

Joachim of Fiore, Eric Voegelin and the History of Order

Claudia Harrison

In Partial Fulfillment for the Degree Bachelor of Arts in the Classics/History/Politics
Major

April 10th, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Life of Joachim of Fiore	6
Works	11
The Third Realm	20
The Brotherhood	24
The Last Leader	28
Conclusion	35
Appendix	38
Bibliography	43

Introduction

“The story has no beginning before it comes to its end. What comes first then: the beginning or the end?” Eric Voegelin begins the last volume of his five-part work *Order and History* with a meditation on beginning.¹ He means to convey that history is not necessarily chronological. Or that it hasn’t always been viewed as progression. Working forward, a historian might assume he is starting from the beginning. But he cannot. He starts in his own time and leaps back to the start without shedding his modern perspective. Instead of working forward and starting from “nothing”, as we are prone to do, some historians have proposed working backwards: staring with all current knowledge and slowly peeling back the layers of time and perspective until we are left only with what we know for certain. In this way, we can see a philosopher’s perspective as a member of his own time rather than unjustly comparing him to the modern day. Karl Lowith does this very thing in his book, *Meaning in History*, where he uncovers the deep influence of Christian philosophy on modern historical thought. His essay on the twelfth century theologian, Joachim of Fiore caught the attention of Eric Voegelin, becoming a small but significant part of one of the most important books on political philosophy in the twentieth century.

In *The New Science of Politics*, Eric Voegelin presents a bold theory of politics and history, attempting to explain how humans reached modernity. A central tenant of his thesis is the cycles of de-divinization and re-divinization he sees occurring throughout

¹ Eric Voegelin, *In Search of Order*, vol. 5, *Order and History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1987), 13.

history. He posits that the rise of Christianity in the Western world brought a period of de-divinization by devaluing earthly affairs in favor of celestial ones. There was, however, a strain of Christianity that had the power to re-divinize society through predicting the Second Coming and Last Days before the apocalypse. Voegelin writes, “The life of early Christian communities was experientially not fixed but oscillated between the eschatological expectation of the Parousia that would bring the Kingdom of God and the understanding of the church as the apocalypse of Christ in history”.² By including the Revelation of St. John in the canon of texts, the Church opened itself to eventual criticism and reform from fanatics eagerly awaiting the end of time. While St. Augustine temporarily crushed the literal belief in the millennium from Revelation, Voegelin sees one theologian as primarily responsible for bringing back eschatological hope into the modern era.

Voegelin credits the abbot Joachim of Fiore with reviving the apocalyptic tradition in Christianity as well as “creating the aggregate of symbols which govern the self-interpretation of modern political society to this day”.³ The symbols he outlines are the Third Realm or three stages of history, the leader, the prophet, and the universal brotherhood. The leader and prophet often blur together, but all of these symbols can be found in both secular and religious speculations about history, ranging from the secular categorization of history into ancient, medieval, and modern periods to Marx’s vision of a community of men living without government institutions. Writing in the twelfth century, Joachim’s time was one with deep undercurrents of change for religious and political

² Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 107, 108.

³ *Ibid.*, 111.

orders. But just how responsible is the monk for bringing the sacred into human history?

In this thesis, I will investigate Eric Voegelin's claims and the significance of the symbols he identifies in the medieval period. The analysis is divided into three parts, exploring the three symbols Voegelin mentions before, during and after Joachim's lifetime. Whether Joachim was truly the cause of such a monumental shift in human thought or whether he came about with the right ideas at the right time remains to be seen.

The Life of Joachim of Fiore

Most of what we know about Joachim of Fiore's life comes from two biographies: *Virtutum Beati Joachimi Synopsis*, written by his friend and secretary, Luke of Cosenza, and *Vita Beati Joachimi Abbatis*, left anonymously by one of his close disciples. Joachim was born in A.D. 1135 in the town of Celico, in the Consenza diocese in Calabria.⁴ Marjorie Reeves points out the diversity of traditions around Joachim's birthplace, drawing attention to the Greek and Jewish influences in the region and adding "he lived at a point where western Europe thrusts out into a Mediterranean menaced by Saracens, where, in Messina, pilgrims, travelers, and crusaders gathered and every rumor of the great conflict with the 'Beast from the Sea' was echoed."⁵ The Norman kingdom controlled Calabria under an advanced political system that maintained peace among the different cultural groups, issuing official documents in Greek, Arabic, and Latin. While Joachim was alive, the Holy Roman Empire and the Pope competed fiercely over these Norman portions of Southern Italy.⁶

Joachim's early career was spent following in the footsteps of his father Mauro the Notary, who served the Sicilian court. In 1167 he left his position as a junior chancery official in the service of King William I, the Bad, while on an official trip to Constantinople to engage in a spiritual journey to Jerusalem and the other Holy Lands. Later he was said to have experienced a vision of the Father on Mount Tabor, however

⁴ Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 1.

⁵ Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore & the Prophetic Future: A Medieval Study in Historical Thinking* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 3.

⁶ McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 2.

Joachim himself never confirmed this ephiphany.⁷ Afterwards, he lived very ascetically as a hermit near Mt. Etna, before returning to Calabria as a wandering preacher and visiting a Cistercian monastery, Sambucina, where he received two more visions.⁸ Ordained a priest by the bishop of Catanzaro, Joachim changed paths after a fateful encounter with a Greek monk who convinced him to join the Benedictine monastery of Corazzo instead. He took the habit in 1171.⁹

Humble, devoted, and extremely disciplined, Joachim preferred interpreting the Scriptures through extensive study and prayer to any other tasks. His extraordinary modesty and excellent sermons quickly won him the respect of his peers, who convinced Joachim to accept the position of abbot in 1178. During his time as abbot, he successfully led the monastery in observing Cistercian reforms, seeking a more perfect ideal of monastic life with its incorporation into the Order. However, he soon tired of the administrative duties preventing him from his study and abandoned his position in 1183 in the process of asking the Cistercian abbey of Casamari to take Corazzo as its own.¹⁰ He remained in Casamari for over a year, beginning the first book of his trilogy, *Concordie novi ac veteris Testamenti*, and working on his other two major works simultaneously. In March of 1184, Joachim was called before Pope Lucius III, who

⁷ Delno C. West and Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 19.

⁸ Bernard McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality: Treatises and Letters of Lactantius, Adso of Montier-en-Der, Joachim of Fiore, the Franciscan Spirituals, Savonarola* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 98.

⁹ West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 20.

¹⁰ McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 3.

encouraged his scholarly pursuits and relieved him from his position as abbot. Joachim made his way back to Corazzo, where he continued writing for five more years.¹¹

Exegesis of the scriptures required extensive study, prayer, and meditation, to which Joachim was more than willing to devote the majority of his time. He received a number of epiphanies and visions, granting him a unique understanding of the Spirit within the text, but these did not come easily. Two instances of major spiritual blocks preceded Joachim's most important insights. About the first, he writes,

Having gone through the preceding verses of the Apocalypse to this place, I experienced such great difficulty and a mental constraint beyond the ordinary that it was like feeling the stone that closed the tomb opposed to me....Since I was involved in many things, forgetfulness led the matter far away. After a year, the feast of Easter came around. Awakened from sleep at midnight, something happened to me as I was meditating on this book, something for which, relying on God's gift, I am made more bold to write....About the middle of the night's silence, as I think, the hour when it is thought that our Lion of the tribe of Judah rose from the dead, as I was meditating, suddenly something of the fullness of the book and of the entire harmony of the Old and New Testaments was perceived with clarity of understanding in my mind's eye.

Joachim and a close friend, Rainer of Ponza, left Corazzo for mountainous Pietraltra in 1189, where they lived as hermits in cells for a couple years. However Joachim eventually forwent complete seclusion in favor of founding a new, stricter Order to suit his needs. The Cistercian abbey of St. John of Fiore was founded on Mt Nero and faced a long uphill battle against the state and neighboring monasteries before gaining recognition by Pope Celestine III in the form of a charter on August 25, 1196.¹² While abbot of this remote abbey, Joachim earned widespread acclaim for his writings, meeting frequently with royal authorities and various members of the papacy. He met three

¹¹ West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 4.

