

THE MONGOL INVASIONS BETWEEN EPISTOLOGRAPHY  
AND PROPHECY  
THE CASE OF THE LETTER “AD FLAGELLUM,”  
C. 1235/36–1338

BY ALASDAIR C. GRANT

*This is a study of an apocalyptic Latin letter (incipit “Ad flagellum humani generis”), surviving in manuscripts from the mid-thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, that describes an apparent aggressive invasion of an ascetic army in the distant East, led by a figure claiming to be Christ and bearing a new volume of scripture. This article offers the first comprehensive study of the letter’s manuscript tradition and presents a new critical edition of the text. It argues that this letter was composed in the crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem sometime in the years 1235–36 as a response to intelligence brought by eastern Christian envoys (quite possibly from Georgia or Greater Armenia) concerning the second wave of Mongol invasions in Transcaucasia. These envoys had spent some time in the presence of a Mongol army, possibly that of the general Chormaghan, receiving an edict that probably demanded their submission and stated the Mongols’ divine right to universal domination. This edict, accompanied by other information, was ultimately translated into Latin for the benefit of the authorities of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. These authorities interpreted both the edict and the oral and/or written intelligence that the eastern Christian envoys delivered within the intellectual framework of Latin Christianity. This particular interpretation was then written into a letter that was sent to Western Europe, where it circulated probably quite widely for around a century. Crusade theorists’ need for intelligence about the Middle and Far East, together with the vogue of apocalyptic prophecy in the later Middle Ages, encouraged the continued copying of the text.*

INTRODUCTION

Fictitious letter of some Christian in the East to a Christian [monarch?] in the West, describing a supposed warlike invasion of a false prophet calling himself Christus Nazarenus, who drives in a gold chariot carrying a book entitled “Liber executionis noui testamenti.”<sup>1</sup>

This description, highly arresting in spite of its disdainful tone, pertains to a relatively brief document found in the manuscript London, BL Royal 12 C xii. The summary makes the letter sound so outlandish that it is perhaps not especially

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I am indebted to Mr. Allan Bicket and Dr. Zachary Chitwood for their remarks on earlier versions of this article, and to the anonymous reviewer and member of the Editorial Board of *Traditio* for their comments on the article and critical text respectively.

<sup>1</sup> George F. Warner and Julius P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King’s Collections* (London, 1921), 2:27–28.

difficult to imagine why no scholar has yet offered this part of the manuscript any attention.

What the cataloguers almost certainly did not know is that this text was no one-off flight of fancy. In fact, the text that they quickly dismissed is a late witness of a letter that was taken seriously enough in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to have met with relatively wide circulation across the Latin Christian world. As is implied in their description, the text is indeed bizarre and its significance at first glance completely obscure. It begins “Ad flagellum humani generis peccatis nostris exigentibus” (As a scourge because of our human race’s sins), and proceeds to describe in apocalyptic terms the violent onslaught of a Pseudo-Prophet and his host in the extreme East. His followers are described as ascetics who possess various supernatural characteristics, both in their striking appearance and in their military prowess.

These extraordinary details hardly seem to reflect any single, easily recoverable reality, while the text’s diffuse and fragmentary manuscript transmission greatly complicates the dating of its composition. This study attempts to address these two problems, initially by providing the first comprehensive account of the textual tradition, and then by evaluating the possible provenance of the letter’s contents by a series of comparisons with other Latin texts primarily from the thirteenth and earlier fourteenth centuries. It then proceeds to offer as exhaustive as possible an exposition of the historical contexts that surrounded the copying of the text in its various versions. In the Appendices may be found a critical edition of the letter and an English translation of this critical text. All quotations of the letter in the present article, whether in Latin or English, come from the Appendices unless otherwise stated.

This article argues that this text, called here the letter “Ad flagellum,” is rooted in the context of Mongol invasions in Transcaucasia.<sup>2</sup> It may have been composed in the crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem sometime in the years 1235–36, at which point the Mongol destruction of Transcaucasia reached its most critical level. By analogy with other documents surviving from this time, I hypothesize that the letter was an attempt at a reasonably direct translation of new and very worrying intelligence — perhaps both oral and written — brought by eastern Christian envoys (quite possibly from Georgia or Greater Armenia). These envoys, I suggest, had spent some time in the presence of a Mongol army, possibly that of the general Chormaghan, and during that period had received an edict that probably demanded their submission and stated the Mongols’ divine right to universal domination. No edict to an eastern Christian group during the years

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<sup>2</sup> Since no proper noun is applied to the invaders at any point in the text, the identification of them as Mongols needs to be proven. Justifications for this identification are explored in the two central sections of this article, “Provenance: Intelligence, Diplomacy, Texts,” and “1235–36: An Otherwise Unattested Mongol Edict in Transcaucasia?,” both below.

1235–36 is known independently, so this reconstruction remains hypothetical. This edict, I then propose, was ultimately translated into Latin for the benefit of the authorities of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Latin authorities, unable to understand the full nature of this new and alien threat, interpreted both the hypothetical edict and the intelligence that the eastern Christian envoys delivered within the intellectual framework of Latin Christianity. This misinterpretation was then written into a letter that was sent to Western Europe, where it appears to have circulated quite widely for around a century. Crusade theorists' need for intelligence about the Middle and Far East, together with the vogue of apocalyptic prophecy in the later Middle Ages, encouraged the continued copying of the text. Today, it deserves a far more central role in scholarship on European interaction with the Mongol world than it has hitherto been afforded.

#### MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

##### *Sigla:*

F = Florence, BN Centrale, MS Landau Finaly 17, fols. 43v–44r (second half of the thirteenth century), ed. Robert Davidsohn, “Ein Briefkodex des dreizehnten und ein Urkundenbuch des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts,” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 19 (1927): 373–88, at 383–84.

C = Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Acc. 2011/5, pp. 317–18 (“Courtenay Compendium”) (fourteenth century).

G = Cambridge, Gonville and Caius MS 162/83, fols. 107v–108v (fourteenth century).

L = London, BL Royal 12 C xii, fols. 13r–14r (compilation completed c. 1338).

B = Freiburg im Breisgau, Bibliothek des erzbischöflichen Ordinariats, Hs. 35, fol. 13v (later thirteenth-century addition to manuscript of the third quarter of the ninth century).

M = Paris, BNF Lat. 4794, fol. 67v<sup>b</sup> (thirteenth century), ed. Jean Richard, “Une lettre concernant l’invasion mongole?,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 119 (1961): 243–45, at 245 and P. Claverie, “L’apparition des Mongols sur la scène politique occidentale (1220–1223),” *Le Moyen Âge* 105 (1999): 601–13, at 612–13.

R = Paris, BNF nouv. acq. fr. 5842, fol. 2v<sup>a</sup> (second quarter of the fourteenth century), ed. Charles Bourel de la Roncière and Léon Dorez, “Lettres inédites et mémoires de Marino Sanudo l’ancien (1334–1337),” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 56 (1895): 21–44, at 37.

The letter “Ad flagellum” is not well known by the standards of the many other Latin texts to emerge from European encounters with the Mongols in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Three manuscripts of the letter have in fact been published before (one of them twice), though apparently none of the four

editors to address the text was aware of any witnesses other than that on which each was working.

A section of the text was first published well over a century ago. In 1893, the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, acquired two folios from the library of Silvio Bocca, Rome, acceded under the number nouv. acq. fr. 5842 (R). These folios preserve mostly letters of the Venetian crusade propagandist Marino Sanudo Torsello, but in between copies of his correspondence there is a brief fragment, in a very poor state, of the first section of the letter “Ad flagellum.” The editors said very little about the text, remarking only that it resembled missionary accounts emanating from China.<sup>3</sup> This correspondence dates from the years 1334–37, and the two letters either side of “Ad flagellum” from mid-1335. Comparison with other versions also reveals that this particular text was obviously also subject to some considerable corruption, suggesting the text as it survives in R is probably quite a number of stages removed from the original. Most of the peculiarities of R do not appear in any other known witness. Despite, for these reasons, offering little help in the collation of a critical text, these folios possess considerable historical significance, something that is considered at length in the final section of this study.<sup>4</sup>

In the several lines of corrupted text that survive in R, there would have been little to suggest that behind them lay a much longer text of much earlier provenance. Scholarship on the letter next progressed in 1927, when Robert Davidsohn published a study of two manuscripts then in the private Landau Finaly collection in Florence. These were subsequently acceded to the city’s Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale. One of these two manuscripts, Landau Finaly 17, comprises an extensive collection of correspondence written by senior clergymen of the thirteenth century, many of which are letters of Gregory IX and Innocent IV. Pertinently to the current study, Innocent was in 1245 to become the first pope to

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Bourel de la Roncière and Léon Dorez, “Lettres inédites et mémoires de Marino Sanudo l’ancien (1334–1337),” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 56 (1895): 21–44. This is not the place for a comprehensive account of Sanudo’s oeuvre, but some reference to his correspondence is necessary. His letters are not printed together in any one place: for this particular group of letters, see de la Roncière and Dorez, “Lettres inédites”; others are edited in Jacques Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos, sive Orientalium expeditionum historia 1095–1420* (Hanover, 1611), 2:289–316; Friedrich Kunstmann, “Studien über Marino Sanudo den älteren mit einem Anhang seiner ungedruckten Briefe,” *Abhandlungen der Historischen Klasse der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. 7 (Munich, 1855), 753–819; and Aldo Cerlini, “Nuove lettere di Marino Sanudo il vecchio,” *La Bibliofilia* 42 (1940): 321–58. The letters have been translated by Sherman Roddy, “The Correspondence of Marino Sanudo Torsello” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1971). A full study of all Sanudo’s correspondence with a revised text and translation remains a major desideratum. See further n. 100 below.

<sup>4</sup> See the section “Reception (2): Prophecy” below.

communicate with the Mongols.<sup>5</sup> One of these various letters is a copy of the letter “Ad flagellum,” preserved at fols. 43v–44r. This is the earliest full copy of the text.<sup>6</sup>

F contains not only the earliest full text, but also the longest text of all known witnesses. This copy states explicitly that it was written by Hugo of St. Sabina (d. 1263) and sent to the bishop of Konstanz, who was at that time Eberhard II (d. 1274). This point, together with the evidence of the more firmly datable or dated letters in the manuscript, would suggest a date of 1251–53 for the letter, as proposed by Davidsohn. In the left margin at the beginning of the letter, a hand of a similar or slightly later time than that of the letter’s appeals to the reader with a manicule and the warning “heed well this news and these extraordinary matters” (*attende nova et mirabilia valde*).<sup>7</sup> As well as being prefaced with this attribution to Hugo, F preserves an extended ending, most of which appears in no other manuscript. On the one hand, these two points suggest that the text has been interpolated. On the other hand, all witnesses in fact deviate at the end, indicating that the transmission of the last part of the letter was particularly unstable. This instability probably reflects the reattribution the letter variously underwent from one manuscript to another.

There is one more published manuscript of the letter to note. In 1961, Jean Richard published a transcription of a short version in the manuscript BNF Lat. 4794, fol. 67v<sup>b</sup> (M). The text does not end mid-sentence (which B, as we will see, does) nor is it quite so corrupted as R. M contains two postscripts, the second of which peculiarly more or less repeats the first, and is in a different hand from the rest of the text; this suggests that the letter was understood to be complete in this short form. The postscripts state that “the lord Patriarch of Jerusalem wrote this letter to the lord pope.”<sup>8</sup> This manuscript is Italian in origin and of somewhat miscellaneous contents: the Anonymous Ravenna *Cosmographia*; an excerpt of Cassiodorus’s *Historia Gothorum*; a chronicle up to the Eastern Roman emperor Justin (AD 518); a list of the popes up to Constantine I (AD 708–15); a letter from part of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum*; and finally the letter “Ad flagellum” in a single column at the manuscript’s end.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See chiefly n. 78 below.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Davidsohn, “Ein Briefkodex des dreizehnten und ein Urkundenbuch des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts,” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 19 (1927): 373–88, at 383–84; on the MS, see Giovanni Lazzi and Maura Rolih Scarlino, with a preface by Luciano Mosiici and Maria Grazia Ciardi Duprè dal Poggetto, *I manoscritti Landau Finaly della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze: Catalogo* (Milan, 1994), 1:55–61.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the remarks of Davidsohn, “Ein Briefkodex,” 384.

<sup>8</sup> “Quas litteras dominus patriarcha Ierosolimitanus scripsit domino pape. Epistola qua literas [*sic*] dominus patriarcha Ierosolimitanus scripsit domino pape” (fol. 67v<sup>b</sup>).

<sup>9</sup> On this MS, see Elisabeth Pellegrin, *La Bibliothèque des Visconti et des Sforza Ducs de Milan, au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1955), 154 (no. 366).

Jean Richard based his text on a photograph sent to him by Hans Eberhard Mayer, the historian of the crusades. He dated the text to the 1220s–1240s and the manuscript to the second half of the century, correcting (without further comment) Elisabeth Pellegrin’s previous dating of the MS to the fourteenth century in her study of the Milanese Sforza library from which it originated. Despite publishing his text in the same journal as that in which de la Roncière and Dorez published the Bocca fragment (R), Richard does not seem to have been aware at that time of the previous study, believing BNF Lat. 4794 to be unique.<sup>10</sup> He became aware of Davidsohn’s text only at a later date, once again upon the information of Mayer. From that time, Richard changed his views on the date of the text, assuming that it was composed in the mid-thirteenth century, as implied by the chronology of the neighboring documents and the attribution found in F.<sup>11</sup> In 1999, Pièrre-Vincent Claverie decided to republish this version in M, which he likewise thought to be unique. The reason for this was that Richard’s transcription was slightly imperfect, probably due to his reliance on Mayer’s photograph.<sup>12</sup> M not only omits the second half or so of the text but also contains many readings not found in any of the other manuscripts. This is despite the fact that it is apparently much earlier than C, G, L, and R, suggesting that its particular branch of transmission quickly acquired a number of corruptions or interpolations as well as omissions, perhaps the product of several early, fairly compressed generations of copies. The alternative possibility — that all witnesses apart from M derive from a common, considerably interpolated and extended prototype — is hard to believe and would be very difficult to prove given the absence of any texts comparable to M that could allow a reconstruction of its ancestors and descendants. It is, furthermore, not clear whether M predates or postdates F. Emendations have not been taken from M, but its variants are noted in the critical text.

Beyond these three texts, at least four more witnesses exist. Three of these originate in fourteenth-century England and belong to two distinct lines of transmission. The first line is represented by two witnesses: Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Acc. 2011/5, pp. 317–18 (C), and Cambridge, Gonville and Caius MS 162/83, fols. 107v–108v (G). C was probably copied in Hampshire, at the Augustinian priory of Braemore. The manuscript, long under the ownership of the earls of Devon, is known as the “Courtenay Compendium.” In 2008, then again in 2010,

<sup>10</sup> Jean Richard, “Une lettre concernant l’invasion mongole?,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 119 (1961): 243–45.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Richard, “The Mongols and the Franks,” *Journal of Asian History* 3 (1969): 45–57, at 46, and Richard, “Ultimatums mongols et lettres apocryphes: L’Occident et les motifs de guerre des Tartares,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 17 (1973): 212–22, at 220.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre-Vincent Claverie, “L’apparition des Mongols sur la scène politique occidentale (1220–1223),” *Le Moyen Âge* 105 (1999): 601–13.

it was sold at auction by Sotheby's, ultimately leading to its relocation to Denmark. The contents, once again, are rather varied: Gildas's *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*, the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, the *Gesta Francorum*, William of Tripoli's *De Machometo*, a Latin version of Marco Polo's account by Pipino, Odoric of Pordenone's *De ritibus orientalium regionum*, and the *Tractatus de ortu Tartarorum*, the last of which is a work that became associated with the letter "Ad flagellum" and that has recently been analyzed by Peter Jackson. The *Tractatus* was a document prepared at the First Council of Lyons in 1245, prior to the mission of John of Plano Carpini and Benedict the Pole to the Mongols. It is a record of the information given by a certain "Archbishop Peter of Russia" ("Archiepiscopus de Russia"), who may have been bishop of Belgorod, in modern-day Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the copyist of MS C actually understood the letter "Ad flagellum" to be the final section of the *Tractatus*, since it is only after the letter ends on p. 318 that he placed the *explicit* of Peter's treatise.

G likewise contains both the *Tractatus de ortu Tartarorum* and the letter "Ad flagellum" together. This means that the letter "Ad flagellum," despite its lack of any demonyms, was clearly associated with the Mongols by the time C and G were copied, and quite probably earlier. M. R. James in his descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts of Gonville and Caius College does not note the letter separately, apparently understanding the two texts to be a single work, although in G — unlike in C — the scribe placed the *explicit* of Peter's treatise before the beginning of the letter "Ad flagellum." The manuscript contains the works of William of Tripoli, Marco Polo, and Odoric in common with C. Peter Tudebode's *Itinerarium Jerosolomitatorum* and Jacques de Vitry's *Historia Hierosolomitana* are also present.<sup>14</sup> Implicit in G is therefore an association of texts concerning the Mongols with texts concerning the crusades: this was part of a trend of some considerable historical significance, and the subject is addressed below.<sup>15</sup> G is very closely related to C and, in its text of the letter "Ad flagellum," probably shared an ancestor at two or three generations' remove. Their syntax and grammar are generally better than that of F (though the subjunctive mood is sometimes lost where it should be present, and almost always is in F), and G has been very well punctuated, but both this and the fact that they lack some phrases found

<sup>13</sup> Peter Jackson, "The Testimony of the Russian 'Archbishop' Peter concerning the Mongols (1244/5): Precious Intelligence or Timely Disinformation?," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3.s., 26 (2016): 65–77; on MS C, see 66. Two versions of this text are published in Heinrich Dörrie, ed., "Drei Texte zur Geschichte der Ungarn und Mongolen," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* 6 (1956): 125–202, at 182–94.

<sup>14</sup> Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College* (Cambridge, 1907), 1:186–88. Citation of MS G and the inclusion of it in the critical text are by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, who also generously supplied the relevant photographs.

<sup>15</sup> See the section "Reception (1): Crusade Theory" below.

in F and L suggests that this line of transmission was “tidied up” at some point by a zealous copyist. On the other hand, C and G lack the interpolations and attributions that are found in F and L, and the various corruptions evident in M and R (and to a lesser extent L). I suggest that the line of transmission to which C and G belong was reasonably “fossilized,” apart from this process of tidying, meaning that these texts, though late, have not suffered systemic alteration. C and G are employed in the critical text.

Another English witness of the letter has escaped all notice so far: this is London, BL Royal 12 C xii, fols. 13r–14r (L). This text seems to have derived from a very different line of transmission from C and G, since it displays marked differences in word order and word choice throughout. It also preserves some concluding material in common with F, but also an entirely different (and as far as the available evidence goes, unique) final phrase. The manuscript was compiled by a priest with a possible association with Hereford Cathedral: he was, on the evidence of a distich on fol. 6v, a follower of Adam de Orleton, bishop of Hereford during the period 1317–27. He was also the scribe of Harley MS 2253, fols. 49–140, and parts of Harley MS 273.<sup>16</sup> The reason L has escaped the notice of historians of the crusader states and the Mongol invasions is perhaps that the manuscript has been of interest mainly to specialists on French literature in the British Isles. Unlike MSS C and G, it contains no other material relevant to European relations with Central and East Asia.

This manuscript as a whole is, arguably, important mostly because it preserves the only French prose version of the romance *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*. This is, however, only one element of the remarkable patchwork of items that constitute the manuscript as a whole: it contains texts in three languages (Latin, Anglo-Norman French, and English), across a huge range of subjects. The compiler’s interests in prophetic texts is of particular importance for the present study. He assembled his manuscript over perhaps a decade or more (from the mid-1320s to c. 1338, the date of the latest prophecy), bringing together four distinct booklets into one codex. The first two of the four are miscellanies, the first being also the earliest part of the manuscript to be compiled, but the second, the last. It is to this second booklet that the letter discussed here belongs. The first booklet somewhat anticipates the remarkable eclecticism of the second by including not only prophecies (for the years 1326 and 1293, on fols. 5 and 6), but also medical notes, prayers, verses, and charters. The second booklet juxtaposes mathematical

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<sup>16</sup> These paragraphs rely on Ernest John Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn: Anglo-Norman Text Society Nos. XXVI–XXVIII (for 1968–70)* (Oxford, 1975), xxxvii–lii; cf. also n. 1 above.



puzzles, French cookery recipes, and finally a series of Latin prophecies relevant to the mid- to late 1330s.<sup>17</sup>

In L, the events mentioned in the letter are described in its unique concluding phrase as being “first made known in the summer of 1335” (*prima patefacta sunt hec in estate anno domini milesimo trescentesimo tricesimo quinto*) (fol. 14r). This claim is a puzzle that requires explanation, and it is addressed in the final section of this article.<sup>18</sup> Despite this confused attribution, L is useful for compiling a critical text: it apparently derives from a quite separate line of transmission from C and G, and preserves a number of phrases in common with F that are missing from the other English witnesses. I suggest that, where F and L give the same or a similar reading, different from that of C and G, this represents earlier material that had become omitted or “corrected” in the CG recension. L does unfortunately suffer from three apparent haplographies, at the point of one of which (the end of fol. 13r, for which see n. 286 below) it would be particularly useful to have the reading of its hyparchetype, due to the lack of agreement among the various witnesses.

