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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Speculum*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Jul., 1985), pp. 553-570

Published by: [Medieval Academy of America](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2848175>

Accessed: 10/09/2012 23:13

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# Antichrists and Antichrist in Joachim of Fiore

By Robert E. Lerner

Conversations with the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202) had a way of turning to the imminent advent of Antichrist: “Antichrist was coming very soon,” Joachim might say, or “Antichrist was already born in Rome,” or “the age culminating in Antichrist’s persecutions will begin in a mere four years.”<sup>1</sup> It is hence not surprising that Joachim became most famous in his own lifetime as a prophet of Antichrist. But how exactly did Joachim’s warnings concerning Antichrist’s imminent advent fit in with his overall view of the history of salvation? Joachim’s contemporaries had more difficulty in understanding this larger issue than they had in grasping his urgent message that Antichrist was coming soon, and central questions concerning the nature of Joachim’s Antichrist thought still have not been resolved by modern scholarship. Above all, two problems of interpretation remain outstanding: (1) Given the certainty that Joachim actually believed in the coming of many Antichrists, which of these several was for him the “real and true” one? (2) Given that Joachim’s “real and true” Antichrist can indeed be identified, how did his conception of this eschatological villain compare with that of prior medieval tradition? In seeking to answer both questions I hope to show concurrently that Joachim’s Antichrist theology was enormously innovative, daring, and subtle, as his thinking was in so many other regards.

Research for the following article was generously funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Academy in Rome, and Northwestern University. Richard Emmer-son and Bernard McGinn provided valuable comments. The following abbreviations are used in the notes: Grundmann, A. A. = Herbert Grundmann, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 2: *Joachim von Fiore* (Stuttgart, 1977); Joachim, *Expositio* = *Expositio magni Prophete Abbatis Joachimi in Apocalypsim* (Venice, 1527; repr. Frankfurt, 1964); Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy* = Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism*; Töpfer, *Reich des Friedens* = Bernhard Töpfer, *Das kommende Reich des Friedens* (Berlin, 1964).

<sup>1</sup> Of these quotations, only the middle one is genuinely verbatim, yet all three represent faithfully the substance of what Joachim is reported to have said on three of the four known occasions when records of his conversations were preserved by trustworthy sources. I refer respectively to his interview with Pope Lucius III at Veroli in 1184, his interview with King Richard of England at Messina in the winter of 1190/91, and his interview with Abbot Adam of Perseigne in 1195. For all three see Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 4–14, with my reestablishment of the dating of Joachim’s interview with Abbot Adam to 1195 on grounds stated in my *Powers of Prophecy: The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 96, n. 27.

To begin, it is necessary to recall that before Joachim medieval Christian theology and folklore allowed the existence of many “antichrists,” but only one Antichrist.<sup>2</sup> Warrant for the proliferation of antichrists — so to speak with a small *a* — was found in 1 John 2.18, which warned that “even now are there many antichrists.” Yet, since the author of 1 John drew a distinction in this very passage between the “many antichrists” who existed “even now” and a great Antichrist who “shall come,” patristic authorities and medieval theologians concluded that the “many antichrists” were any members of the diabolically inspired human society of evil, all of whom helped to prepare the way for the true Antichrist’s coming but none of whom were to be confused with this one true Antichrist himself.<sup>3</sup> Antichrist with a capital *A*, that is, was a single dreadful eschatological figure, called by St. Paul (2 Thess. 2.3–4) “that man of sin” and “the son of perdition,” who would come to oppose everything godly and sit blasphemously in the temple of God in the last days. He it was whose biography was written predictively by the Abbot Adso in the tenth century and who was known by all and sundry in the twelfth as *the* Antichrist, the ultimate false Messiah who would gull the gullible and persecute the steadfast in a blasphemous reign of three and a half years at the end of time.

In contrast to this received doctrine, the mature prophetic writings of Joachim of Fiore show that he believed in the advent of many Antichrists, with particular emphasis on two superlatively terrible Antichrists still to come. The question thus arises as to which of these Antichrists was for him the real one — in other words, what did he mean when he said that

<sup>2</sup> The best general survey of traditional medieval Antichrist lore is Richard K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalyptic, Art, and Literature* (Seattle, 1981). For a much shorter account, see my “Antichrist,” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 1 (New York, 1982), pp. 321–22.

<sup>3</sup> The distinction between antichrists and the Antichrist (here and throughout I take the liberty of distinguishing between the two by means of capitalization) was already made by St. Jerome and St. Augustine: see Jerome, *Commentarii in Daniele* 11.21, ed. F. Glorie, *Corpus Christianorum*, series Latina 75A (Turnhout, 1964), pp. 915–17, and Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 20.19, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCSL 48 (Turnhout, 1955), p. 732. Thereafter it was frequently repeated, as, for example, by the Abbot Adso: see Adso Dervensis, *De ortu et tempore Antichristi*, ed. D. Verhelst, *Corpus Christianorum*, *continuatio mediaevalis* 45 (Turnhout, 1976), p. 22; translation by Bernard McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (New York, 1979), pp. 89–96, at p. 90: “even now in our own time we know that there are many antichrists, for anyone, layman, cleric, or monk, who lives contrary to justice and attacks the rule of his way of life and blasphemes what is good is an antichrist, the minister of Satan.” The nearest approximation of a double Antichrist system before the one of Joachim is the expectation of Commodian, Lactantius, and Sulpicius Severus that a reappearing Nero would act as a tyrannical antichrist immediately before the advent of *the* Antichrist: see Commodian, *Carmen de duobus populis* 891–936; Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 7.16–17; Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* 2.14. Lactantius and Sulpicius, however, do not use the term antichrist for describing the Nero *redivivus*, and Commodian, who does, still conceives of his Nero/antichrist as a western forerunner of the real Antichrist of the Jews.

Antichrist, without modifier, was coming soon?<sup>4</sup> A satisfactory answer to this question as well as an explanation of why Joachim found it necessary to develop a doctrine of multiple Antichrists at all can be gained only if we look at the abbot's prophecies before and after he worked out the implications of his most central prophetic insight.

