# HISTORICAL PROPHECIES FROM LATE ANTIQUE APOCALYPTICISM TO SECULAR ESCHATOLOGY

PETRE GURAN
(Institut d'Études Sud-Est Européennes, Bucarest)

L'auteur se penche sur plusieurs légendes religieuses concernant la fin du monde. On étudie ici le mythe du Dernier Empereur à partir du VII^e siècle, avec une analyse de la *Vision du Pseudo-Méthode* et de l'oracle de la Sibylle de Tibur. L'eschatologie de la période suivante (par exemple, la vision de saint André Salos) allait concevoir le dernier empereur comme le libérateur de Contantinople et le restaurateur du christianisme.

**Mots-clés**: Chute de Constantinople, Fin du Monde, légendes concernant le dernier empereur.

In the 19th century a Greek inhabitant of Constantinople leading a European traveler either to the Golden Gate or to the Romanos Gate would have pointed out a place where it was believed the emperor Constantine XI Paleologos was lying asleep until the day of restoration of Christian rule in Constantinople[1]. This legend circulated under the name of the "marmoreal emperor," *ho marmaromenos vasilias*, and related that an angel of the Lord rescued Constantine XI when he was about to be killed by the Turks. The angel swept him up, turned him into marble, and concealed him in a subterranean cave near the Golden Gate of the city. There the marble emperor still sleeps, awaiting the angel's call to wake up. Legends about the tomb of the last Constantine are multifarious and intermingled with legends concerning the manner and place of his death on the morning of May 29th 1453. Even truthful historical sources about his last hours are utterly contradictory[2].

The ideological structure of such a popular belief, which can be found even in the New Year's Eve greeting *tou chronou stin poli*--"next year in Constantinople," reaches far back to the eschatological production of the 7th century. In this paper I trace the evolution of the myth of the "returning emperor" and establish the place of such Byzantine legends within the eschatological debate of monotheistic religions explaining political domination over the Eastern Mediterranean and its sacred cities (Jerusalem and Constantinople).

A legend from the immediate aftermath of the fall of Constantinople combines several century-long issues in the Byzantine apocalyptic narrative to

[1] N. Politês, Παραδόσεις (Athens, 1904), I: 22, II: 658–74.

[2] D. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor. The Life and Legend of Constantine Palaiologos, Last Emperor of the Romans* (Cambridge, 2002), *passim*.



www.cimec.ro
https://biblioteca-digitala.ro

offer a coherent answer to the questions about the final destiny of Constantinople and consequently of Christian rule. The night before the final attack, Emperor Constantine XI saw the following vision as he was resting on the ramparts next to the Romanos Gate:

> On his right was a church of the Virgin. He saw like a Queen coming towards it with a number of eunuchs. They went in and the Emperor and his nobles hurried to see who this Queen might be and went into the church. [They saw her] opening the sanctuary gate and going inside. She sat on the bishop's throne and looked very mournful. Then she opened her holy mouth and addressed the Emperor: This unhappy city was dedicated to me and many a time have I saved it from divine wrath. Now too I have entreated my Son and my God. But, alas, He has decreed that this time you should be consigned to the hands of your enemies because the sins of your people have inflamed the anger of God. So leave your imperial crown here for me to look after until such time as God will permit another to come and take it. When the emperor heard this he became very sad. He took his crown and the scepter which was in his hand and laid them on the altar; and he stood in tears and said: My Lady, since for my sins I have been bereft of my imperial majesty, I resign also my soul into your hands along with my crown. The Lady of the Angels replied: May the Lord God rest your soul in peace in the company of His Saints. The emperor made obeisance and went to kiss her knee; and she vanished and her eunuchs, who were her angels, vanished with her. But neither the crown nor the scepter were found where they had been left; for the Lady, the Mother of God, took them with her to keep until such time as there would be mercy for the wretched race of Christians. This was reported later by some who had been there and witnessed the miracle. The emperor with his nobles then went forth stripped of his majesty to look on the enemy from the walls. They joined forces and gave battle to some Turks whom they encountered and were defeated. The Turks cut them down; and they took the head of the pitiful emperor to the sultan who had great joy of it[3].

This fragment belongs to the literary genre of Songs and Lamentations (*Monodiai kai threnoi*) about the fall of Constantinople. It conveys the idea that the conquest of Constantinople might be only a temporary punishment and that the purveyance of God might ensure the return of Christian monarchy in Constantinople. In the meantime the regalia must be safeguarded in the heavens until this future reestablishment.

The vision of the Virgin described in this anonymous *Lament* echoes another well-known appearance of the Virgin in Constantinople: the one witnessed by

[3] *Anonymi Monodia,* ed. Lambros, Μονῳδίαι καὶ θρῆνοι ἐπὶ τῇ ἁλώσει τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 5 (1908), 248–50; A. Pertusi and A. Carile, *Testi inediti e poco noti sulla caduta di Costantinopoli* (Bologna, 1983), pp. 326–31. The same tale is told in a Short Chronicle found in a manuscript in the monastery of St. John on Patmos, N. B. Tomadakis, Ἡ ἐν τῷ Πατμιακῷ Κώδικι 287 Μικρὰ Χρονογραφία, *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 25 (1955), 28–37. Here translation by D. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor*, pp. 89–90.

https://www.biblioteca-digitala.ro www.cimec.ro

Andreas Salos (Saint Andrew the Fool) and narrated by his hagiographer Nicephorus. In Andreas Salos' vision, the Virgin spreads her veil over the praying community as a sign of protection bestowed on the population of Constantinople[4]. The meaning of the Virgin's gesture during this special epiphany, that of protection, was later extended to embrace the whole Christian community and popularized through numerous copies and translations of the *Life of Saint Andrew the Fool*. An icon depicting this event, best known as *Pokrov* in the Russian branch of iconographic tradition, transformed the legend into a forceful image of divine protection.

