalyptic thinking in different religions (Appel, Buc, Chen, Doufikar-Aerts, Dunn, Günther, Lobrichon, Scheid, Tiefenauer, Zolles), others present in-depth case studies of a single source, of an individual's approach (Christys, Czock, Lucas, Sommer, Treml), of the use of a particular apocalyptic motif (Afentoulidou, Gelle, Heiss, Tealdi, Tiefenauer, Tottoli) or of a specific local context which helps to further elucidate the concept of eschatology/apocalypse at a specific point in history (Günther, Heil, Kramer, Palmer, Shoemaker, Ward).

While comparison is an important aspect of our analytical approach, it does not play an equally important role in all contributions. In some, comparison is the central starting point of the analysis, either cross-culturally or within a specific context (Buc, Palmer, Ward). In other instances, comparison is carried out through examin-

44 See Standen, "Introduction: Towards a Global Middle Ages," on exploring medieval global phenomena with a focus on social interactions.

ing how ideas of eschatology were introduced into different (religious) communities (Chen, Dunn, Scheid), how apocalyptic images and texts travelled (Bergmeier, Doufikar-Aerts, Grifoni/Gantner, van Oort) or how intertextual relations were established (Däumer, Eltschinger, Heil, Sommer).

The first volume, *Empires and Scriptural Authorities*, starts by examining the formation of literary and visual apocalyptic traditions and considering how these were embedded into religious communities and how they reacted to social developments and political life. The section *Literary and Visual Traditions* brings together overarching perspectives from medieval Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu communities. This first section starts with Guy Lobrichon's chapter on the overall role and pastoral function of the Church with regard to questions of the Last Judgment and salvation. Taking a closer look at the reception of the Book of Revelation and its medieval commentaries between the ninth and twelfth centuries, Lobrichon examines the various possibilities for interpreting its apocalyptic message, either in a literal or in a spiritual sense, which could in turn lead to the formation of radical ideas or result in attempts by the church authorities to channel the apocalyptic discourse. Lobrichon shows how, in the Carolingian era, Christian literary production, specifically of apocalyptic literature, became the task of ecclesiastical elites, while in later centuries apocalyptic discourse coalesced with the writing of history, most prominently in the works of Joachim of Fiore. Turning to Antiquity, Uta Heil argues in her chapter that in early Christian communities apocalyptic writing, specifically apocryphal apocalyptic texts, was primarily part of a literary tradition rather than an expression of cultural-historical notions. These texts, which were still being produced after the formation of the Biblical canon had been completed, did not deal with the end of the world and with apocalypticism as a cultural phenomenon, but had, as for instance the *Didaskalia*, a specific function in ecclesiastical practice and law.

Muslim apocalyptic literature, its rhetoric and imagery are analysed in Sebastian Günther's chapter. While the production or proliferation of apocalyptic texts is often related to an atmosphere of crisis or an event perceived as a catastrophe, Günther shows that apocalyptic ideas were inextricably embedded in a broad medieval Islamic discourse. This resulted in the development of a rich body of Arabic literature discussing topics that are central to eschatology.

Surprisingly, eschatological concepts entered the realm of visual arts relatively late in the medieval West and Byzantium. The complex relationship between text and image is addressed in Armin Bergmeier's chapter, which shows that medieval textual and visual discourse on the End Times did not develop synchronically. While images referring to the Book of Revelation had been in use since Late Antiquity, it was not until the high Middle Ages that a distinctive eschatological visual tradition emerged. Bergmeier discusses a rich corpus of Last Judgment iconography, introduces new perspectives on its interpretation and offers insights on recent scholarly debates on eschatology in art history. The development of Hindu and Indian Buddhist eschatological doctrines, literature and cosmologies is discussed in

Vincent Eltschinger's article. It deals with the most significant instances of the Indian Buddhist appropriation of the *kaliyuga* – a central aspect of orthodox Brahmanical/Hindu apocalyptic prophecies – and engages in a detailed discussion of the question of whether and in which circumstances *buddhas* appear in the End, be it only of a single cycle.

Questions about the reinterpretation and recontextualisation of apocalyptic texts from a philological perspective are brought to the fore in the cluster on *Scriptural Traditions and their Reinterpretations*. This cluster deals with the question of how apocalyptic texts were rewritten over the course of time, how they were introduced into different communities and new contexts, how intertextual links to previous traditions were established and how new meanings were generated. The section starts with Michael Sommer's chapter, which analyses the intertexts in the Book of Revelation. Introducing different scholarly approaches and readings, Sommer examines the issue of the text's authorship and intended audience, and shows how various scholarly prophetic traditions, debates over religious identity and the text's political dimension coalesced into a complex system of intertexts. Two centuries later, in the third century, Jewish-Christian communities, especially the Elcesaites, and their lively prophetic traditions provided a fertile ground for the development of the gnostic movement of Manichaeism, centred on the eschatological prophet Mani. Manichaean eschatological thinking spread from Mesopotamia as far as Roman Africa and Spain in the West and China in the East. In his chapter, Johannes van Oort argues that the newly discovered manuscripts of the Mani Codex demonstrate that various religious traditions, Iranian as well as Jewish and Christian, influenced the features of Manichaean eschatology.

One of the most famous early medieval apocalyptic texts were the *Revelationes* of Pseudo-Methodius, a world history that locates the events of the Islamic expansion within the context of Christian salvation history. Originally composed in northern Mesopotamia (Iraq) in the late seventh century, the text was quickly translated from Syriac into Greek and Latin, and a high number of medieval Latin manuscripts testify to its wide distribution and influence. One reason for its popularity was its multifunctionality. Examining the different redactions of the Third Recension, Cinzia Grifoni and Clemens Gantner show how the *Revelationes* could be easily adjusted to the interests of a Latin Western audience. A first critical edition of the Third Recension, using a newly discovered witness, is included. Questions of textual authority and community are also addressed in Matthias Däumer's analysis of the apocryphal *Book of Watchers*, which traces its images and ideas – such as the motifs of forbidden knowledge and forbidden gifts – from the Qumran fragments to chronological religious works from the high Middle Ages. Focusing on textual traditions, Däumer argues that eschatological motifs drawn from apocryphal literature could traverse different literary genres, such as the otherworldly journeys of Enoch that were revived and integrated in the popular genre of *Jenseitsreisen* in the high Middle Ages.

Apocalyptic texts such as the *Revelationes*, which emphasised and discussed scenarios of threat and crisis, played an important role as vehicles for propaganda, for defining a community's religious and political enemies and for rallying people behind a joint cause. The cluster *Empires and Last Days 1* analyses the role of empires in medieval apocalyptic literature and examines how musings about the stability or continuity of political communities, the perception of enemies, conflicts over religious orthodoxy, or acts of violence could be connected to ideas of the imminence of the end. Philippe Buc offers a comparative analysis of the role of eschatology in provoking violence and martyrdom in medieval Japan, Catholic Europe and the Islamic world. He shows how, during the First Crusade, biblical motifs of martyrdom and divine revenge were enacted in armed violence and in the liturgy, as people were convinced that they were living through the Last Days. The central role of imminent eschatology in early Islam is examined more closely in Stephen Shoemaker's chapter, which anchors this notion in a broader trend in the Mediterranean world of Late Antiquity, specifically in the political eschatology of the Byzantine Christian communities. Imperial eschatology played a significant role in the apocalyptic thinking of the time and finds an echo in Muḥammad's teachings and the beginnings of Islam. The Islamic conquests, in particular, were often connected to eschatological hopes and ideas of inaugurating the events of the *eschaton*. Ann Christys' chapter zooms in on the question of how the expansion of Islam and the conquest of Spain were narrated in the works of the ninth-century Andalusi scholar Ibn Ḥabīb. Christys shows that in his *History*, which ends with an account of the rise of the Umayyads and a prediction of their downfall, apocalyptic *ḥadīth* traditions are elements integral to the narration of historical events. Moral commandments and warnings that sinful behaviour would bring about the Hour stand at the centre of Ibn Ḥabīb's eschatological approach towards history. A complementary perspective on events in medieval Spain from the Christian communities is provided in James T. Palmer's chapter, which examines three different case studies concerning Christian writers in Iberia and Francia in the eighth and ninth centuries: the Adoptionist debate, the conflict over the martyrs of Córdoba and the *Chronica Prophetica* of 883. Palmer shows how apocalyptic thought offered a conceptual yet flexible repertoire to define Christian identity, to establish orthodoxy and to express ideas of inclusion and alterity with regard to heretical beliefs.

The contributions in the last section, *Apocalyptic Cosmologies and End Time Actors*, examine the connection between cosmological concepts, natural phenomena and political prophecy, and consider how they were embedded into apocalyptic discourse. In Tibetan Buddhist cosmology and eschatology, the tradition of treasure texts (*gter ma*), their revelation and the prophecies of the Hidden Lands all played an important role. Analysing the example of the Hidden Land of Yolmo, a mountainous area in Nepal northeast of Kathmandu, Zsóka Gelle shows how warnings of future decline, foreign invasion and catastrophes were interwoven with moral and salvific guidelines and ideas of a safe haven for an idealised version of Tibetan soci-

ety to create a complex eschatological tradition. Faustina Doufikar-Aerts then examines on a broad level the motif of the apocalyptic peoples of Gog and Magog, which is central to medieval Jewish, Christian and Islamic apocalyptic discourse. She investigates its development and dissemination in medieval literary sources and cartography as well as in religious traditions, and shows that it was not only restricted to the medieval world but was also used in early modern times to signify struggle against imperialism, colonialism and political injustice. The apocalyptic interpretation of natural phenomena in Islam is examined in the chapter of Johann Heiss and Eirik Hovden, who analyse a story about a hailstorm hitting a village in the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula with regard to its religious and political implications. They show how apocalyptic interpretations were instrumentalised by Zaydī authorities in order to legitimate their war against the Muṭarrifiyya and to draw boundaries of inclusion and exclusion within the community of believers. The close reading of this case study allows us to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of a specific branch of Islamic eschatology and cosmology that has yet to be studied closely. In medieval apocalyptic literary traditions, not only Gog and Magog, unusual natural phenomena and the Antichrist have a prominent role but also the figure of the End Times emperor. The chapter of Elena Tealdi examines the depiction of the latter in the prophetical commentaries and works of the Friar Minor John of Rupescissa. Written against the background of the changing political landscape in Western Europe, his comprehensive œuvre is characterised by a belief in the imminence of a millennial reign of peace. Tealdi examines the development of Rupescissa's prophetic concept and its transformation over the course of time.

The second volume, *Time, Death and Afterlife*, focuses on key topics of eschatology: death, judgment, afterlife and the perception of time and its end. The first cluster *Death and Last Judgment* starts with Roberto Tottoli's discussion of eschatological topics in *ḥadīth* literature and in the stories of the prophets, focusing on how prophets were depicted facing death and reacting to the Angel of Death in Islam. These episodes touch on important theological aspects in Islamic thinking, such as the tension between confidence in God and fear of the Last Judgment. Tottoli's analysis underlines the significance of eschatological and apocalyptic beliefs in early Islam. While discussions of medieval apocalyptic thought often revolve around the development of computistic, astrological and cosmological ideas, Pia Lucas shows in her article that devotion and fear of God's Judgment played a vital role and could be factored into historiographical concepts. In the works of Gregory of Tours, written in early medieval Francia, the cult of the saints and their relics served as a sort of preview of the Last Things, making tangible fundamental Christian doctrines such as the afterlife of the soul, the resurrection of the body and the Last Judgment. By bringing the Last Things into the here and now, the cult of the saints reminded believers of the imminence of the end.

In the Carolingian world, biblical exegesis on the Book of Revelation and a general discussion of ideas about the future in times of political crisis could be con-

nected to concerns about salvation and personal betterment. Miriam Czock's case study of Dhuoda's *Liber manualis* and her exhortations to her son to lead a pious Christian life examines the complicated nexus of temporal models, biblical revelation and exegesis, and assesses its impact on the discourse of Carolingian *correctio*, an issue neglected up to now. It shows how admonitions associated with specific ideas about both the future within the world and the spiritual future were set out in relation to ideas about redemption and the Last Judgment. In Japanese cultural history, fears and taboos related to death pollution are a pervasive motif. While Shintō deals with life and the concerns of this world, Japanese Buddhism specialised in religious services for the dead. In his chapter, which examines sources from the seventh to tenth centuries, Bernhard Scheid shows how Buddhist clerics became specialists in dealing with death and the ensuing pollution.

The idea that the souls of the deceased would undertake a journey and had to meet obstacles on their way was common to many religions and is examined in the cluster *Afterlife and Otherworld Empires*. Studying textual and visual sources, Marilyn Dunn examines the role of the belief in Last Judgment and an afterlife of souls in the process of the Christianisation of Anglo-Saxon England and considers how problems were addressed and adjustments made in order to accommodate eschatological beliefs. In early medieval Anglo-Saxon society, the deposition of grave goods with the bodies of recently baptised Christians shows how their previous belief in funerary ritual as a rite of transition to a relatively undifferentiated afterlife remained prevalent after their conversion to Christianity. The idea of "otherworld passports" also existed in the Chinese Buddhist afterlife, which was created, as Frederick Shih-Chung Chen argues, as a mirror-image of the living world, where the otherworld authority is modelled on a pre-modern Chinese bureaucratic empire and ruled by Indian Buddhist and local Chinese deities. Using mortuary texts and archaeological material, Chen shows that the adoption of imperial metaphors for the otherworld went hand in hand with the unification of Chinese feudal states during the Qin-Han period. Similarly, in Byzantine Christianity, the literary afterlife traditions and imagery reflected earthly political and administrative structures, as Eirini Afentoulidou shows in her chapter. Adverse powers such as military opponents or tollkeepers were part and parcel of these literary traditions, which were widespread in the Byzantine Church. In India, the development of hell as a place of judgment and torment went hand in hand with the emergence of ascetic religious movements and an increase in the range of divinities that promised salvation to their devotees. In his chapter, Marc Tiefenauer examines the development of the concept of hell in Hindu literature which went hand in hand with the emergence of ascetic movements, of Buddhism and Jainism, in the fifth century BCE. This concept can be found in particular in the Purāṇas, which cover all cosmological topics.

The cluster *Empires and Last Days 2* revisits the questions of the role of empires in medieval apocalyptic literature. It starts with an in-depth case study of aspects of the Gog and Magog story, which is analysed more broadly in the first cluster. Jo-

hann Heiss' chapter examines how different literary traditions were generated at certain points in the history of Arab peoples in northern as well as in southern Arabia. Heiss analyses, for instance, the work of Ibn Khurradādhbih, which describes a mission undertaken to the dam against Gog and Magog under the caliph al-Wāṯiq. The other contributions in this cluster examine the nexus between the concept of linear time, apocalyptic expectations of Christ's Second Coming and the development of chronographical models, and the influence of ecclesiastical elites. Immo Warntjes' chapter on early medieval countdowns to the end of the sixth millennium examines both the complex traditions of the early medieval calculation of the date of Easter and the development of the incarnation era in the light of the religious, moral, intellectual and political interests of a Christian elite. In the Carolingian world, the eschatological understanding of empire played an important role in the formation of Christian identity. In his chapter, Graeme Ward examines three different Carolingian commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew, paying special attention to their use of the late antique historiographical work of Orosius, which was a valuable source of information for the birth of Christ. The text's focus on Roman imperial eschatology, advocating a succession of world empires, was transferred to the Church in Carolingian exegetical works. Ward shows how the great temporal distance between the works and the profound political changes that had taken place in the meantime led to different interpretations. Rutger Kramer then presents an in-depth case study of the enigmatic *Chronicle of Moissac* and examines the issue of the Carolingian reinterpretation and adaptation of earlier historiographical works. The composition of this text, which was based on a plethora of earlier works, reflects the interest of Carolingian intellectuals in the Apocalypse and emphasises the interdependence of Church and Empire at that time.

The final section, *The Afterlife of Eschatology*, examines modern readings and interpretations of eschatology, focusing in particular on the eschatological concepts of time, history and messianism in the works of three widely received and important contemporary thinkers, Giorgio Agamben, Jacob Taubes and Michel Foucault. Kurt Appel examines Agamben's analysis of apocalyptic thought and the corresponding concepts of time on the basis of his interpretation of Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the Book of Revelation. He demonstrates Agamben's influence on the genesis of the essential Western concepts, categories and constellations of eschatology and highlights their political and noetic significance for the present age. Appel considers the development of current concepts of time and traces key categories of Agamben, who responded to today's virtualisations with the concept of messianity. Martin Treml examines Jacob Taubes' eschatological thinking and political theology and shows how his study of religious and biblical texts was interwoven with events in politics and with ideas of salvation and redemption. On a political level, Treml highlights two strands of Western religious thought, which were still influential during the Age of Enlightenment: revolution and its repression on the one hand, and the apostle Paul as role model and guide to an eschatological *Lebensform* on the other.

Finally, Christian Zolles analyses the correspondences between Jacob Taubes' and Michel Foucault's respective theories about Jewish and Christian apocalypticism and touches upon what could have been illuminating discussions between the two on "the use and abuse of history". After providing an overview of the apocalypse as a historical concept, the common characteristics of Foucault's theory of genealogy and Taubes' conception of eschatology are outlined.

Most of the scholars involved in the making of these volumes, especially those who took part in the three-day conference in Vienna, remember warm and fruitful discussions between representatives of widely different disciplines and areas. In one way or another, these exchanges helped to shape the final form of the essays summarised above. Some of us also recall the medievalists' openness to enriching their apocalyptic and eschatological repertoire with non-Western materials. We editors hope that the present two books have remained true to this original spirit and that they will strengthen the belief of specialists in the strong heuristic value of the comparative approach to the study of apocalypticism, messianism and eschatology.

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Literary and Visual Traditions

Guy Lobrichon

Making Ends Meet: Western Eschatologies, or the Future of a Society (9th–12th Centuries). Addition of Individual Projects, or Collective Construction of a Radiant Dawn?

The religious and philosophical tradition of the West shows that eschatology provides the horizon necessary for all the promises of a better future. It sets forth more precisely the end of history. Eschatology and apocalypticism appear to be necessary, not just for social life but also at the very heart of notions of politics in medieval Christianity. But all the prophecies failed between the tenth and twelfth centuries: a "de-eschatologisation" was underway. A first generation of secular masters revolutionised the exegesis of the Apocalypse around the year 1100. Until the second third of the twelfth century, the enemy was outside. It then became interior. When the apocalyptic returned, it passed into the hands of some lonely and deviant figures.

Making Ends Meet? How to bring the world to an end? Or how to construct the end of history, before the afterlife? How can the end turn into a new beginning? Can people decide it themselves? And what levers do they have? The Christians of the Middle Ages in the West had a good point of support to lead their reflection on these inevitable subjects. Two ways were open to them. On my left here is someone who understands the text literally – the fundamentalist. He has two choices: if he is passive, patient, unworried or a pacifist, he sits at the side of the road and waits for the prophecies to unfold; if he is active, violent or has radical opinions, he takes the lead and sets fire to the present world (to usher in the world to come). The choice is simple in appearance: the status quo, or the revolution. But to my right here is the intellectual: he knows the arcana of hermeneutics, he knows that a text needs to be interpreted and that there are many ways to do this. He thus has at his disposal various strategies that are more or less delaying and more or less convincing. I have, however, only placed on the stage two individuals. What if I were to hand over the decision to an entire community? The following reflections suggest that the Western societies of the high Middle Ages made political choices.[1] I believe that they clearly rejected decision-making by individuals in favour of the collective.

1 For a first approach to a huge subject, see Halter and Müller, eds., *Der Weltuntergang*. More important are three collections of texts: Carey, Nic Cárthaigh and Ó Dochartaigh, eds., *The End and Beyond*; Carozzi and Taviani-Carozzi, *La fin des temps*; McGinn, *Visions of the End*.

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1 A Reminder

To return to the distinction between eschatological thinking and apocalyptic thinking seems unnecessary. For the record, let us say this:

1.1 Eschatology, the Daily Bread

Should we dispense with the concept? The word "eschatology" was introduced by the Lutheran Abraham Calov in 1677, and entered the scientific literature of European universities in the period 1835–1845. A mundane definition of eschatology among Christians calls for a description of the coming times, bringing together the three destinations of the body and soul (heaven, purgatory, hell), the Second Coming of Christ (*parousia*), the resurrection of the dead and the Last Judgment. The concept thus carries a teleological significance, which is delineated in the future of humankind and societies. Augustine, Orosius and their readers in the high Middle Ages could not be satisfied with an eschatology confined to the future. They associated it with a construction of historical time, which was directed towards an end of universal history but rooted in the experience of past and present. This version is not only common and teleological but also existential, that is to say individual: eschatology would be the daily bread of every Christian.[2] But the pressure of the present too often weakens the search for the future: unbalanced, the eschatological tension is trivialised, defused, emptied of its potential. But it contains a ferment which resists suffocation. In the Western version of Christianity, eschatology could be defined as the group of doctrines and beliefs concerning the restoration of a humanity tainted by original sin, the completion of redemption, the End of Time, the destruction of all power and all domination, the complete destruction of all evil and, finally, the return to the primordial state as it had been conceived and desired by God. The religious and philosophical tradition of the West shows that eschatology provides the horizon necessary for all the promises of a better future. Since the origins of Christianity, this eschatology has shaped and framed the multiple conceptions of history that Westerners have experienced, especially during the twelfth century and possibly up until the post-Marxism of the twentieth century. And, thus, no political thought based on the articulation of a diagnosis of the present time and with a dynamic to promote, can do without it.[3]

2 The binomial "teleological/existential" is used by the theologian Jean-Daniel Kaestli, see Kaestli, *L'eschatologie dans l'œuvre de Luc*, 10.

3 See the fascinating manual of the western apocalyptic tradition realised by Wieser, Zolles, Feik, Zolles, and Schlöndorff, eds., *Abendländische Apokalyptik*. Also Carozzi, *Apocalypse et salut dans le christianisme ancient et mediéval*.

1.2 Apocalypticism, or Revolution in Motion

Apocalypticism has a narrower meaning than eschatology. It sets forth more precisely the end of history. The future will be a succession of misfortunes and suffering, then vengeance followed by an outpouring of happiness. Yes, of happiness; but when? Commentators are divided on this matter, which is addressed in chapter 20 of the Apocalypse. The majority, headed by St. Augustine, claim that this final happiness will come after the vengeance and the Last Judgment. But another group claimed that there would be a period of earthly happiness lasting one thousand years before the Last Judgment.[4]

The apocalyptic discourse illuminates the aforementioned path of teleological eschatology. It helps to put the defenders of an existential eschatology in the mass of those who do not believe in the positive values of change and who deny the right of societies to change the course of history other than in individual consciousnesses. Their eschatology, which I will readily characterise as passive or realised, leads us to say with Paul Ricœur that "[f]rom being imminent, the apocalyptic model has become immanent".[5] We should thus distinguish between consistent (or consequent) eschatology and realised eschatology: the first trend, as characterised since Reimarus and A. Schweitzer, describes an apocalyptic short-term expectation, whereas Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann and Charles H. Dodd typify the second, existential current of thought. This alternative is a fundamental one. According to the option chosen, the individual will turn either towards a moral improvement/perfection that will enable him or her to escape punishment, or else towards the establishment of a better society that will blossom in the near future, a society of peace, of justice and of equality here on earth.[6]

I return then, as a medieval historian, to the essential question, but need to change it a bit: who should be entrusted with the duty of conducting human society as quickly as possible to a perfect society? And what means should they use? Does the arrival of a virtuous society depend on individuals who have learned to manage their impulses in order to turn them towards the common good, or should this duty rather be entrusted to elite campaigners who will know how to convince all humans to rally around them? Eschatology and apocalypticism appear in this way to be necessary, not just for social life but also at the very heart of notions of politics in medieval Christianity; this applies moreso in the West than elsewhere, since a large number of Eastern Christians denied the canonical status of the Apocalypse. The

4 On the variants of millenarianism, see Landes, *Heaven on Earth*.

5 Ricœur, *Temps et récit*, 40. This quotation of Ricoeur clearly covers what the theologians of the end of the nineteenth century called realised eschatology (or passive as Landes, *Heaven on Earth*, says). Cf. the reflections of the Catholic theologian Theobald, "Apocalyptique dans la théologie contemporaine."

6 On all these issues, see the contributions collected in Emmerson and McGinn eds., *Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, and Guglielmetti, *L'Apocalisse nel Medioevo*.

sketch that I am now going to draw comes from material in the great commentaries on this book that were written between the ninth century and the end of the twelfth century.

2 Delegated Eschatology: The Monks

Anyone is free to call dreams apocalyptic traditions, but throughout their literary history the medieval commentators operate in a terribly rational way. The clerical elite, whose prophetic function was particularly suited to the work of interpretation, was entrusted with the task of identifying and deciphering all the clues useful for the understanding of time and history. These men share methods proven since ancient times: analogical reasoning and the Christian practice of typology. Since the movement of the cosmos is subject to perfectly ordered rules, the entirety of society on earth has to conform to the admirable hierarchy of the angels. Inversely, cosmic disorders are signs of human disorders. The observations made by the masters lead them to hold peace and concord to be phenomena that are difficult to identify in history, except in the case of some short-lived past times that they idealised greatly: their accounts thus give priority to the crisis, which they submit to the grids of eschatological interpretation.

2.1 Mobilising the Learned

Apocalyptic thinking was nourished by the twin spectacles of natural disasters and the disasters of political life, and was spread by a literary production of a very high level. This literary corpus, constantly renewed, consists of copies of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, biblical commentaries – particularly those on the books of the prophets Daniel, Isaiah and Jeremiah – and the Christian additions to the biblical corpus, especially the second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians and the Apocalypse; this material was completed with works of computus (e.g. Beda, *De temporum ratione*, c. 725), of cosmography (e.g. Aethicus Ister), universal histories (e.g. Sulpicius Severus, Orosius)[7], chronicles and annals, collections of prophecies (e.g. Tiburtine Sibylle, Pseudo-Methodius translated in Latin around 711–720, Adso of Montier-en-Der[8]) and compendia of visions and apocalyptic poems (e.g. *Muspilli*, IX$^{2/4}$).[9]

7 Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica* (c. 400), Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* (c. 417?): Wieser, "Die Weltchronik des Sulpicius Severus," 676–686, and a revised English version, "Reading the Past into the Present."

8 Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*; McGinn, *Visions of the End*.

9 Cf. Boor, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, 50–53 and 276.

The proliferation of such writings in ecclesiastical centres attests to the permanence of apocalyptic thinking; it also bears witness to the constant mobilisation of the learned, whether they remained neutral with regard to these ideas (such as the authors who followed Augustine and Jerome), whether they were promoters of such thought, or whether, on the contrary, they held it in contempt.[10]

2.2 Confidence or Resignation?

Should one place one's confidence in the good government of princes, in the prayers of monks/spiritual men, or in the march of history? Should one, in short, resign oneself to be dependent? Belief in determinism and the doctrine of predestination gained the upper hand in the Frankish empire in the ninth century: these two beliefs risked leading to a collective renunciation (of personal agency) when faced with the turbulence of history.

2.3 The Parade: The Monks Move to the Front

Who can correct things, who can re-establish order? Until the end of the eleventh century, the Church struggled to define itself as an institutional reality in itself. In spite of the audacity of some Roman popes whose letters have entered into the collections of the Frankish councils,[11] it remained a spiritual entity seated on a soft mesh of bishoprics. It could do nothing without kings. The kings could, in turn, do nothing without a religious elite: an elite consisting of monks. Not the hermits, who had been poorly regarded since Theodosius, and even more so since Justinian. They had come to be detested in the Carolingian kingdoms, and only a few of them were recognised as prophets and seers. Before Joachim of Fiore, they rarely made a mark on the eschatological tradition.[12] The cenobites offered more promise: they seemed more suitable, more certain. From the seventh century onwards, they began to specialise in apocalyptic literature (Pseudo-Methodius; Beda Venerabilis and Beatus of Liébana in the eighth century; Audradus Modicus, c. 825–845).[13] Starting in the

10 Lobrichon, "Making Sense of the Bible;" Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*.

11 We know that the clerics of the Frankish Empire had to make the "False Decretals" to give substance to the authority of the bishops and the Roman pontiff: Fuhrmann, *Einfluß and Verbreitung der pseudoisidorischen Fälschungen*; see also, with some adjustments, Hartmann and Schmitz, eds., *Fortschritt durch Fälschungen?*

12 See *Eremitismo in Occidente nei secoli XI e XII*. I would refer to my comments in "Erémitisme et solitude."

13 Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, ed. Garstad; cf. Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*. Beda Venerabilis, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Gryson; Beatus of Liébana, *Tractatus de Apocalipsin*, ed. Gryson; Audradus Modicus, *Liber revelationum*, ed. Traube, and for the Italian translation see

ninth century, the monks of the Frankish empire had a mission to guard the public sphere by means of a protective barrier of monasteries, which were distributed across all the important and strategic places of each kingdom. The position of these men made them the best managers of the present and the best guarantors of the future. The monks represented themselves as pioneers, the only ones capable of calming the powers of disorder and of reconciling humanity and heaven. They were no longer just authors but also performers.

The political powers recognised their usefulness early on. Charlemagne's clerks prepared commentaries on Daniel and the Apocalypse; Hrabanus Maurus worked on Jeremiah for Louis the Pious, and on Daniel for Louis the German.[14] In the tenth century, Adso of Montier-en-Der wrote on the Antichrist for his queen, Gerberga. The monks convinced their contemporaries that salvation comes from men of God, the specialists of prayer. They carry out the true combat. Rulers understood their advice and sat back. The monks managed the life-insurance policies for the Last Days; they are the ones who held the lid of the apocalyptic pot. This was a mistake. The danger had worsened with the approach of the year one thousand, and another solution was needed.

2.4 Apocalypticism at First Hand: The Warriors

During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the idea of a restoration of the Roman Empire had been associated with the survival of not just the Christian world but also of all humanity. Thus, the restoration of the empire in Germany, the political crisis of the French kingdom in the west, the premises for the Reconquista in Spain and the Christianisation of the peoples and kingdoms in Central and Eastern Europe all gave a new impetus to apocalyptic discourses. Three urgent matters occupied minds at the time: unity (against the horror of division), reform and, finally, orthodoxy (correctness of doctrine); these were three guidelines, three preconditions for a battle that would from then on become permanent, a war that was unavoidable.[15]

Audrado di Sens, *Fonte della Vita*, ed. Stella; see further Mohr, "Audradus von Sens;" Dutton, *Politics of Dreaming*.

14 The Carolingian exegesis has seen renewed interest in the last ten or so years: see recently Shimahara and Heil, eds., *Études d'exégèse carolingienne*; Shimahara, *Haymon d'Auxerre*; Jong, "Empire as *ecclesia*;" Hoogeveen, "Populus Prior." About medieval prophetism, cf. Vauchez, *Saints, prophètes, visionnaires*; Vauchez, *Prophètes et prophétisme*; Riedl and Schabert, eds., *Propheten und Prophezeiungen*.

15 Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*; it is now advisable to refer to the French translation, revised and expanded, *Guerre sainte, martyre et terreur*.

2.5 Prophylaxis First: The Eschatological Umbrella

An initial outcome was produced around the year one thousand.[16] The rhetoric of the Antichrist expanded at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries. In response, the Church, the *ecclesia*, presented itself as a place of protection. The area of Christian kingdoms, without large-scale coordination, had been sprinkled with bunkers – the monasteries. Between these fortresses of spiritual protection, Christian communities were organised into villages, parishes and lordships in an increasingly dense network that became more and more visible across the countryside. Peace arrangements were established that regulated the use of arms and military action, the movement of people (particularly merchants) and the practice of justice. The ties between kingdoms were tightened by meetings of kings and the living were tied together through con-fraternal agreements (*fraternitas, caritas*). More than ever, the living and the dead were associated through the celebration of masses for the dead in monasteries and in all churches, and also by rearranging graves in the adjoining cemeteries. Human settlements were concentrated from then on around the triad of the castle, the church and the cemetery, three protected sites. Through these many shields a solid umbrella was raised above all of Western Europe, but in a pattern that varied locally by region.

– A *societas christiana*

These shields placed over Western Europe allowed the shaping, during the eleventh century, of a political consciousness that expressed itself in new forms of life, both religious and lay, and in communal liturgies (the great collective excommunications, the interdict, the feast of the dead on November 2nd). This political sensibility was given a name, the "Christian society" (*societas christiana*), an expression whose use spread in the second half of the eleventh century.

– Individual morals

The perspective of the Last Judgment spurred on the development of an individual eschatology – a cluster of beliefs that is well-attested in the Latin literature of the high Middle Ages, particularly in accounts of visions. Otto III, William IV of Aquitaine, Pietro Orseolo and many others take the path of individual salvation[17]. I therefore suggested in 1999 that in the manuscript of the Bamberg Apocalypse and around the year 1000 the idea of particular judgment emerges, a century prior to any theological reflection on this topic: on a well-known and complex folio of the

16 Landes, Gow and Van Meter, *The Apocalyptic Year 1000*.

17 On pilgrimage in the eleventh century, see Graboïs, "Pèlerinages du XIe siècle;" Graboïs, *Pèlerin occidental*; Whalen, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages*; Caby, "Faire du monde un ermitage."

manuscript, one can namely distinguish among the group of those condemned, and identify a young emperor guided by a woman but exhorted by an archbishop.

The Last Judgment seems here to give way to a final repentance and a final pardon before the ultimate sentence.[18]

Fig. 1: "Bamberger Apokalypse", Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Msc.Bibl.140, fol. 53r (Reichenau, c. 1000–1005?; photo: Gerald Raab)

But the prophecies on the millennium did not come to pass. God granted humanity a respite. The empire survived and the Church undertook a review of its aims during what one calls the "Gregorian Reform". Christians had to move on to another stage.

18 Bamberger Apokalypse, fol. 53r. Compare the description of this folio by Suckale-Redlefsen (Gude Suckale-Redlefsen and Bernhard Schemmel, *Buch mit 7 Siegeln*, 71–72) to that of Lobrichon, "Jugement sur la terre comme au ciel."

2.6 Then the Offensive: The Weapon of Communal Apocalypticism

Recent work by Philippe Buc, Jean Flori, Jay Rubenstein, Jehangir Malegam and, most recently, Thomas Lecaque has cast new light on the apocalyptic staging developed by Raymond of Aguilers, one of the first chroniclers of the First Crusade.[19] The 1099 capture of Jerusalem ended in bloodshed. Raymond presented the massacre as a ritual purification and a necessary prelude to the descent of the New Jerusalem on earth. The two most powerful leaders of the First Crusade, Count Raymond IV of Toulouse and Saint-Gilles, and the duke of Lorraine, Godfrey of Bouillon, each refused in turn to take up the royal crown of Jerusalem, as if they feared it would accelerate Christ's return, preferring, like Otto III, the emperor of the year 1000, "to follow naked, with all his soul, Christ".

3 The Triumph of History: Eschatology Realised, Community and Domination

The world did not end in 1099, so the prophecies had yet again failed. I highlight two very simple facts:

– Towards 1111, twelve years after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, an artist painted an initial in the Apocalypse in the Bible of Stephen Harding, the abbot of Cîteaux. He abandoned the iconographic traditions of the Apocalypse for this initial: most unusually, he painted St. Michael's victory over the dragon (Apoc. 12:7).[20]

– Also exceptional was the manner in which a commentator on the Apocalypse around 1115–1120 cut its text into some hundred and thirty units, ending with the refrain "and you too voluntarily suffer tribulation for Christ," just as Christ suffered "for you".[21] One might think that the painter and the exegete illustrate the experience of apocalyptic army of 1099, but this must remain a supposition.

19 Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*, particularly 261–283; Flori, *Pierre l'Ermite et la première croisade*; Flori, *L'Islam et la Fin des temps*; Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*; Malegam, *The Sleep of Behemoth*; Lecaque, "The Count of Saint-Gilles and the Saints of the Apocalypse."

20 Bible of Etienne Harding, fol. 125r, cf. Załuska, *L'enluminure et le scriptorium de Cîteaux au XIIe siècle*, 196.

21 *Liber Floridus*, fols. 3v–31v. This copy of Lambert de Saint-Omer's *Liber Floridus* contains an anonymous *Expositio* on the Apocalypse, which was recorded by Stegmüller, *Repertorium biblicum medii aevi*, no. 1364–1365. There is nothing to justify an attribution to Lambert of Saint-Omer, but its author is obviously contemporary and belongs to the circle of Anselm of Laon: Rubenstein, "Lambert of Saint-Omer and the apocalyptic First Crusade."

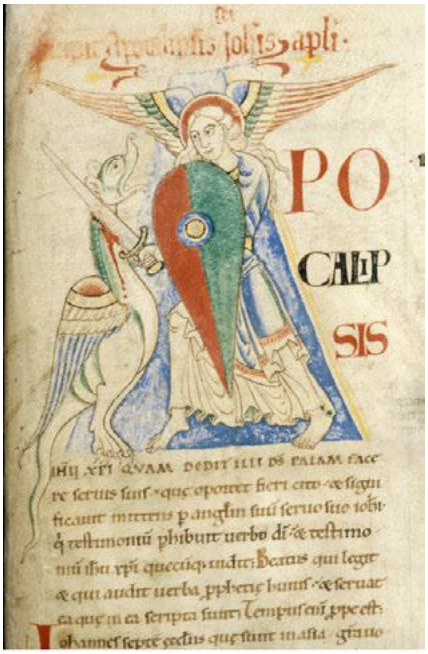

Fig. 2: Initial of Apocalypse, "Bible of Stephen Harding", Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, BM 15 (c. 1111; Cîteaux Abbey, France), fol. 125ra.

3.1 New History, New Exegesis: *Enteschatologisierung*

A "de-eschatologisation" was underway. A first generation of secular masters – in the cathedral schools that were the seedbeds of future universities – revolutionised the exegesis of the Apocalypse around the year 1100. They cut it up into visions: the three central ones (the second, third and fourth visions: Apoc. 4–14) are "recapitulations" – i.e. paths superimposing the history of the Church and world history onto the eschatological framework (*aetates mundi*, *IV regna*, etc.), while the rest only discuss the Last Judgment and the paradise to come, maybe long after the First Crusade.[22] Thus, re-read in light of the apocalypse, present history acquires thickness and consistency. This generation therefore exalted the duty to act in a Christian communion. The path of Jerusalem, paved with the sufferings of war, led the combatants to the climax of passion: to the point of carrying the cross of Christ and sacrificing themselves.

22 See my paper, "Les commentaires de l'Apocalypse, du prétendu 'siècle obscur' jusque vers 1100."

Less than a generation later, the first "intellectuals" – in the sense that Jacques Le Goff used the word[23] – transformed the way of the crusade by spiritualising it and turning it into a penitential journey. These masters had thus, on the one hand, weakened, swallowed up, delegitimised and standardised apocalypticism and, on the other, shattered eschatological unanimity: those who walked to Jerusalem no longer formed the battalions of the End Times, but rather became an endless cohort of pilgrims.

3.2 The Revenge of a Realised Eschatology

It is no coincidence that, starting around 1100, sculptors chose to represent the Last Judgment on the main doors of Romanesque churches:[24] the porch becomes a place of passage for individual penance, indeed a ticket-booth to Purgatory. Around 1140–1145, other sculptors began depicting the Pentecost – to welcome all the *gentes* – in the central tympanum of the narthex of the abbey-church at Vézelay. This twelfth-century Pentecost scene shows dog-heads and monsters from the North and the East, like in the bestiaries, coming from the ends of the world to demonstrate a newly found unity, the sense of a new creation.[25]

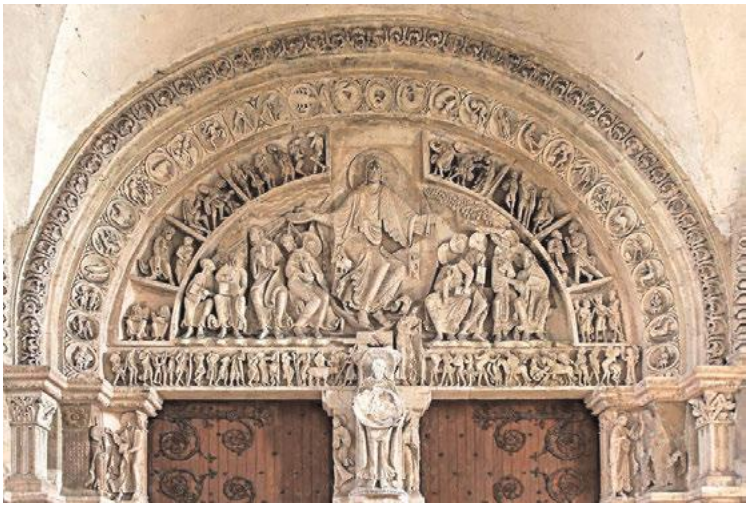

Fig. 3: Vézelay (France), central tympanum of the narthex (ca. 1140–1145), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Tympanums_of_Vézelay#/media/File:Basilique_Ste_Madeleine_narthex_tympan_central.jpg [last accessed, 1 March, 2020]

23 Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*.
24 Christe, *Les grands portails romans*; Christe, *Jugements derniers*.
25 Le Gallic, "Tympan de Vézelay;" Dodds, "Remembering the Crusades;" Angheben "Apocalypse XXI–XXII et l'iconographie du portail central de la nef de Vézelay;" Salet, "Grand tympan de Vézelay;" Katzenellenbogen, "The Central Tympanum at Vézelay."

The monks had lost control of apocalypticism. The example of the Cistercians shows this clearly (Cîteaux was founded in 1098, during the First Crusade). In the Bible of Stephen Harding, abbot of Cîteaux, it is not the monks, but rather St. Michael and the army of angels who – starting with Christ's Incarnation – crush the demons. Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux excludes the idea of the coming of the Antichrist in the near future;[26] he leaves the fight to conquer the Holy Land to warriors and regrets his own involvement in the Second Crusade; along with the monks of his abbey, he instead occupied himself with the daily fight against demons of all sorts and heretics.

Fig. 4: Initial of Apocalypse, "Bible of Saint-Bénigne", Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, BM 2 (c. 1125/1130, Burgundy), fol. 470vb.

26 Goetz, "Bernard et Norbert," 524.

At the time when Bernard of Clairvaux wrote his treatise *In Praise of the New Knighthood* on the Templars, this trend was confirmed by the Benedictines of the abbey of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon. The illuminated initial of the Apocalypse in their "giant Bible" (*Riesenbibel*) is a true monument of visual exegesis: it invites the reader to meditate on the sacrifice of the Eucharist, and no longer on a sacrificial war. Yolanta Załuska sees here "a synthetic representation of several elements of the vision: Christ, the waters, the stars, the angels of the seven churches in bust under arches, the seven candlesticks, the fainted and naked John, the right hand of the Lord resting on him, and the same John, clothed, looking at the vision. These elements are joined to the motifs of a commentary (table set up with bread-wafers, bowls and knife under the candelabra, two young heads with nimbus and two prophets(?) within a 'reduced model' architecture)."[27] I would suggest that the scene should be read differently, however. In the lower left, the Apostle John, in traditional pose, witnesses the vision; on the right, the six angels – not seven – are the first six ages of the world or the first six states of the Church since the Incarnation (*status ecclesiae*); in a central column on three registers, Christ the Judge (top) extends his hand to an elect individual at the resurrection of the bodies (below) and takes him to the Eucharistic feast of the Kingdom finally completed, in New Jerusalem, the Church perfect. But an extraordinary innovation occurs in the lower register. The two saints, who point to the altar and the dead man, present a model church to the Christ. This could be the Temple of Jerusalem reconquered in 1099 by the sacrifice of the crusaders, but the construction of the image closes the way to the expected descent of the New Jerusalem ("consequent eschatology"). The offering to Christ, carried by the patriarchs, the prophets, the saints and the dead of all history, leads to the eternal feast of a triumphant Church.

3.3 The Marginalisation of Apocalypticism

Throughout the twelfth century and up to Joachim of Fiore, commentators on the Apocalypse considered the debate to be over: the eschatological battle is played out in the here and now. By this time, prophecy about the End Times had deserted its traditional seedbed in male monasteries. Joachim of Fiore had had to leave the Cistercian order to exercise his prophetic ministry,[28] while the prophets of the Apocalypse now lived in distant hermitages or in female convents (Hildegard of Bingen, Elisabeth of Schönau): thus marginalised, they no longer played a part in the organisation of the future.

27 Załuska, *Manuscrits enluminés de Dijon*, 132–136.

28 Cf. Orioli, "Gioacchino da Fiore;" Potestà, *Il tempo dell'Apocalisse*; Potestà, "Prophetie als Wissenschaft."

4 Conclusions?

Does the union of some followers of a monotheistic religion offer the safest way to achieve the millenarian dream, that of an era of peace? Just before 1100, a small group of men in the heart of medieval Christendom believed it could lead the history of the world to its appointed end: to establish a reign of peace on earth and open the doors for the return of a Christ who was no longer humble but triumphant. The leaders of the First Crusade, in front of Jerusalem, thought they were acting under the banner of Christ alone, since kings and emperors had been excluded from the expedition and since the pope had given them carte blanche.

Was the kingdom of Jerusalem (1000–1291) not actually programmed for failure? Westerners quickly deprived it of the apocalyptic weapon in order to graft all of Christian space on to the tree of the Roman Church. This "pacified" eschatology had the advantage of opening the door to the (hypothetical) fusion of exogenous sciences and philosophies with Christian truth, and it allowed the shaping of canon law and of all civil laws. It naturally led to the canonisation of unity and to the denigration, ostracisation and exclusion of difference. A lucid observer, John of Salisbury thought around 1155 that the men of his time, perched on the shoulders of giants, approached the inaccessible truth, one and indivisible, better than ever. He says

> that knowledge should come as close as possible to the inaccessible [...] His previously established pragmatism, his curiosity about predicting the immediate historical future has a metahistorical foundation: historical knowledge is partial disclosure of the secrets of Providence, gained by analysis of recurrences, analogies and other similarities within historical time.[29]

The mastery of the future came, in short, with the deciphering of a providential order. This method has the name *historia* (history). As is clear from the *Chronica* and *Gesta Friderici* of the bishop-chronicler Otto of Freising, it absorbs and naturalises the prophetic and apocalyptic discourses and confirms the new political rationality of the kingdoms.[30] We should thus hold the Calabrian monk Joachim de Fiore not as a new star in the heaven of ideas, but as the heir of this path, which he synthesises and sublimates in his *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, where he inaugurates an original development in historical writing.[31] Until the second third of the twelfth century, the enemy was outside. It then became interior. The little foxes were now in the

29 See Moos, "The Use of *exempla* in the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury," 253, quoting John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 2.22.1.

30 Otto von Freising, *Chronik oder die Geschichte der zwei Staaten*, ed. Lammers; Otto von Freising, *Gesta Friderici*, ed. Schmale. See Mégier, *Christliche Weltgeschichte im 12. Jahrhundert*.

31 This is the conclusion I draw from recent work, notably by Rainini, *Disegni dei tempi*; McGinn, "Image as Insight in Joachim of Fiore's *Figurae*," and recently by Wannenmacher, "The Spiny Path of Salvation;" Wannenmacher, "Ein Wandel in der Auslegung der Apokalypse."

vineyard;[32] the masters and exegetes had been saying it for a long time, but they were not heard until the noisy intervention of Bernard of Clairvaux.[33] When the apocalyptic returned, it passed into the hands of some lonely and deviant figures, all in the wake of Joachim de Fiore; these included the Franciscan Spirituals of the thirteenth century and Jean de Roquetaillade or Rupescissa (his *Liber secretorum eventuum* was written in 1349 and his *Liber Ostensor* in 1356[34]). This remained the case at least until the beginning of the fifteenth century, when Vincent Ferrier (1350–1419) used and perhaps abused it at the time of the Schism. Is consecutive eschatology, in other words the apocalyptic, not at the same time the fragile point, the touchstone of all monotheism and the unavowable acme of political reason? Can doctrinal rigour both accommodate and denounce it?

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Abbreviations

CCCM Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnhout: Brepols, 1966–.
CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.
CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866–.
PL Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols., Paris, 1844–1855, 1862–1865.
SC Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Éd. du Cerf, 1941–.

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Bible of Saint-Bénigne. Ms. 2, Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon.
Liber Floridus. Ms. lat. 8865, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

32 *Cantica Canticorum*, 2.15: *Capite nobis uulpes paruulas quæ demoliuntur uineas. Nam uinea nostra floruit* ("Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards").
33 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons*, 63–66 on the *Cantica Canticorum* (*Sancti Bernardi Opera*, eds. Leclercq, Talbot and Rochais). Cf. Brunn, *Des contestataires aux "cathares,"* 125–178. I have not been able to consult the book of Pegg, *A Most Holy War*.
34 Jean de Roquetaillade, *Liber Ostensor*, eds. Vauchez, Thévenaz Modestin and Morerod-Fattebert; John of Rupescissa, *Liber secretorum eventuum*, eds. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert.

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Uta Heil

Apocalyptic Literature – A Never-Ending Story

Applying the definition of apocalyptic texts proposed by John Collins, this article analyses the thirty-ninth festal letter of Athanasius of Alexandria (328–373) with its famous list of biblical canonical writings. In the letter, Athanasius dismisses certain apocalyptic texts associated with Enoch, Isaiah and Moses as dispensable and even heretical. In contrast, the canonical apostolic writings were held to contain sufficient instruction from Christ, the true teacher. This position did not prevent the subsequent composition of further apocalyptic texts, one example of which, the Didaskalia of Christ, *is presented in this article. Obviously, new themes and debates stimulated the continued production of apocryphal writings even after agreement had been reached on the canon of biblical texts.*

1 What is an Apocalyptic Text?

Apocalyptic literature deals with the end, either the end of the world or the end of an individual human being in paradise or hell. However, the production of Christian apocryphal apocalyptic literature is without end – it is a never-ending story, arising out of numerous apocalyptic texts originating at different times and in different cultural contexts. Therefore, there is no final, definitive text about the end, although each text seeks to give exactly this impression. But what kind of text really describes an apocalypse? What makes a text apocalyptic?

The question of defining the genre of apocalyptic texts has been debated for a long time. Apocalyptic literature was intensely studied especially in the 1970s, and a number of definitions were suggested by various scholars. The most famous one was proposed in 1979 by John Collins, now professor for Old Testament Studies at Yale Divinity School. At that time, he was chairing a committee of the Society of Biblical Literature on the "apocalypse" genre. According to him, apocalyptic texts form

> a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.[1]

1 The results of the committee's work were published in a special issue of the journal *Semeia* 14. It was based on a comprehensive survey of all Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts from the period 250 BCE to 250 CE; it represents the efforts of five members of the Apocalypse Group of the SBL Forms and Genres project. Cf. also Hartmann, "Survey of the Problem of Apocalyptic Genre." Cf. now Collins, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, especially his introduction: "What

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Collins thus identified four defining features that describe the form and content of apocalypses. They are

- Revelatory literature

that has

- a narrative framework

and presents

- a revelation mediated by an otherworldly being

thus

- disclosing a transcendent reality, which is a) temporal – eschatological, and b) spatial – supernatural.

This definition found much support[2] but also met with criticism, for example regarding its disregard of the text's intended functions.[3] However, alternative definitions, which include their functions, turned out to be either too specific or too complex. Nevertheless, two purposes of apocalyptic texts are worth discussing, namely their exhortative and consolatory intentions. The search for a definition that encompasses the function of apocalyptic literature reflects the assumption that this kind of literature is primarily the result of a crisis.

Also in 1979, a conference on apocalypticism in Uppsala argued for an end to the fruitless search for a general definition. The participants agreed to the proposal of Jan Assmann: *contra definitionem, pro descriptione*.[4] The discovery of parallel literary phenomena in different regions and cultural contexts in ancient Greece, Rome, and the Near East made a definition more complicated. Therefore, the participants of the Uppsala conference preferred to use "apocalyptic" as an adjective describing textual phrases, passages, and motives, but not as a name of a literary genre. However, according to Collins, this decision was "simply a diplomatic evasion of the issue at the end of a stimulating but exhausting conference."[5]

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is Apocalyptic Literature?" 1–16; and Yarbro Collins, "Apocalypse Now." Cf. also Himmelfarb, *The Apocalypse*.

2 Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature?" 2, with reference to DiTommaso, "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism in Antiquity," and Reynolds, *Between Symbolism and Realism*, and Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*. It is a successful definition suitable to describing apocalyptic literature. The alternative, to take one text as a paradigm or prototype, e.g. the biblical Apocalypse of John, is more of a hindrance than helpful.

3 See Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature?" 5–6, himself on this point. Adler, "Introduction," 17, stresses esotericism as an essential motif and sectarian Christian movements as social background. See below notes 53 and 54.

4 Hellholm, "Introduction," 2: "In spite of several attempts at a definition, there seemed to be a consensus that for the time being *contra definitionem, pro description* (Assmann) would be the appropriate way to pursue investigations in the field of Apocalypticism." Cf. also Collins and Charlesworth, eds., *Mysteries and Revelations*.

5 Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature?" 3.

In subsequent decades, the SBL definition as formulated by Collins has become the most widely-used because it opened up constructive avenues of research.[6] Recently it has been discussed again, and in the end most collaborators confirmed it at a conference in Berlin held in November 2014 organised by the two editors of the "New Schneemelcher", entitled *Antike Christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, Christoph Markschies and Jens Schröter.[7] After the publication of two volumes on Christian apocryphal gospels,[8] a further volume on Christian apocalyptic literature in Antiquity is in preparation. The preliminary list entails 55 Christian apocalyptic texts, which include Jewish apocalyptic literature in Christian use, as well as Christian texts up to the rise of Islam.[9] In his paper, Collins again takes up the question of definition and defends his previous results that now form the basis for the "New Schneemelcher". His approach is an etic one, based on a list of features or a "master-paradigm".[10] Though his definition may be criticised as a circular argument, as selective and simplistic, as being more of a description than a definition, or as overlooking historical developments,[11] Collins defends both his approach and the idea of defining a genre at all.[12] He again problematises the question of "func-

6 Tilly, *Apokalyptik*, 49–52, also bases his description on it. This definition is more abstract compared to the suggestions of Vielhauer and Strecker, "Einleitung," 506, who also link their description to an apocalyptic movement: "Mit aller gebotenen Zurückhaltung und gebührenden Revisionsbereitschaft wird man als Heimat der Apokalyptik jene eschatologisch bewegten und erregten Kreise annehmen dürfen, die von der Theokratie immer mehr in ein Konventikeldasein gedrängt wurden (O. Plöger), die durch eschatologisch Naherwartung, dualistische Vorstellungen und Esoterik eine gewisse Verwandtschaft mit der Gemeinde von Qumran [...] besitzen. Die Apokalypsen stellen die Literatur dieser Konventikel dar; sie sind oft genug aus aktuellen Nöten und zur Stärkung der Gemeinschaft in diesen geschrieben worden."

7 Some papers from this conference were published in the *Journal of Ancient Christianity* in 2016.

8 *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, vol. 1, eds. Markschies and Schröter.

9 A preliminary list of apocalyptic texts: Discourse on Abbaton, Apocalypse of Abraham, Apocalypse of Adam (NHC); Ascension of Isaia, Ascension of Mose, Second and Third Baruch, Apocalypse of Daniel (syr.), Seventh Vision of Daniel, Didaskalia of Jesus Christ, Daniel-Diegese, Apocalypse of Elija, First and Second Enoch, Armenian Henoch, Greek Ephraem, Latin Ephraem, Syriac Ephraem, Gospel of the 12 Apostles (syr.), Apocryphon of Ezechiel, Ever-New-Tongue, Fourth to Sixth Ezra, Greek Ezra, Questions of Ezra, Vision of Ezra, Appointment of Michael and Gabriel, The Glory of the Predecessor, Jacob's Ladder, Apocalypse of John (Greek), Apocalypse of John (Slav.), Apocalypse of Mary, Apocalypse of Makarius (syr.), Apocalypse of Mark (syr.), Ps.-Methodius, Monastic Oracles, Diegesis of Mose, Mysteria of John, Apocalypse of Paul (greek), Apocalypse of Paul (copt.), Apocalypse of Paul (ethiop.), Apocalypse of Paul (NHC), Apocalypse of Peter, Apocalypse of Peter (NHC), Prayer and Apocalypse of Paul, Apocalypse of 24 Prespyters, Apocryphon of the Seven Heavens, Apocalypse of Stephanus, Apocalypse of Sedrach, Testament of the Lord (arab.), Testament of the Lord (syr.), Apocalypse of Thomas, Apocalypse of Zephania.

10 Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered," 24.

11 Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered," 26–27, 35.

12 Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered," 29–32.

tion": "Our conviction was that function was best discussed at the level of individual texts, in their specific contexts; and the commonly accepted idea that apocalypses were intended to comfort and exhort a group in crisis did not necessarily hold true in all cases."[13]

The following observations confirm this argument, because the *Didaskalia of Jesus Christ* (see section 3) demonstrates an ongoing production of apocalyptic texts in new non-crisis contexts.

2 Apocryphal and Biblical Teachings: Athanasius's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*

The previously mentioned variety of Christian apocryphal apocalyptic texts up until the seventh century – "the death of the genre [...] can be placed no earlier than the Middle Ages"[14] – leads to another question: Which strategies do the anonymous authors of these texts use to establish authority and reliability? Why should one read these texts and take them seriously?

All the texts relate to famous biblical figures, particularly those for whom the biblical narrative allows for further revelations, as they had received already divine revelations, including Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament, the disciples of Jesus, or the apostle Paul, whose report of his ascent to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) is an important link. Thus these biblical texts evoke the possibility and ability to conceive of further revelations. In addition, the biblical figures provide and support the authority of these texts. This is important insofar as apocryphal literature is anonymous. No famous author guarantees the authority and importance of the text; it is the biblical figure himself who authorises the story.

Of course, it is impossible to study each of these Christian apocryphal apocalyptic texts in detail here; therefore, it may be of interest to look at them from a different perspective, namely that of Athanasius of Alexandria, who deals with these questions in his thirty-ninth *Festal Letter* from the year 367. This is the famous letter in which he not only announces the date of Easter to the church communities in Egypt, but also presents a list of canonical writings of the Old and New Testament.[15] The latter are divine texts of apostolic age and "sufficient to instruct us perfectly"

13 Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered," 33.

14 Collins, "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered," 35.

15 Brakke, "Canon formation and social conflict;" Brakke, "Athanasius's Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter;" *Atanasio di Alexandria. Lettre festali*, ed. Camplani, 498–518; Lucchesi, "Un noveau complement aux Lettres festales d'Athanase;" Pedersen, "The New Testament canon and Athanasius of Alexandria's 39th Festal Letter."

(*ep. fest.*, 39.15),[16] as he claims. This festal letter is highly important for the history of the formation of the biblical canon, but its characterisation of apocryphal writings is also interesting.

At the time Athanasius wrote this text, he was already of advanced age and had been bishop of Alexandria for nearly forty years (since 328).[17] As the bishop with responsibility over Egypt, Pentapolis, and Libya, he continued the Egyptian tradition of writing festal letters established by his predecessors.[18] He had endured being deposed five times, followed by five periods of exile or flight.[19] But even during these periods, he sought to maintain the tradition of festal letters, with the secondary goal of demonstrating that he was nevertheless the rightful bishop. He thus reinforced his reputation as the strong and unbending bishop fighting for Nicene orthodoxy against diverse heretics.

Throughout many of his writings, Athanasius criticised his opponents' inability to read and interpret biblical texts correctly. However, his thirty-ninth *Festal Letter* is the first and only instance in which he presents a concrete list of the biblical writings he considers orthodox. His aim is, of course, to exclude other, non-apostolic texts and to eliminate the category of "disputed writings".[20] His list presents only those writings which "are canonized, transmitted, and believed to be divine" (*ep. fest.*, 39.16); therefore "let no one add to or subtract from them" (*ep. fest.*, 39.19).[21]

In this letter, Athanasius strongly rejects the reading of apocryphal books, which, he says, are used only among heretics:

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16 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 59.

17 On Athanasius cf. Gemeinhardt, ed., Athanasius Handbuch; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*; Gwynn, *The Eusebians*; Gwynn, *Athanasius of Alexandria*; Martin, *Athanase d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IVe siècle*; Schwartz, *Zur Geschichte des Athanasius*.

18 The tradition of writing festal letters is known from the third century onwards. The first bishop of whom we have more information is Dionysius of Alexandria (cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 7.20); cf. Camplani, "Osterfestbriefe."

19 The first and second periods of exile (335–337 in Trier and 339–345 mainly in Rome) were the result of the Egyptian (so-called Melitian) opposition against him and a mixture of political, ecclesiastical, and theological conflicts. During the third exile (356–361), again the outcome of both theological conflicts and political circumstances, Athanasius hid in Egypt. The fourth and fifth periods of exile were shorter, and again Athanasius escaped arrest. Cf. on his biography Gemeinhardt, *Athanasius Handbuch*, 73–93, and the literature in n. 17. Of interest in this respect was his defense of fleeing from persecution in *De fuga in persecutione*.

20 Cf. the reflections on disputed writings by Origen in the third century (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 6.25.3–14) and the list of Eusebius of Caesarea in *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3.25.1–3 with Eusebius' own reflections on them in *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3.24.17–18 and 2.23.25, ed. Schwartz. Cf. Von Campenhausen, *Entstehung der christlichen Bibel*; Metzger, *Der Kanon des Neuen Testaments*; Markschies, "Neue Forschungen zur Kanonisierung des Neuen Testaments;" Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche Theologie und ihre Institutionen*, 215–335; von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon*; Greschat, "Die Entstehung des neutestamentlichen Kanons;" Thomassen, ed., *Canon and Canonicity* and, as an overview, Ebner, "Der christliche Kanon." Even still Augustine mentions the different canons of Scripture (*De doctrina christiana* 2.8.13).

21 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 60–61.

> We are afraid that, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, a few of the simple folk might be led astray from sincerity and purity through human deceit and might then begin to read other books, the so-called apocrypha, deceived by their having the same name as the genuine books. I exhort you to bear with me if I remind you about things that you already know, on account of the Church's need and advantage (*ep. fest.*, 39.15).[22]

Accepting an additional body of apocryphal books is, as Athanasius claims, "an invention of heretics" (*ep. fest.*, 39.21). According to him, the authors write these texts whenever they please; then they "add time to them" and publish them as if they were ancient (*ep. fest.*, 39.21). Furthermore, they "deceive by their having the same name as the genuine books" (*ep. fest.*, 39.15).[23] He gives the examples of books bearing the names Enoch, Isaiah, and Moses:

> Who has made the simple folk believe that those books belong to Enoch, even though no Scripture existed before Moses? On what basis will they say that there is an apocryphal book of Isaiah? He preaches openly on the high mountain and says, 'I did not speak in secret or in a dark land!' How could Moses have an apocryphal book? He is the one who published Deuteronomy with heaven and earth as witnesses. No, this can be nothing except itchy ears, trading in piety, and pleasing of women (*ep. fest.*, 39.21–22).[24]

Obviously, he primarily has apocalyptic writings in mind. Athanasius does not go into detail, but he mentions "books belonging to Enoch, Moses, and Isaiah", likely referring to the story of the martyrdom and ascension of Isaiah (*Ascensio Jesaiae*[25]), perhaps the *Testament* or *Asumption of Moses*,[26] and the contents of the Enoch-Literature[27].[28] Their authors only want to be considered as great people (*ep. fest.*, 39.22). But, according to Athanasius, there is no need for further revelations: "The apocryphal books are filled with myths, and it is vain to pay attention to them because they are empty and polluted voices." (*ep. fest.*, 39.22)[29] In contrast, each element of the Christian faith – for example, Christ's humanity, His resurrection, and

22 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 60.
23 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 60–61.
24 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 61.
25 Cf. Müller, "Die Himmelfahrt des Jesaja;" Hammershaimb, ed., *Das Martyrium Jesajas*; Schwemer, ed., *Studien zu den frühjüdischen Prophetenlegenden*; Knight, "The Ascension of Isaiah."
26 Tromp, ed., *The Assumption of Moses*; Oegema, ed., "Himmelfahrt Moses;" Graupner and Wolter, eds., *Moses in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Traditions*; Hofmann, *Die Assumptio Mosis*.
27 We know of three Books of Enoch (1 Enoch [ethiop.], 2 Enoch (slav.], 3 Enoch [hebr.]), cf. Ego, "Henoch / Henochliteratur," of which 1 Enoch may be the most likely. On 1 Enoch and its use and rejection among Christians in Late Antiquity, see VanderKam, "1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christianity." Jerome also rejects 1 Enoch and hints at the prominence of this book among the Manichees (*Tractatus* 45 in Psalm 132:3 [Hieronymus, *Tractatus sive homiliae in psalmos*, l. 141, ed. Morin, 280]). Cf. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*.
28 Brakke, "Canon Formation and Social Conflict," 412 with note 70; Camplani, *Lettere festali*, 277.
29 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 61.

the coming judgment – can be found in the canonical writings, which he includes in his list (*ep. fest.*, 39.24).[30]

Therefore, even when these apocalyptic writings refer to the apostle Paul, who quotes a verse of the prophet Isaiah in his first letter to the Corinthians – "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, things that have not arisen upon the human heart" (Isa. 64:3 in 1 Cor. 2:9) – they are wrong. As Athanasius states, Paul's quotation does not indicate that the apostle himself had further apocryphal books at his disposal or that he strives to support his words through other words [...] Rather, the words referred to are things written in the Scriptures! (*ep. fest.*, new Coptic fragment).[31]

Furthermore, Athanasius discredits apocryphal writings by connecting them with heresy in two ways: on the one hand, the heretics are wrongdoers who write and distribute these apocryphal texts; on the other, the false teachings of the heretics are sufficiently refuted by the canonical writings. He does not assert directly that heretical statements can be found in these apocryphal writings, and even concedes that sometimes one may find a useful word in them. Nevertheless, his comments are a polemical strategy to create the impression of the presence of heretical material. His insistence on the sufficiency of the canonical writings to refute heretics suggests that the rise of heresies and various sorts of misconduct was sometimes used to justify the need for further revelatory literature, which Athanasius of course rejects.

In summary, Athanasius criticises the following deceptive strategies:

- Titles of apocryphal apocalyptic books identical to those of genuine books, with the intention to deceive the readers
- Pretence of ancient provenance
- Misuse of biblical figures like Moses, Enoch, and Isaiah
- Misuse of 1 Corianthians 2:9 as a reference to apocryphal books
- Alleged reference to hidden wisdom in Scripture
- Assertion of a need for further revelations
- Boasting of being an elite Christian with more knowledge than other Christians (*ep. fest.*, 39.32)[32]

In contrast to those deceiving strategies, Athanasius depicts Jesus Christ as the only true teacher par excellence, the *Logos* and wisdom of God; the word *didaskalos* is repeated frequently in his letter. Christ, the Word of God, is the teacher, not Moses, Enoch, or Isaiah, and of course no other human teacher. Christ taught his disciples and turned them into "second-generation" teachers. They, the apostles, wrote down

30 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 62.

31 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 64. The *Ascensio Jesaiae*, which is the text that Athanasius probably had in mind (see above note 25), uses this verse of Paul (11.34–35).

32 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 65.

exactly what they had been taught. Therefore, they produced the apostolic writings, which can be found among the canonised Scriptures.[33]

Of course, Athanasius is also teaching his community through his letter, but he depicts himself not as a teacher but as a disciple who has learned everything through divine Scriptures and through the teaching of his "father", his predecessor Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria:

> I have not written these things as if I were teaching, for I have not attained such a rank – rather, because I heard that the heretics, especially the wretched Melitians, were boasting about the books that they call 'apocryphal', I thus have informed you of everything that I heard from my father, as if I were with you and you with me in a single house, that is 'the Church of God, the pillar and strength of truth' (*ep. fest.*, 39.32).[34]

For Athanasius, the teaching of Christ is mediated through the collected (or collective) apostolic writings and guaranteed by the Church's teaching tradition, thereby securing the correct distinction between authentic and inauthentic writings.

It should be noted, however, that Athanasius's insistence on Christ being the true teacher was also frequently expressed in Christian apocryphal literature. Christ appears as a teacher or is even named "teacher". For example, the *Apocalypse of Peter* purports to be a speech by the teacher Jesus about the end of the world. In particular many of the apocalyptic dialogues are written as questions addressed to Christ and answered directly by him, such as the so-called *Questions of Bartholomy*. Another example is the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, a letter from Christ to Thomas regarding the signs of the beginning of the end of the world. In addition, the so-called *First Apocryphon of John* is a dialogue between Christ and John. This demonstrates the common conviction in Late Antiquity that Christ as Word and Wisdom of God is the divine teacher par excellence, but Athanasius constricts Christ's teaching to the canonical writings only. However, it is interesting to observe that the production of apocryphal writings did not stop, although the formation of the canon of biblical writings came to an end in the fourth century.

3 A Later Example: The *Didaskalia of Jesus Christ*

The following considerations present an apocalyptic text that specifically calls Christ a teacher, namely the so-called *Didaskalia of Jesus Christ*. Teacher – *didaskalos* – is not only mentioned in the title in some of the manuscripts,[35] but also ap-

33 Heil, "Athanasius of Alexandria," 177–196.

34 Athanasius of Alexandria, *Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter*, trans. Brakke, 65.

35 The title varies in the different manuscripts: While the Slavonic tradition presents "Revelation of the Apostles," one part of the Greek manuscripts writes "Teaching of the Apostles," the other part "Ordering of the Apostles." The first edition of the texts was published by Nau, "Une didascalie de

pears in the text itself. The text purports to be a dialogue between the disciples and an angel, who is later revealed as Jesus Christ himself. The narrative of the *Didaskalia* is located in the Valley of Josaphat after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. The disciples had been fasting for forty days and then were caught up in an ecstatic experience. In this ecstatic state, the apostles Peter, Paul, Andrew, James, Bartholomy, Thomas, John, Philipp, Luke, Matthew, Mark, and Thaddaeus ask questions to a person they assume to be an angel.

Peter opens the conversation with a question about the reward for fasting for forty days before Passover, as the apostles have just done. Then Paul asks about the penalty for fornicators and Sodomites. The angel, i.e. Christ, describes the penalties as being the river of fire for fornicators and the sleepless worm for Sodomites. Again, fasting is the answer, but now as a means of penance, namely fasting for eight years.

After this, Andrew asks about the special powers of the days of the week, and Christ explains the superiority of Sunday, the Day of the Lord, over the other days of the week. Christ reveals that each day has a special significance according to the story of creation in Genesis 1: Sunday, the first day, is mentioned as the day of the creation of heaven and earth; then the fourth day, Wednesday, as the day for "works of justice and fasting"; the sixth day, Friday, as the day of the creation of Adam; and Saturday as the day of rest. But at the peak of all days is Sunday.[36]

Next, the apostle James asks inquires about the reward for fasting on Wednesday and Friday. The answer again stresses the importance of fasting on these two days in preparation for Sunday. These days even appear in person, praising the one who keeps their fast on these days and venerates Sunday with worship and by ceasing from work.[37]

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notre-seigneur Jésus-Christ," but he only used two Greek manuscripts (A: *Codex Parisinus graecus* 929, fol. 480–501, fifteenth century; B: *Codex Vaticanus graecus* 2072, fol. 179–182, ninth century) while there are at least eight other known Greek and five Slavonic manuscripts (de Santos Otero, ed., *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der altslavischen Apokryphen*, 233–236). The problem of Nau's edition is his attempt to merge the two versions of the two manuscripts he used into one text, as a kind of original version, but they present two different traditions that cannot be united in this way.

36 Greek text after own collations of the two manuscripts, *Codex Parisinus graecus* 929 (480–501) and *Codex Parisinus graecus* 390 (37–46): ὥσπερ ἀστὴρ ἀστέρων διαφέρει ἐν δόξῃ· πρῶτον ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γὴν· καὶ, ὁμοίως, πάντων μειζωτέρα ηὑρέθη ἡ ἁγία κυριακή· διὰ τί κυριακὴν ἐκάλεσεν λοιπῶν; ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τοὺς δύο φωστῆρας τοὺς μεγάλους· εἰς διακόσμησιν τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τῆς νυκτός· τὸν μέγαν ἐκάλεσεν ἥλιον· καὶ ποικίλως κεκοσμημένος ἀερικοῖς δρόμοις ἐλαυνόμενος· ὑπὸ ἅρματος πυρὸς ἀκτίνας ἐκπέμπων· τὴν ἡμέραν τελείως εἰσβαπτίζεται· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ σελήνη τὴν νύκταν ἐκτελεῖ· τὴν δὲ τετάρτην ἡμέραν εἰς ἔργα δικαιοσύνης καὶ νηστείας· τὴν δὲ πέμπτην εἰς διαχώρησιν γῆς καὶ ὕδατος· τὴν ἕκτην δὲ κτίσιν ἀνθρώπων καὶ κτηνῶν καὶ ἑρπετῶν· τὴν δὲ ἑβδόμην κατέπαυσεν ὁ Θεὸς ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἔθηκεν εἰς κεφαλὴν τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡμερῶν ἁγίαν κυριακήν.

37 λέγει ὁ Σωτήρ· μακάριος ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν τῇ πίστει φυλάττων αὐτάς· ὅτι αὐτόν μετὰ τὸ βληθῆναι ἐκ τοῦ σκολιοῦ βίου· καὶ ἀπελθῶν εἰς προσκύνησιν τοῦ ἀχράντου θρόνου· ὑπὸ ἀγγέλων· καὶ ἐν τῷ εἰσιέναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· ὑπαντοῦσιν αὐτὸν αἱ ἡμέραι τετράδη καὶ παρασκευῆ·

The following two questions deal with clerics living at a great distance from their church, whether physically or spiritually, and striving for dishonourable profits on Sundays: on Sunday, clerics are not allowed to leave church for business dealings, nor to give the Eucharist to ignorant people; they are, furthermore, not allowed to marry a second time.

One version of the *Didaskalia* now continues with further questions, but with a change of theme.[38] Bartholomew, who poses a question for the second time here, asks about the mystery of the Father, and Christ reveals details about the seven heavens. John asks regarding the mystery of the demons. Christ answers with the story of the fall of the archangel Samael and his followers. Further questions focus on the Last Judgment and relate revelations on Hades and Tartarus and the destiny of sinners. The apostles inquire about the burning of sinners and other punishments after death. The text ends with an appeal for vigilance: the apostles should be careful to avoid sin.

The last part of the *Didaskalia* includes therefore an interesting story of an archangel who refuses to worship the newly created man, Adam, a being made from dust and mud. Therefore, the archangel is thrown out of the heavens. He became the devil, and his companions turn into demons:

> These things took place concerning the newly formed Adam. When the demiurge had readied all things, God the Ruler spoke to His Spirit: 'Let us make man after our image and likeness' (Gen. 1:26). And He sent angels to the earth, in order to bring Him some dust. And the angels went down; finding the earth dormant, they took some of the dust and returned with joy and exultation. The Earth did not at first notice, but as she awoke and sensed the power that had been taken from her (cf. Mk. 5:30), she looked up at the angels, as they went up with joy, and said, 'With joy they take the dust from me, but with sighing and lament will it return to me' (cf. Eccl. 3:20).
> And after they returned on high, they laid the dust at the base of the awesome thrown. God, after He had created everything, took the dust and formed man after his image and likeness, and He said to the angelic hosts, 'Come, adore the work of my hands!' And Gabriel brought his whole company and paid homage, as did Michael and all the hosts of heaven.

μετὰ χαρᾶς λέγουσαι· χαῖρου φίλε ἡμῶν· ὁ καὶ πολλὰ κοπιάσας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· νηστείαις καὶ ἀγρυπνίαις δεῶμενος τῷ Θεῷ· καὶ ὅλον σου τὸν οἶκον κωλύων ἀπὸ πάσης σχολῆς τῶν γηίνων· νῦν δὲ χαίρου καὶ εὐφραίνου ἐν παραδείσῳ· καὶ λαλούντων αὐτῶν· ἔρχεται καὶ ἡ ἁγία κυριακὴ μετὰ ὀκτὼ ἀγγέλων λαμπροφώρων· καὶ αὐτὴ μέσων κεκοσμημένη ὡς θυγάτηρ Σιῶν· μαρτυροῦσα τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ἀσπαζομένη καὶ λέγουσα τοῖς ὀκτὼ ἀγγέλοις τοῖς ἐν αὐτῇ· δεύτε ἴδετε ψυχὴν δικαίαν ἥτις μώλωπας οὐκ ἔχει· ἥτις καλῶς ἀγωνησαμένη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· καὶ ἐφύλαξεν ἑαυτὴν ἀπὸ πάσης ἐνεργίας τοῦ διαβόλου· τότε χαίρουσιν αὐτὴν οἱ ἄγγελοι· καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν· τότε διασπαζώμενοι τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν καλῶς πολιτευσαμένην· τοῦτος δέ ἐστιν ὁ μισθὸς τῶν τὴν ἁγίαν κυριακὴν φυλαξάντων· καὶ τὴν τετραδοπαρασκευὴν νηστευσάντων.

38 This last part of the *Didaskalia* is transmitted only in one version of the text (in *Codex A* in Nau, "Didascalie", and in *Codex Parisinus* gr. 390, sixteenth century, fol. 37v–46r); the Slavonic version omits it, and the other Greek manuscripts present instead a longer list of woes. The following quotation is taken from a preliminary translation of a new edition of the text made by Jannis Grossmann and myself.

> Samuel,[39] however, turned away and said, 'I am a blazing fire and cannot adore ordinary mud!' But Gabriel came and said, 'Angel Samuel, come and honour the work of Him who formed you, lest God the Lord be angry!' Samuel said, 'I have a throne just like Him; if He is angry with me, I will establish my throne and take my company of angels and be like God' (Isa. 14:13).
> And then the anger of God the Lord was kindled, and He said to Gabriel, 'Take him by his wings, and he shall be thrown down to the Underworld!' Then Gabriel, taking hold of the power of the invisible God, struck Samuel with his wings and said, 'Descend to the Underworld, as God has declared!' And the gates of heaven opened, and Satanael[40] was catapulted below, and he took his hosts of angels with him. In their acceptance of the order to go, the angels descended with him and became evil spirits.[41]
> However, as he saw how the heavens quaked and the powers strove, Michael said, 'Let us now take note; let us stand upright, and let us stand in reverence'. And the invisible God gave peace, and the gates of heaven were shut.[42]

In many respects, the *Didaskalia*, probably written during the sixth century, is a strange text. On the one hand, it shows the ongoing production of apocalyptic texts

39 This is Samael: Scholem, "Samael;" Michl, "Engel V (Engelnamen)," 231.

40 The change of the name marks the change of the archangel into a fallen angel.

41 Cf. *Vita Adae et Evae* [lat. Version], 12–16; *Apocalypsis Sedrach*, 5.2–3; *Quaestiones Bartholomae*, 4.52–56; *Caverna thesaurorum*, 3; *Iesu Contentio cum diabolo*, 3 in griech. A; 4 in slav. R1 und R2 (Casey and Thomson, "A Dialogue between Christ and the Devil," 49–51, 56, 59). The tenth question of Ps. Athanasius (*Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem*, PG 28, 604) rejects this story, as well as Anastasius Sinaita, *Questiones et responsiones*, 80. Cf. *Die Apokalypse des Mose*, 52, ed. Dochhorn, with note 39.

42 ταῦτα γέγονεν διὰ τὸν πρωτόπλαστον Ἀδάμ· κατασκευάσαντος τοῦ δημιουργοῦ τὰ πάντα· λέγει ὁ δεσπότης Θεὸς τῷ ἰδίῳ πνεύματι· ποιήσομεν ἄνθρωπον κατ᾽ εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν τὴν ἡμετέραν· καὶ ἀπέστειλεν ἀγγέλους ἐπὶ τὴν γὴν τοῦ ἀνενεγκεῖν χοῦν ἐξ αὐτῆς· καὶ προσελθόντες εὗρον αὐτὴν καθεύδουσαν καὶ ἦραν τὸν χοῦν ἐξ αὐτῆς καὶ ἀνέβησαν χαίροντες καὶ ἀγαλλιώμενοι· μὴ γνοῦσα δὲ ἡ γῆ καὶ διυπνισθεῖσα καὶ νοήσασα δύναμιν ἐξελθοῦσαν ἐξ αὐτῆς, καὶ θεωρεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους ὅτι ἀνέβαινον χαίροντες, λέγει· χαίροντες ἐπαίροντες τὸν χοῦν ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ· μετὰ στεναγμοῦ καὶ κλαυθμοῦ πάλιν εἰς ἐμὲ εἰσελεύσεται.·καὶ ἀνελθόντες, ἔθηκαν τὸν χοῦν ἐπὶ τοῦ φοβεροῦ βήματος· ὁ δὲ τὰ πάντα δημιουργήσας Θεὸς, λαβὼν τὸν χοῦν, ἔπλασεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατ᾽ εἰκόνα ἰδίαν καὶ ὁμοίωσιν, καὶ εἶπεν ταῖς στρατιαῖς τῶν ἀγγέλων· δεῦτε προσκυνήσατε τὸ ἔργον τῶν χειρῶν μου. καὶ λαβὼν ὁ Γαβριὴλ πᾶσαν τὴν στρατιὰν αὐτοῦ, προσεκύνησεν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Μιχαὴλ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ στρατιαὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν. Σαμουὴλ δὲ ἠθέτησεν λέγων· πῦρ φλογὸς γέγονα ἡμῖν καὶ οὐ δύναμαι προσκυνῆσαι πηλὸν κοινόν. προσελθὼν δὲ Γαβριὴλ λέγει· ἄγγελε Σαμουὴλ, πρόσελθε προσκύνησον τὸ ἔργον τοῦ πλάσαντός σε, μήπως ὀργισθῇ σοι κύριος ὁ Θεός. λέγει Σαμουήλ· θρόνον ἔχω καθότι καὶ αὐτός· ὀργισθῇ μοι, κτίζω τὸν θρόνον μου καὶ ἀρῶ τὴν στρατιάν μου, καὶ ἔσομαι ὅμοιος τοῦ Θεοῦ. καὶ τότε ὀργίσθη κύριος ὁ Θεός, καὶ λέγει τῷ Γαβριήλ· ἄψαι αὐτοῦ τῶν πτερυγίων του καὶ κατενεχθήτω εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια. λαβὼν δὲ Γαβριὴλ δύναμιν παρὰ τοῦ ἀοράτου Θεοῦ, ἐπάταξεν αὐτὸν τῶν πτερυγίων αὐτοῦ λέγων· κάτελθε εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια ἃ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός. καὶ ἠνοίχθησαν οἱ καταράκται τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ ἐκρεμάσθη ὁ Σαταναὴλ καὶ κατέφερεν τὰς στρατιὰς τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ· δοκοῦντες ὅτι ἐν ἀποκρίσεσιν πορεύονται, συγκατέβησαν αὐτῷ ἄγγελοι, καὶ εγένοντο πνεύματα πονηρά. Ἰδὼν δὲ ὅτι ἐκινοῦντο οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ κατεσπούδαζον αἱ δυνάμεις σὺν αὐτῷ, λέγει οὖν ὁ Μιχαήλ· πρόσχωμεν λοιπὸν, στῶμεν καλῶς, στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου. ὁ δὲ ἀόρατος Θεὸς διδοὺς εἰρήνην ἐκλείσθησαν οἱ καταράκται τῶν οὐρανῶν. καὶ οἱ συγκαταβαίνοντες τῷ Σαταναὴλ ἦσαν κατοικοῦντες εἰς τὰ ξόανα καὶ εἴδωλα τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐκλήθησαν δαιμόνια.

outside the biblical canon, which by the sixth century had already been established. It shows the fascination with, and widespread distribution of, apocalyptic features – although the biblical Apocalypse of John, for example, was a highly contested text from the beginning and was accepted into the New Testament canon only by accident.[43] Interestingly, the *Didaskalia* itself refers to "the divine writings" and includes some warnings in form of short woes like "Woe on him who does not believe the divine writings!" and "Woe on him who does not hear of ("listen to"?) the divine writings!"[44] Nevertheless, it promotes itself as an important text: "Listen, those whom I have chosen for my testament. And the mysteries I tell you, write them down in books and transfer them to the next generation, that they may heed the commandments of my father!" This suggests that the author wants to present these commandments as a kind of additional, secret instruction to the apostles that is therefore relevant also to the successors of the apostles, namely the clerics of the Church. It accordingly includes additional commandments for clerics, deacons, and priests to whose care the community is entrusted.

Furthermore, the *Didaskalia* demonstrates the recycling of apocalyptic material in new contexts. The appearance of Bartholomew as a questioner on two occasions and other incongruities[45] show that the anonymous author probably included material from other sources. For example, many similarities with the so-called *Questions of Bartholomy* in the second part of the *Didaskalia* suggest that either the *Questions* were one of its source texts, or that both relied on the same older source(s).

Furthermore, the *Didaskalia* provides an interesting case study for the debate regarding apocalyptic texts as a genre mentioned above, particularly regarding the question as to whether the genre's "function" is a necessary element of the definition. The function of the *Didaskalia* is not, in the first place, exhortation or consolation, which are often suggested to have been apocalyptic texts' main functions. Nor was the text apparently produced as a result of a crisis; instead, it aims to promote a special aspect of piety. The *Didaskalia* thus supports the claim that function should not be part of the genre's definition: not only can apocalyptic texts serve many different functions, but these, in turn, are also served by other genres and not confined to apocalyptic texts.

43 Böcher, "Johannes-Apokalypse." Eusebius relates e.g. the critical remarks of Dionysius of Alexandria on the Apocalypse of John in *Historia ecclesiastica*, 7.25.

44 Cf. on this genre Balz "οὐαί;" Hagner, "Weherufe;" Müller, *Studien zur frühjüdischen Apokalyptik*, 90; Uhlig, "Bemerkungen zu den Weherufen in der jüdischen Apokalyptik."

45 The first apostle Peter talks to the angel as if he already knows him to be Christ, although the angel's revelation occurs later on, when Andrew asks a question. The three insertions of a short list of woes after the third, fourth, and sixth questions are noteworthy, as is the Bartholomew's asking two questions. The last question is presented by four apostles together. The description of Hades at the end of the text is incongruent with the description of the penalty for sodomy and impurity at the beginning. The description of heaven at the beginning (a reward for fasting) is not taken up again in the last vision about the seven heavens. The last part is suddenly presented in the first person plural.

The main theme of the *Didaskalia,* besides fasting, is proper veneration of the Sunday[46]: The third apostle, Andrew, asks about the power of the days of the week, and the Lord answers that the most venerable day is Sunday, the day of the Lord. It is the day on which "God created heaven and earth" (Gen. 1:1); therefore, he places it ahead of all other days. Correspondingly, the anonymous author presents woes about Sunday: "Woe on him who works on Sunday!" "Woe on him who did not abstain from all work on Sunday!" "Woe on him who did not abstain from all concupiscence the night before Sunday!" Interestingly, this concern is stressed with a vision of heaven in which the pious soul is welcomed by the days of the week personified – Wednesday, Friday, and especially Sunday, who appear together with eight angels, decorated as the daughter Zion.[47]

46 Cf. Bergholz, "Sonntag;" Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feast, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*; Brattston, *Sabbath and Sunday among the Earliest Christians*; Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*; Doering, *Schabbat*; Dölger, "Die Planetenwoche der griechisch-römischen Antike und der christliche Sonntag;" Girardet, "Vom Sonnen-Tag zum Sonntag;" Haag, *Vom Sabbat zum Sonntag*; Huber, *Geist und Buchstabe der Sonntagsruhe*; Mayer-Haas, *"Geschenk aus Gottes Schatzkammer," (bSchab 10b)*; Rordorf, *Der Sonntag*; Rordorf, *Sabbat und Sonntag in der Alten Kirche*; Rüpke, *Kalender und Öffentlichkeit*; Schiepek, *Der Sonntag und kirchlich gebotene Feiertage nach kirchlichem und weltlichem Recht*; Staats, "Die Sonntagnachtgottesdienste der christlichen Frühzeit;" Thomas, *Der Sonntag im frühen Mittelalter*; Weiler, ed., *Der Tag des Herrn*; Bergholz, "Sonntag," 453: "Keines der zeitgenössischen Konzilien geht auf die staatliche Sonntagsgesetzgebung ein, und keiner der Kirchenväter stützt seine Argumentation auf eines der staatlichen Gesetze."

47 A Christian assembly on the day of the Lord is mentioned in Acta 20.7 (cf. also Apoc. 1:10; *Didache* 14.1; Ignatius of Antioch, *Magn.* 9.1). Sunday as the day of both the resurrection and the creation appears in the second century in Justin (*1 apol.* 67.3–7). A regular Christian meeting in the evening is mentioned by Pliny (*ep.*, 10.96.7 to Trajan). The law of Constantine of 321 on Sunday rest for judges, urban peoples and artisans was important (*Codex Iustinianus*, 3.12.2): "All judges (*iudices*) and urban peoples (*urbanaeque plebes*) and artisans of all crafts (*atrium officia cunctarum*) should rest on the venerable day of the Sun. However, persons situated in the country may attend freely and unhindered to the cultivation of the fields, since it frequently happens that there is not another day more suitable to entrusting seeds of grain to furrows or vines to ditches, lest the opportunity granted by heavenly provision be lost by the favourable moment of a short season." Not long afterwards, an exception concerning certain juridical activities on manumission was established by Constantine (*Codex Theodosianus*, 2.8.1): "Just as it seemed most unfitting that the day of the Sun, celebrated by its own veneration, should be occupied with wrangling lawsuits and noxious contention of litigants, so it is pleasant and agreeable that acts which are especially desirable should be accomplished on that day. And, therefore, all should have permission of emancipating and of manumitting on the festal day, and transactions concerning these matters should not be prohibited." (cf. also Eusebius of Caesarea, *De vita Constantini*, 4.18–20). Since Theodosius, there were more laws concerning Sunday: in 386 prohibition of lawsuits and collecting debts, prohibition of visiting the theatre and spectacles; in 392: prohibition of circus; in 395: all pagan festival days are prohibited, in 409: no *voluptas* / amusements on Sunday; in 454–474 under Emperor Leo: prohibition of playing the lyre and flute or other musical instruments on Sunday (probably against pantomime), cf. Puk, *Das römische Spielewesen in der Spätantike*, 62–63. But it was only from the sixth century onwards that there are ecclesiastical canons on Sunday veneration comparable to the

Interestingly, there is another extant apocryphal text with the same theme, which, furthermore, also depicts Christ as a teacher. It is the so-called *Letter from Heaven* that Christ is said to have thrown down to Earth to demand Sunday veneration. This letter was read widely not only in the Latin West,[48] but also in the East, with Greek, Syrian, Coptic, Arabic, Aramaic, and Ethiopic versions as well as many others.[49] While the Latin text deals only with Sunday, the oriental versions also demand fasting on Wednesday and Friday. Even some woes have verbatim parallels in the *Didaskalia*.[50] I cannot here delve into the question of the Letter's Greek or Latin origin,[51] but it is probable that the Greek version originated around the same time and in the same context as the *Didaskalia*.

Obviously, an important issue of church practice and church law provoked certain Christian circles to produce some very imaginative apocalyptic texts. Constan-

Didaskalia (cf. Orléans 538 *can.* 31; Macôn 585, *can.* 1; Narbonne 589, *can.* 4; cf. also Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 10.30; Gregor the Great, *ep.*, 13.3; *Admonitio generalis* a. 789, 81).

48 The first mention of this text is in the letter of Licinianus of Cartagena, Spain, in A.D. 584 (PL 72, 699–670), who condemned it in his response to Vincentius of Ibiza, who had originally informed him about this supposed "Letter from Heaven." Already in 538, the council in Orléans condemned Jewish sabbatical practice for Christians. Later condemnations of the Letter from Heaven followed: Papst Zacharias in 745 (Lateran council) and Charlemagne in the *Admonitio generalis* in 789. The oldest Latin version relates that the letter was found in Jerusalem at the Effrem gate and finally arrived in Rome. The destruction of humankind is announced for the following November, if Christians do not keep Sunday as a day of rest. By contrast, a Greek version relates the descent of the letter in Rome, but others locate it in Bethlehem (in a heavy stone that fell from heaven) or Constantinople (cf. the following note).

49 Backus, "Lettre du Jésus-Christ sur le Dimanche;" *Der vom Himmel gefallene Brief Christi in seinen morgenländischen Versionen und Rezensionen*, ed. Bittner; Delehaye, "Note sur la légende de la lettre du Christ tombée du ciel (1899);" van Esbroeck, "La lettre sur le Dimanche, descendue du ciel;" Graf, "Der vom Himmel gefallene Brief Christi (nach Cod. Monac. Arab. 1067);" Priebsch, *Letter from Heaven on the Observance of the Lord's Day*. Cf. on this text also Haines, *Sunday Observance and the Sunday Letter in Anglo-Saxon England*; Palmer, "Der Himmelsbrief;" Röhricht, "Ein 'Brief Christi';" *Los Evangelios Apócrifos*, ed. de Santos Otero, 665–676; Speyer, *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike*, 27–28; Stübe, *Der Himmelsbrief. Ein Beitrag zur allgemeinen Religionsgeschichte*.

50 Cf. *Letter from Heaven*, 2.17, ed. Priebsch (*Der vom Himmel gefallene Brief Christi in seinen morgenländischen Versionen und Rezensionen*, 19.2–4, ed. Bittner) from the Greek version a1. One should also take into consideration another group of texts, namely the sermons of a certain "Eusebius of Alexandria", a fictitious individual in whose name we have 25 sermons (Mai, Introduction: *Spicilegium Romanum*, VIII–X, with a list of these sermons). The first sermon deals with fasting and the nineteenth with Sunday (in PG 86,413–421); cf. Nau, "Notes sur diverses homélies pseudépigraphiques." Other apocalyptic texts which deal with ecclesiastical rules or canon law are the so-called *Testamentum Domini* (cf. *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi / The Testamentum Domini*, ed. Sperry White) and the *Apocalypse of Paul* or *Visio Pauli* (*Apokalypse des Paulus*, ed. and trans. Duensing and de Santos Otero; and *Die Visio Pauli*, ed. and trans. Jirouškova).

51 Van Esbroeck, "La lettre sur le Dimanche, descendue du ciel," argues for a Greek origin already in the fifth century in the context of the different denotations of the days of the week, Delehaye, "Note sur la légende de la lettre du Christ tombée du ciel (1899)," pleads for Latin origin.

tine enacted a law decreeing rest on Sunday, which was also intended to facilitate Christian worship. Nevertheless, Christians did not support the veneration of a day in and of itself for some time, but instead restricted their attention to the attendance of Sunday services alone. The reason was likely an intentional distancing from Jewish Sabbath observation and from common practice observing the special character of a day of the planetary week ("Tagwählerei") and comparable astrological practices. Later on, when this anti-pagan issue diminished, Sunday observance grew in importance, leading to the production of new apocryphal apocalyptic and pseudoepigraphic texts. Nevertheless, the relation to and distance from Judaism remained a problem and dominated later discussions, as can be seen in texts up to Carolingian times.[52]

4 Final Observations

As already stated above, the function of the *Didaskalia* seems to be to support a special veneration of Sunday and to stress the importance of fasting. Its other, exhortatory elements play only a supporting role; as already discussed, apocalyptic literature could serve many different functions.[53] The *Didaskalia* probably dates to the sixth century, a period in which discussions of Sunday veneration appear in other texts as well. It is therefore not a response to a crisis, as it is often claimed regarding apocalyptic literature, but the outcome of the ongoing Christianisation of all aspects of life, a process occurring during and after the era of Emperor Justinian.

The *Didaskalia* may be an exception, but the overemphasis of crisis as the usual, even necessary context of the creation of apocalpytic texts has already been criticised by others.[54] The aforementioned *Letter from Heaven* is another example of imaginative creativity which incorporates apocalyptic features. Therefore, apocalypticism as a religious or cultural phenomenon or movement – or "the apocalyptic" in

52 Cf. Heil, "Ein Sonntag in Cividale," 91–109.

53 Therefore, this text supports Collins' conclusions (Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature?" 5): "Our conviction was that function was best discussed at the level of individual texts, in their specific contexts, and that the commonly accepted idea that apocalypses were intended to comfort and exhort a group in crisis (so Hellholm 1986, 27) did not necessarily hold true in all cases." The "function" of a text is nowadays discussed under the question of the "pragmatic" of a text.

54 Cf. Frey, "Die Apokalyptik als Herausforderung der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft," who claims that it was not acute crisis that stimulated production, but rather something like an ongoing one, which was provoked by the eternal question of why the world is as it is (*theodizee*). Nevertheless, describing apocalyptic literature as a phenomenon of a crisis is widespread, cf. above page 48-50, and Rudolf, "Apokalypse in der Diskussion," 776; also Vielhauer and Strecker, "Einleitung," who argue that apocalyptic literature is resistance literature, caused by real crisis. The main exponent of explaining apocalypticism as crisis literature is Müller, *Studien zur frühjüdischen Apokalyptik*.

every-day language – is something different from apocalyptic as a literary phenomenon.

As stated at the beginning, apocalyptic literature deals with the end, either the end of the world or the end of an individual human being. The *Didaskalia* does not mention or describe the end of the world, not even the *near* end. Rather, it postulates an individual resurrection after death and an everlasting punishment in hell. These radical measures are described in a graphic manner.

The production of apocalyptic literature continued even after the formation of the biblical canon. Though Athanasius strongly rejects this literature in his festal letter, the author of the *Didaskalia* constructs his text around the central figure of Christ as teacher, like Athanasius. This evokes the impression that the apostles wrote works in addition to the known canonical ones. Indeed, the literature about the end makes for a disputed – but never-ending – story.[55]

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Abbreviations

CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.
SC Sources Chrétiennes, Paris: Éd. du Cerf, 1941–.

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55 On the continuity of production of apocryphal texts, see Piovanelli, "Introduction," 7–8.

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Sebastian Günther

"When the Sun is Shrouded in Darkness and the Stars are Dimmed" (Qurʾan 81:1–2). Imagery, Rhetoric and Doctrinal Instruction in Muslim Apocalyptic Literature

This chapter explores statements in the Qurʾan and in the literary testimonies of two major classical Arabic writers that explicitly speak of the apocalypse, including its signs and events. It offers captivating insights into the remarkably rich body of medieval Muslim apocalyptic literature and its wealth of rhetoric and imagery. It illustrates that scholarly considerations of the end of human life, and of the world and time, have served throughout Islamic history as foundations for religio-politically informed hopes of salvation, and for visions of an ideal "new world" promised by God.

Concepts of the apocalypse, in its specific meaning of "uncovering", "disclosing", or "revealing" (hidden) knowledge of a large-scale catastrophe that ends the world as we know it, are a distinctive feature of Islam. Indeed, throughout Islamic history apocalyptic perceptions have served as the foundations of religio-politically motivated hopes for salvation and visions of an ideal "new world" promised by God. The fundamental ideas underlying such cataclysmic notions are found primarily in the Qurʾan. However, there is also a remarkably rich and popular body of Arabic literature that involves discussion of major eschatological issues, such as the end of human life, the world and time, and the existence of the hereafter. They therefore also include specific apocalyptic scenarios.

Starting from these premises, the first part of this chapter explores certain characteristic Qurʾanic statements that explicitly speak of the apocalypse, its signs and events. These passages in the Qurʾan reveal the powerful images and rhetoric used in Islam's sacred scripture to warn the unbelievers, the unjust, and the immoral world at large that there is no hope of salvation at the end of time, unless the people profoundly change their ways of life toward "the straight path, an upright religion, the faith of Abraham" (Q 6:161) common to the Jews, Christians, and Muslims (Q 6:153, 154–157). Closely connected with these admonitions are the Qurʾanic warnings that "on the Day [of the Apocalypse] some of your Lord's signs come, no soul will profit from faith if it had none before, or has not already earned some good through its faith" (Q 6:158). Hence only the God-fearing will profit from the world's transition into a God-created, new world (Q 14:48; see also the Old Testament,

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Isa. 65:17), the eternal "kingdom" or "realm of the heavens and the earth" (*malakut al-samawat wa-l-ard*, Q 7:185; see also 2:107, 117; 3:189; 5:17, 18 etc.).[1]

The second part of this study will illustrate how certain classical Arabic writers take up the numerous Qurʾanic notions on the end of time and creatively expound on them. Here we will review the respective works of two particularly well-known, yet in their scholarly outlooks rather different Muslim thinkers: al-Ghazali, the highly respected theologian, mystic, and religious reformer of the eleventh to twelfth century CE, and Ibn al-Nafis, a brilliant tirteenth-century medical researcher, physician, and philosopher. This study concludes by providing some observations on the context and details of the apocalyptic accounts in these two texts.

1 Qurʾanic Portents of the End of Time

As a divinely inspired, revealed message, the Qurʾan is essentially apocalyptic in the literal sense of this word. Through the Prophet Muhammad's communication of Qurʾanic revelations, Islam's sacred scripture "discloses" knowledge that had thus far been hidden. Yet there is also a substantial number of individual passages and even entire chapters (suras) in the Qurʾan that need to be characterised as apocalyptic in the more specific meaning of the word. Indeed, these sections offer explicit and, in part, remarkably vivid descriptions of cosmic events preceding, or leading to, the collapse of the natural order of things.

One such intensely apocalyptic chapter is sura 81, entitled "Shrouded in Darkness" (*al-Takwir*). This sura is believed to have been revealed to Muhammad in the city of Mecca at an early stage of his prophethood. It opens with a powerful depiction of the collapse of the world, the day of resurrection, and of divine judgment. It reads:

> When the sun is shrouded in darkness,
> when the stars are dimmed,
> when the mountains are set in motion,
> when pregnant camels are abandoned,
> when wild beasts are herded together,
> when the seas boil over,

1 Arabic expressions in the text are given in simplified transliteration. Different diacritic marks serve here to distinguish between the Arabic consonants *hamza* (ʾ), a voiceless glottal stop, and *ʿayn* (ʿ), a laryngeal voiced fricative. Arabic bibliographical references, however, are transliterated. Quotations from the Qurʾan are from Abdel Haleem's translation unless indicated otherwise, while individual Arabic terms are, at times, given in my own rendering. All dates are Common Era (CE). For ideas on the apocalypse in Islam, see in particular the studies in the volume edited by Sebastian Günther and Todd Lawson, *Roads to Paradise*, especially its introduction and the bibliographical appendix; the latter provides extensive information on primary texts in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, along with a number of related studies published in major European languages.

> when souls are sorted into classes,
> when the baby girl buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed,
> when the records of deeds are spread open,
> when the sky is stripped away,
> when Hell is made to blaze and Paradise brought near:
> *then every soul will know what it has brought about*!

The sura continues by affirming that no one can escape "the Day" when God judges every person individually for his or her actions and beliefs in this life. Therefore, the believers are called upon to acknowledge the Truth of the Qurʾan, and consequently to follow "the straight path" of God, apparent in the exemplary life and the actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

Several other suras likewise predict that the apocalypse would take place because humans fail to concede that the Day of Judgment is certain to come. Sura 82, *al-Infitar* ("Torn Apart"), for example, refers to the cleaving of the sky as one of the most dramatic signs of the End Times. It prophesises:

> When the sky is torn apart,
> when the stars are scattered,
> when the seas burst forth,
> when graves turn inside out:
> *each soul will know what it has done and what it has left undone.*
> Mankind, what has lured you away from God, your generous Lord, who created you, shaped you, proportioned you, in whatever form He chose? Yet you still take the Judgment to be a lie!
> Over you stand watchers, noble recorders who know what you do: the good will live in bliss, and the wicked will burn in the Fire. They will enter it on the Day of Judgment and they will find no escape.
> What will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is? Yes!
> What will explain to you what the Day of Judgments is? The Day when no soul will be able to do anything for another;
> *on that Day, command will belong to God.*

Sura 99 (*al-Zilzal*, "The Earthquake"), depicts, in shocking images, the terror of the utter destruction of the world when the apocalyptic "Hour" is near. The earth will shake violently in its last quaking, and the people cry helplessly. The sura states that on that Day, "people will come forward in separate groups to be shown their deeds" and that "whoever has done an atom's-weight of good will see it, but whoever has done an atom's-weight of evil will see that" (Q 99:6–7).

These and other, similar Qurʾanic verses (the Arabic term for "verse" – *aya* – literally means "[divine] sign" or "evidence") use powerful images to illustrate a range of issues relating to the end of time, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life in the hereafter. In fact, it is not monotheism that forms the core idea of the earliest revelations of the Qurʾan. Rather, the warnings regarding the apocalypse and the Last Judgment are at the very center of the first Qurʾanic messages communicated by the Prophet Muhammad.

1.1 The "Hour of the Apocalypse"

The Qurʾan repeatedly refers to the all-decisive *eschaton* (from Greek ἔσχατα, "the final things") or "The Hour [of the Apocalypse]" (*al-saʿa*). However, only God knows the Hour's exact timespan and when it will happen. Other Qurʾanic designations for The Hour indicating the end of time are *al-haqqa*, "The Indubitable" or "Inevitable [Reality of the Apocalypse]" (Q 69:1–3); *al-waqiʿa*, "The Occurring [Hour of Terror]" (Q 56:1), and *ghashiya*, the "Overwhelming [Hour of Punishment]" (Q 12:107). Although nothing in the Qurʾan explicitly points to historical events that would indicate the advent of the apocalypse, it is stated that the hour of the End Times will occur suddenly and quickly (Q 7:187). People "will not be able to make any will, nor will they return to their folks" (Q 36:50). An earthquake will shake the world so severely that "every nursing mother will think no more of her baby, every pregnant female will miscarry, you will think people are drunk when they are not" (Q 22:2).

Further Qurʾanic statements specify certain "major signs of the Hour":

1. Gog and Magog, two savage peoples whom Alexander the Great (*Dhu l-Qarnayn*) had constrained by a huge iron barrier, will be released and "race down from every slope" (Q 18:94–99; 21:96; see also the Bible, Ezek. 38:39).
2. God will bring "a creature out of the earth (*dabbat al-ard*), which will tell [the people] that people had no faith in Our revelations" (Q 27:82; see the Bible, Rev. 13:13–16, and other parallels in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Minor Prophets).
3. The sky will bring forth "clouds of smoke" (Q 44:10); and
4. Jesus will appear as "a portent of The Hour" (Q 43:61; see also 4:159).[2]

It should be noted that the Antichrist's (*dajjal*) advent and his subsequent death at the hands of Jesus are not mentioned as signs of the approaching Hour in the Qurʾan. These ideas are based on prophetic traditions, as is the oft-quoted eschatological sign that at the dawn of the Last Day the sun will rise in the West.

The Qurʾan does not offer a conclusive picture or sequence of events at the end of the world regarding the resurrection of the dead, the Final Judgment, and entrance into paradise or hell.[3] The key message in this regard, however, is very clear:

2 Some Muslim exegetes and modern translators understand Q 43:61 as referring to the Qurʾan instead of Jesus. See also *The Qurʾan*, transl. by Abdel Haleem, 319, n. *b*,

3 Modern scholarship assumes that Muhammad's audience must have been familiar with the details of these eschatological scenarios; see Leemhuis, "Apocalypse," 112–113. For an approach towards terms and tropes in the Qurʾan and later key Islamic texts which express an inner revelatory experience, or apocalypse, see Lawson, *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam*, and "Paradise in the Quran." Angelika Neuwirth in her *Koranforschung – eine politische Philologie*, xxxviii–lxi, offers innovative insights on the question of the apocalyptic in the Gospels and in Qurʾanic eschatology. Shoemaker's *The Apocalypse of Empire* studies Qurʾanic apocalyptic visions within the contemporary context of Late Antiquity; he argues, among other things, that both Christian and Muslim eschatological beliefs were the driving forces behind early Muslim imperial expansions. Demichelis has recently surveyed 900 years of related "orthodox" and "heterodox" views among medieval Muslim scholars in

the unbelievers and evildoers will be damned to punishment in hell, while the pious and righteous will be rewarded with eternal bliss in paradise.

Along these lines, the Qurʾan indicates that first there will be an absolute termination of all life and existence (*fanaʾ*), as "everything will perish except His face" (Q 28:88; see also 55:26–27), and this will be followed by a second creation in the hereafter (Q 29:20).

Occasionally, the meaning of "the Hour" extends to, or stands for, the Day of Judgment as such. The "matter" or "order" of this "Hour of Adversity" (Q 9:117) does not take longer than "the blink or an eye, or even quicker" (Q 16:77). Likewise, the period until all this happens will not be extended "for a single hour" (*saʿatan*, Q 7:34; 10:49; 16:61), and after resurrection the people will feel as if they had not tarried but "an hour", long enough to mutually "recognize one another" (Q 10:45; see also 46:35, Q 30:55).[4]

1.2 The Day of Judgment

The Qurʾanic vocabulary for the Day of Judgment is equally rich. It includes frequent designations such as "the Day of Resurrection" (e.g., Q 2:85; about 70 times in the Qurʾan), "the Last Day" (e.g., Q 2:8; 38 times), and "the Day of the Judgment" (e.g., Q 1:4; 13 times). Other terms are: "a dreadful Day" (e.g., Q 6:15; 10 times); "a terrible Day" (Q 11:3); "a painful Day" (Q 11:26) or a "grievous Day" 26:135, 43:65); "an overwhelming Day" (Q 11:84); and "a Day comes when there will be no trading or friendship" (Q 14:31). Furthermore, there are: "the Day of the Appointed Time" (Q 15:38; see also 38:81); "the Day of Remorse" (Q 19:38); "a Day devoid of all hope" (Q 22:55); "the Day of Decision" (e.g., Q 32:29; 7 times); "the Day of Reckoning" (Q 14:41, 38:16, 26, 53 and 40:27); "the Day of Meeting" (Q 40:15); "the ever-approaching Day" (Q 40:18); "the Day you will cry out for to one another" Q 40:32); "the Day you will turn tail and flee with no one to defend you from Go" (Q 40:33; cf. also Q 41:47); "the Day of Gathering" (Q 42:7; 64:9); "the Day [you were] warned of" (Q 50:20); "the Day of everlasting Life" (Q 50:34); "the Day when they hear the mighty blast in reality" (Q 50:42); "a stern day" (Q 54:8); "a Day of anguish for the disbelievers" (Q 74:9); "a predetermined Day" (Q 56:50); "the Day of Gathering, the

his *Salvation and Hell in Classical Islamic Thought*. Likewise noteworthy are Lange's *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions* (2016), his edited volume *Locating Hell in Islamic Traditions* (2015), Smith's "Eschatology" (2002) as well as the present author's "Die Menschen schlafen" (2016), his handbook article "Eschatology and the Qurʾan" (forthcoming 2020, which reviews also the older and contemporary scholarship on the topic) and his study "As the Angels Stretch Out Their Hands."

4 Cf. my article "Tag und Tageszeiten im Qurʾan." For a detailed description of different hereafter scenarios on "the Day" signaled by a blast of the divine Trumpet, followed by resurrection of the dead, reckoning, judgment and retribution, and the award of paradise or damnation to hell, see my forthcoming article "Eschatology and the Qurʾan" (forthcoming 2020).

Day of mutual neglect" (Q 64:9); "the Day of our Lord – a woefully grim Day" (Q 76:10); "a Day that will turn children's hair grey, a Day when the sky will be torn apart" (Q 73:17–18), "a heavy Day" (Q 76:27); and "the promised Day" (Q 85:2).

Judgment Day is characterised as dreadful and painful, all-encompassing and tempestuous. It is a disastrous day for the pagans, but the day of advantage for the believers over the unbelievers, and the day of God's victory. Resurrection and divine judgment will be signaled by the blast of the divine Trumpet (*naqur* in Q 74:8; *sur* in other suras):

> When the Trumpet is sounded a single time, when the earth and its mountains are raised high and then crushed with a single blow, on that day the Great Event will come to pass (Q 69:13–15).

It is the Day when the cosmic structures collapse. The sky "is torn apart and turns crimson, like red hide" (Q 55:37). It "sways back and forth" (Q 52:9); and it will eventually be torn apart and open up like wide portals (Q 78:19), and the angels will be "sent down in streams" (Q 25:25).

The Qurʾan assures believers that those "turned to bones and dust, shall [...] be raised up in a new act of creation" (Q 17:49), and that death is not the end of everything, but rather a new beginning. Moreover, the resurrection of the dead is portrayed as a second act of God's creation in the hereafter and as yet another sign of God's omnipotence: God causes a human being "to die and be buried." Yet, "when He wills, He will raise him up again" (Q 80:21–22).

On that Day of Resurrection, the disbelievers' "hearts will tremble and eyes will be downcast" (Q 79:8–9). The believers, though, and in fact "all those who believe in God and the Last Day and do good" – here expressly including Jews, Christians, and Sabians – "will have their rewards with their Lord. No fear for them, nor will they grieve" (Q 2:62).

The resurrected will be called to the place of Judgment by an angel described as "the summoner from whom there is no escape" (Q 20:108), and will line up to finally meet their Lord (*liqaʾ Allah*, as in Q 6:31). God Himself will conduct the reckoning of each person. He will do so individually and instantly, as He "is swift in reckoning" (Q 2:202).

The Day of Judgment is a time of uncompromising ruling and final verdict. However, it is also a time of festive celebration and the triumph of divine power and justice. "The earth will shine with the light of its Lord, the Record of Deeds will be laid open, the prophets and witnesses will be brought in" (Q 39:69), so that divine judgment may begin.

After judgment, people will be grouped in three classes: "those on the left" who will go to hell; "those on the right" who will go to paradise; and those in front – ahead indeed in terms of faith and good works who will be the first to enjoy the bliss of paradise (Q 56:7–10).

Indeed, the Qurʾan is rather clear about the course and final objective of life, which consist of coming into being through God's act of creation, passing away at the point of human death, being brought back to life at the Day of Resurrection, and culminating in the eternal reality of paradise and hell. Thus for Muslims this course of life is among the clearest manifestations of God's eternal existence, omnipotence, and mercy.

2 Apocalyptic Visons in Classical Arabic Literature

Specific apocalyptic ideas, presented as key components of eschatological scenarios, are encountered in a large variety of genres and categories of Arabic-Islamic writing. They encompass compilations of prophetic traditions (*hadith*), Qurʾan commentaries, philosophical-theological treatises, historical and ethical writings, compilations on law, rhetorical, lexicographical and belletristic works, as well as manuals on mysticism – to name only some of the vast spectrum of relevant sources. Most texts in this diverse body of Muslim writings touching on eschatological issues to a large extent dwell on Qurʾanic images of the apocalypse. Interestingly, however, many of these scholarly and literary treatments also introduce a considerable number of extra-Qurʾanic ideas. Their authors thus draw more elaborate and, in part, more definite pictures of the apocalypse than those given in the Qurʾan. The classical Arabic works expressly devoted to issues of eschatology and the apocalypse are still little known to most Western readers. The great popularity of these remarkably imaginative books in the Muslim world, however, attests to the topics' importance throughout Muslim history. It also shows how firmly rooted these ideas are in Muslim life and culture.[5]

The expression *ʿulum al-akhira* ("branches of knowledge concerning the hereafter") is mainly used by Muslim scholars in reference to Arabic writings expressly dealing with Islamic eschatology in the broadest sense of the word. It seems to serve best as the generic term for Muslim eschatological literature as such.[6] This literature consists of the following main categories:

5 For a discussion of the spectrum of Muslim works devoted to "heavenly journeys", see my article, "Paradiesvorstellungen und Himmelsreisen im Islam." See also the insightful study by Tottoli, "Muslim Eschatological Literature and Western Studies." On death rites and related beliefs about the afterlife among Muslim communities, see Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, esp. 197–233.

6 For the "crucial affairs taking place prior to the day of resurrection", as the renowned religious scholar and jurist Abu l-Fidaʾ Ibn Kathir (ca. 1300–1373) determined them, see Ibn Kathīr, *Kitāb al-Nihāya*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, 3. Furthermore, see Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 230–268, el-Hibri, *Parable and Politics in Early Islamic History*, and Günther, "The Poetics of Islamic Eschatology," 194–195.

1. INDIVIDUAL ESCHATOLOGY: Works on dogmatic issues relating to the origin, destination, and meaning of life and death, as well as to questions regarding the postmortem existence (of the body and soul). More specific treatments of *al-qiyama* ("the resurrection" of the dead), cover themes such as the revivification of the body, the gathering of the resurrected for divine judgment, and the divine judgment on Judgment Day.[7]
2. UNIVERSAL ESCHATOLOGY, including HISTORICAL ESCHATOLOGY: Works dealing with political, economic, and moral developments in Muslim history as factors that precede or lead to the apocalyptic end of the world and of time. The expression *al-fitan wa-l-malahim* ("dissensions and fierce battles") is therefore found particularly in book titles of "a kind of Islamic apocrypha that combines historical commentaries with eschatological stories".[8] These works deal with "the signs and conditions of the *eschaton*" (*ashrat al-saʿa*), leading to the end of the world and the universe. However, they also address "the crucial affairs taking place prior to the day of resurrection" (*al-umur al-ʿizam allati takunu qabla yawm al-qiyama*), as the renowned religious and legal scholar Abu l-Fidaʾ Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373) noted.[9]
3. TOPOGRAPHIC ESCHATOLOGY: Works of different genres containing "previews" of the landscape of the hereafter as well as of the events and locations of Judgment Day, along with specific details of paradise and hell. These treatments of "the garden and the fire" (*al-janna wa-l-nar*) frequently offer detailed and remarkably vivid descriptions of the different domains of the hereafter.
4. Finally, the LITERATURE ON THE HEREAFTER (*al-adab al-ukhrawi*) is a specific, belletristic subcategory of eschatological writing. The respective works stand out for their sophisticated, fiction-like plots, their refined literary style, and their often delightfully entertaining presentations.[10]

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7 For a concise account of Islamic views on these issues, see van Ess, "Leben nach dem Tod," and "Eschatologie;" and for detailed classification of eschatological concepts, see Donner, "Typology of Eschatological Concepts."

8 El-Hibri, *Parable and Politics in Early Islamic History*, 16. See also the discussion of this literature in Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, esp. 230–268 (on the idea of "moral apocalypse" in Islam, in connection with political events, religious establishments, and attitudes toward certain cities).

9 Ibn Kathīr, *Kitāb al-Nihāya*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, 3. In addition, this literature includes treatments of the *barzakh* (Q 23:100), that is, the intermediate place or transitional state between death and resurrection. On this topic, see Tesei, "*Barazakh* in the Intermediate State of the Dead," and Archer, *Place between Two Places*.

10 The *Risalat al-Ghufran* ("The Epistle of Forgiveness") by the philosophical freethinker and poet Abu l-ʿAlaʾ al-Maʿarri (d. 1057) is a pioneering example of this belletristic literature. It is a kind of Arabic *Divine Comedy*, in which a poet visits paradise and there encounters pre-Islamic poets whose paganism God had "forgiven". See al-Maʿarri, *Epistle of Forgiveness*, ed. Gelder and Schoeler. On the genre more generally, see Ṭulba, "al-Ramz fī l-adab al-ukhrawī, riḥlat al-miʿrāj (*Symbolic Representation in Eschatological Literature, The Ascent to Heaven*)," 90–91.

In what follows, two prominent examples from the Arabic eschatological literature will serve to illustrate the approaches, literary tools, and themes used in classical Muslim scholarship to address key issues of the apocalypse, and to instruct their readers in these matters.

2.1 Al-Ghazali (1058–1111)

A truly remarkable classical Arabic text devoted to Islamic eschatology and questions of the apocalypse is *al-Durra al-fakhira fi kashf ʿulum al-akhira* ("The Precious Pearl Embodying the Disclosure of the Knowledge of the Hereafter"), a work traditionally ascribed to Abu Hamid al-Ghazali.[11]

Al-Ghazali is one of the most respected theologians in Islam. He was a mystic and religious reformer, born in Tus, near the city of Mashhad in Iran. He and his younger brother Ahmad (later a noted mystic in his own right) were orphaned at an early age. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali pursued most of his education and higher studies in Nishapur and Baghdad. In 1091, at the age of 33, he accepted the head teaching position at the newly founded Nizamiyya College, the most important institution of higher learning in Baghdad, and perhaps the entire Muslim world, in the eleventh century.

In 1095, however, at the age of 38, he suffered a personal crisis. A nervous illness caused him to abandon his professorship and leave Baghdad on the pretext of conducting the pilgrimage to Mecca. Disappointed by the corruption of the scholarly establishment of legal thinking that he was involved in, and troubled by increasing doubts concerning the validity of existing doctrines – and even the usefulness of knowledge acquisition as such – this spiritual crisis triggered in al-Ghazali "a violent internal conflict between rational intelligence and the spirit, between this world and the hereafter."[12] This difficult personal situation went so far that al-Ghazali himself observed that he was afraid he would go to hell.[13] In addition, certain contemporary political turbulences in Abbasid Baghdad seem to have contributed to making al-Ghazali apprehensive for a certain period of time. At a later stage in his life, however, he returned to teaching, albeit in Nishapur and later in Tus, not in Baghdad.

The Precious Pearl Revealing the Knowledge of the Hereafter does not contain any explicit indications that would link this work directly to al-Ghazali's personal

11 This treatise was drafted after al-Ghazali's multi-volume *Iḥyaʾ al-ʿulum* (*The Revitalization of the Studies of Religion*). See my "Poetics of Islamic Eschatology," 195–196.

12 Nofal, "Al-Ghazali," 520.

13 In his autobiographical work *Deliverance from Error,* al-Ghazali writes in this regard, "When I considered my circumstances, [...] I was in no doubt that I stood on an eroding sandbank, and was in imminent danger of hell-fire if I did not busy myself with mending my ways," noted by Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 136.

crisis. However, although written at a later stage of his life, it nonetheless clearly redirects the reader's attention from the "trivialities" of this world to the importance of the next. Apparently an extract of al-Ghazali's fortieth and last book of his opus magnum, *Iḥyaʾ ʿulum al-din* ("The Revitalisation of the Studies of Religion"), *The Precious Pearl* stands out for its particularly imaginative, narrative descriptions of death, resurrection, and the various aspects and events of divine judgment. Moreover, it is unique among the eschatological literature in that it presents these themes within its very own, remarkably well-crafted framework of discussion and analysis – a fact that has significantly contributed to its popularity among Muslims up to the present day.

The Precious Pearl addresses in great detail three of the four main eschatological themes, i.e. human death (including the soul's departure from the body, peacefully or painfully), the apocalyptic transformation or transcendence of history, and Judgment Day (see category 2, above). The fourth theme, the final consignment to paradise or hell, although repeatedly referred to in the book, does not receive any specific treatment. Instead, the lengthiest descriptions of the work concern the Hour of the Apocalypse and the Day of Judgment, with all their manifold events. The reader is thus instructed of:

(a) The arrival of the apocalyptic Hour and the destruction of the earth;
(b) The Trumpet's first blast, signaling the Day of Judgment;
(c) Creation of a new earth, resurrection, and revivification of the dead bodies;
(d) The Trumpet's second blast, heralding the arrival of God's Throne;
(e) The individual reckoning and judgment of the people according to their deeds;
(f) Entrance of the judged into either paradise or hell; and finally,
(g) God's rolling-up of the heavens and earth.[14]

In this work, the author makes effective use of powerful imagery, including metaphors, similes and symbols, to help his readers visualise the terrible end of the world, with all its inescapable consequences for those who fail to heed the Qurʾan's passionate warnings of the final, cosmic apocalypse. Most impressive are certain passages in *The Precious Pearl* in which the catastrophic occurrences are described using quotations from or paraphrasing Qurʾanic verses. The author states that, as a result of apocalyptic events, everything in both the material and spiritual worlds – in fact all forms of existence – will be destroyed by God and will vanish:

> [T]he blowing of the trumpet will usher in the arrival of the Hour [...] Then the mountains will be scattered and the clouds; the seas will gush forth one into the other and the sun will be rolled up and will return to black ashes; the oceans will overflow until the atmosphere is filled up with water. The worlds will pass into each other, the stars will fall like a broken string of pearls and the sky will become like rose balm, rotating like a turning millstone. The earth will shake with a tremendous shaking, sometimes contracting and sometimes expanding like a

14 Al-Ghazālī, *The Precious Pearl*, trans. Smith, 13–16.

> skin until God orders the stripping of the spheres. In all of the seven earths and the seven heavens, as well as the vicinity of the Throne, no living being will remain, their souls all having departed. Even if one is spiritual, his spirit will depart. The earth will be empty of its inhabitants and the sky of its dwellers, including all of the various species of creatures.[15]

In "this scene of stark emptiness [...] like before creation", there will be nothing in existence but God.

> Then God extols His own praise as He so desires; He glorifies His eternal existence and His lasting power and never-ending dominion and victorious omnipotence and boundless wisdom. Three times He asks, "To whom belongs the Kingdom this day?" No one answers Him so He answers Himself, saying, "To God who is one alone, victorious!"[16]

The author's use of vivid images of these tremendously powerful, overwhelming events serves to underscore several principal issues of Islamic faith and ethics, while always focusing on one central theme: the unconditional acceptance of *tawhid*, the belief in God the One, Almighty. In this regard, the straightforward literary style, in combination with the deliberate use of parables and similes, is instrumental in addressing a wider, more general readership, for which this book was apparently composed. This is evident in the numerous authorial remarks which al-Ghazali uses throughout his book to ensure that the messages he wishes to convey are unequivocal and completely understood by his audience. Thus, he makes clear that

> the explanation of His word (*tafsir qawlihi*), 'Is the one who walks with his head bowed better guided, or the one who walks evenly on the straight path?' (Q 67:22) [...] is a parable (*mathal*) which God has drawn to the day of resurrection concerning the gathering together of the believers and the unbelievers.[17]

In a similar fashion, al-Ghazali creates powerful images when speaking of the good soul slipping out of the body at the point of death "like the jetting of water from a water-skin". The profligate's spirit (*ruh*) instead squeaks "like a skewer from wet wool". When the angel of death takes the profligate's spirit in his hand, it shudders "like quicksilver", while the face of the profligate at the point of death is "like the one who eats [bitter] colocynth".[18]

Descriptions such as the voices of the two black angels who interrogate the dead in the grave being "like cracking thunder"; their eyes "like flashing lightning", and their breath "like a violent wind" may evoke strong emotions in the reader. Finally, on the day of the apocalypse, the mountains are returned to sand "like a level

15 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, 38–39; al-Ghazālī, *The Precious Pearl*, trans. Smith, 44–45.
16 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, 39; al-Ghazālī, *The Precious Pearl*, trans. Smith, 44–45. See also Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection*, 72.
17 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, 51; al-Ghazālī, *The Precious Pearl*, trans. Smith, 51.
18 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, 5, 7, 17; al-Ghazālī, *The Precious Pearl*, trans. Smith, 22, 23, 29.

dune", and on the Day of Resurrection, as each dead person is sitting upon his grave, awaiting divine judgment, there are some whose light is "like a weak lamp". Others are more fortunate and their lights are "like a strong shining lamp" or "like a bright star", even "like the moon" or "like the light of the sun".[19]

The author concludes his book by again stressing the crucial significance of belief in bodily resurrection, divine judgment, and eternal life in the hereafte for the faithful, how central these creeds are in orthodox Islamic faith, and how important it is for Muslims to acquire adequate knowledge of the tenants of faith. Al-Ghazali's final sentences thus underline the book's intention that was so programmatically expressed in its title:

> *The Precious Pearl* was [...] written to unveil the knowledge of the hereafter, with praise to God, and by His grace and generosity. Praise be to God, Lord of all the worlds![20]

2.2 Ibn al-Nafis (1210–1288)

In the thirteenth century, a very different treatment of the End Times was penned by ʿAli ibn Abi Hazm Ibn al-Nafis. Ibn al-Nafis of Damascus, probably best known for his commentaries on the medical and philosophical works of Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Ibn Sina (Avicenna), along with his original expositions on medical topics such as nutrition, ophthalmology, and child diseases, was already in his lifetime recognised as an exceptional philosophical thinker.

He lived at a time of great turmoil, of changing political alliances, and wars, but it was also a period of significant economic wealth and scientific advancement. Ibn al-Nafis witnessed the downfall of the Ayyubids in Egypt and Syria, and the rise of the Mamluks, the politically powerful military class who ruled these countries from 1250 to 1517. He saw numerous Ayyubid and Mamluk campaigns against the Crusaders, and experienced also the ever-growing danger of the Mongol hordes who destroyed Baghdad in 1258 and subsequently threatened the boundaries of the Syro-Egyptian realm, but who were eventually stopped by the third Mamluk sultan in 1260 in the Battle of ʿAyn Jalut.

One of Ibn al-Nafis's most imaginative works is the theologically motivated novel *al-Risala al-kamiliyya fi l-sira al-nabawiyya* ("The Treatise of Kamil on the Prophet's Biography")[21] – a particularly creative example of a belletristic treatment of the hereafter (thus falling into category 4 above). Conceived as what could be called a theological science-fiction narrative, in the final two chapters of this work the author attempts a scientific explanation of the religiously significant scenarios

19 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, 23, 41, 46; al-Ghazālī, *The Precious Pearl*, trans. Smith, 33, 46, 49.
20 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Durra al-fākhira*, 110; al-Ghazālī, *The Precious Pearl*, trans. Smith, 88.
21 Also known as *Risālat Fāḍil ibn Nātiq* ("The Book of Virtuous, Son of Speaking").

of the apocalypse.[22] Kamil, the novel's protagonist, is portrayed as a "mythical universal prophet-scientist", a human "who foretells all the important events which will take place one earth and knows their immediate causes in this lower world and their ultimate cause in the upper".[23] Through the protagonist's eyes, the author describes how Muslim society is steadily moving away from the moral principles and virtuous standards known from the days of the Prophet Muhammad, and how humankind is rapidly drifting toward a catastrophic end.

Ibn al-Nafis's powerful verbal imagery reveals to the reader the struggles and fights for power that broke out after the Prophet's death, along with the sins committed in the community, and the punishment inflicted on the community by God through the hands of infidels. The reader learns of the great dangers and the suffering that will happen when seemingly energetic and popular leaders emerge: leaders who promise the people protection and security, but then turn out to be cruel and merciless dictators.

The book culminates with the protagonist Kamil foreseeing the collapse of human civilisation, the earth, and the universe. In this way, the author makes the readers observe how the movements of the stars, the sun, and the moon will become irregular to the extent that the sun will eventually rise in the West. The reader of this book learns that there will no longer be seasons. Moreover, "the regions far from the equator will become exceedingly cold and those near it intensely hot". The climate eventually becomes unsuitable for humans, and the characters of the people change so that "crimes and troubles become prevalent".[24]

The final section of the book describes how both nature and human society fall apart. Wars, bloodshed, and insanity predominate; evil people have the upper hand and the good people are in the background. We read:

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22 Ibn al-Nafis wrote this work as a direct response to the philosophical coming-of-age story *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* ("Living, Son of Wakeful") by the Spanish Muslim philosopher Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185), which tells the story of a youth who was spontaneously generated. Kamil, the Arabic name of Ibn al-Nafis's protagonist, meaning "the Complete" or "the Perfect", is a boy who was also spontaneously generated, but in a cave and coming to life around the age of ten. Without an early childhood, he grows up on a deserted island where he learns by himself, and acquires knowledge of physics and metaphysics, but also of prophecies, as well as the way of life and the religious law of the Seal of the Prophets, the Prophet Muhammad, and the events that will occur after his own death. Eventually, Kamil finds God. He does so by observation, reflection, and self-education, without a human teacher or any contact with the outside world. At a more advanced age, when other humans accidentally arrive on his island, he gets in touch with civilisation. These people teach Kamil how to speak a human language and inform him about the conditions of their cities. Cf. also Mahdi, "Remarks on the *Theologus Autodidactus*," 202–206; and Lauri's "Utopias in the Islamic Middle Ages," 23–40.

23 Mahdi, "Remarks on the *Theologus Autodidactus*," 198.

24 Ibn al-Nafīs, *Theologus Autodidactus*, trans. and ed. Meyerhof and Schacht, 72. The edition and translation were based on the only two extant Arabic manuscripts, an early fragment preserved in Cairo; and a later, complete text from Istanbul. Cf. Ibn al-Nafis, *Theologus Autodidactus*, trans. and ed. Meyerhof and Schacht, 36–37.

> Then a fire will start in Yemen and spread over all the regions near the equator. There will be much smoke and this will produce unhealthy winds, thunderstorms, and terrific lightning, and there will be many frightening signs in the air. On account of the abundant smoke the air will become hazy and opaque, and in consequence of this the soil there will lose many of its earthy and watery parts and its substance will be very much reduced, so that the soil in the regions near the poles will become very heavy in comparison. Therefore, great parts of the surface of the earth will break down, the mountains will collapse and become flat, and water will become very scarce, as it will flow near to the equator on account of the subsidence there, and will evaporate by the power of the heat. Consequently, many trees will become dry, and the [surface covered by] soil will be reduced because a great part of it will evaporate and go up. Therefore, the hidden treasures of the earth will become manifest.[25]

These developments will cause people to migrate. People from the South will move to the more temperate regions in the North, and wild and violent peoples from the East will travel towards the civilised world, endangering its existence. Struggles between people will intensify, prices will rise, and fortunes will become small. Due to the many wars, many men will be killed, and women will be in the majority. As a consequence, women will become "lustful and lecherous as they cannot find enough men to satisfy them; and there will be much female homosexuality".[26] Human society, the earth, and the universe will collapse. The Last Day has arrived.

Yet Ibn al-Nafis's book does not end on this pessimistic note. Nor does it give an outlook on paradise or hell, or finish with some kind of dogmatic statement, like al-Ghazali's work. Remarkably, after his depiction of the catastrophic disorder in the universe and the complete destruction on earth, in the book's conclusion Ibn al-Nafis offers a science-oriented explanation of what happens next. After these disasters, the stars will assume their regular movements again and the earth will return to its previous condition, with the soil and the air becoming suitable for supporting animal life again. A mix of intensive rain and the heat of the sun will cause fermentation so that bodies of animals and humans will be formed out of clay. Eventually, the soul, constantly emanating from the Divine, will attach itself to a body part known as the coccyx. The coccyx is said to feed that small part of the body to which the human soul is attached. This makes the bodies formed from clay complete; they will be resuscitated. And, Ibn al-Nafis states in his final sentence,

> This is the rising of the dead – praise be to God the Powerful and All-Knowing.[27]

25 Ibn al-Nafis, *Theologus Autodidactus*, trans. and ed. Meyerhof and Schacht, 72–73.
26 Ibn al-Nafis, *Theologus Autodidactus*, trans. and ed. Meyerhof and Schacht, 73.
27 Ibn al-Nafis, *Theologus Autodidactus*, trans. and ed. Meyerhof and Schacht, 74.

3 Conclusions

In conclusion, our exploration of apocalyptic notions in classical Islam highlighted the following points:

First, the strikingly vivid imagery of the apocalyptic depictions presented in the Qurʾan were a source of great inspiration for classical Muslim scholars writing on related issues. In this respect, the two examples from classical Arabic literature discussed in this chapter – one by the eleventh–twelfth century theologian and mystic al-Ghazali, the other by the tirteenth century scientist and philosopher Ibn al-Nafis – share fundamental literary features; they both bring apocalyptic ideas to fruition through the use of powerful literary imagery and a sophisticated narrative. Furthermore, the two authors promote the view that apocalyptic perceptions in Islam go beyond religious beliefs and display additional, ideological dimensions. Indeed, through their own particular descriptions, both authors convey – sometimes explicitly, at other times more subtly – the notion that human deeds and ethical standards will lead to either damnation or salvation.

However, the two texts fundamentally differ in both their strategic presentation of certain ideas and their literary objectives. Whereas al-Ghazali's *Precious Pearl* is a dogmatic treatise written to instruct the common faithful in fundamental Islamic beliefs, Ibn al-Nafis's *Treatise of Kamil* is a theologically framed coming-of-age story and a science-fiction narrative which probably appealed to an academic audience much more than common readers. Also, while al-Ghazali promotes a spiritually driven vision of the apocalypse, Ibn al-Nafis, by contrast, advances a rationalist, scientific view.

Second, al-Ghazali, already in his lifetime an influential scholar, apparently crafted his work in response to what he saw as an urgent need: to help counter the corrupt society of his day, and to revive the arena of religious learning, by redirecting the outlook of the faithful from the pitfalls of everyday life to divine judgment and the hope of eternal life in the hereafter.[28] Within this wider context of al-Ghazali's life and work, his *Precious Pearl* is a profound reflection on its author's theological convictions and his objective to provide dogmatic instruction and spiritual guidance to the Muslim community concerning this world and the next. Ibn al-Nafis's *Treatise of Kamil*, however, offers a perceptive socio-religious critique of the – in his view – "dangerous" course that Muslim society had taken since the "ideal" time of the Prophet Muḥammad in the seventh century. Let us also recall here that Ibn al-Nafis wrote this treatise sometime between 1268 and 1277 CE,[29] a time of devastating political catastrophes, including the Mongol conquest of Baghdad, the temporary occupation of Syria, and the threat to conquer Egypt. Ibn al-Nafis thus seems to

28 For further discussion, see Günther, "'Only Learning that Distances You from Sins Today Saves You from Hellfire Tomorrow'," and Heck, "Teaching Ignorance: The Case of al-Ghazālī".
29 Fancy, "Pulmonary Transit and Bodily Resurrection," 207.

have believed, like many of his compatriots, that these invasions were a divine punishment, or even the first signs of the apocalypse, brought about by the Muslim faithful's having gone astray from the "straight path" of God and departed from the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. This perception of the cause and effect of religious practice and spirituality in society, or the lack of them, seem to be the motive for Ibn al-Nafis to write a fictional narrative that deals with these large-scale political and religious difficulties.

Third, al-Ghazali's meticulous description of divine judgment points his reader back to the importance of living a pious *versus* a sinful life in this world. As a highly respected theologian and accomplished educator, he uses this retrospective as a stern warning of the consequences that actions in this world have for the next. By contrast, the gifted scientist and philosopher Ibn al-Nafis seems to fully endorse the rational realities of society, history, and life in general when he attempts in his treatise a scientific explanation of the apocalyptic events prophesised in the Qurʾan. Ibn al-Nafis therefore ends his book with a more optimistic outlook than al-Ghazali. Indeed, Ibn al-Nafis envisages the return of life on earth and a new beginning once the prophecies of the apocalypse have been fulfilled.

Yet the distinctive feature of both these classical Arabic works, as well as of the Qurʾanic passages on the apocalypse, that perhaps stands out the most is the human longing, so exquisitely expressed in these texts, "to come full circle" and "taste eternity" – an idea which appears to be as deeply rooted in Islam as it is in other major religions.

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Armin Bergmeier

Volatile Images: The Empty Throne and its Place in the Byzantine Last Judgment Iconography

Eschatological concepts entered the realm of the visual arts of Byzantium and the medieval West surprisingly late. It is not until the middle Byzantine period that we encounter images that depict the end of time, such as the Last Judgment. While the Last Judgment iconography was a relatively late invention, other iconographical motifs, such as images referring to the Book of Revelation had been in use since Late Antiquity. However, those did not acquire eschatological meaning before the high Middle Ages. Here, I concentrate on one particular motif, the empty throne, to illustrate the shift from present to eschatological meaning in the course of the Middle Ages. While it signified an imperial or divine presence during the first millennium, it was increasingly used to refer to the end of time starting in the tenth century.

In this study, I do not treat the terms eschatological and apocalyptic as synonyms. In popular use, apocalypse/apocalyptic are frequently understood as references to the end of time and the horrors associated with it and are thus used interchangeably with eschatology/eschatological. However, ancient and medieval apocalyptic literature is characterised by the revelation of otherwise invisible truths; in some cases, those texts might reveal information about the future end of time, but did not necessarily always do so. Therefore, I use apocalypse/apocalyptic only to denote texts or concepts relating to the field of apocalypticism without any temporal restrictions to past, present, or future meanings. Eschatology/eschatological is exclusively used to denote the Last Things and expectations of the future end of time.

The relationship between historical and art historical research is often as problematic as it is fruitful. Art historians frequently rely on historians for establishing the context in which a work of art was created, transformed, or destroyed. In return, art history reveals a historical understanding of the world not communicated in written form. The link between the two types of sources can be direct and conclusive, as in inscriptions or written descriptions of objects. It can also be circumstantial; if a historical event and the making of an image happened at the same time, we might assume a connection. The thirteenth century, for example, saw the conquest of Constantinople and the subsequent Latin rule. In Venice, it also witnessed the fashioning of the façade of San Marco with spolia from the Eastern Mediterranean (columns and capitals, a porphyry statue, a bronze quadriga etc.). Although the ma-

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terial might have arrived before 1204, we can assume that both actions, the conquest and the architectural decoration, are somehow connected.[1] This type of temporal coincidence can, however, also be entirely accidental and thus be potentially misleading. For example, scholars have proposed a similar relationship between eschatological accounts in written sources and some aspects of the material culture of late antique and Byzantine art. However, there is ample evidence that the interest in eschatology expressed in the visual sources did not emerge until the middle Byzantine period. As I shall argue here, in the case of one particular iconography – the empty throne – the assumption of eschatological meaning throughout the course of much of its lifetime is misplaced. Such interpretations are largely due to the reliance on historical documents to prove the existence of eschatological concerns at the time, ignoring the fact that the images themselves offer little support for such a reading.

As studies by Paul Alexander, Gerhard Podskalsky, Paul Magdalino, Wolfram Brandes, and most recently James Palmer have demonstrated, expectations and anxieties surrounding the end of time in fact circulated as early as Late Antiquity.[2] In a seminal article, Brandes not only showed that the number of predictions surrounding the end of time increased during the reign of Athanasios I (491–518 CE), but also noted heightened eschatological expectations during events that had a profound socio-political impact such as the Hunnic invasion in 395/96, and the Avar and Arab sieges of Constantinople (in 626 and three times between 669 and 717).[3] The chronicle written by the Constantinopolitan lawyer and historian Agathias around 579 is a well-known written source for the surge in eschatological anxieties. He famously mentions that earthquakes and outbreaks of plague in the capital in the mid-sixth century led people to believe that the end was near.[4] But Agathias also records that once the calamities had abated, the inhabitants of the city went back to their old ways. Another famous source, the Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodios, shows signs of a heightened eschatological awareness around times of natural or man-made disaster; the text can be linked to the Arab invasion of the eastern

1 Jacoff, *The Horses of San Marco and the Quadriga of the Lord*, 2–8.

2 Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*; Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*; Brandes, "Anastasios Ὁ ΔΊΚΟΡΟΣ;" Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses;" Magdalino, "The End of Time in Byzantium;" Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, particularly chapter 1 "The End of Civilization (c. 380–c. 575)," 25–54. On the influence of early Islamic eschatology on early Byzantine imperial eschatological concepts, see Greisiger, *Messias, Endkaiser, Antichrist*.

3 Brandes, "Anastasios Ὁ ΔΊΚΟΡΟΣ," 32–53.

4 Agathias, *Historiae*, 5.5.1–6. At the end of the section Agathias laments the fact that "all these good deeds, however, were performed for a limited period of time, as long as the terror was still fresh in people's minds. As soon, in fact, as there were signs that the danger had receded most people reverted to their old ways. It is in fact only under the stimulus of sudden fear and for as long as the emergency lasts that we make a few reluctant and perfunctory concessions to the ideal of charity." (transl. after Frendo: Agathias, *Histories*, 140–141.)

Mediterranean in the early seventh century.[5] Nonetheless, the intention of the present study is not to disprove the general tendency to interpret late antique visual culture in an eschatological light, nor to examine the historiographical reasons for the overlooked but notable absence of eschatological imagery in Late Antiquity.[6] Rather, in this article I concentrate on one case study, the image of the empty throne in Late Antiquity and middle Byzantine times. I aim to reveal the image's non-eschatological *present* meaning during the early period and to trace its transformation in later centuries, when it was incorporated into the iconography of the Byzantine Last Judgment and acquired an eschatological layer of meaning.

The following paragraphs give a short summary of the origins of the motif in Antiquity and list some of the most important examples from Late Antiquity and the middle Byzantine period. The empty throne had its roots in ancient imagery, where it was depicted on coins and sculpture;[7] free-standing sculptures such as the Lansdowne throne (c. 38–41 CE; Inv. no. 50.33.14), which is decorated with Apollo's insignia and is now located at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, are very rare. **(fig. 1)** Cornelius Vollmer has recently presented a study on the ancient motif interpreting its meaning in relation to concepts of initiation. He further suggests that the thrones represent the *absence* of the deity.[8] While the ruler or deity is certainly visually absent, it would be difficult to explain why, for example, the sign of a divine absence would be imprinted on imperial coins. More convincingly, Eugenio La Rocca has supported the conventional interpretation of an empty throne in antiquity as a symbolic representation of a divine or imperial *presence*.[9] This interpretation finds support in the research on images of ancient divinities more broadly; Tanja Scheer, for example, has used the concept of ἕδος (seat) for ancient statues, meaning a vacant seat that the divinity might fill with his or her presence.[10]

The earliest extant Christian image of an empty throne with a cushion, a piece of garment, and a very large Christogram is a relief on a sarcophagus from Frascati (Rep. II.115) dated to the end of the fourth century. Subsequent late antique images tend to be more elaborate; the throne is often surrounded by the Tetramorph, the four celestial beings from the vision of Ezekiel and from the Revelation to John. Visual signs linking the throne to the Christian God often appear on top of it and include a codex or a scroll, a cross or Christogram, a purple chlamys, and in later ex-

5 Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 13–60. *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, trans. by Garstad. See also the article by Grifoni and Gantner in this volume.

6 For these questions see Bergmeier, *Visionserwartung*.

7 For the coins see table 29 in Vollmer, *Im Anfang war der Thron*. The Musée du Louvre in Paris owns a famous relief depicting the throne of Saturn (MA 1662), a fragmentary ancient or early modern copy of which is kept at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia (Inv. No. 9; originally from S. Vitale in Ravenna).

8 Vollmer, *Im Anfang war der Thron*, 29, 154 and 363.

9 La Rocca, "I troni dei nuovi dei," 77–104. See also, Weyl Carr, "Hetoimasia," 926.

10 Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild*, 120–123.

amples a sponge and a lance, signs of Christ's passion (e.g. on the middle Byzantine enamel of the Pala d'Oro in Venice fig. 2). The throne along with these supporting objects appears on the apse wall of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. (fig. 3) In addition, at SS. Cosma e Damiano in Rome, a lamb occupies the empty throne, a symbol for Christ. (fig. 4) Other examples, such as the one in the Santa Matrona Chapel in San Prisco near S. Maria in Capua Vetere (fig. 5) and on the no longer extant sanctuary mosaics of the Church of the Koimesis in Nicaea (early eighth century?; fig. 6), depict a dove, which was probably understood as a sign of the Holy Ghost, the quintessential concept of the invisible divine presence. The so-called St. Mark's Throne, an alabaster reliquary throne in San Marco in Venice, is a fairly unusual object originally from the cathedral in Grado belonging to the same tradition as the three-dimensional Lansdowne throne. (fig. 7) Unlike the earlier pagan object, of course, this throne bears the signs of the Christian God, with a cross placed on top of the backrest.[11] In addition, imagery taken from the apocalyptic visions in the Book of Revelation decorates the back and arms. The front of the backrest shows a tree and a lamb, and on the back two of the celestial beings are depicted – the eagle and the lion. The two remaining celestial beings are found on the armrests, thus completing the number of attendants of the throne vision. The upper portion of each side shows five burning candles, possibly a reference to the seven candelabra from the Book of Revelation (Rev. 1:12–13).

Although the iconography would continue in the East, in the West its popularity waned after Late Antiquity. One rare, late example from the West is the ninth-century fresco on the back of the triumphal arch in the Lombard church at Castelseprio. (fig. 8) Here, the throne is surrounded by scenes from the childhood of Christ, not unlike the images on the apse wall of Santa Maria Maggiore. Several middle Byzantine examples have been preserved in ivory, enamel, manuscript illumination, mosaic, and fresco painting. In the church of St Panteleimon at Nerezi (1164) the empty throne appears behind the altar framed by two angels carrying liturgical fans, thereby duplicating the altar. (fig. 9)

While this image and the above-mentioned enamel from the Pala d'Oro (1105) are not inscribed within an eschatological context,[12] other images depict the throne within the iconography of the Last Judgment, starting in the tenth century. Among the early examples are an ivory plaque from the Victoria and Albert in London,[13] two miniatures from the Tetravangelion today in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Par. grec. 74, fols. 51v and 93v; fig. 10), the mosaics on the west wall of Torcello cathedral (second half twelfth century; fig. 11 and 12), and the Mavriotissa

11 Although the cross and throne are not monolithic, it is extremely likely that the tondo with the cross is part of the original object; see, Gaborit-Chopin, "Stuhl des heiligen Markus. Thronreliquiar," 106.

12 For an eschatological reading of the enamel, cf. Pincus, "Venice and Its Doge in the Grand Design," 264–268.

13 Inv. no. A. 24–1926. Williamson, *Medieval Ivory Carvings*, 129–130, cat. no. 30.

Church in Kastoria (generally dated to the early twelfth century).[14] A fresco in the dome of the twelfth-century Panagia Theotokos in Trikomo, Cyprus (1105–1107 CE) does not show the throne within the typical Last Judgment iconography, but it establishes the connection with the end of time through the accompanying inscription.[15]

1 Modern Historiography

Scholarship on the late antique and middle Byzantine images usually interprets all images of the empty throne as eschatological, based on the fact that the throne features prominently in the middle Byzantine Last Judgment iconography. Paul Durand coined the term *hetoimaisa* or *etimasia* in his discussions of the iconography.[16] Durand's term is directly inspired by middle and late Byzantine inscriptions identifying the throne as ἑτοιμασία, the preparation for the Second Coming of Christ, and is thus eschatological.[17] This interpretive mode received a great boost from Violet Quarles van Ufford, who strongly argued for the late antique images' eschatological meaning in an article from 1971. His argument focused less on the visual similarities between the late antique empty thrones and the middle Byzantine Last Judgment thrones, instead pointing to the motif of the cross on top of the throne.[18] Ufford interprets this cross as the appearance of the sign of Christ predicted in the Synoptic Apocalypse, the Gospel texts detailing Christ's eventual return and the events surrounding it (Mk. 13, Mt. 24, Lk. 21). In the same year that Ufford's article appeared, Thomas von Bogyay published two important encyclopaedia entries on the *etimasia*.[19] Seemingly without knowledge of each others' writings, they arrived at exactly opposite conclusions; von Bogyay argues decisively that the empty throne outside of the Last Judgment iconography has negligible eschatological meaning if any.

14 This early date is supported by Pelekanides and Wharton-Epstein (Pelekanides, "Kastoria," 1217; Pelekanidis and Chatzidakis, *Byzantine Art in Greece*, 72; Wharton Epstein, "Middle Byzantine Churches of Kastoria," 206). Chatzidakis argues for a later date in the first half of the thirteenth century (Pelekanidis and Chatzidakis, *Byzantine Art in Greece*, 81) and Velmans just gives a general date before 1259 (Velmans, *Byzanz: Fresken und Mosaike*, 201).

15 Stylianou and Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 486–488.

16 The first one was Durand in *Étude sur l'Étimacia, symbole du jugement dernier dans l'iconographie grecque chrétienne* (Chartres 1867). See von Bogyay, "Hetoimasia," 1191 and von Bogyay, "Thron (Hetoimasia)," 306.

17 A steatite icon in the Louvre (early eleventh century) is the oldest surviving image to inscribe the empty throne with the word Ἡ ΕΤΟΙΜΑΣΙΑ (Inv. no. OA 11152): Evans and Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium*, 156–157, cat. No. 103.

18 Ufford, "Bemerkungen über den eschatologischen Sinn der Hetoimasia."

19 Bogyay, "Hetoimasia;" Bogyay, "Thron (Hetoimasia)." Bogyay first developed his ideas during the eleventh International Congress for Byzantine Studies: von Bogyay, "Zur Geschichte der Hetoimasie."

While Hugo Brandenburg only recognised allusions to the end of time in images connected to the four apocalyptical beings, such as the one on the apse wall of Santa Maria Maggiore,[20] eschatological readings of late antique images – including those of the throne – have proliferated in the wake of Ufford's article. Josef Engemann viewed the images of crosses such as those in the apse of S. Pudenziana (fig. 13) and in the vault of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia as signs of the Second Coming according to Matthew 24:30.[21] In a seminal article on the images of the Apocalypse, John Herrmann and Annewies van den Hoek list an impressive number of motifs that they associate with the Last Things, among them the empty throne. They therefore term the mosaics in the S. Matrona chapel an "elegant vision of the Second Coming".[22] In the section on Christian thrones, Vollmer equally interprets the Christian images as depictions of the prepared throne for the Last Judgment.

Eschatological interpretations are attractive for scholars because they appear to be specific and intuitively correct. However, several recent publications have distanced themselves from the larger trend in eschatological readings of late antique imagery. Dale Kinney has cautioned against identifying images as apocalyptic that are not directly taken from the Book of Revelation.[23] Geir Hellemo has specifically questioned the tradition of viewing late antique images of the empty throne as the eschatological *etimasia*, instead understanding it as an image of "God's glory and invisible presence".[24] Most fervently, Yves Christe has rejected eschatological interpretations of images associated with the Apocalypse of John, preferring to see them as images of the *ecclesia*.[25] Elisa di Natale and Stefano Resconi similarly set out to minimise the dominant futuristic-eschatological narrative. But they undermine their intention by concluding that eschatological concerns represent nonetheless a "valore aggiunto" in these images, a secondary meaning.[26] Instead of looking for a new primary meaning for those images, di Natale and Resconi avoid one coherent interpretive system, breaking the images up into single iconographical sub-elements and arguing that each of these elements has its own meaning. Thus the cross becomes an image of the passion, while the date palms are read as references to saints' martyria.

In contrast to other scholarship on the empty throne, La Rocca coherently argues for a non-eschatological reading of the motif. He suggests that the Christian images signify power and universal rulership, in contradistinction to their classical predecessors' signification of divine presence. He thereby draws a boundary

20 Brandenburg, "Ein frühchristliches Relief in Berlin," 139.
21 Engemann, "Images parousiaques dans l'art paléochrétien," 79 and 92–93.
22 Herrmann and Hoek, "Apocalyptic Themes in the Monumental and Minor Art of Early Christianity," 55.
23 Kinney, "The Apocalypse in Early Monumental Decoration."
24 Hellemo, *Adventus Domini*, 102–108.
25 Christe, *L'Apocalypse de Jean*, 66–71, particularly 67–68.
26 Natale and Resconi, "L'immagine della cosiddetta 'Etimasia' dal V al IX secolo," 700.

between ancient and Christian images, although he does not explain why the latter would have departed from their ancient counterparts' meaning.[27] While it might be possible that Christians only availed themselves of the pagan iconographic pattern without also using the meaning attached to it, this hypothesis seems much less likely than the assumption that the ancient meaning continued into the Christian era. As I shall argue, this motif was actually chosen exactly *because* of its ancient meaning, which was in fact entirely non-eschatological.

2 Ancient and Late Antique Images of the Empty Throne

The empty throne finds its origins in ancient rites called *sellisternia* (or *solisternia*) and *lectisternia*, the draping of a chair or a couch during offering ceremonies. The chair or couch of the deity served as a backdrop and focus for the offerings. *Pulvinaria*, cushions, were usually placed upon them, on top of which were placed the material signs of the god or goddess, that is crowns, busts, or other attributes. The function of these rites was to elicit a divine epiphany.[28] Vollmer has argued against La Rocca, seeing the images of the empty throne as signifying the *absence* of a ruler or deity, not their potential or invisible presence.[29] A depiction of this absence would, however, be a questionable choice for the reverse of an imperial coin just as it would be strange on the apse wall of a church.

The empty throne emerged in Christian visual culture around the year 400, possibly slightly earlier. While the earliest Christian images depicted the historical Jesus, by the middle of the fourth century we can sense a desire to also represent the divine Christ. Representing the Son of Man in his divine nature was problematic since the second commandment forbids images of God. But after the middle of the fourth century images emerged that did just that. Unlike most other areas of Christian iconography, theophanic images broke with ancient traditions and instead invented new motifs. The only complex ancient motif to have entered Christian theophanic imagery was the empty throne. Linked as it was to the divine presence, the iconography was easy to adapt to a Christian context, and its non-figural character fit the Christian aniconic agenda. For example, in Santa Maria Maggiore the throne appears between the Tetramorph crowning the cycle of images depicting Christ's

27 La Rocca, "I troni dei nuovi dei," 104.
28 La Rocca, "I troni dei nuovi dei," 79.
29 Vollmer, *Im Anfang war der Thron*, 29.

childhood. (fig. 3) Here the image above the altar engages with the presence of the divine in non-figural form.[30]

When appropriating the empty throne iconography, Christians not only replaced the signs of the ancient gods with those of the Christian God (cross, codex/scroll, dove etc.), they also presented it in the guise of biblical theophanic visions, specifically the throne visions of Ezekiel (Ezek. 1 and 10) and Isaiah (Isa. 6), and in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 4). The Tetramorph is a very conspicuous visionary element. In Santa Maria Maggiore there is even an emerald rainbow drawn around the throne referencing the description at Revelation 4:3. The two prophets, Ezekiel and John, both see a person sitting on the throne. Therefore, the ancient non-anthropomorphic motif of the empty throne does not appear to have been the first choice for Christian image-makers wanting to represent the divine figure seated on the throne. Indeed, the image of the enthroned Christ already existed, such as in the apse mosaic of S. Pudenziana. Thus, the empty throne motif was not chosen for its mimetic likeness to the prophetic text, but for the meaning it already held for late antique viewers. It was reused precisely because of its association with invisible presence and its rejection of anthropomorphism, which echoed well with the Christian belief system.

But besides the obvious iconographic parallels, the Christian images also introduced new elements into the throne motif. Their alleged connection to the end of time needs to be addressed in the following section. Two aspects – the connection with the Apocalypse of John and the depiction of the cross – have been used to support eschatological readings. The allusions to the Book of Revelation are only relevant for the images from the Latin West, as this biblical book was not canonical in the Greek-speaking East. In SS. Cosma e Damiano, for example, the throne is surrounded by depictions of the seven candelabra, the sea of crystal, and the book with the seven seals is placed before the throne, all taken from the Book of Revelation. (fig. 4) The late seventh- or early eighth-century mosaics that decorated the sanctuary vault in the now – destroyed Church of the Koimesis in Nicaea instead reference the Old Testament vision in Isaiah 6. (fig. 6) Here four angels frame the composition holding up signs with the Trishagion, the chant of the Seraphim surrounding God's throne. The inscription below the angels quotes the Letter to the Hebrews and translates the composition of the angels accompanying and venerating God's throne: "And let all the angels of God adore him."[31] While Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon read the inscription as referring to the apse mosaic depicting Mary with the Christ-child, it should primarily be understood as a reference to the throne vision under which it is placed.[32] This image in the Church of the Koimesis demon-

30 Engemann has unconvincingly proposed that the image in Santa Maria Maggiore replaced an image of the nativity that is otherwise missing from the cycle. He does not venture an explanation for this alleged image swap. Engemann, "Images parousiaques dans l'art paléochrétien," 88–89.

31 Καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄνγελλοι θεοῦ.

32 Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, 206.

strates the original intention of the throne depictions, namely the visualisation of the otherwise invisible Christian God through a theophanic vision.[33]

Modern scholarship has frequently treated the exegesis of the Book of Revelation as a monolithic, uninterrupted succession of eschatological understandings throughout the past two millennia.[34] However, this was not true for the early medieval readings of this biblical book. Throughout the early Middle Ages, it was predominantly understood as a description of the current state of the *ecclesia*, the present world under the reign of Christ. The fourth-century bishop Tyconius was instrumental in propagating such an ecclesiological reading. His hugely influential commentary on the Apocalypse does not survive in its original form, but parts of it can be reconstructed through the writings of authors such as Augustine and Hieronymus who followed Tyconius' approach.[35] This exegetical reading of the Apocalypse focusing on the present state of the ecclesia would continue unchanged well into the high Middle Ages. It was not until the twelfth century that the writings of Joachim of Fiore, Ruppert von Deutz, and Anselm von Havelberg gave the exegetical tradition a new historical-teleological direction. This eschatological understanding would intensify in the early modern period – Savonarola being only one very prominent figure who exploited it for his own aims – and still informs our current understanding of the Apocalypse. The connection of images with the Book of Revelation therefore cannot be used as an argument for eschatological content in the first millennium. Although religious scholars largely agree on the rejection of eschatological readings of the Biblical text before the high Middle Ages in favor of ecclesiological/present readings,[36] art historians have been slow to pick up on these findings. A notable exception, Yves Christe has tried to draw art historians' attention to the fact that early medieval apocalyptic imagery held a decidedly non-eschatological significance, representing the medieval present.[37]

One controversial object in this regard is the Grado Throne, with its unique trumpeting angels shown on the left side. (fig. 7) Such angels are indeed not only mentioned in the Book of Revelation but also feature in later images of the Last Judgment. Scholars have pointed to the heavenly figures to support an eschatologi-

33 On the concept of divine visions, see Bergmeier, *Visionserwartung*.

34 See, for example, Herrmann and Hoek, "Apocalyptic Themes in the Monumental and Minor Art of Early Christianity."

35 See Mégier, "Die Historisierung der Apokalypse." On Hieronymus's adaptation of Victorinus' commentary and the cancelling of eschatological passages see Dulaey, "Jérôme 'editeur' du Commentaire sur l'Apocalypse de Victorin de Poetovio."

36 See, for example, Konrad, "Apokalypse und Geschichtstheologie im Mittelalter;" Auffarth, *Irdische Wege und himmlischer Lohn*, 85–96; McGinn, "The Emergence of the Spiritual Reading;" McGinn, "Turning Points in Early Christian Apocalyptic exegesis." Cf. Landes, "Lest the Millennium be Fulfilled;" Richard Landes, "The Silenced Millennium."

37 See, for example, Christe, "Apocalypse et interprétation iconographique;" Christe, "Traditions littéraires et iconographiques."

cal interpretation of the object.[38] Such angels also feature prominently on the apse wall of San Michele in Africisco (today in the Byzantine Museum in Berlin). However, trumpets in Late Antiquity also carried non-eschatological connotations that have been largely ignored. Beyond their narrow association with the Last Judgment, the sound of trumpets and angels playing the trumpet had a much more general meaning. Gregory of Nyssa devotes a lengthy paragraph to the sound of trumpets characterising it as a sign of the presence of God and his proximity. In the context of a description of Moses' encounter with God, the church father explains that the sound gets louder the closer you are to God.[39] The theophanic encounter he describes is the one recorded at Exodus 19, which also mentions trumpets playing, but has likewise no connection to the impending end of the world. Therefore, there is no compelling reason to interpret throne images as eschatological on the basis of their connection with imagery taken from the Book of Revelation. The same is true of the visual sign of the cross that often stands or hovers on top of the thrones, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

As noted above, the cross placed on top of the throne has been a major stumbling block for non-eschatological interpretations. Hellemo, for example, agrees with von Bogyay on the non-eschatological character of the empty throne, but emphasises eschatology as one of the central layers of meaning for images of the cross.[40] Scholars commonly justify eschatological interpretations by referencing Christ's announcement regarding the sign of the Son of Man appearing in the clouds before his eventual return (Mt. 24:30). Eduard Stommel has shown that the church fathers generally interpreted this eschatological sign as having the shape of the cross.[41] Interestingly, Ps.-Ephrem, the author of an apocalyptic account of the Last Judgment, interprets the apocalyptic sign as a star shining among the other stars.[42] With regard to the visual culture of Late Antiquity, Stommel has argued for understanding the crosses in the Albenga and Naples baptisteries as images of the Last Judgment. (fig. 14) He interprets the doves surrounding the cross in Albenga as the apostles sitting next to Christ on Judgment Day.[43] Twelve animals in proximity to Christ are, however, not unusual in late antique images (images of the *traditio legis*, the apse mosaic at Sant'Apollinare in Classe etc.). It should be noted that while the sign appearing at the end of days may very well be the sign of the cross, not every depiction of the cross represents the eschatological sign.

38 For example, Gaborit-Chopin, "Stuhl des heiligen Markus. Thronreliquiar," 113; Hahn, "The Meaning of Early Medieval Treasuries," 9.

39 Εἰ δέ τις Μωυςῆς εἴη, γένοιτ'ἂν καὶ ἐπὶ πολὺ τῆς ἀνόδου, χωρῶν τῇ ἀκοῇ τὰς τῶν σαλπίγγων φωνάς [...] ἐν τῷ προβαίνειν γίνεσθαι. (Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Moysis*, 2.158.)

40 Hellemo, *Adventus Domini*, 112–113.

41 Stommel, "Σημεῖον ἐκπετάσεως (*Didache*, 16.6)," 21–31.

42 Ps.-Ephrem, *On Judgment*, 3 (Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion,* 14–16).

43 Stommel, "Σημεῖον ἐκπετάσεως (*Didache*, 16.6)," 39.

The eschatological meaning of the cross was only one among many, and it was not the most important aspect of this central Christian symbol. Accounts of apparitions of crosses that interpret them as the sign of the impending end are notably absent from late antique sources. Instead even where one would expect them, the authors prefer to view the cross as a sign for Christ, of salvation or guidance. Such is the case in an account by Sozomen in which he narrates the story of the sick Probianus who had a vision of a cross and subsequently experienced its healing powers.[44] Another more striking event is recorded in a letter from Cyril of Jerusalem to Emperor Constantius II, in which he tells the emperor about the apparition of the cross in the sky over Jerusalem for several consecutive nights.[45] Instead of reading it as the sign announcing the Second Coming, and even despite mentioning the prediction at Mt. 24:30, he wishes the emperor many healthy years and only notes that from now on this sign will appear again and again in even bigger form.[46] Unlike the eschatological interpretations of natural phenomena at later points during the Middle Ages,[47] Cyril consciously avoids any suggestion that it might announce impending disaster. Such an understanding of natural phenomena simply continued ancient forms of understanding the world as signs of divine intervention or as results of the gods' wrath. Reading natural disasters as signs of the final destruction of the world and the end of time was not the default reading it would become in the later Middle Ages.[48]

With this more proper understanding of the meaning of the cross-sign, we can revisit the mosaic of the empty throne with the cross in the vault of the Arian Baptistery in Ravenna (fig. 15), which has elicited more eschatological readings than other iterations of this motif. Here, the cross seems to hover in front of the throne instead of being firmly placed on top of or behind the cushion. Its hovering state has been taken as a visualisation of the sign appearing in the sky before the Second Com-

44 Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2.3.13.

45 Bihain, "L'Épitre de Cyrille de Jérusalem." See also Chantraine, "Die Kreuzesvision von 351."

46 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Letter to Constantios*, 6 (Bihain, "L'Épitre de Cyrille de Jérusalem," 290).

47 Philostorgios, the author of a church history, uses traditions from Jewish apocalyptic writings to list natural disasters in order to argue that the end was near. While other late antique chroniclers also mention disastrous events and supernatural phenomena, Philostorgios is unique in tying it to the unfolding of sacred time and its impending end. See Bleckmann, "Apokalypse und kosmische Katastrophen," 29. See also Fried, *Aufstieg aus dem Untergang*, 15.

48 In antiquity, Giants were blamed for earthquakes and volcanic activity. The giant Enkelados was believed to inhabit the earth underneath the Etna, from where he would send fiery attacks towards the sky. The Abrahamic religions often linked catastrophes to key theophanic events in sacred time. In the Hebrew Bible, God frequently appears in the clouds and in the midst of earthquakes, lightning, and smoke, most famously in Moses' vision of God on Mount Sinai. The predominant line of interpretation was to understand natural disasters as signs of God's wrath. Another very common explanation was as signs of impending war and man-made disaster. Alcuin, for example, interpreted blood rain as a portent of the sack of the Lindisfarne monastery in 793. See Conti, "Ende des Herrschers – Ende der Welt?," 61; Dutton, "Observations on Early Medieval Weather," 175–178.

ing.[49] However, neither sky nor clouds are depicted, nor would it be logical to show Christ's baptism surrounded by apostles who converge towards the sign of the end of time. It is much more likely that this procession might allude to ancient processions to the *sellisternia* of the gods. The cross should therefore be read as what it appears to be, the sign of Christ in the absence of his visible presence.

The ability of an empty seat to signify the possible presence of absent holiness has also engendered practices, not just images. For example, during church councils of the first millennium a bible was usually placed on a throne, visually representing the Christian God in the midst of the attendants. This practice is recorded in an image in the Paris Gregory manuscript (Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France, grec. 510, fol. 355r) depicting the Council of Constantinople (381 CE).[50] (fig. 16) Similarly, the Grado Throne might have been used as such a lectern for gospel books during the liturgy. It is just barely big enough for a very slim person to sit on, and although it has an opening for relics its substantial size makes it unlikely that it was a 'mere' reliquary. It is also possible that the somewhat enigmatic depictions of four thrones in the Orthodox baptistery at Ravenna represent such a practice, except that here the four gospels rest on altars between the chairs, leaving the latter empty. (fig. 17) Alternatively, the thrones might also just be ornamental, which would not be surprising in the otherwise highly ornate context of the dome mosaics.

3 Continuities and Changes in the Middle Byzantine Period

After the sixth century, the motif of the empty throne did not fall entirely into disuse, but was certainly depicted less frequently. It appears in the Lombard church at Castelseprio (fig. 8) and in Rome's small San Zeno chapel (817–824), where Peter and Paul are shown venerating a reduced version of the empty throne motif. Nothing indicates a departure from its ancient and late antique significance. After the period of Iconoclasm, the motif continued to be used in Byzantium. It frequently appears in Pentecost images, such as in a miniature (fol. 301v) from the Paris Gregory, and in the domes of Hosios Loukas (c. 1048) and San Marco in Venice (twelfth century). (fig. 18) In these images, rays of light representing divine inspiration emanate from the central throne, likely demonstrating the empty throne's ability to visualise the divine source non-figuratively.

49 Ufford, "Bemerkungen über den eschatologischen Sinn der Hetoimasia," 202; Engemann, "Images parousiaques dans l'art paléochrétien," 94; Vollmer, *Im Anfang war der Thron*, 357.
50 On the miniature, see Bogyay, "Zur Geschichte der Hetoimasie," 59; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium*, 210–217 and fig. 36.

The throne also appears by itself in the upper enamel of the Pala d'Oro (1105) in Venice[51] (fig. 2) and in the sanctuary of S. Panteleimon at Nerezi (1064). (fig. 9) In this middle Byzantine church, it is depicted behind the altar, flanked by two officiating angels waving liturgical fans. It has been suggested that in this specific arrangement the throne acquires Eucharistic significance,[52] but despite the obvious spatial analogy with the altar, this interpretation seems implausible. Unlike in images of Christos Melismos, the body of the Christ-child lying on the altar (for example at Kurbinovo), the Nerezi throne is not a visual equivalent of the Eucharistic offerings. Rather, the image-makers have noticed and represented an important parallel between the theophanic apparition during the Eucharist and the empty throne's theophanic meaning. In fact, the visual equivalent of the priestly activities appears in the upper zone of the apse wall high above the altar. (fig. 19) Here Christ is depicted handing out bread and wine. We therefore still find the old significance of the empty throne as a non-anthropomorphic image of the divine presence exploited in images as late as the twelfth century.

At the same time the motif already appears in quite different contexts. From the tenth or eleventh centuries onwards, we find the throne in a new context, the iconography of the Last Judgment. Among the earliest depictions are an ivory now at the Victoria and Albert Museum (tenth or eleventh century),[53] two icons from the Monastery at Sinai,[54] and the two miniatures in the Tetravangelion BnF grec. 74, fols. 51v and 93v. (fig. 10) These images closely resemble each other and clearly share a common prototype with the best-preserved monumental rendering of the Byzantine Last Judgment on the west wall of the Cathedral of Torcello.[55] (fig. 12) The throne is usually positioned below the seated Christ, between Mary and John the Baptist (Deesis) and the seated apostles. It is sometimes flanked by the angels rolling up the scroll of heaven and calling the dead eaten by animals and those devoured by the sea. The lowest register is usually comprised of the juxtaposed representations of paradise and hell. The throne sometimes awkwardly shares the space with the river of fire (τὸ πῦρ τῶν αἰώνων), which connects the seated Christ with the depiction of hell. Sometimes the throne is shown straddling the river, but more commonly the river loops around the throne. This and other elements feature in

51 On the Pala d'Oro see, for example, Volbach, "Gli smalti della Pala d'Oro;" Polacco, "La Pala d'Oro." Volbach identifies the empty throne as the one prepared for the Last Judgment (Volbach, "Gli smalti della Pala d'Oro," 12). There are, however, no other images alluding to that specific event among the enamels.

52 Sinković, *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi*, 35–37.

53 See above fn. 13. Although often dated to eleventh century, Weitzmann and Brenk argue for a date in the tenth century: Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends*, 84, fn. 7.

54 Cat. no.s 150 and 151 in: Sotiriou and Sotiriou, *Icones du Mont Sinai*. Color image of icon no. 151 in: Weitzmann, *Die Ikone*, 23.

55 On the dating of large parts of the mosaic decoration to the second half of the twelfth century see Andreescu, "Torcello. III.," 250–251 and 261.

Daniel's vision (the stream of fire is mentioned at 7:10) and the Synoptic Apocalypse. A quotation from this Gospel text (Mt. 25:41) is even inserted below the seated Christ of the Last Judgment in the Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki (founded in 1028 CE).[56] This narthex fresco, however, is missing the empty throne, because it would be where the arch of the door is located. Similarly, the fresco of the Last Judgment in Sant'Angelo in Formis near Naples (1072–1087 CE) does not depict the empty throne, either. While the empty throne could become a visual placeholder for the entire motif of the Last Judgment, it was paradoxically also the one element that could be dispensed with most easily without loosing any critical information.

The Last Judgment iconography has no direct textual origin. Psalm 9:8 only mentions the preparation of the throne for judgment, which likely inspired the term *etimasia*. The most important biblical texts are the predictions of the end in Daniel, Matthew, and in the Book of Revelation. Furthermore, the fourth-century homily by Ps.-Ephrem (with seventh-century interpolations) has long been credited with having influenced the middle Byzantine motif.[57] It is a particularly extensive account of the events at the end of time, but contains few ideas that cannot also be found elsewhere in apocalyptic, hagiographic, and homiletic writing. Interestingly, Ephrem's text mentions a throne being decorated and Christ being seated to the right of it.[58] Other literary references include John Rufus' *Life of Petrus Ibericus*, in which he describes an extensive vision of the end of time, and a homily by Anastasios Sinaita, in which he describes the eschatological events mentioning the scroll of heaven, the extinguished sun, the falling stars, trumpeting angels, the empty throne, and the river of fire that takes everything away.[59] In sum, there is little strong evidence that Ps.-Ephrem played a dominant role in the conception of this new iconography.

The eschatological throne also appears outside of the Byzantine Last Judgment iconography. Interestingly, in these cases, inscriptions play an important role in underscoring the eschatological intention. A steatite icon now at the Louvre (fig. 23) and a miniature from a psalter manuscript (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 752, fol. 27v; fig. 24), both dated to the eleventh century and discussed below, depict abbreviated versions of the Last Judgment. The psalter miniature bears an inscription identifying the throne as an image of the Second Coming (ἡ δευτέρη παρουσία),[60] while the steatite icon clarifies the purpose of the throne with the inscription Η ΕΤΟΙΜΑΣΙΑ.[61] In both cases, the inscriptions identify the motif as

56 Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends*, 83–84; Papadopoulos, *Die Wandmalereien des XI. Jahrhunderts*, 62.

57 Voss, *Das Jüngste Gericht*, 66–71; Brenk, "Die Anfänge der Byzantinischen Weltgerichtsdarstellung," 109–111; Papadopoulos, *Die Wandmalereien des XI. Jahrhunderts*, 91.

58 Pseudo-Ephrem, *Homily*, 12. ll. 289–290. Transl. Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 32.

59 Guillou, "Le monastère de la Théotokos au Sinai," 252, ll. 3–9.

60 Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends*, fig. 25.

61 Kalavrezou, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite*, 95–96 and Pl. 4.

the prepared throne for Christ's return, thus ensuring an eschatological reading of the otherwise neutral image. An image of the throne in the dome of the Panagia Theotokos in Trikomo (Cyprus) similarly acquires its eschatological meaning through an inscription. (fig. 20 and detail fig. 21) The throne is the focus of two processions of angels led by Mary and John the Baptist around a central medallion containing the image of Christ Pantokrator. The inscription warns the beholder to be "fearful of the Judge",[62] the ετοιμασία inscription immediately above the throne indicates the eschatological valence, and even the open book on the throne is inscribed with a fitting passage from Matthew 7:1: "Judge not, that you may not be judged." Apart from the inscriptions no other visual element makes an eschatological reading imperative. The procession around a central medallion recalls early Christian compositions such as the dome of the Arian Baptistery in Ravenna, where the twelve apostles converge towards the empty throne. The inscription directly above the heads of the angels at Trikomo quotes Hebrews 1:6, just as in the sanctuary vaulting of the Koimesis church at Nicea, asking beholders to worship God in the present.

Without additional information, Christ Pantokrator, the bust-length figure of Christ, cannot be taken as the image of God at the end of days, as shown by Nikolaos Mesarites' description of the Pantokrator image in the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople. Mesarites described the bust-length figure of Christ as a vision that we cannot yet see clearly, using a quotation from the First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 13:12) that has been used since Late Antiquity to describe mankind's (visual) relationship with the invisible divine in the present.[63] Many inscriptions around similar medallions depicting the Pantocrator likewise refrain from allusions to the Last Judgment: for example, the thirteenth-century church of Hagios Ioannis at Kerami (Naxos) quotes Psalm 14:2: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men."[64] (fig. 22) Even the Deesis can only be taken as a reference to the Last Judgment when it appears alongside further eschatological references. If Mary and John appear without eschatological references, such as above the apse conch of the Hagia Sophia at Ohrid, they can only be taken to point to their role as intercessors. However, the inscriptions at Trikomo make overt allusions to the act of judging and the prepared throne for Judgment Day and thus it can safely be considered an image that evokes the end of time.

Therefore we can note that inscriptions played a crucial role in the image of the *etimasia*'s shift in meaning. Prior to the eleventh century there was no need to identify the meaning of the image for the beholders, as it was part of a long, continuous tradition stretching from antiquity until the eleventh century (and beyond). Even in

62 Stylianou and Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 486.

63 Nikolaos Mesarites, *Descriptio ecclesiae sanctorum apostolorum*, 14.1 (Downey, "Nikolaos Mesarites," 869–870).

64 Chatzidakis, Drandakis, Nicos, Acheimastou-Potamianou, Vasilaki-Karakatsani, *Byzantine Art in Greece: Naxos*, 91 and fig. on page 95.

the eleventh century and after, the motif could still be used as the aniconic visualisation of God's invisible presence, as exemplified by the fresco at Nerezi. However, within a more complex eschatological motif or accompanied by an inscription orienting the image towards the end of time, it could now also be used to signify the expectation of the Last Judgment. It is thus imperative that we carefully scrutinise each image and its contextual evidence in order to decide which of the possible meanings was intended in each middle Byzantine example.[65]

To understand the implications behind the change in the image's meaning, we might take a look at the context of some of these images. The steatite icon mentioned above depicts the empty throne flanked by two archangels in the upper register and four warrior saints below, who normally are not related to Last Judgment imagery. (fig. 23) However, the poem written on the horizontal band divides and links both registers. It reads:

> The stratelatai, having appeared from the four ends (of the world) as witnesses to the divine pronouncements, are most ready to be awarded a place (in heaven).[66]

The language alludes to the apocalyptic writings – the Synoptic Apocalypse states that the attendants of the Last Judgment will gather from the four corners of the earth (Mt. 24:31) – and thus connects the "military leaders" (*stratelatai*) to the eschatological content of the upper register. The choice of *warrior* saints might have further been influenced by apocalyptic accounts, which often emphasise the wars and fighting that will occur at the end of the world. Ps.-Ephrem's homily is a particular case in point, devoting several chapters to the detailing of the fighting at the end of time.[67] Perhaps an increasing number of threats from outside the Empire (Avars, Persians, Arabs) triggered the heightened interest in eschatological concepts.

The psalter manuscript Vat. gr. 752 (before 1059) offers further evidence regarding the reasons for depicting the empty throne.[68] Fragments of the Last Judgment iconography are scattered across the manuscript, with paradise on fol. 42v, the raising of the dead on fol. 44v, and the eternal fire on fol. 28r. The *etimasia* appears in a miniature on fol. 27v illustrating Psalm 6. Its upper zone is taken up by the enthroned Christ surrounded by the heavenly host and inscribed ὁ ΧC καθήμενος ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης ("Christ sitting on the throne of glory"). (fig. 24) The lower zone with the empty throne surrounded by clerics is inscribed ἡ δευτέρη παρουσία ("the Second Coming"). At Psalm 6:2 David asks to be saved from God's wrath and from judg-

65 Von Bogyay has similarly stressed the need to assess each image case by case: Bogyay, "Zur Geschichte der Hetoimasie," 61.

66 Trans. Kalavrezou, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite*, 96.

67 See Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, e.g. chapters 6 and 7, at 18–24.

68 On the manuscript see most recently, Crostini and Peers, *A Book of Psalms From Eleventh-Century Byzantium*.

ment. The patristic text of the accompanying catena strikes a similar chord, suggesting a heightened concern with the afterlife and judgment.[69] Glenn Peers has argued that the manuscript reflects an interest in repentance and remission.[70] Dedicatory inscriptions, such as at the Panagia ton Chalkeon at Thessaloniki and the Panagia Phorbiotissa tis Asinou at Nikitari (Cyprus) also reflect these anxieties about Judgment Day. While in Thessaloniki the Last Judgment frescoes in the narthex reference Matthew's text of the Synoptic Apocalypse, an inscription above the apse of the church asks for forgiveness of sins and for salvation for the patrons (ΥΠΕΡ ΛΥΤΡΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΑΦΕΣΕΩΣ ΤΩΝ ΕΓΚΛΗΜΑΤΩΝ ΑΥΤΩΝ).[71] In Nikitari, the south lunette depicts the patron next to Mary interceding on his behalf at Christ's throne. (fig. 25) The inscription appears between Christ and Mary and reads: "Having been blessed in life with many things of which thou, oh! Virgin, wast seen to be the provider, I, Nicephoros *Magistros*, a pitiful suppliant, erected this church with longing, in return for which I pray that I may find thee my patron in the terrible Day of Judgment."[72] Thus, while Last Judgment images were often confined to the narthices of churches, and the images in the naoi mostly continued a tradition of showing the heavenly hierarchy and past biblical and hagiographic narratives, eschatological concerns about the future end of time entered these spaces via inscriptions and in abbreviated form. The cupola at Trikomo is one example for the depiction of the empty throne, while the frescoes in the domed diakonikon at Nerezi show John the Baptist, beneath an image of Christ, as the Ancient of Days holding a scroll inscribed with the words of Matthew 3:2 "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

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Returning to the initial rumination that prompted this essay, namely the complex relationship between textual and visual sources, we can see that the mere existence of a concept in texts does not necessarily engender its translation into visual forms. Eschatological concepts can be traced in written sources from Late Antiquity, but hardly any visual manifestations are extant from before the inception of the middle Byzantine iconography of the Last Judgment. Ps.-Ephrem's text, which might or might not have influenced middle Byzantine invention of the Last Judgment iconography, was written and must have been known to a select group of readers in Late Antiquity. But only the specific concerns current in the tenth or eleventh centuries triggered the translation of this and similar texts into a visual pattern. Therefore, while the interdisciplinary reading of images against texts – and texts against images – is bound to become more important, we should be careful not to make one medium fit the concepts expressed by the other.

69 Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends*, 88.
70 Peers, "Process and Meaning," 456–457.
71 Papadopoulos, *Die Wandmalereien des XI. Jahrhunderts*, 57.
72 Stylianou and Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus*, 114 and fig. 57. For a similar inscription in the Panagia tou Arkou at Lagoudera (before 1191), see the same publication at 159.

Long-lived and malleable images such as the empty throne present a further challenge to historical studies. Their ability to adopt new meanings made them attractive both to image-makers and beholders. But in the absence of inscriptions or contemporary descriptions it can be difficult to decide which meaning was preferred in any given context. The motif of Christ enthroned between the apostles is another such example. The late antique image as it appears in the apse of S. Pudenziana *visually* resembles the arrangement of the seated Apostles in the upper zone of Last Judgment scenes. However, the late antique apse motif does not represent the eschatological future,[73] but rather the theophanic Christ in the midst of his disciples.[74] Convincing visual arrangements were reused like *spolia* and adapted to the new surroundings most probably without the beholders even recognising the change. Very likely they predominantly saw an unbroken tradition. As scholars we must be careful to not let ourselves be fooled by visual similarities, instead identifying the obscured breaks and the historic specificity of the images. A possible reason for why people in middle Byzantine times revived the empty throne motif and included it in the Last Judgment iconography may have been that they felt this preexisting image succinctly visualised the connection between the current state of waiting while God is invisible on Earth – a concept that is close to the original late antique meaning – and the expected return of Christ in the eschatological future. The image thus visualises the time that lies between now and the end of time.

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73 See for example, Engemann, "Images parousiaques dans l'art paléochrétien," 80–81.

74 See for example, Bergmeier, *Visionserwartung*, 102–108..

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Appendix

Fig. 1: Lansdowne Throne, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (c. 38–41 CE; Photo: LACMA)

Fig. 2: Enamel from the Pala d'Oro, S. Marco, Venice (1105 CE)

Fig. 3: Apse wall, S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, detail (c. 432 CE)

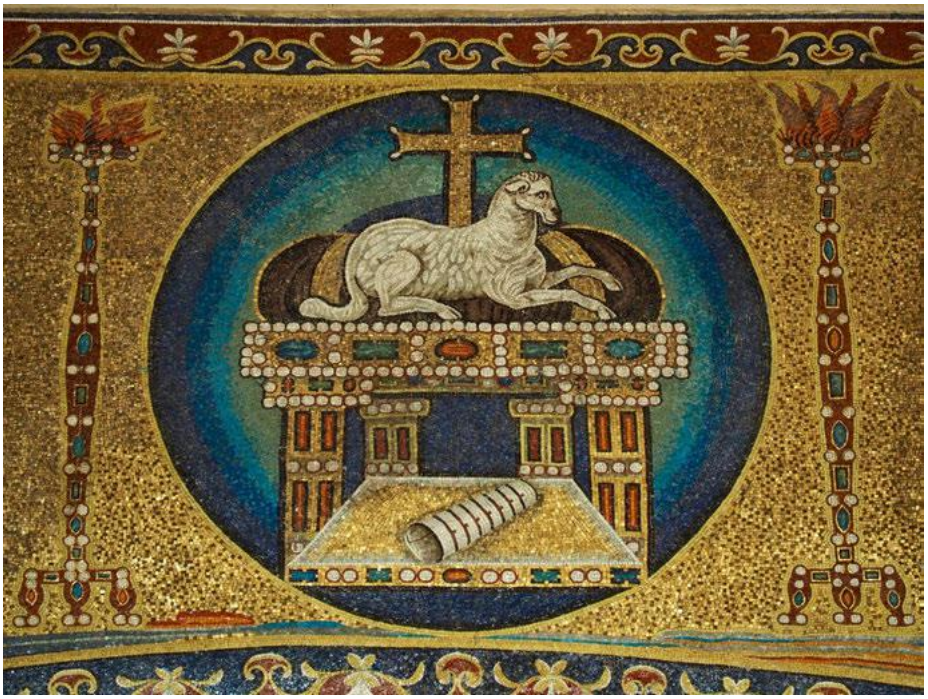

Fig. 4: Apse wall, SS. Cosma e Damiano, Rome (526–530 CE)

Fig. 5: Santa Matrona chapel in San Prisco/S. Maria in Capua Vetere (early 5th cent. CE; drawing after: Wilpert, vol. 4, 1916: Pl. 77)

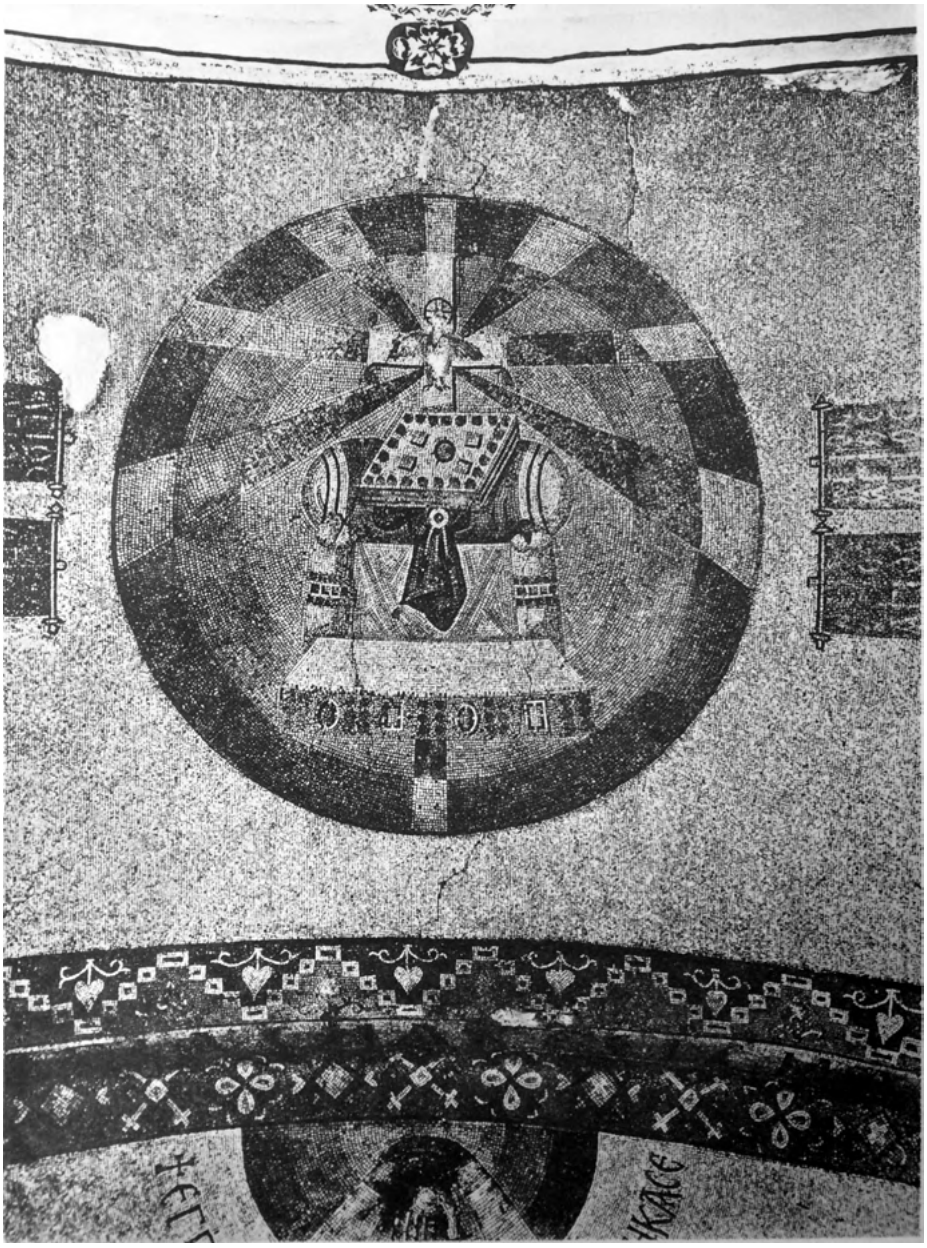

Fig. 6: Barrel vault in the sanctuary of the Church of the Koimesis at Nicaea (early 8th cent. CE?; Photo: Schmit, 1927: Pl. 12.)

Fig. 7: Grado Throne, S. Marco, Venice (6th cent. CE; Photo: Hellenkemper, 1984: 107)

Fig. 8: Inner wall of triumphal arch, Lombard church at Castelseprio (9th cent.?)

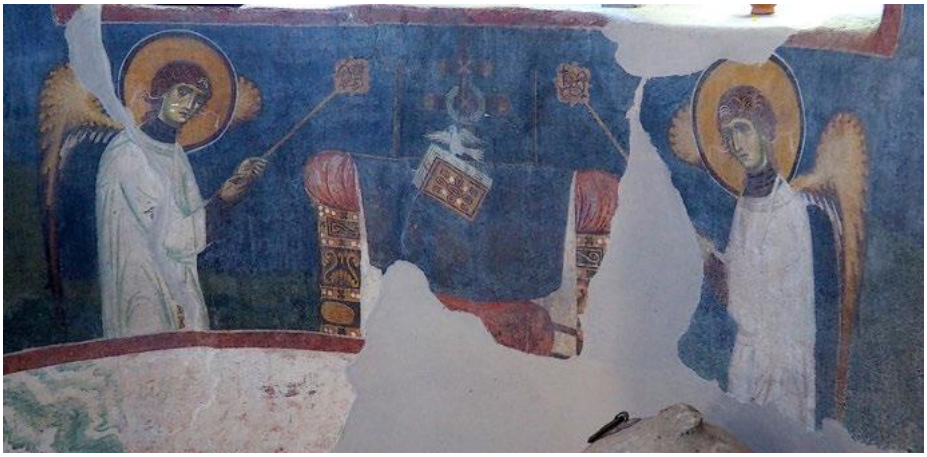

Fig. 9: Apse, *etimasia*, S. Panteleimon, Nerezi, North-Macedonia (1164 CE)

Fig. 10: Last Judgment, BnF, Par. grec. 74, fol. 51v (12th century CE; Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France)

Fig. 11: West wall, Cathedral of Torcello, Venice (2nd half 12th cent. CE)

Fig. 12: Detail of 11

Fig. 13: Apse, S. Pudenziana, Rome (c. 401–417 CE)

Fig. 14: Niche mosaic, Albenga Baptistery (5th century CE)

Fig. 15: Dome mosaic, Arian Baptistery, Ravenna (after 493 CE)

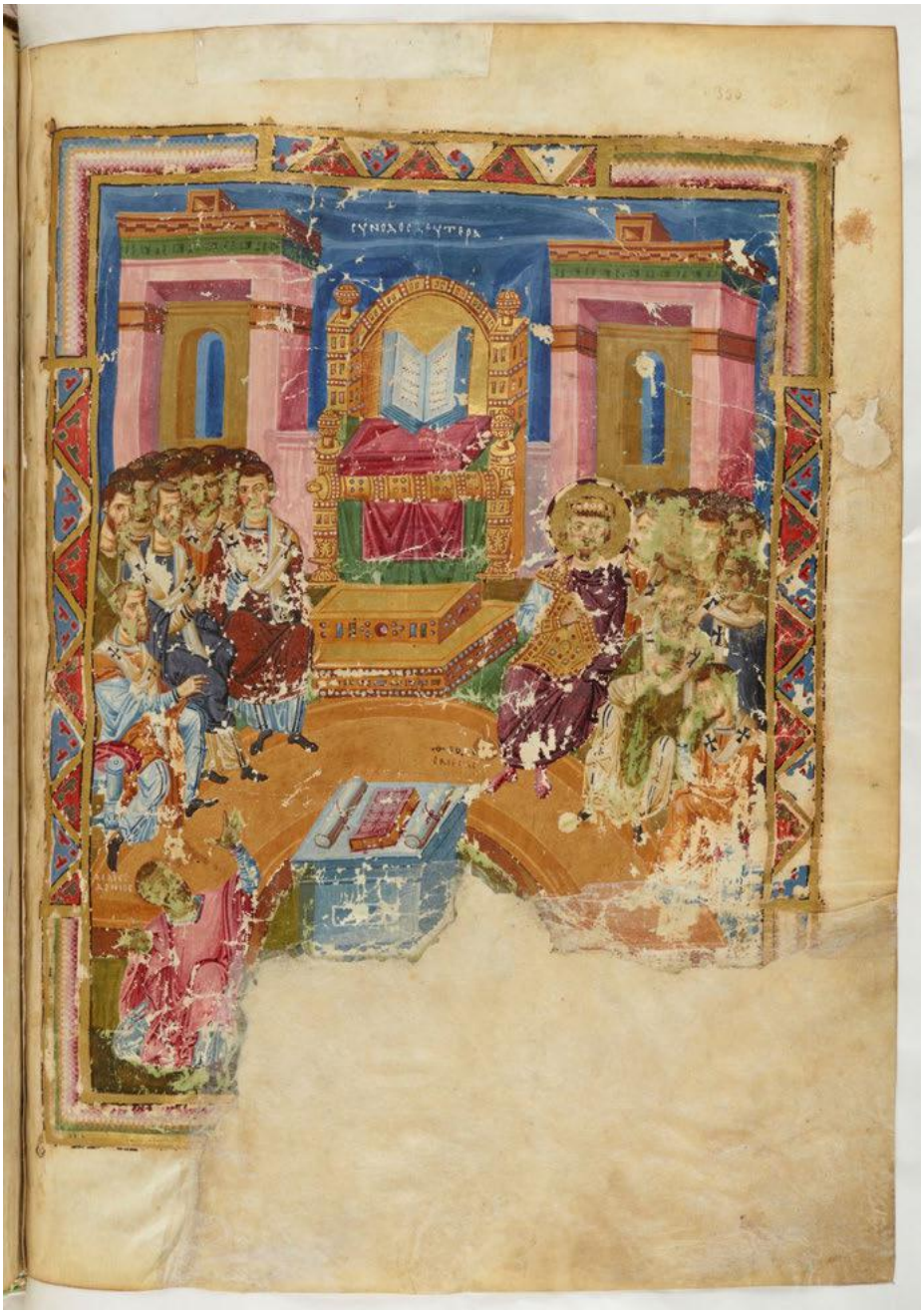

Fig. 16: Council of Constantinople, BnF, Par. grec. 510, fol. 355r (9th cent. CE; Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France)

Fig. 17: Dome mosaic, Orthodox Baptistery, Ravenna, detail (c. 458 CE)

Fig. 18: Pentecost cupola, S. Marco, Venice, detail (12th century)

Fig. 19: Apse, Eucharist, S. Panteleimon, Nerezi.

Fig. 20: Dome, Trikomo, NW Cyprus (1105–1107 CE; Photo: Thomas Kaffenberger)

Fig. 21: Dome, Trikomo, detail (Photo: Thomas Kaffenberger)

Fig. 22: Agios Ioannis, Kerami, Naxos (13th cent.)

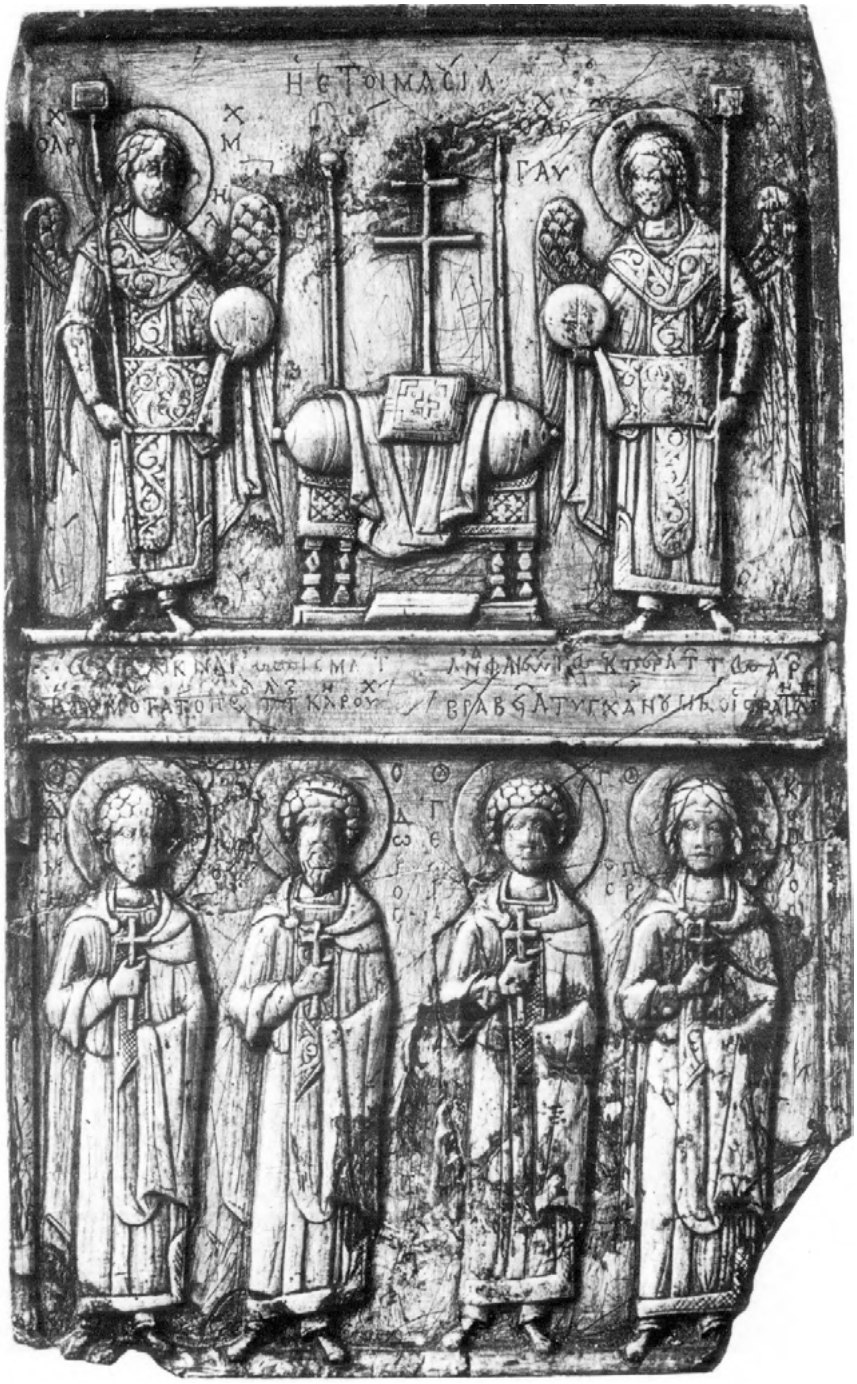

Fig. 23: Steatite Icon, Louvre (11th cent.; Photo: Kalavrezou, 1985: Pl. 4)

Fig. 24: *Etimasia*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 752, fol. 27v (1058 CE; Photo: Peers, 2006: fig. 27)

Fig. 25: Panagia Phorbiotissa tis Asinou at Nikitari, Cyprus (1105/06 CE; Photo: Thomas Kaffenberger)

Vincent Eltschinger

On some Buddhist Uses of the *kaliyuga*

Although their respective cosmologies have much in common, Hinduism and Indian Buddhism have, from an early period, developed fairly independent eschatological doctrines and prophecies that testify to widely diverging apocalyptic anxieties and hermeneutic strategies. Whereas Hinduism, from the second–third centuries CE onward, invariably resorted to a four-period degeneration scheme ending with the dreaded kaliyuga *(often compared with Iron Age as described by Hesiod), sure signs of which the Brahmins saw in foreign rule over India and the increase in "heresies" (e.g., Jainism and Buddhism), the Buddhists were (and to some extent remain) obsessed with the gradual decline and final demise of Buddhism itself, a scenario which they predicted with numerous and regularly updated timetables. Quite unexpectedly though, the Buddhists increasingly resorted to the Brahmanical* kaliyuga, *using it in a surprisingly wide variety of doctrinal and historical contexts and often side by side with their own traditional eschatological repertoire (the so-called five degenerations or corruptions). The present paper aims at collecting the most significant instances of the Indian Buddhist appropriation of the* kaliyuga, *discussing them and attempting to disclose their internal logic. It ends with a detailed discussion of the question whether and under which circumstances* buddhas *appear in the End Times.*

1 Introduction

From the earliest strata of the Purāṇas (fourth century CE?), Buddhists and other non- and/or anti-Vedic "sectarians" (*pāṣaṇḍa*) became a central feature of orthodox Brahmanical/Hindu apocalyptic prophecies centred on the *kaliyuga* and the imminence of the End.[1] The increase in "heresies" (a frequent but misleading translation

1 To put it in a nutshell, the *kaliyuga* is the fourth and final period in a fourfold degeneration sequence (*kṛtayuga*, *tretāyuga*, *dvāparayuga* and *kaliyuga*) describing the gradual corruption of cosmic and religious law (*dharma*), human morality and lifespan. On the *kaliyuga*, see, for example, Stietencron, "Kaliyuga in Indien;" Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, 885–968; Koskikallio, "Yugas, Ideologies, Sacrifices;" González-Reimann, *Mahābhārata and the Yugas*; Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*; Eltschinger, "Apocalypticism, Heresy and Philosophy," 32–61 (and n. 13, 32–33, for further references) ≈ Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics*, 40–72 (and n. 16, 40), and Bronkhorst, "Historiography of Brahmanism." My understanding of the terms "apocalypticism" and "apocalyptic" (see Eltschinger, "Apocalypticism, Heresy and Philosophy," 31–33 ≈ Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics*, 37–39) is strongly indebted to the work of Bernard McGinn. Let it be reminded that according to the American historian (McGinn, *Antichrist*, 88), "[o]ne of the characteristics of apocalyptic eschatology is its drive to find meaning in current events by seeing

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of *pāṣaṇḍa*) is even considered the most unmistakable sign of the Last Days – something it was not yet in the slightly earlier epic descriptions of the *kaliyuga* (especially in *Mahābhārata* [MBh] 3.186 and 188).[2] By contrast, the *kaliyuga* does not feature in early – and genuinely – Buddhist eschatology. This is, in fact, hardly surprising, for the fourfold *yuga* scheme provides a fully mature and self-sufficient account of socio-cosmic time and degeneration when it first appears, with no easily reconstructible prehistory, in the Brahmanical *Mānavadharmaśāstra* (MDhŚ) and MBh (both second to third century CE at the latest).[3] The pattern thus looks like a typically and exclusively Brahmanical conception, one that the Buddhists apparently had no reason to emulate or to appropriate. At first sight, indeed, the Buddhists did not need to import any alien account of apocalyptic or cosmological eschatology. First, their own versions of the end of a sub-eon[4] were frightful and

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them in light of the scenario of the End. Such a posteriori, or after-the-fact, uses of apocalypticism are often reactions to major historical changes [...] that do not fit into the received view of providential history. By making a place for such events in the story of the End, the final point that gives all history meaning, apocalyptic eschatology incorporates the unexpected into the divinely foreordained and gives it permanent significance." In what follows, I provisionally distinguish between apocalyptic and cosmological accounts of the *eschaton*. Whereas cosmological eschatology is focused (generally in the present tense) on the disappearance of the universe as a whole in both its physical and metaphysical constituents, apocalyptic eschatology often consists in a prophecy (generally in the future tense) that interprets dramatic present-day events as sure signs of the End. Whereas *Mānavadharmaśāstra* (MDhŚ) 1.81–86 and *Mahābhārata* (MBh) 3.148 provide good examples of a cosmological description of the four *yuga*s (see *Manu's Code of Law*, ed. and trans. Olivelle, 91 and *Mahābhārata*, trans. Buitenen, 504–506), MBh 3.186.26–75 is typical of an apocalyptic use of the *kaliyuga* (*Mahābhārata*, trans. Buitenen, 594–596).

2 See Eltschinger, "Apocalypticism, Heresy and Philosophy," 37–55 ≈ Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics*, 45–66.

3 See especially Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, 885–890. The first- to second-century CE Buddhist monk poet Aśvaghoṣa alludes to the *kṛtayuga*, the *kaliyuga* and the *yugānta*, but may not have been familiar with the *tretāyuga* and the *dvāparayuga*. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same can be said of the roughly contemporary *Rāmāyaṇa*. For a more detailed discussion, see Eltschinger, "Aśvaghoṣa on Kings," 321–323. Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* (JM, fourth century CE) yields similar results, with two allusions to the *kṛtayuga* (JM *k*. 10.30, Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*, I.279; JM_H 100,17–18, Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*, I.275) and at least three to the *yugānta* (JM *k*. 11.7, Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*, I.291; JM *k*. 14.5, Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*, I.349; JM *k*. 24.1, Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*, II.129). To the best of my knowledge, the JM does not refer to the *kaliyuga*.

4 I.e., each of the twenty increase-and-decrease patterns constituting a period (*kalpa*) of the duration of renovation. Each sub-eon (*antarakalpa*) starts with a human lifespan of 10 years, which rises to 80,000 years before declining again to 10. The dark period of each sub-eon takes place at the end of a period of decrease, when the human lifespan is comprised between 100 and 10 years. See Nattier, *Buddhist Prophecy of Decline*, 14–19. This dark period is characterised by five corruptions or degenerations (*kaṣāya*): of the lifespan (*āyus*), of the defilements (*kleśa*), of morality (*sattva*, lit. "of the living being"), of the false opinions (*dṛṣṭi*), and of the cosmic period (*kalpa*). The latter is itself described, at least towards the end of the process (lifespan comprised between 30 and 10 years), as infested with war (from Skt. *śastra*, "weapon, sword"), famine (*durbhikṣā*), and illness (*roga*). On

pessimistic enough to easily bear comparison with their gloomy Brahmanical counterparts. Second, the Buddhists were inclined to favour apocalyptic scenarios centred not on the cataclysmic disappearance of the world and/or human society at the end of a deterioration process (as in the *kaliyuga* account) but on the final demise of the good law (*saddharmavipralopa*; "good law" = Buddhism) some 500, 1000 or more years after the death of the Buddha.[5] Thus, contrary to what we find in Brahmanism, where *kaliyuga*-related apocalyptic prophecies and cosmological descriptions overlap to a great extent, Buddhist apocalypticism and cosmology were not meant to coincide and have, more often than not, remained separate discursive areas.[6]

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the five *kaṣāyas*, see *Splendeur de l'Inébranlable,* trans. Dantine, 208–211. The motif of the five corruptions permeates the Buddhist imaginaire down to the present day. The so-called testament of the thirteenth Dalai Lama Thubten Gyatso (1876–1933) provides an interesting example of the way in which historical reality (in this case the brutally anti-Buddhist Soviet tutelage over the young Mongolian Popular Republic in the years 1920–1930) can be viewed through the prism of these old prophetic and apocalyptic categories: "Nowadays the manifestations of the five kinds of degeneration are manifest everywhere. Worst of all is the Red ideology, which is becoming more and more rampant. It has caused the search for the rebirth of the Jetsun Dampa to be banned, the property of the monasteries to be looted, and the monks to be forced into the army. Buddhism has been destroyed so completely that not even the name remains." Thubten Gyatso continues as follows, this time in relation to Tibet: "If we are not able to protect our own country, then everyone who supports the Buddha's teachings, whether they be commoners or nobility, and the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama in particular, will be wiped out so completely that not even their names will remain. The estates and property of the monasteries and monks will be annihilated. The tradition of government exemplified by the three ancestral dharma kings will degenerate into mere words. The low will be made high, so that everywhere serfs will steal the ancestral estates, wealth and property, and we will be forced to wander the land as the servants of our enemies. Everyone will be subjected to torture, and both day and night will be an unending round of fear and suffering. Such a time as this will come for sure!" Translation from Schaik, *Tibet*, 204.

5 See Nattier, *Buddhist Prophecy of Decline*, esp. 27–64.

6 Cf. the following statement by Nattier ("Buddhist Eschatology," 155): "The vision of cosmic evolution and devolution [...] is central to Buddhist scholastic theory, but it appears to have had relatively little impact on the lives of average believers. Far more immediate were concerns not about the end of the cosmos, but the impending extinction of the Buddhist religion itself." Properly apocalyptic uses of the five-corruption motif are very frequent, however. Note, for example, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* (SPSū) vv. 2.141–143: *kiṃ kāraṇaṃ pañcakaṣāyakāle kṣudrāś ca duṣṭāś ca bhavanti sattvāḥ / kāmair ihāndhīkṛta bālabuddhayo na teṣa bodhāya kadāci cittam // śrutvā ca yānaṃ mama etad ekaṃ prakāśitaṃ tena jinena āsīt / anāgate 'dhvani bhrayeyu sattvāḥ sūtraṃ kṣipitvā narakaṃ vrajeyuḥ // lajjī śucī ye ca bhaveyu sattvāḥ samprasthitā uttamam agrabodhim / viśārado bhūtva vademi teṣām ekasya yānasya anantavarṇān //*. "For the creatures, when at the period of the five corruptions, are vile and bad; they are blinded by sensual desires, the fools, and never turn their minds to awakening. [Some] beings, having heard this one and sole vehicle manifested by the Jina, will in days to come swerve from it, reject the *sūtra*, and go down to hell. But those beings who shall be modest and pure, striving after the supreme and the highest enlightenment, to them shall I unhesitatingly set forth the endless forms of this one and sole vehicle." Translation from Kern, *Saddharma-Pundarîka*, 58–59. Note also the (Deutero?)Āryadeva's *Skhalitapramardanayuktihetusiddhi* (SPYHS) D19b2/P20b3–4: */snyigs ma lnga yi 'jig rten 'dir/ /'gro la phan phyir lam bshad pa/ /bdud*

In spite of this, several Buddhist uses of the *kaliyuga* can be located in the extant Sanskrit sources and/or their Tibetan translations. These occurrences are too scanty to allow anything like a typology based on recurring topical and/or rhetorical patterns. Some passages are obviously polemical (generally anti-Brahmanical) and seem not to reflect a genuine appropriation of the *kaliyuga* as a descriptive category on the part of the Buddhists. They target the Brahmins' pride in caste (*jāti*, *varṇa*), ritual violence (*hiṃsā*) and political theory, and are the symbolic and non-philosophical counterparts of the sophisticated arguments put forward in other Buddhist literary genres or contexts such as dogmatics (*abhidharma*) and philosophy. Other passages more evidently reflect the Buddhists' concern about threatening aspects of their religio-political environment. These include texts that interpret the strength of Śaivism or certain political events in the light of the *kaliyuga*, and thus partly impinge on the precincts of the apocalyptic prophecies that announce the disappearance of the good law. Finally, yet other Buddhist uses of the *kaliyuga* testify to a full appropriation (but only partial domestication) of the notion in all its cosmological and apocalyptic dimensions. This is especially true of a short treatise on the topic by the (Deutero?)Mātṛceṭa, the *Kaliyugaparikathā* (KP), and of the eschatological conceptions of the *Kālacakratantra*.[7] On the whole, I am inclined to assume that the appeal of the *kaliyuga* to the Buddhist *literati* became increasingly strong in the specific context of apocalyptic prophecies. Nevertheless, scholastic attempts at systematically replacing traditional eschatologies by *kaliyuga* terminology and imagery seem to be entirely missing. This notwithstanding, several "early" Mahāyāna sources testify to the fact that the Buddhists showed no unanimity as regards cosmology. This is especially true of the question whether *buddha*s do or do not appear during the last and most degenerate period of a sub-eon – or, according to slightly later formulations, during the *kaliyuga*.[8]

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dang bdud la phyogs pa dag/ /lam la log par lta ba'i phyir / /rang gi lta bas bden las[1] *nyams/ /nor ba'i lam la lam du 'dod/ /yang dag pa la log rtsod pa/ /de dag bsal*[2] *phyir bshad par bya/*. [1]*las* P: *lam* D. [2]*bsal* D: *gsal* P. "[I am going to] explain the path in order to benefit the sentient beings [who are suffering] in this world of the five corruptions. Because they view the path in a wrong way, Māra and those who side with Māra swerve from the truth on account of their own views, accept an erroneous path as the [right] path, [and] wrongly object to the correct [path. The following] is to be said in order to refute them."

7 Other Buddhist uses of the *kaliyuga* include mKhas grub rje's (1385–1438) reference to Ratnākaraśānti (970–1030?) as an "omniscient being of the Kali Age" (*kalikālasarvajña*, Tib. *rtsod pa'i dus kyi thams cad mkhyen pa*, *Antarvyāptisamarthana of Ratnākaraśānti*, ed. and trans. Kajiyama, 1) in his *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa rgyas par brjod pa* (D5489; see Lessing and Wayman, *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems*, 78–79). This designation, which occurs in connection with the Vikramaśīla scholar's treatise on poetics, the *Chandoratnākara* (D4303 and 4304), is also frequently applied to the Śvetāmbara Jaina polymath Hemacandra (1089–1172) – a fact that points to the Indian origin of mKhas grub rje's allusion. This common characterisation of the two scholars might be due to the fact that they both authored works on a great variety of secular and non-secular subjects.

8 See below, part 2.

The reasons why the Buddhists resorted to the *kaliyuga* are unclear and likely to differ from one case to another. But there is little doubt that the motif offered interesting polemical possibilities. Claiming that Brahmanical institutions such as the caste-system or animal slaughter were typical of the *kaliyuga* pointed to their degenerate and immoral character in an evocative and powerful manner. Moreover, there are good reasons to believe that the Brahmanical *kaliyuga* quickly became a popular representation of the End, being one that made both a common ("transconfessional") idiom and a more effective rhetoric possible.[9] In comparison to the Buddhist ideas, which were either doctrinally overloaded (the five corruptions[10]) or applied too narrowly to Buddhism (the demise of the good law), the *kaliyuga* possibly appeared to be a more open, less dogmatically burdened eschatological framework. Finally, the above-mentioned bifurcation of the cosmological and the apocalyptic may have jeopardised a homogeneous and genuinely Buddhist discourse on the End.

My treatment of the Buddhist uses of the *kaliyuga* is certainly far from exhaustive. The occurrences of the motif discussed below are those I randomly came across in the course of my readings in Buddhist literature.[11] Given my lack of familiarity with Tantric corpora, I have limited myself to a brief exposition of the connection between the Islamic rise to dominance and the *kaliyuga* as it so strikingly appears in the *Kālacakratantra*. My treatment of these materials has to remain doctrinal rather than properly historical, even in instances where the suspicion of *ex post facto* apocalyptic descriptions arises. For, in addition to often being cryptic or vague, the sources under scrutiny can hardly ever be assigned to any precise sociohistorical context that would help determine their intended and unintended meanings.

2 Some Buddhist Uses of the *kaliyuga*

2.1. One of the reasons why, from the early fourth century CE, the Buddhist *literati* increasingly resorted to *kaliyuga* terminology and imagery was presumably the latters' strong polemical potential. For pointing to certain practices and/or ideas as being the products of the dreadful End Times amounted to condemning them as degenerate, and hence misleading and ultimately harmful – or, equivalently, as

9 For inscriptional evidence regarding the *yuga*s, see Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, 890.

10 On this notion, see above, n. 4.

11 Edification literature is replete with rhetorical allusions to the *kaliyuga*. See, for example, Ravigupta's as yet unedited *Āryakoṣa* vv. 12 (= LSP v. 15), 103, and 121 (see Hahn, *Buddhistische Lehrbriefe aus Indien und Tibet*, 236, 252, and 255, respectively), and the same author's *Lokasaṃvyavahārapravṛtti* (LSP) vv. 198 and 232 (see Hahn, *Ravigupta and His Nīti Stanzas*, 25 and 29).

conflicting with Buddhist as well as "primordial" Brahmanical standards and values. This polemical strategy is clearly at play in three passages criticising a set of non-Buddhist practices and behaviours, viz. the violence (*hiṃsā*) inherent in Vedic animal sacrifices, the brahmins' pride in caste (*jāti*, *varṇa*) and the governance practices that found normative expression in (the) *arthaśāstra*(s), the "treatise(s) on [politico-economic] profit/success." The first two occur in the *Yogācārabhūmi* (YBh), while the third belongs to the *Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvaṇanirdeśasūtra* (BGUVVNSū) and related literature.

