THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS JOURNALS The Medieval Academy of America

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

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Source: *Speculum*, Oct., 2004, Vol. 79, No. 4 (Oct., 2004), pp. 1110-1112

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Medieval Academy of America

Stable URL: http://www.jstor.com/stable/20463117

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Social historians will be able to ask multiple questions about the social, economic, and political status of Sephardic men and women who lived in Spain in the late Middle Ages. Indeed, these documents touch on a myriad of interesting subjects. For example, the *ketubot* from the late fourteenth century and their scarcity in the next century show the impact that the 1391 pogroms had on the community. In the Barcelona 2 *ketubah,* two of the witnesses appear as converts when they certify the earlier Hebrew documents (p. 33). In the same *ketubah,* the bride's first husband is listed under both its Hebrew and Catalan versions (p. 33). The double listing points to the question of bilingualism, as well as to the issue of cross-cultural commercial relations, since the individual in question was a silk merchant.

As scholars exploit these documents, a more accurate and less "romantic" view of the Sephardic community of late-medieval Spain will appear. Moreover, the *ketubot* will help provide a more holistic history of this community. The *ketubah,* a document designed to provide financial security for a Jewish woman after marriage, can add a great deal of information about Sephardic men, women, and gender relations to help complete the picture. Moreover, Lacave's book leaves one with the hope that as the documentary collections of local and regional archives in Spain are cataloged, more such documents will come to life.

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RICHARD LANDES, ANDREW GOW, and DAVID C. VAN METER, eds., *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Paper. Pp. xv, 360.

At the core of this volume are eleven papers originally delivered at a 1996 conference on the "apocalyptic year 1000" at Boston University's Center for Millennial Studies. The career-long goal of the center's director, Richard Landes, has been to demonstrate that apocalyptic expectation has influenced a wide range of phenomena. He showed, in a 1988 article frequently cited in this collection, how the revival of the Roman Empire in the West through the coronation of Charlemagne can be understood as an attempt to forestall the Apocalypse: Carolingian interpretations of Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians held that the Antichrist could not come as long as the "nations" were subject to Roman imperial power. Simultaneously, the Carolingians adopted the anno Domini dating system, replacing the *anno mundi* system, according to which the millennial year 6000 was imminent.

The Apocalyptic Year 1000 reveals much about the ways in which powerful, learned Christians responded to the approach and passage of the first millennium of the Incarnation and Passion of their Messiah. All of the articles are suggestive, but the evidence for apocalyptic expectation as a driving force is most persuasive in connection with the history of the Holy Roman Empire. Steven R. Cartwright (pp. 93–108) draws attention to the writings, of c. 960, of Abbot Thietland of Einsiedeln, whose commentary on Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians bears witness to a strong belief in the imminent Apocalypse. Benjamin Arnold (pp. 271–87) discusses how the policies of the Ottonian emperors, like those of the Carolingians, can be understood as a response to Paul's letter, with its implications for the cosmic role of Rome. Arnold moves from the imperial coronations of Otto I (962) and Otto III (996) to a comprehensive discussion of Otto III's program of Roman *renovatio,* including plans to subject more "nations" (including Poles, Hungarians, Swedes, Liutizi, and Pechenegs) to the sway of the (Holy) Roman Empire. Susan E. von Daum Tholl (pp. 231–40), analyzing a group of manuscripts dating from 998 to 1002 known to have been in Otto III's library, shows how the illuminations projected an image of strong, continuing Roman imperial rule, thus assuring the "very thin upper crust [who] would have been privy to them" (p. 232) that the world would not soon end.

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Landes's publications in the field of millennial studies have been characterized by the thesis that millennial expectation motivated not only imperial advisers but also commoners. Hope for the actualization of Christian ideals of equality and social justice inspired the humbler classes into social revolution, via movements such as the Peace of God, popular heresies, and anti-Jewish violence. The agitated populace pressured the ruling elites to respond in a variety of ways, primarily repressive ones. Landes has increasingly perceived this facet of his project to be an uphill battle against "anti-terrors" historians who—like their predecessors around the turn of the first millennium—seek to silence apocalyptic voices. The "anti-terrors school" not only rejects Jules Michelet's Romantic theory that Europeans were paralyzed by terror at the approach of A.D. 1000 but also denies that apocalyptic expectation was a significant factor in developments at the time. Landes articulates his own vision of apocalyptic fervor as a feature of a large and vocal majority and responds explicitly to his opponents in two new essays written specifically for this volume (pp. 3–15 and pp. 243–70). His case is strengthened by the inclusion in the collection of English translations of previously published articles by Daniel Verhelst (pp. 81–92) and Johannes Fried (pp. 17–63). Those authors reformulated Michelet's anxious fear of the Last Days as hope for the Parousia (Verhelst) or as a spur to penance and pious action (Fried). Verhelst's 1977 article on Adso of Montier-en-Der shares with Landes a populist vision but also a tendency to press the evidence: "It certainly would not be preposterous to hypothesize that [queen of West Francia and sister of Otto I] Gerberga's request to Adso was prompted by an apocalyptic unrest that she shared with her subjects" (p. 85). It would not be preposterous, but it is also not necessary; the crowned heads of Europe were independently aware of their responsibility to stave off the Final Days. Fried's synthetic 1989 article on apocalyptic expectation shares Landes's belief in the massive ramifications of *Endzeiterwartung*. It makes a powerful statement (albeit without bibliographic references) and should be widely read.