The last of the witnesses currently known is another text unnoticed by previous editors and commentators: Freiburg im Breisgau, Bibliothek des erzbischöflichen-Ordinariats, Hs. 35, fol. 13v. This manuscript is a collection of astronomical texts, including the *Horologium* of Ps.-Bede, and excerpts of book 7 of the *Liber Computi* and book 2 of the *Carmen* of Sedulius Scottus. This particular copy of the letter “Ad flagellum” is one of two late additions, probably thirteenth-century, to an otherwise ninth-century manuscript, the other being a letter attributed to John of Toledo regarding the alignment of the planets in 1255. The additions are extremely distinctive for their very small, highly abbreviated late medieval hands, compressed into blank space following the earlier astronomical material, which is copied in beautifully clear and spacious earlier medieval hand.<sup>19</sup>

This text of the letter “Ad flagellum” is not complete, ending abruptly, mid-sentence, at the foot of the page. In this line of transmission, no scribe had yet tidied up the ending, as appears to have been the case with MS M, suggesting perhaps that it was either this particular manuscript or its immediate hyparchetype that first contained the incomplete text. When compared with the other witnesses, it is least distant from F. Although it contains sufficient differences to suggest strongly that it belongs to a separate line of transmission than F, the two probably

<sup>17</sup> On these recipes, see Constance B. Hieatt and Robert F. Jones, “Two Anglo-Norman Culinary Collections Edited from British Library Manuscripts Additional 32085 and Royal 12.C.xii,” *Speculum* 61 (1986): 859–82.

<sup>18</sup> See the section “Reception (2): Prophecy” below.

<sup>19</sup> On MS B: Wolfgang Kehr, ed., *Kataloge der Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg im Breisgau*, Band 1, Teil 4, ed. W. Hagenmaier, *Die deutschen mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek und die mittelalterlichen Handschriften anderer öffentlicher Sammlungen* (Wiesbaden, 1988), 415–17. A microfilm image was kindly supplied by the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, Saint John’s Abbey and University, Collegeville, MN.

share a rather distant ancestor, but less distant than the ancestors B shared with any other known text. Thankfully, though incomplete, B is not nearly so corrupted or damaged as R, and so it can help with the construction of a critical text at a number of points. Once again, readings in common with F (and/or L) are to be favored over variations in C and G, as likely representing an earlier reading. B's usefulness is limited, however, as it appears to have suffered a number of corruptions. Both B and F suggest a date for the text of the earlier 1250s — B by association with the other letter copied with it, and F because of both the dates of the documents that surround it and its explicit attribution to Hugo of St. Sabina. However, as is evident from L, copies of this letter could be produced with claims of provenance that are manifestly false. It was in fact quite common for late medieval prophecies to be copied and reattributed if they were not perceived to have been fulfilled.<sup>20</sup>

A date of c. 1251–55, which is what one would calculate based on the earliest established manuscript evidence alone (F and B), seems unlikely, mostly on the basis that the strongest analogies for the letter “Ad flagellum” come from two decades earlier.<sup>21</sup> It is tempting to believe, too, that the circulation by the middle of the thirteenth century of a number of much more accurate eyewitness reports regarding the Mongols would have removed the need to consult and copy confused accounts such as this; but misinformation about the Middle East and Central Asia that might today seem outlandish did continue to circulate long after the introduction of more or less accurate intelligence.<sup>22</sup>

The manuscripts listed above probably represent only a small fraction of the total number of copies originally in existence. That only two of the seven known witnesses appear to belong to a common branch of transmission (C and G; and, even then, perhaps with an immediate gap of one or two generations) suggests that we are missing considerable portions of the tradition. Furthermore, the letter was sometimes copied with an author and addressee, sometimes not, and sometimes with a title, though more often not. Indeed, the textual tradition is inconsistent in both word forms and word order from the very first line (both C and G, for example, use the grammatically more correct gerundive form “flagellandum,” rather than the noun “flagellum”). All of these considerations make it very challenging indeed to find the letter in manuscript catalogues, where it can be listed in any number of ways. At present, I am convinced that a fairly good text can be compiled from the established witnesses, but it is possible that

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<sup>20</sup> Robert E. Lerner, “Refreshment of the Saints: The Time after Antichrist as a Station for Earthly Progress in Medieval Thought,” *Traditio* 32 (1976): 97–144, at 140.

<sup>21</sup> See the section “1235–36: An Otherwise Unattested Mongol Edict in Transcaucasia?” below.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. nn. 106–7 below.

subsequent discoveries of good, complete, earlier copies will lead to the edition included here being superseded in the future.

The seven established witnesses do not present a clear enough series of relationships for me to be confident in producing a stemma to illustrate their place in a wider, reconstructed, and hypothetical tradition, but the following tentative remarks may serve to summarize my understanding of the relationships between the various manuscripts:

1. C and G share a very close common ancestor;
2. C and G probably share an early and distant common ancestor with F and L that is not shared by M;
3. B possibly also shares a distant ancestor with F; B is certainly closer to F, C, G, and L than M, though B is the furthest outlier of the broad group FCGLB;
4. Within this broad group, the readings of F and L often oppose themselves to those of C and G (particularly in the second half of the text), suggesting that they share a common ancestor or ancestors not mutual to C and G;
5. The transmission of F, B, L, and CG thus diverged into multiple branches, but after the branch to which M belongs had already become distinctly separate;
6. The late text of R is too fragmentary for its relationship to the other witnesses to be clear;
7. The large number of variants evident from as early as the 1250s suggests a high frequency of very early copies.

The edition in Appendix 1 is an eclectic text rather than one based on any single manuscript. Although it can be established that R is too fragmentary and corrupt, and M too distant in its transmission from the other witnesses, for either to be useful in compiling a critical text, no clear order of precedence can be accorded to the remaining manuscripts. The readings in F may generally be preferred because it is the earliest complete witness, but as it appears to have been interpolated, I have not constructed a copy text based on it. The underlying principle of the critical text has been to choose what appears to be the earliest reading, usually established by looking for similarities between the disparate lines of transmission represented by F, L, and B on the one hand, and the close cousins C and G on the other. (At one or two exceptional points, I have chosen an apparently later reading where it resolves textual problems present in the earlier reading.) By this process I have sought to reproduce the hypothetical archetype, as far as possible from the available evidence. An English translation

of the critical text is provided immediately following it, at Appendix 2, in order to make the letter “Ad flagellum” as widely accessible as possible.

#### SCHOLARLY RECEPTION

The critical study of the letter was slow to develop. Beyond their allusion to missionary letters from China, de la Roncière and Dorez did not analyze it. Davidsohn, meanwhile, offered only a potential date of 1251–53, without further comment. It was not until 1961 that it received proper attention, from Jean Richard. Richard transcribed the text of M and accompanied his transcription with brief notes, suggesting that the document may pertain to the Mongol invasions. Bearing in mind that he did not know MSS C and G, where the letter appears alongside other works pertaining to the Mongols, such an identification of this curious text, entirely isolated in M (that is, the only witness known to him at that time) would not have been immediately obvious. His conclusions were cautious, but he usefully drew attention to the letter’s similarity to the *Relatio de Davide*, a very early account of the reign of Chinggis Khan that mistook his Christian neighbor Küchlüg for King David.<sup>23</sup> Briefly, he also remarked on the letter’s possible relationship with the Middle Eastern Christian myth of the “Last Emperor.” This was an unorthodox apocalyptic tradition that prophesied a victorious ruler on Earth prior to the appearance of Antichrist and the End Times, which had arisen initially from Judaism and that was preserved by Syriac-speaking Christians in the medieval Middle East. He proposed a date range of 1220s–1240s for its composition, though he leaned towards the earlier end, until he adjusted his hypotheses upon hearing of Davidsohn’s text.<sup>24</sup>

When Claverie reedited the text of M, he came to a number of much firmer conclusions. These conclusions were unfortunately hampered by his lack of awareness of any other witnesses. Claverie considered the portion of the text that survives in M to refer to the Mongol campaigns that Chinggis Khan led into Transoxiana and Iran in 1220–23. The text of M states that the invaders have “already subjected five kingdoms to themselves” (et iam quinque regna sibi subiugaverunt), which Claverie identifies as Khorāsān, Khwārazm, Fārs, Marv, and Iran. In fact, only the very late text of L shares this reading (“quinque”) with M, all other witnesses mentioning “fifteen” (15, xv, or “quindecim”) kingdoms. His analysis can therefore not be taken as certain. As MS M contains the attribution, noted above, that “the lord Patriarch of Jerusalem wrote this letter to the lord Pope,” Claverie decided on the basis of his dating that he could identify the letter as a

<sup>23</sup> Cf. n. 44 below.

<sup>24</sup> Richard, “Une lettre”; “cf. also n. 11 above.” For the “Last Emperor,” see *inter alia* P. 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.

communication from Raoul de Mérencourt to Honorius III, written at Damietta. He placed its composition in June 1221.<sup>25</sup> In her synthetic study of the reception of the Mongol Empire, Denise Aigle has repeated Claverie's hypotheses as if they were proven.<sup>26</sup> Claverie's extremely early and precise dating of the letter cannot, I believe, be accepted with confidence. Likewise, the many details contained in the latter part of the letter not present in M suggest a potentially different context from which the letter arose. It is one of the challenges facing the current study to date the text convincingly.

One of the most sensitive appraisals of the letter is Roman Hautala's recent article on Latin writers' sources for the Mongols' second appearance in Transcaucasia. (The Mongols reemerged in the region from 1228, having first burst onto the scene in 1220–21 and subsequently retreated. The most destructive invasions of the region occurred in the mid-1230s.<sup>27</sup>) Hautala reckons the letter "Ad flagellum" to be the earliest Latin document to refer to this phase of the Mongol conquests. Since it does not share some early sources' (naïve) hope that the Mongols would serve as Christian allies, Hautala believes the text cannot belong to the first phase of the Mongol conquests in the Middle East — *pace* Claverie's dating of the text to 1221. He also sees the lack of any use of the term "Tartarus,"<sup>28</sup> a common Latin term in sources after 1236, as an indication that the letter belongs to the earlier 1230s. (Indeed, the letter uses no proper noun at all in reference to the invaders.) This allows him to attribute it to Gerold of Lausanne, then Patriarch of Jerusalem (r. 1225–38; arrived in Jerusalem 1228).<sup>29</sup> Hautala's analysis merely scratches the surface of the letter, but his conclusions are convincing. In particular, his association of the text with the second wave of conquests in Transcaucasia offers a likely eastern Christian milieu for the intelligence that formed the basis of the document.

Peter Jackson has also contributed some remarks on the provenance of the letter "Ad flagellum." These are contained in his recent article on the *Tractatus de ortu Tartarorum*, two of the copies of which survive in MSS C and G.<sup>30</sup> The

<sup>25</sup> Claverie, "L'apparition des Mongols" (n. 12 above), 604.

<sup>26</sup> Denise Aigle, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality: Studies in Anthropological History* (Leiden, 2015), 50–51.

<sup>27</sup> See nn. 50–52 below.

<sup>28</sup> The term "Tartarus," first attested in the writings of Quilichinus of Spoleto, 1236, was a Latinization of the demonym "Tatar," commonly found in Arabic historiography and still used today, among other places in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation. It later took on new, overwhelmingly negative meaning as it came to be fused with "Tartarus," the term for the Roman underworld. Neither "Tatar" nor "Tartar," nor any associated term, appears in the letter "Ad flagellum." See Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow, 2005), at 59 and 139.

<sup>29</sup> Roman Hautala, "Latin Sources' Information about the Mongols Related to Their Reconquest of Transcaucasia," *Golden Horde Review* 3 (2015): 6–21, at 9–10.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. nn. 13–14 above.

letter's narrator (whose identity is not easy to ascertain) talks of the invaders as menacing "our borders": Jackson understands this to mean the borders of the Franks in Syria, thus suggesting a date of 1244, at which time the Mongol incursions into the crusader states began.<sup>31</sup> It is however possible that the letter does not have a Latin, Frankish origin at all, but that it may be instead the product of communication between eastern Christians (those of the Church of the East,<sup>32</sup> Syrian Orthodox, Armenians, or Georgians) with the ruling classes of the crusader states. If Jackson's association of the letter with the incursions of 1244 is challenged, his dating is implicitly challenged too.

It is not possible to suggest with confidence any precise date for the letter, since both internal and external evidence is too equivocal. Taking manuscript evidence surveyed in the previous section alone, B's position next to a letter describing planetary phenomena of 1255 corroborates the details found in the initial lines of F, claiming that the letter was sent by Hugo of St. Sabina, thus suggesting a date of 1251–53. This passage is probably not, though, a claim for Hugo's authorship, but rather merely an indication that he saw a copy of the letter in the early 1250s and took it to be recent news that should be spread abroad. Thus, at least one text of the letter came to bear an interpolation from him. Historical circumstances militate against such a late date, and it is, on this basis, possible to establish firm parameters outside of which it is unlikely that the text was composed. It can be said with some confidence that it was not composed before the Mongols' appearance in Islamic Central Asia in 1220. It may also seem improbable that such distorted information should have emerged in the Latin East after the dispatch of Innocent IV's mission to the Mongol center at Qara-Qorum in 1244, following which western Europeans were in personal, direct contact with the Mongol court; but there is plenty of evidence to demonstrate that precisely that often happened.<sup>33</sup> Its date cannot therefore be firmly established by negative evidence. A detailed analysis of the letter's content, placed side-by-side with other Latin accounts of the Mongols from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, suggests that the letter should be dated more or less with Hautala, though more especially in 1235–36, in the context of the high point of the Mongol invasions of Transcaucasia. It is the objective of the next two sections of this article to make this case.

<sup>31</sup> Jackson, "The Testimony of the Russian 'Archbishop' Peter" (n. 13 above), 67–68.

<sup>32</sup> The Christian Church of the East is usually (inaccurately) referred to as the "Nestorian" Church by western scholars. These Christians have historically referred to themselves as the Christian Church of the East, and, more recently, the Assyrian Church of the East. I am grateful to Dr. Zachary Chitwood for drawing this to my attention. On this point, see Sebastian P. Brock, "The 'Nestorian' Church: A Lamentable Misnomer," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78 (1996): 23–35.

<sup>33</sup> See nn. 6 (MS F) and 19 (MS B) above and 78 (Innocent IV's mission) and 106–7 (distorted information) below.

## EASTERN CHRISTIANITY AND THE MYTHOLOGIZING OF THE MONGOLS

Sitting in his chariot, he bears in his hands a book written in three languages — Hebrew, Greek, that is, and Latin — in which [are] the prophecies destined to be fulfilled about their future deeds, of which only a few have happened, but it is as if innumerable had, and this causes fear and trembling in us. Their book begins as follows: “The Book of the Accomplishment of the New Testament, to Restrain Rebellious Power and to Preserve the Justice of the Meek.” For all the messengers sent to them, they have made many copies of it, saying through interpreters, whom they have of all languages, that those things, which are contained in the book, ought quickly to be implemented. We send you a copy of this just as our messengers received it, and Our Lordship has written to you.

My hypothetical reconstruction of the sources of the letter “Ad flagellum” is based primarily on the process of information transfer suggested by the paragraph quoted above. Here, the author mentions the existence of an apparent new volume of scripture, and goes on to state that this text is available in multiple languages. The author (that is, the person whose voice is represented, and who may not be the same person as the Latin redactor) himself came to possess a copy, which he claims to have related verbatim to the addressee of the letter (“We send you a copy of this just as our messengers received it, and Our Lordship [that is, the author] has written to you”). This paragraph raises several questions: who was the author of the letter? Who was the addressee of the letter? What was the nature of “The Book of the Accomplishment of the New Testament”? In this and the following two sections of this study, I suggest possible answers to all of these questions.

The authorial voice in the letter appears to be that of someone associated with the messengers who spent time with the army of the Pseudo-Prophet. This person may not actually have been a Latin Christian at all, though, but himself an eastern Christian, and the letter “Ad flagellum” for the most part an attempt at a direct Latin translation of a combination of written and probably also oral evidence brought by this eastern Christian to authorities in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The language used by this messenger cannot be known, but may have been Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, or Syriac, those being the major languages (apart from Latin) used by the Christians of the Middle East.

In order to evaluate this hypothesis, it is necessary to draw attention to the importance of Christians of the Church of the East and non-Chalcedonian (Armenian and Syriac Orthodox) Christians in the period of Mongol expansion. It is well known that Christians of the Church of the East were employed widely in chancery positions by Mongol leaders. Not only that, but many tribes that the Mongols absorbed early on were partly or entirely Christians of the Church of the East: Keraites, Naimans, Onguts, Uyghurs, and Merkits. The Armenians of Cilicia, meanwhile, became the (quite possibly willing) clients of the Mongols,

often requiring Latin Christian military or diplomatic support: this meant that much of the contemporary documentary evidence emanating from Armenian circles played up such supposed Mongol characteristics as sympathy towards (or even practice of) Christianity, and readiness for military cooperation.<sup>34</sup> The implications of this for western Christians were chiefly two: first, that a network of Christian peoples created an avenue of communication between Europe and Central Asia; second, that the Mongols were often misunderstood (and/or misrepresented) as being Christians themselves.<sup>35</sup>

When the Mongols first moved westward through Central Asia in 1220–21, their advances were recorded by Christian and Muslim authors in a manner that was to prove programmatic for the ways in which they would continue to be perceived. The Iraqi historian Ibn al-Athīr (1160–1233) wrote that the advance of the Mongols (Arabic “Tatar”<sup>36</sup>) afflicted especially Muslims, since as the Mongols first swept westward, it was the Dār al-Islām that bore the brunt of the onslaught. He also placed the invaders into an apocalyptic framework, considering that, before the End Times, the terror of the Mongols might be equaled only by the coming of Gog and Magog.<sup>37</sup> This apocalyptic framework had a pervasive influence among European and Middle Eastern writers who described the characteristics of the Mongols. His notion that the Mongol terror affected especially Muslims was also remarked upon by many Christian authors; and the belief that they were sympathetic to Christians, or Christians themselves, persisted stubbornly for around two centuries (at least).<sup>38</sup>

Eastern Christians were themselves both the subjects and the perpetuators of this belief. The most famous example of all is the cleric-king “Prester John,” a mythological Christian ruler believed to be located either in the extreme East, in India, or (especially after the fourteenth century) in Abyssinia. This is no place to rehearse the extraordinary and complex mythologies of Prester John, but it is important to acknowledge here his significance for European attitudes towards Central and East Asia. At some point between around 1143 and 1180,

<sup>34</sup> The full implications of this are considered in the section “Reception (1): Crusade Theory” below.

<sup>35</sup> Alexandr Osipian, “Armenian Involvement in the Latin-Mongol Crusade: Uses of the Magi and Prester John in Constable Smbat’s *Letter* and Hayton of Corycuss’ *Flos historiarum terre orientis*, 1248–1307,” *Medieval Encounters* 20 (2014): 66–100. See crucially Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians* (Leiden, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> On this terminology, cf. n. 28 above. In this case, the term does apply to the people elsewhere in this article called Mongols, but the term “Tatar” cannot be assumed to have this same meaning in every Arabic source.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīkh*, s.a. AH 617 (AD 1220–1221), ed. ‘Umar al-Tadmūrī (Beirut, 1997), 10:333; and Donald Sidney Richards, trans., *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from al-Kāmil fī l-tārīkh, Part 3: The Years 589–629/1193–1231, The Ayyūbids after Saladin and the Mongol Menace* (Aldershot, 2008), 202.

<sup>38</sup> See nn. 118–21 below.



a Latin letter was forged, attributed to Prester John, and apparently written to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos. It met with wide circulation and was translated into most of the vernaculars of Western Europe, as well as into Hebrew. The mythology of Prester John attached itself to real personages in the early phases of Mongol expansion, specifically Toghrul of the Keraites, who was baptized as a Christian with the name David, and later Küchlüg of the Naimans, who was a Christian of the Church of the East. When in 1203 Chinggis Khan defeated Toghrul, he married a daughter of the latter's younger brother, Jakha Gambu; Chinggis's son, Tolui, married her sister, Sorghaghtani Beki. This brought a connection with the Christian Church of the East into the family of Chinggis Khan and gave rise to legends that the invaders were really Christians. However, the image of Prester John did not retain an especially strong association with peoples connected to the Mongols. This may have been in part because when Latin Christian knowledge of Asia opened up in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, no strong contenders for identification with him emerged.<sup>39</sup> The fact that the letter "Ad flagellum" has apparently no reliance whatsoever on the famous myths of Prester John is a very interesting point and something that will be explored more fully later.<sup>40</sup>

As well as being conflated with the Mongols, eastern Christians were also key for informing Latin Christians (and indeed misinforming them, whether intentionally or not) about the character and intention of the invaders. Specifically, the Mongols were rumored to be Christians who would save their coreligionists from the aggression of Islam: the flipside of the perspective represented by Ibn al-Athīr. The Armenian historian Kirakos Gandzakets'i describes this eloquently:

False information arrived concerning [the Mongols], to the effect that they were magi and/or of the Christian faith, wonder-workers, and that they had come to avenge the Christians from the tyranny of the Tachiks [that is, Muslims]. And it was said that they had with them a portable tent-church, as well as a miracle-working cross, and that they would bring an *ephah* of barley and put it before this cross and all the troops would take from it and give it to their horses, yet the supply would not be exhausted, for when all of them had finished taking, the original amount remained.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Jean Richard, "L'Extrême-Orient légendaire au Moyen Âge: Roi David et Prêtre Jean," *Annales d'Ethiopie* 2 (1957): 225–44; Charles Fraser Beckingham, "Boyle Memorial Lecture: The Quest for Prester John," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 62 (1980): 290–310; David O. Morgan, "Prester John and the Mongols," in Charles Fraser Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton, eds., *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes* (Aldershot, 1996), 159–70 (ch. 7); Denise Aigle, "The Letters of Eljigidei, Hülegü and Abaqa: Mongol Overtures or Christian Ventriloquism?," *Inner Asia* 7 (2005): 143–62, at 157.

