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Christian Moral Decline:

A New Context for the *Sibylla Tiburtina* (Ms Escorial &.I.3)

The *Sibylla Tiburtina* was one of the most popular, widespread and influential apocalyptic texts of the medieval period. I have considered elsewhere the *Tiburtina's* reception by its medieval audience.[1] My observations in this paper, however, concern a new aspect of the Latin text - its early history. Much remains to be said about this topic, since, as has been rightly remarked: 'the history of the family of texts that for convenience's sake we call the *Sibylla Tiburtina* is still imperfectly known'.[2] This is perhaps not surprising: with roots in late antiquity, the *Tiburtina's* text evolved over a remarkably long period. The trigger for my discussion below is some neglected aspects of the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Sibylla Tiburtina*. Since the version of the text contained in this codex has been treated as the base text for the current edition, anything said about this manuscript will be critically important for the whole textual tradition. However, firstly, in order to appreciate why these points require further analysis, it is necessary to understand the text's early development.

The text itself is a prophecy supposedly given by an ancient prophetess – the Sibyl of the title. The *Sibylla Tiburtina* narrates world history, structured as nine ages (which the text refers to as "generations"). Particular attention is paid to the history of the Roman Empire, especially the exploits of its last ruler (the 'Last Emperor') and to an account of Christ's birth, life and death in the middle of the narrative. The text was originally written in Greek in the late fourth century, as part of the resurgence in Christian apocalyptic speculation about the nature and purpose of history which followed the catastrophic defeat of the Roman Empire by Gothic forces at the battle of Adrianople in 378. Although this original Greek text is lost, a modified version does survive, produced in the sixth century, again written in Greek and known as the *Oracle of Baalbek*.[3] It has been plausibly suggested that the original fourth-century text was not translated from Greek into Latin until some point after the sixth-century.[4] The date of this translation is still uncertain. The earliest surviving manuscript of this Latin translation is dated 1047 AD. This is the strict *terminus ante quem*. However, textual analysis enables us to work backwards from that earliest manuscript to extend our understanding of the development of the Latin text back about half-a-century earlier, to c.1000AD. We can do this by observing that at least four different Latin versions of the *Tiburtina* have been identified.[5] These four versions derive from a hypothetical common Latin version of the text,

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[1] A. Holdenried, *The Sibyl and Her Scribes* (Aldershot, 2006).

[2] B. McGinn, 'Oracular transformations: the *Sibylla Tiburtina* in the Middle Ages', in Ileana Chirassi Colombo (ed), *Sibille e linguaggi oracolari. Mito, Storia, Tradizione* (Pisa, Rome 1998), pp. 603-644, at 612. McGinn's comment remains true, notwithstanding substantial further study of the available manuscript evidence, see Holdenried, *Sibyl*. A fresh appraisal of the origins and stemmatic relationship of the surviving versions, for example, is among the urgent research desiderata which remain, not least because new manuscript copies of the text keep coming to light (see also below, n.10).

[3] P.J. Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbek. The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1967). As far as we are currently aware, the *Oracle of Baalbek* constitutes an entirely separate branch of this family of texts and does not influence the Latin *Sibylla Tiburtina*. Nevertheless, it is introduced here because the *Oracle* illuminates aspects of the Latin *Sibylla Tiburtina* because of their shared ancestry.

[4] McGinn, 'Oracular Transformations', pp.612-3.

[5] We can be confident about this observation because the *Tiburtina* has a large corpus of surviving manuscript copies, see 'Conspectus of Extant Manuscripts' in Holdenried, *Sibyl*, pp.177-202, which

now lost, known to scholars as the Ottonian Sibyl.[6] As far as I am aware, currently no one has identified any evidence that the text was known in the early medieval west before this.

By combining these observations McGinn has suggested that the text's history is as follows: the original text was written in the fourth-century in Greek; the *Oracle of Baalbek* was created in the sixth-century (and went on to enjoy a textual life separate from the *Tiburtina*); then, sometime after the creation of the *Oracle* (i.e. at some date after, say, 700 AD) the original fourth-century Greek text was updated to include a distinctive seven-stage scenario of the endtime and the Last Emperor motif (thus creating another Greek version separate and different from the *Oracle of Baalbek*);[7] this updated Greek version was either composed in, or found its way to, Italy where it became the basis of the lost Latin translation mentioned above, known as the Ottonian Sibyl, which was produced in the time of the German Emperor Otto III.[8] In summary, therefore, although it does not survive, the earliest identifiable version of the Latin *Tiburtina* is the Ottonian Sibyl, which was probably produced around the year 1000 by someone living in Italy.

As the reader will appreciate, the above reconstruction of the text's early history is simply based on logical inferences derived from later manuscript copies. Except for the conclusion that the *Sibylla Tiburtina* is not based on the *Oracle*, strictly no element of this reconstruction can be proven because there are no surviving manuscripts of the text until 1047. Just to be absolutely clear, this means we have no manuscript or later copies of either the original fourth-century text, the post-700 updated Greek version or the Ottonian Sibyl. These texts do not survive and will always remain purely hypothetical, barring some extraordinary discovery. As soon as we have manuscript evidence, we are confronted by several versions of the text.