Assuredly when we first see Joachim entering the prophetic lists, his Antichrist teaching was not exceptional. The occasion was his appearance before Pope Lucius III at Veroli in May of 1184, at which time he was asked to elucidate the meaning of an obscure Sibylline prophecy found among the belongings of a recently deceased cardinal. In response the abbot portentously adopted a "mournful style," citing, "before everything else," the prophet Micah to the effect that the Church would soon "be led as far as Babylon" (Micah 4.10). This was to say that the Church would soon face its severest challenges before "the punishing Judge of this world will make his appearance." In total there would be seven terrible persecutions waged against Christendom, the first four of which had already been launched respectively by the Jews, pagans, Arians, and Saracens. The final three, all to follow quickly one upon the another, would come soon. And of these, the last would be the culminating persecution of Antichrist, "since it is necessary that Antichrist appear before the great day of the Lord."<sup>5</sup>

Any tattered or grizzled prophet called in for the occasion might have told Pope Lucius more or less the same; what characterized Joachim's dire predictions as being particularly worthy of respect was the fact that they were grounded in a new and arguably unassailable prophetic methodology — Joachim's hermeneutic of the "total concordance" between the Old and New Testaments. That is, assuming the existence of a full parallelism between major stages of salvational history in the two Testaments, Joachim — initially

<sup>4</sup> Disagreement on this question exists between two prominent interpreters of the thought of Joachim. According to Marjorie Reeves, "The Seven Seals in the Writings of Joachim of Fiore," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21 (1954), 211–47, at pp. 222–23, "in Joachim's fully developed scheme, Antichrist must come at the close of the sixth age, before the Sabbath" (Reeves repeats this opinion frequently elsewhere). But for Raoul Manselli, "Il problema del doppio Anticristo in Gioacchino da Fiore," *Geschichtsschreibung und geistiges Leben im Mittelalter: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Heinz Löwe*, ed. Karl Hauck and H. Mordek (Cologne, 1978), pp. 427–49, "il vero e proprio Anticristo" is not the one referred to by Reeves, but rather "the one who will come at the end of time" (p. 427, et passim). Reeves draws back from engaging Manselli on this issue in the brief response she offers in her "Originality and Influence of Joachim of Fiore," *Traditio* 36 (1980), 269–316, at p. 293, n. 89, but, as will be seen from the following exposition, I believe her position regarding the nature of the "real and true" Antichrist in Joachim is the correct one.

<sup>5</sup> The basic study, with an appended edition, of Joachim's commentary of 1184 is Bernard McGinn, "Joachim and the Sibyl," *Cîteaux* 24 (1973), 97–138. (In addition to the manuscript copy used by McGinn, note also: Rome, Carmelite Archive, III varia 1, fols. 123v–127r; and Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Extrav. 251.9, fols. 44r–47v.) McGinn provides a partial translation of the commentary in his *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979), pp. 130–33; my quotations are taken from this translation.

in his prognostication of 1184, and much more elaborately later — mapped out charts of Old and New Testament developments in terms of a “pattern of twos,” one running forward from Genesis and the other from the Gospels.<sup>6</sup> The prophetic element in this arrangement consisted in the fact that the stages covered in the Old Testament were more numerous than those covered in the New; hence knowledge of the stages located in the Old and the parallel first stages in the New enabled one to extrapolate into the future until the close of the second dispensation.

In the prediction offered to Pope Lucius at Veroli this methodology was already well established. Specifically, Joachim stated that “we should remember the Hebrew people bore seven special persecutions in which without doubt the seven special tests of Christians are signified”; he then went on to enumerate the seven persecutions of the Hebrews as running from the first, waged by the Egyptians, until the last, waged by the Greeks under Antiochus. Thus it followed that the Church, too, would face seven persecutions, of which only the first, that of the Jews, was recorded in the New Testament. Supplying the rest on the basis of parallelisms, Joachim determined that the fourth persecution had almost run its course. The fifth would be that of a new king of “Chaldean Babylon” — implicitly a German emperor — and the last that of the canonical Antichrist, the counterpart of Antiochus. Just as the first advent of Christ, then, swiftly succeeded the demise of Antiochus, so Christ’s second advent would swiftly succeed the demise of the terrible great Antichrist.<sup>7</sup>

A trustworthy independent source reports that Pope Lucius at Veroli approved of Joachim’s prophetic understanding of Scripture sufficiently to encourage him to begin writing his major exegetical/prophetic treatises.<sup>8</sup> Yet Lucius presumably had no inkling that these treatises when eventually published would proclaim the chiliastic doctrine that a glorious earthly Sabbath for the Church was certain to intervene between the present and the end.<sup>9</sup> I submit that the explanation for this is that in May of 1184 Joachim was prepared to promulgate his insight about the concordance of Testaments, but was not yet ready to proclaim the consequences of a second insight which

<sup>6</sup> I borrow the term “pattern of twos” from Marjorie Reeves, whose exposition of the interrelationship between the “pattern of twos” and “pattern of threes” in Joachim’s thought is fundamental: see, for example, Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, 1976), pp. 5–14.

<sup>7</sup> The final conclusion is not explicitly stated in Joachim’s commentary of 1184 but seems clearly to be implied.

<sup>8</sup> The source is the *Vita* of Joachim written by his close associate, Luke of Cosenza: see the edition by Grundmann, A. A., pp. 352–53; the same passage is also cited by Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> The lack of chiliasm or any trinitarian historical pattern in the commentary of 1184 has been frequently recognized: see, e.g., Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 6. (I use chiliasm as a synonym for millenarianism — both meaning the expectation of an impending, supernaturally inaugurated, marvelously better time on earth before the Last Judgment.)

had recently transfixed him, and which was even more pregnant for the development of his mature thought. By this I am referring to the abbot's reportedly sudden intuition concerning the "plenitude" of the Book of Revelation. It was primarily this insight, self-reportedly attained as the result of an Easter eve transport, which made Joachim a chiliast, and which also forced him to conclude that there would be more than one Antichrist.<sup>10</sup>

By the plenitude of Revelation, Joachim meant that, if read properly, the final, the most obscure, and for those reasons the most potentially meaningful book of Scripture revealed the entire history of the Church — past, present, and future. Assuming Revelation's plenitude, and interrelating that hermeneutic with the hermeneutic of concordances, Joachim concluded that Revelation indubitably foretold the coming of a wondrous period of justice, peace, and spiritual insight to occur on earth between the demise of Antichrist (St. Paul's Son of Perdition) and the Last Judgment. I have shown elsewhere that the notion of a brief this-worldly Sabbath occurring between the death of Antichrist and the Last Judgment was a medieval exegetical commonplace from St. Jerome onwards.<sup>11</sup> Joachim alluded to the espousal of this doctrine by "Beatus Remigius" (the ninth-century Carolingian exegete Haimo of Auxerre), and he almost certainly knew it as well, directly or indirectly, from the exegesis of the Venerable Bede.<sup>12</sup> Hence his accomplishment was not to germinate the idea of a Sabbath on earth after Antichrist but to root it in such a fertile bed of exegetical and theological soil that it bloomed forth in his mature writings as it had never bloomed before.

Joachim is now most renowned for having nourished chiliasm by means of his triune conception of historical development, but I would argue that his "full" reading of Revelation was his central salvational-historical breakthrough. Certainly, as can be seen from one of his own autobiographical statements, his grasp of the historical significance of the Trinity followed after his hermeneutic insights concerning the concordance of Testaments and Revelation's plenitude.<sup>13</sup> Taken together, the first two insights still

<sup>10</sup> Joachim told of his Easter eve transport in his *Expositio in Apocalypsim*: see *Expositio*, fol. 39rb–va, reprinted in Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 22. In this account he maintained that his insights about the plenitude of Revelation and the concordance of Testaments came to him simultaneously: "subito. mihi meditantī aliquid, quadam mentis oculis intelligentie claritate percepta de plenitudine libri huius et tota veteris testamenti concordia revelatio facta est." Nonetheless, it seems more likely that the idea of a concordance hermeneutic came to him first — especially since only this is evident in the prophecy offered to Lucius at Veroli — and that the Easter eve experience had solely to do with the plenitude of Revelation, the proper understanding of which Joachim was then desperately seeking to attain. For my reconstructed chronology, see n. 13 below and, in greater detail, my "Joachim of Fiore's Breakthrough to Chiliasm," *Cristianesimo nella storia* 6 (1985).

