

Venerating St. Michael the Archangel in the Holy Roman Empire and in Bulgaria, 10th–11th Centuries: Similarities, Differences, Transformations

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The interest in the relations between Bulgaria and the Ottonians has existed for a long time and has recently intensified.¹ This article, however, shall not discuss this topic, but will instead explore the phenomenon of the cult of St. Michael the Archangel, with the goal of examining it within the framework of Christian Europe during the early Middle Ages, where the Bulgarians will be viewed as representing its *east* and the Germans its *west*, respectively.

Keywords: St Michael the Archangel; early medieval Bulgaria; Holy Roman Empire; Monte Gargano; Bamberg

A single article could hardly encompass and interpret all the possible aspects and manifestations of the worship of St. Michael the Archangel in the Holy Roman Empire and in the Bulgarian lands during the early Middle Ages. This *a priori* suggests the need for some kind of selection of the available documents and accounts, as well as for some preliminary provisions to be made. The first of which, for instance, is related to the fact that the independent Bulgarian kingdom ceased to exist after 1018, when Byzantium conquered the Bulgarian lands, after an exhausting struggle that lasted for more than four decades. Secondly, after 1054, the Bulgarians and the inhabitants of the Holy Roman Empire followed, at least ›on paper‹, two different denominations of the Christian faith, which nonetheless did not prevent them from worshipping the same Archangel, St. Michael, during the years of the most expansive spread of his cult especially in western Europe, i.e. from the mid-tenth to the mid-eleventh century.² And thirdly, it seems that the anticipation of the End of Days to occur around the year 1000 (or in 992, according to the eastern Church and the so-called Constantinople era, in particular) was typical not only for the *west*, but also for the *east* (referring in this case to the Bulgarians and the Byzantines, since Byzantium and Bulgaria were the two legitimate empires of the Christian East after 927).³ Moreover, after Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara wrote

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1 Gjuzelev, Bulgaren und Deutsche in Zeitalter der Ottonen; Гюзелев, Българските пратеничества при германския император Отон I.

2 Callahan, Cult of St. Michael the Archangel.

3 Magdalino, The Year 1000 in Byzantium, 241; Степанов, В очакване на Края.

his *Apocalypse* (probably in 691/2),⁴ the end of the world by definition became primarily associated with the so-called last (Roman) emperor and, respectively, the last empire.⁵ And since this *End* was also linked to the so-called final battle between the forces of *good* and *evil*, i.e. between Jesus Christ and the Antichrist, and the heavenly forces were to be led into battle namely by St. Michael the Archangel (Rev. 12: 7-9), it would be only logical that both the Bulgarians and the inhabitants of the Holy Roman Empire would assign a special role to St. Michael the Archangel in this heavenly plan and that all this would be duly reflected in the texts, rituals, ceremonies, and the visualizations of that age.

The Byzantines, whom the Bulgarians were culturally affiliated with, showed an increased interest in St. Michael the Archangel not only prior to 992, but also before the year 1092, which too was laden with certain expectations regarding the impending *End*. Within the borders of Byzantium in Asia Minor was located the sanctuary at Chonae, which was the site of pilgrimage and festivals celebrating St. Michael the Archangel at least until the late twelfth century.⁶ Thus, Symeon the Metaphrast (d. ca. 1000) created a version of the well-known *Miracle at Chonae* which was related namely to St. Michael the Archangel. In the eleventh century, another great Byzantine philosopher, Michael Psellos (1018-1081), reflected on miracles in the most famous sanctuary of the Archangel in Western Europe, the one at Monte Gargano (situated in today's Puglia, Italy), as well as in the sanctuary in Asia Minor. The story of the miracle of St. Michael the Archangel appeared once more, at the end of the tenth century or, more probably, at the beginning of the eleventh century, again in Byzantium, but this time in the *Menologion* of Basileus Basil II (976-1025).⁷ Moreover, Byzantium's capital, Constantinople – ›the centre of the world‹, also called the ›eye of the Universe‹, had several patrons: Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary (the Theotokos), the holy warrior-martyrs and alongside them, of course, St. Michael the Archangel. Just like in the West, and starting from the ninth century onwards, the latter became especially significant for the Byzantines in his role as leader of the celestial army⁸ and as a symbol of imperial victory, in addition to his oldest function as a healer.⁹