To portray Constantine the Great as the dedicator of the city to the Theotokos was a political claim in the 9th century, as we can surmise from the mosaic over the south entrance gate to the narthex of the Hagia Sophia, where Constantine is depicted presenting the city of Constantinople to the Virgin, while Justinian the Great offers her his Church. The 10th-century anonymous hagiographic work *The Life of Constantine* attests that the claim gained credence and popularity[5]. An 11th-century Constantinopolitan Synaxarium takes over this belief and recounts that from the very beginning, the city was dedicated by its founder Constantine to the Mother of God[6]. In the *Life of Basil the Younger* (10–11th century), the belief in Constantine's dedication of the city to the Virgin is modified into a mystical and heavenly variant, where Christ himself bestows the city upon his mother as her inheritance (*eis klèron dedotai*)[7]. In the *Life of Andreas Salos*, this mystical aspect is never explicitly stated, but rather implied in the idea that the city "has been given as a gift" (*keharistai*) to the Virgin[8].

The second important aspect of the fragment is the mention of the remittance of the *regalia* to the Virgin in the sacred context of a church; we may presume that here "church" designates the Church of Blachernae, the same place where Andreas Salos had his vision of the Virgin. This remittance of the *regalia* refers to a 7th-century eschatological legend, first formulated in Pseudo-Methodius' *Vision of the End*, where the "last emperor" appears as an imperial figure who closes the line of legitimate Christian kingship and thus world history[9]. The main role of the last emperor is purely religious and consists in returning the *regalia* to Christ, thus completing the cycle of legitimate kingship on earth.

The quoted fragment combines the remittance of the *regalia* in Pseudo-Methodius with yet another belief with political weight quoted in Constantine

[4] *The Life and Conduct of Our Holy Father Andrew the Fool for the Sake of Christ*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Lennart Rydén (Uppsala, 1995), pp. 254–6 [Migne, Patrologia Graeca 111, 848C].

[5] Fr. Halkin, "Une Nouvelle Vie de Constantin dans un légendier de Patmos," *Analecta Bollandiana* 77 (1959), 79.

[6] A. Frolow, "La dedicace de Constantinople dans la tradition byzantine," *RHR* 127 (1944), 61–127.

[7] A. N. Veselovskij, *Vita Basilii iunioris* (1889), p. 65.

[8] Lennart Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse. Greek Text, Translation, and Commentary", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), 201 and 215 (PG 111:853B); Commentary, 228–229.

[9] Paul J. Alexander, "The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor and its Messianic Origin", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 41 (1978), 1–15.

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio*, according to which the *regalia* of the Byzantine emperors were of heavenly origin, brought by an angel to the founder of the city, Constantine[10]. Thus for the 15th-century author it was only natural to return the regalia to where they came from.

After having been configured in the 7th century, the "last emperor" figure was lent to various other later eschatological texts. The evolution of this figure in Byzantine literature in the following centuries discloses the attitude of the eschatological author towards the anticipated end of history, which meant towards his contemporary society and the empire as a religious factor. My aim here is to describe three categories of transformations within this literature, which characterize the evolution of the Byzantine religious *Weltanschauung* from the 7th century to the conquest of Constantinople. First, I emphasize a shift in eschatological thought from the genuine religious interest in the Parousia (the best example would be the *Latin Pseudo Ephrem/Pseudo Isidore*) to the historical interval between the time of the author or supposed author and the time of the material destruction of the world. Second, I discuss the dissociation of historical prophecy from its eschatological background. Finally, I consider the geographic shift from Jerusalem to Constantinople, and from the complex space of a world empire to a space confined between Western Anatolia and the Southern Balkans, having as a center Constantinople. All these changes amount to a shift from sacred history to secular eschatology, or, in other words, to the fall into history.

The first formulations of the "last emperor" theme are to be found in two 7th-century apocalyptic texts: Pseudo-Methodius' *Vision of History and Its End* and the *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl*. Pseudo-Methodius' text can be dated from the 670s to the 690s with relative certainty, as the textual evidence shows that the two Latin manuscripts produced in the early 8th century are translations of the Greek text, which in turn is a translation from Syriac[11]. Establishing a similar date for the *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl* presents some difficulties, and a variety of hypotheses have been proposed ranging from the 4th to the 11th century. Nevertheless, there are three elements which support the dating of the *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl* to the mid 7th century. Firstly, the enemies of the empire are identified as pagans. Secondly, the name given to the last emperor is Constans, a possible reference to Constans II (born 630, reigned 641–668), the Byzantine emperor who traveled to Rome and tried to establish his capital in Syracuse. Both of these facts, the name of the final enemy and of the last emperor, suggest that the text must date prior to the Christians' awareness of the real threat of Islam and of its monotheistic Judeo-Christian background. As *terminus post quem* we have the reference to the final conflict described as a battle between a king of the Romans and the unclean nations of Gog and Magog. This last element appears for the first time in the Byzantine

[10] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik and trans. R.J.H. Jenkins (Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies) 13 (rev. ed. Washington D.C., 1967), pp. 66–67.

[11] Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, ed. Dorothy de F. Abrahamse (Berkeley, 1985).

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

*Alexander the Great Legend* of the 630s[12]. Thus 630–670 is the most probable span of time for an apocalypse written in Latin and ascribing to the last emperor the name of a real emperor of the 7th century. A third apocalyptic text, which contains a key phrase of the last emperor theme and likewise presents some dating difficulties, is the Latin Pseudo-Ephrem *Sermon on the End of the World*[13]. For all these reasons, the "last emperor" is most likely a 7th-century theme[14].

Regarding the relation between Pseudo-Methodius' *Vision* and the *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl*, in the latter text the "last emperor" theme runs as follows:

> But when the king of the Romans will hear [about the attack of Gog and Magog], he will summon his army, destroy the enemy to the point of death, then go to Jerusalem, there lay down the diadem from his head and all his royal attire, and relinquish the kingdom of the Christians to God the Father and to Jesus Christ his Son[15].

