fol. 61v-62v (Fragment) (s. XIII).
Sammelhandschrift theologischen Inhalts.

192. SAINT-OMER, Bibliothèque municipale, 297.
*Catalogue général* [...] *des départements*. Tome III, Paris, 1861, S. 148-149.
s. XV.
Die Handschrift enthält u.a. noch den Traktat *De miseria humane conditiones* oder *De contemptu mundi* des Johannes Lotharius (Papst Innocentius III).
Ehemaliger Besitzer: Abtei Saint-Bertin.

193. TROYES, Bibliothèque municipale, 290, Tome II.
*O.c.*, Tome second, Paris, 1855, S. 139.
fol. 54r- (s. XIII).
Die Handschrift enthält die *Historia scholastica* des Petrus Manducator.
Ehemaliger Besitzer: Kloster St. Stephanus zu Troyes.

194. UTRECHT, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 158.
[Tiele (P.A.)], *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum bibliothecae Universitatis Rheno-Trajectinae*, Trajecti ad Rhenum-Hagae Comitis, 1887, S. 46-47.
[Hulshof (A.)], *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum bibliothecae Universitatis Rheno-Traiectinae*, II, Traiecti ad Rhenum, 1909, S. 15.
Gumbert (J.P.), *Die Utrechter Kartäuser und ihre Bücher im frühen fünfzehnten Jahrhundert*, Leiden, 1974, p. 325-326.
fol. 112v-115v (s. XIV in.).
Die Handschrift enthält Schriften des H. Bernardus.
Ehemaliger Besitzer: Kartause zu Utrecht.

195. ZÜRICH, Zentralbibliothek, Car. C 26.
Mohlberg (Leo Cunibert), *Katalog der Handschriften der Zentralbibliothek Zürich*, I. *Mittelalterliche Handschriften*, Zürich, 1951, S. 98.
fol. 33r-34r (s. XV).
Sammelhandschrift.

196. ZÜRICH, Zentralbibliothek, Car. I 93.
Gagliardi (Ernst) - Forrer (Ludwig), *O.c.*, II. *Neuere Handschriften seit 1500*, Zürich, 1982, Sp. 1609.
Sammelhandschrift.

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

RICHARD LANDES

# LEST THE MILLENNIUM BE FULFILLED: APOCALYPTIC EXPECTATIONS AND THE PATTERN OF WESTERN CHRONOGRAPHY 100-800 CE

1. The Patterns of Universal History.—2. The Epistle of Barnabas.—3. Hippolytus.—4. Eusebius.—5. Augustine.—6. The Year 6000 Annus Mundi I.—7. Early Medieval Historiography.—8. 'Ut istum miliarium impleatur restant anni...'—9. Julian of Toledo.—10. Bede.—11. The Carolingians.—12. Ex silentio.—13. E vestigiis.—14. The Approach of 6000 *Annus Mundi* II.—15. The Dawn of the Seventh Millennium.—16. Conclusion.—17. Appendix: Definitions

## 1. The Patterns of Universal History

Literate cultures share an almost universal tendency to produce chronological systems; and although regnal years and local systems predominate, some larger societies have adopted a single overarching *era*.[1] Within both Christianity and Judaism, such a system emerged more or less simultaneously, based on the age of the world (*Annus Mundi* = AM). But whereas both the Greek Christians and the Jews established their current *erae mundi* in the early centuries of the Common Era (c.100-250 CE), Latin Christianity, curiously, made two major revisions in its dating system during the following six centuries (c.250-850 CE), before ultimately abandoning AM entirely in favor of *Annus Domini*.[2] Historians have duly noted these chronological transfor-

[1] F.K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, 3 vol. (Leipzig, 1906-14). More recently but less reliably, Elias Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (Ithaca, 1980).

[2] The Eastern Church made only small adjustments in its *Era Saeculi* once it had been established (c.200 CE), Victor Grumel, *La Chronologie*, Traité d'études byzantines I (Paris, 1958). The Jewish case is too complicated to treat briefly. It is possible, given the large discrepancies between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text (see, Gerhard Larsson, 'The Chronology of the Pentateuch: A Comparison of the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 102:3 (1983), pp.401-09), as well as the presence of various calendars and chronologies among the Dead Sea sects (R.T. Beckwith, 'Daniel 9 and the

mations, and even remarked on the 'obsession with the date' that characterized medieval Christian historiography;[3] but they have not defined the pattern they fall into. This pattern reveals a remarkable—and heretofore largely invisible—dimension of patristic and early medieval culture.

The pattern (see chart 1, p. 208) begins with the establishment of a system for dating the age of the world that situates its own date early in the last five centuries of the 6th millennium (c.5600 to 5700 AM). This system then enjoys about two centuries of universal acceptance among a wide range of ecclesiastical writers, despite occasional efforts to change it (c.5700-5900). Finally, and rather suddenly, it disappears from common usage in its 5900s, giving way to another dating system that rejuvenates the world by about three centuries: that is the new system universally accepted in its 5600-5700s.

Let us trace the details of these dating shifts.[4] By the end of the second century CE some apologetic texts contain calculations of the age of the world intended to prove Judaeo-Christian antiquity. It was not until the early 3rd century, however, that Hippolytus of Rome and Julius Africanus introduced the first well-documented Christian chronology (AM I), which placed the Incarnation 5500 years after the Creation. These authors thus placed themselves in the early 5700s AM I. Supported by data drawn from both biblical and secular sources, the new chronology rapidly generated a host of works grappling with the problems of time-reckoning. It prevailed within the Church both East and West.[5]

Date of the Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Communities', *Revue de Qumran*, 40, t.10:4 (1981), pp.521-42), that a pattern of change existed among the Jews similar to the Christian one under study here. Despite the development of the present rabbinic *annus mundi* in the 2nd century (*Seder Olam Rabbah*, ed. S.K. Mirsky, 1966), this method of dating was not used until the 11th century (Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1958), VIII, pp.204-10). For the Christian West, see shart I (p. 208).

[3] 'L'historiographie médiévale est d'abord marquée par l'obsession de la date...' Bernard Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1981), p.147; also, '...obsédant souci de la chronologie...', p.51.

[4] On the following discussion see, Heinrich Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie* (Leipzig, 1898; reprint, New York, 1967); more recently, V. Grumel, *La chronologie*; and A.-D. van den Brincken. *Studien zur lateinischen Weltchronistik bis in das Zeitalter Ottos von Freising* (Düsseldorf. 1957), with extensive bibliography.

[5] The impact of Hippolytus and Julius' work on the field of computus and chronology in the Church appears to have had an effect best described by Thomas Kuhn as the



In the 5800s AM I (300s CE), at least one other system arose in challenge. About 303 CE Eusebius argued, on the basis of massive archival work, that Jesus had begun his ministry 5228 years after the creation. Eusebius thereby rejuvenated the world by almost exactly three centuries, and dated his own time to c.5500 AM II.[6] Despite Eusebius' later prestige as the first Church historian, this early work so failed to find a response among chronographers that no copy of the original Greek survives. In the Latin West, however, in the 370s CE, and the 5870s AM I, the young Jerome revived Eusebius' Chronicle by translating it into Latin and bringing it up to date, c.5580 AM II. Jerome's effort apparently also had limited initial success since the next two important Latin Chronicles (Hilarianus, 397 CE and Sulpicius Severus, 404 CE), continued to use AM I.

But the following century, the 5900s AM I, the 5600s according to Jerome, saw a dramatic reversal in Western historiography, in which AM II replaced its rival in the works of all the major chronographers (Orosius, Hydatius, Victorius of Aquitaine) and only some vestiges of the former remained. In the 6th century, with the exception of the Byzantine-educated Jordanes, no Latin historian dated by the Hippolytan system (AM I). As had once been the case with that *era mundi*, the calculations of Eusebius became the universally accepted system (for Latin historians) during the 57th century according to their own reckoning.

Simultaneously with this complete revision of the established dating system, chronology itself became a still more central concern of Western historiography.[7] Not only did the few narrative historians of the early medieval period (e.g. Gregory of Tours, Bede) pay careful attention to chronographical matters, but perhaps the majority of self-consciously historiographical work in this period consisted principally in bringing

establishment of 'normal science' through the acceptance of a single paradigm which sets the framework for further problem solving in a field of scientific inquiry: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, II:2 (Chicago, 1962), pp.10-22. See below, notes 31 and 37.

[6] For recent works on Eusebius' Chronicle see A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (Lewisburg-London, 1979); Brian Croke, 'The Origins of the Christian World Chronicle', in Croke and Emmett (eds.), *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1983).

[7] Were there a change to a different system (e.g. *Annus Passionis*), the revisions would have been fewer in scope, since the two systems could exist side by side. A change in the AM entailed the replacement not only of all former chronographical data, but also of the various Easter Cycles which computists tried to align with the AM. (See Grumel, pp. 6-25).

Eusebius/Jerome up to date.[8] The attention traditionally paid to the correct *Annus Mundi* in the patristic period became an overriding concern of most early medieval historians. In contrast to their notoriously laconic historiography,[9] these continuators of Jerome, and later of Isidore and Bede, display an often meticulous chronography.[10]

As with the Hippolytan system, AM II prevailed throughout its 5800s (7th century CE). Indeed, when Julian of Toledo tried in 686 CE (5890s AM II) to date the Incarnation to 5325 AM, and the present to 6014, not only did he fail to make any impact even locally, but a later chronicler even associated him with the Eusebian AM II count that he had explicitly opposed.[11] And when, at the turn of the 60th century AM II (703 CE), the young Bede suggested a new calculation of the age of the world according to the 'Hebrew Truth' (based on the Masoretic/Vulgate text: Incarnation = 3952 AM III) rather than the 'Septuagint Interpretation' (the source for Hippolytus and Eusebius), his efforts seemed destined to suffer the same fate. Both at home and on the Continent, Bede's work met with derision and hostility.[12]

But in the course of the Eusebian system's 5900s, it fell victim to the same process of dramatic reversal with which it had replaced AM I in its 5900s some three centuries earlier. Under the sponsorship of the Carolingians, Bede's chronological program, particularly his revival of Dionysius Exiguus' *Annus Domini*, so dominated European chronological practice that by the end of the century we find no mention of AM II — so long the center of the Latin tradition — in the principle

[8] The Gallican Chronicle (511 CE), Count Marcellinus (518), Victor of Tunnuna (567), Marius of Avenches (581), and John of Biclaro (590) all wrote either epitomes or continuations of Eusebius/Jerome: editions in Mommsen's *Chronica Minora*, vol.1, 2, MGH AA IX, XI.

[9] It is a platitude of historiographical studies that the decline of culture at the end of Late Antiquity was reflected in the virtual collapse of serious historical writing: '...jejune chronicles, arid in style, and often ludicrously capricious in their selection of events...': Samuel Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (London, 1899), p.441; for other similar citations see Croke, 'Origins', p.127 n.1.

[10] Cf. '[The Medieval historian's] calculations of numbers, for instance, can scarcely ever be trusted...': G.G.Coulton, art. 'Historiography', in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York, 1950), p.374; further discussion, below p. 170.

[11] Julian of Toledo, *De comprobatione sextae aetatis* III: 10,35 in *Opera Juliani*, ed. Hillgarth, CCSL 115 (1976), p.212; Spanish continuator of Isidore of Seville, MGH AA XIII, p.368.

[12] Bede, *De temporibus*; see introductory remarks by C.W.Jones in his edition *Bedae opera de temporibus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), pp.130-35. Jones did not include the Chronicle in this edition; it can be found in the MGH AA XIII, pp.334-64; and in Jones' 1977 edition, CCSL 123B, pp.461-544.



historical texts. In the early 11th century CE, the rare historian to mention AM II, Ademar of Chabannes, denounced it as false.[13]

This, then, is the pattern: at least two systems for calculating the age of the world, universally accepted and the object of considerable interest in the period they designate as their own 5700s and 5800s, are overthrown in their 5900s by an alternative set of calculations which rejuvenate the world by some 300 years. How can we explain this?

The following study attempts an answer by placing the chronological work of the first eight centuries of Christian historians in a theological framework. As a result, rather than treat chronology as a field primarily concerned with factual accuracy, I have tried to identify larger theological and pastoral concerns that subtly but unmistakably influenced the direction of these chronologists' 'scientific' pursuits. A close analysis of Hippolytus' purpose and strategy illuminates the subsequent chronological activities of such men as Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory of Tours, Julian of Toledo, and Bede. By approaching the data in this way, we can not only explain the unusual pattern of chronological revision outlined above; but mine chronological work—one of the more abundant documentary sources in the early medieval period—for indications of the theological and social activity for which we have little other evidence.

## 2. The Epistle of Barnabas and the Origins of Christian Chronography

Most histories of Christian chronography start either with the apologists of the late 2nd century, or Julius Africanus in the early 3rd.[14] But significantly, the first Christian writing to mention the age of the world, the Epistle of Barnabas (c. 120 CE), concerns itself neither with the date nor the details of chronography, but rather with the broadest sweep of salvation history.

> Listen carefully my children to these words: 'God finished his work in six days...' That means that in 6000 years God will bring all things to

[13] Ademar used the Septuagint figures in his Chronicle, but in a very restricted manner (*Historia* II, 1; ed. J. Chavanon (Paris, 1895), p.68f.). In an Easter table he copied c. 1032, he included—unusually—a column with AM II and labelled it '*secundum falsitatem LXX interpretum*': Paris B.N. lat.5240 f.2; discussed by R. Landes, 'A Libellus from St. Martial at the Time of Ademar of Chabannes: Un faux à retardement', *Scriptorium*, 37 (1983:2), pp.185-88. AM II revived in the 12th century, and AM III (with modifications) in the Renaissance and Reformation.

[14] E.g. Gelzer (1898); Grumel (1958); Croke (1983).

completion, because for Him 'a day of the Lord is as 1000 years...' Therefore, my children, in six days, that is in 6000 years, the universe will be brought to its end. 'And on the seventh day he rested...'[15]

This passage, based on Genesis I and a passage in Psalm 89/90 ('1000 years are as a day passed in the sight of the Lord'), directly implies two of the most dangerous eschatological aberrations of the early church: millenarianism, and the attempt to date the Parousia. Here, in a work for catechumens accepted as canonical by the Alexandrine church, we find a number allegory which implies that, by dating the Creation of the world, one can know the time of its End. The prohibition of such presumption formed, as it were, the first commandment of the emerging institutional church: 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons the Father has fixed of his own authority, (Acts 1:7).[16]

In the passage in question, however, Barnabas not only violated this fundamental taboo, but also drew on a millenarian Jewish exegesis to do so.[17] Although initially widely accepted within the Christian movement, millenarianism had, by this author's time, become a highly volatile issue. Its radical social and political tendencies, its profound anti-institutional bias, and its enthusiastic reception among the unlettered produced great misgivings among ecclesiastical leaders. Once Montanism (mid-2nd-century) had demonstrated apocalyptic millenarianism's full destructive potential, misgiving became hostility towards what was then depicted as a 'Judaizing' heresy. (For further discussion and definitions, see Appendix.) And although this reaction did not set in until the later 2nd century CE, Barnabas here 'anticipated' it by carefully avoiding any explicit millenarianism in his discussion of the sabbath following the year 6000.

[15] Epistle of Barnabas 15: 4a-5a, ed. Prigent, *L'épître de Barnabé*, Sources Chrétiennes [hereinafter, SC], vol. 172 (Paris, 1971), p.185.

[16] Note that this is the opening statement of Luke's Book of Acts, i.e., it addresses the foremost problem of the emerging institutional Church: apocalyptic expectation. Mark and Matthew had issued their versions of the prohibition in the 'Little Apocalypse': 'But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father' (Mk 13: 32, Mt 24:36). This passage speaks only of hour and day, and in the context of the preceding statement ('Truly I say unto you, this generation will not pass away before these things come to pass'), it can be—and was—interpreted to allow calculations of years (see e.g. n.215). Luke's prohibition was more comprehensive in its phrasing.

[17] The clearest expression of this notion in Jewish apocalyptic literature comes in the book of Jubilees and Enoch (Wikenhauser, 'Die Herkunft der Idee des tausendjährigen Reiches in der Johannes Apokalypse', *Römische Quartalschrift*, 45:1 (1937), pp. 1-7), but that in turn derived from a wider ancient astronomical school (F. Cumont, 'La fin du monde chez les mages occidentaux', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 103 (1931), pp.29-96); see, more recently, Auguste Luneau, *L'histoire du salut chez les Pères de l'Eglise: La doctrine des âges du monde* (Paris, 1964), pp.34-49.



A close reading of his work even suggests that he is one of the earliest non-millenarians in the Church.[18]

Careful as he might be on that score, however, Barnabas had introduced into the textual tradition of the Church the idea of a millennial week which inevitably carried with it the millenarian interpretation of the coming sabbath. As Irenaeus put it in the century later (c.185 CE): 'This 7th day is the 7th millennium, the kingdom of the just, where creation renewed will become incorruptible...'[19] This exegesis became the most common and long-lived form of millenarian thought in the church of Late Antiquity.[20]

That such a curious amalgam of popular and erudite eschatological deviations should appear in the anti-Jewish catechism of 'Barnabas', and that Barnabas should be considered canonical by the anti-millenarian church of Alexandria,[21] illustrate the paradoxical nature of the belief whose development over the next seven centuries I now propose to trace. For Alexandria became the center of that theological campaign against millenarianism which, in its more radical forms, even attempted to exclude the Revelations of John from the christian canon. This latter effort (partially successful in the East only) was part of a larger strategy to deny any possible textual support to millenarianism by eliminating those works or passages which explicitly embraced such beliefs.[22] And if

[18] More recent studies of Barnabas have emphasized this aspect, demonstrating that the author was one of the earliest anti-millenarians in the Christian tradition: Oscar Cullman, *Christus und die Zeit. Die urchristliche Zeit- und Geschichtsauffassung* (Zürich, 1946), pp.131-43; and more recently Prigent, *Barnabé*, p.185 n.5.

[19] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* V, 36:3; ed. Adelin Rousseau SC, v. 153 (1969), p.463f. On the importance of millenarianism in Irenaeus, see M. O'Rourke-Boyle, 'Irenaeus' Millennial Hope: A Polemical Weapon', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 36 (1965), pp.5-16; Rousseau, p.186-91. This aspect of his thought has unfortunately received no further attention since O'Rourke-Boyle's article; see M.A. Donovan, 'Irenaeus in Recent Scholarship [since 1970]', *The Second Century*, 4:4 (1984), pp.219-42.

[20] See J. Daniélou, 'La typologie millénariste de la semaine dans le christianisme primitif', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 2 (1948), pp.1-16; Bietenhard, 'The Millennial Hope in the Early Church', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 6 (1953), pp.12-30; Wikenhauser, 'Herkunft', and Luneau, *L'histoire du salut* [n.17].

[21] The Epistle of Barnabas is included in one of the oldest extant Bibles, the Codex Sinaiticus (British Library MS Add. 43725, late 4th C.); first cited in the 2nd century by Clement of Alexandria, (Prigent, *Barnabé*, pp.20-24; see also M. Simon, 'L'Epître de Barnabé et le Temple', in *Les Juifs au regard de l'histoire: Mélanges en l'honneur de Bernhard Blumenkranz* (Paris, 1985), pp.31-36.

[22] Origen's classic attack on the *simpliciores* and their literal (i.e. Jewish) understanding of the rewards of the kingdom appears in the *Peri Archon* II, 11, 2-3. For some discussions of the Alexandrian anti-millenarian school, see V. Ermoni, 'Les phases successives de l'erreur millénariste', *Revue des questions historiques*, 70 (1901), pp.352-88; Leon Gry, *Le millénarisme dans ses origines et son développement* (Paris, 1904), pp.96ff; more recently, M.

widely popular canonical texts could be valid targets of such a purge, so much the more were theological ones. As a result, evidence of millenarianism became extremely sparse in ecclesiastical writings; not only do none of the works of radical chiliasts like the early Montanists survive, but even passages like the one in Irenaeus cited above were expurgated.[23]

Alone among millenarian beliefs, the sabbatical millennium can be traced with a certain continuity, because it is the only one that churchmen continued to endorse despite strenuous theological opposition. We find its themes in the most unimpeachable patristic writings, and traces of it even in the New Testament canon.[24] Indeed, for reasons we shall now consider, the paradox of the anti-judaizing 'Barnabas' preaching the millennial week and anti-millenarian Alexandria accepting his *Epistle* as canonical prefigure a much larger anomaly. For rather than move away from such a clearly dangerous position, the theologians of the next century propounded a teaching which made explicit precisely the most alarming implications of the sabbatical millennium, thus opening up a whole field of chronological activity.

## 3. The Place of Hippolytus in Early Christian Chronography

The first Christian chronographical writings we possess, although composed after Barnabas, are apparently unconcerned with his sabbatical millennium.[25] Theophilus of Antioch did not even make reference to

Simonetti, 'Il millenarismo in Oriente da Origene a Metodio', in *Corona gratiarum: Miscellanea patristica, historica et liturgica Eligio Dekkers O.S.B. XII lustra complenti oblata*, (Brugge - 's-Gravenhage, 1975), pp.37-58.

[23] On the 'ablation' of the final passages of the *Adversus haereses*, see Rousseau, SC 152, pp.28-31. Catholic humanists of the Early Modern period hesitated to include rediscovered millenarian passages like this one in their editions of the Church Fathers (see Gry, p.117f. n.3); and even modern historians of theology apparently find such passages difficult to digest (O'Rourke-Boyle, 'Irenaeus' Millennial Hope', p.5f). See below.

[24] While making no mention of the sabbatical millennium, the reference to Psalm 89/90:4 in II Peter 3:8 (c.135 CE) made unmistakeable reference to it, as Jerome acknowledged (see below n.64). One could aptly apply Henri Leclercq's description of millenarianism's survival in liturgical texts to the study of the sabbatical millennium: 'L'étude du millénarisme nous montre le singulier spectacle de l'erreur se développant sous l'influence des écrits orthodoxes' (art. 'Le millénarisme', in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, XI:1 (1933), c.1192). For the deep penetration of the sabbatical millennium in Christian thought, see Luneau, *L'histoire* [n.17].

[25] See above. They apparently looked back to Josephus' apology for the Jews, *Contra Apionem* I, 1.



the dates of Jesus' life, although his and Clement of Alexandria's chronographies (180-190 CE) placed the life of Jesus in the middle of the sixth millennium since the Creation.[26] While the applicability of these calculations to the sabbatical millennium must have been obvious, particularly to Clement, these writers made no reference to the belief.[27]

These explicitly chronological works, however, had much less impact on their own field than an exegetical remark by Hippolytus of Rome in a commentary on the book of Daniel (c.204 CE):

> The first Parousia of our Lord took place on a Wednesday, the 8th of the Kalends of January, in the 42 year of the reign of Augustus, 5500 years after Adam... One must, therefore get to 6000 years before the Sabbath, the type and figure of the future kingdom of the saints who will reign with the Christ after his descent from the heavens, as John tells in the Book of Revelation.[28]

In one stroke, Hippolytus unambiguously placed the most dangerous millenarian passage from *Revelations* at the center of his eschatology;[29] and then, in a step he acknowledged forbidden, specifically dated the millennium's arrival.[30] The worst potential of Barnabas' sabbatical millennium had come about.

Given the variety of eschatological aberrations current in the early centuries of Christianity, the appearance of such a passage would not be surprising if, like those others, it had faded in subsequent generations.

[26] Theophilus merely provided the total of the years to the reign of Marcus Aurelius (5695 = c.180 CE), *Ad Autolycum* III, 29; for a recent study of Theophilus' chronography which demonstrates how readily it conformed to the symmetries of eschatological calculations, see Oliver Nicholson, 'The Source of the Dates in Lactantius' *Divine Institutes*', *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 36:2 (1985), pp.291-310. According to Grumel, Clement placed the Creation in 5600 BCE (*Chronographie*, p.24f). Martin Werner argues that the earliest Christian era was 6000 BCE (*The Formation of Christian Dogma* (London, 1957), p.38).

[27] Clement is the first patristic source to cite Barnabas, although in his numerous mentions, he never cites the passage in question (*Strom.* II, 67-68; V, 63, 1-6). Modern historians from Gelzer (1898) to Croke (1983) have generally followed these chronographers in identifying their apologetic purpose—undoubtedly important—as their only concern in making their calculations. Theophilus' calculation of years since the Creation, then, 'ne semble donc pas lié a une idée mystique...' (Grumel, p.5).

[28] *In Danielem*, IV,23; ed. G. Bardy, SC 12, (1947).

[29] '*L'Apocalypse* précisement était—est toujours—le berceau et l'aliment du millénarisme': Guy Lobrichon, 'Un Moyen Age, sept ages du monde', *Europe*, 61 (1983 no.654), p.131). On the function of the book for popular Christianity in the earliest period see John Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1975), pp.49-57. Revelations 20:1-7, here cited by Hippolytus, constitutes the key millenarian passage (Gry, *Millénarisme*, pp.54-61).

[30] In the previous passage, Hippolytus denounced the 'indiscreet study of time and inquiry into the Day [of the Lord]' (IV,23), then began his own remarks with the concession: 'But so as not to deny human curiosity even on this point, we find ourselves obliged to say what it is not permitted to say...' (IV,24). See also his remarks in IV:16-17.