¹² McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 3.

different Popes and was called upon by three kings including Philip Augustus of France, Richard I of England, and Emperor Henry VI at separate times.¹³

His best-recorded encounter, with Richard I of England, took place around 1190. The king requested Joachim's advice just before the Third Crusade. Joachim, less interested in short-term prophecies than the overall meaning and order of history, refused to say whether the English crusaders would be victorious and instead turned the minds of the courtiers to his interpretation of the Dragon with Seven Heads (Fig. 1), which he took to represent the fall of seven rulers including Herod, Nero, Constantius Arrianus, Mahomet, Melsemutus, and two more to come. Joachim is also said to have chastised Henry VI later, in 1191, for trying to take over Tancred on behalf of his wife Constance. According to the *Vita Joachimi Abbatis*, he prophesied the decline of Normandy during this encounter, comparing it to Tyre falling before the king of Babylon.¹⁴

In a final, telling encounter in 1198, Joachim corresponded with the Cistercian abbot, Adam of Persigny, in Rome. Adam asked Joachim about how he received his prophecies. Joachim responded that he received clarity to understand the Scriptures with *spiritus intelligentiae*, God's divine gift, as a result of long and disciplined study of the Letter and repetition of psalms under Benedictine rule.¹⁵ Only in this way was Joachim able to perceive the patterns and symbols that directed his life's work. Joachim died quietly on March 30, 1202 in San Martino di Giove, a secluded haven he had built for

¹³ West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 5.

¹⁴ Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore & the Prophetic Future*, 23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

himself after being gifted a portion of land by Archbishop Andrew of Consenza a year earlier.¹⁶

¹⁶ McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 30.

Works

Joachim's three major works *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti*, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, and *Psalterium Decem Cordarum* comprise a trilogy that was the central focus of his life. The first is a comprehensive attempt to draw parallels from each important figure in the Old Testament to one in the New Testament. This included not only people but also periods of time. It is an elaborate historical schema, which sets up his other two works. *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, Joachim's main exegesis, is a commentary on the Book of Revelation, specifically explicating its symbols and relating them to his understanding of history. He also connects the concepts in Revelation to patterns he found in Genesis and the four Gospels. Finally, *Psalterium Decem Cordarum* presents the three stages of history allegorically through the symbol of a psalterium, a triangular stringed instrument (Fig. 2). The body of the instrument represents the Father, the melodies produced, the Son, and the combination of singing and playing, the Holy Spirit. Joachim explains that all three aspects, even though they can be viewed separately, are essential for a psalterium to fulfill its true purpose. In this section I will examine Joachim's methods of exegesis, his symbols, his numerology, and the significance of his timeline. This task is essential in evaluating what makes Joachim's works unique in historical understanding and why his particular symbols became so attractive to future orders and political movements.

Numbers hold a particular significance for Joachim and can be found all over his works. He derives the most meaning from the numbers two, three, and seven with secondary interests in four, five, and twelve. For centuries, numerology had been used to perceive order in the outside world. Numbers connected man to the cosmos by measuring

time and space definitively. Joachim alternates between the numbers two and three for his schema of history, either prioritizing the relationship between the Father and the Son or the entire Trinity. He admires the number two for its symmetry and parallelism and the number three for its representation of perfection or *essentia*. Four represents the earth and cosmic order through its association with the four elements and four directions, seven represents completion as the Sabbath and rest from creation, and five represents man because of the senses and man's five limbs including the head. As the combination of five and seven, twelve takes on the significance of fulfillment or prophecy. Bernard McGinn explains, "five is the promise, seven is the action, and twelve is the fulfillment".¹⁷

Traditional twelfth century exegesis distinguished between literal and spiritual interpretations of the Bible. The scriptures could be taken in four senses: literal, allegorical or doctrinal, moral or tropological, and analogical or heavenly.¹⁸ Joachim himself differentiates between allegory and typology, the metaphorical meaning of the text and the secondary meaning that can only be discerned through later events. He calls these types *allegoria* and *concordia*. Under *allegoria* he included the historical, tropological, moral, contemplative, and anagogic senses. He writes

Allegoria is the similarity of any small thing to an extremely large one, for example of a day to a year, of a week to an age, of a person to an order, or a city, or a nation, or a people, and a thousand similar instances. By way of illustration, Abraham is a single man who stands for the order of patriarchs in which there are many men.¹⁹

¹⁷ McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 19.

¹⁸ Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 130.

¹⁹ McGinn and Reeves, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 122.

The five senses that made up the *spiritualis intellectus* revealed a continuous progression from the material to the spiritual or from slavery to freedom. Joachim uses the example of Abraham's two wives to explain how to apply each of the senses. The historical sense sees Agar as a servant and Sarah as a free woman. The moral sense, Agar as affected by the flesh and Sarah by the spirit. The tropological sense identifies Agar with the Holy Scripture and Sarah with spiritual understanding. In the contemplative sense, Agar signifies the active life and Sarah the contemplative life and the anagogical sense reveals Agar as present strife and Sarah as future paradise.

The seven senses of the *typicus intellectus* or *concordia* correspond to both the seven divisions of history outlined by St. Augustine as well as the seven relationships within the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Father and Son, Father and Holy Spirit, Son and Holy Spirit and the whole Trinity. Joachim explains

That understanding which is called *concordia* is similar to a highway that extends from a wasteland to a city. On the way it crosses valleys in which a traveler may wonder if he is on the right road and just as often passes over mountain heights from which he can see backward as well as forward and determine the right direction to take for the remainder of the journey by contemplating the road he has come. Every traveler who goes forward until the route ahead is unclear finds the correct route to proceed by looking backward.²⁰

Joachim perceived fourteen periods of history having already passed, seven in the Old Testament and seven in the New Testament. He believed that each new age of history comprehends the past within itself resulting in gradual spiritual development. Notably each of the periods ended either in war or persecution. In the Old Testament: the first seal, Abraham and Jacob to Moses and Joshua, the second, Joshua to David, the third,

²⁰ McGinn and Reeves, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 123.

David to Elijah and Elisha, the fourth, Elisha to Isaiah and Hezekiah, the fifth, Hezekiah to the Captivity of Judah, the sixth, the return of the Jews to Malachi, the seventh, Malachi to Christ and John the Baptist. These seals were signified in Revelation 8-11 with the seven trumpets blown by seven angels, corresponding to the fall of Jericho in the Old Testament.²¹

Joachim's seven periods in the New Testament are even more telling. He saw the first as extending from Christ to the death of John the Baptist, the second, St. John's death to Constantine, the third, Constantine to Justinian, the fourth, Justinian to Charlemagne, and the fifth, Charlemagne to the present. The sixth period was about to begin and the seventh would mark the end of the second age and beginning of a third status.²² In *Expositio in Apocalypsim* Joachim provides a detailed explanation of each of the epochs, their correspondences, and his exact reasons for place them where does. But the main significance of his *concordia* is its relation to his larger, three-age theory of history.²³

²¹ Joachim's belief that history of world consisted on seven periods from beginning of time to Jesus was not new. His biggest influence, St. Augustine, who he cites at least forty-three times throughout his entire body of work, also posited seven historical phases. Augustine posited six non-literal time periods corresponding to the six days of creation before Eternal Rest. The first was from Adam to Noah, the second from Noah to Abraham, the third from Abraham to David, the fourth from David to the Captivity, the fifth from the Captivity to Christ, the sixth from Christ to the End of History, and the Seventh as the Second Advent or Eternal Rest. In Augustine's mind, the Millennium had begun with the Advent of Christ and would end with the Second Coming. Augustine's own time was part of the sixth age. Rather than a steady progression, he saw a general trend of deterioration throughout human history, which would continue until the Second Advent. Like Tichonius before him, Augustine related the Book of Revelation to the trials and tribulations of the Church; St. John's Apocalypse was instructive rather than prophetic.

