

**Tyconius and the End
of the World**

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Tyconius and the End of the World*

Tyconius remains one of the most elusive figures of fourth century North African Christianity. A highly original and independent thinker, a layman, he criticized the principles of his own Donatist party, incurred its censure, and yet nonetheless remained loyal¹. And, despite this schismatic allegiance, he was esteemed by no less a figure than Augustine². So little else is known about him, however, that scholars have generally hesitated to affirm anything further save that : (1) both of his exegetical works, the *Liber Regularum*³ and the now lost *Commentary on the Apocalypse*⁴ exercised an enormous and continuing

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1. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* III. xxx, 42 ff. (CCL 23, p. 102 ff.) ; *Ep.* 93, 43 f. ; *C. Ep. Parmentiani* II, 1.

2. *Ibid.*, also *Ep.* 41.2. See also Hahn's comments, *Tyconius-Studien* (Leipzig, 1900), p. 3.
3. *The Rules of Tyconius*, edited F. C. Burkitt, Texts and Studies III, pt. 1 (Cambridge, 1894). All citations in the present paper are to Burkitt's edition and pagination. For the dating of this work, see *ibid.*, Introduction, p. xvii f.

4. Substantial Tyconian passages appear in the Apocalypse commentaries of Apringius (ed. M. Férotin, Paris, 1900) ; Beatus (ed. H. A. Sanders, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome, vol. VII, 1930) ; Bede (PL 93.129-206) ; Caesarius of Arles (ed. G. Morin, Maredsous, vol. II, 1942, pp. 209-277) ; Primasius (PL 68.793-936) ; and in the Turin Fragments, now edited by F. Lo Bue (Texts and Studies, N.S. vol. VII, Cambridge 1963). Most recently Gerald Bonner has attempted a reconstruction of this text by collating passages from these later commentaries (" St. Bede and the tradition of Western Apocalyptic Commentary ", Jarrow Lectures, 1966. See esp. the Appendix, pp. 21-29). More recently, L. Mezey has tentatively identified a fragment of a Budapest MS as Tyconian (" *Un fragment de codex de la première époque carolingienne (Tyconius in Apocalypsin ?)* ", *Miscellanea*

however, the difficulty dissolves, for 350 years is the part intended by the larger period of 400¹⁶.

Tyconius goes on to apply this hermeneutic to a similarly difficult New Testament divergence, the periods of "three days and three nights", "on the third day", and "after three days"¹⁷. "On the third day", as we have just read, refers to Christ; "after three days" — that is, after 350 years — to his Church. Here as well Tyconius interprets traditionally eschatological passages such as I Jn. 2, 18 ("It is the last hour") and II Cor. 6, 2 ("Behold, now is the day of salvation") to show how Scripture frequently uses brief time periods (hour, day) to indicate indefinite ones¹⁸. Finally, he moves on to the classically millenarian theme of the seven days of the cosmic week, which traditionally would end with the millenarian Sabbath Rest of the saints¹⁹. Instead Tyconius, through a long quotation from Jeremiah, turns the whole discussion into a description of entering Jerusalem the Church not through the Law but by faith²⁰.

If then Tyconius' point in mentioning the 350 years in the course of this discussion is to calculate the time left till the End, his presentation is extremely diffuse. He does appear to be saying that the year 350 from the Passion is a crucial date in Church history, but this is not *ipso facto* an eschatological date. Indeed, given his fluid way of reading numbers, one hesitates to take this period as determining a fixed date at all²¹. Rather, it may be taken as one more example of his effort to interpret the numbers given in the Bible, and especially those found in Revelations, in a spiritual way²².

2. The theme of the revelation of the man of sin and the *discessio* of II Thess. 2, 3 appears prominently in two passages in the *Liber Regularum*, both times with reference to Lot departing from Sodom, and once as well with reference to the foretold persecutions of the Donatists. The first passage closes Rule III, "de promissis et lege," where, having discussed the children of Sarah and of Hagar and alluding to the Lord Jesus consuming those who wish to compromise Christian freedom "with the breath of his mouth and

16. V, p. 55-56. See also Pierre Cazier, « Cassien auteur présumé de l'épître des Règles de Tyconius », *R. E. Aug.* 22 (1976), p. 281.

17. V, p. 56 ff.

18. V, p. 60.

19. V, p. 61; cf. his passing reference in V, p. 56. For discussion of the millenarian Sabbath rest, see *infra* p. 70 and note 52.

20. V, p. 61-63.

21. As Burkitt says, this is « a truly marvelous dissertation upon Times, Seasons and Numbers. Nothing less than a quotation of the original in full would do justice to the extraordinary ingenuity by which almost any number can be made to mean any other », *op. cit.*, p. XV. The (forthcoming) *Prosopographie chrétienne de l'Afrique du Nord* counsels caution lest a too-precise date of composition be derived from this passage, p. 1119, note 2. (I would like to take this occasion to thank professors Jacques Fontaine and André Mandouze for generously sharing with me the prosopography's article on Tyconius).

22. So also Cazier, *loc. cit.*, on this mode of exegesis generally: « Ceci permet d'interpréter les nombres de la Bible dans un sens spirituel, en particulier ceux que l'on rencontre dans les textes apocalyptiques ». See also Anderson, *Rules, op. cit.*, p. 148 note 4.

