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ABSTRACT

THE ORIGINS AND ANTECEDENTS OF JOACHIM OF FIORE'S
(1135-1202) HISTORICAL-CONTINUOUS METHOD
OF PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION

by

Dojčin Živadinović

Adviser: P. Gerard Damsteegt

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE ORIGINS AND THE ANTECEDENTS OF JOACHIM OF FIORE'S
(1135-1202) HISTORICAL-CONTINUOUS METHOD OF PROPHETIC
INTERPRETATION

Name of researcher: Dojčin Živadinović

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Date completed: December 2017

Problem

In an age of biblical idealism dominated with allegorical hermeneutics, the works of Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) created a shift in biblical exegesis, directly impacting the development of both Catholic and Protestant eschatology. Although a clear interest has been expressed concerning the influence of Joachim of Fiore on the eschatology of the late Middle Ages, very few scholars have attempted to explore the antecedents of Joachim's ideas, specifically his historical-continuous interpretation of Daniel and Revelation and the application of the year-day principle. The purpose of this study is to explore the origins of Joachim's eschatological views and to suggest the sources or

literary traditions that might have influenced him in developing a systematically historical scheme for interpreting the book of Revelation.

Method

This dissertation attempts to highlight and evaluate similarities between Joachim's biblical historicism and early medieval and Early Church eschatological sources. This is achieved in two steps. The first step is to accurately depict Joachim's method of prophetic interpretation. The second step is to systematically compare Joachim's method of interpretation with the sources antecedent and contemporary to Joachim. Included is an analysis and evaluation of commentaries on Revelation from the Latin, Byzantine, and Near-Eastern Christian sources, as well an examination of sources from the medieval Jewish tradition.

Results

The analysis of the eschatological commentaries antecedent to Joachim of Fiore reveals that besides a number of unique features, Joachim's hermeneutical framework primarily combines: (1) the historical periodization of Church history characteristic of the expositors in the Latin High Middle Ages, in the early Byzantine period, and Near-Eastern Christian exegesis, (2) Latin medieval tradition of Revelation exegesis dominated by the recapitulation principle and, (3) a Near-Eastern Christian (Armenian, Syrian, and Coptic) and Jewish system of prophetic interpretation using the "year-day" principle, coupled with the expectation of the future Sabbatical period, sometimes referred to as the millennium.

Conclusions

Joachim's system of interpretation does not have a direct antecedent but instead has several sources. The historicist method of biblical interpretation, although rare in early Latin Middle Ages, appears to revive in the High Middle Ages. Biblical historicism was a particularly prominent approach to the book of Revelation in the Byzantine and Near-Eastern Christian tradition. Potentially surprising are several similarities between Joachim and Near-Eastern Christian expositors. This seems to be a neglected area in the field of Joachite studies, as very few contemporary scholars have linked Joachim's historical-chronological ideas with the Near-Eastern commentaries of the book of Revelation.

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Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment
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Doctor of Philosophy

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ANF *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson Publication, 1994.
- CCSL *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954-?
- DSS Joachim of Fiore. *De Septem Sigilis*. Edited by Marjorie Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich. *Recherche en théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21 (1954): 239-247.
- DUT Joachim of Fiore. *De Ultimis Tribulationibus*. Edited by Randolph E. Daniel, "Abbot Joachim of Fiore" *The De Ultimis Tribulationibus* in *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves*. Edited by Ann Williams, 165-89. London, UK: Longman, 1980.
- EA Joachim of Fiore. *Expositio in Apocalypsim*. Venice: F. Bindoni and M. Passini, 1527. Reprint, Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964.
- LC (D) Joachim of Fiore. *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti*. Translated by Randolph E. Daniel. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983.
- LC (V) Joachim of Fiore. *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti*. Venice, Italy: De Lucre, 1519. Reprint, Frankfurt, Germany: Minerva, 1964.
- LF Joachim of Fiore. *Liber Figurarum*. Edited by Luca Tondelli, Marjorie Reeves, and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich. *Il Libro delle Figure dell' Abate Gioacchino da Fiore*, volume 2. Turin, Italy: Società editrice internazionale 1953.
- NPNF *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994.
- VBJA Anonymus. *Vita Beati Joachim Abbatis* (c. 1210). Edited by Herbert Grundmann, "Zur Biographie Joachims von Fiore und Rainers von Ponza." *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 16 (1960): 528-538.
- VBJS Luca de Cosenza. *Virtutum Beati Joachimi Synopsis* (ca. 1220). Edited by Herbert Grundmann. "Zur Biographie Joachims von Fiore und Rainers von Ponza." *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 16 (1960): 539-544.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A Cistercian abbot from Calabria in southern Italy, Joachim of Fiore (AD 1135-1202), is considered to be one of the most important apocalyptic expositors of the Middle Ages.¹ Often associated with the development of the historical-continuous² method of the interpretation of apocalyptic prophecies, Joachim's writings³ contributed heavily to the overturn of the medieval idealistic interpretations of the book of Revelation, a tradition that had dominated Latin Christianity since the time of Augustine (AD 354-430).⁴

¹ Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Columbia University, 1979), 126; Antonio Crocco, *Gioacchino da Fiore: la più singolare ed affascinante figura del medioevo cristiano* (Naples, Italy: Empireo, 1960).

² Biblical historicism, also known as historical-continuous or historical-chronological method of prophetic interpretation, portrays apocalyptic passages of the book of Daniel and Revelation of John as chronological and successive periods and events of world and church history. The term "historicism" in this study does not refer to various ideas of historical theory, or artistic style, but to theological and biblical method of prophetic interpretation. See Reimar Vetne, "A Definition and Short History of Historicism as a Method for Interpreting Daniel and Revelation," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 1-14; Milton Spenser Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments*, 2 vols. (London, UK: Phillips and Hunt, 1883), 2: 466.

³ Multiple scholars have noted Joachim's affinity towards historicism. See L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 1:703-713; Mal Couch, "Historicism," in *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1996), 369; Gilbert Desrosiers, *An Introduction to Revelation* (New York, NY: Continuum International, 2000), 32; and Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 19.

⁴ Idealist interpretation does not see the books of Daniel and Revelation as describing or predicting specific events in history. Idealism minimizes the historical application of prophecy and denies any particular historical fulfillment (see Steve Gregg, *Revelation: Four Views*

Background of the Problem

In spite of the differences he held with the medieval tradition, Joachim had friendly relationships with most of the late twelfth-century popes (Lucius III [1181-85], Clement III [1187-91], and Celestine III [1191-98]).⁵ Joachim was on particularly friendly terms with Celestine III, who allowed Joachim to establish a new religious group, the order of Fiore (or Flora),⁶ with the purpose of fostering moral and spiritual reform in the Church.⁷

Joachim's fame as an expositor of prophecy continued after his death. At the Lateran Council of 1215 the order of Fiore was hailed as one of the four pillars of the Church.⁸ While Joachim's piety guarded his personal reputation, his prophetic views stirred controversy, especially in the later periods of less reform-minded popes.⁹ This

[Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013], 68-72; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997], 29). The idealist approach to the book of Revelation was proposed already by Tyconius, a Donatist writer from the late fourth century. It was accepted to a great degree by Augustine and perpetuated by early medieval expositors in the west (Paula Fredricksen, "Tyconius and Augustine on Apocalypse," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard K. Emerson [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1992], 20-50).

⁵ Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1969), 28.

⁶ The order of Fiore (flower) was named after the new spiritual life that was supposed to flourish in the Church as a result of the reformative efforts of Joachim's order (Edmund G. Gardner, "Joachim of Fiora," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 vols. [1912], 8:406).

⁷ When capitalized, the term *Church* is used, throughout the study, to indicate the broad institution of Christian religion. A local congregation or parish will be termed *church*.

⁸ Although some of Joachim's speculations upon the Trinity were rejected (Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 33).

⁹ Several works that were falsely attributed to Joachim inflamed the controversy. The most famous among them are *De Oneribus Prophetarum*, the *Expositio Sybillae et Merlini*, the *Commentary on Jeremiah* and the *Commentary on Isaiah*. For a full account of works attributed to Joachim see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, chaps. 1-2.

controversy continued throughout the late Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment.

In *La Divina comedia*, Dante Alighieri places Joachim in the seventh heaven, hand in hand along with other Catholic saints.¹⁰ He is also counted among the beatified in Catholic literature such as Henriquez's *Fasciculus Sanctorum Ordinis Cisterciensis*. In contrast, however, he appears as a heretic in the *Catalogus Haereticorum* composed by Guido de Perpignan.¹¹ Protestant writers often described him as a medieval reformer, while the *Acta Sanctorum*, a seventeenth-century collection of Catholic Saints, considers him to be among the beatified.¹²

Problem

While a manifest interest has been expressed concerning the impact of Joachim of Fiore on the eschatology of the late Middle Ages, very few scholars have attempted to comprehensively explore the antecedents of Joachim's ideas, specifically his historical interpretation of Daniel and Revelation and the application of the year-day principle.

¹⁰ Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Comedia*, ed. C. Grandgent (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1972), 737; first written by Dante between 1308 and his death in 1321.

¹¹ Compare the eulogies of Joachim, written by Arnold Wion, *Lignum Vitae*, 5 vols. (Venice, Italy: Georgium Angelerium, 1595), 2:790, 793, and Crisostomo Enriquez, *Fasciculus Sanctorum Ordinis Cisterciensis*, 4 vols. (Brussels, Belgium: Ioannus Pepermanus, 1623-1624), 2:135-140, with the condemnation by Guido de Perpignan and Bernard de Luxembourg, "Joachim Abbas," *Catalogus Haereticorum Omnium Pene* (Cologne, Germany: Eucharius Cervicornus, 1522), xviii-ciii. The handwritten edition of Perpignan was produced under the title *Summa de Haeresibus* in Mallorca, Spain, in 1342.

¹² Godefrido Henschenio and Daniel Van Papenbroeck, *Acta Sanctorum*, 53 vols. (Antwerp, Netherlands: Michaelem Onobarum, 1688 [1643-1794]), 7:85-95; Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 3 and 146.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the origins of Joachim's eschatological views and to suggest sources or literary traditions, which might have influenced him in developing a systematically unique historical scheme for interpreting the book of Revelation.

Methodology

This study analyzes similarities between Joachim's apocalyptic thought and major medieval and Early Church eschatological sources. The purpose of the study is achieved through two major steps. The first step is to present an accurate description of the key features of Joachim's method of prophetic interpretation. The second step is to compare Joachim's view of the book of Revelation with the sources antecedent and contemporary to Joachim.

The main corpus of Joachim's eschatological contribution is examined, as are the main avenues through which Joachim was likely influenced in his eschatological hermeneutics. Included is an analysis and evaluation of commentaries on Revelation from the Latin, Byzantine, and Near-Eastern Christian sources, as well an examination of sources from the medieval Jewish tradition.

Scope and Delimitations

The first delimitation of this study is the choice of Joachim's literary opus. Only Joachim's works that can be reliably attributed to Joachim are examined.¹³ The main

¹³ For a definitive study on Joachim's authentic works see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, Appendix A, 511-524.

works in consideration are *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti* (LC), *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (EA), *Liber Figurarum* (LF), *De Septem Sigillis*, and *De Ultimis Tribulationibus* (DUT).¹⁴

The second delimitation is the historical data that are compared with Joachim's writings. The intention is to consider every extant commentary on the book of Revelation recorded from the first century to AD 1200.

The third delimitation of the study relates to the biblical texts on which Joachim's historicist approach is particularly focused. These include the visions of the seven churches (Rev 2-3), seven seals (Rev 6-7), and seven trumpets (Rev 8-9), the 1,260 days (Rev 11:2-3, 12:6, 12:14, 13:5), the woman and the dragon (Rev 12), the first and the second beast (Rev 13), the seven vials (Rev 15-16), the harlot, the beast, and the seven kings (Rev 17), and the millennium and Second Coming (Rev 19-20).¹⁵ The comments of early Church and medieval expositors upon these sections will comprise the primary focus of analysis.

Chapter Summary

The first part of the dissertation (Chapter 2) describes the social and religious context of the twelfth-century Norman Kingdom of Sicily where Joachim lived and worked his entire life. Here he was immersed in a mixture of the Catholic, Byzantine, and Semitic cultures of southern Italy. Chapter 2 also explores Joachim's *vitae*: his youth, his

¹⁴ See the bibliography of Joachim's major works on pp. 329-325. Occasional mention will be made of several minor works of Joachim. For descriptions of these see pp. 45-46.

¹⁵ See Chapter 3.

pilgrimage to Palestine, his life as a monk, his rise to the role of abbot, and his reputation as a renowned prophetic expositor in Calabria, Italy.

Chapter 3 focuses on Joachim's eschatological writings, his theology of history, and particularly his relationship to the historicist system of interpreting the Bible prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 explore and discuss potential origins of Joachim's eschatological views and ideas.

The conclusion section presents an overall summary and synthesis of the study. It includes an assessment of the extent of Joachim's originality and literal dependency, with appropriate applications relating to scholarly issues and perspectives in Joachite studies in the early twenty-first century.

Introduction to the Literature

Little has been written concerning the origins and background of Joachim's historicist hermeneutics. Two articles published in *Traditio*, one by Morton Bloomfield in 1957 and another by Marjorie Reeves in 1980, stand as rare scholarly attempts to examine the background of Joachim's ideas.¹⁶ Bloomfield offers a short overview of twelfth-century Byzantine and Latin medieval literature containing ideas similar to Joachim.¹⁷ Bloomfield, however, does not explore Byzantine or Latin sources prior to the twelfth century.

¹⁶ See Marjorie Reeves, "The Originality and Influence of Joachim of Fiore," *Traditio* 36 (1980): 269-297; Morton Bloomfield, "Joachim of Fiore: A Critical Survey of His Canon, Teachings, Sources, Bibliography and Influence," *Traditio* 13 (1957): 277-288.

¹⁷ Bloomfield, "A Critical Survey," 274-287.

Both Reeves and Bloomfield mention a number of twelfth-century German expositors who advocated the idea of six stages of Church history.¹⁸ Reeves, however, omits discussion of possible Byzantine sources. Delno West observed in 1975 that “although there is a growing body of literature about Joachim and the Joachites, much remains to be done in the field. . . . What influence, if any, did the Greek Orthodox tradition of his southern Italy have upon his unique connection of the Trinity with historical periods?”¹⁹

In his 1985 monograph, *Calabrian Abbot*, Bernard McGinn devotes twenty pages to the background of Joachim’s ideas. In a chapter entitled “Christian Speculation about the Meaning of History,” McGinn skims over nearly twelve centuries of Christian eschatology. McGinn observes that the historical eschatology, which was so characteristic of the earlier Church Fathers, largely waned in the Western tradition due to the pervasiveness of Augustinian amillennialism. McGinn acknowledges that there was a resurgence of historical theology in the twelfth century and expresses the need for further study. “The twelfth century was one of the most creative eras in the long history of Christian speculation on the meaning of history. . . . Efforts to uncover some dependence [of Joachim] to this rich body of thought . . . have thus far proven inconclusive.”²⁰

¹⁸ Such as Honorius of Autun, Anselm of Havenberg, Gerhoh of Reichersberg, and Rupert of Deutz (Reeves, “The Originality and Influence,” 271-286).

¹⁹ Delno C. West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 2 vols. (New York, NY: Burt Franklin, 1975), 1:ix.

²⁰ Bernard McGinn, *Calabrian Abbot* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1985), 68.

Although Joachim specifically mentions his pilgrimage in Syria and Palestine as the location where he had experienced a breakthrough in understanding of the book of Revelation, no Joachite scholar has attempted to explore the liaison between Joachim and Near-Eastern Christian eschatological tradition.²¹ Furthermore, while scholars have recognized Joachim's affinity to Judaism, no effort has been made to explore Joachim's association with the Jewish apocalyptic tradition of the Middle Ages.

Marjorie Reeves writes that "the purpose [of studying Joachim's originality] is to examine the background of ideas out of which Joachim's theology of history was generated, to pinpoint the original aspects of his thought, if any, and thence to define and apply criteria for claiming later individuals, groups, or writings as 'Joachite' or 'Joachimist'."²²

In other words, a re-examination of the extent of Joachim's originality may allow scholars to further appreciate the importance of the Calabrian Abbot in the development of eschatology and ecclesiology in the late Middle Ages and the Reformation.

²¹ Near-Eastern and Oriental Christian tradition referred to in this study is comprised of Syrian, Coptic, Arabic, and Armenian Christian communities that lived outside of the borders of the Byzantine Empire in the 12th century AD.

²² Reeves, "The Originality and Influence," 269.

CHAPTER 2
RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CONTEXT SURROUNDING
JOACHIM AND HIS WORKS

Introduction

Joachim of Fiore (*Gioacchino da Fiore*) (AD 1135-1202)¹ lived in a turbulent age characterized by a profusion of religious reforms, papal schisms, staggering monastic expansions, and violent crusades.² Calabria, a dry and wild southern Italian province where Joachim resided for most of his life, was not exempt from the dramatic changes that occurred during this period of history. This chapter describes the political and socio-religious factors that impacted Joachim’s world and ideas. This includes: the rise and expansion of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, the relationship between the twelfth-century Papacy and the German Empire, the rise of monastic movements, and the crusades. This chapter also portrays a biography of Abbot Joachim of Fiore in connection with major political and religious factors surrounding his life and legacy.

¹ The date of Joachim’s birth is based upon Ralph of Coggeshall’s account in his *Chronicon Anglicanum* (ca. 1226), ed. J. Stephenson, *Rerum britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* (London, UK: 1875), 65. Ralph reports an oral account by Cistercian abbot Adam of Perseigne (d. 1221) who claimed that in 1196 Joachim was about “sixty years of age” (for a detailed discussion of the exact date of Joachim’s birth see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 3).

² See Charles H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1927), vii. The period between 1050 and 1200 has also been described as a “turning point in European and German history” (Horst Fuhrmann, *Germany in the High Middle Ages: 1050-1200*, trans. T. Reuter [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1986], 39).

The Norman Kingdom

One of the greatest political changes that occurred in southern Italy in the early twelfth century was the expansion of the Norman Kingdom. In order to understand the political background of Joachim's writings, it is necessary to examine the Norman ascendancy to power.

Arriving in the late tenth century from northern Europe, the Normans were initially employed as mercenaries in the service of the local Lombard princes of Salerno and Benevento.³ In 1047, less than a century prior to Joachim's birth, Norman mercenaries, at the request of the Lombard princes, attacked and destroyed the Byzantine stronghold of Melfi in the highlands of the Apulia region, bordering Calabria. This proved to be a major turning point for the geo-politics of the Italian south.

The German emperor Henry III (1017-56), pleased with the Byzantine loss, recognized Drogo (ca. 1010-51) as "a duke and governor of . . . Apulia and Calabria."⁴ In return, Henry appealed to Drogo to invade the Lombard principalities of Capua and Benevento. When Norman leaders declined his request, the German emperor joined with Pope Leo IX (1002-54) to attack the Normans. In the summer of 1053, at the crucial Battle of Civitate, the Normans defeated the papal army and captured the pope who, in

³ Margaret M. Carlyle, "Sicily, History," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1971), 469-471. Before the Norman arrival, the southern regions of the Apennine peninsula were divided between Byzantine and Lombard principalities struggling for primacy. This power struggle was intensified with the arrival of the Saracens in the eighth and ninth centuries. For an overview of the history of southern Italy prior to the Norman arrival see Barbara M. Kreutz, *Before the Normans: Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1996).

⁴ "Dux et magister italiae comesque normannorum totius Apuliae et Calabriae" (Einar Joranson, "The Inception of the Career of the Normans in Italy: Legend and History," *Speculum* vol. 23, no. 3 [July 1948]: 357).

return for his liberation, was forced to recognize Norman rulership over the two disputed provinces, Calabria and Apulia.⁵

After their initial success in establishing themselves in the region, the Normans began the century-long process of extricating the Byzantine and Arab forces from the remaining portion of the Italian south.⁶ Particularly notable was the Norman expulsion of the Muslim forces occupying Sicily in 1091. The island of Sicily had been under Islamic rule for more than two hundred years. The success of their crusade brought the Normans respect and reverence in the political and religious arenas of both the East and West. By the year 1127, the Normans had expanded their control to the north, bringing important Italian cities such as Naples, Pescara and Bari under their jurisdiction.⁷

Normans and the Church

The Norman Kingdom participated in an intriguing relationship with the Church of Rome. The Roman *curia* generally recognized Norman rule with the exception of the occasional tension between the two parties. Periodic conflicts between the Church and

⁵ Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1992), 15.

⁶ By the 1060s, two main centers of Norman power were established in southern Italy: one at Melfi in the province of Basilicata, under the Hauteville family; another at Aversa, Campania, under the Drengots. Unlike the Norman conquest of England (AD 1066), which took place over the course of a few years after one decisive battle, the conquest of southern Italy was the product of decades and many battles. Many territories were conquered independently, and only later were they all unified into one state. See Graham A. Loud, *Conquerors and Churchmen in Norman Italy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, Variorum, 1999), 216.

⁷ In the year 1130 Roger II united the lands he inherited from his father, Roger I of Sicily, with the Duchy of Apulia, which belonged to his cousin William II. Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2002), 84.

the Norman court were likely to affect Joachim's relationship with both the papacy and the secular rulers.

After the overthrow of the Saracens in Sicily, the relationship between the Normans and the Church improved. Catholic churches were gradually introduced in the Italian south and bishoprics with metropolitan authority were established at Palermo, Syracuse, and Agrigento. Norman kings, however, oversaw their ecclesiastical organization.⁸

In spite of these developments, the early twelfth century brought about another conflict between Rome and the Normans. The initial dispute arose between the two contenders to the papal throne, Innocent II (fl. 1130-43) and Anacletus II (antipope from 1130-38). Roger II, leader of the Norman forces, threw his support behind Anacletus, who in return recognized and enthroned Roger as the king of Sicily on Christmas day, 1130.⁹ Innocent II, indignant with this alliance, persuaded the Holy Roman emperor, Lothair III (1075-1137), to invade the Normans, promising Lothair the Sicilian crown. In the year 1136, only one year after Joachim's birth, the united armies of the German emperor, Lothair III, and the Byzantine emperor, John II Comnenus (1087-1143), overran

⁸ Karl Bihlmeyer and Herman Tüchle, *Church History*, trans. and ed. V. Mills and F. J. Muller, 3 vols. (Westminster: The Newman, 1963), 2:160.

⁹ Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 48; After its elevation to kingdom in 1130, Sicily became the center of Norman power (Joanna H. Drell, "Normans," *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. C. Kleinhenz, 2 vols. [New York, NY: Routledge, 2004], 2:775-80).

southern Italy, forcing the Normans into surrender. Roger II negotiated to avoid the war and offered the province of Apulia as a fief to Lothair.¹⁰

Anacletus died in 1138. In 1139, at the Second Lateran Council, Innocent II excommunicated Roger II for his schismatic attitude. The Normans responded by ambushing papal troops and capturing Innocent II at Galluccio, near Rome.¹¹ On March 25, 1139, at the Treaty of Mignano, Innocent revoked Roger II's excommunication in exchange for his own freedom. Roger II was confirmed as the supreme king of Sicily and his two sons were confirmed as the duke of Apulia and the prince of Capua.¹²

The Treaty of Mignano was followed by a time of relative tranquility. During this time the Norman Kingdom increasingly consolidated itself as the dominant force in the Mediterranean. However, the tensions between the Normans and the German emperors, and the Normans and the papacy, were palpable for several decades after the active invasions ceased. Joachim grew up during this period. The independent thinking and the spirit of defiance to the Church and the emperor, which were manifested in Norman politics, were also imprinted on Joachim's political and religious thought.¹³ It is

¹⁰ Lothair was pressured by Innocent to concede Apulia to the papal see. During the negotiations, Lothair's army revolted due to a severe drought, which made the negotiations even more difficult (Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 48). Lothair finally conceded Apulia to Roger's adversary, a local Norman count, Ranulf of Alife. Innocent protested, claiming that Apulia fell under papal claims. Eventually, the two agreed to jointly rule and tax the duchy. Lothair then returned north, but suddenly died of sickness while crossing the Alps on December 4, 1137 (Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 69).

¹¹ Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 70, 71; Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom*, 51; Malcolm Barber, *The Two Cities: Medieval Europe, 1050-1320* (London, UK: Routledge, 2004), 211.

¹² Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom*, 52; Barber, *The Two Cities*, 211.

¹³ In his prophetic schemes and interpretation, Joachim accommodated for corrupt popes and greedy emperors. See Chapter 3.

in this context that Joachim developed his ideas on Church reform and separation between the Church and politics.¹⁴

Culture and Religion in the Norman Kingdom

The Norman Kingdom of Sicily was the most ethnically diverse monarchy of twelfth-century Europe. The native Italian population was largely intermixed with ancient Germanic tribes, the Ostrogoths and the Lombards, which arrived there in the fifth and sixth centuries. Byzantine colonization, which had occurred in the sixth century, subsequent Arab invasions (827-902), and finally the Norman Conquest (1047-1154) resulted in an ethnically diverse demography.¹⁵

Culturally, the Italian south was comprised of a mixture of Gothic, Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Scandinavian cultural influences. From a religious perspective, the northern parts of the kingdom were primarily Catholic; Moslems dominated western parts of the island of Sicily; and a number of Greek-Byzantine colonies populated the east of the island. Greek culture was predominant in the southern provinces of the Italian Peninsula—Campania, Catania, and especially Calabria where Joachim was born.¹⁶

Latin cathedrals were built in the lands newly conquered from Greek Orthodoxy and Islam. Most of them were modeled in the Romanesque style with obvious influences from Byzantine and Islamic designs. Public buildings, especially, reflected the influence of Siculo-Arab culture. The Normans built many castles and public buildings in the

¹⁴ See pp. 63-65, 99-101.

¹⁵ Carlyle, "Sicily; History," 471.

¹⁶ Paul Stephenson, *The Byzantine World* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 223-32.

conquered territory, drawing on local craftsmanship and retaining distinctive elements of their non-Norman origins.¹⁷

Joachim's Early Life

Joachim of Fiore grew up in a hybrid civilization where Catholic Europe, the Byzantine East, and Mohammedan Africa mingled together. Not many details are known about Joachim's youth and upbringing. His father, Mauro, was an influential notary who probably occupied a secretarial position at the court of the Norman king, Roger II of Sicily.¹⁸ Joachim's mother, Gemma, died when he was seven years old and, although he was the sixth of eight children, Joachim was the eldest son to reach adulthood.¹⁹ Curiously, he was not baptized until he was ten years of age. A local legend testifies that at his baptism, a regional prophet predicted his future greatness.²⁰

¹⁷ Gravett and Nicholl, *The Normans: Warrior Knights and Their Castles*, 130-37.

¹⁸ Herbert Grundmann, "Zur Biographie Joachims von Fiore und Rainers von Ponza," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 16 (1960): 525, n. 38. Joachim's family name was Tabellione, which was actually a description of the family's occupation (*Tabellio* in Italian means notary).

¹⁹ Gardner, "Joachim of Fiora," 406. Gemma is a common medieval Italian name. Many facts concerning Joachim's life require further research. For comprehensive biographies of Joachim see Ernesto Buonaiuti, *Gioacchino da Fiore, i tempi, la vita, il messaggio* (Rome, Italy: Collezione meridionale editrice, 1931), and Grundmann, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, Germany: Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1977), 2:255-360.

²⁰ Henry Bett, *Joachim of Flora* (London, UK: Methuen, 1931), 6. The two greatest sources of legends concerning Joachim are by Giacomo Greco, *Chronologia Joachim Abbatis et Florentis ordinis* (Cosenza, Italy: 1612, reprinted by Centro Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti, 2008); and Giorgio de Lauro, *Magni Divinique Prophetae Abbatis Joachim Hergasiarum apologetica sive mirabilium veritas defensa* (Naples, Italy: Novelli de Bonis, 1660).

Joachim and Eastern Christianity

Because of its large Greek population, the Norman Kingdom had a distinctively Eastern touch. Celico (Chelico) in Calabria, the city of Joachim's birth, had long been under the ecclesiastical control of the Byzantines. Greek basilicas and monasteries, often richly adorned with frescoes, were prominent in the region.

Some studies have suggested that Joachim's family might have been of Greek origin. The name Joachim, although unusual in Western Europe, was more common among Greek Christians.²¹ In one of his works, Joachim mentions having several discussions with the learned Greeks of his area. It has also been noted that many of Joachim's later disciples and biographers were Greek.²²

Norman kings ruled through a political system designed after the Byzantine administration. Documents were issued in Greek and Arabic as well as Latin, in a format copied from the Byzantine and papal courts. Normans maintained a high level of religious tolerance. Bureaucratic specialists recruited because of their talent rather than through feudal birthright carried out public administration. Normans also operated under a policy of tolerance toward Greeks, Muslims and Jews, protecting their rights.²³ A spirit

²¹ Grundmann notes that the name Joachim was rare in northern Europe but was used among Greek Christians because it was the name of Mary's father according to the apocryphal gospel of James. Grundmann, "Zur Biographie," 333-34 and 546. See James R. Montague, ed. and trans., "Book of James or Protoevangelium," in *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1924), 39-48.

²² See *Tractatus super Quatuor Evangelia*, ed. E. Buonaioti (Rome, Italy: Tipografia del Senato, 1930, reprinted 1966), 222. For more details on the relationship between Joachim and the Greeks, see Paul J. Alexander, "The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses in the Medieval West and the Beginnings of Joachimism," in *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. Ann Williams (Essex, UK: Longman, 1980), 80.

²³ See Delno C. West and Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1983), 2.

of tolerance such as the one cultivated in the Kingdom of Sicily was rare in medieval Europe and can be considered a contributing factor in the development of new thoughts and ideas.

Joachim and Judaism

The Jewish presence in Calabria dates back to several centuries before the Christian era. Calabria flourished during the early Middle Ages. Under Byzantine rule it represented an important commercial center. Its large Jewish population enjoyed freedom and prosperity.²⁴ Certain areas of Calabria may have had a Jewish population of up to fifty percent and many Jews in the region owned prosperous businesses such as silk trading and cloth dyeing.²⁵

The Norman Kingdom, especially, abounded with Jews and Arabs who had non-forcibly converted to Christianity.²⁶ Since Joachim's family lived in a region of many Jews, studies have explored the possibility that Joachim had Jewish origins.²⁷ Several

²⁴ Vincenzo Villella, *La Judeca di Nicastro: e la storia degli ebrei in Calabria* (Lamezia Terme, Italy: Incalabria, 2004), 5-12.

²⁵ David Abulafia, "Il mezzogiorno peninsulare dai bizantini all'espulsione," in *Gli ebrei in Italia; Dall'alto Medioevo all'età dei ghetti*, ed. Corrao Vivanti (Turin, Italy: G. Einaudi, 1996), 5-44.

²⁶ Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 109.

²⁷ See Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, "Joachim von Fiore und das Judentum," in *Judentum in Mittelalter*, ed. P. Wilpert and P. Eckert, *Miscellanea Medievalia* 4 (Berlin, Germany: de Gruyter, 1966), 228-63; reprinted in Delno C. West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 2 vols. (New York, NY: Burt Franklin, 1975) 2: 473-510; see also more recent works by Robert Lerner, *The Feast of St. Abraham: Medieval Millenarians and the Jews* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2001), 25-28; and E. Randolph Daniel, "Abbot Joachim of Fiore and the Conversion of the Jews," in *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. S. J. McMichel and S.E. Myers (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2004), 1-21.

scholars recognize a striking similarity between Joachim's writings and the writings of the Jewish convert and astronomer Petrus Alphonsi (1062-ca. 1110) from Spain.²⁸

Joachim himself acknowledged the influence of Jewish thought in his writings on at least two occasions. In an early work, he describes some Jewish teachers as being "wise men" who employed the "year-day" principle in their computations of prophetic times.²⁹ Elsewhere, Joachim mentions having theological discussions with a "most learned Jew."³⁰ Some scholars have also pointed to the Hebraic origin of Joachim's name and his late baptism as evidence of his family's conversion from Judaism to Christianity.³¹ Although studies on the possible Jewish genealogy of Joachim have been inconclusive, when one considers the number of Jews in Calabria, Joachim's favorable view of Jews in his writings,³² his acknowledgment of frequent contact with Jewish

²⁸ Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, UK: SPCK, 1976), 3. Hirsch-Reich, "Joachim Von Fiore und das Judentum," 230-32, establishes a parallel between Alphonsi's and Joachim's diagrams of Trinity. See also Petrus Alphonsi, *Dialogue Against the Jews*, trans. Irvn M. Resnik, Fathers of the Church, Medieval Continuation 8 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2006), 173.

²⁹ See Joachim's early work, *Genealogia* (1176), ed. Gian Luca Potesta, "Die Genealogia: Ein fruhes Werk Joachims von Fiore und die Anfange seines Geschichtsbildes," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung Mittelalters* 56 (2000): 92, 93. See also Lerner, *The Feast of St. Abraham*, 27.

³⁰ Joachim of Fiore, *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (Venice: F. Bindoni and M. Passini, 1527, reprint ed., Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964), hereafter abbreviated as Joachim, EA, 36.

³¹ In a sermon hostile to Joachim, the Cistercian abbot Gaufrid of Auxerre, a native of Calabria, stated that Joachim was a convert from Judaism and that his friends concealed his Jewish origin (Grundmann, "Zur Biographie," 358-60). According to Grundmann and Daniel, Gaufrid's sermon was motivated by Joachim's later defection from the Cistercians, to build the order of Fiore (Grundmann, "Zur Biographie," 325-338, and Daniel, "Abbot Joachim of Fiore and the Conversion of the Jews," 1-21). Robert Lerner lays down strong arguments in favor of the idea that Joachim's parents were Jewish converts (Lerner, *The Feast of St. Abraham*, 25-29).

³² See pp. 109-111 of this study.

scholars, and his pilgrimage to Israel, the elements of Hebrew thinking found in Joachim's writings should not be surprising.³³

Pilgrimage to Palestine

Though surrounded by churches, synagogues, and monasteries, Joachim did not pursue any religious or ecclesiastical education. Instead, at the age of fourteen, he began studying grammar and law. After his father died, Joachim finished his law and administration studies and became a notary in the Norman court.³⁴

After the death of Roger II in 1154, Joachim continued his bureaucratic career at the royal court during the reign of Roger's son, William I of Sicily (1131-66). The anonymous *Vita Beati* records that Joachim worked for Etienne du Perché, who was the archbishop of Palermo, the chancellor to Queen Marguerite of Navarre, and the regent for King William I.³⁵ In the last year of his reign, William I signed a peace treaty with the Byzantine emperor, Manuel Comnenius. Joachim, then approximately thirty years of age, departed Palermo for Constantinople as a part of the official delegation to continue negotiations with the Byzantine court.³⁶

³³ Grundmann, "Zur Biographie," reprint, 337-341. Bernard McGinn points out that Joachim's notion of the Tetragrammaton IEUE is based on the tract entitled *Clerical Instruction*, written by Jewish scholar Petrus Alphonsi (see McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 290; and Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1972), 40-46).

³⁴ See Grundman, "Zur Biographie," 480; see also West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 1:ii.

³⁵ Grundmann, "Zur Biographie," 481, 482.

³⁶ West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 1: ii.

In Constantinople, Joachim and his associates encountered an outbreak of a disease, probably cholera, which killed most of his travelling companions. Several historians describe this event as a turning point in the life of the young Italian notary.³⁷ In the midst of what can only be perceived as a crisis of identity, Joachim abandoned his mission and severed his ties with the Norman court. Embarking on a search for answers to his life questions, he undertook a long pilgrimage to the Holy Land, “where God was told to have spoken with men.”³⁸

It is difficult to ascertain what provoked such spiritual anguish in Joachim. He may have had a desire to devote himself more to God. He may have felt confused due to surviving the disease that ravaged the rest of his delegation. At the time, plagues and diseases were considered to be divine punishments and since almost all of Joachim’s associates died, Joachim may have wondered why he was one of the few who were spared from death and the disease. Based on various topics Joachim would later explore in his writings, it may be assumed that he was also troubled with theological questions.

³⁷ Ibid.; Giacomo Greco, *Chronologia Joachim Abbatis et Florentis ordinis* (Cosenza, Italy: Andrea Riccio, 1612, reprinted San Giovanni di Fiore: Centro Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti, 2008), 20, 21.

³⁸ “In qua . . . Deus . . . cum hominibus conversari dignatus est” (Anonymus. *Vita Beati Joachim Abbatis* (VBJA) (c. 1210), ed. Herbert Grundmann, “Zur Biographie Joachims von Fiore und Rainers von Ponza,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 16 [1960]: 529; West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 1:iii. There is a possibility that Joachim’s actions were influenced by an example of a Spanish-Jewish thinker Jehuda Halevi (d. 1141) who, unsatisfied with religious life in Spain, performed a pilgrimage to Palestine to experience closeness with God. Halevi taught that true religious fulfillment is most palpable in the Land of Israel; see Halevi’s major work, *Kuzari*, ed. Daniel Korobkin (Jerusalem, Israel: Feldheim, 2009). Halevi was strongly influenced by the writings of Spanish Rabbi Abraham Bar Hiyya whose calculations of prophecy bear similarities with Joachim’s computations (see p. 285-6)

Joachim may have wondered why, if God was on the side of Christians, so many Christians were being punished with sickness, plague, and war?

When Joachim arrived in Palestine in the late 1160s, the land and population was still recovering from the devastating effects of the Second Crusade (1145-49). Joachim probably took a ship to Antioch in northern Syria, from where he might have joined other pilgrims journeying towards Jerusalem. Joachim recorded that he barely made it to Jerusalem after nearly dying of hunger and thirst in the Syrian Desert.³⁹

When he reached Jerusalem, the city, although surrounded by Muslim forces, was still under the protection of the crusaders. Joachim did not spend much time in Jerusalem. Instead he found a solitary refuge on Mount Tabor in central Palestine. There he adopted the life of a hermit, meditating, praying and studying the Scriptures, which he probably accessed through the Syrian monks who, at that time, inhabited various caves on Mount Tabor.⁴⁰ Philips writes that in the 12th century “there were Coptic and Ethiopian Christians in the Holy Land, as well as Jacobites, Armenians, Maronites and Nestorians.”⁴¹ Chapter 6 of this study analyzes the elements of Coptic and Syrian influence on Joachim and his writings.⁴²

³⁹ Ernesto Buonaiuti notes that Joachim, himself, evidences his pilgrimage in a statement in his book on the four Gospels (Ernesto Buonaiuti, *Tractatus Super Quatuor Evangelia* [Rome, Italy: Tipografia del Senato, 1930], 12, n. 93).

⁴⁰ Mount Tabor is considered to be the place where Abraham met Melchizedek, the King of Salem. It is also called the Mount of Transfiguration, because it is the traditional site of Jesus’ transfiguration.

⁴¹ Jonathan Philips, *The Crusades 1095-1197* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 115. For more information on various Christian churches of the East see Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity* (New York, NY: Harper and Collins, 2008).

⁴² See pp. 252-81 of this study.

According to Joachim's contemporary, secretary, and biographer, Luca de Cosenza, Joachim spent about a year as a hermit in the Holy Land. Joachim claimed that one night, as he was meditating upon portions of Scripture, he received a special illumination that opened to him a harmony between the New Testament (NT) and Old Testaments (OT). Soon after this experience Joachim ended his pilgrimage. Having a new conception of Scripture and Christian life, he returned to Italy and his native Calabria.⁴³

Upon his return to Europe, Joachim became a wandering preacher, at first dwelling in a cave on Mount Etna in Sicily near a Greek monastery, and eventually reentering his native Calabria as an independent hermit.⁴⁴ After two years of autonomous preaching, he decided to become a monk. Because of its rigid rules, he chose the Cistercian monastery of Sambucina and remained there as a layman, engaging in evangelistic activities. After some time, the monastery leaders objected to Joachim preaching as a layman, so he was transferred to the recently founded Benedictine Abbey of Corazzo to be properly instructed in taking monastic vows.⁴⁵

⁴³ West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 1:iii, Gardner, "Joachim of Flora," 406; Joachim recounts that, while meditating in his cave, he had to overcome the temptation of sexual sin after being tempted to sleep with a widow who tried to lure him to break the seventh commandment. This event is recorded by Joachim, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, (EA), 39, as well as by Luca of Cosenza, *Virtutum Beati Joachimi Synopsis* (VBJs) (ca. 1220), ed. Herbert Grundmann, "Zur Biographie Joachims von Fiore und Rainers von Ponza," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 16 (1960):7.

⁴⁴ Anonymus, *Vita Beati Joachim Abbatis* (VBJA), 529.

⁴⁵ VBJA, 531.

Joachim and Monastic Life

The beginning of the twelfth century witnessed an intense interest in spiritual renewal in the Church. This was known as the age of monastic revival, or more specifically, the age of the Cistercians.⁴⁶ Many movements arose, promoting the reinvigoration of spirituality within Christendom. For some groups, such as the Cathari, Arnaldists, and Waldenses, true reform could not happen without denouncing ties to the papal see.⁴⁷ Other groups hoped that a reform could be conducted successfully within the Church structure. For many, including Joachim, the reform of monastic life was the key to the betterment of spiritual life in the Church and society.⁴⁸

Rise of the Cistercians

In the twelfth century, the monastery was an institution where many people gathered to seek a deeper spiritual experience.⁴⁹ Especially popular was the relatively new order of Cistercians, which appeared to offer a return to a literal observance of the

⁴⁶ Hubert Jedin and John Dolan, *History of the Church*, 10 vols. (Wellwood, UK: Burns and Oates, 1963-1980), 3:339.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Euan Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2000), 24-28. For a source on the Arnaldist movement see George William Greenway, *Arnold of Brescia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1931).

⁴⁸ Harry Elmer Barnes and Henry David, *The History of Western Civilization*, 2 vols. (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), 1:386.

⁴⁹ By the late eleventh century, the monastery of Cluny was the largest medieval monastic institution. Established in the mid 900s, Cluny had become wealthy from rents, tithes, feudal rights and gifts from pilgrims who passed through its monasteries on the way to different pilgrimage destinations. The massive endowments, powers, and responsibilities of the Cluniac abbots had drawn them into the affairs of the secular world, and their monks had abandoned the manual labor of serfs in order to serve as administrative officials or “choir monks” (William M. Johnston, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 2 vols. [Chicago, IL: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2002], 1:489).

Rule of Saint Benedict.⁵⁰ Rejecting the changes the Benedictines had made from the original rule, the Cistercian monks tried to reproduce the austerity and rigor of life recorded in Benedict's writings, even going beyond the original Benedictine standards in some aspects. The most striking feature of the reform was the return to manual labor, especially fieldwork, which was particularly characteristic of Cistercian life.⁵¹

In 1112, a young, eloquent, and charismatic nobleman named Bernard joined the Cistercian movement. In 1115 he founded the Abbey of Clairvaux, which soon attracted a strong following of zealous young men.⁵² Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) became one of the most admired churchmen of his age.⁵³ With his membership, the Cistercian order began a notable epoch of international expansion. As Bernard's fame grew, the Cistercian movement grew with it.⁵⁴ Bernard eventually became a mentor of popes and kings and, in 1145, Henry, the brother of King Louis VII of France, entered the

⁵⁰ In 1098, Robert of Molesem and Alberic of Citeaux, former Benedictines, founded the first Cistercian abbey at Citeaux near Dijon, France, in the quest for the original piety and modesty of the early monastic orders (Johnston, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 1:295).

⁵¹ Stephen Tobin, *The Cistercians: Monks and Monasteries in Europe* (London, UK: The Herbert, 1995), 29, 33, 36.

⁵² Johnston, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 1:146. See also Adrian H. Bredero, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Between Cult and History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 285.

⁵³ F. Donald Logan, *History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 139.

⁵⁴ Logan, *History of the Church*, 139; from its solid base, the order spread all over Western and even Eastern Europe. One of the most important libraries of the Cistercians was in Salem, Germany. By the year 1200, the Cistercian houses numbered five hundred (see also Constance H. Behrman, *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* [Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2010], 107).

monastery of Clairvaux and became Bernard's pupil. That same year, one of Bernard's disciples ascended the papal chair as Pope Eugene III.

Joachim in the Monastery

When Joachim entered the monastery around 1169, the typical life of the Cistercians consisted of a regular round of worship, reading, and manual labor. Each day was divided into eight sacred offices, beginning and ending with services in the monastery chapel. In addition to corporate worship, the monks spent several hours reading from the Scriptures, and in private prayer and meditation. For most of the day, however, they were engaged in manual labor, washing, cooking, cultivating vegetables and grain, and providing for the needs of the monastery.⁵⁵

Monasteries filled a multiplicity of roles in Joachim's time. They often served as inns, receiving pilgrims and travelers. They offered charity to the poor and food to the hungry. They served as hospitals, providing medical care for the sick. They were also schools where children and youth were educated. As libraries, monasteries performed the important duty of preserving valuable manuscripts as well as hand copying the ancient texts of the Bible, the writings of church fathers, and works by classical authors.⁵⁶

Two years after his return to Italy, Joachim entered the recently founded Cistercian Monastery of Sambucina.⁵⁷ After two years acting as a layman and engaging

⁵⁵ Tobin, *The Cistercians*, 43; Johnston, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 1:299.

⁵⁶ Johnston, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 1:137, 138.

⁵⁷ VBJA, 531.

in various evangelistic activities, the monastery leaders transferred Joachim to the Benedictine Abbey of Corazzo to be trained to become a priest.

Joachim was very much appreciated in Corazzo.⁵⁸ His emphasis on moral reform in the cloisters, combined with his intriguing expositions of biblical prophecies, earned him a reputation as a public speaker. Luca of Cosenza reports that Joachim tended to begin his sermons quietly, but that as he continued his voice would soon resound “like thunder.”⁵⁹

Luca describes Joachim as a humble and kind man of extraordinary devotion. Whenever he could, Luca reports, Joachim would perform the lowest tasks of the monastery such as bed making, cooking, or scrubbing the infirmary floor. Joachim also led a life of rigorous temperance. He wore the oldest, shabbiest clothes he could find, and was a poor sleeper, spending many of his night hours in prayer.⁶⁰

Although Joachim ate very lightly, often fasting, Luca portrays him as a strong and robust man, who often led in manual work.⁶¹ He was known to be a powerful opponent of the consumption of wine, which was often abused in the monasteries. Joachim once instructed his abbot, “Water is a sober drink which neither ties the tongue

⁵⁸ Abbot Gerald, a powerful figure who frequently served on special missions for the popes, particularly favored Joachim (VBJA, 456-58).

⁵⁹ Luca of Cosenza, *Virtutum Beati Joachimi Synopsis* (VBJS), 541; see also Bett, *Joachim of Flora*, 19.

⁶⁰ VBJS, 542.

⁶¹ VBJS, 545.

nor brings about drunkenness, nor makes man babble!”⁶² In one of his later major works, he asserted that wine was not a proper drink for monks.⁶³

Rise to Prominence

Two years after his entrance into the monastery, Joachim became a priest. A few years later, he was promoted to the title of prior. In 1178 he became Abbot of Corazzo in Calabria. Luca of Cosenza records himself to have been unusually impressed with the intensity with which the new abbot celebrated the mass, often crying during the recitation of the passions of Christ.⁶⁴ In his biography, Luca wrote that Joachim was reluctant to take the position of abbot, being more interested in studying and reflecting on the meaning of Scripture and history. Luca describes how, when he was elected to the position of abbot, Joachim hid in a remote corner of the monastery until the Archbishop of Cosenza, the abbot of the Cistercians at Sambucina, and other influential people found him and convinced him to accept the post.⁶⁵

After four years serving as abbot, Joachim gathered the support of his peers to incorporate the Benedictine monastery of Corazzo into the Cistercian order. In 1183 he went to the Abbey of Casamari seeking a Cistercian house that could become the

⁶² Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica* (1281), 2 vols., ed. Giovanni Scalia (Bari, Italy: Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1966), 2:xxxii; see also West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 4.

⁶³ Joachim, EA, 81.

⁶⁴ VBJS, 541.

⁶⁵ VBJS, 542; Bett, *Joachim of Flora*, 8, 9.

motherhouse of Corazzo.⁶⁶ During his eighteen-month stay in Casamari, Joachim commenced editing his chief works: the *Liber de Concordiae*,⁶⁷ the *Expositio in Apocalipsim*,⁶⁸ and the *Psalterium Decem Chordarum*.⁶⁹

Joachim's Method of Bible Study

In addition to fulfilling the duties of a monk, Joachim was particularly interested in the study of the sacred Scriptures.⁷⁰ For unclear passages, Joachim employed a method of Bible study, which he entitled *exercitium lectionis*.⁷¹ The method comprised four steps:

1. Repentance from sins
2. Prayer for understanding
3. Recitation of psalms
4. Humble waiting for illumination while reading the biblical text.

⁶⁶ West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 1: iii.

⁶⁷ Joachim of Fiore, *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti* (Venice, Italy: Simonus de Lucre, 1519, reprint, Frankfurt, Germany: Minerva, 1964), hereafter abbreviated as Joachim, LC (V), contains all five books. The new edition ed. Randolph Daniel (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1983), contains the first four books (hereafter abbreviated as Joachim, LC [D]). Alexander Patschowsky is presently composing a new critical edition of *Liber Concordiae* and it should be in the press by the spring of 2018.

⁶⁸ A summary and partial translation of the *Expositio* is available in English in Edward B. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticae: Or a Commentary on the Apocalypse, Critical and Historical; Including also an Examination of the Chief Prophecies of Daniel*, 4 vols. (London, UK: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1862), 4:384-422.

⁶⁹ *Psalterium Decem Cordarum*, ed. Kurt-Victor Selge, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, vol. 20 (Munich, Germany: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2009), 227.

⁷⁰ Joachim, *Liber Concordiae* (D), 11, 13, and Joachim, EA, 157. In the Middle Ages, monasteries conserved and copied ancient manuscripts in their *scriptoria*. Joachim seems to have utilized such libraries to read and study Latin editions of the Bible.

⁷¹ Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore*, 4.

For Joachim, these steps constituted the approach towards a proper understanding of the biblical text.

In the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux was instrumental in reviving the Benedictine emphasis on a method of contemplative reading of Scripture called *lectio divina*. There are notable differences between Joachim's method of studying the Scriptures and the *lectio divina*. Traditionally, the *lectio divina* method consists of four separate steps: read, meditate, pray, and contemplate.⁷² First, a passage of Scripture is read, and then its meaning is reflected upon. Prayer and contemplation follow. Contemplation often takes the form of "entering in and experiencing the text" and transcends an intellectual response to the text.⁷³

Joachim's *exercitium lectionis* commences with the confession of sin. Joachim asserts that the Scriptures cannot be understood properly if the reader is not forgiven for sins and transgressions, and thereby covered by the grace of God. Secondly, for Joachim, a prayer for understanding comes before meditation on the meaning of the text. Thirdly, Joachim believes that the recitation of scriptural passages (especially Psalms) is the key for filling one's mind with divine thoughts, facilitating further illumination. The fourth step is divine illumination, which occurs while reading a certain unclear text in question. Joachim places greatest emphasis on external enlightenment coming from God in understanding the Scriptures.

⁷² Lawrence S. Cunningham and Keith J. Egan, *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition* (New York, NY: Paulist, 1996), 91, 92.

⁷³ Richard J. Foster, *Meditative Prayer* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983), 24, 25.

Besides his illuminating moment in the Holy Land, Joachim claims to have experienced two other moments of special breakthrough in his study of the Bible. One took place at Easter, during his time as the Abbot of Corazzo. After a period during which Joachim was frustrated with the study of the book of Revelation and “imprisoned by the difficulties of the text,” he experienced a special enlightenment. This event gave him further insight, enabling him to finish writing his books.⁷⁴ The third illuminating moment also occurred during his time as the Abbot of Corazzo. During the time of Pentecost, after experiencing a period of agonizing doubt on the doctrine of the Trinity, Joachim had a vision of a psaltery with ten strings in a triangular form. The symbolism of the vision clarified the mystery of the Trinity for Joachim, and “called forth waves of praise from him.”⁷⁵

When in frustration and perplexity he could not grasp the exact meaning of a biblical passage, Joachim prayed for illumination and turned to the book of Psalms as a way of entering the presence of God. Joachim was very dependent on the spiritual insight that he received through prayer. He states that the recitation of psalms immediately restored the peace that brought him into union with the Lord, as if he was in the heavenly Jerusalem. This would often give him a new insight into the harmony of the text.

Understanding the unity and consistency of Scripture generated in Joachim a sense of God’s care and love for the Church. This, in turn, strengthened Joachim’s relationship with God. Joachim’s method of reading Scripture was based on a

⁷⁴ Due to several similarities in the description, this experience is often identified with the first experience in Palestine. Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore*, 4; Joachim, EA, 39.

⁷⁵ Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore*, 4; see also Donald O. Kellogg, “Joachim,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 24 vols. (New York, NY: Werner Company, 1899), 13:694, 695.

combination of intellectual and spiritual exercises designed to find the historical fulfillment of the text in contemporary societal events. Joachim particularly attempted to harmonize difficult passages by connecting the biblical texts with chronological periods of Church history.⁷⁶

Joachim was sometimes troubled by laxity in the lives of the monks. Notwithstanding his efforts as abbot, the morality and behavior of monks was not improving as he expected, and monastic affairs frequently interfered with his biblical studies.⁷⁷ These interferences led Joachim to seek to leave the affairs of being an abbot in order to devote himself fully to his exegetical writings. However, in order to do that, Joachim needed the approval of higher officials.

Joachim and the Papacy

Joachim's time in the monastery coincided with the final years of the struggle between the Holy Roman emperors and the papacy. The Church endeavored to disengage from the control of the empire in order to elect its own bishops and popes. The struggle for power between the emperors and the papacy was exacerbated by the attempted reforms of Pope Gregory VII (1073-85). The German emperors fought vehemently against the independence of the popes, claiming the role of the divine leaders for themselves. Finally, after several decades of fights, schemes, and controversies, Emperor Henry V (1086-1125) signed the Concordat of Worms in 1121. This allowed the Church

⁷⁶ Joachim's systems of hermeneutics are discussed in great detail in Chapter 3.

⁷⁷ Joachim, EA, 80; Joachim, *Psalterium Decem Cordarum*, 243; see also Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore*, 3.

to elect its own ecclesiastics. Nevertheless, German emperors continued exerting their influence in the election of the new popes by sending their legates during the elections.⁷⁸

After the death of the English pope Adrian IV (1100-1159), a new schism between the pope and the German emperor occurred. The majority of the cardinals were more inclined towards the Sicilian crown. They elected Cardinal Rolando of Siena as Pope Alexander III (1159-1181). However, a minority of five cardinals was faithful to the German emperor Frederick I Barbarossa. They refused to recognize Alexander III as pope and elected Ottaviano de Monticelli, who took the name Victor IV (1159-1164). This event created a Church schism.⁷⁹

Antipope Victor IV and his successors, Antipope Paschal III (1164-68) and Antipope Calistus III (1168-1177), had German imperial support. The dispute between the antipope faction and the papacy continued until the battle of Legnano in 1176, where papal forces defeated Frederick I. After the defeat, at the Peace of Venice (1177),

⁷⁸ Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1988), 172.

⁷⁹ See Ian Robinson, *The Papal Reform of the Eleventh Century* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University, 2004), 388-91. The election of 1159 also had significant legal consequences. Up to that time, the election of a new pope required unanimity among the electors, which led to the schism when the existence of factions in the Sacred College made unanimity impossible (Robinson, *The Papal Reform*, 57). To avoid the schism in the future, the Third Lateran Council of 1179 promulgated the decree *Licet de evitanda discordia*, which established the rule that the pope is elected with a majority of two thirds of the cardinals participating in the election (Robinson, *The Papal Reform*, 84).

Frederick I recognized Alexander III as Pope.⁸⁰ Joachim would later criticize both the emperor and the Church for waging wars and employing violence to seize power.⁸¹

Joachim Visits the Pope

The 1180s were years of renewed apocalyptic expectations. After several decades of peace, the Saracens attacked Jerusalem in 1181. Various astrological letters, predictions, and sibyls circulated around Europe prophesying an imminent end and the destruction of the Saracens by the Christian kings. The anonymous “Letter of Toledo” which circulated through Europe in 1184, announced the destruction of the Saracens by Christian kings and the soon coming of the Antichrist.⁸²

In the summer of 1184, Joachim, then abbot of Corazzo, met with Pope Lucius III (1181-85) in the nearby city of Veroli where he presented Lucius III with his unfinished book *Liber de Concordia*. Joachim also showed the pope excerpts of his commentary on

⁸⁰ Robinson, *The Papal Reform*, 476-71.

⁸¹ See Joachim’s smaller work entitled *Intelligentia super calathis*, a brief commentary on Jeremiah 24 that attacks the papal usage of war and military force. A critical edition is published by Pietro De Leo, *Gioacchino da Fiore: aspetti inediti della vita e delle opere* (Cosenza, Italy: Soveria Manelli, 1988), 125-48. Grundmann dated *Intelligentia* to between 1191 and 1193 (Herbert Grundmann, “Kirchenfreiheit und Keisermacht um 1190 in der Sicht Joachims von Fiore,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 19 [1963]: 353-96, reprinted in *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 3 vols. [Stuttgart, Germany: Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1977], 2:361-402).

⁸² The 1180s were a period of intense apocalyptic expectation (see Roger Howden, *Chronica* [1201], ed. W. Stubbs, 3 vols. [London, UK: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1870], 1:290-91). Howden describes various disasters, earthquakes, unusual astrological phenomena, and the intense eschatological expectation of the time. Howden quotes the “Letter of Toledo,” see H. Grauert, “Meister Johann Von Toledo,” *Sitzungsberichte der Münchener Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1901): 111-325.

the book of Revelation, in which he laid out his views of the apocalyptic revival of the spiritual life of the Church, destined to occur in the last days.⁸³

The pope, intrigued by Joachim's interpretation of prophecies, asked Joachim what would be the fate of Jerusalem. Joachim disagreed with popular predictions and stated, instead, that Jerusalem would eventually fall into the hands of the Muslims (which it did in 1187). Joachim added that the fall of Jerusalem would be the sign that his prophetic expositions were correct.⁸⁴

On Joachim's request, the pope released him from his duties as abbot, urging him to continue and complete his biblical studies.⁸⁵ Joachim returned to Corazzo and remained there as the abbot until 1186, when he went to visit the newly elected pope, Urban III (1185-87) in Verona. Pope Urban also approved of Joachim's expositions and encouraged him to continue writing. This time, Joachim fully renounced his office as

⁸³ The dialogue with Pope Lucius III was recorded by two contemporary sources. The thirteenth-century tract found among the papers of Cardinal Mathias of Angers entitled *Expositio Prophetiae Anonymae Romae repertae anno 1184* (Manuscript Antique 322, fol 149, 150) concurs with the introductory paragraph of Luca of Cosenza's biography (VBJS). Both of these manuscripts affirm that Joachim was invited to prove his spiritual gift by explaining the prophecy of seven seals to the pope. The authenticity of the tract is confirmed by Herbert Grundmann, *Neue Forschungen über Joachim von Floris* (Marburg, Germany: Simons Ferlag, 1950), 43-51; for the partial published text of the Manuscript Antique 322, see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 5, n. 1.

⁸⁴ VBJA, 533; Harold S. Fink, "Crusades," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 24 vols. (Chicago, IL: William Benton, 1971), 6: 832.

⁸⁵ Joachim's testamentary letter and the letter of Pope Clement III, both printed at the beginning of the *Liber Concordiae*, attest to the fact of Lucius III's commission. This is also affirmed in VBJA written in the early thirteenth century. Interestingly, VBJA mentions only the pope approving Joachim's work entitled *Psalterium Decem Chordarum*, and does not mention the two more prominent ones, *Liber Concordiae* and *Expositio* (Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 6).

abbot and took refuge in the hermitage of Petralata, near Corazzo, where he could write his expositions without disturbance.⁸⁶

In 1187, while Joachim was writing his most important commentaries, the Third Crusade was instigated. Cistercian leader Bernard of Clairvaux was a propagator of the crusades and, like Augustine in the *City of God*, struggled to explain why the infidel barbarians would defeat Christian kings.⁸⁷ Joachim's answer to this problem was to reject warfare and bloodshed as a method of Christian expansion. His solution for the success of Christianity did not lie in military interventions or political domination but in what he called *apocalyptic conversion*.⁸⁸

Joachim and the Crusades

Several of Joachim's prophetic interpretations were affected by the wars between Christians and Muslims. Thus, an exploration of the crusades and their impact on the religious and social environment in which Joachim lived is important for this study. Alive during the Second and the Third Crusades, Joachim was very interested in the political situation of his day.

⁸⁶ Most modern scholars accept Joachim's visit to Verona as authentic. Some authorization from Urban III is implied by Joachim's testamentary letter and by Clement III's letter. The oldest authority for this event in Joachim's life is the tract by Robert of Auxerre, written before 1212 (Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 6).

⁸⁷ Gillian R. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2000), 17.

⁸⁸ See E. R. Daniel, "Apocalyptic Conversion: The Joachite Alternative to the Crusades," *Traditio* 25 (1969): 127-39. This eschatological concept comes from Joachim historicist understanding of the book Revelation. See Chapter 3.

First Crusade (1097-1099)

The relatively peaceful relationship between the Christian West and the Islamic East was broken by the expansion and conquest of the Seljuk Turks in the 1070s and 1080s.⁸⁹ In the autumn of 1095, at the Council of Clermont, Pope Urban II called upon all Christians to join a war against the Turks, promising those who died in the endeavor absolute remission of all sins.⁹⁰

Urban's appeal, somewhat unexpectedly, produced a peasant migration of up to 20,000 mostly unskilled fighters, including women and children.⁹¹ Nevertheless, instead of reclaiming Jerusalem from the Turks, the unorganized mobs instigated several Jewish massacres in Central Europe.⁹² After weeks of looting Orthodox Christian lands of the East,⁹³ the mob finally reached Constantinople in early August 1096 only to suffer a heavy defeat from the Muslim forces, only three thousand surviving the Turkish raids.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed., *The Oxford History of the Crusades* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University, 1999), 157.

⁹⁰ August C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University, 1921), 42-43. Pope Urban II was responding to the appeal, which came from Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, asking for mercenaries to help him resist Muslim advances into his territory.

⁹¹ John J. Norwich, *Byzantium: The Decline and Fall* (London, UK: Penguin, 1995), 33; see also Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 78-82.

⁹² Nikolas Jaspert, *The Crusades* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 39-40. Edward H. Flannery's estimate is that 10,000 Jews were murdered between January and July of 1096 "probably one-fourth to one-third of the Jewish population of Germany and Northern France at that time" (Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism* [New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1985], 93).

⁹³ Norwich, *Byzantium*, 33.

⁹⁴ Norwich, *Byzantium*, 33; see also Steven Runciman, *The First Crusade* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 60.

After the setback of the initial peasant's crusade, the more organized wave of the 40,000 crusaders came in 1197, led by the French nobles Hugh I, Count of Vermandois, and Raymond IV, Count of Toulouse. The second wave of crusaders actually managed to pass through Asia Minor, capturing Edessa and Antioch in 1098, and eventually reclaiming Jerusalem for Christendom on 15 July 1099.⁹⁵ As a direct result of the First Crusade, several small crusader states were created: the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Edessa, the Principality of Antioch, and the County of Tripoli. In the Kingdom of Jerusalem at most 120,000 Franks and other western Christians ruled over 350,000 Muslims, Jews, and native eastern Christians.⁹⁶

Second Crusade (1145-1149)

Initially, due to internal conflicts, Muslims did very little about the crusaders and their states. However, after a couple of decades of relative calm in which Christians and Muslims coexisted peacefully, Muslims began to reunite under the leadership of Imad al-Din Zangi, and in 1144, took Edessa, the city that was the first to be captured by Christian crusaders in 1098.⁹⁷

The fall of Edessa led to the Second Crusade, which was called by Pope Eugene III (1146-1153), a former pupil of Bernard of Clairvaux. The pope commissioned

⁹⁵ Logan, *History of the Church*, 126; Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2006), 54.

⁹⁶ Benjamin Z. Kedar, "The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant," in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. T. F. Madden (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2002), 244. Kedar quotes these numbers from Israeli scholar Joshua Prawer, *Histoire du royaume latin de Jérusalem*, 2 vols. (Paris, France: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1969), 1:498, 568-72.

⁹⁷ Kedar, "The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant," 244.

Bernard of Clairvaux to preach in support of the new campaign and accorded the same indulgences that Pope Urban II offered during the First Crusade. French and German armies, under King Louis VII and King Conrad III respectively, marched to Jerusalem and occupied it in 1147 but failed to win any major victories and were unsuccessful in their efforts to reclaim Edessa under Christian control.⁹⁸ Instead, the crusaders launched another onslaught against Jews in Europe and Palestine. Bernard of Clairvaux was upset with the misdirected violence and slaughter of the Jewish population of the Rhineland.⁹⁹ It was not long after the end of the Second Crusade that Joachim visited the Holy Land.

Third Crusade (1187-1191)

After another forty years of Christian control, Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, following the Battle of Hattin, recaptured Jerusalem in 1187.¹⁰⁰ The reports of Saladin's victory shocked Europe. Pope Gregory VII (October-November 1187) called for the Third Crusade, which was led by several of Europe's most important leaders, Philip II of France, Richard I of England (Richard the Lionheart), and Frederick I Barbarossa, Holy Roman emperor.

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Hallam, *Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye-Witness Accounts of the Wars between Christianity and Islam* (London, UK: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), 155.

⁹⁹ Richard Emery, "Crusades," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 vols. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 4:408.

¹⁰⁰ John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2005), 59. After taking Jerusalem back from the Christians, the Muslims spared civilians and for the most part left churches and shrines untouched. Saladin is remembered respectfully in both European and Islamic sources as a man who "always stuck to his promise and was loyal." Harold Lamb, *The Crusades: The Flame of Islam* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1931), 310-311.

Frederick I drowned in Cilicia (modern-day Turkey) in 1190, leaving an unstable alliance between the English and the French.¹⁰¹ Philip II returned to France in 1191, after the crusaders had recaptured the city of Accra from the Muslims. The crusader army, led by Richard I of England, recaptured the port city of Jaffa.¹⁰² Richard left the following year after negotiating a treaty with Saladin. The treaty allowed unarmed Christian pilgrims to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land (Jerusalem), while the city itself remained under Muslim control.¹⁰³

Richard returned to Europe but stopped to spend the winter in the city of Messina on the island of Sicily. While he was there he had an encounter with Joachim of Fiore. According to the eyewitness account of Roger Howden,¹⁰⁴ Joachim met Richard in the winter of 1191-92 and revealed to him that, according to the prophecy of the seven kings in Rev 17, the effort of the crusaders would be in vain and the Muslims would remain in control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Esposito, *Islam*, 59; see also original documents in G. A. Loud, *The Crusade of Frederic Barbarossa*, Crusade Texts in Translation 19 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 172.

¹⁰² Hallam, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 155.

¹⁰³ Richard did not believe he would be able to hold Jerusalem once it was captured, as the majority of Crusaders would return to Europe (Hallam, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 155).

¹⁰⁴ Roger Howden, *Chronica* [1201] 3:75-79; see also a second report of this conversation in “Gesta Regis Henrici II et Ricardi I,” recorded in Howden, *Chronica* 2:151-155; Doris Stenton has demonstrated that Roger Howden accompanied Richard on his crusade and affirmed the veracity of his visit to Messina (Doris M. Stenton, “Roger of Howden and Benedict,” *English Historical Review* 68 [1953]: 574-582). For further discussion on the authenticity of Howden’s account, see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 6-10.

¹⁰⁵ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 7, 8.

Joachim's Order of Fiore

After receiving support from Pope Lucius III in 1184 and Pope Urban III in 1186, Joachim devoted himself to writing and editing his books in a hermitage named Petralata, near Corazzo in Calabria. Several monks from the Corazzo monastery followed him to help in the dictation and writing of his books.

In 1188, Joachim left his refuge in Petralata and went to Rome to visit the newly appointed pope, Clement III (1187-91). Joachim expounded to the pope his views on Christian reform and the soon-coming end of the world. Clement responded favorably to Joachim, granting him permission to found a new monastic order with the objective of fostering spiritual reform within the Church. Clement also encouraged Joachim to make no delay in completing his work, but to submit it to the Holy See for investigation.¹⁰⁶

After the encounter with Pope Clement, Joachim severed all his ties with the Cistercians and dedicated himself to the task of building a new monastic order and completing his works. Concerning Joachim's work, Luca wrote: "I used to write day and night in copybooks, what he dictated and corrected on scraps of paper, with two other monks whom he employed in the same work."¹⁰⁷

In 1192 Joachim and his closest disciples started building a new monastery called San Giovanni di Fiore (Saint John of Flower), in expectation of the new life that they

¹⁰⁶ Gardner, "Joachim of Fiora," 406. This confirmation by Clement III is recorded by a letter written by Clement and published in the preface of Joachim's first work *Liber Concordiae*.

¹⁰⁷ VBJS, 543, in Bettt, *Joachim of Flora*, 9.

hoped would come to “flourish” in the soon-coming millennium.¹⁰⁸ In this new monastery, Joachim intended to introduce a stricter code of moral discipline than that of the Cistercians. The lifestyle introduced in the new order was called by Joachim *la vita contemplativa*, and was typologically depicted in the gospel of John.¹⁰⁹ The Cistercians complained of Joachim’s defection from their ranks, but the abbot’s strong support from the pope made their complaints futile.¹¹⁰

Throughout 1192 and 1193 the new abbey was ravaged with problems. The members of a nearby Greek Orthodox monastery quarreled with Joachim and his monks over pasture rights. The quarrel culminated in an attack upon San Giovanni di Fiore by the Greek monks. During the attack, portions of the new buildings were burned.¹¹¹

Joachim was forced to employ his connections with popes and kings to make sure the new order would survive after his death. In 1193, Joachim went to Palermo to meet with Tancred of Lecce (1181-94), king of the Norman Kingdom. Tancred responded favorably to Joachim’s request for protection and legitimacy. Subsequently, the order of San Giovanni di Fiore received gifts and privileges from the Norman see.¹¹² In the

¹⁰⁸ J. Voigt, “Joachim of Floris,” *A Religious Encyclopedia or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, ed. Philip Schaff, 3 vols. (New York, NY: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1894), 2:1183.