²² West and Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore*, 22.

²³ Interestingly, Augustine also proclaimed three stages in *City of God*: "Before the Law" (Adam to Moses) "Under the Law" (Moses to Christ) "under the Gospel" (Christ to Last Judgment). The main

To fully comprehend Joachim's three stages of history, one must get a sense of his approach to Trinitarian theology. His ideas about the Trinity stemmed from one of his revelations, which he includes in the preface to his *Psalterium Decem Cordarum*. He writes

there came upon me an uncertainty concerning belief in the Trinity as though it were hard to understand or to hold that three Persons were one God and one God three Persons. When that happened I was very frightened and deeply shocked and was moved to call on the Holy Spirit, whose feast day it was, to deign to show me the holy mystery of the Trinity. The Lord has promised us that the whole understanding of truth is to be found in the Trinity (John 16:13). I repeated this and began to pray the psalms to complete the number I had intended. At this moment without delay the shape of a ten-stringed psaltery appeared in my mind. The mystery of the Holy Trinity shone so brightly and clearly in it that I was at once compelled to cry out, 'What God is great as our God?'²⁴

Joachim's conception of the Trinity as a triangular, ten-stringed instrument (Fig. 2) is essential to his theology. He strongly defends Augustine's conception of the Father proceeding from nothing, the Son proceeding from the Father alone, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from both Father and Son. The eternal progression he identifies fits with traditional Trinitarian theology, which Joachim felt that thinkers of his time such as Peter Lombard were attacking. He elaborates on this idea in his *Confessio Trinitatis*, stating

the Father is true God, true wisdom, true essence, and this is not to be understood as confused in a Sabellian manner, but the Father alone is ungenerated God, ungenerated wisdom and ungenerated essence; the Son alone is generated God, generated wisdom and generated essence, and we understand this in accordance with the Fathers: The Son is 'God from God, light from light,' 'wisdom from

difference was that Joachim believes the last stage was yet to come, while Augustine sees it as his own time. Joachim frequently quoted Augustine, most importantly his *De civitate Dei* and *De Trinitate*, which provide the historical background and analysis of history that Joachim uses.

²⁴ Joachim, and Kurt-Victor Selge. trans. Peter Gemeinhardt. *Psalterium Decem Cordarum*. (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2009.) 9.10–10.6 (fol. 227rb–va)

wisdom' and 'essence from essence.' But both are not at the same time God from God, as Augustine points out, but only the Son is from God, i.e. the Father.²⁵

These parallels to light, wisdom, and essence draw from the Nicene Creed and Augustine's own thoughts on the Trinity. They are also the basis for his understanding of past, future, and the entire order of history.

To Joachim, the human world is a reflection of the spiritual world. He uses Pauline principles to argue the three-age schema in his *Liber Concordiae Novi ac Veteris Testamenti*. Distinguishing between the flesh and the spirit, Joachim explains that in the First Age, humans lived according to the flesh, in the Second Age, the flesh and the spirit, and in the Third Age, we will all live in accordance with the spirit alone. These eras can also be summarized as humans living under the Law, under the Church, and under the Spirit. Each epoch includes a golden period or flowering where the works produced perfectly characterized the *tempus*. In the first, from Abraham to Zechariah, the second, from Zechariah to the forty-second generation after Christ, and the third, from the twenty-second generation after St. Benedict until the end of the world.²⁶ The epochs also each have their own order: the Order of the Married, where the task is procreation, the Order of the Clerics, where the task is gospel, and the Order of the Monks, where the task is spiritual understanding. Joachim reasons that the important figures in the first epoch, the fathers, were projections in the image of the Father, those of the second epoch, the saved, in the image of the Son, and those of the third epoch, all men, in the image of the Holy Spirit. He also associates the Old Testament with the First Age, the New Testament with the Second Age, and the Rule of St. Benedict with the Third Age.

²⁵ Joachim, and Mehlman, trans. Peter Gemeinhardt, *Confessio Trinitatis*, 218-220.

²⁶ McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 59.

Joachim was a visual or pictorial thinker; therefore the best way to grasp his understanding of history is through his illustrations. One of his more famous images, the Tree-Circles (Fig. 3) illustrates his Trinitarian schema. Joachim depicts a tree with Noah as the trunk, diverging into three stems that are his sons: Ham, Shem, and Japhet. While the Ham stem stops short, the other two grow upwards, crossing twice to form three circles representing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in order. In the first section, the Jewish side blooms a little more than the Gentile side, representing spiritual development in the Age of the Father, but in the second circle, this reverses so that the Gentiles bloom with the rise of Christianity. The third and high ring blossoms on all sides and within the circle, symbolizing the traditions converging in the Age of the Spirit and granting Jews and Gentiles equal importance in this period. With his tree imagery, Joachim shows that each age is present within the other ages, rather than forming a straightforward succession. The tree also stretches towards the heavens but rather than continuing upward unites both stems into a ring, creating neither a fixed end nor an endless progression to history.

A similar indicator of Joachim's Trinitarian theology again shows his three interlocking rings (Fig. 4), representing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Within in the circles he separates the Latin name for Yaweh or God, IEVE, distributing the syllables equally. The first and third rings, those of the Father and the Holy Spirit represent the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. The first ring is green, symbolizing earth or nature, the second blue, symbolizing water or grace, and the third, red symbolizing fire or spirit.²⁷ Because they overlap, the rings create four main sections, representing the four gospels and seven sections in total, representing the seven seals.

Much more symbolism can be drawn out from this image, but these parallels provide examples of how Joachim outlined his thought.

Finally, the image that best describes Joachim's political schema shows a "new order" for his Third Status (Fig. 5). Taking the shape of a Greek altar cross, the figure can be divided into three main parts. The four ends of the cross at the top stand for the monks who will rule the Third Age. Beneath them is a layer of clerics and at the bottom are the laymen, on top of whom the whole society stands. The clerics are placed between the laymen and the monks so they can act as an intermediary for the two groups. On another level, the society is a human body. All the parts benefit each other and excluding any group would be detrimental to the order. Joachim also ascribes the four animals from the visions of Ezekiel and John in the Bible to the four orders of monks. The calf, representing the Gospel of Matthew, corresponds to the working monks, engaging in the most active life. The lion, representing the Gospel of Luke, corresponds to the clerical monks. The human-faced animal, representing the Gospel of Mark, corresponds to the teaching monks and the eagle, representing the Gospel of John, corresponds to the contemplative monks, with the most knowledge. There is a clear hierarchy, with the contemplative monks, engaging most in the *vita contemplativa* at the top and the working monks engaging most in the *vita activa* at the bottom.²⁸ This structure illustrates one of the most important features of Joachim's thought: that the later an order emerges, the more connected it is with the divine.

²⁸ Matthias Riedl, "A Collective Messiah: Joachim of Fiore's Constitution of Future Society," 2012, 68, http://www.revistamirabilia.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/2012_01_03.pdf.

Although it is not unusual for theologians and philosophers to see in their lifetime a *limen* or turning point in history, Joachim's conservatism in his schema's influences and adaptations would seem to preclude a theory so centered on his own time. For this there is no good explanation other than the course of history itself. Nothing of spiritual significance may have happened in the year 1260, as Joachim had predicted, but the political influence of his works in the following century are apparent in the millenarian movements that followed.