Despite this, scholars have tried to divine the context in which the hypothetical Ottonian Sibyl was produced. They have concluded that the *Tiburtina* is a piece of imperial apocalyptic (or *Reichseschatologie*), both Eastern and Western.[9] This interpretation is based on changes introduced into just one part of the text - the *Tiburtina's* depiction of the Last Emperor in battle with Antichrist. This incorporates a list of rulers of Italy into its account of the ninth (and final) generation, ending with a portrait of Otto III. Scholars have concluded that this suggests a

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lists 112 manuscripts of the Latin *Tiburtina*. On further manuscript references which have since come to light, see below, n.10.

[6] For a brief sketch of the relationship of these versions, see B. McGinn, *Antichrist. Two Thousand Years of Human Fascination with Evil* (New York, 1994), p.309, n.97 and, for additional discussion, H. Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit. Entstehung, Wandel und Wirking einer tausendjaehrigen Weissagung* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp.149-156.

[7] The origins of the Last Emperor motif are still being debated, see Gian Luca Potestà, 'The *Vaticinium of Constans*. Genesis and original purposes of the legend of the Last World Emperor', in Wolfgang Brandes et al. (eds), *Millennium. Jahrbuch zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr., Vol.* 8 (Berlin, New York, 2011), pp. 271-289

[8] McGinn, 'Oracular Transformations', p.613. Otto III's mother was a Byzantine princess, Theophanu, who introduced Byzantine cultural influence to the Ottonian court. It has been assumed that the translation is somehow connected to this.

[9] McGinn, 'Oracular Transformations', p.606 and p.629. *Reichseschatologie* is a particular belief in Last Things which regards the fate of the *imperium romanum et christianum* as the central concern of apocalyptic speculation. It is founded on the identification of the last of the four world empires in the Book of Daniel with the Roman Empire and includes the belief that the Last Roman Emperor is the dominant messianic figure before the actual return of Christ.

political and imperial context for the production of the Ottonian Sibyl.[10] Logically, therefore, one would expect that the same interpretation, that is, placing the text in a similar political and imperial context, would provide the best explanation for later copies of the *Tiburtina*.

However, as soon as we move away from reconstructing the hypothetical production of the Ottonian Sibyl to the actual copies of surviving versions of the *Tiburtina* derived from it, we encounter a difficulty. The difficulty arises, in fact, with the very earliest surviving manuscript of the *Tiburtina*, the one closest in time to the Ottonian Sibyl. That manuscript is Escorial &.I.3[11], which, as well as the *Tiburtina*, contains a copy of Isidore's *Etymologies* and a commentary on the Book of Isaiah by Gregory the Great, all written in 1047 in a single Visigothic hand, by a priest called Dominicus.[12] If the proposed reconstruction of the Latin text's history before 1047 is correct, however, then it is very odd that Escorial &.I.3 originates not from within the Empire, or even from a territory to which a German emperor might conceivably lay claim,[13] but instead comes from mid-eleventh century Spain, from the Muslim-controlled city of Toledo. At the time, Toledo was one of the more important *taifa*-kingdoms to emerge in Spain after the final extinction of the central authority of the Umayyad Caliphate in 1031.[14] It is thus difficult to see any "imperial" political context for this manuscript.

This points up a problem with the interpretation of the *Tiburtina's* prehistory outlined above: it is a chain of hypotheses. It hypothesises the existence of a text (the Ottonian Sibyl) which does not survive and it then hypothesises the environment in which such a text might have appeared. However, since we have no surviving evidence until 1047, the circles in which the text was translated, edited and circulated before that date can likewise only ever be

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[10] See, for example, references to the *Tiburtina* in discussions of Otto III's apocalyptic mentality, policies, and actions, such as J. Fried, 'Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende', *Deutsches Archiv* 45 (1989), pp.381-473 (at p.427) and Matthew Gabriele, 'Otto III, Charelmagne, and pentecost A.D. 1000: A reconsideration using diplomatic evidence', p. 111-132 (at pp.114-5), in M. Frasetto (ed), *The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium* (New York 2002).

[11] Lorenzo DiTommaso, reviewing my *The Sibyl and Her Scribes* in *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 21 (2011), pp.73-76 (at p.74) recently called into question whether the Escorial manuscript is indeed the earliest manuscript of the *Tiburtina*, because a hitherto unknown manuscript containing the text, Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Voss. Lat. Q69 (fols. 1r-3v) is, according to its catalogue description, written in a tenth-century hand: see K.A. de Meyer, *Codices Vossiani latini. Pars II: codices in quarto* (Leiden, 1975), p.158. However, I have examined the Leiden manuscript and in my opinion the script certainly looks eleventh century, perhaps even later (I am grateful to David Ganz for confirming my view of a later date for the script). In addition, internal textual evidence rules out a tenth-century date for the Leiden text of the *Tiburtina*: its regnal list is identical with that of the version of the *Tiburtina* preserved in the Escorial manuscript, that is, with the version that has been dated to the 1030s (see above).