But on the contrary, this eschatological calculus became the cornerstone of Christian chronology. With the detailed work of Julius Africanus and the computi of Hippolytus and the Alexandrine school in the 3rd century, the *era mundi* of 5500 (AM I) became a nucleus of the Church's most important science: time reckoning.[31]

How was such a development possible? How could this patchwork of forbidden beliefs achieve 'une fortune si étonnante?'[32] The answer provides a vital element in understanding the history of Latin chronography; and to seize upon Hippolytus' motivation, we must consider his situation. Again, as with Barnabas's *Epistle*, this work was 'une oeuvre d'édification pour la masse beaucoup plus qu'un écrit réservé aux érudits'[33]—more to the point, an audience of Christians in the throes of one of the most severe 'apocalyptic' crises in the early Church.[34] Eusebius, over a century later, recalled its devastating impact in a passage about two 'historians'. After speaking about Clement's chronographical work, done in the time of Severus, Eusebius turned to a certain Jude.[35]

> Another historian, discoursing on the seventy weeks of Daniel, extends his chronology down to the tenth year of the reign of Severus. He also thought that the appearance of the Antichrist, so much in the mouths of men, was now fully at hand, so mightily did the agitation of persecution then prevailing shake the minds of many.[36]

[31] See remarks on Kuhn [n.5]. Historical studies of AM I (Incarnation = 5500) almost always begin with Julius Africanus, since his was the first *chronological* work to use it. Ginzel, for example, made no mention of Hippolytus' *Commentary on Daniel*; mentioned briefly the 'christliche Grundcharacter' of Africanus' work (I pp.24-5); and listed Hippolytus, on the basis of later computistical work, as a *Nachfolger* of Julius (II pp.1-23). On the significance of time-measurement in European civilization, a development the author traces back to the Western Church, see David Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern West* (Cambridge, 1983).

[32] Daniélou, 'Typologie' [n.20], p.1.

[33] Bardy, *Hippolyte*, SC 14, p.63. The *Epistle of Barnabas*, as noted, was a catechetical text (i.e. for lay beginners); the passage on the sabbatical millennium opens with the pastoral 'Listen my children...'

[34] 'Nous voyons aux alentours de 200 une résurgence surprenante d'espoirs apocalyptiques dans la Chrétienté...': Daniélou and Marrou, *Les siècles chrétiens: Des origines à Grégoire le Grand* (Paris, 1963), pp.136-44; see also Bardy's introductory remarks (SC 14, p.11); and Jarislov Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago, 1971), pp.123-29. I use the term *apocalyptic* throughout this paper to refer to the belief that the End—however conceived—is imminent. See Appendix: Definitions.

[35] Jude was sufficiently notorious from this work for Jerome to identify him in his *De viris illustribus*, 52 (PL 23, c.695).

[36] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VI,7. W.H.C. Frend attributes the persecution to '...the extraordinary outbreak of apocalyptic exultation which broke out in Asia and Syria around the year 200', rather than vice-versa: *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, 1981), pp.320-1.



And although Hippolytus did not mention Jude, he clearly undertook his commentary on Daniel in response to this work.[37]

But Hippolytus' concerns extended much further. He explicitly mentioned apocalyptic teachings originating not from charismatic heretics like Montanus and his followers, but from men at the very top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Bishops, through visions or calculations, had announced to their congregations when, in the coming *year*, the Parousia would occur; and predictably, with the failure of that prophecy, had deeply shaken the faith of their flocks.[38]

Indeed, from the mid-second century, under the double impact of Montanism's apocalyptic millenarianism and imperial persecution, ecclesiastical leaders had found themselves in doctrinal disarray. With no 'orthodox' consensus on how to handle the millenarian menace theologically, some disputants took extreme measures in their efforts to repel it: a group called the *Alogi* wanted to ban all of John's writings in an effort to eliminate *Revelations*.[39] In the face of the unabated apocalyptic fever which shook the spirit of so many (apparently on both sides of the issue), Hippolytus presented a divine plan whereby, 'from the birth of the Christ one must count another 500 years, and *only then* will the End come' (IV:24, italics mine). So although he conceded to 'human curiosity' forbidden calculations and reaffirmed the canonicity of *Revelations*, he also thereby became 'the first Christian writer to reject explicitly the hope of an imminent Parousia.'[40] In technical terms (see Appendix), he first articulated a non-apocalyptic millenarianism.

This combination of the Sabbatical Millennium with AM I was a powerful solution, precisely because of the way it linked popular and

[37] See Bardy's treatment of the background to Hippolytus' two early works, the *De Antichristo* and the *In Danielem* (SC 14, pp.10-18): 'Le commentaire... est avant tout destiné à apporter des assurances à ceux qui se laissent hypnotiser par la crainte de la fin du monde...' (p.17). According to Van den Brincken, Julius Africanus was also responding to Judas (*Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.50). As Jerome's lengthy chronological discussion in his own commentary on Daniel shows (*In Danielem* IX: 24-7; PL, 25 c.5422ff), there was an important chronological debate involved in its interpretation. Jude, Hippolytus and possibly Clement (as Eusebius suggests) addressed their chronological calculations to this eschatological debate.

[38] IV,18-19. The two examples he gives are paradigmatic of the dangers of apocalypticism. The one bishop leaves his flock open to ridicule and financial ruin; the other begins a period of wandering in the desert during which the community begins to resemble a gang of bandits.

[39] Gry, *Le millénarisme* [n.22], pp.87-95.

[40] David Dunbar, 'The Delay of the Parousia in Hippolytus', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 37 (1983), pp.313-27.

elite perspectives. On the one hand, those works preaching sabbatical millenarianism sought to win their popular audiences by confirming the promises of *Revelations*,[41] while on the other they deprived the 'false' charismatics, whose influence on the multitudes was so dangerous, of any claim to know the moment of the millenarian advent. Henceforth only the most learned ecclesiastics trained in chronography could know the time of the End.

But the gospels had forbidden such activity for good cause: with the passage of the centuries, Hippolytus' strategy could only produce results exactly inverse to its original intent. That is to say that, over the centuries, this chronology would shift from non-apocalyptic to apocalyptic, from delaying technique to countdown; and the Church would eventually find itself officially endorsing a teaching which could not be more socially and institutionally disruptive.

Unquestionably Hippolytus and other ecclesiastics were conscious of this problem. In their willingness to go ahead anyway, they revealed both the urgency of the threat posed by contemporary apocalyptic leaders and their own belief in the coming Parousia. For these men almost surely did not preach this doctrine in a spirit of cynical manipulation: on the one hand, they feared for the souls of misled flocks (hence the need to moderate their excitability); on the other, they never expected the world to last *another* three centuries. As Augustine said in 419 CE: 'If we had been there with John [when he wrote it is the last hour (I Jn 2:18)], who would have thought that so many years would pass?'[42] Ultimately *God* would render the time-bomb set by these chronologies irrelevant.

But from our modern vantage point, we can reasonably predict three developments from an ecclesiastical acceptance of Hippolytus' teaching. 1) With the passage of centuries, the millenarian week and its accompanying chronology would grow less popular among the ecclesiastics who first expounded it. 2) As more and more apocalyptic expectations were dashed, the apocalyptically minded would, perhaps reluctantly at first, but with mounting excitement over time, embrace the promise of the

[41] On the popularity of the book, see Appendix. Despite his pronounced distaste for the work, Eusebius wrote: 'For my part I would not venture to set the book aside, as there are many brethren who value it much...' (*H.E.* VII,25).

[42] Augustine, letter to Hesychius, *Ep.* 199,17 (419 CE); CSEL 57, p.257f. According to Dunbar, Hippolytus (c.200 CE) was the first to *write* about this realization (see n.40 above); according to Cullman, Barnabas (c.120 CE) was the first to conceive a theology based on it (see n.18 above).



sabbatical millennium.[43] And 3) in the final generations of its sixth millennium, these chronological calculations would serve precisely those charismatics whom it was initially designed to disarm.

At that point, the one safety valve in Hippolytus' strategy would necessarily play a prominent role. The chronologists, would have to be consulted in order to known the date of the End. The 3rd century marriage between the sciences of computus and chronography bears witness both to the success of Hippolytus' AM and to the rise of this new cadre of specialists.[44] We shall see its importance.

## 4. Eusebian Chronology: the Reaction

A century after Hippolytus and the rise of an active chronological-computistical school, at least one ecclesiastical historian challenged the consensus on the *Annus Mundi*. Early in his career, Eusebius of Caesaria (263-339 CE) wrote a monumental work of chronology wherein he displayed in parallel columns data from all the major cultures of the ancient world. According to his calculations, the beginning of Christ's ministry had occurred in 5228 AM (II).[45]

The year 6000, then, was another five centuries away—although Eusebius never explicitly said anything of the sort. For unlike his predecessors Julius and Hippolytus, who openly acclaimed the year 6000 as the end of the world, Eusebius, a devoted disciple of Origen and a relentless opponent of millenarianism, never mentioned the sabbatical millennium either positively or negatively. For him, millenarianism was

[43] We know from studies of both historical and modern apocalyptic movements that in the case of a failed prophecy, the most common response among believers is to redate in order to preserve the apocalyptic belief, Leon Festinger, H.W. Reicken and S. Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails* (New York, 1964). On the peculiarities of the sabbatical millennium seen from this perspective, see below p.175.

[44] Hippolytus also wrote a chronicle (to 238 CE) which survives only in fragmentary form listed in Chart II as the *Liber Generationis* I. See Marcel Richard, 'Comput et chronographie chez saint Hippolyte', *Mélanges de Science Religieuse*, 7 (1950), pp.237-68; Grumel, *Chronologie* [n.4], pp.4-25. VII,25).

[45] Eusebius' Chronicle survives in a fuller Armenian version, tr. Josef Karst, (Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, v.20, Berlin 1911); Jerome's Latin translation: ed. by Rudolf Helm, (same series, v.47 (1956); for the dating of the Incarnation and Passion, Helm, pp.169, 173-4.

a crass materialistic error existing only among the simple-minded.[46] And to underline its marginality, Eusebius tended to remain silent about it wherever possible.[47] This elusive strategy of denial by omission is nowhere more evident than in his *Chronicle*, where he pushed the entire idea of the age of the world into the background, and dated principally according to an *era* starting with Abraham.[48] Eusebius thus gave the impression that he had abandoned 'toute arrière-pensée eschatologique, renonçant à toute spéculation sur la date de la fin du monde...'[49] The work, clearly addressed to that elite cadre of trained chronographers which had developed over the previous century, has a remarkably 'modern' tone: it seems like a straightforward, factual compilation of chronological data.[50]

But it had little success. Even Eusebius' learned contemporaries showed limited interest in it, and no copy survives in the Greek original. Although the two Alexandrian chronographers of the fourth century, Annianus and Pannodorus, used some of its data, they ignored both its *era mundi* and its de-eschatologizing intent.[51] On these matters Eusebius' contemporary Lactantius may have expressed the more common attitude of the early 3rd century when, at the end of a graphic depiction of the delights of the millennial kingdom, he announced that *at most* there were only another 200 years to wait.[52] Interestingly enough, like

[46] Eusebius recounts twice the story of John the Evangelist fleeing from the public baths upon hearing that the millenarian Cerinthus had just entered under the same roof (*H.E.* III,28 and IV,14); Cerinthus, the author of Revelations according to some, became a patristic code-word for millenarianism (see Eusebius' discussion of the book of Revelations, VII, 25; Augustine, *De haeresibus* 8; CCSL 46 p.294).

[47] R.M. Grant points to this technique as part of a revisionist strategy in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 'Papias in Eusebius' Church History', in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris, 1974), pp.209-213. Grant also notes that Eusebius makes no mention of the works of Hippolytus which contain the millenarianism Eusebius so disliked, and suggests the ommission was intentional (p.212 [correct reference for his n.4 is VI 22, 46]).

[48] According to Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.65, Eusebius 'hat sogar das Verdienst eine neue Weltära geschaffen zu haben, obgleich er das wohl nicht beabsichtigt hat'.

[49] Guenée, *Histoire* [n.3], p.150. His remarks are only representative of a widely held view, e.g. Wattenbach-Levison, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter: Vorzeit und Karolinger* (Weimar, 1952), v.1, pp.50-1; R.L.P. Millburn, *Early Christian Interpretations of History* (London, 1954); Harry E. Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing* (London, 1962), pp.44-48; Mosshammer, *Chronicle* [n.6], pp.146ff; Van den Brincken [n.4], pp.60-5; B. Croke, 'The Origins' [n.6], pp.116-31.

[50] See e.g. the remarks of Milburn, *Early Christian*, p.58.

[51] Mosshammer, *Chronicle*, p.147f.

[52] Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* VII, 14-25.



Eusebius, Lactantius was an imperial theologian and anti-apocalyptic.[53] What separated these two was not their opposition to charismatic preachers announcing the *Parousia*, but rather the way to deal with them: one wanted to deny, the other to delay millennial hope.

If, despite Eusebius' enormous impact as an historian, his chronicle failed in the Greek world, it had an exceptional success among the Latin theologians of the following century. In 379 CE, the young Jerome, one of the most virulent anti-millenarian Fathers, translated Eusebius' chronicle into Latin, bringing it up to date on the intervening decades.[54] Through this translation, Eusebius' chronographical format, data and calculations became the foundation of all orthodox Western historiography: '...gegen Ausgang des vierten Jahrhunderts... errang das Werk eine so grosse Popularität dass daneben die Vorgänger Eusebios... bald völlig vergessen waren'.[55]

It is interesting to note, however, that Jerome later drew on the Masoretic Hebrew text for his translation of the Bible. This text differed significantly from the LXX on an issue vital to chronologists: the number of years between each of the early generations of man. For example, from Adam to Seth 230 years had elapsed according to the LXX; but according to the Masoretic text, only 130. Eusebius had already noted the disparity, but considered the LXX figures the more reliable.[56] But Jerome, by enshrining this variant data in his Latin Bible, undermined the very calculations AM II that he had sought to propagate in the Latin West. No one seemed to notice, since during the next four centuries only one text even raised that issue. For most these historians, the LXX-based calculations of Eusebius were a truth about which '*nulla sit dubitatio*'.

In fact, the question for 5th century Latin chronologists did not revolve around whether to follow a Eusebian AM II or some (to sabbatical millenarians) even more disappointing Hebrew calculation, but rather whether to adopt AM II at all. For Jerome's victory over AM I

[53] Chapter 25 links the millenarian week with II Thessalonians in a distinctly anti-apocalyptic sense: '...that change [millenarian kingdom] must take place when 6000 years have been completed...[and] it seems that nothing of the sort [fall of Rome] is to be feared'.

[54] On Jerome's anti-millenarianism: Luneau, *L'Histoire* [n.17], pp.264-75, and a work I could not consult, J.P. O'Connell, *The Eschatology of Saint Jerome*, Series St. Mary of the Lake, Dissertationes ad lauream, 16 (Mundelein, 1948). On the Chronicle see above n.45; and Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik*, pp.65-7.

[55] Gelzer, *Julius*, II, p.23.

[56] The lengthier discussion appears in the Introduction to the first part of the Chronicle which Jerome did not translate; on the disparity, see Larrson, 'The Chronology' [n.1].

was not as simple as historians hold: Julius Quintus Hilarianus, some twenty years after the publication of Jerome's chronicle, wrote the *De duratione mundi*, a direct descendent of the eschatological chronology of Hippolytus, Julius Africanus and Lactantius. At the end of a brief chronicle based on AM I, the author calculated 101 years remaining in the 6th millennium and then enthusiastically described the millennial kingdom to come.[57] His self-assured tone has struck historians as strange this late in the patristic period, an incongruous echo of pre-Origenist days when such notions were not yet condemned, and his use of AM I, a 'throwback' to pre-Hieronimian chronology. For modern historians, then, Hilarianus' crude millenarianism and apocalyptic calculations represent the swan song of a belief Augustine and Jerome were uprooting from the Church.[58]

We have seen, however, that this teaching of the sabbatical millennium originated in *anti*-apocalyptic circles, and that by the third century, these circles had developed two opposing strategies towards it: the (more far-sighted, but radically new) Eusebian rejection, and the (more dangerous, but more traditional) Lactantian embrace. While a century-long wait may seem brief from a modern perspective, to contemporaries it describes a period well beyond their lifetime. Hence to date the millennium 101 years away was a standard Hippolytan anti-apocalyptic teaching; and this was precisely what Hilarianus had in mind.[59] He thus stands much in the same relationship to Jerome as Lactantius did to Eusebius; and his millenarianism represents not a bizarre or naive relic, but a strong and centuries-old, if increasingly problematic, tradition.[60]

[57] Editions: PL 13 c.1097ff; Frick, *Chronica Minora* I, Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum Teubneriana (Lipsiae, 1892), pp.153-74. Note that the calculation of 6000 years is reinforced by another, 470 years (the period between Abraham and entering into the Promised Land) since the Resurrection (5530 AM): Frick, *Chronica*, p.171 l.11; Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.59.

[58] Gelzer found the millenarianism a 'grotesk... apokalyptisch- chiliastische "deliria"' (II, p.127f). The tone has struck modern historians as puzzling, since by the late 4th century millenarianism was on the defensive if not moribund (Van den Brincken, p.59 and further references n.59; Robert Markus: 'the old millenarian dreams were again being redreamt [by e.g. Hilarian]... [but] hardly a live force in Augustine's day' (*Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970, p.20). Neither Gry nor Ermoni treated Hilarianus and so he has escaped many general surveys of the phenomenon; cf. Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End* (New York, 1979), pp.51-2. On Hilarianus' AM I as a 'throwback', see below n.63.

[59] 'Qui anni VI non ante conplentur, nisi prius prope ultimum reges decem exierunt in mundum...' (Frick, *Chronica*, p.171 l.14); see also Van den Brincken's analysis, *Weltchronistik*, p.59.

[60] See, for example, the references to the millenarian week in Hilary of Poitiers (d. 367 CE) which suggest: 1) adherence to AM I; and 2) a lack of personal commitment to the notion, despite frequent didactic use, Luneau, *L'Histoire*, pp.235-59.



The passage of a century since the original composition of Eusebius' Chronicle had surely persuaded some to its more rigorous position, thus foreshadowing the eventual victory of Jerome's translation; but we are ill-advised to project that victory backwards onto the period immediately after the Latin publication.

For example, in the next major historical work, done some seven years after Hilarianus, Sulpicius Severus wrote a universal history which, while in Eusebian fashion never totalling up the years since Creation,[61] nevertheless retained the dating of AM I. In the first quarter of the 5th century the North African treatise *Liber Genealogus* also used AM I.[62] Along with Hilarianus, these works indicate that this *era mundi* still had strong support in many Western Church circles. In fact, not until after the Fall of Rome did historians begin to use AM II consistently. At the turn of the 4th-5th century, then, Jerome's translation of Eusebius might still have been a tentative novelty with a future as doubtful as that of its original in the East.[63] It apparently took another generation, and the weight of Augustine's support, to assure Eusebius' chronographical victory.

Furthermore, whether AM II dominated already in the late 4th century or not until the mid-5th, its hold on late Roman historians cannot be extended to the wider body of Christian faithful. The eschatological meaning of the year 6000 so carefully omitted by supporters of AM II, for example, had become common belief. In 414, Jerome wrote that

> I think it is on the basis of this passage [Ps.89:4] and... Peter's epistle that it has become customary for 1000 years to be called a day... so that since the world was created in six days, it is thought that it will last 6000 years, after which will come the number 7 and the ogdoad where the celebration of the true sabbath will take place and the true circumcision.[64]

[61] Ed. C. Halm, CSEL 1 (1866). His last total is 4303 at the death of Sampson (I, 29, 8).

[62] MGH AA IX, pp.155-94; two continuations, to 455 CE and 463 CE, survive (see below n.99).

[63] Cf. Van den Brincken: '...hier *greift* Severus auf die voreusebianische Chronologie *zurück*, die zur gleichen Zeit auch noch in Hilarian einen leidenschaftlichen Verfechter fand' (*Weltchronistik*, p.73; italics mine).

[64] 'Ego arbitror ex hoc loco [Ps. 89:4] et ex Epistola... Petri, mille annos pro una die solitos appellari: ut scilicet quia mundus in sex diebus fabricatus est, sex millibus annorum tantum credatur subsistere et postea venire...': Jerome, Ep.140, 8 (PL 22, c.1172). Luneau comments: 'Mais c'est là une opinion commune qu'il ne partage pas...' (*L'histoire*, p.267).

Nor was the knowledge that Christ was born 5500 years since Adam restricted to erudite works of history: it appears in the Acts of Pilate, a 4th to 5th century popular work with virtually canonical status.[65]

Moreover, the reluctance of an anti-apocalyptic writer like Hilarianus to adopt the obviously more prudent AM II suggests that, in his mind at least, those apocalyptic disturbances against which he marshalled his figures demanded more potent remedies than the promise of a seventh millennium still 400 years away. The perplexing stridency of Hilarianus' tone may reflect not his own 'delirious' imagination, but the exigencies of the audience he sought to win over. And in fact, 'en cette fin du IVe siècle...[il y eut] une résurgence d'une vie charismatique et d'une attente eschatologique comparables à celles des premiers siècles chrétiens'.[66] Martin of Tours' apocalypticism (d. 397) and the 'gallican millenarianism' of his circle express a widespread contemporary expectation.[67]

Some of this apocalyptic expectation may even have derived from chronological calculations. According to an AM of 5600, possibly used by Clement of Alexandria, the completion of the 6th millennium would coincide with the end of the 4th century since Christ—precisely when we

[65] *Acta Pilati*, or The Gospel According to Nicodemus, XIX, 1; H.C.Kim, *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Toronto Medieval Latin Texts (1973), p.38. The work is commonly dated to the mid-fourth century on thematic grounds (*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, 1962), III p.813); but O'Ceallaigh, on linguistic and paleographic grounds, dated it to the mid-sixth century ('Dating the Commentaries of Nicodemus', *Harvard Theological Review*, 56 (1963), pp.21-58). However, the earliest ms. comes from the 5th century, Vienna, Ö.N.B. lat. 563 (Lowe, *Codices latini antiquiores*, X (1963), no.1485); and the theme of the *descensus Christi ad inferos* from an early and popular strand of Christian theology. See also, Ann Matter, 'The Pseudo-Alcuinian «de septem sigillis»: an Early Latin Apocalypse Exegesis', *Traditio*, 36 (1980), pp. 124-6. From the present perspective, it is more likely that the initial use of AM I by the composer of this work came in the 4th rather than the 5th century.

[66] J. Fontaine, *Vita Sancti Martini*, SC 135 (1969), pp.998-1023 (commentary on the Vita ch.23-4). It should be noted that the term 'fin-de-siècle' is a kind of modern projection: no one until the 5th century, and few until the 8th, used AD (see above); and the idea of *siècle* as 100 years, rather than an age (saeculum) was a development of later Renaissance humanism (Johannes Burkhardt, *Die Entstehung der modernen Jahrhundertrechnung: Flavius bis Ranke*, Göppinger akademische Beiträge, 43 (1971)). On the other hand, a knowledge of the years elapsed since the Incarnation was current in the patristic period, and the number 100 was not without mysticism (see below nn.68 and 102).

[67] Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* II,14; another work proscribed by anti-millenarian ecclesiastics (see nn.23 and 97; and S. Prete, 'Sulpicio Severo e il millenarismo', *Convivium*, 26 (1958), pp.394-404). It would take far too long to present the considerable dossier on this subject here: I am currently working on a separate article on the subject. See, however, B. Kötting, 'Endzeitprognosen zwischen Lactantius und Augustinus', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 77 (1958), pp.123-39, esp. pp.135-7.



find several traces of it in ecclesiastical documents.[68] Moreover, this target date of millenarian calculation coincided closely with a series of independent eschatological traditions in which computists variously added some 350, 365 or 400 years to Christ's birth or death in order to discover the end of the interim period between the First Coming and the Parousia.[69] In the period between 350 *Annus Incarnationis* and 400 *Annus Passionis*, then, a series of target dates for the Parousia fell due, coming most densely in the final years of the 4th century[70].

In 398 CE, for example, the very year after Hilarianus wrote his work—according to Augustine, 365 years since the Crucifixion [sic], hence the year pagans predicted the end of the Church—the populace of Constantinople was thrown into a panic by the appearance of signs and prodigies.[70a] One has only to read the work of Tyconius, Augustine's

[68] For Grumel, this AM is related to a lunar cycle of 8 years in which Clement's *era mundi* (5600) and Eusebius' (5200) form the two centenary possibilities of the sixth millennium (*Chronologie* [n.2], pp.24-5). Chronological traces: MGH AA IX, p.77f, Grumel, pp.20-1; MGH AA XI, p.80f (ms. G, p.128 no.126). In the early 4th century, Lactantius affirmed that 'those who write about time teach us how many years are completed since the Creation, and *although they vary*..., all nevertheless expect *not more than* 200 years [until the completion of the 6000 years]'. *Div. Inst.* 25; PL 6 c.812 (italics mine). Augustine mentions a tradition in which 400 or 500 years were added to the Ascension, that is, c. 430 CE (*De civitate Dei* [hereafter *dcD*] XVIII, 53, 1), but as he demonstrated elsewhere, the Incarnation and Passion were interchangeable when it came to eschatological calculations (*Ep.* 199, 20); and Bardy, for example, considers the 500 year calculation a reference to Hippolytus (i.e. from the Incarnation), note 57 in the Bibliothèque augustinienne [hereafter BA], 36, p.773). At the sack of Rome in 410, Augustine tells us that some exclaimed: 'Behold, from Adam all the years have passed, and behold, the 6000 years are completed ... and now comes the Day of Judgment' (*Sermo* 113, 8; PL 38 c.576).

[69] A variety of biblical verses and accompanying calculations underlined the significance of both 350 and 400 years. For an example of this kind of numerology, see the remarks of Tyconius (*Liber regularum* V, ed. F.C. Burkitt, *The Rules of Tyconius*, Texts and Studies, III, 1 (Cambridge, 1894), p.60f); discussion in P. Fredriksen Landes, 'Tyconius and the End of the World', *Revue des études augustiniennes*, 28 (1982), pp.60-3. In each of the major traditions of late antiquity we find evidence that 365 years constituted an *Annus Magnus* (a year of year-days), which had great astrological significance: see Folliet, discussion, BA 36, note 59, p.774-5, with full bibliography; and Abba Hillel Silver, *Messianic Speculation in Israel* (Boston, 1927), p.25f.).