<sup>40</sup> See nn. 69–70 below.

<sup>41</sup> Kirakos Gandzakets'i, *History of the Armenians*, chap. 11, trans. Robert Bedrosian (New York, 1986), 186.

Gandzakets'i was here describing precisely that period of the 1220s–1230s in which I argue the substance of the letter “Ad flagellum” arose. It is clear that the broad belief in the Mongols’ purported Christianity and supposed supernatural abilities was an underlying premise of the letter.

There are a number of precedents for documents being translated and transmitted by Christians of the Church of the East or non-Chalcedonians. Latin, the main written language of the Franks, was not understood in the Mongol world, where Turkic languages and Persian were used instead. Letters from Louis IX of France to Batu and Möngke Khan were translated from their original Latin into Arabic and Syriac in the Holy Land: these were “bridge languages” that then allowed Armenian clerics to write a Turkic version more widely intelligible in the Mongol world.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, a letter of Constable Smbat, brother of Het'um I of Cilician Armenia, was conveyed to Cyprus from Samarqand, probably by Uighur intermediaries of the Christian Church of the East.<sup>43</sup> For the letter “Ad flagellum,” however, an even closer and still more instructive parallel than these texts is the *Relatio de Davide*.

The latter is a complex source that survives in three related versions, the longest of which is called the *Historia gestorum David regis Indorum*. It arose in the context of the Fifth Crusade, directed against Damietta in Egypt (1217–21). Unlike the letter “Ad flagellum,” external evidence furnishes a precise date for the *Relatio*: Bishop Jacques de Vitry included parts of the text in a letter addressed to each of Pope Honorius III, Duke Leopold of Austria, and the University of Paris — a letter explicitly dated as having been sent on 18 April 1221. De Vitry’s letter informs his readers that the *Relatio* is a dossier of intelligence compiled originally in Arabic by informants of Bohemond IV of Antioch in neighboring, Muslim regions. The author of the *Relatio* believed Küchlüg of the Naimans to be the Christian King David, victor over the “heathen” Qara-Khitai. He was apparently unaware of Küchlüg’s turn from the Christian Church of the East to a peculiarly militaristic Buddhism. Likewise, he ascribes the Mongol conquest of Khwārazm to “David” (that is, Küchlüg), who was in fact dead by 1218, before this invasion took place.<sup>44</sup> The confused details of the *Relatio* are not of key importance to an analysis of the letter “Ad flagellum,” but its underlying assumptions and process of transmission most definitely are: the *Relatio* framed the

<sup>42</sup> Aigle, *Mongol Empire* (n. 26 above), 48.

<sup>43</sup> Osipian, “Armenian Involvement,” 83.

<sup>44</sup> Friedrich Karl Theodor Zarncke, ed., “Der Priester Johannes, zweite Abhandlung, enthaltend Capitel IV, V und VI,” *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Klasse der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, vol. 8 (Leipzig, 1876), 45–56 (first *Carta* [*Historia gestorum David regis Indorum*]), 57–58 (second), and 58–59 (third). See Jean Richard, “The *Relatio de Davide* as a source for Mongol History and the Legend of Prester John,” in Beckingham and Hamilton, eds., *Prester John*, 139–58 (ch. 6); and Richard, “L’Extrême-Orient légendaire,” 233–36.

Mongol conquests as a Christian attack from the extreme East; not only that, its information was compiled by local Christians in a local (in this case Semitic) language for Latin Christian consumption. My suggestion is that the letter “Ad flagellum” is similar to the *Relatio* in both of these respects.

The circumstances of the Fifth Crusade generated other documents that conform to patterns found in the *Relatio*. Three are mentioned by Oliver of Paderborn (also known as Thomas Oliver or Oliver of Cologne) in his detailed account of the siege and short-lived occupation of Damietta by the Franks (November 1219–August 1221). Of these three communiqués that reached the crusaders, two came while the siege was in progress, and one after it was completed. The first and third of these texts were both, Oliver reports, Arabic letters prophesying Christian successes in the Crusade, the first promising the help of a Christian Nubian king, and the third the help of a certain King David.<sup>45</sup> These texts thus bear certain similarities to the *Relatio de Davide*, although it is in fact the second of the three communiqués that embodies a more compelling case for comparison with the letter “Ad flagellum.”

While the crusaders were laying siege, a letter arrived from the Kingdom of Georgia, which was meant to participate in the crusade, responding to preemptive rumors of the success of the attack. This document apparently began by expressing embarrassment felt by the Georgians: despite being situated very close to the “Saracens,” they had made no military progress, while the crusaders had meanwhile undertaken an enormous journey overseas and then (so they believed) scored a significant victory in Egypt. The Georgians suggested that they therefore turn their attention to an attack on Damascus or another Muslim stronghold. Perhaps more interesting than the alleged contents of this letter (the report of which may equally represent the crusaders’ wishes), is Oliver’s appended description of the Georgians: he knew that they were a Christian people who lived in the mountains by the Caspian Sea, but he also believed that just behind the mountains at the edge of their kingdom the Ten Lost Tribes lay in wait for the coming of Antichrist.<sup>46</sup> If such a notion had been circulating in the Latin East in the period of the Fifth Crusade, it may well have remained current and

<sup>45</sup> “Historia Damiatina” chaps. 35 and 56, in Hermann Hoogeweg, ed., *Die Schriften des kölnner Domscholasters, späteren Bischofs von Paderborn und Kardinal-Bischofs von S. Sabina Oliverus* (Tübingen, 1894), 231–32 and 258–59; and Joseph J. Gavigan, trans., in *Christian Society and the Crusades, 1198–1229: Sources in Translation*, ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia, PA, 1971), 89–91 and 113–14. Texts of the prophecies are printed in Reinhold Röhricht, ed., *Quinti Belli Sacri Scriptores Minores* (Geneva, 1879), 205–13 (“Le Prophétie de Hannan”) and 214–28 (“Prophetia Filii Agap”). On the significance of these letters, see Carlo Conti Rossini, “Il Libro dello Pseudo-Clemente e la Crociata di Damietta,” *Rivista degli studi orientali* 9 (1921): 32–35.

<sup>46</sup> “Historia Damiatina,” chap. 35, in Hoogeweg, *Schriften des kölnner Domscholasters*, 232–34; and Gavigan, *Christian Society and the Crusades*, 91. Cf. 2 Kings 17:6.

influential in the drafting of “Ad flagellum”: news of the appearance in Georgia of Mongol invaders claiming a divine mandate may have awakened memories in a Latin milieu of such apocalyptic rumors pertaining to Transcaucasia.

The perceptions of the Georgians and their lands found in Oliver’s report are consistent with those recorded in the crusading treatise of the Dominican William (Guillaume) of Adam (written perhaps 1316–18), to whose life and writings this study will later return.<sup>47</sup> He believed that the military strength of the Georgians was of huge importance to the successes of the Il-Khanate in their conflicts with the Mamlūk Sultanate, and could be turned to the benefit of the crusaders:

These Georgians have a king whom they always call David, and of all the men of the east they are the most vigorous warriors, thirsting insatiably for the blood of the Saracens and striving beyond measure for a crusade. They are such that without the help of their powerful sword, the emperor of Persia [that is, the Il-Khan] never has had a victory over the Saracens.<sup>48</sup>

I would venture to suggest that either the Kingdom of Georgia, at this time under Queen Rusudan (r. 1223–45), or else a lordship or principality of Greater Armenia, are the most likely origins of the envoys mentioned in the letter “Ad flagellum.” It has been established here that both the Mongols and the Georgians were viewed by Latin authors in the thirteenth century through an apocalyptic lens, and that Armenian writers were involved in the transmission of myths about the Mongols’ purported Christianity. The Georgians’ southern neighbors, the Armenians of Cilicia, were comparatively far better known to the Franks (and probably likewise more familiar in the Latin East than the Cilician Kingdom’s cousins in Greater Armenia), and the two groups remained strongly politically intertwined for the duration of their coexistence.<sup>49</sup>

The chronology of Kirakos Gandzakets’i places the initial Mongol invasion of Georgia in 1220–21, the same years for which Ibn al-Athīr noted the invasions of Islamic territories to his northeast. The Mongol subjugation of Transcaucasia occurred during the period 1222–42, reaching its most aggressive stage under the leadership of the general Chormaghan in the mid-1230s, during the reign of the Great Khan Ögedei (r. 1229–41). In 1236, Chormaghan’s men effected significant

<sup>47</sup> See n. 101 below.

<sup>48</sup> “Isti ergo Georgiani regem habent quem semper David uocant, et super omnes orientales sunt strenui bellatores, insatiabiliter sanguinem Sarracenorum sitientes, et supra modum passagium affectantes. Tales sunt ut numquam imperator Persidis uictoriam de Saracenis habuit, nisi istorum potenti gladio mediante.” Guillelmus Ade, “Tractatus quomodo Sarraceni sunt expugnandi,” in *How to Defeat the Saracens*, ed. and trans. Giles Constable (Washington, DC, 2012), 58–59.

<sup>49</sup> See the section “Reception (1): Crusade Theory” below.

advances in the Zak'arid lands in Georgia and Greater Armenia.<sup>50</sup> Could the chief source of the letter "Ad flagellum" have been a group of envoys from the kingdom of Georgia or a principality or lordship of Greater Armenia who were sent to or otherwise encountered the army of Chormaghan in 1235/36?

Details of the Armenians' submissions to the Mongol khans survive.<sup>51</sup> For Greater Armenia, Gandzakets'i notes that the Armenian noble of Kayen, Awag Zak'arian, submitted individually to Chormaghan in 1236. His lead was followed that same year by a number of other Armenian princes.<sup>52</sup> The Armenians of Cilicia submitted in the next decade. The English chronicler Matthew Paris, monk of the Benedictine abbey of St. Albans (d. 1259), reports their capitulation as early as 1244 in his *Chronica Majora*. The *Chronica* is one of the best known Latin sources for the earlier stages of Mongol expansion, and justly so: it is remarkably well informed for a source so greatly removed, preserving a number of original documents — some of them eyewitness testimonies — that may have been sourced from travelers, in London or via other Benedictine monasteries throughout Europe. In the case of the Armenian capitulation, Matthew's information might have come either from a Latin Levantine source, or else perhaps more likely from a group of Armenian visitors who traveled to St. Albans in 1252.<sup>53</sup> His dating of this delegation of submission to 1244 is corroborated by Armenian sources, though they reveal that it actually set out the previous year.<sup>54</sup> The constable Smbat, brother of King Het'um I, conveyed a further capitulation to the Great Khan Güyük before or during 1248 (departing 1246), while in 1254–55 the king himself journeyed to Central Asia in order to submit once more, this time in person.<sup>55</sup> The process of submission, in other words, occurred in progressive stages.

<sup>50</sup> Gandzakets'i, *History of the Armenians*, chap. 11: 165–67 (AD 1220), chap. 18: 187–90 (AD 1225), chap. 20: 196 (on Chormaghan), chap. 21: 199–203 (the destruction of Georgia "a few years after the destruction of Gandzak" [perhaps 1231, therefore a reference to the mid-1230s]). The sources are analyzed by Dashdondog, *Mongols and the Armenians* (n. 35 above), at 11–13 and 55–60.

<sup>51</sup> For a comprehensive account, see Dashdondog, *Mongols and the Armenians*, 71–89, and her article "Submissions to the Mongol Empire by the Armenians," *Mongolian and Tibetan Quarterly* 18.3 (2009): 76–103.

<sup>52</sup> Gandzakets'i, *History of the Armenians*, chap. 26, 216–20; Dashdondog, *Mongols and the Armenians*, 72–74.

<sup>53</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, 6 (London, 1882), 389–90 (the Armenian capitulation); and 5 (1880), 340–41 (Armenians visit St. Albans); John Joseph Saunders, "Matthew Paris and the Mongols," in T. A. Sandquist and Michael R. Powicke, eds., *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson* (Toronto, 1969), 116–32.

<sup>54</sup> Dashdondog, *Mongols and the Armenians*, 79.

<sup>55</sup> Het'um's mission is introduced and the account of Gandzakets'i translated by John Andrew Boyle, "The Journey of Het'um I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke," *Central Asiatic Journal* 9 (1964): 175–89; Norman Housley, *The*

It is quite possible that the redactor of the letter “Ad flagellum,” when drawing on the oral report and written dossier of his informants, blurred the distinction between the myths he had heard about the Georgians with the information that these (potentially) Georgian or Greater Armenian informants were communicating to him about the Mongols. “David” appeared as a warlike Christian figure in both the *Relatio de Davide*, where he was in reality Küchlüg of the Central Asian Naimans,<sup>56</sup> and in tales of the Georgians such as the description in William of Adam’s treatise.<sup>57</sup> It is quite plausible that these myths, or some very similar, became confused and cross-contaminated in the letter “Ad flagellum.” At any rate, the circumstantial similarities between the content of the letter and descriptions of Georgia and Georgians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (which may have a broader significance for Greater Armenia too) suggests that the intelligence underpinning the letter may have derived from sources rooted there.

#### PROVENANCE: INTELLIGENCE, DIPLOMACY, TEXTS

The letter brings to mind several biblical passages that may have provided underlying tropes, or else in some respects have influenced it. The imagery of God as Light is of course omnipresent in the Bible, but specifically the description of a chariot providing such great light that those around it cannot perceive night is an apocalyptic image paralleled right at the end of the Revelation of John. In his vision of the New Jerusalem, the New Heaven, and New Earth in Revelation 21–22, the narrator states twice that the light provided by God and, through him, Christ, is sufficient to render the sun redundant.<sup>58</sup> It is entirely feasible that the redactor of the letter “Ad flagellum,” writing it himself in the manner of an apocalyptic vision, associated this trope with the messianic overtones of his intelligence. The large amount of descriptive material that constitutes the second half or so of the letter recalls, whether incidentally or otherwise, Habakkuk 1:6–10; especially in the particular antipathy directed by the aggressors in both texts towards royalty and nobility:

For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of

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*Later Crusades: From Lyons to Alcazar, 1274–1580* (Oxford, 1992), 179; Dashdondog, *Mongols and the Armenians*, 79–89.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. n. 44 above.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. n. 48 above.

<sup>58</sup> In particular Rev. 21:23 (“et civitas non eget sole neque luna ut luceant in ea nam claritas Dei inluminavit eam et lucerna eius est agnus”) and 22:5 (“et nox ultra non erit et non egebunt lumine lucernae neque lumine solis quoniam Dominus Deus inluminat illos et regnabunt in saecula saeculorum”).

themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it.<sup>59</sup>

This passage in fact preempts many of the common topoi associated with the Mongols' invasions, offering a biblical precedent for describing a destructive nomadic host. Of course, exploiting the topoi of Revelation and of Habakkuk is not exclusive of deploying actual (if misapprehended) intelligence about the historical Mongol invasions.

The letter's description of the invaders as people who ate no meat and drank no alcohol, and who had almost magical abilities as sailors, are details that do not recall any typical stereotypes (or accurate insights) associated with the Mongols. William of Rubruck's well-known account, for example, written in the aftermath of his journey to Central Asia in 1253–55, quite unambiguously talks of the Mongols as a sociable people who drank liberally and ate all kinds of meat. His narrative is replete with references to *kumis*, the famous fermented mare's milk drunk ubiquitously on the Central Asian Steppe.<sup>60</sup> True, the reference to the use of basic animal hides as clothing is quite in keeping with other accounts, such as Odoric of Pordenone's early fourteenth-century description of the court of the Chaghatai Khanate;<sup>61</sup> but otherwise, the additional ascetic details cannot be explained as a description of any accuracy of the Great Mongol Army.

While these characteristics are at odds with other observations made regarding the Mongols, some elements of the letter's description do anticipate later accounts. In 1245–47, a group of Franciscan friars comprising John of Plano Carpini, Benedict the Pole, and Stephen of Bohemia traveled to Mongolia as ambassadors of Pope Innocent IV. They were the first western Europeans to reach the Mongol

<sup>59</sup> The Latin of the Vulgate is as follows: "Quia ecce ego suscitabo Chaldaeos, gentem amaram et velocem, ambulantem super latitudinem terrae, ut possideat tabernacula non sua. Horribilis et terribilis est: ex semetipsa iudicium et onus eius egredietur. Leviores paradisi equi eius, et velociores lupis vespertinis: et diffundentur equites eius: equites namque eius de longe venient; volabunt quasi aquila festinans ad comedendum. Omnes ad praedam venient, facies eorum ventus urens; et congregabit quasi arenam captivitatem. Et ipse de regibus triumphabit, et tyranni ridiculi eius erunt; ipse super omnem munitionem ridebit, et comportabit aggerem, et capiet eam."

<sup>60</sup> Guilelmus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, in *Sinica Franciscana: Itinera et Relationes Fratrum Minorum Saeculi XIII et XIV*, ed. Anastaas van den Wyngaert (Florence, 1929) [hereafter *WSF*], 164–337; and Peter Jackson, trans. and ed., *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke* (London, 1990).

<sup>61</sup> Odoric, XXIV, 10, in *WSF*, 475–76; and Henry Yule, trans., *Cathay and the Way Thither: Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China* (London, 1866), 1:135.

court, and even witnessed the enthronement of Güyük Khan at Syra-Orda, his camp. Both missionaries describe the golden throne, decorated with precious stones. However, it is at the regional court of Batu Khan, further west, that the closest parallel to the letter “Ad flagellum” is found. The friars reached Batu on 4 April 1246; Benedict notes how,

when the servants of Batu received the presents that they demanded, namely, forty beaver skins and eighty badger skins, they carried them between the two sacred fires, and the Friars were obliged to do likewise, since it is the custom of the Tartars to purify envoys and presents by fire. Beyond the fires there stood a chariot bearing a golden statue of the Emperor, which also it is their custom to worship. But as the Friars utterly refused to do so they were only compelled to bow their heads.<sup>62</sup>

This passage recalls not just the chariot of the letter, but also its emphasis on the animal skins worn by the Pseudo-Prophet’s followers. This suggests that the sources for the letter’s intelligence — the messengers apparently with the Pseudo-Prophet’s army for over a month — may really have had contact with a Mongol court or important military commander’s camp, perhaps in this case that of Chormaghan.

The unexpected asceticism described in the letter may reflect non-Mongol religious communities from Central, South, and East Asia. These may include Christians of the Church of the East, Buddhists, and Taoists, though due to the lack of clarity in the letter this observation must remain largely speculative.<sup>63</sup> Later western medieval accounts refer variously to colossal golden (Buddhist) “idols” larger than Christian depictions of the giant Saint Christopher: these were encountered by Odoric in India (possibly Marwar),<sup>64</sup> and William of Rubruck (who

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<sup>62</sup> “Ministri itaque Bati postulata ab eis receperunt munera, scilicet XL pelles castorum et LXXX pelles taxorum. Que munera portata sunt inter duos ignes sacros ab eis et fratres coacti sunt sequi munera, quia sic mos est apud Thartaros expiare nuncios et munera per ignem. Post ignes stabat currus continens auream statuum Imperatoris, que similiter solet adorari, sed fratres omnino adorare renitentes, compulsi sunt tantum capita inclinare.” Benedict Polonus, 5, in *WSF*, 136–37; and Christopher Dawson, trans., *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York, 1986), 80. See also G. Guzman, “European Clerical Envoys to the Mongols: Reports of Western Merchants in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 1231–1255,” *Journal of Medieval History* 22 (1996): 53–67.

<sup>63</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Dimitri Kastritsis, Dr. Zachary Chitwood, and James Hill, each of whom made observations to me on this topic. On European knowledge of Buddhism in the Mongol period, see David A. Scott, “Medieval Christian Responses to Buddhism,” *Journal of Religious History* 15 (1988): 165–84; on Mongol encounters with Buddhism and Taoism in the thirteenth century, see Sechin Jagchid, “The Mongol Khans and Chinese Buddhism and Taoism,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 2 (1979): 7–28.

<sup>64</sup> Odoric, *Relatio*, chap. 18, in *WSF*, 456 (“Tunc sacerdos et ille cuius pater infirmatur accedunt ad ipsum ydolum, quod est de auro vel de argento, eique faciunt orationes”); translation in Yule, *Cathay*, 1:81–82. On western encounters with religious iconography in Asia



traveled in the years 1253–55) in the Mongol center at Qara-Qorum in Mongolia.<sup>65</sup> The vegetarianism mentioned in the letter might reflect equally Buddhism and Taoism, both of which encourage abstention from meat, though fasting is also a part of eastern Christian practice, as it is western. Latin observers were keenly aware of Buddhist monasticism in particular, and noted that Buddhist monks were similar to the Franciscans in dress and lifestyle. John of Montecorvino, Catholic archbishop of Beijing and Latin patriarch of the Orient in the early fourteenth century, observed in one of his three known letters that there were “many sects of idolaters,” “wearing different habits,” and that these men “practise greater abstinence and austerity than our Latin monks.”<sup>66</sup> The Latin redactor who compiled the material in the letter “Ad flagellum” would unlikely have had sufficient knowledge of these people and practices to distinguish between their various different religious groups, and this means ultimately that it is unclear to which people in particular the text might refer.

Slightly later western accounts noted not only Buddhist asceticism but also its adherents’ supernatural abilities. The intriguing description in the letter “Ad flagellum” of the invaders’ smooth, wooden boats that seem to fly across the water at incredible speed may be a manifestation of the general medieval western European perception that magic was a defining feature of Buddhism. Riccoldo di Montecroce (c. 1243–1320) talks of *baxite* or *boxite* (surely Buddhists), who “all know the magic arts” and who “do not fly, but walk next to the ground without touching it, and when they seem to sit, nothing solid is holding them up.”<sup>67</sup> Once again, these observations remain speculative, but it is just possible that groups of eastern Christians in the Levant had already picked up a smattering of stories about Buddhism and Taoism in Central, East, and South Asia as early as the 1230s. It is a tantalizing thought that this letter may reflect these stories and have circulated them in the Latin world (without clear knowledge of their origins or significance) before the famous merchants’ and missionaries’ travel accounts were written during the following decades.

