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## INTRODUCTION TO THE MILLENARIANISM AND MESSIANISM SERIES

Within Judaism and Christianity there has always been a great expectation that something monumental would happen that would transform human existence and bring an end to human history as we know it. In the Bible, from the time of the Babylonian Captivity, there has been the expectation that a messianic figure would appear who would bring about the culmination of Jewish hopes. In the subsequent centuries, as Palestine came under Greek, Syrian and then Roman control, the messianic expectation grew stronger and stronger. The Dead Sea Scrolls suggest that a great ferment and fervor existed in the period just before the beginning of Christianity.

And, of course, Christianity as a religion began as a claim that the messianic expectation of Judaism had been fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The early Christian texts, especially the four gospels, portray the life and death of Jesus as historically linked to biblical messianic expectations, especially as put forth in the book of *Isaiah*. However, the Crucifixion did not seem to be attended with the expected political triumph of the Jewish Messiah over all of the enemies of the Jewish people. In fact, it looked like a complete defeat. But as St. Paul explained at length, it would come to be fulfilled at the time of the Second Coming of Jesus into world history. Jesus first came to expatiate the sins of mankind, and he would return to reign on earth and to inaugurate the events leading to the Day of Judgment. The most forceful and exciting statement of when, where, and how the messianic triumph would occur was that which appears in the last book of the New Testament, *The Revelations of St. John*, which played a great role in future discussions within Christendom. This work, along with sections of the *Book of Daniel*, provided a blueprint centuries later for those seeking to determine exactly when the Second Coming would occur. It named and described many symbolic figures who would appear as the dramatic climax of human history neared. It also stressed the importance of the events that would lead up to the Second Coming. These included the appearance of the Antichrist, who would try to lead the believers

astray, the conversion of the Jews to belief in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

In the first century of the Common Era, Jews were crushed physically and emotionally by the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Some had hoped the Messiah would arrive in time to save the Temple and the holy city. After the Roman general, Titus, captured and destroyed the city and made captives of the Jews, survivors sought clues of God's plan for when the long sought Messiah would arrive. When a rebellion against Roman rule took place in the second century, some thought its leader, Bar Kochba, was the expected Holy One. In the centuries thereafter, Jewish leaders studied various malevolent developments in Jewish history as containing possible evidences of the birth pangs of the Messiah. They looked for clues about the mighty empires that would have to be destroyed, as foretold in the *Book of Daniel*, in order for the Messianic Age to begin. They tried to calculate from the symbols in the *Book of Daniel*, how long it would be after the end of the Roman Empire.

The messianic expectations on the part of both Jews and Christians reached new heights in the late Middle Ages in Europe. On the Christian side, the preachings and writings of the Italian monk, Joachim de Fiore, provided a new and urgent reading of *Revelation* as foretelling the third and final age of human history that would soon begin.

Jewish kabbalistic thinkers in southern France and Spain sought clues about when the Messianic Age would begin in the kabbalistic interpretations of biblical texts. Numerological readings of Hebrew terms, it was hoped, would provide significant clues. The Jewish scholars investigating this lived, of course, in Christian communities in Europe. Although often isolated by medieval anti-semitic laws and regulations, some interchange of ideas, interpretations, expectations and documents occurred. In the late Middle Ages, Christians became concerned about studying the Bible in the original languages and also about finding out what secret information the Jews might have in their possession. Jews and Jewish converts were contacted and employed in Christian research centers to find out when the long awaited return of Jesus, when he would begin his thousand-year reign on earth, would take place. So, by the late fifteenth century, Christian millenarians and Jewish scholars seeking to find out when the Messiah might arrive, knew of some of each other's findings and ideas. Leading Jewish scholars interacted with important persons in the Church and State in many places in Europe. In Spain, for example, until 1492, figures like Don Isaac Abarbanel, a leading theorist on messianism, was a prominent financial court adviser, first in Portugal and then in Spain.

The many turbulent developments in Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries convinced both Jewish and Christian thinkers that the end of days was at hand. In the West, the forced conversion of most of Spain's Jews, the collapse of the Moorish kingdom in Spain, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and later Portugal, and the unification of Castille and Aragon were taken as indications that something monumental was starting. 1492 was seen as the miracle year, the *annis mirabilis*. The Voyages of Discovery emanating from Portugal and Spain, the new worlds they revealed and the riches they brought

back to Europe had to be part of the great Divine plan. Christopher Columbus, in his *Book of Prophecies*, told Isabella that he would find enough gold in the Americas to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem!

At the other end of Europe, the Ottoman invasions conquered Constantinople, the seat of Eastern Christianity, in 1453, and spread as far as the Balkans, Budapest, the outskirts of Vienna, and the waters around Italy. This also had to be some indication of divine significance. And in Europe, the corruption of the papacy and of the clergy, railed against by Savonarola and Erasmus, was taken as a sign of the deteriorating world that would precede the coming of the Messiah. The resurgence of Greek and Roman learning provided ammunition for those seeking clues about the ways of God in History. All over Europe, the eruption of reform movements within the Church, which led to the establishment of non-Catholic Christian states in England, Germany, Bohemia, and Switzerland, and the emergence of organized Reformed churches as powerful alternatives to Roman Catholicism, all made various visionaries think in terms of the dramatic scenarios in both the book of *Daniel* and *Revelation*. Some hardy thinkers saw the Turkish Empire as the last empire before the divine one. Others saw the pope or the papacy as the Antichrist who was about to be overthrown as a prelude to the Second Coming of Christ. Some commentators on Scripture had come to the conclusion, based on calculations drawn from *Daniel*, that the Millennium would commence 1260 years after the fall of the once mighty Roman Empire. This made it all important to figure out exactly when the Roman Empire ended. Much had to be studied and examined about the last days of the Roman Empire. Sir Isaac Newton became a super-expert on the late, late Roman Empire after it had moved out of Rome and even after it had moved out of Italy in the sixth and seventh centuries. The Scottish mathematician, John Napier, devised the system of logarithms to help in these difficult calculations.

The *Book of Daniel*, Chapter 12, verse 4, told that at the time of the end, people would move to and fro and knowledge would increase. People living in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the voyages of exploration, the creation of colonies all over the world, the development of international commerce and the startling increase of knowledge in so many areas, as sure signs that the Time of the End was fast approaching.

The early modern period saw a wide variety of different and often incompatible millenarian and messianic scenarios being set forth, some of which guided the leading players in different parts of European history. A rich and often wild ferment of ideas, incorporating earlier texts, new Judeo-Christian interpretations, and elements of what was to emerge as the new science, melded together. Examining developments from 1500 onward in terms of these ideas throws quite a different light on the course of events and the motivations behind all sorts of developments, from the theocracy of Savonarola in Florence and the dramatic doings of the early reformers in Germany, to the plans advocated by early Christian Hebraists, Catholic and Protestant missionaries, and optimistic Jewish thinkers who were looking for some ray of hope after the expulsion of the Jews from Iberia. The religious controversies

that dominated English history in the sixteenth century, the religious civil wars in France, the rise of Calvinism in the Netherlands and the Dutch Rebellion, along with the religious fragmentation of the German states, and the rise of Protestant sects in Poland and Hungary, all set forth millenarian interpretations. And climactic events such as the defeat of the Spanish Armada looked to many at the time as a most important sign of God's plans for mankind.

Many Jewish scholars had figured out that 1648 would be a most important year for the Jewish world, the moment of the arrival of the Messiah. Protestants in England and The Netherlands had calculated that 1655–56 would be decisive, beginning with the conversion of the Jews. With religious issues holding such an important part in the conflicts all over Europe, millenarian and messianic thinking and acting played an exciting role in the history of the times.

So, from Portugal to Sweden to Poland to Italy to Palestine and Constantinople, there were exciting and excited messianic outpourings. For example, in Portugal in the late sixteenth century, there was constant expectation that a lost king, King Sebastian, lost in battle, would return and usher in the Messianic Age. Then, in the next century, there was a claim that Jesus would come first to Portugal to rescue the new Christian Marranos and take them with him to Palestine where they would rebuild the Temple. At the same time, Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel proclaimed in 1655 that the coming of the Messiah was imminent because a Portuguese explorer had reported finding some lost tribe members in the Andes mountains. And Menasseh learned from perusing Queen Christina's copy of La Peyrère's *Du Rappels des Juifs* that the King of France would soon lead the Jews to the Holy Land where they would rebuild the Temple and where the Messiah would rule with the King of France as his Regent. Menasseh rushed back to Amsterdam to tell people that the coming of the Messiah was imminent. To prepare for this he rushed to England to get the Puritan government to re-admit the Jews as a prelude to the Messianic Age. Foreign diplomats at the time said it was impossible to talk to Oliver Cromwell about mundane business because he was only concerned about when the Messiah would come. We have an account of some Swedish emissaries who had come to London to discuss some disputes about the Russian fur trade with Cromwell. They reported that the only thing Cromwell would discuss was if there were any new reports about when the Messiah was coming.

When Menasseh ben Israel arrived in England to begin his negotiations with the British government, he was met at the dock by a Welsh millenarian with the improbable name, Arise Evans, who told him that the son of the recently beheaded King Charles I would be the Regent of the Messiah and would rule the world with him. Menasseh is reported to have said that this seemed most unlikely but that he could believe that either the King of Sweden or the King of France could play such a role. Poland, at around the same time, was being invaded by the Swedish army. Just as the Swedes seemed to be over-running the country, the Polish King held up the statue of the Black Madonna in front of the Swedish troops who immediately withered away. This was taken as a divine sign and was followed by an actual marriage of King John Casimir to the

statue of the Black Madonna. This was followed by the destruction of the various Protestant millenarian groups in Poland as a token of Polish love for the Madonna who had saved them.