Nevertheless, the volume does not completely succeed in demonstrating the truth of a populist take on apocalyptic expectation or of the bigger argument (embodied in the volume's subtitle) that apocalypticism was responsible for major social change. Among the contributors to the volume, only a few echo Landes's convictions concerning popular and populist fervor (Guy Lobrichon, p. 76; Yves Christe, p. 151; William Prideaux-Collins, p. 294; David C. Van Meter, pp. 320–21); still fewer note the theme of social change (Daniel Callahan, pp. 192–93). More importantly, those authors fail to explore such dimensions systematically. Only Regula Meyer Evitt explicitly invokes (in a tortured argument, pp. 205–29) a dynamic in which the populace engaged in apocalyptically motivated violence (attacks against Jewish communities in the Limousin early in the eleventh century) and, in response, the clerical elite attempted to contain millenarian apocalyptic fervor through the creation of a tolerationist liturgical drama (the twelfth-century Limoges *Ordo prophetarum*). Umberto Eco and Malcolm Godden both contradict the social revolutionary perspective. For Eco, "after the fall of the Roman Empire and at least for five centuries, people felt that nothing could be done but wait. . . . Since the world was unchangeable, it had only to be read as text. . . . [O]nly after the intellectual world was freed from the impulse toward symbolical reading [by the more mature rationalism of Aquinas] could the new millenaristic movements conceive of nature, even society, as something that can be acted upon and transformed by human initiative" (pp. 132–34). Godden's close reading of the works of Ælfric and Wulfstan, above all the uses made by those authors of earlier commentators on an imminent Apocalypse, argues that the very exploration of apocalyptic themes by learned theologians corroded—rather than inflamed—apocalyptic expectation. Ælfric and Wulfstan both arrived at "a cyclical sense of history, as a series of repeated crises in which Goths or Lombards were replaced by Anglo-Saxons or Vikings, portents followed portents, and the end of the world was always anticipated but never arrived"

(p. 177); "millennial expectation was a feature of the learned establishment rather than popular belief" (p. 176).

If the collection fails to demonstrate the more ambitious arguments that are dearest to Landes's heart, it does prove that apocalyptic expectation was a central concern of a broad range of elites, both secular and ecclesiastical, and not just of a few marginal tassels on the lunatic fringe. Furthermore, it suggests that the more ambitious arguments are far from implausible, albeit not proven. The Apocalypse is part of the central message of the Christian religion. Thus Richard Newhauser (pp. 109–19) can confidently discuss how avarice figured as a sign of the approach of the Last Days, without perceiving any need first to argue that Christian thinkers expected the Apocalypse. We can expect the subject to be of keen interest at least through 2048, the date of the Last Judgment, according to Bede's *De temporum ratione* (p. 300).

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KEITH D. LILLEY, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages, 1000–1450.* (European Culture and Society.) Basingstoke, Eng., and New York: Palgrave, 2002. Pp. xvi, 295; black-and-white plates, black-and-white figures, and tables. $65 (cloth); $19.95 (paper).

A better title for this synthetic textbook would be "Medieval Urban Geography." Himself a historical geographer, Lilley provides a clear account of patterns of urban topography, medieval notions of urban design, and geographies of urban charters. Of special value for an American audience, moreover, are his keen awareness that medieval streets and urban landscapes continue to shape European cities and his sensitivity to the relevance that those landscapes have had, in recent years, for contested political identities, especially in those areas, such as Ireland and Poland, that experienced Europe's internal colonization.

Lilley's orientation is decidedly top-down—we learn more about the lords who granted urban privileges, for instance, than about the communal revolts that extracted such privileges. Moreover, there is a heavy emphasis on the new towns of the period of European colonization, rather than on old towns such as London, York, and Paris. In the period after 1000, secular and ecclesiastical lords, from the Norman conquerors of England, Wales, and Ireland to the Spaniards of the *Reconquista* and the Germans in the Slavic east, founded new towns to enhance their power and income. Towns that were established in a given epoch tended to have similar topographies and to grow in similar ways. The charters spelling out their privileges, moreover, often clustered into particular "families." In the late eleventh century, for instance (and here Lilley follows the work of Mary Bateson), the Norman baron William fitz Osbern granted a charter to the English town of Hereford that was based on one that he had originally granted to his castle town of Breteuil-sur-Iton in Normandy. From Hereford, fitz Osbern and other Norman barons spread the laws of Breteuil to towns in England, Ireland, and Wales. Similarly, colonizing lords in eastern Germany spread the urban laws of Lübeck and Magdeburg.

Lilley highlights the eleventh-century new town of Bridnorth as an example of one pattern of urban topographic formation and transformation, which can be found not only in other parts of England but also in the Rhineland. Bridnorth began, in the 1080s, with a castle, a market street, and a church; in the early twelfth century the market street was extended; and later in the twelfth century a gridded suburb developed to one side of the market street extension. The gridded town of Grenade-sur-Garonne, founded by Eustache of Beaumarchais in 1290–91, serves as an example of a later pattern of urban topographic formation, that of the bastides in Gascony, which were founded both by French and by English lords.

Proponents of modern architecture and city planning, such as Le Corbusier, have written