<sup>11</sup> "Refreshment of the Saints: The Time after Antichrist as a Station for Earthly Progress in Medieval Thought," *Traditio* 32 (1976), 97–144.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116–17.

<sup>13</sup> In his *Psalterium decem chordarum* Joachim stated that he received his Pentecost vision

supported a conception of salvational history viewed in terms of a pattern of twos, but once Joachim became certain of the full meaning of Revelation he transformed his earliest pattern of twos announced at Veroli to make it chiliastic. And apparently once he did that the Trinitarian pattern of threes presented itself in his mind as another way of conceiving of a progressive development of salvational history. Yet if the threes appear frequently in all of Joachim's mature work as complements to the twos, the chiliastic twos can still be apprehended and studied alone.<sup>14</sup> Here it is best to concentrate on that pattern for the purpose of understanding why Joachim was obliged to multiply Antichrists.

Looking more closely, then, at the abbot's reading of Revelation, surely the single most revolutionary aspect of his innovative exegesis was his interpretation of Revelation's last chapters (17–22) as applying to successive events in the future. Exactly how it first occurred to Joachim that this was the only satisfactory way of reading those chapters will never be known for certain, but it seems likely that he found the path opened to him by Bede's progressive exegesis of the opening of the seven seals in Revelation 5.1 to 8.1.<sup>15</sup> Since Bede long before had interpreted the opening of the seven seals to stand for seven periods in the history of the Church, and since Joachim had already conceived of salvational history in terms of concordances between the Old and New Testaments running in parallel sets of sevens, Bede's septiform exegesis was bound to appeal to him. Yet this very exegesis opened new vistas, for Bede's scheme of sevens, unlike the one Joachim had offered to the pope in 1184, was mildly chiliastic: Bede, that is, interpreted

concerning the historical role of the Trinity in the monastery of Casamari after he had already started working on the *Liber concordie* and the Revelation commentary: see Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 24–25. Given Luke of Cosenza's statements (Grundmann, A. A., pp. 352–53) that Joachim arrived at Casamari in the second year of Lucius III's pontificate (i.e., between September 1182 and August 1183) and remained there "about a year and a half, writing and emending simultaneously his book on the Apocalypse and his book on the concordances," the following chronological reconstruction seems inescapable: (1) Joachim was working on both the *Liber concordie* and his Revelation commentary from the time of his arrival; (2) his Easter eve transport took place on 1 April 1184 (by his own account at the time of his transport he had already been struggling with the meaning of Revelation for a year); (3) the Pentecost vision followed not long after, on 20 May 1184. Joachim's trip to see the pope at Veroli (three miles from Casamari) sometime in May of 1184 therefore would have taken place not much more than a month after his Easter breakthrough and would have occurred within a few days, or at most weeks, on either side of his Pentecost vision.

<sup>14</sup> Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 25, points out that a different stress according to the three persons of the Trinity appears in each of Joachim's three major works. Putting this another way, I would say that while all three works are interrelated (three-in-one as the Trinity itself!), each emphasizes in turn one of Joachim's three major hermeneutic insights — the *Liber concordie* the concordance of Testaments, the Revelation commentary the plenitude of Revelation, and the *Psalter of Ten Chords* the pattern of threes.

<sup>15</sup> I have argued this previously in my "Refreshment of the Saints," pp. 116–18, following Töpfer, *Reich des Friedens*, pp. 88–89.

the woes described after the opening of the sixth seal to stand for the persecutions of Antichrist, and the “silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” after the opening of the seventh seal to stand for a brief period of rest for the Church between the death of Antichrist and the end. We may thus suppose that sometime in the course of wrestling with Revelation Joachim put three things together: (1) that Revelation as a whole recounted the entire history of the Church; (2) that Bede was correct in foreseeing the persecutions of Antichrist to be followed by an earthly Sabbath; and (3) that the fullest description of how the Sabbath was to dawn was found not in the vision of the seven seals but in Revelation’s last chapters.

Ultimately stated most fully in the abbot’s epoch-making Revelation commentary, conclusion three was conceptual dynamite because it resulted in the first written violation of St. Augustine’s insistence in the *City of God* that the thousand-year period of a “first resurrection” (Revelation 20.4–6) cannot be taken to apply to an earthly future.<sup>16</sup> As is well known, for Augustine (*City of God* 20.7–10), and for all medieval commentators following him until Joachim, the thousand-year kingdom of Revelation was meant to be understood figuratively as the spiritual resurrection of the elect reigning in the Church in the present. Joachim, however, adopted the view that the narrative running from chapter 17 through the beginning of chapter 20 of Revelation represented a parallel and more detailed way of describing the same events foretold by the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. Namely, just as the reign of Antichrist and the subsequent earthly Sabbath was foretold by the opening of the last two seals, so the reign of Antichrist was foretold by the appearance of the Whore of Babylon and the beast of the bottomless pit in Revelation 17, the destruction of Antichrist was foretold by the casting of the beast into the lake of fire and brimstone at the end of Revelation 19, and the earthly Sabbath was foretold by the reign of Christ and the saints on earth in Revelation 20.4–6.

That being the case, the conclusion became inescapable that there would be a final onslaught of evil at the end of time, and here is where Joachim came to modify his own and all prior Antichrist doctrine. For, once he concluded that the “first resurrection” of Revelation 20.4–6 alluded to a future earthly kingdom, it was necessary to keep on reading, and in doing so he found the immediately following lines (20.7–8) predicting that “when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle. . . .” St. Augustine, identifying the “first resurrection” as alluding to the present, had no trouble in interpreting the onslaught of Gog to stand for the future coming of the

<sup>16</sup> Joachim’s attempt to propitiate Augustine on this point while basically undercutting him is best discussed by Herbert Grundmann, *Studien über Joachim von Fiore* (Leipzig, 1927; repr. Darmstadt, 1966), pp. 98–99, and Töpfer, *Reich des Friedens*, pp. 82–83.



one Antichrist (*City of God* 20.11–12), but Joachim had already used up his one Antichrist in conceiving him to be the beast cast into fire and brimstone before the “first resurrection.” What then to do but make “Gog” another Antichrist?<sup>17</sup> For Joachim the Gog of Revelation 20.8 was not “Antichrist” but the “last Antichrist,” and with that stroke the abbot effected the first major departure in medieval Antichrist thinking since the days of the Fathers.