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denario numero C dies sunt, sicut in Apocalypsi: *Dies MCCLX* [Apoc. 11, 3], nam milia ducenties centies [sic Burkitt] sexages centeni centumviginti sex milia dies sunt, qui fiunt anni CCCCL mensibus tricenorum dierum. Ibidem, unus mensis denario numero centum menses sunt, ut: *Civitatem sanctam calcabunt mensibus XLII* [Apoc. 11, 2], nam XLII centeni III et CC menses sunt, qui sunt anni CCCL.

Tempus aut annus est aut centum anni, sicut *Tempus et tempora et dimidium temporis* [Apoc. 12, 14], quod est aut tres anni et dimidium aut CCCL. Item unus dies aliquando centum anni sunt, sicut de Ecclesia scriptum est *iacere in civitate ubi et Dominus eius cruci fixus est tres dies et dimidium* [cf. Apoc. 11, 8-9], et: *Oportet filium hominis Hierusalem ire, et multa pati a senioribus et principibus sacerdotum et scribis, et occidi, et post tres dies resurgere* [Mt 16, 21]; ipse enim tertio surrexit¹³.

Here as elsewhere Tyconius interprets "Son of Man" to mean the Church, which, he seems at pains to establish, will come to the end of a long struggle three and a half days — that is, 350 years — after the Crucifixion¹⁴. The Son of Man, nonetheless, is a traditionally apocalyptic figure; this, combined with Tyconius' reference to this event as coming within his own lifetime (c. 29-33 A.D. for the date of the Crucifixion plus 350 years would bring us to c. 379-383 A.D., the years of Tyconius' activity), has led scholars to see in this passage an eschatological calculation¹⁵.

Other interpretations are possible. This particular passage occurs within a larger discussion concerned to resolve the numerical divergences presented by the Bible. Tyconius begins his treatment with a consideration of Gen. 15, 13 and Ex. 12, 40: according to the former, Israel would be in Egypt for 400 years; according to the latter, for 430 years. Is Scripture in contradiction? Not at all, says Tyconius, because if we subtract the 80 years Israel had under Joseph from the 430 years of Ex. 12, 40, we arrive at 350 years. To the modern reader, this may not seem to contribute much towards solving the problem. To the exegete familiar with the principle of synecdoche,

13. Rule V, Burkitt pp. 60-61. I translate: « Sometimes an hour is a day and a month is a year, as in Apocalypse, 'Prepared for the hour and the day and the month and for the year', which is three and a half years. In the same place, months instead of years, 'It is given him to hurt mankind for five months'. Sometimes, days containing a number which is a multiple of ten are 100 days, as in Apocalypse, '1260 days', for one thousand two hundred and sixty hundreds equal 126,000 days, which in turn are 350 years in months of thirty days. In the same place, one month containing a multiple of ten is 100 months, as in 'They will trample the Holy City for forty-two months'. For forty-two hundreds are 4,200 months, which are 350 years. 'A time period is either a year or 100 years, as in 'For a time and times and half a time', which is either three and a half years or 350 years. Likewise one day is sometimes 100 years, as is written concerning the founding of the Church, 'In the city where also (its) Lord was crucified for three and a half days', and, 'The Son of Man must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and the scribes; and he must be killed, and after three days rise again', for he himself [i.e., Christ] rose on the third day ».

This passage is difficult to translate, not only because Tyconius' logic is not intuitively obvious, but also because the ablative form « denario numero » is obscure. Anderson suggests « when written with the number ten », *Rules, op. cit.*, p. 16.

14. See Rule I, Burkitt pp. 4 and 7; also p. xviii.

15. *Ibid.*, p. XX; see also above, notes 10 and 11.

destroying them by the sign of his coming" [II Thess. 2, 8], Tyconius concludes:

tempus est enim quo haec non in mysteriis sed aperte dicantur, imminente discessione quod est revelatio hominis peccati, discedente Loth a Sodomis²³.

Tyconius here refers directly to II Thess. 2, 3, while making a rhetorical play on *imminente/discedente*. I would translate this as follows: "For now we may speak of these things not in secret, but openly; for the coming threatened apostasy, which is the revelation of the man of sin, is (like) Lot's leaving Sodom²⁴." Hahn, as we have seen, names this passage in support of his view of Tyconius' eschatological expectations²⁵, and indeed the larger context is filled with eschatological New Testament references: Mt. 13, 30 on the Kingdom of Heaven, II Thess. 2, 8 on the coming of the Lord Jesus, and finally II Thess. 2, 3. But does Tyconius interpret these passages eschatologically? Not necessarily. Rule III as a whole seeks to demonstrate the continuity of grace in the Old and New Testaments, arguing that justification comes not from the Law, symbolized by Hagar, but from Faith, symbolized by Sarah. *Semen ergo Abrahæ non ex lege sed ex promissione est*²⁶. Both the children of Sarah and of Hagar must grow together "until the harvest" (Mt. 13, 30). This touches on one of Tyconius' most important and characteristic teachings, for which the Donatist bishop Parmenian had chastized him²⁷: that the Church is a "mixed body" of both righteous and unrighteous, and that it will remain so as long as time continues. In the meantime, apostasy reveals the *homo peccati*, the Antichrist, that is, the unrighteous within the Church, as Lot's departure from Sodom revealed the unrighteous there. Only God, not man, can distinguish these two groups, and he will separate them only at the End²⁸.