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during the Mongol period, see Michele Bacci, “Cult-Images and Religious Ethnology: The European Exploration of Medieval Asia and the Discovery of New Iconic Religions,” *Viator* 36 (2005): 337–72.

<sup>65</sup> Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 24.5, in *WSF*, 228–9.

<sup>66</sup> Montecorvino, *Epistola* III, in *WSF*, 354; translation in Yule, *Cathay*, 1:208.

<sup>67</sup> “Hii communiter sciunt artes magicas ... non volauit, sed ambulabat iuxta terram et eam non tangebatur, et quando videbatur sedere, nulla re solida sustentabatur.” Riccoldo de Monte Croce, *Liber peregrinacionis* §10, in *Peregrinatores medii aevi quatuor*, ed. Lobegott Friedrich Konstantin von Tischendorf and Titus Tobler (Leipzig, 1864), 102–41, at 117. Scott, “Responses to Buddhism,” 178–80, notes that the first of the psychic powers (*siddhis*) to be reached in the fourth state of meditation was levitation (*dhyana*). See also Nathan J. Ristuccia, “Eastern Religions and the West: The Making of an Image,” *History of Religions* 53 (2013): 170–204.

At this early time, however, western Christians were consistently predisposed to interpreting the unfamiliar by creating reflections of their own world. Given this tendency, perhaps an even more obvious potential parallel for the messianic figure in the letter would be the mythical hierocrat Prester John, mentioned briefly above.<sup>68</sup> However, a comparison of the letter “Ad flagellum” with the apocryphal correspondence of Prester John with Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos reveals, rather interestingly, no convincing similarities. The forged letter of Prester John refers to a kingdom of internal peace and great bounty: a far cry from the violent asceticism of the letter “Ad flagellum.” In Prester John’s kingdom,

neither thief nor theft is encountered; neither flattery nor greed. There is no division among us. Our people abound in all manner of riches. We have few horses, and those that we have are of a poor quality. We believe that there is no one who may compare to us in wealth or the great number of our peoples.<sup>69</sup>

The only point at which Prester John’s portrait of his own domains in any way recalls the letter “Ad flagellum” is in his description of his men’s conduct in battle. The letter “Ad flagellum” is, however, a thoroughly violent text, and so it is perhaps little wonder that some basic similarity would be found here. He informs Manuel of how,

when we march into battle against our enemies, we bear thirteen high and mighty crosses fashioned from gold and precious stones, each borne before us in a wagon in place of a banner. Each one of these is followed by ten thousand soldiers and one hundred thousand infantry, with others besides who are allotted the bearing of the army’s packs, chariots, and food. Since, in truth, I ride simply, before Our Majesty there proceeds a wooden cross undecorated by any picture, gold, or precious stones, so that we are always mindful of the Passion of our Jesus Christ, and one gold vase, filled with earth, as we have learned that our flesh will be returned to its own origins in earth. And another silver vase, filled with gold, is borne before us, so that everyone understands that we are the ruler of rulers. It abounds with all the riches of the world and increases our magnificence.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> See n. 39 above.

<sup>69</sup> “Fur nec praedo invenitur apud nos, nec adulator habet ibi locum neque avaricia. Nulla divisio est apud nos. Homines nostri habundant in omnibus diviciis. Equos paucos habemus et viles. Neminem nobis habere credimus parem in diviciis nec in numero gentium.” Zarncke, ed., “Der Priester Johannes” (n. 44 above), 909–24, with critical remarks at 924–43, and §46 at 915. Cf. also the description of his gilded and bejeweled palace, described in §§88–89, at 921.

<sup>70</sup> “Quando procedimus ad bella contra inimicos nostros, XIII cruces magnas et praecelesas, factas ex auro et lapidibus pretiosis, in singulis plaustris loco vexillorum ante faciem nostrum portari facimus, et unamquamque ipsarum secuntur X milia militum et C milia peditum armatorum, exceptis aliis, qui sarcinis et curribus et inducendis victualibus exercitus deputati sunt. Cum vero simpliciter equitamus, ante maiestatem nostram praecedit lignea crux, nulla pictura neque auro aut gemmis ornata, ut semper simus memores passionis

Despite the presence of a chariot in both letters, there is no convincing case that this was a borrowed trope, and the letter “Ad flagellum” seems, all things considered, to be entirely independent of the correspondence of Prester John. Of all the potential tropes of Prester John’s letter to Manuel, the only vague similarity is that the chariot of the letter is gilded and jeweled like Prester John’s processional crucifixes and his palace. While in the letter “Ad flagellum” the poverty and primitivism of the invading hosts are stressed, the letter of Prester John evokes images of immense riches and high levels of (behavioral) civilization. It is a curious thing that the redactor of the letter does not appear to have borrowed from what was arguably his most obvious model. Indeed, the letter “Ad flagellum” could be considered an isolated mythological *cul-de-sac*, inasmuch as it neither appears to have borrowed from nor to have contributed to other mythological traditions regarding the extreme East. A possible reason for this is that it is (rather like the *Relatio de Davide*) a dossier of genuine intelligence tied to an immediate and specific context — that is, the second and more destructive wave of Mongol attacks on Transcaucasia and eastern Anatolia in the mid-1230s. This intelligence was heavily distorted and was quickly superseded but was not entirely fanciful.

#### 1235–36: AN OTHERWISE UNATTESTED MONGOL EDICT IN TRANSCAUCASIA?

It appears that the *nuncii* mentioned by the narrator of the letter “Ad flagellum” brought a considerable amount of written and probably also oral firsthand intelligence with them. This, I propose, was then compiled into what eventually became the text as it survives. In addition to this intelligence, it is a contention of this article that the letter also references an order of submission drafted by or on behalf of the Mongols. This was directed to a Christian group in Transcaucasia, or to several, most likely the Georgian Kingdom or a lordship or principality of Greater Armenia. This edict then came into the possession of this group’s envoys while in the presence of a Mongol army, probably that of Chormaghan: this was the so-called *Liber executionis Novi Testamenti*. This hypothetical edict was prefaced with a statement of the Mongols’ professed prerogative of universal domination and was made available in a number of translations for the benefit of the foreign envoys. This interpretation explains why the protagonist of the letter is portrayed as a false Christ; why the book is “to restrain rebellious power and to preserve the justice of the meek”; why the invaders claim that they will subject the whole world with their arrows; and why interpreters were said to be there to translate the text into “all languages.” All of these aspects were paralleled in letters

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nostrum Iesu Christi, et vas unum aureum, plenum terra, ut cognoscamus, quia caro nostra in propriam redigetur originem in terram. Et aliud vas argenteum, plenum auro, portatur ante nos, ut omnes intelligant nos dominum esse dominantium. Omnibus divitiis, quae sunt in mundo, superhabundet et praecellit magnificentia nostra.” Zarneke, ed., “Der Priester Johannes erste Abhandlung,” §§47–50, at 916.

received by Christians and Muslims from the Mongols in the mid-thirteenth century.

One reason for the proposed date of the mid-1230s for the letter “Ad flagellum” is the extent to which the situation of the Middle East at the time marries with the content of the letter. The historian of the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm, Ibn Bībī, writes that in 1236 the Amīr Shams al-Dīn ‘Umar Qazwīnī was trading in Turkestān. There, he was asked by a Mongol noble about his standing with the Saljūq Sultanate and, on the basis of his connections with the latter’s ruling elites, was sent back to Anatolia with an edict. The edict stated that God had given the Mongols domination of the whole of the earth’s surface and invited the Saljūqs’ submission, threatening an invasion with mass slaughter and enslavement.<sup>71</sup> This language entirely foreshadows the much more famous letter given to John of Plano Carpini just under a decade later, also considered later in the present section. Furthermore, the role of Shams al-Dīn ‘Umar Qazwīnī is essentially as an envoy brought in from outside, and adopted into Mongol service: he was part of the chain of individuals used to communicate with rulers in Central Asia and the Middle East, represented in the letter “Ad flagellum” by the “interpreters whom they have of all languages.”

In 1235, a Hungarian Dominican friar called Julian traveled east in search of Magyar in Greater Hungary. In 1237, after returning west, he visited Greater Hungary once again: he found the place overrun by the Mongols and received an order of submission from Khan Batu, to be delivered to Bela IV of Hungary. Julian’s *Epistula de vita Tartarorum* (“Letter regarding the life of the Tartars”) preserves a Latin version of this order:

I, the Khan, messenger of the heavenly king, to whom he gave power over the Earth for me to raise up those subject to me and to vanquish my adversaries, wonder about you, King of Hungary, because I have already sent ambassadors to you on thirty occasions, why you have sent nothing from them back to me, nor have you sent in return your own messengers or any letters to me. I know that you are a rich and powerful king, and that you have many soldiers under your control, and that you govern a great kingdom alone. Therefore it is difficult for you to submit to me by your own will. But it would be better and more advantageous if you would submit to me of your own will. I understand moreover that you are detaining my Cuman servants under your protection. Because of this, I demand that you do not hold them with you any more, and

<sup>71</sup> Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-‘alā’iya fi’l-umūr al-‘alā’iya* (the shorter of two versions compiled by the author), in Herbert Wilhelm Duda, trans., *Die Seltchukengeschichte des Ibn Bibi* (Copenhagen, 1959), 193–97, especially 194–95. I am grateful for the assistance furnished by Paul Butcher in construing Duda’s translation. I am much indebted to the analysis of Mongol political ideology of Eric Voegelin, “The Mongol Orders of Submission to European Powers, 1245–1255,” *Byzantion* 15 (1940–41): 378–413; repr. in Ellis Sandoz, ed., *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 10, *Published Essays, 1940–1952* (Columbia, MO, 2000), 76–125.

that you do not become my enemy on account of them. For is it easier for them to escape than for you, because they live without houses, wandering around with tents, and can perhaps escape; but you live in houses and have camps and cities: how will you escape my hands?<sup>72</sup>

Most of this edict is specific to the case of Bela, citing his imprisonment of Cuman subjects of the Mongols as a justification for invasion. The introductory sentence, however, is highly instructive: it suggests the existence already, by the mid-1230s, of the Mongol doctrine of divine mandate for universal rule.

Friar Riccardus, a brother of Julian's in the Dominican Order and also from Hungary, recorded the first two of the friars' missions to the Mongols (1231–33 and 1234–35) in a letter to Pope Gregory IX. In his text, he notes that they encountered “a messenger of the leader of the Tartars, who knew Hungarian, Ruthenian, Cuman, German, ‘Saracen’ [probably Persian] and Tartar.”<sup>73</sup> Hence in the 1230s Christians made contact with the Mongols through polyglot envoys, perhaps in a comparable manner to that seen for Saljūq Rūm. This much appears to be reflected in the letter “Ad flagellum,” in its claims that the so-called *Liber executionis* exists in multiple languages and that the invaders have interpreters for all languages. The fact that the languages named are Latin, Greek, and Hebrew surely represents only the Latin Christian redactor's bias towards familiarity: the real breadth of languages was probably nearer the far more practical gamut known by Riccardus's contact.

Both of these edicts from the mid-1230s (to the Kingdom of Hungary and the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm) contain claims to a divine mandate for universal rule and aggressive threats of invasion and destruction. These elements are present in the letter “Ad flagellum”:

Their book begins as follows: “The Book of the Accomplishment of the New Testament, to Restrain Rebellious Power and to Preserve the Justice of the Meek.” For all the messengers sent to them, they have made many copies of it, saying through interpreters, whom they have of all languages, that those things,

<sup>72</sup> “Ego, Chayn, nuntius regis celestis, cui dedit potentiam super terram subicientes mihi se exaltare et deprimere adversantes, miror de te, rex Ungarie, quod cum miserim ad te iam tricesima vice legatos, quare ad me nullum remittis ex eisdem; sed nec nuntios tuos vel litteras mihi remittis. Scio quod rex dives es et potens, et multos sub te habes milites, solusque gubernas magnum regnum. Ideoque difficile sponte tua te mihi subicis; melius tamen esset et salubrius, si te subiceres sponte mihi! Intellexi insuper quod Cumanos servos meos sub tua protectione detineas. Unde mando tibi quod eos de cetero apud te non teneas, et me adversarium non habeas propter ipsos! Facilius est enim eis evadere quam tibi, quia illi sine domibus cum tentoriis ambulantes possunt forsitan evadere. Tu autem in domibus habitans, habens castra et civitates, qualiter effugies manus meas?” Dörrie, “Drei Texte” (n. 13 above), 179.

<sup>73</sup> “In hac Ungarorum terra dictus frater invenit Thartaros et nuntium ducis Thartarorum, qui sciebat Ungaricum Ruthenicum Cumanicum Theotonicum Sarracenicum et Thartaricum.” Dörrie, “Drei Texte,” 158. See also Guzman, “European Clerical Envoys” (n. 62 above), 57.

which are contained in the book, ought quickly to be implemented. We send you a copy of this just as our messengers received it, and Our Lordship has written to you. ... They know how to shoot arrows twice as well as other men: they say that they will subjugate the entire world with their arrows.

I suggest that this is not mere coincidence but that the letter “Ad flagellum” in fact preserves the confused vestige of an edict delivered to an eastern Christian group that lay in the Mongols’ path in the mid-1230s, which may have been included in full translation alongside the report in the letter. Bearing in mind that the Mongols would turn their attention south towards Cilician Armenia chiefly in the following decade, I once again return to my tentative suggestion that this edict should be associated with Chormaghan’s campaigns in Georgia and Greater Armenia in 1236. The edict was perhaps published immediately preceding his arrival (thus, 1235–36), since the letter mentions at its end that the invaders “are twenty days’ travel distant from us, and already have broken through our borders.”

This identification is plausible also on the strength of similarities between the apocalyptic overtones of the letter “Ad flagellum” and the picture of the Georgians that circulated at the time of the Fifth Crusade. Georgian, Armenian, and Arab Christians all compiled material for the benefit of or communicated on friendly terms with the authorities of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, especially so around the time of the attack on Damietta.<sup>74</sup> I thus agree with Hautala’s identification of the letter with the patriarchate and probably the wider circle of Gerold of Lausanne (who was active in Jerusalem for the decade 1228–38).<sup>75</sup> The edict and this other information was misunderstood and consequently misrepresented in the communiqué sent westwards to Europe. It is a tantalizing consideration that two phrases towards the letter’s beginning and end, respectively (“A little of their manner and habits is revealed to you here, and in greater depth in the book assembled here in your presence,” and “They have other statutes that are accordingly contained more fully in the book sent to you”), may suggest that translations of the edict, or at least of a separate dossier of material, were originally sent west to accompany the letter. It will be fascinating to see if future manuscript finds contain any such associated material. This reconstruction of events would be entirely consistent with the evidence for Mongol policy in Eastern Europe and Anatolia in the mid-1230s.

These points explain the sinister omnipotence ascribed to the central figure of the letter “Ad flagellum.” The claim that he is immortal looks at first sight like a borrowing from apocalyptic traditions about the Second Coming of Christ. However, in the specific context of the Mongols, this perception was probably a warped reflection of a real characteristic of the great khans: that they looked to

<sup>74</sup> See nn. 44 (*Relatio de Davide*) and 45–46 (Oliver of Paderborn) above.

<sup>75</sup> Hautala, “Re-Conquest of Transcaucasia” (n. 29 above), 9–10.

prolong their (earthly) life. (This is perhaps unlikely to be a reference to the general Chormaghan, and more likely pertains to the Great Khan of the time, Ögedei.) This longevity was sought, in particular, through appeals to holy men of all religions and denominations, explaining why many clergy of the Church of the East, for instance, were often found at the court of the khan: they were personally spared the violence of invasions and assembled in order that the aggregate of their prayer be devoted to the ruler's health.<sup>76</sup>

In the middle of the following decade, the famous mission of Benedict the Pole and John of Plano Carpini left for the Mongol court. Benedict's account of this mission has already been cited.<sup>77</sup> They took with them two papal letters of Innocent IV, *Dei Patris immensa* and *Cum non solum*, of 5 and 13 March 1245, respectively.<sup>78</sup> The first encourages the Mongols' conversion to Christianity, and the second asks the reasons for their attacks on Christians and requests peace. In November 1246, Khan Güyük responded with a letter written in Persian with a Turkish preamble and a Mongol seal. The themes of the documents of the 1230s recur in this response. The letter of Güyük suggests that Innocent's request for peace was interpreted as an act of submission. The Mongols claimed that they did not understand the request for baptism (though, since we know that the Mongols were very well acquainted with the Christian Church of the East, this was probably a mere pretext). In the response, the Mongols articulate clearly their belief in the divine mandate of their conquests and the need for the pope to submit. The Mongols probably understood the pope to be the supreme ruler of western Christendom, hence why he is invited ahead of other rulers:

We, by the power of the eternal heaven, Khan of the great Ulus. ... Thou, who art the great Pope, together with all the Princes, come in person to serve us. ... The eternal God has slain and annihilated these lands and peoples [that is, the "Magyar and Christians"], because they have neither adhered to Chingis Khan, nor to the Khagan, both of whom have been sent to make known God's command, nor to the command of God. ... [Seal:] We, by the power of the eternal Tengri, universal Khan of the great Mongol Ulus — our command. If this reaches people who have made their submission, let them respect and stand in awe of it.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Jackson, *Mongols and the West* (n. 28 above), 45.

<sup>77</sup> See nn. 5 and 62 above.

<sup>78</sup> In *Epistolae saeculi XIII e regestis pontificum Romanorum selectae*, ed. Karl Rodenberg (Berlin, 1887), 2:72–73 (*Dei Patris immensa*) and 75 (*Cum non solum*); the texts are also printed in the useful compendium of Karl-Ernst Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels* (Vatican City, 1981), 141–49 (nos. 20 and 21). See the translation in Dawson, *Mongol Mission* (n. 62 above), 73–76.

<sup>79</sup> Original text in Paul Pelliot, ed., "Les Mongols et la Papauté: Documents nouveaux édités, traduits et commentés par M. Paul Pelliot, avec la collaboration de Mm. Borghesio,

Peter Jackson has written that “the earliest direct evidence for the belief in such a programme [that is, a mandate for universal domination] dates, in fact, from the 1240s.” Jackson refers here to this mission of 1245–46, which gave rise to the first known instance of a Mongol letter surviving in its original form.<sup>80</sup> There is, however, a compelling case to be made on the evidence of the Latin letters and the account of Ibn Bībī referenced above that such an ideology was already being articulated in orders for submission as early as the mid-1230s. What is presented in black and white in this letter of Güyük’s may be less clear in the reports of the previous decade, but there is a strong argument to be made that a basic statement of the Mongols’ god-given right to rule the world was included in each of these edicts. The letter “Ad flagellum,” arguably, is one further (if much distorted) instance of this.

Another element of Mongol political ideology can be discerned in the *Liber executionis*. This is the basic division that the Mongols made between the two types of peoples in the world: those that had submitted to them and so were in “harmony” (*il*), and those that had not and so were considered to be in “rebellion” (*bolya*). This formulation is present in the Mongol-language seal attached to the letter sent by Güyük Khan to Innocent IV (“il bolya irgän-dür,” translated in Christopher Dawson’s text as “people who have made their submission”).<sup>81</sup> The two terms also appear in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, chapter 5, section 150. This document is the only known, extensive early Mongol source written from the Mongol perspective, in the Mongol language. It was perhaps first drafted around 1228, but seems to have been later interpolated. In this particular instance, the author distinguishes between two parties in the Kerait tribe, one of which submitted to Chinggis Khan, the other of which challenged him.<sup>82</sup> This distinction is almost certainly what is meant by the phrases “provinciis nobis oboedientibus et provinciis nobis rebellantibus” found in the Latin translation of the edict of Güyük Khan sent through his military commander Baiju. This edict has been transmitted in the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais:

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Massé et Tisserant,” *Revue de L’Orient chrétien* 23 (1922–23): 3–30, at 17–18. English translation in Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, 85–86.

<sup>80</sup> Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 46.

<sup>81</sup> Pelliot, “Les Mongols et la Papauté,” 24; trans. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, 86. Here I rely on Aigle, “Mongol Overtures or Christian Ventriloquism” (n. 39 above), 147 & 158 n. 18. I follow the orthography of Pelliot’s transliteration.

<sup>82</sup> This text has been edited and translated various times in recent years. I use the Latin transliteration of the Mongol text by Paul Pelliot, *Histoire Secrète des Mongols: Restitution du texte mongol et traduction française des chapitres I à VI* (Paris, 1949), 45, and the translation of Francis Woodman Cleaves, *The Secret History of the Mongols, for the First Time Done into English out of the Original Tongue and Provided with an Exegetical Commentary* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), 79.



By the precept of the living god, Chinggis Khan, sweet and venerable son of god, has said that almighty god <is> above all things, himself immortal god, and Chinggis Khan sole ruler over the earth. We want this to come to the ears of everyone in every place, in regions obedient to us and in those rebelling against us.<sup>83</sup>

The full *incipit* given in the letter “Ad flagellum” to this apparent book is “Liber executionis novi testamenti, ad refrenandam rebellium partem, et humilium iusticiam conservandam”:<sup>84</sup> it likewise distinguishes between “rebellious” peoples and “humble” peoples, the former clearly mirrored by the term *bolγa*, and the latter arguably reflecting *il*, or the *oboedientes*. This ideological distinction may also have been expressed in the document upon which Julian drew in his *Epistula de vita Tartarorum*. This edict had at its beginning a phrase that was translated into Latin as “subicientes mihi se exaltare et deprimere adversantes,” which bears a striking resemblance to the phrases “ad refrenandam rebellium potestatem et humilium iusticiam conservandam” and “provinciis nobis oboedientibus et provinciis nobis rebellantibus,” and in turn also to the *bolγa/il* dichotomy of the Mongol-language sources. For this reason, too, it appears that the letter “Ad flagellum” in fact draws on a translation of a Mongol edict for its basic written source, supplemented by the oral and/or written evidence of the Christian party to which it was directed.