There is no reason to believe that this simple narrative of the last emperor is derived from the *Vision* of Pseudo-Methodius, where the emphasis falls on the fact that the last emperor fights the Ishmaelites. Unlike the text of Pseudo-Methodius, the *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl* also fails to emphasize the role of the cross, which gained particular importance during the Byzantine-Persian War and was more strongly perceived by Christians in the eastern territories of the empire then in the west. Captured by the Persians and restored to Jerusalem in 631 by Heraclius, the cross was finally transferred from Jerusalem to Constantinople shortly before the conquest of the city by the Arabs in 638. Although initially kept and displayed at the Hagia Sophia, where the pilgrim Arculf witnessed its veneration in 680[16], in the 9th century the cross became the most important element of the imperial collection

[12] Gerrit J. Reinink, "Heraclius, the New Alexander. Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius," in *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation*, eds. G.J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (Rijksuniversiteit te Groningen, 2002), pp. 81–94.

[13] Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 136–141.

[14] M. Kmosko, "Das Rätsel des Pseudo-Methodius," *Byzantion* 6 (1931), 273–296; Paul. J. Alexander, the studies collected in the volume cited in the previous note and in the Variorum Reprints *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London 1978); Sebastian Brock, "Syriac Views of Emergent Islam," in *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, ed. G.H.A. Juynboll (Carbondale, 1982), pp. 9–21 (reprinted in Sebastian P. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* [London, 1984]); idem, "Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1976), 17–36; idem, "North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John Bar Penkāyē's Rīš Mellē," *JSAI* 9 (1989), 51–75; G.J. Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, eds. Werner Verbeke, et al. (Leuven, 1988), pp. 82–111; idem, "Pseudo-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, Vol. I.: *Problems in the Literary Sources*, eds. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad, (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam) 1 (Princeton, 1992), pp. 149–87; and VR, *Syriac Christianity under Late Sasanian and Early Islamic Rule* (London, 2005).

[15] E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen: Pseudomethodius, Adso und die Tiburtinische Sybille* (Halle a S., 1898), pp. 186, 4.

[16] *Early Travels in Palestine, Comprising the Narratives of Arculf [and others]*, ed. with notes by Thomas Wright (London, 1848), p. 12.

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

of relics related to the life of Christ, according to 10th-century sources[17]. It is in this context that we should understand the identification of the *labarum* with the cross and the particular connection of the cross to the *regalia*. In Pseudo-Methodius' *Legend of the Last Emperor*, the cross is the receptor of the *regalia*. In the 15th-century *Lament* cited above, the Virgin takes the place of the cross as receptor of the *regalia*. This variation echoes the realities after 1204, when the largest piece of the cross in the imperial collection of relics was sold by the Latin emperors of Constantinople to the French King Saint Louis, and consequently the more modest role of these relics of the Passion in the imperial ideology of the Paleologan period[18].

Despite some differences, there is nevertheless a certain coherence in both forms of the 7th-century last emperor myth and its connection to imperial ideology[19]. Perfectly corresponding to the views expressed in the 4th-century works of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Laus Constantini* and *Vita Constantini*[20], or in Cosmas Indicopleustes' (6th century) Cosmography[21], the central idea of this ideology presents the Roman Empire as the best possible political framework for Christianity, foreshadowing the Celestial Kingdom, and background of the Parousia. But military disasters of the 7th century challenge such confident views on both the eastern and western fronts of the empire. In the west, not only did the Justinianic conquest fail to restore the empire to its previous dimensions, but its territory actually shrunk to a few endangered possessions in Italy. At the same time, the Balkan region was lost to the Slavs and the Avars, which were pagan populations. In the east, the Persian War opened the way to the Arab conquest that striped the empire of half of its provinces. The "last emperor" myth thus provides an answer cogent with imperial ideology to this challenge by saying that the empire would be restored and Jerusalem reintegrated into it in the final act of history. If one wonders why the earlier 6th-century layer of eschatological production did not contain the last emperor figure, attested by the *Oracle of Baalbek*[22], we have just to observe that it made no sense to speculate about an eschatological restoration of the empire in Justinian's time. Although we see the weakness and precariousness of Justinian's conquests from our vantage point as historians, the contemporaries must have felt much more confident in the perpetuity of the empire. The spiritual danger came from within the empire and from the empire's leadership if we are to believe Procopius of Caesarea's criticism of Justinian in the *Secret History*.

[17] P. Magdalino, "L'église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion à Constantinople (VII/VIII–XIIIe siècle)," in *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, eds. J. Durand and B. Flusin (Paris, 2004), pp. 15–30.

[18] G.P. Majeska, "The Relics of Constantinople after 1204," in *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, eds. J. Durand and B. Flusin (Paris, 2004), pp. 183–190.

[19] P. Guran, "Genesis and Function of the Last Emperor-Myth in Byzantium," *Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi*, *serie seconda*, 8 (2006), 273–303.

[20] Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, *The Life of Constantine. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford, 1999).

[21] *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk*, trans. from the Greek and ed. with notes and introduction by J.W. McCrindle (New York, 1967), Book II, 68–71.

[22] Paul J. Alexander, *Oracle of Baalbek. The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies) 10 (Washington D.C., 1967).

www.cimec.ro
https://www.cimec.ro

The easily identifiable transition from the *vaticinia post eventum* to the part of real prophecy characterizes these 6th and 7th-century texts--*Oracle of Baalbek*, *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl*, and Pseudo-Methodius' *Vision*. Even more importantly, the eschatological future is presented in a rather simple and schematic way. Pseudo-Methodius' eschatological chronology runs as follows: 1) the Arab/Muslim conquest (called, according to the prophecy in the Genesis, the "Wild Ass") and the tribulations of the Christians; 2) the last emperor's restoration of the empire, his beneficent reign, and his journey to Jerusalem; 3) the invasion of Gog and Magog; 4) the revelation of Antichrist; 5) the Parousia. The importance of this simple scheme resides in perpetuating the belief in the trans-historical role of the Roman Empire.