2.2. In a section devoted to the critical examination of sixteen "allodoxies" (*paravāda*),[12] the YBh ascribes ritual violence (allodoxy no. 8) and claims to socio-religious superiority (allodoxy no. 14) to (the) brahmins of the *kaliyuga* (*kaliyugikā brāhmaṇāḥ*).[13] Here is the account of the "doctrine [according to which ritual] violence is a [religious] duty(/is righteous)" (*hiṃsādharmavāda*):

> [This doctrine consists in believing that] taking [a living being's] life[, something that occurs] within sacrifices [and is] accompanied by [ritual] formula(s) and injunction(s), leads all [the following living beings] to heaven: the [person] who sacrifices, that which is sacrificed, and those who attend this [person] [...]. This [is] a doctrine that violates the established rule; [it has been] settled by rogues but [has certainly] not [been] established in [due] consideration of reason(ing). When the *kaliyuga* is at hand, the brahmins who wish to eat meat indulge in this [ritual violence, thus] transgressing the brahmins' ancient [religious] duty.[14]

The YBh interprets meat-eating and sacrificial killing as typical of the degenerate brahmins of the *kaliyuga*, and this in a manner (*kaliyuge pratyupasthite*) that is reminiscent of epic and purāṇic formulations. The idea that meat-eating and/or ritual violence either did not exist (or were banned) in former times but (re)appeared as a result of moral degeneration is not infrequent in Indian Buddhist sources. Thus it is that in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (LASū), a locus classicus for the Mahāyānist prohibition of meat-eating,[15] the Buddha prophesies that unscrupulous future Buddhist legislators (*vinaya* specialists) will make meat-eating permissible, thus breaking with

12 See Eltschinger, "*Yogācārabhūmi* against Allodoxies 1," 194, n. 14. On the notion of "allodoxy", see *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, ed. and trans. Scherrer-Schaub, xli, n. 63, and Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics*, 36, n. 3.

13 YBh 155,11, $YBh_{T/D}$ 78b2/$YBh_{T/P}$ 90b8. On the YBh's critique of these two allodoxies, see Eltschinger, "*Yogācārabhūmi* against Allodoxies: Ritual Violence," and "The *Yogācārabhūmi* against Allodoxies 2."

14 YBh 145,20–146,4, $YBh_{T/D}$ 73b6–74a1/$YBh_{T/P}$ 85b5–8: *yajñeṣu mantravidhipūrvakaḥ prāṇātipātaḥ / yaś ca juhoti yaś ca hūyate ye ca tatsahāyās teṣāṃ sarveṣāṃ svargagamanāya bhavatīti* / [...] *utsaṃsthavāda eṣa śaṭhaviṭhapito no tu yuktim abhisamīkṣya vyavasthāpitaḥ / kaliyuge pratyupasthite brāhmaṇaiḥ paurāṇaṃ brāhmaṇadharmam atikramya māṃsaṃ bhakṣayitukāmair etat prakalpitam* /. For text-critical notes, see Eltschinger, "*Yogācārabhūmi* against Allodoxies 1," 214, n. 102.

15 On meat-eating in the Mahāyāna, see Seyfort Ruegg, "Ahiṃsā and Vegetarianism," Schmithausen, "Fleischverzehr und Vegetarismus im Buddhismus," 155–193 and Schmithausen, "Meat-Eating and Nature," 190–194.

the rules laid down by him and shared by the *ṛṣi*s of old.[16] Here, degeneration and the resulting delusion are made responsible for the reappearance of a non-vegetarian diet. Very similar ideas can be found in Buddhist literature as regards ritual violence, whose reappearance in the context of funerary practices is condemned in the *Jātaka*s.[17]

In the LASū passage just referred to, the Buddha claims his position to coincide with the practice of the wise and vegetarian *ṛṣi*s of old, those not yet degenerate brahmins whom he regarded as the embodiment of Buddhist values and practice – the so-called "true brahmins".[18] Now, the connection between the *ṛṣi*s, the rise of greed and the concomitant appearance of sacrificial violence is the subject-matter of the *Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta* of the *Suttanipāta* (Sn).[19] In the argument of the *sutta*, the brahmins of Kosala ask the Buddha the following: "Do brahmins now, Gotama, live in conformity with the Brahmanical lore of the brahmins of old?"[20] Gotama's answer is quite unambiguous: "No, brahmins, brahmins now do not live in conformity with the Brahmanical lore of the brahmins of old."[21] According to the Buddha, the "seers of old" (*isayo pubbakā*, Sn 284) were chaste (Sn 284, 285, 290, 291–293), virtuous (Sn 289, 292, 294), learned (Sn 289) and austere (Sn 284, 292). These original brahmins had "no cattle, no gold, no wealth" (Sn 285). Most importantly, these true brahmins "praised non-violence" (*avihiṃsam avaṇṇayuṃ*, Sn 292). Accordingly, their rituals involved no animal slaughter:

> Having asked for rice, a bed, clothes, and butter and oil, having collected them properly, from that they performed the sacrifice. When the sacrifice occurred, *they* did not kill cows. Like a

16 See LASū 249,14–250,6, and Eltschinger, "*Yogācārabhūmi* against Allodoxies: Ritual Violence," 374 and n. 39.

17 See *Jātaka* I.166,12–15, and Eltschinger, "*Yogācārabhūmi* against Allodoxies: Ritual Violence," 374–375 and n. 40.

18 For references and observations on the true brahmin, see especially Masefield, *Divine Revelation*, 146–164 (154 for canonical references), and also Eltschinger, "*Yogācārabhūmi* against Allodoxies 2," nn. 29 and 46. Indian Buddhist normative descriptions of the true brahmin include reference to his refraining from any violence. Note, for example, Uv 33.36: *nikṣiptadaṇḍaṃ bhūteṣu traseṣu sthāvareṣu ca / yo na hanti hi bhūtāni bravīmi brāhmaṇaṃ hi tam* //. "I call a '[true] Brahmin' [someone] who has renounced violence towards [all] beings[, both] moving and immovable, he who does not kill [living] beings." In Uv 33.34, the true brahmin is said to be *ahiṃsaka*, "free from [any] violence".

19 Sn 284–315 (50–55). See Norman, *Early Buddhist Poems*, 49–51. As already hinted at by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya (see YBh, 146, n. 4), (a version of) this *sutta* constitutes the YBh's most likely source of inspiration for associating these Brahmanical practices with an era of degeneration (the YBh's *kaliyuga*). This genealogy is reflected in the very wording of the two texts: whereas the *Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta* expounds, as its title suggests, the Brahmanical lore/law of the brahmins of old (*porāṇānaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ brāhmaṇadhammo*), the YBh accuses the meat-eating brahmins of transgressing the ancient Brahmanical lore/law (*paurāṇaṃ brāhmaṇadharmam*).

20 Sn 50: *sandissanti nu kho bho gotama etarahi brāhmaṇā porāṇānaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ brāhmaṇadhamme ti*. Translation (slightly modified) from Norman, *Early Buddhist Poems*, 49.

21 Sn 50: *na kho brāhmaṇā sandissanti etarahi brāhmaṇā porāṇānaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ brāhmaṇadhamme ti*. Translation (slightly modified) from Norman, *Early Buddhist Poems*, 49.

> mother, father, brother, or other relative too, cows are our best friends, in which medicines are produced. They give food, strength, (good) complexion, and likewise happiness. Knowing this reason, *they* did not kill cows.[22]

And "as long as [the lore] existed in the world, this race prospered in happiness."[23] However, a "change" (*vipallāsa*, Sn 299, Norman, Masefield) for the worse occurred as these 'brahmins' covetousness (*abhijjhāyiṃsu*, Sn 301), desire (*icchā*, Sn 306) and craving (*taṇhā*, Sn 306) increased. Composing ad hoc ritual formulas (*manta*, Sn 302, 306) and, one may surmise, inventing related rituals, the brahmins prompted king Okkāka (Skt. Ikṣvāku) to patronise sacrifices and pay them substantial sacrificial fees. Here is the Sn's account of the events:

> There was a change in them. Seeing little by little the splendour of the king, and women adorned, and chariots yoked to thoroughbreds, well-made, with variegated coverings, dwellings and houses evenly proportioned and [well] laid out, [and] great human wealth, surrounded by herds of cows, combined with groups of excellent women, the brahmins coveted this. Having composed hymns for this purpose, they then went up to Okkāka. 'You have much wealth and grain. Sacrifice, [for] your property is much. Sacrifice, [for] your wealth is much.' And then the king, the lord of warriors, induced by the brahmins, having performed these sacrifices, the *assamedha*, the *purisamedha*, the *sammāpāsa*, the *vācapeyya*, (and) the *niraggaḷa*, gave wealth to the brahmins: cows, and a bed, and clothes, and adorned women, and chariots yoked to thoroughbreds, well-made, with variegated coverings. Having filled delightful dwellings, evenly proportioned, with various sorts of grain, he gave wealth to the brahmins. And they, receiving wealth there, found pleasure in hoarding it up. Overcome by desire, their craving increased the more. Having composed hymns for this purpose, they went up to Okkāka again. 'As are water, earth, gold, wealth, and grain, so are cows to men. For this is a requisite for living creatures. Sacrifice, [for] your property is much. Sacrifice, [for] your wealth is much.' And then the king, the lord of warriors, induced by the brahmins, had many hundreds of thousands of cows killed in a sacrifice.[24]

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22 Sn 295–297: *taṇḍulaṃ sayanaṃ vatthaṃ sappitelañ ca yāciya dhammena samudānetvā tato yaññam akappayuṃ, upaṭṭhitasmiṃ yaññasmiṃ nāssu gāvo haniṃsu te. yathā mātā pitā bhātā aññe vā pi ca ñātakā gāvo no paramā mittā, yāsu jāyanti osadhā. annadā baladā c'etā vaṇṇadā sukhadā tathā etam atthavasaṃ ñatvā nāssu gāvo haniṃsu te*. Translation from Norman, *Early Buddhist Poems*, 50.

23 Sn 298d: *yāva loke avattiṃsu, sukhaṃ edhittha ayaṃ pajā*. Translation from Norman, *Early Buddhist Poems*, 50.

24 Sn 299–308: *tesaṃ āsi vipallāso: disvāna aṇuto aṇuṃ rājino ca viyākāraṃ nariyo ca samalaṃkatā rathe cājaññasaṃyutte sukate cittasibbane nivesane nivese ca vibhatte bhāgaso mite gomaṇḍalapraibbūḷhaṃ nārīvaragaṇāyutaṃ uḷāraṃ mānusaṃ bhogaṃ abhijjhāyiṃsu brāhmaṇā. te tattha mante ganthetvā okkākaṃ ta upāgamum: 'pahūtadhanadhaññо si, yajassu, bahu te vittaṃ, yajassu, bahu te dhanaṃ' tato ca rājā saññatto brāhmaṇehi rathesabho assamedhaṃ purisamedhaṃ sammāpāsaṃ vācapeyyaṃ niraggaḷaṃ, ete yāge yajitvāna brāhmaṇānaṃ adā dhanaṃ: gāvo sayanañ ca vatthañ ca nariyo ca samalaṃkatā rathe cājaññasaṃyutte sukate cittasibbane, nivesanāni rammāni suvibhattāni bhāgaso nānādhaññassa pūretvā brāhmaṇānaṃ adā dhanaṃ. te ca tattha dhanaṃ laddhā sannidhiṃ samarocayuṃ, tesaṃ icchāvatiṇṇānaṃ bhiyyo taṇhā pavaḍḍhatha. te tattha mante ganthetvā okkākaṃ punam upagamuṃ: yathā āpo ca paṭhavī ca hiraññaṃ dhanadhāniyaṃ, evaṃ gāvo manussānaṃ, parikkhāro so hi pāṇinaṃ, yajassu, bahu te vittaṃ, yajassu, bahu te dhanaṃ.*

Thus according to the *Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta*, ritual violence as a scripturally legitimated practice is the end result of the brahmins' moral decay, and this is likely to be the reason why the YBh interprets alloxody no. 8, the brahmins' *hiṃsādharmavāda*, as typical of the *kaliyuga*.

2.3. The second allodoxy connected to the *kaliyuga* pertains to the caste-classes and targets the brahmins' claims to socio-religious superiority (*agravāda*). According to the YBh, the *kaliyugikā brāhmaṇāḥ* hold the following bombastic discourse:

> Brahmins are the best caste-class; [any] other caste-class is inferior. Brahmins are the white caste-class; [any] other caste-class is black. Brahmins are pure; non-brahmins are not. Brahmins are the sons of Brahman, [his] legitimate [sons], born of [his] mouth, born of Brahman, created by Brahman. [Brahmins are] Brahman's retinue.[25]

The issue of the brahmins' monopoly over whiteness and purity is reminiscent of a passage from the *Mahābhāṣya* (MBhāṣya), in which the grammarian Patañjali mentions light-coloured (*gaura*) complexion and pure conduct (*śucyācāra*) as characteristic marks of brahmins.[26] As for the brahmins' genealogical claim to go back to the (mouth of the) primordial Brahman itself or to Prajāpati, it goes as far back as *Ṛgveda* 10.90 and is criticised at length in numerous Buddhist sources.[27] Such is the background of the YBh's critique of the End-Time brahmins' pride in caste. The brahmins of old (the Vedic *ṛṣi*s or "seers", among others) did not need to resort to birth or to any kind of argument, whether "biological", genealogical or other, in order to justify their (then real) charisma.[28] They had *become* brahmins through the excellence of their discernment (*prajñā*), morality (*śīla*), asceticism (*tapas*), truthfulness (*satya*), compassion (*dayā*, *karuṇā*) and control of the senses (*in-*

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tato ca rājā saññatto brāhmaṇehi rathesabho nekā satasahassiyo gāvo yaññe aghātayi. Translation (slightly modified) from Norman, *Early Buddhist Poems*, 50–51. See also Masefield, *Divine Revelation*, 152–153 (SN IV.117–118 presents a different account of the fall).

25 YBh 155,8–10, $YBh_{T/D}$ 78a7–b2/$YBh_{T/P}$ 90b6–7: *brāhmaṇā agro varṇaḥ / hīno 'nyavarṇaḥ / brāhmaṇāḥ śuklo varṇaḥ / kṛṣṇo 'nyo varṇaḥ / brāhmaṇāḥ śudhyante nābrāhmaṇāḥ / brāhmaṇā brahmaṇaḥ putrā aurasā mukhato jātā brahmajā brahmanirmitā brahmapārṣadā iti* /. For text-critical notes, see Eltschinger, "*Yogācārabhūmi* against Allodoxies 1," 223, n. 151. The canonical sources for this are *sutta*s such as MN II.84 (*Madhurasutta*) and MN II.148 (*Assalāyanasutta*).

26 See MBhāṣya I.411,18, Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection*, 355–356, Eltschinger, "*Caste" et philosophie bouddhique*, 111 and n. 302, and Eltschinger, *Caste and Buddhist Philosophy*, 111 and n. 145. Note, however, that Patañjali (MBhāṣya I.411,16–17) seems to regard asceticism (*tapas*), learning (*śruta*) and birth (*yoni*) as the only true marks of brahmanity; he who lacks asceticism and learning is a brahmin by birth only (*jātibrāhmaṇa eva saḥ*).

27 See Eltschinger, "*Caste" et philosophie bouddhique*, 48–55 and Eltschinger, *Caste and Buddhist Philosophy*, 42–49 (MBh 3.187.13 is to be added to the references).

28 The VS (133.7–8) lists seven factors a brahmin could possibly rely upon in order to justify his brahmanity/superiority: soul/life principle (*jīva*), birth (*jāti*), body (*śarīra*), knowledge (*jñāna*), (good) conduct (*ācāra*), action (*karman*) and Veda. The rest of the text is a refutation of each of these criteria.

driyasaṃyama). These are all Buddhist values, which explains why the "true brahmin" in most Buddhist texts is generally none other than the Buddhist saint (*arhat*) himself.[29] Indeed, this also accords with a famous Buddhist etymology of the word *brāhmaṇa*:

> one recognises the [true] brahmin neither on account of [his] matted hair nor on account of [his] clan/lineage nor on account of [his] birth/caste, but rather[, the true brahmin is he] who entirely expels [all] sins[, both] subtle and gross. And [it is precisely] because he has expelled [all] sins [that] he is called a 'brahmin'.[30]

As the Buddha has it in the Uv, "I do not call a "[true] Brahmin" [he who is] born in a [brahmin woman's] womb [and] originates from a [brahmin] mother."[31] Much to the contrary,

> I call a '[true] brahmin' he who knows [his] previous abodes [in *saṃsāra*] and sees heaven and hell(/bad destinies) – for? a sage has obtained the destruction of [re]birth [and] applies himself to the higher forms of knowledge – [and who] discerns the end of suffering. I call a '[true] brahmin' he who, unattached, well-gone [and] awakened, entirely knows [the living beings'] fall [from one existence] and rebirth [in another].[32]

Possessing the six "higher forms of knowledge" (*abhijñā*, among which the recollection of one's previous existences [*pūrvanivāsānusmṛti*] and the knowledge of the living beings' rise and fall in *saṃsāra* [*cyutyupapattijñāna*] are alluded to in this passage) is a characteristic feature of liberated Buddhist saints such as *arhat*s and *buddha*s.[33] Moreover, the reference made by this and other texts to the destruction of suffering and their use of epithets such as *sugata* and *buddha* make the identifi-

29 On the "true Brahmin" and the connected issue of the degeneration of brahmins, see Masson, *Bouddhisme: chemin de liberation*, 97ff., Masefield, *Divine Revelation*, 150ff., and Eltschinger, *"Caste" et philosophie bouddhique*, 164–166 ≈ Eltschinger, *Caste and Buddhist Philosophy*, 164–167. The *Soṇadaṇḍasutta* (DN I.111–126) belongs to the most important canonical sources concerning the true brahmin.

30 Uv 33.8: *na jaṭābhir na gotreṇa na jātyā brāhmaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ / yas tu vāhayate pāpāny aṇusthūlāni sarvaśaḥ / vāhitatvāt tu pāpānāṃ brāhmaṇo vai nirucyate //*. On this etymology, see Balbir, "Discours étymologique dans l'hétérodoxie indienne," 132–133, and for additional references, Eltschinger, *"Caste" et philosophie bouddhique*, 17, n. 25 ≈ Eltschinger, *Caste and Buddhist Philosophy*, 8, n. 17.

31 Uv 33.15ab: *bravīmi brāhmaṇaṃ nāhaṃ yonijaṃ mātṛsambhavam /*.

32 Uv 33.47–48: *pūrvenivāsaṃ yo vetti svargāpāyāṃś ca paśyati / atha jātikṣayaṃ prāpto hy abhijñāvyavasito muniḥ / duḥkhasyāntaṃ prajānāti bravīmi brāhmaṇaṃ hi tam // cyutiṃ yo vetti sattvānām upapattiṃ ca sarvaśaḥ / asaktaḥ sugato buddho bravīmi brāhmaṇaṃ hi tam //*.

33 See, however, Eltschinger, *Dharmakīrti sur les mantra*, 71–72 (and n. 295). According to the Sarvāstivādins and the Vātsīputrīyas, non-Buddhist saints may possess the five higher forms of knowledge – but, of course, not the sixth, the knowledge of the destruction of the influxes [*āsravakṣayajñāna*], the equivalent to *nirvāṇa* – something which the Dharmaguptakas and the Mahīśāsakas seem to deny. *pañcābhijña* ("possessed with the five higher forms of knowledge") is a standard epithet of the *ṛṣi*s.

cation of the true brahmins with holy Buddhist figures even more explicit. Having become brahmins on account of their virtue and spiritual achievements, these personalities had no need to legitimise themselves by resorting to biology, obstetrics and genealogy. In other words, the Buddhists "criticised pseudo-brahmins, brahmins whose decadence begged for a substitution of self-legitimacy based on the excellence of one's birth by a self-legitimacy based on spiritual excellence".[34]

2.4. The third passage witnessing a polemical use of the *kaliyuga* occurs in a Mahāyānasūtra, the BGUVVNSū or *Satyakaparivarta*.[35] But let us firstly see how the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (BoBh) characterises the corruption of the false views:

> Nowadays numerous counterfeits of the good law appear which, presupposing the conclusion that (a) [certain] wrong law(s) is(/are) beneficial, lead to the demise of the good law, to the disappearance of the good law.[36]

This description combines two familiar components of Buddhist eschatology: the cosmological motif of the five corruptions and the prophetic/apocalyptic motif of the demise of the good law. But, contrary to the traditional accounts of the latter, which make disruptive forces internal to the Buddhist community responsible for this (gradual) disappearance, the factor blamed in the BoBh consists in the appearance of "counterfeits of the good law", i.e. pseudo- or maybe even anti-Buddhist teachings that were mistakenly considered beneficial. The BoBh does not commit itself to identifying these "wrong laws". But this or a very similar statement was the source of an interesting *kaliyuga* passage that occurs in the sixth chapter of the BGUVVNSū, which deals with royal ethics (**rājanīti*, Tib. *rgyal po'i tshul*) and identifies the "counterfeits of the good law" as (the) *arthaśāstra*(s), i.e. "Treatise(s) on [politico-economic] Profit/Success":[37]

34 Eltschinger, *Caste and Buddhist Philosophy*, 167.

35 On this *sūtra*, see *Range of the Bodhisattva*, ed. and trans. Jamspal, and Silk, "Editing and Translating a Mahāyāna Sūtra" (*Satyakaparivarta*, according to ŚS 165,17; see Silk, "Editing and Translating a Mahāyāna Sūtra," 159–161). On the Buddhist critique of the *arthaśāstra*/*Arthaśāstra*, see Zimmermann, "Mahāyānist Criticism of *Arthaśāstra*," and Eltschinger, "Politics and/in the End of Times."

36 $BoBh_D$ 173,8–10/$BoBh_W$ 253,5–7: *tadyathaitarhi saddharmapralopāya saddharmāntardhānāya saddharmapratirūpakāṇi prabhūtāni prādurbhūtāni mithyādharmārthasantīraṇāpūrvikāṇi* /.

37 The BGUVVNSū does not make clear whether *arthaśāstra* is to be understood in the singular (either as the title of a work or as a literary genre) or in the plural (referring, then, to various works with this generic title). Be that as it may, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* (AŚ 1.1.1) starts with the following statement: *pṛthivyā lābhe pālane ca yāvanty arthaśāstrāṇi pūrvācāryaiḥ prasthāpitāni prāyaśas tāni saṃhṛtyaikam idam arthaśāstraṃ kṛtam* /. "This singular Treatise on Success has been composed for the most part by drawing together the Treatises on Success composed by former teachers for gaining and administering the earth." Translation from Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law*, 63. On this topic, see *Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, ed. and trans. Kangle, 5–10 and 42–53, and Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law*, 6–8 and 25–28. Early *rājaśāstra*s ("treatises on kings") were likely authored by

> [King Caṇḍapradyota] asked: 'What is it to be confused by a wrong law (*mithyādharma*?).' [Satyaka:] 'It is to regard [it] as virtuous (*guṇadṛṣṭi*?) due to a [false] view that has been ingrained (*parivāsita*?) by [one's] adhesion (*adhimukti*, *adhimokṣa*?) to the [law] called (*sañjñita*?) Arthaśāstra, [which is] a counterfeit of the good law (*saddharmapratirūpaka*) created by wicked people during the *kaliyuga*.' [The king] asked: 'Brahmin, which are the treatises (*śāstra*) based on which a righteous (*dhārmika*?) king protects [his] subjects (*prajā*)?' Answer: 'Great King, they are [those] treatises in which the antidotes (*pratipakṣa*?) against evil desire (*ayuktarāga*?), evil aversion (*ayuktadveṣa*?) and evil delusion (*ayuktamoha*?) are expounded according to [their] nature (*svabhāva*?), [their] subdivisions (*vibhāga*) and [their] benefits (*anuśaṃsa*)'.[38]

According to this *sūtra*, only a "wheel-turning monarch" (*cakravartin*, the ideal figure of the universal ruler in Buddhism) "does not have to rely on *śāstra*s [...] when ruling his empire, due to his knowledge resulting from the *dharma* and the immaculate moral behaviour of his subjects. All other kings are in need of *śāstra*s."[39] However, the available treatises on political governance lead to harm (hence their desig-

Bṛhaspati and Uśanas/Śukra/Kāvya (see MBh 12.59.86–92 and BC 1.41), viz. the *Bārhaspatyaśāstra* and the *Auśanasaśāstra*.

38 BGUVVNSū 60b5–8 (as edited in Zimmermann, "Mahāyānist Criticism of *Arthaśāstra*," 187): *smras pa / log pa'i chos kyis 'khor ces bya ba gang yin / smras pa / don gyi bstan bcos su ming btags pa / gnod par 'gyur ba dang ldan pa / dam pa'i chos ltar bcos pa / rtsod pa'i dus na skyes bu dam pa ma lags pas bgyis pa la mos pas yongs su bgos pa'i lta bas yon tan du lta ba lags so // smras pa / bram ze bstan bcos gang la chos dang ldan pa'i rgyal pos brten cing skye dgu skyong bar byed pa'i bstan bcos gang yin / smras pa / rgyal po chen po de ni bstan bcos gang las mi rigs pa'i chags pa dang / mi rigs pa'i zhe sdang dang / mi rigs pa'i gti mug gi gnyen po'i rang bzhin nam / rab tu dbye ba'am / phan yon gyi sgo nas bstan pa ste /*. See also Zimmermann, "Mahāyānist Criticism of *Arthaśāstra*," 187, to which my translation is indebted.

39 Zimmermann, "Mahāyānist Criticism of *Arthaśāstra*," 183. On the *cakravartin*, see DN III.58–79 (Walshe, *Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 395–405; see also Nattier, *Buddhist Prophecy of Decline*, 13–15 for a summary) and *Kośa* II.196–198 and 202–203. The important *Cakkavattisīhanādasutta* associates the degeneration of political power (failing to rule *cakravartin*-wise, i.e. according to *dharma*; see DN III.61 and Walshe, *Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 396–397) with moral and physical decay (see especially DN III.64–73 and Walshe, *Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 398–402). Under the rule of several successive wheel-turning monarchs, the living beings have a 80,000-year lifespan. One day, however, a king resolves to rule "according to his own ideas" (*svamatena*) and fails to give property (*dhana*) to the needy (*adhana*). Thereupon, poverty (*dāridrya*), theft (*steya*, *adattādāna*), the use of weapons (*śastra*) and killing (*prāṇātipāta*) appear in succession; the humans' lifespan decreases to 40,000 years and their beauty vanishes. Then arise the lie (*mṛṣāvāda*, 20,000), slander (*paiśunya*, 10,000), sexual misconduct (*kāmamithyācāra*, 5,000), harsh speech (*pāruṣya*) and idle chatter (*sambhinnapralāpa*, 2,500), covetousness and malice (*abhidhyāvyāpāda*, 1,000), wrong views (*mithyādṛṣṭi*, 500), illicit desire (*adharmarāga*), improper greed (*viṣamalobha*) and wrong law(s) (*mithyādharma*, 250). From then on, people cease to honour their mothers, fathers, the ascetics, the brahmins and the elders of the family; their lifespan gradually decreases from 100 to 10 years. The humans' lifespan gradually increases again from 10 to 80,000 years after they renounce evil (*akuśala*) ways and promote wholesome actions. When their lifespan reaches 80,000, a new *cakravartin* (Śaṅkha) appears in Ketumatī (the future name of Vārāṇasī) together with the next *buddha*, Maitreya (DN III.75–76 and Walshe, *Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 403–404).

nation as "wrong laws" and "counterfeits of the good law") in that they reflect and promote the evils of desire (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣa*) and delusion (*moha*), the defilements regarded by Buddhism as ultimately responsible for the humans' bad intentions and actions. (On the contrary, Buddhism – the good law – is a genuinely beneficial *śāstra* in that it provides antidotes to these defilements and hence leads to the *summum bonum*, salvation.) According to our *sūtra*, the nefarious treatises styled *arthaśāstra*(s) are typical of the *kaliyuga*. To the best of my knowledge, the BGUVVNSū does not shed additional light on the nature of this/these *arthaśāstra*(s). Fortunately, the *sūtra* is not the only Buddhist source to exhibit some familiarity with – and bad opinion of – the *arthaśāstra*(s). In chapter 23 of his *Jātakamālā* (JM), Āryaśūra (fourth century CE) has the future Buddha (in his former birth as the religious mendicant Bodhi) criticise the *arthaśāstra*, which he also refers to as *kṣatravidyā* ("science of political power"), *kṣatranaya* ("system of political power") and *rājaśāstra* ("treatise on kings"). In this *jātaka*, evil-minded ministers try to convince their king to reject the precepts of the Bodhisattva and to embrace fatalism, theism, Jainism, annihilationism and the science of statecraft, all of which are explicitly condemned as false views (*dṛṣṭigata*). Here is Āryaśūra's introductory statement concerning what he calls the *kṣatravidyā*:

> Another [minister] instructed the [king] in the evil inclinations to crookedness in governance [which are] seen(/prescribed) in the science of political power [and which he presented] as the *dharma* of (the) king(s) although, tarnished [as they are] with cruelty[, they are] incompatible with *dharma*: 'By resorting to men as to a shady tree, one should seek fame through acts of gratitude, but only while you have no use for them. When duty calls, use them like sacrificial beasts.'[40]

A little later, Āryaśūra provides yet another short description of the *arthaśāstra*:

> This [science] allows any act to be performed, good or bad, if it leads to [personal] profit. Only after a person has raised himself up through [personal] profit should he perform(/realize) *dharma*.[41]

As we can see, the science of statecraft is represented as a cruel, unvirtuous/irreligious and cynical opportunism, which fits the bill of a *kaliyuga*-related system of knowledge. Most importantly, the JM explicitly associates this science with *kauṭilya*, literally "crookedness", the very name of the alleged author of the extant *Arthaśās-*

40 JM_K147,5–10/JM_MII.96,11–17 (together with JM *k.* 23.21): *apara enaṃ kṣatravidyāparidṛṣṭeṣu nītikauṭilyaprasaṅgeṣu nairghṛṇyamalineṣu dharmavirodhiṣv api rājadharmo 'yam iti samanuśaśāsa – chāyādrumeṣv iva nareṣu kṛtāśrayeṣu tāvat kṛtajñacaritaiḥ svayaśaḥ parīpset / nārtho 'sti yāvad upayoga*[1]*nayena teṣāṃ kṛtye tu yajña iva te paśavo niyojyāḥ* //. [1]*upayoga-* JM_M : *upabhoga-* JM_K. The above translation of JM 23.21 is borrowed from Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*, II.97.
41 JM *k.* 23.51: *anuṣṭheyaṃ hi tatreṣṭam arthārthaṃ sādhv asādhu vā / athoddhṛtya kilātmānam arthair dharmaḥ*[1] *kariṣyate* //. [1]*dharmaḥ* JM_M : *dharmaṃ* JM_K. Translation (slightly modified) Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*, II.115.

tra.[42] There is thus little doubt that by the early fourth century CE, some Buddhist *literati* were well aware of a *Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra* and interpreted it, if not always against the background of prophetic eschatology, at least as resulting from and promoting detrimental false views – one of the five *kaṣāya*s, by the way.

Note that the claim that the science of statecraft reflects gloomy historical circumstances is not entirely unparalleled, for the MBh insists that this science was made necessary by the moral degeneration that took place in the wake of the *kṛtayuga*. According to the epic, during the *kṛtayuga* "there was neither kingship nor a king, neither punishment (*daṇḍa*) nor a punisher (*daṇḍika*), and all creatures protected each other lawfully."[43] But delusion, greed (*lobha*), love (*kāma*) and desire gradually corrupted these creatures' practice and ruined their righteousness. Their inability to distinguish between duty and sin (*kāryākārya*), permitted and forbidden food (*bhakṣyābhakṣya*), allowable and unallowable speech (*vācyāvācya*), wrong and right (*doṣādoṣa*), and licit and illicit love (< *agamyāgamana*) made the recourse to (the science of) the administration of punishments necessary. And thus it is that at the gods' request, Brahman composed a work in 100,000 chapters, in which socio-religious duty (*dharma*), politico-economic profit (*artha*) and eroticism (*kāma*) were taught together with the triple Vedic science (*trayī*), the investigative science (*ānvīkṣikī*), economics (*vārttā*) and government (*daṇḍanīti*).[44] Although the MBh's and the BGUVVNSū's appreciation of this and similar works differs entirely, the two of them agree in regarding them as intrinsically connected to a period of moral and social degeneration.

2.5. The three Buddhist uses of the *kaliyuga* examined all have polemical intent. The End-Time rhetoric underlying them critically addresses elements of non-Buddhist ideologies that were also recurrently made the target of technical arguments in Buddhist canonical and scholastic literature. No less importantly, however, the Buddhist authors resorted to the *kaliyuga* imagery in order to highlight the threatening and at times even hostile nature of their historical environments. Providing present threats with End-Time related meaning and relevance – the main motivation for resorting to apocalyptic prophecies – is characteristic of two other passages belonging to Mahāyāna literature.

2.6. The first occurs in the tenth chapter (*sagāthaka*) of the LASū and resorts exclusively to the system of the four ages in order to account for both the dispensation

42 Note, in passing, that Uv 33.13 explicitly characterises the true brahmin as *niṣkauṭilya*, i.e. free from crookedness/duplicity. This, however, is very unlikely to allude to the alleged author of the *Arthaśāstra* or this textual tradition's most revered quality.

43 MBh 12.59.14: *naiva rājyaṃ na rājāsīn na daṇḍo na ca daṇḍikaḥ / dharmeṇaiva prajāḥ sarvā rakṣanti ca parasparam //*.

44 As noted by Kangle (*Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, 5), however, the epic's summary of this original treatise refers to politics and statecraft only. Moreover, according to MBh 12.59.78, the treatise was entitled *Daṇḍanīti*.

and the demise of the good law. Here is the *sūtra*'s apocalyptic prophecy concerning the latter:

> Once I have passed away, afterwards, there will be [teachers] such as Vyāsa, Kaṇāda, Ṛṣabha, Kapila and the Guide of the Śākyas. Once I have passed away, within one hundred years there will be Vyāsa as well as [his] *Bhārata*, the Pāṇḍavas, the Kauravas, Rāma and, afterwards, Kṛṣṇa. [There will be] the Mauryas, the Nandas and the Guptas, and then, the barbarians (*mlecha*) [will be] the vilest among rulers. At the end of the barbarians, [there will be] an armed conflagration (*śastrasaṅkṣobha*), and at the end of the warfare (*śastrānte*), the *kaliyuga* [will open up]. And at the end of the *kaliyuga*, the good law will no longer be cultivated by the people. [Events] such as these having taken place, the world [starts to] spin as a wheel, [and] the realm of desire is torn asunder due to the conjunction of fire and sun.[45]

This prophecy presents us with a rare and fascinating insider's look at Indian religio-philosophical, literary and political history. It takes the Buddhist dispensation to be contemporaneous with the foundation of the Sāṅkhya, Vaiśeṣika and Jaina religio-philosophical systems, and slightly earlier (?) than the most prominent epic characters (Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas, the Kauravas). It incorporates (and inverts!) some of the most significant events of ancient Indian political history (in the correct historical order: the Nanda [ca. 364–321 BCE], Maurya [ca. 321–185 BCE] and Gupta dynasties [ca. 320–500/550 CE]). The prophecy follows the dynastic thread until the advent of unspecified foreigners/barbarians, whose final disappearance coincides with the beginning of the *kaliyuga* and the gradual demise of Buddhism. The author or authors do not state at which point in the time sequence (Gupta or post-Gupta?) they are standing. Interestingly enough, none of the epic-historical events related here are interpreted as heralding or belonging to the *kaliyuga*, which quite surprisingly breaks out once all political events have come to an end – as if the *kaliyuga*, in its function as the period during which Buddhism disappears, corresponded to the end of history. Whatever the case may be, violent political events and the *kaliyuga* are substituted for the internal factors traditionally associated with the disappearance of Buddhism.

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45 LASū vv. 10.784–787: *vyāsaḥ kaṇāda ṛṣabhaḥ kapilaḥ śākyanāyakaḥ / nirvṛte mama paścāt tu bhaviṣyanty evamādayaḥ // mayi nirvṛte varṣaśate vyāso vai bhāratas tathā / pāṇḍavāḥ kauravā rāmaḥ paścāc chaurī bhaviṣyati // mauryā nandāś ca guptāś ca tato mlecchā nṛpādhamāḥ / mlecchānte śastrasaṅkṣobhaḥ śastrānte ca kalir yugaḥ / kaliyugānte lokaiś ca saddharmo hi na bhāvitaḥ // evamādyāny atītāni cakravad bhramate jagat / vahnyādityasamāyogāt kāmadhātur vidīryate //*. Let it be noted that the events following the disappearance of the good law and, more specifically, what can probably be interpreted as the final cataclysm and the rise of a new *kṛtayuga* betray a strong alignment with non-Buddhist standards (LASū v. 10.788–789ab: *punaḥ saṃsthāsyate divyaṃ tasmin lokaḥ pravartsyate / cāturvarṇā nṛpendrāś ca ṛṣayo dharmam eva ca // vedāś ca yajñaṃ dānaṃ ca dharmasthā vartsyate punaḥ /*): "Heaven will come again, and within it the world will proceed [again, together with] the four caste-classes, the kings, the *ṛṣi*s and the *dharma*. The Vedas, the sacrifice and giving, as well as virtuous [people], will re-arise."

2.7. The LASū is not the only late-fifth- to sixth-century *sūtra* reflecting a Buddhist apocalyptic/prophetic use of the *kaliyuga*. In a very suggestive passage, the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* (KVSū), a Mahāyānist scripture dealing with the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara's miraculous endeavours for the sake of the living beings, Hindu deities, most importantly Śiva Maheśvara, are reported to originate from Avalokiteśvara.[46] To Śiva, Avalokiteśvara delivers the following prophecy:

> O Maheśvara, you will be there when the Kaliyuga arrives. Born as the primary god (*ādideva*) in the realm of wretched beings you will be called Creator and Agent [of the world]. All beings who will hold the following discourse among the common people will be deprived of the path to awakening: 'Space they say is the *liṅga* [phallus, VE], the earth his pedestal (*pīṭhikā*); it is the dwelling (*ālaya*) of all beings. Because of merging (*līyanāt*) into it, it is called *liṅga*.'[47]

Most telling is our passage's explicit association of Śiva and Śaivism with the *kaliyuga*. Indeed, as recent and ongoing research by Alexis Sanderson shows, Śaivism appears to be the most successful Indic religion from at least the sixth century onwards, with its increasing

> appeal to royal patrons by extending and adapting its repertoire to contain a body of rituals and theory that legitimated, empowered, or promoted key elements of the social, political and economic process that characterises the early medieval period.[48]

To put it in other words, from this period on Śaivism is the most dangerous religio-political challenge to Buddhism, which responded by adopting and adapting Śaiva elements in order to shape an esoteric synthesis of its own. As we can see, the KVSū's apocalyptic prophecy presents a threatening feature of the immediate religio-historical environment – the rise of Śaivism to dominance and the concomitant struggle for patronage – as an unmistakable sign of the End. Let it be noted that the

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46 On the KVSū in general, see Studholme, *Origins of Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*, Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics*, 114–120 and 136–144, and Bisshop, "Buddhist and Śaiva Interactions in the Kali Age."

47 KVSū 265,4–8: *bhaviṣyasi tvaṃ maheśvara kaliyuge pratipanne / kaṣṭasattvadhātusamutpanna ādideva ākhyāyase sraṣṭāraṃ kartāram / te sarvasattvā bodhimārgeṇa viprahīṇā bhaviṣyanti ya īdṛśaṃ pṛthagjaneṣu sattveṣu sāṅkathyaṃ kurvanti // ākāśaṃ liṅgam ity āhuḥ pṛthivī tasya pīṭhikā / ālayaḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ līyanāl liṅgam ucyate //*. For text-critical notes, see Eltschinger, "Apocalypticism, Heresy and Philosophy," 71, n. 186. Translation from Bisshop, "Buddhist and Śaiva Interactions in the Kali Age," 398; see also González-Reimann, *Mahābhārata and the Yugas*, 172. On this passage, see Studholme, *Origins of Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*, 30–31, 44–45 and 123–124, Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics*, 140–144, and Bisshop, "Buddhist and Śaiva Interactions in the Kali Age;" on the verse quoted here (and especially *līyana*), see Studholme, *Origins of Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*, 19–20 and 28–29, Regamey, "Motifs vichnouites et śivaïtes," Bisshop ("Buddhist and Śaiva Interactions in the Kali Age," 400–403) succeeded in identifying the verse as a quotation from *Śivadharmaśāstra* 3.17.

48 Sanderson, "Śaiva Age," 253. See, more generally, Sanderson's detailed account in Sanderson, "Śaiva Age," 252–303, and Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics*, 106–113.

prophecy is not without a polemical dimension either, for, as we are told, adopting Śaivism makes ipso facto every progression towards enlightenment (*bodhimārga*) impossible.

2.8. Kumārila's *Tantravārttika* (TV, sixth century?) possibly reflects yet another early Buddhist use of the *kaliyuga*. In this profoundly anti-Buddhist work, the great Mīmāṃsaka controversialist quotes a half-verse from an as yet unidentifed (Mahāyāna Buddhist?) scripture (*āgama*), which apparently claimed that a/the Buddha (s) take(s) full moral and retributive responsibility for all the sins the *kaliyuga* is to be blamed for:[49] "May [all sins] done in the world due to the dirt of the *kali* age fall down upon my head, [and] may this world be freed [from them]!"[50] Nothing can be said at present on the origin of this half-stanza, but its second part may point to a Sukhāvatī connection: "May all living beings reach the Sukhāvatī [realm] with supreme delight, thanks to my own good deeds."[51] Similarly, the doctrine at stake in this citation, if any, remains obscure: is the mention of the Buddha or Buddhas taking on the sins of humans a purely rhetorical statement or does it reflect an actual belief in "demerit transference" and/or the power of confession?[52] Be that as it

49 Kumārila introduces this citation as follows (TV on MīSū 1.3.4/II.114,5): *buddhādeḥ punar ayam eva vyatikramo 'laṅkārabuddhau sthitaḥ / tenaivam āha* [...]. "As for this very transgression of the Buddha, etc., it stands(/appears) [explicitly] in the *Alaṅkārabuddhi*. Thus [it is that the Buddha] himself speaks as follows [...]." Does *Alaṅkārabuddhi* refer to a Buddhist text (*āgama*, KAṬ 6,14) and, if yes, does it allude to it in an incorrect (*-buddhau* for *-bhūmau*, *-sūtre*? *Alaṅkāra-* for *Laṅkāvatāra*?) or correct form? See the answers to Patrick Olivelle's query [July 10, 2013] on this very topic on the forum "Indology".

50 TV on MīSū 1.3.4/II.114,6–7: *kalikaluṣakṛtāni yāni loke mayi nipatantu vimucyatāṃ sa*[1] *lokaḥ* //. [1]*sa* KAṬ 6,13: *tu* TV. Translation (slightly modified) from La Vallée Poussin, "Buddhist Āgamas," 371.

51 KAṬ 6,13–14: *mama hi sucaritena sarvasattvāḥ paramasukhena sukhāvatīṃ prayāntu* //. As pointed out by Schopen, however, reference to the Sukhāvatī does not necessarily presuppose the cult of Amitābha, for "rebirth in Sukhāvatī came to be a generalized religious reward or goal [...] open to virtually any member of the Mahāyāna community as a whole [...]" (Schopen, "Sukhāvatī as a Generalized Religious Goal," 201).

52 The basic Buddhist doctrine on the subject holds that the retribution of deeds is inescapable. As the KV (30,3–5) puts it: *karmasvakān ahaṃ māṇava sattvān vadāmi / karmadāyādān karmayonīn karmapratiśaraṇān / karma māṇava sattvān vibhajati / yad idaṃ hīnotkṛṣṭamadhyamatāyām* /. "As for myself I declare, O young man, that living beings are possessors of [their] deeds, heirs to [their] deeds, born of [their] deeds, [and] based on [their] deeds. Deeds, O young man, divide the living beings, and this into [being of] vile, high, [and] middle [conditions]." But, at least according to the *Caturdharmakasūtra* referred to by Śāntideva in the ŚS (160,4), past sins can be purified (*pāpaśodhana*) or overcome (*pāpam abhibhavati*) in four ways, including the performance of self-denunciation of one's own past sins (*vidūṣaṇāsamudācāra*; see BHSD 487[b]–488[a]). The practice of self-denunciation is then minutely described in a long citation from the *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra* (SBhUSū; ŚS 160,13–164,7). It includes the following entreaty (SBhUSū v. 3.47 ≈ ŚS 163,7–8): *kleśakarmamalaṃ*[1] *mahyaṃ vāhayantu*[2] *tathāgatāḥ / snāpayantu ca māṃ buddhāḥ kāruṇyasalilo*[3]*dakaiḥ* //. [1]*-malaṃ* SBhUSū: *-phalaṃ* ŚS (see *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*, ed. Nobel, 31, n. 17). [2]*vāhayantu* SBhUSū: *pravāhayantu* ŚS (see *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*, ed. Nobel, 31, n. 18). [3]*-salilo-* SBhUSū: *-sarito-* ŚS (see *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*, ed. Nobel, 31, n. 19). "May the Tathāgatas annul the impurity(/sin)

may, the quotation suggests that, in the author's view, human beings cannot be held responsible for the defilements and hence the misdeeds into which the *kaliyuga* forces them – as if cosmological compulsions lay behind human intentions and actions. But, whatever the correct interpretation may be, Kumārila's argument is clear: by taking on all the sins perpetrated by humans during the *kaliyuga*, the Buddha disqualifies himself as a reliable teacher, for, according to the Mīmāṃsaka doctor, "how could he who deceives himself be beneficial to another".[53]

2.9. The *kaliyuga* is the subject matter of a thirteen-verse work, the *Kaliyuga-parikathā* (KP) ascribed to the famous second-century Buddhist poet and scholar Mātṛceṭa.[54] In view of its strong emphasis on the cosmological, social, political and moral conditions that are supposed to characterise the last age, this short text appears to be strongly indebted to epic and purāṇic accounts of the *kaliyuga*. The KP, at any rate, together with the *Kaliyugasaṅghātaka* (KS) to be examined below, represents one of the most developed stages ever reached by the Buddhist appropriation and incorporation of the *kaliyuga* (the term occurs at vv. 2d, 3b, 4c, 8c, 10b, 11b; *yugānta* in KP v. 11d). Cosmic and natural disorders are in the majority, and at times even regarded as having been caused by human immorality and disregard for *dharma* (a concept apparently used in a Brahmanical rather than a Buddhist sense): "rainlessness" (3a, 7c, 8d), drought (3a, 9a, 9c), the lack of harvest (3b), fruit (3c, 8d, 10d) and corn (7d), violent winds (3b, 6d), hailstorms (3c, 7c), "milklessness" of cows (7d), disorder of seasons (7d, 9c), inversion of the courses of the sun and the moon (9c). Second in number are the references to human vices and depravities, ignorance and immorality (1, 5cd, 8b, 11b and d, 12b, 13a). Issues recurring in the Brahmanical sources include women's misbehaviour (9d, 11a), plagues and illnesses (4a, 7b), the inefficacy of medicines (8a), the injustice, greed and tyranny of kings (7a, 10a, 10d), lawlessness, warfare and other threats (5b, 6c, 7ab, 8c), breaches in social and family order (10a, 11a), importance of money and wealth (2b, 5a), misplaced veneration (2a, 5ab, 6d, 9d), greediness of brahmins (11a), fear of enemies and robbers (7a), etc. While these purely secular concerns represent more than ninety per cent of the whole, allusions to properly Buddhist motifs (*bhadrakalpa* 4c, 4d, 11bc, 12; Māra v. 13) and to the decline of the good law are comparatively few in

of my evil deeds for me; may the Buddhas wash me clean in the flowing waters of mercy." Translation (slightly modified) from *Śikshā-Samuccaya*, ed. Bendall and Rouse, 160. As we can see, the belief in the Buddhas' capacity to remove people's sins is relatively well attested. In the case of the Sukhāvatī, it is the merit (*puṇya*) engendered by the (future) Buddha's (Dharmākara/Amitābha) vows and their realisation that is believed to empty the living beings of "karmic defilements and passions" (*Three Pure Land Sutras*, ed. and trans. Inagaki, 37) and create the Sukhāvatī world-system itself.

53 TV on MīSū 1.3.4/v. 270cd, II.114,4: *ātmānaṃ yo 'tisandhatte so 'nyasmai syāt kathaṃ hita iti* //.

54 On Mātṛceṭa, see *Varṇārhavarṇastotra des Mātṛceṭa*, ed. and trans. Hartmann. According to Dietz (*Mātṛceṭas Kaliyugaparikathā*, 173), "[d]ie Authentizität der Autorschaft des Mātṛceṭa läßt sich nicht mit Sicherheit nachweisen", and no parallel to the Stotras of Mātṛceṭa can be identified.

number. As far as I can see, only parts of verses 5 and 6 deserve to be mentioned in this connection: "Deceivers will cause the demise of the good law,"[55] and: "Those who live in [moral] restraint [and] turn to the supreme teaching [will be very] few [in number]. There can be no doubt that the teaching of the Seer will decline in a short time."[56] The KP gives every impression of being a rather late work modelled on Brahmanical prophecies and of providing a very weakly "buddhicised" account of the *kaliyuga*.

2.10. The *Kaliyugasaṅghātaka* (KS), whose unknown author was apparently familiar with the KP, is yet another late (eleventh century CE?) Buddhist monograph on the *kaliyuga*.[57] Contrary to the (pseudo-)Mātṛceṭa's KP, the KS concentrates on the dramatic increase in human vices and their deleterious effects, but hardly ever alludes to cosmic disasters except by way of similes or metaphors.[58] Similarly, the KS makes no mention whatsoever of the demise of the good law, the Buddhists' most central apocalyptic concern. As far as I am aware, the work alludes three times to the *kaliyuga* (*kali* in v. 11; *kaliyuga* in v. 17; *kaliyugakāla* in v. 49) and twice to the *yugānta* (vv. 18 and 44). During the *kaliyuga*, the world knows "[n]o distinction [...] between rights and wrongs"[59] or between humans and animals.[60] At that time, "[t]he swords of *adharma* fall from all sides. Broken into pieces are the barriers of *dharma*".[61] And, indeed, virtues and virtuous people (*guṇa*, *guṇavat*, *āḍhyaguṇa*, vv. 9, 10, 11, 20, 22, 30, 37), good conduct (*samyagvṛtta*, v. 1), good deeds (*satkriyā*,

55 KP v. 5d: *g.yon can rnams kyis dam chos bsnub par 'gyur* /.

56 KP v. 6ab: *gang zhig sdom pa la gnas bstan pa'i mchog la 'jug par byed pa nyung* / *the tshom yod min drang srong bstang pa ring por mi thogs nub par 'gyur* /.

57 The KS's 50 verses were likely the work of a (Nepalese?) poet who was either "a Buddhist, or at least ha[d] studied a number of Buddhist texts" (Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 103–104), among which might have been Vasubandhu's AKBh (see Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 116, n. 12). KS v. 43 imitates KP v. 12 (see Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 124, n. 46).

58 Note KS v. 18cd: *yugāntasūryā iva dīptaraśmayaḥ pradīpayantīva mahīm asādhavaḥ* //. "It appears the wicked are burning the earth, [l]ike many suns with burning rays at the end of the age." Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 118. Other hybrid examples include KS v. 3ab (*timiram abhibhavati ruciram atipatati* /. "Darkness overshadows, brightness flies past." Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 115) and v. 6 (*naddheva phalapuṣpeṇa bhū rajastamasor iyam* / *sattvasya phalapuṣpe tu patito vāsavāśaniḥ* //. "This land seems covered with fruit [a]nd flower of *rajas* and *tamas*, [b]ut upon the fruit and flower of *sattva* has landed the thunderbolt of Vāsava." Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 115).

59 KS v. 11d^2: *tulyam asatāṃ ca satāṃ ca*. Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 117.

60 Note KS v. 36: *bhayarasaratisañjñā mānuṣāṇāṃ samānāḥ khagamṛgapaśusaṅghair hrīr nṛṇāṃ bhūṣaṇaṃ tu* / *tad api sugaticihnaṃ dūṣitaṃ ced anāryaiḥ ka iva bata narāṇāṃ kaḥ paśūnāṃ viśeṣaḥ* //. "The human sensations of fear, taste, and love [a]re equal to those of birds, and wild or tamed animals, [b]ut modesty is the unique ornament of men. If that very mark of humanity is spoiled by ignoble men, [w]hat is, alas, the difference between men and animals?" Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 122.

61 KS v. 8ab: *paripatanty adharmanistriṃśāḥ śakalīkṛtā dharmasetavaḥ* /. Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 116.

sukṛta, *sucarita*, vv. 2, 3, 43), good manners (*sādhuvṛtta*, v. 49) and good people (*sajjana*, *satpuruṣa*, *sādhu*, vv. 9, 10, 18, 19) are disappearing; uprightness (*sādhutā*, v. 4), nobility (*bhadratā*, *āryatā*, vv. 2, 12) and the "manner of behaviours of the nobles" (*āryavyavahāranīti*, v. 46) are fading away, as too are good dispositions such as affection (*sauhṛda*, v. 5), friendship (*saṅgata*, v. 5), reverence (*gaurava*, v. 5), assistance (*upakāra*, v. 26), serving others' interests (*parahita*, v. 21), consent (*saṃmata*, v. 5), discipline/modesty (*vinaya*, v. 8) and piety (*śuci*, v. 26). During the *kaliyuga*, "only a few civilised men have remained",[62] and "even intelligent people, being afflicted [b]y the fear of finding no means of subsistence, although their minds are embraced by scriptures, set out to go by the same path that the wicked have trampled".[63] The KS's depiction of the *kaliyuga* covers the whole array of human vices, defilements and perversities. Humans exhibit faulty views (*duṣṭadṛṣṭi*, v. 31), insanity (*pramāda*, v. 44) and stupidity (*mauḍhya*, v. 35). Vices (*mala*, vv. 9–10), bad deeds (*vikriyā*, vv. 2, 31), evil (*kukṛta*, v. 3) and defilements (*doṣa*, v. 20) are increasing together with delusion (*moha*, v. 7), unlawful lusts (*adharmarāga*, v. 7) and depraved longings (*viṣamalobha*, v. 7). Those bad people (*durjana*, v. 9) who are destitute of virtues (*aguṇavat*, v. 11) and enemies of virtues (*guṇadviṣ*, v. 37) get the upper hand, following wrong paths (*kāpatha*, *asatpatha*, vv. 9, 31, 45, 49), the path of impurity (*avyavadānacārin*, v. 19). Cruel (*krūra*, *ghṛṇa*, vv. 29, 45) and merciless (*niranunaya*, v. 29), these wicked people are moved by their taste for wealth and money (*bhūti*, *vitta*, *dhana*, vv. 25, 27, 33): "[i]n whichever manner worldly affairs, [t]heir strides entangled with money, [a]vail themselves to the six measures of success, [i]n that very manner the world moves."[64] People in the *kaliyuga* are overwhelmed by all possible forms of conceit: self-satisfaction (*svatṛptatā*, v. 30), arrogance (*svadṛptatā*, *avalepa*, vv. 30, 32), pride (*mada*, vv. 32, 44, 47) and conceit (*māna*, v. 32). Similarly, they exhibit all varieties of dishonesty and untruth (*anṛta*, v. 46): cheats (*kitava*, v. 39) and villains (*pāmara*, v. 48), skilled in deception (*vañcanāpaṇḍita*, v. 48) and brought up in the skills of trickery (*kalikalākauśalodbhāvita*, v. 48), they act out of trickery (*māyā*, vv. 44, 46) and deceit (*śāṭhya*, vv. 44, 47). During this inauspicious period, humans are full of ingratitude (*kṛtaghnatā*, v. 30), malice (*vyāpāda*, v. 47), vehemence (*samrambha*, v. 47) and savagery (*raudratā*, v. 2), and act out of self-interest alone (*svahita*, v. 21). With sinful intentions (*pāpāśaya*, v. 41), they give themselves up to theft (*steya*, *parimoṣa*, vv. 32, 45, 47), offences (*vinikāra*, v. 39), abuse (*kṣepa*, v. 32), (female) adultery (*vyabhicāra*, v. 45), insult (*pāruṣya*, v. 46), backbiting (*paiśunya*, v. 46), and diverse forms of misconduct (*anaya*, v. 37) and evil (*vyasana*, v. 33). In short, "[t]he words of the wise con-

62 KS v. 7d: *kati cid eva śiṣṭāḥ śiṣṭāḥ*. Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 116.

63 KS v. 34bd: *medhāvino 'pi yad avṛttibhayāvasannāḥ / śāstropagūḍhamatayo 'pi pathā pravṛttās tenaiva durjanajanaprahatena gantum //*. Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 122.

64 KS v. 15ac: *yathā yathārthapratibaddhayānā prasiddhiṣāḍguṇyam upaiti yātrā / prayāti loko 'dya tathā tathāyam* [...] //. Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 118. On the six measures of success of the *Arthaśāstra*, see Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 118, n. 19.

versant with the truth have almost faded out. This world has become melancholic as if the feast were over."[65]

2.11. With the *Kālacakratantra*, which presents itself as "a yoga for the liberation of men at the time of the *kaliyuga*,"[66] the Buddhist appropriation of the *kaliyuga* reached its apex. The earliest parts of the *Wheel of Time Tantra*, which is often regarded as the last great revelation cycle in Buddhist India, date back to the late-tenth or early eleventh century.[67] They reflect their authors' or milieu's strong concern about the first Muslim campaigns and about Brahmanism/Hinduism gradually getting the upper hand in its age-old competition with Buddhism.[68] This dual threat permeates the Tantra's eschatology, which "presents a prophetic vision in which Buddhism, allied with a subordinated Hinduism, triumphs over the 'barbarian' religion of Islam in a final apocalyptic war."[69] As a point of fact, the *Kālacakratantra* is well known for providing the most developed account of Islamic (likely Ismā'īlī, perhaps from Multān) doctrines and practices in pre-Islamic or, at any rate, Buddhist India.[70] *Kālacakra* literature describes the Muslim barbarians' abhorrent diet (involving animal sacrifice), violent iconoclasm and strange customs (such as circum-

65 KS v. 43cd: *parimlānaprāyā budhajanakathā tattvanipuṇā nirānandaṃ jātaṃ jagad idam atītotsavam iva* //. Translation from Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*, 124.

66 LKT 1.1d (VP I.30,27): *yogaṃ* [...] *kaliyugasamaye muktihetor narāṇām*. Translation from Newman, "Islam in the Kālacakra Tantra," 331.

67 On Kālacakra literature, see Sferra, "Kālacakra."

68 A comparable motif occurs in a letter in which Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1365–1448) answers Byang chub seng ge's (1372[/1377]–1439) question as to whether Marpa ever met the great Indian *siddha* Nāropa (the author alludes here to the time of the [five] degenerations/corruptions, not to the *kaliyuga* proper) (*Sa skya bka' 'bum*, vol. 7, 429, l. 4): /*sngigs ma'i dus su gyur pas na*/ /*dbus 'gyur kla klos rgyal po bcom*/ /*chos ltar bcos pas sa stengs gang*/ /*chos bzhin de la skur ba 'debs*/. "Since this is the evil time, the barbarian [Turk] king is victorious in Magadha. He falsifies religion and spreads it [Islam] all over, vilifying true practitioners." Translation from Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 146. Thanks are due to the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (www.tbrc.org) for making the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* accessible.

69 Newman, "Eschatology in the Wheel of Time Tantra," 202. Note also Newman, "Eschatology in the Wheel of Time Tantra," 203–204: "Like many other prophetic, eschatological traditions, the Wheel of Time Tantra responded to contemporary religious, social, and political tensions by projecting them and their resolution onto an idealized future. The Buddhist author of the *Wheel of Time* was greatly troubled by the decline of Buddhism vis-à-vis Hinduism, and by the ominous appearance of marauding Muslim armies on the western borders of India. Earlier Buddhist eschatology (the prophecy of the future Buddha Maitreya) provided no clear solution to these problems, so the Wheel of Time presented its own creative response. By adapting a Hindu myth to counter the threat of Islam, the Buddhists hoped to draw Hindus into the Buddhist camp to face a new common enemy. Whereas the Hindu myth of Kalki was devised to assert the caste privileges of the brahmans, the Buddhist myth attempted to unite all Indians against a foreign invader. Although this strategy met with no great success in India, the myth of the Kalkins of Sambhala lives on among the Tibetan and Mongol followers of the Wheel of Time."

70 On the *Kālacakratantra*'s depiction of Islam, see Newman, "Islam in the Kālacakra Tantra;" see also Sferra and Luo, "Materials for the Study of the *Paramārthasevā*," 237–238.

cision), but also mentions their heroism, truthfulness, asceticism and egalitarianism (absence of caste system). In stanzas 1.154–155, the Buddha prophesies the future development of Islam, which he refers to as the barbarian religion/law (*mlecchadharma*; the Muslim barbarians are known as the Tāyins[71]) preached by Muḥammad alias Madhumati(/-pati), the incarnation of (Allah) al-Raḥmān (*rahmaṇāvatāra*):[72]

> Adam, Nūḥ, and Ibrāhīm [are the first three barbarian teachers]; there are also five others whose nature is *tamas* [darkness, VE] in the family of demonic snakes: Mūsā, ʿĪsā, the White-Clad One,[73] Muḥammad, and the Mahdī, who will be the eighth – he will belong to the darkness. The seventh will clearly be born in the city of Baghdād in the land of Makka, where the demonic incarnation – the mighty, merciless idol of the barbarians – lives in the world. [The barbarians] kill camels, horses, and cattle, and briefly cook the flesh with blood. They cook beef and amniotic fluid with butter and spice, rice mixed with vegetables, and forest fruit, all at once on the fire. Men eat that, O king, and drink bird eggs, in the place of the demon [barbarians].[74]

The early eleventh-century authors of the *Laghukālacakratantra* (LKT) and the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary (VP) adapted ancient India's most popular messianic myth, that of the advent of Kalki(n) at the end of the *kaliyuga*. This Brahmanical myth has its *locus classicus* in the third book of the *Mahābhārata*, at the close of the great epic's most detailed description of the *kaliyuga*:

> Then, when the Eon is closing amidst terrifying destruction, the world begins gradually to regenerate from the brahmins onward. At this time fate once more turns favorable in order to prosper the world again. When sun, moon, Tiṣya, and Jupiter are in conjunction in the same sign of the zodiac, the Kṛta age will begin again. Parjanya rains in season, the stars are favorable, and the planets, making their orbit, are propitious. There will be safety, plenty of food, and health without sickness. A brahmin by the name of Kalki Viṣṇuyaśas will arise, prodded by Time, of great prowess, wisdom, and might. He will be born in the village of Sambhala, in a pious brahmin dwelling, and at his mere thought all vehicles, weapons, warriors, arms, and coats of mail will wait on him. He will be king, a Turner of the Wheel, triumphant by the Law,

71 On the etymology of *tāyin*, a word denoting peoples of western Asia (Tib. *stag gzig*, not *skyob pa*, from Arabic *ṭayyi*, perhaps reinforced by the ethnony *tājika*, "Tajik"), see Seyfort Ruegg, *Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, 115, n. 156, and Newman, "Islam in the Kālacakra Tantra," 316–319, 333 (318: "'Tāyin,' like 'Tājika,' is a somewhat vague ethnonym referring collectively to the Muslim Turks, Persians, and Arabs of the northwestern borderlands of the Indian world.")

72 An epithet for Allah meaning "the Benefactor".

73 The identity of the White-Clad One remains obscure; see Newman, "Islam in the Kālacakra Tantra," 321–322.

74 LKT 1.154–155 (VP I.153,15–22, as edited in Newman, "Islam in the Kālacakra Tantra," 352): *ardo nogho varāhī danubhujagakule tāmasānye 'pi pañca mūṣeśau śvetavastrī madhumati mathanī yo 'ṣṭamaḥ so 'ndhakaḥ syāt / sambhūtiḥ saptamasya sphuṭa makhaviṣaye vāgadādau nagaryāṃ yasyāṃ loke 'surāṃśī nivasati balavān nirdayo mlecchamūrtiḥ // uṣṭrāśvau gāś ca hatvā sarudhirapiśitaṃ śuddhapakvaṃ hi kiñcit gomāṃsaṃ sūtatoyaṃ ghṛtakaṭukasamaṃ taṇḍulaṃ śākamiśram / ekasmin vahnipakvaṃ vanaphalasahitaṃ yatra bhojyaṃ narāṇāṃ pānaṃ cāṇḍaṃ khagānāṃ bhavati narapate tatpadaṃ cāsurāṇām //*. Translation from Newman, "Islam in the Kālacakra Tantra," 320 and 319, to be compared with Newman, "Eschatology in the Wheel of Time Tantra," 206.

> and he will bring this turbulent world to tranquillity. That rising brahmin, blazing, ending the destruction, noble-minded, will be the destruction of all and the revolver of the Eon. Surrounded by brahmins, that brahmin will extirpate all the lowly barbarians, wherever they are.[75]

From this myth, the *Kālacakra* retained (and reinterpreted) the figure of Kalki(n), his relation to *kāla* ("Time") and brahmins, Sambhala as his fiefdom (no longer a small village, but a big territory with Kalāpa as its capital city), and the leading role he played in the extirpation of the barbarians (now the Muslim Tāyins). According to the *Wheel of Time Tantra*, the bodhisattva Sucandra, to whom the Buddha preached the Tantra, was the first emperor and Dharma-king of Sambhala. His eighth successor, Yaśas, "unified all the brahman families of Sambhala within a single Buddhist Adamantine Vehicle clan",[76] for which he was given the title of *kalkin* (now an epithet[77] applying to the 25 successive rulers of Sambhala[78]). The twenty-fifth *kalkin*, Raudracakrin, is the one who, at the very end of the *kaliyuga*, will come out of Sambhala and, with the help of the Hindu gods, crush the Mahdī Kṛnmati's irreligious barbarians (he is described as *mlecchadharmāntakṛt*, "destroyer of the barbarian religion/law" in VP I.26,3) in what John Newman has called "a righteous crusade".

The Armageddon is described in LKT 1.159–164:

> At the end of the age, among those Kalkins, at the end of twenty-five reigns, the wrathful Kalkin Cakrin, lord of the gods, honored by the best gods, will appear in the lineage of Kalkins. His peaceful form will delight the righteous; he will annihilate the race of barbarians. Cakrin, mounted on a mountain horse, a short spear in his hand, radiant as the sun, will strike all the foes. When eight Kalkins have reigned, the barbarian religion will certainly appear in the land of Mecca. Then, at the time of the wrathful Kalkin Cakrin and the vicious barbarian lord, a fierce battle will occur on earth. At the end of the age Cakrin, the universal emperor, will come out from Kalāpa, the city of the gods built on Mount Kailāsa. He will attack the barbarians in battle with his four-division army. The Hindu gods Śiva, Skanda, Ganeśa, and Viṣṇu will assist

75 MBh 3.188.85–93: *tatas tumulasaṅghāte vartamāne yugakṣaye / dvijātipūrvako lokaḥ krameṇa prabhaviṣyati // tataḥ kālāntare 'nyasmin punar lokavivṛddhaye / bhaviṣyati punar daivam anukūlaṃ yadṛcchayā // yadā candraś ca sūryaś ca tathā tiṣyabṛhaspatī / ekārāśau sameṣyanti prapatsyati tadā kṛtam // kālavarṣī ca parjanyo nakṣatrāṇi śubhāni ca / pradakṣiṇā grahāś cāpi bhaviṣyanty anulomagāḥ / kṣemaṃ subhikṣam ārogyaṃ bhaviṣyati nirāmayam // kalkir viṣṇuyaśā nāma dvijaḥ kālapracoditaḥ / utpatsyate mahāvīryo mahābuddhiparākramaḥ // sambhūtaḥ sambhalagrāme brāhmaṇāvasathe śubhe / manasā tasya sarvāṇi vāhanāny āyudhāni ca / upasthāsyanti yodhāś ca śastrāṇi kavacāni ca // sa dharmavijayī rājā cakravartī bhaviṣyati / sa cemaṃ saṅkulaṃ lokaṃ prasādam upaneṣyati // utthito brāhmaṇo dīptaḥ kṣayāntakṛd udāradhīḥ / sa saṅkṣepo hi sarvasya yugasya parivartakaḥ // sa sarvatra gatān kṣudrān brāhmaṇaiḥ parivāritaḥ / utsādayiṣyati tadā sarvān mlecchagaṇān dvijaḥ //*. Translation from *Mahābhārata*, trans. Buitenen, 597.

76 Newman, "Eschatology in the Wheel of Time Tantra," 203.

77 On the etymology of *kalkin*, see Seyfort Ruegg, *Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, 121, n. 160.

78 On this list, see VP I.25,9–26,3 Newman, "Brief History of Kālacakra," 81–82 and Reigle, *Lost Kālacakra Mūla Tantra*.

Kalkin, as will the mountain horses, elephant masters, kings in gold chariots, and armed warriors. There will be ninety million dappled mountain horses swift as the wind, four hundred thousand elephants drunk with wine, five hundred thousand chariots, six great armies, and ninety-six crowned kings. Kalkin, with Śiva and Viṣṇu, will annihilate the barbarians with this army. Ferocious warriors will strike the barbarian horde. Elephant lords will strike elephants; mountain horses will strike the horses of Sindh; kings will strike kings in equal and unequal combat. Hanūmān, son of Mahācandra, will strike Aśvatthāman with sharp weapons. Rudra will strike the protector of the barbarian lord, the master of all the demons. The wrathful Kalkin will strike Kṛnmati. Kalkin, with Viṣṇu and Śiva, will destroy the barbarians in battle with his army. Then Cakrin will return to his home in Kalāpa, the city the gods built on Mount Kailāsa. At that time everyone on earth will be fulfilled with religion, pleasure, and prosperity. Grain will grow in the wild, and trees will bow with everlasting fruit – these things will occur.[79]

3 Buddhas and/at the End Times

3.1. Do *buddha*s appear at the end of sub-eons[80]? Vasubandhu's AKBh, which reflects the Kashmirian Sarvāstivādin/Vaibhāṣika orthodoxy, is very clear about this. First, *buddha*s never preach during the periods of increasing human lifespan (*utkarṣakāla*), because then the living beings are not responsive to the Buddhist dispensation (a therapeutics of suffering) since they are not frightened by painful existence.[81] Second, *buddha*s never appear when the human lifespan decreases beyond one hundred years,

79 LKT 1.159–164 (VP I.154,9–155,8): *tanmadhye pañcaviṃśatkramaparigaṇite viṣṭarāṇāṃ yugānte kalkīgotre sureśvaḥ suravaranamito raudrakalkī bhaviṣyat / sādhūnāṃ śāntarūpaḥ sukhada iti tathaivāntako mlecchajāteḥ śailāśvārūḍhacakrī hanadarisakalaṃ sellahasto 'rkatejāḥ* // 159 // *kalkīgotrasya madhye karaguṇitayuge putrapautre 'py atīte tasmin kāle bhavad vai khalu makhaviṣaye mlecchadharmapravṛttiḥ / yāvan mlecchendraduṣṭaḥ suravaranamito raudrakalkī ca yāvat tasmin kāle dvayoś ca kṣititalanilaye raudrayuddhaṃ bhaviṣyat* // 160 // *yuddhe mlecchān hanan yaḥ sakalabhuvi tale cāturaṅgaiḥ svasainyaiḥ kailāsādrau yugānte suraracitapure cakravarty āgamiṣyat / rudraṃ skandaṃ gaṇendraṃ harim api ca sakhīn dāsyate kalkinā ca śailāśvān vāraṇendrān kanakarathanṛpān śastrahastān bhaṭāṃś ca* // 161 // *śailāśvair vāyuvegair guṇaguṇitaguṇaiḥ koṭivirbhiśvavarṇair vedākhyair lakṣasaṃkhyair madamuditagajaiḥ syandanair bhūtalakṣau / ṣaḍbhiś cākṣauhiṇobhī rasanavatikulair maulibaddhair narendrair etat sainyena kalkī hariharasahito mlecchanāśaṃ kariṣyat* // 162 // *hantavyaṃ mlecchavṛndaṃ varakaṭukabhaṭair vāraṇendrair gajānāṃ śailāśvaiḥ saindhavānāṃ samaviṣamaraṇe pārthivaiḥ pārthivānām / aśvatthāmā mahācandratanayahanumāṃs*[1] *tīkṣṇaśastrair haniṣyad rudro mlecchendranāthaṃ sakaladanupatiṃ kṛnmatī raudrakalkī* // 163 // *hatvā mlecchāṃś ca yuddhe hariharasahitaḥ sarvasainyaikakalkī kailāsādrau vrajiṣyat*[2] *suraracitapure saṃsthito yatra cakrī / tasmin kāle dharaṇyāṃ sakalajalakulaṃ dharmakāmārthapūrṇaṃ śasyāny āraṇyajāni sthiraphalanamitās te bhaviṣyanti vṛkṣāḥ* // 164 //. [1]*-hanumāṃs* em.: *-hanūmāṃs* (non-metrical) Ed. [2]*vrajiṣyat* em.: *vrajiyaṣyat* (sic; hypermetrical) Ed. Translation from Newman, "Eschatology in the Wheel of Time Tantra," 206–207.

80 On this notion, see above, n. 4.

81 AKBh 182,24.

> because then, the five corruptions, i.e. the corruption of the lifespan, the corruption of the eon, the corruption of the defilements, the corruption of the false views and the corruption of the living beings, become too abundant [for the *buddha*s to preach properly. For] beyond a decrease [of the humans' lifespan to one hundred years, these humans'] lifespan, etc., are too low.[82]

As a consequence, "the [*buddha*s only] appear [in the world] in [periods of] decline[, when the human beings' lifespan decreases from 80,000] to one hundred [years]."[83]

3.2.1. However, the Sarvāstivādin/Vaibhāṣika account far from exhausts the Indian Buddhists' views on the topic.[84] Some important segments of "early" Mahāyāna, maybe less scholastically but more devotionally, if not prophetically, oriented, accepted the advent of *buddha*s during the degenerate last period of an eon – one of the surest signs of their great compassion.[85] These *buddha*s allegedly appeared in

82 AKBh 183,1–3: *tadā hi pañca kaṣāyā abhyutsadā bhavanti / tadyathāyuṣkaṣāyaḥ kalpakaṣāyaḥ kleśakaṣāyo dṛṣṭikaṣāyaḥ sattvakaṣāyaś ca / apakarṣasyādhastāt pratyavarā āyurādayaḥ* [...] /. *Traité* I.299 (MPPŚ 93a) expresses the same Sarvāstivādin/Vaibhāṣika view: "[Q]uand la durée de vie dépasse 80.000 ans, les hommes vivant longtemps (*dīrghāyus*) abondent en plaisirs (*sukha*); leurs entraves: amour, désir, etc. (*rāgatṛṣṇādisaṃyojana*) sont grosses (*sthūla*) et leurs facultés sont faibles (*mṛdvindriya*). Ce n'est pas le moment de les convertir. D'autre part, quand la durée de vie est inférieure à 100 ans, les hommes ont une vie courte (*alpāyus*) et sont accablés de douleurs (*duḥkha*); leurs entraves: haine, etc. (*dveṣādisaṃyojana*) sont épaisses (*sthūla*). Cette période de plaisir [quand la vie dépasse 80.000 ans] et cette période de douleur [quand elle est inférieure à 100 ans] ne sont pas des époques favorables pour trouver le Chemin (*mārgalābha*). C'est pourquoi les Buddha n'apparaissent pas [à ces moments-là]." See also *Traité* I.574–575.

83 AK 3.94a$_2$b: *apakarṣe hi śatād yāvat tadudbhavaḥ* /. The story of King Kṛkin's eleven dreams in the *Mahīśāsakavinaya* (see Chavannes, *Cinq cents contes et apologues*, 336, n. 1, and 343–349) provides a somewhat hybrid prophecy. Śākyamuni will appear when the human lifespan is one hundred years. As they are described in the *vinaya*, however, the pitiable conditions prevailing during this period are suggestive of the *pañcakaṣāya*(/*kali*) age: 1° Thirty-year-old humans will have grey hair; 2° Twenty-year-old men will beget children; 3° Children will be in command of the household; 4° Rich people will give only to the rich, not to the poor; 5° Kings and court officers will levy excessive taxes and despoil their subjects; 6° Newly married girls will have to feed their mothers; 7° Drought will prevail; 8° People will marry for money rather than according to caste); 9° Kings will be unfair and cruel; 10° Buddhist monks will have worldly interests; 11° The Buddhist law will be decaying in Madhyadeśa but thriving in the bordering areas.

84 For some Mahāyānist arguments against the Sarvāstivādin/Vaibhāṣika position, see *Traité*, 1.299–302. On the periods in which *buddha*s appear, see also Lamotte, *Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, 385–386, n. 29, and Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 86–88.

85 The lightly "mahāyānised" (Mahāsāṅghika?) *Lalitavistara* (LV, see Jong, "Recent Japanese Studies on the Lalitavistara," 252–253) may belong to this broad category. Note LV 248,13–14: *pañcakaṣāyakāle 'ham iha jambudvīpe 'vatīrṇo hīnādhimuktikeṣu sattveṣv ākīrṇatīrthyavargeṣu [...]*. "I have made my appearance in this Jambudvīpa at the time of the five corruptions, among beings of weak inclination [towards the law and] filled with multitudes of outsiders." Note also LV 17.2: *pañcasu kaṣāyakāle hīne 'dharmādhimuktike / jāto 'smiṃ jambudvīpe dharmakriya uddhare loke* //. "I was born in the Jambudvīpa at the time of the five corruptions, a vile [period] inclined towards irreligion, in a world neglecting lawful action." On *uddhara*, see BHSD 130^{b}.

order to preach "easier" paths, i.e. salvational methods better suited to the corrupt dispositions of mankind. This seems to be true of the apocalyptically inclined *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* (SPSū, the Lotus Sūtra) and its doctrine of the One Vehicle (*ekayāna*):

> Moreover, O Śāriputra, the *tathāgata*s, the saint [and] perfectly awakened *buddha*s appear at [the time of] the corruption of the eon or at [the time of] the corruption of the living beings or at [the time of] the corruption of the defilements or at [the time of] the corruption of the false views or at [the time of] the corruption of the lifespan. Then, O Śāriputra, as the corruptions [that are characteristic] of the disturbances of an eon are of this kind, as the numerous living beings are greedy [and] with [very] little roots of merit, the *tathāgata*s, the saint [and] perfectly awakened *buddha*s, on account of [their] skill in [salvific] means, [actually] teach the One Vehicle of the *buddha*s by teaching the three vehicles.[86]

The doctrine of the One Vehicle postulates that the non-Buddhist religious traditions and especially the two non-Mahāyānist vehicles/dispensations – viz. the vehicle of the "hearers" (*śrāvakayāna*) and the vehicle of the solitary, non-preaching *buddha*s (*pratyekabuddhayāna*) – are created by the *buddha*s as didactic/salvific means, expedients or stratagems (*upāya*) "in order to adapt their teaching to the circumstances of the practitioners."[87] Salvation, however, is only possible by means of the Mahāyāna. As our passage suggests, there is an intimate connection between the One Vehicle doctrine and the age of the Last Days, during which human beings are so greedy and devoid of merit that the *buddha*s can only preach them salvation via the (ultimately illusory) three vehicles. As Williams rightly says, "[i]t is only because *buddha*s who appear at the decay of a cosmic epoch find that beings are so full of demerit and evil that they teach the other vehicles".[88]

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86 SPSū$_{K/N}$43,4–8, SPSū$_{W/T}$ 39,29–40,4, SPSū$_{M/D}$ 32,21–25: *api tu khalu punaḥ śāriputra yadā tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksambuddhāḥ kalpakaṣāye votpadyante sattvakaṣāye vā kleśakaṣāye vā dṛṣṭikaṣāye vāyuṣkaṣāye votpadyante / evaṃrūpeṣu śāriputra kalpasaṅkṣobhakaṣāyeṣu bahusattveṣu lubdheṣv alpakuśalamūleṣu tadā śāriputra tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksambuddhā upāyakauśalyena tad evaikaṃ buddhayānaṃ triyānanirdeśena nirdiśanti* /. Note also SPSū v. 2.124 (Śākyamuni is speaking): *ahaṃ pi evaṃ samudācariṣye yathā vadantī vidu lokanāyakāḥ / ahaṃ pi saṅkṣobhi imasmi dāruṇe utpanna sattvāna kaṣāyamadhye* //. "I, too, will act according to the indications of the wise leaders of the world; having myself been born in the midst of the corruption (*kaṣāya*) of creatures, I have known agitation in this dreadful world." Translation Kern, *Saddharma-Pundarîka*, 56.

87 Zimmermann, "Mahāyānist Criticism of *Arthaśāstra*," 184. On the One Vehicle, see Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 145–150.

88 Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 147. Apocalyptic concerns are at the heart of Nichiren's understanding and use of the SPSū. See Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 159–166, and especially 162: "For Nichiren, in the era of *mappo* one can be saved only through faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*. [...] [I]n the age of *mappo* the people require a simple teaching." See also Bowring, *Religious Traditions of Japan*, 332–343, and below, n. 95. On the one/three vehicles and the last age, see also KPSū 51,3–15, quoted below, §2.4, n. 103.

3.2.2. With its manifold didactic expedients, the three-vehicle dispensation is apparently well suited for the short-lived, unintelligent and defiled humans born at the end of a sub-eon. A similar idea seems to be at home in early Indian Pure Land Buddhism (Sukhāvatī, the western blissful paradise-like world-system of the *buddha* Amitābha/Amitāyus).[89] The two *Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra*s (SVSū) that form the textual basis of the Amitābha-related Pure Land traditions also reflect the belief that *buddha*s appear and teach among the five corruptions. And it is for doing exactly this that the other *buddha*s praise Śākyamuni in the shorter SVSū:

> A most difficult task has been accomplished by the Blessed One, Śākyamuni, the Sage of the Śākyas, the Monarch of the Śākyas. After he awakened to unsurpassable, perfect, and full awakening in this Sahā world,[90] he taught a *dharma* that the whole world was reluctant to accept, at the time of the corruption of the eon, at the time of the corruption of the living beings, at the time of the corruption of the false views, at the time of the corruption of the life span, at the time of the corruption of the defilements.[91]

*Buddha*s, then, do appear during the age of the five corruptions. Among the things they teach are the meditative/contemplative means to visualise Amitābha's Pure

89 Nattier, "Realm of Akṣobhya," 74–75: "Pure Land Buddhism consists of all Buddhist teachings that look forward to the possibility of rebirth in another world-system (*lokadhātu*) or Buddha-field (*buddhakṣetra*), where a Buddha is presently teaching the Dharma." Besides Amitābha's Sukhāvatī, this includes Akṣobhya's eastern Abhirati world-system (see Nattier, "Realm of Akṣobhya," and Strauch, "Early Pure Land Buddhism"). In India, Pure Land cults and literature were already well established by the second century CE (see Ducor, "Sources de la Sukhāvatī," 358, 372–373, 395, and, more generally, Eltschinger, "Pure Land Sūtras."). For a short introduction to Indian and East Asian Pure Land Buddhism, see Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 251–276; see also Schopen, "Sukhāvatī as a Generalized Religious Goal," and Bowring, *Religious Traditions of Japan*, 196–216 and 245–266. For a useful summary of recent research, see Ducor, "Sources de la Sukhāvatī." Note that the SPSū (see, for example, SPSū vv. 24.30–33 and Kern, *Saddharma-Pundarīka*, 417) is also indebted to beliefs in the Sukhāvatī. On this point, see Fujita, "Pure Land Buddhism," and Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 152–154.

90 Sahā is the world-system (*lokadhātu*, a multi-layered universe) or *buddha*-field (*buddhakṣetra*) in which we are living and Śākyamuni was(/is) active. On Sahā and the *buddhakṣetra*s, see Lamotte, *Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, 395–404 and *Traité* I.574–576.

91 Shorter SVSū 99,15–18: *suduṣkaraṃ bhagavatā śākyamuninā śākyādhirājena kṛtam / sahāyāṃ lokadhātāv anuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisambudhya sarvalokavipratyayanīyo dharmo deśitaḥ kalpakaṣāye sattvakaṣāye dṛṣṭikaṣāya āyuṣkaṣāye kleśakaṣāye* /. Translation (modified) from *Land of Bliss*, trans. Gómez, 21. In the shorter SVSū (99,19–22), Śākyamuni repeats the same statement (see *Land of Bliss*, trans. Gómez, 21–22). Note also the following passage from the longer SVSū (49,19–50,1): *sarve te tatropādāya na jātv ajātismarā bhaviṣyanti sthāpayitvā tathārūpeṣu kalpasaṅkṣobheṣu ye pūrvasthānapraṇihitāḥ pañcasu kaṣāyeṣu vartamāneṣu yadā buddhānāṃ bhagavatāṃ loke prādurbhāvo bhavati / tadyathāpi nāma mamaitarhi* /. "And all of them from that moment on never lose their remembrance of past lives – except for those who, in a previous existence, have made the resolution to appear in the midst of the five corruptions in times of the decline of the cosmic age, when *buddha*s, blessed ones, make their appearance in the world, like my own appearance in the present age." Translation (slightly modified) from *Land of Bliss*, trans. Gómez, 98.

Land. But how will the humans of the Last Days be able to visualise the Sukhāvatī once their *buddha* has departed? This is the question Śākyamuni is asked by Vaidehī (the wife of King Bimbisāra) in the *Amitāyurbuddhānusmṛtisūtra* (ABASū):

> World-Honoured One, through the Buddha's power, even I have now been able to see that land. But after the Buddha's passing, sentient beings will become defiled and evil, and be oppressed by the five kinds of suffering. How then will those beings be able to see the Land of Utmost Bliss of Amitāyus?[92]

In answer, Śākyamuni teaches sixteen methods of contemplation designed to enable living beings to rid themselves of the "evil karma which [they] have committed during [...] hundred *koṭi*s of *kalpa*s of *saṃsāra*"[93] and to be reborn in the Sukhāvatī (before becoming awakened[94]). The teaching is especially well tailored for beings caught in the corruptions of the Last Days: "[R]ebirth in Sukhāvatī and eventual enlightenment is [...] much easier than trying to attain enlightenment under adverse conditions in this decadent world!"[95]

3.3. Interestingly, one meets with exactly the same kind of doctrinal hesitation concerning the question whether *buddha*s appear during the *kaliyuga*. Although he rejects the idea of the advent of *buddha*s in the midst of the five corruptions of the last age, Vasubandhu admits that *buddha*s appear during the *kaliyuga*:

> Formerly, there was a perfectly awakened [*buddha* also] named Śākyamuni, under whom [our] Blessed One, [still] in the state of a *bodhisattva*,[96] made his initial vow[, saying]: 'May I become a *buddha* of exactly this kind!' Just like ours, he also arose during the *kaliyuga* [and], like the Noble One, his teaching also lasted one thousand years.[97]

92 ABASū 341c. Translation from *Three Pure Land Sutras*, trans. Inagaki, 323.
93 ABASū 343a. Translation from *Three Pure Land Sutras*, trans. Inagaki, 330.
94 The *bodhisattva*s inhabiting the Sukhāvatī are said (shorter SVSū 97,5–6) to be *ekajātipratibaddha*, "bound to [only] one [more] birth".
95 Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 254. The East Asian connection between Pure Land and *mofa*/*mappo* beliefs can be traced to Daochuo (562–645) and Shandao (613–681). *Mappo* ideology permeates the thought of Honen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262). These two great Japanese exponents of Pure Land Buddhism were convinced that "such a path was in fact the only conceivable one for those living in an advanced state of *mappo*" (Bowring, *Religious Traditions of Japan*, 262; see also Bowring, *Religious Traditions of Japan*, 246, 262, and 264). Pure Land Buddhism "saw no possibility of hope in this world, preferring to stress the irredeemably vile nature of life in the here-and-now, and arguing that a guarantee of enlightenment was only available in the next life" (Bowring, *Religious Traditions of Japan*, 339). Contrary to Honen and Shinran, Nichiren (see above, n. 88) saw *mappo* "not as an occasion for pessimistic resignation but as a marvellous chance[, b]ecause the *Lotus* which gave humanity the one best chance of salvation tells us that it will only be expounded in this world and only in a time of *mappo*. The proper, ideal time was therefore here and now" (Bowring, *Religious Traditions of Japan*, 337–338).
96 According to Yaśomitra (AKVy 432,7–8), the *bodhisattva* was named Prabhāsa and was the son of a potter (*kumbhakārakumāra*). On the earlier Śākyamuni, see *Kośa* III.228.

According to this statement (in which, let it be noted, the two apocalyptic motifs of the *kaliyuga* and the disappearance of the good law are conflated), the two Śākyamunis arise during a *kaliyuga*. The statement is especially noteworthy in the mouth of an eminent dogmatician such as Vasubandhu. That the second Śākyamuni appeared during the *kaliyuga* is also the opinion of the former *buddha* Viraja in verse 10.794 of the LASū:[98]

> [The world-ages amount to four, i.e.,] the *kṛtayuga*, the *tretā[yuga]*, the *dvāpara[yuga]* and the *kali[yuga]*. Myself and others [arose] in the *kṛtayuga*, [whereas] the Lion of the Śākyas [will arise] in the *kaliyuga*.[99]

But, a few verses below, the same Viraja insists that

> neither in the *dvāpara[yuga]* nor in the *tretā[yuga]* nor afterwards in the *kaliyuga* do [*buddha*s,] the protectors of the world, arise. They [only] get awakened in the *kṛtayuga*.[100]

According to this last statement, there are no *buddha*s to alleviate human beings' suffering during the dreadful last period.

3.4. As we have just seen, the two SVSū-s praise Śākyamuni for preaching during the age of the five *kaṣāya*s. Now, extolling Śākyamuni's compassionate activities in the degenerate last period is the central concern of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīkasūtra* (KPSū). Like the early Pure Land circles, and perhaps in reaction to them,[101] the KPSū unambiguously accepts the advent of *buddha*s – first and foremost Śākyamuni – at the time of the five corruptions. But, contrary to the sources examined so far, the *sūtra* explicitly (and quite consistently) associates the *kaṣāya*s with the

97 AKBh 266,25–267,2: *śākyamunir nāma samyaksambuddhaḥ pūrvaṃ babhūva / yatra bhagavatā bodhisattvabhūtenādyaṃ praṇidhānaṃ kṛtam / evamprakāra evāhaṃ buddho bhaveyam iti no 'py evaṃ kaliyuga evotpannavān āryavat tasyāpy evaṃ varṣasāhasrāntaṃ śāsanaṃ babhūva /*.

98 Whereas this *sūtra*'s chapters 2–8 (T. 670) had already been translated into Chinese in 443 CE, chapters 1, 9 and 10 are only recorded in Bodhiruci's 513 translation (T. 671). The late composition of the relevant passages can hardly be questioned since they refer explicitly to the Guptas (reg. ca. 320–500/550 CE).

99 LASū v. 10.794: *kṛtayugaś ca tretā ca dvāparaṃ kalinas tathā / ahaṃ cānye kṛtayuge śākyasiṃhaḥ kalau yuge //*. On *kalina*, see BHSD 172[b].

100 LASū v. 10.804: *na dvāpare na tretāyāṃ na paścāc ca kalau yuge / sambhavo lokanāthānāṃ sambudhyante kṛte yuge //*.

101 Note *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, trans. Yamada, I.3: "[The KPSū] concludes that Śākyamuni Buddha who has chosen the impure Sahā world and the salvation of helpless beings is ultimately motivated by the highest compassion, in contrast to those who have chosen the pure worlds and pure beings. Thus, in the [KPSū], Amitābha Buddha and Akṣobhya Buddha, who have enjoyed great popularity from an early period in Mahāyāna Buddhism, as well as many other *buddha*s in the pure buddha-lands, are assigned no more than supporting rôles in order to illuminate the unique position of Śākyamuni Buddha." According to Yamada (*Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, 174), the original compilation of the KPSū may be dated to 200–400 CE or certainly no later than 419, the date of Dharmarakṣa's Chinese translation (T. 157).

kaliyuga. The KPSū can actually be said to reflect a systematic integration of the *kaliyuga* into the eschatological framework of the five corruptions.[102]

At the beginning of Chapter 3, the *bodhisattva* Śāntamati asks Śākyamuni the following questions:

> O Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason why the other blessed *buddha*s possess pure *buddha*-fields, *buddha*-fields without impurities, without [any of] the five corruptions [and] with a multitude of different [good] qualities? [What is the reason why] in these [*buddha*-fields] all the *bodhisattva*s, the great beings, are replete with numerous [good] qualities [and] granted different pleasures, [whereas] the *śrāvaka*s and the *pratyekabuddha*s do not even exist by name? [...] O Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the reason why the Blessed One has arisen in a *buddha*-field with the five corruptions? [What is the reason why the Blessed One] has awakened to supreme perfect awakening at the time (*vartamāne*) of the corruption of the lifespan, at the time of the corruption of the eon, at the time of the corruption of the living beings, at the time of the corruption of the false views, at the time of the corruption of the defilements? And [what is the reason why the Blessed One] teaches a law pertaining to the three vehicles to the four assemblies? Why did the Blessed One not take a pure *buddha*-field, [a *buddha*-field] without [any of] the five corruptions?[103]

According to Śākyamuni, a *buddha*'s activity in a pure (*pariśuddha*) or an impure (*apariśuddha*) land reflects his original vow (*praṇidhāna*) as a *bodhisattva*. Indeed, Śākyamuni also says:

> [it is] on account of [their initial] vows [that] the *bodhisattva*s take a pure *buddha*-field, [as it is] on account of [their initial] vows [that] they take an impure *buddha*-field. Because they are endowed with great compassion, [...] the *bodhisattva*s, the great beings, take an impure *buddha*-field. Thus [it is that] I have made a vow according(/thanks) to which I am now reborn in such a way in a comparatively bad *buddha*-field with the five corruptions.[104]

What did this original vow consist of? The KPSū actually culminates in the story, told by Śākyamuni, of Samudrareṇu's five hundred vows and the *buddha* Ratnagarbha's prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) concerning him. According to this prophecy, the

102 To the best of my knowledge, the KPSū never alludes to any of the other three Brahmanical *yuga*s.

103 KPSū 51,3–15: *ko bhagavan hetuḥ kaḥ pratyayo yad anyeṣāṃ buddhānāṃ bhagavatāṃ pariśuddhā buddhakṣetrā apagatakaluṣā apagatapañcakaṣāyā nānāguṇavyūhā buddhakṣetrāḥ sarve cātra bodhisattvā mahāsattvā nānāvidhaguṇaparipūrṇā nānāsukhasamarpitā nāpi śrāvakapratyekabuddhānāṃ nāmāpi vidyate* / [...] *ko bhagavan hetuḥ kaḥ pratyayo yad bhagavān pañcakaṣāye buddhakṣetra utpanna āyuḥkaṣāye kalpakaṣāye sattvakaṣāye dṛṣṭikaṣāye kleśakaṣāye vartamāne 'nuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisambuddhaś catasraś ca pariṣadas trīṇi yānāny ārabhya dharmaṃ deśayati* / *kasmād bhagavatā pariśuddhaṃ buddhakṣetraṃ na parigṛhītam apagatapañcakaṣāyam* /. On this passage, see also *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, trans Yamada, I.77.

104 KPSū 51,16–52,5: *praṇidhānavaśena* [...] *bodhisattvāḥ pariśuddhaṃ buddhakṣetraṃ parigṛhṇanti* / *praṇidhānavaśenāpariśuddhaṃ buddhakṣetraṃ parigṛhṇanti* / *mahākaruṇāsamanvāgatatvāt* [...] *bodhisattvā mahāsattvā apariśuddhaṃ buddhakṣetraṃ parigṛhṇanti* / [...] *tathā mayā praṇidhānaṃ kṛtaṃ yenāham etarhy evaṃ pratikaṣṭe pañcakaṣāye buddhakṣetra utpannaḥ* /. On this passage, see also *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, trans Yamada, I.77–78.

brahmin Samudrareṇu, a chaplain/minister to the *cakravartin* king Araṇemin, will one day be the *buddha* Śākyamuni in the impure Sahā world, among the five corruptions, as the *kaliyuga* is at hand. Put into Samudrareṇu's mouth:

> If, O Venerable, O Blessed One, such an expectation of mine could be fulfilled and [if] I could, as a consequence (*tathā*), [awaken to the supreme perfect awakening] in the future, during the Fortunate eon, when the corruption of the depravities and the *kaliyuga* with [their] violent defilements are at hand, in a blind world, in a world without a guide, without a leader, [in a world] left to the addiction to [false] views and darkness [...].[105]

This is but one instance of the ubiquitous association of the *kaṣāya*s with the *kaliyuga* in the KPSū.[106]

3.5. To end, let me draw attention to an interesting passage from Prajñāvarman's commentary on the *Devātiśayastotra* (DAS). In stanza 14 of this short *Stotra*, the "Praise of the [Buddha's] superiority over the [Hindu] deities", Śaṅkarasvāmin alludes to the well-known Vaiṣṇava theological scheme according to which Viṣṇu's

105 KPSū 270,1–5: *yadi me bhadanta bhagavann evaṃrūpāśā paripūryeta tathā cāham anāgate 'dhvani bhadrake kalpe tīvrakleśe raṇakaṣāye kaliyuge vartamāne 'ndhaloke 'nāyake 'pariṇāyake dṛṣṭivyasanāndhakāraprakṣipte loke* [...] /.

106 Similar formulations in similar contexts include KPSū 218,4–5 (*kaliyugakāle vartamāne*, "when the time of the *kaliyuga* is at hand"), KPSū 218,18 (*mahākaliyugakāle*, "at the time of the great *kaliyuga*"), KPSū 268,10 (*pañcakaṣāye kaliyuge vartamāne*, "among the five corruptions, when the *kaliyuga* is at hand"), KPSū 268,18–19 (*tīvrapañcakaṣāye kaliyuge buddhakṣetre*, "among the violent five corruptions, during the *kaliyuga*, in an [impure] *buddha*-field"), KPSū 269,4 (*tīvrapañcakaṣāye kleśe kaliyuge*, "among the violent five corruptions, within defilement, during the *kaliyuga*"), KPSū 287,18 (*pañcakaṣāye loke tīvrakleśaraṇe kaliyuge vartamāne*, "among the five corruptions, in a world of violent defilements and depravities, when the *kaliyuga* is at hand"), KPSū 297,8–9 (*pañcakaṣāye loke tīvrakleśaraṇike kaliyuge vartamāne*, "among the five corruptions, in a world with violent defilements and depravities, when the *kaliyuga* is at hand"), KPSū 308,13–14 (*tīvrapañcakaṣāye kaliyuge vartamāne kāle*, "among the violent five corruptions, when the *kaliyuga* is at hand, when it is time?"), KPSū 319,18–19 (*[a?]dharmadurbhikṣakṣīṇakāle mahākleśaraṇe kaliyuge pañcakaṣāye vartamāne loke 'nāyake*, "at the wasted time of irreligion? and famine, when the *kaliyuga* with [its] great defilements and depravities [as well as] the five corruptions are at hand, when the world is without a guide"), KPSū 377,7–10 (*pañcakaṣāye loke vartamāne tīvrakleśāraṇe kaliyuge vartamāne*, "when the world with the five corruptions is at hand[/when the five corruptions are at hand in the world], when the *kaliyuga* with [its] violent defilements and depravities is at hand"). See also KPSū 286,13 and 295,17–296,1. Note also KPSū 282,7–10 (verse): *kleśayoge kaliyuge yā bodhis tvayā samāśritā / chinda kleśe samūlāṃs tvaṃ sidhyate praṇidhir dṛḍhā* // (On *kleśe* as an accusative plural masculine, see BHSG §8.95). "You can rely on the awakening [that you will obtain] during the *kaliyuga* which partakes of the defilements. You, cut off the defilements together with their roots, [and your] vow will succeed!" Other references to the *kaliyuga* in the KPSū include 198,10, where the shortening of life (*āyus*) is regarded as a sign of the *kaliyuga* (*kaliyuganimitta*), 224,6–7, where the two motifs of the *kaliyuga* and the *kaṣāya*s appear in a compound (*tīvrakleśāvaraṇakaliyugakaṣāyāḥ*, "the corruptions of the *kaliyuga* in which the obscuration consisting in the defilements is violent"), 225,16, where the "great *kaliyuga*" is associated with darkness (*andhakāra*). See also KPSū 198,20, 200,5 and 307,8–9.

ninth *avatāra* ("descent" or "historical manifestation") is none other than the Buddha. Far from testifying to an alleged Hindu/Vaiṣṇava "tolerance" or open(minded) ness toward Buddhism, this motif is strongly anti-buddhistic, in that it presents the Buddha as an heresiarch whose deluding, antivedic teachings made the gods' victory over the demons (*asuras*) possible.[107] As Johannes Schneider makes clear, however, Śaṅkarasvāmin's account of the Buddha as Viṣṇu's ninth *avatāra* makes no mention of delusion and falsity.[108] Quite to the contrary, even, for Viṣṇu's motivation for manifesting himself was, according to Śaṅkarasvāmin, compassion towards the suffering human beings:

> There is the old pauranic tradition that this world-honoured Buddha is in fact Viṣṇu who once saw that the world is subject to birth, old age and death; inspired by compassion he was born in the illustrious Śākya family as Gautama, saviour of mankind and endowed with a remarkable mind; which foolish person does not realize now that he is the helpful teacher?[109]

Śaṅkarasvāmin's verse presents itself as an invitation to the devotees of Viṣṇu to draw the consequences of their theological conceptions and to embrace the Law of the Buddha. In particular, verse 14 does not state precisely when Viṣṇu will manifest himself as Śākyamuni. While commenting on verse 5 (and not 14), however, Prajñāvarman quotes a stanza known also to the author (Bhāviveka/Bhavya?) of the *Tarkajvālā*: "[Viṣṇu's] ten [*avatāras* are]: the fish (*matsya*), the tortoise (*kūrma*), the boar (*varāha*), the man-lion (*narasiṃha*), the dwarf (*vāmana*), Rāma [I], Rāma [II], Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalkin."[110] The commentator then briefly introduces these ten

107 See, for example, Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics*, 57–66.

108 See Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 94–96. In this regard, Śaṅkarasvāmin's attitude does not differ from Kṣemendra's, who, in stanza 9.2 of his *Daśāvatāracarita*, presents Viṣṇu's motivation as follows: *sa sarvasattvopakṛtiprayatnaḥ kṛpākulaḥ śākyakule viśāle / śuddhodanākhyasya narādhipendor dhanyasya garbhe 'vatatāra patnyāḥ //*. "Im Bestreben, allen Wesen zu helfen, stieg er voll Mitgefühl hinab ins große Śākyageschlecht, hinab in den Schoß der glücklichen, der Gattin des mondgleichen Königs Śuddhodana." Translation and Sanskrit text from Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 95. Note also *Daśāvatāracarita* stanza 9.45cd: *saṃsāramuktyai suramartyanāgasaṅghasya saddharmam athādideśa //*. "Zur Befreiung aus dem Wiedergeburtenkreislauf lehrte er nun die Schar der Götter, Menschen und Nāgas den wahren Dharma." Translation and Sanskrit text from Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 96.

109 DAS, v. 14: *paurāṇī śrutir eṣa lokamahito buddhaḥ kilāyaṃ harir dṛṣṭvā janmajarāvināśavaśagaṃ lokaṃ kṛpābhyudyataḥ / jātaḥ śākyakule vare (?) 'dbhutamatis trātā nṛṇāṃ gautamaḥ śāstāraṃ hitam eva kas tam adhunā nāvaiti mūḍho janaḥ //*. On *vare 'dbhutamatis*, see Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 91. Translation from *Śaṅkarasvāmin's Devatāvimarśastuti*, ed. and trans. Hahn, 325 (as quoted in Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 91).

110 DASṬ D *ka* 50b3 (as edited in *Buddhistische Kritik der indischen Götter*, 90,21–24, ed. and trans. Schneider = Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 96–97): */nya dang rus sbal phag dang ni/ /mi yi seng ge mi thung dang/ /dga' byed ra ma ṇa nag po/ /sangs rgyas kal ki rtse dang bcu/*. For the stanza as found in TJ D *dza* 296a4, see Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 96–97 and *Buddhistische Kritik der indischen Götter*, ed. and trans. Schneider, 91, n. 59.

*avatāra*s. Here is what he has to say about the Buddha: "Rāma had slain ten million immeasurable [quantities] (**apramāṇa*) of demons (**rākṣasa*?). In order to purify himself of this crime (**pāpa*?), Viṣṇu will appear in the world in the form (**rūpa*) of the Buddha during the *kaliyuga*. Thus speak worldly people (**laukika*)."[111] It is difficult to say whether Prajñāvarman alludes here to a story known to him (from Vaiṣṇava or Buddhist circles?) or, as Johannes Schneider is inclined to believe, models the reason for Viṣṇu taking the form of the Buddha on Śiva's self-punishment after slaying a brahmin.[112]

Bibliography

Abbreviations

ABASū — **Amitāyurbuddhānusmṛtisūtra*. T. 365. See *Three Pure Land Sutras*, ed. Inagaki, 317–350.

AK(Bh) — *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*. Edited by Prahlad Pradhan. Vol. 8, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series 8. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975 (1967[1]).

AKVy — *Sphuṭârthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā, the Work of Yaśomitra*. Edited by Unrai Wogihara. Tokyo: Sankibo Buddhist Book Store (The Publishing Association of Abhidharmakośavyākhyā), 1989 (1936[1]).

AŚ — *The Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*. Edited by R. P. Kangle. Part I: Sanskrit Text with a Glossary. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986 (Bombay 1969[1]).

BC — *The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha*. Edited by Edward H. Johnston. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984 (Lahore 1936[1]): Johnston's edition covers Cantos 1–14, the Sanskrit of which has been preserved. For Cantos 15–17 (Tibetan), see *Leben des Buddha von Aśvaghoṣa*, ed. and trans. Weller. For Cantos 18–28 (Tibetan), see P no. 5356, *Nge* 1–124b8.

BGUVVNSū — *Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvaṇanirdeśasūtra*. P no. 813, *Nu* 37a8–101b8. Quoted according to Zimmermann, "Mahāyānist Criticism of *Arthaśāstra*."

BHSG — Edgerton, Franklin. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*. Vol. I: Grammar. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970 (New Haven 1953[1]).

BHSD — Edgerton, Franklin. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*. Vol. II: Dictionary. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970 (New Haven 1953[1]).

$BoBh_D$ — *Bodhisattvabhūmiḥ [Being the XVth Section of Asaṅgapāda's Yogācārabhūmiḥ]*. Edited by Nalinaksha Dutt. Vol. 7, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series.

111 DASṬ D *ka* 51a6–7 (as edited in *Buddhistische Kritik der indischen Götter*, 94.14–16, ed. and trans. Schneider = Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 98): *ra ma ṇas srin po bye pa dpag tu med pa bsad pas sdig pa de sbyang bar bya ba'i phyir / rtsod pa'i dus su 'jig rten 'dir khyab 'jug sangs rgyas kyi gzugs su 'byung bar 'gyur ro zhes 'jig rten pa dag sgrogs so //*. See also *Buddhistische Kritik der indischen Götter*, ed. and trans. Schneider, 95.

112 See Schneider, "Buddhistische Sicht auf den Buddhāvatāra," 98–100.

	Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1978.
$BoBh_W$	*Bodhisattvabhūmi. A Statement of Whole Course of the Bodhisattva (Being Fifteenth Section of Yogācārabhūmi)*. Edited by Unrai Wogihara. Tokyo: Sankibo Buddhist Book Store, 1971 (1936[1]).
D	*sDe dge Tibetan Tripiṭaka bsTan 'gyur preserved at the Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo*. Edited by Jikido Takasaki, Zuiho Yamaguchi and Noriaki Hakamaya. Tokyo: Sekai Seitan Kankō Kyōkai, 1977–1981.
DAS	*Devātiśayastotra* (Śaṅkarasvāmin). See *Buddhistische Kritik der indischen Götter*, ed. and trans. Schneider, 164–167 for the Sanskrit text and 40–51 for the Tibetan version and a German translation.
DASṬ	*Devātiśayastotraṭīkā* (Prajñāvarman). D no. 1113, *Ka* 45a3–61a3. See *Buddhistische Kritik der indischen Götter*, ed. and trans. Schneider, 62–157 for an edition of the Tibetan text and a German translation.
DN I	*The Dīgha Nikāya*. Edited by Thomas W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter. Vol. I. London: Pali Text Society, 1890.
DN III	*The Dīgha Nikāya*. Edited by J. Estlin Carpenter. Vol. III. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1911.
Jātaka I	*The Jātaka together with Its Commentary, Being Tales of the Anterior Births of Gotama Buddha*. Edited by Viggo Fausbøll. Vol. I. London: Pali Text Society, 1962 (1877[1]).
JM_H	*Āryaśūras Jātakamālā. Philologische Untersuchungen zu den Legenden 1 bis 15*. Edited by Albrecht Hanisch. Vol. 43/1, Indica et Tibetica. Marburg: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 2005. See also Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*.
JM_K	*The Jātaka-Mālā or Bodhisattvāvadāna-mālā by Ārya-çūra*. Edited by Hendrik Kern. Vol. 1, Harvard Oriental Series. Boston/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1891.
JM_M	See Meiland, *Garland of the Buddha's Past Lives*.
KAṬ	*Kāvyānuśāsanaṭīkā* (Hemacandra). Mahâmahopâdhyâya Paṇḍit Śivadatta and Kâśînâth Pāṇḍurang Parab. *The Kâvyânuśâsana of Hemacandra with His Own Gloss*. Bombay: Tukârâm Jâvajî (Kâvyamâlâ 70), 1901.
Kośa	*L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu. Traduction et annotations*. 6 vols. Translated by Louis de La Vallée Poussin. Vol. 16, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques. Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1980 (Paris/Louvain 1923–1931[1]).
KP	*Kaliyugaparikathā*. See Dietz, *Mātṛceṭas Kaliyugaparikathā*.
KPSū	*Karuṇāpuṇḍarīkasūtra*. Translated by Isshi Yamada. *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*. Vol. II. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1968.
KS	*Kaliyugasaṅghātaka*. See Acharya, *Kaliyugasaṃghātaka*.
KV	*Mahākarmavibhaṅga (La grande classification des actes) et Karmavibhaṅgopadeśa (Discussion sur le Mahā Karmavibhaṅga)*. Edited by Sylvain Lévi. Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1932.
KVSū	*Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*. In Parashuram L. Vaidya. *Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgraha*, 256–308. Part I. Vol. 17, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts. Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1961. See also *Gilgitfragmente des Kāraṇḍavyūha*, ed. Mette.
LASū	*The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. Edited by Bunyiu Nanjio. Bibliotheca Otaniensis 1. Kyoto: Otani University Press, 1956 (1923[1]).
LKT	*Laghukālacakratantra*. See VP.
LSP	*Lokasaṃvyavahārapravṛtti*. See Hahn, *Ravigupta and His Nīti Stanzas*.

LV	*Lalita Vistara. Leben und Lehre des Çâkya-Buddha*. Edited by Salomon Lefmann. Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1902.
MBh	*The Mahābhārata. For the First Time Critically Edited*. Edited by Vishnu S. Sukthankar and Sukthankar K. Belvalkar. 19 vols. Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1933–1959.
MBhāṣya	*Patanjali's Vyâkaraṇa-Mahâbhâshya.* Edited by Franz Kielhorn. 3 vols. The Department of Public Instruction, Bombay. Bombay: Government Central Book Depôt, 1880, 1883, 1884.
MDhŚ	*Mānavadharmaśāstra*. See *Manu's Code of Law*, ed. and trans. Olivelle.
MīSū	*Mīmāṃsāsūtra* (Jaimini). See TV.
MN II	*The Majjhima-Nikāya*. Edited by Robert Chalmers. Vol. II. London: Pali Text Society, 1898.
MPPŚ	*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* (ascribed to Nāgārjuna). T. 1509. See *Traité* I.
P	*The Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition, Kept in the Library of the Otani University, Kyoto*. Edited by Daisetz T. Suzuki. Tokyo/Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1957.
SBhUSū	*Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra. Das Goldglanz-sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna Buddhismus*. Edited by Johannes Nobel. Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1937.
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$SPSū_{K/N}$	*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. Edited by Henrik Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio. Bibliotheca Buddhica 10. Saint-Pétersbourg: Commissionnaires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1908–1912.
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SPYHS	*Skhalitapramardanayuktihetusiddhi* (Deutero-Āryadeva?). D no. 3847, *Tsha* 19b1–22b1/P 5247, *Tsha* 20b1–24a8.
SVSū (longer)	*Sukhāvatīvyūha.* Edited by Astuuji Ashikaga. Kyoto: Librairie Hozokan, 1965.
SVSū (shorter)	*Sukhāvatī-Vyūha. Description of Sukhāvatī, the Land of Bliss*. Edited by Friedrich M. Müller and Bunyiu Nanjio. Anecdota Oxoniensia, Texts, Documents, and Extracts Chiefly from Manuscripts in the Bodleian and Other Oxford Libraries, Aryan Series, vol. I, part II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883.
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TJ	*Madhyamakahṛdayavṛttitarkajvālā* (Bhāviveka/Bhavya?). D no 3856, *Dza* 40b7–329b4.

Traité I	*Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna (Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra)*. Edited by Étienne Lamotte. Vol. I. Vol. 25, Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain. Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste, 1981 (1944[1]).
TV	*Tantravārttika* (Kumārila). Subbaśāstrī. *Śrīmajjaiminipraṇītaṃ Mīmāṃsādarśanam*. 6 vols. Pune: Ānandāśramamudraṇālaya, 1994 (1929–1934[1]).
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VP	*Vimalaprabhāṭīkā of Kalkin Śrīpuṇḍarīka on Śrīlaghukālacakratantrarāja by Śrīmañjuśrīyaśas*. Edited by Jagannatha Upadhyāya. Vol. 11, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series. Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1986.
VS	Mukherjee, Kumar Sujit, ed. *The Vajrasuci of Asvaghosa, Critically Edited with Notes and Translations. Visvabharati Annals* 2 (1949): 125–184.
YBh	*The Yogācārabhūmi of Ācārya Asaṅga. The Sanskrit Text Compared with the Tibetan Version*. Edited by Vishushekhara Bhattacharya. 2 vols. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1957.
YBh_T	*Yogācārabhūmi* (Tibetan version). D 4035, *Tshi* 1b1–283a7/P 5536, *Dzi* 1–332a2.

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Scriptural Traditions and their Reinterpretations

Michael Sommer

Choices – The Use of Textual Authorities in the Revelation of John

This article addresses one of the most vibrant areas of current research on the Book of Revelation, the question of the biblical book's intended meaning and audience, by exploring the text's intertextuality. I shall particularly focus on the issue of John's audience and examine if his choice of textual authorities tells us something about his addressees and his enemies. I also challenge the frequently voiced assumption that the Book of Revelation is an anti-Roman writing. A look at John's intertexts supports the scholarly opinion of Tobias Nicklas and Stefan Alkier, who both believe that John's main enemy is not the Roman Empire, but Christians that neglect his claim of authority.[1] *Nevertheless, it is also my purpose to introduce to the literary characteristics of Revelation.*

1 Introduction

The biblical book of Revelation was written probably at the end of the first or at the beginning of the second century by an author who introduces himself as John. While imprisoned on the island of Patmos (Rev. 1:9), he receives a revelation of Jesus (Rev. 1:1) instructing him to write seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor in order to command them to repent and to change their religious and social behavior. Although chapters 2–3 emphasise that John addresses seven "Christian" communities in Asia Minor, his book is intended for a larger circle of readers. The text itself is a kind of a mosaic of intertextual references to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. John creates a story by combining allusions particularly to the visions of Ezekiel, Isaiah and Daniel. He even imitates larger structural outlines of the Old Testament prophets. Looking at the history of research on John's Apocalypse, it is clear that John's intertextuality was not only one of the key topics scholars focused on since the early 1960s, but that how scholars read John's intertexts caused them to interpret the message of John completely differently. The way they looked at the intertextuality of the book clearly influenced the pictures they drew of John as an author, of the addressees of the book and of John's adversaries.

One might even go further: even if methods of reading and defining phenomena like text and intertext have progressed in the last 50 years, the heritage of scholarly trends from the late 1960s is still visible in modern intertextual research on the

1 See Alkier, "Schwerwiegende Differenzen."

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Revelation of John.[2] The most recent publication on John's use of scriptures, the presidential address of the Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense in 2015,[3] pointed out that the debate on the Book of Revelation's use of scriptures is still very schematic. In Adela Yarbro Collins' eyes, opinions about Revelation's role and function among early Christians in Asia Minor have changed substantially in the last twenty years, but intertextual approaches have not kept pace with these scholarly developments. The different standpoints and research questions in the debate on John's intertexts (which text form of the Old Testament did John use? Did he quote from memory? Did he respect the context of his intertexts?) have not moved far from their beginnings in the 1960s.[4] In a recent survey of current developments in the scholarship on Revelation, Thomas Hieke comes to a similar conclusion. According to him, intertextual research runs the risk of repeating older questions.[5]

2 The Book of Revelation as a Mosaic of Misspelled Texts or John the Literate Illiterate?

Nearly every introduction to the New Testament draws similar conclusions: John's work is totally dependent on Israel's holy texts, and his language is highly influenced by the works of the prophets and by the psalms.[6] Whereas texts such as the Ascensio of Isaiah, Apocalypse of Abraham, Apocalypse of Peter, 2 Baruch or 4 Ezra allude extensively to the texts which we attribute to the Old Testament canon, however, the intertextuality of Revelation differs tremendously from them. Even if the reception technique of 5 Ezra has some similarities, John's use of scriptures is to a certain degree more extensive.[7]

2 The mechanistic approach of the 1960s was aimed only at identifying all quotations and allusions in the Book of Revelation. Since the late 1980s, scholars have used intertextual relations in order to reconstruct the social milieu of the book. In the 1990s, research focused mainly on the question if modern readers need to know John's intertexts in order to comprehend the message of the book.

3 Yarbro Collins, "The Use of Scripture in Revelation."

4 I am also going to demonstrate that the current opinions on scriptures and authority emerged or derived from different directions of reading developed in the 1960s and sophisticated in the 1980s.

5 See Hieke, "Literarische und theologische Funktion des Alten Testaments." The article is based on a paper Hieke gave at a conference in Frankfurt in 2012. The discussion afterwards clearly pointed out that intertextual research on the Book of Revelation is less innovative than other parts of apocalypse research. I would go so far to say that it represents a single-track or unilinear field of research. See also Yarbro Collins, "Rewritten Prophets."

6 See Witetschek, "Der Lieblingspsalm des Sehers;" Moyise, "The Psalms in the Book of Revelation."

7 Hirschberger tries to unfold the intertextual clustering in 5 Ezra in her monograph.

The Revelation of John is a kind of mosaic.[8] It is a network composed of a whole variety of different intertexts. John mingled allusions to the prophets, the psalms, and the Torah together and formed a new text out of them.[9] However, his literary technique of reception is particularly striking. He does not quote texts explicitly. Even if some of his allusions come close to what we would call a quotation, he does not introduce them as such.[10] Although he does not quote intertexts, he heavily relies on them, and large parts of Revelation imitate the structure of the prophetic writings of Ezekiel and Daniel, which will be discussed in more detail later.

These peculiarities caused scholars in the early 1960s to ask specific questions that have been discussed in numerous articles. Researchers wanted to know, firstly, whether John based himself on the Greek or Hebrew text of the Old Testament writings. Secondly, did he work with written sources or from memory? And finally, did he intermingle different texts on purpose or accidentally? From the 1960s onwards, scholars have produced two different types of answers to these questions, depending on their reading of Revelation. Researchers who compared John's book with only one single intertext have concluded that he received authorial texts intentionally and faithfully.[11] By contrast, scholars reading Revelation as a mosaic of combined and intermingled intertexts have portrayed John's methods in a completely different way. In their eyes, John "quoted" from memory without having recourse to the written sources. These scholars argued that this accounted for John's allusions to the scriptures differing from the language of the original context.[12]

These two reading patterns rooted in the 1960s still furnish the foundation on which current perspectives on the role of scriptures in John's work are based. Although questions and methods of research progressed over the years, these two perspectives remained enormously influential, and are still present in research today. Their survival is especially noticeable in various studies dating to the late 1980s and early 1990s.[13] Scholars such as Jeffrey Vogelgesang,[14] G.K. Beale[15] or Jay Casey[16]

8 Kowalski, *Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel*, 496 discusses the term mosaic. See also Frey, "Bildersprache der Johannesapokalypse," esp. 174.

9 See Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation*, 284.

10 Furthermore, John's use of Greek is peculiar. It seems that he purposefully violated nearly every rule of grammar. As a result, scholars for a long time considered John as nearly illiterate whose mother tongue could not possibly have been Greek. However, in the last twenty years younger scholars have shown that Revelation's language is the product of an artificial construction that aims to imitate a Semitic language; probably Hebrew, because it was the language of the cult and the scriptures. For more detailed information, see Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*.

11 See Vanhoye, "L'utilisation du Livre d'Ezechiel dans L'Apocalypse."

12 Vos, *The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse*. Cf. also Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John Divine*, 25.

13 See Sommer, *'Tag der Plagen,'* 2–4.

14 Vogelgesang, "The Interpretation of Ezekiel in the Book of Revelation."

15 Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in Revelation of St. John*.

16 Casey, "Exodus Typology in the Book of Revelation."

compared Revelation to only one single text, to the Book of Ezekiel, the Book of Daniel and Exodus respectively. They each assumed that their chosen text had been the most important template for the literary outline of the Book of Revelation, and argued that it therefore offered the key to John's theology. According to this position, John was an author who carefully read intertexts and played with their original meaning. He was comprehensively aware of the content of his intertexts. It was his intention to create a narrative reminiscent of the prophets' in order to claim their authority for his own message. According to this position, he used intertexts purposefully and wanted his readers to compare his book with the particular intertexts to which he alluded. The researchers following this line of argument accordingly posited that John's intended audience was familiar with the Hebrew scriptures. Without such knowledge, John's work could not be understood. Therefore the way in which scholars read the intertextuality of the Revelation of John led them to portray his audience as Jewish.

Jean-Pierre Ruiz, however, approached Revelation differently. Also active in the early 1990s, he treated the book as a blend of texts and accordingly reasoned that none of John's intertexts is important on its own. In Ruiz's opinion, readers do not have to have one particular intertext in mind because Revelation's actual message can be understood without a deep knowledge of the scriptures.[17] He explained why John put together so many different texts by using an argument originally formulated by Louis Vos in the 1960s, who had also emphasised Revelation's literary characteristics as a textual mosaic. In Vos' and Ruiz's eyes, John borrowed the language of the prophets to appropriate their claims to authority for his text.[18] The author was not interested in one single intertext, but tried to imitate the linguistics and semantics of prophetic texts in order to remind his readers of the authoritative status of this kind of language.[19] Vos' ideas found wide acceptance in the scholarly community and remained prominent even as new methods entered the scholarly debate. In the 1990s, as reader-response theories and new forms of intertextuality were introduced into apocalypse research, the core of Vos' and Ruiz's thesis was adopted by many scholars, as can be seen in the works of Steve Moyise, Thomas Hieke, and Beate Kowalski, with only marginal variations.[20]

17 See Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse*, 179. Further Schüssler-Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, 135.
18 See Ruiz, *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse*, 533. Further Vos, *The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse*, 51.
19 See Schüssler-Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation*, 135.
20 See Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, 78; Hieke, "Der Seher Johannes als neuer Ezechiel," esp. 29; Kowalski, *Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel*, 499–500. Synchronic approaches no longer ask if it is important to know John's intertexts, they require it implicitly. For instance, Moyise, Hieke and Kowalski described Revelation's implicit author as someone who wanted to appear as a new Ezekiel or a new Daniel having the same authorial state. Canonical approaches even went so far as to say that the authority of John's book gives the reader the authority to re-read Ezekiel or Daniel in the light of the book of Revelation.

Reader-response criticism and production-orientated forms of intertextual research share a similar idea of how the intended reader of the Revelation must have looked. Both work with the notion of a reader who lives in the world of scriptures and believes in their authority. The main point of difference between them concerns the question of whether the reader has to know a particular intertext very well or not. Scholars following these approaches, however, mostly ignored the substantial changes in scholarly perspectives on John's audience that have taken place in the meantime.

3 John's Addressees in the History of Research

Thoughts about John's views of his political and social environment, of his enemies and of addressees have changed dramatically over the last 50 years. Scholars in the late 1950s and 1960s mostly had a simplistic view of John's audience and his enemies. They read Revelation as a book giving consolation to the Roman Empire's oppressed and persecuted Christians, even though the text mentions neither the emperor nor the Roman Empire by name.[21] In this phase of research, many scholars saw Revelation's main purpose as one of comfort and support for persecuted Christians by preaching the message of a sovereign god who will punish the evil Roman persecutors at the end of time, while faithful Christians would be rewarded. Although not all scholars followed this position, this was certainly a way of reading the Revelation of John that found many adherents in the mid-twentieth century. Even though remnants of this view are still discernible in recent publications,[22] historical research has made two discoveries that led to a turning point in this regard:

1. Historians have revised their picture of the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96) and now question whether there was a systematic persecution of Christians before Decius. Scholars in the late 70s and early 80s like Adela Yarbro Collins and Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza started to read the idea of crisis in John's narrative as his own purposeful over-interpretation of reality. In their view, John did not simply report a real catastrophe, but exaggerated the danger to the Christian faithful in order to make his call for repentance even more powerful.[23] Scholars now no longer read Revelation as a book of consolation, but as a warning, even a threat. According to this line of argument, John wanted to frighten his

21 Giesen's oeuvre is a very clear example for the survival of this point of view. In Giesen's view, John's main enemy is the Roman Empire and he wants to force his addressees to resist against the political pressure to worship the Emperor as god. See Giesen, *Christlicher Glaube in Anfechtung und Bewährung*; Giesen, "Das Römische Reich im Spiegel der Johannes-Apokalypse."

22 Viljoen, "Faithful Christian Living amidst Scoffers of the Judgment Day;" Lichtenberger, *Die Apokalypse*, 49.

23 See the overview of Witulski, *Johannesoffenbarung und Kaiser Hadrian*, 72–81.

Christian audience in order to cause them to isolate themselves from the Greco-Roman culture. This opinion still remains dominant in modern apocalypse research.[24] Most articles from the 1980s onwards treat Revelation as a text that opposes Greco-Roman influences on the culture of Asia Minor, and in particular as an aggressive response to the Imperial Cult. Stefan Alkier, however, has recently criticised this viewpoint by making a couple of striking points. He admits, of course, that John's book has a political dimension, [25] but in his eyes this is just one aspect of John's message.[26] Alkier argues "that numerous other constellations of conflicts are present throughout John's Apocalypse that are of no little importance to the text's rhetoric and theology."[27]

2. By the end of the twentieth century, models of diversity established within the field of humanities had an enormous impact on New Testament studies and influenced ideas of the birth of early Christianity.[28] Scholars have begun to realise more and more that early Christianity was a complex phenomenon of many coexisting ideas and strands that varied in their Christology, theology, ethics and, of course, their scriptural hermeneutics.[29] This emerging trend can also be seen in apocalypse research and has led to a more cautious interpretation of John's communication with his readers. Scholars no longer read John's letters to the Seven Churches in Asia Minor (Revelation 2–3)[30] as a simple interface between John and his readers, but as a testimony to early Christian diversity.[31] Indeed, the letters to the Seven Churches reveal a multitude of different forms of Christian identities. Alkier goes so far as to say that Revelation 2–3 gives insight into a complex struggle between various groups whose profiles can be distinguished. The letters to Smyrna and to Philadelphia mention Jews who are in John's eyes not Jewish, but liars. Scholars have interpreted this passage as reflecting either a local conflict between John and the synagogue, or tensions between John and those Christians who performed some of the Jewish cultic

24 Frey, "Autorfiktion und Gegnerbild im Judasbrief;" Also Kelhofer, *Persecution, Persuasion and Power*, 159. See also Ameling, *Kleinasiatische Kaiserkult und die Öffentlichkeit*.

25 A more detailed analysis of John's adversaries is provided by Müller, "Die Tiefen des Satans erkennen…"

26 See Alkier, "Schwerwiegende Differenzen."

27 Alkier, "Schwerwiegende Differenzen," 3: "[…] dass sich durch die Johannesapokalypse vielfältige andere Konfliktkonstellationen ziehen, die für die Rhetorik und Theologie der Apokalypse keineswegs von minderer Bedeutung sind."

28 A good overview is provided by Nicklas, *Jews and Christians?*

29 See, for instance, Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek*.

30 John delivers to them a message from the messiah who criticises the communities' behaviour and calls them to repentance. The whole apocalyptic main part and its visions could be read as a literary radicalisation of this imperative. More detailed Ulland, *Die Vision als Radikalisierung der Wirklichkeit in der Apokalypse des Johannes*.

31 See Nicklas, "Diesseits aus der Sicht des Jenseits."

practices.[32] The letters to Ephesus, to Pergamum[33] and to Thyatira mention false apostles and false prophets, who, according to John, are spreading heresies in the communities. In John's view, some churches have even accepted the message of those preachers who spread evil teachings. The letters to Sardes and to Laodicea reveal internal tensions within these communities. The messages to Pergamum, to Thyatira and to Laodicea indicate that some of these Churches' members worshiped foreign gods and took part in diverse cults. The writings to Ephesus and to Pergamum indicate local conflicts with the Romans. Scholars associated the Nicolaitans, Balaam and Isebel with Christian groups that over-interpreted the letters of Paul. Paul had a tolerant view on eating idol meat (1 Cor. 8:1.4.7.10; 10:19.28), and the apostle argued that Christians should strive to co-exist more or less harmoniously with non-Christians.[34] On the contrary, John argued that the consumption of idol meat is an offense against the will of God. Although I cannot portray the whole debate, it seems plausible to me, as it does to Rita Müller-Frieberg, that John's text is responding to pseudo-Pauline teachings, which spread in Asia Minor at the end of the first century.[35]

In any case, the conception of a reader of Revelation who is familiar only with the Hebrew Scriptures and reads these texts as authorial and inspired expressions of the will of God clearly cannot accommodate the obvious diversity of addressees as proposed by modern apocalypse research. The multitude of different perspectives of Christians indicated in Revelation 2–3 surely included very varying interpretations of the scriptures; the latter certainly meant something different to Christians following Jewish cult laws than they did to those who read pseudo-Pauline literature that claimed that the Torah was irrelevant to salvation. In my eyes, Christians who tried to integrate into the Greco-Roman society in order to live a peaceful life as citizens must have interpreted the scriptures politically in a different manner than those Christians who followed John's imperative to keep themselves away from cults and idol meat.

32 See Nicklas, "Diesseits aus der Sicht des Jenseits," 263. He also provides a history of research.
33 More detailed, but with an emphasis on the imperial cult, Klauck, "Kaiserkult in der Johannesoffenbarung."
34 See the controversy between Karrer, "Die Apokalypse und das Aposteldekret," and Müller-Frieberg, "Paulusrezeption in der Offenbarung des Johannes."
35 See Sommer, "Nikolaiten und die Gegnerfiktion in der Offenbarung des Johannes."

4 John's Choice of Intertexts and his Profile of Identity

In the last part of this essay, I argue that John's choice of intertexts reflects these different layers of communication apparent in Revelation 2–3 and the diversity of his addresses. If one respects the diversity of John's addressees, one has to consider Revelation's intertextuality as being more complex. It is not sufficient to think that Revelation was read only by readers who had in-depth knowledge of Israel's holy texts. On the contrary, one has to consider that each of them might have practiced different hermeneutics.

4.1 John the Real Jew, Jewish Christians and the Synagogue of Satan

In the chapter(s) in which John tried to convince Jewish Christians to abandon their ties to synagogues (Rev. 2:9 and 3:9), it is only logical that he expresses his own theological and Christological idea using Jewish traditions. In my eyes, John believes that his idea of Christian identity is the only correct way to fulfill the will of God expressed in the scriptures of Israel.

Richard Hays analyzed the vision of the Son of Man in Revelation 1 and concluded that in this passage, the authority of the intertexts is crucial to understanding the idea of Christ it expresses.[36] John's way of connecting prophetic ideas of God to the Messiah are unique and cannot be compared with other Christological conceptions from the late first or early second centuries. Moreover, the picture of God in Revelation is influenced more by Jewish textual authorities than by other early Christian texts. John's tour of God's throne room is full of allusions to Ezekiel's Merkabah vision and to Isaiah 6. Even those passages that reveal the hope for the universal salvation of humankind, like Revelation 7, 14 and 21 to 22, strongly rely on motifs from the Hebrew Scriptures. It is also not surprising that John refers to Exodus 19 and the covenant when he speaks about the inner core of Christian communities (Rev. 1; 5; 20). According to him, the Christians he addresses belong to the (hi)story of Israel and its god as told by the Torah and the prophets. It is very clear that John's thoughts were undoubtedly rooted in Jewish religious traditions. His whole book is very Jewish in character.

Nevertheless, one has to ask which aims he pursued in using the scriptures in this way. Did he intend to oppose local synagogues? Did he want to integrate Christians who still went to the synagogue into his community or was it his goal to re-

36 See Hays, "Faithful Witness, Alpha and Omega," esp. 81.

place (established) Jewish forms of identity by creating a new Jewish identity of his own? I think the truth may lie somewhere in-between.

4.2 Opposition against Groups Rejecting the Torah and/or Over-Interpreting Paul

In my view Revelation's so-called catalogues of vices reflect a conflict between John and the Christians who rejected the laws of the Torah. These catalogues (Rev. 9:20–21; 21:8.27; 22:15) are a central part of John's ethics. For the first time in the text, in Revelation 9:20–21 keywords (esp. *metanoe,w*; Rev. 2:5.16.21.22; 3:3.19; 9:20.21; 16:9.11) appear that refer directly back from the main part of Revelation (Rev. 4–22) to the ethical imperatives of the letters to the Churches (Rev. 2–3). This intratextual connection serves to explain the call for repentance in Revelation 2–3 in greater detail. In these catalogues, readers discover what is required in order to keep their relationship to God intact. Where the main part of the Revelation (Rev. 4–22) merely commands that one stay away from Satan, his evil spirits and from Babylon,[37] the words of the catalogues of vices are more outspoken. They allude to the Torah and represent a collection of different laws with the Decalogue at its centre.[38]

Tab. 1: Catalogues of vices

Revelation 9:20–21	Revelation 21:8	Revelation 21:27	Revelation 22:15
μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἴδωλα [...] καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ **τῶν φόνων** αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ **τῶν φαρμάκων** αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῆς **πορνείας** αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν κλεμμάτων αὐτῶν.	τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἁμαρτωλοῖς καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ **φονεῦσιν** καὶ **πόρνοις** καὶ **φαρμάκοις** καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις, καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ψευδέσιν, [...]	πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ [ὁ] ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος	ἔξω οἱ κύνες καὶ **οἱ φάρμακοι** καὶ **οἱ πόρνοι** καὶ **οἱ φονεῖς** καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος.

37 Of course, this could be read as an implicit call for demarcation from Greco-Roman society, but this message is covered up with vivid and colourful apocalyptic motifs. See Dochhorn, *Schriftgelehrte Prophetie*, 101 ff.

38 My interpretation differs from Giesen, "Kaiserkult in der Offenbarung des Johannes." See my explanation in Sommer, "Bund, Tora und eklektizistische Identitätsbildung."

Worship of demons	Deut. 32:17
Idolatry	Exod. 20:4; Lev. 19:4; 26:30; Num. 25:2; 33:52; Deut. 5:8; 29:16; 32:21
including a description of material	Lev. 19:4; 33:52; Deut. 29:16
Murder	Exod. 20:1; Deut. 5.18
Sorcery	Exod. 22:17; Deut. 18:10
(Sacral) Prostitution	Deut. 23:18
Thievery	Exod. 20:14; 21:37; 22:3; Lev. 19:11; Deut. 5:19
Disbelief	Generally against Exod. 20:3–5 // Deut. 5
Cowardice	Deut. 20:8
βδελύσσομαι / βδέλυγμα Cultic and sexual uncleanness or violation of purity laws	Lev. 5:2; 7:21; 11:10.11.12.13.20.23.41.42; 13:15; 14:3; 18:22.26.27.29.30; 20:13.23.25; Deut. 7:25.26; 12:31

These clear connections (indicated in the table by bold print and underlinings) cannot be coincidental. In these key passages, John emphasises very clearly that the laws of the Torah, or at least of parts of it, are still valid. He is using the language of cultic purity laws to express that the heavenly cult is pure and that its performance does not breach those laws of the Torah not superceded by Christ's teaching. He also emphasises that the Torah is not only a collection of ethical commandments, but also expresses how God wants to be adored. John formulates polemics against foreign cults by referring to the deuteronomic prohibition against worshipping demons and to the commandment of the Decalogue not to produce idols.

4.3 Opposition against Christian Groups Integrating into Greco-Roman Society

John accuses some Christians in the communities he addresses of assimilating too much to Greco-Roman society. The social and religious structure of Asia Minor was highly complex in the late first and early second centuries. The emperor cult was only one of many different cults that characterised the religious landscape of the province. In the cities, many cults co-existed.[39] Without going into detail, John argues against those of his addressees who took part in these cults. He expresses his anger that these people ignored his instructions and thus also denied his claim to authority. However, his harsh message of demarcation was difficult to accept for Christians who took part in the everyday life of the cities and the cults of Asia Minor. A closer examination of the catalogues of vices reveals John's attitude towards Christians taking part in Greco-Roman cults: In Revelation 9:20–21; 2:8 and 22:15, John alludes heavily to the laws of the Torah prohibiting idolatry (Exod. 20:4; Lev. 19:4; 26:30; Num. 25:2; 33:52; Deut. 5:8; 29:16; 32:17.21).[40] As the Pliny's letter to Tra-

39 See Ameling, *Der Kleinasiatische Kaiserkult und die Öffentlichkeit*, 15–30.
40 See Sommer, "Bund Tora und eklektizistische Identitätsbildung," 315.

jan shows, it was incompatible with normal, everyday life in Asia Minor.[41] This document clearly demonstrates that Christians were not persecuted because of their religious beliefs. They only ran the risk of being persecuted if they committed acts of provocation against the government or disturbed the public order by refusing not to acknowledge the Emperor as ruler in public.

Furthermore, in Revelation 21:8.27, John prophecies that cultic or sexual uncleanness will lead to punishment. The words he uses, βδελύσσομαι and βδέλυγμα, are specific terms of the cultic and dietary laws of Leviticus (Lev. 11:11.13.43; 18:30; 20:23.25; 26:11). It is likely that John used this language from the Torah in order to highlight his instructions not to eat meat that was sacrificed to foreign gods (Rev. 2:14.20). John criticised those of his addressees who participated in Greco-Roman cults or bought idol meat sold at the market by employing specific laws of the Torah.

4.4 The Politics of Intertexts

Although John did not write his book only to argue against Christian's participation in the Imperial Cult, his perspective on politics and society at large is negative and judgmental. The Babylon motif in Revelation 17–18 is a prime example of this. Revelation 17 describes a scenario in which the Great Whore of Babylon fornicates with the kings of the earth and seduces all nations. Revelation 18 takes up the same motif, but reveals it to be a symbol for a great city that is the home of evil forces. The chapter portrays God's judgment over Babylon in detail. Many scholars still see Babylon here as a figurative expression for Rome. However, Alkier convincingly argues that it instead symbolises political and economic injustice in general. It certainly stands for more than Rome or the imperial cult, although a first-century reader may well have associated the motif primarily with the Empire.[42] In his Babylon passage, John combines allusions to the Babylonian oracles of Jeremiah with Ezekiel's vision showing God's judgment over Tyre and Sidon (Ezek. 28). But other passages with implicit political meanings (for instance, Rev. 6; 8; 16 and 19) also strongly rely on intertexts such as Exodus, Daniel, Isaiah, or Ezekiel. It is by no means an over-interpretation to call these text-text relationships political, because they have the potential to be read as such. I would go so far as to say that particularly in these passages, John created overlaps between the reception of scriptures and veiled allusions to his political environment.[43] Although the Babylon passage

41 Plinius, *Briefe*, 10, ed. Kasten, 96–97
42 Alkier, "Schwerwiegende Differenzen."
43 Sommer, "Die literarische Konzeption von räumlicher und zeitlicher Wahrnehmung in der Johannesoffenbarung."

in Revelation 17–18 is full of intertexts, scholars like Robyn Whitaker,[44] Thomas Witulski[45] and Annette Weissenrieder[46] have convincingly argued that it shares many motifs with contemporary political discourses of the Empire.[47]

5 Conclusion

John clearly and intentionally chose specific textual authorities to suit his many different audiences. The notion of a reader steeped in the Hebrew scriptures, still current amongst some scholars, ignores essential aspects of the text. With his intertexts, John tried to reach people who were in contact with synagogues, but also people who were fully integrated into Greco-Roman society. His intertexts also had a political dimension and were remarkably Jewish in character. John did not only use prophetic texts to portray his notion of God. He also alluded to the Decalogue in order to describe his idea of ethics and to prohibit idolatry. He even went so far as to employ the language of the cultic purity laws of Leviticus in order to emphasise that the heavenly cult is rooted in the Torah. In my eyes, for John the Torah was more than just an ethical description of God's will. I think he still read the Torah as an instruction of how to worship God correctly.

Revelation's text-text relationships also reveal conflicts between John and other groups of Christians. It might be that John argued against teachings similar to the pseudo-Pauline writings that attributed little importance to the laws of the Torah.

Simply put, John's specific choice of intertexts created its own form of Christian identity that differed significantly from those proposed in other late first- or early second-century Jewish or Christian texts. Although texts like 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra, or the Apocalypse of Abraham utilised Israel's traditions intensely, John's intertextual way of claiming authority or creating ethics and theology was very different and thus stood in contrast to authors like Ignatius or Polycarp, who presented Christological ideas with little reference to Israel's traditions.

44 Whitaker sees similarities between Rev 18 and imperial funeral traditions. Whitaker, "Falling Stars and Rising Smoke."

45 Witulski believes in allusion to the Judea-Capta-coinage (66–70 BCE/132–135 BCE). Witulski, *Die Johannesoffenbarung und Kaiser Hadrian*.

46 Weissenrieder compares depictions of *Dea Roma* with Rev. 17. Weissenrieder, "Bilder zum Sehen – Bilder zum Hören."

47 Such discursive overlapping of motifs takes place in nearly every part of the book. See the commentary of Aune, *Revelation*.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

BEThL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanensium
BThSt	Biblisch-Theologische Studien
BZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
DCLS	Deuterocannonical and Cognate Literature Studies
EHS.T	Europäische Hochschulschriften: Theologie
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
JSNT.S	Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series
NTOA/STUNT	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus/Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
NTS	New Testament Studies, 1955–
SBAB	Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände
SBB	Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
S.JSJ	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
ThKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchung zum Neuen Testament
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Mohr Siebeck, 1891–

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Manichaean Eschatology: Gnostic-Christian Thinking about Last Things

The past decades have seen the publication of new Manichaean texts such as the Greek Mani-Codex and new editions of pivotal eschatological texts such as the Coptic Sermon on the Great War and Mani's Šābuhragān. When combined with previously discovered Manichaean texts and, for instance, polemics from the Church Fathers, these texts throw a new light on Manichaean eschatology. The present chapter aims at presenting some of these new insights, while stressing that Manichaean eschatology, both according to Western and Eastern sources, awards the central position in eschatological events to Jesus.

1 Introduction

The newly-discovered texts have revolutionised our understanding of Manichaeism. Up to the 1980s, many scholars saw Manichaeism as an offshoot of Iranian religious traditions, in particular because of its "dualism" and a number of its eschatological concepts, such as the Great War at the end of time and the conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις) of the world through fire. Since the discovery of the Mani Codex, however, we know for certain that the prophet Mani, the founding father of Manichaeism who was born in 216 CE in present-day Iraq and died in 276 or 277,[1] was raised in a Jewish-Christian community of Elkesaites. This means that the young Mani grew up in a sort of *kibbutz* among Jews who believed Jesus to be the Messiah and venerated a certain Elchasai as the final prophet. Not Iranian, but Jewish and Christian ideas made up the basis of the gnostic religion of the Manichaeans, a church (ἐκκλησία) which spread from Mesopotamia as far as Roman Africa and Spain in the West and China in the East. Astonishingly, recently small communities have been discovered near Quanzhou on the South China-coast who continue to venerate Mani as the Buddha of Light.[2]

From the Greek Mani Codex we also learn that Mani was an eschatological prophet and that his first disciples considered themselves to live in apocalyptic

1 According to Sayed Hasan Taqizadeh, the most likely date is February 26, 277; see Taqizadeh and Henning, "The Dates of Mani's Life," 107. For discussion, see e.g. Böhlig and Asmussen, *Manichäismus*, 309–310; Böhlig, "Manichäismus," 30; Sundermann, "Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur," 367–369.

2 For general introductions to Mani and Manichaeism, see e.g. Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire*; Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*; van Oort, "Mani;" van Oort, "Manichaeism." On Quanzhou, see esp. Lieu's contributions to *Medieval Christian and Manichaean Remains*.

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times.[3] We find the same in Mani's own writings, in particular the so-called *Šābuhragān*, composed to convert šāh-in-šāh Šābuhr I.[4] We gain the same impression from a third text, the *Sermon on the Great War*, which has been transmitted in Coptic and was discovered in Egypt at the end of the 1920s.[5] These texts can be characterised as strongly eschatological.

2 The Eschatological Cologne Mani Codex

The first source of crucial importance in this context is the Mani Codex that was discovered in Egypt shortly before 1970. Due to its acquisition by the University of Cologne, it is usually referred to as the Cologne Mani Codex, or *CMC*.[6] On each of the tiny parchment codex' very small pages (4.5 to 3.5 cm) we find about 23 lines written in Greek majuscules. The codex contains a biography of the young Mani in the form of accounts by his earliest disciples. Mani grew up in a baptising sect whose members hailed the Jewish-Christian prophet Elchasai[7] as their founder (ἀρχηγός).[8]

Reading the *CMC* one is reminded of Rudolf Bultmann's *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*. [9] If I may call to mind its opening sentences: "Jetzt ist die Zeit gekom-

3 Koenen, "Manichaean Apocalypticism." This groundbreaking article remains the text for research on Manichaean eschatology; the present overview draws heavily on it as well.

4 The most recent and best edition of all the fragments, with English translation, is MacKenzie's, "Šābuhragān," (1979; 1980). But see also, for instance, *Manis kosmogonische Šābuhragān-Texte*, ed. Hutter, and German translations of essential parts of the Middle Persian text in Böhlig and Asmussen, *Manichäismus*, 234–239.

5 The key new edition is *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 7–42. See also Pedersen's doctoral dissertation "Studies in the Sermon on the Great War," and his "Der große Krieg." The still often quoted *editio princeps* was by Polotsky, *Manichäische Homilien*, 7–42. Partial English translation (by Iain Gardner) with focus on the *Sermon*'s final passages in Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 221–226; partial German translation in Böhlig and Asmussen, *Manichäismus*, 234–239.

6 First preliminary edition ("Vorbericht"): Henrichs and Koenen, "Ein griechischer Mani-Codex;" *editio princeps* of *CMC*, c. 1–72.7, in: *ZPE* 19, 1–85 (with extensive commentary); of *CMC*, c. 72. 8–99.9, in: *ZPE* 32, 87–199 (with very extensive commentary); of *CMC*, c. 99.10–120, in: *ZPE* 44, 201–318 (with very extensive commentary); of *CMC*, c. 121–192 in: *ZPE* 48, 1–59. An ample commentary on the final section has been published by Römer, *Manis frühe Missionsreisen*. A complete edition was published by Koenen and Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Über das Werden seines Leibes*. Moreover, a diplomatic text has been edited by Koenen and Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Abbildungen und diplomatischer Text*.

7 For the main facts (with relevant literature) on Elchasaios (or Alchasai, Elkesai, Elxaios, Elxai), who is said to have received the revelation written about in the *Book of Elchasai* in Mesopotamia in 116–117, see my German entry "Elkesaiten" (English "Elkesaites") "Elkesaites," 416.

8 *CMC* c. 94. 10–11 (=*Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, ed. Koenen and Römer [dipl. text], 186).

9 Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*.

men! Die Gottesherrschaft bricht herein! Das Ende ist da!" According to the New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann and others, Jesus was an eschatological prophet and he calls on his hearers to make a decision ("Der Ruf zur Entscheidung"). The crucial sign of the *eschaton* is the appearance of the prophet Jesus and his call.

The *CMC* argues the same, and describes the Life of Mani as part of the history of salvation. Its title is Περὶ τῆς γέννης τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ: "On the Genesis of His Body." "Body" means both Mani's physical body *and* his church. The *CMC* is not the work of one author, but comprises excerpts from the testimonies of Mani's first disciples. Just as the evangelists gave their account of Jesus' deeds and words (cf. Acts 1:1), in this codex Mani's disciples give their account of his life and teachings. The disciples include Salmaios the Ascetic; Baraies the Teacher; Timotheos; Abjesous the Teacher; Innaios the brother of Zabed; Za[cheas?]; Kustaios, the Son of the Treasure of Life. We will encounter Kustaios again below as the author of the *Sermon on the Great War*.

The *CMC*'s central message is the revelation of τὰ γενόμενα ("what happened") and τὰ γενησόμενα ("what will happen").[10] In other words, Mani's revelation deals with the entire *past*, which includes the termination of the original separate state of "light and darkness", their ensuing mixture, and the first wars: and it deals with the *future*, the real ἔσχατα, including the Great War, the Last Judgment, and the restoration of the original separate states of "light and darkness". Evil will be enclosed in the βῶλος or tomb. Does this mean, τὰ ἔσχατα ὡς τά πρῶτα: the end like the beginning? Not quite, for as we will see, there are important differences.

Let us first examine how Mani is depicted as an eschatological prophet in the *CMC*. He tells the members of the community of Jewish baptists that their daily washings of food and body are of no avail. Real purity is the purity through γνῶσις: "It is the separation of light from darkness, death from life, living waters from turbid ones" (84); "[...] you [should keep] the commands of the Saviour (= Christ) [so that] he may redeem [your] soul from [destruction] and from (85) perdition." Mani then recounts, in this same excerpt from Baraies the Teacher, that some accepted his words ("they treated me as prophet and teacher", 86), but that the majority rejected him. They said: "Is *he* the one concerning whom our teachers prophesied when they said, 'A young man will [rise up from] our [midst] and will come [forward] as a new [teacher] (87) to call into question our whole doctrine, just as our forefathers have spoken of the Rest of the Garment?'" The forefathers meant here are the Jewish prophets of old. Because these Baptists regarded Elchasai as their founder (ἀρχηγός, 94), we may explain the rather enigmatic expression "the rest of the garment" (ἡ ἀνάπαυσις τοῦ ἐνδύματος) as referring to the Elkesaite idea that the true prophet,

10 Cf. *CMC*, 26.1–2 (= *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, 52, ed. Koenen and Römer). According to the latter, one may also translate (cf. e.g. Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 51): "[...] those things which had happened or were to happen [...]." Or, in rather archaic English: "that which will come to pass."

having dressed himself in the "garments" of the body of the successive incarnations, finally entered the Rest (ἀνάπαυσις). In other words, they considered Elchasai the final prophet. Now, however, some of them wondered whether Mani could be part of this tradition: was *he* the final prophet? The majority of the Baptists denied this and regarded him as one of the apocalyptic pseudo-prophets, and even tried to kill him.[11]

We see here that both Mani's opponents, as well as his disciples, stood in the Jewish-Christian tradition of the prophet Elchasai, who received the apocalyptic revelation written in the *Book of Elchasai* in Mesopotamia in the year 116 or 117.[12] The difference is that the disciples considered *Mani* to be the final prophet. It could be that they already used the expression "seal of the prophets", although this title is transmitted only in medieval Muslim sources such as the writings of al-Biruni and al-Sharastānī and thus may be an expression exclusive to Muslim writers.[13] Anyhow, in the *CMC*, Mani and his importance are discussed in eschatological terms. After a number of (previously completely unknown!) Jewish apocalypses[14] and also some passages from the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 12; Gal. 1) have been quoted, it states that Mani's revelation is the final one and that his disciples became "the seal of his apostleship" (οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐγίγνοντο σφραγὶς αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀποστολῆς, 72).[15]

In the Coptic *Kephalaia*, texts on Manichaean doctrine that seem to have been directly inspired by Mani's own teachings, it is emphatically stated that Mani was sent to the last generation.[16] He was not only Jesus' final prophet, but also the Paraclete.[17] In the words of Mani as transmitted by his disciple Timotheos in the *CMC*, his function was "to scatter the bread on my people".[18] Even Augustine says that some of Mani's disciples considered his name to be Mannichaios (with double N), i.

11 For the further development of the controversy, see *CMC*, c. 94–106 (= *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, c. 186–210, ed. Koenen and Römer,). A fine analysis of context and background can be found in Reeves, "The 'Elchasaite' Sanhedrin."

12 Cf. above, note 7.

13 See e.g. Stroumsa, "Seal of the Prophets;" Colpe, *Das Siegel der Propheten*.

14 See e.g. Gruenwald, "Manichaeism and Judaism;" Reeves, *Heralds of that Good Realm*.

15 Thus the reading according to Koenen and Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex*, 50. Their diplomatic edition (*Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Abbildungen und diplomatischer Text*, c. 142, ed. Koenen and Römer) reads σφραγεις. For the expression, one may compare the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 9:2.

16 *Kephalaia*, c. 179, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 16–17. Translation: Polotsky and Böhlig, vol. 1, 179: "Ich dagegen bin jetzt in dieser letzten Generation (γενεά) gesandt worden." Cf. the English translation by Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 189: "Furthermore, I myself was sent now, in this last generation."

17 Cf. *CMC*, c. 70, which speaks of "τοῦ παρακλήτου πνεύματος τῆς ἀληθείας" (Gardner and Lieu, *Manichaean Texts*, 58: "[...] through the Paraclete, the spirit of truth"). On Mani as the Paraclete promised in Jn 14, see e.g. Sundermann, "Paraklet;" van Oort, "The Paraclete Mani."

18 *CMC*, c. 107: στάξαι δὲ τὸν σῖτον ἐπὶ τοῦ λαοῦ μου.

e., the shedder of manna.[19] Jewish tradition has it that the miracle of manna would be repeated at the end of the world.[20]

To summarise: the *CMC* depicts Mani's life as the beginning of eschatology. With his deeds and words, the last days are imminent. His life initiates the final wars of "light and darkness", Good against Evil. In all of these features, he is heir to the Jewish eschatological expectations in general, and of the Jewish-Christian ones in particular.

3 Mani's Šābuhragān and his Disciple Kustaios' *Sermon on the Great War*

We can identify the same characteristic of Mani's mission in the fragments of the *Šābuhragān*, the Middle Persian text he composed for Šābuhr I.[21] The work's aim was to win the (already more or less convinced) Zoroastrian king over to Manichaeism, and it is for this reason that the Manichaean deities and other aspects of the worlds of "light and darkness" bear Persian names. Several of the *Šābuhragān*'s sections are deeply influenced by the Synoptic Apocalypse (Mk. 13; Mt. 24; Lk. 21) and the eschatological content of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew.[22]

This essential feature of the *Šābuhragān* is also clearly reflected in the Coptic *Sermon on the Great War*.[23] The term "Great War" seems to be Iranian,[24] but most of the sermon is clearly inspired by Jewish and Christian traditions[25] (including, perhaps, the Apocalypse of John[26]). The *Sermon* or *Logos* is said to be composed by

19 Augustine, *De haeresibus*, 46.1: *[...] Mannichaeum uocant, quasi manna fundentem.*

20 Cf. e.g. the annotations of Henrichs and Koenen to *CMC*, 107, in: *ZPE* 44, 265 n. 361, and the still leading study of Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*.

21 See for MacKenzie's text edition and translation, note 4, above.

22 This last aspect is specifically discussed in Hutter, "Mt 25:31–46 in der Deutung Manis."

23 See for the editions of Pedersen and Polotsky, note 5, above.

24 As repeatedly stressed by Widengren; see already his *Mani und der Manichäismus*, 70, 150, n. 3.

25 See in particular the analysis of Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, and the brief annotations in his text edition in *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 7–42.

26 Cf. Pedersen, in particular his diagrams of biblical allusions and quotations in *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 53–64 (which are followed by thorough analyses of the available material, 64–79). As regards the Apocalypse, Pedersen concludes (75–79) that its use by the Manichaeans is "possible", although one should bear in mind (1) that an expression such as "the cup of wrath" (*The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 7, l. 25,) or "the second death" (*Kephalaia*, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 104.106.150) could have been derived also from other (Jewish) texts, and (2) that the Manichaean New Testament seems to have consisted only of "the Gospel" and "the Apostle" (i.e., Paul) (cf. e.g. Tardieu, "Principes de l'exégèse manichéenne"). For the "possible" reminiscences of Apocalyypse in the *Sermon*, see also the corresponding annotations in *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 7, l. 14.

Kustaios,[27] one of the authors of the *CMC*. The *Sermon* speaks of persecutions, in all probability those under Bahrām II (277–293) and perhaps Hormizd II (303–310).[28] It was originally written at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century, somewhere in Mesopotamia and probably in East-Aramaic.[29]

The *Logos* deals with Manichaean eschatology in great detail. It opens with apocalyptic predictions about a time of disaster: robberies, wars, battles; death, hunger, refugees; and so on.[30] Then follows a discussion of the wars of the saviours against Error (πλάνη): Zarathustra against the pre-Zoroastrian religion; Jesus against the errant Jews; Mani against the magi.[31] According to the *Sermon* (like the *CMC*), the final cycle of history begins with Mani, whose mission is painted as ending in new disaster and error, and the coming of the Great War.[32] Weeping is a strong characteristic of eschatological feelings; one may compare Jesus, Enoch (in the *Apocalypse of Enoch*[33]), Ezra (in 4 Ezra): all true prophets are full of tears.[34] After the Great War comes the peaceful rule of the Great King.[35] This rule lasts from the end of the war until – within Mani's own generation – the Antichrist comes.[36] During the Great King's peaceful rule, the end is like the beginning and even trees will speak.[37] As is the case with the pseudo-prophets in the *Šābuhragān*,[38] the Antichrist will be defeated quickly.[39] Then comes Jesus the Splendour (called Xradešahr in the *Šābuhragān*, i.e., the God of the World of Wisdom or Nous[40]) and the Last Judg-

27 See e.g. the page headings in *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 27, 31, 35, 39 [the last two are missing in Polotsky's edition]; cf. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 87–93.
28 Cf. e.g. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 87.
29 E.g. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 80–87; *Pedersen*, "Der große Krieg," 62.
30 Studies in the Sermon on the Great War, ed. Pedersen, 8, 6–10, 28. It is not easy to make a clear-cut division of the text. For convenience's sake, I mainly follow Koenen's global division (Koenen, "Manichaean Apocalypticism," 298–307). For Pedersen's perhaps more sophisticated summary of the *Sermon*'s sections, see his *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 170–171.
31 *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 10, l. 28–31.
32 *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 12–21, 27.
33 Cf. *CMC*, c. 58ff.
34 On weepings, see in particular Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 113–115 and 200–222. Pedersen *inter alia* considers the possibility that the eschatological weepings of the Manichaeans are connected with their Bema-festival and also that they possessed "books of weepings", one of which (*The Weeping*) circulated under Mani's name.
35 *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 21, 28–33. It is important to note that in the Elchasaite tradition (cf. e.g. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 19.3.4) the Great King is Christ.
36 *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 34.
37 Cf. *CMC*, 10.1ff. and 98.9ff. for the speaking of trees (thus preventing the suffering of the divine Light). One may compare *Testament of Abraham* 3, 1–3 and the *Genesis Apocryphon* found in cave 1 of Qumran.
38 *Šābuhragān*, 1–10, transl. MacKenzie, 504–505.
39 Cf. *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 28, l. 4.
40 Cf. e.g. "Šābuhragān," 17, transl. MacKenzie, 505.

ment.[41] The description of the Judgment is similar to that found in Matthew 25: the sheep (i.e., the Manichaean Elect and the worthy Auditors) will be separated from the goats.[42] Under the rule of Jesus the Splendour, gods, angels and the Elect will live together in a new golden age.[43] Again, the trees will be green and talk; all evil will be removed from the world and mankind will listen to the true religion.[44] Then follows the dissolution and destruction of the world. Through the Porter or Omophoros (Ὠμοφόρος),[45] i.e., the Column of Glory or Milky Way, identified with the cosmic Jesus), the sons of the Living Spirit will leave the world.[46] Primal Man will unveil his face and attract them to himself in Paradise.[47] The whole earth will be subjected to ἐκπύρωσις:[48] fire sets free the last particles of light. Darkness will be imprisoned in a βῶλος or Tomb.[49]

41 *The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. by Pedersen, 35–38. Cf. "Šābuhragān," 42ff., transl. MacKenzie, 504ff.

42 On the (fairly complicated) question of the use of Mt. 25 in Mani's and Kustaios' text repectively, see Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 127ff.

43 Studies in the Sermon on the Great War, ed. by Pedersen, 39, l. 1–18. Cf. "Šābuhragān," 130 ff., transl. MacKenzie, 508ff.

44 An interesting feature in this context is that the believers, if they wish so, "will strip themselves of their body, and receive the victory with him [i.e., Jesus], and find the road levelled from him up to the kingdom of life" (*Manichaean Homilies*, ed. Pedersen, 39, 15–18). Another is that, according "Šābuhragān," 130ff., transl. MacKenzie, 509, "when god Xradešahr [i.e., Jesus] will care for the world, then will day, month and year come to an end [...]." The last feature is also stressed in other texts, for instance, *2 Henoch* 17.

45 Only named once in the *Sermon* as we have it (*The Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 40, l. 6), but several times in, for instance, the *Kephalaia*. As his name ("one who bears on the shoulders") indicates, this figure has also been identified as Atlas, but as far as I can see he has another role. In an explanatory note to his translation of *Keph*. 25, 23–25, Böhlig, *Manichäismus*, 328, note 11, remarks: "Die Säule der Herrlichkeit ist nicht mit dem fünften Sohn des Lebendigen Geistes zu identifizieren. Weil dieser, der Atlas bzw. Omophoros, den Kosmos trägt, heißt er so. Weil die Säule der Herrlichkeit aber das Licht aus der Welt emporträgt, hat die den Beinamen 'der große Omophoros' bekommen. 'Groß' dient hier zur Differenzierung." Clackson and others in *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*, 88 s.v. ὠμοφόρος, list – apart from the occurrences in the Coptic Manichaica as "Omophorus, Atlas, Burden-bearer, Porter" – the texts in which it is used in epithets of the Column of Glory, the Perfect Man and in epithets of the Sons of the Living Spirit.

46 Studies in the Sermon on the Great War, ed. by Pedersen, 39, l. 18 – 41, l. 11. One may compare "Šābuhragān," 159ff., transl. MacKenzie, 511ff.

47 Koenen, "Manichaean Apocalypticism," 304, interestingly compares the *Sermon's* account that the appearance of First or Original Man results in the destruction of the world with Apoc. 20:11: on the appearance of "the white throne and the One sitting upon it", "the earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them".

48 Here I use, following Koenen, "Manichaean Apocalypticism," 304, the general eschatological-apocalyptical term, though it should be noted that – as far as I am aware – the term is not used in Greek or (as a loan word) Coptic Manichaica.

49 Strictly speaking, the term βῶλος does not appear in the *Sermon*, but cf. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 379ff. Still the best study on the Manichaean βῶλος is Decret, "Le 'globus horribilis' dans l'eschatologie manichéenne" (repr. in Decret, *Essais sur l'Église manichéenne*, 7–13).

Curiously, this βῶλος is situated in the middle of the New Aion, both structures having already been built at the time of the creation of the world. May we call this some sort of supra-lapsarism?[50] Or absolute determinism?[51] Paradise as the outer sphere and the New Aion as the inner sphere encircle the βῶλος.[52] In the New Aion, the Father of Light unveils his "image" (εἰκῶν) to the redeemed and all light will merge into Him.[53]

Indeed, Kustaios' *Logos* speaks of the New Paradise *and* the Eternal Paradise. The Eternal Paradise appears to refer to the original kingdom of God the Father of Greatness and New Paradise to the New Aion of Primal Man or Christ. It is not wholly clear whether the New Aion will last forever, like the Father's eternal Paradise.[54] If not, one may speak of some Messianic *intermezzo*,[55] after which Christ "will hand over the Kingdom to God the Father" (1 Cor. 15:24–28).

Apart from the βῶλος (for the incarceration of the male demons and evil doers), several texts – probably including Kustaios' *Sermon*; cf. *Manichäische Homilien*, ed. Polotsky, 41 note to line 6; Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 379; *Manichaean Homilies*, ed. Pedersen, 41 – also mention the τάφος (for the incarceration of the female ones).

50 The subject of supra- (and infra-) lapsarism has been much discussed in Calvinist dogmatics. See e.g. Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 136ff. Interestingly, Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, 254, with regard to the supra- and infralapsarianism discussion asks "whether theology has not become a *gnosis* which can never become quite transparent to the Church and can never really affect the Church's belief" (his italics).

51 As a rule, Greek and other Eastern church fathers accused Mani and his followers of (absolute) determinism. See e.g. Klein, *Die Argumentation in den griechisch-christlichen Antimanichaica*, *passim*, and the fine discussion (with ample references to texts and studies) in Pedersen, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, 173ff.

52 Graphically visualized, the βῶλος is also the lowest place.

53 In the words of Kustaios (*Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, 41, l. 14–16): "The veils will be rolled back and gathered, and he will unveil his image for them. All the light will submerge into him." Cf. for background e.g. Pedersen, *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, 394–395 and – in particular for the picture of the veil and the revelation of the Father – Pedersen, *The Veil and the Revelation* (with specific reference to Revelation 20:4 and Matthew 5:8 as its possible background c.q. parallels).

54 As stated above, it is – like the βῶλος – "built" at the time of the creation of the world. On this and other activities of the "Great Builder" or "Great/First Architect", see e.g. *Kephalaia*, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, 82, 8–12 and 118, 8–12.

55 The term (in the sense that Christ's incarnation and subsequent kingdom was God's temporary "emergency measure" in reaction to sin and the Fall) was coined and advocated in particular by the Utrecht theologian Arnold A. van Ruler in his extensive dogmatic writings, to begin with in his Groningen dissertation "De vervulling der wet". The term was taken up by e.g. Jürgen Moltmann, but the meaning the latter attributed to the term differed from Ruler's.

At the end of the *Logos* one finds a remark on the ἀνδριάς or (Last) Statue.[56] Unfortunately the passage is damaged. From other sources[57] we know that this Statue forms itself from the last particles of Light liberated by the ἐκπύρωσις: it becomes "the Perfect Man". In all likelihood, this term is reminiscent of Eph 4:13 and thus refers to Jesus.[58]

4 Concluding Remarks

My overview is indeed a brief one that could be elaborated with many details.[59] What strikes me in particular is the evident Judaeo-Christian substratum underlying many features of Manichaean eschatology. Evidently, this derives above all from Mani's own orgins in a Jewish-Christian *kibbutz* of Elkesaites.

It would be possible to provide a different description of Manichaean eschatology,[60] and even to present an account featuring a dizzying number of names derived from Persian and Chinese languages.[61] These are found, however, in texts that

56 *Manichäische Homilien*, ed. Polotsky, 41 l. 21, who translates "Ur[mensch]" and in a note remarks: "Auch nach den Kephalaia soll der Urmensch im Neuen Äon 'der ἀρχηγός seiner Brüder' sein;" *Studies in the Sermon on the Great War*, ed. Pedersen, p. 41 l. 21, with references to *Kephalaia*, c. 28.34–c. 29.4 and c. 54.19–24, ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, for the eschatological role of the Last Statue.

57 E.g. the *Kephalaia*; see all places indicated in *Kephalaia*, ed. Gardner, 300 s.v. "Last Statue;" cf. Clackson et al., *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*, 61.

58 Cf. e.g. Stroumsa, "Aspects de l'eschatologie manichéenne," 173, who also refers to *Psalm-Book* 59:17: "Jésus est l'Homme parfait dans la colonne (στύλος)."

59 Such as, for instance, the curious teaching that the world fire will last for exactly 1468 years. Perhaps this idea is borrowed from Egyptian thinking: a Sothis period of 1461 years plus an eschatological "year week" of seven years. See e.g. Ogden, "The 1468 Years of the World-Conflagration in Manichaeism," 105, who for the apocalyptic "week" refers to 4 Ezra 7:43 in particular. His opinion is endorsed by, a.o., Stroumsa, "Aspects de l'eschatologie manichéenne," 167, note 20; Koenen, "Manichaean Apocalypticism," 316, 321–326; Sundermann, "Manichean Eschatology," 572a/63. But see also Stocks, "Manichäische Miszellen II," who refers to the chronographic works of Julius Africanus and Hippolytus: according to Africanus, Jesus' resurrection happened in the year 5532, while the world will last for 7000 years. In this way, the eschatological period after Jesus' resurrection is 1468 years.

60 A highly original description of Manichaean eschatology, stressing both its Jewish-Christian and Gnostic (mainly Nag Hammadi) affinities, has been provided by Stroumsa, "Aspects de l'eschatologie manichéenne" (repr. in Stroumsa, *Savoir et Salut*, 259–273). Gardner, "The Eschatology of Manichaeism" offers a detailed and highly reliable account on the basis of Western (mainly the *Kephalaia*) and a number of Eastern sources. More general accounts are provided by Sundermann, "Manichaean Eschatology" (now in his *Manichaica Iranica*, 1.59–72, with bibliography and addenda) and in the less reliable (mainly while superannuated) overview by Jackson, "A Sketch of the Manichaean Doctrine."

61 See e.g. Durkin-Meisterernst, *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*, and Mikkelsen, *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*.

are both much younger and much more syncretistic than the texts discussed above. In the *Šābuhragān* we hear Mani's *ipsissima verba* and, to a considerable extent, the same goes for the *Logos* and the *CMC*.

The crucial point is that Manichaeism was not an offshoot of Iranian thought, but a genuine Gnostic-Christian religion: gnostic in the sense that its central message is that the Nous[62] rescues the Psyche from the Hyle, and Christian, because in essence all Saviour figures in the Manichaean myth are representations of Christ.[63]

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Abbreviations

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62 I.e., in essence, the revealing Wisdom or Gnosis which comes from the spiritual and eternal world and liberates from the temporal world of matter. On the varied aspects of the "Nou" in Manichaeism, see e.g. Tongerloo and Oort, *The Manichaean NOUS*.

63 See above for (in any case!) the eschatological figures of Jesus the Splendour *sive* Xradešahr; the Omophoros; Primal Man; and the Perfect Man. For more eschatological representations of Jesus, see e.g. Rose, *Die manichäische Christologie*, esp. 132–140 for his analysis of Mani's *Šābuhragān* and Kustaios' *Logos*.

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Cinzia Grifoni and Clemens Gantner

The Third Latin Recension of the *Revelationes* of Pseudo-Methodius – Introduction and Edition

This contribution aims, first and foremost, to enhance our understanding of one of the more prominent early medieval texts attributed to Methodius, the late antique bishop of Patara. An apocalyptic world history, written in Syriac in the late seventh century, was attributed to him. The text's main objective was to place the Islamic expansion in the East in the context of the history of salvation and it includes a prophetic section that runs up until the end of times. The Revelationes *enjoyed instant success in the post-Roman world and were quickly translated into Greek and Latin. The latter version underwent a series of revisions early on, which led to several redactions being available by the ninth century. This article will mainly address the particular Latin redaction of the text which has been dubbed the "Third Recension" by modern scholars. It will offer a description of the context of its transmission, a summary of the contents and the first critical edition of the text. In order to understand the changes made by the redactor who produced this version, we need first to take a closer look at the genesis of the work in the Syrian East and at the first Latin version, which originated in the early eighth century.*

1 Pseudo-Methodius and the First Latin Recension [CGa]

1.1 Who was Pseudo-Methodius?

First, we have to define what the *Book of Revelations* of Pseudo-Methodius is. The text is linked inseparably to the "Islamic" or "Arabic Expansion", which had an immense influence on the whole Eastern Roman Empire in the course of the seventh century CE.[1] The Byzantine Empire lost two thirds of its territory and population and an even bigger part of its tax revenue between 634 and the middle of the cen-

1 See Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*.

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tury.[2] The impact of this expansion was at first less dramatic in the culturally Latin West, which was at the time quite far removed, both geographically and ideologically, from the events in the East. What quickly attracted attention in the West, however, was the constant flow of refugees from the former Roman provinces to the east and south.[3] It was mainly in Italy and Sicily, the westernmost parts of the Roman Empire, that these people sought refuge. The debate about the Saracen, Hagarene or Ishmaelite "other" certainly got a new boost in the early eighth century, when the Iberian Peninsula was conquered (711–721) and Constantinople besieged (715–717).[4] Forays into Frankish territories, mainly Aquitaine (Toulouse 721) but also the north (Poitiers 732), had even more impact. Still, the available sources outside of Spain are actually very scarce and do not contain much information about the Saracens.[5] While this, of course, does not mean that such sources never existed,[6] the texts that have come down to us are mainly translations of, or, at least, largely based upon eastern originals.[7] Of these, the most popular by far was an apocalyptic tractate in the guise of a history of the world, literally from its beginnings to its end – the *Revelationes* of Pseudo-Methodius (henceforth PsM).[8] The original version, written in Syriac, was probably composed towards the end of a prolonged period of crisis and unrest, the so-called second *Fitna* (or Arab civil war, 680–692)[9], although the work has been ascribed a number of different dates, all in the seventh century.[10]

2 See, for example, Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*; to get a good impression of just how big a shift had occurred in the old Roman East, see Haldon, *The Palgrave Atlas of Byzantine History*, 29–32, and map 2.8.

3 See Gantner, "The Label 'Greeks' in the Papal Diplomatic Repertoire in the Eighth Century," 303–349, on the situation in the city of Rome.

4 Saracens, Ishmaelites and Hagarenes were all used as terms describing Arab, Arabicised or Berber "others" in the time during and shortly after the Islamic Expansion, quasi synonyms. Ishmaelites and Hagarenes are both biblical terms referring to the story of Abraham and his handmaiden Hagar. See Tolan, *Saracens*.

5 See the relevant sections in Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*; Tolan, *Saracens*.

6 Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, 34.

7 Gantner, "Hoffnung in der Apokalypse?" 521–548.

8 Edition of the First Recension: *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, ed. Aerts and Kortekaas, 64–199 (Latin/Greek); cited as: PsM, chapter, sub-chapter. See also the translation by Garstad, *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. On the Greek version, see also Brandes, "Endzeiterwartung im Jahre 1009 a. D.?" 301–320. For the Latin text, see also *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*, ed. Sackur, 59–96. Edition of the Second Recension: "Eine frühe abendländische Aktualisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodius," ed. Prinz, 6–17; cited as: PsM, R. II, *line* (consecutive count, not by page!). The Syriac original text has been masterfully edited in: *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, ed. Reinink.

9 Actually a series of more or less related conflicts the death of Caliph Mu'āwiyya; see Rotter, *Die Umayyaden und der zweite Bürgerkrieg*; especially on the later period relevant here, see Campbell, "ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr."

10 See McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70 and 301 (notes). Relevant for the present study is Prinz's dating of the work to 655, as this affected his dating of the Second Recension, see Prinz, "Eine frühe abendländische Aktualisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodius," 1. Current

This was a period when Eastern Christians suffered far more persecution and repression than under earlier Arab rule.[11]

The anonymous – or rather, pseudonymous – author of the *Revelationes* was a Christian living under Saracen rule. He must have spent a considerable part of his life in northern Mesopotamia (Iraq), as he used a lot of sources originating in the same area.[12] It still remains unclear whether he actually worked on the text while living there. Neither do we know which branch of Christianity the author belonged to, as he fails to address any relevant matters of ongoing controversy. Melkites (orthodox Chalcedonians) and Monophysites dominated in the area and fought over issues of Christology where he was active, whereas the Nestorians (Church of the East) were certainly weaker. The sources he employs might make a Monophysite author more likely.[13]

The *Revelationes* were ascribed to Methodios, all of the earliest versions of the text bear his name. He was either bishop of Olympos or nearby Patara (both are given in hagiographical accounts) in Lycia in southern Asia Minor. In the Third Latin Recension of the text, he is constantly associated with the latter see, given as "Pytharensis".[14] The prominent bishop had been martyred in 311[15] in the course of the anti-Christian persecutions of the time and was widely recognised as a father of the Church on the basis of a few preserved tractates. There was not much information available on his life, however, which made him a good candidate for the authorship, and it is quite probable that the *Revelationes* were designed to carry this false ascription from the beginning on, given the work's prophetical outlook from the fourth century onwards.

The *Revelationes* present themselves as a history of the world. They follow a peculiar scheme of millennia and "weeks of years", meaning one seven-year bundle after another. The focus of the text is the lot of the Christians under Ishmaelite, that is essentially Muslim, rule and their eventual triumph over it. The *Revelationes* pre-

research mainly follows the dating to 691 proposed by Gerrit J. Reinink, the editor of the Syriac PsM-text, see Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom Römischen Endkaiser," 82–111, esp. 85; this view has also been accepted by some scholars who had previously favoured an earlier date of composition (e.g. McGinn, *Antichrist,* 90 and 307, n. 65).

11 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 263–264.

12 On the sources, especially the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, see Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 5–7; Sackur, "Einleitung: Pseudomethodius," 10–15. See also Reinink, "Der Verfassername 'Modios'," 46–64, at 51–60, and PsM syr., ed. Reinink, xxx–xxxi.

13 Reinink, PsM syr., xxvi–xxix, argues that the author was a Monophysite from northern Mesopotamia, whereas Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 264, is more careful and thinks that a Melkite would be equally possible. On the different Christian groups in the area, see Troupeau, "Kirchen und Christen im muslimischen Orient," 391–472, esp. 399–452.

14 See edition in section 5 below.

15 Prinz, "Eine frühe abendländische Aktualisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodius," 2. Bracht, "Methodius von Olympus," 768–784, and Bracht, "Methodius of Olympus," 1–17.

dict that the Ishmaelites will rule ten of these year-weeks, a calculation which again points to the text having been drawn up towards the end of the seventh century. We have to note right away, however, that the Greek and Latin versions changed this to seven year-weeks, which makes the calculation of the date of composition problematic in these cases, but which fit the general tone and the parallelisation in play better, given the wordplay in Greek (ἑβδοματικῷ ἑβδόμῳ).[16]

It is important to note that the biblicistic term "Ishmaelites" (*Ismaelitae*) is used for the Arabs or Muslims in the First Recension of PsM, just like in the text's Greek template. While the use of this biblical model (or the related "Agarenes") was not uncommon,[17] it is significant in the context of the work's subsequent textual history, with the appearance of alternative terms such as Arabs or Saracens in later recensions being a good indicator that the redactor was deviating from the Latin original.[18]

1.2 A Brief Overview of the Textual Transmission

Originally composed in Syriac, the *Revelationes* were translated into Greek around 700, possibly in a Sinai monastery. This translation soon reached the Latin parts of Europe; its transmission was therefore surprisingly fast compared to other Greek or Syriac texts we can trace.[19] Between 710 and 725, the Latin translation was produced by a monk calling himself Peter (*Petrus monachus*) in an introductory letter (*prefaciuncula*), which sometimes accompanied the work in the textual transmission.[20] It remains uncertain where the translation was made. Three of the four oldest manuscripts of this First Latin Recension are from Francia – nominally still Merovingian – whereas the fourth was produced in Italy, possibly Tuscany.[21] Editors have tried to assign the *Revelationes* to several regions in Francia or to northern Italy, mainly using philological criteria. They do so on the basis that the oldest manuscripts are written in what is called "Merovingian Latin"[22], a form of Latin incorporating a lot of rusticisms and signs of spoken post-classical Latin. It was also

16 Literally maybe the "sevenfold seven years" or "sevenfold weeks". See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 264 with n. 17, and Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 6. See also PsM, XIII, 2. For the text, see PsM, ed. Sackur 59–60, trans. Garstad 74–77.
17 See Tolan, *Saracens* and Tolan, "A Wild Man, Whose Hand Will Be against All," 513–530.
18 See Gantner, "Hoffnung in der Apokalypse?," 534–536.
19 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 15–16. See Frenz, "Textkritische Untersuchungen zu 'Pseudo-Methodios'," 50–58, who still followed the earlier dating of the Syriac version.
20 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 28–31 and 57.
21 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 48–57.
22 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 21–25 and 28–31, esp. 29–30.

to be found in Italy in the period in question.[23] The manuscript transmission also fails to provide any definitive clues, as early medieval manuscripts were possibly more likely to have been preserved in early modern France than in Italy.[24] The Latin translation of PsM coincides with the first phase of Saracen attacks on the south-western European mainland, which witnessed the conquest of Spain (from 711), forays into Aquitania and Francia and attacks against the islands of the western Mediterranean. The vital threat for the remaining Roman ("Byzantine") Empire began to be appreciated, especially in the wake of the second Arab siege of Constantinople between 717/18, which may have been the event that triggered the wider distribution of the Greek PsM. PsM arrived in the Latin world in a climate that certainly greatly fostered immediate interest in the text.[25] It is no wonder then that the *Revelationes* were instantly copied: the four oldest preserved manuscripts all belong to the eighth century itself, with the very oldest tentatively dated to 727.[26] In total, over 220 manuscripts containing one of the four Latin recensions were produced throughout the Middle Ages.[27] The most popular were certainly the first two Latin versions, of which the first is still present in about 50 codices,[28] whereas the second, shortened and re-worked version is to be found in more than 150.[29] In the latter, the *Revelationes* were adjusted to the interests of a Latin Western audience in a manner very similar, but not identical, to that characteristic of the Third Recension.[30]

PsM saw a big surge in its manuscript distribution in the eleventh century, probably because the apocalyptic outlook of the text made it relevant to the eschatological concerns aroused by the millennium.[31] Largely due to its anti-Saracen main strand, it also remained popular in the time of the crusades. The "peoples of the north" (called just that in the First Recension, but Gog and Magog in later ver-

23 Frenz, "Textkritische Untersuchungen zu 'Pseudo-Methodios'," at 52–53, argues in that direction too; his idea that no one would have been able to translate Greek in Francia is to be discarded, though.

24 See, for example, Burigh, *Medieval Manuscript Production in the Latin West*.

25 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 3.

26 See Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 30, and esp. 50–54, with n. 15, regarding the (shaky) dating of Ms Bern, Burgerbibliothek 611.

27 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 19. On the eighth century Latin renderings of the text, see also Herren, "The Revelationes of Pseudo-Methodius."

28 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 31.

29 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 32–33. There is great textual variance among the witnesses of the Second Recension, as the edition of Prinz, "Eine frühe abendländische Aktualisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodius," clearly shows, even though the editor himself tried to downplay these differences. Still, all witnesses of the Second Recension go back to one crucial step of textual revision.

30 Prinz, "Eine frühe abendländische Aktualisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodius," 3–4.

31 In fact, the biggest share of the textual witnesses attributed to the Second Recension date to that period. See, for example, Lerner, "Millennialism," 332. On Millennialism in Europe around the year 1000, but also disconnected from it, see Landes, *Heaven on Earth,* 62–88.

sions) mentioned towards the end of the text would in turn be interpreted as the Mongols/Tatars, and the *Revelationes* were also used as propaganda against the Ottoman Empire at the end of the Middle Ages.[32] PsM was included in manuscript compendia dealing with the End Times from early on – one of the textual witnesses of the Third Recension, Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Augiensis Cod. perg. 254 (***A***), will illustrate this below.[33] On top of the work's own distribution, the *Revelationes* are likely to have influenced other Latin eschatological writings. The very successful tractate on the Antichrist by Adso of Montier-en-Der is often given as a case in point, despite not containing any direct citations from PsM.[34]

1.3 Summary of the First Latin Recension[35]

The chapter numbers follow the ones established in the edition of the Greek text by Anastasios Lolos.[36]

Ch. 1–2: deal with the creation, the times of Adam and Cain. Special emphasis is laid on the latter and his offspring, who are specifically blamed for having indulged in fornication (a topic that fascinated the author).

Ch. 3–5.1: the actions of Noah after the Flood and the birth of his fourth (!) son, Jonitus, a special character otherwise only found in apocryphal Syrian texts. He is presented as wise and learned and is associated with the absolute east, the country of the rising sun. The fate of the descendants of Noah, the establishment of kingdoms, the subsequent wars between them and the invasion of Sampsisano are also mentioned.

Ch. 5.2–5.9: a first invasion of the civilised world by the sons of Ishmael (prefiguring what is to come later); the invaders are vanquished by Gideon, and it is pronounced that they will invade for a second time and in turn be defeated by the Romans.

Ch. 6–7: kings of Babylon, the Medes and Persians

Ch. 8: Alexander and the imprisonment of the "Unclean Nations" (of the north). Alexander is presented as the son of a Macedonian king and an Ethiopian princess; he thereby prefigures the internationality of the later Christian empire.[37] He is also,

32 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 34–35, and Brandes, "Endzeiterwartung im Jahre 1009 a.D.?," 309, with n. 32.

33 See sections 3–5 below.

34 Rauh, *Das Bild des Antichrist im Mittelalter,* 152, and on Adso 153–164.

35 The summary is based on Garstad (trans.), *Pseudo-Methodius* xiv–xvi.

36 Pseudo-Methodius, *Die Apokalypse*, ed. Lolos.

37 This also shows in ch. 14,5.

as is often the case in Christian and even Islamic texts, presented as one of the audience's own, as a proto-Christian in this case.[38]

Ch. 9: after Alexander's death, Byzas marries Chouseth, Alexander's mother. Their daughter, Byzantia, is in turn married to Romulus Armelaus. Their sons then rule Rome, Byzantium and Alexandria respectively. We have an alternative rendering of Roman history here, drawing upon Syrian material.

Ch. 10: prophecy and reflection concerning the kingdom of the Romans/Christians.

Ch. 10.6–11.18: second invasion of the sons of Ishmael (10.6–11.3), caused by sexual sins of the Christians (11.4–8); the countries invaded by Ishmaelites (11.9–13); the depredations of the Ishmaelites (11.14–18).

Ch. 12: the falling away of Christians. This is a central concern of the author, oftentimes overlooked. He sees apostates and opportunists going over to Islam as the biggest danger for Christianity – this was one of his main messages to his audience and one that certainly also had a timeless quality.

Ch. 13.1–6: suffering under the Ishmaelites will separate the faithful from the unfaithful; the Ishmaelites taunt the Christians. [After this section, the Greek version has an interpolated prophecy concerning the second Arab siege of Constantinople.]

Ch. 13.11–18: defeat of the Ishmaelites by the king of the Romans, peace and restoration of the devastated lands. This is another very central section, as it contains the element of hope, maybe the most important factor in the remarkable success of the text.[39]

Ch. 13.19–21: invasion of the "Unclean Nations" (here *not* indentified as Gog and Magog!), who are defeated by the Christians; the king of the Romans goes to Jerusalem. When compared to the long account of the Ishmaelites, the shortness of this section gives it the air of an appendix.

Ch. 14: assumption of the cross, death of the king of the Romans; the son of perdition (note: *not* called the Antichrist) rises, and many are deceived by his signs and wonders. He is then refuted by Enoch and Elijah. The Second Coming of Christ follows, i.e. the Final Judgment of all souls and the end of time.

38 For more information on the use of Alexander in PsM, see Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit,* 83–84.

39 See Gantner, "Hoffnung in der Apokalypse?"

2 The Third Recension: Manuscript transmission [CGr]

Now that we have given an overview of the original Latin version, we can dive into the manuscript transmission of the Third Recension; this information is essential in order to understand the context in which the text circulated and the reasons behind its inclusion in the different manuscripts. In chapter 3 we will proceed to describe and interpret its contents.

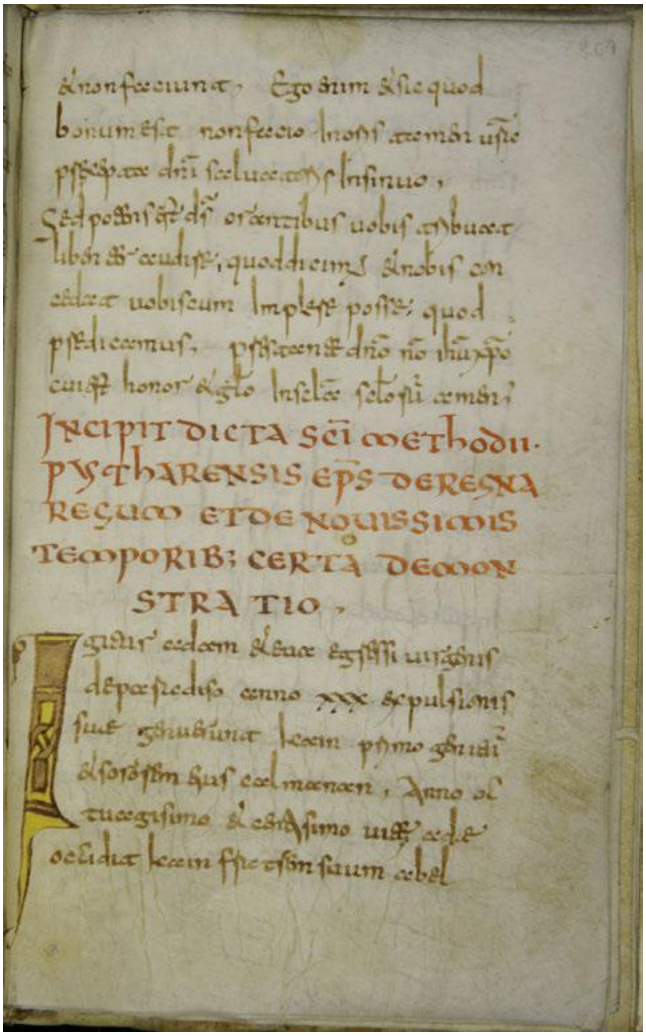

Fig. 1: Incipit of the Third Recension in MS Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. 254, fol. 204r (Source: Badische Landesbibliothek)

In a contribution from 1988, Marc Laureys and Daniel Verhelts offered a first survey of 196 manuscripts transmitting the text of PsM in its various Latin versions. They distinguished four different recensions of the work, the first of which consisted, as we have seen above, of the first translation of Pseudo-Methodius' work from Greek into Latin, while the further three contained various adaptations of it, each unrelated to the others. Laureys and Verhelts listed a provisional number of witnesses for each of the four versions of the text. According to this survey, which was – as the authors themselves admitted – incomplete, the Second Recension was the most widespread in the Middle Ages, whereas the Third Recension, traced only to the late-eighth-century Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Augiensis Cod. perg. 254, fols. 204r–211r, evidently enjoyed far less success.[40]

Ten years later, W.J. Aerts and G.A.A. Kortekaas published a critical edition of the First Latin Recension.[41] In their introduction, the editors stated that the number of the witnesses of PsM in its various Latin recensions had risen to c. 220. However, they did not specify which manuscripts exactly could be added to the already known list.[42] As for the Third Recension, in particular, the editors mentioned that "few manuscripts" transmitted it, but they neither provided a list of the codices they referred to nor explained exactly how many witnesses they were able to add to the single one Laureys and Verhelts had recorded ten years before.[43]

In his recently published monograph on the early medieval understanding and reuse of the apocalyptic tradition, James Palmer dedicated an entire chapter to Pseudo-Methodius' work and its reception in the medieval West.[44] In this, he also paid attention to the Third Latin Recension, describing some major differences from the text of the First. Moreover, he gave account of a further witness of the Third Recension, namely the manuscript Cologne, Dombibliothek, Cod. 15, fols. 84v–86r, written around the middle of the ninth century.[45]

To these two witnesses of Pseudo-Methodius' Third Recension can now be added a third, namely St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 238, pp. 385–392, where the text was written in its entirety by the local monk Winithar around 760.[46] Apart from

40 Laureys and Verhelst, "Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelationes*," 112–136. The Karlsruhe manuscript of the Third Recension is recorded on page 129.

41 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius."

42 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 19: "Weitere Untersuchungen unsererseits mit Hilfe rezenter Kataloge in den Universitätsbibliotheken von Leiden und Groningen bieten Grund für die Registration von ± 220 Handschriften, neben vielen Übersetzungen in den Volkssprachen."

43 Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 32, n. 55: "Das Verbreitungsgebiet der 3. Rezension ist, wenn man die wenigen Handschriften in Betracht nimmt, beschränkt geblieben."

44 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 107–129.

45 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 123, n. 72.

46 Grifoni, "A New Witness of the Third Recension of Ps.-Methodius' *Revelationes*," 446–460.

three exceptions, to which I will return below, the text copied – and adapted – by Winithar was homogenous with that transmitted by the other two witnesses.

Hence, the Third Latin Recension has thus far been discovered in three manuscripts dating back to the end of the eighth and to the ninth centuries. Certainly, further witnesses are still waiting to be detected, but for the moment, relying on these three codices, we can attempt a first description of the context of transmission.

2.1 Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Augiensis Cod. perg. 254

Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Augiensis Cod. perg. 254, which I will refer to hereafter and in the edition as ***A***, became part of the early medieval library of Reichenau, one of the most important monastic centres and scriptoria of the time, in the course of the tenth century at the latest. Since this codex has only rarely caught the attention of modern scholars, I will first describe its structure and contents and then concentrate on the place occupied by the Third Recension in it.

A contains three different codicological units.[47] The first, consisting of folios 1–71, transmits an anonymous seventh-century treatise on the Gospels of Irish origin, which circulated on the Continent under the name of Gregory or Jerome.[48] According to Bernhard Bischoff, the treatise was copied by several writers in an unidentified scriptorium, possibly in the western part of modern-day Germany, during the first third of the ninth century.[49]

At this same centre and in the same period the treatise was bound together with quires of external origin, which now form the second and third codicological units of ***A***. These contain extracts from Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis* (fols. 72r–152r)[50] and a homiletic collection (fols. 153r–211r) respectively, written in a pre-Caroline mi-

47 The manuscript is described in: Holder, *Die Reichenauer Handschriften,* 573–579. It is included as item n. 1110 in Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, hereafter CLA (for a digitised version, see https://elmss.nuigalway.ie/catalogue/1577 – accessed 4 February, 2018). See furthermore Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, 364 n. 1735; Laureys and Verhelst, "Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelationes*," 129. The manuscript is available in digitised form under: https://digital.blb-karlsruhe.de/urn/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-1487 (accessed 4 February, 2018).

48 The treatise is edited in PL 30, cols. 531–590. It is recorded under the title *Expositio IV evangeliorum, recensio I* in Lapidge and Sharpe, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature 400–1200*, no. B341, to which I refer for further bibliography.

49 Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften* 1, no. 1734.

50 Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. Lawson. Here, on page 26 of the introduction, the editor gives account of the omissions and abridgements characterising the Isidorian text contained in ***A***.

nuscule.[51] Both these texts were copied between the eighth and ninth centuries in the same scriptorium. Here, moreover, a contemporary local hand added an *Orologium* at the end of the homiletic collection, i.e. a guide to determining the hour of the day all across the year according to the length of the shadow cast by the gnomon in a sundial (fols. 211v–212r). To establish where exactly this scriptorium was located is a difficult task and would require a thorough palaeographic comparison, which has not been undertaken to date. The catalogue of the Reichenau manuscripts preserved at Karlsruhe, published by Alfred Holder in 1906, provides no information regarding the place of origin of the quires we are dealing with.[52] The issue of their origin was first broached in Elias A. Lowe's *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, where the writing of both the Isidorian extracts and the homiletic collection was attributed to a northern Italian or a Swiss centre.[53] A few years later, Bernhard Bischoff placed the origin of both texts in northern Italy, pointing out some striking similarities with a contemporary manuscript written at Novara, namely Novara, Biblioteca Capitolare, Cod. 2 (LXXXIV).[54] Subsequent, rare mentions of the second and third codicological units of ***A*** rely on the suggestions of either Lowe or Bischoff, without engaging in a new, more detailed palaeographical analysis.[55] As for the contents of both units, they do not offer any specific clues that might help to determine their place of origin with more certainty. Therefore, pending a more precise analysis of their script, we will stick to the assumption that these texts were written either in northern Italy or in some Swiss scriptorium.

Soon after they had been penned, the Isidorian extracts, the homiletic collection and the *Orologium* reached the centre that Bischoff tentatively placed somewhere in modern-day western Germany. Here, they were bound together with the anonymous treatise on the Gospels mentioned above to form a single volume. At this stage, one of the copyists of the treatise added a litany on folios 212v–213v, filling the folios left blank at the end of the last quire of ***A***. After having addressed a conspicuous list of both male and female saints asking for support, the litany ends with a direct prayer to God. In this, the writer invokes divine mercy, peace and security from enemies' attacks upon God's people (*populus tuus*). Moreover, he prays for the life and military success of both Emperor Louis the Pious (r. 814–840) and the

51 A detailed palaeographic analysis of this minuscule is still lacking. In particular, it has not been determined how many copyists cooperated in writing the two units. Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften* 1, no. 1735 describes the minuscule as a "bewegte, ligaturenreiche Minuskel von mehreren Händen".

52 Holder, *Die Reichenauer Handschriften*, 573–574.

53 CLA VIII 1110.

54 Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, no. 1735. Two folios of the Novara manuscript are partly reproduced in CLA III 406.

55 Laureys and Verhelst, "Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelationes*," 129 follow Lowe's interpretation; Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 123 follows Bischoff.

Frankish army.[56] Louis the Pious is the subject of a further addition, which was written onto folio 1r in the tenth century, i.e. after the three parts now forming ***A*** had already been bound together.[57] In question is an annalistic annotation, which apparently occurs only in ***A*** and which carries in red the title *Incipit numerus annorum*. In 1839, Georg Pertz published this text alongside a further annalistic notice from another Reichenau manuscript under the label of *Annales Augienses brevissimi*.[58] It consists of a sixteen-line entry, copied over an erasure, which focuses on the year 832 AD. Seven of the nine sentences forming the entry refer to that year, which is mentioned three times in correlation with Louis' rule. 832 is namely stated twice to be the eighteenth year of Louis' kingship and once as the nineteenth year of Louis' imperial command.[59] This focus on Louis the Pious matches the contents of the final litany. I would assume, therefore, that the annalistic notice was copied on purpose onto folio 1r in the tenth century after the former, now illegible, content of the page had been erased. However, it seems probable that the notice had been originally written soon after 832, since the interest in this year, whatever the reason, seems improbable for the tenth century. As for its place of origin, I would posit the Ala-

56 ***A***, fol. 213v: *Propitius esto, parce nobis domine. Ab omni malo libera. Ab hoste malo libera. A morbo malo libera. Ab incursu malo libera. Ab ira tua libera. Ab omnibus aeternis suppliciis. Ab ira ventura libera. Per crucem tuam libera. Peccatores te rogamus. Vt pacem donis te rogamus. Vt sanitatem nobis donis. Vt ludoico himperator vel exercitum francorum conservare digneris. Vt eis vitam et victoriam donis te rogamus. Vt iram vel indignationem tuam a populo tuo averteris digneris [sic!]. Vt indulgentiam peccatorum nobis donis te rogamus. Vt vitam perpetuam nobis tribuas te rogamus*. This transcription differs slightly from that provided by Holder, *Die Reichenauer Handschriften*, 578. For a study on intercessory prayers for rulers in the Carolingian period, see Choy, *Intercessory Prayer and the Monastic Ideal in the Time of the Carolingian Reforms*, 131–160.

57 For the dating to the tenth century, see Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften* 1, no. 1734. Holder, *Die Reichenauer Handschriften*, 573, seems to date the very writing of this addition to the year 832 by reason of its content. Two further additions dating to the tenth century are found among the final leaves of the book, i.e. a Runic alphabet on fol. 211 and a lexicological gloss on fol. 213v, right at the end of the litany.

58 *Annales Augienses Brevissimi*, ed. Pertz, 136–137. I reproduce the entry contained in ***A*** as published in ibid., 136, n. 1: *Incipit numerus annorum. Sunt anni ab initio mundi secundum Iheronimum usque ad incarnationem Domini 3957. De nativitate Domini usque ad Hludowici regis annum 18mum sunt anni 832. Insimul iuncti sunt faciunt annos 4789. Sunt anni, ut septuaginta interpretibus habetur ab origine mundi usque ad Christum 5199. A nativitate Christi usque ad annum 19mum Hludowici imperatoris sunt anni 832. Hos insimul iunge faciunt annos 6031. A morte Gotofredi duces (sic!) Alamannorum sunt anni 123. A grando et duro hieme numerantur anni 68 usque 18mum annum Hludowici regis. De subiugatione Italiae regionis computantur anni 58*.

59 The distinction made here between Louis' titles is remarkable. With regard to the year 832, Louis is presented as an emperor who has reigned for nineteen years (i.e. since 813). This makes sense considering the fact that his father, Charlemagne, had appointed him as co-emperor in 813 exactly. Concerning the title of *rex*, however, Louis had already been a king since 781, when he was anointed as *rex Aquitanorum* by Pope Hadrian I in Rome. He is recorded as such in the documentary evidence, although rarely, as shown in: Wolfram, *Intitulatio*, 220–224. Therefore, I would assume that this notice refers to Louis' adoption of Charlemagne's title of *rex Francorum et Langobardorum* after his father's death in 814.

mannic region and probably the Reichenau scriptorium. The third-last sentence of the text affirms namely that 832 was the one hundred and twenty-third year since the death of Gotfrid, the *dux Alamannorum*.[60] The cultivation of the memory of Gotfrid (d. 709) long after his death would make most sense in a region such as Carolingian Alemannia, in which his offspring were still politically active.

Summing up the information gathered so far, we can state that the three parts forming the manuscript ***A***, as we know it today, were put together probably under Louis' rule at a Carolingian scriptorium possibly located in western Germany.[61] Here, a treatise on the Gospels copied locally was bound together with two works coming from the same northern-Italian or Swiss scriptorium to form a single manuscript, which was enriched with intercessory prayers for Emperor Louis the Pious. It can be speculated that soon after, and at the latest in the tenth century, ***A*** reached the library of Reichenau, where an earlier annalistic notice also focusing on Emperor Louis was copied over an erasure on its first folio.

In this miscellany, the Third Recension of PsM (fols. 204r–211r) concludes the homiletic collection of twenty items contained in the third codicological unit of ***A***. Just a glimpse at the titles introducing both the collection in its entirety and some of the texts helps us to understand that the early medieval compiler perceived and presented all these items as sermons. Firstly, the title appended to the whole collection on fol. 153r reads: *Incipit collectario (sic!) de diversis sententiis*. Thus, the twenty texts are altogether described as *sententiae*, that is as authoritative precepts expressing the truth.[62] Furthermore, five of the items are introduced straightforwardly as homilies (*homilia*); on one occasion the homily is improperly ascribed to Augustine.[63] Finally, a long title in red marks the beginning of the *Revelationes* with the words: *Incipit dicta sancti Methodii Pytharensis episcopus de regna regum et de novissimis temporibus certa demonstratio* (**see fig. 1**).[64] The *Revelationes* too were regarded as a sermon written by Methodius, the bishop of Patara. They are described as "assertions (*dicta*) concerning the rule of kings and the unerring description of the last times". In these, therefore, both earthly sway (*regna regum*) and eschatolog-

60 For Gotfrid (d. 709), see Zettler, *Geschichte des Herzogtums Schwaben*, 48–54 and Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alemannen*, 103–107.

61 A thorough palaeographic analysis of the pre-Caroline minuscule of both the first part of ***A*** and of the litany is still lacking. For the moment, the vague indication of origin ("Westdeutschland?") given by Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, no. 1734, cannot be narrowed down. Comparing the first part of ***A*** with the manuscripts produced at Reichenau in the first third of the ninth century, I would, in any case, exclude that it was written there.

62 On the meanings of the term *sententia* in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, see the recent contribution by Codoñer, "La «Sententia» y las «Sententiae» de Isidoro de Sevilla," 3–48, esp. 3–10.

63 See entry no. 18 in the following table. Augustine is also regarded as the author of entry no. 3.

64 The title introducing the Third Recension in ***A*** reproduces the title of the First Recension almost faithfully. See Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 71: *Incipit sancti Methodii episcopi Paterensis sermo de regnum gentium et in novissimis temporibus certa demonstratio*.

ical visions formed the main focus of the narrative. As we are now going to see, it was exactly because of this latter topic that the *Revelationes* were included in the homiletic collection of ***A***.

For the sake of clarity, the following table records briefly the main contents and sources, when known, of the twenty items forming the homiletic collection contained in ***A***:

Tab. 1: The homiletic collection of ***A*** (fols. 153r–211r)[65]

1	fols. 153r–156r	**No title** **Inc.:** *Christus ait diligite invicem [...]* **Expl.:** *iniquitate et iniustitia.* **Source:** unknown, but of supposed Irish origin (*Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, hereafter CPL, 790). **Content:** virtues and vices, perspective of eternal reward for the righteous.
2	fols. 156r–157r	**No title** **Inc.:** *Omnis roris [...]* **Expl.:** *in diem resurrectionis in secula seculorum.* **Source:** unknown, but of supposed Irish origin (CPL 791).[66] **Content:** description of the afterlife penance of the soul in the third, fourth, sixth and seventh heavens. Admonition to righteous conduct, addressed also to bishops and priests (*voe sacerdotis qui acceperunt populum et non predicantes eis evangelium regni*).
3	fols. 157v–160r	**Title:** *Sanctus Augustinus episcopus dixit.* **Inc.:** *Fratres karissimi qui in Christo [...]* **Expl.:** *in letitia magna.* **Source:** unknown, but of supposed Irish origin (CPL 792).[67] **Content:** virtues and vices, perspective of eternal reward or punishment. Description of the catastrophic events announcing Christ's Second Coming.

65 The first six texts on the list have been published in *Fragments retrouvés d'apocryphes priscillianistes*, ed. De Bruyne, 318–335. De Bruyne considered them to bear witness to the survival of Priscillianist ideas in the medieval West. Later scholars challenged his arguments, instead considering these and most of the other texts contained in the homiletic collection of ***A*** as evidence of the influence of Irish biblical exegesis on the Continent. See, for instance, James, "Irish Apocrypha," 9–16; Bischoff, "Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter," 205–273, at 230; McNally, *Der irische Liber de numeris,* 38–39, 59, 65, 106, 109, 115, 122; Smyth, "The Irish *Liber de Numeris*," 291–297; Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, 64–69. The Brepols *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* (CPL) gives eight-century Ireland as the origin of the first six texts (*In Hibernia conflata, et quidem saec. VIII, nec originis est Priscillianisticae*, CPL 790–795). Lapidge and Sharpe, *Bibliography,* 331–332, no. 1252, consider these works to be of possible or arguable Celtic origin and list them among the *Dubia*.

66 See James, "Irish Apocrypha," 15–16.

67 The *Clavis Patristica Pseudoepigraphorum Medii Aevi* (CPPM), vol. 1A, ed. Machielsen, records this pseudo-Augustinian sermon as item no. 2351 on 531. A passage from it, which is edited in *Fragments retrouvés d'apocryphes priscillianistes*, ed. De Bruyne, 324, l. 10–19, recurs with the same wording in the *Sermo de symbolo et virtutibus*, ed. Keefe, 6–8, esp. l. 27–46.

4	fols. 160r–161v	**Title:** Homilia de die iudicii. **Inc.:** *Oportit enim nos [...]* **Expl.:** *et angelis in regno celorum.* **Source:** unknown, but of supposed Irish origin (CPL 793). **Content:** admonition to be righteous in consideration of the Last Judgment. Description of earthly punishments for the sinner. Concluding picture of monks and virgins rejoicing and singing along with God's saints and angels in heaven.
5	fols. 162r–165v	**Title:** De parabolis Salomonis filii David. **Inc.:** *Timor domini gloria [...]* **Expl.:** *erunt sicut angeli dei.* **Source:** unknown, but of supposed Irish origin (CPL 794). **Content:** a sermon filled with biblical echoes, both canonical and apocryphal. One direct address to the audience (*Ideo fratres karissimi et omnes populus qui audit me sine intermissione orate dominum*). Rewards and punishments according to one's behaviour. Exhortation to all to give alms and to kings and judges to act in observance of God's precepts. The seven virtues, which, like steps in a ladder, lead to salvation; the seven ways to redeem the soul; the world's twelve major abuses; the three acts leading humans to hell or to heaven, the three acts which cannot be forgiven by God.[68]
6	fols. 165v–172v	**Title:** Liber "canon in ebreica" Hieronimi presbyteri. **Inc.:** *Canon in ebreica [...]* **Expl.:** *habeat vitam aeternam.* **Source:** unknown, but of supposed Irish origin (CPL 795).[69] **Content:** exhortation to follow God's precepts supported by several biblical or apocryphal quotations. The audience is addressed once with the same words as in the previous sermon (*Ideo fratres karissimi et omnes populus...*).
7	fols. 172v–174v	**Title:** De reddendis decimis et primitivis. **Inc.:** *Primus homo qui dedit decimam [...]* **Expl.:** *omnibus insidiis diabuli cui gloria in saecula saeculorum amen.* **Source:** unknown. **Content:** exhortation to offer tithes, first fruits and alms in order to both avoid God's punishment and gain treasure in heaven.

68 This long sermon, edited by *Fragments retrouvés d'apocryphes priscillianistes*, ed. De Bruyne, 328–330, shows similarities with several other texts of Irish origin. Lines 80–85 of De Bruyne's edition reproduce verbatim the beginning of the seventh-century Irish treatise *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, which is ascribed here in ***A*** to Gregory the Great: see Pseudo-Cyprian, *De xii abusiuis saeculi*, ed. Hellmann, 32, l. 2–6. Moreover, lines 92–100 of De Bruyne's edition recur in a further sermon of supposed Irish origin published in McNally, "*In nomine dei summi*," 142, 1–10. In general, the arrangement of arguments into lists of seven (heptads) or three items (triads), which occurs here on five occasions, seems typical of the Hiberno-Latin exegetical tradition (see McNally, "*In nomine dei summi*," 132).

69 Heptads and triads occur in this sermon too. In particular, it features the seven seals of the Revelation of John and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (see McNally, *Der irische Liber de numeris*, 108–109 and 117–118).

8	fols. 175r–180r	**No title** **Inc.:** *Rogo vos et admoneo [...]* **Expl.:** *sub sua protectione producat, qui cum patre et spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum.* **Source:** Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo 199* in its entirety.[70] **Content:** exhortation to fast and, most of all, to offer alms to the poor during Lent.
9	fols. 180r–181v	**Title:** Homilia de die iudicii. **Inc.:** *Fratres karissimi quam timendus [...]* **Expl.:** *eripere dignetur qui cum patre et spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in secula seculorum.* **Source:** unknown.[71] **Content:** apocalyptic end of the world by fire and Last Judgment.
10	fols. 181v–185v	**Title:** Homilia in die sanctum pasche. **Inc.:** *O fratres dilectissimi praesentem [...]* **Expl.:** *in vitam aeternam in secula seculorum amen.* **Source:** unknown.[72] **Content:** exhortation to distinguish conduct that pleases God from bad behaviour on the occasion of Easter Sunday. List of vices to be avoided for entering heaven. Special address to bishops and priests with regard to the vice of vainglory (*Maxime in nobis sacerdotibus viget)*. Detailed description of Last Judgment resting on the account from Matthew's Gospel.
11	fols. 185v–187v	**Title:** Epistola de exitu anime. **Inc.:** *Primun quidem docit nos [...]* **Expl.:** *iusti autem in vitam aeternam amen.* **Source:** unknown, but of supposed Irish origin.[73] **Content:** right after death the soul will form a bone of contention between white angels and black demons. Description of both the tortures awaiting the soul destined for the demons and the joy awaiting that destined for the angels.

70 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones*, ed. Morin. For Sermon 199, see CCSL 104, 803–807.

71 This sermon has not yet been published. Morin records it, but does not ascribe it to Caesarius of Arles (see Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones*, ed. Morin, CCSL 104, 978). As for its sources, a short passage at the bottom of fol. 181r reproduces Isidore's *Synonyma*; see Isidore of Seville, *Synonyma*, ed. Elfassi, 41, 489–498. The apocalyptic devastation by fire accompanying Christ's Second Coming, and in particular the mention that seas will dry out (*mare siccatur*), recurs in sermon no. 3 of the table.

72 This sermon has not yet been published. Germain Morin considers it to be too barbaric to originate with Caesarius of Arles (see Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones,* ed. Morin, CCSL 104, 978: *Barbarae aetatis barbarus fetus, qui nihil ad rem nostram attinet*). Some passages recur in both sermons no. 3 and no. 9 of the table and in the Irish text called *Catechesis Celtica* (see McNally, "*In nomine dei summi*," 129).

73 This sermon is almost the same as that which Robert McNally published and attributed to an Irish scholar (McNally, "*In nomine dei summi*," 134–136).

12	fols. 188r–191v	**Title:** Homilia de eo quod scriptum est in evangelio, bonus homo de bono thesauro cordis sui profert bona. **Inc.:** *Audivimus fratres karissimi [...]* **Expl.:** *sub sua protectione perducat qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum amen.* **Source:** Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo 160* in its entirety.[74] **Content:** Christ dwells in the heart of the righteous, whereas the devil inhabits the heart of the wicked. Humans can choose whom they want to harbour. Their choice will apply to their afterlife too. List of the moral virtues and of the good deeds which make Christ want to stay in one's heart, thus ensuring eternal reward.
13	fols. 191v–192v	**Title:** De camara Christi homini dei. **Inc.:** *Fundamentum ipsius camarae [...]* **Expl.:** *inveniat in nobis talem mansionem. qui vivit et regnat in secula seculorum.* **Source:** unknown.[75] **Content:** the good Christian is compared metaphorically to a room (*camara*) in which Christ would like to dwell. Twenty-four virtues feature as the room's constitutive elements. A further fifteen spiritual virtues perform specific tasks in the room and guarantee its correct maintenance.
14	fols. 193r–193v	**No title** **Inc.:** *Septem scala sunt quibus ascenduntur [...]* **Expl.:** *sic suffocatur iustitia* **Source:** unknown.[76] **Content:** like in item 5: the seven virtues, which, like steps in a ladder, lead to salvation; the seven ways to redeem the soul; the world's twelve major abuses.[77]
15	fols. 193v–194r	**Title:** Incipit de ebrietate *[...]* Incipit de subrietate. **Inc.:** *Ebrietas autem [...]* **Expl:** *sine honorem facit;* **Inc.:** *Subrietas vero [...]* **Expl:** *hominem constabiliscit.* **Source:** Pseudo-Isidore, *Testimonia patrum* (CPL 385).[78] **Content:** the dangers of drunkenness and the corresponding advantages of sobriety.

74 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones*, ed. Morin, CCSL 104, 655–657.

75 This is a text which circulated mostly under the fictitious name of Jerome. It is recorded in the CPPM, ed. Machielsen, vol. 1A, no. 979. See also *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana Manuscripta*, ed. Lambert, vol. 3B, no. 523.

76 See above, n. 68, with regard to the seventh-century Irish treatise *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* as well as to heptads and triads.

77 Here, like in sermon no. 5 of the table, the twelve abuses (*De duodecim abusivis saeculi*) are ascribed to Gregory the Great. A headline written in uncial, but with the same ink as in the surrounding text, introduces the text: *Sanctus Gregorius papa dixit*. The text itself begins with the red initial "H" (*Haec sunt que in hoc seculo [...]*, fol. 193r, 16).

78 Pseudo-Isidore, *Testimonia patrum*, ed. Lehner, 124–125 (chapters 10, l. 10–19 and l. 1–9). See also Pseudo-Isidore, *Liber de numeris*, 1298D–1299B and McNally, *Der irische Liber de numeris*, 43–44. The beginning of the second passage on sobriety with the adverb *vero* as adversative particle (*subrietas vero*...) and the strict contraposition to the argumentation developed in the previous passage on drunkenness demonstrate that the two texts were conceived as a single unit. Hence, I have recorded them as a single item in the table.

16	fols. 194r–195r	**Title:** Incipit de septenario expleto. **Inc.:** *Quare dixit propheta septem sunt oculi dei [...]* **Expl:** *propterea dicti sunt oculi dei qui praevident omnem terram.* **Source:** cf. Pseudo-Bede, *De septem donis Spiritus Sancti*.[79] **Content:** the allegorical meaning of the number seven in Zach. 4:10 is explained by referring to the seven spirits of Isaiah 11:2 and to the seven biblical patriarchs.
17	fols. 195r–196r	**Title:** De modis penitentiae et reconciliationem. **Inc.:** *Romani reconciliant hominem [...]* **Expl.:** *tantum det in elimosina*. **Source:** the penitential decisions partly recur in already edited collections of Insular origin.[80] **Content:** short compendium of conflicting precepts regarding form and duration of penance.
18	fols. 196r–201r	**Title:** Homilia sancti Augustini. **Inc.:** *Rogo vos fratres karissimi adtentius cogitemus [...]* **Expl:** *et vos feliciter pervenitis ad regnum, praestante domino nostro Iesu Christo cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum amen.* **Source:** Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo 103* in its entirety.[81] **Content:** exhortation to be a Christian not only in name but also by virtue of good deeds like righteous and incorruptible behaviour, almsgiving, prayers. Enumeration of several good Christian deeds and virtues. Exhortation to abandon pagan practices like shouting to the new moon, worshipping trees or springs, refraining from work on Thursday in honour of Jupiter.
19	fols. 201v–204r	**Title:** Incipit casticatio ad populum. **Inc.:** *Fratres dilectissimi gratias ago quod in sanctis festivitatibus* ...**Expl.:** *implere posse quod predicamus prestante domino nostro Iesu Christo cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum amen.* **Source:** Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo 55*, abridged and adapted.[82] **Content:** abuses concerning the attendance of Church on feast days. Plea against corruption in judging. Perspective of reward and punishment in the afterlife according to present behaviour. Final accusation against negligent priests.

79 Pseudo-Bede, *De septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, 553B–C. The text, suitably called *incipit de septenario expleto*, aims at explaining the meaning of the number seven in the biblical verse of Zacharias 4:10 (*septem isti oculi Domini qui discurrunt in universa terra*). The mention of the seven spirits of Isaiah 11:2 and of the seven biblical patriarchs introduces the quote from Pseudo-Bede, in which both these references occur again. McNally supposes that this sort of explanation originated under the influence of Irish exegesis: see McNally, *Der irische Liber de numeris*, 108–109.

80 This short penitential collection has not been edited thus far. The initial part (fol. 195r, 9–15) recurs in the *Poenitentiale Theodori*, U I, 13, ed. Finsterwalder, 306. It deals with the differences between Greek and Roman use concerning the public reconciliation of penitents, as explained by Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe 600–1200*, 93–94. A further short passage (fol. 195v, 1–4) recurs in chapter 14 of the *De paenitentia* attributed to Gildas and edited in MGH, *Auctores Antiquissimi* 13, ed. Mommsen, p. 90. I could not identify the source of the following passage, in which Theodore of Canterbury is explicitly mentioned (*Theodorus conlaudabit*, fol. 195v, 4–12). The concluding part of the text (fol. 195v, 12–196r, 2) recurs in the *Liber Sacramentorum Augustodunensis*, ed. Heming, rubric 2304, l. 1–5.