Since Joachim’s Easter eve transport occurred before May of 1184, he perhaps could have told most of this to Pope Lucius at Veroli. But I suspect that he did not want to, for what twelfth-century exegete would have wished to contradict the authority of St. Augustine before giving the matter an enormous amount of thought? Not only, that is, did Augustine deny that Revelation 20 applied to the future, but he also hewed firmly to the view that there would be only one future Antichrist (*City of God* 18.52).<sup>18</sup> Thus it is not surprising that Joachim waited for three years before announcing his chiliasm and that he hesitated until shortly before the end of his life before releasing his daring Revelation exegesis in extenso. Similarly, it is not surprising that in talking with uninitiated contemporaries Joachim cautiously referred to only one “Antichrist.” But if we proceed now to examine in chronological order a selection of the abbot’s relevant writings from 1187 to c. 1200, we can see that the problem of Gog gradually forced him to posit an innovative Antichrist theology even while the canonical “Son of Perdition” always remained for him the “real and true” Antichrist.

Looking first at Joachim’s *De vita Sancti Benedicti* of 1187, the earliest known writing wherein he promulgated his chiliasm, the abbot here openly declared that a final time of peace had been foretold by John of Patmos’s vision of the binding of Satan.<sup>19</sup> Following the text of Revelation, Joachim also drew the conclusion that there would be terrible trials before and after

<sup>17</sup> Here and throughout I follow Joachim’s customary practice of making the single name “Gog” stand for the “Gog and Magog” of Revelation 20.8. The villainous Gog and Magog of Revelation descend from Ezechiel 38–39, whose original Old Testament meaning is here irrelevant.

<sup>18</sup> CCSL 48:650: “. . . non amplius ecclesiam passuram persecutiones usque ad tempus Antichristi, quam quot iam passa est, id est decem, ut undecima eademque novissima sit ab Antichristo.” See also the lapidary statement in *De civitate Dei* 20.30 (CCSL 48:757–58): “In illo itaque iudicio vel circa illud iudicium has res didicimus esse venturas: Helian Thesbiten, fidem Iudaeorum, Antichristum persecuturum, Christum iudicaturum, mortuorum resurrectionem. . . .”

<sup>19</sup> *De vita Sancti Benedicti*, ed. Cipriano Baraut, “Un tratado inédito de Joaquín de Fiore,” *Analecta sacra Tarraconensia* 24 (1951), 95 (cap. 28): “Terminatus autem laboribus istis erit Ierusalem nova in pace, quam interim edificari oportet in angustia temporum. Diabolus autem erit incarceratus, et regem obtinebunt sancti. In fine autem temporum et annorum solvetur Satanas de carcere suo, et educet Gog cum exercitu suo, sicut Ezechiel propheta et Iohannes circa finem [Baraut: fidem] librorum suorum, ante quam tractent de superna Ierusalem aperte describunt.” See also p. 102 (cap. 32) and the passage cited in n. 21 below.

the Sabbath of peace — respectively those launched by “Antichrist” and those by Gog.<sup>20</sup> When Joachim referred to “Antichrist” without modifier in the *De vita Sancti Benedicti* he meant the traditional Pauline figure, and Gog was simply Gog. Yet it is also clear that by 1187 Joachim already knew more about how to interpret Gog than he as yet cared to specify, for at one point in his treatise on St. Benedict he alluded in passing to Gog as the “tail” on the “red dragon” of Revelation,<sup>21</sup> and it was the exegesis of this red dragon wherein Gog appeared as the tail that was to become Joachim’s major means of expounding his multiple Antichrist doctrine roughly a decade later.

Seemingly taking a step backward in his first major prophetic treatise, the *Liber concordie* (written between c. 1183 and c. 1191), Joachim said nothing at all about Gog, let alone multiple Antichrists. Yet since in the *Liber concordie* he omitted methodical consideration of Revelation — on which he was concurrently preparing an extensive commentary — and dedicated himself instead to working out his hermeneutic principle concerning the concordance of Testaments, he really had no need to introduce Gog. Antichrist without modifier, on the other hand, does appear in the *Concordia*: for example, when Joachim points to how Antichrist’s appearance was foreshadowed by such Old Testament figures as Absalom and Antiochus.<sup>22</sup> This Antichrist once more was the canonical Son of Perdition, an identification Joachim could take for granted without having to explain it, whose demise would precede the Sabbath.<sup>23</sup>

Although Gog does not appear in the *Liber concordie*, the issue of how to deal with him surely remained on Joachim’s mind, and we find it spilling out again in the “short oration” (*oratiuncula*), “De ultimis tribulationibus.” Probably written shortly after 1191, and hence standing midway between the recently completed *Concordia* and the still unfinished Revelation commentary, this brief work presumed, as did the *Concordia*, that the one well-known Antichrist — here called interchangeably “magnus Antichristus” and “ul-

<sup>20</sup> That Gog comes after the Sabbath is clear enough from the quotation cited in the previous note; that “Antichrist” comes before may be seen from a statement at p. 113 (cap. 42), in which Saul stands for the history of the Jews until their exit from Jerusalem, “David, christianorum usque ad tempora Antichristi,” and “Salomon, illius populi regnum prenotat, qui tertium statum seculi intraturus, et possessurus est.”

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99 (cap. 31): “Quid autem vespertinam laudem cum antiphona persolvendam mandavit, quid aliud intelligere possumus, nisi id quod Ezechiel et Johannes describunt, venturum, scilicet Gog prope finem seculi et castra sanctorum circumdaturum [Rev. 20.9], per quem draco rufus, ac si verbe caude, desperatius pre solito persequetur electos.”

<sup>22</sup> *Liber concordie Novi ac Veteris Testamenti* (Venice, 1519; repr. Frankfurt, 1964), fol. 95rb (5.65), fol. 129rb (5.114).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 95rb (5.65): “Antichristus usurpaturus est regnum Christi, dicens se esse filium Dei”; fol. 133ra (5.117): “Quia videlicet consummatio hoc tempore laborioso quod dicitur sexta etas, hoc est ab adventu primo Domino usque ad ruinam Antichristi, sequitur quasi tempus Paschale . . . et erit pax et veritas in universa terra. . . .”

timus Antichristus” — would come before the Sabbath.<sup>24</sup> Yet it also introduced texts from Revelation to apply to the Sabbath itself and consequently drew in Gog. In this context Joachim for the first time stated the possibility that the Gog who was to come after the Sabbath might also be an Antichrist. But he merely offered this as a suggestion: indeed, clearly unwilling to go too far in asserting a new Antichrist theology, Joachim held out in the same breath in which he said Gog might be an Antichrist the alternative that he might merely be “a sort of great emperor.”<sup>25</sup>

Thus we must wait until the magisterial Revelation commentary, finally completed between 1195 and 1200, before we see Joachim dealing squarely with the question of what to do with Gog.<sup>26</sup> Now fully rejecting the sense of what he had told Pope Lucius in 1184, the abbot specified in his extended explanatory preface (“*liber introductorius*”) to the Revelation commentary that if the course of salvational history were taken by twos, then the great tyrant and persecutor Antiochus, who came at the end of the Old Testament dispensation, was counterbalanced not by the canonical Antichrist, but by Gog, whose advent would terminate the New Testament dispensation at the end of time. Furthermore, if salvational history were taken by threes, then three dreadful tyrants were to be counted — Antiochus, the canonical Antichrist (at this point called by Joachim the “seventh king”), and Gog — each one coming at the end of a salvational-historical “status.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *De ultimis tribulationibus*, ed. E. R. Daniel, “Abbot Joachim of Fiore: The *De ultimis tribulationibus*,” *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves* (Burnt Hill, Essex, 1980), p. 182, ll. 16–23; p. 183, ll. 4–7. To the list of seven manuscripts containing *De ultimis tribulationibus* offered by Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 515–16, and Daniel, pp. 173–74, should be added: Rome, Carmelite Archive, III varia 1, fols. 176r–178r.