Claverie identified the *Liber executionis* as being rather an apocalyptic pamphlet. He proposed that this might have been the work of Christians of the Church of the East living in northern Iraq, close to Mongol Azerbaijan. He adds that the work was clearly not written in Syriac (the local Christian language), but that there was from the very beginning a Latin version, for the attention of Latin Christian readers.<sup>85</sup> Claverie’s suggestions for where the document was written, and for the involvement of Christians of the Church of the East, are very plausible. However, rather than being written by them for Latin attention, I suggest that this was a document emanating from the Mongols that was translated by eastern Christians (those of the Church of the East, Syrian Orthodox, or — I believe most likely — Armenians of Greater Armenia

<sup>83</sup> “Per preceptum dei vivi chingiscam filius dei dulcis et venerabilis dicit. quia deus excelsus super omnia ipse deus immortalis. et super terram chingiscam solus dominus. Volumus istud ad audientiam omnium in omnem locum pervenire. provinciis nobis oboedientibus et provinciis nobis rebellantibus.” Vincent’s inaccessible text is conveniently printed in Voegelin, “Mongol Orders of Submission” (n. 71 above), 389 (repr. 91–92).

<sup>84</sup> MSS C, G, and B all have the reading “nobilis testamenti” (cf. the critical text in Appendix 1, n. 200). That this feature is shared by two distinct branches of transmission (CG and B) suggests that this curious change occurred in an early copy that was a common ancestor of both branches, which are otherwise really quite distinct. I cannot believe that *nobilis* was the original reading, both because the early text of F has the much more logical *novi*, and because *nobilis* makes no obvious sense.

<sup>85</sup> Claverie, “L’apparition” (n. 12 above), 607–8.

or Georgians) for the benefit of their Latin neighbors. A detailed comparison with those Latin documents of the 1230s and 1240s associated with the Mongols supports the contention that the *Liber executionis* had a later origin, bearing particular similarities to documents produced in the years 1235–36. Not only that, as we have seen, the text strongly echoes contemporary perceptions of Transcaucasia in the Latin East, while the proposed dating fits hand in glove with what is known of the chronology of and responses to the second Mongol invasion of the region when it reached its high point at precisely this time. There are therefore reasonable grounds for placing the provenance of the underlying intelligence of the letter “Ad flagellum” in Georgia or Greater Armenia in the years 1235 or 1236.

#### RECEPTION (1): CRUSADE THEORY

Earlier, this study considered the incipient stages of contact between western Christendom and the Mongols, and suggested that it was in the context of this period that the letter “Ad flagellum” was originally drafted.<sup>86</sup> The letter was, however, widely copied for over a century more, and the contexts for these manuscripts require detailed consideration in order to explain why there remained sufficient interest well into the fourteenth century for these later copies to be made. Here, it is suggested that the letter “Ad flagellum” assumed roles within two distinct but often closely connected types of later medieval literature: crusade theory and prophecy. The assumption of these roles may also tell us much about how medieval readers and copyists understood the letter’s significance and origins. To this end, the present section attempts to reconstruct the contexts of the various later manuscripts with reference to the wider landscape of European diplomacy with the Mongol world. Other relevant evidence, where it may have impacted upon the copying of parts of the manuscript tradition now lost or as yet unknown, is also considered here.

Between the first confused reports reaching the crusader states in the early 1220s and the final defeat of the Franks at Acre seventy years later, the Mongol world fractured into various regional polities. At Chinggis’s death in 1227, his third son, Ögedei (r. 1229–41), succeeded as Great Khan; he was in turn succeeded by his son Güyük (1246–48). In 1251, however, Möngke came to the title after an interregnum of three years; Möngke was descended from Tolui, Chinggis’s fourth son and Ögedei’s younger brother. Competition between the families of these two sons became especially destructive following Möngke’s death in China (1259), after which point any idea of the Mongol conquests being shared between the Chinggisids disintegrated, and competing, regional khanates emerged. Möngke drew vital

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<sup>86</sup> Especially in the sections “Eastern Christianity and the Mythologizing of the Mongols,” “Provenance: Intelligence, Diplomacy, Texts,” and “1235–36: An Otherwise Unattested Mongol Edict in Transcaucasia?”

support from the Jochids of the Volga region (the so-called Golden Horde), while one of his brothers, Hülegü, led Mongol expansion against the Abbasids in the Middle East, and would rule there as the first Il-Khan of Iran until early 1265.<sup>87</sup>

These two khanates were those with which Latin Christendom had the closest and longest lasting relationships. Quickly, they emerged as two mutually antagonistic power blocs, the precise composition of which altered slightly with time, but the broad structure of which remained similar. These power blocs were shaped by economic and political concerns: the Mamlūk Sultanate relied upon the Golden Horde (through Genoese intermediaries) to provide slaves from the regions north of the Black Sea that lay under its control, the income from which benefitted the Jochids; meanwhile, the beginning of war in 1261–62 between Berke of the Golden Horde and Hülegü of the Il-Khanate resulted in the beginnings of cooperation between the Jochids and the Mamlūk Sultanate under Baybars al-Bunduqdārī, already at war with the Il-Khanate.<sup>88</sup> Because any crusades would be directed against territory ruled by the Mamlūks, the developments of the 1260s made the Il-Khanate a possible ally of Latin Europe and the Golden Horde a far less likely collaborator.

The prospects of this alliance have perhaps seemed more immediately evident to historians than they may originally have appeared to the Franks of the thirteenth-century crusader states. The notion was first mooted back in the late 1240s: Matthew Paris reports that two envoys were sent to the pope in the summer of 1248.<sup>89</sup> Later that year, on 19 December, Louis IX of France received an embassy from Güyük's powerful deputy in Tabriz (Iran), Eljigidei; the envoys were two Christians of Mosul: Sayf al-Dīn Muẓaffar Dāwūd, the other known only as Mark. Louis was at that time in Cyprus, readying for an invasion of Egypt: Eljigidei offered Mongol support in the form of a parallel attack on the Mamlūks. Unlike the Mongol letters that precede it (those analyzed in the previous section), this document was not a demand for surrender, but a more cordial suggestion of cooperation. It is possible, though, that this cordiality masked a sophisticated, hidden agenda to channel the crusaders' aggression away from Mongol subjects situated to the north of the Mamlūk Sultanate. Although Louis dispatched an embassy in return, the approach ultimately led to nothing concrete, and his campaign failed.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Peter Jackson, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," *Central Asiatic Journal* 22 (1978): 186–244.

<sup>88</sup> Marie Favereau, "The Golden Horde and the Mamluks" (English version), in Rafail Khakimov and Favereau, eds., *The Golden Horde in World History* (Kazan, 2016), 329–46; Michel Balard, *La Romanie génoise (XIIe-début du XVe siècle)*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1978), 1:57–58, 75–76, and 2:456–61.

<sup>89</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* (n. 53 above), 5:37–38.

<sup>90</sup> Various Latin and French versions of the text are edited by P. Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la Papauté," *Revue de L'Orient chrétien* 28 (1931–32): 3–84, at 23–26. See also Richard, "The

The next significant developments, so far as we know, occurred in 1260, when Hülegü's commander Kitbuqa led a small army south into Syria. The Franks stood by and allowed it to be defeated by the Mamlūks at the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt. At that time, the potential risks of antagonizing the Sultanate — their long-term, familiar enemy — probably seemed too dangerous for them to entertain a new friendship with the Il-Khanate. At this early stage, the papacy also took a very dim view of the Mongols: in language that strikingly recalls the letter "Ad flagellum," a missive of Alexander IV to Henry III of England dated 17 November 1260 reports with breathless anxiety that "a scourge of Heaven's anger in the hand of the monstrous Tartars, bursting forth as if from the hidden borders of hell, has hard-pressed and brought together the Earth."<sup>91</sup>

A general change of attitude would take place over the following few years, although the idea of allying with the Il-Khanate never received as widespread backing as the idea of placing an embargo on trade with the Mamlūks.<sup>92</sup> The Il-Khanate itself often initiated diplomatic missions to the West to foster collaboration, as it stood to benefit from outside help against the powerful Mamlūks.<sup>93</sup> Otherwise, the arguments for such an alliance tended to be emphasized in communications from the Kingdom of Cilician Armenia to the crusader states and Latin Europe. Cilician Armenia had emerged as a product of the crusading movement, and in many respects needed continued Frankish support to survive. It is possible that the Kingdom had welcomed the coming of the Mongols in the 1230s and 1240s as a potential counterweight to the hostile Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm that lay to its north and west. It may therefore have become an essentially willing

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Mongols and the Franks" (n. 11 above), 50; Peter Jackson, "The Crisis in the Holy Land in 1260," *English Historical Review* 95 (1980), 481–513, at 483; and Aigle, "Mongol Overtures or Christian Ventriloquism?" (n. 39 above), 145.

<sup>91</sup> "Flagellum irae celestis in manum immanium Tartarorum quasi ex abditis erumpentium inferi finibus, premit et contulit orbem terrae," in Thomas Rymer, ed., *Foedera, conventiones, literae, et cujuscunque generis acta publica*, ed. George Holmes (The Hague, 1745), 2.2:60, col. 2. On the events of 1260, see Jackson, "Crisis in the Holy Land in 1260," and Reuven Amitai, "Mongol Raids into Palestine (A.D. 1260 and 1300)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1987): 236–55.

<sup>92</sup> Anthony Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land: The Crusade Proposals of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2000), 119. The then-popular theme of disrupting Mamlūk trade is dealt with fully in Stefan K. Stantchev, *Spiritual Rationality: Papal Embargo as Cultural Practice, 1150–1550* (Oxford, 2014).

<sup>93</sup> On Il-Khanid diplomacy with European monarchs, see also John Andrew Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns," in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, ed. Boyle (Cambridge, 1968), 303–421, and Boyle, "The Il-Khans of Persia and the Princes of Europe," *Central Asiatic Journal* 20 (1976): 25–40; Jackson, *Mongols and the West* (n. 28 above), 165–95.

client of the Chinggisids (apparently submitting variously in 1244, 1247, and 1253), and subsequently of their Il-Khanid successors in Iran.<sup>94</sup>

It was noted earlier that various eastern Christian groups, including the Armenians of both Greater Armenia and Cilicia, naïvely misunderstood or else deliberately misrepresented the Mongols as being Christians.<sup>95</sup> This was one reason for the vogue of the idea of a crusader-Il-Khanid coordinated attack in the treatises of a number of crusade theorists in the later thirteenth and earlier fourteenth centuries. Hayton of Gorigos's (or Corycus) *Flos historiarum terre orientis* ("Flower of the Histories of the East") was completed in August 1307 and written in response to an embassy of the Il-Khan Öljeitü to the papal curia. It was intended to encourage the pope and European monarchs to respond favorably to these overtures; in order to serve this agenda, Hayton heavily distorted his descriptions of the Il-Khanate and highly exaggerated any sympathy they might have felt (or be perceived to feel) towards Christianity.<sup>96</sup>

Some western crusade theorists came apparently independently to the conclusion that Il-Khanid-crusader cooperation could prove fruitful, but Hayton's treatise subsequently galvanized some of this support. These theorists are one group among a larger milieu of writers, by no means all of whom shared their views: some did not mention the idea of an alliance at all, while others actively opposed it.<sup>97</sup> What follows is a brief survey of some of the main proponents of the cause.

One of the earliest crusade theorists to propose the alliance was Fidenzio of Padua, a Franciscan who had spent much time in the Middle East and who knew Arabic. He wrote a treatise, *Liber recuperationis Terrae Sanctae* ("Book of the Recovery of the Holy Land"), in response to a request from Pope Gregory

<sup>94</sup> Angus Stewart, "The Assassination of King Het'um II: The Conversion of the Ilkhans and the Armenians," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3.s., 15 (2005): 45–61; see also nn. 51–55 above.

<sup>95</sup> See the section "Eastern Christianity and the Mythologizing of the Mongols" above.

<sup>96</sup> Edition in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Documents arméniens*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1869–1906) (hereafter *RHC Arm.*), at 2:113–253 (French version) and 255–363 (Latin version); see esp. 160–61, 163–68, 170–74, 188–91, 355–58, and 361. Cf. Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land*, 113–17. I retain the "Frankish" spelling "Hayton," rather than using the orthographically correct English transliteration "Het'um," because the former is usually used in scholarship on his writings, and because it allows him to be readily distinguished from his contemporary, Het'um II, King of Cilician Armenia, who also features in the present article.

<sup>97</sup> This list is not exhaustive but includes only the more prominent proponents of crusader-Il-Khanid cooperation. For more detail, see Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land*, especially 111–19 ("The Search for Allies"), and Silvia Schein, *Fideles Crucis: The Papacy, the West, and the Recovery of the Holy Land, 1274–1314* (Oxford, 1991), at 140–218 ("1292–1305: The Years of Transition," and "1305–1308: In Search of a Project").

X at the Second Council of Lyons, 1274; it was completed in 1291.<sup>98</sup> Another project, written in French and known as the *Via ad Terram Sanctam* (“The Way to the Holy Land”) (the date of the original version of which is unclear, but may precede Fidenzio’s treatise) similarly advocated cooperation.<sup>99</sup>

In the early fourteenth century, the Venetian publicist and statesman Marino Sanudo Torsello wrote his *Liber secretorum fidelium crucis* (“The Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross”). The first part of the work was written in 1306–9, the second in 1312, and the last completed in 1321. His text was distributed to Pope John XXII and Charles IV of France, and in voluminous correspondence (with which the letter “Ad flagellum” was to be associated in MS R) he energetically publicized his ideas to any potentially interested parties: Sanudo was an extremely well-connected figure. He traveled widely in the eastern Mediterranean and knew much about the region and its economic structure firsthand. The augmentations he made to his treatise between 1312 and 1321 addressed Armenian-Mamlūk-II-Khanid relations and were influenced by the writings of Hayton of Gorigos. Sanudo had supported the idea of an alliance with the Il-Khans before he read Hayton’s *Flos historiarum*, but after he came to know this text, it became a larger component of his crusading theory.<sup>100</sup>

Between the composition of the second and final versions of the *Liber secretorum*, the Dominican friar William (Guillaume) of Adam wrote a treatise originally untitled but most recently edited as the *Tractatus quomodo Sarraceni sunt expugnandi* (“Treatise on How to Defeat the Saracens,” written c. 1316–18). He was maybe one of the best informed of all crusade theorists, having spent time in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, though he does not appear to have visited Mamlūk Egypt, which he nevertheless loathed. Adam was also, together with Hayton, one of the only two theorists to be aware that the Mongol world consisted at this time of multiple khanates and to be aware that the Mamlūks and the Golden Horde were then aligned against the Il-Khanate.<sup>101</sup>

In 1332, an anonymous Dominican authored a text called the *Directorium ad faciendum passagium* (“The Route for Carrying out a Crusade”) for King Philip

<sup>98</sup> Edition in Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-biografica della Terra Santa e dell’ Oriente francescano* (Florence, 1913), 2:9–60, esp. 57; Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land*, 16–17 and 112.

<sup>99</sup> Edition in Charles Kohler, “Deux projets de croisades en Terre Sainte,” *Revue de l’Orient latin* 10 (1903–4): 406–57, at 425–34.

<sup>100</sup> “Liber secretorum fidelium crucis,” in *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. Jacques Bongars (n. 3 above), 2:1–288. Translation in Peter Lock, *The Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross (Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis)*, Crusader Texts in Translation 21 (Farnham, 2011); see also Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land*, 39–40 and 49–50.

<sup>101</sup> Guillelmus Ade, “Tractatus quomodo Sarraceni sunt expugnandi,” in Constable, *How to Defeat the Saracens* (n. 48 above), esp. 44–49, 56–59, and 104–5; cf. Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land*, 106 and 112.

VI of France. Like William of Adam, the author had traveled to Constantinople, Iran, and the Indian Ocean, and this circumstantial evidence raises the possibility that both texts were written by one and the same man, though it is maybe more probable that the author merely used Adam's text. The *Directorium* mentions the conquests of "Casan" (the Il-Khan Ghazan) in Syria in 1300, and makes the case that the Mongols would cooperate against the mutual Mamlūk enemy in the event of a crusade.<sup>102</sup> By the early 1330s, the circumstances that might favor such cooperation were more or less passed.<sup>103</sup>

Crusade theorists derived the information on which they based their proposals either from personal observation, written or oral secondhand intelligence, or from a combination. This need for information is an important context for the study of the letter "Ad flagellum," because it almost certainly explains the copying of the text in the manuscript Paris, nouv. acq. fr. 5842 (R). Furthermore, bearing in mind how much of the transmission process remains obscure, this context may very well have led to the copying of the letter in other instances too. The transmission of a copy of the letter "Ad flagellum" (regardless of how mutilated) together with a small dossier of letters by the important crusade theorist Marino Sanudo Torsello would suggest that at least one copyist found some sort of shared, common interest in these texts.<sup>104</sup> Naturally, this argument for common interest could not be made for every manuscript, since many contain no uniting theme running through their contents; but in this case there is a positive argument to be made for connections to be drawn between apocalyptic-prophetic texts and crusade theory. In Florence, BN Centrale, MS Landau Finaly 17 (F), the letter is transmitted alongside a large volume of correspondence written by senior ecclesiastics, concerned largely with northern Italy, but rooted in a wider Mediterranean context, touching upon relations with the crusader states, the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm, and the Mongols.<sup>105</sup> In the search for understanding the world around and beyond the Holy Land, any intelligence might prove useful, even if some of these reports may, with the benefit of hindsight, appear farfetched or manifestly false. This desire to accumulate all available reports on what was happening in the various regions to the east and across the Mediterranean basin most likely underpinned the creation of such document collections as those found in MSS F and R.

<sup>102</sup> *RHC Arm.* 2:367–517, esp. 502–6; Charles Raymond Beazley, "Directorium ad Faciendum Passagium Transmarinum," *American Historical Review* 12 (1907): 810–57; and 13 (1907): 66–115, esp. 107–9; Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land*, 42–45; and Constable, *How to Defeat the Saracens*, 7–8.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. nn. 114 and 116 below. For another late proposal involving assumptions of cooperation, see Benjamin Z. Kedar and Sylvia Schein, "Un projet de 'passage particulier' proposé par l'ordre de l'Hôpital, 1306–1307," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 137 (1979): 211–26.

<sup>104</sup> See n. 3 above.

<sup>105</sup> See n. 6 above.

Sanudo himself was not, it seems, directly influenced by the letter “Ad flagellum,” and we do not know whether he himself read it. (Whatever the precise date of the copying of R, the association of the letter in this manuscript with documents — including Sanudo’s own correspondence — dated to 1334–37 does make this feasible, since he did not die until 1338.) It is at least quite plausible, on the evidence of MS R, that it was circulating among people interested in crusade theory, for whom its implications of potential disruption to the balance of power in the East would have been highly significant. Sanudo was perhaps less likely than some to be influenced by the ambiguous and distorted contents of the letter, since he had traveled widely in the Levant and did not have to rely solely on the often confused accounts of others.

But by no means all theorists worked from a basis of personal, firsthand knowledge of the eastern Mediterranean: Pierre Dubois (c. 1255–after 1321), a publicist and apologist writing for Philip IV “the Fair” of France, alleged in his *De recuperatione Terrae Sanctae* (“On the Recovery of the Holy Land”) that the strengths of the Mamlūk Sultanate came from long-lived, clairvoyant, evil spirits.<sup>106</sup> To take another example, extraordinarily, over four decades after the main Mongol invasions of Eastern and Central Europe, a chronicler in Mantua recorded that “in that year [1285], a certain David John, King of the Tarses [most likely meaning ‘people of the city of Tarsus’], the Tartars, and the Enclosed Tribe, entered Hungary and destroyed it for the most part.”<sup>107</sup> These two cases gesture towards a larger reality: that the gathering of more accurate intelligence regarding the Mongols did not necessarily displace or prevent the fabrication and elaboration of myths, because the two were able to coexist quite happily — and perhaps this was especially so in northwestern Europe, where the number of people in direct and regular contact with the Mongols was, particularly in the fourteenth century, far lower than in the Levant or the Italian maritime cities.

Significantly, it was in the far northwest of Europe, in England, that at least three of the surviving witnesses of the letter “Ad flagellum” were copied (C, G, and L). Furthermore, these three copies represent two quite separate lines of transmission.<sup>108</sup> This poses the question of why a text of this nature was apparently so interesting to English scribes in the fourteenth century. A partial

<sup>106</sup> Pierre Dubois, *De Recuperatione Terre Sancte*, ed. Charles Victor (Paris, 1891), 70–74; cf. Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land*, 106.

<sup>107</sup> “Et eo anno quidam David Iohannes rex Tarsiis et Tartarorum et gentis incluse intrauit Hongariam, et eam destruxerunt pro maiore parte.” *Annales Mantuani*, s.a. 1285, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS rer. Germ. 19 (Hanover, 1866), 29; cited in Richard, “Ultimatums mongols” (n. 11 above), 221. For the possible identifications of the “Tarsiis,” see Denis Sinor, “Le Mongol vu par l’Occident,” in *1274, année charnière: Mutations et continuités; Colloque international du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Lyon, Paris, 30 septembre–5 octobre 1974* (Paris, 1977), 55–72, at 58.