The Third Realm

Up to this point in Christianity, there existed both pessimistic and optimistic ideas about the eschaton. It could be seen either as the violent retribution to mankind's increasing evil or the final relief from worldly suffering. Skeptics prepared for society's gradual moral deterioration followed by a strict final Judgment, where only the faithful would be saved. Still others, described as "millenarians" looked forward to a sort of Jewish Messianic Age, where a Holy People were to take over Jerusalem and reign in peace and harmony.²⁹ The terms stems from the word "millennium" because this last era was supposed to be a thousand years, derived from the wisdom in Revelation. Although the book specifies that resurrected Christian martyrs would inherit this kingdom, many Christian sects interpreted this prophecy more freely, equating themselves with the martyrs and anticipating the kingdom within their lifetime.³⁰ In this way they contained the Messianic Age within history, not beyond it. It was the climax to linear time, which appeared inevitable in the near future.

Three concepts from Christian doctrine supported a final age of peace. The first was that of the Millennium, of Satan bound for a thousand years, the second, of the Sabbath Age, and the third, of the Holy Ghost bringing illumination at the end of human history. The symbol of the Millennium promised direct divine intervention in history preceding a definite limited time period wherein Satan would be bound and only an exceptional few would survive. After this period, there would be one last battle between good and evil

²⁹ Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 295.

³⁰ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London: Paladin, 1970), 14.

before the end of days. A New Jerusalem would descend and begin another heaven and earth beyond human history. Some, including the Christian Papias from around A.D. 60-130, saw this millennium as an earthly Age of Gold for the rest of time. However, influential theologians such as Origen and St. Augustine rejected millenarianism as wishful thinking and proposed an entirely spiritual Millennium, existing beyond human time. St. Augustine particularly believed that Christ's birth had set off the Millennium, which was being fully realized in the Church over and over again.³¹

The concept of the Sabbath was often interpreted eschatologically rather than practically in early Christianity. A Sabbath Age was expected to fall within time and history but theologians argued over when this could take place, since it necessarily must be the result of divine intervention. The Seventh Day of Creation must be distinct from the Eighth Day of Eternity. For example, Lactantius, writing in the third century, foresaw rising evil on earth, ushered in by wars, plagues, an evil king, and a false prophet up until the righteous would be besieged by the Antichrist in a mountain. At this point, God would send a Messiah to liberate His people, and Christ would battle the Antichrist before the dead were resurrected for the Last Judgment. Only after all this would the Sabbath Age occur on earth for a definite period of time, an age of gold and bliss for the survivors.³² In this view, he seems to equate the Sabbath Age with the Millennium. St. Augustine is more cautious about his predictions, though he does distinguish the Seventh Day from the Eighth Day and places the Sabbath after the Second Coming and Last Judgment, contrasting the imperfect form of peace that can be achieved on earth with the divine rest eventually given by God.

³¹ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, 296.

³² Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 28.

Although the symbol of the Holy Ghost and full illumination may be the clearest expression supporting an apotheosis to history, it too leaves many ambiguities. The second century thinker, Montanus, believed the Third Age would follow the Parousia, when New Jerusalem would descend. The author Tertullian also subscribed to this chronology. Full illumination of the Age of Spirit could only be realized after the Second Coming, but this would not mark the end of history just yet, for it would be an earthly age.³³ In the centuries to come, orthodox Christian thought would correct these millenarian ideas, interpreting the Millennium as stretching between both advents and the Sabbath Age as beyond history.

Still this unique strain of thought survived through survived through Sibylline oracles. Influenced by classical thought, these prophetic writings highlight a tension between hope for human triumph or resolution in history and the knowledge only divine intervention can improve man. In this ideological conflict, an important symbol is introduced which would shape human history: the Last Emperor. The Tiburtine, one of the first texts to impart this symbol, did so in the fourth century. It predicts that a Greek Emperor, Constans, will lead men into a final age of peace and prosperity by converting or rooting out the non-believers. After performing this task, the Emperor was to surrender his crown and robe, manifestations of the rule of Christianity, in Jerusalem that God would take over his duties. A final battle between the Archangel Michael and the Antichrist would precede the Parousia.³⁴

Much later, in the seventh century, the Pseudo-Methodius appeared to bring back the symbol. It foresaw mounting evil and an attack on Christendom by the Ishmaelites, only

³³ McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot*, 59.

³⁴ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, 299-300.

to be defeated by the Last Emperor rising from his deep sleep. Then the gates of the north open unleashing the wrath of Alexander's conquered masses, which would burn and pillage the Eastern Empire, interrupting the period of tranquility the Emperor had instilled. Finally the Emperor would travel to Jerusalem to surrender his crown to the Antichrist, whom would rule until Christ came to defeat him and the Last Judgment would commence.³⁵ Once again the peace achieved by man is not the true peace that only Christ can bring, but it does recognize a moment of triumph of humankind.

The most influential doctrine of the Last Things that the Middle Ages saw, came from the Benedictine Abbot Adso of Burgundy in the tenth century. His *Libellus de ortu et tempore Antichristi*, a compilation of different ideas about the Antichrist, was hugely influential in this period. The abbot believed Antichrist would be born in Babylon and journey to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem and declare he is the son of God. Aided by the various miracles and resurrections he performs, the Antichrist will gain widespread support and recognition, which he will use to persecute Christians for three and a half years. Finally either Christ or the Archangel Michael will descend to defeat the Antichrist and bring a period of peace to Jerusalem.³⁶ The abbot still places both the Sabbath and Millennium outside of human time and history, but his detail of the Antichrist as the Last World Empire would inspire many later movements in France, Italy, and Germany. These early hopes for man's redemption through his own devices on earth would not be revived until Joachim of Fiore outlined his Trinitarian structure of history.

³⁵ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 71.

³⁶ McGinn and Reeves, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 86.

The Brotherhood

Some of the most fervent propagators of Joachim of Fiore's ideas came with the arrival of two new Orders of Mendicants that formed soon after his death in 1202. The Dominicans and the Franciscans, founded in 1206 and 1216 respectively, appeared to fulfill Joachim's expectation of the preaching orders that were to bridge the gap of understanding between scholastic hermits and laymen: those who interpreted the scriptures and those who the knowledge could benefit. The Joachimist movements stirring within these orders were passionately inspired by his ideas, living for the Third Age he described in his writings even without knowing its exact character. Although his words were rarely presented correctly, his symbols enchanted the minds of several friars enough to create beautiful stories and prophecies, assigning their orders with the pivotal role of harbingers for the Third Age, a universal brotherhood turning towards the Holy Spirit and the last stage of history.

In Joachim's schema of history, each status has a primary occupation: the Father creates, the Son teaches, and the Holy Spirit triumphs. The words Joachim himself uses are *operatio*, *doctrina*, and *jubilatio*. He uses contradictory symbols to explain the three ages, at one point characterizing the first status and order of married men as old, the clergy as young men, and the monks as youthful and reversing this order in another instance, presenting the laity as young and the brotherhood of monks as old men.³⁷ The ambiguity with which he presents the third order confirms both the double progression of the Third Age, resulting from both Father and Son as well as the intermediary position he hoped the two orders would occupy, mediating between reaching upwards for exegetical

³⁷ *Super Quatuor Evangelia* p. 92, *Psalterium Decem Chordatum* 246r.

wisdom and preaching downwards to the masses. The Dominican and Franciscan Orders focused mainly on the second task, forgetting the first, and therefore carried only a partial understanding of Joachim's prophecies into the present.