81 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones*, ed. Morin, CCSL 103, 64–68.

20	fols. 204r–211r	**Title:** Incipit dicta sancti Methodii Pytharensis episcopus de regna regum et de novissimis temporibus certa demonstratio. **Inc.:** *Igitur Adam et Eva* … **Expl.:** *et regnabunt cum Christo in saecula saeculorum amen*. **Source:** Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelationes*, Third Latin Recension. **Content:** see below.

As the table shows, the homiletic collection of ***A*** consists of either complete homilies or preparatory texts for preaching in which the afterlife perspective is predominant.[83] The items are mostly anonymous, at times incorrectly ascribed to patristic authorities such as Augustine, Jerome or Gregory the Great.[84] Four out of the twenty texts are genuine homilies by Caesarius of Arles, which, however, never disclose his authorship in their titles.[85] Many of the items recorded in the table share contents with works of supposed insular or, more specifically, Irish origin. This would imply that the compiler of our collection either worked in a centre preserving insular exegetical output along with Caesarius' homilies and the *Revelationes*, or simply reproduced a model in which these works featured together already. As for the contents of the collection, both the internal recurrence of specific topics and the logical succession of some of the texts lead me to think that they were gathered according to a precise plan. Indeed, the various items generally share the aim of showing which virtues assure the humans of a place in heaven after death. They engage primarily with the topic of heavenly reward and infernal punishment according to right or bad behaviour on earth. A further main concern occurring in some of them is penance, i.e. what should sinners do in order to both atone for guilt before God and to deserve a blessed and joyous afterlife. In particular, almsgiving features very often as the privileged tool for expiating one's minor sins.[86] The four homilies by Caesarius of Arles, one of the sixth-century "preachers of repentance,"[87] fit perfectly well in this context. Finally, the depiction of the Last Judgment, in which the good will receive their everlasting reward and the bad their eternal retribution, occurs in five texts and features, most notably, in the dramatic conclusion of the *Revelationes*

82 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones*, ed. Morin, CCSL 103, 240–247. The succession of topics of Caesarius' homily has been rearranged; chapter 4 on drunkenness has been dropped.

83 See McNally, "*In nomine dei summi*" for a similar homiletic collection, in which some of the texts gathered cannot be considered as proper sermons, but rather as documents providing "themes and a certain amount of authentic inspiration for preaching" (123).

84 See entries no. 3, 6, and 18 in the table.

85 See entries no. 8, 12, 18, and 19 in the table. Note that the title of entry no. 18 ascribes the homily to Augustine.

86 See, in particular, entries no. 5, 7, 8, 17, and 18 in the table. On the perception of sins as debts toward God and on the expiatory function of almsgiving, see Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 83–114.

87 Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 137.

in their Third Recension.[88] As we shall see below, the final part of the Third Recension contains several elements of novelty compared to the First. Indeed, it mentions firstly the various catastrophic events preceding Christ's coming (drought, famine etc.), secondly the appearance of Christ's cross in the sky, and finally the destruction of the world by fire. All these topics are absent from the conclusion of the First Recension, whereas they recur, remarkably, in homilies n. 3, 9 and 10 of the collection.[89] Due to such similarities, the Third Recension offers a very coherent ending to the booklet.

Altogether, the collection contained in ***A*** can be considered as a homiletic tool for priests focusing on the moral preparation for the Last Judgment and on the salvation of the soul. The compendium envisages God's people in its entirety as audience. Indeed, it addresses not only the laity but also, in some passages, bishops and priests. Item n. 2 rebukes, for instance, those *sacerdotes* who did not accomplish their duty of preaching the gospel. Item n. 10 warns them against the vice of vainglory, "which concerns us especially" (*maxime in nobis sacerdotibus viget*). Finally, item n. 19 reproduces Caesarius of Arles' admonishment of negligent priests. In such context, the Third Recension of PsM offers both a coherent and a spectacular conclusion, in which the earthly fight between good and evil, that began with Adam and his offspring, finds its end in the apocalyptic devastation of the world by fire and in the Second Coming of Christ to judge all human souls.

2.2 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 238

St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 238, which I will call ***S*** hereafter and in the edition, is probably the oldest known witness of the Third Recension of PsM. Since I have dealt with the contents of this manuscript in a previous contribution, I will limit myself to stressing only some major characteristics on this occasion.[90] ***S*** was written by the monk and priest Winithar at St Gall, where he had come around 760 in the wake of the newly appointed abbot, Johannes (r. 759–782).[91] The very peculiar traits of Winithar's hand recur in at least seven further manuscripts preserved in the St Gall library, which he wrote either in their entirety or in collaboration with other copyists.[92] As for the first group of autographs, they contain not only copies of or extracts

88 See entries no. 3, 4, 9, 10, 11 and 20 in the table.

89 See n. 72.

90 See Grifoni, "A New Witness of the Third Recension of Ps.-Methodius' *Revelationes*."

91 On Winithar's biography and autographic production, see Ochsenbein, "Sonderling im Galluskloster: Winitharius," and, more recently, Walter Berschin and Bernhard Zeller, "Winithar in Sankt Gallen."

92 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Codd. 70 and 907, as well as the fragment 1399a2, are regarded as Winithar's autographs in their entirety, whereas St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Codd. 2, 11, 109 and 225 were written by him only in part. In her recent monograph on the origin and dissemination of Ale-

from previous literature but also texts which Winithar claims to have composed on his own. This is the case, for instance, with the so-called *Versus Winitharii* (p. 250–258) in St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 70 and with the *proplema Winitharii* (p. 178–181) in ***S***.[93] As for the other group of manuscripts, which Winithar wrote only in part, they were completed according to Winithar's directives. Indeed, either he wrote the initial lines of specific texts before passing the pen on to other scribes, or he added titles, chapter divisions and, at times, corrections after the copying had been completed.[94] Altogether, thus, Winithar can be regarded as the designer and the person responsible for the production of all these codices, which now offer significant evidence of the cultural interests that moved him.

Not surprisingly, the Bible and its interpretation formed the major focus of Winithar's activity. Firstly, several of his manuscripts transmit single books of the Bible, or parts of them, accompanied by various exegetical tools, be they treatises, homilies, genealogies or summaries of biblical content organised in question-and-answer form. Secondly, a significant portion of his compendia deals with the meaning of words, i.e. with etymology and lexicography. For instance, two of his manuscripts, namely ***S*** and St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 907, contain very substantial glossaries, in which Winithar combined previous glossographic material with information drawn from Isidore's *Etymologiae* to form a new linguistic tool.[95] St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 225 also bears witness to Winithar's lexicographic interest, transmitting Isidore's *Differentiae verborum* and parts of Eucherius' *Instructiones*, a work which also closes the collection of texts transmitted by **S**. Finally, computus, chronology and various works on moral issues are well represented throughout Winithar's compendia.

The texts contained in ***S*** reflect such interests to a great extent. In my opinion, their succession in the book is not accidental, but responds rather to a specific plan. I see in ***S*** a sort of encyclopaedia, in which Winithar summarised firstly the biblical account of human history, secondly the physical properties of the world and finally

mannic minuscule Natalie Maag describes in detail the traits of Winithar's hand and includes St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 194 in the group of his autographs. Furthermore, Maag bestows on Winithar the role of leader of the scriptorium; see Maag, *Alemannische Minuskel*, 36–54. Also, Veronika von Büren ascribes to Winithar the copying of Pseudo-Methodius' *Revelationes* in their Second Recension in Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Cod. C 65, fols. 80v–88v; see von Büren, "Le «De natura rerum» de Winithar," 395. Except for the fragment St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 1399a2 (CLA VII 996), Winithar's manuscripts and the corresponding catalogue descriptions are available online under: http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/csg (accessed 4 February, 2018).

93 The *Versus Winitharii* transmit a moral exhortation addressed by Winithar to his confrères (see Berschin and Zeller, "Winithar in Sankt Gallen"); the *proplema Winitharii* consists of a succinct explanation of the Pentateuch in question-and-answer form (see Grifoni, "A New Witness of the Third Recension of Ps.-Methodius' *Revelationes*," 450–451).

94 Maag, *Alemannische Minuskel*, 43–44.

95 For the contents of Winithar's manuscripts and, in particular, for his lexicographic output, see McKitterick, "Le pouvoir des mots," 30–43.

the characteristics of specific peoples as well as, more generally, the ideal conduct of human beings. Furthermore, he framed this corpus of texts with linguistic tools, which open and conclude the book. The audience for such an endeavour was probably limited to the local community at St Gall, for which Winithar had created a reference book of all-embracing content.[96] Indeed, after the huge glossary mentioned above (p. 1–163), ***S*** transmits résumés of the main contents of the Bible and of some exegetical issues concerning the Octateuch in question-and-answer form (pp. 163–304). A small section dedicated to chronological issues follows, which recapitulates the history of humankind from Adam to Jesus (p. 305–312). Afterwards Winithar's focus shifts to the description of physical phenomena, which involves reproducing Isidore's *De natura rerum* with the addition of a short extract from the first book of Vergil's *Georgica* (pp. 312–385).[97] At this point the subject changes again and peoples come to the fore. With the aid of two texts (pp. 385–396), which he both entitled *De gentibus*, Winithar addressed respectively the issues of the place occupied by peoples in the Christian history of salvation and of the ethnic classification of the inhabitants of what we now would call Western Europe. The first text he used is the Third Recension of PsM (pp. 385–392), the second consists of extracts from Isidore's *Etymologiae* 9.2 (pp. 392–396), which Winithar reshuffled in order to describe first of all the Romans and then other "Western-European" *gentes* (i.e. Goths, Lombards, Germanic peoples in general, Suevi, Burgundians, Saxons, Franks, Britons, Scotti, Gauls and Vascones/Basques). A section dedicated to Christian moral instructions follows: here we find both a text called *De moribus*, which is ascribed in the title to the ancient philosopher Seneca, and Gennadius' *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus* (pp. 396–434). In the final part of the manuscript, Winithar began again to summarise the main contents and exegetical problems of the Bible from the point where he had left off, inserting a résumé in question-and-answer form of the four Books of Kings as well as prologues to each of the major and minor Prophets. ***S*** closes with a linguistic tool, namely the second book of Eucherius' *Instructiones*, which Winithar reproduced almost in its entirety.

This brief description of the contents of ***S*** shows that the Third Recension of PsM was copied here in a context completely different from that of ***A***. In my opinion, Winithar chose to include the Third Recension in the Christian encyclopaedia he was producing not by reason of its moral or eschatological contents but primarily because it pays special attention to peoples, bestowing on some of them a particular role in the history of Christianity. The leading position assigned to the "Romans of Rome" until the end of the world, as we shall see below, might correspond to Wini-

96 The presence in ***S*** of four sentences in which Winithar presents himself as the author of two texts contained in the manuscript and addresses the reader (*omnis enim qui legerit*, 181), asking for prayers, proves that an external audience was envisaged for **S** rather than it being (only) designed for personal use; see Grifoni, "A New Witness of the Third Recension of Ps.-Methodius' *Revelationes*," 446–448.

97 Grifoni, "A New Witness of the Third Recension of Ps.-Methodius' *Revelationes*," 453.

thar's own vision of the hierarchy of peoples in human history. This impression is reinforced by the passages from Isidore's *Etymologiae* which he copied right after the Third Recension and also entitled *De gentibus*. Indeed, Winithar adjusted the original succession of the Isidorian passages to place the Romans in an outstanding position and at the head of the remaining Western *gentes*.

On a final note, I would like to remark that Winithar knew PsM in two, perhaps even in three, different versions. Along with the Third Recension, which he adapted and copied in his own hand in ***S***, he certainly also knew the First Latin Recension. Indeed, St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 225, which was compiled under Winithar's supervision,[98] transmits the First Latin Recension on pp. 384–439.[99] According to Veronika von Büren, moreover, Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Cod. C 65, which contains the *Revelationes* in the Second Recension (fols. 80v–88v), is also written in Winithar's own hand. Von Büren's attribution is disputed, however. In the first place, it is the subject of controversy whether the Zürich manuscript was produced in the scriptorium of St Gall in Winithar's time at all.[100] Be that as it may, Winithar certainly had both the First and the Third Recension at his disposal when he designed his manuscripts. He chose to copy the latter in order to talk about peoples and to stress the outstanding position of the Romans, and, in particular, of those Romans directly associated with the city of Rome.

2.3 Köln, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Cod. 15.

Köln, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Cod. 15, which I will refer to as ***K*** hereafter and in the edition, was written at an unidentified scriptorium within the borders of modern-day Germany in the course of the ninth century.[101] Two main scribes participated in the production of the book. The first wrote the major bulk of the pages, copying almost a third of the *Expositio libri comitis* by Smaragdus of

98 CLA VII 928.

99 Laureys and Verhelst, "Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelationes*," 117, no. 27. A study of the relationship between this manuscript and ***S*** concerning the text of the *Revelationes* is a desideratum.

100 See n. 92 above. The manuscript has not been digitised yet. It is recorded in CLA VII 1017, which suggests an Alamannic origin ("Written in the Alemannic area, hardly in an important centre"). Mohlberg, *Katalog*, 38, no. 95, does not specify, whether the manuscript was written in St Gall or rather belonged to St Gall before moving to Zürich ("8 Jahrh. [...] Aus St. Gallen"). See also Laureys and Verhelst, "Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelationes*," 128, no. 134. Maag, *Alemannische Minuskel* does not list the Zürich manuscript under Winithar's output.

101 The manuscript is available in digitised form at http://www.ceec.uni-koeln.de (accessed 4 February, 2018). Here it is linked to the description from Anderson and Black, *The Medieval Manuscripts of the Cologne Cathedral Library*, in the revised digital version from 1997. Anderson and Black date the manuscript to the first third of the ninth century. A further catalogue record, however, dates the production of ***K*** to the second half of the ninth century; see Gattermann, *Handschriftencensus Rheinland*, vol. 1, 583–584.

Saint-Mihiel (fols. 1v–81v).[102] This text ends suddenly on fol. 81v with the letters *glo-* for *gloriam*. This abrupt cessation was caused by the loss of the central folios of quire 11, of which only the two external folios remain (81r–82v). It is impossible to know at what point the first scribe stopped writing. He certainly copied only a part of the *Expositio*, perhaps on purpose. It seems that the second scribe took his work up exactly on the final folio of quire 11 (fol. 82r), probably after the central folios of the quire had already been lost. Here he copied a brief, anonymous commentary on the Gospels (fol. 82r–v). Then he employed three more quires (until fol. 100v) to accommodate a further nineteen short texts of mainly homiletic nature, which deal with various topics. Some of them convey allegoric or moral explanations of biblical passages; others contain, for instance, brief accounts of the origin of the world or the creation of Adam. A further group of texts focuses on moral matters, providing biblical models for several Christian virtues, condemning vices or again exhorting to penance. A final cluster addresses liturgical or computistic issues.[103] Every single item is provided with a title, which, in the majority of the cases, offers a clue as to the content, or, more rarely, declares a pseudo-epigraphic paternity for the texts. Augustine is mentioned thrice as author, while the names of the late antique Church authorities John Chrysostom, Anthony, Jerome and Methodius occur once each. Determining the sources of these texts is a complex task, which I could not pursue on this occasion.[104] As far as I can judge, however, the compendium lacks the coherence of contents that characterises the homiletic collection of ***A***.

The Third Recension of PsM features on folios 84v–86r. It is framed by a brief pseudo-Augustinian sermon providing an allegorical interpretation of the parable of the ten coins (Luke 15:8–10) and by a sermon on penance ascribed to John Chrysostom in the title.[105] Neither text contains an eschatological perspective nor a relevant thematic affinity with the Third Recension. This, in turn, is introduced by the corrupt title *De Daniel in libro metotii pāt̄nis* (= *paternis*?) *esaię*, which is probably an inaccurate rendering of *De Daniel in libro Methodii Paterensis* [or *Patarensis*] *ecclesiae* ("Concerning Daniel in the Book by Methodius from the Church of Patara"). As is typical of the collection, the title provides clues as to the content that follows. Thus, the whole Third Recension is presented here as an interpretation of the biblical Book of Daniel, to which the text does indeed refer explicitly in the course of the

102 For Smaragdus' *Expositio*, also known as *Collectiones in epistolas et evangelia*, see Rädle, *Studien zu Smaragd von Saint-Mihiel*, 113–194. The work is published in PL 102, cols. 13C–552D. The text contained in ***K*** reaches until col. 167D.

103 I refer to Anderson and Black's catalogue for a more detailed description of the contents of this section. A thorough analysis of the sources of the single items is still lacking.

104 To the description provided by Anderson and Black I can only add that the sermon contained on fols. 83r–84r and entitled *Sermo ex lectione euuangelii* is an almost verbatim reproduction of homily 37 of the second book of Gregory's *Homiliae in Evangelia*, encompassing paragraphs 8 to 10 of the modern edition: Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, ed. Étaix, 354–358.

105 The two sermons carry respectively the titles: *Incipit dicta sancti augustini episcopi de decem talenta* (fol. 84r) and *Incipt sermo sancti Iohannis de penitenciam dicens* (fol. 86r).

narrative, where mention is made of the vision of the four Persian kings contained in Daniel 11. Furthermore, the title contains the traditional, pseudo-epigraphic attribution to Methodius, whose affiliation to the city of Patara was, however, misread and inaccurately copied either by the scribe of ***K*** himself or at some earlier point in the textual transmission. The text of the Third Recension contained in ***K*** features several unintentional omissions of text-segments ending with the same word as the last one copied (so-called "saut du même au même"), and generally offers a more deficient version compared to the other two witnesses. Although the manuscript was produced in the course of the ninth century, its orthography, morphology and syntax do not show significant traces of the linguistic accuracy being pursued by Carolingian intellectual elites at the same time.

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In conclusion, the survey of the context of transmission of the Third Recension in the three known witnesses shows that each redactor saw a different focus in the text and included it accordingly in his miscellany. The redactor of ***A*** chose the Third Recension as the perfect conclusion to his homiletic collection, in which the afterlife perspective and the depiction of the events accompanying Christ's Second Coming were predominant. The similarities in content between the final part of the Third Recension – which differs slightly from that of the First, as we shall see in the following section – and several passages occurring in the corpus of this collection are particularly striking. Could it be that the Third Recension too originated in an environment influenced by Irish or Insular exegesis, as many of the other texts in ***A*** apparently did? The redactor of ***S***, the presbyter Winithar of St Gall, used the Third Recension as a prophetic account on specific peoples and their role in human history. Finally, the compiler of the collection of texts contained in the second part of ***K*** presented the work as an exegetic tool for the interpretation of the biblical Book of Daniel.

3 The Contents of the Third Recension [CGr]

The Third Recension is both an abridgement and an adaptation of the First Recension. It was apparently produced soon after the First began to circulate and was already available to Winithar around 760. With rare exceptions, the three known witnesses transmit a homogeneous text, which summarises heavily the contents of ten of the fourteen chapters into which modern editors have arranged the First Recension.[106] The contents of chapters 4, 6, 7, and 12 of the First Recension do not recur in the Third at all.

106 For the modern edition of the First Recension see above, n. 8; for the English translation see n. 35.

The historical part of the *Revelationes*, embracing chapters 1 to 9 of the First Recension, went through major modifications in the Third, particularly in the text copied, or rather personally readapted, by Winithar. Its initial part abridges the account of biblical history from the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise to the deeds of Noah's sons, especially those of Jonitus (chapters 1 to 3 of the First Recension). Indeed, the Third Recension contains only a concise enumeration of Adam's descendants and a cursory mention of both Noah and the Flood. The names of Shem, Ham and Japheth feature only once and only in ***A***, whereas the account on Noah's fourth son, Jonitus, maintains most of its original length. After this, the Third Recension integrates passages taken from both Isidore's *Chronicon* (4.1) and *Etymologiae* (5.39.5–8 and 9.2.6).[107] These responded to the aim of presenting the progeny of Shem, and consequently the birth of Abraham and of his offspring, instead of the progeny of Ham described by the First Recension in the ensuing fourth chapter. In particular, the Third Recension recalls explicitly via Isidore that Ishmael was born from Abraham by his Egyptian concubine Hagar and that Ishmael's descendants, that is to say the Ishmaelites, are called Saracens through a corruption of the original name. Moreover, the Third Recension stresses that the Saracens are a cruel and powerful people (*gens crudelis et valida*) that lives in the desert. Winithar's version, as transmitted by ***S***, shows a further peculiarity in this section: in contrast to the other two witnesses, ***S*** alone omits the account of Noah and his son Jonitus, who is not mentioned in the Book of Genesis at all. In other words, ***S*** skips the résumés of chapters 2 and 3 of the First Recension as transmitted by both ***A*** and ***K***. Right after Adam's death, ***S*** presents the Isidorian account of the descendants of Shem until the birth of Abraham, beginning with Ragau (Gen. 11:20). I like to think that the absence of this text was not the result of Winithar's distraction in copying but rather an intentional omission, which reflects his preference for sticking with the narrative contained in the Book of Genesis. It could be, however, that this segment of text was actually missing from Winithar's exemplar.

Chapter 4 of the First Recension (the wars against the descendants of Ham) was skipped entirely by the redactor of the Third Recension, who instead proceeded to his depiction of the horrible Saracens, which draws on parts of chapter 5. Only two passages from this chapter recur in the Third Recension, i.e. the account of the attack against Western regions by the Ishmaelites and the prophecy about their ultimate defeat by the king of the Romans. Moreover, in reproducing these passages the Third Recension introduces substantial innovations. Firstly, the attack undertaken by the Ishmaelites is presented in a prophetic way, that is to say, as something that will happen in the very Last Days (*in novissimis diebus*).[108] The First Recension, on the contrary, had described this offensive in chapter 5 both as a fact

107 See Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon*, ed. Martín, 4–208 (the link pages), at 8–9. For the *Etymologiae*, see Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri* XX, ed. Lindsay.

108 See below the *Editorial principles* on p. 230 for a detailed description of the innovations introduced with regard to the tenses in this passage.

that had already occurred in the past – once more in conflict with the information on the Ishmahelites contained in the Bible – and as a prophecy about the future, when the Ishmaelites will be defeated by the Christian kingdom of the Romans. Secondly, whereas the king of the Romans of the First Recension has to be interpreted as the Christian emperor of Byzantium, all three witnesses of the Third Recension state that the king of the Romans shall rise from the city of Rome (*surgit rex Romanorum de Roma*). After this the Third Recension skips to chapter 8, making no mention of the history of the kingdom of Babylon, which is narrated in chapters 6 and 7 of the First Recension. Chapter 8's account of Alexander's enclosure of the twenty-two "Unclean Nations" behind the bronze gates is reproduced almost literally and without remarkable omissions. Here again, however, ***S*** features a singularity compared to the other two witnesses. Indeed, the story of the confinement of the "Unclean Nations" ends in all three manuscripts with a biblical quote from Ezekiel predicting that the peoples of Gog and Magog, included among them, will invade the land of Israel on the last day (Ezek. 38:14–16). A list naming all the imprisoned peoples closes the chapter.[109] At this point **S** alone includes a sentence stating that both the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation confirm the prophecy of this invasion.[110] The remark was probably conceived and added by Winithar himself, who interrupted the narration on purpose to offer further biblical parallels, thus enhancing the claims of the *Revelationes* to reliability. After this the text contains an abridgement of chapter 9 of the First Recension. In particular, it preserves the account of the progeny of Chouseth, the Ethiopian mother of Alexander the Great, who, after Alexander's death, married again, this time to Byzas, the king of Byzantium. The union of Chouset and Byzas' daughter Bizancia with Romillus/Romulus, the king of Rome, bound the Romans tightly to the Ethiopians. This proves particularly significant when considering the prophecy contained in Psalms 67:32, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God", which recurs several times across both the First and the Third Recensions.[111] Thanks to their mutual bond, the prophecy could be applied to the Romans as well as to the Ethiopians. Thus, both the First and the Third Recensions explain the meaning of the biblical verse by relating it to the kingdom of the Romans, which will be the last to exist on earth before the advent of the Antichrist and the final demise of the world.[112] As we have seen, however, the Third Recension refers to a king of Western Romans, whereas the First alludes to the Byzantines. At this point all three witnesses of the Third Recension

109 The names of the twenty-two "Unclean Nations" are only in part homogeneously recorded in the three witnesses of the Third Recension. The names of Gog and Magog, however, open the list in each manuscript.

110 *Et hęc sentenciam danihelis profetia adprobat et apocalipsis iohannis apostoli testimonium dat* (cf. edition, l. 102). See Daniel 11 and Revelation 20:7–10.

111 On Chouset's progeny and the interpretation of Psalms 67.32, see Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende," 82–111, esp. 99–101 and 111.

112 Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica,* 2.1.14., ed. Schwartz and Mommsen.

add a sentence that again bring the Saracens to the fore as the ultimate rivals of the Romans. By recalling directly the passages which had readapted chapter 5, the Third Recension reiterates that the kingdom of the Romans shall emerge to defeat the sons of Ishmael, defend the Christian realm and subjugate the Saracens under a terrible yoke.[113]

From the prophetic part of the First Recension (chapters 10 to 14) the Third adopts only those elements that allow the narrative to straightforwardly reach the apocalyptic end. In particular, the Third Recension summarises only the very last part of chapter 10, evokes remotely a few sentences of chapter 11 and skips completely chapter 12. Of the two final chapters only chapter 14 is reproduced with fidelity, whereas chapter 13 is heavily abridged. The primary focus of the Third Recension is the future clash between Saracens and Romans. Many details concerning the Saracen invasions and wicked domination are omitted. For instance, we find no mention of the numerous lands subjugated by the Ishmaelites, nor does the description of their rule feature the horrific scenes occurring in the First Recension. Although their invasion is explained as a punishment for the sins of the Christians in both texts, the Third Recension lacks the explicit statements of the First and dedicates only half a sentence to the topic. The Saracens' coming is introduced abruptly: their wickedness shall arise in the seventh millennium (*ascendit malitia Sarracinorum in septimo tempore*), causing death and destruction until the kingdom of the Romans will defeat them definitively, bringing back peace and serenity among the Christians. The following invasion of the "Unclean Nations" (*gentes inmundas*) receives but a brief mention, and their defeat by one of God's commanders is not described at all. A second point of focus of the Third Recension is the appearance of "the Son of Perdition, that is to say of the Antichrist", as the text specifies.[114] ***S*** and ***K*** present him as the son of a virgin, whereas ***A*** sticks to the First Recension's depiction of the Antichrist as the son of a woman and a man belonging to the tribe of Dan. The final part of the narrative abridges only slightly the text of chapter 14 of the First Recension, keeping the theatrical death of the king of the Romans, the account of the wonders accomplished by the Antichrist and the death of the two servants of God Enoch and Elijah, who had dared to rebuke him. At this point, for the third time, **S** (fols. 392–393) presents a peculiarity in comparison to the other two witnesses. Here the narrative flow is interrupted by a long quotation from Revelation 11:3–13 concerning the two prophets Enoch and Elijah just mentioned in the text. The biblical quote is introduced by the red uncial title *In Apocalipsin* and closed by *explicit de Apocalipsin et incipit de priora leccione*, again in red uncial characters. In this case I am also persuaded that the addition should be ascribed to

113 *Vnde erit regnum Romanorum, qui subiciet filios Ismahel et uincet eos et defendet regnum Christianorum et subiugauit (sic!) iugo pessimo Sarracinos* (cf. edition, l. 113–115).
114 *Et tunc ueniet filius perditionis, hoc est Antichristus* (cf. edition, l. 145–146).

Winithar himself, who was again pursuing his aim of linking the Third Recension more tightly to the canonical narrative of the Bible.

It is noteworthy that the Third Recension envisaged a slightly different ending than its model. Indeed, while the First Recension quickly describes the final defeat of the Antichrist foreshadowing the consequences of Judgment Day, the Third Recension lingers over the enumeration of the apocalyptic events predicting Christ's Second Coming. It mentions droughts, famine, drying rivers and dying fish, the lack of people for burying the dead, accompanied by stench and filth everywhere. A further difference concerns the events after Christ's glorious coming. Whereas the First Recension mentions briefly the righteous shining in heaven and the sinners punished in hell, the Third Recension describes the final consumption of the world by fire, addressing as blessed those who will be prepared when these events take place.

To sum up, four main innovations distinguish the Third Recension. Firstly, the Ishmaelites of the First Recension are identified here with the Saracens. In contrast to the First Recension, their invasion is presented exclusively as a future event, which will foreshadow the Last Judgment. Secondly, there is no mention of the many apostasies on the part of the Christians after the Saracens' invasion, as detailed in chapter 12 of the First Recension. Thirdly, the king of the Romans, who will fight and defeat the Saracens in the Last Days, is a western ruler: he dwells in Rome and from there he will start his mission. Finally, the author of the Third Recension closes the work with a detailed description of the catastrophic events foreshadowing and following Judgment Day. The text's final address is of moral nature and consists of an exhortation to live righteously in this world in order to share the same glorious fate of the saints in the afterlife. These are all elements featuring repeatedly in the homiletic collection of ***A***, as we have seen, which ensure that the Third Recension fits perfectly well in that context.

4 Conclusion [CGa]

In this final assessment, it seems pertinent to re-visit once more the questions of how the redactor of the Third Recension of PsM worked and why he acted the way he did. The basis of the product that has come down to us was clearly the First Latin Recension and it will again be paramount to compare the redaction to the original.

It is very clear that one main driving-force behind the changes was the desire to create a text that would be more agreeable to a Latin Western audience entirely lacking any background in Syrian and especially Syriac literature. It seems obvious, for example, that the excurse on Medan and Persian history (chapters 7 and 8 in the First Recension) was dropped completely for this reason. On similar grounds, the earlier parts of the *Revelationes* were also brought into more accordance with estab-

lished Biblical/Old Testament history. The text was also heavily abridged in these earlier sections to render it more readable. Changes were also made in the Second Latin Recension in very similar fashion, but the outcome was still quite different. Some intriguing features of PsM were actually kept by the redactor of the Third Recension. Jonitus, the fourth son of Noah, was even retained in the version transmitted by codices ***A*** and ***K***. He was, however, dropped from the text copied by Winithar. That is again not surprising for two reasons: firstly, Winithar can be described as an expert on the Bible and it is very probable that he adjusted the text himself. Secondly, the St Gall monk probably also knew the Second Latin Recension, a version that had likewise cut Jonitus. One has to admit though, that it cannot be ascertained whether Winithar already knew the First or the Second Recension at the time he was working on his text of the Third Recension.

A very interesting trait shared by the Second and Third Recensions is the assimilation or incorporation of the Christian anti-Saracen hero. Whereas the First Recension speaks of a *rex Gregorum sive Romanorum* and thereby clearly has the Byzantine Emperor in mind, the Second renders him *rex Christianorum et Romanorum*[115], while the Third has, as we have seen, the very peculiar, hyper-specific *rex Romanorum de Roma*. It is easy to see why a Latin redactor might have wanted to make that change. But the redactor of the Third Recension was even more rigorous in order to leave not a shread of doubt as to who was bound to act. This is even more remarkable when one takes into account that there was still no king or emperor of old, western Rome at the time of the text's production. It was thus very important for our writer to make that specific point and it fits with his overall interest in Roman history. Whereas nearly all passages in the first chapters of PsM were cut to a certain extent, the redactor provides us with a full version of chapter 9, an alternative history of early and pre-classical Rome, including a connection to Alexander the Great (d. 323 BCE). The next section that remained nearly uncut concerns the "second outing" of the Ishmaelites or Saracens. As we have seen, the "historical part" on a Saracen invasion in Roman times was indeed cut from the work, but the far longer pseudo-prophetical and prophetical part remained. This had the effect of binding the Saracens even closer to the narrative on the End Times than had hitherto been the case – an effect certainly intended by the redactor, who was keen on the connection between Romans, Saracens and the Last Judgment. When Winithar called his gentle redaction of the Third Recension *De gentibus*, he was clearly thinking of this part too. Conspicuously, the long passage on the misconduct and apostasy of Christians was cut from this section, which clearly shows that, in contrast to the First Recension, the outlook of this version of PsM was generally outwards and *not* on the own flock. This is also underlined by the strong interest in the Antichrist, who, despite all his mimicry, could and would have been seen as the absolute out-

115 Prinz, "Eine frühe abendländische Aktualisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodius," 14, with n. b.

sider in the narrative. The message of this version of the text, far more so than in the First Recension, let alone in the Syriac original, was to prepare its readers for the things to come and not to make them adjust their life in the present. Still, that Last Judgment was to be expected in the not too distant future, given that the Saracens were already very present in the world of the redactor, which went to prove the accuracy of the prophecy.

The Third Recension of PsM also underlines a general trait of the text, regardless of which version one used: its multi-functionality. The Reichenau manuscript (***A***) used it as the last in series of sermons on the End Times, and Winithar (***S***) – while clearly also keen on eschatology – rather as a fund of Roman and Saracen history. Finally, the Cologne manuscript (***K***) found that PsM answered some of the compilers' questions about the Book of Daniel. The multifaceted text could serve a purpose for all of them – and for more people, if we consider that the other recensions were put to an even greater variety of uses. All three copies of the Third Recension have one thing in common – and this is again a trait that we can tentatively generalise for PsM: in all cases, the text was consciously included to bring the picture the respective manuscript wished to present up to date. To a contemporary audience, its salient feature will probably have been the connection it made between the Saracens, the End Times and salvific history. PsM neatly provided support for the Book of Daniel narrative, it showed a unique vision of the Romans and Christians fighting the Saracens and it connected the very up-to-date fear of these adversaries with a compelling and dramatic vision of the Last Days. The Third Recension was, in a way, not unique in this respect. Its singularity lies in the attempt to render PsM agreeable to a Latin audience while trying to keep as many features of the original as possible. Still, it was not tailor-made for one purpose only, as we have seen, the redactor managed to keep much of the richness of the original version. Thus, it is rather not by chance that we see it used in different combinations with various other texts and genres: this versatility was, in fact, built into the work from the outset.

5 Edition [CGr]

Editorial Principles

The present edition of the Third Latin Recension of Pseudo-Methodius' *Revelationes* relies on the three known witnesses and on the critical edition of the First Recension. The following *sigla* will be used:

Tab. 2

A	Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Augiensis Cod. perg. 254, fols. 204r–211r, saec. VIII *ex.* / IX *in.*, northern Italy or Switzerland.
A^2	Corrections to the original readings of *A* by a later, perhaps tenth-century hand.
K	Köln, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Cod. 15, fols. 84v–86r, saec. IX, Germany.
S	St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 238, p. 385–392, saec. VIII^2, St Gall. Winithar's autograph in its entirety.
Rec.1	Critical edition of the First Recension: W.J. Aerts and G.A.A. Kortekaas, eds., *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen* . Vol. 569, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Subsidia 97 (Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 1998).

The text transmitted by *A* has been corrected in its initial part by a later hand, which normalises the grammar and, on one occasion, upgrades the abbreviation system to contemporary standards. At l. 31/32, indeed, the corrector changes *astralocus* to *astrologus* and re-writes the abbreviation *–us* in the word *magnus* according to a form used from the late ninth century onwards. The text transmitted by *K* features several omissions and errors. In two significant cases, *K* shares the peculiar reading of *S* (i.e. *non estimabitur* at l. 131/132 and *mulierem uirginem* at l. 148). In several other cases, however, the readings of *K* are nearer to those of *A* than to those of *S*, perhaps because the writer of *S*, i.e. Winithar, modified the text on his own initiative. I would therefore cautiously suggest the existence of two different branches in the textual transmission, one of which includes *S* and *K*, without posing a direct dependence of *K* on *S*. *S*, and probably Winithar himself, introduced several innovations compared to the other two witnesses. Many of them are additions which aim at linking the text to the Bible more closely.

This edition strives to reproduce as much as possible the peculiarities of the language of the known witnesses, correcting only when a corrupt reading can be explained as a possible mechanical and banal error. The readings of *A* are preferred in the case of equally valid variants. The edition accommodates three apparatuses. The first records the biblical passages which are either explicitly quoted or alluded to in the text. The second contains references to the sources employed in the text. In addition, the references to those chapters of the First Recension which the Third abridges or adapts are placed in the right margin of the text. The third apparatus is an *apparatus criticus*. As a rule, it records only variant readings to the published text (negative principle). In the case of difficult or peculiar readings, however, the *apparatus criticus* does give account of their occurrence in the manuscripts (positive principle). The punctuation corresponds to modern conventions.

Orthography: Respecting modern editorial conventions, the edition uses *V* for both capital *U* and *V*, and *u* for both lowercase *u* and *v*. Abbreviations are silently expanded. I have not recorded the following common orthographic variations in the

manuscripts: between *e* and *i*, as in *sterelem/sterilem*; *c* and *t*, as in *cognatio/cognacio*; *app-* and *adp-* or similar, as in *apposuit/adposuit*; *i* and *y*, as in *gigantes/gygantes*; *x* and *cs*, as in *uxorem/ucsorem; ph* and *f* as in *propheta/profeta*. Some non-Classical readings can be explained by this common interchange between letters, as, for example, *discendit* instead of the Classical *descendit* (l. 62). Since *discendit* is transmitted by both *A* and *S*, and *descendit* only by *K*, I have retained *discendit* in the edition. The reading *orribilis* (l. 64) instead of the Classical *(h)orribiles*, can be explained by reason of the common interchange between *i/e* and the usual omission of *h*. Since *A*, *K* and the First Recension read *orribilis*, I have retained this form in the edition. Similarly, I have maintained the non-Classical *iniuriosus* (l. 22) for *iniuriosos*, since the ending *–us* for the accusative plural features in both *A* and *K* (*S* omits this passage).

The verbal form *inchoat* recurs three times at lines 37–38 in several orthographic variations, of which *inquoad* is the most often used in all three witnesses. Therefore, I chose to make the spelling uniform and always use *inquoad* in the edition. For the rare word *asincitum*, indicating a special sort of mineral bitumen,[116] I have chosen the spelling *arsincitum* contained in *A* (l. 88).

As for the diphthong *–ae*, it features in every possible variation (*-ae*, *-e*, or *ę*) and without consistency, both within the same manuscript and between the three witnesses. I have mostly opted for normalisation. Thus, when the manuscripts disagree, I have silently put *–ae* regardless of the original text. In contrast, when all the witnesses share the same spelling, although not Classical, I have retained it in the edition. For instance, the edition features *seculum* (l. 11, 163, 200), but both *caelo* (l. 51) and *celo* (l. 117, 121, 199), according to the respective uniform readings of the manuscripts.

Worthy of particular mention are the numerals, which either appear in the form of Roman digits or were spelt out without any consistency across the three manuscripts. Only *K* features, although seldom, ordinal numbers in the mixed form of a digit with a flexion suffix. The present edition features both cardinal and ordinal numbers in the form of Roman digits, without indicating possible flexion suffixes (e.g. XXX = both *triginta* and *tricesimus, -a, -um*).[117] The actual readings of the manuscripts, when discordant, are recorded in the apparatus.

I have capitalised all proper names silently. Proper names of persons and places are usually spelt in various forms both within the same manuscript and across the three witnesses. Provided the variants of a name were equally valid, I have chosen one of the spellings of *A* and reproduced it consistently throughout the text, while recording the other readings in the apparatus. Otherwise, I have chosen the variant which best corresponds to the text of the model, be it the First Recension or Isidore

116 *Asincitum* recurs in the First Recension and in the *Cosmographia* 41b, 10 of Aethicus Ister, who drew on the *Revelationes* for this passage. See Aethicus Ister, *Cosmography*, ed. Herren, 52.
117 The only exception concerns *secundum [...] tertium* on l. 109, which I have printed in full.

of Seville's works. The list of the names of the "Unclean Nations" deserves special mention (l. 96–101): the spelling of their names varies considerably both from manuscript to manuscript and when compared to the First Recension.[118] In particular, *S* features a number of unique names (perhaps Winithar's own invention?). In this case, I have again preferred the readings of *A*, which stick more closely to the First Recension, and have recorded the variants in the apparatus. All three witnesses and the First Recension unanimously state that the "Unclean Nations" amounted to 22 (l. 101). However, both *A* and the First Recension lists 23 names, perhaps because Gog and Magog were considered to be the same people. Conversely, both *S* and *K* omit a single name from their lists, the *Agrimardii* and the *Arcnei* respectively, whether because of a simple distraction or, having noticed the contradiction, on purpose.

Morphology: I have mostly retained the morphologic form of the witness(es), even when non-Classical, as for example in the case of: 1) *quondam* (l. 15) for the Classical *quendam*, transmitted both by *A* (the other two witnesses omit it) and by the majority of the manuscripts of the First Recension; 2) *filia* (l. 58), transmitted by all three witnesses and by the First Recension instead of the expected *filiam*; 3) *qui* (l. 63), referred to *mare* (which does occur as masculine in the early Middle Ages), instead of the Classical *quod*; 4) *exient* (l. 93), as transmitted by both *A* and *K* and usual in Biblical Latin (see also *exiet* at l. 94). *S* features the Classical form *exibunt*; 5) *qui* (l. 140), referred in all three witnesses to *gentes*, instead of the Classical *quae*.

As for the construction *terram Eonan, in quo solis ortus fit* (l. 30–31), the anomalous *in quo* referred to *terram* is recorded in both *A* and *K* (*S* omits this passage) and in the First Recension. It can be explained as an original literal translation of the corresponding Greek adverb ἔνθα, which persisted evidently in the subsequent textual transmission.[119] At l. 167 I have emended the transmitted forms *exaltauerit* and *exaltaret* to the correct *exaltabitur*, resting on the text of the First Recension. I believe the variants to have originated from different misreadings of the same abbreviated form.

Syntax: I have retained non-Classical constructions when attested either in all or in the majority of the witnesses, as, for instance, in the case of *in ipsum resuscitauit Deus genus humanum* (l. 16–17) instead of the Classical *in ipso*, or *Contradicunt regnum Romanorum* (l. 125) instead of the Classical *contradicunt regno* transmitted by the First Recension. This concerns also the non-Classical use of the personal pronoun *eius* instead of the possessive adjective *suus, -a, -um*; I have preserved, for instance, *Kain et eius cognatio* (l. 18), as transmitted in the manuscripts. Furthermore, I have retained the non-Classical construction of *dare* with accusative of the receiv-

118 For this list of names in the Syriac, Greek and Latin versions of the *Revelationes*, see Sackur, "Einleitung: Pseudomethodius," 36–39.

119 On the First Latin Recension as translation *verbum e verbo* of the Greek model see Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 25.

ing person and ablative of the given thing in the line: *Dedit Noe Ionitum filium suum terra Eonan* (l. 30), as transmitted by *K*.[120]

I have accepted the words *ad edificandum turrem* (l. 32–33), as transmitted by both *A* and *K* (*S* omits this passage), in place of the Classical *ad edificandam turrem*. Although either copyist, or their models, could easily have misread an original *edificandam* and written *edificandum* instead, I prefer to think of a non-Classical combination of *ad* + gerund + accusative in this case, something which also occurs at l. 163–164 (*ad arguendum perfidiam*).

At l. 169 I have maintained the irregular construction *Tunc distruitur omnem principatum et potestatem*, because I regard *omnem principatum et potestatem* as a literal quote from the Bible, which has not been adapted to the new syntactic context. We find further examples of non-Classical constructions at l. 179, where the ablative replaces the expected accusative (*sol in tenebris et luna in sanguine* instead of *sol in tenebras et luna in sanguinem*), at l. 186 (*coram* + acc. instead of abl.) and, finally, at l. 188 (*adherebunt* + acc. instead of dat.). On both l. 93 and l. 140, I have accepted the faulty *gentes illas* and *gentes illas pessimas* instead of the correct nominative form. Both passages were written without the support of corresponding sentences in the First Recension and all witnesses agree, except in the case of the second occurrence, where *S* features a different, and indeed correct, reading (*illi pessimi)*.

Further peculiarities: The passage describing the genealogy of Shem (l. 33–40), which parallels the account of Genesis and draws on Isidore's *Etymologiae*, is damaged: *S* contains it only in its final part, while *A* transmits the text with two lacunae and a repetition, and the readings of *K* are often corrupt. Nevertheless, *K* alone contains the words *inde sunt Caldei iusti*, which, following Isidore, must relate to Arfaxat. The adjective *iusti*, however, does not occur in Isidore and could be a gloss pertaining to *Caldei* of different origin and one added at this point by the copyist of *K* himself or by his model. For instance, the *Adnotatio libri Hiezechielis imperfecta* by Haimo of Auxerre contains the explanation *VIRI ERGO, id est Chaldei, IVSTI SVNT* relating to Ezekiel 23:45.[121] Therefore, I did not include *iusti* in the edition.

The passage predicting the future attack of the Saracens (l. 46–53) shows signs of being an unaccomplished adaptation of the corresponding section of the First Recension. The redactor of the Third Recension wanted to present the account of the Saracens' invasion as a prophecy about the Last Days, whereas the First Recension records the attack as something that both already happened in the past and would occur again in the future. Therefore, some of the past tenses of the model had to be changed to future tenses. The shared readings of the oldest witnesses of the Third Recension, i.e. of *A* and *S*, show that the redactor only implemented this modifica-

120 For the construction "*dare aliquem aliqua re (per analogiam ad* donare)" see *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 3: D–E, 901, 27.

121 Haimo of Auxerre, *Adnotatio libri Hiezechielis imperfecta*, ed. Gryson, 23–388, at 266, l. 461.

tion in part. Instead of *ascenderunt*, the Third Recension features the present *ascendunt in novissimis diebus*; then it introduces the future *subicient*, which is not present in the model. Yet the perfect tense *dominati sunt* of the First Recension remains unchanged in *A* and *S*, whereas it is replaced by the future tense *dominabuntur* in the ninth-century *K*. Although it hampers the proper understanding of the passage, I have chosen to use *dominati sunt* in the edition, considering it to be a faulty reading, but one which might reproduce the wording of the original text of the Third Recension. The scribe of *K* might have corrected this form to the corresponding future tense on his own initiative. Therefore, we should not regard *dominati sunt* as a conjunctive "error" between *A* and *S* against *K*.

The section dedicated to the description of the "Unclean Nations" (l. 64–74) is corrupt, both in the Third and in the corresponding passage of the First Recension. Indeed, the latter's translation of the Greek version resulted in problematic passages, which the copyists of the Third Recension either reproduced verbatim, probably not understanding their meaning, or tried to modify without success. For instance, the redactor of the First Recension translated the Greek word κανθαροειδῶς (*Rec.1*, 8, 4) with *cantharo speciem*, seemingly unconcerned by the resulting lack of sense.[122] The Third Recension features the word *cantharo* (l. 67) in three slightly different spellings; I have printed the reading of *K* which is the nearest to the text of the First Recension. Furthermore, the First Recension coined, it seems, the new Latin word *spurcebilem*, which each of the manuscripts of the Third Recension modified slightly. I have opted for the reading of *A* (*spurgiscibilem*, l. 68) in this case. In this passage, the manuscript *S*, perhaps Winithar himself, tried to normalise or correct those words, which were evidently perceived as difficult. The result is a section that is corrupted in new ways and which remains problematic. Except for one case,[123] I have not strived to normalise these sentences nor to create a grammatically correct version of the text through conjectures and amendments, since I believe that no such correct version ever existed. On the contrary, I have retained, for instance, the participle *coaculati* for the correct *coagulata*, as well as the nominative *producta conpago* instead of the corresponding accusative *productam conpaginem*, which would have matched the syntactic structure. The reading *lineamenta* of the Third Recension (l. 70) could solve the *crux desperationis* inserted by the editors into the corresponding passage of the First Recension.[124]

Similarly complicated is the passage abridging chapter 9 of the First Recension, which comes back to the purpose of explaining how Chouset's progeny bound the Ethiopian, Macedonian, Roman and Greek peoples together to form a single family. The redactor of the Third Recension aimed to reproduce the information of his model very concisely. As a result, the reader can only understand the contents of

122 See Jerome, *Commentarii in prophetas minores. In Abacuc*, ed. Adriaen, 1. 2, l. 409: *scarabeus uel cantharus uermis est stercoris*.

123 I have integrated a *<quae>* at l. 70.

124 See Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 111, 5.

this section by bearing in mind the larger account of the First Recension. To establish the text of the edition was a difficult task. I interpret the uncertain and problematic reading *semen* (l. 103) as "progeny": it occurs in this sense in the First Recension at ch. 9.7, as I have recorded in the *apparatus fontium*. I have maintained the flawed *quod est* (l. 108), which can be explained as an original misreading of the *quidem* of the First Recension, which is still recorded in *K*. As for the name of the city of Byzantium, I have reproduced the inconsistency of both *A* and *K* and of the First Recension regarding the forms *Bizancia* and *Biza*, although *S* reads always *Bizancia*. On l. 113 we have to suppose a loss of text in the First Recension, which persisted in all the known witnesses of the Third. Following the suggestion of the editors of the First Recension,[125] the lacuna could be filled by adding <*et Graecorum regnum*>. I preferred, however, to simply mark the damaged passage without suggesting integrations for which I did not have enough evidence to rely upon. The following sentence (*unde erit [...] Sarracinos,* l. 113–115) is an innovation of the Third Recension. A similar addition to the text of the First Recension occurs at l. 165–166, again in regard to Chouset's progeny.

A further difficult passage is found at l. 131–134, which I render as follows in the edition: *et non estimabitur ut uel quis Christianus remaneat, quia in ecclesiis ibi fornicantur et faciunt uniuersa blasphemia in Christo*. I interpret this to mean: "and even the surviving Christians will not be considered as Christians, since they commit fornication and every kind of blasphemy towards Christ there in the churches". The First Recension does not contain this passage. The problematic clause *ut uel quis* is transmitted only in *A*; *K* reads *aut uel quis*; *S* places *ut* before *non estimabitur* instead of *et*. Furthermore, *A* alone reads *pręstinabitur* (= "will be bought") instead of *non estimabitur*. *Praestinare* is a rare verb, used mostly in Antiquity, which nevertheless occurs in lexicographic tools circulating widely in the early Middle Ages.[126] Its presence in the sentence could hardly be explained as a misreading of an original *non estimabitur*, but must be regarded as a variant reading. I prefer to print *non estimabitur* for the moment, hoping for new witnesses of the Third Recension to be discovered.

Concerning the Antichrist (l. 146–147), both *K* and *S* introduce a remarkable innovation compared to both the other Recensions and to the text transmitted by *A*. Indeed, they present the mother of the Antichrist as a virgin: *S*, p. 390, reads *nascitur de tribu Dan ex muliere uirgine*; *K*, f. 85v, reads *nascitur autem de tribu Dan mulierem uirginem*. *A*, f. 209r, reads instead *nascitur autem de tribu Dan ex muliere*

125 See Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 123.

126 See the digital edition of the *Liber Glossarum* under *prestinare* (http://liber-glossarum.humanum.fr/context.html?id-l=PR982, accessed 4 February, 2018) and also Sextus Pompeius Festus, *De verborum significatu quae supersunt cum Pauli epitome*, ed. Lindsay, 249, 27–28: *Praestinare apud Plautum praeemere est, id est emendo tenere*.

et uir (which becomes *uir<o>* in my edition).[127] By reading *muliere(m) uirgine(m)*, the branch of the transmission including *K* and *S* conforms with an alternative depiction of the birth of the Antichrist which circulated since Late Antiquity – for instance, in the work of the Church Father Jerome – and was expressly declared as faulty by Adso of Montier-en-Der in the tenth century.[128] Since *A* shares the reading *ex muliere et uir<o>* with both the First and Second Latin Recensions and with the corresponding passage of the Greek version, I regard *ex muliere uirgine* as a modification of the original reading. Therefore, my edition reproduces the text of *A*.

Symbols and abbreviations used in the edition

Tab. 3

Symbols:	<...>	=	words not occurring in the manuscripts and added by me
	***	=	lacuna in the text
Abbreviations:	*a.c.*	=	*ante correctionem* (referred to a correction done by the copyist himself)
	p.c.	=	*post correctionem* (referred to a correction done by the copyist himself)
	add.	=	*addidit*
	praem.	=	*praemisit*
	scr.	=	*scripsit*
	sup.l.	=	*supra lineam*
	tr.	=	*transposuit* (when a copyist inverts the succession of two words)
	ut uid.	=	*ut videtur*

Sources mentioned in the Apparatus Fontium

The sources listed below were used by the redactor of the Third Recension only. They do not occur in the First Recension.

127 Cf. the corresponding passage in the First Recension: *Ingredietur enim hic filius perditiones in Hierusolimam et sedibit in templo Dei sicut Deus, homo cum sit carnalis ex semini uiri et ex utero mulieres, de tribu Dan discendens* (Aerts and Kortekaas, "Einleitung: Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius," 195, 1–3). The Second Recension reads: *Ingredietur autem in Hierusolimam et sedebit in templo Dei, putat se quasi ut Deus sit et erit exaltatum cor eius nimis, cum <sit> homo ex semine uiri filius mulieris de tribu Dan* (Prinz, "Eine frühe abendländische Aktualisierung der lateinischen Übersetzung des Pseudo-Methodius," 222–224).

128 See Adso of Montier-en-Der, *De ortu et tempore Antichristi*, ed. Verhelst, 24: *Nascetur autem ex patris et matris copulatione, sicut et alii homines, non, ut quidam dicunt, de sola uirgine*. For Pseudo-Hippolytus' and Jerome's depiction of the birth of the Antichrist from a virgin see McGinn, *Antichrist*, 74–75, with nn. 67 and 75.

ISID., *CHRON.* = ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS, *Chronica* – ed. José Carlos Martín, CCSL 112 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 4–208.

ISID., *Etym.* = ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX* – ed. Wallace Martin Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911).

Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelationes*, Rec. Tertia
cur. Cinzia Grifoni

INCIPIT DICTA SANCTI METHODII PYTHARENSIS EPISCOPUS DE REGNA REGUM ET DE NOVISSIMIS TEMPORIBVS CERTA DEMONSTRATIO

Igitur Adam et Eua, egressi uirgines de Paradiso, anno XXX expulsionis suae genuerunt Kain primogenitum et sororem eius Calmanan. Et post XXX alios annos genuerunt Abel et sororem eius Deboram. Anno LXXX et C uitae Adae occidit Kain fratrem suum Abel. In anno autem CCCXXX primi miliarii, quod est primum seculum, natus est Seth, uir gigans in similitudine Adae. Anno DCCCXXX mortuus est Adam et separati sunt filii eius. Et disiuncti sunt filii Seth a filiis Kain, et abstulit Seth suam cognationem sursum in

Rec.1: cap.1

12 anno - adam] Gen. 5, 5

1/4 incipit - demonstratio] de daniel in libro metotii pat¯nis esaię *K*, de gentibus *S* **5** igitur] *om. S* et eua] etua *S* egressi] egressi sunt *S* uirgines] uirgenis *A*, -is *K* **6** anno] et anno *S* xxx] triginsimo *S* kain] cain *S*, chain *K* **7** primogenitum] et genitur *K* calmanan] calminan *S* **7/8** et[2] - deboram] *om. S* **7/8** xxx alios] allius xx *K* **8** annos] -us *K* genuerunt] genurunt *S*, peperit *K* deboram] dab- *K* **9** lxxx - c] octuagisimo et centisimo *A*, lxxx et centessimo *K*, centissimo octavogissimo *S* adae] adam *K* occidit] hoccidit *K*, occisit *S* kain] cain *S* **9/10** fratrem - abel] habel fratrem suum *K* **10** cccxxx] tregisimo *A*, ccctissimo *K*, trecentissimo trigisimo *S* primi miliarii] -o -io *KS* **11** primum seculum] -us -us *K* seth] set *K*, sedh *S* **12** similitudine] -em *K* dcccxxx] nongentissimo treginsimo *A*, lxl tricesimum *K*, nongintissimo trigisimo *S* **13** separati] seperati *KS* eius] *om. K* disiuncti] discuncti *K*, dispersi *S* **13/36** filii[2] - ragau[1]] *om. S* **13** seth] set *K* **14** kain] khain *K* **14/15** et - montem] *om. K*

2

quondam montem proximum Paradiso. Seth interpretatur resurrectio, quia in ipsum resuscitauit Deus genus humanum. Inde sunt appellati filii Dei. Habitabat autem Kain et eius cognatio in campo, in quo et Abel fratrem suum interfecit.|Apposuit autem malignus diabolus bellum fornicationis adiungere filiis Seth, ut concupiscerent filias Kain et acciperent eas sibi in uxores et iniuriosus filios genuerunt. Isti fuerunt gigantes potentes a seculo. Propter quod iratus est Dominus Deus contra eos. Inuenit autem Noe solum iustum et praecepit fieri arcam, in qua saluatus est Noe et filii eius. Misit autem Dominus diluuium in terram et tertia die diluit omnia animantia in terra.|Egressus autem Noe de arca post diluuium genuit filium et uocauit nomen eius Ionitum post Sem, Cham et Iafeth.

Rec.1: cap. 2

Rec.1: cap. 3

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23 gigantes - seculo] Gen. 6, 4 **24/25 inuenit - iustum**] cfr Gen. 6, 8-9 **27 diluit - terra**] cfr Gen. 7, 23 : deleuit omnem substantiam quae erat super terram

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15/17 seth - dei] cfr ISID., *Chron.* 4,1 (p. 8-9) : Adam annorum CCXXX genuit Seth, qui pro Abel natus est interpretaturque resurrectio quia in ipso resuscitatum est semen iustum, quod est stirpis filiorum Dei

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15 quondam] *intellege* quendam proximum] -imo *A* paradiso] parati sunt *K* seth] sed *A*, set *K* **16** interpretatur] inpretatur resurrectio] resonatur *K* **17** inde] et inde *K* sunt] fuerunt *K* appellati] apellati *K* **18** habitabat] -bit *A*, abitabat *K* kain] chain *K* campo] -um $A^{a.c.}$ **19** abel] habel *K* interfecit] interficit *K* **20** filiis] -us *K* **21** filias] fillis $A^{a.c.\ ut\ uid.}$ kain] chain *K* acciperent] hacc- *K* **22** sibi] *om. K* in uxores] ad ucxores *K* iniuriosus] *A*, inius siosus *K*, *intellege* iniuriosos filios] -us *K* isti] et isti *K* fuerunt] -ant *A* **23** quod] quod deus *K* **25** arcam] archa *K* qua] quo *K* saluatus] saluus **26** terram] -a *K* **27** tertia die] *om. K* diluit] diuidit *A, sed cfr* deleuit *Gen. 7, 23* omnia animantia] omnem animantiam *A* terra] -am *A* egressus] egresus *K* **28** autem] est *K* noe] nohe *K* arca] arkha *K* genuit] et genuid *K* **29** ionitum] ionithum *A*, hionitum *K* **29/30** post - ionitum] *om. K*

3

Dedit Noe Ionitum filium suum terra Eonan, in quo solis ortus fit. Dedit autem ei sapientiam et fuit astrologus magnus. Huic Membroth petiit consilium ad edificandum turrem Babillon.|Sem autem, filius Noe, genuit Arfaxat inde sunt Caldei. ⟨Arfaxat⟩ genuit Sala inde sunt Samarite. Sala genuit Eber inde sunt dicti Ebrei. Eber genuit Fhalet. Fhalet genuit Ragau. Ragau autem genuit Saruc. Inquoad regnum Scitarum. Saruc genuit Nachor. Aegyptiorum regnum inquoad. Nachor genuit Thara. Regnum Asyriorum inquoad et Sicimorum. Thara genuit Abraham. Abraham autem habebat uxorem sterilem nomine Sarra, quae non

Isid. *et* Gen.

33/40 sem - abraham[1]] cfr Gen. 11, 10-26 **40/44 abraham**[2] **- ismahel**] cfr Gen 16, 1 *et* 15

33/40 sem - abraham[1]] ISID. *Etym.* V 39, 5-8

30 terra] -am *A* eonan] chanaan *K*, Eoam *Rec.1* in quo] *AKRec.1* solis] -us $A^{a.c.}$ **31** fit] fuit *K* ei] *om. K* sapientiam] -ia *K* astrologus] A^2, astralocus $A^{a.c.}$, austerlocus $K^{a.c.}$, auster $K^{p.c.}$ **32** magnus] semitus *scr., deinde del. K* huic] $A^{a.c.}K^{p.c.}$, de huic $A^{p.c.}$, hoic A^2, huc $K^{a.c.}$ membroth] nebroth *Rec.1* **33** babillon] babil *A* **34** genuit[1]] *om. K* arfaxat[1]] tarfharat sacor *K* inde - caldei] *om. A*, iusti *add. K* **34/35** genuit[2] - samarite] *om. K* **35** sala] sachor *K* genuit] genuid *K* eber] A^2, aber *A*, heber *K* **36** eber] heber *K* genuit[1]] genuid *K* fhalet[1] - genuit[2]] *om. A* **37** autem] *om. S* saruc[1]] sacrach *K*, saruch *S* inquoad] *codd., intellege* inchoat scitarum] scoetharum *A*, excitarunt *S* saruc[2]] sarach K, saruh $S^{a.c.}$, saruch $S^{p.c.}$ **38** nachor[1] - inquoad] *bis scr. A* nachor[1]] naor *A*, nacohr *K* aegyptiorum - inquoad] incoad egipcii summum *K*, egipciorum regem inquoet nachor inquoet *S* nachor[2]] naor *A*, nacor *K* **39** thara] terra *A*, tara *K*, thare *S* **39/40** regnum - sicimorum] inquoad regnum asiracum et siratynorum *K*, regem excitarunt et in quo regnum asiriorum et sicimorum *S* **39** inquoad] inquoat *A* **40** thara] terra *A*, tara *K* abraham[1]] habraam *K* abraham[2]] abraam *K* autem] *om. A*, uero *K* **41** sterilem] *om. S* nomine] nomen *S* sarra] sarram *K* quae] qui *K*

4

concipiebat. Qui accepit concubinam nomine Agar Aegyptiam et genuit filium et uocauit nomen eius Ismahel, de quo sunt Ismahelitae, qui corrupta lingua dicuntur Sarracini, habitantes in deserto, gens crudelis et ualida.|Ascendunt autem in nouissimis diebus a deserto et subicient omnes terras usque ad magnam Romam et Illiricum et Thesolonicam et Sardiniam, quae est trans illam magnam Romam, et dominati sunt omnem terram in annis LX et non erit qui eos possit vincere sub caelo ebdomadas VII usque quod Dominus Deus deuincat illos. Post haec autem surgit rex Romanorum de Roma. Rec.1: cap. 5

Audi nunc certissime quomodo haec quattuor regna conuenerunt sibi, Ethiopes enim et Maccedones et Rec.1: cap. 8

44/45 ismahelitae - sarracini] ISID. *Etym.* IX 2, 6

42 qui] que A^2, et *K*, et pro eo *S* concubinam] concupinam *S* nomine] nomen *S* agar] hagar *K* **43** aegyptiam] egipcia *K*, ęgipciaga *S* genuit] genuit in ea *S* et uocauit] uocauitque *K* **44** ismahel] hismahel *A*, ismael *K* ismahelitae] hismahelitę *A*, ismaelite *K* corrupta lingua] -ę -ę *A* **45** dicuntur] dicunt *K* sarracini] sarraceni A^2, saraxani *K* habitantes] -ibus *K* deserto] -um *K* crudelis] A^2S, crudele *A*, crudelissima *K* **46** ascendunt] ascendit *S* nouissimis diebus] -os dies *K* **47** subicient] -iunt *K* omnes terras] -is -as *A*, -em -am *S* **48/49** et' - romam] *om. A* **48** thesolonicam] tes- *K* sardiniam] -a *K*, -icam *S* quae] qui *S* **49** magnam romam] *om. K* dominati sunt] dominabuntur *K*, -ati sun *S* **50** omnem] *om. A* in annis] canis *A*, annis *K*, illam annos *S* lx] *Rec.1*, *om. A*, xl *K*, septuaginta *S* erit] est *A* possit] possant *A* **51** ebdomadas] ebdomata *A* uii] septem *S* **51/52** usque - deus] usque quod oc deus *K*, dominus autem deus omnipotens *S* **51** quod] quo *A* **52** deuincat] -et *S* surgit] surgere habet *A*, surg *S* **53** roma] -am *K* **54** audi] aut *K* certissime] -imi *S* haec quattuor] quatuor hec *K* **55** conuenerunt sibi] ceperunt regnare *S* ethiopes] id est ethyopis *A*, etiopis *K* maccedones] -is *A*, macidonii *K*, macedoni *S*

5

Romani et Greci. Haec sunt quattuor uenti commouentes mare magnum. Philippus igitur, pater Alexandri, Maccedo fuit et accepit uxorem Chuset, filia regis Ethiopis nomine Phol. De qua natus est
60 Alexander Grecorum tyrannus, *** et regnauit in ea annos XVIIII. Occidit autem Darium regem Medorum et dominatus est omnem terram. Discendit autem Alexander usque ad mare qui uocatur Regio Solis, ubi conspexit gentes inmundas et aspectu orribilis. Sunt
65 autem ex filiis Iafeth nepotes, quorum inmunditiam uidens ualde exorruit. Commedent enim omnem cantaro speciem, hominem coinquinabilem uel spurgiscibilem, id est canes, moris, serpentes,

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56/57 haec - magnum] Dan. 7, 2

60/61 * - xuiiii**] cfr *Rec.1* 8, 3: Hic condedit Alexandriam magnam et regnauit in ea annis XVIIII

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56 et] seo et *A* haec] et *S* quattuor] iiiior *K* uenti] uentis *A*, ventes *S* **57** commouentes] -ntis *A*, *om. S* mare] -ri *A*, -ris *S* magnum] Magnus *S* philippus] fliphot *K*, filippus *S* **58** maccedo] macydon *K*, macedonius *S* chuset] cumset *K*, quę sit *S* filia] *codd. Rec.1* **59** ethiopis] --es *K*, -um *S* nomine] nomen *A* phol] fol *KS* qua] iiii *K* natus] *om. K* **60** grecorum] greg- *A* tyrannus] tyrr- *K*, tyranus *S* in ea] *om. A* **61** annos] -nus *AK* xuiiii] xlviii *A* occidit] et occ- *S* darium regem] *om. S* darium] docium *K* medorum] edorum *S* **62** dominatus est] dominabitur *K* terram] illam *add. S* **63** qui] *ASRec.1*, quod *K* solis] *A²KS*, solus *A* **64** aspectu] -um *A*, -o *K* orribilis] *AKRec.1*, horribili *S*, *intellege* horribiles sunt] *bis scr. A* **65** ex filiis] filii *K* nepotes] -is *K* quorum] corum *K*, chore quorum *S* inmunditiam] -arum *A*, -a *K*, inmun inmundiciam *S* **66** uidens] autem *add. K*, uidit alexander *S* exorruit] etcorruit *K*, horruit *S* commedent] *codd.*, *intellege* comedunt omnem] hominem *S* **67** cantaro] scantarum *A ut uid.*, cantero *S*, cantharo *Rec.1*, *intellege* cantharorum hominem] *codd.*, omnem *Rec. 1* coinquinabilem] quoin- *AK* **68** spurgiscibilem] sporcibilem *K*, expurgibilem *S* canes] -is *AK* moris] *AK*, morens *S*, *intellege* mures serpentes] -is *KS*

6

morticinorum carnes, aborticia, informabilia corpora ⟨quae⟩ in aluo necdum per lineamenta coaculati sunt, uel ex aliqua parte membrorum producta conpago, que formam figmenti possit perficere, uultum uel figuram expremere, necnon etiam et omnem speciem iumentorum et ferarum inmundarum. Mortuos autem nequaquam sepelliunt sed sepe commedent eos. Haec uidens Alexander timuit ne quando inrumperent in terram et contaminarent eam. Deprecatus est Deum, et praecipiens Dominus Deus congregauit eos omnes, mulieres uel filios et filias eorum, et eduxit eos de terra orientali et conclusit eos minans, donec introissent in finibus Aquilonis. Et non est introitus nec exitus ab Oriente usque in Occidente qui possit ad eos introire uel exire aut transire. Deprecatus est autem Alexander Deum, quid de eis faceret et exaudiuit eum Dominus. Et precipit Dominus Deus duobus montibus, quibus est

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69 carnes] canis *KS* aborticia] -as *A*, -dia *K*, auort- *S* informabilia] infur- *A*, infir- *S* corpora] *om. K* **70** aluo] alueo *A* per lineamenta] pro lini- *K*, et proliamenta *S* coaculati] quoaquolati *A*, coacolaty *K*, *intellege* coagulata **71** aliqua] -am *K*, alio *S* parte] -em *K* **71/74** conpago - autem] *om. K* **72** formam] -a *S* perficere] pro- *S* **74** mortuos] suos *add. S* **75** sepelliunt] sepeliatur *K*, sepeliant *S* sepe] et *K* commedent] *codd.*, *intellege* comedunt eos] eas *K* **76** uidens] audiens *K* inrumperent] inrup- *A*, erump- *S* **77** terram] suam *add. K* contaminarent eam] quoaminarent iam *K* est] autem *add. A* deum] quid de eos faceret *add. S* **78/79** omnes - filias] cum mulieris hac filius *K* **79** uel filios] *om. S* terra] *om. S* **80** orientali] -is *A*, -e *K*, oriente *S*[in ras.] minans] *om. K*, inuias *S* introissent] -irent *K* **81** aquilonis] aquillonis *K* nec] neque *K* **82** occidente] hoc- *K*, *intellege* occidentem qui] quisquis *A* **83** exire aut] *om. S* transire] transsire *K* est] *om. K* **84** de] *om. K* eis] eos *S* faceret] fecerit *K* dominus] *om. K* **85** precipit] precepit *A*, proiecit *K*[a.c.], proicit *K*[p.c.], precipiens *S* dominus deus] ei dicens *A* montibus] et adiunctis proximauerunt *add. K*

7

uocabulum Vbera Aquilonis, et adiuncti proximauerunt inuicem usque ad XII cubitorum. Et construxit portas aereas et superinduxit eas arsincitum. Et si uoluerint eas aperire in ferro non possunt neque dissoluere per ignem, sed statim ignis omnis extinguetur, neque ferro incidetur neque ⟨per⟩ ignem resoluetur uel quocumque libet aliam astuciam. In nouissimo autem tempore exient gentes illas in terra Israhel, sicut dixit Ezechihel propheta: *In nouissimo die consumationis exiet Gog et Magog in terra Israhel,* qui sunt gentes et reges quos reclusit Alexander in finibus Aquilonis: Gog et Magog et Anog et Ager et Acena et Zendefar et Pontinet et Libi et Euni et Farizeth et Declimi et Zarmade et Theblei et

94/95 in - israhel] cfr Ez. 38, 14-18; cfr Apoc. 20, 7-10

86 ubera aquilonis] ubera et aquillonis *K*, unus uipera et alter aquilonus *S* et adiuncti] *om. K* proximauerunt] *KRec.1*, proanim- *A*, adproxim- *S* **87** ad] *om. A* xii] duodicem *A*, xu *S* cubitorum] cupit- *S* **88** eas] *om. S* arsincitum] hasiniciitum *K*, asencitum *S*, asincitum *Rec.1* et[2]] ut *K* **89** in ferro] *SRec.1*, *om. A*, nec ferire *K* possunt] -sent *K*, -sint *S* **89/90** dissoluere - ignem] per ignem dissouere *K* **90** sed] et *K* omnis] omnes *A*, annis *K* extinguetur] -untur *A*, stigtus *K* ferro] *KRec.1*, -um *AS* **91** incidetur] -ere *S* ignem] ignis *S* resoluetur] soluetur *K*, dissoluitur *S* quocumque] quod- *KRec.1*, quae- *S*, *intellege* quamcumque **92** aliam] aliqua *S* astuciam] artuciam *K* autem] *om. S* tempore] die *praem. K* **93** exient] exibunt *S* illas] *intellege* illae terra] -am *S* israhel] israel *K* ezechihel] zahiel *K*, hieremias *S* **94** propheta] -e *K* consumationis] a consummacione *K* exiet] *ARec.1*, exient *K*, exibunt *S* gog] gogi *S* **95** magog] magogii *S* in] on *S*[a.c.] terra] -am *S* qui] quae *K* gentes] genere *A* et] *om. K* reges] -is *AK* quos] quas *KS* **96** reclusit] conclusit *KS et l. 80*, retrusit *Rec.1* aquilonis] aquill- *K* gog] gogi *S* magog] amagog *A*, magogi *S* **97** anog] anoz *K*, anagogi *S* ager] agegi *K*, anogi *S* acena] azirazen *K*, hanagegi *S* et[3]] *om. K* zendefar] defar *K*, defaragi *S* pontinet] eponites *K*, sudmegi *S* libi] libei *K*, libiae *S* **98** euni] tunii *K*, eomigi *S* farizeth] farizei *K*, farazei *S* declimi] iaclimo *K*, diclinii *S* zarmade] zarmate *K*, sarmathaei *S* theblei] ablei *K*, delbię *S*

8

Zamarciani et Gahonii et Amazarde et Agrimardii et Anafagii, qui dicuntur Cinocefalli, et Terbei et Alanis et Phisolonici et Arcnei et Tasaltarii. Hii XXII reges consistunt inclusi, quos inclusit Alexander.

Obtinuit igitur Chuset semen, filia Ethiopis, quam accepit rex Bizas de Bizancia. Habuit filiam nomine Bizanciam, quam accepit Romillus, qui et Armaleus, rex Romae, et dilexit eam ualde et dedit ei in dotem Romam. Habuit autem ex Bizancia filios III, primogenitum quod est secundum appellationem patris Armaleum, secundum Vrbanum, tertium Claudium. Rec.1: cap. 9

103 obtinuit - ethiopis] cfr *Rec.1* 9, 7: Optinuit igitur semen Chuset, filiae Phol regis Aethiopiae…

99 zamarciani] zarmazion *K*, szarmaciani S gahonii] achunu *K*, caconiaei *S* amazarde] amargade *K*, narzardi *S* agrimardii] grimardii *K*, *om. S* **100** anafagii] anofagiis *K*, anafagi *S* qui] quae *K* dicuntur] dicitur *A* cinocefalli] cenofali *K*, cinofari *S* terbei] tharrei *K*, arbiae *S* **101** phisolonici] fissiloninici *K*, fisaloni *S* arcnei] *om. K*, archanaei *S* tasaltarii] adsaltarii *K*, saltariae *S* hii] ii sunt *K*, hic *S* xxii] uigenti duo *A*, xx et duo *K* reges] -is *k* **102** consistunt] -ent *K* inclusit] con- *S* alexander] et hęc sentenciam danihelis profetia adprobat et apocalipsis iohannis apostoli testimonium dat *add. S* **103** chuset] cusset *K*, quosit *S* semen] *scripsi*, sen *A*, sem hii *K*, sem¯ *S* filia] *AK*$^{p.c.}$, -ae *S* ethiopis] etiopes *K* quam] quęm *S* **104** bizas] bicius *S* bizancia] *S*, -am *AK*, *intellege* Byzantio **104/105** habuit - bizanciam] *om. A* **104** habuit] abuit *K* **105** quam] quem *A*, quęm *S* romillus] romulus *K*, romolus *S* qui et] quam *K*, que *S* armaleus] eternalius *K ut. uid.*, armoleus *S* **106** dilexit] dilex *S* eam] eum *A* ei] *om. A* dotem] dodem *S* **107** habuit] abuit *K* autem] *om. S* ex bizancia] ex bizanciam *A*, ex ea *K*, bizancia *S* filios] filius *K* **108** primogenitum - est] primum uocauit *S* quod est] *AK*, quidem *Rec.1* appellationem] appellacio *S* patris] -i *K* **109** armaleum] suo *K*, armoleus *S* secundum] alium *K*, -us *S* urbanum] -us *S* tertium] iii *K*, tercius *S* claudium] claudius *S*

Armaleus tenuit Romam, Vrbanus Bizam, Claudius Alexandriam. Obtinuit autem Chuset, filia Phol regis Ethiopum, Ethiopiam, Maccedonum et Romanorum ***. Vnde erit regnum Romanorum, qui subiciet filios Ismahel et uincet eos et defendet regnum Christianorum et subiugauit iugo pessimo Sarracinos. Vnde et prophetia regis Dauid dicens: *Ethiopia praeueniet manus eius Deo*. Non est regnum sub celo qui possit superare regnum Christianorum in illis diebus. Vnde et in medio terrae crux sancta, in qua *latitudo et longitudo uel profundum*, quia non est sub celo qui possit superare umquam uirtutem sanctae crucis, quia hec est inuincibilis arma.

Post quam autem ascendit malitia Sarracinorum in septimo tempore, sicut dixit Danihel propheta. Rec.1: cap. 10

116/117 ethiopia - deo] Ps. iuxta LXX 67, 32 **120 latitudo - profundum**] Eph. 3, 18 **123/124 in - tempore**] cfr Dan. 11, 13-15

110 armaleus] armalius *K*, armoleus *S* tenuit] genuit *K* urbanus] -um *A*, genuit *add. K* bizam] bibam *A*, bizanciam claudius] -um *A*, claudus *K* **111** obtinuit] obtenuit *KS* chuset filia] *om. A* chuset] cus etiob *K*, filia] *scripsi*, -am *K*, *om. S* phol] fol *S* **112** ethiopiam] -a *AK* maccedonum] macidoniam *K*, et macedonum *S* **112/113** romanorum - regnum] *om. K* **113** qui] *codd.*, *intellege* quod subiciet] -at *AS* filios] -us *K* **114** ismahel] hismahel *A*, ismael *K*, ismahel *S* uincet] -it *AK* defendet] defundit *A* **115** subiugauit] *codd.*, *intellege* subiugabit sarracinos] -is *A* **116** prophetia] prof- *S* regis] regnus *K* dicens] dicentes *K*, dicit *S* ethiopia] -ae *S* **117** praeueniet] -iad *K* deo] -um *K* **118** qui] *codd.*, *intellege* quod regnum] *om. K* **119** in[1]] *om. K* terrae] -a *K* qua] *om. A* **120** longitudo] altitudo *K* uel] et *S* profundum] -o *K* **120/121** sub celo] *om. K* **121** umquam] eum quam *S* uirtutem] -e *K* **122** est] *om. K* inuincibilis] inuinculis *A*, inuinca- *K*, inuici- *S* **123** post] per *A* sarracinorum] saraz- *K* **124** tempore] ipsorum *add. S* danihel] daniel *K*

10

Contradicunt regnum Romanorum in numero circumuenientium temporum, in septimo ipso tempore, hoc est in septimo miliario, quando finis adpropinquat.|Tunc faciunt uniuersa mala in toto orbe terrarum, ita ut non inueniatur regnum sanctorum neque sacrificium neque holocaustum. Et occident omnes Christianos, nec erit qui sepelliat eos, et non estimabitur ut uel quis Christianus remaneat, quia in ecclesiis ibi fornicantur et faciunt uniuersa blasphemia in Christo.|Et reseruabit Dominus reliquias, sicut fecit in diebus Achaab regis Israhel. Et surget regnum Romanorum et percutiet eos et uxores et filios eorum. Et erit post hec pax et regnum eorum et erunt *nubentes et nuptum tradentes*, sicut locutus est Dominus, *sicut fuit in diebus Noe* usque quod ueniet Antichristus. Et

cfr Rec.1: cap. 11

Rec.1: cap. 13

130 neque[1] - **holocaustum**] cfr Dan. 3, 38 **135 in** - **achaab**] cfr IV Reg. 9, 4-10 **137/139 nubentes** - **noe**] Matth. 24, 37-38

125 regnum] regem *A*, *intellege* regno romanorum] christianorum *A* **125/126** in - temporum] *om. S* **125** numero] unum *A*, -um *K* **126** circumuenientium] circumeuncium *K* temporum] -ore *K* tempore] ipsorum *add. S* **128** orbe] -em *AS* **130** holocaustum] oloc- *K* occident] -unt *S* **131** omnes] *om. K* christianos] -is *A*, -us *K* erit] erad *K* qui] *bis scr.* S sepelliat] sepeliad *K*, sepeliat *S* eos] *om. KS* et] ut *S* **131/132** non estimabitur] pręstinabitur *A* **132** ut] aut *K*, *om. S* remaneat] -ad *K* **133** ecclesiis] ecl- *KS* ibi] sibi *S* blasphemia] mala et blasphemant *S* **134** christo] *intellege* christum et] *om. KS* reseruabit] -uit *AS*, autem *add. S* fecit] *om. sed scr. post* israhel *S* **135** achaab] aza *K*, agap *S* israhel] israel *K* et] *om. S* surget] -it *K*, autem *add. S* regnum] rex *K* **136** uxores - eorum] uxores eorum et filiis *S* filios] -us *K* **137** post] pos *K* pax] crucis *add. K* eorum] sanctorum *KS* **138** nuptum] -u *AK* sicut[2]] sic *K* **139** usque quod] usquo $K^{a.c.}$, que *add.* $K^{sup.l.}$ ueniet] uenit *A* antichristus] ante- *K*

11

surgent gentes illas pessimas qui tenuntur inclusi, Gog et Magog et ceteri qui superius sunt scripti, et faciunt uniuersa mala uastantes terram. Post haec discendit rex Romanorum in Hierusalem. Ebdomada temporum et dimidia transacta, hoc est annos X et dimidium, erit regnum Romanorum et sanctorum. Et tunc ueniet filius perditionis, hoc est Antichristus.

Nascitur autem de tribu Dan ex muliere et uir⟨o⟩. Nascitur autem in Chorozain, nutrietur in Betsaida, et regnabit in Capharnaum. Et letabitur Chorozain quia in ea natus est, Betsaida quia in ea nutritus est, Capharnaum quia in ea regnaturus est. Propter hanc causam Dominus in euangelio tertiam sententiam dedit dicens: *Vae tibi, Chorozain*, et *Vae tibi, Betsaida*, et *Tu,*

Rec.1: cap. 14

153/155 uae[1] **- discendis**] Matth. 11, 21 *et* 23

140 surgent - pessimas] surgentes illi pessimi *S* illas pessimas] *AK*, *intellege* illae pessimae qui] *intellege* quae inclusi] *AS*, -us *K*, *intellege* inclusae gog] gogi *S* **141** magog] amagog *A*, magogi *S* ceteri] -a *K* sunt scripti] *tr. S* **142** uastantes] uasd- *S* terram] -a *K* post haec] posec *K* discendit] des- *K*, *om. S* **143** in hierusalem] *om. S* ebdomada] ebdomadata *A* **144** est] sunt *K* annos x] x anni *K*, duos annos *S* dimidium] dimedio *S* erit] et erit *KS* **145** romanorum et] *om. S*, episcoporum *add. K* **146** antichristus] ante- *KS* **147** nascitur autem] et nascitur *S* ex - uiro] ex muliere et uir *A*, mulierem uirginem *K*, ex muliere uirgine *S* **148** nascitur autem] nacitur *K* chorozain] chorazaim *K*, coro- *S* nutrietur - betsaida] in betsaida nutritus est *S* nutrietur] *Rec. 1*, -ebatur *A*, nutritus *K* **149** regnabit] -uit *KS* capharnaum] kafar- *K*, capar- *S* **149/151** et - capharnaum] *om. K* **149** chorozain] coro- *S* **150** ea[1]] eam *S* betsaida] et letabitur *praem. S* **151** capharnaum] et letabitur caparnaum *S* **151/152** hanc causam] hoc *S* **151** hanc] ahc *K* **152** euangelio] -um *A*, euuangelium *K* tertiam sententiam] -a -a *K*, tres sentencias *S* **153** chorozain] corazaym *K*, coro- *S* et[1]] *om. S* betsaida] beth- *A*

12

Capharnaum, usque in celum exaltaueris et usque in infernum discendis. Et cum apparuerit filius perditionis, ascendit rex Romanorum sursum in Golgotha, in quo confixum est lignum sanctae crucis, et tollit rex Romanorum coronam de capite suo et ponit eam super crucem et expandit manus suas ad celum et tradet regnum Christianorum Deo et Patri et adsumitur crux sancta in celum simul cum corona regis. Et cum uenerit Dominus postea iudicare seculum per ignem tunc apparebit crux ante eum, sicut dixit Apostolus, ad arguendum perfidiam infidelium. Et tunc *praeueniet Ethiopia manus eius Deo*, de Chuset, filia Phol regis, unde erit rex Romanorum. Cumque exaltabitur crux in celum sursum, tradit continuo rex Romanorum spiritum suum. Tunc distruitur *omnem principatum et potestatem*, ut appareat filius perditionis. Tunc

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162/163 tunc - eum] cfr Matth. 24, 30 **164/165 praeueniet - deo**] Ps. iuxta LXX 67, 32 **168/169 omnem - potestatem**] I Cor. 15, 24

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154 capharnaum] cafar- *K*, capar- *S* usque[1]] quousque *S* **155** discendis] -eris *S* apparuerit] apar- *K*, apparebit *S* **157** confixum] fixus *K*, -us *S* et] *om. S* **158** ponit] -et *A* eam] ea *A* **159** crucem] -e *A* manus] -um *A*, -os *S* suas] -am *A* ad] in *A* tradet] -at *A*, tradidit *K* **160** christianorum] *om. S* deo] -um *K* **160/161** et[2] - regis] *om. S* **160** adsumitur] adsummit *K* crux] xps *(christus) K* **161** corona] -am *A* et] ut *S* **162** postea] *om. K*, possit *S* **163** apparebit] aparaebet $K^{a.c.}$, aparaebit $K^{p.c.}$ **163/164** ad - perfidiam] *Rec. 1*, ad arg- prophetia *A*, ad arg- pro fidem *K*, ad -am -am *S* **164** et] *om. S* **165** ethiopia] *post* manus eius *scr. A*, eti- *K*, -ope *S* deo] *om. A*, -um *K* chuset] set *K*, sit *S* phol] fol *KS* **166** rex] regnum *S (cfr l. 113)* exaltabitur] *Rec. 1*, -auerit *AK*, -aret *S* crux] sancta *add. A* **167** tradit] tradidit *K*, tratradet *S* **167/168** spiritum suum] ad deum spem suam *S* **168** distruitur] destruetur *S* **169** potestatem] -um *A* ut appareat] et aperiad *K*, et apparebit *S* **169/171** tunc - dicitur] non dixit quia dicit *K*

13

implebitur prophetia Iacob de tribu Dan, quia inde erit filius perditionis, qua dicitur: *Dan serpens in uia et accubans in semita, mordens calcaneum equi, ut cadat ascensor retrorsum*. Equus igitur ueritas et pietas est iustorum, calcaneum uero nouissima dies, quia uiri sancti in calcaneum mordentur, uidelicet in nouissima die in fantasmatis et in mendacibus signis quae faciet Antichristus. Nam ceci respiciunt, claudi ambulant, surdi audiunt. Conuertit⟨ur⟩ enim sol in tenebris et luna in sanguine. Ingreditur enim filius perditionis in Hierusolimam et sedebit in templo Dei sicut Deus, cum sit homo carnalis et perfidus. Et Iudas, traditor Domini, de tribu Dan fuit.

171/173 dan - retrorsum] Gen. 49, 17 **176 in**[2] **- signis**] II Thess. 2, 9; cfr Matth. 24, 24 **177/178 ceci - audiunt**] Matth. 11, 5; Luc. 7, 22 **178/179 conuertitur - sanguine**] Act. 2, 20; cfr Ioel 2, 31; cfr Apoc. 6, 12 **180 sedebit - deus**] cfr II Thess. 2, 4

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170 iacob] iob *A* **171** filius] antechristus id est *praem. S* qua] quia *S* dicitur] dixit iacob ad *S* dan] dans *K*, filium suum *add. S* et] *om. S* **172** accubans] acupans *K*, occupans *S* calcaneum equi] equum in calcaneum eius *S* ut cadat] et cadens *S* **173** ascensor] eius *add. S* equus] ęqualis *S* est] *om. S* **174** iustorum] hic pro tunc implebitur propheta iacob de tribu dan quia inde erit filius perditionis *add. S in loco falso (cfr l. 169/171)* calcaneum] -us *A* nouissima] -us *S* dies] die *A*, tempus est *S* **175** mordentur] -euntur *K*, -untur *S* uidelicet] uidilicit *A*, uidilicet *S* in[2]] *om. A* **175/176** nouissima die] -o die *K*, -is diebus *S* **176** fantasmatis] -atibus *S* signis quae] signisque *A* quae] qui *K* faciet] -ad *K*, -at *S* **177** antichristus] ante- *K*, a te christus *S* nam] *om. A*, et *add. S* ambulant] ambo- *A* **178** conuertitur] conuertit *codd.*, et *praem. S* enim] *om. A* **179** sanguine] -em *K* ingreditur] -iebatur *A*, -ietur *K* enim] *om. A*, hic *add. KRec.1* **180** hierusolimam] iherosolima *K* et] ut *S* sedebit] sedit *A*, sedeat *S* templo] -um *S* **180/181** cum - homo] homo cum sit *S* **181** perfidus] perfectus *K*, profidus *S* et[2]] sicut *S* traditor] -ur *K*, qui tradedit *S* domini] -um *S*

14

In illis diebus mittit Dominus suos famulos, Enoch et Heliam, ad arguendum inimicum, ut coerceant eius
185 seductionem et corripiant et ostendant eum mendacem coram omnes homines. Videntes autem omnes gentes sinunt eum et fugiunt ab illo propter praedicationem iustorum sanctorum et adherebunt iustos. Videns autem seipsum diabolus contemptum et increpatum ab

183/188 in - iustos] cfr Apoc. 11, 3-12

183 suos famulos] *tr. A*, -us -us *K* enoch] enoc *KS* **184** heliam] heleam *S* arguendum] arquuendum *K* coerceant] coher- *S* eius] eum *S* **185** seductionem] sedit- *A*, seducc- *K*, de seduccione *S* corripiant] -iat et arguat *S* ostendant] -at *S* eum mendacem] mendacium *S* **186** omnes homines] -ibus -ibus *S* autem] eum *A* **187** sinunt] sic nunc *A* et - illo] *om. S* fugiunt] -ient *K* propter] pręter *A* praedicationem] perdit- *A* **188** iustorum sanctorum] *tr. K* et] *om. A* adherebunt] ader- *K* iustos] -um *A*, -is *K* uidens] -entes *A* **189** seipsum diabolus] *tr. S* diabolus] -um *A* contemptum] -emtum *K*

15

190 his sanctis interficiet illos in ore gladii ubi Dominus eorum crucifixus est, hoc est in Caluariae locum.

Erit autem regnum Antichristi tempus et tempora et dimidium tempus, id est tribus annis et dimidium. In illis diebus pluuiae non erunt super terram nec nubes 195 discurrunt. Et erit famis magna et flumina siccabunt et pisces interibunt et omnes prae fame ualida moriuntur,

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192/193 tempus - tempus] Dan. 7, 25; Apoc. 12, 14

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190 his] is *K* interficiet] -it *S* illos] eos *S* ubi] hubi *K* **191** crucifixus est] *tr. S* caluariae] -ium *S* locum] -o *K*, in apocalipsin; et dabo duobus testibus meis et profetabunt diebus mille cclx amictis saccos hii sunt duę oliuę in conspectu domini terrae stantes; et si quis eos uoluerit nocere ignis exiet de ore illorum et deuorauit inimicos eorum; et si quis uoluerit eos letere sic oportet eum occidi; hii habent potestatem claudendi celum ne pluat in diebus profetię ipsorum; et potestatem habent super aquas conuertendi eas in sanguinem et percutere terram omni plaga; quocienscumque uoluerint et cum finierint testamentum suum bestia quae ascensura est de abiso faciet aduesus *(sic)* illos bellum et uincet eos et occidet illos; et corpora eorum in platęis ciuitatis magnae quę uocatur spiritaliter sodoma et egiptus ubi et dominus eorum est crucifixus; et uidebunt de populis et tribus et linguis et gentibus corpora eorum per tres dies et dimedium; et corpora eorum non sinunt poni in monumentis; et inhabitates *(sic)* terram gaudebunt super illos et iucundabantur et munera mittunt inuicem; quoniam hii duo profetae cruciauerunt eos qui inhabitant terram; et post tres dies et dimedium spiritus uitae introiuit in eos et stabunt super pedes suos et timor magnus accedit super eos qui uidebant eos; et audierunt uocem magnam de celo dicente illis ascendite huc; et ascenderunt in celo in nube et uiderunt eos inimici eorum; et in illa hora factus est terraemotus magnus et decima pars ciuitatis cecidit; et occisa sunt de terraemotu nomina hominum uii milia et reli *(sic)* in timore missi sunt et dederunt gloriam deo celi; explicit de apocalipsin et incipit de priora leccione *add. S (Apoc. 11, 3-13)* **192** erit] -at *A* regnum] -i *K*, tempus *S* antichristi] anty- *K*, ante- *S* **193** tempus] -ore *K* id - dimidium[2]] *om. S* annis] *om. A* illis] his *A* **194** pluuiae] -a *K* erunt] -it *K* terram] -a *K* nec] et *S* nubes] -is *A* **195** discurrunt] non dis- *A*, discurrerunt *K* magna] in terra *add. A (cfr Luc. 4, 25)*, ualida *K (cfr l. 196 et Luc. 15, 14)* et[2]] *om. A* flumina] flumi *S* **195/196** et[3] - interibunt] *om. S* **195** et[3]] *om. A* **196** fame] -a *K* ualida] *om. S*

16

nec erit qui sepelliat eos. Et erit foetor et putrido super faciem terrae. Et tunc apparebit signum filii hominis in celo, crux sancta. Et tunc ueniet Christus et interficiet filium perditionis spiritu oris sui et iudicabit seculum per ignem et conburitur omne seculum subito in ictu oculi. Hoc est finis seculi et iudicii dies. Beati qui parati sunt et digni inuenti sunt in illa hora quando haec fiunt. Eritque regnum sanctorum et regnabunt cum Christo in secula seculorum. Amen.

198 et - hominis] Matth. 24, 30 **200 spiritu - sui**] II Thess. 2, 8 **201 in - oculi**] I Cor. 15, 52

197 erit[1]] est *A* sepelliat] -eliad *K*, -eliat *S* foetor] -dor *AK* putrido] *codd., intellege* putredo **198** filii] -ium *AK* **199** crux] quod est *add. S* et[1]] *om. S* **200** filium] -us *AK* spiritu] -um *K* iudicabit] -uit *S* **200/201** seculum - omne] *om. K* **201** et - seculum] *om. S* omne] -em *A* seculum] -o *K* in ictu] inicto *S* oculi] -is *S* **202** finis] -es *KS* iudicii dies] -iis dei *A*, *tr. S* **203** et - sunt] *om. A* hora] ora explicit *K*, die *S* **203/205** quando - amen] *om. K* **203** haec] hoc *A* fiunt] fient et *S* **204** regnum] *om. A* cum christo] *om. S*

Bibliography

Abbreviations

CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnhout: Brepols, 1966–.
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866–.
CLA	*Codices Latini Antiquiores*, ed. Elias A. Lowe, 12 vols. Oxford: Claredon Press, 1934–1971.
CPL	*Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, ed. Eligius Dekkers, Turnhout: Brepols, 1990.
CPPM	Clavis Patristica Pseudoepigraphorum Medii Aevi. Turnhout: Brepols, 1990–.
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. 1826–.
AA	Auctores antiquissimi
Cap.	Capitularia regum Francorum
EE	Epistulae
SS	Scriptores
SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. sep. ed.	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi
PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols., Paris, 1844–1855, 1862–1865.

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Eschatological Relativity. On the Scriptural Undermining of Apocalypses in Jewish Second Temple, Late Antique and Medieval Receptions of the *Book of Watchers*[1]

The First Book of Enoch *(third century BCE) is currently placed between apocryphal and canonical status. Its position at the end of the Old Testament mirrors and prefigures the Book of Revelation of the New Testament. The first part of this pentateuch, the* Book of Watchers *is named after angels who slept with human females, thus creating heroic, but uncontrollable giants. The protagonist Enoch visits the Beyond in order to bring these Watchers' pleas to God – thus creating the starting point of the so-called* Jenseitsreisen *("Journeys to the Beyond"). While the genre of* Jenseitsreisen *had its heyday in the high Middle Ages, the Book of Watchers is believed to have been unknown at the time, only to reappear in the fifteenth century CE in a version written in an Old-Ethiopian language. In my contribution to the volume, I wish to suggest another theory of reception. My aim is to show how the plot of the* Book of Watchers *was included in chronological religious material up to the thirteenth century CE, creating a long durée narrative about a culture, writing tradition and way of thinking that is subversive to salvific history and its dogmatic eschatology.*

> If the languages were already differentiated after Noah, why not before?
> It is a chink in the armour of the myth of Babel.
> Umberto Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*[2]

> Sometimes when people piss me off,
> I ask myself, "What would God do?"
> ... Then I try to drown them.
> *The Godless and Irreligious* Facebook group[3]

1 Enoch, the Prediluvian Scribe

The *Ethiopian* or *First Book of Enoch* is currently placed between apocryphal and canonical status. The reason for this ambiguity is that it was not acknowledged by

1 Luckily, no one has to write alone; there are always partners in sacrilege. That is why, for corrections and helpful suggestions to this article, I would like to thank: Daniel McDonald, Matthias Meyer, Justin Vollmann, Christian Zolles and Lena Zudrell.

2 Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, 10.

3 Meme posted by funnyatheism/fb, April 15, 2017.

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the Eastern and Western Catholic Church,[4] but included at the end of the Old Testament in the Bible of the Orthodox Ethiopian Church. In this position at the rear of the Old Testament, the *First Book of Enoch* mirrors and prefigures the Book of Revelation of the New Testament. Structurally mirroring Moses' Pentateuch, the contemporary form consists of five parts: (1) *The Book of Watchers* (1 Enoch 1–36), (2b) *The Book of Parables* (1 Enoch 37–71), (3) *The Astronomical Book* (1 Enoch 72–82) (4) *The Book of Dream Visions* (1 Enoch 83–90), and (5) *The Epistle of Enoch* (1 Enoch 91–108). For a long time, the only manuscripts transmitting the text were written in the fifteenth-century Old-Ethiopian language Ge'ez. In 1952, however, archeological findings in the Qumran caves showed that the original *Book of Enoch* has to be dated back to the Second Temple era, with some of the texts being as old as the third century BCE. The oldest Aramaic texts are those of the *Book of Watchers*, which in the original Enoch-pentateuch was followed by (2a) *The Book of Giants*, presumably of similar age. In Christian times, supposedly in the first century CE,[5] the *Book of Giants* was replaced by the *Book of Parables*, an "allusive retelling"[6] of the *Book of Watchers*. Along with fragments of all parts of the original Enoch-pentateuch, there were other findings in Qumran that Florentino García Martínez collected as the so-called *Book of Noah*.[7] Only nine short fragments of this book exist, but they are closely linked to the original *Watchers/Giants*-plot.

The *Book of Watchers* is named after angels – former watchers of heaven and sentinels stationed to guard the earthly paradise – who slept with human females, thus creating heroic but uncontrollable giants. These are the Nephilim (הנפלים) of the Torah:

> (1) And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, (2) that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. [...] (4) There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. (5) And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (6) And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. (7) And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.[8]

Equivalent to Genesis, God in the *Book of Enoch* destroys the children of the Watchers by drowning them in the Deluge. An otherworldly place of penalty for the angels

4 For the most relevant texts leading to this refusal, especially the Augustinian ones, see Charles, "Introduction."

5 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 254–256; Knibb, "The Date of the Parables of Enoch."

6 Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 59.

7 *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. García Martínez, 263–264.

8 Genesis 6:1-7; King James Bible.

is installed – but not yet inhabited.[9] The *Book of Watchers* tells the story of how Enoch becomes the middleman between the condemned and God, travelling through the Beyond to seek forgiveness, first for the angels. As far as one can reconstruct the plot of the *Book of Giants*, Enoch does the same for their children, the Nephilim. Regarding this aspect, the *Watchers*/*Giants*-complex is a twofold eschatology: on the one hand, Enoch sees pictures of the Last Days during his otherworldly journeys (*Jenseitsreisen*);[10] on the other, the plot itself culminates in the Deluge, the first apocalypse that wiped out a corrupted creation in a prefiguration of the final Judgement Day.

Enoch is Noah's great-great-grandson, the protagonist and (for most parts) first-person narrator of this text. At the beginning of the text, he is given two different mandates: first, he is asked by a godly authority to tell the Watchers of their condemnation; second, these Watchers ask Enoch to travel to the Beyond in order to plead for God's forgiveness. The decision to choose Enoch as twofold middleman is well reasoned:

> (1) And before everything Enoch had been hidden, and none of the sons of man knew where he was hidden, or where he was, or what had happened. (2) And all his doings (were) with the Holy Ones and with the Watchers in his days. (3) And I Enoch was blessing the Great Lord and the King of Eternity, and behold the Watchers of Heaven called to me, Enoch the scribe, [or: called me "Enoch the Scribe"; M. D.] and [they: the Holy Ones; M. D.][11] said to me: (4) 'Enoch,

9 At this place of penalty, Enoch only sees captivated stars, substitutes for the yet to be punished Watchers. The time at which the Watchers will be taken to their torture is unclear. It is even possible to imagine them still on earth. For this, see Däumer, "'[Er] bezeugte gegen sie alle [...] – und schrieb das Ganze.'"

10 The *Jenseitsreisen* ("Journeys to the Beyond") are the core of the so called *Visionsliteratur* ("vision literature") that Peter Dinzelbacher described as an important sub-group of late-antique and medieval literature (see Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter*; Dinzelbacher, "Einführung"). Benz, *Gesicht und Schrift*, showed just recently that it is much easier to treat *Jenseitsreisen* as a separate genre, for there are enough markers to prove their autonomy as a strongly contoured group of texts. In Benz's study, the *Book of Watchers* marks the starting point of this enduring genre, reaching from the Second Temple era up to its most famous late-medieval exponent, Dante's *Commedia* (1307–1321). For the genre of *Jenseitsreisen*, see also Däumer, "Vision."

11 The identification of the pronouns referred to in 12:3 is problematic. There is certainly a second pronoun, which is understood by most translators to refer to the Watchers (for a second English translation in that manner, see *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch*, trans. Charles, 27–28). Yet a reading that sees the Watchers as the speakers of the following words makes no sense, because they are not very likely to be the ones telling Enoch to condemn them. That is why there has to be a pronominal change between the act in indirect speech of calling Enoch "the Scribe", and the act in direct speech of the condemnation. The German translator Andreas Gottlieb Hoffman writes "Und siehe! die Wächter nannten mich Henoch, den Schreiber. Dann sagte *er* zu mir: [...]" (*Das Buch Henoch*, trans. Hoffmann, 9; accentuation: M.D.), thus implicating a speech by God or probably one of his messenger angels. For me it seems far more reasonable to see the Holy Ones of 12:2 as the speakers of the condemnation, as they are the second group that Enoch spends his time with during his retreat. This is in agreement with the most recent German translation by Siegfried Uhlig, which leaves open the grammatical possibility that the pronoun refers to the Holy Ones: "und siehe, die Wächter riefen

> scribe of righteousness, go, inform the Watchers of Heaven who left the high heaven and the eternal place, and have corrupted themselves with the women, and have done as sons of men do, and have taken wives for themselves, and have become completely corrupt on the earth. (5) They will have on earth neither peace nor forgiveness of sin (6) for they will not rejoice in their sons. The slaughter of their beloved ones they will see, and over the destruction of their sons they will lament and petition forever. But they will have neither mercy nor peace.'[12]

Between 1 Enoch 12:2 and 12:3, the mode of narration changes from third- to first-person, just at the moment when Enoch is called "the Scribe". There is a certain metanarrative logic to this change, as Enoch can only be the writer of his own words after he has been declared a scribe. Still, this declaration concerns more than just Enoch's vocation to be a legitimate first-person narrator. Later, the semi-magical power of writing enables Enoch to cross the transcendent border: he writes down the pleas of the Watchers and then reads them aloud at the river Dan, where he falls asleep and is lifted to heaven (1 Enoch 13:7–8): Enoch's ability to write is his key to the Beyond and therefore essential for his second mandate, begging for mercy in the name of the Watchers.

Nevertheless, one might ask: why is Enoch (and only Enoch) able to write in the first place and who taught him to write? The text of 12:3 is not clear about that. It can be read as "[T]he Watchers of heaven called *to* me, Enoch the scribe",[13] meaning that God made Enoch the first scribe of men and that he is addressed by the condemned angels according to his God-given function. The other interpretation is: "[T]he Watchers of heaven called me 'Enoch the Scribe'", meaning that the Watchers conferred upon Enoch the title of "Scribe" via a performative speech act. Seen in this way, the Watchers have taught Enoch the art of writing and are now declaring his education to be finished in giving him this approbation. That would also explain what "doings [he had] [...] with the Watchers" before they summoned him to be their defence lawyer in the Beyond.

Looking at the description of the Watchers' sin, a strong argument for prioritising the second interpretation (i.e. the recognition of the condemned angels as

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mich, Henoch den Schreiber, und *sie* sprachen zu mir: [...]" (*Das äthiopische Henochbuch*, trans. Uhlig, 533–34; accentuation: M. D.). Another possibility would be George W.E. Nickelsburg's approach, which sees two different groups of watchers between the indirect and the direct speech: "And behold, the watchers of the Great Holy One called me, Enoch the scribe, and said to me, 'Enoch, righteous scribe, go and say to the watchers of heaven [...] , [y]ou will have no peace or forgiveness.'" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 234) This seems to be grammatically possible, but, considered from a narratological point, it strikes one as weird that a narrator who has just introduced a group of condemned angels named Watchers should contrast them with heavenly creatures that are also called Watchers. This would mean that the heavenly angels would be the "Watchers of the Great Holy One" and the ones living on earth the "Watchers of Heaven". Despite the hermeneutics of the *lectio difficilior*, this seems to me to be completely counter-intuitive – even for a text that is more than 2300 years old.

12 1 Enoch 12:1-6. *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, trans. Knibb, 92.

13 My accentuation; *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, trans. Knibb, 92.

Enoch's teachers) can be found. In contrast to the plot of Genesis, the *Book of Watchers* portrays their sin as being not only sexual in nature – indeed, it is analogue to that committed by Prometheus in Greek myth:[14] the Watchers are condemned for the things they taught mankind without God's consent.

The list of this forbidden knowledge includes many skills that are clearly damnable: the knowledge to forge both weapons (signifying warfare), and jewellery (signifying vanity) as well as the art of colouring the eyes (signifying prostitution – 1 Enoch 8:1-2). Beside these skills, there are also elements of intellectual knowledge that are difficult to translate from the Ge'ez. Translation is further confounded by the fact that the relevant fragment of the original text (4QEnoch^{b} [4Q202, 4QEn^{b} ar], Col. III)[15] – like most of the Qumran findings – is heavily deteriorated.

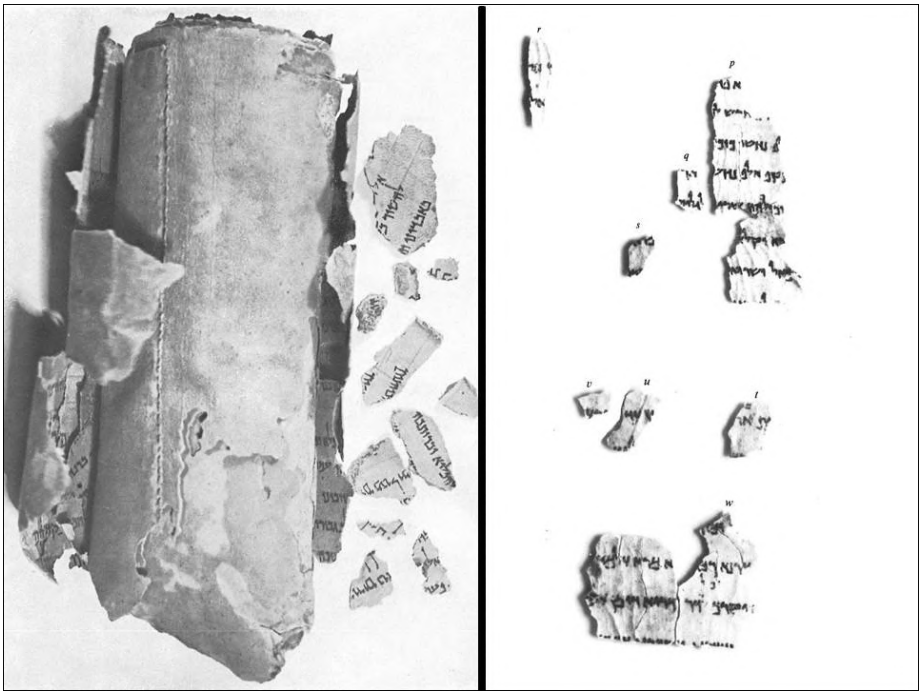

Fig. 1 left: Qumran scroll in early stage of unrolling; **right:** 4QEnoch^{b}, Col. III, 1–16[16]

14 "The oldest version of the [Prometheus] story is found in works of Hesiod (*Theogony*, 507–616; *Works and Days*, 42–105)" (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 192–193) that date to before 700 BCE.

15 All editions of the Qumran texts have different systems to name the fragments. I give all the designations according to the format "(ed. Martínez [ed. Maier, ed. Milik])".

16 Left illustration from *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University*, ed. Sukenik, fig. 13; right illustration from *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*, ed. Milik, plate VII and VIII.

In the list of forbidden gifts brought by the Watchers there is a Ge'ez word that basically means "characters/symbols/signs". The Qumran fragments of 4QEnoch[b], Col. III retain parts of this original list as well as the direct textual surroundings, but have a gap where the original word for these "characters/symbols/signs" would be. Knibb interpolates "portents", referring to a Greek version of the text, dating from the sixth century CE.[17] The German translator Siegfried Uhlig is more careful and uses the neutral term *Zeichen* and merely assumes *vielleicht Sternendeutung* – "probably astrology".[18] In his commentary on the *Book of Enoch*, George W.E. Nickelsburg finally proposes that the original list had been formulaic in the style of "{name of the Watcher} taught the signs of {X}", reducing the "characters/symbols/signs" to a mere introductory element to the astronomical skills.[19] Combined, however, with the less obscure passages which show that Enoch was personally educated by the Watchers and most probably taught the art of writing, it seems much more reasonable to read the "characters/symbols/signs" in the list of forbidden gifts as "scriptural characters". Following this lead, the fire that the Promethean Watchers brought to earth was the dangerous ability to write.

The early *Book of Watchers* reception – documents that are much older than the Greek version that lead to Knibb's reading – proves that the semantically narrow translation as "scriptural characters" is valid. The strongest indications in support of Enoch having received writing lessons from the condemned angels are found in the so-called *Book of Jubilees*, only around 150 years younger than the *Book of Watchers* itself and also part of the Qumran findings:[20]

> (17) And he [Enoch; M. D.] was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book that men might know the seasons of the years according to the order of their separate months. (18) And he was the first to write a testimony, and he testified to the sons of men among the generations of the earth[.][21]

Enoch is portrayed as the first scribe and astronomer, with his knowledge of the stars being a result of the skill of writing. As the *Book of Enoch* (especially the *Book of Astronomy*) was the most important astronomical work of its time, it is also very probable to assume that the book referred to towards the end of this passage means

17 *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, trans. Knibb, 17.

18 *Das äthiopische Henochbuch*, trans. Uhlig, 522. See 1 Enoch 8,6 in *Buch Henoch*, trans. Hoffmann, 9, where it is also translated as "Zeichen".

19 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 199. Already translated in a similar way in *Books of Enoch*, ed. Milik, 171 and *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated. The Qumran Texts in English*, ed. and trans. García Martínez; trans. Watson. 249.

20 *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, ed. and trans. García Martínez, 238–245.

21 Jubilees 4:17–18. *The Book of Jubilees*, trans. Charles, 53. See also 11QJubilees [11Q12, 11QJub], Frag. 3: "(1) [in the fifth wee]k [of the fourth year of the Jubilee and called him Enoch] (2) He was the first (person) [to learn writing"] (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, ed. and trans. García Martínez, 241).

the *Book of Enoch* itself, showing that Enoch's education was, in fact, considered to be the precondition for the text's very existence.

This precondition is ultimately the crux of the matter. If scriptural characters were part of the forbidden gifts the Watchers brought to earth, and the *Book of Enoch* was written by Enoch in these sinful characters, then the logical consequence is a major moral problem concerning the text itself, for it is a religious text that declares itself to be predicated upon sin. In addition, as all of Judeo-Christian religion is conditioned by sin, it tells the story of a corrupted medium, of script being the transmitter of a sinfulness that is based on but culturally more elaborate than that of Adam and Eve.

Arriving at this point does not imply a modern, overly-sceptical, non-mythical and thus ahistorical logic – especially since the semi-biblical *Book of Enoch* is aware of its own problematic status. In the Ge'ez *Book of Parables* – the replacement for *The Book of Giants* in the present Enoch-pentateuch – the moral implications of the sinful script taught by the condemned angels are made explicit:

> (8) And the fourth [Watcher; M. D.] (is) Penemue: this one showed them all the secrets of their wisdom. (9) He taught men the art of writing with ink and paper, and through this many have gone astray from eternity to eternity, and to this day (10) for men were not created for this, that they should confirm their faith like this with pen and ink. (11) For men were created no differently from the angels, that they might remain righteous and pure, and death, which destroys everything, would not have touched them; but through this knowledge of theirs they are being destroyed, and through this power it (death) is consuming me.[22]

In this retelling of the Watcher plot, the bringing of a sinful script to earth by the Watchers is outlined as fact. Furthermore, it is told in the words of the first-person narrator, Enoch, who describes the use of the Watchers' script as the reason why death came to earth – which again comes close to the committing of the original sin. It will be death – in the form of the Deluge – that consumes all humankind and among them the narrator himself, who at this point cannot know that he (according to Gen. 5:21–24) will be gathered to heaven while still in his body and thus never experience this punishment.[23] At this point, Enoch – in accordance with the pseudepigraphical status of the text and thus with the limitations of a first-person narrator – seems to be entangled in the snares of his own text, intertwined with scripture, and therefore intertwined with sin. It is a sin that is even more severe for Enoch, since his name, חֲנוֹךְ (*chanoch*), means "the experienced, the profound, the teacher".[24] As a matter of fact, Enoch was the first human being who was taught the sinful art of writing by the condemned angels, and – very much like the source of an infection – spread this Promethean fire amongst prediluvian humankind. In

22 1 Enoch 69:8-11. *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, trans. Knibb, 161.
23 According to the Midrashim, Enoch will become Enoch-Metatron, Metatron being his name as "Prince of the World", after his non-death. Bin Gorion, *Die Sagen der Juden*, ed. Gorion, 125.
24 Von Ranke Graves and Patai, *Hebräische Mythologie*, 132.

other words: in the *Book of Watchers*, Enoch is the promoter of the first apocalypse, although, according to Genesis, he is the one who got away.

2 The Scriptural Undermining of the Deluge…

2.1 …in the Qumran Fragments

Both Enoch's ability to write and the fact that he *has* written the original *First Book of Enoch* are marked by sin. As a result, it is no surprise that we can find traces in the fragments of the *Book of Giants* that tell us of God's plan to douse this fiery scripture along with everything in the Deluge:

> (1) The book […] (2) *Blank* … (3) Copy the second tablet of the l[etter …] (4) written by the hand of Enoch, the celebrated scribe
> (1) […and] they washed the tablet to er[ase …] (2) […] and the water rose above the [tab]let […] (3) […] and they lifted the tablet from the water, the tablet which […] (4) […] … […] to them all […][25]

It is hard to be certain about the exact sequence of actions, but one can nonetheless grasp that the extinction of the Watchers' sons involves erasing Enoch's writings from the artefact upon which they were inscribed. It is impossible to tell what happened to the tablets if we rely on the *Book of Giants* exclusively – only the phrase "and they lifted the tablet from the water" seems to indicate that the destruction was prevented, or at least that someone tried to prevent it. That said, other texts of the Qumran Enoch-complex might help solve this riddle. The fragments of the *Book of Noah*[26] tell of the re-establishment of human culture after the Deluge. The astonishing characteristic of this re-establishment is that it seems to be closely linked to the Watchers' sinful deed of original cultural endowment before the Flood:

> (14) The waters will cease […] they will destroy from the high places; all of them will come (15) … […] (16) […] … […] and all of [th]em will be rebuilt. His deed will be like that of the Watchers. (17) Instead of his voice […] they will establish his foundation upon him. Its sin and [its] gu[ilt][27]

It is not clear, who "he" is; the only thing certain is that he delivers a sinful and guilt-stained foundation to the new, insufficiently cleansed human culture. "He", the vice-Prometheus, plants a second nucleus of evil in the same way the Watchers

25 4QBook of Ginatsa [4Q203, 1Q EnGiantsa ar]; *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, and trans. ed. García Martínez, 260, and 2Q26 [2QEnGiants ar]; *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, eds. Garciá Martínez and Tigchelaar, 221.
26 *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, ed. García Martínez, 263–264.
27 4Q534 [4QNoah ar], col. II; *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, eds. García Martínez and Tigchelaar, 1071–1073.

did. It is possible that the sinful protagonist of this text is one of Noah's sons, for there is another fragment that describes Noah's knowledge of "three books" – most probably parts of the pentateuch created by his great-great-grandfather Enoch. These books seem to be the cardinal point of a prophecy of someone who will be empowered to cross over to the Beyond, just like Enoch's writing enabled him to journey to the Beyond:

> (4) In his youth he will be … [… like a m]an who knows nothi[ng, until] the moment in which (5) [he will] know the three books. *Blank* (6) Then he will acquire wisdom and will know … […] … of visions, in order to reach the upper sphere.[28]

Besides, this fragment also shows that the already mentioned connection of script and transcendent threshold-crossing has not disappeared, but instead lies dormant until the prophesied gets hold of Enoch's books. By the logic of salvific history, the dormant power of this script has to lead to a second (relative) apocalypse, which, following the narrative of Genesis, is the *confusio linguarum* caused by the tower of Babel (Gen. 15:5–8).

Umberto Eco sees the Babylonian *confusio linguarum* as the starting point and main motivator of Europe's *Search for the Perfect Language*.[29] This search starts with the feeling of loss that the myth of Babel implicates – the loss of the universal language that Eve and Adam spoke in Paradise. With knowledge of the *Watchers/Giants*-complex, however, the route from the language of Paradise to the Babylonian Confusion is not a direct one, and the destruction of human communication is not limited to spoken language: before the *confusio linguarum* there had been a *pernicies scripti*. This also gives an answer to Eco's bewilderment about the "chink in the armour of the myth of Babel".[30] The differentiation of languages that already existed in the generation of Noah (see Gen. 10:31–32) seems to weaken the significance of the *confusio linguarum*. But the point is that it coexists with a unified mode of writing. The Enochian script had survived the Deluge against God's will, and had to be scattered in a second apocalyptical step.

There is, of course, a problem concerning the media at hand, as the Enochian heritage is written language while the story of Babel deals with the spoken word. Yet it seems that one is metonymically connected to the other; while the Babylonian destruction of the universal spoken language is absolute, a scriptural language, like the Watchers brought to earth, is more resilient and able to create artefacts that can be found in later times. Thus, it will always be able to cause a revival or re-infection of the latent spoken word. The difference in medium is mainly a question of poten-

28 4Q534 [4QNoah ar], col. I; *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, eds. García Martínez and Tigchelaar, 1071.
29 Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*.
30 Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, 10.

tial endurance: Babel shows that the spoken language is not able to endure, whereas the written word does.

And so, the story of Enoch's writings continues, even after this second major cultural caesura. Enoch's books re-appear in Qumran fragments of a Genesis apocryphon concerning Abram's exile in Egypt. Here, we can be absolutely sure that Enoch's writings survived the fall of the tower, as well as the Deluge:

> (23) [...] After these five years (24) three men of the princes of Egypt [came...] from Pharaoh Zoan on account of my [Abram's; M. D.] [words] and of my wife. They gave me (25) [many presents expecting from me] goodness, wisdom and truth. I read in front of them the [book] of the words of Enoch.[31]

The first post-Babel protagonist, Abram (only after Isaac's birth will he be called Abraham), is known in Egypt for his wisdom and the beauty of his wife Sarai (later: Sarah). In response to the Pharaoh's demand to prove his wisdom, Abram does not speak his own words, but reads from the *Book of Enoch*. Sarai's beauty will lead to her abduction by Pharaoh Zoan, as told in Gen. 12:10–20. The reading of Enoch's words leads to their dissemination in North Africa, thus creating a kind of provenance myth for the lasting importance of the *Book of Enoch* in the Orthodox Ethiopian Church. It is proof that Enoch's books are highly valued by post-diluvian mankind, and that their auratic power seems to be unbroken despite the *confusio linguarum*. The second step of the relative apocalypse – relative, as it just *almost* wipes out human culture, but also relative as in relation to the absolute Apocalypse – seems to have been as inefficient as the first one when it comes to destroying the enduring power of Enoch's writing.

Also, the implications of this endurance cannot be underestimated on an eschatological scale. The reappearance of Enoch's books in the Qumran fragments uncovers a general will to be affiliated with the prediluvian culture through the power of a script whose existence defies the will of God. Both God-willed caesurae, the Deluge as well as the *confusio linguarum*, were not taken as absolute by writers and collectors of the Qumran fragments. What is told in their Enoch-collection is a myth of human hardiness, of an urge to defy and – more importantly – successfully defy the extinction of human culture. Reading the *Book of Enoch* as the mirror-image and prefiguration of the Book of Revelation (and thus acknowledging its eschatological meaning), this human cultural durability, enduring one relative apocalypse after another, forms an image of subversive continuity and an undermining of apocalypses that only the final and absolute Judgment Day can end.

31 1QGenesisApocryphon [1QapGen], col. XIX, 23–25; *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, ed. García Martínez, 232.

2.2 …in Chronological Religious Writings up to the Middle Ages

Up to this point, the tale of scriptural continuity seems to be limited to the Qumran fragments and its reception in the Jewish Second Temple era, or, taking into account the *The Book of Parables*, early Christian times. In the following, I want to draw attention to some examples that show that the thought of subversive continuity of the *Book of Watchers* inspired a *long durée* narrative of anti-salvific subversion reaching (at least) up to the Middle Ages.

The earliest trace is again to be found in the *Book of Jubilees*. The story of Arpachshad, the first child born after the Flood[32] and thus a symbol of the first post-diluvian generation, is told as follows:

> (1) In the twenty-ninth jubilee, in the first week, in the beginning thereof Arpachshad took to himself a wife and her name was Rasu'eja, the daughter of Susan, the daughter of Elam, and she bore him a son in the third year in this week, and he called his name Kainam. (2) And the son grew, and his father taught him writing, and he went to seek for himself a place where he might seize for himself a city. (3) And he found a writing which former (generations) had carved on the rock, and he read what was thereon, and he transcribed it and sinned owing to it; for it contained the teaching of the Watchers in accordance with which they used to observe the omens of the sun and moon and stars in all the signs of heaven. (4) And he wrote it down and said nothing regarding it; for he was afraid to speak to Noah about it lest he should be angry with him on account of it.[33]

It is of critical importance that the rediscovery of the Watchers' heritage is combined with a story of script learning: Arpachshad, the first *chanoch* (teacher) of post-diluvian mankind, teaches his son Kainam, who leaves his parents to build his own city; Kainam discovers the teachings of the Watchers, most probably those his ancestor Enoch described and the Deluge had not been able to erase. Based on these words, Kainam is responsible for resurrecting a culture of sin. The latent writing carved in stone is reactivated and infects parts of the second post-diluvian generation, and Kainam must, as a conequence, hide his transcription from the eyes of his great-grandfather Noah.[34] In other words, Kainam starts a subversive subculture

32 Noah sires Sem before, and Sem sires Arpachshad after the Flood (Gen. 10:21–24).

33 Jub. 4:17–18; *Book of Jubilees*, trans. Charles, 53.

34 Noah's insinuated hostility towards Enoch's writing could be one possible explanation for the very strange tale of Moses' destruction of the first stone panels he received on the Sinai. In Exodus 34:1 God says to Moses: "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon *these* tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest." The reason for the destruction of these first panels remains unclear; that Moses destroyed them because of the Israelite's apostasy is merely one possibility. Could it be that these panels were written in the wrong language, in Enoch's script, learned from the sinful Watchers? It is also possible that Moses did not dare to give this kind of ambivalent writing to his people after he saw their fickleness. This would explain why God, instead of duplicating, inscribes the plates a second time, now using the new post-diluvian script.

that arises from the writings of the *Book of Watchers* – and thus proves the extent to which God's first apocalypse was undermined by the resistant power of writing.

In this case, the rediscovery of prediluvian culture is explicitly linked to sin. But later elements of the *longue durée* narrative lose this explicitness. In contrast, there are even narrators that seem to be eager to be affiliated with prediluvian culture. Perhaps the most important element of this diffuse tale of human continuation was written at the end of the first century CE by Flavius Josephus in his *Antiquitates Iudaicae*:

> These [the sons of Seth], being all of virtuous character, inhabited the same country without dissension and in prosperity, meeting with no untoward incident to the day of their death; they also discovered the science of the heavenly bodies and their orderly array. Moreover, to prevent their discoveries from being lost to mankind and perishing before they became known – Adam having predicted a destruction of the universe, at one time by a violent fire and at another by a mighty deluge of water – they erected two pillars, one of brick and the other of stone, and inscribed these discoveries on both; so that, if the pillar of brick disappeared in the deluge, that of stone would remain to teach men what was graven thereon and to inform them that they had also erected one of brick. It exists to this day in the land of Seiris.[35]

Seth is the third child of Adam and Eve, the שֵׁת, *schet* (substitute) for Abel, who was murdered by Cain. His descendants, the sons of Seth, constitute the nine generations between the expulsion from Paradise and the Deluge.[36] This chain of generations ends with Noah and includes Enoch. The description of the sons of Seth having "discovered the science of the heavenly bodies and their orderly array" presents the astronomical knowledge gained by Enoch on his Beyond-travels as an acquisition of the whole prediluvian lineage. Warned by Adam's prophecies, this lineage defies the God-willed erasure of their culture: they built the two pillars (one against destruction by fire, one against destruction by water) and inscribed them with the astronomical teachings, most probably those taught by the Watchers. Thus the Enochian scripture is saved for generations to come. Flavius Josephus tells us that one pillar, namely the one meant to endure a watery apocalypse, has been found in Seiris (Syria) and thus affirms that the transfer of prediluvian culture to his time was successful. In no way does he demur in this matter; in fact, he emphasises that the sons of Seth were "all of virtuous character" and that the reclamation of prediluvian culture is desirable. That means that he either does not know about the sinful nature of this former culture (which is unlikely), or that he tacitly appreciates this tale of human endurance bypassing the Deluge.

35 Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Iudaicae*, 1. 69–71; translation: *Jewish Antiquities*, trans. by Thackeray, 33.

36 The Torah counts nine men as Seth's descendants, each of them representing a prediluvian generation: Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah; see Genesis 5:1–32.

In either case, his tale of cultural transmission enjoyed a revival in the high and late Middle Ages, owing mainly to its inclusion in the *Aurora*, a widely read Bible in Latin verse, written in the last quarter of the twelfth century by Petrus Riga. Deviating from Flavius Josephus, Petrus Riga does not ascribe the erection of the pillars to the sons of Seth. Instead, he includes the tale after having listed the seven generations descending from Cain[37] (v. 455–468). Between Genesis 4:21 and Genesis 4:22, after telling of Lamech's son Iubal, who "was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ" (Gen. 4:21), Petrus Riga inserts the following:

Et quia nouit Adam primum dixisse futurum
Iudicium duplex – scilicet ignis aque –
In geminis artem scripsit posuitque columpnis;
Extitit hec laterum, marmoris illa fuit,
Vt non hec per aquam pereat, non illa per ignem;
Si sit deficiens una, sit una manens.
Vt nobis Iosephi declarant scripta, columpnam
Marmoream tellus Syrica seruat adhuc.

Because he [Iubal] knew that the first Adam had prophesied the coming
of a twofold judgment – more precisely, by fire and by water –
he placed and wrote his art on twin pillars.
One of them loomed, made of brick, the other one he made of marble,
so that the one could not be worn away by water, the other not by fire,
and if the one would perish, the other one would sustain.
As the writings of [Flavius] Josephus explain to us, the pillar of marble
is, until nowadays, protected by the soil of Syria.[38]

The protagonist of these verses is no longer one of Seth's lineage but Iubal, the musician among the Cainites. He acts because of a prophecy "the first Adam" made.[39] This "first" implies a second: in this case, Jesus Christ, who is – most influentially, by Augustine[40] – called the "second Adam". Thereby, the implication draws parallels between Adam's prophecy of the Deluge and Jesus' prophecy of the Last Judgment (Mt. 24:1–36; Mk. 13:1–32; Lk. 21:5–36), thus emphasising the eschatological prefiguration of one apocalypse by the other. The overall result of the citation of Flavius is the incorporation of a non-biblical tale of subversive endurance into the

37 According to Genesis 4:17–24, these generations, living in the land of Nod, were: Cain, Enoch (not to be confused with the Enoch in Seth's line), Irad, Mehujael, Metusael, Lamech (also not to be confused with Noah's father). Lamech married twice: Zillah bore him a son, Tublacain, and a daughter, Naamah; Adah bore him Iabal and Iubal, the latter being the creator of the pillars in the above-cited verses.
38 *Aurora Petri Rigae Biblia Versificata,* ed. Beichner, v. 469–476; translation M. D.
39 *Adam primum dixisse futurum* could alternatively be translated as "Adam had first prophesied"; but I think that the translation above – literally – makes more sense.
40 The fourteenth chapter of *De fide, spe et caritate* is about *Adam secundum* ("the second Adam"); see Augustine, *Enchiridion*, trans. Mitterer, 437–443.

text of a rhymed Bible bearing at least semi-canonical authority. To accomplish this revaluation of Flavius Josephus' tale, Petrus Riga had to change its moral implications: on the one hand, in the *Jewish Antiquities*, the scripture rescued from God's wrath is astronomical, most probably the words of Enoch, which should have been destroyed; on the other, the people depositing them for post-diluvian mankind are the morally sound descendants of Seth. Because of this ambivalence, Petrus Riga changes both the sender and the content of the prediluvian message. In his version, the morally corrupt Cainites worked for the preservation of their culture, and it was Iubal, the mostly harmless musician, that hid the knowledge of his art in and on the pillar. Iubal is not said to infect post-diluvian mankind with any kind of sinful writing or astronomical teachings; he only secures the continuity of his own private art instead. Thus the morally questionable tale of the resistant power of forbidden human writing is reduced to a less problematic myth of musical origin. Being deposited by one of the morally inferior Cainites, the retrieval of the prediluvian artefacts seems to be much less desirable.

This raises the question of Petrus Riga's motivation for including this tale at all. He obviously saw some value in the story he found in the *Jewish Antiquities* – but he also understood its dubious moral implications. As a consequence, he limited the story to a less hazardous myth, instead of excluding the element of human endurance altogether. In other words: to Petrus Riga, the statement that human culture *does* endure seems to have been more important than the question which elements of the old culture survived.

The tale in this form is thus embedded in a semi-authoritative Christian text, though it is now rendered morally harmless, because its original message is only completely understandable if one knows and considers its intertextual references. At the same time, the embedding facilitated the extrapolation of the story within the frame of Christian historical traditions. Only about half a century later it was revived in a comparably authoritative genre that introduced the myth to the broad audience of the German-speaking courts of the twelfth and thirteenth century: it reappears namely in Rudolf von Ems' *Weltchronik*. This chronicle (finished 1254) is the first German-language text depicting the world's history from its creation to the present. Rudolf von Ems includes the tale and – following his main source, the *Historia Scholastica* of Petrus Comestor (finished 1173) – places it in yet another setting, once again disguising its original sense, while reuniting it with its long-lost source, the tale of the Watchers.

In dirre zit begunden sehin,	At this time,
als wir die warheit hoeren jehin,	as we heard it truthfully said,
von Seth die Gotis sun, die man,	the God-sons of Seth, the male ones, began
der menschen kint, die tohtern, an,	to look at the children of mankind, the daughters,
die burtic warin von Cain,	who were descended from Cain.
und gesselletin sich zouzin,	They joined with them,
so das sie an den stunden	so that at this time

kindennes begunden	they bore children,
bi jenen dort und hie bi disin,	there, at their place, and here, with these,
hie wouhsin lange und groze risin ...	huge and mighty giants grew up.[41]

At first glance, Rudolf merely translates Petrus Comestor's version of the Genesis passage (Gen. 6:1–4), which reads:

> *Cum coepissent homines multiplicari super terram, viderunt filii Dei, id est Seth, religiosi, filias hominum, id est de stirpe Cain, et victi concupiscentia, acceperunt eas uxores, et nati sunt inde gigantes.*
>
> At the time humankind began to spread over the earth, the sons of God, these are the ones of Seth, the pious ones, looked at the daughters of men, these are the ones of Cain's tribe, and they were vanquished by desire, they took them as wives and thus the giants were born.[42]

The Genesis plot had already been altered in significant ways in the *Historia Scholastica*. For example, it is not the liaison between the Watchers of Heaven and human women that leads to the birth of the Nephilim. Instead, the descendants of Seth fall for the women of the Cainites. Although this would convert this sin into a solely human failure, Petrus Comestor still calls the sons of Seth *filii Dei*, and Rudolf, accordingly, *Gotis sun* ("sons of God"). In Genesis 6:2–3, however, this is the term used for the sinful angels. In opposition to the *filii Dei*, Petrus Comestor emphasises the Cainites as *filias hominum*, which Rudolf translates to *menschen kint* ("children of humankind"). These expressions are biblical, but their use here is incongruous, because the original angels/mankind encounter is now presented as a purely human affair; they thus perpetuate the idea of an angelic-human liaison, without actually adhering to the biblical version. Of course, the textual surface Rudolf adopts from the *Historia Scholastica* is quite transparent, given that it is at least peculiar that the liaison between two human tribes results in the birth of giants. Both passages can be described as palimpsests, in which the angels of Genesis are frailly overwritten with the Seth-tribe, allowing the former to shine through the textual surface as an ulterior foil.

However, Rudolf's palimpsest goes further than his source. In the oldest complete transmission, the Werningeroder manuscript,[43] the verses describing the after-

41 *Rudolfs von Ems Weltchronik*, ed. Ehrismann, v. 645–654; translation M. D.

42 *The Historye of the Patriarks*, ed. Taguchi, 48 [translation by M. D.].

43 Rudolf von Ems' *Weltchronik* is preserved in over 100 fragments and complete manuscripts. There are four text families: 1. *Autornahe Fassungen* (versions close to the author's original text); 2. *Planvolle Zusammenstellungen* (systematic compilations); 3. *Bearbeitungen der autornahen Fassungen* (revised versions of the author's original text); 4. Free compilations. The Werningeroder is the oldest complete manuscript of the first category, written around 1300, and therefore as close as possible to the archetype of Rudolf's work. The verses quoted above differ strongly in other manuscripts and, to some extent, these changes seem to be more than just random in nature. In the beautifully illustrated Donaueschingen manuscript (writing and illustration finished 1375), for

math of the liaison between the tribe of Seth (aka. angels) and the Cainites (aka. human females) are told using a similar technique, in this case for the purpose of including plot-elements other than those in Genesis:

sunde und suntlichir sin	Also, sin and sinful pursuits
begunde wahsen ouh an in,	began to increase among them.
mit kunstlichir liste kraft	By the power of skillful intellect
wohs ouh ir liste meisterschaft	the mastery of their competences grew
an manegir kunst und wisheit.	in many arts and teachings.
nu hat Adam in vor geseit	Now, Adam had prophesised
das al du welt muoste zergan	that the whole world would perish
mit wazzir und ouh ende han	by water and meet its demise
mit fure: fur die forhte	by fire. Against this fear
ir kunst mit vlize worhte	their skill raised with diligence
zwo sule, der eini ziegelin	two pillars, one made of brick
was und du ander steinin	the other made of marble-stone,
von marmil, hertir danne ein glas.	that was harder than glass.
swaz kunst von in do fundin was	Whatever artistry they had invented and
und irdaht, die scribin sie	and devised, they wrote
an dise selbin sule, die	onto those pillars that should,
dise liste soltin	as they wished, accommodate
inen behabin alsi woltin,	within them theses abilities,
so du welt und ouh du leben	so that when the world and also their lives
ir chomendin ende solten geben,	should come to an end,
das ir nahkomin sidir	their descendants will nevertheless
die liste fundin abir widir.	rediscover these abilities later.[44]

Seth's and Cain's descendants erect the pillars – a combination of Flavius Josephus' and Petrus Riga's protagonists in cooperation – but the reason Rudolf gives for mankind's sinfulness is to be found in neither source. Flavius Josephus describes the tribe of Seth as being "of virtuous character", and thus approves their act of rescuing their culture; in Petrus Riga's text, the deed is accomplished by one of the morally dubious Cainites, with the art of music withheld from God's wrath. In the Wernigeroder manuscript of the *Weltchronik*, we find the increasing *sunde und suntlichir sin*. Limited to this verse, *sin* could mean the mere intent to be sinful. But the textual surrounding shows that *sin* has to be read in its more specific Middle High German meaning of "artistic and intellectual capacity", for the following

example, the emphasis on mankind's increased intellect nourishing sin is not to be found. Instead the whole passage is abridged (or perhaps even censored) to the Genesis-compliant verses: *In diesen selben iaren / wuhs an den selben luten sunden groz. / Dar in die menscheit sich sloz. / Do mit sie verdinten gotes zorn.* ("In these years / great sin grew in these people. / Mankind encased itself in it. / With that they earned God's wrath"). Rudolf von Ems, "Weltchronik," Ms. Donaueschingen cod. 79, Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe, https://digital.blb-karlsruhe.de/id/114092, fol. 8r. For the different manuscript families of the *Weltchronik*, see Walliczek, "Rudolf von Ems," 339.

44 *Weltchronik*, ed. Ehrismann, v. 677–698; translation M. D.

verses agglomerate specified intellectual abilities and crafts (*kunstlichir liste*, *ir liste meisterschaft*, *manegir kunst und wisheit*, the personification of *kunst* in v. 686 etc.).

But neither Genesis nor the *Historia Scholastica* nor any of the above-mentioned sources for the pillar-plot speak of sinful skills, arts or teachings. The only text that describes intellectual increase nourishing sin is the *Book of Watchers*, which alone enumerates the forbidden gifts (among them scripture) given to mankind.

It is not possible to determine whether the reappearance of the Watcher-plot in Rudolf's *Weltchronik* is a firm intertextual link, because there is no material evidence for knowledge of this source in the European Middle Ages.[45] That said, I do not underestimate the power of oral transmission and therefore the ability of narrators to deliver content from mouth to ear, from generation to generation and from culture to culture. As a result, it does seem possible that some version of the Jewish Prometheus-plot circulated in Central Europe in the thirteenth century. Interestingly, Rudolf combines this echo of the Watcher-plot with the story of the pillars. Until then, the two narrative elements had only appeared separately, and the mutual connection of both the cultural artefacts and the pillar-inscriptions to Enoch thus lay hidden. But by augmenting the pillar-myth and hinting at the teachings mankind received from the Watchers, Rudolf makes clear that "the science of the heavenly bodies" has to be an Enochian one. Rudolf lessens the sinfulness of this endurance by adopting the palimpsest-like technique he found in the *Historia Scholastica*, declaring the entirely human descendants of Seth to be *Gotis sun*, thereby transforming the angelic origin into a profane *Gotteskindschaft*. Furthermore, once the original sin of the Watchers is muted to a silent subtext, the sinfulness of their Promethean gifts can be included again. As a result, the story of the endurance of sinful prediluvian culture can be allowed to persist.

3 Conclusion

I will stop my delineation of this *longue durée* narrative at this point. It is, however, pertinent to ask whether this tale of endurance did itself endure beyond the Middle Ages.

First, one could point to John Dee, astronomer of Elisabeth I, who practised between 1582 and 1587 and reanimated the tale when he and his psychic medium Edward Kelly contacted angels who allowed them to bring the Enochian alphabet to earth.[46] Second, one could refer to the Rosicrucians' establishment of universal ar-

45 "[O]utside Ethiopia [the] knowledge of the book largely disappeared, and it was not until the early modern period that it began once again to attract notice." Knibb, *Essays on the Book of Enoch*, 21.

46 Eschner, *Die Henochische Magie nach Dr. John Dee*. This inspirational discovery of a universal language has echoes of Hildegard of Bingen's *Lingua Ignota*. The difference to Dee's alphabet is that

cane languages that show references to the language that Enoch taught prediluvian humankind.[47] One could also hint at more obscure and esoteric fin-de-siècle revivals such as the *Ordo Hermeticus Aurorae*, for whose esoteric practices Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers used Dee's Enochian alphabet.[48] Later, Aleister Crowley's Thelema religion was founded on the basis of Mathers' Enochian work.[49] Also, the original language that John Smith claimed to have translated for the *Book of Mormon* (1830), the so-called "reformed Egyptian", could easily be regarded as a branch of the Enochian script that Abram spread in North Africa:[50] John Smith partook in this myth by "translating" the *Book of Abraham* that was written on a scroll said to also include the writings of "Enoch's Pillar, as mentioned by Josephus".[51] Finally, one could even point to the US-American Church of Satan and Anton LeVey's *Satanic Bible* (1969), which includes a satanic version of Dee's Enochian alphabet.[52]

Or one could just stop here and merely assert that this tale of endurance does endure.

The more important question concerns the circumstances that enabled the endurance of a story about enduring sin, which even God failed to destroy by means of the Deluge – a twofold endurance that stands in contrast to any kind of dogmatic eschatology. Like an endlessly recurring virus, similar to the "archaic and anachronistic forms" which Jean Baudrillard describes,[53] this tale repeatedly re-emerges to point out the relativity of apocalypses, and the defectiveness of God's plans to end and cleanse humankind.

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there is no known connection between this secret language and Enoch or the prediluvian culture. Therefore the *Lingua Ignota* does not imply a deviation from God's apocalyptic plans.

47 For example, in the *Confessio fraternitas Rosae Crucis* from 1615 one can find the following statement referring to Adam's language and Enoch's alphabet as the lost ideals of a universal language: "Wenn wir in anderen Sprachen nicht so beredt sind, wissen wir, daß diese kein Echo der Sprache unserer Urväter Adam und Henoch darstellen, sondern vererbt sind durch die babylonische Sprachverwirrung." ("If we are not that eloquent in other languages, we know that these are not echoes of the language of our prime fathers', Adam and Enoch, but that they were inherited from the Babylonian confusion of languages."); quote in Eco, *Die Suche nach der vollkommenen Sprache*, 191; translation M. D.

48 Regardie, "Introduction to the Enochian System."

49 Hyatt and DuQuette, *The Enochian World of Aleister Crowley*. For the asserted magic of the Enochian alphabet, see Crowley, *Confessions. Eine Autohagiographie*, trans. Jungkurt, 1:534.

50 See the Qumran fragment 1QGenesisApocryphon in chapter II.1 of this text.

51 Larson, *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus*, 82.

52 Gallagher, "Sources, Sects, and Scripture," 103.

53 Baudrillard, *Die Illusion des Endes oder Der Streik der Ereignisse*, trans. Voillié, 50: "Es ist unglaublich, daß nichts von dem, was man geschichtlich für überholt hielt, wirklich verschwunden ist, alles ist da, bereit zur Wiederauferstehung, alle archaischen, anachronistischen Formen sind unversehrt und zeitlos vorhanden wie Viren im Inneren des Körpers." ("It is astonishing that nothing thought to be historically outdated has really vanished. All is there, waiting for its resurrection, all archaic and anachronistic forms are unscathed and timelessly present like viruses inside the body." – translation M. D.).

Hans Blumenberg wrote about the myth of Prometheus:

> Prometheus guarantees to men that their culture cannot be interfered with. Only he, as a Titan, could have stolen fire, not those for whose preservation he did it. [...] When one knows how to make fire, one has become resistant to divine wrath. That is why Zeus cannot reverse the theft of fire by taking it away from men, so as to keep it as the exclusive property of heaven, its place of origin. In the end nothing has changed for the gods, but everything has changed for men. Having been created by the Titans, they must reckon with the ill will of Olympian Zeus, but they have someone who has survived that ill will and prevents it from having consequences, someone whom they can count on as having tamed Zeus.[54]

Take this passage, replace "Prometheus" with "the Watchers", "Titans" with "angels" and "fire" with "script", and it becomes obvious: just like the antique tale of Prometheus, the abiding myth of the Watchers, as well as of their forbidden cultural gift, and its distributor Enoch, acts as the Judeo-Christian version of the testimony of humankind's ability to survive everything – even God's wrath. This tale about the origin of script is, at its core, one of a human defiance and hope so great that not even apocalypses can extinguish them.

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Empires and Last Days 1

Philippe Buc

Eschatologies of the Sword, Compared: Latin Christianity, Islam(s), and Japanese Buddhism

This chapter focuses on the role of eschatology in violence, across several ensembles, premodern catholic Christianity (with a focus on the First Crusade), medieval Japanese Buddhism, Twelver Imamite Shi'a Islam, and twelfth-century Almohad Mahdism. In particular, it looks at the impact of beliefs in the nature of the eschatological moment on the conduct of war, including intra-cultural war. These eschatologies assumed corruption and evil in the world. All these ensembles could trust that the eschatological moment called for the purge of evil, including in one's own ranks. The call for violent purge was exceptional in Japan, and limited to the Hokke School founded by Nichiren, likely because of both its eschatology and its intolerant exclusivism, which brings it close to medieval Catholicism and the aforementioned versions of Islam, in their refusal to accept the orthodoxy of other variants of the true religion.

[...] one must first learn to understand the time.
Nichiren, *The Selection of the Time*.[1]

[...] The highest skill in matter of Scriptures [is] to
know how to distinguish between the times.
Bernhard Rothmann, *Von der Verborgenheit der Schrift des Reiches Christi*.[2]

What can a comparison between medieval Japan and medieval Catholic Europe, with an additional foray into classical and medieval Islams (plural),[3] tell us about the role of eschatology (including apocalyptic expectations) in provoking, explaining, or shaping armed violence? Evidently, human beings do not need organised religion in order to wage war; nor is religion war's sole source of meaning or legitimacy. One should look at religion, rather, as one among several *Bedingungen der Möglichkeit*, "conditions of possibility", for war.[4] One can also explore whether specific visions of the end push human beings to armed violence and provide scripts for it.[5]

1 Nichiren, *The Selection of the Time*, 538.
2 Rothmann, *Von Verborgenheit der Schrift des Reiches Christi*, 352.
3 The plural is obligatory given, at least, the divergence between Sunni and Shi'a Islam. But see also the *plaidoyer* in Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*.
4 For an explanation of the post-Kantian version of the term, see Blume, "Bedingung."
5 This is not the only possible effect of eschatology; see the comparative historical reflections in Landes, *Heaven on Earth*. For the concept of "scripts", see Baker and Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution*.

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In Western and Central European Christianity until perhaps as late as 1600, two normative scenarios co-existed when it came to the End Times. In the first, human beings would renounce armed violence and if necessary die as martyrs (in analogy to what the Church taught about apostolic and early Christian times). In the second, they would join the angelic armies of heaven and help the returning Christ purge the world of evil people and of sins. Commenting on John's Apocalypse, a biblical exegete likely active around the time of the First Crusade (1096–1100) leaned in the second direction:

> *And the armies that are in heaven followed Him* (Apoc. 19:14) [...] By *the armies* that John saw following Christ, and issuing from heaven, understand the saints who will be born at the end of the world and will fight against Antichrist.[6]

According to some exegetes, the armies of heaven comprised the martyrs. These were the men and women whom the same Apostle John claimed to have seen in his vision clamoring to God, asking: How long shall you delay judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on earth? (Apoc. 6:10: *Usquequo Domine sanctus et verus non iudicas et vindicas sanguinem nostrum de his qui habitant in terra?*) The theological consensus had it that this divine vengeance would take place at the end of time; but disagreement existed among commentators of the Bible as to whether the martyrs would themselves participate in the great bloody harvest of the impious. The idea of a waiting period, until the End, was not innocent; in the etymological sense of the word, it was not non-noxious: for it did not deny the virtue of purgative massacre, it just delayed its implementation, and kept it alive as a hope and value. The available scripts included the first two books of the Maccabees, which provided an oxymoronic alloy of passive and active martyrdom, melded together via the hot metal of vengeance. In 1 Maccabees, the family of Mattathias and Judas rose up in arms against pagan Greek oppressors and Jewish collaborators to avenge the blasphemies committed against the Jewish God. They died weapons in hand, but their cause met with success. One Eleazar threw his spear from under what he believed was the Greek ruler's elephant, and died under the dying beast's weight. He had thus "given himself [to death] to free his people and acquire an eternal renown" (1 Macc. 6:43–46). In 2 Maccabees (6–7), pious figures suffered passively for refusing to accept pagan practices, but God's vengeance struck their persecutors both miraculously (the tyrant Antiochus IV died a horrible death, 2 Macc. 9:5–28) and militarily (the heathen were massacred on the battlefield to avenge the martyrs, 2 Macc. 8:3–4). What linked this Old Testament past, the deeds of *vetus Israel*, the Israel of yore, to the present and the New (*novus*) or True (*verus*) Israel, that is, Christianity, was

6 Berengaudus, *Expositio in septem visiones*, 19.14, 926B. My thanks to Guy Lobrichon for this text.

typology and prophecy.[7] Christian exegetes of the Bible considered that a number of figures in the Old (Jewish) Dispensation were types for entities or events in the Christian Era (the New Dispensation), or prophesised these. Thus the Maccabean fighters, for instance, were types for the *milites christi*, those men and women of the *verus Israel* soldiering for, or serving, Christ.[8] And the genocidal fate of the enemies of the Israel of Old (depicted for instance in Isaiah) anticipated the destruction of Christianity's enemies at the end of time. These notions, developed in biblical exegesis, were displayed in the liturgy, which communicated them to the faithful at large.

Indeed, the liturgies commemorating martyrs, such as that for the children of 2 Maccabees 7, linked their willingness to die with the coming retribution at the end of time. This willingness drew on the Old Testament counterpart to the martyrs' clamor in Revelation, that is, on Psalm 78: "Avenge, O Lord, the blood of Your saints that has been shed."[9]

This liturgical juxtaposition, sung year after year as part of the calendar in Catholic churches remained for centuries just that – liturgical. Yet at one point it was – or so some Christians thought – enacted. With the First Crusade,[10] the structure became event.[11] A critical mass of human beings had convinced itself that the apocalypse was just around the corner. The crusaders, in terms of Christian typology, were the New Israel, the New Maccabees. Their martyrdom, however, did not add to delayed vengeance, but triggered immediate retribution. One chronicler, himself a participant of the crusade, connected into a single sequence the martyrdom suffered by a number of Christian warriors before the walls of Antioch in 1098, and then, via the clamor of Revelation 6, the retributive massacre of the enemy Turks. According to the anonymous *Deeds of the Franks*, the latter's twelve leaders "died soul and body". A related version, that of Petrus Tudebodus, was even more explicit: all the enemies "received an eternal death [in hell] with the Devil and his angels".[12] According to another source, before storming Jerusalem in June 1099, the

7 Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality*; Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*. As to war, see Buc, *L'empreinte du Moyen Âge*. For an early study on the typological use of the Old Testament for political conceptions, see Chydenius, *Medieval Institutions and the Old Testament*.

8 Pace Lapina, *Warfare and the Miraculous in the Chronicles of the First Crusade*, for which see my review of it.

9 See, e.g., *Cantatorium*, fol. 125r (one of the oldest surviving Gregorian chant manuscripts, ca. 920); or Ms. Cod. Sang. 339, fol. 127v (antiphonary, ca. 980x1000). I am currently developing this relationship between the storming of Jerusalem and the liturgy, presented more at length at Giles Keppel and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi's seminar, École Normale Supérieure, March 29, 2017's ENS seminar.

10 On the relationship between crusade and liturgy, see now Gaposchkin's superb *Invisible Weapons*.

11 See Sahlins, *Islands of History*, and *How "Natives" think*.

12 *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, § 8, ed. and trans. Hill, 40–42; Petrus Tudebodus, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, eds. Hill and Hill, 74–77.

crusaders did not only imitate the script of the "Israel of Old" (their typological exemplar) against Jericho via a procession around the city's wall. They also spent the night reciting psalms and the litanies of the saints, among which one recognises elements of the vengeful liturgy for the martyrs.[13] And the same author, depicting the mounds of slaughtered "pagan" bodies after the crusaders' conquest of the Holy City, saw in this landscape poetic divine justice. Did the situation not invert the verses of the psalm (*uersa uice* [...] *mutato*), "They laid the corpses of Your enemies to be fodder for the birds of the air, the flesh of Your opponents [to be fodder] for the beasts of the earth?"[14] The original Psalm 78:2 read: "They have given the corpses of Your servants to be fodder for the birds of the air, the flesh of Your saints [to be fodder] for the beats of the earth." The liturgies enacted right after the conquest of Jerusalem also echoed those for the martyrs.[15]

The actualisation of these specific biblical scenarios came about because one reached a tipping point (the moment when an accumulation of elements, which accumulation had up until then not changed dynamics, brutally engenders a wholly new process):[16] a critical mass of men and women had convinced itself before or during the crusading expedition of 1096–1099 that the world stood on the threshold of history's end, the Eschaton.[17] That the First Crusade was moved in part by apocalypticism is controversial among scholars, but is made more likely by a similar configuration obtaining in more fully documented episodes of paroxysmal religious violence, such as the Taborite holy war against "soft" Catholicism in 1419 to 1421, the radical French Catholic attempts to exterminate Calvinism from the 1560s to the 1580s, and the Anabaptist takeover of the Westphalian city of Münster in 1534/1535.[18] Despite scholarly skepticism, therefore, the probability is high that many participants of the crusade in 1096–1100 were enacting a vision of the End, an apocalyptic script transmitted by the Bible, its interpretations, and the liturgy. One cannot

13 See *The Text of the Account of the Capture of Jerusalem*, ed. France, 647. France remarks, n. 9, on the echo of Psalm 78.

14 *The Text of the Account of the Capture of Jerusalem*, ed. France, 650: *Et uersa uice nonne mutato de his dici potest: 'Posuerunt morticina inimicorum tuorum escas uolatilibus celi, carnes aduersariorum tuorum bestiis terre'. Nam sed merito non erat qui sepeliret. Congruum namque [...].*

15 See Raymond d'Aguilers, *Le "Liber" de Raymond d'Aguilers*, ed. Hill and Hill, 151: *Quomodo plaudebant exultantes et cantantes canticum novum Domino [...] Hęc dies quam fecit Dominus, exultemus et letemur in ea*, compared to Cod. Sang. 339, fol. 127r–v: *O[ffertorium]. Exultabunt sancti in gloria laetabuntur in cubilibus suis exulationes dei in faucibus eorum. V[ersus]. Cantate domino canticum nouum cantate domino canticum nouum laus ei in ecclesia sanctorum [...].*

16 "Tipping point" or "tip point", a natural science concept brought into Sociology by Grodzins, "Metropolitan Segregation."

17 Lobrichon, *1099. Jérusalem conquise*; Flori, *La Guerre sainte*, 347–352; Buc, "La vengeance de Dieu;" Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*.

18 I have brought together these four moments in Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*, to show the similarities in the shape that armed violence took. The classic study linking the sense of the coming End with radical Catholic religious warfare is by Denis Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu*. See as well Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*.

explain the willingness and desire on the part of tens of thousands of men and women to journey from Western Europe all the way to the Near East without apocalypticism. And perhaps more interestingly, one cannot understand what they did and speculate on what they may have felt – their deeds and conceptions – without knowing the scripts for the End of Days current in late eleventh-century Western Europe.

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The beginnings of Islam were eschatological, as the Qur'an's frequent references to the Last Days (*ākhir az-zamān*) indicate. A number of scholars have convincingly argued that the Prophet saw himself as living in the End Times, entrusted with the task to renew and purify monotheism.[19] The relationship of the earliest community around Muḥammad to armed violence may have been complicated (which would account for the seeming contradictions in the several traditions about the legality of violence, its limitations and the forms it could take).[20] But whatever early Muslim radical pacifism, including the willingness to be martyred rather than fight, may have existed in the first generation of what Aziz Al-Azmeh has felicitously conceptualised as "Paleo-Islam",[21] it did not become normative outside Shi'a and related traditions.

Twelver Imamite Shi'ism, from which the currently dominant form of Islam in today's Iran derives, provides an interesting point of comparison with medieval Catholic Christianity.[22] Mathieu Terrier has recently shown how Twelver eschatology abolished active religious warfare and instead called for martyrdom in the current age of history; in the End Times, however, warfare will again be permissible and necessary to combat the Muslim Antichrist (the Dajjal or Djaddjāl, "deceiver"), a false Messiah. This last war will be led by the returning hidden Imam, the Mahdī, assisted by the Prophet Jesus. ʿAlī's refusal to fight for his rights as successor to his cousin Muḥammad was based on the Prophet's injunction not to go to war until one had enough men on one's side to win. This happened at the battle of Siffīn (657),

19 Blichfeldt, *Early Mahdism*, has little to say on eschatology. But see Donner, "From Believers to Muslims;" Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam*, with the review by Derry, "Review of the *Apocalypse in Islam*;" Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, and Shoemaker, "'The Reign of God Has Come';" Arjomand, "Messianism, Millennialism and Revolution in Early Islamic History."

20 Firestone, *Jihad*.

21 Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity*. One will disagree with Bowersock, *The Crucible of Islam*, iii, that Al-Azmeh's "attempt to rename the early Islamic period as Paleo-Islam will probably not succeed in altering current usage". No matter that Bowersock, according to his Princeton flatmate Peter Brown, "has now thoroughly outpaced" Edward Gibbon, see Brown's review, "The Center of a Roiling World," at 48.

22 This paragraph summarises Terrier, "Expérience et représentation du *Jihād* dans le Shi'isme imamite ancien." I am grateful to Dr Terrier for a preview of this text before its publication, on the occasion of our common presentation at Keppel and Amir-Moezzi's ENS seminar, March 29, 2017. See as well Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism*, hard to use given the lack of diachronic markers.

which ʿAlī fought against the supporters of Mu'āwiyya. However, due to deceit and the timorousness of many of ʿAlī's warriors, Mu'āwiyya became the fifth Caliph. The family of the Prophet suffered a final defeat at Karbalā' (680 CE), where ʿAlī's second son Hussayn and much of Hussayn's family were massacred. After Karbalā', for Twelver Islam, there was to be no more fighting for God, but mere passive martyrdom. The angelic hosts who might have fought (but failed) to protect Hussayn are now mournfully awaiting the Last Days. It is in these Last Days that the twelfth Imam will return as the "master of the time" to avenge the Shi'a from the persecutions they suffered – passively – since the beginning. Shi'a traditions also teach that some saintly martyrs will return to life in order to fight – as some apocalyptically-minded crusaders believed their own martyred dead did in 1098–1099, alongside the angelic hosts (as Saint Andrew explained in a vision).[23]

Like the Jewish Essenes (or whatever Jewish sect penned the manuscripts of Qumran)[24] and like the singers of the Catholic liturgy ca. 1000, the Imamite Shi'a trusted in a delayed vengeance. For the Twelvers, as for some medieval Christians (and for the Jewish sectarians), there would be a holy war to end all sufferings, but its time had not yet come. This comparison thus reveals that what one could read as pacifism (in the contemporary sense of the term) in the medieval sources was not necessarily that: it was waiting for the vengeance at the end of time, for an eschatological vengeance in which, in some scenarios, the elect would take part.

A connection between eschatology and radical violence is attested elsewhere in the vast world and history of Islam, or rather of Islams, plural. In the twelfth and thirteenth century, the Almohads, a reformist movement, emerged in North Africa.[25] They considered their first and most critical task to be the fight against the established dynasty of the Almoravids, who in their eyes propagated a deviant version of Islam. The Almohad movement had been founded by a Mahdī, Ibn Tūmart (d. ca. 1128/1130), one of many Mahdīs who emerged in the Islamic West, the Maghreb, between the eighth and the fifteenth century. To what extent these figures were compatible with Sunni orthodoxy is beside the point (one can debate the influence of

23 Raymond d'Aguilers, *Le "Liber" de Raymond d'Aguilers*, ed. Hill and Hill, 78, American trans. by Hill and Hill, *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*, 60 (modified): "And in truth God shall help you. All your brothers who died since the journey's beginning shall join with you, and you shall fight [only] one tenth of the enemy, since they, in the power of God and at His command shall fight against nine tenth of the enemy." On Raymond, see Flori, *Croniqueurs et propagandistes*; Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*, 152–176, and passim.

24 I discuss the Essenes in Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*, 69–70, where I follow those scholars who see a connection between the sect and the Qumran manuscripts. Those who deny this connection will still have to agree that a Jewish sect believed in dissimulating hatred for the impious until the war of the Just, the Angels, and God, against bad Jews and pagans. Whether we call this sect Essene or not is irrelevant to the comparison. Some scholars see a connection between the Qumran scrolls and early Muslim apocalypticism, see Arjomand, "Messianism, Millennialism and Revolution in Early Islamic History," 109–111.

25 See Lagardère "Gīhād almohade," 2.617–631.

Shi'a and Sufi ideas in the little that one can reconstruct of these usually ephemeral figures' teachings).[26] With Mahdism, we observe a configuration, also present in several Christian episodes, that conjoins End Times expectations, reform, and purge of one's own ranks. The Mahdī Ibn Tūmart (or one of his lieutenants) forced the leaders of Muslim Berber tribes to identify in their own groups lukewarm followers of the new movement in their own groups, and to execute them.[27] The episode is known thanks to Abu Bakr al-Baydak, a companion of the Mahdī, and was later seen as an embarrassment.[28] "They were put to death, each by his fellow tribesmen", reported from the distant Mashreq, the Muslim "East", a partisan of the rival Ayyubids, Ibn al-Athir (1160–1233). Another version of the story, also transmitted by Ibn al-Athir, pushed the blame away from the Mahdī and onto an impostor, Abu Muhammad ʿAbdallāh al-Bashir al-Wansharisi. Al-Bashir latter claimed that God had granted him the ability to know who was destined to heaven and who a reprobate (i.e., predestined to damnation). The Berbers were then ordered to spare the former and execute the latter.[29] Al-Baydak presents the first of two purges as the "sorting out (*tamyīz*) of the [Almohad] party". All "those who were dissenting, hypocrites, or false" were excluded: "Thus the perfidious were sorted out from the good. People then beheld with their own eyes the truth, and the believers' faith was doubled. As for the unjust, they tasted the fire [...] Then al-Bashir reviewed the survivors and went on expedition with God's benediction."[30]

This account finds a surprising parallel in a vision reported by the most apocalyptically-minded of all First Crusade chroniclers, Raymond d'Aguilers. In 1098, Peter Bartholomew was told by Christ in a vision to let the crusader army assemble as if for review. Once the battle-cry, "Help, O God", had been shouted, the Saviour would highlight any traitors within the ranks. They were to be slaughtered and their goods distributed to the poor. Only so, said the Lord, would the army reach its desired aim, Jerusalem. It was a vision, and a vision that was not enacted. But the desire to purge one's own ranks existed all the same.[31] One purged insiders; one more evidently purged outsiders. Returning to the Maghreb, Maribel Fierro has surmised that eschatology may have been one of the five possible reasons why the Almohads decided to force Christians and Jews to convert to Islam, in a departure from the routine toleration of the "people of the Book" as long as they submitted to Islam's

26 García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, and García-Arenal, *Mahdisme et millénarisme en Islam*.

27 See Garciá-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform*, 171–173.

28 My thanks to Pascal Buresi for the information and for drawing my attention to this source: Al-Baydak, *Mémoires*, ed. Lévi-Provençal, 126–127, 181–185.

29 Ibn al-Athir, *Annales du Maghreb et de l'Espagne*, trans. Fagnan, 532–535.

30 Al-Baydak, *Mémoires*, ed. Lévi-Provençal, 126–127 (French), 181–185 (Arabic). On this episode, see Arjomand, *Apocalypse and Social Revolution in Islam*, chapters 7 and 8. I thank him for the preview.

31 See Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*, 168–69; Rubenstein, "Godfrey of Bouillon versus Raymond of Saint-Gilles," 67–69.

political rule.[32] Would not at the end, as proper for a universalist faith, all humans be one? Fierro adduces comparable cases, including that of the famous Shi'a Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim, who too may have been moved by eschatology to persecute Jews and Christians in ca. 1009 (corresponding to Hijra 400). Another factor she proposes is the Almohad obsession with the oneness of truth – an obsession always present as a potential within universalist religions.[33]

The motif of betrayal and enemy trickery is present in Muslim eschatology, as it is in its older Christian cousin.[34] In Christianity, the Antichrist, lieutenant of Satan – the "father of lies" (John 8:44) – is the lie (*mendacium*) par excellence (2 Thess. 2:10–12).[35] The name of his Muslim equivalent, the Dajjal, means straightforwardly "the deceiver".[36] Both Christianity and Islam consequently assume that it is desirable towards the end of time to know who is actually in the righteous camp, and who is not. Dislike for false brothers can lead to extreme solutions such as those propounded by both the Mahdī Ibn Tūmart and Raymond d'Aguilers's first crusade circle of visionaries. Furthermore, both Christianity and Islam assume that at the End, only a minority among the nominal believers will be true; both thus also predict internal wars (Arabic *fitna*) to take place in the End Times, in which true believers will be sorted from the bad. These wars will offer men and women the choice to join the right side. In this way, the community of believers will be "refined".[37] Tellingly, in the first five centuries of Sunni Islam, the "Book of *fitna*", *Kitāb al-fitan*, was the preferred title for apocalyptic literature.[38]

The newest "kid on the block" Daesh, a.k.a. the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (or Syria)", ISIL (or ISIS), also pairs intense apocalyptic notions with the idea of purging the Muslim community of false believers. The sect's propaganda magazine, *Dabiq* (published until recently and in several languages), and its follow-up, *Rumiyah*, juxtapose discourse about the coming final battles against Satanic Western armies with violent images of the execution of infidels and bad Muslims.[39] As my MA student Lukas Huber has explored, like many crusade-era thinkers, the

32 Fierro, "A Muslim Land without Jews or Christians," 242–243, and Fierro, "Conversion, Ancestry and Universal Religion."

33 Fierro, "A Muslim Land without Jews or Christians," 246.

34 See here Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 16–17.

35 This notion liking Antichrist and deceit remains central up to the modern day, as evidenced by the plot of the highly popular apocalyptic series Left Behind, published in the late 1990s and early 2000s. See Buc, "Evangelical Fundamentalist Fiction and Medieval Crusade Epics."

36 Blichfeldt, *Early Mahdism*, 5.

37 In the episode discussed above, Saint Andrew compares the chosen crusaders to good grain sorted away from straw (destined to be burnt) and also to noble metal.

38 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 15–16, 20–22, 27.

39 I draw here on the fine MA thesis of my student Huber, "The Eternal Crusader."

Daesh publications assume the existence of a conspiracy uniting multiple agents, including the obvious "crusaders" (infidel soldiers) and traitors.[40]

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To call Japan Buddhist is a simplification. Like elsewhere in East Asia, Buddhism in Japan has always coexisted with local cults and Confucianism.[41] However, it dominated the islands' institutional religious landscape. A consensus emerged in the eleventh century among the different schools or lineages present in medieval Japan that one lived in the terminal phase of a cycle of the Buddhist Law. One had entered the *mappō* – a dangerous age in which demonic forces roamed and corruption was rife, including among monks.[42] Demons might corrupt Buddhist teachings and inspire sinful and nefarious falsehoods. A dangerous age called for radical measures. The Japanese schools of Buddhism, however, stopped short of promoting holy war against sects they considered to have veered away from correct teachings.[43] The school that came closest to doing so, the Hokke-Shū founded by Nichiren (1222–1282),[44] considered that in this last age only its own teachings and the exclusive devotional focus on just one sutra (the Lotus Sutra) could ensure salvation. Nichiren, in 1260, also held that in an earlier age, kings and others had earned karma and reincarnations as *buddhas* by fighting against Brahmins and bad monks – if necessary, to the death. But – and we shall return to this – with the present age opened by Shakyamuni *buddha*, one no longer was to kill bad monks; it sufficed to withdraw alms from them.[45] A few years after this statement, however, Nichiren, perhaps because the threat of a Mongol invasion had become more acute, wrote that the only way to save the realm was to round up monks from the Zen school and the Pure Land schools, and behead them all on a beach. This was not an idle pronouncement: Nichiren claimed it was not his own, but "rather it was in all cases the spirit of the Thus Come One Shakyamuni that had taken possession of my body".[46] Nichiren assumed that in this last age, the most dangerous enemies of the Law were not "evil rulers and evil ministers, [...] non-Buddhists and devil kings". The main groups of the "enemies of the correct teachings" comprised "monks who disobey the precepts", but the greatest of them were the "slanderers of the law [...] among

40 McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse*, describes a tension between the eschatological impulse and the need to organise that specialists of the European Middle Ages will recognise: A king at the end of time was often both a builder and reformer and an apocalyptic figure.

41 Bowring, *Religious Traditions of Japan*.

42 See Marra, "The Development of Mappō Thought in Japan." Marra considers that with the fourteenth century, *mappō* was no longer feared, and if still believed in, acted upon.

43 See in general Demiéville, "Le Bouddhisme et la guerre," repr. in Demiéville, *Choix d'études bouddhiques*. This classic discussion has been translated as "Buddhism and War."

44 Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*.

45 Stone, "Rebuking the Enemies of the Lotus." See the *Risshō ankoku ron*, translated in English as *Establishing the Correct Teaching*, 19.

46 Letter of 1271, which Nichiren cites in his *The Selection of the Time*, 579.

the eminent monks, who appear to be upholders of the precepts and men of wisdom". They were all the more dangerous as they were hard to identify as enemies, even harder to unmask than corrupt monks.[47] In medieval Catholic conceptions, too, the Antichrist's most effective agents were not pagans or the kings who persecuted Christians; rather, they were deviant Christians and "false Christians" (to use the terms of the twelfth-century *Ludus de Antichristo* ("Play of Antichrist"), that is, heretics and hypocrites. These would emerge in abundance right before the coming of the end, as members of the Antichrist.[48] From this belief emerged what seems a European collective paranoia, a character trait still visible in some quarters nowadays, that is, the assumption of gigantic conspiracies to overthrow what is good, and sow evil.[49] Present but more relaxed perhaps in the medieval Japanese context, this belief in organised treachery exists also in Islam.

Nichiren considered that "when it comes to studying the teachings of Buddhism, one must first understand the time". Less radical figures agreed that the moment mattered, such as for instance the Tendai abbot Jien (d. 1225), scion of the great Fujiwara family that had produced imperial regents since the eighth century. Jien criticised the newer, demotic Amidist schools of Japanese Buddhism that promised a simple path to salvation, which stood in stark contrast to the more complicated practices of the Tendai and Shingon forms of Buddhism. He attributed antinomian ideas (that one could eat meat and have sex and yet be reborn) to the Amidists and rebuked them. Jien was especially upset at the claim made by Hōnen (d. 1212),[50] that a simple focus on the Buddha Amida (Japanese Amitābha) and the invocation of his name alone ensured salvation. Yet he curiously admitted that in a later phase of the Buddhist time-cycle, a single-minded focus on the Buddha Amida would be the solution:

> At a time when the one teaching of Amitabha will really increase divine grace, people will certainly have their sins and troubles removed and enter paradise. But before that time comes, and while the Shingon and the eliminate-illusion teachings of Tendai are still destined to prosper, no one will be able to achieve salvation by following the teachings of deceptive demons.

Jien, like many of his contemporaries, believed that he lived in the last, degenerate age of a Buddhist cycle, the *mappō*, but he trusted that humans could set back tem-

47 Nichiren, *The Selection of the Time*, 584.

48 *Ludus de Antichristo*, ed. Vollmann-Profe. For Antichrist, crusade, and eschatology, see most recently Buc, "Crusade and Eschatology." In general, see most recently the multivolume study by Potestà and Rizzi, eds., *L'anticristo*.

49 See Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*, 246–247, and the discussion of paranoia and hysteria, 112–151.

50 See Bowring, *Religious Traditions of Japan*, 245–253.

porarily its effects. The time for a single-minded focus on just a single devotion had not yet come.[51]

In relation to religious armed violence, time had a peculiar texture. Ages in which it was allowed, or even mandated, were followed by periods when it was forbidden, and *vice versa*. The influential Church Father, Augustine of Hippo (d. 430), had to justify why the self-styled "Catholic" Church could call on the Roman army to force the so-called Donatist dissenters to listen to Catholic sermons. How could this be permitted when the Church, until recently, had been persecuted by the same Roman state? Was not any Christian church founded on the blood of the martyrs, hallowed by the violent persecution they had endured? In several of his works, the good bishop deployed the same argument to rebuff such challenges. With the Roman emperors' conversion to Christianity in the fourth century, the Psalm's prophecy had been fulfilled. In an earlier age, the kings of this earth had raged against the Church. Now, however, they served it (Ps. 2). This was according to God's will and called for new rules. Augustine's eschatology, as is well known, was consciously anti-millenarian.[52] But with this argument of the turning of times, he nailed shut the coffin of early Christian pacifism. Seven hundred years later, the monk Ekkehard of Aura, who by contrast with Augustine believed he stood at the threshold of the apocalypse,[53] hit out with a counter-accusation at the critiques levied at the unprecedented pilgrimage in arms that was the First Crusade. Those opposed to the crusade were, Ekkehard argued, "unwise" and "impudent" men, stuck in an obsolete (*inveterata*) error. They did not realise that this "novelty [the crusade]" was "so necessary for a world that has now grown old and is close to its end".[54] The opposition between the old (*inveterata*) and the new (*novum*), set in the context of the End Times, made logical the transvaluation (*Umwertung*) of an earlier value: just as the New Testament had turned the Old Testament's bellicism into pacifism, the apocalyptic moment turned on its head the old teachings of the Church forbidding offensive holy war. Scrutinising sky, nature, and politics for the signs listed in the "little apocalypse" of Matthew 24, and detailing their factual presence in his chronicle, Ekkehard, like many others, had come to believe that the Last Days had arrived. Over the centuries, many Christians and Muslims would both scrutinise for signs of the End and see signs of the End.[55]

51 Jien, *The Future and the Past*, ed. and trans. Brown and Ichida, 171–173. Jien believed Japan had entered the *mappō* (The *Future and the Past*, 223, with the editors' footnote 43), but his notion of history included the possibility to resist the decline, if only for a limited number of years.

52 Landes, "Millenarismus Absconditus."

53 Buc, "Crusade and Eschatology," 301–313; Rubenstein, "Crusade and Apocalypse," 180–186, and Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*.

54 Ekkehard, *Frutolfs und Ekkehards Chroniken*, eds. Schmale and Schmale-Ott, 130.

55 Examples of Japanese Buddhist signs in Nichiren, *The Selection of the Time*, 576–577, include false and evil monks, aberrant stellar motions, great winds, rains and fires, internal strife, conflict among kin, armed revolt, invasions. See also Nichiren, *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the*

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The sense of reversals was not present only in Abrahamic monotheisms. In the *Treatise on the State*, a work in dialogic form involving a questioning Visitor and an answering Master, Nichiren justified coercion of bad monks by invoking earlier cycles of the Buddhist Law, the *dharma*. Back then, kings and warriors had gained merit by killing evil Brahmins to protect the Law: they had also fought bad monks, sometimes to the death, and with karmic rewards. The Buddha Shakyamuni was the reincarnation of one of these armed sectarians.[56] At this point in the dialogue, the reader, along with the fictional Visitor interrogating the Master, might come to the conclusion that this legitimised the killing of bad monks. The Master seemed to be leading the discussion in this direction. Yet his teaching then takes a surprising turn. In the current age of the Dharma incepted by Shakyamuni, one is no longer to kill bad monks, one just refuses alms to them.[57] Nichiren would change his mind about this less than ten years later, owing to the growing Mongol threat, which for him was both a consequence of religious failings and an occasion for religious reform. Nevertheless, in his division of ages one can see something akin to the Christian ideas about a time before and another after Christ, whose Passion marked the passage from the material warfare waged by the Old Israel to the merely spiritual warfare of the New Israel, Christianity.[58]

Conclusion

Let us end on presentist musings, whose speculative nature should not invalidate the preceding comparisons. In a wonderful flight of Gallic rhetoric, the mid-nineteenth-century historian Edgard Quinet, meditating on the Christian nature of the unchristian French Revolution, turned to a comparison that explained the zealous mutual antagonism of Islam and Europe:

Peace of the Land, 8–10. For Muslim signs of the End, see Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 13–14.

56 Nichiren, *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*, 19–23. See the French translation, Nichiren, *Le "Traité sur l'État" de Nichiren*, trans. Renondeau, 166–174.

57 Nichiren, *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*, 23; Nichiren, *Le "Traité sur l'État" de Nichiren*, trans. Renondeau, 174. Refusing alms means institutional murder. A temple could not survive without support.

58 Interestingly, Nichiren, like Jien, considered that the present age was the age of the warriors. Jien presented the idea neutrally; Nichiren, *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land*, 21, was more positive: it was now, given the *mappō* ("if the correct teaching is about to come to an end") and the resulting existence of bad monks, the task of the warriors ("white-robed laymen") to defend the Law "with swords and staves". However, they should not "take life".

> East and West had aimed in their struggles at the same thing. With the same violence, the one as the other wanted the unity promised by the prophets, the founders of their respective laws. Furthermore, they were moved by the same force, fear. When I consider Muḥammad or Gregory VII, I see the same terror for the Last Day, the same tremor that propels two worlds the one against the other: They make haste because they believe that they are at the edge of their last instant. On both sides, a fearsome angel pushes them to the same clash, and the same force is paralyzed by its opposite.[59]

An analogous meeting of End Time beliefs and pressures took place with the monstrous virtual encounter between Osama bin Laden and George W. Bush in and around September 11 (2001).[60] Bruce Lincoln famously juxtaposed the two warlords' speeches, and (among other mirrored dimensions) identified encoded apocalyptic references.[61] In a global world, where in the USA a good quarter of the population belongs to fundamentalist protestant denominations and believes in Armageddon, and where the majority of Muslims also now see themselves as living in or close to the end of time, we cannot dismiss the force of seemingly archaic scripts that link the apocalypse and violence.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

CCCM Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnhout: Brepols, 1966–.

CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.

CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866–.

PL Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols. Paris, 1844–1855, 1862–1865.

SC Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Éd. du Cerf, 1941–.

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Cantatorium. Ms. Cod. Sang. 359, Stiftsbibliothek Sankt Gallen.

59 Quinet, *Christianisme et la révolution française*, 209.

60 I mean, of course, *à tout seigneur tout honneur* (cf. Romans 13.7), September 11th, 2001, with its close to 3000 casualties, not September 11th, 1973, when the Chilean army overthrew with CIA help President Allende, resulting in the execution of thousands of Chilean leftists.

61 Lincoln, *Thinking About Religion After September 11*, 19–32 ("Symmetric Dualisms: Bush and bin Laden on October 7").

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Stephen Shoemaker

The Portents of the Hour: Eschatology and Empire in the Early Islamic Tradition

For much of the past century, scholarship on Muḥammad and the beginnings of Islam has shown a reluctance to acknowledge the importance of imminent eschatology in earliest Islam. One of the main reasons for this resistance to eschatology would appear to be the undeniable importance of conquest and political expansion in early Islam: if Muḥammad and his followers believed that the world would soon come to an end, why then did they seek to conquer and rule over so much of it? Nevertheless, there is no real contradiction between the urgent eschatology revealed by the Qur'an and other early sources on the one hand, and the determination of Muḥammad and his followers to expand their religious polity and establish an empire on the other. To the contrary, the political eschatology of the Byzantine Christians during the sixth and early seventh centuries indicates that these two beliefs went hand in hand, offering important contemporary precedent for the imperial eschatology that seems to have fueled the rise of Islam. Accordingly, we should understand Muḥammad's new religious movement within the context of this broader religious trend of Mediterranean Late Antiquity. Muḥammad's new religious polity seems to have been guided by the belief that through their conquests and expulsion of the Romans from the Holy Land and Jerusalem, their triumphs were inaugurating the events of the eschaton. *Therefore, Muḥammad's new religious movement should be seen as a remarkable instantiation of the political eschatology that we find expressed elsewhere in Jewish, Christian, and Zoroastrian writings of this era.*

For much of the past century, scholarship on Muḥammad and the beginnings of Islam has often shown an unfortunate aversion to eschatology. Instead, there is a marked tendency, particularly, but not exclusively, in English language scholarship, toward a view of earliest Islam as movement that was more "pragmatic" than "apocalyptic". Rather than finding a prophet and his community who believed themselves to be living in the shadow of the *eschaton*, Muḥammad and his earliest followers are presented as having pursued very practical goals that were directed toward effecting social change and building a political empire. Nevertheless, the eschatological urgency that pulses across the traditions of the Qur'an is simply too powerful to be ignored, and increasingly scholars are turning to recognise that imminent eschatological belief was a core principle of Muḥammad's religious movement. Indeed, when we read this evidence from the Qur'an alongside a number of early apocalyptic *ḥadīth*, it seems all but certain that Muḥammad and his followers

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were convinced that they would witness the end of the world in the Hour's sudden arrival seemingly in their own lifetimes.[1]

Yet not only Muḥammad's early followers were expecting the imminent end of the world: at the very same time they were seizing dominion over a great deal of it. In the earliest decades of its history, Muḥammad's community of the Believers spread rapidly across western Asia and North Africa, establishing in their wake what amounted to a new "Islamic" empire. Yet it would be wrong to imagine that the Believers' political success was somehow at odds with their eschatological expectations. Their impulse to rule the world was not, in fact, incongruous with their conviction that the same world was soon to pass away. To the contrary, it seems that faith in the impeding *eschaton* fueled their imperial ambitions. There can be no question that in addition to preaching the Hour's proximate arrival, Muḥammad also expected his followers to engage in *jihād* in the path of God (e.g., Q 4:75.95), which amounted to militant struggle on behalf of their divinely chosen community and its religious values. Of course, one must be careful not to project back onto the period of origins the classical doctrine of religious warfare formulated much later in the Islamic legal tradition. Yet at the same time, the Qur'an clearly enjoins the faithful to wage war on behalf of the community of the Believers as a religious duty. It is true that certain elements within the later Islamic tradition, including most notably Sufism, would seek to soften the militancy of *jihād*, which simply means "struggle" or "striving", by defining it instead in terms of spiritual struggle rather than actual combat.[2] But in the first Islamic century, *jihād* and the faith of the Believers entailed fighting to eliminate wickedness from the world and to establish the rule of their divinely ordered polity throughout the world.[3]

Although the Qur'an, to be sure, occasionally displays some diversity of opinion regarding the degree of militancy that was expected on behalf of the new religious movement, it is clear that by the end of Muḥammad's life the dominant attitude in the community had become the legitimation of, and the exhortation to pursue, ideological war against the "unbelievers". The community of the Believers thus was "a movement of militant piety, bent on aggressively searching out and destroying what they considered odious to God".[4] The establishment of a new righteous and divinely guided polity that would displace the sinful powers who ruled the present age was an essential part of this *jihād* in the cause of God.

1 For more on this topic, see Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 118–196; Shoemaker, "Muḥammad and the Qurʾān," 1078–1080; Shoemaker, "The Reign of God Has Come," 514–58.
2 Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 77.
3 See, e.g., Tyan, "Djihād."
4 Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 85.

1 Eschatology and Conquest in the Early Community of the Believers

The earliest known witness to the emergence of Muḥammad's community onto the world stage, the *Doctrina Iacobi nuper baptizati* ("Doctrine of Jacob the Newly Baptized"), paints a very similar picture of the Believers' movement. This seventh-century Greek text relates a series of debates that were supposedly held among the Jews of North Africa who recently had been forcibly baptised under Heraclius.[5] These debates supposedly took place in July, 634, just at the very moment when Muḥammad's followers had first begun to enter the Roman Near East. It is no mere coincidence, then, that the *Doctrina Iacobi* is the first text to describe this new religious movement. The text was likely written very soon after the events that it describes, as seems to be required by its concern to address the specific issue of the forced baptism of 632, as well as by references to contemporary political events that indicate a time just after the first Arab attacks on the Roman Empire.[6] Moreover, despite the many clichés and caricatures that too often typify Christian writings on Jews and Judaism, the *Doctrina Iacobi* defies most of the literary conventions – and conventional interpretations – of the *adversus Iudaeos* genre. It is, in this regard, as David Olster explains, "the exception that proves the rule".[7] Whereas most anti-Jewish literature from this period presents only a highly stereotyped construct that is rhetorically designed to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity, the *Doctrina Iacobi* instead presents what is judged to be a detailed and realistic depiction of late ancient Judaism.[8] The *Doctrina Iacobi* thus stands out within its genre for its careful and accurate representation of such historical details and, more remarkably, for the thorough and thoughtful contextualisation of its dialogue within this broader historical setting.[9] Therefore, despite the suspicions that such a text might potentially invite, historians of the early seventh century are generally agreed that this text

5 The most recent edition has been published by Dagron and Déroche, "Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIe siècle," 47–219. The edition has been recently republished with the rest of their article, with the same pagination, in Dagron and Déroche, *Juifs et chrétiens en Orient byzantin*, 47–219.

6 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 59. Here Hoyland argues persuasively against Dagron's suggestion that the text was composed sometime in the early 640s, which seems unlikely: Dagron and Déroche, "Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIe siècle," 246–247. See also McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 179.

7 Olster, *Roman Defeat*, 175.

8 Olster, *Roman Defeat*, 159–164; cf. also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 56; Dagron and Déroche, "Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIe siècle," 240–46. The specific attention given to the cities of Ptolemais and Sykamine in Palestine leads Hoyland and Dagron and Déroche to conclude that the author is likely a native of their environs.

9 Olster, *Roman Defeat*, 158–159.

offers remarkable insight into the diversity and complexity of religious culture in this era.

The text identifies its author as Joseph, one of the participants in the dialogue, but its main character is Jacob, a Jewish merchant from Palestine who had recently been coerced into baptism while on an ill-timed business trip to Carthage. After several days of debate, about midway through the text, a new character enters the discussion, Justus, the unbaptised cousin of one of these new Jewish converts, who has recently arrived from Palestine. Justus is upset that his cousin and so many other Jews have accepted their Christian baptism, and he is persuaded to debate the issue with Jacob before the group. This being a Christian text, one is not surprised to learn that Justus is ultimately persuaded to himself become a Christian and receive baptism. Nevertheless, after his conversion, Justus reveals the contents of a letter that he had just received from his brother Abraham in Palestine. In it Abraham writes that "a prophet has appeared, coming with the Saracens, and he is preaching the arrival of the anointed one who is to come, the Messiah". Abraham reports that he consulted "an old man who was learned in the Scriptures" for his opinion on this new prophet. The sage replied that "he is false, for prophets do not come with a sword and a war-chariot", and he encouraged Abraham to look into the matter himself more carefully. Abraham then continues to relate the results of his inquiry: "when I investigated thoroughly, I heard from those who had met him that one will find no truth in the so-called prophet, only the shedding of human blood." For good measure, Abraham also reports that this prophet "says that he has the keys of paradise, which is impossible".[10]

According to Abraham's account of this new religion, Muḥammad's followers were proclaiming their faith in starkly eschatological terms, which Abraham's letter interprets in terms of Jewish apocalypticism – that the Messiah was soon to arrive. While it is not entirely clear whether Muḥammad and his earliest followers were actually expecting the appearance of a Messiah, they do seem to have believed that the world was soon to come to an end. The reference in this instance to the coming Messiah could simply reflect a refraction of Muḥammad's eschatological message through the lens of Judaism. In Jewish ears, sounding the *eschaton*'s impending arrival meant the Messiah's arrival as well. One imagines that the presence of many Jews within Muḥammad's early community of the Believers would have only amplified such potential messianic associations.[11] Moreover, as Sean Anthony recently explains, Muḥammad's alleged claim to possess the keys of paradise also reflects an element of early Islamic kerygma, as Cook and Crone first noted in *Hagarism*.[12]

10 *Doctrina Iacobi*, 5.16 (Dagron and Déroche, "Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIe siècle," 209–211).

11 See, e.g., Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 22, 24, 32, 134, 205. See also Donner, "La question du messianisme dans l'islam primitif," 17–27; and Bashear, "The Title '*Fārūq*' and Its Association with ʿUmar I," 47–70.

12 Anthony, "Muhammad," 243–265; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 4.

Obviously, as Anthony notes, this claim is eschatological, yet no less important is its strong association with the military campaigns of the Umayyads in the early Islamic historical tradition. Several traditions link the Umayyad conquest ideology with the keys of paradise, which suggests that this motif offers "an early testimony to the doctrine of *jihād* procuring believers access to paradise".[13] Therefore, we have in the *Doctrina Iacobi* evidence that as the Believers left the deserts of Arabia behind them, they entered the Promised Land with an eschatological fervor that was joined to the conviction that one was obligated to spread the dominion of their faith through warfare, a pious militarism that would ultimately be rewarded with entry into paradise.

Abraham's description of earliest is Islam is really not controversial, or at least, it should not be. The eschatological confidence of the Believers is amply displayed in the Qur'an, as we demonstrated elsewhere,[14] and so is the idea of *jihād* as warfare on behalf of God and God's community.[15] History shows us well enough that this martial piety was soon actualised through decades of conquest and the establishment of a new empire under the authority of the Believers and their "commander" (*amīr*). The Believers' urgent eschatology and their commitment to *jihād* were not disconnected, it would seem, and indeed, it would be rather strange to imagine them as such. Indeed, as Donner recently notes, "unless we assume something like eschatological enthusiasm, it is difficult to understand what would have motivated the early believers to embark on the conquests in the first place. The apocalyptic spark seems most likely to be what ignited the sudden burst of expansionist conquest that we associate with the eventual emergence – almost a century later – of Islam."[16] Raiding for booty is easy enough to understand, but absent apocalypticism, why would Muḥammad's followers have made such a forceful push outside of Arabia in order to seize and occupy Roman and Sasanian territory? Why were they intent on the destruction of these empires and not content merely to plunder them? Clearly some sort of imperial eschatology must have been at work from the very early history of Muḥammad's new religious movement. As David Cook concludes of these invasions, "it would seem, then, that the conquests were seen as an integral part of the redemptive process which occurs just before the end of the world".[17]

Unfortunately, the Qur'an does not link its eschatological immediacy with its injunctions to expand the Believers' dominion by military force as explicitly as we might like. Nevertheless, both elements figure prominently in the Qur'an and thus were central tenets of Muḥammad's religious movement. One imagines that

13 Anthony, "Muhammad," 255–262, although Anthony's proposal for a later dating of the *Doctrina Iacobi* is not very convincing, in my opinion.

14 Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 118–96; Shoemaker, "Muḥammad and the Qurʾān;" Shoemaker, "The Reign of God Has Come."

15 As, for instance, Anthony rightly notes: Anthony, "Muhammad," 247.

16 Donner, "Review of Robert Hoyland, *In God's Path*," 139–140.

17 Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 71.

Muḥammad's followers must have understood these two key principles of their religious worldview as correlative, so that they believed that the formation and expansion of their community through armed struggle were instrumental to the Hour's immediate advent. By piecing things together, it seems clear that the Qur'an effectively endorses such a worldview, even if it does not always do so directly. Perhaps such clarity is seemingly absent because, as Cook notes, "the Qur'an is an eschatological book and not an apocalyptic book".[18] The Qur'an is eschatology in action, not in the future; the Hour was already arriving even as the community was expanding. Thus, it was perhaps irrelevant to specify their linkage, which was in the moment self-evident. One did not need to explain how the world would come to an end when one was living out the Hour's approach on a daily basis, expecting it at any minute.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence to suggest that the Qur'an once unambiguously professed a direct link between the military success of Muḥammad's religious community and the arrival of the *eschaton*. The two ideas are joined together in a variant reading of Qur'an 61:6 said to derive from the codex of the Companion Ubayy b. Kaʿb (d. between 640 and 656), who according to the Islamic tradition was Muḥammad's scribe. In the *textus receptus*, this verse has Jesus predict that an apostle named Aḥmad will come after him, a prediction that meets with rejection. According to Ubayy b. Kaʿb's version, however, Jesus forecasts not only Aḥmad's appearance, but also that he would form a community that "will be the last one among the communities", that is, a community whose formation will inaugurate the End Times: "I am God's messenger to you, bringing you an announcement of a prophet whose community will be the last one among the communities (*ākhir al-umam*), and by means of whom God seals the messengers and prophets (*yakhtum allāh bihi al-anbiyāʾ wa'l-rusul*)."[19] According to this version, Muḥammad's followers would emerge as the final community in the world, whose formation and success would occasion its end.

18 The definition of apocalypticism is in fact a complex matter, although in the study of early Judaism and Christianity, a consensus has emerged around the idea that apocalypse is strictly speaking a literary genre, which often, but not always, involves eschatology. Nevertheless, as John Collins explains, "other material may be called 'apocalyptic' insofar as it bears some resemblance to the core features of the genre apocalypse". There is, he explains, a certain conceptual worldview, an apocalyptic perspective, that emerges from the early Jewish apocalypses but appears also in other texts that may justifiably be called "apocalyptic literature", even if they are not, strictly speaking, apocalypses. Likewise, Collins notes the presence of "apocalyptic eschatology" in texts belonging to other genres and further identifies "apocalypticism" as a broader phenomenon that describes "the ideology of a movement that shares the conceptual structure of the apocalypses". See specifically Collins, "What is Apocalyptic Literature?" 6–7, and Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 11–13. The foundational work on this matter, however, remains Collins, ed., *Apocalypse*. I follow this consensus of early Jewish and early Christian studies in my approach to apocalypticism and eschatology. For more discussion of this topic, see Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*, 11–16.

19 Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, 170; Powers, *Zayd*, 120.

David Powers has proposed that Ubayy's version may indeed be the earliest form of this verse, and that its canonical equivalent is a later revision. When the *eschaton* failed to arrive quickly as expected, the prediction in Ubayy's version proved false, and so the passage in question was altered to its now canonical form, "I am God's messenger to you, confirming the Torah that was [revealed] before me, and giving you good tidings of a messenger who will come after me, whose name will be Aḥmad."[20] In such a case, the original imminent eschatology and the early community's role therein were replaced, once these points had been falsified, by a reference to Jesus' confirmation of the Torah. Although this explanation is admittedly speculative, it is easier to imagine a scenario where Ubayy's version is the original, and when its prediction is falsified by the *eschaton*'s abeyance, the now canonical version was introduced, which would obviate this difficulty. The alternative, that the canonical version was earlier, seems less likely, since it is hard to comprehend the introduction of such an eschatological prediction once it had become patently false. If this interpretation is correct, then the eschatological valence of the community's formation and expansion was once also advanced by the Qur'an, only to be removed and replaced once this no longer could be true.

Furthermore, we know from the Qur'an that the contemporary Byzantine tradition of imperial apocalypticism was known to Muḥammad and his earliest followers.[21] The story of Dhū al-qarnayn, that is, Alexander the Great, from sura 18:83–101, borrows directly from the *Syriac Alexander Legend*.[22] The Qur'an's adaptation of this Christian text affords definitive proof that Muḥammad and his followers were not only aware of, but were seemingly engaged with the tradition of Byzantine imperial eschatology. And, as Haggai Ben-Shammai argues, it would appear that the Qur'an regards Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings as "scripture" on par with Torah, Gospel, and *Zabūr* (most likely the Psalms).[23] It is true that the Qur'an does not include specific references to the most obvious instances of imperial apocalypticism from the *Syriac Alexander Legend*. Nevertheless, the Qur'an's usage of the *Syriac Alexander Legend* is primarily eschatological, as it incorporates the traditions about Alexander building a wall to hold back the peoples of Gog and Magog until the final judgement, a brief account of which concludes Alexander's appearance in the Qur'an.[24]

20 Powers, *Zayd*, 121.

21 For more on the early Byzantine tradition of imperial eschatology, see Shoemaker, "The Reign of God Has Come," and now Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*, 38–63. Essentially, imperial eschatology or imperial apocalypticism expects the eschaton's realisation through imperial triumph.

22 See van Bladel, "The Alexander Legend in the Qurʾān 18.83–102," 175–203; and Tesei, "The Prophecy of Ḏū-l-Qarnayn (Q 18:83–102)," 273–90. See also my recent monograph, Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*, esp. 79–86.

23 Ben-Shammai, "*Ṣuḥuf* in the Qurʾān," 1–15. I thank Will McCants for this reference.

24 See Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*.

There is, moreover, no reason to presume that only this part of the *Syriac Alexander Legend* was known to Muḥammad and his followers, assuming that the Qur'an is their collective work. Rather, the full version of the *Alexander Legend* was likely known, including Alexander's promise to send his throne along with his crown to Jerusalem for the Messiah to use and its forecast of Rome's eschatological triumph, along with the Persian emperor Tubarlak's related prophecy. It is perhaps understandable that the Qur'an failed to include these predictions of the Roman Empire's ultimate victory, particularly since they must have seen themselves and their divinely ordained empire instead in this role. Yet on the basis of this extraordinary literary relationship, we can be safe in assuming that Muḥammad and the Believers would have had direct contact from rather early on with Byzantine imperial apocalypticism. Therefore, we may take some confidence that this widely diffuse and popular theme from the religious cultures of the late ancient Near East influenced how nascent Islam understood itself, its expansion in the world, and its conviction that the Hour was soon to arrive.

Furthermore, the opening passage of sura 30, *Sūrat al-Rūm*, the sura of Rome (referring, of course, to the Roman Empire, which, although it was somewhat diminished in the western Mediterranean at the beginning of the seventh century, continued to have sovereignty over the eastern Mediterranean and much of Italy, including Rome itself, as well as all of North Africa and parts of Spain), resonates strongly with the traditions of Byzantine and Iranian imperial eschatology.[25] According to the conventional vocalisation of this passage, verses 2–5 note that "the Romans have been conquered in the nearest (part) of the land [i.e., the Holy Land]". Then follows a forecast that "after their conquering, they will conquer in a few years. The affair [or "rule" – *al-amr*] (belongs) to God before and after, and on that day the believers will gloat over the help of God."[26] The Qur'an's concern here with Rome's imperial fortunes is rather interesting, particularly since the Believers are said to rejoice at Rome's victory. The historical circumstances, according to this vocalisation, are seemingly Iran's invasion and occupation of the eastern Roman Empire, followed by Rome's triumph in 628. The traditional explanation for the Believers' sympathy toward the Romans here understands this conflict as a war between Iranian paganism and Byzantine monotheism, since the Christians were, after all, a "people of the book". Yet these same events were apocalyptically electric for both the Christians and Jews of Byzantium, and, one imagines, for the Iranians as well, particularly in light of the millennium's approaching end on their calendar.[27] Surely it is significant, then, that this prophecy, which is the only predictive passage in the

25 The traditions of Iranian imperial eschatology and their connections with other contemporary Mediterranean eschatological traditions are discussed in Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*, 100–115.

26 Translation from Droge, ed., *The Qur'ān: A New Annotated Translation*, 264.

27 Again see Shoemaker, "The Reign of God Has Come." Again, regarding Iranian political eschatology in this period, see Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*, 100–115.

Qur'an, concludes by invoking the *eschaton* – the "affair" or "command" of God, or perhaps even better, the "reign" that belongs to God. Thus, in Qur'an's sole reference to contemporary world affairs, it addresses the most eschatologically charged political events of the era, the last Roman-Persian war (602–628 CE), which excited apocalyptic expectations across the religious spectrum of the late ancient Near East. It is yet another sign that formative Islam, with its imminent eschatological hopes and a militant piety aimed at spreading its dominion throughout the world, was a movement fueled by the ideas of imperial apocalypticism that suffused its immediate cultural context.

An early variant reading of these verses, however, suggests this interpretation even more so. According to an alternative vocalisation, first attested by al-Tirmidhī (d. 892), the beginning of *Sūrat al-Rūm* instead remarks that "the Romans have conquered in the near part of the Land. They, after their victory, will be conquered in a few years. Reign [or "the command"] belongs to God before and after, and on that day the Believers will boast over the help of God."[28] According to this reading, the passage begins by noting the Byzantine victory over the Iranians in 628, followed by a prediction of their defeat several years later at the hands of Muḥammad's followers.[29] Although Theodor Nöldeke predictably rejected this reading, since he believed all of the Qur'anic text came directly from Muḥammad and "Muḥammad could not have foreseen this", Richard Bell and others have noted that, according to the standard vocalisation, "it is also difficult to explain Muḥammed's favourable interest in the political fortunes of the Byzantine Empire in this early period", as seemingly indicated in the final verse.[30] Alternatively, however, if the verse refers to the victory of the Believers over the Byzantines, their rejoicing makes perfect sense. Likewise, according to this reading, we find the Believers inserting their own triumph over the Byzantines into the eschatological war between the Roman and Iranian Empires. The victory of the Believers brings with it the reign or "affair" of God, thus identifying their devout polity as the apocalyptic empire that would usher in God's rule at the end of the age.

There is good reason to think that this alternate reading may have been the original, inasmuch as it can better account for the Believers' jubilation at the outcome. One suspects that a longstanding prejudice, ensconced by Nöldeke in particular, that the entire Qur'an must be assigned to Muḥammad is at least partly responsible for the traditional version's favor in much scholarship.[31] Nevertheless, it is long past time that scholarship should dispense with the encumbrance of this

28 Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. ʿAwaḍ, 5: no. 3192.

29 See the discussion of the vocalization and interpretation of this verse in El-Cheikh, "Sūrat al-Rūm," 356–64. Edmund Beck suggests that the "Byzantine" victory refers to Muʾta, although I find this less likely: Beck, "Die Sura *ar-Rūm* (30)," 339.

30 Nöldeke and Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. 1, 149 n. 7; Bell, *The Qurʾān*, vol. 2, 392.

31 Nöldeke and Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. 2, 1–5; Nöldeke, *Orientalische Skizzen*, 56. See also Gilliot's critique of this position, in which he notes that even Nöldeke himself eventually came

dogmatic fossil, leaving open the possibility that this passage, as well as others, may in fact have originated within the community of the Believers even after Muḥammad's death.[32] Of course, if Muḥammad in fact survived to lead his followers' campaign in Palestine, as the very earliest sources report, then that could provide another explanation for this passage.[33] While one cannot entirely exclude the traditional vocalisation, even this readily shows concern with the rise and fall of contemporary empires as they related to eschatological expectation, here signaled in the reference to *amr allāh*, the reign of God.

Recently, Tommaso Tesei has convincingly demonstrated that this Qur'anic prediction must be understood in light of close parallels from several Christian and Jewish writings of the early and mid-seventh century that predict the eschaton's arrival as a consequence of Rome's victory over the Persians. These texts include the Khosrau's prophecy in Theophylact of Simocatta's *History*, the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Ephraem*, the *Sefer Eliyahu*, the *Syriac Alexander Legend*, and the *Passion of St. Golinduch*.[34] Tesei's reading of the passage in this broader context, which I find highly persuasive, concludes that the while the Qur'an here predicts a Roman defeat and then a Roman victory, the rejoicing of the Believers that follows is not, actually, on account of Rome's triumph. Rather, he explains, the phrase "and on that day" in verse four refers not to the time of the Roman victory, but instead to the *eschaton* that would soon follow it: this expression, "and on that day" (*wa-yawma ʾḍin*), Tesei notes, generally signals the Day of Judgment in the Qur'an. Likewise, reference to God's promise (*waʿd*) in verse six has strong apocalyptic connotations, since this term usually indicates God's eschatological promise, and as noted above, the reference to *amr allāh* similarly directs the interpretation of this passage in an eschatological direction. Tesei further proposes that these eschatological prophecies regarding Rome's triumph in the final Roman-Persian war were likely transmitted to Muḥammad's early followers by former Arab confederates of the Byzantines who allied themselves with the Believers as they drew near to the Roman frontier. In such a way, this Byzantine wartime propaganda quickly reached Muḥammad's followers and was adapted into new version that replaced Rome's unique eschatological mission with simple conviction that the *eschaton* was imminent. Thus, according to such an eschatological reading, the Qur'an's reference to these events should perhaps be translated instead as follows: "The Romans have been defeated in the nearest (part) of the land [the Holy Land]. But after their defeat, they will triumph in a few years. The reign of God is before and after, and on the Last Day the believers

to concede the possibility of interpolations in the Qur'an: Gilliot, "Reconsidering the Authorship of the Qurʾān," 100.

32 Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 136–196.

33 Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 18–72, 197–265.

34 Tesei, "'The Romans Will Win!' Q 30:2–7 in Light of 7th c. Political Eschatology." These texts are also discussed in some detail in Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*, 74–100, including the *Passion of St. Golinuch*, which Tesei does not mention.

will rejoice in the victory of God. The Promise of God!" Thus, the canonical version is equally compatible with the understanding that the Believers expected their apocalyptic hopes would soon to be realised through the conquest of the Abrahamic Promised Land in Palestine, along with its sacred center in Jerusalem "the apocalyptic city *par excellence*".[35] There, in anticipation of the Hour's imminent arrival, they would, among other things, restore worship to the Temple Mount as they awaited the Temple's impending divine restoration in the *eschaton*.

2 Eschatological War with Rome in the Early Islamic Apocalyptic Tradition

Among the most overlooked resources for studying the beginnings of Islam is its early apocalyptic literature, and this neglect is surely yet another symptom of the long-standing scholarly disregard for eschatology in the study of Islamic origins. Yet in these texts, what is often implicit in the Qur'an becomes explicit. The early Islamic apocalyptic tradition shows clear evidence of imperial eschatology at work, and from it we can see that the Believers clearly understood their war with the Roman Empire in eschatological terms, identifying the Romans explicitly as "the people of the End Times".[36] The symbiosis between *jihād* and eschatological conviction mentioned above is, not surprisingly, also in particularly high relief in this material, and Jerusalem likewise occupies a position of particular importance.[37] Yet, like so much of the early Islamic tradition, the apocalyptic traditions of formative Islam were collected only at a much later date, and accordingly it can sometimes be difficult to determine which traditions are only of more recent vintage and which reflect perspectives from the first decades of the community of the Believers as it was expanding across the Near East. It is not a hopeless task, however, and the good news is that a great deal of material can be assigned with confidence to the first Islamic century, as Wilferd Madelung, Suliman Bashear, and David Cook have each demonstrated.[38] Our main source for early Islamic apocalypticism is the *Kitāb al-Fitan* of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, a massive collection of apocalyptic traditions largely from

35 McGinn, *The Meanings of the Millennium*, 10; cited in Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 97, 248.

36 See Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 83–84, where references are also given. This should not be taken as suggesting, for instance, that one should therefore simply collapse the "Associators" of the Qurʾān with the Byzantines, therefore understanding the Qurʾān's call to action against the unbelievers as directed exclusively toward the Romans. Surely, however, the Romans figured very prominently among those unbelievers against whom Muḥammad's early movement struggled to bring righteousness into the world.

37 Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," esp. 68–82.

38 Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies," 141–185; Suliman Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," 173–207; Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, esp. 330.

Syria that was compiled by this otherwise little-known figure in approximately 820.[39] Presumably most of these traditions received their present formulation largely during the later Umayyad period, and perhaps some even in the early ʿAbbāsid era. Nevertheless, as Madelung notes, the general content of much that Nuʿaym transmits is significantly older, and these apocalyptic traditions "reflect the situation under the early Umayyad caliphate before the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ", which took place at the beginning of the Second Civil War in 684.[40] Although a number of Nuʿaym's traditions survive also in other early *ḥadīth* collections, the vast majority does not, and accordingly his collection is the main font of the early Islamic apocalyptic tradition, both for historians and later Islamic apocalypticists alike. Indeed, a number of contemporary Islamist movements, including especially the apocalyptic Islamic State, have drawn significant inspiration from Nuʿaym's unequalled collection of early Islamic apocalyptic traditions.[41]

There is, as David Cook notes, in general strong continuity between early Islamic apocalypticism and the apocalyptic visions of late ancient Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. Indeed, the influx of such religious culture to the nascent Islamic tradition "was no less important in quantity or significance than the transfer of scientific and philosophical material that took place during the eighth through tenth centuries".[42] The apocalypticism of the late ancient Near East was decidedly imperial in nature, and so it comes as no great surprise to find similar ideas expressed in the early Islamic apocalyptic tradition.[43] For the most part, the Qur'an and its vivid eschatological warnings are largely absent from early Islamic apocalyptic literature, which as Cook notes, is essentially free of Qur'anic citations. Instead, the imagery and vocabulary of pre-Islamic apocalypticism prevails.[44] This is surely in part because, once again, as noted above, "the Qur'an is an eschatological book and not an apocalyptic book". The message of the Qur'an is not to identify the signs that will presage the *eschaton*, but rather, "already its tokens have come" (Q 47:20). The end was at hand, and thus there was little point in outlining future events that would one day usher in the end of the world. But the Qur'an's absence from these traditions is also a good indicator of their relative antiquity. The early Islamic apocalyptic tradition took shape at a time, it would seem, before Qur'anic citation assumed special importance.[45]

39 Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, ed. Zakkār. A complete translation of Nuʿaym's, Kitāb has now appeared, which I thank David Cook for sharing with me in advance of its publication: Cook, *The Book of Tribulations*.

40 Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies," 180; so also Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," 173.

41 McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse,* 29, 143.

42 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 2.

43 See Shoemaker, "The Reign of God Has Come;" Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*, 146–179.

44 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 2, 276, 300–303.

45 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 305.

Unfortunately, early Islamic apocalypticism has been largely ignored by the Islamic tradition and modern scholarship alike. Aside from several articles by Madelung and Bashear,[46] the only major study is Cook's impressive monograph from 2002, which does an outstanding job of opening up this vast and complex literature for further scholarly analysis. An edition of Nuʿaym's essential collection was published only in 1993, so that Madelung and Bashear had to work from manuscripts in their influential studies. Nevertheless, Cook has now prepared a forthcoming translation of Nuʿaym's *Kitāb* that will soon make this fascinating corpus even more widely available to scholars of early Islam and Late Antiquity. As for the Islamic intellectual tradition, one can readily understand why it marginalised so much of this apocalyptic material. It is, after all, largely subversive, forecasting dramatic upheaval and change and identifying the present system as in some sense defective, even if at times various regimes could channel its energy to serve their interests.[47] The main sources for the early Islamic apocalyptic tradition are, like Nuʿaym's *Kitāb al-Fitan*, all Sunnī collections. A distinctively Shīʿī apocalyptic literature does not develop until ninth and tenth centuries, even if there are, to be sure, Shīʿī apocalyptic movements much earlier. Prior to the ninth century, Sunnī and Shīʿī apocalypticists shared an early "pan-Muslim" corpus of apocalyptic literature.[48] Moreover, distinctively Shīʿī apocalyptic traditions tend to eschew the historical apocalypses of imperial conquest that are so prominent in the early tradition. Instead, they express a more passive confidence that God will ultimately turn the tables on those in power in favor of the defeated and oppressed, no doubt a symptom of the Shīʿī's minority status within the Islamic world.[49] But in the core of early material shared by both Sunnī and Shīʿī alike, the realisation of the *eschaton* through apocalyptic imperial triumph is an especially prominent theme.[50]

Two sets of traditions in particular are especially relevant to this topic, the so-called "Portents of the Hour" traditions and another set of historical apocalypses collectively known as the "Aʿmāq Cycle", the name 'Aʿmāq' ("valleys") in this case referring specifically to the valleys of northern Syria on the frontier between Rome and the Caliphate. In the first set of traditions, Muḥammad outlines a series of

46 Madelung, "ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr and the Mahdi," 291–305; Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies;" Madelung, "The Sufyānī between Tradition and History," 5–48; Bashear, "The Title '*Fārūq*';" Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars;" Bashear, "Riding Beasts on Divine Missions," 37–75; Bashear, "Muslim Apocalypses and the Hour," 75–100.

47 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 312–313, 327–328. See, e.g., Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*; Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam*; Velji, *An Apocalyptic History of the Early Fatimid Empire*.

48 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 190–194, esp. 192. On early Shīʿī apocalyptic movements, see Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians*; Anthony, "The Mahdī and the Treasures of al-Ṭālaqān," 459–483.

49 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 192–193, 225–226.

50 As Cook succinctly observes, "the imperialist tendency is strong in Muslim apocalyptic": Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 5.

historical events, usually six, that will indicate the Hour's proximate arrival. This tradition is widespread in early Islamic literature, and Nuʿaym devotes an entire section of his collection to Muḥammad's enumeration of the Portents of the Hour, which includes more than thirty different traditions. The full extent of its prominence in the early Islamic tradition, however, is best appreciated through perusing the range of variants gathered by Bashear from a variety of collections.[51] Seemingly one of the oldest such traditions is the following *ḥadīth* from Nuʿaym's *Kitāb* attributed to the Companion of the Prophet ʿAwf b. Mālik al-Ashjaʿī (d. 73/692–693).

> The Messenger of God said to me: 'O ʿAwf, count six (events) before the Hour. The first of them will be my death.' I was moved to tears then until the Messenger of God began to silence me. Then he said: 'Say one. The second will be the conquest of Jerusalem. Say two. The third will be an epidemic death *(mawtān)* among my community like the murrain of sheep *(quʿāṣ al-ghanam)*. Say three. The fourth will be a tribulation *(fitna)* among my community.' And (the Prophet) described it as grave. 'Say four. The fifth will be that money will overflow among you, such that a man may be given a hundred dinars and he will get angry about it (deeming it little). Say five. The sixth will be a truce between you and the Banu ʾl-Aṣfar (= Byzantines). Then they will march against you and fight you. The Muslims will at that time be in a country called al-Ghūṭa in a town called Damascus.'[52]

As Madelung notes, this prediction almost certainly dates to sometime before the Second Civil War, which began in the early 680s, since this *fitna* would, "no doubt, have been mentioned, like the First, if it had already happened", since the fourth sign mentioned in this prophecy, "a tribulation (*fitna*) among my community", refers to the First Civil War (656–661).[53] The epidemic of death refers to the plague of Emmaus (ʿAmwās) in 638/9, which began in Palestine, killing some 25,000 soldiers at Emmaus before spreading more widely across Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. The abundance of money, as Madelung notes, indicates the prosperity enjoyed by the Believers following the First Civil War under the reign of Muʿāwiya (661–680).[54] The final sign, however, is a true prediction, forecasting the impending final conflict between the Believers and the Romans. We have here then a particularly early tradition, which identifies several significant events from early Islamic history as signs that the end would soon arrive: the death of Muḥammad (632–635), the conquest of Jerusalem (635–638), the plague of Emmaus (638–639), and the First Civil War (656–661).[55] The prosperity under Muʿāwiya presumably represents the time of the tradition's formation, after which the final apocalyptic conflict was soon expected. Thus, this tradition would seem to indicate that the imminent eschatological expectation of the Qur'an endured into the early Caliphate, as the Believers continued to

51 Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," esp. 174–180.
52 Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 25, no. 57; translation is from Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies," 146.
53 Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies," 146–147.
54 Dols, "Plague in Early Islamic History," 371–383, 376–378; Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies," 147.
55 Regarding the dates of the first two events, see Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*.

that believe that the Hour would soon arrive. One imagines that Muḥammad's death and the capture of Jerusalem were in their moment once reckoned to be *the* omen of the *eschaton*. As I have argued elsewhere, it appears that Muḥammad's earliest followers did not expect him to die before the Hour's arrival, and so his passing surely must have triggered powerful expectations of the Hour's imminent approach.[56] Likewise, the capture of Jerusalem and the restoration of worship to the Temple Mount must have had many Believers awaiting the trumpet's call at any moment, especially those who were influenced by Jewish and Christian apocalyptic ideas. Indeed, one has the sense that perhaps this list of portents grew in number as these eschatologically charged moments passed and yet the end still did not arrive.

Before long, the conquest of Constantinople began to appear as one of the Hour's portents in some traditions.[57] Very likely, when the conquest of Jerusalem failed to yield the consummation of history soon thereafter, another eschatological objective had to be identified. If removing the impure Romans from the Holy Land and the world's apocalyptic epicenter did not usher in the Final Judgment, then perhaps only the total defeat of the Romans and their submission to the Caliphate's divinely elected empire would bring about the end of time. Yet even if their target had moved, the Believers' conviction that the *eschaton* would be realised through imperial conquest and their dominion remained unshaken. In this regard, however, the absence of Constantinople from the tradition cited above is surely significant. The conquest of Constantinople would appear to be an accretion to the list of portents, and so its absence here is presumably yet another sign of this tradition's relative antiquity. In addition to the Second Civil War's absence, the tradition's failure to identify Constantinople as the final apocalyptic objective suggests its formation at a time before this reorientation of Islamic eschatology had taken place. Concluding instead with mention of a truce with the Byzantines and their subsequent betrayal, this tradition seemingly reflects an expectation that the eschatological war between Rome and the Believers would be fought, if not for control of Jerusalem, then at least in Greater Syria.

With this final prediction, this early account of the Portents of the Hour opens toward the second set of early apocalyptic traditions, the Aʿmāq Cycle. This tradition too is widespread and is "fundamental to the study of Muslim apocalyptic, since the basic story line is repeated in most of the major traditions, or used as a hinge between stories".[58] The Aʿmāq Cycle is also quite early, probably originating in its basic form before the end of the seventh century, as, for instance, the terse allusion to its narrative as the final portent of the Hour would seem to confirm. In one of its simplest forms, the tradition is as follows:

56 Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 178–188, 195–198, 261.
57 Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," 175–180; Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies," 155–159. See also El-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, 60–71.
58 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 49.