And lastly, but not least in importance, western Europe read the same *Revelation* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, called by B. McGinn ›the crown of Eastern Christian apocalyptic literature‹,¹⁰ in Latin, beginning from the first decades of the eighth century,¹¹ while the

4 Reinink, Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser. The Syriac version is edited by Reinink, *Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*. The Greek and Latin versions are edited by Aerts and Kortekaas, *Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*.

5 Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 151-184; Reinink, *Syrische Wurzeln der mittelalterlichen Legende vom römischen Endkaiser*; Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser*; Reinink, *Ps.-Methodius*; McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70-71.

6 Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 178; Vryonis, *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, 20, 33, n. 165.

7 Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 157-159; Basil, *Menologium Basilianum*, ed. Migne, 33 CD; Michael Psellus, *Oratio in Archangelum Michaellem*, ed. Fisher, 230-256. On the expectations of the end of the world around AD 1000 in Byzantium, see Magdalino, *History of the Future and Its Uses*; Magdalino, *Prophecies on the Fall of Constantinople*; Magdalino, *End of Time in Byzantium*.

8 Walter, *Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art*, 277, 293; Kazhdan, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1360.

9 See Rohland, *Erzengel Michael*; Arnold, *Footprints of Michael the Archangel*, chapter 3.

10 McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70.

11 See McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 72; for a discussion of the oldest known Latin manuscript of Pseudo-Methodius, see Kortekaas, *Transmission of the Text of Pseudo-Methodius*; the second Latin redaction of that same text is edited by Prinz, *Frühe abendländische Aktualisierung*.

Bulgarians got acquainted with his work from the tenth century onwards, although they read it in Old Bulgarian (Old Church Slavonic).¹² This is namely the text that contains the well-known scene with the already mentioned ›last emperor‹ who, shortly before the arrival of the Antichrist, was supposed to go to Golgotha and leave there his crown and sceptre, stretching out his hands to heaven.¹³ It is therefore quite clear why for the Germans and the Bulgarians these paradigmatic, archetypical *loci/topoi* (last emperor, Golgotha, crown, scepter) stood at the base of several real or imaginary acts of their rulers, which will be discussed a bit later. The review of these and other similarities and differences in the afore-mentioned cult enables us to seek possible points of intersection in the worship of St. Michael the Archangel in the two European states (or regions) in question. It also gives us the opportunity to attempt to outline some constant characteristics as well as possible transformations and the emergence of new ›roles‹ assigned to the sainted archangel by the Germans and Bulgarians before the end of the early Middle Ages.

Otto III, Henry II and the cult of St. Michael the Archangel: symbolic acts on the threshold between two millennia.

By the mid-tenth century until the end of it, a number of texts appeared in western Europe which were directly related to the End of Time, which was expected to come in the year 1000.¹⁴ The pressure brought on by this anticipation is best seen among the regular clergy, and more specifically among some members of the intellectual elite at that time, especially those who acted as advisers, one way or another, to the kings and, in particular to the Ottonian emperors. The latter is not surprising given the direct connection between concepts such as the (Christian) *empire*, the *chosen people/people of God*, the *salvation of souls on Judgment Day*, the *unclean people (of) Gog and Magog* and the like. Emperors were viewed by many learned men as directly responsible for the salvation of the souls of ›the God's chosen people‹ and the survival of the empire in such ›tense times‹ before the impending *End*. Most of these rulers perceived their role as a solemn responsibility of the highest possible order in the value scale of the Christian world. In this regard, of utmost importance for us are several symbolic acts made by Emperor Otto III (983-1002), who ascended the throne of the Holy Roman Empire at the tender age of three; these acts were all made just before the year 1000, during the year itself or directly afterwards.¹⁵