¹⁰⁹ Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore*, 3. In Joachim’s thought, the apostles Peter, Paul, and John also represent the three stages of history. Peter is identified with the Age of the Father and the dispensation of the Jews. Paul represents the dispensation of gentile Christians—the Church. Apostle John outlived the two older Apostles, and saw the visions of the new world on the isle of Patmos. He thus foreshadows the future Age of the Spirit (see pp. 56, n. 21 of this study).

¹¹⁰ West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, iii.

¹¹¹ West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 5.

¹¹² West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 5; Bett, *Joachim of Flora*, 15.

following year, however, Tancred died and, through marriage liaisons, the Kingdom of Sicily, although not without a fight, fell into the hands of Emperor Henry VI (1190-97) and his wife, Constanze.

Joachim visited Henry VI and Constanze in Palermo in the summer of 1195. He reproved Henry for his violence in seizing the Norman Kingdom, proclaiming that his act of invading Sicily was the deed of *feroces barbarorum animi*.¹¹³ However, Joachim also declared that these events occurred in typological fulfillment of the prophetic history. Joachim compared Henry to Nebuchadnezzar, biblical king of Babylon, who in the sixth century BC had invaded the Mediterranean city of Tyre. The prophecy of destruction, pronounced by the prophet Ezekiel against the city of Tyre (Ezek 26-28), found, according to Joachim, its antitypical fulfillment in the destruction of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily. “For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people” (Ezek 26:7).¹¹⁴

Although Henry’s advisors were dismayed at Joachim’s comparison, Henry accepted the role of Nebuchadnezzar. He granted privileges to Joachim and offered to protect the abbey in Fiore.¹¹⁵ Finally, on April 25, 1196, San Giovanni di Fiore was

¹¹³ “A ferocious [and a] barbarian soul” (Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 11). This account is based on VBJA, 24.

¹¹⁴ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 11. The comparison between the Babylon and Roman *Imperium* can be found all through Joachim’s writings (see especially Joachim, EA, 173-174). Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the King James Version.

¹¹⁵ Joachim remained on very good terms with the Imperial authority, especially with the Empress Constanze. A famous interview between Empress Constanze and Joachim is recounted by Luca of Cosenza, where Joachim is presented as personal confessor of the Empress, while she

confirmed as an independent institution by Pope Celestine III (1191-98) who also issued a bull approving the new monastic order created by Joachim.¹¹⁶ In 1204, after Joachim's death, Pope Innocent III issued another bull reconfirming the approval granted by Pope Celestine III. Finally, in two letters, in 1216 and 1220 Pope Honorius also reconfirmed the approval. The monastery of San Giovanni of Fiore in Calabria eventually became the motherhouse of several other similar establishments.¹¹⁷

Joachim's Death and Fame

By the end of the twelfth century, Joachim's reputation as an expositor and *profeta* spread widely. The body of Joachim's work was presented to Pope Innocent III in 1200. However, Joachim died two years later, before any judgment was pronounced upon his works. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* attests that "the holiness of his life is unquestionable; miracles were said to have been wrought at his tomb, and, though never officially beatified, he is still venerated as a *beatus* on May 29."¹¹⁸

Although Joachim was not widely known outside of Italy during his lifetime, historians agree that within thirty years of his death, he was looked upon as an oracle of his times. His works rapidly became famous in wide circles, both common and professional.¹¹⁹ After his death in 1202, even as Joachim's fame increased, a considerable

acts very humbly and bows before Joachim as "Mary Magdalene before Christ" to be absolved (VBJS, 12; see also Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 11).

¹¹⁶ Philipp Jaffe, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, 2 vols. (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck Verlagsanstalt, 1956), 2: no. 17425.

¹¹⁷ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 28; Gardner, "Joachim of Fiora," 407.

¹¹⁸ Gardner, "Joachim of Fiora," 407.

¹¹⁹ Delno West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 1: i.

controversy arose in regard to his impact and teachings.¹²⁰ Some thought of him as a man of great wisdom, others revered him as a prophet, and still others damned him as a false teacher. His message had particular appeal among the new mendicant orders and through their advocacy, Joachim's ideas rapidly spread northward. Despite popular claims, Joachim never assumed the title of a prophet. Instead, he avowed a special insight into Scripture and history which he termed *intelligentia spiritualis*.¹²¹

Joachim believed that in a future age of the Church, namely in the period of the Spirit, many diligent students of Scripture will experience the gift of illumination. Joachim based this assertion on the text in Dan 12:4, “many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased,” which he quotes at least nine different times in his writings. In *Concordia*, Joachim stated that “knowledge will be multiplied through every age of the world, just as it is written ‘Pertransibunt plurimi et multiplex erit scientia’.”¹²²

¹²⁰ As a whole, the council of Lateran in 1215 accepted Joachim’s major writings as orthodox, except his reformulations on Trinity (Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot* [New York, NY: Macmillan, 1985], 165-68).

¹²¹ Joachim of Fiore, *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti* (Venice, Italy: De Lucre, 1519, reprint, Frankfurt, Germany: Minerva, 1964), 2-3. In 1199, Innocent III proclaimed that the common people are not able to understand the Holy Scriptures (Innocent III, *Cum ex Injuncto*, PL 214:696). Joachim, on the other hand, argued that there would be a time when multitudes will understand the Holy Scriptures. For more on *intelligentia spiritualis* see Gian-Luca Potesta, “‘Intelligentia Scripturarum’ und Kritik des Prophetismus bei Joachim von Fiore,” in *Neue Richtungen in Der Hoch-und Spätmittelalterlichen Bibelexegese*, ed. Robert E. Lerner (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenburg, 1996), 95-119.

¹²² “Many shall go through [the words of these prophecies] and knowledge shall be increased” (Joachim, LC [V], 96). For a full discussion on Joachim’s future prediction of scriptural illumination see Robert E. Lerner, “*Petransibunt Plurimi*: Reading Daniel to Transgress Authority,” in *Knowledge, Discipline and Power in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of David Luscombe*, ed. J. Canning, E. J. King, and M. Staub (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 19-21.

Minor Works

Besides the three most important works of Joachim, the *Liber Concordia*, *Expositio Apocalypsim* and *Psalterium Decem Chordarum*,¹²³ Joachim also composed a number of minor tracts, letters, poems, and sermons on topics both relevant and irrelevant to his apocalyptic theology. Among these is the *Adversus Iudeos* in which Joachim attempts to prepare the Jews for their conversion to Christianity, which he expected to occur at the beginning of the imminent period of great Church renewal.¹²⁴

Another important work necessary to fully understand Joachim's eschatology is *De Septem Sigillis*. In it Joachim repeats the basic patterns of his interpretation of history, paralleling the history of Israel, from Abraham to Christ, with the history of the Christian Church from Christ to the end of the world.¹²⁵ The tract *De Ultimis Tribulationibus* more specifically deals with last-day events, and is also a valuable source of Joachim's apocalyptic thought.¹²⁶

¹²³ *Concordia* builds the groundwork of Joachim's typological system of concord between Old Testament and New Testament dispensations. *Expositio Apocalypsim* exposes these concords throughout the book of Revelation. *Psalterium Decem Chordarum* explains in more detail Joachim's views of the Trinity, based on the book of Psalms.

¹²⁴ *Adversus Iudaeos*, ed. A. Frugoni (Rome, Italy: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1957). The most recent edition of this work is *Agli Ebrei* (To the Jews), ed. M. Liritano and B. Forte, trans. in Italian (Catanzaro, Italy: Rubbettino, 1998).

¹²⁵ *De Septem Sigillis*, ed. Marjorie Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, "The Seven Seals in the Writings of Joachim of Fiore," *Recherche en théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21 (1954): 211-247; see also Morton Bloomfield, "The Pierpoint-Morgan Manuscript of 'De Septem Sigillis,'" *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 38 (1971): 137-148.

¹²⁶ *De Ultimis Tribulationibus*, ed. K. V. Selge in "Ein Traktat Joachims von Fiore über die Drangsale der Endzeit: 'De ultimis tribulationibus,'" *Florensia* 7 (1993): 7-35; see also E. Randolph Daniel, "Abbot Joachim of Fiore: The *De ultimis tribulationibus*," in *Prophecy and Millenarianism*, ed. A. Williams (London, UK: Longman, 1980), 165-89.

In addition, Joachim wrote two introductory treatises to his *Expositio in Apocalypsim*. The *Praefatio super Apocalypsim* was written around 1188-92¹²⁷ and the *Enchiridion super Apocalypsim* was written in 1194-96.¹²⁸ Both treatises are earlier and shorter versions of the *Liber introductorius* prefacing *Expositio in Apocalypsim*.

Marjorie Reeves and Beatrice Reich have convincingly argued in favor of the canonicity of Joachim's *Liber Figurarum* (Book of Figures).¹²⁹ This book of illustrations presents visual images which relate to Joachim's main ideas. According to scholarly consensus, Joachim's illustrations were compiled by his disciples into a single volume shortly after Joachim's death in 1202. This work was extremely important to the spread of Joachim's interpretations throughout Europe.¹³⁰

Just before his death in 1202, Joachim also wrote a book entitled *Tractatus super Quatuor Evangelia*. Intended to be understood within Joachim's scheme of history,

¹²⁷ Joachim, *Praefatio super Apocalypsim*, ed. K. V. Selge, "Eine Einführung Joachims von Fiore in die Johannesapokalypse," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* vol. 46, no. 1 (1990): 85-131.

¹²⁸ Joachim, *Enchiridion in Apocalypsim*, ed. Edward K. Burger (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986). The *Liber introductoris*, sometimes cited as a separate work, forms an introduction to *Expositio*.

¹²⁹ Luca Tondelli, Marjorie Reeves, and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *Il libro delle figure dell'abate Gioachino da Fiore*, 2 vols. (Turin, Italy: Società editrice internazionale, 1954). See the more recent edition by Marjorie Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *The 'Figurae' of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1972).

¹³⁰ Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, *The 'Figurae'*, 351-376; Joachim's tables are also available online at the "Centro Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti," accessed April 16, 2017, http://www.centrostudigioachimiti.it/Gioacchino/GF_tavole.asp.

Tractatus presents the four gospels as progressive consummations of historical periods that culminate with the eternal Sabbath at the end of history.¹³¹

Summary

Chapter 2 portrays Joachim as a product of a complex culture suspended between the Norman Kingdom and the Latin West, in between the Greek East and the Sicilian south. The Norman Kingdom in which he lived was a melting pot of cultures, ideas, and thoughts that allowed for an open spirit and independent philosophy. Joachim lived in the period of the crusades and amid much internal controversy between popes and emperors.

Joachim's pilgrimage to Palestine was probably the most critical event in his life. While in contact with Syrian Christian hermeneutical traditions and particularly in the solitude of prayer and study on Mount Tabor, he had an enlightening experience, which opened his mind to developing a revolutionary outlook on Jewish and Christian traditions. His emphasis on the Scriptures and prayer for understanding the text made him a unique biblical scholar for his time.¹³²

In addition to his emphasis on biblical hermeneutics, the second major influence on Joachim's life and theology was monasticism. The rules of Saint Benedict, the order

¹³¹ The thesis of Henri Mottu on *Tractatus* offers critical analysis of this work. Henri Mottu, *La Manifestation de l'Esprit selon Joachim de Fiore* (Ph.D diss., University of Geneva, 1971), and published under the same title in 1977 simultaneously by Delachaux et Niestlé (Neuchatel, Switzerland), and Labor et Fides (Paris, France).

¹³² See Joachim's express statements that only through Scripture can we establish the true history of humanity (Joachim of Fiore, *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti*, trans. R. E. Daniel (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983), 11, 13; and Joachim, EA, 157). Barbara Obrist argues that this is one of the major differences between Joachim and some of his contemporaries like Hugh of Saint Victor for example (Barbara Obrist, "Image et prophétie au XIIe siècle: Hugues de Saint-Victor et Joachim de Flore," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome; Moyen-Age, Temps modernes* 98, no. 1 [1986]: 50).

of Cistercians, and the writings of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux represented a foundation on which Joachim desired to build his plan for Church reform. Intelligent reading and understanding of the Scriptures was something Joachim believed the monastic order had neglected. He believed that monasticism had become inefficient in reaching the true spiritual life toward which it strived.

Joachim opposed many popular apocalyptic and political ideas of his time. He was strongly opposed to the idea of crusades as the answer for the church's problems and expressed horror at each act of violence. He was not afraid to rebuke kings and queens for their aggressive military assaults on other kingdoms. Joachim also opposed the papal use of secular weapons and armies in the struggle against Emperor Henry VI.

For Joachim, the key to the true betterment of society was not a bloody crusade or political conquest, but a change of heart, spiritual conversion, and humility. These could be achieved through devotion to the God of the Bible, with an emphasis on knowing Him and His will. Joachim's vision for the future foresaw the victory of spiritual men over the forces of corruption and greed in the church and society. Joachim believed in the imminence of the "Age of the Spirit" in which God would finish His work of redemption, preparing the world for the Second Coming of Christ.

CHAPTER 3

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF JOACHIM OF FIORE

Introduction

Several scholars asserted that the prophetic expositions recorded by Joachim of Fiore are precursors of modern historicism.¹ The historicist method of interpretation has historically been characterized by two major hermeneutical elements. The first is the linear-chronological succession of historical events depicted in prophetic symbols of the apocalyptic literature of the Bible. The second is the year-day principle, which adopts the premise that one day in Bible prophecy represents one year in real history. The historical-continuous framework and the year-day principle are fundamental in implementing apocalyptic time-periods such as the 1,260-, 1290- and 2300-day prophecies within the scheme of Church history.²

¹ See L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald, 1952), 1:703-713; Mal Couch, *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1996), 369; Gilbert Desrosiers, *An Introduction to Revelation* (New York, NY: Continuum International, 2000), 32; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 19-21, etc.

² Osborne, *Revelation*, 19, 20; Elliott, *Horae Apocalipticae*, 4; 16-21; Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation; A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 46.

Although the historicist hermeneutic was common in the early Church,³ historicism, as an independent branch of biblical interpretation, was at its greatest prominence between the Late Middle Ages and the late nineteenth century.⁴ This chapter investigates whether or not Joachim of Fiore's method of biblical interpretation can truly be considered a form of historicism.

Joachim and the Typology of "Concords"

Chapter 2 focuses almost exclusively on Joachim's understanding of the meaning of history. However, his typological interpretation of the Bible and the main outlines of his views on the Trinity must be understood before his apocalyptic ideas can be addressed.⁵ Three central issues are involved when studying the eschatology of Joachim of Fiore: the typological interpretation of Scripture, the mystery of the Trinity, and the meaning of history.

³ See Chapter 4. An overview of the various prophetic expositions from the third through fifth centuries demonstrates that prophecies of Daniel were mainly interpreted within a historicist framework by both the Latin (later Catholic) and Greek writers. F. F. Bruce, "Eschatology in the Apostolic Fathers," in *The Heritage of the Early Church*, ed. D. Nieman and M. Schatkin (Rome, Italy: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1973), 77-89; Thomas Cornman, "The Development of Third-Century Hermeneutical Views in Relation to Eschatological Systems," *JETS* 30, no. 3 (September 1987): 279-87; Gilbert Desrosier, *An Introduction to Revelation*, 32; Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski, *Power and Religion in Late Antiquity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 6.

⁴ See Fromm, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vols. 2-4.

⁵ Grundmann recognizes Joachim's system as classical biblical typology—a pictorial system of concordance between the types of the Old Testament and the antitypes of the history of Christ and the Church. According to Grundmann, Joachim's book, *Liber Figurarum*, represents a manual of typology (Herbert Grundmann, *Studien über Joachim von Floris* [Leipzig, Germany: 1927, reprint, 1966], 199-207); see also Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 3:359-67.

Joachim's approach to typology revolves around his view of the *concord*s of Scripture, paralleling the major persecutions and events of ancient Israel with the history of the Christian Church.⁶ Joachim believes that the visions in the book of Revelation represented the inner wheel that corresponds to the outer wheel described in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek 1:4-21). The outer wheel is the history of the Hebrew people, from Abraham to the return from Babylon, recorded in the Scriptures from Genesis through the book of Esther. The Apocalypse, or inner wheel, contains the main periods and events of the Christian Church. In Joachim's system, the major periods of the Christian Church faithfully parallel the key stages in the history of Israel.⁷

According to Joachim, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the patriarchs of the Hebrew people—serve as prophetic prototypes for Zacharias, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, founders of the Christian Church.⁸ Furthermore, the twelve tribes of Israel are prototypes of the twelve apostles, while the violent conquest of Canaan by Joshua has a parallel in the bloody persecution of Christians in the early Church. The secession of the ten tribes of northern Israel from Judah, recorded in Kings and Chronicles, prefigures the schism in the Christian Church between the Latin and Greek Churches. The destruction of the ten northern tribes by the Assyrians typifies the Muslim conquest of Byzantium, while the

⁶ These illuminations formed the basis of his foremost and major works, entitled *Liber Concordiae Novi ac veteri testamenti* and *Expositio in Apocalypsim*. (McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 127).

⁷ Joachim, EA, 1d-2a; Joachim, LC (D), 62; *Enchiridion in Apocalypsim*, ed. E. K. Burger, 11; E. Randolph Daniel, "Joachim of Fiore: Patterns of History in Apocalypse," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. R. K. Emmerson and B. McGinn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1992), 78.

⁸ Joachim, LC (D), 25; Daniel, "Joachim of Fiore: Patterns of History," 79; West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 95-98.

destruction of Judah by Babylon foreshadows the captivity of the Latin Church to worldly corruption.⁹ These are just some of the most obvious of Joachim's concords. Joachim believed that the Old Testament Scripture contains multiple prophetic types which must find their antitypical fulfillment in the Christian Church history.

The Theory of Three *Status*

The most fundamental element of Joachim's eschatology is the theory of the three stages (*status*) of sacred history that the world must endure. Each member of the Trinity takes precedence during one age: (1) *Status Patri*—the Age of the Father, (2) *Status Filii*—the Age of the Son, and (3) *Status Spiritum*—the Age of the Spirit.

In this way, three conditions of the world (*tres mundi status*) bear witness—as we have already stated in this work . . . the first, when we were under the law (*sub lege*); the second, when we were in grace (*sub gratia*); the third, which we expect soon, which will be of the abundance of grace (*sub ampliora gratia*). . . . So the first condition belongs to the Father, the creator of all things, whose time begins with the beginning of history . . . and reaches out to the apostles. . . . The second condition must belong to the Son, who deigned to dress the clay we are made of, to fast and suffer in it to reform the condition of the first men, who killed to eat. The third condition belongs to the Holy Spirit, of whom the apostle says “where there is the Spirit of the Lord there is freedom” (2 Cor 3:17).¹⁰

According to Joachim, the first of the three stages of history, the *status Patri*, or the Age of the Father, begins at the moment God chooses Abraham as the father of faith.

⁹ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 6, 11, 16-27; West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 10-29.

¹⁰ Joachim, LC (V), 112. Translation available online: <http://www.granta.demon.co.uk/arasm/jg/ioachimi.html> (accessed May 27, 2017).

The first stage is the forty-two generations from Abraham to Christ, which are enumerated in the first chapter of Matthew. This stage is also called the Age of the Law.¹¹

The second stage, the *status Filii*, or the Age of the Son, is depicted by forty-two prophetic months from Christ to the arrival of the Antichrist. These forty-two months are taken from Rev 11:2 and 13:4, and represent the tribulation of the Church for 1,260 years after Christ's ascension.¹²

The final stage of history is the *status Spiritum*, or the Age of the Spirit, which commences at the end of the 1,260 years and after the fall of the Antichrist. This stage ushers a spiritual renewal into the Christian Church and a period of apocalyptic conversion of the Jews and gentiles to Christianity. Joachim also calls this period the millennium.

Although superficially simple, these stages of history become increasingly complex as, according to Joachim, each status has a starting point and a flourishing point. For example, the Age of the Father already has a starting point with Adam, but it really flourishes starting with Abraham. The Age of the Son has its roots in the reforms of the prophet Elisha (whom Joachim sees as a prototype of Jesus). However, it does not flourish until the appearance of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus. The Age of the Spirit has its starting point in the monastic reforms of Benedict but, as Joachim predicts, it does not truly flourish until the arrival of the millennium.

¹¹ Augustine also structured the history of Israel in different *etates* on the basis of the numbers of generations (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 22:30).

¹² The application of the year-day principle in Joachim's writings is discussed further in this study (pp. 72, 77, 81, 117).

The First Age of the world began with Adam, flowered from Abraham, and was consummated in Christ. The Second began with Uzziah, flowered from Zachary, the father of John the Baptist, and will receive its consummation in these times. The Third Age, taking its beginning from St. Benedict, began to bring forth fruit in the twenty-second generation, and is itself to be consummated in the consummation of the world. The First Age, in which the married state¹³ was illustrious, is ascribed to the Father in the personal aspect of the [Trinitarian] mystery. The Second, in which the clerical state in the tribe of Juda [sic] was illustrious, is ascribed to the Son; the Third, in which the monastic state is illustrious, is ascribed to the Holy Spirit.¹⁴

Joachim also illustrated his theology of history of three ages in a series of diagrams in his *Liber Figurarum*.¹⁵ In Joachim's thought, the apostles Peter, Paul, and John also represent the three stages of history. Peter is identified with the Age of the Father and the dispensation of the Jews. Paul represents the dispensation of gentile Christians-the Church. Apostle John outlived the two older Apostles, and saw the visions of the new world on the isle of Patmos. He foreshadows the future Age of the Spirit.¹⁶

Joachim placed considerable importance on the gospel of John. He saw it as a blueprint for the new spiritual life, which must emerge in the Church, reforming it from

¹³ "The married state" is the period of the prophets and kings in the Old Testament who were allowed to marry, as opposed to the period of celibate clergy and monks of the New Testament dispensation.

¹⁴ Joachim, LC (V), 56b, translated in Bernard McGinn, "The Abbot and the Doctors: Scholastic Reactions to the Radical Eschatology of Joachim of Fiore" *Church History* 40, no. 1 (March 1971): 33.

¹⁵ Joachim's diagrams collected in *Liber Figurarum* are kept in the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, UK. Also available online, "Centro Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti," accessed April 16, 2017, http://www.centrostudigioachimiti.it/Gioacchino/GF_tavole.asp.

¹⁶ Joachim, LC (D), 408-9. "Joachim has a whole series of triplets to characterize these ages such as fear, faith, love; law, cross, rest; work, suffering, contemplation; flesh, blood, spirit; Peter, Paul, John; starlight, dawn, day; winter, spring, summer; grass, corn, wheat; water, wine, oil; servants, children, friends; old men, youths, children; knowledge[,] wisdom, perfect intelligence; married (or laity), clerics, monks, etc." West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 1:46.

the inside out. The other writings of John were also significant to Joachim, especially the book of Revelation. Joachim's reverence for John and his belief in the future Church renewal, are evident in the name Joachim chooses for his first monastic house—San Giovanni Di Fiore (Saint John of the Flower)—and the monastic order of Fiore.¹⁷

Joachim's Interpretation of the Book of Revelation

According to Joachim, the most pertinent passages explaining the past, present, and future are found in the mysterious last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse of John, or Revelation. All the other prophecies in the Bible are for Joachim interpreted through the lenses of this apocalyptic book.¹⁸

In *Expositio in Apocalypsim*¹⁹ Joachim starts by explaining that there are eight significant occurrences of the number seven in the book of Revelation: seven churches (Rev 1-3), seven seals (Rev 4-8), seven trumpets (Rev 8-11), seven heads of the dragon (Rev 12), seven heads of the sea-beast (Rev 13), seven cups of wrath (Rev 15-16), seven heads of the scarlet beast (Rev 17), and seven last beatitudes (Rev 20-22). Using the Tyconian rule of recapitulation,²⁰ Joachim asserted that each group of seven (except for

¹⁷ The imagery of flowering comes from Joachim's drawings of the three ages of history, Available online at the "Centro Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti," accessed April 16, 2017, http://www.centrostudigioachimiti.it/Gioacchino/GF_tavole.asp.

¹⁸ For Joachim, the book of Revelation provides inspired people with lenses for understanding the book of Daniel and not vice versa. For Joachim's interpretation of the visions of Daniel, see pp. 92, 93.

¹⁹ This section of the study follows Joachim's commentary on the book of Revelation in the order of Joachim's divisions as it is found in his *Expositio*. Occasional references to the rest of Joachim's opus are added for the purpose of making a systematic presentation of his thought.

²⁰ The rule of recapitulation postulates that each successive vision in the book of Revelation recapitulates the content and the message from the previous vision, adding to, and

the last one) relates to one of the seven major periods of the Church from the birth of Christ to the end of the Christian dispensation.

The Seven Churches

In the letters to the seven churches (Rev 2-3), Joachim identifies the seven stages of the Christian era.²¹ The first two churches, Ephesus and Smyrna, represent the first two centuries of the Church from the time of the apostles until the age of Constantine and Pope Sylvester I (ca. 325). This period is characterized by the struggle against false apostles as well as the fierce persecution of the Church by Diocletian (d. 311) and imperial Rome.²² This period is depicted in Revelation: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Rev 2:5).

Joachim argues that these words were fulfilled when the primacy of Church authority was

enlarging upon it with new information. This rule was first partially applied by Victorinus and further publicized by Tyconius and Augustine (Ann Matter, “The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis,” in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 41; W. Weinrich, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture; Revelation* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005], xii).

²¹ Although the historical application of the churches is notable, in commenting upon the churches, Joachim dwells mainly on the tension between the five principal apostolic sees of the Early Church (Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome) versus the seven churches in Asia Minor founded by the Apostle John. The five primary sees represent for Joachim the heritage of the Apostle Peter. Peter’s churches also serve as a prototype for five sections of the ecclesiastic church orders—the apostles, martyrs, doctors, bishops, and monks—in chronological order (Joachim, EA, 17, 18). By contrast, the Apostle John’s seven churches represent the monastic order and reach beyond the Christian era into the Dispensation of the Spirit (Joachim, EA, 47-51). Joachim reasoned that since John outlived Peter, the prophetic significance of his churches reaches further into history than the typology of Peter’s churches, which ends around the time of Joachim in the fifth period of the Church History.

²²Joachim, EA, 61d-63c.

transferred from Asia to Constantinople, and then finally to Rome.²³

The third stage is the church of Pergamos. During this period the Church becomes established and is approved by the ruling powers of the empire. This age is characterized by the appearance of false teachers. Also at this time, the doctors of the Church²⁴ arise to protect the truth and denounce the heresies. This stage has its own peculiar dangers. In a general sense, the words in Rev 2:13, which describe the seat of Satan, also apply to those who greedily aspire to the power of the magistrates. They are filled with pride and seek the title of rabbi (teacher). In a more historical sense, the false teachers are specifically identified as Arius, Eunomius, and Macedonius, the leaders of the Arian and Sabellian heresies in the fourth century.²⁵

The message to the church of Thyatira correlates to the fourth stage of Church history, and is represented by the “order of virgins” (*ordo virginis*).²⁶ This is a period of expansion for the Latin Church. The antagonistic force of this period is Jezebel who appears in Rev 2:20. Jezebel represents individuals in the Church who pretend to be spiritual but condone sin and sensuality “under religious garment” (*sub habitu religioso*). As Elijah flees to escape Queen Jezebel and finds refuge in another land (2

²³Joachim, EA, 62d-63c.

²⁴ Here, one may assume that Joachim refers to some of the early Christian theologians regarded as especially authoritative (particularly Augustine of Hippo, Jerome, Ambrose, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazians).

²⁵Joachim, EA, 71a-73c.

²⁶Joachim, EA, 73a-74a. In his writings Joachim makes a distinction between the order of the “married ones” (the kings and prophets ruling in the Old Testament Church) and the order of the “virgins”-(the celibate monks and clergy leading the New Testament Church) (Joachim, EA, 5bc, 18a. See also McGinn, *Calabrian Abbot*, 185-6).

Kgs 17:10), thus, Joachim argues, the perfection of true monastic life ceases to be found among the Greeks and is taken up by the Latin Christians.²⁷ Joachim also identifies the destruction of Israel's northern tribes by the Assyrians as a prototype for the ruin of Byzantium, first by the Persians and later during the Arabic invasion.²⁸

The church of Sardis represents the fifth stage of the Church, that of monastic orders. Jesus' message to this Church period is: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that you livest, and art dead." (Rev 3:1) Joachim believes this period receives the most scorn from Jesus, as it has slipped away from the monastic ideal set up by Benedict of Nursia (d. 540). Corruption and laxity characterizes this period. However, there are "a few names . . . which have not defiled their garments" (Rev 3:4). Those positive elements, for Joachim, are found within the Cistercian and other reform-minded orders.²⁹

The last two churches, Philadelphia and Laodicea, illustrate the climax of Christian history, entering the Age of the Spirit. In the sixth letter, addressed to the church of Philadelphia, Joachim identifies a prophecy of the coming sixth period of the Church history, which he asserts must begin soon after the year 1200.³⁰ See Table 1.

²⁷Joachim, EA, 75b.

²⁸Joachim, EA, 76ab.

²⁹Joachim, EA, 78b-81d.

³⁰ See Daniel, "Joachim of Fiore: Patterns of History," 80, 81. Joachim reasons that, in the same manner as Jesus was conceived in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, so in this sixth period of Church history Christ will infuse the Church with the orders of spiritual men—*virii spiritualis* (Joachim, EA, 83b).

Table 1. The seven churches

	The Church	The Persecutors
<i>Ephesus</i> AD 30-100*	Order of the apostles until the death of Apostle John	Judaizing false apostles
<i>Smyrna</i> AD 100-312	Order of the martyrs from the death of Apostle John until Constantine and Pope Sylvester	Pagans and Jews
<i>Pergamos</i> AD 312-565	Order of the doctors (Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, etc.)	Heretics Arius, Eunomius, Sabellius, Macedonius, etc.
<i>Thyatira</i> AD 565-752	Order of the “virgins” Rise of Monasticism	False Christians under religious guise.
<i>Sardis</i> AD 752-1200	Development of Monastic Orders. Cistercians	Hypocritical monks; spiritual lethargy in many monasteries
<i>Philadelphia</i> 1200-1260	The spiritual Church-born out of contemplation and scriptural illumination-near the end of the second status	False prophets and false christs
<i>Laodicea</i> 1260-?	An order of monks engaged in active preaching at the very end of the second status	False prophets and false christs

* Joachim defines the time periods for each stage of Church history in his exposition on the seven seals (pp. 61-69).

Table 1 synthesizes Joachim's historical interpretation of the seven churches as found in the *Expositio*.³¹ Joachim believes that the Age of the Spirit will come about through two end-time monastic orders—an active order with an emphasis on preaching, and a contemplative order with an emphasis on personal spirituality. These two orders, which must bring renewal, reformation, and scriptural illumination in the Church, are represented by Philadelphia and Laodicea, the last two churches.³²

The Seven Seals

Joachim's commentary on the seven seals (Rev 6:1-8:6) provides more details on the concord between the OT and NT and the seven stages of Church history. Joachim distinguishes between the seals (which close the book in Rev 5) and the "opening" of the seals (an action that takes place in Rev 6 and 7). The seals (unopened) represent seven major periods of the Old Testament Jewish Church; the opening of the seals depicts seven periods of the Christian Church. Together, the symbolism forms a complete typological concord between the history of the Church and the history of OT Israel.³³

³¹Joachim, EA, 51-75. See also a similar diagram by Gian Luca Potesta, *Il Tempo Dell' Apocalisse; La Vita di Gioacchino Da Fiore* (Bari, Italy: Laterza, 2004), 301. Froom's conclusion that the seven churches have no historical application for Joachim overlooked Joachim's comments in *Expositio*, 51-75, where they are clearly related to historical time periods (Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:703, n. 52).

³²Joachim, EA, 82c-99b; see also Joachim's work *De Vita sancti Benedicti et de Officio Divino*, ed. M. Arnoni (Cosenza, Italy: Edizioni Meridionali, 1994). For more details of the order of spiritual men see Joachim's treatment of the two witnesses in Rev 11.

³³ Joachim, EA, 6-9, 113-120; Joachim, LC (D), 285-306, and Joachim, *De Septem Sigilis*, ed. M Reeves and B. Hirsch-Reich. *Recherche en théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21 (1954): 239-247.

The First Four Seals (AD 1-752)

The first seal, depicted by the image of the white horse (Rev 6:1-2), illustrates the period of the Church from Christ to the death of John the apostle (ca. AD 100). The white horse represents the pure apostolic Church.³⁴ In *Liber Concordiae* Joachim further explains that this period of Church history parallels the period of Israel's history from Abraham to Moses. In this period, nascent Israel descends to Egypt, just like the baby Jesus (Matt 2:1). After eating the Passover lamb, Israel passes through the Red Sea. This typifies Jesus' death and resurrection.³⁵

The second seal, depicted by the image of the red horse (Rev 6:3-4), represents the period of the early Church martyrs. It begins around the time of the death of the Apostle John and ends with the Edict of Milan (AD 313), which ended religious persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. This period of Church history parallels the period from Moses and Joshua to Samuel and David. The bloody conquest of the heathen Canaanites by Israel is effectively reversed as pagan Rome persecutes and kills Christian martyrs.³⁶

The third seal, illustrated by the black horse (Rev 6:5-6), depicts the general history of the Church from Constantine (d. 327) to Justinian I (d. 565).³⁷ In Israel's history, this period parallels the events from Samuel and David to Elijah and Elisha. For

³⁴ Joachim, EA, 114ab; Joachim, DSS, 239, 240.

³⁵ Joachim, LC (D), 288.

³⁶ Joachim, EA, 115ab, Joachim, LC (D), 291; Joachim, DSS, 241.

³⁷ Joachim, EA, 115cd; Joachim, LC (D), 292.

Joachim, the apostasy in the time of Israel's kings such as Jeroboam and Ahab translates to the rise of the Arian heresy in fourth-century Christianity. This period also initiates the process of separation between the Greek and Latin churches, paralleling the division between the ten tribes of Israel and the tribe of Judah.³⁸

The fourth seal, introduced by the image of the pale horse (Rev 6:8), represents the fourth period of the Christian Church, which Joachim calls the period of the virgins. It is characterized by the rise of monastic orders and Church clerics. The members of both groups took vows of celibacy. This period begins with the reign of Justinian I (d. 565) and ends with the death of the last Greek pope, Zachary (d. AD 752).³⁹ This stage parallels the period of Israel's history between the prophet Elijah and the destruction of the ten northern tribes of Israel. In the same way that the Assyrians took Samaria captive, the Saracens invaded much of the Byzantine Empire. The strength and primacy of the Christian Church in this period passes from the Greeks to the Latins.⁴⁰

The Fifth Seal

Continuing his analysis of concords between the NT and the OT, Joachim asserts that the fifth seal represents the period between the last Greek Pope, Zachary (d. 752), and the year 1200. This stage parallels the interval of Jewish history between King

³⁸Joachim, EA, 115cd; Joachim, LC (D), 293, 294; Joachim, DSS, 241, 242.

³⁹Joachim, EA, 116ab; Joachim, LC (D), 296.

⁴⁰Joachim, EA, 116ab; Joachim, DSS, 242. This is the period when the church flees "into the wilderness" (Rev 12:14) for "time, times and half a time" (reminiscent of Elijah's hiding from Jezebel for three and a half years). Joachim interprets this time as a period when the true Church reformers escaped into contemplation and solitary places and hermitages (Joachim, LC, 296-300).

Hezekiah and the exile to Babylon.⁴¹ During this fifth period of Israel's history many prophets arise, calling Israel to repentance. As a parallel, during the fifth stage of the Christian Church, many hermits, monks, and reformers, including Bernard of Clairvaux, are summoned by God to reform the Church.⁴²

In *Liber Concordiae*, Joachim further explains that Israel's exile to Babylon is reflected in the Church's captivity in a "spiritual Babylon." The spiritual Babylon, for Joachim, is the desire for power. In his treatise on *Septem Sigilis*, Joachim argues that the German princes have "afflicted the Church" through their thirst for control over the popes and the bishops.⁴³ The relationship between the Church and the German State, Joachim reminds us, was initially positive, especially at the time of Charlemagne and the Ottonians. However, after the time of Emperor Henry I (d.1024), he argues, the German Empire became obsessed with controlling the affairs of the Church.⁴⁴

⁴¹Joachim, EA, 116; Joachim, LC (D), 211-214.

⁴² Joachim, LC (D), 91-92; Joachim, EA, 87c. For an analysis of Bernard of Clairvaux's influence in Joachim's theology of history see Bernard McGinn, "Alter Moyses: The Role of Bernard of Clairvaux in the Thought of Joachim of Fiore," *Citeaux* 42 (1991): 429-48.

⁴³ "Teutonicorum qui nimis pro peccatis ipsius ecclesiam afflixerunt." (Germans who greatly afflicted the Church with their sins) (Joachim, DSS, 244).

⁴⁴ Joachim, LC (D), 301. In modern historical writing, Henry I customarily refers to King Henry (919-936), the founder of the Liudolfing dynasty of Saxon emperors. At least two Joachim scholars identify this as the king to whom Joachim refers in this passage (see Ernesto Buonaiuti, *Gioacchino da Fiore*, 166-68, and Robert Lerner, "Frederick II, Alive, Aloft, and Allayed in Franciscan-Joachite Eschatology," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. Verbeke [Leuven, Belgium: Mediaevalia Lovaniensia studia 15, 1988], 376). Patschovsky, however, asserts that, in this case, Joachim was most definitely referring to Emperor Henry II (972-1024) who was the first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of German states, known to Joachim and his contemporaries as Henry I (See Alexander Patschovsky, "Der heilige kaiser Heinrich 'der Erste; als Haupt des apokalyptischen Drachens über das Bild des römisch-deutschen reiches in der Tradition Joachims von Fiore," *Florensia* 12 [1998]: 19-52, translated into English in *Viator* 29 [1998], 291-322).

According to Joachim, this is a time when “secular princes, Christian in name only, but in reality worse than the godless heathen peoples, tried to deprive the Church of its freedom.”⁴⁵ Joachim’s harsh comments prompt the question, why was Joachim so hard on the German princes?⁴⁶ It seems that he disapproved of two things which were characteristic of all the German emperors: the influence of the state in the affairs of the Church, and the excessive use of force that German rulers employed in their provinces, especially in Italy. The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa’s involvements in the papal schism controversy (1159-1179), German conflicts with the Normans, and the violent overthrow of the Kingdom of Sicily in 1194, were all still fresh in the collective memory of Italians during the final redaction of Joachim’s works (1195-98).⁴⁷

Joachim believed in a definitive separation of ecclesiastical and secular domains. He felt that the state should take care of civil responsibilities, leaving the church to take

⁴⁵ “Ut ergo in quinto tempore reges Egypti et Babylonis, qui aliquando videbantur amici fuisse regum Iuda, deterius pre ceteris gentibus afflixerunt eos, ita in tempore ecclesie quinto-et maxime a diebus Henrici primi imperatoris Alamannorum-mundani principes, qui Christiani dicuntur et qui primo videbantur venerari clerum, deterius pre gentibus qui ignorant Deum auferre quesierunt libertatem ecclesie.” (In the fifth period [of the history of Israel], the kings of Egypt and Babylon who once appeared to be the friends of the kings of Judah, afflicted them worse than any other nation. In the same way, in the fifth period of the church, especially in the days of German Emperor Henry I, secular princes, Christian in name only, but in reality worse than the godless heathen peoples, tried to deprive the Church of its freedom) (Joachim, EA, 7vb).

⁴⁶ This seems to be strange, especially knowing that Emperor Henry ‘the first’ was canonized in 1146 as a saint (Michael Walsh, *A New Dictionary of the Saints: East and West* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007], 257-8).

⁴⁷ For the issue of Frederick Barbarossa’s involvement in the Papal schism (1159-1179) and Joachim’s critique of the Emperor Henry IV’s conquest of Sicily, see p. 42 of this study. Joachim identified Henry IV with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 11; VBJA, 537-38), and Frederick Barbarossa with Absalom (Joachim, LC [D], 335; EA 168b). The comparison between Babylon and Roman *Imperium* can be found all through Joachim's writings (see especially Joachim, EA, 173-4).

care of church business, including electing its own bishops and ecclesiastics.⁴⁸ However, Joachim also criticized the Church for the usage of the temporal force, although he repeatedly argued that the blame falls upon the German kings for inducing the Church to aspire to military conquests instead of engaging in the contemplation of Scripture.⁴⁹

The Sixth Seal (AD 1200-1260)

The opening of the sixth seal occurs at the time of the fall of Babylon and the return of the Israelites to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. In the Christian dispensation, however, this corresponds to the future reformation of the Church. Joachim believes that this reformation would begin sometime between 1200 and 1260.⁵⁰

In the OT, the sixth period of the Jewish dispensation, marked by the exodus from Babylon and rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, was fraught with many challenges and obstructions. In the same way, Joachim contends, the future reformation of the Church will also endure much opposition and trials.⁵¹ Joachim predicts that at the time of the opening of the sixth seal, Arabic forces and the “sons of Babylon,” who “claim to be

⁴⁸ In Joachim, EA, 196d, Joachim clearly expresses his discontent with the German kings because of the issue of ‘investitura ecclesiarum.’ Although Henry II elected bishops with the encouragement and permission of the pope (Walsch, *A New Dictionary of the Saints*, 258), being the first of the dynasty of the German Emperors who established this norm, he becomes the symbol of Babylon captivating the Church in the eyes of the Abbot of Fiore (Patschovsky, “Der heilige kaiser Heinrich,” 35-42).

⁴⁹ Joachim’s critique of Papal usage of secular forces is best described in a small tract he wrote around the year 1191 entitled *Intelligentia Super Calathis* (Grundmann, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 2:361-402). The only critical edition of this work of Joachim is published by Pietro De Leo, *Gioacchino da Fiore*, 135-148.

⁵⁰ Joachim, EA, 117d-119c.

⁵¹ Joachim, LC, 301-303.

Christians” but instead are “the synagogue of Satan,” will make the first attack upon the Church in order to quench spiritual revival.⁵²

This is, Joachim argues, symbolized by the cataclysmic signs in heaven and on earth recorded in the sixth seal (Rev 6:12-17). Joachim believes that these signs indicate that the Church will be filled with scandals, fights, jealousy, emulations, and rivalry. The true people of God will have to hide and will not be able to speak openly. Christian forces will be overrun by evil. There will be an abundance of false prophets. Spiritual men, strong in faith, will have to flee to the mountains,⁵³ looking for repentance.⁵⁴ Joachim predicts that in this period Constantinople will fall and Greek churches will be overtaken in an Islamic invasion. Equally, all those belonging to the reprobate Latin churches will be punished and destroyed.⁵⁵

In *Liber Concordiae*, Joachim reminds us that the exodus of the Jews out of Babylon was initially led by Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 2:1-2). They are a type of two monastic movements that must take the Church out of its spiritual captivity.⁵⁶ In the *Septem Sigilis*, Joachim also mentions Ezra and Nehemiah as prototypes of the two

⁵² Joachim, *De Septem Sigilis* (DSS), 244.

⁵³ An allusion to Jesus’ eschatological words recorded in Matt 24:16 and Luke 21:21.

⁵⁴ Joachim, EA, 117d-119c. The “sun like sackcloth” (Rev 6:12a) represents for Joachim a darkness that will cover the Church. The “moon like blood” (Rev 6:12b) depicts the death of many faithful witnesses who reflected the light of Jesus, the true Sun of righteousness. The “downfall of the stars” (Rev 6:13) represents the fall and apostasy of many high doctors and teachers in the Church.

⁵⁵ Joachim, EA, 192, 193. The destruction of Constantinople by Muslims indeed occurred in 1453.

⁵⁶ Joachim, LC (V), 55b-56a. For further exploration of the imagery of the two witnesses and their defeat by the Antichrist, see Joachim’s understanding of the sixth trumpet and Rev 11.

monastic orders that will help the Church to receive scriptural illumination and escape the eschatological Babylon.⁵⁷

The opening of the sixth seal also involves an angel sealing the people of God upon their foreheads (Rev 7:2). Joachim believes that this imagery predicts the appearance of a charismatic Church leader, possibly a reform-minded pontiff who will lead the church to the anticipated spiritual reformation. Joachim explains:

A new leader will ascend from Babylon, namely a universal pontiff of the New Jerusalem, that is, of Holy Mother the Church. His type is found written in Revelation: “I saw an angel ascending from the rising of the sun having the sign of the living God” (Rev 7:2). With him are the remnants of those who were driven out. He will ascend not by speed of foot nor change of place, but because full freedom to renew Christian religion and to preach the word will be given to him. The Lord of hosts will already begin to reign over the whole earth.⁵⁸

After the final tribulation, the 144,000 faithful people remain alive. The 144,000 for Joachim represent the mystic (not literal) number of the end-time remnant. They remain alive to fight the battle against the evil powers and the corrupt kings of the earth, which align their forces with the wicked religious impostor, the Antichrist.⁵⁹

Besides the 144,000, an innumerable number or a “great multitude” (Rev 7:9-17) is killed for Christ's name. These must go through “the great tribulation” (Rev 7:14) and, for Joachim, represent the multitude of faithful Christians who would be martyred in this end-time struggle, opposing the forces of the Antichrist. Their blessedness is declared by

⁵⁷ Joachim, DSS, 245.

⁵⁸ Joachim, LC (V), 56b; translated in McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 135; see also Joachim, EA, 120d, 121a.

⁵⁹ Joachim, EA, 121b-122a. Even though the 144, 000 are described as being “of all the tribes of the children of Israel,” Joachim does not see them as being literal Jews but spiritual Israel—the Church.

their waving of the palm-tree branches, described in Rev 7:16. They will serve God day and night and He will “wipe all tears from their eyes” (Rev 7:17).⁶⁰

Seventh Seal (1260 AD - ?)

The seventh seal is introduced by a “silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” (Rev 8:1). Joachim argues that this silence corresponds to the OT era after Ezra and Malachi, when there was a silence of inspiration and the biblical canon was temporarily closed.⁶¹ In the concord of the gospel dispensation, this silence means that the time of expounding Scripture has ended. Joachim interprets “the half hour” in Rev 8:1 as the last portion of the prophetic 1,260 years (“time, times and half a time” from Dan 12:7 and Rev 12:14). Both “half a time” in Dan 12:7 and “half an hour” in Rev 8:1, for Joachim, refer to the eschatological Sabbath, a long-expected interval of peace and tranquility enjoyed by the Church after the tribulations of the sixth seal.⁶²

The period of silence and peace in Rev 8:1 is, for Joachim, the same period as the “millennium” from Rev 20. In spite of the name, Joachim argues, the millennium does not last for a literal thousand years.⁶³ The interim of peace on earth precedes the Second Coming of Christ and is typified by the cessation of the persecution Israel experienced after the exodus from Babylon, lasting, more or less, until the birth of Christ. See Table 2.

⁶⁰ Joachim, EA, 122b-123a.

⁶¹ Joachim, EA, 123ab.

⁶² Joachim, EA, 123b.

⁶³ For further exploration of the final millennium in Joachim’s system see pp. 106-109.

Table 2. The seven seals.

Time Period	Seals (Israel)	Opening of the Seals (Church)
1. AD 1-100	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob Descent to Egypt Passover and exodus Twelve tribes	Zacharias, John the Baptist, Christ Nativity and descent to Egypt Death and resurrection of Christ Twelve apostles
2. AD 100–312	Israel destroys Pagan Canaanites From Joshua to David	Roman Pagans persecute Christians From John to Constantine
3. AD 312–565	Conflict with Syrians Schism of Judah and Israel	Church doctors vs. Arians Latin and Greek Churches divided
4. AD 565–752	Elijah, Elisha, and the sons of prophets Conflict with Assyrians	Virgins, hermits and monks Greek Church invaded by the Saracens
5. AD 752–1200	Israel in captivity, Judah confirmed Conflict with the king of Babylon	Latin Church confirmed above the Greeks Conflict with the German emperors
6. AD 1200–1260	Babylonian exile Fall of Babylon Ezra and Nehemiah rebuild Jerusalem Zerubabel a good leader Jews return to Jerusalem	Church Corruption Fall of Christian Babylon Church Reform of the Two Monastic Movements Sealing Angel = Angelic Pontif 144,000 Reforming the Church Jews convert to Christianity
7. 1260–?	Rest until Antiochus IV Epiphanies First Advent of Christ Resurrection of Christ	Satan in chains Millennium until Satan is released Final Advent of Christ Resurrection of the Dead

The Seven Trumpets

The seven trumpets are initiated by an angel throwing the “golden censer filled with fire” down upon the earth (Rev 8:3-5). Joachim interprets this event as the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost.⁶⁴ Commenting upon the seven trumpets (Rev 8:6-11:19) Joachim recapitulates the seven stages of Church history. The trumpets primarily depict the persecuting agents throughout the Christian era.⁶⁵ The trumpets also warn of persecutions and trials for the Church. Each of the angels sounding the trumpets is a guardian for an era of the Church.

The First Four Trumpets (AD 1–752)

The angel blowing the first trumpet designates the ministry of the apostles, chiefly the preaching of the Apostle Paul. The hail mixed with fire and blood cast onto the earth signifies the spirit of hard-heartedness mixed with fiery and bloody zeal, infused into the Jews through their rejection of the gospel. As a result of this rejection, a third of the Jewish Christians (Judaizers who performed circumcision), despite professing Christian beliefs, eventually reject Christ and return to Judaism.⁶⁶

The second trumpet for Joachim reveals the struggle between the martyrs and doctors of the Church on one side and the Nicolaitans, an early gnostic sect, on the other.

⁶⁴ Joachim, EA, 127.

⁶⁵ Joachim’s comments on the trumpets are largely found in the *Expositio* (123b-153a). For a commentary and treatment of Joachim’s view of trumpets see Potesta, *Il Tempo Dell’ Apocalisse*, 307-313, and Elliott, *Horae Apocalyptice*, 4:380-395.

⁶⁶ Joachim, EA, 127c-128b.

Nicolas, the leader of the Nicolaitans, is likened to a burning mountain (Rev 8:8), causing one third of the believers to depart from the faith.⁶⁷

The angel blowing the third trumpet describes the Christian doctors from the time of Constantine onward. The falling star, which poisons the wells and the fountains, is Arius whose “error falls on bishops and priests from whom should flow forth streams of wisdom and truth. Arius’s error embitters the waters of true doctrine perverting the meaning of Scripture.”⁶⁸ The Arian heresy and persecution influences one third of Christendom and continues until the rise of the Saracens.

The angel blowing the fourth trumpet causes the “darkening of the sun and moon” (Rev 8:12). Joachim believes that this trumpet depicts the holy monks and virgins who, as “celestial luminaries, gave light to the world,” but were in a large measure extinguished by the outburst of the Saracens in Syria and Northern Africa. The angel that announces three great woes (Rev 8:14) represents Pope Gregory I (590-604) who wrote earnestly about the end of the world and the coming tribulations.⁶⁹

The Fifth Trumpet (AD 752-1200)

The fifth trumpet refers to the same chronological period as the fifth seal. The fifth angel announces the invasion of locusts with scorpions’ tails, which come out of “the bottomless pit” (Rev 9:1-3). Joachim argues that the locusts foreshadow the Catharist heresy, popularly called the Pathareni. Joachim calls them the modern

⁶⁷ Joachim, EA, 128bc.

⁶⁸ Joachim, EA, 128c-129d, translation mine.

⁶⁹ Joachim, EA, 129d-130b.

Manicheans because they believed in a dualistic teaching that the world and human bodies were created by the devil.⁷⁰

Joachim argues that the Pathareni locusts emerge out of the “smoke of their own heresy.” The trees and grass, which the locusts are bid not to hurt (Rev 9:5), symbolize the pure Christians who resist believing in the error. On the other hand the people converted by the heretics are soon damaged by the erroneous teachings. The rushing locust wings symbolize the Pathareni’s noisy arguments over Scripture. The Pathareni are commissioned with five months to spread their cause. Using the year-day principle, Joachim calculates that this period refers to 150 years of the Pathareni’s preaching and annoying the Church.⁷¹

Joachim does not claim to know the identity of the locust king, Abaddon. He might be a pope whom the heretics profess to obey. Joachim believes that the Manichean heretics are the precursors of the Antichrist, which will appear in the sixth stage of Church history. Their numerous appearances throughout the fifth stage point to the nearness of the Antichrist’s advent.⁷² However, Joachim does not identify Abaddon and the locusts as the real Antichrist. He follows a Patristic interpretation of 2 Thess 2:6,

⁷⁰ Joachim condemns Pathareni for pompously calling themselves “*catharoi*” (pure), and yet denying that Jesus came in human flesh (Joachim, EA, 130c-131c). Elliott makes a distinction between the Pathareni and the Cathari and believes that Joachim is describing the Cathari rather than the Pathareni, who were much closer to the Waldenses (Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticae*, 4:380-383). Gian Luca Potesta, on the other hand, believes that the Pathareni and the Cathari are one and the same (Potesta, *Il Tempo Dell’ Apocalisse*, 309).

⁷¹ Joachim, EA, 131a-132d. Although Joachim cites the common belief of his time that no one knows when the sect of Patarens first began, he does give a temporal limitation of 150 years for their existence (five months being equivalent to five times thirty days [one month] and converted into years by the year-day principle).

⁷²Joachim, EA, 133a.

asserting that the Roman Empire is a power that restrains and delays the appearance of the Antichrist. When the Roman Empire collapses, the Antichrist will be manifested.⁷³ In Joachim's mind the Roman Empire was still alive through the reigns of German emperors. Only after the fall of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations, during the sixth stage of history, will the Antichrist rise to power.⁷⁴

The Sixth Trumpet (AD 1200-1260)

The angel of the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:13-21) announces the sixth stage of history by blowing his instrument and loosing the four destroying angels, which are bound at the Euphrates River (Babylon). The blowing of the sixth trumpet represents for Joachim the trials that the Church must experience in the near future.⁷⁵ Joachim sees these four destroying angles as four major forces that will invade and destroy the Holy Roman Empire. Of these forces, the Muslim Turks from the east are the greatest threat. The

⁷³ Potesta (*Il Tempo Dell' Apocalisse*, 310) argues that Joachim borrows from Jerome with regard to this concept. Joachim does quote Jerome in a few instances in the *Expositio* (e.g., Joachim, EA, 146). However, other early writers besides Jerome—including Tertullian, Lactantius, John Chrysostom and Augustine—express the idea that Rome was resisting the appearance of the Antichrist (see Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:257, 414, 444; Augustine, *The City of God*, 2 vols. [Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1884], 2:382). It is possible that Joachim was aware of a more general patristic opinion.

⁷⁴ Joachim, EA, 133b. Bernard McGinn argues that Joachim expected the Antichrist of the sixth period to be a Patharene pope (McGinn, *Calabrian Abbot*, 196). This is, however, uncertain. Marjorie Reeves argues that Joachim saw the Antichrist as being a pseudo-pope arising from within the Catholic faith (Reeves, *Influence*, 9). For a more detailed discussion on the identity of the Antichrist in Joachim's thought, see pp. 89-96.

⁷⁵ For Joachim, those are the same trials as described when the four angels release the winds of strife in Rev 7:1-4, during the sixth seal (Rev 7:1-2).

Ethiopians, Moors, and Berbers form alliances attacking from the south. The Cathari, which first appear at the time of the fifth trumpet, threaten the Church from the west.⁷⁶

The fourth angel, coming from the north, brings the invasion of the nations north of Germany. Joachim argues that these four forces continue to be “bound in the great river Euphrates” (Rev 9:14). The Euphrates is a river that flowed through the ancient city of Babylon. Joachim asserts that “Euphrates” here refers to the nations subdued by the Holy Roman Empire, which temporarily serve as a bulwark to the Church. But when the sixth vial is poured out and the waters of the Euphrates “dry up” (Rev 16:12), these powers will attack and destroy the “proud city of Rome.”⁷⁷

The Angel with the “Little Scroll” (Rev 10)

Within the events described under the sixth trumpet, the book of Revelation portrays a vision of an angel of light with an “open book” (Rev 10). Joachim interprets this angel as a charismatic preacher, or angelic pontiff, who must come soon to launch a spiritual reform in the Church. The angel holding “an open book,” with his face shining “as it were the sun” (Rev 10:1), indicates for Joachim the light of spiritual intelligence opening up the parallels and concords between the Old and the New Testament.⁷⁸

Joachim interprets the oath of the angel as an indicator that his mission is to

⁷⁶ Joachim, EA, 133c-134b. Joachim mentions a conspiracy rumor circulating around which claimed that the Cathari or Patareni and Saracens had already made a secret pact, uniting against the Catholics.

⁷⁷ Joachim, EA, 134cd. “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up” (Rev 16:12). Joachim here, in his fashion, connects the events of the sixth trumpet with the events described in the sixth vial (Rev 6:12-16).

⁷⁸ Joachim, EA, 137b. Joachim sees here a parallel with the sixth seal and the angel with the seal of God (Rev 7:1-4).

proclaim that the end of times and the Day of Judgment will be soon, though the exact date of the event remains uncertain.⁷⁹ Joachim interprets the charge, to “take [the book] and eat it up” (Rev 10:9), as an invitation for the monastic societies to enlighten the Church with spiritual expositions on prophecies of the book of Revelation and to preach the Gospel of the coming kingdom.⁸⁰ This is the time when the whole Church will be illuminated with a deep and full understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

The “Measuring of the Temple” (Rev 11:1-2)

The events and symbols described in Rev 11:1-14 belong under the section on the sixth trumpet. In Joachim’s system these events are in a historical parallel with the events symbolized under the sixth seal. “Measur[ing] the temple of God” with “a reed” (Rev 11:1-2) refers to the confirmation of the Latin Church—a symbol paralleling the sealing of true believers in Rev 7.⁸¹ The Greek Church—because of its schism from the Latin Church and because it was not operating under the apostolic “reed,” or code of discipline—corresponds to the “outer court” that was “given to the Gentiles.”⁸²

Joachim is, however, also critical and reproachful of Rome and the Latin Church. He said that the Latins, despite seeing the evil that entered the Greek Church, did not repent, but “added sin to sin.” Because of this, after desolating the Greek Church, “the

⁷⁹ Joachim, EA, 139cd.

⁸⁰ Joachim, EA, 141d; the Apostle John in Rev 10 receives and “eats the little book.” Joachim sees this as a commission for John to be the representative of the monastic orders of the Christian Church. This, for Joachim, equals Jesus’ charge to Peter to assume leadership of the clerical orders.

⁸¹ Joachim, EA, 142cd.

⁸² Joachim, EA, 142d-143b.

Gentiles” are to tread “the holy city [the Latin Church] under foot forty and two months” (Rev 11:2). Joachim interprets these months here symbolically. Forty-two months of thirty days make up 1,260 days, which converted into years shape a period of 1,260 years of the gospel dispensation.⁸³ During this time, from the birth of Christ to the end of time, the Church suffers various persecutions. Joachim believes that the promised millennium of peace and illumination will begin around the year 1,260 or 1290.⁸⁴

The Two Witnesses

Joachim disagrees with the general patristic opinion that the “two witnesses” in Rev 11:3-14 represent Enoch and Elijah. He argues, instead, that they are the prophets Elijah and Moses, and that there is a precedent for pairing them together, as occurred during Christ's transfiguration on Mount Tabor. One of the witnesses has “power over waters to turn them to blood” (Rev 11:6), which seems to imply a Moses figure. The other witness has power to “shut heaven, that it rain not” (Rev 11:6), which is reminiscent of the activities of the prophet Elijah.⁸⁵

⁸³Joachim, EA, 144, 145.

⁸⁴ According to the text in Dan 12:9, “From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days” (See Joachim, EA, 145). This millennium of peace must endure for a short time, according to Joachim, not a full one thousand years (see the discussion on the millennium on pp. 106-109 of this study). Although through prophecies it might be possible to deduce the beginning of the millennium, it is not possible to deduce the end of it, for “of that day or hour knoweth no man” (Matt 24:36).

⁸⁵Joachim, EA, 146abc. Potesta believes that this disagreement with the patristic opinion on the question of the “two witnesses” remains the greatest conflict between Joachim and traditional exegesis (Potesta, *Il Tempo Dell' Apocalisse*, 311). Joachim does spend an unusual amount of time over this detail. He considers Jerome's conclusion to be merely an *opinion* and thus delineates clearly between the authority of the Church Father and the authority of Scripture (Joachim, EA, 145-149). For an overview of patristic interpretation of the two witnesses in Rev 11, see Maria M. Witte, *Elias und Henoch; Als Exempel, typologische Figuren und*

Joachim, however, argues that the two witnesses do not represent a literal Elijah and Moses. He agrees with Church Father Jerome who stated that, if readers take things literally in the book of Revelation, they will be forced to believe in “Judaic fables” such as “the rebuilding of Jerusalem” and the “renewal in its temple of carnal ceremonies.”⁸⁶

Joachim concludes that the two witnesses have a dual meaning. The first meaning refers to the Church’s act of witnessing, achieved through the work of the clergy and monks during the Christian era. The 1,260 days, in which the two witnesses are to preach while being “clothed in sackcloth” (Rev 11:3), signify for Joachim 1,260 years of clerical and monastic witnessing throughout the Christian era.⁸⁷

At the same time, the two witnesses also represent two end-time monastic orders, which come in the spirit and with the power of Moses and Elijah, to preach the gospel and oppose the Antichrist. These two spiritual orders, Joachim claims, will act in unison with the angel-preacher of Rev 10 in reforming the Church.⁸⁸

Revelation 11:8 states that the “dead bodies [of the witnesses] shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (Rev 11:8). Joachim predicts that under the reign of the Antichrist, the two

apokalyptische Zeugen (Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang, 1987), 168-215; see also Chapter 4 of this study.

⁸⁶ Joachim, EA, 146d. Jerome, “Letter 53, To Paulinus,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* II series. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), II, 6:96-102. At the same time, Joachim disagrees with Jerome that the two witnesses are Elijah and Enoch. He believes they represent Elijah and Moses. See Elliott, *Horae Ecclesiasticae*, 4:327, 385 (Joachim, EA, 148a-149c)

⁸⁷ Joachim, EA, 148d.

⁸⁸ Joachim, EA, 147bcd. Joachim also identifies these three reforming agents with the three angels from Rev 14:6-12, who proclaim the “everlasting gospel” against Babylon and the beast.

reformation orders will cease to preach for a period of time and the truth shall lie as if “dead.”⁸⁹ As to the location of the slaughter of the two witnesses, Joachim diverges from medieval tradition that interprets the words “where also our Lord was crucified,” as being the literal Jerusalem. Joachim observes that Jerusalem is never called “the great city” like Nineveh or Babylon. He also and notes that “spiritually [the city] is called Sodom and Egypt” and concludes that the location is the kingdom of this world—the body of the worldly citizens—who, in spirit, participated in Christ's crucifixion.⁹⁰

As to the three and a half days during which the witnesses lie dead (Rev 11:9), Joachim asserts that this prophetic detail predicts a short period of time (probably three and a half years) during which the Antichrist will reign. At the end of Antichrist's short rule, the kingdom will be given to the saints.⁹¹ Joachim is vague about the use of the year-day principle here in Rev 11:9. However, commenting on Rev 13 he contends that the Antichrist will oppress the people of God for three and a half years.⁹²

The earthquake that destroys a tenth of the city (Rev 11:13) symbolizes the apostasy of the infidel clerics who profess to be a part of the Church, yet belong to the Antichrist. Ultimately, the infidel clerics openly apostatize from the faith, together with the “seven thousand” who are deceived by the beast and false prophets and who “[are] slain” “in the earthquake” (Rev 11:13).⁹³ After a short period of time (probably three and

⁸⁹ Joachim, EA, 150bc.

⁹⁰ Joachim, EA, 150c.

⁹¹ Joachim, EA, 150d-151b.

⁹² Joachim, EA, 165d.

⁹³ Joachim, EA, 151cd.

a half years) the “two witnesses” are “resurrected,” the two monastic orders return to preach the gospel once again, the Antichrist is destroyed by divine intervention, and the Church is ushered into the period of healing and restoration depicted by the message of the seventh trumpet.

The Seventh Trumpet (AD 1260–?)

The angel of the seventh trumpet announces the close of the tribulation. The “great voices in heaven” (Rev 11:15) are preachers in the Church announcing and rejoicing over the coming good. The twenty-four elders bowing around God’s throne represent the composite number of the Church leaders united in the praise of Almighty God (Rev 11:16-17).

The seventh trumpet is also described as “the time of the dead, that they should be judged” (Rev 11:18a). Joachim affirms that, in this period, the beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:1-3). The Antichrist and his followers, “them that destroy the earth” (Rev 11:18b), are then finally exterminated. The third age of the world, the holy millennial Sabbath, will begin at last.⁹⁴ See Table 3.

⁹⁴ “Ad tempus illud referendum est in quo Bestia et Pseudo-propheta mittentur in stagnum ignis ardentis sulphure; et ad tertium statum mundi, qui erit *in sabbatum et quietem*: in quo, exterminatis prius corruptoribus terræ, regnaturus est populus sanctorum Altissimi; quousque induti novis corporibus, et pacto iudicio generali, ascendant simul cum Domino suo ad paratum sibi regnum ab origine mundi” (The time referred to is that in which the Beast and the False Prophet will be placed in the lake of fire and sulphur. And the third state of the world will be the time spent in sabbath and rest, in which them that destroy the earth will be exterminated, and the general judgment being set up, the holy people of the Most High with the new bodies being given to them, will rise with their Lord for the kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world.) (Joachim, EA, 152cd, translation mine).

Table 3. The seven trumpets

Trumpets	Church Defenders	Apostates	Time Period
1	dPaul and the apostles	1/3 of Judaizing Christians eventually reject Christ	AD 1-100
2	Church martyrs	1/3 of Christians join Nicolaitan Gnostics	AD 100-312
3	Doctors of the Church	1/3 of Christians join Arian Heresy	AD 312-565
4	Monks and virgins	Saracens killing or converting 1/3 of Christians	AD 565-752
5	Faithful Catholics	Cathari and Pathareni 5 months = 150 years of their heresy	AD 752-1200
6	Reformist Pope (Rev 10) two monastic orders reforming the Church (Rev 11)	Saracens, Cathari, Turks, Barbarians The Antichrist;	AD 1200- 1260
7	The “voices in heaven” (Rev 11:14) A multitude of preachers expelling antichristian forces (Rev 11:14)	The judgment (Rev 11:18) “Them that destroy the earth” (Rev 11:18b) will be destroyed themselves	AD 1260-?

Revelation 12–The Dragon and the Woman

The twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation begins with a description of “a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev 12:1). This woman, Joachim asserts, represents the holy Church of God, the bride of Christ, bearing the crown of twelve virtues.⁹⁵

In *Liber Concordiae*, Joachim argues that “the woman clothed with the sun, who signifies the [C]hurch, remained hidden in the wilderness from the face of the serpent, *a day without doubt being accepted for a year* and a thousand two hundred and sixty days for the same number of years.”⁹⁶ The “great red dragon” (Rev 12:3) is Satan, who persecutes Christians for 1,260 years until the arrival of the millennium. The Church’s persecution in “the wilderness” lasts for forty-two months, or 1,260 days, which is 1,260 years (Rev 12:6). This period for Joachim corresponds to the time of the seven persecutions, starting with King Herod, and ending with the final tribulation.⁹⁷ The dragon's seven heads represent the seven chief persecuting kings during the gospel dispensation.⁹⁸

⁹⁵Joachim, EA, 154ab. In a more specific sense, the woman represents the holy monks and virgins and the church of hermits. The woman is the mother of the 144,000, a symbolic number of *spiritual men* who will remain faithful until the end (Joachim, EA, 154d, 155a).

⁹⁶ “*Accepto haud dubium die pro anno*” (Joachim, LC [V], 12b, translated in Froom 1:713). The year-day conversion is a recurrent theme in major Joachim’s writings. See Joachim, EA, 131a, 145-146, 165d; Joachim, LC (V), 12, 21, 118, and 134-135.

⁹⁷Joachim, EA, 157bc.

⁹⁸Joachim, EA, 156b. “*Septem capita septem sunt nomina tyrannorum qui sibi persequendo ecclesiam per tempora successerunt*” (Seven heads are the names of seven successive tyrants who persecuted the church) (Joachim, EA, 156c, translation mine).

The First Four Heads of the Dragon (AD 1-752)

Although Joachim's *Expositio* covers many details concerning the controversy between the dragon and the woman, his elucidations on the seven heads of the dragon are most clearly expressed in *Liber Figurarum*, or the "Book of Figures."⁹⁹ It is a collection of illustrations relating to Joachim's interpretation of prophecies. Figure 14 of the *Liber Figurarum* depicts the seven heads of the dragon, which detail the seven persecutions of the Church. In Joachim's mind, the seven heads of the dragon in Rev 12 represent the same powers as the seven heads of the beast in Rev 13. They are also the same as the seven heads of the scarlet beast chronicled in Rev 17.¹⁰⁰

According to Joachim, during the period of the first head of the dragon, the Devil persecutes Christ and His Church through the actions of Herod (Antipas) and Pilate. However, Christ rises from the dead, and ascends into heaven (Rev 12:5) sending His Spirit to protect the Church.¹⁰¹ The second persecution begins with Nero and ends with

⁹⁹ Luca Tondelli, Marjorie Reeves, and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *Il libro delle figure dell'abate Gioachino da Fiore*, 2 vols. (Turin, Italy: Società editrice internazionale, 1954), 2: figure 14. Joachim's "Figures" represent an important collection of the symbolic theology of the Middle Ages. The original figures, conceived and drawn by Joachim at different periods of his life, were collected in one volume soon after his death in 1202. For an assessment of the authenticity and a list of manuscripts in *Liber Figurarum* see the latest edition in Marjorie Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *The 'Figurae' of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1972), 86; see also Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 7-9, 27, 517.