> Then the Byzantines will send to you asking for a truce *(ṣulḥ/hudna)*, and you will make a truce with them. On that day a woman will cross the pass (in the Tarsus Mountains, the area of the fiercest fighting) to Syria safely and the city of Caesarea in Anatolia will be built (rebuilt). During the truce al-Kūfa will be flattened like leather – this is because they refused (lit. left off) assistance to the Muslims (i.e. of Syria), and God knows whether, in addition to this desertion *(khidhlān),* there was another event that made attacking them permissible [religiously speaking]. You will ask the Byzantines for assistance against them, and they will assist you, and you will go until you camp [with them] on a plain with hills (*marj dhī tulūl)*. One of the Christians will say: 'By means of our cross you obtained the victory; therefore give us our share of the spoils, of the women and children.' You will refuse to give them of the women and children, so they will fight and then go and return [to the Byzantine Empire] and prepare for the final apocalyptic battle (*malḥama*).[59]

Numerous variants add details to this basic narrative, and Nuʿaym brings over two-hundred different traditions related to this eschatological battle between the Romans and the Believers, running almost sixty pages in the printed edition.[60] Generally, these traditions describe a war with the Byzantines that begins on the Syrian frontier, and this remains the primary theater of war in Islamic apocalyptic, so that even today, for instance, contemporary apocalyptic movements within Islam place a special emphasis on the city of Dābiq as the site of the final conflict. Their focus on this specific location in the valleys of northern Syria owes itself primarily to mention of this town in the version of the Aʿmāq Cycle included in Muslim's canonical collection of *ḥadīth*.[61] Nevertheless, a key battle in this war will also be fought in the Holy Land on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and its culmination will be the Islamic conquest of Constantinople, and with it, the fall of Rome. While Constantinople is unquestionably the ultimate prize in this final war, the main events still remain rooted in northern Syria, a sign, it would seem, of the tradition's formation in the early decades when this region was a hot zone of conflict between Rome and the Caliphate. The valleys of northern Syria thus will be the site of the last all-out battle not just with the Byzantines, but between Muslims and the entire Christian world.[62]

Although Bashear regards the conquest of Constantinople as fundamental to the early apocalyptic tradition, maintaining that its capture was "a corner-stone in Umayyad policy right from the start", I suspect, as indicated above, that this may not have been the Believers' original goal, particularly in the pre-Umayyad period.[63] Instead, the liberation of Jerusalem was likely their original apocalyptic objective. The conquest of Constantinople is not prominent, as we have noted, in the early Portents of the Hour traditions. These emphasise instead the liberation of Jerusalem

59 Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 268, no. 1225; trans. from Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 49–50.
60 Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 257–315, nos. 1214–1417.
61 al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4, 1759–760 (34 [2897]). Most notable in this regard is the Islamic State, which has shown keen interest in controlling Dābiq and has even named its official magazine after the city.
62 Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," 181–182, 205–206.
63 Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," 190, 201.

and the coming war with Byzantium in northern Syria. In the bulk of these traditions, the conquest of Constantinople does not figure at all. For instance, only a single variant of the ʿAwf tradition cited above includes the conquest of Constantinople, and while this event appears in some other versions of this genre, these are distinctly in the minority.[64] Its absence from so many of these predictions suggests that it is likely an early accretion, and moreover it seems improbable that the conquest of Constantinople would have been erased from so many variants if it had in fact been a part of the tradition from the start. Furthermore, another early apocalyptic tradition also suggests that Constantinople was not originally in focus. According to this *ḥadīth*, "This matter/affair [*al-amr*] will continue with you until God will conquer the land of Persia, and the land of the Byzantines and the land of Ḥimyar [i.e., the Yemen], and until you will be [comprised of] three military districts [*ajnād*], a *jund* in Syria, a *jund* in Iraq, and a *jund* in Yemen".[65] As Cook notes, this tradition indicates that the groups that originally circulated these traditions "did not see further than the immediate conquests of the orthodox caliphs". There was no expectation of a "long-term process of conquest", because "the Day of Judgment was assumed to be so close that no further conquests could be made before it".[66] Likewise, the absence of Constantinople's conquest in more abbreviated versions of the Aʿmāq Cycle, such as the one cited above, could also suggest that this was a secondary addition to the Believers' vision of the End Times. It is true that this event may have been omitted from these traditions simply for the sake of brevity, but I suspect that such silence reflects instead an earlier tradition in which Constantinople was not yet the object of the Believers' eschatological ambitions.

Particularly intriguing in the Aʿmāq apocalypse is the alliance that the Muslims of Syria will forge with the Byzantines against what are apparently other Muslims in Iraq, because the latter refused to give aid to their Muslim brothers and sisters in Syria. Why the Muslims of Syria would imagine a future war in which they would ally themselves with the Byzantines against fellow Muslims for this reason is puzzling. To my knowledge, no such alliance occurred during the early history of Islam, and one would certainly be hesitant to posit an actual coalition of Romans and Syrians against the Iraqis on the basis of this apocalyptic vision. Yet what does this tradition say about the religious identity of the communities that produced and consumed this apocalyptic literature? Cook suggests that perhaps we find here "a unique glance into the final irrevocable split between Christianity and Islam, which may have been connected together by some common beliefs at a very early stage,

64 Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," 174–177.
65 al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, ed. al-Mar'ashlī, vol. 9, 179; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-nubūwah wa-ma'rifat aḥwāl ṣāḥib al-sharī'ah*, ed. Qal'ajī, vol. 6, 327. Trans. from Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 70. See also Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmīyīn*, ed. Salafī, vol. 3, 396, no. 2540 (I thank David Cook for this reference).
66 Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 70.

and by certain political ties as well".[67] Presumably, Cook has in mind here something along the lines of Donner's early community of the Believers, and such a Byzantine-Muslim alliance, even only an imagined one, does seem to fit this hypothesis. The prospect of Muslims going to war with Christians against other Muslims, simply for lack of support, suggests a time when the confessional boundaries between the two faiths may not have been as firm as they would eventually become. Perhaps the tradition itself arose right at a moment when the Believers were struggling with the limits of the community's boundaries. The Syrian Muslims, who undoubtedly represent the tradition's matrix, were likely more open to the involvement of Christians and possibly even Romans within their community than were their "Iraqi" opponents. Indeed, perhaps it was disagreement over this very issue that inspired the apocalypticist to imagine such a rift between Muslims – a debate about the relationship between their emergent faith community and the Christians of the Near East.

That this is in fact a conflict between Muslims is made clear by the outcome. After the Syrians and Byzantines triumph over the Iraqis, the Christians demand a share of the spoils, "of the women and children", arguing that this is due them because victory was achieved through the power of the cross. The result, we are told, is a disagreement with the Syrians, and the Romans retreat in order to prepare for what will be the final apocalyptic war. Yet other variants of the Aʿmāq Cycle explain even more clearly that the issue here is that many of the Iraqi captives are Muslims, and the Syrians will not allow their co-religionists to be taken captive by the Romans, even if they are political enemies. For instance, according to another version, the Byzantines demand, "'Divide with us those of your progeny [the Muslim captives] that you have captured', and they [the Muslims] will say: 'We will never divide with you the progeny of Muslims!'"[68] The Byzantines consider this a betrayal, and accordingly they return home to prepare for war with their former allies. When the Byzantine emperor is initially reluctant to attack, because the Muslims have enjoyed much past success against him in combat, they go instead to the ruler of "Rome" (the Pope?), whom they persuade to launch a campaign against Syria by sea, seizing control of all of Syria, except for Damascus and Mt. Muʿtaq, a mountain near Ḥimṣ on the Orontes.[69] After their initial success, the Byzantine Emperor then decides to send a large force of his own overland. Eventually, they meet a much smaller force of Muslims at Jerusalem, at which point the tide begins to turn in the latter's favor. From Jerusalem, the Muslims begin to push the Byzantines back, until both sides

67 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 51.

68 Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 259, no. 1218; trans. Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 84.

69 Bashear proposes, somewhat questionably, that we should read in these apocalyptic accounts vestiges of actual historical events. The profound deficiencies of the early Islamic historical tradition inspire him to suggest this possibility. See Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," esp. 173–174, 198–207.

face each other in a decisive battle in the Aʿmāq, or valleys, of northern Syria.[70] This region remains a focus of Islamic eschatological expectation, and even today, contemporary apocalyptic movements within Islam place a special emphasis on the city of Dābiq as the site of the final conflict.[71]

In a bloodbath, a third of the Muslim army is killed, and another third flees from the field. Of this third, one third joins the Byzantines, saying, "If God had any need of this religion [Islam], He would have aided it," while another third, the Bedouin, retreats into the desert, and the final third returns to their homelands, in Iraq, the Yemen, and the Ḥijāz. Yet the remaining third from the initial force will stand together with renewed resolve against the Byzantines, and God will send four angels with their hosts to aid them. With this divine assistance, they will defeat the Romans decisively, and press further into Byzantine territory. When they reach Amorium,[72] its citizens will surrender, but then they will betray the Muslims, alleging falsely that the Dajjāl, the Anti-Christ, had appeared in the Muslims' homelands. Many will turn back, and the Byzantines will take the opportunity to slaughter the Arabs that remained. Realizing that they have been duped, the others will return full of zeal for vengeance, and they will march steadily toward Constantinople, sweeping aside Byzantine armies and cities along their way. When they make camp across from Constantinople, the sea will miraculously withdraw, allowing them to take the city with ease, as the walls will crumble to shouts of *Allāhu akbar*. Then, the Dajjāl will actually appear at Constantinople, and together with Jesus the son of Mary, the Muslim army will defeat him.[73]

The conquest of Constantinople is thus the eschatological climax of this particular tradition, and as Cook notes, "the utter and complete confidence [...] that Constantinople will fall soon" in its many versions is yet another sign of its relatively early formation, at a time when this outcome seemed certain, rather than something that had still not occurred after a length of time.[74] Nevertheless, Jerusalem remains

70 Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 259, no. 1218; trans. Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 85.

71 Their focus on this specific location in the valleys of northern Syria owes itself primarily to mention of this town in the version of the Aʿmāq Cycle included in Muslim's canonical collection of *ḥadīth*: Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol. 4: 1759–60. Dābiq does not figure regularly, however, the bulk of the Aʿmāq traditions. Most notable in this regard is the Islamic State, which has shown keen interest in controlling Dābiq and has even named its official magazine after the city.

72 Amorium was first attacked by Muḥammad's followers as early as 644 and was briefly taken in 646, being captured by them twice more before 740. Nevertheless, Muḥammad's followers did not maintain a hold on the city and its fortress, which remained the capital of the province of Anatolikon and was an important military center for the Byzantines on the frontier in their conflicts with the Muslims in the centuries to come. From early on, it was a frequent target of Islamic raids into Roman territory, which probably accounts for its apocalyptic significant in this early eschatological tradition. It would fall only in 838 when the Abbasid caliph al-Muʿtaṣim directed a massive military campaign against it. See, e.g., Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 107, 113, 216; Foss, "Amorion," vol. 1:79–80.

73 Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 260–261, no. 1218; trans. Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 86–88.

74 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 62, 66.

particularly significant in this cycle, and in many respects it manages to retain its eschatological importance in the face of Constantinople's new prominence. As just seen, according to some versions of the Aʿmāq Cycle, the final eschatological triumph over Rome will effectively begin at Jerusalem, even if the most definitive engagements will take place in the valleys of northern Syria. The Muslims begin to prevail against the Byzantines only after being pushed back to Jerusalem, where they rally their forces. This element seems to echo another set of early Islamic apocalyptic traditions, which foretell a future Byzantine reconquest of Jerusalem just before the end of time. Of course, reconquest of Jerusalem was central to the Byzantine apocalyptic tradition, as evidenced, for instance, by the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*. But this was a matter of great concern in early Islamic apocalyptic as well, and the same theme figures prominently also in medieval Jewish apocalyptic literature, making for an apocalyptic tradition shared, in different ways, by all three faiths. In the Islamic tradition, however, the Byzantine reoccupation of Jerusalem will be very brief, lasting only forty days, at which point the Muslims will drive them out.[75] Moreover, these apocalyptic traditions also preserve an echo of the Byzantine legend of the Last Roman Emperor, who appears, albeit in a slightly different guise, in early Islamic traditions about an eschatological Roman emperor named Tiberius. This tradition too, then, seems to have made an impression on all three faiths.[76]

Paramount, however, for registering Jerusalem's abiding eschatological significance in the early Islamic apocalyptic tradition are the reasons given for the Believers' apocalyptic war against Rome and the capture of Constantinople. On the one hand, the Believers are charged with taking Constantinople as revenge for the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. No doubt, this motivation is an extension of the Believers' claim to the Abrahamic patrimony that they shared with the Jews. From this perspective, Rome's desecration of Jerusalem and the Temple was as much an affront to them as it was to the Jews, and therefore they claimed for themselves the right of vengeance, which they would exact through the destruction of Constantinople.[77] "Since one of the principal components of the messianic age is that of justice", as Cook observes, "old wrongs must be righted before this period can begin".[78] Even more telling, however, are the traditions that locate the eschatological motive for the conquest of Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire in the restoration of the stolen treasures of the Temple to Jerusalem, which were taken by the Romans in 70 CE and, accordingly, were believed to be still in their hands. Although most of these treasures, which included the Ark of the Covenant, the rod of Moses, and the earring of Eve, among other items, were thought to be in the city of

75 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 75–77. E.g., Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 286–287, no. 1292.
76 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 79–80. See also Cook, "The Heraclian Dynasty in Muslim Eschatology," 3–23.
77 See, e.g., Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 284, no. 1282; trans. in Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 60–61, where references to variants of this tradition in other sources can be found.
78 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 65.

Rome, Constantinople and Antioch held some as well.[79] Undoubtedly Cook is right that the eschatological repatriation of the Temple treasures was linked to the Believers' determination to restore worship to the Temple Mount, and also to the notion of the Dome of the Rock as a prefiguration and place holder for the Temple's restoration at the Hour. Since this understanding of the Dome's significance presumably did not survive much beyond the first Islamic century, once again we can be sure that we are dealing here with particularly early traditions.[80] Thus, in these justifications for the apocalyptic conquest of the Roman Empire, we find powerful confirmation that Jerusalem, its liberation, and the restoration of worship to its Holy of Holies remained at the center of the early Believers' eschatological expectations, even as they turned their sights increasingly toward Constantinople.

3 Conclusion

While the early Islamic apocalyptic tradition may at times seem to place more emphasis on the conquest of Constantinople than on the capture of Jerusalem, there can be no doubting that the latter city loomed large in the eschatological hopes of the early Believers, even after they began to look toward the New Rome. The religious significance of Jerusalem for the early Believers is unmistakable, and indeed there is reason to suspect that initially it overshadowed even Mecca and Medina in their sacred geography. It was the original focus of their prayers and it remains to this day the "apocalyptic capital" of Islam, which surely is significant if Islam began, as seems to be the case, as a movement grounded in fervent eschatological expectation. Moreover, the importance of the Holy Land's liberation and its restoration to the descendants of Abraham, along with the renewal of worship on the Temple Mount reveal the importance of capturing and controlling Jerusalem for the early Believers. The eschatological charge of the Dome of the Rock's design and decoration along with the apocalyptic significance of the "Temple's" restoration signal that Jerusalem's capture was more than just another victory: it was object of their eschatological desires.[81] The fact that the conquest of Jerusalem is named as one of the Portents of the Hour and that Jerusalem remained important in the Aʿmāq Cycle attests to its enduring apocalyptic significance, even after its capture did not witness the Hour's imminent arrival. Indeed, as we have just seen, according to a number of traditions, the continued conquests and the anticipated capture of Con-

79 See, e.g., Nuʿaym, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 272, no. 1252, and also the references to other such traditions in Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 56–57.
80 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 54–55, 65–66; Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihād*," 93–94. See also Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 218–240.
81 Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, 197–240.

stantinople and even Rome were undertaken primarily with the restoration of holy objects to the Temple in view.

Nevertheless, even if we were to remove Jerusalem completely from view, there can be no doubting that, based on the early Islamic apocalyptic tradition, the early Believers' movement was fueled by a powerful ideology of imperial eschatology. Their expectations of the Hour's impending arrival remained strong, as did their conviction that history would soon be fulfilled in the triumph of their divinely chosen polity over the ungodly powers of the world, among whom stood most notably, Rome. Through their striving on behalf of their community's military success, they were doing the work of bringing about God's divine plan for the apocalyptic redemption of the world.[82] Therefore, when we situate what we are able to know about earliest Islam within the religious landscape of the late ancient Near East, within which it formed and into which it emerged, we find it was an eschatological movement that is well in line with the imperial apocalypticism of the age. Indeed, perhaps we should best regard Muḥammad's new religious polity as a remarkable instantiation of the political eschatology that we find expressed elsewhere in Jewish, Christian, and Zoroastrian writings of this era.[83]

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82 Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 315.

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Ann Christys

The *History* of Ibn Ḥabīb: al-Andalus in the Last Days

The Andalusi scholar ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb (d. 853) was remembered as a legal scholar whose judgements were cited until recent times, but he was active in several other fields. A work of universal history, the History (Kitāb al-ta'rīkh)*, surviving in a single thirteenth-century copy, was attributed to him. Beginning before creation, it covers the prophets and early caliphs before focusing on the conquest of Spain, ending with a brief account of the rise of Umayyads and a prediction of their downfall. Ibn Ḥabīb was also responsible for introducing into al-Andalus the practice of collecting and commenting on* ḥadīth *– sayings attributed to the prophet Muḥammad and his followers. Ibn Ḥabīb himself became a noted authority on* ḥadīth *and used them extensively in the History. Many relate to incidents in the life of king Solomon that are implied but not explained in the Qur'an, which were woven in with stories of his supposed activities in Spain. The text also introduces into the narrative* ḥadīth *from Egypt and elsewhere about the Last Days, adapted to the Umayyad realm at a period of instability. This paper argues that these apocalyptic* ḥadīth *are a key to understanding the* History's *representation of al-Andalus in the ninth century.*

When the Andalusi scholar ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb (d. c. 853) compiled his *History* (*Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*) he did so with his eyes firmly fixed on its end:

> I begin it with Adam [and] I mention all the prophets and kings who inhabited the world [...] and their history (*akhbār*) [...] and what Allāh worked for them until the time of the Prophet, peace and blessings upon him [...] and how the caliphs followed after him [...] until the time of al-Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (705–715), may Allāh have mercy on him. Then I come to the conquest of al-Andalus and the arrival there of Ṭāriq, the client of Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr (in 711). I mention the number of her governors and those who will govern her until she is destroyed and what will happen after the destruction until the Hour with traditions and the signs [of the end of the world] if Allāh wishes it to come.[1]

Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam was concerned about how the world would end. Since none of the three monotheisms had a fixed set of eschatological beliefs, the question of the transmission of ideas to Islam from its predecessors is complicated.[2] However, a pattern of thought common to the Hebrew Bible and the New

1 Ibn Ḥabīb, *ʿAbd al–Malik ibn Ḥabib, Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 25–26; Ibn Ḥabīb, *ʿAbd al–Malik ibn Ḥabib, Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, commentary 88–100. All translations, unless attributed, are the author's.

2 Averil Cameron's analysis of apocalyptic texts in Greek and Syriac that circulated on the eve of Islam points to their wide variety of view and the difficulty in tracing their influence on the new faith, see Cameron, "Late Antique Apocalyptic;" Hoyland, "Early Islam as a Late Antique Religion,"

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Testament is also discernible in the Qur'an.[3] Nearly a quarter of the verses of the Qur'an deal with the end of the world.[4] Indeed, one way to read Muḥammad is as a charismatic preacher who expected the world to end with him; new verses may have been added to the Qur'an after his death to postpone the end.[5] It is difficult to say when these additions might have been made. Challenging the orthodox view that the text of Qur'an was established by the third caliph, Uthmān (644–656), some scholars have suggested that the text we now have was compiled under ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705).[6] The early radiocarbon dates of Qur'anic fragments discovered in the Yemen and elsewhere, which may even predate Muḥammad's mission, further complicate the discussion.[7]At the same time, the Qur'an's message is timeless and it does not provide a specific narrative of the Last Days as for instance the Book of Revelation does, but instead provides descriptions of heaven and hell that are loaded with moral significance, intended to warn and correct the believers.[8]

A large body of exegesis of the Qur'an evolved in the first centuries after the death of the Prophet. Muslim scholars used an accumulation of eschatological *ḥadīth*[9] – the *sunna qawlīyya* attributed to Muḥammad – to comment on passages in the sacred text that dealt with death, judgement and paradise. Six portents of the Hour were traced back to the Prophet, preserved by his companion ʿAwf b. Mālik. Muḥammad predicted that, after his death, Muslims would conquer Jerusalem.[10] Yet this would not ameliorate the ills of the world, which would be afflicted by plagues and other causes of untimely death. Increasing wealth would result in a civil war (*fitna*), ending in a temporary truce with Byzantium, with the collapse of this truce heralding a final war in which all would be destroyed. Many of these eschatological *ḥadīth* were preserved in the *Book of the civil wars (Kitāb al-fitān*) compiled by an Egyptian contemporary of Ibn Ḥabīb, Nu'aym ibn Hammūd (d. 843), which survives in two late-medieval manuscripts.[11] The origins of the *ḥadīth* themselves are obscure. It is likely that some at least of the statements attributed to Muḥammad were later inventions that helped to explain events in historical time. Indeed, eschatological *ḥadīth* referring to actual events have been used to try to pin down the date

1053–1077; Al-Azmeh, "God's Chronography and Dissipative Time," 199–225; Cook, "The Beginnings of Islam as an Apocalyptic Movement;" Donner, "Piety and Eschatology in Early Kharijite Poetry," 13–19.

3 Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses," 3–34; Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its biblical subtext*.

4 Tottoli, "Narrative Literature," 467–480.

5 Shoemaker, "Muḥammad and the Qur'ān," 1078–1108.

6 Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 100.

7 Reynolds, "Variant Readings," 14–15.

8 Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu*; Rippin, "Literary Analysis of Qur'ān, Tafsīr and Sīra," 151–163; Neuwirth, "Qur'an and History," 1–18.

9 In this paper *ḥadīth* is used for both the singular and the plural *aḥadīth*.

10 Bashir, "Apocalyptic and other Materials in Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," 173–207.

11 Aguadé, "Messianismus zur Zeit der frühen Abbasiden," 43.

these *ḥadīth* were compiled, although with limited success.[12] Al-Azmeh characterised the use of *ḥadīth* in exegesis and in works of other genres as presenting "the seamless transition between signs past, present and future inscribed in eschatological traditions attributed to Muḥammad through the history of the world from Creation, and the coming apocalypse".[13] This is the programme of the *History* of Ibn Ḥabīb. In what follows I hope to illustrate the historian's intentions by focussing on a number of episodes from the *History*, and more especially his use of *ḥadīth* relating to the end of the World and his development of stories associated with king Solomon. I will go on to argue the importance of eschatological *ḥadiṯh* for understanding Ibn Ḥabīb's presentation of the history of al-Andalus.

Born in Elvira, near Granada, Ibn Ḥabīb studied in Córdoba, and travelled for three years in search of learning to Medina, Jerusalem and Egypt. On his return to al-Andalus he served at the court of the Umayyad emir ʿAbd al-Raḥman II, wearing the impressive headgear (*qalansūwa*) awarded to scholars of law and *ḥadīth*. Ibn Ḥabīb's works in several genres survive either in copies made in the later medieval period or in citations by other authors.[14] His legal judgements were preserved with those of other scholars from al-Andalus and the Maghreb in a number of texts, some of which were still in use in the Maghreb in the modern era[15] and in a legal treatise, the *Kitāb al-Wādiḥa*, which has been reconstructed from citations of it.[16] Ibn Ḥabīb made several collections of *ḥadīth*[17] and it is likely that he was responsible for introducing *ḥadīth* into al-Andalus.[18] His earliest biographer, al-Khushanī (d. 971) recounted in detail Ibn Ḥabīb's skilful deployment of citations from the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* to defend his wayward brother Ḥārūn against an accusation of blasphemy – a story that, even if is untrue, represents the importance of his use of *ḥadīth* in ensuring Ibn Ḥabīb's posthumous reputation.[19]

One of Ibn Ḥabīb's surviving *ḥadīth* collections includes forty-three traditions on the Last Days. His biographers remembered another, which is no longer extant, with the title "The Day of Resurrection" (*Kitāb al-qiyāma*). He used *ḥadīth* extensively in several works with eschatological aims. Among these is the Description of Paradise (*Kitāb wasf al-firdaws*). It was edited in Beirut in 1987 without giving the

12 Cook, "Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions," 23–47; Görke, "Eschatology, History and the Common Link," 179–208.

13 Al-Azmeh, "God's Chronography and Dissipative Time," 201.

14 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, commentary 58–64.

15 Müller, *Gerichtspraxis im Stadtstaat Córdoba. Zum Recht der Gesellschaft in einer mälikitisch-islamischen Rechtstradition des 5./11.Jahrhunderts*; Lagardère, *Histoire et societé en Occident musulman au Moyen Âge. Analyse du Mïyâr d'al Wanšarîsî.*

16 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tratado jurídico*, ed. María Arcas Campoy.

17 Muranyi, "ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb." Wilk, "Women, Families and Lesbianism in the Andalusi Eschatology in the 3rd/9th Century," 237–254.

18 Fierro, "The Introduction of ḥadīth into al-Andalus," 68–93.

19 *Muḥammad b. Ḥārīth al-Jushanī, (m.361/971), Ajbār al-fuqahā' wa-l-muḥaddithīn* ("Historia de los alfaquíes y tradicionalistas de al-Andalus"), ed. Avila and Molina, 245–254.

name of the editor or details of the manuscript, which was probably a copy from al-Azhar, Cairo, dated 1498.[20] Eighty-five folia of the manuscript remain, but there must originally have been at least eight more. Unusually for an Islamic text, the work's title Description of Paradise, accurately declares its content. Ibn Ḥabīb made a collection of citations from the Qur'an supplemented by *ḥadīth* and exegesis by the compiler and others. The structure of the work is simple, the large number of eschatological statements in the Qur'an providing the framework into which *ḥadīth* and exegesis could easily be inserted.[21]

As we shall see, the opening section of Ibn Ḥabīb's *History* uses a similar method of complementing citations from the Qur'an with *ḥadīth*. There are, however, problems with the surviving text. It was attributed to Ibn Ḥabīb because of the large number of passages beginning "Ibn Ḥabīb said". Yet the single surviving manuscript, dated 1295/6, cannot be an exact copy of the original, since it continues the annals of the Umayyads for at least thirty years after the supposed author's death. Nor is it a full compendium of Ibn Ḥabīb's historical writings; later sources cited Ibn Ḥabīb on episodes that do not appear in this manuscript. It is likely that this is a copy of a student's version of the *History*, perhaps compiled in the 880s, although later dates have been suggested.[22]

It is possible to read *History* as a "universal history" from Creation to the author's own time and place and to assume that its purpose was similar to that of providential Christian history, revealing the working-out of God's purpose for the world. Yet this designation may be misleading.[23] The ultimate origin of Ibn Ḥabīb's *History* was probably a tradition of chronicling the world from Creation that began in Islam in the middle of the eighth century. This seems to have been based on a chronological re-ordering of stories about the Old Testament prophets in the Qur'an, expanded by *ḥadīth*. The same process was applied to Jesus – also a prophet in Islam – and to Muḥammad, the seal of the prophets. One of the earliest authors to work in this genre was probably Ibn Isḥāq (d. 760s), who is known for a Life of Muḥammad that survives only in a ninth-century version. Many different titles were given to Ibn Isḥāq's works when they were cited in later centuries, but they suggest that he prefaced his *Life* of the Prophet with a narrative or a collection of *ḥadīth* on Creation called *Kitāb al-Bad'*, or *Kitāb al-Mubtadā'* ("The Beginning"); this does not survive, although an attempt has been made to reconstruct it from a considerable number of citations of it by later authors, in particular al-Ṭabarī (d. 923).[24] Both Ibn Ḥabīb's *History* and al-Ṭabarī's *Chronicle of the Prophets and Kings*[25] begin in this

20 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, commentary 66–67, and Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb waṣf al-firdaws*; see further Monferrer, "El kitab Wasf al-Firdaws de Ibn Habib."

21 Al-Azmeh, "Rhetoric for the Senses," 215–231.

22 Makkī, "Egipto y los origines de la historiografía árabe-española," 157–248.

23 Christys, "Universal Chronicles in Arabic before c. 900," 61–70.

24 Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet*.

25 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tā'rīkh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*, ed. de Goeje et al.

way with a history of creation and the prophets to Muḥammad, followed by a history of the caliphate to the author's day which narrows its geographical focus to the region where the author was writing. Later historiography in Arabic turned towards local histories or was subsumed into works that were encyclopaedic rather than chronological and didactic. Thus Ibn Ḥabīb's *History* and al-Ṭabarī's *Chronicle* are the only surviving texts that approach "universal history". Yet, whilst there are many similarities in content between the two – although Ibn Ḥabib's work is very much the shorter – they seem to have been written with different aims, if we may believe their prefaces. Al-Ṭabarī did indeed set out to show how men would be rewarded for their virtues and punished for their faults.[26] He may, however, have become less convinced of this as the story reached his own day, since his narrative, at least in its edited version, seems to be continuing without reference to the End Times. In Ibn Ḥabīb's *History*, on the other hand, it is possible to follow an eschatological thread running from the preface cited above through the whole work.

Fundamental to a discussion of the Last Days was an understanding of time, with the calculation of the Age of the World and the number of years that had already passed. "First", says al-Ṭabarī

> I shall begin with what for us comes properly and logically first, namely the explanation of What is time? How long is its total extent? Its first beginning and final end. Whether before God's creation of [time] there was anything else. Whether it will suffer annihilation and whether after its annihilation there will be something other than the face of the Highly praised, the Exalted Creator.[27]

Al-Ṭabarī went on to give variant calculations of the Age of the World up to the time of Muḥammad, and how much remains, compared with the Age of the world in Jewish, Christian and *Majūs* (Zoroastrian) calculations. Ibn Ḥabīb also sought chronological definition. At the time of writing, noted Ibn Ḥabīb, "200 years remain of the 500 years up to the end of the 7000 years [but] according to other narratives there are more [years remaining to the End of the World]."[28] In parallel with the Christian tradition of Six Ages of the World, each a thousand years long, it was a commonplace of Islamic learning that the World would endure for 7000 years, a day in heaven being equivalent to a thousand years on earth:[29]

> the whole of time revolves around seven days [...] the whole world from its beginning when Allāh created Adam, whom he created on a Friday and sent down to earth on a Friday. The Hour of Resurrection will be on a Friday, and it is the first and last day of the world, [the day of] its beginning and its end. Allāh made each of these days a thousand years and he made the

26 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tā'rīkh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Michael de Goeje et al., 5.

27 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tā'rīkh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Michael de Goeje et al., 5; translated in Rosenthal, *The History of al-Tabari*, Vol 1, 169.

28 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh,* ed. Aguadé, 73.

29 Q 22:47, cited by Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh,* ed. Aguadé, 15; Bashir, "On Islamic Time," 519–544.

> whole of the world until seven thousand years had perished (i.e. to last seven thousand years).[30]

Ibn Ḥabīb noted the number of years allocated to Adam, Noah and Abraham, the length of time that separated them, and the periodisation of what followed:

> A further thousand years passed until Allāh sent down the Torah (*tawrāa*) to Moses, which is five thousand years. Between the Torah and the Psalter (*zabūr*) were five hundred years and between the Psalter and the Gospels (*injīl*) five hundred years and six thousand years were over. And from Jesus (*'Isā*) to Muḥammad – peace and blessings upon him – a full five hundred years passed [...] I will describe what elapsed during the remaining five hundred [years], God willing. According to Ibn Ḥabīb, two hundred years remain of the five hundred years up to the end of the seven thousand years [but] according to other narratives there are more [years remaining].[31]

In his entries on the prophets, Ibn Ḥabīb presented the degeneration of the World from God's perfect Creation as inherent from the very beginning:

> Adam was expelled from Paradise and his descendants were prevented from entering it, except for a few. And this is the root of discord and the mother of all evils, the greatest of the great sins and transgressions; it exceeds all [other] sins just as its tree is higher than all [other] trees[32] [...] nothing is seen in our times, which are the last of times, to despise except what already existed, or there was something like it, in the time of Adam.[33]

Ibn Ḥabīb's treatment of the prophets resembles the method he used in the Description of Paradise: an expansion of citations from the Qur'an with *ḥadīth*. The narrative is allusive, relying on the readers' knowledge of the Qur'an rather as the Qur'an itself relies on the readers' knowledge of Biblical stories, so that Ibn Ḥabīb had only to cite a few short phrases to conjure up the whole story from the reader's memory. This makes the interpretation of both his sources and his intent problematic. In his expansion of the Qur'anic account of the Biblical prophets from *ḥadīth* Ibn Ḥabīb seems to have been selective in his use of the material available to him. This is in marked contrast to al-Ṭabarī, who gives the impression (which may however be misleading)[34] of including all the *ḥadīth* at his disposal, even when they are contradictory. Yet it is difficult to understand why Ibn Ḥabīb included some of these *ḥadīth*. Many of the stories Ibn Ḥabīb retells appear whimsical, such as the story of how Satan crept into Noah's Ark by hanging onto the tail of a donkey.[35] Further, in contrast to the cursory nature of his overall narrative, some of these stories are recounted in considerable detail, including long passages of direct speech attributed

30 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh,* ed. Aguadé, 25.
31 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh,* ed. Aguadé, 73.
32 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 20.
33 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 34.
34 Shoshan, *Poetics of Islamic Historiography,* 140.
35 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 38.

to the participants. Ibn Ḥabīb was writing before *ḥadīth* became more formalised, when attempts were made to distinguish "correct" *ḥadīth* – transmitted from the Prophet by an unbroken chain of reliable authorities (*isnāds*) – from the broad mass of *ḥadīth* which were discredited. By the end of the ninth century, stories about Satan and Noah were being hived off into a genre known as the "stories of the prophets" (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā*),[36] which were not meant to be taken literally.[37] Ibn Ḥābīb's attitude towards *ḥadīth* was controversial even in his own lifetime and led him into public dispute.[38] His use of *ḥadīth* in the *History* should be seen as a venture into a genre of historiography that was closely related to *ḥadīth*.[39] Its rules were not yet formalised, leaving Ibn Ḥabīb free to experiment with the inclusion of material that enlivened a common fund of knowledge about the lives of the Old Testament prophets and pointed up its moral value for contemporary readers.

Ibn Ḥabīb did not always select the most obvious eschatological material for inclusion in the *History*. He made little use, for example, of what the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* recorded about Gog and Magog;[40] indeed, he made two references to Gog and Magog without alluding to their Qur'anic role in the Last Days: "When Gog and Magog are let loose and rush headlong down every hill; when the true promise nears its fulfilment."[41] Ibn Ḥabīb simply noted of Gog and Magog that their people are numerous[42] and he listed them amongst the nations of the earth: "the inhabited world extends for 44,000 leagues (*farasangs*) and 12,000 of these are allocated to *al-Ṣīn* (China) and *al-Hind* (India) and 8,000 to Gog and Magog and 3,000 to the *Rūm* (Christians in general) and 1,000 to the Arabs."[43] Nor, in this context did he mention the mysterious Qur'anic hero Dhū al-Qarnayn, who built a wall to keep Gog and Magog out, a wall that God will destroy in the Last Days.[44] Ibn Ḥabīb did mention Dhū al-Qarnayn – whom he identified with "al-Iskander (Alexander) and it was he who built al-Iskandarīya, which is named after him"[45] – but only to point a simple moral. On his journey during which (as we know from the Qur'an) he would build the wall, Dhū al-Qarnayn is chastised by an old man, who refuses to interrupt his prayers to greet the hero.

36 Klar, "Stories of the Prophets," 338–349.
37 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, commentary, 56.
38 Fierro, "Proto-Malikis, Malikis and Reformed Malikis in al-Andalus," 57–76 and 227–233; Fierro, "Local and Global in *hadith* Literature," 63–89.
39 Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 73–74.
40 Qur'an 18:89–101; Donzel and Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources*, 61–72.
41 Qur'an 21:96.
42 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh,* ed. Aguadé, 42.
43 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh,* ed. Aguadé, 17.
44 Qur'an 18:89–106.
45 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh,* ed. Aguadé, 68; in some traditions Alexander built the wall to keep out Gog and Magog: see Faustina Aerts-Doufikar in the same volume.

> When Dhū al-Qarnayn saw the old man's attentiveness to his prayers and his obliviousness to [Dhū al-Qarnayn], [the latter] decided to approach him. He disembarked [from his ship] and went right up to [the *shaykh*] and sat down in front of him. When the *shaykh* turned away from his prayers, Dhū al-Qarnayn spoke to him face-to-face, saying: 'What prevented you from noticing me and recognising my power as the people have done?' [The *shaykh*] said 'I was talking with One who is greater than you in power, with a greater company and a mightier army. How could I leave Him and turn towards you?' [...] and Dhū al-Qarnayn profited from the *shaykh,* but the *shaykh* did not profit from him.[46]

Here Ibn Ḥabīb passed over the well-known aspects of the story of Dhū al-Qarnayn in order to develop his own exegesis of a familiar figure.

The same strategy is evident in Ibn Ḥabīb's treatment of traditions associated with King Solomon. The Qur'an focuses on the twin topoi of Solomon's wisdom and his building of the Temple, which were taken up in later Arabic literature.[47] These Ibn Ḥābīb skated over with a few words, concentrating instead on a third aspect of Solomon's story: his idolatry, which resulted in the usurpation of his throne. This tradition is recounted in the Hebrew Bible.[48] The Qur'an, in contrast, merely alludes to it with the statement: "We put Solomon to the test and put a counterfeit upon his throne, so that he at length repented."[49] It is possible that Ibn Ḥabīb's contemporaries were not familiar with the full story that lay behind this statement. Ibn Ḥabīb recounted at length how Solomon had created an idol at the behest of his wife. As punishment for this, a jinn named *Sakhr* took on Solomon's likeness and occupied his throne; Solomon was driven out of his kingdom and faced great tribulation:

> Solomon (*Sulaymān*) – peace and blessings upon him – committed an offence. God, the blessed, the exalted, expedited his punishment in the world and afflicted him with *Sakhr*, one of the jinns, when he took off his ring (or seal, Arabic *khātim*) at the time of his entry into the privy and at the time of sexual intercourse. *Sakhr* disguised himself [as Solomon] before one of the women to whom [the latter] had given [the ring]. He took the ring and put it on and went out to the people and sat on the throne of Solomon. When Solomon came out of the privy he asked one of his women for the ring saying: 'Will you not hand it over?' She said 'No'. And Solomon remembered his offence and [...] knew that he was unclean [...] [then] he departed as a fugitive. God dispossessed him of his kingdom and his dominion [...] his state changed for the worse and he became unrecognisable to anyone who knew him. He took to wandering through the villages, begging the people for food until his hunger and his needs were satisfied. [When] he revealed himself, saying: 'I am Solomon son of David the prophet', they became angry with him and threw stones at him and an old woman of the Jews (*Banū Isrā'īl*) spat in his face.[50]

46 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 68–69.
47 Borrut, "La Syrie de Salomon," 107–120.
48 Särkiö, "Solomon in History and tradition," 45–56.
49 Qur'an 38:34.
50 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh,* ed. Aguadé 72.

Ibn Ḥabīb cited the story of Solomon and *Sakhr* on the authority of Ibn Abbās, one of the Companions. Al-Ṭabarī gave two slightly different versions of the same story, with different *isnāds*,[51] but within an account of Solomon which is generally positive. In all three versions, Solomon is eventually restored to God's favour after finding his ring in the belly of a fish.

> Solomon hired himself out to the sailors and unloaded fish from the ships. His pay was two fish per day. He exchanged the first for bread and grilled the second and one day out came his ring from one of them. Recognising it, he prostrated himself before God in adoration, praising Him in thankfulness. So his sin was forgiven and his kingdom was restored to him. And when he put the seal on, the sailors recognized him, came towards him and prostrated themselves.[52]

Solomon's full powers, laid out in the Qur'an, were restored to him:

> Solomon went to his kingdom and the people recognized him and welcomed him and accepted his lordship. And at that, he said: Lord 'Bestow upon me such power as shall belong to none after me. You are the Bountiful Giver'.[53] God 'subjected to him the wind [...] and the devils'[54] and subjected to him *Sakhr* also with them who had plundered his ring. [...] And Solomon – peace and blessings upon him – took it [possibly a box in which he had locked *Sakhr*] and strengthened it with copper and threw it into the sea. Solomon remained in his dominion for some time, content with the judgement of his Lord until God, the glorious, the powerful, took him.[55]

Ibn Ḥabīb may have intended this excursus simply as an illustration of the perils of idolatry. Yet his portrayal of Solomon is so much more negative than that of the Qur'an that it seems a deliberate denigration of the prophet. Here Ibn Ḥābīb may have been preparing the ground for the reader to interpret a number of stories that connected Solomon with the conquest of al-Andalus.

Ibn Ḥabīb's account of the conquest cites one of his teachers ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (d. c. 846) and two scholars whose work he may have studied in Egypt: al-Wāqidī (d.c. 823) and ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahab (d. 812). It is dominated by a number of the apocalyptic tropes associated with the Islamic conquests in the East.[56] In Spain, they coalesce around the figure of Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr, the governor of North Africa who sent Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād to conquer Spain in 711 and followed him to the peninsula in the following year. After besieging an unnamed city without success for "about twenty days" Mūsā ordered his men to call on Allāh.

51 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tā'rīkh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*, 1, ed. de Goeje et al., 588–597.
52 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh;* ed. Aguadé, 72–73.
53 Qur'an 38:35.
54 Qur'an 38:35.
55 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 73.
56 Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*; Makkī, "Egipto y los origins;" Christys, "Ibn Ḥabīb and the Conquest of al-Andalus."

> And the people said: 'Praise the Lord! Mūsā has lost his senses. He is ordering us to attack the cornerstones when we can't see anything except the walls and there is no means of access.' Then [Mūsā] went ahead between the lines and prayed earnestly and tearfully. We stood by, waiting for his *Allāhu akhbar* and the people cried *Allāhu akhbar* with him. Then he attacked and we attacked and the side of the fortress which was nearest to us was destroyed and the people went in and took captives, merchandise and jewels, too many to count.[57]

Mūsā's success was to be short-lived. From the chronicler's perspective, as the legacy of Solomon's idolatry was played out in the peninsula, Mūsā's failure foreshadowed the end of Muslim rule over al-Andalus, perhaps the Last Days of the world. Ibn Ḥabīb introduced the theme with the following anecdote:

> Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr went out to a river [...] where there were idols of men on the right bank and idols of women on the left. Then [...] he came to a place where there were copper domes. He ordered that one of the domes should be broken. Out came a devil who shook his head and said: 'Peace be upon you, Prophet of God, who tormented me in the world.' And when the devil learned that he was not Solomon (*Sulaymān*) he went up to him and Mūsā recognised that he was one of the devils that Solomon, peace be upon him, had imprisoned and he ordered that he should be left alone.[58]

The jinn are some of the devils over whom Allāh gave Solomon control.[59] In a separate anecdote, another devil whom Solomon had imprisoned predicted the apocalypse. Mūsā came upon three idols

> And when he reached the third idol he said 'dig!'. And they dug and there was a sealed bottle. Mūsā ordered [them] to open it and a strong smell issued from it. Mūsā said, 'Do you know what this is?' They replied, 'No'. He said, 'That is one of the jinn which Solomon the prophet, peace be upon him, imprisoned.' Then he went on until he reached one of the islands in the sea where he found sixteen green jars sealed with the seal of Solomon [...] He ordered that one of the jars be broken and out came a devil and shook its head and said 'He who honours you truly informs you of Allāh's prophecy which will not be repeated after the world is corrupted and a created being is destroyed'. And he ordered that the jars remain [where they were] and they were put back in their place.[60]

By linking Mūsā with Solomon, Ibn Ḥābīb made Mūsā the locus for the same type of moral lessons that he had recounted in the section on the prophets. He could no longer call upon the *ḥadīth* concerning the prophets, but there was a store of fantastical tales about the conquest of al-Andalus that could be adapted to his purpose. To the frustration of later historians, Ibn Ḥabīb's narrative of the conquest has little

57 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 144; Noth, *Early Islamic Historical Tradition*, 44.
58 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 145.
59 e.g. Qur'an 21:82.
60 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 144.

detail on the itinerary of the conquest,[61] but focuses on the crowns, jewels, rich carpets and other booty that the Islamic armies obtained from Spain and on their failure to hand over the caliph's share and to distribute the remainder among their followers. Ibn Ḥabīb condemned the greed of the conquerors and their deviation from the right path of jihād.[62] His thesis was illustrated by what he recounted about the fate of one of Spain's more fabulous treasures, the Table of Solomon.[63]

> Tariq the client of Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr when he conquered Toldeo obtained there the Table of Solomon, son of David, peace be upon them both, adorned with jewels woven with gold with rows of pearls and sapphires of which no-one knew the value, and another table of onyx, also beyond price.[64]

After Mūsā had been in al-Andalus for two years, he was summoned to the presence of the caliph in Damascus.

> Then he returned to Ifrīqiya [...] and he ordered haste, and that the jewels and gold and silver and types of cloth of al-Andalus should be loaded up [...] Mūsā arrived before the death of al-Walīd (in 715) and brought him precious things made of pearls and sapphires and chrysolite, together with maidservants and manservants and the Table of Solomon [...] and the crowns [of the Visigoths] adorned with wreathes of pearls and sapphires.[65]

Mūsā's seizure of the Table of Solomon, which was rightfully the property of Ṭariq ibn Ziyād, was one of the instances of his greed that brought his nemesis at the hands of Walīd's successor, Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik. The caliph became angry as Mūsā boasted of his conquests and the riches he had obtained for himself in land and goods and Sulaymān resolved to punish his over-mighty subject:

> Sulaymān ordered that [humiliation] should be inflicted on him on a very hot summer's day. Mūsā was a large, corpulent man and he stood still [in the sun] until he fell to the ground unconscious. [...] Sulaymān looked at Mūsā as he lay unconscious and said: 'O [Mūsā] I did not think that you would depart from your oath [to serve the caliphate].'

Mūsā was eventually rehabilitated at a huge cost, said to be one hundred thousand dinars. The narrative of Mūsā's nemesis was popular; variants were copied into several Arabic histories and into the Latin Chronicle of 754,[66] where the chronicler noted that "Mūsā was ignominiously [...] and publicly paraded with a rope around

61 Dozy, *Recherches sur l'histoire et la littérature des arabes d'Espagne*, 33–34; Makkī, "Egipto y los origins;" Manzano, *Conquistadores, Emires y Califas Los Omeyas y la formación de al-Andalus*, 36; Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia*.
62 Clarke, *Muslim Conquest of Iberia*; Christys, "*From ǧihād* to *diwān* in two providential histories of Hispania/al-Andalus," 79–94.
63 Rubiera Mata, "La Mesa de Salomon," 26–31.
64 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 141.
65 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 148.
66 *Chronica muzarabica*, ed. Gil, vol. 1: 15–54.

his neck;" he was pardoned only after paying a fine of two million *solidi*.[67] Yet Mūsā served the caliph until his death, accompanying him on pilgrimage. Thus the story is not about Mūsā alone, but rather it is a moral tale about not withholding the fruits of conquest from the caliph, God's representative on earth. By giving such a prominent role in the story to Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, Ibn Ḥabīb may also have evoked the town of Dābiq in northern Syria where Sulaymān was buried, one of the sites where, according to Islamic tradition, the events of the Last Days are to be played out.[68]

Above all, Ibn Ḥabīb's association between Mūsā and another scenario of the Last Days – the fall of Constantinople – highlighted the importance of al-Andalus in eschatological thought. Predictions of the fall of Constantinople in the Islamic eschatological tradition may have originated in similar Christian preoccupations.[69] Many *ḥadīth* dated this event to the centenary of the Hejira i.e. 717,[70] which was almost contemporary with the conquest of al-Andalus. The "prediction" was connected in some way to an unsuccessful Muslim siege of Constantinople of 715–717, although the link to real events became increasingly tenuous.[71] According to a number of *ḥadīth* Constantinople was to be the scene of battles between the Muslims and the descendants of Heraclius, when after a great struggle the city would fall into the hands of the last remaining Muslims.[72] By the middle of the ninth century a connection had been made between the conquest of al-Andalus and that of Constantinople. A tradition attributed to Sayf b. Umar (d.c. 800) held that the third caliph Uthmān "when he sent an army from Qayrawān to al-Andalus to conquer it, wrote to them, saying 'Certainly, Constantinople will be conquered from al-Andalus. If you conquer [al-Andalus], you will share in the reward'."[73] Later authors confirmed this association, which was a reflection of the liminal position of al-Andalus in the Islamic world. A short eschatological text of the eleventh century or later begins with a statement that "the people of the Maghreb (North Africa and al-Andalus) will continue to bear witness to the truth until the Last Hour."[74] The author went on to cite an eleventh-century scholar Ibn Ḥumaydī, who explained that

67 *Cronica muzarabica*, ed. Gil, vol.1: 35, trans. Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 134.

68 Dābiq was the name of the online magazine published by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) from 2014–2016, derived from a *ḥadīth* for which I am unfortunately unable to give a reference, naming it as the site of the last battle between Muslims and infidels.

69 Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources," 997–1018; Álvarez Palenzuela, "Milenarismo y milenaristas en la edad media," 11–32; Magdalino, "The History of the Future."

70 Cook, "The Beginnings of Islam as an Apocalyptic Movement."

71 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others Saw it*, 26–31; Al-Azmeh, God's Chronography.

72 Cook, "The Heraclian Dynasty in Muslim Eschatology," 3–24.

73 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tā'rīkh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*, ed. de Goeje, 255.

74 Fierro and Faghia, "Un nuevo texto de tradiciones escatológicas sobre al-Andalus," 99–111.

> This statement applies above all to al-Andalus, since its coast is bathed by the ocean beyond which there is nothing [...] the ocean surrounds it on all sides except on the north, which is in the hands of the Christians (*Rūm*) [...] and the land extends continuously from the border with the *Rūm* as far as Constantinople.

Ibn Ḥabīb did not cite these *ḥadīth* in the *History*, but he noted that in the course of his campaign in al-Andalus Mūsā:

> Advanced into the land of the enemy until the people became more and more weary. They said 'Where do you want to go with us? We have considered what is before us. Where do you want to take us – out of the world to seek greater things than God has [already] conquered for us?' Musa laughed and said 'By God! [...] I will go on to Constantinople and conquer it, if God wills it'.[75]

Mūsā was forced to turn back from Constantinople and when he left the peninsula for Damascus he did so with a curse: "he turned in the direction of Cordoba and said 'How wonderful you are! What God made delightful and exalts and glories in your power [will be] your malediction after two hundred years'."[76] In fact, according to Ibn Ḥabīb's continuator, the fulfillment of the prophecy took a little more than two hundred years, until the rule of the emir Abdullah (888–912):

> A government that untied all the knots which his father and grandfather had tied in peace; in his reign sorrows followed; family members were arrested and their goods seized; the markets stagnated and prices were very high. Degenerates were raised up and the emir humiliated and the inhabitants of Cordoba the damned, the beloved, were humiliated and will be food for a tribe of Berbers [...].[77]

> [Ibn Ḥabīb] said: Cordoba, the whore, woe to her in the second battle, great the outrage, without morals ... She has no agreement or pact; affliction will befall her [...] assailed by spirits from the far places through a man with a snout, a young man of the people of evil omen[78] in his vanguard the Muslims and in his rear guard the polytheists and the people will flee to Carmona with a cry 'O you who possess the damned city'.

> [...] then Cordoba will be destroyed until no-one lives there except crows; power will move to Seville and the caliphs will come from the sons of Abbās and they will have the leadership until the sons of 'Abu Talib (i.e. the Shī'ītes) until the deceiver goes out and the Dākhil (Dajjāl) of the Quraysh of the sons of Fāṭima will come in and the people of al-Andalus will hand the governorship to him and in the time of this Fāṭimid Constantinople will be conquered.[79]

The reference to Carmona may recall one of the key events in the history of the Umayyads in Spain – the site of the defeat by Abd al-Rahman I of al-ʿAlā b.

75 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 144.
76 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 146.
77 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 152.
78 Attributees of the Mahdi; see Fierro, "Sobre al-Qarmuniyya," 83–94.
79 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 153.

al-Mughīth, campaigning in support of the Abbasids in c. 763. Ibn Ḥabīb was "predicting what had already taken place": an attempt by the Abbasids to take over al-Andalus. The name Carmona also recalls the incursions of Vikings in 844; when Seville was sacked, the inhabitants fled to Carmona.[80] A tenth-century historian associated Ibn Ḥabīb with this episode; Ibn Ḥabīb was deeply concerned by the destruction of Seville and wrote a letter to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II urging him to build walls around the town against the Vikings' return.[81]

Ibn Ḥabīb and his continuator used a list of the governors and emirs of al-Andalus to compute the year of al-Andalus' destruction. They noted that, when Mūsā entered Toledo

> He found there a house of the kings and [...] in it were twenty-five royal crowns of pearls and sapphires, as [many] as the number of the kings who ruled al-Andalus (Visigothic Spain). When every one of them died they brought his crown to that house and wrote on the crown the name of its owner, how much he had accomplished in his lifetime up to the day of his death and how much remained in his dominion. And it is said that a number of the Muslim governors of al-Andalus from the day of the conquest will be counted [as the same as] the kings of the Christians (*'ajam*) who were in it – twenty-five kings.[82]

The list of the governors and emirs of al-Andalus in the *History*[83] has twenty-five names. The list corresponds very closely to the annalistic treatment of the governors by the *Chronicle of 754* for the period up to the middle of the eighth century.[84] Another very similar list was appended to *Chronicle of Albelda* compiled in northern Spain in the late ninth century: the so-called "Prophetic Chronicle"[85], also predicted the fall of al-Andalus in the 880s with the expulsion of the "Saracens" from Spain.[86] The decade was one of instability and a feeling prevailed that Umayyad control over al-Andalus was reaching its end.[87] Ibn Ḥabīb's calculation of the End Times for al-Andalus, echoing the chronometric passages at the beginning of the *History*, defined the Last Days more exactly.

Yet, as is true of so many apocalyptic scenarios, it would be a mistake to over-interpret the details of these passages. Some of the *ḥadīth* that Ibn Ḥābīb cited can also be found in the collection of his contemporary, the Egyptian Nu'aym b.

80 Ibn al-Quṭīyya, *Taʾrīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, ed. al-Abyārī, 78–81; Fierro, "Sobre al-Qarmuniyya."
81 Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis II. Anales de los emires de Cordoba Alhaqem I (180–206 H./796–822 J.C.) y Abderraman II (206–232/822–847) Edición facsimile de un manuscripto árabe de la Real Academia de la Historia* ("Legado Emilio García Gómez"), ed. Vallvé Bermejo, folio 188v.
82 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 140.
83 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 434–442.
84 *Chronica Muzarabica*, ed. Gil, vol. 1: 15–54 *passim*; Sumner, "The Chronology of the Governors of al-Andalus to the Accession of ᶜAbd al-Rahman I," 422–469.
85 See James Palmer in this volume.
86 *Chroniques Asturiennes*, ed. Bonnaz, 8; Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle* Ages, 186.
87 Manzano, *Conquistadores, Emires y Califas*, 347–349; Fierro, "Doctrinas y movimientos de tipo mesiánico en al-Andalus," 159–175.

Ḥammād. Here, however, they "predict" the fall of the Abbāsids and that Constantinople will be conquered from Egypt.[88] We should read such statements as the expression of general rather than specific concerns: "the ritual reconfirmation of Muḥammadan veracity [...] [through] the simple device of pairing what tradition designated as his apocalyptic statements, gnomic as well as explicit, with specific events."[89]

Thus the message of the passage on the Last Days of al-Andalus cannot be separated from the selection of *ḥadīth* on the destruction of sinful nations and threats to the believers that accompanies it:

> The beginning of the nation was prophecy and mercy and then [...] it became proud and overweening and depraved. [...] a man fasted at that time and gained nothing except hunger; he prayed and gained nothing except sleeplessness and distress; he went on pilgrimage but did not reach his goal; he gave alms but his alms were not accepted; he purified himself but his purity was not acceptable.[90]

> [...] the time of trial for the people of Islam is imminent, and especially for the people of the sects who are surrounded by dreadful sanctuaries, so that [some] peoples are converted to Judaism and others adopt Christianity.[91]

Rather than commenting on contemporary politics, Ibn Ḥabīb was using eschatological *ḥadīth* in the Islamic tradition that instructed the believers to command right and forbid wrong.[92] Ibn Ḥabīb was moralising on the evils of al-Andalus in his own day just as he had pointed out how Solomon had erred and Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr had offended the norms of *jihād*. Although this approach to *ḥadīth* was controversial even in the author's own lifetime, it is fundamental to his concept of history. For, according to the *ḥadīth* tradition, it is when people are at their worst that the Hour will come.[93]

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89 Al-Azmeh, "God's Chronography," 201.
90 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 152.
91 Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitab al-Ta'rikh*, ed. Aguadé, 155.
92 Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*.
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James T. Palmer

Apocalyptic Insiders? Identity and Heresy in Early Medieval Iberia and Francia

Apocalyptic traditions supplied a conceptual repertoire that was used by writers in the early Middle Ages to delineate different senses of Christian identity. In particular, fear of heresy was an important catalyst for thinking about religious communities in apocalyptic terms, as writers sought to identify their community or views with the elect within the Church. In this paper, three case studies are examined: the Adoptionist Controversy in the eighth century, the case of the Córdoban martyrs in the mid-ninth century, and the so-called Chronica Prophetica *of 883. These highlight different apocalyptic dynamics, as Christian writers in Iberia and Francia argued for their particular views on religious orthodoxy against other Christians, while engaged with perceived challenges from Islam – all while believing that any corruption to orthodoxy opened the way for Antichrist. The cases remind us that, however we might want to generalise about a "Western apocalyptic tradition", the success of apocalyptic ideas often lay in their flexibility to be useful in response to a variety of situations.*

Anxiety about apocalyptic outsiders and alterity played an important role in early medieval Christian thought. Prophesied punishment for sin from the North in Ezekiel and Jeremiah, combined with the threat of assault from Gog and Magog in Revelation, meant that many invaders of the early medieval West generated fears about the End Times.[1] To think in such terms is, of course, also to posit a sense of being an insider that contrasts with the groups outside salvation. There was a sense of Christian collectivity, sometimes explicitly called *sancta ecclesia*, the Holy Church, which people identified with to make sense of their difficulties in life and their hopes for salvation in the future.[2] Scripture was clear: the community would struggle and be challenged. This apocalyptic-framed identity was not without considerable complexity, as many people followed Jerome and Augustine in believing that Gog and Magog were the enemies within – namely heretics, who looked and sounded as if they were real Christians, but who were really leading people astray. Such ambiguity raises important questions about how people negotiated identities in relation to apocalyptic thought.

1 For an overview of this theme see Palmer, "Apocalyptic Outsiders and their Uses in the Early Medieval West," 307–320.

2 De Jong, "The State of the Church and Early Medieval State Formation," 214–254.

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Both apocalypse and identity-formation are situational.[3] What we mean by this, is that people actively appropriated ideas from a spectrum available to them to respond to and maybe shape specific processes. The result is that, while we can seize upon certain generalities relevant to apocalypse and identity, any given instance might subvert some of the expectations generated by the effort to generalise because of the particularities of the situation. Such lines of thought are well-developed in scholarship on ethnic identities, as demonstrated by exemplary studies by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, amongst others.[4] For apocalyptic traditions, it is maybe less well investigated, not least because of debates that have essentialised what apocalypse means without allowing for much variation. As a contribution to understanding the situational variances in apocalypse, therefore, the present study will investigate the interplay of identities and End Times thought in the Iberian Peninsula after the Arab-Berber conquest of 711. Responses to the conquest itself are lost to us, but there are three valuable case studies: conflict between Frankish and Iberian churchmen in the Adoptionist debate, the conflict over the martyrs of Córdoba, and the production of the unusual *Chronica Prophetica* of 883. All three point towards the importance of perceptions of heresy as a key ingredient in the formation of Christian identities in the period, drawing on a crucial sense of struggle and persecution rooted in apocalyptic narratives.

The case studies naturally intersect with issues about how religious groups define themselves by theorising about the alterity of other groups. Early Christian views of Islam in the Latin West were complex, because Muslims were seen either as an imagined ethnic group (the Saracens or Ishmaelites), or as a group defined by their imagined religious beliefs (often as heretics or pagans), or both, rather than as "Muslims" in the modern understanding of people who adhere to that particular, distinct religion.[5] Most constructions as we have them are unsurprisingly shot through with long-standing orientalist attitudes, often with origins that predate Islam.[6] At the same time, such constructions are often part of an internal Christian discourse, designed to sharpen aspects of belief and practice or to diagnose the cause of problems, more than they are an attempt at ethnographic description or understanding of Islam.[7] A central issue, as we shall see, is that talk about

3 On the circumstances of apocalypse, see Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*. The classic statement of situational identity is Geary, "Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages," 15–26, reprinted in Geary, *Writing History*, 1–18.

4 Pohl and Reimitz, eds. *Strategies of Distinction*. Pohl and Heydemann, eds. *Strategies of Identification*. Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity, and the Framing of Western Ethnicity*.

5 Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen und christlich-abendländisches Selbstverständnis im frühen und hohen Mittelalter*, 262–265 and 352–395, mostly focusing on post-1000 examples; Tolan, *Saracens*; Akbari, *Idols in the East*; Valenzuela, "The Faith of the Saracens," 311–330.

6 Tolan, "'A Wild Man, Whose Hand Will Be against All'," 513–530.

7 For a condensed survey see Palmer, "The Otherness of Non-Christians in the Early Middle Ages," 33–52 and more exhaustively Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religionen und christlich-abendländisches Selbstverständnis im frühen und hohen Mittelalter*.

apocalyptic peoples often took place in the context of conflict between Christians, using Christian points of reference and trying to define Christianity. It was about imagination. Internal debates about identity and heresy shaped the orientalist attitudes of Latin Christians to other religious groups.

1 Methodological Background

Before proceeding to the case studies in detail, it is essential to review briefly some of the methodological baggage study of the apocalyptic and identities bring with them. We might start here with a simple question: was there such a thing as a singular "Western apocalyptic tradition" in the early Middle Ages from which people involved in our case studies might draw? Crude characterisations of eastern and western thought suggest that there are some common threads in each. These could include – and are not exhausted by – Augustinian agnosticism concerning the exact timing of Judgment Day, attachment to particular calculations of the age of the world, an ambiguity of attitude towards the resonance of events in Jerusalem or Constantinople, limited interest in visionaries, and localised developments in thinking about purgatorial states or the biography of Antichrist. Most of these were affected in some way by east-west communications of ideas, but they played out to generate distinctive cultural zones.[8] At the same time, however, not everywhere within the western zone could identify with ideas of empire in the same way, or had real Jewish communities to encounter, or easy access to ideas coming out of Syria. Ireland, for instance, was not very much like Rome. Peter Brown has called the localised re-creations of Christian universality "micro-Christendoms," and these represent the kinds of variations on a theme we need to be aware of in our analyses.[9]

To get any sense of zones or micro-Christendoms we have to engage in some level of comparative history. Sometimes it is only through comparison of similar things in different contexts can we see what is distinctive, and sometimes we can only really understand what we have when we can see what it lacks in comparison to something else. A range of filters and comparisons must be applied to reveal the logic of any given example. But, as Chris Wickham insisted in his 2009 Reuter Lecture, we must tread carefully: comparative history without an explicit and reasoned basis can quickly become a collection of unhelpful or meaningless differences.[10] There should be good structural grounds for comparison, which within Wickham's oeuvre includes factors such as similar size of political community. This should stand no less when engaging with sociological/ anthropological comparison across time and space. It can be valuable to look for structural similarities between

8 z.B. Meier, "Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.," 41–73.
9 Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 15.
10 Wickham, "Problems in Doing Comparative History," 5–28.

communities. We should be more cautious about using these insights to "fill in the gaps" in the evidence – what I have called elsewhere "Jurassic Park anthropology".[11] Comparative studies illuminate less, and can indeed mislead, if the models used predetermine the outcome of analysis.

A good case study here is the use of "millenarianism" or "millennialism" as a comparative model. Finding its classic form in Norman Cohn's *In Pursuit of the Millennium*, and finding significant nuance in the work of Richard Landes, "millennialism" is often understood as the defining model for interpreting apocalyptic thought – a radical, subversive way of thinking which mobilises people to seek reform on Earth in ways which stand in opposition to a typically conservative and suppressive mainstream religious community.[12] Millennialism can certainly be a powerful force in history. But in focusing on the radical and the transcultural, Cohn, Landes and others following them have downplayed the extent to which those mainstream religious communities had their own apocalyptic outlooks. To give one stock example: Gregory of Tours described a number of radical, disruptive holy men in the sixth century, one of whom seemed to proclaim himself the Second Coming – but the millennialist perspective misses that Gregory himself characterised these preachers as types of antichrist, prophesied in the Epistles to challenge the faithful in the End Times.[13] The local evidence should always take priority over the model.

The example of Gregory already points towards some key issues in the formation of apocalyptic identities. There has, of course, been a significant scholarship on the creation and mutation of both ethnic and community identities, both of which have recently been pushed to consider what a Christian identity really meant in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.[14] There was always sufficient diversity in practice to ensure that there was anxiety about unity of purpose. But that unity of purpose meant that there had to be core ideas: belief in the Holy Trinity, belief in salvation, belief in Judgment Day. It is no coincidence that major theological debates in the period hinged on Christology, sin, and the apocalypse. These provided frames in which people could see their place in the world, as part of a community defined by their relationship to God and salvation. One might remember O'Leary's useful idea that apocalyptic rhetoric often hinges on explaining problems of evil, authority, and temporality.[15] These were crucial ingredients of rhetoric in identity formation too, so it is no coincidence that apocalypse and identity intersected, as Wolfram Brandes and Veronika Wieser have recently shown for the last years of the

11 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 10.
12 Landes, *Heaven on Earth*.
13 Compare Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 13; and Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 13 and 75–7.
14 Pohl, "Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West," 1–46.
15 O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse*.

Roman Empire.[16] The remainder of the present essay will explore other ways in which this intersection worked, with a particular focus on the importance of heresy.

2 Looking Inwards: The Adoptionist Debate

The Adoptionist Debate is well-known as the last great Christological debate of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, as Christians explored once again the relationship between Christ's human and divine natures.[17] It presented a convenient crisis point for Charlemagne (r. 768–814) and his court, as it coincided with their efforts to bring renewed clarity to ecclesiastical and monastic order, and to develop richer overlap between religious and secular spheres.[18] Moreover, Charlemagne had, since 778, developed a military presence in the Spanish March, and dealing with Adoptionism offered, as Cullen Chandler put it, "a means to establish cultural hegemony in conquered areas in an effort to integrate them into the multinational Carolingian kingdom".[19] Pressures in the Iberian Peninsula were unusual, however, as many Christian communities had developed in a Muslim-dominated environment following the conquests of the early eighth century.[20] The lived and the theoretical models for what it meant to be a Christian could not fail to be different for someone living in Toledo and someone living in Aachen.

The role of eschatology and apocalypticism was crucial to the Frankish perspective on Christian standards.[21] Moreover, the religious standards of the Frankish kingdoms' elites were part of their self-identity.[22] The *Admonitio generalis* of 789, Charlemagne's first substantive reformist statement made with the assistance of Alcuin, is famous for its Old Testament allusions and restatement of conservative canon law.[23] It also engaged with the theme of reform as apocalyptic drama. Indeed, this is how it ends:

> We know that in the last days there will appear false teachers, as the Lord Himself foretold in the Gospel (Mt 24:11) and as the apostle Paul testifies to Timothy (1 Tim 4:1). Wherefore, most beloved, let us prepare ourselves with all our heart in knowledge of the truth, that we may be able to resist those who oppress the truth and that, by the gift of divine grace, the word of God

16 Brandes, "Gog, Magog und die Hunnen," 477–498; Wieser, "Roms wilde Völker," 23–50.
17 Cavadini, *The Last Christology of the West*. For wider context, Matter, "Orthodoxy and Deviance," 510–530.
18 Close, *Uniformiser la foi pour unifer l'Empire*. Kramer, "Adopt, Adapt and Improve," 32–50.
19 Chandler, "Heresy and Empire," 505–527 at 507.
20 Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain*. For a different perspective, see now Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia*.
21 McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms*; de Jong, "Charlemagne's Church," 103–135.
22 Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?," 114–161.
23 *Admonitio Generalis*, ed. Mordek, Zechiel-Eckes, Glatthaar.

> may flourish and become general and spread to the benefit of our souls and the praise and glory of the name of our lord Jesus Christ.

Such a statement establishes a clear sense of us and them, of those united by truth and those who would oppose them with tricks and lies, defined by their standing as Judgment Day approaches. The last chapter of the *Admonitio generalis* that then follows serves as an illustration of how to educate people properly. It sketches an ideal sermon that emphases the nature of the Holy Trinity and Mary, that the resurrection will be bodily, that sins will be punished, and the importance of virtues. The sermon is squarely eschatological in the sense that it encourages the audience to reflect on the consequences of their actions ahead of Judgment Day. As I have suggested elsewhere, Carolingian *correctio* "harnessed such ideas to lend urgency to its fight".[24] This is not to say that it was somehow "mere rhetoric": indeed, the power of such language often came from the perceived reality of the shortness of time.

Adoptionism provided a test case for reform. Elipandus of Toledo had already compared the priest Migetius to Antichrist for his unorthodox teachings about the nature of the Holy Trinity: "No one is your equal among heretics", he wrote, "no one is companion to you: how great the last of all, so full of the poison of all heretics, intoxicated by the poisonous filth of all heretics, clearly you are to be recognised Antichrist."[25] As controversy spread concerning Elipandus's own views on the Trinity, the bishop maintained a fiery tone, and denounced Beatus of Liébana as "the ironically named Beatus, disciple of Antichrist [...] pseudo Christ and pseudo prophet" to his critic's friend Alcuin of York.[26] From Oterius and Beatus's replies to Elipandus, we also discover that the bishop of Toledo had called his principal opponent a *praecursor Antichristi* for preaching teachings he found contrary to the faith.[27] These are some of the earliest actualisations of Isidore of Seville's definition of antichrists, plural, as people who did not live according to Christ's teachings, and indeed opposed Christians, or subverted them through false teachings.[28] Anxiety about such issues ran through Beatus' famous *Tractatus de Apocalypsin* which, like many other early commentaries on Revelation, was significantly a

24 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 150.

25 Elipandus, *Epistola*, 1.5, ed. Gil, 73: *Nullus in hereticis tibi equalis, nullus tibi sodalist. Quanto cunctis nobissimus, tanto omnium hereticorum venena refertus, omnium hereticorum ceno letali inebriatus, aperte Anchristi dinosceris esse missus.*

26 Elipandus, *Epistola*, 6.3, ed. Gil 96. (The letter begins "to the most reverend brother Deacon Alcuin, not a minister of Christ, but disciple of the most fetid and ironically named Beatus, sprung from the glorious prince in the ends of the East, a new Arius, contrary to the teachings of the venerable holy fathers Ambrose, Augustine, Isidore, and Jerome – if he turns from the error of his way, eternal greetings from the Lords; if not, eternal damnation.")

27 Beatus of Liébana and Eterius of Osma, *Adversus Elipandum libri duo*, 2.13–17, ed. Löfstedt 113–116.

28 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, 8.11.20, ed. Lindsay.

meditation on the struggles of the Church.[29] Heresy naturally lent itself to apocalyptic discourse.

Alcuin himself used eschatologically-framed arguments in his attacks on Felix of Urgell, another Adoptionist. In a letter to Felix, following the bishop's condemnation at the Council of Regensburg in 792, Alcuin impressed upon his opponent the importance of the correct teachings for the unity and peace of the Church – especially as "love grows cold in the last days", a reference to Matthew (Mt. 24:12).[30] In his *Contra haeresim Felicis*, he elaborated on this theme, which ended again with an appeal to teach the right things "up until the end of the world".[31] These are not statements which depend on prophesying the end of the world. The end could not be predicted, but its shadow was cast upon all history regardless. Alcuin wrote with the assumption that the shadow could be perceived, just as Gregory the Great (590–604) had done in his otherwise entirely Augustinian perspective before him.[32] Ultimately, it bound together duty and judgment.

Alcuin's rhetoric did not shape the reports of the councils at which Adoptionism was debated, even though he was involved in them. We might call Alcuin's one of the "backstage publications", in contrast to the public version for wider consumption.[33] The official report of the Synod of Frankfurt reports the unanimous condemnation of Elipandus and Felix as heretics in straightforward language, before continuing on to report on a variety of issues, political, economic, and ecclesiastic.[34] A letter sent by bishops to Spain to announce the synod in advance is striking for the regional identities it invokes in its opening address, from "all the bishops of Germany, Gaul, and Aquitaine" (*episcopi Germaniae, Galliae et Aequitaniae*), to the "prelates of Hispania" (*praesules Hispaniae*).[35] Administratively, the *sancta ecclesia* was a collaborative enterprise which was not blind to its regions.[36] In such a context, the bishops were keen to renew unity through a "counsel of peace" and to defend the True Faith "in which [...] stands the beginning and end of our salvation". They recognised, however, that Elipandus's ideas introduced a poison (*venena*) to the catholic faith. If unity was an important precondition for salvation, heresy was the internal force that threatened that unity.

29 Beatus of Liébana, *Tractus in Apocalipsin*, ed. Gryson. Matter, "The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis," 38–50; Gil, "Los terrores del ano 6000," 1. 217–47, 222–238.

30 Alcuin, *Epistola*, 23, ed. Dümmler, 60–65.

31 Alcuin, *Contra haeresim Felicis*, 101.230.

32 Alberi, "'Like the Army of God's Camp'," 1–20; Garrison, "The Bible and Alcuin's Interpretation of Current Events," 68–84; Markus, "Living within Sight of the End," 23–34.

33 A distinction made in Drønen, "Conversion in Context," 209–221, at 212.

34 *Capitulare Francofurtense* (a. 794), ed. Werminghof, 165.

35 *Epistola episcoporum Franciae*, ed. Werminghof, 143: *in qua [...] salutis nostrae initium extat et finis*.

36 The classic statement of unity and diversity in this context it McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms*.

The rhetoric of the Adoptionist Debate, overall, illustrates the problem of apocalyptic insiders and outsiders neatly. We have two groups, who both perceived themselves to be the champions of orthodoxy, both using apocalyptic language to assert their role as the representatives of the *sancta ecclesia* persecuted by deceitful enemies in the Last Times. In this kind of context, what drove the heightening of language was that both sides claimed the centre ground, and did so from an institutional standpoint. This was a not a fight about the margins and otherness; this was a fight about the corruption of the spiritual heart of the Church. The two sides were united by a common conceptual repertoire but divided by different ways of expressing themselves and the different cultural pressures they faced. As we explore the next case study, the martyrs' movement of Córdoba, we will encounter similar dynamics.

3 Looking Inwards: The Martyrs of Córdoba

For the second example, we move to the middle of the ninth century and the city of Córdoba – the capital of Umayyad authority in the West.[37] The city was the scene of a number of flashpoints between 850 and 859, in which Christians provoked their own martyrdom by verbally attacking Muslim officials and mosques – actions that were intended as much as a challenge to Christian accommodation with Muslims as a challenge to Muslim authority itself.[38] It should be stressed that not all Christians shared the sense of opposition, and indeed one of the ringleaders was, for a time, imprisoned by Bishop Reccafredus of Seville as the bishop sought to maintain peace.[39] There was much sensitivity over whether provoking people to kill you really counted as "martyrdom"[40] The sentiments and stories of the martyrs nevertheless appealed to many Franks, and Usuard of Saint-Germain-des-Prés included notices about them in his martyrology for King Charles the Bald (840–877), after visiting the region in 857–858 but possibly on the basis of stories in southern France.[41] This is the only obvious case in which millenarianism might help us to understand the provocative actions of individuals involved, if one believed that radical violence on the margins was readily reducible to millenarian impulses.[42] It remains unprovable whether or not there was any motivation to the "martyrs" themselves beyond oppo-

37 Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*.
38 Patey, "Asserting Difference in Plurality," 53–66; Gutiérrez, "Los mártires de Córdoba," 453–463.
39 Albar, *Vita Eulogi*, 4 and 6, ed. Gil, 332–34.
40 Tolan, "Mahomet et l'antéchrist dans l'Espagne du IXème siècle," 167–180, at 170. Palmer, "The Frankish Cult of Martyrs and the Case of the two Saints Boniface," 326–348.
41 Usuard, *Martyrologium*, ed. Dubois. Nelson, "The Franks, the Martyrology of Usuard, and the Martyrs of Córdoba," 67–80; Christys, "St-Germain des-Prés," 199–216.
42 Cutler, "The Ninth-Century Martyrs' Movement," 329–330.

sition to another religious-cultural group.[43] There is, nevertheless, evidence that cultural conflict and apocalyptic narratives affected some Christian self-identification in the period among those who wrote about the "martyrs".

It is, again, worth reflecting on the situation in the Frankish kingdom to highlight some of the moods in play. Religious difference had become re-politicised in the 830s and 840s after a series of crises, no doubt intensified by the tensions that clouded the last days of Emperor Louis the Pious's reign (813–840) and led to outright civil war in 840–843.[44] The headline crisis was the sack of Paris in 845 by pagan Vikings in an attack that prompted reflections on the providential message of Jeremiah at ecclesiastical meetings in Meaux and Paris.[45] An attack on Rome in 846 by pirates – "Saracens and Moors" (*Saraceni Maurique*) according to Prudentius of Troyes, not that it is clear how he would know – did not help matters, and indeed generated apocalyptic reflection as far away as Constantinople.[46] Anti-Jewish sentiment intensified too, stoked by the shock conversion to Judaism of Bodo-Eleazar, who fled to the relative religious diversity of Spain in 838.[47] Frankish religious culture hardly had a reputation for promoting proto-multiculturalism before all this, and a sense of being under attack by religious others only intensified issues. Many writers turned to prophecy and apocalypse to find ways of conceptualising threats and what they meant for them and their place in the world.[48] The appeal of the Córdoba martyrs in such a context is unsurprising.

The Córdoba movement is remarkable for the sizeable literature it inspired by close friends Eulogius of Córdoba and Paul Albar. Eulogius used New Testament models to promote a negative view of Islam in order to push for more resistance to it amongst his Christian peers. He drew in particular on Second Thessalonians and the Gospels to cast Muḥammad himself as a *precursor Antichristi* and pseudo-prophet.[49] The Córdoba martyrs were here claimed to be justified in their actions for making a stand against evil when many other people were instead led astray by the seductive words of teachers to be conciliatory. In the *Memoriale Sanctorum*, addressed to Paul Albar, he opined that the martyrs "seem to me to be true imitators of the apostle Paul, who said 'if anyone preaches to you other than what you have received, let him be anathema' (Galatians 1:9) [...] They come forth against the Angel of Satan and forerunner of Antichrist, professing widely what is holy, which now

43 Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 104.
44 Palmer, "The Otherness of Non-Christians in the Early Middle Ages," 40–41.
45 *Meaux-Paris*, ed. Hartmann 81–84.
46 *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Waitz, 34. See also here Lankila, "The Saracen Raid of Rome in 846," 93–120 on how the sheer organisation of the raid may have inspired a dramatic reaction among Christians. On the Greek reaction, see Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Traditions*, 77–78.
47 Reiss, "From Aachen to Al-Andalus," 131–57.
48 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 178–183.
49 Eulogius of Córdoba, *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 12–13, ed. Gil, 482–483. Tolan, "Mahomet et l'antéchrist dans l'Espagne du IXème siècle," 174–175.

indeed the whole Church of Spain preaches with voices, although hidden while oppressed."[50] In the *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, he wrote "among all the other authors of heresies [...] [Muḥammad] created, by the instigation of the devil, a sect of new superstitions and separated himself far from the community of the Holy Church."[51] Such language drove home Eulogius' argument that Islam was a heresy to be resisted by the faithful, as Christians and Muslims fought to claim the upperhand in a shared cosmology.[52] The nature of the polemic revealed a different reality, of course: that many Christians were happy to make their accommodations. Eulogius was trying to change the opinions of his fellow Christians, not simply to reflect them.

A crucial ingredient here was the representation of Muḥammad as another *precursor Antichristi*. Eulogius quoted verbatim from a *Vita Muhammadi*, possibly translated from a Greek original, which he had found in Pamplona in the very north of Spain.[53] The purpose of this biography was to denigrate Muḥammad, calling him a "pseudo-prophet" and "heresiarch", before casting aspersions about his sexual morals. It is not apocalyptic except in drawing attention to Muḥammad's status as a pseudo-prophet, which establishes an important key to interpretation: this was not perceived as a clash between two different world religions per se, but still rather something conceptualised as a problem with "internal enemies". Muḥammad, it was argued, had committed Christian sermons to memory in order to subvert them. In a letter, John of Seville drew Paul Albar's attention to the text but amplified the language a little, so that it referred to "the heretic Muhammad, pseudo-prophet of the Arabs, precursor of Antichrist" (*hereticus Arabum pseudoprofetarum sigillus, Antichristi precessor*).[54] As with the first case study, the apocalyptic discourse had its roots in discourse about unity and heresy. Indeed, as Ann Christys has suggested, the whole point of the polemic was to justify the martyrs actions in the face of Christian condemnation, with the attack on Islam designed to bolster the position of Eulogius and Albar in the debate rather than to denigrate Muslims directly.[55] By making Muḥammad a *precursor Antichristi* and heresiarch, as Tolan argued, the debate was given "une place claire et comprehensible dans l'histoire et l'eschatologie chré-

50 Eulogius of Córdoba, *Memoriale Sanctorum*, 1.6, ed. Gil, 375: *Ac per hoc veri imitators Pauli apostolic mihi esse videntur, qui ait: Si quis vobis evangelizaverit praetor quod acceptistis, anathema sit. Cuius testimonii informati oraculis, prosiliunt contra angelum Satanae etiam omnis ecclesia Hispaniae quamquam clandestinis ut oppressa praedicat vocibus.*

51 Eulogius of Córdoba, *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 19, ed. Gil, 487: *Denique inter ceteros post ascensionem Domini haeresum auctores solus hic infaustus novae superstitionis sectam instinctu diaboli condens procul ab ecclesiae sanctae convent descitur.*

52 Tieszen, "From Invitation to Provocation," 21–33.

53 Wasilewski, "The Life of Muhammad in Eulogius of Córdoba," 333–353; Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus*, 62–68.

54 Paul Albar, *Epistulae*, 6.8–10, ed. Gil, 200–201. Collins, "Literacy and the Laity," 109–133, at 121.

55 Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus*, 68.

tiennes, tout en justifiant et glorifiant les martyrs qui s'opposent aux suppôts de l'antéchrist".[56]

Paul Albar, who also wrote letters against Bodo-Eleazar, wrote the highly provocative *Indiculus luminosus* – one part anti-Muslim polemic, one part Gregory the Great-inspired meditation on suffering in Daniel and Job.[57] Throughout, he talked about "the persecution of Antichrist", clearly referring to the perceived treatment of Christians, but also outlining "Antichrist" as a type of enemy in Christian history in the spirit of classic exegesis on the subject.[58] Christians themselves could be tainted by willingly adopting the cultural practices of the Muslims, including circumcision.[59] Rhetorically, picking up on a familiar refrain, anyone who was positioned against Christ was an antichrist. Heresy was crucial to the tapestry of ideas here, as he quoted Jerome: "I consider all heresiarchs to be antichrists; to teach, under the name of Christ, things that are contrary to Christ."[60] This raised the theme of the apocalyptic insider again, by making the perceived persecution of Christians a matter of opposition through internal corruption. Internal corruption could, of course, have external causes, and Paul noted the infections of heresy caused by "doctrines of heretics, philosophers and Jews" (*doctrinis hereticorum philosoforum Iudeorumque*).[61] Heresy was poison to the body of the faithful to Paul, just as it had been to the Frankish critics of Adoptionism a generation earlier.

Strikingly, the one element of prediction concerned not the apocalypse per se, but the end of Arab rule in Iberia. This is a subject on which Paul Albar talked about in relation to (pseudo-)ethnic groups more than elsewhere. He built on Jerome associating Antichrist with Little Horn, and talked about how the Greeks and Franks ("under the name of the Romans", *sub nomine Romanorum*) and the Goths had been laid low.[62] After "a time and times and a half" (Dan. 7:25; Apoc. 12:14), however, the "kingdom of the people of the Ishamaelites" would come to an end. What could this "time of times" mean? Efforts to interpret the phrase in Pseudo-Methodius' *Revelation* had led to the prophecy that rule of the Ishmaelites would end after ten weeks of years in the Syrian version of c. 690 (i.e. 70 years) or seven weeks of years in the early-eighth-century Greek and Latin versions (i.e. 48 years).[63] "Time and times and

56 Tolan, "Mahomet et l'antéchrist dans l'Espagne du IXème siècle," 180.

57 Paul Albar, *Indiculus luminosus*, ed. Gil, 270–315. His letters to Bodo-Eleazar are *Albari Epistulae* 14–20, ed. Gil, 227–270. Kenneth Baxter Wolf, "Muhammad as Antichrist," 3–19.

58 Paul Albar, *Indiculus luminosus*, 3–4, 6, 15, 21, 32–35, ed. Gil, 274–277, 278–279, 287, 293–295, 311–315. McGinn, *Antichrist*, esp. 86.

59 Paul Albar, *Indiculus luminosus*, 35, ed. Gil, 313; Patey, "Asserting Difference in Plurality," 57.

60 Paul Albar, *Indiculus luminosus*, 34, ed. Gil, 313: *Ego reor omnes eresiarcas Antichristos esse et sub nomine Christi ea docere que contraria Christo sunt*. Jerome, *In Evangelium Matthaei*, PL 26.176B.

61 Paul Albar, *Indiculus luminosus*, 27, ed. Gil, 302 (cf PL, 121.543A for the corrected Latin).

62 Paul Albar, *Indiculus luminosus*, 21, ed. Gil, 294; Jerome, *In Danielem*, 4.12.7, ed. Glorie, 941.

63 *Pseudo-Methodius*, 13.2, ed. Reinink, vol. 1, 57 (German translation) and vol. 2, 35 (Syrian); ed. Aerts and Kortekaas, 164 (Greek) and 165 (Latin). On the Syrian version on this point see Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius," 149–187. For comparison with Paul Albar see Tolan, *Saracens*, 91.

a half" was generally understood in the West, following Jerome's commentary, as referring to an approximate 3½ years of Antichrist's persecution.[64] It depends, however, where one wanted to interpret the phrase. In the spirit of the Methodian interpretation – coincidentally or not – Paul Albar multiplied 3½ by 70 to give a length of 245 years for the reign of the Ishmaelites, partly on the basis that they were associated with Antichrist.[65] Demonstrating a command of dating systems, he gives his present year as A.D. 854, 892 in the Spanish Era, and 240 lunar years or 229 solar years according to the Arab calendar, and then calculates that there are 16 years left of this 245 years.[66] This projects a hope for liberation into the future in the year 870. It is left open whether anything more apocalyptic might be expected after that in the vein of Pseudo-Methodius, although the idea of vanquishing the followers of Antichrist would not have been without apocalyptic resonance.

The writings of Eulogius and Paul Albar highlight the complexities of forming Christian identities. For them, there was a clear sense of a defining contrast between Christians and Muslims. Nevertheless, definition was not grounded in religious differences as we would understand them today, with clear doctrinal and theological differences, but rather in the Old Testament anxiety about persecution and related liberation fantasies. It is, again, in many respects like Pseudo-Methodius in this approach to understanding religious difference through a textual lens. Also like Pseudo-Methodius, anxiety was fuelled by debates within Christian communities themselves about acceptable limits of accommodation between different religious groups. With multiple senses of what it meant to be Christian in play, people could appropriate the urgency of fears about heresy with time running short to try to reinforce and define their own position more clearly. In doing so, Eulogius and Albar came closer to contemporary Frankish attitudes than those of many of their contemporaries in Iberia.

4 Looking Outwards: The Prophetic Chronicle

The prophecy of Paul Albar's chronicle leads us the third case study and the so-called *Chronica Prophetica* of 883, most likely written in al-Andalus.[67] It is less a chronicle and more a collection of genealogies and notes that collectively provided a providential framing for Iberian history.[68] That history has the Goths and Saracens

64 Jerome, *In Danielem*, 2.7.25, ed. Glorie, 847.

65 I am not aware of any hard evidence for knowledge of Pseudo-Methodius directly in Spain but Ann Christys has highlighted evidence that suggests similar stories involving a Last World Emperor were in circulation by the eighth century: Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus*, 47–51.

66 Paul Albar, *Indiculus luminosus*, 21, ed. Gil, 294.

67 *Chronica Prophetica*, ed. Bonnaz, 1–9.

68 For a fuller analysis see now Marschner, "The Depiction of the Saracen Foreign Rule in the Prophetic *Chronicle* through Biblical Knowledge."

with lineages stretching back to Genesis, making ethnic identity central to the struggle. On account of its manuscript tradition and the use of epitome chronicles and regnal lists, it has been associated with the less providential *Chronica Albeldensis* of 883; consensus, however, treats that chronicle as a separate, northern work.[69] The particular context of the prophecy is clear: the author-editor expected Alfonso III of Asturias to reconquer the south imminently, harnessing an eschatological-providential mode to express hopes for political liberation.[70] The author records the prophecy that Saracen domination would last 170 years – a figure possibly derived from a gematrical reading of the a cloud in Ezekiel 38 – after which "the peace of Christ would be returned to the Holy Church" (*pax Christi Ecclesiae Sanctae reddatur*).[71] It is significant here that the author turns the particular situation of the Church in Iberia into a wider issue for the whole Church – a part for the whole – as it highlights the universalising tendencies of Christian identity discourse.

As with Eulogius and Paul Albar earlier in the century, the author of the *Chronica Prophetica* used engagement with Muslims to frame his polemic. Indeed, a central point for him is that the Muslims themselves (or so he claimed) believed that their domination of Iberia would last only 170 years.[72] This may connect to a prophecy recounted in the ninth-century history of Ibn Habīb, known through a reworking of 888–891 by his student Yahyā I-Maghāmi, in which the conqueror Mūsā ibn Nusayr (d. 716) predicted the fall of Córdoba within 200 years as part of a series of stories about moral disintegration and the end of time.[73] Ibn Habīb said that there would be 25 rulers of Córdoba, just as there had been 25 rulers of the Visigoths in Spain – after which, Yahyā I-Maghāmi added, he expected a non-Arab ruler.[74] The author of the *Chronica Prophetica* listed 24 rulers up to Muhammad I (r. 852–888), before noting again the expectation of imminent vengeance.[75] Given the explicit reference to Muslim prophecies, it is unlikely that the parallel is mere coincidence.

The strategy of generating identities through genealogies, lists and fragmentary historical notes was far from novel. It can be found explicitly in cases such as Paul the Deacon's *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*, to implicit cases such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.[76] It was also strong in Arab historiographical traditions in the ninth century.[77] This connected with a providential way of viewing Gothic history first set

69 Goméz-Moreno, "Las primeras crónicas," 588. Gil, *Chronica Hispana saec. VIII et IX*, 212. Gil edits the *Chronica Albeldensis* at 437–484.

70 Collins, *Caliphs and Kings*, 54–55. Deswarte, "La prophétie de 883," 39–56, esp. 48–49.

71 *Chronica Prophetica*, 2.2, ed. Bonnaz, 3. Marschner, "The Depiction of the Saracen Foreign Rule in the Prophetic *Chronicle* through Biblical Knowledge."

72 *Chronica Prophetica*, 2.2, ed. Bonnaz, 3.

73 Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 145–147.

74 Ibn Habīb, *Kitab al-ta'rīj*, ed. Aguade, 153. Christys, "The History of Ibn Ḥabīb," 335.

75 *Chronica Prophetica*, 7, ed. Bonnaz, 8–9.

76 On Paul the Deacon see also Reimitz, "Transformations of Late Antiquity," 279–280. On Anglo-Saxon tradition see Moisl, "Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies and Germanic Oral Tradition," 215–248.

77 Christys, "The History of Ibn Ḥabīb."

out by Isidore of Seville in the seventh century. Writing for the Gothic king Sisenand in 624, Isidore rehabilitated the association between the Goths and their potentially negative association with Gog of Magog.[78] He referred ambiguously to Ezekiel's prophecy that Gog of Magog would lead a providential scourge on Israel, but he employed it as part of a tapestry of deep historical points that collectively stressed the vitality of the Goths and the weakness of their Roman predecessors. Such a literary strategy came with an interesting apocalyptic pedigree, because Augustine had been forced to deny that the Goths who disrupted the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries were to be identified with the hordes of Gog and Magog prophesied in Revelation. Isidore was able to defuse this anxiety further by making the one-time apocalyptic outsiders the reformed heirs of Roman dignity.

The strategy of the *Chronica Prophetica* was to strengthen the prophetic identity of the Goths using Isidore's model. The principal difference was that Isidore had written at a time of Gothic strength, whereas the author of the *Chronica Prophetica* was writing in the second century after the conquest of 711. The Goths' loss of Spain was blamed squarely on the Goth's own sinfulness, just as the predicted return of the land to them was blamed on the faithlessness of the Muslims.[79] Although the author claims the authority of Ezekiel's prophecies about Gog for this, the quotations given to not correspond to any of the text in Ezekiel; indeed, the story inverts the narrative, so that Gog is punished and then redeemed, whereas in the Old Testament, Gog is the punishment set upon Israel that is later forced back. In the Chronicle, Gog was no longer the enemy of Israel: typologically, it *was* Israel. Gog and Magog had been fully rehabilitated through their association with the Goths.

The raises powerful issues about the nature of apocalyptic insiders and outsiders. As it was elsewhere, the Muslims' identity was constructed in relation to Sarah, Hagar and Ishmael, to give a sense that they were not complete outsiders to the faith, but rather people who shared some of the lineage of salvation from which they had become separated.[80] Muḥammad himself was given an important role here by the author, who included a variant version of the *Vita Muhammadi* with all its talk of a depraved heresiarch to argue for the Muslims' lack of faith.[81] But again, to place heresy at the heart of Muslim-Christian difference was invoke a sense in which the Muslims could have been insiders, and indeed almost were insiders, because they were subject to the same forces and stories of salvation history. The ambivalence over whether Gog and Magog were attacking peoples or secret enemies within meant that the distinction between insider and outsider was not always clear… except, some would claim, to the careful observer.

78 Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum, Wandalorum, Sueborum*, ed. Alonso, 172. Palmer, "Apocalyptic Outsiders and their Uses in the Early Medieval West," 315.
79 *Chronica Prophetica*, 2.1, ed. Bonnaz, 3.
80 *Chronica Prophetica*, 3, ed. Bonnaz, 3. Tolan, "'A Wild Man, Whose Hand will Be against All'."
81 *Chronica Prophetica*, 4, ed. Bonnaz, 5–6.

5 Conclusion

People define Christian identities fundamentally in relation to the stories and typological patterns of the Old and New Testament. The examples we have encountered above demonstrate different ways in which people could negotiate identities in relation to apocalyptic and related providential concepts. In the first example, longstanding anxieties rooted in Christology debates led to both sides of the Adoptionist Debate meditating on the persecution of the Church and the dangers to unity posed by heresy – an issue closely bound to ideas about Antichrist, because heretics led people astray by proclaiming falsehoods under the banner of Christianity. In the second example, similar core ideas were employed to unsettle accommodation between Christians and Muslims: Islam was portrayed directly as a dangerous heresy associated with Antichrist, and a prophecy of liberation was introduced. In the third example, the issues of heresy and apocalypse were less important, but the providential baggage and the vision of a unified the *sancta Ecclesia* in peace was to the fore. In each case, identities were framed by ideas rooted in meditations on issues of heresy and prophecy – ideas that often resonated strongly with apocalyptic beliefs and rhetoric.

Perceptions of being on the inside, as part of the *sancta Ecclesia*, did not necessarily involve access to special knowledge about when the End might come. Indeed, the only explicit prophecy concerned fantasies about the liberation of Christians from Muslim rule in Iberia. To talk in such terms was to enter a related kind of providential discourse, in which one assessed successes and failures in relation to an ongoing tallying of sins and good works. People could lose God's favour and they could win it back. The process of reflecting on this is understood well as part of historiographical tradition and the creation of ethnic identities. The case studies we have encountered expose useful instances in which different peoples in different situations used a shared, universalising repertoire of ideas to redraw their Christian identities and, in the process, blur the religious and ethnic characteristics of those they perceived as different to themselves. At the same time, they illustrate enough variety even within communities in Iberia and Francia to remind us to be careful about the generalisations we might attempt to make about a "Western apocalyptic tradition". The success of apocalyptic discourse often lies in its flexibility.

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Abbreviations

CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnhout: Brepols, 1966–.
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866–.
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. 1819–.
AA	Auctores antiquissimi
Cap.	Capitularia regum Francorum
EE	Epistulae
SS	Scriptores
SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. sep. ed.	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols. Paris, 1844–1855, 1862–1865.

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Apocalyptic Cosmologies and End Time Actors

Zsóka Gelle

Treasure Texts on the Age of Decline: Prophecies Concerning the Hidden Land of Yolmo, their Reception and Impact

The toponym "Yolmo" appears in Tibetan texts from the fifteenth century onwards and refers to an area near the border of Tibet with Nepal, corresponding to today's Nepalese districts of Sindupalchok and the edge of Rasuwa. Yolmo is described as one of the Hidden Lands (sbas yul) *concealed by Padmasambhava in the eighth century and opened by sNgags 'chang Śākya bZangpo, a famous "treasure-revealer"* (gter ston), *at the beginning of the sixteenth. The first part of this article explores Buddhist cosmology and eschatology, teachings regarding the Age of Decline, and the way these ideas were transferred between cultures and reached Tibet. This discussion provides the wider context for the subsequent analysis of the prophecies attributed to Rig 'dzi rGod ldem, a late fourteenth/early fifteenth century Tibetan treasure-revealer. His prophecies about the End Times warn of foreign invasion and urge people to escape Tibet and find a Hidden Land in the Himalaya to save their lives and preserve Buddhist teachings. Five of these describe the Hidden Land of Yolmo and the way in which it could be transformed into an ideal place to serve as a safe haven for Buddhist practitioners. The third and final part highlights the activities of a Tibetan lama, gTer dbon Nyi ma seng ge, who followed these prophecies in the early eighteenth century and settled in Yolmo.*

According to the rNying ma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, the great Tantric master Padmasambhava and his consort Ye she mtsho rgyal concealed spiritual treasures (*gter ma*) in the eighth[1] century, to be revealed in the future, when conditions were right for their dissemination and practice.[2] They were concealed in the form of texts, religious objects, remote valleys and lands, or as teachings buried in the mind stream of future reincarnations of Padmasambhava's direct disciples.

The valleys and lands concealed for future discovery are called *sbas yul* in Tibetan, "hidden lands", and considered to be places of refuge for Tibetans during foreign invasion or political unrest in an Age of Decline, when the preservation of the Buddhist teaching is in danger. The *sbas yul* is a geographical place, capable of supporting a sizeable population engaged in agro-pastoral work, a bountiful land where resources are plentiful and easily available. It is a place where an idealised

1 All datings refer to CE datings.

2 *gTer ma* or "treasure" became one of the three types of transmission of the rNying ma School, the other two being *bka' ma* (direct transmission from master to disciple in an unbroken line), and *dag snang* (pure vision).

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version of Tibetan society can be sustained far from all the political trouble of Tibet. In a spiritual sense, it is seen as a multi-layered *maṇḍala*, where practitioners can achieve higher realization.[3] My research concentrates on one particular Hidden Land, sBas yul Yol mo gangs ra,[4] the Hidden Land of Yolmo Snow Enclosure, a place identified geographically with a mountainous area in Nepal northeast of Kathmandu, close to the Tibetan border. There are several treasure texts available which describe this locality, how to get there, and how to transform the place into a sacred realm.

Before discussing these treasure texts and their impact, I would like to explore the underlying narrative of Buddhist cosmology, to demonstrate how certain elements emphasized in the treasure texts concerning Yolmo are deeply rooted in the early Buddhist scriptural tradition, and how they were transmitted between cultures, schools, and lineages.

1 The Underlying Narrative

The time of the historical Buddha,[5] Buddha Śākyamuni, is often described as a kind of Golden Age in Buddhist literature. Over the centuries, various predictions and theories developed concerning the duration and decline of the Buddha's teaching, and its final disappearance from the human realm.[6] Different timetables ascribe different numbers of years to the periods of decline, ranging from a minimum of five hundred years to more than ten thousand divided into five-hundred-year periods. The number of five-hundred-year periods that a text posits reflects the historical era

3 Some of the most important contributions by Western scholars exploring Tibetan sources on hidden lands are Reinhard, "Khembalung," 5–35; Bernbaum, *The Way to Shambhala*; Brauen-Dolma, "Milleniarism in Tibetan Religion," 245–256; Orofino, "Tibetan Myth of the Hidden Valley in the Visionary Geography of Nepal," 239–271; Diemberger, "Gangla Tshechu, Beyul Khembalung," 60–72; Diemberger, "Beyul Khenbalung, the Hidden Valley of the Artemisia," 287–334; Ehrhard, "A 'Hidden Land' in the Nepalese-Tibetan Borderlands," 335–364; Ehrhard, "The Role of 'Treasure-Discoverers' and their Writings in the Search for Himalayan Sacred Lands," 227–239; Sardar-Afkhami, "Account of Padma-bkod," 1–21; Sardar-Afkhami, "The Buddha's Secret Gardens;" Childs, "Refuge and Revitalization," 126–158; Huber, "A Pilgrimage to La-phyi," 233–286; Huber, *The Cult of the Pure Crystal Mountain*; Boord, "Pilgrims Guide to the Hidden Land of Sikkim Proclaimed as a Treasure by Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can," 31–53; Mullard, *Opening the Hidden Land*.

4 Tib. *sBas yul Yol mo gangs ra*.

5 Lamotte uses 486 BC as a working hypothesis for the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha. Assuming that he lived for eighty years, his lifetime falls into the second half of the sixth century BC. See Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins to the Śaka Era*, 14.

6 Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 106; Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins to the Śaka Era*, 192.

in which it was written. All texts emphasize that the decline is caused primarily by human agency.[7]

The suttas no. 154–156 of the *Aṅguttaranikāya* list five things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the Dharma. These are when the *bhikkhu*s (monks) do not listen to the Dharma; do not learn the Dharma; do not keep the Dharma in mind; do not examine the meaning of the teaching; and by not understanding it, do not practice it properly.[8] Buddhist texts often warn of the emergence of a desire for possession in monastic communities,[9] which is seen as another cause of decline. There is a sense of crisis in these texts, and a number of innovative practices and doctrines are developed in response to it.

In the frame story of the *Cakkavattisīhanādasutta*[10] ("The Lion's Roar of the Wheel-Turning One")[11] the Buddha urges his monks to cultivate mindfulness, morality, and restraint; however, the main narrative of the text does not mention any monks or the historical Buddha but talks about the moral decline of society in general terms and elaborates on the workings of cause and effect that bring forth the End Times. The main narrative is possibly a more ancient story,[12] which talks about a wheel-turning monarch who stops ruling according to the Dharma. Because of this, his people become poor:

> [...] from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased, from the increase of the theft, the use of weapons increased, from the increased use of weapons, the taking of life increased – and from the increase of the taking of life, people's life-span decreased [...] from eighty thousand to forty thousand years.[13]

The text describes that as a result of numberless unvirtuous deeds, the lifespan of people shortens, and their physical body deteriorates. At the beginning of an intermediate eon (*antarakalpa*) humans live for eighty thousand years, but by the end, in the darkest times, the average lifespan will be only ten years. The final event will be a seven-day war,[14] when swords appear in people's hands and they hunt and kill

7 For a detailed description of different timetables, see Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time,* 27–64 and Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins to the Śaka Era*, 192–198.

8 *Aṅguttaranikāya*, 3.176–180 (5.154–156). See *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, 766–770.

9 See *Aṅguttaranikāya*, 3.108–110 (5.80), 715. The *sutta* states that in the future there will be monks who long for fine robes, good almsfood, comfortable housing, and socialising, and that in order to get these things they will leave their solitary dwellings and move to big cities. It warns monks that they should avoid entertaining these kinds of desire.

10 It is the 26th sutta of the *Dīghanikāya,* 3.58–79. Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 13–15 mentions this briefly in order to prove that cosmic evolution and devolution was assumed by Buddhists from early on. The English translation of the title is from *Thus Have I Heard,* 395.

11 *Dīghanikāya*, 3.58–79 (26).

12 See Gombrich, *How Buddhism Began*.

13 *Dīghanikāya*, 3.68 (26.14) 399–400.

14 The expression used is "sword-interval" or *satthantarakappa* that seems to mark a turning point between two *antarakalpa*s. It is ususally interpreted as a seven-day war. See *Dīghanikāya*, 602, en. 798.

each other. Only the people who manage to hide in thickets of tall grass, dense jungle, forested woodland, inaccessible mid-river islands, or mountain valleys, survive. After the final war, these people will emerge from their hiding places and decide to live virtuously. As they refrain from negative actions, their lifespan increases, and their physical bodies improve as well. When they live again for eighty thousand years, Jambudvīpa[15] will be prosperous; it will have eighty-four thousand cities headed by Ketumatī,[16] the royal capital. At that time a fully enlightened *buddha* will appear named Metteyya (Skt. Maitreya). In the discourse, the Buddha's Dharma of truth, morality and virtue indicates the way to liberation, and it is the basis of order in society, which can be ensured only by the presence of a righteous king. Since there is no *buddha* present in the End Times, the king has to replace him and serve as the "sovereign regulator".[17] When the king is not ruling according to the Dharma, society disintegrates, and the negative actions of living beings give rise to negative processes.

There are notable variants between the texts, but even these very early works share the idea that both external and internal events will show the arrival of the End Times. Some of the external signs are that foreign armies invade India, persecute the followers of the Buddha, destroy *stūpa*s and burn holy texts. Most of the sources mention three foreign kings[18] who will attack India from three different directions: south, north and west.[19] The internal signs of the End Times are also numerous. The most severe is that monks do not observe their vows and there is only a single *arhat*[20] and a single Tripiṭaka master[21] left in the world, but during a quarrel both of them are killed. Thus the Dharma disappears from the world, the sky and earth grow dark, the earth quakes, and a shower of meteors burns everything. Māra and his retinue feel great joy, and a loud voice will be heard in the air: "As from

15 Tib. *'dzam bu'i gling*. According to Buddhist cosmology, the world-mountain Sumeru around which the sun and moon revolve arises in the centre and is surrounded by a vast ocean with four continents in the four directions. The southernmost is Jambudvīpa, the only place where beings can get enlightened by being born as human beings.

16 Identified with today's Benares in India.

17 Apple, "Eschatology and World Order in Buddhist Formations," at 114. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer,* 52.

18 According to the Dunhuang text these three kings are of the *ya ba na, ba lhi ka*, *sha ku na*. They are identified by Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 243 as the kings of the Greeks, Parthians and Śaka. Lamotte translates them as Yavana, Pahlava and Śakas and argues that this refers to a historical event which occured during the last two centuries BC (Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins to the Śaka Era*, 201).

19 Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 239–250.

20 "One who is worthy." Someone who freed himself from the bonds of desire and who will not be reborn.

21 A honorary title given to those who were well versed in the three divisions of the Buddha's teachings: the *sūtra*, the *vinaya* and the *abhidharma*.

today the Saddharma of the Śākya, the great recluse has disappeared."[22] This is how the *Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* describes it,[23] a text which, according to Taiken Kimura, was written around 150 CE.[24]

The *Candragarbhasūtra* is a much later Mahāyāna sūtra which was translated first into Chinese[25] and then into Tibetan. It is treated as a separate work by the Tibetan bKa' 'gyur in its mDo (Sūtra) section.[26] Its narrative opens with the Bodhisattva Candragarbha asking the Buddha: "How will the True Dharma finally disappear, for what reason will it decline, and who will bring it to an end?"[27] The Buddha then recounts the story of the three kings who will invade India, and of the Prince of Kauśāmbī who fights against their armies for twelve years and after his triumph becomes the king. Having killed many people in the war, he wants to purify himself of his sins, and for this reason invites all Buddhist monks to come to his kingdom. The Dharma disappears from other parts of India, and Kauśāmbī becomes its last bastion. Then the king invites an *arhat* and a Vinaya Master (master of monastic discipline) to his court, and when the masters quarrel, the Vinaya master's disciples become angry and, whilst trying to defend their preceptor, kill the *arhat*. Then, in revenge, the Vinaya master is killed, and after a fight in the *saṅgha*, no one remains alive. On seeing the dead bodies, the King of Kauśāmbī becomes so unhappy that he goes blind. His ministers try to please the king by disguising five hundred men as Buddhist mendicants. However, when these fake monks are unable to answer his questions, the king realizes that the Buddha's teaching has disappeared from the world and dies of sorrow. Aside from a few details, the main narrative is very similar to the one found in the *Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra*.

According to the Mahāyāna view, our present age is a *kalpa* of renovation-duration called Bhadrakalpa[28] or "Auspicious Era", when a thousand *buddha*s appear. During the *kalpa* of renovation-duration a *buddha* can appear only during the *antarakalpa*[29] of decrease, and not during the time of increase, when human beings live longer and are too content with life to listen to the teaching of the *buddha*s, or in the final period of decline when the human lifespan is between one hundred and ten years, and humans are too inferior to be able to respond to the teachings.[30] Mahāyāna sūtra, just like other Buddhist literature, urge monks to uphold right con-

22 Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins to the Śaka Era*, 198–200.
23 T 1545, ch. 183, 918a–21b.
24 Buswell and Jaini, "The Development of Abhidharma Philosophy," at 112.
25 T 397, ch. 56, 337b.
26 D 27, *Ka* 176b–177b.
27 Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 240.
28 Tib.: *bskal pa bzang po*.
29 One *kalpa* consists twenty *antarakalpa*s.
30 Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 108.

duct and be diligent in learning and practice in order to keep the Dharma from declining.

The *Candragarbhasūtra* mentioned above became very popular in Tibet. It does not only have an early Tibetan translation found in Dunhuang,[31] but is also included in every edition of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. In addition, the famous historian Bu ston (1290–1364)[32] cited the entire text of the *Candragarbhasūtra* with only a very few abbreviations in his *Chos 'byung* ("History of Buddhism in India and Tibet").[33] In the bKa' thang literature the great treasure finders O rgyan gling pa (b. 1323), Sangs rgyas gling pa (1340–1396) and Padma gling pa (b. 1450) all reproduce the prophecy from the *Candragarbhasūtra*, which in its Khotanese adaptations predicts – instead of a flight to Kauśāmbī, which was overrun by Muslims at the time – an exodus to Khotan (Li yul in Tibetan). However, by the fourteenth century Khotan is no longer a safe haven for Buddhists, and the Li yul ("The Land of Li") mentioned in the prophecy then comes to be identified by Tibetans with Nepal.[34]

In Tibet there are three cosmological systems, the Abhidharma, the Kālacakra and the Great Perfection (rDzogs chen).[35] Although these cosmological systems represent different approaches, they do not contradict each other in Tibetan thought.[36] Nevertheless, the prophecies related to the Hidden Land of Yolmo reflect only the single world universe view of Abhidharma cosmology. Their descriptions of the Age of Decline are very similar to the main narrative of the *Cakkavattisīhanādasutta* in emphasizing that as a result of society's moral decline, human lifespan is shortened, and at the end of the era people need to escape. The *Candragarbhasūtra* also exerted considerable influence; the external and internal signs of the End Times which it predicts are continuously re-interpreted and enriched to reflect contemporary events in Tibet. However, Tibetan texts emphasize that the escape from Tibet is necessary in order to avoid annihilation, and they also stress that the Dharma can be preserved only in Hidden Lands which support practitioners in attaining higher realizations. And instead of talking about *slad ma'i tshe slad ma'i dus* or the "latter times", they identify their present with the *dus lnga brgya tha ma'i tshe*, "the final (or most inferior) five-hundred-year period", when it is time to escape from Tibet.

31 Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 229. IOL J601.1.

32 Bu ston Rin chen grub was the abbot of the Zhwa lu Monastery and an important figure in the production of the foundations for many extant editions of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon.

33 See under Bu ston Rin chen grub, *Chos 'byung gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod* in the bibliography.

34 Sardar-Afkhami, *The Buddha's Secret Gardens*, 59, fn. 64. See Brough, "Legends of Khotan and Nepal," 333–339 for a comparison of legends related to Khotan and Nepal.

35 The Abhidharma and the Kālacakra are two cosmologies developed in India and later transferred to Tibet. The root text of the Abhidharma system is the Abhidharmakośa written by Vasubandhu in the fourth–fifth century CE and translated into Tibetan in the eighth century CE. The root tantra of the Kālacakra system was translated into Tibetan in 1027 CE. Instead of physical cosmology, Great Perfection is concerned more with primordial purity, the fundamental nature of being.

36 A fascinating exposition of these systems is presented by "Jam mgon kong sprul bLo gros mtha yas". The English translation of the text is included in Jamgön, *Myriad Worlds*.

2 Tibetan Treasure Texts on the Age of Decline Concerning the Hidden Land of Yolmo

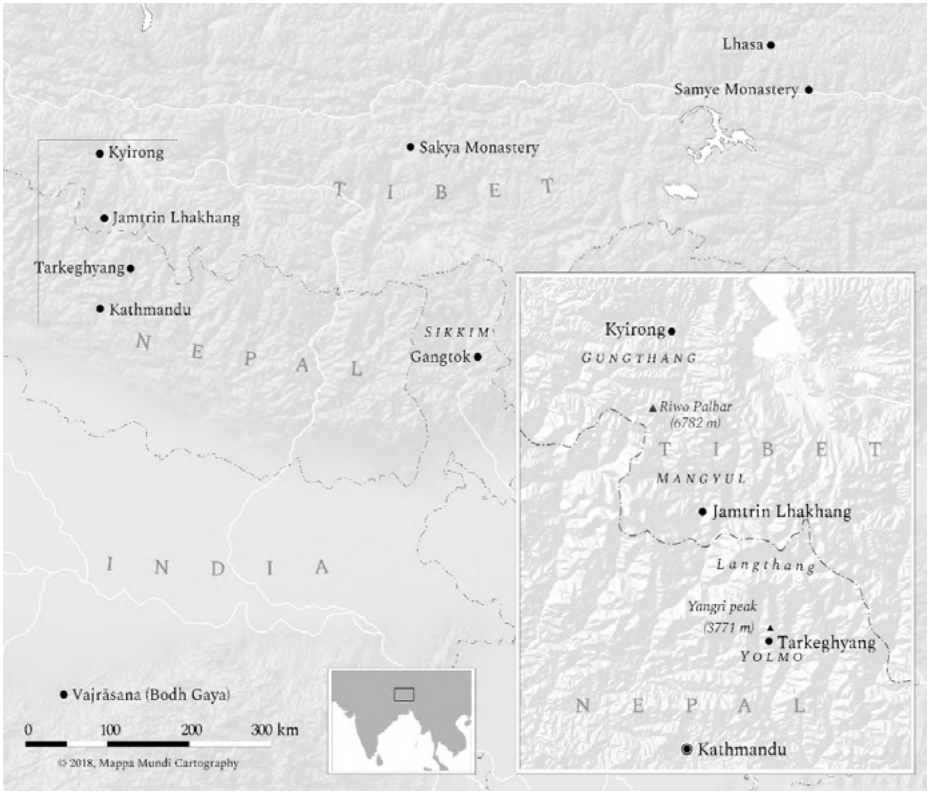

Fig. 1: Map of the Himalayan Asian region

The rNying ma School is considered to be the greatest exponent of the treasure tradition (*gter lugs*),[37] and one of the rNying ma lineages, the Northern Treasure (Byang gter) founded by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem (1337–1408), became particularly famous for

37 However, "treasure transmission" is not exclusive to this school. Most traditional accounts consider Sangs rgyas bla ma, who lived in the eleventh century, to be the first treasure-revealer, but textual accounts show that the treasure tradition becomes popular only from the thirteenth century onwards. See Doctor, *Tibetan Treasure Literature*, 198, fn. 5; Thondup, "The terma Tradition of the Nyingmapa School," 154; Gyatso, "The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Tradition," 99, fn. 5. Sangs rgyas bla ma is mentioned as the first treasure-revealer already by O rgyan gling pa (1323–ca. 1360) in his *O rgyan guru padma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs rnam par thar pa rgyas pa bkod pa padma bka'i thang yig* (*Padma bka' thang shel brag ma*), xylograph from blocks carved in 1966 in Rumtek, preserved at Nyishang Takashar Monastery in the Manang area of Nepal (n.p., 1972), f. 197a.

promoting the concept of Hidden Lands. From the fourteenth century onwards, a wide range of literature developed in Tibet regarding the way to flee to the Hidden Lands, how to identify them, how to open the gate of the sacred place (called respectively *lam byang*, route manual; *gnas yig*, guide-book; and *kha byang*, inventory of treasures[38]), descriptions of how they look (*gnas bshad*), and accounts of what prophecies (*lung bstan*) were given regarding them.

The prophetic texts on Yolmo quoted here all belong to a collection called *Byang gter lugs kyi rnam thar dang ma 'ongs lung bstan* ("Biographies and Future Prophecies of the Northern Treasure Tradition").[39] It consists of altogether twenty-six texts, twenty of them using *gter tsheg*,[40] indicating that they belong to revealed treasures (*gter ma*). The other six texts were composed by different authors and include a supplication prayer, biographies and other works. The copy used for the 1983 edition by the publishers in Gangtok was borrowed from the library of Lama Sengge of Yolmo. Five of the twenty-six texts of this collection are dedicated solely to the Hidden Land of Yolmo Snow Enclosure, and one is a general description of Hidden Lands, *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, which mentions Yolmo frequently. These six texts were included among other Tibetan sources in another collection published by one of the Yolmo lamas, mKhan po Nyi ma don grub (KNYD)[41] in Kathmandu in 2003, and the *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang* was also published in another collection of texts regarding the Hidden Land of 'Bras mo gshongs (Sikkim).[42] All of the six texts are regarded to be hidden treasures, and the colophons of four texts mention that that particular "treasure" (*gter ma*) was extracted at the middle[43] of the northern side of the sacred mountain Zang zang lha brag by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem.[44] One colophon says that the text was hidden in the middle of a rocky mountain that looks like a heap of poisonous snakes,[45] and another simply states that it is a prophecy given by Padmasambhava.[46] Zang zang lha brag is located in the Northern Plain in Tibet (Byang thang). In 1366 Rig 'dzin rGod ldem discovered a

38 A synonymous term is *gter gyi lde'u mig*, "key to the treasures". It contains a list of locations where treasures are found.

39 *Biographies and future prophecies of the Northern Treasure tradition*, ed. Gyalsten and Dawa.

40 In the treasure texts of rNnying ma literature *gter tsheg*, or "treasure sign" is used instead of the *shad* (interpunctuation-marker).

41 The book includes six works by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, two short texts by Bya bral Rin po che and a longer piece by mKhan po Nyi ma don grub.

42 Ma 'ongs lung bstan sbas yul gyi them byang, ed. Buddhist Digital Resource Center.

43 Tib. *sked*, meaning literally the "waist" of the mountain.

44 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup; *Yol mo'i snying byang*, ed. Dondrup; *Yol mo gangs ra'i gnad byang*, ed. Dondrup; *Yol mo gangs kyi ra ba'i lung byang snying gi ṭikka*, ed. Dondrup.

45 *Yol mo'i gnad yig*, ed. Dondrup, 27: *brag ri sdug sbrul spungs 'dra*. A sacred place beneath Mount Bkra bzang where Rig 'dzin rGod ldem made his second treasure discovery. The same text is quoted by the 6th Zhwa dmar pa, who did a pilgrimage to the sacred places of Yolmo in 1629. See Lamminger, "Der sechste Zhva dmar pa Chos kyi dbang phyug."

46 *Sbas pad ma tshal gyi lam yig*, ed. Dondrup.

blue chest there with compartments filled with yellow parchments. The lineage he founded was named "Northern Treasure" after this discovery. The groups of texts were designated by their position, and the five groups (four in the cardinal directions and one in the centre) were named the "Five Treasuries". From the dark brown central cavity, Rig 'dzin rGod ldem extracted his most important revelation, the *Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal* ("Penetration of the Intention of Samantabhadra"), which became the central teaching of the Northern Treasure tradition. This *gter ma* – a rDzogs chen text – was also practiced by the 5th Dalai Lama (1617–1682) and is an important teaching of the rNying ma school even today. According to his biographer,[47] Rig 'dzin rGod ldem was entrusted with another set of treasures by an old hermit living on Mount Bkra bzang called Ri khrod pa bZang po,[48] who, guided by dreams and visions, excavated treasures buried under the threshold of the temple of Grom pa rgyang in gTsang.[49] This set of texts contained the famous *Gsol 'debs le'u bdun ma*,[50] an important prayer attributed to Padmasambhava and said to be concealed by Mu khri bTsan po,[51] destined to protect and reinvigorate the royal line during the time of degeneration. There were also many minor prophecies, certificates and keys (list of locations) to Hidden Lands among the texts, one of them[52] predicting that the treasure master (*gter ston*) will have vulture feathers growing on the crown of his head.[53] According to the text, the protector of the treasures (*gter tshab*) was to be the king of Gung thang, but by the time Rig 'dzin rGod ldem received the treasures, King bKra shis lde had died.[54] His son, Phun tshogs lde (1338–1370) lived in the Sa skya Monastery, and Rig 'dzin rGod ldem visited him, offering him to assume the place of his father as the treasure's protector. However, the young prince and the scholars of Sa skya as residents of a prestigious monastic institution did not look favourably on a village Tantric practitioner like rGod ldem. Apart from the political turmoil of the fourteenth century, with the emergence of wealthy monastic hegemonies like Sa skya, the Old School (rNying ma tradition) with its village-based lay tradition usually centred around a clan patriarch, where the teaching was passed down from father to son, faced a cultural and religious cri-

47 Nyi ma bzang po, a late disciple of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem. See BDRC ID: P8839. The biography titled *sPrul sku rig 'dzin rgod ldem 'phru can gyi rnam thar gsal byed nyi ma'i 'od zer* is also available on the BDRC website under W27603.

48 Also mentioned as gTer ston bZang po grags pa.

49 It is one of the *mtha' 'dul* temples erected in order to suppress the left hip of the demoness. See Sørensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies*, 276–277.

50 See the original text and its English translation at http://www.lotsawahouse.org/topics/leudunma/.

51 Mu khri btsan po, one of the sons of King Khri srong lde btsan.

52 The title of the text is *Snying tig gnad kyi man ngag don bdun*. It is included in the collection of the *Biographies and Future Prophecies of the Northern Treasure Tradition*. W27866: 277–302.

53 This refers to Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, who was born with moles on the top of his head which caused the hair on his crown to look like feathers. His name *rgod ldem* means "vulture feather".

54 He ruled Gung thang between 1352 and 1365.

sis. And while the New Schools (Sa skya, bKa' brgyud, and later the dGe lugs pa) followed the New Tantras of Bengal, the teachings of the Old School were centred around the Tantras from Oḍḍiyāna and the person of Padmasambhava. According to Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's biography, he was able to generate faith in Phun tshogs lde only by performing a wrathful *Vajrakīlaya* (Tib. *rDo rje phur pa*) rite, but even then, the new king offered only one *zho*[55] of gold for his treasure hunt. Rig 'dzin rGod ldem managed to excavate the treasures, a number of guidebooks among them, and meditated for a year with his uncle on the top of Mount Bkra bzang on their meaning.[56] After a difficult fourteen years exploring the Hidden Land of 'Bras mo gshongs, Rig 'dzin rGod ldem finally managed to hand over the treasures to the new king of Gung thang, mChog sgrub lde, who released a royal declaration in 1389 about establishing a patron-priest relationship (*mchod yon*) with Rig 'dzin rGod ldem and his lineage "for as long as the Buddhist teaching lasts". He donated to Rig 'dzin rGod ldem and his descendants the Ri bo dPal 'bar[57] and three Hidden Lands under his sovereignty including their monasteries, hermitages and nomad pastures.[58]

2.1 The Time to Leave Tibet

The *gter ma* texts concerning Yolmo unearthed by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem are all written in dialogue form, similar to the teachings of the Buddha. However, in treasure literature the teacher is usually not Śākyamuni but Padmasambhava, the Indian Tantric master considered to be the second Buddha by Tibetans. He is represented as talking with his disciple Khri srong lde btsan (c. 742–798), the Bodhisattva King of Tibet who, according to rNying ma literature, was the most popular ruler of the glorious Tibetan empire which lasted from the seventh to the eleventh centuries.

The frame narrative is set in bSam yas, the first monastery of Tibet. The king invites Padmasambhava, who is meditating in the nearby mChims phu hermitage,[59] in order to ask him about the Age of Decline and about historical events indicating the advent of the last five hundred years, when it will be time to escape from Tibet.

55 One *zho* is approximately one tenth of an ounce of gold.

56 Sardar-Afkhami, "The Buddha's Secret Gardens," 69–75.

57 A mountain dominating the sKyid rong valley, around 6500 m high.

58 Herweg, "The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can and three Historic Questions Emerging from It," 128–133.

59 The mChims phu hermitage is about 16 km northeast of bSam yas Monastery. According to legend, Padmasambhava bestowed the first Vajrayāna initiation to his eight disciples in one of its caves and gave several teachings there to his twenty-five disciples. The caves today are named after famous yogis who meditated there, one of them being 'Jigs med gling pa (1729–1798), who received the *kLong chen snying thig* transmission there.

2.1.1 External Signs

Padmasambhava's prophecy – similarly to the early Indian sources discussed above – emphasises foreign invasion as the main sign showing that the end of times is drawing close. The Mongols and the Turks are frequently mentioned as invading armies, but these presumably historical events are varnished with so many layers of Buddhist mythology that it is impossible to separate prediction and mythology from historical fact. In a way, this perfect amalgamation is what makes the prophecies work, because it makes them easily identifiable with various historical events of different historical periods. For instance, it says in the *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*: "Māra, the Lord of Pleasure,[60] when looking from the top of Mount Meru in the four directions [and seeing] the general victory of the dark side, will rejoice. Seeing that the teaching of the Śākya is degenerating in the southern Jambudvīpa, Māra will be cheerful. That time Vajrāsana[61] in India will be captured by the Turks,[62] and Māra will throw flower-weapons".[63] At another point the same text notes: "Tibetans all will be defeated by foreign invasion and the Turks."[64] Similarly, the *Yol mo gangs ra'i gnad byang* ("Essential Guide to the Yolmo Snow-Enclosure") states:

> At the end of times, escape the suffering tormenting Tibet! When India and Tibet, the Land of Snow, will be conquered by Māra's army, the Turks, there is a safe valley west of Mangyul and east of Nyanam, between them. Its upper part is cut off by snowpeaks, the lower part by jungle.[65]

60 *Dga' rab dbang phyug*, the chief Māra, the Love God, Kāma. Māra (*bDud*) in Buddhist mythology is a powerful god, who dwells in the highest abode in the desire realm. For the Dharma practitioner, he symbolises one's ego-clinging and preoccupation with the eight worldly concerns.

61 *Rdo rje gdan*, the place where Gautama Siddhārtha attained enlightenment. It is identified with today's Bodh Gayā.

62 *Du ru kha*. This event, when *Du ru kha rgyal po* destroyed the shrine of *Rdo rje gdan*, is part of the mythic history of the black flying *bse* mask of the *Sa skya pa*. See Sørensen and Hazod, *Thundering Falcon*, 284 and Vitali, "Sa skya and the mNga' ris skor gsum Legacy," 26–27. *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup: 3. *de'i tshe bdud dga' rab dbang phyug gis/ ri rab kyi rtse nas phyogs bzhir bltas pas/ phyir nag po'i phyogs kha rgyal nas bdud brod pa skyed lho phyogs 'dzam bu gling pa shākya'i bstan pa nyams pa mthong pas/ bdud snying dga'/ de'i dus na rgya gar rdo rje gdan du ru khas 'dzin pas bdud mtshon cha'i me tog 'thor/*

63 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup, 3: *de'i tshe bdud dga' rab dbang phyug gis/ ri rab kyi rtse nas phyogs bzhir bltas pas/ phyir nag po'i phyogs kha rgyal nas bdud brod pa skyed lho phyogs 'dzam bu gling pa shākya'i bstan pa nyams pa mthong pas/ bdud snying dga'/ de'i dus na rgya gar rdo rje gdan du ru khas 'dzin pas bdud mtshon cha'i me tog 'thor/*

64 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup, 5: *bod kyi mi thams cad mtha' dmag dang du ru kas brlag*.

65 *Yol mo gangs ra'i gnad byang*, ed. Dondrup, 29: *dus tha ma la bod sdug bsngal gyis nyams thag pa rnams der bros shig/ de nas rgya gar dang bod kha ba can gyi yul bdud dmag du ru kas btul ba'i dus na/ nub mang yul la gtad pa/ shar gnya' nam la gtad pa'i bar na phu gangs kyis chod pa/ mda' nags kyis chod pa'i lung pa btsan po gcig yod do/*

The same text, when praising the Hidden Land of Yolmo, says: "It is free of the danger of the Mongolian army and the Turks."[66]

At one point the *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang* provides slightly more detailed historical guidance:

> In Tibet the power of the great king will weaken, and the law will perish. One-hundred and twenty-three years will pass in Tibet without [central] power. Then, the Mongolian Black Mudur (Mu dur nag po) will conquer [Tibet]. One hundred and twenty-five years of Mongolian rule follow. Then the Mongolian rule will perish. Then Tibetans should go to hidden lands.[67]

And later in the same text again: "In Tibet, first, the name of Māra's son will be Go rta nag po."[68] It is difficult to identify Mu dur nag po, but from the line of events it is safe to assume that the second name, *Go rta nag po*, is a misspelling of *rDo rta nag po*, who appears in many other Tibetan sources as one of the generals of the Mongolian army that invaded Tibet in 1240 ("Iron-Male-Mouse Year").[69] After this military campaign the Sa skya school was invested with temporal authority over Tibet by the Mongols, and when Kublai Khan ascended to the throne of China in 1280, the lamas of Sa skya became the preceptors of the Yüan emperor. In spite of his teacher 'Phags pa's protest, Kublai did not want to tolerate any other school than the Sa skya pa. When the Yüan Dynasty fell in 1368, Rig 'dzin rGod ldem was thirty-one years old and had already revealed some important treasures.

The *Yolmo gangs ra'i gnad byang* ("Essential Guide to the Yolmo Snow-Enclosure") refers to an attack on Nepal: "Later, when Nepal is approached by the army of the Turks, [and they stay there for] three years, you must go to the Pu'i li Healing Lake, the land of herbs.[70] Then the time will arrive to capture the land [of Yolmo]."[71] This is the only mention of Nepal being attacked by the Turks, and it can be identified with a historical event, the time when Shansud-Din Iliyas invaded the Kath-

66 *Yol mo gangs ra'i gnad byang*, ed. Dondrup, 31: *hor dmag du ru ka'i dmag gis 'jigs pa las grol lo/*

67 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup 1–2: *bod du mnga' bdag rgyal po'i mnga' thang nyams nas khrims 'jig/ bod la khrims med lo brgya dang nyi shu rtsa gsum yong/ de nas mu dur nag po hor gyis 'dul/ hor khrims lo brgya dang nyi shu rtsa lnga yong/ de nas hor khrims 'jig/ de'i dus su bod sbas pa'i yul du 'gro dgos/*

68 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup 2: *bod du dang po bdud kyi bu go rta nag po bya ba 'byung/*

69 See Dudjom, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 766; Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 78; Shakabpa *Tibet. A Political History*, 61. Childs, "Refuge and Revitalization," 133. Some scholars assume that the names Mu dur nag po and rDo rta nag po refer to the same person; see Sardar-Afkhami, "The Buddha's Secret Gardens," 41, fn. 52.

70 I requested mKhan po Nyi ma don grub to clarify this place name. According to him, it refers to the upper part of Yolmo in general.

71 *Yol mo gangs ra'i gnad byang*, ed. Dondrup, 32: *dus phyi bal po'i yul du du ru ka'i dmag lhags pa dang/ lo gsum phu'i li sman mtsho sman gyi yul du 'gro dgos pa yang yong bas/ dus la babs pa'i tshe yul zungs shig/* The Tibetan word *sman* also has other meanings, it can, for instance, refer to a class of spirits, and the expression *phu'i li sman mtsho sman gyi yul* can also be translated as "[you must go] to the Pu'i li lake of the *sman*, to the land of *sman*."

mandu valley in 1349 with his Turkic army.[72] Curiously enough, it seems that Tibetans are urged by the prophecy to capture borderland areas at a time when Nepal is busy with foreign invasion.

A major event prophesied as a sign of the coming of the End Times is the murder by knife of three kings of Mang yul Gung thang. The *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang* says:

> Oh, great king! When one king of Mang yul Gung thang's line is stabbed with a knife, suffering will start in Upper Tibet. With a second death by stabbing, disaster will start in Tibet. With the third murder, the happiness of Tibet is gone: flee to the hidden lands and southern valleys. At that time, those who make it to the hidden lands will find peace.[73]

Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's biography mentions that King Phun tshogs lde (1338–1370) was murdered with a knife,[74] and quotes several prophecies from earlier texts stressing that the power and faith of the royal lineage is weakened. Because the fate of Tibet depends on the royal descendants of Gung thang, it is important to unearth the treasures in order to protect the royal line and the whole of Tibet.[75] Similarly, in the *Yol mo'i gnad yig* ("Essential Instructions of Yolmo Snow-Enclosure") Padmasambhava gives the following prediction to King Khri srong lde btsan: "When the royal lineage reaches its end in Mang yul Gung thang, the dividing line between happiness and suffering is reached. Obtain the treasure (*gter*) protecting Tibet from suffering!"[76] Western scholars sometimes interpret this prophecy as a reference to the fall of the Gung thang Kingdom in 1620.[77]

The third sign of the End Times is that the royal temples built during the imperial era to pin down the supine demoness lying on the land of Tibet are deserted and in ruins.[78] As the *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang* says:

> Earlier, according to the Teaching, the signs of the end were inconceivable, particularly those signs which show the need to go to the hidden lands. In the temples you established, great king, and the other two kings with an awakened mind,[79] most of the worship will cease, they

72 Childs, "Refuge and Revitalization," 136; Regmi, *Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal*, 312–322.

73 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup, 14: *kye rgyal po stod mang yul gung thang du rgyal po nyid kyi gdung rgyud gcig gri ru bkum pa dang bod kyi sdug 'go 'dzugs so/ gnyis gri ru bkum pa dang bod kyi phung 'go 'dzugs so/ gsum bkum pa dang bod kyi skyid pa zad pas sbas yul dang lho rong la bros shig/ de'i dus su sbas pa'i yul du thar pa rnams la bde skyid 'byung ngo/*

74 Sardar-Afkhami, "The Buddha's Secret Gardens," 76. Herweg, "The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can," 109.

75 Herweg, "The Hagiography of Rig 'dzin Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can," 106–110.

76 *Yol mo'i gnad yig*, ed. Dondrup, 23: *rgyal po nyid kyi gdung rgyud tha ma la mang yul gung thang du 'byung/ de'i dus su bod kyi bde sdug go so mtshams su song bas/ bod kyi sdug bsngal skyob pa'i gter 'di thob par 'gyur ro/*

77 Childs, "Refuge and Revitalization," 142; Regmi, *Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal*, 312–322.

78 For a beautiful image of the supine demoness with the list of temples built on her body, see Sørensen and Hazod, *Thundering Falcon*, 399.

79 The three Dharma kings who established Buddhism in Tibet: Srong btsan sgam po (569–649?/605–649?), Khri srong lde btsan (r. 755–797 or 804) and Ral pa can (806–838).

> will be torn down. In half of the Border Taming (*mtha' 'dul*) and Further Taming temples (*yang 'dul*)[80] worship will stop. In 'On chang rdo[81] a royal emanation will establish a temple in two generations from now. Three hundred and sixty years after the foundation, it will be in ruins and deserted.[82]

Beside these events, floods, earthquakes, fires, famine, and religious repression are also mentioned as signs indicating that it is time to leave Tibet and find refuge on the borderlands in a Himalayan Hidden Land.

2.1.2 Internal Signs

The internal signs of the approaching final five-hundred-year period are the moral decline and disintegration of society, when disturbing emotions poison people's hearts, and the only way to escape the resultant violence is to flee to a Hidden Land. The *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang* portrays this period in the following way:

> The king of Māras will fire seven arrows to Tibet from the top of Mount Meru. As a result, there will be no sun and moon, [and therefore] no year and month on Jambudvīpa. As an external sign, dazzling fire will blaze on the sky. As an internal sign, district chiefs, army commanders, local lords, the ones with greater karmic power are shot by the poison of Māra that makes them kill (*gsod byed kyi dug*). Instantaneously, burning hatred and wild jealousy will arise. As a result of this, they will kill each other, completely annihilate each other.
> Because powerful scholars, spiritual masters, and teachers are shot by the arrow poisoned with delusion (*smyo byed dug mda'*), instantaneously they will feel despair, and become cold-hearted. At that time those who generate mind for practice disparage each other. They turn away from the Dharma and engage in worldly activities. They turn away from practice and rely [only] on words. Half of the country is filled with [people] wearing yellow robes.[83] There are only a few following the Buddha's words.
> The ministers and advisors will be shot by the poison of warfare *('khrug byed kyi dug*). Instantaneously, they become disloyal. As a result, their mind will get confused and want to do even greater wrongs. Rumours not told by some to others, they reveal. Advice that others did not want to give, they will allow.
> There is chaos and civil war in Tibet, and the poison of craving for food (*lto ba'i dug*) will be shot at the men. Tibetan religious men, and [those] not at all religious, and the ones in between, are all barely able to handle the pain. Suddenly steaming hot food appears [in their

80 *Mtha' 'dul dang yang 'dul gyi gtsug lag khang*.

81 King Ral pa can built a temple there, in the lower sKyid chu valley. See Dudjom, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 522.

82 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup: 1–2: *gong du bstan pa bzhin du mtha' ma'i rtags bsam gyis mi khyab bo/ khyad par sbas pa'i yul du 'gro dgos pa'i rtags 'di ltar 'byung/ rgyal po nyid la sogs pa rgyal po byang chub sems ldan gsum gyis bzhengs pa'i lha khang gi mchod pa chag phal cher zhig ral du song/ mtha' 'dul dang yang 'dul gyi gtsug lag khang phyed zhig/ mchod pa 'bul ba rgyun chad 'on chang rdo'i sa phyogs su sprul pa'i rgyal po gcig gis da ste gdung rabs gnyis nas lha khang bzhengs par 'gyur ro/ de bzhengs nas mi lo sum brgya drug cu nas zhig ral du stong par 'gyur/*

83 People pretending to be monks.

mind], and the lust of eating will arise in everyone. They hunt for deer[84] of the higher remote places. They catch fish with arrows. They slaughter their own cattle. They eat red meat. They drink red blood. They put on animal skin. In the End Times[85] they will eat the flesh of [their own] father.[86]

Women are shot with the poison of deceit (*g.yo byed kyi dug*). Instantaneously, their minds become dark and calculating. As a result, they spread bad rumours and slander; fathers and sons quarrel. There will be discord among the local people, masters and servants will disagree, and there will be feud in the family.

When the evil-minded are shot by the arrow of evil actions and deluded mind (*las log blo rgyugs kyi mda'*), instantaneously obsessive greed and craving arises. At that time suddenly people will be killed and robbed of their wealth. They pull out a knife from under the robe. Women will be killed with knives, strangled, their hair pulled out, and heads trashed. Some are buried alive in secret.

Then the poison of killing and stealing life (*srog gcod tshe 'phrog gi bdud*) will be shot on spiritual masters, great practitioners and righteous leaders. The virtuous ones will suddenly feel unhappy and empty. At that time even the root of virtue that was left will be completely wiped out. This is how the seven poisonous arrows of Māra will be shot on Tibet.

Like a small bird carried away by a hawk, Tibetans are not able to focus their thoughts on the same thing but argue with each other. They attack each other and fight, [and this] will last for thirty years. At that time, the virtuous ones, possessing the thought of enlightenment,[87] those having determination and physical strength, an entourage and provisions, if they look for the road and seize the land, by possessing skilful means and recognising favourable circumstances, they will capture all the hidden lands. Border armies and Turks will not be able to massacre these Tibetan people.[88]

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84 *Ri dvags*. Herbivores, such as deer.

85 *Dus tha mar*, referring to the final five hundred years.

86 Cannibalism.

87 Skt.: *bodhicitta*.

88 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup, 3–5: *de'i tshe bdud dga' rab dbang phyug gis/ ri rab kyi rtse nas phyogs bzhir bltas pas/ phyir nag po'i phyogs kha rgyal nas bdud brod pa skyed lho phyogs 'dzam bu gling pa shākya'i bstan pa nyams pa mthong pas/ bdud snying dga'/ de'i dus na rgya gar rdo rje gdan du ru khas 'dzin pas bdud mtshon cha'i me tog 'thor/ bod kha ba can gyi yul du bstan pa'i lhag ma dar la ma smin ba'i dus 'ongs te/ bdud kyi rgyal po des ri rab kyi steng nas dug mda' bdun bod la 'phen te/ de la lo zad zla zad nyi zla'i mdangs 'dzam bu'i gling la med pa'i tshe 'phangs pas/ phyi rtags su ni nam mkha' la me 'od lam lam pa 'ong/ nang rtags su sde dpon dang/ dmag dpon dang/ gtso bo dang/ 'jig rten gyi las stobs che ba rnams la gsod byed kyi dug 'phangs pas/ glo bur du zhe sdang tsha lam lam pa dang phrag dog 'khrug ram ram pa skye/ de'i rje su gcig gis gcig gsod/ gcig gis gcig brlag par 'joms so/ mkhan po slob dpon ston pa/ stobs che ba rnams la smyo byed dug mda' phog pas/ glo bur du snying mi dga' ba dang/ snying grang lhang lhang pa 'ong/ de'i dus su chos byed la sems zhugs te/ gcig gis gcig smod/ chos bor nas 'jig rten gyi las la 'jug/ nyams len bor nas tshig la ltos/ gos ser mo gon pas yul phyed khengs/ ston pa'i bka' bzhin pa re re tsam/ 'khrug byed kyi dug blon po dang gros byed la phog pas/ shes pa rtsi phun pa glo bur du skye/ de'i rjes su blo 'phrul khong skyon che bar 'dod pas pha rol la mi smra ba'i gtam tshur smra/ tshur rol mi 'dod pa'i gros phar slob/ bod nang 'khrug la zing 'gro/ rngam char lto ba'i dug shar po la phog ste/ bod kyi chos pa dang mi chos pa 'bring po thams cad la kha ngal khyog khyog pa/ lto ba tsha chil chil ba glo bur du 'byung/ de'i dus su thams cad la zas skom gyi 'du shes 'dod sred langs ste phu'i ri dwags rngon/ mda'i nya 'dzin/ rang gi phyugs 'og tu bcug ste gsod nus/ sha dmar po za/ khrag dmar po 'thung/ pags pa dmar po 'ding/ dus tha mar pha sha za ba 'byung ngo/ g.yo byed kyi dug bud med la phog ste/ glo bur du shes*

Similar descriptions of varying length can be found in many prophetic texts urging people to move to Hidden Lands. One of the treasure texts giving the longest depiction of the chaotic state of society and morals is the *mChod rten chen po bya rung kha shor gyi lo rgyus thos pas grol ba* ("Legend of the Great Stupa"),[89] unearthed in bSam yas by the same treasure master, sNgags 'chang Śākya bZangpo, who opened the Hidden Land of Yolmo in the early sixteenth century.

2.2 Finding the Hidden Land

The guidebooks, inventories and keys to the Hidden Land of Yolmo give a detailed description of the terrain, the number of peaks and valleys, as well as the local guardians and mountain gods who should be propitiated by the newcomers. They provide information regarding the season during which the land is accessible, which routes lead there, and what kind of dangers can be expected on the way. They also discuss the number of people and the skills necessary to complete the arduous journey. The descriptions sometimes sound like precise instructions for travellers, sometimes like symbolic, dreamlike images suitable only for the spiritually advanced. The *sBas pad ma tshal gyi lam yig* ("Guide to the Lotus Grove") says:

> If you look from bSam yas one-two *yojana*[90] far to the southwest, Yolmo Snow Enclosure shall be [there]. It is also called the Hidden Lotus Grove. Its features are a summit gathering six upland valleys; three connected valleys on the slopes of high snow mountains. It is north of Bodh Gayā, northeast of the city of Li,[91] below Mang yul.[92] It is on a hillside of Buddha Śākyamuni's Lay Follower,[93] on the western slope of the Chief of the Twelve Goddesses.[94] You can see Li

pa rtsi ru ma 'ong/ de'i rjes su phra ma mang po smra ste pho dang bu 'thab tu 'jug/ yul mi nang 'thab/ dpon dang g.yog 'khon/ pha spun nang dme byed pa gcig 'ong/ las log blo rgyugs kyi mda' blo ngan la phog nas glo bur du rngam sems hab khyur ba skye/ de'i tshe glo bur du mi gsod nor 'khyer/ chos gos kyi 'og nas gri 'dzugs/ bud med gri ru 'chi/ dbugs ma chad par 'bal dang mgo rdung byed/ gson po sa rdibs su bskung ba gcig 'ong/ srog gcod tshe 'phrog gi bdud dge ba'i bshes gnyen chos byed dang sde dpon ya rab la phog ste/ dge byed la glo bur du snying tsha stong stong pa 'ong/ de'i dus su dge ba'i rtsa ba ci yod pa mthar mi thon par 'chi/ de ltar bdud kyi dug mda' bdun bod la phog pa dang/ bya phran khras khyer ba ltar/ bod kyi bsam pa phyogs gcig tu mi 'dril bar gcig la gcig rtsod/ gcig la gcig rgol zhing 'khrugs pas/ mi lo sum cu bar du gnas so/ de'i dus na dge byed byang chub kyi sems dang ldan pa/ snying rus lus stobs che ba/ 'khor dang yo byad ldan pa/ thabs dang rten 'brel mkhas pas lam btsal yul bzung na sbas pa'i yul thams cad zin no/ bod kyi mi thams cad mtha' dmag dang du ru kas brlag cing gsod par mi nus so/

89 *mChod rten chen po bya rung kha shor gyi lo rgyus thos pa grol ba*. W00KG09761: 9–54.

90 Measure of distance used in ancient India. Scholars estimate that one *yojana* was equivalent to c. 8–12 km.

91 Kathmandu in this case.

92 sKyid rong valley, Southern Tibet.

93 It refers to dGe bsnyen gLe ru, one of the great mountains and its mountain god.

94 *Bstan ma bcu gnyis*, the twelve goddesses of Tibet.

> yul[95] from there [i.e., from Yolmo]. At the time when people live until sixty, the path is found, and when the lifespan is about fifty, settlements are established, which turn into seven thousand bigger cities.[96]

And the *Yol mo'i snying byang* ("Quintessential Inventory of Yolmo") says:

> [The place] called Yolmo Snow Enclosure is below Mang yul, northeast of the city of Li, south of the snow mountain that looks as if a victory banner is stuck into it, west of the Snowy Yaksha Queen.[97] There are three big valleys. There are three sub-valleys. It takes four days [to travel from the] upper to the lower parts of the valley. There are seven great treasures. Various kinds of herbs grow there. There is healing water in the middle[98] of the land. In the upper part of the valley there is an eightfold glacial stream. There are three big lakes. There are many ḍākinīs[99] and local guardians residing there, therefore bad smell and impurity should be avoided. This place is very fortunate; therefore, longevity, merit, and wealth are in abundance. In the age of dregs obey the command and search for this land![100]

2.3 Righteous Rule and Ideal Society

Geoff Childs has suggested that the primary purpose of Hidden Lands was the preservation of Tibet's imperial lineage by providing a place of refuge for the descendants and patrilineal kin of Emperor Khri srong lde btsan at times when the continuity of the lineage was threatened.[101] He supported his theory by citing examples from Tibetan texts regarding five Hidden Lands: gNam sgo zla gam (Langtang),

95 Refers to Nepal, the Kathmandu valley.

96 *Grong khyer*: city, town, big settlement. In Tibet, even settlements with 30–40 houses are called *grong khyer*. According to mKhan po Rang grol (verbal communication, 2013), a place can be called *grong khyer* if it has at least eighteen workshops like blacksmith, etc. *Sbas pad ma tshal gyi lam yig*, ed. Dondrup, 20–21: *bsam yas nas lho nub tu btsal ba'i dpag tshad gcig gnyis na/ yol mo gangs kyi ra ba zhes kyang bya/ sbas pa padma'i tshal zhes kyang bya ba gcig yod de/ de'i bkod pa ni/ phu drug 'dzoms pa'i yang rtse/ lung pa gsum gyi 'dzoms/ gangs mthon po'i mgul/ rdo rje gdan gyi byang/ grong khyer li'i byang shar/ mang yul gyi gting/ thub pa chen po nyid kyi dge bsnyen gyi mgul/ bstan ma bcu gnyis kyi gtso mo'i nub mgul na yod do/ li yul mthong ba'i sa/ drug cu kha ral la lam rnyed/ lnga bcu'i dus su yul 'debs/ grong khyer bdun stong chags so/*

97 *Gnod sbyin gangs kyi rgyal mo*. Name of a mountain.

98 *Sked*, literally "waist".

99 Tib. *mkha' 'gro ma*, "sky-goer", female spirit.

100 *Yol mo'i snying byang*, ed. Dondrup, 28. *yol mo gangs kyi ra ba zhes bya ba/ mang yul gyi gting/ grong khyer li'i byang shar/ gangs ri rgyal mtshan gtsugs pa 'dra ba'i lho/ gnod sbyin gangs kyi rgyal mo'i nub na/ lung pa chen po gsum yod/ lung phran gsum yod/ lung pa'i phu mda' la nyin lam bzhi yod/ gter kha chen po bdun yod/ sman gyi rigs sna tshogs skye ba yod/ lung pa'i sked na sman chu yod/ phu na gangs chu yan lag brgyad ldan yod/ mtsho chen po gsum yod/ mkha' 'gro zhing skyong mang po gnas pa yod pas/ thab gzhob 'khon grib la 'dzoms/ gnas 'di shin tu bkra shis shing/ tshe dang bsod nams longs spyod thams cad rgyas par 'gyur ro/ snyigs ma'i dus nga'i bka' bzhin bsgrub pa rnams/ gnas 'di tshol cig/*

101 Childs, *Refuge and Revitalization*.

Yol mo gangs ra (Yolmo), sKyid mo lung (near Kutang), 'Bras mo ljongs (Sikkim), and mKhan pa ljongs (in Bhutan and Khumbu), and interpreted parts of Padmasambhava's prophecies as referring to specific historical and political events.[102] Whilst my research on Yolmo has led me to agree with many of Childs' observations, I would like to stress that, according to the texts examined here, the protection of the royal line of Gung thang is entrusted to treasures (*bla gter*) and treasure masters (*gter ston*), and that there is no textual evidence that the royal line should be preserved by relocating its descendants to the Hidden Land of Yolmo.

Out of the six prophecies concerning Yolmo, four mention the importance of a king. As the relevant passages are brief, I will quote them in full:

> 'For going to the hidden lands, a Dharma-protecting king is necessary.'[103]
> 'When there is no king, it is like having limbs without a head.'[104]
> 'In order to subdue the land, the king should be born in the Year of the Ox, Dragon or Tiger; the queen in the Year of the Sheep, Monkey or Bird; the ordained monks should possess knowledge, discipline, and kindness, all three. The Tantrika should keep his *samaya*,[105] the Bon po should not offend the *gsas*[106], and thirteen laymen possessing great physical strength should be present. They should [all] live in harmony, and the kingdom should be governed in accord with the Dharma.'[107]
> 'It is very important for the king to have an awakened mind, the queen to have pure conduct, the Bon po not to offend the *gsas*, and the Tantrika to have transmission.'[108]
> 'In order to take hold of that land [Yolmo], the king must be of the Year of the Ox. [If so,] take it from the north. The queen should be of the Year of the Bird, [if so,] take it from the west. The preceptor should be learned in the Tripiṭaka, [if so,] take it from the east. The Tantrika should be firm in the developing stage [if so,] take it from the northeast. The Bon po should be someone not offending the *gsas*, [if so,] take it from the northwestern direction. The minister should be competent in making arrangements, [if so,] take it from the nearby surroundings.'[109]

102 On the list of Hidden Lands popular in the Northern Treasure tradition see Gelle, *Gter ma a hanyatlás koráról*, 247.

103 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup, 2: *sbas pa'i yul du 'gro ba la chos skyong pa'i rgyal po gcig dgos te/*

104 *Sbas yul spyi'i them byang*, ed. Dondrup, 16: *rgyal po med pas mgo med kyi yan lag 'dra/* It actually refers to the situation of Tibet in the text, but I found it adequate to quote it here, as it reflects the Tibetan view in general as well.

105 *Dam tshig*. Series of vows or precepts.

106 *Gsas* is used for Bon deities in general like *lha* for Buddhists.

107 *Sbas pad ma tshal gyi lam yig*, ed. Dondrup, 21: *btsan po glang 'brug stag lo pa gcig/ btsun mo lug sprel bya lo ma gcig/ dge slong mkhas btsun bzang gsum dang ldan pa gcig dgos/ sngags pa dam tshig dang ldan pa gcig/ bon po bsas ma nyams pa gcig/ skyes pa lus stobs dang ldan pa bcu gsum dgos/ de rnams thugs mthun par byas la/ rgyal srid chos dang mthun par skyongs/*

108 *Yol mo gangs ra'i gnad byang*, ed. Dondrup, 31: *rgyal po byang chub kyi sems dang ldan pa dgos/ bstun pa gtsang spyod dang ldan pa dgos/ bon po bas ma nyams pa gcig dgos/ sngags pa byin rlabs dang ldan pa shin tu ga che'o/*

109 *Yol mo'i snying byang*, ed. Dondrup, 42: *yul de 'dzin pa la btsad po glang gi lo pa gcig dgos te/ byang gi phyogs nas 'byung/ btsun mo bya lo ma gcig dgos te nub nas 'byung/ mkhan po sde snod 'dzin pa gcig dgos te byang shar nas 'byung/ bon po bsas ma nyams pa gcig dgos te nub byang gi mtshams nas 'byung/ blon po bkod la mkhas pa gcig dgos te nye ba'i 'khor bas 'byung ngo/*

As mentioned earlier, our sources list several signs of the arrival of the End Times, such as foreign invasion, the lack of central power in Tibet, chaos and civil war, and the three kings of the Gung thang Kingdom being killed by knife. Still, there is no mention of the Gung thang royal line in the prophecies describing the ideal society to be established when arriving in the Hidden Land. The texts only describe the king in general, someone who protects the Dharma and is a lawful, righteous, compassionate person who ensures that everything functions according to the law. In my opinion, this idea is more likely to derive from the rNying ma sentiment about the Golden Age of the eighth century, when the Bodhisattva King Khri srong lde btsan ruled Tibet and Padmasambhava was his teacher, as well as the image in early Buddhist texts of the Cakravartin, the wheel-turning monarch who rules according to the Dharma, ensuring peace and protection for his people.

2.4 Creating a Paradise on Earth

In the prophecies revealed to Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, Hidden Lands are described as paradise-like regions where people do not age, life is pleasant, and resources are inexhaustible. However, in order to transform them into auspicious places for Buddhist practice, various rites have to be conducted, and *stūpa*s, temples, retreat places need to be built. The prophecies also stress the importance of local mountain deities and their worship by the new settlers.[110]

The *Sbas padma tshal gyi lam yig* ("Guidebook to the Lotus Grove") says:

> On the three plains, there is a grove with lotus flowers, a water mill made of precious stones, all kinds of grains grow. As there are various kinds of plants, there are all kinds of herbivores; and because there is nutritious grass, there are all kinds of four-legged animals. If the killing of wild animals is prohibited, the king [will enjoy] long life. Recite *sūtra*s, [and perform] *sādhana*s of Amitāyus and Uṣṇīṣavijayā.[111] Build four *stūpa*s in the four directions of the path and erect a glorious rice-heap *stūpa* in the centre; that is the way to make a land fortunate.[112] In later times on the upper part seven thousand yak hair tents will be set up.[113] In the lower part seven thousand cities will arise. The teaching of the secret mantra will emerge like a rising sun. There is summer and winter [similar to those experienced in] the city of Li. Protect particularly the Dharma treasures and cattle, horse, sheep in the upper part of the land. On the lower part six grains grow, in the centre the imperial law rules. At the three road-gates market places will be established. Furthermore, because it is a fortunate land, people have the treasure of good health, long life and great wealth. Having the five kinds of precious things is the symbol

110 In the Tibetan cultural realm, from early times, the mountain cult related to the territorial divisions of clan society. The mountain deity was the personal protector of the head of the clan, and when a new territory was captured, its mountain deity had to be propitiated and served. Karmay, "The Tibetan Cult of Mountain Deities and Its Political Significance," 63.

111 Buddhas of long life.

112 By building these *stūpa*s, the holy place will be consecrated.

113 Seven thousand nomadic families will settle here.

> of collected prophetic treasures. If a beast of prey appears in that land, give offering to gLe ru,[114] if a yeti appears, give offering to rDo rje Legs pa, if large and small birds appear, give offering to Cha ti's snow mountain. If you do accordingly, these seven thousand cities will go to the realm of bliss.[115]

And at the end of the same text Padmasambhava says:

> Because sentient beings in general are guided by the five degenerations,[116] may the door of 'Og min,[117] mNgon dga',[118] dPal ldan,[119] bDe chen[120] and Las rab[121] one above the other, the five-peaked Khechara,[122] the Potala[123] and lCang lo can,[124] all the law-abiding hidden lands and similar lands, valleys and mountain ranges, rocky places and cave doors open when people arrive there, and may they all attain the supreme and common *siddhi*[125] without exception! May all beings reach the place of liberation! May they realise the pure land of the three bodies![126]

114 dGe bsnyen gLe ru, one of the mountain deities of Yolmo.

115 Tib. *bDe ba can*, Skt. Sukhāvatī, Amitābha's pure land. *Sbas pad ma tshal gyi lam yig*, ed. Dondrup, 21–22: *thang gsum la me tog padma'i tshal yod/ rdo'i nor bu'i chu thags yod/ 'bru'i rigs kun smin/ sngo kun dang ldan pas ri dwags kun 'du/ rtswa kun bcud dang ldan pas dud 'gro kun 'tsho/ ri rgya byas na rgyal po sku tshe ring/ mdo sgrub dang tshe dpag med gtsug gtor gsung sgrogs/ lam phyogs bzhir mchod rten bzhi rtsigs/ dbus su dpal ldan 'bras spungs mchod rten rtsigs/ de ni yul bkra shis pa'i thabs yin no/ dus phyis phu de la sbra khyim bdun stong chags/ mdo la grong khyer bdun stong chags so/ gsang sngags kyi bstan pa nyi ma shar ba 'dra ba gcig yong/ li yul dang dbyar dgun byed/ khyad par chos gter dang/ phu ru gnag rta lug gsum skyongs/ mdo ru 'bru drug smin/ bar du rgyal khrims chags/ lam sgo gsum la tshong 'dus 'byung/ lar bkra shis pa'i yul yin pas nad nyung/ tshe ring longs spyod gter dang ldan par 'gyur ro/ rin chen sna lnga yod pas gter lung 'dus par brda/ yul der gcan gzan byung na/ gle ru mchod/ mi rgod byung na rdor legs mchod/ bya byi byung na cha ti'i gangs mchod/ de ltar byas pas grong khyer bdun stong bde ba can du 'gro/*

116 Tib. *snyigs ma lnga* (Skt. *pañcakaṣāya*): the fivefold degeneration: 1. *āyuḥkaṣāya* (Tib. *tshe'i snyigs ma*, "degeneration of life"): decline of sustaining life-force, shortening life-span. 2. *dṛṣṭikaṣāya* (Tib. *lta ba'i snyigs ma*, "degeneration of views"): decline in the virtue of renunciants, wrong views. 3. *kleśakaṣāya* (Tib. *nyon mongs kyi snyigs ma*, "degeneration of afflictions"): disturbing emotions, decline of virtue among people. 4. *sattvakaṣāya* (Tib. *sems can gyi snyigs ma*, "degeneration of beings"): decline of body to inferior shape and size. 5. *kalpakaṣāya* (Tib. *bskal pa'i* or *dus kyi snyigs ma*, "degeneration of the era") decline in enjoyments, periods of conflicts. It is quite curious, that only one third of the Tibetan texts writing about *kalpakaṣāya* use *bskal pa snyigs ma* according to the BDRC database, and except works included in the Canon, they are all written after the fourteenth century CE. The other two third of the texts using *dus kyi snyigs ma* range from the eleventh century or earlier to the present times.

117 Skt. Akaniṣṭha realm.

118 Skt. Abhirati. Akṣobhya's pure land.

119 Skt. Śrīmat. Ratnasambhava's pure land.

120 Skt. Sukhāvatī or Mahāsukha. Amitābha's pure land.

121 Skt. Karmaprasiddhi. Amoghasiddhi's pure land.

122 Tib. mKha' spyod. The pure land of Vajra Vārāhī.

123 Tib. ri Po ta la. The pure land of Avalokiteśvara.

124 The pure land of Vajradhara (T. rDo rje 'chang), Vajrapāṇi, Kuvera, Vaiśravaṇa.

125 Mastery over physical forces, "attainments". The common *siddhi*s are the power over lifespan, being able to fly and become invisible, do fast walking, being invincible, moving through solid

The closing words of the *Guide to the Hidden Lotus Grove* quoted here list the Hidden Lands and remote places of yogic practice together with various *buddha*-fields or pure lands, places of unworldly purity that represent the journey of *bodhisattva*s to an enlightened state. It somehow reinforces the idea that Hidden Lands and sacred places can be experienced by their inhabitants at several levels. They are not only ideal places for practice, but on a higher spiritual plane they also represent an enlightened vision that can be attained gradually or non-gradually in this lifetime.

3 Following the Prophecy

During the last centuries the followers of the rNying ma School were often criticised by the other schools (*gSar ma*) for practicing old Tantras and magic. They were often persecuted because of their practices, particularly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the newly converted Mongolian tribes, such as the Qoshot Mongols who were helping the 5th Dalai Lama to unify Tibet (1641), and the Dzungar Mongols[127] who raided Tibet in 1717. Among other rNying ma monasteries, the Dzungars destroyed rDo rje brag,[128] the centre of the Northern Treasure tradition, and killed its abbot Rig ’dzin Padma ’Phrin las (1641–1717). It is known from biographies of Tibetan lamas that during these centuries the treasure texts concerning Hidden Lands unearthed by Rig ’dzin rGod ldem gained great popularity. *Yang ’dul* temples were whitewashed and renovated by treasure masters and yogis and became starting points for trips to the southern borderlands. During their travels, these yogis often stopped for retreats in power places, conducted magic rites to stop foreign armies invading Tibet (*dmag zlog, hor zlog*),[129] and occasionally even settled down in one of the Hidden Lands.

One of these masters was gTer dbon Nyi ma seng ge (1687–1738), whose biography, the *Nges shes ’dren pa’i shing rta* (“Chariot of Certainty”), was recorded by his

objects like walls, power over the beings in the underworld (*nāga*, *mahoraga*, *sa bdag*, etc.), and clairvoyance. The only supreme *siddhi* is buddhahood itself.

126 *Sbas pad ma tshal gyi lam yig*, ed. Dondrup, 22: *snyigs ma lnga bdo’i sems can ’dren pa’i phyir/ ’og min mngon dga’ dpal ldan bde chen dang/ las rab brtsegs pa mkha’ spyod rtse lnga dang/ po ta la dang lcang lo can rnams dang/ tshul mthun sbas pa’i yul dang yul ’dra dang/ rong dang ri ra rdza jom thams cad kyi/ sgo phye ’gro ba mang po der bslebs nas/ mchog thun dngos grub ma lus myur thob shog/ ’gro kun thar ba’i gling du bgrod par shog/ sku gsum zhing khams dag la spyod par shog/*

127 The Dzungar identity was created by different Oirat tribes, who founded the last great nomadic empire in East Turkestan. As newly converted dGe lugs pas, they persecuted both rNying ma and Bon followers. See Karmay, “A Recently Discovered rnam thar of Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od,” 320.

128 One of the six main rNying ma monasteries in Tibet. It was rebuilt after the Dzungar invasion, then destroyed again by the Chinese army in the 1960s. Its renewed reconstruction was begun in 2000.

129 See Gentry, “Representations of Efficacy.”

son 'Phrin las bdud 'joms, the 5th Yol mo ba chen po. According to this account Nyi ma seng ge was born in Mang yul, and not only possessed, but also closely followed Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's prophetic texts discussed above.[130] He was the fifth descendent of bsTan gnyis gling pa, the steward of the Byams sprin Temple in Mang yul, which housed many treasure teachings and as a *yang 'dul* temple was built to pin down the right sole of the demoness' foot.[131] When the Dzungar army reached the district, Nyi ma seng ge decided to go to charnel grounds located in sacred places in order to perform magic practices aimed against the Dzungars. During his travels on the bank of the Nyi ma khud lake[132] in Nepal he saw a miraculous omen and set off to the sacred place of Skye ba lung. He gave donations for the building of meditation huts and founded retreat centres, and on visiting the Kathmandu valley renovated the two great *stūpa*s, the Bya rung kha shor and the Swayambhu (Tib. 'Phags pa shing kun). After his return to Mang yul, plague broke out in the Kathmandu valley, and King Jagajjaya Malla (1722–1734)[133] invited him back to perform Tantric rituals in order to stop the epidemic.[134] After his success, the king granted him land in Yolmo, and this gift was documented on copperplate.[135] During an interview I conducted on clan history in Tarkeghyang village in Yolmo, my informant told me that his clan ancestor was a certain Myes myes Karma dbang phyug of Tongsi village[136] in the sKyid rong area, who accompanied Nyi ma seng ge with his people as his sponsors when he moved to Yolmo, and there was a group from another sKyid rong village travelling with them, who formed the Ayogpa clan, which had already died out in Tarkeghyang. According to his biography, when Nyi ma seng ge arrived with his people in Yolmo, he immediately started to transform the land according to Rig 'dzin rGod ldem's prophecy:

130 GSS.

131 Sørensen and Hazod, *Thundering Falcon*, 399.

132 According to the biography of Padmasambhava included in the *Zab pa skor bdun* (*O rgyan thar dpag bsan ljong shing*) revealed by gTer ston O rgyan mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870), Padmasambhava subjugated the mountain gods (*gnod sbyin*) and the cannibal spirits (*srin po*) at that lake. For an English translation, see Dowman, *The Legend of the Great Stupa*, 70.

133 The ruler of independent Kathmandu during the three kingdom (Pātan, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu) period (1482–1769).

134 Si tu paṇ chen (1699–1774) writes about a delegation of Karma pa lamas being invited by the same king, Jagajjaya Malla, to his Kathmandu court in 1723. When he asked the lamas to perform some kind of miracle to stop the epidemic, they responded that they did not have the ability to perform miracles but would do everything to stop the epidemic. See Verhagen, "Si tu paṇ chen," 328–329.

135 Two copies of these copperplate landgrants were translated and published by Clarke, "A Helambu History," 15–16.

136 In Yolmo his descendants belong to the Tongso clan.

> He was thinking to build a temple. When he looked at the geomantic signs, the precious heart of the place was [a mountain] planted there like a refuge tree,[137] and accordingly, as it was prophesied in the guidebook and the prophetic manual[138] he built [the temple] there on the top of g.Yang ri with great hardships. As it is written in the prophetic manual: 'surrounded by valleys from right and left, in the middle of the offering place there is a marvellous circular mountain top.[139] On the top of that mountain, Ārya Avalokiteśvara's magnificent temple should be built.' There was stone and wood in this place, so he did the cleansing ritual of rDo rje rNam 'joms.[140] They made sure that the direction [of the building] was not wrong. The [building's] measurement was right. There were three [storeys]: upper, middle and lower. In every direction sixteen arms length, and alternately eight, and four. In the manner of the terraces of Mount Meru there were three levels. It was essential [to make it] firm and stable.[141]

The temple was built in the same style as the Mang yul Byams sprin Temple, the place Nyi ma seng ge came from. The main structure and the floors were made of Nepalese red pinewood, the three roofs of the upper, middle and lower floor were covered with slates, and sculptors were invited from gNya' nang to make the statues out of a mix of herbs and clay. The three storeys of the temple housed three shrines, and the inner arrangements and statues also closely followed the description of the prophecy.[142] On the ground floor, there was a Nirmāṇakāya[143] shrine with the statue of an eleven-headed and thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (sPyan ras gzigs). On the middle floor, there was a Sambhogakāya shrine with a three-headed red

137 *Rin chen mchod sdong* can be translated as a *stūpa*, an offering lamp or a refuge tree (*tshogs shing*). The emphasis here is on the shape, which is very similar in all three cases.

138 See *Yol mo gangs kyi ra ba'i lung byang snying gi ṭikka* in the bibliography.

139 In the original prophecy, this is followed by two more sentences (*Yol mo gangs kyi ra ba'i lung byang snying gi ṭikka*, ed. Dondrup, 37: *de'i steng nas phyogs mtshams su bltas pa dang/ mtha' skor na thang gsum yod/*). These are omitted from Nyi ma seng ge's biography, probably because of their lack of relevance to temple building. Otherwise the prophecy is quoted verbatim.

140 Skt. Vajravidāraṇa. It is a consecration ritual during which all construction materials, wood and stones are sprinkled with holy water.

141 GSS 17a–b: *de nas gtsug lag khang zhig bzhengs par dgongs te sa dpyad gzigs pas/ gnas kyi snying po rin chen mchod sdong btsugs pa 'dra ba dbyangs ri'i rtser gnas yig lung byang ltar bzhengs pa la dka' brtsegs shin tu che ba 'dug pa ni/ lung byang las/* (quoting *Yol mo gangs kyi ra ba'i lung byang snying gi ṭikka*, ed. Dondrup, 37) *g.yas g.yon rong gi mchod pa'i dbus na ri rtse zlum brjid bzang ba zhig yod/ ri de'i rtse la 'phags pa thugs rje chen po'i khyad par rmad du byung ba'i lha khang rtsig dgos/de'i sa rdo shing rnams kyang rdo rje rnam 'joms kyi khrus nas bton/ phyogs ma nor bar byas te/ rgya che chung nges pa med/ rab 'bring tha ma gsum ste/ phyogs re la 'dom bcu drug pa'am/ brgyad pa'am/ bzhi ba'am/ ri rab bang rim gyi tshul du rim pa gsum yod pa gcig bzhengs/ de sra zhing brtan pa gal che/*

142 *Yol mo gangs kyi ra ba'i lung byang snying gi ṭikka*, ed. Dondrup, 37–38.

143 The *Trikāya* (Tib. *sku gsum*) or "Three Bodies" doctrine is a teaching on the nature of reality and the nature of buddhahood. Nirmāṇakāya is the body that manifests in time and space, the Buddha's manifestation in the physical world. Sambhogakāya is the enjoyment body of the Buddha that manifests in clear light, either in a vision or in deep meditation. Dharmakāya is the body of Truth that has no limits or boundaries, it is the Buddha-nature's emptiness of conceptualizable essence.

Mahākāruṇika (Thugs rje chen po). The top floor housed a Dharmakāya shrine, where Amitābha's ('Od dpag med) statue was held as the main image.

The prophecy also gave instructions for establishing settlements:

> At the foot of this mountain on the east, there is a plain. Establish a place here for ordained monks and *upāsaka* (lay people), for all the Dharma practitioners. To the southwest there is a plain. Establish a place there for householders and common people. To the north there is a plain. Establish a place there for Tantric practitioners.[144]

In 1723 Nyi ma seng ge founded Tarkeghyang village at the foot of the mountain, and a retreat place named Grub pa sdong on the east. The temple built by him on the g.Yang ri mountain was destroyed after a while,[145] but both the village and the retreat centre are still there, and the wish to fulfil Padmasambhava's prophecy never diminished in Yolmo. Some say that he was the initiator of the custom of annual pilgrimage from the village to the mountain top as well, held on the full-moon day of the second Tibetan month. In the twentieth century Bya bral Rin po che (Sangs rgyas rdo rje, 1913–2015), established further centres of practice, and even opened a Hidden Valley called Bemthang in the north.

4 Conclusion

The cult of Hidden Lands in the Northern Treasure tradition is a very complex topic, and my aim here was only to explore its roots in Indian Buddhist thought and cosmology, and to show how teachings regarding the Age of Decline were transferred through time and between cultures, how the rNying ma tradition utilised Buddhist texts from India and Central Asia translated into Tibetan for formulating its prophecies on Hidden Lands, and how through treasure transmission these texts had an impact on the activities of an eighteenth-century Tibetan lama settling in Yolmo. The purpose of a prophecy is primarily of a moral and salvific nature. As we have seen, the prophetic teachings regarding the Hidden Land of Yolmo provide information about the present situation in Tibet (chaos and moral decline), warn about coming disasters (foreign invasion, natural catastrophes), encourage the right course of action (escape and practice the Dharma in a new and safe place, live a virtuous life), and give a glimpse of possible future realisations (reaching the Hidden Land and live happily, be reborn in a pure land, meet Padmasambhava in the next

144 *Yol mo gangs kyi ra ba'i lung byang snying gi ṭikka*, ed. Dondrup, 38–39: *ri de'i shar phyogs kyi ri 'dabs la thang gcig yod/ dge slong dang dge bsnyen rgyu'i chos spyod pa thams cad kyi gnas gdab/ de'i lho nub phyogs na thang gcig yod/ der skya bo dang dmangs kyi gling gdab/ de'i byang phyogs na thang gcig yod/ gsang sngags bsgrub pa rnams kyi gling gdab/*

145 For details of the temple construction see Gelle, "Jolmó maṇḍala – Horváth Z. Zoltán emlékére," 142.

life). They allow men to exercise free choice, but by describing possible futures, they strongly encourage them to follow the track illuminated by the prophecy. They give hope and comfort to all those whose lives are threatened, or who wish to have better conditions for spiritual practice. Their modernity lies in their relevance, and their relevance lies in their constant reinterpretation.

Instead of a longer summary, I included all the important elements of my argument in a table for further consideration and discussion.

Tab. 1

	Indian prophecies	**Jangter prophecies**	**Nyima Sengge**
1. External causes	3 kings will attack India	When the Mongols and Turks attack Tibet => It is time to escape	Moves to a Hidden Land
2. Internal causes	The five *kaṣāya*s will permeate everything, society will disintegrate	When the five *kaṣāya*s permeate everything, and society disintegrates => Live a virtuous life in a Hidden Land	Establishes a temple village for his people who accompanied him to Nepal
3. State of the Teaching	*Stūpa*s, books will be destroyed, and disciples killed in India	When *stūpa*s, books, temples are destroyed in Tibet, and practitioners killed => Renovate temples and *stūpa*s to delay the end of times in Tibet. In case you have fled already, transform the new land and build places for practitioners	Builds *stūpa*s, temples, retreat centers; starts the tradition of annual pilgrimage
4. Righteous rule and royal lineage	Last representatives of the Dharma and even the last king ruling according to the Dharma dies	When the imperial era is over, and there is no king, only chaos and disintegration => Create an ideal society in a new place	Lives a virtuous life as head of a community of practitioners
5. End of the era	Darkness, Māra laughing	When there is darkness in Tibet and Māra is laughing => Start a new life in a new place under Padmasambhava's protection In the next life you will be reborn in a Pure Land	People survive the bad times in a Hidden Land in safety under Padmasambhava's protection

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List of Abbreviations

BDRC	Buddhist Digital Resource Center
D	Derge (sDe dge) Edition of the Tibetan Canon
GSS	*Gu ru Sūrya Sengge'i rnam thar mdor bsdus nges shes 'dren pa'i shing rta,* (Manuscript photographed by the author in Nepal) fs. 36
IOL	India Office Library
LTWA	Library of Tibetan Works and Archives
PTS	Pāli Text Society
T	Taishō Tripiṭaka

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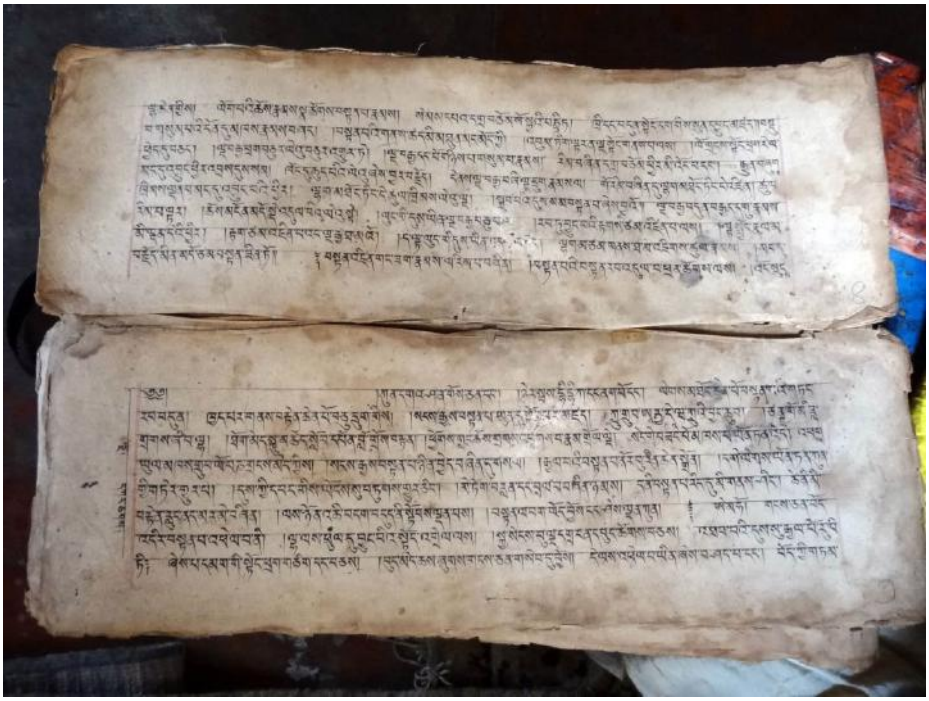

Fig. 2: The Melamchi Karchag mentions the temple built by gTer bon Nyi ma Seng ge, standing on gYang ri peak (© Zsóka Gelle 2012)

Fig. 3: gTer dbon Nyi ma seng ge's statue on the upper floor of Tarkeghyang Gonpa. In 2015 a big earthquake destroyed this temple (© Zsóka Gelle 2012)

Fig. 4: gYang ri peak (3771 m) from the east (© Zsóka Gelle 2010)

Faustina Doufikar-Aerts

Gog and Magog Crossing Borders: Biblical, Christian and Islamic Imaginings

In the realm of eschatology, the history of the apocalyptic peoples Gog and Magog is a world in itself. The Gog and Magog theme plays a role in the eschatological tradition of all three Abrahamic religions. This article revolves around the theme of "crossing borders" – geographical, religious, and temporal borders – and investigates the development and dissemination of this wide-ranging motif in medieval literary as well as religious traditions. It considers the key stages in the evolution of the written testimonies of this motif and its pre-modern afterlife. A detailed analysis of four texts in particular will illustrate the intertwined character of the Gog and Magog motif within the tradition of Alexander the Great and Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions and eschatology.[1]

1 Sources and Transmission

The reconstruction of the origins of the Gog and Magog motif starts with its first occurrence in extant written tradition. It is of significance that the initial manifestation of the names Gog and Magog (with variations) can be found in sacred texts, namely in a number of biblical books. Genesis (Gen. 10:2–4) names the sons (and some of the grandsons) of Japheth: "The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. (3) And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. (4) And the sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim."[2] The names on this list are the ancestors and forefathers of tribes, as is made clear in Gen 10:5: "From these the coastland peoples spread out through their lands, each according to his own language by their own families, in their nations."

Locating these tribes both spatially and temporally became a subject of special interest in the nineteenth century. The supposed habitats of these tribes start turning up on topographical maps of the ancient biblical world. One example is the map in *An Historical Textbook and Atlas of Biblical Geography* by Lyman Coleman, entitled *The World as known to the Hebrews according to the Mosaic account*.[3] In this visual representation, the relevant peoples are shown in the region between ancient

1 This article confines itself to this thematic subject matter. For a full study of Gog and Magog I refer to Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, as well as to Van Donzel and Schmidt, *Gog and Magog*.

2 Biblical citations here are according to the Lexham English Bible (LEB) or NIV, New International Version. These names are also mentioned in Chronicles 1:5–7, but with "Rhodanim" instead of "Dodanim".

3 Coleman, *A Historical Textbook and Atlas of Biblical Geography*, 34.

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Thrace, Asia Minor, the Caucasus and Persia. Coleman's map shows how much attention academics, in particular scholars of the Bible, paid to identifying the tribes mentioned in Genesis 10.

Other passages, both in the Old and the New Testament, also refer to Gog and Magog, namely the passages in Ezekiel (38–39) and in Revelation (20). In Ezekiel 38:1–6 we find a prophecy directed against Gog and other tribes:

> And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying (2) 'Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the head leader of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him. (3) And you must say, 'Thus says the Lord Yahweh: Look! I am against you, Gog, the head leader of Meshach and Tubal, (4) and I will turn you around, and I will place hooks in your cheeks, and I will bring you out and all of your horses and horsemen fully armed, all of them, a great crowd, holding a shield, and small shield, and holding swords, all of them. (5) Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them, with a small shield and helmet. (6) Gomer and all of its troops, Beth Togarmah, the remote areas of the north, and with all of its troops and many peoples with them'.

After further prophetic descriptions of Gog's army and progress, Ezekiel 38:14–16 continues with predictions, particularly about the multitude of Gog's horsemen and their coming from the North:

> Therefore prophesy, son of man, and you must say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord Yahweh: 'Will you not realize on that day when my people Israel are dwelling in safety, (15) and so you will come from your place, from the remote areas of the north, you and many people with you, horsemen all of them, a great crowd and a vast army, (16) and you will advance against my people Israel like a cloud covering the land; it will be in the last days, and I will bring you against my land, so that the nations know me, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes, O Gog!'

In continuation a third passage in Ezekiel 38:18–20 with predictions, particularly about the multitude of Gog's horsemen and their coming from the North:

> 'And so then in that day, on the day of the coming of Gog against the land of Israel', declares the Lord Yahweh, 'My rage will come up in My anger. (19) And in My passion, in the fire of My wrath, I spoke that certainly on that day a great earthquake will be on the land of Israel. (20) And the fish of the sea and the birds of the heaven and the animals of the field and all of the creeping things that creep on the earth and all of the humans who are on the surface of the earth will shake at My presence; and the mountains will be demolished, and the steep mountain sides will fall, and *every wall on the earth will fall*.'

Subsequently, Ezekiel 39:1–3 reinforces the element of the remote areas of the north:

> And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and you must say, 'Thus says the Lord Yahweh: 'Look! I am against you Gog, the head leader of Meshech and Tubal, (2) and I will turn you around, and I will drag you along, and I will bring you up from the remote areas of the north,

> and I will bring you against the mountains of Israel, (3) and I will strike your bow from your left hand, and your arrows from your right hand I will cause to fall.'

Ezekiel 39:6 specifically mentions Magog:

> And I will send fire against Magog and among the people inhabiting the coastlands in safety, and they will know that I am Yahweh.

The last predictions in Ezekiel 39:11 speak about the burial of the hordes of Gog:

> And then on that day I will give to Gog a grave there in Israel, The Valley of the Travelers, east of the sea, and it will block the travelers and Gog and all of his hordes they will be buried there, and they will call it the Valley of Hamon-Gog [= God's multitude].

In the New Testament, Gog and Magog appear in Revelation (20:7–8) in a passage on the defeat of Satan:

> (7) When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be set free from his prison (8) and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. Their number is like the sand of the sea.

From the above, we can observe that the meaning of the names is not stable, but ambiguous. In these early scriptures, Gog and Magog are not always mentioned together. Magog can refer not only to an individual, but also a tribe, and even to the abode of Gog.[4] We may assume, however, that Gomer and Magog, originally the names of the sons of Japheth, provided the basis for the names Gog and Magog that were later used to refer to the tribes of their supposed descendants. The above passages signify the beginning of the long-term presence of Gog and Magog in the minds and consciousness of religious communities. In Late Antiquity, the Gog and Magog motif spread from the Middle East into North Africa and Europe and, later on, into the Islamic world. There is a number of distinctive elements in the above passages on Gog and Magog, such as the vast horde of warriors mounted on horseback that is described as a cloud covering the land, the motif of Gog and Magog described as being as numerous as "the sand of the sea", their release after a thousand-year period as an invasion from the north, and walls crumbling down to the ground. These elements will reappear again and again in various combinations in later stages of the transmission of the Gog and Magog motif.

A key role in the development of the Gog and Magog theme after its first appearances in the Old and New Testaments seem to have played a series of apocalyptic texts, produced mainly in the various seventh-century Syrian Christian communities.[5] These provided an important addition to the theme: the fact that Gog and Magog were sealed off from the world by Alexander the Great behind a barrier with a

4 It may have been considered a prefix *ma* (/*mem*) indicating a *nomen loci* with the implication of "the place where".

gate that would break down at the end of time. These texts, in particular the *Revelationes* by Pseudo-Methodius, spread throughout Christian medieval Europe, mostly as part of histories about Alexander the Great,[6] because the Gog and Magog episode based on Pseudo-Methodius became part of the Byzantine/Greek recensions ε and γ of the *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes that are currently dated to the late ninth and probably post-ninth century, respectively.[7] It also found its way into the *Historia de Preliis* J[2], a twelfth-century Latin recension of the *Alexander Romance*.[8] Moreover, the Latin translation of Pseudo-Methodius' text also attained great popularity in Europe, independantly.[9]

The motif of the enclosure of Gog and Magog and the associated End Times' scenario came to play a prominent role in the Islamic tradition, as I will demonstrate below. In Arabic, Gog and Magog first appear as "Yājūj wa-Mājūj" in the Qur'an.[10] As an illustration of the expansion and scope of this motif across time and space, I would like to draw attention to an early nineteenth-century Javanese poem that includes an End-Time character named Juja-Makjuja, whose name obviously derives from the Arabic form of Gog and Magog, Yājūj wa-Mājūj. According to the poem, the angel (!) Dulkarnèn, following divine commands, tied up Juja-Makjuja with a hundred ropes. However, the latter managed to free himself by licking the cords with his tongue. Eventually, he was put in chains that he could not lick away due to the prayers of the faithful.[11]

This poem from the remote Indian archipelago echoes motifs from what I have coined "the Dhū 'l-Qarnayn tradition".[12] The angel's name in the Javanese poem, Dulkarnèn, is evidently rooted in the Arabic cognomen Dhū 'l-Qarnayn. In the

5 It concerns the *Glorious Exploits of Alexander*, the *Homily* and *Revelations*, to which we will return in the below.

6 *Revelationes* or *Apocalypse* by Pseudo-Methodius. For its influence on Christian eschatology see Garstad, *Apocalypse*, ix–xii. The translation in Garstad of the Greek and Latin translations of the original Pseudo-Methodius in Syriac derive from the edition by Aerts and Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse*.

7 Aerts, "Gog, Magog, Dogheads," 29–30 favours a date for ε of "the (late) 9th century or even early 10th century" and argues that γ originated "considerably later". Georg Trumpf, in "Pap. Berl. 21266," 86, estimates that the composition of ε occurred in the eight/ninth century. Jouanno, *Naissance et métamorphoses*, 338 deems a later date than the late ninth century improbable. Her findings are supported by Moennig, "Alexander the Great," 167.

8 See Pritchard, *The History of Alexander's Battles*, 8. It was also translated into Arabic and twice into Hebrew. See Van Bekkum, *Hebrew Alexander Ms. London*, 119 and Van Bekkum, *Hebrew Alexander Ms. Paris*, 77. In the Hebrew texts the names, Gog and Magog, are not mentioned, but the description fits the characteristics of Pseudo-Methodius.

9 Aerts and Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse*, 31–35. Also see Cross, "The Earliest Allusion in Slavic Literature to the Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius."

10 Q 18:94 and Q 21:96. A variant reading is Yā'jūj wa-Mā'jūj.

11 My paraphrase from the description by Wieringa, "Juja-Makjuja as the Antichrist," 135–136.

12 This tradition was classified and analysed as part of *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, where I gave an overview of the Alexander tradition in the Arabic and Islamic world, linked to the sacred character Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, see Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, chapter 3, 135–193.

Islamic tradition, the identity of the man designated by the epithet Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn – the Two-Horned – in the Qurʾan (18:83) has been much discussed. A rather obscure, but peculiar view is that he might be an angel. Ibn Kathīr (c. 1300–1373) and al-Damīri (1344–1405), for instance, transmit the following in the name of the second caliph, ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb, when they wrote: "However, the most unlikely opinion thereof was that he [Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn] was an Angel. This was said after the Commander of the Faithful, ʿUmar Ibn Al-Khattāb, who heard a man calling another man, saying: 'O Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn!' He [ʿUmar] said: Leave it! Was it not enough for you to name yourselves after the Prophets that you give names after those of the Angels?"[13]

This eccentric *ḥadīth* is probably the source for Dulkarnèn and his angelic status in the poem. According to the interpretation of Edwin Wieringa, who analysed this poem both thematically and structurally, "the Javanese versions of the story of Alexander from the court of Surakarta ends with the episode of Sultan Iskandar's building an iron wall to keep out Gog and Magog".[14] However, "he warns his followers, this barricade will fall when the Day of Judgement is near, because it will be licked by the sharp tongue of Makjuja".[15] In the below I will construe the motif of the licking tongue. This first instance here is to demonstrate that the Gog and Magog motif in the Islamic world came to reach the far-east parts of the world.

Similarly, in another part of the world, in Mali, Gog and Magog can be found in a *vita* entitled *Qiṣṣat Dhī l-Qarnayn*, "the Story of Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn". This *Qiṣṣa*, preserved in an eighteenth-century manuscript from Timbuktu, was discovered and edited only recently.[16] The Islamic epithet Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn became attached to Alexander the Great at an early stage of Islamic literary and religious history.[17] In some versions of the *Story of Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn,* the protagonist was called al-Iskandar Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn. At the beginning of an episode describing the building of the wall to keep out Gog and Magog, we read in the Malinese copy: "And he [Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn] traveled to the site of Gog and Magog, located in between a pair of sleek, high and towering mountains; any bird that would fly over it would not have a chance to survive."[18] The passage refers to the description of Gog and Magog in the Qurʾan 18:93, but it gives more details. A number of manuscripts with texts similar or re-

13 Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidāya*, 95. Slightly different in Damīrī, *Ḥayat al-Ḥayawān*, ed. Houtsma, 17: "And because of that, when ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, heard a man calling: O Dhū' l-Qarnayn!, he [ʿUmar] said: Have you finished now with the names of prophets and are you moving up to the names of angels?"

14 Sultan Iskandar refers to Alexander the Great.

15 Wieringa, "Juja-Makjuja as the Antichrist," 135–136, is citing Ricklefs, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds*, 51–52, 97.

16 The Arabic text of the manuscript was edited diplomatically, including a conversion into Modern Standard Arabic with a French translation by Bohas and Sinno, *Le Roman d'Alexandre*.

17 See Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 135, and "Alexander in Medieval Arab Minds."

18 The passage refers to the description of Gog and Magog in the Qurʾan 18:93. This will be discussed in more detail in the below.

lated to the *Story of Dhū 'l-Qarnayn* were circulating in North Africa and Spain from the ninth century onwards.[19] However, the motif did not only travel in textual form from the Middle East to Timbuktu and Java, it also had a vivid existence in visual representations.

Fig. 1: Page 19 in Ms. *Kitāb Qiṣṣat Dhū (!) al-Qarnayn*. The manuscript from the Mamma Haidara Commemorative Library in Timbuktu has no page numbers and is dated to 1157 AH = 1744 AD (© Mamma Haidara Collection).

19 See Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 50–58, and Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends*, 47–48.

The great impact of the Gog and Magog motif in medieval Europe and the Islamic world is witnessed by their frequent appearance in cartography. Medieval maps of the world frequently indicate the abodes of Gog and Magog and the place of the barrier against them. Gog and Magog are sometimes identified with nations such as Ung and Mongol, Goth and Magoth, the Scythians, Turks or Tatars.[20] For centuries their presence in the remote corners of the world was a recurrent element on maps, a phenomenon extensively described by Andrew Gow. With the increasing empirical knowledge over time about geographical dimensions, the outskirts of the world on maps, shifted further and further away and with them the abodes of Gog and Magog.[21]

By examining several key extant maps in a roughly chronological order, we can observe that the wall or gate of Gog and Magog was a common constituent of cosmographical presentations. The eleventh-century Isidorian *Mappa Mundi*, made by an anonymous map maker, was based on Isidore of Seville's (560–636) schematic tripartite division of the world, the diagrammatic "T and O model" in Book fourteen, chapter two of his *Etymologiae*. It clearly shows a mountain-range with a closed gate to the west of the Caspian Sea, in the extreme north of Asia as it was imagined, which, like on other such maps, is presented on the left.[22]

The unique Anglo-Saxon Mappa Mundi from the Cotton manuscript collection, which dates to the end of the tenth century or slightly later, does seem to be a stylistically independent creation in that it does not follow a known cartographic model; it has an almost square shape and Gog and Magog are situated in the far north on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, located on the left of the map.[23] There is a range of mountains depicted in their territories, but Gog and Magog are not clearly enclosed behind a barrier or gate.

The Sawley Map, also called the World Map of Henry of Mainz, dates from circa 1110; it has an oval form and is oriented with east at the top. In the north, on the left, it shows Gog and Magog plainly enclosed in a square, with a wall constituting the south of the square and the other sides formed by a mountain range.

On the detailed Psalter Map dating from between 1221 and 1250, a long wall with gate is prominently visible. This romanesque art style map, which is ruled by the Christian religious world scheme, with Christ at the head of the image, also situates the enclosure in the north-eastern part of the world, similarly as on other such maps presented on the left.[24]

20 For more suggestions of identification see Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 88–99.

21 See the maps in Gow, "Excerpt from Gog and Magog" and note 28.

22 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Clm 10058, fol. 154v. Images and a survey of world maps depicting the Wall of Gog and Magog can be found in Gow, "Excerpt from Gog and Magog" on http://www.myoldmaps.com/early-medieval-monographs/gog-and-magog-on-mappaemund.pdf.

23 British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius BV.

24 British Library, Add MS 28681. For details see: http://www.myoldmaps.com/early-medieval-monographs/223-the-psalter-mappamundi/223-psalter.pdf.

One of the most famous medieval maps is the Ebstorf Mappa Mundi from circa 1234.[25] The enclosure of Gog and Magog is situated on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea – that is, the opposite shore to where both the Isidorian and Cottonian maps placed it – and shown as a square with a wall on the land side and mountains on the sea-side, similar to the Sawley Map's representation. Remarkably, Gog and Magog are depicted as cannibals.

The latter two maps, and many others for that matter, are constructed according to a religiously defined pattern. At the top of the map, namely the ultimate eastern part of the world, they show Christ, on the Psalter Map also flanked on the left and the right side by angels. Below his hands lies paradise, which is thus located in the east.

Even centuries later, Gog and Magog were still represented on maps, such as on Gerard Mercator's *mappa mundi* from 1569 intended *ad usum navigantium*, for the use of sailors.[26] Here the two nations are situated on opposite sides of a mountain range: the nation on the left is described as *Mongul quae a nostris Magog dicitur* ("Mongul, which we call Magog"), and the area to the right of the mountains is labelled *Ung quae a nostris Gog dicitur,* "Ung, which we call Gog". [27]

Even on early modern maps based increasingly on empirical data, such as Sanson's double hemisphere map of the world from 1691, we can find *Mongal et Magog*, directly beneath the Polar circle in the farthest north-east part of the globe.[28]

The abodes of Gog and Magog were not only to be found on maps from medieval Christian Europe; they were also depicted on Islamic *mappae mundi*. The oldest map of this kind is the *mappa mundi* by Abū 'l-Qāsim Ibn Ḥawqal, an Arab scientist and traveler of the tenth century. He based his maps and his travel reports on his own experiences, and probably also on the works of Ptolemy (second century CE). The map was part of his geographical work, *Ṣūrat al-'Arḍ* ("Image of the Earth"), the oldest extant manuscript of which dates from 1086.[29] Ibn Ḥawqal's map

25 It was made sometime during the tirteenth century out of 30 goatskins. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in the bombing of Hanover in 1943, but has survived in several good facsimiles and photographs. See http://www.landschaftsmuseum.de/Bilder/Ebstorf/Ebstorf-neu_ganz-2.jpg.

26 He drew upon Marco Polo's travelogue, *Il Milione*, written about 1300.

27 Gerritsen, "Gog and Magog," 9: "On the top of the mountains lying north of Ung one can discern two tiny human figures blowing trumpets. The legend explains that they represent the bronze statues of two trumpet blowers which in all probability were erected here by the Tartars, in perpetual memory of the liberty they gained when they crossed over the highest of these mountains on their way to safer regions." The presence of trumpet blowers may have been understood otherwise at the time. It is possible that they were considered to symbolise the sounding of the seventh trumpet blown by the angel at the end of times, in Revelation 11:15–19.

28 Captioned: *Description General du Globe Terrestre et Aquatique en Deux-Plan-Hemispheres*. It was composed by Guillaume Sanson and published by H. Jaillot (Paris, 1674) and is currently being digitised as part of the collection of the Bibliothèque de France.

29 *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi*, ms. A. 3346, fols. 3b–4.

is oriented with south at the top, and he situated the "regions of Gog and Magog" in the northernmost part of the world.

Another example of an Islamic representation of Gog and Magog is the world map by al-Idrīsī.[30] The map, known as Tabula Rogeriana, was created in 1154 at the court of Roger II, the King of Sicily. The map also has south at the top, but is less schematic and slightly more accurate than the map of Ibn Hawqal. All the same, it shows a considerable part of the world behind a mountain range in the most northern region as inhabited by Gog and Magog. Many copies of the map survive, including the Charta Rogeriana ("Weltkarte des Idrisi"), a horizontal elaboration of the map, in a "reconstruction" by Konrad Miller in 1927.[31] The map, which is also situated south-north, depicts Gog and Magog enclosed by a prominent mountain range with fortifications, called the *jabal Qūfāia*.[32] Between the range's northern mountains is a gate with the Arabic caption in Latinised script: *sadd ḏī 'l karnajin, al musamma bi al rad[ ] (radm?)*, "The Barrier of Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, called the Rampart". Miller here used the very words of the Qur'an verses (18:94.95), *sadd* and *radm*, to describe the wall.

Further, on a fifteenth-century Iranian world map, preserved in the anonymous work *Mojmal al-Tawārīkh wa 'l-Qeṣaṣ* ("Compendium of Histories and Narrations"), it is amazing to see that on the left side a considerable part of the globe is confined by a huge wall with gate.[33] According to the caption this is the Wall of Gog and Magog. It is situated in the north-east quarter of the world, on the left of the map which is again oriented south-north. On the map's right side, which shows the southern shore of the Mediterranean, the formidable lighthouse of Alexandria stands on the right bank of the Nile. Its construction was generally attributed to Alexander the Great, but in fact it was built after his death during the Ptolemaic period. The prominence given to these constructions, and their dimensions, which are completely out of proportion, is symbolic for their power and dominance. The way in which the edifices are presented gives the impression that Alexander was responsible for the

30 Abū ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Idrisī al-Qurṭubī (1100–1166); the Tabula Rogeriana was part of his *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fī Ikhtirāq al-Āfāq* ("Book of Pleasant Journeys about Remote Regions"). The famous Cairo copy made by ʿAlī ibn Ḥasan al-Hūfī al-Qāsimī in 1456 is preserved in Oxford's Bodleian Library, ms. Pococke 375 fol. 3v–4. A digitised image can be found at http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~23~23~126595~142784:WorldMap?qvq=w4s:/what/MS.%20Pococke%20375;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=0&trs=70#

31 In the collection of the Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3200.ct001903/?r=0.023,0.279,0.295,0.123,0

32 Possibly Mount Qāf is meant here.

33 *Mojmal al-Tawārikh*, ms. pers. Cod. Heid. orient. 118, fols. 258b–259a, in the University Library of Heidelberg. http://dfg-viewer.de/show/cache.off?id=2&tx_dlf%5Bid%5D=http%3A%2F%2Fdigi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de%2Fdiglit%2Fcodheidorient118%2Fmets&tx_dlf%5Bpage%5D=522 [accessed 18 January 2020]. On the topic "wall versus gate with key!" see Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 159–162.

world's most significant buildings, with the only exception of the Kaʿba, which is situated in the middle.

Fig. 2: *Mojmal al-Tawārikh*, ms. pers. Cod. Heid. orient. 118, fols. 258b–259a (© Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg)

The positioning and demarcation of Gog and Magog in medieval and pre-modern maps is telling. It points to the belief in the genuine confinement of the two nations, somewhere in *terra incognita*, or, to put it in allegorical terms, in "Magogistan". Moreover, the wide geographical and temporal range of these maps' production and the representations is striking evidence of the Gog and Magog motif's long-lived cultural importance.

In this regard it is interesting to examine what instigated this process of dissemination on the medieval world scale. It was briefly mentioned above that a number of Syriac Christian apocalyptic texts played a key role in the development of the Gog and Magog motif. Three of them, which are still extant today, were particularly influential: the anonymous *Neṣḥāna dileh d-Aleksandrōs*, the "Glorious Exploits of Alexander", also known (after Wallis Budge) as the *Christian Syriac Alexander Legend*. Subsequently, a verse version of mainly the same content appeared, the *Memra d-Aleksandrōs* – known as *Homily* or *Discourse* – attributed to Mār Yaqūb of

Serūgh.[34] A third influential text was the *Apocalypse* or *Revelationes* written by the author nowadays known as Pseudo-Methodius.

The first and second of these three texts were composed in the first half of the seventh century, around 628 and 636 respectively, preceding the advent of Islam in their region of origin. Pseudo-Methodius' work dates to the 690s, a decade indeed perceived as an apocalyptic time by many nations and religious communities of the Middle East.[35] These apocalyptic texts all originated in the Syrian Christian communities as reactions to three different events that left indelible traces on the history of the region: the defeat of the Persian King Khosroes II by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius in 628, the conquest of Jerusalem shortly afterwards, in 636, by the new players on the world stage, the Muslims from the Arabian peninsula, and finally, around 692, the building of the Dome or the Rock in that city.

Whilst the texts are anonymous, two of them have been attributed to alleged authors. All three elaborated on the biblical information about Gog and Magog. In a manner of speaking, they excavated, and blew new life into, the role of Gog and Magog as a scourge of mankind at the end of times.

Apart from that, the Syriac tradition, beginning with the *Nesḥāna*, added a completely new element to the motif in the form of Alexander of Macedon, the ancient world conqueror. He becomes the builder of a barrier intended to prevent Gog and Magog, whom the composers or the interpreters of these texts linked to the Huns, from spoiling the earth and harassing its inhabitants. He supposedly built the enclosure with the assistance of three thousand smiths, and also travelled to the impassible Foetid Sea (Ôkĕyânôs) – supposedly in the west – and to the place of sunrise.[36]

Alexander had been associated with fences before, above all in the work of Flavius Josephus.[37] These barriers were variously located in the Caucasus: the Caspian Gates of Derbend and the Daryal Gorge in todays' Georgia. However, the Syriac apocalypses joined together elements that had not occurred in this combination before: Alexander the Great, the Biblical nations of Gog and Magog and the barrier that enclosed them, and eschatological predictions. Some scholars have assumed that this innovative element in the *Neṣḥāna* is bearing on a vision in the Book of Daniel 8:20–24, which was interpreted as a struggle between the Greeks (Alexander the Great) and the Persians that would end in the latter's defeat.[38] Furthermore, the *Neṣḥāna* states that Alexander had horns on his head "wherewith he

34 Texts and translations of both in Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*.

35 See Reinink, "Alexander the Great".

36 Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, 153–156 and 145–148, respectively. The Foetid Sea is the ocean, which according to cosmological perceptions surrounds the inhabited world.

37 Flavius Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 7.7.4. See transl. by Thackeray, *The Jewish War*, 575.

38 (20) "The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. (21) The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. (22) The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. (23) In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have

might thrust down the kingdoms of the world".[39] Alexander also attached an inscription to the gate in the wall he erected, which predicted that Gog and Magog would break loose on God's command at the destined Hour: this refers to the Hour at the end of time.

No less important is the fact that Alexander is presented as a forerunner of the Christian hegemony that will precede the end of time.

This demonstrates that the Syriac tradition of the seventh century elaborated on the biblical apocalyptic notices and worked out complete new dimensions, which formed the beginning of a new stage in the development of the Gog and Magog motif crossing borders.

This is of interest because the second important phase in the history of the Gog and Magog motif is its development in the Islamic tradition. I already mentioned above that Gog and Magog appear in two different Qur'anic verses under their Arabic name Yājūj-wa-Mājūj.[40] In one of these passages, the building of the Wall of Gog and Magog is part of a set of related verses (Q 18:94–100) that, according to one interpretation, may be read as a parable.[41] Although the character of the Qur'anic revelation leaves the narration (*dhikr*)[42] more cryptic than the Syriac accounts, it is nevertheless evident that it includes many elements that we also encountered in the seventh-century Syriac apocalypses. In the Qur'an verses it is the ancient character, referred to as Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, the Two-Horned, who builds the barrier to enclose Yājūj-wa-Mājūj. Nevertheless, even without sharing names, the mutually shared traits of both figures are noticeable. The comparable events and references show similarities, without being identical. This observation was already made in the first centuries of Islam.

Early commentators on these verses and transmitters of Prophetic Traditions already suggested an association between the two.[43] They may have recognised corresponding features, which made them suppose that the Two-Horned was to be identified with Alexander. In the *Biography of the Prophet*, its author, Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767) states that he knows from the accounts of foreigners (*aʿājim*) that Dhū 'l-Qarnayn was a man from Egypt, designated as "the Greek", and that he was from the lineage of Yafeth, son of Noah. Further, Ibn Hishām (d. 828), the transmitter and revisor of Ibn Isḥāq's *Biography*, adds that this person's name was al-Iskandar and that he

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become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. (24) He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people."

39 Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, 146.

40 Qur'an 18:94 and 21:96.

41 Qur'an 18:83–100. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 753.

42 Actually, the rendering of the word *dhikr* in the verse varies in translations: report, account, remembrance, story, history.

43 See Doufikar-Aerts, "Alexander in Medieval Arab Minds."

built the city of Alexandria, which was called after him.[44] Although this allusion is just one of more suggestions he mentions, Ibn Hishām was likely one of the sources which instigated or corroborated the development of the identification of Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn with Alexander the Great.

Whether Ibn Isḥāq and Ibn Hishām were familiar with the Syriac tradition in the form in which it has come down to us cannot be determined with any certainty. However, it is clear that they or other traditionists were familiar with a version of it, because the recurrent descriptions of the features of Gog and Magog in Islamic writings did not derive from the Qurʾan. The only characterisation in the Qurʾan (18:93) is that Gog and Magog "spoil the earth" (*mufsidūna fī al-arḍ*).

Be that as it may, Alexander became part of Islamic tradition and primarily associated with Gog and Magog, and an eschatological narrative. Already before the ninth century the history and image of Alexander became intertwined with the characteristics of the Two-Horned and he was generally named al-Iskandar Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn.

In the following, four texts of different genres will be considered that will serve to demonstrate the close connection of Gog and Magog and other eschatological phenomena with Alexander.

2 Signs of the Hour in Pseudo-Aṣmaʿī

According to Islamic eschatology, there are signs of the end of the world, often referred to as the Hour, *al-Sāʿa*. The signs warning of it are called *ishārāt al-sāʿa* ("Tokens of the Hour"), *ashrāṭ al-sāʿa* ("Conditions of the Hour"), *ʿalāmāt al-sāʿa* ("Signals of the Hour"), and *āyāt al-sāʿa* ("Signs of the Hour"). They are divided in major and minor signs. Some speak of ten major portents and another set of minor signs of the Hour. Other traditions mention seven major portents and up to one hundred minor signs. Major signs shared by many traditions include – apart from natural phenomena, such as fire, smoke and earthquakes – particular encounters, the release of *al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl* ("the Antichrist"), Gog and Magog, the Beast, the *Mahdī* (Messiah), and the return of Jesus, son of Maryam (Mary).[45]

That Alexander became intertwined with the Qurʾanic Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn emerges particularly clearly if we look at Arabic translations of "secular" texts about Alexander from Syriac and Greek. The translation into Arabic of the *Alexander Romance*, a partly historical, partly legendary biography, was the source for Islamic historians' presentations of the history of Alexander. Almost without exception, the Qurʾanic

44 *Sīrat al-Nabī*, Ibn Hishām, Fathi Anwar al-Danuli, Cairo (s.d.), 1.387. Also see above, the remarks about Alexander's reputation as the builder of the lighthouse of Alexandria.
45 See Haddad and Smith, "The Anti-Christ and the End of Time," 512–518.

Dhū ʾl-Qarnayn and the Gog and Magog episode came to form part of these historical accounts.[46]

The passage quoted below comes from a manuscript presenting the work, entitled "Biographies of the Kings and the History of the Persians and the Arabs" by the historian Pseudo-Aṣmaʿī.[47] The text, which will be referred to here as *Nihāya*, is considered to date from before the year 850. The scene describes a dialogue in which Alexander questions the Brahmans, the Indian sages also known as the Gymnosophists or the "naked philosophers" in Greek literature. The story of the encounter with the Brahmans is a very well-known episode from the *Alexander Romance*.[48] Pseudo-Aṣmaʿī gives it a special twist in his text. In addition to the regular, recurring parts of this episode, in this version Alexander also asks the Brahmans about the future of his realm.

> Alexander said: 'Tell me, who will be reigning the kingdom after me?' The Brahmans answered: 'After you will reign the *Mulūk al-Ṭawāʾif* [the petty kings][49], because you will appoint them over all the lands and the regions.[50] Then, after them, the kingdom of Irān Shahr will transfer to the sons of Sāsān[51] the son of King Bahman Isfandiyād, [=Esfandiyār] the son of Bishtāsaf [=Bishtasb] the son of King Luhrāsaf [=Lohrasb]. And he is [the same as] Bukht Naṣr [Nebukadnezzar 1145–1114 B.C.E.][52], and they will reign for a very long period. Then God Almighty will give power in the neighbouring lands to the sons of Ismaʿīl, the son of Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl [the 'God's friend' Abraham], peace be upon them. They now live in the deserts and they feed upon meat and drink milk and they will be in power and conquer the land until the end of time.'[53]
>
> And Alexander asked: 'And how will they attain kingship?' They [the Brahmans] said: 'God Almighty will send to them a virtuous, God-fearing, devout, righteous and merciful man, who observes truthfulness and honesty. Rebukes by any critic do not distract him from the sake of God.'[54]

46 See Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 26, 33–35, 38, 43, 46–48, 60, 68, 72 and chapter 3, 135–193. Several, mainly seventeenth-century manuscripts have surfaced, which contain a redaction of Pseudo-Callisthenes in Arabic. I am preparing a critical edition with translation of what I coined the Quzmān redaction of the Arabic Alexander Romance.

47 Full title: *Kitāb Siyar al-Mulūk al-musammā bi-Nihāyat al-Arab fī Akhbār al-Furs wa l-ʿArab* ("Book of the Biographies of the Kings, entitled *The Ultimate Aim*, on the History of the Persians and Arabs"). My translations of this episode here are based on Cambridge University Library, Ms. Qq. 225, 69v–70r, of which no printed edition has yet been made. The equivalent passage can be found in the Teheran edition, 137–139.

48 See Pfister, "Das Nachleben der Überlieferung;" Stoneman, "Who are the Brahmans?," and Stoneman, "Naked Philosophers."

49 This may be a concept deriving from the reign of the διάδοχοι, the historical successors of Alexander.

50 See Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 108 in particular note 63, 111.

51 Forefather of the Sassanids.

52 This historical dating of Bukht Naṣr is obviously not compatible with this genealogy.

53 It is clear that the author alludes to the Arabians. The prediction in the Syriac apocalypses, claiming this rulership for the Byzantine Empire, seems to have been adapted in view of actual developments by the time of the author.

> His sword is his scourge upon the ones who disobey and he will be given victory over the ones who are hostile, and near and far away he will be feared. And a great deal of people will appear who will renounce the pleasures of this world and long for the hereafter. They bring about glory and are bestowed upon with victory and this will continue until there will rise among them jealousy, and they will develop great desires and there will be much greed, and evil will expand among them and their hearts will be filled with desire for the world and that will be their only concern. Then they will kill each other in such a war that the realm of the birds will fall down upon their realm at the coast of the sea[55] and the world will witness a discord (*fitna*) as it has never witnessed before.
> Then Alexander asked: 'What is the sign of the release of the Antichrist (*al-Dajjāl*)?' They answered: 'There will be many earthquakes, the powerful will be humbled and the despised will be raised and the wells will dry and there will be a shortage of water and people will go through much bloodshed and violate the inviolable (sacred).' Alexander exclaimed: 'Blessed are you, because to you are given moderateness and knowledge.' But the Brahmans said: 'Nay, blessed is the one whom God Almighty safeguarded from the temptations (*fitna*) of the world and who will leave the world unblemished.'[56]
> Then Alexander continued:
> 'I want you to give me good advice.' They answered: 'What use can our morals be, since you are occupied with this world and greedy, without considering the End?' Alexander said: 'Tell me about the Hour (*Sāʿa*) if you have knowledge about it.' They said: 'How can we have knowledge since God most High conceals it from all his creatures, only that certain evil things of mankind point to it.' He said: 'What are the portents (*ashrāṭ*) of the Day of Judgement?' They said: 'The appearance of adultery and usurious interest and the satisfaction of men with men and of women with women. Moreover, there will be excessive arrogance and hypocrisy, the disappearance of fear and piety and the pursuit of worldly matters and the breakoff of kinship and the absence of fear of God from people's hearts.'
> After this conversation Alexander asks the Brahmans what they would like to receive as a gift.
> 'Give us immortality', they reply. Since he cannot fulfill this wish, they ask him: 'If you are mortal yourself, why do you bother conquering the world when you to leave it to others when your time has come?' Alexander responds that he does not act for selfish reasons, and asks rhetorically: 'Don't you know that the waves of the sea would not move unless God sends upon them the winds that set them in motion?'[57]

So far the *Nihāya*'s description of Alexander's dialogue with the Brahmans, who are presented as a strictly ascetic nation.[58] The excerpt clearly includes a large portion of eschatological predictions. Although the initial predictions refer solely to the future rule of Persia, the rest of the prophecies have a general character.[59] They put the history of the world in a holistic perspective of sovereignty and particular Is-

54 This seems to refer to Qur'an 5:54 in a slightly different wording.
55 This is a rather cryptic expression which may indicate that the sky falls down on the earth.
56 The term *fitna*, in the Islamic historical context often indicates the two early events of civil strife. It also means both temptation and discord.
57 See the original phrase in the Syriac version, Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, 92: "For just as the waves of the sea are not lifted up unless the wind blows upon them".
58 For the conversation with the Brahmans, see Doufikar-Aerts, "Give us Immortality."
59 The royal names can be identified as occurring in the *Shahname*, where Lohrāsb is mentioned as the father of Gushtāsp. In Shahrastānī's *Kitāb al Milal*, Lohrāsb is the father of Bishtāsb, to whose

lamic eschatology. There is no mention here of Gog and Magog,[60] but by way of Alexander's conversation with the Brahmans we get a list of signs and portents of the End Times. It is remarkable in itself that all these eschatological issues have been incorporated in the story of the Brahmans, which is unique to the *Nihāya*, as far as I am aware.[61] As to content, it is clear that the passage about the "sons of Isma'īl" living in the desert to whom God "will give power in the neighbouring lands", refers to the Arabians. With the "virtuous, God-fearing, devout, righteous and merciful man, who observes truthfulness and honesty" is obviously meant the Prophet Muḥammad. Moreover, with these predictions Alexander is made a forerunner of these future events.

3 The Signs of the End in the *Muṣannaf*

A second text that deserves our attention is from the *Muṣannaf* ("Literary Work") by an early Islamic authority, 'Abd al-Razzāq al-San'ānī, who died in 827.[62] 'Abd al-Razzāq is also the transmitter of a biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* ("The Book of Expeditions"), which was composed by his teacher Ma'mar ibn Rāshid (d. 770). In the *Muṣannaf*, 'Abd al-Razzāq presents exhaustive traditions about the Mahdī (the Islamic Messiah), the signs of the end of time, Gog and Magog, al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl (the Antichrist) and the return of 'Isā ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary).[63]

The *Muṣannaf* reports of Gog and Magog that they do not die before they have produced an offspring of a thousand descendants.[64] 'Abd al-Razzāq transmits the following information on the authority of his master, Ma'mar, from the father of Ibn Ṭāwūs. [65] In Islamic tradition it is common – and even indispensable for the reliability of the information – that the source, and the chain of the transmitters (*isnād*) is mentioned. The afore-mentioned spokesman, Ibn Ṭāwūs's father, said:

> Jesus, the son of Mary, will come down (on earth) as a guiding prayer-leader (*imām*), doing right and bringing justice. When he comes he will crush the cross and kill the swine and im-

court Zaradusht went in order to convince the king of his revelation. The identification with Bukht Naṣr is unclear; was he a substitute for Zarathustra as another pagan character from a – to the author – nebulous and remote period?

60 The Gog and Magog episode can be found elsewhere in Alexander's history in the *Nihāya*, 76v. Also see Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 157–158 and 163. Grignaschi, "La Nihāyatu-l-'arab," 55–56.

61 See Doufikar-Aerts, "Give us Immortality."

62 Al-San'ānī, *Kitāb al-Muṣannaf*, no. 20843 and no. 20844, ed. al-Az'amī, vol. 2: 400–401.

63 Chapters in the Muṣannaf: Bāb qiyām al-Rūm; Bāb al-Dajjāl; *Bāb nuzūl 'Isā ibn Maryam 'alayhima al-salām*; *Bāb qiyām al-Sā'a*. Al-San'ānī, ed. al-A'zami, vol 11, 385–403.

64 Al-San'ānī, *Kitāb al-Muṣannaf*, no. 20810, ed. al-Az'amī, vol. 2: 385.

65 Al-San'ānī, *Kitāb al-Muṣannaf*, no. 20843, ed. al-Az'amī, vol. 2: 400–401.

> pose the *jizya* [the taxes imposed upon non-Muslims], and the community of believers will be one. He will implement his command on earth until the lion will lay together with the cow, who will take him for a bull, and the wolf will be with the sheep, who will take him for the dog, the poisonousness of venomous beasts will vanish and a man can lay his hand on the head of a snake and it does not harm him, and a girl can put a lion to flight, as a boy who puts a small dog to flight. An Arabian horse will have the value of twenty dirham [presumably, very cheap?] and a bull will cost so and so. The earth will return to its shape at the time of Adam, and a bunch of grapes will feed a whole group of people and the same goes for the pomegranate.

A slightly different account is transmitted in the *Muṣannaf* on the authority of Abū Hurayra.[66]

Both descriptions of the peaceful period initiated by the return of Jesus are reminiscent of the biblical prophet Isaiah's visions: "The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord." (Isa.iah 65:25) and "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them." (Isaiah 11:6).

ʿAbd al-Razzāq also mentions various minor signs of the Hour. "Some of the signs of the Hour are; that knowledge will disappear and that ignorance will appear; that wine will be drunk; that adultery will spread about; that there will be a lack of males and a surplus of women, until there will be fifty women against one man."[67]

Regarding the upheaval at the end of time, ʿAbd al-Razzāq quotes a book on the authority of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, in which it is said that there will be a great battle, during which the King of the Rūm will address his troops saying: "Whosoever has that wish, let him flee, God will bring a turn of fate (*dabra*) upon them.[68] There will be a battle the likeness of which has never been witnessed – or will be seen – and when a bird passes above the heads of these men on the battlefield it will drop down dead, because of their stinking smell."[69]

This particular utterance appears not to be merely a *topos*. A similar statement can be found in relation to the Foetid Sea in one of the above-mentioned Syriac apocalyptic texts, the *Neṣḥāna dileh d-Aleksandrōs*. This passage was included also

66 Page 401, no. 20845. "Security will then cover the earth, so that lions will graze with camels, tigers with cattle, and wolves with sheep. Youth will play with snakes, and these will not harm them. He [ʿIsā] shall dwell in the earth for forty years, then he will die and Muslims will pray over him and bury him," translation Bijleveld, "Eschatology," 40.