[12] For descriptions of the Escorial manuscript, see P.G. Antolín, *Catálogo de los Códices Latinos de la real Biblioteca del Escorial*, vol.2 (Madrid 1911), p.331; Joachim Kirchner, *Scriptura Latina Libraria* (editio altera, Oldenbourg 1970), p.27. The current belief that the manuscript comes from Toledo rests on a thirteenth-century note in the codex, first reported by P. Ewald, 'Reise nach Spanien im Winter von 1878 auf 1879', in *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 6 (1881), p.248.

[13] On the boundaries of the mid-eleventh German Empire, see Hanna Vollrath, 'The Western Empire under the Salians', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume IV c.1024-1198*. Part II, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley Smith (Cambridge 2004), pp.40-43.

[14] See S. Barton, 'Spain in the Eleventh Century', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume IV c.1024-1198* (op.cit.), pp. 154–90, which includes discussion and further bibliographical references to Toledo's period as a *taifa*-kingdom on p.157 and pp.170-1.

hypothesised. If therefore the conventional explanation cannot satisfactorily explain the very first manuscript containing the text, then, clearly, that explanation must be at least partly wrong and some other explanation is needed. In this regard, several observations about the Escorial manuscript itself suggest a way forward.

Firstly, the Toledo version of the *Tiburtina* is one of no less than three different eleventh-century versions of the text, which points to much copying and recopying. This in turn suggests that the Latin *Tiburtina* had already enjoyed wide and early dispersal in Europe, even before it arrived in the hands of the priest Dominicus in Toledo barely half a century after its assumed creation. This supposition is supported by another fact: the text preserved in the Escorial manuscript is not simply a copy of the Ottonian Sibyl (the supposed Ur-*Tiburtina*) from around 1000AD, but already an updated version thought to have been composed in the time of the Salian emperor Henry III (1039-56), again by someone in Italy.[15] This all implies a rapid dissemination of the work during the eleventh century. By the 1120s we have surviving copies from Spain, England and Germany and evidence the text was known in Flanders and France.[16]

If it is correct that the text was frequently copied and widely disseminated soon after being created, then the obvious question is: why was it so popular? The traditional answer would be that it enjoyed such wide diffusion because of its imperial associations. However, as mentioned above, this explanation does not seem to work even for the earliest surviving manuscript. Alternatively, we might assume that apocalypticism would be the other natural context for a work such as the *Tiburtina,* which depicts the rise of Antichrist. It was widely held in medieval Europe that in the endtimes the Christian community would be threatened from the outside by Antichrist and his helpers, whether by mythical tribes such as Gog and Magog, or by the real 'other', that is non-Christian faith communities such as pagans, Jews, or Muslims.[17] Again, however, it is difficult to see any such "non-political" apocalyptic reason for the text to have been copied. The Toledo copy of the *Tiburtina* does not depict the rise of Islam as a particular apocalyptic threat,[18] nor were any annotations made in the margins to reflect contemporary anxieties about Muslims as Antichrist's agents or as the apocalyptic peoples Gog and Magog. Indeed, if anything, there may have been more optimism in Christian Spain in the 1040s, following the caliphate's extinction in 1031 and its

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[15] On this, as well as the other eleventh-century versions, see McGinn, 'Oracular Transformations', pp.610-15. There has been some debate over whether the updating occurred in northern Italy (Lombardy), or Southern Italy, see Möhring, *Weltkaiser,* pp.37-9.

[16] Holdenried, *Sibyl*, Appendix B, pp. 203-206 and Conspectus of Extant Manuscripts, pp. 177-202.

[17] This is considered, for example, in A.C. Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age, 1200-1600* (Leiden, 1995) and F. Schmieder, 'Christians, Jews, Muslims – and Mongols. Fitting a Foreign People into the Western Christian Apocalyptic Scenario', in *Medieval Encounters* 12 (2006), pp.274 - 295. The tradition of fitting outsiders into the Christian apocalyptic scenario ties in closely with beliefs about Antichrist, Christianity's arch-opponent who could be variously understood as a single individual or a group of people, see R.K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study in Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Manchester, 1981), p. 11-33 and McGinn, *Antichrist*, pp. 54-56, 80-82.

[18] As McGinn observed in the context of his study of another, later, *Tiburtina*-manuscript (the so-called Newberry Sibyl), the Toledo-*Tiburtina* (which he calls the W1- Sibyl) 'gave no special stress to the *Sarraceni* or *filii Ishmael*, merely mentioning the Last Emperor's destruction of idols and calling of pagans to baptism', see 'Oracular Transformations', p.631.

fragmentation into competing Muslim *taifa* city states, and a spate of victories against the Muslims by Spain's Christian rulers.[19]