12 Thompson, *Slavonic Translations of Pseudo-Methodius*, esp. 144; Йовчева и Тасева, Преславска лексика в превода на Псевдо-Методиевото Откровение; Йовчева и Тасева, Двата старобългарски превода на Псевдо-Методиевото Откровение; Тъпкова-Займова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, 161; Милтенова, *Откровение на Методий Патарски*; also see Тъпкова-Zaimova and Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*; Biliarsky, *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

13 Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 180.

14 There are many books and articles on this problem. On the letter of the abbot from Montier-en-Der, see Konrad, *De Ortu et tempore Antichristi*; Adso Dervensis, *De ortu et tempore Antichristi necnon et tractatus qui ab eo dependunt*, ed. Verhelst; Verhelst, Adso of Montier-en-Der; on the so-called letter referring to the Hungarian incursions before the year 1000, see Huygens, *Un témoin de la crainte*; on the attitude towards that same year amongst the Anglo-Saxons and with regard to such an author as was Ælfrik, in particular, see Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* 150 ff.

15 On the reign of Otto III a classical study is Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio*, 87-187.

Otto III's acts do not have the nature of trivial, mundane activities. These acts bear a powerful symbolic significance, undoubtedly influenced by the cult of St. Michael the Archangel, which had a strong presence in the western parts of Christian Europe before and directly after 1000 AD.¹⁶ This cult remained a fundamental part of western Christianity up until the twelfth century when it was gradually replaced by the cult of the Virgin Mary. Such specificity is easily explained given the fact that according to the Bible, the heavenly forces were to be led into the final battle against ›the forces of darkness‹ before the *End* by St. Michael the Archangel himself. Did this cult of the Archangel have a similar dimension in the eastern part of Europe at that time and, in particular, in the two Christian empires there, namely the Byzantine one and that of the Bulgarians? This question is much too complex and would require focused and thorough research that cannot be undertaken within the scope of this article. I would therefore simply like to point out the noteworthy fact that the mother of Otto III was of Byzantine origin and was called Theophano;¹⁷ he nevertheless was surrounded mainly by intellectuals and ascetics with ties to the western Church.

It is well known that on the feast day of St. Michael the Archangel it is customary to read passages from the *Apocalypse* – something generally not typical for the other feast days of the liturgical year. Another detail also worth keeping in mind: the notion of St. Michael the Archangel as the master of the scales of justice which weigh the souls on the Day of Judgment began to take form during the ninth century.¹⁸

Following Peter Bitsilli [Bicilli], let me note that as a cultural period, the Christian Middle Ages were ›governed‹ by hierarchy and symbolism. According to him, these two traits can be found everywhere – in science, literature and the visual arts of this period, as well as in the perception of the world in its entirety.¹⁹ The symbolic way of thinking, continues Bitsilli, bridges the gap that divides the two worlds – the visual one, i.e. the one of experience, with the invisible (or heavenly) one.²⁰ Bitsilli's observations are undoubtedly true; and I would expand the two above-mentioned trends with a third, or rather a factor typical of that era – the conservative tradition. Tradition is nothing more than a specific *memory* which is repeated continuously with the help of the corresponding (symbolic) rituals or texts and images within a given collective, society, or even people; often, however, it is also renovated. Furthermore, each symbolic act, especially if it is made by an emperor, at a symbolic place and at a symbolic time, must be correctly read also as a message for the future and, possibly, as an attempt at *renewal*, a renovation (*renovatio*) of the empire.