Even with St. Thomas Aquinas' well-publicized distaste for Joachim of Fiore and his prophecies, the sense of immediacy, historical consciousness, and intellectual character of the Dominican Order ensured that it would not escape Joachim's influence. Gerard de Fracheto details an interesting story of the founding of the Order in which St. Dominic and St. Francis see a beautiful apparition as well as the four animals of the Gospels and the wheel of Ezekiel, symbols featured prominently in Joachim's works, and decide to continue the work of all the patriarchs, apostles, prophets, important figures of Bible by helping the apparition extend its wings over the entire world. The vision itself does not mention Joachim but Dietrich of Apolda and Fr. Galvagneus de la Flamma after him both give Joachim credit for first predicting the two Orders when mentioning the story.³⁸ Around the same time, Stephen of Salaniaco in his *De Quatuor in quibus Deus Praedicatorum ordinem insignavit* would quote Joachim from a pseudo-Joachimist work before repeating Gerard de Fracheto's the same story. These works, from the 13th and 14th centuries begin the longstanding association between Joachim's two Orders and those of the Franciscans and Dominicans, reaffirmed in 1484 by St. Antonino, the Dominican Archbishop of Florence in his *Pars Historialis*.³⁹

Most Dominicans kept away from Joachim's more radical hopes for human history, but a few did indulge in apocalyptic speculation. In the late 13th century, John of Paris, quotes the *Super Hieremiam* and includes his own schema for the ages of the

³⁸ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Middle Ages*, 163.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

Church. These ideas were included in his *De Antichristo*, a work that was reproduced centuries after his death in 13. The Dominican Fr. Rusticianus compiled Joachimist prophecies with other apocalyptic texts and illustrations of Frederick III in the role of a Last World Emperor. Giovanni Anninio of Viterbo, the 15th century historian and scholar defended millenarianism, believing in both a final Age of Peace and a Last World Emperor. Finally, Thomas Malvenda, a 17th century Dominican, wrote about Joachim as a prophet for the Mendicants and echoed Joachim's positive outlook of man's ability to reform before the Last Judgement.⁴⁰ The significance of his vision of the apocalypse lies in the role of preaching across the world to restore order.

If Dominican friars reacted cautiously to Joachim's ideas, Franciscans reacted confidently. The extreme commitment to poverty and active spirit of the Franciscan Order lent itself well to apocalyptic thought. The messiah-like status attributed to St. Francis also served to fuel a mission much more historical than those before it. In many ways Joachim's *Liber Concordiae* paved the way for the many parallels drawn between St. Francis and Christ. Although Joachim himself would never permit there to be a third Testament to accompany his Third Age, many Franciscans put the Testament of St. Francis in this spot. John of Parma, a well-known Joachite, first associated St. Francis with the Sixth Angel of the Apocalypse in the 13th century and Bartholomew of Pisa managed the same in 1385 without inciting the accusations of heresy laid on the former. However it was the Franciscan Gerard of Borgo San Donnino in his 1255 compilation of Joachim's trilogy who first acknowledged Joachim's Third Age of history.⁴¹ Gerard of Borgo San Donnino's introduction to the works was regarded as a heretical, prompting

⁴⁰ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, 172.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

further examination of Joachim's works and his theory of history. In the meantime, the idea of a Third Status was once again buried under the less controversial but no less apocalyptic expectations of the openings of the sixth and seventh seals.

Compared to the bold reformative instincts of the Mendicant Orders in the 13th and 14th centuries, Joachim's own Cistercian Order in Cosenza remained very conservative in character. Marjorie Reeves calls the abbot, "bold in prophecy" yet "timid in experiment".⁴² Joachim did not see in his own order the potential to transform or revolutionize. Instead the Cistercians who held on to Joachim's prophecies are mainly characterized by waiting. After Joachim's death there remained a small group of his followers in Calabria from the Order of Fiore preserving his works and sermons as well as more fantastical legends about Joachim. The *Super Hieremiam*, one of the most famous Joachimist works is thought to have come from these Cistercian followers. In it, Joachim's three statuses are clearly outlined, his Trinitarian doctrine is defended and the concept of a brotherhood of monks is explored in detail.⁴³ While Dominican and Franciscan awareness of Joachimist prophecies prompted action and reform, the Order of Fiore preserved its current status, defending its founder against the condemnation of 1215 and attacks on his Trinitarian doctrine, collecting pseudo-prophecies, reinterpreting his works through spiritual understanding, and anticipating the Third Status.

⁴² Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Middle Ages*, 145, 146.

⁴³ Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future*, 26.

The Last World Emperor

Joachim of Fiore unintentionally articulated a new type of millenarianism, which would eventually be appropriated by a number of religious and political movements, ranging in size and scope. Most of these movements diverged sharply from the original interests of the abbot, but they all echoed the idea of *reformare* that Joachim reintroduced into mainstream thought. Joachim mentions a *Dux e Babylone*, a leader for the spiritual age. We now know that Joachim most likely meant the pope to be this leader and his mission would be to free the Church from political rule. However, many of Joachim's followers and scholars merged this conception with another Christian idea of Last World Emperor who would usher in the Third Realm. In Joachim's time the idea of authorship was much more complex. It was considered normal to take from or rewrite the works of other authors, and often the true source of a text was obscured. Followers of Joachim did not find it important to distinguish between what Joachim actually wrote and the later texts ascribed to him. Therefore, Joachim's legacy is necessarily intertwined with the thoughts and ideas of his followers, even if they are not accurate to his original works.

One of the earliest recorded uses of Joachite texts was by a rigorist group of the Franciscan Order, which formed within a few years of Joachim's death around St. Francis of Assisi.⁴⁴ The reformers broke off of the order after it began acquiring land and universities for its own uses. Rejecting these advancements and seeking a stricter form of monastic life, they soon stumbled upon Joachim of Fiore's "prophecies", fueling many commentaries and prophecies of their own based on his works. These monks naturally viewed their own Order as the last and most perfect brotherhood Joachim had outlined in

⁴⁴ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 110.

his writings, and prepared to lead the faithful into a final era of history. These pseudo-Joachite prophecies grew in popularity so much as to eclipse Joachim's own writings and went on to inspire various radical movements in later centuries.

Eschatological expectations and prophecies about a Last World Emperor existed long before Joachim's works, but his notoriety and that of the prophecies he inspired had long lasting political effects, particularly in Germany. After Frederick I's death during the first crusade, German prophecies imagined a second Frederick to complete the work of the first and usher the Christian masses into the Millennium. In 1210, Frederick's grandson Frederick II received this role, of Emperor of the Last Days. Frederick II's fascinating character lent him well to the position and his capture of Jerusalem in 1229 provided further evidence in his favor. He also harbored an antagonistic relationship with the Papacy, believing it was corrupt with wealth and threatening to diminish its power. These ongoing conflicts set Frederick up to be the savior in a pseudo-Joachite text, written ten years after the crusade, which anticipated Frederick eventually annihilating the church by the year 1260, beginning the third age.⁴⁵

While German Joachites perceived the Last World Emperor as a savior, Italian Franciscan Spirituals perceived the mounting evil implied by his arrival. To them, the Emperor was the Beast of the Apocalypse and the developing Holy Roman Empire would eventually become Babylon. These political symbols spawned from the devil and were to be destroyed before the onset of the Millennium. But in Germany, the idea persisted that the clergy were corrupt and required the chastisement of a powerful new leader, who would remake the Church. Popes and bishops were cast aside and replaced with the

⁴⁵ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 111.

wisdom of wandering preachers. One example of this emerging social radicalism is the manifesto Brother Arnold, a Dominican. His pseudo-Joachite work, *De Correctione Ecclesiae*, prophesized that in 1260 the Pope would finally be revealed as the Antichrist and answer for his crimes of oppressing the poor and abusing his power for monetary gain. His order, whilst remaining in total poverty, would overcome the Church and rule as the new leaders of the Age of the Spirit. Their future tasks included confiscating the Church's finances and distributing the money amongst the poor masses, the only remaining true Christians.⁴⁶

It is not hard to see why these radical prophecies would hold widespread appeal with the dissatisfied lower class. However their hopes would be dashed in 1250 when Frederick died suddenly, only ten years short of the supposed start to a third age. Here the prophecies concerning a supernatural resurrection of the Last World Emperor take center stage. Rumors spread that Frederick was still alive, slumbering inside Mt Etna, to return when he was most needed. These supernatural phantasies created conditions for a string of imposter Fredericks, who would gain small but influential followings in the German countryside.