[70] Potential dates CE: 349-51, 364-6, 379-83, 394-98, 399-401, 429-33; note the cluster 394-401. During Easter of 351 CE, the apparition of a luminous cross over the hills of Jerusalem and its impact on the populace is noted in at least 10 different patristic sources, including a letter from that city's bishop, Cyril, to Emperor Constantius (PG 33 c.1165-76; references to other sources, c.1175-8).

[70a] On the 'pagan' prophecy of the end of the Church and the symbolic meaning of 398 CE: Augustine, *dcD* XVIII, 53,2; on the panic in Constantinople: idem, *Sermo de excidio urbis* 6,7, (ed. CCSL 46, p.258f); on that year as an *annus monstrifer*: Claudian, *Invectiva contra Eutropium* II:4ff; MGH AA X, p.96); on Christian apocalyptic interpretation of the

Donatist inspiration, to understand how preoccupied with the number symbolism of chronological periods even the most anti-apocalyptic thinkers of the age were.[71] Augustine's remarks on the issue in the City of God clearly addressed a lively and highly informed audience of eschatological computists;[72] and it is unlikely that his advice—to relax their busy fingers—was heeded.

## 5. Augustine and the Ecclesiastical Millennium

These closing years of the 4th century also marked a crucial moment in the history of millenarianism, since during this period Augustine repudiated even the allegorizing variety he himself had previously accepted.[73] From this point on he dedicated much of his energy to ridding the church of this belief.[74] Modern historians hold that he was so successful that millenarianism disappeared from Christianity for the eight centuries until Joachim of Fiore.[75] After Augustine 'only cranks and heretics dared to put forward an eschatological interpretation of the millennium'; and what should be millenarian references to a *prima resurrectio* in 6th century liturgical texts were in fact incomprehensible to 'la croyance populaire qui, dès le Ve siècle, avait perdu la notion et le souvenir des promesses millénaires'.[76]

Constantinople event, Philostorgius, *Church History* XI: 6-7; J. Bidez, *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig, 1913), pp.cxiii-cxvi, 136-7). The scholarly discussion on this issue is treated by Folliet, ibid.

[71] Modern scholarship has paradoxically recognized Tyconius both as Augustine's inspiration and as an apocalyptic calculator. The latter view is founded on a misreading of the texts (discussion and bibliography in P.F. Landes, 'Tyconius') and is due, in no small part, to Tyconius' detailed treatment of chronological number mysticism and its (for him, negative) relationship to eschatological calculation.

[72] *dcD* XVIII, 53,1 - 54,2; and notes 57-9 (BA 36, p.772-5).

[73] G. Folliet, 'La typologie du "sabbat" chez saint Augustin: son interprétation millénariste entre 389 et 400', *Revue des études augustiniennes*, 2 (1956), pp.371-390, esp. 380-85.

[74] His main works in this effort are his correspondence with Hesychius, Bishop of Dalmatia (*Epistolae* 197-99: 418-19 CE); and the final four books of the City of God (c.425 CE), which constitute a sustained Tyconian commentary on the Book of Revelations.

[75] 'Le millénarisme... était donc vaincu et disparaissait de la scène de l'histoire': Ermoni, 'Les phases' [n.22], p.388. This was the conclusion of the earliest studies on Millenarianism (Bousset, *Der Antichrist* (Gottingen, 1895) p.164f.; Gry, *Millénarisme* [n.22], p.129), accepted by subsequent historiography (e.g. Daniélou, 'Typologie' [n.20], (1948), p.16; D.H. Kromminga, *The Millennium in the Church: Studies in Christian Chiliasm* (Michigan, 1949), pp.102-24; Bietenhard, 'Millennial Hope' [n.20], p.30; virtually any encyclopedia article). Cf. below n.83.

[76] Bietenhard, 'Millennial Hope', p.30; H. Leclercq, 'Millénarisme' [n.24], c.1193.



Augustine's position derived from Tyconius' teaching on the 'Two Cities'. The Earthly and Heavenly Cities remain inextricably intertwined until the Eschaton, which itself completely transcends this *saeculum*. As a result of this radical dissociation between historical time and the Eschaton, one cannot interpret any historical (especially political) event apocalyptically. Moreover, the earthly (hence historical) millennium of Revelations can only refer to the (necessarily imperfect) *incarnation* of the Heavenly City, the church.[77] So not only were eschatological chronologies like Hilarianus' unacceptable, but so was any historical work which interpreted events like the earthquake in Constantinople in 398 and the sack of Rome in 410 as signs of the imminent Parousia.[78] This radical agnosticism, shared even by ecclesiastics otherwise unfavorable towards Augustine, had a major impact on both the subsequent fate of millenarianism and more generally on European historiography.[79]

Obviously Augustine had no patience for the millenarian week. In his commentary on Psalm 89, he ridiculed the belief with a combination of numerological and allegorical prowess.[80] His principle point here and elsewhere was that eschatological calculations are infinitely variable, evangelically forbidden, and inherently mischievous: The prudent Christian stays away from them.[81] Therefore, despite his vast chronological erudition and the obvious assistance he gleaned from Eusebius' work, Augustine never openly committed himself to AM II, but used his expertise primarily to confound those who fell prey to the temptation of

[77] On the ecclesiological interpretation of the millennium, see *dcD* XX, 7-9; Bardy, note 28, BA 37, pp.774ff; Kamlah, 'Ecclesia et regnum Dei bei Augustin (zu *de civitate Dei* XX:9)', *Philologus*, 93 (1938), pp.248ff; more recently, Ulrich Duchrow, *Christenheit und Weltverantwortung* (Stuttgart, 1970), pp.259-63. A major target of Augustine's eschatological polemic was 'die endgeschichtliche Deutung des gegenwärtigen Geschehens': E. Lewalter, 'Eschatologie und Weltgeschichte in der Gedankenwelt Augustins', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 53 (1934), p.11; see more recently R. Markus, *Saeculum* [n.58], pp.22-71.

[78] On Philostorgus, see n.70 above.

[79] 'In the west this Augustinian identification [of the 1000 year period with the Church] was to be upset only centuries later by Joachimism and...related schemes': Gerhard Ladner, *The Idea of Reform* (New York, 1967), p.231. See also Ernst Bernheim, *Mittelalterliche Zeitanschauungen in ihrem Einfluss auf Politik und Geschichtsschreibung* (Tübingen, 1918), pp.50-62. Jerome used Tyconius to revise and censor the millenarian Victorinus of Pettau's Commentary on Revelation (ed. Haussleiter, CSEL 49 (1916); the semi-pelagian Gennadius, who expressed no great love of Augustine (*de viris illustribus* ch. 39, 62, 65, 86; PL 58), speaks of the Tyconian interpretation of Revelations in the most positive terms, and probably drew on its principle ('nihil in ea [Rev.] carnale sed totum intelligens spirituale', PL 58 c.1071) for his own tractate on the subject (see below n.112) .

[80] *Ennar. in Ps.* 89, 4 (PL 37 c.1142f).

[81] See also, *Ennar. in Ps.* 6, 1-2; *Ep.* 197, 199; *dcD* XVIII, 52-4.

eschatological calculus. Given his perceived success in eliminating millenarianism, historians have more or less assumed that Augustine and Jerome were equally effective in eliminating the whole range of eschatological calculations and similar apocalyptic phenomena.[82]

But was he so successful? Certain evidence has suggested otherwise to a number of scholars.[83] Although the eschatological prohibitions of Augustine and Jerome were repeated continuously, we must nevertheless be careful not to anachronistically grant them the clear victory in their own day that history, *ex post facto*, has granted their position. Augustine's insistence, for example, that the Book of Revelations should not be read historically—taken up by every theologian from that day on in commentaries on the work,[84]—placed a near-impossible demand on believers who, wicks trimmed, looked anxiously for signs of the coming Parousia. Augustine's own disciple Quodvultdeus wrote as bishop of Carthage a major work, the *Liber de promissionibus* (c.450), which systematically enumerated all the signs of the Apocalypse and labelled them fulfilled, occurring, and to be fulfilled. The present fell in the 'half time of the Antichrist'. In one passage he identified the Vandals and the Goths with Gog and Magog and adduced in support Augustine's prohibition against such an exegesis by dropping the crucial negative.[85] If so highly placed a theologian could not maintain Augustine's eschatological teachings, one might suspect that lesser clergy fared still worse.

[82] E.g. Daniélou, 'Typologie' [n.32], p.15f; and below p.161.

[83] Although Augustine 'hat zur Verbannung des Chiliasmus aus der herrschenden Meinung geführt, hat ihn zurückgedrängt, nicht aber vernichtet': R. Schmidt, '*Aetates mundi*. Die Weltalter als Gliederungsprinzip der Geschichte', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 67 (1956), p.297. Not yet integrated into the general historiography, this suspicion has been voiced by many: Harnack, art. 'Millennium', in *Encyclopaedia Brittannica* (11th ed. 1910); Bernheim, *Mittelalterliche*, pp.63-70; Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, p.28f; McGinn, *Visions*, p.27; Carozzi and Taviani-Carozzi, *La fin des temps: Terreurs et prophéties au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1982), pp.174-7). Paul Alexander emphasized the fact that the victory was a theological one, primarily concerning the interpretation of Revelations 20; and that in more popular apocalyptic literature the millenarian dreams flourished, 'The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor and its Messianic Origin', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 41 (1978), pp.13-14 and nn.44-5). See also R. Lerner's study of how medieval thinkers made a Hieronomian numerological detail the focus of a vigorous millenarian tradition, 'The Refreshment of the Saints: The Time after the Antichrist as a Station for Earthly Progress in Medieval Thought', *Traditio*, 32 (1976), pp.97-144.

[84] See above n.79 on Gennadius; also e.g. Haimo of Auxerre (9th c.) PL 117 c.938; discussion in P.F. Landes, 'Tyconius' [n. 69], pp.66, 72.

[85] Quodvultdeus, *Liber de promissionibus* IV, 13, 22; ed. Braun, CCSL 60 (Turnhout, 1976), p.207; tr. Braun, SC 102 (Paris, 1964), p.633f. See, P.F. Landes, 'Tyconius', pp.67-8, esp. n.43.



From this perspective, for example, we might reinterpret a remark in that part of Jerome's *Commentary on Ezekiel* designed to fight the apocalyptic interpretation of Rome's fall. There Jerome mentioned some who 'want 430 years to be completed from the baptism of the Savior until the consummation of this world'.[86] While we might think that these men were apocalyptic hysterics panicked at Rome's Fall, it is more likely that they were clerics fighting that reaction by delaying the Parousia in the manner of Hippolytus and Hilarianus. Several indicators suggest that, while in the 4th century, eschatological calculators had added 350 or 365 years to Christ's incarnation or Passion, in the 5th, they focused on 430 or (as did Hilarianus) on 470 years.[87] And according to the principle that the more intense the current apocalyptic fervor, the less far off the Parousia can be postponed (but always beyond one's own lifetime), these men of whom Jerome speaks have pointed to a date only 50 years distant.

Given the strength of such a variety of apocalyptic themes and chronological eschatologies, it is more than probable that the sabbatical millennium also survived among both laity and clergy. Indeed, for all his formal opposition to the millenarian week, Augustine ironically provided it with a most valuable support: he systematically structured universal history according to the six days of creation. Whereas, historians before him had used a variety of periodizations of history, including the five of Eusebian tradition, Augustine now established the 'Six Ages' as the principle historical vision for the Latin Church.[88] Thus, although he rejected any effort to read the sixth age in terms of an eschatological development[89] and refused to define the ages chronologically, he nevertheless placed the present *in* a Sixth Age which had begun with Christ. When linked to AM II, this theme of the Six Ages reinforced the millenarian framework Eusebius had supposedly eliminated from chronography: Christ had come early in the sixth millennium, at the beginning of the Sixth Age.

Moreover, although Augustine never formally linked AM II and the Six Ages,[90] he nevertheless also played a major role in assuring AM II's

[86] *In Ezechielem*, 4, 4 (PL 25 c.46B).

[87] See also Hilarianus (above n.57) and Augustine, *Ep.* 199, 20.

[88] R. Schmidt, 'Aetates mundi', pp.288-317; Luneau, *L'histoire*, pp.291-92; McGinn, *Visions*, p.26f.

[89] 'Augustine's thought moved... towards the rejection of any attempt to introduce any division derived from sacred history into the history of the age after Christ': Markus, *Saeculum* [n.58], p.20.

[90] But almost: *dcD* XX, 7.

success. Despite his objections to eschatological calculations, he considered chronology an important element in any Christian education, and his review of the history of the terrestrial city in Book XVIII of the *City of God* based itself on data from Eusebius' *Chronicle*.[91] In one context, for that matter, he used AM II precisely for the ammunition it provided against the sabbatical millennium. In his letter to Hesychius, an aggressive, apocalyptically-minded bishop in Dalmatia (419), Augustine demolished the notion that John's 'last hour' referred to the final five hundred years of mankind:

> Besides, if we look carefully into church history, we find that the Apostle John died long before the completion of 5,500 years from the beginning of the human race.[92]

The only extant history which provided calculations for such an argument was Eusebius-Jerome.

Similarly, Orosius' *Historiae adversus paganos* (416) reveal Augustine's support of AM II.[93] In this secular companion to the *De civitate Dei*, commissioned by Augustine, we find two anti-apocalyptic teachings. First, Orosius develops his overriding theme that things have been worse. This point, generally understood by historians as an apologetic response to pagan claims that Christianity was responsible for Rome's misfortunes, had an equally important apocalyptic dimension which Augustine himself enunciated in his letter to Hesychius (418): 'When we fall into a panic over present events as if they were the ultimate and extreme of all things, may we not be laughed at by those who have read of more and worse things in the history of the world?'[94] Second, Orosius used AM II, the first historian to do so since Jerome's almost 40-year old translation. His work, therefore, describes an ever more Christian, and hence improving world, *aetate* 5724.[95] So some 120 years after Eusebius had done the research, his work, through Jerome and Augustine, gave the Latin West a new lease on life, or rather, a new mortgage on time.

[91] On chronology, *De doct. christ.* 2, 28. On Eusebian chronological data, *dcD* VIII, 11; XVI, 16, XVIII, 2ff; see Croke, 'Origins' [n.6], p.126.

[92] *Ep.* 199, 18.

[93] Paulus Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, ed. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna, 1882).

[94] *Ep.* 199, 39. In other words, Hesychius is a 'Chicken Little' shouting 'the sky is falling down!' because he got hit on the head by an acorn. See also Kötting, 'Endzeitprognozen', p.139.

[95] T. Mommsen, 'Orosius and Augustine', in his *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (New York, 1959), pp.325-48.



## 6. The Year 6000 AM I

That AM II dominates every major and most minor 5th century chronologies attests to Augustine's and Jerome's success in changing Latin historiography. Indeed, by 500 CE we have no document recognizing the arrival of the year 6000, no history dating by AM I, and no particular evidence of apocalyptic panic. (See Chart II.) 'Sicherlich ist es u. a. ein Verdienst des Eusebios, wenn wir um 500 keinerlei Weltuntergangsstimmung feststellen'.[96] But such a conclusion, like the one about Augustine's impact on millenarianism, is perhaps too hasty.

First of all, we should avoid facile correlations between the number of extant apocalyptic or millenarian documents and the temper of the times. As we have seen, Augustine had forbidden such discussions. His position found further support in the *libri non recipiendi* of the Gelasian decretals (490s CE; 5990s AM I) which condemned almost every identifiable millenarian work or passage from the patristic period that had not already undergone 'ablation'.[97] Given this dual attack on such texts past and present, an undisciplined cleric giving vent to his overactive apocalyptic imagination would stand little chance of having his work copied and preserved by later ecclesiastics.[98] The silence on, and implied lack of concern for, apocalyptic matters in 5th century historical works reflects contemporary attitudes less than it does a sustained ecclesiastical policy which included, among other things, the acceptance of AM II. We cannot, therefore, cite the absence of apocalyptic references in histories using AM II as proof that contemporaries shared such studied indifference.

Secondly, a closer look at historical texts indicates that AM I had a continuous following throughout the 5th century; and that, not surpri-

[96] Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.65; similarly, Gelzer, *Julius* [n.4], II p.23, cited above.

[97] Examples of expurgations: Irenaeus (above n.23); Jerome's revision of Victorinus of Pettau's commentary on Revelations (above n.79). The list is edited in PL 59 c.162ff, and bears a striking similarity to Jerome's explicitly anti-apocalyptic compilation in response to the fall of Rome, *In Ezechielem* 11:36 (PL 25 c.355), noted by Gry, *Millénarisme*, p.129 n.2. The success of these lists can be seen, for instance, in the manuscript tradition of Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi*, identified in the *De libris* as *Opuscula Postumiani et Galli Apocrypha* (above n.67; see also B. Peebles, *Sulpicius Severus*, Fathers of the Church, v.7, p.95f; Gry, *Millénarisme*, p.117). As Kötting notes, the Gelasian decretals take up an earlier (pagan) Roman hostility to apocalyptic texts ('Endzeitprognozen', p.139).

[98] Discussed further in R. Landes 'Millenarismus absconditus: Quelques réflexions méthodologiques sur le millénarisme et l'historiographie au Haut Moyen Age', *Annales* [forthcoming].

singly, those works based on it contain significant traces of *Weltuntergangsstimmung*. In the 450s, two continuations of AM I chronologies engaged in apocalyptic speculation: one identified the Vandal Genseric as the Antichrist; the other calculated 5984 years since creation and counted 16 remaining until the year 6000.[99] Hilarian's millenarian work also survived, and in the generation before 6000 AM I (469 CE), one disturbed chronologist rebutted it through misrepresentation. He argued that Hilarian's year 6000 had already passed without the Parousia because it used the wrong data base: by the 'authentic Hebrew calculations translated by Jerome', the year 6000 had not yet come.[100] A collection of loosely related consular lists and paschal tables report a series of unsettling events in the 5990s AM I; and the author of one text, which explicitly rejects AM II for AM I, reports that twice in this decade (493 and 496 CE) delirious ignoramuses announced the birth of the Antichrist.[101] Another text identified the year of consul Viator (495 CE) as 500 AD and 6000 AM,[102] while a third identified the apocalyptic year 6000 with the consulate of Belisarius (534 CE).[103] What should we

[99] The *Liber Genealogus*, composed between 405-428, concluded with a lengthy discussion of the meaning of 666 (Rev. 13: 18); it had two continuations (455 and 463 CE), MGH AA IX, pp.154-96.

[100] The author attempted first to change Hilarianus' figures (Passion = 5570 AM instead of 5530) and thereby placed the year 6000 in the past ('quos annos iam... cognoscimus fuisse impletos...'); he then offered an AM based on the Masoretic/Vulgate text: Incarnation in 4113 AM (MGH AA XIII pp.415-17). Note that the author assumes his audience gives a millenarian significance to the year 6000. Van den Brincken places the composition in 469 (*Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.59 and n.61), a year which, according to Hydatius, had seen prodigies too numerous to detail (MGH AA XI, p.35).

[101] The works are collected and partially edited by Mommsen, *Consularia Italica*, MGH AA, IX pp.249-339. The *Pascale Campanum* begins with a calculation of the age of the world to the consulates of Olibrus and Rusticus (464 CE: date of the first recension?) which, after noting the opinions of AM II chronographers, it gives as 5943 AM (p.745). The surviving ms. (Vat. reg. lat. 2077, 6th c.) includes first hand annotations to 513 CE, among which is the mention of 'ignari praesumptores' in 493 and 'alii delirantes' in 496 who announced the coming of Antichrist (pp.746-47).

[102] 'Fiunt ergo ab adventu domini usque ad consulatum Viatoris [495 CE] anni D, ab Adam autem anni VI milia' (*Fasti Vindobonenses posteriores*, St. Gall 878, 6th c., MGH AA IX, p.330). Because of a missing gathering, we cannot know what this work recorded for the previous years.

[103] Again the scribe of Vat. reg. lat. 2077 (see above n.101) wrote in the margin of a passage about the completion of 6000 years and the Parousia: 'quod est cons. Bilisari [534 CE]': MGH AA IX, p.492f. This calculation apparently placed the Passion in 5500, testimony to a standard pattern of redating eschatological predictions (see below, n.178). Note that these last two examples come after the year 6000, suggesting their authors' anti-apocalyptic sentiments (i.e. they, like Hilarianus' continuator, may be pointing out that the crucial date has passed).



make of these texts: marginal, hence insignificant? or the traces of a concern our principle sources deliberately passed over in silence?

Things were different in Byzantium. There, due to an early and vigorous campaign against millenarianism which even succeeded in excluding *Revelations* from many editions of the New Testament throughout this period,[104] Eastern ecclesiastics evidently felt secure enough to openly confront the coming of the year 6000. They retained AM I into its 7th millennium; and their historical works from that new millennium apparently convey an impression of equanimity. 'Byzantine chroniclers and historians do not regard this year [6000] as connected with the expectation of universal catastrophe and do not emphasize it at all'.[105]

Again, such conclusions may be premature. No chronographer directly acknowledged the year 6000; and the fact that by the end of the 6th millennium at least three variants of AM I existed, could as soon indicate a desire to cast doubt on any specific date for the fateful year as an indifferent ignorance of precisely when it fell.[106] A closer look at John Malalas' erratic use of several calculations of AM in his World Chronicle (mid-6th c.) and the prodigies he reported in the reign of the emperor Anastasius, during whose rule (491-526 CE) the year 6000 occurred, may reveal some of the difficulty 6th century historians had in digesting the advent of the seventh millennium.[107]

Beyond strictly historical works, we find three 'historical apocalypses', produced in the East precisely during the decades in which, according to

[104] Gry, *Millénarisme* [n.22], pp.87-107. On the de-millenarianized historical theology of the Greek fathers, see Luneau, *L'histoire* [n.17], pp.107-206. On the place of Revelations in the East: Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament* (London, 1930), pp.182-8. In Armenia, it was not canonical until the 12th century: *Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans (Cambridge, 1980), pp.357, 366f.

[105] A. Vasiliev, 'Medieval Ideas on the End of the World: East and West', *Byzantion*, 16:2 (1942-3), p.469; similarly, Gelzer: 'fröhlich und ohne viel Kopfzerbrechen über das Schlussjahr 6000 wegzählen' (*Julius* [n.4], II p.26); and Kötting: 'führen sie die Chronik seelenruhig weiter' ('Endzeitprognozen', p.139).

[106] E.g. 4992-4 BCE; 5502 BCE; 5508 BCE; Vasiliev, 'Medieval', pp.467-69; more recent discussion, Grumel, *Chronologie*, pp.73-97.

[107] The only surviving ms. contains two different AM, one of 5500, the other of 5967 (i.e. Passion = 6000). The shift between the two takes place after the period around the year 500 CE during which no reference to the AM occurs. Malalas, *Chronographia* (PG 97 c.354; 579-80; 632); on this problem, see Gelzer, *Julius*, II pp.129-32; Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], pp.118-9. It is noteworthy that among the disasters and prodigies of this period, Malalas describes a 'second divine wrath' visited upon Constantinople in the reign of Zeno (col. 571) and a third in the reign of Anastasius (col. 602). The first divine wrath came in the reign of Theodosius (379-95 CE) and may refer to the incident of 398 (see PG c.541 n.31; and above n.70a).

the various chronological systems, the millennial year occurred. Indeed, one written during the reign of Zeno (474-91 CE) announced the end of the World in the year 6000.[108] The other two works termed 'historical apocalypses', report past and current events as if they were the fulfilled apocalyptic prophecies of an ancient seer (one could not imagine a less Augustinian approach).[109] As one historian noted, such an unusual rate of production serves, as 'a barometer of [rising] eschatological pressures... around the year 500 AD'.[110] Moreover, these historical (and imperial) apocalypses had a rich future in the Byzantine and later European Middle Ages.[111]

Given such developments in the 6th century East, what can we say about the traditionally more millenarian West, where instead of three apocalyptic works, we have three Tyconian commentaries on the book of Revelation?[112] Did the apocalyptic lull that seems to have prevailed in the West reflect the success of the new chronographical and theological orthodoxy in actually transforming Christian apocalyptic expectations? Or rather does it mark a documentary distortion revealing the ecclesiastical *will* to divorce the apocalyptic from history while concealing a parallel divorce between official theology and more 'rustic' beliefs?

[108] Published in Hartmut Erbse (ed.), *Fragmente griechischer Theosophien*, Hamburger Arbeiten zur Altertumswissenschaft, 4 (Hamburg, 1941), pp.51-52; according to the editor it is Alexandrine in origin and shows the influence of Lactantius and the Sybils (p.x). Note that the original purpose of the sabbatical millennium was precisely to fight such a practice (e.g. Hippolytus' response to Jude's analysis of Daniel).

[109] The Seventh Vision of Daniel (c.480), Fr. tr. F. Macler, 'Les apocryphes de Daniel', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 33 (1896), pp.290-306; the Oracle of Baalbek (c.502 CE), ed. Paul Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek: The Tiburtine Sybil in Greek Dress*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, X (Washington, 1967). On the definition of 'historical apocalypses' see Macler, ibid., p.41; and Alexander 'Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources', *American Historical Review*, 73:4 (1968), p.998 n.2.

[110] Alexander, 'Medieval Apocalypses', p.999.

[111] Prof. Alexander's posthumous volume, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, ed. D.F. Abrahams, has just been published by University of California Press (Los Angeles, 1985).