The Center for 17th- & 18th-Century Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles asked me to organize a series of conferences on Messianism and Millenarianism in 1997–1998 in view of the growing interest and concern with the Millennium, and to present these conferences at the William Andrews Clark Library.

For over twenty years I had been setting forth my own researches into the subject, and organizing conferences of other scholars at the Clark. In 1975 I gave a paper at the Clark, in the series, *Culture and Politics*, organized by Perez Zagorin. My paper was on “Jewish Messianism and Christian Millenarianism” and dealt with the amazing interactions between Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel of Amsterdam and the British and Dutch Christian Millenarians, and with the French Marrano theologian and courtier, Isaac La Peyrère, who was predicting that at any moment the King of France would lead the Jews back to the Holy Land and rule the world with the Messiah! After more research on such matters I was invited in 1981–82 to be the Clark Professor to organize a lecture series on the subject. I was able to bring together people working in different disciplines and in different countries. And I was able to work with an exciting group of young scholars in the bowels of the Clark, and to imbibe the fruits of rooting through the rich collection of seventeenth-century religious tracts in the Clark collection.

So, it seemed fitting that a more comprehensive group of conferences should be organized at the Clark near the end of century, bringing together people in many disciplines from Europe, Israel, Canada, Brazil and the United States.

Although the messianic and millenarian movements often were intertwined and took place in the same geographical space and chronological time, it was thought best to divide the conferences by the religious groups involved. Originally I had hoped to have conferences on Jewish messianism, Moslem millenarianism, Catholic millenarians, British millenarianism, and Continental millenarianism. For reasons beyond my control, we ended up with just four conferences, leaving the Moslem side of the story for later discussions.

In the second half of this century, the study of millenarianism has been led in part by studies such as Norman Cohn’s *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, Gershom Scholem’s studies on Jewish mysticism, by the studies into the forces at work in the Puritan Revolution in England and North America by Christopher Hill, Hugh Trevor-Roper and others, by the studies on millenarian religious views in The Netherlands and in Bohemia, by studies on the influence of Jacob Boehme’s mysticism, by studies on the impact of the early Quakers in England and all over Europe, and by studies on the millenarian movements and proto-Jewish ones in Transylvania and Poland. The wealth of material examined in the last fifty years of religious movements incorporating millenarian and messianic ideas, and the influences of these groups, needs a lot of cross fertilization of disciplines, scholars and ideas.

National histories have had difficulty with historical actors who moved

## 1. THE ROSICRUCIANS AND THE GREAT CONJUNCTIONS

The Rosicrucian manifestoes were published at Kassel in 1614, and there is controversy about their authorship. This chapter will explore some of the personalities known to be involved in one way or another, and bring out some of the intended meanings of the millenarian symbolism used in them. It shows that astronomical/astrological calculations based on several major conjunctions of the stars and planets were an important part of millenarian symbolism.

The first of the manifestoes was *Fama Fraternitatis Roseae Crucis*, which describes the recent discovery of the grave of Christian Rosencreutz, a fourteenth-century knight who traveled to the Middle East and there gained wisdom in magic, kabbalah, and astrology. On return to Germany he founded a brotherhood to guard the knowledge he brought home. The *Fama* now announces that the brotherhood has come into the open to let it be known that a new age of reformation of all the arts is to begin. It calls for others to come forth in print to let themselves be known to the brotherhood.

The second manifesto, *Confessio Fraternitatis Roseae Crucis*, is addressed to all the learned of Europe and is even more apocalyptic in tone. It begins with the statement that it is now possible to securely name the Pope as Antichrist, and goes on:

It is Jehova who, seeing how the world is falling to decay, / and near its end,  
doth hasten it again to its beginning, / inverting the course of Nature, and so  
what heretofore / hath been sought with great pains and daily labour He  
doth / lay open now to those thinking of no such thing, offering / it to the  
willing and thrusting it upon the reluctant, that it / may become the good  
that which will smooth the troubles of human / life and break the violence of  
the unexpected blows of Fortune ... .

The *Confessio* states that the trumpet shall sound since it has become manifest to many learned men in Germany that the Pope shall be trodden under foot and “a final groan shall end his Ass’s braying.” This will lead to much commotion but “our treasures shall remain untouched, till the Lion shall

arise and exact them as his right, receive and employ them for the establishment of his kingdom.” The Lion here introduced is almost certainly a reference to the Paracelsian Lion prophecy. Its renewed use in Germany can be traced back to at least 1598. A first part was culled from Paracelsus’s *Liber Mineralibus* (ca. 1540), republished in his collected works at Basel in 1588. Also, Paracelsus had published a shorter prophecy in 1530 that was republished at Strassburg in 1616. Paracelsus stated that after a great and fearful solar eclipse there will be revolts, riots, and wars, whereupon:

The Lion having Blue and White for associates will march in a high manner ... . An Old Lion will be bound and a young Lion will become free. He will please all those animals that the old had vexed ... . Then shall the Pearl, so long lost, be found by one of humble estate, and will be set as a jewel in gold. It will be given to the Prince of all beasts, that is, to the right Lion. He will hang it about his neck, and wear it with honour. He will resist the Bear and the Wolf, and rend them asunder; so that the Beasts of the forest shall be safe. Then will the Old Art flourish and no heed will be given to the New. Then will the New World begin and the White and the Black shall disappear ... .<sup>1</sup>

This prophecy circulated in manuscript, and in the form finally published as *De Tinctura Physicorum* (1619) the prophecy brings together some new elements. The prophecy now involves three precious treasures buried in Europe and the coming of *der Löwe aus Mitternacht* (The Lion of the North). While the first part was written by Paracelsus, the second part on the Lion was added by someone else.

The northern Lion as an emblematic savior is found in several places in the Bible; for instance, as the Swedish Rosicrucian Johannes Bureus showed, in *Amos* 3:8 and in *Revelation* 5:5. It worked as a forceful emblem for psychological resistance and popular messianism. It was later used in the Thirty Years War, first in 1624 through a series of pamphlets speaking in a nondescript way of the rise of a German Lion and then in 1626 in a document written by a Rosicrucian from Rostock, Anastasius Philareta Cosmopolita or Joachim Morsius, which called for the intervention of the Danes in the German war. In 1631, the Lion of the North was used massively in pamphlets to prepare the Swedish invasion of Germany. Its occurrence in the *Confessio* has stirred Frances Yates’s speculation that in 1614 it designated the Palatine Prince Fredrick V of Württemberg, later King of Bohemia, who lost his realm shortly thereafter at the Battle of the White Mountain in 1618.

The *Confessio* continues:

God hath already sent messengers which should testify His will, some new stars which have appeared in Serpentarius and Cygnus the which powerful signs of a great council shew forth how for all things which human ingenuity discovers, God calls upon his hidden knowledge, as likewise the Book of

Nature, though it stands open truly before all eyes, can be read or understood by only a few.

The stars can be taken together with the assertion in the *Fama* there has been a showing of “the uppermost point in *Trygono igneo*, whose flame should now be more and more bright, and shall undoubtedly give to the world the last light.” This is a reference to the recent cycle of conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn in the fiery trigon that play a hidden role in the Rosicrucian texts. Thus, it may seem unenlightening to be informed that Christian Rosencreutz was born in 1378 and lived 106 years. In the *Fama*, we are told of the rediscovery of his grave, as he had predicted, 120 years after his death in 1484, i.e., as the *Confessio* states – in the year of the new star of 1604. Yet, readers are no doubt supposed to know that the birth of the knight coincides with the end of the Great Papal Schism in 1378, while his death concurs with the birth of Martin Luther in 1484; a year in which a conjunction between the planets Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars appeared in the zodiac sign of Scorpio.

Indeed, the *Fama* was likely to be understood only by readers conversant with certain themes in Arabic astrology. The doctrine of the great conjunctions was described in detail by the ninth century astronomer of eastern Khurashan, Abu Ma’shar al-Balki, who argued that a great prophet who would supercede Mohammed would appear when these planets meet in Scorpio, as they did in 1484.<sup>2</sup>

The impact of the conjunctions had been debated in Germany for some time. In his treatise *Mysterium Cosmographicum* (Tübingen, 1596), Johannes Kepler studied records from Johannes Regiomontanus on the great conjunctions between Jupiter and Saturn and found how each conjunction “occur[s] successively eight zodiacal signs later, how they gradually pass from one trine to another,” and in particular now generating conjunctions in the fiery trigon of Aries (1583), Sagittarius (1603), and Leo (1623), all dates significant in Rosicrucian calculations.

The astronomical debate intensified after the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 1603/04. In 1605, Kepler and the Paracelsian astronomer Helisaeus Roeslin appeared together as commentators on the new star in *Serpentario* that appeared just above this conjunction. A year later, Kepler shifted grounds and wrote a thesis dedicated to Rudolph II, *De nova Stella visitatu in pede Serpentario* (Prague, 1606), in which he agreed with Roeslin that there would be further wars of religion even after the truce of Duke Matthias and the Turks in Hungary, but he also smugly mocked Roeslin’s prediction of a great catastrophe after 1604. Kepler instead briefly warns of the advent of a new union and sect to which both Turks and Christians will be admitted, a remark that could well be a reference to Guillaume Postel’s mystical tract *Panthenousia* (Venice, 1547), which argued for a future concordance between messianic religious groups whether Hebrew, Christian, or Ishmaelite. Kepler then quickly invokes the silence of Harpocrates and asserts that no punishment is severe enough for those who allow it to be breached.<sup>3</sup>

As the *Confessio* states, it was the comet in the (cross-shaped) sign of Cygnus



or the Swan and the little nova in Serpentario (1603/4) that triggered the Rosicrucian movement. The deeper reason for this enthusiasm was that the nova of 1603/4 appeared in the sky a little above the great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Sagittarius, being part of a sequence of conjunctions in the fiery trigon so rare that in Arabo-Latin astronomy it was taken to mark the coming of a new age, a circumstance explained by Robert Fludd in his *Apology for the Rosicrucians* in 1616. Celestial signs were taken to be crucial for marking the new era, and the appearance of the two stars in the *Confessio* (Kassel, 1614), and then again on the famous image of the Rosicrucian tract *Speculum sophericum rhodo-stauroticon* (Frankfurt, 1618) by Theophil Schweighardt (Daniel Mögling), shows that the Roeslin/Kepler discussion of astronomical phenomena was central to the Rosicrucians.<sup>4</sup>

There is the possibility that the Lion referred to in the *Confessio* is the sign for the awaited Great Conjunction in the fiery trigon, that of Leo in 1623, underlined by such writings as Paul Nagel's *Cursus Quinquenali Mundi oder Wundergeheime Offenbarung* (Halle, Saxonia, 1620) which stated that the whole course of history would repeat itself within the course of four years before the bitter end: "1624 nec plus ultra." Of course, Nagel was immediately attacked by a Jesuit author claiming that his doctrine of compressed repetition was a mere stage-play, falsely transposed to the scene of reality.