At this time in Germany, the central government was weakening and the country was slowly separating into nearly independent states. France meanwhile was centralizing power and growing stronger in its monarchy. The loss of a charismatic leader like Frederick II proved devastating. His death preceded the Great Interregnum, a period of social and political disorder in Germany. No leader was able to properly control the whole of the country and small conflicts popped up all over. The growth of German cities

⁴⁶ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, 311.

and increased productivity of manufacturing and trade was stalled by these rivalries and many artisans and merchants struggled to survive. With the increasing uncertainty and financial instability surrounding the urban poor, hope of another Frederick, even a false one, became a uniting force for many Germans.

In 1284 a hermit near Worms appeared, claiming to be the Emperor at the same time as another pseudo-Frederick moved through Northern Germany. The former, now thought to be a megalomaniac, gained a small following in Neuss, warring with the nearby city of Cologne where he had been cast out. Using some of the legends circling about a resurrected Frederick, he told of his life traveling and repenting for past sins. His popularity reached even to Italy, from which representatives were sent to investigate the new Frederick. Eventually his successes convinced him to travel south and call upon King Rudolph, the current monarch, who besieged the town that hid him and he was burnt at the stake. Norman Cohn notes that burning was seen as punishment for insurrection, but also heresy or sorcery, confirming the man's his religious fanaticism and belief that he was sent from God to play an eschatological role.⁴⁷

The imposter Frederick promised his followers that he would be resurrected after three days and sure enough another imposter appeared soon after to claim the role before being executed. Rather than quelling the rumors, these public trials only increased supernatural speculations and the prophecies inspired by these events continued to enthralled sections of the German population. Assured that Frederick would one day come back and create the utopian order they had been promised, radicals nurtured fantastical legends well into the fourteenth century. As chaos and civil wars increased

⁴⁷ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 115.

throughout Germany, the increasingly desperate poor developed hatred for the rich, paired with eschatological expectations of a fairer society, while the wealthy detached themselves from the problems of the lower class. Prophecies created over a century before returned with an even more radical political bent. The Swiss historian John of Winterthur identifies and criticizes the popular prophecies circling in the mid-fourteenth century. He writes about expectations for a Last World Emperor, a Frederick, who would not only annihilate the Church, but restore a sort of populist justice, taking wealth from the hands of the rich and distributing it amongst the poor. John of Winterthur vehemently rejected the prophecies, much like the clergy, but the more suspicious Christian official grew, the more martyrs they created.⁴⁸

Several other manifestos followed that of Brother Arnold, mixing politics with eschatological expectations. The *Gamaleon*, written in the fifteenth century, outlines a peculiarly nationalistic plan for the last days. In it, the Last World Emperor, of German descent, was to conquer France and the Papacy, overpower Hungary and the Slavic peoples, exterminate the Jews, and reveal Germans as the supreme people. The new Church would remain under the Emperor's domain in the Last Days, preceding Parousia and the Last Judgment.⁴⁹

Another text, the *Reformation of Sigismund*, surfaced around the same time, proposed a drastic reform of the Empire and the Church together. The author seems to have familiarity with the struggles of the working poor and sought to instill a new order fitted to the needs of the least fortunate members of society. Serfdom would be abolished and the current tax system would be amended such that the lower class might prosper.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 117.

⁴⁹ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 118.

Written anonymously, it also called for church property to be secularized, another step towards the separation of the church from the monarchy. Lastly, it turned from practical to prophetic concerns, describing a vision of Emperor Sigismund's that an Emperor Frederick would return to carry out all these reforms. He would accept the robe and crown of Christendom and satisfy the common man's aching for justice. The *Reformation of Sigismund* circulated Germany very widely and was one of the first political manifestos published in German rather than Latin.⁵⁰ This began a trend of making political manifestos more available to the public.

Finally in the early 1500s, the *Book of a Hundred Chapters* appeared on the scene. Also written anonymously, its author was a German radical claiming to communicate with God through the Archangel Michael. Before imposing chaos as punishment for man's evil, God would elect to give humanity one last opportunity for redemption. A faithful leader, likely intended to be the author himself, was to lead a group of laymen, all wearing a yellow cross, to assemble under the reign of Emperor Frederick. The last Emperor would reign for a Millennium and destroy sinner with his immense, God-given power. His characterization resembles Christ and his appearance, a Second Coming. After a crusade fought by the poor and pious, none who lived luxurious, including the clergy in his eyes, could remain. The new order ushered in would abolish all private property, confiscate wealth, and tax all equally, according to the judgment of the Emperor. One year would be awarded for sinners to confess, before they were judged and

⁵⁰ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, 342.

executed under his rule. Afterwards, the true Germans could enjoy peace and share the earth in fraternity before the Last Days.⁵¹

The egalitarian and anti-capitalist principles apparent in this text, paired with the concept of cleansing the human race are undoubtedly startling. Furthermore, the author claimed to bring back a Golden Age for German people, originally destroyed by Romans and after them, the Church. He also rejects the Old Testament, since Jews wrote it. All these components make the *Book of a Hundred Chapters* alarmingly similar to the German National-Socialist ideologies, which would appear much later. The popularization of this strain of eschatological thinking can only be attributed to the Joachite-inspired prophecies written centuries prior. The pattern of increasing politicization and secularization in these works edges closer and closer to prompting revolution and social action. The attitude towards history of these later works are of certainty and action rather than the faith and contemplation with which Joachim imbued his own writings.

⁵¹ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 120-126.

Conclusion

“The order of history emerges from the history of order”.⁵² Originally, when Eric Voegelin wrote about Joachim of Fiore, he saw the abbot as part of a much larger historical thesis. Voegelin intended to write a six-volume work, called *Order and History* describing his entire schema of world history. He warned readers that he did not have a certain end in mind and that his ideas would arise as he wrote them. Ultimately, he completed four volumes with only two chapters of the fifth volume published after his death. The political philosopher did indicate in his fourth volume that his final book would be called *In Search of Order*. As a result, all we have is a general direction of his analysis and nothing close to a final conclusion. Voegelin explains, “the conception was untenable because it had not taken proper account of the important lines of meaning in history that did not run along lines of time”.⁵³ With the new knowledge he had acquired, he could not retain the same structure as the first three volumes. The fifth volume was to “study the contemporary problems which have motivated the search for order in history”.⁵⁴

It is then possible that Voegelin might have reincorporated Joachim of Fiore into his final volume. Or he might have left the monk out entirely. In his earlier works, Voegelin accused Joachim of reviving a Gnostic strain of thought, explaining why modern people believe they can attain some sort of perfect or complete knowledge of the universe. But new scholarship has revealed that if he is guilty of any heresy, Joachim

⁵² Eric Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation*, vol. 1, *Order and History* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), ix.

⁵³ Eric Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, vol. 4, *Order and History* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 58.

stands firmly within the apocalyptic tradition. His tone is one of uncertainty and exploration rather than knowledge and enlightenment. Gnostics saw salvation in revelation, believing in a sort of spiritual dimension in man that allowed him to transcend his own world. While it could be easy to confuse Joachim's Brotherhood in the Third Realm with these individuals, he never proposes doing away with societal order entirely. While Gnosticism attempts to escape history and the reality, apocalypticism seeks to transform it. They are two different methods of escaping determinism, the monotonous wheel of life, with drastically different effects. The optimistic hope that humans can reorder their world, embodied in the passion of the Mendicant Orders is the central reason Joachim's theology was so readily embraced by various movements. The implicit criticism of the Church and spirit of *reformare* was another factor in the apocalyptic tradition and Joachim's own thought that would have a profound effect on politics moving forward.