[112] Primasius (North Africa, early 6th c.; PL 68 c.793ff); Caesarius (Arles, early 6th c.; PL 35 c.3417ff); Apringius of Beja (Iberia, c.540; ed. Ferotin, Biblio. patrol. 1, Paris, 1900); less certain attributions: Cassiodorus (mid 6th c.; PL 70 c.1405ff); and the anonymous 'De septem sigillis' (A. Matter, 'De septem' [n.65], p.137). See Matter for the most recent bibliography of most of these texts. Also add to this list Gennadius' lost *Tractatus de mille annis et de Apocalypsi beati Johannis* which he sent to Pope Gelasius (d. 493), *De viris illustribus*, ch. 100 (PL 58 c.1120), which probably a) used Ticonius (see n.79 above), and b) like the work of the 4th century Syrian Jacobus of Nisibe, 'shut the mouths of all those who with presumptuous notions, philosophized stupidly (inaniter) on the Advent of the Antichrist or of our Lord' (*De viris*, ch.1; c.1059).



Rather than pressing the point concerning the poorly documented 5th-6th century, let us pass on to the fate of the second official chronology of the age of the world in the West, that of Eusebius. For it is the *repeating* pattern of chronological changes that makes the strongest case for reconsidering our documentation. And with AM II, the pattern not only repeats, but does so in a still more dramatic way, partly because of the active separation of millenarian eschatology and chronology in Eusebius' approach, and partly because of the intensified concern with chronology characteristic of early medieval historiography. Hence our data is more plentiful and the attempt to disguise millenarian preoccupations more self-conscious.

## 7. Early Medieval Historiography

Through Jerome's translation the Eusebian chronology dominated European historiography from the 5th century onwards. Chroniclers even respected the intentions of both its author and its Western sponsors by keeping their chronologies strictly separate from any eschatology.[113] When Isidore of Seville wrote a chronology of the world, he went out of his way to conclude with remarks and biblical citations that forbid the calculation of years remaining in the sixth age.[114]

But Isidore's concluding protestations serve only to highlight the problem. By using Augustine's six ages of history to define chronological periods, he had linked World Ages directly to the millennial week for the first time. Augustine, as we have seen, had carefully avoided any such explicit coupling of ages and years, and such a linkage in Isidore's work necessitated the concluding disavowal. Typically, behind the explicit rejection of eschatological calculations, we find a major, if implicit,

[113] This is particularly true of the 6th century authors edited in Mommsen's *Chronica Minora* (MGH AA IX and XI): *Chronica Gallica*, 511 CE (IX pp.632-66); Marcellinus Comes, c.518 CE (XI pp.60-104); Cassiodorus, 519 CE (XI pp.120-61); Victor Tonnonensis, 566 CE (XI pp.184-206); Marius of Avenches, 581 CE (XI pp.232-9); John of Biclair, 590 CE (XI pp.211-20). Only Jordanes (550 CE) dated the Incarnation to 5500 AM (MGH AA V:I); but he did not record a date over 6000 and generally used chronological information loosely. Van den Brincken takes his use of the older *era mundi* as a sign 'wie sehr sich der Gedanke an ein Ende der Welt nach 6000-jährigen Bestand überlebt hat...' (*Weltchronistik*, p.89). Cf. below.

[114] MGH AA XI, pp.424-481. 'Residuum saeculi tempus humanae investigationis incertum est; omnem enim de hac re questionem dominus Iesus Christus abstulit, dicens: *Non est vestrum nosse tempora...*' (p.481).

concession to the millenarian week and the importance of the year 6000.[115]

This conflict between the implicit eschatology of chronological calculations and the explicit denials which accompanied them characterizes the historical work of the early Middle Ages. Gregory of Tours, in this sense, was a post-Augustinian Hippolytus. Like his 3rd century predecessor, he 1) explained that he would calculate the age of the world for those so passionately concerned with apocalyptic matters (Greg., *Hist. franc.* I,1; Hipp., *In Dan.* IV,23);[116] 2) denied the possibility of eschatological calculations (Greg.I,1; Hipp.IV,16);[117] 3) provided a chronology that pushed the year 6000 over two centuries away (Greg.IV,51, X,31; Hipp.IV,24); and 4) described current apocalyptic leaders and their large followings—both lay and clerical—against which these calculations could be used in argument (Greg. IX,6, X,25; Hipp. IV,18-19).[118] But unlike Hippolytus, he did not explicitly link any of these four points, and were we not alerted to the pattern from Hippolytus, we could easily dismiss Gregory's remark about '*eos qui appropinquantem finem mundi disperant*' as a curious aside,[119] identify the false Christ of Bourges as

[115] Schmidt, 'Aetates mundi' [n.83], p.291f; Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], pp.91-5; Martin Haeusler, *Das Ende der Geschichte in der mittelalterlichen Weltchronistik* (Cologne, 1980), pp.25-6; Hillgarth, 'Historiography in Visigothic Spain', *La storiografia altomedievale*, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 17 (Spoleto, 1970), II p.291 and n.118.

[116] 'Illud etiam placuit propter eos, qui adpropinquantem finem mundi disperant, ut, collectam per chronicas vel historias anteriorum annorum summam, explanitur aperte, quanti ab exordio mundi sint anni' (Gregory of Tours, *Historia francorum*: I, Preface; MGH SRM I:1 p.3). See discussion of the ambiguity of the phrase 'qui...disperant' in Giselle de Nie, 'Roses in January: a Neglected Dimension in Gregory of Tours' Historiae', *Journal of Medieval History*, 5 (1979), p.261.

[117] Shortly after his bold statement (previous note), Gregory retracts its implications in his confession of orthodoxy: 'Sed diem illam omnibus hominibus oculi ipse Dominus manifestat dicens... «De die autem illa et ora nemo scit, neque angeli caelorum, neque filius, nisi Pater solos» [Mk 13: 32]' (p.5). The point is clearly important to him, since citing Mark gets him into trouble with the Arians (the Father knows more than the Son?).

[118] Ibid., X, 25. Gregory does not call it a millenarian movement, and modern historians have followed his lead (even Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York, 1961), p.22, ignores it; but cf. 1970, p. 41); but if the leader called himself Christ, then for his following, if not for Gregory, the Parousia had arrived; so understood by Michel Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes* (Paris, 1979), pp.410ff; see also, R. Landes, 'Millenarismus absconditus'.

[119] G. Monod, *Etudes critiques sur les sources de l'histoire mérovingienne*, Bibl. de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, vol. 8 (Paris, 1872), p.73f.; and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-haired Kings* (London, 1962), p.56. Both mention this phrase without returning to it. More recently Van den Brincken (*Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.97), Verhelst ('La préhistoire des



an eccentric heretic rather than a millenarian,[120] and consider his chronology simply a typical concern of medieval historiography.[121]

It becomes apparent, however, that despite the official (i.e. explicit) denial of any millenarianism in early medieval chronology AM II, this orthodox written tradition was accompanied by an oral one which continued to transmit the belief in a sabbatical millennium. Gregory did not have to spell out just how to use his calculations in arguments with the numerous charismatics who 'came forward in various parts of Gaul...and acquired great influence over the common people'.[122] The anti-apocalyptic uses of chronology were commonplace.

In this light, we can better understand the bizarre final entreaty of the *Historia francorum*, itself an embellishment of the conclusion of *Revelations*.

> I conjure you all, you Bishops of the Lord who will have charge of Tours cathedral after my unworthy self, I abjure you all, I say, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Judgment Day feared by all sinners, that you never permit these books to be destroyed, or to be rewritten, or to be reproduced in part only with sections omitted, for otherwise, when you emerge in confusion from this Judgment Day, you will be condemned with the Devil. Keep them in your possession, intact, with no amendments and just as I have left them to you. Whoever you are, even if our own Martianus himself has given you instruction in the Seven Arts...even if you are an acknowledged master in these skills, and if, as a result what I have written seems uncouth to you, despite all this I beg of you, do not do violence to my Books. You may rewrite them in verse if you wish to, but KEEP THEM INTACT.[123]

Gregory's concern with the age of the World played a still more central role in the *Chronicle of Fredegar*, the next major historical work

conceptions d'Adson concernant l'Antichrist', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 40 (1973), p.77, and G. de Nie ('Roses' [n.116], pp.286-8) have pointed out its significance for the accompanying chronology.

[120] Jeffrey B. Russell alludes to it as 'one of the chaotic heresies' of the Early Middle Ages, the work of a proto-'Eccentric' (*Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages* (Los Angeles, 1965), pp. 8, 10).

[121] '...and totes up his figures for the last time...': Lewis Thorpe in the Introduction to the Penguin translation (London, 1974), p.27. More recently, J.M. Wallace-Hadrill has commented on the eschatological dimension of the chronology, although without pointing out its anti-apocalyptic function (*The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), p.38).

[122] 'Sed per totas Gallias emerserunt plerique, qui per has praestigias adiungentes sibi mulierculas quasdam...magnus se in populis praeferebant; ex quibus nos plerosque vidimus quod obiurgantes revocare ab errore nisi sumus': X, 25.

[123] X, 31. Cf. Revelations 22:18-19. Note that among the aspects of Gregory's work that would *not* suffer from versification and pertained directly to Judgment Day were 'the total sum of years since the world began' with which he then concluded his History: 5792 AM II.

from Merovingian Gaul.[124] The first part of the work collected lengthy excerpts from four chronicles discussing in detail the age of the world.[125] Although three of these sources used AM II (Jerome, Hydatius and Isidore), one used AM I (*Liber Generationis*). The compiler apparently had some difficulty with this last text which placed his own day in the 7th millennium; and, although in copying it he dated Constantine's reign (307 CE) to 5806 AM I, as did his document, he recorded the last year of Heraclius' reign (641 CE; or, 6140 AM I) as 5149.[126]

The true date, about which '*nulla sit dubitatio*' according to 'Fredegar', derived from Eusebius' work. In order to calculate with the greatest precision the present year *Annus Mundi*, he informed his readers, one took AM II calculations up to the passion of the Lord (5228 years) and added them to the year of the Victorine Easter cycle. These Easter Tables, which began with the *Annus Passionis* and repeated every 532 years, thus provided a year-by-year chart with which to track the passing sixth millennium.[127] As we shall see, subsequent continuators of 'Fredegar' used precisely this technique.

## 8. 'Ut istum miliarium impleatur restant anni...'

The proof that the early medieval preoccupation with AM II was accompanied by an 'underground' or rather, oral tradition of the sabbatical millennium appears most distinctly in the emergence of a

[124] 'Fredegar's' Chronicle has several major editions: G. Monod, *Etudes mérovingiennes*, 2e partie, BEHE, vol.63 (Paris, 1885), a transcription of ms. B.N.lat. 10910; Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM II (1888); J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (New York, 1960). For a bibliography, see Wallace-Hadrill, p.lxiii-lxvii, and F. Ganshof, 'L'historiographie dans la monarchie franque sous les Mérovingiens et les Carolingiens', *La storiografia* [n.115], pp.637-42.

[125] Book IV, Prologue (MGH SRM II, p.123). These kinds of chronographical collections were not rare: see e.g. ms. Lucensis bibl. capit. 490 (MGH AA IX, p.156).

[126] MGH SRM II, p.40 l.40; p.41 l.32; p.42 l.12. Note that none of the variants (p.42 n.g) is correct. Krusch remarks laconically: 'Numerum falsum esse, vix commemorari necesse est' (n.3). In the earliest manuscript (Paris BN lat. 10910 f.28r) a later hand erased the original figure and wrote VDCXLVIIII (5649).

[127] MGH SRM II, p.34 l.19-21. The Easter Tables of Victorius of Aquitaine recorded the Easter cycle of 532 years, an *annus magnus pascale*. He constructed his table in 457 CE and started it with the year of the Passion (29 CE); thus his tables would serve for another 102 years (MGH AA IX, pp.667ff). Although the tables themselves do not include a column for AM, and the Alexandrine tables Victorius drew from used AM I, his introduction used AM II (ibid., pp.681-2); see Franz Ruhl, *Chronologie des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1897), pp.126-7.



double refrain in early medieval historiography: on the one hand, a summary of the years in each age '*ab exordio mundi...*' culminating in a total '*ad praesentem annum*'; and on the other, not uncommonly from the end of the 7th century, a calculation of the years remaining 'until the completion of this millennium'.[128] The most striking instances of these millennial countdowns appear in copies of Isidore's widely popular *Six Ages*, the work which ended in the last age with a total of years AM II and an explicit prohibition against eschatological calculations. Beginning with a regnal list based on Isidore's Chronicle from 643 CE, we find at least a dozen of these countdowns to the year 6000 in texts dating from the later 7th to the end of the 8th century CE, from 5874 to 6000 AM II.[129]

The continuators of Fredegar, inheritors of his great chronographical compilation, display the same fascination with the year 6000. The earliest extant manuscript of this work, Paris BN lat. 10910, copied within a generation of the original composition, contains the following computation on the final folio:

> Invenit Lucerios presbeter monacos dom/ tum a... per ista croneca et per alia crone[ca] su. quod septoagenta et quattuor ann[i ab ista comp]utavid quod sextus miliarios...[docit] esse explitos, conpotavit ipsos [annos LXXIIII et] an[no]s X in indiccione exsiente te[rtia decimo ann]o quarto Dagoberto rignante.[130]

Thus in 715 (Indiction 13), the latter half of the fourth year of Dagobert III's reign, Lucerios counted 84 years to the completion of the millennium.

Some twenty years later, a pro-Carolingian continuator of the chronicle included a similar calculation in his Chronicle:

> Certe ab initio mundi usque ad passionem domini nostri Iesu Christi sunt anni 5228 et a passione Domini usque isto anno praesente qui est in cyclo

[128] Variously called 'epitoma temporum', or 'annorum mundi brevis collectio' etc. See Paris BN nal 1613 f.8r, for a collection of such paragraphs (below pp. 190).

[129] 1) 643 CE (MGH SRM VII, p.493 no.19:2);—2) 673 CE (Krusch, 'Zur Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendland', *Neues Archiv*, 9 (1884), p.132);—3) 673 CE (MGH AA XI, p.493 no.7);—4) 673 CE (ibid., p.505-6 no.6);—5) 675 CE (ibid., p.492);—6) 699 CE (Krusch, p.134);—7) 715 CE (MGH SRM II, p.502);—8) 727 CE (Krusch, p.136);—9) 736 CE (MGH SRM II, p.176); —10) 738 CE (Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), pp.303-4);—11) 742 CE (MGH AA XI, p.169);—12) 748 CE (MGH AA IX, p.158 no.5);—13) 778 CE (Levison, pp.303-4);—14) 784 CE (see below p.193-194);—15) 800 CE (MGH AA XI, p.505; and below pp.195-196). See chart III.

[130] Reconstruction by Krusch, MGH SRM II, p.9f; translated by Wallace-Hadrill, *Fourth Book* [n.124], p.xlxvii.

Victorii ann[us] 177, Kl. Januarii, die dominica, ann[i] 735; et ut istum miliarium impleatur, restant ann[i] 63.[131]

This text illustrates particularly well the method for bringing the AM up to date proposed by 'Fredegar': that is, starting from 5228 AM II as the date of the Passion, counting all subsequent years one by one with the Victorine Easter tables. But 735 is the date from the Incarnation, not the Passion; and as a result, if the chronicler had followed his figures, he would have produced an *annus praesens* of 5963 AM, with only 37 years left in the millennium. In fact, he did not: he added 532 (the length of the first Easter cycle since the Passion) to 177 (the year in the present cycle) and the total (709) to the Eusebian count (5228) and came up with 5937 AM II.[132]

This old and tenacious confusion between counting from the Incarnation or the Passion could have been the occasion for countless errors among often poorly trained scribes adding and subtracting large sums with Roman numerals.[133] In fact, however, a surprisingly high proportion of the figures in this 'countdown' tradition were accurate, suggesting the care and attention that this effort commanded. As the research of Krusch and Mommsen has shown, many an apparently ridiculous error turns out to be accurate.[134] Such consistency in the face of so many pitfalls reflects the importance that these calculations had for their authors and communicates the power that the eschatological date of 6000 exercised over their minds, silently dominating the chronological activity of the whole period.

Silently, I say, because even though, as the apocalyptic date neared, the bearers of the tradition expressed more and more openly the ulterior concerns of the chronologies they worked on, on the most explicit level

[131] Krusch, ibid., p.176; Wallace-Hadrill, ibid., p.92.

[132] This solution was first outlined by Krusch, 'Die *chronicae* des sog. Fredegar', *Neues Archiv*, 7 (1882), p.491.

[133] An example from late 10th century Anjou: Louis Halphen, *Recueils d'annales angévines et vendômoises* (Paris, 1903), p.58 n.1. One might think that something similar had happened in Gregory of Tours, who counted 412 years from the Passion to Martin's death (397 CE). The innacuracy had no effect on his calculations for 6000, however, since he dated the Passion to 5184 AM: IV, 51 (MGH SRM I, p.187f.); X, 30 (p.449f.).

[134] See, for example, the works of Krusch cited above. Misguided contempt (above n.10) has led modern historians into error. Lewis Thorpe notes that Gregory of Tours made an error in his final calculations: 'As the figures stand the total is, of course, 6063. All the figures are given in Roman numerals, which are often miscopied by scribes' (*History of the Franks* [n. 121], p.604 n.135). Thorpe was correct in using the present tense: he is the scribe who miscopied. From the Exodus to the Resurrection according to Gregory there were MD*XXX*VIII (1538) years (MGH SRM I, p.449, l.24), not MD*CCC*VIII (1808). (Gregory's numbers were in fact in error, but not on this issue; see previous note.)



the Augustinian position still held good: virtually no one repeated Hilarianus' audacity and claimed that the year 6000 marked the End.[135] So pervasive was Augustine's influence that modern historians, looking back over the historiography of the period and noting its fascination with the date, nevertheless decline to associate this phenomenon with the millenarian tradition they know lies at its roots. For them, although 'die Zeitrechnung des frühen Christentums hatte in allererster Linie den Parusietermin zum Gegenstand...als jedoch das Ende länger auf sich warten lässt, wendet sich das Interesse änderen Problemen zu'.[136] Most do not acknowledge that these calculations were in any way eschatological and even a study specifically concerned with the apocalyptic dimension of universal histories concludes that Augustine's influence, through Isidore and Bede, had eliminated this particular point of view 'Ausgeschieden sind—wenigstens fur die nächsten Jahrhunderte—lediglich chiliadische Fristrechnungen'.[137]

Ironically, the documents which inform us most clearly about the continuing association of the sabbatical millennium with the chronologies AM II come not from the followers of Hilarianus, but of Augustine: Julian of Toledo and Bede. Before Augustine, proponents of the prevailing AM (I) openly espoused the sabbatical millennium, while opponents passed it over in silence. After him, the conventional chronologists (using AM II) pursued their eschatological interests in (literary) silence, while only among the opponents of AM II do we find an open acknowledgment of the sabbatical millennium's continued existence. Not surprisingly, this opposition arises as AM II approached its final century, and it appears specifically in the context of a proferred alternative dating system AM.

## 9. Julian of Toledo (c.642-696)

In time the theologians of the early Middle Ages, just like their predecessors in the patristic period, found themselves committed to a calculation AM which became more dangerous with every passing

[135] With the exception of two cases from Spain: 742 CE (above n.129) and 784 CE (below p.193-194).

[136] Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.103. She, more than most who work on historiography, recognized the role of millenarianism; but ultimately she judged the impact of these concerns limited: 'Allgemeine Verbreitung haben derartige Vermütungen nicht gefunden...' (p.108).

[137] Haeusler, *Das Ende der Geschichte* [n.115], p.32.

generation. The first challenge to AM II then, came from Julian, archbishop of Toledo, in his *De comprobatione sextae aetatis* (686 CE).[138] Julian's stated concern was to counter an argument from the Jews that Jesus could not have been the Messiah since he was not, according to their chronology, born in the sixth age. In his counter-attack, Julian assailed both the Jewish AM (by which the Incarnation would have occurred in 3776 AM) and the Jewish notion that the messiah will come in the year 6000.[139] He concluded by providing his own calculations of the years elapsed since the Creation: Christ, he said, had been born in 5325 AM, and therefore the year 6000 had passed—without incident—over a decade earlier.[140]

Julian's polemic provides us with the first explicit mention of the sabbatical millennium in 200 years, here denounced as Jewish in origin, but also capable of 'infecting' the body of Christian faithful.[141] But if the Jews may have been his opponents in the debate about Christological claims for Jesus and they may well have been the source of radical millenarian beliefs,[142] they were hardly the ones whose beliefs about the year 6000 posed a threat. The sabbatical millennium played a minor role in Jewish eschatology, and certainly no Jewish apocalyptic movement in Julian's day would have predicated its message on a messianic date some 1500 years distant.[143] On the contrary, it was Julian's fellow Christians

[138] On Julian see, J.N. Hillgarth, 'Historiography' [n.115], pp. 299-303. Hillgarth has edited Julian's works in *Sancti Iuliani Toletanae Sedis Episcopi Opera*, CCSL 115 (Turnhout, 1976); the *De comprobatione* is on pp.143-212.

[139] 'Numquid aut per legem aut per prophetas alicubi specialiter in sexto millesimo anno nasciturus predictus est Christus?' *De comp.* I, 3, ll.10-13.

[140] *De comp.* III, 10, ll.100-148. His *era mundi* of Creation in 5825 BCE is close to a calculation which would put the Incarnation at the end of the 10th Paschal Annus Magnus (532 years) since the Creation (5320 AM). 'Sic, inquam, transactis his sex millibus annis, quid nunc iam Iudaeorum falsitas agis...?' ibid., III, 10, ll.131-2 (*Opera*, p.212).

[141] A fear of the cancerous effects of the Jewish teaching on the sabbatical millennium surfaces repeatedly: *De comp.*, Introductory epistle; I, 2, ll.20-1; I, 3, l.10; I, 6, ll.1-2; etc. See Bernard Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du moyen âge sur les juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris, 1963), p.120.

[142] The entire period of Islamic expansion and particularly the earliest days were seen by Jews in a messianic light which often resulted in mass movements (A.H. Silver, *Messianic Speculation* [n.69], pp. 36-57, esp. p.43; S. Baron, *Social History* [n.3], vol. V, pp.138-208). The Spanish chronicler of 754 (see below n.149) described just such a movement occurring c. 720, when a mad commoner drove many Spanish and North African Jews to selling their property in the expectation of the divine kingdom reestablished in Jerusalem (obviously here on earth): *ad an.* [Spanish] *era* 759 (PL 96, 1268). The problem was of great concern to the rabbis (Silver, p.56; Baron, pp.191-4).

[143] The notion of Six Ages emerged only slowly within Christianity (not until Augustine c.400), and there is no equivalent in Judaism (Luneau, *L'Histoire* [n.17], pp.37-46).



who now openly calculated the approach of *their* year 6000.[144] The concluding calculations, in which Julian put the year 6000 into the (recent) past, had far more import for a Christian audience of sabbatical millenarians than for his Jewish opponents.

But if Julian's principle concern was Christians calculating the year 6000 AM II, why would he not *prefer* the Jewish calculations precisely since they put that year so far away? Julian's argument—that these figures contradict the Christian claim that Christ was already born in the sixth age—is inconsistent. If, as he repeatedly asserted, no link existed between ages and millennia, what threat could Jewish chronology pose?[145] Why would a birthdate for Jesus in 3776 AM deny that Jesus was born in the sixth age, unless the sixth age and the sixth millennium were, in the *Christian* imagination, inextricably bound?[146] In the final analysis, Julian's strenuous efforts to protect his fellow Christians from the 'brazen calculations' of the Jews constitutes a tacit admission that his co-religionists considered millennia and ages inseparable. The 'vulgar' mind had completely assimilated Augustine's six ages with the millennial week.

Julian's *De comprobatione* had little success. There are few surviving copies, and Julian himself eventually dropped its chronological arguments, despite his energetic efforts on behalf of Augustinian eschato-

Moreover, the Millenarian Week calls for the Messiah to inaugurate the seventh, sabbatical millennium (= seventh age); the notion that he should arrive in the sixth derives from the peculiar Christian problem of two Comings (see M. Werner, *Formation* [n.26], pp.38-39). When Julian attributed the belief in the Messiah's coming only in the sixth age to the Jews (*De comp.* I, 1, ll.12-13), he could only be projecting.

[144] 'The week of millennia... is on the whole a Christian concept rather than a Jewish one, and is based by Christians on a non-Pharasaic chronology [i.e. the LXX]' (R.T. Beckwith, 'Daniel 9' [n.2], p.537. Even the most explicit talmudic opinions linking millennia to days of the creation week contain little to support Julian's allegation: *Sanhedrin* 97a and b (tr. H. Freedman (Soncino, London, 1935), p.657f.). It has, however, been accepted in modern scholarship: e.g. Samuel Katz, *The Jews in the Visigothic and Frankish Kingdoms of Spain and Gaul* (Cambridge, 1937), p.36 and n.4. Katz notes: 'It is nonetheless interesting to note that both Ildefonse and Julian are unaware that this chiliastic doctrine of the 6th millennium was accepted by Christians in apostolic and post apostolic times' (p.37). On the contrary, they knew it all too well. Note a Spanish calculation (without countdown) in the first year of king Wamba: 672 CE (MGH AA IX, p.159).

[145] Note his insistence that the ages have no predictable relationship with the 'supputatio annorum:' e.g. I, 4-5; III, 1-7.

[146] The same principle is at work in Julian's contention that by the Hebrew figures mankind was presently in the fifth age: Preface, l.27f (*Opera*, p.147). For the Jews, 686 CE was 4462 AS; i.e. 5th millennium = 5th age. See also I, 1 (p.149).

logy.[147] On the other hand, two texts written after the Moslem invasion indicate the tenacity of the Iberian tradition of sabbatical millenarianism that Julian attempted to change. The first, a continuation of the Chronicle of John of Biclair dating from 742 CE, calculated 5941 years since Creation and the number of years remaining until the end of the sixth millennium, which the author explicitly identified as the end of the sixth age.[148] This is the first Christian document to embrace the millennial week since Hilarianus some 340 years earlier.