The *Fama* and the *Confessio* were published at Kassel in 1614, but were written in 1609/10 in Tübingen in the circle of Johannes Valentin Andreae, a student of theology. Investigations of the Tübingen scene show that Andreae was influenced by Tobias Hess, a millenarian and Christoph Besold, a learned Doctor of Jurisprudence.

Recently formulated doubts on Andreae's authorship of the *Fama* stem from his own disavowal of the movement. In a later phase, he dismissed the Rosicrucian fiction as a joke, a "ludibrium." Also, in his extant writings, there is no unambiguous reference to his authorship of the tracts. He instead shows a polemical attitude, and in 1617 he ridicules predictive astronomy and Rosicrucian ideas in his plays, *Menippus* and *Turbo*. Moreover, in *Mythologiae Christianae* of 1619, Andreae lists a number of apocalyptic authors whom he regards as deluded, including the spectacular apocalypticists Paul Lautensack, Guillaume Postel, Jacob Brocardo, Aegidius Gutman, Simon Studion, and even his former friend Tobias Hess. This is notwithstanding that they all appear to have been part of the tradition that sets the millenarian tone of the Rosicrucian pamphlets.

The influences on the writer of the *Fama* are laid out in the research of Will-Erich Peuckert. Peuckert saw the Rosicrucians somewhat vaguely as an offshoot of a larger school of Pansophism, but he also provided new material on the background of the millenarian calculations of the Second Coming of Christ in Simon Studion's manuscript *Naometria sive nuda et prima libri intus et foris scripti per clavem Davidis et calamum virgae similem apertio*, begun according to Studion's own account in Tübingen in 1592 and given in complete form to Duke Fredrik IV of Württemberg in 1604. Studion (1543–1606) worked as a Lutheran pastor at Marbach outside Stuttgart. Few details are known about

his life, but he studied history with Martin Crusius (1526–1607) at Tübingen and he continued to have contacts there, particularly with Tobias Hess. Crusius was in any case pleased to see the young brothers Andreae in his class; in 1603 he records that Johan Valentin visited his class on Cicero. In 1597, another student of Crusius, Tobias Hess, read Studion's *Naometria* in manuscript and started to develop his own apocalyptic predictions. Hess searched for further details in the millenarian commentaries on Genesis and the Song of Songs by the Italian unionist Jacob Brocardo. It was through Hess that Andreae learned of Studion's ideas.<sup>5</sup>

*Naometria* means "the measurement of the holy place." In it, Studion works out a chronology for the rebuilding of the Temple and calculates the time of the Second Coming. In an important analysis, Robin Bruce Barnes has shown that Studion partly relies on the mystical number reckoning of Eustachius Poysssel, whose *Der Schlüssel David, Esaie: 22. Apocalip: 3.* (n. p. 1594) focuses on the recent Calvinist takeover in Saxony and the threatened fate of Lutheranism in the Palatine realm of Frederick IV. Describing the Teutonic Order during the mid-medieval reign of the millenarian Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (declared anathema in 1240), Studion aggressively predicts the crucifying of the Pope in 1620 (punning on 1260 as a failed Joachimite prediction for the millennium). As with Poysssel, Studion locates the Second Advent to 1623.

The reckoning is laboriously subtle and each of Studion's two manuscripts counts to over a thousand pages of biblical commentary and prophecy on the turn of events after the rise of Luther and Zwingli in 1521 and 1528. The reformist activity of Luther's protector, Duke Frederick of Saxony (d. 1525), is coordinated with the apocalyptic rider of the White Horse. Conclusions are drawn on the rise of Henry of Navarre and Emperor Rudolph II. In a central and much debated phrase, Studion states that negotiations for an evangelical union among Protestant princes and electors took place at Lüneburg in July 1586 with diplomatic representatives from France, Britain, and Denmark.

Subtle calculations are given by hand that the year 1590 will emerge as a decisive historical turning point, a year of mutation. In particular, Studion offers a significant numerical computation based on the Hebrew words for Rose and Lily (in Hebrew "hebsaleh" and "shushanna"), yielding 530 + 661, adding up to 1191, the year of the founding of the Teutonic Order. Similarly, Studion's *militia evangelica* dwells *sub rosa et lilio*. One image in the text can be interpreted as a protean Rose Cross: a round black cross is set within seven concentric circles overlaid by petal-shaped markings for numerical figures, thus forming a rose. Studion calls it the entrance of the four archangels to the Temple.<sup>6</sup> Studion's proto-Rosicrucian ideas thus are firmly linked to the Teutonic Order and to Frederick of Saxony as the protector of the Lutheran reform.

Studion now mixes the quest for the New Jerusalem with suggestions for a historically determined political alliance. An appendix to the 1604 edition, titled *Hieroglyphica Simone Studionis*, delivers political instructions in a six part motet set to horns, strings, and the human voice and written by Johannes Brauhart, a cantor at Marbach. The song expresses hopes that Henry IV of

## 2. ARIANISM AND MILLENARIANISM: THE LINK BETWEEN TWO HERESIES FROM SERVETUS TO SOCINUS

Arianism and millenarianism, on the face of it, seem strange bedfellows. In a tradition stretching back to the post-Reformation era, canonised in the Enlightenment, consolidated by the liberal historiography of the nineteenth century, massively restated in the post-war period, and still very evident in recent literature, these two forms of unorthodoxy are associated with seemingly antithetical sets of values and behaviours.

Anti-trinitarianism on the one hand has won a firm place in the classic narrative of the emancipation of the western mind from the bondage of medieval dogma. In attacking the central mystery of orthodox Christianity, it is routinely claimed, antitrinitarians developed the most progressive aspects of the Renaissance and Reformation in the direction of the Enlightenment and nurtured a trinity of liberal values: freedom, reason, and tolerance. The classic two-volume history of Unitarianism by Earl Morse Wilbur, published in 1946 and 1952, begins and ends by describing its subject as “a movement fundamentally characterised by its increasing devotion to these three leading principles: ... freedom, reason and tolerance.”<sup>1</sup> The standard history of Socinianism in England by Herbert John McLachlan, published in 1951, adopts precisely the same formula – “devotion to the principles of freedom, reason, and tolerance in religion marks the movement through every change in its forms of thought” – adding that it also “helped pave the way for the ‘Age of Reason.’”<sup>2</sup> Similar statements in more recent literature are easy to find in leading accounts of the Italian, Polish, Czech, Transylvanian, and Dutch wings of the antitrinitarian movement.<sup>3</sup>

The post-war reputation of millenarianism, on the other hand, already indelibly soiled by Müntzer, Münster, and the Fifth Monarchists, could scarcely offer a greater contrast. In the immediate aftermath of Hitler’s Third Reich, Walter Nigg published in Zürich one of the first modern histories of millenarianism, cast as a history of the vain and destructive pursuit of the “eternal empire,” “das ewige Reich.”<sup>4</sup> A few years later, Norman Cohn

produced the first version of his famous study of what he variously called “revolutionary messianists,” “mystical anarchists,” and “millenarians.” Conceived, like his later work on witchcraft and anti-semitism, as a study of the social and ideological preconditions for persecution and genocide, its second edition concluded with an appendix directly exploring the bearing of these medieval and Reformation movements on the totalitarian eschatologies of Hitler and Stalin.<sup>5</sup> If antitrinitarianism emerged from the Second World War still associated with individual freedom, reason, and tolerance, millenarianism remained no less firmly associated with messianic tyranny, mass delusion, and violent fanaticism.

As a result of this conceptual divide, Arianism and millenarianism have rarely been discussed together. Modern Unitarians and millenarians, in the first place, have not been keen to associate with one another. Unitarianism’s claim to be a precursor to the Enlightenment seems incompatible with an association with millenarianism, and none of the leading surveys of the movement dwell on it. McLachlan’s survey of English Socinianism, for instance, refers to millenarianism only in passing as one of the “divergent elements” “which made for dissension and disunity”; while the first survey of the heyday of the doctrine in Transylvania seemed at pains to deny any association with millenarianism.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the Adventist historians who pioneered the study of the history of Protestant millenarianism had enough difficulty establishing the respectability of their own heritage without emphasising its association with other heresies such as antitrinitarianism. The indexes in LeRoy Edwin Froom’s four-thousand-page history of prophetic exegesis – another work contemporaneous with Wilbur and McLachlan, Nigg and Cohn – turn up a mere handful of references to antitrinitarianism, Arianism, Socinianism, and Unitarianism,<sup>7</sup> while the equally voluminous but far less well-known anthology of texts on the Kingdom of God compiled by Ernst Staehelin includes only two documents by Socinians, neither of them millenarian.<sup>8</sup> Even in case studies of individuals and small groups, the coincidence of antitrinitarianism and millenarianism is rarely noted, more rarely analysed, and never analysed in a sustained, synoptic fashion.