Matthias Riedl recently corrected Eric Voegelin's Gnosis thesis, explaining that Voegelin wrote before an important discovery of several Gnostic texts had been made.⁵⁵ The political theorist himself amended his theory and acknowledged that his view of Gnosticism had been misinformed. Since Voegelin never completed his last two volumes of *Order and History*, which he had designated as explorations of early and modern Gnosticism, it is safe to say that the Gnosis-thesis of his earlier works caused problems after more information was available to him. But despite the technical errors of his thesis, I believe the philosopher's instincts about Joachim himself were correct. Of all his

⁵⁵ Matthias Riedl, "Joachim of Fiore and Gnosticism," 2009, 1, <https://sites01.lsu.edu/faculty/voegelin/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/2015/09/Matthias-Riedl1.pdf>.

symbols, Joachim's Third Realm proves the most original and the hardest to refute. The eternal progression from Son to Holy Spirit, beginning to end that Joachim posited was almost immediately taken as a linear one, and the abbot himself cannot have been blameless in this misunderstanding. Furthermore, Gnosticism and Apocalypticism as heretical movements can be seen as two sides of the same coin: one esoteric, one common, one concerned with the Beginning of Things, the other with the End of Things.

In the *Influence of Prophecy in the Middle Ages*, Marjorie Reeves writes, "A prophet foretells the future: he can also create it".⁵⁶ As we now know, the designation of Joachim as a prophet stems more from his reputation and spurious works after him than the monk's true undertaking. And yet, in my view, Joachim has more in common with Eric Voegelin and other political philosophers than he does with Elijah or Daniel. Biblical prophets imagined events much like the ones in their own lifetimes, reoccurring cyclically in human time. Attempting a comprehensive theory of history that mediates between the extremes of negating the material or spiritual world is another task altogether. Voegelin saw a dialogue in history between competing strains of thought that are both important to a human society. In identifying this dialogue, he created a space for opposing philosophies to coexist. Joachim attempted the same when he designated his Two Orders, one for contemplating the eternal, and another for relaying these messages to the public. His Third Realm included all the components of the ages before it and its structure sought to balance the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*. But as is the case with the works of many political philosophers, Joachim's ideas were coopted by one side and their original intent was abandoned. The symbols on which Joachim left his mark had

⁵⁶ Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, 135.

been alive long before him and remained long after him, evolving and adapting to the most current political landscape. This is the danger of any historical analysis. Perhaps Joachim never intended to cause political change and only wanted to share his knowledge with the world. If so, he forgot something crucial: In seeking to understand human history, one cannot help but shape it in the process.

Appendix



Figure 1. Seven-headed Dragon from the *Liber Figurarum*, MS. Oxford, C.C.C. 255A, f.

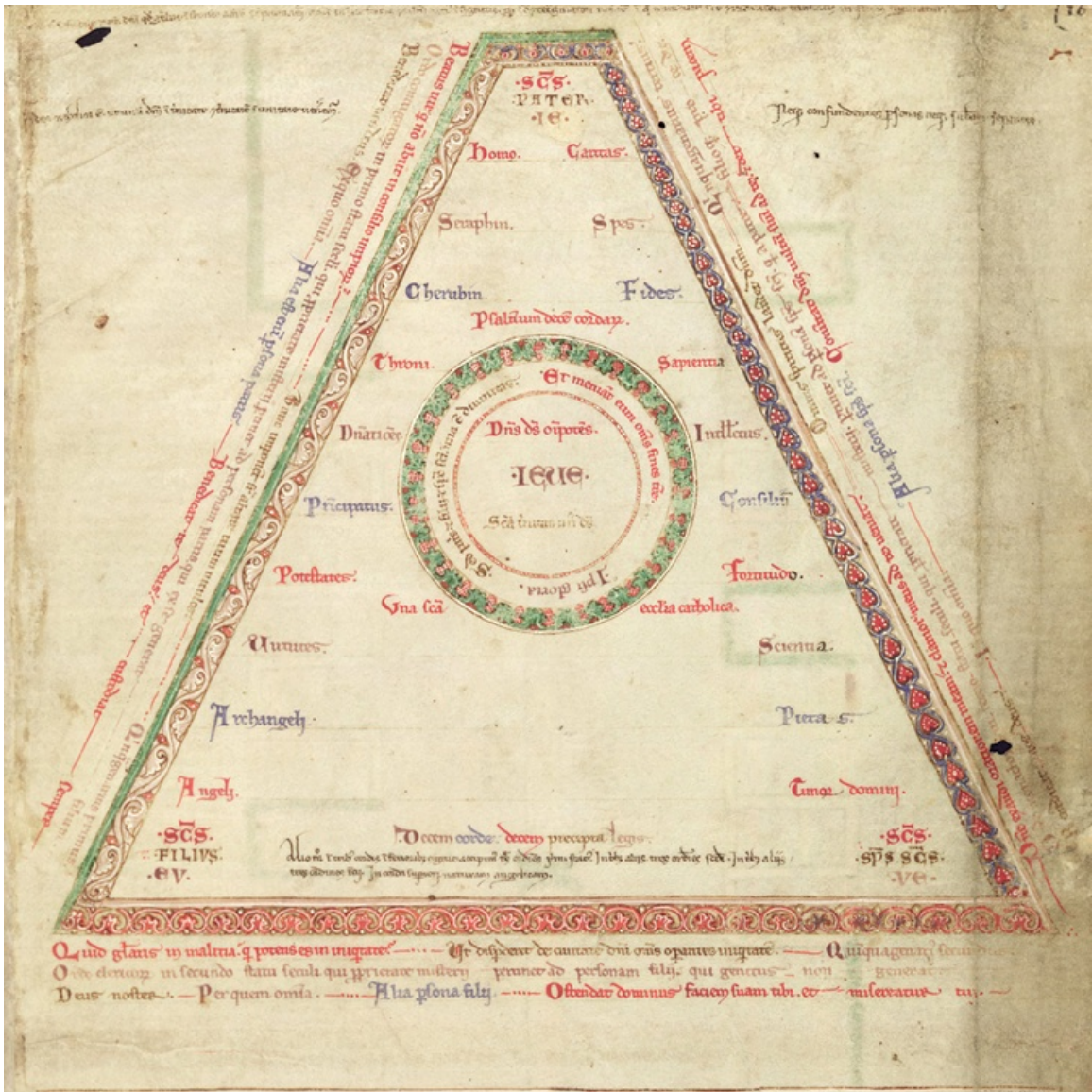


Figure 2. Ten-stringed Psalter from the *Liber Figurarum*, MS. Oxford, C.C.C. 255A, f. 8r



Figure 3. Tree Circles from the *Liber Figurarum*, MS. Oxford, C.C.C. 255A, f. 12v