23. I discuss here III, p. 31; cf. also IV, p. 50.

24. For *mysterium*, see A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français des Auteurs Chrétiens*, definition 3; for *discessio*, *ibid.* definition 3 with special reference to II Thessalonians; for *immineo*, *ibid.* definition 4; cf. also Souter, *Glossary of Later Latin*, who gives « warn, admonish, urge [sacc. IV on] ». *Imminente* here means « threatened » or « threatening », but because of the play with *discedente* I have had to use two English words for the one Latin participle. I include « like » in parentheses in my translation because *discedente Loth a Sodomis* is in apposition to *imminente discessione*, as a sort of simile. Cf. Anderson's translation, *Rules*, *op. cit.*, p. 95 f.

25. Hahn, *Tyconius-Studien*, p. 6, quoted above note 10.

26. III, p. 13. In the background is Paul's discussion in Galatians, esp. chapters 3-5. Cf. Augustine, *De doct. christ.* III. xxxiii, 46, who wishes Tyconius had gone at this problem from the angle of grace and the commandment.

27. See the discussion of Parmenian's objections to Tyconius in Monceaux, *Histoire*, *op. cit.*, V, p. 231-237. Apparently Tyconius had most expanded on this idea in his two now lost works, *De bello intestino* and the *Expositiones diversarum causarum* (summarized in *ibid.*, p. 232 f.); see also Augustine, c. *Ep. Parm.* I.1:1; *B.A.*, vol. 28, p. 718-720 note 10.

28. See e.g., I, p. 5; III, p. 30; V, p. 63; more generally, Rules I, II and VII *passim*. Such an outlook, as Augustine was quick to note, shatters the foundations of Donatist ecclesiology; on this, see Markus' brief but excellent discussion, *Sæculum*, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-126; also *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* vol. 28, p. 718 f., note 10; Dinkler, *art. cit. Pauly-Wissowa*, col. 855.

But when is the End? This brings us to our second passage, from Rule VI, "Recapitulatio". Here Tyconius quotes Luke 17, 29-32, on Lot and the Day of the Son of Man. "On the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire from heaven... it will be like this on the day of the Son of Man [i.e., the Church], when he will be revealed... thus do not turn back: remember Lot's wife²⁹". Characteristically eschatological language, one might think. But again, Tyconius' exegetical principles allow him a different sort of reading. As Augustine himself explains in his epitome of the Rules, the reader has a choice here: to take Luke to speak of a future revelation of the Lord, or of a present ethical decision to abandon a past life of sin. Since this passage continues "in that hour", one might take this to refer to the End, says Augustine,

...unless the mind of the reader is awake to an understanding of recapitulation, assisted by another scripture which in the Apostles' own lifetime announced, 'Little children, it is the last hour' (I Jn. 2, 18). Therefore the time in which these commands should be observed extends from the time of the preaching of the Gospel up to the time of the revelation of the Lord. For the revelation of the Lord itself pertains to that hour which itself is terminated by the Day of Judgment³⁰.

3. In the course of the same discussion, while explaining that recapitulations may be the likeness of future events, Tyconius refers to Matthew 24, 15-16, "When you see what was said by the prophet Daniel [i.e., the abomination of desolation], then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountains..."

*Tunc qui in Iudæa sunt fugiant in montes, et inducit finem. Quod autem Danihel dixit in Africa geritur, neque in eodem tempore finis. Sed quoniam licet non in eo tempore finis, in eo tamen titulo futurum est, propterea Tunc dixit, id est cum similiter factum fuerit per orbem, quod est discessio et revelatio hominis peccati*³¹.

'then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountains', [and seeing this], a person and the End is not now. But even if the End is not now, nonetheless, according to this passage, it will come. Therefore he said "Then", that is, when similarly the 'apostasy' and the 'revelation of the man of sin' will have been accomplished throughout the whole world.

29. VI, p. 66.

30. *De doct. christ.* III. xxxvi, 54. Augustine's paraphrase is more lucid than Tyconius' own passage, *loc. cit.*, which is characteristically dense: « numquid illa hora qua Dominus revelatus fuerit adventu suo non debet quis converti ad ea quae sua sunt et uxoris Loth meminisse, et non antequam reveletur? Dominus autem illa hora qua revelatus fuerit ista observari, non solum ut abscondendo quaerentibus gratiorem faceret veritatem, sed etiam ut totum illud tempus diem vel horam esse monstraret. eadem itaque hora, id est tempore, ista observanda mandavit, sed antequam reveletur: eadem quidem hora, sed in qua parte horae ratione cognoscitur ».

Augustine here refers to Tyconius' major de-eschatologizing hermeneutic, that is, to see the revelation of the Lord as the life of the Church within time, and the 'final time', the 1000 years in which the saints reign with Christ, as co-extensive, again, with the Church's historical period on earth. The eschatological accent of the Parousia is accordingly greatly reduced. See the discussions in Christe, *art. cit.* (1979), p. 110 f., and (1976), pp. 47-48; also Ladner, *Reform. op. cit.*, pp. 224-231 for Augustine's use of this idea in the *City of God*; cf. esp. *De civ. Dei* XX.7-13.