¹⁰⁰ Because Joachim completely identifies the seven heads of the dragon in Rev 12 with the seven heads of the beast in Rev 13 and with the seven heads of the scarlet beast in Rev 17, he also discusses them all at the same time (McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 294). All comments concerning Joachim's view of the seven heads in Rev 13 and 17 are thus made under the present subheading.

¹⁰¹ Joachim, EA, 158d; Joachim, LF, 14.

Constantine when the Devil is temporarily “cast out into the earth” (Rev 12:9).¹⁰² In *Liber Figurarum*, Nero is listed as the second head of the dragon and serves as a representative of Rome’s persecution of Christians.

For Joachim, the apocalyptic song of exultation (Rev 12:10-12)¹⁰³ refers to the time of Constantine, when the saints who survived the heathen oppression are crowned with glory.¹⁰⁴ However, the Devil quickly launches the third persecution upon the woman by means of Arius and other heretics.¹⁰⁵ The water cast out of the mouth of the dragon against the woman (Rev 12:15) depicts Arian heresies and persecutors. In *Liber Figurarum*, the third head of the dragon is identified with Roman Emperor Constantius II (337-361), who converted to Arianism and persecuted the Trinitarian Christians.¹⁰⁶

The dragon’s fourth persecution is against those who are engaged in monastic spiritual life and prayers. They are attacked through the invasion of the Saracens and the spread of Islamic doctrine. Joachim mentions Cosdroe, the Persian king who was believed to have accepted the teachings of Mohamed, enabling the spread of Islam in the

¹⁰²Joachim, EA, 158c.

¹⁰³ “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now is come salvation, and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down’” (Rev 12:10).

¹⁰⁴Joachim, EA, 160c.

¹⁰⁵Joachim, EA, 161ab.

¹⁰⁶ Joachim, LF, 14, in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 294.

seventh century.¹⁰⁷ In *Liber Figurarum* Cosdroe is replaced by Mohamed as the fourth head and the general of Muslim forces.¹⁰⁸

The Fifth Head (AD 752-1200)

In the introductory preface to the *Expositio* the fifth head of the dragon is called “one of the kings of the new Babylon,”¹⁰⁹ a reference to German kings of the Holy Roman Empire.¹¹⁰ However, *Liber Figurarum*, besides the words “kings of Babylon”—which refers to German Emperors—mysteriously adds the word “Mesemothus.”¹¹¹ There

¹⁰⁷Joachim, EA, 163b; Joachim, EA, 10b. Cosdroe, in contemporary literature known as Chosroe, Khosrow, Chorsroes, or Xusro, was identified by Joachim as a supporter of Islam. For more on Cosdroe see Door Mehrard Kia, *The Persian Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. (Denver, CO: ABC-CLIO, 2016), 1:262-268. McGinn uses “Chosroes” which is an alternate spelling (*Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 294). Marjorie Reeves (*Influence of Prophecy*, 178) follows Joachim’s Latin rendering: “Cosdroe” (*Expositio*, 163b and 10b).

¹⁰⁸ McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 134. Joachim also replaces Cosdroe with Mohamed in his interview with Richard I Lionheart (Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 7-9). On the other hand, some fourteenth-century copies of the seven-headed dragon “figure” retain Cosdroe as the fourth king. For variants in tables of the seven-headed dragon see Patschovsky, “The Holy Emperor Henry ‘The First’,” *Viator* 29 (1998): 291-293.

¹⁰⁹ “Quintum caput draconis fuit unus de regibus babylonis nove qui volens sedere super montem testamenti et apparere similis Altissimo” (The fifth head of the dragon was one of the kings of the new Babylon who wanted to sit upon the mountain of the testimony and be like the most High) (Joachim, EA, 10b, translation mine).

¹¹⁰ Marjorie Reeves notes that in *Expositio*, 134d, Joachim saw the disaster that overwhelmed Frederick Barbarossa and his army as the beginning of the “fall of Babylon” (Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 304, note 3). See also McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 133, and E. R. Daniel, “Double Antichrist or Antichrists: Abbot Joachim of Fiore,” in *Abbot Joachim of Fiore and Joachimism: Selected Articles*, ed. E. R. Daniel, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 7:13.

¹¹¹ “Mesemothus. Quinta filiorum Babylonis in spiritu et non in littera. . . . Quinta persecutio ad regem pertinet Babylonis”(Mesemoth. The Fifth Persecution, that of the Sons of Babylon in the Spirit and not in the letter. . . . The fifth persecution pertains the kings of Babylon) (Joachim, LF, 14, translation mine).

has been much debate on the meaning of this name. Several scholars now concur¹¹² that Joachim is here most definitely referring to the Moors whom in other places he calls “Mesesmutus” and “Melsemuti.”¹¹³

Although, Joachim’s references to proud German emperors are abundant,¹¹⁴ he also seems to include the Moors as co-leaders of the fifth persecution.¹¹⁵ This might appear confusing at first. Neither in *Liber Figurarum* nor in *Expositio* does Joachim

¹¹² See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 8-9; McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 294; Patschovsky, “The Holy Emperor Henry ‘The First’,” 301-302.

¹¹³ “Secta Sarracenorum. . . qui vulgo dictus est Mesesmutus quique in partibus Africe et Mauritanie in suis successoribus potentialiter regnat” (The sect of Saracens, commonly called Mesesmutus, reigns strongly in various parts of Africa and Mauritania” (Joachim, EA, 116b, translation mine). See also “Mauri, que vulgo dicuntur Meselmuti” (Joachim, EA, 134a). Roger Howden’s account of Joachim encounter with Richard I Lionheart also mentions *Meselmuti* as Joachim’s fifth head of the dragon. “Quod (sc. Apoc. 13, 9.10) Joachim interpretatur dicens ‘reges septem’, scilicet Herodes, Nero, Constantius, Maumet, Melsemutus, Saladinus, Antichristus; ex his ‘quinque ceciderunt’, scilicet Herodes, Nero, Constantius, Maumet, Melsemutus; ‘et unus est’, scilicet Saladinus, qui in praesenti opprimit ecclesiam Dei” (Roger Howden, *Chronica* [1201] 3:77); see also a second report of this conversation in “Gesta Regis Henrici II et Ricardi I,” Howden, *Chronica*, 2:152.

¹¹⁴ Joachim, EA, 173-174; see the account of Joachim identifying Henry VI as Nabuchadnezzar and Henry VI’s kingdom as Babylon (VBJA, 537-8); Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 11. In Joachim, EA, 7vb, Joachim identifies Henry I as the king of Babylon. Joachim’s prediction of the ultimate destruction of the Holy Roman Empire is found in Joachim, EA, 190-192; Joachim’s greatest criticism of the Holy Roman emperors is their interference in the affairs of the Church (see pp. 63-65 of this study). See also Joachim, EA, 196d, where Joachim specifically mentions the issue of the ecclesiastical investiture.

¹¹⁵ “Ut autem prima persecutio concitata est in Iudea, secunda Rome, tertia in Grecia, quarta in Arabia, ita quinta persecutio in Mauretania et in Hyspaniis orta est. . . . Ut autem aliquid inferatur exempli causa de persecutione fidelium, nuper auditum est referentibus quibusdam—qui se prope asserunt affuisse—congregasse Meselmutum Christianos, qui errant in terra sua, et multos in odium nominis Christiani pariter occidisse” (In the same way as the first persecution was agitated in Judea, second in Rome, third in Greece, fourth in Arabia, so the fifth one has arisen in Mauretania and Hispania. . . . As an example of this persecution inflicted on the faithful, recent reports were heard—by those who assert that they were present—that Meselmutum have convened Christians who were dwelling in their own land and killed many in hatred of the Christian name) (Joachim, EA, 116, translation mine).

identify any Moorish ruler significant enough to be designated as one of the heads of the apocalyptic dragon. Patschowski argued that “Mesemothus” refers to Almohad ‘Abd al-Mu’min (1133-1163), one of the major Masmuda Berber chiefs (‘Mesemothus’ being a corruption of his tribe’s name), whose successors ‘Abu Ya‘qub Yusuf (1163-1184) and Abu Yusuf Ya‘qub al-Mansur (1184-1199) conquered the whole of North Africa and Southern Spain, and at the battle of Alarcos in 1195, even succeeded for a while in bringing the Reconquista to a temporary halt.¹¹⁶ The distress of Christians in Spain, which Joachim had heard about, might be reflected in this variant of his scheme of Church history.¹¹⁷

Regardless of whom, specifically, Joachim identifies as the fifth head, the mystery remains as to why there are two persecutors in the fifth period, symbolized by the fifth head of the dragon? One reason might be that Joachim was trying to be indirect and non-specific in regard to the persecution of the German kings, knowing that through his commentary, he (and by association, his disciples) was treading a fine line between constructive criticism and civil disobedience.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Patschovsky, “The Holy Emperor Henry ‘The First’,” 301-302 (see especially n. 39). For more on the Almohads see Maria Isabel Fierro, *The Almohad Revolution: Politics and Religion in the Islamic West During the Twelfth-Thirteenth Centuries* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 2012).

¹¹⁷ See n. 114. In Joachim, EA, 133-34, Joachim mentions a “conspiracy rumor,” which claimed that the Cathari (or Pathareni) from Spain and southern France had already made a secret alliance with the Saracens against the Catholics.

¹¹⁸ Not long after Joachim’s death, his disciples reprinted *Liber Figurarum*, replacing all references to Mesemoth with references to Emperor Henry I as the fifth head of the dragon. (See a reprint of Manuscript Vat. lat. 3822 in Patschovsky, “The Holy Emperor Henry ‘The First,’” Figure 2).

However, a more pertinent reason may be found in the broader analysis of Joachim's fifth period of the Church's history. A systematic examination of all of his writings suggests that Joachim believed that during the fifth period, the Church was under attack from not one, but two foes: the external Saracen enemy in Mauritania and Hispania, and the internal adversary, the Church corruption, for which Joachim blames the German kings. In the description of the fifth seal, Joachim focuses more on the internal corruption of the German Roman Empire (new Babylon), while in the description of the fifth trumpet, he emphasizes the external threat of the Patareni and Saracens, who, allied with the Moors, posed a threat against the Christian world.¹¹⁹

In conclusion, there are good reasons to propose that Joachim sees the fifth head of the dragon as containing a double threat for the Church: an external one (Mesemothus, or an alliance of Moors and the Patareni) and an internal one (Babylon, or the corrupted Roman Empire). A similar scheme is also found in Joachim's interpretation of the sixth head.¹²⁰

The Sixth Head (AD 1200-1260)

Before commenting upon the "sixth head" of the dragon, it is important to underscore that Joachim sees the seven heads of the dragon in Rev 12 as being the same as the "seven heads" of the beast in Rev 13. This also goes for the "seven heads" of the scarlet beast in Rev 17. They all represent the same persecutors for Joachim.

¹¹⁹ See pp. 71-73.

¹²⁰ For a full analysis of Joachim's patterns of internal and external foes of the Church see pp. 95-96.

Revelation 17 suggests a chronological succession of the seven heads. “The seven heads . . . are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space” (Rev 17:9-11). For Joachim, the five heads that “have fallen” are already in the past. The sixth head, the one that “is,” symbolizes the Muslim threat under the rule of Saladin the Great, a very tangible threat in Joachim’s time.¹²¹

Joachim continues further in his interpretation of the sixth head. According to one passage in Rev 13, one of the seven heads of the beast must receive a “deadly wound” (Rev 13:3). Joachim believes that this “deadly wound” occurs precisely during the “sixth head” (Saladin). For a short period, Joachim suggests, Christians might be victorious while the Saracens draw back in retreat from the Christian armies of Richard I, and the third crusade. Nonetheless, after a few years, the wound will heal, says Joachim, and the sixth king will revive. Under Saladin (if he is still alive) or under another leader in his place, the Saracens will gather a much greater army than the previous one. They will incite a universal war against the Christian Empire.¹²² This, according to Joachim, is prophesied in Rev 13. “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast” (Rev 13:3).

¹²¹Joachim, EA, 10b, 197a, and Joachim, LF, 14.

¹²² Joachim, EA, 10b, 197a, and Joachim, LF, 14. E. R. Daniel points out that this passage makes sense only if Joachim wrote it before Saladin’s death in 1193 (Daniel, “Apocalyptic Conversion: The Joachite Alternative to Crusades,” *Traditio* 25 [1969]: 132-134)

The Seventh Head–The Antichrist (AD 1260 - ?)

The seventh head of the dragon is the final Antichrist who, for Joachim, is still in the future. After the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire, Joachim predicts the rise of a religious impostor, the long-anticipated Antichrist, the greatest foe of the Church.¹²³ This figure is the embodiment of the beast from Rev 13:11 that has “two horns like a lamb, and [speaks] as a dragon.”

He [the lamb-like beast] will perform great signs before him [the first beast] and his army, just as Simon Magus did in the sight of Nero. “There will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning, in order to deceive, if possible, even the elect. The Lord will shorten those days for the sake of his elect (Matt 24:21-22).”¹²⁴

Joachim believed that the seventh head, the Antichrist, was coming soon, within one generation and would usurp the papal throne. Roger Howden, a scribe for Richard I Lionheart, records an account of the visit between Joachim and Richard I, which occurred in Messina (Sicily) in the winter of 1090-91. Among other things, Joachim revealed that the Antichrist was, at the time, fifteen years old and living in Rome, preparing himself to usurp the papal seat. Richard’s response to Joachim reflects the popular concept of the time, that the Antichrist is a Jew, from the tribe of Dan, who is to reign in the temple at Jerusalem. Joachim instead argued that the “temple of God” in 2 Thess 2 represents the

¹²³ In addition to Figure 14 of the *Liber Figurarum*, Joachim also comments upon the seventh head (Joachim, EA, 9-11, 156, 162-68, and 196-97). For relevant comments on Joachim’s view of the Antichrist see Richard K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 1981), 25-6, 60-62; Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist; Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1994), 135-42; Robert Lerner, “Antichrists and Antichrist in Joachim of Fiore,” *Speculum* 60, no. 3 (July 1985): 553-570.

¹²⁴ Joachim, LF, Figure 14, in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 138.

Church of God and the Antichrist thus must come from the West, from within the Church.¹²⁵

The Union of the Sixth and the Seventh Heads

According to Joachim, the revived sixth head of the beast (a Saracen leader from the east) and the seventh head (Antichristian Pope from the west) rule together in the last period, just before the millennium. The revived sixth head of the beast in Rev 13:1-10 rules the secular domain, while the Antichrist, or the false prophet from Rev 13:11-18, pretends to be a religious leader and seduces many into false worship.¹²⁶

The sixth and the seventh kings are the last two foes of the Church before the Millennium; one from the east and one from the west. They will gather an alliance of worldly kings in order to persecute the true Christians. These worldly kings are the “ten horns” of the dragon (Rev 12:3) and of the beast (Rev 13:1 and Rev 17:10). These “ten horns” represent ten smaller kingdoms that will join Saladin’s “revived” forces and attack the Christian Empire during the sixth period of Church history.¹²⁷ See Table 4.

¹²⁵ Roger Hoveden, *Chronica*, 3:75. The earliest manuscript of this conversation dates from 1092/93. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 6-10. See also Hoveden, *Chronica*, 2:177, 178. For more information on the record of Joachim’s encounter with Richard I see pp. 39 and 88 of this study.

¹²⁶ Joachim, LF, 14; Joachim, LC (D), 402, 403; Joachim, DSS, 244. Joachim explains why the Church must suffer two persecutions in the sixth status. “Just as the sons of Israel used to walk through the desert for five days and on each morning of any week used to collect an omer of manna for the day, but only on the sixth day would gather a double ration so they could rest from labor on the sabbath (Exod. 16:16-23), so too . . . [God] will permit the two final persecutions to happen in the one sixth time so that at the opening of the seventh seal peace may come and his faithful people can rest from their labors.” Joachim, LF, 14 trans. in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 139.

¹²⁷ Joachim, LF, 14, trans. in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 137.

Table 4. The seven heads of the dragon^a

First head [AD 1-39]	Herod [Antipas]. The First Persecution, that of the Jews. The Time of the Apostles.
Second head [AD 54-68]	Nero. The Second Persecution, that of the Pagans. The Time of the Martyrs. ^b
Third Head [AD 337-361]	Constantius [II]. The Third Persecution, that of the (Arian) Heretics. The Time of the [Church] Doctors.
Fourth head [AD 626-632]	Mohammed (Cosdroe). ^c The Fourth Persecution, that of the Saracens. The Time of the Virgins. [Rise of Monasticism]
Fifth Head [AD ca. 752-1200]	Mesemoth (Melsemutus) ^d [Moorish tribes allied with heretic Patareni]. The Fifth Persecution, that of the Sons of Babylon in the Spirit and not in the letter. [German Emperors] The Time of the Conventuals. ^e
Sixth Head [1187-1193]	Saladin. The Sixth Persecution has begun. The Seventh will Follow.
Seventh head [ca. 1200-?]	“Another will arise” (Dan 7:24), [Little Horn in Dan 7]. This is the Seventh King, who is properly called Antichrist, although there will be another like him, no less evil, symbolized by the tail
Tail of the dragon [ca. 1260?]	This is that king of whom Daniel says: “There will arise a king of shameless face” (Dan 8:23-24). Gog. He is the Final Antichrist.

^a As summarized by Joachim himself in LF, 14, translated in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 136 and 294-295. Content in parentheses comes from Joachim’s material in *Expositio*. Content in brackets represents my additions and clarifications.

^b Even though Nero lived and died before the general period of the Early Church martyrs (ca.100-312), he initiated and inaugurated Roman persecution of Christians and as such is used by Joachim as the representative of that period.

^c In *Expositio* Joachim mentions Persian ruler Cosdroe II Parvez (AD 590-630), as the fourth head (Joachim, EA, 10b, 163b).

^d In *Expositio* Joachim uses the term *Melsemutus* or the “Mauri qui vulgo dicuntur Melsemuti” (Joachim, EA, 134a).

^e Clerics attached to collegiate churches.

Revelation 13–The Two Beasts

The Beast with the “Deadly Wound” (Rev 13:1-10)

The beast in Rev 13, which comes out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, represents for Joachim the sum of all evil secular powers that raged against the Church throughout the 1,260 years of Church history. With regard to the Beast’s forty-two *months* of dominion (Rev 13:5), taken generically, the length is calculated through the year-day principle and stated by Joachim as 1260 years. Besides this, there is to be a paroxysm of the final persecution for three and a half years.¹²⁸

The beast in Rev 13 is described as “a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion” (Rev 13:2). Joachim sees here the similarity with the animals mentioned in Dan 7: a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a terrible beast.¹²⁹ The first four heads of the sea-beast in Rev 13:1-10, hence, for Joachim, parallel the four animals in Dan 7:1-8.

Joachim here departs from a traditional interpretation of the four beasts in the book of Daniel being the four world empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome). In the NT concord proposed by Joachim, the four animals in Dan 7 follow the pattern of the first four stages of the Christian era as depicted by the first four of the seven churches and first four seals (see Tables 1 and 2). The lion, symbolizes for Joachim, the unbelieving Jews. The bear represents pagan Rome. The leopard with four heads signifies Arian heretics divided among the Greeks, Goths, Vandals, and Lombards.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Joachim, EA, 165cd.

¹²⁹ See Dan 7:1-8 and Rev 13:2.

¹³⁰ Joachim, EA, 162d, 163ab.

The fourth beast of Dan 7 is described as very terrible and having iron teeth. For Joachim this embodies the Saracen kingdom, which expands rapidly through the desolation of the churches in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Africa, Mauritania, and the islands of the sea. Joachim says that the first three beasts eventually submit to the Christian Church, but the fourth beast remains as terrible as ever.¹³¹

This beast suffers a temporary “wound” (Rev 13:3). Joachim asserts that, because of the Third Crusade, a wound is inflicted upon the sixth head and Muslim expansion is stopped for a while. However, Joachim predicted that, shortly after being wounded, the sixth head would soon be fully restored and “all the world” would wonder “after the beast” (Rev 13:3b). This means, for Joachim, that the Muslim forces will soon conquer Christian kingdoms.¹³²

The Beast Coming Out of the Earth (Rev 13:11)

The lamb-like beast that comes out of the earth (Rev 13:11) represents for Joachim the antichristian religious kingdom that will be led by a *Maximus Antichristus*.¹³³ This religious kingdom is divided between its two horns. The two horns of the lamb-beast represent the counterfeit of the two apocalyptic orders of Moses and Elijah, described in

¹³¹ Joachim, EA, 163c.

¹³² Joachim, EA, 165b.

¹³³ Joachim, EA, 168b; *DUT*, 182, 183. As evidenced in one of his early writings, Joachim suspects that the Antichrist arises from among the Latins (Joachim, *De Vita Sancti Benedicti*, 94); see also Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 6-9.

Rev 11.¹³⁴ Joachim anticipates that the antichristian prophets will arise out of the Church, speaking Christian language, appearing to be pious Christians, and thus having the power to deceive. Joachim predicts that they will unite with the secular powers (revived head of the sixth beast) and make the earth worship the Antichrist.¹³⁵

The great Antichrist is none else but a universal pontiff who at the end times will lead these pseudo-prophets. He is described as the “seventh head” of the dragon in Rev 12. This is the one whom the Apostle Paul describes as sitting in the temple of God, showing himself as God, being extolled above all that is called God and being worshipped as God (2 Thess 2:8).

The Beast who ascends from the sea is controlled by some great king of her sect, similar to Nero, almost the ruler of the entire world. In the same way, some great Prelate who will be similar to Simon Magus and who will become almost a Universal Pontiff throughout the earth will control the Beast that ascends from the earth. This is that Antichrist of whom Paul speaks: “Who opposes and exalts over everything that is called God.”¹³⁶

¹³⁴ “Bestia qui ascendit de terra nequamquam aliqua persona, sed secta, seu regnum aliquod designat” (The beast which ascends out the earth does not represent any one person but instead designates a division, or some kingdom.” (Joachim, EA, 166c, translation mine).

¹³⁵ Joachim, EA, 166d.

¹³⁶ “Sic verisimile videtur quod, sicut Bestia illa quæ ascendit de mari habitura est quendam magnum regem de sectâ sua, qui sit similis Neronis, et quasi imperator totius orbis. Ita Bestia quæ ascendet de terra habitura sit *quendam magnu[m] Prelatum*, qui sit similis Symonis Magi, et quasi *Universalis Pontifex* in tot[e] orbe terrarium, et ipse sit ille *Antichristus* de quo dicit Paulus, ‘Quod extollitur et adversatur supra omne quod dicitur Deus’ (Joachim, EA, 168a). Bernard of Clairvaux also thought that the Antichrist might be an Antipope; and Theodoret of Cyrrus, who, much earlier, said that the Antichrist “would seize presidency in the Church.” (“εν τη εκκλησια αρπάξει την προεδριαν”) (See Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ*, 1:394 and 3: 99).

Double Adversaries at Each Stage of History

At this point, it is useful to clarify that at each stage of Church history, Joachim foresees two adversaries: one spiritual and one political, one internal and one external.¹³⁷

1. In the first stage, the Jews (spiritual adversary) made alliance with the Romans (secular power) to cause pain to Christ and His apostles.

2. The second stage begins with Simon Magus (spiritual adversary) deceiving Nero (secular foe) to oppose the Christian Church. This stage continues as the Roman emperors will continue to persecute the Church until the legalization of Christianity under Constantine.

3. The third stage is characterized by the alliance of Arian heretics (spiritual foe) with the Roman emperors Valens and Constantius II.

4. In the fourth stage of history, Mohamed (spiritual leader) is paired with Cosdroe, the Persian King who accepted Islam.

5. Joachim lives during the fifth stage in which he considers the conventuals and formalistic religious leaders as a spiritual foe,¹³⁸ while the secular challenge is the apostate Holy Roman Empire or “the new Babylon.”

6. The sixth stage, which Joachim expected to begin shortly, is dominated by the sixth head of the beast from Rev 13:1-10, which represents the secular forces of Saladin. Joachim argues that secular forces of Saladin are already being united with spiritual

¹³⁷ Joachim, EA, 167cd.

¹³⁸ Pathareni and Cathari also feature as a possible spiritual enemy at this stage.

antagonists—Cathari and *Pathareni*, “the dregs of heretics” who are making secret alliances with Muslim forces.”¹³⁹

7. Finally, the false pontiff, the “Maximus Antichristus,” or the lamb-like beast from Rev 13:11, will dominate the seventh stage. Joachim argues that this false Pontiff will be paired with the “revived” sea-beast, the Islamic secular forces. These forces have been only temporarily “wounded” by Christian crusaders, yet they will revive and join with the Antichrist.¹⁴⁰

The Image and the Mark of the Beast

Joachim tentatively interprets the beast’s image (Rev 13:14, 15) as a tribute created by the false prophet in memory of the first beast, as a symbol that the kingdom will endure forever.¹⁴¹ The symbolism of the beast “receiving breath and speaking” (Rev 13:13) denotes that the Antichrist will perform various miracles to deceive many. The mark to be impressed upon “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond” (Rev 13:16) is some edict of the beast’s command.¹⁴² The number 666 is still a mystery for Joachim.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ “Pathareni, hæreticorum fex, mundi potestatibus se tuetur” (Pathareni, the dregs of heretics, who protect themselves with worldly authorities) (Joachim, EA, 167cd).

¹⁴⁰ Similarly in the eighth stage, after the millennium, the secular power is Gog—the captain of the wicked forces of the whole world, and the spiritual power is the *Ultimus Antichristus*—Satan himself (see pp. 111-113).

¹⁴¹ Joachim, EA, 168bc.

¹⁴² Joachim, EA, 168cd.

¹⁴³ “We must wait . . . before speculating as to the number; which name however is not revealed” (Joachim, EA, 168d, 169ab). With such precautions, Joachim proceeds to expound on the subject. The number 666 may typify the whole time from Adam to the end of the world. The

The “Eternal Gospel” and the “Fall of Babylon”

After the exposition of the dragon with seven heads (Rev 12) and the two beasts (Rev 13), Joachim turns to the positive scenes that will characterize the final events of earthly history. Joachim understands these to include the preaching of the “everlasting gospel” (Rev 14:6), the “three angels’ messages” (Rev 14:6-12), the harvest vision (Rev 14:14-20), the seven vials (Rev 15-16), and the subsequent judgment upon Babylon (Rev 14:10; 16:12-18:21).

The 144,000 and the “Eternal Gospel”

The 144,000 standing on Mount Zion (Rev 14:1) represent the monks of the Church and the virgin hermits who resist the universal apostasy in the end times. The three angels “flying through the midst of heaven” represent three major figures of the monastic movement. The first angel is identified as the angel-prophet with the little book from Rev 10:1, announcing the understanding of the prophecies of Revelation. Joachim hints that the fulfillment of the preaching of the first angel in Rev 14 possibly refers to himself and his order of Fiore.¹⁴⁴

The two angels who follow are the same as the two witnesses of Rev 11, who preach in the sixth period of the Gospel era. The two witnesses represent two monastic

number 600 may represent the six ages of the world, or the whole time of the beast. The number 60 may represent the six periods of the Church history in which the beast has grievously persecuted the Church of God. The number 6 may represent the time (forty-two months) of Daniel’s eleventh king, or little horn, in which the final persecution is to be consummated. Joachim admits that this interpretation is based on speculation: “Expectanda usque tempus revelatio huius nominis; et tunc ei qui habet intellectum licebit numerum computare” (Let us wait until the time of the revelation of his name when those who have intellect will be able to calculate the number) (Joachim, EA, 169a, translation mine).

¹⁴⁴ Joachim, EA, 173ab.

orders that will be commissioned by God to send messages of warning and renewal. The second angel, who cries, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” (Rev 14:8), announces the fall of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations.¹⁴⁵ The third angel’s announcement comes after the Holy Roman Empire is destroyed by the revived sixth head of the beast (the Saracens). Once Babylon has fallen, the Saracens (the revived sixth head) will seek to destroy the two orders in order to erase Christianity.¹⁴⁶

The voice from heaven that says, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.” (Rev 14:13), announces the glorious Sabbath awaiting those who will reign on earth after the destruction of the beast and the false prophet.¹⁴⁷ Joachim intimates that the fall of the Antichrist will not be achieved through combat or violent resistance, but through supernatural intervention from God.¹⁴⁸

Joachim links the “everlasting gospel” of Rev 14:6 to Christ’s announcement that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world” (Matt 24:14). Jesus told the Pharisees “the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:12). The “carnal Jews and Christians,” argues Joachim, sought after the material and visible kingdom, not an internal restoration into God’s image. Thus, the reformation that follows the preaching of

¹⁴⁵ Joachim, EA, 173bc.

¹⁴⁶ Joachim, EA, 173cd.

¹⁴⁷ Joachim, EA, 175a.

¹⁴⁸ In other places Joachim intimated that the Christians will prevail over evil by preaching, not fighting (*Tractatus super quator Evangelia*, ed. E. Buoniaoti [Rome, Italy: Tipografia del Senato, 1930], 117).

the “everlasting gospel” is the destruction of carnal Babylon, the liberation of the church from material aspirations, and the proclamation of inward renewal (*renovatio*).¹⁴⁹

**The Fall of Babylon (Revelation 14:8;
17:15-17, and 18:1-21)**

The term *Babylon* in the book of Revelation is for the first time employed in the context of the second angel’s message in Rev 14:8. This term is later employed to describe the great harlot in Rev 17 and also the judgment upon the mystical Babylon in Rev 18.¹⁵⁰ The book of Revelation identifies Babylon as a negative power, which makes “all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev 14:8). From the entire tenor of Joachim’s writings it is clear that he interprets the apocalyptic Babylon as the corrupt Holy Roman Empire.¹⁵¹ However, it is not merely the secular empire he is criticizing. Joachim explains that the “Babylonian harlot” described in Rev 17:4, symbolizes the whole of the Christian Empire, “wherever the false and simoniac Christians are found.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ The “renewal” of the true gospel anticipated by Joachim must be characterized by the full manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit—love, peace, kindness, meekness, patience etc (Gal 5:22-23)—in all Christians. The followers of Joachim took the concept of the “everlasting gospel” even further than Joachim, anticipating time when the holy sacraments and the Church itself cease to have intercessory functions (see Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 59-69, 187-190; see also Xavier Russelot, *Joachim de Flore, Jean de Parme et la doctrine de l’Evangile Eternel* [Paris, France: E. Thorin, Libraire-éditeur, 1867]).

¹⁵⁰ Joachim’s view of Babylon is explained here in order to avoid redundancy and repetition of content. The judgment and final ruin of Babylon are fully documented in Rev 17:15-18:24. “Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all” (Rev 18:21).

¹⁵¹ Joachim, EA, 10b, 134c, 173-174, 190-192; Joachim, LC (D), 376-381, 390-395; Joachim, LF 14; Take note also that Joachim calls Henry IV “king of Babylon,” VBJA, 537-8.

¹⁵² Joachim, EA, 194b.

While Joachim never argues that the Latin Church would become Babylon, he did affirm that the Church would be *taken* to Babylon. He quotes Micah 4:10: “Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for . . . thou shalt go even to Babylon.”¹⁵³ In *Expositio*, Joachim explains that Jerusalem did not become Babylon but instead was exiled in it, enduring a temporary pilgrimage.¹⁵⁴

Joachim also mentions Babylon in *Liber Concordia* and argues that all the calamities of OT Israel will be repeated in the Christian dispensation. Just as the OT destruction of Israel’s ten tribes by Assyria finds its parallel in the Muslim conquest of Byzantium, so the exile of Judah and Jerusalem to Babylon foreshadows worldly corruption and the captivity of the Latin Church by the secular state.¹⁵⁵

While Joachim’s devotion to the Latin Church is undisputed, he is not shy to criticize the simony, worldliness, and lust for power, which are pervasive among the clergy. Although the Church as a whole is not Babylon, it is possible that, on an individual level, members of the corrupt priesthood are.¹⁵⁶ Joachim especially condemns

¹⁵³ See Joachim’s early tract *De Prophetia Ignota*. For a critical edition see Matthias Kaup, *De Prophetia Ignota: Ein frühe Schrift Joachims von Fiore* (Hannover, Germany: Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1998).

¹⁵⁴ “In ipsa urbe quæ vocatur Babylon peregrinatur civitas Jerusalem.” (in this city which is called Babylon the city of Jerusalem is sojourning in pilgrimage) (Joachim, EA, 198, translation mine). Reeves also argues that Joachim never envisioned the Latin Church as Babylon, but rather as Jerusalem, which was captured by the Babylon of secularism and worldliness. (Reeves, *Influence*, 9.)

¹⁵⁵ Joachim, LC (D), 376-81, 390-95.

¹⁵⁶ In *Liber Concordiae*, Joachim blasts a blistering attack on the simoniac clergy. He follows the attack with a warning to the monks, lest they think they were immune from such sin (Joachim, LC, 390-94). See also E. Randolph Daniel, “Exodus and Exile; Joachim of Fiore’s Apocalyptic Scenario,” *Last Things; Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. W. Bynum and P. Freedman (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2000), 124-139.

the papal use of secular weapons and military force, and considers this behavior of the popes to be a sign of the Babylonian exile.¹⁵⁷ Finally, based on Rev 17:16 Joachim predicts that the “ten kings,” will destroy the “harlot Babylon,” which will be one of the signs of the advent of the Antichrist.¹⁵⁸

The Vision of the Harvest (Revelation 14:14-20)

In his interpretation of the vision of the harvest (Rev 14:14-20), Joachim identifies the figure of the “Son of man” (Rev 14:14) as the arrival of an apocalyptic order of holy monks, charged with imitating the life of the Christ perfectly. The figure of the angel who goes forth from the temple in heaven (Rev 14:15) represents a second order, that of hermits, imitating the life of the angels.¹⁵⁹

An order will arise which seems new but is not. Clad in black garments and girt with a belt from above, they will increase and their fame will be spread abroad. In the spirit of Elijah they will preach the faith and defend it until the consummation of the world. There will also be an order of hermits imitating the angels’ life. Their life will be like a fire burning in love and zeal for God to consume . . . and extinguish the wicked life of evil men. . . . The former order will be milder and more pleasant . . . in the spirit of Moses. This order [hermits] will be more courageous and fiery to gather in the harvest of the evil in the spirit of Elijah.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ See Joachim’s smaller work entitled *Intelligentia super calathis*, a brief commentary on Jeremiah 24 that attacks the papal usage of war and military force in the struggle against the Emperor Henry IV. A critical edition is published by Pietro De Leo, *Gioacchino da Fiore*, 125-148. See also Grundmann, “Kirchenfreiheit und Keisermacht um 1190 in der Sicht Joachims von Fiore,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 19 (1963), 353-96, reprinted in *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 2:361-402.

¹⁵⁸ Pietro De Leo, *Gioacchino da Fiore*, 128.

¹⁵⁹ Joachim, EA, 175ab.

¹⁶⁰ Joachim, EA, 175b-176a in McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 136-7. [brackets supplied]

These two orders, one of hermits and the second of monks, come in the spirit of Elijah and Moses. The order of hermits will be filled with zeal for justice, like Elijah. The order of monks will be gentle like Moses. The two new orders that must prepare the faithful for the exile from spiritual Babylon are the antitypes of the OT reformers Zerubabel and Joshua (Zech 3, 4).¹⁶¹ The final purification of the Church, Joachim believes, occurs as the world goes through the final tribulation. After the seventh vial is poured out, the spiritual Church, will come out of spiritual Babylon and will be made ready for the millennial reign of peace and love.¹⁶²

The Seven Vials (Revelation 16-18)

Using the rule of recapitulation, Joachim argues that the seven plagues of God's wrath cover the same seven stages of Church history described in the visions of the churches, seals and trumpets. The vials depict effusions of God's wrath against those who persecuted His Church throughout the ages.¹⁶³ The particular emphasis is on the last three vials, which deal with the fall and destruction of the spiritual contemporary Babylon.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Joachim, EA, 192c. A future "angelic pope" will arise out of Babylon as a "new Zerubabel" and spearhead the return to apostolic simplicity (Joachim, LC [D], 402-3).

¹⁶² Joachim believed that, in a sense, this exodus from Babylon has already been announced by Bernard of Clairvaux (Joachim, LC [D], 408-22); McGinn, "*Alter Moyses: The Role of Bernard of Clairvaux in the Thought of Joachim of Fiore*," 429-448).

¹⁶³ Even though the seven vials are called the "last plagues," Rev 15:1 and 21:9.

¹⁶⁴ A long disquisition precedes Joachim's comment on the vials, with reference to the reasons and justifications of God's outpouring of his wrath. (See Joachim, EA, 177-182) Joachim argues that God's wrath springs not from His hatred of the wicked and the persecutors; but from a desire for their conversion. (Joachim, EA, 186cd)

The first vial of God's wrath is poured on Judaizers and upon the Jewish synagogue, which rejected Christ. The second vial of wrath falls on the apostates of the early Church who abandoned their faith because of fear of martyrdom. Third vial is poured upon the bishops and priests who were infected with Arian heresy. The fourth vial falls on the hypocritical members of the contemplative orders. The fifth vial strikes the false members of the clergy, and the conventuals who, though they are supposed to be God's representatives, yield themselves to be the representatives of the beast.¹⁶⁵

The sixth plague symbolizes God's judgment upon the Holy Roman Empire, the new Babylon. The drying up of the Euphrates (Rev 16:12) symbolizes the weakening of the empire's strength so that it is unable to resist the Muslims ("kings from the East") that soon come and desolate it. After the desolation of the empire, the three spirits like frogs appear (Rev 16:13-14), representing the Antichrist and his assistants.¹⁶⁶

Rev 18 gives additional insight to the fall of new Babylon. It offers a description of the "kings of the earth" wailing over the destruction of Babylon (Rev 18:9). They represent the wicked church prelates, who flirt with the secular authority. According to Joachim, these are the same "kings of the earth" who bemoan the calamities contained in the sixth seal (Rev 6:15). The "merchandise" of Babylon (Rev 18:11) represents ecclesiastical functions, bought or bartered by priests for money. The fire that will utterly burn Babylon (Rev 18:8) symbolizes the eternal punishment of the reprobate members.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Joachim, EA, 187a-190b.

¹⁶⁶ Joachim, EA, 190bcd.

¹⁶⁷ Joachim, EA, 199, 201.

Finally, the air into which the seventh vial is poured (Rev 16:17) represents the spiritual Church, which will remain after the judgment on Babylon, a judgment by which the people of God will be cleansed from the impurity of the world.¹⁶⁸ (See Table 5)

Table 5. The seven plagues

	Plagues	Falling Upon
AD 1-100	Grievous Sore	Judaizers and upon the Jewish synagogue
AD 100-312	Sea like blood	Lapsed during Roman Persecution
AD 312-565	Rivers and springs like blood	Bishops and Priests infected with Arian heresy
AD 565-752	Sun scorch men like fire	Hypocritical members of contemplative orders
AD 752-1200	Darkness	Apostates among the clergy and conventuals
AD 1,200-1,260	Drying of Euphrates Spirits like Frogs	Fall of the Holy Roman Empire Spirits of Antichrist and his assistants
AD 1260-?	Air	Purification of the Church

¹⁶⁸ Joachim, EA, 191bcd.

The Millennium, Second Advent and Eternity

The song of exultation that follows the fall of Babylon (Rev 19:1-10) is expounded by Joachim as the song of the Church on earth, which has escaped out of the spiritual Babylon. It is a song “such as [has] never been heard in the Church since the days of Constantine.”¹⁶⁹

The Second Advent (Rev 19)

Whether the figure of Christ on the white horse who comes to destroy the beast (Rev 19:11) represents Christ’s bodily advent, or is only spiritual, is uncertain for Joachim. At first he seems inclined to view it as a bodily coming. Later he concedes that it may be explained as Christ acting through his Church triumphant. Joachim writes: “The armies of saints following him [Christ] on white horses signify either the saints that rose from the dead when Jesus rose, (Matt. 27:52) or all the saints dead in Christ generally, as now to appear with Him; if Christ’s coming be personal. If not, then they may be Christ’s saints on earth.”¹⁷⁰ Either way, the wicked and the Antichrist will be destroyed at that moment but not by a military effort of the saints. Instead, the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire by supernatural intervention from God. The sword from Christ’s mouth (Rev 19:15) cuts down the reprobate, and none, except a “small number of people,” are left. None except the saints are living in the seventh period.¹⁷¹ In a short

¹⁶⁹ “Tanta exultation electorum erit in ecclesia quanta non fuit a diebus Constantini” (Joachim, EA, 203bc).

¹⁷⁰ Joachim, EA, 207b, trans. in Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticae*, 4:415, 416 [brackets supplied]. See also Joachim, EA, 91a.

¹⁷¹ Joachim, EA 207b, 209cd.

volume entitled *Enchiridion in Apocalypsim*, Joachim explains that at the beginning of the millennium the Holy Spirit is poured down onto the spiritual men. This group, also called the “collective messiah,” rapidly establishes a universal order of justice on earth.¹⁷²

Millennium or the “Age of the Spirit”

Commenting on Rev 19-22, Joachim contends that the events surrounding the millennium clearly point to a future time.¹⁷³ The millennium, also called the “seventh tempus” by Joachim represents the beginning of the third stage of world history, the Age of the Spirit. At the beginning of the millennium “the stone . . . cut out of the mountain without hands” (the kingdom of Christ), comes upon the earth and begins filling the whole earth (Dan 2:44-45).¹⁷⁴

But that kingdom [of iron and clay] will last a short time, even until that stone, which was cut from the mountain without hands, falls upon it, and with the arms with which it formerly conquered the Roman empire conquers and destroy it So therefore that precious stone, which will descend from heaven, is to fill all the earth, when the universal kingdoms of the nations have been destroyed which fought against it.¹⁷⁵

While Augustine identifies God’s kingdom on earth as a present reality, Joachim does not. Joachim does attempt to reconcile his chiliastic idea with Augustine’s by consenting that the binding of Satan might have an incipient fulfillment beginning at the time of Christ’s resurrection. He argues, however, that the perfect fulfillment of the

¹⁷² *Enchiridion in Apocalypsim*, ed. Edward K. Burger (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986), 44, 45; see also Matthias Riedl, “A Collective Messiah: Joachim of Fiore’s Constitution of Future Society,” *Mirabilia* 14 (Jan-June 2012): 64, 65.

¹⁷³ Joachim, EA 16a, 210c.

¹⁷⁴ Joachim, LC (V), 127a; see also *DUT*, 178.

¹⁷⁵ Joachim, LC (V), 127b transl. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:702 [brackets original].

Millennium is only achieved during the seventh stage of Church history—the final Sabbath—after the destruction of the beast and apocalyptical Babylon.¹⁷⁶

Joachim also argues that the future age of the Spirit does not last for a literal thousand years but for a relatively brief period of time.¹⁷⁷ This conclusion, he claims, is supported by the text in Rev 8:1, where the opening of the seventh seal (which for Joachim represents the seventh period of the Church) reveals a period of “silence” for a short, symbolical period of “half an hour.”¹⁷⁸

In his earlier work entitled *Genalogia* (1176) Joachim seems to draw from rabbinical calculations of the 1290 and 1335 days (years) in Dan 12:11-13. Daniel 12:11b mentions that ‘the abomination of desolation’ will reign for 1290 days, but then adds, “happy are those who persevere and attain the 1335 days” (Dan 12:11b-12). Joachim notices a forty-five day gap in between the 1290 and 1335 days and concludes that this gap might refer to a period of sabbatical rest of forty-five years.¹⁷⁹ Joachim, however, refuses to speculate on the exact duration of the millennium or the time of the

¹⁷⁶ “Secundum partem incepit ab illo sabbate quo requieuit Dominus in sepuchro: secundum plenitudinem sui, a ruinà Bestiae et Pseudo-Prophetæ” (It begun partly with that sabbath when the Lord rested in the tomb but in its fullness –after the demise of the beast and the false prophet) (Joachim, EA, 211ab, translation mine.)

¹⁷⁷ Joachim, EA, 211c.

¹⁷⁸ Joachim, EA, 123bc. See p. 68 of this study.

¹⁷⁹ See Gian Luca Potesta, ed. “Die genealogia: Ein fruhes Werk Joachims von Fiore und die Anfange seines Gescichtsbildes,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung Mittelalters* 56 (2000), 93. For an investigation into the possibility that Joachim draws on rabbinical sources see pp. 281-286 of this study.

resurrection and Second Coming of Christ, because “of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matt 24:36).¹⁸⁰

The period of rest is characterized by Satan’s temporal imprisonment in “the bottomless pit” (Rev 20:3) after which Christ’s personal advent occurs.¹⁸¹ This final period sees the acceptance of the two prophets from Rev 11, representing the two new monastic orders that appear. Joachim seems to envision an age when the Church is completely dedicated to spiritual affairs and the world becomes a big place of spiritual healing, like a large monastery.¹⁸²

For Joachim, the papacy, as the top of the clerical hierarchy, does not play a leading role in the spiritual Church of the future.¹⁸³ The new order of the third age unites all the monastic orders, the canons regular, and the religious lay movements of the chivalric and hospital orders. All these religious orders unite in the *nova religio* (new

¹⁸⁰ *DUT*, 189. “Quis scit quàm breve esse poterit sabbatum ipsum?” (Who knows how short this sabbath could be?) (Joachim, EA, 210d, translation mine): Lerner argues that Joachim’s forty-five yearlong millennium stems from Jerome, (*Commentaria in Danielelem*, ed. F. Glorie, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina [Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1964], 75A: 943-4) who also argued in favor of short “refreshment of the saints” after the expiration of 1290 days. See Robert Lerner, “Refreshment of the Saints: The Time After Antichrist as a Station for Earthly Progress in Medieval Thought,” *Traditio* 32 (1976), 97-144.

¹⁸¹ Joachim, LF 14 in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 141.

¹⁸² *DUT*, 168; Joachim, LC (D), 21; see also Riedl, “A Collective Messiah,” 57-80; see Stephen E. Wessley, *Joachim of Fiore and the Monastic Reform*, American University Studies, Theology and Religion 72 (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1990).

¹⁸³ See Bernard McGinn, “Joachim of Fiore and the Twelfth-Century Papacy,” *Joachim of Fiore and the Influence of the Inspiration* ed. J. E. Wannenmacher (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 31-33.

religion) of the spiritual Church, which, in its moral perfection, surpasses all earlier times and forms of Christian community, and anticipates perfection of religion.¹⁸⁴

Conversion of the Jews

The conversion of the Jews was a major eschatological expectation for early and medieval Christians. In Joachim's time, this expectation, rooted in the writings of Paul and the early Church fathers, was resisted by multitudes of Jews in Europe, northern Africa and the East. Joachim believed that near the beginning of the age of the Spirit, the Jews would finally confess Christ and return to the "olive tree," (Rom 11:17-24).

Joachim's approach to the Jews is basically Pauline. In *Adversus Judeos*,¹⁸⁵ quoting Paul, he argues that the Jewish blindness is temporary and only lasts until the salvation of the gentiles is complete (Rom 11:25).¹⁸⁶ Joachim's attitude towards the Jews must be understood within the framework of his theory of concords. In a series of sermons entitled *Dialogi de prescientia dei*, Joachim argues that the Jews were originally

¹⁸⁴ "Perfectio religionis illius ecclesie vincet aliorum omnium et temporum et ordinum religionem..." (the perfection of this religion will excel all the other religious and temporal orders) (Joachim, LC, [V], 95, 96, translation mine); see also Joachim, EA, 19c and *Tractatus Super Quatuor Evangelia*, ed. F. Santi (Rome, Italy: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2002), 97-101.

¹⁸⁵ In the majority of earliest manuscripts this treatise is entitled "Exhortatorio Iudaeorum" (Exhortation concerning the Jews). See Robert Lerner, *The Feast of St. Abraham: Medieval Millenarians and the Jews* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2001), 138, n. 65). The title "Adversus Iudeos" (Against the Jews) comes from the prefatory letter printed at the beginning of the Venetian edition of the *Concordia* and *Expositio*.

¹⁸⁶ Joachim called this process the "apocalyptic conversion." *Adversus Iudeos*, ed. Arsenio Frugoni (Rome, Italy: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1957), 87, 95-6; see also *DUT*, 169, 186-188. Daniel, in "Apocalyptic conversion," 128-54, argues that the Joachim's particular approach towards the Jews was in great part motivated by disillusionment with the crusades.

chosen because they were few and humble. By the time of Christ they had become proud and haughty. For this reason, God rejected them and chose the despised gentiles. By the twelfth century, however, the Latin Christians have become proud and conceited, while the Jews have been humbled. Therefore, God is about to reach the Jews again, and give them rulership together with the Gentiles. Joachim calls this process “a spiral.”¹⁸⁷

In *Liber Concordiae*, Joachim gives more detail concerning this eschatological reversal. First, great calamities and tribulations are expected to fall upon the Church. These purify it from the reprobate and antichristian influences of materialism and the governing state. Next, a new pope, or eschatological Elijah, rises, preaching the word of God with much power and leading many Jews into conversion to Christ.¹⁸⁸

And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached throughout the entire world; and the spiritual understanding will come to the Jews and like a thunderbolt shatter the hardness of their heart, so that the promise that is written in Malachi will be fulfilled: “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the great and horrible day of the Lord. And he will convert the hearts of the fathers to the sons and the hearts of the sons to the father; lest perhaps I come and I strike the land with anathema.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Joachim, *Dialogi de prescientia dei et predestinatione electorum*, ed. Gian-Luca Potesta, (Rome, Italy: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1995), 10-22, 65-112. This spiral-shaped view of the history of the Jews and Gentiles is also basic to Joachim’s two minor works *Dialogi* and *De propheta ignota*. (See Daniel, “Joachim of Fiore; New Editions and Studies,” 678, 679. The “spiral” is also depicted in some of Joachim’s drawings and figures in the *Liber Figurarum*, figures 18 and 19; see also Matthias Kaup, *De prophetia ignota*, 23.

¹⁸⁸ Joachim, LC (D), 158-160, 402; *DUT*, 186. Although Joachim declares that it is unknown by how long Elijah’s coming will precede the Second Coming of Christ, he will come “in principio tertii [status]” (in the beginning of the third age of the world [the age of the Spirit]) to convert the Jews (*DUT*, 189). The sequence of events on the eschatological timetable is spelled out clearly in the *Tractatus Super Quator Evangelia*, (Buonaiuti), 143 “Antequam veniat tribulation Antichristi, incipient converti reliquie Iudeorum” (Before the tribulation of the Antichrist comes, the Jewish remnants will begin to be converted), translation mine.

¹⁸⁹ Joachim, LC (D), 422 [quoting from Malachi 4:4-6], translated in E. R. Daniel, “Abbot Joachim of Fiore and the Conversion of the Jews,” *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, eds., S. J. McMichel and S. E. Myers (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2004), 19, 20.

Joachim's attitude towards the Jews stands in striking contrast to the prevailing trends of his time. He does not focus on the Jews' role in the crucifixion, or make them part of Satan's conspiracy against Christendom. Joachim does not believe that the Antichrist comes out of the cursed tribe of Dan. While maintaining that the Jews are temporarily "blinded" and "carnal," Joachim rejects their demonization.¹⁹⁰ He rests assured that the conversion of the Jews would take place when the appropriate time is near. This conversion, however, is only possible through a pure Church, characterized by true humility, love and poverty, and which rejects a carnal and materialistic view of God's kingdom being political in nature.¹⁹¹

The "Final Antichrist," After the Millennium

After a short millennium of peace, dominated by the illumination of the people of God, Satan is unleashed from his captivity. Revelation 20:7 states that he "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle" against God and His people.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ The Jews are described as carnal in the sense that they live according to flesh and are unable to understand the spiritual side of the Scriptures, which point to Christ's spiritual kingdom. For Joachim many Christians are also carnal, because they believe that the kingdom of God is material and visible on earth. This is what it means to Joachim, to have a carnal or materialistic view of Scripture. (Daniel, "Joachim and Conversion of the Jews," 20)

¹⁹¹ Daniel, "Joachim and Conversion of the Jews," 21.

¹⁹² Joachim, LF, 14 "Sane in fine tertii venturus est alisu qui cognominatus est Gog. Et ipse erit ultimus tyrannus et ultimus Antichristus." (Truly at the end of the third [stage] comes the destroyer named Gog. And he will be the last tyrant and the last Antichrist) (Joachim, EA, 10a, translation mine). Just as the post-exilic Jews, after a period of peace and restoration following the Babylonian exile, had to endure one last persecution under the rule of Antiochus, in the same way the Church, after experiencing short millennial respite, must undergo one last tribulation before the very end (see Joachim, LC [D], 404).

The post-millennial tribulation is led by what Joachim calls the “final (*ultimus*) Antichrist.” This Antichrist will be Satan himself, who will gather all the resurrected reprobates—the “Gog and Magog”—and surround the city of God (Rev 20:7-8).¹⁹³ The final Antichrist appears openly before the end of the millennium, imitating the visible and audible coming of Christ.

Because at the end of the world Jesus Christ will come to Judgment in open fashion, so too the devil himself will go forth at the end of the world and will appear openly in the days of Gog. He will incite the pagan nations and will lead them to war. . . . Satan will appear openly with armies of wicked men, so that . . . he may pretend to be Him [sic] who will come to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire.¹⁹⁴

Joachim asserts that the final Antichrist is portrayed as the “eighth king” in Rev 17:11 and also as the “tail of the dragon” in Rev 12:4. Eventually, after deceiving the reprobates, the final Antichrist fails and is destroyed by the fire coming from God, together with his armies. The failure of Satan, according to Joachim is described in Revelations 17:11-14, where the Lamb of God defeats the “eighth king” and his armies. “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth . . . and goeth into perdition.” (Rev 17:11). In the last battle, Christ will prevail forever and Satan and his angels will finally be thrown into the lake of fire.¹⁹⁵ (See Table 6)

¹⁹³ Joachim, LF, 14 includes the inscription: “Gog. He is the last Antichrist,” but in *Expositio* 10a, Joachim explains that Gog “is not the final Antichrist but rather the commander in chief of the Antichrist. (“Non videatur iste Gog esse ipse Antichristum, sed princeps exercitus Antichristi”). In this stage of history, the last Antichrist is Satan himself.

¹⁹⁴ Joachim, LF 14, translation in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 141.

¹⁹⁵ Joachim, LF 14 translated in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 140; See also *DUT*, 169, 180, 181.

Table 6. The last three enemies of the church

Saladin	Future Antipope	Satan
Sixth head of the dragon (Rev 12:3)	Seventh head of the dragon (Rev 12:3)	Tail of the dragon (Rev 12:4)
Sixth king - "one is" (Rev 17:10)	Seventh king - "not yet come... must continue a short space" (Rev 17:10)	Eighth king - "goeth into perdition" (Rev 17:11)
	"Maximus Antichristus Comes before the Millennium	"Ultimus Antichristus" Comes after the Millennium
Beast wounded and healed (Rev 13:3)	Lamb-like Beast (Rev 13:11-18)	
	Little horn in Dan 7	Little horn in Dan 8

The defeat of the final Antichrist is accompanied by the general resurrection, when Christ appears in the clouds and destroys all the resurrected wicked with His breath.¹⁹⁶ Satan is punished in the fire and the saved live forever, peacefully, in the restored new earth described in chapters 21-22 of Revelation.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Joachim, EA, 212d.

¹⁹⁷ Joachim, EA, 215-222. Joachim does not give more detail on the fate of Satan and the reprobates. He simply states that they are punished in the *stagnum ardentis sulphure* (lake of burning sulphure) (Joachim, EA, 199, 201; *DUT*, 186-188).

Summary and Implications

Chapter 3 portrays a comprehensive picture of Joachim's eschatological expectations. Joachim is convinced that Revelation, if properly understood, outlines the major events in the history of the Christian Church. Joachim's method traces the most important events, persecutions, and controversies, which occurred between the time of the Apostle John and the end times. Joachim's approach to prophetic text is indeed a fully developed form of historicism. The events and periods of history, predicted in prophecy, are lined up against each other in a successive-chronological fashion, exhibiting no gaps or intermissions among them.

Joachim applies a full historicist scheme to the "seven churches" in the chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation. Each church in Rev 2 and 3 represents one major period of the Christian era. A similar periodization into seven major stages of Church history is developed by Joachim in commenting upon all other major visions of the Revelation such as the seven seals (Rev 6-7), the seven trumpets (Rev 8-11), the seven plagues (Rev 16) and the seven heads of the apocalyptic dragon and the beast (Rev 12, 13 and 17). This makes Joachim the first fully consistent historicist commentator on the book of Revelation in history. (See Table 7)

The usage of the year-day principle is another indicator of Joachim's firm grasp of what is considered to be the historicist method of interpretation. Historicism, as a hermeneutical system, often necessitates the conversion of the prophetic days and months into actual years. Joachim's application of time conversion fits the historicist system such that his calculations of time periods typically cover important periods of Church history.

Table 7. Comprehensive view of Joachim’s interpretation

AD	Seals (Rev 6:1-8:6)	Trumpets (Rev 8:6-11:19)	Heads (Rev 12, 13, 17)	Vials (Rev 15-20)
I 1- 100	Christ and the Church of apostles	Preaching of Paul Judaizers reject	Herod, Jewish persecution	Punishment upon the Jews and the Judaizers
II. 100- 312	Church of martyrs until Constantine	Nicolaitan heresy	Nero and the pagan persecution	God’s wrath upon the lapsed during Roman persecution
III 312- 565	Church doctors versus Arianism	Fallen star of Arian heresy	Constantius II, Arian persecution	God’s Wrath upon Arian Priests
IV. 565- 752	Church of monks versus Saracens	Saracens quench the light of Monks	Mohammed (Cosdroe) Muslim persecution	Wrath upon hypocritical monks
V. 752- 1200	Church vs. German kings, Monastic reform	Rise of Cathari (Pathareni) 150 years (5 months)	Mesemoth, (king of Moors) or Henry “I” Church in babylonian captivity	Wrath upon clergy and conventuals greedy for power
VI. 1200- 1260	Church apostasy Destruction of Byzantium and Rome 2 Monastic Orders Angelic Pontiff	Four angels (Saracens, Cathari, Turks and Barbarians) destroy Byzantium and Rome Angelic Preacher Two Monastic Orders 3.5 years reign of Antichrist (Rev 11:9)	Muslim forces under Saladin - This head is wounded but revives and new Muslim forces attack Europe.	Judgment upon the German Empire. kings of the East (Saracens) 3 frogs - power of Antichrist
VII. 1260			Maximus Antichristus (Evil Pope). will unite with revived Muslim forces	Cleansing of the Church (7 th vial) Judgment upon Babylon (Rev 18) Saved Exult (Rev 19) Millennium begins
1290	“Silence in heaven” Short Millennial Sabbath -	Christ’s breath destroys the wicked who “destroyed the earth” (Rev 11:18)		
1335 - ?)	Conversion of the Jews		Satan rises as the “final Antichrist” (8 th king) but is defeated by Christ’s full appearing.	Satan rises again. Gog and Magog (Rev 20:11-15) New Heaven and New Earth (Rev 21-22)

Joachim employs the hermeneutical year-day principle in all of his major works.¹⁹⁸ Besides the year-day principle and the historical-linear framework of prophetic interpretation, the most central part of Joachim's hermeneutics is a particular form of typology. Joachim calls it the *concord*s.¹⁹⁹ Joachim develops this theology of history based on the idea of a gradual self-revelation of the triune Godhead. The revelation of the Father brings about the patriarchal order of Israel, as described in the OT. The revelation of the Son leads to the creation of the clerical church.

Finally, the imminent third dispensation of the Holy Spirit brings about the final *ecclesia spiritualis* or spiritual church Joachim does not simply recognize traditional OT prototypes fulfilled in the life and death of Christ, (such as sanctuary sacrifices and feasts).²⁰⁰ He goes much further and identifies the entire scope of Hebrew history as a type of the post-resurrection Christian church. Joachim cites divine approval for such an approach in the visions of Revelation. He believed that his theory of concord could be

¹⁹⁸ Joachim, EA, 131a-132d, 145, 146, 165d; Joachim, LC (V), 12, 21, 118, 134, 135; Joachim's 1,260 years never led him to extend the year-day principle to the longer period of the 2,300 days in Dan 8:14, probably because of his belief in the imminence of the end. (See comments of Alfred F. Vaucher, *Lacunziana, essais sur les prophéties Bibliques* [Collonges sous Salève, France: Fides, 1949], 8). Nevertheless, three years after Joachim's death, a pseudo-Joachim manuscript with strong emphasis on anti-simoniatic clerics, *De Semnibus Scripturarum* reckons 2,300 days from the prophet Daniel until AD 1,600. (Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:718-725)

¹⁹⁹ Joachim, LC (D), 13; Daniel, "Joachim of Fiore; Patterns of History," 83; Marjorie Reeves has shown that a pattern of concordances between the two ages of the OT and the NT is central to the all of Joachim's writings. (Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, 129-32; and Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* [Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1970], 71-77.

²⁰⁰ For a detailed study on the classic typological principles see Richard M. Davidson, *Typology In Scripture* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1981).

verified by the major parallels between the events of OT and NT history.²⁰¹ In Joachim's detailed typological system, the seven major periods of the OT Israel have their antitypical fulfillment in the seven major periods of the Christian Church. (See Table 2 on p. 69) Hence, for Joachim, the validity of the concept is demonstrated both biblically and historically.

Additionally, Joachim saw a unique parallel between the forty-two generations between Abraham and Jesus in the OT (Matt 1:1-17), and the "forty-two months" (1260 days)—a period found in the book of Revelation (Rev 11:2; 12:6; 12:14 and 13:5) and in the book of Daniel (Dan 7:25, 12:6). The "forty-two months," or 1,260 days, for Joachim, represent 1,260 *years* of Church dispensation, a predicted period of time between Jesus' First Advent and the end. Joachim asserted that just as Christ's First Coming occurred after 42 generations between Abraham and Christ, in the same way, Christ's Second Coming would arrive after the expiration of these 42 prophetic months.²⁰² For Joachim, the faithful people of God enter the final millennial rest sometime after the expiration of the 1,260 prophetic years.

Influenced by a sense of historical reality, Joachim breaks away from the recapitulation rule and argues that the last four chapters of Revelation (chapters 19-22)

²⁰¹ Grundmann recognizes Joachim's system as classical biblical typology—a pictorial system of concordance between the prototypes of the OT and the antitypes of the history of Christ and the Church. According to Grundmann, Joachim's book *Liber Figurarum* represents a manual of typology. (Herbert Grundmann, *Studien über Joachim von Floris* [Leipzig, Germany: Wiesbaden, 1927, re-print, 1966], 199-207; see also Floridus Röhrig, *Rota in medio rotae, Ein typologischer Zyklus aus Oesterreich*, Jahrbuch des Stiftes Klosterneuburg [Klosterneuburg, Austria: Buch und Kunstverl, 1965], 11)

²⁰² Even the period of "five months," Revelation 9:5 is turned by Joachim into 150 days (5 times 30 days) and then converted into 150 *years*. See Joachim, EA, 131a-132d.

refer more appropriately to the future *renovatio*. Joachim also justifies this view exegetically, asserting that other passages in Revelation (such as those regarding the seventh seal, seventh trumpet and seventh vial) suggest that a final sabbatical period of restoration and perfection is yet to come.

Joachim's view of the millennium naturally created ecclesiological tension with Augustinian eschatology. Augustine justified the Church's involvement in secular affairs with the idea that Christianity has already become (or is progressively becoming) the kingdom of heaven on this earth. For Augustine, the "stone cut out without hands" from Dan 2 hits the earth at the First Coming of Christ, announcing its expansion into a mountain. The Church, for Augustine, is represented by this "stone" growing into the mountain or *Civitas Dei* (city of God) on earth. For Augustine, the millennium has already begun, and Christians should expand God's spiritual and temporal authority over the kingdoms of the world.

Joachim is fundamentally opposed to such materialistic reading of Scripture, which, he argues, imitates "carnal" Jewish theocracy. He considers the involvement of the Church in the affairs of the State, and vice versa, to be evidence of Church's spiritual exile into Babylon. Joachim points to Jesus' statement, that "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21) and argues that God's kingdom is presently in the sphere of spiritual reality. The material reality would be realized after the Second Coming of Christ. The Church must be reformed from this kind of materialistic thinking, says Joachim and "come out of Babylon." This will be effected through God's power and through *viri spiritualis*—the religious men, who will arise in power of Elijah to preach

spiritual conversion, ceasing from worldly lusts and wars, ushering the glorious restoration and renewal of the whole Church.

Before the Millennial rest, Joachim asserts that Scripture predicts appearance of Antichrist. Joachim sees the Antichrist as an internal foe, a prototype of Judas, “the son of perdition” (2 Thess 2:3), who betrays Christ from within the gathering of the elect. The Apostle Paul says that the Antichrist must “[sit] in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thess 2:4). According to Joachim, Paul’s words are prophetic and therefore symbolic. The “temple of God” represents the Church, not a literal Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

Joachim deviates from the medieval idea that the end-time Antichrist is Jewish, arises from the tribe of Dan, and assails the Church from the outside. In his opinion, such pseudo-biblical speculations only increase hatred towards the Jews, thus failing to foster Judaism’s acceptance of Christ. Instead of coercing the Jews into Christianity, Joachim believes in the imminent and pre-destined apocalyptic conversion, in which the Church becomes a symbol of peace, attracting the Jews to Christ through the spirit of God’s love.

The progress of the spiritual reformation of the Church will be stifled by the appearance of the end-time false prophets and Antichrist himself. Joachim envisages two great Antichrists, one before and the other after the Millennium.²⁰³

Joachim’s view of the Second Advent of Christ is complex and ambiguous. For Joachim, Christ’s advent is progressive. Just before the beginning of the millennium,

²⁰³ For Joachim, the question of which Antichrist is the real Antichrist is unnecessary. Each head of the dragon was an antichrist. This is supported by John’s assertion that “many false prophets [antichrists] are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Nevertheless, the last two antichrists—the *maximus Antichristus* and the *ultimus Antichristus*—remain, in Joachim’s opinion, the two greatest foes of the Church.

Jesus physically manifests His power by using His breath to supernaturally destroy the Antichrist and the wicked. More importantly, at the same time as the physical manifestation, Christ also comes spiritually. Through the concept of a collective Messiah, Jesus affects a monastic renewal within religious society. During the short, restorative millennium, Christ is spiritually present in His people.

The physical descent of Jesus to earth in order to rebuild an earthly kingdom does not fully materialize until the end of the short (forty-five-year-long?) millennium. If Joachim does, indeed, place the physical Second Coming of Christ after the millennium (even though the millennium is very short for Joachim), he can theoretically be called a father of postmillennialism.²⁰⁴

This summarizes the chapter on Joachim's eschatology. Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 press further the focus of the study, discussing the possible antecedents of Joachim's historicist exegesis, particularly his scheme of history, and the usage of the year-day principle.

²⁰⁴ "In Christian eschatology, postmillennialism is an interpretation of chapter 20 of the Book of Revelation, which sees the second coming of Christ occurring *after* (Latin *post*–) the 'Millennium.' The term subsumes several similar views of the end times, and it stands in contrast to *pre-millennialism* and—to a lesser extent—*amillennialism*. Postmillennialism was a dominant theological belief among American Protestants who promoted reform movements from the 18th to the 20th century, such as abolitionism and the Social Gospel. Daniel Whitby (d. 1726) is presently considered the father of modern postmillennialism." (See Robert Whalen, "Postmillennialism" and "Premillennialism," *Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements*, ed. R. Landes, [New York, NY: Routledge, 2000], 326–332)

CHAPTER 4

JOACHIM AND THE EARLY CHURCH ESCHATOLOGY

Introduction

Chapters 4–6 examine eschatological interpretations within the religious traditions of the cultures that played important roles in Joachim’s thinking. These include Latin, Byzantine, Near-Eastern Christian, and Judeo-Semitic cultures. The eschatological interpretations are analyzed and evaluated to determine similarities between Joachim’s ideas and earlier and contemporary sources.

Chapter 4 investigates patterns of Joachim’s interpretational precedents and antecedents among the early Church fathers.¹ The main question addressed in Chapter 4 is: What are the commonalities (and differences) between Joachim’s eschatology and the prophetic interpretations in the Early Church?

¹ For an overview of Early Church eschatology see Leroy Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950-54), vol. 1; Brian Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1991); Charles Hill, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); David Edward Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic in Early Christianity* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); Robert Daly, *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

Ante-Nicene Fathers

Pseudo-Barnabas

The earliest apocalyptic interpretations of Bible prophecies in the early Church are found in the *Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas*, presumed to be written by a Christian writer of Jewish origin from Alexandria who lived around the time of the Roman emperors Trajan (AD 98-117) and Hadrian (AD 117-138).² In the eschatological section of the epistle, pseudo-Barnabas argues that the earth must endure six thousand years, after which Jesus will return to earth to usher the blessed millennium of peace.