<sup>108</sup> See nn. 13–14 above.



answer to this question can be found in a consideration of England's diplomatic exchanges with the Il-Khanate during the reigns of Edwards I (r. 1272–1307) and II (r. 1307–27). Another part of the answer can be found in an examination of the popularity of political prophecy in England at this time, which is addressed below.<sup>109</sup>

Particularly after the failure of the Eighth Crusade (Tunis, 1270), which resulted in the death of Louis IX of France, Edward of England (not yet king) came to be regarded increasingly as the preeminent champion of the crusading cause. Edward first came across ambassadors of Il-Khan Abaqa in Tunis shortly after Louis's death, and upon his arrival in the Holy Land, where he had traveled to fulfill his crusading vows, established contact with the Il-Khanate. The reigns of Abaqa (r. 1265–82) and Arghun (r. 1284–91) were characterized by frequent communication with Edward I. There followed a hiatus during the reigns of Geikhatu, Baidu, and the Muslim Ghazan (1291–1304), and then a revival under Öljeitü (r. 1304–16). Edward II responded enthusiastically to an embassy of the last of these in 1307 but did not follow it up with action. In the winter of 1312–13, Öljeitü launched a small and unsuccessful attack on Syria, after which he sent what seems to have been the last Il-Khanid embassy to the West, similarly destined for Edward II. Two last false Mongol victories over the Mamlüks were reported in England for 1312 and 1317, after which time direct contacts appear to have stopped, and the steady flow of (increasingly inaccurate) intelligence to have all but dried up (for the time being).<sup>110</sup> Interest in the Mongols, however, did not then cease, as is evident in the continued copying of texts relevant to the Mongols in the MSS Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Acc. 2011/5 (C) and Cambridge, Gonville and Caius MS 162/83 (G).<sup>111</sup>

The three known English manuscripts of the letter "Ad flagellum" were copied during the fourteenth century and so postdate the high tide of English-Il-Khanid relations. I have suggested that the common ancestor shared by MSS C and G was not an immediate archetype, but perhaps at one or two generations' remove; similarly, the distinct peculiarities of L would point to common ancestry with C and G only at many degrees' remove.<sup>112</sup> This means that the two branches of fourteenth-century English transmission must have involved many witnesses either now lost or as yet unknown. It therefore remains impossible to know at precisely what time

<sup>109</sup> See n. 132 below; cf. n. 129.

<sup>110</sup> This sketch lists only the earliest and latest diplomatic contacts between the two parties, to give some idea of their origins and longevity: there were many more, for which see Jacques Paviot, "England and the Mongols (c. 1260–1330)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3.s., 10 (2000): 305–18; Stewart, "Assassination of King Het'um II" (n. 94 above), 58; L. Lockhart, "The Relations between Edward I and Edward II of England and the Mongol Il-Khāns of Persia," *Iran* 6 (1968): 23–31.

<sup>111</sup> See nn. 13–14 above.

<sup>112</sup> See n. 16 above.

the text first reached England and, by extension, whether or not its importance for English scribes was directly connected with Edward I's and Edward II's diplomacy with the Il-Khanate. This diplomatic context seems very likely to have encouraged interest in information pertaining to the Mongols, and the interest of this information — including an appetite for new hearsay — did not entirely pale with the final mission of Öljeitü.<sup>113</sup> On the other hand, English writers, most exceptionally in the case of Matthew Paris, had long had an interest in the Mongol world; to such chroniclers, a document like the letter “Ad flagellum” would have been of considerable interest.

The realistic possibility of a crusade carried out with Il-Khanid help waned in the first decade of the fourteenth century. The second, brief, and final Il-Khanid occupation of Syria in 1299–1300 incited enormous hopes, but ended with no permanent benefits for Western Europe. This campaign, led by the Il-Khan Ghazan, resulted in the temporary conquest between January and May 1300 of Mamlūk territory as far south as Gaza. Extravagant rumors circulated among chroniclers of the West, to the effect that an Il-Khanid-Armenian-Cypriot coalition had wrested the Holy Land from the Mamlūks on behalf of Christendom, while Ghazan (himself a Muslim from his accession in 1294) was sometimes said to have converted to Christianity.<sup>114</sup> It appears that the realization of the baselessness of these rumors cooled enthusiasm for the proposed alliance. Hayton of Gorios's treatise of August 1307, the *Flos historiarum*, represented one of the later exhortations to form a crusader-Il-Khanid alliance.<sup>115</sup> Yet, even in August 1307, the circumstances had been very precarious, and just three months later the assassinations of Het'um II and Leo III of Cilician Armenia at Il-Khanid hands would pour a great deal of cold water over the idea. The last Mongol attempts to secure an alliance petered out in these years, ending (as we have seen) with Öljeitü's final embassy to Edward II in 1313. Furthermore, in 1320 the last Il-Khan, Abu Sa'īd, would sign an entente and in 1322 a full truce with the Mamlūk Sultanate, officially spelling the end of the hostilities that had for so long provided much of the rationale for crusader-Il-Khanid co-operation.<sup>116</sup> Though English chroniclers would continue to record numerous tales about the Mongol world, the future of its diplomatic relations with Europe would, from then on, become predominantly the preserve of Venetians and Genoese.

<sup>113</sup> See nn. 117–21 below.

<sup>114</sup> Silvia Schein, “Gesta Dei per Mongolos 1300: The Genesis of a Non-Event,” *English Historical Review* 94 (1979): 805–19; Housley, *Later Crusades* (n. 55 above), 22.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. n. 96 above.

<sup>116</sup> Stewart, “Assassination of King Het'um II.” See also Schein, *Fideles crucis* (n. 97 above), 214, which incorrectly names Leo IV. For the Il-Khanid-Mamlūk rapprochement, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate: Gifts and Material Culture in the Medieval Islamic World*, rev. ed. (London and New York, 2016), 66–67.

These Italo-Mongol relations represent the final of the various stages of contact between the Mongols and the West. The Il-Khanate itself was only to remain intact until the death (from plague or poison) of the last Il-Khan, Abū Saʿīd, in late 1335. His death precipitated unrest, causing extreme difficulties for Italian traders settled in Iran. Despite these hardships, the maritime cities continued to interact with the Mongols of the Golden Horde and post-Il-Khanid Mongol rulers in Iran. These interactions were concerned with securing economic and religious privileges for Christians, often *hommes d'affaires*, in the Mongols' territories.<sup>117</sup> While this context does not appear (so far as we know) to have been of direct relevance for the transmission of the letter "Ad flagellum," three of the latest copies of which were made in England, it is plausible that the letter might have been read and copied in Venetian and Genoese circles at this late time: Sanudo's broader Venetian context was certainly significant for the text of MS R.

Around a century after the high point of English-Il-Khanid diplomacy came rejuvenated effort from some quarters to reinstate a rapprochement. The reign of Tīmūr-i Lang ("the Lame," d. 1405; also Temūr, European Tamerlane) saw the revival of two themes familiar from earlier times: over-optimistic calls for a crusader alliance and false reports of Tīmūr's conversion to Christianity. The impetus for cooperation came this time from John, a Dominican and archbishop of Sulṭāniyya (in today's northwestern Iran) in the early fifteenth century. He doctored missives from Tīmūr in order to make collaboration look more attractive to European rulers, emphasizing their common hostility to the Ottomans and offering a highly exaggerated (arguably totally untrue) sense of how sympathetic Tīmūr was to Christians. Just as in the case of Hayton of Gorigos, John of Sulṭāniyya was a Christian living with the realities of Mongol (non-Christian) hegemony in the East, trying to solicit the help of fellow Christians with carefully chosen language and distorted information.<sup>118</sup>

So sympathetic an image of Tīmūr was not, however, unique to those with such vested interests as John. Thousands of miles to the west, some English chroniclers reported Tīmūr's advance with interest, others with enthusiasm: being hostile to the Muslim Ottomans, he might be a friend of Christendom. Adam of Usk was in Rome when he heard news of the Battle of Ankara (20 July 1402). His account,

<sup>117</sup> Virgil Cioacă, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Leiden, 2012), 150–240 (chap. 4.2, "Cooperation and Confrontation with the Italian Merchant Republics"); Luciano Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'Empire Mongol," *Journal Asiatique* 250 (1962): 549–74; Balard, *La Romanie génoise* (n. 88 above), 1:57–58, 75–76, and 2:456–61.

<sup>118</sup> Jackson, *Mongols and the West* (n. 28 above), 242–47; for John's life and career, see Anthony Luttrell, "Timur's Dominican Envoy," in Colin Heywood and Colin Imber, eds., *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage* (Istanbul, 1994), 209–29. For Hayton, see n. 96 above.

more cautious than some of his contemporaries', recalls greatly the manner in which Ghazan's occupation of Syria in 1300 was received in the West. The claim that Tīmūr followed up his victory with the sacking of Jerusalem is false.<sup>119</sup>

In these days [Tamerlane], the son and heir of the king of Persia, conquered and took captive in a stricken field the sultan of the Turks of Babylon, Aremirandine [=Bayezid I Yıldırım], who had struck great dread into Christendom, as boasting that he would destroy the faith, and who had been wont to invade the Christians, and especially the Hungarians, with a hundred thousand warriors; and he utterly destroyed Jerusalem, and held those parts with great ceremony. Therefore the pilgrimage of Christians to those parts is now hindered.<sup>120</sup>

Thomas Walsingham, a successor of Matthew Paris as chronicler in St. Albans, heard rumors in England that took this news one step further still into the realms of fiction. These rumors arrived during the visit of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos to the court of Henry IV of England. He reported that

the King of Letto (=Lithuania? in fact meaning Tīmūr) defeated in battle Balsak (that is, Bayezid), the son of the noble Balthasardan, whom they call "Admiratum," (recte Murad I), and he destroyed Jerusalem and the region around it; and because he had conquered him in favor, and unexpectedly, he was converted to the religion of Christianity, alongside sixty thousand men of his sect. After he had heard these things, the Emperor [Manuel], cheered, left from England honored by the King [Henry] with precious gifts.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>119</sup> On Tīmūr's relations with Latin Christendom, see Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 235–55.

<sup>120</sup> "Hiis diebus, filius et heres regis Persarum Aremirandine, Turcorum Babylonie soldanum, magnum timorem Christianitati incipientem ut ipsius fidem pervertere jacentem, in centum mille bellicosos Christianos, et presertim Hungaros, invadere solitum, in campestri bello per se devictum obtinuit; Jerusalemque funditus destruxit, et partes illas in magna pompa occupavit. Unde Christianorum peregrinatio ad illas partes jam extitit impedita." Adam of Usk, *Chronicon*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (London, 1904), 62, s.a. 1402 (English trans., here slightly modified, at 227).

<sup>121</sup> "Rex de Letto peremit in bello Balsak, filium Balthasardan illustris, quem 'Admiratum' vocant, destruxitque Hierusalem et in circuitu regionem; et quia gratiose vicit eum, et inopinabiliter, conversus est ad Christianitatis ritum, cum sexaginta millibus hominum sectae suae. Hiis auditis rumoribus, Imperator effectus laetior recessit ab Anglis, honoratus a Rege donariis pretiosis." Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley (London, 1864), 2:247, s.a. 1401. For another, very similar version of this story, see Thomas Walsingham, "Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti," in *Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blandeforde monachorum S. Albani necnon quorundam anonyorum chronica et annales*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley (London, 1866), 336. The identification with Lithuania is found in Giedrė Mickūnaitė, *Making a Great Ruler: Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania* (Budapest, 2006), 35, where she also suggests that this account may confuse reports of Tīmūr with news of Christianization in Lithuania. The passages quoted here are cited in Adam Knobler, "Pseudo-Conversions and Patchwork Pedigrees: The Christianization of Muslim Princes and the Diplomacy of Holy War", *Journal of World History* 7 (1996): 181–97, at 191.

Though by no means an exhaustive survey, these two passages provide a glimpse of how the news of the Tīmūrid advance was received in northwestern Europe. The false hopes embodied here are familiar refrains of leitmotifs first heard nearly two centuries earlier.

These themes of cooperation and pseudo-Christianity, which had originally emerged during the siege and capture of Damietta in 1218–21,<sup>122</sup> did not, therefore, completely disappear with the waning of the Il-Khanate. It is not clear to what degree these diplomatic contexts influenced the transmission of the letter “Ad flagellum,” because so much of the manuscript tradition remains obscure: the strength of this influence would be easier to evaluate if we knew more about precisely when the text began to circulate in England, something that cannot be gleaned from the three known fourteenth-century copies. Furthermore, while it is important to note that European relations with the Mongol world long outlasted the end of formal diplomatic contact with the Il-Khanate, I believe that the more immediate reasons for the copying of the letter in northwestern Europe in the later 1330s actually lie elsewhere: in the spread of prophetic literature.

#### RECEPTION (2): PROPHECY

The previous section has explored possible reasons why the letter “Ad flagellum” might originally have grasped the attention of English copyists and why a mutilated copy of the text was at least once circulated alongside the correspondence of the crusade theorist Marino Sanudo Torsello. I have argued here that the letter “Ad flagellum” is, in its origins, not a solely prophetic text, but rather an intelligence communiqué expressed in the language of apocalyptic prophecy. Contemporaries might have understood this text as a factual report, as a prophecy, or as anything in between; the manuscript tradition suggests as much. Having seen an overview of the ways in which crusade theorists gathered and processed information when writing about conditions in the Middle East, it will have become clear that all manner of sources were employed, and not necessarily with the sorts of critical approaches that historians apply today. This section turns its attention to some prophetic texts. The later medieval prophecies addressed here were sometimes grounded, however loosely, in events or conditions in the Middle East and more distant parts of Asia, but were frequently expressed in allegorical rather than literal terms; they may therefore be treated as essentially different from, for example, intelligence reports that were influenced by mythological tropes (such as, William of Adam’s image of the Kingdom of Georgia<sup>123</sup>).

<sup>122</sup> Cf. n. 44 above (the *Relatio de Davide*).

<sup>123</sup> See n. 48 above.

Many of these prophecies concerned the events that would surround the coming of Antichrist. From Late Antiquity, pessimism about the End Times, influenced by the writings of Augustine, had prevailed in Western Europe. Later, this pessimism was sometimes replaced with an optimism that predicted better times either preceding or following the coming of Antichrist, only after which would come the End Times. Those prophecies that placed the better times before the coming of Antichrist are known as “chiliast,” or “Sibylline,” after the foundational late antique eastern Christian Sibylline texts upon the traditions of which later prophecies drew.<sup>124</sup> Those that placed the better times after the coming of Antichrist are called “Joachite,” because they are usually understood as influenced by the writings of Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202).<sup>125</sup> The much older and more established Sibylline, chiliast model seems to have dominated in the prophecies entering Europe from the Middle East in the later Middle Ages, though not exclusively so.

Some of the most influential prophetic texts of this period circulated in a large number of different versions, adapted and translated to fit the requirements of changing circumstances and audiences. (It is in a context such as this that Claverie has read the letter “Ad flagellum,” in his attribution of it as a piece of eastern Christian apocalypticism from the northern region of Iraq, where it bordered Mongol Azerbaijan.<sup>126</sup>) One example of such a contemporary text is the “Vision of Tripoli”: first emerging c. 1239 in the context of the Mongol invasions of Hungary, it quickly spawned many variants, some of which survived into the late fifteenth century. Written as an allegory involving various animals, it prophesied great destruction to the crusader states by Muslims, followed by the ultimate triumph of a crusade and then the appearance of Antichrist. Another text, the “Prophecy of Merlin,” drew on traditions from the tenth century, predicting the triumph of a French king, crowned emperor in Jerusalem. He would vanquish the rampaging tribes long ago constrained behind the Black Sea by Alexander the Great, and the “Saracens” would be converted to Christianity. He would then relinquish his power, and before the ultimate triumph of God, Antichrist would reign on Earth.<sup>127</sup> Both prophecies are therefore chiliastic, which is entirely

<sup>124</sup> The basic sources are Ernst Sackur, ed., *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen: Pseudomethodius, Adso und die tiburtinische Sibylle* (Halle, 1898, repr. Turin, 1963).

<sup>125</sup> On Joachism, see the many works of Marjorie E. Reeves, including *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachism* (Oxford, 1969), *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, 1976), and Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, 1972). The key distinctions between Joachite and Sibylline prophecy are summarized in Lerner, “Refreshment of the Saints” (n. 20 above), which also provides comprehensive bibliographic notes on the two subjects up to the time of writing.

<sup>126</sup> Claverie, “L’apparition” (n. 12 above), 607–8.

<sup>127</sup> Versions of these two prophecies, taken from the anonymous *Excidium Acconis* (written soon after the ejection of the Latins in 1291), are printed in Joseph Van den Gheyn, “Note sur un manuscrit de l’*Excidium Acconis*, en 1291,” *Revue de l’Orient latin* 6

consistent with the tenor of the two prophetic Arabic letters that Oliver of Paderborn reports were received by the crusaders at Damietta during the Fifth Crusade.<sup>128</sup>

In addition to these texts, prophecies connected with events in the East that were either Joachite in origin, or later assumed Joachite associations, circulated in England at this time. The additions to the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris, found in BL Cotton Nero D I, contain material of considerable interest for the subjects both of apocalyptic prophecy and of intelligence regarding the Mongols. Matthew himself oversaw the composition of this text, and so this prophecy must have been circulating in England before his death in 1256. For the year 1242, Matthew reproduces a letter from the abbot of the Benedictine abbey of St. Mary in Hungary, dated 4 January, that describes the destruction caused by the Mongol invaders. Immediately following the end of this letter, the chronicler states that worrying rumors were circulating at that time about the advent of Antichrist, including a short set of verses that predicted his coming for the year 1250 (thus apt to the Joachite prediction of terror until the year 1260).<sup>129</sup> The connection drawn here by Matthew Paris is entirely similar to that which seems to underpin the letter “Ad flagellum”: the attacks of the Mongols, even in cases where documents such as the Hungarian report of 1242 existed, might be inserted into a framework of apocalyptic prophecy, the origins of which were separate. Perhaps the association of the letter in MSS F and B with texts pertinent to the earlier 1250s had something to do with the spread of Joachite prophecies at this time and the significance of that decade in the Joachite apocalyptic chronology.<sup>130</sup>

The letter “Ad flagellum” itself is far more a description of a group with apocalyptic associations rather than a prophecy in its own right. In fact, the letter actually refers quite separately to the prophecies of the invaders themselves, claiming that,

sitting in his chariot, he bears in his hands a book written in three languages — Hebrew, Greek, that is, and Latin — in which [are] the prophecies destined to be

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(1898): 550–56, at 555–56; summaries and an English translation of the “Vision” are given in Schein, *Fideles crucis* (n. 97 above), 117–20; see also Alexander, “The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor” (n. 24 above).

<sup>128</sup> See n. 45 above.

<sup>129</sup> “His quoque temporibus propter terribiles rumores hujusmodi celebriter hi versus, Antichrist adventum nuntiantes recitabantur: Cum fuerint anni transacti mille ducenti / Et quinquaginta post partum Virginis almae, / Tunc Antichristus nascetur daemone plenus.” Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* (n. 52 above), 6:80. Cf. Morton W. Bloomfield and Marjorie E. Reeves, “The Penetration of Joachism into Northern Europe,” *Speculum* 29 (1954): 772–93, at 787.

<sup>130</sup> See nn. 6 (MS F) and 19 (MS B) above.

fulfilled about their future deeds, of which only a few have happened, but it is as if innumerable had, and this causes fear and trembling in us.

In other words, the redactor of the letter “Ad flagellum” (once again, not necessarily the same person as the authorial voice<sup>131</sup>) understood that prophecies were contained in the book borne by the Pseudo-Prophet, rather than that he was himself composing a prophetic text. For these reasons, I do not believe that the letter began its life as an exposition of chiliastic or Joachite predictions about the coming of Antichrist in a Transcaucasian, Middle Eastern, or eastern European context, in the sense of the other texts mentioned here, but I do believe that it is quite possible the letter came to be read alongside such other texts and understood as part of this broader corpus. One example of such a reading of the text is arguably evident in the late MS Royal 12 C xii (L).

Slightly later political prophecies, current in England in the earlier fourteenth century, can help further to explain the presence of the letter “Ad flagellum” in MS L. The other question that remains to be answered is why in this particular copy the text bears a date of summer 1335.

The ascription to 1335 may, of course, simply be a scribal error for 1235, which would also fit neatly with the dating of the text proposed by this study. In MS L the date is clearly written out in full, but this text (or a close ancestor) may have been based on a hyparchetype that read “MCCXXXV,” accidentally (or perhaps even earnestly) misread by a fourteenth-century copyist as “MCCCXXXV.” On the other hand, in MS L the letter takes on a new role as a piece of apocalyptic prophecy for English consumption. Understanding the particular prominence of prophetic literature in England during the reigns of Edwards I, II, and III is probably the most important context in which this new role, and the new date, is to be understood. This literature, in turn, had its own wider context among a significant corpus of apocalyptic and political prophecies circulating in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Europe and the Middle East.

Bound with the letter in MS L is the prophecy “Lilium regnans” (fol. 16r): this is an allegory in which the Son of Man and the Eagle of the East ally in repelling the Lily from invading the Lion’s territory. The Son of Man wrests control from the Lily, and a golden age is ushered in. Also in this booklet (fol. 16v) is the prophecy of the Holy Oil of Thomas Becket, a text associated with Old Testament stories of David and concerned with the restoration of the church of God: this prophecy, like the letter “Ad flagellum,” in which a supreme *pontifex* of the church is disallowed by the Pseudo-Prophet, has anti-papal overtones. Furthermore, another manuscript, BL Cotton Claudius B VII, preserves a version of

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<sup>131</sup> See the beginning of the section “Eastern Christianity and the Mythologizing of the Mongols” above.



the fictitious letter of Prester John to Manuel I Komnenos.<sup>132</sup> It is very probable that the compiler of MS L associated the letter with the other prophecies that he copied, but scholars addressing his manuscript have tended to separate the prophecies from the letter, meaning that this context has not been understood. The compiler of the manuscript may have found these prophecies already grouped together, or may himself have brought them together. Either way, an English scribe in the period c. 1335–38 drew a connection between them.