31. VI, p. 67; cf. Anderson's translation, *Rules*, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

Here Tyconius indeed correlates contemporary events in Africa with the prophecies in Daniel and Matthew, and alludes as well, once again, to II Thess. 2, 3. But in citing these eschatological passages, is he making eschatological statements? It would seem difficult to think so, given his own specific disclaimer. He seems to be saying, rather, that certain enthusiasts, looking at events, might conclude that the End were near, but that such a conclusion is incorrect. Rather, these events refer to the life of the Church in the world, as do the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin, the unrighteous. And this must occur not only in Africa, but *per orbem*. Further, these events in themselves do not presage the End. All these things, those prophesied and accomplished both in the Old Testament and in the New, like the fire from heaven at Lot's departure and the Day of the Son of Man, recapitulate each other and thus demonstrate the unity of Scripture. Quoting Psalm 126, 1-3, Tyconius notes that, as the Lord did great things for the children of Israel, so he "has done great things for us... and so by this figure he made their time and ours one"³². All these great events bind together salvation history³³; they describe not a future End, but the present earthly life of the Church and the believer³⁴. Indeed, to facilitate the discernment of this pattern in "the whole Law" is precisely the function of the *Liber Regularium*. For, as Tyconius says in his prologue, his exegetical principles are *mystical* rules ("sunt enim quaedam regulae mysticae"), which enable spiritual understanding³⁵.

In sum, then, Tyconius' citations of eschatological passages in Scripture should not necessarily be taken as *prima facie* evidence of a personal enthusiasm. Exegetically, he has them serve quite a different end, and in so doing very often exorcises their original eschatological content³⁶. Indeed, this could be one of his major purposes in citing them³⁷.

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32. *Loc. cit.*

33. So also Cazier, *art. cit.*, p. 281.

34. So also, e.g., Hahn, *Tyconius-Studien*, p. 7; Dinkler, on the 'existentialism' of Tyconius' interpretation, *art. cit. Pauly-Wissowa*, col. 852.

35. Prologue, 1; also Cazier's comments, *art. cit.*, p. 272. Augustine thought Tyconius not as successful in his endeavor as he thought he was, *De doct. christ.* III. xxx, 42.

36. A point not missed by other scholars: see e.g., Hahn, "alles auf die Gegenwart bezieht" *Tyconius-Studien*, p. 7; Kamlah, "Seine Auslegung hat überall die konkreten Bilder der Ap zu verflüchtigen gesucht", *Apokalypse*, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Dinkler, "... T. von der historisch-realistischen Exegese zur geistlichen überging, und mit dem starren Chiliasmus brach", *Pauly-Wissowa*, *art. cit.*, col. 853; Bonner, "The merit of Tyconius was that his exegesis made such crude literalism impossible", though he continues that it left intact the sense of an immediate expectation of the End of the world, "St. Bede", *art. cit.*, p. 5.

37. See also Cazier, *art. cit.* p. 272 and Christie, *art. cit.* (1976), p. 48, for the same point with respect to the Apocalypse commentary.

The evidence of the Rules alone, then, is at best ambiguous, as the positions taken by these various scholars attest. Is there however some evidence external to the Rules which might support this consensus view, that Tyconius lived in expectation of the End?

Burkitt, who first interpreted Tyconius' understanding of the 350 years as an eschatological calculation, points to the anonymous mid-fifth century African writing, the *Liber de promissionibus*³⁸. This work contains the earliest reference, after Augustine's, to the *Liber Regularium*. Citing *De prom.* IV.13, 22, Burkitt comments, "[T]he reference to Tyconius... shows how his eschatological calculations were explained away by readers in the succeeding century" (p. XX). This passage in the CCSL edition runs:

...septimus dies qui mane tantum; nam vesperum non habebit. Quam requiem sabbati omni praecepto divinitas ipsa servandam commendat [cf. Rule V, p. 62] ut vacantes ab omni opere malo mane adstemus [Ps 5, 5] et contemplerur eum qui coronat in misericordia et misericordia [Ps 102, 2], omnes iuste iudicans et inique neminem damnans. Sed de his Tyconius multa conscripsit. Consummationem vero perfectionemque temporum trium annorum et sex mensium qui dicti sunt dies MCCLX et menses faciunt XL et II, non tantum Apocalypsis Iohannis quantum et Daniel propheta commendat; quibus civitatem sanctam calcari [Apoc. 11, 2; cf. Rule V, p. 61]*** ut aestimatur ab haereticis et maxime Arrianis qui tunc plurimum poterunt³⁹...

Burkitt's view of the *De promissionibus* as supporting evidence seems curious because, far from 'explaining away' the alleged Tyconian eschatological calculations, it appears if anything to appropriate and enlarge them. The whole book labors, especially through an elaborate numerology⁴⁰, to describe a salvation history climaxing with "The Half-Time and the Signs of the Antichrist"⁴¹ and "The Glory and the Kingdom of the Saints". The

38. Now attributed to Quodvultdeus, the Catholic bishop of Carthage who fled the Vandals and died in Italy c. 453. This text is now edited in CCSL vol. 60 (1976) pp. 11-223, and given with a translation in *Sources Chrétiennes*, vols. 101-102 (1964), by René Braun.