So, what can be derived from some of the symbolic acts of Otto III, who was undoubtedly influenced by the Sibylline eschatological traditions of the Apennines? Those traditions expectedly received a significant boost on the peninsula during the tenth century, which was much more visible when compared with the same traditions in the Frankish kingdom and the lands populated by Germans. Before attempting to answer this question, it would be logical to outline at least in general these symbolic acts, along with their chronology and some of

16 See esp. Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 181-204.

17 Jenkins, *Byzantium*, 321-325; Ciggaar, *Byzantium and its Neighbors*, 266; for more details, also see Euv and Schreiner, *Kaiserin Teophanu*; Davids, *Empress Theophano*; on dynastic marriages on the eve of the year 1000 esp., see Shepard, *Marriages towards the Millennium*.

18 Fried, *Awaiting the End of Time*, 59.

19 Бицилли, *Элементы средневековой культуры*, 12, 14-15.

20 Бицилли, *Элементы средневековой культуры*, 21.

their specific *loci/topoi*. Moreover, they should be placed in the overall context of Otto III's rule in the period directly preceding and following the year 1000, in particular between 996 and 1002. Some of them had projections even later on, during the rule of his successor Henry II (1002-1024), this time not only concerning the ideas of *renovatio imperii*, but also regarding another year, tensely anticipated by the Christians in the western part of Europe: the year 1033 (as a sum of the year 1000 and the 33 years of the earthly life of Jesus, the so-called *Annus Passionis*).

Johannes Fried is inclined to view as highly probable the existence of a direct connection between the discussion regarding the End of Time and the imperial programme for the ›renovation‹ of the empire at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries, since the number and quality of such references, and primarily with regard to the name of Otto III, is truly impressive.²¹ This is not quite uncontroversial, as Levi Roach has recently pointed out, the sources from the time of Otto III's reign over the empire of the west do not explicitly state anything in this regard. Nevertheless, as Roach also admits, the cumulative effect of the sources dating mostly from the period from 996 to 1002 does imply certain conclusions precisely in the direction of adherence to the expectations for the End of Time.²²

First of all, in 996, when the still quite young Otto III was preparing for his imperial coronation in Rome (on 21 May 996), he wore a cloak decorated with scenes from the *Apocalypse* of St. John the Apostle. This information can be found in the *Miracula S. Alexii*. It also contains an important addition: when the ceremony was over, Otto III bestowed this clearly significant cloak to the monastery of Saints Boniface and Alexius on the Aventine: Otto III obviously began his imperial reign with eschatological considerations in mind.²³ This is the earliest evidence of the depiction of such images outside of the illumination tradition. The so-called *Bamberg Apocalypse*, one of the several famous manuscripts from Reichenau that is perhaps the emblematic example of the illumination art-form and that in many ways has given rise to the trend of depicting the *Apocalypse* in miniatures, was probably dedicated to Otto III. This codex (*Bamberg Staatsbibliothek Msc. Bibl. 140*) contains the oldest depiction of Antichrist outside of the tradition of Beatus of Liébana and also implies definite apocalyptic conceptions.²⁴

Another codex from Bamberg includes two manuscripts (*Bamberg Staatsbibliothek MSS 22 and 76*), that are combined into one body and were most probably also a part of Otto III's library.²⁵ A further observation regarding the monastery of Saints Boniface and Alexius in Rome can be added here. It served as a sanctuary (in the late 980s and the early 990s) to none other than one of the most important figures that helped Otto III impose new cults in Europe – Adalbert (Vojtěch) of Prague, who would later be made a saint.²⁶

21 For more details, see Fried, *Awaiting the End of Time*, 40 ff.; on Otto, see also Görich, *Otto III. Romanus Saxonicus et Italiscus*.

22 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 78, n. 11.

23 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 78.

24 See Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, vol. 2, 10-24, 215-228; Fried, *Awaiting the End of Time*, 40-41; Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 86.

25 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 85.

26 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 79. For St. Adalbert and his deeds, also see Флоря, *Христианство в Древнепольском и Древнечешском государстве*, 196, 211-224, 226-236, 240-242, 245, 248, 254-255, 258-264; Wood, *Missionary Life*, 207-225; Кузнецова, *Миссии латинской церкви*, 50-52, 56.