Did the compiler of MS L, or the compiler of his hyparchetype, take the date of summer 1335 from a specific source? In MS Paris, nouv. acq. fr. 5842 (R), there is some tantalizing evidence that suggests this could have been possible. The correspondence of Sanudo's preserved in these folia dates from the years 1334–37.<sup>133</sup> The copy of the letter "Ad flagellum" is situated after a report concerning the pontificate of Benedict XII dated to spring 1335 and immediately before an intriguing account of a man of Narbonne who claimed to be Christ, the latter concerning a theme that is obviously very similar to the claims of the letter "Ad flagellum." It seems plausible that the compiler of these two folia heard of the news of the arrest of the Narbonnais Pseudo-Prophet, which recalled to him another letter of which he had a copy. This text may be the key to understanding how and why the letter was appropriated into an apocalyptic, prophetic context at this late stage:

A certain heretic has been captured in Narbonne, who speaks terrible heresies, and asserts that he is called "Jesus Christ," and says that he is the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, about which the Son of God said through the Evangelist: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name" (John 14:26). For he says that he had been sent by God to teach the Truth in clear faith, and claims that he was born of the Virgin and conceived by the Holy Ghost, such that the religious have been completely stupefied. And so, because he replies marvelously or offers visions about everything whatsoever that happens to him, and since he was requested by one of the aforementioned to make some other signs by which he might believe him, he responded those words that the true Son of God replied in truth to the Jews when he had been requested by them: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and it will not be given to you" (cf. Matt. 12:39). When he was asked by an inquisitor for what end he came, he answered that he had come against the [Papal] Curia that elects those men in the faith; and, filled with much amazement, <he answered> as if no scripture was unknown to him, since he was learned and filled by a demon. He said that he was a clergyman, and he speaks considerably florid Gascon in a literary and local manner; and when one speaks to him

<sup>132</sup> On these prophecies, see Lesley A. Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2000), 83–110 (chap. 3). For the "correspondence" of Prester John, see nn. 44 and 69–70 above.

<sup>133</sup> For Sanudo, see nn. 3 (letters) and 100 (*Liber secretorum*) above.

irreverently, he is silent; and when one speaks to him with reverence, he replies freely to questions.<sup>134</sup>

There is another text in R, this time a letter of Sanudo himself, that further suggests the possible importance of this grouping of documents for the broader reception of the letter “Ad flagellum.” In early 1335, Sanudo wrote from Venice to Paulino, bishop of Pozzuoli (Campania), reporting an embassy of two brothers called Jacobini from the Golden Horde, at this time under the rule of Özbek Khan, to the European courts of Hungary, Austria, Venice, the papacy, and Byzantium. They took with them messages from unspecified Christian rulers in the regions around the Khanate. Sanudo describes these envoys as “learned in many languages” (*scientes ydiomata plura*), which is strongly reminiscent of the Latin reports of the 1230s. The order in which the three letters mentioned here appear — “Ad flagellum,” the heretic of Narbonne, and the report of the Jacobini embassy — might be mere coincidence, but it may also reflect the reception of the letter “Ad flagellum” as both a report on conditions in the extreme East (to complement the information concerning the Golden Horde), and as a piece of apocalyptic prophecy (mirrored in contemporary southern France).<sup>135</sup>

MS R, despite comprising a mere two folios, thus fulfilled a number of roles. It circulated information that might be of interest to crusade theorists, but some of this selfsame information could subsequently be read — in other contexts — in a primarily or purely prophetic light. It is possible that the content and relative dates of the letters collected in MS R influenced the prophetic collection in MS L, the compilation of which was likely completed around 1338.<sup>136</sup> After these two folios were disseminated, it seems plausible that the copyist who collated the hyparchetype on which the booklet in MS L drew attached a date of summer 1335 based on the context of these two other letters in this selection of

<sup>134</sup> “Quidam hereticus captus est Narbone qui dicit terribiles errores, et facit se vocari Jesum Christum, et dicit quod est Paraclitus, Spiritus sanctus, de quo dicit filius Dei in evangelio: ‘Paraclitus autem Spiritus sanctus, quem mittet pater in nomine meo.’ Dicit enim quod est missus a Deo pro edocenda fide lucida veritatem [*sic*], et asserit se natum ex virgine et conceptum opere Spiritus sancti, sic quod religiosi sunt valde stupefacti. Ita quod de omnibus quibuscumque que sibi fiunt mirabiliter respondet vel visiones dat, et cum fuit requisitus per quemdam predicatorem quod faceret aliqua signa quibus crederetur sibi, respondit illa verba que vere filius Dei respondit Judeis, cum ab eis requisitus erat: ‘Mala et prava generacio querit signum et non dabitur vobis.’ Cum fuit interrogatus per quemdam inquisitorem quo ibat, respondit quod versus curiam pro eligendo illos in fide, et multa plena stupore, quasi nulla scriptura latet eum, cum est scientificus et demonis plenus; et dixit quod fuit canonicus et loquitur Guasconica litteraliter et vulgariter ornate valde; et quando irreverenter quis ei loquitur, tacet, et quando cum reverentia, respondet libenter ad interrogata.” Ed. de la Roncière and Dorez, “Lettres inédites” (n. 3 above), 38.

<sup>135</sup> Ed. de la Roncière and Dorez, 38–39; trans. Roddy, “Correspondence” (n. 3 above), 306–7.

<sup>136</sup> On MS L and its compilation, see nn. 1 and 17 above.

correspondence, or on a closely associated document. Other than this, it is difficult to account for how this copy might have ended up with this date, markedly later as it is than most other correspondence regarding the Mongols, and clearly not the original date of the text, which is already attested from the middle of the thirteenth century.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The letter “Ad flagellum” had a complex genesis and went on to acquire a very complex textual history. The seven manuscripts currently known represent only a few disparate fragments of what was probably once a considerable number of witnesses, disseminated across Latin Europe in the thirteenth century and still being copied in the earlier fourteenth. Of the surviving copies, only two (MSS C and G) belong to very closely related lines of transmission. The various texts, three of which (B, M and R) are incomplete or shortened, are but fragments of an originally much larger story. The text was transmitted as an example of clerical correspondence (F), intelligence about the Mongol world (C, G, and arguably also R), a text relevant to crusade theory (R), and apocalyptic writing (L and perhaps also R).

The apparently apocalyptic content of the letter, meanwhile, appears not to have arisen through borrowings from other texts circulating in later medieval Europe, but instead from genuine but heavily distorted information about Mongol operations in Transcaucasia, c. 1235–36. I argue on the basis of analogy with other reports from the 1230s and 1240s that part of this information came from an edict sent by the Mongol invaders to a Christian group in Transcaucasia or the Middle East, perhaps most likely in Georgia or Greater Armenia, demanding their submission. This information was then passed on to the elites of the crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, where it was fashioned into a letter that bore the distortions understandable of a Latin Christian interpreting the deeply alien through the lens of the familiar. This text was sent west, where it circulated apparently quite widely, probably encouraged by crusade theorists’ need for texts about the Middle East and Central Asia and by the vogue of political and apocalyptic prophecy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The letter “Ad flagellum” is, overall, a document that deserves a far more prominent place than it currently occupies in the ongoing conversation about the relations between the Mongols and the West.

*University of Edinburgh*

**Keywords:** crusades, diplomacy, letters/epistolography, Mongols, mythology, prophecy, Transcaucasia

## APPENDIX 1: A CRITICAL EDITION OF THE LETTER “AD FLAGELLUM”

*Sigla:*

F = Florence, BN Centrale, MS Landau Finaly 17, fols. 43v–44r (second half of the thirteenth century), ed. R. Davidsohn, “Ein Briefkodex des dreizehnten und ein Urkundenbuch des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts,” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 19 (1927): 373–88, at 383–84.

C = Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Acc. 2011/5, pp. 317–18 (“Courtenay Compendium,” fourteenth century)

G = Cambridge, Gonville and Caius MS 162/83, fols. 107v–108v (fourteenth century)

L = London, BL Royal 12 C xii, fols. 13r–14r (compilation completed c. 1338)

B = Freiburg im Breisgau, Bibliothek des erzbischöflichen Ordinariats, Hs. 35, fol. 13v (later thirteenth-century addition to a manuscript of the third quarter of the ninth century)

M = Paris, BNF Lat. 4794, fol. 67v<sup>b</sup> (thirteenth century), ed. J. Richard, “Une lettre concernant l’invasion mongole?,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 119 (1961): 243–45, at 245, and P. Claverie, “L’apparition des Mongols sur la scène politique occidentale (1220–1223),” *Le Moyen Âge* 105 (1999): 601–13, at 612–13.

R = Paris, BNF nouv. acq. fr. 5842, fol. 2v<sup>a</sup> (second quarter of the fourteenth century; fragmentary, highly corrupt, and not included in the critical text), ed. C. de la Roncière and L. Dorez, “Lettres inédites et mémoires de Marino Sanudo l’ancien (1334–1337),” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 56 (1895): 21–44, at 37.

The punctuation of the main text is my own; that in the *apparatus criticus* reflects the MSS. I am indebted in the editing of this text to Adriano Cappelli, trans. David Heimann and Richard Kay, *The Elements of Abbreviation in Medieval Latin Palaeography* (Lawrence, KS, 1982).

*Editorial Signs:*

(...) = resolved abbreviations (standard ligatures resolved without comment)

{...} = delenda

[[...]] = deleta

[...] = editorial notes

ah̄ = incerta

137 138 139 140 Ad flagellum<sup>141</sup> humani generis<sup>142</sup> peccatis nostris exigentibus,<sup>143 144</sup> gentes barbaricas<sup>145</sup> edidit<sup>146</sup> Ihesus Christus.<sup>147</sup> Nam quidam pseudopropheta<sup>148</sup> de<sup>149</sup> extremis<sup>150</sup> mundi partibus, et alii multi,<sup>151</sup> in pellibus<sup>152</sup> ovium,<sup>153</sup> surrexerunt,<sup>154</sup> quorum innumerabilis et inexpugnabilis multitudo,<sup>155</sup> qui paucis parcunt hominibus<sup>156</sup> ecclesiasticarum personarum<sup>157</sup> et<sup>158</sup> maxime religiosarum<sup>159</sup> sanguinem sciunt;<sup>160</sup> bella nutriunt,<sup>161</sup> et modo<sup>162</sup> in partibus orientalibus degunt,<sup>163</sup> et iam sibi regna xv subiugarunt.<sup>164</sup> De quorum modo et<sup>165</sup>

- 137 *tit. add.* nova pestis contra ecclesiam **CG**.
- 138 *add.* frater Ugo miseratione divina ec(clesie) sanctę Sabine p(res)b(yte)r card(inalis) ap(os)t(ol)icę sedis legatus dilecto f(rat)ri suo Constantinensi ep(iscop)o salutem et amorem. noveritis dominum nostrum apostolicum ꝑ patriarcha Ierosolimitano in hunc modum litteras recepisse. **F**
- 139 *add.* quam epistolam dominus patriarcha Ierosolimitanus, scripsit domino pape. **M**.
- 140 *in marg. et in a.m. add.* at(tende) nova et mirabilia valde **F**.
- 141 flagellum] **FLBM** flagellandum **CG**.
- 142 humani generis] *transp.* **B**.
- 143 peccatis nostris exigentibus] **FCGB** [*ins. s.l. peccatis G*] peccatis exigentibus **L** exigentibus peccatis **M**.
- 144 *add.* inritis **CG**.
- 145 barbaricas] **FLB** barbaras **CGM**.
- 146 edidit] **FCGB** [*ins. s.l. init. e F*] fecit **L** {e} edidit **M**.
- 147 Ihesus Christus] **FB** dominus noster Ihesus Christus **CGM** dominus **L**.
- 148 pseudopropheta] **L** pseudo **FM** pseudo prophete **CG** svedo [*sic*] prophete **B**.
- 149 de] **FCGBM** ab **L**.
- 150 extremis] **FCGLB** extraneis **M** [*corr. in nota extremis (Richard)*].
- 151 *add.* et alii multi] **L** [*lectio recentior est, sed verbum subiectum plurale requirit*].
- 152 pellibus] **FCLM** perellibus **G** pelle **B**.
- 153 ovium] **FCGLB** obvium **M** [*corr. in nota ovium (Richard)*].
- 154 surrexerunt] **LB** surrexer(ant) **F** insurrexerunt **CG** subrexerunt **M**.
- 155 *conieci* quorum innumerabilis et inexpugnabilis multitudo] quorum mirabilis est et inexpugnabilis multitudo **F** quorum innumerabilis multitudo et expugnabilis **C** quorum innumerabilis multitudo et inexpugnabilis **G** quorum innumerabilis multitudo est **L** qui innumerabilis et qui in expugnabilis multitudo **B** quorum est pene irrevocabilis multitudo **M**.
- 156 parcunt hominibus] **FCGLB** *transp.* **M**.
- 157 personarum] **FLBM** personis **CG**.
- 158 et] **FCGL** *om.* **B**.
- 159 religiosarum] **FL** religios(arum) **CG** religiosorum **B** religiosorum **M**.
- 160 sciunt] **CL** sitiunt **F** sticiunt **G** gluçiunt **B** sciunt **M** [*corr. in nota sitiunt (Richard)*].
- 161 bella nutriunt] **FCGB** *om.* **LM**.
- 162 modo] **FCGLB** maxime **M**.
- 163 orientalibus degunt] **FCGLM** degunt orientalibus **B**.
- 164 *scripsi* et iam sibi regna xv subiugarunt] et iam sibi regna ꝑ xv subiugarunt **F** et iam sibi regna 15 subiugarunt **CG** et iam quinque regna sibi subiugarunt **L** et iam regna sibi quindeci(m) subiugarunt **B** et iam quinque regna sibi subiugaverunt **M**.
- 165 modo et] **FCGLB** *om.* **M**.

conversacione<sup>166</sup> vobis aliquantulum presentibus aperitur,<sup>167</sup> et profundius in libro presentibus colligato.<sup>168</sup>

Ihesum enim predicant nazarenum — prout in simbolo nostre fidei continentur<sup>169</sup> — et eum<sup>170</sup> secum habere dicunt.<sup>171</sup> Quem in curru deferunt,<sup>172</sup> auro contexto purissimo<sup>173</sup> et lapidibus preciosis.<sup>174</sup> Nunquam autem<sup>175</sup> cibariis<sup>176</sup> <sup>177</sup> utitur, sed<sup>178</sup> ab omnibus, qui sunt in exercitu,<sup>179</sup> <sup>180</sup> creditur<sup>181</sup> immortalis.<sup>182</sup> Dicunt<sup>183</sup> autem,<sup>184</sup> quod currum tenebre nunquam comprehendunt,<sup>185</sup> sed sicut sol omni tempore resplendescit,<sup>186</sup> ita quod circumstantes, qui sunt in exercitu, non possunt noctis tenebris obscurari.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>166</sup> conversacione] **CGB** conversacione **FLM**.

<sup>167</sup> vobis aliquantulum presentibus aperitur] **B** aliquantulum vobis presentibus aperitur **F** nobis aliquantulum aperitur **CG** vobis aperiam aliquantulum presentibus **L** vobis aliquantulum p(resentibus) apperitur **M**.

<sup>168</sup> et profundius in libro presentibus colligato] **CG** profundius autem in libro incluso presentibus colligatis **F** s(e)c(un)d(u)m quod findatur in libro presentibus allegato **L** et in libro presentibus colligato **B** sed supletur in libro p(resentibus) alligato **M**.

<sup>169</sup> Ihesum enim predicant nazarenum, prout in simbolo nostre fidei continentur] **FCB** Iesum ... continentur **G** Christum predicantes nazarenum prout in nostro fidei simbolo continentur **L** Christum enim predicant naçarenum, et alia que fidei catholice simbolo continentur **M** [*corr.* predicant (Richard; Claverie)].

<sup>170</sup> eum] **FCGLB** Christum **M**.

<sup>171</sup> habere dicunt] **CGLBM** *transp.* **F**.

<sup>172</sup> quem in curru deferunt] **CGB** quem deferunt **F** quem in curru **L** quem curru **M**.

<sup>173</sup> auro contexto purissimo] **B** aureo texto purissimo **F** auro contexto durissimo **CG** aureo purissimo texto **L** aureo purissimo **M**.

<sup>174</sup> et lapidibus preciosis] **CGB** et lapidibus preciosissimis involutum **F** gemmis et lapidibus preciosis deferunt **L** et preciosis lapidibus tectum deferunt **M**.

<sup>175</sup> nunquam autem] **FCGB** qui nunquam **LM**.

<sup>176</sup> cibariis] **FCGB** cibus **L**.

<sup>177</sup> *add.* publicis **M**.

<sup>178</sup> sed] **F** set **L** et **B** *om.* **CG** et ideo **M**.

<sup>179</sup> qui sunt in exercitu] **FCGB** qui in ex{c}ercitu sunt **L** de exercitu **M**.

<sup>180</sup> *add.* adoratur et **B**.

<sup>181</sup> *add.* esse **L**.

<sup>182</sup> immortalis] **CGLB** immortalis **F** i(m)mortalis **M**.

<sup>183</sup> dicunt] **FCGLM** p̄dicant̄ **B**.

<sup>184</sup> autem] **FCGBM** enim **L**.

<sup>185</sup> quod currum tenebre nunquam comprehendunt] **CG** quod eum tenebre comprehendunt **F** quod currum tenebre nunquam comprehenderent neque comprehendunt **L** currum nunquam tenebre comprehendunt **B** quod currum nunquam tenebre comprehendunt **M**.

<sup>186</sup> sed sicut sol omni tempore resplendescit] **FCG** set lucet o(mn)i tempore sicut sol **L** set sicut sol omni tempore replandescit [*sic*] **B** sed sic omni tempore splendet **M**.

<sup>187</sup> ita quod circumstantes, qui sunt in exercitu, non possunt noctis tenebris obscurari] **FB** [*corr.* possint (Davidsohn)] ita quod circumstantes in exercitu non possunt noctis tenebris obfuscarī **CG** ita quod circumstantes qui sunt in ex{c}ercitu non possunt tenebris noctis comprehendi **L** itaque circumstantes semper videntur in lumine esse **M**.

Sedens autem<sup>188</sup> in curru,<sup>189</sup> librum gestat in manibus scriptum idiomatibus tripartite lingue<sup>190</sup> — ebraice,<sup>191</sup> grece videlicet,<sup>192</sup> et latine — in quo de factis eorum venturis prophecie debent consummari,<sup>193</sup> quorum nonnulli numero, quasi innumerabiles accidunt,<sup>194</sup> que<sup>195</sup> nobis timorem ingerunt et pavorem.<sup>196 197</sup> Liber autem ita incipit:<sup>198</sup> “Liber executionis<sup>199</sup> Novi<sup>200</sup> Testamenti, ad refrenandam rebellium potestatem,<sup>201</sup> et humilium iusticiam<sup>202</sup> conservandam.” Cuius omnibus nunciis ad eos directis copiam faciunt, dicentes per interpretes (quos habent omnium linguarum)<sup>203 204</sup> quod<sup>205</sup> ea, que in libro continentur,

<sup>188</sup> autem] FCGLB ille M.

<sup>189</sup> add. predicto M.

<sup>190</sup> conieci librum gestat in manibus scriptum idiomatibus tripartite lingue] librum gestat in manibus subscriptum ideomatibus tripartite lingue F librum gestat manibus scriptum ydiomatibus trium linguarum CG librum gerit in manibus scriptum tripartite lingue L librum gestat in manibus conscriptum ydeomatibus tripartite lingue B manibus librum gerit scriptum dogmatibus M.

<sup>191</sup> ebraice] FB hebraice CG hebrayce L ebrayce M.

<sup>192</sup> videlicet] F om. CGLM scilicet B.

<sup>193</sup> conieci eorum venturis prophecie debent consummari] errorum venturis prophete asserunt consumari F venturis proph(ec)ia debent consummari CG eorundem venturas propheticas dicunt consummari L eorum venturis prophecie continentur, dies eciam expeřuntur, in quibus debent prophecie consumari B futuris eorum dicunt prophecias consumari M.

<sup>194</sup> quorum nonnulli numero quasi innumerabiles accidunt] F quorum nonnulli numero quasi innumerabilis multitudo mırřa dicunt CG quorum nonnulli nimium innumerabilem asserunt L quarum non nulle numero quasi innumerabiles acciderunt B.

<sup>195</sup> que] F quod CGB qui L.

<sup>196</sup> timorem ingerunt et pavorem] F stuporem ingerunt atque pavorem CG timorem ingerunt et tremorem L stuborem ingerunt et pavorem B.

<sup>197</sup> om. quorum nonnulli ... pavorem] M.

<sup>198</sup> liber autem ita incipit] FB om. CG liber enim incipit sic L liber autem prefactus sic incipit M.

<sup>199</sup> executionis] FLM executionis CG exsecucionis B.

<sup>200</sup> novi] FLM nobilis CGB.

<sup>201</sup> ad refrenandam rebellium potestatem] F ad refrenandum rebellium pıřayıtatem C ad refrenand(u)m rebellium pıřayıtatem G ad refrenandam rebellium partem L ad refrenandam rebellium pıřayıtatem B ad rebellium po(tes)tatem refrenandam M.