The second text, a continuation of Isidore's *History of the Goths*, written in 754 CE and attributed to Isidore of Bajos, contains a citation from Julian's *De comprobatione*. The author, who evinced a great interest in dates, concluded with a lengthy discussion of the exact date AM of the Incarnation.[149] He resolved the problem with an appeal to *doctissimus et sanctissimus Julianus*: 'and if we seek out the years since the origin of the world until the nativity of Christ according to the Septuagint translation, 5200 years are found...'. The citation in question is exact, but out of context—the author has used it to support the very chronology that Julian had tried so hard to displace.[150] Like Augustine, Julian had been swallowed up by the opposition.

## 10. Bede the Eusebian Chronographer (c.673-734)

In 703 a young monk from northern England published a libellus entitled *De temporibus* which, like its encyclopedic predecessor by Isidore of Seville, began with the smallest divisions of time and finished with a chronicle of the six ages of the world.[151] But in contrast to Isidore, who adopted AM II with minor variations, Bede produced entirely new figures for the years since creation based on the *hebraica veritas* (AM

[147] J.N. Hillgarth, 'Towards a Critical Edition of the Works of Julian of Toledo', *Studia Patristica*, 1 (1957), pp.37ff. Six years later Julian wrote the *Prognosticon futuri saeculi*, a major work of orthodox eschatology based largely on Augustine and 'well-calculated to appeal to a world intensely concerned with the Last Things' (Hillgarth, CCSL ed., p.xviii). Julian made no allusion there to the arguments of the *De comprobatione* (see *Prog.* III, 1-5. See also Hillgarth, 'St Julian of Toledo in the Middle Ages', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), pp.7-26; Le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgatoire* (Paris, 1981), pp. 135-7).

[148] Madrid, Bibl. univ. 135, f.5 (MGH AA XI, p.169); the final calculation is illegible.

[149] Editions in PL 96 c.1246-80, there attributed to Isidore Pacensis (Bajos); MGH AA XI, pp.330-68, entitled *Continuatio hispana*. See Díaz y Díaz, 'La historiografía hispana desde la invasión árabe hasta el año 1000', *La storiografia* [n.115], p.316f.

[150] *De comp.* III, 8, ll.12-17.

[151] The works of Bede on time have been published twice by C.W. Jones [n.12].



III). The Incarnation, according to him, had occured in 3952 AM—a rejuvenation of the world by some 1200 years. The reaction to this novum was immediate and violent. Behind Bede's back, a certain David denounced his work as heresy to Bishop Willifrid, and no one rose to Bede's defense. Bede's response, a letter to the monk Plegwin in 708 CE, displays an uncharacteristic vehemence which, despite his rapid ascendancy in matters of time reckoning, he sustained against opponents of his chronology the rest of his life.[152]

According to David, Bede had denied that the Christ was born in the sixth age, a curious contention since, as the most rapid glance reveals, Bede's text belies such an assertion.[153] The only way to understand this clearly false reading is to realize that David, and apparently his audience, shared the same belief in the indissoluble link between ages and millennia that had invisibly controlled Julian's argument some twenty years earlier.[154] We find the same belief affirmed in Rome, where a document from 742 cited John Malalas, the Byzantine chronicler: 'everyone agrees that He was born in the sixth millennium...'—and then the author added, 'except the Scots'.[155] And as in Julian's case, this great solicitude for the chronological location of the Incarnation disguised a different concern, the timetable not of the Advent, but of the Parousia.[156]

Bede's response confirms this analysis of the actual thrust of David's objections. 'I warn you dear brother, lest you, seduced by vulgar opinion, should hope that the duration of this world will only be 6000 years...'[157] This is the first explicit testimony to this belief among Christians since the 5th century, here referred to as *vulgar* (i.e. popular)

[152] This letter (708 CE) outlines David's actions: *Epistula ad Pleguinam* (Jones, *Bedae*, pp.307-15; *Didascalica*, pp.617-26. 'The *De temporum ratione* [hereafter *DTR*], written 17 years later, is colored from Preface to Chronicle by his combined fear and irritation at this... body of readers' (Jones, *Bedae*, pp.132-5). Note that although the first work, the *De temporibus*, ostensibly sought to resolve a serious paschal controversy which threatened to errupt in 704 CE (ibid., p.130f.), it was the *chronological* calculations that elicited the opposition.

[153] 'Responsit quia negarem in sexta aetate saeculi dominum salvatorem in carne venisse' (Jones, *Bedae*, p.307; *Didascalica*, p. 617). Based on Isidore's six Ages, Christ's Incarnation defined the beginning of the 6th age, as Bede himself pointed out.

[154] 'The traditional chronology [of Jerome and Isidore] had combined in the popular mind with Augustine's doctrine of the Six Ages, ably spread by Isidore, to create a millennial dogma which became a pseudo-scholarly fetish...': Jones, *Bedae*, p.133.

[155] '...quamvis Scotti concordare nolunt, qui sapientim se existimant habere et scientiam perdederunt' (MGH AA XIII, p.427 ll.27-8). On the identification of Bede with these 'Scots', see Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.118f.

[156] Van den Brinken (ibid., pp.107-113) and Verhelst ('Préhistoire' [n.119], pp.83-85) have identified this agenda behind Bede's chronology.

[157] *Ep. ad Pleg.* 14 (Jones, *Bedae*, p.313; *Didascalica*, p.623f).

opinion. Bede even admits how afflicted and irritated he feels when *rustici* importune him, desiring to know how many years were left in the last millennium of the world: the simple-minded just cannot rid themselves of so foolish a notion.[158]

Bede's writings on this matter show how the safety valve in the Hippolytan strategy—that erudite circle of computists who alone knew the date AM—went into action in the final century of the 6th millennium. The rustics, be they poorly-trained clerics or pious laymen, awaited their release from this life of tears and suffering; they knew that the moment approached, perhaps even in their own lifetimes. But they had to consult the computist about the exact date. And, just as in the 60th century AM I, the anti-millenarian expert in the last century of AM II changed the date. In this case, Jerome's far-sighted decision to use the Masoretic numbers in his Bible translation, figures ignored by chronographers for centuries, now came to the fore. Bede's chronographic work constituted 'a veritable pirouette'.[159]

Bede took up all these issues once again in 725 in his major work on time, the *De temporum ratione*. Both the introduction and the conclusion indicate how much the old accusation of heresy continued to vex him.[160] The treatise concluded with a chronicle of the six ages of the world, a major historical work concluding with a rigorously Augustinian eschatological treatise among whose targets were 'those who suppose that the condition of this world was limited, from the start, to 6000 years... [and hence] that the Advent should be most anticipated at the end of the sixth millennium'.[161] And if such unacceptable beliefs were

[158] 'Unde et ipse satis doleo et, quantum licet, vel amplius irasci soleo, quoties a rusticis interrogor, quot de ultimo miliario saeculi restent anni...' (ibid., 15). 'War dies [apokalyptische Fristrechnungen] aber drei Jahrhunderte nach Augustinus noch nötig?' (Haeusler, *Ende der Geschichte* [n.119], p.30), apparently meant as a rhetorical question, since the author then passes from Bede to the 12th century in his survey of the eschatology of World Chronicles (p.33).

[159] Juan Gil, 'Los terrores del año 800', in *Actas del Simposio para el estudio de los codices del 'Comentario al Apocalipsis' de Beato de Liebana* (1977), p.218. 'Bedas Tat geschah jedemfalls zum richtigen Zeitpunkt, da bei Annahme einer 6000-jährigen Weltdauer die hieronymianische Chronologie gerade wieder gefärhlich zu werden drohte' (Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.110).

[160] Bede dedicated the introduction of the *DTR* to justifying his preference for the *hebraica veritas*, replete with angry asides about his opponents, e.g.: 'credo mox nostro labori calumniam facere desistet si non hunc tamen lividis, quod absit, contemplatur obtutibus' (Jones, *Bedae*, p.175f.; *Didascalica*, p.264).

[161] 'Neque enim ullatenus sunt audiendi, qui suspicantur huius saeculi statum sex milium annorum ab initio fuisse definitum, et... adventus maximae circa terminum sexti millenarii debeat sperari' (*DTR* 67, Jones, *Didascalica*, p.536). Ironically, this concluding



not bad enough, among these men, Bede warned, were some who believed that the seventh period of 1000 years will be an earthly one.[162] One could not ask for less ambiguous testimony to the survival of the most dangerous kind of sabbatical millenarianism in the early 8th century.

One further remark within Bede's discussion of this sabbatical millenarianism has a direct bearing on this study, for it points out why modern historians have difficulty in understanding the meaning of the documention from this period. Whereas in his earlier encounters, those millenarian rustics had frustrated Bede, now the tables were turned: Bede challenged them.

—And where have you read that such things are to be thought and to be believed?

To which they, *mox stomachantes*, responded:

—Have you not read in Genesis that in 6 days God created the World? Whence its existence would be established for 6000 years more or less.[163]

In Bede's account, that is all. These 'frivolous heretics' seem truly ignorant. They are obviously illiterate, since they do not cite even the most obvious texts in support of their position: Psalm 89/90 and II Peter.

Whether or not this dialogue convinced Bede's opponents to abandon their beliefs or not, it reveals how he counter- attacked: by pointing to the complete absence of any *text* supporting the sabbatical millennium. If in 708 Bede could still recall reading the work of a 'chronographical heresiarch',[164] apparently by 725 nothing remained in the corpus of

treatise (*DTR* 67-71), despite its orthodox tenor, recalls the structure of Hilarianus' millenarian chronology from 397 CE, one which comes closest to the format of the historical apocalypses. Van den Brincken links Hilarianus, Bede and Otto of Freising in this tradition (*Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.59). This mini-treatise was perceived by contemporaries as a distinct subject, and parts or all of it were published separately (Verhelst, 'Préhistoire' [n.119], p.84 n.172).

[162] 'Et quod est gravius, fuere qui propter septimum diem, in quo requievit Deus ab operibus suis, sperarent post sex annorum milia sanctorum laboris in hac vita mortali septimo mille annorum curriculo eos post resurrectionem in hac ipsa vita immortales in deliciis et multa beatitudine regnaturos esse cum Christo. Verum his quia heretica sunt et frivola...' (*DTR*, 67, ll.34-39).

[163] 'A quibus si queris ubi haec putanda vel credenda legerint, mox stomachantes, quia aliud quid respondere non habent: Annon legisti, inquiunt, in Genesi, quia sex diebus mundum fecerit Deus?' (*DTR*, 67, ll.29-32). Cf. Julian's attack on the Jews: 'Numquid aut per legem aut per prophetas...' (above n.139).

[164] *Ep. ad. Pleg.* 14 (Jones, *Didascalica*, p.624 ll.247-60); Jones identified the text as the Prologue of Cologne (*Bedae*, p.135 n.2), Levison as the *De duratione mundi* of Hilarianus

ecclesiastical texts. This textual void played an important part in the ecclesiastical opposition to the millenarian week. While orthodox hostility may have failed to eradicate sabbatical millenarianism among the laity (and clergy), it had succeeded in eliminating the record of that teaching so completely from the texts that, at the most dangerous period of any chronology AM, its 60th century, orthodoxy could deny the very principle of the millenarian week at the same time that it changed the calendar. Thus, in the post-Augustinian silence the Church could adopt a more responsible theological position without contradicting itself.[165] The documentary results of these concerns, so specific to certain periods like the 5th and 8th centuries, should not, however, deceive modern historians: the textual silence hardly mirrors the actual situation.

It is important to note finally, that Bede's contribution to medieval chronography owed less to his transformation of the *era mundi* than to his reintroduction of the dating system suggested by the monk Dionysius Exiguus, who introduced *Annus Domini* in his Alexandrine Easter Tables of 526. Not only did Bede give this *era* a prominent role in his *De temporum ratione* and structure his prestigious History of the English Church around it, but, most significantly, he placed it in the first column of his new Easter Tables, drawn up for the second *Annus Magnus* (532-1063).[166] His efforts in this field met with such success that this *era*, however labelled, is that of the world community today.

## 11. The Bedan Carolingians

In the early 5940s AM II, the first major church council in over a generation met to reform the Frankish Church, 'so that the Christian people might gain the salvation of their souls and not perish by the deception of false priests'. The canons were dated *Annus Domini* 742—an official announcement of the Carolingian intention to transform

('Bede as Historian', in *Bede His Life, Times and Writings*, ed. A. H. Thompson (New York, 1966), p.115 n.4).

[165] It is interesting to note that the Augustinian policy of not discussing millenarianism can be seen even in David's attack on Bede *in defense* of an impending year 6000. Rather than mention his concern openly, he, like Julian, made a (textually untenable, but theologically more acceptable) attack on a corollary issue.

[166] Jones, 'The Victorine and Dionysiac Paschal Tables in the West', *Speculum*, 9:4 (1934), pp.408-22; F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch* [n.1], III, p.178-85.



chronological practices.[167] The source of this innovation was, of course, Bede, whose great popularity among Carolingians is nowhere more evident than in the study of time-reckoning. His work on Easter cycles was paradigmatic; it displaced all rivals in the complicated world of European computus. The Carolingians copied his Easter Tables and his *De temporum ratione* unceasingly and accurately, and they wore out their copies with use.[168] The text was part of the core curriculum for any Carolingian cleric and lay at the foundation of all those accomplished computistical schools which proliferated during the period 750-850 CE.[169]

In historiography Bede's influence was no less pervasive, particularly in matters of chronology.[170] His position here is all the more remarkable, since the tradition he replaced, unlike the computistical one, had been coherent and unified for over three centuries. His principle impact derived from his use of *Annus Domini*, which generated the most popular form of Carolingian historiography, the *annal*. The year-to-year composition of the *Royal Frankish Annals* from the mid-790s (5990s AM II) on illustrates how central this new tradition had become to 'une historiographie officieuse qui répondait à l'intérêt à soutenir l'ordre politique que [la dynastie carolingienne] avait érigé'.[171]

Modern historians regularly discuss the positive innovations of Carolingian historiography stemming from Bede's work. But what of the negative side of Bede's legacy? For the adoption of AD in effect replaced the practice of dating AM and, coincidently or consequently, the annal eclipsed the universal history. Whereas most histories between 400 and

[167] Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence, 1749), vol. XII c.365-70; Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles* (Paris, 1910), vol. III:2 p.8ff. Citation from the first canon. See Levison, *England* [n.129], pp.70-93; esp. pp.83-4.

[168] See brief but eloquent remarks by Jones, *Didascalica*, CCSL 123 A (1977), pp.v-xv, esp. xii-xv.

[169] Study of computus required at the Council of Aachen (789 CE), MGH Legum II:1 p.60; Mansi, XV: 477, 508. While in this context *computus* can mean anything from arithmetic for calculating tithes to the Calendar, it can also mean chronology and Easter cycles. For one example among many of Carolingian schools of computus in this last sense, see A. Cordoliani, 'Les manuscrits de comput ecclésiastique de l'Abbaye de Saint Gall du VIIIe au XIIe siècle', *Zeitschrift für schweizerischen Kirchengeschichte*, 50 (1957), pp.161-200.

[170] 'Die gesamte Chronistik der Karolinger- und Ottonenzeit stand unter dem beherrschenden Einfluss Bedas': Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.113.

[171] Michael McCormick, *Les Annales du Haut Moyen Age*, Typologie des sources, fasc. 14 (Turnhout, 1975), p.16; see also, Wattenbach, Levison, Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter: Vorzeit und Karolinger* (Weimar, 1953), II pp.180-92, 245-66; Ganshof, 'L'historiographie franque' [n.124], pp.660-85.

750 CE began with the Creation, in the century of Carolingian dominance only three (minor) such histories survive. And although almost every previous historical work contained a count AM II, thereafter mentions of it became increasingly rare. Of the three Carolingian Universal Histories, only the earliest (c.770 CE) gave both Septuagint and Hebrew counts;[172] the next two, written in 809 and 814, used the *hebraica veritas* alone.[173]

To portray the shift from universal history to contemporary annal as self-explanatory or as the natural interest of an active age in its own period[174] misses a point. Carolingians avoided, rather than merely neglected, universal history because of its inescapable association with a now apocalyptic AM II.[175] Indeed, alongside the new historiography we find the familiar theological denunciation both of the sabbatical millennium and of any attempts to calculate the End. Ambrosius Autpertus in the first commentary on *Revelations* since the mid-6th century, denounced those who wished to calculate the years remaining in this sixth age, and warned 'against those who say: "when the six thousand years will be finished, then it will be the consummation [of the world]".'[176]

[172] MGH SS XIII, pp.1-19; MGH AA XIII, pp.336-40. These dates AM only went to the limit of Bede's Chronicle (5927 AM II, 4680 AM III); its own (extremely sparse) information on the next 15 years (to 741 CE) was dated AD. The date of composition is much debated; the range is from shortly after Charles Martel (i.e.,741) to, at the latest, 775. Wattenbach (*Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, p.258 and n.313) and Van den Brincken (*Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.114) follow Krusch, (*Neues Archiv*, 7 (1882), p.291) in dating it after 768. Such a dating, however, creates the need to explain why the previous generation (740-770) receives more laconic treatment than the one before (710-40).

[173] The anonymous Chronicle from 809 survives in numerous copies (MGH AA XIII, pp.346-54); Claudius of Turin wrote a less popular Universal Chronicle in 814 (PL 104 c.917ff). '...offenbar[en] diese Chronik[en] an Beda anknupfende Zusammenstellungen, das Streben nach einer Orientierung in der Weltgeschichte' (Wattenbach, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, p.259; also Ganshof, 'L'historiographie' [n.124], pp.663-7).

[174] Wattenbach (*Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, pp.223, 258) and Ganshof ('L'historiographie', p.663) note the phenomenon without explanation. Herbert Grundmann (*Geschichtsschreibung im Mittelalters* (Göttingen, 1965), p.19) and Van den Brincken (*Weltchronistik* [n.4], p.113) argue that in times of political ascension historians focus on the present, not on universal history; the latter concludes that 'erlangt das karolingische Imperium die eigentliche Einordnung in die Heils- und Universalgeschichte' (p.133).

[175] Paul the Deacon illustrates the 'Carolingian effect'. In two early works, written in 763 and 774 CE, he used the format of Universal History and AM II (Wattenbach, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, p.213-14). Once under Carolingian influence (782 CE) he no longer used either. 'Die Weltgeschichte... hat er einer späteren Generation als Aufgabe hinterlassen' (ibid., p.223).

[176] 'At contra qui dicunt: Cum finiti fuerint sex milium anni, tunc erit consummatio, quid aliud agunt, quam contra Domini interdictum tempora scire se iactant', *In apocalypsin* VI, 13, 18; ed. CC Cont. Med. 27A, p.523, l.278f). Cf. Bede (*Ep. ad Pleg.* 15); Augustine (*Ennar. in Ps.* VI); and n.214-15 below.



Carolingian theologians naturally agreed: the timing of eschatological events was necessarily hidden from man.[177]

This Carolingian transformation reproduced point for point the change in chronology we already observed in the 5th century: 1) the denunciation of the sabbatical millennium and the abandoning of the prevailing chronology ; 2) their displacement by a radical agnosticism about the End and a new set of numbers which placed the year 6000 well into the future; 3) the progressive elimination of any written mention of the rejected calculations; and 4) the occurrence of all these changes in the 5900s according to the previous chronology. The time bomb of the year 6000 was once again defused. (See Chart III, p. 211.)

## 12. Ex silentio

Or was it? As we have seen, the pattern of these changes suggests a possible disjuncture between the textual silence surrounding the coming of the year 6000 and broader contemporary attitudes. And while a consideration of this question seemed inadvisable based on evidence from the first time this phenomenon occurred c. 500 CE, in this second instance, both the wealth of documentation and the repetition of the pattern permits a more detailed analysis. Did the Carolingian success at the documentary level reflect a comparable success in the realm of popular attitudes? What success did the new Bedan chronology-theology have even among the cadres of trained ecclesiastics? Did Carolingian computists in fact 'quiet their fingers', as Augustine had advised?

The most straightforward answer would derive from the documentation: silence or scattered references implies indifference. But indifference cannot explain the pattern of chronological consensus in the Western tradition. As opposed to the stated intentions of eight centuries of chronographers about their motivations for adopting a given *era mundi*, the twice repeated adoption of a system AM in its 5700s and its replacement in its 5900s describes a radically different reality. Although the 'objective' refinements that Eusebius and Bede introduced appear as self-explanatory changes within a discipline committed to the highest

[177] Alcuin (on the period between the death of Antichrist and the Last Judgment), *De fide s. trinitate*, III, 19 (PL 101 c.51); Rabanus Maurus, *De computo*, XIV (PL 111 c.307), cf., idem., *Enarratio super Deuteronomium*, I, 11 (PL 108 c.862f); Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matthaeum* XI, 24 (PL 120 c.805); Claudius of Turin, *Chronicon*, V (PL 104 c.925f).

level of accuracy, they do not explain their timing. Why did the highly trained Byzantines reject Eusebius' AM II in its 5500s, while the Latins embraced him in the following century, the 5900s AM I? Why, for three centuries, did no important chronographer address the obvious contradiction between the Septuagint (AM II) and the Vulgate (AM III)? How did AM II shift from its place as the 'undoubtedly correct' count of the Merovingians to become the discarded 'Septuagint interpretation' of the Carolingians? The anomalous Hebrew figures had been available in the Vulgate for three centuries; someone had even tried to use them in 469 CE. But judging from Julian's work and the response to Bede, an AM (III) based on those calculations was out of the question until the very end of last century of the 6th millennium AM II.

When we place this pattern within the larger framework of the sabbatical millennium and its anti-apocalyptic strategy, however, the timing and direction of these changes become apparent. By the 5900s, the disadvantages (i.e. apocalyptic nature) of any given chronology far outweighed the conservative (i.e. non-apocalyptic) intentions which in its 5700s had made it so attractive. Moreover, in the West, after centuries of being preached to laymen, the sabbatical millennium had taken root outside of clerical circles. Those responsible theologians, forced to defuse Hippolytus' time bomb themselves, apparently felt the necessity both to change the calculations and (so as not to make the same mistake twice) eliminate millenarian eschatology from the much-practised field of chronography.

But the second part of the pattern, the fact that in each case those (supposedly neutral) calculations which successfully replaced the prevailing chronology *rejuvenated* the world, suggests some less obvious conclusions. First, it raises the question, Why change the chronology at all? If millenarianism were as marginal and ridiculous a belief as theologians would have us believe, why did the Western Church not follow Byzantine practice? Why trouble to change a well-entrenched chronology? That effort alone suggests a fear of approaching the year 6000 even in the context of a de-eschatologized chronology.

But beyond that, if one must change the calendar, why not propose a chronology in which the year 6000 had already passed: what better way to be done with the foolishness of this sabbatical millennium? Why did Eusebius and Bede succeed where Julian failed? Why did the 6th century West not follow Jordanes and move back to AM I? If the success of changes depended on scholarship, why did Eusebius gain credence in the West after failing in the East? But if the changes derived (as had the idea of an AM to begin with) from the tenacity of millenarian beliefs, a



rejuvenation was necessary. Far from dispatching that 'carnal error', the successful chronologies in fact *extended* the life of millenarian expectations.

Moreover, this 'extension' of two to three hundred years corresponds to that 'buffer' which Hippolytus had first provided between the present and the year 6000, suggesting that the chronological revisionists continued—tacitly—to pursue Hippolytus' strategy. Just as Hippolytus' chronology found favor in its 5700s, so those of Eusebius and Bede succeeded, not only in the final century of the 6th millennium of their predecessor, but also three to four centuries before the millennium—now only implicit—in their own calculations. Jerome could have redone Eusebius' chronology according to the Masoretic text in the 4th century CE; but postponing the year 6000 by 1500 years was unimaginable to a culture steeped in notions of a sabbatical millennium. So he did not; Bede did only when Jerome's AM had reached its limits. And the fact that the adoption of Bede's *hebraica veritas* led primarily to the abandonment of universal chronicles and AM dating in general suggests that a 1200 year postponement was no more acceptable.