In a later phase of the conflict between Byzantium and the Caliphate, when the likelihood of tremendous threats such as sieges of the capital in 674–78 and 716 abated and the war became an endemic conflict on the frontiers, the imminent end of history received a postponement and opened the scene to history from the point of view of a person living and writing in Constantinople. Without distinguishing between iconoclast and iconophile eschatology, the end of time seemed less imminent. Instead, religious unrest and internal controversies about the orthodoxy of Byzantine power decreased its religious relevance. In this stage, the eschatological authors develop a long and blurred future.

The *Daniel-Diegesis,* edited by K. Berger, initiates the last emperor myth's fall into history[23]. Set shortly after the extremely dangerous Arab campaigns against Byzantium, those of 716–717, the text portrays the last emperor as a savior-emperor and destroyer of the Arabs. The prophecy does not, however, end here; historical development continues for several generations with two successive wicked rulers and a "foul alien woman" until the cataclysmic destruction of Constantinople through submersion under the waters of the sea[24]. Historical developments continue in Rome and Jerusalem. This part of the text, an anti-Jewish polemic, states that the Antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan. In the *Daniel-Diegesis*, there is no last emperor in the restricted sense of Pseudo-Methodius and the *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl*.

Similarly, the *Apocalypse of Patriarch Leo of Constantinople*, from the end of the 8th or beginning of the 9th century, presents a historical scenario where the last emperor is completely absent. None of the 7th-century features of the last emperor are ascribed to any of the emperors of the series prophesied by the eschatological author. There is only a hazy figure of a good emperor, followed by a wicked woman called Irene, and a man named Constantine, who will for the last time restore true faith and piety[25]. Another peculiarity of this apocalypse is its equal

[23] Klaus Berger, *Die griechische Daniel-Diegesis: Eine altkirchliche Apokalypse* (SPB 27; Leiden, 1976).

[24] The image of Constantinople submerged under the sea is already present in Justinian's time, see P. Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda", in *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol on His Seventieth Birthday*, eds. R. Beaton and C. Roueché (Aldershot, 1993), pp. 3–34.

[25] R. Maisano, *L'apocalisse apocrifa di Leone di Costantinopoli* (Naples, 1975).

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

emphasis on the historical phase of the prophecy and the strictly eschatological scene of the Last Judgment, which takes up one third of the text (chapters 21 to 29).

The *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* adopts this perspective and further blurs the simple scheme of Pseudo-Methodius. His series of future rulers introduces a disjunction between the different aspects of the last emperor. Chronologically there is no last emperor, but the functions assumed by the last emperor are divided among several future emperors.

Andreas Salos' sequence starts with a good emperor, called "from poverty," who will humble the sons of Hagar, establish peace, and create abundance. After him comes a bad emperor, called the "son of lawlessness" (like the Antichrist in II Thess. 2:3), who will reign three and a half years (Daniel 7:25; 12:7) and will be followed by another bad emperor called the "apostate and persecutor." In the fourth place arrives a good emperor from Ethiopia, who will restore churches and spread the love of Christ, followed immediately by an emperor from Arabia who will go to Jerusalem and depose his regalia (the "last emperor" in the restricted sense). After the death of the Arabian emperor, three brothers will arise and wage wars between them (inspired by the Diadochi, according to Rydén). They will be supplanted by the filthy woman, after whose reign Jewish power will be restored in Jerusalem. In the ninth range comes the disintegration of the empire, the transfer of power to Rome, Thessalonica, and Sylaion, and the release of Gog and Magog. At this moment, the Antichrist is revealed and begins the final clash between himself and the three witnesses, Elijah, Enoch, and the Son of Thunder (John the Evangelist). The prophecy ends with Christ's second coming.

Thus for Andreas Salos, four emperors precede the imperial figure that accomplishes the most important function of the last emperor--the deposing of the regalia in Jerusalem--but other "last emperor" functions are assumed by the emperor who comes first--the military restoration of the empire--and by the emperor who comes in the fourth place--the restoration of Christianity. After the death of the fifth emperor political power continues with a series of disastrous reigns and conflicting powers, which means that the end of legitimate Roman power is distanced from the ultimate acts of the end of history.

According to the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse*, the True Cross is not one object, but is composed of several pieces, kept in different places as relics, which put together form the Cross. Once the dispersed pieces are reunited in a mysterious way, they will reconstitute the Cross on Golgotha in Jerusalem[26]. In this way, the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* can be viewed as an attempt to reconcile divergent opinions about the destiny of the True Cross: on the one hand, the belief that the Cross cannot be found on earth and will appear only at the end of time as a heavenly sign of the Parousia (a belief defended by Saint John Chrysostom); and, on the other hand, the belief in the authenticity of the relics of the Cross, stored

[26] *The Life and Conduct of Our Holy Father Andrew the Fool for the Sake of Christ*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Lennart Rydén (Uppsala, 1995), p. 268.

https://www.biblioteca-digitala.ro www.cimec.ro

first in the Hagia Sophia and then in the palatine chapels of Constantinople, as numerous literary sources inform us starting from the 9th century[27]. The *Apocalypse of Patriarch Leo of Constantinople* shares the same difficulty regarding the Cross, as it states that the Cross is in Heaven, ready to descend for the Parousia. Thus the scene of the last emperor deposing his crown on the Cross became senseless; the last emperor has lost the most important of his functions and disappeared altogether[28]. It seems to be a peculiarity of the Apocalypses of the iconoclastic era (*Daniel-Diegesis*, *Patriarch Leo*) to deny the eschatological relevance of the collection of relics related to the Passion of Christ. In this respect the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* joins this group.