The best known such cases, nevertheless, are extremely impressive: five of the most intellectually distinguished representatives of either movement in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Isaac Newton (1642–1727) and his chosen successor as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, the “honest Newtonian” William Whiston (1667–1752), were of one mind on many questions; but “the most startling point of similarity in their views,” according to James E. Force, “is the confluence between the heartfelt Arianism of the two men and their millennial hopes.”<sup>9</sup> The two leading dissenting intellectuals of late eighteenth-century England, Richard Price (1723–91) and Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), dissented from one another on many fundamental theological issues – including Original Sin, the Virgin Birth, the preexistence of Jesus, the sufficiency of Scripture, and the details of their eschatologies. Despite the common association of the two, Jack Fruchtman Jr’s study of them concluded that “the only principles that they held in common were their rejection of the

idea of the trinity and [their acceptance of] the coming millennium.”<sup>10</sup> A less familiar but no less distinguished example is one of the greatest intellectuals of eighteenth century Sweden: the nobleman, inventor, natural philosopher, metaphysician, theologian, and mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), who combines an unusual brand of antitrinitarianism with a unique quasi-millenarian interpretation of the Apocalypse.<sup>11</sup>

The continuation of millenarianism amongst such distinguished intellectuals in the era when it was least respectable amongst their enlightened contemporaries generally is striking *prima facie* evidence of a strong link of the doctrine with antitrinitarianism. If one begins to search for earlier cases, moreover – with the indispensable contemporary bibliography of antitrinitarian literature compiled by the Socinian Christoph Sand and edited by Benedict Wissowatius in 1684 at one elbow and modern critical literature at the other – one very quickly reaches the conclusion that these latter day Arian millenarians were in fact part of a long, varied, and widespread tradition.<sup>12</sup>

Even before antitrinitarianism emerges from the welter of radical theologies of the early reformation era to assume an identity as an independent movement, it is combined with millenarianism in the thought of a number of prominent figures. According to Wilbur, “the first known Protestant” to express unorthodox views on the Trinity in print was Martin Cellarius-Borrhaus (1499–1564).<sup>13</sup> The work in which he did so, his *De operibus Dei* of 1527, is also amongst the first explicitly millenarian writings to emerge within the inner circle of Lutheran reformers; and the condemnations of millenarianism in the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566 are both partly in response to this work.<sup>14</sup> Cellarius’s combination of Arianism and millenarianism led the more outspoken antitrinitarians who followed to regard him as a precursor<sup>15</sup> and influenced the leaders of the first generation of antitrinitarians in Transylvania, Giorgio Biandrata and Ferenc Dávid. Dávid published key excerpts from the work together with one of his own writings<sup>16</sup> and it appears to have been one of the most important sources for the millenarian strains in one of Dávid’s most important works.<sup>17</sup> Nor is Cellarius a unique case. Two of his Italian colleagues in Basle, Coelio Secundo Curione and Sebastian Castellione are numbered amongst early antitrinitarians and millenarians.<sup>18</sup> Among early Dutch radical reformers noted in standard works for their antitrinitarian views are such well-known millenarians as Melchior Hoffmann, David Joris, and Hendrik Nicolaes.<sup>19</sup> Unexplored thematic continuities link sixteenth century spiritualists with philosemitic millenarians of the mid-seventeenth century such as Isaac La Peyrère, Paul Felgenhauer, and Abraham von Frankenberg, all of whom expressed unorthodox views on the Trinity.<sup>20</sup> And numerous millenarians in eighteenth-century Germany<sup>21</sup> and Britain<sup>22</sup> display similar predilections for antitrinitarianism.

Millenarianism was clearly combined with antitrinitarian and Christological heresies of great variety in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Such instances in themselves, however – and more could doubtless be found – might seem to suggest only that all manner of heresies were bubbling up and mingling together in the seething cauldron of the radical reformation. More

impressive evidence of a genuine link is found by pursuing the opposite strategy: not locating antitrinitarian ideas among early millenarians but noting the regularity with which millenarian ideas are found in pioneers of early modern antitrinitarianism.

The chief of these is undoubtedly Michael Servetus (d. 1553). This highly unorthodox Spaniard has long been celebrated as a champion of intellectual freedom and toleration, a religious martyr, and even a medical innovator as well as the father of Unitarianism. But as Jerome Friedman has pointed out, “among all the images associated with the name of Michael Servetus” in a large and polyglot literature, “rarely if ever does one come across that of millenarian or chiliast.”<sup>23</sup> The oversight is all the more extraordinary since an at least quasi-millenarian position is implicit in the very title of Servetus’s masterpiece, the *Christianismi restitutio*, which promises the imminent destruction of Antichrist, emancipation from Babylonian captivity, and the restoration of apostolic purity and the kingdom of heaven to the church.<sup>24</sup> This apocalyptic vision is elaborated in great detail within the work itself, and it exercised considerable influence on the later antitrinitarian movement.

Servetus is doubly appropriate as a point of departure because his treatise illustrates perhaps the most direct and important link between antitrinitarianism and millenarianism. As Friedman has rightly emphasised, the centre of Servetus’s apocalyptic thought “lay not in a vision of the future, but in a systematic presentation of the past, what might be called the pre-history of the millennium.” Indeed he is scarcely exaggerating in suggesting that Servetus’s apocalyptic scheme is “dominated by the figure of Antichrist, and only secondarily concerned with the returned Christ and the kingdom of God.”<sup>25</sup> Several lengthy sections and innumerable shorter passages in the *Christianismi restitutio* describe the kingdom of Antichrist, the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal power of Satan and Antichrist, the mystery of iniquity, and sixty characteristics of the reign of Antichrist.<sup>26</sup> Taken together, they represent one of the most damning apocalyptic and typological indictments of the Roman papacy ever written, which has never been given the attention it deserves.

In the course of the *Christianismi restitutio*, to begin with, the papacy is assaulted with the full armoury of apocalyptic images.<sup>27</sup> The abomination of desolation in *Daniel* (666), the great apostasy of the “little apocalypse” (664), the Mystery of Iniquity, Man of Sin, and Son of Perdition of II Thessalonians 2 (393, 667), the Antichrist of John’s epistles: all of these and a host of images from the Apocalypse are applied to the bishop of Rome and his church. The latter include the four horsemen of the Apocalypse;<sup>28</sup> the sun and moon obscured, the stars falling from heaven;<sup>29</sup> the great red dragon persecuting the new-born church and fighting with the Archangel Michael;<sup>30</sup> the beast with two horns (the two swords of temporal and spiritual power);<sup>31</sup> the Whore of Babylon, riding upon the beast with seven heads, with its crown, its scarlet robes, its gold, its “sorcery and whoredom,” its merchants trading in souls, adoring the beast and his image, drunken with the blood of saints;<sup>32</sup> and the diabolic trinity of dragon, beast, and false prophet,<sup>33</sup> to mention only the most important. In short, one could digest from the *Christianismi restitutio* a fairly

complete, brief commentary on the Apocalypse in which every sinister image is referred to the Roman church and papacy.

This extensive catalogue of apocalyptic prophecies, however, does not begin to exhaust Servetus's wrath or the inexhaustible stock of biblical images through which he expresses it. Here the apocalyptic weapons so beloved of the magisterial reformer are deployed as part of a far larger campaign in which virtually all of the malign figures, images, and episodes of the entire Bible are typologically referred to the mysterious transformation of Christ's church into the abomination of desolation by the Roman Antichrist.

The precipitous fall of the church under the Antichrist not only fulfils the prophecies of the last book of the Bible; it also recapitulates the story of the fall of the human race as a whole narrated in the first chapters of Scripture. No sooner had God created the world than man was seduced by Satan and the whole perfect work was fatally corrupted. No sooner had God sent his son to restore that original perfection than Satan sent his son, the Antichrist, to corrupt everything once again. The desolation and contamination wrought by this second Fall, moreover, is "longe maiora" than the first, and the punishment of the Roman Antichrist will therefore be far greater than that inflicted on the serpent who seduced Adam and Eve: while the serpent was condemned merely to crawl upon the earth on his belly, the "Babylonian beast" will be cast into eternal fire (393–4).

But if the corruption of the church by the Antichrist represents a recapitulation of man's primordial fall, it also presents a typological repetition of all the other evils recorded in the Scriptures. All the debauched cities, the depraved peoples, the monstrous races, the evil rulers, pseudo-prophets, and false priests recorded in Scripture are in effect mere precursors of the Roman Antichrist. The pope and his minions live like Sodomites. They adorn themselves in purple and scarlet like Babylonians. They practice the abominations of Egypt, the baleful business of Tyre and Sidon, the deceitful commerce of the Chananites, trafficking in human souls. Like the Edomites they sell their own brothers into slavery; like the Philistines they tear the people of God to pieces and secretly remove the Ark of the Covenant from their midst; like the Moabites they offer forbidden sacrifices for the dead. Everything, in short, which the Old Testament relates concerning the Mystery of Iniquity is a mere foreshadowing of things fulfilled spiritually in anti-Christian Rome. "Therefore it will be more bearable for Tyre, Sidon, Sodom, and Gomorra in the Day of Judgement than for that great city."<sup>34</sup>

The same typological logic applies to all the crimes committed by the blackest figures on Biblical record. The sins of Cain, Nimrod, Jezabel, Jeroboam, Pharaoh, Absalom, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, Herod, Simon Magus, even Judas Iscariot – "all these are heaped together and crowned spiritually in the Beast." In Babylon will be played out all the acts of evil to be found in sacred history from the beginning of the world.<sup>35</sup> All the idols and false gods of Israel's neighbours – Baal, Beelzebub, Astarot, Dagon, Elilim, Moloch – are likewise mere types of the Roman Antichrist. "In short, you will find nothing written in the sacred mysteries of the pagan gods which he

### 3. MYSTICAL MILLENARIANISM IN THE EARLY MODERN DUTCH REPUBLIC

Is there a special phenomenon which can usefully be labelled ‘Dutch millenarianism’? Or should we rather speak about ‘millenarianism in the Dutch Republic’? Is there a ‘corpus’ of Dutch millenarian literature? Or did Dutch millenarians rely on international chiliastic publications? In order to answer such questions concerning the national and international contexts of millenarianisms it might be best to look at the problem from a comparative perspective. We know that millenarianism was a widespread phenomenon in early modern Europe and North America. A comparative approach might help us to solve questions about specific national elements in an international movement.