Such a pattern reflects the continuous practice in the West of fighting apocalyptic millenarianism with a strategy that mortgaged the future, a strategy that could only recommend itself as temporarily the lesser of two evils. And given the dangers involved in this lesser one, the greater evil had to be the proliferation of still more urgent apocalyptic beliefs. Moreover, if the development and use of chronological calculations AM to postpone the Eschaton indicates the presence of such charismatic popular movements, the changing of the calculations AM *before* the arrival of the year 6000 reveals the anxiety of ecclesiastics in the face of a chronology whose apocalyptic significance they could not erase from the culture. Were the millenarian week solely the belief of apocalyptic thinkers, attempts to change AM would occur, as do all other such eschatological recalculations, *after* the prophecy failed.[178]

Therefore, when with the approach of the year 6000 AM II, the documents indicate no awareness of that fact, and at the same time depend completely on the latest anti-millenarian chronographer, modern historians cannot surmise that the countdown to the sabbatical millennium had ceased. Quite the opposite: we must, especially given the *increase* in computistical activity during this period, allow for unwritten

[178] Festinger, et al. (*When Prophecy Fails* [n.43]), describe how once an apocalyptic date has passed, those who believed in it prefer to redate (and proselytize still more vigorously) rather than abandon the belief. See above, n.103.

traditions (both clerical and lay) which continued to transmit the belief beyond the time when the documents themselves—in the final two generations of the 6th millennium—ceased to discuss it openly. Therefore, we must also entertain the possibility that when ecclesiastical teachings made their necessary shift away from these beliefs, the popular response (both lay and clerical) involved a measure of hostility. When Bede spoke of his opponents *mox stomachantes*, he may not have exaggerated.[179]

This approach, however, entails the grave methodological problem of an argument *ex silentio*. As with those of the late 5th century, modern reconstructions of late 8th century events, as minute as they may get, apparently find little surviving evidence to suggest that this was a time of increasing apocalyptic expectation. One art historian, for example, has commented:

> Die Apokalypse kann man sich nicht in den Händen der Grossen und Mächtigen des Karolingerstaates vorstellen. Auch der überlieferte Bestand von nur vier illustrierten Handschriften des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts im ganzen Frankreich spricht dafür, dass sie in den Geheimzonen der Klöster und Reliquienschätzen der Dome aufbewahrt wurden. Hingegen wissen wir aus dem Testament des Markgrafen von Frioul dass er für jedes seiner sieben Kinder mindestens einen Psalter vererbte...[180]

The obvious implication here is that since the book of *Revelations* was not in the hands of the Carolingian *potentes*, its contents were not on their minds. To invert these documentary indications and conclude that so few copies of the Book of Revelations were made precisely because they meant so much more than the Psalms to the Carolingian nobility seems absurd. Such arguments produce the most notoriously unreliable and even dangerous historical reconstructions, and traditionally they automatically disqualify themselves.[181]

On the other hand, how do we deal with data clearly outlining a pattern of documentary repression and evidence of a strong sense of

[179] Jerome speaks of the same hostility from orthodox Christians outraged by his dismissal of their millenarian beliefs: '...non solum suae sectae homines [the millenarian followers of Apollinarius], sed et nostrorum in hac parte dumtaxat plurima sequitur multitudo, et praesaga mente jam cernam quantorum in me rabies concitanda sit' (*Praef. in lib.* XVIII Isaiah; PL XXIV c.627). As Harnack said about the significance for the *simplices et idiotae* of the 3rd century decline of Chiliasm in the East, '...man nahm ihnen die Religion, welche sie verstanden, und gab ihnen dafür einen Glauben den sie nicht verstehen konnten...': *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (Leipzig 1894, 3rd ed.), vol. I, p.573f.

[180] Wolfgang Braunfels, *Die Welt der Karolinger und ihre Kunst* (Munich, 1968), p.155.

[181] In its worst form, it fits under the rubric of 'the furtive fallacy' and at some point borders on paranoia, David H. Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Towards a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York, 1970), pp.74-8.



apocalyptic imminence among even the most sober of Carolingian theologians?[182] Is it then methodologically sound to equate small numbers of texts with indifference and assume that the 'Geheimzonen' of the cloisters had no relationship to lay mentalities?[183] Or to then extend such conclusions about the elite to commoners?[184] Is such a superficial reconstruction any more 'scientific' than one which spins fantasies about an obsession whose intensity was inversely proportional to its mention in contemporary documents?[185] Ultimately both are arguments *ex silentio*.

Whatever the eventual conclusions of historians, however, the reconstructions of the role played by the sabbatical millennium will not come *ex silentio*, but from the traces of its repression, *e vestigiis*; and these traces are found both in the pattern of changes AM and in the survivals of the older dating system despite prevailing opposition. For the attempt to eliminate from the documents any trace of an apocalyptic concern with the approaching year 6000 was by no means as complete as the modern historiographic silence on the subject would lead one to believe. So rather than conjecture about the popular beliefs and actions so rarely attested to in our sources, we can start by looking at the survival of the belief in those very ecclesiastical circles where it should no longer have existed. But in doing so, the historian must bear in mind the lesson of the chronological pattern: these traces, rather than reflect isolated vestiges of a largely somnolent belief, in fact represent the remarkable

[182] Verhelst, 'Préhistoire' [n.119], pp.88-91; see also next note.

[183] I.e. 'the fallacy of negative proof:' if no evidence of x, then not-x is the case (Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, pp.47-8). In this case, see the counter-indications based on studies of Carolingian architecture and liturgy that there was 'une vague notable de la pensée apocalyptique' between the end of the 8th and the mid-9th centuries, a development not restricted in its impact to the hidden world of the cloister: Carol Heitz, 'Retentissement de l'Apocalypse dans l'art de l'époque carolingienne', in *L'Apocalypse de Jean: Traditions exégétiques et iconographiques, IIIe au XIIe siècles*, ed. Yves Christe (Geneva, 1979), pp.217-34.

[184] Given the inherent appeal of millenarianism to the powerless and dispossessed and the corollary hostility to it traditionally displayed by those in power (see Appendix), it seems particularly inadvisable to make such an inference. See assertions by Leclercq, 'Millénarisme' [n.24]; and Markus, *Saeculum* [n.58], p.20.

[185] 'Il a peut-être existé parallèlement une littérature de seconde zone, de portée locale, plus ou moins divergente des textes des grands auteurs sur le plan doctrinal [i.e. they were millenarian], constituant sur divers points des noyaux archaïques isolés' (F. Paschoud, 'La doctrine chrétienne et l'idéologie impériale romaine', in *L'Apocalypse*, ed. Christe, p.71). Note the focus on literature. Aside from the assumption that 'les grands auteurs' played as central a role in their own culture as they do in the legacy of texts transmitted over the next 15 centuries, what evidence permits the conclusion that the older tradition is archaic and isolated rather than widespread and commonplace?

eruption into a carefully controlled medium of attitudes explicitly proscribed by the most powerful and prestigious figures of the day.

## 13. E vestigiis

The data indicating how widespread and important the belief in the sabbatical millennium remained after the advent of Bedan historiography appear primarily at the margins of the new culture: in the margins of Carolingian texts and on the margins of Carolingian political influence. Countdowns to the year 6000 obviously no longer had a place at the end of an annal whose dates were in the later 700s AD, or in a world chronicle in the early 4700s AM III. The last such calculation in Francia came in the Fredegar continuation of the 730s; thereafter even that school of historiography dropped any discussion of the date AM. But countdowns to a 7th millennium AM II continued to show up where Carolingian domination made limited inroads: Spain (with 59 years remaining until the year 6000), Lombardy (57 years), Lombardy or Southern France (42, really 32, years), Spain (14 years), and Lombardy (in the year 6000)—indices of a practice which, with every new decade, became increasingly more dangerous to ecclesiastics, Carolingian or not. (See Chart III, p. 211).

Moreover, such practices went on even in the very heart of that Carolingian world, which had apparently discarded AM II: computists continued to track the count of years AM II. Theodulf of Orleans, for example, placed a copy of Isidore's Chronicle immediately after the Book of Revelations in his sumptuous copies of Alcuin's Bible.[186] And, as we shall see, historians continued to copy and compose brief *epitomai omnium temporum* based on AM II. We even find such paragraphs at the beginning of two Carolingian Annals.[187]

[186] Paris BN lat. 9380 f.319v, and Le Puy, Cathedral ms., are the two surviving copies of this 'magnifique document de la calligraphie au temps de Charlemagne [800-818 CE]' L. Delisle, 'Théodolphe d'Orléans', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 40 (1879), p.8: the article contains a detailed description of the contents of both mss. The Chronicle goes only to 624 CE (i.e. as far as Isidore had taken it), MGH AA XI, p.397. For the Paris ms., see *Mss. datés* III, p.107.

[187] The *Annales Laureshamenses* and *Guelferbytani* (MGH SS I, pp.22-39). The surviving mss. containing these passages both come from the early 9th century (*Laures.*: St. Paul in Kärnten Cod. 25 a 8 (XXV 1/32); *Guelf.*: Wolfenbüttel Aug. 67, 5), although their composition was in the final decades of the 8th (Hartmut Hoffmann, *Untersuchungen zur karolingischen Annalistik*, Bonner historische Forschungen, 10 (Bonn, 1958), pp.77-90). The *An. Guelf.* used the model of a twelve hour day to divide the world chronological data, a schema closely associated with the millenarian week (Schmidt, 'Aetates mundi' [n.83], pp.301-2).



A Carolingian could be as avid—albeit more discrete—a calculator of the year 6000 as any Lombard or Asturian. The annalist from Lorsch who opened with a count AM II made his purpose perfectly clear: 'qui simul iuncti fiunt ab initio mundi ad nativitatem Christi 5199 anni; in nostris vero codicibus invenimus a nativitate Domini usque ad praesentem annum'. For him, dating *Annus Domini* was another way to calculate AM II. Similar 'inconspicuous' traces of an uninterrupted tradition of 'millennial' calculations appear in the interstices of a number of Carolingian texts.

For example, the famous Fredegar manuscript (Paris BN lat. 10910) to which Lucerios had added his typically Merovingian countdown in 715 CE (f. 184v) included an abbreviation of the *Liber Pontificalis* listing the years, months, and days of each pope's rule since Peter (f.20v-23r). At the time the manuscript was copied (c.700 CE), this list was already out of date (it extended only to c. 650), and it had gone untouched since this original redaction.[188] But in the 16th year of the reign of Pope Hadrian (788 CE), a Carolingian scribe brought this list up to date. Nowhere did he copy out the sum of years of the Church, nor add that figure to the 5228 found on the folio preceding his list in the manuscript.[189] Did he therefore *not* know that, by these figures, it was the year 5987 AM II and that there were no more than 13 years remaining in this millennium?

Another manuscript, a copy of an important canonical collection first compiled in the Loire region in 796 CE,[190] takes this same set of calculations a step further, suggesting that some Carolingians had replaced the now discarded Victorine Easter Tables with a Papal List as

[188] Above nn. 124 and 130. Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis: Texte, introduction et commentaire*, Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, ser.2, no.3, I, pp.28-30. The dating is discussed in the *Mss. datés*, III p.640. The list apparently went up to the reign of Pope Martin I (649-65), whose name was erased and recopied by the Carolingian continuator.

[189] 'Nulla sit dubitatio de ista descriptione... a passione domini per paschale Victorii usque in tempore isto invenies veritatem' (f.21; see Krusch, *Neues Archiv*, 7 (1882), pp.250ff).

[190] Paris BN lat. 1451 f.20v-23r. The origin is debated between Tours (Köhler, *Schüle von Tours*, I, p.46 n.1; L.W.Jones, *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 14 (1963), p.20 n.4) and St. Maur, whence the name of the *Collectio* (Maasen, *Geschichte des canonischen Rechts*, I, pp.613-24). This ms. is apparently closely related to the Hague Mus. Meer. Westr. 10 B 4 (see Lowe, *CLA* V, no.528; vol. X no.1572). For dating see below n.193.

a way of doing chronological updates according to AM II.[191] A preliminary text included a pontifical list which went to the end of Hadrian's papacy (d. 25 Dec. 795 CE), followed by a summary of the years *ab origine mundi* up to the Passion AM II (5228) and a calculation of how many years had elapsed since then (767).[192] These figures totalled 5995 AM II; but this total and the years remaining (5), went unrecorded.[193]

The evidence for such calculations is wanting only if one does not look for it. For example, a computus manuscript written at the very beginning of the 9th century at Autun contains the only surviving 8th century Carolingian world chronicle, the one whose last entry AM II was 5927.[194] The Bedan Easter cycles found in the same manuscript go from the Incarnation to 1006 AD.[195] In their margins, a scribe recorded the age of the world: outside column 1, starting in the 6th century, he recorded the year according to the *hebraica veritas* for every decade until the year 4760 (806 AD). But outside the tenth column, he recorded the Septuagint figures to 5990 (789 AD). The scribe thus extended the

[191] As the Chronographer of 354 had put it: 'post ascensum eius [viii kal. aprilis] beatissimus Petrus episcopatum suscepit' (MGH AA IX, p.73). Similarly, Augustine dated the beginning of the Church from the year of the Resurrection: *dcD* XVIII, 54.

[192] 'Ab exordio mundi usque ad diluvium sunt anni 2242... passum autem dominum nostrum Iesum Christum peractis ab ortu mundi 5228 anni. A passione domini... usque ad sedem beatissimi marcellini papae sunt anni 276 menses 9 [Dec. 304 CE]; de apostolo iam facto Christi martyris Marcellini usque tempus gloriosissimi domni Karoli regis 25 anni regni eius [793 CE] hoc est usque vii kalendas aprilis [March 25] sunt anni 490 et menses 3' (f.7v). The sums come to 5995 AM [796 CE, see next note] although Charlemagne's 25th year was in 793 and the years since Marcellinus to his 25th year were 488 (Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, p.xlix n.1).

[193] Note that while there were at least two more lines left in the column, the first scribe left no room for more Popes, despite the fact that the news of Hadrian's death (Dec. 25) could hardly have reached him without the news of Leo's election (Dec 26-7). Another scribe later squeezed Leo in between Hadrian and the epitoma beginning on the subsequent line. Normally, one would date the manuscript from this, i.e. to 796 CE, but Lowe dated it 800-816 because of its relationship to the ms. Mers. Westr. 10 B 4 (vol.V no.528; see n.190 above for references), followed by many including Jones and the *Mss. datés* II, p.468). For 796 CE, see Köhler and Maasen. In order to argue 9th century, one must explain why Leo was not included in the list first hand. Löwe apparently had second thoughts (vol.X p.39).

[194] Leiden Scal. 28 f.43-143; discussed by Mommsen (MGH AA XIII, p.238) and Jones (*Bedae*, p.152 ms. no.42). The ms. has been dated to 800-1 based on an *annus praesens* in Bede's *DTR* (ch. 49, 52, 54, 58), but cf. Mommsen, *Neues Archiv*, 22 (1897), pp.548-53; and to 816 CE based on an entry in the annals by the scribe who copied out the manuscript (*Mss datés... Pays Bas*, I p.92f).

[195] Leiden Scal. 28 f. 2-21v. 1006 AD is the end of the 25th 19-year cycle of the second *Annus Magnus* (532-1063). Most Bedan Easter Tables, especially those beginning with the first *Annus Magnus*, go until the end of the second (1063); see R. Landes 'A Libellus' [n.13], p.183-6.



Hebrew calculations into the period in which he wrote, but discontinued the Septuagint ones two entries (decades) earlier, just before he would have had to record the year 6000. Unless one argues that he stopped out of tedium, these tiny marginalia bear witness to the combination of fascination and inhibition the year 6000 exerted on at least some Carolingian computists.

In one well known case, a calculation AM II was openly made in the very last years of the 6th millennium. A manuscript from Cologne contains the following note, written in the 31st year of Charlemagne's reign (Oct. 798 - Oct. 799 CE):

> From the beginning of the world until this thirty-first year of the reign of Charles the king—the same year in which he received a third of the population of Saxony as guests [hostages], and in which messengers from Greece came to offer him the *imperium*—there are 5998 years according to the Hebrew verity transmitted by Jerome, but according to the LXX there are 6268 [from Creation]; and from the incarnation of the Lord there are 798 years. And whomever this does not please, let him sweat and read and calculate it better.[196]

Bede's orthodox calculation (4750 AM III) is omitted; AM II is presented as Jerome's *hebraica veritas*, and the long-rejected AM I as that of the Septuagint! Unless one passes over the calculation as an irrelevant error,[197] it is impossible not to see in this flagrant misrepresentation of Bede an aggressive challenge to his followers.[198] And the work emanates from St. Amand, one of the most important Carolingian centers of the day.[199]

[196] Kölner Dombibliothek 83 II f.14v. Full text edited by Bruno Krusch, *Studien zur christlichen- mittelalterlichen Chronologie* (Leipzig, 1880), II pp.195ff.

[197] 'Le calcul de l'ère du monde parraît erroné' (Ganshof, 'Historiographie' [n.124], p.667 n.120). Löwe discussed the calculations in order to date the passage, 'Eine Kölner Notiz zum Kaisertum Karls des Grossen', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblatter*, 14 (1949), p.7; and conceded that where an inconsistency appeared, it was most likely an error in the 'seltener gebrauchten Weltära nach Hieronymus...'. This text, however, served as a conclusion to a computation of the age of the World, Krusch, ibid., p.195-7.

[198] Only indirectly, through the Vulgate translation, could one argue that Jerome transmitted the Hebrew figures (above p.151). The fact that the author then presented the Septuagint figures of Jerome's Chronicle as Bede's indicates his intention to mislead. As such, the passage is reminiscent of the use the Spanish Chronicle of 754 made of Julian of Toledo (above p.174) and the chronological compiler's use of Bede in Paris BN nal. 1613 (below n.200).

[199] H. Löwe proposed a number of important hypotheses concerning this text, and those concerning the provenance (St. Amand) and date (Oct. - Dec. 798) appear likely; see J. Ramackers, *Annales der historisches Verrein für das Niederrhein*, 148 (1949), p.164. According to Löwe, the original author of the notice was Hlotharius, the scriptorium master at St. Amand and an intermediary between Alcuin of Tours and Arn of Salzburg ('Kölner Notiz', pp.22-23).

A note at the bottom of a page in an early 9th century manuscript from Tours illustrates both the tenacity of the older calculations and the battle waged between its supporters and the more 'orthodox' Bedans. The manuscript contains numerous works of computus including Bede's *De temporum ratione* and, on one page, a collection of five *epitomai omnium temporum*. The first uses AM I; the next three, AM II; and the last, cited verbatim from Bede, implies his *support* for AM II.[200] Later in the manuscript we find the calculation *annus praesens* AD 819 and AM 6017.[201] In response, another scribe wrote at the bottom of the five calculations:

> Beware, prudent calculator, wherever you might find computations of this sort throughout this book, lest you think that the years are set out following the Hebrew truth, but rather [they are] according to the Septuagint interpretation which, as Bede tells us, both Jerome and Augustine taught was not to be followed in this matter.[202]

Although Jerome and Augustine said nothing of the sort (indeed Bede struggled hard merely to argue the latter's support for the Vulgate translation), probably neither would have objected to this misrepresentation.

Historians and codicologists have yet to assemble the full dossier on these vestiges of millennial calculations. Already from various printed sources alone an impressive number of examples exist (see charts II and III), but if egregious examples like the last two fail to excite the attention of historians, how could inconspicuous ones like Easter table marginalia hope to even receive mention in published manuscript descriptions? On the other hand, once alerted scholars begin to look for such anomalous marginalia, a rich dossier awaits compilation.[203] Until then, an approach which considers the use of manuscripts too unreliable and

[200] Paris BN nal. 1613 f.8r (MGH AA XIII, p.737). The citation from Bede (Jones, *Didascalica*, p.282) exactly parallels that from Julian by the Chronicler of 754 (above, p.174): literally correct, but used in support of the system AM that the cited author opposed. The manuscript comes from Tours and originally included what are now four different codices: Paris BN nal. 1612-4 and Tours 334, reconstruction in *Catalogue général des mss. des bibliothèques publiques de France*, 37, 1 (Paris, 1900), pp.250ff.

[201] Tours 334 f. 37r (*Catalogue général*, p.254).

[202] 'Cave prudens calculator ubicumque per totum hunc librum huiusmodi supputationem inveneris ne putes iuxta hebraicam veritatem annos positos sed secundum LXX interpretes quos et Ieronimus et Augustinus teste Beda docent in hoc non esse sequendos' (Paris BN nal. 1613 f.8r; MGH AA XIII, p.737).

[203] Starting with Scaliger (1598) the Leiden Scal. 28 has been discussed numerous times without mention of these marginal notes.



limits its field of inquiry to published texts should avoid concluding that millenarian countdowns disappeared in the period after Bede.[204]

Again, the interpretation of these documents remains uncertain; They clearly indicate the survival of calculations AM II, but of what kind? And how significant? How many flow from the pens of avid millenarians, how many from cautious but irresistably 'curious' clerics, and how many, hard as it may be to imagine, from the pens of conservative ecclesiastics clinging to an ever-more dangerous strategy for dealing with still more immediate apocalyptic problems? And with the approach of the now denied year 6000, were there charismatics who argued that the time had been shortened, and the Apocalypse was now? After all, as Bede said, there were those who believed that the End was most to be expected *towards the end* of the 6th millenium.

## 14. The Approach of the Year 6000 *Annus Mundi II*

Towards the end of the 8th century several sources record both unusual prodigies and the popular anxiety they provoked. In AD 763, according to the *Annales Xantenses* (10th c.), a sudden meteor shower 'terrified everyone so that they thought the end of the world was at hand'.[205] Still more powerfully apocalyptic were the signs that occurred in 786 AD, a veritable *annus mirabilis*:

> Many signs are reported to have occurred that year: the sign of the cross appeared in the clothing of men, and blood poured forth from the skies and the earth, and other signs appeared whence an enormous dread and salubrious fear invaded the populace so that many corrected their ways. And six days before Christmas tremendous thunder and lightening appeared such that it struck churches... and was heard through almost all of Francia and many men were killed by it, indeed even birds in the sky were struck dead by that same thunder, and a celestial arc [rainbow?] appeared in the clouds throughout the night, and afterwards many men died.

Other sources spoke of 'troops (*acies*)... in the Heavens, so great that nothing like it had occurred in our times'.[206] These signs deeply

[204] Haeusler, *Ende der Geschichte* [n.115], pp.2, 32. See also Karl H. Krüger, *Die Universalchroniken*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, fasc. 16 (Turnhout, 1976).

[205] 'Stellae subito visae de caelo cecidisse ita omnes exterruerunt ut putarent finem mundi imminere' (*Annales Xantenses*, London BL Tiberius C XI (11th c. hand); MGH SS II, p.223). That same year Paul the Deacon, still not under the influence of the Carolingian court, wrote a letter solicited by the Lombard Queen Adalperga on the Age of the World, in which he used AM II [n.175].

[206] *Fragmentum Chesnii*; *Annales Laureshamenses* (MGH SS I, p.33). Many Carolingian annals from that period contained some comment on the prodigies of that year (see

impressed people throughout the kingdom; as a shorthand for the entire year, numerous Easter tables noted: 'Signum crucis in vestimentis apparuit'.[207] Further prodigies occurred in Northumbria in 793 AD (5990s AM II), which the Anglo-saxon chronicler called 'terrible portents (*forebecna*) which miserably frightened the inhabitants'.[208]

Since such an atmosphere encourages the activity of prophets and pseudo-messiahs, one would normally expect reports of the kind of popular heretics that Boniface had described in the 740s, charismatics like Adalbert who distributed his fingernail clippings and bathwater among the faithful and founded his own 'true' churches; heretics who were specifically the target of early Carolingian reform legislation.[209] To the contrary, no such survive. On the other hand, three years after these signs in 786, Charles issued his famous *Admonitio generalis* which insisted on strong clerical training in a variety of religious subjects (including computus) and vigorous popular preaching. The final exhortation explains the context of this reform:

> And therefore we enjoin this more diligently to your charity since we know that in the last days false teachers will come just as the Lord prophesized in the Gospels (Mt. 24: 11) and the apostle Paul told to Timothy (I Tim. 4: 1). Therefore, dearly beloved, let us prepare ourselves wholeheartedly in the knowledge of truth so that we might resist those contradicting the truth.[210]

From Spain, where, despite Julian, the eschatological significance of the year 6000 had found the most unambiguous expression,[211] documents from the closing years of the late 8th century report heresy and sabbatical millenarianism at the highest ecclesiastical levels and apocalyptic preaching to the populace. The Adoptionist controversy, generally considered a matter of erudite theological debate, generated one of the most remarkable discussions on apocalyptic belief to survive from the Early Medieval church. As a forum for attacking Adoptionism, Beatus of Liebana wrote a commentary on *Revelations* which, along with that of his contemporary Autpertus Ambrosius, renewed the Tyconian tradition so energetically affirmed in the mid-6th century.[212] In this otherwise orthodox work, Beatus inserted a computation of the age of the world which concluded: 'Since the Creation up to the present [Spanish] *era* 824 [=786 CE], 5986 years have elapsed; for the completion of the 6th millennium, there remain 14 years, and the 6th Age will end in *era* 838'.[213] With this exceptional statement, Beatus made the forbidden link between years and ages, and dated the end of the world in his own time. Perhaps to lessen the scandal, he continued in a perfectly orthodox fashion, recording Isidore's passage on the unknowability of time:

> The time remaining to the world is uncertain to human investigation. Our Lord Jesus Christ rejected every question on this matter when he said: 'It does not belong to you to know the times or the moments which the father has put in his own power' (Acts 1:7); or again: 'No one knows the day nor the hour—neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father' (Mark 13:32).

Historians have taken this as a sign of Beatus' ultimate orthodoxy on the issue, particularly since the rest of the commentary seems so conservative.[214] Yet in reality, it reveals the way in which such biblical injunctions could be turned to the service of the sabbatical millennium. It is an expression of how powerful the grip of the year 6000 remained on the imagination even of such an ecclesiastic. For Beatus concludes this passage with the final announcement:

> You should know the truth, the World will End in 6000 years, but who knows if they will not be *shortened* (italics mine).

Augustine and Bede had both ridiculed this interpretation whereby partisans of the sabbatical millennium had defended themselves from

next note). The longest accounts come from these so-called Annals of Lorsch and their relatives, the *Fragm. Chesnii* and the Chronicle of Moissac. (MGH SS I, p.298; H. Hoffmann, *Untersuchungen* [n.187], p.85).

[207] See the collection in the MGH SS I, pp.12, 33, 67 [ad.an. 785], 75, 88, 92, 97, 118, 298.

[208] Plummer and Earle, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles in Parallel* (Oxford, 1892), I, pp.54-7; in the notes, Plummer points out the usage of *forebecna* implied portents of the End (II p.62). Gil has compiled a similar list, including several apocalyptic texts from the late 8th century ('Los terrores' [n.159], pp.238-45).

[209] J.B. Russell, 'St. Boniface and the Eccentrics', *Church History*, 33 (1964), pp.235-47. 'Et ut haeresis amplius in populo non resurgat sicut invenimus in Adalbertum et amplius populus per falsus [sic] sacerdotos deceptus non pereat' (Council of 744, no. 2; MGH Leges I, 2 p.29; above n.167-69).