39. CCSL 60, p. 207. Burkitt sees this passage as referring to the Rules, as does Monceaux, *Histoire*, *op. cit.* V, p. 192, note 4; Braun, to the lost commentary, SC 101, p. 61, note 5. McGinn, *Visions*, *op. cit.*, p. 54, translates as follows (for French translation, SC 102, p. 633 f.): "... the seventh day which is morning alone, for it has no evening. Divinity itself enjoins this sabbath rest to be observed with every command, so that abstaining from all evil we may stand upright in the morning and behold Him who crowns in compassion and mercy", judging all with equity and damning no one unjustly. Tyconius has written much on these subjects. The Revelation of John and Daniel the Prophet prove that the consummation and perfection of the times is to be completed in three years and six months (said to be 1,260 days or to make forty-two months). In these times, as it is thought, the Holy City will be trodden down by heretics, especially by the Arians who will be very powerful then".

40. Braun, Introduction SC 101, p. 27-28.

41. Wherein the author announces the End of the World: "In hoc dimidio temporis finem mundi et signa quae futura sunt ipsiusque Antichristi facta, superbiam eius brevisque temporis potestatem, domino donante et operante eius gratia, adscriptis capitulis ex divinis testimoniis probanda suscipimus...", prologus 1, CCSL 60, p. 190; in French, SC 102, p. 591. The apo-

author sees the apocalyptic scenario realized in events occurring around him, and he does not hesitate to say so, even where this means directly defying his mentor, Augustine⁴². For, despite Augustine's warnings in *De civitate Dei* XX, the author here continues:

Gog et Magog, ut quidam dixerunt, Gotos et Mauros, Getas et Massagetas, per quorum saevitiam ipse iam diabolus ecclesiam vastat et tunc amplius persequetur, cessare etiam faciens iuge sacrificium [Dan. 11, 13]; propter quod ammonet dominus dicens: *venio cito, beatus qui vigilat et servat vestimenta sua ne nudus ambulet* [Apc. 16, 15]⁴³.

The *De promissionibus*, in short, is much more elaborately eschatological than is Tyconius, whose reference to the 350 years of the Church in Rule V, is by comparison understated indeed. In fact, the author's matching contemporary events to eschatological predictions flies in the face of the allegorizing typological hermeneutic championed by Tyconius, and by Augustine himself⁴⁴.

calypic *dimidium temporis* comes from Dan. 7, 25 and 12, 7, and from Rev. 12, 14. The author goes on in this passage to describe the prodigies and heretical activities of the Antichrist, who is all heretics « et maxime Arrianos quos nunc videmus multos seducere aut potentia temporali aut industria mali... » V, 7, CCSSL, p. 194.

42. The four-fold partitioning of salvation-history in the *De promissionibus* draws on a model worked out first by Augustine, while reading Tyconius in the 390's, in his Pauline commentaries (CSEL 84), and in qu. 66, 3 of *De 83 quaestionibus* (B.A. 10, p. 240; see also note 72, p. 740). Augustine's first three stages – *ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia* – correspond to Books I-III of *De prom.*; Augustine's fourth stage, *in pace*, is however eschatological in an utterly non-apocalyptic way, whereas *De prom.* draws directly on Revelations to cast current events in an apocalyptic mold. Cf. Braun, Introduction SC 101, pp. 25 and 61.

43. « Gog and Magog, as some say, are the Goths and the Moors, the Getas and the Massagetas, through whose savagery the devil himself already lays waste to the Church and will then persecute it more fully, even making the 'perpetual sacrifice' to cease. For this reason the Lord warns: 'I am coming quickly; blessed be he who is wakeful and preserves his garments lest he walk naked.' »

Augustine in *De civ. Dei* XX, 11 – a passage our author surely has in mind here – specifically repudiates any such interpretation: « Gentes quippe istae, quas appellat Gog et Magog, non sic sunt accipiendae tamquam sint aliqui in aliqua parte terrarum barbari constituti, sive quos quidam suspicantur Getas et Massagetas propter litteras horum nominum primas, sive aliquos alios alienigenas et a Romano iure seiunctos », B.A. 31, p. 246. [« For these nations, which he names Gog and Magog, are not to be understood as of some barbarian nations in some part of the world, whether the Getae and the Massagetae, as some conclude from the initial letters, or of some other foreign nations not under Roman rule. »]

44. This a-historical interpretation of Revelations, seen in the *Liber Regularum*, is continued, as far as we can tell, in Tyconius' commentary where, according to Gennadius Massiliensis, « nihil in ea carnale sed totum intelligens spirituale », *de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* 18, PL 58.1071. For this reason I am skeptical of Braun's explanation of the author's not making further use of Tyconius' commentary. « Quant à Tyconius... c'est à son *Commentaire sur l'Apocalypse*, perdu aujourd'hui, que notre anonyme, soucieux de ne pas répéter ce qui avait été dit par d'autres, renvoyait son lecteur », SC 101, p. 61. Such a reticence would make this author all but unique among medieval commentators, who as a group generally do not hesitate to incorporate wholesale (whether acknowledged or unacknowledged) the work of earlier writers. More probably, the author did not use Tyconius because he could not: an allegorizing reading of Revelations does not serve his purpose.