67 Al-Sanʿānī, *Kitāb al-Muṣannaf*, no. 20801, ed. al-Azʿamī, vol. 2: 381.

68 This is explained by the editor of the edition as *hazīma* ("defeat").

69 No. 20813, page 387. It may be assumed that he is referring to the smell of the dead bodies. It is not clear whether the cryptic expression about the falling birds in the *Nihāya* implies something similar (see note 55 above).

in the Arabic *Alexander Romance,* probably via an Arabic translation of the *Neṣḥāna*. In the Syriac "original", the sea is described as follows:

> Men are not able to come near to the Foetid Sea, neither can ships sail thereon, and no bird is able to fly over it, for if a bird should attempt to fly over it, it is caught and falls and is suffocated therein. Its waters are like pus; and if men swim therein, they die at once; and the leaves of the trees which are by its side are shrivelled up by the smell of these waters as though fire licked then.[70]

The Arabic version elaborates on this:

> *No bird can fly over it*, because its water is like pus, which spreads a terrible smell, because this is the water through which God punished the people, who perished in the Flood. Their bodies and the bodies of the animals that died at that time lie in its depths. All the beasts and every living soul, birds as well as quadrupeds, perished in it and on its shore the trees remain without leaves, and moreover, they are fruitless and barren by reason of the stench and the nasty smell. You must know that no person, without exception, passes by or he will die and perish, because of the stench and the nasty smell.[71]

The element of the dead bodies added in the Arabic version gives the passage an even more ominous atmosphere by connecting the Foetid Sea with the Flood. Apparently, it circulated more widely, as is shown in a parallel description in the report of another author, ʿUmāra ibn Zayd: "No bird can fly over [the Foetid Sea], because it would instantly fall down in it [...] due to its nasty smell and no living soul could come near without dying." [72]

The characteristics, namely the birds flying over and dropping dead because of the stench, seem too odd and specific to be mere coincidental, which makes one ponder how they can crop up in these descriptions, without being somehow related.

4 Predictions Written on the Gate of Gog and Magog

A third report involving predictions concerning the end of time, an elaborate episode related to Gog and Magog, can be found in the above-mentioned Arabic *Alexander Romance*, *Sīrat al-Malik Iskandar*. Like the description of the Foetid Sea,

70 Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, 145.

71 *Sirat al-Malik Iskandar,* ms. Maadi 14, 163r–163v.

72 My translation from *Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar,* ms. Add. 5928, ff. 2–81, 59r. ʿUmāra ibn Zayd (d. circa 815) is an early transmitter of a legendary biography of Alexander. See Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 35–45.

it derived from the Syriac *Neṣḥāna*.[73] After a description of the horrible features and repulsive conduct of Gog and Magog, the text goes into some detail regarding Alexander Dhū 'l-Qarnayn's construction of the gate in the wall encircling Gog and Magog and a description he affixes to it:[74]

> After he had completed [the building of] the gate he sealed, fortified and strengthened it; he made a coating of phylacteries, which neither iron, nor fire or anything else could erode.[75]
> He wrote a Greek inscription on the gate in lead as he had done on the lighthouse in Alexandria;[76] it said: 'In all ages, times and years the nations [Gog and Magog] will attempt to open the gate. They will try hard, but will not achieve unlocking it. They will even *lick it with their tongues* that are sharp as a snake's tongue, but they will not be able to unfasten it until the time has arrived when God Almighty commands that it shall be opened. This will happen in the year 864 of the final thousand years, when destruction will take place with the extinction of these nations, and the annihilation of the greedy lickers[77] from the whole world, until there is no one left to blow on the fire, neither a dog to water against the wall. At that time sins and crimes will be numerous and the Lord's anger with their deeds will come down upon them. God will send unto them the kings of Yājūj and Mājūj.'
> They will come forth from their remote habitations and they will gather at the gate with their horses and weaponry. They will cry out God's great name and the gate which was made will crumble down; they will not even need a key. The evildoers will come out escaping through the gate. The multitude of their horses' hoofs that run over the threshold of the gate will make the doorsill sink down a large span, and likewise will the gate's upper frame be destroyed by the track of the spearheads. When Yājūj and Mājūj break out this will heralded in all directions of the land of the Rūm, the Persians and Arabians. Then twenty-four thousand kings[78] will come together and destroy a huge number of people until the ground will have become invisible because of the awful bloodshed upon it. Then also the impure nations[79] (?) will break forth and the people will [try to] escape from them.
> Only a few people will deny what I say. If they do not believe me, let them consider the prophecies of Irmiyā (Jeremiah) the prophet. This is another sign, which God has made behind the gate; a huge stone dripping blood on the rocks. The people of these places will come to wash

73 Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, 144–161. This Arabic Quzmān-redaction of the *Alexander Romance*, *Sīrat al-Malik Iskandar*, is for the greater part based on the Syriac *Alexander Romance*, but it includes parts of the Syriac *Neṣḥāna* as well.

74 For the translation of this episode, see Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 158–160.

75 On this phenomenon, see Aerts, "Alexander's Wondercoating," 159–167.

76 See above, the illustration on the worldmap from the *Mojmal al-Tawārīkh*, which demonstrates the dominant place and connectedness of the two constructions. Also see Doufikar-Aerts, "Alexander the Great and the Pharos."

77 The word is spelled differently in the manuscripts and may be corrupt; the variant *al-lāḥisūn* (licking, devouring) seems to make sense in this context.

78 A chiliad of the twenty-four kings spoken of at the initial confinement. In Islamic tradition, like we have seen in the *Muṣannaf*, it is said that the men of Gog and Magog produce at least a thousand offspring before they die.

79 This is not fully clear; the *Neṣḥānā* (Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great*, 155) says: "the kingdom of the Greeks", whereas the Ethiopic text (Wallis Budge, *Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, 241) has "the royal armies". The word "armies" is probably based on Arabic *juyūsh*. However, the Arabic manuscripts have *junūs* – probably a corruption – as a somewhat uncommon plural of *jins*, race.

> their heads with this blood and drink from it. Then they will return to their kinfolk. Thus will God shed the blood of men on the earth, just as the blood which is spilled on the rock.[80]

Gog and Magog licking the Wall in order to demolish it is a familiar element that we already encountered in the Javanese poem above, in which Juja-Makjuja tried to destroy the chains that bind him, by using his tongue. Eventually, he was put in chains that he could not lick away completely, due to the prayers of the faithful. The sharp tongues of Gog and Magog were not part of the Syriac tradition; they first appear in the Arabic texts building on it.[81] In the wake of the expansion of Islam into far away regions this feature of Gog and Magog was transferred over centuries and continents to survive, amongst other places, in the poetry of the Indian archipelago. A detailed analysis of other features of this passage and an in-depth comparison with its Syriac versions unfortunately lie outside the scope of this article. Here it must suffice to point to the characteristics of Gog and Magog, in particular the great number of their hordes, their reputation of annihilators and the crumbling down of the Wall.

5 End Time Predictions in *Dürr-i Meknūn*

In the final section, I will show the intertwined character of the Gog and Magog tradition through a summary of its elements as contained in a fifteenth-century cosmography, entitled *Dürr-i Meknūn* ("Hidden Pearl") and composed by Aḥmed Bīcān in Ottoman Turkish.[82]

> At the end of time, ʿĪsā (Jesus) will receive a revelation and he will bring together the believers at Mount Ṭūr (Sinai). Then two brothers, Gog and Magog, and their companions will tear down the Wall. They have small bodies and small eyes and drooping ears. They will spread all over the earth and roast and eat the people and the animals they find on their way. The first group drinks all the sweet water and the second all the brackish water and the rest can only lick the mud that is left in the swamps. The earth will be covered by them to the extent that birds find no place to land other than on their heads. The shortage of food will be so severe that one sheep is auctioned for a thousand pieces of gold. ʿĪsā encourages the people with good advice. Gog and Magog shoot arrows to the heavens.[83] When ʿĪsā prays to the Almighty, the believers say, 'Amen', and then the Almighty sends an army in the shape of a black horse. The army defeats Gog and Magog. Birds with camel necks drop the bodies into the sea. Then everything becomes cheap [!] and ʿĪsā will crush the idols and he performs the pilgrimage together with the *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*, the 'people of the cave'. Then he goes to Medina and marries an Arabian

80 My translation of the *Sīrat al-Malik Iskandar*, ms. Maadi 14, 173r. The text was transmitted in Coptic circles, but has a hybrid Christian and Islamic character.
81 See Doufikar-Aerts, "Dogfaces, Snake-tongues, and the Wall against Gog and Magog," 47–48.
82 The text was published in an astounding luxury edition by Kaptein, *Ahmed Bican Yazıcıoğlu*.
83 This is reminiscent of Ezekiel 39:3. Shooting arrows into the air is a pre-islamic sooth-saying practice.

> woman and has daughters with her. He will be Sultan for forty years, and then God will bestow upon him His grace and call him to heaven.[84]

Some of the elements in this apocalyptic text are unusual, but other elements, such as depicting Gog and Magog with drooping ears, occur quite regularly, such as in the descriptions by ʿUmāra ibn Zayd and Abū ʿAbd al-Malik[85], but also in the Persian tradition, as can be seen in a lithograph edition of the *Khamse* by the famous twelfth century Persian poet Nezamī Ganjāvī (1141–1209).[86] The vision of the End Times in the *Dürr-i Meknūn* combines an interesting mix of elements. The prominent role of ʿĪsā is worth noting. The prophet Jesus forms an integral part of Islamic eschatological visions. Within this framework, he is depicted as the defender of iconoclasm by his destruction of idols. The People of the Cave (sometimes also called the Sleepers or the Companions of the Cave), mentioned in the Qur'anic verses 18:9–26, are said to be ʿĪsā's companions on his pilgrimage to Mecca. In Islamic exegesis the *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* or Sleepers of the Cave are mostly thought of as being adherents of Christianity, who for that reason were persecuted during the reign of Daqiyānūs, the Roman emperor Decius (201–251 CE). They appear not only in the Islamic tradition but also in eastern and western Christianity as the "Seven Sleepers of Ephesus", who are honoured as martyrs.[87]

In this respect it should also be noted that according to the *Irshād al-Qulūb*, a treatise on ethics written by the fourteenth-century Shi'a scholar Ḥasan Ibn Abī l-Ḥasan al-Daylamī, the Companions of the Cave are to return to assist the Mahdi [Messiah].[88] Furthermore, as ʿĪsā is described as making the pilgrimage to Mecca, it appears that at the end of time, he is part of the *umma*, the community of Muslim believers, or that all Christians, with him, have joined the *umma*.

The innumerable multitude of Gog and Magog's hordes is visualised here by the image of birds finding nowhere to land, except on the heads of the marauders, because they completely cover the place. The image can be traced back to the biblical descriptions quoted above: Ezekiel's description of Gog "cover[ing] the land like a cloud", and the Book of Revelation's saying about Gog and Magog that "their number is like the sand of the sea".

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84 My paraphrase on the basis of Kaptein's Dutch translation of manuscript pages 152r–152v of *Dürri Meknūn, Eindtijd en Antichrist (ad-Dağğāl) in de Islam*, *Eschatologie bij Aḥmed Bīcān*, 187–189.

85 ʿUmāra ibn Zayd, *Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar* and Abū ʿAbd al-Malik (possibly second half of the ninth cent.), *Qiṣṣat Dhī 'l-Qarnayn*, see Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 166–167. Also see above, note 72.

86 Reproduction in Seyed-Gohrab, Doufikar-Aerts, McGlinn, eds., *Gog and Magog, The Clans of Chaos*, 122. For a description of the physical characteristics of Gog and Magog, see Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, §3.6.2, 163–168.

87 There is a wide-spread literature on *martyria* in Syriac, Greek and Latin as well as pictorial manifestations. A number of relics and several shrines were venerated as the assumed Cave.

88 *Irshād al-Qulūb ilā l-Ṣawāb al-Munjī man ʿAmila bi-hi min Alim al-ʿIqāb*. In Shiʿa believe the Mahdi is the twelfth Imām.

Lastly, it goes without saying that the release of Gog and Magog in the Islamic canon is one of the ominous signs of the imminent end of time.

These four examples of the visions of the end of time may have shown that the Islamic tradition of the Gog and Magog motif is rooted in a long line of transmissions. Even nowadays, the tradition is kept very much alive in a wealth of popular books and on the internet.[89] Whilst the motif's modern development has not been the subject of this investigation, it is very clear that the eschatological tradition, and in particular the motif of Gog and Magog, has in both literary and oral form continued to serve a function during the last centuries in the struggle against imperialism and colonialism, and particularly in cases of political injustice. In his analysis of the Javanese poem discussed above, Edwin Wieringa has shown that in the nineteenth century, such eschatological motifs became a way to oppose the "other", the Christian coloniser. Thus the wicked Juja-Makjuja is presented as a grandson of Jesus, who figures in the poem as the Nabi Ngisa, "Prophet Jesus". According to Wieringa, "[t]here can be no doubt that Juja-Makjuja represents the barbarian Dutch colonial administration here".[90]

In nineteenth-century North Africa, Gog and Magog similarly became a factor in the belief that "the Christians", namely the French colonisers, would be expelled from their lands at the arrival of the "Master of the Hour". According to the predictions of Kabylian *marabouts*, at least as recorded by the Dutch Lieutenant C. M. de Jong van Rodenburgh in 1855, "the Arabs[91] await this messianic figure" and "the gate will be opened and a coarse nation, which is held locked up by this gate behind two huge mountains in inner Africa, will assault the living. The total destruction [...] preludes the end of time."[92] The coarse nation, evidently a reference to Gog and Magog, has been geographically transposed to the inner lands of Africa, another *terra incognita* for the Kabylians, and an equally convincing Magogistan.

My reconstruction of key phases in the development and spread of the Gog and Magog theme in relation to Alexander Dhū 'l-Qarnayn shows that crossing borders was a continuous and "medieval world"-scale process. The narration has lately been resumed on the world wide web, as an antique mindset garbed in modern apparel, showing that the fascination for Gog and Magog has not left the minds and consciousness of religious communities, nor those of scholars.

89 See Haddad and Smith, "The Anti-Christ and the End of Time," and Seyed-Gohrab, Doufikar-Aerts, McGlinn, eds., *Gog and Magog*.

90 Wieringa, "Juja-Makjuja as the Antichrist," 144.

91 The lieutenant probably did not distinguish the Kabylian Berbers from the Arab-speaking population, or he used the word Arabs for Muslims.

92 Doufikar-Aerts, "Dogfaces, Snake-tongues, and the Wall against Gog and Magog," 37. I thank my brother, Remieg Aerts, who long ago brought to my attention the article by de Jong van Rodenburgh in *De Gids*.

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Johann Heiss and Eirik Hovden

Zaydī Theology Popularised: A Hailstorm Hitting the Heterodox

This article examines the apocalyptic interpretation of natural phenomena in Islam, analyzing the religious and political aspects of a story about a hailstorm hitting a village in the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula sometime around 1205–1210. According to certain contemporary Zaydī interpretations, through this catastrophe God was directly intervening in order to punish the followers of a sub-branch of Zaydism in Yemen, the so-called Muṭarrifiyya. Whereas the Zaydī imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza and his followers argued that God would repeatedly intervene in the natural world, statements ascribed to the Muṭarrifiyya assert that he would only start the process of creation, with the physical world transforming itself on a continuous basis thereafter. Because the imam and his followers would interpret natural phenomena as signs sent by God, the hailstorm was considered to be a punishment of the village's inhabitants, the Muṭarrifīs, who subscribed to practising the wrong creed. After having met their resistance, the imam had declared previously the Muṭarrifīs to be unbelievers. In doing so, he used the imagery of the End Times to legitimise his attack and the confiscation of their property. This article analyses in detail the story about the hailstorm, which was written by a secretary of the imam, and connects it to other contemporary texts. It demonstrates how scholarly categories of theology and cosmology were popularised and politicised in order to create communities and hierarchies and to draw boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

Perceptions about the End Times in the Muslim world[1] usually include stories about catastrophes and vicissitudes announcing the end.[2] The Qur'an, for example, is full of mentions "of death, the end of the world, and resurrection".[3] Events announcing the End Times are alluded to in sura 81, called "al-Takwīr" or, "the folding up". Verse 1 – 14 of the sura reads, using anaphors and end-rhymes:

> When the sun is rolled up,
> and when the stars swoop down,

1 On eschatological and apocalyptic ideas in the Muslim World see Günther and Lawson, eds., *Roads to Paradise*; Chittick, "Muslim Eschatology;" Smith and Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection*.

2 See for instance Chittick, "Muslim Eschatology," 133.

3 Chittick, "Muslim Eschatology," 132

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and when the mountains are moved,
and when the camels about to give birth are left untended,
and when the beasts are gathered together,
and when the seas boil over,
and when the humans are coupled [sc. with their bodies],
and when the girl that was buried is made to ask
for what crime she had been killed,
and when the leaves [of men's deeds] are unfolded,
and when heaven is pulled off,
and when hellfire is kindled,
and when paradise is brought close:
every human will come to know what he has brought along.[4]

Some of the events mentioned in this sura relate to natural disasters. Sufficient rain is fundamental for agriculture, but too much rain can wreck agricultural infrastructure such as terraces or canals within minutes. Meteorological incidents, such as too little or too much rain at the wrong time of the year, could be seen as signs of the coming of *yawm al-qiyāma*, the Day of Resurrection.[5] Rain and weather is a topic that can make theology relevant for the farmers: rain invocations (*istisqāʾ*, *istighātha*) have been a continuous feature in the cultural history of South Arabia from pre-Islamic times until today.[6] On the way from high-level theology to farmers' practical spell, the logic changes, and the words used may take on new meanings. The way natural events were interpreted could vary significantly according to different worldviews and political positions.[7]

This article is about how theology and cosmology, which tended to be important forms of knowledge reserved to elite scholars in religious establishments, were transformed into populist narratives and political slogans that everyone could relate to and rally behind. Thus this chapter is also about how complex theological discourses are made known and comprehensible to a wider audience, and how they can be given political potency.

The article analyses the occurrence and religious/political interpretations of allegedly extreme weather-conditions in the south-east of the Arabian Peninsula. According to mainstream Zaydī interpretations, God interfered directly in nature and punished a sub-branch of Zaydism in Yemen, named the "Muṭarrifiyya",[8] with a

4 The translation follows Muḥammad Asad's in changed form.

5 Books on the End Times in Arabic Islamic literature exists in numbers, as an example: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), *al-Durra al-fākhira fī kashf ʿulūm al-ākhira* ("The Precious Pearl about the Unveiling of the Knowledge of the End"), ed. Gautier [orig. 1878].

6 For the rain invocation or "Regenopfer" (called *istighātha* in the north of Yemen) see Gingrich, *Erkundungen*, 112–113; Varisco, "The Adaptive Dynamics of Water Allocation in Al-Ahjur, Yemen Arab Republic," 104–107.

7 For an overview, see Heiss and Hovden, "Competing Visions of Community in Medieval Zaydī Yemen," 366–307.

8 Madelung, "Muṭarrifiyya."

hailstorm that struck a specific village in the Yemeni highlands sometime around 1205–1210:[9]

> The Muṭarrifiyya, as far as we know about their creed, claim that anyone who wants to be a prophet can be so, the only exception being his incapacity. Thus they exceed the unbelief of the Banū Ḥanīfa[10] and others of the unbelievers (*kuffār*) [...].
> When the 'judgement of the sword'[11] had been passed on the Muṭarrifiyya by the imam, peace be upon him, Rāshid b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaqrī al-Janbī[12] refused to acknowledge it. In those days, he stayed in the region of al-Ahnūm where his influence was already established in its plains and mountains. He had propagated the school[13] of the Muṭarrifiyya there and most of the inhabitants sympathised with it.
> He [al-Ṣaqrī] was the *shaykh* of the 'the people of the strike' who maintain that God created the world in one strike (*qafakha*) and made some parts of it as a causation for other parts, and that God has no longer any direct role in his creation, so for him [God] no activity is left in his creation.
> He [al-Ṣaqrī] called for a meeting for everyone at a place called al-Ḥuraymāt of the land of Banū ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz of the region al-Ahnūm. He described to them what had happened to his fellow Muṭarrifis regarding punishment, killing and confiscation of properties. He called for patience and perseverance in favour of their school[14], for the defense of their religion and the keeping of their creed. He aroused their feelings for fighting the imam, peace be on him, and they [the local people] responded positively.
> They had not yet dispersed again from their meeting place when God the Exalted caused a cloud to rise, and from that cloud pelted them with a punishment never seen at that time. A violent wind with ice/hail came down on them, which did not go beyond the borders of the village where they had met. It destroyed the agricultural lands and uprooted the crops, the wines, the trees and the fruits.
> It was a clear sign[15] for the people of that village; they saw in it an evil omen and they knew that they had been hit with His intention.
> The ice remained on those trees that were left in that area for three days. A group of the local population repented and recognised the greatness of the imam, peace be on him. After that, this evil one [al-Ṣaqrī] stayed on for some days. Then they expelled him from their lands.

The author of *al-Sīra al-sharīfa al-Manṣūriyy* ("The Illustrious Manṣūrī Biography"), the biography of Imam al-Manṣūr bi-Llāh ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza (r. 1197–d. 1217), was Abū Firās b. Diʿtham, the imam's *kātib al-inshāʾ* or chief secretary. His duties in-

9 All dates in this article refer to CE. The following story is taken from Abū Firās ibn Diʿtham's *al-sīra al-sharīfa al-Manṣūrīya*, 852–853.

10 This is an allusion to the story of Musaylima al-kadhdhāb, the "false" prophet, and the Banū Ḥanīfa who were his adherents. He was a contemporary of the prophet Muḥammad and ever since has been a famous figure in later literature used to represent false claims to religion.

11 Ar. *ḥukm al-sayf*, the death-sentence; as a precondition for the *ḥukm al-sayf*, the members of the Muṭarrifiyya had to be declared unbelievers (*takfīr*).

12 At that time a leading Muṭarrifī, mentioned three times in the biography of ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza; the vocalization is not certain.

13 Ar. *madhhab*, usually a school of thought in *fiqh*, here used for a group of heretics.

14 The author uses the word *madhhab* again.

15 Ar. *āya ẓāhira*.

cluded the composition of the imam's letters, documents, and treaties, and the reading of all incoming mail. He was thus in an ideal position to write a biography of his master; in addition, he was also an accomplished poet. Ibn Diʿtham originated from a family of Sanaa, some of whose members had already been secretaries. Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ b. Abī l-Rijāl (d. 1681), who included Abū Firās b. Diʿtham in his biographical dictionary *Maṭlaʿ al-budūr wa-majmaʿ al-buḥūr*[16], calls him a "sword drawn against the Muṭarrifiyya"[17]. Ibn Abī l-Rijāl completed his biography of Ibn Diʿtham with exemplary verses of his poems, and cites the end of the biography of Imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza. The passage quoted, in a high rhetorical style and in rhymed prose (*sajʿ*), contains the only date known concerning Ibn Diʿtham: He ended his work in June 1218, just little more than a year after his master's death.

Ibn Diʿtham's work, the biography of Imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza, originally consisted of four volumes. Only the second (now in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan) and the third volume (now in Sanaa, Great Mosque) are preserved.[18] They were edited by ʿAbd al-Ghanī Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī in 1993. In his *sīra* the author gives evidence of his mastery of rhetorical techniques by his use of rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) at key points. For the most part, however, he employed a simple, matter-of-fact style, as in the hail story quoted above. Ibn Diʿtham used the same technique of stylistic alternation when enlarging on religious concepts and arguments: usually he tried to keep his writing on these often complex issues as simple as possible in order to remain intelligible to the wider population as they gathered, for example, in market places or in mosques after the *khuṭba* or Friday sermon. However, he occasionally shows off his religious education by alluding to passages of the Qur'an or by including sentences that are likely fully intelligible to experts only. Ibn Diʿtham's purpose in the above passage was to explain why the Muṭarrifiyya is bad, and why the imam is good. This point should be accessible and comprehensible to everyone. At the same time he strove to offer delicacies for experts.

Ibn Diʿtham's biography of ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza contains several stories of incidents in which rain plays a major role. They precede the story of the hailstorm, thus the trope of weather as a reward for obedience or punishment for resistance to the imam is already well-known to the listener/reader. That God was on the imam's side is suggested implicitly again and again, although neither the connection between God, rain, and the imam, nor the direct causality between obedience toward the imam and a subsequent reward in the form of rain, are ever made fully explicit. In

16 "Rising of Full Moons and Confluence of Rivers concerning the Biographies of the Men of the Zaydiyya." Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ b. Abī l-Rijāl, Maṭlaʿ al-budūr wa-majmaʿ al-buḥūr fī tarājim rijāl al-Zaydiyya, ed. Ḥajr.

17 Ar. *Sayf maṣlūl ʿalā l-Muṭarrifiyya*.

18 A possible fourth part may have been identified by Ansari. See Ansari and Schmidtke, "The Literary-Religious Tradition among 7th/13th Century Yemenī Zaydīs," 168, fn 15.

the imamic biographies there are many stories of how rain and prosperity follow in the footsteps of the imams.[19]

The incident of the hailstorm is said to have taken place in a mountainous region called al-Ahnūm. The village mentioned, al-Ḥuraymāt, cannot be found on a modern map, but al-Ahnūm is a well-known area, perhaps best known for the mountain fortress Shahāra with its famous arched stone bridge connecting the two peaks and two parts of the settlement.

Around 1200 the extent and form of God's agency in the world was a hotly debated topic within the Yemeni Zaydiyya. The two main branches of Zaydism in Yemen, the Mukhtariʿa[20] and the Muṭarrifiyya, came down on different sides of this doctrinal debate.[21] The conflict took on strong political dimensions, to which we will return below.

Before we comment on the story about the hailstorm, however, we need to set up its physical, political and cultural context. A brief outline of the relevant geography and political situation will be followed by an overview of the main theological positions at the time, including some examples. After this contextualisation, we shall visit the hail story one more time towards the end of the article, this time revealing even more details of its potential meaning in the formation of visions of community where orthodoxies and obedience are central.

1 The Yemeni Highlands around 1200

The geographical context of the hailstorm are the Yemeni highlands, a hilly plateau located at around 2000 metres above sea level running north-south between the areas of Ṣaʿda and Dhamār, with the city of Sanaa between them. The western part of the plateau is a rugged landscape of deep relief that ends in an escarpment falling sharply down to the coastal plains. To the east, the plateau fades more gently into the desert called the Empty Quarter. On the plateau, rainfall is abundant in the south and west, while towards the north and east supplementary irrigation is necessary, usually taking the form of water runoff being led from adjacent grazing or barren lands onto agricultural terraces. The most important crops are sorghum, wheat and barley. The amount and timing of the rain is crucial since water in this type of agriculture is only stored as soil humidity. The highlands were inhabited by sedentary tribes who, for most of the time, were not under the control of any state but dominated by local tribal elites. The Zaydīs arrived in this area around 900. Several

19 In Ibn Diʿtham's biography of ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza e.g. 251; 299. The authors are currently working on this issue.

20 The Arabic name of the group leads back to a verb meaning "to invent, to produce, to bring into existence". See Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 724c.

21 For an overview, see Schwarb, "Muʿtazilism in the Age of Averroes," 266–276.

successive Zaydī imams (who were religious and political leaders) tried to create Zaydī Islamic states in the northern highlands, some managing to venture south and capture Sanaa. Most of the Zaydī imams, however, only held power over the tribal areas around Ṣaʿda and Najrān and the areas between Ṣaʿda and Sanaa.[22]

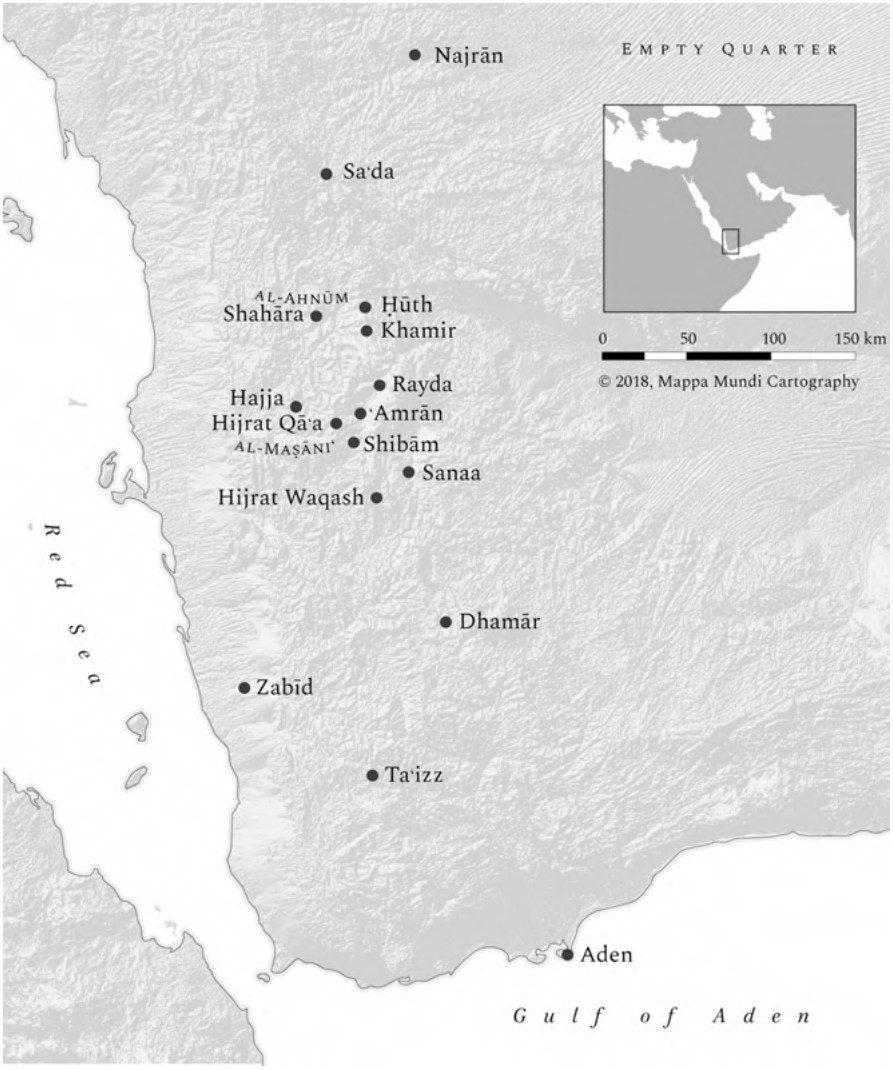

Fig. 1: The Yemeni Highlands

22 Studies about the Yemen comprise Dresch, *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen*; Gochenour, "The Penetration of Zaydi Islam into Early Medieval Yemen;" Gochenour, "Towards a Sociology of the Islamisation of Yemen;" Zayd, *Muʿtazilat al-Yaman*; Heiss, "Tribale Selbstorganisation und Konfliktreglung;" Madelung, "Zaydiyya."

By 1100 a complicated denominational geography of Yemen had developed. Sunnī elites controlled the areas along the coastal plain in the west; Ismāʿīlīs controlled the mountains south and west of Sanaa, and the Zaydīs were active in the tribal highlands north of Sanaa. The Sunnīs were nominally loyal to the Abbasids, while the Ismāʿīlīs had close ties to the Fatimids in Egypt. However, most of the northern part of the Ismāʿīlī area was ruled by a local tribal dynasty centered on Sanaa, the Ḥātimids, who did not have a clear religious affiliation. This allowed some Zaydīs to operate inside nominally Ismāʿīlī territory around Sanaa. The political-denominational borders were not as sharp as this textual map suggests and continued to shift over time. What such shifts meant to the local population is not clear. Certainly, it meant a change in to whom they paid their taxes and owed military service. However, it is unlikely that they changed their beliefs with each change of ruler, and perhaps not even their rituals (the different Islamic denominations have slight, but potentially visible ritual differences).

By c. 1200, most of the formerly Ismāʿīlī areas were ruled by Sunnīs, as most of today's northern Yemen had been invaded by the Sunnī Ayyubids in 1174, and only some minor pockets of Ismāʿīlī orientation remained. When Sunnīs and Ismāʿīlīs refused to submit to the Zaydī imam, they were often defined as rebels (*bughāt*), a specific category of Islamic law of the state (*fiqh al-siyar*), and hence the Zaydī imam could initiate punitive campaigns. However, rebels could not easily be declared unbelievers (*kuffār*) since they were, after all, Muslims. Indeed, to call them rebels instead of unbelievers both made a pragmatic interaction possible and provided the imam with the option of employing punitive violence whenever he considered it advantageous.[23] The declaration of the Muṭarrifiyya as unbelievers was thus an unusually strong reaction, necessitating quite some production of theological polemics.

In the rest of this chapter, we shall concentrate on the Zaydī areas north and west of Sanaa and focus on sectarian dissent *within* Zaydīsm in this area, more specifically the tensions between the two branches of Zaydism at the time, called al-Mukhtariʿa, who had the imam on their side, and al-Muṭarrifiyya. Both claimed to be the true Zaydīs and Muslims.

Most of history writing by Zaydīs focused on the imam and his role as both a political and religious leader. The Zaydī imams called themselves "Commander of the faithful" and claimed the leadership of all Muslims. In practice, they had to compromise both in geographic scope and vis-à-vis the powerful tribal elites inside their own areas. Most of the sources we have from this period are the biographies of these imams,[24] usually compiled shortly after their death by their secretaries. These

23 Kruse demonstrates the important difference between *bughāt* and *kuffār* in Yemeni Zaydism, see Kruse, "Takfīr und Ǧihād bei den Zaiditen des Jemen."

24 List of biographies: ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd Allāh al-ʿAbbāsī al-ʿAlawī, *Sīrat al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn*, ed. Zakkār; Abū l-Ghamr Musallam b. Muhammad b. Jaʿfar al-Laḥjī, *The Sīra of Imām Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh; From Musallam al-Laḥjī's Kitāb Akhbār al-Zaydiyya bi l-Yaman*, ed. Madelung; al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. Yaʿqūb al-Hamdānī, *Sīrat al-Imām al-*

biographies, while largely modeled on the biography of the Prophet, also contain much detail about the careers of the imams concerned, the history of their times and of regents in peaceful or warlike contact with the imams. The biographies are usually arranged chronologically and incorporate different textual topoi and types of documents: descriptions of battles, stories of failure and success, administrative documents, theological and legal treatises, letters, and poetry.

In Zaydism, the imamate is not considered to be hereditary, but – at least in theory – only someone descending from the Prophet was allowed to claim the imamate. The Zaydī imamate lasted until 1962, having effectively turned into a hereditary kingdom under the Qāsimī (c. 1600–1850) and later the Hamīd al-Dīn (1911–1962) dynasties. The claim to the imamate was often disputed, resulting in frequent military conflicts between competing claimants. However, in the early phase of Zaydism in Yemen, between 900 and 1200, few imams were politically strong, and thus Zaydī scholars and supporters arguably became used to operate without an imam at a local level.[25] As a result, the occasional imam pretender who claimed authority over the whole Zaydī community often met resistance from within the Zaydi community, or parts of it. This was certainly true in the case of Imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza around 1200. He ruled as imam from 1197 until his death in 1217 and controlled the tribal highlands down towards Sanaa which itself was held by the Ayyūbids. The Muṭarrifiyya was a special challenge for him as they were an inner-Zaydī network or movement opposing his imamate and thus his right to collect canonical taxes and enforce government. Al-Manṣūr's condemnation of the Muṭarrifiyya grew in intensity and culminated in the *takfīr* ("excommunication") of the movement and in physical attacks.[26]

By 1200, the Zaydī community had also geographically split into two, roughly along a line running from Sanaa via Rayda to al-Ahnūm. East of this imaginary line, the imam was backed by the Mukhtariʿa and held political power through local tribal and scholarly elites, while the Muṭarrifiyya was dominant in the west, particularly in areas like al-Maṣāniʿ and from today's ʿAmrān south in a semi-circle round Sanaa on its west side through Thulāʾ, Shibām and what is today Banī Maṭar, south to Ānis. The imam tried to establish his authority also over the Muṭarrifiyya but met much resistance. The issue of collecting and redistributing taxes may have been a decisive factor in the enmity between the imam and the Muṭarrifīs. The Sunnī Ayyubids partly controlled the areas in which most of the Muṭarrifiyya operated, along

Manṣūr Bi-Llāh al-Qāsim b. ʿAlī al-ʿIyānī, ed. al-Ḥibshī; Mufarriḥ b. Aḥmad al-Rabaʿī, *Sīrat al-Amīrayn*, ed. al-Sayyid and ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī; Sulaymān b. Yaḥyā al-Thaqafī, *Sīrat al-Imām Aḥmad b. Sulaymān*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī; Abū Firās Ibn Diʿtham, *Al-Sīra al-Manṣūriyya: Sīrat al-Imām ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī.

25 Heiss and Hovden, "Competing Visions of Community in Medieval Zaydī Yemen."

26 Madelung, "al-Manṣūr Biʾllāh."

with Sanaa, making it difficult for the imam to launch military campaigns into these regions to enforce his fellow Zaydī subjects' obedience.[27]

2 Theology and Cosmology

The theological and cosmological views of the Muṭarrifīs were unique amongst contemporary Muslim denominations. Among the views they held, or at least were accused of holding, were particular theories regarding the causality of natural phenomena. Most of the sources we have were written by their adversaries, except for a few which will be looked at below. The Muṭarrifiyya supposedly viewed God as the one who gave the original first push, the initial act of creation, but then left natural matters and bodies (*ajsām*) to react and interact with each other without further divine interference. Without going into too much detail regarding the highly complex theological debates between the Muṭarrifiyya and the Mukhtariʿa, we need to review some of these issues in order to understand the story about the hailstorm.

According to the author of the hail-story above, the Muṭarrifīs claimed that God created the world in one go or "strike" and brought into being four fundamental elements (*uṣūl*), water, air, wind, and fire, which in various mixtures constitute all things (bodies, *ajsām*) around us. After God's first "strike", these elements started reacting with each other and through those interactions continually developed and transformed (*iḥāla* and *istiḥāla*) into new forms. According to the Muṭarrifīs, God does not intervene in the everyday creation of phenomena, which were called "accidents" (*aʿrāḍ*) in contemporary theological terminology. Rather, God created the basic substances (*al-uṣūl*) at the beginning of time and only gave the initial push.[28] Rain, for example, is thus a form of water that simply happens to gather in the skies, forming clouds and falling down forming a certain incident or phenomenon. It is not created as a separate incident, accident, or phenomenon out of nothing (*ikhtirāʿ*), it simply changes its form or composition. By contrast, the name for the group opposing the Muṭarrifiyya, the Mukhtariʿa, is derived from the notion of *ikhtirāʿ*, *creatio ex nihilo*. In this theory, God is directly behind every phenomenon (*aʿrāḍ*) in the world. We should not, however, automatically assume that the Muṭarrifiyya and the Mukhtariʿa were clearly-defined, distinct groups that were internally theologically homogenous. In the contemporary literature, these group terms are used as charges of mistaken belief and thus represent an external, negative "la-

27 The best review of the historical events, according to the available sources, is given in Zayd, Tayyārāt, 144–198.

28 ʿAlī Muḥammad Zayd claims that these four elements came from Greek philosophy but that earth was exchanged with wind in order to stay within the teachings of the first imam in Yemen, al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn. It was certainly important for the Muṭarrifiyya to claim that they stayed within 'orthodoxy' and the tradition of al-Hādī. Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 259.

belling" or "branding" of the other. Particularly in the politically charged genre of biography written by authors on the imam's side, the use of the term "Muṭarrifiyya" indicates strong condemnation. For the sake of convenience, however, modern scholars use these terms neutrally to denote the various parties.

As mentioned above, most of the information we have about the views of the Muṭarrifiyya comes from their adversaries. The only surviving theological treatise by a Muṭarrifī scholar is called *al-Burhān al-Rāʾiq al-Mukhalliṣ min warṭ al-maḍāʾiq* ("The Shining Clarified Proof of Difficulties in Narrow Places") and was written by Sulaymān b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muḥallī.[29] The Yemeni historian ʿAlī Muḥammad Zayd assumes that al-Muḥallī was a contemporary of the Mukhtariʿī (and strongly anti-Muṭarrifī) court scholar and chief judge al-Qāḍī Jaʿfar b. ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 1177) because al-Muḥallī refers to the Mukhtariʿa as the Jaʿfariyya. At the same time, ʿAlī Muḥammad Zayd argues that Muḥallī likely wrote the *Burhān* not long after al-Qāḍī Jaʿfar b. ʿAbd al-Salām's death, because the treatise does not mention Imam ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza who was the next strong opponent of the Muṭarrifiyya and who became active in the 1190s.[30] Most of the *Burhān* unfortunately remains unedited and consequently little studied. In this article, we shall only have a brief look into some of its riches to get a feeling for the style and construction of the arguments as found in the sections edited by ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī[31] and through a summary given by ʿAlī Muḥammad Zayd.

2.1 On the Nature of Rain

One section in the *Burhān* is called *Bāb al-qawl fī l-uṣūl wa-l-jawāhir* ("Chapter on the Theory of Fundamental Elements and Atoms").[32] The form, style, and sequence of argumentation show that the author wants to portray himself as an orthodox Zaydī in line with well-known earlier Zaydī authorities. The basic argument of this section is to prove, first of all, the existence and importance of the fundamental elements, secondly, that all other things, such as animals, trees, and clouds, come from these, and thirdly how some things have different compositions of these original fundamental elements. The existence of the elements is proven with reference to the Qur'an and to authoritative texts written by famous Zaydīs. Al-Muḥallī starts by discussing the centrality of water as a basic substance that forms an important part of other things. He explicitly mentions that rain comes from clouds. He also refers to the many passages in the Qur'an where water is given a prominent role, such as

29 Madelung, "A Muṭarrifī Manuscript." Zayd has made a rough edition/summary of parts of the work with some analytical comments: Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 201–308.
30 Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 202.
31 ʿAbd al-Ghanī Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī, *al-Ṣirāʿ al-fikrī fī l-Yaman bayna l-Zaydiyya wa-l-Muṭarrifiyya*, 51–90.
32 al-ʿĀṭī, *al-Ṣirāʿ al-fikrī*, 53–56.

"We created from water everything living" (Anbiyāʾ 30) and "His throne was situated over water" (Hud 7). He goes on to quote passages by the early Zaydī Medinan scholar/imam al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (d. 860)[33], the grandfather of the first imam in Yemen, about how pastures and trees are absolutely dependent on rain and that this can also be easily seen in practice. The author thus also includes "scientific observations" in addition to references to authoritative texts or persons.

Al-Muḥallī quotes al-Hādī's statement that the fundamental element in earth (*ṭīn*) is indeed water, as well as al-Hādī's reply to a question by his son al-Murtaḍā, in which he explains that everything is created from the fundamental elements (*uṣūl*) water, air, wind, and fire.[34] In creation, water can react with heat (fire), turn into steam and ascend into the air. This is then connected with the Qur'anic verse Fuṣṣilāt 11.[35] Al-Muḥallī ends by stating that the two sons of al-Hādī, al-Murtaḍā and al-Nāṣir, also "mentioned [...] these issues". The meaning of some of the Qur'anic verses he uses is ambiguous and therefore open to alternative interpretations. However, instead of potentially laying his argument open to criticism by referring to the inherent ambiguity in these difficult Qur'anic verses, the author simply uses a style of argumentation where as many Qur'anic verses are referred to as possible, aiming for a cumulative effect. By invoking sources like the Qur'anic and early Zaydī authorities first, then moving on to the later Zaydī authorities, such as al-Hādī and his two sons, a hierarchy of authority becomes apparent. On the whole, the argument appears plausible, at least its foundation in "orthodoxy", namely that the four elements are well attested in Zaydism. Indeed proving the orthodoxy of his claims, rather than arriving at new knowledge from the textual sources themselves, seems al-Muḥallī's main objective at this point.

The treatise's next section is called *Bāb al-qawl fī l-iḥāla* ("Chapter on the Theory of Transformation"). Al-Muḥallī states that God created the world changing and transforming (*yaḥīlu wa-yastaḥīlu*). Furthermore, everything was created with a meaning or purpose, and this is to be either useful for man or a danger; and this cannot be changed (*jabr*). This is simply how the world is created; fire burns, water quenches, food satisfies, blankets warm, medicines cure, etc., all with God's force (*jabr*), and with almost mechanical regularity. Bodies keep reacting with other bodies, transforming them, and leading to new interactions and forms. This is getting close to a picture of a deistic or even "godless" nature ruled only by natural laws, but al-Muḥallī continues by stating that God is the ultimate cause. He actively takes a position defending himself from accusations of taking the "natural world" out of the divine reach.

33 Madelung, "al-Rassī, al-Ḳāsim b. Ibrāhīm b. Ismāʿīl Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib;" Madelung, "Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen."

34 al-ʿĀṭī, *al-Ṣirāʿ al-fikrī*, 55.

35 "And He applied His design to the skies, which were [yet but] smoke; and He said to them and to the earth, 'Come [into being], both of you, willingly or unwillingly!' to which both responded, 'We do come in obedience'." (translation Asad, slightly changed)

> As for what they say, that if we assume that the world is constantly transforming, then this must be outside of God's active interference (*tadbīr*), then how can this be outside God's active interference when God's interference in the world is how this world is, be it by intention (*qaṣd*) or by its natural disposition (*fiṭra*).[36]

As many modern scholars have established, at this time too great a reliance on philosophy in Islamic theology was considered dangerously close to heresy. In order to be accepted as "Islamic", authors had to operate within a theological/cosmological framework in which God was central, and to couch their arguments in theological terms.

Accordingly, when al-Muḥallī describes something similar to natural laws that God has created and set in motion, he chooses his exact wording and terminology carefully to avoid any accusation of following the *ṭabīʿiyya*,[37] meaning something like "those who believe in (godless) nature". Al-Muḥallī goes far in setting up a system without God, in the sense that God is only the prime mover, but he carefully and explicitly states that God is ultimately behind these patterns in the world, and that whether or not God actively intends them, they are a result of His creation. As God originally created the world, the world is God's and therefore not godless. The transformations of things happen according to God's original will. How this theory fits with God's ability to occasionally intervene to punish the faithless and reward the faithful is not touched upon in this chapter but dealt with elsewhere, as are the questions of how such a theory relates to divine justice and various degrees of free will. It is not our intention here to describe the teachings of the *Burhān* in general; important for us in the context of this chapter is one further passage discussing the element of water. Interestingly, the examples and metaphors used are not completely theological but do draw on examples of common sense from engineering and farming. The following is a summary of a section of the *Burhān* given by ʿAlī Muḥammad Zayd. It refutes the theory of *ikhtirāʿ*, of creation out of nothing. Here, al-Muḥallī gives several examples related to water:

> A water mill rotates faster if the amount of water or the inclination of the millrace increases, and the mill will rotate more slowly if the water flow decreases and the inclination of the millrace becomes horizontal. This is evidence that the practical determinant of the operation can be conceptualised with a theory that is built on bodies (*ajsām*), which invalidates the theory of *ikhtirāʿ* of phenomena. If it were true that phenomena are created *ex nihilo* then there would be no meaning [as a factor of explanation] of more or less water, or a steeper or more horizontal angle of the millrace.

36 al-ʿĀṭī, *al-Ṣirāʿ al-fikrī*, 61. The term *fiṭra* is important as it refers to a universe where God is still in charge, as distinct from *ṭabʿ*, nature. The same regards the use of the term *jabr*, a couple of sentences above. This very issue is still discussed today, see al-Wazīr, Zayd b. ʿAlī, Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥūthi, and Muḥammad Sālim, "Ḥiwār ʿan al-Muṭarrifiyya." *Al-fikr wa-l-maʾsāt, Kitāb al-Maṣār*, vol. 2, for example on page 224.

37 See Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 178, 304.

> It can also be observed (*yustashhadu*) in a fountain (*shādharwān*) where the height and the power of the water jet, and its amount, are dependent on its operation and its construction. This is further evidence (*yadillu ʿalā*) for the invalidity of *ikhtirāʿ al-aʿrāḍ*.
> It can also be observed in the power of flowing water (*sayl*) according to the amount and the steepness of the canal or its horizontality. As it can also be observed in a stream that a farmer leads to his land, diverting it, in full control, to where he wants. If the one who takes the water does this according to the physical layout (*bunya*) of the river, then this is what the Muṭarrifiyya claims. And if it [the water] only floats according to what God creates at any moment, then this is not true, because even a child can prevent it from flowing, and how could it be possible to stop something that God has created.[38]

These thought-experiments are particularly interesting as they do not build on revealed textual evidence but on physical occurrences that can be observed and understood by both experts and laymen alike. However, the terms, concepts and theories – such as bodies, phenomena, or transformation – derive from theological discourse and have theological-political connotations. The exact meanings of these terms would necessitate an analysis of the discourse(s) in a much broader perspective, particularly the established discourse of *aʿrāḍ* and *ajsām* in Muʿtazilī theology and in theological discourses of the wider Islamicate world. One would also need to take into account the exact developments of these theories taking place in Yemen and elsewhere shortly before the *Burhān* was written, including the level of familiarity of the scholars of the Zaydiyya with other disciplines such as philosophy, science and medicine. However, what is important for this chapter is how the seemingly minute and technical details of theology take on legal and political relevance, as we shall see below.

Describing a system of "natural laws" – even though al-Muḥallī seeks to wrap it in a language of orthodox theology – does leave God with less power, or should we say, with less interest in the world compared to the theory of *ikhtirāʿ*. That is a problem for those who want to interpret incidents or natural phenomena as divine punishments or rewards, or as signs of apocalypse. In the context of al-Muḥallī's theory, it is easy to claim that a certain rainstorm was not the act of God, but simply an ordinary phenomenon that has "its own" cause and was therefore not related to human misbehaviour or lack of obedience. It does diminish God's ongoing, active role in his creation – one might say that the world becomes partly "secular", or at least opens for that possibility. No wonder that this was an irritating theory for theocratic leaders, and not only because it was hard to argue against.

38 Translated from Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 261–262. It is not clear how strictly Zayd read the text, or if he at times inserted his own words.

2.2 The Views of al-Laḥjī

We should be cautious in extending the theological reasoning found in al-Muḥallī's *Burhān* to all Muṭarrifīs. Musallam al-Laḥjī's (d. ca. 1150) works, probably written a decade or two before *Burhān,* are much less "expert-theological" in style and mainly recount the pious acts of individual Muṭarrifis. Al-Laḥjī's take on the connection between good deeds and their reward (or bad deeds and their punishment) in the form of natural phenomena is particularly interesting, as he leaves the exact causal relations open. An example of this can be found in his biography of Ismāʿīl al-Muzayyin, a member of the Muṭarrifī community a century or so before al-Laḥjī. We are told that Ismāʿīl performed a pious act by giving part of his harvest to other Muṭarrifīs out of his love for them. Suddenly a heavy rainstorm destroys the neighbouring fields (supposedly of non-Muṭarrifīs), while the field of Ismāʿīl is left intact.[39] There is no direct mention of God interfering or of a miracle, but it is clear from the narrative that there is some sort of "unusual", not natural connection. We can therefore safely say that the Muṭarrifī view on God's involvement in natural phenomena was not as monolithic as the opponents of the Muṭarrifiyya tended to describe it, presumably in order to produce a sharp opposition or dichotomy.

In the following paragraphs from the biography of his teacher, al-Ḍāmī, al-Laḥjī describes his own childhood in Shaẓab (today's al-Sūda or al-Sawda, north-west of ʿAmrān), in which he represents himself as a "thinker" already during childhood and youth:

> I used to try to bring something into being (*ījād*), something touchable that could remain at my disposal, but I did not find anything like it. Indeed, I once arrived at a cistern (*birka*) in which there had been water which had later come to an end, and in it remained wet clay. I took a piece of it, shaped it into a different form, and said to myself: 'I brought (*awjadtu*) this into being!' Then I realised something in my mind saying: 'No! Rather the existence of clay (*wujūd al-ṭīn*) was there before you, it was gathered up here by the flood-water (*sayl*) and not from pressure [your shaping of it].'
> Then I aimed at the air, high up, trying to capture some of it. However, I was not able to do so. Then the voice said inside me: 'Even if you had managed to capture some of it, you would not have brought it into being, because bringing into being (*ījād*) is impossible (*lā min shayʾ*).'[40]
> Then I jumped up into the air, [thinking that] maybe I could remain in it; however, I was not able to do so. I returned to myself and I realised that it is not possible for me to bring into being bodies (*ajsām*) and likewise, nor to exceed the habit of man (*khurūj ʿalā ʿādat al-bashar*)
> I was thus convinced that I was created (*maṣnūʿ*) and that I have a creator (*ṣāniʿ*) who is able to do what I am unable to, out of his grace[41], and that he is different from me. I found in myself

39 See the story about Ismāʿīl al-Muzayyin translated on pages 398–399 in Heiss and Hovden, "Competing Visions of Community in Medieval Zaydī Yemen." Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 202; al-ʿĀṭī, *al-Ṣirāʿ al-fikrī*, 51.

40 *al-ījād lā min shayʾ*. *Shayʾ* can here possibly both mean "thing" in the common sense, as well as the common colloquial usage "nothing".

41 This word is unclear in the manuscript.

> knowledge of what I was able to do, which is the transformation of the clay from one form to another, and that the clay [itself] is something different [from its form], and that I am able of only one thing: movement[42] (*ḥaraka*).
> This all happened when [I was so young that] I had no idea about the term for things like this, but I imagined it as something distinct from earth and air and myself. I did not know at the time that it is called 'phenomenon' (*ʿaraḍ*). These and similar issues were present in my thinking.[43]

In this story we are given a fascinating insight into Laḥjī's descriptions of his own childhood thinking. Before and after the passage above, he describes some of his curriculum, habits, and interests. By suggesting that these theological theories could be developed even by a child, and without knowledge of the correct terminology, he almost seems to mock the experts' theology and their categories, perhaps also rather specifically the theory that the world is divided into bodies (*ajsām*) and phenomena (*aʿrāḍ*). One possible way of reading al-Laḥjī is that humans are able to use their senses and their reason, and the theological concept of "phenomena" (*ʿaraḍ*, *aʿrāḍ*) is perhaps superfluous. How all of this might be combined with the texts of revelation he leaves completely open.

In this work, al-Laḥjī's approach to theology and Islamic law is – as in the example above – largely anecdotal and implicit, and we should therefore be careful to ascribe to him explicit opinions or theoretical positions he might not have held. However, the passage quoted illustrates that an interest in theological issues does not necessarily have to be confined to specialist discourse. It can also start from the basic experiences of being human, and in such a way be accessible also to ordinary villagers and farmers, at least on some level. In fact, this seems to be al-Laḥjī's main point.[44]

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42 Or, perhaps "action".

43 Abū l-Ghamr Musallam b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Laḥjī, Akhbār al-Zaydiyya min ahl al-bayt ʿalayhim al-salām wa-shīʿatihim bi-l-Yaman ("Manuscript, Jāmiʿat al-Imām Muḥammad b. Saʿūd al-Islāmiyya, MS no. 2449"), 179. Al-Laḥjī uses a low register of language, to such an extent that these passages might not be classified as "theology" by some. In the passage cited above al-Laḥjī obviously avoids the terms used in the Qur'an, where in sūrat Ṣād (38:71–76) God says to the angels: "Behold, I am about to create a human being out of clay". The Qur'anic passage, obviously the model for al-Laḥjī, uses *khalaqa* and *sawwiya*, whereas our author says *awjada*, *ṣawwara*, and *ṣanaʿa*. *Ajsām* is mentioned for the first time with a negative connotation, as is *ʿaraḍ*, which only appears at the end of the story.

44 Jan Thiele presents an in-depth analysis of the work of al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣāṣ (d. 1188), one of the local adversaries of the Muṭarrifiyya, whose treatises on Islamic theology and natural philosophy exemplify a high level of scholarship at the time. Al-Laḥjī's terminology, even if presented as an easily accessible narrative, should also be read carefully against the discourse that al-Raṣṣāṣ engages in and elaborates upon. Some of the terms al-Laḥjī uses above fit with al-Raṣṣāṣ' list of subcategories of accidents. See Thiele, *Theologie in der jemenitischen Zaydiyya*, 73.

3 The *fatwā* of Imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza

Around the year 1200 the Mukhtariʿa could rely on very advanced Muʿtazilī rationalist theology imported from the Zaydī communities in what is today northern Iran.[45] Nevertheless, it seems that many local Yemenis preferred the natural causation theory of the Muṭarrifiyya, or were in any case content not to side with Imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza and his court scholars. Reasons could also have been partly political or economical, such as reluctance to pay the canonical taxes to the imam. The issue of natural versus divine causality of phenomena became a political marker of difference, indicating one's allegiance. The causes of rainfall became one of the very foci of disagreement. The tensions between Imām ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza and the Muṭarrifiyya grew over time and the rhetoric became increasingly strident, as ʿAlī Muḥammad Zayd has shown.[46] It seems clear that at this time, the Muṭarrifiyya was (at least accused of) claiming that rain is not created or sent by God. Proof of this accusation is the *fatwā* by Imam ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza, issued as a response to questions coming from Amīr Nūr al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq:

> Related to that: About someone who rented out his land (*istaʾjara*[47]) to a Muṭarrifī for the [period of the travelling to Mecca for] *ḥajj*, and set aside (*akhraja*) for him some of the obligatory taxes (*ḥuqūq*), this being before the time of the [present, righteous] imam, and believing that his [the Muṭarrifī's] doctrines were right. Is it necessary to pay a fine (*gharāma*) for this or is it not necessary? [48]

Amīr Nūr al-Dīn is asking to what extent the taxes paid (*huqūq Allāh*, such as *zakāt*) are valid taxes or zakāt when given to a Muṭarrifī if the payer trusts the latter to spend them in the right way. The answer discusses issues related to the lease and the fine, but here we shall focus on the first part of the answer, which deals with how to recognise a Muṭarrifī, in fact: how to define the heresy.

> The answer to that: The heresy (*kufr*) of a Muṭarrifī is not defined by the term [Muṭarrifī], just as a Mukhtariʿī is not [always] right (*najāt*) by that name, the legal effect [of apostasy] only comes from the doctrines (*iʿtiqād*) that they hold. If he [the Muṭarrifī] believes what is typical for their school, denying that God, the Exalted, tests [man], and likewise His habit of granting mercy to whomever he wants, the sending of rain (*inzāl al-ghayth*) after despair, His creation

45 For an excellent overview over the actors, process and context of this "transfer", see Schwarb, "Muʿtazilism in the Age of Averroes;" Ansari and Schmidtke, "The Literary-Religious Tradition among 7th/13th Century Yemenī Zaydīs;" Ansari and Schmidtke, "The Cultural Transfer of Zaydī and non-Zaydī Religious Literature from Northern Iran to Yemen."

46 Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 156–192.

47 From the verb it is not entirely clear who rented the land to whom, but the second time the verb is used the context suggests that the Muṭarrifī tenant is not considered worthy to take and pass on the *zakāt* for the right purpose or right authority.

48 Ibrāhīm b. al-Qāsim b. al-Muʾayyad, *Ṭabaqāt al-Zaydiyya al-kubrā*, ed. al-Wajīh, vol. 2, 223–224.

> for death and life in large and small, elevation of some servants above others in classes (*darajāt*)[Q 43:32], preferring some of the Prophets above others, and similar to this, then this is apostasy (*ridda*) according to the Ahl al-bayt, peace be upon them, and according to the *ʿulamāʾ* of the Umma. Thus the apostate cannot be leased [land] (*al-murtadd lā taṣiḥḥu ījāratuhu*), and [one can] not submit the canonical taxes to him (*taslīm al-ḥuqūq ilayhi*), according to consensus (*ijmāʿ*) [...].

Here imam ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza produces a neat "check-list" of a Muṭarrifī's heretical beliefs. In general, its criteria do fit with the contents of the *Burhān al-rāʾiq* as analyzed by ʿAlī Muḥammad Zayd.[49] Several of the points concern God's active interference in the world. There is no room here to go into all of the items on the list, and we shall focus on the accusation that the Muṭarrifiyya does not believe that God sends rain, and further, that this belief is seen as a heretical deviation from orthodoxy.

The *fatwā*'s language is fairly straightforward. There is no theological reasoning, only a brief statement of the imam's opinion. He claims that his view is grounded in the school of the Ahl al-bayt (descendants of the Prophet)[50] and represents the consensus of all scholars of the Islamic community. Although these two sources of validity do not prove the authoritativeness of his statement, he presents them as sufficient. Other treatises by the imam contain more elaborate arguments against the Muṭarrifiyya, but in this *fatwā*, he confines himself to simply stating that the view that God does not send rain is heretical.

There was obviously much discussion of such issues in the Zaydī community at this time, as well as about the use of force exercised by the imam in defining orthodoxy. The construction of a clear line of theological demarcation between "us" and "them" was used to legitimate the use of military power and violence against the population in the geographical areas where the Muṭarrifiyya was relatively strong. We do not know the exact timing of this *fatwā*, but it was one of numerous legal devices justifying the confiscation of property, killing of men, and taking of slaves amongst Muṭarrifis.[51] After establishing the theological and political context of Imam ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza's activities, we can finally again turn to our central case study, the story of the hailstorm found in his biography. We are now better equipped for understanding the richness and the finer points of its rhetoric.

49 For example about the topic "equality in sustenance", see Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 92–94.

50 This is a common way of defining Zaydism, as apposed to Sunnism.

51 As for *dār al-fisq* as a third category between *dār al-Islām* and *dār al-ḥarb*, see the *fatwā* in Ibrāhīm b. al-Qāsim b. al-Muʾayyad, *Ṭabaqāt al-Zaydiyya al-kubrā*, ed. al-Wajīh, vol. 2, 64–67. Here the imam legitimates confiscating property of Muṭarrifīs.

4 The Story of the Hailstorm in the Biography of Imam ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza

Ibn Diʿtham, the imam's chief secretary, begins his story with a short summary of the beliefs of the Muṭarrifīs.

> The Muṭarrifiyya, as far as we know about their creed, claim that anyone who wants to be a prophet can be so, the only exception being his incapacity (*ʿajz*)[52]. Thus they exceed the unbelief (*kufr*) of the Banū Ḥanīfa and others of the unbelievers (*kuffār*).

The disbelief of the Muṭarrifīs is compared to the *kufr* of the Banū Ḥanīfa. With the use of this example, Ibn Diʿtham follows the imam who in his work *al-Durra al-yatīma fī tabyīn aḥkām al-saby wa-l-ghanīma*[53] introduced the Banū Ḥanīfa as an example of *kufr* (disbelief), and also contrasted them to the greater *kufr* of the Muṭarrifīs.[54] The latter were to be judged even worse than the early enemies of the Prophet. There is a certain possibility that in his role as secretary Ibn Diʿtham himself formulated the edicts and even, at least partly, wrote *al-Durra al-yatīma*.

The Banū Ḥanīfa were one of the first tribes to renounce Islam, supporting their own prophet Musaylima.[55] They and their "false" prophet were frequently used as an example of unbelief. Their military suppression and its theological and political legitimation was used to support the opinion that it was legal to wage war against the Muṭarrifiyya and to kill them [*ḥukm al-sayf*], take captives, and confiscate their property.

The claim that anyone could be a prophet sounds far-fetched and is based on a probably deliberate blurring of the concepts of "prophet" and "imam". The idea that anyone, regardless of his background, could be an imam as long as he was qualified, certainly circulated and was heavily discussed at that time. Nashwān b. Saʿīd al-Ḥimyarī (d. 1178 CE) was advocating this view shortly before the biography's composition.[56] Opinions like his were an obvious threat to the imam's (and the Ahl al-bayt's) exclusive claim to political/religious power. However, most scholars consider that the Muṭarrifiyya did indeed follow the doctrine that imams

52 That is, if he is not fit intellectually or otherwise.

53 "The Unmatched Pearl Concerning the Explanation of the Judgments on Taking Prisoners and Booty" edited in al-ʿĀṭī, *al-Ṣirāʿ al-fikrī*, 206–253.

54 The same use of Banū Ḥanīfa is made by Ḥumayd b. Aḥmad al-Muḥallī (d. 1254) in his collection of imams' biographies called *al-Ḥadāʾiq al-wardiyya* or "The Gardens of Roses". The last biography is the one of Imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza, where he makes the comparison between the Muṭarrifiyya and the Banū Ḥanīfa with the same function. The relation between Ibn Diʿtham's and al-Muḥallī's biographies of imam al-Manṣūr has not yet been analysed.

55 His original name was Maslama; the name usually is given as a diminutive in derogatory use; often as a kind of nickname *al-kadhdhāb* is added, "the liar".

56 Nashwān's views on this is given in his work called *al-Hūr al-ʿīn*. For a review of Nashwān's views, see Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 111–115.

had to come from the Ahl al-bayt, or at least did not openly contradict this doctrine.[57]

After laying the general groundwork by raising the question of the imamate and reminding his readers of the Muṭarrifiyya's comparison with Banū Ḥanīfa, Ibn Diʿtham sets the stage for the specific story's interpretation: that the Muṭarrifiyya is the very opposite of the imam and of true belief. He starts the following part with "source criticism" of the traditional style by giving the personal names of those who told the story or those who could confirm it, among them an influential cousin of the imam.

> In the same vein God the Exalted hit them [the Muṭarrifiyya] with hail (*barad*)[58], as is told by Marzūq b. Yaḥyā al-Jawrī[59] and Yaḥyā and Qāsim, the two sons of Muḥammad Faṭīḥ[60]. Their account was confirmed by the Amīr Ṣafīy al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm[61], who was told this story by reliable persons who said:
> 'When the judgement of the sword [*ḥukm al-sayf*, declaration of *takfīr*] had been passed on the Muṭarrifiyya by the imam, peace be upon him, Rāshid b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaqrī al-Janbī[62] refused to acknowledge it. In those days, he stayed in the region of al-Ahnūm where his influence was already established in its plains and mountains. He had propagated the *madhhab* of the Muṭarrifiyya there and most of the inhabitants sympathised with it (*māla ilayhi*).'

Imam ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza wrote a letter declaring the Muṭarrifiyya to be *murtaddūn* (from *ridda*, apostate) and *kuffār* (unbelievers). It must be this declaration that is referred to as "The Judgement of the Sword" here, with the consequence that anyone who upheld Muṭarrifī doctrines could be killed, his women and children enslaved, and his properties confiscated. When the story of the hailstorm was written down, the violent implications of this judgment (*ḥukm*) were already being carried out, making it likely that its wording was well known.[63] Al-Ṣaqrī was one of the

57 Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 94–95.

58 The word b-r-d can be read and interpreted in different ways: as *bard*, meaning "coldness, chill" (Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 184b) or as *barad*, "hail, frozen rain" or *barid*, "possessing coldness or coolness" (Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 184b); for *barid* Lane cites as example *saḥāba barida*: "a cloud containing hail and cold." It seems that what is intended here is coldness, hail, storm, and icy rain at the same time. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 184c).

59 Al-Jawrī in the text, in the index al-Ḥawrī, which is palaeographically very similar.

60 In writing, Faṭīḥ or diminutive Futayḥ are the same, an ambiguity.

61 The *ibn ʿamm* (father's brother) of the imam, and one of his important generals, here obviously intended as a very trustworthy source.

62 A well-known leading Muṭarrifī, mentioned three times in the biography; the vocalisation is not certain.

63 ʿAlī Muḥammad Zayd claims that the first accounts of violence can be dated to 1206/1207. Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 184. In the *sīra* itself, there is also a long treatise quoted, shortly after the hail story, where the imam invokes *takfīr*. Ibn Diʿtham, *Al-Sīra al-Manṣūriyya: Sīrat al-Imām ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī, vol. 2, 863–883 (large parts in rhyme). At the end of the letter with the long poem, Ibn Diʿtham states that it had a strong effect on people and that people from the western areas, such as al-Aḥnūm and parts of Ḥajja turned away from the Muṭarrifiyya, where they previously used to pay

Muṭarrifi scholars/politicians who were still active at that time in the lands of al-Ahnūm, the mountains around Shahāra west of Khamir and Ḥūth. Ibn Diʿtham refers to the Muṭarrifiyya as a *madhhab*[64] and acknowledges that this "way of believing" seems to be well-accepted among the population in that region.

Here a series of questions arises: Can we take this last piece of information as historical fact, or is it a part of the tendentious narrative and thus to be seen as a "literary" truth? The problem is that we do not have many sources from this time which we could use to "triangulate" and judge the content. Was the area of al-Ahnūm really Muṭarrifī? And what would this mean? Does it mean that the doctrines of the Muṭarrifiyya were well-known there, or simply that the population there welcomed the occasional Muṭarrifi missionary? Did it mean that the population did not wish to pay taxes to ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza and therefore rather "held" Muṭarrifī doctrines (who possibly demanded/offered to take lower taxes)? Or were the al-Ahnūm simply on the fringe of ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza's area of operation and control anyway? Is this location in the story representative of the frontier lands that had to be converted? These questions cannot be answered by an interpretation of this story alone, but they should be kept in mind. Now the story takes a theological turn:

> He [al-Ṣaqrī] was the *shaykh* of the *ahl al-qafakha* ['the people of the strike'][65], who maintain that God created the world in one strike [*qafakha*] and made some parts of it as a causation for [a continuous transformation into] other parts (*wa-jaʿala baʿḍahu yaḥīlu baʿḍan*), and that God has no longer any direct role in his creation (*wa-lam yabqa lahu tadbīr fī khalqihi*), so for him [God] no activity[66] is left in his creation (*wa-lā naẓar fī bariʾatihi*)[67].

the canonical taxes to them. Ibn Diʿtham, *Al-Sīra al-Manṣūriyya: Sīrat al-Imām ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī, 2:889.

64 A *madhhab* is just "a way by which one goes or goes away", and also "a way, course, mode or manner, of acting or conduct" or "a way of believing, or opining, thinking or judging", "a belief, a creed, a persuasion" (Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 983b); in our case the word is used as something similar to *iʿtiqād* or established school of thought.

65 In the first instance, the editor has *qaḥfa*, in the second *qafkha*. The intention clearly is the use of the same word in both instances. *Qaḥfa* (or *qiḥfa* ?) would be "intense rain", cf. Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, *Shams al-ʿulūm*, 5382–5385, but fits not as well as *qafakha* from q-f-kh "he struck him", v. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2549c, where Lane mentions *qafakha* as "used by the people of El-Yemen in the sense of *ṣaqaʿa*" with the meaning "he struck a person's head with a staff". *Ṣaqaʿa* is (Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1706 a/b): "He struck him, or beat him." What seems to be intended is a presumably devaluating expression for the Muṭarrifīs who allegedly believe that God created the world "at one blow or strike" (*qafkha*) or "in one sweep", and that subsequently one thing influenced and changed the other without God interfering with it. Consequently the author calls the Muṭarrifīs *ahl al-qafkha*. Nashwān b. Saʿīd al-Ḥimyarī, Shams al-ʿulūm wa-dawāʾ kalām al-ʿArab min al-kulūm. Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon, 2549c.

66 Could also be translated as "interest", "control", "inspection", meaning the role as an active overseer.

67 *Wa-lam yabqa lahu tadbīr fī khalqihi wa-lā naẓar fī bariʾatihi*: from a rhetorical point of view this is a parallelism where both parts of the sentence give practically the same sense – a nice example of the author's delicacies for the specialists.

The theology and cosmology is here explained in simple words which end, however, with a succinct rhetorical manoeuvre. The arguments are formulated in a way that anyone with a minimum of theological background can understand. However, one can only be fascinated by the implications of this theological theory of natural causation. God only created the world in one go, and after that, the natural elements act and react with each other. This could mean that God does not anymore interfere in the world after the first act of creation. What are the implications of this for the imam's theocratic status? Does God actually support the imam, can such support be seen, does it exist? With arguments of that kind, the Muṭarrifis could indirectly invalidate the imam's transcendental legitimation.

Again, one must be cautious about whether or not the Muṭarrifiyya actually held these doctrines. If they did, it is highly likely that their leading scholars had developed far more sophisticated versions of this theory at a much higher level of abstraction, with built-in mechanisms to ensure compatibility with other theories. Contemporary theological experts employed complex theoretical devices to avoid extreme positions claiming absolute predestination or, on the other hand, complete free will. What is of interest in our context, however, is that Ibn Diʿtham clearly wants to tell the story in a manner that renders it easily comprehensible to any intended listener or reader. He returns to the description of the situation:

> He [al-Ṣaqrī] called for a meeting for everyone at a place called al-Ḥuraymāt of the land of Banū ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in the region of al-Ahnūm. He described to them what had happened to his fellow Muṭarrifis regarding punishment (*nakāl*), killing and confiscation of properties (*ibāhat al-amwāl*)[68] He called for patience[69] and perseverance in favour of their *madhhab*, the defense of their religion [*dīn*] and the keeping of their creed.[70] He aroused their feelings for fighting the imam, peace be on him, and they [the local people] responded positively.

This is an appropriate description of a political meeting. A man central to the activities of the Muṭarrifiyya sums up the suffering of his companions and exposes the unrighteousness of their opponents. He calls for support and loyalty. But again, what is the historic value of this information, if any? Is this a first-order observation? The author gives no indication that he was present himself. He makes us believe that the meeting and the speech given there really happened by naming witnesses, as if citing a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet. Even if this meeting never took place, this description remains one of a political meeting that could have really happened, at least in a similar way, but on the side of the imam in the presence of the author

68 A further rhetorical phrase: *min al-nakāli wa-l-qatli wa-ibāḥati l-amwāli*: a climax with a longer third element and a rhyme in the first and third element.

69 *Ṣabr* "patience, or endurance" was among others a tribal value. Consequently for the people al-Ṣaqrī/Ibn Diʿtham addressed the positive meaning was immediately understandable (cf. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1644c).

70 *Wa-ḥaḍḍahum ʿalā l-ṣabri wa-l-istiqāmati ʿalā madhhabihim wa-l-mudāfaʿati ʿan dīnihim wa-l-muḥāfaẓati ʿalā ʿaqīdatihim*: enumeration with parallelism.

with the necessary few changes. With this story alone it is impossible to fully answer these questions. But at least the place-names are certainly not invented, and violent conflicts between these enemies are also known from other sources, as is the general historical and geographical context. The author then turns to the climax of the story:

> They had not yet dispersed again from their meeting place when God the Exalted caused (*ansha'a*) a cloud to rise, and from that cloud pelted them with a punishment never seen at that time. A violent wind[71] with ice/hail (*barad*) came down on them, which did not go beyond the borders of the village (*balad*) where they had met. It destroyed the agricultural lands and uprooted the crops, the wines, the trees and the fruits.[72]

Ibn Diʿtham makes it very clear that God is the author of this catastrophe, indicating that the doctrines of the Muṭarrifiyya are false. He then adds a couple of sentences in which he points out how the local people interpreted and understood what had happened:

> It was a clear sign (*āya ẓāhira*) for the people of that village; they saw in it an evil omen (*taṭīrū bihi*) and they knew that they had been hit with His intention.

The story ends with the defeat for the Muṭarrifi activist; people turn against him and drive him from their territory.

> The ice [*barad*] remained on those trees that were left in that area for three days. A group of the local population repented and recognised the greatness (*faḍl*) of the imam, peace be on him. After that, this evil one [al-Ṣaqrī] did not stay on except for some few days and then they expelled him from their lands.

The story is clearly meant to serve as an example[73] and an argument for the imam's side against the Muṭarrifiyya. If the people of al-Ahnūm had expelled the Muṭarrifi in the first place, they would not have suffered the catastrophe. The moral of the story is clear: those who say that God does not create natural phenomena are wrong. They are punished by God with a natural disaster which clearly could not be mere coincidence. What is especially interesting is how the rather complicated and high-level theological differences are communicated in ways which ordinary – or

71 Reading *ḥāṣib* instead of *ṣāḥib* ("companion") in the text. See also the editor's note referring to *ḥāṣib* as denoting "a violent wind that raises the pebbles" and "a wind casting down pebbles from the sky: or a wind that tears up the pebbles. [...] And hence, A punishment from God [Lane cites al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*]" and "Clouds (*saḥāb*) casting down snow and hail", Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 581c.

72 "Fruits", *thimār*, could also be used metaphorically and translated as "yields".

73 In the year 1073/1074, in the biography of the two amirs al-Qāsim and Muḥammad, the sons of Jaʿfar b. al-Imām al-Qāsim b. ʿAlī al-ʿIyānī, a similar case of punishment of opponents by hail, in that case the defeated army of the Ṣulayḥids, is reported. Cf. al-Rabaʿī, *Sīrat al-Amīrayn*, ed. al-Sayyid and ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī, 230.

shall we say: ordinary but intellectually interested – people can understand. The author tries not only to describe the theological arguments, but also to convince the reader of the other party's error and the danger in believing the theory of natural causation. His account is clearly political propaganda for the imam and his version of theology, and consequently also his version of orthodoxy and his authority.

After this incident, the biographer describes other "steps" in the repression of the Muṭarrifiyya during the following years, and the gradual territorial and hegemonial occupation by the imam. This is often related in more realistic language, such as the attacks on the two main centres of Muṭarrifī life and learning, Hijrat Qāʿa and, a few years later, Hijrat Waqash south-west of Sanaa in 1215. The Muṭarrifiyya seems to have suffered under the imam's rule during the following years and was unable to recover after his oppression for several reasons, few of which are well-researched, but it lies outside of the scope of this chapter to explore them here.[74]

5 Conclusion

This chapter does not deal with a typical text regarding the End Times in the usual sense. Nowhere in the story of the hail-storm is anything like an end of time or signs of its approach mentioned. However, natural events were interpreted as a kind of end times for a specific group, the Muṭarrifiyya. For the Muṭarrifīs, their declaration as unbelievers by the imam, and the ensuing killings, confiscations, and more or less violent conversions were the prelude to the movement's end. On the other hand, natural events like the hail in our story could have been interpreted as disasters announcing the end of the world, and it is telling that this possibility was not used by the people at that time. A feeling of an end of time or of the world, of the *yawm al-qiyāma*, was simply uncalled-for at that time, it seems. For the Muṭarrifīs God does not interfere with nature, at least not habitually, so there is no need to interpret the hail-event as a sign of the End Times, whereas for the other side, the imam, the hail is a sign for his close connection to God and an indication of his being the rightful imam. An interpretation of the hail as a sign of the end of the world is equally impossible for him.

We have several good studies of the theological disagreements and developments in this period, but there are few that examine how these advanced and abstract theories were simplified, popularised, and reduced to effective political slogans, rendered useful for the creation of communities and – at the same time – the creation of hierarchies and boundaries. This requires a repertoire of concepts outside of theology (and eschatology) itself, in which one can describe and model the social-political context as well as the theology/ideas and the channels and modes in

74 The most detailed account of the later years of the Muṭarrifiyya is given by Zayd, *Tayyārāt*, 156–198.

which they were communicated and expressed. For such an undertaking it is arguably necessary to use a wide range of sources, not only those that are considered theology.

Slogans like "the people of the strike" (*ahl al-qafkha*) are not effective by themselves, of course, but have to be contextualised within the specific political tensions at the time. We also have to take into account that different actors have different degrees of interest/capacity in theology, yet they are also at times forced into taking a position and to using religious doctrines as political demarcations. We know that Imam ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥamza tried to expand his area of political influence and military dominance west into the fertile mountains of al-Ahnūm and wanted the population there to pay taxes to him. The Muṭarrifiyya was also known to partially collect religious taxes such as *zakāt*, but they distributed this income locally, a policy we have to assume was more popular than paying taxes to the imam, who would then spend them mainly on war or on his allies. The Muṭarrifiyya did not claim political hegemony over an extended region as the imam tried to. For example, they did not demand military conscription or support for holy war as the imam did from many of his subjects. The imam's intended take-over of al-Ahnūm was thus not only a matter of theology and orthodoxy; it also came along with political ambitions and consequences. The community was not only a community of religious orthodoxy: it was also a community of political loyalty. It was a hybrid religious and political vision of community.

In their biographies, the Zaydī imams are often portrayed as having special ties to God. Imams could therefore possibly help create rain for farmers. Intercession is a very controversial topic not only in Zaydism, but in Islam in general, and the exact nature of a "miracle" is often left vague. If the imam is obeyed, rain and prosperity would come. But not everyone believed that.

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Elena Tealdi

Political Propheticism. John of Rupescissa's Figure of the End Times Emperor and its Evolution

This article examines the connection between political prophecy and apocalyptical expectations during the Middle Ages. It focuses on the figure of the emperor of the end times in John of Rupescissa's prophetical commentaries and works. In Rupescissa's thinking, the figure of this final emperor is key to his exploration of the interaction between a universal temporal power and the spiritual one. The emperor's role in Rupescissa's eschatological thinking developed as the European political balance, and particular the position of France, changed. The analysis of Rupescissa's use and evolving interpretations of various prophetical sources highlights the different roles played by the temporal power in the expected imminent events of tribulation and salvation.

1 Political Prophecy and John of Rupescissa

In her book *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England*, Lesley Ann Coote answers the preliminary question "What is political prophecy?" by giving an interesting definition of prophecy: "Prophecy is not a genre but a discourse", before continuing that "political prophecy was not a code but a living language".[1] This definition can surely be applied to the prophecies of the Friar Minor John of Rupescissa (c. 1310–ca. 1366), which were closely connected to contemporary political developments and were adjusted accordingly throughout the author's lifetime.[2] John of Rupescissa was born around 1310 in the village of Marcolès, a few kilometers south of Aurillac. From about 1327 until 1332 he studied at the University of Toulouse, where-

1 Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England*, 13.

2 The first important study on John of Rupescissa appeared in the middle of the last century by Bignami-Odier, *Études sur Jean de Roquetaillade (Johannes de Rupescissa)*, based on her École Nationale des Chartes thesis of 1925. A lightly revised version of the book was published under the title "Jean de Roquetaillade (de Rupescissa): Théologien, polémiste, alchimiste." Lerner's "Historical Introduction" to Rupescissa's *Liber secretorum eventuum* edition (Iohannes de Rupescissa, *Liber secretorum eventuum, édition critique, traduction et introduction historique*, ed. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert, 13–85) offers a comprehensive study on his life, works and prophetical discourse; see also his more recent paper Lerner, "Life, Works, and Fortune of the Prophet Immured," 25–39.

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upon he became a Franciscan friar, before continuing his studies until 1337. At that moment or very soon after, he was assigned a place at the Franciscan friary in Aurillac.[3] It was during this first period of his religious life that the friar received and recounted some visions connected to the Antichrist's birth and life,[4] with the result that he came to be regarded as a visionary. Indeed, such a reputation was met with deep suspicion by the ecclesiastical authorities in Rupescissa's days, especially in Languedoc, where the heretical experience of the Beguins, a community of laypeople who lived according to the spiritual Franciscan model of strict poverty,[5] had just been extirpated. The ecclesiastical authorities continued to perceive a threat in the aftermath of this movement, and it was in this atmosphere that John of Rupescissa's visions were met with great scepticism.

Despite the likely absence of any evidence of doctrinal heresy at the time, it is easy to understand why John would have been incarcerated in December 1344 by his own order, considering that his prophecy was probably aimed at criticising its leadership, and accused them – in accordance with Peter of John Olivi's preaching and writings – of laxity, moral abuses, and opulence.[6]

All of Rupescissa's works, which comprise about twenty prophetic texts – commentaries on prophecies and new prophetic texts, including two examples of alchemical writings – were produced within a short period, namely between the years 1348/49 and 1357. From the *Liber secretorum eventuum* (1349) and the commentary on the *Oraculum Cirilli* (a medieval papal prophecy), we learn that, at the time of his imprisonment, he had been committed to writing an exposition on the "arcane revelations of Daniel" on the basis of a supernatural insight into the prophetic meaning of the Book of Daniel that he had received in Aurillac in 1340.[7] He certainly continued to write during the years of Franciscan imprisonment, as we can read in the

3 See Lerner, "Historical Introduction," 15–16.

4 About these visions, see Lerner, "Historical Introduction," 24–27; Lerner, "Life, Works and Fortune of the Prophet Immured," 29.

5 On Provençal groups of Beguins and their connections to Olivi's memory and theology, see Burnham, *So Great a Light, So Great a Smoke* (in particular, on Olivi's eschatology and its influence on the Beguins, 17–20 and 36–40).

6 The circumstances surrounding the arrest and imprisonment of the "Franciscan prophet" are analyzed by Lerner ("Historical Introduction," 28–29; "Life, Works and Fortune of the Prophet Immured," 30–32), who excludes two theological and doctrinal reasons for his incarceration – the formulation of a literal millennialism and adhesion to the technical doctrine of Franciscan poverty – since Rupescissa formulated the first one after 1345 and was never completely favourable to the second. Nevertheless, the clear influence on Rupescissa of another work, Arnold of Villanova's *De cymbalis ecclesie*, probably offered the inquisitor Guillaume Farinier adequate grounds for ordering his arrest. On Arnold of Villanova, see: Potestà, "L'anno dell'Anticristo. Il calcolo di Arnaldo di Villanova nella letteratura teologica e profetica del XIV secolo," 431–463.

7 Iohannes de Rupescissa, *Liber secretorum eventuum*, ed. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert, §18 [p. 146]; the passage from the commentary on the Oracle of Cyril is quoted by Bignami-Odier, *Études*, 186.

prologue of the *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, composed in 1356, where he speaks about the works composed during his time in the prison of Rieux.[8]

Remarkably, the friar's works were all produced in prison, owing to the fact that he was incarcerated almost without interruption from 1344 until his death around 1366. While the conditions of his first imprisonment – at the Franciscan convent of Figeac, some fifty kilometers south of Aurillac – were surely very hard,[9] his final detention in Avignon, after a peregrination through several Franciscan prisons, offered him the extraordinary possibility of being in touch with the most important people of the ecclesiastical world.[10] It was in Avignon that he read and commented on almost all known Latin medieval prophetic texts and constructed his

8 "[...] and from the dungeon of Rieux with a letter written with my own hand I have made <that>" (*Vade mecum in tribulatione*, Prologue, ed. Tealdi, 222; English translation: Kaup, 149). His sprawling commentary on the *Oraculum Cirilli* seems to have been composed mostly between 1347 and the first half of 1349; for the dating of this text and the challenges it poses, see Lerner, "Life, Works and Fortune of the Prophet Immured," 35, who specifies that "Avignon was the point of departure for the circulation of all of Rupescissa's surviving works, including the commentary on Cyril, which he most likely brought with him and completed there."). After the *Liber secretorum eventuum*, completed in November 1349, Rupescissa wrote the letter *Reverendissime pater* (1350), *De quinta essentia* (an alchemical work: 1351–1352), the *Sexdequiloquium* (1352–1353), the *Breviloquium de oneribus orbis* (1354), the *Liber lucis* (another alchemical work: probably 1354), the *Liber ostensor* (1356), the letter *Vos misistis* (1356), the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* (1356) and the letter *Flori rosarum* (between 1356 and 1360). The modern editions of Rupescissa's works are the following: Boilloux, *Étude d'un commentaire prophétique du XIVe siècle: Jean de Roquetaillade et l'Oracle de Cyrille*; Casteen, "John of Rupescissa's letter *Reverendissime pater* (1350) in the aftermath of the Black Death," 139–179; Jean de Roquetaillade, *Liber ostensor quod adesse festinant tempora*, édition critique sous la direction d'A. Vauchez, par C. Thévenaz Modestin et Ch. Morerod-Fattebert; avec la collaboration de M.-H. Jullien de Pommerol; sur la base d'une transcription de J. Bignami Odier; and the already cited editions of *Liber secretorum eventuum* (1994) and *Vade mecum in tribulatione* (2015). The early modern edition of his principal alchemical work remains standard: Iohannes de Rupescissa. *Liber de consideratione quinte essentie omnium rerum*. On his alchemical production, see: DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*. On the extraordinary overall production of the friar minor, see Lerner, "John the Astonishing."

9 See Lerner, "Historical Introduction," 29.

10 The terrible nature of his first confinement is described by Rupescissa himself in book IX of the *Liber ostensor* (chapters 16–22 and 36: edition 517–521 and 528). See also Lerner, "Life, Works, and Fortune of the Prophet Immured," 30. His final quarters were situated within the papal prison called "of the Sultan" (located somewhere apart from the papal palace) and were described by the Franciscan as an equally frightful place (*Liber ostensor*, 9.23, ed. Vauchez, 522). Nevertheless, an ever more frequent and wide use of prophetical and theological sources is evident in the works he wrote from the late forties onwards. The *Sexdequiloquium* and *Liber ostensor* clearly depended on the close reading of many other texts and extensive cross-referencing, which leads us to imagine him sat at a desk and to conclude that his living conditions in the papal prison cannot have been that bad. He was never actually condemned for heresy, and there is even reference to him being "relaxatus" by Clement VI in October 1350 (Vatican Archives, *Collectoriae* 50, f. 91v). This term is puzzling, but we can assume that it denoted a reduction in the severity of the conditions of his internment, as hypothesised by Potestà, "Gli spiriti dei profeti sono soggeti ai profeti," 47–59, at 48, note 4.

own prophetic system, which was deeply permeated by a belief in the imminent opening of a millennial reign of peace. This reign was considered in a literal sense and would open between 1365 and 1368, according to Rupecissa's eschatological computations, which were based on the books of the Bible, especially on that of the prophet Daniel.[11] The political element never disappeared from Rupescissa's prophecies completely, but it began to play a different role. With the End Times approaching, he understood politics as a useful key to clarifying the present, revealing the near future, and explaining the deeper meaning of the past.

2 The Emperor as the Apocalyptical Antichrist

Rupescissa's eschatological plan first appeared in the *Liber secretorum eventuum*, written in 1349. It envisaged three successive periods: one between the present and 1366 that would see the rise of the Antichrist; the second between 1366 and 1370, consisting of the Antichrist's open reign; the third as a millennium of peace, which would extend between the Great Antichrist's destruction in 1370 and the final advent of Gog. The *Liber secretorum eventuum* was primarily concerned with identifying the Antichrist with a political figure of his own time, and he looked for him specifically amongst the descendants of Emperor Frederick II.[12] The Provençal Beguins had seen Frederick III as Antichrist thirty years before, and now Rupescissa put the focus on Frederick II's grandson, Louis of Sicily, making clear that the

11 This "prophetic system" is recognisable within all of Rupescissa's prophetic works and was defined by Lerner as "the most detailed, internally coherent and influential Christian prophetic system of the fourteenth century" (Lerner, "Historical Introduction," 14). For a general introduction to medieval eschatology, see: Lerner, "Millennialism," 326–360. The works of Reeves and Töpfer remain very important: Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*; Töpfer, *Das kommende Reich des Friedens*.

12 In fact, the character of the Antichrist in Rupescissa's works is never alone, since the friar followed the Olivian expectation of two Antichrists, calling them "misticus" and "maximus", respectively. Applying this structure to the Hohenstaufen dynasty in his commentary on the *Oraculum Cirilli*, Rupescissa identified Louis the Bavarian with the mystic Antichrist and Louis of Sicily with the great one. In the *Liber secretorum eventuum* the structure is the same, since the two sovereigns are connected to different heads of the apocalyptical red dragon of Revelation 12 and named by the same epithet: "Louis of Bavaria with his antipope was the mystical, figurative and very solemn Antichrist, as already said. And, since it is said in the Revelation that "as for the beast that was and is not, it is an eight, but it belongs to the seven", this is the forthcoming Louis, that is quite a tyrant of the whole world. In fact, the emperor Frederick was the sixth king, while Louis the Bavarian is the seventh, and, so, Louis of Sicily will be the eighth" (*Liber secretorum eventuum* §7, ed. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert, 140).

prophetical and apocalyptic discourse in question introduced not only a political landscape but also, more exactly, a dynastic scheme of succession.[13]

While Rupescissa had not ruled out associating the Antichrist with a pseudo-pope[14] in the *Oraculum Cirilli* prophecy,[15] in the *Liber secretorum* he proceeded to identify some churchmen as benign apocalyptic characters, and announced the coming of five angelic popes who were destined to destroy the enemies of Christianity, lead heretics back to the Church, and institute reform. They would serve between the then incumbent pope, Clement VI, and the open reign of the Antichrist.[16]

13 The fourth paragraph of the *Liber secretorum eventuum* is entitled "Intellectus primus in revelatione patrum et generis Antichristi et nominis eius et persone et loci" and identifies the Apocalyptic enemy of the Church with the king of Sicily: "At first, I understood that the forthcoming Antichrist will be born from the lineage of Emperor Frederick and King Peter of Aragon; and I understood that the young king of Trinacria, who keeps the island of Sicily, Louis himself is the forthcoming universal king of the whole world, under whom the Holy Roman Church will cry" (*Liber secretorum eventuum* §4, ed. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert, 138); in the fifth paragraph, Rupescissa explains that he has to be identified with the apocalyptical beast of Revelation 13, since the sea he will arise from is the Mediterranean Sea around Sicily itself and his partial defeat was realised when "the heretic Frederick was deposed from his imperial power and, during the reign of Manfred, all their venomous lineage was destroyed on the field of Benevento, by the blessed and celebrated French race" (*Liber secretorum eventuum* §5, ed. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert, 139).

14 This is the subject of §§ 19–26 of the *Liber secretorum eventuum* (see, in particular, § 21, ed. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert: "It will occur, with the permission of God, that, with the suggestion of a counterfeiter and in offence to Christ and the pope, another one, son of ambition and pride, will be elected as pseudo-pope, sustained by a group of many cardinals denying the real pope;" The figure of the pseudo-pope would be transcribed in the subsequent *Sexdequiloquium* but did not appear in the last works of the friar. About the evolution of the image of the pseudo-pope, see Potestà, "Il profeta degli Anticristi, del *reparator* e del millennio," 51 and n. 40.

15 The core of the prophecy was the contrast between Celestine V and Boniface VIII, modelled on the biblical conflict between Roboam and Jeroboam (cfr. I Kings 12). On the content of the prophecy, see Potestà, *L'ultimo messia*, 166.

16 The role of these popes is described in §§ 56–59 of the *Liber secretorum eventuum*, which have the following incipit: "Therefore, the greatest pope, who will immediately succeed the aforementioned lord pope that currently reigns, will be a most pious man, elected by a single nod from God and anointed by the Holy Spirit and strengthened from heaven by the Archangel Michael's special protection and consoled by his personal visitations. Thus, God will pour the Holy Spirit and prudent zeal onto him to repair what is collapsed and to rebuild what is destroyed. He will plan to do astonishing, admirable and most divine things and will attempt to accomplish useful things, on account of which he will suffer grievously. But finally, by command of God, he will escape the perils and achieve victory over his false enemies." (*Liber secretorum eventuum* § 56, ed. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert, 165). Paragraph 20 had already introduced the figure of a saintly pope, connected to Celestine's memory: "Thus, according to the command of the almighty God, it will happen that the confined cardinals cannot agree on anybody except upon a certain man, who is most pious and anointed by God. He will not be chosen from the order of the cardinals, but rather in the same way as they once selected the most pious Celestine; indeed, this man will be elected with due observance and canonically." (*Liber secretorum eventuum* § 20, ed. Lerner and Morerod-Fattebert, 147).

Although it seemed that this opposition between the great enemy of the Church and its saintly defender would long remain a fixed part of the friar's eschatological vision, this did not prove to be the case. While the role of Louis of Sicily declined in subsequent works,[17] the apocalyptical enemy began to be explicitly called the Antichrist and was now not always to be identified with a specific sovereign. This is true of the *De oneribus orbis*, a commentary on the prophecy *Veh mundo in centum annis*, written in 1354, in which the last adversary of the Church is, according to the Book of Revelation, identified with Lucifer, the Beast arising from the sea or the false prophet, but no longer has a personal name.[18]

On the other hand, the concept of the saintly pope also underwent complex development in the year following the writing of the *Liber secretorum eventuum*. This is clear from the difference between the popes as described in the 1349 work, in which their portrayal was closely connected to the papal prophecy *Genus nequam*[19] – which also culminated in four saintly figures – and the popes that featured in subsequent works, where a progressive abandonment of this prophetic source is evident.

In fact, some years later, while he was writing another long theological and prophetical work, entitled *Sexdequiloquium*, Rupescissa no longer quoted from this set of prophecies. Nevertheless the close correspondence between the units 11–16 of *Genus nequam* and the *Sexdequiloquium*'s description of the final events until the coming of the Beast[20] make clear that he adopted the same theological structure and framework of apocalyptic expectation. He also comments on the saintly pope's evangelical life, implicitly identifying him as a Franciscan, and further notes that this pope will be "crowned by angels".[21] It is in this work that Rupescissa invented the term *reparator*, used as a personal name (and no longer an adjective, as in the preceding commentary to the *Oraculum Cirilli*) that served to identify a pope as having a specific eschatological role that was no longer based on the first papal series,

17 The same "prudential" attitude towards the personal identification of the Antichrist and the immediate applicability of the final fights to specific dynasties can be found in the Franciscan pseudo-Joachimite *Summula seu Breviloquium super concordia Novi et Veteris Testamenti*, written between 1350 and 1355 in Catalonia and containing an exposition of Joachim of Fiore and Peter of John Olivi's prophecies. For the edition of the text, see: *Summula seu Breviloquium super Concordia Novi et Veteris Testamenti*, ed. Lee, Reeves and Silano. Fundamental is also the paper by Robert E. Lerner, "Origine, contenuto e fortuna della *Summula* pseudo-gioachimita;" see also Potestà, "Il profeta degli Anticristi," 50–51 and note 37.

18 Potestà, "Il profeta degli Anticristi," 51.

19 Dependent on a Byzantine model of imperial prophecies called *Oracula Leonis*, the papal series was preceded by a cardinal series prophecy showing a strong anti-Orsinian perspective (i.e. a polemic against the Orsini, the powerful Roman family to which many cardinals and three twelfth- and thirteenth-century popes belonged), and ran into the beginning of the fourteenth century, where the same ecclesiastical polemic again comes to the fore. See Potestà, *L'ultimo messia*, 160–162. For the edition of the text, see Fleming, *The Late Medieval Pope Prophecies*.

20 Mesler, "John of Rupescissa's Engagement."

21 *Sexdequiloquium* V 4,2,12, as quoted in Mesler, "John of Rupescissa's Engagement."

but instead connected to the thirteenth motto (*Iste solus clare aperiet librum scriptum digito Dei vivi*) of another prophecy, *Ascende calve*.[22] The latter was aimed at denigrating the papacy and contradicted the theological meaning of the *Genus nequam* in that it introduced a structure culminating with a diabolic figure. Nonetheless, Rupescissa did not hesitate to utilise the *Ascende calve* – which he had only recently discovered – in his *Sexdequiloquium*,[23] using the thirteenth motto, which implicitly referred to Pope Celestine, to help shape the ideological construction of his *reparator*.[24]

In the meantime, Rupescissa's apocalyptic character of the poor, saintly pope grew more and more independent of the existing tradition of papal prophecies and ended up being identified not with a prophetical figure but with two biblical ones, the angel of Revelation 10:1 (the *angelus habens libellum apertum*)[25] and the mystical Elijah of Matthew 17:11. He was now characterised by Christological traits, especially by the typological use "in a second sense" of those prophetical passages of the Old Testament traditionally connected to the advent of Christ.

It might appear, therefore, that the journey from the *Liber secretorum eventuum* (and the commentary on the *Oraculum Cirilli* before it) to the works of the next decade brought with it the progressive elimination of the imperial horizon from Rupescissa's eschatological structure. But this was not (or, at least, not yet) entirely the case.

22 Both the dating of the *Ascende calve* and the milieu in which it was redacted are still subjects of controversy, but we can situate it in an Italian Spiritual Franciscan context between 1328 and 1330, according to Schwartz and Lerner, "Illuminated Propaganda." Regarding the debate around the redaction of the prophecy, see Potestà, *L'ultimo messia*, 178 and related note 104.

23 Mesler explains the change in the *Sexdequiloquium* concerning the integration of the new prophecy into the overall system in this way: "However, his reference to this prophecy is subtle. Rupescissa describes the coming pope as one 'who will kill Nero [and] heal the wounded', where Nero represents Pope Innocent VI." This image, as Lerner pointed out to me, draws on *Ascende calve* 13: "Rise and be valiant. Kill Nero and you will be secure; heal the wounded." Unlike the previous prophecies, Rupescissa does not mention this one by name, nor does he give any indication that he is referring to a prophetic text (Mesler, "John of Rupescissa's Engagement").

24 There is also evidence that Rupescissa wrote a – now lost – commentary on the prophecy, in particular on the thirteenth image: "On him I have written many treatises in abundant speech in several of my books, that is in my Commentary on the Prophetic Book Horoscopus and in the two Commentaries on the Book of the Tablets of God to Cyrill and in my Commentary on the prophetic book about the supreme pontiffs, which begins: Arise, Baldhead, and in the Commentary on the canon which begins: To the Heights you are called, oh Prince [...]." (*Vade mecum in tribulatione*, int. 9, ed. Tealdi 237; English translation: Kaup 191).

25 As argued in Tealdi: *Hic est angelus in manu habens libellum apertum*.

3 The French Emperor as a New Good Actor

In fact, another benign character emerged to accompany the *reparator* within the apocalyptic scenario, as we can see in the *Liber ostensor quod adesse festinant tempora* and the *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, both written only a few months apart in 1356. The *Liber ostensor*, slightly older and much longer than the second work, was structured along clearly pro-Angevin and anti-Aragonese lines.[26] It culminated in the anticipation of an emperor of the End Times whose French origins are strongly emphasised and reinforced by allusion to different prophecies, thus making the book a sort of prophetical encyclopaedia and showing the great extent of Rupescissa's library.

Very different in structure and dimension from the *Liber ostensor*, the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* is a short work directed towards obtaining salvation, and was widely disseminated.[27] Those willing to put their trust in Rupescissa's prophetic predictions about the imminent coming of the two Antichrists were urged to convert to a poor, evangelical life on the model of Christ and the Apostles. In structure, the work has twenty short chapters or intentions (*intentiones*). The prologue takes the form of a letter to *magister* Petrus Perrier, a Franciscan and a scholar of medicine. The first intention looks at the conversion of *infideles*, the destruction of heretics and schismatics, and the unity of the Latin and Greek Churches. The second, third, and fourth intentions are concerned with the conversion of secular clergy to the model of Christ's life, the persecution of clergy who remained in sin, and the final escape of the Roman Curia from Avignon. The fifth discusses the calamities expected to befall the world between the years 1360 and 1365, including the arrival of both the Eastern and Western Antichrists.[28] The sixth intention relates to the then recent defeat of the French army at the Battle of Poitiers on 19 September 1356,

26 The following quotations illustrate this point: "The second opinion is that this black rooster will be a worldly emperor who will have to be elected from among the people of the Gauls after the death – as I believe – or around the time of 'the beast ascending from the sea' (Apoc. 13:1). The *reparator* will choose him to reign without any election by the Alamanns [Germans]. He will be a rooster, which means from the family of the royal Gallic Franks, and black, because of the great penance. And he will reign over all, in the West and in the East, and will order the execution of the *reparator*'s orders. And his chickens, the many Gallic noblemen, will be destined to care for the whole world from this moment on." (*Liber ostensor*, 5.45, ed. Vauchez, 300–301); "In the same treatise it is expressly said that an angelic poor man, evangelical *reparator* of the future world, will take someone on from the Pippin's lineage against the German use of the election. And this man will repair the world together with him, and will make the Christian faith rule everywhere." (*Liber ostensor*, 4.46, ed. Vauchez, 163–164).

27 Its shortness was probably the main reason for its extraordinary diffusion. Within a few decades it had spread across Europe, from Spain to Bohemia, from Sweden to Italy, not only in the original Latin language but also in French, German, English, Italian, Castilian, Catalan, and Czech.

28 The theme of the double Antichrist (see above, note 7) obtains a peculiar geographical characterisation in the *Vade mecum*, since the two Antichrists are expected to come from different regions of the world and act together.

which is interpreted as an sign within the context of Rupescissa's sequence of events leading to the apocalypse indicating the beginning of the persecution and ultimate restoration of the Church. The seventh intention deals with the clergy's loss of material goods, and the eighth describes the Western Antichrist. The ninth to twelfth describe the actions of benign apocalyptic characters, namely the *reparator* and the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3, identified as friars minor, as well as a saintly French king. The thirteenth and fourteenth intentions discuss the persecution of both regular clergy and the Order of Friars Minor, while the fifteenth predicts the persecution of important towns. The sixteenth intention can be considered to be the core of the work: it explains the meaning of being saved in the aftermath of the Antichrists' persecution. The seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth intentions depict the appearance of the Western Antichrist and the events immediately before, during, and after the millennium of peace. The twentieth and final intention is a compendium of the prophetic quotations used by the author in building the chronology of the eschatological plan.

Both in the *Liber ostensor* and the *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, the second apocalyptic character was represented as a temporal sovereign whose role was to follow and support the *reparator*.[29] In writing these two works, Rupescissa used the *Liber de Flore*, a prophecy written in a Spiritual Franciscan milieu during Pope Boniface's reign,[30] to shape the image of the emperor of the End times. Because there is no reference to this prophecy in the *Sexdequiloquium*,[31] we can assume that it was unknown to our author until the first years of the 1350s.

As a new acquisition for his prophetical library, the *Liber de Flore* offered Rupescissa the precious new perspective of a perfect cooperation between temporal and spiritual powers, who were qualified to become actors in the messianic destiny of the Church. The unification of the Roman and Greek Churches, the end of the Byzantine Empire, and the dominion over Jerusalem exercised by the Angevin sovereign after the reconquest of Sicily were to be the most significant actions of this benign emperor, whose death in Constantinople would be followed by a range of miracles.[32]

29 As stated in the twelfth intention of the *Vade mecum in tribulatione*: "Against the custom of the German election he will raise up the king of the French, who will come at the beginning of <the restorer's> election to see his evangelical brilliance, as Roman emperor. To him God will subjugate the whole world in general: the West, the East and the South. He will arise in such a great holiness that no emperor or king since the beginning of the world ever will have equaled him in holiness except the King of Kings and Lord Jesus Christ." (*Vade mecum*, int. 12, ed. Tealdi, 243; English translation: Kaup, 209, 211).

30 On this work, see: Potestà, *L'ultimo messia*, 170–172. The first study of this prophecy was undertaken by Grundmann, "*Liber de Flore*."

31 As pointed out by Mesler, "John of Rupescissa's Engagement."

32 These miraculous signs after death are referred to explicitly in the *Vade mecum*, where, however, they relate to both the pope and the emperor: "The whole world will be restored by these two, and by them will be destroyed all the law and tyrannical power of Mohammed. Both, the pope and the

After the French emperor's death, the saintly pope (the second in a series previously announced in the text), who would also be a Frenchman, would wield both temporal and spiritual power, and within a year restore peace between Germany and France, where the ruling dynasty would not be re-established. A significant passage relating to the acquisition of temporal power by the pope sees the latter refusing to be crowned out of reverence for Christ's crown of thorns. This element of the crown plays a fundamental role in both the *Liber ostensor* and *Vade mecum*, but there is a notable difference in how it is presented.

In the *Liber ostensor* Rupescissa includes numerous lengthy quotations from the *Liber de Flore* that were to be read together with some quotations from the *Visiones* of the monk Sergius.[33] The passage concerning the refusal of the crown in the *Liber de Flore* is quoted in full, with the pope consistently referred to as the spiritual pastor and identified as the successor of the dead first *reparator*.[34] The passage is quoted again in a later chapter, after a temporal sovereign has been identified as a "king from the Occident" in line with Sergius' *Visiones*.[35] It is clear from the text,

emperor, will personally visit Greece and Asia, extinguish the schism, liberate the Greeks from the Turks, subjugate the Tartars to the faith, restore the kingdoms of Asia. And the pope will decree that forever, as long as the world exists, <some> cardinals will be taken from the Greek Church. He will ascend the mountain that is called Taurus in Asia to take back Asia. In Italy he will end the schism of the Guelphs and Ghibellines and put the lands of the Church into such an order that the Church will never fight again because of them. He will extirpate greed and arrogance from the clergy. He will annihilate the heresies. And since, as I have said, it will soon happen that the unbelievers will invade Italy, Hungary and many Christian countries and afflict Christendom literally for months, it is he who will destroy them and liberate the Christian people from Mohammed's hands. [...] After nine years and a half or nine months or thereabouts, he will finish his life and the emperor after ten years and a half or thereabouts. And in death both will shine through great miracles." (*Vade mecum*, int. 12, ed. Tealdi, 243–244; English translation: Kaup, 211, 213, 215). We thus read here that the pope would have died after nine and a half years, as did the emperor in the *Liber de Flore*, while the king's reign would have lasted ten and a half years. This second figure depends on another prophecy entitled *Visiones*, which was composed in the ninth or tenth century by the monk Sergius. This figure is a legendary character of the Christian and Islamic tradition. The *Visiones*, known to Rupescissa from a thirteenth-century Latin version, referred exactly to the expectancy of an occidental saintly king. See Bignami-Odier, Levi Della Vida, "Une version latine de l'Apocalypse syro-arabe de Serge-Bahira."

33 See note 33 and *Liber ostensor*, ed. Vauchez, 920–922, on the use of the *Visiones* in Rupescissa's prophetical work.

34 "During the reign of the successor of the first pauper *reparator*, the temporal rector will die, and in the town of Constantinople will dissolve a debt with God, and he will shine, after his death, because of a huge number of miracles. Another poor man will assume his temporal power. The already named successor will be present at the temporal rector's death and will preach in a very kind way that somebody from his lineage be placed on his own honorable throne. And this one, when he conquers the temporal dominion, will immediately refuse to be crowned with the golden crown, because of his reverence for the Crucifix." (*Liber ostensor*, 6.64, ed. Vauchez, 352: cfr. *Liber de Flore*, ms. Arras, Bibliothèque municipale, 138, fol. 99).

35 "A king will come from the West and will reign in the whole world for one and half weeks. This is the precious king described by Joachim, who has to be chosen from the French lineage by the poor

though not expressly stated, that the pope will refuse the crown, while the emperor will not. Moreover, a few lines before the above-mentioned passage, the reader is provided with further information on the mission of the king, who is said to have been called to reunify the whole world under the dominion of God.[36] This emphasis on political action, and its essential role, suggests that, unlike the pope, the king will not be expected to renounce his crown, once he has been called upon to exercise his full dominion over the world in order to ensure Christ's universal reign.

The scenario presented in the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* diverges considerably from the *Liber de Flore*'s model. First of all, in Rupescissa's version the conversion of *infideles* all around the world would not be achieved by a human character (neither emperor nor pope), but by God himself or, perhaps, come about through a series of favourable coincidences.[37] Secondly, the key twelfth intention states clearly and unambiguously that the apocalyptic actor expected to renounce his crown is the king.[38] This means that the saintly king is ordered and expected to exercise his redemptive role precisely by renouncing the symbol of his temporal authority. There is a difference between the two works, therefore, in how the balance between the two powers, the temporal and the spiritual, is presented. While the *Liber ostensor*, in accordance with its *Liber de Flore* template, describes the two powers as being perfectly equal (albeit within a relationship of loyalty and obedience), the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* offers the idea of a precise hierarchy between them.[39] At the

friar minor emperor. And he will refuse to be crowned with the golden crown." (*Liber ostensor*, 6.77, ed. Vauchez, 362).

36 "He will conquer the infidels' towns and subjugate them. And he will hit them with his sword, because he is the one who will be ordered by the emperor to free the whole world from all the mistaken sects and to realize one herd with one pastor under Jesus Christ's dominion." (*Liber ostensor*, 6.78, ed. Vauchez, 362).

37 "God's first intention, however, is to gather – during the tribulations that have begun and are to increase from stage to stage – the whole world in the one Catholic faith [...] to convert the Jews, Saracens, Turks, Tartars, and to lead the Greeks back to the unity of the general Church, and to extirpate completely from the earth all the schismatics, the heretics in their entirety [...] For rather should heaven perish and the earth be reduced to nothingness, than that the word of Christ in the 10th chapter of John should fail, who says: Other sheep I have, which are not of this flock; them also I must bring, and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd." (*Vade mecum*, int. 1, ed. Tealdi, 223–224; English translation: Kaup, 153, 155). Note the use of the same quotation from the Gospel of John 10.16 here as in the passage from the *Liber ostensor* cited in the preceding note.

38 "This emperor will be recognised in this, that, for the sake of honoring Christ's crown of thorns, he will refuse to be crowned with a golden crown" (*Vade mecum*, int. 12, ed. Tealdi, 243; English translation: Kaup, 211).

39 The *Liber ostensor*, quoting the *Liber de Flore* (ms. Arras, Bibliothèque municipale, 138, fol. 98), at book 6, chapter 63, affirms that "the spiritual pastor and the temporal rector will have a common will and a common perfection; what will be ordered by one of them, will be executed by the other" (ed. Vauchez, 352); on the other hand, the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* emphasises the complete dependence of the temporal sovereign on the spiritual *reparator*: "This holiest emperor will be the executor of all the mandates of the mentioned restorer (*reparator*)" (*Vade mecum*, int. 12, ed. Tealdi, 243; English translation: Kaup, 211).

core of the dynamic balance aspect we find the symbol of the crown and the connection between it and Christ's crown of thorns. Its significance is not surprising if we consider the devotion to the holy crown "invented" and practised by Louis IX, king of France from 1226 to 1270. It is tempting to see in Rupescissa's attitude a re-establishment of apocalyptic expectations concerning the French crown, reinforced by the use of the prophetic authority of the *Liber de Flore*, but at the same time updated by the implicit reference to the more recent reign of Louis IX. The situation is not so simple, however.

In 1238/9, the French sovereign Louis IX obtained the crown of thorns from the emperor of Constantinople. Its acquisition and the building of the Parisian Sainte-Chapelle to house it are the highpoints in the shaping of the theological and political meaning associated with the circulation of these most important Christian relics during the Middle Ages.[40] For the French king, the possession of Christ's crown was an irrefutable signal of both his superiority in comparison to other monarchies and his divine investiture within the whole Christian community. The crown was, therefore, a visual sign and proof of the connection between spiritual guidance and temporal dominion. Charismatic leadership had always been a particular element of dynastic legitimisation, but during the reign of Louis IX it assumed the dimension of moral – and not simply political – hegemony, which was evoked through reference to divine and supernatural investiture. The problematic nature of this conception is evident, on one hand, in the refusal of the papacy to universalise veneration of the holy crown and, on the other, perhaps, in the effort made by Louis's brother, Charles I of Anjou, to obtain Louis' canonisation, which arguably represented an actual admission of papal moral supremacy. Indeed, the symbolic construction and liturgical propaganda bound up with the crown of thorns decreased after the king's death, while the Roman Curia re-elaborated the figure of the saintly king with the aim of using it for the purposes of celebrating the superiority of ecclesiastical authority.

Although it seems somewhat paradoxical, Louis' canonisation obfuscated the celebration of the crown insofar as it turned the king into the foremost purveyor of the universal obedience owed to the Church, thereby diminishing the cult's original theological and political message. Rupescissa's works were written some decades after Pope Boniface VIII's canonisation of the saintly king of France in 1297, and their evolution must be viewed in the context of the difficult and rarely productive relationship between the two wielders of universal powers – the Church and the monarchy – in the intervening period. It is immediately evident that a simple shift of balance, applying the phrase *renuet coronari* to the emperor rather than the pope, could cause a considerable change of perspective: the saintly and humble sovereign of Rupescissa's prophecies is no longer the pope, as in the original

40 The short explanation of this topic here is dependent on the important volume of Chiara Mercuri, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re,* 105–211.

prophecy, and instead reverts to the apocalyptic figure of the emperor. Nevertheless, the latter character is an *imperator sanctissimus*, who reigns with the *reparator* while being wholly obedient to him.

It is pertinent at this point to examine the manuscript tradition of the *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, as it may assist in the interpretation of the text's development. The tradition of the Latin text is very complex, with copies transcribed all across Europe, particularly in the century and a half after Rupescissa's writing (from 1359, only three years after the original redaction, to the middle of the sixteenth century).

It is not possible to establish a *stemma codicum* that relates all manuscript families to a unique original, nor can this archetypal text be identified with any certainty in the surviving copies. Nevertheless, a French manuscript family of the text, named α in the recent edition, shows some peculiar characteristics that allow it to be identified it as clearly a very important version.[41]

It is of some significance that all the manuscripts of this family are French; one of them is the oldest known exemplar of the Latin tradition,[42] while another, even if datable only to the fifteenth century, contains a very coherent text that displays a deep understanding of the prophetical meaning of the *Vade mecum*.[43] So, too, does the earliest French translation, which is also the oldest witness of the text (1358) and was likewise written in France.[44] None of these manuscripts include the phrase *ob honorem sancte corone spinarum Christi*,[45] thereby reducing the refusal of the crown to a simple act of humility, without any reference to the political and theolog-

41 See the *ratio editionis* in Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 136–157.

42 Brügge, Stadtbibliothek 416: described in Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 96–97; it is dated to 1359 (the same date is given for the ms. Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana Lat. III 39, but only for the folios containing the *Vade mecum*).

43 Vaticano, BAV Reg. Lat. 1964: described in Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 115–116.

44 This translation is attested in a manuscript of the second half of the fourteenth century: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale del France, Fr. 24254. Concerning this manuscript and the French translation, see Ferrari, "La prima traduzione francese del *Vade mecum in tribulatione* di Giovanni di Rupescissa (Paris, BnF Fr. 24254)." Some remarks on the relationship between the Latin and French versions are expressed in Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 136–157 (*ratio editionis* of the family) and is more extensively examined in Ferrari, "La più antica traduzione francese del *Vade mecum in tribulatione* (ms. Paris, BnF, fr. 24254)."

45 "For the sake of honoring Christ's crown of thorns" (see also n. 38). The same omission can be found in a French translation as well: "Il prenra et fera empereur de Rome, contre la coustume de l'eleccion d'Alemaigne, un roy de France qui sera au commencement de sa creacion pour enduire et manifester au monde la clarté euvangelique d'icellui Reparateur du monde; au quel empereur Dieu sousmettra generalment tout le monde: Orient, Occident et Midi; et sera de si grant sainteté que onques ne fu roy ne empereur pareil a sa sainteté et sa prodommeye, fors seulement nostre Seigneur Jhesu Crist le souverain Roy des Roys. Cestui empereur sera congneu a ce que il refusera estre couronné de couronne d'or": Ferrari, "La più antica traduzione francese del *Vade mecum in tribulatione* (ms. Paris, BnF, fr. 24254)," 57.

ical implications of the possession of the holy relics. It seems impossible to establish whether this variant reflects authorial intention or not, but we can at least assume that the entire older French tradition did not contain any reference to King Louis' actual expectations.[46] The omission of any direct reference to Christ (and his crown) would seem to signal the increased role of the Church, which was expected to become the foremost arbiter within Christianity during the End Times. Nevertheless, the apocalyptic character of the saintly emperor also endured in undiluted form, at least within the Latin manuscript tradition, in which all other witnesses containing the entire text contain the complete sentence.[47] Furthermore, the abbreviated

46 This observation is supported by a similar omission from the comparably early Catalan version of the *Vade mecum*, as pointed out by Marco Pedretti: "Aquest farà emperador aquell rey de França qui vindrà en lo començament quant ell serà papa – e açò serà contra la costuma de la elecció qui·s solie fer en Alamanya – al qual Déus sotsmetrà tot lo món; lo qual emperador serà de tan gran santedat, que negun emprerador ni rey no li serà stat semblant del començament del món tro ara; aquest emperador sobresant serà execudor de tots los manaments del dit papa Reperador": Pedretti, "La traduzione catalana del *Vade mecum in tribulatione* (ms. Carpentras, Inguimbertine, 336)," 166–167.

47 It is particularly significant that an important group of manuscripts circulated quite early in England, constituting a group easily identifiable as a family (family γ of the *ratio editionis*: see Giovanni di Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 171–188). Among these, two manuscripts (London, British Library, Royal 8 E VIII and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Th. 57) have what are evidently marginal notes (sometimes interpolated into the text, so probably copied from an older exemplar). The note concerning the twelfth intention presents an interesting example of the phenomenon of the eschatological horizon being updated, when it suggests that the emperor would be called "Taurus" (this is an "intentional" mistake from the original reference to the *Taurus* as a region of Asia), since he would reign in both England and France, and could thus be identified with the English king, Henry VI of Lancaster: "This *reparator* will drive all the corrupted, simoniacal, mean and lustful priests away from the temple of God. At the beginning of the emperor's reign, he will choose a French king, who will be very saintly. Note that the emperor and the king will destroy the law of Muhammad and will visit Greece and Asia. Note that the emperor will go to Asia and that he will be called 'bull' and that somewhere the king of England is called a bull with two horns that is the English and the French crown: only God exactly knows his identity, but I think he is the present king of England." See Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 312–314. Manuscripts containing excerpts of the text could also correctly render the characterisation of the emperor. For example, the Italian ms. London, Wellcome Institute Library 507, on fol. 1 presents a singular abbreviated version that focuses on the spiritual element of the religious conversion, but not without frequent reference to the apocalyptic characters of the eleventh and twelfth intentions. In particular, it reads: "The pope will nominate as Christian emperor the French king reigning at the time. And he will have so great a holiness, virtue and goodness that no king will ever have had the like, Christ excepted. In fact, he refused to be crowned with the golden crown, since he thought that the king of the universe had been crowned with a crown of thorns in an act of terrible cruelty." (See Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 305–307). Nevertheless, the ascription of a predominantly spiritual or political-revolutionary sense to the text by later redactors often brought with it the elimination of any reference to imperial power; examples of these two tendencies at work can be found in Wrocław, Biblioteka Universytecka I Q 72m (writing only: "Then the pope will destroy all the heretics and other infidels with their heresies." See Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 309–311) and the more important Wien, Österreichische Nation-

version[48] does not omit the entire content of the twelfth intention, and is actually one of the less contracted forms of the *Vade mecum*. This points to the existence of both a strong tradition of the text and a deep comprehension of the contents of the passage.

4 No More King?

Although the *Vade mecum* is much shorter than the *Liber ostensor* and it takes and develops the main themes of the earlier treatise, it cannot simply be considered to be a summary. The two works can be seen as mutually independent pieces, with the political discourse itself as the principal grounds for comparison between them. Indeed, it is the modified political scenario and background of these works that can be used to explain the discontinuity between them. In the *Vade mecum*, the emperor's role is significantly reduced to that of a mere agent of the *reparator*, described only in the second part of the twelfth intention before disappearing.[49] The reduction of his role cannot be explained simply by the constriction of the apocalyptic landscape to a few pages, given that a considerable difference in the roles allocated to the spiritual and temporal characters can be observed in the work.

A specific change of perspective had come about in Rupescissa's eschatological plan, as can be established by focussing on the biblical quotations in the two works (*Liber ostensor* and *Vade mecum*) and identifying some possible lines of interpretation. A particular quotation from Isaiah 28:19 that is found in both the *Liber ostensor* and the *Vade mecum* (and here more frequently) is very significant in this regard. The quotation (*sola vexatio intellectum dabit auditui*) seems to be the "driving force" of this eschatological dynamism, because it reveals as an indispensable precondition for the opening of the millennium of peace the deep connection between *tribulatio* and *conversio*, then *conversio* and *predicatio*, and finally *predicatio* and the

albibliothek 3282, that, according to Robert E. Lerner's definition of "popular justice", omits any reference to both temporal and spiritual power, leaving it to the lay people the role to destroy the corrupted clergy (see Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 301–305) and, for the context of the redaction of the text, Lerner, "Popular Justice."

48 The abbreviated version of the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* survives in diverse forms, including a group of manuscripts containing a text with all the intentions in abbreviated form and lacking the prologue; a shorter version circulated in England. These manuscripts contain only some abbreviated intentions, but, significantly, always include the twelfth one. See Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 200–208.

49 The second part of the intention includes complete list of their actions, where it is made clear that the emperor neither does anything by himself nor works without the spiritual pope (see the quotation above, n. 33).

conversio of the *infideles*.[50] As for the character refusing the royal crown in the two texts, here the focus shifts from the temporal to the spiritual. The *Vade mecum* features a temporal sovereign who has renounced his political role and its symbol (the crown). He is a truly "disempowered" king, who, because of his consequent inability to change the condition of the world, is no longer the object of eschatological admonition. Thus the addressee of Isaiah's admonition is identified as the Church and the French monarchy in the *Liber ostensor*,[51] while it is to be equated with the Church alone in the *Vade mecum in tribulation*.[52] What happened in the few months between the writing of the *Liber ostensor* and of the *Vade mecum*, respectively? Why was the French king no longer an addressee of the Old Testament prophet in the *Vade mecum*? On 19 September 1356, the French army was destroyed at the Battle of Poitiers and King John II imprisoned at Bordeaux (together with a large number of French nobles). He was destined to remain there until 11 April of the following year, when he was transferred to London, where he stayed until 8 May 1360.[53] These events affected a key element of Rupescissa's eschatological scenario: the French monarchy could no longer be considered a good interlocutor and actor in his eschatological scenario. The friar therefore not only eliminated the allocution to the monarchy, but also continued with the construction of a new hermeneutical plan

50 It is worth mentioning that Isaiah's quotation is used surprisingly rarely in the Franciscan and Spiritual literary works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, even in works that explicitly involve the connection between persecution and salvation, such as Angelo Clareno's *Historia septem tribulationum*; in fact, we find a very similar use of that quotation only in Arnald of Villanova's *Tractatus de tempore adventus Antichristi*, which was surely a source of Rupescissa's eschatological plan: "And so the terrifying voice is necessary to do these things [...], as it is written in Isaiah's prophecy: And it will be sheer terror to understand the message. Actually, the tribulations of punishment and persecution and the terror of dying and forthcoming judgement could upset the men whose hearts have not totally parted with the expectation of eternal life" (ed. Perarnau i Espelt, "El text primitiu del *De mysterio cymbalorum Ecclesiae* d'Arnau de Vilanova," 138. On Arnald's eschatological timetable and its influence, see also Potestà, "L'anno dell'Anticristo."

51 "I was saying [...]: 'God's will be done! Maybe affliction will give them the intellect to come back to their fathers and predecessor kings' way of living and ruling.' And I understood that, since they had abandoned the humility and the holiness of the old way of ruling, because of that a lot of troubles had occurred to them" (*Liber ostensor*, 4.51, ed. Vauchez, 168).

52 In the second and shorter text the central theological theme is the persecution of the clergy, which ends with the extreme possibility of conversion before the beginning of the millennium of peace, and ultimately with the divine election of a saintly pope. This is evident from intentions 3: "Those, however, who according to the words of Isaiah scourged shall receive understanding, will be preserved by God with the holy prelates and clerics as seeds." (*Vade mecum*, ed. Tealdi, 227; English translation: Kaup, 163), 7: "[...] the affliction shall give them understanding, and they will humbly recognize their guilt" (*Vade mecum*, ed. Tealdi, 234; English translation: Kaup, 183), and 9 ("For when through these tribulations [...] this affliction shall confer understanding, Christ, through the ministry of the holy angel, will cause one supreme pontiff to be elected [...]" (*Vade mecum*, ed. Tealdi, 235; English translation: Kaup, 187).

53 The echo of the defeat of Poitiers was significant, not only in Rupescissa's eschatology but also in the external and internal politics of France. See, among others, Green, *The Battle of Poitiers, 1356*.

that took into account the new *status quo*; the defeat of Poitiers was not omitted, but rather became a part of the "eschatological mechanism". The defeat of the French monarchy was necessary in order that the Church be left alone and unprotected, so that its persecution became inevitable; the persecution of the Church was in turn necessary in order to lead it to the conversion that would bring about the gathering of saintly men who would be able to pray for the infidels' conversion and the world's eschatological salvation.

The political landscape remained a fundamental element of the eschatological plan, but it was recast as a pre-existing and unavoidable starting point within a dynamic of cause-and-effect; it was part of the fixed past, no longer of a malleable present that, even up until the composition of the *Liber ostensor*, it was possible to question and to direct.[54] The final months of the year 1356 pushed some other developments into Rupescissa's eschatological thinking. A short text beginning with the words *Verba fratris Iohannis* can be found in a prophetical section of a fourteenth-century English manuscript and also in an erudite collection of prophecies compiled in Mantova in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.[55] Although this text is called a summary of the *Liber ostensor* in the first manuscript[56] and of the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* (or actually the *Liber ostensor* itself) in the second one,[57] it has to be considered a new and independent text.[58] This short and extremely precise text has

54 This dynamic of cause-and-effect has a specific rhetorical expression in the *Vade mecum*. The negation of possibility (*non possibilis est*) and the hypothetical sentence in the past tense: something would have happened before that (*citius quam*) something else could happen. The three fundamental steps of the eschatological plan (the French monarchy's defeat, persecution of the Church, conversion of infidels) are also presented in the *Vade mecum* in a non-chronological sequence (first intention: conversion of infidels; second one: Church persecution; sixth one: defeat of French monarchy), with a consequent emphasis on the necessary connection between the three events. The internal structure of the text is explained at 76–77 of the critical edition.

55 For the description of the two manuscripts (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 138; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 16021), see Rupescissa, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, ed. Tealdi, 128 and 130–131; see also *Liber ostensor*, ed. Vauchez, 857–859.

56 Ms. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 138, fol. 184r: *Verba fratris Johannis de Rupecissa ordinis minorum de futuris eventibus stupendis et de certis annorum cotationibus eorumdem, abreviata de libro qui intitulatur Ostensor futurorum*.

57 Paris, BnF, Lat. 16021, fol. 5v: *Verba fratris Iohannis Repetissa qui dicitur Vade mecum in tribulatione, ordinis fratrum minoris, de futuris evenientibus stupendiis et ceteris annorum abreviate de libro eius intitulato Ostensor quot adesse festinant tempora ad dominum cardinalem Petragoricensem*. The grammatical structure of the sentence is not very clear, since it would suggest that the friar and not his work is called *Vade mecum in tribulatione*.

58 I thank Robert E. Lerner, who suggested this interpretation to me during a discussion on the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* edition, that took place in Milan on 3 December 2015. He argued that the author of the *Verba fratris Iohannis* was Rupescissa himself, because of some peculiar linguistic structures and images, as well as a number of intentional and carefully chosen omissions (in particular, the millenarian references) that could hardly have been done by someone else. Lastly, in the Paris manuscript the author speaks of the French king as *dominum meum regem Franchorum* and it is easy to hear the voice of the Franciscan prophet in this. Since this work was written a few months

several elements in common with the *Vade mecum* and correctly organises the concatenation of events from the defeat of the French army to the persecution of the Church and the intervention of eschatological characters to rescue Christianity. In it, the French emperor seems to play the same role as in the *Vade mecum* (although with a significant difference between the two manuscripts) and is explicitly said to renounce his crown because of his reverence for Christ.[59] It should be noted that in the Parisian manuscript the imperial character actually disappears entirely, while the pope plays his eschatological role according to an updated fifteenth-century "schedule".[60] Even if the change of dates suggests a later re-writing of the text, it is notable that the additional chapter is in fact a new exposition of the first intention of the *Vade mecum*; secondly, the sentence *et similis ei papa non fuit et a morte sancti Petri circa* is an exact repetition of the original celebration of the emperor in the *Vade mecum*.[61] These two details could suggest that the scribe knew and was reading the *Vade mecum* directly, and – possibly – that the *Verba fratris Iohannis* had originally circulated in two versions, one with the two eschatological figures and one with the saintly pope alone. Or perhaps Rupescissa himself hesitated between the two solutions – and this would be a fascinating hypothesis – while he was "reconceiving" his *Vade mecum*.

A few months after the *Vade mecum* was redacted, another text flowed from the pen of Rupescissa. The friar wrote a letter addressed to Étienne Aldebrand, archbishop of Toulouse, beginning with the words "Vos misistis". Some themes of the

after the *Vade mecum*, before the end of the year, it is clearly a "reconsideration" of the *Vade mecum* and has as its most prominent element – but not the only one – the re-establishment of the correct order of events from the year 1357 to the 1365. See Lerner, "Yet Another Work by John of Rupescissa."

59 In its final part the short eschatological treatise, which can be characterised as a synopsis of intentions 6, 5, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 (in this order) of the *Vade mecum*, reads: "In the year 1360 or a bit later, there will be this good shepherd's entrance. This forthcoming celestial *reparator*, coming from the saintly French kings' lineage and from their own home, will elect a king for the glory of the Roman empire; and Christ will submit to him all the world from East to West; and nobody will be able to take position against him. This very saintly man will be humble and will refuse to be crowned with the golden crown because of the reverence towards Christ's crown of thorns. The emperor will live about ten and half years; and the *reparator* nine years and nine months" (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 138, fol. 84v).

60 "And it will be not so long from the year of our Lord 1470, before or after the entrance of that man who will suffer persecution at the hands of his own friends during the years 1475, 1476 and 1477. So, there will be one flock and one shepherd all around the world. And starting from Saint Peter's death there has been no pope like him. He will save the world and restore it to its original sanctity and unity" (Paris, BnF, Lat. 16021, fol. 6r). *Et ab anno Domini 1470 non distabit multum, ante vel post introductionis ejus, quem persecutionem patietur a suis intra annum Domini 1475, 1476, 1477. Fiet unum oville et unus pastor in mundo. Et similis ei papa non fuit et a morte sancti Petri circa. Qui et enim universum mundum recuperabit et ad ipsum reducet, ad sanctitatem et unitatem antiquam.*

61 "He will arise in such a great holiness that no emperor or king since the beginning of the world ever will have equaled him in holiness except the King of Kings and Lord Jesus Christ." (*Vade mecum,* int. 12, ed. Tealdi, 243; English translation: Kaup, 209, 211; see above, note 30).

Vade mecum were once again broached therein: the escape of the Curia from Avignon, the persecution of the clergy, the general decline in human solidarity, and the increase in European wars and aggression by external enemies.[62]

Besides the shared elements some changes can also be noted in the eschatological scenario presented. A *reparator* is expected, but he would be neither a pope nor a friar minor, but simply an *angelus vicarius Christi*. Above all, he would not be supported by anybody, neither by the two eschatological characters nor a temporal emperor. At the end of the letter, Rupescissa uses the image of the "wheel of fortune" (*rota fortunae*), whose turning periodically brings about success or defeat in human events. Fortune, like Christian Providence, is understood as an instrument of divine omnipotence. It will destroy proud men and radically change the destiny of the world. A conversion is expected for humanity, but the role of any saintly man (both the *reparator* and the emperor) is entirely reduced:[63]

> But after countless tribulations, and after the controversies at hand inside the Christian community are over, God's benevolence will come to the foresaken people, since one angel, Christ's representative – who has knowledge of all of his intentions and who will lead every churchman back to the way of life of Christ and the Apostles – will extinguish almost all sin and will sow all evangelical virtues in the world. He will convert the Jews, destroy many of the Saracens, convert the Tartars, but destroy the Turks, who refuse to convert to Christ. The whole world will be pacified under him and peace will last about one thousand years. And then, from this time on, evil will grow in the world, the mighty ruler will mourn, the king will wear the sadness, the power of the people will have been destroyed, until the future representative of

62 The letter often circulated together with the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* and may be read in eight of the manuscripts: Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A V 39; Bremen, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, b 35; Göttingen, Stadt-Archiv, 7; Milano, Biblioteca Trivulziana, 199; Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson D 339; Wroclaw, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, I Q 112; London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian E VII; London, British Library, Royal 7 A IX (this last manuscript presents a short text depending on the letter *Vos misistis* and the fifth intention of the *Vade mecum*, signifying that its author had probably read them together in another manuscript). See also Bignami-Odier, *Études*, 174–175.

63 This section of the unedited letter is here transcribed from the ms. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A V 39, fol. 124r, where *Vos misistis* is followed by the letter *Reverendissime pater* and then the *Vade mecum*: *Sed post tribulationes innumerandas et transactis scandalis in Christianitate propinquis, misericordia Dei veniet ad desolatam gentem, quia unus angelus vicarius Christi, qui sciet omnes voluntates eius, qui universos ecclesiasticos reducet ad modum vivendi Christi et apostolorum, universa fere scelera extirpabit, omnes virtutes evangelicas seminabit in mundo. Iudeos convertet, plurimos destruet Sarracenos, Tartaros convertet, Turcos autem destruet, nolentes converti ad Christum; totus orbis sub ipso pacificabitur et pax fere mille annis durabit. Et ideo, ab hoc tempore et ultra, mala crescent in mundo, princeps magnus lugebit, rex induetur merore, manus populi dissolvetur, donec mittatur ille Christi vicarius futurus et totius destructi seculi reformator: felix qui orabit pro illo ut cito veniat; sed tamen interim orator penitentiam agat. Salvabuntur omnes qui fugient de medio malorum ad montes, quia vindicta Domini generaliter et specialiter [erit] super omnes, felices et infelices. Felices igitur omnes prenominati in cedula si in pace bene morientur: moriantur et cito, ne videant tot mala, et ad quos eorum hereditates devolvantur non curent, quia qui acquirit non possidebit et qui possidet quod possidet non retinebit, quia rota fortune iam venit ad casum antedictum.*

> Christ and the reformer[64] of the whole devastated world will be sent: blessed is the man who will pray for him to come soon; however, he should do penance in the meantime. All those who will flee from evil to the mountains will be saved, since the Lord's vengeance will come over each and everyone, the blessed and the unblessed. And blessed will be all who were mentioned in the text before, if they die well and in peace: and let them die soon, so that they do not have to see so much evil, and do not have to worry about whom they would leave their inheritance to, since he who acquires will not own anything, and he who owns will not keep what he possesses, because the wheel of fortune has already come to bring the afore-mentioned fall.

We may imagine that this was the end of the parabola of Rupescissa's political prophetic discourse. The defeat of the temporal power, the Capetian king, brought the dissolution of the expectations Rupescissa had placed in him; consequently, the prophet's attention turned to supernatural actors, who operated completely independently of human affairs.

5 Conclusion

The development of Rupescissa's prophetical works shows a continuous process of change and updating, and the figure of the emperor offers a very interesting focus for analyzing this process. The emperor is present in Rupescissa's earliest works from the 1340s, where – based on the political propheticism connected with Peter of John Olivi – he is cast in a very negative role. In the subsequent works, following on from Louis IV the Bavarian having abandoned the political scene, the negative character begins to be identified simply as the Antichrist (without any additional name given). Meanwhile, a new character appears on the scene: he is the figure of a king of France of the end times, the *reparator*, whose role is bound up with notions of salvation and spiritual power, and continues to be developed in the later works. After the devastating defeat of King John II near Poitiers, the emperor's function undergoes a great change, with reflection on the eschatological meaning of the crown, connected to the image of Christ's crown of thorns, playing an important role in the transformation. Finally, in his last short works from the same year, 1356, Rupescissa seems to hesitate with regard to the very permanence of the imperial character; the epilogue of the *Vos misistis* letter ultimately sees the temporal power disappear and the spiritual one substituted by the impersonal figure of fortune, while the human saintly pope turns into an *angelus vicarius Christi*, an angel representing Christ.

64 Other manuscripts have "reparator" instead of "reformator".

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Cultures of Eschatology 2

Death and Last Judgment

Roberto Tottoli

Death and Eschatological Beliefs in the Lives of the Prophets according to Islam

Islamic stories of the prophets include themes and motifs of eschatology and death. The genre dedicated to the stories of the prophets includes many accounts of prophets meeting the Angel of Death. Most of these concern attempts by the prophets to delay their death, or even report that the prophets feared death. Others, however, reflect a different religious attitude, seeking to inspire trust in the fate of good believers by showing that the prophets were not afraid of death and were confident in God's Final Judgment. In ḥadīth *literature, prophets are also mentioned in reports dealing with the Day of Judgment, such as in traditions about the prophets being asked to intercede for believers before God. Jesus is also frequently mentioned in eschatological stories, because of his return before the end of time and his killing of the Antichrist. Later literature added further narratives connecting prophets to death and the End Times. All these accounts demonstrate the widespread diffusion of an interest in the themes of death and eschatology, in particular as associated with the prophets.*

1 Introduction

According to the Qur'an and Islam, Muḥammad was a prophet who stood at the end of a long line of prophets who had come before him. Most of these prophets were the patriarchs and religious figures occurring in the Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testament, who are also mentioned in the Qur'an. Consequently, stories about the lives of these earlier prophets preceding Muḥammad are included in every genre of Islamic literature. Stories about the lives of the prophets also constitute a specific genre, including narratives of every kind. These narratives attribute Muslim behaviour and Islamic concepts to figures ranging from Adam to Jesus. In fact, the body of stories about the prophets both reflects what was current in Islamic religious discourse at the time and attests to the significance of these figures in Islamic beliefs and traditions. Furthermore, they demonstrate the significance of these specific issues in religious imagery, and particularly the increasing significance of eschatological themes during the Islamic Middle Ages. Their analysis provides us with the impression of an evolving religious sensibility vis-à-vis the themes of death and final destiny.

However, some preliminary considerations regarding the genre and the concerns of the stories of prophets in Islamic literature are needed. Although stories and traditions about the prophets appear in various Muslim literary genres, some

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differences in the use of eschatological contents and motifs can be detected between the material used in classical collections of stories of the prophets, on the one hand, and other literature, on the other. If the early normative literature connected with these topics, such as Qur'anic exegesis, follows similar lines, later versions of individual narratives from medieval literary works on the prophets and in *hadīth* literature (i.e. the literature collecting the sayings of Muḥammad) introduced a number of new elements that reflected different concerns. The difference is evident and, as we shall see, can be explained, first, by the different concerns of the literary genres, and, second, by a peculiar evolution in style and contents displayed by the traditions on the prophets.

2 The Stories of the Prophets and Eschatological Themes

The classical works on the lives of the prophets usually include Qur'anic verses as well as accounts adding various traditions and reports from other sources, mostly early transmitters and authors of Islamic traditions and literature. Given the role of these figures in the Qur'an, Qur'anic exegesis lies directly at the origin of this literary genre, and to a certain extent determines both the tone of the contents and the significance of these stories. In the Qur'an, the Jewish prophets and Jesus, the Christian prophet, are usually depicted as messengers in accordance with the conception of the prophecy of Muḥammad. The themes touched on are therefore strictly connected to their calling. In addition, the prophets are usually depicted as leaders of people and thus as divinely inspired guides involved in the direct administration of their communities, as Muḥammad was in Medina. It is therefore quite natural that eschatological and apocalyptic beliefs do not figure as prominent topics in these Qur'anic descriptions of the prophets' earthly lives. The Islamic literature is in some respects different. The post-Qur'anic narrative elaborations on the prophets are extensive and rich in detail, and alternative versions of many of these stories exist. As a result, numerous accounts of eschatological import can appear in a single work.

The main eschatological topic emerging in the literature on the prophets is the theme of the prophets facing death, and their fate immediately after death. In the traditional literature, this theme is dealt with, first, in the prophets' discussions with, or reactions to, the Angel of Death who catches their souls – some prophets even contest his authority, given that prophets are superior to angels – and second, in matters regarding the fate of their bodies. The Islamic traditions maintain that the bodies of the prophets are not corrupted by earth, and that they are buried where they died.[1]

The by far most widely attested motif relating to the prophets' deaths lies in their response to the visit of the Angel of Death, particularly either their various

stratagems to delay their fate or, by contrast, their faithful and sober acceptance of their imminent death. The stories representing these differing attitudes touch on sensitive theological points in Islamic thinking, such as the superiority of the prophets over the angels, and the tension between the confidence in God and the fear of the Final Judgment, which, given God's absolute omnipotence, every believer should feel. Although the prophets have a privileged position among human beings, the frequent occurrence of the motif of them trying to avoid or fearing death prove that these topics were of interest to ordinary Muslims. Furthermore, the way the various literary sources treat this question is a clear indication of different attitudes and concerns displayed by them.

One attitude that emerges, as mentioned above, is that some prophets, when confronted with the Angel of Death, are afraid of death and do not want to die, and even try to delay their fate.[2] One story contains a long passage in which God explains to Adam that he would again become mud (*ṭīn*). Adam, however, does not want to die. This account adds that only Muḥammad accepted the visit of the Angel of Death with calm and positivity.[3] According to another text, Adam is disturbed when God announces to him the existence of death, and asks what it is.[4] Yet another story includes a cruel ironic twist: when Adam asks for something from paradise, he receives the unexpected visit of the Angel of Death.[5] Adam's desire to go on living is such that he even wants to come back to earth after his death.[6] His attitude to death as described in these accounts to some extent contradicts the story of Adam giving one thousand years of his life span to David after hearing how short the latter's life would be. This story is well-attested in the literature collecting the sayings of Muḥammad, but is also cited in the literature on the prophets.[7]

1 See e.g. Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 394: earth does not consume the bodies of the prophets. On these matters see also Bayhaqī, *Ḥayāt al-anbiyā' fī qubūrihim*. The question of the tombs of the prophets is connected with popular beliefs identifying various sites, also for the same prophet. There is more literature on this, though the question is also mentioned in early and classical literature which, for instance, provides some relevant information. See e.g. Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 66: around the Ka'ba and the spring of Zamzam there are the tombs of ninety-nine prophets; Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 178: the tombs of Abraham, Sarah, Ishak and Jacob are close to one another; Isḥāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'al-dunyā*, fol. 136v ff.: tombs of prophets are in Hadramawt, in the sacred territory in Mecca, etc.

2 See on this Burge, *Angels in Islam*, 78–79.

3 Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 73–74.

4 Ibn Iyās, *Qiṣaṣ*, 49.

5 Isḥāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada' al-dunyā*, fol. 78v–79r.

6 Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 42.

7 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, 1:87–89; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shākir et al., 5:233, no. 3076; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1:252, 299, 371; see also Ps.-Aṣmaʿī, "Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'" (= *Tawārīkh al-anbiyā'* in the *Kitāb al-Shāmil*), fol. 8r–8v. Cf. also Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, 1:98: when Adam is dying he calls his sons to him. On the death and burial of Adam see Lybarger, "The Demise of Adam in the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*."

Other traditions concern the prophets coming after Adam. Some accounts state that Idrīs wanted to go to heaven whilst still alive in order to verify how much of his life was left. For this reason, he entered into discussion with the Angel of Death when the latter came to visit him.[8] The tradition describing how Jesus called one of the sons of Noah (usually identified as Shem or Ham) back to life in order to ask him to describe the Ark states that Shem/Ham rose from the grave with whitened hair, because he feared that it was the Day of Resurrection.[9] According to another account, Noah's hair became white and his tongue dry when the Angel of Death came to him.[10]

In various stories about Abraham, the latter does not welcome the Angel because he himself wants to be the one calling for it rather than face its unexpected visit.[11] In one account, Abraham is described as surprised and terrified when he sees the Angel's terrible features.[12] Others state that when the Angel of Death appears before Abraham in the shape of an old man, Abraham dies.[13] This tradition is once again meant to underline the superior status of a prophet over that of an angel. And it is because of this that one recurring motif concerns the devious ways the Angel has to devise in order to catch the prophets' souls. When it is time for Jacob to die, the Angel comes and talks to him, making him drink from a cup, after which Jacob dies.[14]

The deaths of Moses and Aaron also attracted particular interest. Moses rejects the first visit of the Angel of Death, and even strikes him and gouges out his eye. The Angel of Death complains to God; in response, God tells Moses to take a handful of hair from a bull and gives his life as many years as the number of hairs. This account is attested in *ḥadīth* literature and subsequently quoted in later narratives on the prophets.[15] Moses' fear of death is also mentioned in another account: when

8 See Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 49–50; Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 82–85; Isḥāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada' al-dunyā*, fol. 93r; Rabghūzī, *The Stories of the Prophets*, ed. Boeschoten and O'Kane, 2: 43–44.

9 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul*, ed. Goeje et al., 1:187; Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 307; Ibn Iyās, *Qiṣaṣ*, 67; Ps.-Aṣma'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, fol. 84r; Rabghūzī, *The Stories of the Prophets*, ed. Boeschoten and O'Kane, 2:428.

10 Ibn Iyās, *Qiṣaṣ*, 67–68.

11 Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 328–329. See also the *Siyar al-anbiyā'* fol. 54r–54v; Rabghūzī, *The Stories of the Prophets*, ed. Boeschoten and O'Kane, 2:116–117.

12 Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥabā'ik fī akhbār al-malā'ik*, ed. 'Āshūr, 38–39; on the confrontation between the Angel of Death and Abraham, see also Abū al-Shaykh, *Kitāb al-'aẓama*, 162–63.

13 Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 97; cf. Tabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul*, ed. Goeje et al., 1:328–29, Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 152–153; Ps.-Aṣma'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, fol. 26r; cf. Isḥāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada' al-dunyā*, fol. 214r–215v.

14 Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 177.

15 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, 1:316. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, nos. 1339, 3407; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, no. 2372; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2:269, 315, 351; ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Raḥmān al-A'ẓamī, no. 20530; see in general on all these traditions Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-aʿyān*, vol. 1, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, 441–444; ʿUmāra b. Wathīma, *Kitāb bad' al-*

meeting God in the burning bush, Moses states that he has no fear of God because he is only afraid of death.[16] Moses even hated death, leading to God giving Joshua the gift of prophecy in order to alleviate Moses' fear.[17] The death of Aaron is recounted in great detail and given a full narrative setting, including the description of the complex role played by Moses.[18]

The death of Solomon is also an object of attention in narrative accounts regarding the prophets. The Angel of Death visits Solomon and he dies, but the jinn and other creatures remain unaware of the event, at least for some time.[19] Stories about the meeting of Solomon with the Angel of Death describe him asking the Angel directly when the latter is going to take his soul, because, according to other sources, Solomon is a friend of the Angel of Death.[20] But when the Angel of Death appears before him, Solomon blenches with fear.[21] He trembles when he recognizes the Angel of Death.[22] Stories are also told of the visit of the Angel of Death to David.[23]

Contrasting attitudes, if not beliefs, are revealed in other accounts, which stress that the prophet, and with him the good believer, has nothing to fear from death. This attitude, as already mentioned above, reflects the view that – notwithstanding the absolute omnipotence of God, who therefore decides the destiny of all – the good believer and Muslim should have confidence in his final destiny because of his true faith and obedience to religious rules of behaviour. This is also reflected in the vicissitudes ascribed to the prophets. In al-Tha'labī's collection of stories of the prophets, Joseph talks calmly to his people just before his death, showing no fear.[24] In the same source, God eventually leads Moses to love death.[25] Similarly, when a man finds David speaking to the Angel of Death, he sees the two calmly talking with each other.[26] This narrative detail is reminiscent of the account in a tradition cited by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 855), which states: "David came back home to find a man there who was in fact the Angel of Death; he accepted the end of his days and

khalq wa-qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā', ed. Khoury, 42–51. On the death of Moses and Aaron in a comparative analysis of motifs and stories, see Schwarzbaum, "Death of Moses in Jewish, Arab, Falasha and Slav Folklore;" Schwarzbaum, "Jewish, Christian, Moslem and Falasha Legends" (reprint in Schwarzbaum, *Jewish Folklore Between East and West*, 31–73); Sadan, "Le tombeau de Moïse à Jéricho et à Damas."

16 Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 210.

17 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul*, ed. Goeje et al., 1:503.

18 Cf. Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 246–247; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, 1:318; cf. Ps.-Aṣmaʿī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, fol. 42v; 118v–119r; see also Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 189.

19 *Siyar al-anbiyā'*, fol. 144v–145r; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, 2:30–31.

20 Ibn Iyās, *Qiṣaṣ*, 153; Abū al-Shaykh, *Kitāb al-ʿaẓama*, 164.

21 Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 295.

22 Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 326.

23 Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 277. On David, see also *Siyar al-anbiyā'* fol. 131v.

24 Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 141.

25 Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 237.

26 Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 292.

did not oppose God's will."[27] But other sources, too, mention of similar attitudes of acceptance and obedience to God's plan to have been shown by other prophetic figures: no-one wishes for death more than Joseph, but God reveals to him that he still has sixty years of life remaining.[28] Abraham meets the Angel of Death, but it is his wife who weeps after recognizing the Angel. Abraham then sees the form in which the Angel of Death catches the souls of the prophets and it is beautiful. In the end, the Angel, in the usual form of an old man, takes Abraham's soul. The account ends by stating that Abraham was the first one to wish for death.[29] Elsewhere, more neutral attitudes are attested: Noah laments his fate before his death and the Angel of Death simply offers him a cup: he drinks and dies.[30] Mary also accepts her fate with no complaint when she receives the visit of the Angel of Death.[31]

Some further points can be made about the general outlook of the works citing these traditions. The stories can reflect, and even combine, contrasting attitudes, but some authors tend to favour one motif over another. The two major works on the lives of the prophets by Tha'labī (d. 1027) and Kisā'ī (fl. twelfth century?), for instance, include contrasting traditions regarding the visits of the Angel of Death to the prophets. Whereas Kisā'ī included many accounts that show that the prophets, too, were afraid of death and tried to delay it, Tha'labī paid attention particularly to accounts that emphasised the prophets' confidence in the face of death. These differing emphases accord with the two works' characteristics more generally: Kisā'ī frequently included tales of popular origin, whereas Tha'labī derived his stories from more traditional exegetical environments, but with a special interest in mystical attitudes and behaviours.[32]

27 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2:419. On David's death, see also Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, 2:16–17.

28 Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 178.

29 Ibn Iyās, *Qiṣaṣ*, 88.

30 Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 100.

31 Rabghūzī, *The Stories of the Prophets*, ed. Boeschoten and O'Kane, 2:426–427.

32 The role of the Angel of Death when visiting and taking the souls of the prophets is underlined in the accounts saying that he weeps when he knows he is taking the souls of angels and the poor (Ps.-Aṣma'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* fol. 6r). As a matter of fact, he even wept when he first came to know of his power to take the souls of human beings (Isḥāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada' al-dunyā*, fol. 41r). Other stories attest that, in any case, other figures also had a kind of confidence in treating with the Angel of Death. Some kings, for instance, asked him to come later, delaying their fate, but this he would refuse (Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes ou relatifs aux arabes publiés dans l'Europe Chrétienne de 1810 à 1885*, 183–185; see also Weil, *The Bible, the Koran, and the Talmud*, 98).

3 The End Times and *ḥadīth*

As we have seen, the question of the fear of death and the encounters of the prophets with the Angel of Death were major eschatological motifs in the stories of the prophets. But they were not the only motifs associating the prophets with the theme of death and related matters. Other significant accounts include details about the role of prophets on the day of Resurrection and in other events that will take place at the end of time. Apocalyptic beliefs with some eschatological details are also evoked by the traditions mentioning the presence of prophets in heaven in the well-known narratives on Muḥammad's ascension to heaven (*miʿrāj*) and the many accounts associating prophetic figures with the eternal abodes. The most significant of these accounts are not about the prophets whom Muḥammad met in the seven skies when he ascended to heaven, but a few mention the presence of certain figures by the throne of God. One saying also quoted in the major *ḥadīth* collections refers to Moses standing at one pillar (*qā'ima*) of the throne.[33] He is not the only prophet to be granted this privilege. It is, for instance, stated that David, too, is or will be in the vicinity of the throne in eschatological times.[34]

In addition, there are also a number of traditions that associate certain prophets with the Day of Resurrection more directly by giving them a role in the definition of beliefs and religious concepts. One significant saying ascribed to Muḥammad contains the Prophet's answer to his Companions' question as to who will help them and humankind on the Day of Resurrection. Muḥammad explains that men will go first to Adam, and then to Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus to ask for intercession. All these prophets will refuse their request or will tell them that they cannot intercede before God for men because of some faults or sins they themselves committed during their lives. Then the men will ask Muḥammad, and he will intercede for them before God. This tradition, attested in all the major *ḥadīth* collections, affirms that Muḥammad will be the sole intercessor before God and that no other figure will be able to play that role on the Day of Resurrection. It reflects a tendency in this literature that emphasises Muḥammad's superiority over all other prophets.[35]

However, both *ḥadīth* literature and Qur'anic exegesis also include reports and traditions regarding the End Times that link some of what will take place to Jesus,

33 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Tafsīr*, 2:484: Muḥammad adds that he does not know if he will be raised before him; see also al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī tawīl āy al-Qur'an*, 20:258, 259: various versions; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 2412; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, nos. 1843–4.

34 David will be standing by the leg (*sāq*) of the throne on the Day of Resurrection: al-Wāḥidī, *al-Tafsīr al-wasīṭ*, 3:549; Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, *Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al-Saʿdī*, 227, no. 134; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 13:29, no. 7586, *passim*. This tradition regarding David recalls the use of entertainments for the blessed every Friday before the throne of God and awaiting the Final Judgment; on these beliefs and in relation to the mention of David standing next to the throne, see Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions*, 152.

35 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, nos. 3361, 4712; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, nos. 194, 195; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shākir et al., nos. 2434, 3148; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1:4–5, 281–282; 2:435–436.

and to some extent also to other prophets. Adam, for instance, plays a role in an account of the physical appearance of people destined to paradise: they will enter it as tall in stature as Adam, whose original height was sixty cubits when he left paradise.[36] The words of Muḥammad are in any case more concerned with theological matters than narrative details. When he says that God already determined the men destined to hell and paradise at the time of Adam, the issue is predestination and not the eternal abodes.[37] Another theme emerging in many *ḥadīth* accounts connecting the prophets with eschatology is their role and rank. Muḥammad describes what will happen to him and his Companions on the Day of Resurrection, and states that Abraham will be the first to be re-clothed on that day.[38] However, the contrasting approach, underlining that the prophets have no knowledge of the unseen and do not know more than Muḥammad, is also attested. During his night journey, Muḥammad asks the prophets he meets if they know the time of the Hour (that is, the Day of Resurrection), but Abraham, Moses and Jesus answer that they know nothing of it.[39]

Nevertheless, the main prophet connected with the End Times is clearly Jesus. According to Muslim Sunni traditions, Jesus is the Messiah and the redeemer who comes before the end of time – although, it must be pointed out, he is a Muslim Jesus. In fact, the traditions have it that he will come down from heaven, where he now dwells, and will burn crosses, kill swine, and be a just judge.[40] Other *ḥadīths* mention the ten signs which will accompany the events leading to the End Times, one of these being the Second Coming of Jesus.[41] But the main eschatological event involving Jesus will be his confrontation with the Deceiver, i.e. the Antichrist (the Muslim *al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl*), who will come to earth and tempt men throughout the events that will bring the world to its end. Many (sometimes contrasting) traditions describe this Dajjāl, and consequently many others explain how Jesus came back to earth from heaven to fight against him, to redeem men and to restore the pure Islamic faith. The accounts are numerous and give a great many details regarding these occurrences, explaining where they will take place, the prodigious events accompanying and following them, and the strictly Islamic nature of this Jesus coming

36 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2:295, 535.
37 Cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 6:441.
38 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, no. 2860; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shākir et al., no. 3167; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1:229, 235, 253, 398.
39 Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, no. 4081; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1:375.
40 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, nos. 2222, 2476, 3448; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, nos. 155–156; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shākir et al., no. 2234, Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2:272, 290, 394, 411, 482, 538; 6:76.
41 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, no. 2901; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, no. 4055; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shākir et al., no. 2183; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 4: 6–7; ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, nos. 20791–20792.

back to earth.[42] Islamic traditions usually interpret the short and simple phrase in the Qur'an stating literally "He will be a sign of the Hour" (Q 43:61) as referring to these events, including the major role to be played in them by Jesus, and consequently all this is mentioned and described in later reports. Jesus also features as the Messiah, or the Messiah son of Mary, in the sayings of Muḥammad. The term *al-masīḥ* appears eleven times in the Qur'an as a by-name of Jesus and is also used to refer to him in the later traditions. Some accounts give further details: the Messiah will not enter the city of Medina, just as the pestilence spreading before the End Times will not enter it, since it is the city of the prophet Muḥammad.[43] The relevance of the eschatological Jesus is further attested by the chapters on this theme included in the major collections of stories of the prophets.[44] Finally, the names of the prophets also appear in some accounts describing the *dābba*, the Beast of the End Times mentioned in the Qur'an (Q 27:82). The Beast will come bearing the seal ring of Solomon and the staff of Moses, cleansing the face of the believer with the staff and stamping the unbeliever's nose with the seal ring.[45]

As a matter of fact, although some collections of stories of the prophets include chapters about Jesus at the end of time, the main authoritative accounts regarding this are also included in the major collections of sayings of Muḥammad. Muslim (d. 875), the author of the collection second only to the one by Bukhārī (d. 870) in Muslim consideration, includes many accounts which became canonical with regard to Muḥammad's references to these events. This is of great significance also in relation to the major topic of the fear of death discussed above.

4 Later Stories of the Prophets

The central role played by these accounts and these topics is clearly shown in the later evolution of Islamic literature. A brief preamble is called for here. Islamic

42 See e.g. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 3449; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2:166, 272, 336; 3:345, 368, 384; 4:182, 217, 429; see also Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, no. 2940; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, no. 4075; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shākir et al., no. 2240; ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, nos. 20835–20836, 20838–20839. A *ḥadīth* explains that Muḥammad saw Jesus and the Dajjāl in a dream, cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, nos. 3440–41 etc., and stating that Jesus will kill the Dajjāl, see Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shākir et al., no. 2244; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3:420, 4:226, 5:13, 6:10; ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al nos. 18709–18710*. On this topic see *Cook, Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, index under the headword Jesus, and the literature cited there.

43 Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 5731; cf. other accounts citing the Messiah, e.g. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 5:41, 46, 47; ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, nos. 10181, 10185.

44 Thaʿlabī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 403–404; Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Eisenberg, 307–309.

45 Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, 403; Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī ta'wil āy al-Qur'ān*, 20:15, 16; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, no. 7942; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shākir et al., no. 3187; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, ed. Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, no. 4066; cf. on this Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 120–122.

literature saw internal developments after the fourth century AH (tenth century CE), the period usually considered as that of the final canonization of classical Islam's main features. As already noted by other scholars, it was in fact from then on that religious literature and traditions became more and more interested in themes regarding devotion to the Prophet Muḥammad, eschatology, the motifs of death and lament over it. Along with reworkings of earlier literature, which was extensively commented on and glossed, certain genres of Islamic literature show the evolution of a new sensibility in relation to these themes.

The major motifs associating the prophets with eschatology became the subject of literary re-workings in the context of the emergence of new topics and traditions. This appears clearly in the collections preserving manuscripts that include various short accounts, mostly in miscellaneous collections, dealing with the lives of single prophets or even with only one event in their lives. Some of these *qiṣaṣ* (tales) concern the Second Coming of Jesus before the Day of Resurrection or the deaths of Aaron and Moses, elaborating upon the old classical accounts in new, more extensive narrative settings. One of the most interesting narratives in this respect is a story in which Jesus calls a skull back to life. The man thus revived tells Jesus of his visit to hell and the punishments and torments he saw there. Because of this experience, the man decides to act properly as a believer and finally converts to Islam. This story, though not mentioned in the major collections of the stories of the prophets, is included in almost fifty manuscripts. Many of its extant versions are not textually related, attesting to its widespread circulation, and thus also to the role of Jesus in the vivid description of hell presented as a *memento mori* to believers.[46]

5 Conclusion

The prophets played various roles in the Islamic traditions. The figures from Adam to Jesus are first of all earthly figures, and their lives are described in order to explain the role of a prophet leading a community and communicating the message of belief in God. No specific or special significance is given to them in relation to death and eschatology in the stories describing their lives in historical sequence. The main eschatological topic in the stories of the prophets is their interaction with the Angel of Death, their different reactions to him reflecting contrasting attitudes toward death.

Nevertheless, other early literary genres include different traditions, describing the impossibility for the prophets to be intercessors for humankind on the Day of Resurrection and the apocalyptic role of Jesus. This narrative tradition, attested in

46 See on this Tottoli, "The Story of Jesus and the Skull in Arabic Literature."

the major *ḥadīth* collections, demonstrates the need to underline the superior status of Muḥammad and thus of Islam. It also shows the significance of eschatological and apocalyptic beliefs in early Islam, and of Jesus's role in the general Islamic scenario of those events.

These topics and narratives were further developed by later Islamic literature, mainly in adaptations to suit popular tastes, which also prove the widespread diffusion of an interest in the themes of death and eschatology, in particular as associated with the prophets. New traditions and narratives added further stories, with the prophets also playing a role in describing the eternal abodes and the events of the End Times.

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Pia Lucas

Scattered Bones and Miracles – The Cult of Saints, the Resurrection of the Body and Eschatological Thought in the Works of Gregory of Tours

Gregory of Tours' position on the time remaining until the Last Judgment has been interpreted in very different ways among recent scholarship. These contradictory readings are due to an apparent contrast between the bishop's calculations of the number of years since Creation, and the gloomy tone of the tenth book of his Histories. *While the numbers seem to express that there was still time, the last book of the* Histories *is full of* prodigia *pointing to the Apocalypse. Numbers and signs notwithstanding, it is the underlying concept of the cult of saints in his works that offers an intriguing insight into Gregory's eschatological thinking. To him, the cult of the saints and their relics served as a preview of the Last Things and made tangible fundamental Christian doctrines such as the afterlife of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the Last Judgment. By bringing the Last Things into the here and now, the cult of the saints reminded believers of the imminence of the end.*

5792 – this is the number of years that had, according to Bishop Gregory of Tours, passed since Creation at the time that he finished his *Ten Books of Histories* in about A.D. 594.[1] Despite its precision, historians have interpreted this figure in surprisingly different ways. This article will contribute to our understanding of Gregory's ideas about the afterlife, the End Times and the Last Judgment, and especially the resurrection of the body, by focusing on one particularly important theme in his works, the cult of the saints and their relics. I start by exploring Gregory's seemingly inconsistent thoughts about his own time and its relation to the Last Things. Examining the principles of the cult of saints and their relics as Gregory understood them can illuminate the bishop's ambiguous position towards the proximity of the end of time. In order to understand how the cult of saints and their relics was connected to eschatological thinking in the author's mind, I will go on to analyse a passage that has largely been neglected so far: a theological debate about the resurrection of the

1 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.31, ed. Krusch and Levison, 537. (In the following, page numbers after the source texts refer to their given edition.) A calculation of Gregory's own numbers actually sums up to 5793 years since Creation. Unless otherwise indicated, the translation used is by Thorpe, Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, here: 604.

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body between Gregory and one of his priests, which offers many insights into how Gregory imagined the afterlife and the Last Days.[2]

1 Chronology and Prodigies – How much Time until the Last Days?

It has been noted in contemporary scholarship that, at least in the West, the sixth century was a time of increased eschatological concern. Gregory's namesake, pope Gregory I, for example, made explicit statements about the end of all things being imminent.[3] We also find evidence for apocalyptic movements of some sort in the bishop of Tours' own works.[4] Furthermore, Gregory included two remarks about the proximity of the Last Days in an exchange of letters between Gallic bishops and the former Queen Radegund, which he quoted verbatim in his *Histories*.[5]

However, scholars have disagreed as to how close to the end of the world Gregory of Tours thought his own lifetime to be. Given the meticulous chronological efforts in the *Histories*, this might seem astonishing at first sight. Gregory starts the first book with counting the years since Creation up to his own day, first according to biblical ages, and then by counting the years between what were to him key historical events. He states that he modelled his calculations on the chronicles of Eusebius and Jerome, the work of Orosius and the Easter tables of Victorius.[6] Whilst the periodisation he uses is strongly influenced by the Eusebius/Jerome tradition, it

2 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 496–500. Discussed shortly in context with ideas about the afterlife, but with a different set of questions, only in Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 158–162. Similarly in Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, who dismisses some of Gregory's arguments as "inconsistent", 110; mentioned in passing in Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*, 68, 73, 138, 149. Not mentioned in Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*; Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*; nor in Landes, "Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled." The dialogues are discarded as theologically irrelevant in Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, 143.

3 Meier, "Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert," 56–63. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 55–68. In the words of the Roman bishop: *Nam in hac terra, in qua nos vivimus, finem suum mundus iam non nuntiat, sed ostendit*. Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum libri quattuor*, 3.38.3, ed. Migne, col. 316.

4 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 9.6, ed. Krusch and Levison, 417–420; 10.25, 517–519.

5 Bishops: *declinante tempore saeculi vetustate*, Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 9.39, ed. Krusch and Levison, 461; Radegund: *Sed quoniam incerta sunt humanae conditionis momenta vel tempora, quippe mundo in fine current [...]*. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 9.42, ed. Krusch and Levison, 471.

6 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 1.prologue, ed. Krusch and Levison, 5; 2.prologue, 36. The biblical generations he inserts follow the same tradition as Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 22.30, ed. Dombart and Kalb, 865.

deviates from it in some minor instances.[7] The first sections count from Creation, or from Adam, to the Flood or Noah, and from there to Abraham, to the Crossing of the Red Sea, to the building of the first Temple, and from its destruction to Christ's passion, respectively. By adding up these sections, the date of the passion emerges as 5184 *anno mundi*.[8] After the Passion, the next caesura Gregory counts to is the death of Saint Martin of Tours, to whose popularity in Gaul Gregory greatly contributed with his works.[9] At the end of each of the first four books, Gregory calculates the age of the world up to the date reached in the narrative, and book four again takes up the whole chronology from Creation as given above, ending with the death of King Sigibert in the year 5774 AM (A.D. 575).[10] None of the books five to nine, which together cover a period of only 15 years, take up the chronological sequence, but the very last words of book ten are devoted to a presentation of partly the same chronological sections as outlined above. Here the chronological markers are Creation, the Flood, the Red Sea Crossing, the resurrection of Christ, and the death of Saint Martin. The calculation ends with the twenty-first year of Gregory's own pastoral office (A.D. 593 or 594).[11] It is worth noting here that book one speaks of the passion of Christ, while book ten refers to the resurrection of the Lord – a point that marks a difference not in chronology but in outlook, to which we will return at a later point.

Despite this careful reckoning, Gregory did not offer any authorial comments on how to understand these numbers, so his calculations leave plenty of room for interpretation. The widely divergent modern readings are mainly the result of four aspects of Gregory's narrative in the *Histories*. The first is that Gregory – without directly telling his readers – seems to subscribe to a tradition that posited six world ages of 1000 years each, with the year 6000 AM as the date for Christ's Second Coming. This, according to Gregory's calculations, lay still about 200 years in the future, though he himself never made this explicit.[12] Second, there are two prominent, but apparently antithetical, statements in the *Histories'* prologue. On the one hand, Gregory states that he intends to calculate the sum of the years since Creation "on behalf of those who despair about/of the coming end of the world",[13] but on the other

7 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 1.4, 1.7, 1.10, 1.13, 1.16, 1.23, ed. Krusch and Levison, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 19. For a detailed comparison see Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul*, 302–303.

8 See n. 7, cf. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 4.51, ed. Krusch and Levison, 189–190. Hieronymus counts 5229 years up to Christ's ministry, Eusebius 5228 and sets Christ's birth in the year 5198, see Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul*, 302–303.

9 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 1.48, ed. Krusch and Levison, 34. Cf. Wood, "The Individuality of Gregory of Tours," 35–39.

10 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 4.51, ed. Krusch and Levison, 189–190.

11 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.31, ed. Krusch and Levison, 537.

12 However, his time sections cannot be understood as "Ages" – there are seven in book 1 and 4, and five in book 10.

13 *Illud etiam placuit propter eos, qui adpropinquantem finem mundi disperant*, *Hist*. 1.prologue, 3. This open translation has been chosen on purpose to account for different possible interpretations,

hand he asserts (with Mk. 13:32) that no one can know the hour when the end will come. In addition, there is Gregory's clear announcement that the Antichrist would have to come before the end.[14] Finally, the frequency of portents and prodigies reported in Gregory's *Histories* has often been used to assess the bishop's attitude towards the approaching end of the world. In this context, the accounts of false prophets and a false Christ in the last two books also need to be borne in mind.[15]

Walter Goffart concluded that, whereas Gregory's position on when the world would end seems ambiguous, the bishop of Tours nevertheless dismissed apocalyptic movements – the false prophets and false Christ – as rustic excitations, "vulgarizing" them so they could be dismissed as "local nuisance[s]", and that he aimed to "set the reader's mind at rest".[16] In a similar manner, Richard Landes read Gregory as having tried to reassure his contemporaries with his calculations that there was still time until the end of days.[17] As mentioned above, this interpretation is based on the assumption that Gregory adhered to the idea of the Six Ages and that he expected his readers to make this connection themselves, as he never explicitly counted the years "still left". While the Eusebian version, which dated Christ's birth to around 5200 AM, in the East failed to replace the calculations by Hippolytus of Rome and Julius Africanus, according to which the incarnation took place in 5500 AM, it was soon well-established in the West.[18] Gregory probably was acquainted with the tradition, as all of the chronological sources he mentions used some form of this model, and he consciously chose to follow the Eusebian version.[19] From Landes' point of view, there is little reason for setting out a chronology in the absence of apocalyptic concerns – be it to confirm the nearness of the Last Judgment, or to alleviate fears of its imminence.[20] However, there are other possible motives for

see further down, p. 483. The common translation is along the lines of Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, 67: "For the sake of those who are losing hope as they see the end of the world coming nearer and nearer." Similarly also Buchner's translation in: Gregory of Tours, *Zehn Bücher Geschichten*, vol. 1, trans. Buchner, 7.

14 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 1.prologue, ed. Krusch and Levison, 4–5.

15 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 9.6, 10.25, ed. Krusch and Levison, 417–420, 517–519.

16 Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, 187.

17 Landes, "Lest the Millenium Be Fulfilled," 166–168; similarly Brincken, *Studien zur lateinischen Weltchronistik*, 97.

18 Meier, "Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert," 47–55; Magdalino, "The End of Time in Byzantium," 120. For the development of the idea of the Six Ages from the letter of Barnabas and its adaptions to Eusebius/Jerome, see Kötting, "Endzeitprognosen zwischen Lactantius und Augustinus," 126–130; von den Brincken, *Studien zur lateinischen Weltchronistik*, 49–66, 92; Landes, "Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled," 141–156.

19 See n. 7. Gregory's contemporary Marius of Avenches uses very similar numbers; see Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower*, 65, n. 153. Sulpicius Severus, whose *Vita Martini* Gregory knew and used, still adhered to the Hippolytus/Africanus tradition and saw the end as close, see Meier, "Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert," 51, and in general Vaesen, "Sulpice Sévère et la fin des temps."

20 Landes, "Lest the Millenium Be Fulfilled," passim.

counting the years since Creation. Gertrud Bodmann explains Gregory's efforts to situate his own time in a wider Christian framework without reference to apocalyptic concerns by pointing out the orientational function of biblical events and figures for a Christian history, even one focusing on Gaul.[21] Identifying the correct Easter date was another valid motivation for chronological calculations, as were efforts to simply measure time.[22] Bernhard Kötting stresses the long tradition of chronological efforts in antiquity; the idea of a declining world and of one's own time as *senectus mundi* was a well-established pagan topos before it was included in Christian thought.[23] When we read expressions like *declinante tempore saeculi vetustate* in the bishops' letter to Radegund cited by Gregory (n. 5), we should keep this long tradition in mind. We should also take seriously the concern to situate one's own time in the sequence of the history of the world or of Christianity, without understanding it inevitably as a countdown. Nevertheless, as Gregory himself connects his chronological enterprise to the end of the world in the prologue, the case might seem obvious. However, whether his object in the *Histories* was to reassure his contemporaries is less clear.

Based on Gregory's chronology as outlined above, but without referring to the concept of the Six Ages, Peter Brown takes a broader look at the work of the bishop and comes to the opposite conclusion. To him, Gregory was not aiming to comfort anyone, but on the contrary wanted to remind his readers of the End Times to which, in Gregory's opinion, they paid insufficient attention.[24] Brown translates the sentence in which Gregory gives his reason for his calculation (quoted above) quite differently: people did not despair with regard to the coming end *because* it was coming closer, but they despaired *of* the coming end, that is, they despaired of its closeness, gave up hope and did not expect the end any longer.[25] The calculations were meant to show that God's patience had lasted a long time already, but above all it is the bishop's accounts of numerous prodigies and the often sombre tone in which he describes his time that lead Brown to this conclusion. Gaul had already fallen into the "shadow of the 'time of sorrows'".[26]

This highly divergent assessment of Gregory's eschatological perspective points to the striking divide between a Eusebian chronology (with 6000 AM still 200 years away) and the gloomy narrative that the author presents us with in one and the same breath in book ten. This contrast has led some scholars to believe that the author underwent a change of mind in the course of writing his historiographical

21 Bodmann, *Jahreszahlen und Weltalter*, 168–180.
22 Palmer, "The Ordering of Time," 609, 614.
23 Kötting, "Endzeitprognosen zwischen Lactantius und Augustinus," 125.
24 Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 155.
25 Cf. n. 13; Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 155–157, and Brown, "Amnesty, Penance, and the Afterlife from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages," 51; Giselle de Nie also emphasises the inherent ambiguity in that sentence: Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower*, 58.
26 Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 154.

work. Giselle de Nie, like Brown, focuses Gregory's use of *prodigia*, such as the extraordinary natural phenomena reported in the *Histories*, and suggested that the bishop's perspective grew "increasingly grim" over time.[27] Adriaan Breukelaar also detects transformations in the bishop's thinking, but in the opposite direction. According to him, Gregory's own worries were comforted by his chronological calculations, added at the very end of the writing process.[28] It becomes clear that the much-debated different theories about the composition of the *Histories*, the chronological distance between events and writing, and about the stages of revision, play a major role in interpreting Gregory's attitude.[29] Martin Heinzelmann, who has attributed a high conceptual coherence to the work, considers Gregory's position as thoroughly ambiguous.[30] He detects a stronger presence of the Last Judgment as a prevalent theme in the last two books, but does not attribute this shift in emphasis to a change of heart, quite the opposite. Eschatology, or the eschatological church and its connection to the "mixed" church of the worldly *ecclesia*, are, in Heinzelmann's view, the major subjects of the *Histories* as a whole. He convincingly demonstrates a link between book one, in which biblical history provides the background for the constitution of the *ecclesia Dei* through Christ and his saints and where the chronology is outlined, and book ten, with its eschatological tone, the mentions of signs of the coming Judgment, and final chronological calculation.[31] In Heinzelmann's reading, the higher density of signs relating to a coming end is an intentional development in the narrative, not a development in the mind of the author over time – a crucial distinction.

Before concluding this section, it is necessary to look at the frequently mentioned *signa et prodigia* in the *Histories* and their connection to the Last Days. It has been noted that Gregory saw the coming of the Antichrist as a necessary precondition for the End Times, but was of the opinion that this had not yet occured.[32] However, it is possible to identify a reference to a closely related tradition, the second coming of Nero as the Antichrist or his herald, in Gregory's account of King Chilperic.[33] Gregory presents his least-favorite Merovingian king as harbouring heretical tendencies and as an enemy of the churches and bishops. In the vicious

27 Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower*, 56, 67; Nie, "Spiritual Reality, Imagination and Earthly Events in the 'Histories'," 78–81.

28 Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul*, 171–174, 304.

29 Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, 187 n. 324, denies any form of development in Gregory's perspective.

30 See Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*, 71.

31 Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*, 70–71, 114–116, 141–150; Meier, "Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert," 65–66, also argues for the ambiguity of Gregory's position not being the result of any development in his thinking.

32 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 71, 75.

33 A tradition of which he was certainly aware, as Sulpicius Severus extensively discusses the subject, see Vaesen, "Sulpice Sévère et la fin des temps," 58–67, 70; Wieser, "Die Weltchronik des Sulpicius Severus," 677–679.

obituary Gregory bestows on him, Chilperic is called the "Nero and Herod of our times".[34] It seems possible that Gregory expected his readers to catch this reference to the End Times, yet it appears that he rather used this connotation to characterise Chilperic as negatively as possible. Chilperic's portrayal and the circumstances of his reign are not congruent enough with Gregory's own expectations of the Antichrist to proclaim the arrival of the Last Days, not least because the king had died before fulfilling any of the prophesied events.[35] Times were bad, but the "real Antichrist" had not yet come and entered Jerusalem. However, the Antichrist was not the only sign of the apocalypse.

It was widely acknowledged, in Christian as in pagan times,[36] that the end of the world would be heralded by extraordinary events, such as natural disasters, wars, pestilence and celestial phenomena. However, earthly events interpreted as divine signs could just as well merely denote divine wrath without necessarily indicating the imminence of the end.[37] In this reading of signs, which is prevalent in the Old Testament but occurs in all kinds of different cultures, earthly events are interpreted as part of a cycle of retribution in which human misbehaviour is answered by divine punishment.[38] Gregory's *Histories*, and even more his hagiographical works, are full of such retributive cycles, be it in the form of extraordinary events in the natural world or punitive miracles performed by the saints working God's will. Indeed, several scholars have pointed to the fact that at least some of the *prodigia* in the *Histories* should be seen in this light. Celestial signs or unusual natural events were often interpreted by Gregory to be a reaction to the sins of the people, or to point to coming disasters like diseases or the death of kings.[39] However, the last books of the *Histories* contain more prodigies that the author does not, or cannot, decipher, and which might therefore be interpreted as eschatological pointers.[40] The introduction to the tenth book is a well-known passage often cited in this con-

34 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 6.46, ed. Krusch and Levison, 319. He is also often associated with Jews, e. g. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 6.5., ed. Krusch and Levison, 268–272. Whether Gregory had always thought so poorly of Chilperic is discussed in Halsall, "Nero and Herod?"

35 See Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 1. prologue, ed. Krusch and Levison, 4–5. According to Thomas Kitchen, the characteristics of Nero attributed to Chilperic are without apocalyptic urgency; see Kitchen, "Apocalyptic Perceptions of the Roman Empire in the Fifth Century A.D," 658.

36 Kötting, "Endzeitprognosen zwischen Lactantius und Augustinus," 133–134.

37 Kötting, "Endzeitprognosen zwischen Lactantius und Augustinus," 133–134; Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography*, for ex. 14–15, 63–78.

38 Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography*, 3–12.

39 Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower*, 40–45; Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, 188–189. See for example Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 2.6, 4.9, 4.31, 6.6, ed. Krusch and Levison, 47, 141, 163–166, 272–273.

40 Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower*, 50–56, Nie, "Spiritual Reality, Imagination and Earthly Events in the 'Histories'," 80–81.

text.[41] Gregory describes how in 590, Rome was devastated by a horrible flood and an outbreak of the plague "starting at God's sanctuary" (Ezek. 9:3) and killing pope Pelagius. His designated successor, later known as Gregory the Great, ordered rogations and addressed the people in a sermon that the bishop of Tours reports word for word.[42] The future pope admonished his flock to change their ways, to show remorse and pray before it was too late. Influenced by the positions known from Gregory the Great's own writings,[43] many scholars have interpreted this to refer to the closeness of the Last Judgment. However, neither the wording of the sermon by Gregory the Great, nor its contextualisation, which we definitely owe to Gregory of Tours, directly refer to the Last Judgment or the end of days. The sermon itself points to the imminence of judgment insofar as the sudden death brought by the plague did not give the sinner time to repent in this world.[44] We will come back to this idea in the third section below. David Patterson even interpreted the passage in book ten to refer to pagan worship and its resulting divine punishment, with God's anger finally being placated by the peoples' prayer and contrition.[45] Whereas it is unlikely that there were indeed residual pagan traditions in Gaul strong enough to merit such a lengthy episode,[46] the section does have a similar structure to another passage in book two, in which God also punishes the sins of the people with disease and his divine wrath is finally appeased by the institution of rogations.[47]

But while this episode itself remains ambiguous, the wider context of book ten makes it clear that an association with the Last Days is warranted, if not intended outright. The *Histories*' final two books show an increase in references that characterise the contemporary time as bleak indeed. These books' narratives are interspersed with prodigies that are repeatedly and explicitly connected to the Last Days, although Gregory still avoids saying that the latter had actually dawned. The first of these comments relates to a lengthy passage concerning a false prophet who demanded to be venerated like an apostle and another impostor who had gathered

41 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.1, ed. Krusch and Levison, 477–482; Meier, "Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert," 57–59; Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*, 72; Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower*, 52.

42 A very similar version of this sermon, differing only concering the churches mentioned for the procession, can be found in the letters of Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 13.2, ed. Hartmann, 365–367. Its authenticity as part of the Histories has been challenged by Chadwick, "Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great," but later scholars mostly agree that the bishop of Tours himself actually included the sermon by the pope, e.g. Hack, *Gregor der Große*, 28–32, and Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*, 206, n. 83.

43 Meier, "Eschatologie und Kommunikation im 6. Jahrhundert," 59–60.

44 *Percussus quisque ante rapitur, quam ad lamenta paenitentiae convertatur. Pensate ergo, qualis ad conspectum districti iudicis pervenit, cui non vacat flere quod fecit*. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.1, ed. Krusch and Levison, 479.

45 Patterson, "Disaster, Dragons and Episcopal Authority in Gregory of Tours."

46 Compare Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, 206.

47 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 2.34, ed. Krusch and Levison, 81–84.

a large following. It was of people like these, Gregory stated, that the Gospel had warned: in the Last Times, such tempters would rise as false prophets and Christs, and might even deceive the elect (Mt. 24:24).[48] He again likens his contemporary period to the End Times in what one could call an eschatologically-themed block in book ten, chapters 23–25. A section about celestial signs concerning the correct date of Easter, and earthquakes, floods and disease in Gaul is followed by a long chapter on an earthquake which destroyed the city of Antiochia.[49] The narrative construction intentionally reminds the reader of the destruction of Sodom. In the next chapter, dealing with the plague in Gaul, Gregory explicitly takes up the words of the Gospel about the first signs heralding the Second Coming – "and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places" (Mt. 24:7) – in order to connect the fate of Gaul to that of the wider world. Gregory goes on to talk about a man whom the devil incited to pose as a false Christ, but after describing the latter's fall adds that one should rather have called him an Antichrist.[50] Once again, Gregory does not state that the Last Times had arrived, but the apocalyptic associations are obvious. Book ten also contains the lengthy dialogue in which Gregory aims to convince a doubting priest of the resurrection of the flesh, which will be discussed in detail in the second part of this article.[51]

Despite the fact that the chronology closing the *Histories* leaves a period of c. 200 years until the apocalyptic date of 6000 AM, the emphasis on eschatological themes in book ten is undeniable. Although Gregory never explicitly announces that the last days had indeed begun, the reader is left with a feeling of urgency, of "indefinite imminence", as James Palmer put it.[52] The higher density in the narrative of events associated with the Last Times is not indicative of Gregory changing his mind, but is intended as a reminder that the Judgment will indeed come. Further, while using the Lord's passion as a temporal marker in book one draws a line to the church's past with the suffering of the martyrs, the choice to refer to Christ's resurrection instead in the last book intentionally points to the future of the Church, of Christianity as a whole: the Last Judgment.[53]

In view of this evidence and the widely diverging interpretations of Gregory's attitude it has produced, I would suggest that we should take the ambiguity exhibited in the *Histories* and the author's own assertion that 'no one could know the hour' more seriously.

But why would Gregory, as a bishop and author, be willing to leave his flock and his readers with this ambiguity? In order to answer this question, we need to

48 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 9.6, ed. Krusch and Levison, 417–420.
49 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.23–25, ed. Krusch and Levison, 514–519.
50 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.25, ed. Krusch and Levison, 517–519.
51 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 496–500.
52 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 75.
53 This fits in with Brown's reading, and aligns with Heinzelmann's general interpretation of the *Histories*, see Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*, 5–6.

look beyond his eschatological allusions regarding the "when" by including the issue of "what": his ideas about the afterlife and the Last Judgment itself. By doing so, we move from questions of a general apocalypse to questions of individual eschatology, exploring the Last Things from a more personal perspective. Gregory's position on the former might be thoroughly – and intentionally – ambiguous, but, as we shall see, his entirely unambiguous concern with the latter is reflected largely in his ideas regarding the cult of saints.

2 Relics and Resurrection

> Indeed, the cheeks were red, while the rest of his body shone as white as a lily, so that one would have said that he was already prepared for the glory of the future resurrection.[54]

This is Gregory's description of the dead body of his own great-grandfather, bishop Gregory of Langres. We find similar descriptions of dead saints' bodies incorrupt even years after their death throughout the Middle Ages. Many scholars have argued for a strong connection between the belief in the cult of saints and eschatological concepts,[55] and it is clear that, in Gregory's text as cited here, the undecayed saintly body prefigures the deceased's resurrection body. It has therefore been suggested by scholars such as Arnold Angenendt that the *corpus incorruptum*[56] as a perfectly preserved body was considered relevant to the later resurrection of the flesh and might consequently have inhibited the division of the saintly body into smaller corporeal relics to be distributed to different locations.[57] Some evidence does indeed seem to point in this direction. In patristic tradition, the resurrection body was mostly considered to be remade of the actual body a person had possessed on earth.[58] This has been linked to the controversy with Gnosticism, which probably led to an increased emphasis on

54 *Haec enim apparebat rubea, reliquum vero corpus tamquam candens lilium refulgebat, ut aestimares, eum iam tunc ad futurae resurrectionis gloriam praeparatum*. Gregory of Tours, *Vitae Patrum*, 7.3, ed. Krusch, 238; translation: Gregory of Tours *Life of the Fathers* trans. by Van Dam, 45. Compare Gregory of Tours, *Vitae Patrum*, 7.4, ed. Krusch, 240.

55 Uytfanghe, "Essor du culte des saints," passim; Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours, Hagiography, and the Cult of the Saints," esp. 390, 393, 407, 423–424.

56 Frequently used synonyms are "*inlaesum*" or "*integrum*". See for example Gregory of Tours, *Vitae Patrum*, 12.3, ed. Krusch, 115; Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 62, ed. Krusch, 80; Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 34, 100, ed. Krusch, 319, 362.

57 This argument is developed in Angenendt, "Corpus incorruptum," esp. 322, 333–334; 341; and Angenendt, "Reliquienverehrung bei Gregor von Tours und Beda Venerabilis," 39–40; see also Swinarski, "Zu zwei gegensätzlichen Vorstellungen im mittelalterlichen Reliquienkult," 61.

58 On issues of material continuity and personal identity, including of the flesh, see Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*. She does not cover the early Middle Ages, but extensively treats patristic ideas.

the earthly body as the material basis for the resurrection body.[59] If the saints' bodies were seen as already prepared for the resurrection, it seems conceivable that this might have resulted in reluctance among contemporaries to pick apart the saints' remains. On the other hand, the opposite practice is attested throughout the Middle Ages, as well. We find evidence for the division of saintly bodies and the adoration of partial corporeal relics as if they represented the saint in his or her entirety.[60]

It is in light of this ambivalence that I want to start by examining the saints' cult in the works of Gregory of Tours from an eschatological perspective. Did Gregory share the ideas of the saintly *corpus incorruptum* and its significance to the resurrection body, and were they linked to a prohibition of dividing corporeal relics? We shall first explore Gregory's views on the division of saintly bodies into separate relics. If we follow Arnold Angenendt's argument, it might appear obvious that the bishop opposed the splitting up of bodily relics. When Mummolus, a retainer of the pretender Gundovald, tried to obtain a piece of the finger of Saint Sergius for his master, Gregory concludes this episode with the words: "What had happened can hardly have pleased the martyr [...]." Mummolus took off with a piece of the relic, but "not with the approval of the martyr, as the remainder of the story has made clear."[61] This has been taken as proof that Gregory of Tours opposed the practice in general, which, if we are to believe pope Gregory the Great, was the position taken by the Western church as a whole.[62] While extensive studies have shown that pope Gregory I spoke against the practice and indeed did not divide and distribute partial bodily relics himself,[63] the works of the bishop of Tours have not been subjected to such detailed scrutiny. This might be due to the scarce evidence. There are, indeed, very few passages referring with certainty to bodily relics, mostly because Gregory does not distinguish linguistically between corporeal and contact relics.[64] The high

59 Angenendt, "Corpus incorruptum," 338–339; Salisbury, *The Blood of the Martyrs*, 23–24; Bynum sees the Gnostics as not enough of an explanation and points to the martyrs instead, see further down 13 and n. 84.

60 Swinarski, "Zu zwei gegensätzlichen Vorstellungen im mittelalterlichen Reliquienkult," 58–61; Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 3–4, 78–80. This has been termed "Realpräsenz" by Dinzelbacher, "Die 'Realpräsenz' der Heiligen in ihren Reliquiaren".

61 *Credo, non erat acceptum martyri, ut haec ille contigerit [...] sed non, ut credo, cum gratia martyris, sicut in sequenti declaratum est.* Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 7.31, ed. Krusch and Levison, 351. Gundovald's enterprise failed, resulting in his death, and Mummolus, who had turned traitor, also suffered a violent death.

62 Robert Wiśniewski has pointed out that we need not regard this as the position of the West as a whole, and neither should we believe that the custom of dividing relics was generally unchallenged in the East in all regions and at all times, see Wiśniewski, "Eastern, Western and Local Habits in the Early Cult of Relics," esp. at 287–288. For more detail, cf. the ninth chapter of his monography, Wiśniewski, *The Beginnings of the Cult of Relics*.

63 McCulloh, "The Cult of Relics in the Letters and 'Dialogues' of Pope Gregory the Great," esp. 181; Leyser, "The Temptations of Cult," 306.

64 He mostly uses *reliquia* and *pignus* interchangeably, e. g. Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 13, 18, ed. Krusch, 47–49; Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 83, ed. Krusch, 352;

demand for relics, partly caused by their being considered increasingly necessary in churches, was believed to have led to the emergence of substitute relics (*Ersatzreliquien*) in the form of contact, or, as they are often called, "secondary" relics.[65] But to speak of "substitutes" is misleading. Gregory does not distinguish between types of relics regarding efficacy – even a piece of cloth in which the Holy Cross had once been wrapped healed twelve possessed and three blind people, as well as two paralytics. Gregory was not concerned whether relics stemmed from saintly bodies or were created through contact with the living saint or his grave, but with their authenticity. When an initially sceptical Gregory had finally been convinced of the origin story of the aforementioned cloth, its authenticity was further confirmed by the miracles it accomplished.[66] Distinctions between different types of relics are of modern origin and need to be applied with caution.[67]

The evidence against dividing corporeal relics is not as clear-cut as it seems, if we take into account the context of the Mummolus episode mentioned above:[68] Gundovald wanted the relic in question not for veneration, but to increase his chances in combat, and Mummolus attacked it brutally, hacking at the bone with his knife until it broke into pieces. The relic, or rather, the saint, was not shown the proper respect, and this is how Gregory's comments should be understood.[69] Moreover, we do find a story in Gregory's works that tells of the successful division of a corporeal relic.[70] While the episode emphasises that the request for a piece of the body of John the Baptist was considered highly unusual, a woman who devotedly spent several years in prayer and tears at his grave was finally deemed worthy of being granted the saint's thumb. The partial relic was understood as a gift from the saint and from God, honouring the woman's merit and zeal – a miracle in itself. On the other hand, we find instances where the division of a *contact* relic is opposed by the saint. When a certain Nunninus chopped off a piece of the tombstone of Saint Germanus of Auxerre with his sword, he was struck immobile by the saint's wrath.

Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 2.6, ed. Krusch and Levison, 47; see also Weidemann, "Reliquie und Eulogie," esp. 369. According to Weidemann, "Reliquie und Eulogie," 371–372, no instances of bodily relics being divided can be found in Gregory of Tours works, but this is not entirely true, as the following examples show.

65 Gregory himself had a stock of relics available, which he distributed among churches in his diocese. When he found out that a church which, according to tradition, should hold relics of St. Stephen actually lacked these, he sent his deacon to fetch a relic of this saint from his own collection. Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 33, ed. Krusch, 58. About relics in the altar as a rule in Merovingian Gaul, see for example Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes*, 22, 27–28.

66 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 5, ed. Krusch, 42.

67 See Smith, "Relics," esp. 42–45, 59–60.

68 As does Swinarski, "Zu zwei gegensätzlichen Vorstellungen im mittelalterlichen Reliquienkult," 63–64.

69 Compare the concept of *reverentia* as illustrated by Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 119–121.

70 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 13, ed. Krusch, 47.

However, after he apologised and promised to keep the relic in a church and to celebrate his festival, he was allowed to leave.[71] As in the the story of Mummolus, Nunninus' was a crude and brutal attempt to obtain a relic. He was only let go because he promised the saint a church and proper veneration. It is worth noting that the relic of Saint Sergius that Mummolus treated so badly must have been divided sometime before – it was only a finger – but had nevertheless worked plenty of miracles while it had been kept in the church that its owner had provided for it.[72] The specific circumstances of each case need to be considered: in some instances, the apparent opposition against dividing the bodies of saints might be better explained with efforts to limit the private possession of relics.[73] In this respect, it is interesting to note how strongly Gregory emphasises that the distribution of relics in his diocese was his episcopal duty.[74] Furthermore, a large part of the post-mortem miracles that Gregory relates happen in an ecclesiastical context, involving a church, or at least clerics. It appears that Gregory's preferred way of contact with saints and their relics was through the mediation of the church, which could set this contact in a liturgical context and thus offer the proper *reverentia* to the saint and his remains.

The evidence regarding the partitioning of corporeal relics in Gregory of Tours must therefore remain inconclusive – there is neither a forthright interdiction, nor is the resurrection mentioned anywhere in these contexts as a reason for keeping saintly bodies intact. But there are further problems with simply linking the concept of *corpus incorruptum* and bodily resurrection to a prohibition to divide corporeal relics. In the Carolingian era, the bodies of martyrs were distributed geographically either in their entirety or divided into smaller relics which was partly made possible by a change in the popes' stance on how to handle the remains of the Roman saints.[75] However, the idea of the *corpus incorruptum* still had not been discarded.[76] The *Libri Carolini* even went so far as to explain that relics were to be preferred to images because they would take part in the glory of the resurrection, while images would not.[77] It seems that for the Carolingians, at least, the scattering of corporeal relics did not inhibit the saints' bodily resurrection.

In fact, when we think of scattered bones, we have to think about the martyrs. It was customary for the Roman persecutioners to burn and scatter the remains of

71 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 40, ed. Krusch, 322–323.
72 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 7.31, ed. Krusch and Levison, 351.
73 Swinarski, "Zu zwei gegensätzlichen Vorstellungen im mittelalterlichen Reliquienkult," 67; Clark, "Victricius of Rouen and Fourth-Century Debate," 172.
74 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.31, ed. Krusch and Levison, 534–535, cf. n. 64.
75 See for example Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 30. One example comes from Einhard, *Translatio et miracola ss. Marcellini et Petri*, 2. 1–2, ed. Waitz, at 245–246.
76 As Angenendt, "Corpus incorruptum," 323, 335, himself admits.
77 *Libri Carolini*, 3.24, ed. Freeman, 449; Chazelle, "Matter, Spirit, and Image in the 'Libri Carolini'," 168; Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 37.

the dead in order to inhibit their veneration.[78] Furthermore, a letter of the congregation of Lyon and Vienne to congregations in Asia and Phrygia recorded by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* states clearly that this was done in order to destroy their hope in the resurrection.[79] Gregory relates their passion in a slightly different way: in his version, after their death the martyrs of Lyon appeared to believers in a vision with their bodies "intact and unwounded" (*integri ac inlaesi*) to assure them that they had not died, just as Christ had promised. They also encouraged the faithful to bury their ashes, which worked many miracles afterwards.[80]

It has frequently been pointed out that the very existence of the early Christian martyrs and their trials had necessitated the elaboration and development of eschatological thought.[81] The martyrs' mutilated, burned, broken and scattered bodies were the first relics venerated by Christians.[82] However, they posed the theological problem of how such a "body", or rather the remaining bones and ashes, related to the resurrection of the flesh. The passage in Eusebius certainly shows that concern about this was at least considered a possible issue.[83] It was not only a matter of justice that the martyrs, who had died for their faith in imitation of Christ, would be rewarded and allowed to enjoy the heavenly glories. It was also necessary that it was the very body that had suffered that would overcome its pain, fragmentation and scattering.[84] Caroline Bynum has shown that the early Christian theologians developed their concepts of the resurrection of the flesh already with the martyrs in mind.[85]

While these authors differed on how much the body would change during the process of resurrection, most of them shared the idea that the resurrected material stemmed from the body occupied by a person on earth. In this respect, resurrection was always imagined as entailing a "reassemblage of bits".[86] Clearly, the dispersion of the martyrs' bodies would not inhibit their future resurrection, and this belief de-

78 Wortley, "The Origins of Christian Veneration of Body-Parts," 12; see for ex. the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 16–18, ed. Musurillo, 16–17, and the words of Ignatius of Antioch as given in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3.37, ed. Schwartz, 276–279. For a non-hagiographical source, see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 22.11.3–10, ed. and trans by Rolfe, 310, 315, 331.

79 Eusebius, 5.1, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 426–427.

80 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 48, ed. Krusch, 71–72.

81 Cf. Uytfanghe, "Essor du culte des saints," 94–97; Kleine, "'Res sacra' oder 'sacrilegium'?," 92; Salisbury, *The Blood of the Martyrs*, 22.

82 Wortley, "The Origins of Christian Veneration of Body-Parts," 12; cf. *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 18, ed. Musurillo, 17.

83 The *Martyrdom of Fructuosus* also seem to reflect concern in this respect, ed. Musurillo, 184–185.

84 Salisbury, *The Blood of the Martyrs*, 26; Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 44–50.

85 Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 43–44.

86 These theologians included Irenaeus, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Jerome and Augustine. See Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 34–38, 89–91, 95–103. See also Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 30–31, 35–36, 102, 143–145, with the relevant passages.

veloped in parallel with eschatological principles.[87] While this was the most common theological position, some uncertainty seems to have existed among believers regarding the necessity for the body to be complete and undisturbed. However, it was precisely in such circumstances that the influence of the saints was considered beneficial: a burial *ad sanctos*, next to saints or their relics, was believed to secure an uninhibited resurrection.[88] Augustine did not consider a burial *ad sanctos* to make a difference, but he used the scattered bodies of the martyrs as an example to reassure believers that, although it was pious and right to bury the deceased, an intact body or a grave were in no way necessary for the future resurrection of the flesh.[89]

With this in mind, it is instructive to look at a passage in Gregory of Tours' *Histories* that so far has not received the attention it merits: the dialogue on the resurrection of the body found in book ten, the book with the strongest allusions to the End Times.[90] Despite Gregory's reputation among modern historians as a rather superficial theological thinker,[91] his *Histories* include several theological disputes, all in the form of dialogue: two with Arians, one with a Jew, and one with one of his own priests on the resurrection, which is of interest to us here.[92] Gregory must have felt this to be an important and problematic issue in order to include such a lengthy dialogue on it. This fact, together with the placing of the dialogue in the *Histories*' last book with its eschatological tone, resonates strongly with the above-mentioned interpretation of Peter Brown that Gregory saw his contemporaries despairing *of* the coming end. If even the most fundamental doctrine, the resurrection of the body, was doubted, the end was uncertain, indeed. In the dialogue, Gregory's interlocutor starts with a very basic question that might also have bothered the laity: how could there be a resurrection of the body if God said "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19)? God did not say that man, after becoming dust, should rise again.[93] To counter that argument, Gregory makes use of a whole range of well-known biblical passages. First, he explains that the souls live on after leaving the body and hope for the coming resurrection.[94] He then cites the vision of the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 37:4), describing how dry bones would be covered with skin and joined with sinews and veins, which had long been understood to refer to individu-

87 Kleine, "Schätze des Heils, Gefäße der Auferstehung," 167.

88 Duval, *Inhumation 'ad sanctos' dans la chrétienté d'Orient et d'Occident*, esp. 43–47.

89 Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, 6 (8), ed. Zycha, 633–634.

90 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 496–500.

91 Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, 143. Heinzelmann qualifies that, *Gregor von Tours*, 136–141.

92 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 5.43, 6.5, 6.40, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 249–252, 268–272, 310–313, 496–500.

93 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 496.

94 The activity of the soul after death was strongly debated in the East, and possibly presented the background of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, as well, see Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great*, esp. 93–106.

als instead of being a metaphor for the people of Israel.[95] With a view to the saints' cult, it is important to note that Gregory refers to the story of the coming to life of a body that touched Elisha's dead limbs (2 Kings 4:34), which suggested that the bodies of the righteous were beneficial for others in regard to the resurrection (see above and p. 502). Gregory also cites Paul's ambiguous comparison of resurrection with a seed (1 Cor. 15), which could be interpreted more in terms of difference than continuity of matter: the stalk is not the same as the seed. However, in his dialogue, Gregory uses it only to express that something dead could come to life again, like a tree in winter, not to emphasise difference. These aspects make it very clear that Gregory stood in the tradition of the belief in a material continuity of the earthly body. To him, the body we use on earth was in fact the same body that would be woken for the resurrection. As explained above, while it might seem likely that the dismemberment and scattering of saintly bodies could pose a problem, patristic discussion did not link the saints' cult with the resurrection in this way, rather the opposite. And Gregory, too, reassures his interlocutor that the resurrection will take place despite the fact that bodies become dust. When the obstinate priest remains unconvinced, Gregory states unambiguously that it does not matter into how many parts a body had been divided, nor where these parts were located. "Even if a man were reduced to very fine dust and then scattered over the land and sea [...] it would still not be difficult for God to restore that dust to life."[96] The priest insists that this is hard to believe – what about bodies torn apart by wild beasts, or immersed in water and eaten by fishes and digested and so forth? At this point, the martyrs inevitably come to mind again. Gregory uses a quotation from the Apocalypse of John that the sea shall give up the dead (Rev. 20:13) to make things even more explicit:

> It is clear from all this that although a fish may have swallowed part of a body, or a bird torn sections of it away, or a wild animal devoured it, it will still be joined together again and restored by our Lord for the resurrection. He who created man as yet unborn from nothing at all will not find it difficult to restore any lost portions. He will restore our physical attributes in their entirety and just as they were before [...].[97]

In short, whatever happens to the body at or after death does not endanger its resurrection. It is striking how much the bishop of Tours relies here on arguments that

95 Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 54.

96 *[...] Quamlibet in pulvere redigatur homo et aquis ac terrae [...] dispergatur, non sit difficile Deo haec ad vitam resuscitari.* Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 497.

97 *Unde manifestum est, quia, quidquid humani corporis piscis absorbuit, alis rapuit, bestia deglutivit, a Domino coniunctum in resurrectionem reparandum erit, quia non erit ei difficile perdita reparare*, qui ex nihilo non nata creavit; sed ita haec in integritate solida, sicut prius fuerat, reparabit [...]* Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 497. I modified the imprecise translation by Thorpe (*"replace"), which he probably chose for reasons of variation, but the next sentence and the context make clear that nothing, wherever it is, is truly "lost" to God, and that the old bits are restored, not new ones made. Compare Buchner's choice: "wiederzugeben": Gregory of Tours, *Zehn Bücher Geschichten*, trans. Buchner, 353.

had been used for hundreds of years already in this same debate. The image of the pieces of bodies in the bellies of beasts, birds and fishes can be found already in Athenagoras, Tertullian and Augustine.[98] The idea that God, who had created everything from nothing, would always be able to reassemble every part and to restore a body to its former state can be found in Minucius Felix and Jerome, as well as in Augustine.[99] Given this well-established line of authorities arguing for the bodily resurrection even of utterly scattered or decomposed bodies, it is hard to see why Gregory should oppose the division of relics for any reasons connected to his understanding of the resurrection of the body.

However, Gregory's dialogue with his priest opens up a whole range of other possible connections between the cult of saints and ideas about the afterlife and the Last Days, which resonate with concepts found in his hagiographical corpus. As noted above, the fate of the martyrs was a key question in the early development of eschatological theology, and justice and God's grace made it essential that their way into heaven was uninhibited and immediate.[100] This meant that there had to be some form of preliminary judgment directly upon death. By Gregory's time, this idea had been discussed for several centuries already; while Lactantius denied that any judgment took place before the Last Days, the concept permeated the works of Tertullian, and Augustine admitted it in principle, as did Gregory the Great.[101] This logical consequence of the martyrs' immediate access to heaven is also expressed in Gregory of Tours.

> And like heaven keeps, as we believe, those who have died in sanctity, from whose tombs often that *virtus* proceeds, so that by them the blind are made seeing, the lame walk, and lepers are cleaned and other cures are granted to the petitioning sick – just so we believe also that the sinners will be held in this infernal prison until the Judgment.[102]

Let us focus on the saints first. That they already enjoyed God's presence immediately after death constitutes the very basis of their cult. Until the resurrection, their souls were in heaven, and they were granted by God the power to work miracles on

98 Esp. Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, 6 (8), ed. Zycha, 633–634; Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 23 (88), ed. Hout, 96–97. Compare also Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 32, 38, 41; see also Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 23, 144.

99 Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 34, 43, 103–105; Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 35, 143–144.

100 Straw, "Settling Scores," 24–28. Salisbury, *The Blood of the Martyrs*, 26–28; Uytfanghe, "Essor du culte des saints," 104.

101 Cf. Le Goff, *Die Geburt des Fegefeuers*, 65–67, 80, 87–99, 113–119; Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 36–37, 68, 137, 213.

102 *[...] sicut illos, qui defuncti sunt sancti, caelum, ut credimus, retinet – de quorum sepulchris saepius virtus illa procedit, ut de his caeci inluminentur, clodi gressum recipiant, lyprosi mundentur et alia sanitatum beneficia infirmis petentibus tribuantur – ita credimus et peccatoris in illo infernali carcere usque ad iudicium retineri.* Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 498; (my translation).

earth.[103] Meanwhile, their body stayed behind on earth until the Last Days, their relics being understood as a *pignus*, pledge.[104] This notion underlies a second concept already mentioned above that stayed constant through the Middle Ages, that of a relic of whatever size standing for the saint as a whole.[105] This was made most explicit in the *De laude sanctorum* by the early fifth-century bishop Victricius of Rouen.[106] The first to develop a "theology of relics",[107] he explained that the blood of the martyrs was "on fire with the reward of divinity", and every bit and piece of them shared in this link to the divine. Most importantly, he stated that "there was nothing in relics which is not complete", and that their distribution did not diminish their power in any way.[108] Displacement or loss was not a thing that martyrs, received in heaven, could feel. Instead, each piece of them was endowed with unity, could work miracles, and as such was already a "sign of eternity".[109] Though there are no explicit references to such ideas in the works of Gregory of Tours, we find many examples of stories informed by them. Gregory extends the idea of *pars pro toto* to include contact relics: the saints were entirely present even in the tiniest piece imbued with their *virtus*, and this piece was referred to by the name of the saint. His or her presence, and therefore the authenticity of the relics, was revealed through miracles.[110] Tellingly, Gregory of Tours describes the body of the martyr Ferreolus, whose head had been cut off, nevertheless as "intact" and "untouched" (*integer* and *inlaesus*), that is, as a *corpus incorruptum*.[111] If a martyr without his head attached could be considered whole, and a piece of a finger conveyed the whole power of a saint, and if scattered bones and dust were no obstacle to the resurrection of the body, then we have to rethink the connection between the cult of

103 There are countless examples in the works of Gregory of Tours, e. g. *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 98, ed. Krusch, 361; *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 36, ed. Krusch, 61; *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini*, 1.8, ed. Krusch, 143.

104 E. g. Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 30; Weidemann, "Reliquie und Eulogie," 369; Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 13, ed. Krusch, 47; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 2.6, ed. Krusch and Levison, 47.

105 See above p. 489.

106 Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum*, ed. Demeulenaere. I follow the translation of Clark, "Victricius of Rouen."

107 Clark, "Victricius of Rouen," 367.

108 Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum*, 8.l.10, ed. Demeulenaere, 81; *in reliquiis nihil esse non plenum*: 9.l.30–31, 83–84; 10.l.14–19, 85. Transl. Clark, "Victricius of Rouen", 390.

109 Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum*, 11.l.45–50 and 12.l.35, ed. Demeulenaere, 88, 90. Transl. Clark, "Victricius of Rouen," 397.

110 Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini*, 2.36, ed. Krusch, 172; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 7.31, ed. Krusch and Levison, 351, Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 36, 77, ed. Krusch, 61, 89, and many more. The presence of saints in relics is regularly acknowledged by possessed people, e.g. Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Juliani*, 33, 35, ed. Krusch, 128–129.

111 Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Juliani*, 2, ed. Krusch, 115; this passage is also quoted by Angenendt, "Reliquienverehrung bei Gregor von Tours und Beda Venerabilis," 37, who, however, does not work out its full implications for his theory about a prohibition of dividing relics as a result of the concept of *corpus incorruptum*.

saints and eschatological belief. Clearly, Gregory did not perceive the concept of *corpus incorruptum* as discouraging the dividing up of saintly bodies into separate relics. Instead, he saw not only the complete *corpus incorruptum*, but each miracle-working relic in its "wholeness" as promise and reassurance of the future resurrection, a preview on earth of what was to come in the eternal realm. There might have been other reasons discouraging the partitioning of relics, such as a general respect for the dead, the lingering effects of antique customs and laws, and aesthetic ideas regarding a whole human body as being in perfect likeness to God. But the saint's body was a preview of salvation, not a religious taboo.[112]

However, it should be remembered that Victricius of Rouen's *De laude sanctorum* was responding to possibly widespread scepticism towards the cult of relics, even if, unfortunately, Vigilantius of Calagurris is the only such sceptic voice to have come down to us.[113] Generally, the debates concerning the resurrection of the flesh received a particular impetus whenever the integrity of the body of the dead was in question: first in context of the persecution, and then again with the increasing division and distribution of relics.[114] Other ideas about the afterlife were also subjected to a lively discussion in the sixth century. The activity of souls after death was an issue of debate, Origen's ideas about the afterlife (in the manner ascribed to him) were declared heretical at the Second Council of Constantinople, and even the saints' cult in Gaul was far from uncontested, as Gregory's own frequent mention of sceptics proves.[115] Whether or not we believe that even priests raised doubts concerning the resurrection of the flesh, Gregory's inclusion of a lengthy dialogue discussing this issue suggests that he was reacting to lingering scepticism regarding fundamental aspects of Christian doctrine in Merovingian Gaul.

The existence of martyrs and the development of the saints' cult and its practices caused questions, maybe even concern – but exactly these questions led to the development of a more detailed doctrine about the afterlife. The cult of saints itself might have served to address fears about the life of the soul and the fate of the body.[116] Its reassuring quality emerges clearly in Gregory's retelling of the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, a story that he included twice in his works. The

112 Kleine, "Schätze des Heils, Gefäße der Auferstehung," 167, 182; Lafferty, "Relic Hunters in Late Antiquity," esp. 250–254; Kleine, "'Res sacra' oder 'sacrilegium'?," 108. For "preview", see above and Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours, Hagiography, and the Cult of Saints," 416 and Kleine, "Schätze des Heils, Gefäße der Auferstehung," 189; Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 161.

113 See Hunter, "Vigilantius of Calagurris and Victricius of Rouen," esp. 416–425.

114 Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 43–50, 93, 104; Kleine, "Schätze des Heils, Gefäße der Auferstehung," 188, 191.

115 On the debates on the soul and its afterlife, see e.g. Baun, "Last Things," 607–610. Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great*, passim; for Origen see Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 189–190; for scepticism in Gregory, see Wood, "Early Medieval Devotion."

116 Cf. Kleine, "Schätze des Heils, Gefäße der Auferstehung," 188–189; Uytfanghe, "Essor du culte des saints," 101–105.

spread of the so-called "heresy of the sadducees"[117] in the early fifth century, a feature only found in Gregory's version, leads to doubt about the resurrection of the flesh. The fate of the saints, however, who awake safe and sound nearly 200 years after they have been shut in a cave, restore the faith in the resurrection among the people and emperor Theodosius.

The cult of the saints reassured believers about the truth of the eschatological teachings and served as a constant reminder in this world of the Last Things to come in the next. The saintly souls were alive and already with God, as their miracles proved.[118] It would be their own earthly bodies that would rise, so that these bodies could join in the pleasures according to the merit they had won.[119] The miracles worked even by bits of fingers or shreds of cloth attested that the saints' scattered remains were still part of one whole, showing believers on earth that not even the smallest bit was lost to God.[120]

3 Last Things in the Here and Now

The fate and activity of the saints thus anticipated what would happen to soul and body in the afterlife. But we find a further connection between the saints' cult and ideas about the afterlife in Gregory's works that needs to be explored. Examining his thoughts about the period between death and resurrection offers interesting insights into early medieval concepts about the interim. To begin with, the bishop makes it very clear in the resurrection dialogue that everyone, even non-believers, will be resurrected in the body, so that the righteous and the sinners will pass to glory or be punished according to their deserts in the very flesh that they occupied in this world. Until then, the saints' souls are kept in heaven, but the sinners will be waiting *in illo infernali carcere* until the Last Judgment.[121] As already indicated above, this implies that some form of judgment follows immediately upon death, and it seems that for Gregory, there was no difference between this verdict and the Last Judgment other than that at the latter, the body would participate in the punishment. Interestingly, while many other churchmen and theologians concerned with the afterlife had differentiated between "the very good", "the very bad" and

117 Gregory of Tours, *Passio sanctorum septem dormientium*, ed. Krusch, and Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 94, ed. Krusch, 100–102. The priest in the resurrection dialogue is also termed a Saduccee, Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.31, ed. Krusch and Levison, 496.

118 General line of argumentation: Kleine, "Schätze des Heils, Gefäße der Auferstehung," 189; for ex. Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 30, ed. Krusch, 56; Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 46, 99, ed. Krusch, 326, 362.

119 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 498.

120 For Gregory, see n. 110; for other authors, see Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 106.

121 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.13, ed. Krusch and Levison, 497–498.

lesser sinners, Gregory did not make such distinctions.[122] He apparently did not envisage any form of "purgatorial state", which had been considered a possibility for lesser sinners by earlier churchmen and was also proposed by some of Gregory's contemporaries.[123] While one could disagree regarding whether the *infernalis carcer* should be translated with "hell", there is no evidence here or elsewhere in Gregory's works that he imagined a phase in the afterlife in which some form of punishment experienced between death and the Last Days could result in a different outcome at the Last Judgment.[124] Indeed, when Gregory imagines his own future death and discloses his fear of the Judgment, he jumps directly from his demise to the day of the resurrection of the flesh.[125] This, again, leaves the reader with a feeling of "indefinite imminence" (see section one). With Gregory of Tours' own theology in mind, therefore, the future Gregory I's sermon to the people of Rome (included at the beginning of book ten of the *Histories*), in which he admonished his flock to pray and repent *now* (see p. 486) might lose its apocalyptic context, but without losing its urgency. How far the end of all times is still away becomes less significant if the judgment at death may well be final.

The absence of a purgatorial option in Gregory's works raises the question of what the bishop made of the prayer for the dead by the living, an old and widespread liturgical practice that was later firmly connected to ideas of purgatory.[126] Gregory certainly knew the practice, and while he considered it beneficial in general, he did not attribute to it the significant function for the fate of the believer that, for example, Gregory the Great assigned to it in his *Dialogues*.[127] Petitions for the dead, be it in the form of prayer or mass, are mentioned several times in the works of the bishop of Tours, but do not play a decisive role. A woman's offering of wine from Gaza to be used in masses for her dead husband is deemed beneficial for his soul, but is of only marginal importance to the story.[128]

122 For example Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, Caesarius of Arles, Gregory the Great – see Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 62, 105; Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 138–141, 208–209, 214, Le Goff, *Die Geburt des Fegefeuers*, 75, 92, 96, 109, with references.

123 See n. 121; further Le Goff, *Die Geburt des Fegefeuers*, 25, 90–100, 113–119.

124 See also Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, 75, 80; Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower*, 150–153, 158–161; Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, 110.

125 Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini*, 3.60, ed. Krusch, 197.

126 Le Goff, *Die Geburt des Fegefeuers*, 63–65; Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, 8; Angenendt, "Theologie und Liturgie," 157–161.

127 See for example Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum libri quattuor*, 4.40, 4.55, PL, cols. 396–397, 416–421. See also Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great*, 76–79, 129–134, about the pope's concern with prayer for the dead.

128 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 64, ed. Krusch, 335–336. The point of the story is that God exposed a fraud, with the husband revealing to his wife in a vision that the greedy subdeacon always substituted the valuable offering with cheap wine.