<sup>25</sup> *De ultimis tribulationibus*, ed. Daniel, p. 183, ll. 21–24; p. 187, ll. 10–22, esp. 21–22: “Igitur aut iste Gog erit Antichristus aut quasi magnum imperator, seductus a diabolo.” Earlier in the *oratiuncula* (p. 182, ll. 22–23) Joachim had established the license for considering Gog an Antichrist by an implicit quotation of I John 2.18.

<sup>26</sup> Apparently, although I would regard this conclusion as tentative, Joachim prepared two abbreviated versions of his Revelation commentary before releasing the definitive one: an *Enchiridion super Apocalypsim* and an *Apocalypsis nova*. (I take the former to consist of items 3 and 4 in Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, p. 513, but in reverse order, and the latter to be Reeves’s item 4a.) I have been unable to study the *Apocalypsis nova*, but the *Enchiridion* clearly precedes or greatly simplifies the major Revelation commentary, inasmuch as it refrains from advancing any doctrine of multiple Antichrists. See MS Vat. Reg. lat. 132, fols. 53v, 58v, 67v, 68r, 74r, 84v, 94v–95r, where Antichrist without modifier precedes the Sabbath, and Gog, who is never called Antichrist, comes after. (This text alone, then, would be sufficient to disprove Manselli’s argument — see his article cited in n. 4 above — that Gog was Joachim’s “vero e proprio Anticristo.”) My dating of the completion of the definitive *Expositio in Apocalypsim* to the years between 1195 and 1200 is based on the work’s internal reference to a visit to Messina in 1195 — *Expositio*, fol. 134rb–va — and the assumption of its completion in Joachim’s “Testamentary Letter” of 1200, as printed at the beginning of the Venetian editions of both the *Expositio* and the *Liber concordie*.

<sup>27</sup> *Expositio*, fol. 9ra: “. . . ibi post Antiochum regem datus est finis veteri testamento; hic post adventum Gog erit consumatio seculi. Hec de illa concordia que in duobus perstringitur

By either count, the obvious question immediately arose as to how there could be an apparent Antichrist after Antichrist, and Joachim at first answered this briefly by adducing the assurance of 1 John 2.18 that there are many antichrists.<sup>28</sup> Always wishing, however, to provide vivid visual images for the purpose of illustrating his thoughts, Joachim thereupon became far more expansive by introducing the indelible figure of Revelation's red dragon, the terrible creature "having seven heads," whose "tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven" (Rev. 12.3-4). For Joachim, the red dragon was pure evil or Satan himself, the members of whose body were the totality of the damned. And of these damned, a few so far exceeded the others in wickedness that they stood out as the dragon's seven heads. Ignoring the traditional dictum that all the damned were in some way antichrists, Joachim dwelled solely on the seven heads, all of whom, he insisted, were so extraordinarily vicious that they could properly be called Antichrists.<sup>29</sup> (The distinction by means of capitalization is my own, but I believe it corresponds to Joachim's thinking.)

Proceeding to seek the concrete identities of the seven Antichrists, Joachim superimposed the seven-headed "scarlet-colored beast" of Revelation 17 onto the seven-headed red dragon of Revelation 12 to find that the seven heads were seven kings — five who are "fallen," one who "is," and one who "is not yet come" (Rev. 17.10). Accordingly, the first five must have already reigned, and these, as Joachim could determine from his system of concordances, were Herod, Nero, Constantius Arrianus, "Cosdroe" (according to Joachim, the king of Persia who directly preceded the Saracens), and a "King of Babylon" (identified elsewhere by Joachim as either the German emperor Henry IV or "Mesemoth," a shadowy "Moor").<sup>30</sup> The sixth king, who "is," therefore had to be the reigning persecutor, Saladin (who, however, might still have a successor as culminating sixth king and Saracen Antichrist), and the "seventh king, not yet come," was *the* Antichrist — the "great Antichrist," or the Son of Perdition foretold by St. Paul.<sup>31</sup>

testamentis"; fols. 9vb-10ra: "Ut autem in fine primi status ultimus rex Antiochus nomine ceteris immanior fuit, ita in fine secundi, qui erit in proximo, septimus rex ille venturus est, de quo dicit Ioannes [Rev. 17.10] *Et unus nondum venit*. Et ipse deterior erit omnium qui fuerunt ante se. . . . Sane in fine tertii venturus est alius qui cognominatus est Gog. Et ipse erit ultimus tyrannus et ultimus Antichristus. Et enim antichristi multi sunt dicente Ioanne. . . ."

<sup>28</sup> See n. 27, last two sentences.

<sup>29</sup> *Expositio*, fol. 10ra-va: "Cap. 8: De Antichristo et Dracone et Capitibus et Membris Eius. . . . Draco iste diabolus est. Corpus eius sunt omnes reprobi. Capita ipsius hi qui principanter inter reprobos et ipsos quoque quibus presunt, precedunt, et precellunt in malum. . . ."

<sup>30</sup> See on this Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 8-9, and Marjorie Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *The "Figurae" of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 86-88.

<sup>31</sup> *Expositio*, fol. 10va: "Porro septimus rex, de quo in septima visione eiusdem Danielis dicitur *Surgat rex impudens facie* [Dan. 8.23] . . . Iste est septimum caput draconis, et iste videtur esse ille de quo dicit Apostolus *extollitur et adversatur supra omne* . . . *tamquam sit Deus* [2 Thess. 2.4]. Iste est magnus ille tyrannus qui facturus est multa mala in mundo, licet sit et alius designatus in

Yet even with the “great Antichrist” all the worst oppressors of the faith were not yet counted, for there still remained the tail of the red dragon. Obviously, then, the tail had to be Gog.<sup>32</sup> Making Gog the dragon’s tail was for Joachim an ideally apposite way of conceiving of the final tyrant because the tail position emphasized both Gog’s temporal posteriority and his singularity compared to the seven heads. Unquestionably Gog would come after the seven Antichrists, including the most dreadful future seventh one,<sup>33</sup> and unquestionably he would be a terrible persecutor. But was Gog also an Antichrist? In dealing with this question Joachim was extremely elusive and ultimately self-contradictory, for at the start of the “*liber introductorius*” he called Gog without qualification “the last tyrant and last Antichrist,” but then, in expounding on the symbolism of the red dragon, he hedged, and finally, at the end of the Revelation commentary proper, he denied his own initial proposition.