Kamlah names Primasius and Bede as sources for his view of Tyconius as an eschatological thinker⁴⁵. Though he does not footnote to the passages he has in mind, he most likely intends Primasius' *Commentariorum super Apocalypsim Beati Iohannis*, PL 68.793c-795a, and Bede's *Explanatio Apocalypsis*, PL 93.131b-133b⁴⁶. Primasius, a sixth century North African Catholic bishop, does not trouble to hide his contempt for Donatism or for Tyconius' having remained a Donatist: he simply extracts from Tyconius what accords with Augustine and sound doctrine, as one would « a precious jewel fallen on a dung-heap⁴⁷ ». Bede, more respectful of Tyconius the man (« vir inter suos eruditissimus »), comments also the exegete, « except in those places where he seeks to defend the schism of his party, the Donatists... For he mourned those persecutions which they as heretics endured under the pious emperor Valentinian... And, calling them martyrs, he boasted that these persecutions had been foretold in the Apocalypse⁴⁸ ». Both commentators deplore Tyconius' Donatism, yet neither explicitly correlates Tyconius, Donatism, and eschatological enthusiasm. Bede's report of the Donatist claim to persecutions foretold by John may indeed point in this direction⁴⁹, but as we have already seen, Tyconius himself, though granting such an identification, gives it no eschatological weight⁵⁰.

Ecclesiastical tradition as represented by Primasius and Bede thus seems to relate three facts about Tyconius: that he was an important source for their own commentaries; that he was a Donatist; and that, accordingly, some of his work was suspect. This still does not suggest or support a picture of Tyconius expecting the imminent End. And perhaps more telling against this view is that Augustine, who rarely missed an opportunity to express his bafflement at Tyconius' loyalty to Donatism, never makes this accusation himself. Given his dim view both of eschatological enthusiasm and of Donatism, he would hardly have missed such a chance, had that chance existed.

45. Quoted note 11 above.

46. See also, e.g., Hahn, *Tyconius-Studien*, p. 4 (for Bede), and Bonner, « St. Bede », *art. cit.*, pp. 5 and 10-12. Unfortunately, no better editions of these two works exist, though Bonner has announced that they are currently in preparation in « Towards a Text of Tyconius » *Studia Patristica* X (*Texte und Untersuchungen* 107), 1970, p. 11. For the Primasius text, see also Johannes Haussleiter, « Die lateinische Apokalypse der alten afrikanischen Kirche », in Haussleiter and T. Zahn (eds.), *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur* IV (Erlangen und Leipzig, 1891), p. 176 f.

47. « Sicut autem pretiosa in stercore gemma a prudente debet curari... » PL 68.794 c.

48. « Has ergo regulas non in Apocalypsi tantum, id est, in Revelatione sancti Joannis apostoli, quam idem Tyconius et vivaciter intellexit et veridice satissime Catholice disseruit, praeter ea dumtaxat loca in quibus suae partis, id est, Donatistarum, schisma defendere natus, persecutiones quas ipsi a religioso Valentiniano principe, videlicet, ut haeretici pertulerunt, ... et martyria vocans, has in eadem gloriose Apocalypsi fuisse praedictas; verum in omni quoque Scriptura Canonica et praecipue prophetica easdem vigere regulas quisque vigilantiter intendit, inveniet ». PL 93. 132 d-133 a. A French translation of this passage may be found in Monceaux, *Histoire*, *op. cit.*, V, p. 207.

49. Cf. Augustine, c. *Gaudentium* Ixxvii, 30-31, and discussion, *infra*, p. 72.

50. See *supra*, pp. 65-66; also p. 72.

Placing Tyconius in the context of the *Liber Regularum*'s over-all exegetical program and in later Catholic tradition has failed to confirm the consensus interpretation that he was an eschatological thinker. What more adequate understanding of this man might be gleaned from considering him in his historical context?

II

The significance of Tyconius' reading of Revelations comes into sharper focus when we consider the established tradition of apocalyptic commentary, particularly in the West. In earlier commentaries, two features had figured prominently: millenarianism, and persecution⁵¹.

Christian millenarianism focused on the cosmic week, an eschatological concept drawing on Genesis 1, Psalm 90, and Revelations⁵². As God created the world in six days, and a day to him is like a thousand years, so the world would exist 6,000 years after which, at the end of the sixth age in the year 6,000 from the Creation, Christ would return to inaugurate the millenarian Sabbath rest and the thousand-year reign of the saints. To know the final hour — which many of these earlier commentaries placed in the year 400 A.D. or 500 A.D.⁵³ — the Christian could compute the age of the world, and he could watch for the signs of the approaching End, most especially the coming of Antichrist.

51. My discussion in this section is particularly indebted to the work of W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford, 1952), and *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1965); F. Paschoud, « La doctrine chrétienne et l'idéologie impériale romaine », *L'Apocalypse de Jean...*, *op. cit.* note 5 above, pp. 31-72; Markus, *Saeculum*, *op. cit.*; and the two articles by Christie, *art. cit.* 1976 and 1979.