Otto III made an extremely important penitential visit to a place in western Europe that was truly emblematic at the time – Monte Gargano, Apulia (today's Puglia in Southern Italy). It was made precisely at the beginning of 999, and what is more, during Lent. This Christian centre has a long history; it had been used by the Langobards/Lombards for their political and religious legitimation after they had settled in Italy. It is also the site of a major pilgrimage centre related to the cult of St. Michael the Archangel that held great significance in Europe during the early Middle Ages. As was already mentioned, the latter was directly connected to the Second Coming of Christ. The story of the miracle in Monte Gargano dates from the eighth or ninth century, while its Greek version probably emerged in the late ninth or the early tenth century, i.e. during the Byzantine *reconquista* of these territories.²⁷

During the period between the tenth and the eleventh centuries, Monte Gargano was at the height of its influence among the Christians. The aura of this holy centre spread far and wide not only among the senior clergy who visited the site during the tenth century (for instance, Odo of Cluny, John of Gorze, William of Volpiano), but also among the ordinary pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem – many of them, especially Normans and Catalans, stopped there to worship St. Michael the Archangel.²⁸ The centre of the cult of St. Michael the Archangel at Mount Gargano had gained such great spiritual influence by the tenth and eleventh centuries that similar sanctuaries in the Apennines and in other regions of eastern Europe actually began to imitate its location and the form of its shrine.²⁹ For instance, the erection of the Mont-Saint Michel Abbey in Normandy on a rocky mount is a self-conscious act of modelling in accordance with the ›matrix‹ set by the sanctuary at Monte Gargano. Moreover, this imitation model was further achieved by other conscious measures: the direct ›import‹ of monks from Monte Gargano, as well as the transferring of a part of the altar stone as a relic from Gargano.³⁰ In many parts of western Europe, church buildings that were almost identical in shape and were raised on hills and mountain tops became a symbol of the presence and the protection of St. Michael the Archangel.³¹

Otto III started his journey to Monte Gargano at the insistence of the venerable ascetic St. Nilus.³² This journey should also be viewed in the context of the spiritual influence wielded by Otto III's entourage during the last three years of his life. A group of prominent intellectuals and trusted ascetics who probably drew his attention to the apocalyptic literature with regard to the year 1000. According to Jean-Marie Sansterre, this austere act, along with the subsequent penitential journeys of the emperor, could all be viewed as an essential part of the renovation.³³ It can be assumed with good reason that this *renovation* of the empire was intended to somehow delay the coming of the *End of Time*, since the existence of the empire in the west was seen as a fundamental condition for the continued existence of this world.

27 Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 166.

28 Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 185, n. 32-34; cf. France, *Occasion of the Coming of the Normans*.

29 Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 170; details, see in Otranto and Carletti, *Il santuario di S. Michele arcangelo*, 57-71.

30 Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 170.

31 Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 171.

32 *Vita de S. Nilo*, quoted after Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 185, n. 35; for the meeting between St. Nilus and the emperor, see Дюби, *Времето на катедралите*, 99.

33 For the influence of the ascetics over Otto III, see Sansterre, *Otton III et les saints ascètes*.

It should be noted in particular that on this penitential journey the emperor crossed the distance from Rome to Monte Gargano barefoot, just as each pilgrim is expected to make his way to the Golgotha – barefooted, in the literal and figurative senses of the word. Actually, this practice is much more ancient in origin. In the *Book of Exodus* in the Old Testament God explicitly tells Moses, showing him the Unburnt Bush: »Do not come any closer,« God said. »Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground« (*Exodus* 3:5). The Greek philosophers as well as the sages of ancient Greece in general did not fail to draw attention to this practice. They also emphasized the need to appear barefoot before the sacred sites and the places of their secrets and mysteries. Iamblichus, for instance, instructed (in *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* 82-86) that »One should sacrifice and worship barefoot.«³⁴