In another story, a woman who secretly hoarded money "migrated to the underworld (*migrans inferno*) and was buried",[129] and her gold was thrown on top of her corpse. In the nights following her burial, screams were heard, so that the people complained to the bishop. When he opened the tomb and found the gold to have melted and filled the dead woman's mouth, he prayed for the punishment to stop, whereupon the screams ceased. While this case indeed shows the intercession by the living on behalf of the dead, the emphasis is, again, not on the woman's suffering or its amelioration by prayers on her behalf. The further fate of the woman's soul or her salvation are not even mentioned, but Gregory argues that now that her wickedness had been revealed to everyone, the punishment of her body could stop. The story serves as a lesson to living Christians and is followed by a sermon-like passage on the dangers of greed. The final section of the *Liber in gloria martyrum* – which follows immediately after this story – concludes that it is "necessary for us to seek the patronage of the martyrs so that we might be worthy to be helped by their assistance. What we are not worthy to obtain by our own merits, we can receive by their intercessions."[130]

When Gregory considered the dubious state of the soul in the afterlife, he emphasised the ability for intercession by God's friends, the saints, rather than any efforts of the living. It is in this light that we should understand his story of a prayer for a dead virgin that Saint Martin of Tours said whilst still alive. The prayer was effective because Martin had already shown through his miracles that he was recognised as a friend of God.[131] In Gregory's view, this was the only hope for reprieve in the afterlife: that the saints might intercede with God[132] and succeed in moving Him to grant an "amnesty"[133] even to sinners if the latter had sought the saints' patronage while alive. This is also how Gregory imagined his own Last Judgment: "And when in accordance with the judge's decision I am to be condemned to the infernal flames, he [Martin of Tours] will protect me with the sacred shroud [...] and reprieve me from this punishment."[134]

129 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 105, ed. Krusch, 110.

130 *Unde oportet nobis eorum patrocinia expetere, ut eorum mereamur suffragiis adiuvari, vel, quod nostris digni non sumus meritis obtenere, eorum possimus intercessionibus adipisci [...]*. Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 106, ed. Krusch, 111. Translation: Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*. The same subjects of greed and the help of the saints end the *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 110, ed. Krusch, 369–370.

131 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 5, ed. Krusch, 301–302; cf. Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 164.

132 Saints as intercessors in general: Pietri, "Évolution du culte des saints aux premiers siècles chrétiens;" Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 60–63, 67–68.

133 Brown, "Amnesty, Penance, and the Afterlife from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages," 50.

134 *Cumque eo iudicante fuero flammis infernalibus deputatus, sacrosancto pallio [...] me contectum excuset a poena*: Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini*, 2.60, ed. Krusch, 180. Translation from Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, 259.

Gregory's stress on the here and now is revealed even more clearly if we look at his accounts of the miracles of the saints.[135] In all of these, God works his power through the *virtus* he granted the saints,[136] and every miracle requires a decision: to punish or to reward. Throughout his works, be it the *Histories* or his hagiographical corpus, Gregory reminded his readers of one fact: divine judgment would not come to mankind only at the end of days. In fact, it could come at any time in this world, through God himself or through the agency of his saints. Punitive expressions of this power are sometimes referred to as *ultio divina*,[137] but in several instances, they are explicitly termed *iudicium*.[138] Obviously, God expressed his verdicts regarding human actions not only on Judgment Day. The numerous prodigies referred to above provide the *Histories* with their sinister tone for this very reason: they already imply a divine sentence, even without directly heralding the end of the world. Indeed, the Final Judgment can already be prefigured and visible in this life. While saintly bodies are described as white, shining, fragrant and perfect, indicating that they belong in heaven,[139] some sinners already receive an earthly punishment that leaves no doubt about their destination.[140] For example, in a story associated with Saint Julian of Brioude, Gregory describes how an obstinate sinner's corpse turned black, started to smoke and stink. According to Gregory, there could be no doubt where that man went who left earth "with such a judgment" (*tali iudicio*).[141]

So while the saints' bodies and relics served as a reassuring preview of the resurrection, the judgments already implicit in the miracles on earth similarly functioned as a foreshadowing of what was to come.[142] Although there was no purgatorial phase in the afterlife, punishment *in this life* could in some cases absolve from sins and alleviate punishment at the Last Judgment. According to Gregory, King Sigismund (d. 523/24), who instituted the permanent singing of psalms in St. Maurice-d'Agaune after he had killed his own son,[143] did not consider this enough to care for his soul in the afterlife. Instead, he "prayed that divine vengeance would punish him for his misdeeds in this world, so that he might be considered absolved

135 Accordingly, Brown names his chapter on Gregory "The Other World in this World," Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 149–181.

136 See n. 103.

137 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 1.41, 2.4, 3.5, ed. Krusch and Levison, 28, 45, 101; Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 74, 102, ed. Krusch, 87, 105.

138 Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Juliani*, 10, 17, ed. Krusch, 119, 122; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 2.4, 6.10, ed. Krusch and Levison, 45, 280.

139 See e.g. p. 488 and Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 6.29, ed. Krusch and Levison, 296.

140 Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 171.

141 Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Juliani*, 17, ed. Krusch, 122; transl. Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, 176; similar Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 5.36, ed. Krusch and Levison, 242.

142 Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours, Hagiography, and the Cult of Saints," 422–424; Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 164.

143 The *laus perennis*, see Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 74, ed. Krusch, 87.

in judgment".[144] In Sigismund's case, the manner of his death apparently served as absolution.

The healing miracles that regularly occured where saintly remains resided, usually in ecclesiastical surroundings, are positive examples of the prefiguration of the Last Things in this life. In Gregory's works, believers and saints mostly met at cult sites under the aegis of the Church, where clerical personnel ensured the proper *reverentia*, supervised and recorded the miracles that took place, often at liturgically important moments.[145] In this way, the miracles linked the long-dead saints, already in heaven, with the members of the temporal *ecclesia*. Sins and disease were considered connected, so that a healing of the body was simultaneously a healing of the soul. This analogy is elaborated in images likening the act of healing to a "rebirth", in which blood is infused into dried limbs and straightens them (as in Ezekiel's vision). Alternatively, he used vocabulary implying a resurrection of the body when people touched the tomb (e. g. *renasci fecit, renatum fuisse*), by this choice of image recalling the passage about Elisha (2 Kgs. 4:34) mentioned above.[146] This typology is in line with Gregory's assessment of the help the blessed can offer.

> For we believe that just as they restrain all kinds of illnesses here, so they deflect the ruthless penalties of torments there and [...] that just as they restore to life the bodies of the dead here, so they extend their hand, dig up from the waters of the Acheron those buried in sin, and restore them to eternal life.[147]

This saintly help, in this life as in the next, was accessible in this world through the mediation of the Church, the *ecclesia* as preparation for the world to come. For the amnesty through the intercession of the saints was not unconditional: one had to prove oneself a friend of the saints in *this* life to be worthy their patronage.

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With a verdict already waiting upon death, and no discernible purgatorial phase in which it might be diminished, judgment was always imminent. That the saints

144 *[...] Deprecans, ut quaecumque deliquerat in hoc ei saeculo ultio divina retribueret, ut scilicet habeatur in iudicio absolutus [...]*, Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 74, ed. Krusch, 87.

145 Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, 90; e. g. Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini*, 2.14, 2.30, ed. Krusch, 163, 170.

146 Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini*, 1.40, 2.13, 2.43, ed. Krusch, 156, 163, 174. Cf. Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, 105–114; Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, 66–68, Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower*, 201–204. The passage about Elisha's dead body might have been understood as proof from the Old Testament for the abilities of the saints or the righteous, compare the resurrection dialogue, p. 494.

147 *Confidimus enim, quod, sicut hic morborum genera resecant, illic saevas tormentorum poenas avertant, et, [...] sicut hic mortuorum cadavera ad vitam resuscitant, illic peccato sepultos, ex Acharonticis stagnis manu iniecta erutos, vitae aeternae restituant*. Gregory of Tours, *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini*, 4. prologue, ed. Krusch, 199; trans. Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, Compare Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 106, ed. Krusch, 111.

would indeed have the power to intercede was already evident in the miracles they worked through their remains in the here and now, at their tombs or through their relics. God had arranged it so that these could be found all over Gaul.[148] This meant that no part was lost for the resurrection: God already knew where the fragments of the saints were to be found and to whom they belonged, because it was through his friends that God worked his miracles, saving or punishing. Thus, despite the possible comfort of two centuries still remaining until the year 6000 AM in Gregory's chronology, there was no doubt in his mind that judgment was never far away, and that his contemporaries would do well to prepare their souls. Instead of being only concerned with a general world-encompassing apocalypse, the End Times that would bring a Last Judgment for everyone, Gregory's focus lay rather on a "personal eschatology", a closer look at the Last Things of the individual afterlife of each member of the Christian faith. To Gregory, knowing when the end for all would come was not the main point. Instead, after promising a chronology and admitting its futility, he stated that Christ himself and the belief in him was *noster vero finis*.[149]

Through the saints, believers could already anticipate the principles of the Last Things: the afterlife of the soul, the future resurrection of the body, and the coming Judgment. In this form, the cult of the saints reminded believers of the imminence of the end. What did numbers matter, compared to the evidence that the saints were working God's judgment already in the current world?

On the basis of this analysis of Gregory's thoughts on the saints' cult and its eschatological associations, it seems safe to conclude that his ambiguity on *when* the end would come was intentional. No one could know the hour, but the end was certain, and everyone with eyes to see could recognise it as prefigured in the miracles in this world.

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Abbreviations

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CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866–.
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Leipzig–Berlin: Hinrichs–Akademie Verlag, 1897–.
MGH Conc.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Concilia
MGH EE	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae (in Quart)
MGH SS	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores in Folio

148 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 46, ed. Krusch, 69.
149 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 1.prologue, ed. Krusch and Levison, 5.

MGH SS rer. Merov.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols. Paris, 1844–1855, 1862–1865.

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Miriam Czock

Arguing for Improvement: The Last Judgment, Time and the Future in Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*

The role of eschatology and the Apocalypse as part of theological discourse in the Carolingian age (c. 750–950 CE), has been widely studied. Nevertheless, the complicated temporal structure of biblical revelation of which the Apocalypse is only one of many parts and its impact on the discourse of the Carolingian endeavor to correct Christian society has hardly been looked into. As a consequence, the development of ideas of futurity expressed in argumentative patterns associated with ideas of revelation and the Last Judgment, is rather underresearched. This oversight is a serious one, because it obscures a specific approach to time, as well as a conglomeration of ideas about the Christian way of life. This article explores the discursive techniques that formed an extensive matrix of moral norms connected to temporal patterns, rooted in the interpretation of the Bible. It focuses on Dhuoda's Liber manualis *as just one voice in a much broader and diverse Carolingian discourse.*

The centrality of an eschatological world-view in the Middle Ages and the influence of apocalyptic thought on medieval life have often been emphasised.[1] For the early Middle Ages, discussion has mainly revolved around the question of whether there was a heightened apocalyptic fear around 800 that drove society to look for signs of the apocalypse, and stimulated the development of computistic, astrological and cosmological ideas.[2] While these discussions have centred on the role of the Apocalypse as a driving force of change in matters of time measurement, James Palmer has recently argued that the Apocalypse was not central to innovations in that field.

1 For approaches that stress a linear sequence of time and the significance of the future in the Middle Ages, see for example Schmitt, "Appropriating the Future;" Boyle, "Forming the Future for Individuals and Institutions in Medieval Ireland."

2 Fried, "Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende," and Fried, *Apokalyptisches Denken und die Entstehung der modernen Naturwissenschaft im Mittelalter*; de Jong, "Charlemagne's Church," 105; Palmer, "Calculating Time and the End of Time in the Carolingian World," and Palmer, "The Ordering of Time." With a wider scope on the End of Time: Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*. For the pull of the future: Schmieder, *Mittelalterliche Zukunftsgestaltung im Angesicht des Weltendes*.

Note: I am deeply indebted to Charles West, who made many valuable suggestions on the manuscript and kindly helped my English along.

Editors' note: While finishing these volumes, we learned that our dear friend and colleague Miriam Czock sadly and unexpectedly passed away. We will always remember her, as a brilliant scholar, but most of all as a cheerful, generous and warm-hearted person.

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Instead, he suggested that the Last Judgment might have played a significant role in the Carolingian movement of *correctio*.[3]

Other scholars have approached Carolingian thinkers' interest in the Apocalypse by considering the role of eschatology and the Apocalypse in theological discourse. Research on the Carolingian exegetical oeuvre on the Apocalypse has sometimes commented on the deep entwinement of temporal patterns and biblical exegesis.[4] Up to now, biblical exegesis has either been analysed as an interpretational mode to help understand the biblical past or as a meditation on eschatology. Thus, research understood exegesis as an interpretational strategy that either brought the Old Testament into correspondence with the New or centred on the End Times as foreseen in the Book of the Apocalypse. Exegesis can be seen as a theological exploration of the future, in which the anticipated coming of Christ and the Apocalypse are the subjects of interpretation. However, the role of the future in medieval exegesis was much more multifaceted, as future and foreknowledge shape the epistemological mode of exegesis as an act of interpretation. From that point of view, the future becomes an interpretative tool and exegesis ultimately a technique that reads the history of salvation as one revelation after the other, always in the context of the whole of biblical revelation. The future is not therefore limited to the Revelation of John, the apocalyptic book of the bible, but also penetrates the Old and the New Testament.

Nevertheless, the complicated temporal structure of biblical revelation, of which the apocalypse described in the Apocalypse of John is only one part, and its impact on the discourse of *correctio* has hardly been looked into.[5] As a consequence, the Carolingian development of ideas of the future connected to modes of biblical exegesis continues to be under-researched, and argumentative patterns as-

3 Palmer, "Calculating Time and the End of Time in the Carolingian World," and Palmer, "To Be Found Prepared." Historians have not yet reached agreement on how to label the cultural endeavour undertaken during the eighth and ninth centuries/during the reign of Charlemagne and his successors. For an introduction to the phenomena and further reading, see McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms*; Brown, "Introduction: The Carolingian Renaissance;" Depreux, "Réformes culturelles à l'époque carolingienne." On pastoral care, cult and reform, see for example Staubach, "'Cultus divinus' und karolingische Reform," and Staubach, "Aspekte der karolingischen Pastoralreform;" de Jong, "Charlemagne's Church," and "Ecclesia and the Early Medieval Polity."

4 Matter, "Pseudo-Alcuinian 'De septem sigillis'," 134, underlines the fact that there is "nothing chiliastic about *De septem sigillis*; rather, it links the Old and New Testament". See also Matter, "The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis;" Heil, "'Nos Nescientes de Hoc Velle Manere' – 'We Wish to Remain Ignorant about This'"; Mackay, "Apocalypse Comments by Primasius, Bede, and Alcuin."

5 Exegesis as a rhetorical tool has not yet been fully explored. However, there were different ways of reading the Bible, and with it different kinds of exegesis as well as temporal concepts. For different approaches to exegesis and the conceptualisations of time, see Collins, *The Carolingian Debate over Sacred Space*, 39–65; Czock, "Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft," and Czock, "Creating Futures through the Lens of Revelation in the Rhetoric of Carolingian Reform."

sociated with ideas of revelation and the Last Judgment remain opaque. This oversight is a serious one, because it obscures something that inspired a specific approach to time, as well as a cluster of related concepts about the Christian way of life. Therefore, this study explores the discursive techniques that formed an extensive matrix of moral norms connected to temporal patterns, rooted in the interpretation of the Bible. It concentrates on just one voice in the broad and diverse Carolingian discourse,[6] taking Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*[7] as an example of how argumentative patterns and exhortations could be modelled on a time frame derived from biblical exegesis. It looks closely at how admonitions associated with specific ideas of both the future within the world and the spiritual future were set out in relation to ideas about redemption and the Last Judgment.

Dhuoda's exhortations for her son have long attracted scholarly attention. Her status as a female writer and the relationship between her own familial, social and political background to the content of the *Manual* have been debated especially.[8] Dhuoda wrote the book at a politically highly sensitive time for her and her family during the years 841–843. Dhuoda was married to a courtier of Louis the Pious named Bernhard of Septimania, who in 841 avoided participating in the battle of Fontenoy, the key moment in the fraternal wars fought by Louis the Pious' sons for supremacy within the empire.[9] After the battle of Fontenoy, Bernhard, who had long-standing political ties to Pippin II of Aquitaine, commended his son William to Pippin's victorious adversary, Charles the Bald. Dhuoda's son thus joined the court of Charles the Bald in 841. We do not have to dwell on the details of the political turmoil in which Dhuoda and her family were involved. For the present purpose it may suffice to keep in mind that her book, although not openly political in nature and hardly referring to any of the upheavals Dhuoda's family was experiencing, was written as an attempt to give William guidance for his life at court.[10] Although she focused on William, Dhuoda's book had a broader educational scope. She ex-

6 On this debate, see de Jong and Renswoude, eds., *Carolingian Cultures of Dialogue, Debate and Disputation*, and the entire issue.

7 Dhuoda, *Manuel pour mon fils*, ed. Riché; Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. and trans. Thiébaux. All quotations follow Thiébaux's translation. Both Riché and Thiébaux include introductions to Dhuoda and her work in their editions. There is another English translation by Neel: Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, trans. Neel, as well as a German one by Fels: Dhuoda. *Liber manualis*, trans. Fels. For a more general overview of Dhuoda's moral programme, see Sedlmeier, *Die laienparänetischen Schriften der Karolingerzeit*.

8 Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*, 36–54; Cherewatuk, "'Speculum Matris';" Claussen, "God and Man in Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*;" Stofferahn, "Liber Manualis and A Century of Scholarship;" Le Jan, "Dhuoda ou l'opportunité du discours féminin;" Sot, "Jonas d'Orléans et Dhuoda;" Le Jan, "The Multiple Identities of Dhuoda;" Nelson, "Dhuoda," and Nelson, "Dhuoda's Context;" Chandler, "Barcelona BC 569 and a Carolingian Programme on the Virtues." For the laity's overall role in the moral discourse see McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, 223–227; Noble, "Secular Sanctity;" Stone, "The Rise and Fall of the Lay Moral Elite in Carolingian Francia."

9 Nelson, "The Search for Peace in a Time of War."

10 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, Introduction, 31.

pected her son to share her advice and wisdom with others and hoped it would benefit his peers and a wider court audience.[11]

Dhuoda herself described her approach as dealing with "what is useful in the *saeculum* (age) and pleasing to God".[12] It was Janet Nelson who pointed out that Dhuoda thus took up a dual theme, counselling her son both regarding the *temporalia*, meaning his worldly office, as well as regarding his soul.[13] Dhuoda therefore constructed her discourse around two futures, one within the world, the other salvational. Moreover, her use of temporal signifiers (*temporalia*, *saeculum*, etc.) to describe her tenets for William's behaviour raises the question about the role that time itself, as well as past, present and future, played in constructing and framing her arguments.

It is not the first time that the special significance of time to Dhuoda's arguments has received scholarly attention. In Barbara Schlieben's view, Dhuoda phrased her exhortations with reference to contemporary phenomena in an effort to manage her present. She noted that in the *Handbook,* Dhuoda engaged in discreet modifications to contemporary political models of society, such as the status of bishops.[14] However, although Schlieben also emphasised Dhuoda's reliance on eschatological thought patterns, she did not take a closer look at how Dhuoda's advice regarding William's present within the world might have been intertwined with ideas about the future, and her conception of time, more generally.

While Schlieben looked primarily at Dhuoda's use and transformation of political models in view of the future, others have emphasised her reliance on Scripture to confront her present.[15] In constructing her *Handbook*, Dhuoda brought together well-known biblical extracts, which she arranged to suit her needs.[16] While research has emphasised the centrality of Scripture to Dhuoda's writings, until now it is above all her preference for the Old Testament that has been the focus of scholarly attention. Mayke de Jong highlighted the importance of the past for interpreting the ninth-century present by analysing Carolingian exegetes' preference for using Old Testament models in a typological fashion.[17] However, although de Jong focused on

11 Nelson, "Dhuoda," 117–120.

12 Nelson, "Dhuoda," 112–113.

13 On the theme of Dhuoda admonishing William to be prepared for his temporal service, see for example: Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 2.3, 4.2, 7.1, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 81, 131, 190.

14 Schlieben, "Zum Zusammenhang von Gegenwartsbetrachtung und Prognose im Frühmittelalter," 42–47.

15 Although Dhuoda's literary enterprise owes much to Scripture, she also relied on classical sources. For her use of sources, see: Dhuoda, *Manuel pour mon fils*, 33, ed. Riché, 375–385; Lepree, "La Carolingian Exegetical Tradition," 46–86. For Dhuoda's reading of the Bible, see Nelson, "Lay Readers of the Bible in the Ninth Century," 50–53.

16 For citations of the Bible in Dhuoda, see Dhuoda, *Manuel pour mon fils*, ed. Riché, 375–382; Riché, "Bible de Dhuoda."

17 De Jong, "Carolingian Political Discourse and the Biblical Past," 94–101, esp. 97. On the relevance of the Old Testament to Carolingian thought, see Kottje, *Studien zum Einfluß des Alten Tes-*

the Old Testament and the uses of the past, she nevertheless pointed out "that Dhuoda made associative and allegorising connections between Old and New Testament text".[18] In this way, De Jong called attention to the intricate ways in which Old Testament and New Testament could be associated with each other. However, it still remains to be explored how the Old and New Testaments became a point of reference for Dhuoda and an explanatory model for how her conception of the present related to redemption and to Judgment Day.

Dhuoda clearly framed her reactions to recent events in biblical language. Past, present and future are therefore set into a horizon of revelation and salvation derived from the Bible, which informs her thought. Therefore this study looks not only at the entwinement of the innerworldly and spiritual futures in Dhuoda's thought, but also explores the impact of exegesis on her argumentative patterns, her moral exhortations and, more generally, her ideas of time. Furthermore, it analyses the influence of the concepts of redemption, salvation and the Last Judgment on Dhuoda's spiritual and religious values. Finally, this article explores the ways in which revelation and the belief in the Last Judgment established a framework for individual and collective improvement.

1 Biblical Revelation, Redemption, Salvation and Time

Dhuoda herself provided a clue as to how she located her book and her advice within the temporal framework of biblical history. At the very beginning of the *Handbook*, she explained its subject by using etymology and biblical quotations to explore the meaning of "hand" (*manus*).

> For 'hand' signifies the work completed, as Scripture says: 'And the Lord's hand was laid upon me', that is to say, the redemption which has led believers to perfection. [...] The '-alis' part of *Manualis* has many meanings. [...] It means scope, which is aim; consummation, which is 'achievement'; and striving after, which is 'completion'. [...] What other meaning, then, could this term *Manualis* have but the end of ignorance. One thinks, too, of the messenger foreknowing the light of the future, as if to say: 'The night has gone before, the day will hasten',[19] that is, Christ, who himself has plainly said, 'If I am the day and you are the hours, follow me',[20] and so forth.[21]

tamentes auf Recht und Liturgie des Frühen Mittelalters; Hartmann, "Die Karolingische Reform und die Bibel;" Contreni, "Carolingian Biblical Culture;" Hen and Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*; Chazelle and Edwards, eds., *Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era*; Contreni, "The Patristic Legacy to c. 1000,"

18 De Jong, "Carolingian Political Discourse and the Biblical Past," 96.

19 Romans 13:12.

20 This refers to John 8:12, 9:4–5, 11:9.

All the biblical quotations cited by Dhuoda in this passage use time as a rhetorical element. They also reflect the connection that Dhuoda establishes between her present and biblical revelation. The salvific fact revealed in Christ is at the core of the temporal concept expressed here. In a sense, Christian faith relies on a bifold revelation, of which one part is already fulfilled. Christ is the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament: his coming redeemed Christendom and opened the possibility of salvation. At the same time, this raises the question of how salvation history moves forward after Christ's first coming. The biblical Book of Revelation is an answer to this. It is a prophecy about the end, the Last Judgment and the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. This prophetic structure of the Bible implies a relation between the past and the prophesied future, with the present as a bridge linking the two. Dhuoda picks up on this in her short explanation of "hand", steeped in biblical images. She thereby links her programme, and thus also her present and future, to biblical revelation in a very specific way. While the work of God is completed, because redemption through Christ's death on the cross led believers to perfection, there is still the "light" of the future to come.[22] Dhuoda inserts her work in between the poles of past redemption and of the prophecy of the future end. Knowing about the possibility of perfection is the end of ignorance, but at the same time the possibility of perfection contains the need for "completion". It is to this completion that Dhuoda intends her *Manual/Handbook* to lead/guide the reader.[23] Thus although God has completed his work, mankind is still following his path, and this means that biblical revelation is interwoven into the fabric of the present.

Although eschatological in nature, Dhuoda's selection of biblical citations does not point to any millennialism on her part. She does not represent the apocalypse as an eschatological prophecy shortly to be fulfilled. Instead of treating the end of the world as imminent, Dhuoda points her reader in a different direction. Citing St. Paul's letter to the Romans, which has a clear eschatological dimension, she lays out the path for following Christ, a path which cannot be ignored. Her juxtaposition of only half a passage cited from Romans 13:12 with quotes from St. John's Gospel illuminates the argumentative framework of her exhortations. The sentences that

21 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, Incipit, 40–41: *'Manus' enim multis intelligitur modis: [...] Scriptura dicente:* Et facta est super me manus Domini, *hoc est redemptio, quod credentes ad perfectum usque perduxit [...]. 'Alis' quanquam multas habet significationes [...] hoc est scopon quod dicitur destinatio, et consumatio quod intelligitur perfectio, et secutio quod est finitio; [...] Quam significationem habeat huius locutio quod dicitur Manualis; nisi finis ignorantiae? Et nuntius intelligitus prescius lucis futurorum, ac si dicat:* Nox precessit, dies autem adpropinquabit, *hoc est Christus, ipse videlicet qui dixit:* Si ego dies et vos horae, sequimini me, *et cetera*.

22 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, Incipit, 40.

23 Placing Dhuoda's statements in the broader context of salvation history might render them more easily comprehensible. As yet, there is much confusion about how they refer to each other, see Sedlmeier, *Die laienparänetischen Schriften der Karolingerzeit*, 379–380, especially footnote 29. For Dhuoda connecting wisdom to God's Scriptures in the Old and New Testament and to God's eternity, see Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.4, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 136–137.

Dhuoda cites from Romans 13:12 remind the reader of the apocalypse and are perhaps used by her to establish a sense of urgency. Another idea, however, is much more prominent in her argument: her quotations from the Gospel of John stress the need to follow Jesus. If one reads the whole of Romans 13:12, this theme continues: "[L]et us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."[24] The individual possibility of redemption and the potential of salvation in the future calls for action in the present life: to embody Christ's way and to behave in a Christian fashion. Christian ethics and moral formation are thus based in salvific history.

Dhuoda emphasises the nexus of past redemption and prophesied future salvation.[25] Redemption relates to the hope for the coming of God's kingdom on Judgment Day, and sets in motion the need to adhere to Christian morality in the present. The momentum of revelation thus played a powerful role in the Carolingian discourse on Christianity. Through the interrelatedness of the biblically revealed past, present and future, Dhuoda located her advice inside a complex pattern of Christian time.

2 God's Eternity and Human Time

Before moving on to Dhuoda's ideas regarding William's earthly and salvific futures, another one of her observations on time has to be considered. Dhuoda's admonitions are based on a model of time steeped in the fact of redemption and the promise of salvation, which hinges on two distinctive features of divine and human time. God is eternal and spans the past, the present and the future. Dhuoda writes:

> Dwelling in the past, now in the present and in the future, he [God] is always here and everywhere. Existence is his forever, for in his words: 'I am Alpha and Omega' and 'I am who am'.[26] Human life on earth, by contrast, is limited, and therefore everything earned in it is short-lived. Everything one gains will only be possessed for a time, and not all time.[27]

It is the belief in God's eternity, on the one hand, and the temporality of finite worldly human life, on the other, that is the horizon in which life beyond the Day of Judgment becomes imaginable. The idea that human life on earth ends and God's

24 King James Bible. Vulgata: [...] *abiciamus ergo opera tenebrarum et induamur arma lucis.*

25 The emphasis on salvation was already pointed out by Sedlmeier, *Die laienparänetischen Schriften der Karolingerzeit*, 383, especially footnote 29, though without following up this theme.

26 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 1.1, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 60–61: *Ipse in praeteritis tunc, ipse in praesentibus nunc, ipse in posteris manens, semper hic et ubique est, et esse apud omnia utilia possibiliter habet. Apud illum semper esse abetur, dicente illo* Ego sum alfa et omega. Et Ego sum qui sum.

27 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 1.5, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 66–67.

eternity will prevail serves a foil to all Dhuoda's thoughts, although the concept itself mostly remains implicit.

While Dhuoda's exhortations to William are thus infused with temporal concepts linked to ideas of redemption and salvation, she also contemplates the temporal linearity of human life by setting out a sequence of past, present and future. Thus she admonishes William to follow and imitate in the present and future the behaviour of virtuous men in the past.[28] The linear concept of time governing human life, and the role of future in it, come to the fore in book 8, where Dhuoda admonishes William: "Pray for things past, present and future. Pray for the past if you have been lax about this, so that you will be able to put it aside; pray for the present wrongs so that you may avoid them; pray for the future in order to guard against any evils that may run into you."[29] Prayer was thus a tool to repent past sins, a guide in the present and a preparation for an unknown future, in which many pitfalls could lie ahead.[30] The uncertainty of the future and the importance of prayer in anticipation of it is also a part of book ten. Here Dhuoda turns to the subject of her own future and beseeches her son: "Shall I live long enough to see that time with my own eyes? I am not sure of my own merits, not sure of my strength, since in my fragile labour I feel shaken by the waves of the sea. Though this is how it is with me, all things remain possible with the Almighty."[31] Again Dhuoda's thoughts seem to oscillate between her future within the world and her future salvation. The statement about the time drawing nearer might be read in light of the political turmoil through which Dhuoda had to live.[32] It can equally be read as showing her awareness of the openness and uncertainty of both her earthly future and her soul's future beyond earthly time. Again, prayer is a tool of guidance in the face of an unknown future. Although Dhuoda insists in other instances that William should plan his future and prepare for it,[33] these passages show that she was acutely aware of the fluidity of a future that could not be foretold.

Whilst Dhuoda's focus on William and his soul seemingly favours the individual, she nevertheless imagines reaching heaven not as a solitary task, but as a collective one. Already Janet Nelson pointed out that Dhuoda intended William to share her *Handbook* with others. Time and again, Dhuoda stresses that William is not alone in striving for salvation. For example, she writes: "I entreat you, my son,

28 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.1, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 130–131.

29 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 8.2, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 196–197.

30 For the embeddedness of individual salvation into the collective, see also Ganz, "Individual and Universal Salvation in the *In honorem sanctae crucis*."

31 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 10.3, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 225: *Et ut ego ad hoc pervaleam tempus, ut cernere valeam, incerta consisto, incerta ex meritis, incerta vigore, fragilique labore per undas conquassor. Licet in me ita consistat, tamen apud omnipotentem cuncta possibilia manent.*

32 For the passages about tribulation and their meaning, see Sedlmeier, *Die laienparänetischen Schriften der Karolingerzeit*, 426–431.

33 See for example Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.1, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 130–131.

you who are amongst these [human creatures], that you strive with all your strength in order to scale the summit – with all others worthy and capable of loving God – and with them arrive in the kingdom that shall endure without end."[34] Dhuoda sees salvation as something that has to be reached collectively because the promise of redemption is made to all Christians. However, before we can understand the interrelations between her concept of time and the idea of individual and collective betterment, we have to first explore how she imagined present, future and salvation to be intertwined.

3 Redemption of the Spirit, the Body and Two Futures

Dhuoda placed her whole endeavour within a framework of biblical revelation. Therefore, her practical advice is often linked to the past as well as the future. As a consequence, her view of the future was based on ideas of past redemption and future salvation, and her practical advice often applied to both the past and the future. However, her thoughts concerning the future not only had to accommodate redemption and salvation, but also had to be related to a future within the world.[35] As will be seen below, Dhuoda was convinced that the future within the world and eternal salvation went hand in hand. Living according to Christian moral precepts was thus not only beneficial for the salvation of the soul, but also for present-day life.

34 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 1.1, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 58–59: *Inter quos adortor te, fili, ut, in quantum vales, illa semper perquiras ubi cum dignis et abtis Deumque diligentibus, ad certum possis scandere culmen, atque una cum illis ad regnum valesa pertingere sine fine mansurum*. For another example, see Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 3.10, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 112–117.

35 The notion that the future within the world and the spiritual future are intertwined does not seem to be unique to Dhuoda. See Czock, "Creating Futures through the Lens of Revelation in the Rhetoric of Carolingian Reform." However, it was far from pervasive in Carolingian thought. Alcuin, for example, seems to offer a much more inward-looking kind of argument. He underlines spiritual growth, see Alcuin, *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*, PL 101; Szarmach, "Alcuin's 'Liber de virtutibus et vitiis';" Alcuin, *De virtutibus et vitiis liber*, transl. Stone, http://www.heroicage.org/issues/16/stone.php. That Alcuin's arguments are rather spiritual is made plain in his preface, Alcuin, *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*, PL 101, 613–614, where he says: "From whence I ask that the holy desire of your salvation may run very often back to the reading of these letters, as if to a certain comfort; so that the spirit tired out by external troubles may have a return to itself, in which it may rejoice; and that it may know to what it ought chiefly to hasten." (*Unde precor sanctum salutis vestrae [Al. sanctæ salutis tuæ] desiderium, ad harum sæpius, quasi ad quoddam recurrere solatium, litterarum lectionem; ut animus exterioribus fatigatus molestiis, ad seipsum reversus habeat, in quo gaudeat; et quo maxime festinare debeat, intelligat*.)

The entwinement of present and future within the world with the salvific future beyond Judgment Day is already apparent in the preface to the *Manual*, in which Dhuoda commends her book to William.

> You will also find it in a mirror, in which without a doubt you can fix your gaze upon the health of your soul. In doing so, you can please in every way not only the world but [also] him who formed you from clay. What is in every way necessary, son William, is that in fulfilling both duties you show that you can lead a useful life in the world and that you can please God in all things.[36]

Following the guidelines and values set out by Dhuoda is thus not only necessary for reaching the future goal of salvation, but also for living a fulfilling life on earth. Moreover, Dhuoda is not only thinking of spiritual fulfillment, but also hopes for worldly offices and endowments for her sons. As she tells William later in the text, "He will abundantly grant you the world's prosperity, and he will convert all your enemies to peace. But you must, as it is written in the Book of Job, 'gird up your loins like a man', be humble of heart and chaste in body: 'turn toward that which is upright, be all glorious and clothe yourself in splendour'."[37] The Christian ethics she envisions are not necessary to overcome an internal struggle,[38] but are a technique to reach salvation as well as success within the world. Her *Handbook* therefore encourages an active involvement in, and even a shaping of, the world. It is not only to be used as a guide for salvation, but as a guide for dealing with society.[39] As she wove the promise of salvation into her admonitions, she also to some extent harmonised the worldly present and future salvation. The world for her is already immersed in heavenly things.[40]

As a result, ideas of the present, its meaning for the future beyond Judgment Day, and the future within the world became deeply intertwined in her text. This

36 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, Prologus, 48–49: *[...] invenies etiam et speculum in quo salutem animae tuae indubitanter possis conspicere, ut non solum saeculo, sed ei per omnia possis placere qui te* formavit ex limo: *quod tibi per omnia necesse est, fili Wilhelme, ut in utroque negotio talis te exibeas, qualiter possis utilis esse saeculo, et Deo per omnia placere valeas semper.*

37 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 1.7, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 68–69: *[...] tributes tibi prospera in mundo largissime, et omnes inimicos tuos convertet ad pacem. Tu autem, ut scriptum est in Iob accinge sicut vir* lumbos tuos; *sis humilis corde castusque et corpore, atque* erectus in sublime esto gloriosus valde et speciosis induere vestibus.

38 Dhuoda does not stress any internal emotional struggle to reach salvation within the world and in the afterlife. Alcuin, in comparison, as Barbara Rosenwein has shown, thought of virtues and vices as emotions that were to be managed, if one wanted to lead a happy life. See: Rosenwein, "Taking Pleasure in Virtues and Vices."

39 This is also stressed for example by Claussen, "God and Man in Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*."

40 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 2.2, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 74–75: "Earthly things, son, teach us about the heavenly. When you have earnestly striven for something in the world and you have obtained it, you will rejoice." (*Docent, fili, terrena quae sunt coelestia. Tu cum pulsaveris in saeculo et adquisieris, gaudebis [...].*)

reading in which the future within the world and the salvific future are mutually dependent also leads to a specific programme of spiritual development that impinges on the body. Dhuoda's discourse on moral reform does stress inner contemplation,[41] but it is not only inward-looking: she also emphasises the merits of morals for the body. The body might be the theme in Dhuoda's work in which the subordination of the material world to the spiritual emerges most clearly. Dhuoda often contemplates the fate of body and soul.[42] And although there are clear instances in which she writes about the physical, worldly body,[43] she also considers its spiritual health. Therefore her ideas sometimes seem to shift between the physical body of the world, its spiritual status within the world and the resurrected body and soul. She ends her preface: "However, as Scripture says, 'seek first the kingdom of God in all things and the rest will then be added to you', all that is necessary for the benefit of your soul and body, to be happily enjoyed."[44] Dhuoda here cites the account of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:33, which stresses the need to seek God's kingdom first. At the same time, it promises those who do so that all their earthly wants will be provided for. To decide whether she is talking about the worldly body, and with this William's present, is even harder if we take into account her belief that not only the soul will be saved, but that also the body will be resurrected.[45] She writes:

> Let anyone who seeks with all his heart the author of salvation believe that he can obtain salvation, not only of body but of soul. As you turn these thoughts over, hasten, in the present and the future, to commit your watchful zeal to action, so that you can surely receive this twofold salvation from the One whom you must discern with pure mind, having believed.[46]

Once again, Dhuoda admonishes William that he has to take action in present and future to ensure his salvation.

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41 For an interpretation that, although factoring in Dhuoda's political message, mainly stresses the spiritual dimension and sees Dhuoda on par with later mystics, see Mayeski, "The Beatitudes and the Moral Life of the Christian."

42 See for example Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 125, 126, 131, 135, 137, 147, 149, 179, 155, 157, 187, 193, 199.

43 For example, while admonishing William to pray for the sick, she entreats him to pray "for the sick, that God may give them spiritual health and bodily remedy [...]". (*[...] pro infirmis, ut det illis Deus salutem animae et corporis medelam.*) Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 8.8, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 198–199.

44 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, Praefatio, 50–51: *Tamen, ut ait Scriptura, primum in omnibus regnum Dei quaere et cetera tunc adicientur, ea quae necessaria sunt animae et corpori tuo fruenda feliciter.*

45 For the belief in the bodily resurrection see, for example, Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*.

46 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.2, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 132–133: *Quisquis enim salutis Auctorem toto quaesierit corde, non solum corpori, sed animae salutem credat sibi percipere posse. Hoc in te huc illucque conflectens, tempore praesenti atque futuro in studio certaminis pervigil ita satagere festina, ut utrasque ab illo quem puro intuitu cernere debes, indubitanter accipere valeas fisus.*

This shifting image comes to the fore when Dhuoda picks up the theme of spirit and body most thoroughly in the first chapter of book 7,[47] which Janet Nelson thought was at the core of her arguments about the dual theme of worldly conduct and God's grace.[48] In this chapter, Dhuoda talks about the two birth of Christians, the first physical and the second spiritual. And although she concedes that the spiritual is nobler than the physical, she points out that neither is much use without the other.[49] Janet Nelson pointed out that although Dhuoda recognised a tension between the carnal and the spiritual, she also saw the necessity of coexistence, even harmony, between the two. This dialectic between body and soul is another indicator of how deeply intertwined the present within the world, past redemption and the salvific future beyond Judgment Day became for Dhuoda.

4 Thinking Improvement, Redemption and Salvation in a Social Matrix: The Example of Justice as Moral Value

A closer look at Dhuoda's thoughts on the theme of just judgment can reveal the intricacies of her concept of time.[50] In a chapter on the vices and beatitudes (book 4.8), Dhuoda admonishes her son William: "'Love justice', so that you will be known as a just man when you preside over legal cases. [...] And another 'if you administer justice, judge correctly'. For it is written: 'According to the judgment that you have rendered' etc."[51] The last quotation comes from the Gospel of Matthew 7:2, and reads in in full: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[52] Matthew's is a revelatory message, but Dhuoda's use of it does not seem to be intended to evoke

47 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 7.1, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 190–191. Claussen, "God and Man in Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*," 45: This is not to say that she does not draw the ancient and traditional dichotomy between things spiritual and carnal. Book VII of the *Liber* is concerned precisely with this difference, but it becomes first confusing, and then blurred, as the same people and the same things participate in both qualities at the same time.

48 Nelson, "Dhuoda," 113–117.

49 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 7.1, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 190–191: *[...] duo nativitates in uno homine esse noscuntur, una carnalis, altera spiritualis, sed nobilior spiritualis quam carnalis. Una enim sine alia utiliter non potest in genere consistere humano, [...].*

50 Meyers, "Dhuoda et la justice d'après son Liber Manualis."

51 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.8, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 154–155: Dilige iustitiam, *ut iustus esse videaris in causis. Nam* iustus Dominus iustitias dilexit *diligitque semper:* aequitatem videt vultus eius. *Valde eam, eo tunc in tempore, diligebat et diligi admonebat ille qui dicebat:* Diligite iustitiam, qui iudicatis terram. *Et item alius*: Si iustitiam loquimini, recta iudicate. *Scriptum namque est*: In quo enim iudicio iudicaveritis, et cetera.

52 King James Bible.

aspects of apocalyptic fear; instead, she uses it to talk about the individual's chance of salvation. Although men like William administered justice in this world, their judgment had also a significance beyond this life, because its consequences follow in the afterlife. This again shows how the prospect of future salvation impinges on the present. To Carolingian aristocrats such as William, however, justice was much more than just another part of a programme of moral values: it was essential to reach heaven.

Dhuoda envisions judging to be an act that could easily endanger one's salvation if meted out unfairly or corruptly. However, her description of justice also reveals the connections between the individual and the collective in the workings of present and of salvation:

> You, therefore, son William, beware and flee iniquity, love righteousness, practice justice. [...] Do not pursue the cravings for perishable things. The True and Pure has provided a home in your feeble body for a true, pure, immortal soul. Never allow yourself to prepare hideous chains for this soul by planning, saying or consenting to some injustice through lack of fairness or pity. For many suffer pain for wrongs that others have committed. [...] For someone has said: 'I sin with all who are sinners, if I fail to correct those I see sinning!'[53]

In this passage, Dhuoda calls two things to William's attention. First, injustice produces suffering in the present world. Judging justly is therefore necessary to minimise worldly suffering. Second, Dhuoda warns William that letting someone else commit an injustice is as much a sin as acting unjustly yourself, as every Christian is responsible for safeguarding the salvation of others, too. As a result, consenting to the wrongs of others is also a vice, endangering every individual's salvation. Correcting others' behaviour is thus part and parcel of ensuring both individual and collective salvation. Ideas of redemption and salvation therefore not only bear temporal implications as well as salvific ones, but also linked together the individual and the collective.

This is also connected to book 4's overall theme of self-perfection. In it, Dhuoda insists on watchfulness not only to ensure salvation, but also for William to shape his innerworldly present and future in beneficial ways. She invokes the examples of the saints to advise her son to

> [...] curse and flee from the wicked, unrighteous, slothful, and proud. In every way, shun those who are an abomination in spirit. Why? Because they cast their nets like mousetraps in order to deceive. They never stop preparing roadblocks and impediments along the way, so that they

53 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.8, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 154–155: *Tu ergo, fili Wilhelme, cave et fuge iniquitatem, ama aequitatem, sectare iustitiam, time audire Psalmographi dictum:* Qui diligit iniquitatem, odit animam suam. *Absit a te ut, pro ceducis concupiscentiarum rebus, animam quam verus et mundus et veram et mundam atque immortalem in tuo misit fragili corpore manentem, tu, ob iniustitiis et inmisercordiis aliquid iniuste componendo, dictando etiam et consentiendo, illa laqueis praepares malis. Pro alienis namque culpis multi torquentur. [...] Dicit enim quidam: 'Cum omnibus peccantibus pecco, si quos videro peccantes ipse non corrigam.'*

> themselves fall headlong to the ground and cause others like them to fall. They were like this in the past. I entreat you to avoid them now and in the future, whether this occurs at present or is about to occur. God grant that your lot will in no way be linked to them.[54]

Dhuoda thus urges William to learn to influence both his temporal and his salvational future alike. Central to his ability to shape his future is his moral conduct and that of those he surrounds himself with. Again the individual's fate is linked to a collective one, but this time on earth. Dhuoda makes it clear that wrong behaviour, or consenting to such behaviour, not only paves the road to hell but also leads one to loose one's wordly position. Again we see how she argues dialectically: acts of moral decency provide both temporal benefits and salvation.

At the same time, Dhuoda's musings on justice show how her ideas of salvation, as well as her reception and adaptation of scripture, played a vital role in her response to a political arena that she perceived to be a treacherous environment. The choice of the theme of justice in this specific context is invested with a meaning beyond that of the salvation of William's soul, and not only because salvation is bound up with the collective. For in the same chapter in which she admonishes her son to judge justly, Dhuoda also sets out how rulers should behave, including being just.[55] Justice was, of course, one of the core themes of legitimate rule in the early middle ages, as attested, for example, by the writings of Isidore of Seville, Cathwulf or Jonas of Orléans.[56] By evoking ideas of justice, Dhuoda not only speaks about her son's behaviour, but reminds everyone who reads her work that justice is a fundamental feature of good rulership. It is possible that in promoting this idea, she was also claiming justice for her family.[57] However, this remains implicit. Rather than making a direct reference to the political limbo[58] in which her family found itself, Dhuoda expressed her concerns in a discourse on salvation. Nevertheless, her call for justice in this distinct discursive way demonstrates that specific current

54 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.1, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 129–131: *[...] ut malos, improbos pigrosque atque superbos execrandum et fugiendum et abominabiles in animo per omnia vitandum. Quare? Quia funes, velut muscipula, ad decipiendum tendunt et iuxta iter scandala atque ofendicula, ut praecipites corruant, et alios sui consimiles praecipitare faciant, parare non cessant. Hoc fuerunt in praeteritis, hoc ortor ut fugias in praesentibus atque futuris, si sunt aut fuerint quod permittat Deus, ut non tibi sors cum illis iugantur in nullo.*

55 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.8, ed. and trans. Thiébaux, 154–157.

56 Isidore of Seville, *Sententiae*, 3.54–54, ed. Cazier, 305–310; Cathwulf, *Epistola* ed. Dümmler. Cathwulf remains a shadowy figure. Indeed, everything we know relies on the letter he wrote, see Story, "Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey;" Garrison, "Letters to a King and Biblical Exempla;" Anton, "Königsvorstellungen bei Iren und Franken im Vergleich," 282–284, 298–301. For Jonas and Dhuoda's view on justice see Meyers, "Dhuoda et la justice d'après son Liber Manualis," 456. For the use of Isidore in admonitory texts on justice of the Carolingian Reform see, for example, Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern*, 232–234.

57 Meyers, "Dhuoda et la justice d'après son Liber Manualis."

58 A very short overview of the political turmoil her family was in is found in this article on pages 71–72. See there for more literature.

problems could easily be clothed in an often seemingly standard discourse on Christian morals.

5 Conclusion

We cannot know for certain that William, or anyone else, fully understood the potential meanings inherent within Dhuoda's argument. Nevertheless, the parallels between how she made her case about the future and the general early medieval tendency to cite Christian morals when reacting to problems in the here and now, suggest that hers is just one example of how the Carolingian world thought about time and the future. Although, at first glance, Dhuoda's admonitions might sound like standard Carolingian moralising, this study suggests that they had a far more complex underpinning. The revelatory structure of the Bible provided a blueprint for exhortation, thinking and the setting forth of Christian morals. Christians had to navigate both the fact of redemption and the promise of salvation in their present life – and, in a way, also in God's eternity. While Christ's incarnation had redeemed humanity, salvation was to be gained only at the Last Judgment. The perfection reached in Christ's incarnation and his death on the cross in the past led to a constant need to follow Scripture in the present in order to become complete in salvation in the future. Although there is a tension between (past) redemption and (future) salvation, both integrate a linear concept of human time into the divine scheme of things. Dhuoda's book, therefore, contains a message about how a discourse in which scriptural past and earthly present, as well as earthly future and salvation, are intricately linked, can help to (re-)orientate Christian living both in the present and in the future, be it individual or collective. The idea Dhuoda's *Handbook* presents of the future is not one marked by innovative thinking. Instead, it is a discourse on the Christian morals that hold the key to managing the future.[59]

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Abbreviations

CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.
MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica. 1819–.

59 This structuring of innovation has been observed by others: Phelan, "Catechising the Wild." Jennifer O'Reilly argues that the close connection between exegesis, revelation and mission is particularly evident: O'Reilly, "Islands and Idols at the Ends of the Earth." I would like to thank Máirín MacCarron for pointing this out to me.

MGH Epp.	Epistolae (in Quart)
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols. Paris, 1844–1855, 1862–1865.
SC	Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1941–.

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Bernhard Scheid

Death and Pollution as a Common Matrix of Japanese Buddhism and Shintō

Starting from two famous examples of death taboos in sources from the seventh and tenth centuries, respectively, this article argues that the Japanese taboos regarding pollution (kegare)*, which have become intimately associated with Shintō, are actually a product of different cultural influences and came into being only at a time when worship of Buddhist and local deities* (kami) *already existed side by side. My focus, however, is not the question when and where such taboos originated, but why they were sustained during many centuries which were dominated by a Buddhist world view. My conclusion is that the concept of* kegare*, and by extension the deities who defined what was pure and what was defiled, became an important means to single out Buddhist clerics as specialists dealing with death and the ensuing pollution.* Kegare*, therefore, served as a non-Buddhist concept for the benefit of Buddhism. To back up this argument, the article contains several examples from literary sources which provide insights into the interactions between daily life at court and the pantheon in Japan's premodern period.*

Fears and taboos related to death pollution are a pervasive motif in Japanese cultural history and are often regarded as a salient feature of Japan's "native religion", Shintō. Traditional scholarship in Japan as well as in the West explained such fears as a transhistorical phenomenon and as a major reason why Shintō retains its importance in Japan despite the undeniable success of Buddhism in the country. Indeed, the concept of "pollution" or "defilement" (*kegare*) can be seen as one of the main constituents of Shintō as we know it today. It could even be argued that avoiding *kegare* and maintaining purity is what Shintō is all about. The most important rituals of Shintō are purification rites called *harae*, lit. "to sweep away." Death, however, is seen as such a dangerous source of pollution that Shintō cannot deal with it directly. Shintō priests, therefore, usually refrain from all death-related rituals and pay particular attention to avoid pollution during funerals, in graveyards, and other places or events related to death. Buddhism, on the other hand, has monopolised the realm of death rituals since at least the beginning of the medieval period (twelfth–sixteenth centuries). Its specialisation on religious services for the dead went so far that Japanese Buddhism is sometimes labelled "funeral Buddhism" (*sōshiki bukkyō*) especially in regard to the early modern period (seventeenth–nineteenth centuries). In other words, Japanese religion established a clear division of labor, according to which Buddhism deals with death and the afterlife, while Shintō deals with life and this-worldly concerns. While there is a general consensus on this

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state of affairs amongst most specialists of Japanese religious history, opinions are divided as to the reasons and origins of this apparently peaceful cooperation.

A fundamental critique of the transhistorical connection between Shintō and death taboos appeared in 1979 in the form of a small volume called *Shintō no seiritsu* ("The Formation of Shintō")[1] by Takatori Masao (1926–1981), a historian with a particular interest in Japanese folklore. Takatori argued that the death taboos of Shintō can only function if there is another religion that provides ways of dealing with the dying and the dead, burial and mourning rituals. The death taboo as it appears in sources of the classical period (eighth to twelfth centuries CE, see below) and later could therefore not have existed before the establishment of Japanese Buddhism in the sixth and seventh centuries. Drawing from classical texts as well as from ethnographic sources, Takatori supported his argument with empirical data and demonstrated that death taboos were not as firmly rooted in "folk religion" as had hitherto been generally assumed. While Takatori did not deny the connection between Shintō and fears of pollution in later periods, he argued that both took shape as a by-product of the establishment of the classical central state between the seventh and ninth centuries. This hypothesis was arguably the beginning of a deconstruction of the received concept of Shintō, a deconstruction that was taken up by scholars such as Kuroda Toshio (1926–1993)[2] and continues to have an impact on Shintō scholarship both in Japan and the West up to the present day.[3] Drawing on this line of inquiry, this paper will examine some key examples of the impact of death taboos, especially in the period of classical court culture. My conclusion will focus on the question why taboos related to death, in spite of their apparent non-Buddhist nature, have survived almost one and a half millennia of Buddhist impact on Japanese religious culture.

1 Takatori, *Shintō no seiritsu* ("The Formation of Shintō").

2 Kuroda, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," 1–21.

3 Recent works by Western scholars that attempt to revise the received image of Shintō include Breen and Teeuwen, eds., *Shinto in History*; Teeuwen and Scheid, eds., *Tracing Shinto in the History of Kami Worship*; Teeuwen and Rambelli, eds., *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*; Faure, Como, Nobumi, eds., *Rethinking Medieval Shintō*; Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan*, to name but a few. Most of these authors agree that the term "Shintō" is fraught with problems when applied to the early phases of Japanese religious history, because the concept of a native religion hardly existed and the term *shintō* was not in common use at the time (see esp. Kuroda, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," and Teeuwen and Scheid, *Tracing Shinto in the History of Kami Worship*). Therefore, "ritualism for the *kami* (native deities)" might be a more appropriate term. For the sake of simplicity, however, I am nevertheless using terms like "Shintō", "Shintō priest", or "Shintō shrine" when referring to the ritual system, the ritualists, and the structures of the *kami*-deities.

1 Contrasting Examples, 7th and 10th Centuries

In the second half of the seventh century, Japan adopted the legal code of Tang China[4] and on this new legal basis established a centralised state. The ensuing process of Japanese "self-Sinicisation", which included the establishment of a permanent capital and the elevation of the ruler to a "heavenly sovereign" (*tennō*), is comparable in its dimensions to Japan's rapid modernisation/Westernisation in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration (1868). In order to demonstrate the radical shift in religious values that occurred at that time, I would like to cite two particularly striking examples to which Takatori Masao first drew our attention.[5]

The first example dates from the year 642, and thus from shortly before the Taika Reforms of 645 that ushered in the Japanese adoption of the Chinese legal system. The *Nihon shoki*, the first official Japanese chronicle, written in 720, relates a story about a Korean envoy who has been sent to the Japanese court together with his wife and their child. During his stay in Japan, the child dies and is buried in Japanese soil. The envoy and his wife, however, avoid any contact with the dead body and stay away from the child's funeral. The text comments:

> It is the general custom in Baekje and Silla (= Korea, B. S.) when a death occurs that even the parents, brothers, husband and wife, and sisters of the deceased should never look on [the dead] again. Judging from this, they are utterly wanting in feeling, and not to be distinguished from birds and beasts.[6]

Clearly, at this time the Korean envoy's particular taboo avoidances in the face of death were seen as an unnatural foreign custom.

The second example dates from about 300 years later and takes place in the mid-Heian (ninth–twelfth centuries) period, at the apex of classical Japanese court culture. It concerns the death of an imperial consort, Fujiwara no Anshi (also called Yasuko, 927–964), who died at the age of 37 after giving birth to her tenth child with Emperor Murakami (926–967, r. 946–967). In this case, we are much better informed about the specific circumstances because of the existence of a number of different sources, including the *Eiga monogatari* ("Tales of Fame and Fortune").[7] From

4 The laws are generally known in Japanese as *ritsu-ryō*, "penal and administrative laws". They are also known by the names of subsequent redactions, the only extant one being the *Yōrō code*, drafted in 718 and enacted in 757, which will be discussed below.

5 Takatori, *Shintō no seiritsu*, chap. 4.

6 *Nihon shoki*, 24 (Kōkyoku Tennō), 642CE/5/22; *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, trans. by Aston, vol. 2, 173–174 (with minor modifications); Takatori, *Shintō no seiritsu*, 240–241.

7 The *Eiga monogatari* is a historical account of Heian court life compiled from the diaries of various court ladies in the 11th century. It starts with the reign of Emperor Uda (867–931, r. 887–897) and concentrates on the fortunes of the Fujiwara House and in particular on Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1028). For Takatori's treatment of Anshi's death, which includes other sources as well, see Takatori, *Shintō no seiritsu*, 20–22 and 223.

its account we learn that, although the emperor was extremely concerned about the fate of his main consort and her child, from the moment she fell ill it was impossible for him to get in touch with her in person. In fact, Anshi moved to the estates of her maternal family several months before the expected birth of her child, and it was there that she gave birth. General custom at that time treated child birth as a source of pollution similar to death (as we will discuss in more detail below). Therefore, no birth was permitted to take place in the emperor's residence, which had to be kept free from any form of defilement. In the case of Anshi, other reasons added to this general pattern of avoidance. According to the *Eiga monogatari*, she had been ill since the beginning of her pregnancy and was herself very well aware that her illness was caused by the death spirits of former adversaries.[8] In particular, she was tormented by the spirit of a distant uncle whose daughter was herself a member of the emperor's harem. The latter had borne a son to the emperor before Anshi, but Anshi and her family had successfully arranged for Anshi's oldest son to be elected crown prince. Such decisions were of utmost importance to the entire political elite, since it was an established practice during most of the Heian period that a maternal relative of the reigning monarch acted as imperial regent (*sesshō kanpaku*). Monarchs came under increasing pressure to step down from their leading position as soon as they reached a mature age. Both monarchs and crown princes, therefore, were usually quite young and de facto political vehicles for their maternal uncles and grandfathers. As many other legends from the Heian period confirm, successful lobbying for a particular imperial successor could later lead to troubles with the spirits of defeated enemies, particularly if these enemies were murdered or died in exile in the course of political machinations.

Anshi bravely endured the consequences of her political success. When she realised that the vengeful spirit of her uncle had taken possession of her, she isolated herself not only from the emperor but also from her children in order to avoid spiritual contagion. The emperor in turn kept sending messengers asking about her health, as well as numerous Buddhist clerics who conducted exorcist rites in close vicinity to her private rooms:

> Finally the pains of approaching childbirth added to Empress Anshi's misery. The necessary preparations took place, and the assembled monks set up a tremendous chanting of sutras. Anshi seemed alarmingly close to death. It was not even certain that she was still breathing. The throng of people in the chamber and its vicinity all joined in frantic supplications to the gods and buddhas, and presently, to their great delight, a baby's cry was heard. Then there was a commotion about the afterbirth, but in the midst of it all Anshi's spirit fled. It was the Twenty-ninth of the Fourth Month in the fourth year of Ōwa [964]. Words cannot describe such an event.[9]

8 As Michel Strickmann has argued, such beliefs were based on what he calls the "Tantric revolution" in China and Japan (Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, chapter 5: "The Genealogy of Spirit Possession").

After this dramatic climax, the story ends with the description of Anshi's sumptuous funeral rites. While in this case Anshi's children were allowed to take part, the emperor was not able to do so owing to his purified status. Instead, he "kept to a strict regimen of ritual purity, refusing to receive any of the consorts in his bedchamber, even for a few moments of harmless amusement, and abandoning all his customary pursuits so that he might engage in pious works on Anshi's behalf".[10] At the end of the mourning period, however, the emperor turned to a lady with whom he had secretly been in love for a long time and made her his chief consort.[11]

Both of the examples cited relate the death of a family member, of a child and a mother, respectively. In both cases, their relatives must stay away from the deceased due to fears of defilement. In the first case, however, such fears and their related customs are condemned as a deficit of human feeling. In the second case, on the other hand, such fears seem so natural that the text hardly bothers to explain them in detail. Between the lines, however, it becomes clear that the fears relate to the world of the unseen, which is peopled with all sorts of malicious spirits. Such spirits are like pathogenic germs (to use a modern simile), and defilement creates conditions favorable for them. Indeed, it has been argued that diseases caused by the establishment of a capital city (8th century) and the ensuing urbanisation may be one reason for the emphasis placed on symbolic purity and the fear of defilement in the subsequent centuries.[12]

Putting aside the discussion of possible reasons, the two contrasting examples of handling death allow us to infer that fears of death pollution must have increased dramatically between the seventh and the tenth centuries, giving rise to a large number of rites of avoidance and purification. Indeed, around the time when the above-cited *Tales of Fame and Fortunes* were written, a leading courtier even noted in his diary that the fear of pollution represented a distinctively Japanese concern that did

9 *Eiga monogatari*, 1, translation: *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, trans. McCullough and Craig McCullough, 85.

10 *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, trans. McCullough and Craig McCullough, 87.

11 *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, trans. McCullough and Craig McCullough, 88–89. Anshi's children did make it to the throne, but her eldest son, Emperor Reizei (950–1011, r. 967–969), abdicated after two years, tortured by the same ghost as his mother, according to the *Eiga monogatari*. His younger brother, En'yū Tennō (959–991, r. 969–984), followed him to the throne while still a child.

12 Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan*, chap. 9, "Spirits". William Farris, a leading expert on premodern Japanese demography, summarises the scope and impact of diseases as follows: "[...] beginning around 730 repeated outbreaks of lethal epidemics cut deeply into a population that often had no previous experience with a particular pathogen. The result was massive die-offs – as much as 25–35 percent approximately each generation. This basic pattern – a population with little or no immunity decimated by a deadly virus or bacterium every generation – continued unabated until 1150 [...] Effects were apparent in myriad aspects of culture, even religion and art." (Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 9; see also Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan*.)

not exist in China and India.[13] Nothing could be farther away from the evaluation of foreign customs of death avoidance by Japanese chroniclers 300 years earlier.

2 The Codification of Taboos

As Herman Ooms has argued, the preoccupation with purity and defilement may be traced back to the reign of Emperor Tenmu (631–686, r. 672–686), probably the single most influential ruler during the above-mentioned period of Sinicisation.[14] According to Ooms, the concern with purity was not an essential feature of Japanese mentality but was introduced as a result of the social elites' emulation of continental practices. As elsewhere in East Asia, the opposition of pure and defiled served as a powerful metaphor to strengthen social stratification, ranging from the emperor as the apex of purity down to the strata of slaves and outcasts, who were identified with defilement.[15]

While Japanese chroniclers of the *Nihon shoki* had not yet fully adopted the purity paradigm and therefore exhibited some reservations regarding excessive taboos of death (as in the example of the Korean envoy), juridical texts of the same period prepared the ground for the taboos' inclusion into elite culture. The Japanese *Yōrō code* (eight century), for instance, mentions quite a few rules of abstinence, in particular in relation to annual ceremonies for the native *kami* at court. These rules include a definition of abstinence[16] that clearly identifies matters related to death with ritual defilement:

> Abstinence is defined as no mourning, no visits to the sick, no eating of meat, no death verdicts or execution of punishments, no music, and no contact with impurity.[17]

These rules generally follow the outline of the Chinese Tang code.[18] However, Japanese laws on religious matters differed from China's in one decisive point: the

13 Fujiwara no Sanesuke (957–1046), *Shōyūki*, Manju 4 (1027 CE)/8/25; cited from Stone, "Do Kami Ever Overlook Pollution?," 205.

14 "The Tenmu dynasty witnessed the beginnings of a social appreciation of the purity-impurity pair without, however, reaching the level of intensity it acquired centuries later." (Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan*, 261). On Chinese precedence, see in particular 254–256.

15 Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan*, chapter 10 ("Purity").

16 Jap. *imi* or *mono'imi*; in the present example, the law refers to "partial abstinence" (*ara'imi*) in contrast to strict abstinence (*ma'imi*).

17 *Yōrō ritsuryō, jingi ryō* (laws relating to kami worship) §11, ed. Dettmer; transl. from Mori, "Ancient and Classical Japan," 37; for a more technical translation into German, see Dettmer, *Der Yōrō-Kodex. Die Gebote*, 8–9.

18 It has been pointed out that some taboos in the Tang code may actually reflect Buddhist influences, especially meat eating taboos, which were originally an Indian practice. See, for instance, Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*.

most prominent native deities were defined – in accordance with the official mythology – as ancestors of the ruling house, and the emperor himself was seen as a "manifest deity".[19] This may be one reason why Japanese laws on purity and taboo were in many cases more detailed and more severe than their Chinese counterparts.[20] Two centuries after the introduction of the legal code, rules on purity were formulated in even greater detail in the *Engishiki* ("Procedures of the Engi Era", 927), a legal document on court ritual today seen as one of the canonical texts of Shintō. It includes a list of abstinence rules, from which I would like to cite the following items:[21]

> (item 1) At all times, if there is contact with defilement or evil, avoidance is practiced: for 30 days' time after the death of a person (counting from the day of burial), for 7 days after a birth, for 6 days after the death of a domestic animal, for 3 days after the birth of one (avoidance does not apply to chickens) [...].

This item establishes a certain hierarchy of polluting events. Human deaths are more defiling than human births, which in turn are more defiling than animal deaths or births. In contrast to the prescribed times of abstinence, the concrete forms of the ascetic practices required seem to have differed according to function and rank, but may have included – in addition to the above-mentioned provisions from the *Yōrō code* – refraining from sexual contacts.[22]

> (item 2) At all times, when consoling in a bereavement, or calling upon the sick, or when reaching a place where a mound is being built, or encountering a 37th-day Buddhist memorial service, even though one's person is not defiled one is not allowed to enter the Imperial Palace on that day.

In other words, any contact with death or sickness, whether intentional or accidental, should cause people to refrain from entering the palace.

> (item 6) At all times, if place A becomes defiled, person B who enters there (that is, takes a seat there) and all persons in that place become defiled. If C enters B's premises, his body alone becomes defiled, not those of people on his own premises. If D enters C's premises he does not become defiled.

This item indicates that pollution is contagious like a disease (even if its transmission ends after more than three instances). Items 2 and 6 make clear why the impe-

19 "In imperial edicts, the phrase 'The emperor who rules as a resplendent kami' is to be used." (*Yōrō ritsuryō, Kushiki-ryō* [public documents] §1, ed. Dettmer; Mori, "Ancient and Classical Japan," 38.)

20 Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan*, 257.

21 The following four quotations are from *Engishiki*, book 3; the translation follows *Engi-Shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era*, trans. Bock, 116–117, with small modifications.

22 Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan*, 253, 256–257.

rial consort Anshi had to avoid contact with family members in order to protect them from contagion by the evil spirit who had taken possession of her.

> (item 4) At all times, during the days of partial abstinence before and after the festivals of *Toshigoi*, *Kamo*, *Tsukinami*, *Kanname* and *Niiname*, monks, nuns and persons in mourning, as well as bands of robbers, may not enter the Imperial Palace [...].

This item relates to state ceremonies by the emperor and high-ranking court priests that focused on offerings to the *kami* deities. The provision makes clear that not only people in mourning but also Buddhist clerics and (the punishment of captured) criminals can cause defilement. Such defilement would not only render the offerings ineffective but could enrage the *kami*, which could ultimately lead to natural catastrophes and epidemics.

The mention of (Buddhist) monks and nuns indicates the implicit identification of Buddhism with death pollution. This is apparent in other passages from the *Engishiki*, as well. The work contains, for instance, regulations for the imperial ancestor shrines in Ise, which rivalled the imperial palace in terms of purity. Among the most striking examples of dangers to the purity of Ise to be averted is a list of words that within the shrine's precincts have to be replaced by code words:

> The inner seven words are: the Buddha is the 'Central One', the sutras are 'dyed paper', a pagoda is a 'yew-tree', a temple is a 'tiled roof', a monk is 'long-hair', a nun is a 'female long-hair', a Buddhist meal is 'short rations'.
> Besides these there are the outer seven words: death is called 'getting well', illness is 'slumber', weeping is 'shedding brine', blood is 'sweat', to strike is 'to caress', meat is 'mushrooms', a tomb is a 'clod of earth'.[23]

This list systematically refers to Buddhism, on the one hand, and to potentially defiling functions of the human body. Both topics must not be referred to directly and related terms are at times even turned into their opposites ("long-hair" for monk, "getting well" for death).

Earlier scholars regarded such anti-Buddhist connotations in the *Engishiki* as the salient features of traditional Shintō ritualism. Takatori, however, pointed out that they probably originated in a very specific context, namely the so-called Dōkyō Incident of the late 760s. At that time, Dōkyō (700–772), a high ranking Buddhist monk and advisor to the female sovereign Shōtoku (718–770; r. 749–758 under the name Kōken, and 764–770 as Shōtoku) almost succeeded in making himself emperor. According to Takatori, it was only in reaction to this infamous attempt to establish a Buddhist theocracy that the court nobility systematically excluded Buddhists from certain leading functions in order to protect their traditional hereditary

23 *Engishiki*, vol. 5; cited from Bock, 152–153. The first mention of such taboo words can be found in the *Kōtaijingū gishikichō*, a set of rules for the Inner Shrine of Ise from 804.

prerogatives.[24] If Takatori is correct, then the identification of Buddhism with defilement was not a "natural" grass-roots reaction against an alien religion, but rather a top-down measure initially caused by competing ritualists at court. Similarly, the preoccupation with purity and defilement in relation to death, and in particular with vengeful spirits, seems to have started within the court aristocracy in the period following the Dōkyō incident from top down rather than from bottom up.

3 Buddhist Management of the Death Taboo

According to famous Buddhist theologians such as Hōnen (1133–1212), the founder of the Japanese Pure Land school (Jōdo-shū),[25] "in the Buddhist teachings, there is no such thing as avoidance, as it is commonly spoken of in the world".[26] In an insightful article on Japanese death taboos, the American scholar of Japanese religion Jacqueline Stone qualified this statement in the following way:

> In formal Buddhist doctrine, pollution has little place, except, perhaps, as metaphor: an awakened mind is said to be 'pure', while a deluded mind is 'defiled'. Similarly, the realm of a buddha or bodhisattva, being free of delusion and suffering, is called a pure land (*jōdo*), while a realm inhabited by ordinary deluded beings such as our present, Sahā world, full of greed, hatred, and ignorance, is called a defiled land (*edo*). In the sphere of ethical and ritual practice, however, monastic Buddhism in particular has its own standards of 'pure conduct', such as refraining from killing living beings and abstaining from eating meat or pungent roots, drinking alcohol, and engaging in sexual activity.[27]

In other words, Japanese Buddhists knew of and paid attention to the above-mentioned pollution caused by death. However, they treated such issues differently from the court society's lay members. This is most clearly reflected in a genre of short didactic tales (*setsuwa*) of Buddhist origin. The following example can be found in two *setsuwa* collections, and is set in roughly the same period as the previous example of Empress Anshi. A family from the lower nobility in the capital encounters a problem in getting the body of their deceased father to the graveyard, since the gate of their precinct happens to be in an "ill direction," according to Yin Yang principles. Their elderly neighbor, a former palace guard who has become a

24 Takatori, *Shintō no seiritsu*, 37–63; Mori, "Ancient and Classical Japan," 55.
25 The concept of "Pure Land" (Skt. *sukhāvatī*, Jap. *jōdo*) usually refers to a kind of paradise by a specific Buddha and is a typical product of Mahayana Buddhism. In Japan, it was intimately related to the belief in Buddha Amitābha (Jap. Amida) and led to the creation of a distinct school by Hōnen and his followers, which differed from all other Buddhist denominations in many respects, for instance, in the observance of celibacy. Jōdo-shū and its offshoot Jōdo Shinshū are nowadays the strongest factions within Japanese Buddhism.
26 Stone, "Do *Kami* Ever Overlook Pollution?," 211.
27 Stone, "Do *Kami* Ever Overlook Pollution?," 207.

Buddhist lay monk, offers them the possibility of carrying the corpse through his own precinct. The lay monk's family protests:

> Even the saintliest holy man [...] would hardly do this kind of thing. Who ever heard of anyone with so *little care for his own safety* that he lets his neighbor's dead body be taken out of his gate?[28]

As the story makes clear, the family expects immediate trouble with unseen forces resulting from coming into contact with death pollution. The lay monk, however, dismisses their objections and permits the passage of his neighbor's dead body. As a Karmic reward for his courageous and compassionate action, he reaches a lifespan of over ninety years, and, despite their initial doubts, his family members thrive as well.

The interesting point of this story is that taboos from outside Buddhism, in this case related to Yin and Yang, but also to death, are not rejected outright. The text presents the conflict between directional taboos and death taboos as a serious problem. Within this framework, the lay monk exhibits extraordinary human compassion, and in this case Karmic reward overrules the "natural" consequences of breaking a death taboo. In other words, sincere Buddhist virtue can ward off death pollution. Nevertheless, death taboos have to be taken into account even though they do not belong to Buddhism in a strict sense.

Death pollution even mattered in the case of *kami* who functioned as guardians of Buddhist temples, such as Sannō Gongen, the protector deity of Tendai Buddhism. Tendai's central monastic complex is situated on Mt. Hiei, to the northwest of Kyoto. At the foot of the mountain is a shrine dedicated to Sannō, which is actually a collective name for three main and many lesser protector deities. Although many of these deities are of Indian origin and the whole shrine compound gained prominence only after a monastic complex was established in its vicinity by the Japanese Tendai patriarch Saichō (767–822), the deities are regarded as *kami* and therefore require a ritual and spatial separation from proper Buddhist temples.[29] Such separation notwithstanding, Ryōgen (912–985), a major reformer of Hiei monasticism, included worship of Sannō in a set of 26 monastic rules that he wrote in 970. Rule 23 states that every monk on Mt. Hiei must attend sūtra chanting cere-

28 *Konjaku monogatari-shū*, vol. 20, tale 44; *Uji shūi monogatari*, tale 24; trans. Mills, *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, 171–172.

29 Today the site is known as Hiyoshi Shrine, located in Sakamoto at the shores of Lake Biwa. On the development of the shrine originally known as Hie, see Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, chapter 3. The name of Sannō, lit. "mountain king", was introduced by Saichō, whose biography is intimately connected to the original deities of Hie. Saichō adopted the name Sannō from a Chinese deity by the same name, which was worshiped as the protector of Guoqing si, the head temple of Chinese Tiantai (Jap. Tendai), where Saichō received his training in Tendai teachings (Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 77). This indicates that the combined worship of Buddhist and native deities was not specific to Japanese Buddhism.

monies for Sannō, which were to be held twice a year.[30] Absence was permissible only "if a monk is sick, has become ritually defiled, or is invited to an official or private service"[31] at court. Due to this provision, Ryōgen himself had to miss the Sannō sūtra chanting in 973 because it happened to occur within the 30-day mourning period after a funeral service (see the *Engishiki* rules above) that Ryōgen had performed for his patron, Fujiwara no Koremasa (924–972). However, during this period he left the mountain and unintentionally passed through the precincts of the Sannō Shrine. He feared to have incurred a curse (*tatari*) by Sannō as a result and drafted a written apology to the *kami*, from which we know of these events.[32]

This demonstrates that *kami* like Sannō were regarded as supporters of Buddhism and received mass rituals of sūtra chanting. In fact, they were even explained as manifestations or "traces" (*suijaku*) left on earth by former "original buddhas" (*honji*) in order to sustain human beings.[33] Nevertheless, they were also regarded as proper native deities likely to react negatively to pollution, and in this sense as lying outside of Buddhist control and doctrine. As the Buddhist reformer Nichiren (1222–1282) put it, a few centuries after Ryōgen:

> Japan is the land of the kami (*shinkoku*). And it is the way of this country that, in many cases, strangely enough, the manifest traces (*suijaku*) of the buddhas and bodhisattvas [i.e., the *kami*] do not conform to the sūtras and treatises, and when one goes against them, there is actual punishment. [...] Those born in this country would do well to observe their prohibitions![34]

4 Defilement in the Shintō-Buddhist Pantheon

As shrines for Sannō and other Buddhist *kami* indicate, the distinction between native deities and deities from other cultural spheres, in particular the Indian deities brought to Japan by Buddhist lore, was often blurred. Local *kami* and Indian *devas* existed in the same pantheon and were receptive to Buddhist rituals. It seems, however, that the implicit social hierarchy that identified "pure" with high and "defiled" with low social status was transferred also to this syncretic pantheon. This, at least, is suggested by the following story, once again from the *setsuwa* genre. The tale is the first in a collection called *Uji shūi monogatari* ("Tales Gleaned from [the collection of] Uji") compiled around 1200, which is mostly dedicated to Buddhist topics but presents them with a distinctly humorous gist.

30 Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*, 238, 363.
31 Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*, 363.
32 Stone, "Do *Kami* Ever Overlook Pollution?," 209.
33 On the concepts of *honji* and *suijaku*, cf. Teeuwen and Rambelli, eds., *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, 2003.
34 *Gassui gosho*; cited from Stone, "Do *Kami* Ever Overlook Pollution?," 226.

The main protagonist of this tale is the Buddhist monk Dōmyō (974–1020), another historical figure from classical court culture who gained fame as a poet and as a master of chanting the *Lotus Sūtra*. While other *setsuwa* recount all manner of miracles connected to his chanting skills, the *Uji shūi* reveals some of his human weaknesses, particularly as they related to his romantic relationship with Izumi Shikibu (970–?), herself a legendary poetess and a stunning beauty.[35] One night, so the story goes, Dōmyō had sex with her and subsequently turned to his chanting routine.

> By the time he had chanted all eight books [of the Sūtra], it was near daybreak. He was just about to doze off, when he sensed someone nearby. 'Who is it?' he asked and the answer was, 'I am the old man from around Fifth Avenue and Nishi-no-Tōin Lane.' – 'What do you want?' – 'I have been listening tonight to your chanting of the Sūtra, and I shall in all my lives to come never forget it.' – 'But I chant the Sūtra regularly. What was so special about tonight?' To this the roadside deity (*sai*) of the Fifth Avenue replied: 'At times, when you deign to chant the Sūtra in a purified state (*kiyokute*), [all the gods] beginning with Brahma and Indra come to listen and it is impossible for an old man like me to approach you. Tonight, since you chanted *without making the water ablutions*, I caught a moment when Brahma and Indra were not present and got the unforgettable chance to listen to you.'[36]

While most modern readers will smile in sympathy with the lowly god in the guise of an old man, the comment at the end of the story emphasises a different aspect:

> Therefore one must perform purification, even when chanting at a trifling occasion. As the venerable Eshin[37] said, 'never chant the Buddha name (*nenbutsu*) or the Sūtra without paying attention to the Four Rules [of proper conduct as a monk].'[38]

This commentary implies that the encounter with a roadside deity was a humiliating experience for an aristocratic cleric. Roadside deities (generally known as *dōsōjin* or *sai/sae no kami*) seem to have played a role in agricultural fertility rites and were frequently represented in the form of loving couples or phallic stones.[39] The story obviously draws a tacit connection between Dōmyō's sexual adventures and the

35 Dōmyō was in fact another scion of the Fujiwara and studied as a child under the abovementioned Tendai abbot Ryōgen on Mt. Hiei. On the corpus of legends about his relationship with Izumi Shikibu, which include even the motif of incest, see Marra, *Representations of Power*, 96–99.

36 *Uji shūi monogatari*, tale 1. My translation is indebted to Mills, *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, 135–136, and *Japanese Tales*, trans. and ed. Tyler, 258; emphasis is mine.

37 Genshin (942–1017; also known as Eshin Sozu), a Tendai monk and precursor of the Pure Land movement.

38 Jap. *shi igi*, rules referring to the four actions of walking, standing, sitting, and lying.

39 The first Japanese dictionary, the *Wamyō ruijusho* from the tenth century, defines *dōsojin* (lit. ancestor gods of the roads; roadside deities) as *sae no kami*, "deities of prevention". The first descriptions of such deities seem to be contained in the *Fusō ryakki*, a history of Japan by an anonymous monk from the late Heian period. It classifies roadside deities as "strange figures" and describes them as male-female couples with visible sexual organs (Czaja, *Gods of Myth and Stone*, 44–45). Later examples, mostly from the early modern period, show dressed couples sometimes embracing each other in sexual union. Such couples are at times carved on the figure of a phallus.

fact that a "sexual deity" listened to him. While his motivation to chant the sūtra immediately after his sexual encounter with Izumi Shikibu is not explained in the text, it is possible that medieval readers understood it as an attempt to counterbalance the negative Karmic retributions resulting from his transgression of celibacy. The commentary, however, seems not particularly concerned about this breach of monastic rules. Instead, it highlights the fact that Dōmyō neglected the proper ritual preparations before chanting the *Lotus Sūtra*. It becomes apparent that such preparations are necessary for addressing the "aristocracy" among the gods, while the common people's deities do not pay attention to such things. Consequently, Dōmyō's pious efforts were not only in vain, but on top of that were exploited by a god who was himself rather an outcast. The commentary, therefore, seems to suggest that the roadside deity by his very presence defiled the noble chanting. In any event, chanting for a roadside deity did not improve Dōmyō's Karmic balances.

The story further reveals that from a Buddhist angle, devas from India and native *kami* are united in a world without ethnic boundaries but with a strict social hierarchy.[40] As noted above, non-Buddhist deities were often interpreted as "traces" left by Buddhist entities (and thus ultimately as "didactic means" [*upāya*; Jap. *hōben*]). Yet at the same time, the deities mirror the human world in that they strive for Buddhist salvation and seek to avoid ritual defilement, especially if they belong to the higher echelons of the pantheon. Purity in the classical period thus seems to have functioned as a marker of social distinction even in the world of the unseen. It was not, however, an ethnic marker of the native pantheon, as traditional interpretations of Shintō would have us believe.

5 Shintō Attempts to Regain the Realm of Death

These *setsuwa* may suffice to demonstrate that the taboos set up against Buddhism in the *Engishiki* had lost most of their relevance already by the end of the classical period. The taboos against death, however, remained intact, particularly in a Shintō context. This is illustrated in a striking story about a Shintō priest's death. It is set once again in the environment of the imperial court, but during the medieval period, when political power in Japan had shifted to the shōgun (military governor) and the emperor's court was reduced to largely ceremonial functions. At that time,

40 The *Konjaku monogatari* contains a story which makes a similar point. An anonymous "Dharma protecting deity" of Japanese origin is unable to fulfil his promise and offer food to a pious monk when another monk recites the *Lotus Sūtra* with him. The reason is that the *Lotus Sūtra* attracts the attention of "Brahma, Indra, the Four Deva Kings and the Holy Throng of Bodhisattvas who guard the Lotus Sutra" (*Tales of Times now Past*, trans. Ury, 92), whose presence prevents the local god from approaching the monks (*Konjaku monogatari shū*, 13, tale 39).

a court priest called Yoshida Kaneatsu (1368–1408) wrote a detailed account of his father's death in his diary.

We learn that Kaneatsu's father, in spite of his function as the head of the Yoshida Shrine in Kyōto, wanted to take Buddhist orders when he felt his end coming, as was common amongst members of the nobility shortly before their death. In order to do so, he had to ask for the shōgun's permission. The permission was granted and Kaneatsu's father took the status of a lay monk. On his deathbed he chanted the *nenbutsu* (Buddha Amida's name) and thus entered the Pure Land. His son and the rest of the family, however, could not stay with their dying father due to the particularly severe taboos against death pollution, which governed the world of Shintō priests. This prompts Kaneatsu to lament in his diary: "The state of a Shintō priest is indeed powerless!"[41] This example illustrates that during the Japanese medieval period even high-ranking Shintō priests would seek Buddhist salvation and yet observed a strict regime of non-Buddhist taboos. Yoshida Kaneatsu, however, was obviously critical of this state of affairs and realised that it limited his religious capacities.

About one hundred years later, Yoshida Kanetomo (1435–1511), a member of the same priestly family, devised a systematic teaching that functioned theoretically without Buddhism and also included a kind of funeral ritual. This was in fact the first systematised form of Shintō that overcame the traditional division of labor between shrines and temples.[42] Yoshida Shintō even developed visions of the afterlife that enabled them to conduct funeral rites, which included deification of the deceased.[43] With the diffusion of Yoshida Shintō, particularly during the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), Shintō funerals became an option, and death pollution could be overcome (in theory at least) by non-Buddhist ritual means.

Nevertheless, the official religious policy of the Tokugawa Shogunate rather privileged Buddhism in that it made Buddhist funerals more or less obligatory for the entire populace.[44] This led to the curious fact that Buddhism concentrated all its efforts on its monopoly on death ritual, while the intellectual avant-garde became increasingly critical of Buddhist doctrines. When the Tokugawa regime eventually declined in the early nineteenth century, such criticism was taken over by parts of the general populace. Consequently, the *coup d'état* of 1868 (the Meiji Restoration) led not only to the official disentanglement of Shintō and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*), but also to a short but violent phase of anti-Buddhist violence.[45] At that time it seemed that Shintō might become a kind of state religion backed by the newly-formed Meiji government. By about 1880, however, the government had reduced

41 *Yoshida-ke hinamiki*, 1402/4/26; Scheid, *Der eine und einzige Weg der Götter*, 95–98; Scheid, "Overcoming Taboos on Death," 211–212.

42 For a general outline of Yoshida Shintō, see Scheid, *Der eine und einzige Weg der Götter*.

43 Bernhard Scheid, "'May the Leaves and Twigs of my Descendants Bloom Forever'," 321–338.

44 Hur, *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan*.

45 Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan*.

Shintō shrines to mere places of emperor worship and even forbade Shintō funerals. As a consequence, the traditional "division of labor" continued largely unchanged until the present day: Shintō shrines are places for this-worldly concerns and auspicious festivals like the New Year; Buddhist temples have their economic basis and spiritual *raison d'être* in services for the dead. Even notions of death pollution remain current in modern society, as demonstrated, among other things, by a number of smaller taboos. These include refraining from shrine visits and seasonal greetings at New Year if there has recently been a death in the family, or the purification with salt when returning from a funeral. The faint association of Buddhism with death pollution can even be observed in the case of *kitamakura*, lit. "northern pillow". This refers to the custom to turn the head of a dying person to the north, in imitation of the death of the Buddha. Due to this custom, it is generally regarded as a taboo in everyday life to sleep with one's head pointing north.

6 Death Taboos and the Coexistence of *kami* and Buddhas

In conclusion, let me try to summarise the findings of my brief historical sketch of Japanese death taboos in a more abstract way in order to show why I regard these taboos to be the "common matrix of Buddhism and Shintō".

If we go back to the early classical period, we can say that courtly Shintō – or rather the world of courtly *kami* ritualists, including the emperor, who is himself seen as a *kami* – created a twofold universe of pure and defiled, placing itself in the pure part only. The higher their rank, the more a person had to be protected from potentially defiling contacts. Defilement, however, was regarded as a consequence of the most natural physiological actions, such as birth and death. Impurity was therefore being constantly re-established by people being born or dying. The disintegration of the body, including traces of blood or signs of illness, offended the *kami* and made people vulnerable to attacks by vengeful spirits. Conversely, negative events, such as natural catastrophes or epidemics, were explained as the reactions of *kami* and spirits who had been offended by pollution.

While crimes and moral transgressions also constituted causes of defilement, the question whether such causes were produced intentionally or not did not make much difference according to the logic of taboo regulations. Thus women in labor or people in mourning were sources of pollution despite having done no moral evil to their environment. In this respect, taboo regulations differed strikingly from Buddhist moral conceptions, such as the theory of Karmic retribution. For this reason, traditional views of Japanese religion tended to regard such taboos as salient, transhistorical features of "Shintō" and at the same time as natural reactions against Buddhism. Takatori and others argued, however, that the death taboos varied ac-

cording to time and space, coming into existence at a time when Buddhism was already established in Japan. Moreover, if death taboos were indeed the domain of Shintō only, one would expect Buddhist theology to have developed counter-theories. Japanese Buddhists, however, hardly ever criticised the fear of death pollution (with the exception of some radical zealots of Amitābha's Pure Land). Instead, Buddhist monks incorporated the notions of pure and defiled, together with faith in the *kami,* into their own religious system. Centres of Buddhist learning felt in need of spiritual protection and singled out local *kami* for this task or invented new ones. Thus, Buddhist *kami* shrines that were both modelled after, and integrated into, the system of imperial *kami* ritualism came into existence. Consequently, even Buddhist *kami* acted according to non-Buddhist concepts of pollution and purification. In other words, Japanese Buddhist institutions supported religious practices and ways of thinking that contradicted the basic morality of Buddhism.

The systems of taboo and avoidance, on the one hand, and of Karmic retribution, on the other, existed too long side by side to be regarded as a weak compromise. Rather, I would argue that their coexistence was stable because Japanese Buddhism – which was the only institution in Japan which developed a monastic organisation independent of the state – profited from it. While taboos and defilement known as *kegare* presupposed the existence of *kami* who defined what was pure and what was defiled, Buddhists had the power to appease irritated *kami* due to their access to the higher echelons of the pantheon where the *buddhas* resided. Buddhism could therefore present itself as the most effective institution able to get rid of death pollution and evil spirits.[46] This is, in my view, a major reason why Japanese Buddhists never produced a fundamental critique of *kegare* but instead reinforced these taboo laws, inexplicable as they were. Of course, Karmic retribution and reward which became increasingly visualised in the realms of hell and paradise (Pure Land), were always strong arguments for why Buddhism mattered. Yet the afterlife scenarios of hell, paradise and other realms of rebirth have nothing to do with the defilement caused by death in this world. In this sense, Shintō deities are this-worldly agents that delineate the boundaries between pure and defiled, which only Buddhist specialists can cross unharmed. The *kami* thus explain why Buddhism matters in one's present life (removing defilement and the threats by the spirits of the dead), while the concept of Karma explains why Buddhism matters in one's afterlife.

Seen from this angle, it becomes clear that *kegare* is of equal importance for both Buddhism and the realm of the *kami* which we now call Shintō. Japanese Buddhism was sustained not only by its own doctrines, but also by non-Buddhist rites of avoidance and taboos related to death, even if the ideas from which such ritual

46 Alternative specialists such as masters of Yin and Yang (*onmyōji*) existed in classical Japan, but their status gradually declined while their concepts were absorbed into Buddhism and the incipient schools of Shintō during the medieval period (see, for instance, Hayashi and Hayek, eds., *Onmyōdō in Japanese History*).

derived contained some anti-Buddhist potential. This interlocking of Buddhist and non-Buddhist concepts is probably a major reason for two particular characteristics of Japanese religious history: the dominant role of Buddhism when compared to, for instance, China or Korea, and the remarkable stability in the coexistence of *kami* and *buddhas*.

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Afterlife and Otherworld Empires

Marilyn Dunn

Apocalypse Now? Body, Soul and Judgment in the Christianisation of the Anglo-Saxons

Apocalyptic was not, as is sometimes asserted, a good starting point for those engaged in the conversion of England to Christianity in the period around 600 CE: this chapter argues that it took about two hundred years for issues such as Christian apocalyptic and the Last Judgment to be properly foregrounded. Before this could be achieved, the Anglo-Saxon Church had to overcome the gulf between Christianity and indigenous Anglo-Saxon religions whose primary focus was on positive outcomes – survival, health, prosperity – in this life. Burial of converts with grave goods, which might even initially include Christian objects understood as "other-world passports", reflect the persistence for nearly a century, of belief in funerary ritual as a rite of transition to a relatively undifferentiated afterlife. The chapter discusses the adjustments and accommodations by which the Church attempted to make its teaching comprehensible, particularly in the articulation of its doctrine on the nature of the soul and the development of its thinking about the Christian interim afterlife. It shows that the idea of Judgment was not particularly compatible with elite expectations; and also that problems were created by disagreements within the Church over whether there was a place in the Christian afterlife for the souls of unbaptised ancestors. Finally, it discusses the way in which the promotion of the Christian concept of linear (as opposed to cyclical) time and Anno Domini dating marked significant steps in the Church's progress towards more explicit presentation of the Last Judgment and Christian apocalyptic.

Writing to the Anglo-Saxon ruler Æthelbehrt of Kent in 601 at the point of his conversion to Christianity, Pope Gregory I summoned up apocalyptic images of the end of the world:

> [...] we would wish your Majesty to know that the end of the world is at hand, as we learn from the words of Almighty God in the Holy Scripture; and the kingdom of the saints which knows no end is near. As the end of the world approaches, many things happen which have never happened before; these are changes in the sky and terrors from the heavens, unseasonable tempests, war, famine, pestilence and earthquakes in divers places. Not all these things will come about in our days, but they will all follow after our days. So if you see any of these things happening in your land, do not be troubled in mind; for these signs of the end of the world are sent in advance to make us heedful about our souls, watching for the hour of death, so that when the Judge comes, we may, through our good works be found prepared.[1]

1 Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistularum*, 11.37, ed. Norberg, 929–932. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.32; *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 112–115.

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There have been recent suggestions that apocalypticism, a "key element" of Gregory's theological perspective, would prove instructive for Æthelberht and even that, through this letter, Gregory was attempting to teach him "to use the apocalyptic to his advantage in urging others to conversion".[2] In reality, Gregory had very limited experience of dealing with pagans and we might legitimately wonder about the effectiveness of raising these matters. Æthelberht had received the mission sent out by Gregory in 597, but the letter Gregory sent to the king's Christian Frankish wife at the same time makes it plain that she had taken no steps to school her husband in the Christian faith either then or at any previous point in their marriage.[3] In 601, Æthelberht was a very new Christian indeed and it is far from clear that he would have been able to comprehend all the elements of Christian apocalyptic which Gregory confidently lays before him. We can assume that the king would have known "changes in the sky and terrors from the heavens" (*inmutationes aeris, terroresque de caelo*), tempests, war, possibly famine and almost certainly pestilence (though earthquakes were probably outside his experience). We can also assume that he is likely to have been familiar with predictions and inferences from such "signs". But the essential matters of Christian apocalyptic – judgment and the judge, souls, the approaching end of the present world and Christian eternity – were quite another matter. All are highly specific to the Christian religion and would require clarification to a person whose views about this life and the afterlife were very different from those taught by Christianity. Far from aiding conversion, Christian apocalyptic would reveal profound differences between Christian doctrine and the religions of the pagan Anglo-Saxons; and over the first two centuries of Christianisation, the early Anglo-Saxon Church would find itself faced with the necessity of making many adjustments and accommodations to bridge the gulf between them.[4]

In teaching Christian apocalyptic and afterlife concepts to the Anglo-Saxons, the Church faced a huge initial disadvantage: it was dealing with people whose religion was world-accepting rather than world-rejecting and focused primarily on this life rather than any life to come. Evidence of sacred springs, groves, altars and animal sacrifices indicates that Anglo-Saxon religions were of the type concerned above all with this world rather than the next; its rituals focused on achieving positive outcomes like health, victory and prosperity.[5] Studies of conversion to Christianity in modern societies where indigenous religions focus primarily on well-being during life do not suggest that the Christian view of the afterlife has been an important

2 George Demacopoulos, "Gregory the Great and the Pagan Shrines of Kent;" Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 66.

3 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 54–56.

4 For the basic approach of this paper, which makes use of insights provided by the cognitive science of religion, see Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 1–6; Dunn, *Belief and Religion in Barbarian Europe*, 3–8; Whitehouse and Martin, eds., *Theorizing Religions Past*; Barrett, *Why Would Anyone Believe in God?*; Boyer, *Religion Explained*.

5 Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, 5–66; Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 56–83.

factor in persuading people to convert. On the contrary, Christianity succeeds in such circumstances by focusing strongly on the present life.[6] The *Ecclesiastical History*'s one and only account of the mass conversion of an Anglo-Saxon people that was neither led nor enforced by a ruler is that of the conversion of the South Saxons in the 680s by Bishop Wilfrid of Northumbria. Arriving in the area after it had been suffering from drought for three years, he taught this people to catch fish, thus putting an end to a major famine. (The drought miraculously ends when the grateful South Saxons are baptised).[7] The same point is made by Wifrid's hagiographer, Eddius: he fails to mention the fishing miracle in relation to Sussex, but tells a similar tale of another mass conversion, this time of continental paganism in Frisia.[8] Both Bede and Eddius make it quite clear that in the cases they describe, preaching and teaching alone had proved ineffective.[9] Whether entirely fictional or partly accurate, both narratives underline the world-accepting nature of Anglo-Saxon religion and the fact that the most effective way to secure conversion to Christianity was to associate the new religion with survival, health and prosperity. Apocalyptic was not a good point from which to start.

In a famous passage of his *Ecclesiastical History*, Bede claims to give an account of events of just over a century earlier when King Eadwine of Northumbria consulted his thegns about the desirability of becoming Christian. One thegn advises that:

> This is how the present life of man on earth [...] appears to me in comparison to that time which is unknown to us (*quod nobis incertum est temporis*). You are sitting feasting with your ealdormen and thegns in winter time; the fire is burning on the hearth in the middle of the hall and all inside is warm, while outside the wintry storms of rain and snow are raging and a sparrow flies swiftly through the hall. It enters in at one door and quickly flies out through the other. For the few moments that it is inside, the storm and wintry tempest cannot touch it, but after the briefest moment of calm, it flits from your sight, out of the wintry storm and into it again. So this life of man appears but for a moment; what follows or indeed what went before, we know not at all (*quid autem sequatur, quidue praecesserit, prorsus ignoramus*).[10]

The passage conveys the Anglo-Saxon view that present life is clearly the most desirable state of existence, in the same way that feasting in the king's hall represented the high point of pleasure and reward in the existence of the Anglo-Saxon warrior.[11] It also reveals the extent of the gulf between Christian and pagan understandings of life after death: Bede concludes the episode by making the thegn go on to advocate conversion – if, that is, the new doctrine offered "something more cer-

6 Gifford, "African Christianity and the Eclipse of the Afterlife."
7 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4.13, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 372–375.
8 Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, 26, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 52–53.
9 Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, 26, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 52–53.
10 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2.13, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 182–185.
11 Shippey, *Beowulf*, 23: "The hall equals happiness equals light."

tain" (*certius aliquid*) about the unknown.[12] It was easy for the Christian monk to imply that the Anglo-Saxon conception of the afterlife was as uncertain as the thegn's metaphor of the dark, stormy and wintry exterior world is intended to suggest. Religions focused on the here-and-now often characterise the otherworld or spirit-land as a fainter and/or less pleasant or somehow distorted version of existence – even if it is also the place where the spirits of ancestors live.[13] We have extensive evidence from virtually all areas of Anglo-Saxon England of the customs of burial with grave goods; cremation, generally practised up to the early years of the seventh century;[14] exposure or reduction of the body and secondary burial; and the dismemberment or partial dismemberment of bodies post-mortem.[15] These reflect funerary rituals of the type classified by the work of Robert Hertz and Arnold van Gennep in the early twentieth century as rites of transition, designed to conduct the spirit safely into the other world.[16] Their performance indicates a belief that the soul did not separate immediately from the body on death, but lingered in the vicinity of the living, requiring appropriate rites to transport it to the spirit-land or land of the ancestor. In such belief-systems, there is not necessarily a strong concept of post-mortem judgment as in Christianity: the afterlife can be relatively undifferentiated. The punishment of those deemed to have put themselves beyond the social pale in some way may consist in denial of appropriate rites of transition into the ancestral world. However, the absence of correct or complete funerary ritual may also allow the spirit to re-enter the body as a malevolent revenant.[17]

While Pope Gregory had been keen to foreground the Last Judgment in his letter to Æthelberht, the evidence suggests that the Church in England was not in a position to follow his example for some time. Instead, it found itself working with peoples who understood funerary ritual as a rite of transition into an otherworld rather than an afterlife in the Christian sense; and with ruling elites who viewed acceptance or rejection of Christianity within traditional parameters in which adoption of cults of individual deities had formed part of strategies for their own personal advancement.[18] Thus we find baptismal spoons placed near the head of the person interred in the extraordinarily lavish rite-of-transition Sutton Hoo Mound 1 ship burial; and gold foil crosses placed on the face of the occupant of another magnifi-

12 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2.13, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 184–185.

13 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons,* 8–9. For an otherworld as mirror-image of a secular empire see in this volume Frederick Chen, "The Evolution of the Buddhist Other-World Empire in Early Medieval China."

14 See Hines and Bayliss, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Graves and Grave-Goods of the 6th and 7th Centuries AD*, 552, note 7, for later cremation burials at Southampton and Pagham.

15 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 85–100.

16 Hertz, "A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death;" Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 146–165; Metcalf and Huntington, *Celebrations of Death*, 1–130.

17 Pentikäinen, "The Dead Without Status;" Barber, *Vampires, Burial and Death*.

18 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 101–103.

cently furnished tomb at Prittlewell, Essex.[19] The individuals with whom they were buried have tentatively been identified by some historians and archaeologists with Rædwald and Sæberht, two rulers who accepted baptism at Æthelberht's behest in the early years of the seventh century.[20] Even if these identifications cannot be proved beyond doubt, we are dealing with very high-status burials dating from around the 620s which demonstrate the way in which elites interpreted Christianity in the earliest conversion period. Coming from a conceptual framework in which religion was equated with the production of good outcomes for individuals and peoples, the spoons and foil crosses (and possibly other objects such as inscribed bowls and a buckle which may have been designed to contain some sort of relic) were understood in the sense of "passports" to a Christian afterlife.

The use of such "passports" in furnished burials indicates a partial or syncretistic understanding of the Christian afterlife. The durable nature of such perceptions and also the difficulties involved making the concept of judgment palatable are both demonstrated by archaeological evidence from the region of eastern Francia which, up to the 530s, had been the Burgundian kingdom. In the fifth century, the Burgundians had originally converted to the Arian (Homoian) form of Christianity; but we can visualise this giving way to a possibly more syncretistic version of the Christian religion after the kingdom was absorbed into Francia.[21] In the sixth and seventh centuries, some monks and clerics attempted to consolidate Catholic Christianity in the region by creating and distributing – to recipients including clerics and one woman – what were in effect Christian grave goods. [22] These were buckles, artefacts commonly found in traditional furnished burials: but in this case they were engraved with Biblical motifs, sometimes accompanied by mysterious apotropaic inscriptions. A recurrent theme was Daniel's rescue from the lions' den, an image employed to symbolise the resurrection of the elect to eternal life. The same idea is presented more explicitly on the so-called "Landelinus" buckle, engraved with Revelation's rider on a white horse and the Beast of the Apocalypse. The object declares its own apotropaic power with the Latin inscription "Landelinus made this *numen*" and also expresses the wish that the possessor may "live a thousand years in the Lord". The rider is represented as a Frankish warrior on a stallion, brandishing a *francisca* in the one hand and the weapon of the elite, the *angon*, in the other; the horseman of the Apocalypse is identified with the elite warrior class, while the buckle's owner is putatively classed with those who would be resurrected first to live and reign with Christ a thousand years, before the general resurrection,

19 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 163–164; for analogues of the Prittlewell crosses among the Lombards and Alemanni, see Bierbrauer, "The Cross Goes North."

20 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2.3, 2.15, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 142–143, 190–191.

21 Dunn, *Belief and Religion in Barbarian Europe*, 66–79.

22 For other depictions of Daniel suggesting the resurrection of the elect to eternal life, see Alexander, "Daniel Themes on the Irish High Crosses."

as described in Revelation 20:4–6.[23] These buckles, understood as afterlife passports designed to fast-track the deceased to salvation, provide graphic illustration of how far Christian eschatology was – or was not – understood by some members of the elite, including clerics, in the seventh century. The simpler Christian tokens found at Sutton Hoo and Prittlewell, in kingdoms making a first, limited acquaintance with Christianity suggest a vague understanding of a personal salvation guaranteed by their presence.

So substantial were the differences between Christian teaching and the original intuitions, beliefs and practices of the Anglo-Saxons in these areas that the Church made little or no headway for decades in the area of funerary ritual and must have fallen far short of achieving a full understanding or acceptance of Christian afterlife belief. Even if we accept that the death of baptised Christians was normally followed by Christian funerary ritual in a church (and it is far from certain that this was the case), inhumation of Christians with grave-goods, possibly accompanied by traditional ceremonies at the graveside, continued. Archaeologists have even detected a marked increase in the deposition of grave-goods in female graves in the second quarter of the seventh century.[24] It seems that traditional beliefs were still sufficiently strong (particularly among women?) for there to be doubts about the adequacy of Christian ritual alone to usher the soul into an otherworld. However, this situation appears to have changed with the abrupt termination of furnished burial throughout Anglo-Saxon England in the period 660–680.[25]

Attempts to attribute this dramatic change solely to the initiative of Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury between 668 and 690 must founder on the "lack of any specific documentation of Theodore's concern with this matter".[26] But the disappearance of grave-goods coincides very closely with the period between 664 and 687, which saw the Justinianic Plague sweep England. Bede admits that the plague provoked a reversion in some areas to traditional religious practices.[27] A common folk-aetiology of plague is that it is caused by the spirits of those who die first re-entering their bodies as malevolent revenants and then going on to kill others; and while Bede makes no explicit reference to reversion to non-Christian practices in treatment of the dead, there is possible archaeological evidence of some

23 Treffort, "Vertus prophylactiques et sens eschatologique;" Gaillard de Sémainville, "Nouvel examen de la plaque-boucle mérovingienne de Landelinus découverte à Ladoix-Serrigny;" Young, "The Imagery of Personal Objects;" Dunn, *Belief and Religion in Barbarian Europe*, 157–161. For afterlife passports, see also Chen, "The Evolution of the Buddhist Other-World Empire" in this volume.

24 Hines and Bayliss, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Graves and Grave-Goods of the 6th and 7th Centuries AD*, 551–552.

25 Hines and Bayliss, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Graves and Grave-Goods of the 6th and 7th Centuries AD*, 466; this narrows the timeframe suggested in Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 240, and quoted in Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 191.

26 Hines and Bayliss, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Graves and Grave-Goods of the 6th and 7th Centuries AD*, 553.

27 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3.30, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 322–323.

post-mortem preventative "immobilisations" of the bodies of individuals who could have been regarded as potential revenants.[28]

The spread of the pandemic appears to have galvanised the Anglo-Saxon Church into a more active promotion of Christian funerary ritual and the concept of a Christian interim afterlife than it had been able to attempt or accomplish in previous decades. The 670s saw the emergence of the *Dialogues* purporting to be written by Gregory I, but probably originating in Northumbria. This work in four books blended some passages taken from Gregory's genuine writings with a large quantity of sermon exempla designed to facilitate or consolidate conversion. The whole of Book Four – together with some individual passages elsewhere in the text – is devoted to questions relating to the interim afterlife and the soul.[29]

While Christianity taught eternal reward or punishment of the reunited body and soul following the Last Judgment, the idea of immediate post-mortem reward or punishment for the souls of the very good or the very bad had long become accepted. The fate of the soul of an individual guilty of relatively minor sins, however, had not been the focus of much detailed consideration before the seventh century: before then, it was variously considered either to sleep, or to exist in suspended animation in the "Bosom of Abraham", or in *refrigeria*, "places of refreshment" somewhere in the Christian afterlife, awaiting Christ's Second Coming.[30] However, the *Life of Fursey*, a text produced on the continent in the 640s describing the out-of-body experiences of the soul of an Irish monk, announced a major development in interim afterlife concepts when it proposed that penances might be fulfilled in the afterlife.[31] The *Life* was vague about where this might occur, but the *Dialogues* attributed to Gregory I took another major step forward in the development of this Christian interim afterlife by suggesting that this might take place in a nearby location.[32] Thus the Church now offered a location for souls in the period immediately following death that corresponded to the traditional Anglo-Saxon perception that the souls of the dead existed in spaces in close proximity to the living.[33] The rapid disappearance of furnished burial argues for the effectiveness of its campaign to persuade the populace that the souls of the dead could safely be transported into

28 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 162–180.

29 For the *Dialogues* as a work produced in seventh-century England, see Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 157–160, and the references given there. The most-cited English translation is that of Zimmerman: Saint Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*. Neither Moricca, *Gregorii Magni Dialogi*, nor de Vogüé takes into account all the extant manuscripts and variants of the text: see Yerkes, "An Unnoticed Omission in the Modern Critical Editions of Gregory's 'Dialogues'," and Jeffery, "The Latin Texts Underlying The Old English Gregory's Dialogues and Pastoral Care."

30 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 13.

31 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 40–42. For the *Life of Fursey*, see Ciccarese, "Visioni di S. Fursa," and *Transitus Beati Fursei*, trans. Rackham.

32 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 4.42, ed. de Vogüé, trans. Antin, 3:150–153.

33 Semple, "A Fear of the Past."

this afterlife by Christian funerary rites – an effectiveness "confirmed" by the disappearance of pandemic in the 680s.

If this represented a step forward in the acceptance of Christian afterlife teaching, it also threw into sharp relief the major divergence between Christian and pagan conceptions of the nature of the soul and its relationship with the body. Christianity had inherited a Platonic body-soul duality in which the immortal soul was also the locus of sense-perception, emotion and thought. Analysis of later Anglo-Saxon literature – *Beowulf, The Seafarer, The Wanderer* – has revealed that the dominant Old English term for the immaterial part of the person was *mod/hyge* (the latter a strictly poetical usage), which might be translated as "mind".[34] A second term, *sawul/sawle* was also used by the Anglo-Saxons to describe the immaterial part of a person, in this case the immortal or transcendent spirit: its use was restricted to religious discourse and secular contexts involving death, including the latter's possibility or imminence.[35] But there the similarities between the *sawul/sawle* and the Christian soul (Latin *anima*) end. The latter encompassed the mind (*mens/animus*), apprehension and intellect: but the *sawul* was endowed with none of these and lay dormant in an uncertain location in the still-living body. For the pagan Anglo-Saxons, not just emotion but also the intellectual and rational qualities would all have been associated with what the later literature calls the *mod* or *hyge*, whose seat was in the heart (*heort*) or upper part of the torso – except on those rare occasions when it might temporarily leave the body in a state of sleep or trance.[36]

Confronted with a folk-taxonomy that did not include a disembodied immortal soul capable of experiencing pain, pleasure or emotion, the Church needed to provide explanations of how the soul could separate from the body at death and nevertheless feel all these things in the interim afterlife. Much of Book Four of the *Dialogues* is devoted to these issues. Book Three sets the scene, ending with a question posed by Gregory's interlocutor, Peter, about the life of the soul after the death of the body – "which many in the bosom of the Church doubt".[37] Book Four opens with an explanation of the way in which the living body is moved by a single invisi-

34 Anderson, *Folk-Taxonomies in Early English*, 327–351; Phillips, "Heart, Mind and Soul in Old English;" Godden, "Anglo-Saxons;" Clemoes, "*Mens absentia cogitans* in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*." See now also Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions*, and Lockett, "The Limited Role of the Brain in Mental and Emotional Activity According to Anglo-Saxon Medical Learning."

35 Anderson, *Folk-Taxonomies in Early English*, 334.

36 Anderson, *Folk-Taxonomies in Early English*, 341.

37 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 3.38, ed. de Vogüé, 2:432: *Quia multos intra sanctae Ecclesiae gremium constituos de vita animae post mortem carnis perpendo dubitare. Quaeso ut debeas, vel quae ex ratione suppetunt, vel si qua animarum exempla animo occurrunt, pro multorum æedificatione dicere, ut hi qui suspicantur, discant cum carne animam non finiri.* Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great*, argues that the *Dialogues* were written by Gregory in support of a defence of the cult of saints composed by Eustratius of Constantinople between 582 and 602. There is no evidence whatsoever that Gregory knew of Eustratius's work; and the cult of saints was hardly

ble soul;[38] and it further explains that the rational mind is also to be identified with the immortal soul. This latter thesis involved a denial that animals might have any sort of immortal soul, an assertion at variance with the doctrines of Augustine and the authentic views of Gregory himself.[39] It also necessitated a lengthy excursus in order to deny that scripture (Eccles. 3:18–20) posits any similarity between men and beasts.[40] Amongst other related questions, Book Four tackles the problem of the soul's ability to experience sensation in the afterlife, arguing that, even though incorporeal, it can suffer punishment by fire in hell. This is said to begin through *seeing* the flames – in other words through active engagement in obtaining sensation, in the manner of the *mod/hyge* of the living.[41] This is not the only instance in the *Dialogues* of an attempt to encourage belief in the post-mortem Christian *anima* by depicting it in modes of being or activity normally associated with the *mod*. Book Two, Chapter 35 is notable for its description of a Christian *anima* engaged in contemplation of God producing an expansion or relaxation of the "bosom of the mind" (*mentis laxatur sinus*) and enabling it to see the entire world in the light of God. The relaxed or un-constricted breast, chest, or heart is a characteristic of the roomy or unrestrained *mod* at the peak of its well-being.[42] The localisation of the *anima* throughout the body had already been suggested by the *Life of Fursey*: when Fursey's out-of-body soul is burned during its visit to the other world, his physical body is found to bear the mark of the burn when the soul is restored to it. Bede's abridged version of the narrative in his *Ecclesiastical History* omits a good deal of the original, but not these essential points.[43] Bede also claims to have heard that when Fursey himself recounted his experiences, his listeners noticed that he broke

under threat in the West, as Dal Santo, who seems unaware of recent work on the *Dialogues* (see note 29 above), attempts to suggest.

38 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 4.5, ed. de Vogüé, 3:32–39.

39 Gregory the Great, *Homilia in Evangelia* 29: *Bruta vero animalia sunt, vivunt, sentiunt, sed non discernunt*, ed. and trans. Étaix, Blanc and Judic, 2:202–203. While Gregory here follows a roughly Augustinian scheme in which souls approximate to the life-spirit and attributes souls – though not higher reason – to animals, later Anglo-Saxon authors either refused to countenance the latter concept (Ælfric), or struggled with this notion (Alfred). See Godden, "Anglo-Saxons." According to Stanton, "Mimicry, Subjectivity and the Embodied Voice in Anglo-Saxon Bird-Riddles," some of the riddles in the tenth-century Exeter Book imply a degree of animal rationality.

40 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 4.3–4.4, ed. de Vogüé, 3:22–33

41 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 4.30, ed. de Vogüé, 3:100: *Ignem namque eo ipse patitur et quia concremari se aspecit crematur*. On Anglo-Saxon concepts of sense perception see Anderson, *Folk-Taxonomies in Early English*, 311.

42 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 2.35.6, ed. de Vogüé, 2:240; Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions*, 106–109.

43 Bede indicates that he is summarising, though he does not list all the areas he omits, which include the pioneering postulation of post-mortem penance as a possibility: Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3.19, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 272–273. As Bede's later account of Dryhthelm would indicate, discussions about post-mortem penance and purgation had moved on between the 640s and the eighth century.

out in a sweat, either through terror or joy – a nice additional touch drawing together different conceptions of memory and embodiment.[44]

The *Ecclesiastical History* presents a further elaboration of the Christian interim afterlife, with its account of the afterlife tour of the soul of a Northumbrian layman, Dryhthelm, who miraculously returns from the dead.[45] Dryhthelm claimed to have been guided to view the souls of those who had postponed confession of their sins until they were on the point of death alternately tormented by flames and ice in a deep and broad valley of infinite length close to – but distinct from – the fiery pit of hell itself. He is also taken to a very pleasant location described as the abode of blessed spirits. Bede makes Dryhthelm describe the direction he was led in to each location, thus suggesting the topography of a close-at-hand interim afterlife; by the mid-eighth century a re-conceptualised paradise would take shape as a further interim destination for the souls released by masses and prayers from purgative penitential torments.[46] Bede also carefully stresses the physicality of the torments and pleasures experienced by disembodied souls, especially in the valley where they continually leap between unendurable cold and excruciating heat.[47] The reality of the sensations experienced by Dryhthelm's own disembodied soul – heat, cold, foul stench, sweet perfumes, intense light – is also highlighted. It is implied that these were hyper-real, surpassing the normal range of bodily feeling. Bede claims that in later life, bitter cold meant nothing to Dryhthelm: "I have", he says, while standing in icy water and alluding to his out-of-body experience, "known it colder". [48]

A vital point in the whole explanatory process relating to the interim afterlife was the invisibility of the Christian soul when it departed the body at the point of death. The *anima* was endowed with the qualities of intelligence and sense-perception attributed to the *mod* by the Anglo-Saxons; and one of the most widespread folk-beliefs relating to the *mod* and to other versions of the body-soul was that it could temporarily exit the body through the mouth in states of sleep or trance in the form of a small animal or bird.[49] Given the *mod*-like qualities of the Christian soul, would it not be visible when a person died? This expectation explains the extraordinary discussion of these issues at several points in the *Dialogues*.[50] The *Dialogues* make the claim that the soul's departure is indeed visible – but only to the "eye of

44 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3.19, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 274–275: *[...] cum sedens in tenui veste vir ita inter dicendum propter magnitudinem memorati timoris vel suavitatis quasi in mediae aestatis caumate sudaverit*.

45 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5.12, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 488–499. The account's place in Bede's text suggests that the events are supposed to have occurred around the 690s.

46 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5.12, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 494–495: *beatorum mansiones spirituum*. See Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, esp. 77–110.

47 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5.12, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 488–493.

48 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5.12, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 498-99.

49 See Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 170; Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*.

50 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 2.35.6, 4.11.8, ed. de Vogüé, 2:240, 3:48–49.

the mind" of sufficiently spiritual and prayerful individuals.[51] But the discussion then vacillates between not describing the form taken by the soul (though it may ascend to heaven in a globe of fire) and giving it the form of a bird: the departing soul of Abbot Spes of Campli takes the shape of a dove.[52] This trope appears in modified form in the *Life* of Gregory the Great composed by an anonymous member of the monastic community of Whitby in the early eighth century. Its description of the death of the Northumbrian Bishop Paulinus suggests that his soul was also seen – again only by some – flying toward heaven, this time in the form of a white swan. To signify that the Christian *anima* was not simply immortal, but also capable of intelligence and sensation, the *Dialogues* and the Whitby *Life* both show that it was necessary to evoke the *mod*, popularly intuited as encompassing these qualities.

While it is clear that there were considerable problems in presenting Christian eschatology and apocalyptic to a non-ecclesiastical audience, one source has sometimes been read to suggest that the Anglo-Saxon Church sought to teach the Apocalypse of John to monks and laity alike in the late seventh century. This is Bede's own history of the abbots of Wearmouth-Jarrow, which describes how, in 679/80, Benedict Biscop returned from a visit to Rome with pictures for the monastery church at Wearmouth, bringing with him

> [...] paintings of holy images to decorate the church of the blessed apostle Peter which he had built: there was an image of Mary, the blessed Mother of God and virgin forever, together with the twelve apostles, with which he enriched the middle apse of the church; the painted boards stretched from one wall to the other. There were images of the gospel stories with which he adorned the south wall of the church; and images of the visions of the Apocalypse of the blessed John with which he similarly decorated the north wall.[53]

Biscop's church decorations have not survived. One suggestion is that they were panels specifically commissioned for the comparatively restricted space available in the tall and narrow aisles of St Peter's Wearmouth; another – and more convincing

51 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 4.11.7, ed. de Vogüé, 3:40–41: *Nam multi nostrorum, mentis oculum fide pura et uberi oratione mundantes, egredientes a carne animas frequenter viderunt.*

52 *Vita Gregorii*, 17; *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 101.

53 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, 6; Bede, "History of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow," ed. and trans. Grocock and Wood, 36–37: *[...] picturas imaginum sanctarum quas ad ornandam ecclesiae beati Petri apostoli, quam construxerat, detulit: imaginem videlicet beatae Dei genetricis semperque virginis Mariae, simul et duodecim apostolorum, quibus eiusdem ecclesiae testudinem ducto a pariete ad parietem tabulato praecingeret; imagines evangelicae historiae quibus australem parietem decoraret; imagines visionum apocalypsis beati Iohannis, quibus septentrionalem aeque parietem ornaret [...]*. In Roman and Italian churches the Apocalypse of John was depicted in a highly selective fashion, featuring themes such as the four living creatures; the seven-sealed scroll and the seven candlesticks; a roundel, whose colours evoke the "rainbow that looked like an emerald" (Rev. 4:7) enclosing a throne with the cross and the Lamb of God. See Herrmann and van den Hoek, "Apocalyptic Themes in the Monumental and Minor Art of Early Christianity." Chazelle, "Art and Reverence in Bede's Churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow," 89, suggests that the Wearmouth representations might have included a Christ in Majesty analogous to the one in the Codex Amiatinus.

– hypothesis is that he imported not only icons but representations in a variety of media such as ivory, metal or textiles.[54] Bede claims that his intention

> [...] was that all who came into the church, even those who did not know how to read, should always gaze on the lovely sight of Christ and his saints wherever they looked, albeit in a picture; they should either recall with a keener mind the grace of the Lord's incarnation, or remember to examine themselves more closely, seeing the decisive nature of the Last Judgment as though they had it before their very eyes. [55]

However, we should resist attempts to read a broad pastoral significance into Biscop's imported images.[56] They were brought to Wearmouth at a time of extraordinarily intense theological and liturgical contact between Rome and Northumbria, in the wake of the Monothelite Controversy which had convulsed the Church for decades; their selection underlined the community's position as a centre of Roman liturgy and affirmed its Chalcedonian orthodoxy.[57] Bede's later suggestion of the instructive aspects of Biscop's pictorial imports, including those based on the visions of Revelation, seems to have developed out of his own monastic education in Wearmouth: as a young *nutritus* still unable to read properly, he may himself have been taught through their use.[58] His words also reflect awareness of Gregory I's letters to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles in support of the use of pictures in churches as a means of instruction for the illiterate.[59] But Biscop's decorative programme was designed to resonate with members of a monastic community, and it is revealing that Bede's description of the Apocalypse pictures partners *examen* or test (in the sense of the trials of the Last Judgment) with *se ipsi examinare* – to examine one's self, a part of the monastic process of meditation and penance. Perhaps it was the influence of Biscop's pictures on the young Bede's education that would later inspire him to decide on a commentary on John's Apocalypse as his first venture into scriptural exegesis.[60]

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54 Meyvaert, "Bede and the Church Paintings;" Chazelle, "Art and Reverence in Bede's Churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow;" 86.

55 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, 6, ed. and trans. Grocock and Wood, 36–37: *[...] quatinus intrantes ecclesiam omnes etiam litterarum ignari, quaquaversum intenderent, vel semper amabilem Christi sanctorumque eius, quamuis in imagine, contemplarentur aspectum; vel dominicae incarnationis gratiam vigilantiore mente recolerent, vel extremi discrimen examinis, quasi coram oculis habentes, districtius se ipsi examinare meminissent*.

56 Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, 2, states that Bede "clearly considered the pictures to be valuable tools in the education of the illiterate"; although he then adds, more appositely, that Bede "would first have gazed upon them as a child before he was literate himself". See also Darby, "Bede, Iconoclasm and the Temple of Solomon."

57 Chazelle, "Art and Reverence in Bede's Churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow," 89–90.

58 Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, 2.

59 Chazelle, "Art and Reverence in Bede's Churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow," 91.

60 Discussed by Wallis, *Bede: Commentary on Revelation*, 35.

Elsewhere in Northumbria, the monumental open-air crosses at Bewcastle and Ruthwell, dating from the period c. 700–750, reveal that the message of Christianity was still being finessed with elite values and expectations, which did not necessarily include the idea of judgment or at least its unpleasant corollary, eternal damnation.[61] One interpretation of the Bewcastle Cross suggests that it was made for a noble family, represented by the figure of a man with a hawk carved near its base and also by individuals commemorated in some of its worn runic inscriptions.[62] It associates them not just with salvation through the death of Christ, the latter signified by the image of Christ recognised by two beasts, but also, in its representation of John the Baptist holding the *Agnus Dei*, the final triumph of Christ as Lord of Lords and King of Kings, as in Revelation 17:14. A similar message may be conveyed by a further image of Christ with the closed scroll of the Book of Life in his left hand, while his right hand is raised in blessing – a gesture implying that the depicted individual and those named in the runes are inscribed in the *Liber Vitae* of Revelation 20:12–15 and will therefore be saved.[63] Although the extensive knowledge of Christian liturgy and scripture encoded in the cross's imagery tends to confirm the suggestion that it was made for a religious establishment, its runes identify it as a *sigbecn* or sign of victory: and it is hard to escape the conclusion that this victory focused on the automatic promise of eternal life with Christ in heaven for the kin group associated with it. The Ruthwell Cross, also putatively associated with a religious establishment, though (as far as we can tell) not with any named individual or family, similarly seeks to align Christianity with elite values. It includes a runic inscription in the form of a poem presenting the death of Christ in terms of the death of a warrior-hero, employing the vocabulary of traditional anthropology which makes him *modig* – full of *mod*, courageous. At the same time, it alludes to the Monothelite Controversy: God Almighty *wills* to mount the cross.[64] Its multivalent imagery offers a dense web of monastic allusions interwoven with references to Roman stational liturgy, to the Eucharist, Annunciation, Lent, Easter, conversion and baptism.[65] As on the Bewcastle Cross, a representation of Christ Over the Beasts leads to another featuring John the Baptist bearing the *Agnus Dei*. While the Latin inscription around the former refers to Christ as the "judge of fairness" (*iudex aequitatis*), this relates to "beasts and dragons in the desert" who acknowledge the saviour of the world and in doing so are converted from evil to good: and Christ holds the scroll of a prophet, a possible reference to the Book of Life.[66] Once again there is an implication of guaranteed salvation for those associated with the cross.

61 Ó Carragáin, "Christian Inculturation in Eighth-Century Northumbria."
62 On the dangers of over-interpreting the runic inscriptions, see Page, "The Bewcastle Cross."
63 Karkov, "The Bewcastle Cross," 19–20; Ó Carragáin, "Christian Inculturation in Eighth-Century Northumbria."
64 Ó Carragáin, "The Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem in its Iconographic and Liturgical Contexts."
65 See Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*.
66 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 150–153, 201–208.

A more problematic issue for the Anglo-Saxon Church, and one that may have contributed in a different way to the postponement of full consideration of the Last Judgment, was the related question of the afterlife fate of pagan ancestors. For the Anglo-Saxons as for other Germanic peoples the ties of kinship did not cease on death: the kin group extended below as well as above the ground.[67] Were the ancestors not to be saved as well? The issues involved in conversion are famously encapsulated in the tale of the failed baptism of Radbod, leader of the Frisians in the early eighth century. He is said to have turned away from the font on the very point of baptism, when Bishop Wulfram of Sens tactlessly informed him that his non-baptised ancestors were damned. Although its authenticity has been contested in the past, recent research vindicates it as a narrative intended to elucidate a real and enduring problem. Radbod is presented as refusing to go "without the company of his predecessors, the princes of the Frisians, to reside with a small number of the poor in the celestial kingdom".[68]

The problem of the non-Christian ancestors had already been recognised by churchmen involved in earlier stages of the Germanic conversions. Some early Christian writers had taught that, between his death and resurrection, Christ had descended into hell and converted or baptised all those who had lived before his coming.[69] This laid the ground for the so-called "Dated Creed" of 359, created not only to resolve the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century but also to address the intuitions and beliefs of the pagan Goths on the Danubian border: it indicated that Christ had descended into hell to rescue some of its inhabitants.[70] The idea that Christ had baptised those who lived and died before him not only meant salvation for some pagan ancestors, but might also be taken to imply its possibility for all who had died ignorant of the Christian message. The doctrine of Christ's Descent into hell was repeated more briefly in the Creed of Constantinople of 360 and also passed into some versions of the Apostles' Creed, where the laconic phrase *descendit ad inferos* or *ad infera* might have evoked a more vivid picture in the minds of hearers and perhaps even formed the basis of homilies in which clerics encouraged

67 Boyer, *Religion Explained,* 237–241; Pentikäinen, "The Dead without Status;" Williams, "Monuments and the Past in Early Anglo-Saxon England;" Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons,* 18, 91–92.

68 The most recent discussion is in Meens, "With One Foot in the Font." Thanks to Immo Warntjes for this reference.

69 Notably Clement of Alexandria and Origen. See Rambaran-Olm, *John the Baptist's Prayer or the Descent into Hell from the Exeter Book*, 179–196, for a list of references to the doctrine of the *Descensus* in post-Apostolic and medieval commentators up to the end of eleventh century; also MacCulloch, *Comparative Study of an Early Christian Doctrine*.

70 Dunn, "Intuiting Gods," and Dunn, *Belief and Religion in Barbarian Europe*, 31–39; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 364. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, 294: [...] *ubi omni dispensationis adimplevisset, secundum Patris voluntatem, crucifixum et mortuum esse, et at inferos descendisse, atque ibi, quod sui officii erat peregisse; quem janitores infernorum conspiciati exhorrurerunt* [...].

them to think that their ancestors might be saved.[71] However, there was no agreement in the Church on the effects of Christ's Descent: the version of the Apostles' Creed used in Rome from at least the fifth century onwards did not include the Descent clause and Gregory I considered that Christ had liberated only the righteous, the prophets and patriarchs.[72]

The Anglo-Saxon Church appears to have been deeply divided on the whole issue. A version of the Apostles' Creed without the Descent was added to the Codex Laudianus version of Acts: this is a manuscript possibly used by Bede himself and taken from England to Fulda in the eighth century by the West Saxon missionary Boniface, who represents a section of the Anglo-Saxon Church which took a hard line where the salvation of pagan ancestors was concerned. [73] At a church council in Rome in 745, he played a leading role in condemning Clemens, an Irish missionary in Austrasia, on the grounds that "contrary to the teaching of the Fathers, he affirms that Christ descended into hell to deliver all those, believers and unbelievers, servants of Christ as well as worshippers of idols, who were confined there."[74]

The Radbod story may have been composed in response to Clemens's activities, to support the rejection of any possibility of ancestor salvation and to underline the necessity of baptism.[75] Earlier, the *Dialogues* attributed to Gregory the Great had specifically rejected the idea of prayer for deceased infidels and godless people.[76] By contrast, Willibrord, a contemporary of Boniface's, who like him worked among the Frisians, seems to represent a group in the English Church conscious of the need for a more assimilative approach.[77] Willibrord had spent ten years in Ireland, the homeland of Clemens, where the idea of the "naturally" virtuous pagan of earlier times had developed.[78] A native Northumbrian, he would also have been familiar with the Anonymous of Whitby's *Life of Pope Gregory*, which includes the story of how the pope posthumously baptised the Roman Emperor Trajan "by his tears", when he wept on being told how this dead pagan had performed a notably charita-

71 Owen, *The Vision of Hell*, 94–95.

72 See Rambaran-Olm, *John the Baptist's Prayer or the Descent into Hell from the Exeter Book*; Owen, *The Vision of Hell*, 94–95. Rufinus, *Commentarius in symbolum Apostolorum*, 18, notes that, "'He descended into Hell' is not added in the Creed of the Roman Church, neither is it in that of the Oriental Churches. It seems to be implied, however, when it is said that 'He was buried'." Rufinus, *On the Creed*, trans. Fremantle, 550; Badcock, *History of the Creeds*, 145–147.

73 Walther, "Codex Laudianus G 35," 1:1–5, 13–20.

74 *Letters of Saint Boniface*, ed. Emerton, 102.

75 Meens, "With One Foot in the Font," 589.

76 Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, 4.46.8, ed. de Vogüé, 3:164–165. A sermon probably originating in Anglo-Saxon England suggests that some hard-line clerics tried to face down hostile comments about the tardy arrival of Christ as Saviour, which logically denied salvation to many: Machielsen, "Fragments patristiques non-identifiés du Ms. Vat. Pal. 577," 535.

77 Meens, "With One Foot in the Font," 589–593.

78 See Ó hÓgáin, *The Sacred Isle*, 190; Ireland, "Some Irish Characteristics of the Whitby Life of Gregory the Great," 153–159.

ble deed.[79] This tale, echoed in the legend of St Erkenwald, was designed to offer some degree of reassurance to anyone concerned about the possibility of eternal separation from the ancestors in the Christian afterlife.[80]

One tactic employed on the continent to "Christianise" pagan ancestors retrospectively, re-establishing the bonds of kin both above and below ground, had involved the building of churches over their graves.[81] In England, the late seventh-century penitential known as the *Discipulus Umbrensium* forbade both re-burial of pagans in consecrated ground and also the construction of churches over their tombs.[82] We have no way of knowing how rigorously these prohibitions were enforced throughout England after this period; but the continued importance of the issue of the ancestors is highlighted by the depiction of Christ's Descent into hell on the Wirksworth Slab, a carved tomb-cover from late eighth- or early ninth-century Mercia.[83]

Fig. 1: Wirksworth Slab, general (Photo: Marilyn Dunn)

79 *Vita Gregorii*, 29, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 128–129.
80 *Vita Gregorii*, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 161–163, note 22.
81 See Geary, "The Uses of Archaeological Sources for Religious and Cultural History," 36–38.
82 *Paenitentiale Theodori*, 2.1.4–5; ed. Finsterwalder, 312.
83 Hawkes, "Wirksworth Slab." I offer a different interpretation of the overall significance of the Slab.

Jane Hawkes suggests that it should be associated with an elite ecclesiastical foundation, possibly a double house or a monastery founded by a woman. The right-hand side of the slab is devoted to the Marian feasts of Annunciation, Presentation or Purification, Dormition and Assumption.[84] On the left are four scenes representing Easter: Christ washing the feet of the Apostles; a cross, symbol of the crucifixion; Christ's Descent into hell and the resurrection.[85] The scenes show the influence of earlier and eastern iconographic models and also eastern apocrypha, adapted to specific ends: Christ's Ascension is witnessed, unusually, by two women, one of whom probably signifies the person originally buried under the slab. As at Bewcastle and Ruthwell, the anticipation of salvation rather than judgment is conveyed, in this case by the cross bearing the *Agnus Victor* and surrounded by the symbols of the Evangelists. This is the Lamb of Revelation 17:14, with whom the chosen and faithful are associated. And implied salvation is also extended to non-Christian ancestors.

Fig. 2: Wirksworth Slab, detail (Photo: Marilyn Dunn)

84 Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, 25–51, for the introduction of the Marian feasts of Presentation, Annunciation, Nativity and Dormition into Anglo-Saxon England. See also Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, 101–107.

85 Harbison, "Two Panels On The Wirksworth Slab," suggests, unconvincingly, that the *descensus* is the nativity and washing of the infant Christ and identifies the presentation as the adoration of the Magi.

The depiction of the Descent itself favours a maximalist interpretation of Christ's activity in hell. It shows him reaching into an open coffin to deliver the swathed Adam who lies there: underneath are three figures in a brazier, representing Herod, Cain and Judas, the only inhabitants left in hell, according to the apocryphal Coptic *Resurrection of Bartholomew*, after Christ's visit.[86] As a whole, the Wirksworth Slab indicates an elegant solution to the problem of the ancestors: the person buried under this carving proclaimed not just her own personal salvation, but also of that of her illustrious forebears.

Monuments such as the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses and the Wirksworth Slab conveyed their implication of guaranteed salvation through linking Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the Cross with allusions to a restricted number of texts from Revelation which associate salvation with kingship, lordship, victory and being part of an elect. This selective approach not only circumvented discussion of the highly unattractive possibility of eternal damnation but also conveniently avoided the awkward question of when and in what circumstances the Last Judgment might occur. Its association with the end of the present world, a subject heavily freighted with non-Christian resonances, may have been another factor contributing to the deferment of full consideration of its meaning. While the Church's calendar incorporated cyclical features, such as Christmas, Easter and saints' days, effectively absorbing midwinter, spring and other non-Christian celebrations,[87] the Christian view of time and eternity begins with God's creation of the world and stretches into eternity when, after the Parousia and Last Judgment, the present world will pass away and there will be a new heaven and a new earth.[88] This linear view of time and the end of the world, in which the Final Judgment plays a key role, was not shared by the pagan Anglo-Saxons. Clive Tolley has shown that a narrative in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, in which a house-pillar survives an otherwise all-consuming fire, points to the existence of an alternative non-Christian eschatology in which the world ends in a cosmic conflagration. This was part of a cyclical process, also involving the world's renewal and re-population, beginning with the two human beings who survive the cosmic disaster.[89] So Pope Gregory's insistence in his letter to Æthelberht on the approach of the "end of the world" may have unintentionally evoked images and ideas very different from those he wished to suggest. The enduring potency of this competing eschatology is suggested by Bede's attempts to defuse the myth of cosmic cyclicality, when he attributes the house-pillar's survival to a miracle worked by a relic of the blood of King Oswald of Northum-

86 Cockerton, "The Wirksworth Slab," 11–12; Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 668–672. Hawkes, "Wirksworth Slab," 256, questions the identification of the three figures, but also stresses the scene's dependence on very early models.

87 Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 152–154.

88 See Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, 25–39, 93–151.

89 Tolley, "Oswald's Tree."

bria. It may also underlie the remarkable concern with time and eternity which led Bede to revise his first work on the subject, *De temporibus* ("On Times"), composed in 703, with the production of the much longer *De temporum ratione* ("On the Reckoning of Time") in 726. In the latter, Bede warned against any speculation about the imminence or otherwise of the Second Coming. He also added a seventh and eighth age to the six ages of his earlier *De temporibus*. The seventh age runs parallel with the sixth and is the time spent by the souls in the interim afterlife. The eighth world age commences with the Last Judgment and stretches on into what Bede terms in its conclusion "eternal stability and stable eternity".[90] His concern to establish the linearity of Christian time may also have prompted the *Ecclesiastical History*'s extensive use of *Anno Domini* dating. This last development tends to be understood primarily in the context of Bede's use of Dionysius Exiguus's Easter tables, which came with an *Anno Domini* chronology attached.[91] But while Dionysius's tables were known elsewhere, Bede was the first to attempt to popularise *Anno Domini* dating, which had the advantage of establishing a clearly linear view of past, present and future, at the same time as making overt reference to the Incarnation. By the last quarter of the eighth century, this was becoming more commonly used in Anglo-Saxon charters and became a normal feature of them in the ninth; the 816 synod of Chelsea decreed that the year of the Incarnation should always be used in episcopal documents.[92]

Such promotion of the concept of Christian linear time represents an important step forward in allowing the Anglo-Saxon Church to draw the attention of the laity to the Last Judgment *as* judgment. One of the first indications of this is to be found on a small ivory plaque now housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, depicting the general resurrection of the dead, Christ as judge and the entry of the good and wicked to heaven and hell. Opinions as to its date vary widely, but Jane Hawkes believes that it was created in England around 800.[93]

90 Bede, *De temporibus liber*, ed. Jones; Bede, *De temporum ratione*, ed. Jones. English translations with commentaries: *De temporibus:* Bede, *Nature of Things and On Times*, trans. Kendal and Wallis. *De temporum ratione* is translated in Bede, *Reckoning of Time*, trans. Wallis. See also Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*; Palmer, "The Ends and Futures of Bede's *De temporum ratione*."

91 For example, Declercq, *Anno Domini*, 155–159.

92 Declercq, *Anno Domini*, 169.

93 Hawkes, "The Road to Hell," 233. She adds that if it is not actually Anglo-Saxon, it comes from a centre with close connections to Anglo-Saxon England. Michelli, "Beckwith Revisited," argues for a date in the first half of the eleventh century. See also Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends*, 118–120.

Fig. 3: Victoria and Albert Ivory (© Victoria and Albert Museum)

One of the two scrolls held by the Christ-judge quotes from the "Little Apocalypse" of Matthew 25:34 (in a pre-Vulgate version): *Venite benediciti patris mei percipite regnum vobis* ("Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"). Hawkes thinks the other scroll is worn and would have quoted Matthew 25:41 ("Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire I know you not"). Many details of the scene remain to be elucidated: for example, the central figure might be the Archangel Michael, but this interpretation may rest on Michael's depiction in a similar central position in later Last Judgment representations. There is a possible reference to the cityscapes of Jerusalem and Bethlehem as depicted in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, in the buildings of heaven and hell into which the resurrected bodies are received. However, the sinners file into the earliest known example of a distinctively English phenomenon – the Hell Mouth. More than one scholar has suggested that its origins lie in the northern pagan myths of the end of the world, known to us through later Norse literature, featuring the devouring wolf, Fenrir, who plays an important role in a cosmic destruction-and-renewal myth.[94] An

94 Pluskowski, "Apocalyptic Monsters," 160; Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell*, 28, 64; Schapiro, "Cain's Jaw-Bone that Did the First Murder," n. 66. All draw attention to the later Viking-

earlier version of the myth may have circulated in Anglo-Saxon England: another devouring Hell Mouth appears on the mid-ninth-century cross-shaft at Repton (then in Mercia).[95] These images suggest that traditional understandings of the nature of time and the end of the world have now been re-inscribed in a Christian version of time, judgment and afterlife. On the other hand, the ivory also suggests that the Church was still obliged to evoke traditional perceptions when trying to represent the Christian soul. The carving features the resurrection of the flesh, a doctrine which not only proved challenging for theologians but often provoked scepticism amongst ordinary folk or potential converts: nevertheless, in conformity with the theology of Augustine, the ivory shows fully formed human bodies rising from their coffins or sarcophagi.[96] However, the carver also represents the moment at which resurrected bodies are re-united with souls by picturing the latter as birds, one of which flies into the mouth of a body rising from a sarcophagus. This striking image indicates that even in the context of a full consideration of the Last Judgment to come, it was still necessary to refer to deep-seated intuitions in order to suggest the Christian conception of the disembodied soul.[97]

Further evidence of the Anglo-Saxon Church's growing confidence in foregrounding judgment and in particular the potentially rebarbative doctrine of damnation can be found on the late eighth-century outdoor cross from Rothbury in Northumbria. Insofar as we can tell from its present fragmentary condition, Rothbury depicted the Crucifixion; Christ in Majesty; the Raising of Lazarus (which we might interpret as reference to Christ's power to raise bodies from the dead and therefore to the resurrection of the body); and a crowd either welcoming Christ into Jerusalem or "adoring the cross in a general apocalyptic scheme".[98] One panel appears to combine Christ's Ascension with visual references to the Second Coming, using elements derived from the traditional Roman depiction of the synoptic Gospels' version of the Last Judgment, which shows Christ in clouds.[99] Such traditional Roman approaches to the Last Judgment had presented the Second Coming

era crosses at Gosforth and on the Isle of Man, where depictions of Fenrir represent a similar re-inscription of non-Christian intuitions in the context of the Christian message.

95 Hawkes, "The Road to Hell," 235.

96 Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, 98–99.

97 A similar understanding may explain Irish representations of the Resurrection depicting a bird entering Christ's mouth as he lies in the tomb, such as on the "Cross of the Scriptures" at Monasterboice and the Durrow Cross: Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland*, vol. 1, catalogue nos. 54 and 89; vol. 2, figs. 140 and 254; Beckwith, *Ivory Carvings in Early Medieval England*, 22. For the persistence of body-soul intuitions at variance with Christian doctrine, see the items by Godden and Lockett at note 34, above, and Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England*, 49–50.

98 Hawkes, "The Rothbury Cross," 88.

99 See Herrmann and van den Hoek, "Apocalyptic Themes in the Monumental and Minor Art of Early Christianity," 59–61 for the sixth-century decoration of SS Cosmas and Damian and also for images inspired by Revelation in the same church. Hawkes, "The Rothbury Cross," 91, suggests that Monkwearmouth could have provided direct inspiration for Rothbury.

in a manner "intended to provide the viewer with gratification and freedom from anxiety".[100] Jane Hawkes notes several apocalyptic features of the Rothbury Ascension panel and underlines the fact that its models "showed Christ as judge with the company of heaven, but did not include the damned in hell".[101]

Fig. 4: Rothbury Cross Ascension (Photo: Marilyn Dunn)

The significance of the Rothbury Cross lies in its departure from its Roman models by the addition of another carved panel which, according to current interpretations, *does* depict the damned in hell.

On this side, grotesque naked and deformed humanoid figures are suspended within the intertwining bodies of serpent-like beasts that menace their heads and genitals.[102] Rothbury thus encapsulates what we might call a remarkable "bodily turn" in the depiction of the Last Judgment by its creation of an explicit and horrific picture of the reality of hell in which the re-united bodies and souls of sinners are tortured for eternity. The novelty of the depiction is underlined by the way in which

100 Herrmann and van den Hoek, "Apocalyptic Themes in the Monumental and Minor Art of Early Christianity," 80.
101 Hawkes, "The Road to Hell," 237.
102 Hawkes, "The Rothbury Cross," 88.

the Ascension scene builds on traditional imagery, while the sculptors evidently had to improvise their own visual language to represent the torments of the damned: the threatening reptilian beasts appear to derive their form from zoomorphic motifs current in Insular art.[103]

Fig. 5: Rothbury Cross Dammed (Photo: Marilyn Dunn)

The Victoria and Albert Ivory and the Rothbury Cross seem to mark the first moves in the direction of the elaborate Last Judgments carved above church doorways or in paintings and mosaics in church interiors from the central Middle Ages onwards, with their positioning of saints and sinners on Christ's right and left and their remarkably imaginative depictions of the torments of the damned and, in some cases, the Mouth of Hell. But tentative steps in this direction had come about as a result of a long period of interaction and assimilation between Christianity and the original beliefs of the Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxon Church found itself obliged to make many adjustments and accommodations in order to deal with peoples whose idea of religion was focused on personal or familial benefit; whose understanding of the way body and soul were constituted was at odds with Christian teaching; who num-

103 Hawkes, "Art of Damnation in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture," 237; Hawkes, "The Rothbury Cross," 88.

bered the dead as an important part of their kin-group; and who viewed time and eternity in cyclical terms. All this contributed to deferring and delaying consideration of the Last Judgment – itself a difficult issue in the first place, as the Anglo-Saxons did not think in terms of an afterlife encompassing post-mortem judgment or differentiated outcomes. While Pope Gregory had initially been eager to preach apocalyptic to Æthelberht of Kent, it did not appear in his subsequent instructions to his mission once he was slightly better informed about the religion of the pagan Anglo-Saxons. Instead, Gregory recognised the need to begin work with what little mutual ground he could identify, specifically the customs of religious feasts and festivals, between the Church and its target populations. "The man who is attempting to climb to the highest places", he decided, "rises by steps and degrees and not by leaps" – an aphorism that would prove all too accurate in the area of Christian apocalyptic.[104]

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Abbreviations

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SC Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1941–.

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104 Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistularum*, 11.56, ed. Norberg, 961–962: *[...] qui summum locum ascendere nititur, gradibus vel passibus non autem saltibus elevator*. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 1.30, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 106–109. See also Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, 56; Markus, "Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy."

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The Evolution of the Buddhist Otherworld Empire in Early Medieval China

The perception of the afterlife as a mirror image of the living world is a widespread religious phenomenon among civilisations. As this mirror-image relation is conditioned by the natural and social surroundings of each cultural milieu, particular questions arise when a religion is translated from one cultural domain to another, as Buddhism was into China. One of the most striking aspects of popular Chinese Buddhism is the ubiquity of purgatorial and penitential liturgies that are performed as part of funerals, ancestral worship and religious festivals and involve communication with a bureaucratic pantheon for the sake of the well-being of the deceased and the living. This otherworld authority takes the form of a pre-modern Chinese bureaucratic empire ruled by the Indian Buddhist and local Chinese deities. This article attempts to unravel the evolution of the Buddhist use of this Chinese imperial metaphor in the period before the emergence of the more fully fledged imperial image presented in the Scripture of the Ten Kings *during the medieval period. By examining early archaeological and mortuary texts, I will first show how the development of the "imperial metaphor" of otherworld authority began once Chinese feudal states were first unified as an empire during the Qin-Han period. The second section illustrates how the bureaucratic otherworlds that existed parallel in Indian and Chinese contexts were linked and amalgamated within Chinese Buddhism through the accommodation of certain religious concepts, such as abstinence days, transmigration and the afterlife fate of deceased kings and officials, which were formulated in Chinese Buddhist apocryphal scriptures and popular religious texts. Through this process of evolution, the profile of the Chinese Buddhist otherworld empire we are familiar with today was formed.*

Seeking the essence of Christianity, Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872 CE) argued that "Religion is that conception of the nature of the world and of man which is essential to, *i.e.*, identical with, a man's nature." Hence the image of God is identical to the image of man. Taking the ancient Greek gods as his example, Feuerbach made the point that this mirror-image relation means that the quality and nature of god are determined by social conditions in each cultural milieu.[1] If god's image is a reflec-

1 Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 19–20.

Note: The article is based on part of my research project on "The Early Formation of the Buddhist Otherworld Bureaucratic Empire in Early Medieval China", which was generously sponsored by research fellowships of the Sheng Yen Education Foundation, the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (IKGF) at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation (European region). I am very grateful for their munificent support.

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tion of man's, and man's image varies in accordance with social conditions, can we apply this mirror-image relation to the cadre of the pantheon and social structure in general?

Writing of the journey to the afterlife narrated in the *Book of the Dead*, John H. Taylor remarked that "the ancient Egyptians' interpretation of their universe was conditioned strongly by the environment and their experience of life."[2] From early imperial China (from the second century BCE), too, there is unequivocal mortuary evidence of a common belief in an afterlife journey to a mirror-image counterpart of the living-world bureaucracy in the otherworld. Indeed, the prevalence of the "imperial metaphor" in perceptions of the otherworld has long been considered by Sinologists to be a distinctive feature of Chinese religions.[3] With reference to early Indian Buddhism, scholars such as Bimala C. Law and Miyasaka Yūshō 宮坂有勝 have noted how the assemblies of gods and of monastic communities described in the Pāli canonical scriptures (*Nikāyas*) seem to parallel the public assemblies of the Kṣatriya tribes at the time of the Buddha.[4] In her work, Jane Baun has demonstrated the applicability of the mirror-image relation to perceptions of the otherworld conveyed by imperial and bureaucratic metaphors in the medieval Byzantine Apocrypha.[5]

If images of god and of the otherworld are conditioned by specific social milieus, particular questions arise in cases of a religion that has been translated from one cultural domain into another, as Buddhism was into China from around the beginning of the Common Era. How did Buddhism put down roots in foreign soil so successfully that its otherworld metaphors gained general acceptance, supplanting even those of local religions to assume the chief role in determining the fate of the deceased in the afterlife? By examining key archaeological and textual sources from early medieval China (from the second century CE to the seventh century CE) concerning the afterlife journey and transmigration, this paper seeks to show how Buddhism was able to transform the Chinese otherworld empire.

One of the most compelling popular aspects of East Asian Buddhism is the ubiquity of purgatory and repentance liturgies, which are performed as part of funerals, ancestral worship, and religious festivals. Their apparent dominance caused modern scholars until the 1990s to label this aspect of East Asian Buddhism derogatorily as "Funeral Buddhism". Tamamuro Taijo 圭室諦成 first proposed this term in the 1960s,[6] because the intensive performance of funeral rites by priests for financial gain had led to the corruption of monastic communities and the neglect of spiritual teaching. From another perspective, however, the very prevalence of funeral litur-

2 Taylor, *Journey through the Afterlife*, 16.
3 Feuchtwang, *The Imperial Metaphor*.
4 Law, *Heaven and Hell in Buddhist Perspective*, 14–15; Law, *Some Kṣatriya Tribes of Ancient India*, 87–88. Miyasaka Yūshō, *Bukkyō no kigen*, 341–345.
5 Baun, *Tales from Another Byzantium*.
6 Tamamuro Taijo, *Sōshiki Bukkyō*.

gies demonstrates how successfully Buddhism provided its East Asian adherents with convincing answers to questions regarding their ultimate fate and their well-being in the afterlife.

The Chinese Buddhist funeral liturgy rests on the soteriological belief that the chanting of repentance scriptures and the performance of purgatorial rites by Buddhist clergy are effective means of nullifying the past sins and bad karma of the deceased, ensuring salvation in the otherworld. There the dead will be judged by judicial deities, who decide whether to condemn them to tormenting Hells, dispatch them to a better rebirth, or admit them to the Western paradise (*Sukhāvatī*). The funerary liturgy usually starts with a priest chanting a type of mortuary petition on behalf of the deceased, which is addressed to the bureau of the otherworld authority for protection and salvation. The petition, an actual document, is then burned. An example of the sample texts of such Buddhist funeral petitions is the *Official Document of the Bureau of Three Treasures* (*Sanbaosi dieben* 三寶司牒本) to the Otherworld Bureau, authorised by Amitābha Buddha, "Lord of the Western Paradise" and endorsed with the red print of the seal of the four Chinese characters of the Seal (*yin* 印) of the Three Treasures: *fo* 佛 (the Buddha), *fa* 法 (the Dharma), and *seng* 僧 (the *saṅgha*, the Buddhist monastic community), a text commonly used at Buddhist funerals nowadays.[7] Another earlier example is the seventeenth-century woodblock of model texts for funeral passports to the Pure Land, endorsed by the monogram of Tathāgata Śākyamuni, which was found in the Bút Tháp Temple 寧福寺, Vietnam.[8] These Buddhist funeral petitions were similar in form to a pre-modern Chinese official passport, but they were supposed to have been issued by an otherworld empire ruled by Amitābha Buddha or Śākyamuni Buddha, respectively, and the Bureau of Three Treasures. The use of this type of funeral document illustrates Buddhist appropriation of the idiosyncratic concept of bureaucratisation, a characteristic of indigenous Chinese religion. The first part of this paper examines the origins of this concept in the early Chinese context.

1 The Beginning of the Early Chinese Otherworld Bureaucracy

The bureaucratic concept has long been considered a pillar of Chinese civilisation, and the mirroring of the this-worldly bureaucracy in the imagery of deities and the structure of the pantheon strikes many modern sinologists as an idiosyncratic characteristic of Chinese popular religions. The earliest extant unequivocal texts proving

7 Chen, "The Transformation of Concepts of Bureaucratization of the Other World," 369, fig.1.
8 I would like to thank Professor Jim Kemp for showing me the pictures of the carvings that he surveyed.

the use of funerary petitions that resemble Chinese imperial documents date as far back as the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE). The earliest substantial account of communication with an otherworld bureaucrat found so far is actually a story written on a bamboo-slip that has been excavated from Tomb 1 at Fangmatan 放馬灘, Gansu province, dated to the late Warring States period (approximately 230 to 220 BCE). Mentioned in the Administrator of Di's 邸 report to the Qin 秦 Royal Scribe, it tells of the resurrection of a person called Dan 丹, who had committed suicide after stabbing someone. His patron, Xi Wu 犀武 (presumed to be the famous general of the Wei 魏 state[9]), considered that Dan was not yet fated to die, so he made a declaration to this effect to the Scribe of the Director of the Life-Mandate in the underworld, an official called Gongsun Qiang 公孫強 (彊) (probably another historical figure, who had been an officer of the Cao 曹 state in the Spring and Autumn period)[10]. Eventually, after three years, Dan was resurrected from the tomb, and at the end of the story he explains how to conduct proper funeral rituals.[11] In the view of Donald Harper, this narrative suggests that the conception of a dialectical relationship between the this- and the otherworldly bureaucracies was already part of the popular religions of the Warring States period.[12] Lothar von Falkenhausen similarly argued that it implies the early formation of a belief that "the afterworld of the dead, though hermetically separate from ours, was nevertheless a mirror-image of the world of the living, with a hierarchy of ghosts corresponding to the administration system of the secular state".[13] The story of Dan shows the registration of human lifespans to be the responsibility of an otherworld bureaucrat, and the identification of the Scribe of the Director of the Life-Mandate with the historical figure of Gongsun Qiang is a very early example of the Chinese popular belief that an official could after death assume a similar role in the otherworld bureaucracy. As this belief seems compatible with the Buddhist theory of transmigration, it was later frequently applied by Chinese Buddhists to the bureaucratisation of the Buddhist otherworld.

2 Early Funerary Documents

Although belief in an otherworld bureaucracy is already implied in sources predating the first emperor, the earliest unequivocal and concrete evidence of the use of funeral texts in the form of official documents comes from the Former Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE). A limited number of texts involving communication with the otherworld bureaucracy are known from this period, most of which have been excavated

9 Simaqian, *Shiji*, 4:164.
10 Simaqian, *Shiji*, 35:1573.
11 Li Xueqin, "Fangmatan jianzhong de zhiguai gushi."
12 Harper, "Resurrection in Warring States Popular Religion," 16.
13 Falkenhausen, "Sources of Taoism," 8.

in the Hubei and Hunan provinces.[14] Here is one of the earliest documents intended to inform the otherworld bureaucracy of the coming of the deceased, *gaodi ce* 告地策. It is written on a wooden tablet discovered in tomb No. 18 of Gaotai at Jingzhou in Hubei:

> On the day of *gengzi* of the tenth month whose first day is *bingzi* of the tenth year of Emperor Wen [173 BCE], Qi from Zhongxiang dares to declare as follows: the adult woman Yan from Xin'an is willing to move to Andu with the adult male servants, Mr. So-and-Sos, and the female servant Fang. I notify Andu to receive the household registration and report when the document arrives. I dare to declare. On the day of *gengzi* of the tenth month, the aide of Jiangling, Mr. Long, sincerely transmits the document to the aide of Andu.
> Ting signed it
> [On the other side]
> Chan signed it[15]

The text takes the form of an official document transferring the registration of a deceased lady from Jiangling 江陵 to Andu 安都, her destination in the otherworld. (The aide of Andu is one of the otherworld bureaucrats also mentioned in land contracts of the Northern-Southern dynasties.)[16] It even seems to have been written and signed by local secular officers (or at least was written as if it had been).[17] On another tablet, the name of the destination "Andu" is inscribed at the top, while "the seal of the aide of Jiangling 江陵丞印" appears in smaller characters at the bottom.[18] This suggests that it was considered a genuine official document, and contact between the bureaucrats of the living world and the bureaucrats of the otherworld was being straightforwardly equated with contact between different living-world bureaux.

14 Hubeisheng jingzhou bowuguan 湖北省荆州博物館, *Excavation*, 222–223; The Hunan Provincial Museum and IAAS, "Changsha mawangdui er san hao hanmu fajue jianbao;" Archaeological Team of Han Tomb, 168, "Hubei jiangling fenghuangshan yiliuba hao hanmu fajue jianbao;" Qiu Xigui [Chiu Hsi-kuei], "Hubei jiangling fenghuangshan shihao hanmu chutu jiandu kaoshi;" Hubeisheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖北省文物考古研究所 ed., *Suizhou kongjiapo hanmujiandu*, 197.

15 Hubeisheng jingzhou bowuguan, *Excavation*, 222–223: 七年十月丙子朔[庚子], 中鄉起, 敢言之: 新安大 女燕自言與大奴甲, 乙, [大]婢妨徙安都, 謁告安都. 受[]數書到爲報, 敢言之十月庚子江陵龍氏丞敬移安都丞. 亭手(背)產手.

16 Liu Zhaorui, "Anducheng yu Wuyijun."

17 There are different interpretations as to why the two sides of the tablet were inscribed by different people. See Xing Yitian, "Hunan longshanliye J1(8)157 he J1(9)1–12hao qindu de wenshu gocheng, biji he yuandang cunfang xingshi (lienzai er)."

18 Hubeisheng jingzhou bowuguan, *Excavation*, 222–223.

3 The Development of the Chinese Otherworld Empire

From the end of the first century CE, a different type of funeral document, called a "tomb-quelling text" (*zhenmu wen* 鎮墓文), gradually became popular in mortuary practice. Tomb-quelling texts for the dead were written on pottery jars in order to deflect evil from the tomb and its occupant. Anna Seidel describes them as passports endorsed by the Supreme Celestial Emperor (or the Yellow God) and his envoy that were intended to introduce the dead to the subterranean administration. The quantity of tomb-quelling texts increased dramatically after the mid-second century.[19] Here is one from 174 CE:

> On the sixteenth day, *gengshen*, of the twelfth month, whose first day is *yisi* of the second year of *Xiping* (5 February, 174 CE), the Celestial Emperor's Envoy informs the three mounds and five tombs of the Zhang family to the Left and Right officers of the tomb, the grave-owner in the centre, the Aide and Director of the Sepulchre, the Chief Director of the Sepulchre, the Chief of the Commune of the Gate of Souls, the Brigade Commander of the Sepulchre, etc., and dares to announce and transmit (this document) to the Aide of the Mound and the Earl of the Tomb, the Sub-terrestrial Two Thousand Bushel Officials, the Marquis of the Eastern Sepulchre, the Earl of the Western Sepulchre, the Official of Underneath, the Squad Leader of Haoli, etc. Today is an auspicious day. It is for no other reason that the deceased man, Zhang Shujing, who was ill-fated and died young, came down to rest in this mound. The Yellow God governs the five sacred peaks. He takes charge of the welfare of the living. He summons the spirit souls and vital souls, and controls the archives of the dead. The living built the high terrace. The dead come to be buried deeply alone. Eyebrows and beard would fall and become dust and ash. Today I therefore offer the medicine of recovery, which is intended to ensure no death for later generations. There are nine stems of Shangdang ginseng, intended to substitute for the living. The lead figures substitute for the dead. The yellow beans and seeds of melons are held by the dead to pay the otherworld tax. The system is set up to avoid affliction and ward off punishment incurred by offences towards the land so that disasters and misfortunes will not happen. This message should be conveyed in order to prevent the local bureaucrats of the netherworld troubling the Zhang family. Promptly, promptly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances.[20]

Tomb-quelling texts not only inherited the basic structure and format of official documents, but also comprised explicit religious ideas, which led to some adjustments

19 Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs;" Wu Rongzeng, "Zhenmuwen zhong suo jiandao de donghan daowu guanxi," 56. Liu Yi, *Jingtian yu chongdao*, 17–33.

20 Ikeda On 池田溫, "Chugoku rekidai boken ryakko," 273, no. 6: 熹平二年十二月乙巳朔十六日庚申, 天帝使者告張氏之家, 三丘五墓, 墓左墓右, 中央墓主, 塚丞塚令, 主塚司令, 魂門亭長, 塚中游擊等; 敢告移丘丞□□, 地下二千石, 東塚侯, 西塚伯, 地下擊犢卿 耗(蒿)里伍長等. 今日吉良, 非用他故, 但以死人張叔敬, 薄命蚤死, 當來下歸丘墓. 黃神生五嶽, 主生人祿; 召魂召魄, 主死人籍. 生人築高臺, 死人歸深自貍. 眉須以落下爲土灰. 今故上復除之藥, 欲令後世無有死者.上黨人參九枚, 欲持代生人, 鉛人持代死人, 黃豆瓜子死人持給地下賦. 立制牡厲, 辟除土咎, 欲令禍殃不行. 傳到約勒地吏, 勿復煩擾張氏之家. 急急如律令.

to the texts. First, petition to the otherworld on behalf of the dead person and his relatives is no longer filed by a local bureaucrat, but by the Celestial Emperor's Envoy. Secondly, there is a difference of tone. In the earlier Former Han funeral texts, the attitude of the local bureaucrat towards his otherworld counterpart was generally neutral. As the Chinese scholar Chen Zhi 陳直 comments, the whole bureaucratic process was based on the living-world principle of doing "official business according to official principle".[21] By contrast, the main concerns of tomb-quelling texts were not only to exorcise evil influences and absolve the dead from punishment, but also, in many cases, to demand special blessings and protection from otherworld bureaucrats. The grave goods mentioned in this text, for example, were payment of otherworld tax and substitution for the dead to fulfill their underworld corvée service in exchange for the protection from the otherworld administration.[22] In addition, almost every tomb-quelling text highlights the need to clarify the registration of the dead and the living in their respective realms, as any muddling of this registration would cause misfortune toward the living family.

In tomb-quelling texts, the Celestial Emperor's Envoy issues orders to a wide range of otherworld officials of provincial commandery-kingdom level. The Two Thousand Bushel Officials of the Otherworld (routinely mentioned in texts) correspond to leading officials at the commandery-kingdom level of provincial government during the Han dynasty. In fact, the contact between the Celestial Emperor's Envoy and the otherworld provincial-level bureaucrats here runs exactly parallel to the role within Han administration of the Special Imperial Envoy. The latter was dispatched by the emperor to supervise local government and tackle problems caused by maladministration and incompetent bureaucrats, particularly the Two Thousand Bushel Officials. There are many historical accounts of how the Imperial Special Envoy acted as a Messenger of Justice from the imperial court, impeaching incapable officials and thus winning the gratitude of the populace.[23] For instance, in the official history of the Later Han dynasty, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, it is recorded:

> [In the first year of Han'an of Emperor Shun's reign (142 CE)], the emperor issued an edict to dispatch eight envoys to make a tour of inspection of people's conduct. Those chosen all possessed great fame and they were promoted and given the title of Palace Attendant. Palace Attendant Du Qiao, Probationary Grand Master of the Imperial Household Zhou Xu, Former Inspector of Qing State Feng Xian, Chief Steward for Writing Luan Ba, Attendant Censor Zhang Gang, Inspector of Yan State Guo Zun, and Aide to the Defender-in-Chief Liu Ban were all promoted to the rank of Probationary Grand Master of the Imperial Household and dispatched to their respective states and commanderies. If Inspectors or the Two Thousand Bushel Officials were found to have committed evident bribery or crimes, [the Special Envoys] were to report them to the central government by the Fast Post Horse. If the criminal official was not above black-ribbon rank, he was to be arrested immediately. Loyal officials with integrity, who

21 Chen Zhi, "Guanyu 'Jiangling cheng' gao 'dixia cheng'," 76.
22 Chen, "The Transformation of Concepts of Bureaucratization of the Other World," 77–81.
23 Huang, *Lianghan xingzhengshi shouce*, 50–55.

> worked for the benefit of the public and were trusted by the common people, were also to be reported to the imperial court. Accordingly, the eight envoys all received this mission at the same time. The world called them 'the Eight of outstanding character'. [24]

The Eight Trigram Deities, the eight messengers of the supreme deity, the Grand One, are frequently mentioned in Daoist scriptures such as in the *Laozi zhong jing* 老子中經 ("Central Scripture of Laozi") as embarking on tours to inspect the behaviour of human beings on eight seasonal days. In his research on one of these eight Imperial Envoys, Luan Ba 欒巴, Professor Liu Cunren (Liu Ts'un-yan, 柳存仁) pointed out that the Eight Trigram Deities were probably modelled on these eight Imperial Envoys in this historical event described in the *Hou Han shu*.[25] Priests seem to have used the title of Celestial Emperor's Envoy in tomb-quelling texts in order to mirror the role of the Special Imperial Envoys of the Han dynasty. In taking on the new religious concerns expressed in the tomb-quelling texts, the passport to the otherworld bureau ceased to be part of the living-world bureaucratic process and became a passport administered by religious cults for religious ends.

The advent and growing popularity of tomb-quelling texts coincided with the earliest accounts of organised religious cults in Chinese history. They are therefore thought to have been used by proto-Daoist cults. Angelika Cedzich, in her study of the stele of the Later Han Celestial Master community in Sichuan, suggests that there was a symmetrical relationship between the community and the invisible regime in which they believed. The Celestial Master priests were thought capable of managing both these worlds. She comments:

> The otherworldly bureaucracy was closely linked to a symmetrical organization on earth, whose representatives, the *jijiu* priests of the Celestial Master tradition, had the power to directly influence the proceedings on the other side. The spirit-administration became an inseparable part of a greater whole managed by a this-worldly clergy.[26]

As she also notes, the duties of the *jijiu*, the delegate priests of the Celestial Master, included collecting taxes and keeping records, tasks normally performed by local administrators.[27] This implies that they might have taken over this role. Although we do not know from the Later Han tomb-quelling texts who exactly the Celestial Emperor's Envoy was, the structure of his communication with the invisible realm suggests that his functions paralleled those of a Celestial Master priest.

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24 Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, 61:2029: 時詔遣八使巡行風俗, 皆選素有威名者, 乃拜舉爲侍中. 舉侍中杜喬, 守光祿大夫周栩, 前青州刺史馮羨, 尚書欒巴, 侍御史張綱, 兗州刺史郭遵, 太尉長史劉班並守光祿大夫, 分行天下. 其刺史, 二千石有臧罪顯明者, 驛馬上之; 墨綬以下, 便輒收舉. 其有清忠惠利, 爲百姓所安, 宜表異者, 皆以狀上. 於是八使同時俱拜, 天下號曰八俊.

25 Liu Cunren [Liu Ts'un-yan], "Was Celestial Master Zhang a Historical Figure?"

26 Cedzich, "Ghosts and Demons, Law and Order," 32–33.

27 Cedzich, "Ghosts and Demons, Law and Order," 30.

The transition from Former Han funeral texts to Later Han tomb-quelling texts exemplifies the transformation of religious perceptions of the otherworld through the adoption of bureaucratisation. This pattern was commonly replicated by later Daoism and imported Buddhism in order to facilitate their propagation – as can still be seen in modern-day funeral texts.

4 Early Buddhist Appropriation

During this period of transition in the Han dynasty, the introduction of Buddhism was first recorded in official Chinese imperial history. Indigenous religions included belief in an afterlife journey in a bureaucratised otherworld. The basic doctrine of Buddhism, by contrast, taught a model of transmigration (the cycle of rebirth), *nirvāṇa* (liberation), and karmic retribution. This was novel to the Chinese in key respects: the destination of the afterlife, its ultimate soteriological goal, and the mechanism of the transmigration cycle. Nevertheless, these Buddhist doctrines came to permeate Chinese religious beliefs in the ensuing early medieval period and became an integral part of Chinese popular religion that survives until today. On the basis of his research on early Buddhism in India, Gregory Schopen points out that as it spread from Northern India, Buddhism always encountered different cultures and developed ways of surviving in foreign milieus by finding a place in the local landscape.[28] The fundamental doctrines of Buddhism won acceptance among the Chinese in the early medieval period through a smooth process of development that connected the early Chinese religion's concepts of otherwordly bureaucracy with similar ideas existing in Indian Buddhism. This process may be seen in early medieval popular Buddhist scriptures, accounts, and ritual texts, particularly the scriptures on the *rentian jiao* 人天教 ("Teaching of Men and Gods").

The *Teaching of Men and Gods* belongs to the most basic category of Chinese Buddhist taxonomy of the Buddhist doctrine, conveying the core idea of karmic retribution and instructing lay people about the Five Precepts and the Ten Merits whereby they might gain a better rebirth.[29] Despite their popularity, many such

28 Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 360.

29 Although the teaching has an Indian origin, the term *rentian jiao* was probably first proposed by a lay Chinese Buddhist, Liu Qiu 劉虯 (438–495 CE), during the second half of the fifth century. The *Teaching of Men and Gods* was very popular during the Northern and Southern dynasties. Its social organization is known as *yiyi* 邑義, which is an association of lay believers directed by a monastery. Their activities have been further revealed by the inscriptions on the Northern Wei caves. The *rentian jiao* was the imperative dynamic for Buddhist revival after the persecution of Buddhism by the Emperor Taiwu 太武 of the Northern Wei (446–452 CE) and the leading figures in this revival were a group of monks from Liangzhou 涼州, particularly Tanyao 曇曜. The *rentian jiao* is similar to the "affective religion", defined by Richard Gombrich in his observation of Theravāda Buddhism in Ceylon; it is contrasted with the "cognitive religion" pursued only by the religious elites who sought

scriptures are considered apocryphal due to the hybrid quality of their content. In early medieval Chinese Buddhist scriptures of the *Teaching of Men and Gods*, the celestial process of inspecting and recording people's deeds and deciding those deeds' karmic consequences in terms of lifespan and future rebirth is administered by a hybrid otherworld empire including both Indian Buddhist and Chinese bureaucratic deities. This hybrid imperial metaphor was in fact created by Chinese Buddhists by forging a link between parallel religious concepts of the celestial inspection and recording of human behavior on religious days of abstinence described in respective Indian Buddhist and in Chinese Daoist scriptures. This integration of the other religion's elements is also evident in contemporary Buddhist funeral documents. According to the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration, a person with substantial merit can be reborn as a celestial being or even a deity. This concept is fully compatible with the Chinese belief that kings or officials could after death assume similar positions in the otherworld, so a dead Chinese king or official might turn into a Buddhist god. In this way, Buddhism was able to assimilate Chinese popular cults of sacrifice to dead kings and officials. In the following sections, I show how a Buddhist otherworld bureaucratic empire was gradually formed during the early medieval period through engagement and interplay in respect of abstinence days and the transmigration of otherworld official deities.

5 The Amalgamation of Parallel Bureaucratic Otherworlds via similar Concepts of Abstinence Days

The *Jingdu sanmei jing* 淨度三昧經 ("Samādhi-Sūtra of Liberation through Purification") and the *Tiwei boli jing* 提謂波利經 ("Sūtra of Trapuṣa and Ballika"), both composed in the fifth century CE, are usually viewed together as the most influential and popular apocryphal Buddhist *sūtra*s of *rentian jiao* during the Northern and Southern dynasties.[30] Both scriptures contain an account of the *bawang ri* 八王日 ("Days of the Eight Kings"), abstinence days commonly observed by Buddhists in the early medieval period. This account provides a good example of how a hybrid Chinese Buddhist otherworld bureaucratic empire was intentionally formulated by

ultimate liberation through meditation, whereas "most people, monks included, devoted themselves exclusively to acts of merit (*pinkam*), the aim of which is a good rebirth in heaven or on earth". Gombrich, *Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon*, 377; Gregory, "The Teaching of Men and Gods;" Gregory, *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity*, 110–127; Tsukamoto Zenryū, *Shina Bukkyō shi kenkyū: Hokugi-ben*, 341–346.

30 Lai, "The Earliest Buddhist Religion in China," 12–14; Gregory, "The Teaching of Men and Gods," 254–258; Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 208–257; Tokuno, "Byways in Chinese Buddhism;" Ziegler, "The Sinification of Buddhism as Found in an Early Chinese Indigenous Sūtra;" Chen, "Who Are the Eight Kings in the Samādhi-Sūtra of Liberation through Purification?"

linking parallel religious ideas of periodic abstinence days and associated metaphors of inspection and recording of human deeds by otherworld bureaucratic deities in Indian Buddhist and Chinese Daoist texts.[31] It emphasises the importance of abstinence on the Days of the Eight Kings, which are identical with the Daoist eight seasonal days stipulated by the fourteenth section of the *Laozi zhong jing*. On these days, the otherworld bureaucratic deities (especially the Eight Trigram Deities)[32], each associated with a particular part of the human body, assembled at the imperial court of the Celestial Emperor, the Lord of the Grand One, to report the deeds of human beings and decide whether to prolong or to curtail their lives. People imagined the assorted bureaucratic deities on these occasions removing their names from the register of the dead and thereby lengthening their lives.[33] According to the *Jingdu sanmei jing*, all sentient beings in the three realms of *saṃsāra* (transmigration) are governed by King Yama, who is the Son of Heaven (one of the titles of the Chinese emperor) of the otherworld bureaucratic empire and also a subject of the Buddha.[34] On the Days of the Eight Kings, the celestial bureaucratic gods, along with other otherworld bureaucrats (both Indian Buddhist and indigenous Chinese deities), receive reports submitted by the Four Celestial Kings on the fifteenth and thirtieth days of the lunar month, inspect the deeds of individuals, and update their records. Only by observing the Buddhist Five Precepts and Ten Issues on these days could one have previous sins nullified and additional merit added to one's record in the hope of living longer and avoiding rebirth as an inferior being or falling in the hells in a future life.[35]

The key to unravelling how a text integrating Buddhist and Chinese beliefs, like the *Jingdu sanmei jing*, was composed hinges on the reason why major Indian Buddhist deities – such as Indra, the thirty-two *deva*s or guardian ministers, and the *Four Great Kings* – are accompanied by Chinese deities – such as the Director of the Life-Mandate, the Director of Records, the Five Emperor Messengers, and the mystical Eight King Messengers – in the account of how otherworld bureaucrats investigate human deeds on the Days of the Eight Kings. My analysis reveals that they are associated with otherworld bureaucratic inspection of sentient beings on the six Buddhist abstinence days, as depicted in the early Buddhist text of the *Four Great Kings*, and the eight Daoist seasonal days in the *Laozi zhong jing*. Also, the merits

31 Chen, "Who Are the Eight Kings in the Samādhi-Sūtra of Liberation through Purification?," 58–69.

32 The association between the eight seasonal days and the Eight Trigrams was probably first mentioned by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200 CE) in one of the commentaries on the *Book of Changes* allegedly written by him, the *Yiwei tonggua yan* 易緯通卦驗. Yoshijirō, *Kan'eki kenkyū*, 199; Ziegler, "The Sinification of Buddhism as Found in an Early Chinese Indigenous Sūtra," 168.

33 Chen, "Who Are the Eight Kings in the Samādhi-Sūtra of Liberation through Purification?," 65–68.

34 *Jingdu sanmei jing*, Zangwai fojiao wenxian, 248.

35 *Jingdu sanmei jing*, Zangwai fojiao wenxian, 262, 265–266. Chen, "Who Are the Eight Kings in the Samādhi-Sūtra of Liberation through Purification?," 61–62, 75–78.

obtainable by observing the six Buddhist abstinence days correspond to those obtainable on the eight Daoist seasonal days; and an increase in lifespan is promised in the *Account of the Days of the Eight Kings*.[36] The discovery of these parallels enables us to see that the mystical Eight King Messengers in the *Account of the Days of the Eight Kings* are probably a Buddhist appropriation of the key inspector deities on the eight seasonal days, the Eight Trigram Deities mentioned in the *Laozi zhong jing*. Furthermore, this helps us identify the enigmatic eight deities with the eight trigram symbols inscribed above them on the bottom layer of many Northern Liang 北涼 (Liangzhou) votive stūpas from Turfan and Dunhuang (dated to around the first half of the fifth century CE); they are probably the Eight King Messengers in the accounts of the *Account of the Days of the Eight Kings* found in both the *Jingdu sanmei jing* and the *Tiwei boli jing*.[37]

Scholars such as Bimala Law, Miyasaka Yūshō and T. W. Rhys Davids have pointed out that the narration of the assembly of deities in the hall of Indra's court and his role in Buddhist scriptures (such as the text of the *Four Great Kings*) actually mimic the public assembly of the Kṣatriya tribes and the role of a tribal leader.[38] According to a commentary by the fifth-century Buddhaghosa on the text of the *Four Great Kings*, the bureaucratic process of karmic recording on the six abstinence days involves first writing on palm leaves and then engraving on golden plates, procedures that reflected bureaucratic practices in pre-modern India.[39] By contrast, in the *Laozi zhong jing* and the *Account of the Days of the Eight Kings*, the process is based on the administrative paperwork of the Chinese imperial bureaucracy. Thus the Indian imperial metaphor of inspections and the assemblies in the courts of the Four Celestial Kings and of Indra, as depicted in the text of the *Four Great Kings*, is incorporated into the local Chinese model in the *Account of the Days of the Eight Kings*.

Furthermore, this hybrid bureaucracy of the otherworld appears not only in scriptural texts; it also manifests in subsequent Buddhist funeral passports of the sixth century. One such text was inscribed on a wooden tablet and dedicated to Lady Wang Jiangfei:[40]

36 Chen, "Who Are the Eight Kings in the Samādhi-Sūtra of Liberation through Purification?,"

37 Chen, "Who Are the Eight Kings in the Samādhi-Sūtra of Liberation through Purification?," 69–73.

38 See n. 4 and *Dialogues of the Buddha*, ed. Davids and Davids, 296.

39 *Manorathapūraṇī. Buddhaghosa's Commentary*, ed. Walleser and Kopp, 2: 233–234. Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy. A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions*, 113–115; Chen, "Who Are the Eight Kings in the Samādhi-Sūtra of Liberation through Purification?," 63–65.

40 Aside from the funeral passport of Lady Wang Jiangfei in Shandong, we have a group of relatively simplified Buddhist funeral documents addressed to the God of the Five Paths (dating from the mid-sixth to the mid-seventh century), which were excavated in tombs in Turfan. See Hansen, "Path of Buddhism into China;" Chen, "Buddhist Passports to the Other World."

On the sixth day of the seventh month, whose first day is *yichou* of the fourth year, *Guisi* of *Wuping* [573 CE] of Northern Qi. The disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha Gao Qiao dares to declare to the Earth of Shengwan li of Zhentan kingdom [China]. Although Gao Qiao was initially from the Bohai commandery of Ji zhou, he has continuously lived in Shengwan li of Yidu county of the Qi commandery of Qing zhou because of his official position. His wife, Wang Jiangfei, who is seventy-seven years of age, had been ill for many years and medical treatment did not help. Her life came to an end suddenly on the sixth day of this month. She left the three lights above, the sun, moon and stars, and ended up down in Haoli.[41] During her lifetime, Jiangfei dedicated herself to the Ten Virtues, adhered to the Five Precepts, and performed the entire fasts, including the three month-long fasts each year and six-day fasts each month, without missing any of them. Now she is dispatched by the preceptor, the Lord of the Grave and the Lord of the Mountain, and she will be picking flowers for the Buddha and will not return. When Jiangfei's life came to an end, the Celestial Emperor [Indra in this context] held flowers to welcome her spirit, and the Great Potentiality[42] came to receive her soul. I order you, the underground Nüqing 女青,[43] to issue an edict to the Great God of the Five Paths and the officers in Charge of the Soil as follows: Wherever Jiangfei's clothes, property, sundry goods and personal luggage pass by, you must not detain them. If they are questioned and detained, in this world Rudra will crush

41 The southern side of Mount Tai was believed to be the final destination of the dead in the otherworld no later than the Han dynasty.

42 The Great Potentiality; or the great powers of *buddha*s and bodhisattvas which transform themselves into others.

43 Scholars have been baffled by the meaning of the term *Nüqing* 女青 in Chinese religious writing, though *Nüqing* 女青 is the name of a herb that appears in several Chinese medical scriptures. *Bencao jing*, ed. Cao Yuanyu, 209; *Mingyi bielu*, ed. Shang Zhijun, 232. According to the thesaurus Kuangya 廣雅, by the third-century Zhang Yi 張揖 (juan 10, page 2), Nüqing 女青 is a kind of herb also called *wuge* 烏葛 ("Dark Vine"). The *Shennong bencaojing* 神農本草經 says that *Nüqing* 女青 is a kind of vine, used mainly for the diseases caused by noxious agents produced by various parasites. It can expel venomous *qi*, kill ghosts, or cure diseases caused by heat or fever. It can also dispel misfortune (治蠱毒. 逐邪惡氣. 殺鬼. 溫瘧. 辟不祥). The early medieval Daoist scripture *Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律 ("Code of Nüqing for [Controlling] Demons") is a text about exorcism. From the fourth century onwards, the ordinance of Nüqing became a kind of standard ending phrase that frequently appears in Chinese mortuary texts. There is a dispute among scholars about whether the *Code of Nüqing for (Controlling) Demons* is equivalent to the ordinance of Nüqing in the mortuary texts. In the mortuary petition of Wang Jiangfei, the herb Nüqing is treated as an otherworld deity and made responsible for issuing edicts to other otherworld bureaucratic deities to protect the property and safety of the deceased. It seems that Nüqing represents an authority in the otherworld. In this context, the ordinance of Nüqing means the decree issued by Nüqing. The argument among scholars centers on whether the ordinance of Nüqing stems from a specific statute on mortuary issues in the *Code of Nüqing for (Controlling) Demons* that cannot be found in the extant version. However, if we interpret the ordinance of Nüqing as an ordinance issued by the authority Nüqing, as in the regular ending phrase of the mortuary document "in accordance with the statutes and ordinance", in my opinion, it does not necessarily denote any specific statute, but is simply a claim that the matter should be dealt with under that authority. See Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 80–81; Bai Bin, "Wujin nanchao maidiquan mingci he yiwushu de daojiao kaogu yanjiu," 83; Bai Bin and Dai Lijuan, "Shicong kaohucailiao kan *Nüqing guilü* dechengshushidai yu liuxingdiyu;" Li Zhitian, "*Nüqingguilü* yu caoqi tianshidao dixiashijie de guanliaohua wenti;" Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs," 41. Peterson, "Demon Statute of Feminine Verdure;" Dudink, "*Nüqing guilü*."

> you into pieces like the branches of the *arjakamañjarī* tree. In case you do not know who the scribe and the reader are, when the document comes, let it be said that Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is the scribe and Bodhisattva Vimalakīrti is the witness reader. So I transmit this document. Promptly, promptly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances.[44]

This funeral passport was directed by Buddhist disciple and government official Gao Qiao to the administration of the otherworld on behalf of his late wife. Its bureaucratic format and structure bear significant resemblance to those of Han funeral texts, apart from the fact that the content is dominated by Buddhist ideas and divinities. The syncretic otherworld administration it portrays includes both Buddhist and Chinese deities, though it is ruled by Buddhist divinities. That Lady Wang Jiangfei's observance of the Buddhist Five Precepts and Ten Merits when she was alive is the guarantee of a better afterlife for her in Indra's Heaven, and the document was issued and endorsed by Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and Bodhisattva Vimalakīrti. The appearance of mortuary documents of this type during the sixth century demonstrates that basic Buddhist doctrines and the transformed metaphor of a hybrid Chinese Buddhist otherworld authority were not restricted to the popular scriptures of *rentian jiao*, but had entered religious practice.

6 The Transmigration of Deceased Kings and Officials into Otherworld Divinities

As discussed above, in the story of Dan found in Tomb 1 in Fangmatan the dead mortal, Gongsun Qiang 公孫強, previously an officer, was reincarnated as a bureaucrat in the otherworld, namely as the Scribe of the Direction of the Life-Mandate 司命史. According to K. R. Norman's research on the Buddha's view of deities in Indian Buddhism, otherworld deities were themselves seen as subject to the cycle of *saṃsāra* of death and rebirth, and thus to karmic retribution. Each deity should be regarded as the title of a divine position rather than a single divine individual.[45] This concept is also mentioned in the *Jingdu sanmei jing*, which states that "the lifespan of *deva*s is also finite" (諸天亦自有歲盡).[46] Erik Zürcher has noticed an in-

44 *Taozhai cangshi ji*, ed. Duan fang, 13:6a–8a. Asami Naoichirō, "Chūgoku Nambokuchō jidai no sōsō buns hui:" 北齊武平四年歲次癸巳七月乙丑六日庚午, 釋迦文佛弟子高僑敢告: 口灣里地振坦國土, 高僑元出冀州勃海郡, 因宦仍居青州齊郡益都縣澠口裏. 其妻王江妃, 年七十七, 遇患積稔, 醫療無損, 忽以今月六日命過壽終. 上辭三光, 下歸蒿裏. 江妃生時十善持(持)心, 五戒堅志, 歲三月六, 齋戒不闕. 今爲戒師藏公, 山公等所使, 與佛取花, 往知(之)不返. 江妃命終之時, 天帝抱花, 候迎精神, 大權口往接侍靈魂. (勅)汝地下女青詔書五道大神, 司埭之官, 江妃所衣資雜物, 隨身之具, 所逕(經)之處, 不得訶留. 若有留詰, 沙訶樓碎汝身首如阿梨樹枝. 來時, 不知書讀是誰. 書者觀世音, 讀者維摩大士. 故移, 急急如律令.

45 Norman, *Collected Papers*, 1.

46 *Jingdu sanmei jing*, ed. Zangwai fojiao wenxian, 266.

teresting resemblance between this Buddhist concept of rebirth in a divine position and the Daoist concept of deities as officials in the immortal bureaucracy.[47] By means of transmigration, it is possible for a dead mortal, whether he was a Chinese or Indian, to be reincarnated as an Indian or Buddhist deity in the otherworld. There are several accounts of the transmigration of historical figures into Buddhist otherworld bureaucratic gods during the early medieval period. They demonstrate how the Buddhist transformed Chinese perceptions of the other-world empire through accommodation of this resemblance.

7 The Posthumous Transmigration of an Indian King into King Yama, the Lord of Hell, in Chinese Buddhist Scripture

One of the earliest Chinese Buddhist narrations of the transmigration of a deceased Buddhist into an otherworld juridical deity can be found in an extraordinary account attributed to the *Wen diyu jing* 問地獄經 ("Sūtra on Questions on Hells") and dating to the fifth century or earlier. This text describes how King Bimbisāra 毘(毗)沙國王, a patron and follower of the Buddha, died in a battle against a King Weituoshi 維陀始王 and in the otherworld became Yama, Lord of Hell, subject to the Northern Celestial King, Vaiśravaṇa. Furthermore, King Bimbisāra's eighteen ministers and his entire defeated army of millions followed him to Hell in order to assist him in governing the sinners. The ministers became the eighteen Hell-kings, who supervised different tortures in eighteen different Hells.[48] The *Wen diyu jing*'s account is probably the earliest enumeration in Buddhist scripture of transmigrated Hell-kings for each specific Hell, which has no precedent in early Indic texts. It is well documented in various Indian and Chinese sources that the real King Bimbisāra did not die in battle but was murdered by his son, King Ajātaśatru.[49] The account of his transmigration into Yama therefore appears to be a forgery. How was the story composed and what was the motivation behind it? These questions were for many years overlooked by scholarship. In an earlier article, I traced the development of the idea of Bimbisāra's transmigration into the Lord of Hell and considered why, as Yama, he was subject to the Northern Celestial King. My findings suggested that the text was probably formulated from parallel/analogous conceptions of the roles and position of deceased kings or generals in the otherworld hierarchy in the

47 Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism," 123.
48 *Jinglü yixiang*, T 53. 2121. 258–260. Ziegler, "The Sinification of Buddhism as Found in an Early Chinese Indigenous Sūtra," 153–159. Chen, "In Search of the Origin of the Enumeration of Hell-kings."
49 Radich, *How Ajātaśatru was reformed*.

Chinese religious and Buddhist sources. First, the depiction of the transmigration of King Bimbisāra, as well as of his ministers and army, after a calamitous defeat recalls similar accounts of Chinese popular cults making sacrifices to "defeated armies and dead generals (or kings)" during the tumultuous early medieval period. The members of these cults believed that dead generals or kings and their millions of soldiers, particularly those who died in battle, turned into ghost kings and demonic soldiers in an unseen world (on earth) and spread diseases to humans if they were not propitiated.[50] Textual sources show that Daoists and Buddhists alike dismissed these cults as profane, because they performed blood sacrifices, yet both also attempted to tame unruly ghost kings and integrate them into their respective pantheons, Daoist or Buddhist. Secondly, King Bimbisāra is linked to the Northern Celestial King in a passage about the afterlife fate of the Buddha's disciples in the *Janavasabha Sutta* (DN 18), the *Shenisha jing* 闍尼沙經 in the Chinese *Dīrgha-āgama* (T 1. 1: 34b4–36b23). Here the late King Bimbisāra approaches the Buddha and says that, because of his devotion to Buddhism, he has been reborn into the entourage of the Northern Celestial King and become a king of non-humans among the *deva*s (celestial beings).[51] The story of Bimbisāra's transmigration into Yama shows how Buddhists shrewdly accommodated local sacrificial cults by linking parallel and compatible beliefs in the transmigration of deceased kings or generals that could be found in both Buddhist and popular Chinese religious texts. It was frequently included in later medieval repentance and purgatory scriptures, such as the *Lianghuang baocan* 梁皇寶懺 ("Jewelled Repentance Dharma of Emperor Liang", T 45. 1909). As the *sūtra* includes an account of the intermediate state between death and the next life, before the deceased are informed of their fate, it is considered a prototype for the later medieval (ninth or tenth century) *Scripture on the Ten Kings*. 十王經.[52]

8 The Posthumous Transmigration of a Chinese General into King Yama in the Official Chinese Historical Record

In the *Suishu* 隋書, the official history of the Sui dynasty (581–618 CE) edited in the seventh century CE, there is a legend about the famous General Han Qin 韓擒 (alter-

50 Lin, "The Cult of Jiang Ziwen in Medieval China," 357–375. Chen, "Liuchao Jiang Ziwen xinyang tanwei," 165–169. Li, "Nanchao suhoushen jici chutan minsu yanjiu," 112–120. Quan, "Nanchao de suhoshen xinyang," 39–44.

51 Chen, "In Search of the Origin of the Enumeration of Hell-Kings," 53–64.

52 Chen, "In Search of the Origin of the Enumeration of Hell-Kings;" Ziegler, "The Sinification of Buddhism as Found in an Early Chinese Indigenous Sūtra," 158.

natively called Han Qinhu 韓擒虎, 538–592 CE), who was told before his death that he would become King Yama in the otherworld. It was later elaborated in a popular vernacular story, the *Han Qinhu huaben* 韓擒虎話本 (the "Storyteller's Script of General Han Qinhu"), one of the Tang transformation texts (唐代變文). The original version in the *Suishu* reads:

> Not long afterwards, the neighbourhood mother saw an impressive regiment outside the house of General Han Qin, like that of a king. The mother was curious, so she asked them why they were there. One of them answered, 'We are coming to greet the king.' Then the whole regiment suddenly disappeared. Thereupon a person, who had suddenly become severely ill, ran in alarm to the house of Qin and said, 'I want to pay my respects to the king.' The entourage asked him: 'Which king is this?' He answered, 'It is King Yama.' Qin's soldiers tried to whip him, but Qin stopped them and said, 'It is satisfactory enough to be in the position of Supreme Pillar of State in my lifetime and then to die as King Yama.' He fell ill in his sleep and died within a few days.[53]

This legend recorded in the official history reflects not only the continuity of the old Chinese belief that a dead imperial official could take a bureaucratic position in the otherworld; it also further demonstrates acceptance of the fusion of this belief with the Buddhist concept of transmigration, making it possible for a Chinese general to be reborn as an Indian otherworld divinity. When a deceased Chinese high official could become King Yama, the Buddhist otherworld bureaucratic authority was no longer foreign, or part of a hybrid conception, but had become fully integrated as a Chinese Buddhist otherworld empire.

9 How the Government of the Transmigration Cycle by the Otherworld Bureaucracy Replicates Living-World Imperial Administration

In the seventh-century *Ming bao ji* 冥報記 ("The Record of Retribution from the Dark World") written by Tang Lin 唐臨, a Buddhist who once served as President of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs 吏部尚書 at the Tang imperial court, there is a detailed description of the parallel positions of otherworld divinities and their counterparts in the living-world bureaucracy. It appears in a tale about a man from the commandery of Zhao 趙 called Lu Renqian 陸仁蒨, who encounters a ghost called Cheng Jing 成景 who says that he was in life the aide of the state governor during the Western Jin dynasty (265–316 CE) and is now, in the otherworld, an offi-

53 Wei Zheng et al., *Suishu*, 52:1341: [...] 無何, 其鄰母見擒門下儀%甚盛, 有同王者, 母異而問之. 其中人曰: 「我來迎王. 」忽然不見. 又有人疾篤, 忽驚走至擒家曰: 「我欲謁王. 」. 左右問曰: 「何王也? 」答曰: 「閻羅王. 」擒子弟欲撻之, 擒止之曰: 「生爲上柱國, 死作閻羅王, 斯亦足矣. 」因寢疾, 數日竟.

cial of Kingdom of Linhu 臨胡國. This kingdom is, like the state of Zhao, located on the north bank of the Yellow River. The ghost adds that the otherworld king of Linhu is actually the late King Wuling of Zhao state 趙武靈王 (340–295 BCE), who, according to historical accounts, starved to death during a rebellion in the Warring States period.[54] The kingdoms of the otherworld, the ghost explains, are all governed from Mount Tai; each month, envoys like himself are sent there to present a report. Lu Renqian befriends the ghost Cheng Jing, who arranges for one of his retinue to follow Lu Renqian and help him avoid misfortune by providing prophetic information from the otherworld administration. In return for this assistance, Chen Jing asks Renqian to give him food, as ghosts (even high-ranking ones) are always hungry; this is because one living-world meal is equivalent to a whole year's supply of food in the otherworld. Several years later, Renqian falls ill and asks Chen Jing for help. Chen Jing tells him that he still has more than twenty years to live, but Renqian might prefer to have his date of death brought forward to enable him to take advantage of an employment opportunity in the otherworld. An old classmate of his, called Zhao Wu, now Recorder on Mount Tai, would like him to die early and take a high position there in the otherworld administration. Though the ghost presents this as a rare chance of advancement, Renqian does not want to leave the world of the living prematurely. Chen Jing therefore advises him to send a petition for longer life to Mount Tai, accompanied by a painting of the Buddha. This is done, but Renqian, not being a believer in Buddhism, has doubts about the effectiveness of his petition. He asks Chen Jing to tell him how the transmigration cycle functions in the otherworld.[55] After explaining the Buddhist concept of transmigration with the metaphor of the rankings of imperial bureaucrats, Chen Jing addresses the question of whether the Daoist petition is also worthwhile:

> For Daoists, the Celestial Emperor presides over the six paths (of transmigration), called the Celestial Bureau. King Yama is like the Son of Heaven in the human world. The Lord of Mount Tai is the chief state secretary. The God who records the Five Paths is like the president of a government board. It is like our nation, parallel to the big states and commanderies. In every affair in the living world, the Daoist priest makes a petition upwards to ask for good fortune. The Celestial Bureau receives it and transmits it to King Yama. It says that on day so and so of month so and so, a person so and so makes a petition so and so. You should deal with it as reasonably as possible and not falsely accuse or abuse the person; Yama sincerely receives and implements it, just as people receive official edicts. Without good reason, the person cannot be acquitted; if there is a false charge, the person can make an appeal. How can you say it is of no benefit?
>
> [Renqian] questioned further, 'How do Buddhists cultivate their merits?' Jing answered: 'The Buddha is the grand sage. Buddhists do not have paper circulation and transmission. Those who have cultivated Buddhist merits will be sincerely received by the celestial gods. They will often be treated with tolerance and forgiveness. A person with profound merits, even if he has

54 Simaqian, *Shiji*, 43:1815.

55 *Ming bao ji*, T. 51, 2082: 792–793.

> been put on the list of Evil Destinies, will not be chased and arrested. That is what I cannot understand and I do not know how it actually works.'[56]

Regarding the interplay between Chinese Buddhism and Daoism, Zürcher points out that, while we tend to pay attention to the religious elites and their texts (the top levels of the Buddhist and Daoist pyramids), at a popular religious level, the two religions were integrated into a more or less indistinguishable mass of beliefs and practices.[57] The story of Lu Renqian exemplifies how, at a popular level, Buddhist and early Chinese interpretations of afterlife fate had intertwined and merged by the later years of early medieval China. The Buddhist concepts of the cycle of transmigration and karmic retribution were commonly perceived by the Chinese populace as fully compatible with the Chinese belief in a parallel unseen world ruled by an imperial bureaucracy, headed by deceased kings and officers and focused on official paper-pushing related to the registration of the dead. In contrast to the description found in the fifth-century *Jingdu sanmei jing* discussed above, the Buddhist cosmological concept of the Six Paths is here governed by the Celestial Emperor, while King Yama is merely emperor in the otherworld empire, along with the Buddhist god in charge of the Five Paths and the eminent Lord of Mount Tai, the pivotal Chinese deity concerned with registering the dead, and that their bureaucratic roles closely parallel those of officials at the Chinese imperial court. Daoist petitions and rituals are not thought to conflict with Buddhist cultivation of meritorious deeds and devotion; both approaches are presented as effective and beneficial. By the end of the early medieval period (before the increasing popularity of Buddhist scriptures on esoteric and purgatory rituals in the Tang dynasty), this acculturated interpretation of the otherworld empire at the level of popular religion is not distinctly Buddhist or Daoist; it is Chinese.

10 Conclusion

Some scholars have suggested that a proto-bureaucracy was present in China as early as the late Shang dynasty (sixteenth century BCE–1046 BCE).[58] Yet, it was only after the establishment of a more centralised, "de-feudalised" government during the Warring States period and at the beginning of the empire of the Qin and Han

56 *Ming bao ji*, T. 51, 2082: 793b. See also Gjertson, "A Study and Translation of the Ming-Pao Chi," 160–166, 298–312: 道者. 天帝總統六道. 是謂天曹. 閻羅王者. 如人天子. 太山府君尚書令. 錄五道神如諸尚書. 若我輩國. 如大州郡. 每人間事. 道上章請福. 天曹受之. 下閻羅王云. 某月日得某甲訴云云. 宜盡理勿令枉濫. 閻羅敬受而奉行之. 如人之奉詔也. 無理不可求免. 有枉必當得申. 可爲無益也何. 又問. 佛家修福何如. 景曰. 佛是大聖. 無文書行下. 其修福. 天神敬奉. 多得寬宥. 若福厚者. 雖有惡道文簿. 不得追攝. 此非吾所識. 亦莫知其所以然.

57 Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism," 140.

58 Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*; Keightley, "The Religious Commitment."

dynasties that Chinese imperial administration became a structured framework based on paper (wood-tablet)-pushing, close to the modern definition of bureaucracy.[59] This change in political administration was reflected in contemporary perceptions of the otherworld, as we saw in the early accounts of communication between living-world and otherworld bureaucrats in the story of Dan from tomb I at Fangmatan, and the Former Han funeral texts. The Former Han funeral texts resemble official documents, petitioning otherworld bureaucrats or the earth god in the names of local bureaucrats or familial officials of the nobility. As the empire began to decline during the Later Han period, a different type of mortuary document emerged, the tomb-quelling text, characterised by additional religious ideas. The Celestial Emperor Envoy (modelled on the emperor's special envoy from the imperial court) replaced the local bureaucrat as the petitioner, and the texts became essentially religious documents, seeking special blessings and protection for the deceased and the bereaved family. The early development of Chinese perceptions of the otherworld as a counterpart of the bureaucratic empire in this world coincided with changes in political structure and social conditions. This is in line with Feuerbach's theory of the mirror-image of God. Similarly, scholars of early Indian Buddhism have pointed out that the assemblies of gods, role of deities like Indra, and otherworld methods of record-keeping described in early Buddhist scriptures mirror the practices of the Kṣatriya tribes at the time of the Buddha. This paper has sought to explain how these two otherworlds mirroring the different cultural milieus from which they originated merged to form a specifically Chinese conception of an otherworld hierarchy and bureaucracy after Buddhism was introduced into China.

Robert Campany has recently employed Michael Baxandall's reasoning to question the often rather reckless use of the term "influence" in discussion of Chinese religion. In *Patterns of Intention*, Baxandall wrote:

> If one says that X influenced Y it does seem that one is saying that X did something to Y rather than that Y did something to X. [...] If we think of Y rather than X as the agent, the vocabulary is much richer and more attractively diversified: draw on, resort to, avail oneself of, appropriate from, have recourse to, adapt, misunderstand, refer to, pick up, take on, engage with, react to, quote, differentiate oneself from, assimilate oneself to, assimilate, align oneself with, copy, address, paraphrase, absorb, make a variation on, revive, continue, remodel, ape, emulate, travesty, parody, extract from, distort, attend to, resist, simplify, reconstitute, elaborate on, develop, face up to, master, subvert, perpetuate, reduce, promote, respond to, transform, tackle.[60]

In line with this pluralistic view of cultural influence, this paper has surveyed various textual sources for the perception of the Buddhist otherworld bureaucracy in the early medieval period: popular apocryphal scriptures of *rentian jiao*, Buddhist mortuary texts, the earliest enumeration of Hell-kings, the accounts of the transmi-

59 Creel, *What is Taoism?*, 126–127, 134. Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, 196.
60 Campany, *Making Transcendents*, 216; Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, 58–59.

gration of a Chinese top official into Yama, and a popular story about how the otherworld empire operates. The results of this analysis show how a Buddhist perception of the otherworld based on the doctrines of a cycle of transmigration and karmic retribution gradually permeated Chinese religious beliefs about afterlife fate in early medieval China until it became an indispensable and indistinguishable part of it. The *Account of the Days of the Eight Kings* in the *Jingdu sanmei jing* demonstrates how a Chinese Buddhist otherworld empire was formulated by accommodating and amalgamating parallel concepts of abstinence days and the associated bureaucratic metaphors of periodic inspection and recording in Indian Buddhist and Chinese Daoist texts, which mirrored the respective structure of living-world authority. As a result, the fundamental Buddhist doctrines of the transmigration cycle and karmic retribution in *rentian jiao* were integrated into the Daoist pursuit of a longer life. Although Buddhist divinities became dominant in this hybrid otherworld empire, the Indian bureaucratic metaphor of the Kṣatriya tribes relating to investigation and assemblies in the celestial courts (depicted in the text of *The Four Great Kings*) was submerged in the local model of Chinese imperial bureaucracy in the *Account of the Days of the Eight Kings*. This portrayal of a transformed Chinese Buddhist otherworld bureaucracy was also reflected in the early appearance of the Buddhist funeral passport, wherein Buddhist divinities supplanted Chinese deities as the chief authorities in typical Chinese mortuary documents. This form of Buddhist funeral passport is still in use today.

In addition, there is a certain similarity between the indigenous Chinese belief that deceased kings and officials take equivalent positions in the otherworld and the Buddhist concept that otherworld deities are subject to the cycle of death and rebirth and may be replaced by other deceased individuals. Yet, while the Chinese belief is usually confined within Chinese geographical boundaries and the influence of the ghost kings is often associated with the regions that they ruled whilst alive, the Buddhist theory of transmigration can be applied to any sentient beings regardless of geographical or ethnic barriers. This means that not only deceased Indians but also Chinese and people of other ethnic origins can be reborn as Indian Buddhist deities. Textual examination of the story of King Bimbisāra's transmigration into Yama reveals that the Buddhist textual reference in this story probably derives from the account of the afterlife fate of the Buddha's follower King Bimbisāra given in the *Janavasabha Sutta* (the *Shenisha jing*). The latter reports that, because of his faith in the Buddha's teaching during his lifetime, the King declared after his death: "I am reborn into the communion of the great King Vessavaṇa (the Northern Celestial King). Deceased as a human king, I have in Heaven become a non-human king."[61] This statement about the fate of a deceased king seems to parallel indigenous Chinese beliefs. In addition, by adapting the narrative of defeated warrior kings and millions of soldiers turning to menacing underworld ghost kings and sol-

61 DN II 206, trans. by Rhys Davids, 240.

diers after their death in battle from the cults of "defeated armies and dead generals (or kings)", the story of King Bimbisāra's transmigration as Yama presents an underworld bureaucracy in Buddhist order. Not only is the underworld ruled by Yama, incarnated by a deceased Buddhist king as a warrior king defeated in battle, it seems that the Chinese belief in the regional gods of popular sacrificial cults was also conceptualised and transformed into the belief according to which the ministers of King Bimbisāra were reborn as Hell-kings in the Hells connected to different tortures. This apocryphal story, containing what is probably the earliest enumeration of the Hell-kings, is another text exemplifying Buddhist efforts to absorb local popular cults into its otherworld system by integrating parallel religious concepts.

By the end of the early medieval period, basic Buddhist doctrines about the otherworld were no longer foreign, but had become part of Chinese religions at the popular level. The inclusion in the official imperial history of the legend of Han Qin being received by a ghost army and becoming King Yama signifies not only that a dead Chinese could rule the otherworld empire, but also that Buddhist concepts of the otherworld had become completely embedded in Chinese beliefs. The portrayal of the otherworld bureaucratic empire in the story of Lu Renqian's encounter with Chen Jing indicates the inclusiveness of Buddhism and popular Chinese religions during the process of interplay and amalgamation. Indian Buddhist and early Chinese beliefs about the otherworld and individual afterlife fates co-existed and accommodated each other's compatible ideas.

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Eirini Afentoulidou

Space and Power in Byzantine Accounts of the Aerial Tollhouses

The idea that the souls of the deceased undertake a journey to heaven while adverse powers try to hinder their ascent was common to many religions in (Late) Antiquity. These adversaries were sometimes presented as military opponents and othertimes as tollkeepers (telonia). *Byzantine Christianity elaborated upon the idea of the aerial tollkeepers: every soul, accompanied by benign angels, encounters tollhouses, which are guarded by demons. Each tollhouse is responsible for one kind of sin. The demons in each tollhouse demand satisfaction for the respective unconfessed sins, which the soul pays with good deeds done during lifetime. If a soul runs out of good deeds before it has passed through the last tollhouse, it is condemned.*

The imagery of the tollkeepers was widespread among Byzantine Christians, coexisting with other, often contradicting notions. It was neither condemned nor officially recognised by the Byzantine Church. The stories of the aerial tollhouses reflect perceptions of power relations in the space between heaven and earth, between earthly life and places of eternal reward or damnation: whereas in other narratives the demons act as enemies or raiders in a disputed area, the demons sitting in the tollhouses function as executors of the divine law in a civil environment. Moreover, unlike apocalypses in which he acts as an absolute monarch, showing mercy at his will, God is not present in the accounts of the tollhouses. Yet in the imaginary landscape of these accounts there exists no space between heaven and earth which is not under God's distant, but undisputed reign.

1 The Byzantine Church and the Afterlife: Preliminary Remarks

When discussing notions of the afterlife in the Byzantine Church up to its demise in the fifteenth century, one has to bear in mind the pastoral (as opposed to systematic) character of the greater part of the extant theological literature written in Greek on things to come. The official teaching of the Byzantine Church consisted mostly of what was contained in the Creed as formulated by the fourth ecumenical council at Chalcedon in 451 CE: "[Christ] shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end [...]. I expect the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."[1] In this "life of the world to come", the

1 Staats, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis von Nizäa-Konstantinopel.*

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righteous would be rewarded with God's kingdom, whereas the sinners would be punished with eternal Hell. These very basic teachings were not enough to satisfy people's need to know about what was expecting them and their loved ones once they departed from this life. The details were filled in by the interaction with other late antique religions and belief systems of the Eastern Mediterranean. The main source for these notions was Judaism, and the channels of Jewish ideas' transmission were not only (what was largely seen as) canonical biblical literature (which, again, bore traces of various and at times diverging traditions), but also extra-canonical apocalypses.[2] Other sources were the Egyptian and Greek religions and – especially regarding the notion of the aerial tollhouses – the religious movement of Gnosticism.

The hour of death, the judgment of the soul and the afterlife were common subjects in patristic and Byzantine literature. Authors made extensive use of images and motifs such as the ascent of the soul of the deceased, its encounter with hostile (demonic) powers, the weighing of the soul's deeds, its journey to the respective dwellings of the righteous or the sinners, or the universal judgment as a global stage, where all actions are laid bare while humans and angels are watching.[3] However, such descriptions never reached the status of a dogma. Their function was mainly pastoral, aiming to motivate the audience towards a life in accordance with the teachings of the Church. Even if at times there were heated discussions among theologians about details of the afterlife, such as whether the promised Kingdom of Heaven is the Paradise in Eden,[4] or whether the souls of the deceased can act in the time between death and resurrection,[5] they were always conducted on an "unofficial" level. Their protagonists had no interest in initiating a process that could result in a binding church document. What such discussions show is that some Byzantine theologians were aware of contradictions regarding the afterlife in their tradition, including the Bible, and tried to rationalise them. Most of the time, however, even highly esteemed ecclesiastical writers used motifs and images of the afterlife without worrying about their theological implications.

The fluidity of the Byzantine Church's discourse on the afterlife may seem surprising for a Church that prided itself on preserving exact dogma. However, it was based on a widespread consensus among the theologically educated that there were many things, especially concerning death, that surpassed human understanding – at least in the fallen state of humanity – and any attempt to explain them could only be tentative or figurative. In the fourth century, Gregory of Nyssa therefore called discussions on the human state after resurrection "conjectures":

2 Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*.
3 Afentoulidou, "'Exposed to the Eyes of all, upon the Public Theatre of the Universe'."
4 Krausmüller, "What is Paradise and Who is in It?"
5 Constas, "To Sleep, Perchance to Dream;" also Eustratius of Constantinople, *De Statu animarum*, ed. Deun.

> Just as many questions might be started for debate amongst people sitting up at night as to the kind of thing that sunshine is, and then the simple appearing of it in all its beauty would render any verbal description superfluous, so every calculation that tries to arrive *conjecturally* at the future state will be reduced to nothingness by the object of our hopes, when it comes upon us.[6]

The idea that higher knowledge could be attained only when one has laid aside the corporeal burden was common among Neoplatonic, Gnostic and Christian authors;[7] however, what Gregory means here is the post-resurrection human state rather than an esoteric knowledge reached by few. In the seventh century, Anastasios of Sinai reached the following conclusion after attempting to explain why people die in different ways and at different stages in life: "[W]e have not said these things in an assertive and polemical way, but in a scientific spirit and as seems reasonable."[8] Similarly, the monk Philippos in his popular work *Dioptra*, composed in 1095, avoids answering the question on the nature of the incorruptible body that humans will resume after the resurrection by arguing that it is impossible to know these things while still living in the corrupt world.[9]

The aerial tollhouses, which will be discussed in the present article, do not therefore represent "what the Byzantines believed about the afterlife".[10] The motif was one of the many narratives used to conceptualise the soul's posthumous judgement. Although we have very few detailed accounts of the tollhouses, numerous allusions to it indicate that it was a very popular theme that did not need to be further explained to a Byzantine audience. The allusions to the aerial tollhouses occur mostly in texts of uncontested orthodoxy and always in an edifying context, aimed at motivating the audience to repent, do good, avoid evil, and seek God's mercy and the saints' or Mary's intercession: poems of contrition, hymns, exhortatory homilies, edifying tales. In more abstract theological treatises on the afterlife the tollhouses are not mentioned at all.

2 The Ascent of the Soul and the Aerial Tollhouses

The belief that the soul of the deceased rises through the air, encountering aerial powers which can hinder its ascent, was part of many religious systems of the

6 Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima et resurrectione*, 112.7–12, ed. Spira and Mühlenberg; translated by Moore and Wilson, *St Gregory of Nyssa On the Soul and the Resurrection*.

7 Cf. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 142–189.

8 Anastasios of Sinai, *Questions and Answers*, 28, trans. Munitiz, 124.

9 *Ἡ Διόπτρα*, ed. Lavriotis, 141; republished in Prochorov, Bil'djug, Miklas and Fuchsbauer, *"Dioptra" Filippa Monotropa*. I am preparing a new edition, which will be published in the series *CCSG*. In my edition the verses are *Diopra*, IV, 411–420.

10 See Krausmüller, "How Widespread Was the Belief in Demonic Tollgates in Sixth- to Ninth-Century Byzantium?"

ancient Near East. The prevailing hypothesis is that this notion was adopted by Eastern Christianity as a result of interaction with Gnosticism.[11] The term tax collectors (τελῶναι) to denote these powers is first encountered in Greek in the Gospel of Thomas, a Gnostic text with Christian influences (dated probably to the first half of the third century CE),[12] and appears in many Greek Christian texts thereafter. In Western Christianity demons as aerial tax collectors are unknown. As late antique and Byzantine texts employing the tollkeepers/tax collectors imagery have been discussed extensively in the last decades, I will not recount the textual evidence or the discussions on the origin of the tollhouses.[13] Instead, I will discuss only a selection of texts, concentrating on the question of power relations in the space between death and Heaven. The journey through the tollhouses constitutes a judgment of the soul – a judgment executed in the space between the deathbed and the throne of God, but not by God. This is in striking contradiction to the Christian doctrine of an omnipotent, omnipresent God, and raises the question of power and authority in this liminal space. I will focus on two early Christian texts influenced by Gnosticism to a varying degree that use the motif of a password/passport, two monastic texts that employ the imagery of the battlefield and three Byzantine texts that depict a quasi-judicial process.

2.1 Gatekeepers and Passwords

A central teaching of Gnosticism was that the soul, in this life or after death, ascends through spheres towards a higher form of existence, the *pleroma*. The spheres were guarded by gatekeepers, who demanded a passport or password (σύμβολον, σημεῖον, χαρακτήρ) – esoteric knowledge only acquired by few. The idea of the password is found in several late antique texts influenced by Gnosticism. In the possibly second-century text called the *Ascensio Isaiae*,[14] God the Father orders Christ to descend to earth through the seven gates of Heaven disguised as an angel, so that the angels who keep the gates do not recognise him. From the third gate downwards the angels demand a password, which Christ gives, so as not to be recognised. The procedure is introduced with the following or a similar formula: And those who kept the gate of the (third) Heaven demanded the password (*māxlaft*), and the Lord gave (it) to them.[15] The Coptic fragment has <σημ>ειον (sign), the

11 Bousset, "Die Himmelsreise der Seele;" Recheis, *Engel, Tod und Seelenreise*.
12 Bartelink, "ΤΕΛΩΝΑΙ."
13 Marinis, *Death and the Afterlife in Byzantium*; Afentoulidou, "Gesellschaftliche Vorstellungen in den byzantinischen Berichten;" Bartelink, "ΤΕΛΩΝΑΙ."
14 *Ascensio Isaiae*, 10.7–31, ed. Norelli, vol. 2.
15 *Ascensio Isaiae*, ed. Norelli, translates "lasciapassare". See the comments in *Ascensio Isaiae*, ed. Norelli, vol. 2, 529–533.

Slavonic translation *znamenije*, the Latin *character*.[16] In this passage the gatekeepers are angels and they are in the service of God, ensuring that only the worthy enter the gates of Heaven. However, they seem to have acquired a certain degree of autonomous authority: it appears that it is not possible for God to order his angels to let somebody through without asking questions.

The Gnostic terminology of gatekeepers and passport/password is used in one of the earliest patristic mentions of tollkeepers, the *Stromateis* (literally "patchwork") written by Clement of Alexandria around the year 200 CE:

> [The pure in heart] exhibits as a sacred symbol (σύμβολον) the bright impress (χαρακτήρ) of righteousness to the angels that wait on the ascension [...]. For those, who demand toll (τέλος), detain those who bring in any worldly things, who are burdened with their own passions. But him that is free of all things which are subject to duty, and is full of knowledge (πλήρη γνώσεως), and of the righteousness of works, they pass on with their good wishes, blessing the man with his work.[17]

As in the *Ascensio Isaiae*, the gatekeepers are angels. God is completely absent, but the fact that the angels are benign to the righteous implies that they are in God's service. The Gnostic discourse permeates the text: the virtue that humans practice is compared to a permit, and the virtuous is "full of knowledge". However, the biblical discourse of righteousness of works puts the privileged, esoteric character of the "passport" into perspective.

2.2 Demonic Opponents

In several late antique and early Byzantine texts originating mainly from monastic circles in Egypt and the Near East, demons try to obstruct a human's way to God's throne using physical power. This journey to God's throne may refer to the everyday spiritual struggle of the ascetic whilst alive or to the posthumous ascent of the soul. Texts using a martial discourse often quote or allude to a passage from the Letter to the Ephesians attributed to St Paul:

> Grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of his power. Put on the full armour of God so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics. For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the principalities and the ruling forces who are masters of the darkness in this world, the spirits of evil in the Heavens. That is why you must take up all God's armour, or you

16 *Ascensio Isaiae*, ed. Norelli, vol. 1, 182–183.

17 Clement of Alexndria, *The Stromata*, 4.18.117.2, ed. Hoek and Mondésert: σύμβολον ἅγιον τὸν χαρακτῆρα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τὸν φωτεινὸν ἐπιδεικνύμενος τοῖς ἐφεστῶσι τῇ ἀνόδῳ ἀγγέλοις [...]. Τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἐπαγομένους τινὰ τῶν κοσμικῶν κατέχουσιν οἱ τὸ τέλος ἀπαιτοῦντες τοῖς σφετέροις βαρουμένους πάθεσι, τὸν δὲ γυμνὸν μὲν τῶν ὑποπιπτόντων τῷ τέλει, πλήρη δὲ γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοσύνης συνευχόμενοι παραπέμπουσι, τὸν ἄνδρα σὺν καὶ τῷ ἔργῳ μακαρίσαντες. Translated by Wilson, *Clement of Alexandria: The Stromata*.

> will not be able to put up any resistance on the evil day, or stand your ground even though you exert yourselves to the full. So stand your ground, with truth a belt round your waist, and uprightness a breastplate, wearing for shoes on your feet the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace and always carrying the shield of faith so that you can use it to quench the burning arrows of the Evil One. And then you must take salvation as your helmet and the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God (Eph 6:10–17).

In this passage the whole world, including the air, is under the rule of the masters of the darkness. God's assistance is visualised in parts of armour, that is, objects that are very close to one's body, for the whole terrain is under the power of evil.