52. Gen. 1, the seven days of Creation; Ps. 90, 4 (and II Peter 3, 8), « for in Thy sight a thousand years are a passing day »; Apoc. 20, 4-5, the martyrs coming to life again in the first resurrection, to reign with Christ 1000 years. Christ's Parousia would inaugurate this seventh age of the millenarian Sabbath in the year 6000 A.S. (*anno saeculi*). Augustine in *De civ. Dei* XX, 7 objects not so much to this belief *per se* (which, he says, he himself once held), but to the « carnal interpretation » of the period of the saints' reign given by some Christians who, perhaps, projected their experience of the martyrs' *laetitia* onto the millennial Sabbath Rest. He eventually gives up this seven-day millenarian scheme, though not the analogy with the creational days. See Lädner's discussion, *Reform*, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-264; cf. *De civ. Dei* XXII, 30; R. Schmidt, « Aetates mundi », *Zeitschr. für Kirchl.* 67 (1956) pp. 288-317; A. Luneau, *L'Histoire au salut* (Paris, 1964), esp. pp. 284-408.

53. For 400 A.D. = 6000 A.S., e.g., Clement of Alexandria and various paschal computations (these are discussed with references in V. Grumel, *La Chronologie* (Paris, 1958) § 1; for 500 A.D., the date prevailing in the West, e.g. Hippolytus, *In Daniele* IV, 24 and his *Liber Genealogus* (see Grumel, *ibid.*, p. 6 ff.; also Monceaux, *Histoire*, *op. cit.* vol. VI p. 253 f.); Julius Africanus, *Chronographia* (apud Eusebius, *Chronicle* (see Grumel, *ibid.*, p. 22 ff.); Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* VII; xxv, 3-5; also Hilarius, *de mundi duratione* xvii (PL 13.1105 a) (see also discussion below, note 74); also Labriolle, *Histoire de la Littérature Latine Chrétienne* (Paris, 1947), t. 1, p. 437.

Divining the signs of the End in a period of Imperial persecution gave many of the early commentaries a decidedly political aspect. Irenaeus, for example, identifies the fourth beast of Daniel 7 and the beast from the sea in Revelations 13 with the « imperium quod nunc regnat »⁵⁴; the name of the second beast, encoded in the numbers 666, is LATINUS⁵⁵. For Tertullian and for Victorinus of Pettau, Rome was the apocalyptic Babylon; the Emperor, the Wicked One, the Mystery of Iniquity foretold in II Thess. 2, 7⁵⁶. But with the Peace of the Church and the conversion of the Empire, such interpretations became unacceptable to Orthodoxy. In post-Constantinian apocalyptic commentaries, we see an abrupt *volte-face*, an attempt to ease both the millenarianism and the political criticism of the older tradition⁵⁷.

But in that seat of fundamentalist Western Christianity, in Africa, little had changed for the Donatists. The Emperor, the ally of the *traditor* clergy, and the Empire, were still the enemy. The African Church, now preserved, as they saw it, only in Donatism, could continue to be the Church of the martyrs, enduring imperial persecution and legal harassment. Before the beast of Rome, the Donatist still witnessed to his faith⁵⁸.

54. « Manifestus adhuc etiam de novissimo tempore et de his qui sunt in eo decem regibus, in quos dividetur quod nunc regnat imperium, significavit Iohannes Domini discipulus in Apocalypsi, edisserens quae fuerint decem cornua, quae a Daniele visa sunt », *Adv. haer.* V.26, 1; see SC vol. 153 (Paris, 1969), p. 324.

55. « Sed et AATEINOS nomen habet sexcentorum sexaginta sex numerum; et valde verisimile est, quoniam novissimum regnum hoc habet vocabulum. Latini enim sunt qui nunc regnant », *Adv. haer.* V.30, 3; SC 153 p. 380.

56. Tertullian, *Adv. Marcionem* III, 13, 10 (CCSL 1, p. 526); Victorinus of Pettau, *Apoc.* VIII, 2; XI, 4 (CSEL 49, pp. 86 and 102).

57. In the West, for example, Ambrose defines the Thessalonian *discessio* as rebellion against Rome (PL 17.456-7), and Optatus argues that the State is the protector of the Church, as Lebanon is to the Bride in the Song of Songs (CSEL 26, p. 74). In the East, Eusebius played a prominent role in smoothing out Church/State relations and reinterpreting the millenarian tradition: he rejected the canonical status of Revelations (always less accepted in the East in any case), praised the Emperor, and rejuvenated the world by some three to four hundred years against the earlier *anno saeculi* calculations. Jerome both translates Eusebius and endeavors himself to re-work the tradition in his de-eschatologized edition of Victorinus (see discussion, *infra*, n. 73). His efforts may be clearly perceived thanks to Haussleiter, who gives Victorinus and Victorinus-Jerome on facing pages, CSEL 49). On this topic generally, see Ermoni, « Les phases successives de l'erreur millénariste », *Revue des Questions Historiques* LXX (1901) pp. 353 ff. (the author's erudition compensates for his polemical stance); also Paschoud, *art. cit.*, pp. 59-67, on the effects of the Peace; Markus, *Saeculum*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-71, esp. 45 ff. on the tensions between the older and newer view, and the contrast between the Eastern, Eusebian tradition and the traditional attitude of apocalyptic hostility to the State in the West.