I would like to suggest an alternative explanation. The political interpretation of the *Tiburtina* has caused scholars to focus on just one eschatological element of the text (the Antichrist-Last Emperor motif) to the exclusion of its other eschatological themes. Perhaps a more convincing solution to the problems of the Toledo manuscript can be found by looking towards these neglected eschatological elements. I would suggest that one reason for the *Tiburtina's* early popularity derives from its use of the theme of Christian suffering based on moral decline in its description of the endtimes. This is an important but often overlooked theme not only in discussions of the *Tiburtina*, but in Christian apocalypticism generally, because of the general focus on the role which outside forces play in apocalyptic tribulations. Yet, persecution and suffering at the hands of outsiders is not the whole story. In the inherited apocalyptic drama, with its various colourful symbolic figures, the ordinary multitude of the suffering Christian people plays a part, too, and deserves our attention. This is because, to an extent, the Christian community brings suffering upon itself because it harbours collective Antichrists[20], that is, as stated in the tradition of Augustine and Gregory by a tenth-century cleric with an interest in apocalypticism: 'anyone, layman, cleric, or monk who lives contrary to justice and attacks the rule of his way of life and blasphemes what is good'.[21] A well-known passage concerning the character of the end times in the second letter of the Apostle Paul to Timothy describes this moral and spiritual decline from which the Christian community is to suffer in the endtimes (2 Timothy 3:1-5):

> Know also this, that in the last days shall come dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked. Without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness. Traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure more than of God: Having an appearance indeed of godliness but denying the power thereof.[22]

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[19] On the more optimistic nature of Spanish apocalypticism in the wake of Muslim defeat by Christians (and on Spanish lack of interest in the role of the German empire), see H. Mayr Harting who considers these topics with reference to the tenth century in 'Apocalyptic Book Illustration in the Early Midle Ages', in *Apocalyptic in History and Tradition*, ed. C. Rowland and J. Barton (London, 2003), pp.172-211 (at p.188).

[20] Emmerson, *Antichrist*, p. 63 highlights the existence of a complex exegetical tradition where 'Antichrist may be understood as already present in the evil lives of false Christians, heretics, and yet to appear as the culmination of all evil before Christ's Second Advent. The dualism that expects Antichrist to lead the body of evil in the last days also may account for the beliefs in multiple Antichrists. These are the present opponents of Christ; they represent the body of the devil at war with the body of Christ'.

[21] *Quicumque enim sive laicus, sive canonicus sive monachus contra iustitiam vivit et ordinis sui regulam inpugnat et quod bonum est blasphemat, Antichristus est et minister sathanae*, see *Epistola Adsonis ad Gerbergam reginam* ed. E. Sackur, Ernst *Sackur, Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen. Pseudomethodius, Adso, und die Tiburtinische Sibylle* (Halle a.d.S., 1898), p.106. For English translation, see Adso of Montier-en-Der 'Letter on the Origin and Time of the Antichrist', in Bernard McGinn (ed.), *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (Mahwah, NJ, 1979), p.90. Note, in the middle ages, some believed in a sole Antichrist, others in a collective Antichrist. It is not possible to show which group believed the end was more imminent, or, indeed, whether either group believed it was imminent at all. In short, there is no demonstrable relationship between belief in either a collective or a sole Antichrist and a belief that the end of the world was imminent.

[22] For Latin text, see appendix.

A similar catalogue of woes based on moral decline among the faithful is also a prominent part of the *Tiburtina's* narrative.[23] According to the text preserved in the Escorial manuscript, moral decline will occur in the ninth and final generation:[24]

> And in these days brother will consign brother to death, and a father his son, and brother and sister will have intercourse and there will be heinous malice on earth, old men will sleep with virgins, and bad priests with beguiled girls. Bishops will be attendants of this wrongdoing, and there will be bloodshed on earth. And they will defile the temples of the saints, and among the people there will be fornication, filthiness and the sin of sodomy, and they will be a reproach to themselves. And men will be rapacious, abusive, they will hate justice and love falsehood and Roman judges will be fickle. Admitted today to pass judgment, the next day they will have changed [their mind] on account of bribery and they will not pass correct but false judgement. And in these days men will be rapacious and covetous and will commit perjury, and they will love the gifts of falsehood, and law and truth will be destroyed, and the earth will quake in different places and cities on islands will be swept into the sea, and there will be pestilence among men and beasts, and the dying of men, and the earth will be forsaken by the enemy and the futility of their God will be unable to provide consolation. Afterward there will arise a king with the name B [...]. Then after him a Salian from Francia with the name B will rise. It will be the beginning of suffering the like of which has not been seen since the beginning of the world. And in his days there will be much fighting and tribulations for many, and bloodshed and earthquakes in towns and regions and many countries will be captured. And there will be no-one to resist the enemy, because then God's wrath will be on earth. In this persecution Rome will be conquered by the sword and will fall into the hands of this king itself and there will be covetous people, tyrants who hate the poor, who oppress the innocent, and save the guilty. And they will be unjust and despicable and the condemners to destruction will be captured,[25] and there is no-one on earth who resists him and who roots them out because of their malice and cupidity. And then there will arise a king of the Greeks…

The sins of covetousness, love of falsehood, perversion of justice, rejection of the truth, and sexual sins are prominent in this enumeration of the signs of moral decline. Those with responsibility who should know better (judges and bishops) will abuse their office; even the most basic social bonds, family loyalty, will collapse (exemplified by fathers and brothers murdering each other); virgins and old men are expressly castigated for sexual licentiousness and, in any event, it is also inappropriate that the old should fornicate with the young. Such motifs are not unusual. Apocalypticism, it has been well observed, has a strong moralising

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[23] The reader will recall that the Latin *Tiburtina* and the *Oracle*, although both derived from the original text, represent variant versions (see above, n.3) and that the *Tiburtina* itself then split into several different versions. The Escorial manuscript contains version II of the *Tiburtina*. The theme of moral degradation survives in the extant Greek text (the *Oracle*) and all Latin text families, but there are variations in the amount of detail given and whether the theme is placed in the seventh, eighth, or ninth generation.