[210] Admonitio generalis of 789, canon 82; MGH Leges II, 1 p.62.

[211] Continuation of Juan of Biclair (742 CE) [n.148]; two further examples from Spanish mss. given in Gil, 'Los terrores', p.219.



[212] H.A. Sanders, *Beati in Apocalypsin Libri Duodecim*, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome, 7 (Rome, 1930). On its links with the Adoptionist controversy, see Gil, pp.228-38; on Ambrosius, see above n.176.

[213] *In apocalypsin* IV 5, 16 (Sanders, ibid., p.367-8; translation from McGinn, *Visions* [n.58], p.77-8).

[214] 'The former chronological precisions are muted by the appeal to those scriptural texts traditionally opposed to any fervent apocalypticism' (McGinn, *Visions*, p.303 n.9). Cf., Verhelst: '[Béatus] constatait à son étonnement qu'il ne restait plus que 14 ans' ('Préhistoire', p.86). Gil, on the other hand, underlined the apocalyptic urgency of the passage and calls Beatus' use of these citations a 'smokescreen' ('Los terrores', p.225).

evangelical reproach.[215] For the author of this fragment, however, that inveterate exegetical tradition was neither frivolous nor heretical, but Catholic.[216]

Moreover, Beatus apparently fell into the worst error feared by those farsighted theologians who recognized the dangers posed by the originally conservative teaching of the millenarian week. According to his arch-enemy Elipandus, the Adoptionist archbishop of Toledo (then under Islamic rule),

> Beatus prophesied to our people during the vigils of Easter, saying that it was the end of the World, whence the people, terrified and panicked, fasted that same night until the 9th hour of Sunday. A certain Honorius, when he felt himself afflicted with hunger said to the people: 'Let us eat and drink, and if we are to die, at least we will be satisfied'.[217]

It is unclear how to interpret this document: details of the scenario seem suspicious,[218] and it could just be a way of discrediting an enemy. On the other hand, Beatus' own teachings on the subject would encourage such a course of action, even if it were not he but one of his followers who actually so preached.[219] In any case, these two texts from Spain, together with the exactly contemporaneous occurrence of a terrifying *annus mirabilis* in Carolingian Europe in the 5980s AM, constitute one of the most exceptional collections of explicitly apocalyptic documents since Augustine's day. Whether or not the chronologists chose to admit it in their pages, AM II continued to stimulate imaginations in the last generation before its year 6000.

[215] Augustine (*Ep.* 199, 19) responding to Hesychius' 2nd point, (*Ep.*198); Bede, *Ep. ad Pleg.*, 14f (Jones, *Didascalica*, p.624f); and the *DTR*, ch.67 (Jones, p.536 ll.25ff).

[216] '...ita ut supradictum est, intellegere debet, expectare, et timere omnis catholicus, et hos quattuordecim annos tamquam unam horam putare; et die noctuque in cinere et cilicio tam se quam mundi ruinam plangere, et de supputatione annorum supra non quaerere et diem extremi saeculi vel tempus supra non queat investigare, quem nemo scit nisi Deus solus' (*In apoc.* IV, 5, 31; Sanders, ibid., p.371; discussion in Verhelst, 'Préhistoire', p.86).

[217] *Epistola episcoporum Hispaniae ad episcopos Galliae, Aquitaniae et Austriae*, 17 (PL 101 c.1330 C).

[218] Particularly the conclusion which, as Gil points out, draws on I Cor. 15:32 (p.223 n.15) and more generally fits an ecclesiastical *topos* of the dangers inherent in apocalyptic predictions. E.g., Hippolytus has the bishop of Pontus say: 'If things do not come to pass as I have predicted, then believe no more in the scriptures and do what you please' (*In Dan.* IV:19) see above p. 147. The denouement befits the source.

[219] In addition to his chronological calculations, he, like many, believed that the general Resurrection of the Dead would occur on Easter Sunday (Gil, 'Los terrores', pp.223-24). It is not difficult to imagine that a movement following the penitential regime of Beatus' apocalyptic teaching (n.216, above) could reach some kind of decisive climax at Easter, which would provide enemies with ammunition for such accusations.



The document in this AM II tradition of countdown calculations closest to the apocalyptic year comes from a continuation of Isidore done in Lombardy, possibly Modena. This region, like Spain, had a long and tenacious commitment both to AM II and to the eschatological tradition which accompanied it.[220] In 778 CE, a scribe (possibly from Verona) copied a brief computus of the Age of the World first composed in 738 and based on the standard Merovingian computistical procedure: from the Beginning to the Passion (5228); from the Passion to the end of Victorinus' first cycle (532); and from then to the present year (179). 'From the origin of the World to the present time there have been 5928 years. And there remain in the sixth millennium 72 years'. At this point our copyist added his own gloss: 'substract forty there remain 32'.[221] It was the final generation.

John of Modena was born the year of that first calculation (738 CE) and was forty in the year of the second. In his 62nd year he penned the following passage, at the conclusion of his copy of the Chronicle of Isidore:

> From the fifth year of the emperor Heraclius [last entry in the original chronicle, site of concluding paragraph on not calculating the End], to the 28th of Liutprand, king of the Lombards, and of the birth of my poor and unhappy person, there are 124 years. Since, to the 27th year of the most Christian and pious Lord Charlemagne, king of the Franks and the Lombards in Italy, there are 62 years. From the creation of Adam until the present year, this 8th indiction—in which the Paschal celebration of the Jews falls on the ides of April, and ours on the 13th of the Kalends of March [sic], the beginning of the world falls on the 4 of the ides of April (April 10), the creation of the moon on the ides of April (13th), man, created in God's image, on the 17th of the kalends of March [sic] (15th)—in all, there are 6000 years.[222]

[220] Italian computistical efforts to change the date looked more towards Byzantium and AM I for inspiration than to the 'Scotti.' For instance, a church dedicated in 770 CE bore an inscription, available for all to see, dated 6278 (AM I), (Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, I p.514 no.2). For a similar example, see the translation of an Alexandrine chronography (AM I) by George the bishop of Amiens (769-98): Paris BN lat. 4884. Known since Scaliger as the *Excerpta Latina Barbari* and dated 7th-8th century (MGH AA IX, p.83, 249; Frick, *Chronica* [n.57], p.ccxi), the ms. is in fact late 8th c. (Lowe, *CLA* V, no.560; Porcher, in *Karl der Grosse* (Dusseldorf, 1967), III p.59f n.19; Bischoff, *Mittelalterlichen Studien* (Stuttgart, 1966), I p.60).

[221] London BM Cotton Nero A ii (Levison, *England* [n.129], p.304). Note that the figures add up to 5939, which should give 61 years left; both calculations give ten more years to the world than they should. Lindsay identified the ms. as Veronese, *Notae Latinae* (Cambridge, 1915), p.461; Levison suggested a Frankish origin; in either case, it was written in pre-Caroline miniscule (ibid., p.303).

[222] Codex Mutinensis Estensis ord. I n.11 (MGH AA XI, p.400 no.32; citation from p.491). The author apparently made an error in which he consistently wrote March for

John's mournful tone and lack of any direct eschatological references suggest an ecclesiastic in the conservative tradition: unlike Beatus, the calculations he has made do not incite his enthusiasm. He has, however, steadfastly refused to compromise the chronological tradition of his predecessors. And the arrival of the traditional chronology's fateful year finds him humbled, self-absorbed,[223] and preoccupied with establishing correspondences between crucial moments of creation and their calendric equivalents in the coming year.[224] He may not mention the millenarian week, nor discuss eschatological issues, but by aligning specific dates in the year 6000 with those of the Creation, he revealed his deeper concerns. The list, in fact, identifies the possible dates upon which the 6000 year period of earthly travail could be fulfilled.[225] The countdown to the End was, in his mind, a question of months and days.

## 15. The Dawn of the Seventh Millennium

What then occurred in this long-awaited year? First, we should note, its equivalent date CE is elusive: the year 6000 AM II could have fallen on any of several dates between 799 and 806.[226] But this uncertainty by

May. The year is, in fact, 5999 AM (800 CE): 5813 + 124 + 62 = 5999 AM; 773 (Charlemagne king of Lombardy) + 27 = 800; 800 CE corresponds to the 8th indiction and Easter that year was on the 19th of April. Perhaps with the year changing at Easter, 6000 years would be complete.

[223] Such personal remarks are rare (e.g. Lucerius in 715, above p.172). Here humble John inserts his own biography into a computus done from the years of Patriarchs, Emperors and Kings.

[224] His list forms around the creation of the (full) moon on April 13 (4th day); hence April 10th corresponds to the 1st day and April 15 to the 6th, when Adam was created. These considerations played a major role in both patristic and rabbinic calculations of the *Annus mundi* (V. Grumel, *La chronologie* [n.2], pp.6-25; Edgar Frank, *Talmudic and Rabbinic Chronology* (New York, 1956), pp.14-20).

[225] The traditional moment was Easter (above n.212). The exceptional number of days specified may represent an attempt to cover all the possibilities: the creation of the world (Gen. 1:1) and of man (v.26) are two traditional starting points for the counting of 6000 years; with the creation of the moon (v.16) such calculations were possible. The rare (if not unique) inclusion of the date for the Jewish Passover here indicates an uncertainty that should have disappeared after Nicea (325), when the Church intentionally separated its calendar from that of the Jews (E. Zerubavel, 'Easter and Passover: On Calendars and Group Identity', *American Sociological Review*, 47 (1982), pp.284-89).

[226] The matter raises a host of chronological problems. Depending on whether one counts ordinally or cardinally, for example, there is a play of 1-2 years (if Jesus was born 5199 years after creation, is that in 5199 or 5200 AM?) This problem, inherent in any chronology (see the three year span in the Rabbinic AM (Franck, *Talmudic Chronology* [n.224]), was further compounded by more particular ones. First, the Eusebian tradition set



no means indicates indifference: indeed the Royal annalists regularly announced the change in the year *Annus Domini* whether it meant interrupting their narrative or not.[227] And in fact, of the several years AD which could have corresponded to the fulfillment of the six millennial 'days', one stands out as among the most memorable dates in Western history. Pausing in his account of Charlemagne's visit to Rome at Christmas, the royal annalist announced the advent of the year AD 801[228] before describing the epoch-making event of the new year's first day: Charlemagne's imperial 'coronation'.[229]

Modern historiography on the coronation expresses the same fascination and enthusiasm that this spectacular event elicited from contemporaries.

> The coronation of Charles is not only the central event of the Middle Ages, it is also one of those very few events of which, taking them singly, it may be said that if they had not happened, the history of the world would have been different.[230]

the Incarnation two to three years earlier than did Dionysius and Bede. Second, the Armenian and the Latin versions disagree on the chronology of Jesus' life; and although Eusebius apparently set the preaching of Jesus in the 15th year of Tiberius, 5228 AM II, many of his followers set the Passion in that year (e.g. Prosper Tiro, MGH SS IX, p.409f.). This uncertainty around the year of the Passion created an area of dispute over the date of the Incarnation AM II (e.g. Chronicler of 754, above p.174). Isidore of Seville, without explicitly stating it, dated the Incarnation 5196 AM II: *Chronicon*, no.237, 239 (MGH AA XI, p.454). It is even difficult to get a rule from modern chronologists for translating from AM II into AD, since most treat Eusebius-Jerome's *era* only as the *era* of Abraham (e.g. Ruhl, *Chronologie* [n.127], p.208; Ginzel, *Julius* [n.4], pp.47-51; cf. Grumel, *Chronologie*, [n.2] p.219).

[227] See R.L. Poole, 'The Beginning of the Year in the Middle Ages', in *Studies in Chronology and History* (Oxford, 1934), pp.1-27; and the Royal Frankish Annals, from 767 AD on (MGH SS I, p.175ff).

[228] The correspondence of 6000 AM II with 801 AD would have derived from a specifically Carolingian error of adding Dionysius Exiguus' AD to Eusebius' date for the Incarnation AM, with no regard to the two year gap between the two dating systems. The so-called Annals of Lorsch prescribed exactly such a procedure: 'Paulus Orosius presbyter in libro primo historiarum adversum paganos numerum annorum ita comprehendit dicens, "...qui simul iuncti fiunt ab initio mundi ad nativitatem Christi 5199." In nostris vero codicibus invenimus a nativitate Domini usque ad praesentem annum' (see p. 186f above).

[229] *Annales regni francorum*, MGH SS I, p.189f. The coronation is more precisely dated by more sources than any other event for centuries; and the rather rapid redating in historiographical sources to AD 800 (e.g. Paris BN lat. 5239, late 10th c., f.13r) suggests a wide, hence simplifying, usage of the date even among medieval writers. For modern historians the uniquely specific dating of the Coronation in the sources permits a discussion of 'dem genauen Zeitpunkt' (Karl J. Benz, 'Cum ab oratione surgeret. Überlegungen zur Kaiserkrönung Karls des Grossen', *Deutsches Archiv*, 31:2 (1975), p.341).

[230] James Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire* (New York, 1904), p.50. '...über deren Bedeutung für die weitere Geschichte des Abendländes sich alle einig sind', Benz, 'Überle-

Given the importance attributed to the coronation and the wealth of often contradictory evidence about its circumstances (the problem of 'Karl wider Willen'),[231] medievalists have produced voluminous analytical and narrative reconstructions of the event focused primarily on the motives of the central actors.[232] What 'really' happened remains, nevertheless, an 'immer noch umstrittene Frage'.[233] No sooner has one authority proclaimed the topic exhausted than others point out unexamined perspectives.[234] And yet, in all this twelve-century-long discussion, only one source from that time and one in ours link the year 800 AD with the year 6000 AM II.[235] Perhaps the low profile of this older dating system, and the high visibility of the newer, have led modern researchers to assume that those alive at the time were as indifferent to

gungen', p.339; also, Donald Bullough, '*Europae Pater*: Charlemagne and his Achievement in the Light of Recent Scholarship', *English Historical Review*, 85 (1970), p.59-105.

[231] The principal difficulty comes from certain Carolingian sources which indicate that the ceremony occurred hastily (*Annales regni francorum*: 'cum ab oratione surgeret...') and without Charles' prior knowledge (*Annales sci. Maximiniani*: 'nesciente domino Carolo') to an unwilling Charlemagne (Einhard, *Vita Caroli* ch. 27: 'se...ecclesiam non intraturum si pontificis consilium praescire potuisset...'); see the collection of relevent texts in Kurt Reindel, *Die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Grossen* (Göttingen, 1970).

[232] 'Der Hergang selbst bietet viel weniger Schwierigkeiten als die Deutung, die Erkenntnis der Motive und Ideen die das Handeln der beteiligten Persönlichkeiten leiteten': P. Classen, 'Karl der Grosse, das Papsttum und Byzanz', in *Karl der Grosse. Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, ed. P.E. Schramm and W. Braunfels (Düsseldorf, 1967), p.577. For the bibliography, see Reindel, p.77-84; *Zum Kaisertum Karls des Grossen*, ed. Günther Wolf, Wege der Forschung, 38 (Darmstadt, 1972), p.435ff; Bullough, '*Europae Pater*', (pp.65-7).

[233] Duchrow, *Christenheit* [n.77], p.334. Bullough points out that 'the enthusiasm for elaborate hypotheses [about the imperial coronation], resting on what further inquiry proves to be a quite unsound basis', can give the neophyte the impression that 'the history of the 8th and 9th centuries is... entirely a subjective exercise' ('*Europae Pater*', p.66).

[234] In 1952, and again in 1968, Percy E. Schramm wrote: 'Über das denkwürdige Schauspiel, das Rom am Weinachtstage des Jahres 800 der Welt geboten hat, brauchen wir nicht viele Wörte zu verlieren; denn die geschichtlichen Zeugnisse die es betreffen, sind so grundlich hin und her gewendet worden, dass von ihnen kein neuer Aufschluss mehr zu erwarten ist.' ('Die Anerkennung Karls des Grossen', first published in *Geschichte der mittelalterlichen 'Staatssymbolik'* (Munich, 1952), p.39f; repeated verbatim in *Kaiser, Könige und Päpste. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart, 1968), I p.255. In addition to the vast literature since 1952, more recently Benz suggested a new scenario for the coronation based on liturgical data: 'Überlegungen', (1975), p.342; and Gil a different major revision based on the apocalyptic activity at the end of the 59th century AM: 'Los terrores del año 800', (1977) [n.159]. p.245-7.

[235] The text contemporary to Charlemagne which mentions the arrival of the year 6000 is the *Annales Augiensis*, ad an. 800: '6000 ab initio mundi' (no actual mention of the Coronation), Carlsruhe 167, c.814 CE (MGH SS III, p.136f). The only modern text to come to my attention is that of Juan Gil, 'Los terrores'; I thank Prof. P. Riché for pointing out this article to me.



the question of the date *Annus Mundi* as we are, that AM II had somehow been forgotten.[236]

We have already seen, however, that throughout Western Christendom, and even among highly placed Carolingians, the end of the sixth millennium of man's existence was closely tracked; and that, in the larger context of seven centuries of Christian chronography, the silence of the year 6000 falls into a consistent pattern of ecclesiastical anti-millenarianism. This silence bespeaks not a lack of interest but an acute consciousness of the suppressed dating system and its apocalyptic implications. By attending only to the most superficial meaning of our documents, then, we reaffirm—perhaps unwittingly, but then all the more forcibly—the Augustinian literary tradition according to which millenarianism no longer played a role in Christian life. The power of this 'historical Augustinianism' can perhaps best be illustrated by the fact that, while all the basic data used in the present study have been available in edited sources since the 19th century, and while historians like Krusch and Mommsen knew perfectly well that Charlemagne had been crowned at the turn of the seventh millennium AM II, no historian of chronology has ever raised the issue. It just made no sense to.[237]

But in fact, the bond between ecclesiastical chronology and sabbatical millenarianism was intimate and enduring. The repeating pattern of changes in the chronological systems of a date-obsessed Latin church constitutes what sociologists call 'non-reactive evidence'. Such data are particularly valuable because, unlike self-conscious statements, they derive from unintentional yet consistent behavior patterns, thus revea-

[236] This is a standard, often explicit assumption of historians concerning millenarian traditions which drop out of theological literature (see e.g. nn. 58, 75f, 105, 136, 158, 198), which becomes a tacit or unconscious one among less specialized historians.

[237] This continues to be the case despite the recent attention to universal historiography: Van den Brincken, *Weltchronistik* (1957); Krüger, *Universalchroniken* (1976); Haeusler, *Ende der Geschichte* (1980); Guenée, *Histoire* (1981). There is a major area of computus research on the date AM II of the coronation which has never been addressed, filled with the kinds of mathematical and speculative work normally so attractive to chronographers. Note that while many chronological tables (*L'art de vérifier les dates* (1818); Mas Lastrie, *Trésor de chronologie* (Paris, 1889), c.91; Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Hannover, 1891); Grumel, *Chronologie*, p.239; etc.) give multiple *erae mundi* in their tables, they do not include the Eusebian (see also n.226 above). In a separate table concerning the dating of the Incarnation and Passion, Grumel includes the Eusebian, which equates 1 AD with 5201 AM II, hence AD 800 with 6000 AM II (*Chronologie*, p.30). Note the error (two 5204s), and the 'chronologie longue', in the Crucifixion date of 5230 [sic] AM II. What would a mapping of the various counts AM II reveal about the Coronation?

ling attitudes that one might otherwise deny.[238] In the case of Western calculations of the age of the world, one cannot explain the pattern of changes without positing—however much it contradicts the deep-seated assumptions of fifteen centuries of historiography—the existence of strong millenarian beliefs at every level of Christian culture in the Early Middle Ages, from the de-apocalypticizing computists to the rustics importuning them with questions about the years remaining. The consistent pattern of a long-used dating system disappearing just decades before its apocalyptic term, therefore, reflects not the absence of millenarianism but its opposite: the strenuous ecclesiastical attempt to combat that belief.

What, then, was this situation about which our medieval texts so mislead us? As we have seen, the underlying motivation for any chronology AM, both when actively supported and conspicuously silenced, derived from the Church's conflicts with apocalyptic preachers.[239] As long as the computus since the Creation totalled fewer than some 5900 years, a given *era mundi* provided the institution with an important argument against these preachers. The textual silences which shroud the advent of the 6000th year, then, reflect the Church's peculiar vulnerability when the chronology it had preached recently and openly approached its apocalyptic term.[240] The simple passage of time had turned one of the Church's most important eschatological teachings to the laity into one of the greatest weapons of 'false prophets'. In the circumstances, such a chronology had to go unmentioned as much as possible, and if a layman or renegade cleric should raise the matter, well-trained ecclesiastics must be capable of denying not only sabbatical millenarianism, but also discrediting the old 'interpretation' and affirming a new 'truth'.

The dating shift effected by the early Carolingians strongly suggests that the lay population knew both the apocalyptic meaning of the year

[238] Eugene Webb, *Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in Social Science* (Chicago, 1966). Gry, in a footnote to a discussion of millenarianism's once open acceptance in the teachings of the Church, commented: 'Combien d'autres, *sans être aussi explicites*, firent au chiliasme une part dans l'enseignement chrétien!' (p.131 n.1; italics mine, punctuation his). The pattern traced here offers an answer even someone with such informed suspicions would probably find surprising.

[239] See above discussion pp.146-149, 154-156, 158-159, 166-167, 175-178.

[240] See above, p.181. Note that Augustine suggested teaching the 'uninstructed' (c.400) by beginning with a review of universal history (*De catechizandis rudibus*, ch. 6, also on the six ages of the world, ch. 22; PL 40 c.317, 338.), a course followed by Martin of Braga in his treatise *De correctione rusticorum* (c.560 CE) where he specifically mentions the calculation of years between Adam and Noah (*Martini episcopi bracarensis opera omnia*, ed. C.W. Barlow, American Academy in Rome (New Haven, 1950), p.186).



6000 and its imminent approach.[241] This is the context in which the *Annus Domini* took its place as the third major dating system in the Church's struggle against apocalyptic enthusiasm. To the descendants of Bede's overly curious interrogators the Carolingians responded first, with an *Annus Mundi* according to the *hebraica veritas*, and then with a new concept of measuring time, by the year of our Lord.[242] By dating the Coronation AD 801, then, they publicly affirmed *urbi et orbi* this new system which, like its predecessors, promised a reprieve of several centuries.

Moreover, AD's anti-apocalyptic subtext was only one part of a still larger tacit discourse on the eschatological significance of current events, a discourse addressed to and understood by a wide audience. Just as Augustine and Jerome's contemporaries could see Rome's sack through the lens of II Thessalonians, so too could Alcuin's and Charlemagne's view a woman's usurpation of the imperial throne in Constantinople as the signal that the Fourth Empire had fallen and that Antichrist had been unleashed—and, in fact, Irene's coup occurred in 797 AD, or, according to AM II, in the last five years of the final millennium.[243] The pope's disgrace and flight from Rome the following year could only have encouraged such speculations.[244]

[241] This is not to say that they knew the exact date (we do not), but obviously an indiscrete cleric could easily divulge his own version of what should be left unsaid: after all, such knowledge would confer great prestige and even power on its possessor. It is worthwhile remembering, in this context, that semi-literate cultures like the Carolingian use written texts as mnemonic devices. AD dating in the later 8th century CE was the new and unfamiliar system in constant need of recording; AM II, on the other hand, had over four centuries of constant use to assure its oral transmission. To compensate for the reversal of this situation (by our anachronistic familiarity with AD), we might adopt the same mnemonic device and record the AM II beside each Carolingian AD date.

[242] See above, discussion of Gregory of Tours (pp.166-167), Bede (p.174-178) and the Hippolytan strategy of each *new* anti-apocalyptic dating system which accounts for the adoption of Bede's AD rather than his AM (p.147-148).

[243] On the imperial exegesis of II Thess., see F. Paschoud, 'Doctrine chrétienne' [n.185]; on its renewed significance in Carolingian theology, see Verhelst, 'Préhistoire', p.88-91; on its meaning for the Christmas day drama, see Gil, 'Los terrores', p.246: '...nada hay que temer: la terrible pesadilla del fin del mundo queda pospuesta para otros tiempos... cuando todo parecia vaticinar el cataclismo final.' Irene was the first woman to ascend the Imperial throne and rule in her own right, an innovation not appreciated by many, particularly since she did so by dethroning and blinding her own son; comments in A.A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, 1952), p.234f.

[244] Augustine's interpretation of the 'millennium' as part of the 6000 years created a significant debate over whether the three and a half years of the Antichrist were to be included in those 6000 years or follow them, a problem Augustine himself raised in the *City of God*. His own peculiar understanding of the 'reign of the Saints' permitted an affirmative answer to precisely the kind of scenario we observe at the end of the eigth century CE (dcD XX, 13).

Surely these issues weighed on Alcuin's mind—if only because of what others were saying—when he wrote his famous June letter of 5998(?) to Charlemagne, urging him to take the imperial title since the two highest seats of power in this world, the papal see in Rome and the imperial throne in Second Rome, were empty.[245] Hence, as he put it, the salvation of the Churches of Christ lay in Charles alone. But then why would Alcuin not cite biblical and patristic sources to argue that no Emperor in Constantinople and no Pope in Rome would lead to the 'apostasy' unleashing the Antichrist—unless Charles acted? Would not this argument have been still more compelling? Perhaps Alcuin did not want to; more significantly, perhaps he did not have to. But in any case, we can rule out one answer: that he was not thinking about it. That may seem the simpler answer, and makes Alcuin and Charlemagne more like us in their thinking. But it cannot explain their silence on so weighty a matter.