I will argue here that specifically Dutch elements are almost non-existent in millenarianism in The Netherlands. We do not detect special features which can be labelled as typically Dutch. Even the particular political nature of the early modern Dutch Republic as a federative state does not change this situation.

If asked to describe Dutch millenarians, I would say that they were characterized by being politically and socially conservative, more learned than popular, more individual than collective, and above all, their ideas were primarily an imported product. Although in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century we do come across a number of chiliasts who were born in the Low Countries such as Willem and Ewout Teellinck, Daniel van Laren, Daniel de Breen, and Coenraad van Beuningen, the majority of chiliasts in the Dutch Republic were foreigners. Millenarians such as the English preachers John Archer and Thomas Goodwin, the German scholars and mystics Philip Ziegler, Paul Felgenhauer, Friedrich Breckling, and Christian Hoburg came to teach millenarian doctrines in the Dutch Republic. The same holds true for Jeremiah Burroughes, William Bridge, Jan Amos Comenius, Johannes Rothe, Quirinus Kuhlmann, Isaac de la Peyrère, Jean de Labadie, Antoinette Bourignon, Pierre Jurieu and Robert Fleming: they all came from abroad. Numerous famous chiliastic publications came out in the Netherlands: the works of Thomas Brightman, Patrick Forbes, Hugh Broughton, Jane Leade,



Pierre Allix, and Daniel Whitby. So it was mainly due to the influx of foreign millenarians that belief in a future millennium came to flourish in the United Provinces.<sup>1</sup>

Judging from John Durie's remark that 'many people in the Low Countries were looking forward to the fulfilment of the Book of Revelation,' millenarianism was well received by the local population. Friedrich Breckling's observation that chiliasm was preached from every Dutch pulpit<sup>2</sup> might have been an exaggeration, but that millenarianism really was a significant factor in the Dutch Republic is shown by the often vehement manner in which it was combatted by learned Reformed theologians such as Antonius Walaeus, Antonius Hulsius, and Samuel Maresius. These scholars thought along the lines of the official Dutch version of the Bible, the States Version (1637), and its marginal annotations were regarded as almost as holy as the Bible itself. In these marginal annotations millenarian beliefs were discussed and rejected.

Although millenarian convictions did not form part of orthodox Protestant teaching and were to be encountered mainly in circles of religious non-conformists, chiliastic beliefs could also be detected within the walls of the official churches, particularly as the century progressed. What I find really interesting is the change in attitude towards millenarian beliefs which occurred in the later seventeenth century: while at first millenarianism was mainly regarded from a negative viewpoint as heterodox, as a belief held by people on the religious fringe, from 1660 onwards there was a shift towards a more positive judgement, even to the point of millenarianism being accepted within the orthodox Reformed church. What factors contributed to this highly interesting development of what can be labelled the 'orthodoxization' of millenarianism? Unquestionably, the growing popularity of prophetic theology under the influence of Johannes Cocceius did much to make millenarianism acceptable within the Dutch Reformed Church. Simultaneously, another millenarian tendency made itself felt in the Calvinist church: some important exponents of the orthodox Reformed pietist movement called the "Further Reformation" ("Nadere Reformatie") expected a future millennium on earth. Both Reformed movements (prophetic theology and pietist eschatology) made this special form of eschatology more respectable in Dutch Calvinist circles than it had ever been before.<sup>3</sup> This process of 'orthodoxization' was not limited to the United Provinces. For example, there was a similar development in Germany where chiliasm as 'a hope for a better state of the church on earth' (Spener) became a pietist tenet which was maintained by Lutheran pietist theologians for a long time.

I would like to pay attention here to one aspect of 'Dutch' millenarianism which supports my thesis that it was not a typically national movement but above all part of a larger European movement. This aspect concerns what I have called 'mystical millenarianism'. 'Mystical millenarianism' was a widespread phenomenon in early modern Europe: many scholars strove to combine mystical theology with millenarian beliefs, which led to a special form of chiliasm. We need only think of such German Lutheran theologians as Christian Hoburg, Friedrich Breckling, and Georg Lorenz Seidenbecher. A

good example is Pierre Serrurier or Petrus Serrarius (1600–1669), who was not a native Dutchman (this Walloon theologian was born in London) but whom we may regard as a ‘Dutch’ millenarian since he lived in the Dutch Republic for the largest part of his life.<sup>4</sup>

Even if his first publications displayed his connection with mysticism it soon became clear that Serrarius was more than just a mystic: he was also a convinced millenarian. Although his words already suggest a clear realisation of the approaching end of the present age of the world, there is little or no indication of millenarianism in those first publications. He only emerges as a convinced chiliast in his *Assertion du règne de mille ans* of 1657 – a work which shows that his millenarian persuasions were not in contrast to his mysticism but were actually intimately connected with it.

It seems plausible that Serrarius’s millenarian convictions emerged in the early 1650s. At all events it was in these years that he plunged into the study of chiliasm. This is proved by the extensive knowledge of millenarianism which we find in his *Assertion du règne de mille ans*. In contrast to his previous publications, this work is an entirely autonomous piece of writing and provides the first incontestable evidence that Serrarius had become a millenarian. It is characterized by clear and succinct discussions which reveal a deep knowledge of chiliasm. “A better introduction to chiliastic thought and a better preparation for the refutation of orthodox attacks cannot be found anywhere in that time period”, wrote Johannes Wallmann.<sup>5</sup>

In his *Assertion* Serrarius was reacting to an antichiliastic work by French professor Moïse Amyraut. Amyraut,<sup>6</sup> attached to the Protestant academy of Saumur, is known above all for his teaching on predestination, his so-called hypothetic universalism. Where that dogma was concerned the positions of Amyraut and Serrarius were probably less far apart than on the subject of millenarianism. In his *Du règne de mille ans*, which appeared in Saumur in 1654 and was reprinted in Leiden a year later, Amyraut attacked chiliasm in general and the English chiliasts in particular. He was totally opposed to the revolutionary activities of people who directly connected Biblical texts with political ends. Afraid of the possible spread of this propheticism, he composed a work which led to a bitter controversy with one of the few French chiliasts of his day, his friend Pierre de Launay.<sup>7</sup>

Amyraut compared the arguments of the millenarians with those of the Copernicans, and those of the antichiliasts with those of the peripatetics. In order to prove their view that the earth was the immovable centre of the universe the peripatetics, he said, advanced arguments which everyone could understand. The disciples of Copernicus, on the other hand, could only provide arguments comprehensible to very few. Well, something similar could be said about the arguments of the chiliasts and the antichiliasts. The latter, like the peripatetics, based themselves on arguments comprehensible to any believer, taken, as they were, from “des maximes les plus communes de l’Evangile, des livres dogmatiques de l’Ecriture, et de l’analogie que les parties de la religion Chrestienne ont entr’elles.” The arguments of the chiliasts, on the other hand, as far as they were worth mentioning, could hardly be comprehended since

they were based on divine revelations. For these reasons Amyraut preferred to leave interpretation of the prophecies alone.<sup>8</sup>

As a peripatetic, Serrarius may have been surprised to see his millenarianism associated with Copernicanism. He replied that Amyraut would have done better to act according to his own words and should not have ventured to interpret the prophecies. Indeed, even Serrarius himself would not have dared to do so had divine grace not accorded him “quelque petite ouverture au Siècle à venir, et intelligence en les Escriptions Sainctes touchant ce Règne,” from which he had concluded that, since God was willing to guide his pen, he could advance some unimpeachable truths about this mystery. He could also appeal to prominent chiliasts from the early church, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Lactantius, and was thus pursuing a laudable early Christian tradition.<sup>9</sup>

He had not published his *Assertion* without some hesitation. He did not intend, as he said in his foreword, to shock certain friends who were pious people in search of the inner kingdom of God, with his proof of God’s external kingdom on earth, “as if one wished to amuse them with external matters in order to prevent them from searching internal and purely spiritual matters”.<sup>10</sup> He could set their minds at rest, however. If they were prepared to follow his line of reasoning they would realize that he did not want to discourage them, but to encourage them. For in order to become an inhabitant of the external kingdom it was necessary first to take part in the internal, spiritual kingdom. The inner kingdom must be set up in man. Only then could one hope to become a citizen of Christ’s external kingdom on earth.

In other words, millenarian expectations stimulated a search for the inner kingdom. Serrarius was obviously well aware of the possible conflict that might result from the confession of an inner religion, the ‘theologia mystica’, on the one hand, and millenarianism on the other. He resolved it by closely connecting the two in such a manner that the path from the inner kingdom led to the outer one.

Those who observe the commandments of the Gospel will be saved even if they do not believe in Christ’s future kingdom on earth, Serrarius observes. Chiliasm, however, is the best means of prompting man to practise all the Christian virtues and is above all an exceptional consolation in suffering for Christ. Serrarius sees himself and his fellow millenarians adumbrated in the tribe of Issachar (Gen 49:14–15). Like Issachar, the strong ass who, “couching down between two burdens”, bows his shoulders to bear the burdens when he sees how good rest is and how pleasant the land, Serrarius and his companions bow their shoulders under the cross when God shows them the rest which will follow the suffering, and lets them see in the distance the land of the glorious saints. The view of that land, the external kingdom of Christ on earth, facilitates the choice of taking up the cross in the present life. Chiliasm is thus not necessary for salvation but is both morally inspiring and comforting.<sup>11</sup>

In the *Assertion* we find all the basic ideas of Serrarius’s theology. Even if certain themes were to be elaborated in his later writings they are in essence already present in this tract: first of all we have the expectation of Christ’s glorious kingdom on earth, described as the resurrection of the church; then

there is the idea of the general conversion of the Jews, including the ten tribes, and their return to their former fatherland, a theme revealing a special sympathy for the Jews; finally, there is the vision of history, characterized by the idea of decline.