[24] English translation my own. There is a German translation of the complete text of the *Sibylla Tiburtina* as edited by Sackur, see Alfons Kurfess, *Sibyllinische Weissagungen* (Muenchen 1951), pp.263-279, but this is problematic in places, see n.24.

[25] Note at this point in the text, the exact meaning of the sentence *Eruntque inuisti et nequissimi et damnatores exterminii captivabunt* remains somewhat obscure (cf. e.g. the German translation Kurfess, p.277: *Und sie werden ungerecht und ganz nichtswuerdig sein, und die auswaertingen Schaedlinge werden gefangengesetz werden…*). See appendix for full Latin context.

component: persistence in evil will be punished; a last warning is given to sinners to forsake their evil ways while it is still possible.[26]

From this perspective, the presence of the motif of suffering through sin and moral decline in the Latin *Tiburtina* seems unremarkable. Why focus on this element of this text? Quite simply because this theme had particular contemporary resonance in the eleventh century. It has so far gone unnoticed that at the same time as the *Tiburtina's* earliest surviving manuscripts were being produced, Cluniac monasticism was promoting a climate which would have made a western clerical audience especially receptive to the theme of moral decline.[27]

Cluny had made eschatology, that is, that part of Last Things concerned with personal salvation, a major tenet of its spirituality, a focus expressed in elaborate rites around death, the commemoration of the departed, and intercessionary prayer for the dead in the afterlife.[28] Sometimes this Cluniac eschatological emphasis has been placed in the context of research on the nature of the beliefs about Last Things of the 'millennial generation' (that is, in the period 979-1042). This discussion of the 'millennial generation' has produced an ongoing debate about the nuances of tenth- and eleventh-century apocalypticism.[29] In the context of these debates, Cluniac eschatology is often read as a response to living at a specific moment in time - the turn of 1000AD, a date which Christians supposedly associated with the Book of Revelation's prediction of the loosing of Satan, the cataclysm of human history at the end of time, and the imminence of the Last Judgement.[30]

However, this is not the only way to interpret Cluny's eschatological concerns. The narrow modern focus on how medieval people approached the possibility of the imminent culmination of world history in the year 1000 has sidelined another very prominent medieval preoccupation: personal and collective salvation. This current in medieval thought flourished without any expectation that the world was about to end. In recognition of the soteriological

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[26] McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, p.12.

[27] See, for example, Joachim Wollasch, 'Monasticism: the first wave of reform', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume III c.900-1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge 1999), p.174-185, and K. Hallinger, 'The Spiritual Life of Cluny in the Early Days', in Noreen Hunt (ed.), *Cluniac Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages* (London 1971). Still valuable today is the weighty two–volume study on the Cluniacs by Ernst Sackur, *Die Cluniacenser: in ihrer kirchlichen und allgemeinwissenschaftlichen Wirksamkeit bis zur Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts*, 2 Vols (Halle a.S., 1892-1894) which he produced not long before he published the seminal edition of the eleventh-century *Tiburtina* in 1898, using the Escorial manuscript as his base text (Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*). Sackur was thus well-versed in Cluniac religious practices and well-aware of Cluny's pervasive influence in Europe; he even devoted a Chapter to discussing Cluny's influence in Spain, see below. Yet, Sackur never considered how this influence might have intersected with the *Tiburtina's* evolution over the course of its literary life.

[28] See Patricia Ranft, 'The Maintenance and Transformation of Society through Eschatology: Cluniac Monasticism', *Journal of Religious History* 14/3 (1987), 246-255 and Jean Leclercq, *The Spirituality of the Middle Ages* (London 1968).

[29] See, for example, H. Möhring, 'Die renovatio imperii Kaiser Ottos III. Und die Antichrist-Erwartung der Zeitgenossen und der Jahrtausendwende von 1000/1001, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 93 (2011), 333-50. For an overview of the debate about the nature of eschatology at the turn of the millennium, see Edward Peters, 'Mutations, Adjustments, Terrors, Historians, and the Year 1000', in M. Frasetto (ed), *The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium* (New York 2002), pp.9-28. Paul Magdalino, too, provides a useful summary of the debate, see his 'The Year 1000 in Byzantium', in Paul Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000* (Leiden 2003), pp.233-70.