For if the Carolingians really were unfamiliar with AM II chronology, and if the millenarianism it incited were of no great import; if then some antiquarian monk had stumbled upon this magnificent coincidence between Charlemagne's plans and a forgotten dating system, why did the court not capitalize on the arrival of the 6000th year since Creation and give to the coronation a cosmic significance? Millennia do not come around that often. If the Emperor Philip held great festivities on the thousandth anniversary of Rome's founding (248 CE), why would Carolingian and Papal propagandists not use the theme of inaugurating a new age in world history to exalt their unprecedented proceedings?[246] Here we have an historical parallel to the 'Hound of the Baskervilles', a case where the decisive clue was that the dog did *not* bark.[247] Such a silence, then, invites us to think about two sides of the same event—about the 'Coronation of Christmas Day 800', eloquently consecrated

[245] *Ep.* 174; MGH Epp IV (1985), p.288.

[246] '...inaugurándose un nuevo ciclo histórico...': Gil, 'Los terrores', p.246. Patristic historians considered Philip the Arab (244-49) the first (albeit secret) Christian emperor (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* VI, 34), a tradition explicitly linked to his desire to greet that millennium of Rome's founding (248 CE) as a Christian (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Anonymi Valesiani pars prior* VI, 33, Loeb Édition, Harvard, 1964, III p.528; Zosimus, *Hist. eccl.* I, 19-22; Orosius, *Hist.* VII, 28). The Romans had a particular fondness for centennial and millennial celebrations, and used the uncertainties of conflicting calendars to celebrate them as often as possible (see e.g. Horace's 'Carmen saeculare' to commemorate 500 years of Roman power in 17 BCE, and Suetonius on Claudius' celebration of 800 years in 47 CE, *De vita caesarum* V, 21).

[247] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (New York, 1953), p.783-899.



by a Bedan orthodoxy which stretches across the millennia; but also, as Professor Juan Gil argues, about the 'Coronation of Christmas Day 6000'.

## 16. Conclusion

In the final analysis, we have been taken in by the orthodox record keepers. While modern theological historians have purposefully carried on their Augustinian historiography, the supposedly secular historians have unconsciously done the same. Thus while the former group, as a principle of doctrine, interprets no mention of apocalyptic activity in the texts to mean none in reality, the latter group, assuming a neutral documentation, does so as a principle of methodology.[248] Both schools have accordingly concluded that millenarianism disappeared after the *De civitate Dei*, when in fact it survived in a variety of forms, elite and popular, at least in Latin Christendom. Considering the vigor of millenarianism both in Late Antiquity and in the High Middle Ages, this conclusion should hardly come as a surprise. An eight hundred year hiatus would be much more curious.[249]

The evidence, however, lies beneath the surface of the texts. So if we wish to locate millenarian activity, we must look not for lurid descriptions of apocalyptic uprisings, but to the literary reactions such movements elicited. And among these, chronology provides more than just a copious source of documentation. It constitutes a particularly revealing anti-apocalyptic discourse since it both postponed and aggravated the Day of Reckoning, a strategy whose utility over a period of centuries was matched only by its danger at term. So just as Hippolytus and Gregory insisted on a given date 5700 AM in order to counter the apocalyptic currents of their own day, so too the overthrow of any given AM in its 5900s and the silences of the years 6000 come from the pens

[248] Similar problems exist in modern studies of Jewish millenarian movements: 'One of the remarkable features of research on Sabbatianism is the tendency to minimize the scope of the movement and to distort its meaning. Although such a stance is understandable among Orthodox Jews, what is surprising is that it has also been adopted, without further reflection, by scholars whose basic historical approach is far removed from the traditionalists. Critical faculties which are so alert when dealing with other weighty issues seem almost to slumber and to become blinded when it comes to the Sabbatian movement and its transformations': G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah* (Princeton, 1973), pp.xi.

[249] See the recent reflections of Guy Lobrichon, 'Conserver, réformer, transformer le monde? Les manipulations de l'Apocalypse au moyen âge central', in *The Role of the Book in Medieval Culture*, ed. P. Ganz (Turnhout, 1986), II, pp.75-94.

of men profoundly discomfitted by these earlier indiscretions. And yet by simultaneously emphasizing a new chronology with the same 'benefits' as the previous one, this supposedly sobered later generation continued those chronological indiscretions, continued to mortgage a future that they would not have to deal with.

This remarkable pattern of *Annus Mundi* dating, sustained for over at least eight centuries and repeated on a major scale at least twice, confirms Christian chronography's ongoing and antagonistic relationship with apocalyptic expectation. And while only rarely does an image from the other side of this eschatological dialogue penetrate the terrain of the written—fleeting references to pseudoprophets with large followings among the *rustici*, or to wild rumors about the Antichrist circulating among *ignorantes*—the dossier of surviving chronologies offers us a consistent record of the scribal side of this debate. Indeed, the chronological texts available may provide a detailed 'map' charting the ebb and flow of this undying conflict in Europe over the epochs separating Christian Rome and the emergence of our own civilization, providing another *ligne de faîte* which traverses the long medieval centuries. This 'map' drawn, we can reread the documents from that period, noting their silences and anomalies as well as their beguilingly familiar contents.[250]

Only then can we begin to remove that 'patina of the obvious which encrusts human actions'[251] and start to see these centuries as experienced by the men and women who lived through them. Our very term 'Middle Ages', derived from those Renaissance humanists who wished to emphasize the distance between their renewed culture and that benighted one separating them from Classical Antiquity, hampers this effort. Having adopted this terminology, we modern historians too often overlook or trivialize[252] the fact that those 'medieval' men were living

[250] E.g. the curious remark in the 'Kölner Notiz' about messengers coming from Byzantium to offer Charles the throne has been traditionally dismissed by historians as unreliable and unlikely. Within the context of both the sabbatical millennium and II Thessalonians, it might bear reconsideration. It is perhaps no accident that mention of this incident would survive only in a text calculating the date AM II (see above nn.196-8, 243-4, esp. remarks by Löwe).

[251] '...this is the first and last enemy of the historian': Peter Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (New York, 1972), p.19.

[252] E.g., '...il n'y a là rien autre chose que l'expression banale de la doctrine catholique sur la proximité de la fin du monde...' (Léon Giry, *Manuel diplomatique* (Paris, 1894),



not in the Middle Ages, in their own minds at least, but at the very end of the Last one.

## 17. Appendix: Definitions

When I presented a draft of this study at the Louvain colloquium, it occasioned a discussion on definitions which seemed to warrant separate treatment. I use the three terms—eschatology, apocalypticism and millenarianism—with meanings which, while not necessarily the common ones, nevertheless serve best to identify the variable aspects of these phenomena most relevant to studying chronological millenarianism.

By *eschatology* I refer to the belief in the End of Time and a conception of the final destiny of mankind.[1] Each of the three Western religious traditions assumes that God will bring an end to History and with that End pass judgment on all men.[2]

By *apocalypticism* I mean a belief that that End, however conceived, is imminent, that one lives at the very edge or in the midst of the Last Events. In this sense, Martin of Tours was apocalyptic in believing that the Antichrist had already been born and was approaching manhood.[3] When an apocalyptic sense of imminence spreads, a type of eschatological community emerges characterized by charismatic leaders and active—occasionally socially disruptive—manifestations of religious belief.[4] The early Christian movement, for example, experienced a

p.544); '...il est certain qu'on a cru à la fin prochaine du monde—mais quelle époque n'y a pas cru, avant la moderne?': Yves Congar, *L'ecclésiologie du haut moyen âge* (Paris, 1968), p.127. Cf. Gil, 'Los terrores', p.217.

[1] Eschatological beliefs are found throughout the world: see e.g., Mircea Eliade, *From Primitives to Zen* (New York, 1974), nos.188-197; and even in non-religious thought: Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford, 1966). See also J. Le Goff, art. 'Escatologia' in *Enciclopedia* (Turin, Einaudi, 1978), V, pp.712-17. For 'eschatology' used in a different sense, see, J. Carmagnac, 'Les dangers de l'eschatologie', *New Testament Studies*, 17 (1971), pp.365-90.

[2] This latter trait, common to Islam, Christianity and Judaism, is what some scholars would identify as *apocalyptic*, i.e. The End as a great Revelation and particularly as a resolution to the problem of theodicy. See, D. Hellholm, *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Tübingen, 1983).

[3] See McGinn, *Visions* [cited n.58 in text], pp.3-5. On Martin's teachings, Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* II, 14; by this definition, Martin of Tours was an apocalyptic thinker (McGinn, p.51). He was apparently also a millenarian: Gry, *Le millénarisme* [cited n.22], pp.116-7; J. Fontaine, *Vie de saint Martin*, SC, 133 (1967), pp.166-170.

[4] See, for example, the apocalyptic communities described by Hippolytus (above text, p.147).

continual tension between its apocalyptic origins and the delay of the expected Kingdom. In the face of the increasingly unwelcome consequences of this (inevitably erroneous) apocalyptic sentiment which continued to grip the imagination of the faithful, the Church eventually emerged as the *interim* institution to which Christians were to look for guidance until the Parousia.[5]

By *millenarianism* I mean a belief that these final events will usher in a reign of Peace, Justice and Plenty *here on Earth* and that salvation for the Just will be collective and its rewards experienced while living in the flesh.

> Each vine will shoot forth 10,000 trunks and each trunk 10,000 branches, each branch 10,000 shoots, and each shoot 10,000 clusters, each cluster 10,000 grapes and each grape will give forth 25 measures of wine... and they will dispute with each other for the honor of feeding the saints...[6]

Thus although millenarianism implies a *thousand* year kingdom, the crucial element lies not in whether the kingdom to come will last 100, 400 or 1000 years, but in the fact that at the beginning of this period a total transformation in the nature of terrestrial power relations takes place ('The meek will inherit the Land'). Millenarianism therefore concerns, a variable *band of time* during which Heaven descends to Earth, a definition which conforms to both patristic and anthropological usage.[7] The term *chiliasm*, the Greek term for millenarianism, can be used to denote forms of the belief specifically linked to 1000 year kingdoms (e.g. Montanism).

By these definitions, all Jewish eschatological thought is millenarian, with chiliasm as a late development, a fact which the Church fathers acknowledged when they branded both 'judaizing' heresies.[8] Similarly,

[5] This is directly related to the problem of the 'historical Jesus' and the revision of his message by an increasingly institutional Church raised by Schweitzer in 1906; see the recent discussion in John Gager, 'The Gospels and Jesus: Some Doubts about Method', *Journal of Religion*, 54 (1974), pp.244-71; Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (Yale, 1983), pp.171-80; and Paula Fredriksen, *De Jésus au Christ* (Paris, 1988; Eng. ed. New Haven, 1988).

[6] The passage is in Irenaeus (*Adv. her.* V, 33, 3; c.185 CE), there attributed to John, 'the disciple of the Lord' as handed down from the presbyters to Papias. See the almost verbatim description in the Apocalypse of Baruch (29:5; c.70-100 CE).

[7] Ermoni, 'L'erreur millénariste' [n.22], pp.352-88; Gry, *Millénarisme*, pp.7-8; and Y. Talmon, art. 'Millenarism', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1968), vol.10, pp.349ff. Talmon's definition only differs in including the notion of imminence, hence describing what I would call apocalyptic millenarianism.

[8] 'Judaism, in all its forms and manifestations, has always maintained a concept of redemption as an event which takes place publicly, on the stage of history and within the community' (Gershom Sholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), p.1). On the patristic accusations of 'judaizing' see, e.g. Origen, *Peri Archon* II, 11, 2; Jerome, *In Ezechielem* XI, 18, 15; see also Luneau, *L'histoire* [cited n.17], pp.268-7; Gry, *Millénarisme*, pp.87ff.; J. Harnack, art. 'Millennium', in *Encyclopaedia Brittannica*, 11th ed., (1910), vol.18, pp.461ff. 'From a purely phenomenological point of view there is doubtless some truth to these reproaches [of judaizing], even if in historical reality these tendencies also arise spontaneously from attempts to take Messianism seriously and from a feeling of dissatisfaction with a Kingdom of God which is to lie within us and not about us' (Scholem, p.16).



every identifiable case of popular eschatology is millenarian, a matter which deserves its own full-length study. Here I can only note that while 'elite' eschatological thought is sometimes millenarian, virtually no example of a popular apocalyptic movement is not.[9] This does not mean that all laymen or non-literates were millenarians, only those drawn into apocalyptic movements.

Finally, *apocalyptic millenarianism* is among the most problematic forms of eschatological belief, since at the threshhold of the Millennium, believers tend towards radical action, often anti-institutional attempts at restructuring society.[10] The politically dangerous quality of a belief in the imminence of a communal, this-worldly redemption, underlined so dramatically by the two Jewish revolts against Rome in Christianity's formative years (70 and 135 CE)[11] led the Church fathers to condemn

[9] See the continuous references in hostile Church fathers to the 'simpliciores' or the 'vulgi' who cling to this belief: e.g. Eusebius on Montanus' appeal to the multitudes, *Hist. Ecc.* V, 16; Bede, above pp.175-178; other examples in Gry, *Millénarisme*, pp.87-108. As Harnack points out, it was the intellectual neo-Platonizing of the Alexandrine church which displaced millenarianism 'first among the cultured', and then with variable success among 'the lower strata of Christian society' especially in the West (*Dogmengeschichte* [cited n.179], pp.462-3). The existential appeal of an earthly Kingdom, of an '[eschatological] reward in terms of this world' to men and women who work with their hands, is obvious (see Bietenhard, 'Millennial Hope' [cited n.75], pp. 13, 15).

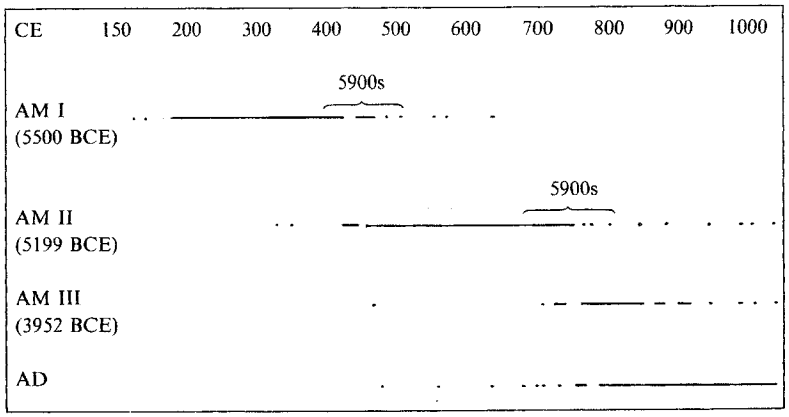
[10] Norman Cohn emphasized this aspect in *The Pursuit of the Millennium* [cited n.118], perhaps too exclusively (see, e.g., McGinn, *Visions*, pp.28-30). For a consideration of active and passive forms of millenarian expectation, see A.Y. Collins, 'The Political Perspective of the Revelation of John', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 96:2 (1977), pp.241-56. Regardless of how restrictive Cohn's focus on the restive urban brand of millenarianism may have been, it nevertheless identified a particularly important variety which can be found even in rural, non-Christian societies (Talmon, 'Millenarism', p.349; Kenelm Burridge, *New Heaven New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (New York, 1969); Anthony Wallace, 'Revitalization Movements', *American Anthropologist*, 58 (1956), pp.264-81; Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: the Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven, 1976). Naquin underlines the perfectly ordinary social behavior of non-apocalyptic millenarians and its insurrectional transformation when apocalyptic expectation arises.

[11] In a sense Josephus' account of the Jewish Wars revolves around the disastrous impact of messianic *movements* on Palestinian Jewish life in the Empire. The break between Christianity and Judaism owes a great deal to these problems (see S.G.F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London, 1968); Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel* (Paris, 1964) ch.1; and *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E.P. Sanders (London, 1980), articles by Markus, Grant and Lüdemann). Within Judaism the eventually ascendant rabbinic school developed a great distrust of apocalyptic millenarianism (Scholem,

millenarianism as a heresy, and identify its operative element as a carnal, literal interpretation of the kingdom of saints.[12] Eusebius tells how Domitian questioned the descendents of David on precisely this issue and was mollified only when they responded that theirs 'was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom...'.[13]

University of Pittsburgh

CHART I
THE PATTERNS OF DATING THE AGE OF THE WORLD




*Messianic*, pp.1-36). Note that the official rabbinic chronology emerged shortly after the defeat of Bar Kochba (135 CE). See above n.1 of article, and Silver, *Messianic Speculation* [cited n.142], pp.15-9.

[12] See above n.7. The intense distaste many Catholics express towards the 'carnality' of millenarianism transpires even in the scholarly discussions of the 20th Century (e.g. Ermoni, 'L'erreur millénariste'; Leclercq, 'Millénarisme' [cited n.24]).

[13] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* III, 20.



## TABLE INDICATING THE USAGE OF VARIOUS WORLD ERAS, 100-830 CE

### LEGEND

The World Era used by an author is indicated by a line beginning in the period in which his work was composed and ending in the year 6000 AM according to his calculations. Capitalized names indicate theologians writing historical works. Dates of composition provided in parentheses are approximate and not intended to be definitive.

| | |
|---|---|
| ..... | uncertain |
| — — — — | implied |
| ———— | AM calculated up to date of composition |
| ═══ | AM presented in explicitly millenarian framework |
| ——→ | countdown to the end of the Sixth Millennium |
| ═══⟩ | countdown to the end of the World |
| ←—— | 6000 AM passed |
| o | 6000 AM acknowledged as passed |
| * | 6000 AM expected within two decades |
| ( ) | range of possible dates |
| ———— | single manuscript source |
| ═══ | text with multiple extant copies |
| ▬▬▬ | prevailing orthodoxy |

References with volume number and page only come from MGH Auctores Antiquissimi

| | |
|---|---|
| SS: | MGH Scriptores |
| RM: | MGH Rerum merovingicarum scriptores |
| PL: | Patrologia Latina |
| LP: | *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, vol. I |
| NA: | Krusch, 'Einführung', *Neues Archiv* 9 |
| Lev.: | W. Levison, *England and the Continent* |
| Krusch: | *Studien* (1880) |

N.B. I have used a variable scale in the chronological axis in order to highlight the periods around the approaching year 6000.
With the exception of the earliest centuries, only Latin Historians are included in the charts.

CHART II

FROM AM I TO AM II (100-600 CE)

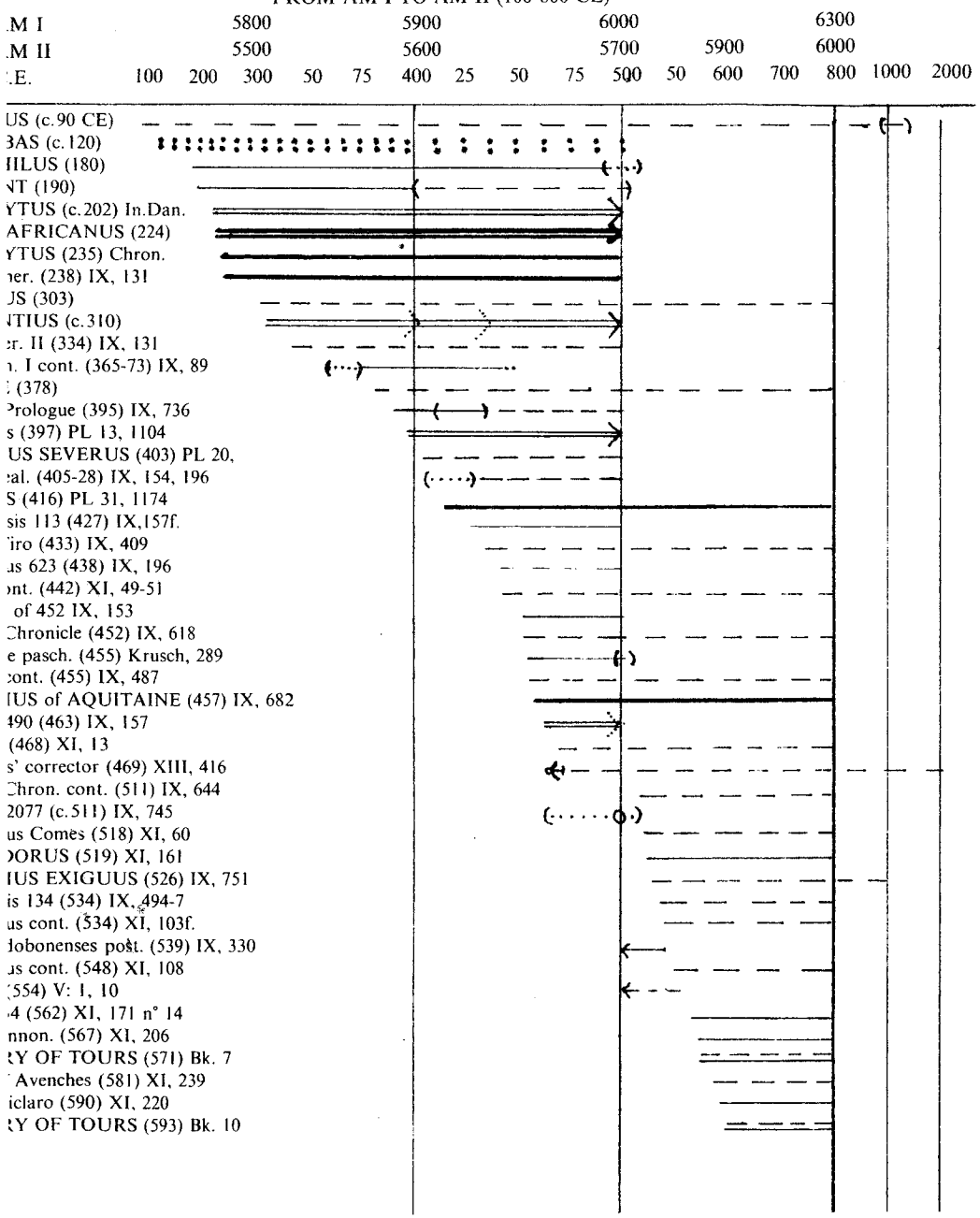
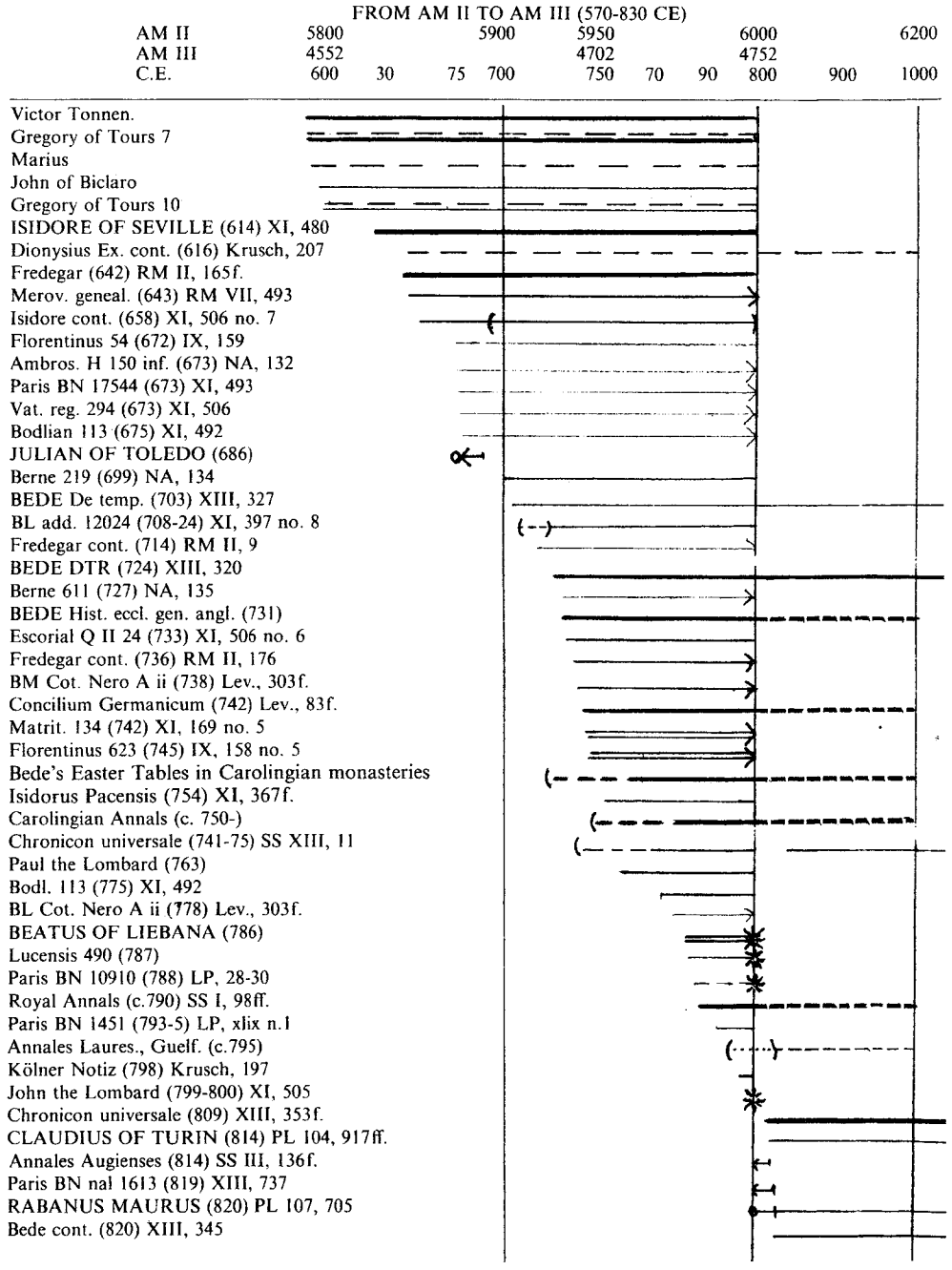





CHART III

FROM AM II TO AM III (570-830 CE)