The *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* has also in common with the *Daniel-Diegesis* and the *Apocalypse of Patriarch Leo of Constantinople* a strong anti-Jewish polemical content. It is worth noting that the *Daniel-Diegesis* and the *Apocalypse of Patriarch Leo* can be dated to the 8th century with some certainty; the former goes back to the accession of Leo III, while the latter dates to the decline of his dynasty. Although Rydén dates the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse*, together with the whole text of the Life, to the mid-10th century, C. Mango believes that the *Life of Andreas Salos* was produced sometime between the end of the 7th and the middle of the 8th century[29]. At least for the Apocalypse in the *Life of Andreas Salos*, an earlier dating than the one proposed by Rydén (mid-10th century) is possible. The significance would be that the three texts belong either to a period when ideological interest in the Cross was not yet developed, or to a background of religious opposition to imperial government, in this context and that period, to the iconophiles.

Another series of Byzantine eschatological texts appears in the manuscripts with the title *Vision of Daniel*. Afanasii Vasiliev (1893) edited three such texts: the second text bears the complete title *Horasis tou Daniel peri tou eschatou kairou kai peri tes synteleias tou aiônos*[30]; the third text is called *The Last Vision of Daniel* (*He eschate horasis tou Daniel*)[31]; while the first text is a homily falsely ascribed to St. John Chrysostom based on fragments of the *Vision of Daniel* (*Tou en hagiois patros hemon Ioannou tou Hrisostomou logos ek ten horasin tou Daniel*)[32]; but the

[27] B. Flusin, "Construire une nouvelle Jérusalem: Constantinople et les reliques," in *L'Orient dans l'histoire religieuse de l'Europe. L'invention des origines*, eds. M.A. Amir-Moezzi and J. Scheid (EPHE: Brepols, 2001), pp. 51–70; P. Magdalino, "L'église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion à Constantinople (VII/VIII–XIIIe siècle)," in *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, eds. J. Durand and B. Flusin (Paris, 2004), pp. 15–30.

[28] R. Maisano, *L'apocalisse apocrifa di Leone di Costantinopoli*, p. 103. The Cross is displayed only after the general resurrection of the dead, together with the other signs of his passion.

[29] C. Mango, "The Life of St. Andrew the Fool Reconsidered", (Rivista di studi bizantini e slavi II. Miscellanea A. Pertusi II), (Bologna 1982), pp. 297–313 versus L. Ryden, "The Date of the Life of Andreas Salos", DOP 32 (1978) pp. 129–155.

[30] A. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina* (Moscow, 1893), pp. 38–43; Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 77–95 discusses this piece as Daniel Kaˆ œstai, referring to the first words of the text.

[31] A. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina*, pp. 43–47; Alexander calls it Last Daniel.

[32] A. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina*, pp. 33–38; Alexander calls it Pseudo-Chrysostom.

https://biblioteca-digitala.ro www.cimec.ro

longest, most detailed, and oldest Byzantine *Vision of Daniel* was transmitted to us only in its Slavonic translation contained in the famous codex Zbornik Popa Dragolja[33]. Based on the *vaticinia ex eventu*, all these texts were created in the 9th century.

The Slavonic text gives the following sequence of future reigns and events after the last recognizable historical context linked to a rebellion and the consequent Arab invasion in Sicily: 1) An emperor of humble or unknown origin will be discovered by divine revelation and anointed at Akrodounion. His mission is to fight back the Ishmaelites, he will afterwards turn to the west, subdue the fair-haired nations, sojourn in Rome for a while, and finally come with many nations to Constantinople, wherefrom he will scare off an emperor whose name starts with sigma. 2) Then a ruler called "the tenth horn" (vocabulary borrowed from the Old Testament Book of Daniel) will rise to power and reign for one year. 3) The Ethiopian emperor will kill the tenth horn and reign in peace and prosperity for 32 years, restoring churches and holy images. 4) After his reign the unclean people of Gog and Magog will be unleashed, but finally destroyed by an archangel. 5) Eventually an emperor of the Romans will go to Jerusalem and sojourn there for twelve years, and as the son of perdition is revealed, the this last emperor will depose the regalia on the cross and hand over the empire to God. 6) The son of perdition will fight the witnesses of God and kill them.

The text stops abruptly here. The structure preserves some of the simplicity of 7th-century apocalypses (*Pseudo-Methodius* and the *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl*), but splits the pseudo-methodian figure of the last emperor into three figures: the anointed emperor who fights the Arabs, the Ethiopian Emperor who brings abundance, and the emperor residing in Jerusalem who hands over the empire to God. The second text in Vassiliev's edition (*Orasis tou Daniel*) keeps close to this sequence, only it splits the tenth horn into a succession of three emperors, the third of which pronounces the prophecy of Constantinople drowned in the waters. The rest of the structure is identical. A new feature in these 9th-century visions of Daniel is the relation of the first or second eschatological emperor to Rome or more generally to Western Mediterranean geo-political notions and his trajectory from the west to Constantinople. This feature might be explained by the fact that all these texts are derived from an eschatological production in Sicily or interested in development of Sicilian history. Among them the pseudo-chrysostomian homily stands out because of its very short future. In it, like in Pseudo-Methodius, the Antichrist comes after the emperor who defeats the Arabs. Nevertheless the text seems to be only a conglomerate of excerpts from different other texts combining exegetic and narrative styles, particularly Pseudo-Methodius and the Slavonic Daniel.

[33] P.S. Srechkovich, *Zbornik Popa Dragolia*, Srpska Kralievska Akademia, *Spomenik* 5 (1890); V. Istrin, *Otkrovenie Mefodia Patarskago i apokrifičeskie videniia Daniila*, I: Texts (Moscow, 1897), pp. 156–158; P.A. Lavrov, *Apokrificheskie Teksty*, (Sbornik Otdelenia Russkago Jazyka i Slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk) 67, 13 (St. Petersburg, 1899), pp. 1–5.