[30] See, for example, Fried, 'Endzeiterwartung', pp.413-417.

component of Last Things, and in contrast to the historiography about the 'millennial generation', it has been argued that Cluny's brand of eschatology endorsed a vision of the endtimes that looks not just to the year 1000, but far beyond it, towards eternity's perfection. This was a vision built on the hope of mankind changing its sinful ways and reforming its life before death for a better life after death.[31] Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, however, Cluny's intense focus on the next life led to a renewed focus on the life now lived. This is illustrated by the use of 2 Peter 3:14 as one of the twelve liturgical readings in Cluny's office for All Souls' Day: 'while waiting for this [Christ's return], make every effort to be found without stain or defilement'.[32]

Recent research has emphasised both that this eschatological perspective was detached from any expectation that the end was imminent and that it (rather than some form of millennial thinking) also applies to the outlook of reformers such as Peter Damian (c. 1007 - d.1072), one of the earliest and most prominent members of the reform party in the eleventh-century Church.[33] Peter's activity was exactly contemporary with the *Tiburtina's* earliest manuscript evidence. He is significant for current purposes because he is a typical representative of the kind of eschatological mentality which Cluniac rites and observances had promulgated throughout Europe. He is an excellent example that Cluniac ideas were influential outside the order since, although he was very interested in Cluny, he never formally joined the order. [34] As such, I shall treat him as an exemplar of the intellectual currents promulgated by the eleventh-century reform movement which had been influenced by Cluniac ideas.

Peter Damian reminds us of this link between conduct in life and fate after death when, for example, he reflects on unchaste priests: 'because of a flux of momentary passion, they earn the reward of burning in eternal fire that cannot be quenched. Now they wallow in the filth of impurity, but later given over to the avenging flames, they will be rolled about in a flood of pitch and sulphur'[35]. In another example, his letter to judge Bonushomo of Cesena, Peter offers a summary of what scripture has to say on eschatology and then he advises the judge to 'always hold up your <u>deeds</u> before your eyes, fear the judgement of God'.[36] Personal

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[31] This has been cogently argued in Ranft, 'Maintenance and Transformation'; see also Patricia Ranft, *The Theology of Work. Peter Damian and the Medieval Religious Renewal Movement* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp.34-49.

[32] *Propter quod carissimi haec expectantes satis agite inmaculati et inviolati ei inveniri in pace*, see Ranft, *Theology*, p.37.

[33] Kurt Reindel, 'Petrus Damiani', in *Theologische Realenzyklopaedie*, vol. xxvi (Berlin, 1996), pp.294-296; the literature on Peter Damian is vast, see U. Facchini, *Pier Damiani, un padre del secondo millennio : bibliografia 1007-2007* (Rome 2007). Patricia Ranft, who has studied Peter Damian's eschatological outlook in detail, avoids the term apocalypticism altogether when talking about him and instead refers to 'prophetic eschatology' to capture Damian's perspective on Last Things, see Ranft, *Theology*, pp.33-54 and her 'Maintenance and Transformation'.

[34] See Ranft, *Theology*, pp.33-54; see also Irven M. Resnick, 'Peter Damian on Cluny, Liturgy and Penance', *Journal of Religious History* 15/1 (1988), 61-75.

[35] Letter 112: *Qui nimium per momentaneae libidinis fluxum, inextinguibile combustionis aeternae mercantur incendium. Nunc in luxuriae foetore sordescunt, sed tunc flammis ultricibus traditi in torrente picis et sulphuris rotabuntur*, see Kurt Reindel (ed.), *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*. Vol. 3: 91-150 (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1989), p.268, ll.6-9; English translation: Owen J. Blum (transl.), *Peter Damian. Letters* (Washington, 1989-1998), Vol.5: 91-120, p. 266.

[36] Letter 21: *Tu autem [...] facta tua simper ante oculos pone, Dei iudicium pertimesce [...]*, see Kurt Reindel (ed.), *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*. Vol.1: 1-40 (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica,

transformative action and last things go hand in hand here. In short, Cluniac eschatological spirituality and those influenced by it required people to reform their present lives in anticipation of eternity. Thus eschatology became in fact a call to reforming action, rather than merely being a prediction that Christ's return was imminent.

This distinction matters because medieval ideas about Last Things (such as the Second Coming, the End of the World, and the Last Judgement) form a complex structure of interrelated beliefs, only some of which rest on the conviction that the end is nigh.[37] This must be taken into account when considering a number of references to the final age in a letter Peter wrote in 1057 to the cardinal bishops of the Lateran shortly after he had himself become a cardinal. In it he makes clear that he perceives himself and his fellow cardinals as the 'guards on the towers and turrets of a castle' who 'often call out to one another as they stand watch on a stormy night'[38]. Peter regards his letter as such a call, 'not to waken you from your sleep, since you are vigilantly on guard, but rather to arouse myself, now meanly yawning under the influence of listless inactivity'. Having alerted his listeners that he is issuing a call to vigilance, Peter then continues his letter with observations about the state of the Church which illuminate the eleventh-century context of the *Tiburtina's* 'moral decline' theme. Peter's observations run as follows:

> And so, my dear friends, you will observe that the whole world, prone to evil, rushes headlong to its ruin on the slippery path of vice, and the closer it approaches its end, which is already at hand, the more it daily heaps upon itself the burden of still graver crimes. Discipline that should characterize the Church is everywhere neglected, proper reverence is not shown to bishops, the decrees of canon law are despised, and only earthly interests are eagerly promoted as being worthy of God. Moreover, the legal order in contracting marriages is thrown into disorder, and, what an impious thing it is, those who superficially cloak themselves with the title of Christians live indeed like Jews. Where do we not find plundering? Where are we secure against theft? Who have any fear of perjury? Of pandering, or of sacrilege? Who are finally horrified at committing the most heinous crimes? At the same time we repudiate the practice of virtue, and a plague of every kind of perversity has broken out like a wild beast on the attack.[39]