The series of similar symbolic acts was continued with a mutual penitential withdrawal by Otto III and Franco of Worms, with whom the emperor travelled to Subiaco where he laid the foundations of a church of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Adalbert of Prague. Upon his return at the end of the summer of 999, Otto III convened a meeting with his main councillors in the Abbey of Farfa (located north of Rome) and announced that he had planned some extraordinary events for the coming year 1000.³⁵ According to Levi Roach, this meeting had a very important contextual significance with regard to the future. The emperor issued two documents for the Abbey of Farfa, one of which ended with a striking spiritual sanction. It contained a threat to anyone who dared to break the privileges given, namely that they, together with Otto III (!), would answer for their deeds on Judgement Day. Such phrasing is quite unusual for the charters issued in Italy in the name of Otto III, but it sounds logical in the context of the emperor's penitential acts in the preceding months.³⁶

Another act of Otto III also carried an emblematic quality, since it is again part of the same behavioural ›network‹ of actions. While in Aachen, the capital of Charlemagne's (†814) empire, Otto III ordered the emperor's tomb to be opened, thus obviously signalling a connection between his own authority and the legacy of the first Frankish, but also Roman, emperor since 476. All this was fully in line with the Otto's plans for *Renovatio imperii*.³⁷ Here, one can undoubtedly also see the influence of the so-called Legend of Charlemagne,³⁸ which presented the Frankish-and-Roman emperor in the light of ›the last emperor‹ concept that emerged at the very end of the seventh century (most probably around 691/692 in Northern Mesopotamia, according to Gerrit Reinink) and was developed in the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara.³⁹ In it, Charlemagne is presented as directly connected to Jerusalem, as can very well be expected in the light of the Pseudo-Methodius tradition in the west after the beginning of the eighth century. This connection is not surprising in the light of a story

34 Кашъмов и Панчовски, *Питагор и питагорейците*, 101.

35 Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio*, 130-131; Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 87.

36 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 87, 89.

37 See Folz, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne*, 76-93; Флоря, *Христианство в Древнепольском и Древнечешском государстве*, 250; Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 91 ff.

38 Folz, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne*, 76-93; for details on the eschatological perspective and motivation behind some of Charlemagne's reforms, see Latowsky, *Charlemagne as Pilgrim*; Alberi, ›Like the Army of God's Camp‹; Gabriele, *Empire of Memory*.

39 Amongst so many studies on this issue, see for instance Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 151-184; McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 32-36; Reinink, *Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser*, 82-111; Reinink, *Ps.-Methodius*, 149-187; Reinink, *Romance of Julian Apostate*.

that appeared in the *Chronicle* of Benedict of Monte Soracte, compiled in a monastery not far from Rome (perhaps not coincidentally), again in the late tenth century. According to this legend, Charlemagne did, in fact, visit Jerusalem during his lifetime, but before leaving Italy he, along with his whole entourage, stopped at Monte Gargano to receive the blessing of St. Michael the Archangel.⁴⁰ Could it be that Otto III was deliberately trying to present himself as following in the footsteps of his renowned predecessor in his journey to Monte Gargano? This could very well be the case, especially if one recalls that Otto III had wanted to place his crown on the Golgotha hill, exactly as predicted by Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara – along with having the intention of ordering for himself to be buried in Aachen, near the tomb of the western Roman Empire's re-newer, Charlemagne.⁴¹