In many Christian texts "the evil day" of the Letter to the Ephesians is interpreted as referring to the hour of death. This is the case in homily 22 by Symeon Stylites the Younger from sixth-century Syria.[18] This homily, written in Greek, treats exclusively the hour of death, exhorting listeners to follow a way of life according to God's commandments. The author uses rapidly changing powerful images rather than a linear narration. According to the homilist, the soul of the deceased, armed with its virtues, undertakes a journey through a dangerous land to the throne of God. On its way it has to face demons, who under their leader, the devil, try to defeat it and drag it to Hell. The homily's beginning both cites and echoes the Letter to the Ephesians. Its vocabulary is used throughout the homily, such as when the demons are called "ruling forces".[19] Martial terms abound: the devil raids,[20] the angels embolden the soul,[21] the soul fights against[22] and wins over[23] the demons etc. An element absent from the Letter to the Ephesians but central in many Christian narrations is the company of angels. In Symeon Stylites' narration angels encourage the soul and prepare it for the struggle, but, in contrast to later accounts, they are not otherwise involved. God is sitting at the end of the route, awaiting those who make it through the dangerous territory, but is himself completely absent from the battlefield. Thus between the soul's deathbed and the throne of God there exists a space with its own rules, in which God and his angels have no power. Terms borrowed from civil administration also imply that this space is governed by the demons: besides being named a chief tollkeeper,[24] the devil himself is described as a judge in the air[25] – an unusual image, since it is usually Christ who is depicted as a judge. However, although the use of the word "judge" implies some kind of

18 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 111–118.
19 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 113, l.13: ἐξουσίαι.
20 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 114, l.3: κατέτρεχε.
21 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 114, l.16: παραθαρσύνουσι.
22 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 115, l.19: ἀντιπολεμοῦσα.
23 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 116, l.1: νικησάσης.
24 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 112, l.2–3: ἀρχιτελώνου.
25 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 113, l.8: μετέωρον δικαστήν.

power, the devil does not decide himself, but awaits the outcome.[26] Moreover, the demons drag the souls they manage to overpower to Hell: the battlefield is not their proper territory either.

Much shorter is the account in Homily 43 of Pseudo-Makarios, presumably from the late fourth or early fifth century CE:

> Like tax-collectors sitting in the narrow way, and laying hold upon the passers-by, and extorting from them, so do the devils spy upon souls, and lay hold of them; and when they pass out of the body, if they are not perfectly cleansed, they do not suffer them to mount up to the mansions of Heaven.[27]

Although there is no battle here, the detail that the tollkeepers sit at narrow streets marks a shift from the gatekeeper-imagery: they are not God's servants, but are implicitly likened to lurking raiders. Unlike in Symeon Stylites the Younger's narration, they are not powerful enough for an open battle. Still, God's rule in this liminal space is not secure enough to guarantee a soul's safe passage either. Arguably, it is God's law that the tollkeepers execute; any author who employed the imagery of the tollkeepers would hardly deny that the demons only do whatever God allows. But even if the tollkeepers are a conceptualisation of God's judgment, the details of the imagery reveal notions of power and authority.

At the beginning of a further text, a vision attributed to the fourth-century hermit Makarios of Egypt but probably of much later date, the angels escort the soul towards God's throne. The encounter with the demons is described in the following words: "Some black and dark ones in the air were very busy trying to snatch the souls of the humans and drag them down. But the angels resisted strongly and forcefully by flogging them."[28]

The human soul remains passive throughout the journey. This passivity stands in contrast to the passage from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians and the previously mentioned homily by Symeon the Stylite, but it is typical of most later accounts of the tollhouses. The constellation at the battle also reveals different power relations: in Symeon's homily the angels stay away from the battlefield, on which the demons seem to have the upper hand. In the vision attributed to Makarios, the angels are ordered by God to escort the soul; this is a space in which God's orders are carried

26 Symeon Stylites the Younger, *Homily*, 22, ed. Cozza-Luzi, 114, l.2: αὐτός τε ὁ διάβολος τὰς φάσεις κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ψυχῶν ἀνέμενε.

27 Pseudo-Makarios, *Die 50 Geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, ed. Dörries, Klostermann and Kroeger, Homily, 43.9, 290–291: Ὥσπερ εἰσὶν οἱ τελῶναι καθεζόμενοι εἰς τὰς στενὰς ὁδούς καὶ κατέχοντες τοὺς παριόντας καὶ διασείοντες, οὕτως καὶ οἱ δαίμονες ἐπιτηροῦσι καὶ κατέχουσι τὰς ψυχάς, καὶ ἐν τῷ ἐξέρχεσθαι αὐτὰς ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, ἐὰν μὴ τελείως καθαρισθῶσιν, οὐκ ἐπιτρέπονται ἀνελθεῖν εἰς τὰς μονὰς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. English translation: Mason, *Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian*, 274.

28 Τινὲς δὲ μέλανες καὶ ζοφώδεις ἐν τῷ ἀέρι εἶχον περισπασμὸν πολὺν τοῦ ἁρπάζειν καὶ κατασπᾷν τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἱ δὲ ἄγγελοι ἀνθίσταντο κραταιῶς καὶ ἰσχυρῶς ὡς σφόδρα μαστίζοντες αὐτούς. *Visiones de sanctis angelis*, PG 34, 224 C.

out by his messengers. However, God himself does not appear, and the demons are still active in this space. And yet, they do not act as somebody who has authority, but as raiders who try to snatch the soul. In the passage quoted, which is from the beginning of the vision, the struggle between angels and demons is entirely physical. In the second part of the same vision, however, the scenario changes from military to bureaucratic, and the demons take up the function of clerks sitting at their tollhouses. It is this function of the demons as tollkeepers that I will discuss in the following section.

2.3 A Judicial Process

The very term tollkeepers/tax collectors belongs to a fiscal/legal discourse – fiscal matters and justice were not strictly separated in Byzantium.[29] In the course of the centuries the juridical elements become more pronounced, whereas the military discourse diminishes.

A detailed and systematic account of the tollhouses' procedure is first given in the tenth-century Vision of Theodora in the *Life of St. Basil the Younger*, which will be discussed below.[30] However, the details given in numerous earlier mentions and short texts from the end of Late Antiquity onwards reveal a high degree of consistency regarding the procedure of the judgment: every soul, escorted by two benign angels, has to pass various tollhouses guarded by demons. There is a tollhouse for each different kind of sin. The demons in each tollhouse demand satisfaction for the respective unconfessed sins, which the soul pays with good deeds done during its lifetime. If a soul runs out of good deeds before it has passed the last tollhouse, the demons take possession of it. If it can pay off every sin, it reaches its goal, which is the throne of God.

The first account to be examined here is again the vision of Makarios. The first part of the vision, as discussed above, describes physical fights between angels and demons, but the second part consists of scenes of quasi-legal procedures. In one scene, the demons accuse a man of fornication, sodomy and verbal abuse. The angels claim that he had repented in time, which the demons doubt. Both parts agree to summon the guardian angel of the aforesaid man as a witness. The guardian angel testifies that his protégé had confessed his sins before he died. His testimony is accepted and the man is saved.[31]

The next account is the story of the Carthaginian, who is a civil servant according to one version, a soldier according to another. The story, set in the seventh century, is transmitted both independently and, with minor variations, as part of the

29 Magdalino, "Justice and Finance in the Byzantine State."
30 *Vita Basilii Iunioris* (*BHG* 264). Editions: *The Life of Saint Basil the Younger*, ed. Sullivan, Talbot and McGrath, and *Žitie sv. Vasilija Novago*, ed. Vilinskij (version of cod. Athon. Iberon 478).
31 *Visiones de sanctis angelis*, o.c. 224 D–225 C.

ninth-century *Chronicle* of Georgios Monachos.[32] The fact that it appears in various contexts and versions is typical of how such stories circulated; it is a reminder that the dissemination of stories and images regarding the *telonia* was not restricted to written sources. In this story, an unnamed Carthaginian dies in sin. After struggling his way through the first *telonia*, he runs out of good deeds. As he reaches the tollhouse of fornication, the demons bring forth all the sins from his youth against him. The angels claim that he had confessed these sins. The demons accept this defence, but reveal one last unconfessed sin. The angels immediately admit that the demons have won. The man is about to be taken away by the demons, but in a miraculous way he is released back to life, where he reports his posthumous fate, repents and dies a few days later.

The last text comes from the vision of Theodora, which is part of the tenth-century *Life of Saint Basil the Younger*. Theodora had been Saint Basil's faithful slave in her final years. When she dies, the saint's disciple, Gregory, worries about her posthumous fate. Theodora appears to him in a vision and reveals what she went through from the hour of her death until she entered the Heavenly Kingdom. While Theodora still lay on her deathbed, terrified by the surrounding demons, two angels came to her aid and collected all her good deeds. At that point Saint Basil appeared and gave her a bag of gold from his own good deeds as a reward for her good services. Endowed with the treasure of good deeds, both her own and Basil's, Theodora and the angels set off on their journey through twenty-one tollhouses, all guarded by demons. At some tollhouses, such as the one for maliciousness, avarice or heartlessness, the tollkeepers found nothing against her, and Theodora and the angels passed easily. At other tollhouses, such as the ones for excessive wine drinking and gluttony, the angels, acting as Theodora's attorneys, readily paid from her good deeds. At some other tollhouses the outcome was not obvious and a quasi-judicial struggle between the angels and the demonic tollkeepers took place, until both parties reached an agreement. For example, the demons sitting at the tollhouse of adultery accused Theodora of having cheated on her husband. The angels did not contest this fact, but tried to argue for a milder penalty for their client by claiming that, as a slave, Theodora was not married to her man; therefore, cheating on him should be categorised not as the sin of adultery, but of fornication. The demons retorted with an equally quasi-legal argument: the master of the slave is like a second God; therefore, the man that was given to Theodora by her previous mistress was equal to a husband; therefore, cheating on him was adultery. Theodora then tells Gregory

32 Διήγησις ψυχωφελής ["Beneficial Tale"], ed. Combefis, vol. 1, 324–326. French translation in *Léontios de Néapolis*, ed. Festugière and Rydén, 613–616 and *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, 575–578, ed. Boor, 678.16–683.2. In the first version the story is set at the time of the patrician Nicetas (fl. ca. 609–617), in the Chronicle of Georgios Monachos at the time of emperor Constantine III (641). Carthage was destroyed in 698. Festugière identified the Nicetas of the first version with John the Almgiver's adoptive brother (o.c., 613). See Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* III, 940–943, s.v. Nicetas 7.

that this argument went on for some time and that the angels won, without giving further details.[33] She was not spared the accusation of fornication though, which she eventually paid off by good deeds.

Theodora's motives were also taken into consideration in the mini-trials at the tollhouses. Thus the tollkeepers responsible for wrath accused Theodora of having castigated her children, whereas she claimed that this had not been an act of wrath, but that she had corrected her children to teach them, and out of love.[34]

According to accounts of the tollhouses such as the ones described above, the space between earth and Heaven is administered by a perfectly functioning justice system. The formerly raiding demons are tamed and become part of this system – not as judges, but as plaintiffs, who demand what belongs to them. They are still hostile to the humans, but they claim their rights by appealing to the law. The angels act as attorneys. Neither the angels, nor the demons have the power to influence the outcome of the trial, which is solely the result of the sum of good and bad deeds. God is absent from this space. It is not God's power to which this space is subjected, but an impersonal justice system. The forensic nature of the struggle over a soul reveals a high degree of consensus between angels and demons. Both parts respect the "universal" (i.e. the Byzantine) law and act within its frame. Evidence and valid arguments are accepted. Both parts are highly motivated and fight for their cause to the end, regardless of whether the person they accuse or defend is a sinner, but nobody contests the outcome of the process.

Everything is small-scale and almost private: there is no global theatre with a universal judge and myriads of angels and saints as spectators.[35] There are only two angels, some demons at each tollhouse, and a single human soul. The human soul is not expected to perform any heroic feats in its encounter with the demons. It can only be escorted through this huge bureaucratic system and watch as the angels and the demons argue about every single deed of its earthly life. Compared to the battle scenes in accounts such as in the homily attributed to Symeon, posthumous human agency in accounts of the aerial tollhouses is very much restricted. Indeed,

33 *Vita Basilii Iunioris*, 2.33.14–29, ed. Halkin, 238: εἶχον σύντροφον ἐκ προστάξεως αὐθεντικῆς μου, καὶ μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ συνοικοῦσα προσέπεσα μετὰ καὶ ἑτέρων τινῶν νέων. [...] Οἱ δὲ ὁδηγοῦντές με ἀνθίσταντο αὐτοῖς λέγοντες· «δουλὶς αὕτη πεφυκῖα ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐκείνῳ οὐχ ὑπὸ ἱερέως ηὐλόγηται [...], ἵνα καὶ μοιχείας κυρίως ὦσι τὰ ἐγκλήματα, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον πορνείας δέον ταῦτα κατονομάζεσθαι [...]. Οἱ δὲ μεγάλως θρυλλούμενοι ἀντετίθουν λέγοντες· «Οὐχὶ δεύτερος θεὸς τῷ δούλῳ ὁ κτησάμενος ἀργυρώνητον κύριος αὐτοῦ ἐστί; Καὶ αὕτη γνώμῃ τοῦ δεσπότου αὐτῆς καὶ κυρίου αὐτῆς ἐπισυναφθεῖσα, δέον τὰ τούτων παραπτώματα μοιχείας καὶ οὐ πορνείας σπέρματα κατονομάζεσθαι.» Τούτων οὖν οὕτως ἐπὶ πολλὰς ὥρας ἀμφισβητουμένων καὶ ζητουμένων, Χριστοῦ χάριτι νενικήκασιν οἱ ἐμὲ φυλάσσοντες ἐκεῖνοι νεανίαι.

34 χάριν παιδεύσεως [...] ἀγαπῶσα is the Greek text in cod. Athon. Iberon 478 (*Žitie sv. Vasilija Novago*, 17.38–39, ed. Vilinskij). In the Moscow version (*Life of Saint Basil the Younger*, 2.16.14, ed. Sullivan, Talbot and McGrath, 214) ἀγαπῶσα is missing.

35 Afentoulidou, "'Exposed to the Eyes of All, upon the Public Theatre of the Universe'."

the deceased person never answers the demons him- or herself. It is the accusations of the demons and the answers of the angels that steer the events.

The soul cannot expect any help from God or from human friends, not even from the intercession of the Mother of God, which is so important in other accounts of the afterlife.[36] Nobody is exempted from the tollhouses, and no one has so much influence as to intervene on behalf of somebody else. Even the gold Theodora accepts posthumously from Basil is a sign that both share the same status, albeit with different achievements: Basil cannot exempt Theodora from the tollhouses, he will pass through them himself someday, and the deeds of both the holy man and the slave woman are converted into the same currency. This comes in sharp contrast to Gnostic notions of the enlightened few who possess privileged knowledge in form of a passport or password. Theodora and the Carthaginian man are explicitly persons of no special religious status. The absolute ruler is absent, and everybody else is subject to the same bureaucracy.

The peace and security guaranteed by a strong omnipresent administration, the remoteness of a ruler, the private character of the process, the passivity of the individual in its encounter with the bureaucracy, and its self-reliance as opposed to trust in social networks, are the main features of the imagined space between Heaven and earth. And perhaps this is how some of the Christians of the Eastern Roman Empire perceived power relations in their earthly world.

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BHG Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca. Edited by François Halkin. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1957–1984.

CCSG Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca. Edited by Marcel Richard. Turnhout: Brepols, 1976–.

CCT Corpus Christianorum in Translation. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009–.

CPG Clavis Patrum Graecorum. Vols. 1–5. Edited by Maurits Geerard. Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–2003.

PG Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857–1866.

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Marc Tiefenauer

The End of the End: Devotion as an Antidote to Hell

The history of literary descriptions of the hereafter in India extends back to the end of the second millennium BCE, to which period the earliest still extant Sanskrit hymns date. It was not until the emergence of ascetic religious movements, such as Buddhism and Jainism, in the fifth century BCE that hell developed into the place of judgment and of torment. During the first millennium CE, hell would find its place in Hindu literature, as the devotion for the gods Viṣṇu and Śiva gave rise to an impressive literary genre: the Purāṇas. Later, with the help of Sufism, Hindu devotional movements adopted a kind of defiance of the hereafter, as shown by pre-modern literature.

It was not until the first centuries CE that hells – as vast and cruel as those described in Buddhist and Jainist literature – began to appear in Hindu texts. In Hindu literature, hell saw its most important development in the texts known by the generic name of Purāṇas – the "Ancients". I will begin the article's first section with a quote from an example of this golden age of Sanskrit literature on hell.

The rise of the Purāṇas coincides with the growth of religious traditions that propagate the adoration of divinities that eclipse all others. Two dominant movements sometimes opposed each other, sometimes coexisted: the disciples of the god Viṣṇu, and those of the god Śiva. In the Purāṇas, we are confronted with two parallel trends: on the one hand, the increased prominence of elective divinities who promise salvation to their devotees, and, on the other hand, the impressive development of ever more detailed and cruel descriptions of hell. In the article's second section, I will illustrate the paradoxical coexistence of promises of damnation and of doctrines of salvation in order to reveal the logic underlying this rhetoric.[1]

In the course of the second millennium CE, new devotional currents directly challenged the Purāṇas' discourse of hell. Mystics – no longer writing in Sanskrit but in their vernacular languages – promoted an all-powerful god surpassing all other divinities in the pantheon. The emergence of this mystical poetry coincided with the appearance of a new religion on Indian soil: Islam. The Hindu faith developed alongside Muslim mysticism, that is, Sufism, and the two religions often shared poetic images and forms of expression. In my article's third section, I will present some examples of mutual fertilisation of Hinduism and Islam from the works of the great authors of this period.

1 Concerning salvation, see Dhavamony, *Classical Hinduism*, 466–506; Nelson, "Liberation." About salvation and hells, see Tiefenauer, *Les enfers indiens*, 428–508.

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1 The Golden Age of Hell

There are many Purāṇa,[2] in Sanskrit as well as in other Indian languages. Eighteen of them are known as the "great Purāṇas" (called the *Mahāpurāṇa*).[3] The motif of hell is only one of many themes treated in the Purāṇas, whose encyclopaedic scope covers above all cosmological topics. Nevertheless, hells[4] are regularly referred to,[5] and while their number, as well as their names, can vary considerably from one text to another, it is still possible to identify distinct structural families.[6] A representative example is the synthesis provided in the *Purāṇa of the Boar* (*Vārāhapurāṇa*), this animal being one of the forms in which the god Viṣṇu incarnated in our world. The text contains a whole section dedicated to the hereafter, entitled *Moral Anthology* (*Dharmasaṃhitā*),[7] which possibly dates to around the end of the first millennium CE.[8] It is a kind of compilation of representations of hell, similar to descriptions found in other Purāṇas as well as in sources preceding this literary genre. Surprisingly, and without this being explicitly stated in the text, it lists these representations of hell in the order of their historical appearance.

The *Moral Anthology* thus presents itself as the apex of its genre, an overview of the infernal visions of the preceding centuries. The description of the hells is provided by Naciketas, a Brahmin[9] boy who finds himself in the world of the dead after his father has cursed him in a fit of anger.[10]

The child first describes the different kinds of sinners who will end up in hell. The list of sins partly corresponds to those found in another literary genre, the moral treatises (*Dharmaśāstra*). These include sins connected to ritual, to virtue, to food, and to different kinds of theft. The same principles govern the kingdom of the dead as those that rule all Creation, namely the transmigration of the souls (*saṃsāra*) and the retribution of deeds from one life in another (*karman*). In this logic, hell is an existence in its own right – a long and painful existence, which, however, the damned finally leave in order to be reborn again into the world of the living.

Naciketas continues his visit to the hereafter and describes the splendid city of Yama, the king of the hells. In Indo-European mythology, the figure of Yama is

2 On this subject, see Rocher, *The Purāṇas*.

3 Rocher, *The Purāṇas*, 30–34; Gupta and Bhattacharya, *The Vārāha-Purāṇa*.

4 To be sure, these texts do not refer to a single hell but to numerous hells.

5 In particular in the *Agni-*, *Garuda-*, *Nārada-*, *Padma-*, *Brahma-*, *Brahmavaivarta-*, *Bhāgavata-*, *Mārkaṇḍeya-*, *Vārāha-*, *Vāmana-*, *Vāyu-*, *Viṣṇu-* and *Skanda-Purāṇa*.

6 On this subject, see Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder*, 147–173.

7 Gupta and Bhattacharya, *The Vārāha-Purāṇa*, 193–212.

8 Hazra, *Studies in the Purāṇic records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, 105–106.

9 I.e. a member of the highest cast, the priests' cast.

10 This is an ancient myth, the first traces of which go back to the so-called Vedic literature. We find it in different forms in the *Śatapatha-* and the *Jaiminīya-brāhmaṇa*, in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, in the *Anuśāsanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, in the *Dharmasaṃhitā* of the *Vārāhapurāṇa*, and finally in the *Nāciketopākhyāna*.

without any doubt the one with the longest life: we come across him in the most ancient Iranian texts (the *Gāthā* of the *Avesta*) as well as in the first Sanskrit hymns (the *Ṛgveda*), both collections going back to the end of the second millennium BC. In the *Moral Anthology*, Yama, the lord of the dead, welcomes Naciketas into his heavenly enclave of hell. Sometimes terrifying, sometimes reassuring, depending on to whom he is speaking, the king and judge of the deceased allows the child to make a tour of his dominion. Naciketas meets Citragupta, a kind of minister charged with recording all deeds (the *karman*). On his orders, the messengers of Yama (*yamadūta*), who play the role of torturers, burn and tear apart the bodies of the damned. The list of tortures they inflict continues over several chapters. A funny detail in one chapter is that the torturers of hell go on strike and refuse to carry out their hard work any longer. Citragupta tries to bring them back to order by appealing to demons. In the end, Yama himself has to intervene to resolve the disagreement between Citragupta and the *yamadūta*.

The long, vivid description of the hells, to which most of the *Moral Anthology* is devoted, is followed by a shorter account of the pleasures awaiting the righteous. If they fell in battle, met their death while defending the Brahmins, or proved their largesse by giving them lands and cattle, the paradise of Indra (*Amarāvatī*, the home of the immortal) awaits them. There, they will find happiness with charming women whom they can enjoy at their convenience. If these pleasures address themselves to men, the women also enjoy a paradise of their own. Wives who dedicated themselves body and soul to their husbands will find immortality and earn the status of goddesses in heaven without having to endure the judgment of Yama.

The *Moral Anthology* closes with a speech by Yama, who draws up a long list of methods with which to cleanse oneself of one's sins. Kindness towards all creatures, asceticism, and yogi techniques are amongst the recommendations of the king of the dead, but these precepts are mostly addressed to Brahmins. Yama ends by revealing the simplest expiatory practices that are open to all castes, even the lowest ones. Even though offerings of cows or dairy products are mentioned again, the most effective way is to offer worship to the god to whom the text is dedicated: Viṣṇu. According to the master of hell himself, the celebration of Viṣṇu constitutes the most effective expiatory ritual. Its performance even liberates for all eternity even the vilest sinners from all evil deeds they may have committed. And the text does not fail to remind us that, ultimately, a thousand successive existences are needed for the worshippers of the competing god, Śiva, to achieve the advantages that Viṣṇu's worshippers will gain in a single life.

2 The Takeover of the Elective Gods

The *Moral Anthology* constitutes a good example for the coexistence between the rhetoric of hell and the promise of salvation. This text skillfully stages a progression from hell to atonement, and from atonement to paradise. Promises of salvation are not rare in the Purāṇas. Some narratives take the form of moral tales in which Death himself, or his representative Yama, are brought face to face with the redeeming divinity which the text champions.

An example of this can be found in the *Purāṇa of Skanda* (*Skandapurāṇa*),[11] which narrates the story of the good king Śveta ("the white") who is completely devoted to the god Śiva.[12] When the king engages in prayer at a temple consecrated to his divinity, Yama sends his messengers to get him and to carry him to the hereafter. But the men of the master of the dead do not dare attack the king in the middle of his worship. Yama ultimately has to go there himself, but faced with this illustrious worshipper he, too, does not dare intervene. Time (Kāla), who is another incarnation of Death,[13] reminds Yama of his duty, but the latter reveals to him that it is difficult to tackle the devotees of Śiva. Time gets angry and decides to settle the problem himself. When he prepares himself to strike the king with his sword, Time is reduced to ashes by the third eye of Śiva. The sovereign, however, is so virtuous that he pleads with his god for Time: he extols this destroyer of lives' virtues, which Creation cannot do without. Convinced by his devotee's arguments, Śiva brings Time back to life.

The intention of this text is clear: the god Śiva is stronger than death because he is literally able to *kill Time*. According to the *Purāṇa of Skanda*, this all-powerful god is the only one to preside over the destinies of all creatures, and his worshippers therefore have nothing to fear from death.

A similar narrative is located in two other texts, the *Purāṇa of the Tortoise* (*Kūrmapurāṇa*) and the *Purāṇa of the Liṅga* (*Liṅgapurāṇa*).[14] These two sources feature Rudra, an ancient divinity Śiva is associated or even identified with.[15] There we meet Śveta once more, who in the *Purāṇa of the Tortoise*'s version is once more a king, but appears as a simple hermit in the *Purāṇa of the Liṅga*. In the latter,[16] Time (Kāla) comes to get Śveta – his hour has literally come for him. When Time prepares to take the hermit to the realm of Yama, mocking the power of the gods, Rudra

11 Skanda is one of the sons of the god Śiva.
12 *Skandapurāṇa*, ed. Parata, 1.1.32.
13 It is also often confused with Yama, but this narrative separates the two figures.
14 The tortoise is the form of the second incarnation of Viṣṇu; as for the *liṅga*, it is the ithyphallic symbol of Śiva.
15 Rudra, a minor divinity in the most ancient Sanskrit corpus, the *Ṛgveda*, will later be identified with Śiva in post-Vedic literature, in particular in the Purāṇas.
16 Bhaṭṭācāryya, *Liṅgapurāṇa*, 1.30.

appears and kills Time. The tale ends with the reminder that Rudra defeats death and liberates his worshippers from it.

The *Purāṇa of the Tortoise,* which presents Śveta as a king,[17] also describes Rudra's intervention at the moment when Time ties up his victim. Rudra abuses Death (which is here identified with Time) and kills it with savage kicks. At the end of the eleventh century CE, Somadeva evokes this episode in his famous *Ocean of the Streams of Stories* (*Kathāsaritsāgara*),[18] clarifying that it is Śiva who has killed Time.

The superiority of Rudra-Śiva in the face of personified Death has given him a number of eulogistic epithets: "Ender of Time", "Conquerer of Yama", "Time-burner",[19] etc. In other parables, however, Viṣṇu is the protagonist who vanquishes Death.

The *Purāṇa of the Fortunate (Bhāgavatapurāṇa),* which is dedicated to Viṣṇu in his most famous incarnation as Kṛṣṇa, includes a delightful parable which shows how to avoid the agonies of hell.[20] Before the story starts, the *Purāṇa* specifies that, to cleanse oneself from one's errors, expiatory rituals are never as effective as devotion to Kṛṣṇa. We then learn about Ajāmila, a Brahmin who had disgraced himself by marrying a slave (*dāsī*), and also engaged in pillaging, gaming, fraud and theft. When he was already old, this man struggled to feed his many children: he had ten sons, the youngest of whom was named after one of the aliases of Kṛṣṇa: Nārāyaṇa. When his hour had come and the dreadful men of Yama closed in to lead him to the world of the dead, the old man called his youngest son. But when the servants of the god Kṛṣṇa heard the old man repeat "Nārāyaṇa" – their master's name – they rushed to save Ajāmila. According to this text, the simple repetition of the name of their god allows the worshippers to atone for the sins committed in the course of ten million existences.

Another parable, which also exists in a Śivaite as well as a Viṣṇuite version, describes the misadventures of a child called Mārkaṇḍeya, who was destined from birth for an early death.[21] The seventh chapter of a lesser Purāṇa, the *Purāṇa of the Lionman* (*Narasiṃhapurāṇa*)[22] provides a detailed version of this story. At the birth of the child, a wise man predicts that the boy would die at the end of his twelfth year; nevertheless, his father provides him with a religious education with a master. Mārkaṇḍeya grows up in humility and wisdom. One day, he asks his parents about the source of their sadness, and when they reveal the gloomy prediction to him, the boy does not lose confidence in his education, but assures them that he will resist

17 *Kūrmapurāṇa*, 2.35.

18 Somadeva, *Kathāsaritsāgara*, 12.5.333–338.

19 In Sanskrit, respectively: *Kālāntaka*, *Yamāntaka*, *Kāladahana*.

20 *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, 6.1–3.

21 The Śivaite versions of the myth give him sixteen years, while the *Skandapurāṇa*, 6.21, which attributes the salvation of the child to Brahmā, only promises him six months of life from the time of the prophecy of his death.

22 The Lionman (Narasiṃha or Nṛsiṃha) is one of the *avatāra*s of Viṣṇu.

death thanks to his ascetic practice. On a riverbank, Mārkaṇḍeya spends one year worshipping the statue of his god, until the day of his expected death. When the servants of Yama come to get him, the messengers of Viṣṇu intervene and beat them. The men of Yama retreat; and finally it is Death himself who comes to get the child. When they see him, Viṣṇu's envoys shout that they will "kill Death". Mārkaṇḍeya proceeds to intone a hymn in the honour of Viṣṇu, which Death is unable to withstand, ultimately having to admit defeat. Thus the young devotee vanquishes Death by dedicating himself to Viṣṇu body and soul.

3 The Obsolete Hell

The aforementioned *Moral Anthology* was compiled towards the end of the first millennium CE. It is the period when the Sebuktigīn, and later his son Mahmud of Ghazni, conquered the north of what is now Pakistan, the Panjāb, and the Ganges valley. Two centuries later, Muhammad of Ghor established his capital at Delhi. This Sultanate, which survived until 1526, was succeeded by the Moghul Empire, which lasted until its colonisation by the British. For a millennium, Northern India was controlled by Muslim dynasties. The courts of Indian sultans and emperors attracted Muslim mystic brotherhoods (*ṯarīqa*, pl. *ṯarā'iq*), whose membership increasingly spread across the Indian subcontinent.[23] They profoundly influenced Hindu devotional literature – not without consequence for the perception of the world of the dead, and hell in particular.

In fifteenth-century Northern India, mystic poets started to appear who were born not into elite, but often artisan or lower Hindu castes. Neither ascetics nor monks, they were anti-conformist, rejected castes and idol cults, and shared much common ground with the Sufi. The great poet Kabīr, who lived in the first half of the fifteenth century, worked as a weaver in Benares (the city where he may have been born). His first name of Arabic origin suggests that he may have belonged to a cast of yogis who had converted to Islam. Both humble and fervent, Kabīr expressed nothing but contempt for asceticism and rituals in his songs in the vernacular tongue. He seems to have been illiterate and to have disdained books; nevertheless, Kabīr composed countless poems that were handed down in oral tradition, later to be preserved and imitated by his disciples to such a point that we now cannot distinguish which texts he himself authored, and which his followers and imitators. Still, these poems unequivocally show a defiance of hell.

The songs attributed to Kabīr clearly state that only God (whatever His name) can save us after death. Without the name of Rāma (*avatāra* of Viṣṇu), it is impossi-

23 See Husain, *L'Inde mystique au moyen âge*; Athar Abbas, *A History of Sufism in India*; Dalmia and Faruqui, *Religious Interactions in Mughal India*.

ble to escape from hell;[24] even dying at Benares, the sacred city, will not save anyone from hell whose heart is evil.[25] Without the name of the only God, hypocrites will thus end up in the city of Yama.[26] If Kabīr is confident in the face of hell because he has found the supreme atonement which will wash him of his sins,[27] he also does not search for paradise – he is as indifferent to the threat of one as he is to the promise of the other.[28] Like a dedicated wife, the mystic is joined to the divine Husband and so can accept the best as well as the worst, provided he is close to his Beloved.[29] His discourse thus directly confronts the theology of fear maintained by the Purāṇas, which, to Kabīr, are nothing but a mirror for the blind,[30] a false doctrine made up from beginning to end.[31]

While Sūradāsa, another of the great Northern Indian poets, does not display the same scorn for the Purāṇas, he nevertheless also strongly refutes hell. A disciple of Vallabha, the founder of the devotional movement of the Path of Grace (Puṣṭimārga), he is reputed to have lived in the sixteenth century. Like Kabīr's, the œuvre of Sūradāsa outlived the one who began it, and the texts that have come down to us should be considered the fruits of a literary tradition that took several centuries to mature rather than the work of an individual author. A considerable number of devotional texts in Braj (*braja bhāṣā*), a literary language of Northern India that preceded current Hindi, originated with Sūradāsa. The most famous is the *Ocean of Sūra* (*Sūrasāgara*), which consists partly of a rewrite of the most important Viṣṇuite Purāṇa, the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.

In the *Ocean of Sūra,* the poet confesses that he is a sinner and reveals that he has returned to the city of Yama and the pits of hell several times. He even expects to return there forever, carried down by the servants of the god of the dead.[32] He asks his lord Viṣṇu to help him confront his fear of Yama in spite of the number of his sins,[33] because Viṣṇu alone is able to intercede at the moment when the messengers of the god of the dead strike.[34] According to Sūradāsa, Viṣṇu is a refuge for his worshippers: he protects us against the soldiers of Yama and, like a ship, allows us to flee sordid hell (and other unpleasant reincarnations) and to reach a peaceful land: the Vaikuṇṭha, the paradise of the adored lord.[35]

24 *Kabīr Granthāvalī*, ed. Vaudeville, *pada* 346.
25 *Kabīr Vāṇī*, ed. Vaudeville, *Rāgu āsā* 37.
26 *Kabīr Granthāvalī*, ed. Vaudeville, *dohā* 12.54, 18.3.
27 *Kabīr Vāṇī*, ed. Vaudeville, *Rāgu āsā* 17.4–5.
28 *Kabīr Vāṇī*, ed. Vaudeville, *Rāgu āsā* 17.4–5, *Kabīr Granthāvalī*, ed. Vaudeville, *dohā* 31.6–7.
29 *Kabīr Granthāvalī*, ed. Vaudeville, *dohā* 11.7
30 *Bījaka*, *ramainī*, 32.
31 *Bījaka*, *ramainī*, 61.
32 *Sūrasāgara*, 391.11–12.
33 *Sūrasāgara*, 392.1–4.
34 *Sūrasāgara*, 418.41–43.
35 *Sūrasāgara*, 433.5–8.

In the sixteenth century, Tulasīdāsa, a Brahmin born near Ayodhyā, chose an itinerant life devoted to the worship of Rāma, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. He went to Benares, where he created about a dozen works of devotional inspiration, including his most celebrated work, the *Spirit of the Deeds of Rāma* (*Rāmacaritamānasa*). This great poem, written in the vernacular Avadhī language, revisits the epic of Rāma from a devotional point of view. It was a huge success, to a point where its popularity outdid its illustrious Sanskrit predecessor, the *Journey of Rāma* (*Rāmāyaṇa*), composed one and a half millennia earlier and attributed to the legendary lyric poet Vālmīki.

In the fourth book of the *Journey of Rāma*, Rāma kills Vālin, the monkey king, who had ousted his younger brother. Tārā, Vālin's wife, laments over her husband's corpse and, in a poignant passage, deplores her condition as a widow.[36] Despairing, she even asks Rāma to kill her in order to put an end to her suffering, but the hero-god scorns her.[37] In Tulasīdāsa's reworking, the episode takes a completely different turn: Vālin submits to Rāma in his dying moment, which opens the gates of paradise not only to him,[38] but to his widow, too, who throws herself at the feet of the *avatāra* who has just slain her husband.[39]

Another, even more spectacular conversion of a married couple takes place at the end of Tulasīdāsa's epic: the one of Rāvaṇa and his wife Mandodarī. Rāvaṇa, the demon king, is Rāma's main enemy, and his death closes the epic narrative. In the Sanskrit version of the epic (the *Journey of Rāma*), Mandodarī mourns her husband whom Rāma has killed at the end of a long battle. Like Vālin's wife, she laments her fate as a widow at length.[40] In Tulasīdāsa's *Spirit of the Deeds of Rāma*, Rāvaṇa's death takes a completely different turn. After he has literally been reduced to pieces, the demon still defies his adversary with his last breath, pronouncing the name of Rāma as he dies. The simple fact of having named the hero, even if in ultimate defiance, allows Rāvaṇa's soul to attain the mouth of the triumphant god and thus paradise.[41]

According to the Viṣṇu devotees, the repetition of the divine name has a key place in devotional rituals, and invoking Rāma is a part of the salvation of the worshippers. This is confirmed in the *Very Spiritual Journey of Rāma* (*Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa*), another (Sanskrit) version of the epic, which was probably composed not long after Tulasīdāsa's work. Regarding Rāvaṇa's death,[42] this text explains that the demon had so obsessively thought about Rāma that he had saved his soul, in the same way as worshippers who concentrate on their chosen god gain salvation. Thus

36 *Rāmāyaṇa*, 4.23.8–15.
37 *Rāmāyaṇa*, 4.24.36, 43.
38 Tulasīdās, *Rāmacaritamānasa*, 4, *dohā* 9 et *caupāī* 11.1a.
39 Tulasīdās, *Rāmacaritamānasa*, 4, *caupāī* 11.3cd.
40 *Rāmāyaṇa*, 6.111.1–90.
41 Tulasīdās, *Rāmacaritamānasa*, 6, *dohā* 102 et *caupāī* 103.1–2, 5a–b.
42 Śāstrī, *Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa*, 6.82–87.

the name of Rāma is so powerful that it allows the most irretrievable sinner to escape the torments of hell. This is obviously a powerful argument for conversion.

At the end of the sixteenth century, the Moghul emperor Akbar ordered the complete translation of the *Journey of Rāma* into Persian. This translation, which was completed in November 1588, later became the object of numerous revisions.[43] The Freer Gallery of Art in Washington keeps one of the manuscripts of this translation.[44] This illuminated copy provides an illustration showing Rāvaṇa, the demon king, when he confronts Yama, the god of the dead, in single combat.[45] The miniature frames a cartouche with the Persian text summarising this paradoxical battle (Rāvaṇa trying to kill a god who is himself an incarnation of death). The image is interesting in many respects, in particular for the manner in which it represents Yama, who is dressed in Portuguese clothes (high boots, baggy trousers).[46] As we might expect in a Moghul miniature, he is represented in the Persian style in the form of a *dīv*, a demon from Persian mythology. The attributes of the god, which Sanskrit literature describes as a staff (the Staff of Time) and a rope (in order to carry the living into the world of the dead), are here represented in a fanciful, unorthodox manner. But the most significant detail are the wings he is provided with. In fact, the miniaturist has given him angels' wings, borrowing from Iranian and Islamic iconography. The painter thus transposes the Hindu god of the Manes into an angel of death as found in the religions of Semitic origin.

This iconographical transformation of Yama is not only the fruit of the inventiveness of a painter working around 1600. The new status given to the god of the dead is also visible in Indo-Persian literature, especially in the works of a Moghul prince: Dārā Shukoh (1615–1659). At the age of forty-two, when he had already written several treatises on Muslim mysticism and worked on a Persian translation of an important body of ancient Sanskrit texts,[47] he wrote an essay called *The Mingling of Two Oceans* (*Majmaʿ al-Baḥrain*). In this work, he pursues an ambition which is already clear in his translations: to show to what extent Hinduism – or at least his vision of it – is compatible with his Islamic tradition.[48] The essay explains the respective positions of hell and paradise in Hindu cosmology,[49] as well as the mechanism of damnation and salvation.[50] According to Dārā Shukoh, the liberation of the mystic's soul and his disappearance into the Divine Essence "[...] make hell and

43 On this subject, see Truschke, *Culture of Encounters*, 101–141.
44 Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, shelf no. F1907.271.303.
45 Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, shelf no. F1907.271.303, vol. 2, folio 303, verso.
46 For a full description of this image, see Vālmīki, *Rāmāyaṇa illustré*, ed. De Selliers, 7.59.
47 More precisely the 52nd *upaniṣad*, under the Arabic-Persian title of *Sirr-i akbar*, "The Great Secret."
48 In other words, how the *advaita vedānta* can be interpreted in the light of Sufism.
49 Shukoh and Maḥfūẓ al-Ḥaqq, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrain*, chap. 17 (*Bayān-i qismat-i zamīn*).
50 Shukoh and Maḥfūẓ al-Ḥaqq, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrain*, chap. 19 (*Bayān-i qiyāmat*).

paradise obsolete and they would be destroyed at the end of time". The prince also invokes the figure of Yama and assigns a new role to him: the role of an angel.[51]

At the start of the eighteenth century, a Persian-speaking man of letters of Hindu faith, Amānat Rāy, prepared a translation of the *Journey of Rāma* in the form of a *mathnawī,* a long narrative poem.[52] This verse form makes it into a much more elegant and sophisticated piece of literature than the version ordered by Emperor Akbar. This impressive quarto of nearly a thousand pages also includes the episode of the battle of the demon Rāvaṇa against Yama, but this time in a sweeping and elaborate style. The lithographic edition of the *Journey of Rāma in Persian* (*Rāmāyan-i fārsī*), published in Lucknow in 1872, introduces the story of Rāvaṇa's visit to the world of the dead with a cartouche summarising the episode.[53] The author (or editor) translates the Sanskrit term *yamaloka*, "world of Yama", with the Arabic term *mulk al-maut,* "kingdom of death". However, as the Arabic alphabet does not note the vowels, this expression can also be read in a different way: *malak al-maut,* i.e. "angel of death".[54] The latter expression, which is more common than *mulk al-maut,* designates the angel Azrael (in Arabic 'Izrā'īl), who puts an end to the life of all creatures. Comparing Yama to an angel is not the only modification by Amānat Rāy: while in the Sanskrit account, Yama is the "King of the *dharma*" (*dharmarāja*), that is, he is responsible for the respect of the moral order that governs the world, in the Persian translation, he is subject to the order of "God the Pure" (*Yazdān-i pāk*).[55]

4 Conclusion

The Purāṇas present complex and, at first glance, paradoxical images of hell. Complex, in particular, in late sources like the *Moral Anthology*, which gather the different stages of the historical evolution of the hereafter in a synoptic form; paradoxical because the complexity and cruelty of the punitive hereafter stands alongside radically simple methods of escaping the torments of hell, available even to the worst sinners. In the Purāṇas, the hells seem to serve as a necessary opposite to the salvation offered by the elective god – Viṣṇu for some, Śiva for others. This rhetoric suffers no ambiguity: the power of the divinity, the recipient of devotion, is the only simple means allowing the vanquishment of death and the torments it promises to

51 In Persian: *firishta.*
52 The original model of this form is the *Spiritual Mathnawī (Mathnawī-yi ma'nawī*) by Rūmī, the great thirteenth-century Persian mystic poet.
53 Rāy, *Rāmāyan-i fārsī,* 840.
54 Cf. Qur'an 32.11.
55 Rāy, *Rāmāyan-i fārsī,* 841, l. 9, col. 3.

sinners. This golden age of Indian hells thus coincides with the rise to power of saviour gods.

When Islam appears in India, amongst the ruling elites as well as amongst the lower classes, it brings, in its mystic form, Sufism, a new discourse that makes the threat of hell as obsolete as the hope of paradise. From the fifteenth century onwards, Hindu devotional movements adopted Sufism's defiance with regard to the hereafter: death is no longer frightening, and if hell remains a recurrent motif in the theology of the worshippers of Viṣṇu and Śiva, its threat is now the object of mockery.

Yama, the god of the dead, survived in the Persian translations of the Purāṇas, which flourished in the Moghul empire, but in the guise of an angel, a form borrowed from Iranian mythology as much as from Islamic tradition. This primordial ancestor, who once was the king and judge of hell, for a time put on the appearance and the function of a psychopomp angel, such as the Azrael of the Semitic religions.

And Yama survives to our day in the modern literature of India, in television series, advertising, graphic novels and video games. He is often a rather simple and paunchy character and no longer provokes fear. He was deposed by much more popular gods who pit their promises of salvation against the challenge of death and hell.

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Empires and Last Days 2

Johann Heiss

The Multiple Uses of an Enemy: Gog, Magog and the "Two-Horned One"

In medieval apocalyptic traditions, the apocalyptic peoples of Gog and Magog have a prominent role. This article presents an in-depth case study of aspects of the Gog and Magog story in the different literary traditions in northern as well as in southern Arabia.

One of the most famous historians of medieval Syria, Ibn al-Athīr (1160–1233), who as a young man fought in Saladin's army against the Europeans later called crusaders, mentions the incursion of the Mongols (he refers to them as Tatars) into the domain of the Khwarizm Shah in his annalistic "perfect history" at the year 617/1220. The passage is one of the rare instances where an Arabian historian turns directly to his readers/hearers, when he writes: "For a number of years I continuously avoided the mention of this event, deeming it too horrible, so that I loathed its mention."[1] He then proceeds to describe the singularity of the gruesome events, comparing them with the story of the Banū Isrā'īl and Bukht Naṣr (the Israelites and Nebuchadnezzar), and the destruction of Jerusalem. He claims: "Indeed, history does not contain anything which comes near to it [the catastrophe of the Mongols] or gets close to it."[2] After reflecting on the past, Ibn al-Athīr turned to the future and speculated: "Possibly, there will never be a calamity like that until the world becomes extinct and the earth ceases to exist except [he simply says] Gog and Magog[3]." With that, Ibn al-Athīr alluded to a tradition that originated in the Near East, in the Old Testament, and that is common to all monotheistic religions: the stories of Gog and Magog, Alexander the Great, and the End of Times. These legends were so well known and so often repeated that Ibn al-Athīr only needed to mention the name of Gog and Magog to evoke the stories around them in the memory of his readers/hearers.

The names of Gog and Magog occur for the first time in the Old Testament (Gen. 10:2; Ezek. 38–39), where Gog seems to be a king and Magog the region where he reigned. In the New Testament, Gog and Magog appear in the Book of Revelation (20:8), where both are peoples who will invade the earth at the End of Time.

1 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* 10, ed. Abū l-Fidā', 399: لقد بقيت عدة سنين معرضا عن ذكر هذه الحادثة استعظاما لها كارها لذكرها

2 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* 10, ed. Abū l-Fidā', 399: إن التواريخ لم تتضمن ما يقاربها ولا ما يدانيها

3 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* 10, ed. Abū l-Fidā', 399: ولعل الخلق لا يرون مثل هذه الحادثة إلى أن ينقرض العالم وتفنى الدنيا إلا يأجوج ومأجوج

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Shortly after the beginning of the Christian era, Flavius Josephus[4] equated Magog with the Scythians. He was also the first to link the biblical Gog and Magog with the popular Hellenistic Alexander tradition, at least as far as we can determine. Because he is a man well known for his attempts to combine Jewish and Hellenistic traditions, Flavius Josephus is understandably a good candidate for such an undertaking.[5] He is, in any case, the first author known to have used (Gog and) Magog as a foil for actual enemies. With Magog's help, the menace posed by the Scythians could be made clear and, by using the name found in Scripture, this threat and the defence against it were sanctified and transferred to a realm that could – or should – not be reached by human reasoning. The connection with the Alexander tradition added to the potential uses of the story of Gog and Magog: it could be instrumentalised to construct a scenario of menace, but with the involvement of Alexander at the same time allowing a story of the successful handling of the danger or of a (hope for) victory to be construed.

Since the area of the eastern Mediterranean coast was multilingual and multireligious at Flavius Josephus' time and in later centuries, a group of stories like those about Gog and Magog and Alexander the Great was bound to spread over time to many different regions and to be translated into numerous languages. Because the story had to be adapted to the specific contexts and needs of the different temporal and local spaces in which it was used, the outcome was a multitude of versions of mutually interdependent texts, a "*textus*" in the literal sense.

In this article, I wish to describe the development and, above all, the uses of the group of stories around Gog and Magog and Alexander the Great at certain points in the history of Arab/Muslim peoples in northern as well as in southern Arabia. But I will first outline the history of the peoples of the Eurasian steppe to the northeast of Arabia, where Gog and Magog were usually imagined to live. I wish to show that the history of these peoples was intertwined with that of the Arabs from early on.

1 A Texture of History: The Road to the Dam

In 642, Arab troops destroyed the last Sasanid army at the Battle of Nihāvand, sealing the fate of the Sasanid Empire. Nine years later, in 651, they took the important trading town Marw, the capital of Khurāsān that had been refounded by Alexander the Great as Alexandria Margiana (now in Turkmenistan). In the following year, the Muslim troops conquered the towns of northern Tocharistan, including Balkh, and in 661 the Umayyad dynasty began with the caliph Mu'āwiya. He proceeded to send

4 Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.6.123: τοὺς γὰρ νῦν ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων Γαλάτας καλουμένους Γομαρεῖς δὲ λεγομένους Γόμαρος ἔκτισε. Μαγώγης δὲ τοὺς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ Μαγώγας ὀνομασθέντας ᾤκισεν, Σκύθας δὲ ὑπ' αὐτῶν προσαγορευομένους.

5 Donzel and Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources*, 10.

a legation to inspect the dam that, according to the Qur'an, had been erected against Gog and Magog, following in the footsteps of a delegation sent during the Sasanid period. Arab garrisons were set up in the major towns, including Marw, which "became the Arab's major base for military operations in Central Asia".[6] Caliph Mu'āwiya made Khurāsān a separate province in 673, and his governor there, ʿUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād, then crossed the Oxus River into the Bukhāran kingdom, where tribute was raised. Arabs settled in the subdued towns and added Arabic to the many (e.g. Persian, Turkish) languages spoken and written there. After a period of revolt and internal strife following the death of Mu'āwiya, some of the provinces and towns like Bukhāra had to be subdued again under al-Walīd (r. 705–715). Khwārizm was seized in 712 by al-Walīd's governor, Qutayba, who invaded Transoxania as far as Ferghana two years later. In 715, he again invaded the Jaxartes regions, now operating in alliance with the Tibetans. The allies were successful in defeating the Turkish Türgiš rulers in the region, and they appointed a ruler in Ferghana sympathetic to their interests. However, the Turkish Türgiš people restored their power and "became the supporters of the local peoples against the Arabs and Islam and [the Türgiš became] also the close allies of the Tibetans".[7] Because this alliance threatened to close them off from the west, the Chinese made a secret pact with the Arabs to counter the Türgiš and the Tibetans. Between 737 and 740, the Kaghanate of the Türgiš, encompassing the Central Asian trading towns along the Silk Road, was destroyed by the Chinese and the Arabs. The Türk empire in the eastern steppe region was in turn overthrown in 742 by a coalition of Uyghurs (Tughuzghuz in Arabic) and Qarluqs, who then took the place of the Türgiš.

When the Abbasid rebellion broke out in 747 (one of the many rebellions in the mid-eighth century), it did so in Merw, which belonged to the most important commercial towns of its time, with a Sogdian market and a Bucharan quarter. The leaders of the revolt were merchants of Arab and Central Asian origin, while the defeat of the Umayyad army was brought about by a largely Central Asian army, the Khurāsāniyya. The first Abbasid caliph, Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ, was proclaimed in or around 750, the year in which Ko Sōnji, a Chinese general of Koguryo (Korean) origin, defeated the Tibetans in the Pamirs and intervened in a conflict between the kings of Ferghana and Shāsh/Taschkent. When Shāsh was taken, the crown prince fled to the Arabs in Samarqand, who dispatched an army against Ko's troops. In the following battle at Atlakh, near Talas, in July 751, that part of Ko's army composed of Qarluqs joined the Central Asians and the Arabs, and this side was victorious[8]. It was from people taken captive at this battle and brought to Samarqand that the Arabs (and later the Europeans) learned how to produce paper.

6 Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 123.
7 Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 134.
8 Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 145.

With this very shortened series of events,[9] I wish to indicate that the regions through which one had to pass in order to reach the homelands of Gog and Magog (commonly thought to be in the northeast) were not in the least unknown in the centres of the Arabic empire, be it Damascus, Merw, Baghdad or Samarra.

Since Gog and Magog are mentioned in the Qur'an (sura 18, *al-kahf*, "The Cave"), there could be no doubt about their existence for a believing Muslim. The passage in the Qur'an also mentions a two-horned one, who built the dam (*sadd* or *radm*) against the evildoers Gog and Magog, after people harmed by them complained to him.[10] The identity of this enigmatic two-horned one (arab. *dhū l-qarnayn*) was a matter of debate within Islam from early on. Within the tradition of the Christians and Jews living among the Muslims, the identification with Alexander the Great, whose legend does seem to have informed the Qur'anic text, prevailed. This identification was not acceptable or at least dubious for many Muslims, however, because Alexander was clearly not a believer. Consequently, other people were also identified with *dhū l-qarnayn*, one of whom I will discuss later.

Gog and Magog are also mentioned in some of the *ḥadīths* or sayings of the prophet Muḥammad, some of which identified them with Turkish peoples. We shall encounter the Turks again in the following examples.

2 The Mission to the Dam against Gog and Magog

Ibn Khurradādhbih or Ibn Khurdādhbih was born circa 820, possibly in Khurāsān (the capital of which was Merw), into a family with a Zoroastrian background. He was of Persian origin, travelled widely and in later life lived in the capitals Baghdad and Samarra. He died around 912.

Ibn Khurradādhbih was the head of post and intelligence in the province of Jibāl (now in Iran) under Caliph al-Mu'tamid (ruled 870–892) and later wazīr or minister for post and information (intelligence service) in the capital Baghdad. He wrote on music, among other topics, but also a famous and frequently copied story about the mission to the dam against Gog and Magog under the caliph al-Wāṯiq (r. 842–847). This account is contained in his *kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* ("Book of Roads and Kingdoms"), which he seems to have finished in 885/886. The book is a kind of administrative geography of the Islamic regions and their borderlands, interspersed with narrations on different issues, among them a chapter on remarkable edifices.

9 Following Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*.

10 sura 18, *al-kahf*, verse 94 brings together the two-horned one, who usually is identified with Alexander the Great, and Gog and Magog: "They (the inhabitants of the region) said: You two-horned one. Gog and Magog are spoiling the land. May we pay you a tribute, that you will erect a dam between us and them?" (transl. Asadm with alterations).

There, the dam against Gog and Magog is mentioned as the last and most prominent example,[11] and the mission to the dam is described.

Caliph al-Wāṯiq, we are told, saw in a dream that the dam against Gog and Magog was open. He decided to send a legation to examine the condition of the dam.[12] Ashinās, a Turkish general of the caliph, proposed to send as an envoy Sallām the interpreter, who spoke thirty languages.

Then follows Sallām's report in the first person. After being equipped with everything needed (including winter clothes, money, fifty men and pack animals), he started from Samarra, which had been the capital of the Abbasid Empire since around 835. al-Wāthiq's father al-Mu'tasim, had transferred the capital from Baghdad to Samarra: "The most important reason for the move had been the serious conflicts which had arisen between the inhabitants of Baghdad and the caliph's Turkish slave soldiers from Central Asia."[13] But the situation did not change substantially, as the different groups of Turkish soldiers were also stationed at locations around Samarra, with the militia of the abovementioned Turkish general Ashinās at Karkh Fayruz, around 10km north of the capital.[14] It seems that the Turks were perceived as a menace, something which may have had a bearing on the decision to instigate Sallām's mission to the dam.

Sallām and his group travelled roughly northeastwards (but with detours) along a route that took in the courts of the different rulers, governors and kings. First they reached the governor of Armenia in Tiflis, then they travelled on to the ruler in al-Sarīr, from there to the king of Allān (the Alans), then to Fīlān Šāh, and from there to the king of the Khazars. They then had to traverse a stinking land full of destroyed towns, and next encountered a people who spoke Persian and Arabic and were Muslims but knew nothing about a caliph. After passing the town of Ika,[15] from where it was three days to the dam, Sallām found the place where the "two-horned one" and his troops had stayed. They learn that Gog and Magog are two different people and very small, Magog being even smaller than Gog (one rather than one and a half cubits[16]). Then Sallām describes the dam and especially its door very exactly, giving measurements in cubits for nearly everything, even stating how deep the foundations are (which he certainly could not see). It seems that conjuring up an exact picture in the mind of the hearer or reader through the detailed description

11 See Ibn Khurradādhbih, *kitāb al-Masālik*, ed. Goeje, 162–170 about the expedition of Sallām, the interpreter, to the dam of Gog and Magog.

12 In later versions of the story the caliph is said to have been in fear because of that dream.

13 Donzel and Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources*, 173.

14 Cf. Donzel and Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources*, 173.

15 This name is a dubious conjecture; it is not legible in the Vienna ms.

16 A cubit (of Alexander) measures little more than 50 cm.

was designed to document the authenticity of his report. The author also uses a number of Persian terms in the description.[17]

As an example for the kind of exact *waṣf* ("description") Sallām/Ibn Khurradādhbih transmits, the key hanging on the door will suffice:

> [...] And on the lock a key [Arab. *miftāḥ*] is hanging, which is one and a half cubits in length and has twelve teeth [Pers. *dandānka*]; every tooth has the form of a pestle [Pers. *dastaj*] for a mortar [Pers. *hawāwīn* in an Arab. plural form], and the circumference of the key is four spans. It is hanging on a chain that is welded to the door. Its length is eight cubits, in circumference four spans. The ring through which the chain goes is like the ring of a catapult [*manjanīq*, from Greek μηχανή or μηχανική].

There are many traits in Sallām's report that seem to be taken from the stories of Gog and Magog and Alexander in the Syriac tradition. One passage of a Syriac text of this kind presented by Zadeh[18] also mentions the key of the door:

> And he [i.e. Alexander] made a bar of iron teeth with grooves, and hammered out an iron key [syr. *qlīḏā*, which is Greek κλειδίον, new Greek κλειδί) which had twelve grooves, and he attached onto the gate locks made of copper.[19]

Taken together, the two texts illustrate by their use of loanwords the complex fate of the story of Gog and Magog: they reflect the mix of languages in the regions where the story was told and written down as well as revealing shared components of the basic narrative. In the Arabic tradition, the text of sura 18 of the Qur'an had to be taken into account, and its elements were accordingly incorporated into Sallām's report. Since there was no certainty regarding the identity of the "two-horned one" within the Arabic chain of transmission, Sallām/Ibn Khurradādhbih avoids the mention of Alexander (or any other potential candidate). The Macedonian king appears only when Sallām/Ibn Khurradādhbih talks about the unit of measurement, which is denoted as the cubit of Alexander. As suggested by Zadeh, "It would be tempting to argue that Sallām's account is drawn directly from the Christian Syriac tradition".[20] Indeed, Christians and Christian converts lived at the court of the caliph, many of whom were presumably Syriac-speaking. Additionally, translators lived at the centre of the caliphal state, among them Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq (808–873), who was one of the most famous and prolific translators and a Nestorian Christian. Thus, the caliphal court and the capital Baghdad were ideal places for the merging

17 *Darwand* for "lintel"; *dastaj al-hawāwīn* "pestle used in mortars"; *dandānka* "tooth" (here of a key); *degdan* "tripod, fireplace", with *deg* "pot".

18 Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam*, 108–109.

19 Zadeh cites the Syriac Neṣḥānā, and points out that the word translated here with "grooves" can mean "grooves, rocks, and mountains", which is connected etymologically to the word for "teeth". Obviously one could also translate here with "teeth" or "points" (cf. Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam*, 240– 241, n. 51)

20 Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam*, 109.

of different strands of traditions as well as for the dissemination of the versions of a story generated there.

On the door of the gate which hinders Gog and Magog from encroaching upon the rest of the earth, Sallām found an inscription "in the first language", of which he gives a translation. It corresponds word for word to verse 98 of sura 18, exactly the sura where Gog and Magog and the "two-horned one" are mentioned: "Yet when the time appointed by my sustainer shall come, he will make this level with the ground: and my sustainer's promise always comes true."[21]

This inscription connects the beginning and the End of Time via the Qur'an: in the first, oldest language a verse of the holy book is already written long before Islam exists (but is, of course, known to God), and it announces that the dam (radm) will be razed at the appointed End of Time, when Gog and Magog will come forth. And, one could continue: "Satanas will come out and deceive the peoples (τὰ ἔθνη) that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, and he will gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea [...]." (Rev. 20:7–8)

Apart from the (presumably, bad) dream of the caliph, we are given no details concerning the motivations for the expedition, but we can suspect that a perhaps vague fear and feeling of threat concerning the Turks around the capital and the Turks far away may have played a part.

The stories around Gog and Magog, Alexander the Great, and the End of Times also appear quite early in South Arabia and the narratives are used in a similar fashion. This is shown by Faustina Doufikar-Aerts in her contribution to this volume. She quotes Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣan'ānī (744–827), who in his voluminous al-muṣannaf ("The Categorised") – namely traditions or ḥadīṯs of the prophet – dedicates a number of pages to the events at the End of Time and to Gog and Magog.[22] But the complex of stories surrounding Gog and Magog was also interpreted and utilised in other ways in South Arabia.

3 The "Two-Horned One" in South Arabia

The Yemeni traditionalist Wahb b. Munabbih (died in Ṣanʿā' in or shortly after 110/728), who originated from a South Arabian family of Persian descent, asked a companion of the prophet, ʿAbdallāh b. (al-)ʿAbbās (d. 68/687/88), to explain who "the two-horned one"[23] was:

21 Transl. Asad.

22 ʿAbd ar-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 11, ed. al-A'ẓamī, 381–402.

23 See the "kitāb al-tījān" ("Book of the Crown") of Ibn Hishām (who died ca. 218/833): 119–120; and also Nashwān, *Khulāṣa*, ed. ʿAlī b. Ismā'īl and Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad, 135.

> [...] he (ʿAbdallāh b. (al-)ʿAbbās) was asked about *dhū l-qarnayn*, who he was. He said: 'He was from Ḥimyar, and he was al-Ṣa'b b. dhī Marāthid, and he was the one whom God made strong on earth, and he gave him means for everything.[24] He reached the two extremities [verb. horns, Arab. *qarn*, used to explain one part of the name *dhū l-qarnayn*] of the sun and he trod the earth and built the dam against Gog and Magog.' He (Wahb b. Munabbih) asked: 'And Alexander the Rūmī[25]?' He (ʿAbdallāh b. (al-)ʿAbbās) answered: 'Alexander the Rūmī was a virtuous and wise man. He built on the sea of Ifrīqīs[26] two lighthouses, one in the land of Babylon, the other in the Land of Rome.'

After a short digression on the name *Ifrīqīs*, Nashwān continues[27]:

> Ka'b al-Aḥbār[28] was asked about dhū l-qarnayn, and he said: 'We hold it to be correct from the knowledge of our [Jewish] religious authorities (*aḥbār*) and our ancestors that he was from Ḥimyar and that he was al-Ṣaʿb b. dhī Marāthid[29]. Alexander was from the Banū Yūnān [the Greeks] b. ʿĪṣ b. Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm [Abraham], the friend of God, and his men saw ʿĪsā b. Maryam [Jesus, son of Mary], among them Galenos, Aristoteles and Daniel. Galenos and Aristoteles were from the Rūm [Byzantines] of the Banū Yūnān [Greeks], and Daniel was from the Banū Isrā'īl, one of the prophets of God.'

Notwithstanding these assertions, the source underlying al-Ṣaʿb b. dhī Marāṯhid's deeds is obviously the same cycle of sagas that surround Alexander the Great in the Pseudo-Kallisthenic tradition. As proof of the claim that the "two-horned one" was a South Arabian, Ibn Hishām turns to quotations from poetry that allude to "the two-horned one's" origins in South Arabia, such as a line from the pre-Islamic poet Imru' al-Qays: "And he built a dam where the sun rises against Gog and Magog among the mountains."[30]

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24 Cf. Qur'an 18:84: God tells the prophet what to answer if he is asked about the "two-horned one"; God says: "We made him strong on earth, and gave him means for everything."

25 Rūmī is usually the Arabic term for Byzantine people; it originally denoted someone "from Rome", and then transferred to their Byzantine "successors". Usually, Alexander is denoted as Yūnānī, "Greek" (originally "Jonian").

26 Ifrīqīs is the Arabic rendering of the name of the Roman province Africa. The name is used as a personal name in the South-Arabian genealogies (al-Hamdānī, *Iklīl*, 2, 65–79, 108, 117). The sea of Ifrīqīs is clearly the Mediterranean Sea, so Babylon (Bābilyūn) must be the old fort of the town that was to later become Cairo.

27 Nashwān, *Khulāṣa*, ed. ʿAlī b. Ismā'īl and Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad, 135.

28 An early source for Muslim authors, the name of which means "the glory of the [Jewish] learned men" in translation. Not much is known of his life. He is said to have come from a south-Arabian Jewish family of Ḥimyar/dhū Ruʾayn origin. He allegedly converted to Islam, and in 638 accompanied the caliph ʿUmar during the conquest of Jerusalem. He introduced Jewish legends (later pejoratively called Isrā'īliyyāt) into Islamic contexts. According to tradition, he died in Ḥimṣ between 652 and 656.

29 ṣaʾb can be translated as "headstrong, obstinate", and marāthid can be understood as a plural of marthad, "a generous man" (Lane 1031b); in part two of al-Hamdānī's *al-Iklīl*, one finds another al-Marāthid, the son of Marthad the Younger, on 52.

30 The translation follows Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam*, 98; for the Arabic, see Ibn Hishām n.d.: 124; Nashwān, *Khulāṣa*, ed. ʿAlī b. Ismā'īl and Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad, 139.

Ibn Hishām also quotes from a poem by Ḥassān b. Thābit[31], a contemporary of the prophet, who wanted his reminder of the victories of the South-Arabian ruler al-Ṣaʿb to spur the Arabs on to conquest. The early Arab conquests involved many South Arabians, who often stayed in the conquered lands, be it Egypt, Iraq or Syria. Like many of the poems attributed to Ḥassān, this one was presumably composed later, in Umayyad times. It is clear that "in the course of the early Arab conquests, the figure of Dhū 'l-Qarnayn was positioned, at least metaphorically, as a source of emulation for military expansion".[32]

The "two-horned one" had now become an Arab, or, to be more precise, a southern Arab, and not a Greek who had already been pocketed by the Christians. al-Ṣaʿb was a Ḥimyarī, and often thought of as having been a member of the pre-Islamic South Arabian ruling elite. This is shown by the particle *dhū*/*dhī* before his name, which was originally a pronoun. In the ninth/tenth century, it was understood as a kind of title indicating an elite status.

In the same period, a time when people from the northern Arabian regions, among them members of the family of the prophet Muḥammad, came south and claimed a special position in society, a part of the Yemeni population disapproved of them. It was difficult to oppose them openly, because that would have meant coming dangerously close to the borders between religiosity and unbelief. The disapproval of people from the north was therefore expressed in non-religious ways and language: The South-Arabian glorious past was emphasised, thereby presupposing that the people from the north lacked a comparable past, without explicitly stating this fact. The South-Arabian sector of the genealogies was reworked, adapted and equipped with many shining, South-Arabian sounding names like al-Ṣaʿb b. dhī Marāthid. Additionally, already existing narratives like the one about Gog and Magog were adapted to South Arabian needs. It is little wonder that one of the staunchest advocates of the South-Arabian side in his time, the abovementioned Nashwān b. Saʿīd al-Ḥimyarī (d. 1178), relied on the material collected by Ibn Hishām when he wrote an explication of his *qaṣīda al-Ḥimyarīya* under the title of *Khulāṣat al-sīra al-jāmiʿa li-ʿajāʾib akhbār al-mulūk al-tabābiʿa* ("Quintessence of the comprehensive history concerning the wondrous reports of the Tubbaʿ kings"[33]). Nashwān's works did not only play "a part in the struggle of the tribes of South Arabian origin against the northern Arabs for predominance in the Muslim world".[34] As a Yemeni Zaydī scholar, he opposed the claim that only members of the family of the prophet could be imams or leaders of the community. For him, every Zaydī learned man was eligible to become imam. With this claim, Nashwān directly opposed the descendants of the prophet.

31 Lived c. 563–674; he was a companion of the prophet (one of the ṣaḥāba) and a member of the Khazraj tribe, which allegedly had a South-Arabian genealogy.
32 Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam*, 98.
33 *tubbaʿ* was understood as a title of pre-Islamic south Arabian kings.
34 Lichtenstädter, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 2, 976.

4 Integrating the People

Scenarios of menace and of successfully overcoming former foes can be used as foils against an actual enemy, and can thereby help figures of authority to create or maintain communities in a manner that suits their own interests. It makes little difference whether the former enemy was a real one or, as in the case of Gog and Magog, one existing only in (holy) books and narratives. The boundaries to these enemies, to actual ones as well as to past ones, have to be made visible and clear, and – if necessary – the distance between oneself and the enemy has to be lengthened. Time and again, Gog and Magog were used as foils against actual enemies like the Scythians, Huns and Turks, who threatened the group to which the relevant politicians and other agents believed they belonged. In the light of that menace, people had to be induced to common action to overcome the threat and to be victorious, just like Alexander the Great was when he built the dam against Gog and Magog. If the people imagined as a community were to close ranks, they could be just as successful as Alexander or the "two-horned one". Gog and Magog were imagined to live near the margins of the earth, as far away as possible geographically. But their distance from humanity could be still further emphasised by different means; their depiction with dogs' faces in some of the Arabic literature of the 9th century is one such example.

In projecting the remembrance of Gog and Magog onto an actual foe, what was originally a community of remembrance becomes a community united by the expectation of victory over that enemy. This is true of the use of the story of Sallām the interpreter, a function not expressly addressed by Ibn Khurradādhbih himself but by some of those who retold the story.

The events around Gog and Magog and the "two-horned one" were instrumentalised differently in South Arabia: there, the narratives are used for the purpose of legitimisation, i.e. to enhance the status of those responsible, while at the same time opening up the possibility that the position of others would be devalued.

Additionally, during the early Arab conquests the figure of *dhū l-qarnayn* was used, at least metaphorically, as "a source of emulation and stimulus for military expansion".[35]

Having all that in mind, it comes as no particular surprise that before the first Turkish (Ottoman) siege of Vienna in the year 1529 pamphlets were distributed among the troops of the Austrian side, where the Ottoman troops (here, too, commonly called the Turks) were presented as Gog and Magog; after several centuries, Gog and Magog could still be instrumentalised for the same goals as in South Arabia between the tenth and twelfth century.

35 cf. Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam*, 98.

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Immo Warntjes

A.D. 672 – The Apex of Apocalyptic Thought in the Early Medieval Latin West?

In Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the Second Coming of Christ was connected to the beginning of the seventh millennium. This raised apocalyptic expectations for the end of sixth millennium. When exactly this was to take place depended on how one counted the years since Creation. Three different methods of counting were introduced successively, with Christ's birth in AM 5500 (AMI), AM 5200 (AMII), and 3952 (AMIII). AMII replaced AMI roughly 100 years before AMI would have reached the end of the sixth millennium, and the same applies to AMIII replacing AMII. The general assumption is that the introduction of a new count that pushed the end of the sixth millennium back by a few centuries is a significant indicator of widespread apocalyptic anxiety. This article analyses countdowns to the end of the sixth millennium according to AMII (AM 6000 = A.D. 800). It concludes that these do not reflect bottom-up reactions to apocalyptic fear, but are rather the product of debates among the Christian intellectual elite about scientific-theological issues.

1 Introduction

The sixth-century text known as *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*, ascribed to a certain Gildas by both Columbanus and Bede, describes in detail the conquest of late Roman, Christian Britain by the pagan Saxons, its prehistory, causes and consequences.[1] Starting with the Roman invasion, Gildas recounts the Britons' conversion to Christianity, the withdrawal of the Roman legions that left the British areas exposed to Irish and Pictish raiding, the resulting British call for aid to the pagan Saxons, whose support turned to oppression. He ends with a scathing rebuke of secular Briton leadership becoming tyrannical and ecclesiastical values being undermined by mortal sins. The text's rhetoric and imagery are decidedly apocalyptic. According to Gildas, the Saxon enemy's devastation of the country and a subsequent famine that further decimated the population were not taken seriously as signs of divine displeasure. In the ensuing phase of growth, the Britons, "welcoming Satan as an angel of light" (*exceptio Satanae pro angelo lucis*), succumbed to vices and ungodli-

1 For the problems in dating Gildas's work, see especially O'Sullivan, *De excidio of Gildas*; an earlier date is proposed by Higham, *The English Conquest*, 118–145; for a recent summary of the debate, see Schustereder, *Strategies of Identity Construction*, 74–79.

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ness; God, therefore, "wished to purge his family" (*volente deo purgare familiam suam*) and caused the pagan enemy to return, this time accompanied by plague. The barbarian Saxons brought "just punishment of the crimes that had gone before" (*ultionis iustae praecedentium scelerum*); British slavery ensued, but in his mercy, the Lord granted the Britons another victory. However, they again reverted to their vices, kings turned into tyrants, simony prevailed, and clerics became false prophets and "instruments of the devil" (*diabolica organa*).[2] Gildas concludes:

> [...] except for yourselves, who are held bound so tight with iniquities in this world that you cannot at all ascend to heaven, but must fall into the dreadful dungeons of hell, if you do not turn to the Lord in this life? Nor should any priest applaud himself solely because he is conscious that his own body is pure: for if some of those he is in charge of die because of his ignorance or laziness or flattery, their souls shall be required on judgement day from his hands as though he had killed them. Death comes no sweeter from the hand of a good man than that of a bad. [...] May the almighty God of all consolation and pity preserve the very few good shepherds from all harm, and, conquering the common enemy, make them citizens of the heavenly city of Jerusalem, that is, of the congregation of all the saints, the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.[3]

Gildas's letter is not explicitly linked to the last book of the Bible – it is not a commentary on the Book of Revelation – but it uses apocalyptic rhetoric and imagery. Indeed, while there are few early medieval commentaries on Revelation,[4] Gildas's work is a prime example that early medieval authors nevertheless did write about the End Times, though perhaps not using the genres that modern scholars have labelled "apocalyptic writings".[5] Gildas provides us with many features characteristic of authors who employ apocalyptic narratives in the early Middle Ages. The follow-

2 The quotes from Gildas, *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*, 21–22, 24, 67, ed. Mommsen, 37, 39, 64; trans. Winterbottom, *Gildas*, 13–79, at 24, 25, 27, 54. For the question of literary topoi vs historical fact in Gildas's work, see McKee, "Gildas: Lessons from History;" for Gildas's rationale and rhetoric, see Higham, *English Conquest*, 7–89, 146–202.

3 Gildas, *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*, 109–110, ed. Mommsen, 85: *[...] praeter vosmetipsos, qui ita ligati iniquitatibus in hoc mundo tenemini, ut in caelis nequamquam ascendatis, sed infaustis tartari ergastulis, non conversi in hac vita ad dominum decidatis? Nec sibi quisquam sacerdotum de corporis mundi solum conscientia supplaudat, cum eorum quis praeest, si qui propter eius imperitiam vel desidiam seu adulationem perierint, in die iudicii de eiusdem manibus, veluti interfectoris, animae exquirantur. quia nec dulcior mors quae infertur a bono quoque homine quam malo. [...] Ipse omnipotens deus totius consolationis et misericordiae paucissimos bonos pastores conservet ab omni malo et municipes faciat subacto communi hoste civitatis Hierusalem caelestis, hoc est, sanctorum omnium congregationis, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus, cui sit honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen*; transl. Winterbottom, *Gildas*, 79.

4 For overviews of early medieval apocalypse commentaries, see Matter, "The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis," and Matter, "Exegesis of the Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages" (a reworking of the aforementioned article); Schipper, "Bede's Commentary on the Apocalypse and the Carolingians;" Poole, "The Western Apocalypse Commentary Tradition of the Early Middle Ages."

5 This underlies the overview by Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*.

ing more general considerations, some of which are also applicable to Gildas's work, may help our understanding and interpretation of such texts:

- Writing was almost exclusively in the hands of a Christian, intellectual elite of considerable spiritual, political, and economic power, whose prime legitimisation was Christianity. Should the link between this elite and religion be questioned or undermined, its status and privileges were at risk.
- There were external and internal factors that could challenge or threaten the close link between this elite and Christianity. Potential external factors threatening the elite's dominance included, most prominently, military defeat at the hand of a pagan force (such as Irish and Pictish raiders, the Germanic invaders of Gildas's narrative; and in later centuries the Saracens, Vikings, and Hungarians), which demonstrated Christian military (if not spiritual) inferiority. The Christian elite's role was to safeguard God's blessing of society, and military defeat and other external factors, like famine, plague, extreme weather, and celestial phenomena, were interpreted as signs of God's displeasure with society's behaviour and thus indicators of the elite's failure to fulfill its prime task. The most obvious internal factor that could undermine the elite's status was internal power-struggles, its members' shortcomings in honouring their own set of moral values, or accusations of heresy.
- In such times of crisis, Christian intellectuals responded in two ways, depending on their status. Those in power, in the highest ecclesiastical and thus also political positions, tried to divert the blame that would naturally be directed at them by pointing the finger at their ecclesiastical opposition, secular rulers, or society more generally. In such cases, the Christian elite styled itself not so much as the guardians of society's well-being, but as the interpreters of God's will. This method was so effective that apocalyptic narratives were regularly employed to cement privilege and power. Those among the intellectual Christian elite who did not hold high office or enjoy power, privilege, and authority, but only aspired to these, used also external, but particularly internal shortcomings of the higher-ranked clergy in order to undermine the latter's authority and position themselves as potential successors of higher moral integrity.

If, then, writing the apocalypse was an ideal instrument used by the Christian elite to retain its privileges and to preserve the social hierarchy (or as a short-cut to gain access to higher status), is it still possible to trace more widespread apocalyptic anxiety? In other words, do early medieval texts employing apocalyptic narratives only reflect discourses that were triggered within the Christian elite and directed at its relation to secular power holders, or can we detect in them also "bottom-up" concerns? Were the writings of the intellectual elite informed by apocalyptic fears among the general population?

2 Early Medieval Countdowns

The genre most indicative of widespread apocalyptic anxiety may be a substantial corpus of "countdowns" to the end of the sixth millennium. These are brief accounts positioning the author's *annus praesens* in the wider context of salvation history by counting the years from the creation of the world to the time of writing, and then indicating the number of years left until the second coming of Christ. This corpus was inspired by the second-century *Letter of Barnabas*, whose author combined the six days of creation with the psalmist's statement that one day of the Lord is like 1000 years into the theory that the second coming of Christ would occur at the end of the sixth millennium.[6] When exactly the sixth millennium was going to end obviously depended on the calculation of how many years had passed since creation (AM = *anni mundi*). The early Middle Ages principally knew three different ways of reckoning the age of the world, labelled AMI, AMII, and AMIII after Richard Landes's classification in his seminal article of 1988.[7] AMI goes back to the writings of Hippolytus of Rome and Julianus Africanus in the third century, who both dated the birth of Christ to AM 5500; the end of the sixth millennium would therefore occur in A.D. 500.[8] AMII is the Septuagint-based count of Eusebius of Caesarea, known in the Latin West through Jerome's translation of A.D. 381/382. According to Eusebius's calculation, Christ's birth took place in AM 5199/5200, and the sixth millennium would therefore end in A.D. 799/800.[9] AMIII is the Vulgate count popularised by Bede in the eighth century, according to which Christ was born in AM 3952. Bede's method was not used for calculating the end of the world, as his more prominent use of *anni domini* (A.D.), still in use today, gave rise to the belief that the second coming of Christ would occur a millennium after the first coming, i.e. in A.D. 1000 (or any other year suggested by recalculations of A.D. chronology).[10]

Richard Landes drew attention to the phenomenon that AMI was widely replaced by AMII, and AMII in turn by AMIII, shortly before the end of the sixth

6 ΒΑΡΝΑΒΑ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ 15.3–5, ed. Kraft and trans. Prigent, 182–185.

7 Landes, "Lest the Millenium Be Fulfilled."

8 See especially Mosshammer, *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era*, 327–329, 387–421; also Rühl, *Chronologie des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 190–191; Haeusler, *Das Ende der Geschichte in der mittelalterlichen Weltchronistik*, 7–23.

9 See Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and the Greek Chronographic Tradition*, 78; Burgess and Witakowski, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography*, 79–84.

10 See, most prominently, Fried, *Aufstieg aus dem Untergang*; Fried, "Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende;" Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000;" and the essays assembled in *Apocalyptic Year 1000*, ed. Landes, Gow, and Meter, which includes the two articles just mentioned, Fried's in English translation. For the re-calculations of the incarnation era, see now Verbist, *Duelling with the Past*; Nothaft, *Dating the Passion*, 103–112, and Nothaft, "An Eleventh-Century Chronologer at Work."

millennium was reached according to their respective calculations. According to Landes, this was not coincidental – quite the contrary. He argued that this phenomenon proves how seriously the issue was taken in the early Middle Ages: the belief that the world would come to a close at the end of the sixth millennium was so widespread and created such a dynamic of apocalyptic fear that it forced the intellectual elites to revise their count, each time pushing the end of the sixth millennium back by a few hundred years, in order to calm the faithful and restore order.

In Landes's reading, calculations counting down to the end of the sixth millennium (here termed chronological millennialism) are the type of text most indicative of widespread apocalyptic fear.[11] The biggest corpus of such countdowns survives for AMII, according to which the sixth millennium ended in A.D. 799/800. So far, I have been able to identify 15 witnesses (see Table 1); surely many more are yet to be found in the manuscripts. These countdowns appear in five different manuscript contexts (column 3 in Table 1):[12] in contexts 1 and 2), they appear as continuations to Isidore's or Fredegar's chronicles, respectively; in context 3) as conclusions to short tracts counting the number of years from the creation of the world to the present year (*summae annorum*), all written from a Frankish perspective; in context 4) in connection with Easter calculations (computus), principally the one invented by Victorius of Aquitaine in A.D. 457; and in context 5) as part of an Iberian tradition that is unconnected to Isidore.

The beauty of these countdowns is that most of them can be securely placed in space and time (columns 1 and 4 in Table 1). This is because they typically do include not only a reference to the *annus praesens* of the author (from which the number of years to the end of the sixth millennium are counted down), but also to the reigning king, which gives them geographical anchorage.

Tab. 1: Countdowns relating to AMII

A.D.	transmission	context	geographic reference
644	poem *Deus a quo facta fuit* (MGH Poetae 4.2, 695–7)	4 – Victorian computus	Domnall mac Áedo of Cenél Conaill – northern Ireland / western Scotland
649 (?)	Würzburg UB Mp. th. f. 28 (saec. VIII)	3 – Frankish *summae annorum*	Sigebert III – Austrasia

11 For a definition of this term and the countdowns discussed below, see Warntjes, "The Final Countdown and the Reform of the Liturgical Calendar in the Early Middle Ages," 51–55. Haeusler's approach (*Das Ende der Geschichte in der mittelalterlichen Weltchronistik*, especially 23–32) of just focusing on the most prominent world-chronicles, not their recensions, or smaller texts, neglects this corpus in its entirety.

12 See Warntjes, "The Final Countdown and the Reform of the Liturgical Calendar in the Early Middle Ages," 56–61.

A.D.	transmission	context	geographic reference
658	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 309 (saec. XI), 95v; Tours BM 334 (A.D. 819), 17v; Geneva BU 50 (A.D. 804?), 133r; Paris BnF Lat. 16361 (saec. XII), p. 241.	4 – Victorian computus	Suibne mac Commáin of the Déisi – mid-eastern Ireland
[672]	León AC 8 (saec. XI), 25v	5 – Iberian tradition	Wamba – Visigothic Spain
672	Paris BnF Lat. 17544 (saec. XII), 114r; Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 294; Venice BM Lat. II 47; Vienna ÖNB 4831	1 – Continuations of Isidore's chronicles	Chlothar III – Neustria and Burgundy (Bourges / north-east Aquitaine)
673	Milan BA H 150 inf. (saec. IX), 129v	4 – Victorian computus	Chlothar III – Neustria and Burgundy (the MS context favours Burgundy)
675	Oxford BL e Mus. 113 (saec. X/XI), 114v–115r	3 – Frankish *summae annorum*	Theuderic III – Neustria and Burgundy (the textual context suggests Neustria)
[699]	Bremen UB msc 0046 (*c*.A.D. 900), 38v	4 – Victorian computus	
[715]	Paris BnF Lat. 10910 (A.D. 715?), 184r	2 – cross-reference to Fredegar's text	
727	*Dial. Burg.* 17 (Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich*, 374: Bern BB 611 (saec. VIII$^{1/2}$), 96v	4 – Victorian computus	
736	First continuation of Fredegar (MGH SS rer. Merov. 2, 176)	2 – continuation of Fredegar	
738 (+ 768)	London BL Cotton Nero A II (saec. XI), 36r	3 – Frankish *summae annorum*	
742	Madrid BUC 134 (saec. XIII), 25v	5 – Iberian tradition	
747	Florence BML Plut. 20.54 (saec. X), 15v	4 – Victorian computus	Lombard King Rachis – northern Italy
786	Beatus of Liébana, *In apocalypsin* IV 5.16	5 – Iberian tradition	Beatus of Liébana (author) – northern Iberia (Asturias)

If these countdowns were indicative of widespread apocalyptic fear, they would allow us to map this phenomenon in seventh- and eighth-century Europe:

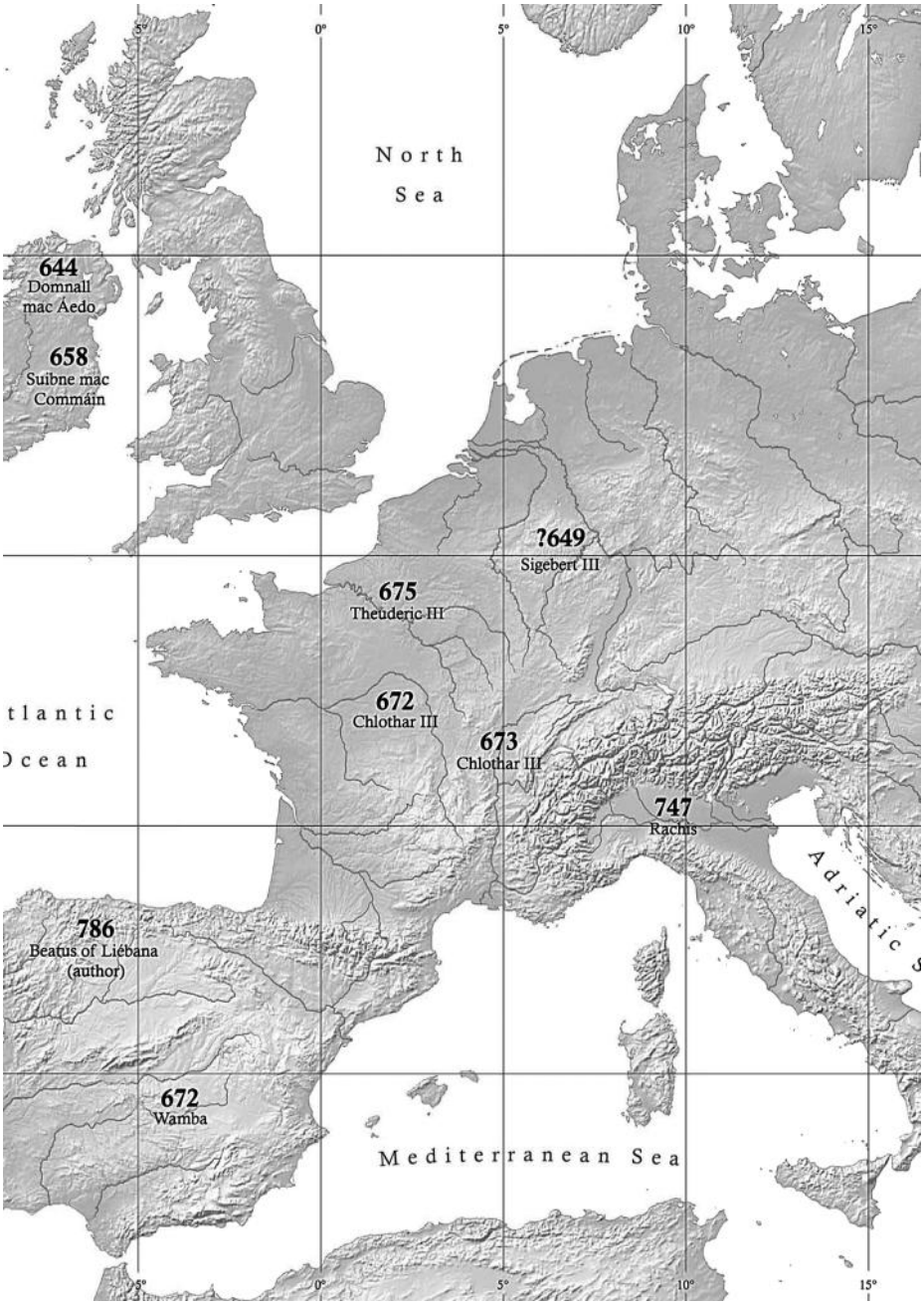

Fig. 1: Mapping of countdowns to the end of the sixth millenium in seventh- and eighth-century Europe (© Mappa Mundi Carthography)

However, whether these countdowns to the end of the world really do reflect widespread apocalyptic anxiety among the general populace remains to be analysed. Certainly, the concentration of countdowns in the first half of the A.D. 670s is very striking. The evidence comes from four different manuscript contexts (continuations of Isidore's chronicle; Frankish *summae annorum*; Victorian computus; and the non-Isidorean Iberian tradition) and from four different geographic regions (Neustria, Burgundy, Aquitaine, Iberia). The text of all four dating clauses is essential for the following analysis:

672: León AC 8 (saec. XI), 25v:

> *Ab incarnatione autem domini nostri Ihesu Christi usque ad presentem primum glorissimum [recte glorissimi] Wambanis principis annum, qui est era DCCX, sunt anni DCCLXII [recte DCLXXII[13]].*
> *Ab exordio autem mundi usque ad presentem et primum Wambanis annum, qui est era DCCX, colligitur anni V̄DCCCLXXII. Et in era DCCCXXXVIII completi fuerint anni V̄I̅.*
>
> From the incarnation of our lord Jesus Christ to the present, first year of the most glorious King Wamba, which is era 710, there are 672 years.
> From the beginning of the world to the present and first year of Wamba, which is era 710, 5872 year are collected. And in era 838, 6000 years will have been completed.[14]

672: Paris BnF Lat. 17544 (saec. XII), 114r:

> *Post hanc supputationem usque in annum praesentem, quo Chlotharius exercitum contra Wascones movit, id est quintodecimo regni ipsius, additi sunt anni LX a tempore item Chlotharii abavi ipsius, in quo anno apostolicus vir domnus Chado episcopus et Barcelaicus abbas basilicam sancti Sulpicii a fundamento edificare ceperunt circa illam priorem, ubi in corpore requiescit. Qui annus centesimus tercius decimus cum bissexto in ciclo Victorii repperitur et ab obitu sancti Sulpicii XXus VIus esse probatur. Sunt ab exordio mundi usque ad predictum tempus anni V̄DCCCLXXIII. De sexto vero miliario supersunt anni CXXVII.*
> *Quia idem Victorius a duobus Geminis et tempore passionis Christi cum consulibus in suo ciclo usque ad Constantinum et Rufum illius anni consules intimavit annos CCCCXXX et sine consulibus CII. Et ab initio mundi usque ad predictum annum, quo Constantinus et Rufus consules erant, titulavit in suo prologo annos esse V̄DCLVIII. Peractis illis centum et duobus sine consulibus, quos ipse futuros scripsit, et CXIII de recapitulatione cicli invenies summam annorum superius intimatam, id est V̄DCCCLXXIII.*

13 The correction is confirmed by Florence BML Plut.20.54, 45v (http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AVsVHEIgkUprGCn5XSfO&c=II.%20Isidori%20iunioris%20Chronographia,%20cum%20prologo#/oro/96).

14 León AC 8 is available online at http://bvpb.mcu.es/es/consulta/registro.cmd?id=449895. There is a beautiful facsimile edition of the codex in *Liber Antiphonarium*, curated by Cuesta. See also Warntjes, "The Final Countdown and the Reform of the Liturgical Calendar in the Early Middle Ages," 54–55. All translations, unless stated otherwise, are mine.

According to this count, up to the present year, in which Chlothar led an army against the Basques, i.e. the 15th year of his reign, 60 years are added to the time of Chlothar, the great-grandfather of this one, in which year the apostolic man, lord, and bishop Chado and the abbot Barcelaicus began to build from its foundation the church of the Holy Sulpicius around that earlier place, where he [Sulpicius] rested in the flesh. This year is found as the 113th with bissextus [= AP 645 = A.D. 672] in the cycle of Victorius, and from the death of Sulpicius it is proven to be the 26th. There are 5873 years from the beginning of the world to the aforementioned time. Of the sixth millennium, however, 127 years remain.
This is because the same Victorius published in his cycle 430 years with consuls from the two Gemini and the time of the passion of Christ to the consuls Constantine and Rufus of his own year, and 102 years without consuls. In his prologue, he argued that from the beginning of the world to that year in which Constantine and Rufus were consuls, 5658 years had passed. After those 102 years without consuls, which he tabulated as future ones, had passed, and 113 of the return of the cycle, you will find the sum of years given above, i.e. 5873.[15]

673: Milan BA H 150 inf. (saec. IX), 129v:

A mundi principio usque ad diluvio sunt anni ^{II}*CCXLII. Item ab initio mundi usque ad passione domini nostri Jesu Christi sunt anni* V̄*CCXXVIII. Similiter ab initio mundi usque eo tempore quando ciclo isto Victurius condedit sunt anni* V̄*DCXLVIII. In summa enim ab initio mundi usque in presente anno, id est sexto decimo anno regnante Chlotario filio Chlodoueo, sunt anni* V̄*DCCCLXXIIII. Restant de sexto miliario anni CXXVI.*

From the beginning of the world to the Flood are 2242 years. Likewise, from the beginning of the world to the passion of our lord Jesus Christ are 5228 years. Likewise, from the beginning of the world to the time when Victorius invented that very cycle are 5648 years. In total, from the beginning of the world to the present year, i.e. the sixteenth year of the reign of Chlothar, son of Chlodovech, are 5874 years. 126 years remain of the sixth millennium.[16]

675: Oxford BL e Mus. 113 (saec. X/XI), 114v–115r:

A passione domini nostri Ihesu Christi usque ad transitum Childeberti regis, in quo anno cyclus Victurii rurso ex passione dominica circulum annorum ad inicium rediit, sunt anni DXXXII. In summa ab inicio mundi usque in praedicto anno sunt anni V̄*DCCLX. Ab eo anno usque primo anno regni Chlotharii filii Chlodouei sunt anni LXXXVIIII [recte LXXXXVIIII]. Ab inde usque transitum illius, quando Heldericus germanus suus tria hec regna Neustria, Austria, et Burgundia subiugauit, sunt anni quindecim et menses [erasure] V; Hildericus regnauit in Neustria annos II et menses VI. Cui germanus suus Teodericus successit in regno. Ab eo anno, quando passus est dominus nostri Ihesus Christus, usque primo anno Teoderici regis anni sunt DCLXVIII [recte DCXLVIII]. Fiunt insimul ab inicio mundi usque in predicto primo anni [recte anno] regni Teoderici incliti regis anni* V̄*DCCCLXX et VI. Et restat de sexto miliario anni CXXIIII. Explicit.*

15 *Additamenta ad chronica maiora*, ed. Mommsen, 493, with correction by Krusch, "Die Zusätze zu den Chroniken Isidors," 365. Warntjes, "The Final Countdown and the Reform of the Liturgical Calendar in the Early Middle Ages," 56–57.
16 For this dating clause see especially Krusch, "Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande," 132; Warntjes, *The Munich Computus*, LXXIII–IV; Warntjes, "The Final Countdown and the Reform of the Liturgical Calendar in the Early Middle Ages," 59.

> From the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ up to the death of King Childebert – in which year the cycle of Victorius returned from the Lord's Passion to the beginning of the cycle of years – there are 532 years. In total, from the beginning of the world up to the aforementioned year, there are 5,760 years. From this year up to the first year of the reign of Chlothar, son of Clovis, there are 89 [*recte* 99] years. From then up to his death, when his brother Childeric subjugated these three kingdoms of Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy, there are 15 years and 5 months. Childeric reigned in Neustria for 2 years and 6 months. His brother Theuderic succeeded him in the kingdom. From this year, when our Lord Jesus Christ suffered, up to the first year of the reign of Theuderic, there are 668 [*recte* 648] years. These make altogether, from the beginning of the world up to the aforesaid first year of the reign of the renowned king Theuderic, 5876 years. And there remain 124 years of the sixth millennium. The end.[17]

The first year in this cluster of countdowns is A.D. 672. In order to understand what triggered such a widespread use of chronological millennialism at that particular moment, it is essential to analyse this crucial year in detail.

3 The Year A.D. 672

In the early Middle Ages, apocalyptic fear was usually generated by warfare, famine, pestilence, rare and disturbing astronomical phenomena (such as eclipses, comets, or solar activity), earthquakes, or extreme weather. In the period under discussion here, between c. A.D. 640 and 800, the Arab invasion of the Iberian Peninsula from A.D. 711 onwards was the most cataclysmic political change (though it only indirectly influenced Beatus of Liébana's commentary on the apocalypse, which contained the last countdown listed in Table 1 above). Likewise, the Viking incursions in Britain and Ireland starting in the A.D. 790s had a similar effect (and are more directly connected to the contemporary apocalyptic discourse).[18] Both events, however, took place too late to explain the cluster of chronological millennialism under discussion here.

Outside of the political sphere, the A.D. 660s saw the highest density of unsettling and catastrophic events in the seventh and eighth centuries, starting with the famous total solar eclipse of A.D. 664, which was followed by plague and widespread famine. While the Annals of Ulster only transmit some cryptic entries,[19] Bede provides a fuller narrative, specifying that the plague depopulated large areas

17 The passage is transcribed (and discussed) in *Additamenta ad chronica maiora*, ed. Mommsen, 491–492; Waitz, "Handschriften in englischen Bibliotheken," 383; Krusch, "Chronologie der merowingischen Könige," 477–481, and Krusch, "Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande," 133. Cf. also Krusch, "Die Zusätze zu den Chroniken Isidors," 365; Warntjes, "The Final Countdown and the Reform of the Liturgical Calendar in the Early Middle Ages," 56–57.
18 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 176–183.
19 *Annals of Ulster* s.a. 663 (= 664), ed. and trans. Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, 134–135.

of Anglo-Saxon England and Ireland.[20] The plague's devastating consequences and its prominent place in the collective memory of the Irish and Anglo-Saxons can also be seen in Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, written around A.D. 700. This saint's life is divided into three books, on prophecies, miracles, and angelic apparitions, respectively. The second book ends with Saint Columba's patronage and spiritual guidance protecting the regions of modern-day Scotland from the plague.[21] It may well be that the apocalyptic countdowns of the A.D. 670s are a delayed reaction to the problems faced in the previous decade. However, the events just described took place in Britain and Ireland, whereas the countdowns of the A.D. 670s originated exclusively on the Continent.[22]

Three of the four countdowns under scrutiny here, dating to the years from A.D. 672 to 675, can be placed in Neustria, Burgundy, and north-eastern Aquitaine. Because of the explicit references to reigning Neustrian-Burgundian kings, James Palmer considered a political background the most likely scenario.[23] The second and third countdown transcribed above refer to the 15th and 16th year of the Neustrian-Burgundian king Chlothar III, respectively. The fourth provides more detail, stating that Chlothar III died after ruling for 15 years and 5 months, and that his reign was followed by the tyranny in Neustria of Childeric II who reigned for 2 years and 5 months. This reign, in turn, came to an end with the accession of Theuderic to the Neustrian throne. This last countdown certainly smacks of political partisanship, but to connect all three countdowns to the power struggle between Childeric II, Bishop Leudegard of Autun, and the Neustrian mayor of the palace Ebroin seems

20 See especially Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3.27, ed. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera historica*, 1, 191–194; trans. Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 311, 313, 315. For the apocalyptic context of this passage, see Foot, "Plenty, Portents and Plague," 27–29. For the plague in Britain and Ireland in the early Middle Ages (including good overviews of the sources), see Maddicott, "Plague in Seventh-Century England;" Dooley, "The Plague and its Consequences."

21 Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, 2.46, ed. and trans. by Anderson and Anderson, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, 178–181; cf. the new translation by Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona*, 203–204, with commentary 348–349. Adomnán's references to the plague are discussed, though in a different context and with rather controversial results, by Woods, "Adomnán, Plague and the Easter Controversy."

22 For an overview of occurrences of the plague on the Continent in the second half of the seventh century, see Biraben and Le Goff, "La peste dans le haut moyen age," 1492–1497 (interestingly, the authors do not consider the epidemic described in Insular sources for the A.D. 660s to have been the plague; more generally, Britain and Ireland do not feature in their discussion). Obviously, the scarcity of sources available for this time and place may distort the picture; certainly, the *Life of St Eligius of Noyon* (ed. Levison, 669–742) seems to suggest that the plague of the A.D. 660s also hit at least the border region between Austrasia and Neustria: chapter 2.41 (724–725) relates a vision shortly after Eligius's death concerning Queen Balthild; Eligius had died in A.D. 660, Balthild in A. D. 680 (and, more generally, the *Vita* was composed by Bishop Audoin of Rouen, whose death is recorded for A.D. 686); chapter 2.43 (725–726) then narrates that "at the same time, a plague (*morbus*) devastated most violently many of the cities of Francia", but a certain Ingomar in the city of Thérouanne was spared through his veneration for Eligius.

23 Palmer, "The Ordering of Time," 617; Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 86, 91.

to telescope events anachronistically. Particularly the first of the three countdowns appears to have been written before the conflict broke out, which, however, turned into a large-scale political crisis only at Chlothar's death and Childeric II accession.[24] Also, the last of these three countdowns, written at the end of the conflict, could have explicitly referred to it, but chose to remain silent. James Palmer's hypothesis that the Frankish political conflict triggered the production of apocalyptic countdowns also cannot account for the production of the one from Visigothic Spain, a kingdom unconnected to Neustrian politics at this time. More convincing would have been the observation that two of the four countdowns described above mark the first year of rule of the respective king (Wamba and Theuderic III) and therefore could have been composed to commemorate the respective change in rulership. However, for this purpose a simple *summa annorum*, counting the years to the accession of the new king, would have been enough, there was no need for adding a countdown to the end of the sixth millennium.

4 The Victorian Computus

Since there is no conclusive evidence that the "traditional" causes of widespread apocalyptic fear were at play in the A.D. 670s, the decade's cluster of dating clauses containing apocalyptic countdowns must have been triggered by something else. Since their authors belonged to the Christian intellectual elite, the trigger may have been a theological or intellectual problem, rather than a political event or a social, celestial, or natural phenomenon. This brings us back to the textual and manuscript context of the countdowns in question. The countdown of A.D. 673 in the Milan MS is embedded in the computistical writings of Victorius of Aquitaine, sandwiched between the latter's prologue and Easter table, here covering the years AP 1–120 and 144–154 (the latter wrongly labeled 121–131; this is equivalent to A.D. 560–679 and 703–713). The dating clauses written as a continuation of Isidore of A.D. 672 and the *Summa annorum* of A.D. 675, respectively, explicitly use Victorius's Easter table as one of their central dating components. Three of the four countdowns in question, therefore, present a direct link to Victorius's Easter table. The Aquitanian's paschal calculations may therefore provide the solution to the problem.

In the second century, followers of the still emerging Christian belief decided that their highest religious feast day, commemorating the crucifixion and resurrection of their saviour, was not to be celebrated on a fixed Julian calendar date.

24 For the background of this conflict, see especially Dupraz, *Contribution à l'histoire du regnum Francorum*, 354–369; Ewig, "Die fränkischen Teilreiche im 7. Jahrhundert," repr. in Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*, at 213–216; and also idem, *Merowinger und das Frankenreich*, 160–161; Geary, *Before France and Germany*, 189–190; Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, 69–71. For the difficulties in dating this conflict, see Dupraz, "Essai sur une chronologie nouvelle," 552–561.

Rather, following the information provided in the Gospels, the first Sunday after the full moon occurring at the time of the Hebrew lunar month *Nisan* (the first month of spring) was proclaimed the correct date. The connection of Easter to the lunar phases (or the synodic lunar month, i.e. the period from one new or full moon to the next) proved fateful. The developing Eastern churches, with their intellectual centre in Alexandria, favoured a 19-year lunar cycle, while the emerging Western church with Rome at its core first experimented with an 8-year lunar cycle, before embracing, in the late third and early fourth centuries, an 84-year lunar cycle. This variation in practice led to ongoing disputes between Alexandria and Rome, which the pope found increasingly embarrassing.[25] In A.D. 457, Pope Leo I commissioned Victorius, a renowned mathematician from Aquitaine, with the task of bringing the Western calculations in line with the East.

Creating an Easter table is not an easy undertaking, as the amount of numerical data to be processed is considerable. Certainly, it seems that for centuries after Victorius no further attempt was made at establishing a more accurate system: besides other considerations, it must have been deemed too complex a task. Following the Alexandrian example, Victorius opted for a 19-year lunar cycle, though the structure of his version differed from the Alexandrian one in a number of details.[26] Since a 19-year lunar cycle is not compatible with the 28-year weekday cycle (after all, Easter had to be celebrated on a Sunday), the result of Victorius's efforts was a (19x28=) 532-year Easter table.[27]

There were three reasons why some of these 532 years proved problematic for later users of Victorius's table.

25 For the late antique Easter controversy between Rome and Alexandria and the underlying Easter cycles, see especially Schwartz, "Christliche und jüdische Ostertafeln;" Schmid, *Osterfestberechnung in der abendländischen Kirche*, 1–60; Chaîne, *Chronologie des temps chrétiens*, 19–70; van de Vyver, "Évolution du comput alexandrine;" Declercq, *Anno Domini*, 49–82; Mosshammer, *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era*, 109–316; Nothaft, *Dating the Passion*, 35–80.
26 The differences are most prominently discussed in Jones, "Victorian and Dionysiac Paschal Tables," repr. in idem, *Bede, the Schools and the Computus*.
27 Victorius's computistica consist of a full 532-year Easter table and a letter to archdeacon (later pope) Hilarus, which serves as a prologue to said table. His computistica are edited by Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 4–57. For this Easter reckoning, see especially Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, vol. 2, 275–285; Schwartz, "Christliche und jüdische Ostertafeln," 72–80; Bedae opera, ed. Jones, 61–68; Declercq, *Anno Domini*, 82–95; Declercq, "Dionysius Exiguus," 181–187; Mosshammer, *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era*, 239–244; Holford-Strevens, "Paschal Lunar Calendars up to Bede," 192–196.

4.1 Two Dates for Easter Sunday in certain Years

Victorius was supposed to reconcile Roman with Alexandrian tradition. A first step was to abandon the Roman 84-year Easter table and to adopt a 19-year lunar cycle. But there were further differences between Eastern and Western practice. The most important one, from a theological perspective, was the differing lunar limits of Easter Sunday: Since Easter was agreed to fall on the first Sunday after the first full moon (*luna* 14) after the spring equinox, the lunar age on this day could vary by seven days. The Roman church set their lunar limits from *luna* 16 to 22 in accordance with the lunar age implied by St John's Gospel for the resurrection (*luna* 16). The Alexandrian church, on the other hand, allowed Easter to fall between *luna* 15 to 21, commemorating the crucifixion according to the Synoptic Gospels (*luna* 15)[28] and the limits for the Jewish feast of unleavened bread as outlined in Leviticus.[29] Put in (over)simplified language, when Alexandria allowed Easter Sunday to fall on *luna* 15 (the day immediately following the first full moon after the vernal equinox), Rome would postpone by a week to *luna* 22. In the prologue to his Easter table, Victorius explained that he noted both Alexandrian *luna* 15 and Roman *luna* 22 in the relevant years in order to accommodate both traditions.[30] However, he did not do this consistently for every year in which his system allowed Easter Sunday on *luna* 22; a comprehensive study of how exactly he set the double dates remains a major desideratum in modern scholarship.[31] What was designed as an act of diplomacy earned Victorius the scorn of later commentators, who accused him of not providing clarity where clarity was needed. Victor of Capua, replying to the pope's question about the Easter date for A.D. 550, was furious that Victorius provided both a correct (though with the wrong lunar date) and a wrong date for this year.[32] The Irish *peregrinus* in Francia, Columbanus, argued that Victorius "defined nothing where it was

28 For the difference between John and the Synoptic Gospels in dating Jesus's passion, see especially Nothaft, *Dating the Passion*, 23–24.

29 Leviticus 23:5–6.

30 Victorius of Aquitaine, *Prologus*, 11 (Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 26): *Illud praeterea insinuari non destiti propter diversiorum paschalium conditores, ubi in hoc eodem cyclo dies paschae gemina designatione positus invenitur, id est ubi luna XV. die dominica et post septem dies vicensima secunda conscribitur, non meo iudicio aliquid definitum, sed pro ecclesiarum pace apostolici pontificis electioni servatum, quatenus nec ego, quod ad meum pertinebat officium, praeterirem, et in eius constitueretur arbitrio, qui universali ecclesiae praesiderit, quaenam potissimum dies, in tali condicione sollemnitati praecipuae deputetur. Nam ceteris, quae e latere similiter adiecta sunt, non firmatur auctoritas, sed varia significatur opinio.*

31 The starting point for this investigation must be Krusch, "Über eine Handschrift des Victurius," 274–275; Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 12–15; Warntjes, *The Munich Computus*, LXXXIV–V n 228.

32 The passage in question is transmitted by Bede in *De temporum ratione*, 51, ed. Jones, *Bedae opera*, 272–273; trans. Wallis, *Bede*, 135). Bede provides another lengthy quote from Victor of Capua in his *Epistola ad Wicthedum* 8 (ed. Jones, *Bedae opera*, 322–323; trans. Wallis, *Bede*, 421–422). This latter and more fragments of Victor of Capua's *De pascha* are printed by Pitra, *Spicilegium Soles-*

necessary" in his letter to the Gaulish clergy of A.D. 603.[33] The monk Leo, writing in Visigothic Spain in A.D. 627, complained along similar lines.[34] Many Victorian Easter tables from the later seventh and eighth centuries, however, dropped the double dates, no doubt to give them more authority and to avoid confusion.[35] But from the mid-fifth to the mid-seventh centuries, Victorian doubles dates were considered a problem of his Easter reckoning, rather than an elegant way of reconciling two divergent traditions.[36]

The other two reasons for problematic years in Victorius's table can best be explained on the basis of a chart created by Daniel Mc Carthy:[37]

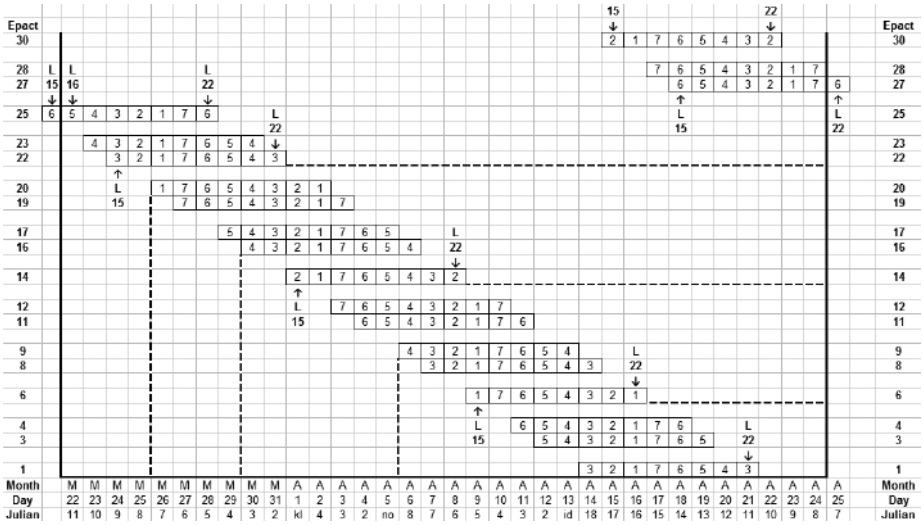

Fig. 2: The Julian calendar dates for Easter Sunday in Victorius's Easter reckoning, depending on the epact (lunar age) and weekday of 1 January.

mense, vol. 1, 296–301; Pitra worked from Paris BnF Lat. 12309, 87v–96r (information provided by Philipp Nothaft). The passage in question here is not among Pitra's fragments of Lat. 12309.

33 Columbanus, *Epistolae*, 2.7, ed. Walker, *Opera*, 18: *iuxta Victorium nuper dubie scribentem et, ubi necesse erat, nihil definitem*.

34 Leo monachus, *Epistola ad Sesuldum*, 2 (Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 299): *Sed illud me inter cetera movet, ubi ambigue duas opinions dies paschae uno eodemque anno prefixit*. A new edition of this letter has just been published by Martín-Iglesias, "La *Epistola de computo paschali*".

35 For the manuscript transmission of Victorian Easter tables, see Warntjes, *The Munich Computus*, LXXXIV–LXXXV n 228. To these, add Paris BnF Lat. 10756 (saec. VIII), 67r, which transmits a Victorian Easter table for the years AP 161–165 = A.D. 720–724 (cf. Krusch, "Chronologisches aus Handschriften," 93–94); the manuscript was originally part of Bern BB 611, which contains the Victorian *Dial. Burg.* of A.D. 727 (cf. Hellmann, *Tironische Noten in der Karolingerzeit am Beispiel eines Persius-Kommentars aus der Schule von Tours*, 225, 248).

36 See also Warntjes, "Victorius vs Dionysius," 86–87.

37 Slightly modified from Mc Carthy, "Paschal Cycle of St Patrick," 113.

The Victorian Easter reckoning was based on a 19-year lunar cycle. This means that the lunar age of any given Julian calendar date will recur to the exact same value after exactly 19 years, but not before. In other words, if a certain Julian calendar date is fixed, say 1 January, it will have a different and characteristic lunar age for each of the 19 years. Therefore, each year of the 19-year lunar cycle can be defined by the characteristic lunar age of a fixed Julian calendar date. Victorius chose 1 January, and the lunar age on this date is called the epact. The epacts are listed in the vertical axis. The horizontal axis refers to the Julian calendar period that Victorius allowed for Easter Sunday, ranging from 22 March as the earliest possible date to 24 April as the latest. For any of the 19 years in Victorius's lunar cycle, Easter Sunday could fall on seven different consecutive dates, *luna* 16 to 22 (with Victorius also noting the alternative *luna* 15 if Easter fell on the latter date, as discussed above). Which of these was Easter Sunday in a given year depended on the weekday of 1 January; the weekdays are here numbered in early medieval fashion from 1 = Sunday to 7 = Saturday. For example, according to this chart, in a year with epact 3 and weekday 1 on 1 January, Easter Sunday fell on 16 April.

The problematic years occurred when the range of permissible lunar ages for Easter (*luna* 15 or 16, respectively, to *luna* 22) could not be accommodated within Victorius's Julian calendar limits for Easter Sunday of 22 March to 24 April, i.e. in years of epact 25 and 27 respectively:

4.1.1 Epact 25

In his prologue, Victorius explained that the *Latini* allowed the Easter new moon (*luna* 1) to fall as early as 5 March,[38] which leads to Easter full moon (*luna* 14) on 18 March, and the earliest Easter Sunday (*luna* 16) on 20 March. This statement mislead Bede[39] and many modern commentators into thinking that Victorius was here explaining his own method. However, the word *Latini* here refers to the Roman method that Victorius was supposed to replace and to reconcile with Alexandria. Unlike the Alexandrians, who strictly observed Easter Sunday after the vernal equinox of 21 March, the Romans did not consider themselves bound by such a rule. For them, the key objective seems to have been that Easter was not to be celebrated on or later than 21 April, which marked the anniversary of the foundation of the city of Rome. Surely, the end of the Lenten fast and the commemoration of the passion of Christ could not coincide with the debauchery of pagan festivities.[40] If 21 April was to be kept as an upper Julian calendar limit, Easter Sunday had to fall before

38 Victorius, *Prologus*, 4 (Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 19).

39 Bede, *De temporum ratione*, 50–51 (ed. Jones, *Bedae opera*, 269–272; trans. Wallis, *Bede*, 131–135).

40 This argumentation is evident through Prosper's *Chronica* §§1351–1352 (ed. and trans. into German by Becker and Kötter, *Prosper Tiro*, 124–125): *CCCCXVII: Theodosio XVIII et Albino [AP 417= A.D.*

the vernal equinox of 21 March. Victorius had more flexibility. As will be outlined below, the brief he got from the papal curia allowed Easter Sunday as late as 24 April. This made it possible for Victorius to honour the vernal equinox of 21 March at least for Easter Sunday (as, e.g., Easter Sunday previously celebrated on 20 March *luna* 16 could now be postponed to 24 April *luna* 22). He still set the Easter full moon (*luna* 14) as early as 20 March (i.e., *before* the vernal equinox) every 19th year (in years with epact 25), which led to 22 March, *luna* 16 (i.e., *after* the vernal equinox) as the earliest possible date for Easter Sunday. For Victorius, it was important to observe the equinox-rule for Easter Sunday, not necessarily also for the Easter full moon. Therefore, Victorius's method allowed the equinox-rule to be strictly observed for Easter Sunday, which no previous Roman Easter reckoning had achieved to do. A potential problem for the date of Easter Sunday only arose in years in which 1 January not only fell on *luna* 25, but also on Friday (or Thursday in bissextile years). This led to Easter Sunday on 28 March, *luna* 22, or, alternatively (if double dates were applied), 21 March, *luna* 15 (i.e., on the equinox), which Alexandria considered unlawful. But none of the extant Victorian Easter tables records the "Greek" double date in such years (A.D. 471, 661, and 756),[41] and it must be presumed that Victorius deliberately avoided them for these years in his original composition.

This still meant that every 19th year, the Easter full moon fell before the equinox. Victorius, from his Roman perspective, would not have seen any problem with this. Later commentators, like Bede, however, who were trained in the Alexandrian tradition, considered this "erroneous", "unjust", or "wicked".[42] Certainly by the seventh century, when the popularity of countdowns to the end of the sixth millennium grew, adherents of Victorius's calculations came increasingly under attack from the rising number of supporters of the Alexandrian (Dionysiac) reckoning. Every 19th year, the one with epact 25 in Victorius's Easter table, must have led to debates between the two opposing camps.[43]

4.1.2 Epact 27

Whereas the first aspect discussed here was simply a matter of preference, and the second one controversial only for those opposed to Victorius's system, the third

444]. hoc anno pascha domini VIII Kal. Mai. [= 23 April] celebratum est nec erratum, quia in die XI Kal. Mai. [= 21 April] dies passionis fuit. ob cuius reverentiam natalis urbis sine circensibus transiit.

41 Cf. Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 32, 36, 46.

42 Bede uses the strongest language in *De temporum ratione* 51, which principally deals with Easter Sunday before the equinox, but chapter 50 leave no doubt that this applies equally to the Easter full moon before the equinox; cf. n. 39. Bede returns to the subject in *De temporum ratione* 61–62 (ed. Jones, *Bedae opera*, 281–284; trans. Wallis, *Bede*, 145–149). In chapter 61, he explicitly outlines the case of Easter Sunday falling after, the Easter full moon, however, before the equinox.

43 Cf. Warntjes, "Victorius vs Dionysius," 83–86.

posed a real problem for followers of Victorius themselves. The brief given to Victorius by Pope Leo I must have explicitly forbidden for Easter Sunday to fall later than on 24 April. That date was already stretching the issue for the papal curia. In A.D. 444, Leo had agreed to 23 April for Easter Sunday as calculated by the Alexandrians, two days after the anniversary of the foundation of Rome.[44] One of the arguments for accepting such a late date may have been that the commemoration of Christ's passion would fall on, but not after, 21 April.[45] In A.D. 455, the situation was more delicate. According to the Alexandrian reckoning, Easter Sunday was supposed to fall on 24 April, and therefore Christ's passion would be commemorated on 22 April, the day after the anniversary of Rome's foundation. Maybe Rome here argued that at least the Easter full moon and the Last Supper fell on, and not after, 21 April, but there is no record of that. What is recorded is a series of letters exchanged between Leo and the Eastern Roman emperor as well as the patriarch of Alexandria, starting as early as A.D. 451, which illustrate the seriousness of the issue.[46] In the end, Leo gave way and allowed Easter Sunday to be celebrated on 24 April in Rome. But when discussing the format of the new table to be designed by Victorius, Leo must have insisted that this was as far as the compromise in terms of Julian calendar dates for Easter Sunday would go: 25 April, the last possible date in the Alexandrian reckoning, was to be avoided.[47]

This put Victorius in a difficult position. His Easter table, with its 19-year lunar cycle starting with creation, the table proper with the year of Christ's passion and resurrection, was a very clever construction on various levels. Only in a year with epact 27 and Friday (or Thursday in bissextile years) on 1 January, which occurred

44 Cf. n. 40 above.

45 Paschasinus, *Epistola ad Leonem*, 2, ed. Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 245–250 at 249: *Nec nobis aut novum aut erratum videatur, cum dies passionis XI. die kalendarum maiarum occurrat, a qua, sicut Grecis videtur, pascha nomen accepit*. Paschasinus does not mention the festivities in Rome in this context, but it shows an interesting parallel in argumentation with Prosper's passage cited n. 40 above, which does; Prosper is explicit that because of Christ's passion coinciding with the birthday of the city of Rome, no circus games took place.

46 The relevant letters are edited by Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 251–265.

47 How problematic the acceptance by Leo of 24 April as Easter Sunday was perceived in Rome is evident through Prosper's *Chronica* §1376 (ed. and trans. Becker and Kötter, *Prosper Tiro*, 138–139): *eodem anno pascha dominicum die VIII Kal. Mai. [= 24 April] celebratum est pertinaci intentione Alexandrini episcopi, cui omnes Orientales consentiendum putarunt, cum sanctus papa Leo XV Kal. Mai. [= 17 April] potius observandum protestaretur, in quo nec in ratione plenilunii nec in primi mensis limite fuisset erratum. extant eiusdem papae epistolae ad clementissimum principem Marcianum datae, quibus ratio veritatis sollicite evidenterque patefacta est et quibus ecclesia catholica instrui potest, quod haec persuasio studio unitatis et pacis tolerate sit potius quam probate, numquam deinceps imitanda, ut, quae exitialem attulit offensionem, omnem in perpetuum perdat auctoritatem*. Prosper may have been an advisor to Leo in chronological questions relating to Easter; cf. James, "Leo the Great and Prosper of Aquitaine," 563–564. More generally on the relation between Prosper and Leo, see now Kötter, "Prosper von Aquitanien und Papst Leo der Große."

four times in 532 years, did the Aquitanian mathematician's method face insurmountable problems. In those instances, Easter Sunday should fall on 25 April with *luna* 22 according to Victorius's rules, but in violation of his Julian calendar limits for Easter Sunday of 22 March to 24 April; only the Alexandrian alternative, *luna* 15 on 18 April, appeared acceptable. Accordingly, Victorius failed to produce a lawful "Latin" date in years with those chronological characteristics.

How Victorius envisaged solving that problem is difficult to reconstruct. Interestingly, Victorius discussed only one year of his Easter table in detail, which is indeed one of epact 27, but with Saturday (rather than the problematic Friday) on 1 January.[48] In such years, he argued, Easter Sunday could only be celebrated on 20 March according to the Latins, which had never been done, or on 24 April according to the Alexandrians, which had been observed a few times (no doubt referring to Leo's concession of A.D. 455). As this discussion constituted the final paragraph of his prologue, Victorius suggested that 24 April was the latest possible date for Easter Sunday in his Easter table. If this is what he intended to argue here, surely his solution for the problematic year of epact 27 and Friday (or Thursday in bissextile years) on 1 January was not to celebrate Easter Sunday on 25 April, *luna* 22. The only option was the "Alexandrian" *luna* 15, with no "Latin" alternative.

That this is what Victorius had in mind is confirmed by the oldest copy of the full Victorian 532-year Easter table, preserved in Gotha FB Membr. I 75, 77v–106r. For the first two occurrences of these problematic chronological combinations, the years AP 18 and 113, the Gotha table only provides one date for Easter Sunday, 18 April (*luna* 15). For the remaining two instances, AP 360 and 455, the Gotha table lists a second date, the erroneous 24 April (*luna* 22) ascribed to the Greeks.[49] Obviously, 24 April was a Saturday rather than a Sunday in those years. Since this mistake appears twice in the Gotha table, and is confirmed for AP 455 (= A.D. 482) by the oldest (partial) Victorian table, known as the *Paschale Campanum*,[50] there cannot be any doubt that Victorius himself listed these dates. Therefore, for years with epact 27 and Friday (or Thursday in bissextile years) on 1 January, Victorius even introduced falsified data in order to hide (or at least obscure) the fact that he was unable to produce an Easter Sunday in line with his own set of criteria.

Later commentators found cleverer solutions. Victorius (like Dionysius) did not provide details about the construction of his 19-year lunar cycle. In particularly, he never specified the exact place of the embolisms, the intercalated lunar months that

48 Victorius, *Prologus*, 12 (Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 26): *Cum vero contigerit, luna vicensima septima sabbato vel maxime die Kalendarum ianuarium provenire absque bissextum, noverit sanctitas tua, pascha nisi aut XIII. Kal. aprl. secundum Latinos, quod numquam caelebratum, etiamsi luna conveniat, penitus invenitur, aut VIII. Kal. mai. secundum Aegyptios, quod aliquotiens observatum est, reperiri non posse.*

49 Gotha FB Membr. I 75, 78r, 83v (Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 27, 32, 44, 49).

50 The *Paschale Campanum* (Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 2077, 96v–98r) is ed. Mommsen, 746.

would bring the 354 ¼-day lunar year in line with the 365 ¼-day solar year. Seventh- and eighth-century computists, therefore, had some room for interpretation. As far as I am aware at present, only three tabular reconstructions of the details of Victorius's 19-year lunar cycle survive:

1. Bern BB 645, 55r–56v, probably composed around A.D. 696 in north-eastern France.[51]
2. Paris BnF Lat. 10756, 64v–66v; this originally formed part of Bern BB 611, which also contains a Victorian Computus of A.D. 727, possibly composed around Luxeuil.[52]
3. The final chapter of *Quaest. Austr.* of A.D. 764, uniquely transmitted in the famous codex Cologne DB 83–II of A.D. 805 (206v–213v).[53]

The Bern version differs markedly from its Paris and Cologne counterparts not least because it begins with the year of epact 1 on 1 January (coinciding with the first year to which Victorius's table could have been applied, A.D. 458), while the other two chose the year of epact 9 (the Victorian equivalent to the first year of the Dionysiac 19-year cycle) as their starting point. For the year in question (epact 27), however, all three texts follow the same doctrine (spelled out in most detail in *Quaest. Austr.*): Whereas Victorius's original Easter table suggested that the embolism of that year had to be intercalated before Easter Sunday, here the embolism is pushed to 3 May to 1 June.[54] This leads to a lunar age for Easter Sunday incremented by one com-

51 For the Computus of A.D. 696 that contains the table in question see Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 7–8; Cordoliani, "Les plus anciens manuscrits de comput ecclésiastique," 104–109, 111–112; Warntjes, "Köln als naturwissenschaftliches Zentrum in der Karolingerzeit," 58. For a discussion of the Victorian lunar cycle in question here, see Holford-Strevens, "Paschal Lunar Calendars up to Bede," 194–196.

52 The Victorian Computus of A.D. 727 was first edited by Krusch in "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 53–57; a new edition under the abbreviated title *Dial. Burg.* can be found in Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich*, 348–374. Cf. also Table 1 and n. 35 above.

53 *Quaest. Austr.* is edited by Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich*, 462–508, here 496–508. For a discussion of the Victorian lunar cycle in question here, see Holford-Strevens, "Paschal Lunar Calendars up to Bede," 194–196.

54 The sequence of lunar ages on the calends (the first day) of each month in this year is: January 27, February 28, March 27, April 28 (29 in Bern is a scribal mistake), May 29, June 30, July 1, ... This means that the May lunation ends on 2 May with *luna* 30, followed by another full lunation of 30 days, the embolism, starting on 3 May and ending on 1 June, followed by the hollow June lunation of 29 days ending on 30 June. *Quaest. Austr.* 2.11 (year VIII; Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich*, 500–501) provides a slightly different explanation, but to the same effect: the hollow lunation (of 29 days) ending on 2 April is supposed to be considered the embolism and the 13th and last lunation of the lunar year; the following May lunation of 30 days is the first lunation of the following lunar year (and therewith the Easter lunation); this, however, is contrary to Latin customs, which insists on seven lunations of 30 days in embolismic years; therefore, the Egyptians turn this 13th lunation into one of 30 days (this is Victorius' practice), which leads to epact 28 (rather than 29) on 1 May. The passage reads (with punctuation changed from Borst's edition): *Kalendas Aprilis*

pared to Victorius's original table, and thus a lawful Easter Sunday of 18 April, *luna* 16 (rather than *luna* 15 as Victorius would have it) in the year in question.[55]

A year of epact 27 with the embolism before Easter Sunday

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J
1	27	28	27	28	28	30	1	2	4	4	6	6	8
2	28	29	28	29	29	1	2	3	5	5	7	7	
3	29	1	29	30	1	2	3	4	6	6	8	8	
4	30	2	30	1	2	3	4	5	7	7	9	9	
5	1	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	8	10	10	
6	2	4	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	9	11	11	
7	3	5	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	10	12	12	
8	4	6	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	11	13	13	
9	5	7	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	12	14	14	
10	6	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	13	15	15	
11	7	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	14	16	16	
12	8	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	15	15	17	17	
13	9	11	9	10	11	12	13	14	16	16	18	18	
14	10	12	10	11	12	13	14	15	17	17	19	19	
15	11	13	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	18	20	20	
16	12	14	12	13	14	15	16	17	19	19	21	21	
17	13	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	20	20	22	22	
18	14	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	21	21	23	23	
19	15	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	22	24	24	
20	16	18	16	17	18	19	20	21	23	23	25	25	
21	17	19	17	18	19	20	21	22	24	24	26	26	
22	18	20	18	19	20	21	22	23	25	25	27	27	
23	19	21	19	20	21	22	23	24	26	26	28	28	
24	20	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	27	27	29	29	
25	21	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	28	28	30	1	
26	22	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	29	29	1	2	
27	23	25	23	24	25	26	27	28	30	1	2	3	
28	24	26	24	25	26	27	28	29	1	2	3	4	
29	25		25	26	27	28	29	1	2	3	4	5	
30	26		26	27	28	29	30	2	3	4	5	6	
31	27		27		29		1	3		5		7	

A year of epact 27 with the embolism on 3 May to 1 June

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J
1	27	28	27	28	29	30	1	2	4	4	6	6	8
2	28	29	28	29	30	1	2	3	5	5	7	7	
3	29	1	29	1	1	2	3	4	6	6	8	8	
4	30	2	30	2	2	3	4	5	7	7	9	9	
5	1	3	1	3	3	4	5	6	8	8	10	10	
6	2	4	2	4	4	5	6	7	9	9	11	11	
7	3	5	3	5	5	6	7	8	10	10	12	12	
8	4	6	4	6	6	7	8	9	11	11	13	13	
9	5	7	5	7	7	8	9	10	12	12	14	14	
10	6	8	6	8	8	9	10	11	13	13	15	15	
11	7	9	7	9	9	10	11	12	14	14	16	16	
12	8	10	8	10	10	11	12	13	15	15	17	17	
13	9	11	9	11	11	12	13	14	16	16	18	18	
14	10	12	10	12	12	13	14	15	17	17	19	19	
15	11	13	11	13	13	14	15	16	18	18	20	20	
16	12	14	12	14	14	15	16	17	19	19	21	21	
17	13	15	13	15	15	16	17	18	20	20	22	22	
18	14	16	14	16	16	17	18	19	21	21	23	23	
19	15	17	15	17	17	18	19	20	22	22	24	24	
20	16	18	16	18	18	19	20	21	23	23	25	25	
21	17	19	17	19	19	20	21	22	24	24	26	26	
22	18	20	18	20	20	21	22	23	25	25	27	27	
23	19	21	19	21	21	22	23	24	26	26	28	28	
24	20	22	20	22	22	23	24	25	27	27	29	29	
25	21	23	21	23	23	24	25	26	28	28	30	1	
26	22	24	22	24	24	25	26	27	29	29	1	2	
27	23	25	23	25	25	26	27	28	30	1	2	3	
28	24	26	24	26	26	27	28	29	1	2	3	4	
29	25		25	27	27	28	29	1	2	3	4	5	
30	26		26	28	28	29	30	2	3	4	5	6	
31	27		27		29		1	3		5		7	

Fig. 3: Two possible constructions of a year of the Victorian 19-year lunar cycle with epact 27 on 1 January. The lunar age of every day for each month from January to December are listed in succsessive columns, with abbreviations for the respective month in bold in the first line and the dates of month in bold in the first column. The embolism is highlighted in red, and the lunar age on the critical date, 18 April, in yellow.

This alteration of Victorius's original calculation did not simply remain theoretical; two seventh- and eighth-century Victorian Easter tables confirm that it was also applied in practice. The first of these, covering the years AP 141–212 [=A.D. 700–771], is transmitted in Paris BnF Lat. 4860 (Reichenau, saec. IX^{ex}), 147v-148r and Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 586 (Lake Constance region, saec. IX^{inf}), 9r–10v. Years of epact 27 oc-

luna vicesima octava. IIII. Nonas Aprilis luna vicesima nona deficit. III. Nonas Aprilis prima luna, quae luna Maii est et luna primi mensis. De hac luna Hieronimus ait: Interdum incipit in Aprili. Contra consuetudinem embolismorum luna Aprilis, quae vicesima nona esse <dicitur>, hac vice tertia decima esse deputatur luna. Ut hoc embolesmo iuxta Latinos septem lunae tricesimae inveniantur, ideo Aegyptii hanc lunam tricesimam esse putant. Epactae Aegyptiorum viginti octo. Kalendas Maii luna vicesima nona.

55 See Holford-Strevens, "Paschal Lunar Calendars up to Bede," 194 n. 57.

cur four times in this table. In the first instance, AP 151, the lunar age of Easter Sunday is in line with the canonical Victorian Easter table; in the remaining three cases (AP 170, 189, 208), however, the lunar age of Easter Sunday is systematically incremented by one compared to Victorius's original construction, no doubt because of the later placement of the embolism discussed above. More important for the present study is the second table, preserved in Milan BA H 150 inf. (Bobbio, saec. IX$^{1/3}$), 130r–132r, covering the years AP 1–120 and 144–154 (wrongly labeled 121–131). Years of epact 27 occur seven times in this table (AP 18, 37, 56, 75, 94, 113, 151). In four of these instances (AP 18, 37, 56, 113), the lunar age of Easter Sunday is incremented by one compared to the canonical Victorian Easter table. Crucially, two of those four increments coincide with the only two years in the range of this table that contain the problematic combination of epact 27 and Friday (or Thursday in bissextile years) on 1 January. Therefore, this table consistently and systematically solves Victorius's problem by providing an acceptable lunar age for Easter Sunday in years AP 18 and 113, 18 April, that is, *luna* 16 (rather than Victorius's *luna* 15).

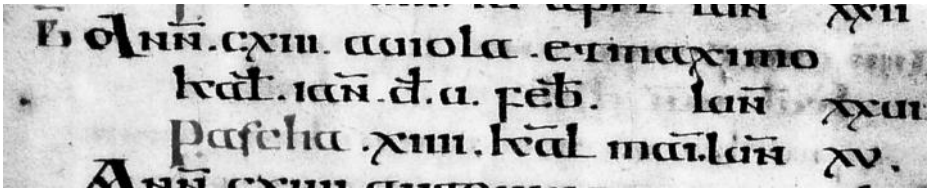

Fig. 4: AP 113 in Gotha FB Membr. I 75, 84r

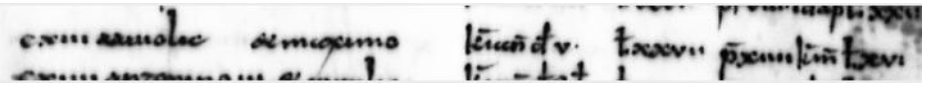

Fig. 5: AP 113 in Milan BA H inf. 150, 132r

Interestingly, in the Milan codex the Victorian Easter table immediately follows the countdown of A.D. 673, and one wonders whether the alteration of the Victorian Easter table is connected to this countdown and its *annus praesens*.

5 Gregory of Tours and the Easter of A.D. 577

Clearly, this technical trick of shifting the embolism to after Easter in years of epact 27 was only introduced at some point in the second half of the seventh century (and may, in fact, have been a regional solution, restricted to northern Burgundy and Austrasia). Before then, a year with epact 27 and Friday (or Thursday in bissextile

years) on 1 January created considerable controversy among the intellectual elite that promoted the Victorian method of reckoning.

Our best witness in this respect is Gregory of Tours. In his *Ten Books of Histories*, he includes two passages designed to illustrate the invocation of portents of the apocalypse that will follow if Easter is not celebrated on the right day. The most indicative statement comes towards the end of Gregory's text, and it is worth quoting in full:

> *Dubietas pascae fuit ob hoc, quod in cyclum Victuri luna XV. pascham scripsit fieri. Sed ne christiani ut Iudei sub hac luna haec solemnia celebrarent, addidit: Latini autem luna XXII. Ob hoc multi in Galiis XV. luna celebraverunt, nos autem XXII. Inquesivimus tamen studiosae, sed fontes Hispaniae, quae divinitus implentur, in nostrum pascha repleti sunt. Terrae motus factus est magnus XVIII. Kalendas mensis V., die IIII., prima mane, cum lux redire cepisset. Sol eclypsin pertulit mense VIII. mediante, et ita lumen eius minuit, ut vix, quantum quintae lunae cornua retinent, ad luscendum haberet. Pluviae validate, tonitrua in autumno gravia, aquae autem nimium invaluerunt. Vivariensim Avennicamque urbem graviter lues inguinaria devastavit.*
>
> A dispute arose about the date of Easter, because Victorius, in his cycle, had written that Easter should be celebrated on the fifteenth day after the full moon. To prevent Christians holding the feast on the same day after the full moon as the Jews, Victorius added: 'The Church of Rome celebrates on the twenty-second day.' As a result many people in Gaul held Easter on the fifteenth day, but I myself kept the feast on the twenty-second day. I made careful inquiries and discovered that the Spanish Springs, which flow by divine agency, began to run on the day which I had chosen for Easter. There was a great earthquake very early in the morning on Wednesday, 14 June, just as the day began to dawn. There was an eclipse of the sun in the middle of October. The sun's rays were so diminished that it gave no more light than the horned moon when five days old. It rained in torrents, there were violent thunder-storms in Autumn and the river-waters rose very high. There was a serious outbreak of bubonic plague in the towns of Viviers and Avignon.[56]

The year in question is A.D. 590, and the problem the one outlined under 1 above: Victorius provided two dates for Easter Sunday in this year, 26 March (*luna* 15) and 2 April (*luna* 22). The first one was supposed to reflect Alexandrian customs, the second one Victorius attributed to the *Latini*.[57] Victorius thought the decision was the pope's to make. Gregory clearly did not have the same regard for Roman authority. A metropolitan bishop in Gaul held as much (if not more) power than the bishop of Rome, and there was no question of outside interference in spiritual matters; decisions were taken locally not centrally.[58] Whether the choice made was right or wrong was not determined by inquiry in Rome, but by consultation of the holy wells

56 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 10.23, ed. Krusch, 514–515; trans. Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours: Histories*, 581–582.

57 Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 28.

58 Prinz, "Die bischöfliche Stadtherrschaft im Frankenreich vom 5. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert," and Prinz, "Der fränkische Episkopat zwischen Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit," 110–133; Scheibelreiter, *Bischof in merowingischer Zeit*; Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien*.

in Spain, which obviously could only sanction or condemn the action retrospectively.[59] More importantly, Gregory's narrative draws a direct connection between celebrating Easter on the wrong date and portents of the apocalypse: earthquakes, a solar eclipse, thunderstorms and torrential rain, plague. One wonders whether Gregory's contemporaries would have seen the fact that (according to the bishop's narrative) the plague raged most vehemently in Viviers and Avignon as direct punishment for not celebrating Easter on the correct date. Certainly, only two chapters later Gregory extends the list of divine punishment from plague to famine in other parts of Gaul, citing Matthew 24:7–8/Mark 13:22 on the signs of the End Times:

> *At in Galliis Masiliensim provintiam morbus saepe nominatus invasit. Andecavos, Namneticos atque Cenomaticos valida famis oppressit. Initia sunt enim haec dolorum iuxta illud quod Dominus ait in euangelio: Erunt pestilentiae et fames et terrae motus per loca; et exurgent pseudochristi et pseudoprophetae et dabunt signa et prodigia in caelo, ita ut electos in errore mittant, sicut praesenti gestum est tempore.*
>
> In Gaul the Bubonic plague which I have so often had occasion to mention attacked Marseilles. A terrible famine afflicted Angers, Nantes and Le Mans. These are the beginning of sorrows, as our Lord said in the Gospel: 'And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders in the sky, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.' That is exactly what happened at this time.[60]

The message was clear: celebrating Easter on the wrong date could lead to apocalyptic consequences.

But what, then, if the authoritative Easter table did not produce lawful Easter dates in certain years? Interestingly, Gregory's second passage on the Easter problem deals exactly with the case discussed under 3 above: a year of epact 27 and Friday on 1 January in the Victorian Easter table. He says that in this year, A.D. 577, some churches in Gaul, following the Spanish example, kept Easter Sunday on 21 March, while Tours and other cities preferred 18 April.[61] The information provided by Gregory is rather sparse, and for very good reasons: 18 April, his Easter Sunday, fell on *luna* 15, a practice he was to condemn later in his work, in the passage cited above. Celebrating Easter Sunday on 21 March is an interesting alternative within

59 Krusch, "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie," 11 put it thus: "Bei den Doppeldaten des Victorius traten die Zweifelsfälle ziemlich häufig ein, und man forschte dann, an welchem Datum sich die Taufquellen in Spanien gefüllt hatten. War dies an dem gewählten Datum der Fall, so hatte man die Genugtuung, daß man richtig gefeiert hatte, im anderen Falle umgekehrt den Schmerz."

60 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 10.25, ed. Krusch, 517; trans. Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours: Histories*, 584.

61 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, 5.17, ed. Krusch, 215: *Eo anno dubietas paschae fuit. In Galliis vero nos cum multis civitatibus quarto decimo Kalendas Maias sanctum paschae celebravimus. Alii vero cum Spanis duodecimo Kalendas Aprilis solemnitatem hanc tenuerunt; tamen, ut ferunt, fontes illi, qui in Spaniis nutu Dei conplentur, in nostrum paschae repleti sunt.*

the Victorian system (not considered by its Aquitanian author), as its lunar age, *luna* 17, is uncontroversial;[62] but it meant commemorating the resurrection *on* rather than *after* the equinox, which was considered problematic in itself (see 2 above). Certainly, 25 April with *luna* 22 was not considered a possible date for Easter Sunday by followers of Victorius in Gaul or Spain, if Gregory can be trusted here. Gregory had an interest in not providing further information, and his own unease with the choice of Easter dates available to him that year is obvious in the remainder of this chapter: yes, the Spanish holy wells confirmed his date (18 April), but on the same day there was also an earthquake-like incident at the village of Chinon, while mass was held in honour of Christ's resurrection, followed by an outbreak of the plague. Gregory pointed out the problem, but had no solution.

6 Conclusion

The evidence provided by Gregory of Tours illustrates how conflicting or uncanonical data for the commemoration of the most important feast of Christianity caused distress among the Christian intellectual elite in Western Europe towards the end of the sixth century. The problems were caused by the construction of the Victorian Easter table, and followers of this system connected conflicting dates for Easter Sunday or unlawful data with portents of the end of the world. After the fateful year A.D. 577, the next year for which the Victorian table would provide no clear-cut lawful date was A.D. 672. We have no account similar to that provided by Gregory on the reactions to this intellectual dilemma, principally because the A.D. 670s are one of the least documented decades in Merovingian history. Certainly, the Christian elites had to act. One option was to tamper slightly with Victorius's Easter table by postponing the embolism and thereby creating an uncontroversial Easter date of 18 April, *luna* 16.[63] This was done in Gaul, probably after substantial intellectual debate around the year A.D. 672 as witnessed by three of the four countdowns transcribed above. The other option was to replace the Victorian reckoning with its rival, the Alexandrian system in the guise of Dionysius's Easter table. The fourth countdown reflects this change, the one from Iberia with the reference to the Visigothic king Wamba. The few sentences provided, with its application of the incarnation era, could hardly have been more visionary, certainly from our retrospective viewpoint. Wamba, whose accession is commemorated here, was the first Christian king

62 Krusch, "Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande," 127–128, with his characteristic sharpness, rightly identified the celebration of Easter Sunday on 21 March as an alternative within the Victorian system (which he believed Victorius had envisaged himself). Englisch, "Ostern zwischen Arianismus und Katholizismus," 80–86, on the other hand, wants this to reflect some regional Visigothic custom, of which there is no conclusive evidence.
63 See Figures 3–5.

for whom the anointment ritual was recorded,[64] which was to define the Middle Ages from Pippin the Younger's anointment by Pope Stephen in A.D. 754 onwards and in some regions, like England (whose royal ruler is still anointed by the archbishop of Canterbury), persists to the present day. This passage contains one of the earliest uses of the incarnation era, which remains the standard in the 21st century. At the same time, the late date for Easter Sunday on 25 April (exclusive to the Alexandrian/Dionysiac system) celebrated by the Visigoths in this year was still viewed with considerable suspicion by the Iberian intellectual elites, a reminder of the Roman past of Iberia.[65]

Certainly, the four countdowns dating between A.D. 672 and A.D. 675 discussed in this article make it very clear that our knowledge of the connections drawn between present time and potential portents of the apocalypse in the early medieval Latin West exclusively stems from the writings of a Christian elite. This elite held the religious, moral, and intellectual monopoly, often coupled with considerable political power. Its members tried to play the apocalypse to their advantage (claiming moral superiority over their secular or ecclesiastical rivals, as in Gildas' case), which provides us with a sense of the internal and external threats this elite faced. Sometimes, however, as in the case of the countdowns to the end of the sixth millennium discussed here, apocalyptic allusions were simply the result of a theological and/or technical problem important to Christian intellectual circles alone, without any bearing on our understanding of the politics of the day, or even of the sentiments of a wider public. The thought-world of that elite was not that of the lay nobles, nor of the commoners. Their reflections were more often triggered by intellectual questions, problems, and challenges than by real-life experiences. The apocalyptic over- or undertones we find in early medieval Latin accounts are no exception to that rule.

64 Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae regis* 4, ed. Levison, 220. See Rovira, "La iglesia visigoda y los problemas de la sucesión al trono en el siglo VII," repr. in Rovira, *Estudios visigoticos* III, 54–56; Aguilera, *Pensamiento político visigodo*, 285–292; Claude, *Adel, Kirche und Königtum*, 154–161; Collins, "Julian of Toledo and the Royal Succession in Late Seventh-Century Spain;" Teillet, *Des goths à la nation gothique*, 585–624; de Jong, "Julian of Toledo," 378–382.

65 This is best illustrated by the Visigothic codex Paris BnF Lat. 609 (saec. IX), 76r, which contains a dating clause of A.D. 672 discussing the unusually late date for Easter Sunday in the Dionysiac reckoning for this year: *Nostrum uero sanctum pascha per dies XXXV, qui faciunt septimanas V, ab XI Kalendas Apriles usque in VIII Kalendas Maias, excepto uno, quod fuit sub era ab incarnatione Domini DCLXXII: XIIII Kalendas Maias die dominico Hebreorum pascha, et nostra VII Kalendas Maias luna XXIa, sicut et in preteritis iam fuit.*

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Abbreviations

CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. 1819–.
MGH Auct. Ant.	Auctores Antiquissimi
MGH SS rer. Merov.	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
SC	Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1941–.

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Graeme Ward

Exegesis, Empire and Eschatology: Reading Orosius' *Histories Against the Pagans* in the Carolingian World

This essay seeks to uncover nuggets of eschatological thought in three Carolingian commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew. It does so by examining the different ways that Hrabanus Maurus, Paschasius Radbertus and Christian of Stavelot read and interpreted Orosius' Seven Books of Histories Against the Pagans, *a work of Christian apologetic history composed c. 417. Orosius'* Histories, *which were hugely influential throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, typically have been seen as expressing a distinctly eschatological understanding of the Roman Empire, an understanding that is frequently contrasted with that of Orosius' teacher and dedicatee: Augustine of Hippo. The exegetical reception of Orosius, which has not yet been subject to close scrutiny, reveals that some ninth-century intellectuals did not use Orosius to show that the duration of the world was bound to the lifespan of the Roman Empire. Rather, they employed the* Histories *as an authoritative account of the beginnings of the* ecclesia, *the Christian Church. These biblical exegetes fashioned close intertextual bonds between Orosius' narrative and Matthew's account of the birth of Christ. By bringing Orosius into dialogue with the central narrative of Christianity, they invested the* Histories *with eschatological meaning.*

1 Introduction

Eschatological thought permeated all forms of Christian practice and belief in the Middle Ages, not least because it was written into the scriptural core of Christianity: the books of the Old and New Testaments.[1] Consequently, biblical exegesis – that is, the interpretation of the various books of the Bible – comprised a particularly important medium through which ideas about Last Things were communicated to medieval monks and clerics, and perhaps also lay people too. Through the critical lens of exegesis, Old Testament prophecies were shown to have been fulfilled in the

1 Arnold, "Old Testament Eschatology and the Rise Apocalypticism;" Collins, "Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Ancient World;" Rowland, "Eschatology of the New Testament Church," and Daley, "Eschatology in the Early Church Fathers."

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New, while the prophecies of the New Testament would be fulfilled in the future, when the events foretold by Jesus were to be realised at the end of time.[2]

An example of this can be seen in the commentary on the Gospel of Matthew produced by a monk named Christian in the 860s to help guide inexperienced students within the monastic community of Stavelot-Malmedy (in modern-day Belgium) through the first book of the New Testament.[3] Chapter 70 of this commentary, titled "On the Signs of God's Judgment", was keyed to the "Little Apocalypse" of Matthew 24. The latter is also known as the "Synoptic Apocalypse", as different versions of it are also found in the Gospels of Mark (Book 13) and Luke (Book 21). In this episode, Jesus's disciples gathered around him outside of the temple on Mount Olivet in c. A.D. 30 and asked him: "[W]hat will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?" (Mt. 24:3) Jesus explained that before waves of violence, natural disasters, persecutions and false prophets would afflict them, they "will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed". He added: "Such things must happen, but the end is still to come." (Mt. 24:6) Glossing this latter expression, Christian of Stavelot addressed his young readers: "He who reads the words which Orosius collected about wars from histories might become frightened because of such tribulations. On account of this, the Lord safeguarded his followers lest they become troubled and think that the end of the world is at hand."[4]

In this passage, Christian of Stavelot, writing in the Carolingian empire of the ninth century, evoked the dominant strand of anti-apocalyptic eschatology in the early Middle Ages.[5] First developed in the Christian Roman Empire of the fourth and fifth centuries, this view held that although the world's end was inevitable it was not to be considered imminent. He did so, however, with reference to a late antique text not usually used in this context: Orosius' *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (hereafter: *Histories*).[6] Orosius wrote his *Histories* c. 417 to argue that the Roman Empire's conversion to Christianity had in no way contributed to the sack of

2 Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*. On early medieval exegesis, see Contreni, "The Patristic Legacy to c. 1000;" Chazelle and Van Edwards, *Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era*; Spijker, *Multiple Meaning of Scripture*. More generally on early medieval eschatology, see Baun, "Last Things," and for various definitions Landes, "Millenarianism/Millennialism, Eschatology, Apocalypticism, Utopianism."

3 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis*, ed. Huygens. A clear introduction to the text is provided in Ponesse, "Instruction of Monks in Christian of Stavelot's Commentary;" concerning eschatology, see Meter, "Christian of Stavelot on Matthew 24:42." On Matthew's Gospel itself, see Kermode, "Matthew;" Bornkamm, "Enderwartung und Kirche im Matthäus-Evangelium;" Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*.

4 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis* 24, ed. Huygens, 434: *Qui legit verba quae Orosius de bellis collegit per istorias, expauescere poterit pro tantis tribulationibus. Ob hoc muniebat dominus suos, ne turbarentur et ne putarent instare finem mundi.*

5 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*. See also Heil, "Nos nescientes de hoc velle manere – We Wish to Remain Ignorant about This." The best introduction to Carolingian history is Costambeys, Innes and MacLean, *The Carolingian World*.

6 Orosius, *Histories*, ed. Arnaud-Lindet; English translation: *Histories*, trans. Fear.

Rome seven years previously in 410.[7] Orosius explained in his work's prologue that Augustine of Hippo, his teacher, had commissioned him to "set out in a book [...] all the troubles caused by wars [...] that [he] could discover in all the records of the histories and annals".[8] The *Histories* dwelt on the ubiquity of human conflict, but they were shot through with a message of hope. Orosius discovered that the woes of the present paled in comparison to those of the past: Christianity had tempered, though not eradicated, the endemic wretchedness that had stained the world through sin as a result of Adam's fall from grace.

Christian of Stavelot's use of Orosius reflects the *Histories*' emphasis on war, yet nevertheless the comment appears somewhat at odds with Orosius' general apologetic – even anti-apocalyptic – tenor. Since things were worse in the past, present conflict ought to be stripped of apocalyptic significance: the *Histories* were intended to defuse expectations of the imminent End, not generate them.[9] Christian's phrasing not only clashes with one of the main purposes of the *Histories* but implies an almost atemporal link between past and present.[10] Almost half a millennium separated his world from that of Orosius, during which the western Roman Empire had collapsed in the later fifth century and had been re-established in 800 under Charlemagne, the first Carolingian emperor; even greater was the temporal distance between Stavelot in the 860s and the time of Christ. Yet these three levels were collapsed into one other: ninth-century monks might fear the end of the world is nigh while reading a history written 450 years previously, which itself covered wars and other calamities from even deeper in the past. To allay such fears, Christ's words, initially spoken to his own disciples (who lived long before Orosius wrote), still spoke directly to Carolingian monks (who lived long after).

This brief yet puzzling appeal to the authority of Orosius serves to introduce the key texts and themes that I wish to address in this essay: the intimate relationship between the *Histories Against the Pagans* and the Gospel of Matthew, as seen through the critical lens of Carolingian biblical commentary. This relationship was to some extent already present in Orosius' work. As part of his rhetorical strategy to convince those not wholly committed to Christianity of the religion's worth, Orosius made little use of the various books that comprised the Old and New Testaments.[11] One of the very few exceptions corresponds precisely to the passage from Matthew 24 on which Christian of Stavelot commented, and it speaks to one of the central

7 For two recent studies with full bibliographies, see Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* and Formisano, "Orosius' *Historiae adversus paganos* or the Subversion of History." See also Leonard, *In Defiance of History*. On the sack of Rome, see the review article by Nuffelen, "Not Much Happened: 410 and All That."

8 Orosius, *Histories*, 1.1.10, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 1, 8; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 32.

9 See Landes, "Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled," 160.

10 On time in Carolingian exegesis, see Heil, "Nos nescientes de hoc velle manere – We Wish to Remain Ignorant about This," and Czock, "Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft."

11 Orosius, *Histories*, 1.1.7–8, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 1, 11.

aspects of the *Histories* as a whole: that the establishment of world-wide peace under the Roman Emperor Augustus (ruled 27 B.C. until A.D. 14) was prepared by God for Christ's birth. It was, Orosius said, "when the world was enjoying the profoundest calm and a single peace lay over every people" that Christ's disciples asked him about "the end of days that was to come" (*de conclusione temporum subsequentium*).[12]

The unprecedented period of peace – the so-called *pax Augusta* – which interrupted otherwise incessant wars and was established on earth in preparation for the birth of Christ, was central to Orosius' argument. It later became a salient aspect of Carolingian exegesis of Matthew's Gospel, not least Matthew 2:1, which narrated the birth of Christ. In addition to Christian of Stavelot, two other ninth-century exegetes of Matthew made remarkable use of Orosius for their interpretations of this fundamental scriptural event: Hrabanus Maurus, abbot of the monastery of Fulda (in central Germany), whose Matthew commentary was written c. 821, and Paschasius Radbertus, abbot of Corbie (in northern France), whose more extensive and complex opus was written in various stages between the late 820s and early 850s. By taking these commentaries into account, I not only seek to address the vital exegetical context of the early medieval reception of Orosius' *Histories*, which so far has received little attention, but also to demonstrate that by studying how ninth-century scholars bound the *Histories* to the first Gospel, it becomes possible to catch unexpected glimpses of eschatological thought.

2 The Reception of Orosius: Empire, Eschatology and the "Shadow of Augustine"[13]

Orosius' *Histories Against the Pagans* were enormously influential throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, as testified by the c. 245 manuscripts and fragments preserved between the sixth and sixteenth centuries.[14] The broad shape of the text's reception has been sketched in important overviews of the work's influence,[15] as well as more focused analyses of the ways it was glossed,[16] abbreviated,[17] and even translated: it was rendered into Old English in the later ninth century, and into Ara-

12 Orosius, *Histories*, 7.3.10–12, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 3, 22–23; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 324–325.
13 Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, 3.
14 Mortensen, "Diffusion of Roman Histories in the Middle Ages."
15 Goetz, *Geschichtstheologie des Orosius*, 148–165; Hillgarth, "The *Historiae* of Orosius in the Early Middle Ages;" Eisenhut, *Die Glossen Ekkeharts IV.*, 49–61. Coz, "Quelques interprétations des *Historiae adversus paganos* d'Orose."
16 Eisenhut, *Die Glossen Ekkeharts IV*.
17 McKitterick and Evans, "A Carolingian Epitome of Orosius from Tours."

bic in the tenth.[18] Scholars have shown how the *Histories* functioned both as a historiographical model for later writers of history to emulate and as a reservoir of historical material from which they could draw.[19] Closely connected to the text's influence upon historical writing, the *Histories* have also been considered an important source for shaping medieval perceptions of geographical knowledge.[20] The exegetical aspect of the reception of Orosius, by contrast, has not yet been properly studied.[21]

Furthermore, the influence of Orosius has been considered alongside, or even contrasted against, the reception of the dedicatee of his *Histories*, Augustine, namely his monumental *De civitate Dei* ("On the City of God") and his *Letter* 199, which he himself called "On the End of the World".[22] Orosius and Augustine have long been considered to have held diametrically opposed views on the crucial, interlinked topics of church and state, and history and eschatology, with the maturity and sophistication of the latter set in opposition to the naïve shallowness of the former.[23] Their differing views concerning the sacred significance of the Roman Empire have been seen as especially important, not only from a fifth-century perspective but also from ninth-century vantage points. For Orosius, the Roman Empire, the final political entity in a series of four successive hegemonic powers (after Babylon, Carthage, and Macedon), was pre-ordained to rule the world until its very end.[24] Moreover, the coincidence of Christ's birth and the reign of the first Roman emperor, Augustus, aligned the fates of church and empire, of the sacred and the secular. By making the Christian Roman Empire "the supreme, final phase of history", Orosius is considered to have "brought history writing into the realm of eschatology".[25] Andrew Fear, Orosius' most recent English translator, has characterised the work as "postmillenarian": Christ's birth was to usher in "a thousand-year reign of increasing peace and plenty as Christianity spreads across the world". "If not heaven on earth," Fear stated, Orosius' "views mean that Christian Rome will certainly bring heaven closer to earth as the last millennium progresses".[26]

18 Old English Orosius: *Old English History of the World*, ed. and trans. Godden; Leneghan, "Old English Orosius and the Rise of Wessex," Arabic Orosius: Sahner, "From Augustine to Islam;" Christys, *Christians in Al-Andalus*, 135–157; Daiber, "Weltgeschichte als Unheilsgeschichte."

19 Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 64–81; Werner, "Gott, Herrscher und Historiograph," 7–18.

20 Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*; Lozovsky, "The Uses of Classical History and Geography in Medieval St Gall."

21 Cf. Goetz, *Geschichtstheologie des Orosius*, 155.

22 Hillgarth, "The *Historiae* of Orosius in the Early Middle Ages;" nuanced and developed by Brilli, "Entente entre Orose et saint Augustin."

23 Markus, "The Roman Empire in Early Christian Historiography," 252–253.

24 Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, 50–64; Palmer, "The Ordering of Time," 612–613. More generally, Goez, *Translatio imperii*.

25 Quotes from Zecchini, "Latin Historiography," 324 and Harris, "The Bible and the Meaning of History in the Middle Ages," 88.

26 Fear, "Introduction", 10, 23.

According to Orosius, earthly peace and prosperity would grow as the world became steadily more Christian until at some undefined point in the future would come

> those final days at the end of the world when the Antichrist will appear and the Final Judgment is held. At that time, Christ the Lord has prophesied through His own words in the Holy Scriptures that there will come troubles the likes of which have never been seen before and then in the unbearable torments of that time, it will be not in the way which happens now and has always occurred in the past, but, through a much clearer and more serious judgment that the saints will receive their approbation and the wicked their damnation.[27]

The belief that at the end of time Antichrist would appear and the final reckoning would befall mankind was, by Orosius' day, enshrined orthodoxy and was shared by Augustine as by many others.[28] Orosius' teacher, however, came to radically reject the belief that the Christian Roman Empire could ensure peace and happiness on earth until the eschaton.[29] In his *On the City of God*, completed a decade after the *Histories Against the Pagans* in 427, Augustine secularised Rome, removing the empire from God's plans for human salvation.[30] The survival of the empire could therefore have no bearing on the felicity of the church or the duration of the world; Christian believers should not look to any political power, but to heaven and the afterlife. According to Robert Markus, arguably the most influential modern expert on Augustine, it is the "eschatological dimension of Christian hope", more than anything else, that "lies like a deep gulf between Augustine and Orosius".[31]

The perceived differences between Orosius' and Augustine's positions on the church, empire and eschatology are significant because they resonate well beyond the study of Late Antiquity. Modern perceptions of these fifth-century individuals have also informed the study of the Carolingian period. Alcuin, a scholar at the court of Charlemagne, read Augustine but was said to have modelled his understanding of Christian Empire on writers such as Orosius who failed to grasp Augustine's ideas.[32] In Paul Kershaw's study of peace in the early Middle Ages, one author's use of Orosius – "whose vision of history was the transformative triumph of Christianity and, with it, peace" – encapsulated the optimism and dynastic confi-

27 Orosius, *Histories*, Prol. 15–16, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 1, 9; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 33. See also 7.27.14–16, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 3, 73–74.

28 Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 124–167.

29 There is a vast literature on Augustine's eschatology. See for example Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 133–150; Corradini, "Augustine's Eschaton."

30 Markus, *History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, 22–71 and 157–166. For attempts to bridge the "deep gulf" between Augustine and Orosius, see Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, 153–156, 186–206 and Ward, "Frechulf of Lisieux, Augustine and Orosius."

31 Markus, *History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, 166. More fully on this theme: Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 131–150 on Augustine, 151–152 on Orosius.

32 Blumenshine, "Alcuin's *Liber contra haeresim Felicis*," 227. On Alcuin, see also Alberi, "The Evolution of Alcuin's Concept of the *Imperium christianum*."

dence of the reign of Louis the Pious (ruled 813–840). A decade later, "the events of the middle years of the ninth century had in their turn driven [others] [...] into an Augustinian distance from the fallen world, and towards a focus upon the peace of the Heavenly Jerusalem".[33] In her study of the ninth-century exegete Haimo of Auxerre (roughly contemporary with Christian of Stavelot), Sumi Shimahara likewise characterised Haimo's historical outlook as being specifically "Augustinian".[34] Augustine radically broke with a tradition, encapsulated by Orosius, which understood that the Roman Empire was "destined to last until the end of the world".[35] Haimo, like Augustine, distinguished himself by suggesting the Roman Empire had already fallen, uncoupling the end of the world from the duration of Empire. By contrast, most other ninth-century exegetes seemingly believed that the Roman Empire "survived without disruption, from the Fathers until themselves".[36]

Haimo and several other authors produced commentaries on the Book of Daniel, 2 Thessalonians and John's Apocalypse, biblical texts in which the eschatological and apocalyptic character of Rome was especially pronounced.[37] Through these commentaries (and indeed a range of other texts), prophecies about Rome and the end of time were still told in the ninth century.[38] The Roman Empire and its duration, however, was only one element of Carolingian eschatological thought, and by no means the most important. The reception of Orosius in Carolingian Matthew commentaries, to which I now turn, allows us to shift attention away from the eschatological end of the Roman Empire and onto its historical inception. Looking back from the ninth century, the sacred significance of imperial Rome was most readily to be found at its very beginning.

33 Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, 186 and 203.

34 Shimahara, *Haymon d'Auxerre*, 227–299; Shimahara, "Haimo of Auxerre." See also Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 167–170.

35 Shimahara, *Haymon d'Auxerre*, 233.

36 Shimahara, *Haymon d'Auxerre*, 234.

37 Generally, see Adamek, *Vom römischen Endreich der mittelalterlichen Bibelerklärung*, and Verhelst, "Conceptions d'Adson concernant l'Antichrist." On Daniel, see: Courtray, "Réception du *Commentaire sur Daniel* de Jérôme;" Shimahara, "Commentaire sur Daniel de Raban Maur." II Thessalonians: Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist*. Literature on the exegesis of the Apocalypse is considerably more substantial: Matter, "The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis;" Lobrichon, "Stalking the Sign;" Mégier, "Die Historisierung der Apokalypse oder von der globalen zur geschichtlichen Zeit der Kirche in lateinischen Apokalypsenkommentaren, von Tyconius bis Rupert von Deutz."

38 McGinn, "Eriugena Confronts the End," 7–13; pertinent comments also in Nelson, "Kingship and Empire," 72–73.

3 Orosius and Carolingian Matthew Commentaries

There is a substantial body of Carolingian Matthew commentaries: around ten different commentaries are extant.[39] The eight authors whose names we know are a veritable who's who of ninth-century intellectual culture: Claudius of Turin, Hrabanus Maurus, Paschasius Radbertus, Christian of Stavelot, Otfrid of Weissenburg, Sedulius Scottus, John Scotus Eriugena and Remigius of Rheims. Conrad Leyser has even gone so far as to note that "from the reign of Louis the Pious onwards, Matthew commentary was one of [the] modes in which aspirant court intellectuals sought to establish their credentials".[40]

However, the intended audiences and motives for writing of the three authors that I shall consider – Christian of Stavelot, Hrabanus Maurus and Paschasius Radbertus – mean that we should approach them not only as court intellectuals but also as local teachers, first and foremost addressing the needs of specific religious communities. Education and spiritual enrichment lay at the heart of all three projects. We have already met Christian of Stavelot. The commentary of Hrabanus Maurus, abbot of the important monastery of Fulda, was completed c. 821 and dedicated to Archbishop Haistulf of Mainz.[41] Hrabanus aimed for utility and practicality, bringing together a diverse range of patristic sources in a single volume to offer the "disadvantaged reader" (*lector pauperculus*) without access to a decent library a range of authoritative interpretations.[42] The commentary of Paschasius Radbertus, on the other hand, served a more experienced audience.[43] It has been called "the most learned work of exegesis before the second half of the thirteenth century".[44] Sometime before 831, Radbertus, then abbot of Corbie, dedicated the first four books of his Matthew commentary to a certain Guntlandus, a monk at the nearby monastery of St. Riquier, where Radbertus had spent time as an exile; some two decades later, between Spring 849 and April 853, the next eight books were offered to the whole monastic community at St. Riquier.[45] According to David Ganz, it represented his "life's work", which "grew as he grew in age and understanding".[46]

39 Schönbach, "Über einige Evangelienkommentare des Mittelalters;" Stoll, "Drei karolingische Matthäus-Kommentare."

40 Leyser, "Royal Genealogy and Marian Devotion in the Ninth-Century West," 31.

41 Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, ed. Löfstedt. A copy was also sent to Fredurichus of Utrecht: Hrabanus, *Epistolae*, ed. Dümmler, 400. On Hrabanus, see de Jong, "Hrabanus Maurus and Biblical *Historia* for Rulers."

42 Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, Prol., ed. Löfstedt, 1. On Hrabanus and his exegesis.

43 Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, ed. Paulus.

44 Schönbach, "Über einige Evangelienkommentare des Mittelalters," 154.

45 On Radbertus, de Jong, "For God, King and Country," and de Jong, "Paschasius Radbertus and his Epitaphium Arsenii."

46 Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance*, 31, 32, 82–83; Schönbach, "Über einige Evangelienkommentare des Mittelalters," 144–150.

Unlike Christian's and Hrabanus' commentaries, it "responded not so much to the needs of the schoolroom as it did to the spiritual lives of monks".[47]

The three commentaries were pitched at different levels of readers, and not only did they use very different sources, they also used their sources very differently. All responded to the Matthew commentary written by Jerome c. 385, which laid the interpretative foundation for the exegesis of Matthew's Gospel in the Latin West. Jerome's work, however, was written hastily and was more concerned with the "historical" or "literal" interpretation of the Gospel; for Christian of Stavelot, Jerome was unsatisfactory even as literal commentary.[48] For Hrabanus and Radbertus, uncovering the deeper, hidden meaning of Scripture was paramount, that is, its "spiritual" interpretation. One aspect of spiritual exegesis, it should be noted, was known as anagogy and understood as the discussion of "future rewards and what the future life in heaven consists of".[49] In other words, anagogy was a medieval term used to denote the modern concept of eschatology.

Jerome, curiously, did not comment on Matthew 2:1, which marked the opening of the nativity narrative. Amongst the resources of the past available to ninth-century readers that helped contextualise the birth of Jesus, Orosius' *Histories* was arguably the most significant.[50] The birth of Christ during the reign of the Emperor Augustus was the hinge upon which the whole of Orosius' apologetic narrative hung.[51] It was above all for this reason that the three exegetes tapped into it as a means of shedding light on Matthew's Gospel, yet as we shall see, this could reflect both "historical" and "spiritual" modes of interpretation.

3.1 Christian of Stavelot

Christian of Stavelot's commentary is a good place to start, since his exegesis typically followed the historical, rather than the "spiritual", mode of interpretation. Unpacking Matthew 2:1, Christian noted that it was customary for historians to include the regnal years of rulers in their works, just as they were found in the *gesta* and

47 Contreni, "The Patristic Legacy to c. 1000," 532.

48 Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matheum*, Praefatio, ed. Hurst and Adriaen, 4–5; Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis*, Prol., ed. Huygens, 51–52. See also Mégier, "*Historia* and *Littera* in Carolingian Commentaries on St Matthew."

49 Hrabanus, *Commentaria in Exodum*, PL 108, 148B; Hrabanus borrowed this passage from Bede, *On the Tabernacle*, from where I have taken the English translation: Bede, *On the Tabernacle*, trans. Holder, 26. For further examples, see Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis,* vol. 2, 179–226.

50 Orosius was used by Paul the Deacon and Frechulf of Lisieux for precisely this purpose. On the latter, see Ward, "Frechulf of Lisieux, Augustine and Orosius."

51 Orosius, *Histories,* 6.22.1–11, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, 234–237; *Histories*, 7.1–2, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 3, 14–20.

charters of his own day.[52] Matthew situated Jesus's nativity in Herod's reign, whereas the Evangelist Luke, writing later and providing more detail, added that Christ was born during the reign of Augustus (r. 27 B.C.–A.D. 14), when a census was carried out in Judaea under the governor of Syria, Cyrinus (Lk. 2:1–3). Immediately after this, Christian added that Christ's birth and the Roman census took place in the forty-second year of the reign of Augustus (or Octavian, as Christian calls him), a fact derived from Orosius.[53] Within a single sentence, Christian started with Matthew, moved to Luke for further elaboration before turning – albeit silently – to Orosius. The bigger picture generated by exegesis was accumulative, taken from many sources together. Christian's combination of sources shows that information taken from the *Histories* could be seamlessly absorbed within the material drawn from the two gospel writers, blurring the boundaries between historiography and Scripture.

Using Orosius, Christian noted that on the day of Christ's birth, "many prodigies" were seen and recorded, "which revealed [that] Christ [was] the creator of the world".[54] Firstly, "a very large stream of oil flowed for a full day", the significance of which was to be found in the fact that "Christ" means "anointed by the spiritual oil".[55] The second sign was that on this day, angels announced the nativity by singing "Glory to God in the Highest, and on the Earth peace towards men of good will" (Lk. 2:14). Christian borrowed this from Orosius, but added his own flourishes: "so that that [angelic] voice might be fulfilled, so great a period of peace was established in the Roman world for twelve years such as no king could have made within a single province".[56] This fulfilled two additional prophecies not mentioned by Orosius: Isaiah 2:4 ("they shall turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears

52 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis* 2, ed. Huygens, 91: *Usus fuit istoriographorum ut quando historiam scriberent tempus regis adnotarent, sicut etiam nunc fit non solum in Gestis sed etiam in cartis*. Cf. *Expositio super librum generationis*, 1, ed. Huygens, 80: *Et etiam consuetudo istoriographorum est sic istoriam scribere, sicut eo tempore putatur quando res agitur*.

53 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis*, 2, ed. Huygens, 91: *Hac etiam de causa Mattheus tempus Herodis ponit qui in Iudea regnabat, Lucas vero, longuis et excelsius repetens, et nomen imperatoris et nomina consulum et tempus professionis census adnotavit, dicens exit edictum a Caesare Augusto videlicet ab Octaviano, quia quadragesimo secondo anno imperii Octaviani Christus est natus et census exactus*.

54 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis*, 2, ed. Huygens, 91–92: *Et ipso die multa prodigia exstiterunt quae eum creatorem orbis ostenderunt*.

55 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis*, 2, ed. Huygens, 92: *[...] ipso die fons olei largissimus de taberna meritoria per totum diem fluxit ut ostenderet quia is nascebatur qui Christus diceretur, id est unctus oleo spiritali*. Cf. Orosius, *Histories*, 6.18.34, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, 222. Orosius said this happened before the nativity, not on the same day.

56 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis*, 2, ed. Huygens, 92: *Eodem die angeli cantauerunt gloria in excelsis deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae uoluntatis* (Lk. 2:13–14), *et ut ista uox conpleretur tanta pax in orbe Romano facta est per XII annos, quantam nullus rex potuit facere in una prouintia, ita ut, sicut propheta dixit, conflarent gladios suos in uomeres et lanceas suas in falces* (Is. 2: 4), *et psalmista dixerat orietur in diebus eius abundantia pacis* (Ps. 71:7).

into sickles") and Psalm 71:7 ("In His days an abundance of peace shall arise"). A third story was copied from Orosius, which dealt with a decree of Augustus prohibiting him being called "master, since the True Master of all the human race was then born among men".[57] Christian's commentary shows how Orosius' narrative could be tied to the story of Christ, linking Matthew's and Luke's gospels; Christian was able, moreover, to embed further Old Testament texts into Orosius, working the *Histories against the Pagans* deeper into the textual fabric of Christianity. Hrabanus Maurus, in his explicit acknowledgment of Orosius' authority, went a step further.

3.2 Hrabanus Maurus

Hrabanus' exegesis was designed as a compilation of earlier commentary, and he often signalled to readers via marginal annotations the authorities from whom given passages were derived.[58] In his prologue to Haistulf, Hrabanus described the process of gathering together and examining the works of the authoritative experts on Matthew's Gospel. He name-checked Orosius, along with "Cyprian, Eusebius, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Fulgentius, Victorinus, Fortunatianus, [...] Leo, Gregory of Nazianzus, Pope Gregory [I], John Chrysostom and other fathers, whose names are written in the Book of Life".[59] Turning from the prologue to the text itself, we can glean from Hrabanus' use of the *Histories against the Pagans* that Orosius' particular field of perceived expertise was Christ's birth. For his commentary on Matthew 2:1, Hrabanus extracted many of the same details as Christian of Stavelot: God's role in preparing peace in the Roman Empire, Augustus's reluctance to be called *dominus* and other miracles and prodigies that heralded the nativity. Hrabanus, however, went a step further: he not only excerpted directly from Orosius, but also subjected the *Histories*' narrative to allegorical exegesis.

Wherever possible, Hrabanus identified and analysed "signs" within the Bible, that is, symbols of hidden meaning to be uncovered. Such meaning could be found outside the canonical texts of Scripture. The eight-book structure of his Matthew commentary was itself subject to such a reading. The first seven books contained a narrative of Christ's life up until his crucifixion, while the eighth dealt with the pas-

57 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis* 2, ed. Huygens, 92. Orosius, *Histories*, 6.22.4–5, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, 235; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 315–316.

58 Steckel, "Pragmatische und symbolische Dimensionen der Autorensiglen (*nomina auctorum*) bei Hrabanus Maurus."

59 Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, Prol., ed. Löfstedt, 2–3: *Adgregatis igitur hinc inde insignissimis sacrae lectionis atque dignissimis artificibus, quid in opusculis suis in beati Matthaei uerbis senserint, quid dixerint, diligentius inspicere curaui; Cyprianum dico atque Eusebium, Hilarium, Ambrosium, Hieronimum, Augustinum, Fulgentium, Victorinum, Fortunatianum, Orosium, Leonem, Gregorium Nazanzenum, Gregorium papam Romanum, Iohannemque Crisostomum et ceteros patres, quorum nomina sunt scripta in libro uitae.*

sion and resurrection. The first seven books thus represent the seven ages of the world, and, while Christ was resurrected on the eighth day, Hrabanus tells his readers that the Christian faithful, after the world has ended, will be resurrected and will live eternally alongside Christ in the eighth, eternal age.[60] Even organisation could evoke eschatology.

Similar signifiers were detected in the *Histories against the Pagans*. Orosius, himself keen on the symbolism of numbers, had compared the births of Abraham and Christ, noting that while the former was born in the forty-third year of the first secular ruler, Ninus of Assyria, the latter was born "almost at the end of the forty-second year of the rule of Augustus Caesar, the first of all Rome's emperors".[61] Hrabanus pushed Orosius' synchronisation further. Read within the framework of Matthew's gospel, the number forty-two – the year symbolising Abraham's and Christ's births respectively – possessed "mystery" (*mysterium*), for the regnal years in which both Abraham and Christ were born corresponded with the total number of generations within the genealogy of Christ.[62] Matthew 1:17 counted fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian captivity, and fourteen from the captivity to Christ, which taken together amount to forty-two generations. By comparing the sacred genealogy from Matthew's Gospel with Orosius' historical synchronisation, Hrabanus made a connection that Orosius himself had not envisaged. This connection, in turn, emphasises the significance of the *Histories*, not merely as a narrative about the past, but one which complements and confirms the perceived truths of Matthew's Gospel.

Hrabanus also drew on Orosius' reports of the "miraculous events" which occurred around Christ's birth.[63] Towards the end of his sixth book, Orosius described a series of events that occurred in Augustus's reign before Christ's birth, events which, Orosius argued, proved that "Caesar's rule had been ordained in advance entirely to prepare for the future coming of Christ".[64] One of these occurred after the

60 Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum* 8, ed. Löfstedt, 677. See also Hrabanus, *De computo*, ed. Stevens, c. 96, 321. On an important source dealing with the seven ages of the world and the eternal eighth, see Darby, "Bede's History of the Future," and Palmer, "The Ends and Futures of Bede's De temporum ratione."

61 Orosius, *Histories* 7.2.13–15, ed. Arnaudt-Lindet, vol. 3, 19–20; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 322. Although Abraham was said to be born in the 43rd year, the exegetes silently dropped this in favour of the 42nd. Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis* 2, ed. Huygens, 91: *sicut Abraham, qui in figura domini precessit, quadragesimo secundo anno Nini, qui primus rex in mundo fuit, natus est, sic Christus quadragesimo secundo anno Octauiani, qui primus 'imperator' appellatus fuit, natus est*.

62 Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, 1 (2:1), ed. Löfstedt, 52: *Nec hoc uacat a mysterio; concordant enim in numero natiuitas patriarchae ac Saluatoris nostri et ordo genealogiae inter ipsos per Matthaeum euangelistam enumeratae*.

63 Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum* 1 (2:1), ed. Löfstedt, 52: *Nec onerosum debet esse lectori, si res mirandae, quae temporibus Augusti in testimonium adventus Salvatoris nostri existiterunt, breviter commemorentur*.

64 Orosius, *Histories*, 6.20.4, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, 227; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 309.

triumvir Lepidus capitulated to Augustus in Sicily. Orosius stated that Augustus "restored 30,000 slaves to their masters and crucified another 6000, whose masters could not be found".[65] Hrabanus not only reproduced these figures, but interpreted them too. The 30,000 slaves were invested with eschatological significance: those who surrendered themselves to Christ and who served the Holy Trinity and fulfilled the Ten Commandments would be rewarded with eternal life in heaven (30,000 symbolising the trinity and the commandments). The 6000 slaves with no masters signified those who in the first six ages of the world had sinned and who would be punished with perpetual torture in hell.[66] Orosius provided the numbers: the interpretation was entirely Hrabanus'. This is significant because such allegorising was typically reserved for the words of the Bible. Hrabanus thus seems to have treated the *Histories* as though they were an extra-biblical, or even a para-scriptural source.

Hrabanus similarly reframed another event in the *Histories* that attested to God's role in preparing Augustus's Empire, which Christian of Stavelot also mentioned. On the day that Augustus was given permanent tribunician power, a fountain of oil erupted and flowed for a full day.[67] "By this event", Hrabanus explained,

> what is more evidently signified than Christ's entrance into the world, about which it was written: 'may the earth sprout forth a Saviour' (Is. 45:8) and 'he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end' (Lk. 1:32–33)? [This indicates that] Christians are made from Christ, that is those anointed by the anointed, and they themselves will march in great and inexhaustible numbers from the lodging house, that is from the welcome and bountiful Church, during the full period of the Roman Empire, or rather, up until the end of the world.[68]

Orosius linked the flowing oil and the ever growing church to the Roman Empire, equating the duration of Rome's empire with the lifespan of the world.[69] Hrabanus' addition of the adverb *immo* sets up an opposition, uncoupling the "end of the

65 Orosius, *Histories*, 6.18.33, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, 222; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 305.

66 Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum* 1 (2:1), ed. Löfstedt, 53.

67 Orosius, *Histories*, 6.20.6–7, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, 228–229.

68 Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, I (2:1), ed. Löfstedt, 53*: Hoc uero, quod Augusto Vrbem ingresso in perpetuum illi tribunicia potestas manere a senatu decretum est, et his diebus trans Tiberim e taberna meritoria fontem olei terra exundauit ac per totum diem largissimo riuo fluxit, quid euidentius in eo significatur, quam quod Christo mundum intrante (de quo scriptum est: Terra germinet Saluatorem (Is. 45:8), et Regnabit in domo Iacob in aeternum, et regni eius non erit finis (Lk. 1:33), hoc est per omne tempus Romani imperii, immo usque ad finem mundi a Christo Christianos fieri, id est unctos ab uncto, et ipsos de meritoria taberna, hoc est de hospita largaque ecclesia, affluenter et incessabiliter processuros*. Adapted from *Histories*, trans. Fear, 310.

69 Orosius, *Histories*, 6.20.7, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, 228; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 310: *[…] sub principatu Caesaris Romanoque imperio per totum diem, hoc est per omne Romani tempus imperii, Christum et ex eo Christianos, id est unctum atque ex eo unctos, de meritoria taberna, hoc est de hospita largaque Ecclesia, affluenter atque incessabiliter processuros […]* ["They tell us that in the principate of Caesar in the Roman Empire – interpreted this means that as long as the Roman Empire endures – Christ and, after him, the Christians – that is oil and those anointed by it – will march from a

world" from "the full period of the Roman Empire". Hrabanus, moreover, looked beyond time and history: Christ's kingdom, which began on earth as the church, would forever endure in heaven. Looking back to the nativity inevitably meant thinking forward. Whether or not Orosius originally "brought history writing into the realm of eschatology",[70] key parts of his narrative became invested with eschatological meaning when read within the context of biblical exegesis.[71]

3.3 Paschasius Radbertus

Paschasius Radbertus, our final exegete, offers a further ninth-century snapshot of how the *Histories against the Pagans* were interpreted, which reveals both commonalities and contrasts with the previous two cases. Radbertus alone quoted what "*our* Paulus Orosius" (*Paulus Orosius noster*) said about the earthquake and solar eclipse that followed Christ's crucifixion.[72] As for Christ's nativity, Radbertus began by evoking those now familiar Orosian hallmarks: Jesus was born during "a most stable peace", which, "by divine power", had been established "all across the earth". This peace "was arranged not by the virtue of Caesar but by the grace of Christ". Augustus, in refusing to be called "lord", recognised that "then the True Lord of the human race was born amongst men".[73]

Radbertus worked at a more elevated level than either Hrabanus or Christian of Stavelot, engaging with a much wider range of texts and ideas. In terms of method, he tended less to excerpt directly from his sources; rather, he used them as the foundations on which his own reflections were based. We can see this in how he continued his analysis of Matthew 2:1:

> In this same year, moreover, men in each and every province were recorded by name and each professed in their own region, so that a slave, therefore, who had not returned to his proper master, was lawfully punished by death. The whole world is enlisted, which Luke recalled. This very clear statement marked out this same Caesar as ruler of all other men. Without

lodging house – that is the welcoming and bountiful church – in great and inexhaustible numbers…"]

70 See above, n. 25.

71 A summary of Hrabanus' analysis of Matthew 2:1 was included in Otfrid of Weissenburg's *Glossae in Matthaeum*, ed. Grifoni, 57–58.

72 Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, 12 (27:45), ed. Paulus, 1381; cf. 1395 and 1415.

73 Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, 2 (2:1), ed. Paulus, 143: *Quadragesimo siquidem regni Augusti quando Iesus natus est anno diuina ordinante potentia firmissima primum pax in omni terrarum parte mortalibus famulatur. Tunc igitur nempe hoc factum legitur quando angeli cecinerunt audientibus hominibus*: *Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bone uoluntatis* (Lk. 2:14). *Vnde liquido constat quia pax ista non uirtute Cesaris sed Christi gratia conponitur. Adeo ut idem Augustus ad quem rerum summa concurrerat in consistorio se Dominum appetlari non sit passus. Immo quia non ausus est diuino succensu eo quod uerus Dominus totius humani generis inter homines nascebatur.*

> doubt, Christ, who founded the whole of humankind, wished to be discovered and enrolled as a man amongst men by human laws, since through this act he enrolled his followers as eternal citizens of the heavenly fatherland. Through this same act Christ deemed it fitting to be a subject of the Roman Empire, because never since the beginning [of time] was there any ruler that obtained *imperium* over the entire world. The source of this [rule] is known most clearly by the inspection of our faith, because our Lord Jesus Christ came when He delivered to the world a most stable peace so that his preachers would have an unimpeded path to follow across the entire earth and so that the world, having accepted this peace, might extend the more tranquil word of preaching. Thus it is read that the sound of the apostles went forth into all the earth and it is revealed that the word of preaching flowed swiftly unto the ends of the earth.[74]

Christ's status as a Roman citizen was read, we could say, anagogically. The earthly citizens of the Roman Empire, once they accepted Christ's message, would become the heavenly citizens of the eternal kingdom. The Roman Empire was not just established to make space for Christ's nativity, but had a further function: to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel. Orosius himself had argued this, but of our three exegetes, only Radbertus deemed it relevant to utilise this argument.[75] Radbertus' point, however, seems slightly different from Orosius', who wanted to emphasise the workings of divine providence in history. The spreading of the Gospel was a central theme of Christian history. It was also an important facet of Christian eschatology, for the end of days would not begin until the world had been exposed to the message of the New Testament. In Matthew 24:14, after predicting wars, disasters and persecutions, Jesus prophesied that the "gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come".

In Radbertus' commentary, the birth of Christ in Matthew 2 and Christ's eschatological discourse in Matthew 24 were connected, even though these sections of his

74 Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, 2 (2:1), ed. Paulus, 143*: Eodem quoque anno singularum prouintiarum ubique homines censentur ex nomine et singuli suis profitentur in locis. Ita ut seruus qui proprium non redisset ad dominum iure plecteretur in mortem. Describitur autem uniuersus orbis quod Lucas meminit. Eundemque Cesarem clarissima illa professio cunctorum hominum principem designauit. Inter quos nimirum Christus qui uniuersum genus condidit inueniri atque conscribi homo inter homines humanis legibus uoluit quatinus per hoc suos conscriberet in aeternitate caelestis patriae ciues per quod idem Romano dignatus est subiacere imperio. Quod nusquam penitus ab exordio cuiusquam in regno fuit ut aliquis totius mundi potiretur imperio. Vnde fidei nostrae inspectioni manifestissime patet quia Dominus noster Iesus Christus cum uenit potissimam pacem ideo mundo reddidit ut sui praedicatores per orbem liberam intrandi uiam haberent et pace recepta mundus tranquillius uerbum praedicationis intenderet. Hinc igitur est quod in omnem terram sonus (Rm. 10:18) apostolorum exisse legitur et in fines orbis terrae uerbum (Ps. 18:5) praedicationis cucurrisse monstratur.*

75 Orosius, *Histories*, 6.1.8, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 2, 164; *Histories*, trans. Fear, 262: "the glory of His New Name and news of Salvation that it proclaimed could spread swiftly and without hindrance in great silence over a land that was at peace far and wide and, indeed, so that his disciples as they travelled among the diverse peoples of the empire, freely offering all of them the gift of salvation, should have peace and freedom to meet with others and spread their message as Roman citizens among Roman citizens."

exegesis were written as much as twenty years apart. The theme of divinely realised peace on earth, as conveyed by Orosius, was re-deployed, but this time alongside an Augustinian source. Modern distinctions between Orosius and Augustine as rival proponents of empire and ecclesia do not therefore fit neatly onto this evidence.

As part of his analysis of Matthew's Little Apocalypse, Radbertus blended ideas from Orosius and Augustine. Commenting on Matthew 24:6 ("You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."), Radbertus wrote:

> That sign (i.e. wars), therefore, is not a sign of the age to come, nor a sign of the [second] coming of Christ. Because before Christ's advent and soon afterwards there were innumerable types of fighting that were seen and heard, and many false prophets came then and afterwards. For this reason, one rightly cannot accept that the sign ought to be of things to come, since across time and space wars have never ceased, as a result of which the earth is now ground down and soaked with human blood. Albeit under Augustus Caesar, through the dispensation of God's providence, there was a cessation from war at the time of Christ's Advent and then a little later so that the Gospel could be preached freely throughout the whole world. Nevertheless, not long after barbarian nations frequently tore everywhere through the Roman provinces, just as the Romans themselves had first subjugated the whole world to themselves through war.[76]

The *Pax Augusta* opened up the world to Christ's disciples and the preachers of his message. This could be considered an *un*-Augustinian viewpoint, at least to the extent that Augustine never made a point of the providential co-incidence of Christ and Augustus.[77] Yet much of Radbertus's subsequent comments on Matthew 24 were derived from Augustine's *letter* 199 ("On the End of the World"), a classic statement of patristic eschatology.[78] By acknowledging the workings of divine providence for the birth of Christ and the spreading of his message while also drawing on Augustine's *Letter*, Radbertus combined views that have been deemed incompatible. If nothing else, this passage cautions against seeing "Augustinian" and "Orosian" as clear-cut categories. Hrabanus Maurus, it should be noted, also used

76 Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, 11 (24:6), ed. Paulus, 1158: *Quod itaque signum non est signum futuri seculi neque signum aduentus Christi. Quia et ante aduentum Christi et postea mox fuerunt et audita sunt et uisa innumera proeliorum genera sicut et pseudochristi multi eo in tempore et deinceps uenerunt. Qua de causa iure queritur quod signum esse debeat futurorum cum numquam per diuersa temporum interualla et locorum cessauerint bella quibus iam terra contrita est et sanguine madefacta humano. Etsi in tempore aduentus Christi cessarunt dispensante Dei prouidentia sub Augusto Octauiano et deinceps paulo post ut Euangelium per orbem liberius predicaretur. Tamen non multum longe crebrius Romanas prouincias barbare nationes usque quaque peruaserunt sicut et Romani prius sibi bellando omnem orbem subiugarunt.*

77 Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 3.30, ed. Dombart and Kalb, 96.

78 Augustine, Letter 199 (*De fine saeculi*), ed. Goldbacher, 243–293. Bouhot, "Hesychius de Salone et Augustin."

Orosius' *Histories* and Augustine's *Letter* 199, though never fused together within the same passage.[79]

Radbertus often looked beyond his sources to his own world. He noted in relation to Matthew 24:7 that he and his contemporaries "continually sustain so much extermination of human life and the desolation of communities at the hands of barbarian and pagan enemies that every day, with a groan, we expect nothing but our end. And still, just as the Divine Word said, the end is not yet."[80] Wars were endemic to human history and therefore cannot be taken as signs of the imminence of the end: this was the same point that Christian of Stavelot drew attention to when he noted that readers of Orosius, being confronted by the wars of the past, might worry that the end is nigh. When Radbertus reached Matthew 24:14 on the preaching of the Gospel, a similar message was expressed, with Augustine's *Letter* 199 again functioning as his main source. The "consummation" was to come after the Gospel had been preached to all nations, but it could not be known how much time would remain after all had heard the word of God. Even in Augustine's day, Christianity had spread far and wide; Radbertus could add that by his time, even the Danes had begun to build churches and be baptised.[81] Christian of Stavelot later wrote that since the Khazar Turks had converted from Judaism and the Bulgarians had embraced Christianity, the faith was to be found within every "people under the sun".[82] Johannes Heil in his study of Carolingian eschatological expectation thought that Christian "failed to raise, or deliberately avoided" asking what the fulfilment of Matthew 24:14 might mean "for the question of how near the end was".[83] When discussing signs of the eschaton, it went against orthodoxy to ask questions that God alone could answer.

4 Conclusions

Central to Christian doctrine was the understanding that the world's end was preordained. The exact date of this, however, could and indeed should not be known, an agnostic position that has itself been styled "Augustinian".[84] It was not only the work of Augustine, but of a whole range of patristic thinkers that shaped the belief

79 See especially Hrabanus, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, 7 (24:14), ed. Löfstedt, 617–620.

80 Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, 11, ed. Paulus, 1159: *Tanta a barbaris et paganis hostibus exterminia hominum et desolationes ciuitatum iugiter sustinemus qui nihil aliud cotidie quam finem nostrum cum gemitu exspectamus. Et tamen sicut sermo diuinus ait nondum est finis*. For more Radbertian gloominess, see Matter, "The Lamentations Commentaries of Hrabanus Maurus and Paschasius Radbertus."

81 Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, 11 (24:14), ed. Paulus, 1164–1165.

82 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio super librum generationis* 24, ed. Huygens, 436.

83 Heil, "Nos nescientes de hoc velle manere – We Wish to Remain Ignorant about This," 91–92.

84 Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000."

that the end must always be expected, even if the exact moment could not be known. James Palmer has noted that Carolingian libraries housed "many different apocalyptic and eschatological voices", a view "which complicates, without necessarily contradicting, arguments about the "Augustinian" tendencies of Carolingian intellectual life".[85] In this essay, I have sought to show that Carolingian exegesis prompts a similar conclusion. It offers insights into particular scholars at work in their libraries, utilising the various resources of their communities to help their monastic and clerical brethren learn about and reflect on the various books of the Bible and the vast amounts of authoritative commentary that had been produced on them from Late Antiquity onwards.

Within these resources of knowledge, examples of eschatological thinking are legion. This ought to come as no surprise, because eschatology is a core component of Christianity and as such is ubiquitous in the theological literature of the Middle Ages. The contexts in which commentaries were written, however, provide valuable clues to help us understand one of the reasons why Orosius' *Histories* were copied and read in the Carolingian period (and beyond). As a historian, Orosius was not particularly focused upon eschatological matters, and the exegetes surveyed here did not read him for his distinctive views on the End Times. Rather, they read him because his *Histories* shed light on the birth of Christ as it was reported in the Gospel of Matthew. Orosius was an invaluable authority on the beginnings of Christian history: he was the historian of the divinely-ordained peace, which, through Augustus, was engendered for Christ's birth and for his church to grow through preaching. This alone helps account for the work's enormous appeal.

Orosius appears not to have been read as an advocate of Roman imperial eschatology: Carolingian authors did not explicitly utilise his scheme of four successive empires culminating in Rome.[86] Orosius' Carolingian readers, especially those engaged in exegesis, inhabited the Church founded by Christ, not the empire established by Augustus. In monastic milieus, the *ecclesia*, not the empire, was the chief object of study.[87] The absorption of Orosius' apologetic history into scriptural commentary underscores this: in the *Histories against the Pagans*, Augustus is explicitly subordinate to Christ; in the commentaries, in turn, Orosius is implicitly subordinate to Matthew. This has implications for eschatology. The eschatological emphases which Hrabanus and Radbertus added to Orosius came from wider understandings of the past, present and future, the bases of which lay in the Bible and its interpretation. These emphases were read into, rather than derived from, the *Histories against the Pagans*. Even Christian of Stavelot, who did not seek to uncover alle-

85 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 162–163.

86 Hugh of Fleury (twelfth century) appears to have been the only historian who followed Orosius' schema: Funkenstein, *Gegenwartsbestimmung im Geschichtsdenken des Mittelalters*, 91, 101.

87 On the relationship between empire and ecclesia in Carolingian discourse (with greater emphasis on the imperial side of things), see de Jong, "The Empire that was always Decaying," and Kramer, "A Crowning Achievement."

gorical meaning when drawing on the *Histories*, still invested this work with eschatological value when he read the text in relation to Matthew's Gospel, a narrative, like all New Testament texts, that was predicated upon the expected end of the world, the Last Judgment and eternal salvation.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

CCCM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866–.
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. 1819–.
MGH Epp.	*Epistolae (in Quart)*
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols. Paris, 1844–1855, 1862–1865.

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Rutger Kramer

The Bede Goes On: Pastoral Eschatology in the Prologue to the *Chronicle of Moissac* (Paris BN lat. 4886)

This article presents a close reading of the introduction to the ninth-century Chronicle of Moissac *as it occurs in the twelfth-century manuscript Paris BN lat. 4886. It will be argued that the combination of the main text of this prologue – a reworking of Bede's ideas on the Six Ages of the World – and the interlinear and marginal glosses to this part of the text show that the narrative of the* Chronicle *as a whole should be understood as an eschatological commentary on the political situation in the Frankish Empire in the early years of Louis the Pious, as seen from the vantage point of an author working in Aquitaine, in the South-Western corner of the empire. At the same time, it will be shown that the text is given a timeless quality through these marginal comments, which may have prompted the copyist responsible for the extant manuscript to maintain them despite the different circumstances at the time.*

The *Chronicle of Moissac* (*CM*) is an enigmatic text.[1] At first glance, it appears to be one among multiple examples of Carolingian historiographical customs, not least because it presents itself as a reworking and continuation of the *Chronica Maiora*, chapter 66 of the eighth-century Northumbrian monk Bede's *De temporum ratione* – a work on the meaning and calculation of the passage of time, which was hugely influential throughout the early medieval West.[2] Through this connection, the *CM* belongs to a larger "family" of Carolingian texts that attach themselves to Bede's work. It was probably first written in the early ninth century as a product of the monastic network in Aquitaine, the kingdom created by Charlemagne in 781 to facilitate the administration of the South-Western reaches of the Carolingian realm. Focusing on this political context highlights the idea that the *CM* presents a localised

1 The most recent and most complete edition of the *Chronicon Moissiacense* was made by Claszen and Kats, *Chronicon Moissiacense Maius*; Kettemann, *Subsidia Anianensia*, Beilage 2: *Chronicon Moissiacense* und *Chronicon Anianense*: Synoptische Edition der Handschriften Paris BN lat. 4886, fols. 43v–54v und Paris BN lat. 5941, fols. 2r–49v, provides a partial edition and commentary as well. The oldest reliable – albeit partial – edition was prepared by Pertz, *Chronicon Moissiacense*, with additional improvements in *Ex chronico Moissiacensi*. A translation of the text for the years 802–814 may be found in King, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, 145–149.

2 On Bede's influence, see, among others, Wallis, "Bede and Science," 113–126, and Westgard, "Bede and the Continent in the Carolingian Age and Beyond," 201–215.

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interpretation to the history of the empire and the role of the Carolingians in its development, which in turn matters for our interpretation of Paris BN lat. 4886 as a whole.[3] Moreover, the fact that the narrative is built on foundations laid by Bede also shows the universal aspirations of the author, while also showing the enduring influence of the Northumbrian monk throughout the Frankish world.

The main enigma surrounding the *CM* starts from the fact that it only survives in two manuscripts that date from centuries after the initial composition of the narrative. Of these two, BN lat. 4886, from the late eleventh and early twelfth century, is the earliest.[4] The other manuscript, also in Paris (BN lat. 5941) dates to the fourteenth century and contains the same ninth-century core but now heavily interpolated to fit with that manuscript's aim of presenting the history of Barcelona in a broader context.[5] While the *CM* thus represents the end of a "chain of chronicles", an eleventh-century copy of a ninth-century compilation based on an eighth-century narrative using sources from the seventh, sixth, and fifth centuries, its scanty manuscript transmission raises many questions about the text as a whole, its origins and the adaptations it has gone through between the moment of first inscription and the earliest witnesses.[6] While these questions are still being resolved, some things seem to be clear regardless. The *Chronicle of Moissac* was based on a plethora of earlier historiographical works, including Orosius, Fredegar and his continuator, the Annals of Lorsch and most notably Bede's *De temporum ratione*, which, as noted, provides the backbone for the narrative as a whole. When we reach the final entry for the year 818, the readers have seen the narrative of a world where the Christian Church and the Roman Empire together guaranteed peace and stability. Within this framework, the Carolingian dynasty, despite the challenges they faced and the diversity within their realm, proved itself a worthy heir of both these traditions.[7]

Taken at face value, this seems nothing out of the ordinary for a Chronicle written at the height of Carolingian power. However, the way the Carolingian history of the *CM*, or at least the version in BN lat. 4886, has been connected to Bede's views of the past is noteworthy. It is not alone in this. One of the *CM*'s close relatives, the equally enigmatic *Chronicon universale* or *Chronicle of 741*, versions of which may be found in Leiden, Scaliger 28 or Munich, BSB Clm. 246, also present themselves as

3 Bede, *De temporum ratione*, ed. Jones; trans. Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*. On the historiographical context of the *Chronicle of Moissac*, see Bellarbre, "La "nation" aquitaine dans l'historiographie monastique."

4 This manuscript is available online, through the *Gallica* database: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10540997j.

5 Available online through *Gallica*: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8562475. On this manuscript and its relation to Catalan literary culture, see Philipp-Sattel, *Die Anfänge der katalanischen Schriftkultur im Mittelalter*, 89–107.

6 The term "chain of chronicles" is borrowed from Wood, "Chains of Chronicles."

7 For a more detailed overview of the text of the *CM*, its sources and its audience, see, in addition to the commentaries to the editions cited in n. 1, Kramer, "A Crowning Achievement."

continuations or elaborations on Bede's historiography.[8] As such, when on fol. 2v of BN lat. 4886, where the narrative starts in earnest, a decorated capital I marks the point where *In Christi nomine incipit liber cronicorum Bedane famuli Christi* ("In the name of Christ, here begins the book of chronicles of Bede, servant of Christ") it is not dissimilar to the chronicle found in München, BSB, Clm 246, which has a similar setup and a similar approach to Bede's original, but makes different editorial choices throughout.[9] Then, the author of the *CM* added a short section on the sources used by Bede and in this new version of history, citing the Old and New Testament, as well as a selection of the most influential early Christian historical thinkers, such as Orosius, Augustine, Josephus, Jerome, Rufinus, Marcellinus and Isidore, before starting with the story of Adam and the beginning of mankind.[10]

What follows is a fascinating vision of history and the future through the eyes of a multitude of medieval authors, which, if we include the two chapters from *De temporum ratione* appended at the end of the chronicle, takes up roughly three quarters of the manuscript (fols. 2–55 out of 71 total). The remainder of the codex is made up of a broad range of theological, liturgical and pastoral treatises, including the *Decretum Gelasianum* and Isidore's *In libros veteris ac novi testamenti*, but also some as yet unedited treatises, lists of prophets, apostles and popes, and parts of the so-called *Commonitorium Palladii*, an early medieval text on Indian Brahmins associated with the fourth-century bishop Palladius of Helenopolis or, for the Latin version presented here, Ambrose of Milan.[11] It is an eclectic collection, in its eleventh-century form perhaps the dossier of a monastic teacher or a personal miscellany of a scribe or even an abbot. More research is definitely needed to further our understanding of this manuscript and its place in the monastic culture of High Medieval Aquitaine.[12] For now, however, fascinating though this historiographical and monastic codex may be, what interests us are the pages immediately preceding the start of the chronicle, which elaborate on Bede's views of history as explained in his *Chronica Maiora*. Moreover, another layer is added to these pages by a number of glosses by a hand that is roughly contemporary – if not the same – as that of the copyist. This introduction and its glosses will be the focus of this article, as they present an interesting early medieval take on the intersection of past and future and the function of historiography in navigating time itself. These show that the author

8 See Kaschke, "Enhancing Bede."

9 McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, 23–28.

10 Although it is very probable that the *CM* in its current form is the product of several generations of authors and compilers, I will refer to them as a singular "author" for the purposes of this article.

11 A full description of this manuscript may be found in Claszen and Kats, *Chronicon Moissiacense Maius*, vol. 1, 18–30. Specifically on the *Commonitorium Palladii*, see Pritchard, "The Ambrose Text of Alexander and the Brahmans." While this article cannot go into further detail here, the presence of this rather curious text, specifically, seems to me an important clue about the purpose behind the manuscript as a whole.

12 See, for instance, Bellarbre, "Aquitania, Wasconia, Hispania," at 199–208.

was aware that Bede's original intent was not simply to write a world history out of literary curiosity, but that he was making an argument about time as well.

Bede's goal with *De temporum ratione* (*DTR*) was to make a polemical case for his views on the calculation of time as part of an ongoing debate in the monastic world of the eighth-century.[13] To Bede, the metaphor of choice – or the "microcosm", as he calls it – was provided by the Six Days of Creation, which corresponded with the Six Ages of the World, supplemented by a more spiritual or eschatological Seventh and Eighth Age.[14] Bede explicates this metaphor twice within *DTR*. The first time occurs in chapter 10, where he, in the words of Faith Wallis, "knits *computus* and exegesis together" so as to emphasise "the analogy between the events of history in each of the six World-Ages, and the events of the day of Creation (in the "primal week") to which each corresponds".[15] The second time marks the beginning of chapter 66, which had as its ultimate goal to illustrate Bede's overarching point that, as James Palmer explains, previous attempts at calculating the age of the world had been found wanting, and that "and that therefore recent history needed re-synchronising to a reformed reckoning".[16] The importance of this went beyond chronological exactitude: the very act of reckoning time also confronted one with the ongoing process of human history – and eventually, salvation.[17]

The author of the *CM* went one step further still, and belaboured the general point that their readers should look beyond the past as a political tool, and become aware of history and their place in the greater scheme of things in order to walk the path towards salvation.[18] He signalled this by appending not only Bede's original prologue to the *Chronica Maiora* to the text, but also an expanded version of his Six Ages: a version in which the author's eschatological agenda comes to the fore clearly and unequivocally. In this sense, it differs from the ninth-century München Clm 246, which does show a similarly creative approach to Bede's *DTR*, but instead of narrating the full Six Ages, its copyist opted to stop partway through the First

13 Following the reading by Palmer, "The Ends and Futures of Bede's *De temporum ratione*," 139–160.

14 Bede uses the term "microcosm" (*microcosmos*) to refer to the relation between the life of a person and the universe itself in the *DTR*, in Chapter 35 ("The Four Seasons, Elements, and Humours"), trans. Wallis, 100–101, to equate the four seasons to the four humours that determine a person's health, and in Chapter 66 ("The Six Ages of the World"), trans. Wallis, 157. See also O'Brien, *Bede's Temple*, 81–82.

15 *DTR* c. 10 ("The Week of the World-Ages"), trans. Wallis, 39–41. See also the commentary by Wallis in the translation, at 280.

16 Palmer, "The Ends and Futures of Bede's *De temporum ratione*," 146.

17 Cf. Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, 96–124.

18 Landes, "Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled." Cf. for a more political reading of early medieval historiography Werner, "Gott, Herrscher und Historiograph," and for the Carolingian case also McKitterick, "Political Ideology in Carolingian Historiography."

Age, and instead add different prologues – the ones to Eusebius' *Chronicle*, the *DTR* by Bede, and Isidore's *Chronica Maiora*.[19]

While the author of the version of the *Chronicon universale* thus retains a sense of historiography in the manuscript BSB Clm 246, its Parisian counterpart has an altogether more eschatological approach. In the remainder of this article, I will focus on the way the author of the *CM* has built upon Bede's foundation. By comparing the Six Ages of Man given in *DTR* to the version presented in this manuscript, I intend to argue that the *CM* was not only written with an eye towards the immediate future of the intended audience, but betrayed a clear and explicit preoccupation with eschatology as well.[20] In doing so, the intentions behind the *CM* will become more apparent, which in turn helps explain the choices made during the compilation of the manuscript in its entirety. Looking at the opening pages of BN lat. 4886 thus helps us focus on one of the links in the chain of chronicles it represents. Thereby, we may shine a light on the way a monastic author in the ninth century (or indeed, a scribe in the late eleventh century) conceived of the intersection between historiography and eschatology in a way that made sense to their intended audience. Because this connection did make sense to their intended audience: as has been noted, there is an eschatological undertone visible in most historiographical endeavours of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.[21] The passage of time, from a Carolingian point-of-view, inexorably moved humanity towards the End just as every single individual would have to account for their (mis)deeds after the end of their life.[22] The marginal glosses to the passage under scrutiny, as we will see, highlight that the *Chronicle of Moissac* was part of that same long narrative tradition. They provide an additional dimension to our understanding of this scribe's vision of Bede's "Augustinian" cosmology, and thereby allow us yet another fascinating glimpse into the mind-set of the people involved in the long history of this manuscript.[23]

19 Palmer, "The Ends and Futures of Bede's *De temporum ratione*," 155–156. The manuscript itself may be consulted online at http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0006/bsb00069161/images/. For a description of the manuscript, see Halm, *Catalogus codicum latinorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis*, 63; Bierbrauer, *Die vorkarolingischen und karolingischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, a. 86.

20 For a basic overview of Bede's "Ages of the World," and how the model presented in *De temporum ratione* links up with Bede's other treatise on time, *De tempore*, see Blair, *The World of Bede*, 262–270.

21 See Wieser, "The Chronicle of Hydatius," and, in the same volume, Warntjes, "The Final Countdown and the Reform of the Liturgical Calendar in the Early Middle Ages," for analyses of the interdependence between eschatology, history, and audience in different sources.

22 See Czock, "Creating Futures through the Lens of Revelation in the Rhetoric of the Carolingian Reform."

23 Cf. Brown, "Art.: Bede, Venerable," who noted that a full study of Augustine's influence on Bede was still lacking. But see also Kelly, "Bede's Use of Augustine for his Commentarium in principium Genesis," and Thacker, *Bede and Augustine of Hippo*.

1 Eclectic Six

Bede's ideas about the Six Ages of the World were heavily dependent on the work done several centuries earlier by Augustine, bishop of Hippo and one of the most influential thinkers of the early Church.[24] Adapting several earlier models for the passage of time, Augustine frequently referred to the Six Ages in his works, and in the process showed the adaptability of this seemingly rigid concept. The existence of this metaphor demonstrates the flexibility of how biblical typology combined with ideas of time and eschatology in the early Christian discourse. This may have prompted Augustine to use the metaphor in his refutation of the Manichees, for instance, when he closes the first book with an exposition on the Six Days of Creation as an admonition to do good works while alive, in order to enjoy the fruit of one's labour on the Seventh Day.[25] The fact that these good works should be done on the orders of God should not detract from the enjoyment at the end: by combining the story of Creation with an eschatological outlook, he emphasises how everybody is on the same path towards personal fulfilment, and, essentially, that the Earthly City is never really finished.[26] This "personal" approach also allowed him to use the same metaphor as an educational tool to instruct teachers on how to explain the tenets of faith to new catechumens. In chapter 22 of the treatise *De catechizandis rudibus* ("On Instructing the Unlearned"), the Church Father provides an overview of the Six Ages, of which five had been completed and the sixth was still ongoing. It is worth quoting in full, if only because it may well be the most succinct overview of the ages.

> Of these ages, the first is from the beginning of the human race, that is, from Adam, who was the first man that was made, down to Noah, who constructed the ark at the time of the flood. Then the second extends from that period on to Abraham, who was called the father indeed of all nations which should follow the example of his faith, but who at the same time in the way of natural descent from his own flesh was the father of the destined people of the Jews; which people, previous to the entrance of the Gentiles into the Christian faith, was the one people among all the nations of all lands that worshipped the one true God: from which people also Christ the Saviour was decreed to come according to the flesh. For these turning-points of those two ages occupy an eminent place in the ancient books. On the other hand, those of the other three ages are also declared in the Gospel, where the descent of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh is likewise mentioned. For the third age extends from Abraham on to David the king; the fourth from David on to that captivity whereby the people of God passed over into Babylonia; and the fifth from that transmigration down to the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. With His coming the sixth age has entered on its process; so that now the spiritual grace, which in previous times was known to a few patriarchs and prophets, may be made manifest to all nations [...].[27]

24 Generally, see Vessey, "From 'cursus' to 'ductus'."
25 Augustine, *Two Books on Genesis against the Manichees*, 1.22–25, trans. Teske, 81–90.
26 See Claster, *The Medieval Experience*, 47–50; McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 351–358.
27 Augustinus, *De catechizandis rudibus*, 22.39, trans. Salmond, 307–308.

It is a deceptively simple chronological overview, an explanatory framework to link the narratives of the Old and the New Testament. Augustine prefigures this framework several times, most notably in Chapters 3 ("Of the Full Narration to Be Employed in Catechising") and 6 ("Of the Way to Commence the Catechetical Instruction, and of the Narration of Facts from the History of the World's Creation on to the Present Times of the Church"). There, he explains that understanding salvation is a matter of knowing and explaining history. In a nutshell, Augustine holds that the way the story of mankind has been told "from what is written in the text, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth', on to the present times of the Church" contains the keys to achieving salvation. It would be the responsibility of the teacher to distil this down to a level appropriate to the listener(s).[28] Throughout the *De catechizandis rudibus*, Augustine reminds his audience that they should remind their students that everything that happened culminates in the Last Judgment, when mankind has to revisit their sins and reckon with them.[29]

While Augustine's purpose behind the Six Ages was both historical and eschatological, the explicitly educational function of this model in the *De catechizandis rudibus* seems to have been equally important for the reception of the Six Ages by Bede.[30] As alluded to above, Bede saw the purpose of the model not as a "summary" of history or a gathering of historical events, the knowledge of which would help one achieve salvation.[31] Instead, he saw it as a way to emphasise the importance of properly understanding time and the role of mankind within it, as seen from his vantage point in time and space.[32] It was an analogy that both Augustine and Bede would explore in various ways, for example when these Six Ages are also equated to stages in the human life cycle, but which in *De temporum ratione* retains predominantly historical, educational and indeed eschatological foundations with a view towards formulating a vision of the future.[33] The week holds a special meaning for Bede. "Human custom restricts [the definition of a week] to [a period of] seven days", he writes in Chapter 8 of *DTR*, "but according to the authority of sacred Scripture there are many notable kinds [of weeks], all of which, if I am not mistaken, point to a single end: that is, they urge us to hope for endless peace in the grace of the Holy Spirit when all good works are accomplished".[34] A week – or rather, a *hebdomada*, as per the Greek word Bede mentions at the beginning of the

28 Augustinus, *De catechizandis rudibus*, 3, trans. Salmond, 285–286; and 6, trans. Salmond, 288–289.

29 For instance, in Augustinus, *De catechizandis rudibus*, 7, trans. Salmond, 289–290; and 23.41, trans. Salmond, 308.

30 On this text and its educational approach, see among others Chin, "Telling Boring Stories."

31 Cf. Mégier, "Le temps des Ages du monde, de saint Augustin a Hugues de Fleury."

32 Generally, see Mégier, "Die Historisierung der Apokalypse, oder von der globalen zur geschichtlichen Zeit der Kirche in lateinischen Apokalypsenkommentaren."

33 Darby, "Bede's History of the Future."

34 *DTR*, 8, trans. Wallis, 32, as well as the commentary and relevant literature on 277–279.

chapter – can be any period of comprised of six "time periods" and an additional, equal period of rest or culmination, like for instance the 50 days of Pentecost, or the Sabbatical years prescribed in Leviticus 25.[35] The week thus becomes a cosmological constant, and as such it is no surprise that it is a microcosm for existence in its entirety. It is built into Creation itself: "Thus the first week of all, unique of its kind, from which the others derive their form, is honoured by divine action, because the Lord, completing the adornment of the universe in six days, rested from His labours on the seventh."[36]

All this leads to his chapter on the final kind of week, which, according to the *DTR* chapter 10, is "unique in that it does not come back again to its beginning, is composed of the unstable Ages of this world, and follows in all respects the pattern of the first week".[37] It starts with the creation of light and (consequently) darkness, which causes the "sons of God" to be "separated from their seed" and the eventual birth of monsters and giants, which prompts God to wipe the slate clean with the Deluge: the Evening of the First Day and the rise of (for lack of a better word) Evil is thus implied to be a consequence of the creation of light, which inadvertently stages earthly life as an ongoing proving ground.[38] The Second Day starts with the Ark, and evening sets in when the "Sons of Adam" attempt to build the Tower of Babel.[39] The Third Day, then, begins with the calling of Abraham, and ends, interestingly, when the Hebrew people demand a King to be placed over them, leading to the disastrous reign of Saul. David and Solomon then signal the morning of the Fourth Day, with the Babylonian captivity signalling dusk, and the Fifth Day begins when the "people of Israel" come into their own upon their return until the advent of the Romans and a renewed period of subjugation.[40] All this then leads to the Sixth Day, which started with the appearance of Christ, and which will last until the start of the persecution by the Antichrist – a project that is yet ongoing. The culmination of these two days, in this model, is in a "timeless" Seventh Day which actually started with the death of Abel – the "first martyr" – and which will end when all the righteous are awaiting the resurrection and end of time proper.[41] What follows is the Eighth Age, which has no equivalent in the story of creation, but is simply characterised by the "everlasting joy" granted to the blessed. As Bede clarifies, these final two ages should be on the minds of everybody praying, as they represent not only

35 See Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, XXX–LI, who shows that Bede was synthesising several longer traditions of dividing and ordering time.

36 *DTR*, 8, trans. Wallis, 32.

37 *DTR*, 10, trans. Wallis, 39–40.

38 See Bequette, "The Six Ages of History and the Renewal of the Human Person."

39 On the development of the exegesis of the Tower of Babel between the Anglo-Saxon and Frankish worlds in the eighth and ninth centuries, see Major, *Undoing Babel*, 96–132.

40 Although only tangentially related to this paper, the importance of the history of the people of Israel as a precursor to Frankish self-assertion is worth noting: Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?" Cf. Heydemann and Pohl, "The Rhetoric of Election."