Having thus commented on his own times, Peter then sets out the morally degraded character of the endtimes in the words of scripture (2 Tim 3: 1-5) by continuing:

> But let me not appear the stilted actor proclaiming a tragedy; it will be enough for me to quote the words of the Apostle, for like prophecies his words came forth when he said, "You must face the fact: the final age of this world is to be a time of troubles. Men will love nothing but self and money: they will be arrogant, proud, and blasphemous; with no respect for parents, no gratitude, no piety, no natural affection; never at peace, scandalmongers, intemperate, and

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1983), p.260, l.29 – p.211, l.1. Ranft, *Theology*, p.44 for translation and further discussion of the content of this letter.

[37] Consequently, a range of separate terms is required to distinguish between these medieval ideas in modern scholarly discussion, see for example, C. Walker-Bynum and P. Freedman (eds), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia 2000), p.8. Eschatology (separated into individual eschatology and universal eschatology), apocalypticism, and millennialism are the terms most commonly deployed by scholars. 'Eschatology' is the most neutral of these terms: in contrast to 'apocalypticism' (or 'millennialism') it does not imply psychological or chronological imminence of the end, see, for example, *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford, New York, 2011), which offers a useful glossary of terms, see pp.717-723.

[38] Letter 48, see Blum (transl.), *Letters*, Vol.2, p.263; see appendix for Latin text.

[39] Letter 48, see Blum (transl.), *Letters*, Vol.2, p.264; see appendix for Latin text.

fierce; strangers to all goodness, traitors, adventurers, swollen with self-importance. They will be men who put pleasure in the place of God, men who preserve the outward form of holiness, but are standing denial of its reality.[40]

Having thus inserted this scriptural reference to moral decline Peter Damian then returns to his own time, saying:

Amid such yawning depths threatening damnation for the human race the one and only harbour is obviously the Roman Church; and if I may put it so, the boat of the poor little fisherman is ready to rescue from the swells and angry waves those who confidently resort to it, and bring them to peaceful and life giving shores.[41]

Peter is thus optimistic that mankind can turn away from sin, but action is required, in the form of commitment to the Church. Strikingly for our purposes, the passage from Timothy incorporated by Peter Damian shares many themes with the *Tiburtina's* catalogue of moral decline, such as covetousness, sexual incontinence, lack of respect for parents, and falsehood. Since they are listed in scripture, clearly these indications of moral decline are among the standard expected signs of the last days, like earthquakes and other natural disasters. That is why they appear in material as diverse as the *Tiburtina* and the eleventh-century letters of Peter Damian. In Peter's letters, however, these signs do not suggest that he believed the end was nigh; instead they become part of a call to reforming action. In this he embodies sentiments in the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reform movement which followed in the wake of Cluny's drive for monastic reform. It is thus not surprising to find that just before Peter cites scripture on the signs of moral decline (2 Tim 3:1-5), he reflects on the fact that: 'Discipline that should characterize the Church is everywhere neglected... we repudiate the practice of virtue, and a plague of every kind of perversity has broken out.'

Peter Damian's letter thus exemplifies the linking of the scriptural theme of moral decline in Christian society to the contemporary situation in the Church, a Church he considered marred by the avaricious practice of the buying and selling of Church offices and by a sexually incontinent priesthood which disregarded the principle of clerical celibacy. Peter's combination of 2 Tim 3:1-5 with a critique of the contemporary Church suggests that even though on one level merely a standard endtimes-topos, the enumeration of the signs of moral decline, too, would have particularly resonated for ecclesiastical reformers. This did not simply mean, however, that people expected the imminent end of the world; rather it ties into concerns with the fate of the individual in the afterlife in times of general moral decline.

Reform-minded thinkers in the eleventh century could read eschatological texts not as descriptions or predictions of the end of the world, but as commentaries on the contemporary Church and, above all, as a call to action. Since it is, in one sense, an eschatological work, this interpretation can obviously apply to the *Tiburtina*. Given that, as mentioned above, the earliest surviving manuscript of this supposedly "imperial" text comes from a Muslim-controlled city in Spain, far outside the German Empire, I would suggest that even the earliest manuscript of the *Tiburtina* is better understood in the context of ecclesiastical reform and of eschatology's soteriological component, rather than in an imperial-political context. It is true that all apocalyptic texts hold out hope for the suffering righteous. They are told to stand fast in the hour of trial because God will soon come to reward them and punish their enemies.[42] But in the case of the suffering that arises from moral decline the message is more complex,

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[40] Letter 48, see Blum (transl.), *Letters*, Vol.2, p.264-5; see appendix for Latin text.

[41] Letter 48, see Blum (transl.), *Letters*, Vol.2, p.265; see appendix for Latin text.