An important theme of the *Assertion* concerns the Christian prejudice against chiliasm as if it were a Jewish, material expectation of the future. When examining the motives for Amyraut's antichiliasm Serrarius is struck by the coarse prejudice which this theologian, like so many other Christians, has against the Jews. He apologizes in advance for the word 'prejudice' which he uses in this context, but he is unable to open this abcess without using that particular lancet.<sup>12</sup> This prejudice consists in the conviction that chiliastic expectations are the product of Jewish ignorance. The Jews had never had an eye for the spiritual aspect of biblical prophecy, runs the anti-chiliastic argument. Their material feelings, their life in a fleshly covenant, their physical slavery, all contribute to the fact that they could not conceive anything other than a temporal, visible messianic kingdom.

To these arguments Serrarius responds violently. Certainly, he begins, the Jews were grossly mistaken about Christ's first coming, but the Christians should thereby be warned against making a more serious mistake by misunderstanding Christ's second coming.<sup>13</sup> One of Serrarius's most basic convictions is that Jews and Christians are both partly blinded. If the Jews had only attended to the material aspect and had expected an earthly, material kingdom, the Christians can be reproached with having conceived everything in a spiritual sense and thus having reached the mistaken conclusion that only a spiritual, invisible kingdom lies in store. From a formal point of view Jews and Christians can therefore be accused of exactly the same thing.

The Jews have only listened to the promises in the Old Testament, while the Christians have only looked at the path leading to the fulfilment of these promises as it is described in the New Testament. Owing to this partial neglect neither Jews nor Christians have understood the matter properly. The full truth about Christ's earthly kingdom contains both elements, however. It contains the path, which is suffering; and it contains the objective, the marvellous promises which will be fulfilled in Christ's glorious kingdom. It is the chiliast who holds the key to this full truth since he knows about the path as well as the promises. Chiliasm is thus a synthesis of the partial truth which the Jews and the Christians have each appropriated. The idea that Christianity and Judaism are in a sense complementary can be regarded as one of the basic features of Serrarius's millenarianism.<sup>14</sup>

What is the cause of the partial blindness among both Jews and Christians? It is the ideas which they have imbibed from their youth; they have received opinions which prevent them from hearing the teaching of the Spirit.<sup>15</sup> Ever since their infancy Christians have received a belief in Christ, the crucified and resurrected Lord, who rose to heaven and sat on the right hand of God the Father. The Jews who, according to a mysterious divine decree, temporarily rejected the crucified and resurrected Christ so that the Gospel might go to the heathens, "ont dependant autres maximes et principes touchant le Messie non

#### 4. DUTCH MILLENARIANISM AND THE ROLE OF REASON: DANIEL DE BREEN AND JOACHIM OUDAAN

##### I

In a famous article in 1992, Richard Popkin argued that philosophical rationalism was not the only intellectual reaction to the crisis of scepticism that swept Europe in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. Another reaction, which Popkin referred to as the “Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought,” attempted to combat scepticism and find truth without using reason as its sole guiding principle. This Third Force involved what Popkin called “strange combinations” of empirical and rationalist thought with theosophic speculations and millenarian interpretations of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

While Popkin’s attention was turned to English and continental writers like Joseph Mede, Henry More, John Dury, and the cosmopolitan Jan Amos Comenius, an interesting example of Third Force thinking arose within The Netherlands in the persons of Daniel De Breen (1594–1664) and Joachim Oudaan (1628–1692) and in a radical religious sect to which they belonged, the Rijnsburg Collegiants. De Breen, Oudaan, and other Collegiants shared many of the views of Popkin’s Third Force thinkers, but there were some important differences as well. Popkin’s thinkers had religious concerns, especially for the coming of the millennium, and they saw the increase of knowledge and the development of science as a crucial preparation for the millennium.<sup>2</sup> For some Collegiant thinkers, however, millenarianism interacted with reason in a different way: rather than being a force to usher in the millennium reason was instead a recourse accompanying a decline of millennial fervor in the 1670s and 1680s.

Millenarianism was a significant factor in the intellectual and religious world of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. Professor van der Wall points out that it was most commonly found among the many nonconformist groups that flourished in the tolerant atmosphere of the Republic, especially in the urbanized provinces of North and South Holland and West Friesland. She also notes that the sources of millenarian ideas in the Republic were largely English

and German, even when a native Dutchman such as Daniel De Breen or a “naturalized” Dutchman such as Petrus Serrarius actually penned them.<sup>3</sup>

Daniel De Breen was born in Haarlem and attended the States College of Leiden University, where the fledgling Dutch Republic trained its Reformed ministers. He inclined to the more liberal Remonstrant side in the great conflict of ideals and life paths that tore the Dutch Reformed church apart in the last two decades of the sixteenth century and the first two decades of the seventeenth. De Breen served as secretary for the Remonstrant party in its great confrontation with the stricter Contra-Remonstrant faction at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618–1619. Finding himself and his party on the losing side of the struggle at Dordrecht, De Breen left Holland rather than renounce his convictions. He traveled to, among other places, Strasbourg, where he mixed with a number of millenarian sectaries, including followers of the German spiritualist Kaspar von Schwenkfeld.<sup>4</sup> It was at this time that De Breen’s interest in the millennium was born.

In 1621 De Breen returned to Haarlem and began to associate with the Rijnsburg Collegiants, a loose group of religious dissidents many of whom, like the great millenarian Petrus Serarius (1600–1669), harbored chiliastic sympathies. Also in 1621 De Breen was arrested by the authorities when officials raided an illegal Remonstrant meeting. After being questioned by the city pensionary and mayors, De Breen was released with the admonition not to attend such meetings in the future. Some years later, in 1646, De Breen was among the founders of an Amsterdam branch of the Collegiants.<sup>5</sup>

Many Collegiants were drawn to millenarianism by something like – but also in important ways unlike – the sceptical crisis in European thought that spawned Popkin’s Third Force. Collegiant millenarians reacted to what they saw as the corrupt state of religion and all of the established churches of their time. They felt that they lived in a world unholy. Following spiritualist ideas, these Collegiants held that as soon as the church had come into contact with the *sinful, secular, and material state under the Emperor Constantine* the result had been a steady and tragic fall of the church into decay and debauchery, unchecked by the Reformation, to end only with the expected coming of the millennium. These Collegiants saw the millennium as an escape from a world unholy, a world that would be destroyed when Christ came again.

Like Mede, More, Dury, and others of Popkin’s Third Force, De Breen’s thought was a mixture of different elements. While many of his works focussed on the millennium, his Scripture interpretation was rationalistic, attempting to adapt holy writ to the demands of natural reason. According to De Breen, Christianity contained nothing that is not in accord with reason. The believer should select as the true religion the one that gives the best rules for divine service and the one that most conforms to reason. Indeed, De Breen would accept no interpretation of Scripture that was contrary to reason or external experience. While Leszek Kolakowski has called De Breen’s rationalism “empty phraseology,” Popkin has shown how millennial and scientific outlooks often went together as parts of a vital transitional worldview.<sup>6</sup>

II

De Breen's most important millenarian writing was *Van 't Geestelijck Triumpherende Ryck onses Heeren Jesu Christi (Concerning the Triumphant Spiritual Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ)* published in Amsterdam in 1653. Already by the early 1650s there was growing millennial excitement and expectation in Collegiant circles because of the approaching decade, which would include such numerologically promising years as 1660, 1662, and 1666. De Breen began his book by telling his readers that the coming of the kingdom of Christ on earth was a belief held by many of the Church Fathers as well as by Paul in Romans II. But these prophecies had not yet been fulfilled, and mankind still awaited the glorious return of Christ. DeBreen then used the first major portion of his book to convince his readers that the temporal kingdom of Christ would indeed take place.<sup>7</sup> While Mede, Dury, and others spent much time calculating a method for finding out when the prophesies of Daniel and Revelation would be fulfilled, De Breen's arguments for when and how the millennium would appear emerged out of a far darker background, a world filled with unholy kingdoms that had to be destroyed as part of the Second Coming.<sup>8</sup>

Signs of the coming millennium included false Christs (and De Breen was quick to point out that the world was full of false prophets), wars (of which the terrible Thirty Years War gave recent example), famine, pestilence, suppression of the holy by the Roman Pope and Empire, and a general cooling of love and respect toward God. Men will be very careless and disobedient even though the day of Christ's coming has been revealed to them, De Breen continued.<sup>9</sup> Christ will destroy the earthly monarchy that suppresses the holy people. He will bring terrible judgement over the heathen destroyers of Jerusalem, a judgement that will be marked by a fearful darkening of the sun, moon, and heavens. Thus with the fourth and last empire destroyed the holy will rule on earth for a thousand years, after which the devil and evil men will be thrown into the fires. God's judgement over the dead will then take place, followed by God's final destruction of his enemies and the Last Judgement.<sup>10</sup>

With this frightening prognostication De Breen left little doubt that he considered the world prior to the advent of the millennium, the days in which he himself lived, to be a world unholy and deserving of righteous annihilation. The millennium served as a deliverance for God's people from this evil world. De Breen remarked that people could read about all of this in *Revelation 20:1–11*, where the secrets of God and the future state of the church and its enemies at the end of the world are all revealed, in order to give believers comfort in the days of persecution.<sup>11</sup>

De Breen continued his discussion with *Matthew 5:5*, where Christ said that the meek would rule the earth. Many would have it believed, he wrote, that Christ meant only eternal life, not salvation for the holy in this world. But De Breen objected that this would mean that there would be no limits placed upon the tyranny of the Godless in this world, and that the holy would not be delivered from this tyranny until the Last Judgement. De Breen argued that by

the Kingdom of Heaven the Bible meant the Kingdom of the Messiah on earth. Even *Matthew* 13:24, which was often said to refer to the Last Judgement, the resurrection of the dead, and the destruction of heaven and earth, really referred to the destruction of the fourth and last worldly monarchy.<sup>12</sup> Again De Breen emphasized holy destruction of the pre-millennial world, with the kingdom of Christ waiting as a reward.