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

Compared to 8th-century eschatology (*Daniel-Diegesis* and *Apocalypse of Patriarch Leo*), where the figure of the last emperor is very weak or altogether absent, the visions of Daniel share with Pseudo-Methodius this assertion that Christian imperial history will last until the coming of the Antichrist, which means that it is a necessary framework for the historical condition and it is only the ceremonial restitution of the regalia in Jerusalem which allows for the Antichrist to come. This is a faithful rendering of patristic interpretation of II Thessalonians 2:6–7, expressly mentioned in the Pseudo-Chrysostom homily on the biblical *Vision of Daniel*[34].

Liutprand of Cremona, visiting Constantinople in the mid-10th century, testifies to an apocalyptic tradition ascribed to a Hippolytus bishop in Sicily, whose prophecy indicates that an emperor of the West would defeat the Ishmaelites, causing Liutprand to think of the Ottonian emperors[35].

In contrast to earlier apocalypses linked to the tradition of Pseudo-Methodius, the visions of Daniel produced in the 13th and 14th centuries[36] describe the appearance of an aged king – eventually named John – in the "right hand part of Constantinople" escorted by four angels to Hagia Sophia and crowned there[37]. After the crowning of this king the apocalyptic author describes a victorious campaign against the Ishmaelites[38]. These texts already concentrate only on a fragment of future history: the victorious campaign of a Christian emperor against Muslim forces.

A completely new type of apocalyptic interests appears in the *Oracles of Leo the Wise*[39]. The first characteristic of this text consists in the lack of any indication that the future events of the narrative may be linked to the major *eschata* preceding the Parousia. They are a fragment of history written in future tense. The text describes simply a succession of emperors, reigning in Constantinople until the eventual fall of the city. A second characteristic is the geographic and geopolitical simplification. The geography of the 8th and 9th-century apocalypses, in which the authors still knew that the emperors' action concerned a large world reaching from Spain, Italy, and Sicily to Palestine and Mesopotamia, is replaced by the concentration on Constantinople alone. History, more precisely Constantinopolitan history, replaces eschatology. The emperors are generally presented in grim colors, the

[34] A. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina*, p. 35; Discussion of the eschatological content of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians by B. McGinn, *Antichrist. Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (San Francisco, 1994), pp. 33–57; Cristian Badilita, *Métamorphoses de l'Antichrist chez les Pères de l'Église* (Paris, 2005), pp. 51–60; Théodore Paléologue, *Sous l'œil du grand Inquisiteur. Carl Schmitt et l'héritage de la théologie politique* (Paris, 2004), pp. 111–129.

[35] Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London, 1910), pp. 460–464.

[36] A. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina*, pp. 43–47.

[37] V. Istrin, Otkrovenie Mefodia Patarskago i apokrifičeskie videniia Daniila, I: Texts (Moscow, 1897), p. 137.

[38] C. Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise", *Zbornik Radova Vizant. Instituta* 6 (Belgrade, 1960), pp. 59–93.

[39] *Tou sophotatou basileos Leontos chresmoi*, PG 107:1122–1158 (repr. of Petrus Lambecius' edition, Paris, 1650); E. Legrand, *Les oracles de Léon le Sage* (Paris, 1875).

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

essence of the prophecy being their identification by different symbols: the first emperor is associated with a canine aspect; the second is symbolized by a serpent devoured by crows; the third is depicted as an eagle bearing a cross and a unicorn; and the fourth image presents an old emperor, symbolized by a scythe and a rose, who is pagan and rebuilds the temples; the fifth emperor is a beneficent one, after whose death follows the division of the empire, bloodshed in Constantinople, and a fox cunningly seizing power. The series of future emperors is closed by an anointed liberator-king, whose name is Menahem.[40] Thus in the *Oracles of Leo* the last emperor is given a name, which is quite unique. Only in late visions of Daniel (of the 14th and 15th centuries) did the liberator king bear a name, Ioannes[41], who echoes the priestly king of an unknown country looked after by western mendicant brothers. Yet, the name Menahem of the *Oracles of Leo*[42] links this tradition to another source of eschatological beliefs. The same name, Menahem, appears in the *Apocalypse of Zerubabel* (a Jewish eschatological text produced at the beginning of the 7th century in Palestine during the Persian invasion), where the character who bears it is a Messiah dedicated to waging war whose mission is to restore the Jewish kingdom in Jerusalem[43]. The connection between the Jewish apocalypticism of the 7th century and the 13th century's *Oracles of Leo* seems hardly possible, but as Paul Alexander rightly affirmed, the figure of the last emperor is a mirror image of the Jewish warrior Messiah[44]. The increasingly secularized historical prophecies in Byzantium thus run closer to what was also merely a historical eschatology, the Jewish Messianism. The structural resemblance of the two genres thus justifies an exchange of information between the two cultural spheres. Byzantine historical prophecies, as ongoing pseudo-scriptural or pseudo-patristic literature developing outside the canonical control of the Scriptures, was naturally open to exchange with a wide range of cultural spheres in the Mediterranean.

The 14th and 15th centuries supplement this tradition with another text, which is primarily concerned with the fate of the Byzantine capital. The *Centon of the Poor Emperor*[45] assumes Constantinople has already been conquered and expresses the dream of Christian restoration. Although there are several hypotheses regarding the date, ranging from the early 13th to the 15th century, the text was probably composed during the siege of the capital by Bayazid Ildirim (1394–1401) or, more

[40] C. Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise", p. 60.

[41] V. Istrin, *Otkrovenie Mefodia Patarskago i apokrifičeskie videniia Daniila*, I: Texts (Moscow, 1897), p. 137.

[42] *Tou sophotatou basileos Leontos chresmoi*, PG 107:1137A.

[43] Israel Lévi, "L'apocalypse de Zorobabel et le roi de Perse Siroès", *REJ* 68 (1914), 131–44.

[44] Paul J. Alexander, "The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor and Its Messianic Origin", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978), 1–15.

[45] The text is also known as the *Centon of the True Emperor* after the first words of the text, the title of the 16th-century manuscript being *About the Famous Poor Emperor Elected by God, Known and Unknown, Who Lives in the First Height of Constantinople*. See Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 130–136; C. Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise", p. 61.