[42] McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, p.8.

for change has to come from within man himself, and not by means of delivery from oppression through an outside agent (such as a Last Emperor, for instance) or through divine intervention. The solution for God's suffering people is to repent and practice righteousness, justice, and sexual restraint. This eschatological outlook was spreading widely throughout Europe, carried by ecclesiastical reform. It emerges from this discussion as an important alternative to imperial apocalyptic, just before the *Tiburtina's* textual evolution was captured in manuscript witnesses such as the Toledo codex of 1047, considered here.

If, from the time of our earliest surviving evidence, the *Tiburtina* can be understood in a soteriological or reforming context inspired by Cluny, it is natural to think that the Cluniac context might also explain the dissemination of the text. This cannot be demonstrated conclusively, but it seems very possible. Cluny had both the mindset and the infrastructure to circulate the *Tiburtina*, given the mobility of its monks and abbots, and the support and patronage it received from European monarchs and nobles, including those of Spain.[43] I have not yet been able to identify direct Cluniac influence in Toledo itself prior to the reconquista, although, strikingly, the city acquired a French Cluniac archbishop, Bernard de Sedirac, immediately after the Christian reconquest of Toledo in 1085 by Alfonso IV of Leon-Castile.[44] However, even if we cannnot show Cluny's direct influence in Toledo at the time Escorial &.I.3 was being written, there were certainly Cluniac influences nearby in the neighbouring Kingdom of Leon-Navarre, where Cluny contributed to monastic reform in the period c.1020-1035.[45] For example, Sancho the Great of Navarre turned to Cluny around 1025 and persuaded Abbot Odilo to send monks to Spain who, according to Ralph Glaber, were themselves 'Hispani', that is, Catalans who, through long residence at Cluny, had become familiar with the Observances of the Burgundian house.[46] Sancho's personal ties with Cluny and its Abbot Odilo, also illustrate the appeal in Spain of Cluniac eschatological spirituality: Sancho entered the Burgundian congregation as a lay member (a *socius et familiaris*) to profit from Cluny's daily liturgical supplications for all its members in life and death.[47] This is not to suggest, incidentally, that the fate of the *Tiburtina* in eleventh-century Spain was necessarily related to royal patronage; rather it is only to note Cluny's influence

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[43] The importance of 'a large geographic and cultural network of living churchmen and thinkers' such as Cluny's for the 'transfer of religious writings and ideas across the face of Christendom' at the turn of the millennium has been demonstrated in a study of the spread of Marian devotion, see T.J. Wellman, 'Apocalyptic Concerns and Mariological Tactics in Eleventh-century France', in M. Frasetto (ed.), *The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium* (New York 2002), p.148.

[44] See Barton, 'Spain', pp.177-8 and p.181; see also John Williams, 'Cluny and Spain', *Gesta* 27 (1988), pp. 93-101.

[45] There were also French-Catalan sources of ecclesiastical renewal, see C.J. Bishko, 'Fernando I and the Origins of the Leonese-Castilian alliance with Cluny', in C.J. Bishko, *Studies in Medieval Spanish Frontier History*, II (London, 1980), pp.1-136, consulted electronically via The Library of Iberian Resources Online. (http://libro.uca.edu/frontier/spanfrontier.htm; regrettably the online version is not paginated so below I refer to the text by reference to the related footnotes), see text related to n.18.

[46] See Bishko, 'Fernando I', see text related to n.20.

[47] See Bishko, 'Fernando I', see text related to n.21. It might be thought that Sancho sought connections with Cluny in order to advance the reconquista or to support a propaganda and recruitment drive for a 'holy war' against the Muslims. However scholars have cautioned against this assumption. Instead, Bishko, 'Fernando I', text related to n.41, has stated that Sancho "throughout his long reign shows surprisingly little interest in the characteristically Catalan and Leonese ideal of the Reconquista; his powerful military efforts rather were directed towards enhancing his power in Southern France, in the Pyrenees beyond Aragon, and to the West in Castile and Leon."

there and that, therefore, it is quite plausible that the kind of reforming thought which Cluny promoted would have been known in the peninsula, potentially even where Cluny's direct influence was absent.

Returning to the text of the *Tiburtina*, and its early history, we need to appreciate the full complexities of the eschatological component of its narrative. This component includes not merely the apocalyptic motifs of the attack by Gog and Magog or the Antichrist but also the theme of Christian suffering based on moral decline. Hitherto this aspect of the text has been passed over, rather undeservedly, for it may well explain the *Tiburtina's* appeal just as well as, or instead of, explanations based on *Reichseschatologie* and apocalyptic fears of Muslims. The *Tiburtina's* inclusion of the theme of Christian society's moral decline constituted a powerful reason in its own right for the circulation and translation of the text even before the mid-eleventh century. This reminds us that we are confronted not with a single homogenous 'endtime scenario', but with different 'flavours' of apocalypticism which depended on, for example, how imminently the end was expected, what hopes believers had for the period before the end, and who believers regarded as the good and evil players in the drama of the Last Days. Such differences in outlook are part of the variegated eschatological imagination of the past but are often difficult to capture, especially when talking about apocalypticism around the year 1000.