<sup>202</sup> iusticiam] CGLBM iustitiam F.

<sup>203</sup> cuius omnibus nunciis ad eos directis copiam faciunt, dicentes per interpretes quos habent omnium linguarum] B cuius omnibus [[omnibus]] nuntiis ad eos directis, copiam faciunt, dicentes quod interpretes quos habent omnium linguarum F qui omnibus nunciis ad eos directis copiam faciunt dicentes per interpretes quod habent omnium linguarum C qui omnibus nunciis ad eos directis copiam faciunt dicentes per interpretes quos habent omnium linguarum G cuius libri omnibus nunciis ad eos directis copiam tıřıřuřum et interpretes quos secum habent L cuius libri copiam omnibus locis faciunt, et omnium nationum interpretes habent, ut nuncii nostri referunt. M [corr. interpretes (Claverie)].

<sup>204</sup> add. Quas litteras dominus patriarcha Ierosolimitanus scripsit domino pape. Epistola qua literas [sic] dominus patriarcha Ierosolimitanus scripsit domino pape [posterior sententia in a.m.] et hic fin. M.

<sup>205</sup> quod] CGB dicunt F et dicunt quod L.

oportet<sup>206</sup> celeriter<sup>207</sup> adimpleri. Cuius copiam ad vos dirigimus,<sup>208</sup> prout nostri nuncii<sup>209</sup> receperunt, et<sup>210</sup> nostra dominacio<sup>211</sup> vobis<sup>212</sup> scripsit.<sup>213</sup>

Fuerunt autem nostri nuncii predicti<sup>214</sup> in eorum<sup>215</sup> exercitu<sup>216</sup> per mensem<sup>217</sup> et amplius, et<sup>218</sup> viderunt<sup>219</sup> inopinata<sup>220</sup> miracula que<sup>221</sup> predictus<sup>222</sup> “Ihesus” coram omnibus faciebat.<sup>223</sup> Illi autem, qui<sup>225</sup> sunt in exercitu,<sup>226</sup> dulcissimi sunt,<sup>227</sup> et habent facies pulcherrimas,<sup>228</sup> et<sup>229</sup> delectabiles ad videndum.<sup>230</sup> Staturam autem eorum comuni cetu hominum uno cubito habent longiorem;<sup>231</sup> eis autem brachia fortissima<sup>232</sup> suffragantur, et<sup>233</sup> arcus habent fortissimos,<sup>234</sup> et<sup>235</sup>

- 
- 206 oportet] **CGB** oportere **F** debent **L**.  
 207 celeriter] **CGLB** celitus **F**.  
 208 ad vos dirigimus] **LB om.** **F** debent dirigimus **C** vobis dirigimus qui **G**.  
 209 nostri nuncii] **LB** nostri nuntii **F** nuncii nostri **CG**.  
 210 et] **CGB om.** **F**.  
 211 dominacio] **CGB** devotio **F**.  
 212 vobis] **FCG** nobis **B**.  
 213 scripsit] **FB** scribit **CG**.  
 214 nostri nuncii predicti] **C** predicti nuntii nostri **F** nostri {nostri} nuncii predicti **G** nostri nuncii **B**.  
 215 qui fuerunt in *pro* receperunt ... eorum **L**.  
 216 exercitu] **FCGB** ex{c}ercitu **L**.  
 217 mensem] **FCGB** unum mensem **L**.  
 218 et] **FCGB om.** **L**.  
 219 *add.* et receperunt **L**.  
 220 inopinata] **FCGL** inopinam **B**.  
 221 que] **CL** q(uę) **FB** quibus **G**.  
 222 predictus] **FCGB** dictus **L**.  
 223 coram omnibus faciebat] **FCGB** faciebat coram omnibus **L**.  
 224 *add.* et nunciarunt nobis quod **L**.  
 225 *conieci* illi autem qui] et qui **F** populi autem qui **C** ipsi autem qui **G** illi qui **L** isti autem **B**.  
 226 exercitu] **FCGB** ex{c}ercitu **L**.  
 227 dulcissimi sunt] **CG** sunt ditissimi **F** sunt diversissimi homines **L** ditissimi sunt **B** [*lectionem recentiore* *malim*].  
 228 facies pulcherrimas] **CGLB** *transp.* **F**.  
 229 et] **FCGL om.** **B**.  
 230 delectabiles ad videndum] **FLB** *transp.* **CG**.  
 231 *conieci* staturam autem eorum comuni cetu hominum uno cubito habent longiorem] statura autem eorum est uno cubito longior statura co(mmun)i **F** staturam autem coram co(mmun)i ho(m)u(nu)m cetu uno cubitum habent longiorem **C** staturam a(utem) coram co(mmun)i hominum cetu numero cubitum habent longiorem **G** staturam habent a(utem) co(mmun)i cetu hominum uno cubito longiorem **L** staturis autem corporis omni cetu hominum \*\*\* [*ceterum deest*] **B**.  
 232 fortissima] **FL** robustissima **CG**.  
 233 et] **FCG om.** **L**.  
 234 arcus habent fortissimos] **L** arctus [*ins. s.l. c*] habent fortissimos **F** habent arcus fortissimos **CG**.  
 235 et] **CGL om.** **F**.



duplo melius sagittare sciunt<sup>236</sup> quam alii<sup>237</sup> homines: dicunt eciam<sup>238</sup> quod eorum<sup>239</sup> sagittis<sup>240</sup> totum mundum subiugabunt.<sup>241</sup> Ita autem<sup>242</sup> se habent<sup>243</sup> in preliis,<sup>244</sup> quod nunquam fugiunt vel<sup>245</sup> pavescunt, sed, si<sup>246</sup> aliquis ex illis<sup>247</sup> (quod raro accidit) moriatur<sup>248</sup> in conflictu, in signum salvacionis<sup>249</sup> et glorie<sup>250</sup> eum suspendunt in aere,<sup>251</sup> corpore artificialiter imputrescibile reservato.<sup>252</sup>

Lanam et linum<sup>253</sup> nesciunt, sed<sup>254</sup> indifferenter pellibus animalium vestiuntur.<sup>255</sup> Arma<sup>256</sup> habent de corticibus<sup>257</sup> contexta,<sup>258</sup> que non possunt ab aliquibus<sup>259</sup> penetrari. Reges et principes interficiunt, et pontificem superstitem ecclesiasticum non permittunt, plebe que ad eorum legem convertitur reservata.<sup>260</sup> Equos et<sup>261</sup> mulos<sup>262</sup> non equitant nec iumenta,<sup>263</sup> sed<sup>264</sup> habent<sup>265</sup>

<sup>236</sup> *scripsi* duplo melius sagittare sciunt] duplo melius sagitare sciunt **F** sciunt duplo melius sagittare **CG** melius sagittare sciunt **L**.

<sup>237</sup> alij] **FCG** ceteri **L**.

<sup>238</sup> eciam] **CGL** enim **F**.

<sup>239</sup> eorum] **FCG** suis **L**.

<sup>240</sup> sagittis] **FL** sagitte [*a.c.* sagitta] **C** sagitta **G**.

<sup>241</sup> totum mundum subiugabunt] **L** sibi subiiciunt totum mundum **F** penitus mundum subiugabunt **C** penitus totum mundum subiugabunt **G**.

<sup>242</sup> ita autem] **FCG** et ita **L**.

<sup>243</sup> se habent] **FL** *transp.* **CG**.

<sup>244</sup> preliis] **FL** proliis **CG**.

<sup>245</sup> vel] **FCG** nec **L**.

<sup>246</sup> si] **F** *quāḡḡ* **CG** cum **L**.

<sup>247</sup> ex illis] **CG** *om.* **F** eorum **L**.

<sup>248</sup> moriatur] **F** moritur **CGL**.

<sup>249</sup> salvacionis] **CG** salvationis **FL**.

<sup>250</sup> et glorie] **FL** *om.* **CG**.

<sup>251</sup> aere] **FL** aera **CG**.

<sup>252</sup> *scripsi* imputrescibile reservato] imputrescibili reservato **F** [*corr.* imputrescibile (Davidsohn)] reservato **CG** imputrefactibili conservato **L**.

<sup>253</sup> lanam et linum] **F** lanum et linum **CG** lanum et lylum **L**.

<sup>254</sup> sed] *s(ed)* **FCG** *set* **L**.

<sup>255</sup> vestiuntur] **FL** utuntur **CG**.

<sup>256</sup> *add.* autem **F**.

<sup>257</sup> de corticibus] **L** corticibus **F** ex coriis siccis **CG**.

<sup>258</sup> contexta] **FCG** *texta* **L**.

<sup>259</sup> ab aliquibus] ab *aliq(uḡḡḡ)* **CG** ab aliis **F** *om.* **L**.

<sup>260</sup> *conieci* et pontificem superstitem ecclesiasticum non permittunt, plebe que ad eorum legem convertitur reservata] et pontificem superstitem ecclesiasticum non permittunt, eo qui ad legem convertitur reservato **F** et potentes et personam ecclesiasticam superstitem non relinquunt, plebe tum humilique ad eorum legem convertitur reservata **CG** et potentem ac substitem ecclesiasticum non dimittunt, reservata plebe que ad eorum ritum convertitur **L**.

<sup>261</sup> et] **FL** *om.* **CG**.

<sup>262</sup> mulos] **CGL** mullos **F**.

<sup>263</sup> non equitant nec iumenta] **FL** ut iumenta non equitant **CG**.

<sup>264</sup> sed] *s(ed)* **FCG** *set* **L**.

<sup>265</sup> habent] **FL** *om.* **CG**.

animalia cervis similia, et<sup>266</sup> per montes et per<sup>267</sup> plana<sup>268 269</sup> ab ipsis<sup>270</sup> animalibus<sup>271</sup> deferuntur.<sup>272</sup> Naves non habent,<sup>273</sup> sed<sup>274</sup> vasa peroptima ad modum composita piscium,<sup>275</sup> levissimo genere constructa lignorum,<sup>276</sup> que sunt infrangibilia;<sup>277</sup> et ea<sup>278</sup> in plaustris<sup>279</sup> deferunt<sup>280</sup> et,<sup>281</sup> quando ad aquas deveniunt,<sup>282</sup> possint de facili<sup>283</sup> pertransire.<sup>284</sup> Marinam tempestatem non metuunt,<sup>285</sup> sed<sup>286</sup> per mare volitant sicut aves;<sup>287</sup> nec vas apud nos invenitur, quod possit eorum impetibus obviare.<sup>288</sup> Cibariis non<sup>289</sup> utuntur sicut ceteri homines,<sup>290</sup> et tempore necessitatis et famis corticibus et foliis arborum satiantur.<sup>291</sup> turpissime<sup>292 293</sup> iacent,<sup>294</sup> immunda comedunt.<sup>295 296</sup> Vinum non bibunt sed aquam, et si contingeret aliquem de conversis ad eos vinum

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- <sup>266</sup> et] **CG** a **F** [*corr.* et (Davidson)] *om.* **L.**  
<sup>267</sup> et per] **CG** et **F** *om.* **L.**  
<sup>268</sup> plana] **FCG** plane **L.**  
<sup>269</sup> *add.* et silvas **L.**  
<sup>270</sup> ipsis] **F** aliis **CG** istis **L.**  
<sup>271</sup> *add.* equaliter **CG.**  
<sup>272</sup> deferuntur] **FCG** permoventur **L.**  
<sup>273</sup> *add.* ut per eas aquas transeant **F.**  
<sup>274</sup> *add.* habent **F.**  
<sup>275</sup> ad modum composita piscium] **F** admodum piscium composita] **CG** *om.* **L.**  
<sup>276</sup> levissimo genere constructa lignorum **F** levissimo genere lignorum constructa **CG**  
levissima lignorum genere composita **L.**  
<sup>277</sup> infrangibilia] **F** impenetrabilia **CG** impugnabilia **L.**  
<sup>278</sup> et ea] **FCG** *om.* **L.**  
<sup>279</sup> plaustris] **F** plaustro **CG** castris **L.**  
<sup>280</sup> deferunt] **FL** vehunt **CG.**  
<sup>281</sup> et] **CGL** ut **F.**  
<sup>282</sup> ad aquas deveniunt] **F** veniunt ad aquas **CG.**  
<sup>283</sup> possint de facili] **F** de facili [[non]] possunt **C** de facili possunt **G.**  
<sup>284</sup> pertransire] **F** pertuassire **CG.**  
<sup>285</sup> marinam tempestatem non metuunt] **CG** marinam autem tempestatem predicta vasa  
non metuunt **F.**  
<sup>286</sup> *om.* quando ad aquas ... sed] **L.**  
<sup>287</sup> volitant sicut aves] **F** sicut aves volant **CG** volutant sicut aves **L.**  
<sup>288</sup> nec vas apud nos invenitur, quod possit eorum impetibus obviare] **F** [*corr.* impetus  
(Davidsohn)] nec apud nos imicintur quod posset eorum impetui obviare **L** *om.* **CG.**  
<sup>289</sup> non] **FCL** autem **G.**  
<sup>290</sup> sicut ceteri homines] **CG** ut ceteri homines **F** *om.* **L.**  
<sup>291</sup> *conieci* et tempore necessitatis et famis corticibus et foliis arborum satiantur] tempore  
enim necessitatis et famis corticibus et foliis arborum satiantur **F** et tempore necessitatis et  
famis corticibus et foliis arborum saturantur **CG** set tempore famis et necessitatis corticibus  
arborum et herbarum floribus saciantur **L.**  
<sup>292</sup> turpissime] **L** nobilissime **CGF** [*lectionem recentiore* *malim*].  
<sup>293</sup> *add.* vero **F.**  
<sup>294</sup> *add.* et **CG.**  
<sup>295</sup> immunda comedunt] **F** *transp.* **CG** *om.* **L.**  
<sup>296</sup> *add.* tum **CG.**

bibere,<sup>297</sup> capite amputato<sup>298</sup> punitur. Legem non habent nisi illam quam precepit “Ihesus”;<sup>299</sup> ecclesiastica reprobant sacramenta,<sup>300</sup> et dicunt legem nostram amplius sustineri non debere.<sup>301</sup> Status alios<sup>302</sup> habent, prout in libro vobis directo<sup>303</sup> plenius continetur.<sup>304 305</sup>

Quare<sup>306</sup> plagam timentes nimiam<sup>307</sup> in nos breviter infligendam,<sup>308</sup> cum per terram<sup>309</sup> a nobis per<sup>310</sup> xx<sup>311</sup> dietas tantummodo<sup>312</sup> sint remoti, et iam in<sup>313</sup> fines nostros irruerunt,<sup>314</sup> et stragem fecerint mirabilem paganorum et minentur eciam christianis.<sup>315 316 317</sup>

## APPENDIX 2: ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE CRITICAL EDITION

As a scourge because of our human race’s sins, Jesus Christ has sent forth barbarian tribes. For a certain Pseudo-Prophet and many others have arisen from the

<sup>297</sup> vinum non bibunt sed aquam. et si [*ins. s.l. si*] contingeret aliquem de conversis ad eos vinum bibere] **F** vinum non bibunt s(ed) aquam, et si vinum aliq(ue)m contigit bibere aut degustare, et de illis qui ad eos convertuntur **CG** vinum non bibunt set aquam tantummodo. et si aliquis attemptaverit conmedere vel bibere, que ab ipsis prohibentur **L**.

<sup>298</sup> capite amputato] **F** amputato capite **CG** capite **L**.

<sup>299</sup> legem non habent nisi illam quam precipit Ihesus] **CG** legem non habent nisi illud quod precipit Ihesus eis **F** legem non habent nisi illam quam ille Ihesus dat **L**.

<sup>300</sup> ecclesiastica reprobant sacramenta] **F** ϕ(μν)ια ecclesiastica sacramenta reprobant **CG** reprobant autem sacramenta ecclesiastica **L**.

<sup>301</sup> legem nostram amplius sustineri non debere] **L** legem nostram amplius sufficere non debere **F** legem nostram sustinere non posse **CG** [*ins. s.l. posse G*]

<sup>302</sup> status alios] **L** status autem **F** [*corr. statum (Davidsohn)*]

<sup>303</sup> directo] **F** misso **L**.

<sup>304</sup> continetur] **F** videbitis contineri **L**.

<sup>305</sup> status ... continetur] *om.* **CG**.

<sup>306</sup> quare] **F** quare tantam **CG** istam **L**.

<sup>307</sup> nimiam] **F** nimis **L om.** **CG**.

<sup>308</sup> scripsi in nos breviter infligendam] in nos breviter infigendam **F** in nos breviter infixuram **CG** breviter nobis infligendam **L**.

<sup>309</sup> cum per terram] **F** ut pote cum **CG** et **L**.

<sup>310</sup> per] **FCG om.** **L**.

<sup>311</sup> xx] **CGL** xv<sup>ti</sup> **F** [*legit XX<sup>ti</sup> (Davidsohn)*]

<sup>312</sup> dietas tantummodo] **F** dietas **CG** dietarum termino **L**.

<sup>313</sup> in] **FCG om.** **L**.

<sup>314</sup> hic fin. **CG**.

<sup>315</sup> scripsi et stragem fecerint mirabilem paganorum, et minentur eciam christianis] et stragem ... etiam christianis **F** et strages fecerunt ac faciunt paganis, minantur enim christianis **L**.

<sup>316</sup> *add.* vestram sanctitatem duximus obsecrandam, quat(enus) pro nobis qui sumus signum positi ad sagitam, preces ad Dominum effundatis, ut sibi placeat hanc pestem a populo catholico revocare. ne christiana confundatur religio et christiane fidei firmaculum dirimatur. preces autem, quas a vobis exigimus, pro nobis ab omnibus fidelibus exigatis. **F**

<sup>317</sup> *add.* prima patefacta sunt hec in estate [*ins. s.l. in estate*], anno domini milesimo trescentesimo tricesimo quinto **L**.

furthest regions of the earth, of whom there is an innumerable and unassailable multitude. They spare few men and copiously shed the blood of clerics and of the religious. They encourage wars and now dwell in the regions of the East, and have already subjugated fifteen kingdoms to themselves. A little of their manner and habits is revealed to you here, and in greater depth in the book assembled here in your presence.

They call him “Jesus of Nazareth,” just as [these things] are held in the symbol of our faith, and they say that they have him with them. They bear him in a chariot woven of purest gold and with precious stones. He never partakes of food, but is believed to be immortal by all those who are in his army. They say that they never perceive the chariot in darkness, but that it shines at all times like the sun, such that those who are standing around, who are in his army, cannot be hidden by the shadows of night.

Sitting in his chariot, he bears in his hands a book written in three languages — Hebrew, Greek, that is, and Latin — in which [are] the prophecies destined to be fulfilled about their future deeds,<sup>318</sup> of which only a few have happened, but it is as if innumerable had, and this causes fear and trembling in us. Their book begins as follows: “The Book of the Accomplishment of the New Testament, to Restrain Rebellious Power and to Preserve the Justice of the Meek.” For all the messengers sent to them, they have made many copies of it, saying through interpreters, whom they have of all languages, that those things, which are contained in the book, ought quickly to be implemented. We send you a copy of this just as our messengers received it, and Our Lordship<sup>319</sup> has written to you.

Those messengers of ours that were mentioned previously were among their army for a month and longer, and witnessed the unexpected miracles that the aforementioned “Jesus” enacted in the presence of all. Those who are in his army are most beautiful,<sup>320</sup> have very attractive features, and are pleasant to look upon. Their height is one cubit more than the common man; they are favored with strong arms and have very sturdy bows; they know how to shoot arrows twice as well as other men: they say that they will subjugate the entire world with their arrows. They bear themselves in battle in such a way that they never flee or are afraid, but, if any of them (which rarely happens) dies in battle, as a sign of his salvation and glory, they hang him in the air with his body kept by human skill free from corruption.

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<sup>318</sup> This is a loose translation, since all of the MSS’ readings at this point are quite obscure.

<sup>319</sup> This refers to the author of the letter, who received intelligence, which he is now communicating.

<sup>320</sup> Though the reading *ditissimi*, the basic meaning of which is “very rich,” appears to be the older reading, the reading *dulcissimi* (“very sweet”), given by later MSS, makes far more sense in this context. See the *apparatus criticus* to the text in Appendix 1, n. 227.

They have no knowledge of wool or linen, but dress without distinction in animal skins. They have weapons woven from tree bark that cannot be penetrated by anyone. They kill kings and princes and do not allow a high priest at the head of the church, while the common people who convert to their law are protected. They do not ride horses, mules, or draught animals, but have animals like deer, and are borne by these animals through mountains and plains. They do not have boats, but excellent vessels made in the manner of fish, constructed of a very light sort of wood, which are unbreakable; and they bear them in wagons and, when they arrive at the water, they can cross easily. These do not fear sea storms, but fly across the sea like birds, nor can a vessel be found among us able to withstand their attack. They do not partake of food like other men, but in time of need and famine they are satisfied with the bark and leaves of trees. They lie most foully,<sup>321</sup> and they consume filthy things. They do not drink wine, but rather water; and if it happens that anyone of those converted to them drinks wine, he is punished by having his head cut off. They have no religion except that which “Jesus” has prescribed to them; they have rejected the holy sacraments, and say that our religion should be supported no longer. They have other statutes that are accordingly contained more fully in the book sent to you.

On account of this, we are afraid that too great a plague will soon be inflicted upon us, since they are only twenty days’ travel distant from us, and already have broken through our borders and made an extraordinary slaughter of the pagans and are also threatening the Christians.

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<sup>321</sup> Though the earlier reading seems to have been “nobilissime” (most nobly), this sits at odds with the use of “immunda” (filthy things) in the next clause, hence I have preferred here the later reading of “turpissime” (most foully) found only in the late MS L. See further the critical apparatus, n. 292.