De Breen's vision was a bipolar one of good versus evil. After the total destruction of the worldly empire the holy people would be placed above other people as rulers. But who were the holy people? They were all true and sincere Christians and the Jews who convert. Their enemies are Antichrist and his godless followers who persecute Christians, confessing Christ in words while denying him in deeds.<sup>13</sup>

Christ's Second Coming will not be in person but in spirit, through the service of the angels, De Breen announced. This coming had to be distinguished from Christ's last coming when he will come in person, appear in clouds, resurrect the dead and take the holy to heaven.<sup>14</sup> Some people believed that Christ's kingdom would be only spiritual, destroying not empires but false religion, having no outer, visible power but only the power of spirit. De Breen admitted that Christ's kingdom would be spiritual and different in nature from worldly kingdoms, but Christ's kingdom would be on the earth and it would destroy worldly kingdoms, he insisted.<sup>15</sup> According to *Matthew* 25, the punishment of the Godless in this first judgement will be eternal: they will be thrown into a fire, "there eternally to remain," while the reward of eternal happiness for the holy will also be eternal, because they will live until the Last Judgement, De Breen added.<sup>16</sup>

Having said that Christ would not erect his kingdom in person but by using messenger angels, De Breen added that Christ would rule his kingdom through his believers. These believers will have heavenly strength, and they will rule over other people of the earth as "Stadtholders of Christ." Yet again De Breen repeated that this new kingdom could only be erected after the total destruction of the Roman Empire, which crucified Christ, and the Roman church, the great Anti-Christ, whose followers will be "expunged from the earth."<sup>17</sup> This great judgement will be carried out not by God's people but by God himself, through hail, fire, thunder and lightening from heaven.<sup>18</sup>

In Christ's kingdom the majesty and glory of the Christian church will be great, De Breen continued. All that peoples' senses enjoy, all that their hearts find desirable, will be in the new kingdom. It will be a change and renewal of the whole world, and all that is needed for man's full blessedness on earth will be provided. It will be a New Jerusalem of great peace and well being. There will be an exceptional knowledge of God's secrets (a point that De Breen does not expand upon as did Dury and Comenius). Exceptional holiness will prevail, and the church will live in peace, free from fear, danger, persecution, and oppression. Temporal pleasures will abound, as will good bodily health and long life. The holy will have the fullness of spiritual gifts, and belief, hope, and love will flourish, De Breen concluded.<sup>19</sup>

Despite descriptions of Christ's kingdom such as De Breen's, the view of the



millennium in Collegiant circles did not produce the confident, hopeful, indeed joyous, feeling often found among English Millenarians. Collegiant millenarianism was based just as much, if not more, on the complete destruction of a world they saw as decayed and sinful. Other Collegiant writers, such as Joachim Oudaan, wrote apocalyptic works depicting a world unholy, a world gone wrong and in rapid decline, hurtling towards its destruction at the hands of a vengeful God. Works such as these had only vaguely millennial overtones, as will be seen below.

From these chiliastic and apocalyptic works the Collegiants developed a picture of a pre-millennial world in such a state of decay that only a miracle such as the millennium could save it. When the millennium failed to appear on the several dates set for it (1660, 1662, 1666) the Collegiants were left with a view of a world unholy, divorced from God's caring and nurturing power, a world essentially secular. Rather than give up in despair, many Collegiants built on this dreary foundation new hopes for reforming the world based on the power of human reason. The ideas of Spinoza, who had many Collegiant friends, most famously reflect these rational reform plans, but there were many other lesser minds pointed in the same direction, such as Jarig Jelles, Pieter Balling, and Johannes Bredenburg.

### III

The Collegiant transition from millennial expectations to reliance on human reason can be seen clearly in the work of Joachim Oudaan. Poet and classical scholar, Oudaan was born in 1629 in Rijnsburg, the cradle of Collegiantism, but moved to Rotterdam in 1656. In Rotterdam his interest in millenarianism grew as the years passed, and in 1689 he published a chiliastic work entitled *Bedenkelijke Toepassing op eenige stukken in de Openbaring ... (Thoughtful Application of some parts of Revelation)*, a commentary on the *Book of Revelation* focussing on the prophecy of the seals.

With an apocalyptic outlook, the *Bedenkelijke Toepassing* painted a gloomy picture of a world corrupt and unholy, destined for divine destruction, a destruction that unfolds with the opening of each seal. Peoples, lands, and kingdoms are laid waste for their sins. This dark forecast was only lightened by the opening of the seventh seal, revealing angels sounding trumpets heralding the end of all things.<sup>20</sup> Little hope seemed to be left for humanity and the world it had built. By 1689 all the prime dates for the millennium had passed uneventfully, no doubt further shading Oudaan's dark outlook.

Yet in the very same year that he wrote this story of the world's gloomy end Oudaan wrote a work of religious reform in which he came to rational terms with the fallen world. His *Overwegging eeniger grond-stellingen door J.V.G. in zelfs redenering over de algemeene kerk ter neder gestelt: en der zelve onrechtmatigheid aangewezen* (*Consideration of some principles made by J.V.G. in his argument about the universal church, and the illegitimacy of the same shown*) outlined the sorry decline of the church since Constantine's time and the corrupt state of the Catholic church of his own day as well as that of its

5. WHO WAS THE AUTHOR OF THE *CLAVIS  
APOCALYPTICA* OF 1651?  
MILLENARIANISM AND PROPHECY BETWEEN SILESIAN  
MYSTICISM AND THE HARTLIB CIRCLE

The year 1654 was rather unpleasant, filled with rumours about the beginning of the millennium.<sup>1</sup> Cromwell ruled England, Queen Christina abdicated in Sweden, and Germany was still paralyzed by the horrors of the Thirty Years War. Although peace had finally been made in 1648, there was great discontent, especially in the eastern regions of Bohemia and Silesia, because the treaty of Münster had not restored Protestantism in these regions but had in fact solidified the Catholic rule of the Hapsburgs.<sup>2</sup> A steady flow of refugees continued to leave the region, and there was constant anticipation of new military action against the Catholic side.

In Vienna, nervousness was mounting. A secret correspondence between Johann Heinrich Bisterfeld and John Dury regarding millenarian plans for a unification of all Protestants had been found. The emperor offered a reward of 4000 thaler on the head of the author of a work entitled *Clavis apocalyptica*.<sup>3</sup> The book had come out anonymously in English in 1651, and included a foreword by John Dury in the form of a letter to Samuel Hartlib. Joseph Mede's book of the same title most certainly had served as a guide for it, but in the newer version the predictions were more concrete and the beginning of the millennium was pinpointed for the year 1655.

Knowledge concerning the identity of the author was limited to the presumption that he was German, since the manuscript was written in that language, and that he must have given it to Comenius, who sent it on to Hartlib. There have been numerous suggestions that the author may have been Abraham von Franckenberg,<sup>4</sup> but for all his millenarian views Franckenberg had quite a different conception of the coming of Christ. Besides, Franckenberg died in 1652 whereas the emperor offered the reward in 1654, after having learned the name of a suspect who was still very much alive. Peter Figulus wrote that same year in the beginning of July to Hartlib, telling him

how he admired the steadfastness of the writer.<sup>5</sup> So who, then, was the actual author?<sup>6</sup>

We may indeed obtain a clue to the solution of this mystery from Abraham von Franckenberg, who had known the author of the *Clavis apocalyptica* and associated with him. The library at Gotha contains a letter written from a physician from Aschersleben, Matthias Engelhart, to Johann Friedrich Münster. This letter, too, was written in 1654, only two weeks prior to the letter from Figulus, and it, too, was apparently a response to rumours of the imperial blood money. Engelhart writes about the recently published *Apocalypsis reserata* and the *Clavis apocalyptica*, and relates something which he had learned about their author from Abraham von Franckenberg before his death in 1652. “In addition, Mister A.V. Franck[enberg] wrote me that the author of the named texts had something complex under preparation at the time, which would be [...] an important work. Mister Güler is a persona politica and a secretary with the duke of Brieg, but does not like his name to be made public.”<sup>7</sup>

Who is this Güler? He is Michael Gühler (Güler, Gueler), a revenue- and tax-collector for Georg III, viceroy of the duke, at the court of Brieg in Silesia.<sup>8</sup> We know that his first wedding took place in 1636 in Brieg and that he was born in Gräditz in 1598. He went to school at the Gymnasium of Schweidnitz until 1617; then he traveled through the Holy Roman Empire and stayed for two years in Preßburg (Bratislava). In 1621, he went to Wittenberg where he studied theology and mathematics. After he finished the university in 1626, he returned to Silesia and became *praeceptor* of the children of Georg Friedrich von Senitz. Then, in 1629, Gühler came to Breslau and functioned as a teacher again, now for the children of Adam von Franckenberg und Proschlitz auf Reinersdorf. Maybe it was through that connection with a member of the Franckenberg family that Gühler came in contact with Abraham von Franckenberg.<sup>9</sup> From Breslau he soon went to Brieg to start his career as a revenue-collector.