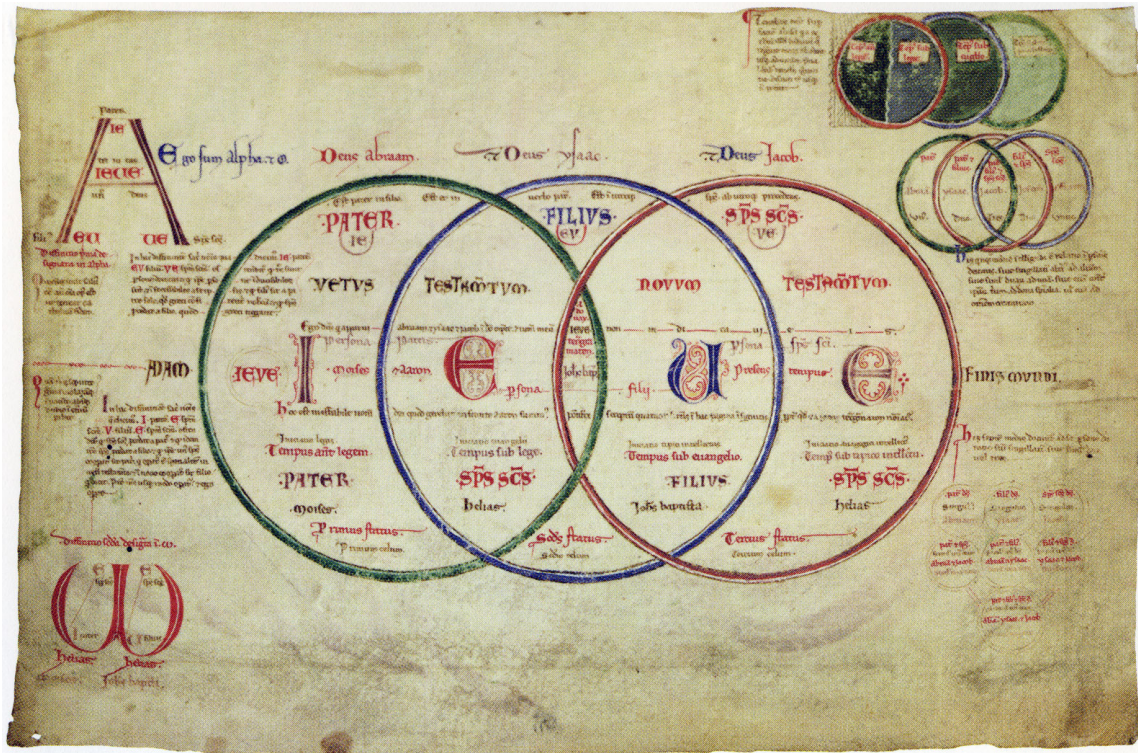


Figure 4. Trinitarian Circles from the *Liber Figurarum*, MS. Oxford, C.C.C. 255A. f. 7v

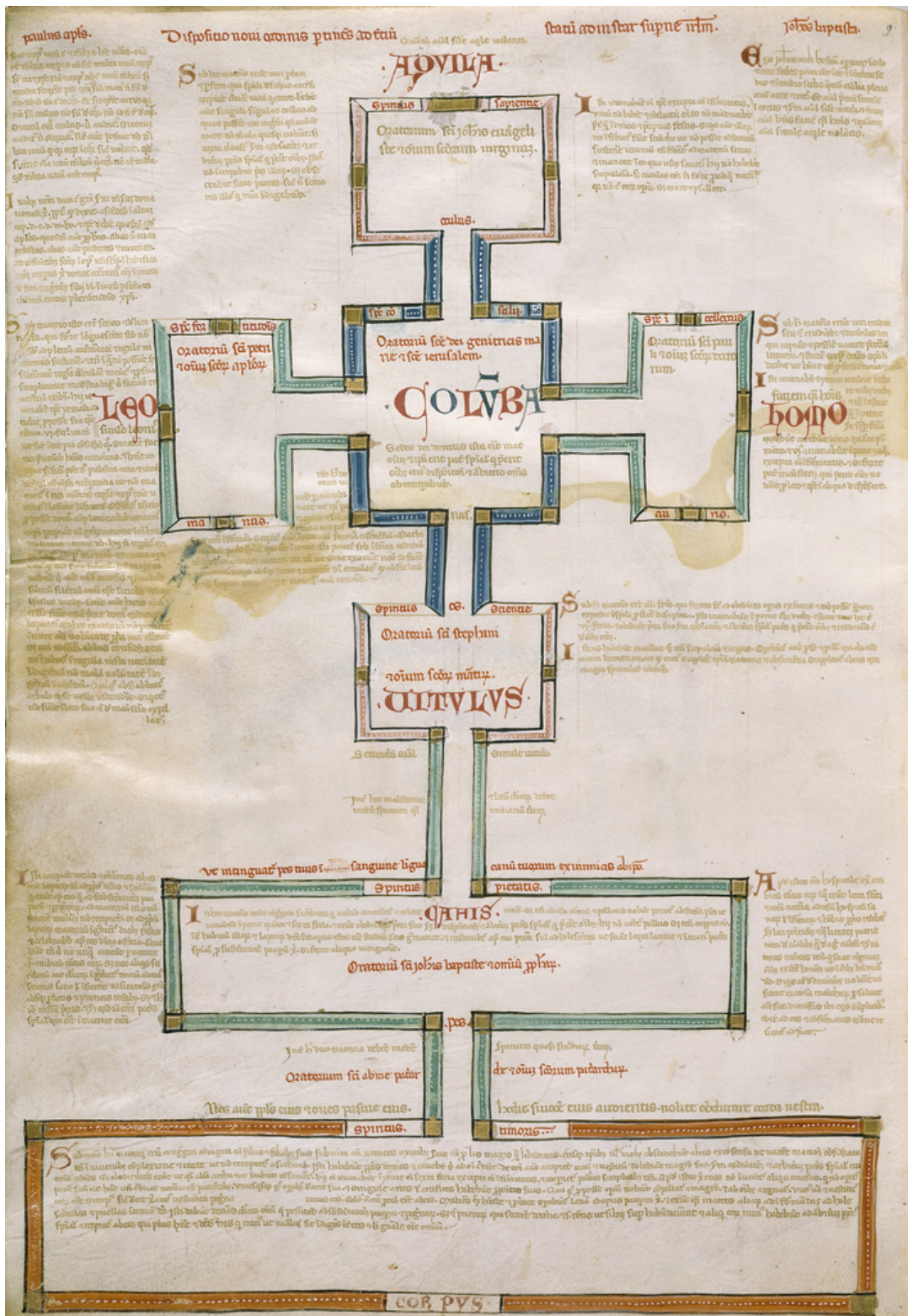


Figure 5. Dispositio novi ordinis from the Liber Figurarum, MS. Oxford, C.C.C.

255A, f.17r

Bibliography

- Brakke, David. *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity*.
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Cohn, Norman. *The Pursuit of the Millenium* . 2nd ed. New York: Oxford Univ. Press,
1971.
- Grant, R.M. *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*. New-York: Columbia University press,
1966.
- Jonas, Hans. *The Gnostic Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958.
- Löwith, Karl. *Meaning in History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.
- Manuel, Frank E. *Shapes of Philosophical History*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University
Press, 1965.
- McGinn, Bernard, and Marjorie Reeves. *Apocalyptic Spirituality: Treatises and Letters of
Lactantius, Adso of Montier-En-Der, Joachim of Montier-En-Der, Joachim of
Fiore, the Franciscan Spirituals, Savonarola*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1979.
- McGinn, Bernard. *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western
Thought*. New York: Macmillan, 1985.
- Olson, Theodore. *Millennialism, Utopianism, and Progress*. Toronto: University of
Toronto Press, 1982.
- Reeves, Marjorie, and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich. *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore*. Oxford:
Clarendon Press, 1972.
- Reeves, Marjorie. *Joachim of Fiore & The Prophetic Future: A Medieval Study in
Historical Thinking*. Stroud: Sutton, 1999.

- Reeves, Marjorie. *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism*. Notre Dame (Ind.): University of Notre Dame Press, 2011.
- Riedl, Matthias. "The Political Thought of Joachim of Fiore." 2001.
<https://sites01.lsu.edu/faculty/voegelin/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/2015/09/Riedl.pdf>.
- Riedl, Matthias. "Joachim of Fiore and Gnosticism." 2009.
<https://sites01.lsu.edu/faculty/voegelin/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/2015/09/Matthias-Riedl1.pdf>.
- Riedl, Matthias. "A Collective Messiah: Joachim of Fiore's Constitution of Future Society." 2012.
http://www.revistamirabilia.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/2012_01_03.pdf.
- Smalley, Beryl. *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*. Notre Dame (Ind.): University of Notre Dame Press, 1964.
- Stackhouse, Reginald. *The End of the World?: A New Look at an Old Belief*. New York: Paulist Press, 1997.
- Voegelin, Eric. *Israel and Revelation*. Vol. 1. Order and History. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1956.
- Voegelin, Eric. *The Ecumenic Age*. Vol. 4. Order and History. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1974.
- Voegelin, Eric. *In Search of Order*. Vol. 5. Order and History. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1987.
- Voegelin, Eric, and Dante L. Germino. *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.

West, Delno C., and Sandra Zimdars-Swartz. *Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.