And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.” Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, “He finished in six days.” This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, “Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years.” [Ps 90:4, 2 Pet 3:8] Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. “And He rested on the seventh day.” This meaneth: when His Son, coming [again], shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day.³

Pseudo-Barnabas draws upon Jesus’ description of end-time events, which include changes in the sun, moon, and stars (Matt 24:29). Like Joachim, Pseudo-Barnabas sees the thousand years occurring in the future, not already begun.⁴ For both, the thousand years begin with the resurrection, the Second Advent, the destruction of the

² This is not Barnabas, the companion of the Apostle Paul from the book of Acts. See James C. Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 3-9.

³ *Epistle of Barnabas* 15, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols (Peabody: Hendrickson Publication, 1994), 1:146. First square bracket supplied.

⁴ Barnabas and Joachim also agree that the stone from Dan 2:35 and 2:45 describes a future event. “The final stumbling-block (or source of danger) approaches, concerning which it is written, as Enoch [Daniel] says, “For this end the Lord has cut short the times and the days, that His Beloved may hasten; and He will come to the inheritance” (*Epistle of Barnabas*, 4 [*Ante-Nicene Fathers* (ANF), 1:138]).

“wicked man” (the Antichrist), and with major cataclysms affecting the sun, moon, and stars.⁵

Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr (ca. AD 100-ca. 165) was a Samaritan of Greek education who was martyred in Rome. One of the earliest Christian apologists, Justin attempts to vindicate Christianity from various charges made against Christians in the mid-second century.⁶ In *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin includes several paragraphs mentioning the book of Revelation,⁷ revealing his belief in a future millennium of peace.

There will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare. . . . And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place.⁸

Justin firmly believes that Jerusalem, in ruins after being destroyed by Hadrian and the Bar Kokhba revolt (AD 135), will soon be rebuilt at the impending Second Coming of Christ. He believes that Jews and Christians will then live peacefully in the

⁵ For Joachim, these events primarily mark the end of the millennium, although in a partial sense they might occur even at the beginning of it. See pp. 103-106, 111-113 of this study.

⁶ For a study on the works and theology of Justin Martyr, see Leslie W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2008).

⁷ Which he attributes to John the Apostle. See Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 81 (ANF, 1:240).

⁸ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 80, 81 (ANF, 1:239, 240).

newly rebuilt Jerusalem.⁹ He seems to envisage two resurrections: one before and one after the thousand years. The first resurrection raises all the dead and martyred Christians, gathering them into the New Jerusalem, while the second resurrection raises the righteous Jews who then join the Christians in eternal life. No mention is made of the resurrection of the wicked.¹⁰

Justin further believes that the Roman Empire will soon be divided and the power taken by the “man of sin” (2 Thess 2), whom he also identifies as the “little horn” (Dan 7).¹¹ Justin disagrees with Trypho, the Jew, who interprets “the time, two times and half a time” of the little horn’s persecution (Dan 7:25) as 350 years. Instead, Justin believes that the Antichrist will reign for a shorter period of time, after which Christ will destroy him and establish His kingdom on the renewed earth.¹²

Like Joachim, Justin does not consider the millennium to have already begun with the First Coming of Christ, but places it in the future. However, while Justin seems to

⁹ “[Trypho:] ‘But tell me, do you really admit that this place, Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt; and do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful with Christ and the patriarchs, and the prophets, both the men of our nation, and other proselytes who joined them before your Christ came? Or have you given way, and admitted this in order to have the appearance of worsting us in the controversies?’ [Justin:] ‘Then I answered, I am not so miserable a fellow, Trypho, as to say one thing and think another. I admitted to you formerly, that I and many others are of this opinion’ (Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 80 [ANF, 1:239]).

¹⁰ Justin does admit that not all of the Christians of his time agree on all of the details of the millennial reign of Christ. “Many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise” (Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 80 [ANF, 1:239]).

¹¹ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 110 (ANF, 1:253, 254). “The times now running on to their consummation; and he whom Daniel foretells would have dominion for a time, and times, and an half, is even already at the door, about to speak blasphemous and daring things against the Most High” (Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 32 [ANF, 1:210]).

¹² Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 32 (ANF, 1:210).

embrace the idea of two resurrections, Joachim is hesitant to decide whether the pre-millennial resurrection is spiritual or physical.¹³ Another view common to both Justin and Joachim is the belief that the Christian Church should not be engaged in secular warfare. Justin argues that after the First Advent of Christ, Christians have beaten their “swords into plowshares” according to the messianic prophecies of Isa 2:4 and Mic 4:3.¹⁴

Irenaeus of Lyons

Irenaeus, bishop of the Christian churches in Lyons (d. 202), was a champion of orthodoxy against the Gnostic heresy in the last quarter of the second century.¹⁵ In his work *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus dedicates several chapters to the topic of end-time events. Interpreting the fourth kingdom of Dan 2 and 7 as the Roman Empire of his time, Irenaeus asserts that Rome will soon be divided into ten smaller kingdoms, as implied by the ten toes of iron mixed with clay (Dan 2) and the ten horns of the fourth beast (Dan 7).¹⁶

The “little horn,” which causes three of the first ten horns to be “plucked up by the roots” and destroyed (Dan 7:8), is a future antichrist also called the “son of perdition” (2 Thess 2:3). He is also the king with “fierce countenance” from Dan 8:23 who will persecute the saints of God and prosper. Contrary to Joachim, Irenaeus claims that the

¹³ See p. 105 of this study.

¹⁴ Justin, *The First Apology* 39 (ANF, 1:175-6).

¹⁵ Born in Asia Minor, Irenaeus acted as mediator between the Christian communities in the East and the West. Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1997), 1-11.

¹⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5. 25. 26 (ANF, 1:553-5).

Antichrist will conquer Jerusalem and sit in the renewed Jewish temple pretending to be the Messiah.¹⁷

Irenaeus also identifies the Antichrist as the “beast” or the “eighth king” in Rev 17:11. This king unites with the “ten horns” (Rev 17:12) and “make[s] war with the Lamb” (Rev 17:14). The Antichrist and the ten horns then “burn [the Harlot, Babylon] with fire” (Rev 17:16). This represents the destruction of the vestiges of the Roman Empire and the persecution of the saints of God. After that, the Second Coming of Christ will destroy the Antichrist and the kings who unite with him.¹⁸

According to Irenaeus, the beast coming from the sea in Rev 13 also represents the Antichrist. The beast with two horns like a lamb (Rev 13:11) represents the assistant of the Antichrist, the false prophet who makes miracles, deceiving the world.¹⁹ Irenaeus also attempts to give an interpretation of the mystical number 666. Like Joachim, his first impulse is to ascribe the number to the six thousand years of human history, from Adam

¹⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 25 (ANF, 1:553-4). Under the assumption that the Antichrist is of Jewish origin, Irenaeus speculates that the inclusion of Dan, in Jer 8:16, and the omission of it among the tribes listed in Rev 7, might indicate the Antichrist’s origin. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 30 (ANF, 1:559)

¹⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 26 (ANF, 1:554). This is the chronology of events outlined by Irenaeus: “Let them await, in the first place, the division of the kingdom into ten; then, in the next place, when these kings are reigning, and beginning to set their affairs in order, and advance their kingdom, [let them learn] to acknowledge that he who shall come claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking, having a name containing the aforesaid number, is truly the abomination of desolation. This, too, the apostle affirms: When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 30 [ANF, 1:559]).

¹⁹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 28 (ANF, 1:557).

to the end. Irenaeus later suggests *Lateinos* (which numerically in Greek equal 666) because the horn must come out of the Latin Empire.²⁰

Irenaeus states that the resurrection of the just takes place after the Antichrist is destroyed, followed by the reign of the righteous with Christ on earth.²¹ This kingdom of God on earth he calls the “hallowed seventh day” or the “true Sabbath.”²² Although not commenting upon whether or not the “seventh day” lasts for exactly a thousand years, Irenaeus stresses that the millennial kingdom and the resurrection (both of the righteous and of the wicked) are literal actualities, not spiritual allegories.²³ The purpose of the first resurrection (which occurs before the millennium) is to gather the saints from east and west and give them the kingdom. The second resurrection (at the end of the thousand-year reign) gathers the wicked for their final judgment and eternal annihilation.²⁴

Even though Irenaeus spends much less time upon seven seals and seven trumpets than does Joachim,²⁵ his approach to the apocalyptic prophecies appears as historicist.

²⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 28 (ANF, 1:557). For Joachim’s view on 666, see p. 96-7, n. 143 of this study.

²¹ “For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord.” Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 35 [ANF, 1:565]).

²² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 30 and 33 (ANF, 1:560, 62).

²³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 35 (ANF, 1:565-66).

²⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 35 (ANF, 1:566).

²⁵ Irenaeus does not comment upon seals or trumpets except for identifying the rider on the white horse in the first seal (Rev 6:2) as a symbol of Christ’s first advent and His victory over the world. “For to this end was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: “He went forth conquering, that He should conquer” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 35, book 4:22 [ANF, 1:493]).

This is confirmed primarily by his approach to the succession of kingdoms in Dan 2 and 7, and his identification of the fourth kingdom as Rome. Irenaeus does not see any historical gaps between the fourth beast (Rome) and the ten horns; the ten horns appear to be the ten future kings (kingdoms) who will spring out of Roman ruins. Irenaeus also does not see a gap in time between the “little horn” and the ten horns. The little horn destroys three horns and thus successively follows the appearance of the ten kingdoms in the flow of the historical events. Finally, Irenaeus, like Joachim, expects the millennial reign of righteousness to be ushered in after the fall of the little horn Antichrist.

The major differences between Irenaeus and Joachim lie in their view of the Second Coming of Christ. Irenaeus is clearly pre-millennial, whereas Joachim wavers between a pre-millennial and post-millennial coming and admits to a belief in both. Also, for Joachim, the lamb-beast (Rev 13:11) represents the main Antichrist, whereas for Irenaeus the lamb-beast represents the “armor-bearer” of the wicked one. Also, unlike Irenaeus, according to Joachim, the Antichrist will not be of Jewish origin.

Gnostic Eschatology

Few historians have considered the influence of Gnosticism upon early Christian eschatology.²⁶ Gnosticism was a syncretistic philosophical religion, composed of elements from Oriental mystery religions, Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy, and Judaism (primarily Genesis and Wisdom literature). While its roots go back to pre-Christian times, Gnosticism infiltrated Christianity in the late first century AD. From that

²⁶ Dewick maintained that Gnosticism had “little effect upon Christian eschatology” (E. C. Dewick, *Primitive Christian Eschatology* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1912], 334).

point on Christian Gnosticism is distinguishable from pagan and mythological Gnosticism.²⁷

Although the Nag Hammadi Gnostic writings only occasionally quote apocalyptic passages from the Revelation of John or the book of Daniel, they do cover some major eschatological themes, such as the judgment, the Second Coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead.²⁸

In Platonic fashion, the majority of Gnostic writers consider the physical and material world to be evil, a prison for souls.²⁹ The Second Coming of Christ and the resurrection of the saints must, therefore, be realized spiritually, in the life of a Christian. In the *Treatise on Resurrection*, for example, an anonymous Gnostic author describes the conversion experience as “the way to immortality” where “we suffered with Him and we arose with Him, and we went to heaven with Him.” According to the Gnostic writer of the *Treatise*, “this is the spiritual resurrection which swallows up the physical in the same

²⁷ For a study on Gnosticism see Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (San Francisco: Harper, 1983). For a more recent evaluation of Gnostic influence in Christianity see Carl B. Smith, *No Longer Jews: The Search for Gnostic Origins* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), and Alastair Logan, *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2006).

²⁸ Gnostic writings, in a general sense, tend to retell the stories mentioned in the gospels and quote certain passages in Pauline writings. See James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (New York, NY: Harper, 1977); see also Craig A. Evans, Robert L. Webb, and Richard A. Wiebe, eds., *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1993).

²⁹ Rudolph, *Gnosis*, 88.

way as the fleshly.”³⁰ In the next section, he declares: “Already you have the resurrection Why not consider yourself as risen and already brought to this [resurrection]?”³¹

In the *Gospel of Thomas*, the anonymous Gnostic writer claims that resurrection is a present reality based on a dialogue between Christ and his disciples: “His disciples said to him, ‘When will the repose of the dead come about, and when will the new world come?’ He said to them: ‘what you look forward to has already come, but you do not recognize it.’”³²

A very similar concept of present resurrection is also found in the *Gospel of Philip*. This particular Gnostic work not only denies the physical resurrection of believers at the end of times, but even goes so far as to deny the reality of Christ’s resurrection in the flesh. The author states that Christ was resurrected at His baptism and not after His death. “Those who say that the Lord died first and then rose up are in error, for he rose up first and then died.” Hence, every believer must also attain to resurrection in his life. “He who has been anointed possesses everything. He possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross, the Holy Spirit. This is the kingdom of heaven.”³³

Another example of the Gnostic realization of eschatology can be seen in the *Apocalypse of James*, which claims that the Second Coming of Christ was realized during

³⁰ *Treatise on Resurrection*, 45:23-28 and 45:39-46, in Evans, Webb, and Wiebe, *Nag Hammadi Texts*, 44-45.

³¹ *Treatise on Resurrection*, 49:9-30, in *Nag Hammadi Texts*, 47.

³² *Gospel of Thomas*, 42:7-11, in *Nag Hammadi Texts*, 119.

³³ *Gospel of Philip*, 56:16-18 and 74:12-25, in Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, 134 and 144.

Pentecost, at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. Furthermore, it is realized every time a Christian obtains the Spirit.³⁴

Some Gnostic writings, however, did accept the future Second Coming or a literal physical resurrection at the end-times. The *Apocalypse of Peter*, for example, reflects a literal expectation of the advent of the Lord from the sky.³⁵ In spite of such exceptions, the predominant emphasis of Gnostic writings lies upon the idea of *realized eschatology*, focusing much more on the present than on the future.³⁶ Kurt Rudolph also supports the conclusion that the resurrection, in Gnostic writings, is understood mostly as “present realized experience and [a] future ascent of the individual soul” at death, but “there is none at the end of the world,” as is the case with most early Christian interpreters.³⁷

The idea of a spiritual Second Coming of Christ, whether in the form of baptism or the conversion of a believer, draws its origin from the Gnostic insistence on the

³⁴ *The First Apocalypse of James*, 29:14-30:28, in Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, 245; see also a treatise entitled *The Exegesis on the Soul*, 134:10-16: “Now it is fitting that the soul regenerate herself and become again as she formerly was. . . . This is the resurrection from the dead. This is the ransom from captivity. This is the upward journey of ascent to heaven.” (Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, 185).

³⁵ *Apocalypse of Peter*, 77:25-78:5, in Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, 342.

³⁶ The term *Realized eschatology* represents a Christian eschatological theory popularized by C. H. Dodd (1884-1973) that holds that the eschatological passages in the NT do not refer to the future, but instead refer to the ministry of Jesus and His lasting legacy. See George E. Ladd and Donald A. Hagner, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 56.

³⁷ Rudolph, *Gnosis*, 161, 191-92. The writer of *Hypostasis of the Archons* claims that binding Satan and casting him into the bottomless pit (Rev 20) occurs before the world was even created. *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, 95:11-13 in *Nag Hammadi Texts*, 182. According to Gnostic teaching the devil, also known as the angel Yaldabaoth, was cast into the abyss (Rev 20) where he created the material world, including Adam and Eve and the tree of knowledge. Several Gnostic writers quote Rev 20:1-3 in this context. See also *On the Origin of the World* 102. 33-34 in *Nag Hammadi Texts*, 188.

exclusively immaterial and spiritual realm of God's activity. Gnosticism of course borrowed this notion from Platonism.³⁸ The spiritualization of the *Parousia* (Greek: appearance) was especially common in North Africa, where Gnostic and Neo-Platonic eschatology influenced theology of popular Christian teachers such as Origen, and later, to a certain extent Tyconius and Augustine.³⁹

In proposing an ongoing *continuous eschatology*, Joachim discarded the concepts of a "realized eschatology" and spiritual millennium pervading Augustinian eschatology. In this respect, Joachim returns to the eschatological expectations of the mainstream ante-Nicene Fathers.

Tertullian

Tertullian of Carthage (ca. 160-225) ranks among the most prominent of the early Latin fathers.⁴⁰ Like Irenaeus, he contends for a more mainstream Christian understanding of the prophetic passages and affirms the future physical resurrection, earthly millennium, and the literal and physical Second Coming of Jesus at the end of the age. Commenting extensively on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, Tertullian argues that Christ's coming is very soon and that the Roman Empire is delaying the appearance of the Antichrist. He begs his readers to pray for the stability and unity of the

³⁸ For similarities between various Gnostic and Neo-Platonic streams of thought see Kevin Corrigan, Tuomas Rasinus, and John D. Turner, eds., *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013).

³⁹ See Henry M. Evans, "The Origin and Development of Expectation for Christ's *Parousia* in Earliest Christianity" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1984), 214-304, 355.

⁴⁰ For a systematic view of Tertullian's theology see Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004).

Roman Empire in order to delay the prophesied breakup of Rome and the coming of the Antichrist.

What obstacle is there but the Roman state, the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist upon (its own ruins)? “And then shall be revealed the wicked one, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.”⁴¹

Joachim seems to follow Tertullian’s idea that there are many antichrists.

Tertullian specifically describes Marcion and his followers as antichrists.⁴² Yet there is also a specific Antichrist, the “Man of sin” (2 Thess 2) and the first beast in Rev 13, who arises just before the resurrection as a great persecutor of the church.⁴³

Tertullian rejects the idea, proposed by Irenaeus, of the Antichrist being a Jew from the tribe of Dan, sitting in a Jewish temple in the newly rebuilt Jerusalem. Instead, Tertullian says that the temple of God is the Church, and apostasy comes from the bosom of the Church.⁴⁴ Based on the account of the two witnesses in Rev 11, Tertullian concludes that Enoch and Elijah would come back to earth and fight the Antichrist. They

⁴¹ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 24 (ANF, 3:563); see also Tertullian, *Apology* 32 (ANF, 3:42, 43).

⁴² Tertullian, *The Prescription Against Heretics* 4, and *Against Marcion* 3.8 (ANF, 3:245, 327).

⁴³ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.16, and *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 25 (ANF, 3:463-64, 563).

⁴⁴ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.7.23, 25, and *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 26 (ANF, 3:326, 341-42, 564). This view, which anticipates that the Antichrist will come from within the Church would also be expressed by several early Greek fathers and even some later Latin commentators, particularly Bernard of Clairvaux and finally Joachim (see page 95 of this study).

would consequently be killed and then resurrected, announcing the end of the world and the resurrection of the righteous.⁴⁵

In agreement with Irenaeus and Justin Martyr, Tertullian affirms a belief in two resurrections. The righteous rise in the first resurrection while the wicked rise at the end of the millennium. Tertullian affirms that Christians customarily pray to have a part in the first resurrection, which takes place at the Second Advent of Christ.⁴⁶ He opposes the Gnostic *animalists*, as he calls them, who believe that the first resurrection happens spiritually during the baptism of believers.⁴⁷ He declares Christ to be the stone of Dan 2 that smites the worldly kingdoms at His Second Coming, not His First Coming.⁴⁸ At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, God destroys the Antichrist and resurrects the saints, establishing a kingdom of the righteous on earth. This kingdom of righteousness lasts for a thousand years, after which, at the end of the millennium, the New Jerusalem

⁴⁵ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 50 (ANF, 3:227-28).

⁴⁶ “Of the heavenly kingdom this is the process. After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints, who rise sooner or later according to their deserts, there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgment: we shall then be changed in a moment into the substance of angels, even by the investiture of an incorruptible nature, and so be removed to that kingdom in heaven” (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 3:25 [ANF, 3:342-3]).

⁴⁷ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 22 (ANF, 3:560). Tertullian calls the Gnostic teachers *animalists* because of their focus on the soul (Lat. *anima*) and rejection of bodily resurrection.

⁴⁸ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 22 (ANF, 3:560-61); Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3:7 (ANF, 3:326).

descends upon the earth. The wicked are then resurrected, but only to be judged and destroyed, while the saints obtain angelic bodies.⁴⁹

Tertullian does not comment specifically on the seven seals in Rev 6, but he does mention that the martyrs under the altar in the fifth seal symbolize the tribulation of Christians, which he witnessed in his time.⁵⁰ Tertullian places the beginning of the sixth seal in the time of the Antichrist and describes the final dissolution of the earth and sky before the advent.⁵¹ This idea is followed by later expositors, including Joachim.

Hippolytus

Hippolytus (ca. 180-240) was a bishop of Portus Romanus,⁵² near Rome. He was considered one of the most learned Christian scholars and theologians of his day. Several works on prophecy, among which are *Commentary on Daniel* and a *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, are attributed to Hippolytus. Jerome attests that he also wrote a treatise on Revelation, which is only fragmentarily preserved.⁵³

⁴⁹ “After the casting of the devil into the bottomless pit for a while, the blessed prerogative of the *first resurrection* may be ordained from the thrones; and then again after the consignment of him to the fire, that the judgment of the *final* and universal *resurrection* may be determined out of the books” (Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 25 [ANF, 3:563]).

⁵⁰ Tertullian, “On the Resurrection of the Flesh,” 25 (ANF, 3:562-3).

⁵¹ Tertullian, *Against Hermogenes*, 34 (ANF, 3:496-97).

⁵² For a general study on Hippolytus see J. A. Cerato, *Hippolytus between East and West* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University, 2002). For Hippolytus’s eschatology see David N. Dunbar, *The Eschatology of Hippolytus of Rome* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1979).

⁵³ Jerome, *On Illustrious Men (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers [NPNF]2, 3:375)*. Fragments of Hippolytus’s commentary have been isolated and translated into French in Pierre Prigent, “Hippolyte, commentateur de l’Apocalypse,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 28 (1972): 391-412, and in P. Prigent and R. Stehly, “Les fragments du De Apocalypsi

In his works, Hippolytus follows the traditional view of the four kingdoms in Dan 2 and 7, identifying them with Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. He anticipates the coming of the Roman division in ten smaller kingdoms.⁵⁴ After the division of Rome, Hippolytus predicts a rise of the little horn, or Antichrist, who will be of Jewish origin.

Hippolytus offers many unique interpretations. For Hippolytus, the beast with seven heads and ten horns in Rev 13:1-9 represents the Roman Empire. The “mortal wound” (Rev 13:3) of the Roman “beast” occurs during the civil war between Augustus and Mark Antony in 27 BC. Rome recovers from the wound and must continue its rule until the coming of the Antichrist.⁵⁵ The beast with two horns like a lamb in Rev 13:11-18 depicts the future Antichrist who comes after the fall of Rome.⁵⁶ According to Hippolytus, the Antichrist must conquer three “horns” (an allusion to Dan 7:8-9): Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia (an allusion to Dan 11:40-44).⁵⁷ Even though the Antichrist is a Jew,

d’Hippolyte,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 29 (1973): 313-33. Following the trend of Tertullian and Irenaeus, Hippolytus heavily criticized the beliefs and lifestyle of the bishops of Rome. This resulted in the suppression and near elimination of all of his writings (Philipp Schaff, *Church History*, 8 vols [New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914], 1:160).

⁵⁴ “Then he says, “The fourth beast (was) dreadful and terrible: it had iron teeth, and claws of brass.” Who, then, are meant by this but the Romans, whose kingdom, the kingdom that still stands, is expressed by the iron? “for,” says he, “its legs are of iron.” 2. After this, then, what remains, beloved, but the toes of the feet of the image, in which “part shall be of iron and part of clay mixed together?” By the toes of the feet he meant, mystically, the ten kings that rise out of that kingdom” (Hippolytus, *Fragments from the Commentary on Daniel* 2.1.2 [ANF, 5:178]; see also *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 28, 29 [ANF, 5:210]).

⁵⁵ Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 49 (ANF 5:214).

⁵⁶ Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 48, 49 (ANF, 5:214).

⁵⁷ Hippolytus, *Fragments from the Commentary on Daniel* 2.2 (ANF, 5:178). See also *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 25, 26 (ANF, 5:209).

Hippolytus, like Irenaeus, identifies the mystical number 666 with the names *Lateinos*, believing that the name is somehow linked to the Latins.⁵⁸

After the appearance of the Antichrist, Enoch and Elijah (the two witnesses in Rev 11) descend from heaven to counter the Antichrist's influence. However, after three and a half years of preaching (Rev 11:3), they are killed, after which they are resurrected and ascend to heaven (Rev 11:9-11).⁵⁹ After that, Hippolytus says,

When he has conquered all, he will prove himself a terrible and savage tyrant, and will cause tribulation and persecution to the saints, exalting himself against them. And after him, it remains that "the stone" shall come from heaven, which "smote the image" and shivered it, and subverted all the kingdoms, and gave the kingdom to the saints of the Most High. This became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. . . . The stone that "smites the image and breaks it in pieces," and that filled the whole earth, is Christ, who comes from heaven and brings judgment on the world.⁶⁰

The Second Coming of Christ destroys the Antichrist and ushers in the millennium of peace. In *Chapters Against Gaius*, Hippolytus asserts that the binding of Satan, described in Rev 20:2-3, occurs at the Second Coming of Christ.⁶¹ He opposes a

⁵⁸ Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 50 (ANF, 5:215).

⁵⁹ Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 43-47 (ANF, 5:213-14).

⁶⁰ Hippolytus, *Fragments from the Commentary on Daniel* 2.1.2 (ANF, 5:178).

⁶¹ Hippolytus also wrote a defense of the Book of Revelation, entitled *Capitula contra Gaium* [Chapters Against Gaius], which exists only in fragments and is preserved in the commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi, a twelfth-century Syriac Apocalypse commentary (Jaroslav Sedlacek, ed., *Dionysus Bar Salibi; In Apocalypsim, Actus et Epistulas Catholicas*, Corpus Christianorum Scriptorum Orientalia 60 [Louvain, Belgium: L. Durbecq, 1954]). English translation appears in John Gwynn, "Hippolytus and His 'Heads against Caius'," in *Hermathena: A Series of Papers on Literature, Science, and Philosophy*, 8 vols. (Dublin, Ireland: Members of Trinity College, 1888), 6:397-418.

“heretic Gaius” who believes that the binding of Satan refers to Christ’s defeat of Satan during His incarnation.⁶² Here Hippolytus and Joachim concur.

In *Chapters Against Gaius*, Hippolytus also acknowledges that before the Second Coming of Christ, there must be plagues, as described in the prophesy of the seven trumpets. Hippolytus sees the seven trumpets in Revelation as a description of the judgments of God that must occur just before the Second Coming of the Lord. The sixth trumpet is opened during the reign of the Antichrist.⁶³

Believing in a six-thousand-year chronology, Hippolytus calculates that the end of the world should take place around the year AD 500.⁶⁴ He interprets the text in Rev 17:10 that “five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come,” as referring to the historical progression of the ages of the world. Five thousand have passed, one thousand “is,” and the seventh thousand is yet to come, as a temporal Sabbath.⁶⁵ The millennium, for Hippolytus, does not need to endure literally a thousand years, because for God “a

⁶² Hippolytus argues that if Satan is bound today why does the Apostle Paul remind us, in Eph 4:12, that “our conflict is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities of the air, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world” (Gwynn, “Hippolytus,” 402-404)? Gaius attacked the idea of “fleshly pleasures” during the earthly millennium (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.28 [NPNF 2, 1:125]).

⁶³ Gwynn, “Hippolytus,” 399-403. For the authenticity of “Chapters Against Gaius” see Bernard McGinn, “Turning Points in Early Christian Apocalypse Exegesis,” in *Apocalyptic Thought in the Early Christianity*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 90-92.

⁶⁴ Hippolytus, *Fragments from the Commentary on Daniel*, 2.4-6 (ANF, 5:179).

⁶⁵ Hippolytus, *Fragments from the Commentary on Daniel* 2.4-6 (ANF, 5:179).

thousand years [is] as one day” (2 Pet 3:8). Thus, both Hippolytus and Joachim settle for a short millennium, after which the devil and the wicked are finally destroyed.⁶⁶

Although Hippolytus has many unique interpretative features that contradict Joachim’s interpretation, there are two themes in common: the belief in a future millennium and the Second Coming of Christ, and the overall tendency towards historical-continuous system of hermeneutics.

Origen of Alexandria

Origen of Alexandria (ca.185-254) is the first known Christian author to have rejected the future millennium in Rev 20. He was also one of the most influential Christian writers of his time.⁶⁷ Although Origen wrote commentaries on almost every book in the Bible, he never wrote a commentary on the book of Revelation. Some of his comments on portions of Revelation can be found interspersed throughout his many books.⁶⁸

Credited as the primary propagator of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture,⁶⁹ Origen promoted the idea that the Second Coming of Christ and the millennium do not

⁶⁶ Gwynn, “Hippolytus,” 403-04.

⁶⁷ Origen is alleged by Epiphanius to have written six thousand works, long and short (Frederick Crombie, “Introductory Note to the Works of Origen,” ANF 4:229); see also Eusebius, *Church History* 6.23 (NPNF II, 1:271).

⁶⁸ Origen did express intent to write on the book of Revelation (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 49 [PG 13:1673-74]). For discussion on the eschatology of Origen, including his use of the book of Revelation, see Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 47-64. See also Hill, *Regnum Caelorum*, 181-187.

⁶⁹ Allegorical interpretation tends to see biblical narratives as metaphors, rather than literal historical events. For Origen’s allegorism see Richard Patrick and Crosland Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of*

represent literal future events but rather a continual growth and expansion of Christianity.⁷⁰ In the Gnostic manner, Origen does not connect the Second Advent with the resurrection or the millennium, or recognize it as marking the climax of human history.⁷¹ Rather, the effects of the Second Advent are set forth as the ultimate reign of Christ, brought about by a gradual process, through successive worlds and long ages of purification.⁷² For Origen, as for the Gnostics, the Second Coming of Christ occurs every time a Christian prays to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

With much power, however, there comes daily, to the soul of every believer, the second advent of the Word in the prophetic clouds, that is; in the writings of the prophets and apostles, which reveal Him and in all their words disclose the light of truth, and declare Him as coming forth in their significations [which are] divine and above human nature. Thus, moreover, to those who recognize the revealer of doctrines in the prophets and apostles, we say that much glory also appears, which is seen in the second advent of the Word.⁷³

Scripture (London, UK: Westminster John Knox, 2002). Origen denies the historicity of OT declarations concerning the creation week and the fall of man, interpreting them to be mere allegories of spiritual reality. He also rejects some features of Gospel narratives, and alleges that some of the historical records of the Scriptures were fabricated by the Apostles, in order to bring out a mystical meaning rather than a literal meaning (Origen, *De Principiis*, 4.1.16 [ANF, 4:365]; see also Frederic Farrar, *History of Interpretation* [New York, NY: Macmillan, 1886], 197, 200).

⁷⁰ See Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.68 (ANF, 4:611, 619, 666).

⁷¹ Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.56 (ANF, 4:421). Viviano points out that Origen “wrought some bold changes in Christian eschatology.” Origen, for example, “dissolved the Christian expectation of the resurrection of the body into the immortality of the soul, since Christian perfection consists, on this Platonizing view, in a progressive dematerialization” (Benedict T. Viviano, *The Kingdom of God in History* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1988], 39). Alister McGrath has observed that Origen “went further than most of the early Christian theologians” by asserting that “the resurrection body was purely spiritual” (Alister E. McGrath, *A Brief History of Heaven* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003], 33).

⁷² Origen, *De Principiis* 3.6.8 (ANF, 4:348).

⁷³ *Series Commentariorum Origenis in Mattheum*, 50 (PG 13:1678), trans. by Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:318. See also *Commentariorum Origenis in Mattheum*, 32 (PG 13:1642).

Origen likens those who hold to a literal or corporeal interpretation of the Second Advent to children. He insists on a solely spiritual interpretation for enlightened Christians and argues that there is no literal physical resurrection of the bodies.⁷⁴ Origen believed that souls must undergo gradual, perhaps age-long purification in the next world (possibly many worlds).⁷⁵ He anticipated the ultimate universal salvation of both the wicked and the righteous, including even Satan and his angels.⁷⁶

Origen's rejection of the future millennium exercised a profound influence on the Christians in Alexandria and North Africa. Dionysius of Alexandria (d. 265), Tyconius from Carthage (ca. 380), and Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) all demonstrate the influence of Origen's amillennialism.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ "For what kind of body is that which, after being completely corrupted, can return to its original nature, and to that self-same first condition out of which it fell into dissolution? Being unable to return any answer, they betake themselves to a most absurd refuge, viz., that all things are possible to God. And yet God cannot do things that are disgraceful, nor does He wish to do things that are contrary to His nature For the soul, indeed, He might be able to provide an everlasting life; while dead bodies, on the contrary, are, as Heraclitus observes, more worthless than dung. God, however, neither can nor will declare, contrary to all reason, that the flesh, which is full of those things which it is not even honourable to mention, is to exist for ever. . . . We, therefore, do not maintain that the body which has undergone corruption resumes its original nature," Origen, *Against Celsus* 5. 14. 23 (ANF, 4:549, 553).

⁷⁵ Origen, *De Principiis*, 3.6.8, 9 (ANF, 4:347-8); *De Principiis*, 1.6 (ANF, 4:260-62). The belief in many realms and many worlds clearly shows the influence of Gnosticism in Origen's hermeneutic.

⁷⁶ Origen, *De Principiis*, 1.6.2, 3 (ANF, 4:262); *De Principiis*, 3.6.5 (ANF 4:346-47) and *Against Celsus* 4.13 (ANF, 4:502). Origen was posthumously charged with heresy of universalism and anathematized as a heretic by a later synod (see Crombie, "Introductory Note to the Works of Origen" [ANF, 4:233]). For more recent discussion on Origen's heterodoxy see Mark S. M. Scott, *Journey Back to God: Origen and the Problem of Evil* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2012).

⁷⁷ S. D. F. Salmond, "Translator's Introductory Notice to Dionysius" (ANF, 6:78-9); Dionysius, "From the Two Books on the Promises" 4 (ANF, 6:83); Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ*, 1:3-8. Tyconius's and Augustine's views of prophecy are described later in this chapter.

Victorinus of Pettau

Victorinus (d. ca. 303) was a Christian leader from Pettau (or Ptuj) in modern-day Slovenia. He was martyred during the persecutions of Diocletian. Victorinus is the author of the first extant commentary on the book of Revelation.⁷⁸ Like Joachim, Victorinus appears to have viewed the seven seals as depicting a progressive line of history. The first seal is a prophecy regarding the spread of the gospel, first by Jesus and then by His followers.⁷⁹ Writing around the year 275, Victorinus believes he is still living in the period of the first seal, but soon the other three seals—wars, famines, and pestilence—will be opened in order. Subsequently, the final end-time persecutions occur, as described in the fifth and sixth seals.⁸⁰

The angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God is Elijah, the precursor of the time of the Antichrist, who is promised to return before the Second

⁷⁸ Because Hippolytus's text is lost, Victorinus's commentary is the earliest extant commentary. See Wilfrid G. Brown, *Victorinus of Poetovio or Pettau: A Reevaluation of This Missionary Bishop and Early Latin Father of the Christian Church* (Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada: Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Yukon, 1985).

⁷⁹ Victorinus of Pettau, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John* (ANF, 7:350-51). Victorinus sees the seven churches as seven types of Christians (*Commentary on the Apocalypse* [ANF 7:346-48]).

⁸⁰ “The red horse, and he that sat upon him, having a sword, signify the *coming wars*, as we read in the Gospel. . . . The black horse signifies famine, for the Lord says, “There *shall be* famines in divers [sic] places”; but the word is specially extended *to the times of Antichrist*, when there *shall be* a great famine. . . . In the sixth seal, then, was a great earthquake: this is that *very last persecution*. . . . “And the heaven withdrew as a scroll that is rolled up.” For the heaven to be rolled away, that is, that the Church *shall be* taken away. “And every mountain and the islands were moved from their places.” Mountains and islands removed from their places intimate that in the *last persecution* all men departed from their places; that is, that the good *will be* removed, seeking to avoid the persecution” (Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 6 [ANF 7:351], italics mine). This passage demonstrates that Victorinus sees the second through seventh seals as still in the future. Desrosiers, therefore, erroneously concludes that Victorinus sees these five seals to be in the past, and believes himself to be living in the time of the sixth (Gilbert Desrosiers, *An Introduction to Revelation* [New York, NY: Continuum, 2000], 32).

Coming of Christ (Mal 4). The 144,000 are the Jews who convert due to Elijah's preaching and who are saved at the end, together with the great multitude of the Gentile Christians.⁸¹ This is similar to Joachim who also views the sealing angel as an Elijah-type reformer who would foster the conversion of the Jews.

Unlike Joachim, Victorinus interprets the seven trumpets (Rev 8-11) to be the outpourings of God's wrath immediately before the Second Coming. They are, for Victorinus, identical to the seven vials in Rev 16. The seven trumpets and seven vials represent the same cataclysmic event—the future destruction of the Roman Empire.⁸² The Antichrist arrives after the destruction of Rome and reigns for 1,260 days, or three and a half years, as “the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit” (Rev 11:7). At the end of the reign of the Antichrist, God raises “the two witnesses”—Moses and Elijah—to preach the gospel and to convert the Jews. These two witnesses are defeated by the Antichrist, after which they are resurrected after a literal three and a half days (Rev 11:9).⁸³ For Joachim, these two witnesses are two end-time monastic movements, fostering Church reform.

The woman clothed with the sun in Rev 12 represents, for Victorinus, the pure apostolic Church. The dragon is the devil that works through the Roman Empire,

⁸¹ Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (ANF 7:352).

⁸² “The trumpet is the word of power. And although the same thing recurs in the phials, still it is not said as if it occurred twice, but because what is decreed by the Lord to happen shall be once for all; for this cause it is said twice. What, therefore, He said too little in the trumpets is here found in the phials. We must not regard the order of what is said, because frequently the Holy Spirit, when He has traversed even to the end of the last times, returns again to the same times, and fills up what He had before failed to say” (Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, [ANF 7:352]).

⁸³ Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (ANF 7:354-5).

persecuting the Church and its male child, Christ.⁸⁴ Like Joachim, Victorinus equates the seven heads of the dragon (Rev 12:3) with the seven heads of the beast in Rev 13 and also with the seven heads of the scarlet beast in Rev 17. Victorinus, however, proposes that these seven heads represent the seven deceased Roman emperors of the second half of the first century, from Nero (d. 68) to Nerva (d. 103). The eighth king (Rev 17:11) is the Antichrist, or the “Beast . . . of the sea” from Rev 13 who comes in the future, at the end of time.

According to Victorinus, the Antichrist is not a Jew but a Roman. He comes in the spirit of a “revived Nero,” persecuting Christians, and works with the ten horns to divide the Roman Empire. This eschatological Nero deceives the Jews, claiming to be the Messiah and oppressing Christians as Nero did. Thus the persecuting beast would be revived and “ascend out of the bottomless pit” (Rev 17:8).⁸⁵

The beast coming up out of the earth with two horns like a lamb (Rev 13:11) represents the false prophets and magicians who arise at the time of the revived Nero-Antichrist, aiding him in his rise to power. This false prophet helps the Nero-Antichrist to

⁸⁴ Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (ANF 7:355).

⁸⁵ Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (ANF 7:355, 358). The Christian poet Commodian who lived around the time of Victorinus (ca. 260) also writes of Nero, who will return from hell: “Then, doubtless, the world shall be finished when he shall appear. . . . Nero shall be raised up from hell, Elias shall first come to seal the beloved ones; at which things the region of Africa and the northern nation, the whole earth on all sides, for seven years shall tremble. But Elias shall occupy the half of the time, Nero shall occupy half . . . and the Latin conqueror shall then say, I am Christ, whom ye always pray to. . . . He does many wonders, since he is the false prophet. Especially that they may believe him, his image shall speak. . . . The Jews, recapitulating Scriptures from him, exclaim at the same time to the Highest that they have been deceived” (Commodian, *The Instructions* 41 [ANF, 4:211]).

deceive the Jews into believing he is the Messiah.⁸⁶ The three angels in Rev 14 represent the prophet Elijah and his followers, the prophets, who will defeat the Antichrist and preach the gospel to all nations.⁸⁷

Originally, Victorinus believes in the future millennium.⁸⁸ Because of his millenarianism, his writings were suppressed by bishop Damasus I (d. 384), and ranked with the Apocrypha by Pope Gelasius (d. 496).⁸⁹ Victorinus's commentary on Revelation, preserved by Jerome, has been altered to contain the amillennial view of the millennium, propagated by Jerome and Augustine.⁹⁰

Methodius

Methodius (ca. 260- ca. 311) was a Christian bishop of Olympus in Lycia (Asia Minor) who suffered martyrdom during the fierce Diocletian persecution (ca. 311). He is

⁸⁶ Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (ANF 4:356-7).

⁸⁷ Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (ANF 4:357).

⁸⁸ Victorinus writes in another work: "Wherefore, as I have narrated, that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign" (Victorinus, *On the Creation of the World* [ANF, 7:342]).

⁸⁹ Leon Clugnet, "Victorinus," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1912), 15:414.

⁹⁰ See Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (ANF 4:358-9). Many scholars recognize that the anti-millenarian conclusion is the evident interpolation of a later editor (Schaff, *Church History*, 2:862-64; see also William Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries on Revelation* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011], xx, xxi). For a Latin edition that includes Victorinus's commentary and Jerome's recension in parallel, see Iohannes Haussleiter, ed., *Victorini episcopi Petavionensis opera*, CSEL 49 (Vienna, Austria: F. Tempski, 1916).

known chiefly as an antagonist of Origen's allegorical interpretation, although in some respects he, too, was influenced by Origen.⁹¹

Methodius does not write a systematic commentary on prophecy. Yet, in his treatises entitled *From the Discourse on the Resurrection* and *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, Methodius frequently mentions the book of Revelation. He defends a historical reading of the book against bishop Dyonisius of Alexandria, who favors a more allegorical reading.⁹² In fact, Methodius is one of the few expositors from the East who was enthusiastic about the book of Revelation.⁹³

Methodius does not comment upon the whole book of Revelation but only on chap. 12. The woman in the wilderness is the Church; she is persecuted by the red dragon, who is the Devil. The child born of the woman who ascended to heaven represents the saints who are spiritually born into the Church through baptism. The dragon persecutes the Church for 1,260 days (Rev 12:14), which, Methodius and Joachim both agree, represents the time from the first to the Second Coming of Christ.⁹⁴

⁹¹ For a study on Methodius see Lloyd G. Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus: Divine Sovereignty, Human Freedom, and Life in Christ* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1997).

⁹² Methodius of Olympus, *Symposium* 8.7, *Ancient Christian Writers* 27 (New York, NY: Paulist, 1996), 112. Against Dionysius of Alexandria, *On Promises*, preserved in Eusebius, *Church History*, 7.25.4 (NPNF II, 1:340).

⁹³ For the reception of the Apocalypse in the East see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament; Its Origin, Development and Significance* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1987), 209-28. Both Methodius and Dionysius argued in favor of incorporating the book of Revelation in the Christian canon. Dionysius felt it necessary to allegorize and moralize the book in order to defend its "concealed and more wonderful meaning" from Christian detractors who rejected the work, while Methodius believed it had prophetic and predictive value.

⁹⁴ Methodius, *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins* 8:5-11 (ANF, 6:335-39). This is where Joachim harmonizes with Methodius.

At His coming, Christ restores the earth and resurrects the saints. Methodius contends against Origen's view and the Gnostic views of resurrection being either the daily spiritual experience of the saints, or baptism. The resurrection, for Methodius, is a real and tangible event that takes place at the end of the world.⁹⁵

Lactantius

Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius (ca. 250-ca. 330) converted to Christianity in the midst of Diocletian's persecution. His most noted work, *The Divine Institutes*, comprises seven books. He composed it largely in the hope of bringing the Emperor Constantine to a deeper conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures.⁹⁶

Interpreting the prophecies of Daniel, Revelation, and Sibylline oracles,⁹⁷ Lactantius follows the traditional historical succession of the four kingdoms from Dan 2 and 7, and predicts that the fourth kingdom (Rome) must undergo division into ten kingdoms. Three of these ten kingdoms are then overthrown and occupied by an evil king. This king is the little horn from Dan 7 and the first beast from Rev 13. According to

⁹⁵ Methodius, *From the Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.9-13 and 3.1-4 (ANF, 6:366-70 and 374-75).

⁹⁶ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 1.1 (ANF, 7:10). The *Institutes* constitute the first Latin attempt at a systematic Christian theology. Lactantius' elegant writing gained him the title of the "Christian Cicero" (Francis Young, *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2006], 262). For an examination of Lactantius's life and relationship with Emperor Constantine see Elizabeth D. Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2000), 115-138.

⁹⁷ *The Sibylline Oracles* is a collection of non-biblical prophetic verses uttered by Hellenized Jewish prophetesses from the second and third centuries A.D. Some Sibylline Oracles have themes similar to those found in the book of Revelation. The Sibylline Oracles should not be confused with the original Sibylline books of the ancient Roman religion which are now almost completely lost. For more information on the Sibylline Oracles see John J. Collins, *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2001).

Lactantius, this evil tyrant comes from the “northern regions”⁹⁸ and conquers three Asian provinces and rules them for forty-two months while persecuting the Christians.⁹⁹

At that time Elijah is sent as one of the “two witnesses” (Rev 11) to gather the forces of the elect, counter the Antichrist, and preach the gospel, with the aid of many miracles. After Elijah’s work is done, a new evil power arises—the beast from the abyss, who destroys the prophet and proclaims himself to be God. He is also the “man of sin” prophesied by Paul in 2 Thess 2.¹⁰⁰ Thus, like Joachim centuries later, Lactantius seems to envisage two antichrists assailing the Church in the end-times.

Lactantius briefly alludes to the scenes of the seals, trumpets, and vials in Revelation, which describe the destruction that occurs at the end of time, at the time of the two antichrists.¹⁰¹ After these calamities, Christ comes to establish His millennial reign, resurrect the saints, and destroy the wicked. According to Lactantius, the Second Coming of Christ occurs around the year 500—two hundred years after his lifetime—though it does not occur until Rome has fallen.¹⁰² Like the majority of the ante-Nicene fathers Lactantius expects a terrestrial, millennial reign of the resurrected saints, along

⁹⁸ Antichrist is for many expositors seen as the “king of the North,” Dan 11:31-45.

⁹⁹ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.16 (ANF, 7:213). “Three provinces” is an allusion to the “little horn” plucking and subduing “three kings” in Dan 7:8, 21, 24.

¹⁰⁰ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.17 (ANF, 7:214).

¹⁰¹ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.17 (ANF, 7:213-14).

¹⁰² Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7.24-26 (ANF, 7:219-21); see also *Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 71, 72 (ANF, 7:253-4). For the earliest known time prediction, ca. AD 500, see Hippolytus, p. 138-139 of this study.

with Christ, at His Second Advent. After the thousand years, the wicked are resurrected to receive their final punishment.¹⁰³

Ante-Nicene Fathers and the Year-Day Principle

One of the main features of Joachim's historical eschatology is his conversion of apocalyptic days into prophetic years. This conversion of prophetic times serves the historical-chronological scope of his interpretation.

In Christian literature, early Church writers Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 180) and Hippolytus of Rome (AD 200) substitute years for days when interpreting the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27.¹⁰⁴ Irenaeus links the period of the reign of the Antichrist with the half-week (three and a half days) in Dan 9:26. Irenaeus asserts that this demonstrates that the Antichrist will be in power for three and a half years. He writes: "Now three years and six months constitute the half-week."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ "After these things God will renew the world, and transform the righteous into the forms of angels, that, being presented with the garment of immortality, they may serve God for ever and this will be the kingdom of God, which shall have no end. Then also the wicked shall rise again, not to life but to punishment; for God shall raise these also, when the second resurrection takes place, that, being condemned to eternal torments and delivered to eternal fires, they may suffer the punishments which they deserve for their crimes" (Lactantius, *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 72 [ANF, 7:255]).

¹⁰⁴ "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity . . . and to anoint the most Holy. . . . From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and [sixty two weeks]. . . . And after [sixty-two weeks] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. . . . And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Dan 9:24-27).

¹⁰⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.25 (ANF, 1:554).

Clement, bishop of Alexandria (AD 150-215),¹⁰⁶ also substitutes the days for years in interpreting the seventy weeks in Dan 9:24-27. He applies the prophecy to a period of time beginning with the rebuilding of Jerusalem under the Persian rule of Cyrus, and stretching all the way until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70.¹⁰⁷

Seventy weeks in Dan 9, for Clement, mathematically equals 490 days. In turn, if a year-day principle is employed, the 490 days actually depict 490 years. The prophecy is divided into a period of sixty-nine weeks (or 483 years) and one remaining week (or seven years).¹⁰⁸ Clement asserts that the sixty-nine-week period begins with the Persian decree to rebuild Jerusalem and ends with the death of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, around AD 30.¹⁰⁹ The one remaining week is slightly separated from the chronological flow. For Clement, this last “week” begins with the persecution of Christians by Nero and ends with the destruction of Jerusalem (ca. 63-70). For Clement, the final “half a week” (Dan

¹⁰⁶ For the major outlines of Clement’s works and theology see John Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria* (New York, NY: Ardent Media, 1974); see also Eric Osborne, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2008).

¹⁰⁷ Clement, *Stromata* 1:21 (ANF, 2:329, 334).

¹⁰⁸ The Hebrew text in Dan 9:24-27 speaks specifically in terms of days and weeks. Because of this, the interpretation of the text as a prophecy requires the application of the year-day principle to convert the 490 days into a long period which ends at the baptism and passion of Christ. See Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel, Wisdom to the Wise; Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 353-54.

¹⁰⁹ There were several decrees to rebuild Jerusalem, spanning the period between 538-454 BC. Clement does not specify which decree is used here as the beginning point of this time prophecy. See William Shea, *Daniel* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 154-158.

9:27b) represents the Roman siege of Jerusalem, which lasted for three and a half years.¹¹⁰

The calculation employed by Clement (that half a week is equal to three and a half days which is equal to three and a half years) clearly points to a year-day substitution principle. This substitution principle was also employed by other major third-century Bible expositors, namely Tertullian,¹¹¹ Hippolytus,¹¹² and Julius Africanus (ca. 240).¹¹³ They all contend that the chronology of the seventy-weeks prophecy of Dan 9 begins with the renovation of Jerusalem under the Persians and ends with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Clement, *Stromata* 1:21 (ANF, 2:329). “Three years and six months . . . is ‘the half of the week,’ as Daniel the prophet said” (*Stromata* 1:21 [ANF 2:334]). This period is also described and enlarged upon by the time-periods of 1,290 and 1,335 days in Dan 12:6-9. Clement also sees the 2,300 evenings and mornings in Dan 8:13 as a week (approximately seven years) of Nero’s persecution and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (*Stromata* 1:21 [ANF 2:334]). Jerome criticizes Clement for not paying attention to precise chronology. According to Jerome, the period of time from Cyrus until the destruction of Jerusalem is 609 years, not 490 (*Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel*, trans. Gleason L. Archer Jr. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1958], 105).

¹¹¹ Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews* 8 and 11 (ANF, 3:158-59, 168).

¹¹² Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 43 (ANF, 5:213). In the “Appendix on the Works of Hippolytus,” 21 (ANF, 5:247), he writes: “For by one week he indicates the showing forth of the seven years.”

¹¹³ Julius Africanus, *The Extant Fragments of Chronography* 16-18 (ANF, 6:134-137). Origen is another African expositor who commented on Dan 9. In his style of parabolic interpretation, he uniquely interprets seventy weeks (490 days) as 4,900 years, including the entire period of human history from Adam until the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Origen, *Series Comentariorum in Mattheum* 40 [PG 13:1656-58]).

¹¹⁴ Tertullian’s knowledge of chronology is, of course, inexact, as is demonstrated by his placement of the destruction of Jerusalem 52½ years after the birth of Christ. Julius is more precise as he dates seventy weeks (490 years) from 444 BC until the death of Christ (ca. AD 31). See J. Paul Tanner, “Is Daniel’s Seventy-Week Prophecy Messianic: Part I,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166 (April-June 2009): 190-91.

The ante-Nicene Christian writers comment much more readily on Daniel than on Revelation. The book of Daniel was interpreted by early Christians in a predominantly historicist fashion. However, this approach was more difficult for the book of Revelation since the early Christians could not imagine that the Second Coming of Christ would be far away in the future, followed by seven periods of the Christian Church as Joachim suggested. The inability to see clear prophetic fulfillment in the book of Revelation (as opposed to the book of Daniel) has even engendered suspicions in some Christian circles as to the full inspiration of the Book of Revelation. Furthermore, those who accepted the full inspiration of Revelation had little to write about because its prophecies had not yet been fulfilled. Consequently, the comments on the book of Revelation are scant.

The only full commentary on Revelation in the ante-Nicene Church history is the commentary of Victorinus of Pettau, doctored by Jerome, which in its present form does not contain any year-day allusions. The commentary of Hippolytus on Revelation is not extant and the comments by Irenaeus and Tertullian and other writers are scarce, not discussing any of the time periods in the book of Revelation.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Prophetic “times,” “days,” and “months,” in Daniel and Revelation are found in Dan 7:25, 8:13, 12:6, 9-12, and Rev 2:10, 9:5,10,15; 11:2, 3, 9, 11; 12:6,14, and 13:5.

Post-Nicene Fathers

Eusebius

Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260-340) was one of the main Christian historians and polemicists of the early fourth century. His *Ecclesiastical History* (ca. 325) covers the major historical events of the ante-Nicene Christian Church.¹¹⁶

Initially, Eusebius's views on the Second Advent, the future millennium, and the great outline prophecies of Dan 2 and 7 are in harmony with the majority of Christian expositors of the ante-Nicene period.¹¹⁷ However, in 326 when the newly converted Christian ruler, Emperor Constantine, began restoring Jerusalem, and built a large basilica in the supposed place of Christ's tomb, Eusebius completely changed his views on these prophecies. Instead of representing the Second Advent, the stone cut out "without hands" in Dan 2 becomes for Eusebius a symbol of the expansion of the Christian Church.¹¹⁸ The little horns in Dan 7 and 8 and the two beasts in Rev 13 are identified as the Roman persecutors, Valerian and Diocletian.¹¹⁹ Eusebius comes to see

¹¹⁶ See a translation and commentary by Paul L. Maier, *Eusebius, The Church History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2007). Eusebius played an important part in the Council of Nicea (AD 325). See David S. W. Hadrill, *Eusebius of Caesarea* (London, UK: A. R. Mowbray, 1960).

¹¹⁷ Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel*, trans. William J. Ferrar, 2 vols. (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1920). Of this work, originally comprised of twenty chapters, only the first ten and a fragment of the fifteenth chapter are extant. For eschatological comments see especially books 4, 8 and 15 in Ferrar, 1:212, and 2:118, 236-7. This apologetic work, designed as an answer to Jewish and Greek inquirers, is thought to have been written between 314 and 318.

¹¹⁸ Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine* 3.15 (NPNF II, 1:523-24).

¹¹⁹ Eusebius Pamphilus, *Ecclesiastical History* (NPNF II, 1:477). Eusebius also declares that Constantine fulfills the prediction of Dan 7:18: "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom" (Eusebius, *The Oration of Eusebius Pamphilus in Praise of the Emperor Constantine* 3 [NPNF II, 1:584]).

the defeat of the dragon, inflicted by Michael the archangel (Rev 12:6-13), as the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity.¹²⁰

According to Eusebius, Constantine's restoration of Jerusalem initiates the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ.¹²¹ Constantine seems to have adopted Eusebius's interpretation because, in an obvious allusion to Rev 20, he renames the renovated city "the New Jerusalem." Constantine also ordered the bishops assembled at the Synod of Tyre to proceed to the "New Jerusalem," where they celebrated a festival in connection with the consecration of the place.¹²²

Athanasius and Hillary of Poitiers

Eusebius's new understanding of prophecy was strongly opposed by several important Christian voices of the fourth century, both in the East and in the West. Both Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria (297-373), and Hillary, bishop of Poitier (300-368), rejected Eusebius's interpretations, holding to the ante-Nicene expectation of the soon-coming dissolution of the Roman Empire. They also affirmed the future appearance of the Antichrist, preceding the literal Second Coming of Christ.¹²³

¹²⁰ The Emperor Constantine adopted the role of deliverer of the Church from the red dragon depicted in Rev 12. He ordered a picture of himself, surmounted by a cross, above the dragon who has been hurled headlong into the depths. This picture was to be placed on the front of the imperial palace. Writing to Eusebius and other bishops, Constantine declared that by his own instrumentality the dragon (presumably Licinius, a pagan persecutor) had been driven from state affairs. Eusebius, *The Oration* 3 (NPNF II, 1:520); see also Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.14 (NPNF II, 3:53); Socrates Scholasticus named Licinius "the dragon" in *Ecclesiastical History* 1.9 (NPNF II, 2:16).

¹²¹ Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine* 3.33 (NPNF II, 1:529).

¹²² Socrates, *The Ecclesiastical History* 1.17 and 33 (NPNF II, 2:21, 32).

¹²³ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word* 56 (NPNF II, 4:66).

Athanasius of Alexandria and Hilary of Poitiers lived during the period of rule by the Arian emperors (337-378). They argued that the Antichrist will not come as an external power but will rise from within the Church, Arius being seen as a precursor to the appearance of the evil one.¹²⁴ Like Joachim many years later, Athanasius and Hilary believed that the Arian king Constantius II (337-361) was one of the forerunners of the Antichrist.¹²⁵ Hilary warns fellow Christians not to worship and admire the glory of the Church and its buildings because Paul prophesies that this is where the Antichrist is to be seated.¹²⁶

Cyril of Jerusalem

Conversion of the Roman emperors to Arianism caused many to consider the possibility that Antichrist and the “falling away” depicted in 2 Thess 2 might come from within the Church. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem (315-386), joined Athanasius and Hilary of

¹²⁴ Arianism is the theological teaching attributed to Arius (ca. AD 250-336), a presbyter from Alexandria, Egypt. It concerns the relationship of God the Father to the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Arius asserts that Jesus is a created being, ontologically inferior to God the Father. Deemed a heretic by the Ecumenical First Council of Nicaea in 325, Arius is later exonerated in 335 at the regional First Synod of Tyre. After his death, he is once again pronounced a heretic, at the Ecumenical First Council of Constantinople in 381. The Roman Emperors Constantius II (337-361) and Valens (364-378) were Arians or Semi-Arians.

¹²⁵ Athanasius, *History of the Arians* 8:77-80 (NPNF II, 4:299, 300); Hilary, *De Trinitate* 6.46 (NPNF II, 9:115).

¹²⁶ “One thing I warn you: beware of Antichrist. For the evil love of walls has captured you. You wrongly venerate the Church of God in [the form of] roofs and buildings; in these you wrongly find the name of peace. Can it be doubted that in these Antichrist is to be seated? To me, mountains and forests and lakes, and prisons and chasms are safer. For the prophets, either dwelling in these or being plunged into them, prophesied in the spirit of God” (Hilary of Poitiers, *Contra Arianos* 1.12 [PL 10:616], transl. in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:409).

Poitiers in their concerns that the Arian heresy has commenced the great apostasy and that the Antichrist, therefore, cannot be far away.¹²⁷

Basing his calculations on Dan 7, Cyril expects the Roman Empire to be divided between ten Roman generals (the ten horns in Dan 7:8). Afterwards, another one (the little horn) arises and eventually takes control of the entire Empire. With the aid of his sorceries he deceives both Jews and Gentiles, convincing them that he is the Messiah.¹²⁸ This antichristian impostor is destroyed by the brightness of the Second Coming of Christ, heralding the time of the general resurrection of the saints.¹²⁹

Cyril speaks of the eternal kingdom of God established at the Second Coming but does not mention the millennium spoken of in the book of Revelation.¹³⁰ This is significant as Cyril also omits the book of Revelation from his list of canonical writings.¹³¹ Although accepted as inspired among the African and the Latin fathers, the canonicity of Revelation was still disputed by the Greek Christians in the mid-fourth

¹²⁷ Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures" 15.9 (NPNF II, 7:107).

¹²⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures" 15.12-13 (NPNF II, 7:107-109).

¹²⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures" 14.30 (NPNF II, 7:102).

¹³⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures" 12.17 (NPNF II, 7:76-7).

¹³¹ Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures" 4.36 (NPNF II, 7:36-7).

century AD.¹³² Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 378) expressed the reticence towards its full canonization, pointing towards the difficulties of interpretation and the risks of abuse.¹³³

John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407), born in Antioch and later a patriarch of Constantinople, is one of the most renowned teachers of the Greek Church. Called *Chrysostom* (golden-mouth) because of his eloquence, his expositions on Revelation are lacking, due to a reticence towards the book in the East. Nevertheless, Chrysostom, a strong believer in Bible prophecies, commented on other prophetic passages.¹³⁴

There are some similarities between Joachim and Chrysostom's views. Chrysostom does not believe the idea proposed by Irenaeus, and accepted by some Latin doctors, that the Antichrist is of Jewish origin or that he rules over the Jews, rebuilding the Jewish temple. Instead, Chrysostom quotes 2 Thess 2 and denotes the Antichrist as apostasy coming out of the Church.

But he calls him "the son of perdition," because he is also to be destroyed. But who is he? Is it then Satan? By no means; but some man, that admits his fully working in

¹³² Ante-Nicene fathers from northern Africa and the Latin West were generally favorable towards the book of Revelation. However, this did not guarantee their recognition of Revelation as canonical. Many second century Christians in Syria rejected the book because it was a favorite Scripture of the Montanists, a sect that the mainstream church deemed heretical (Ned B. Stonehouse, *Apocalypse in the Ancient Church* [Goes, Holland: Oosterban and Le Cointre, 1929], 138).

¹³³ Stonehouse, *Apocalypse in the Ancient Church*, 138-142. In the West, the Revelation of John was officially accepted at the Council of Carthage of 397 (Lee M. McDonald and James A. Sanders, *The Canon Debate* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002], Appendix D-2, n. 19).

¹³⁴ He declared scriptural prophecy to be more potent than miracles, and also said that prophecy was to indicate things present as well as to declare future events (Chrysostom, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* 5 [NPNF, Series I, 11:33, 65]; see also *Homilies on First Timothy* 5 [NPNF I, 13:423]).

him. For he is a man. “And exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshiped.” For he will not introduce idolatry, but will be a kind of opponent to God; he will abolish all the gods, and will order men to worship him instead of God, and he will be seated in the temple of God, not that in Jerusalem only, but also in every Church. “Setting himself forth,” he says; he does not say, saying it, but endeavoring to show it. “For he will perform great works, and will show wonderful signs.”¹³⁵

In line with the majority of Ante-Nicene Christian interpreters, Chrysostom believed that the Roman Empire is the fourth empire of Dan 7 (the first three being Babylon, Persia, and Greece) and that it is Rome that restrains the arrival of Antichrist. Chrysostom rejected the Origen/Eusebian view of resurrection being baptism and God’s kingdom being Christianized Rome. He contended that Rome will soon fall and then, he claims, the “man of sin” will appear to deceive many in the Church. A struggle must occur between Elijah, who will return to earth, and the Antichrist or false Messiah.¹³⁶ After a short reign the Antichrist will be destroyed by the Second Coming of Christ. Then, the resurrection of the saints occurs.¹³⁷

Tyconius

Towards the end of the fourth century, Tyconius (d.385), a little-known Donatist writer from Carthage in Northern Africa,¹³⁸ wrote a commentary on the Revelation. The

¹³⁵ Chrysostom, *Homilies on Second Thessalonians* 1 (NPNF I, 13:386).

¹³⁶ Chrysostom, *Homilies on Second Thessalonians* 1 (NPNF I, 13:378).

¹³⁷ Chrysostom, *Homilies on Second Thessalonians* 1 (NPNF I, 13:388-89; see also Chrysostom, *Interpretatio in Danielelem Prophetam* (PG 56:208, 228-232).

¹³⁸ Donatism was a schismatic Christian movement, which arose out of Diocletian’s persecution of Christians in Northern Africa. The Donatists (named for their first bishop Donatus Magnus) refused to yield the Bible manuscripts to the Roman authorities and were not in communion with the churches of the Catholic tradition, which yielded to the pressure of the persecution. Donatism eventually disappeared after Arabic conquest in the seventh and eighth

fragments of Tyconius's commentary on Apocalypse were assembled from the quotes from later Latin Fathers by several monks in the monastery of Bobbio (Italy). The fragments were edited and published under the name of *Turin fragments* in 1963.¹³⁹

Besides Tyconius's comments on Revelation, a theoretical manual on the interpretation of Scripture entitled *The Book of Rules* is preserved. It provides significant insight into the eschatological framework of this Donatist theologian.¹⁴⁰

Tyconius developed the idea suggested by Victorinus that Revelation is not to be read in linear-continual fashion but that it repeats and enlarges its content in a series of recapitulations that cover the entire book.¹⁴¹ Revelation, according to Tyconius, depicts the events relating to the Church's conflict against evil from the First to the Second Coming. Through seven seals, trumpets, plagues, heads of the beast, and the other apocalyptic imagery in Revelation, each section repeats and enlarges the entire historical

centuries. F. L. Cross, "Donatism," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2005), 503.

¹³⁹ Tyconius's fragments on Revelation were edited and published by Francesco Lo Bue (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1963). The newest critical edition of Tyconius's work is by Roger Gryson, ed., *Tyconii Afri Expositio Apocalypseos*, in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CCSL), 107a (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011). For multiple editorial comments on Tyconius' commentary see the French edition by Roger Gryson, ed., *Tyconius Commentaire de l'Apocalypse*, in CCSL (in Translation 10) 107a (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011).

¹⁴⁰ See Pamela Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: Its Purpose and Inner Logic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2009).

¹⁴¹ Victorinus was the first one to allude to the recapitulation principle, but he (without Jerome's interpolation) saw only three recapitulation cycles in Revelation: chaps. 4-11, 12-16, and 17-22. Tyconius, on the other hand, developed it into nine recapitulation cycles: chaps. 4-6, 7-8, 8-9, 10-11, 12-14:5, 14:6-16, 17-18, 19, and 20-22.

and theological account.¹⁴² The recapitulation approach was later adopted by most Latin medieval expositors, including Joachim.¹⁴³

Unlike Joachim, however, Tyconius strongly emphasized the view of the millennium being a present reality. He recapitulates chaps. 19-22 in Revelation and argues that they describe the history of the Church, starting with Jesus' First Advent. Tyconius argues that Jesus' work of vanquishing demons proves Satan's imprisonment described in Rev 20:2. He agrees with Origen and Eusebius in the assertion that the thousand-year kingdom of God begins with Christ's incarnation. Christians enter this present millennial kingdom through the "first resurrection" (Rev 20:4-6), which Tyconius identifies as baptism; while the "second resurrection" (Rev 20:11-13) is the bodily resurrection at the end of time.¹⁴⁴

For Tyconius, the mystical imagery of the seals and trumpets represents the struggle between the "body (followers) of Christ" and the "body of the devil," from the passion of Jesus until the final tribulation.¹⁴⁵ The white horse of the first seal represents the pure Church of Christ. In all ages there are those who belong to the pure religion of Christ. The red horse (the second seal) represents the devil and his forces openly attacking the Church. The dark horse (the third seal) represents the "false brothers" who

¹⁴²Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 145-46.

¹⁴³ With the main exception that Joachim is much more historically precise, and also includes the seven churches in the historical recapitulation and omits the last part of Rev 20-22, preserving the belief in a future millennium.

¹⁴⁴ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 220-21.

¹⁴⁵ See Traugot Hahn, *Tyconius Studien* (Leipzig, Germany: Dieterich'sche Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1900), 100; Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:466-471. Tyconius sees the text of the seven churches as allegorical, not historical (Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 105).

secretly subsist within the Church. The Antichrist arises from such a group, says Tyconius. The pale horse (the fourth seal) represents the hypocrites in the Church who openly show their hypocrisy in the last days, by openly attacking the Donatist Christians. The fifth seal for Tyconius represents all martyrs who have died, both physically and spiritually, in the conflict between the Church and the forces of Satan.¹⁴⁶

Conceptually, Tyconius's interpretation of the first four seals resembles Joachim's. The main difference is that, while Joachim sees the seals as historical-chronological periods of the Christian Church (Apostles, Martyrs, Arian Heretics, Muslims, Apostasy in the Church), Tyconius sees the symbols of the first five seals as moral attitudes in the Church. Only the sixth seal is really historical for Tyconius, as he believes the sixth seal depicts the final persecution at the time of the Antichrist.

The trumpets repeat the same storyline as the seals with some added details. The fifth trumpet describes the tribulation of the Donatist brethren in Africa who are persecuted for "five months" (Rev 9:5), which Tyconius interprets as the persecution of the Donatists by Constantine for five *years* from 316-321.¹⁴⁷ Much like the sixth seal, the sixth trumpet also announces the tribulations surrounding the end of the world.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 137-150.

¹⁴⁷ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 158-59. "Tyconius a en vue la persecution emblématique des donatistes sous Constantin. Déclenchée à la fin de 316, elle s'interrompt effectivement au milieu de la cinquième année, en mai 321" (Gryson, *Tyconius; Commentaire de l'Apocalypse*, 132)

¹⁴⁸ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 159-60. While Tyconius converts "five months" into "five years," Joachim sees the five months in Rev 9:5 as 150 days (5x30 days), which, converted with the year-day principle, represent 150 years (see p. 72 of this study).

In commenting on Rev 11, Tyconius introduces a unique idea, not followed by later medieval expositors, that the “two witnesses” represent the OT and the NT, preaching from within the Church. The beast that kills the two witnesses (Rev 11:8-11) represents the false brethren from within who will betray the Church and the Scriptures.¹⁴⁹ Joachim diverges here from both Tyconius and from the medieval tradition, which sees the two witnesses as the literal return of Elijah and Enoch (or Moses) upon the earth. For Joachim, the beast represents the Antichrist who will persecute and attempt to destroy the two faithful end-time monastic movements. Joachim and Tyconius do have several things in common, however. The 1,260 days of the two witnesses’ activity (Rev 11:3) denote for both a symbolic number, representing the entire period from the passion of Christ until the end of the world.¹⁵⁰

The three and a half days” during which the two witnesses lie dead (Rev 11:9) represent, for Tyconius, a literal three and a half years of the Church’s tribulation at the end-times.¹⁵¹ This is the first time a Christian expositor used a day to represent a year in interpreting the time prophecies of Revelation. Joachim, much later, will use the same idea in converting days in prophecy for years.