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

precisely, during the absence of Manuel II, who went by sea to seek help from the western kingdoms. The invasion of Anatolia by Tamerlane, the battle of Ankara and the defeat of Bayazid provide a suitable context for imagining the end of the Ishmaelites/Turks. The text paints a detailed portrait of the savior emperor, who combines noble and ridiculous traits. Moreover, he wears chains on his neck, breast, and members--an ascetic feature characteristic of holy fools[46].

After the fall of Constantinople, the *Oracles of Leo* were reinterpreted by their Greek readers as referring to a series of sultans, signifying the countdown to the hoped end of the Ottoman Empire[47].

Starting with Pseudo-Methodius, eschatology is irreversibly split into two literary genres: unhistorical visions of the Last Judgment with a strong moralizing intention[48] (starting with an important Jewish and early Christian tradition[49] and continuing in both western[50] and eastern Christianity until the 10th century with the *Life of Saint Basil the Younger* and the *Life of Saint Niphon of Constantiana*[51]), and prophecies about an earthly future, such as those described above. This earthly future sometimes includes a long description of the terrible deeds of the Antichrist, the glorious second coming of Christ, the killing of the Antichrist, and the beginning of the Judgment (Pseudo-Ephrem and the *Apocalypse of Patriarch Leo*). Other texts only briefly mention the Antichrist (Pseudo-Methodius and the visions of Daniel). Growing out of this second vein of apocalyptic thought, historical prophecies acquired an autonomous status which eventually evolved into late Byzantine and post-Byzantine legends of a *sleeping emperor*.

But what is the role of this new pseudo-prophetic literature? In contrast to the pseudo-methodian structure of the last emperor myth, the series of emperors which appear in the *Vision of Daniel*, the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* or in the *Oracles of Leo* can hardly be read as imperial ideology or propaganda[52]. The overall picture is frightening, and although good emperors show up from time to time, the tone is one of pessimism. Perhaps the most important message of this literature is the lack of spiritual relevance of Christian imperial power. This interpretation becomes obvious if we take into consideration the whole text of the *Life of Andreas Salos*. First, he clearly states that Constantinople does not enjoy a particularly happy destiny, and, after several wicked rulers, deserves to be drowned in the sea. In regard to Epiphanius' concern about the holy relics, Andreas answers that God will

[46] *Anonymou paraphrasis ton tou basileos Leontos chresmon*, PG 107:1144AB.

[47] C. Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise," pp. 78–85.

[48] For the origins of this type of literature, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell. An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia, 1983).

[49] Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford, 1993).

[50] Jacques Le Goff, *La naissance du purgatoire* (Paris, 1981).

[51] These two hagiographical texts acquired great popularity in late Byzantium and in the Byzantine Commonwealth, through Slavonic translations: *Zhitïe sviatago Nifonta litsevoe XVI veka*, opisanie sostavil V. Shchepkin, (Moscow: Imp. Russian Historical Museum, 1903).

[52] G. Podskalsky, "Représentation du temps dans l'eschatologie impériale byzantine", in *Le Temps chrétien de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge, III–XIII siècles* (Paris, 1984), pp. 439–450.

www.cimec.ro
https://biblioteca-digitala.ro

lift the relics of his saints up to heaven[53]. The holy man believes that there is no reason to be concerned about the Hagia Sophia; it is only a stone building and God needs no particular dwelling place on earth, as he inhabits the whole of creation[54]. Constantinople--with its corrupt and violent officials, whores, hypocritical clergyman, and individuals driven by lust whom Andreas Salos meets on the streets of the city--is by no means on the verge of becoming a heavenly Jerusalem. Adding up the number of years of the rule of different emperors mentioned in the text, we arrive at 52, which is a short future. But then the saint announces that the power of the assembled Jews in Jerusalem will last until the fulfillment of the 7th millennium. Even if the text were written at the end of the 10th century, there would still be some 500 years left until the end of the 7th millennium, which allows for a long historical time without Christian rule. Andreas offers no eschatological consolation. In this sense, it is noteworthy that this text constantly alludes to and quotes the Revelation of Saint John, a text which did not yet enjoy canonical status in Byzantium. Moreover, Andreas Salos shares the same pessimistic perspective of history as the Revelation. By contrast, Andreas' disciple Epiphanius, as a good Byzantine official, believes and hopes that Constantinople enjoys a special status. He calls the city a "New Jerusalem" and worries about its relics and churches. As a saintly patriarch, he also assumes the direction of the Constantinopolitan church after the death of his teacher. Through the two characters, the text offers two opposing stances on the spiritual relevance of organized society, and particularly of Christian society. Andreas, on the other hand, suggests a mystical solution. He believes that there is no hope for perfect society on earth, and consequently that one must seek the Kingdom of Heaven with the unique means through which it can be achieved: ascetic strife. The reward for such an attempt is a vision of the future or otherworldly reality, like a quick glimpse into that private felicity one would enjoy after physical death.

Although the visions of Daniel discussed above do not benefit from a coherent literary background like the one we read in the *Life of Andreas Salos* as theological support for the saint's apocalyptic, this entire group of 8th to 10th-century apocalypses convey a similar frame of mind. It seems, then, more logical to see this middle and late Byzantine political eschatology as a gradual separation from the political theology based on the *katechon*-theory[55] developed in Pseudo-Methodius, or, more precisely, as a rejection of the identification of the empire with an instrument of salvation, and of an ideal Christian society foreshadowing the Heavenly Kingdom. We may also ask how central this literature was to Byzantine religiosity. Obviously it is hard to judge the dissemination of a text based on the number of preserved manuscripts. Yet, compared to other popular religious literature, the poor quality of the textual transmission of several of these texts is astonishing. Was it because of

[53] L. Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse. Greek Text, Translation, and Commentary", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), 208–209 and 220–221 (PG 111:864C).

