



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050* by Richard Landes, Andrew Gow and David C. Van Meter

Review by: David Appleby

Source: *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Jan., 2009), pp. 120-122

Published by: Catholic University of America Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27745469>

Accessed: 16-06-2020 10:25 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Catholic University of America Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Catholic Historical Review*

Squatriti's introduction has much of interest to say both about Liudprand's place in the convoluted political world of tenth-century northern Italy, the Ottonian Empire, and Byzantium—none of them very safe places for courtiers either clerical or lay—and about the literary strategies he uses in his accounts. Unlike previous commentators, Squatriti does not feel that Liudprand reveals himself in his works, suggesting rather that “he left behind *personae* not personality” (p. 7), using a variety of stylistic strategies depending both on the circumstances and the purpose of his writing. These could vary from the use of sexual innuendo and robust humor as a means to point out the illegitimacy of the behavior of the petty rulers of northern Italy in contrast to that of the Ottonians, to the artistic sprinkling of Greek words and the insertion of poetry to emphasize his own learning, and thus reliability, as a writer. The dialogue form followed in the *Homily* (translated into English for the first time here and thus particularly welcome) shows Liudprand as an able practitioner of this familiar theological style, too. A vivid sense of his versatility and his wide horizons, both literary and geographic, comes through in both translation and introduction.

This translation has been aimed at an English-speaking student readership, and the introduction certainly has a great deal of useful guidance for one coming to Liudprand for the first time. Although there is no specific treatment of tenth-century Byzantine, Papal, northern Italian, or Ottonian history and a map would certainly have been helpful, nonetheless the footnotes (although perhaps rather too many are to works in Italian) infallibly tell the reader where to look for further information, and the bibliography is up-to-date. Thus recent debates about medieval humor, sexual politics, and the nature of the “other” all find a welcome place; for the more traditional nuts-and-bolts information, readers are sensibly referred to the relevant chapters of the *New Cambridge Medieval History*. Reasonably priced and extremely user-friendly, while still providing a scholarly reassessment of Liudprand and his works, this new translation is to be warmly welcomed.

University of York

ROSEMARY MORRIS

The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050. Edited by Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, and David C. Van Meter. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. xvi, 360. \$145.00 clothbound, ISBN 978-0-195-11191-0; \$55.00 paperback, ISBN 978-0-195-16162-5.)

Although the volume stems from a 1996 conference in Boston, the first chapter is a translation of Johannes Fried's article of 1989 on apocalyptic expectation c. 1000. Fried's practice anticipated the underlying principle of this entire collection: discarding the “terrors/antiterrors” dichotomy, they look for more nuanced signs of apocalyptic ideas and expectations in the medieval sources.

In part 1, which focuses on medieval thought, Guy Lobrichon shows that the Anonymous of York (c. 1000) made apocalyptic additions to a largely anti-apocalyptic tradition of commentaries on Revelation 20. The context and reception of Adso's *De ortu et tempore Antichristi* allow Daniel Verhelst to discern "a powerful latent anxiety about the end of the world among the clergy and more educated laymen in Lotharingia and the West Frankish Kingdom" (p. 87). According to Steven R. Cartwright, the commentary on 2 Thessalonians by Thietland of Einsiedeln expresses ideas intended to ease contemporary anxiety over the coming apocalypse. Richard Newhauser argues that the avarice-apocalypse nexus in tenth-century thought reflects both the changing economy and the patristic idea that an upsurge in greed would signify the end of time just as it had once signified the end of the golden age. Umberto Eco highlights St. Augustine's hermeneutic system as one factor that enabled Beatus of Liébana to interpret Revelation in a "neurotic" (p. 128) and non-Augustinian manner.