Another similarity between Tyconius and Joachim is the use of typology. For Joachim, the history of Israel represents a prototype of the history of the Christian Church. Tyconius also uses typology; however, for him it is not the OT history, but the

¹⁴⁹ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 171.

¹⁵⁰ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 167; see also Methodius (pp. 145-47 of this study).

¹⁵¹ “Per tres dies et dimidium, anni tres et menses sex sunt” (Thus, the three days and a half, are actually three years and six months) (Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 170, translation mine).

life of Christ that presents a prototype for the history of the Church. The book of Revelation, hence, simultaneously describes the life, struggles, temptations, and sufferings of Christ and of the Church. Consequently, the death and resurrection of the two witnesses represent the death and resurrection of Jesus, as well as the death and resurrection of the people who are faithful to Him, especially at the end of time.¹⁵²

The same principle is found in Rev 12, where the woman giving birth to the man-child represents the virgin birth of Christ as well as the everlasting birth of Christ in His people. Tyconius argues that by preaching the gospel, the Church daily gives birth to Christ.¹⁵³ The red dragon that persecutes the Church and her child (Rev 12:2) represents Herod. However, it also simultaneously represents the false brethren, who continually persecute the Church from the inside (*intestinus hostis*).¹⁵⁴

According to Tyconius, the entire book of Revelation reveals the struggle between the true believers, the false brethren and the open rebellion against God. The false brethren reside within the Church as part of the body of Christ until they are separated during the final tribulations. The sea-beast, hence, in Rev 13:1-10 represents the body of the devil, openly opposing God. The lamb-beast from Rev 13:11-18 represents the false brethren who reside within the body of Christ and who come out and join the open

¹⁵² Maureen Tilley describes Tyconius's approach as a classical case of Donatist typology (Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997], 112-116).

¹⁵³ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 174-75.

¹⁵⁴ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 175-76.

rebellion at the end of time.¹⁵⁵ For Joachim, these beasts are placed more firmly in historical-chronological framework of the book of Revelation.

The time periods of the book of Revelation are also very important to Tyconius. The “1,260 days” and the “time, times and half a time” (Rev 12:6, Rev 12:14) symbolize the journey of the Church “from the Passion of the Lord until the end of the world.”¹⁵⁶ This resembles Joachim’s system. The difference between Tyconius’s view of the 1,260 days and Joachim is that for Tyconius, this period also represents the time of the millennium, which the Donatist writer believes to be 350 years long.¹⁵⁷

In Rev 12 Tyconius continues to demonstrate a tendency to place the text within the historical framework. In his interpretation of the ten horns of the dragon in Rev 12:3, he considers the horns to represent ten persecutions of Christians that are to occur in the near future.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 181-87.

¹⁵⁶ “Tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis, tempus a passione Domini dicit usque ad finem mundi” (Time, times and half a time, represents the period from the passion of the Lord until the end of the world) (Gryson, *Tyconii Afri*, 180, translation mine).

¹⁵⁷ The passage concerning the 350 years seems to have been omitted by the early Medieval Latin fathers Primasius and Cesarius, but it was preserved by Beatus of Liebana: “Id est trecentos quinquaginta quod sunt anni tres et menses sex” (These three years and six months represents three hundred and fifty years) (Henry A. Sanders, ed., *Beati in Apocalypsi libri duodecim*, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome 7 [Rome, Italy: American Academy in Rome, 1930], 4.81, translation mine); “Id est tribus annis et sex mensibus, quod sunt anni trecenti quinquaginta, quos supra diximus a passione Domini usque ad antichristum, haec ut diximus, spiritual est in ecclesia” (These three years and six months represent three hundred and fifty years which must go between the passion of the Lord until the arrival of the Antichrist) (Sanders, *Beati in Apocalypsi*, 12.6, translation mine). For the most recent Latin edition with a Spanish translation see Joaquin G. Echegaray, A. Del Campo, and L. G. Freeman, eds., *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 2 vols. (Madrid, Spain: Estudio Teologico de San Ildefonso, 2004), 2:447. See also Lo Bue, *Turin Fragments*, 157, and pp. 212-3 of this study.

¹⁵⁸ “In decem cornibus decem persecutorum est numerus, in quibus omnem ecclesiam in novissimo ventilabunt”—“The ten horns enumerate the ten persecutors, which will soon come to

In commenting upon the seven last plagues (Rev 15-16), Tyconius explains them as various spiritual and physical punishments of God upon the wicked during the Christian dispensation. The punishments are not chronological as in Joachim's system but happen simultaneously to the wicked people who molest the Church.¹⁵⁹

Just like Victorinus of Pettau, Tyconius matches the seven kings in Rev 17 with the seven major Roman emperors from Julius Caesar to Nero. The eighth king is the Antichrist, who will come at the end-time.¹⁶⁰ Hence, although the idealist and moral interpretation is the emphasis of his text, Tyconius also developed multiple historical applications: past, present and future.¹⁶¹ Coester, I believe, summarizes Tyconius correctly:

The Donatist writer Tyconius . . . gave allegorical exegesis a greater sense of historical realism. Tyconius acknowledged that the book of Revelation predicted actual persecutions like those experienced by the Donatists at the hands of Rome, but he insisted that these events in no way allowed people to declare that the end had arrived. God's timetable remained hidden.¹⁶²

Tyconius hence summarized several early Church ideas and added a few of his own. He mirrored the view of Origen and Eusebius on the present millennium but also expanded on the historical recapitulation laid down by Victorinus. Tyconius did occasionally

exhaust the the whole church." Lo Bue, *Turin Fragments*, 182. Joachim, focusing on the historical identification of the seven heads of the dragon, does not elaborate on the 10 horns.

¹⁵⁹ Gryson, *Tyconius: Commentaire de l'Apocalypse*,

¹⁶⁰ Gryson, *Tyconius: Commentaire de l'Apocalypse*, 188-89.

¹⁶¹ Several historians recognize traces of historicism in Tyconius's approach; see Hahn, *Tyconius Studien*, 100-102; Aloise Dempf, *Sacrum Imperium* (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg, 1962), 121, 122; Wilhelm Kamlah, *Apocalypse und Geschichtstheologie* (Berlin, Germany: Emil Ebering, 1935); F. Crawford Burkitt, *The Rules of Tyconius* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1894), 4, 7, 60, 61; From, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:466-471.

¹⁶² Craig Koester, "On the Verge of the Millennium: A History of the Interpretation of Revelation," *Word and World* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 130.

recognize that the book of Revelation describes current or past historical events.

However, he was more preoccupied with the moral picture of the Church, as portrayed in the text, rather than elaboration of specific patterns of Church history.

Ambrose of Milan

Aurelius Ambrose (ca. 340-397), a prefect of the Roman province Aemilia Liguria who later became a bishop of Milan, is known as one of the major doctors of the church.¹⁶³ Most of his writings are homilies on the OT and NT. His exegesis shows the influence of Origen's allegorical method.¹⁶⁴

There are not many similarities between Ambrose's and Joachim's interpretation. Ambrose identifies the "man of sin" (2 Thess 2:3) as a Jew from the tribe of Dan, who, claiming to be the Messiah, rebuilds the temple of the Jews and sits in it as a king.¹⁶⁵ Enoch and Elijah must be put to death by the Antichrist (Rev 11) who imposes his mark on the foreheads and hands of his followers (Rev 13) and persecutes the church of Christ (Rev 12).¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ See Neal McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1994), 51.

¹⁶⁴ F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 2 vols. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1935), 2:631.

¹⁶⁵ Ambrose, *Liber de Benedictionibus Patriarcharum* 7.32 (PL 14:717); see also *Enarrationes in XII Psalmos Davidicos* Psalm 40.10 (PL 14:1131) and *De Interpellatione Job et David* 2.7.27 (PL 14:861).

¹⁶⁶ Ambrose, *Enarrationes in XII Psalmos Davidicos*: Psalm 44.4 (PL 14:1193).

Ambrose holds that the resurrection takes place after the Second Coming of Christ, destroying the Antichrist.¹⁶⁷ However, he considers that this is the “second resurrection” spoken of in Rev 20:4-6. The first resurrection occurs when a Christian dies and enters the beatitude of heaven. The second resurrection is the final bodily resurrection at the end time. The millennium, for Ambrose, is a time of reward for the righteous dead. For the wicked dead, it is a time of punishment, which precedes final annihilation at the second resurrection.¹⁶⁸

Jerome

Eusebius Jerome (ca. 340-420) was born in Stridon in the Roman province of Dalmatia (present-day Croatia). After years of studying and traveling, in AD 379 Jerome became a presbyter of the church in Antioch. Known as a brilliant scholar with knowledge of both Hebrew and Greek, Jerome assisted the Roman bishop Damasus in creating a new and scholarly Latin translation of the entire Bible, which later came to be called the Vulgate. He also wrote commentaries on most books of the Bible.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Ambrose, *Enarrationes in XII Psalmos*: Psalm 43.7 (PL 14:1144); see also *On the Decease of His Brother Satyrus* 2.62.74 (NPNF II, 10:184, 186).

¹⁶⁸ See Ambrose, *Enarrationes in XII Psalmos Davidicos*: Psalm 1.54 (PL 14:995). Ambrose is not sure what kind of punishment the wicked endure. He proposes that it might be a “punishment of the darkness” before the wicked are raised for the final annihilation (Ambrose, *Enarrationes in XII Psalmos Davidicos*: Psalm 1.56 [PL 14:996]).

¹⁶⁹ Studies on Jerome include those by John N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1975); Megan H. Williams, *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2006), and most recently, Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).

Although he does not reject the canonicity of Revelation, Jerome considers it to be a book of mysteries and is reticent to comment upon it.¹⁷⁰ He does, however, edit Victorinus of Pettau's writings on Revelation. In the prefatory letter to the commentary of Victorinus, Jerome admits that he completely modified the last three chapters to eliminate Victorinus's chiliastic ideas of a future millennium.¹⁷¹ Jerome, in the same line with Origen, Eusebius, Augustine and Ambrose, argues in favor of a triumphalistic view that the millennium is already here and it represents a spiritual life lived by true Christians.

For whoever preserves inviolate the intention of virginity and faithfully fulfills the precepts of the Decalogue and is watchful of impure habits and impure thoughts within the chamber of the heart lest they overcome him, that one is truly a priest of Christ and fully completing the millennial number is believed to reign with Christ and with him the devil is truly bound.¹⁷²

Although he opposed the ante-Nicene Christian belief of a future millennium, Jerome mentions that many still in his time held onto the idea that the duration of the world will be six thousand years and then the seventh millennium would usher the spiritual state of holiness on earth.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Jerome, *Letter 53.8*, "To Paulinus, Bishop of Nola," (NPNF II, 6:102).

¹⁷¹ See Jerome's preface letter to Victorinus in Johannes Haussleiter, ed., *Victorini episcopi Petavionensis Opera*, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, vol. 49 (Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky, 1916), 15.

¹⁷² Jerome's preface letter to Victorinus in Haussleiter, *Victorini episcopi Petavionensis Opera*, 49:147; English translation in William Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries on Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), xxi.

¹⁷³ "Sex millibus annorum tantum credatur subsistere et postea venire septenarium numerum et octonarium, in quo verus exercetur sabbatismus et circumcisionis puritas redditur" (Many believe that six thousand years must subsist and then comes the seventh and the eighth period, in which, a true sabbath-keeping and a pure circumcision is restored) (Jerome, Letter 140, "to Cyprian the Presbyter" [PL 22:1172]).

While reserved in his interpretation of Revelation, Jerome comments extensively on the prophecies of Daniel. After enumerating the four kingdoms in Dan 2 and 7 as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, he compares the weakening of the Roman Empire to the feet made of a mixture of “iron and clay” in Dan 2:44.¹⁷⁴

Jerome believes that the Antichrist represented by the little horn is very near and that Rome is soon to expire.¹⁷⁵ He asserts, like Joachim, that the temple in which the Antichrist is to sit is not the Jewish temple but the Church. Jerome also declares that the Second Advent of Christ will not occur until the Antichrist has appeared, and furthermore, the breakup of the empire must precede the Antichrist. Having appeared, however, the Antichrist is cut off and brought to perdition by the Second Advent, “as the darkness is put to flight at the coming of the sun.”¹⁷⁶ Joachim reflects here much of Jerome’s original thoughts.

Augustine of Hippo

Aurelius Augustinus (354-430) or Augustine of Hippo was born in Numidia, North Africa. Before his conversion, he was a professor of rhetoric in Rome and Milan.

¹⁷⁴ “Now the fourth empire, which clearly refers to the Romans, is the iron empire which breaks in pieces and overcomes all others. But its feet and toes are partly of iron and partly of earthenware, a fact most clearly demonstrated at the present time. For just as there was at the first nothing stronger or hardier than the Roman realm, so also in these last days there is nothing more feeble, since we require the assistance of barbarian tribes both in our civil wars and against foreign nations” (Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, ed. Gleason Archer, 32).

¹⁷⁵ Jerome, “Letter 123, to Ageruchia” (NPNF II, 11:236, n. 7). “He [Paul] shows that that which restrains is the Roman [E]mpire; for unless it shall have been destroyed, and taken out of the midst, according to the prophet Daniel, Antichrist will not come before that” (Jerome, *Commentaria in Jeremiam* 5.25, [PL 24:839], trans. in Froom 1:444).

¹⁷⁶ Jerome, “Letter 121, to Algasia” (PL 22:1037).

In 387, he experienced a conversion to Christianity and was baptized by Ambrose of Milan. After eight years of study and contemplation of Scripture, he was elected bishop of Hippo in Northern Africa. Soon he rose to become one of the most illustrious of the Church theologians of his time.¹⁷⁷

In the midst of Augustine's episcopacy, after eleven centuries of triumphal progress, the Roman Empire began to break up. The sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 had many Christians believing the end of the world was at hand.¹⁷⁸ These events coincided with a stream of apocalyptic speculations and time-setting efforts in Africa and beyond.¹⁷⁹ Augustine argues tirelessly against such opinions, claiming that no one knows the day or the hour of Christ's return, and reminding Christians that conflicts and wars always existed and will exist until the end.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ For biographies of Augustine see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2000), and Henry Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University, 2009). For a comprehensive view of Augustine's teaching on a broader variety of subjects see Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed., *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999).

¹⁷⁸ For an investigation into Jerome's view that the fall of Rome announces that the end of the world is at hand, see Jerome, "Epistle 126," translated by Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies*, 304.

¹⁷⁹ See Richard Landes, "Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectation and the Pattern of Western Chronology, 100-800 CE," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst, and A. Welkenhuysen (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University, 1998), 155. Bernhard Koetting lists a series of signs and prodigies occurring between the years 389 and 420 throughout the empire in "Enzeitprognosen zwischen Lactantius und Augustinus" *Historisches Jahrbuch* 77 (1958): 125-39. For Augustine's own description of signs, prodigies, and other apocalyptic phenomena and speculations of his time, see his correspondence with Hesychius (Augustine, "Letters 197-199," Edmund Hill, John E. Rotelle; Boniface Ramsey, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: Letters II* [Brooklyn, NY: New City, 2001], 320-331).

¹⁸⁰ Augustine, *Letter* 198, 15:34-39.

Like many Christians of his time, soon after his conversion to Christianity, Augustine believed in a future millennium to come.¹⁸¹ However, frequent apocalyptic abuses and end-of-the-world predictions and time-settings made him reticent towards the historical approach to the book of Revelation, preferring more idealistic interpretations.¹⁸²

When Augustine encountered the commentary of Tyconius, he immediately embraced its approach. Tyconius, although stressing a moral interpretation, allowed for the moral lessons of Revelation to be prototypes for the history of the church. Augustine, however, used Tyconius solely for the purpose of deconstructing the historicity of Revelation. He argued that the Church had already entered into the millennium where all the symbols of the book of Revelation are conveying an exclusively moral and idealistic message relating to the conflict between the Church and the world, with the Church being responsible for purging the evil from the world.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Augustine, *The City of God* 20.7.1 (NPNF I, 2:433); see David R. Anderson, “The Soteriological Impact of Augustine’s Change From Premillennialism to Amillennialism,” *The Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 15 (Spring 2002): 27.

¹⁸² See Paula Fredricksen, “Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse,” in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (London, UK: Cornell University, 1992), 29-31.

¹⁸³ Augustine, *The City of God* (NPNF I, vol. 2:430). Augustine praises the commentary on Revelation by Tyconius and incorporates many of Tyconius’s ideas into his exposition. Paula Fredricksen writes: “Tyconius affected Augustine’s own theological development profoundly. The attack on millenarian understandings of scriptural prophecy and especially of the Apocalypse, in book 20 of the *City of God* is a monument to Augustine’s appropriation and appreciation of Tyconius. . . . By complicating the biblical text, Tyconius gained a purchase on the perfectionist and millenarian readings of Scripture. . . . The Donatist’s interpretations ironically became definitive of Catholic commentary on the Apocalypse for the next eight hundred years” (Paula Fredricksen, “Tyconius,” *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], 854).

Consequently, Augustine placed strong emphasis on realized eschatology. The first resurrection, which precedes the millennium, represents the resurrection of the soul, which occurs at baptism. The second resurrection, after the millennium, is the resurrection of the body. Christ has already bound the devil in the “innumerate multitude of the impious, in whose hearts there is a great depth of malignity against the Church of God.”¹⁸⁴ Christ has bridled Satan’s power for a thousand years, or, more accurately, an indefinite period of time, from His First to His Second Advent.

Augustine admits the difficulty of interpreting the destruction and the cataclysmic events described by Jesus in Matt 24 and by John in Revelation, because they clearly seem to refer to the end of time. Augustine argues that these might have referred to the destruction of Jerusalem.¹⁸⁵ Like Eusebius, Augustine claims that the “stone cut without hands” from Dan 2:44-45 represents not Jesus’ Second Advent, but his Church, which was established at the First Advent and is growing and “filling up the entire earth.” For Augustine, the Second Coming of Christ is not so much a physical event but a spiritual progression. It refers to “the Savior which continually occurs in His Church, that is, in His members, in which [He] comes little by little, and piece by piece, since the whole Church is His body.”¹⁸⁶

Augustine was not entirely “ahistorical.” He accepted the periodization of history into six stages from Adam to the End of the World, proposed by Hippolytus. For

¹⁸⁴ Augustine, *The City of God* 20.6 (NPNF I, 2:432).

¹⁸⁵ Augustine, *The City of God* 20.5 (NPNF I, 2:425).

¹⁸⁶ Augustine, *The City of God* 20.5 (NPNF I, 2:245).

Augustine, however, the Church was currently under the sixth and last period. The seventh period is not the millennium of peace upon earth, as Hippolytus had suggested, but the eternity itself.¹⁸⁷

In spite of his denial of an earthly millennium, Augustine admits that a spiritual millennialism might be less reprehensible than its materialistic alternative. In his discussion of Rev 20, Augustine states that a belief in a coming earthly Sabbath “would be in some degree tolerable if it were held that delights of a spiritual character were to be available for the saints.”¹⁸⁸ Thus, it seems that Augustine is not so much opposed to the idea of a millennium, but to its materialistic interpretation. In this sense, Joachim might be responding to Augustine’s concern by developing the idea of a millennium that is characterized by superior devotion and spirituality, a time when the Church is totally expunged from its earthly and materialistic elements.

Opposing Augustine’s Amillennialism¹⁸⁹

The impact of Augustine upon Latin eschatology was tremendous. An accomplished writer and orator, Augustine was able to establish a hermeneutical approach to Revelation (and the rest of the Scriptures) for generations to come. In terms

¹⁸⁷ Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed* 22 (NPNF I, 3:307). Augustine’s periodization of history in six stages was common during the early Middle Ages. Joachim built on it but proposed a computation of the seven stages of Church history, which paralleled seven stages of Israel’s history.

¹⁸⁸ Augustine, *The City of God* 20.7 (NPNF I, 2:433).

¹⁸⁹ It is difficult to know if Joachim had access to some of the works presented in this section. These volumes, however, demonstrate a considerable opposition to amillennialism in the late fourth and early fifth centuries.

of empirical verification, the essence of Augustine's argument is vindicated by the passage of time, which has continued thus far without end.¹⁹⁰

Not all of the contemporaries of Augustine were convinced that his approach to biblical prophecies was the correct one. The Vandal invasions in the early and middle fifth century created an unprecedented apocalyptic stir among Christians throughout the empire. The Donatist writer of the *Liber Genealogus* proposes the idea that the name of the Vandal king, Genseric, reveals the number of the Beast, 666.¹⁹¹

A contemporary of Augustine, Quodvultdeus, in *Liber de Promissionibus*, argued strongly that the apocalyptic signs of the approaching end-time were being fulfilled as he wrote. The Goths' division into two tribes, Visigoths and Ostrogoths, offered an almost irresistible comparison to the forces of the wicked Gog and Magog from Rev 16 and Isa 45.¹⁹²

The writer of the Latin *Commentary on Matthew 24*¹⁹³ (probably Ambrosiaster, ca. 386)¹⁹⁴ attacks the idea suggested by Tyconius, Ambrose, and Augustine, that the first

¹⁹⁰ Fredricksen, "Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse," 35.

¹⁹¹ *Liber genealogus* in Theodor Mommsen, *Chronica Minora, Monumenta Germaniae Historica; Auctores Antiquissimi*, 15 vols. (Berlin, Germany: Weidmann, 1878-1919), 9:194-95 (for the year AD 452). On this text see Landes, "Lest the Millennium be Fulfilled," 162.

¹⁹² See *The City of God* 20.11, where Augustine states precisely the opposite. See also Landes, "Lest the Millennium be Fulfilled," 156-165.

¹⁹³ Published independently by G. Mercati, "Anonymi Chiliastae in Matthaem XXIV Fragmenta," *Varia Sacra* 1, *Studi e testi* 11 (Rome, Italy: Typografia Vaticana, 1903), 3-45, and C. H. Turner, "An Exegetical Fragment of the Third Century," *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1904): 218-227.

¹⁹⁴ For discussion on authorship see Wilhelm Geerlings, "Ambrosiaster," *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, ed. S. Döpp and W. Geerlings, trans. M. O'Connell (New York, NY: Herder and Herder, 2000), 20-22; see also David G. Hunter, "Fourth-century Latin Writers," *The*

resurrection in Rev 20 merely symbolizes baptism. He returns to the view held by the Ante-Nicene Fathers and argues that the first resurrection occurs at the start of the millennium, not “merely in word but in fact.” The millennium is a fulfillment of the biblical Sabbath, and it is not spent by eating, drinking, and engaging in other carnal pleasures, as some describe it. At the end of the millennial kingdom, the devil and his followers are released from prison, only to be defeated once more by Christ.¹⁹⁵

Sulpicius Severus

Born in Aquitaine, France, Sulpicius Severus (ca. 363-420) worked under the tutelage of Martin of Tours.¹⁹⁶ In his *Chronicle of Sacred History*, written around 403, Severus opposes the theory that the stone from Dan 2 represents the First Coming of Christ. Instead Severus expects the prophecy to be fulfilled at the Second Advent.

The iron legs point to a fourth power, and that is understood of the Roman Empire, which is more powerful than all the kingdoms, which were before it. But the fact that the feet were partly of iron and partly clay, indicates that the Roman Empire is to be divided, so as never to be united. This, too, has been fulfilled, for the Roman state is ruled not by one emperor but by several, and these are always quarreling among themselves, either in actual warfare or by factions.¹⁹⁷

Severus interprets the prophecies of Daniel as an outline of sacred history from Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome and up to the Second Coming of Christ. He believes

Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature, ed. F. Young, L. Ayres, and A. Louth (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2010), 307.

¹⁹⁵ See an analysis of the Anonymous Latin *Commentary on Matthew 24* in Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 66.

¹⁹⁶ See Clare Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer; History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1983).

¹⁹⁷ Sulpicius Severus, *Sacred History* 2.3 (NPNF II, 11:98).

the Roman Empire is in the process of dissolving between “iron and clay.” Severus, is inclined to believe in two Antichrists. He postulates that the real Antichrist appears after Rome is dissolved. However, before the Antichrist’s appearance, Nero is resurrected to persecute the Christians once more and to take possession of the western portion of the empire. Once his conquest is accomplished, Nero is destroyed by the Antichrist coming from the east. According to Severus, the Antichrist was already born and will assume power as soon as he has reached the proper age.¹⁹⁸ There are no indications that Joachim was aware of Sulpicius Severus’ expositions. However, Joachim also has two Antichrists in his system; one before, and the other after the millennium.

Theodoret of Cyrrhus

Theodoret (ca. 393-457) was an influential Greek author, theologian, and Christian bishop of Cyrrhus, Syria (423-457). He played a pivotal role in all the major fifth-century Christological controversies that led to various ecumenical acts and schisms.¹⁹⁹ Like Severus and Martin of Tours, in regard to prophecies, Theodoret defends the traditional Christian view of the Second Coming of Christ.

Interpreting Dan 2 and Dan 7, he enumerates the four kingdoms as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Theodoret argues that after the decline of the Roman Empire, the world will be divided into ten smaller kingdoms, followed by the Antichrist or the

¹⁹⁸ Severus, *Dialogues* 2.14 (NPNF II, 11:45). Commodian, early Christian poet from the mid-third century, also seems to adhere to the idea of a “dual Antichrist.” This duo is composed from Nero and the “real Antichrist” (see p. 144. n. 84 of this study).

¹⁹⁹ See Paul B. Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrrhus* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2007).

“little horn” as Daniel calls it (Dan 7:9). The little horn is destroyed and judged at the Second Coming of Christ.²⁰⁰ Theodoret especially repudiates the concept of the stone in Dan 2: 34, 45, smiting the image of Nebuchadnezzar, being the First Advent of Christ.

“For it [the kingdom of God], he says, shall never be destroyed, and His Kingdom shall not be left to other people, and it shall break in pieces and destroy all kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. . . .” But if they shall maintain that the Lord’s first coming is signified by these words, let them show that the kingdom of the Romans passed away at the same time that the Saviour appeared. For all things are found to be contrary to this, it was strong and did not pass away at the birth of the Saviour. . . . If therefore the first coming of the Lord did not overthrow the empire of the Romans, it properly remains that we should understand [by this] His Second Advent. For the stone which was cut out before without hands, and which grew into a great mountain and covered the whole earth, this at the second advent shall smite the image upon the feet of clay. That is, He will come at the very end of the kingdom of iron, which already has been made weak, and having destroyed all kingdoms, He will consign them to oblivion, and will bestow His own eternal kingdom upon the worthy.²⁰¹

Theodoret does not comment on the book of Revelation, undoubtedly due to the fact that many Greek Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries still did not consider it to be canonical.²⁰²

Post-Nicene Fathers and the Year-Day Principle

Several post-Nicene fathers employ the year-day principle in their prophetic expositions. The prophecy of seventy weeks in Dan 9:24-27 is the major biblical passage to which the conversion is applied. Eusebius of Caesarea writes: “It is quite clear that

²⁰⁰ Theodoret, *Commentary on Daniel*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 95-8.

²⁰¹ Theodoret, *Commentarius in Visiones Danielis Propheticae* (PG 81:1420), trans. by Fromm, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:452; see also Theodoret, *Commentary on Daniel*, 61-2.

²⁰² See p. 146, n. 92 and p. 157, nn. 132, 133 of this study.

seven times seventy weeks *reckoned in years* amounts to four hundred ninety. That was therefore the period determined for Daniel's people."²⁰³

The sixty-nine weeks (or 483 years), according to Eusebius, applies to the time that elapses between the rebuilding of the Jewish temple at the time of the Persian kingdom and the baptism of Jesus. The remaining week represents seven years of messianic preaching exclusively to the Jews: three and a half before the death of Christ and three and a half after Christ's death and resurrection.²⁰⁴

Sulpicius Severus makes similar reckoning in the early fifth century (ca. 412).²⁰⁵ Polychronius (373-430), bishop of Apamea in Syria,²⁰⁶ also applies the year-day principle to all three-component parts of the seventy weeks. Regarding the first seven weeks in Dan 9:25, he counts forty-nine years from the first year of Darius the Mede to the sixth year of Darius Hystaspes. This calculation includes the rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple.

²⁰³ Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel* 8.2, trans. W. J. Ferrar (London, UK: SPCK, 1981), 118. See also: "For the Scripture, in the book of Daniel, having expressly mentioned a certain number of weeks until the coming of Christ, of which we have treated in other books, most clearly prophecies, that after the completion of those weeks the unktion among the Jews should totally perish. And this, it has been clearly shown, was fulfilled at the time of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ." Eusebius, *Church History*, 1.51 (NPNF II, 1:90).

²⁰⁴ Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel* 8.2 trans. Ferrar, 135-36.

²⁰⁵ "But from the restoration of the temple to its destruction, which was completed by Titus under Vespasian, there was a period of four hundred eighty-three years. That was formerly predicted by Daniel, who announced that from the restoration of the temple to its overthrow there would elapse seventy [sixty, *sic*] and nine weeks. Now, from the date of the captivity of the Jews until the time of the restoration of the city, there were two hundred and sixty years." Sulpicius Severus, *Sacred History* 2.11 (NPNF II, 11:102).

²⁰⁶ Polychronius is influenced by the Greek pagan philosopher Porphyry, who argues that all the visions in the book of Daniel reach only to the First Coming of Christ (see Robert Berchman, *Porphyry Against Christians* [Boston, MA: Brill, 2005], 11-16). Like many eastern fathers, Polychronius did not comment on the book of Revelation. For a biography of Polychronius see *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2005), 1315.

After a small temporal gap, the sixty-two prophetic weeks resume from the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes I to the thirty-second year of Herod: 483 years from the building of the walls of the city to the birth of Christ. The one-week time period then begins and Christ confirms the covenant in the half-week, or three and a half years of His ministry.²⁰⁷

Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ephraim Syrus (303-373), Apollinaris of Laodicea (d. 380),²⁰⁸ Jerome, and Theodoret of Cyrillus presents calculations that use the year-day system to make time predictions with regard to the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel.²⁰⁹

The only Early Church application of the year-day principle to the book of Revelation is by Tyconius, who argues that the three and a half days in Rev 11:9 represent the three and a half years of Antichrist's end-time persecution. Tyconius also saw five months in Rev 9:5 as the five years of Constantine's persecution of Donatists from 316-321.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Polychronius, *Commentarius in Danielelem*, in *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio*, ed. Angelo Mai, 8 vols. (Rome, Italy: Typis Vaticanis, 1825-1838), 1:111.

²⁰⁸ Appollinaris of Laodicea differed from other Church fathers in that he reckons the seventy weeks (490 years) from the death of Jesus until the end of the world. Virtually nothing remains of his writings, and his view on Dan 9:24-27 is derived from Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, ed. Gleason L. Archer, 94-115.

²⁰⁹ Athanasius, *The Incarnation of the Word* 39, 40 (NPNF II, 4:57-8); Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures" 12.19 (NPNF II, 7:77); Ephraim Syrus, *In Danielelem Prophetam*, in *Opera Omnia*, Syriac and Latin edition, 6 vols. (Rome, Italy: Ex Typografia Pontificia Vaticana, 1740) 2:216-17; Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, ed. G. Archer, 94-115; Theodoret, *Commentary on Daniel*, transl R. C. Hill, 245-49.

²¹⁰ Gryson, *Tyconius Commentaire de l'Apocalypse*, 132, n. 12; 134, 158-59.

Summary and Implications

Joachim and the Early Church Eschatology

The overview of early Church eschatology has demonstrated that various forms of historical interpretation, similar to Joachim's system, existed in the first four centuries of the Christian Church. These are especially visible in the early Christian commentaries on the prophecies of Daniel.²¹¹ Commentaries on the book of Revelation exhibit greater historical ambiguity in their interpretation.²¹²

In spite of general ambiguity, the ante-Nicene Fathers and a certain number of post-Nicene Fathers saw the book of Revelation as a prophetic portrayal of a chronological succession of events, preceding the Second Coming of Christ.²¹³ For Irenaeus, Tertullian, Victorinus, and Tyconius, the seven seals (Rev 6-7) span the Christian era. The first seal represents the victory of Christ and the early Church. The last two seals depict the final persecution and the eternal rest. The messages expounded by early Church expositors, as they relate to the second, third, fourth, and fifth seals, are historically not fully developed. In the passage on Rev 7, commenting upon the sixth seal, Joachim comes close to Victorinus's interpretation that the angel who "[seals] the

²¹¹ See Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:455-464; J. Barton Payne, *The Imminent Appearing of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 30.

²¹² That the Apocalypse was the subject of extensive and constant study by the Early Church is evident from the significant fact that practically the entire book is reproducible from the Christian writers of the first three centuries. See H. Grattan Guinness, *History Unveiling Prophecy* (Chicago, IL: F. H. Revell, 1905), 41-46.

²¹³ Cain and Lenski observe: "Two primary camps, historicist and allegorist, had emerged by the late third century." Andrew Cain and Noel E. Lenski, *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 6; see also Thomas Cornman, "The Development of Third-Century Hermeneutical Views in Relation to Eschatological Systems," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30, no. 3 (September 1987): 279-287.

servants of our God in their foreheads” (Rev 7:1) represents some kind of end-time spiritual figure, like Elijah, who will come to revive the Church and convert the Jews.

The early Church fathers also did not comment much on the passages dealing with the seven trumpets (Rev 8-11). They are seen either as a recapitulation of the seals (Tyconius) or as an elaboration upon the seven last plagues (Hippolytus, Victorinus). Joachim prefers the recapitulation approach, which postulates that most of the visions in the book of Revelation repeat the content and message from the preceding visions, enlarging upon them with new information.

Joachim differs from the position of some early Church fathers in believing that the two witnesses in Rev 11 are two end-time prophets who will descend from heaven to combat the Antichrist for three and a half years (Elijah and either Moses or Enoch). They will be killed and lie dead for three and a half days. Joachim sees them more specifically as two monastic orders arising in the end-time.

When it comes to the time periods in Rev 11, Joachim views the 1,260 days (Rev 11:3) in a similar light with Methodius and Tyconius—as a period of Church expansion, from the first Advent of Christ to the Second Coming. Joachim and Tyconius employ the year-day principle when commenting in Rev 11:9. For both commentators, the final three and a half days, during which the two witnesses lie dead, represent three and a half years of the final persecution of the Christian Church.

In the prophecies of Rev 12, most of the early Church fathers recognize the woman as the Christian Church, the man-child as Christ, and the dragon as Rome. The first beast of Rev 13 is commonly seen as the Antichrist, although Hippolytus understood it to be the Roman Empire. The second beast is generally defined as the false prophet (or

Antichrist according to Hippolytus). Joachim does not necessarily deviate from these views but his comments represent a further historical development from the early Church tradition. Joachim isolates each head of the dragon (or the beast) as a major persecutor of the Church, starting with Herod and Nero and ending with the final Antichrist.

The early Church fathers generally anticipate that a personal Antichrist appears near the end of the world, to rule for three and a half years. The Antichrist figure is variously identified as a Jew, an apostate, or a son of Satan. Joachim disagrees with the tradition that the final Antichrist will be an outside force: a Jew from the tribe of Dan. He instead comes close to Tertullian, Tyconius, and a number of Greek fathers, who see the Antichrist as an internal foe—a type of Judas, “the son of perdition” (2 Thess 2:3), who betrays Christ from within the gathering of the elect. The Antichrist must “sit in the temple of God, claiming to be God” (2 Thes 2:8). These words, Joachim argues, are prophetic and therefore symbolic. For him, the “temple of God” in this passage represents the Church, not a literal temple in Jerusalem (see Eph 2:21; 1 Cor 3:13).

Joachim fully reflects the predominant view among the early Church expositors that the Roman Empire must crumble before the Antichrist appears. Joachim, however, believes that the Roman Empire did not vanish at the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century. Instead, it continued to exist through Byzantium and later through the Holy Roman Empire of German nations. According to Joachim, once the German Empire crumbles, the Antichrist will appear.

The early Church fathers most frequently identify the woman Babylon in Rev 17 as Rome. The ten horns of the beast are ten kingdoms that come after the dissolution of Rome. Some interpreters such as Victorinus and Tyconius see the seven kings of the

scarlet beast as seven Roman emperors from Nero to Trajan. Others, such as Hippolytus, see them as seven ages of world history. Joachim sees them as seven main persecutors of the Christian Church.

One of the greatest points of agreement between Joachim and early Church eschatology is the belief in a future millennium. Ante-Nicene writers, such as Pseudo-Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Papias,²¹⁴ Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, and Lactantius, clearly write about the crumbling of Rome, followed by the rise and then final destruction of the Antichrist at the Second Coming of Christ. This is followed by the millennium, enjoyed by God's righteous people.

Some writers, such as Hippolytus asserted that the future millennium might not last for exactly a thousand years, but might be much shorter. This is similar to Joachim's interpretation. Tyconius also held that millennium does not last exactly one thousand years but endures for 350 years.

The shift in power within the Roman Empire from Paganism to Christianity also created a shift in eschatological expectations, from hope for a future millennium, towards the realization of the present kingdom of God. Because of this, fourth-century eschatology experienced a dramatic change in regard to the thousand-year doctrine and the expectation of the imminent Second Coming of Christ.

Of all the post-Nicene patristic assaults on the future millennium, the one advanced by Tyconius and later Augustine in the *City of God* is the most influential. For

²¹⁴ Papias was an early Christian bishop (ca. 70-155) who was also reported to have believed that "there [would] be a Millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth" (*Fragments of Papias* 6 [ANF, 1:154]).

Augustine, belief in a future kingdom of God was a “ridiculous fable” since “even now the Church is the Kingdom of Christ and Kingdom of heaven [on earth].”²¹⁵ The future millennium and the future resurrection became a present reality for major Latin fathers such as Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. This view ultimately traces its origin to Gnostic realized eschatology, and Neo-Platonist immaterialism, which entered Christianity via Origen of Alexandria.

The Year-Day Principle in the Early Church

One of the main features of the historical-chronological method of prophetic interpretation is the usage of the year-day principle. Joachim employs this principle when interpreting the prophetic times in Rev 11-13. Although the conversion of prophetic days and months into years is not a predominant feature of early Christian prophetic interpretation, it finds occasional employment by some major Church fathers.

Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Julius Africanus, Jerome, Eusebius, Severus, Ephraim Syrus, Appolinaris of Laodicea, and Theodore of Cyrhus all employed the year-day principle in relation to the seventy weeks of Dan 9. Only Tyconius is recorded to have used this system in relation to the book of Revelation, when dealing with the two witnesses who are dead for “three days and an half” (Rev 11:9; 11:11).²¹⁶

²¹⁵ “In quasdam ridiculas fabulas verteretur. . . . Ergo et nunc ecclesia regnum Christ est regnumque caelorum” (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 20. 7, 9, ed. Bernard Dombart and A. Kalb, *Sancti Aureli Augustine episcopi De Civitate Dei libri XXII*, 2 vols. [Stuttgart, Germany: Teubner, 1993], 2:419, 429).

²¹⁶ It would be surprising to see early Christian Fathers use this principle for 1,260 days, as this would propel the Second Coming and the end of history far away into the future. The Christian hope, even from its earliest days, was to continue expecting the Second Coming as being an imminent and soon expectation. See 1 Cor 7:12 and 2 Thess 2:1-9.

In summary, it appears that some features of Joachim's thought already appeared in the first four hundred years of Christianity, especially the concept of the future Millennium. The hermeneutical principles such as the year-day method and the historicist approach to the visions of the book of Revelation are existent in theory but most likely because early Christians expected the end of the world to be near, these hermeneutical devices were not applied to the prophecies to make them extend beyond AD 500.

CHAPTER 5

JOACHIM AND MEDIEVAL ESCHATOLOGY IN THE LATIN WEST

Introduction

Chapter 5 continues to answer the main questions of the study: How original was Joachim in his historicist exegesis of Revelation and other Bible prophecies? What were the influences on him of early medieval thought, and how much can it be clearly differentiated between what is original in Joachim's interpretation and what he shared with other medieval expositors, including his contemporaries? Chapter 5 investigates traces of historicist interpretation within the medieval eschatological tradition of the Latin apocalypse commentaries from AD 500-1200.

Joachim's historical-chronological exegesis is particularly observable in the visions of the seven churches (Rev 2-3), seven seals (Rev 6-7), seven trumpets (Rev 8-9), the 1,260 days (Rev 11:2-3; 12:6; 12:14; 13:5), the seven vials (Rev 15-16), the seven kings (Rev 17), and the millennium (Rev 20).¹ The commentary of Latin medieval expositors relating to these texts receives the primary focus of analysis.

¹ See Joachim's historicist hermeneutics in Chapter 3 of this study.

Early Latin Commentaries on the Book of Revelation

After the Western Roman Empire was overtaken and divided among Germanic tribes, and the year 500 passed without Christ's appearance, the idea that the millennium had begun at the birth of Jesus became more prominent. This is especially true in the Latin West, where ahistorical and *idealist* exegesis featured as a major interpretative approach to the book of Revelation between the fourth and tenth centuries.²

Idealism, in Christian eschatology, is a biblical interpretation that sees the apocalyptic imagery as a description of the spiritual struggle between good and evil, deemphasizing historical fulfillment and focusing rather on the moral and spiritual values of the text.³ The commentaries and expositions on Revelation analyzed in this section are separated into two major groups: *idealism* and *historical idealism*.⁴

² For traces of millennialism in the period of AD 500-1000 see Richard Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000," *Speculum* 75 (January 2000): 115-120.

³ *Idealist interpretation* (also called the eclectic, anagogical, spiritual, moral and allegorical method) does not see the books of Daniel and Revelation as describing or predicting specific events in history. Rather it considers that their symbols express spiritual and moral truths. These truths are realized as the Church relates to the world. Idealism minimizes the historical application of prophecy and denies any historical fulfillment. For idealists "the Apocalypse is a theological poem setting forth the ageless struggle between the kingdom of light and kingdom of darkness" (Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997], 29). For idealists, the only historical event in the book of Revelation is the Second Advent of Christ (mentioned in Rev 6:12-17; Rev 11:15-19; Rev 14:14-19, Rev 16:17-19; Rev 19:1-21), (see Steve Gregg, *Revelation: Four Views* [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013]). Idealism is closely related to allegorical method of biblical interpretation. Biblical allegorism, championed by Origen of Alexandria, interprets the non-apocalyptic portions of the Bible as metaphorical and hyper-moralistic stories, rather than actual literal events (see Henri De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis* 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 2:83-127

⁴ *Historical idealism* is a term I coined to refer to the approach to the book of Revelation where a portion of the visions (of seals, trumpets, etc.) follows a chronological or historical flow, while the rest is allegorical, idealistic, and more historically ambiguous. Sometimes one author can be historically precise in discussing one vision (e.g., the seven seals) and completely ahistorical in discussing another (e.g., the trumpets or vials).

Idealism

The early Latin Middle Ages were dominated with homiletical and allegorical idealist commentaries.⁵ Early medieval idealism can be split into two categories: the *ecclesiastical* and the *Christological* variants. The ecclesiastical variant of early medieval idealism sees Revelation as describing the moral struggle of the Christian Church. Christological commentaries—while remaining idealist in nature—identify visions in Revelation as pertinent to the life of Jesus on earth.⁶

Caesarius of Arles

Caesarius of Arles' (468-542) was a bishop of Arles in the south of Gaul (France) and one of the foremost ecclesiastical figures of his generation. His writings had a wide circulation in the Latin west and for a long time were attributed to Augustine.⁷

Caesarius' homilies on the book of Revelation represent the earliest examples of the early medieval ecclesiastical idealism.⁸

⁵ Besides classical idealism, the early medieval period also contained a fair number of *historical-idealist* commentaries. These commentaries apply more historical-chronological applications while still holding to some aspects of the idealist school of thought. Such commentaries become more prominent in the 8th-12th centuries.

⁶ For the division of early medieval commentaries between ecclesiastical and Christological see Gumerlock, *Seven Seals*, 6; see also Beale, *Revelation*, 48, and Hailey, *Revelation*, 50.

⁷ See PL 35:2417-2452 under the name of Augustine. For further study on Caesarius see William Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (New York, NY: Cambridge University, 2004).

⁸ Germain Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis Opera Omnia*, 2 vols. (Bruges, Belgium: Declée, De Brouwer, et Cie, 1942), 2:209-277; English translation in William Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries on Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2011), 63-109.

For Caesarius, the prophecies of Revelation are not intended to predict or discern history or the chronology of events before the Second Coming. This is particularly seen in Caesarius's interpretation of the messages to the seven churches in Rev 2-3. He does not see them as prophetic predictions of Church history—as Joachim does—but merely as spiritual and moral counsel to the universal Christian church throughout times.⁹

The four horses of the apocalypse, described in the first four seals (Rev 6), represent the non-chronological conflict between the Church and the sinful world. The white horse symbolizes the apostles and the prophets led by Christ Himself. The red, black, and pale horses symbolize “*populus sinister et malus*” (sinister and evil people) sent by the devil to counter the progress of the Church.¹⁰ The four horses, described in the first four seals, are not indicative of different chronological periods of Church history. Instead they all appear contemporaneously in the Church.¹¹ The images and symbols contained in the seven seals, therefore, are not attached to particular historical events, except for the sixth seal, which represents the “*persecutio novissima*” (last persecution), and the seventh seal, which portrays the eternal rest of the saints (Rev 8:1). The sixth and seventh seals must occur in the future.¹²

⁹ “Septem ergo ecclesia, quibus sanctus Iohannes scribit, intellegitur una ecclesia catholica” (“The seven churches to whom Saint John writes are understood to be one catholic church”) (Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 2:213, trans. in Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 65).

¹⁰ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 2:225; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 72.

¹¹ “Iste tres equi, unum sunt, qui exerunt post album et contra album” (“These three horses are one, who came out after and against it”) (Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 2:225, trans. in Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 73).

¹² Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 2:225; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 73; see also Gumerlock, *Seven Seals*, 41-44.

The seven trumpets (Rev 8-9) describe God's punishments upon the evildoers. The first trumpet announces the *ira Dei* (wrath of God) upon the wicked. The second trumpet denounces the heretics. The third trumpet describes those who have fallen away from the church. The fourth trumpet contains "all evil people."¹³ The star that opens the abyss in the fifth trumpet represents "the body of those many persons who have fallen through sins," especially the heretics. The sixth trumpet, like the sixth seal, depicts the "final persecution" that lasts for an "hour, day, month, and year" (Rev 9:12) or according to Caesarius, "three years and a half."¹⁴

Caesarius reflects Tyconius in asserting that the two witnesses represent the OT and NT. The 1,260 days of their prophesying (Rev 11:2) refer mystically to the entire period from the Passion of Christ until the end of the world. Like Tyconius, and later Joachim, Caesarius converts days into years when commenting on "three days and half" of the two witnesses lying dead (Rev 11:9). This number represents the three years and six months of the final tribulation.¹⁵ The woman in Rev 12 is the Church persecuted by the red dragon, or the devil. Satan persecutes the Church for a "time, times and half a time" (Rev 12:14). Caesarius is uncertain about this period. He follows Tyconius here and affirms that a time can be a year, but it can also be a "hundred years."¹⁶

¹³ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 230; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 76.

¹⁴ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 233-34; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 78-9.

¹⁵ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 239-40; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 82-4.

¹⁶ "Tempus et annus intellegitur, et centum anni" ("Times can be understood both as one year and as a hundred years") (Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 244, trans. in Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 86).

The beast coming out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns (Rev 13:1-10) represents all the impious persons who form the “body (followers) of the devil.” This beast, although already active in the time of Caesarius, is fully manifested in the time of the Antichrist. The “healing of the deadly wound” of the beast, according to Caesarius, portrays the heretics who are rebuffed by the Church but keep resurrecting, just like the Arians.¹⁷ The forty-two months during which the beast blasphemes the name of God is interpreted by Caesarius as the period of the final persecution.¹⁸ The second beast, which has two horns like a lamb, according to Caesarius also represents the heretics, for they pretend to be Christian although they speak like a dragon and deny Christ.¹⁹

For Caesarius, the vials in Rev 16 represent the spiritual chastisement of God upon the wicked during the entire period of the Christian dispensation.²⁰ The three frogs that arise during the sixth vial are the devil, the false prophet (the leader of the heretics), and the “body of the devil,” that is, the impious Christians who make up a large proportion of the church.²¹ The harlot woman and the scarlet beast represent the wicked

¹⁷ “Utique habent potestatem heretici, sed praecipe Arriani” (“Yes, they have the power of heretics, under the command of Arians”) (Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 245, translated in Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 87). Weinrich believes that Caesarius might be thinking about the Visigoths, who became Arian Christians and ruled southern Gaul (Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 87, nn. 4 and 8). This is a rare instance of Caesarius tying the text of the book of Revelation to a concrete historical entity.

¹⁸ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 245; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 87.

¹⁹ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 246-47; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 88-9.

²⁰ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 250-52; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 90-2. Caesarius is very vague here. The vials at the same time depict the future suffering in Gehenna. The sun scorching the wicked at the time of the fourth vial is equated to the future sufferings in Hell.

²¹ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 255; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 94.

who oppose the Church from within and without. Inside the church are false Christians and outside are heathen.²²

Finally, Caesarius concludes with Augustine's interpretation of the millennium. The "thousand years" depicted in Rev 20 represent the reign of the saints on earth during the Christian dispensation. The resurrection of the saints (Rev 20:4) symbolizes the baptism of a Christian. The second resurrection (Rev 20:5) represents the final resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ.²³

Caesarius asserts further that Satan is released after the "thousand years" of the reign of the Church. He then constrains the Antichrist, along with Gog and Magog, to persecute the saints for three and a half years, on the four corners of the earth. However, the persecutors are destroyed by God and perish. Meanwhile, the Church is fully purified and flourishes, becoming the "city [of] pure gold in Rev 21-22."²⁴

Cassiodorus

Senator Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus (ca. 485-ca. 585) was a Roman statesman and writer. Like Joachim of Fiore, Cassiodorus was born in Calabria in southern Italy, and also like Joachim, served on the court of the governor of Sicily. Later he went on to becoming the prefect of Italy under Theodoric I, king of the Ostrogoths (ca.

²² Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 255-57; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 94-96.

²³ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 267-270; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 100-03.

²⁴ Morin, *Sancti Caesarii*, 273-277; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 104-109.

393–451).²⁵ Cassiodorus’s commentary on Revelation (ca. 535) is very brief, contains many uncertainties, and was not widely circulated. It is written in an idealist fashion, common for its time and is preserved in only one copy, dating from the late sixth century.²⁶

The first three seals (Rev 6:1-5) are ambiguous and ahistorical, representing the purity of Christ, the blood of His adversaries, and His judgment upon the impious. The explanation of the fourth seal has been cut out of the manuscript, probably through a copying mistake. The fifth seal represents all the martyrs of the Church. The sixth seal is the end of the world. The “silence in heaven” (Rev 8:1) in the seventh seal represents the announcement of the final judgment.²⁷

Cassiodorus does not recapitulate the seven trumpets. Instead, he interprets them as the judgments of God ushering in the end of the world. The two prophets Enoch and Elijah appear in the final period of God’s warnings, to bring sinners to repentance, and to preach during the three and a half years of the Antichrist’s reign.²⁸

The woman in Rev 12 typifies the Church which must flee “into the wilderness” in the end times for three and a half years (Rev 12:6). This period represents the time when the Antichrist, or sea-beast from Rev 13:1-10, blasphemes God and persecutes the

²⁵ Senator is his first name, not his title. For more information on Cassiodorus see James J. O'Donnell, *Cassiodorus* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1979).

²⁶ *Complexiones in Apocalypsi*, ed. Roger Gryson, *Commentaria Minora in Apocalypsin Johannis*, CCSL (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003), 107:224.

²⁷ *Complexiones in Apocalypsi*, 119.

²⁸ *Complexiones in Apocalypsi*, 119-121.

Church. Cassiodorus is confused over the identity of the beast with two horns like a lamb (Rev 13:11-18). At first he considers it to be the same evil power as the first Antichrist beast, described in different words.²⁹ Later he calls it a “false-prophet.”³⁰

The woman Babylon, riding the scarlet beast, is also not precisely identified. She either represents the city of Rome (the capital of the Roman Empire) or the secular powers of the world. Cassiodorus does not comment on the seven kings in Rev 17:8-11. He considers the ten horns of the scarlet beast to be future ten kings, who will support the Antichrist.³¹

At the end of time, the Antichrist will be thrown into the lake of fire, the Devil will be put in prison, and the saints will be resurrected. Even though the binding of the Devil seems to be described as a future event, Cassiodorus concurs with Augustine and Caesarius, that this event describes the Devil being bound after the birth and baptism of Jesus.³²

Primasius

Primasius was a bishop of Hadrumentum in North Africa. His commentary on Revelation is of great importance to modern scholarship, because it contains the pre-

²⁹ *Complexiones in Apocalypsi*, 121-22.

³⁰ *Complexiones in Apocalypsi*, 127.

³¹ *Complexiones in Apocalypsi*, 124-125.

³² “Alligavit que eum mille annis, quod per figuram synecdoche a partem totum dicitur, quando eius finis omnimodis habetur incognitus, qui tamen consensu patrum a nativitate domini computantur” (And he bound him for a thousand years, which by a figure—a synecdoche—forms the whole from a part, and by the consent of the Fathers, this number is computed from the birth of the Lord onwards) (*Complexiones in Apocalypsi*, 127, translation mine).

Cyprian Latin text of Revelation. In addition, his commentary is of great help in reconstructing the highly influential commentary of Tyconius.³³

Just like Caesarius and Cassiodorus, Primasius believes that the seven seals and seven trumpets display the conflict between the forces of Christ and the forces of the Devil. He suggests that the seven seals represent the “aetatem mundi” (stages of the world); however, he does not tie them to specific chronological events, except the last two, which describe the final persecution and must occur one after another, near the end of the world.³⁴

There are some historical applications in Primasius’s comments on the seven trumpets, where he identifies the third and fourth trumpets with fallen churchmen and corrupt doctors of the Church.³⁵ The locusts of the fifth trumpet represent heretics such as Montanus, Maximilliana, and Donatus.³⁶ The other trumpets represent various heresies

³³ See A. W. Adams, ed., *Primasius episcopus Hadrumentinus, Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, CCSL, 92 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1985). Substantial Tyconian passages also appear in the Apocalypse commentaries of Apringius of Beja, Beatus of Liebana, and the Venerable Bede.

³⁴ “Sextam mundi aetatem, sext signo denuntiat, grandi persecutionis impetu in fine venturam” (Seven seals denote seven stages of the world, culminating with a great persecution) (Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 94-105, translation mine). Primasius here probably reflects Augustine’s periodization of seven stages of the world from Adam to the Second Coming of Christ (see p. 173 of this study).

³⁵ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 140-42.

³⁶ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 149-50; William Weinrich, *Revelation*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 137.

and persecutions upon the church, depicted by the locusts in the sixth trumpet. After the final flood of heresies in the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:11-20), Primasius interprets the great angel with the scroll in Rev 10 as depicting the Second Coming of Christ.³⁷

Primasius reflects Tyconius in interpreting the two witnesses to be the OT and NT, preaching the gospel to the world. The forty-two months of their preaching not only describe the time of final persecution, but in a mystical sense, the entire period of the Christian dispensation.³⁸ At the end-times, the beast from the bottomless pit destroys these two witnesses for three and a half days. Primasius, like Tyconius, converts the three and a half days into three and a half years.³⁹ Primasius here defends the year-day principle, alluding to the forty years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness (Num 14:33-34). "And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years. . . . After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years."

In describing the beast from the bottomless pit (Rev 11:9-11) Primasius asserts the ancient tradition that the Antichrist will be of Jewish origin, from the tribe of Dan.⁴⁰

³⁷ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 159-162; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 146-47.

³⁸ "The number of the months signifies not only the last persecution but also the entire time of Christianity. For there are six ages of the world and seven days by which all time moves by passing away and returning. Six times seven makes forty-two, and I believe that the passage refers to both of these [numbers]" (Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 166, trans. in Weinrich, *Revelation*, 156).

³⁹ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 170-71.

⁴⁰ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 169, 226; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 246.

The Church fleeing from the devil in the wilderness for 1,260 days represents the end-time persecution by the Antichrist, which will endure three and a half years.⁴¹

The beast with seven heads and ten horns in chap. 13 is the “body of the devil”—the wicked followers of the Devil who abide both in the world and also in the Church. The final seventh head of this beast is the Antichrist, a vicious king who comes at the end of times. The forty-two months of the beast’s blasphemies refer more specifically here to the time of the final tribulation.⁴² The second beast of Rev 13 is compared by Primasius to Simon Magus, who will give magical abilities to his followers to perform miracles, speak in tongues, and do healings, in order to deceive the Church into following the Antichrist.⁴³ The number of the beast, according to Primasius, refers to the number of days during which the Antichrist will persecute the Church.⁴⁴

The seven vials, according to Primasius, do not occur at the end of time but represent the spiritual torments of the wicked throughout the Christian era.⁴⁵ The harlot Babylon and its scarlet beast represent the mystical “body of the devil,” present both in the world and in the Church. This body persecutes the Christians during the present dispensation. The ten horns of the beast and seven heads of the beast represent kings or

⁴¹ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 187-88; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 193.

⁴² Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 193-95; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 202.

⁴³ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 199-201; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 206-07.

⁴⁴ By an unusual method of computing he arrives at 1,225 days of persecution by the Antichrist. Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 203-208.

⁴⁵ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 225-236; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 244-264.

kingdoms that will arise near the end of time and lead in the universal persecution of the Church.⁴⁶

Primasius further reflects Tyconius and asserts the millennium to be a “present reality.”⁴⁷ After it ends, Christ comes to destroy the Antichrist, resurrect the saints, and restore earth to its original condition.⁴⁸ The millennium is not a literal thousand years, for “no man knows the day nor the hour” of the end of times (Matt 24:36). Most of Primasius’s comments are of a devotional character, and the most concrete historical events described in the book of Revelation are the events that will happen in the future.

Apringius

Apringius (flourished ca. AD 545) was a bishop of Beja in present day Portugal, who wrote a not very widely circulated tract on Revelation.⁴⁹ The two major fragments that survive cover only the section of Revelation from chapters 1:1 to 5:7 and 18:6 to 22:20. A copyist in the Middle Ages supplied the missing middle section with the commentary of Victorinus (edited by Jerome).⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 238-240; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 266-274; At the same time, for Primasius, the first five kings represent the five senses which tempt the Christian: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste (Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 243-44).

⁴⁷ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 271-73; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 321.

⁴⁸ Adams, *Primasius episcopus*, 270-71; Weinrich, *Revelation*, 319.

⁴⁹ See Roger Gryson, ed., *Apringi Pacensis Tractatus Fragmenta in Commentaria minora in Apocalypsin Johannis*, CCSL, 107 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003), 11-31; English translation in William Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries on Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2011), 23-62. See also a Spanish translation by Alberto del Campo Hernández, ed., *Comentario al Apocalipsis de Apringio de Beja, Introduccion, Texto Latino y Traduction*, Institución San Jerónimo, vol. 25 (Estella, [Navarra, Spain]: Verbo Divino, 1991).

⁵⁰ See Gryson, “Introduction,” *Apringi Pacensis*, CCSL, 107:17-9.

Apringius's view of the book of Revelation is styled by Gumerlock as a "Christological approach."⁵¹ The first extant fragment of the commentary focuses on the book written "within and without, sealed with seven seals" (Rev 5:1) which, for Apringius, represents seven chronological events in the life of Jesus; the incarnation, nativity, passion, death, resurrection, glory, and kingdom.⁵²

The second extant fragment of the commentary identifies the rider on a white horse (Rev 19) as a personification of the Second Coming of Christ. With the sword coming out of His mouth, Christ slays the wicked (Rev 19:15).⁵³ The thousand years in Rev 20 and the binding of Satan (which is achieved through Jesus' crucifixion), however, are associated with the First Advent of Christ. Millennium is a present reality.

In commenting upon Rev 20, Apringius provides a unique computation of Dan 9. He suggests that the millennium is associated with the seventy-week periods of Daniel. In his computation, he doubles 490 days (converted to years) to get 980 years.⁵⁴ For Apringius the last half-week from Dan 9:27 represents the final persecution by the Antichrist.⁵⁵ After the millennium, Satan himself is set loose, however only to be

⁵¹ Gumerlock, *The Seven Seals of the Apocalypse*, 6, 27-29.

⁵² Gryson, *Apringi Pacensis*, 66.

⁵³ Gryson, *Apringi Pacensis*, 70-73, 81; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 46, 52.

⁵⁴ Gryson, *Apringi Pacensis*, 80; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 51.

⁵⁵ Gryson, *Apringi Pacensis*, 80, 81; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 52. Apringius here reflects the views of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, against Eusebius and most of the Greek fathers (see chapter 4).

gathered with all the reprobates to suffer eternal punishment.⁵⁶ This event ends the controversy between Christ and Satan and brings final restoration to the earth.

Pseudo-Alcuin

Long believed to be a tract written by English scholar Alcuin of York (ca. 735-804), the Pseudo-Alcunian *De Septem Sigilis* is identified today by most scholars as an early seventh-century text from Spain. Like the commentary of Apringius, it belongs in the family of Christological commentaries because it also interprets the seven seals as seven events in the life of Christ.⁵⁷ “The first seal is the nativity of the Lord. The second, the baptism. The third, the crucifixion. The fourth, the burial. The fifth, the resurrection. The sixth, the ascension. The seventh, the judgment.”⁵⁸ Simultaneously, for Pseudo-Alcuin, the seals also represent seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Pseudo-Jerome

Handbook on the Apocalypse by Pseudo-Jerome (ca. AD 600-700) is another example of an ecclesiastical variant of early medieval idealism. It was written some time in the seventh century and circulated under the names of Jerome and Isidore of Seville.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Gryson, *Apringi Pacensis*, 84; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 54.

⁵⁷ E. Ann Matter, “The Pseudo-Alcunian ‘De Septem Sigilis’: An Early Latin Apocalypse Exegesis,” *Traditio* 36 (1980): 111-37; English translation can be found in Francis X. Gumerlock, *The Seven Seals of the Apocalypse: Medieval Texts in Translation* (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 2009), 30-32.

⁵⁸ Matter, “The Pseudo-Alcunian,” 113-14; Gumerlock, *The Seven Seals*, 30.

⁵⁹ *Incerti auctoris Commemoratorium de Apocalypsi Johannis Apostoli* [Handbook on the Apocalypse of the Apostle John by an uncertain author], in *Commentaria minora in Apocalypsin Johannis*, ed. Roger Gryson, CCSL, 107:159-229; and Kenneth Steinhauser, “Bemerkungen zum pseudo - heironymischen Commemoratorium in Apocalypsin,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für*

The author takes an idealistic approach, sometimes claiming to explain things historically, but more often relating the visions of Revelation to ecclesiastical themes through allegory.⁶⁰

The four horses, which come forth at the opening of the first four seals, depict the Church of Christ, the martyrs, the persecutors, and the hypocrites respectively. They appear concurrently and without a chronological order.⁶¹ The fifth seal describes the righteous obtaining eternal life. The sixth seal describes, in spiritual terms, the cataclysms and persecutions led by the Antichrist who comes from the tribe of Dan.⁶²

The seven trumpets recapitulate the seals, representing seven “preaching” warnings (*praedicationes*) to the world, preached by the Church. The first preaching occurs at the time of the apostles. The second is a sermon to the non-believing Gentiles. The third sermon is to the “less-evil persecutors.” The fourth sermon is preached to those who live in the obscurity of sin. The fifth and sixth angels blow their trumpets against the disciples of the Antichrist.⁶³ The seventh trumpet represents the final judgment of God.⁶⁴

Philosophie und Theologie 26 (1979): 220-42 at 232-6 argue that the Handbook was written by a student of Cassiodorus at Viviarum around AD 600. Others believe it is Irish and date it in the late seventh or early eighth century. See Gryson, *Commentaria minora*, CCSL, 107:181-82.

⁶⁰ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 207; Gumerlock, *The Seven Seals*, 51.

⁶¹ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 208-09; Gumerlock, *The Seven Seals*, 51-2.

⁶² Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 209-11; Gumerlock, *The Seven Seals*, 52.

⁶³ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 213-215. At the time of the fifth and sixth trumpets, Enoch and Elijah arise. They are the two witnesses who preach for forty-two months, the period of the Antichrist’s rule. They are martyred, but after three and a half days they rise again on the Day of Judgment.

⁶⁴ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 217-18.

The woman fleeing the dragon with ten horns is the Church. The ten horns are ten kings who follow the Antichrist during the final persecution.⁶⁵ The beast in Rev 13 represents a king who rules over the multitude of heretics. This is the first king who will rule as an antichrist. He will receive a mortal wound, but a second antichrist will come in his place. The beast that looks like a lamb is a servant of the Antichrist.⁶⁶

The seven angels that hold seven cups of wrath (Rev 15-16) also represent seven preachers. The first three vials represent the wrath of God poured upon sinners, Gentiles, and heretics, who are outside of the church. The fourth, fifth, and sixth vials are poured upon the wicked within the Church.⁶⁷

The woman Babylon in Rev 17 is the world and the beast is the Antichrist.⁶⁸ They rule during this present millennium, while Satan is bound until the judgment. The millennium takes place during the NT era. The “first resurrection” (Rev 20:5) signifies death of the individual saints and departure of their souls to heaven. The “second resurrection” is the general resurrection of bodies, which happens after the millennium.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 218-19.

⁶⁶ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 219-221.

⁶⁷ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 222-23.

⁶⁸ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 223-24; the author does not comment on the seven heads of the beast.

⁶⁹ Gryson, *Commemoratorium*, 225-26.

Autpertus

Ambrosius Autpertus (ca. AD 760) was born in the province of Gaul. He later became the abbot of Saint Vincent at Benevento, near Calabria in southern Italy. His commentary on Revelation was completed at the time of Pope Paul I (fl. 757-767). It contains many moral and devotional considerations, but it essentially reflects Augustine, Victorinus-Jerome, and Primasius.⁷⁰

Like most other Latin commentators in the early Middle Ages, Autpertus espouses a historically vague idealist interpretation. He agrees with Primasius that the “book written within and without, sealed with seven seals” (Rev 5:1) represents the NT Gospel contained within the OT. In his expositions on the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the 1,260 days, the Antichrist, and the harlot Babylon, Autpertus fully reflects Primasius. The only new insights he provides are of devotional substance.⁷¹

Minor Idealist Commentaries

Four minor idealist commentaries on Revelation in the early medieval period merit brief mention. The first is the commentary by Alcuin of York (ca. 735-804). The commentary of Autpertus, widely read by the educated elite of the Carolingian courts,

⁷⁰ Robert Weber, ed., *Ambrosii Autperti opera; Expositionis in Apocalypsin Libri I-V*, in CCCM 27; *Libri VI-X* in CCSL, 27A (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1975).

⁷¹ For detailed analysis of Autpertus view of Revelation see Douglas W. Lumsden *And Then the End Will Come: Early Latin Christian Interpretations of the Opening of the Sevean Seals* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 55-74.

made such an impression on Alcuin of York that in his own exposition, he scarcely attempts to do more than take extracts from Autpertus's commentary.⁷²

De Testimoniis in Apocalypsin Sancti Joannis Apostoli is a compilation of Pope Gregory I's (d. 603) comments on Revelation, compiled by one of Gregory I's disciples, Paterius. The compilation is gathered from the writings of Gregory such as the *Moralia* on Job, homilies on Ezekiel, and the *Pastoral Rule*. Like Alcuin's commentary, the comments in *De Testimoniis* are mostly allegorical and idealist with virtually no historical applications. The few historical applications mainly concern the future Antichrist and the persecutions of the end-time.⁷³

The third minor commentary to be mentioned in this section is *De Enigmatibus ex Apocalypsi Johannis* (On the Mysteries of the Apocalypse of John).⁷⁴ The *Enigmatibus* maintains the idealist approach. There is no particular historical chronological progression from seal to seal or from trumpet to trumpet.⁷⁵ Likewise, the interpretations

⁷² Alcuin seems to occasionally quote Bede. For consideration of Alcuin of York see *Explanatio Apocalypsis per interrogationem et responsionem*, Unpublished Manuscript in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 13581, fols 3r-31r. I am thankful to professor Francis X. Gumerlock for a faximile copy of this manuscript. Because the commentaries of Autpertus and Alcuin present virtually no historicist comments that could be compared with the work of Joachim, they are not analyzed separately in this study.

⁷³ Paterius, *De Testimoniis in Apocalypsin S. Joannis Apostoli* (PL 79:1107-22).

⁷⁴ This commentary is contained in the volume commonly called the *Irish Reference Bible* (ca. 785) or *Das Bibelwerk*, a one-volume commentary on the whole Bible (Roger Gryson, ed., "De Enigmatibus ex Apocalypsi Johannis," CCSL, 107:231-295).

⁷⁵ Gryson, "De Enigmatibus," 273-75.

⁷⁵ Gryson, "De Enigmatibus," 282-84.

of the Antichrist, the vials, and the millennium adhere to the observations made by previous future-idealist commentators.

The year-day principle is used in interpreting three and a half days in Rev 11:9, which, in the *Enigmatibus* symbolize three and a half years of the final tribulations.⁷⁶ Concurrently, the “time, times and half a time” (Rev 12:14) represent the entire period from Christ’s First Coming to His Second Coming. In addition, they mystically point to the period of the final tribulation of the Antichrist.⁷⁷ Similarly to Victorinus and Apringius, the *Enigmatibus* interprets the seven kings in Rev 17 as the seven Roman emperors from Julius Caesar to Nero. The eighth king (Rev 17:11) is the Antichrist.⁷⁸ The millennium in Rev 20 represents the period of the New Testament Church. Satan is bound to the abyss until the arrival of the Antichrist and the final deliverance of the Church at the Second Coming of the Lord.⁷⁹

The final idealist commentary in this group of minor commentaries is the *Expositio in Apocalypsin Iohannis* written by Theodulphus of Orleans (ca. 805).⁸⁰ Theodulphus is also mainly an ecclesiastical idealist. The first four seals and trumpets contain some historical progression, describing the periods of apostles, martyrs, heretics, and doctors of the Church. The 1,260 days apply to the period from Christ until the end

⁷⁶ Gryson, “De Enigmatibus,” 269, 270.