[54] L. Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse", 211 and 222 (PG 111:868B).

[55] See footnote 34.

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

inattentive or unspecialized copyists that the number of variations from one manuscript to the other, of textual corruptions and misreading, amount to unreliable textual transmission? Contrasted with the fine rhetoric production of court circles, one could hardly call this literature imperial. Nevertheless, these prophecies were widely read and cited: emperors sometimes consulted them superstitiously, while historians mocked such attitudes, and clergymen opposed it fervently[56]. Historical prophecies belonged to the same area of interest as astrology.

If already in the *Life of Andreas Salos* Constantinople is hardly a New Jerusalem, by the 12th century the distrust in the eternal destiny of the New Rome finds its way into historiography. Michael Attaleiatos sternly criticizes Byzantine warfare and its political action and expresses distrust in its eternal destiny after the battle of Mantzikert. He reproaches the Byzantines for having abandoned Justice, their ancestral customs, and the praise of their creator[57], for which sins they were also abandoned by God on the battlefield. Starting with the Second Crusade, as western armies closed in on Constantinople, the city was in unrest. The inhabitants of the capital no longer felt that the city was impenetrable, as was the case when Frederic Barbarossa and the Third Crusade approached the city[58]. The year of 1204 only confirmed these fears.

By the 14th century Constantinople no longer represented the standard of orthodoxy and Christian practice, as follows from the Hesychast controversy. Philotheos Kokkinos in his Encomium on Gregory Palamas expresses a surprisingly stern criticism of Constantinople:

> Meanwhile as I said, their enemy Barlaam arrived in Constantinople, a city which I, at least, do not praise for its beauty and wealth and wisdom, as someone else might, since I am not able to praise even one of these things. For there they sport with the divine as if with draughts and dice, or, to quote the wise theologian, "as if these things were horse races and theaters"; and they treat what is seen (in the liturgy, or the uncreated light) contemptuously and betray the divine and evilly perform what is mystical as in theatre or drama[59].

Confronted with the decline of their empire in the 14th century, some Byzantines found consolation in the mystical and liturgical eschatology of the Hesychasts, in their exaltation of a Church capable of surviving without an empire[60]. By the time the capital succumbed to the Turkish assaults, all of Anatolia

[56] A late Byzantine example of this attitude is the rejection by Saint Maxim Cavsocalivitis of Emperor John V Paleologos and Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos' interests in political predictions; see F. Halkin, "Deux Vies de saint Maxime le Kausokalybe", *Analecta Bollandiana* 54 (1936), 93.

[57] Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. E. Bekker, (Bonn: CSHB, 1853, 1864), 193–197.

[58] An echo of this fear can be found in the second series of *Oracles of Leo*, C. Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise", p. 67.

[59] Philotheos Kokkinos, *Encomium of Gregory Palamas*, PG 151:594D–595B.

[60] P. Guran, "L'eschatologie de Palamas entre théologie et politique", *Études byzantines et post-byzantines* 5 (Bucharest, 2006), 291–320; idem, "Les implications théologico-politiques de l'image de la deèsis à Voroneț", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 44 (2005), 39–67.

https://www.cimec.ro www.cimec.ro

and most of the Balkans had already been under Ottoman rule for more than a century. But this mystical eschatology has another story.

Our analysis allows us to identify four stages in the evolution of historical prophecy. The first stage emphasizes the centrality of the empire in the *Weltanschauung* of the Byzantines. It groups several texts produced in the 7th century, an echo of either what seemed to be the restoration through Heraclius or of the Muslim invasion: the *Legend of Alexander the Great* (in the 630s); Pseudo-Ephrem's *Sermon on the End of the World*; the *Latin Tiburtine Sibyl*; and Pseudo-Methodius' *Vision of History and Its End*.

In the second stage, eschatology with historical content may express a subversive stance towards political power. The universal empire of the Romans is not necessarily a stronghold of Christianity; pagan or anti-Christian rulers could also govern this empire: such is the stance in the *Daniel-Diegesis* and the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse*. Or even Christianity and empire might occasionally part ways, as in the *Apocalypse of Leo, Patriarch of Constantinople*.

In the third stage, the concern with the role of the empire at the end of time is substituted by an interest in the final fate of Constantinople. The belief in a natural cataclysm destroying Constantinople prior to the end of the world is expressed in many early medieval apocalypses, most notably in the *Andreas Salos Apocalypse* and in the *Vision of Daniel*. Later medieval apocalypses (the *Late Daniel Visions*; the *Oracles of Leo the Wise*; the *Centon of the True Emperor*) reveal firm awareness that a military conquest of Constantinople is also possible and would mean merely the end of Christian rule in that city, and not the end of the world.

The fourth stage, which appears in the same late medieval and the early modern (post-Byzantine) historical apocalypses, marks the transformation of the political content of apocalyptic literature into a truly "secular eschatology." Hoping for the deliverance of Constantinople, these pseudonymous authors are interested only in the historical fate of the city. The last universal savior emperor merely turns into a liberator of the Greek nation.

The already growing national consciousness of the Greek-speaking population of Byzantium borrows the language of eschatology only to express a political expectation. In the post-Byzantine *Oracles of Leo* and in the *Songs and Laments Over the Fall of Constantinople*, eschatology reverts to a definitive fall into history. Occasionally the 18th century revisits Pseudo-Methodius to find a meaning for the growing Russian Empire. Byzantine eschatology--ranging from the core of the Christian religious system (the belief in the second coming of Christ) to diverse forms of historical prophecies favoring ethno-cultural identifications--produced material for almost every type of attitude towards political power, from sacred awe of God-given imperial order to total distrust and rejection of social order. There is nevertheless a chronology to this religious and political thought which highlights an evolution and gives meaning to history. Religious thought pours out of man's dynamic relation to past and future, the only possible frames for an evanescent present.

www.cimec.ro
https://biblioteca-digitala.ro