58. « Christians in the fourth and early fifth centuries... could follow the ancient apocalyptic tradition of hostility to the Empire... The Church, in this image, was surrounded by an alien and hostile world in the midst of which it constituted the elect. In a profound sense this image expressed a notion of the Church as essentially and inwardly always persecuted. Those who thought in such terms could take their stand within an ancient tradition of Christian thought, especially strong in Africa. Spiritually, such men lived in the world of Cyprian, Tertullian and of the early martyrs. Beneath the purple and scarlet robes of the apocalyptic whore they could still recognise Rome... [I]n Africa, above all, Donatist theologians kept the tradition alive throughout the fourth century and later. By Augustine's time, they were its sole representatives », Markus, *ibid.*, p. 55 f.

lity. Rejected by his own party, refusing the Catholics, he appears in the perspective of history a solitary, lonely figure. His work, however, did find a home among Catholic theologians, who appreciated and appropriated it with a remarkable rapidity. His Commentary soon circulated beyond Africa, where Jerome incorporated passages in his de-eschatologizing re-edition of Victorinus of Pettau's *In Apocalypsin*⁷¹; future generations — Primasius, Caesarius of Arles, Apringius, Bede, Beatus — so depended on it that it became virtually definitive of Catholic interpretations of Revelations. And finally, through his admirer Augustine, Tyconius inadvertently formulated an ecclesiology that worked to undermine the theological foundations of his own church.

But ultimately his adoptive party, the Catholic church, treated him little better than had his own. Assuming his exegeses, it shunned him as a heretic, until, eventually, all but one of his works were lost.

What remained was Tyconius' "exegetical revolution"⁷², his thorough-going de-eschatologizing both of apocalyptic texts and of political events. It helped to liberate Augustine from the earlier millenarian framework of most Christian thought, and provided him with the key to a more profound understanding of Paul⁷³. More generally, it freed Western Christianity from the apocalyptic traditions of its own past, so that it could settle into its new post-Constantinian position in the world and, as it were, in history⁷⁴.

However, as long as scholars see Tyconius as anticipating the imminent End of the World, on the one hand, while creating precisely that hermeneutic which served to quiet such expectation in subsequent Latin Christianity, on the other, they miss the full measure of the man and prevent our appreciation of what, after all, must be one of the most extraordinary individual contributions to bibli-

71. On Jerome's use of Tyconius here see Haussleiter, CSEL 49, pp. XLII-XLV. Apparently Caesarius of Arles made similar use of Tyconius: see G. Morin, « Le commentaire homilétique de St Césaire sur l'Apocalypse », *Rev. Ben.* XLV (1933) p. 47 f.

72. Christie, *art. cit.* (1979), p. 111.

73. On freeing Augustine from millenarianism, see esp. the article by G. Folliet, « La typologie du Sabbat chez St Augustin », *R.E. Aug.* II (1956) pp. 371-390; N.B. p. 380 on Tyconius' Apocalypse commentary. On Tyconius' own Paulinism, e.g., Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 42 and Dinkler, *art. cit.*, col. 854; also A. Pincherle, « Da Ticonio a Sant'Agostino », *Ric. Rel.* I (1925) p. 459, cf. 464 ff. For Augustine's use of Tyconius in the earlier years of the 390's, the excellent discussion in U. Duchrow, *Christenheit und Weltverantwortung* (Stuttgart, 1970), esp. pp. 259-61 and 232-7. For Tyconius' effect on Augustine's reading of Paul in the *ad Simplicianum*, the work of Alberto Pincherle, most recently « Sulla formazione della dottrina agostiniana della gratia », *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* XI.1 (1975), pp. 1-23. Pincherle's earlier work, *La formazione teologica di sant'Agostino* (Rome, 1947) touches on the effect of Tyconius on Augustine's early Pauline commentaries; I am currently preparing a study on this question.

74. Indeed, Tyconius would seem to go beyond most in his ability to let go of the Eschaton, and many do not initially follow his lead. In 397, for example, the Catholic writer Hilarius composed a strikingly literal commentary on Apocalypse, *De mundi duratione* (PL 13), in which he interprets the eschatological scenario very literally and ends by reaffirming the year 500 A.D. as the appointed time of the End. As we have seen, despite Tyconius and Augustine, this date continued to have eschatological resonance for both Catholics (see *supra*, pp. 67-68) and Donatists (*supra*, p. 72) especially in the wake of the Vandal invasion.

cal exegesis in the West. In their view, Tyconius stands as a sort of half-way house between the apocalyptic expectations of the earlier Revelations commentators and the Catholic interpretation which, one can then argue, really starts with Augustine⁷⁵. The origin of the de-eschatologizing Western tradition is thus also, in a sense, its Origen, his name tainted, his interpretations borrowed but suspect, his most influential work lost. Tyconius can no longer speak for himself.

But Augustine has spoken for him. The Catholic bishop's instinct for finding valuable sources had led him to the Donatist layman. Thanks to Augustine's praise in the *De doctrina christiana*, we still have the *Liber Regularum*. And thanks to the *Liber Regularum* and what we can reconstruct of the Apocalypse Commentary we can, I have argued, sufficiently perceive Tyconius' own voice to know that he himself had already left behind that expectation which his work in succeeding generations would serve to still.

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75. Markus, *op. cit.*, p. 56, is a notable exception.