Apparently the reason for this elusiveness was that Joachim’s answer to whether Gog was an Antichrist depended on what particular point he was trying to make. Seen in the broadest eschatological terms, Gog was certainly “the last tyrant and the last Antichrist,” because only an Antichrist who would come right before the Last Judgment could be considered a properly evil counterpart to Christ’s advent during that Judgment itself. Gog also still seemed to be a true Antichrist for Joachim when he pointed out in interpreting the meaning of the dragon that the Devil, who always tries to mimic hideously the good works of the Lord, will send his two worst Antichrists to mimic Christ’s two advents: that is, just as Christ first came “hiddenly” but will come to Judgment openly, so Satan will first send the great Antichrist to delude the faithful by trickery and then send Gog with his terrible legions to persecute them openly. Yet in making this very point Joachim drew attention to the possible existence of “someone” who “might say that Gog is not Antichrist, but rather a sort of army leader of that king whom the Devil himself will send.”<sup>34</sup> Taken alone this puzzling remark would be barely comprehensible, but it becomes clear at the end of the Revelation commen-

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cauda.” This same “*magnus ille tyrannus*” is called simply “*magnus Antichristus*” in *Expositio*, fols. 10vb, 133ra.

<sup>32</sup> See n. 31 — “*licet sit et alius designatus in cauda*” — and further, *Expositio*, fol. 10vb: “*Unde et multorum tenet opinio de ultimo illo tyranno qui vocatur Gog, quod ipse sit Antichristus.*” Cf. also the passage from Joachim’s *De vita Sancti Benedicti* quoted in n. 19 above.

<sup>33</sup> It is worth stressing that the forces of Gog and Magog precede the advent of the one canonical Antichrist in Pseudo-Methodius and the Tiburtine Sibyl, two of the most widely influential “inspired” eschatological visions that circulated in Joachim’s day. (See editions of both by E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen* [Halle, 1898], pp. 89–94, 185–86.) Most likely Joachim knew about such traditions but ignored them.

<sup>34</sup> *Expositio*, fol. 10vb: “*Unde et multorum tenet opinio de ultimo illo tyranno qui vocatur Gog, quod ipse sit Antichristus, nisi forte dicat aliquis non esse Gog ipsum Antichristum, sed quasi principem exercitus illius regis quem induet ipse diabolus. . . .*”

tary when Joachim unmask himself as that “someone” and explains that Gog cannot be an Antichrist but only a military representative of a final Antichrist because the language of Revelation 20.8 portrays Gog as a victim of deception rather than as a deceiver.<sup>35</sup> Presumably Joachim’s hidden motive for drawing back from calling Gog an Antichrist at this last juncture was to emphasize his departure from the teaching of St. Augustine, who in the *City of God* 20.11–12 made Gog the one and only Antichrist.<sup>36</sup>

Standing back from Joachim’s hedging, however, the subtlety of whether Gog personally would be the last Antichrist or a military stand-in for the last Antichrist is not a major issue, inasmuch as in either event Joachim’s great Revelation commentary conceives of a final Antichrist coming after the earthly Sabbath at the end of time. Moreover, the most accessible guide to the entire complex of the abbot’s mature teachings, the *Liber figurarum*, reemphasizes the same point. This extraordinary picture book, almost certainly executed under Joachim’s own direction very late in his life, illustrates by means of annotated multicolored illuminations what the abbot hitherto had said in words.<sup>37</sup> And here the viewer may see the terrible red dragon in all its hideous glory, with its seventh head labeled “the seventh king who is properly called Antichrist, although there will be another like him, no less evil, symbolized by the tail.” Looking then at the tail in question, the viewer finds the label: “Gog: He is the final Antichrist.”<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., fol. 213ra: “Quamvis, ut iam diximus in prefatione huius operis, non videatur iste Gog esse ipsum Antichristum, sed princeps exercitus Antichristi, alioquin cum Antichristus sit auctor seductionis propter eum qui corporaliter habitaturus est in eo non oportuerat dici *Exibit et seducet gentes que sunt super quatuor angulos terre, Gog et Magog* [Rev. 20.17], sed potius: Egredietur Gog et seducet gentes ad faciendum hoc et illud. Unde magis videtur quod non sit Gog ipse Antichristus, sed magis princeps exercitus eius.” Note how this directly contradicts the statement about Gog being the “ultimus Antichristus” quoted above, n. 27.

<sup>36</sup> Note that in *Expositio*, fol. 168rb, Joachim offers an apparent attempt to placate Augustine: “Nonnulli tamen doctorum illum regem undecimum nominant Antichristum, sic [ed.: sicut] et illum qui vocatur Gog. Quod mihi tamen ideo verum videtur, quia unus est draco, sed multa capita, et malitiam quam non complet in uno Antichristo complebit in alio.” But at fol. 213ra, before the passage cited in the prior note, he changes his tune: “Nisi forte dicat aliquis ipsum Gog esse eum quem dicit Apostolus: *adversari et extolli supra omnem quod dicitur Deus*. . . . Maxime cum hoc magni doctores videantur magis sentire. Teneatur interim et hec opinio si sic placet, et eligamus ipsi quoque ambigere cum multis, ubi diverse sunt et multiplices opiniones maiorum quousque superveniat hora illa quam statuit nobis Dominus in evangelio. . . .” A careful study of Joachim’s confrontation with St. Augustine would be most valuable but also extremely challenging inasmuch as Joachim declines to mention Augustine by name whenever he implicitly expresses disagreement with him.

<sup>37</sup> Convincing arguments in favor of “the genuine character of the *Liber Figurarum*” are adduced by Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, “*Figuræ*,” and appear to have won the day.

<sup>38</sup> *Il libro delle figure dell'abate Gioacchino da Fiore*, ed. Leone Tondelli, Marjorie Reeves, and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, 2nd ed. (Turin, 1953), plate XIV. A complete English translation of the captions and surrounding exposition for the figure is given by McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (as above, n. 3), pp. 136–41. See also the extremely valuable commentary in Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, “*Figuræ*,” pp. 146–52. Manselli, “Il problema” (as above, n. 4), p. 447, n. 63, attempts to

Relying, therefore, on the relevant passages from the Revelation commentary, as well as on the “popularization” of the Revelation commentary’s dragon exegesis in the *Liber figurarum*, we may define Joachim’s innovation in the realm of Antichrist periodization as consisting of a doctrine of multiple Antichrists in which the two most evil Antichrists in the Devil’s arsenal were still to arrive — one before and one after an earthly Sabbath. As the *Liber figurarum* text itself distills Joachim’s message: “among all the Antichrists who will appear in the world, two are worse than the others — the one denoted by the seventh head [of the dragon], and the one denoted by the tail.”<sup>39</sup> The Antichrist of the tail was Joachim’s greatest novelty, for no one hitherto had posited a final Antichristian persecution coming after an ultimate earthly Sabbath.<sup>40</sup> But in answer to our first question, the Antichrist of the seventh head — “he who is properly called Antichrist” — was undoubtedly for Joachim the “real and true” one.