⁷⁷ Gryson, “De Enigmatibus,” 271, 272.

⁷⁸ Gryson, “De Enigmatibus,” 286.

⁷⁹ Gryson, “De Enigmatibus,” 289, 290.

⁸⁰ Roger Gryson, “Expositio in Apocalypsin,” CCSL, 107:305-337.

of the world. The harlot in Rev 17 is the “Church of Heretics” or the whole unbelieving world. The seven kings are the seven Roman emperors from Julius Cesar to Domitian.⁸¹

Historical Idealism

Beginning with the eighth century onwards, a number of commentators began suggesting more concrete historical applications to seals, trumpets, and heads of the beasts in the book of Revelation.

The Venerable Bede

The English doctor, Bede (673-735), “the Venerable”, is arguably the first Latin commentator to have developed a substantially historical commentary on Revelation.⁸²

Bede’s greatest novelty was his interpretation of the messages to the seven churches (Rev 2-3). Besides describing the woes and victories of the universal Church in all ages, the seven churches, according to Bede, each depict one particular stage of ecclesiastical history.

The church of Ephesus, for example, represents the Church of the apostles. The church of Smyrna represents the Church persecuted by Roman emperors in the early

⁸¹ Roger Gryson, “Expositio in Apocalypsin,” in CCSL, 107:305-337; seven seals (pp. 315-317), seven trumpets (pp. 320-322), 1,260 days (pp. 324-326), seven kings (pp. 330-31).

⁸² Roger Gryson, ed., *Bedae Presbyteri Expositio Apocalypseos*, CCSL, 121A (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001); see also PL 93:129-206. First English translation by Edward Marshall, *The Explanation of the Apocalypse by Venerable Bede* (Oxford and London, UK: James Parker and Co., 1878); most recent English translation by William Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries of Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2011). Different from his commentary on Revelation, Bede is believed to have also written a short chapter summary for each chapter in the book of Revelation entitled *Capitula in Apocalypsin* [*Chapter Headings on the Apocalypse*], (Roger Gryson, ed., *Bedae Presbyteri Expositio Apocalypseos*, CCSL, 121A [Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001], 136-151).

centuries. Bede interprets the ten-day tribulation in Rev 2:10 as ten main persecutions of the Christian Church from Nero to Diocletian.⁸³ Bede does not comment on the historicity of the third, fourth, and fifth churches, but singles out the sixth church, Philadelphia, which for him depicts symbolically the sixth stage, a future period when the Church is persecuted by the Antichrist and the Jews are converted. This is the period of the last tribulation, just before the end of time.⁸⁴ The seventh church is Laodicea, or as he calls it, a “tepid church.” Churches like Laodicea will be customary just before the Second Coming of the Lord. Bede supports this interpretation by asking the same question as Christ in Luke 18:1: “When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”⁸⁵

Bede interprets the seven seals and the seven trumpets as both moral and historical messages, revealing the spiritual but also historical struggles of the Church against the pagans of the second seal, the false brethren of the third seal, and the Arian heretics of the fourth seal. The fifth seal describes those who emerge victorious from the struggle, while the sixth seal describes the final persecution in the end-times. The seventh seal represents eternal rest.

⁸³ Gryson, *Bedaes Presbyteri*, 221; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 119; Bede here quotes Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* 7.27, ed. C. Zengemeister in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 96 vols. (Vienna, Austria: Akademie von Wissenschaft, 1882), 5:325-28.

⁸⁴ Gryson, *Bedaes Presbyteri*, 219; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 111.

⁸⁵ Gryson, *Bedaes Presbyteri*, 219-20; Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 111, 122.

Bede asserts that the ideas in the book are recapitulated, repeating the same periods through the vision of the seven trumpets.⁸⁶ The first trumpet represents the increase of the Christian religion. The second is the Devil's work among the pagans, hindering Christian success. The third is the appearance of heretics. The fourth represents the period of hypocrites in both the Church and the surrounding society.⁸⁷ The eagle flying in the midst of the heaven (Rev 8:13) represents the doctors of the Church who proclaim the end to be near. The fifth and sixth trumpets are, at the time of Bede's writing, still in the future. They represent the coming heresies and persecutions at the time of the Antichrist.⁸⁸

The two witnesses in Rev 11 represent the OT and NT as well as the Christian Church that will preach a special message of repentance for forty-two months during the time of the Antichrist (Rev 11:3). Together these total three and a half years.⁸⁹ The woman fleeing in the wilderness for 1,260 days (Rev 12:6) represents the period of the Christian Church waiting patiently for the return of the Lord.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ "And so in the first seal, he holds the glory of the ancient church; in the following three seals he sees the threefold war against it; in the fifth seal he sees the glory of those who triumph in this war; in the sixth seal he sees that which is going to occur at the time of the antichrist; and then . . . in the seventh seal he sees the beginning of the eternal repose" (Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 128).

⁸⁷ Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 138, 139. Bede asserts that trumpets and seals form inversed parallelism. The third and fourth seals represent "false brethren" and "heretics," while the third and fourth trumpets inversely represent "heretics" and "false brethren."

⁸⁸ Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 140-41.

⁸⁹ Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 146-48. Bede does not comment specifically on the "three days and a half," Rev 11:9, 11:11.

⁹⁰ Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 151-52.

In Tyconian fashion, Bede interprets the beast coming out of the sea (Rev 13) as the sum of the wicked—“the body of the devil”—which is ever present in the world and even within one third of the Church. The beast blasphemes for forty-two months—the entire time of the Christian Dispensation—until the arrival of the Antichrist. The Lamb beast, having two horns like a lamb and speaking like a dragon (Rev 13:11-18), is the end-time deceptive Antichrist.⁹¹

The 144,000 in Rev 14 symbolize the future saved ones.⁹² The seven plagues in Rev 15-16 represent seven punishments of God after the death of the Antichrist and before the Second Advent. Here Bede departs from Tyconius and other early medieval fathers. He does not identify recapitulation in the seven vials but rather sees them as the final outpouring of God’s wrath at the end of time.⁹³

The harlot Babylon and her beast represent the “body of the devil” and worldliness. The seven heads of the beast represent various kings in history, which were representatives of the body of the devil. The “five kings” who have fallen (Rev 17:10) are unknown to Bede. However, the seventh king is the Antichrist. He will join the “ten horns” of the beast for the last persecution.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 153-156.

⁹² Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 157-160.

⁹³ Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 163-168.

⁹⁴ Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 168-171.

Finally, Bede's view of the millennium reflects Tyconius and Augustine as he places the one thousand years into the past and begins the millennium with the First Advent of the Lord. Christ returns at the end of the millennium.⁹⁵

Beatus of Liebana

Beatus of Liebana (c.730–c. 800) was a monk, theologian, and geographer from the kingdom of Asturias, in northern Spain. His large commentary on the book of Revelation is preserved in thirty-five manuscripts and presents a mixture of idealism and historical comments. It includes selections from many commentaries known to Beatus.⁹⁶ Beatus's commentary is especially important because it preserves a lengthy excerpt from the commentary by Tyconius. In fact, a large part of Tyconius's material can be reconstructed through an analysis of Beatus's work. Most of Beatus's manuscripts also contain Jerome's recension of Victorinus's commentary on the book of Revelation.

Beatus's commentary is richly illustrated with scenes of the book of Revelation. The illustrations of Beatus picture the fearful struggle of the seven-headed beast and the

⁹⁵ Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries*, 178-181.

⁹⁶ First Latin edition, Henry A. Sanders, ed., *Beati in Apocalypsi libri duodecim*, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome 7 (Rome, Italy: American Academy in Rome, 1930); second Latin edition, E. Romero-Pose, ed., *Sancti Beati a Lieban commentarius in Apocalypsin*, 2 vols., *Scriptores Graeci et Latini consilio Academiae Lynceorum editi* (Rome, Italy: Typis Officinae Polygraphicae, 1985); third Latin edition with Spanish translation, Joaquin G. Echegaray, A. Del Campo and L. G. Freeman, eds., *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 2 vols. (Madrid, Spain: Estudio Teologico de San Ildefonso, 2004). Finally, the most recent critical Latin text is by Roger Gryson, ed., *Beati Liebanensis Tractatus de Apocalypsin*, CCSL, 107 B-C (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2012). Gryson presents a critical two-volume edition of the commentary's text, in Latin and French.

ten-horned monster waging war against the Church. It is possible that Joachim was acquainted with Beatus's Mozarabic illustrations, following Beatus's idea of adding illustrations to his own commentaries on prophecies.⁹⁷

Beatus's commentary compiles features from various hermeneutical schools. He reflects Jerome's historicist interpretation of Dan 2⁹⁸ and 7.⁹⁹ He refers to Tyconius and asserts that the seven churches in Rev 2-3 describe the spiritual message to the Church of Christ in all ages. Nevertheless, some of Beatus' details are historical. Like Bede, Beatus identifies the "ten days" persecution of the Church of Smyrna (Rev 2:10) as ten major persecutions of Christians from Nero to Diocletian.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ For more details on Beatus's numerous illustrations see John Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus: A Corpus of the Illustrations of the Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 5 vols. (London, UK: Harvey Miller, 1994-2000).

⁹⁸ Daniel 2: "The four metals of Nebuchadnezzar's dream represent four successive world kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. . . . The mix between the feet of iron and clay is the weakness of the world before the Second Coming. The stone is the Christ, which will come at the end of the world, accompanied by the angels and bring peace. . . . Christ is present in his Church, which is symbolized by filling of the world with the stone. It is implied that the Second Coming will come when the Church fills up the entire world" (Sanders, *Beati in Apocalypsi*, 136, translation mine).

⁹⁹ Daniel 7: "The four beasts represent four world kingdoms. The four angels in Rev 7 also represent four world kingdoms. The last kingdom is Rome" (Sanders, *Beati in Apocalypsi*, 360, translation mine). "Before Christ's coming, one little horn will arise. This will occur in the future when the Roman Empire will be destroyed. (Beatus doesn't consider that Rome has fallen yet; he possibly considers the Byzantine kingdom or the Kingdom of the Franks as a legitimate successor to the Roman Empire.) "Then the ten kings will split the kingdom among themselves in ten parts. Then another king will arise among those and destroy three kingdoms. These three kingdoms are Egypt, Africa and Ethiopia. This king who does this is a son of perdition, the Antichrist that sits in the temple of God making himself God" (Sanders, *Beati in Apocalypsi*, 136, translation mine).

¹⁰⁰ Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 2:205; for Bede see p. 206-7 of this study.

Beatus returns to Victorinus's interpretation of the seals and trumpets. The first seal represents the pure Church of the apostles. The second represents future wars, which must fall upon the world. The third and fourth seals represent the spiritual corruption of the Church at the time of the Antichrist and the false brethren who dominate the Church. The fifth and sixth seals represent the tribulations of the martyrs just prior to the Second Coming of Christ.¹⁰¹

The first five trumpets symbolize the timeless reality of the Church struggling with false brethren, hypocrites, those who work for the Antichrist, and infidels. The sixth trumpet represents the time of the Antichrist.¹⁰² The two witnesses preaching for 1,260 days in Rev 11 describe the preaching of Elijah during the three and a half years of the Antichrist's reign.¹⁰³ At the same time, they represent the Old and the New Testaments, and their preaching that endures for a longer period. Beatus literally copies the passage from Tyconius, who states that this three and a half-year period also represents 350 years from the Passion of Christ until the Second Coming of Christ.¹⁰⁴

Even though Beatus lived in a time when Spain was under Muslim occupation, no open reference to Islam can be found in the text. Beatus copies Tyconius verbatim in Rev 13 and writes that the beast with the seven heads represents "the body of the devil." The

¹⁰¹ Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 2:343; for Victorinus see p. 142 of this study.

¹⁰² Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 2:409-440.

¹⁰³ Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 2:443.

¹⁰⁴ The three and a half days of the Two Witnesses laying dead in Rev 11:9 also represent the three and a half years and at the same time three and a half centuries (Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 447). For this view supported by Tyconius, see p. 164 of this study. This was also an early Jewish view reported by Justin Martyr (see p. 124 of this study).

seven heads represent various antichristian kings, of whom the last one will be the final Antichrist.¹⁰⁵ The lamb-beast represents the bishops, priests, and false prophets who are Christ-like in appearance but follow the Antichrist.¹⁰⁶

In his interpretation of the seven kings from Rev 17, Beatus diverges from Tyconius and instead reflects Victorinus. The “seven kings” (Rev 17:9-11) represent the seven Roman emperors of the second half of the first century: Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, and Nerva. The “eighth king” (Rev 17:11) is the future Antichrist.¹⁰⁷

One of Beatus’s most original thoughts is certainly the assertion of a future thousand years. In describing the various numbers in the book of Revelation, Beatus digresses into a discussion on 6,000 years of human history. He claims that according to his mathematical calculations the world will end in the year AD 838.¹⁰⁸ Even though the sixth millennium expires and a final seventh millennium commences in the year 838, Beatus does not believe this final thousand-year period is the same as the one described in Rev 20. Instead, Beatus reflects Tyconius and asserts that the “thousand years of Satan’s captivity” described in Rev 20:5 refer to the ongoing (in his time) period of

¹⁰⁵ Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 472-74.

¹⁰⁶ Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 479-91.

¹⁰⁷ Sanders, *Beati in Apocalypsi*, 495, 496.

¹⁰⁸ Sanders, *Beati in Apocalypsi*, 367-68, Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 369-70.

Christian dispensation, the sixth millennium, which ends with the appearance of the Antichrist, who is destroyed by the brightness of the Second Coming of Christ.¹⁰⁹

Iberian Apocalyptic Views (9th-11th century)

Besides Beatus, there were other voices from the Iberian Peninsula expounding upon the figures and motifs of the book of Revelation. In the mid-ninth century a movement of *voluntary martyrs* arose who oppose the Islamic rule of Spain.¹¹⁰ Around the year 848 a brief anti-Muslim tract began circulating throughout the Iberian Peninsula, identifying the number 666 in Rev 13:18 as the year of Mohammed's death.¹¹¹

Shortly after the appearance of the anti-Muslim tract, the Spanish scholar and poet, Alvaro of Cordoba (ca. 800-861), produced *Induculus Luminosus*. In it, he identifies Mohammed as the "little horn" of Dan 7 that sprang up after the breaking of the "fourth beast" (Rome). Making use of the references to seventy years in Psa 90 and Dan 9, and multiplying this number with the three and a half times in Dan 7:25 and Dan 12:7, Alvaro calculated that the Islamic rule should end in AD 870.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Echegaray, *Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana*, 418-420.

¹¹⁰ Charles Tieszen, *Christian Identity amid Islam in Medieval Spain* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 34-41; see also Ron Barkai, *El enemigo en el espejo: cristianos y musulmanes en la España medieval* (Madrid, Spain: Rialp, 2007), 52-3.

¹¹¹ See Manuel Diaz y Diaz, "Los textos antimohamitanos mas antiguos en códices españoles," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littérature du Moyen Age* 37 (1970): 149-164.

¹¹² Alvaro of Cordoba, *Induculus Luminosus* (PL 121:513-556); Spanish-Latin edition by Feliciano Delgado Leon, *Alvaro de Cordoba y la Polemica contra el Islam: el Induculus Luminosus* (Cordoba, Spain: Cajasur, 1996), 21; for the English translation see Carleton M. Sage, *Paul Albar of Cordoba: Studies on His Life and Writings*. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1943), 30.

It is not known whether Joachim knew of Iberian Christian traditions equating Mohammed to the Antichrist. In any case, Joachim also interpreted the little horn from Dan 7 as a secular Muslim leader (Saladin). For Joachim, however, this power would join the real Antichrist—the religious impostor from the West (the little horn in Dan 8) who conquers Christian Europe, before “going into perdition” (Rev 17:11) at the Second Coming of Christ.¹¹³

Haymo of Auxerre

A member of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Germain d’Auxerre, Haymo (d. ca. 878) was the author of numerous biblical commentaries and theological texts. Many of Haymo of Auxerre’s texts were previously attributed to a German Benedictine monk Haymo of Halberstadt (d. 853).¹¹⁴

In his commentary on Revelation, Haymo is ahistorical when expounding the seven churches and seven seals. In his comments on the trumpets, however, he departs significantly from the timeless framework and identifies the first four trumpets with the chronological development of Church history.¹¹⁵ The periodization of Church history is also suggested by Haymo in his discussion of the six wings of the seraphim in Rev 4, where he intimates that the number six pertains to the work of Christ, completed in six

¹¹³ See pp. 91, 93-95 of this dissertation.

¹¹⁴ Justo L. Gonzales, *History of Christian Thought*, rev. ed. 3 vols. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987), 2:122.

¹¹⁵ “The angels [that blow the trumpets] represent the universal preachers of the Church. However, for as they turn succeeding one another, as martyrs succeeding apostles, thus martyrs are followed by confessors and virgins, in the same manner is here distinguished calling them, first, second, third etc.” (Haymo of Auxerre, *Expositionis in Apocalypsin Beati Joannis Libri Septem* [PL 117:1048], translation mine).

ages of the world. Haymo suggests that the six wings (and the six seals) have a dual application, representing the history of salvation from Adam to Christ and the history of salvation from Christ to the Second Coming.¹¹⁶ Joachim later adapts this concept into a more comprehensive historical system.

The first three trumpets represent the successive appearance of the apostles, the martyrs, and the confessors and virgins (the rise of monasticism). The following fourth development of the Church is the period of heretics represented by the fourth trumpet. By this, Haymo alludes to the Trinitarian and Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries.¹¹⁷ The final three trumpets and seals describe heresies that arise at the end of time.¹¹⁸

The two witnesses in Rev 11 represent Enoch and Elijah, who appear at the end-time to preach the gospel for a period of 1,260 days, or three and a half years. After they finish their preaching, they are killed by the Antichrist. The final persecution of the Church arises, symbolized by the two witnesses being slain for three and a half days.

¹¹⁶ Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1010. For more details on Haymo's theology of history see Derk Visser, *Apocalypse as Utopian Expectation* (New York, NY: Brill, 1996), 57.

¹¹⁷ "One third of the sun and moon and the stars are darkened. . . . The two thirds, however, remain in clarity: the good prelates, the doctors and the auditors. . . . Thus when the heretics were in the Church, the light was almost lost but the error was detected . . . and these infidels were expelled from the Church. The sun, moon, and stars were stricken when the heretics attacked the Church and they were obscured when the Church expelled them and anathematized them openly . . . and the eagle was flying over the sky. This predicts that the Church will remain united" (Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1049, 1050, translation mine).

¹¹⁸ Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1051-1060.

According to Haymo, these three and a half days must be converted “one year for one day,” according to the system shown in Num 14 and Ezek 4.¹¹⁹

The woman in Rev 12 represents the Church of God being persecuted by Satan, the great dragon. The seven heads of the dragon represent all the kings, who were used by Satan to persecute the Church for 1,260 days. Just like Joachim, Haymo explicitly mentions Herod as one of the heads of the dragon who persecuted the woman in the prophecy. He also explains that the mystic number of 1,260 days endures for the entire time of the Christian dispensation: “although this number [the 1,260] especially belongs to the times of Antichrist, the time can be referred, however, to everything in the present, that is, from the Lord's Ascension until the end of the world.”¹²⁰

The beast that arises from the sea in chapter 13 at the same time represents the Devil, but also the final Antichrist. This beast shall fully be revealed after the symbolic period of 1,260 days, during which the Church wanders in the wilderness. At the same time, Haymo asserts that the beast is, at this time, present through impious and wicked kings, represented by the seven heads of the beast. Although Haymo does not give precise historical identities to the seven heads, he does, however, mention that the beast's

¹¹⁹ Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1070-74; “Unde et postea quadraginta annos permanserunt in deserto, Domino dicente ad Moysen [Num 14:34]: ‘Diem pro anno dedi vobis.’ Similiter et ad Ezekielem (4:6)” (Hence after they remained forty years in the wilderness, the Lord said to Moses:’ [Num 14:34] I give you a day for a year.’ A similar thing is found in Ezekiel [Ezek 4:6]) (Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1074c, translation and brackets mine).

¹²⁰ “Quamvis hic numeru specialiter pertineat ad tempora Antichristi, tamen ad omne praesens tempus potest referri, a Domini scilicet ascensione usque in finem saeculi” (Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1084d, translation mine).

“two feet like a bear” represent the Roman emperors Vespasian and Titus—two persecutors of Christians and Jews in the early Church.¹²¹

The head of the beast that is mortally wounded but gets healed (Rev 13:3) is the Antichrist, the final impostor, who through his death and resurrection (whether spiritual or literal) pretends to be Christ. The Antichrist leads people in false worship for the duration of “forty-two months” (Rev 13:5), which are a literal three and a half years. Many Christians follow him because of the miracles performed by his false prophets. His preachers and false prophets are symbolized by the beast with two horns like a lamb (Rev 13:11).¹²²

The seven vials described in Rev 15-16 represent, for Haymo, the punishment of God upon the wicked in historical succession. The first two vials fall upon the Jews who crucified Christ. The third vial falls upon Gentiles like Nero, who persecuted Christians, and also upon false philosophers such as Plato and Virgil.¹²³ The pattern of the first three vials seems somewhat similar to the pattern developed by Joachim of Fiore. The fourth vial represents the intense persecution performed by the Antichrist and his followers at the end-times. The fifth vial falls upon the seat of the beast, meaning the entire body of the devil. The sixth and seventh vials fall upon various types of sinners. These

¹²¹ Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1094a.

¹²² Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1094-1096, and 1098-1100. Just as the beast from the sea represents both the antichristian powers that existed throughout the Christian era and in the same time the final Antichrist, so also the 42 months represent for Haymo both the final three and a half years of the Antichrist’s persecution but also in the same time, the entire period of the Christian church from the Ascension to the end (see particularly Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1095d).

¹²³ Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1126-1128.

punishments, Haymo says, are not physically but spiritually painful, as the torment of sin burdens the conscience of the sinners.¹²⁴

Haymo also suggests some historical allusions in his interpretation of Rev 17. He introduces a new idea among the Latin expositors that the harlot Babylon represents a religious power.¹²⁵ For Haymo, the harlot Babylon is the church of the Jews and Pagans, which helped the beast (the Devil) to persecute first the apostles and prophets and later the holy martyrs and other Christian saints. Haymo also attempts to historically identify some of the seven kings of the beast, such as Nero, Domitian, and other cruel persecutors. The last king is the Antichrist.¹²⁶

Lastly, Haymo maintains the Augustinian view of the present millennium. The thousand years begin with the birth of Jesus and close at the end-time, when Christ comes to destroy the Antichrist and the false prophets.¹²⁷ Besides the commentary of Venerable Bede, Haymo's interpretation is closest to Joachim's expositions thus far.

¹²⁴ Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1128-1133.

¹²⁵ Most medieval expositors identified the woman Babylon in Rev 17 with either the "worldiness" or the "body of the Devil," or imperial Rome. Andrew of Caesarea was the first among the Greeks to equate it with religious power—a sum of all pagan religions (see p. 259 of this study). Joachim asserts that Babylon is present "wherever the false and simoniac Christians are found" (Joachim, EA, 194b, see p. 99 of this study).

¹²⁶ Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1139-1146.

¹²⁷ Haymo, *Expositionis*, 1181-91.

Berengaud of Ferrière

Elements of a historical-chronological approach also can be seen in the *Expositio Super Septem Visiones Libri Apocalypsis*, written by Berengaud de Ferrière (fl. ca. 860) around the end of the ninth century.¹²⁸ Berengaud's determination was to suggest more historical details for various symbols in the book of Revelation, which would resolve the uncertainty of the previous expositors.¹²⁹

In order to place the book of Revelation in history, Berengaud proposed the division of the world's history into seven ages. He placed the historical scheme of the first seven seals in five major periods between Adam and the birth of Christ. The first four seals describe salvation history: (1) from Adam to the flood, (2) from the flood to Moses, (3) from Moses to Elijah, and (4) from Elijah to Christ. The fifth seal represents the martyred apostles. The sixth seal depicts tribulation during the time of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. The seventh seal retrogrades a little to symbolize the birth of Christ, which in turn ushers in the Christian era.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Berengaud de Ferrière, *Expositio Super Septem Visiones Libri Apocalypsis* (PL 17:765-970). This commentary was previously erroneously attributed to Ambrose of Milan. For the debate around Berengaud's identity and the date of composition see Derk Visser, *Apocalypse as Utopian Expectation (800-1500); The Apocalypse Commentary of Berengaudus of Ferrière and the Relationship between Exegesis, Liturgy and Iconography* (New York, NY: Brill, 1996), 3-26 and 87-94.

¹²⁹ Berengaud's applications are so strongly historical that some recent historians were persuaded that Berengaud was the "first to suggest that Revelation described events through history to the writer's day" (I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis, and Ian Paul, *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Letters and Revelation* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011], 342).

¹³⁰ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 812-848. Joachim has a similar division of the seven ages from Adam to Christ. However, differentiating between the opening of the seals and the actual message of the seals, he applies the seven OT ages only to the opening of the seals. The actual message of the seals symbolizes the seven periods between the First and the Second Advent of Christ.

The trumpets follow a similar historical order, according to Berengaud. The first four trumpets cover the time between Adam and Christ, while the last three trumpets describe the events from Christ onwards.¹³¹ The fifth trumpet represents the Gnostic heretics who arose after the death of the apostles, such as Nicolas at the end of the first century. The tormenting locusts in the sixth trumpet (Rev 9) for Berengaud describe the period of the early Church martyrs and the persecution by the Roman emperors.

The scenes of the sixth trumpet continue with the great angel who appears in chap. 10. This angel represents the success of the Church despite the threats from heresy and persecution. This is where the Church is now, argues Berengaud. However, soon the Church will be persecuted. This is described in Rev 11 where the “two witnesses”—meaning, the faithful Christian ministers—are portrayed as persecuted by the Antichrist. The final sounding of the seventh trumpet brings the end of time and the final judgment of God.¹³²

Revelation 12 repeats again the story of the Christian Church, which is here persecuted by the red dragon (Rev 12:3).¹³³ Berengaud, similarly to Joachim, identifies the seven heads of the dragon as seven major evil forces that persecuted the people of God through history. Following the same history as the seals and trumpets, the seven heads of the dragon represent the reprobates of all the ages. The first four heads represent the evil kings and false prophets from Adam to Christ. The fifth head represents the

¹³¹ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 850-854.

¹³² Berengaud, *Expositio*, 855-865.

¹³³ For Berengaud, the woman clothed in sun in Rev 12:1-2 is also an allusion to Mary, mother of Jesus.

apostate Jews who killed Jesus and persecuted the apostles. The sixth head represents the persecutors of the Christian church throughout the Christian era, and the seventh head represents the coming Antichrist.¹³⁴ The “time, times and half a time” of the Church’s pilgrimage into the wilderness represent the whole period from the First to the Second Advent of Christ.¹³⁵

The beast with seven heads, rising from the sea in Rev 13, represents the body of the devil, which persecuted the Christian Church at various times and in different forms. One of the heads received a mortal wound, through the efforts of holy doctors and teachers of the Church; namely Ambrose, Hillary, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, and others.¹³⁶ However, the mortal wound heals when the Antichrist appears to persecute the saints for the period of forty-two months (Rev 13:4) or three and a half years. This Antichrist will be accompanied by one of his disciples, the false prophet doing miracles, who is symbolized by the lamb-beast from Rev 13:11.¹³⁷

The seven last vials in Rev 15-16 represent, for Berengaud, the wrath of God, which has fallen upon the wicked during seven major stages of world history, from Adam to the Second Coming. These fall upon (1) the wicked antediluvians that sinned with ungodly women. (2) The idolatrous nations after the flood. (3) The Jews who were bound “under the Law” but did not keep God’s commandments. (4) The false prophets who

¹³⁴ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 876bc.

¹³⁵ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 880d.

¹³⁶ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 883.

¹³⁷ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 886.

incited the Jews to reject the real prophets of God. (5) The blinded Jews who killed the Lord Jesus and persecuted the Apostles. (6) The persecutors of the Christian Church who attempted to extinguish the faith of Christ. (7) Finally, the seventh plague is reserved for Antichrist and his servants at the end times.¹³⁸

Berengaud's historical framework can also be traced in his interpretation of Rev 17. The seven heads of the beast represent the sum of the wicked leaders who have ruled the world throughout all seven ages of history, from Adam to Jesus' Second Coming.¹³⁹ The beast who "was, is not and comes out of the bottomless pit" (Rev 17:8) represents Satan who "was" in full power before Christ, "is not" during the period of the Christian dispensation and "will come out of the bottomless pit" during the period of Antichrist.¹⁴⁰ The great harlot in Rev 17 is a convenient symbol for Pagan Rome where street prostitution was common, claims Berengaud. The harlot is devoured by ten horns (Rev 17:12), namely ten barbarian tribes who devastated the Roman Empire. Berengaud enumerates the ten horns in this way:

The ten horns . . . represent those kingdoms by which Roman Empire was destroyed. Saracens snatched and then totally subjected Asia; Vandals conquered Africa, Goths (Spain), Lombards (Italy), Burgundians (Gaul), Franks (Germany), Huns (Pannonia), finally Alans and Suevi depleted many places of their population.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 901.

¹³⁹ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 912-13.

¹⁴⁰ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 997

¹⁴¹ "Decem cornua . . . significant quippe ea regna, per quae Romanum imperium destructum est. Partem namque Asiae per se primitus abstulerunt: postea vero Saraceni totam subegerunt: Vandali Africam sibi vindicaverunt, Gothi Hispaniam, Longobardi Italiam, Burgundiones Galliam, Franci Germaniam, Hunni Pannoniam: Alani autem et Suevi multa loca depopulate sunt" (Berengaud, *Expositio*, 914-15, translation mine).

Similarly to Jerome and Theodoret, Berengaud holds that the appearance of the ten horns from Rev 17 and Dan 7 was an event, which has already happened or is in process of happening. The only thing to expect before the coming of the Lord is the arrival of the Antichrist, who must arise from one of these ten kingdoms.¹⁴²

Though writing with much originality in the interpretation of the seals, trumpets, seven heads, ten horns and other prophecies, in interpreting the millennium in chap. 20, Berengaud does not depart from Augustine and Tyconius' view. The millennium is not a literal period but a spiritual number describing the entire time from the First to the Second Advent.¹⁴³ Overall, however, Berengaud's commentary represents a decisive step towards introducing features of historicism into the Latin West.

The Crisis of the Year 1000

Though Augustine and Jerome argued against attempts to calculate the time of the end, ironically their interpretation of Revelation contributed to the sense of end-time crisis that swept across Christendom in the tenth century. While Augustine specifically said that the millennium might not be as long as one thousand years, few expected that it would be longer. Thus, around the year 1000 there was a definitive expectation among many Christians that the millennium was about to expire and that the Lord was about to appear from the sky.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Berengaud, *Expositio*, 915. Berengaud quotes Jerome as advised by Augustine in *Civitate Dei* 20:23.

¹⁴³ Berengaud, *Expositio*, 968-72.

¹⁴⁴ Modern scholarship seems to increasingly acknowledge the existence of serious apocalyptic expectations around the turn of the first millennium. Michael Frassetto, *The Year*

As early as the eighth and ninth centuries there is evidence of millennial fervor, and the expectation of the imminent end of the world.¹⁴⁵ By the year 980 the millennial movement had gained many followers who expected the end around the year 1000.¹⁴⁶ Many concluded that if Satan had been bound, and the millennium had begun with Christ's First Advent, then Satan was due to be released in the year 1000 or 1033.¹⁴⁷

When the years 1000 and 1033 passed and nothing happened, many began to question the reason for delay. Commentators on eschatology and on the book of Revelation ultimately split into two groups: (1) those who continued advocating Augustine's amillennialism and ahistoricism, and (2) those who attempted to make sense of the delay of the Second Coming by interpreting Revelation as the prediction of Church history.

1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium (New York, NY: Macmillan, 2002), provides a balanced and nuanced approach to the issue. He distinguishes between the traditional views that identify a time of fear (the "terrors of the year 1000") and those that deny an awareness that the millennium existed. Frassetto recognizes that there were a variety of responses to the eschatological years 1000 and 1033 and that these responses contributed to the broader social and religious developments associated with the birth of European civilization.

¹⁴⁵ See reports by Alcuin (AD 760) and Bede (AD 730) about apocalyptic fervor in their time in Richard Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000: Augustinian Historiography, Medieval and Modern," *Speculum* 75 (January 2000), 115-120; see also Beatus of Liebana's expectation of the end in AD 838 (p. 213 of this study).

¹⁴⁶ Growing perceptions of the greed and immorality practiced by Christian clergy and royalty reinforced the idea that the time for God's judgment had come. See Johannes Fried, "Awaiting the End of Time around the year 1000," Richard Landes, ed., *Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change 950-1050* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2003), 17-64.

¹⁴⁷ The year 1033 was expected because the year AD 33 was considered to be the year of the death of Jesus (Landes, "The Fear of an Apocalyptic Year 1000," 117).

Expositors Contemporary to Joachim

Anselm of Laon

Anselm of Laon (ca.1050-1117) from Northern France returns to ecclesiastical idealism manifested in early medieval writers such as Caesarius and Primasius.¹⁴⁸ For Anselm, the first five seals are not in chronological succession. The sixth and seventh seal are the only firmly historical ones, as they symbolize the time of the Antichrist, followed by the respite from the tribulations. The first four trumpets also represent the timeless struggle between the Church and the Devil. The fifth and sixth trumpets depict the heresies during the period of the Antichrist.¹⁴⁹

The two witnesses represent the Holy Scriptures. Both, the forty-two months in Rev 11:2, and the 1,260 days in Rev 11:4, represent three and a half years of the persecution of the Antichrist.¹⁵⁰ The 1,260 days and the “time, times and half a time” of the Church being persecuted by the Devil (Rev 12:6, 12:14) represent, again, the future three and a half years of the Antichrist’s persecution.¹⁵¹

The first beast in Rev 13:1-10 is the Antichrist, and the lamb-like beast in Rev 13:11 depicts the apostles of the Antichrist who do miracles in his stead and carry out his persecutions. There is no mention of the seven heads or ten horns.¹⁵² The seven vials

¹⁴⁸ Anselm of Laon, *Enarrationes in Apocalypsin* (PL 162:1499-1586).

¹⁴⁹ Anselm, *Enarrationes*, 1522-1536.

¹⁵⁰ Anselm, *Enarrationes*, 1539-40.

¹⁵¹ Anselm, *Enarrationes*, 1544.

¹⁵² Anselm, *Enarrationes*, 1546-48.

represent God's punishments upon the Antichrist and his followers.¹⁵³ The harlot represents Babylon or the world. The beast "who was, is not and will come out of the bottomless pit" (Rev 17:8) is the Devil who "was" before Christ's advent, "is not" during Christian dispensation, and "will come out" at the arrival of the Antichrist. The seven heads of the beast represent the seven mortal sins.¹⁵⁴

Anselm closes his idealistic and spiritual exposition on Revelation with the description of a present millennium. During the period of his writing, Anselm states that Satan is "bound" by Christ until he is released at the time of the Antichrist. These events are followed by the second resurrection, that of the saints.¹⁵⁵

The "Glossa Ordinaria"

Originally composed around 1120-50, *Glossa Ordinaria* ("A Simple Commentary") represents an assemblage of Bible glosses and annotations from Church Fathers and other patristic sources, printed in the margins of the Vulgate Bible. While Anselm of Laon is often credited with involvement in the initial project, it also draws on earlier glosses and other sources. It is believed that the first edition has been completed sometime after Anselm's death by a group of his disciples.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Anselm, *Enarrationes*, 1554.

¹⁵⁴ Anselm, *Enarrationes*, 1560-63.

¹⁵⁵ Anselm, *Enarrationes*, 1572-73.

¹⁵⁶ *Glossa Ordinaria* was long credited to Walafrid Strabo. The misattribution was first shown by Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University, 1941). For a survey of other medieval short glosses see M. T. Gibson, "The Place of the *Glossa ordinaria* in Medieval Exegesis," *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers*, ed. M. D. Jordan and K. Emery, Jr. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1992), 9, 23.

The earliest manuscripts of *Glossa Ordinaria* on the book of Revelation are not yet available in critical form.¹⁵⁷ Jean-Paul Migne's edition is based on later manuscripts, which reveal influences of the Latter Middle Ages historicist catholic exegesis.¹⁵⁸ Hence, Migne's edition is not relevant for our examination of possible influences on Joachim. The earliest printed gloss on the book of Revelation (Strasbourg, AD 1480) was copied from 13th and 14th century *Glossa* manuscripts and is much closer to the original *Glossa* by the school of Laon.¹⁵⁹

The seals and the trumpets historically parallel each other. They portray the seven seals and seven trumpets as the processions of the events from the early Church to the coming of the Antichrist. The first seal depicts the time of the apostles. Next comes the persecution performed by the Gentiles during the second seal. This is followed by the heretics who denied the Holy Trinity—an obvious allusion to the fourth century Arian controversy. The fourth seal represents the “false brethren” and moral apostasy in the Church. The last three seals are interpreted as still being in the authors' future. They depict the tribulations related to the time of the Antichrist's soon coming.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ For a display of earliest manuscripts of *Glossa Ordinaria* see “Glosses et Commentaires de la Bible Au Moyen Âge,” accessed April 28, 2017, <http://glossae.net/en/node/52>.

¹⁵⁸ For the *Glossa* in Migne (attributed to Walafriid Strabo) see PL 114:710-752

¹⁵⁹ See *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria* (Strasbourg, France: Adolph Rusch 1480/81), facsimile reprint and intro by Karlfried Froehlich and Margaret T. Gibson (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1992), 4 vols, also available online on “Glossae Scripturae Sacrae,” <http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions.php?livre=../sources/editions/GLOSS-liber83.xml>.

¹⁶⁰ See chapter six of the Apocalypse commentaty in *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria*, (Strasburg, France: Adolf Rusch, 1480), accessed April 28, 2017, Glossae Scripturae Sacrae, http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?livre=../sources/editions/GLOSS-liber83.xml&chapitre=83_11

The seven trumpets recapitulate the seals. The first trumpet describes the unbelieving Jews, who rejected Messiah. The second trumpet predicts the persecution of Christians by the Gentiles. The third trumpet announces the appearance of the heretics and the fourth trumpet represents the internal hypocrisy in the Church. The last three trumpets, just like the seals, symbolize the actions of the Antichrist in the end times.¹⁶¹ The two witnesses in Rev 11 represent Enoch and Elijah, who preach for forty-two months or three and a half years during the time of the Antichrist.¹⁶²

The woman in Rev 12 is the Church. The dragon persecuting the Church for 1,260 days symbolizes for *Glossa* either the three and a half years of the preaching of Jesus or the three and a half years of the future preaching of Antichrist. The seven heads of the dragon represents all the major persecutors of the universal Church. The first beast in Rev 13 depicts the Antichrist while the second beast symbolizes his false prophets.¹⁶³

The seven plagues in Rev 16 represent future punishments of God upon all the reprobates, unbelieving Jews, impious Gentiles and preachers of Antichrist.¹⁶⁴ The great

¹⁶¹ See chapter eight and nine of *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria* (Strasburg, France: Adolf Rusch, 1480), accessed April 28, 2017, Glossae Scripturae Sacrae, http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?livre=../sources/editions/GLOSS-liber83.xml&chapitre=83_8

¹⁶² See chapter eleven of *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria* (Strasburg, France: Adolf Rusch, 1480), accessed April 28, 2017, Glossae Scripturae Sacrae, http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?livre=../sources/editions/GLOSS-liber83.xml&chapitre=83_11

¹⁶³ See chapters twelve and thirteen of *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria* (Strasburg, France: Adolf Rusch, 1480), in Glossae Scripturae Sacrae, accessed April 28, 2017, http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?livre=../sources/editions/GLOSS-liber83.xml&chapitre=83_12.

¹⁶⁴ See chapter sixteen of *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria* (Strasburg, France: Adolf Rusch, 1480), in Glossae Scripturae Sacrae, accessed April 28, 2017, <http://gloss->

harlot riding upon the scarlet beast in Rev 17 represents the Antichrist and his followers, who ride upon the Devil. The beast, which “was, is not and will come out of the bottomless pit” represents Satan, who “was” before Christ, “is not” during the Christian Dispensation, and will come up again after the end of the Christian millennium.¹⁶⁵ The seven heads of the beast represents seven major sins and heresies of the reprobate and immoral world. The millennium is a reality contemporary to the Christian dispensation where Christ binds Satan in the hearts of his followers.¹⁶⁶

The earliest versions of *Glossa*, hence do not depart much from medieval idealism, except providing a little more clarity to the chronology of the first four seals and the trumpets.

Richard of Saint Victor

Richard of Saint Victor presided over the notable Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris from 1162 to his death in 1173.¹⁶⁷ He wrote his commentary on Revelation at the same

e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?livre=../sources/editions/GLOSS-liber83.xml&chapitre=83_16.

¹⁶⁵ See chapter seventeen of *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria* (Strasburg, France: Adolf Rusch, 1480), in *Glossae Scripturae Sacrae*, accessed April 28, 2017, http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?livre=../sources/editions/GLOSS-liber83.xml&chapitre=83_17.

¹⁶⁶ See chapter twenty of *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria* (Strasburg, France: Adolf Rusch, 1480), in *Glossae Scripturae Sacrae*, accessed April 28, 2017, http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?livre=../sources/editions/GLOSS-liber83.xml&chapitre=83_17.

¹⁶⁷ Richard seems to have been of British origin; see Franklin T. Harkins and Frans van Liere, eds., *Interpretation of Scripture: Theory: A selection of works of Hugh, Andrew, Richard and Godfrey of St Victor, and of Robert of Melun* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2012), 289-94.

time that Joachim was abbot of Casamari. Richard mainly harmonizes with the *Glossa*'s tradition although with some differences in detail, particularly in Rev 16-19.

The third and fourth seals and trumpets are still identified as somewhat undefined heretics, false brethren and hypocrites in the Church. However, the second seal, for Richard, is firmly and history identified as a period of early Christian persecutions "from Nero to Constantine."¹⁶⁸ The first seal and first trumpet represent the beginning of the Gospel message being preached in Judea by the apostles. The sixth seal and the fifth and sixth trumpets traditionally describe the arrival of tribulations in the time of the Antichrist.¹⁶⁹

The two witnesses who preach for 1,260 days (Rev 11:3) are Enoch and Elijah who will oppose the rule of Antichrist during three and a half years of his reign.¹⁷⁰ The 1,260 days of the Church in the wilderness (Rev 12:6) also represent this future period of three and a half years.¹⁷¹ The first beast in Rev 13 is the Antichrist and the second beast that appears like a lamb represents false Christians who support the Antichrist in the end-times.¹⁷²

The seven plagues are not in the future for Richard of St. Victor. Instead, they describe the wrath of God poured upon various groups of wicked and rebellious people

¹⁶⁸ Richard of St. Victor, *In Apocalypsim Joannis* (PL 196:763, 764).

¹⁶⁹ St. Victor, *In Apocalypsim*, 769-775 and 785-788.

¹⁷⁰ St. Victor, *In Apocalypsim*, 196:792 - the three and a half days in Rev 11:9 and 11:11 are a literal three and a half days for St. Victor, *In Apocalypsim*, 793.

¹⁷¹ St. Victor here differs with *Glossa*, *In Apocalypsim*, 196:800.

¹⁷² St. Victor, *In Apocalypsim*, 196:805-808.

who oppressed the Church during the historical periods of seven seals and seven trumpets. The first plague falls upon the Jews, the second on the heathens, and the third on the heretics. The rest of the plagues must fall upon the Antichrist and his followers.¹⁷³ This resembles closely Joachim's system.

With slight differences, Richard reflects Berengaud's historical explanation of the seven kings in Rev 17. The seven kings are seven periods of the world. (1) From Adam to Noah. (2) From Noah to Abraham. (3) From Abraham to Moses, (4) From Moses to David. (5) From David to Christ—these “five have fallen”, (6) “One is”—from Christ to Antichrist, and finally (7) “a short time,” from the Antichrist until the Second Coming.

Just as in the *Glossa*, the beast “who was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit” (Rev 17:8) is the Devil who “was” before Christ, “is not” during the Christian era, and “shall ascend” at the end-time. The ten horns of the beast represent ten kings who will arise in the time of the Antichrist.¹⁷⁴ Finally, at the end of his commentary, Richard does not depart from the mainstream view of present millennium.¹⁷⁵

Bruno of Segni

Bruno (AD 1045-1123) was bishop of Segni and abbot of Montecassino in Campania, southern Italy, not far from Calabria where Joachim grew up and lived.

¹⁷³ St. Victor, *In Apocalypsim*, 196:819-830.

¹⁷⁴ St. Victor, *In Apocalypsim*, 196:834-37.

¹⁷⁵ St. Victor, *In Apocalypsim*, 196:853-56.

Among other biblical commentaries, Bruno of Segni is credited for writing an early twelfth century explanation of Revelation.¹⁷⁶

Even though Segni spends considerable amounts of time interpreting the seals and trumpets as a moral allegory applicable to all the periods of the Church, he also presents them as historical-chronological succession of events.¹⁷⁷ The first seal for Bruno represents the preaching of Christ and the apostles, the second seal is preaching through the blood of martyrs, which began with Nero. The third seal represents the church struggling against depraved members. The fourth seal depicts the church preaching against members who are filled with hatred and jealousy. The fifth seal revisits all the Christians martyrs, which have died for their faith. The sixth seal represents the period of Enoch and Elijah's preaching during the time of the Antichrist. The seventh seal represents the rest, or Sabbath, of the church.¹⁷⁸

The trumpets also seem to follow a certain chronological flow. The first trumpet represents a warning of God's punishment upon the Jews, heretics, and philosophers. The second trumpet more specifically addresses the punishments upon the anti-Christian tyrants. The third trumpet is specifically addressed to the heretics. Fourth trumpet

¹⁷⁶ Bruno Segni, *Commentaria in Apocalypsim* (PL 165:603-745). The abbey of Montecassino was the oldest monastery in Italy. It was established by Benedict of Nursia.

¹⁷⁷ The seven churches are idealistic and symbolize one universal church. Segni, *Commentaria*, 614.

¹⁷⁸ Segni, *Commentaria*, 635-638.

identifies Arians and Sabellians as specific heretics, against whom the church raises its voice. The fifth and the sixth trumpets represent the persecution of the Antichrist.¹⁷⁹

The two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah preaching for 1,260 days during the time of the Antichrist. Segni actually employs the year-day principle when commenting upon three and a half days in Rev 11:9. Like Haymo and Berengaud, he quotes Ezekiel 4:6 as a support for his computation.¹⁸⁰ The 1,260 days in Rev 12, however, represents the tribulation of the Church for “the entire time from the beginning of Christ’s preaching until the last-day.”¹⁸¹ The beasts in Rev 13 both represent the final Antichrist. The lamb-beast in Rev 13:11-18 is not a false prophet, but rather represents the Antichrist, who is the same entity as the first beast, after its deadly wound is healed.¹⁸² Joachim comes close to this interpretation.

Segni recapitulates the seven vials in Rev 16 and asserts that the seven cups of God’s wrath represent “seven orders of doctors” of the Church. Segni does not specify who these noted doctors of the Church are, however he asserts that they proclaim God’s judgment upon the wicked in seven successive periods of the Christian era.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Segni, *Commentaria*, 648-50.

¹⁸⁰ Segni, *Commentaria*, 664.

¹⁸¹ “Per dies autem mille et ducentos sexaginta omne tempus a Christ predicatione, usque a diem ultimum intelligimus” (Segni, *Commentaria*, 669, translation mine).

¹⁸² Segni, *Commentaria*, 677-78.

¹⁸³ “Septem videlicet angelos, id est septem doctorum ordines, qui sibi per diversa tempora succedebant, habentes plagas septem” (Thus, seven angels, having seven plagues, represent the seven orders of doctors who followed one another through different ages), (Segni, *Commentaria*, 688, translation mine).

The harlot Babylon (Rev 17:1) represents imperial Rome, which had persecuted many saints and martyrs. The beast, which carries the woman, represents nations, which were under the dominion of Rome.¹⁸⁴ Segni, like Berengaud and Richard of St. Victor, proposes that the seven heads of the beast represent seven stages of world history. Five had passed before the time of John the Apostle, the sixth stage represents the period of Christian dispensation, and the seventh stage will be a short time of persecution during the reign of the Antichrist.¹⁸⁵

Segni further reflects this approach in interpreting the nature of the beast that “was” in Rev 17:8. He identifies the beast as the dominion of pagan governments before the birth of Christ. “The beast is not” depicts the Christian dispensation of Segni’s time. The beast “shall ascend out of the bottomless pit” symbolizes the rebirth of the Pagan forces at the time of the Antichrist. The ten horns, however, do not represent the ten barbarian tribes that divide ancient Rome, as Berengaud proposed. For Segni they are in the future, and represent the multitude of kingdoms that will join the Antichrist.¹⁸⁶ Finally, in harmony with medieval tradition, for Segni, the millennium in Rev 20 describes the period from Christ’ First to His Second Advent.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Segni, *Commentaria*, 697-99.

¹⁸⁵ Segni, *Commentaria*, 699-700.

¹⁸⁶ Segni, *Commentaria*, 700-701; similarly to Glossa and Richard of St. Victor.

¹⁸⁷ Segni, *Commentaria*, 712-14.

Rupert of Deutz

Born in Liege in Belgium, Rupert of Deutz (1075-1129) was a Benedictine theologian and later the abbot of Deutz Abbey, near Cologne in Germany. In his commentary on the doctrine of the Trinity, written in 1125, Rupert divides history into three important periods, according to the work of the three Persons of the Godhead.¹⁸⁸ The idea of three stages of history seems to be later developed by Joachim on the basis of Rupert's writings.¹⁸⁹

Writing half a century before Joachim, Rupert's approach to the book of Revelation shows examples of a strong historical emphasis, much different to the approach of the school of Laon. In interpreting the seven seals, Rupert offers a unique combination of Tyconian typology, early medieval Christological anagogy, and historicist hermeneutics. Thus the seals, for Rupert, open the seven main stages of the life of Christ, which in turn serve as a prototype for the history of the Church.¹⁹⁰

The first seal represents the Incarnation and preaching of Christ and the beginning of the Christian Church. The second seal portrays the suffering of Christ on the cross but

¹⁸⁸ *De Sanctae Trinitate et de Operibus eius*, ed. Habanus Haacke in *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis* 21 and 23 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1971-72). For Rupert the three ages are following: (1) Father: from Creation to the Fall of Adam. (2) Son: From Adam to Christ, and (3) Spirit: From Christ to the general resurrection. Rupert maintains his arguments through his analysis of the three age arguments, especially focusing on the Age of the Spirit in *De glorificatione trinitatis et processione Sancti Spiritus* (PL 169:13-202).

¹⁸⁹ While Joachim and Rupert have much in common they pointedly diverged on their treatment of the Jews (see Ana Abulafia, "The Conquest of Jerusalem: Joachim of Fiore and the Jews," *The Experience of Crusading*, ed. Marcus Bull, 2 vols. [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2003] 1:143). For more on Rupert of Deutz see John H. Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1983).

¹⁹⁰ See Christological commentaries of Apringius (p. 199), pseudo-Alcuin (p. 200), and Oecumenius (p. 252 of this study); For Tyconius' Christocentric typology see pp. 163.

also depicts the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus and Vespasian. In the third seal, just as the false brother, Judas, sold Christ for thirty denarii, false brethren such as Arius and others appear in the Church and sell Christ by denying the doctrine of the Trinity. The fourth seal also describes the Arians as persecutors of other Christians. They deny Christ who, after his death on the cross, is glorified through resurrection and demonstrates His divinity.¹⁹¹ The fifth seal represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church after Christ's ascension. At the same time it typifies the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the martyrs who suffer persecution by the Antichrist. The sixth seal describes both the destruction of Jerusalem and the final tribulation at the time of the Antichrist.¹⁹²

Rupert reverts to the OT for interpretations of the seven trumpets. The trumpets represent God's punishments in the seven stages of sacred history from Abraham to Christ. The first trumpet depicts the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The second trumpet describes the punishment upon Egypt at the time of the exodus. The third trumpet addresses the Amorites during Israel's journey in the wilderness. The fourth trumpet describes the apostasy of Israel before it enters Canaan. The fifth trumpet describes Israel's downfall and apostasy, worshipping other gods during the period of the judges. The first section of the sixth trumpet describes the apostasy of Israel after Solomon, ushering in the exile to Babylon. The second part of the sixth trumpet describes

¹⁹¹ Rupert of Deutz, *In Apocalypsim Joannis Apostoli Commentaria* (PL 169:941-47).

¹⁹² Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 954-58.

the succession of four great kingdoms, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, from the exile to Babylon until the First Advent of Christ (depicted as a great angel in Rev 10).¹⁹³

The two witnesses in Rev 11 are relegated to the end of the world's history. They are, once again, Enoch and Elijah. They preach against the Antichrist for 1,260 days, or three and a half years.¹⁹⁴ However, the woman hiding in the wilderness for 1,260 days (Rev 12:6) represents the Church being persecuted for the entire period of the Christian era.¹⁹⁵ This is the time when the Devil persecutes the Church through the Roman emperors before Constantine as well as later, by the Arian emperors.¹⁹⁶ The "earth open[ing] its mouth" to save the woman from the dragon's flood (Rev 12:16) represents, for Rupert, the Council of Nicaea and the Council of Ephesus, which saved the Church from the Arian and Nestorian heresies.¹⁹⁷

The dragon's seven heads symbolize seven persecutors of God's people in sacred history. (1) The Egyptian pharaoh. (2) Jezebel. (3) Holofernes, in Babylonian captivity. (4) Haman the Agagite during the time of Medo-Persia. (5) Antiochus during the time of the Greek Empire. (6) Nero under the Romans and (7) the future Antichrist. The identities of the heads of the beast correspond to the identities of the heads of the dragon (Rev

¹⁹³ Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 978-1004; see also Visser, *Apocalypse as Utopian Expectation*, 4.

¹⁹⁴ Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1018-22. The three and a half days are only a short period of time (*breve tempus*) in the future. Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1032.

¹⁹⁵ "Diebus mille ducentis sexaginta, id est quando peregrinando in hoc saeculo persecutiones tolerat" (Twelve hundred and sixty days is the pilgrimage we are enduring in this present age) (Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1050).

¹⁹⁶ Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1059.

¹⁹⁷ Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1060-61.

13).¹⁹⁸ Joachim later identifies most of these persecutors as OT prototypes of persecutors in the Christian era.¹⁹⁹ The description of the beast in Rev 13, for Deutz, symbolizes the reign of the last head, the Antichrist himself. The other beast, which comes from the earth, represents false Christs and false prophets who arise together with the Antichrist.²⁰⁰

The seven vials repeat the message of the seven trumpets, representing God's judgment poured upon unbelievers throughout OT history.²⁰¹ The seven heads of the scarlet beast in Rev 17 are Egypt, Israel, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and the kingdom of the Antichrist, the same seven powers described in Rev 12-13.²⁰² Hence, from Rev 8-17, Rupert adopts a unique pretero-historical approach.

Finally, Rupert returns to classical Augustinianism in his exposition of the millennium. The thousand years in Rev 20 represent many years, but not necessarily one thousand. This period begins during Christ's First Coming when Jesus defeated the Devil, and when the Church began uprooting pagan religions. Satan is released at the end of the millennium, during the reign of the Antichrist.²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ PL 169:1043 and 1065-67. This description of the heads closely resembles the descriptions of Andrew of Caesarea and Berengaud of Ferrier, who similarly identify the seven heads of the dragon (or the scarlet beast in Rev 17).

¹⁹⁹ See pp. 69, 91, 113.

²⁰⁰ Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1078-79.

²⁰¹ Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1110-30.

²⁰² Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1132.

²⁰³ Deutz, *In Apocalypsim*, 1174-81.

Anselm of Havelberg

Anselm of Havelberg (1100-1158) was a German bishop and statesman, and a secular and religious ambassador to Constantinople. He was an important political and literary influence in the Middle Ages. Anselm advised three German rulers, acted as a papal legate, and held the offices of bishop of Havelberg and archbishop of Ravenna. He was a critic of the monastic life of his time, and a theorist of Christian history. He held theological discussions with Nicetas of Nicomedia, an account of which, at the request of Pope Eugene III, he wrote later as his *Dialogues*. His account tended to play down the theological differences between the East and West, and in this, Anselm reflects the influence of the Greek tradition in interpreting Revelation.²⁰⁴

In the reports of the dialogues between Latin and Greek theologians,²⁰⁵ Anselm adopts a historicist view of the seven seals prominent within the Greek tradition.²⁰⁶ The first seal is the apostolic Church. The second seal is the persecuted Church until the time of Diocletian. The third seal is the Church invaded by heretics such as Arius, Sabellius, Nestorius, and Eutyches. The fourth seal represents the Church attacked by internal hypocrisy. In this period there are some good doctors, including Augustine, Rufinus, Norbert, Bernard of Clairvaux, Benedict of Nursia, and Basil the Great. The fifth seal concerns all those who have suffered for the cause of God in all periods of history. The

²⁰⁴ For more information on Anselm's dialogues with the Greek Church see Jay T. Lees, *Anselm of Havelberg: Deeds Into Words* (New York, NY: Brill, 1998), 5, n.9.

²⁰⁵ See Anselm of Havelberg, *Dialogi* (PL 188:1139-1248).

²⁰⁶ See expositions of Andrew and Arethas of Cesarea on pp. 256-261.

sixth seal refers to the violent persecution by the Antichrist, which occur in the future of Anselm's time. The seventh seal depicts the eternal bliss and rest of the Church.²⁰⁷

Anselm strongly contributes to the introduction of concrete historical counterparts to apocalyptic symbols. This development heralds a definitive passage of Latin eschatology, from a period of idealist eschatology into a stage of explanations of Church history.²⁰⁸ Anselm was a Premonstratensian, an order closely related to Bernard of Clairvaux and Joachim's Cistercians. It is very likely Joachim was aware of Anselm's views on the seven seals. This could explain the similarities between their views.²⁰⁹

Gerhoh of Reichersber vs. Guibert of Nogent

Besides their turbulent interactions with the Eastern Church, Latin Christians in the early twelfth century were faced with the ever-growing threat of Islam. Many crusaders believed they were fulfilling a divine mission by establishing a Christian kingdom in Jerusalem, and thereby hastening the coming of the Antichrist. A clear witness to this was Guibert of Nogent (1053-1124), bishop of Puy, one of the major propagators of the First Crusade, who reported the speech of Pope Urban IV:

Antichrist . . . according to the etymology of his name . . . will attack Christians. And if Antichrist finds there [in Jerusalem] no Christians (just as at present when scarcely any dwell there), no one will be there to oppose him, or whom he may rightly overcome. According to Daniel and Jerome, the interpreter of Daniel, he is to fix his

²⁰⁷ Havelberg, *Dialogi*, 1149-1157; see also McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 114-116.

²⁰⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux also proposed four age divisions of Church History based on the four horses of Rev 6 (McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 109).

²⁰⁹ Herbert Grundmann is convinced of Anselm's influence on Joachim. *Studien über Joachim von Floris* (Leipzig, Germany: B. G. Teubner, 1927), 92-95; For more details on Anselm's theology of history see Walter Edyvean, *Anselm of Havelberg and the Theology of History* (Rome, Italy: Catholic Book Agency, 1972).

tents on the Mount of Olives; and it is certain, for the apostle teaches it, that he will sit at Jerusalem in the Temple of the Lord, as though he were God. And according to the same prophet, he will first kill three kings of Egypt, Africa, and Ethiopia, without doubt for their Christian faith.²¹⁰ This, indeed, could not at all be done unless Christianity was established where now is paganism. It is thus first necessary, according to the prophecy, that the Christian sway be renewed in those regions.²¹¹

The general public was well acquainted with these ideas of the Antichrist. They were propagated by means of various theatrical plays, such as *Ludus de Antichristo* (ca. 1160), a twelfth century liturgical drama of southern German origin, which promoted the idea of the Antichrist as a Jew persecuting Christians in Jerusalem.²¹²

Gerhoh of Reichersberg (1093-1169) was a highly outspoken voice against these eschatological ideas. Born in Polling, Bavaria, Gerhoh was one of the most distinguished German theologians of the twelfth century.²¹³ He was a provost of Reichersberg Abbey and a canon regular. In his *Libellus de Investigatione Antichristi* (Booklet on the Investigations of Antichrist), written in 1162, he tried to prove that the Antichrist should be conceived of neither as a person, nor as coming from Dan or from Babylon. Gerhoh, like Joachim, argues that the Antichrist will not reign in Jerusalem, and thus there is no

²¹⁰ This is most likely referring to “three horns” plucked up by the “little horn,” Dan 7:10, 24, and/or the “King of the North” subduing three African regions (Dan 11:43).

²¹¹ Edward Peters, *The First Crusade* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1998), 35-36, brackets mine.

²¹² Most likely the play was written ca. 1160. For a Latin edition see PL 213: 950-959. New Latin edition by Gisela Vollman-Profe, *Ludus de Antichristo* 2 vols (Lauterburg, France: Kummerle, 1981); English translation by J. Wright, *The Play of Antichrist* (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967).

²¹³ Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (New York, NY: Colombia University, 2000), 122 describes Gerhoh as “one of the major historical theorists of his time.”

need to send crusaders there to await his arrival.²¹⁴ For Gerhoh, these terms should be understood in a broader, spiritual way as referring to worldliness in the Church.²¹⁵

In 1142 Gerhoh wrote *Libellus de Ordine: Donorum Spiritus Sancti* (Booklet on the Order of Gifts of the Holy Spirit). Here he explains that, up to the time of his writing, there have been five occasions for which the trumpets have voiced the victory of the church: the victory of the apostles, the martyrs, the doctors, the monks, and the reformist popes (such as Gregory VII.) In the sixth period, the period during which he is writing, the Church proclaims victory over the simonists and sin-indulging “Nicolaitans.”²¹⁶ This periodization of Church history based on the template of the vision of the seven trumpets strongly resembles Joachim’s system.

Like Joachim does later, Gerhoh, in some of his writings, applies a form of ecclesiastic typology. He also parallels the history of Israel with the life of the Church. Like Joseph, one of the twelve patriarchs who is first thrown into a dungeon and later elevated to a position in the pharaoh’s court, the Church is initially persecuted by Pagan Rome before being elevated, by Constantine, into a position of privilege.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ For Gerhoh, the struggle between the emperors and the popes represents the unleashing of the forces of Gog and Magog from Rev 20:8 (Gerhoh, *De investigatione*, 1460).

²¹⁵ Gerhoh of Reichersberg, *De investigatione Anti-Christi* (PL 194:1443-1480); see also Jodok Stülz, “Des Propstes Gerhoh von Reichersberg Abhandlung: De investigatione Antichristi,” *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 20 (Vienna, Austria: 1858), 127-188.

²¹⁶ Damien and Odulphe van den Eynde and Angelin Rijmersdael, eds., *Libellus de Ordine: Donorum Spiritus Sancti in Gerhohi Praepositi Reichersbergensis Opera Inedita*, 2 vols. (Rome, Italy: Pontificium athenaeum Antonianum, 1955-56), 1:63-165.

²¹⁷ Gerhoh, *Scutum Canonicorum* (PL 194:498).

While Gerhoh condones the protection of the Church by secular administrations, he nevertheless opposes the Church's involvement in temporal enterprises. He laments the mingling of the spiritual and temporal powers. Bishops, according to Gerhoh, should not be both spiritual pastors for congregations and judges of worldly matters. For Gerhoh, this is a fulfillment of the Old Testament prototype of Jerusalem being overcome by Babylon.²¹⁸ Joachim very closely mirrors Gerhoh's ideas on this point. In Joachim's view, the Church is supposed to be the antitype of Israel, presenting a contrast to the theocratic and secular attitude of the Jewish dispensation.

Due to his view of the historical-chronological fulfillment of the seven trumpets, and his use of typology to determine the progress of the Church, Gerhoh can be legitimately considered a strong antecedent to Joachim and his ideas.²¹⁹

Summary and Implications

Chapter 5 provides a summary of Medieval Latin eschatology, from the sixth to the twelfth century. Early Latin writers (under the influence of Augustine) initially resisted the idea that the book of Revelation contains an inspired prediction of major events in the history of the Christian Church. However, writers such as Venerable Bede, Berengaud of Ferrière, Haymo of Auxerre, Bruno of Segni, Anselm of Havelberg, and others progressively established features of historical method. Joachim brought these ideas together and created a unique historical-chronological system. (See Table 8)

²¹⁸ Gerhoh, "Psalm 145," *Commentarius in Psalmos* (PL 194:906-910);

²¹⁹ Another connection between Gerhoh and Joachim is the appearance of a possible future angelic pope figures in Gerhoh's writings (see Bernard Töpfer, *Das kommende Reich des Friedens* [Berlin, Germany: 1964: Akademie-Verlag], 30-31).

Table 8. Seven seals in the early and high Latin middle ages.

7 SEALS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202)	Apostles	Martyrs Pagan Rome	Arians	Muhammad	False Christians	Antichrist tribulations	Millennium
Anselm of Havelberg (d. 1158)	Apostles	Martyrs Pagan Rome	Arians	False Christians	Martyrs in all ages	Antichrist tribulations	Rest
Rupert of Deutz (d.1129)	Apostles	Fall of Jerusalem	Arians	Arians	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulations	Rest
Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173)	Apostles	Martyrs Pagan Rome	Heretics	False Christians	Martyrs in all ages	Antichrist tribulations	Rest
Bruno of Segni (d. 1123)	Apostles	Martyrs Pagan Rome	Corrupt Christians	Corrupt Christians	Martyrs in all ages	Antichrist tribulations	Rest
Glossa Ordinaria (ca. 1150)	Apostles	Martyrs Pagan Rome	Heretics	False Christians	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulations	Rest
Anselm of Laon (d. 1117)	Church in all periods	Non- Believers	Heretics	False Christians	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulations	Rest
Berengaud of Ferrier (ca. 860)	Adam to Flood	Noah to Moses	Moses to Elijah	Elijah to Malachi	Martyred apostles	Destruction Jerusalem	Christian era
Beatus of Liebana (d. 798)	Pure Church	Future wars	Corruption Antichrist	Hypocrisy Antichrist	Martyrs Antichrist	Antichrist tribulation	Rest
Haymo of Auxerre (d. 878)	Church in all Times	Pagans	Evil people	Heretics	Martyrs in all ages	Antichrist tribulation	Rest
Venerable Bede (d. 735)	Church	Pagans	False brethren	Arian heretics	Victorious Christians	Antichrist tribulation	
Pseudo-Jerome (ca. 700)	Church	Martyrs in all times	Persecutors in all times	Hypocrites in all times	The righteous	Antichrist tribulation	Rest
Pseudo-Alcuin (d. 804)	Nativity	Baptism	Crucifixion	Burial	Resurrection	Ascension	Judgment
Apringius (d. 545)	Incarnation of Christ	Nativity of Christ	Passion of Christ	Death of Christ	Resurrection of Christ	Second Coming	Eternal Kingdom
Caesarius Primasius Autpertus (d. 542) (d. 560) (d. 780)	Apostles and prophets	“Sinister and Evil people”	“Sinister and Evil people”	“Sinister and evil people”	Martyrs in all times	Antichrist tribulation	Eternal rest

Seals and Churches: The only medieval expositor before Joachim to develop historical applications of the Seven Churches was the English writer, Bede. His pattern is incomplete but provides evidence of the awakening of historicist sentiments in the West. Medieval expositors such as Anselm of Havelberg, Rupert of Deutz, and Bruno of Segni exhibit the greatest similarity to Joachim's view of the seven seals. These expositors interpret the seven seals as the seven major period of the Christian Church.

Others such as Anselm of Laon, Caesarius, Autpertus, Beatus, and Primasius reflect a more idealistic approach when interpreting the seven seals. The idealistic approach sees the seven seals and the seven trumpets as the various moral influences in the Church and in the world, which affect the religious situation among the believers. This approach is not chronological as each seal or trumpet can be applied to various periods of the Christian Church.

Besides classical historicism and idealism, some Latin medieval scholars took a Christological approach in which the seals represent events in the life of Jesus. This approach is exhibited by Pseudo-Alcuin and Apringius. For them, the seven seals represent seven major events in the life of Jesus from incarnation to Christ' death and resurrection. Finally, there is also Berengaud's unique *pretero-historicist* approach, which counts the seven seals as the seven major periods from Adam all the way to the Second Coming of Christ.

Seven Trumpets: In the Latin Middle Ages, before Joachim, there was a wide divergence in the interpretation of the seven trumpets. Some writers such as Primasius and Bede, who adopted the idealistic approach in interpreting the seven seals, exhibited a more historical-chronological view of the trumpets. (See Table 9).