41 Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, 69–74.

the hopes and fears built into the fabric of Christianity, but also provide a motivation for sinners to repent and – more importantly – willingly accept rebuke by the Lord on their path towards salvation.[42]

Chapter 10 of *DTR* provides the reader with an indication of Bede's ideas about the interaction between cyclical and linear natures of Christian time.[43] The chapter is embedded in a larger overview of the units (days, weeks, months) that make up the years, but at the same time makes clear that this very model implies that all this will end at some point in the future. This point is made even more clearly when Bede revisits the model in Chapter 66 (the *Chronica Maiora*), but instead of linking the Ages of the World to the Days of Creation in Genesis, he here opts to show how these same ages are also paralleled in the stages of a human life – the microcosm mentioned earlier.[44] Serving as a prelude to his *Chronica Maiora*, Bede does not change the basic divisions. He gives the number of years each Age is supposed to have lasted, and at the same time makes history relatable by, for instance, equating the Deluge that ends the First Age with how most people forget their infancy, or the Fourth Age (from David to the Babylonian Captivity) to "youth", because "this age in man is normally apt for governing a kingdom". The current Sixth Age he equates with "senility" because of the uncertainties that come with living in the present, and because the end of this Age will also mark the end of time itself. Before presenting his narrative of the course of history, he once again reminds his readers that "By a happy death, everyone will overcome these Ages of the world, and when they have been received into the Seventh Age of perennial Sabbath, they look forward to the Eighth Age of the blessed Resurrection, in which they will reign forever with the Lord".[45] Life has been long and hard, Bede implies, but if his readers would take all these challenges in stride, they could look forward to a long rest. Bede's primary concern was with the correct calculation of the age of the world, so it made sense that he would not give up Augustine's pastoral or educational impetus. Like Augustine, Bede used the Six Ages to make sure his audience – the monks of his community, and more generally the people he would convince of his approach to *computus* – knew why time, history and the future mattered to them.

2 New Beginnings

This background needs to be taken into account when reading the opening to the *CM*. The text explicitly posits itself as a continuation or exposition of the work done previously by Bede (something made clearer by the addition of the prologue of *De*

42 Cf. Chazelle, "Debating the End Times with Bede."
43 See Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 103–131, esp. 126–129.
44 *DTR*, 66, trans. Wallis, 157–159.
45 *DTR*, 66, trans. Wallis, 158.

temporum ratione, the last part of which is still visible on the damaged first folio). However, in Paris BN lat. 4886, the full text of *DTR* itself is missing: the computistical education is gone, and supplanted by the more pastoral approach to time and history also visible in the works of Augustine and Gregory the Great.[46] While Bede was preoccupied with the proper calculation of time, the composer of this manuscript wanted to make their audience realise that the very passage of time itself should be seen as an admonition to reconcile one's self with the intentions behind God's Creation. This adds a pastoral context to the choices made by the author or the copyist for the extended prologue in Paris BN lat. 4886. It becomes clear that he has chosen to highlight the apocalyptic themes that come with the territory. Seemingly unsatisfied with the verbatim copy of the prologue to the *Chronica Maiora* at the beginning of the manuscript, a reiteration of the Six Ages-model is appended before the narrative proper. It does not follow any one version of Bede's or Augustine's Six Ages, but instead presents a convolute of both versions that shows that this writer was more preoccupied with eschatological themes than with chronology.

The reworked prologue will be presented here, together with a translation.[47]

Latin	English
DE PRIMA ETATAE SECULI	ON THE FIRST AGE OF THE WORLD.
Prima aetatae Adam et successores eius frequenti fuerunt Dei locutione laetati, ita ut filii Dei apellarentur.	In the first age Adam and his offspring were happy because they were often speaking with God, so that they were called the "Sons of God".
Cuius aetatis vespera fuit, cum [ipsi filii] Dei filias hominum duxissent uxores et eis nati fuerunt monstruosi homines, quibus [iratus Deus] omnem humanum [genus, quod tunc fuit] diluvio venientae delevit.	Evening fell over this age, when [those sons] of God took daughters of men as wives, and monstrous men were born to them, upon which [angry God] erased the entirety of the human race [as it was then] with a Flood.

46 See Darby, "Apocalypse and Reform in Bede's *De Dei iudicii*;" Dagens, "La fin des temps et l'église selon saint Grégoire le Grand."

47 Many thanks to Cinzia Grifoni for helping me prepare the transcription and finish the translation. Given that Kettemann has not edited this portion of the *CM*, the Latin has been transcribed from the manuscript directly. Our transcription diverges from the edition by Claszen and Kats at several points, which we have marked by using <angle brackets>.

Latin	English
Secunda aetatis mane fuit, cum Noe et filii eius per diluvium liberatis dominus benedixisset, dicens crescitae et multiplicamini et tunc culturae Dei illius temporis homines fuerant dediti.	The morning of the Second Age was, when Noah and his sons had been delivered from the Flood and the Lord blessed them, saying "Go forth and multiply" (Genesis 9:7), and from then on mankind was dedicated to the service of God.
Cuius aetatis vespera fuit, cum, relicto Deo, homines caepissent ignem et aquam syderaque, necnon et ipsos mortuos homines, pro Deo adorare. Quibus iratus, Deus solum Habraam de medio eorum aelegens, exire iussit de terra et cognatione sua.	Evening fell over this age, when, having left God behind, the humans began to worship fire and water and the stars, and even the dead instead of God. Thereupon, the angry God, having elected only Abraham from their midst, ordered him to leave his lands and his family.
Tercia aetatis manae fuit laeta et desiderabilis ad Abraam futuri seminis <pro>missio sanctaque et mistica.	The morning of the third age was [marked by] a happy and desirable promise of future offspring to Abraham, which was holy and mystical.
Ysaac et Iacob ceterorumque patriarcharum conversatio. Multarum gentium per Ioseph facta salvatio legisque per Moysen data constitucio et diu expectata in terram repromissionis introductio.	[It was also marked by] the way of life of Ysaac and Iacob and the other patriarchs. For many of the *gentes*, salvation was provided through Joseph and the decree of the law was given by Moses and after a long time the introduction into the Promised Land happened.
Cuius vespera fuit, cum populus Israhel, Dei imperio negleto, regem sibi hominem superesse maluissent. Primumque elegerunt apostatam a Deo Saulem, quem Philistei cum magna ipsius populi partem peri[merunt].	Evening fell over this age, when the *populus* of Israel, neglecting the command of God, desired a human king to be placed above them.[48] And the first they elected was Saul, who apostasised from God, and whom the Philistines together with a large part of that same *populus* (= Israel) killed.
Quartae aetatis mane fuit victorialae et triumphis clarum David regnum gloriosumque et pacificum filii eius Salomonis ymperium templique mirabilis ad mistica constructio.	The morning of the fourth age came victoriously and [saw] an illustrious kingdom due to the triumphs of King David; and also the glorious and peaceful empire of his son Salomon as well as the miraculous and mystical construction of the temple.
Cuius vespera fuit.[49] *Q(uonia)m idem populus peccatis agentibus cum rege, quem tunc habuerunt, in Babiloniam captivitatem ductus est eorumque metropolis Iherusalem, cum templo et omnibus privatis publicis aedificiis, spoliata est igneque consumpta.*	Evening fell over this age, when the same *populus*, having committed sins together with the king they had at the time, was taken to the Babylonian captivity while their metropolis Jerusalem, together with the temple and all private and public buildings, was plundered and consumed by fire.

48 Generally on *populus* and other such terms, see Heydemann, "Biblical Exegesis and the Language of Community in Late Antique and Early Medieval Europe." From an early medieval perspective, the installation of a king over the *populus*, effectively turning it into a *regnum* was an interesting move, and it might be worth further research to fully understand the way post-Roman sources dealt with this political shift. See Pohl, "*Regnum* und *gens*."

49 Claszen and Kats have opted to attach this clause to the preceding sentence, but given the pattern of the text thus far, we felt it should be the start of the next segment. The manuscript, at fol. 2r, does start another new sentence with "Quoniam," however.

Latin	English
Quintae aetatis manae fuit, cum predictus Dei populus de Babilonia captivitatae liberatur reedificande Iherusalem templique licentia<m> accipere.	The morning of the fifth age came, when the aforementioned *populus Dei* was freed from the Babylonian captivity, receiving permission to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.
Cuius item vespera fuit, cum secundum propheciam patriarchae, legitimo principe deficiente, Herodes alien<igen>a[50] *eiusdem gentis susciperet ymperium, multisque illud iniustis et sanguinariis operibus maculasset.*	Evening fell over this age, when, in accordance with the prophecy of the patriarch, a legitimate ruler being absent, the foreigner Herodes took the empire over that *gens*, and dishonoured many of them with injustices and bloodthirsty deeds.
Sexta aetatis gloriosum et prefatis omnibus lucidius manae fuit, cum Christus filius Dei pro nostrae redemptionis dispensatione homo fieri dignaretur. Suique aevangelii fulgore mundum in tenebris iacentem revocaret atque omnibus in se credentibus vitae aeternae semitam patefaceret et suos discipulos Spiritus Sancti gracia dedit, hos omnibus gentibus ad predicanda caelestis vitae gaudia misisset.	The morning of the Sixth Age was glorious and brighter than all the preceding ones, because Christ the son of God deigned to become Man for the dispensation of our redemption. And through the light of His message he recalled the world from the shadows it had been cast in, and He opened up the path to eternal life for all who believe in Him; and to His disciples He gave the grace of the Holy Spirit, and sent them to all the *gentes* so as to preach the joys of heavenly life.[51]
Cuius quidem aetatis vespera quando veniet incerta. Quod vero veniet certissima orribilior ceteris hominibus tenebrescit, cum ingruente persecutione antichristi [noviss]ima paucis electorum liberatis totus mundus eius iniqua et damnabili crudelitatae maculabitur et ad ultimum supernae maiestatis iudicae tocius mundi machina igne consumabitur.	It is uncertain when evening will fall over this age. That it will come is absolutely certain, [and] it will bring a horrible darkness for the remainder of mankind, when, with the arrival of the final persecution of the antichrist and a few of the elect having been liberated, the whole world will be dishonoured by his unjust and damnable cruelties, and at the end, through the judgment of the Heavenly Majesty, the entire machine of the world will be consumed by fire.

50 Although the manuscript reads "aliena", we have decided to expand it to "alienigena", to fit with the early Christian trope of Herod as a "foreigner", most famously explained in the works of Augustine: Horbury, *Messianism Among Jews and Christians*, 83–122, at 87.

51 See above, n. 48, on the importance of this shift from *populus* to *gens* and what it might mean for the notions of Other- and Sameness employed by the author.

Latin	English
Septimae vero aetatis primum mane caepit, <quoniam> anima Abel iusti innocentiae suae perfectionae laetata aeternae requi<ei e>sset, gaudio suscepta et per ceteras sex aetatis glorioso semper tramitae decurrens.	Truly, the morning of the Seventh Age began, when the soul of Abel the Just, rejoicing in the perfection of his innocence, was received in the joy of eternal bliss, thus always going forward on the glorious path through the other Six Ages.[52]
Quo<sc>umque Dei electos invenerit eorum animas, de ac corruptionae liberatas, [in suae quietis beatitudinem transducere] laetata est laetarique usque in finem seculi non desinit.	And when he (i.e. Abel's soul) encountered the souls of those elected by God, who have been liberated from corruption [...] he was happy to [transport them in the blessedness of his tranquillity] and he will not finish being happy until the end of the world.
Atque sicut in creatione mundi sexta die <per>fectus creatus est homo, sic et sexta aetate Christus sua mirabili dignationae factus homo corporis sui, id est sanctae plenitudine et perfectione predictam septimam aetatem maxima ex parte conplevit.	And also, like during the creation of the world a perfect human was created during the Sixth Day, so in the Sixth Age Christ, having made himself a human body in his wonderful grace – i.e. in the holy abundance and perfection of His body – accomplished the aforementioned Seventh Age for the most part.
Simul et usque in finem seculi completurus est, quae quidem aetas vesperam habitura, non est sicut nec septima dies qua Deus opera sua conplevit habuisse legitur,	At the same time, He will accomplish it (the Seventh Age) until the end of time, since this Age will not have an evening, as one reads that the Seventh Day, when God had finished His work, also did not have an evening.
sed feliciore octavae aetatis gloria comulabit cum in ea suscepte animae etiam corpora gloriae resurrectionis sublimata secum ad aeternae vitae et infinitae felicitatis gaudia introducere merebuntur.	But this Age will be accomplished with the happier glory of the Eighth Age, as the souls, having been received into it *(i.e. into the Eighth Age),* will deserve to introduce themselves to the joy of eternal life and of infinite happiness, together with their bodies raised in the glorious resurrection.

52 *Abel iustus* appears to be a callback to Matthew 23:35 or Luke 11:51. It should be noted that to Augustine, the idea of Abel "the Just" signalled a certain unity between Christians and the righteous people who had lived before the advent of Christ: Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?*, 28–31, citing Augustine, *Epistola* 102 (To Deogratias), ed. Goldbacher, as the most comprehensive overview of his thoughts on the matter.

Latin	English
Sicque et Salomon ait "Omnes vestiti duplicibus cum suo rege, cui simul in hoc seculo fideliter serviebant sine fine feliciter congaudebant".	As Salomon said: "All are dressed warmly/doubly with their king, whom they loyally served simultaneously in this world and have rejoiced with him happily without end" (cf. Prov. 31:21).
De quo eorum duplici gaudio etiam in apocalipsis legitur. Vidi in quid Iohannes subtus altare animas interfectorum propter verbum Dei et propter testimonium, quod habebant, et clamabant dicentes "usques quo domine non iudicas et vindicas sanguinem nostrum de his, qui habitant super terram et date sunt illis singule stolae albae dictumque est, ut requiescerent [tem]pus ad huc modicum, donec impleretur numerus conservorum eorum."	About their double happiness can be read already in the Apocalypse, in which John says: "I have seen under the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God and of the testimony they gave, and they called out, saying 'Lord, how long now before thou wilt sit in judgment, and exact vengeance for our blood from all those who dwell on earth? Whereupon a single white robe was given to each of them, and they were bidden to take their rest a little while longer, until their number had been made up by those others'." (Rev. 6:10–11).
Sanctis namque martyribus singulis stolis donabuntur, cum animae eorum felici quietae suscipiuntur, donec perficiatur in finae mundi prefinitus electorum numerus. Duplicabuntur vero stolae cum corporibus receptis atque ab omni corruptionis labe liberatis, simul animae et corpora gaudium Domini sui intrare, merebuntur.	Likewise, the holy martyrs too will be given a single robe, because their souls are received into happy bliss until the predetermined number of the elect is completed before end of the world.[53] Truly the robes will be doubled after the bodies have been re-taken and relieved from any mark of corruption, when the souls along with the bodies will be worthy to enter into the joy of their God.
Prestante Domino nostro Iesu Christo, qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto honor et virtus et graciarum actio per infinita secula seculorum. Amen.	Our Lord Jesus Christ concedes it, who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit is given honour and the action of the graces until the end of time. Amen.

Building on the foundations laid by Bede and Augustine, the author of this prologue in Paris BN lat. 4886 has clearly given their own spin to this venerable model. It was reframed to more closely follow the agenda of the *CM*. Gone was the polemical approach to *computus* and the reckoning of time, either because, by the early ninth century, the debate had been resolved to the author's satisfaction, or because it would not be the intention behind this particular version of history.[54] For this ver-

53 The Latin *prefinitus* appears to refer to the number of the saved given in Revelation 7:4 and 14:1, where it is said that 144.000 people will be saved in the end (12.000 from each of the tribes of Israel).

54 A comprehensive overview of the debate is given in Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik in Frankenreich*; See also Wallis, "Images of Order in the Medieval Computus," who argues that *computus* had become a pedagogical tool rather than an absolute theological necessity (an idea also explored, using different texts, in Kramer, "*Ecce fabula!* Problem-Solving by Numbers in the Carolingian World.") Given the efforts made by the Carolingians (at least from the top down) to present a uniform idea of the Church, it would not be in the author's best interest to explicitly engage with that debate again on these pages: they were preoccupied with showing the importance of the Roman/Carolingian Empire for the fulfilment of Creation.

sion, what was important was the idea that history would move inexorably forward, and ensure that salvation would be within the reach of the largest possible number of people: as the *CM* moved closer to the "present" (i.e. the year 818, or the early 820s), it becomes clear that the many narrative strands in the text tie together to show how the Carolingian dynasty, as rulers of the Franks, have been put in a position where their particular brand of Romanness and Christian politics maximises the eschatological potential of their empire.[55] This became especially poignant when, in the wake of Charlemagne's coronation in 800 the interdependence between Church and Empire was considered anew from many angles, with the identification of the (Carolingian-led) Franks as the heirs of the *populus* of Israel being a topic of repeated contention, while the endurance of the Roman Empire also fed into eschatological modes of thinking about history at the time.[56]

Although the *CM* thus feeds into the way the Carolingian court intellectuals attempted to harness historical narratives to steer the overarching political context, the author of the text made clear that their takeover had not happened through their agency *per se*, but that the success of these Frankish rulers was a sign of God's benevolence for all.[57] The new world order created by the Carolingians should, in other words, be seen as an encouragement, a sign that things were moving forward, towards the inevitable end. None of this should mean that readers of the *CM* should simply leave their faith and their fate in the hands of the Carolingians, however.[58] As this prologue shows, and as we will see, the author had clear ideas about the role of individual agency and the dangers this caused to one's chances to reach heaven.

55 See McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World*, 84–155, esp. 92–97, highlighting the importance of the so-called "Encyclopedia" of 809 for Carolingian understanding of time and history, and the influence of the *DTR* on that text. See also Borst, "Alkuin und die Enzyklopädie von 809."

56 See above, n. 41, See also Harris, "The Bible and the Meaning of History in the Middle Ages," 83–104, esp. 91–93, but cf. Nees, *A Tainted Mantle,* 3–17, who cautioned against over-emphasising this view. Generally, unpacking the complex relation between Old Testament history, Roman traditions, and the ecclesiastical and political needs of the ruling elites in the Carolingian present falls well beyond the scope of this article.

57 See Kramer, "A Crowning Achievement." More generally, see Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity*, esp. 120–132 and 218–244.

58 At this point, it is all but impossible to say anything with certainty about the intended audience of the *CM* either in its ninth-century context, or in the version presented in this manuscript. A thorough and more detailed study of Paris BN lat. 4886 is needed in order to shed more light on this question – indeed, the eclectic contents of the manuscript might allow us to get closer to the intended audience than would be possible based on the *CM* alone.

3 A Syncopated Bede

Given that the manuscript explicitly frames itself as a work by Bede, and the prologue to the *Chronica Maiora* is included as well, a comparison between the extended prologue and the Northumbrian's model will shed more light on the authorial intentions behind the text. The ideas contained in *DTR* chapter 10 will be a point of departure for this comparison, as it seems closer to both the contents and the "spirit" of the reworked prologue, and because the inclusion of the Six Ages-model from the *Chronica Maiora* implies that the author wanted to juxtapose both versions by adding eschatology to the more overtly computistic approach in the "original" text. As we will see, the interlineal glosses help emphasise precisely those points when needed.

The glosses to BN lat. 4886 pose a challenge all by themselves.[59] While a full analysis of the comments and elucidations throughout the manuscript falls outside the scope of the present article, it should be noted that glosses in the margins appear in different hands and in different formats, which has led earlier commenters to posit that, while some of them must have been added later (albeit not long after the initial composition),[60] some of them may have been present in the exemplar from which the eleventh-century copyist was working.[61] This seems especially true for some of the glosses to the *CM* proper, which are highlighted in red and black boxes and thus might be distinguished by virtue of being "original".[62] Given that the *CM* was never continued when the current manuscript was compiled, and the glosses appear to be as relevant to a ninth-century audience as to a later one – if not more so, as they highlight important events and persons – this idea is certainly plausible. The scribe might have simply kept them for antiquarian reasons, or because he considered them to be an integral part of the text or a reading aid of sorts. For the other type of frequently occurring glosses, however, it is even less sure if they belonged to the exemplar or were added by the scribe. These appear as interlineal glosses explaining various words and concepts that might be unclear to the reader, and give the entire manuscript the appearance of a codex that was partially used for teaching purposes.

It is this second type of gloss that appears in the reworked prologue on fols. 1r–2v. They are written in a hand that looks remarkably similar to that of the main text,

59 Generally, see Teeuwen, "Voices from the Edge."

60 Eg. Paris, BN lat. 4886, fols. 3r–4v.

61 Kettemann, *Subsidia Anianensia*, 494–496, and Claszen and Kats, *Chronicon Moissiacense Maius* I, 30, note that some marginalia are shared between Paris BN lat. 4886 and Paris BN lat. 5941, indicating a common origin.

62 In addition to the many "regular" glosses, these "boxed" marginalia in the *CM* are visible on fols. 5r; 7r; 10r; 12r (elaborate); 13v; 14r; 16v; 17r; 18r; 25v; 26r; 27r; 28v; 29v; 30v; 31rv; 33r; 35v; 36v; 37r; 38rv; 42v; 44v; 45rv; 47r; 50v; 51r; 53r. On fol. 37v, an elaborately interlocked group of four circles containing the name Benedictus is also visible.

which leads to the assumption that they were added during the initial composition or very shortly afterwards – although it is very likely that, unlike the rubricated boxes, these were added rather than copied by the scribe.[63] Mostly, they clarify potentially difficult subjects, such as when *metropolis Iherusalem* is explained as "that which is the head and like a mother to the cities subordinate to it", or when *decrepita* is glossed with "very old".[64] Nevertheless, given that even such seemingly minute elucidations steer the reader's gaze towards a certain reading of the main text, it is worthwhile to take them into account when looking at this adaptation of Bede's Six Age-model.

The differences between both approaches become clear immediately when comparing the First Ages. Superficially similar, it is striking that Bede, in *DTR* 10, only comments that "the giants were born" and that evil crept into this world when night was separated from day, the *CM* actually gives agency to the "Sons of God", who "took daughters of men as wives, and monstrous men were born to them". Also, Bede's God destroys "the world" out of regret, whereas the *CM* emphasises that it was the "human race" which became the subject of God's ire. This subtle shift in focus shows how the author of the *CM* aimed to offset Bede's fatalistic yet ambivalent approach to the passing of time and God's will with a more admonitory message about purity, faith and responsibility. This point is driven home in one of the glosses, which is added to the phrase *nati fuerunt monstruosi homines*. It reads "that is, with deformed members or about which we are said to be warned in the future".[65] In a single turn of phrase, the gloss downplays the "giants" mentioned by Bede and instead focuses on the grotesque nature of these children, the offspring of divine and human creatures. The second part of the gloss then gives a moral reading, in that it warns the readers that they, too, can turn into such monsters "in the future". As a warning in the context of this apocalyptic introduction, it warns about the monstrosity of the soul and the dangers it can do for the body during the Resurrection.[66] The addition of this phrase as a gloss almost makes it insist upon itself: crammed at

63 As indicated by the shape of the g; the curious ct-ligatures; and the fact that they appear to have been written in ink that is the same as – or similar to – the ink used for the main text. Many thanks to Anna Dorofeeva, Jesse Keskiaho and Bernhard Zeller for helping me make sense of these glosses.
64 The first is on fol. 2r: *dicitur eo quod caput et quasi mater sit ceterarum sibi sub iacensium civitatum*; the other on 1v: *valde senile*.
65 Fol. 1v: *deformatis membris sive monstra dicuntur quod nos in futurum monere*. There is a thin but clear line under this gloss, indicating to which line and word it belonged.
66 This focus on the "monstrous" might be reflective of a more general trend among the Carolingian intellectual elites to define those outside of their Christian, ecclesiastical community as Others which threatened the fabric of the Church. Of particular interest in this regard is the highly influential *Apocalypse* by the seventh-century Syriac intellectual Pseudo-Methodius, *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, ed. and trans. Garstad. On this text, the strategies of distinction it employs, and its influence on the Christian West, see Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 107–129; Gantner, "Hoffnung in der Apokalypse?," as well as Grifoni and Gantner, "The Third Latin Recension of the *Revelationes* of Pseudo-Methodius."

the end of a line, it draws the reader's eye in a way that the regular text might not have been able to accomplish. It was a whispered warning to remain pure and faithful – but an effective one.

The Second Age is again subtly but markedly different between Bede and the *CM*. In Bede's version from *DTR*, the Age begins with the rescue of the Ark, and ends with the Tower of Babel and the subsequent divine punishment of henceforth having multiple languages. The *CM* again places the focus on mankind. First, it repeats God's blessing to "increase and multiply" after Noah's safe landing, and mentions their devotion to His service. Then, rather than pointing out the Tower of Babel as the birth of multilingualism and as a root cause for the existence of multiple peoples, it actually and uncharacteristically ends on a hopeful note when this version sees the first appearance of the chosen people of Abraham, the one who stayed loyal while the rest fell to idolatry and demon worship once again. Curiously, this is the beginning of Bede's Third Age, which, in this version, ends when Saul is crowned the first king of Israel, and immediately proceeds to kill the priests and the prophets before being killed by "foreigners" himself. The *CM* adds much more detail here in a few brush strokes. It starts with a small vignette on the construction of the Temple, the virtues of the patriarchs, and, significantly, the remark that "for many of the *gentes*, salvation was provided through Joseph". This is interesting, in that it draws attention to the multiplicity of the *gentes* first, and the ability of Joseph (a prefiguration of Christ) to save those outside of the Chosen People, the *populus*.[67] In fact, the *CM* continues, it is this *populus* who cast off its responsibilities by demanding a king to be placed as an intermediary between them and God. In a dire warning about bad kingship, the *CM*'s third age ends with Saul, the first king, dead at the hands of the Philistines, together with "a large part of [his] people".

Saul's mistakes are rectified by the next two generations of kings, David and Salomon. The latter's construction of the Temple even inaugurated something of a golden era, which would only end when the *populus* once again falls from grace and is led into the Babylonian Captivity while Jerusalem, "together with the Temple" was burned to the ground.[68] They commit these sins, the *CM* notes, "together with their king".[69] Bede, meanwhile, continued to look for outside causes for the misery of the *populus*, pointing out that the Chaldeans demolished the Temple and exiled the people, but leaving open the question whether or not they had

67 See, for instance, Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 89.2, trans. Müller, 39–40, who draws this connection quite explicitly. This text might have been known to the author of this version of the CM, given that two eleventh-century manuscripts of Caesarius' sermons from the same region are extant.

68 On the importance of the Temple in the world of Bede and under the Carolingians, see Darby, "Bede, Iconoclasm and the Temple of Solomon;" Pippal, "Relations of Time and Space;" Spatafora, *From the "Temple of God" to God as the Temple*.

69 On the importance of the good behaviour of kings for the well-being of their people, see Meens, "Politics, Mirrors of Princes and the Bible."

themselves to blame. To him, the fact that this was allowed to happen was lesson enough, without adding the moralising point about royal authority.

The emphasis on agency is significant, especially in connection with the role of Jerusalem in this passage and the fact that the *CM* signals how the Fourth Age ended with the destruction of the Temple – the construction of which had heralded the heyday of kingship in Israel. Bad leadership had inadvertently caused this destruction. The author seems to want to admonish rulers at the time of writing that their bad behaviour could lead their people into sin and thereby provoke the ire of God. An eschatological layer of meaning is then added by the inclusion of a small gloss on the word *metropolis*, reading "a metropolis is called that which is the head, and like a mother to the cities subordinate to it". It is a gloss dense with meaning, as it invokes both the Pauline image of the Church as a body with a head that ought to remain healthy, and the etymology of Jerusalem as the "mother city" of the Chosen People. This latter idea is visible in Paul's letter to the Galatians, for instance, but also in the works of the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who in turn influenced many early Christian thinkers through Augustine's adaptation of his ideas.[70] Augustine is perhaps the clearest in giving this an eschatological bent, by stating in one of his sermons that human life, according to the letters of Paul, is essentially an exile from the Heavenly Jerusalem.[71] It is a journey through the earthly city to the "Jerusalem above, 'which is the mother of us all' (Gal. 4:25–26). [Paul] calls her a mother, like a metropolis; metropolis, you see, means mother city. So that is the one to which we must be hurrying along, knowing that we are still away, abroad, and on the way".[72] Combined with Bede's general idea of the Temple as a model for the unity of the Christians, the implication that bad rulership was the cause for the Babylonian captivity, and the image of the Heavenly Jerusalem invoked through the appended gloss, the author of the manuscript here shows the multitude of ideas present in the *CM*.[73] Following the clues given in this passage, it should be clear to the audience that the burning of the Temple signalled division in the Church. This was perhaps a reflection of concerns held by the author at the time, but, through the imagery of the *caput*, also a warning that personal piety and faith were as important as the agency of the collective. The appeal to purity implicit in the gloss on the First Age, on the marriages between the Sons of God and the Daughters of Men, seems poignant still.

"Cyrus, first [king] of the Persians, reigned 30 years. In order that the word of the Lord from the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, in the first year of his reign he loosed the captivity of the Hebrews. He caused about 50,000 people to return to Judaea, and restored to them 5,400 gold and silver vessels from the Temple of the

70 Ben-Eliyahu, *Identity and Territory*, 69–73. On Philo's influence on Augustinian cosmology, see van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 235–253.
71 Markus, *Saeculum*, 82–83.
72 Augustinus, *Sermo 346B: On our Journey through this Life*, trans. Hill, 80.
73 O'Brien, *Bede's Temple*, esp. 129–155.

Lord".[74] So Bede described the end of the Babylonian captivity in his *Chronica Maiora*, and the *CM* adds to this several passages from Orosius and Josephus, as well as the "original" insertion that Cyrus even "dissolved Babylon in the 20th year of his reign".[75] Chapter 10 Bede's *DTR* is less specific but does prefigure the upcoming split between the Jews and the Christians, stating only that "the people of Israel multiplied in Chaldea [and] some of them sought out Jerusalem, fledged in the plumage of heavenly yearning, and others abode amongst the rivers of Babylon, lacking all powers of flight".[76] The *CM* makes this ecclesiological reading more explicit: the "people of God" are freed, and received permission to rebuild the Temple. By implication, this permission had been granted by Cyrus, destroyer of Babylon and, according to Jerome's *Commentary on Jeremiah*, a possible prefiguration of Christ.[77] Once again, the author of the *CM* weaves together many different theological and exegetical threads in such a way that it shows they were aware of the tradition of treating history and the passing of time as proof of a divinely ordained plan. In that sense, it is interesting that the *CM* reverses the narrative agency presented in Bede's Fifth Age. To Bede, the Fifth Age ends when "the Jewish people was made tributary to the Romans because of the magnitude of their wicked deeds, and moreover was oppressed by foreign-born kings".[78] The *CM*, on the other hand, this time leaves out the sinfulness of the *populus* and instead states that it was "in accordance with the prophecy of the patriarch" that the foreigner Herodes became the ruler of Jerusalem, and commits many misdeeds. A gloss over this final phrase again recalls the "monsters" of the First Age, as it explains Herodes' "dishonouring" (*maculare*) with "deforming" (*deformare*), the word used to warn the readers about the consequences of mingling with those outside of the *populus*.[79] In both narratives, however, the rebuilding of the Temple is linked to the rise of the Romans as well: in the same year that Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem, the dynasty of Tarquinius is expelled from Rome, and the Republic is proclaimed.[80]

The proposition that the Roman Empire provided the necessary preconditions for Christ – and consequently, Christianity – to be born is a trope throughout early medieval exegesis, and Bede and the *CM* are no exception.[81] In the narrative of the *Chronica Maiora* proper, the birth of Christ is prefaced with a short "state of the empire", ending with the remark that this was "the year in which the movements of all the peoples throughout the world were held in check, and by God's decree Caesar

74 *DTR*, c. 66 (a. 3423), trans. Wallis, 182.
75 *CM*, ed. Claszen and Kats, 32–33.
76 *DTR*, c. 10, trans. Wallis, 40.
77 Jerome, *Commentary on Jeremiah*, 16:14–15, trans. Graves, 102.
78 *DTR*, c. 10, trans. Wallis, 40.
79 On fol. 2r, over the word *maculasset*, a scribe has added *id est deformasset et inquinasset* ("that is, he would deform and pollute [them]").
80 *CM*, ed. Claszen and Kats, 28–30; *DTR*, c. 66 (a. 3423), trans. Wallis, 182.
81 See Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire*, 38–63.

established genuine and unshakeable peace".[82] According to Bede, who was quoting Orosius here, the peace needed for God to descend to Earth was created through the activities of the Roman Empire – and indeed the importance of the emperors is one of the general themes retained by the author of the *CM* as well.[83] This political angle is absent in Chapter 10 of *DTR*, however: the condensation of the entire age prompted Bede to highlight the "recreation" of mankind in Christ's image and the creation of the Church instead. The *CM* emphasises this final point above all, drawing not just on the Crucifixion but also Pentecost – the typological reversal of the Tower of Babel – into the "morning" of the Sixth Age.[84] Not the "baptism" of the Church in Christ's blood marks the beginning of the end, but the moment when the Apostles are being sent out to preach salvation to the *gentes*.[85] It seems an obvious choice to include this here: the remainder of the *CM* is, after all, the story of the Franks as the successors of Rome and the latest standard-bearers of the Church. To their audience, the apostolic mission bringing the Word of God to them was an integral part of their story.

If the reworked prologue was part of the ninth-century text of the *CM*, the changes in emphasis and the additions made to Bede's short overview of the Six Ages speak volumes about the intentions of the author and the context in which he wrote. Bede used his eschatological model to present a series of certainties, to show in inexorable march of time. His *DTR* was intended to be didactic, but also functioned as a tool to understand how the passage of time was part of God's creation – and how calculating it would thus reveal greater truths about the world. While the author of the *CM* took this message on board, their writing goals were much more overtly apocalyptic and admonitory. They were not concerned with revealing the certainties of time and history, but with showing how the awe-inspiring immensity of Creation should lay bare the uncertainties about everybody's individual salvation and how that pertained to the development of the (Roman) Empire.[86] This becomes nowhere clearer than in the final part of the prologue to the *CM*, which tells of the coming of the Antichrist and the fate of mankind during the Seventh and Eighth Age.

82 *DTR*, c. 66 (a. 3952), trans. Wallis, 195.
83 Kramer, "A Crowning Achievement."
84 See Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 64.
85 Cardó, *The Cross and the Eucharist in Early Christianity*, 24–34; see also Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era*, 14–74.
86 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 130–159.

4 Additive Rhythms

In Bede's overview, the end of the Sixth Age is treated relatively briefly. "The evening of this Age, darker than all the others, will come in Antichrist's persecution", he wrote in Chapter 10, whereas the prologue to the *Chronica Maiora* tersely states that "like old age, this [Age] will come to an end in the death of the whole world".[87] This choice may be explained, firstly, because to Bede the primary use of this model was to explain "the reckoning of time" (which only comes in useful when humanity is still around), and secondly because *DTR* features several separate chapters on what happens after the end of the world. Two of these chapters, on "The Remainder of the Sixth Age" (c. 67) and "Three Opinions of the Faithful as to When the Lord Will Come" (c. 68) are actually featured directly after the *CM* in this manuscript as well.[88] However, in the context of the *CM* they serve to amplify the apocalyptic message made visible in the opening – especially given that a brief passage from the pseudo-Alcuinian *Liber de divinis officiis* touching on similar themes has been added after these chapters on the final page of the quire, albeit probably at a later point in time.[89]

Between the two of them, Chapters 67 and 68 of *DTR* combine a brief *apologia* for writing about the "course of the past", with an explanation that uncertainty about the Second Coming was an intrinsic and necessary part of being a good Christian. In fact, knowledge of history and the length of the preceding five ages would not confer unto the readers an indication of when the End might be. Bede explains that the Seventh Age had already begun when Abel, "Christ's first martyr", was slain, which, among others, means that the duration of each age varies enormously.[90] The Sabbath, the Day of Rest, thus runs simultaneously with the course of history, and the Eighth Age would only start after the Final Judgment.

The ideas contained in these two chapters are also prefigured in the final part of the prologue to the *CM*. As such, the certainty of the End of the World is combined with the uncertainty of its arrival, and the bulk of the "evening" of the Sixth Age is taken up not by musings about how to determine the end, but rather with emphasising the fear of the Antichrist and the Judgment that will follow his reign. The manuscript even betrays some lingering confusion about the exact nature of the Antichrist: originally, on fol. 2r, the text foretold the persecutions "before Christ" (*ante Christ*), but this was later corrected in accordance with Isidore's explanation that the Anti-Christ "is not, as certain simpletons suppose, called the An-

87 *DTR*, c. 10, trans. Wallis, 40–41.
88 *DTR*, cc. 67–68, trans. Wallis, 239–241.
89 Pseudo-Alcuin, *Liber de divinis officiis*, 38–39, PL, cols. 1258–1246. See also Ryan, "Pseudo-Alcuin's *Liber de divinis officiis*;" Andrieu, "L'Ordo romanus antiquus et le Liber de divinis officiis du Pseudo-Alcuin."
90 Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, 71–72; Cf. Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?* 206.

tichrist because he is to come before (*ante*) Christ, that is, that Christ would come after him. This is not the case, but rather he is called Antichrist in Greek, which is 'against Christ' (*contrarius Christo*) in Latin, for ANTI in Greek means 'against' in Latin."[91] Nevertheless, through the vocabulary chosen, the author does imply parallels between the sack of Jerusalem, the cruelty of Herodes and the Antichrist, and the subsequent liberation of the faithful afterwards. This leads to the *CM*'s vision of the End: the moment when the machinery of the world breaks down and is given to flames – but not before some of the elect would have made it to heaven already. The point it is not the certainty of the End Times, but to make the audience realise that all they have to decide is what to do with the time that is given.

The final part of the *CM* mostly follows Bede's eschatological model, explaining how Abel was the first to go directly to heaven, thereby kickstarting the Seventh Age. Abel "the Just" would also be responsible for guiding the remaining righteous to heaven, while the rest had to wait for the incarnation of Christ to even be given a chance to attain salvation, and even then only after God would have ended the Seventh Age. This would be a divine act, not a naturally occurring phenomenon like the passing of night and day. More importantly, it would mark the reunification of body and soul, lead to the Eighth Age which exists outside of time and space.

The final paragraph of the prologue to the *CM* consists mainly of two biblical quotations. The first of these is a heavily adapted version of Proverbs 31:21 ("no servant of hers but is warmly clad"), which occurs in a series of aphorisms on the qualities of a good wife. In the *CM*, the focus shifts from the wife to the "king", who is made responsible for clothing his loyal subjects. As becomes clear from the second quotation, from Revelation 6:10–11, what is meant here is a metaphor about the "white robes" the elect will receive upon the beginning of the Eighth Age, when their sins have been washed away and their bodies resurrected. A "predetermined number" (*prefinitus electorum numerus*) will reach heaven already during the Seventh Age, receive a single robe, and have to wait until their numbers are filled and the Final Judgment can begin. In a passage reminiscent of one of Bede's *Homilies on the Gospel*, it is further explained that a second robe is given then, to signal not just the purity of the soul but also the (renewed) sinlessness of the body.[92] It is a passage rife with baptismal imagery, and is clearly meant to give hope to the readers, and to admonish them to strive for a level of purity that will entitle them to be clad in white. In the context of the chronicle that follows, it also functions, once again, as a reminder that the passage of time and the series of unfortunate events that takes place during the Six Ages need not mean that people should forget that salvation is theirs to attain in spite of (or: because of) these hardships.

91 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, 8.11.20, ed. Lindsay; *Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Barney et al., 84.

92 Bede the Venerable, *Homily*, 2.12, trans. Martin and Hurst.

This brief exposition on apocalyptic clothing is interesting not only because it allows the author to unite the cosmological (i.e. the end of the world) with the personal (i.e. the clothes one will wear), but also because it gives us two more tantalising glimpses at the intentions behind the *CM* and the manuscript. Firstly, the word for robe, *stola*, has been glossed with "that which we call dalmatic" (*id est stole quod nos vocamus dalmaticas*).[93] More than a simple robe, a dalmatic is a liturgical vestment marking out members of the clergy. This may off course be a simple descriptor, explaining an archaic word with a more common one, occurring mostly – though not exclusively – in a liturgical or clerical context.[94] By emphasising that this is what "we" call this particular piece of clothing, it draws the audience in even closer while simultaneously creating a sense of election among the readers. Whoever would use that word is part of the in-group. And this in-group would consist of members of the clerical hierarchy, tasked, among others, with pastoral and liturgical functions meant to enable their flocks to attain salvation alongside them.[95] If the *CM* is indeed historiography with a pastoral function, this little gloss is one of the tools used by the author to emphasise that point.

Secondly, this final passage ties in to the final text in this section of the manuscript. After the *CM* and *DTR* chapters 67 and 68, the scribe has also added, on the bottom half of fol. 55v, several excerpts from Pseudo-Alcuin's *Liber de divinis officiis*, an early tenth-century liturgical treatise drawing on the work of Remigius of Auxerre and the controversial commentator Amalarius of Metz.[96] This part of the manuscript is badly damaged, and it falls well beyond the scope of this article to parse out the various bits taken from this work, but what is clear is that the excerpts all deal with the meaning of white clothes and their connection to the Resurrection, as a kind of addendum to the prologue. Equally interesting is what the inclusion of this passage tells us about the composition of BN lat. 4886. The *Liber de divinis officiis* clearly postdates the earliest possible moment the *CM* might have been composed. Nevertheless, the fact that it appears to have been added to fol. 55v as an afterthought makes it appear as if the entire first part, that is Bede's prologues, the additional prologue, the *CM* and *DTR* chapters 67–68 were intended as a single unit, or, more likely given the origin story of the *CM*, were copied as such. After the final line of Bede's text, the writing gets more cramped, the layout is not as neat

93 Paris BN lat. 4886, fol. 2v. The editors, on page 4, n. v, have erroneously read *dagmaticas* here.

94 An interesting instance is a poem by Theodulf of Orléans, in which the *dalmatica* becomes part of the purifying ritual of bishops before the service: *Carmen* 2, ed. Dümmler, 453; for a broader context, see Collins, *The Carolingian Debate over Sacred Space*, 91–120. Cf. also Garipzanov, *Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World*, 251, who draws attention to the Byzantine imperial associations connected to (among others) that particular article of clothing.

95 Miller, "Reform, Clerical Culture, and Politics," esp. 313–314.

96 On Amalarius of Metz and his view of the past, see Ward, "The Order of History" on the influence of Augustinian modes of thinking on Remigius of Auxerre, see Pollmann, "Von der Aporie zum Code."

anymore, and it is obvious that the scribe had to fit these excerpts on this final page because a next quire would start with a new – planned – text.[97] To the extent that these pseudo-Alcuinian reflections on white clothing were thus not part of the original project, this strengthens the assumption that the preceding text of the *CM*, with its neat layout, organised glosses and elegant, almost archaising writing, went back to an earlier exemplar. Either way, the scribe clearly did not want to waste any space in this manuscript, even in a narrative dealing with the end of time.

5 After Bede

Following the *CM*, the manuscript contains a wealth of shorter texts that are as enigmatic as they are revealing. Most of these deal with matters of exegesis or edification, and many of the smaller treatises in the manuscript remain unedited to this day, and a fuller analysis of the entire codex would greatly enhance our understanding of ecclesiastical culture in late eleventh century Aquitaine.[98] What seems clear, however, is that these texts were not chosen haphazardly or for reasons of mere antiquarianism, but that they formed an archive for a local intellectual who was deeply interested in questions of time, space and personhood, and who had gathered many texts around that topic to help them teach, or to help them think.

While it does seem likely that the prologue to the *CM* in this text was part of the original text, and that the glosses were added by the same hand during the composition of the manuscript or shortly afterwards, it is difficult if not impossible to say if the glosses should be understood in a ninth- or eleventh-century context. Given the timeless quality of Bede's text, however, a case could be made for both options – or at least, that the scribe of Paris BN lat. 4886 felt the glosses would remain a useful guide for the readers towards a more moral interpretation of the narrative. The Book of Revelation was of enduring interest for intellectuals in the Carolingian Empire. This mentality was combined with the heightened emotional state of the intellectual elites in the entourage of Louis the Pious – many of whom hailed from the southern reaches of the Empire – who took a more proactive stance towards Church "reform" and applied the religious idealism formulated by previous generation to engender a veritable "penitential state of mind" at his court.[99] Awareness of one's personal sinful state and its impact on the world had become part and parcel

97 Unfortunately, the next quire appears to have been damaged so we do not know exactly what the next part would have looked like.

98 But see the (as yet unpublished) dissertation by Bellarbre, *Composer avec le passé*.

99 On the optimism prevalent at the Carolingian court in the first decades of the ninth century, see Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire*, 31–58; the idea of the "penitential state" is based on Mayke de Jong's analysis of the mentality at the Carolingian court in the first half of the ninth century: *Penitential State*.

of the political discourse of the early ninth century, when the *CM* was composed. This mentality is definitely visible in the prologue to the narrative, with its emphasis on Jerusalem and the Temple, as well as on the rulers of the people.

For a monastic writer in late eleventh-century Southern France, the outlook would be vastly different even if the message stayed essentially the same. The political fluctuations of the era, combined with the increasing independence of the emerging Duchy of Aquitaine, would make author and audience alike sensitive to the vicissitudes of power and the wages of kingship. In such a context, a narrative ending with the Carolingian heyday could convey a sense of nostalgia and give an example of a political structure to which one could aspire, while also providing an "anchor" to which a communal identity might be fastened. At a time when monastic communities were still subject to an ongoing and almost unchecked reforming process, creating the illusion of a stable and centralised empire might help individuals make sense of the world around them.[100] At the same time, the apocalyptic imagery contained within the framing of the *CM* would serve as a reminder that whatever political or religious dynamics were in the end no match for the Divine Judgment that would inevitably follow.[101]

Again, a more thorough analysis of the manuscript in its entirety is needed to shed more light on this issue. In either case, the adaptation of Bede's Augustinian influences helped give the *CM* in its entirety a moralistic, apocalyptic slant. This would have made perfect sense to audiences both in the ninth and the eleventh century, given their familiarity with this eschatological mode of thinking about history. To those readers who had read and reflected upon these opening pages, the happenings that marked the passage of time became laden with meaning – decisions by powerful people became a statement of why it was worthwhile to follow in their footsteps, and members of the Church were collectively made responsible for maintaining the purity of their faith. By adapting, continuing, and re-interpreting Bede's use of the Six Ages of the World, those involved in making Paris BN lat. 4886 showed what they thought mattered, in the end.

100 Generally, see Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*.

101 In this context, the legacy of Charlemagne's memory loomed large over subsequent framings of apocalyptic narratives: Latowsky, *Emperor of the World*. While it requires further study to see to what extent the specific framing of the Empire in the *CM* inadvertently became relevant again in the wake of the Crusades from the eleventh century onwards, the Carolingian Empire, its leaders and leading intellectuals definitely served as an inspiration to this new endeavour – for better, but certainly also for worse: Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory*, esp. 97–128, and most recently Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*, esp. 35–49 and 123–164.

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Abbreviations

CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866–.
MGH Poetae	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Poetae Latini Medii Aevi
MGH QQ zur Geistesgesch.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters
MGH SS	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores in Folio
PL	Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1844–1855, 1862–1865.

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The Afterlife of Eschatology

Kurt Appel

The Testament of Time – The Apocalypse of John and the *recapitulatio* of Time according to Giorgio Agamben

Giorgio Agamben is one of the most widely received and most important philosophers of our time. His philosophy can be understood as a continuation of Foucault's archaeology of knowledge. Accordingly, Agamben analyses the genesis of the essential occidental concepts, categories and constellations in the context of their political and noetic significance for the present age. Similar to Foucault, this endeavour includes an impetus that is critical of knowledge and society. Beyond Foucault, Agamben systematically deals with not only the influence of religious categories on the constitution of occidental power but also its subversive potential. Among Agamben's writings, his Homo Sacer *project*[1]*, most of which has been translated into English by now, and his book* The Time that Remains (Il tempo che resta)[2] *deserve special mention. In* Il tempo che resta, *Agamben particularly investigates apocalyptic thought and the correspondent concepts of time on the basis of an interpretation of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Both aspects are key to a critique of systems of power and their structures of representation. This text also focusses on these questions. The first part of the article provides a definition of the position of current concepts of time, while the second traces key categories of Agamben, who responds to today's virtualisations with the concept of messianity. The third part will attempt to confront Agamben's change of perspective, which rests on observations from the Bible, wherein the problem of a critical vision of historical superpowers and their representation systems becomes the decisive criterion for an apocalypticisation of history.*

1 Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer* project consists of the following 9 volumes: *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. [*Homo sacer. Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita*.]; *State of Exception. Homo Sacer*, II.1. [*Stato di Eccezione. Homo sacer*, II.1.]; *Stasis: Civil War as a Political Paradigm. Homo Sacer*, II.2. [*Stasis. La guerra civile come paradigma politico. Homo sacer*, II.2.]; *The Sacrament of Language. An Archaeology of the Oath. Homo Sacer*, II.3. [*Il sacramento del linguaggio. Archeologia del giuramento. Homo sacer*, II.3.]; *The Kingdom and the Glory. For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government. Homo Sacer*, II.2. [*Il regno e la gloria. Per una genealogia teologica dell'economia e del governo. Homo sacer*, II.2.]; *Opus Dei. Archeologia dell'ufficio. Homo sacer*, II.5; *Remnants of Auschwitz. The Witness and the Archive Homo Sacer*, III. [*Quel che resta di Auschwitz. L'archivio e il testimone. Homo sacer,* III.]; *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life*. [*Altissima povertà. Regole monastiche e forma di vita. Homo sacer*, IV.1.]; *The Use of Bodies*. [*L'uso dei corpi. Homo sacer*, IV.2.].

2 Agamben, *The Time that Remains*.

Note: The present essay is a revised version of the paper "Die Wahrnehmung des Freundes in der Messianität des Homo sacer," which has been translated by Brita Pohl and Christina Pössel and revised by Kurt Appel and Veronika Wieser.

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1 The Present between the Apocalypse and the Virtual

1.1 The Collapse of the Master Narratives and Subsequent New Narratives

That motifs of the Apocalypse are invoked in a wide range of discussions and across disciplinary borders is not least due to the fact that, after the religious narratives that had constituted traditional symbolic orders have been replaced, their secular surrogates are also *either* in the process of disintegrating – like the one of a progress in the consciousness of freedom – *or* lead into nothingness, like the narrative of the approaching entropic death of the universe as an end point of evolution.[3] In the mental landscapes marked by these losses there emerge, on the one hand, innumerable particular stories (sourcing their content in sports events, pop songs etc.) that all go hand in hand with a fragmenting subject. On the other hand, the fantasy novels of our time become manifest as new grand narratives to shape our global urban culture, their themes often resorting to pre-modern or medieval subjects. *Star Wars*, *Game of Thrones*, *Ghost in the Shell*, etc. not only pervade literature, film and video games, but, increasingly, the everyday lives of the urban populations of all nations and cultures. At present, people in the West no longer live from Sunday to Sunday, but from one series of *Game of Thrones* to the next. This means that, even more than the pop culture idols of the 1960s and 1970s, these stories shape all spheres of life and subliminally work as identity markers, neither *against* nor *for* modernity and its pathos of freedom, but *alongside* it.

1.2 Apocalyptic Scenarios

The new fantasy narratives both borrow extensively from, and redesign, religious and medieval motifs, in which *apocalyptic scenarios* enjoy a particular importance. While the traditional Christian theologies as expressions of the institutionalised religious denominations situate themselves in the "afterlife", the idea of the end of humanity is ever more prevalent in film (think, for instance, of *Melancholia* by Lars von Trier), literature (for example, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy), and some of the aforementioned new master narratives (such as *Game of Thrones*)[4]. In a more or less coded manner, omnipresent figures like vampires, zombies, cyborgs, or mutants testify to the "end of time": the first two because they have survived their own death

3 Cf. Horn, *Zukunft als Katastrophe*, 7–43.
4 See Horn, *Zukunft als Katastrophe*, and Zolles, "Die Zeit apokalyptischer Repräsentation und ihre Aufhebung in Lars von Triers Film Melancholia."

without being redeemed, the latter insofar as they prefigure the transition from humankind to a (potentially immortal) post-human age.

The traditional occidental historico-theological narrative – which may even define the "West" as such, and which has reached far into modernity – began with the eternity of God and of Heaven. It continued with cosmic history proper, shaped by humans, and found its conclusion in the anticipation of the Last Judgement. Its secular transformations conceived of the end of history either with utopian hope, or foresaw universal extinction. At present, it is the latter idea of all-embracing annihilation which shapes global culture. In the cycle of climate and environmental conferences, this apocalyptic undertone functions as a warning to politics and society that, should the present Western-capitalist lifestyle continue, global demise – at least of those forms of culture that humanity knows and regards as livable today – will be inevitable. In addition, the demise of man is also regarded as an inevitable fact. Human beings and their native Earth are considered marginal phenomena in the unfathomable spaces of cosmogony and its attendant entropy. In the light of this consideration, the apocalyptic scenarios in the newly created fantasy worlds seem to be a kind of escapist or coping strategy in the face of the political, intellectual and scientific developments of our time.

1.3 Virtual Worlds

We might say that today, the threshold from moribund reality to a virtuality that is forgetful of death, or rather "undead", is being crossed ever more often. The virtual world renders times and spaces arbitrarily interchangeable and repeatable. The cyborg can be reloaded, and the virtual world of the internet can be reset any time. In the interactive transformations of the new narratives, the "subject" may adopt or abandon the persona of one or more avatars in the blink of an eye; what is more, the chosen "individuals" can continue running automatically, i.e. "by themselves". If the modern subject splits into a physical and a virtual (online) existence, the latter will survive the physical one. Heidegger's *Being and Time* was the epoch-making philosophical oeuvre of the twentieth century.[5] Heidegger focused on mortality and finality, on the "Being toward Death" (*Sein zum Tode*) of *Dasein*. In the transition to the virtually determined times of the present, this scenario is changing. Our symbolic order is guided neither by a paradisiac eternity "post mortem" – whether disembodied or in a transfigured body – as laid down in traditional theology as the meaning of human existence, nor by the heroic "authentic" acceptance of finitude as propagated by the twentieth-century existentialists. In fact, what is beginning to show is rather a "post-mortal" continuing (i.e. a time that has left behind death as the end point) in a melancholy search for mortality, for the lost body and its time.

5 Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* [*Being and Time*].

In this sense, we might speak of a (post-) apocalyptic world that has emerged from its own extinction. It is marked by the search for an irretrievably lost death. *Our fear is no longer of finitude, but increasingly of the infinite. Fear is no longer focused on the end of history or its "thereafter", but on its irretrievable loss.*

2 On the *aisthesis* of the Messianic in Agamben's *Homo Sacer* Project

2.1 Theological Concepts and the Archaeology of Occidental Power

Turning back to the quest for a philosophy of history, we need to acknowledge that the great teleological projects of modernity were all characterised by criticism of epistemology and society. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the first part of his system, but also a continuation of Kantian epistemology insofar as forms of knowledge are examined for their dynamic-genetic character, that is, understood as historically mediated. In the Marxist-influenced wake of Hegel, epistemology and social criticism increasingly combined with a deconstruction of the social dynamics of power. High points of this project were the writings of Walter Benjamin and Michel Foucault. At the intersection of these two thinkers, we find Giorgio Agamben.

Agamben is one of the most widely read and discussed philosophers of our time. His primary interest is a continuation of the archaeological-epistemological work of Foucault. More strongly than the latter, however, Agamben emphasises the profound, originatory influence of theological and apocalyptic-messianic concepts and ideas on the symbolic order of occidental thought that continues into the present. From his engagement with angelology through to his account of the genesis of the dogma of the Trinity, Agamben reconstructs the guiding principles of occidental thought on the basis of key Christian theologumena.

What needs to be mentioned in this context is Agamben's clear distinction between apocalypse and messianism.[6] The former signifies the *end of time*, its transition into eternity. The latter, however, is marked by the *time of the end*, that is, by a *kairos* expressing the end of *chronological* time and its uniform progression without finality and sense. This distinction is complicated by the fact that *biblical* apocalypticism, with its most differentiated expression in the Revelation to John – contrary to the metaphysical reconfiguration of the biblical time in the schema of time and eternity since Late Antiquity – corresponds more to Agamben's messianic age, as examined in his book *The Time that Remains* (Il tempo che resta)[7]. This is why

6 Cf. Agamben, *The Church and the Kingdom*.
7 Cf. Agamben, *The Time that Remains*.

Agamben's thoughts on messianity are very conducive to initiating an understanding of biblical apocalypticism and its relevance to contemporary social criticism.

2.2 The Project of Messianity as an Alternative to the Camp

As regards content, we first need to emphasise Agamben's radically critical demeanour with regard to the Western development of power. Agamben's key thesis is that the legal[8] *state of exception* that was branded into European history in the concentration camp, represents a paradigm of the mental landscape of Europe. In *Homo Sacer I*, he writes:

> One of the theses of the present inquiry is that in our age, the state of exception comes more and more to the foreground as the fundamental political structure and ultimately begins to become the rule. When our age tried to grant the unrealizable a permanent and visible localization, the result was the concentration camp. The camp – and not the prison – is the space that corresponds to this originary structure of the *nomos*.[9]

In his analyses, Agamben aims to trace the violent aspect of European history and to show how theological and metaphysical choices helped condition it. Auschwitz here serves as the constant catastrophic reference in which the intellectual history of Europe stares into its own abyss. In a manner of speaking, therefore, it represents the catastrophic face of an apocalyptic end of the world.

2.3 Aisthesis of Reality and the Re-Writing of History

The apocalypse, specifically the Revelation to John, understands itself as thought aiming to decode the character of history in order to unveil a corresponding vision of man. The present essay attempts to show that Agamben's work is also deeply marked by an "aisthesis of reality". His archaeology of power consists of exposing layer after layer in order to reveal a look at "bare man" – it is no coincidence that bareness is a key, recurring motif – and at that which conceals him, or what is concealed *behind* him.[10] The question will be whether we will *encounter* an ultimate emptiness, or whether a perspective will emerge from which society, religion, art, philosophy, and above all history will have to be re-written. In doing so, Agamben cannot be appropriated by either theology or "secular" currents, because, as we will proceed to show, these alternatives no longer apply.

8 Below, we will need to point out that the figure of the state of exception transcends legal categories.

9 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, I.19

10 A reconstruction of the political dimension well worth reading is provided in a so-far unfortunately unpublished dissertation by Müller, "Das Paradigma der Schwelle."

2.4 The Sovereign, *homo sacer*, and Control of Bare Life

In the first volume of his *magnum opus, Homo Sacer*, which is subtitled *Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben emphasises that "the entry of *zoē* into the sphere of the *polis* – the politicisation of bare life as such"[11] is the decisive event of modernity. What constitutes modernity is the abstraction of human life from its social, legal and political embedment in order to establish the possibility of total control on the part of the one wielding power, i.e. the *sovereign*. Agamben uses two figures to illustrate his discourse: the sovereign and the *homo sacer*, who serves as the title of the entire project. Following Carl Schmitt, Agamben defines the sovereign as the one who is able to decide on the (legal) state of exception. He is therefore someone who defines the ultimate limits and power of law as he embodies the *right* to suspend the rule of law in order to secure the scope of power (including the scope of law which both implements and sustains power). Contrary to law, which always has lacunae, that is, areas to which the court's judgement cannot be applied, nothing may oppose the application of the sovereign verdict. If law secures power through the judgements of the courts, sovereign power manifests itself in the capacity to pass absolute and incontestable judgement.[12] In accordance with his fundamental thesis of modernity as the control of bare life, Agamben offers a variation of the concept of sovereignty: "[...] in this sense, the production of bare life is the originary activity of sovereignty".[13] Insofar as law is a codification of morality and thus of the social involvement of life, sovereignty consists of the possibility of absolute control over the individual without regard for its social relations. The sovereign can banish the individual from the legal sphere and from the social framework, completely refuse it social recognition, and thus reduce it to unprotected, *bare* life. Agamben therefore is able to say that the sovereign sphere is "the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide".[14]

Before exploring the question of other possible applications of the figure of the state of exception, we shall discuss the counter-figure of the sovereign, the *homo sacer*. Referring to the Roman legal tradition, Agamben defines him as the one who "cannot be sacrificed yet may, nevertheless, be killed".[15] The *homo sacer* is no longer part of the social fabric, he is, in medieval terminology, out-lawed. Being under the ban of the sovereign means to be *banned* from all legal and social relation-

11 Agamben, *Home sacer*, I.10.

12 Here it might be interesting to study parallels between Agamben and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In this latter work, too, the course of Modernity consists in the absolutisation of the structure of judgement, the highest form of which is to be found in the Terror of the Revolution and in Kantian Morals. Cf. Appel, "'Nur in der Geschichte der Zeugen kann Gott in seinem Christus geschichtlich wahr werden'."

13 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, I.53.

14 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, I.53.

15 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, I.13.

ships; excluded from the sphere of the living; the *homo sacer* is a living dead. In the antique world, he could therefore not be sacrificed, because, as a socially dead individual, he was unable to establish a link between the mundane world and the world of the gods.

For the following observations, we need to note that *homo sacer* is the anti-figure to the sovereign. "What unites the surviving devotee, *homo sacer,* and the sovereign in one single paradigm is that in each case we find ourselves confronted with a bare life that has been separated from its context [...]."[16] The sovereign as well as *homo sacer* are figures without a social body, the "other" of the social world and its institutions.

The provocative aspect of Agamben's social criticism is the thesis that also and in particular in our present society, the "bare life is produced by a control mechanism",[17] i.e. that Western society is this highly efficient mechanism, the innermost element of which is absolute control over human life. To begin with, Agamben thinks of the camp as the site of the production of bare life and absolute sovereignty over it. However, according to Agamben, the paradigm of absolute control has not been overcome. There are also currently sites of the production of bare life, for example places such as Guantanamo, refugee camps and *banlieues*, where life has been excluded from the social frameworks of the state. However, Agamben particularly links sovereign power in current society with medicine, which is both capable of designing future life and of determining its survival.[18] In a deeper sense, the fact that the sovereign is not a person in the sense of a legal subject becomes apparent in that sovereignty no longer needs to be executed by a person; it consists of economic and bureaucratic processes that can produce survival in whole swathes of the world, or, on the other hand, set in motion anonymous social mechanisms to which the individual is totally subjected.

2.5 Of the Power of "Making Survive" and of the Exclusion from the Sphere of Death

At the outset I emphasised that we are currently witnessing an epochal transition from the mortal world to a world without death. Agamben's analysis of sovereign power can be linked to this observation; for it is possible that the melancholy search for the lost body and thus for mortality originates in the search for a sphere which is still able to elude the sovereign. Agamben himself does not define sovereignty only in the "traditional" manner, as the power over life and death, but also as the power

16 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, I.61.
17 Cf. Agamben, *State of Exception. Homo sacer*, II.1.
18 Agamben says that "the physician and the scientist move in the no-man's-land into which at one point the sovereign alone could penetrate". See Agamben, *Homo sacer*, I.91.

of "making survive", not only in the sense that the sovereign can grant survival, but also that he can enforce it. This means that in our time the power over death is transformed from the possibility of killing, hitherto the most extreme power, into the possibility of deferring death. The *present homo sacer* as the figure on the threshold between (social) life and death shifts from *the exclusion from the sphere of life into the exclusion from the sphere of death.*

Today's virtual worlds are therefore increasingly worlds in which the virtualised subject is separated from its own mortality, and in which cyberspace has usurped the function of the sovereign. Regarding the structure of time, the traditional time of salvation history and its secular offshoots still had a past and a future beyond their immediate grasp. In contrast, the unrestricted reproducibility and omnipresence of the internet forms a kind of permanent temporal state of exception. Virtual time, stripped of all direction, is the eternal Now without anything beyond itself, neither past nor future. In it, there is no asynchronicity; indeed, everything except the internet itself is present in the internet. It forms a ghostly sovereign and the container which comprises all events. As in any machine, events coincide with each other in such a way that there is no room for manoeuvre and no independent development of the individual moments; the events express a kind of absolute matrix that is no longer comprehensible, in which inside and outside, the real and the imaginary coincide.

2.6 The Recovery of Man's Inoperativity

2.6.1 Agamben's Political Project

The problem of virtuality is a key – though largely implicit – issue in Agamben's central work within the *Homo Sacer* project, *The Kingdom and the Glory* ("Il regno e la Gloria")[19]. Many of his other writings' motifs converge in this book, which aims to execute an archaeology of the genesis of the Western "governmental machine" – or rather of the *proprium* of Western politics and culture as such. According to Agamben, its basic coordinates lie in the tension between *regno,* that is, active government, and *gloria,* the inactive glory which forms the secret centre of power and which is not least tasked with legitimising and maintaining power. Therefore, every Western government needs to be legitimised by an externalised, sacral instance which cannot be represented directly by the governmental machine or any other institution or by the *demos*. The only function of this mysterious instance is to shroud the fact that the aim of the government lies in its own perpetualisation.

19 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, II.2.

For this duality, Agamben cites examples from history[20] and politics, adding an novel aspect of the sovereign: he is the character clothed in a glory that lies outside immediate political-administrative practice, and which today – as Agamben adds in an important aside – is above all allocated by the media.[21] Agamben sees the central goal of his *magnum opus* in the task of opposing "the ingenuous emphasis on productivity and labour, [...] politics is here returned to its central inoperativity, that is, to that operation that amounts to rendering inoperative all human and divine works".[22] This is whence, in principle, all branches of Agamben's efforts derive; he sees "inoperativity as a properly human [...] praxis", man as the "sabbatical animal par excellence".[23] The *humanum* is characterised by not being subject to the reign of instincts and the ends they entail; i.e. its *ex-sistence* precisely does not immediately coincide with the organisation of its life and survival. It is thus ultimately not subordinate to any functionality or external purpose. In other words: it is free – though Agamben deliberately avoids any emphasis of the term "freedom", probably because in the occidental tradition, the term has substantial action-theoretical connotations in the sense of the capability of self-beginning, the self-realisation of the subject, and of professional activity. Man will have to be made free of these functions by undergoing a *desubjectification*, which will be discussed in more detail below.

2.6.2 The Eighth Day as a Festive Surplus of Time

The Bible, as Agamben notices and explores in his book *Nudities*,[24] presents the Sabbath as a "surplus" that cannot be made to serve a purpose. In its most profound meaning, the seventh day is neither a mere chronological add-on to the other days, nor simply an interruption of the six-day rhythm of work. Rather, it is the transcen-

20 Mainly following Kantorowicz' epoch-making work *The King's Two Bodies*, published in 1957.
21 Agamben writes: "If the media are so important in modern democracies, this is the case not only because they enable the control and government of public opinion, but also and above all because they manage and dispense Glory [...]." See Agamben, *Homo sacer* II.2, xii. This means that the task accorded to religious authority, which consists in dispensing Glory, has passed on to the media. In this process, the separation of "government/kingdom" and "glory" is increasingly cancelled out. At this point, I would like to add another comment: Agamben has recently concluded his *Homo Sacer* project with the volume *L'uso dei corpi. Homo sacer*, IV. There the volume *Stasis. La guerra civile come paradigma politico. Homo sacer*, II.2 is listed as *Homo sacer*, II.2, the same as the volume *The Kingdom and the Glory*. It is hard to imagine that Agamben made a mistake in numbering them. Rather, two mutually non-exclusive interpretations suggest themselves: the first is to regard the volume *Stasis* as an appendix to *The Kingdom and the Glory*, the second in *Stasis* taking the place of *The Kingdom and the Glory*, the latter volume thus being quasi the "remainder" and centrepiece of the entire project.
22 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, xiii.13
23 Agamben, *The Kingdom and th*e Glory, xiii.293
24 Agamben, *Nudities*, 104–112.

dent opening of time, which is structured and organised by work and the causalities linked to it. Through the surplus expressed by the Sabbath, time never forms a complete whole, but has an "outside", a *rest* that cannot be integrated.

In the Christian tradition, the Sabbath, the seventh day on which God "rested/celebrated from all his work which God created and made" (Gen. 2:3), is transformed into Sunday. On the one hand, Sunday is the Christian equivalent to the Sabbath, that is, the day of interruption, of rest and festivity. On the other hand, it radicalises a moment already present *in nuce* in the Sabbath because it does not know any proper chronological "territory" but is radically a-chronological: as the *eighth day*,[25] it coincides with day one, that is, with the day of original Creation and the first working day (and therefore symbol of active time). This implies two things: the eighth day may coincide with any other day, insofar as it is a working day; to a certain extent, it is the inner festive transformation of active time itself. Incidentally, until very recently, the Catholic liturgical tradition took this into account by including the Sunday liturgical formula also in weekday masses, thus precisely not opposing Sunday to the other days in a chronological sense. The second implication goes even deeper: the conflation of the eighth day with the day of the creation of the world indicates *that the creation of the world takes place in the feast*. In a temporal perspective, this draws a first line to messianity: messianic time is festive time, that is, time that no longer stands under the auspices of activities, external purposes or similar, that is not determined by the chronological chain of Being; instead, it festively expresses the openness of Being in relation to all necessities.[26] In Kantian terminology, it is this un-reifiable sphere of freedom ("causality of freedom") which confronts the causality of nature, without being able to limit it "positively" in any way.

2.6.3 The Dualism of Government and Glory, the Economy of Salvation and the Occidental Fracture between Being and Praxis

From the axiom "to return politics to its central inoperativity" mentioned above, Agamben derives the most important definitions and analyses of his work *The Kingdom and the Glory*. Religion is situated in the sphere of glory, which finds its deepest expression in the celebration of the inoperativity of man, the (temporal) openness of Being as compared to any purely causal-chronological obligation. In Agamben's distinction between these two spheres, namely "kingdom/government" and "glory", the former stands for active work, that is, for the human accomplishments within the Chronos insofar as man is part of the realm of physical necessities. The second defines the "surplus", the unavailable transcendence of events that cannot be

25 Sunday is 6+1+1, i.e. the addition of the Sabbath is doubled and thus solemnly confirmed.
26 Cf. also Bahr, *Zeit der Muße – Zeit der Musen*.

caused nor classified, and that is granted to man as a gift to which he is summoned to respond.

Using the concept of the economy of salvation, Agamben demonstrates that in the European tradition of governance (including the separation between political/state and clerical/church power) we can observe a deeply ambivalent development with regard to the relation between kingdom and glory. In its analysis, he mainly focuses on the Christian theological separation between an imminent and a salvation-economical Trinity. Thus in this separation the difference between God's being and God's action is revealed:

> The divine being is not split [by the thought of creation and incarnation, i.e. the opposition between a world-transcendent Creator and a God of history] since the triplicity of which the Fathers speak is located on the level of the *oikonomia,* not ontology. The caesura that had to be averted at all costs on the level of being reemerges, however, as a fracture between God and his action, between ontology and praxis.[27]

According to Agamben, the fracture between Being and praxis that is expressed in this separation marks the end of the ancient world.[28] Action cannot immediately be inferred from Being, but marks its own, separate sphere. This action therefore becomes independent of the Being and arises now from the conscious act of will – in which, so to speak, the subject gives birth to itself – and later takes over Being itself and becomes its paradigm.[29] As Agamben explains in *Opus Dei*, this means that all that is happening in the world is subject to the compulsion of always having to effectuate something[30] and turns into a *perpetuum mobile*. It is particularly ironic that Christianity has never forgotten that such a perpetually moving machine, that is, the "idea of eternal government" is "truly infernal":[31] only hell is captive to an eternal cycle of work.

It is essential that the spheres of Being (theology, *gloria*) and of action (economy, government) presuppose each other. Government has its most extreme plenitude of powers not where it legitimise itself by its ever-contingent action, but where its action produces glory from within itself.

27 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 53.
28 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 53–54.
29 Agamben particularly exemplifies this in *Homo sacer*, II.5. *Opus Dei. Archeologia dell'ufficio*. There, he says: "La fede cristiana è una mobilitazione dell'ontologia, in cui è in questione la trasformazione dell'essere in operatività" (Christian faith is a mobilisation of ontology, which poses the problem of the transformation of being into operativity). Cf. Agamben, *Homo sacer*, II.5, 72.
30 Cf. Agamben, *Homo sacer*, II.5, 102.
31 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 164.

> Government glorifies the Kingdom, and the Kingdom glorifies Government. But the center of the machine is empty, and glory is nothing but the splendor that emanates from this emptiness, the inexhaustible *kabhod* that at once reveals and veils the central vacuity of the machine.[32]

Agamben emphasises that he understands man as the completely inoperative "Sabbatical animal par excellence".[33] The paradox is that work can never stop because, in a way, it never completely fulfils man, because he can ultimately never be expressed through work. The separation of Being and *praxis* (in the sense of *poiesis*!) conveys that human Being never immediately passes into *praxis*, and that the latter is not contained in Being. However, the autonomy of the latter conceals that by itself, it comes to nothing, aims for nothingness, so to speak. The world as an absolute *perpetuum mobile* and perfectly connected causality of events would quite literally be "nothing"; its *doxa* (*glory*) would be the absolute meaningless void. It is precisely this emptiness of the paradigm of action that may also be veiled by glory. It establishes the illusiveness of legitimisation for an increasingly totalising government (in the sense of seamless *poiesis*). In other words: the paradigm of action attempts to circumvent its own meaninglessness by establishing a place, namely the transcendent sovereignty of "glory", which evades this paradigm while implementing it at the same time.

In this way, the government is solely legitimised by the glorification of the "Other" (glory), and the only function of this "Other" is this legitimisation. Thus in Agamben we ought to distinguish a yet-to-be-explored *messianic doxology* from an *economic doxology*.[34] This, however, opens up possibilities of misinterpretation, because the (economic) doxology, as a core component of negative theology – in which God as the complete Other can only be met with *encomium* (as Agamben presents it in his angelology insofar as the angels permanently convert operativity into *encomium*) has "the function of cover and serves to found a governmental hierarchy".[35] Regarding government, therefore, the sovereign power of glory is the "remainder that poses itself as the whole that infinitely subtracts itself from itself".[36] It is therefore effectively the hidden veiling that makes us forget that the whole realm of praxis or *poiesis* is rendered inoperative (*rendere inoperoso*) in man. While there is an awareness in doxology that the dispositive of action is not the ultimate reality of man, this, paradoxically, continually turns into its opposite, becoming subject by

32 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 211.
33 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 246.
34 Agamben does not explicitly use these terms, but in substance.
35 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 155.
36 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 99.

action, because the subject glorifies its own action in the glorification of the Other, without admitting to do so even to itself.[37]

As regards time, it needs to be emphasised that eternity as a place of glorification is precisely *not* messianic time, as Agamben shows in another important work, *The Time that Remains*, it is only the mirror of working time and its legitimising point. We might say that the biblical model, according to which the working days were created for the sake of the seventh day and only derive their meaning from it, is inverted in such a way that timeless eternity legitimises the immanent progress of the machine of work. But how can we distinguish the Messianic from its perverted form? In order to explore this, we need to consider the concept of dignity and its problems.

2.7 Dignity, Shame, and Speechlessness with regard to the *homo sacer*

Dignity is a key term of the Western tradition, and the concept of human dignity guides much of current ethical discourse. In *The Kingdom and the Glory*, Agamben linked glory closely to the dignity (*dignitas*) of the sovereign; the latter represented both the starting point and product of glorification. It thus marks a sphere which seems to elude human manipulation, and essentially forms that additional space in which the definition of the world as a mere nexus of means-and-ends relations – in Kantian terms, the "causality from nature" – is left behind.

The thoughts explored in the preceding section suggest that this approach to dignity will not be Agamben's last word on the matter. However, we need to emphasise that dignity has to be regarded as a founding figure of religious interpretations of Being as well as a cornerstone of secular ethics. The idea that man, with any of his words, gestures and expressions, reaches beyond himself as a mere creature of nature (animal) and beyond any determinable meaning – which is why there will never be a finished lexicon – and does not coincide with himself in a purely immanent manner (like a machine that only signifies its own set operations and is unable to distance itself in the least from this functionality), served as a signpost to a transcendent expansion of purely immanent concepts of work and causality. This is manifest in its earliest secularised form in Kantian ethics, according to which man not only has an exchange value but a dignity elevated above any calculable value.[38] More recently, it manifests in the concept of human rights which are regarded as non-negotiable because of the dignity of man.

37 Here, too, we may identify a close resemblance between the analyses of Agamben and of Hegel, in the unhappy consciousness, in which the subject thinks it works for the glory of God but in reality appropriates this glory himself. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*.
38 Cf. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 43.

Of course, Agamben does not reduce man to a perpetually operating, incessantly causally determined machine; nevertheless, he leaves room for a suspicion that the concept of dignity – like the one of glorification – also conceals something. There is particular scope for this suspicion in the third part of *Homo Sacer* in which he attempts an analysis of Auschwitz.[39]

Auschwitz, according to Agamben, defines an ethical aporia; it is "the site in which it is not decent to remain decent, in which those who believed themselves to preserve their dignity and self-respect experience shame with respect to those who did not".[40] What is this suggested indignity of dignified behaviour in a borderline situation in which sovereign power reduces man, layer by layer, to his bare biological life, which may, if necessary, be "eclipsed"? The second question regards what exactly is expressed by the feeling of shame, of which already the young Hegel said that it does not express "fear for one's own", but fear "in the face of one's own self-centeredness".[41]

Agamben makes a momentous observation:

> In certain places and situations, dignity is out of place. The lover, for example, can be anything except 'dignified', just as it is impossible to make love while keeping one's dignity. [...] There are good reasons for this impossibility of reconciling love and dignity. Both in the case of legal *dignitas* and in its moral transposition, dignity is something autonomous with respect to the existence of its bearer, an interior model or an external image to which he must conform and which must be preserved at all costs. But in extreme situations – and love, in its own way, is also an extreme situation – it is not possible to maintain even the slightest distance between real person and model, between life and norm.[42]

Dignity duplicates man by setting aside a (sacral) sphere in which the subject finds its last refuge, which seems to withdraw it from simple availability. This constructs a symbolic order which opens up a space between mere nature (bare life) and its mental "rewriting" and *relecture*, which in a way translates physis into language and produces a permanent surplus of meaning of the word as compared to the immediate practice of life, which therefore can never be recovered by man.[43] The atrocious message of the camp, however, is that "there is still life in the most extreme degradation".[44]

The purpose of torture is the un-dignifying of a person by reducing them to a mere piece of nature. The concentration camp "produced" such degraded "bare" life, which was no longer clothed in dignity, and which in the camp was described

39 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, III.
40 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, III, 60.
41 Hegel, *On Christianity*, 306.
42 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, III, 68–69.
43 Agamben here follows Lévi-Strauss when talking about a surplus of signification vis-à-vis the signified, i.e. a non-correspondence between the sign and the signified, from which arises the freedom of *logos* as compared to physis. Cf. Agamben, *Homo sacer*, II.3, 67–68.
44 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, III, 69.

as the *Muselmann*. The latter stands at the threshold "between man and non-man",[45] not least because he is deprived of his subject function, because he cannot, so to speak, bear witness for himself.

The *Muselmann* as an expression of utter degradation thus defines the extreme situation that Agamben also envisages for love, namely the radical disappearance of the distance between the subject and its model (which is expressed by dignity). The subjectification of our nature and denotative language (defining and explaining the world) cultivate a permanent construction of this distance, the permanent construction of one's own model in order to be able to liberate oneself from the immediate acts and attributions of life. This also addresses the crucial moment of Hegel's thought, in which religion is situated in opposition to speculative knowledge. Contrary to a frequent assumption, what is at issue is precisely not the abolition of the sensual dimension of knowledge, but rather the structure of knowledge which segregates the Absolute (the absolute subject) into a separate sphere in order to keep it "pure" and inviolable by avoiding exposing it (and therefore the subject situating itself in it) to any risk.

Agamben, by contrast, emphasises that love risks its own model and is prepared to expose itself to the "Other". The crucial aspect of his argument lies in the analysis of *shame*. We have already mentioned that in Hegel's early works, shame is defined as fear of one's Own. Referring to Levinas, Agamben takes a similar direction:

> [Shame] does not derive [...] from the consciousness of an imperfection or a lack in our being from which we take a distance. On the contrary, shame is grounded in our being's incapacity to move away and break from itself. [...] To be ashamed means to be consigned to something that cannot be assumed. [...] In shame, the subject thus has no other content than its own desubjectification; it becomes witness to its own disorder, its own oblivion as a subject.[46]

In these phrases Agamben approaches the question of what remains when dignity and glory no longer represent the transcendent reference points of our *aisthesis*. One answer might be that the result would be a world without *doxa*, an example of which Agamben sees in the depilated bodies of fashion models and porn stars.[47] However, this view arises when images have achieved complete autonomy from any reality and show a perfect illusory world.

By contrast, shame is not about the "whereabouts" of the subject in any image, for example, in the sense of a subject being ashamed in a situation which contradicts the moral image that the subject has constructed for itself. Instead, it is about a radical de(con)struction of the subject. The subject in a way becomes a witness of itself as a "non-human" which can no longer be represented, delineated and evaluated. Agamben does not coin this expression in order to record that there might be

45 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, III, 47.
46 Agamben, *Homo sacer*, III, 105–106.
47 Agamben, *Nudities*, 97.

human beings who have become so dehumanised due to abuse, torture and banishment that there remains nothing of *humanum*. Rather, "non-human" is the sphere in which any linguistic or conceptual visualisation reaches its limits, the "remainder" that is left when, with dignity, the transcendent and thus "highest" reference of the human being has been violated.

Possibly the most important idea of Agamben is that, ultimately, the subject can be decoded neither as an indestructible substance in the sense of metaphysics nor as a transcendental companion in the sense of Kant, nor as a carrier of moral judgements and actions. Subjectivity, by contrast, is *encountered* in the testimony of a desubjectification: "human beings are human insofar as they bear witness to the inhuman [that is, to non-human]."[48] It is precisely at the site where any internal or external modelling is shattered that *subjectivity* emerges. *Subjectivity thus generates itself in the testimony for the speechless, for the non-figure, for the one who is removed from any noetic or practical control, for the* homo sacer. *Homo sacer* thus gains a new inflection: so far, he only was the one who was under the spell of social and symbolic systems of reference; now, in his complete lack of images, he becomes the starting point of a becoming-human of the one bearing testimony to him. With a theological twist, we might say that *homo sacer,* insofar as he is testified as such and insofar as there is faithfulness to this experience, "heralds" the arrival of the messianic subject, which experiences in this testimony, that is, in his own subjectification, *eo ipso* a desubjectification: it is not "I" who lives, "but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).[49]

However, it is not only the conceptual world that is shattered by the *homo sacer,* but also, as Agamben states in *The Time that Remains,* the denotative function of the language of depicting Being. This sublation of denotative language has a notable parallel in the world of love: "[Love] is not a world of predicates [...] but a world of indivisible events, in which I do not judge, nor do I believe that the snow is white and the sun is warm, but I am transported and displaced in the snow's-being-white and in the sun's-being-warm."[50] Modern man tends to enter into a world of judgments and statements which they use to orient themselves. In this manner (as Agamben also writes in the conclusion to his *Homo Sacer* project, *L'uso dei corpi*),[51] language becomes the decisive moment of Being. We might say that language and Being form a zone of indiscernibility. In contrast, the messianic moment emerges where language in its denotative and judging functions is rendered inoperative (*rendere inoperoso*). Agamben refers to an "absolute nearness of the word"[52] to which

48 Agamben, *Homo sacer* III, 121.

49 It is important here that in this sentence, there is also a passage from Christ as a designation of the Messiah to Christ as a proper name. For here there is no longer the structure of a judgment, but only the name that invalidates all judgments and previous images.

50 Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, 129.

51 Cf. Agamben, *Homo sacer*, IV.2, 155–178.

52 Agamben, *The Time that Remains,* 136.

the apostle Paul bears witness. In it, the word no longer functions as a predicative judgment, not even as a performative self-expression of the speaker, but remains in a dialectic of subjectification and desubjectification insofar as an event is denoted which once more systematically renders inoperative all meanings and forms of expression, and which, precisely in this gesture, "bears witness to what, unexpressed and insignificant, remains in use forever [...]."[53]

Returning to one of the fundamental theorems of Agamben's philosophical project, in which messianity is expressed by the fact that "politics is [...] returned to its central inoperativity" by "rendering inoperative all human and divine works",[54] this *rendere inoperoso* becomes apparent first and foremost in a radical shift of perspective. The world is separated from its linguistic and conceptual accoutrements and images. And the last instance – "God" – which in its glory consists in the praise of those acclaiming it, brings forth "a nudity" "that theology absolutely does not want to see".[55] This leads to an *absolute* experience and a last encounter between the world and God. As Agamben describes this in his book *The Coming Community*: "God is in every thing as the place in which every thing is"[56] and "[what] is properly divine is that the world does not reveal God".[57] Messianity therein reveals itself as radical immanence and devaluation of all models which lie between the human being and the experience of the singular, the exposed, or, in Agamben's words: the remainder in which alone truth becomes visible.[58]

3 *Ecce homo*, or the Conflation of Sovereign and *homo sacer*

3.1 The Gift of Vulnerability

What is striking about the first account of creation at the beginning of the Bible is that several times God *sees* that what he has done is good. This formula reoccurs in Genesis 1:31, referring to the entire work of creation, which has come to a good, if – as the seventh day demonstrates – open conclusion: "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." Oddly, of what exactly the goodness of His creation consists is rarely explored. An interesting perspective is opened up by

53 Agamben, *The Time that Remains,* 137.
54 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory,* xiii.
55 Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory,* 221.
56 Agamben, *The Coming Community*, 14.
57 Agamben, *The Coming Community,* 90.
58 Thoughts of a very similar structure can be identified in Hegel, in Musil's *Man Without Qualities*, and in Hölderlin. Cf. Appel, "Gott – Mensch – Zeit;" Deibl, "Vom Namen Gottes und der Eröffnung neuer Sprachsäume."

the first mention "that it was good", in Genesis 1:10, because this follows not immediately after the first act of creation, but only after the third. Three separations precede this statement: of light from darkness, of heaven from earth, and of land and sea. The three also implicitly separate the sphere of the living from the sphere of the dead/the immortal from each other. In particular the second separation, the delimitation of heaven, precludes that immortal things may interfere with the terrestrial "one-day" with its rhythm of evening (time doomed to death) – night (death) – morning (new creation). The fragility of the relation between the immortal celestial and the mortal terrestrial is demonstrated not least in Genesis 6:1–4 (or Gen. 6:1–5), when the (celestial, immortal) sons of God descend to earth to procerate with the daughters of men and have to be restrained by God.

In this article's first part, I referred to the seventh day, which transcends Creation. It is both the festive beginning and end of the world, forming a sphere that is neither included in chronological time nor external to it. In answer to the question of what is being celebrated, the subsequent sequences offer indications that it is the vulnerability, the "not-being-God" of Creation. In contrast, the fall of man consists of his endeavour to gain seamless control over Being, not least in the form of absolute knowledge, which, in its totality, leaves us only with a void of meaning, i.e. "evil". 'Before' the fall, man is in a sense endowed with a fragility which opens his path to the tree of life. In the seamlessness of his claim to knowledge and power, however, which also includes the claim to access the world of the Gods (as we shall see below), he blocks his own path to life.

The extent to which the theme of death is at the heart of the beginning of Genesis is apparent in the discourse between Eve and the serpent. It culminates in the latter's statement: "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:4–5). To read the statement of the serpent, the personification of desire, simply as a lie, is too simplistic: after all, its second part, the "opening of the eyes", has come true. Indeed, the serpent's statement represents the key challenge, in a way the wager between God and man that pervades the whole Bible: will humanity manage to usurp immortality for itself and thus breach the separation between the human and the divine world, or will the human pretence to omnipotence remain limited by that separation? The wager is, on the part of humanity, its death, and on the part of God, his being God as the limit to human self-assertion.[59] The subsequent events of the Bible affirm and develop this direction of inquiry: Cain, the man whom Eve has conceived (Gen. 4:1), is as the first-born the guarantor of a symbolic immortality of Adam, who continues to live in his image. On the other hand, Abel, whose side God takes, is, as his name implies, superfluous, an insubstantial "breath" as transient as a breeze. Later, the great human endeavour of mak-

59 Could man usurp immortality, he would finally take the place of God, and God could no longer fulfil his divine function, namely protecting man from himself.

ing a name for oneself, that is, of gaining immortality, follows the genealogy of Cain and reveals the genesis of cities (and their structures of power), of the military and of culture (Gen. 4:19–22).

To return to the initial question regarding the "goodness" of the world, it should be noted that it is good precisely where it is not clad in its own pretence to power and its own self-assurance, but where it dons the "robe of light" of vulnerability, accessibility, and mortality. The openness of this fragility is the precondition to relations and compassion, which is celebrated and brought to mind on the seventh day.

3.2 *Ecce homo*

The vulnerable as a hermeneutic key to history is also raised in other pivotal places in the Bible. In Genesis, Chapter 18, YHWH[60] allows himself to be seen near the oaks of Mamre, namely by revealing himself in the hospitable reception by Abraham.[61] The fact that this revelation occurs in the figure of a guest can hardly be a coincidence, for YHWH repeatedly appears as a guest later, whether in the Tent of Meeting or in Jesus of Nazareth's visits to many houses. The guest withdrawn from the security of his own home is a figure which neither can be appropriated, nor does it designate the wholly other. Rather, the guest is situated at the threshold between one's own and the foreign, between the centre and the periphery. The guest is never "at home" but always by the other; he does he exist "in himself", but only as someone received by the other. However, the guest does not emanate from the host's will, but is in fact received. What is at issue in the pivotal biblical revelation (Exod. 32:30–34:9), which is linked to Genesis 18 through various key words,[62] is the visibility of YHWH to Moses. Moses will receive a revelation of the name of YHWH as a merciful God in the passage of his glory. What is emphasised, however, is that man "does not see YHWH (or rather his face) and live".[63] A direct approach to the Absolute (and its appropriation, implicit in the approach) is thus excluded in the text; in fact, it would result in death.

The question of the vision of the Divine returns to the centre of attention at the end of the Bible, in the Johannine writings[64] which conclude both the Gospels and

60 YHWH designates the Biblical name of God (literally probably "I am the one who will have proved himself as being" ...), which was never vocalised and therefore cannot be pronounced.

61 On the meaning of the guest, cf. the outstanding book by Bahr, *Die Sprache des Gastes*.

62 Keywords from Gen 18 taken up in Ex 32:30–34 are e.g. "finding favour/grace in thy sight", "pass on", "way of YHWH", "know".

63 Cf. Dohmen, *Exodus 19–40 (HThKAT)*, 316–360. Cf. also Schwienhorst-Schönberger, "Sehen im Nicht-Sehen. Mose auf dem Berg Sinai."

64 These include the Gospel of John, the three letters of John, and the Revelation to John (Apocalypse) as the last biblical book.

the Bible as a whole. Indeed, the "seeing" of the "Kyrios"[65] becomes the pivotal guiding thought. In the prologue to the Gospel of John, a complex dialectic becomes apparent: on the one hand, it emphasises that "no man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18), on the other hand, it refers to the one who "dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father), He hath declared Him" (John 1:14–18). Just as Exodus 32:30–34:9 affirms that God can only be experienced in mercy – in the two dimensions of healing and absolution – the prologue to the Gospel of John also makes clear that one cannot directly gaze at the "Father". Indeed, the significance of Jesus as the Crucified – that is, as *homo sacer* – is to be the interpreting *signum* of the "Father".

Of particular importance is John 1:35–39a:

> The next day John [the Baptist] was there, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt [...][66]

The meaning of the vision of the Lamb of God, namely a farewell to all self-representation of power which will have determined our history, is made clear in the Revelation to John (Apocalypse) in many inflections and emotional landscapes: it is the slaughtered Lamb of God which unveils (*apokalyptein*) the seal of history. The quotation above is initially more "muted": while one of the two disciples of John who are *invited* to see is identified as one of the future "twelve" apostles, namely Andrew (John 1:40), the other remains unnamed and is therefore intended for the identification of the reader. Thus we may argue that Jesus, John the Baptist, Andrew and the reader of the Gospel meet in this excerpt. In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist is the representative of the Old Testament prophets and therefore symbolises the Gospel of John's argument that the books of the Old Testament (that is, the *logos* that is at the beginning) bear witness to Jesus and find new embodiment in his flesh. The *logos* that is at the beginning is not only the Word in general but the text which receives the world and *vice versa*, and in which Jesus is embodied.

This shows that the testimony of John the Baptist and his disciples (including the reader of the Gospel) begins with a reinterpretation of the corpus of the entire *Tanakh* (the Hebrew bible), which, however, presupposes a special reading according to the *corresponding view* of Jesus. The quotation above expresses a very particular motion: it starts with the testimony of John (and thus of the Old Testament text), which the readers may enter through identification with his disciples, and continues with the question of the dwelling of the one who baptises with the Holy

65 In the Septuaginta, i.e. the Greek version of the Bible, YHWH, the Hebrew name of God, was rendered as the title "Kyrios" (Lord).
66 The translation used is the King James Version.

Ghost (that is, Jesus: see John 1:33) and thus attempts a new reinterpretation of the scripture. The invitation to go with Jesus and to see where he dwells thus expresses the invitation to arrive at a vision of Jesus by means of the text of the Gospel that allows for a *relecture* of the Scripture and of the name of God YHWH.

This text as the genuine dwelling of Jesus subsequently contains seven signs in which Jesus interprets YHWH, the name of God (I AM ...). A key passage is the raising of Lazarus in which Jesus becomes manifest as "the life" (John 14:6). This seems slightly at odds with the fact that in his last great speech of instruction to the disciples/readers (John 14–17), Jesus says that they will accomplish much greater works than he himself "because I go unto My Father" (John 14:12). Jesus going to the Father withdraws his body from the disciples' immediate access. However, this results not only in a negative change in the relation to Jesus as the interpreter of God, but also signifies a new expansion of His body which results from His withdrawal. In a sense, the body of Jesus spreads out between the two poles of heaven and earth, and it is precisely in this in-between space that the Gospel is located, a text which those following Jesus can don in order to *see* him properly. The greater sign the disciples are promised refers to the mission of the Paraclete, the Spirit (John 14:17). In it, a vision is disclosed which results in the composition of the Gospel of John, or rather of the Johannine writings. The greatest sign is therefore a messianic corpus of texts obtained by the mission of the spirit in which the body of Jesus is transposed and which bears witness to Jesus as *homo sacer*.

The vision of Jesus finds its immediate expression in joyful love (John 15:12) and in friendship (John 15:15) to which the readers are summoned. In the Gospel of John itself, there is, in addition to the initial call to see Jesus ("Behold the Lamb of God!", repeated twice by the Baptist) in John 1:29.36, another summons at the end of the Gospel, contained in the description of the trial against Jesus:

> Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And he saith unto them, *Behold the man!* (John 19:4–5)

Strangely enough, in most translations[67] the *Ecce homo* is ascribed to Pilate, though this attribution seems unlikely (even though not impossible) both grammatically and theologically.[68] It seems more plausible that Jesus is the speaking subject. At the start, John bears witness to Jesus, and at the end of the Gospel it is Jesus himself who has "greater witness than that of John" (John 5:36). Jesus challenges the reader of the Gospel to open himself to seeing the man: namely the *wrongfully* tortured and ridiculed man, the *homo sacer* who is excluded from the sphere of law. In this gaze upon the *bare* body, which has lost all cultural or status-oriented attributes, which

67 Not, however, the Vulgate!

68 I owe this reference – and so much more in my reading of the Bible – to Roberto Vignolo, professor of Bible studies at the Facoltà teologica dell'Italia Settentrionale.

holds nothing back either aesthetically or regarding its knowledge, God – in biblical terms – takes up His dwelling (i.e. He receives the right to hospitality). Taking up Agamben's words, we may refer to a "singularity without identity"[69] which recognises "what is properly divine [in the fact that] the world does not reveal God".[70]

The Gospel of John thus through seven signs (from the wedding at Cana to the raising of Lazarus) approaches YHWH, the name of God, finding its climax in Jesus' last personal statement, *ecce homo*. Its crucial messianic content is that in this scene, the two figures of the *homo sacer* (in his absolute vulnerability and homelessness) and the divine sovereign directly coincide or – as Agamben would have it – form a zone of indiscernability. Jesus is the one testified as well as the testimony (cf. John 5:34) and thus becomes – in paradoxical terms – the subject of the testimony of a desubjectification.

The last text of the biblical Canon, the Revelation to John, also revolves around this kind of subjectification – which is not at home in itself – in which the "Ecce homo" of the Gospel is historico-theoretically developed and substantiated.

3.3 The Revelation to John and the Last Meeting of Mankind

The Revelation to John, which for centuries has been interpreted metaphysically,[71] is more subtle than has often been perceived, in particular in its historico-philosophical propositions. It does not simply follow the pattern of an appointment with eternity as the end of history. Unlike any other biblical book, Revelation quotes a wealth of other parts of this library. It forms a collage of quotes which is placed at the end of the Bible not only in terms of its theme, but which also recapitulates the complete canon. However, in contrast to other biblical (and New Testament) scriptures that refer to each other, there are no direct quotes. Instead, all quotes appear in a singularly fractured and displaced manner, as though direct access to history was impossible.[72]

The impression of shifts, displacements, of a re-creatio of given texts is radicalised when we focus on the use of language, and more precisely the grammar, of this recapitulating book of the Bible. The author writes in a semiticising Greek; his vocabulary is extensive and he has a fluent command of Greek. This renders his severe grammatical errors all the more bizarre; however, when considered in a systematic manner, these mostly occur in the context of God's appearances (e.g.

69 Agamben, *The Coming Community*, 64.
70 Cf. Agamben, *The Coming Community*, 90.
71 An exceptional presentation of paradigmatic interpretations of the Revelation to John is provided by Zolles, *Die symbolische Macht der Apokalypse*.
72 Cf. Paulsen, "Zu Sprache und Stil des Johannes-Evangeliums."

Rev. 1:4–6: *apo* with nominative!).[73] The text therefore shows in a striking way that, confronted with the last word of God, language shatters. Or – to use Agamben's words – in messianic time the denotative and judging (identifying) character of language is rendered inoperative.

Another aspect that needs to be emphasised is the fact that the text presents seven beatitudes. The Revelation to John therefore is no sinister text threatening the coming destruction of the world, but – at least to its addressees – a message of good news (*evangelium*) and the definitive *relecture* of the Sermon on the Mount! We need to note the significance of the number "seven" that characterises this book (seven churches as addressees, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, seven visions which prepare the final vision of a new heaven and a new earth in Rev 19–20). The number "seven" echoes the programmatic introduction of the Bible (creation in seven days). Accordingly, the style of the Revelation to John is characterised by a solemn liturgics. Throughout the book – or rather, we should say: throughout the letter, as the last book of the Bible is a sermon by letter – a heavenly liturgics is enacted which *invalidates* history (for which Agamben coins the happy phrase *rendere inoperoso,* to render inoperative).

The decisive question with significance also for the hermeneutics of history (and perhaps also of interest to medievalists) concerns that which "is rendered inoperative": the human history of violence and its representations. The last book of the Bible, the letter of John, recapitulates the entire biblical history and in it the complete history of humanity (represented by "Egypt", "Assyria", "Babylon", "Persia", the Empires of the Diadochi and Rome); in this recapitulation, it finds its decisive hermeneutics and reinterpretation. We have to emphasise that the addressees of the letter/the Revelation are the followers of the mortally wounded Lamb of God (the crucified Messiah to whom the *ecce homo* refers), who is able to open the seal of history.

Before the eyes of these addressees unfolds the successive displacement of all *representations* of the ruling and violent powers of history, both linguistically – see the shattering of the ruling grammar! – and symbolically: "throne", "trade", "urban life", "armament" etc. are also rendered inoperative. At the end of the letter of John, after the final visions (including the disappearance of the history of violence in the lake of fire) the texts moves to focus on the new heaven and the new earth (including the arrival of the City of Jerusalem, the gates of which are now always open), but almost immediately turns into an audition and a solemn liturgy (celebrated by the victims of history) – *and ends, as the last word and the last appointment of history, in an amicable blessing for all.*

In the sign of the cross, a multifaceted imagery which invokes the entire contemporary visual repertory is employed to separate power from its visual and lin-

73 Cf. Paulsen, "Zu Sprache und Stil des Johannes-Evangeliums." Also Biguzzi, *Apocalisse nuova version, introduzioine e commento*.

guistic representations, and the last appointment which remains is the one with the open wound of the Lamb which, at the end, is symbolised by a paradisiac tree of life – showing that the tree of life in the Garden of Eden is nothing but the self-exposing vulnerability of the crucified body. *Thus, what remains* (cf. Agamben, Il tempo che resta), *that is, the last appointment of man, is a sphere of pure vulnerability and fragility in the exposing of which sounds an amicable blessing (the grace of Messiah Jesus for all!)*.

Therefore, the last appointment is neither with a transition to a metaphysical (hidden) world free of suffering, nor with an all-dissolving nothing, but the vision of a new symbolic order (*ecce homo!*) in which the images in which the powers of history expressed themselves are rendered inoperative, and life rises anew from a fragile encounter. It is an appointment with the irrecoverable which cannot be translated into any image or any language, which "does not entail being remembered and commemorated; rather, it entails remaining in us and with us as forgotten".[74]

This essay shall be closed with essay with one more quote from Agamben: "The messiah comes for our desires. He separates them from images in order to fulfil them. Or rather, in order to show they have already been fulfilled."[75]

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74 Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, 40.

75 Agamben, *Profanations*, 54.

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Martin Treml

Eschatology as Occidental *Lebensform*: The Case of Jacob Taubes

Jacob Taubes, founding chair of Jewish Studies at Free University of Berlin from 1962 and ordained rabbi, was one of the most controversial figures in West-Berlin. Not only did he understand how to polarise opinions in various academic and non-academic debates, but he put theological thought on the same level as philosophy, without negating the insights of the Enlightenment, instead tracing them back to the religious horizon from which they once emerged from. This article examines Taubes' eschatological thinking and political theology, and shows how his study of religious and biblical texts was interwoven with events in politics, and with ideas of salvation and redemption. The article's focus is twofold: first, I will examine Taubes' dissertation, Occidental Eschatology *(1947), a phenomenology of the Apocalypse and apocalypticism as the foremost expression of Western religious thought that has always been characterised by two poles, revolution and its repression; and second, I will discuss the radical thinking of the apostle Paul, as portrayed in Taubes' late Heidelberg lectures on the Letter to the Romans, where he shows how deeply Paul was anchored in the rabbinical mindset.*

Scientific method is distinguished by the fact that,
in leading to new objects, it develops new methods
(Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*)

1 Text Becomes (Hi-)Story

In 1947, a dissertation in philosophy was published in Bern. It came to only 60 pages, which was not unusual at the time.[1] It comprised the first three chapters of what would later become *Abendländische Eschatologie* (*Occidental Eschatology*), vol. 3 of *Beiträge zur Soziologie und Sozialphilosophie*.[2] The series was edited by the sociologist René König, a German Catholic émigré who had left the University of Cologne in 1938 due to his strong opposition to the Nazi regime (in 1949, he returned to Germany and also to this university). König had come to Switzerland, as many like him did or tried to do.[3] The title, *Occidental Eschatology*, is an "austere

1 Taubes, *Studien zur Geschichte und System der abendländischen Eschatologie*.
2 Taubes, *Abendländische Eschatologie*.
3 König stayed in loose contact with Taubes. Their correspondence is kept in the literary estate of Taubes (EJT) at the Leibniz-Center for Literary and Cultural Research (ZfL) Berlin.

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conjoining" (*harte Fügung*), juxtaposing a theological term with a cultural-historical one. The work has since become well known, even programmatic, at least among those interested in the dialectics of secularisation and in the German philosophy of religion of the mid-twentieth century; they are many.[4] The dissertation's author was Jacob Taubes (1923–1987).

The only son of the rabbi of Zurich, Taubes was born into a family originally from Galicia, a *Kronland* of the Habsburg Empire until 1918. The Taubeses and Edelsteins (the family on Jacob's paternal grandmother's side) were deeply rooted in both Hasidism and the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, linking mysticism with Haskalah, the Jewish form of Enlightenment.[5] Taubes' father made a name for himself in Switzerland and within the wider Jewish community by his efforts to rescue the "remnant of Israel" (*sherit Israel* in Hebrew) from Hungary during the last years of the Second World War, activities in which Jacob participated.[6]

Rabbi Taubes' son was trained at the universities of Zurich and Basle, where he attended not only classes in philosophy, history and Semitic Studies but also in Christian theology. He was a student of the Protestant Karl Barth, and was also in touch with the Catholic Hans Urs von Balthasar, who provided pastoral care to the university's Catholic students at the time. Both were already or would become great figures and personalities within their respective congregations. Taubes was also ordained a rabbi, receiving his *semihah* at the *yeshivah Etz-Haim* (Hebrew for "Tree of Life"), a strictly orthodox rabbinical school in Montreux, founded in 1927. There he studied under Rav Yerahmiel Eliyahou Botschko, a "Litvaker" originating from the Lithuanian branch of Jewish orthodoxy famous for combining deep piety with strong rationality in their Talmudic studies. Taubes later corresponded regularly with the rabbi's son, Moshe, who succeeded his father in the 1950s.

But the story did not end there: a group from the Montreux *yeshivah* made *aliyah* (Hebrew for the immigration to Palestine/ Israel) in 1985 and founded *Heikhal Eliyahou* (Hebrew for "Elijah's Temple"), named after both rabbi Botschko and the biblical prophet Elijah, who did not die but ascended into heaven. His reappearance inspires prophetic visions and auditions, and even triggers the coming of the messiah himself. This *yeshivah* is located in Kochav Yaakov, a settlement in the West Bank, some fifteen minutes by car from Pisgat Zeev, a post-1967 settlement that now forms part of Greater Jerusalem. Kochav Yaakov means "Star of Jacob", a strong messianic allusion taken from the Torah. In one of the oracles of the diviner Balaam, who was first hostile towards Israel but then, called by God as a newly chosen

4 Currently there are translations of *Abendländische Eschatologie* into Italian (1997), Hungarian (2004), Croatian, French, English (all 2009) and Spanish (2010).

5 Cf. Stimilli, *Jacob Taubes*; Treml, "Reinventing the Canonical;" Kopp-Oberstebrink, "Jacob Taubes;" Muller, "Reisender in Ideen."

6 Cf. Kranzler, *George Mantello, El Salvador, and Switzerland's Finest Hour*, 244–245.

prophet, proclaims "What I see for them is not yet; What I behold will not be soon: A star rises from Jacob, A sceptre come forth from Israel."[7]

I mention these theopolitical implications to draw attention to two things that matter very much in discussing Taubes and his eschatological thinking. Firstly, Carl Schmitt's influence on Taubes concerning political theology might have been less important than hitherto assumed, because much in Jewish thought points in a similar direction.[8] Secondly, I hope to show, at least in the case of Taubes' *yeshivah*, how the study of religious or biblical texts has become interwoven with events in politics. Such texts do not simply document what has happened in the world and in history; what is written is also desired to be fulfilled, thus transforming history. The first is the historiographical or historiosophical function of texts, while the second might be called their prophetic or messianic impact. Viewed from the latter perspective, historical concepts are never a question of mere categorisation nor solely the product of inner mental and intellectual activities. Within different religious cultures, they are linked to redemption as well as salvation; they are interpreted as evidence for the fulfillment of prophecies and revelations. In this way, the theological term "eschatology" implies a very political programme; it becomes a theopolitical weapon, with sometimes lethal consequences in (not only modern) Israel's history.[9] The name of this programme is apocalypticism; as Gershom Scholem (one of Taubes' teachers in Jerusalem) has it, "there remains no doubt about the entry of apocalyptic tradition into the House of Study" – into that of the rabbis of Antiquity and of academia of the twentieth century.[10]

The genealogies and locations of the rabbis with whom Taubes studied and corresponded are not only parts of a family tree or a geographical map but also elements of Israel's history of salvation, as it intersects with the topography of the Holy Land. In Judaism, religion has been a family affair as well one of the land since Abraham, the first of the patriarchs.[11] He left his native country, went into exile at God's calling and was, despite his high age, rewarded with a son and the assignment of land "as a possession."[12] Yet he was a wanderer most of his life. Liturgically, he is remembered by the prayer line "My father was a fugitive Aramean";[13] this

7 Numbers 24:17.

8 The relationship between Taubes and Schmitt (usually including Walter Benjamin) has been the subject of a constantly growing wave of secondary literature in several languages for several decades. This industry was admittedly started by Taubes himself and later supplemented by Schmitt. The singular 1930 letter of thanks from Benjamin to Schmitt has played a central role in it. I would rather suggest concentrating on the study of the sources and the actual encounters and correspondence between them. For this, see Taubes and Schmitt, *Briefwechsel*, eds. Kopp-Oberstebrink et al.

9 Cf. Schmidt, "Die theopolitische Stunde;" Lebovic, "The Jerusalem School."

10 Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," 9.

11 Cf. Mosès, "Figures de la paternité biblique."

12 Genesis 15:7.

13 Deuteronomy 26:5.

confession is recited annually in the Passover Haggadah, which calls to mind not only the arch-patriarch but also God's sparing of Israel from its persecutors in history and, it is hoped, in the present.

2 Messianism between Destruction and Liberation

The entry of messianism into history is always dramatic, as it brings it to an end and opens up the vista of a post-history. The rabbis radically distinguished between this world (*ha-olam ha-ze*), the existing one, and the world to come (*ha-olam ha-ba*). "The harmony which it (the world to come, M.T.) reconstitutes does not at all correspond to any condition of things that has ever existed even in paradise, but at most to a plan contained in the divine idea of Creation."[14] This primordial idea of a direction from the beginning, which is lost to sin and can only be realised by one, the messiah, is present in both Judaism and Christianity, even if, of course, redemption happens differently in the two religions: in the world in the former, beyond it in the latter.[15]

The figure of the messiah already underwent significant changes in the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament). Whereas it was first designed to secure the hoped-for continuity of the dynasty of King David – the genealogy of Jesus of Nazareth still testifies to this aim – it then became linked to eschatological events during the exile of the Jews. The messiah thus no longer belonged to history, as such, with the history of salvation instead in the foreground. Nevertheless, the messianic figure should be thought of in the old terms of royalty, as an anointed king who was almost divine (as in Egypt) and possessed the highest, superhuman qualities: justice, wisdom, military prowess, but also a willingness to suffer, even to die (which eventually became the role of the so-called Messiah ben Joseph, the forerunner of the final and successful Messiah ben David).[16]

Again, it was Gershom Scholem who studied the idea of the messiah. His epochal essay *Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism* starts with a sharp distinction between Judaism and Christianity that deserves to be quoted at length:

14 Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," 13.

15 The term "messiah" comes from the Hebrew *mashiah*, meaning the "anointed one", and was originally part of the phrase *ha-melekh ha-meshiah*, "the anointed king", describing the coronation ritual. The kings of Judah and Israel were not crowned, but anointed with oil ritually poured over them, indicating that they now took possession of the sacred office as leader, protector and – if necessary – liberator of the people, a ritual which, by the way, was common to the political ritual of the ancient Eastern Mediterranean. The kings of Egypt had been instituted in the same way.

16 Cf. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*.

> Any discussion of the problems relating to Messianism is a delicate matter, for it is here that the essential conflict between Judaism and Christianity has developed and continues to exist. [...] A totally different concept of redemption determines the attitude to Messianism in Judaism and in Christianity; what appears to the one as a proud indication of its understanding and a positive achievement of its message is most unequivocally belittled and disputed by the other. Judaism, in all its forms and manifestations, has always maintained a concept of redemption as an event which takes place publicly, on the stage of history and within the community. It is an occurrence which takes place in the visible world and which cannot be conceived apart from such a visible appearance. In contrast, Christianity conceives of redemption as an event in the spiritual and unseen realm, an event which is reflected in the soul, in the private world of each individual, and which effects an inner transformation which need not correspond to anything outside.[17]

Scholem thus divides messianism into an "outward", political one – which is Jewish – and a Christian one, which is "pure inwardness".[18] It is exactly this criterion of the internalisation of the messianic experience that poses a problem for Taubes. In his essay *Scholem's thesis on Messianism reconsidered*, originally delivered as a lecture to the World Congress of Jewish Studies (held every four years in Jerusalem) in 1981 and then published under two different titles in three different versions,[19] he reaches the opposite conclusion to Scholem. According to Taubes, messianism is ruled by a dialectic process between the world and the redemption from it. He considers

> the dialectics in the Messianic experience of a group at the moment when prophecy of redemption fails. The 'world' does not disintegrate; but the hope of redemption crumbles. If, however, the Messianic community, because of its inward certainty, does not falter, the Messianic experience is bound to turn inward, redemption is bound to be conceived as an event in the spiritual realm, reflected in the human soul.[20]

In any case, the realm of messianic inwardness is opened up by the mystic response to the necessarily outer failing of the messiah, "the symbolic transformation of the 'scandal' of his earthly life. It is in the interpretative context that the Messianic message is to be found, not in the life-history of a person, which is as opaque as all earthly events usually are."[21] According to Taubes, all messiahs must be considered to be paper tigers – but this is a very modern point of view. One could even say that while the different attempts to implement Jewish messianism failed, the Christian one was born of failure itself. But did it really fail? From a later Christian perspective – but perhaps *only* from it – this new creed which has become Christianity and the

17 Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," 1.
18 Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," 2.
19 Cf. Taubes, "Scholem's Thesis on Messianism Reconsidered," 665. Taubes, "The Price of Messianism," and Taubes, "The Price of Messianism."
20 Taubes, "Scholem's Thesis on Messianism Reconsidered," 669–670.
21 Taubes, "Scholem's Thesis on Messianism Reconsidered," 672.

dominant religion by Emperor Constantine's choice might be the religion to last, the end of old Israel, *to telos tou nomou*, "the end of the law", as Paul has it.[22]

Here Scholem (and Taubes) would disagree, the former ending his essay with a somewhat baffling link to the present that portrayed certain aspects within current Zionism as a deliberate enactment of messianic freedom. Redemption became unleashed liberation – not so much of the individual as of the people and the land. "Little wonder that overtones of messianism have accompanied the modern Jewish readiness for irrevocable action in the concrete realm, when it set out on the utopian return to Zion. It is a readiness which no longer allows itself to be fed on hopes. Born out of the horror and destruction that was Jewish history in our generation, it is bound to history itself and not to meta-history."[23] Taubes opposed this direct connection to Zion as the land, and he did so against the background of the right-wing government of Menachem Begin, the first prime minister not coming from the Labor Party.

3 A Text and its Discontent

Let us return to Taubes and his dissertation. The book, though well written, was not well received and soon more or less forgotten in academic circles. It was first mentioned again among an inner circle of Jewish émigrés, where the accusation of plagiarism was raised against the author. Rumour had it that Taubes took whatever he could from others books without acknowledging his borrowings. This charge is first known to have been raised against him by Hans Jonas, whose 1934 dissertation, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* ("Gnosis and the Spirit of Late Antiquity"), had opened a new chapter on the understanding of Late Antiquity. In his memoirs, he reported that, in 1949, Karl Löwith (or in English Lowith), the author of *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen* (*Meaning in History*), having been asked about the quality of Taubes' book, had told him, "it's a very good book. And that's no accident – half of it's by you, and the other half of it's by me", and he, had agreed.[24] Yet he somehow liked Taubes and, in a letter to Hannah Arendt, Jonas even admitted that he was not so bad a thinker.[25]

Indeed, in addition to the works of Jonas and Löwith, parts of Taubes' dissertation were copied from Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele*

22 Romans 10:4. The phrase can also mean "the goal of the law", which it most probably does in Paul, at least in a non-biased, non-Christianising reading.

23 Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," 35–36.

24 Jonas, *Memoirs*, ed. Wiese, 168. Cf. Lowith, *Meaning History*; Cf. Löwith, *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen* (the German original appeared later than its English translation).

25 Jonas, *Memoirs*, 168–169, and letter of Hans Jonas to Hannah Arendt, February 22, 1954. I want to thank Mimi Howard (Cambridge/Berlin), who informed me about this letter, which she found in the archives of the New School of Social Research (New York).

("The Apocalypse of German Soul"), Alois Dempf's *Sacrum Imperium* and Oswald Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* ("The Decline of the West")[26] – all of these books were classics in their respective fields.

In all these cases, Taubes acted as a plagiarist in the modern sense. Yet I understand him as an eager commentator and even pious student of great masters in the premodern sense, because he not only transmits but also enriches their teachings. He wrote as if the author (a figure later so vehemently attacked as a mere construction by Michel Foucault) had not yet been born.[27] Taubes might claim a place in the chain of traditionally trained Jewish scholars and their operative modes and textual techniques.[28] He lived in the world of the *yeshivah*, where teachers and students operated in the kind of symbiosis typical of all traditional religious cultures. The most gifted of each generation would most probably become brilliant teachers themselves; until then, they had to humbly revere the master whom they would succeed, respecting a certain way (*derekh*) of interpretation and also of instruction. Commentaries were most highly appreciated within the tradition; the genius of this favoured genre was Rashi (1040–1107), one of the greatest Halakhic authorities and the most important Torah and Talmud commentator, whose remarks continue to be printed in every rabbinic edition of the Bible (Chumash) and the Talmud until today. In Rashi's world, the bourgeois concept of intellectual property was still unheard of.

In a letter to an American-Israeli friend and rabbi, Aharon Agus, Taubes stated the importance of Rashi from another perspective, explaining that "I do not think we can go on in commentaries to texts, that has been done in a canonic way by Rashi (you know that I consider Rashi the greatest genius of the Jewish spirit)."[29] And he was convinced of the truth of Kafka's statement that "Judaism has always produced its sufferings and joys almost simultaneously with the corresponding Rashi commentary" ("Das Judentum bringt seit jeher seine Leiden und Freuden fast gleichzeitig mit dem zugehörigen Raschi-Kommentar hervor")[30].

Taubes' religious beliefs certainly appear to have been genuine. This is supported by the testimony of none other than Leo Baeck, the rabbi of Theresienstadt and one of the most important spiritual leaders of the German Jewry under National Socialism. When he was asked about Taubes by Louis Finkelstein, the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York – the flagship rabbinical seminary of American Conservative Judaism, where Taubes stayed for two years as a re-

26 Cf. Balthasar, *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele*; Dempf, *Sacrum Imperium*; Spengler, *Untergang des Abendlandes*.

27 Cf. Foucault, "What Is an Author?," ed. Bouchard. On the relationship between Taubes and Foucault see the contribution of Christian Zolles in this volume.

28 Cf. Scholem, "Tradition and Commentary as Religious Categories."

29 Letter of Jacob Taubes to Aharon Agus, November 11, 1981, EJT.

30 Letter of Taubes to Agus; Taubes here quotes Kafka, cf. Kafka, *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande*, ed. Brod, 202. (My translation). As far as Kafka was concerned, psychoanalysis was the *Raschi-Kommentar* of his own time.

search student in the late 1940s – he answered: "I got to know him to be gifted and to have learned many a thing, sometimes maybe too many a thing, in the old and new fields of learning. Indeed his mind is yet fermenting somewhat but I think he is most promising. Furthermore he is a fine character and a truly religious one. I feel sure you will enjoy having him your pupil."[31]

After years in Israel and the USA, Taubes came to the Free University of Berlin in 1962 to accept the Founding Chair for Jewish Studies – only the second one to be established at a public university in a German-speaking country (the first was at the University of Vienna, four years earlier). His dissertation had by now acquired a high reputation, even if only very few people could actually have read it, seeing as it was almost impossible to access a copy in the university or in any public Berlin library at the time. By the 1980s, most existing copies had either been stolen or had mysteriously disappeared. Those interested could register in a waiting list to see the book, but as only three positions were available on the list, one already had to wait before even being put on it – Kafka says hello!

A reprint of his dissertation was resisted by Taubes, perhaps because of the criticism of Jonas and others mentioned above, and only became possible some years after his death, in 1991, due to combined efforts of his second wife, the philosopher Margherita von Brentano, and his publisher, Axel Matthes (a *Freigeist*, who also made works of the French radical thinkers Antonin Artaud and Georges Batailles available to German readers).[32] Yet *Occidental Eschatology* only began to be the fully appreciated once Jewish Studies finally became popular at German universities and, above all, when the book was translated into English in 2009. The latter was published by Stanford University Press in the prestigious series *Cultural Memory in the Present*, edited by Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries.[33]

4 The Structure of *Occidental Eschatology*

Taubes begins his book with a phenomenology of the Apocalypse and apocalypticism as the foremost expression of Western religious thought, which has always been characterised by two poles, by revolution and its repression.[34] All other events in history are merely contingent, fleeting episodes that might have a great impact on real history (*Realgeschichte*) but never relate to the deep and underlying structure of history as such. If God is the master of history, his ways remain obscure.

31 Letter of Leo Baeck to Louis Finkelstein, October 24, 1947. I want to thank Markus Krah (Potsdam), who found the letter in the archives of JTS.

32 Cf. Taubes, *Abendländische Eschatologie. Mit einem Anhang*. The third edition, containing an afterword by myself, published in 2007.

33 Cf. Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*.

34 For another (hi-)story of apocalypticism, cf. Zolles, *Die symbolische Macht der Apokalypse*.

For Taubes, Gnosis was key to meaning in history. "What is Gnosis? The Greek word means 'knowledge'," and it is the noble name of the revolutionary "emancipation of man's self from the bondage of the natural powers of the cosmos and social powers of the human 'world'."[35] Gnosis thus refers not only to a chapter in the religious history of late Antiquity that possesses a rich mythology as well as complicated systems of both revelation and redemption. It is also the deepest expression of the suffering soul longing for salvation and liberation. It would become a central metaphor in mid-twentieth-century German philosophy, not least because of Taubes.[36] The ontological dualism of Gnosis is directed against the cosmos both as creation and order: "The cosmos was desacralized and demonised."[37] Creation thus became the dark realm of fallen angels or devils, and the creator was viewed as a *deus malignus*, an evil god. But Gnosis also led to a new anthropological understanding by creating the "Gnostic Idea of Man". "Man, reduced to the last residuum of his own being, to his non-worldly, non-natural self, to his *pneuma*, discovered that with his fellow-man, his brother – even with the vilest of men – a community of 'brotherhood' was possible."[38]

Taubes understands Gnosis as the continuation and radicalisation of apocalypticism, "this forward looking expectation" of a "passionate people", Israel.[39] And it is Israel in exile, "a situation which is parallel to their wanderings in the wilderness. The Exile is the wilderness of the nations, where there is no sense of being rooted to the land or any adherence to a state."[40] Yet it would be wrong to limit this experience to "Israel according to the flesh" (as the apostle Paul would later have it).[41] The experience of estrangement from the world was ubiquitous. "It is incorrect to brand the Jewish nation in Exile as an exception. It is true that the Jews in Exile are a nation without land, but – and this is the decisive factor – they are surrounded by nations in a similar position."[42] For all of them, liberation must be the combination of spiritual freedom with independence from the evil powers both of the world and of heaven. From Jesus seeing "Satan falling from heaven like lightening", it is only a short way to the vision of John the Apocalyptic proclaiming "a new heaven and a new earth".[43]

Eschatology as the general programme of the end of the world in Western religions is grounded in the revelation of divine truths. For Taubes,

35 Taubes, "The Gnostic Idea of Man," 90.
36 Cf. Styfhals, "'No Spiritual Investment in the World as It Is'"
37 Taubes, "The Gnostic Idea of Man," 90.
38 Taubes, "The Gnostic Idea of Man," 94.
39 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 21.
40 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 24.
41 1 Corinthians 10:18.
42 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 25.
43 Luke 10:18 (cf. Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 50), and Revelation 21:1.

> [r]evelation is the fire which casts light upon the clearing (*Lichtung*) between God and the world. The burning fire reaches the center of heaven; the world is darkness and gloom. The voice of God, which is the very essence of revelation, is to be *heard* in this fire, but has no visible form. It sprays flames of fire. Mankind cannot break through to God without being scorched (*versengt*). It can only see God from behind, but not face to face. Nobody can see the face of God and live.[44]

This imagery alludes to the repeated appearance of Yahweh to Moses as fire in the Bible (as a burning bush, as lightning on Mount Sinai, as a fire-cloud in the desert during the exodus of the people of Israel from their Egyptian exile).[45] Taubes uses a language deeply rooted in, or borrowed from, Martin Heidegger, Franz Rosenzweig and Eugen Rosenstock Huessey, who were all existentialist *and* religious thinkers, though each in his own, sometimes peculiar way. Thus Taubes not only describes or analyses occidental eschatology but also performs it. Particularly in the book's first part, *Vom Wesen der Eschatologie* ("On the Nature of Eschatology"), the sentences are short and laconic; they are set in a strict order and phrased in a very self-assured way. Yet there is also a tune to the language that sings a song of great hope and even provides visionary insights. Taubes' prose turns into *gebundene Rede* (bound speech); he makes use of all the means the German language has to offer to make a prose text resemble poetry, as by rhythm and alliteration; this has, of course, always been a stylistic strategy employed by prophets. Finally, such a style is aimed at orality and holds the address to the community to be the ideal act of speech.

These stylistic elements make Taubes the very last Jewish philosopher of German expressionism, itself an eschatological movement between catastrophes, be they authoritarian or liberating. This effect is more or less lost in the existing translations, meticulous as they are. To my knowledge, there is only one exception, Dana Hollander's translation of Taubes' late Heidelberg lectures on the apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans, in which she transforms Taubes' spoken German into an English prose equivalent to that which Taubes might have spoken on such an occasion.[46]

Eschatology was born in ancient Iran, and further elaborated in Israel in the second century BCE (the biblical Daniel is "the first Apocalypse to come down to us in complete form").[47] By the time of Jesus, it had become a universal phenomenon – at least according to Taubes, in keeping with the doctrine of ancient religious history that prevailed in the first half of the twentieth century: "The historical place of revolutionary apocalypticism is Israel. Israel aspires and attempts to 'turn back' (*Umkehr*). Turning back on the inside has a parallel effect on the outside. The pathos or revolution defines Israel's attitude to life."[48] Yet the final point of this

44 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 7.
45 Cf. Exodus 3:2 (burning bush) and 19:18 (lightning), Numbers 9:15 (fire-cloud).
46 Cf. Taubes, *Political Theology*.
47 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 43.
48 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 15.

urge for revolution, its apex, was reached in the post-apocalyptic Germany of the 1920s, and Taubes proves to be its finest echo and mouthpiece.

Occidental Eschatology leads the reader through the material in a threefold way. Firstly, it starts from the later, post-prophetical texts of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), before passing on to Jesus, Paul and early Christianity, finally reaching Augustine and Joachim of Fiore as the two most visible proponents of the ecclesiastic historiosophy that consists in either the neutralisation or reanimation of chiliastic speculations. And again Taubes finds in them traces of the anthropological shift which he called the "Gnostic Idea of Man", now firmly rooted in the new creed. "In the Christian community the man of Late Antiquity blots out his own ego in favour of the superego (*Über-Ich*), which, coming from beyond, descends to the people. This superego is one and the same in each member of the community, so that the community represents a collective of the spirit (*so dass die Gemeinde das* pneumatische Wir *darstellt*)."[49]

Secondly, Taubes discerns in early modernity the laboratory of eschatological thinking in which political theology became possible in many different but always radical ways, particularly in left-wing Protestantism and, above all, among the Anabaptists. The theopolitical culmination achieved in the process was described in Ernst Bloch's *Thomas Müntzer as Theologian of the Revolution*, written shortly after the First World War.[50] Taubes made use of this "ecstatic writing" (Leon Wieseltier) in his dissertation.[51] He writes: "In Müntzer's theology the soul dissociates itself from all the dross of the external world, overrides all earthly powers, attaches no value to any sacramental institution, and has the most profound and intimate understanding of grace as its own abyss, as the advent of faith."[52] All this is performed within a scenario of utmost catastrophes, which Judaism knows as the "birth-pangs of the messiah", a period of "transition or destruction".[53] These elements can also be found in Puritanism "already under Cromwell, and such tendencies are even stronger in the American colonies".[54] This eschatological drive had come to an end within theology by the eighteenth century.

Thirdly, Taubes recognises that in the weakness of theology there lies the triumph of philosophy, a field into which apocalypticism entered by way of Lessing. Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel transformed it further, but it was Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx and Søren Kierkegaard who made it the spiritual engine of our time, if in different forms: an ironic, a revolutionary and an inner, unseen one, respectively. Everyone who does not follow these three masters would necessarily end in nihilism.

49 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 65. (Display in the original).
50 Cf. Bloch, *Thomas Müntzer als Theologe der Revolution*.
51 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 210.
52 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 114.
53 Cf. Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," 8.
54 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 119.

This nihilism is not the negativism of Franz Kafka and his concept of "minor literature".[55] Taubes once called him "the Rashi before Auschwitz";[56] to compare the writer from Prague to Rashi was quite something, but Taubes was not the only one who associated Kafka with important positions of Jewish theological thought. Harold Bloom once stated: "Kafka's revelation [...] returns always to its own nothingness, yet this is the *ayin* of *Ein Sof*, a nothingness which is everything."[57] *Ayin* is a letter of the Hebrew alphabet which is not spoken (linguistically, it is a glottal stop), and *Ein Sof* (the first letter of which is *ayin*) is the name of the *deus absconditus* (the literal meaning of which in Hebrew is "no end") in the Kabbalistic speculations of the mid-sixteenth-century mystic Isaac Luria, who "deeply injured Judaism."[58] Kafka's nothingness is – as the apostle Paul might have said in his correspondence with the Corinthians – but "all in all", at least according to Taubes' interpretation (I will not dwell on this topic here, as it would deserve an essay of its own).

Taubes' apocalypticism envisages a new epoch after history, a messianic post-history. One of his interpreters explains that "the End of Time is only conceivable as salvation. The end of history is indeed the transition from temporality to eternity, that is, from godlessness to God, and from evil to good."[59] Salvation is found in immediate proximity to God, or, as Paul has it: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood."[60] Only when the Messiah comes, will everything become clear.

Here the apostle Paul competes with Moses, who, within Judaism, always stands by himself and above all others. He is the first teacher of Israel, "Moses, our rabbi" (*Moshe rabbenu*), according to his traditional title. Most probably, Paul here refers to an on-going debate among scholars and scribes commenting on Numbers 12:6–8, a difficult, highly poetic section, "which contrasts Moses' prophetic experience with that of all other prophets. Whereas other prophets receive revelation through visions and dreams, Moses experiences the presence of the Lord face to face."[61]

This debate continued among rabbis in later times. In Leviticus Rabbah, a fifth-century *midrash* (a rabbinic interpretation of the Bible), the question of how God

55 Cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*.
56 Letter of Jacob Taubes to Aharon Agus, November 11, 1981.
57 Bloom, "Gershom Scholem as Poet," 9.
58 Cf. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 244–286, 251.
59 Styfhals, "Gnosticism and Postwar German Thought," 41.
60 1 Corinthians 13:12. The *Festschrift* marking Taubes's 60th birthday alludes to this passage, cf. Bolz and Hübener, *Spiegel und Gleichnis*. Its contributors include not only colleagues from Berlin or Germany but also Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy from France, Moshe Barasch and Avishai Margalit from Israel, and Edmund Leites and Rodolphe Gasché from the USA. The final article is written by Emile Cioran, a Romanian writer living in Paris.
61 Beale and Carson, eds., *Commentary on New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 739.

actually communicated with Moses is discussed. As usual, the authors were interested in the tensions or ambiguities in the biblical text where God says that "with him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly (*mar'e*) and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the Lord."[62] Now the rabbis read *mar'e* as *mar'a* (which is, of course, possible, as the biblical text contains no vowels), meaning "mirror", but also "vision", as in Num. 12:6 at the beginning of this section).[63] On the reception of prophetic visions, they concluded that "through nine mirrors did the prophets behold them [...], but Moses beheld them through one mirror."[64] But this was not enough, so the rabbis stated further that "all the other prophets beheld them through a blurred mirror [...], but Moses beheld them through a polished mirror."[65] The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that nobody will need any mirror at all in the eschatological age to come. His interpretation is different from that of the rabbis on this point (as he opposes the idea of any intermediary but Christ); yet both share a playful hermeneutic in the best sense, and it is all about reflection as a way of mirroring, but also as a form of thinking and producing knowledge.

Interpretations like this show how deeply Paul was anchored in the rabbinical mindset. In Taubes' view, it is the Jewish, not the Christian Paul, who is relevant. He claimed that "the word 'Christian' [...] doesn't yet exist for Paul."[66] In fact, "the first known occurrence of the term 'Christianity' is in Ignatius, writing in the early second century."[67] But Judaism did not exist as a fixed entity either. Taubes brought Paul back to Judaism; he was one of the first among the moderns to do so, but not the only one; in fact, Krister Stendahl, a Swedish Lutheran theologian (whom Taubes got to know at Harvard in the late 1950s), placed Paul "among Jews and Gentiles" (as the title of one of his books runs); and finally, Daniel Boyarin made a similar, yet different and in itself radical effort only one year later and without any knowledge of Taubes.[68]

For the apostle Paul, Christ is the Messiah, but his agenda is a blurred one. Faith, as demanded by Paul, is directed to the Messiah, not to God, and the love of God is sublated by the love of the neighbour.[69] The Messiah is the focus of Paul's sermon and mission. Both, the sermon and mission, prove to be signs of the conversion that has taken place through the redeeming death of Christ on the cross, the baptism into death carried out in his name finally sealing this conversion for everybody, "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. [...] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for

62 Numbers 12:8.
63 Cf. Beale and Carson, eds., *Commentary on New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 739.
64 Leviticus Rabbah 1:14.
65 Leviticus Rabbah 1:14.
66 Taubes, *Political Theology*, 21.
67 Dunn, "A New Perspective on the New Perspective on Paul," 159–160.
68 Cf. Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, and Boyarin, *Paul and the Politics of Identity*.
69 For this sublation, cf. Welborn, *Paul's Summons to Messianic Life*, 2–3.

you are all one in Christ Jesus."[70] This is the great movement of totalisation in Paul; all will become one – eschatologically. Albert Schweitzer (who was not only a medical missionary in the tropics but also a profound theologian) called this "'being-in-Christ' [...] the prime enigma of the Pauline teaching: once grasped it gives the clue to the whole."[71] Taubes thought very highly of Schweitzer's book, because it proved that "Paul marks the exact turning point from Christian apocalypticism to Christian Gnosis; eschatology and mysticism meet in him".[72]

5 Paul as another Moses

That the key concepts of this revolutionary, Gnostic apocalypticism could be found in the sermon of Paul became a kind of dogma for the late Taubes; he even identified himself with the apostle, because he recognised him as the great master of eschatological thinking.[73] The lectures that Taubes, suffering from incurable cancer, gave in Heidelberg a few weeks before his death in March 1987 are well known; they are published under the title *The Political Theology of Paul*. According to the publisher, they are heavily edited;[74] nevertheless, it is what we are left with, so we must consider and interpret it as is.

In these lectures, two concepts dominate: one of time as finite (*Frist*) and the other of salvation. The first is an eschatological notion, but – as Taubes stresses elsewhere – "today it has certainly become overwhelming and common due to the contingent threat of the nuclear annihilation of the human world".[75] This was in the late 1980s; nowadays climate disaster is the catastrophe commonly anticipated, and is similarly charged with hope of salvation and fear of the end. Taubes' ideas on the expiring of time have been comprehensively studied and further developed by Giorgio Agamben, who even dedicated his book to Taubes *in memoriam*.[76] But there is still much more to say about the latter's thinking on salvation.

Taubes' concept of salvation is deeply rooted in Paul's theology of crisis. Paul divided the Jews between those who believed that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and those who did not. The first group represents the remnant (*sherit*) of Israel; only it will be saved.[77] This, Paul hoped, would see the remant escape the wrath of God

70 Letter to the Galatians 3:26 and 28.
71 Schweitzer, "Eschatological Mystic," 389 (= Portions from chapters 1 and 14 of Schweitzer, *Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*).
72 Cf. Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 68.
73 Cf. Treml, "Die Figur des Paulus in Jacob Taubes' Religionsphilosophie."
74 I want to thank Raimar Zons (Paderborn) for this information.
75 Interview mit Jacob Taubes, ed. Rötzer, 318. (My translation).
76 Cf. Agamben, *The Time that Remains*. For a discussion of Taubes' and Agamben's ideas on Paul, cf. Kroeker, "Recent Continental Philosophers," 447–452.
77 Cf. Romans 9:27.

arising from the absolute sinfulness of mankind.[78] As Taubes states, "for Paul, the task at hand is the *establishment and legitimation of a new people of God*".[79]

One has to understand that the biblical concept of God's devastating Judgment Day is, of course, very much overdetermined; who knows that he or she will be saved and not condemned?[80] All of us must live in fear and, as especially Protestantism would have it, in faith. Real experiences of historical destruction merge with fantasies of death that oscillate between fear and wish. Taubes also spoke often about this issue from a personal perspective, and he participated regularly in associated rituals: in Paris, he used to pray at the synagogue on Rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth at Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur (the most solemn feast days of Divine Judgment and, finally, Pardon). He would then throw himself to the ground and, completely covered by his large prayer shawl, cry and weep incessantly.[81] Messianic activism appears to be a panic reaction, a *Kurzschlusshandlung*, in which what should be a matter of hope and ritual (as in the case of Taubes in Paris) is often violently acted out collectively (an observation not only made from the perspective of Western Christianity and its secularisation).

The same ambiguity prevails with regard to God's main attributes. In Western religions, God is one; he may (or may not) be three persons, but he possesses, in any case, two attributes: his punishing justice and his loving grace. While the latter is reason for joy and gratitude, the former invites fear and horror. The defusing of this most terrible *Angst* (while at the same time creating a new one) was not only Luther's aim but also the declared goal of all founders of religions, theologians and reformers, from Moses to Muhammad, Paul to Augustine and any ancient (proto-) rabbi to Jacob Taubes.

That divine violence is best expressed and overcome by cults and rituals is an age-old experience common to all religions. The same is true for the salvation from it. Taubes recognises the destructive and the redemptive powers inherent in the evening service (*eref*) before Yom Kippur (the Great Day of Pardon and Atonement), called *Kol Nidre(i)* (Aramaic for "all vows"). There, the annulment of all formulas and the exemption from all vows made between man and God during the past year is proclaimed in a solemn antiphony between cantor and congregation.

> The recitation must begin while it is still daylight and must be prolonged until sunset. It is the custom to repeat *Kol Nidrei* three times in order to accommodate latecomers. [...] Not formally a prayer, *Kol Nidrei* nevertheless became the most beloved ritual act of the Day of Atonement. It alleviated anxiety which was especially intense in the Rosh Ha-Shanah season because of possible violation of the sanctity of pledges.[82]

78 Cf. Romans 9–11.

79 Taubes, *Political Theology*, 28 (display in the original).

80 In Revelation 21:4, there is a strong hint that only those who have tears in their eyes will be saved. I wish to thank Jürgen Manemann (Berlin) for this information.

81 I wish to thank Eva-Maria Thimme (Berlin), once Taubes' *Hilfskraft*, for this information.

82 Kieval and Bayer, "Kol Nidrei," 276 (display in the original).

Through this ritual, which does not refer to any oath made in commerce or in court, Israel's salvation history is solemnly re-enacted – and that is what Taubes told his Heidelberg audience, combining biblical exegesis by the rabbis and Paul with Jewish liturgy as understood by Franz Rosenzweig to make his point.[83]

While Moses sat with God on Mount Sinai, the people worshipped the Golden Calf. He was deeply shocked, and even more so once God most aggressively proclaimed that he would now destroy Israel: "Now, let Me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation."[84] The last part of this quotation actually refers to the blessing and promise that God had once made to Abraham[85] – before it, there was only destruction and catastrophe. Yet it was also an offer to Moses to persuade him not to annihilate his people, despite their great sins – this is at least how ancient commentaries as well as Rashi understood the passage. And Moses responded with a multifarious plea.[86]

Here, Taubes combines his interpretation with lengthy quotations from the Talmud, Tractate Berakhot 32a. He shows not only how different the tranquil and, despite all condensation, almost pedantic tone of the rabbis is from Paul's heated apocalyptic speech but also how much both of them follow the same agenda: that of the salvation of Israel from God's blazing anger and justice. Both make use of traditional methods of interpretation, with Paul heaping biblical quotation on biblical quotation outside any stringent context and the rabbis reading the biblical text loosely and making use of homonymias. They explained:

> And Moses besought (*wa-yeḫal*) the Lord his God (Exod. 32:11). R. Eleazar said: This teaches that Moses stood in prayer before the Holy One, blessed be He, until he wearied Him (*heḫelahu*). Raba said: Until he remitted His vow for Him. It is written here *wa-yeḫal*, and it is written there (in connection with vows), he shall not break (*yaḫel*) his word (Num. 30:3); and a Master has said: He himself cannot break, but others may break for him (i.e. find a reason for absolution). Samuel says: It teaches that he risked his life for them as it says, And if not, blot me (*ḫalal*), I pray (*yeḫal*) Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written (Exod. 32:32). Raba said in the name of R. Isaac: It teaches that he caused the Attribute of Mercy to rest (*heḫelah*) on them. The Rabbis say: It teaches that Moses said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of the Universe, it is a profanation (*ḫullin*) for Thee to do this thing.[87]

This is a play on words on the part of the rabbis, involving what seems to be the same stem of three consonants (or sometimes half-consonants) which all Hebrew verbs and nouns possess: here it is *ḫ-l-h* and *ḫ-l-'*, but also *ḫ-l-l* and *ḫ-v-l*, the stem formations of which can easily be brought close or even put together when pronounced. They mean "to calm, appease" (from *ḫ-l-h*), "to make sick, wear out" (from *ḫ-l-'*), "to desecrate, profane", but also "slain" (from *ḫ-l-l*), and "to spin, cir-

83 Cf. Taubes, *Political Theology*, 28–38.
84 Exodus 32:10.
85 Cf. Genesis 12:12.
86 Cf. Exodus 32:11–14.
87 Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 32a.

cle" (from *ḫ-v-l*). In any case, these transmutations then open up a wealth of possibilities for understanding what had happened between God and Moses at Mount Sinai and how Israel was finally saved from justified annihilation. R. Joshua ben Levi even taught that "The Israelites made the Golden Calf only in order to place a good argument in the mouth of the penitents (i.e. that true penitence effectually works), as it is said, O that they had such a heart as this always, to fear Me and keep all My commandments (Deut. 5:26)."[88]

For Taubes, Paul encounters the same problem as Moses. Like him, Paul must do something to dissuade God from unleashing his wrath (*orge theou*)[89] and to save a people that do not actually deserve salvation. The apostle becomes another Moses. In a similar way, Kafka speaks of "other Abrahams" in a letter written to Robert Klopstock in July 1921, discussing how the patriarch avoided sacrificing his own son (as well as the ram) and how "rewarding the best" and "punishing the worst" have become indiscernible, both then and now.[90] Paul, in his eschatological thinking, tries to make the gap between life and death discernible again. For him, this has two consequences, as Taubes succinctly explains: firstly, that the law (*nomos*) is no longer effective, because the Messiah Jesus was executed on the grounds of it, something which should never have happened; secondly, that it is no longer possible to save the whole of Israel, but only a remnant of it – with whom, however, the heathens who have joined the messianic movement will also now be redeemed.[91] Let us turn briefly to the first point. "The people has sinned. It has rejected the Messiah that has come to it."[92] How can it be saved? "Here is a Messiah who is condemned according to the law. *Tant pis*, so much the worse for the law."[93] By abrogating the law, Paul outperforms Moses, who was the promulgator of the law, for a second time.

6 Paul and the End of the Law

During the summer semester of 1986, Taubes gave what should become his last lectures at the Free University, entitled "Paul and philosophy (for advanced students)".[94] They lasted only one hour each, not two (as it is usual at German universities), due to his already grave health problems (even if he did not yet know about his fatal disease). These lectures became his legacy to the Berlin students, and I was

88 Babylonian Talmud, Avoda Zara 4b.
89 Romans 1:18.
90 Cf. Kafka, "Über Kierkegaards 'Furcht und Zittern'," 43 (my translation).
91 Cf. Taubes, *Political Theology*, 37–38.
92 Taubes, *Political Theology*, 37.
93 Taubes, *Political Theology*, 37.
94 Cf. Free University Calendar for the Summer Semester 1986, 246.

among them. He spoke about research on Paul from Spinoza to the present day, and about the First Letter to the Corinthians. Nietzsche was one of his most important topics, because the latter had held Paul responsible for Christianity's destruction of everything exquisite and noble. In order to prove this, Nietzsche turned to the First Letter to the Corinthians – as Taubes did. But in contrast to Taubes' interpretation, Nietzsche called Paul's efforts "*the very worst ones of all*" and him "the genius of hatred".[95] How and why did the apostle succeed in his reinterpretation of the message of Jesus as it can be found in the gospels?

> Paul simply shifted the emphasis of this whole being, putting it *behind* that being – into the *lie* of Jesus' 'resurrection'. Basically, he had no use whatsoever for the life of the redeemer – he needed the death on the cross and something else besides. [...] Paul wanted the end, and *consequently* he wanted the means to it as well.[96]

Nietzsche, on the contrary, did not aim for an end, as he feverishly expressed his favour for eternal recurrence. His "doctrine tries to combine the pagan pattern of the cycle and the biblical pattern of the arrow of eschatological history".[97] Thus, his failure to construct a non-biblical philosophy of history was inevitable.

For Taubes, the declared aim of Paul is to bring the brothers (and sisters) of the early Christian communities to unity. Already in the opening chapter of the First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul demonstrates their supremacy over those who hold power over the world now but will lose it and will not live in the new aeon under Christ. "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."[98] By their faith in the Messiah, the Corinthians will become the masters of those now noble, elegant or wise. Referring respectively to the Greek philosopher, the Jewish rabbi, and the Roman rhetorician, Paul asks: "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age?"[99] And he replies: "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."[100] All of these intellectuals despise the brothers of Corinth. In the new aeon of Christ, God has carried out an inversion of values – something which Nietzsche understood, but he took the wrong side in the conflict (at least as far as Taubes is concerned).

Yet Paul does not call for an active rebellion against the Roman Empire. Instead he declares that the Messiah's coming, his death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave after three days have definitely put an end to both the old aeon and

95 Nietzsche, "Anti-Christ," 38 (display in the original).
96 Nietzsche, "Anti-Christ," 39 (display in the original).
97 Taubes, "Community – After the Apocalypse," 104.
98 1 Corinthians 1:18.
99 1 Corinthians 1:20.
100 1 Corinthians 1:22–24.

all of its representatives, be they political or intellectual. They had all been following the law, which saw "an apotheosis of Nomos";[101] this had now ended. What happened at this end, Paul, the anti-philosopher, explains philosophically, as all true philosophy sets itself at the end of all philosophy. What was "nothing" (in Greek, *me on*) has now become "everything" (in Greek, *pan*):

> Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.[102]

The "world" is the antithesis, but the inversion of values – that which was nothing now becomes everything – is the key motif of the First Letter to the Corinthians.

When the scribes are despised, the law they interpret, too, counts as "nothing" (even if it was "all" in other Jewish traditions). In this way, Judaism "without the law" becomes possible, a Judaism for all. This is Paul's legacy, at least as discerned by Taubes. The end of the law does not, therefore, mean the end of Judaism. On the contrary, the end of the law does not liberate the believers, because it was never compulsive, but rather a space for memory and protection (in addition to its festive and joyous aspects). Nonetheless, the end of the law enables the heathens (*goyim*, the people or non-Jews) to become believers and join the "power of God". Only at the very end will the "remnant of Israel" also be saved. This is the prophetical concept developed in the Letter to the Romans. For Taubes, it possessed deep apocalyptical dimensions, an interpretation that was likely influenced by the catastrophes of the twentieth century that he witnessed.

7 Eschatology as *Lebensform*

In his works, Taubes demonstrated his preeminent expertise on apocalyptic and Gnostic ideas in Judaism and their *Nachleben* from Antiquity to the present. However, paradoxically for an academic, religious history served him less as a field of scholarly research than as a repository of elements for a description of the present. In this he followed Walter Benjamin, who in his fragmentary *Arcades Project* studied the Paris of the nineteenth century not out of antiquarian interest but for the "now of recognisability" (*Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit*), by tracing the relation of a certain text, image or event to us in the present.[103]

For Taubes, Paul also served as a tool for diagnosing the condition of his own time. In 1980, he argued that

101 Taubes, *Political Theology*, 23.
102 1 Corinthians 1:26–28.
103 Cf. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 473 (here in connection with the dialectical image).

> a comparison of our epoch with Late Antiquity is fitting, because today a 'bureaucratic Caesarism' reigns in different ways in East and West, as was predicted by Bruno Bauer in the nineteenth century and by Oswald Spengler in the first half of the twentieth. But today, there is no Paul in view who could give image and reality to the complete Other, the Anti-Caesar, for whom the epoch is eagerly longing.[104]

When the rabbis stated that "there is no earlier and later in the Torah (*ein mukdam u-me'uhar ba-Torah*)", they meant that the order in which things are told in it does not necessarily correspond to the order in which they have happened – events may appear out of order or sequence.[105] This concept of simultaneity strongly reminds of the interpretation of the Freudian theory of the unconscious as a maternal realm.[106] There everything exists at the same time without negation or end – even if a lot of psychic life is actually concerned only with negation and the end: that is, with death. Perhaps the same could be said about eschatology. In speaking of the last things, the catastrophe of the end should not be a real end, but only the end of history, or the beginning of post-history. Israel should be destroyed because of its sins, but the remnant of it should live on forever. The visionary of apocalypticism hints at this when he declares: "and I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away and the sea is no more."[107] Such fantasies of extermination and restoration are largely avoided by the rabbis. They were determined to "make a fence for the Torah", and not to interpret arbitrarily, but freely.[108] They acheived the great freedom in their exegesis through hermeneutics of simultaneity and the admission of contradictions. Paradoxically enough, it is in this patriarchal world that a place was created where both paternal and maternal origins could be reflected upon.[109]

Despite the lapse in time, Paul and Taubes have much in common; just as Paul may be called a proto-rabbi (as rabbinic Judaism was not already born), Taubes could be viewed as a post-apocalypticist. He was no prophet of doom, noting that "the Apocalypse of our generation has come and gone."[110] What the Shoah was for Taubes, the violent death of the Messiah was for Paul, who stands at the beginning of the Christian era as Taubes stands at its end. In retrospect, he appears as a pioneer, marking the crossroads of Jewish-Christian debates beyond the principles and traps of ecclesiastic dialogue and reconciliation in a confessional sense. Taubes'

104 Letter of Jacob Taubes to Jürgen Busche, October 27, 1980, EJT (Part of it also in Taubes and Schmitt, *Briefwechsel*, eds. Kopp-Oberstebrink et al., 108–109, 109. My translation).
105 Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 6b.
106 Cf. Heinrich, *Arbeiten mit Ödipus* (= edition of a lecture course at the FU Berlin from 1972). Schlesier, *Konstruktion der Weiblichkeit bei Sigmund Freud*.
107 Revelation 21:1; the first part is a quotation of Isaiah 65:17.
108 Mishnah, Avot 1:1.
109 Cf. Heinrich, *Arbeiten mit Ödipus*, 164–165 (here related to Greek tragedy).
110 Taubes, "Community – After the Apocalypse," 101.

thinking was deeply rooted in an existential choice to know, to learn, to teach. He loved to take a panoramic view of the subjects he discussed.

For Taubes, eschatology was not so much an academic concept belonging to the study of the history of religions as the occidental *Lebensform*. Through it, the certainty of a liberating revelation born out of catastrophe as well as intense discontent with contemporary culture have been transformed into both an explosive messianism within Judaism and a universal form within Catholicism. In Taubes' thinking, the enduring power of the *katechon* (a pseudo-Pauline eschatological figure, with which the late Carl Schmitt identified)[111] was set into Scholem's "blazing landscape of redemption."[112] It is a paradoxical encounter of duration and end which Taubes conceived of as a dialectical one bringing together destruction and liberation, letting ends meet in the dialectics of desacralisation and resacralisation. This might be considered an escape from the matters and inclinations of religion and culture after 1805, when religion finally turned bourgeois. Taubes continually opposed this appeasement, and once wrote angrily: "God isn't bourgeois and the bourgeois isn't religious."[113]

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Abbreviations

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111 Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:6–7. For Schmitt's use, cf. Taubes and Schmitt, *Briefwechsel*, eds. Kopp-Oberstebrink et al.
112 Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," 35.
113 Letter of Jacob Taubes to David Hartman, March 1, 1982, EJT.

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Christian Zolles

History beyond the Ken: Towards a Critical Historiography of Apocalyptic Politics with Jacob Taubes and Michel Foucault

Jacob Taubes, Founding Professor of Jewish Studies and the Sociology of Religion, but also Director of the Section for Hermeneutics at the Institute of Philosophy at Berlin's Free University from 1962 until his death in 1987, was one of the most influential and controversial theorist in humanities. Recently discovered documents from his literary estate reveal that he was among the first German thinkers to recognise Michel Foucault's brilliance as a lateral thinker. On two separate documented occasions, he attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to involve him in colloquia on epistemological research. This article examines the correspondences between Taubes' and Foucault's respective theories about Judeo-Christian apocalypticism and touches upon what could have been illuminating discussions between the two on "the use and abuse of history". After providing an overview of the apocalypse as a historical concept, the common characteristics of Foucault's theory of genealogy and Taubes' conception of eschatology are outlined. By highlighting the corresponding historiographical aspects of these two approaches, the focus shifts to the widely neglected "other", "gnostic", or "revolutionary" potential of apocalyptic notions. Beyond the history of representations, a non-representative "tradition of breaking with tradition" might be discovered, demonstrating the immanent political implications of eschatology and offering perspectives on historical struggles "from the bottom up".

1 Preface

The only attested meeting between Jacob Taubes and Michel Foucault took place as early as June 1964 at the Seventh International Philosophical Colloquium at Royaumont Abbey.[1] At an illustrious round table on Friedrich Nietzsche, including philosophers like Jean Beaufret, Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Gilles Deleuze, Pierre Klossowski, Karl Löwith, Gianni Vattimo and Jean Wahl, the

1 This article offers an extract of the theoretical and methodological approach provided in my dissertation: Zolles, *Die symbolische Macht der Apokalypse*. I am thankful to Harald Kluge Halvorsen for co-translating the text and for vivid discussions on its topic. The translation of the text was revised by Christina Pössel. Martin Treml kindly provided me with copies of the documents presented in the preface and in the closing remarks of this paper. They derive from the literary estate of Jacob Taubes held at the Leibniz-Center for Literary and Cultural Research (ZfL) in Berlin.

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37-year-old Professor at the University of Clermont-Ferrand, Michel Foucault, presented his seminal paper on "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx".[2]

Foreshadowing the epistemological disposition of *The Order of Things* (which was published two years later), in this paper Foucault called attention to the lack of analysis both of Western techniques of interpretation and of the tradition of "suspecting that language means something other than what it says",[3] and claimed that the hermeneutic system was re-founded in the nineteenth century. Scrutinised synchronically, the works of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud do not constitute simply an increase in knowledge, but rather a system of looking at phenomena, and Man, differently: "[Marx, Nietzsche and Freud] have not given a new meaning to things that had no meaning. They have in reality changed the nature of the sign and modified the fashion in which the sign can in general be interpreted."[4] The activity of continuously reflecting upon oneself and of exploring the concealed levels of human consciousness becomes central, but, Foucault argues, paradoxically reveals itself as an illusory profundity, reliant on misguided imaginings. Finding no anchorage, the signs come loose and become subject to interpretation without end.

> What is in question in the point of rupture of interpretation, in this convergence of interpretation on a point that renders it impossible, could well be something like the experience of madness. An experience against which Nietzsche fought and by which he was fascinated; an experience against which Freud himself struggled, not without anguish, all of his life. This experience of madness would be the sanction of a movement of interpretation that approaches its center at infinity and that collapses, charred.[5]

Foucault proceeds to claim that Marx's interpretation of relations of productions similarly – albeit less elaborately – follows a circular reasoning and proves to be an endless process. In modern hermeneutics, "interpretation finds itself with the obligation to interpret itself to infinity".[6] The supposed originator of interpretation shifts to the centre. In the modern *episteme*, reasoning is located somewhere between the conflicting fields of hermeneutics and semiology, somewhere between the belief in the truthfulness of signs and the endlessness of self-implicating languages.

Among those listening to Foucault's paper was the 41-year-old Jacob Taubes, learned rabbi, Jewish theologian, Professor of the History and Philosophy of Religion at Columbia University in New York, and a restless wandering academic. In the discussion following Foucault's paper, he posed the following question:

2 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," ed. Faubion.
3 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," ed. Faubion, 270.
4 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," ed. Faubion, 272.
5 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," ed. Faubion, 275.
6 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," ed. Faubion, 278.

> Isn't Foucault's analysis incomplete? He hasn't addressed the techniques of religious exegesis, which have played a crucial role. And he hasn't traced the true historical correlation. Despite what Foucault has just said, it seems to me that interpretation in the nineteenth century begins with Hegel.[7]

Foucault answered:

> I haven't spoken about religious interpretation, which indeed was of great importance, because in the very short history that I just outlined I focused on the signs and not the sense. The break that took place in the nineteenth century can certainly be linked to the name of Hegel. But in the history of signs in their broadest sense, the discovery of the Indo-European language, the disappearance of the general grammar, and the substitution of the concept of the organism for the concept of the character are no less 'important' than Hegel's philosophy. We shouldn't confuse the history of philosophy with the archaeology of thinking.[8]

In this short conversation, the positions of the two thinkers and their opposition are clearly indicated. Taubes emphasises the importance of the religious tradition in occidental philosophy, ingeniously incorporated into the historical discourse by Hegel, who had already played a crucial role as a follower of early Christian Gnosticism as Taubes argued in his dissertation on *Occidental Eschatology*, published in 1947.[9] Foucault, on the other hand, has in mind a historical methodology, which he elaborated more concretely in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). There he again addresses why he does not consider topics like cosmology, mathematics, chemistry, physiology, or biblical exegesis in *The Order of Things*, arguing that the deliberately limited focus of his discourse analysis, the "region of interpositivity" provided in his studies, has nothing to do with an all-inclusive "Weltanschauung". On the contrary, he aims to destabilise such "totalisations":[10]

> The horizon of archaeology, therefore, is not *a* science, *a* rationality, *a* mentality, *a* culture; it is a tangle of interpositivities whose limits and points of intersection cannot be fixed in a single

7 The discussion, as yet missing from English versions of the text, is translated from: Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," ed. Defer and Ewald, 575: "L'analyse de M. Foucault n'est-elle pas incomplète? Il n'a pas tenu compte des techniques de l'exégèse religieuse qui ont eu un rôle décisif. Et il n'a pas suivi l'articulation historique véritable. Malgré ce que vient de dire M. Foucault, il me semble que l'interprétation au XIXe siècle commence avec Hegel." Cf. Lauermann, "Materialistische oder apokalyptische Geschichtsphilosophie?," 237–238.

8 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," ed. Defer and Ewald, 575: "Je n'ai pas parlé de l'interprétation religieuse qui en effet a eu une importance extrême, parce que dans la très brève histoire que j'ai retracée, je me suis placé du côté des signes et non du côté du sens. Quant à la coupure du XIXe siècle, on peut bien la mettre sous le nom de Hegel. Mais dans l'histoire des signes, pris dans leur extension la plus grande, la découverte des langues indo-européennes, la disparition de la grammaire générale, la substitution du concept d'organisme à celui de caractère ne sont pas moins 'importants' que la philosophie hégélienne. Il ne faut pas confondre histoire de la philosophie et archéologie de la pensée."

9 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*.

10 Cf. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 175–176.

> operation. Archaeology is a comparative analysis that is not intended to reduce the diversity of discourses, and to outline the unity that must totalize them, but is intended to divide up their diversity into different figures. Archaeological comparison does not have a unifying, but a diversifying, effect.[11]

This quotation demonstrates that the two thinkers' perspectives were not diametrically opposed, but rather that they argued from different angles: from a "spiritual" (Hegelian) and from a "material" (discursive) point of view, respectively. Taubes, at least, does not seem to have abandoned the thought of further discussions. In a letter dated September 20, 1966, when he was already a professor at the Institute of Jewish Studies and director of the Section for Hermeneutics at Berlin's Free University, he recommended participants for an interdisciplinary colloquium on "Late Horizons of *mythos*" ("Späthorizonte des Mythos"), organised by the philosopher Hans Blumenberg and the prestigious research group "Poetics and Hermeneutics".[12] Beside Jean Bollack, Paul Ricœur ("probably the most important thinker in France"), Herbert Marcuse ("the sharpest and most honest thinker of the Frankfurt School"), Pierre Bourdieu ("he was in Berlin recently and impressed us all very much"), Karl Kerényi, Henry Corbin, and Emil Cioran ("the finest mind I have ever encountered"), he described Foucault as follows:

> Michel Foucault, I mention just with a question mark. His books *Histoire de la Folie*, *Les Mots et les choses* certainly belong to our topic, but Foucault doesn't speak German, and I don't know if we can expect him to participate in an intense German discussion for eight days. It would be a risk, but it would be worth it. He is highly intelligent and always brings a new, unexpected aspect to a discussion.[13]

The published proceedings of the "Poetics and Hermeneutics" circle's fourth meeting shows that, with the exception of Jean Bollack, none of the above-mentioned scholars participated in the discussions on "Terror and Play: Problems in the Reception of Myth" in 1968.[14] Although Taubes, and notably Peter Szondi until his tragic death in 1971, invited other seminal representatives of the "Frankfurt School" and "Reception Theory", as well as of "Deconstruction" and of "Poststructuralism", to their seminars at Berlin's Free University (where Jacques Derrida repeatedly lectured from 1968 onwards),[15] no further plans to collaborate with Foucault are

11 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 177.

12 Taubes, "Letter to Hans Blumenberg." Cf. Amslinger, *Eine neue Form von Akademie*, 221–224.

13 Taubes, "Letter to Hans Blumenberg," 101: "Michel Foucault nenne ich nur mit Fragezeichen. Seine Bücher *Histoire de Folie*, *Les Mots et les choses* gehören sicherlich zu unserem Thema, aber Foucault spricht nicht Deutsch, und ich weiß nicht, ob man ihn für acht Tage einer intensiven deutschen Diskussion aussetzen kann. Es wäre ein Wagnis, aber es würde ich lohnen. Er ist blitzgescheit und bringt immer einen neuen unerwarteten Aspekt in die Diskussion."

14 Fuhrmann, *Terror und Spiel*.

15 Cf. Derrida, "Letter to Peter Szondi," 49: "Would you send my greetings and thanks to all who listened to me so generously, welcomed, and guided me? In particular to Samuel Weber – to whom I

attested for the next decade. Although his work was read intensively in Szondi's seminars,[16] the next opportunity to invite him to a plenary discussion on new historiographical perspectives in Germany was not taken: the fifth "Poetics and Hermeneutics" colloquium in 1970 on the subject "History: Event and Narrative",[17] conducted by one of the doyens of German *Begriffsgeschichte* ("History of Concepts"), Reinhart Koselleck, also took place without him.

2 The Apocalypse as a Historical Concept

The appearance and subsequent proliferation of spectacularly visualised cinematic doomsday scenarios, typically accompanied by romanticised images and plots, has caused the previously immanent political meaning of the apocalypse to be nearly completely forgotten. The apocalypse is inevitably linked to the predominant logic of mass representation, wherein the experience of its immanent power – revealing itself through natural catastrophes or terror attacks and becoming a matter of public concern only for an instant – is closely related to suffering a "trauma".[18] According to German cultural and literary scholar Hartmut Böhme, dealing with the apocalypse in modern times means to be essentially "anti-apocalyptic". The apocalypse always has to be seen as a product of the rational *sublime* combined with the suppressed horror hovering behind.[19] The biblical scholar Yvonne Sherwood, following

will write soon – and Prof. Taubes – I will not forget our joint projects." ("Voulez-vous saluer pour moi, et remercier tous ceux qui m'ont si généreusement écouté, accueilli, guidé? En particulier Samuel Weber – à qui j'écrirai bientôt – et le Prof Taubes – je n'oublie pas nos project communs.")

16 Cf. Samuel Weber, "Deckerinnerungen," 305: "On the one hand, he [Peter Szondi] highly appreciated Derrida's painstaking examination of textual details and his simultaneous ability to perceive wider correlations and implications. On the other hand, he considered it extremely dangerous to question the concept of history, and even of truth, in a radical way, because this also affected the concept of objectivity. For this reason, he tried to find an alternative by drawing on the hermeneutic tradition. Also in this respect he was influenced more by Foucault than by Derrida – although he, as previously mentioned, highly valued Derrida's occupation with language and literature, while Foucault had less to offer in this respect." ("Einerseits schätzte er [Peter Szondi] Derridas akribische Auseinandersetzung mit textuellen Details und seine gleichzeitige Fähigkeit, daraus größere Zusammenhänge und Implikationen herauszuspüren, sehr. Andererseits betrachtete er den Anspruch, den Begriff der Geschichte und sogar den der Wahrheit radikal in Frage zu stellen, als äußerst gefährlich, sofern er zugleich den Begriff der Objektivität nicht mehr unangetastet ließ. Deshalb suchte er durch Rückgang auf die hermeneutische Tradition eine Alternative zu finden. Er war auch in dieser Hinsicht eher von Foucault als von Derrida beeinflußt – obwohl Derridas Beschäftigung mit der Sprache und mit der Literatur ihm, wie gesagt, sehr zusprach, während Foucault in dieser Hinsicht weniger zu bieten hatte.")

17 Koselleck and Stempel, eds., *Geschichte – Ereignis und Erzählung*.

18 Cf. Daschke, "Apocalypse and Trauma."

19 Cf. Böhme, "Vergangenheit und Gegenwart der Apokalypse," 396.

Derrida, who in his linguistic-*wise* manner claimed to be the eschatologists' last follower, argues that:

> Apocalyptic is the bête-noire of the kinds of polities and epistemologies that we call (and call into being as) 'Western' and 'modern'. [...] Apocalyptic contains all that the Enlightenments hate: secrecy, whispers, sectarianism, fanaticism, fundamentalism, human and divine vengeance, sulphurous vengeful streams of apocalyptic hate.[20]

Retained below the surface, the deep strata of the apocalypse are intrinsically tied to the shifting of reasoning in "modernity". Foucault's discourse analysis and Koselleck's conceptual history provide two complementary approaches for investigating this shift. Both refrain from tracing the significant meaning of "modern" concepts etymologically to their origins, but whereas Foucault focuses on epistemic patterns and variable modes of speaking the truth, Koselleck seeks to find the definition of common essential words and their application across a wide range of sociopolitical contexts.

According to Koselleck – in this respect significantly influenced by Taubes' self-declared antagonist in "political theology", the Catholic theorist of constitutional law Carl Schmitt[21] – the apocalypse did indeed have an immanent political meaning until the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[22] It had been an integral part of the Christian conception of time, characterised by its temporal ambiguity: inherent in the powerful and visually stunning representations of doom and salvation at the End Times, the expectation of Jesus Christ's second coming and the Final Judgment were continually *realised and actualised*, and by this, in deferral of the *parousia*, *archived and preserved* over a long period. This eschatological time-structure at the core of Christian belief, this adherence to the utopian moment of *kairos*, also provided important possibilities of identification at the political level, demonstrated by its potential to mobilise and unite Christian powers against their internal and external enemies.

By the end of the Thirty Years' War it had become apparent, Koselleck asserts, that the common horizon of living in the End Times did no longer have an unifying but, on the contrary, a diversifying effect (as already evident in the reformers' identification of the pope as the Antichrist). The apocalypse, being far too extreme in its temporal indecisiveness, in its wavering between protesting and delaying, and in its exclusive political claim, could no longer remain an integral part of absolutist state politics. At that time, a political process began in which apocalyptic expectations would be separated from their former political function and replaced by calculations

20 Sherwood, "Napalm Falling like Prostitutes," 53–54. Cf. Derrida, "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy."

21 Schmitt's disagreements with Taubes will be discussed in more detail below. Cf. Missfelder, "Die Gegenkraft und ihre Geschichte," and also Müller, *A Dangerous Mind*, esp. 106–07.

22 Cf. Koselleck, "Modernity and the Planes of Historicity," 11–14.

of political prognostics.[23] As matters of time became assigned to the calendar and projects oriented towards the *future* increased, backward-looking conceptions of time were replaced by conceptions of ultimate progress. With the Enlightenment battling all forms of visionary enthusiasm, ideas about the end of the world were separated from human actions and became associated with the empirical science of natural history.

Against this backdrop, marginal religious groups, committed to the scriptural belief in the Final Judgment, became opposed to the new "social contract" and the formation of a public sphere. One significant effect of this was that puritan movements set out to find their "New Jerusalem" in the vastness and wilderness of overseas territories that offered the possibility of founding Christian communities of a new kind.[24] The tradition of biblical exegesis and prophecy would again become especially influential on public affairs in antebellum America, when numerous revivalist religious movements emerged that proclaimed the imminence of the Second Coming. One of the most prominent figures, the Baptist preacher William Miller, predicted that the world would end in the 1840s.[25] After his prophesied scenario did not come about and the so-called "Great Depression" set in, the "Millerites" dispersed into different sects like the "Advent Christians", the "Seventh-Day Adventists" and, later on, "Jehovah's Witnesses", all of which still exist today.

Independently of these premodern marginal groups' radical belief in the imminence of the end of the world, the apocalyptic narrative was also read in the broader context of revolution.[26] Koselleck argues that the absolutist governmental agenda to stabilise political conflicts and discourse by instilling a belief in progress was radically challenged by the Enlightenment's effort to establish a private sphere in opposition to official international state politics. The bourgeoisie sought to become the centre of moral authority, thereby providing the ideological foundations for a liberal society.[27] Collective singulars like "history", "state" or "spirit" were invested with new significance. The discourses of the period often allude to utopian fulfilment, with biblical visionary prophecies like the Book of Revelation being the most popular, providing the allegorical grid for the narrative of uprising and fulfilment. In revolutionary and reactionary representations, the apocalypse, in the singular, would become the epitome of revolution within history.

23 Cf. Koselleck, "Modernity and the Planes of Historicity," 15–21.
24 Cf. Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity*.
25 Cf. Rowe, *God's Strange Work*.
26 Cf. Koselleck, "Modernity and the Planes of Historicity," 22–25; and also Garrett, *Respectable Folly*; Vondung, *Die Apokalypse in Deutschland*, 152–175; Burdon, *The Apocalypse in England*.
27 Cf. Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*. Koselleck's critical perspective on the formation of the modern public sphere was opposed by Jürgen Habermas in "Verrufener Fortschritt – verkanntes Jahrhundert," and, eventually, in *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

Enlightenment engagement with the Bible, however, largely remained the preoccupation of German Pietist scholars.[28] Protestant theology would become a scholarly discipline at universities and constituted a key element of the latter's success, albeit with the prescription that the predominant state programs of *scientisation*, *deconfessionalisation*, *professionalisation* and *nationalisation* were assimilated.[29] As Michael C. Legaspi argues:

> The point here is that it was in the eighteenth century that biblical scholars turned decisively to the *university* to recover not just an Enlightenment Bible or a cultural Bible but a *universal* or catholic Bible, one capable of fostering the unity once associated with the scriptural Bible. The civic, aesthetic, and philological bibles created by Enlightenment scholars were, to an important extent, initiatives of the university. To focus on the university is to see why – if religious strife had long exhausted the early modern, Western church – the moribund scriptural Bible was remade so influentially in the eighteenth century. For it was in this period that universities were created or remade expressly to serve the interests of the state.[30]

The Book of Revelation, considered the Bible's most challenging visionary prophecy, was gradually starting to be read within the context of a genuinely historical temporality, as demonstrated by notable commentaries such as that of the Lutheran pietist clergyman Johan Albrecht Bengel in 1740. According to Koselleck, this joining of historical experience and true knowledge already anticipated the outlines of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[31] A strong tendency to historicise eschatological belief coincided with a new philological and poetological interest in the biblical scriptures, notably in the prophetic tradition, whose symbolistic aspects became the subject of strict textual criticism. This approach shed new light on the intertextualities of the Old and New Testaments and on the close relationship between late Judaism and early Christianity.[32]

Two approaches to the biblical scriptures in general, and to its prophecies in particular, can be described as typical of the period around 1800. In his new introductions to the Old and New Testaments, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn established a thorough historico-critical reading. He concluded that most of the Hebrew writings were the product of multiple authors, and that biblical descriptions of the supernatural

28 As late as 1893, Friedrich Engels claimed: "A science almost unknown in this country, except to a few liberalizing theologians who contrive to keep it as secret as they can, is the historical and linguistic criticism of the Bible, the inquiry into the age, origin, and historical value of the various writings comprising the Old and New Testament. This science is almost exclusively German. And, moreover, what little of it has penetrated beyond the limits of Germany is not exactly the best part of it [...]." Engels, "The Book of Revelation." Cf. further Boer, "Revelation and Revolution."

29 Cf. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*, 29; and also Sherwood, "Napalm Falling like Prostitutes," 55–56.

30 Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*, 32–33.

31 Cf. Koselleck, "Perspective and Temporality," 140.

32 Cf. (also for the following) Schmidt, *Jüdische Apokalyptik*; Koch, "Einleitung;" Baird, *History of New Testament Research*.

should be seen in their wider historical and mythological contexts. In this he agreed with Johann Gottfried Herder's notion that the Bible was a profane book among others, though it remained the "most human" and therefore the "most sacred" one.[33] Herder – anticipating the "secularisation" of the Bible based on aesthetic assumptions – had sought to shift the focus onto the literary, yet anagogic, dimensions of the Bible, stressing also how the historic national character of Hebraic poetry has to be taken into account. In pursuing this aim, the interpretation of the Book of Revelation's symbols proved to pose the greatest challenge in his search to arrive at a homologous understanding of the Bible's deeper universal spirit.[34]

Many romantic poets, above all Friedrich Hölderlin in his hymn *Patmos* (1803), attempted to reunify religious and lyrical experiences of language and time, in a manner akin to the ancient visionary prophets'. In contrast to such autonomous interpretations, the *scientisation* of the Bible and of apocalyptic literature was characterised by its *historisation* (as opposed to its *actualisation)* and its *philologisation* (as opposed to its *poetisation*). In accordance with these principles, and using the methodology of hermeneutics developed by his friend Friedrich Schleiermacher, the protestant theologian Friedrich Lücke established the historico-critical discipline of "Apocalypticism" in 1832.[35] His aim was to develop a hermeneutic theory for the analysis of the literary character of prophetic writings and their multiform historical interpretations. In retrospect, this can be described as the beginning of the study of apocalypticism as a literary genre, which proliferated as more and more apocryphal documents were discovered. Over time, the apocalypse became a fundamental historical concept characterising a whole variety of visionary and end-time narratives in Western history.[36]

The current – interdisciplinary – mainstream of research is still dominated by the assumption that its subject matter is a generic tradition that comprises mainly the Abrahamic religions and their "secularized" reception.[37] Yet it has so far been impossible to formulate a definition of apocalypticism as a genre, as a narrative about the end of the world, as a millenarian rhetoric, as a movement, or as an ideology. This has led scholars to doubt the usefulness of a discourse which subsumes

33 Cf. Weidner, "Scripture, and the Theory of Reading;" Weidner, *Bibel und Literatur*, esp. 110–122 and 273–284.

34 Cf. Fohrmann, "Apokalyptische Hermeneutik."

35 Cf. Christophersen, "Die Begründung der Apokalyptikforschung durch Friedrich Lücke."

36 Cf., as an overview, the contributions in Collins, McGinn, and Stein, eds., *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*.

37 Cf., amongst a diverse variety of publications, Cohen, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*; O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse*; Amanat and Bernhardsson, eds., *Imagining the End*; Collins, McGinn, and Stein, eds., *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*; Collins, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*; Murphy and Schedtler, eds., *Apocalypses in Context*; Johnson, ed., *End of Days*.

all such variegated aspects of doom and salvation.[38] A historiographical perspective that stresses a fixed definition of "apocalypse" has to concede that it is likely to generate a history of continuity, of comparability, of certainty, and of identity. Such rigid conceptual framework will tend to neglect the essence of what "apocalyptic" signifies, by failing to acknowledge its inherent irrational and un-representable dimensions. The excluded, antagonistic, and intangible "other" of Western civilisation will thus probably always struggle to attain historical positivity.

3 Genealogical Apocalypticism according to Michel Foucault

Throughout his career, Michel Foucault challenged the historicising approach, which he considered a bourgeois identification with the past, loaded with limiting and excluding strategies. His occupation with the histories of madness, medical perception, punishment, sexuality, as well as with the institutions and practices of truth-telling and the enactment of power within these realms, was driven by an intention to reassess matters taken for granted within the Western tradition. Fundamental to this was the questioning of common concepts and notions, and of their tendency to contain appropriations and oversimplifications of historical events and developments, and to legitimate the application of modern categories by homogenising long periods of the past. As Foucault insisted in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*,

> we must rid ourselves of a whole mass of notions, each of which, in its own way, diversifies the theme of continuity. They may not have a very rigorous conceptual structure, but they have a very precise function. Take the notion of tradition: it is intended to give a special temporal status to a group of phenomena that are both successive and identical (or at least similar); it makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same; it allows a reduction of the difference proper to every beginning, in order to pursue without discontinuity the endless search for the origin; tradition enables us to isolate the new against a background of permanence, and to transfer its merit to originality, to genius, to the decisions proper to individuals.[39]

Nietzsche's criticism of Christian traditionalism and of Historism, in particular as expressed in his 1887 book *On the Genealogy of Morality*, was what spurred Foucault's development of an alternative methodological approach to reveal a new "effective" history. He opposes the latter to a historiographical approach that, in giving to a group of phenomena "a special temporal status", adopts exclusively modern

38 Cf. Webb: "'Apocalyptic:' Observations;" Hellholm, "Methodological Reflections on the Problem of Definition of Generic Texts;" Sturm, "Defining the Word 'Apocalyptic'."
39 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 23.

methods of teleological deduction, rational truth-telling, and the individual sublime – aspects that rather ought to be conceived of as compensational strategies for modern societies' fundamental lack of identity. The present age's paranoiac striving to understand and control all forms of knowledge and human behaviour, a new struggle for "universal" power exercised indirectly and deviously, is being projected into the past. Foucault compares this type of suprahistorical perspective to a *surveilling gaze*, retracing a history

> whose function is to compose the finally reduced diversity of time into a totality fully closed upon itself; a history that always encourages subjective recognitions and attributes a form of reconciliation to all the displacements of the past; a history whose perspective on all that precedes it implies the end of time, a completed development. The historian's history finds its support outside of time and pretends to base its judgments on an apocalyptic objectivity. This is only possible, however, because of its belief in eternal truth, the immortality of the soul, and the nature of consciousness as always identical to itself.[40]

The mention of "apocalyptic objectivity" and "immortality of the soul" already indicate that Foucault argues in regard to a *longue durée* of power dynamics that go back to a time when Christian doctrines were predominant, ascribing to the history of traditions also a "voiceless obstinacy toward a millennial ending".[41] In contrast to such a generic perspective that tries to establish an ideal continuity "as a theological movement or a natural process",[42] a *genealogical* perspective provides a history that knows that its complex system of distinct and multiple elements can neither be *synthesised* or *identified*, nor retraced to a *metaphysical origin*. As "knowledge is not made for understanding [but] for cutting",[43] the genealogist will push "the masquerade to its limits" and provide "a history in the form of a concerted carnival".[44] Thus identity should be systematically dissipated and the political dimension of the "will to knowledge" unmasked. A contingent history of the visible and expressible, and the manner in which they depend on contemporary interpretations, ideologies, and social structures, will be excavated:

> The role of genealogy is to record [the] history [of interpretations]: the history of morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as events in the theatre of procedures.[45]

Although Foucault's historical studies reached far into the Western past but apparently never analysed the twentieth century's "dispositifs" in any detail, he consis-

40 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 379.
41 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 380.
42 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 380.
43 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 380.
44 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 386.
45 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 378–379.

tently asserted that it was necessary to approach subjects "both as present-day questions and as historical ones"[46] and that his efforts ought to be characterised as "writing the history of the present".[47] With this in mind, Foucault attempted to develop a cultural critique "as an analysis of the cultural facts characterising our culture. In that sense, it would be a question of something like an ethnology of the culture to which we belong."[48] His attempt "to place myself outside the culture to which we belong, to analyse its formal conditions" and thus "the very conditions of our rationality"[49] literally correlates the objects with the subjects (in Latin "the ones lying beneath") of investigation. As, paradoxically, "discursive formations do not have the same model of historicity as the flow of consciousness or the linearity of language",[50] a genealogist can identify the point where external forms of knowledge become integrated and "subjective". He also can discover the contingent relation of inner and outer temporality or, as Hans Blumenberg put it, the gap between "lifetime" and "world-time".[51]

In *Madness and Civilisation* (1961), Foucault identified a fundamental shift in the occidental perception of time that occurred as early as the Renaissance. A new division had been introduced between tragic cosmic visions and moral criticism. Around 1500, "the derision of madness took over from the seriousness of death" and the "fear before the absolute limit of death becomes interiorised in a continual process of ironisation".[52] Living in the End Times became increasingly coupled to interpretations of the actual political conditions:

> Whereas previously the madness of men had been their incapacity to see that the end of life was always near, and it had therefore been necessary to call them back to the path of wisdom by means of the spectacle of death, now wisdom meant denouncing folly wherever it was to be found, and teaching men that they were already no more than the legions of the dead, and that if the end of life was approaching, it was merely a reminder that a universal madness would soon unite with death. [...] The terms of the argument were therefore now reversed. It was no longer the end of time and the end of the world that would demonstrate that it was madness not to have worried about such things. Rather, the rise of madness, its insidious, creeping presence showed that the final catastrophe was always near: the madness of men brought it nigh and made it a foregone conclusion.[53]

46 Foucault, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview," 376.
47 Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned," 178. Cf. Garland: "What is a 'History of the Present?'" and Roth, "Foucault's 'History of the Present'," quoting a motto from the *Order of Things*: "[...] a discourse attempting to be both empirical and critical cannot but be both positivist and eschatological."
48 Foucault, "'Who Are You, Professor Foucault?'," 91.
49 Foucault, "'Who Are You, Professor Foucault?'," 91.
50 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 187.
51 Blumenberg, *Lebenszeit und Weltzeit*.
52 Foucault, *History of Madness*, 14.
53 Foucault, *History of Madness*, 15.

At the dawn of the Reformation, madness loses the primary attribute it had in the Middle Ages: that of detachment from the collective experience of the apocalypse. This was now displaced by the notion of madness as a product or a symptom of man's worldly activities, always on the verge of surfacing, whose remedy is attainable only in the beyond. Gradually, madness, and its polarity of excessive enthusiasm and melancholy, became a border experience; pure unreason came to be the opposite of self-reflective erudition. In other words, as principles of reasoning became more predominant, irrational experiences in "life-time" became increasingly detached from events in "world-time". As a result, a new realm could be defined where all forms of uncontrolled affects, including crude imaginings, wild protests and irrational hopes, which previously related to the Day of Judgment, were reduced to symptoms:

> And it was precisely there that psychology was born, not as the truth of madness, but as a sign that madness was now detached from its truth, which was unreason, and that from now on it would be a rudderless phenomenon, *insignificant*, on the indefinite surface of nature. An enigma with no truth other than the one that could reduce it. It is for that reason that we must do justice to Freud. [...] Psychoanalysis is not about psychology, but it is about an experience of unreason that psychology, in the modern world, was meant to disguise.[54]

Foucault later claimed that in focusing on the limits of human experience, his work had outlined "three modes of objectification that transform humans into subjects"[55] – as objects of the sciences, of dividing practices, and of self-recognition: "Thus, it is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research."[56] To deepen our understanding of what it meant to be a "subject", his studies expanded beyond the Enlightenment era (which nevertheless was to remain the period most significant for his work).[57] According to Foucault, we need to explore "much more remote processes if we want to understand how we have been trapped in our own history".[58]

Foucault traced the emergence of specific disciplinary mechanisms, coupled to the development of Western reason, that were exercised through techniques of both *totalisation* and of *individualisation* already in Late Antiquity. Although the modern state system, having developed from the medieval "state of justice" and the "administrative state" of the fifteenth century, had indeed generated new forms of political sovereignty, its policies and "governmentality" are comparable to tendencies that

54 Foucault, *History of Madness*, 339.
55 Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 326.
56 Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 327.
57 Cf. Foucault, "Je suis un artificier," 95: "Basically, I only have a single object of historical investigation: the threshold to modernity." ("Au fond, je n'ai qu'un seul object d'étude historique, c'est le seuil de la modernité.")
58 Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 329.

can be retraced far back in history.[59] As the modern ensemble of "biopolitical" tactics has "the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument",[60] their all-encompassing claim resembles the earlier tactics of "pastoral power". After having transmuted the ancient conceptions of dominion into that of a radically new, ethical kind, the singular organisation of the Christian Church had given prominence to the figure of the servant pastor (as opposed to princes, magistrates, prophets, fortune-tellers, benefactors, or educationalists) as a special form of power.[61] According to Foucault, this was based on four principles: assuring individual salvation in the next world; preparing oneself to sacrifice; looking after every single individual; and revealing the innermost secrets of the souls.

> This form of power is salvation-oriented (as opposed to political power). It is oblative (as opposed to the principle of sovereignty); it is individualizing (as opposed to legal power); it is coextensive and continuous with life; it is linked with a production of truth – the truth of the individual himself.[62]

The Christian pastorate displays a religion of order that established a general system of "pure obedience".[63] It followed an "economy of souls" (*oikonomia psuchōn*, in the words of Gregory of Nazianzus)[64] in which the individual identified and recognised and to which he subjected himself.

> Analytical identification, subjection, and subjectivation (*subjectivation*) are the characteristic procedures of individualization that will in fact be implemented by the Christian pastorate and its institutions. What the history of the pastorate involves, therefore, is the entire history of procedures of human individualization in the West. Let's say also that it involves the history of the subject.[65]

However, in retracing the history of Western subjectification, it is also important to emphasise five modes of "counter-conducts".[66] Foucault described them as tactics of insubordination *against* the pastorate and the hierarchical sovereignty of the Church. Often perceived as rebellious and thoroughly non-Christian in their own time, these practices of resisting conduct nevertheless influenced church history significantly. Furthermore, in retrospect they tend to be identified as *typically* Christian: *asceticism* as a practice of total withdrawal and as an exercise of self on self;

59 Cf. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 144, and more precisely on the change of pastoral power between 1580 and 1660, 303–325.
60 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 144.
61 Cf. Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 333.
62 Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 333.
63 Cf. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 230–236.
64 Cf. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 256–257.
65 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 239.
66 Cf. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 259–283.

communities as a social utopian alternative to the priest's sacramental power; *mysticism*, leading to experiences not permitted under pastoral power; the personal *interpretation of Scripture* against the predominant discursive background and without any pastoral relay; and *eschatological beliefs* as a rebellion against the time monopoly of the pastorate.

Representing tactical battles at the limits of pastoral power, these counter-conducts also appear to be its consequence, demonstrating how all human utterances and acts can be understood as caused by specific organisations of power. This perspective offers a decidedly *materialistic* approach to *spiritual* struggles in Western history, analysing them not in connection with specified concepts, but rather as representative instances of political conflicts *of* and *with* their respective time.[67] It was eschatological beliefs that, combined with other counter-modes, most radically challenged the temporal order of the Church and its chronological and universal history. When reading the Book of Revelation, *everything* can *always* seem perilous. For this reason, with the increased institutionalisation of the Church, the relation of knowledge and power crystallised in the development of the appropriate interpretation of the Book of Revelation: the demarcation lines between the compliant and the non-compliant, the licit and the illicit, the ones who had a future and the ones who did not, the living and the dead, could always be drawn anew.

It is this *immanent temporal as political conflict* that needs to be recognised a key tension in Western history. Dealing with eschatological beliefs as a counter-conduct offers a genealogical perspective on apocalypticism that is independent of deductive definitions and instead focuses on power dynamics, oppression, and the resultant disobedient activities of critique, resistance, and liberation.

4 Political Eschatology according to Jacob Taubes

In one of his seminars, Jacob Taubes characterised the mentality of *apocalypticism* with the help of the following anecdote.[68] After the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, an emigrant comes to stay with friends in Vienna for a time, telling them that he is looking for a place of asylum. Attempting to locate one, he spins a globe, but no country proves suitable, and he mournfully exclaims: "Don't you have another globe?" According to Taubes, such an experience of total foreignness in the world, and of the futility of a nation's political and social structures, is essentially apocalyptic. A productive reading of both Jewish *and* Christian *eschatology* cannot be developed without considering this type of experience. An account of this kind of

67 For theoretical, yet less historico-methodological "counter-approaches" cf. Quinby, *Anti-Apocalypse*; Norris, "Versions of Apocalypse;" Keller, *Apocalypse Now and Then*; Bull, *Seeing Things Hidden;* Hall, *Apocalypse*.
68 Cf. Ebach, "Zeit als Frist," 79.

estrangement is provided by Taubes in his only monograph, his dissertation on *Occidental Eschatology* published in 1947.[69]

Influenced by contemporary modes of existentialist expressionism and cultural criticism (the first quote in the book is from Otto Weininger, the last one from Martin Heidegger), and the religious studies by Hans Jonas, Karl Löwith, Bruno Bauer, Otto Petras, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, Taubes re-examined the European history of ideas with a focus on its inherent "apocalyptic-gnostic" conflicts. He argues that as a consequence of the deferral of Christ's *parousia*, the Jewish experience of time as limited ("[t]he paramount question posed in the Apocalypse is *when*")[70] and of leading a life of self-alienation ("the present state of the world, in which the ego dwells, is exile")[71] was carried by Christians as an *internalised* spiritual experience. Deliverance, therefore, became attainable only in the *life hereafter*.[72] Various revolutionary thrusts would continue to occasionally challenge the established Christian institutions in their fundamental structures and attempt to alter their conception of time and open the way for fulfilment *in this life*. These conflicts resemble the opposition between Aristotelian and dialectical logic, or between what is linear, orientated towards present and future, rational, and what is spiral, historically-orientated, and apocalyptic-gnostic.

> Apocalypticism and Gnosis inaugurate a new form of thinking which, though submerged by Aristotelian and Scholastic logic, has been preserved into the present and was taken up and further developed by Hegel and Marx. [...] Dialectical logic is a logic of history, giving rise to the eschatological interpretation of the world. This logic is determined by the question of the power of the negative, as posed by apocalypticism and Gnosis.[73]

Taubes assesses the Western history of ideas through the lens of its spiritual struggles, which he characterises as constantly driven by a "gnostic" or "apocalyptic"[74] tendency to rebel against the predominant rationalistic manifestations. For him, the revolt of the Gnostics in the second and third century A.D. against the creator-God

69 Cf. generally on Taubes: Terpstra and Wit, 'No Spiritual Investment in the World as It Is'; Gold, "Jacob Taubes;" Assmann, Assmann, and Hartwich, "Introduction to the German Edition;" Treml, "Reinventing the Canonical;" Martin, "Liberalism and History after the Second World War."

70 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 32.

71 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 36.

72 The divergences between the views of Taubes and Gershom Scholem resulted from their different valuation of eschatology in Judaism and Christianity. For Taubes, the Jewish messianic heritage was 'prolonging its career' within Christianity. Scholem suspended this process, arguing that Jewish redemption takes place in public and within the community, whereas he saw Christian redemption as turning back from the world, privatised, and focused on an invisible spiritual realm. Cf. Taubes, "Price of Messianism;" and further Macho, "Intellectual Rift between Gershom Scholem and Jacob Taubes."

73 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 35–36.

74 For the problem of Taubes' conceptual equalisation of "Gnosis" and "Apocalypticism", see Colpe, "Jacob Taubes' Gnosisbild."

of the Old Testament, against the conception of the incomplete material creation of the demiurge, became paradigmatic for all further spiritual disputes, which would revolve around the idea of the release of divine *pneuma* within man as opposed to the dominance of a temporal *psyche*. Gnostic thought thus anticipated many notions expressed only much later, such as in Joachim of Fiore's preaching of the spiritual kingdom and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. After Hegel had presented his solution to the problem of theodicy as consisting of both the overcoming of the power of the negative dialectically and historically and the depicting of the spiritual maximum of existence (the *higher realms*), "the disintegration of God and the world"[75] that set in in the nineteenth century lead to a returning to man's primordial alienation and minimal existence (the *lower realms*).[76]

According to Taubes, this modern rift between the higher and the lower dimensions of existence can only be mended through a decentralisation of subjectivity and a radical self-reflection, combined with a setting in motion of the original powers of "Messianism". He noted that a fundamentally new kind of imaginary had emerged out of St. Paul's efforts to give form to the enthusiasm of the early Christian communities:

> In contrast to the old, organic allegiances, the Christian community is an inorganic, subsequent (*nachträglich*) togetherness of individuals based on 'pneuma'. [1 Cor. 12:13] In the Christian community the man of late antiquity blots out his own ego in favour of the superego (*Über-Ich*), which, coming from beyond, descends to the people. The superego is one and the same in each member of the community, so that the community represents a collective of the spirit (*das pneumatische Wir*). The spiritual center of man is the superego of the beyond (*das jenseitige Über-Ich*): 'It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me.' [Gal. 2:20]
> The superego of Christ is seen by the masses as opposing Caesar (*Anti-Cäsar*). It outshines and devalues the Caesarian superego (*cäsarisches Über-Ich*). The mankind of late antiquity, having been reduced to the existence of a colorless mass, begins for a while to revere its lost self in the divine emperor.[77]

For Taubes, the early Christian communities thus preserved the Christ imaginary within their *self*-consciousness, signalling the beginning of the experience of "individual eschatology". Assuming authority over this alternative "superego", the early Church was able to assert itself against the subversive and even anarchistic features of Gnosticism, which Taubes perceived as succeeding the forcefulness of Jewish apocalypticism, with Marcion as the "Arch-Heretic".[78] Such currents were later strongly opposed by the institutionalised Catholic canon, creed, and liturgy, and by

75 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 9.
76 Cf. Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 184–194.
77 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 64–65.
78 Cf. Taubes, "The Iron Cage and the Exodus from It."

the tendency of bishops to, in Foucault's words, "totalise" and "individualise", to "pastoralise" the members of the Christian communities.[79]

Although Taubes later tried to restrict access to *Occidental Eschatology* because of its numerous borrowings from other authors, particularly from Jonas and Löwith, the book's subject matter remained significant for him throughout his career. An untiring polemicist, he often placed himself in provocative opposition to the academic establishment and persisted in trying to restore and revitalise "a tradition of breaking with tradition, which sets on fire the cages of the world that are otherwise frozen in their immanence".[80] *Occidental Eschatology* also provided a comprehensive survey of the European history of ideas by assembling various key philosophical discourses of the Weimar Republic. These offer valuable insights into topics such as the debate on "political theology", a term strongly associated with the work of the controversial Catholic jurist, political theorist, and former National Socialist Party collaborator, Carl Schmitt.

For many years, Schmitt, whom Taubes called an "apocalyptic prophet of the counterrevolution",[81] remained Taubes' intellectual antipode, above all because of his idea of "time as a limit" and his adoption of a "secular" political orientation within a much broader religious tradition. As Taubes put it,

> Carl Schmitt thinks apocalyptically, but from above, from the powers that be; I think from the bottom up. Common to us both is the experience of time and history as delimited respite, a term or even a last respite. Originally that was also a Christian experience of history.[82]

Albeit fundamentally standing far apart – as a Jew, Taubes was an "abstract enemy" to the orthodox Catholic Schmitt – both shared the same universal perspective on "occidental" history, asserting that Christian eschatology remained the decisive force in Western political thought. Even after the transition to a modern state, historical theological concepts mostly retained their political significance, if in "secularized" guise.[83] To Taubes, history should be read for its "messianic" moments and movements of liberation "from the bottom up", and to recover the *longue durée* of rebellious struggles against established structures and representations. By contrast, Schmitt, looking "from above", considered an absolute sovereign as essential for

79 Cf. Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 72–77 (on the Revelation of John in this perspective, 70–72).
80 Assmann, Assmann, and Hartwich, "Introduction to the German Edition," xxiv.
81 Cf. Taubes, *To Carl Schmitt*, 1–18. In this article, Schmitt's historico-juridical conceptions are discussed only insofar as they were part of Taubes' intercourse with him.
82 Taubes, *To Carl Schmitt*, 13.
83 As famously phrased in Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 36: "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are securalized theological concepts not only because of their historical development – in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver – but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts. The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology."

maintaining the political order, and the only way to preserve something like a memory of the "messianic". To Schmitt, the sovereign represents the ultimate secular authority, who guarantees order beyond the rule of law in a "state of exception" (*Ausnahmezustand*).[84] That is why the *katechon*, the "restrainer" of Antichrist and the guardian of temporal order, first mentioned in the apostle Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, ought to be a prominent figure of thought. According to Schmitt, "[t]he belief that a restrainer holds back the end of the world provides the only bridge between the eschatological paralysis of all human events and the tremendous historical power (*Geschichtsmächtigkeit*) of the Christian empire of the German kings."[85]

As is apparent, both Schmitt and Taubes saw modern liberal democracies and their fundamental crises as deeply rooted in the Western religious tradition, but their conceptions of the "apocalyptic" remained diametrically opposed. Where Taubes largely focused on provocative acts against the still predominant representative "superego of the beyond" which served to conciliate the masses, Schmitt sided with its sovereign "restrainer" who prevented man from becoming "wolf to man" in anarchic times of civil war. Therefore nothing less than the continued existence of the "occidental" structure of *totalisation* and *individualisation*, already mentioned above as a major topic in Foucault's work, was at the centre of the debate on "political theology". Taubes sought to overcome it, Schmitt to retain it under any circumstances, at the date of ultimate decision, in a "state of exception".

The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben has recently contributed to the – once again prominent – theoretical debate on political "Messianism"[86] with an attempt to retrace the figure of *Homo sacer*, combining the theories of Foucault and Schmitt. It is important to note that Agamben's commentary on the letter of Paul the Apostle to the Romans includes a dedication to Taubes and substantially departs from Schmitt's ideas at key points.[87] Following Taubes' ideas in his last four lectures (held in Heidelberg in 1986) on *The Political Theology of Paul*,[88] as well as *Walter Benjamin's* interpretation of the "state of exception",[89] Agamben pleads for a revi-

84 Cf. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5–15.

85 Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law*, 29.

86 Cf. Blanton and Vries, eds., *Paul and the Philosophers*; and for an overview Ferris, "Agamben and the Messianic;" Liska, "Messianic Language and the Idea of Prose."

87 Cf. Agamben, *Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, 1, and esp. 104–111, where Agamben identifies the incompatibility of Taubes' "messianic" and Schmitt's "katechontic" conception of lawlessness, of *katargēsis*, and of *anomia*.

88 Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, 76–96.

89 Cf. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 257: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight. Then we shall clearly realize that it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency, and this will improve our position in the struggle against Fascism."

sion of the conventional conceptions of eschatology, particularly its *temporal* implications:

> The most insidious misunderstanding of the messianic announcement does not consist in mistaking it for prophecy, which is turned toward the future, but for apocalypse, which contemplates the end of time. The apocalyptic is situated on the last day, the Day of Wrath. It sees the end fulfilled and describes what it sees. The time in which the apostle lives is, however, not the *eschaton*, it is not the end of time. [...] What interests the apostle is not the last day, it is not the instant in which time ends, but the time that contracts itself and begins to end [...], or if you prefer, the time that remains between time and its end.[90]

Agamben here aligns himself with Benjamin and Taubes, for whom Paulus had increasingly become a key figure of interpretation and identification. For Agamben, too, both *eschatology* and the *apocalyptic* concern events in chronological time and are dependent on the level of common representation. Yet in order to better comprehend the *messianic*, the particular *temporal* experience of the apostle – as opposed to that of a prophet or an apocalyptic visionary – should be reconsidered. It refers to the experience of facing imminent *parousia*, of living not at the *end of time*, but in the *time of the end*, when temporal progress and time become compressed and Man faces the ending both individually and jointly. Then, when moving beyond the *worldly* and *physical* experience, witnessing the rupture of the political tensions of common and individual identification, the "messianic" subversive power in Man might unfold.[91]

Thus, "political eschatology" fundamentally deals with the limits of civilisation and questions the machinations of politics and power, as well as the appropriation of the *apocalyptic* in representations for secular purposes.[92] It seeks to challenge how these representations traditionally emerge out of a negative perspective on the "spiritual-messianic" experience – demanding an absolute "profane-materialistic" methodology in order to become historically positive in the spirit of the Enlightenment.

5 Revisiting the Times of the Apocalypse and *parrhēsia*

Although challenging Western historiographical traditions from different angles, Foucault's theory of genealogy and Taubes' conception of eschatology to a large extent agree where their "profane-materialistic" and "spiritual-messianic" perspectives

90 Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 62.
91 Cf. Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 57.
92 On the concept of a political theology based on Hegel, Taubes and Malabou, see now Lynch, *Apocalyptic Political Theology*.

converge in dealing with the "last things", or the *eschaton*. Both approaches attempt to offer a historical view unaffected by predominant cultural dispositions and "state philosophies". They focus instead on analyses and interpretations of experiences of otherness and extremity in order to deconstruct representations of identity and reveal modes of oppression caused by various intrinsic power dynamics. Importantly, they fundamentally question all conventional perceptions of *chronological time*. Foucault argued that it is "[a]s if we were afraid to conceive of the *Other* in the time of our own thought",[93] and – using his method of genealogy – he tried to find "just below the temporality of historians"[94] a history that "constructs a countermemory – a transformation of history into a totally different form of time".[95] Taubes, for his part, consistently focused on the conditions of alienation in Western religious history, assuming them to convey the "messianic" potential to establish a new general order of different temporality: "The subject of inquiry is the essence of history", and "[h]istory only reveals its essence as eschatology".[96]

It might prove advantageous to scholars of apocalypticism faced with overly simplistic historical deductions and narrowing traditional patterns to concentrate more on the various contrasting temporal aspects inherent in the conceptual field of the apocalypse. This would enable established notions to be characterised not by their definite *meanings* but rather their concrete *functionality*, not in relation to a distinct "occidental" *conceptual category* but a distinct "occidental" *temporal structure*. Applying such a shift in focus to specific historical indices, "revelation" could then be considered as referring to the *individualised dimension of chronological time*, to the socio-political preconditions necessary for the individual to uncover language or culture at a certain time and confront an intuited absolute other (like "God", "nation", "nature", or "love"). The "apocalyptic" affects the *representative dimension of chronological time*, powerful narratives used to envision the Final Judgment, the end of the world, or some threatening other (like "The Whore of Babylon", "Gog and Magog", "the enemy", or "aliens"). "Apocalypticism" refers to the *historical dimension of chronological time*, a traditional reference to former expectations of the end, archived and actualised according to specifically defined parameters of commemoration. "Eschatology" should accordingly be considered in conjunction with the *finite dimension of chronological time*, the joint anticipation of the ending and fulfilment of chronological time, which strongly opposes the conventional belief in progress. The "Messianic", finally, points to an *operative dimension within chronological time*, a highly personal experience of the time of the now as the time of the end, which cannot be mediated or suspended, but in which all mediation is brought to its end – a life totally restarted in "the time which remains", perpetuating the

93 Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, 13.
94 Foucault, *History of Madness*, 355.
95 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 385.
96 Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 3 and 12.

heritage of living *another* life, in joint actions, aside from the ever persistent absolute powers of totalisation and individualisation.

A historical methodology that takes into account these temporal aspects might lead to a more viable understanding of the "apocalypse" as a specific religious *and* political phenomenon in the Western tradition. Neglecting the narrative's inherent function – as a fundamental critique of and protest against the established order – would mean to lose sight of significant movements and figures of thought in the past, politically not imposed by gazes of surveillance "from above", but caused by the effects of oppression and emanating "from the bottom up". Even in times of "secularisation", a reflection on the persistence of this conflict should be considered vital, as the humanities, including modern historiography, have proven to be greatly influenced by related modes of thinking. As Foucault reasoned:

> That which eludes power is counterpower, which however is trapped in the same game. For this reason the problem of war, of confrontation, must be revisited. The tactical and strategical analyses must be revisited on an extraordinarily deep, minute, and ordinary level. The universal battle needs to be rethought by avoiding perspectives of the Apocalypse. Because from the 19th century on, we have lived in an apocalyptic economy of thinking. Hegel, Marx, or Nietzsche, or in another sense Heidegger, have promised us the tomorrow, the break of dawn, the dawn of day, the day which reveals, the evening, the night, and so forth. This simultaneously cyclic and binary temporality has dominated our political thinking and leaves us defenceless when we need to think differently.[97]

In contrast to such a Western "apocalyptic economy of thinking" and its temporal determination, Foucault sought to develop a historical method that is not only capable of taking the singular character of political struggles and counterstruggles into account, but puts it at the centre of analysis. If Foucault had been addressing this point to Taubes – a representative of the humanities' apocalyptic discourse in twentieth-century Germany – he likely would have suggested that Taubes prescind from ascribing *all* forms of rebellious acts and counter-conducts to "apocalyptic-gnostic" patterns. He might also have recommended that Taubes free himself of his intellectual intercourse with Carl Schmitt and his "katechontic" justification of "political theology", leave the level of the apocalyptic discourse and instead turn to "micro"-analyses at "an extraordinarily deep, minute, and ordinary level".

97 Foucault, "Je suis un artificier," 130–131: "Ce qui échappe au pouvoir, c'est le contre-pouvoir, qui est pourtant pris lui aussi dans le même jeu. C'est pourquoi il faut reprendre le problème de la guerre, de l'affrontement. Il faut reprendre les analyses tactiques et stratégiques à un niveau extraordinairement bas, infime, quotidien. Il faut repenser l'universelle bataille en échappant aux perspectives de l'Apocalypse. En effet, on a vécu depuis le XIXe siècle dans une économie de pensée qui était apocalyptique. Hegel, Marx ou Nietzsche, ou Heidegger dans un autre sens, nous ont promis le lendemain, l'aube, l'aurore, le jour qui pointe, le soir, la nuit, etc. Cette temporalité, à la fois cyclique et binaire, commandait notre pensée politique et nous laisse désarmés quand il s'agit de penser autrement."

Interestingly, Foucault's last lectures at the University of California at Berkeley and the Collège de France in the early 1980s, seems to circle around the very subject Taubes had pursued over a lifetime.[98] In his considerations on *critique* and *parrhēsia*, Foucault analysed the European tradition's various modes of telling truth as "practices of the self", describing them as forms of courageous "dramatics of true discourse"[99] (as opposed to American discourse pragmatics), which bind certain persons (like the prophet, the seer, the philosopher, the scientist) as subjects to the truth they assert. Pursuing a "genealogy of the critical attitude in Western philosophy",[100] he outlined a "matrix scene of *parrhēsia*"[101] as an occasional "limit-situation"[102] that could be found in various constellations of "veridiction" in the past. In many respects, its characterisation resembles Taubes' assumption of a "gnostic structure" that is *not* "a timeless eternal, archetypal idea that repeatedly comes into language without being ignited in a particular historical context".[103]

In the classical Greek and Hellenistic tradition, Foucault recognised an ethical and philosophical practice of speaking truth that was represented by certain noble people's "courage to say things which are useful for everyone".[104] In the Septuagint and the works of Philo of Alexandria, on the other hand, *parrhēsia* was conceived of as "speaking open-heartedly" to God. In a more general sense, to be blessed with *parrhēsia* was also recognised as a gift from God. In the New Testament, however, *parrhēsia* simply described "a mode of being, a mode of activity [...,] an attitude of the heart",[105] not necessarily manifesting itself in discourse or speech, but rather referring to a new "eschatological attitude":

> *Parrhēsia* is the confidence that God will hear those who are Christians and who, as such, having faith in Him, ask of Him nothing other than what is in accordance with His will. It is this parrhesiastic attitude which makes possible the eschatological confidence in the Day of Judgment, the day which one can await, which one must await with complete confidence (*meta parrhēsias*) because of God's love.[106]

In the context of the courage to preach the Gospel, however, this confidence in God's salvation would become "the apostolic virtue par excellence",[107] notably in the case of the apostle Paul. His assured way of expression resembles the Greek

98 Cf. Foucault, *Fearless Speech*; Foucault, *Government of Self and Others*; Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*; and esp. Taubes "Virtue and Faith".
99 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 68.
100 Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 170–171.
101 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 50.
102 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 61. Cf. Folkers, "Foucault, Parrhesia and the Genealogy of Critique," esp. 7–10.
103 Taubes, "Notes on Surrealism," 109.
104 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 326.
105 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 329.
106 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 330.
107 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 330.

courage of addressing others and practicing frank speech. According to Foucault, this activity would transpose into ambiguous modes of individual asceticism due to "the increasing stress on obedience in Christian life".[108] Yet this prior moment of "freedom of speech, disorder and anarchy of everyone being able to say everything or anything"[109] can be considered as having significant traits in common with Taubes' conception of the "messianic" moment, which for a short time occurred as a Judaeo-Christian experience in the first and second century A.D., as, for instance, displayed in Marcionism.

> Gnosis, the Greek term for knowledge, achieves in late ancient Gnosticism a specific coloration: secret, revealed, knowledge necessary for redemption, a knowledge that is not naturally acquired, a knowledge that transforms the knower. [...] The act of knowledge is accomplished in the proclamation of Gnostic myth itself.[110]

This intersection between Foucault's genealogical assumptions on *parrhēsia* and Taubes' *Fragments towards a Critique of Historical Reason*[111] can be considered a fruitful foundation for examining historical encounters with eschatology. Shifting the focus onto the modes of "veridiction" and courageous acts of truth-telling, and their implications for heterochrony and otherness, could enable a re-evaluation of "eschatological counter-conducts", such as the Franciscan or Dominican movements.[112] Similarly, the role of the university and the function of critique in the era of the Enlightenment, gradually superseding practices of "wisdom", might prove a productive subject to which to apply these perspectives.[113]

In *Nietzsche, Freud, Marx* (1964), Foucault had claimed that "language means something other than what it says",[114] and that the main challenge was to scrutinise

108 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 333.
109 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 331.
110 Taubes, "The Dogmatic Myth of Gnosticism," 69.
111 The subtitle for Taubes, *From Cult to Culture*.
112 Cf. Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 29: "It seems to me that in medieval Christianity we see another type of grouping bringing together the prophetic and parrhesiastic modalities. The two modalities of telling the truth about the future (about what is hidden from men by virtue of their finitude and the structure of time, about what awaits men and the imminence of the still hidden event), and then telling the truth to men about what they are, were brought together in a number of particular [types] of discourses, and also institutions. I am thinking of preaching and preachers, and especially of those preachers, starting with the Franciscans and Dominicans, who played an absolutely major role across the Western world and through-out the Middle Ages in the perpetuation, but also renewal and transformation [of] the experience of threat for the medieval world. These great preachers played the role of both prophet and parrhesiast in that society. Those who speak of the threatening imminence of the future, of the Kingdom of the Last Day, of the Final Judgment, or of approaching death, at the same time tell men what they are, and tell them frankly, with complete *parrhēsia*, what their faults and crimes are, and in what respects and how they must change their mode of being."
113 Cf. Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 29–30, and also Taubes, "The Intellectuals and the University."

the functional order of the hermeneutic systems in Western tradition that directly related to the absence of "speaking truth". In the last year before his death in June 1984, he seems to have detected, beyond the discursive strategies of hermeneutics, a pragmatic attitude dependent on, but not reducible to its historical contexts. His thought therefore seems to have been converging with Taubes' thread in *Occidental Eschatology*, which, however, to a large extent lacked a historic-methodological support.

The last sentence of Foucault's lectures, though not spoken in public, emphasises his correspondence with Taubes. It insists on the importance to focus on Western counter-conducts, in order to attain a deeper understanding of the political dimension of the history of the humanities, and to return to the critical dimensions in philosophy, psychology, and economics. It states: "[T]here is no establishment of the truth without an essential position of otherness; the truth is never the same; there can be truth only in the form of the other world and the other life."[115] One can say that from the beginning to the end, in parallel developments, Taubes and Foucault pursued their liminal endeavours without ever suspending a certain provocative, subversive, conceivably even "messianic" impulse: that maybe one day in a utopian finale, in accordance with a history that focuses on the unconscious experiences of a "nonworldly ego",[116] spoken from beyond the ken, language will once again mean what it says: "Poetry is the only beyond, not because it bridges 'this world' (*Diesseits*) and the one 'beyond' (*Jenseits*), Above and Below. It is the beyond itself. The word does not bear testimony, rather it is itself transcendence."[117]

6 Closing Remarks

Jacob Taubes made one last effort to involve Michel Foucault in a research group on historiography in 1978. In a letter to Hermann Peter Altenstein, Jr. of the Berlin "Wissenschaftssenat" concerning the founding of an Institute of Advanced Study in Berlin, Taubes proposed a number of the workshops. One of these was to deal with "transitional periods in history":

> Amongst the most productive subjects seems to be the problem of transitions and turning points in history, or more precisely: in history itself there are no turning points, but several groups have a consciousness of the transitional symptom and the turning point of a period within the 'continuous' run of history. Here I am considering a small task group as a workshop, with Kosellick [sic!] (Bielefeld), Meier (Bochum), Foucault (Paris), Hübener (Berlin), Veyne (Paris), Bollack (Paris) and others (not more than eight!) participating. For this, a detailed,

114 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," ed. Faubion, 270.
115 Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 340, note.
116 Taubes, "Notes on Surrealism," 102.
117 Taubes, "Notes on Surrealism," 104.

> later to be defined, preliminary project report on the study of 'late' periods in occidental history (which usually are classified as periods of decline in the official historical sciences) would also be needed, potentially contributed by the Aspen Institute. In this field, the East-Berlin Academy and its department of Late Antiquity is active as well. Thus a visit to East Berlin could be added to the group's schedule.[118]

However, this proposal of Taubes also failed to materialise. What could have become an unconventional, risk-taking research institute located in the very centre of Berlin, thereby mirroring and calling attention to the "world-historic conflicts between East and West" and the "grim reality of the century",[119] instead developed into the foundation of the prestigious "Wissenschaftskolleg" in the outer Grunewald district, in Wallotstraße, in 1981. Initially, Taubes strongly opposed this new institution's "idyllic" and "elitist" status.[120]

The plan to invite Foucault to a workshop seems not to have been pursued further after this. Foucault's stay in Germany in January 1978, when he met representatives of the Berlin student movement at the Tunix Congress, remained his last. On this occasion, he encountered Peter Gente, a former student assistant of Taubes and one of the founders of the Merve Verlag, an underground collective publishing company, which excelled in bringing French philosophy to German readers in translation.[121] Eventually, Taubes would outlive Foucault by three years, albeit increasingly impaired by manic depression. In autumn 1986, he was diagnosed with cancer and died within a few months. He concluded his life-long preoccupation with "gnostic" or "apocalyptic" patterns and movements in occidental history with a final lecture on *The Political Theology of Paul* with "Exodus from Biblical Religion: Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud"[122] – to a significant extent still pursuing the discussion with Foucault on "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx".

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118 Taubes, *Letter to Hermann Peter Altenstein, Jr.*: "Eines der produktiven Themen scheint mir das Problem der Übergänge und Zaesuren in der Geschichte zu sein oder genauer: in der Geschichte selbst gibt es keine Zaesuren, aber verschiedene Gruppen haben ein Bewußtsein vom Übergangscharakter und Zaesur einer Periode innerhalb des 'kontinuierlichen' Laufes der Geschichte. Hier denke ich an eine kleine Arbeitsgruppe als workshop, in der Kosellick [sic!] (Bielefeld), Meier (Bochum), Foucault (Paris), Hübener (Berlin), Veyne (Paris), Bollack (Paris) und andere (nicht mehr als acht!) teilnehmen könnten. Auch hier wäre ein genau zu umschreibender Forschungsbericht über das Studium von 'Spät'perioden in der okzidentalen Geschichte (die gewöhnlich als Verfallsperioden von der offiziellen Geschichtswissenschaft normiert werden) als Vorarbeit nötig, die das Aspen-Institut beisteuern könnte. Auf diesem Gebiet ist auch Ostberlin in der Akademie in der Abteilung Spätantike tätig, so daß ein Besuch in Ostberlin mit ins Programm der Gruppe aufgenommen werden soll."

119 Taubes, *Letter to Hermann Peter Altenstein, Jr.*

120 Cf. Taubes, "Elite oder Avantgarde?;" Pörksen, *Camelot in Grunewald*, 77–78; Felsch, *Geschichte einer Revolte*, 209–210 and 216.

121 Cf. Felsch, *Der lange Sommer der Theorie*, 141–148.

122 Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, 76–96.

In the above-mentioned letter from 1978, Taubes had already suggested the future direction of an independent research institute:

> If the individual fellowships were not to be distributed pluralistically and blindly, but instead due thought were to be given to setting a longer-term course for the development of the Wallotstraße project, I would consider nothing more appropriate than the pursuit of the intentions of the Warburg Institute *at a new level of reflection* that has opened up in the post-war convergence of art history, semiotics, the theory of symbols and images.[123]

Taubes thought that this prospected institution – partially realised in 1996 with the foundation of the Leibniz-Center for Literary and Cultural Research in Berlin – would come to represent a convergence of the heritage of both the German and the Jewish philosophical tradition. In his late assessment of the role of the Enlightenment, Foucault similarly argued that the problems of modernity could only be addressed by thinking both Jewish and Christian philosophy together. In his essay *What is Enlightenment?*, part of his 1983 debate with Jürgen Habermas, he once again outlined the categorical necessity of focussing on the limits both of society and of the individual as they are defined by mechanics of power. Foucault reasons that this critical task originated as a German-Jewish dialogue at the beginning of the Enlightenment; Moses Mendelssohn's and Immanuel Kant's answers to the prize question "Was ist Aufklärung?" in 1783 reveal their common intellectual foundation:

> With the two texts published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, the German *Aufklärung* and the Jewish *Haskala* recognize that they belong to the same history; they are seeking to identify the common processes from which they stem. And it is perhaps a way of announcing the acceptance of a common destiny – we know to what drama that was to lead.[124]

Even if it is unclear, as Foucault argues, "whether we will ever reach mature adulthood",[125] the task inherited from the *Lumières* remains crucial:[126] to lift the veils of apocalyptic discourses as well as of apocalyptic powers. Both Taubes and Foucault

123 Taubes, *Letter to Hermann Peter Altenstein, Jr.*: "Sollten die einzelnen fellowships nicht pluralistisch und blind gestreut werden, sondern überhaupt der Gedanke in Erwägung gezogen werden, langfristig einen Akzent mit den Arbeiten des Projekts Wallotstraße zu setzen, so schiene mir nichts würdiger als die Nachfolge der Intentionen des Warburg-Instituts *auf einem neuen Niveau der Reflexion*, wie es durch die Konvergenz von Kunstgeschichte, Semiotik, Theorie des Symbols und der Bilder, die nach dem Kriege sich herstellte, anzutreten."

124 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," 304.

125 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," 318.

126 Cf. Derrida, "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy," 22: "In the daylight of today we cannot not have become the heirs of these *Lumières*. We cannot and we must not – this is a law and a destiny – forgo the *Aufklärung*, in other words, what imposes itself as the enigmatic desire for vigilance, for the lucid vigil (*veille*), for elucidation, for critique and truth, but for a truth that at the same time keeps within itself some apocalyptic desire, this time as desire for clarity and revelation, in order to demystify or, if you prefer, to deconstruct apocalyptic discourse itself and with it

– both of whom themselves witnessed atrocities and experienced radical social exclusion – offer perspectives on historical struggles from "limit-experiences". At the core of eschatology as well as of genealogy, beyond the common historiographical occupation with events in chronological time, courageous "practices of freedom" are to be discovered,[127] which ought to remain important also in the future, through the pursuit of what Foucault called the "work on our limits, that is, a patient labor giving form to our impatience for liberty".[128]

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everything that speculates on vision, the imminence of the end, theophany, parousia, the last judgment."

127 Cf. Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self," 292: "[...] I refuse to reply to the question I am sometimes asked: 'But if power is everywhere, there is no freedom.' I answer that if there are relations of power in every social field, this is because there is freedom everywhere." And Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 5: "The essence of history is freedom."

128 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," 319.

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