Having achieved the identification of Joachim’s “real” Antichrist, the remaining question arises as to how the abbot’s portrayal of this figure’s traits related to earlier Antichrist lore. Fortunately the work of the earlier abbot-eschatologist, the Abbot Adso, simplifies our task, since Adso’s short “biography” of Antichrist can be taken as a convenient summary of received medieval wisdom.<sup>41</sup> If this premise is allowed, two major findings emerge: (1) in contrast to the received expectation that Antichrist would be a Jew from the tribe of Dan, Joachim’s Antichrist is not a Jew at all; and (2) in contrast to tradition’s unaffiliated tyrant and trickster, Joachim’s Antichrist is the leader of a sect of heretics who is simultaneously king and priest.<sup>42</sup>

Joachim must certainly have heard that Antichrist was supposed to be a Jew, but in this regard, as in so many others, his own beliefs diverged markedly from the commonplace.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, for Joachim Antichrist was not

discount the statement “qui proprie dicitur Antichristus” by arguing that “dicitur” does not mean “est”; I find this unconvincing, however, in view of the numerous passages (all left unmentioned by Manselli) which show that for Joachim the Antichrist coming before the Sabbath rather than Gog was the real Antichrist: note indeed that elsewhere in the *Liber figurarum* the “validissima Antichristi tempestas” is equated with the “punitus perditionis filii” — both coming before the Sabbath — and that “Antichristus” used alone means the Antichrist coming before the Sabbath, not Gog (texts in Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, “*Figurae*,” pp. 134, 140).

<sup>39</sup> As translated by McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, p. 140.

<sup>40</sup> This is the crucial difference between Joachim’s teaching and the expectation of a Nero/antichrist coming immediately before the Antichrist in Commodian, Lactantius, and Sulpicius Severus, as referred to in n. 3 above.

<sup>41</sup> Adso’s Latin text is edited by Verhelst, and the best English translation is by McGinn (both as n. 3 above).

<sup>42</sup> In developing these two contentions from here to the end of this article I accordingly mean to revise the view stated by Herbert Grundmann, *Studien* (as above, n. 16), p. 9, that Joachim “hardly added a single new motif” to the traditional Antichrist picture.

<sup>43</sup> An excellent survey of Joachim’s relations to Judaism, showing his basically irenic stance, is

only a false Christian rather than a Jew, but he did not even come from the East. Perhaps certain difficult-to-determine personal considerations conditioned this judgment,<sup>44</sup> but the most demonstrable one can be located in the tight internal logic of Joachim's characteristically symmetrical exegesis. Namely, Joachim's hermeneutic of concordances inescapably dictated the conclusion that there would be a double rather than a single persecution preceding the Sabbath — to use his own language, that the "sixth and seventh heads" of the red dragon of Revelation were "joined closely together."<sup>45</sup> Translated into specifics, this meant that the Saracens symbolized by the sixth head, who already in the present were the most manifest persecutors of the Church, would soon be aided by the forces of the great Antichrist, or "seventh head." And when that happened the Church would be fully beleaguered equally from two directions, for as the Saracens would be persecuting from the East, the great Antichrist with his forces would be aiding them from the West.<sup>46</sup>

The two persecutions, moreover, were to be symmetrical in the quality of their evil, inasmuch as the Saracens' paganism was to be balanced by the great Antichrist's heresy. Antichrist, that is, would arise from a "sect of heretics" and arrive to work his villainy at the head of a multitude of "false prophets."<sup>47</sup> Clearly Joachim here interrelated his exegesis with his perception of the signs of the times. Looking at his world as a pious Christian he could see that whereas the gravest open threat to the Church in the years shortly before 1200 was represented by the Saracens (Jerusalem had fallen

Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, "Joachim von Fiore und das Judentum," *Judentum im Mittelalter*, *Miscellanea mediaevalia* 4 (Berlin, 1966), pp. 228–63. Hirsch-Reich, however, neglects to notice that Joachim diverges daringly from tradition in making his Antichrist a Western pseudo-Christian rather than a Jew.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239–43, reviews the evidence for the possibility that Joachim was of Jewish descent, concluding that he almost certainly was not. Yet Joachim did have at least one "most learned" Jewish acquaintance: *ibid.*, p. 229, citing *Expositio*, fol. 36vb.

<sup>45</sup> On the double persecution before the Sabbath, see best Reeves and Hirsch-Reich, "*Figurae*," pp. 134, 144, offering supporting texts from the *Liber concordie*, the *Expositio*, and the *Liber figurarum*. (The *Liber figurarum*'s succinct presentation is translated by McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, pp. 138–39.) See also the very specific statement of the same point in the *De septem sigillis* (which I take with Reeves to be a late work of Joachim's), ed. Reeves, "The Seven Seals" (as above, n. 4), p. 244.

<sup>46</sup> As early as when he wrote the *De vita Sancti Benedicti* Joachim wondered whether Antichrist was not lying await among the "Latins": "Quapropter cavendum est, ne ipse Antichristus latitet modo apud Latinos . . ." (ed. Baraut, as n. 19 above, p. 94). The continuity of Joachim's belief that Antichrist would arise from the West makes the report of Roger Howden that Joachim told Richard the Lionhearted in 1190/91 "Antichristus in Roma natus est et ibi sedem apostolicam possidebit" fully credible: see Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 6–9.

<sup>47</sup> *Liber figurarum*, trans. McGinn, p. 138, although I prefer to translate *secta* as "sect" rather than "group." Again Joachim's thought on the subject appears to have been basically in place by the time of the writing of his *De vita Sancti Benedicti*. See p. 94: "Unde bene dicitur de secta pseudoprophetarum, cuius princeps erit Antichristus."



in 1187), the most serious latent one was the internal challenge posed by the growth of the Cathar and Waldensian heresies.<sup>48</sup> For Joachim the Jews clearly were not much of a problem to worry about, but if the Saracens and heretics were to collaborate, only a miracle of divine intervention could save the elect.<sup>49</sup>

Joachim's other great divergence from tradition lay in making his great Antichrist represent the embodiment of the worst imaginable Western corporate dangers — a depraved royalty and a depraved papacy — rather than conceiving of him as being unaffiliated. In terming the traditional Antichrist "unaffiliated," I of course do not mean to suggest that he was expected to delude the world unaided. On the contrary, the worst of all diabolical villains as envisaged by Adso and received lore was to be instructed by maleficent enchanters and at the height of his powers would dispose over an army of minions. Yet this Antichrist came out of nowhere in concrete historical terms; inspired by demons as he was, he still appeared as little more than a nightmarishly successful deluder and persecutor acting without relation to prior earthly institutions.