Table 9. Seven trumpets in the early and high Latin middle ages

TRUMPETS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202)	Christian Judaizers	Nicolaitan Gnostics	Arius Arians	Mohammed Saracens	Cathari and Pathareni	Forces of the Antichrist	Final destruction
Gerhoh of Reichersberg (d. 1169)	Preaching of apostles	Martyrs	Doctors	Monks	Reformist popes	Reform vs. simoniacs	Final judgment
Rupert of Deutz (d.1129)	Pharaoh (Egypt)	Jezebel	Holofernes (Babylon)	Haman (Persia)	Antiochus (Greece)	Nero (Rome)	Final Antichrist
Richard St. Victor (d. 1173)	Destruction of Jews	Unbelievers	Heretics	False Christians	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulation	Final judgment
Bruno of Segni (d. 1123)	Destruction of Jews	Martyrs Pagan Rome	Punished heretics	Punished Arians	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulation	Final judgment
Glossa Ordinaria (ca. 1150)	Period of apostles	Gentiles	Heretics	False Christians	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulation	Final judgment
Anselm of Laon (d. 1117)	Church in all periods	Unbelievers	Heretics	False Christians	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulation	Final judgment
Berengaud of Ferrier (ca. 860)	From Adam to flood	From Noah to Moses	From Moses to Elijah	From Elijah to Malachi	Nicolaitan Gnostics	Early Christian Martyrs	Final judgment
Beatus of Liebana (d. 798)	Pure Church	Pagans	False brethren	Hypocrites	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulation	Final judgment
Haymo of Auxerre (d. 878)	Preaching of apostles	Preaching of Martyrs	Virgins and monks	Against Arians	Antichrist heresies	Antichrist heresies	Final judgment
Venerable Bede (d. 735)	Pure Church	Pagans	Heretics	Hypocrites vs. Doctors	Antichrist tribulation	Antichrist tribulation	Final judgment
Pseudo-Jerome (ca. 700)	Preaching of apostles	Preaching to gentiles	Preaching to persecutors	Preaching to sinners	Antichrist heresies	Antichrist heresies	Final judgment
Primasius Autpertus Alcuin (560-600)	Preaching of apostles	Preaching to gentiles	Fallen Churchmen	Corrupt Doctors	Heretics: Montanus, Donatus	Antichrist heresies	Final judgment
Cassiodorus (ca. 585)	Future destruction	Future destruction	Future destruction	Future destruction	Future destruction	Future destruction	Future destruction
Caesarius (d. 542)	Punishment wicked	Punishment heretics	Punishment apostates	Punishment 'evil people'	Sinners heretics	Antichrist tribulation	Final judgment

In the interpretation of the seven trumpets, two main streams of thought emerge in this period, (ecclesiastical historicism and ecclesiastical idealism) with three minor deviations: Cassiodorus—the trumpets represent the punishments of God at the end of time; Rupert of Deutz—the trumpets represent history from Adam to the First Coming; Berengaud of Ferriere—the trumpets represent history from Adam to the Second Coming.

Tables 8 and 9 demonstrate that Joachim’s interpretation of the seals and trumpets bears conceptual similarities with several medieval antecedents. The greatest similarity lies in the recapitulation of the scheme of the seven seals, describing different stages of the Church history. At the same time, Joachim presents numerous unique thoughts. For example, he incorporates Islam and the apostate Christian empire into his historical scheme as the fourth and fifth seals.

The Seven Heads of the Dragon (Rev 12) and the Beast (Rev 13 and 17): For Joachim the seven heads of the red dragon in (Rev 12) and the seven heads of the beast (Rev 13, 17) represent seven major tormenters of Christians in history: Herod, Nero, Constantine II, Mohammed, the German emperors, Saladin and the final Antichrist. Although several medieval writers touched upon the figures of Herod, Nero, the Arian emperors and the final Antichrist in their historical or semi-historical schemes, Joachim offers a uniquely consistent historical continuum of the seven major Church persecutors in the Christian dispensation. (See Table 10).

The 1,260 days: The biblical 1,260 days (Rev 11:3, 12:6) is a period of time found exclusively in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. It is described as “forty-two months” in Rev 11:2 and 13:4. It is also described as “time, times and half a time” in Rev 12:14 and Dan 7:25 and 12:7. For the medieval writers, this prophetic number was either

Table 10. The seven kings in the early and high Latin middle ages

SEVEN HEADS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202)	Herod	Nero	Constantine II (Arian)	Mohamed	German Roman Empire	Saladin	Antichrist
Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129)	Sodom & Gomorrah	Egypt	Amorites	40 years Wandering	Apostasy in Judges	Solomon -Exile	Final Judgment
Richard St. Victor (d. 1173)	Adam to Noah	Noah to Abraham	Abraham to Moses	Moses to David	David to Christ	Christ to Antichrist	Antichrist to advent
Bruno of Segni (d. 1123)	Adam to Noah	Noah to Abraham	Abraham to Moses	Moses to David	David to Christ	Christ to Antichrist	Antichrist to advent
Anselm of Laon (d. 1117)	Adultery	Theft	Murder	Envy	Pride	Lust	Laziness
Berengaud of Ferrier (d. 860)	Adam to Noah	Noah to Abraham	Abraham to Moses	Moses to David	David to Christ	Christ to Antichrist	Antichrist to advent
Beatus of Liebana (d. 798)	Nero	Oton	Galba	Vespasian	Titus	Nerva	Antichrist
Haymo of Auxerre (d. 878)	Nero	Domitian	A Cruel King in history	A Cruel King in history	A Cruel King in history	A Cruel King in history	Antichrist
Venerable Bede (d. 735)	Cruel King in history	Cruel King in history	Cruel King in history	Cruel King in history	Cruel King in history	Cruel King in history	Antichrist
Primasius (d. 560)	End time king	End time king	End time king	End time king	End time king	End time king	Antichrist

associated with the three and a half years of persecution by the Antichrist, during the end-times, or it was a description of the time of the entire Christian dispensation. Joachim is aligned with the second interpretation; a framework relating to the entire Christian dispensation. Joachim develops this idea further by applying the year-day principle to it.

The year-day principle was employed by Primasius who defended its usage alluding to the forty years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness in Num 14:33-34. For Primasius, however, the year-day principle applies only to the "three days and an half" in Rev 11:9 and 11:11. Haymo, Beatus and Bruno of Segni also argued that the three and a half days in Rev 11:9 must be converted "each year for a day," according to the system shown in Num 14 and Ezek 4.²²⁰ No Medieval Latin writer, however, applied this method to the longer periods, such as the 1,260 days. In this, Joachim is unique among Latin expositors.

Millennium: The Augustinian view of the millennium dominated the early Latin Middle Ages. With regards to the millennium, Joachim here again significantly deviates from Latin medieval thought, striving to reestablish the hope in a future period of peace and deliverance.

²²⁰ Tyconius appears to be the first to perform this conversion in Rev 11:9, 11 (see p. 162-163 of this study)

CHAPTER 6

THE EASTERN AND NEAR EASTERN COMMENTATORS

Introduction

Chapter 6 presents an investigation into the connection between Joachim and Eastern eschatological thought, especially Byzantine, Syriac, Armenian, and Coptic apocalyptic traditions. Since Joachim frequently interacted with the Byzantine and Near-Eastern Christian traditions—especially during his pilgrimage to Palestine—there is a strong possibility that he became familiar with apocalyptic ideas that circulated in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the Byzantine East.¹

This chapter explores similarities between Joachim’s thought and early Byzantine Commentators such as Oecumenius and Andrew of Caesarea as well as his disagreement with Pseudo-Methodius tradition. Also, it takes a close look upon the affinities between Joachim’s expositions and the Near-eastern apocalypse commentators. Finally, the chapter closes with an overview of the Jewish historicist tradition up to the 1200s.

¹ Paul Alexander affirms some similarities between Joachim and Byzantine Apocalypticism (Paul J. Alexander, “The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses in the Medieval West and the Beginnings of Joachimism,” in *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. Ann Williams [Essex, UK: Longman, 1980], 80).

Major Byzantine Commentators

Oecumenius

Oecumenius (ca. 550) was a sixth-century Greek intellectual who wrote the earliest extant Greek commentary on Revelation (ca. 520-550).² Based on the number of surviving manuscripts, his commentary was not very popular in the Byzantine Empire.³

According to Oecumenius, visions of Revelation refer mainly to the principal events in the life of Christ. The six seals represent six periods of Christ's ministry between His baptism and His death on the cross. Oecumenius's approach resembles that of his contemporaries in the West, Apringius and Pseudo-Alcuin. The sixth seal, which discusses "the 144,000" (Rev 7:1-10), represents the faithful Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The saints described by the "great multitude" (Rev 7:11-19) symbolize the Gentiles who joined the Church through the efforts of the apostles, and also during the entire Christian dispensation. The seventh seal represents the Second Coming of Christ.⁴

² The sixth-century Oecumenius should not be confused with the ninth-century bishop Oecumenius of Trikka. For a critical Greek edition of Oecumenius's commentary on Revelation (ca. AD 500-530) see Marc De Groot, *Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, *Traditio Exegetica Graeca* 8 (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters, 1999); English translations are by John N. Suggit, *Oecumenius' Commentary on Revelation*, *Fathers of the Church* 112 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2006), and William Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries on Revelation: Oecumenius and Andrew of Caesarea*, *Ancient Christian Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2011), 1-107. For a discussion of the date of Oecumenius's commentary see Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, xxiii-xix.

³ Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou, in her dissertation entitled "Andrew of Caesarea and the Apocalypse in the Ancient Church of the East: Studies and Translation" (Québec City, Canada: Université Laval, 2008), 15-17, holds that "Oikoumenios" wrote his commentary at the end of the sixth century.

⁴ Suggit, *Oecumenius*, 71-82; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 34-5. For other christological views on seven seals see commentaries of Apringius (p. 199) and pseudo-Alcuin (p. 200 of this study). For Tyconius's Christocentric typology see pp. 163.

The seven trumpets, for Oecumenius, come chronologically after the seventh seal (Second Coming of Christ). The trumpets hence represent the punishment of the wicked in Hell. Oecumenius asserts that these punishments are eternal, although the fifth trumpet mentions only “five months” of suffering. These five months might refer to a period of more intense torture, after which suffering would be somewhat relieved.⁵ Oecumenius curiously asserts that even in these punishments God’s grace is still open for repentance.⁶

The forty-two months of measuring the sanctuary in Rev 11:2 refer to the Christian era between the First and Second Coming of Christ.⁷ The two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah, who are sent from heaven at the end of times to confront the Antichrist. They will preach for 1,260 days, meaning a specified “figurative or literal period of time,” after which the Antichrist will slay the two prophets.⁸

The focus of Rev 12-13 returns to events around the time of Jesus. The woman in Rev 12 is Mary, the mother of Jesus, who is persecuted by the dragon, who is Satan. The woman fleeing into the wilderness for “1260 days” represents the three and a half years during which Mary and Joseph were in Egypt, hiding from King Herod.⁹

⁵ Suggit, *Oecumenius*, 85-98; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 36-44.

⁶ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 40-41. This is why Oecumenius has been accused of exhibiting certain sympathies towards Origen’s belief in universal salvation (see Franz Diekamp, “Mittheilung über den neuaufgefundenen Commentar des Oekumenius zur Apokalypse,” *Sitzungsberichte der Königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaft* 43 [1910]: 1052-53).

⁷ Suggit, *Oecumenius*, 100-1; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 47-8.

⁸ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 47-8.

⁹ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 53-6.

The first beast in Rev 13, which comes out of the sea, represents the vile and wicked people who are possessed by the Devil in the time of Jesus' ministry on earth. The beast was wounded at the time of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, when many Jews were converted. Later, the beast was healed of its mortal wound when Jews killed the apostles and rejected the gospel. The second beast, coming out of the earth with two horns like a lamb, represents the Antichrist, who will appear at the end of times and deceive the Jews once more into believing in a false messiah.¹⁰

The seven vials in Rev 15-16 represent sufferings placed upon the wicked at the end of time, in order "to bring those to acknowledge God through torments who did not acknowledge their Master through his beneficent work."¹¹ The harlot in Rev 17 represents the great city of Rome, which has already been judged by God. The "many waters," upon which the Harlot sits, represent the many nations that were ruled by ancient Rome; the scarlet beast is the Devil who supported Rome's power.¹² The seven heads of the scarlet beast represent seven persecuting Roman emperors in chronological order: Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Severus, Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian.¹³

The mysterious eighth king is the Antichrist, who will come at the end of time. The ten horns represent ten rulers, who arise at the end of the Roman rule. As other Byzantine writers, Oecumenius, at the time of his writing, considers that the Roman

¹⁰ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 57-60.

¹¹ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 70.

¹² Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 72-4.

¹³ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 75.

Empire is still in power in its Byzantine form. When Byzantium falls, the ten smaller kingdoms will arise for a short time and Antichrist will ascend from among one of these ten rulers.¹⁴

At the end of his commentary, Oecumenius offers a unique interpretation of the millennium. In the Christological manner that characterizes his entire commentary, he interprets the “thousand years” as a symbolic period of Christ’s life and ministry on earth. During this time, Oecumenius asserts, the Devil was bound to the bottomless pit by Christ’s presence. The loosing of Satan and his efforts to gather the wicked to conquer the holy city (Rev 20:6) refer to “the time between the incarnation of the Lord and the consummation of the present age.”¹⁵

Oecumenius’s greatest emphasis is on the events surrounding the time of Christ’s ministry on earth. His second focus is the future events: the seven trumpets, the two witnesses, the lamb-beast, the Antichrist, and the seven vials. In commenting upon the “hundred and forty and four thousand” and the “great multitude” in Rev 7:9; the 1,260 days in Rev 11:2; and the seven heads of the beast in Rev 17, Oecumenius does suggest a somewhat historicist bridge between past and future events.¹⁶

¹⁴ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 75.

¹⁵ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, xxxi and 88-91.

¹⁶ See Suggit, *Oecumenius*, 9-13. In several passages, Oecumenius exhibits features of the northern African idealist and allegorical exegesis, particularly that of Origen and Cyril of Alexandria (AD 376–444) (Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, xxiv, xxv).

Andrew of Caesarea

Even though Oecumenius's work qualifies as the earliest Greek commentary on the book of Revelation, the most prominent eschatological voice of the Byzantine period is Andrew, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (563-637).¹⁷ Although Andrew does not mention Oecumenius by name, he repeatedly indicates that the mainstream Byzantine ecclesiastical circles did not accept his exegetical conclusions.¹⁸ Andrew quotes Methodius¹⁹ as confirmation of the tradition of the Greek fathers according to whom Revelation was written to shed light on the history of the Church and not to discuss things that happened in the past (such as Christ's life).²⁰

Andrew interprets the seven seals as seven successive categorizations of Church history. The first seal represents the time of the order of the apostles. The second seal represents the time of the order of the martyrs. The third seal represents the rejection of faith by many Christians due to persecution. In the fourth seal, Andrew sees the persecutions, events, and calamities between the time of Emperor Maximian (d. 313) and

¹⁷ PG 106:215-458 and 1387-94; for the critical edition of Andrew's commentary, see Joseph Schmid, *Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andrew von Kaisareia*, Münchener Theologische Studien I, Historische Abteilung (Munich, Germany: Karl Zink Verlag, 1955).

¹⁸ English translations of Andrew's commentary are available in Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea and the Apocalypse in the Ancient Church of the East: Studies and Translation," vol. 2; see also William Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries on Revelation: Oecumenius and Andrew of Caesarea*, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2011), 109-208.

¹⁹ "The mystery of the Incarnation of the Word was fulfilled long before the Apocalypse, whereas John speaks of the things that are present or future" (Methodius of Olympus [d. 311], *Symposium* 8.7, Ancient Christian Writers 27 [New York, NY: Paulist, 1996], 112).

²⁰ Andrew also asserts that in order to discern the historical application of the symbols, the interpreter needs the help of the Holy Spirit (Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:7).

the time of Andrew's writing (ca. 620).²¹ The fifth seal symbolizes the martyrs of God in all four periods. The sixth seal represents the future tribulation at the time of the Antichrist. The seven trumpets represent the judgment of God upon the wicked just before the final consummation.²²

The two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah. The forty-two months of "trampling the holy city" (Rev 11:2) and the 1,260 days of the preaching of the two witnesses (Rev 11:3) represent the three and a half year persecution of Christians by the Antichrist at the end of times.²³

Commenting on Rev 12, Andrew again quotes Methodius in asserting that the woman clothed with the sun represents not Mary, the mother of Jesus, but the Holy Church.²⁴ The dragon with seven heads represents the Devil, who persecutes the Church throughout time, but who drives the Church into the wilderness in particular (Rev 12:6, 12:14) for a literal three and a half years, in the time of the Antichrist.²⁵

²¹ Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:73-76; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 132-37.

²² Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:78, 102-114; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 143-149. Like Victorinus and Oecumenius, Andrew does not recapitulate the interpretations of the trumpets.

²³ Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:119-20; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 151-2. Andrew does not comment upon the three and a half days in Rev 11:9 and 11:11.

²⁴ See Methodius, *Symposium* 8.5 (Ancient Christian Writers), 27:110.

²⁵ Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:128-132; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 154-159. Andrew here disagrees with Methodius who states that this number signifies the entire period of the Christian dispensation "in which as she grows, our Mother [the Church] rejoices and exults during this time until the restoration of the new ages" (Methodius, *Symposium* 8.11, Ancient Christian Writers, 27:116). Andrew instead chooses to reflect Hippolytus in this matter, who also gives a literal interpretation. For him, it is the actual period "during which the tyrant

The beast coming out of the sea (Rev 13:1-9) represents the Antichrist. Much like Joachim, the seven heads of the beast represent various persecutors of the Church throughout Church history. Andrew does not identify all the heads but he does specifically mention the Arian Emperor Valens and the Pagan Emperor Julian.²⁶

In commenting upon the features of the beast “like unto a leopard, [with] the feet of a bear, and . . . the mouth of a lion” (Rev 13:2), Andrew asserts that this means the Antichrist's rule will include all of the areas represented by these animals: Greece, Persia and Mesopotamia.

The leopard means the kingdom of the Greeks, the bear that of the Persians, the lion is the kingdom of the Babylonians over which the Antichrist will rule, coming as king of the Romans, and abolishing their rule when he sees the clay toes of the feet, through which is meant the weak and fragile division of the kingdom into ten.²⁷

Andrew also repeats the early Church expectation that Rome will fall and that subsequently the Antichrist will arise. The Antichrist (which corresponds to the fourth beast in Dan 7) will be the king of the Roman Empire, of which Andrew was a citizen.²⁸ The second beast that arises from the earth (Rev 13:11) is the false prophet, the assistant of the future Antichrist, who shows signs and wonders to induce all to join the cause of

[Antichrist] is to reign and persecute the Church” (Hippolytus, *On Christ and Antichrist* 61 [ANF 5:217]).

²⁶ Constantinou, “Andrew of Caesarea,” 2:139, 140; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 160. Julian the Apostate (fl. 361-363) was the nephew of Constantine. When he ascended to the throne in 361 he openly advocated Paganism, reinstated measures to repress Christianity, and attempted to revive the worship of the traditional Greek gods. Valens (fl. 364-378) was an Arian who persecuted orthodox Christians, tolerated Paganism, and clashed with such notables as Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzus.

²⁷ Constantinou, “Andrew of Caesarea,” 2:140; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 160.

²⁸ Constantinou, “Andrew of Caesarea,” 2:140-141; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 160. It appears that for Andrew, the Roman Empire also continues in its Byzantine form.

the Antichrist.²⁹ The seven vials (Rev 15-16) represent the various punishments of God, which will fall upon the followers of the Antichrist and torment them just prior to the Second Coming of Christ.³⁰

Andrew displays an unbroken historical chain of events when commenting upon the harlot woman and the scarlet beast with seven heads or kings in Rev 17. The harlot represents false religious systems of all ages. The seven heads of the beast represent seven worldly powers, which serve the Devil. Andrew identifies them as the Assyrians, the Medes, the Babylonians, the Persians, and the Macedonians, and asserts that the five have fallen (Rev 17:10). The one that is represents Pagan Rome. The one that comes for a short time is Christian Rome from Constantine onwards. This period, held Andrew, was ongoing and would last until the appearance of the Antichrist, the eighth king.³¹

Commenting on Rev 20, Andrew exhibits the Augustinian view of the millennium: Christ's Passion on the cross threw Satan into the abyss. The disappearance of idolatry and the destruction of the temples of idols are proof that the Devil is bound.

²⁹ Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:143-49; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 161-63.

³⁰ Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:160-171; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 168-175.

³¹ Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:178-180; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 176-180. The harlot woman represents the sum of all the Pagan religions, which persecuted the Christians, from Rome to the Persian Empire, in the time of Andrew. The beast "who was, is not and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" is the Devil who "was," power before Christ, "is not" triumphant during the Christian dispensation, but "shall ascend" again in the last days, at the time of the Antichrist (Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:175-177; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 177).

The thousand years represent a symbolic period of time that is necessary for the Church of God to finish its work of preaching the gospel to the entire earth.³²

Andrew's work was the most widespread ancient commentary on the book of Revelation produced by the Greek East. Andrew's surviving manuscripts number more than eighty complete copies, thirteen abbreviated versions, fifteen manuscripts with *scholia* (commentary), and numerous other manuscripts. In addition, translations of Andrew's commentary survive in Georgian, Armenian, Latin, and Slavonic manuscripts.³³ Andrew's emphasis on a historical-chronological exposition of the Revelation significantly influenced all subsequent Eastern commentaries. It also became a standard patristic commentary in the Eastern Christian tradition and decisively fostered the reception of the book of Revelation into the canon of the Orthodox Church.

Arethas of Caesarea

The last major eschatological commentator of early Byzantine historicism is Arethas of Caesarea (AD 860-935), a renowned scholar of the tenth century. Arethas compiled a *scholia* on the Apocalypse, for which he was largely dependent upon his predecessor, Andrew.³⁴ Arethas closely reflects Andrew in depicting the seven seals as seven periods of the Church up to his time.³⁵ Hesitant to give a precise historical

³² Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 2:199-201; Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 188-192.

³³ Constantinou, "Andrew of Caesarea," 1:18.

³⁴ Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, xix; see also Alexander Kazhdan, "Arethas of Caesarea," *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University, 1991), 1:163.

³⁵ Arethas of Caesarea, *Expositio in . . . Apocalypsin*, (PG 106:486-786).

application for the fourth seal, Arethas quotes the interpretation of Andrew, which is based on Eusebius's chronicle of famine and pestilence in the Roman Empire, which occurs as a consequence of Christian persecution.³⁶

Similarly to Andrew, Arethas believes the seven trumpets symbolize God's final judgment upon the earth before the very end of time. Although most of the trumpets indicate what Arethas identifies as future events, he hypothesizes that the first trumpet of judgment might have been blown already during the invasion of the Barbarians.³⁷ The fifth and sixth trumpets represent the suffering of the Devil and his followers in hell.³⁸

Most of Arethas's commentary is a reproduction of the exposition of Andrew.³⁹ He does depart from Andrew in his identification of the beast from the sea as Islam (which was, in his time, attacking the borders of the Byzantine Empire).⁴⁰ The lamb-beast represents the Antichrist and the false prophet, who would appear soon.

The seven vials depict the suffering of the wicked at the end of the world. The seven kings in Rev 17 portray seven kingdoms from Babylon to the Second Coming, with no variation from Andrew's view.⁴¹ The millennium is ongoing at the time of Arethas' writing.

³⁶ Arethas, *Expositio*, 506.

³⁷ Arethas, *Expositio*, 521.

³⁸ Arethas, *Expositio*, 525-538.

³⁹ See Paulo Magdalino, *Byzantium in the Year 1000* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2003), 250.

⁴⁰ Arethas, *Expositio*, 672. Here Arethas and Joachim come to an agreement.

⁴¹ "Seven Kings are seven Kingdoms: Assyrian, Neo-Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, the kingdom of Macedonians, the old Rome which at first governed by the consuls accepted monarchy under Augustus Caesar and was occupied by the impious all the way until

Minor Byzantine Commentaries

Medieval scholar William Weinrich maintains that Oecumenius, Andrew, and Arethas are the only significant expositors on Revelation in the Greek tradition.⁴² However, the inclusion of some minor prophetic interpreters may enrich a discussion of Greek apocalyptic thinking. Several apocalyptic commentaries characteristic of the Byzantine hermeneutic are worthy of consideration here.

Didascale of Jacob

The mid-seventh-century Greek work *Didascale of Jacob* (AD 640), translated into Arabic, Slavonic and Ethiopian, represents another voice of Eastern apocalyptic tradition.⁴³ The wide circulation of this work indicates that the Greek influence was apparent outside the borders of the Byzantine kingdom. A slightly modified Ethiopian version of the text, known in the West as *Sargis D'Aberga* (AD 740), adds a short interpretation on Dan 7.⁴⁴

Constantine, after which dissolution it was translated into a New Rome under the honorable Christian kings. Ten Horns are those who, in the latter times, will spring up from the [new] Roman Empire in whose midst will arise Antichrist. These will have the reign for one hour, and will reign with the beast who is the Antichrist incarnated" (Arethas, *Expositio*, 692-93; translation from Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries*, 178, 179).

⁴² Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries on Revelation*, xix.

⁴³ François Nau, *La Didascalie de Jacob* in *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris, France: Firmin-Didot, 1912), 8:711-780.

⁴⁴ Silvain Grebaut and Ignazio Guidi, eds., "Sargis d'Aberga, Controverse Judeo-Chrétienne." Ethiopian text edited and translated into French, part 1, in *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris, France: Firmin-Didot, 1908), 3:549-646; Silvain Grebaut, trans., "Sargis d'Aberga, Controverse Judeo-Chrétienne." Ethiopian text edited and translated into French, part 2, in *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris, France: Firmin-Didot, 1916), 13:1-119.

Sargis asserts that the four empires—Chaldea, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—must expire, and that the ten kings and the false Christ (the little horn) come after the fall of the [Eastern] Roman Empire.⁴⁵ *Sargis* also refers to the fulfillment of the seventy-week prophecy (Dan 9:24-27) at the first coming of Christ without any mention of the gap theory or last week’s future fulfillment.⁴⁶ Although *Sargis* does not comment upon the book of Revelation, it remains a clear example of the historical-chronological approach to the book of Daniel within the Greco-Ethiopian tradition.

Pseudo-Methodius

The expectation of the near end of the world and the appearance of the Antichrist is also found in *Sermo De Regnum Gentium et in Novissimus Temporibus Certa Demonstratio*⁴⁷ written by Pseudo-Methodius (AD 650). First written in Syriac, and then

⁴⁵ “Oui, les quatre grands animaux que le prophète *Daniel* a mentionnés sont les quatre royaumes du monde. Puis les dix cornes, cela veut dire les dix rois. Puis la corne qui est petite, c’est le faux Messie. Ensuite le Fils de l’homme viendra sur les nuées du ciel, afin de juger les vivants et les morts. Le songe que *Nabuchodonosor* a fait et (que) le prophète *Daniel* a interprété est vrai. En effet, il a dit: La tête d’or pur c’est le royaume des Chaldéens; la poitrine et les bras d’argent, c’est le royaume des Perses et des Mèdes; le ventre et les reins d’airain, c’est le royaume des Grecs, c’est-à-dire le royaume du roi *Alexandre*; les jambs de fer c’est le royaume des Romains . . . le royaume des Romains . . . est puissant . . . il me semble qu’il demeurera à jamais” (Yes, the four animals that Daniel the prophet mentioned are the four kingdoms of the world. The ten horns represent the ten kings. Then comes the little horn, the false Messiah. Then the Son of Man will come in the clouds of heaven to judge the living and the dead. The dream that Nebuchadnezzar had and that the prophet Daniel interpreted is true. Indeed, he said, the heart of gold is the realm of the Chaldeans. The chest and arms of silver is the kingdom of the Persians and the Medes. The stomach and kidneys of brass is the kingdom of the Greeks, that is to say, the kingdom of King Alexander. The legs of iron represent the kingdom of the Romans The kingdom of the Romans . . . is powerful . . . It seems as if it will remain forever) (Grebaut, *Sargis d’Aberga*, 13:44, 45).

⁴⁶ Grebaut, *Sargis d’Aberga*, 13:45, 46.

⁴⁷ For the Syriac edition see Michael Kmosko, “Das Rätzel des Pseudo-Methodius” *Byzantion* 6 (1931): 273-296; see also Paul Alexander, “The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses

translated into Greek and Latin, it reached the West where it became popular reading, contributing to the eschatological expectation prominent at the time of Joachim.⁴⁸

The treatise is not a commentary on Revelation, but it deals with sacred history from Adam to Christ and from Christ to the Arab invasion. It also attempts to predict the events that happen just prior to the arrival of the Antichrist and Christ's Second Coming. The treatise quotes selectively from Daniel and the book of Revelation but it also borrows heavily from the apocalyptic pseudo-prophecy attributed to the Tiburtine Sibyl.⁴⁹ Written around AD 380 with revisions and interpolations added at later dates, the pseudo-prophecy of Albunea, the Tiburtine Sibyl, predicts the arrival of a final emperor whose reign is characterized by great wealth, victory over the foes of Christianity, the end of Paganism, and the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. According to Albunea, after the death of this final emperor the empire gives way to the Antichrist:

At that time the Prince of Iniquity who will be called Antichrist will arise from the tribe of Dan. He will be the Son of Perdition, the head of pride, the master of error, the fullness of malice who will overturn the world and do wonders and great signs through dissimulation. He will delude many by magic art so that fire will seem to come down from heaven. . . . When the Roman [E]mpire shall have ceased, then

in the Latin West and the Beginnings of Joachimism," in *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. Ann Williams (Essex, UK: Longman, 1980), 62.

⁴⁸ For an analysis of the connection between pseudo-Methodius and Joachim see Paul J. Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Traditions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1985), 13, and especially Alexander, "The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses," 54-106.

⁴⁹ See Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 133-135. Sibyls were oracular women of ancient Greece and Rome, who were believed to possess prophetic powers. Albunea the Tiburtine Sybil was a Roman sibyl. The apocalyptic text attributed to her was written around AD 380 (see E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen* [Halle, Germany: S. M. Niemayer, 1898], 177-87).

the Antichrist will be openly revealed and will sit in the House of the Lord in Jerusalem.⁵⁰

Albunea also predicts that the two witnesses (identified as Elijah and Enoch) from the book of Revelation must come down from heaven to oppose the Antichrist. After having killed the two witnesses, the Antichrist starts a final persecution of the Christians. Drawing from Albunea's Sybil, Pseudo-Methodius likewise anticipates the coming of a last Roman emperor. The only difference between Pseudo-Methodius and Albunea is that Pseudo-Methodius adds that the emperor would defeat the Persians and Muslims (Gog and Magog), after which the final Antichrist would rise.⁵¹

Pseudo-Methodius's tract was widely read in the East, and its influence in the West was immense.⁵² There is strong evidence that Joachim knew about Pseudo-Methodius's piece, and about Albunea's writing, upon which it was founded.⁵³ In fact, in several of his writings, Joachim directly confronts the idea of a glorified secular emperor, claiming that the Roman Empire of his time is a type of Babylon. Instead of hoping for a

⁵⁰ Translated from Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte*, 185-86; English translation in Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End; Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Columbia University, 1979), 49-50.

⁵¹ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70-76;

⁵² "The existence of translations in Russian, Arminian, Arabic and Old Slavonic testify to its importance in Eastern Christianity. . . . The text itself was later translated into a number of the vernacular literatures, including Middle English" (McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 72). See also Charlotte D'Evelyn, "The Middle English Metrical Version of the *Revelationes* of Methodius," *Publications of the Modern Language Society of America* 33 (1918): 135-203. For an example of Pseudo-Methodian tradition being continued in the East see Lennart Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse [ca. 950], Greek Text, Translation, and Commentary," *Harvard University Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974): 197-261.

⁵³ In an early work, *De Prophetia Ignota*, Joachim actually quotes and comments upon a similar sibyl (see Bernard McGinn, "Joachim and Sibyl," *Citeaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 24 [1973]: 116-119, 122-23).

final emperor, Joachim paints a German emperor as one of the seven heads of the Antichrist beast.⁵⁴ For Joachim, the end-time savior-figure is not a secular ruler but a spiritual champion, an angelic leader who cleanses the Church and divorces it from earthly corruption. This is represented by the Angel with the seal of God in Rev 7:1-4.⁵⁵

Fueled by the popular idea of the last emperor, many European kings sought to conquer Jerusalem, overtake Islam, and convert the Jews with force.⁵⁶ Joachim stood on the complete opposite side of the ideological spectrum, directly opposing such interpretations. He believed in a spiritual renewal, the non-violent conversion of the Jews, and the growth of perfect love in the Church. In fact, Joachim discouraged King Richard from fighting the crusades, predicting Islamic victory followed by an inevitable and final spiritual revival in the Church. Richard himself appears almost certainly to have been influenced by Pseudo-Methodius's apocalyptic tradition.⁵⁷

Near-Eastern Christian Commentaries

Joachim of Fiore claimed to have encountered a special understanding of the prophecies during his pilgrimage in Syria and Palestine. There is a possibility that Joachim could have been brought in contact with some of the Near eastern eschatological ideas during his pilgrimage in Syria and Palestine. In the context of this background, it is

⁵⁴ See pp. 63-65 and 84-85 of this study.

⁵⁵ See p. 67 of this study; see also McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 135.

⁵⁶ For a study on Pseudo-Methodius and his influence on the Western monarchs see Benjamin Garstad, ed. and trans., *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius; An Alexandrian World Chronicle* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University, 2012).

⁵⁷ See an account of Joachim's encounter with Richard I on pp. 39 and 88 of this study.

useful to consider several representatives of Christian eschatological thought from the East, including representatives of the Syrian, Coptic, and Armenian traditions.

Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius

After the seventh-century Arabic conquest of Northern Africa, an unknown Coptic author attempted to use the name of celebrated Church Father Athanasius of Alexandria in order to give legitimacy to his interpretations.⁵⁸ The Pseudo-Athanasian commentary portrays an unusual computation of the four empires from Dan 7. According to the author, the fourth beast, which has traditionally been identified with Rome, is here interpreted to be the Islamic kingdom.

After these things the good God . . . will divide the unity of the kingdom of the Romans and of their empire. . . . He will stir up upon the earth a mighty people, numerous as the locusts. This is the fourth beast, which the prophet Daniel saw. . . . The name of that nation is Saracen, one which is from the Ishmaelites, the son of Hagar, maidservant of Abraham. . . . That nation will . . . make all the countries under its rule mint their own gold with the name of the beast written on it, the number of whose name is 666.⁵⁹

This departure from the traditional exegesis of Dan 7 (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome) is relevant to an investigation into the writings of Joachim, because Joachim made the same interpretation in his own works, identifying the fourth kingdom with Islam.⁶⁰ The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius also identifies Islam with the sea beast from

⁵⁸ See Francisco J. Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1985), 247-276.

⁵⁹ Pseudo-Athanasius, *Apocalypse*, 9.9-10, trans. in Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam (Princeton, NJ: Darwin, 1998), 282-84.

⁶⁰ See p. 93 of this study.

Rev 13. Although Joachim identifies the seven-headed beast with multiple kingdoms, according to the multiple heads of the beast, he does place a significant emphasis on the “sixth head,” which, for Joachim, represent the Saracen Empire. This “sixth head” would soon coalesce with the final Antichrist (False Pontiff—the seventh head of the beast).⁶¹

Unlike pro-Byzantine Pseudo-Methodius, the Coptic Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius singularly discards the Roman Empire’s status as the last power (which will endure until the end of time, when it will hand over custodianship to God). Joachim shares this pattern in his exposition as well.

Anonymous Syriac Commentary on Apocalypse

A manuscript discovered in the British Library in 1981 was found to contain an anonymous Syriac commentary on Revelation written in the early ninth century (ca. 800). It was transcribed in 1088 by Aby Samuel bar Cyriacus, a monk in the monastery of Saint Mary Theotokos, about sixty miles west of Cairo in the Nitrian desert.⁶²

The overriding principle of exegesis in the Syriac commentary is a thoroughgoing Christology, in which, point by point, the text of Revelation is seen as an allusion to Christ. The other engine of text analysis is historical, in which the author applies a historical application to various events and visions in the text. The seven churches in Rev 2-3, for example, have purely historical meaning as they represent seven Church councils: (1) Nicaea, AD 325; (2) Constantinople, 381; (3) Ephesus, 429; (4) Ephesus,

⁶¹ See pp. 90-91 of this study.

⁶² Stan Larson, “The Earliest Syriac Commentary on the Apocalypse: Transcription, Translation, and Importance of Brit. Lib. MS. Add. 17, 127” (Ph.D diss., University of Birmingham, 1984).

431; (5) Chalcedon, 451; (6) Tyre, 512, where Severus of Antioch rejects the Chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures of Christ and establishes an Orthodox Church of Syria; and (7) Byzantium, 553.⁶³

The seven seals in Rev 6 are more Christological. The first four seals open the transgression of Adam and Eve, which is atoned by the redemption of Christ. The fifth seal represents Moses and the prophets. The sixth seal symbolizes the death of Christ upon the cross.⁶⁴ The 144,000 in Rev 7 represent the twelve apostles and the progress of the early Church.⁶⁵ The half-hour period in the seventh seal represents the forty days during which Jesus remained on earth after His resurrection. The incense of the angel in Rev 8:5 represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles at Pentecost.⁶⁶

Thus, both Joachim and the anonymous Syrian writer use a dual application for the seven seals. For both, the seven seals first apply to the seven periods of the OT history. Joachim, however, does not apply them secondarily to the life of Christ but rather to the seven periods of the Christian Church.

The trumpets also have dual meaning for the author of the Syrian commentary. They symbolize various judgments God executed in the OT (such as Noah's flood and the plagues of Egypt). However, they also allude to various aspects of the life and death of Jesus.⁶⁷ One interesting detail is found in the exposition of the five-month time period

⁶³ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 57-92.

⁶⁴ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 135-162.

⁶⁵ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 179.

⁶⁶ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 191, 199.

⁶⁷ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 211-2453

described in Rev 9:5. The Syrian writer does not see them as literal five months; he first converts them into five weeks or thirty-five days. Then, according to the year-day principle, they become thirty-five years—a period between the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.⁶⁸ The sixth trumpet represents the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.⁶⁹

The rest of the commentary is also Christocentric. The two witnesses represent the ministry of Christ when He was on earth. The 1,260 days during which the two witnesses prophesy while wearing sackcloth (Rev 11:3) extend from the time of Jesus' baptism until the day of His ascension into heaven.⁷⁰ A similar pattern is found in Rev 12. The woman is the church and the 1,260 days during which the Church flees into the wilderness refer to the time from the day that Christ was baptized until the time of His crucifixion and resurrection.⁷¹ However, the three and a half days in Rev 11:9 and 11:11 are converted into years and represent three and a half years of Christ's ministry on earth during His first coming.⁷²

The beast in Rev 13 represents the Antichrist, or the "man of sin," who appears at the end. Through unusual calculations, the Syriac writer converts forty-two months of the Beast's reign (Rev 13:5) into 294 days. Using the year-day principle, the 294 days

⁶⁸ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 245; the usage of the year-day principle here is justified with the reference to Num 14:33-34.

⁶⁹ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 257.

⁷⁰ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 279.

⁷¹ Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 317-321.

⁷² Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary," 91.

become years. According to the Syrian commentator, the man of sin (the Antichrist) is supposed to rule for that period of time. After his rule, Christ shall come.⁷³

The lamb-beast in Rev 13:11 is the same power as the tail of the dragon in Rev 12:4.⁷⁴ This is interesting because no other expositor except Joachim identifies the tail of the dragon as an independent historical entity. Another point of rapprochement between Joachim and the anonymous Syrian author is the idea of two Antichrists. The Syrian commentator, as well as Joachim, identifies both the lamb-beast and the beast of the sea (Rev 13:1-10) as real Antichrists.⁷⁵

There is uncertainty regarding the length of time the two Antichrists will rule according to the Syrian commentator. The anonymous author argues that the “time, times and half a time” (Rev 12:14) refers to the “1000 years during which Satan and the serpent and the false Christ rule the world.”⁷⁶ It could be theorized that the author believes that this present age, ruled by Satan, will endure for one thousand years. On the other hand, the 294 years of the Antichrist’s rulership mentioned in Rev 13, begin in the near future and possibly lead into the year 1000.⁷⁷

⁷³ Larson, “The Earliest Syriac Commentary,” 337.

⁷⁴ Larson, “The Earliest Syriac Commentary,” 339.

⁷⁵ Larson, “The Earliest Syriac Commentary,” 339-341.

⁷⁶ Larson, “The Earliest Syriac Commentary,” 331.

⁷⁷ Larson concurs that the meaning of these calculations is not fully clear (Larson, “The Earliest Syriac Commentary,” 331-332).

The “great reaper” in Rev 14 represents the appearance of Christ in the clouds as a reaper of the earth, consuming the wicked and rewarding the righteous.⁷⁸ The seven vials (Rev 15 and 16) represent the torment of hell, which will consume all those who worship the false Christ and the man of sin.⁷⁹

The anonymous commentator does not comment upon the seven kings in Rev 17. He also skips Rev 20 and does not comment upon the millennium. The value of the anonymous Syrian commentary in relation to the work of Joachim is the discovery of some interpretative particularities that bear similarity to Joachim’s expositions. These include the identification of the tail of the dragon as a separate entity, and the frequent usage of the year-day principle.

Dionysius Bar Salibi

Jacob Bar Salibi, also known as Dionysius Bar Salibi (d. 1171), is the most prolific writer of the twelfth-century Syriac Orthodox Church.⁸⁰ In his exhaustive commentaries on the texts of the OT and NT, he often interweaves and summarizes the interpretations of previous Greek writers such as Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, and others. In his comments, Bar Salibi also incorporates long-lost excerpts from Hippolytus’s “Chapters Against Gaius.”⁸¹

⁷⁸ Larson, “The Earliest Syriac Commentary,” 351-353.

⁷⁹ Larson, “The Earliest Syriac Commentary,” 361-370.

⁸⁰ See David Bundy, “Dionysius Bar Salibi (d. 1171),” *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 332-333.

⁸¹ Hippolytus defense of the Book of Revelation, entitled *Capitula contra Gaium* [Chapters Against Gaius], exists only in fragments and is preserved within the commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi. English translation appears in John Gwynn, “Hippolytus

Bar Salibi's comments on Revelation are short and cover only select passages. He scarcely comments on the seven churches, and seems to discuss the churches in the context of the time of John.⁸² The seven seals, on the other hand, he perceives as being in the distant future relative to the time of his writing. For Bar Salibi, the seals depict the expansion of faith at the very end of times and the impending famines and plagues caused by the wicked. The sixth seal represents the fall of the Antichrist and the appearance of the Lord in the heavens.⁸³

The seven trumpets are also in the future and represent the punishments upon the wicked at the end of times. The 1,260 days from Rev 11:2, Rev 12:6, and Rev 12:14 represent the period of persecution of the saints by the Antichrist.⁸⁴ Bar Salibi does not comment on the seven vials or the woman harlot in Rev 17.

Perhaps Bar Salibi's most original thoughts are expressed in his comments on the millennium in Rev 20. Salibi cites Hippolytus, who argues in favor of a future millennium. He joins with Hippolytus in opposing Gaius "the heretic" (ca. AD 230) who had advocated the concept of a present millennium.⁸⁵ Salibi comments that the saints are resurrected first to receive the kingdom while the wicked are resurrected later, to be

and His 'Heads against Caius',” in *Hermathena: A Series of Papers on Literature, Science, and Philosophy*, 8 vols. (Dublin, Ireland: Members of Trinity College, 1888), 6:397-418. Syriac and Coptic writers held Hippolytus in high esteem (see Otto F. Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity* [Cairo, Egypt: American University in Cairo, 1999], 43).

⁸² Dionysius Bar Salibi, *In Apocalypsim, Actus et Epistulas Catholicas*, ed. Jaroslav Sedlacek (Louvain, Belgium: Secretariat de Corpus, 1962, first edition, Paris, France: 1910), 1-6.

⁸³ Bar Salibi, *In Apocalypsim*, 7.

⁸⁴ Bar Salibi, *In Apocalypsim*, 12, 15, 16.

⁸⁵ Bar Salibi, *In Apocalypsim*, 19; see also John Gwynn, "Hippolytus and His 'Chapters Against Gaius'," 6:402-404.

destroyed. Both resurrections take place before the beginning of the millennium and before the creation of the new heavens and new earth.⁸⁶ Thus, Salibi clearly favors the view of a future millennium. This same view is espoused by many of the ante-Nicene commentators. Writing around 1170, Salibi is the first documented Christian writer, after Augustine, to espouse chiliasm.⁸⁷ This view probably circulated among other Syrian Christians, and Joachim could have encountered it during his sojourn to Syria and Palestine around the late 1160s.

Nerses of Lambron

Nerses of Lambron (1153-1198), the archbishop of Tarsus in Asia Minor, near Syria, was one of the most significant figures in Armenian literature and ecclesiastical history. The author of numerous biblical commentaries, he played a major role in the religious life of Cilician Armenia. In 1179 he adapted the Greek “Commentary on Revelation” by Andrew of Caesarea with some additions and changes to reflect Armenian tradition.⁸⁸

The seven seals loosely follow Andrew. The first two seals are the era of the apostles, followed by the era of the martyrs. The third seal represents the persecution of Bishop Novatian by the Emperor Decius (250-251). The fourth and fifth seals describe

⁸⁶ Bar Salibi, *In Apocalypsim*, 20-21.

⁸⁷ Beatus of Liebana mentions a future, thousand-year period, in the context of the seventh seal in Rev 8:1, but not concerning the millennium in Rev 20. The millennium in Rev 20 is, for Beatus, the age that is present at the time of his writing (see p. 213-4 of this study).

⁸⁸ Nerses of Lambron, *Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John*, translation of the Armenian Text, notes and introduction by Robert W. Thomson (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2007).

the persecution of Christians under Maximian (303-313). The sixth seal is the future Antichrist.⁸⁹ The “heaven departing as a scroll” represents the Second Coming of Christ. The seventh seal is the Sabbath of rest.⁹⁰

The seven trumpets are in the future, relative to the time of Nerses’ writing. Nerses thinks the first trumpet will be a barbarian attack on the world, conducted with the permission of God. The other calamities will follow, punishing the wicked.⁹¹ The forty-two months in Rev 11:2 and the 1,260 days in Rev 11:3 represent the three and a half-year rule of the false-Christ during the end times. The three and a half days in Rev 11:9 and 11:11 are not converted into years.⁹²

When commenting upon the 1,260 days in Rev 12:6, however, Nerses departs from literalism and computes them through the year-day principle. He asserts that “the woman fled into the desert to be nourished there for one thousand, two hundred and sixty days. . . . *The number of days is years*, because one thousand, two hundred and sixty years is the time of the world from the resurrection of Christ until the Second Coming.”⁹³

⁸⁹ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 78-82. Nerses responds to the question of the large gap between Maximian and his own time by explaining that “since Constantine the great reigned and church was confirmed, no other disturbance occurred at all to it save the one to come in those times, as we learn” (Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 84).

⁹⁰ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 85, 94.

⁹¹ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 96-120. The five months in Rev 9:5 represent eternity (Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 100). The sixth trumpet punishes the Antichrist and his followers (Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 103.)

⁹² Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 108, 111.

⁹³ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 123. The “time, times and half a time,” Rev 12:14, however, remain the future three and a half years. “And just as he [Satan] waged war for one thousand, two hundred and sixty years, the latter [Antichrist] fights for as many days, which are three years and half” (Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 126, 127).

This makes Nerses, who wrote around 1179 AD, the first Christian expositor to have applied the year-day principle to the 1,260 days, two decades before Joachim published similar views in his *Concordia* (1198) and *Expositio* (1200).⁹⁴

The sea-beast from Rev 13:1-10 is the final false Christ for Nerses. Another correspondence between Nerses and Joachim's system is the seven heads of the beast, which symbolize various wicked kings throughout Church history. Nerses specifically mentions Julian the Apostate and the Arian Emperor Valens.⁹⁵ The lamb-like beast is the false prophet who will deceive nations into following the final Antichrist.⁹⁶

The seven vials represent God's final punishment upon the followers of the Antichrist.⁹⁷ The beast in Rev 17 is the Devil who "was" before the coming of Christ, "is not" during the Christian dispensation, and "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" at the end-time to personify Christ.⁹⁸ Nerses follows Andrew of Caesarea in enumerating the seven kings in Rev 17:9. These are seven kingdoms: five which have fallen (Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece); one that is ongoing at the time of the writing

⁹⁴ Nerses of Lambron is reported to have finished his commentary in 1179 AD (Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 5), while Joachim's *Concordia* was presented to Pope Lucius in 1184 but it was not finished until 1198. See LC [V], 12a and 118b for the earliest evidence of the year-day principle in Joachim; see also E. Randolph Daniel, "Exodus and Exile, Joachim of Fiore's Apocalyptic Scenario," in *Last Things: Death and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. W. Bynum and P. Freedman (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2000), 128-129.

⁹⁵ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 128. This follows closely Andrew of Caesarea.

⁹⁶ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 131-33.

⁹⁷ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 144-153.

⁹⁸ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 155-56.

(Pagan Rome, the sixth king); and seventh king (Christian Rome, which begins under Constantine). The eighth king is the future kingdom of the Antichrist.⁹⁹

Since Nerses makes no departure from the medieval view of the millennium, the greatest similarities between Nerses and Joachim relate to the historicity of the seven seals, the conversion of the 1,260 days into 1,260 years and the historicity of the heads of the beast in Rev 13.

Bulus al-Bushi and the Coptic Tradition

Bulus al-Bushi (ca.1180-1250) was a Coptic expositor who wrote a commentary on Revelation in the early thirteenth century.¹⁰⁰ Although it was written shortly after Joachim's death, al-Bushi's interpretation of Revelation, composed in Arabic,¹⁰¹ seems to have been representative of a larger Coptic tradition, which circulated among Christians in Syria, Egypt, and Palestine.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Nerses, *Commentary on the Revelation*, 158-59.

¹⁰⁰ For further documentation on Bulus al-Bushi's life, see Samir Khalil Samir, *Traité de Paul de Bus sûr l'Unité et la Trinité, l'Incarnation, et la Vérité du Christianisme*, Patrimoine Arabe Chrétiens 4 (Zouk Mikhail, Lebanon: al-Turath al 'Arabi al-Masihi, 1983), v-viii, 15-27; and Aziz S. Atiya, "Bulus al-Bushi," *Coptic Encyclopedia*, 8 vols. (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1991), 2:423-24.

¹⁰¹ See English translation in Shawqi N. Talia, "Bulus al-Bushi's Arabic commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John: An English Translation and a Commentary" (Ph.D diss., The Catholic University of America, Cairo, 1987); see also the most recent critical edition by Nagy Edelby, "Le commentaire de L'Apocalypse de Bulus al-Būšī (évêque du Caire en 1240 AD): Étude, édition critique traduction et index exhaustif" (Ph.D diss., l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, Lebanon, 2015).

¹⁰² See Steven Davis, "Introducing an Arabic Commentary on the Apocalypse: Ibn Kātib Qayṣar on Revelation," *The Harvard Theological Review* 101, no. 1 (January 2008): 77-96.

Al-Bushi's commentary is mainly of a historical nature. While the seven churches represent only a moral message for the Church,¹⁰³ the seven seals cover seven millennia of history from Adam to the Second Coming of Christ:¹⁰⁴ (1) from Adam to Enoch, (2) from Enoch to Noah, (3) from Noah to Abraham, (4) from Abraham through Moses to Israel's kings, (5) from the period of Israel's kings to Christ, (6) From Christ to the Antichrist, and (7) the final millennium.¹⁰⁵

The sixth period (from Christ to the Antichrist) endures for 1,500 years. Al-Bushi bases this computation upon the prophecies of "time and a half time" (Rev 12:14), which for him represents the "one thousand five hundred years for which the world will remain."¹⁰⁶ The seventh seal predicts a final thousand years for Al-Bushi. This thousand years begins with destruction of the Antichrist and the wicked. After their destruction, the saints are resurrected.¹⁰⁷ Thus, al-Bushi (similarly to Joachim) asserts that after the Incarnation there will be approximately 1,500 years before the final millennium.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Talia, "Bulus al-Busi's Arabic Commentary on the Apocalypse," 82-114.

¹⁰⁴ "The seven seals (Rev 5:1) are the secret of the full duration of the world, which is seven thousand years. In every seal there is what will come to pass in that millennium, one by one" (Talia, "Bulus al-Busi," 132).

¹⁰⁵ Talia, "Bulus al-Busi," 140-144, 149-150. This is reminiscent of Berengaudus.

¹⁰⁶ Talia, "Bulus al-Busi," 185. Al-Bushi's interpretation of this passage is unusual. Rev 12:14 actually reads "time, times and half a time."

¹⁰⁷ Talia, "Bulus al-Busi," 159.

¹⁰⁸ Explaining the seven seals, al-Bushi argues that the millennium is not always exactly one thousand years; it can be a little less or even more. Ignoring this flexibility, Wainwright (*Mysterious Apocalypse* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993], 44), erroneously concluded that the final millennium, according to Bushi, must go from AD 500-1500.

Al-Bushi is less historically detailed in interpreting the seven trumpets. For him, the trumpets are a non-chronological sequence of calamities, apostasies, persecutions, and schisms that befall the world and the Church in the sixth millennium. These begin after Christ's passion and continue until the end of times. The sixth trumpet points to the arrival of the Antichrist. The Antichrist battles the two witnesses who are Enoch and Elijah, for three and a half years (Rev 11:6).¹⁰⁹

Al-Bushi believes that Rev 12 depicts the conflict between Satan and the Christian Church from the birth of Christ until the end of the world.¹¹⁰ The beast that comes out of the sea in Rev 13:1-9 represents the Islamic nations, which torment the Church. Al-Bushi translates the number of the beast—666—as Mamecios (any connection with Joachim's, Melsemut?).¹¹¹ This association of Mohamed with the beast dates back to the seventh century. Around the year AD 690, the Egyptian Coptic chronicler John of Nikiu wrote: "And now many of the Egyptians who had been false Christians denied the holy orthodox faith and life-giving baptism, and embraced the religion of the Muslim, the enemies of God, and accepted the detestable doctrine of the beast, that is, Mohamed."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Talia, "Bulus al-Busi," 174-76.

¹¹⁰ Talia, "Bulus al-Busi," 184.

¹¹¹ See pp. 84-87 of this study. Al-Bushi's Coptic transliteration of the name Mohamed is a forced one. The name Mohamed has been generally transcribed in Coptic as *Maumet* (see Paul E. Kahle, *Bala'izah: Coptic Texts from Deir el-Bala'izah in Upper Egypt*, 2 vols. [London, UK: Oxford University, 1954] 2:795). Since the total number of the name equals 387, Al-Bushi transliterated it differently [*Mamecios*] by adding certain letters, thus giving a total of 666 (see Talia, "Bulus al-Busi," 200).

¹¹² Davis, "Introducing an Arabic Commentary," 84-85; see also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 283-84.

The second beast, for al-Bushi, is the future Antichrist who will come after the 1,500 years are expired. The seven plagues refer to the last calamities that will fall upon the wicked at the end of times.¹¹³ Regarding the final thousand years in Rev 20, Al-Bushi departs from Hippolytus by interpreting the prophesy as applicable to the present (relative to the time of writing) sixth millennium. The first resurrection in Rev 20 is thus a spiritual resurrection” or a conversion.¹¹⁴ The thousand years of Satan “in the bottomless pit” (Rev 20:2) are the 1,500 years from the Passion of the Lord to the end of time.¹¹⁵

The Coptic commentary on Revelation by al-Bushi, although written a couple of decades after Joachim’s death, reflects the earlier tradition of Coptic apocalyptic thought. This is demonstrated through the text of the *Coptic Apocalypse of Daniel*, written during the period of Jerusalem’s captivity, around AD 1187. It was first published by Woide (Oxford, 1799), and translated into French by Frédéric Macler in 1896.¹¹⁶

Al-Bushi’s interpretations of Revelation bear similarities to the *Coptic Apocalypse* interpretations. Al Bushi decodes the name 666 to Mamecios, as does the

¹¹³ Talia, “Bulus al-Busi,” 204. Al-Bushi does not comment upon the harlot or the beast with seven heads in Rev 17.

¹¹⁴ “By ‘the first resurrection’ he means the spiritual resurrection of the holy ones, while still in the body, before the general resurrection. He said that ‘it will be for a thousand years.’ For from the coming of the Lord to the end of time there are one thousand five hundred years” (Talia, “Bulus al-Busi,” 224).

¹¹⁵ Even though in Rev 12:14, Satan seems to be actively fighting against the Church throughout that same period of 1,500 years.

¹¹⁶ Carl Gottfried Woide, *Appendix ad editionem Novi Testamenti graeci e codici ms. Alexandrino* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1799) translated in French by Frédéric Macler, “Les apocalypses apocryphes de *Daniel*,” *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions* 33 (1896): 165-176.

anonymous writer of the *Coptic Apocalypse*.¹¹⁷ The *Coptic Apocalypse of Daniel* also bears similarities to the *Coptic Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius*.¹¹⁸ It identifies the fourth beast of Dan 7 as the Saracen Empire,¹¹⁹ as does Joachim.

The similarities in prophetic interpretation between Joachim and Al-Bushi's Coptic tradition are: (1) identification of a future millennium (the seventh seal), (2) the conversion of the 1,260 days into a long period of time from the birth of Christ to the end of the world, and (3) the identification of Islam in association with the first beast (Rev 13) and the associated names for Mohamed (al-Bushi's Mametios and Joachim's Melsemut).

Jewish Expositors Prior to Joachim

Due to the influence of Jewish thought in southern Italy, it is also necessary to analyze Jewish apocalyptic interpretations and compare them with Joachim's writings.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ "Then among them a child will arise, who is his son. He will be the child of a double race, because his father is an Israelite, his mother is Roman. . . . This is the king whose name makes the number 666; he will be called by these three names: *Mametios*, *Khalle* and *Sarapidos*. Being a child, he will reign in order to do much evil" (Macler, "Les apocalypses apocryphes de *Daniel*," 172, trans. in English at Christian Classic Ethereal Library, accessed April 28, 2017, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/apocalypse_of_daniel_coptic_02_text.htm).

¹¹⁸ See p. 267 of this study.

¹¹⁹ "The fourth beast, which you saw, who resembles a lion, is the king of the sons of Ishmael. He will reign for a long time over the land and will be very powerful during many days. This realm will be of the race of Abraham and of the slave of Sara, the wife of Abraham. All the cities of the Persians, the Romans and the Greeks will be destroyed; nineteen kings of this race among the sons of Ishmael will reign over the land; they will reign until the time of their end" (Macler, "Les apocalypses apocryphes de *Daniel*," 166, trans. in English at Christian Classic Ethereal Library, accessed April 28, 2017, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/apocalypse_of_daniel_coptic_02_text.htm).

¹²⁰ For Joachim's connection with Judaism in Sicily see pp. 17-19 of this study.

Jewish expositors from Flavius Josephus (d. ca. 100) to Abraham Ibn Ezra (d. 1167) generally adopt a historicist approach to interpreting the book of Daniel. In Jewish tradition, the four metals of Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan 2) and the four beasts in Dan 7 (the lion, bear, leopard, and dragon) represent four successive world kingdoms: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Edom (a cryptic kingdom which initially depicted Pagan Rome but later, possibly Christian Rome.)¹²¹ These four empires are followed by the division of the world into ten smaller parts and the coming of the Messiah.¹²² The Talmud, completed by the fifth century, speaks of the four empires of prophecy, beginning with Babylon and ending with Rome.¹²³

The early medieval Jewish scholars offer various opinions on the identity of the little horn that comes out of the fourth beast. Some commentators see it as Titus, who destroyed the Second Temple in AD 70. Other commentators see it as the medieval papacy. Japheth ben Ali Ha-Levi (d. ca. 980) identifies it as a representation of Islam.¹²⁴ Ibn Ezra (d. 1067) sees both the little horn and the fourth kingdom, from which the horn

¹²¹ Nosson Scherman and Meir Zlotowitz, eds., *Daniel; A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publication, 1980), 103-105, 199-202.

¹²² Norman Roth, ed., *Medieval Jewish Civilization: An Encyclopedia* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 214, 324, 382, 446, 465, 526, 529.

¹²³ The identity of Rome is usually, although not always, concealed by the name Edom, Michael Guttman, *Mafteah Hatalmud (Clavis Talmudis)*, 4 vols. (Wroclaw, Poland: M. Kohn, 1924), 3b:55, 62-65; see also Fromm, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:194.

¹²⁴ D. S. Margoliouth, ed., *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel by Jepheth ibn Ali the Karaite* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 2011), 35-44.

arises, as Islam.¹²⁵ Ibn Ezra's interpretation is similar to Joachim's. For Joachim, the little horn in Dan 7 also represents an Islamic power (maybe Saladin), while the little horn in Dan 8 comes from within the Christian Church, and arises from the West.

Another common point between Joachim and Jewish historicism is the application of the year-day principle. Substituting a year for a day in computations of biblical time-prophecies is a recurrent principle of Jewish tradition. It can be argued that as early as the third century BC, translators of the Septuagint Greek version of OT identify the seventy weeks of Dan 9 as seventy weeks of years. In Dan 9:25-27, translators of the LXX clarified the substitution by translating the original Hebrew "weeks"¹²⁶ to "weeks of years." This is the first published example of the "year-day principle."¹²⁷ The year for day substitution can also be found in the Book of Jubilees, a Jewish work from the intertestamental period. The Book of Jubilees, dated to the second century B.C., uses the word *week* to refer to seven years.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Scherman and Zlotowitz, *Daniel*, 103, 202. Ibn Ezra puts Greece and Rome together in one kingdom because according to Gen 10:4 Greece (*Javan*) and Rome (*Kittim*) are ethnically related.

¹²⁶ The Hebrew word for "weeks" (*šäbû'im*) is "a specialized term to be applied only to the unit of time consisting of seven days, that is, the 'week'" (R. Laird Harris, et al., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 2:899.

¹²⁷ Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:170, 174-176.

¹²⁸ Noah's age in Jubilee 10:16 is given in these words: "Nine hundred and fifty years he completed in his life, nineteen jubilees and two *weeks* and five years" (italics supplied).

19 jubilees	= 19 x 49 years	= 931 years
2 <i>weeks</i>	= 2 x 7 years	= 14 years
5 years	= 1 x 5	= <u>5 years</u>
		950 years

The year-day principle was also used among the Jews in the early Middle Ages. The 2,300 evenings and mornings (Dan 8:13), the 1,290 days, and the 1,335 days in Dan 12:11-12 are frequently converted by Jewish scholars into periods of years. Jewish expositors usually expected that the arrival of the Messiah would occur after these periods of time.¹²⁹

Jewish expositors are also known for expecting the end of the world after 6,000 years of human history. After the 6,000 years, the Messiah appears, introducing a final thousand years during which the earth rests in primordial chaos. Karaite Jewish scholar Benjamin Nahawendi (ca. 780-850) speculates that this final millennium occurs at the expiration of the 1,290 and 1,335 days found in the last chapter of the book of Daniel (Dan 12:12,13). Nahawendi dated the 1,290 year-days from the destruction of the second temple, thereby arriving at 1358 as the Messianic year.¹³⁰

In the *Sefer Hagalui*, a commentary on the book of Daniel, Saadia ben Gaon (882-942) contends that both the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days are to be reckoned as years. Ben Gaon reasserts this idea in the eighth chapter of *Kitab al-Amant kal-I'tikadat*. Unlike Nahawendi, however, Saadia never fixed a beginning for the time periods.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Scherman and Zlotowitz, *Daniel*, 328-329; for an exhaustive summary on the year-day principle in medieval Judaism see Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:188-221.

¹³⁰ Simhah Pinsker, *Likkute Kadmoniyoth* (Vienna, Austria: Adalbert della Torre, 1860), 82; see also Isidor Singer, "Benjamin Ben Moses Nahawendi," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12 vols. (New York, NY: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906), 3:254-55; see also Salo Wittmayer Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 16 vols. (New York, NY: Columbia University, 1957), 5:225.

¹³¹ See Joseph Alobaidi, ed., *The Book of Daniel: The Commentary of R. Saadia Gaon* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2006), 651-666; see also Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:200-01; and Moshe Gil, *Jews in Islamic Countries in the Middle Ages* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2004), 354-55.

Joachim's choice to utilize the year-day principle in his interpretations may have been precipitated by the incorporation of the same principle within Jewish traditions. Joachim acknowledges having had much conversation with Jewish scholars. Robert Lerner argues that Joachim is actually referring to the rabbinic tradition when he states that certain wise men (*sapientes*) variously interpret the days of Daniel as "years, months and centuries."¹³² Also, in his *Apocalypse* commentary Joachim describes his frequent dialogues with a "most learned Jew" to discuss their respective faiths.¹³³

Joachim might have also been aware of the calculations of Abraham Bar Hiyya Hanasi (1065-1136). Bar Hiyya Hanasi was a Spanish-Jewish astronomer, mathematician, and philosopher. He was a surveyor for the state, the author of a textbook on geometry, and was interested in calendation. He wrote *Megillat Hamegalleh* (The Scroll of the Revealer)—the first eschatological work by a European rabbi—in which he performed the most extensive attempt at Messianic calculation to that point. He considered all the extant literature that had been written on the subject.¹³⁴

Bar Hiyya's calculations are derived from the date of creation, as he believes the world will last for 6,000 years, with the seventh 1,000 years being the millennial sabbath. Like Nahawendi, Bar Hiyya calculates the 1,290 years-days from the destruction of the

¹³² See Joachim's early work *Genealogia* (1176) in Gian Luca Potesta, ed., "Die genealogia: Ein frühes Werk Joachims von Fiore und die Anfänge seines Geschichtsbildes," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung Mittelalters* 56 (2000): 92-3; see also Lerner, *The Feast of St. Abraham*, 27; see also p. 18 of this dissertation.

¹³³ Joachim, EA, 36.

¹³⁴ For an extensive analysis of bar Hiyya's calculations see Hannu Töyrylä, *Abraham Bar Hiyya on Time, History, Exile and Redemption: An Analysis of Megillat ha-Megalleh* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2014).

Second Temple, which he places in AD 68. This puts the apocalyptic end in 1358, making it the Messianic year.¹³⁵

The prominence of year-day principle among the Near-Eastern commentators might also be due to the Jewish influence. It is very probable that Joachim's systematic application of the year-day method in his writing (even for longer periods such as 1,260 days) came as a fruit of the interaction with Jewish and Eastern Christian sources.

Summary and Implications

Chapter 6 examines the elements of Jewish and Eastern Christian medieval eschatology that had the potential to influence Joachim in the development of his historical system. It is possible, if not probable, that many elements of Eastern eschatology were a source of inspiration for Joachim. Byzantine scholar Paul Alexander affirms that Joachim's "familiarity with Byzantine apocalyptic thought and texts, whether in the original Greek or in Latin translation, is highly probable."¹³⁶

The first similarity between Joachim and his Eastern antecedents and contemporaries is the idea of progressive and successive Church history as delineated in the book of Revelation. The early Byzantine writer Andrew of Caesarea was the first Christian expositor to develop a historicist interpretation of the seven seals (Rev 6) and

¹³⁵ Abraham Bar Hiyya, *Megillat Hamegalleh*, ed. A. Poznanski and J. Gutmann (Berlin, Germany: Mekise Nerdamim, 1924), translation into Catalan by J. Millas Vallicrosa (Barcelona, Spain: 1929), 175-76. See also Geoffrey Wigoder, "Abraham Bar Hiyya," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 26 vols. (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 1:292-294.

¹³⁶ Paul J. Alexander, "The Diffusion of Byzantine Apocalypses in the Medieval West and the Beginnings of Joachimism," in *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. Ann Williams (Essex, UK: Longman, 1980), 80.

seven kings (Rev 17). Other Eastern expositors also showed an inclination towards historicism (see Table 11).¹³⁷

Table 11. The seven seals in the Eastern Christian tradition compared to Joachim

	Seal 1	Seal 2	Seal 3	Seal 4	Seal 5	Seal 6	Seal 7
Joachim (ca. 1190)	Apostles	Martyrs	Arian Heresies	Mohamed	Church in Babylon	Antichrist	Millennium
Bulus-al-Bushi (d. 1250)	Adam to Enoch	Enoch to Noah	Noah to Abraham	Abraham to David	David to Christ	Christ to the year 1500	Final Millennium
Nerses of Lambron (d. 1198)	Apostles	Martyrs Pagan Rome	Persecution of Decius	Apostasy of Novatian	Persecution of Maximian	Antichrist Tribulations	Rest prior to Seven trumpets
Dionysius Bar Salibi (ca. 1171)	Future Calamities	Future Calamities	Future Calamities	Future Calamities	Future Calamities	Future Calamities	Future Calamities
Arethas, Andrew Caesarea (d. 637)	Apostles	Martyrs Pagan Rome	Apostasy during Pagan Persecution	Apostasy after Constantine	Martyrs in All Ages	Antichrist Tribulations	Rest prior to Seven trumpets
Earliest Syriac Apocalypse (ca. 800)	Adam's sin to Christ's death	Adam's sin to Christ's death	Adam's sin to Christ's death	Adam's sin-to Christ's death	Moses and Prophets	Christ's Death	Forty years from the cross to AD 70
Oecomenius (ca. 550)	Birth of Christ	Temptations of Christ	Teachings of Christ	Passion of Christ	Death of Christ	Conversion of Jews	Converted Gentiles

¹³⁷ The only known Eastern commentary missing from this discussion is a translation of the book of Revelation with a commentary in the Georgian language produced by Euthymus the Athonite around 978. The commentary may have commonalities with Andrew of Caesarea. The only extant edition is in Georgian, written by Ilia Imnaishvili, *Iovanes Gamocxadeba da misi targmaneba [The Revelation of John and its interpretation]* (Tbilisi, Georgia: n.a., 1961). Descriptions of it are in J. N. Birdsall, "The Georgian Version of the Book of Revelation," *Studia Biblica* 3 (1978): 33-45; and J. N. Birdsall, "The Translation of Andreas on 'Revelation' by Euthymus the Athonite," *Bedi Kartlisa* 41 (1983): 96-101.

Seven Churches: The writer of the earliest Syrian *Apocalypse*, from the early ninth century, indicates that the seven churches represent the progress of Church history throughout seven major Church councils.