In part 2, which focuses on art and literature, Yves Christe notes that while Apocalypse cycles in manuscripts often depicted the end of the world and the Last Judgment, monumental images between about 1000 and the mid-twelfth century usually omitted them; intensely apocalyptic themes were too explosive for ordinary viewers. Malcolm Godden explains that references to the millennium in the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan must be understood against a background of speculation about time and history, and in light of the ambiguities of Old English grammar. Daniel F. Callahan suggests that widespread concern about the millennium accounts for the growing interest around 1000 in St. Michael as the archangel of the apocalypse. Regula Meyer Evitt examines anti-Judaism in an early-twelfth-century liturgical manuscript from Limoges. The *Ordo prophetarum* preserves the dramatic force of earlier images of Jews as threatening outsiders, while muting the apocalyptic fervor linked to anti-Judaism in early-eleventh-century Limoges. Once the millennium had passed, and after violence against southern French Jews, a return to Augustine's calmer eschatology seemed attractive. Susan E. von Daum Tholl argues that the projection of firm Ottonian rule into eternity in deluxe illuminations was a means of asserting "the eschatological continuity" (p. 236) of the empire against the apocalyptic idea that the empire's fall signals the end of time.

In part 3, which focuses on historiography, Landes criticizes the antiterror consensus that developed among modern historians in response to the nineteenth-century thesis of the terrors of the year 1000. Augustine's cautious eschatology shaped the medieval sources more than the champions of the consensus realized. However the claim is viewed that modern historians have been more Augustinian than their medieval predecessors, the discussion is so clear that it should be read before the volume's other studies. Benjamin Arnold maintains that the measures of Otto III and Pope Sylvester II to spread Roman imperial and ecclesiastical authority just before 1000 were responses to apocalyptic expectations based on St. Paul's (2 Thess. 2:3) reference to a "falling

away” just before the last day. William Prideaux-Collins surveys ideas about the apocalypse in England around the year 1000, giving attention to Byrhtferth, Wulfstan, and Ælfric. Van Meter examines the eschatological rhetoric of the letter of Richard of St. Vanne describing the otherworldly visions of a monk of St. Vaast in Arras c. 1012. The letter was a call for obedience within the monastery and a warning to outsiders who might obstruct efforts to bring the house under the authority of the local bishop. Presenting these in light of the impending apocalypse made the point more forcefully, but perhaps also fueled popular religious fervor and even heresy in Arras.

Part 4, “Tools and Sources,” contains Bradley E. Schaefer’s survey of astronomical events around 1000, as well as a collection of translated documents illustrating eschatological expectations and social change in that period. The collection is a first-rate guide to the state of the question and would well suit undergraduate and graduate courses on historiography and methodology.

Thomas Aquinas College

DAVID APPLEBY

Norbert and Early Norbertine Spirituality. Selected and introduced by Theodore J. Antry, O. Praem, and Carol Neel. [The Classics of Western Spirituality.] (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. 2007. Pp. xvi, 309. \$27.95 paperback. ISBN 978-0-809-14468-6.)

This book is long overdue. As Carol Neel and Theodore Antry point out in the introduction to their book *Norbert and Early Norbertine Spirituality*, studies of Norbert of Xanten and the Premonstratensians are “conspicuously underrepresented in modern scholarship” (p. 1). Ss. Bernard of Clairvaux, Hildegard of Bingen, and Francis of Assisi have long been the subject of historical analysis, and more recent studies have focused on Robert of Arbrissel and the wandering preachers of the twelfth century. By selecting and translating seven texts that illuminate Norbert and the Premonstratensian order, the editors provide an extraordinary service to monastic studies, as well as offer a wonderful entry point into the twelfth century.

Published as part of the Paulist Press’s Classics in Western Spirituality series, the translations offer “some of the more important Premonstratensian works of the early decades and provide material for such synoptic consideration of their twelfth-century movement” (p. 3). Each text is preceded by helpful introductory remarks that supply important historical context. By presenting these texts in chronological order and in full translation, the translators demonstrate the emergence of a distinctive Premonstratensian spirituality. As Neel and Antry argue, the Premonstratensians were “astoundingly prolific” in contrast to other “networks of Augustinians” (p. 24).

In critiquing monks for claiming superiority over “the true profession of the canons,” Anselm of Havelberg’s *Apologetic Letter* offers insights into the