Joachim's Antichrist, on the other hand, not only leads a sect of heretics, but by his very titles — king and priest — stands for all the worst things that might soon happen in the West. This conception of Antichrist's powers was grounded on the assumption that the Devil would send two final Antichrists to mimic hideously the two advents of Christ. We have already seen that Joachim offered this assumption as a means of explaining why and how the Antichrist coming before the Sabbath would be different from Gog coming after — that is, the one would come "hiddenly" and the other "openly." But there was more, for Joachim also posited that just as Christ in his first coming was king, and priest, and prophet, so the great Antichrist would "sometimes imitate and call himself a prophet, sometimes a priest, and sometimes a king."<sup>50</sup>

Providing greater detail on this mimicry, Joachim ignored the prophetlike aspect of the great Antichrist and concentrated instead on his dual nature as priest and king. Here his discussion grew out of his exegesis of Revelation

<sup>48</sup> In the *Expositio*, fol. 134ra, Joachim identifies the heretics that Antichrist will lead as "Patarines," a term by which he definitely meant to designate the Cathars (see *ibid.*, fol. 130vb). A full review of Joachim's expressions concerning heresy is presented by Raoul Manselli, "Testimonianze minori sulle eresie: Gioacchino da Fiore di fronte a Catari e Valdesi," *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser. 18/2 (1977), 1–17.

<sup>49</sup> Admittedly Joachim's Antichrist remains a *deceiver* of the Jews, as he was for Adso and medieval tradition. The point, for example, is stressed by Joachim in his *Adversus Iudeos*, ed. Arsenio Frugoni, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 95 (Rome, 1957), p. 48. But for Joachim Antichrist is just as much a deceiver of the Gentiles as he is of the Jews: e.g., *Expositio*, fol. 10vb: "decipiet multitudinem infinitam Judeorum et Gentium."

<sup>50</sup> *Expositio*, fol. 10vb: "Sicut autem Christus Iesus dictus est rex et pontifex et propheta, ita et ipse nunc prophetam, nunc pontificem, nunc se regem Christum simulabit et dicet." The same point is made in the *Liber figurarum*, trans. McGinn, p. 139.

13, the chapter which treats of the complementary appearances of the “beast from the sea” and the “beast from the earth.” For Joachim these two monsters were complementary manifestations of the one great Antichrist, who was simultaneously king and priest, or, implicitly, the worst imaginable Western emperor and the worst imaginable pope. The beast of the sea was a terrible monarch, like Nero — “as if the emperor of all the earth” — and the beast of the earth was a parallel “great prelate,” like Simon Magus — “as if the universal priest of all the earth.”<sup>51</sup> Revealing himself as priest, this Antichrist would fulfill Paul’s prediction of the coming of a terrible “man of sin” who would “exalt himself over all . . . that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God” (2 Thess. 2.3–4); and revealing himself as king, he would fulfill Daniel’s prophecy of the coming of a “king of fierce countenance,” whose “power shall be mighty, but not by his own power” (Dan. 8.23–24).<sup>52</sup>

Joachim certainly did not know exactly who this great Antichrist would be, but he just as certainly believed that he would be coming momentarily.<sup>53</sup> We now know that the abbot “erred in his counting” in this regard, yet his Antichrist teachings were nonetheless so gripping and so seemingly grounded on scriptural infallibility that they exerted an enormous influence on posterity. For example, Peter Olivi, Ubertino da Casale, John of Rupe-scissa, Francesc Eiximenis, and Bishop Berthold Pürstinger, to name just a few late medieval prophets and remonstrators, all drew directly or indirectly from Joachim’s teachings on Antichrists and Antichrist.<sup>54</sup> Tracing these and

<sup>51</sup> Richard K. Emmerson and R. B. Herzman, “Antichrist, Simon Magus, and Dante’s ‘Inferno’ XIX,” *Traditio* 36 (1980), 373–98, argue convincingly for seeing Simon Magus as a type of Antichrist in Dante but miss the likely Joachite inspiration, especially at p. 380, n. 23.

<sup>52</sup> *Expositio*, fol. 168ra, essentially reiterated by *Liber figurarum*, trans. McGinn, p. 138. On the grounds of these texts I believe Töpfer, *Reich des Friedens*, p. 91, is mistaken in maintaining that Joachim’s Antichrist “ist also nicht in erster Linie ein weltlicher Herrscher, sondern mehr eine Art Pseudopapst.” The point is crucial for measuring the extent and nature of Joachim’s subsequent influence. For example, the Franciscans who shortly before 1250 thought that Emperor Frederick II was Antichrist were just as much true disciples of Joachim as were the later Franciscans, Beguins, and Fraticelli who considered one or another pope to be the “mystical” or “great Antichrist.” Note, too, that Peter Olivi, in this regard one of Joachim’s most faithful heirs, made both Nero and Simon Magus foreshadow the great Antichrist and that Olivi went out of his way to disavow any attempt to turn the great Antichrist into a pseudo-pope alone: see passages from Olivi’s *Lectura super Apocalypsim* quoted respectively by David Burr, “Olivi’s Apocalyptic Timetable,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 11 (1981), 242, and by Töpfer himself, p. 229, n. 101, as well as by Gian Luca Potestà, *Storia ed escatologia in Ubertino da Casale* (Milan, 1980), p. 154, n. 22.

<sup>53</sup> Again the contemporary reports of conversations, as in Reeves, *Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 4–14, gibe with what we find in the abbot’s actual writings, as, e.g., *Exposito*, fol. 133ra: “ipsum magnum Antichristum . . . quem ego . . . presentem puto esse in mundo.”

<sup>54</sup> Without attempting to be exhaustive, I would cite: for Olivi and Ubertino, Potestà, *Storia*, pp. 142–67; for Rupescissa, my “Black Death and Western European Eschatological Mentalities,” *American Historical Review* 86 (1981), 533–52, at pp. 541–42 (reprinted with improve-

related influences would be a separate task. Suffice it here merely to say in conclusion that Joachim of Fiore's belief that two terrible Antichrists were still to come and his belief that the "real and true" Antichrist appearing before the Sabbath would be simultaneously a Western king of lies and pseudo-pope were to become major components of an extremely tenacious tradition of late medieval eschatological faith.

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ments in Daniel Williman, ed., *The Black Death: The Impact of the Fourteenth-Century Plague* [Binghamton, N.Y., 1982], pp. 77–105, at pp. 84–85); for Eiximenis, Pere Bohigas, "Prediccions i profecies en les obres de Fra Francesc Eiximenis," *Franciscalia* (Barcelona, 1928), pp. 23–38, at pp. 26–30; and for Pürstinger, Josef Schmuck, *Die Prophetie "Onus Ecclesiae" des Bischofs Berthold Pürstinger* (Vienna, 1973), pp. 227–31. The background to the concept of a "mystic Antichrist" who comes as an immediate forerunner of the "great Antichrist" in the eschatology of Olivi and his followers is a topic I hope to address in the future.