Seven Seals: The pattern of Church history in the seven seals is described by the Byzantine scholars Andrew, Arethas, and especially Nerses of Lambron. Bulus-al-Bushi's approach resembles the pretero-historicist model of Berengaud of Ferrier. Oecumenius' interpretation, like the earliest Syrian *Apocalypse*, is mostly Christological. In contrast, Dionysius of Salibi approaches seals and trumpets in a completely futuristic manner.

Seven Trumpets: Eastern writers generally do not recapitulate the seals and trumpets the way Latin fathers do. The trumpets most often follow the historical events described in seals chronologically, representing the tribulations and trials of the end times. Joachim follows the Latin pattern, repeating and enlarging upon the historical events prophesied under the seven seals.

The 1,260 days: For the Greek and Eastern medieval writers—as for many Latin expositors—the prophetic number 1,260 is sometimes associated with the period of the time describing the entire Christian dispensation.¹³⁸ A number of Latin writers prior to Joachim applied the year-day principle to the short period of “three days and half” in Rev 11:9.¹³⁹ However, none of the Latin expositors ventured to apply the year-day method to the longer prophetic numbers (1,260, 1,290 and 1,335 days.)

¹³⁸ For Oecumenius (forty-two months in Rev 11:2), see p. 253 of this study; for Methodius of Olympus, see p. 146.

At least two Eastern scholars contemporary with Joachim did use this conversion. Bulus-al-Bushi converts 1,260 days into 1,500 years while Nerses of Lambron translates 1,260 days to exactly 1,260 years of Christian dispensation, expecting the end of the prophecy to occur in the late thirteenth century. This is identical to Joachim's calculation. Jewish scholars such as Benjamin Nahawendi, Saadia ben Gaon, and Abraham Bar Hiyya also employed this method, albeit while interpreting the 1,290 days in Dan 12:12.

In their calculations for shorter periods of time, Eastern commentators also applied the year-day principle. For example, the anonymous writer of the Syrian *Apocalypse* applied the year-day principle to the five-month prophesy in Rev 9:5 and to the three and a half days in Rev 11:9 and 11:11. The conversion of prophetic days into years appears to have been a popular hermeneutical device among the Near-Eastern writers during the early Middle Ages.

The Seven Heads of the Dragon and the Beast(s): Joachim's identification of the seven heads of the beast in Rev 13, with seven major persecutors during the Christian dispensation, bears the imprint of the Byzantine historicist tradition. A similar interpretation was first explored by Andrew of Caesarea and then by Arethas and eventually by Nerses of Lambron. Nerses and Andrew specifically name the Arian Emperor Valens and the Pagan Emperor Julian as examples of persecuting leaders throughout the Christian era. Joachim identifies Constantius II instead of the Valens, and Nero instead of Julian. For him, they represent more fitting representatives of persecution by the heathens.

Millennium: An Augustinian view of the millennium was dominant in the Middle Ages, in both the East and the West. Byzantine writers such as Andrew and Arethas

exhibit Augustinian influence in their view of the millennium (Rev 20). The anonymous Syrian *Apocalypse* also places the millennium between the years AD 33 and 1500.

There are some exceptions, however. The early Greek writer Oecumenius sees the millennium as a symbol of Christ's ministry during his First Coming. Bulus-al-Bushi saw a future thousand years in the text describing the seventh seal (Rev 8:1). The view that is most congruent to Joachim's, however, is that of the Syrian writer Dionysius bar Salibi. Citing Hippolytus, Salibi clearly favors the view of a future millennium and places the thousand-year millennium in Rev 20 as a future period of peace. Writing around 1170, Salibi is the first documented Christian writer after Augustine to return to a future millennium. There is a possibility that this view had been in circulation among Syrian Christians by the time Joachim journeyed to Syria and Palestine around the late 1160s.

There may also be indications that Joachim attempted to harmonize Jewish exegesis with Christian thought. The idea of 1,290 days extending from the first century AD (destruction of Jerusalem) to the future millennial Sabbath is present in the Jewish scholarship with which Joachim had frequent interaction.

Miscellaneous Similarities: There is a striking similarity between Joachim and Near-Eastern eschatology in the interpretation of Dan 7. Whereas the established interpretations of the four beasts identify them as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, the unknown Coptic author of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius* identifies the fourth beast as Islam. This substitution is identical to the substitution that would later be made by Joachim. The fact that *Pseudo-Athanasius* also identifies the beast from Rev 13 as Islam—another idea echoed in Joachim's writings—suggests that the similarities between the two interpretations might not be merely coincidental. The third major resemblance

between Joachim and *Pseudo-Athanasius* is a stout rejection of the angelic last emperor who defeats the Antichrist and ushers in the period of peace.

Significant correspondence is also found between Joachim and the unknown author of the earliest extant *Syrian Apocalypse*. The Syrian expositor believed the last enemy of the Church to be the tail of the dragon in Rev 12:4. No other known commentator besides Joachim identifies the tail of the dragon as an actual historical power. A further connection is that the anonymous Syrian writer, like Joachim, endorses the idea of two Antichrists. The first Antichrist, associated with the sea-beast in Rev 13:1-10, must join forces with the lamb-beast (Rev 13:11-18), which is also the tail of the dragon and the false Christ. This view of the tail of the dragon in conjunction with the two end-time Antichrists is strongly reminiscent of Joachim's theories about the end-time apocalyptic showdown.

Two other expositors whose interpretations are remarkably similar to those of Joachim are Basar-al-Bushi and the author of the *Coptic Apocalypse of Daniel*. They interpret the number 666 as the name Mametios, which bears some resemblance to Joachim's Melsemut. Furthermore, they associate Islam with the first beast in Rev 13, as does Joachim.

These miscellaneous similarities increase the likelihood that, while meditating and studying the Scriptures in Palestine and Syria, Joachim came in contact with various streams of Near-Eastern Christian eschatology. Through his writing, Joachim then potentially attempted to bring the Near-Eastern apocalyptic ideas into harmony with the classic Latin and Byzantine historicist tradition.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPACT

Summary

Joachim's Hermeneutic

An attempt has been made, throughout this study, to portray the times, the person, and the writings of the Cistercian abbot, Joachim of Fiore. Born in twelfth-century Norman-ruled Calabria, Joachim lived in a complex culture suspended between the Latin West, the Greek East, and the Semitic South. The Norman Kingdom in which he lived was a melting pot of cultures, ideas, and thoughts that allowed Joachim a degree of independence in his reflections and philosophy.

Joachim's pilgrimage to Palestine was probably the most critical event in his life. In the solitude of Mount Tabor, he was, for the first time, able to receive a special type of illumination. It opened his mind towards a revolutionary outlook on Jewish and Christian Scriptures. In Palestine and Syria Joachim also seems to have come under the influence of the Eastern perspectives on the prophecies of Revelation, particularly the Byzantine, Syrian, and Coptic traditions.

Another significant influence on the life and theology of Joachim was monasticism, yet in a unique way. The rules of Saint Benedict, the order of Cistercians, and the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux represent the foundation on which Joachim desired to build his plan for church reform. When attempting to understand the

Scriptures, he emphasizes a prayerful study of the Bible, rather than resorting to the commentaries of prior expositors. This approach makes Joachim a uniquely biblical monk for his time. The reading of the Scriptures was something Joachim believed monastic orders had neglected. In Joachim's opinion, this neglect made the Church incapable of reaching the true spiritual life toward which it strived.

Through his reading of Scriptures and his interpretation of Bible prophecies, Joachim came to the conclusion that the key to the true betterment of society was not a bloody crusade or political conquest, but spiritual conversion and a change of heart. Illumination and regeneration, according to Joachim, must be the basis for all reforms. This illumination comes through prayer, devotion, and an emphasis on the knowledge of God acquired through the Holy Scriptures.

Joachim considered all passages in the Bible to have prophetic significance. Whether looking at the Bible narrative with typological lenses or interpreting classic apocalyptic passages, his view of the future was a vision of the victory of spiritual believers over the forces of corruption and greed in the church and society. The imminent age of the Spirit was a predestined reality during which God closes His work of redemption by raising spiritual movements that will prepare the way for the Second Coming of Christ.

In Joachim's detailed typological system, which he calls the *Concordia*, the forty-two generations between Abraham and Jesus in the OT (Matt 1:1-17) are paralleled by forty-two prophetic months (or 1,260 prophetic days) between Jesus' First Advent and the millennium (Rev 11:2, 13:5). The major events of the OT church are concordant with

the major events of the NT Church.¹ These events are recorded and predicted in different aspects in the visions of the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven heads of the dragon/beast. Joachim identifies the entire scope of Hebrew history as a prototype for the post-resurrection Christian church.² He cites divine approval for such an approach in the visions of Revelation, which he claims are predictive in nature. Joachim's theory of concords (*Concordia*) is verified by the major parallels between the events of OT and NT history. Hence, Joachim would argue, the validity of the concept can be demonstrated historically.³

Using the rule of recapitulation and his own-developed theory of concords, Joachim produced an impressive framework for interpreting the book of Revelation. In his approach, each subsequent vision of the apocalypse recapitulates a historical-chronological progression of Church history.

Joachim was the first expositor ever to have applied a full historicist scheme to the "seven churches" in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation. In the letters to the seven churches (Rev 2-3), Joachim identifies the seven stages of the Christian era. The

¹ Grundmann recognizes Joachim's system as classical biblical typology—a pictorial system of concordance between the prototypes of the OT and the antitypes of the history of Christ. According to Grundmann, Joachim's book *Liber Figurarum* represents a manual of typology (Herbert Grundmann, *Studien über Joachim von Floris* [Leipzig, Germany: Wiesbaden, 1927, reprint, 1966], 199-207; see also Floridus Röhrig, *Rota in medio rotae, Ein typologischer Zyklus aus Oesterreich*, Jahrbuch des Stiftes Klosterneuburg [Klosterneuburg, Austria: Buch und Kunstverl, 1965], 11).

² Joachim is often credited with separating history into three ages, though similar ideas appear to have circulated in Christian thought before him. For example, Hugh de Saint Victor divided history into two stages separated by the incarnation of Christ. Technically, this is also Joachim's approach. For a general background to the theory of the ages of history see R. Schmidt, "Aetates mundi: Die Weltalter als Gliederungsprinzip der Geschichte," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 67 (1955-56): 288-317.

³ Joachim, LC (D), 13; Daniel, "Joachim of Fiore; Patterns of History," 83.

first two churches, Ephesus and Smyrna, represent the early three centuries of the Church from the time of the apostles until the age of Constantine and Pope Sylvester I (ca. 325). The third stage is the church of Pergamos. During this period the Church becomes established and is approved by the ruling powers of the empire. This age is characterized by the appearance of false teachers and heretics such as Arius and others.

The message to the church of Thyatira correlates to the fourth stage of Church history. This is a period of expansion for the Latin Church. The antagonistic force of this period is Jezebel who appears in Rev 2:20. Jezebel represents individuals in the Church who pretend to be spiritual but condone sin and sensuality “under religious garment.” The church of Sardis represents the fifth stage of the Church, that of monastic orders. In Joachim’s view, many members of the monastic community had become complacent. Jesus’ message to the church in the fifth stage is: “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that you livest, and art dead” (Rev 3:1). Joachim believes this period receives the most scorn from Jesus, as it has slipped away from the monastic ideal set up by Benedict of Nursia (d. 540).

The last two churches, Philadelphia and Laodicea, illustrate the climax of Christian history, entering the Age of the Spirit. In the sixth letter, addressed to the church of Philadelphia, Joachim identifies a prophecy of the coming sixth period, which he asserts must begin soon after the year 1200.

A similar periodization into seven major of Church history is developed by Joachim in commenting upon all other major visions of the Revelation such as the seven seals (Rev 6-7), the seven trumpets (Rev 8-11), the seven plagues (Rev 16), and the seven

heads of the apocalyptic dragon and the beast (Rev 12, 13, and 17). This makes Joachim the first entirely consistent historicist commentator on the book of Revelation in history.

Larsen has argued that because of the usage of the word *dispensatio* in his writing, Joachim belongs to the *futurist*, or as it is sometimes called, the *dispensationalist* school of thought.⁴ Such an assessment of Joachim's approach is inaccurate. Joachim's mere usage of the term *dispensatio* bears no connections with the contemporary dispensationalist hermeneutics. Joachim's method of interpretation relies heavily on chronological periodization of the most critical events, persecutions, and controversies, which occurred between the time of the Apostle John and the end-times. The periods of history, predicted in prophecy, for Joachim, are lined up against each other in a successive-chronological fashion, exhibiting no gaps or intermissions among them.

The use of the year-day principle is another indicator of Joachim's strict adherence to the historicist method of interpretation. Historicism as a hermeneutical system necessitates the conversion of the prophetic days and months into actual years. The hermeneutical principle of historicism prompted Joachim to speculate upon the time period of "1260 days" mentioned in Dan 7:25 and 12:6, and in Rev 11:2, 11:4, 12:6, 12:14, and 13:5. He also speculated on when the time period had begun and when it would expire. Joachim started his reckoning from the birth of Christ. For Joachim, the

⁴ David Larsen, "Joachim of Fiore: The Rebirth of Futurism," *Covenant Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2002): 1-15; See also I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis, and Ian Paul, *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Letters and Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 342.

faithful people of God would soon enter the final millennial rest, at the imminent conclusion of the 1,260 prophetic years.⁵

Joachim's view of the Second Advent of Christ is complex and ambiguous. For Joachim, Christ's Second Advent is somewhat progressive. Just before the beginning of the millennium, Jesus physically manifests His power on earth by using His breath to supernaturally destroy the Antichrist and the wicked. More importantly, at the same time as the physical manifestation, Christ also comes spiritually. Through the concept of a collective Messiah of monastic orders, Jesus Christ effectuates an unprecedented religious renewal within the society. During the short, restorative millennium, Christ is spiritually present in His people.

The full physical descent of God's heavenly kingdom to earth does not fully materialize until the end of the short (forty-five-year-long?) millennium. If Joachim does, indeed, place the physical Second Coming of Christ after the millennium (even though the millennium is very short for Joachim), he may theoretically be called a father of postmillennialism.⁶

⁵ Besides presenting no "gaps" in his chronological-successive timeline of prophetic events from the First to the Second Advent, Joachim also discards "dispensationalist" view of rapture, and Antichrist ruling in the literal temple in Jerusalem.

⁶ In Christian eschatology, postmillennialism is an interpretation of chap. 20 of the Book of Revelation, which sees the second coming of Christ occurring *after* (Latin *post*-) the 'Millennium.' The term subsumes several similar views of the end-times, and it stands in contrast to *pre-millennialism* and—to a lesser extent—*amillennialism*. Postmillennialism was a dominant theological belief among American Protestants who promoted reform movements from the 18th to the 20th centuries, such as abolitionism and the Social Gospel. Daniel Whitby (d. 1726) is presently considered the father of modern postmillennialism (Robert Whalen, "Postmillennialism," "Premillennialism," *Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements*, ed. R. Landes [New York, NY: Routledge, 2000], 326–332).

Implications of Joachim's Hermeneutics

Although some authors categorized Joachim's typological approach to Scripture under the general rubric of medieval allegory, the studies of Grundmann and de Lubac have shown that Joachim actually broke with the traditional medieval theories of the four senses of Scripture.⁷ Joachim was somewhat reticent towards the scholastic theology of his time. His patristic knowledge consisted predominantly of the works of Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, as well as some other medieval authors, among whom Bernard of Clairvaux seems to be his favorite. However, the works of the patristic authors do not abound in Joachim's writings. Joachim explicitly asserts that the works of Jerome and Augustine represent their personal opinion and are not above the injunctions of Scripture. Joachim's general tactic is to attempt to harmonize patristic hermeneutics with his own, and when he needs to disagree with the traditional reading of a particular text, Joachim ventures to do it in a non-confrontational manner.⁸

Robert Lerner is probably correct in pointing out that Joachim's most significant departure from medieval eschatology is his projection of the millennium as being in the future.⁹ By abandoning the concept of realized eschatology dominating Augustinian hermeneutics, Joachim returned to the eschatological expectations of the mainstream

⁷ See Grundmann, *Studien uber Joachim von Fiore*, 13-34, 199-207; Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 3:327-420, especially 359-67; see also McGinn, "The Abbot and the Doctors," 31, against Lerner who argues that Joachim's system is not a real typology but a special hermeneutical category on its own called *concordance* (Robert Lerner, *The Feast of St. Abraham* [Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2004], 12-13).

⁸ In a few instances, Joachim directly lashed out against patristic scholasticism (Joachim, EA, 87c; *Tractatus Super Quatuor Evangelia* [Buonaiuti], 277, 296-97).

⁹ Robert Lerner, "Antichrists and Antichrist in Joachim of Fiore," *Speculum* 60, no. 3 (July 1985): 556; for further elaboration on Augustine's application of Tyconius see p. 172.

ante-Nicene Fathers. Furthermore, Joachim's application of typological meaning to events and figures in Church History, and even contemporary to himself, directly confronts Augustine's denial of the possibility of an apocalyptic plot being discerned in the Scriptures. For Joachim, the millennium, although not one thousand years long, is a future, historical, and critically important stage of the world's history. It is contingent upon both prophecy (Rev 8:1 and Rev 20) and typology (the rest from persecutions after the exile of the Jews from Babylon).

Augustine, witnessing conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity, sees the Church as bound to achieve great spiritual and material progress and to "[fill] the whole earth," like the stone in the prophecy of Daniel (Dan 2:35). Joachim, looking backward in history, does not see progress but instead identifies a spiritual downward spiral of corruption, simony, worldliness, and exile to Babylon. Hence, for Joachim, the millennium of peace and prosperity must yet be in the future. The Church will be reformed, says Joachim, through *viri spiritualis*—the spiritual men, who will arise in power of Elijah to preach spiritual conversion, ceasing from worldly lusts and wars, ushering the glorious restoration and renewal of the whole Church. Augustine, interpreting Rev 20:3, sees the devil "bound up" by the Church while Joachim sees the devil alive and well and free to instigate spiritual decay, corruptions, crusades and other sins in the Church and the World. For Joachim, the Scripture and history confirm that the devil is not bound yet but will be "bound" during the future Millennium of peace.

Augustine's view of the Millennium justified the Church's involvement in secular affairs by asserting that Christianity has already become (or is progressively becoming) the kingdom of heaven on earth. For Augustine, the event prophesied in Dan 2:43, of the

stone hitting Nebuchadnezzar's image, had occurred at the First Coming of Christ. The Church embodies this "stone," growing into an earthly mountain of God or *Civitas Dei*. For Augustine, God's kingdom is not only spiritual but political and temporal. Christians should engage in the work of expanding God's spiritual and temporal authority over the kingdoms of the earth, even if it involves military conflict.

Joachim considers that such a materialistic reading of Scriptures is "carnal" and reminiscent of Jewish theocracy. He considers the involvement of the Church in the affairs of the state, and vice versa, to be a sign of spiritual exile, characteristic of a figurative Babylon. For Joachim, Jesus' assertion that the "kingdom of God is in you" (Luke 17:11), applies only as a spiritual reality during the age of the Son. It does not become a material reality until the commencement of the age of the Spirit. Joachim notices that the "stone" hitting the image of the Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:34) comes after the iron legs of Rome are dissolved and after Imperial Rome becomes weak as "iron and clay" (Dan 2:33). Joachim, just like many early Church Fathers, argued that this division of Rome did not happen at the Christ's First Advent but is yet to occur in the future.

Another Joachim's departure from medieval tradition was the idea that the final end-time Antichrist would be Jewish, would arise from the tribe of Dan, and would assail the church from the outside. From Joachim's perspective, these mindsets, which were common in medieval eschatology, were pseudo-biblical speculations that served only to increase hatred toward Judaism and were counterproductive to the Christian witness and mission among the Jews.

Joachim sees the Antichrist as an internal foe, a type of Judas, "the son of perdition" (2 Thess 2:8), who betrays Christ from within the gathering of the elect. The

final, great Antichrist, Paul says, must “sit in the temple of God, claiming to be God” (2 Thess 2:9). According to Joachim, the “temple of God” represents the Church and not a literal Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Instead of coercing the Jews into Christianity, Joachim believed in the pre-destined “apocalyptic conversion,” wherein the Church would become a symbol of peace attracting the Jews to Christ through the spirit of God’s love.

Biblical Historicism Prior to Joachim

Although Joachim’s contributions were crucially significant for the development of biblical historicism in the West, this study confirms that Joachim of Fiore was not the only exponent of the historical-chronological exegesis of prophecies in the early Middle Ages. Biblical historicism, although sometimes less elaborated, existed well before Joachim. For most of the period of the early Church, the book of Daniel was predominantly interpreted in a historicist manner. In the book of Daniel, the early Church fathers saw a historical and chronological succession of four world empires (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—Dan 7:21-23). This succession was to be followed by the soon dissolution of Rome into ten smaller kingdoms (“ten horns” in Dan 7:24a), followed by the arrival of the little-horn Antichrist (Dan 7:24b-25) and a final deliverance at the Second Coming of Christ.

At the same time, such historical clarity was lacking in the early Christian observations of Revelation. Commentators such as Irenaeus (ca. 180) and Hippolytus (ca. 220) interpreted only a few visions of the Apocalypse, particularly chaps. 13 and 17, as descriptions of the future appearance of Antichrist. The rest of Revelation proved more enigmatic for them.

Both Victorinus (d. AD 270), bishop of Pettau, in the West, and Bishop Methodius of Olympus (d. AD 310), in the East, agree that Revelation predicts the progression of the Church history. Nevertheless, (and understandingly so) neither of them is able to give precise predictions as to which stages of history are represented. In a letter dated around 394, Jerome encapsulates this ambiguity, avowing that in the book of Revelation there are “as many mysteries as there are words.”¹⁰

The inability of the early Church to lay down a concise historical interpretation of the book of Revelation has stimulated some expositors to develop a more idealistic approach, interpreting major parts of Revelation as the spiritual combat of the Christian Church versus evil. The semi-ahistorical interpretations hinted by Tyconius were promptly adopted by Augustine who focused mainly on moral and the ideal message of the book. The idealist reading, thus, became prevalent in the Latin West, supplanting the idea of historical progression suggested by some early writers.

Nevertheless, the idealist approach to Revelation failed to satisfy scholars in the East. Byzantine expositors, starting in the sixth century, extended the historical-chronological exegesis normatively applied to the book of Daniel to the book of Revelation. Andrew of Caesarea (fl. ca. 610), Arethas (fl. ca. 900), and to some lesser extent Oecumenius (fl. ca. 550), developed the earliest forms of historicist readings of Revelation.

In the Latin West, expositors such as the Venerable Bede (fl. ca. 750), Haymo of Auxerre (fl. ca. 840), and Berengaud of Ferrier (fl. ca. 850) began introducing historical-

¹⁰ “Apocalypsis tot habet sacramenta quot verba.” Jerome, *Letter 53.8* “to Paulinus, Bishop of Nola” (NPNF II, 6:102).

chronological allusions to the traditional idealist patterns. For instance, the English thinker Bede was the first expositor to have hinted towards interpreting the seven churches in Rev 2 and 3 as seven periods of the Christian Church.¹¹ Haymo and Berengaud applied the seven heads of the beast in Rev 13 and 17 to a chronological succession of historical persecutors of the Church. The work of these individuals is the earliest precursor to the Latin historicist approach developed by Joachim.

By the early twelfth century, through the efforts of Bruno Segni, Rupert of Deutz, Gerhoh of Reichesberg, and Anselm of Havelberg, Latin eschatology had fully opened the door to historical frameworks. According to Rupert of Deutz, the seven heads of the dragon in Rev 12 form seven major persecutors of the people of God through history. Interpreting the seven seals in Rev 6, both Rupert of Deutz and Anselm of Havelberg identify the seven periods of the Christian Church: the time of the apostles, the time of the martyrs, the time of the heretics versus the doctors, the time of the monks versus the hypocrites, the time of Church reform, the time of the Antichrist, and the final rest. Gerhoh of Reichesberg's interpretation of the seven trumpets follows a similar pattern.

Among the Syrian, Coptic, and Arminian churches of the East, there are serious considerations for historical patterns. The early ninth century *Anonymous Syriac Commentary* interprets the seven churches as seven major Church councils, from the council of Nicaea (325) to the council of Byzantium (553). The Arminian expositor Nerses of Lambron (1180) employs a historical-chronological approach to the seven seals, which depict the seven stages of the Christian Church from the apostles onward.

¹¹ Bede does not comment on the historicity of the third, fourth, and fifth churches.

The seven heads of the scarlet beast in Rev 17, for Lambron, represent seven world empires from Babylon until Byzantium. See Table 12.

Table 12. Predominant hermeneutics of expositors before Joachim

AD	Medieval Idealism		Medieval Historicism		
	Classical Idealism	Ecclesiastic	Historical Idealism	Pretero-Historicism	Ecclesiastical Historicism
400	Christological		Tyconius		
500		Caesarius		Oecomenius	
600		Cassiodorus			Andrew of Caesarea
700	Apringius	Primasius	Venerable	Early Syrian	
800	Pseudo-Alcuin	Pseudo-Jerome	Bede	Apocalypse	
900		Paterius			Arethas of Caesarea
1000		Alcuin	Haymo of Auxerre	Berengaud	
		Autpertus		Rupert of Deutz	Anselm of Havelberg
1100		Anselm of Laon	Bruno of Segni		Gerhoh
		Glossa Ordinaria		Bulus-al-Bushi	Nerses of Lambron
	Futurism	Combining Various Approaches			
1200	Dionysius Bar Salibi (1170)	Beatus of Liebana (850) Richard of St. Victor (1140)			Joachim of Fiore

Additionally, even the year-day principle, which Joachim applied so frequently, was commonly featured in medieval exegesis, both East and West. In the fourth century, Tyconius converted “three and a half days” in Rev 11:9 into three and a half years, which became a standard interpretation of that passage in the Latin scholarship. Although not employing this method to convert the “1260 days” (Rev 12:6), a number of Latin

commentators agreed that this cipher, or the equivalent “time, times and half a time” (Rev 12:14), describes the entire length of the Christian dispensation.

While the year-day principle does not appear much in the writings of Byzantine expositors, it seems to be prominent among Near-Eastern medieval Christians. The *Anonymous Syrian Commentary*, for example, converts the days into years while commenting on Rev 9:5 and 9:15. Nerses of Lambron (ca. 1180), a contemporary of Joachim, is arguably, the first expositor known to have applied the year-day principle to the 1,260 days of Rev 12:6. Like Joachim, Nerses believed that the 1,260 days depicted the 1,260 years of the duration of the Christian era, from Christ’s birth until His Second Coming.¹²

The concept of the future millennium could also be drawn, at least in part, from among the various traditions of the churches of the East. There are two examples of this. The first is the Syrian expositor Bar-Salibi, who, writing around 1170, placed the Millennium firmly in the future. The second is the Coptic commentator Bulus-al-Bushi who envisioned a period of rest during the time of the seventh seal as the future final thousand years of human history.

The possible influence of Jewish exegesis upon the development of biblical historicism in the Christian thought should not be neglected to the present study. This influence can already be seen in the work of Tyconius, who adopted the Jewish idea of a “time” being a century. Medieval Jewish scholars particularly stressed the year-day

¹² Later interpreters would apply the “1260 days” of the “woman in the wilderness” (Rev 12:6,14) to the beginning of the medieval apostasy of the church. See for example Luther, “Table Talk 429” in *The Table Talk of Martin Luther*, ed. and transl. William Hazlitt (London, UK: George Bell and Sons), 194-195.

principle when interpreting 1,290 days in Dan 12:11. Jewish medieval interpreters regularly saw the period of 1,290 years expiring with the beginning of the final Sabbath of the future millennium.

Finally, while many medieval expositors in both the East and the West applied historical-chronological exegesis to selected passages in Revelation, Joachim of Fiore was the first Christian writer to employ the method systematically, for the entire book, fully constructing the framework of prophetic Church history. Joachim's systematization of various historicist traditions into a congruent system set the stage for historicist dominance in the High Middle Ages and the Reformation.

Conclusions

Joachim's Antecedents

There are many challenges associated with determining Joachim's antecedents and the streams of influence that shaped and directed his views. Although there are remarkably few direct quotations and references linking Joachim to other authors, it does not seem that he wrote in a vacuum. He did directly quote Jerome and Augustine, showing knowledge of the early Church fathers. He also cited Bernard of Clairvaux, reacted strongly against the Byzantine ideas of a Final Emperor, and mentioned multiple discussions he had held with Jewish scholars. These represent evidence that Joachim had exposure to various streams of the apocalyptic thought of his time.

Medieval scholar Morton Bloomfield writes that "as to the sources of his [Joachim's] historical theories, we have no exact predecessors but in a way an

embarrassment of riches.”¹³ Joachim’s biblical historicism combines (1) a Christian tradition of the historical progression of apocalyptic time, existent among some Latin and most Byzantine and Near-Eastern expositors prior to Joachim; (2) Latin medieval traditions of Revelation exegesis dominated by the recapitulation principle;¹⁴ and (3) a Near-Eastern Christian (Armenian, Syrian, and Coptic) and Jewish system using the “year-day” principle coupled with the expectation of the future Sabbath.¹⁵

At the same time, Joachim’s system is not at all a mere compilation of different eschatological views. While embracing various features of medieval eschatology, Joachim firmly rejected aspects that he considered non-biblical. Reflecting upon the Medieval Latin tradition, Joachim criticized its insistence upon a present millennium and its assumptions about a Jewish Antichrist. Reflecting upon Byzantine eschatological tradition, Joachim excluded the pseudo-Methodian idea of the angelic last-Emperor (which actually originated among the Sibylline oracles).¹⁶ Thus it appears that Joachim blended the historical eschatological traditions of multiple cultures—Greek, Near

¹³ Morton W. Bloomfield, “Joachim of Fiore,” *Traditio* 13 (1957): 274.

¹⁴ Greek expositors Andrew and Arethas did not recapitulate churches, seals, trumpets, and plagues. Seven seals describe the history of the Christian Church while the seven trumpets and seven last plagues represent God’s end-time judgment.

¹⁵ Although the view of a future millennium was dominant in the ante-Nicene Church, it is more plausible that Joachim was nudged towards the future thousand years through his contact with Syrian and Coptic Christianity and through his interaction with Jewish scholars of his time.

¹⁶ Joachim also naturally differed from the Jewish historicist expositors in their view of the first coming of Christ and their view of the Godhead.

Eastern, Latin, and Jewish—extracting those elements which he could not determine to have originated in the Scriptures.¹⁷

The influence of Near-Eastern Christian thought upon Joachim seems to be a neglected subject in the field of Joachite studies. Virtually no contemporary scholar of the middle ages has ever linked Joachim's historical ideas with the Near-Eastern Christian exegesis of the book of Revelation. Further research in this area is needed.¹⁸

Besides these major literary sources, two Latin writers contemporary to his time, notably, Gerhoh of Reichersberg and Rupert of Deutz, deserve particular comment. The most significant similarity between Gerhoh (d. 1169) and Joachim is the usage of typology. For Gerhoh, the major Old Testament events find their antitypical fulfillment in both the life of Christ and in the history of the Christian Church, the body of Christ. Also, like Joachim, Gerhoh sees the seven trumpets as seven main stages of Christian dispensation—stages almost identical to those described by Joachim. Furthermore, the refutation of the concept of a Jewish antichrist is actively present in the writings of both Gerhoh of Reichersberg and Joachim of Fiore. Finally, both Gerhoh and Joachim—in spite of their sentimental attitude towards the Church—were keenly aware of the shortcomings of ecclesiastical life.

¹⁷ See Joachim's express statement that only in Scriptures can we establish the true history of humanity (Joachim, LC [D], 11, 13, and Joachim, EA, 157).

¹⁸ Larson points out that there seem to be unpublished Armenian and Syrian commentaries on Revelation in manuscript form at Oxford and elsewhere. These manuscripts, could shed further light upon Near-Eastern Christian hermeneutics and its potential connection with Joachim (see Stan Larson, "The Earliest Syriac Commentary on the Apocalypse: Transcription, Translation, and Importance of Brit. Lib. MS. Add. 17, 127," Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, England, 1984), 442.

In the same century, Rupert, bishop of Deutz (d. 1129), also wrote about seven stages of the Christian Church, interpreting the seven seals in the book of Revelation. Rupert's stages of history are also very similar to those of Joachim. He develops the theory of three main ages of history, delegating each period to one person of the Trinity. Among the authors of the twelfth century, Deutz and Gerhoh appear to be closest to Joachim's thought.

Joachim's Originality

The idea that the symbols and images of Revelation represent the prophetic portrayal of most significant events and periods of ecclesiastical history was hinted at and alluded to by many early Church and medieval expositors. However, no Bible interpreter before Joachim ever applied the historical-chronological system of interpretation to the entire book of Revelation, nor in such detail.

Joachim's greatest originality lies in the particular detail he gave to each seal, trumpet, and the head of each beast. For Joachim, the long centuries of conquests, schisms, heresies, persecutions, trials, and monastic and other spiritual movements in the Church did not happen by random chance. Instead, they were foreseen by God and were revealed in the book of Revelation. God did not forget the Church. Just like the OT Israel, the NT Church had to undergo seven main periods before Christ's return. The prototypes laid out in the OT history had to be historically and chronologically fulfilled in the NT dispensation. The mystical number of 1,260 years—the "time, times and half a time" mentioned multiple times in the books of Daniel and Revelation—had to expire before the end would come and God would bring the history of the earth to its close.

Within his historicist system of thought, Joachim offers some very progressive ideas, especially for the age in which he lived. Here are the five most significant side-details of Joachim's historicism:

1. *A favorable view of the Jews*: Joachim's denial of a Jewish Antichrist, his rejection of forceful conversion, and his optimistic view of the spontaneous conversion of the Jews is one of the earliest anticipators of the idea of freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

2. *Rejection of the glorification of the state and emperors*: In both East and West, emperors were expected to be the final messianic figures, who would bring about the kingdom of God. Joachim, however, firmly denounces this idea as "Babylon." Joachim especially rejects the idea of the militant expansion of Christianity.

3. *Rejection of the glorification of the popes*: While Joachim does expect that the future renovation of faith will be led by an "angelic pontiff"—a spiritual leader of sorts—he also strongly affirms that an "antichristian pontiff" must appear first. Joachim does not allow for the divinization of the papal see. Joachim's insistence that the Church of his time is corrupt gradually fostered in the minds of his readers the need for spiritual reform.

4. *Separation of Church and state*: Joachim appears to be one of the earliest anticipators, in modern history, of the separation of the Church and the state. His insistence upon separating ecclesiastic and secular affairs pervades his writings. Not only did Joachim reject the emperor's involvement in ecclesiastical investiture, but he also attacked the Church's usage of militia, war, and politics in general. The emphasis on the *vita spiritualis* of the Church upon this earth became a predecessor for the radical concept

of the separation of Church and state that emerged during the Reformation and Enlightenment.

5. *Experiential and personal religion*: Finally, one of the most important contributions of Joachim to Bible hermeneutics is his emphasis upon “spiritual illumination.” Joachim believed that any person who spent time reading the Bible could, with the help of God, become enlightened to understand God’s plan of the past and present, and even gain glimpses of the prophetic future. Joachim believed that his enlightening experience was not a peculiar gift given to him alone, but a foretaste of the spiritual intelligence to be poured out on all people before the end of history.

Joachim’s Impact

Having defined Joachim’s originality, it is now possible to more precisely evaluate the impact of his writings in the High Middle Ages, Renaissance Europe, and to some extent, the influence his works still exercise today. Firstly, Joachim’s writings left a lasting impression on the history of the Christian interpretation of Revelation. Medieval historian Bernard McGinn did not exaggerate when he observed that “from 1200 to 1500 there remained only a few important authors of the text untouched by the Calabrian and the tradition he initiated.”¹⁹ McGinn also noted that by the year 1250, it became “almost as difficult to ignore Joachim as it was to neglect Daniel or the Book of Revelation.”²⁰

The extent of Joachim’s impact upon the pre-Reformation interpretation of biblical prophecies has been comprehensively described in Marjorie Reeves’s work

¹⁹ Mc Ginn, *Visions of the End*, 146.

²⁰ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 158.

Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages (1969).²¹ Reeves argues that the most potent of Joachim's ideas is the prophecy of the coming "spiritual men" who will usher in an unprecedented era of global peace, a millennium of prosperity and love.²²

While the prophecy of the future spiritual men is undoubtedly a significant thought in Joachim's writings, the systematization of the scheme of history is too often underappreciated in the discussion of Joachim's contribution to Christian hermeneutics. Joachim's interpretation of the two witnesses in Rev 11, as two future reformist movements, certainly had a unique appeal to Franciscans and Dominicans, whose orders were founded shortly after Joachim's death.²³ However, in many ways, Joachim's predictions of the future restoration and the soon emergence of "spiritual men" were received as credible predictions only because his contemporaries were persuaded by the logic of his historical-chronological system of interpretation.

This is demonstrated by a notable number of prophecy expositors from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, who, in their commentaries and lectures on the

²¹ See also the updated study by Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and Prophetic Future* (London, UK: SPCK, 1976).

²² Reeves, *Prophetic Future*, 85-7 and 145-160; McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 159; see also M. Reeves and M. Bloomfield, "Penetration of Joachimism into Northern Europe," *Speculum* 29 (1954): 772-793.

²³ See especially: (1) Peter John Olivi's *Postilla in Apocalypsim* (1275), edited in David Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom: a Reading of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia University, 1993); (2) Alexander Minorita, *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (1250), edited in Sabine Schmolinsky, *Der Apokalypsenkommentar des Alexander Minorita: zur frühen Rezeption Joachims von Fiore in Deutschland*, Monumenta Germaniae historica, Studien und Texte, 3 (Hannover, Germany: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1991); (3) Nicholas of Lyra's commentary in Philip D. Krey, *Nicholas of Lyra Apocalypse Commentary* (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 1997). See also Randolph E. Daniel, "A Re-examination of the Origins of Franciscan Joachimism," *Speculum* 43, no.3 (October 1968): 671-676.

Apocalypse, adopted Joachim's historical patterns without especially emphasizing his future age of the Spirit or the spiritual renovation of the two orders.²⁴ Even Reeves observed that "these authors demonstrate that one could appreciate Joachim's visions of the patterns of history while evading the trap set by his expectations of the future."²⁵

Commenting further on late medieval English expositors of prophecy, Reeves expresses her additional surprise with the fact that so many writers after Joachim chose to focus on his patterns of history, rather than on his predictions of future renovation. Persuaded that these expositors were avoiding the core of Joachimism, she compares it to wanting "the whole play of Hamlet—without Hamlet."²⁶

The English expositors were not alone in this approach to Joachim's legacy. The pseudo-Wenceslas Prague Commentary (1220-1240),²⁷ the commentaries of the Augustinian master Augustino Trionfo (1270-1328),²⁸ the works of Archbishop Paul of

²⁴ Reeves, *Prophetic Future*, 85-89; see also Robert Freyhan, "Joachism and the English Apocalypse," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 18, no. 3/4 (July-Dec. 1955): 211-244.

²⁵ Reeves, *Prophetic Future*, 88.

²⁶ Reeves, *Prophetic Future*, 87.

²⁷ Probably the most impressive contemporary example of a historical approach to Revelation, the *Scriptum super Apocalypsim cum imaginibus* [*Book on the Apocalypse with Pictures*] appears shortly after Joachim's time. This text of the Book of Revelation with commentary and illustrations was associated with Wenceslas, duke of Bohemia (921-935). However, its final redaction is considered to have taken place between 1220 and 1240. See Anton Ludwig Frind, ed., *Scriptum super Apocalypsim cum imaginibus* (Prague: H. Eckert, 1873).

²⁸ For a connection between Joachim and Augustino Trionfo see Gian Luca Potesta, ed., *Il profetismo gioachimita tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento*, Atti del III Congresso Internazionale di Studi Gioachimiti, San Giovanni in Fiore, 17-21 Settembre 1989 (Genoa, Italy: Marietti, 1991), 263.

Burgos (1351-1430),²⁹ the Florentine philosopher Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498),³⁰ the Dominican expositor Giovanni Nanni (1432-1502),³¹ and the German humanist Nicolas of Cusa (1401-1464)³² all focus almost exclusively on the historical patterns established and developed by Joachim. While trying to improve the historical commentaries, they tend to ignore Joachim's attempts at predicting the future spiritual men and the details of the coming millennium.³³

David Burr comments that these late medieval expositors "tend to cite Joachim in contexts that do not force engagement with what is distinctive in his theology of history."³⁴ In other words, it seems that late medieval writers more frequently admired Joachim's overall system without necessarily adopting all the peculiarities and particulars of his scheme and predictions.

²⁹ See Burr, "Antichrist and Islam in Medieval Franciscan Exegesis," 139 and Philip Krey, "Nicholas of Lyra and Paul of Burgos on Islam," in *Medieval Perceptions on Islam: A Book of Essays* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1996), 153-182.

³⁰ Girolamo Savonarola, *Compendium Revelationum*, extracts translated in Herbert Lucas, *Fra Girolamo Savonarola* (London, UK: Sands and Company, 1899), 51-73; see also McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 183-275.

³¹ Giovanni Nanni, *Glossa super Apocalypsim* (Genoa, Italy: per R. Magistrum Baptistam Cavulum, 1480); 1507 edition available on Google books under the title *Glossa sive Expositio super Apocalypsim* (Cologne, Germany: Werden).

³² Nicolas De Cusa, "Coniectura Novissimis Diebus," in *Opera Omnia* (Basel, Switzerland: H. Petrina, 1565), 932-935.

³³ Most of these scholars also employ the year-day principle in similar fashion to that of Joachim.

³⁴ David Burr, "Mendicant Readings of the Apocalypse," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. B. McGinn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1992), 94-95.

Among other luminaries who admired and followed Joachim's historical framework are individuals such as the Franciscan doctor Bonaventure (1221-1274), who built upon Joachim's patterns to develop his own theology of history.³⁵ Archbishop Peter Aureol (1280-1322) tried to re-calculate the end of the 1,260 years to fit his age.³⁶ The physician and a controversial theologian, Arnold of Villanova (1235-1312), expected the Antichrist to appear around 1378—a date that handily coincided with the Western Schism (1378-1415).³⁷ The Franciscan scholar, Jean de Roquetaillade (ca. 1310-1366), placed the start of the great persecution in the year 1365 and saw the father of the future Antichrist in Friedrich III of Sicily.³⁸ The Spanish Dominican penitential preacher, Vincent Ferrer (1350-1420), wrote in 1402 to Pope Benedict XIII that the Antichrist would be born in 1403.³⁹

³⁵ See Bernard McGinn, "The Significance of Bonaventure's Theology of History," *The Journal of Religion* 58, Supplement, Celebrating the Medieval Heritage: A Colloquy on the Thought of Aquinas and Bonaventure (1978): 64-81.

³⁶ Petrus Aureolus, *Compendium litteralis sensus totius diuine scripture* (Quaracchi, Florenze, Italy: College of St. Bonaventure, 1896), 454-56; see also Burr, "Mendicant Readings of Apocalypse," 100-101.

³⁷ Villanova, *De adventu Antichristi* (1288), in Joseph Perarnau, "El Text Primitiu del *De Mysterio Cymbalorum Ecclesiae* d'Arnau de Villanova," in *Arxiu de textos Catalans antics* 7/8 (1988/89): 134-69. About 1292 Villanova wrote a commentary on what he thought was a genuine work of Joachim entitled *Introductio in Librum [Joachim] De Semine Scripturarum* (critical edition in Joseph Perarnau, ed., *Arnaldi de Villanova Opera Omnia* [Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2004]).

³⁸ See Robert E. Lerner and Christine Morerod-Fattebert, eds., *Johannes De Rupescissa Liber Secretorum Eventuum*, Spicilegium Friburgense, 36 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Editions Universitaires Fribourg, 1994).

³⁹ See Laura A. Smoller, *The Saint and the Chopped-Up Baby: The Cult of Vincent Ferrer in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2014), 162. For other Dominican scholars who revered Joachim and adopted much of his method see Reeves, *Prophetic Future*, 161-174.

These interpreters, and numerous others, all cited Joachim and based their calculations upon the year-day principle and the historical-chronological framework of Revelation he advanced. While Joachim's predictions about the new age to come, the "everlasting gospel" of love, and the angelic pope were cherished and anticipated with great fervor among various groups who found in these images a justification for their own historical significance, these predictions were trusted and accepted mainly due to a sense of the perceived consistency of Joachim's Church history patterns.⁴⁰

The sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers took Joachim's system of interpretation to another level. Being an Augustinian monk, there is a possibility that Martin Luther could have come into contact with Joachim's ideas through the enthusiasm of Augustinian friars.⁴¹ Whether that was the case or not, Luther had almost certainly encountered Joachim's writings through *Tractatus de moribus Turcorum*, the work of George of Hungary. First published in 1481, *Tractatus* is riddled with Joachimite apocalyptic overtones, containing significant excerpts from Joachim's *Expositio* in a large appendix. Luther cherished the *Tractatus* as a valuable piece in his personal library, providing a new printing edition for it in Wittenberg.⁴²

⁴⁰ For a detailed survey of Joachimites and Franciscan spirituals who adopted most of Joachim's predictions, see Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:717-743; see also David Burr, "Mendicant Reading of the Apocalypse," 94.

⁴¹ See the fascination Augustinian monks and hermits found with Joachim's historicism in Reeves, *Prophetic Future*, 88-9 and 251-273. It is the Augustinian monks who were responsible for the 1519 and 1527 Venice editions of Joachim's *Expositio* and *Liber Concordiae*.

⁴² See Adam Francisco, *Martin Luther and Islam* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2007), 25; see also Julian A. B. Palmer, "Georgius de Hungaria and *Tractatus de moribus condicionibus et nequicia Turcorum*," in *Bulletin of John Rylands Library* 34 (1950/51): 44-68.

Two of Joachim's significant themes circulated among Protestant Reformers. The first is the expectation of spiritual and ecclesiastical *renovatio*. The idea that the Bible predicts the Church going into Babylonian captivity and experiencing a "reformation" or "renovation," as Joachim termed it, is uniquely Joachite. Joachim's prediction of a coming renovation strongly influenced several Catholic orders. The reform-expecting sentiments existed all the way until Luther's arrival. In many ways, Joachim's works set the stage for Luther's reform.⁴³ The second is Joachim's dream that multitudes would be able to read the Bible and receive the same illumination he experienced while studying the Scriptures.⁴⁴ Luther and other reformers embraced these ideas with much enthusiasm, forging the reformed doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers."⁴⁵

Luther's views on prophecies also reflect the influence of the historicist method passed down by Joachim. Luther came closest to Joachim's historicism in five areas: (1) the historical-continuous approach to Revelation;⁴⁶ (2) the year-day principle;⁴⁷ (3)

⁴³ For more on Joachim's view of future reformation see pp. 58-60, 66-68, 74-78, 97-98, 101-102, and 106-108 of this study.

⁴⁴ For Joachim's prediction on future greater emphasis on Holy Scripture see p. 44 of this study; see also West, *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought*, 1: iv.

⁴⁵ See a further connection between Joachim and Martin Luther in Heiko A. Oberman, *The Impact of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 135; see also Winfried Vogel, "Luther's Eschatological Theology: Part I," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1986): 256-57.

⁴⁶ Luther saw the seven seals as seven major persecutions of the Church, and the seven trumpets as seven major heretics throughout the Church history in chronological fashion (see Martin Luther, "Preface upon the Apocalypse," *Luther's Works*, 55 vols. [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1964], 35:405-410).

⁴⁷ See for example Luther, "Preface on Daniel" (1531) *Luther's Works*, 35:305-06; Luther, "A Sermon on the Jewish Kingdom and the End of the World, Mat. 24" (1525), in Lenker, *Sermons of Martin Luther*, 8 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988), 5:366, 367; see also

the rejection of a Jewish antichrist; (4) the association of the Antichrist with Islam or the papacy; and (5) the idea that all can interpret Scriptures through the aid of God's Spirit.⁴⁸

Besides Luther, reformers such as Philipp Melancthon, Andreas Osiander,⁴⁹ John Bale, and Heinrich Bullinger all embraced the historical-continuous method, often quoting Joachim in their writings.⁵⁰ These Protestant scholars were followed, and in some cases preceded by, Anabaptist reformers who also adopted critical tenets of the historical-chronological approach, frequently crediting Joachim as an exegetical resource and hermeneutical antecedent.⁵¹

Luther's comments on Dan 12:7-12, in which he converts 1,290 days and 1,335 days into years spanning from AD 70 to AD 1360 or 1405 (Luther, "Vorrede über den Propheten Daniel" [1541], *Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Weimar Ausgabe]: Die Deutsche Bibel*, 15 vols. [Weimar, Germany: Herman Böhlau, 1900], XI-DB: 86-124).

⁴⁸ Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:254-282; Winfried Vogel, "The Eschatological Theology of Martin Luther: Part II," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 183-199; see also Martin Luther, "Preface to the Book of Daniel," *Luther's Works*, 35:294-320 See also "Preface upon the Apocalypse," *Luther's Works*, 35:399-415.

⁴⁹ Andrew Osiander was a leader of the Reformation in Nurnberg from 1525-1548. He reprinted and re-illustrated some of Joachim's writings (Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:296) later writing a volume on historicism himself entitled *Vermutung von den letzten Zeiten und dem Ende der Welt* (Nurnberg, Germany: J. Petreius, 1545), trans. by George Joy into English, *Coniectures of the Ende of the Worlde* (Antwerp, Netherlands: S. Mierdman, 1548).

⁵⁰ The first Protestant commentary on Revelation was written by Francis Lambert and appeared in Latin in 1528 under the name *Exegeseos Francisci Lamberti Auenionensis in sanctam Diui Ioannis Apocalypsim libri VII* (Marburg, Germany: Franz Rhode, 1528). Lambert's commentary is heavily dependent upon Joachim and serves as a transition between medieval and Protestant historicism (Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:302). Among other sixteenth-century Protestant commentators on Revelation, who followed historicist exegesis and quoted Joachim of Fiore, is the leader of Swiss reformers Heinrich Bullinger, *A Hundred Sermons upon the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* (London: John Day, 1561). See also commentary of Bishop John Bale, *The Image of Two Churches* (1549), in *Select Works* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1849), 249-640.

⁵¹ See Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearers, 2000), 52-3. Anabaptist leaders Melchior Hoffman and David Joris especially entertained Joachim's ideas of the progression of history (see Klaus Depperman, *Melchior Hoffman* [Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1987], 252-53); see also Warwick Gould and Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Myth of Eternal Evangel in the 19th and 20th Century* (New

The Anabaptist and the main-line reformers were followed by several seventeenth and eighteenth-century Puritan writers,⁵² Baptists and Wesleyans, who continued identifying the book of Revelation as a prophecy of Church history.⁵³ Commenting on the work by M. Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and Prophetic Future*, which largely explores Joachim's influence upon Renaissance and Reformation writers, Daniel concludes:

The Protestant reformers who cited Joachim included Mathias Flacius Illyricus, John Foxe and John Bale as well as Radical Reformers including Thomas Muentzer and Melchior Hofmann. The "most complete Joachite" was Giacompo Brocardo, a humanist from Venice who went to northern Europe, became Protestant and sided with the Huguenots. [Marjorie] Reeves traced Joachimism down to the seventeenth century in Thomas Brightman, Hugh Broughton, and James Maxwell.⁵⁴

Joachim's influence continued to be felt in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Among the luminaries of that epoch who adhered to biblical historicism is Sir Isaac Newton, as can be seen in his posthumously published historicist commentary on

York, NY: Oxford University, 2001), 18. For Hans Hutt's admiration of Joachim see Thomas N. Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology* (Dovners Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 524.

⁵² Peter Toon, *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660* (London, UK: James Clarke Company, 2002). See also M. Reeves, "History and Eschatology: Medieval and Early Protestant Thought in Some English and Scottish Writings," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 4 (1973): 106-110, and M. Reeves, "English Apocalyptic Thinkers [c.1540-1620]," in *Storia e Figure d'Apocalisse fra '500 e '600*, ed. R. Rusconi, Atti del 4ro congresso internazionale di studi Gioachimiti (Rome, Italy: 1996), 259-273.

⁵³ For the most prominent Methodist exposition on Revelation see Adam Clarke, *Commentary and Critical Notes upon the New Testament*, 2 vols. (New York, NY: J. Emory and B. Waugh for the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1826), 2: 881-980. For more connections between Joachim and the Reformation see Gould and Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Myth of Eternal Evangel*, 15-19.

⁵⁴ Randolph Daniel, "Review of Marjorie Reeves' *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future*," *The Medieval Review* (August 11, 2000), accessed online, June 20, 2017 <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/14973/21091>

Daniel and Revelation.⁵⁵ The historicist interpretations of Bible prophecies especially escalated in the nineteenth century. With several hundred monographs and thousands of journal articles expounding upon Daniel and Revelation, the nineteenth century produced the most numerous amount of historicist literature in human history.⁵⁶

Regarding Joachim's influence upon Protestant theologians, historians Gould and Reeves write: "The conclusion to be drawn . . . is that in learned circles Joachim's commentary on the Apocalypse was being used for specific historical interpretations but Joachim's Trinitarian theology. . . and doctrine of the third *status* was seldom imbibed."⁵⁷ Protestant reformers, for the most part, added to Joachim's work in that they saw in the book of Revelation the development of the Antichrist within the Roman Catholic Church system. Joachim himself was not hostile to the papacy, but his identification of the Antichrist with a coming usurping pope gave ammunition to many anti-papal interpretations.

Not all biblical historicists from this period were Protestant or anti-papal, however. It is through reading Joachim's material that the Chilean Jesuit scholar Manuel Lacunza (1731-1801) was influenced to write his views of the soon coming of the celestial kingdom. Lacunza's volume, entitled *La Venida del Messías En Gloria y*

⁵⁵ Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (London, UK: J. Darby and T. Brown, 1733).

⁵⁶ See Dojcin Zivadinovic, "The Apocalyptic War: An Analysis of the Conflict between Historicism, Preterism and Futurism in the 19th Century America and Britain," Research Paper, Andrews University, December 2008, 61-64, available at the Andrews University Library Archives; see also Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 4.

⁵⁷ Gould and Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Myth of Eternal Evangel*, 18.

Majestad, was published in 1810 under the pseudonym Juan-Josaphat Ben Ezra. It contained predictions that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and the soon-coming millennium were about to be fulfilled.⁵⁸

Lacunza's book was translated by Edward Irving in England, influencing the growth of the Second Advent expectation in England and America.⁵⁹ Thus, in this way, the Second Advent Movement of the mid-1840s received an impetus through the English translation of Lacunza's work, itself drawing from the legacy of Joachim.⁶⁰

Besides, Lacunza, other Catholic scholars of the nineteenth century also employed the historical-chronological approach to prophecies. For instance, Ambrose de Lisle Phillipps (1809–1878), a convert to Catholicism in England, used all the features of historicist interpretation, including the year-day principle. Instead of the papacy, Phillipps

⁵⁸ Manuel Lacunza, *La Venida del Mesías en Gloria y Magestad* (Cadiz: F. Tolosa, 1811). Before its official publication the *La Venida* circulated in South America and Europe in manuscript form from the 1790s onward. Despite the prohibition of the Inquisition, the volume was secretly printed in Cadiz in 1811 or 1812 followed by several other editions in Spain and England. Further editions were printed in Mexico in 1821/1822, in Paris in 1825, and again in London in 1826 (see Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 3:308-314).

⁵⁹ Manuel Lacunza, *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, trans. Edward Irving, 2 vols. (London, UK: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1827).

⁶⁰ Somewhat erroneously called the father of modern dispensationalism, Edward Irving followed closely the traditional historicist pattern in interpreting the Bible prophecies. Irving placed the seals and trumpets in the different periods of Church history, used the year-day principle for 1,260 days, and identified the papacy with the little horn from Dan 7. See Edward Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God: A Discourse on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse, Which Relate to These Latter Times, and until the Second Advent* (Glasgow, UK: Chalmers and Collins, 1826).

identified Islam as the Antichrist of Revelation. In his work, Phillipps mentions several other Catholic historicists of the time.⁶¹

Another major nineteenth-century Catholic expositor who defended biblical historicism was the renowned German Theologian, Catholic priest, and Church historian Johann Ignaz von Döllinger (1799-1890). Döllinger rejected the dogma of papal infallibility and wrote a book in which he presented how biblical historicism was traditionally the most common method of interpretation in the pre-reformation period.⁶²

Historicism and the Modern Christian Thought

Even though the rise of the futurist and preterist schools of interpretation in the late nineteenth century contributed to the decline of classical historicism, the idea that the book of Revelation portrays major successive events in the history of the Church continues to have an impact upon the Christian world today. The idea still exists within the wide spectrum of dispensational communities, which often consider the message of the seven churches as portraying the historical overview of the Church from the time of the apostles to the present age. Baptist theologian John Walvoord is an example of such an approach. In his commentary, republished in 2011, Walvoord employs a definite

⁶¹ “The venerable Father Bartholomew Holtzhauser, of Bingen, so interprets the 1,260 Apocalyptic days. The learned Church historian, the Abbe Rohrbacher adopts the same view, as may be seen in the tenth volume of his ‘Ecclesiastical History,’ where he treats at length the prophecy of Daniel in reference to Mahomet and the Mahometan apostacy. The same view is also maintained in a learned work, published at Paris in 1844, and dedicated to the late Pope Gregory XVI, entitled, ‘La Fin des Temps.’ The same is upheld in another most admirable treatise, entitled, ‘Preuves Incontestables de la Verite de L’Eglise Catholique deduites de L’Apocalypse’ (Ambrose Philipps, *Mahometanism in Its Relation to Prophecy* [London, UK: Charles Dolman, 1855], 126-27).

⁶² Johann Döllinger, *Prophecies and the Prophetic Spirit*, trans. Alfred Plummer (London, UK: Rivingtons, 1873).

historical-chronological framework in interpreting the message of the seven churches and also in interpreting the seven heads of the scarlet beast in Rev 17.⁶³

Among contemporary evangelicals who apply historical-chronological approach to the entire book of Revelation are Berkshire College professor Oral E. Collins,⁶⁴ and the Presbyterian theologian Francis Nigel Lee.⁶⁵ Among classical historicist scholars of the 20th century are Cambridge librarian B. F. Campbell Atkinson,⁶⁶ Presbyterian magazine editor Eric C. Peters,⁶⁷ George W. Dehoff, editor of *Dehoff's Bible Commentary*,⁶⁸

⁶³ John Walvoord, *Revelation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2011). The rest of the commentary is futurist.

⁶⁴ Oral Edmond Collins, *The Final Prophecy of Jesus: An Introduction, Analysis, and Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007).

⁶⁵ Francis N. Lee, *John's Revelation Unveiled* (El Paso, TX: Historicism Research Foundation, 2001). See also F. N. Lee, *The Anti-Preterist Historicism of John Calvin and the Westminster Standards* (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, 1995).

⁶⁶ B. F. Cambell Atkinson, *The War with Satan; An Explanation of the Book of Revelation* (London, UK: Protestant Truth Society, 1940), adopts Thomas Brightman's view of the seven churches, the synchronicity principle of Joseph Meade and several of the ideas of Isaac Newton. See also B. F. Cambell Atkinson, *The Times of the Gentiles; a Brief Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (London, UK: Protestant Truth Society, 1971).

⁶⁷ Peters was the chief editor and publisher of the *Old Fashioned Prophecy Magazine* (Blackwood, NJ: OFPM, 1962-1967).

⁶⁸ *Dehoff's Commentary*, 6 vols. ed. George W. DeHoff (Murfreesboro, TN: Dehoff Publications, 1982), 6: 321-342.

Baptist Evangelist Ralph Woodrow,⁶⁹ Canadian Baptist Reverend A. J. L. Haynes,⁷⁰ Baptist Reverend Harold Edwin Barton,⁷¹ and others.

The historicist method is particularly retained within Protestant denominations such as the United Church of God.⁷² The Advent Christians with 130,000 thousand members, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with their 19 million members worldwide still firmly employ the historical-chronological method of prophetic interpretation. Quite similarly to Joachim's system, Seventh-day Adventists apply seven churches and seven seals to the seven main periods of the Christian Church: the age of (1) Apostles, (2) Martyrs, (3) Church Corruption after Constantine, (4) Medieval Apostasy, (5) Reformation, (6) Evangelical Awakenings and the Great Second Advent Movement, and (7) the Remnant Church prior to the Second Coming of Christ.⁷³

The prominence of biblical historicism within the larger Adventist tradition is the reason that at least one Catholic scholar has labeled Joachim a “medieval Adventist.”⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Great Prophecies of the Bible* (Riverside, CA: Evangelical Association, 1971).

⁷⁰ Most of A. J. L. Haynes's works are published via websites such as www.historicism.com, accessed March 21, 2018.

⁷¹ *It's Here: The Time of the End: A Comprehensive Study of Bible Prophecy Fulfilled and Unfulfilled* (New York, NY: Exposition Press, 1963).

⁷² *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* (Cincinnati, OH: United Church of God, 2008).

⁷³ See, for example, Francis D. Nichols, ed., *Commentary on Daniel and Revelation from the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 742-765; Mervin Maxwell, *God Cares* 2 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1985), 122-145; Ranko Stefanović, *Revelation of Jesus Christ* 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2009), 113-157.

⁷⁴ Jean Séguy, “Les ordres religieux ‘adventistes’ du catholicisme,” in *Christianisme et prophétisme*, Actes du colloque de la Faculté adventiste de théologie 2003 (Collonges-sous-Salève, France: 2005), 81-116. Already in the late 1940s a French Adventist theologian Alfred

Adventist researcher Leroy E. Froom recognizes the connection between Joachim and modern historicism as he places Joachim side-by-side with the prophet Daniel, John the Revelator, Wycliffe, Luther, Knox, Isaac Newton, and Wesley in illustrating what Froom sees as a “progression of truth” from biblical times to the modern day.⁷⁵

Viability of Biblical Historicism for Today

The broad comparison between Joachim and modern historicist thought brings this discussion to the relevance and viability of the historical-chronological approach to the book of Revelation today. It has been observed and documented that the historicist method led Joachim to develop several positive traits for the development of society, such as the value of individual conscience, separation of church and state, religious tolerance, and an emphasis on pacifist Christianity. In spite of these positive changes for society, biblical historicism has been marginalized in mainstream Christian scholarship today. The usual arguments in favor of discrediting historicism are as follows:

1. There is a lack of consensus among various historicist expositors.
2. Historicism is irrelevant to the first-century readers of Revelation.
3. Historicism is anti-Catholic and anti-papal.
4. The major focus of historicism is on Western Church history.
5. Historicist interpretation is constantly revised as history progresses.

Vaucher noted that Joachim of Fiore’s ideas stood close to the root of the Great Second Advent Awakening in America and Britain (1840-1844) (Alfred-Felix Vaucher, *Lacunziana: Essai sur les propheties bibliques* [Collonges-sous-Saleve, France: Fides, 1949; see also Vaucher, “Les 1,260 jours prophetiques dans les cercles joachimites,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 3 [1965]: 42-48).

⁷⁵ See Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 1:7.

In spite of a number of modern expositors who perpetuate these points of criticism,⁷⁶ it can easily be demonstrated that most, if not all of these arguments, are not inherently applicable to classical historicism.

Argument 1. “Lack of consensus” criticism is not inherent or exclusively applied to biblical historicism, as there is a paramount lack of consensus among both preterist and futurist expositors regarding different visions and images of both Daniel and Revelation.

Argument 2. “Historicism is not relevant for the first-century Christians.” The argument of irrelevance to the original audience, does not comprehensively depict the historicist method of interpretation. For Joachim, and for most modern historicists, much of Revelation is and was directly historically or morally relevant to the early Church. In historicism, passages that are usually identified as portrayals of the historical situation of the first two centuries of the Christian era are: 1.) the primary audience application of the “seven churches” (Rev 1-3); 2.) the opening of the seven seals, especially the first two seals (Rev 4:1-6:4); 3.) the first two trumpets (Rev 8:6-10); and 4.) the initial narrative of the woman versus the dragon in Rev 12:1-6.⁷⁷

Besides recognizing the historical application of these selected passages to the early Christian Church, historicist interpreters generally also believe that many symbols in Revelation contain foretastes of future Christian hope—such as: 1.) the vindication of

⁷⁶ Osborne, *Revelation*, 20; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 46; Homer Hailey, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), 49; Desrosier, *An Introduction to Revelation*, 32; Marvin Pate, *Reading Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2009), 9; Simon P. Woodman, *The Book of Revelation* (London, UK: SCM, 2009), 22; Merrill Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 139.

⁷⁷ Joachim also saw the first two heads of the beast and first two vials as concerning the early Christians. This would make more than 25 % of the whole book!

the righteous (Rev 7, 14); 2.) punishment upon the wicked (Rev 6:12-17, Rev 11:15-19, Rev 14:8 -16:18); 3.) and the glory of God's future kingdom (Rev 19-22). These large sections of the book of Revelation (nearly 40 % of the book!), although not necessarily historically applicable to first- and second-century Christianity, represent extraordinarily essential and relevant pieces of eschatological hope and expectations for *even the earliest readers*.

Biblical historicism, as a system, does not negate that the book of Revelation, as a whole, contains many morally relevant ideas for all centuries, including the early Church audience. Joachim, for instance, places a fair amount of emphasis on the moral message of Revelation, which had relevance both for John's time and for all subsequent readers.⁷⁸

Ironically, however, this supposed weakness of historicism has traditionally proved to be its greatest strength. Historicist interpretation, as no other system in history, allowed the biblical text to evade the narrow early Church application by suggesting historical and moral pertinence of Daniel and Revelations for millions of people who were separated from the ancient times.

In conclusion, there is a complete lack of evidence that the early Christians understood the book of Revelation as being in any significant way historically or morally relevant to the first or second-century AD. No early Church Father left an indication that

⁷⁸ The confusion perhaps lies in the failure to recognize Revelation and Daniel as apocalyptic prophecies rather than classical prophecies. The nature of apocalyptic prophecies is to predict the future and warn successive generations of the woes coming upon them; classical prophecies often have a primary application for the original audience and a secondary one for the future. For more on classical or general prophecies versus apocalyptic prophecies see Jon Paulien, "The End of Historicism, Part I," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 27-29.

the book of Revelation was fully relevant to their time. Quite the opposite, Pseudo-Barnabas, Irenaeus, Justin, Hippolytus, and Victorinus saw the majority of visions in Revelation as awaiting fulfillment in the nearby or later future.⁷⁹

Argument 3: “Historicism is inherently anti-Catholic.” This criticism of historicism ultimately falls on its head because it implies that validity of a specific interpretative framework is measured by political correctness towards a particular religion, kingdom or state instead of its internal cohesiveness. If political correctness were the criterium, nearly all futurist interpreters today could be labeled anti-Islamic or islamophobic, and most preterist interpreters would be considered anti-Roman Empire.

Besides, while a significant number of Protestant historicists did, indeed, apply the symbol of the beast to the inquisitorial medieval Church-State system, the pre-Reformation Catholic expositors of the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries showcased the fact that biblical historicism, purely as an interpretive framework, is not inherently anti-Catholic. Joachim, the originator of modern historicism, was historicist in the fullest sense, yet he was not anti-Catholic.

Argument 4: “Focus only on Western Church history.” This argument is probably the fairest critique of historicism. While it is true that some prophetic expositors in the nineteenth century sometimes focused rather heavily on various arbitrary details of Western history, biblical historicism, as a general approach, is not inherently Western-centered. This is again demonstrated by Joachim, and by many classical historicist

⁷⁹ The argument of absence of relevance to the early Christians is even refuted by Beale, who does not favor historicism (Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 46-7).

expositors, which in their expositions recognize past or future events beyond the borders of Western civilization.

Instead of thinking in terms of Western-centered, it would be reasonable to think in terms of historicism being “covenant-centered.” It is unquestionable that the OT histories of Israel and the NT history of the early Church are concerned primarily with the story of God’s people, whether Jews or Christians. Correspondingly, one could expect the Bible prophecies (including Daniel and Revelation) to place the primary focus of their attention upon the persecutions, trials, and victories of God’s people through the ages. The other cultures and nations, outside of the reach of the Church, would thus have a mention in biblical prophecies as long as they interacted with the people of the covenant.

Finally, even with that in mind, traditional historicists were hardly Western-centered. In his expositions, Joachim covers ancient Palestine, Rome, Europe, Byzantium, and the Islamic states. Finally, Joachim envisages a future global conflict (Gog and Magog) where eventually the entire world will be affected by apocalyptic movements.

Argument 5: “Interpretation constantly must be revised as history progresses.” In answering this objection, it is important to notice that a progression of understanding is not perceived as a flaw in any other branch of science, industry, or technology. The same goes for theology or philosophy. Most Christians believe that the understanding of biblical truth grows and develops with each new generation. However, for some reason, the possibility for growth and update seems to be denied to the historicist understanding of the biblical prophecies.

Final Words

By its sheer scope, biblical historicism is genuinely unique. It is the only truly inclusive and universal approach to Bible prophecies. It avoids the narrow relevance for only first-century Christians—as Preterism suggests—and it also escapes the limited application to the last few years of the earth’s history, as proposed by Futurism.

Biblical historicism requires and stimulates implicit trust in God’s involvement in human life and history. The historicist reading of the prophecies of Daniel (the “four empires” in Dan 2 and Dan 7; the prophecy of “seventy weeks” in Dan 9 etc.) represented the foundation of the early Church’s faith. This might have been the reason why so many Christian expositors from 12th to 20th century accepted Joachim historical framework. Christian faith has historically been tightly interwoven with the empirical evidence of the predictive power of God’s Word.

The prophetic words of the book of Revelation 1:3 may still speak to the Christian Church today: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

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