The court of Brieg, of which we are informed only in broad outline, was Calvinist, and Duke Johann Christian had taken in Bohemian exiles in 1620 after the defeat of the Winter King at the battle of White Mountain. Thus, many of the compensatory ideas which had originated around the Palatine Elector Frederick V after the Bohemian tragedy – one may recall for instance the prophecies of Christoph Kotter – came immediately to Brieg.

A leading purveyor of such ideas was Hans Theodor von Tschesch, who assembled a circle of like-minded people who engaged in the study of mysticism, the Kabbalah, chronology, and the apocalypse.<sup>10</sup> One member of this circle was Abraham von Franckenberg, who in the train of war turmoil (from 1639 onwards Silesia became the main seat of war after the Swedish invasion) left the region and went to Danzig.<sup>11</sup> The works of Jakob Böhme were read and edited in the circle, yet interest was also shown in contemporary natural sciences and scientific chronology. The manuscript of a *Chronologia omnium temporum*, which contained a number of predictions for the future, could also be found in Brieg.<sup>12</sup> It seems to have been written around 1630, at a

time when Gähler was still a young man, possibly by Paul Kaym, who – like Gähler – was a toll collector in the neighboring town of Liegnitz.<sup>13</sup> Incidentally, Tschesch, too, like Franckenberg, fled the war: in 1641 he was supposedly planning to go to the Holy Land but was hindered by pirates from doing so; instead, he went to Holland and from there to Elbing near Danzig, where he died in 1649.

The millenarian circles around Tschesch exchanged views on texts and insights concerning the prophecies of the *Book of Revelation*. Revenue officials like Kaym and Gähler dealt with mathematics and had through this employment a natural affinity for chronology, which was often pursued by mathematicians and astronomers. Gähler cites exegetical and chronological works by Scaliger, Pareus, Graser, Reusner, Calvisius, Krentzheim, Helvicius, Napier, Piscator, Crell and Clüver – an impressive bulk of academic literature.<sup>14</sup> After writing the *Clavis* he seems to have worked on another, ‘complex’ and ‘important’ book – at least this is what Franckenberg reported<sup>15</sup> – but we do not know anything further about it.

Already in 1642 one finds Franckenberg corresponding with his old friend Johann Permeier, now living in Frankfurt am Main, about a *Clavis apocalyptica*, possibly the work of Mede that Permeier had offered to send to his friend in Danzig. Franckenberg replies: “I gladly await the *clavis* and take it (with God) under consideration. ApOca! is naturally in itself the true *Clavis Script[uræ] S[anctæ]* and of the secrets sealed therein, hence also of current times; as to how the *clavis* of the Apocalypse should be [...] discovered, however, I believe it not to be quite accessible to one (person) alone.”<sup>16</sup> Franckenberg seems sceptical about the possibility that one man – like Mede – should be able to interpret the Revelation in a satisfactory manner. Rather, he appears to believe that one can gain results by consulting the entire tradition of commentaries as well as through an exchange between scholars.

Let us suppose that Gähler belonged to the close circle around Franckenberg and had hitherto not been acquainted with Mede’s book. In this case, Permeier’s sending the book from Frankfurt (known for its book trade) could have been a possible way for him to become familiar with the work. At least one must suppose that Gähler’s book was inspired by the discussions that took place in Brieg, Liegnitz, Breslau, Elbing, and Danzig. Franckenberg himself – although he was interested in prophetic chronology<sup>17</sup> – seems to have reserved his opinion when it came to specific datings of the anticipated last days. He was more inclined to a ‘subtle’ millenarianism in terms of an anticipation of a spiritual renewal.<sup>18</sup>

The German manuscript of the *Clavis* must have reached Hartlib and Dury in England around 1650. It was then translated and made into an English published edition, to which Dury wrote the foreword. In it, Dury makes very clear that he had soon become aware of how much the German work was influenced by Joseph Mede’s book of 1627: “In effect I finde that it is an abbridgment of our friend Mr Mede (now with God) his interpretation of the Revelation, with som additions confirming the truth thereof, and applying the same to the present state of affairs in Europe and in Asia, more closely, and

circumstantially than hee did, to show the distinct events which are shortly to bee fulfilled.”<sup>19</sup> This was the main difference from Mede: at points where Mede was still vague, the new work tended to specify particular circumstances, applying the calculations to the current political state – and it did this with considerable urgency, as the beginning of the millennium was predicted for the year 1655.

In England the work was quite a sensation, and even Cromwell was apparently influenced by it.<sup>20</sup> On the continent, however, the work was hardly known. This was about to change, though, as an anonymous book was published in ‘Christianstadt’ in 1653 under the title *Apocalypsis reserata, Das ist: Geöffnete Offenbahrung Johannis*.<sup>21</sup> Here, too, the assertion was made that 1655 was the key year. But most importantly, the reader would find an appendix with a further German text entitled *Clavis apocalyptica*. Textual comparison shows without doubt that it is the very same text which Hartlib and Dury had translated into English; hence, it must be the first edition of the German original by Gühler. ‘Christianstadt’ may mean the town of Duke Johann Christian, that is, Brieg. In the English version, the more elaborate *Apocalypsis reserata* was made into the second part of the work published by Hartlib and Dury, and was therefore not mentioned in the title. This inverted order has hitherto prevented the bibliographic identification of the German and English works.

The German edition made both the prediction of the onset of the millennium in 1655 and the related decline of the papacy and the Hapsburgs instantaneously known in the empire. In 1654 a reprint was made in Elbing and Danzig, which were already well-established centers of followers of Böhme and Comenius.<sup>22</sup> Vienna’s reaction and the offering of a reward on the author’s head was only too understandable. It was just as understandable that orthodox theologians like Johann Heinrich Ursinus were asked to write refutations.<sup>23</sup>

How might one suppose that Hartlib obtained a copy of the *Clavis*? Although we can only speculate, there are a few indications based on connections among Brieg and Transylvania, Poland, and England. In his foreword to the English edition of the *Clavis* dated 28 November 1650, Dury had included the letter Comenius had sent to Hartlib together with the German manuscript. Comenius explains: “my son in law hath been away these two weeks, beeing sent to Warsaw, and to Brieg, hee bring’s no news but terrors, by reason of the Peace, which is to bee feared will afford nothing but new tortures to the confidences of those that are deserted by it, and excluded from it. Nor are the forerunners hereof wanting.”<sup>24</sup> So it may have been Comenius’s son-in-law Peter Figulus who, on his short journey to Silesia, had made a stop in Brieg and obtained the *Clavis*. Dury translates Comenius’s *Wratislaviam* falsely as *Warsaw*, since what is meant is neither Warsaw nor Bratislava, but Wroclaw (Breslau). In order to report on the rather unpleasant news, Figulus had thus been to the two Silesian towns, Brieg and Breslau.

Now it is no longer surprising that Figulus had written to Hartlib in 1654 praising the steadfastness of the author of *Clavis* – after all, he was one of the few who actually knew the author’s identity, and furthermore the one through

whom the manuscript first became publicly known. Gähler had apparently asked Figulus to bring the manuscript out of devastated Silesia, yet urged him to keep his name secret because of his position as a ‘politicus.’ Comenius at any rate goes directly from describing Figulus’s journey to his remarks about the *Clavis* and the *Apocalypsis reserata*: “Behold, here I import unto you these Germane Treatises, concerning the Periods of the Reveleation-times, drawing to an End (Godgrant they may not bee lost, nor fall into other hands) but upon this condition that you shall let us know your Judgment thereof; for to this effect, hee that is the author of them caused them to bee communicated unto us, that whoever should read, should also judg and censure. I have heard a little while ago of this book, that is the true revelation of the Revelations; and that which will bee most comfortable (if hee hath hit right) is, that wee are so near the term prefixed. I prairie you communicate this to your men, if yet you have anie Joseph Medes amongst you; but it must first bee translated into English.” The fact that Comenius knew about the existence of the text beforehand suggests that he might have sent Figulus to Brieg with the explicit purpose of contacting the author.

There had long existed contacts with Brieg in the circles around Comenius. There was Cyprian Kinner, for example, an old friend of Hartlib’s, who since the mid-1630s had collaborated with Bisterfeld and from the mid-1640s also with Comenius: he had started out as Gähler’s colleague, a physician in ordinary at the Brieg court. During the years 1646 to 1650, which is the time during which the *Clavis* was most probably written, he was in close association with both Franckenberg and Hartlib.<sup>25</sup> The fact that Gähler was affiliated with the ideas of the Comenius-circle through Franckenberg and Kinner becomes quite evident even by the choice of words of the *Apocalypsis ‘reserata’*, this being a widespread metaphor due to Comenius’s *Janua linguarum reserata*.

There are still further inquiries which need to be made concerning the relationships of the ‘Third Force’ described by Richard Popkin<sup>26</sup> with the so-called ‘Silesian mysticism’ in the works of Gähler and even more so in such persons as Tschesch and Franckenberg. The similarities of the two groups are striking and call into question the hasty pigeonholing of the Silesians under the categories of ‘mysticism,’ ‘escapism,’ and ‘stoicism.’ It would certainly be incorrect to view such texts as the German *Clavis apocalyptica* as nothing but an immediate reaction to or reflection of the war situation and confessional conflicts. First of all, one must note that there existed something of a ‘millenarian International.’ Comenius alludes to this when he speaks of “anie Joseph Medes amongst you” – which included mutual contacts among such men as Tschesch and Franckenberg, the Dutchman Petrus Serrarius, the Lutheran Georg Lorenz Seidenbecher, John Dury, and Menasseh ben Israel.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, recent research – especially that of Howard Hotson<sup>28</sup> – has made us aware of the fact that the ‘scientific’ form of millenarianism represented by Alsted, Mede, and their followers was in no way contrary to philologically and humanistically oriented historical research.<sup>29</sup>

The first generation of main-stream Protestants, Hotson argues, broadly agreed in their identification of the papacy as Antichrist. Since, according to