Let us now take a look at another holy site of the cult of St. Michael the Archangel – that of San Michele della Chiusa. It is located in Piedmont near Turin, and was the other significant *locus/topos* of worship of St. Michael the Archangel by the Christian world in Italy at that time. Here, on the peak of a high mount, St. Giovanni Vincentius, the bishop of the Ravenna region, who later became a hermit in the mountain near Chiusa, built a church around 987, i.e. again shortly before the anticipated End of Time in the year 1000. The church was erected quickly after his visions of fire descending from the sky and of St. Michael the Archangel. Both visions were linked to the hill which St. Giovanni later named ›Pirchiriano‹ (from the Greek *pyr kyriou*, i.e. ›Divine Fire‹ or ›Fire of God‹). Shortly afterwards, the church was consecrated by the bishop of Turin Amizo (c. 988 – c. 1002). The legend of this link between the church and the Divine Fire quickly spread far and wide and later became instrumental for the great fame of Chiusa. As a result, by 999 a monastery was also built there, founded by Hugo of Montboissier, a pilgrim living in the Auvergne who undertook this pious act in an attempt to atone for his sins. Hugo chose Chiusa near Turin because of its ideal location with regard to the constant flow of worshippers travelling from Francia to Rome.⁴²

The centres of worship of St. Michael the Archangel in the German lands of the Holy Roman Empire were equally popular during the aforementioned period. The one in Hildesheim, for instance, quickly became ›the art capital of Northern Europe‹, preserving various masterpieces of early medieval western European art created during the reign of Otto III. Among them are the famous bronze doors, a special column decorated with scenes from the life of Jesus Christ, and a reliquary containing a piece of the Golgotha cross. The latter was donated to the church personally by Otto III in 993, when his own mentor Bernward ceased his spiritual guidance of the young emperor in order to become a bishop. Shortly before passing away in 1022, Bernward consecrated the cathedral where soon afterwards his body was put to rest. The interesting thing is that his tomb contained signs which undoubtedly point to his special attitude towards the Day of Judgment, just as was the case with his contemporaries, the emperors Otto III and Henry II (1002-1024), whom Bernward faithfully served for so many decades.⁴³

40 Benedicti Sancti Andreae Monachi, *Chronicon*, chapter 23, quoted after Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 185, n. 39.

41 See Sansterre, *Otton III et les saints ascètes*, 403-407; Fried, *Awaiting the End of Time*, 59; Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 185; for some ideas of Otto III and their symbolic realization, also see Warner, *Ideals and Action in the Reign of Otto III*.

42 *Chronica monasterii Sancti Michaelis Clusini*, quoted after Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 186.

43 Steinen, *Bernward von Hildesheim über sich selbst*; Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 187.

Another centre of worship of St. Michael the Archangel in the German lands was Bamberg, which was under the special supervision and care of Henry II, since in 1007 he ordered a special diocese to be created there. In 1012, on his fortieth birthday, the emperor personally attended the consecration of the cathedral and dedicated the main altar to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael the Archangel, and St. George.⁴⁴ The cathedral and Bamberg as a whole were the centres of the sacred imperial imagery during Henry II's reign, which is why he ordered some of the most beautiful manuscripts with miniatures created both in his time and the time of his predecessors to be stored precisely there. Amongst them are the *Gospels of Otto III*, considered by some historians to be the culmination of the Ottonian miniature painting, as well as the *Pericopes Book of Henry II*, which Henry Mayr-Harting calls »the apogee of angelic power in Ottonian art«. A definite addition to these is the outstanding *Bamberg Apocalypse*, created around 1000.⁴⁵

Also in Bamberg and with the support of Henry II, Bishop Eberhard founded a new Benedictine centre that was again named after St. Michael the Archangel – Michaelsberg. The event took place in 1015 and the location chosen was once more a high hill situated above the town. Shortly before leaving for the Apennines (in 1022, for a visit to Monte Gargano), the Emperor Henry II, together with some clerics, participated in the consecration of the monastery church of St. Michael the Archangel in 1021. It is very likely that precisely on that occasion Henry II presented the church with a golden *antependium* for its main altar, which was subsequently stored in Basel. This famous work of art depicts Christ, with St. Michael the Archangel and St. Benedict of Nursia standing by his right side, and on his left – the archangels Gabriel and Raphael. The small figurines of Henry II himself and his wife Kunigunde positioned by the feet of Christ are an interesting addition to the scene. Christ himself is marked by an inscription on his head through the prism of *Apocalypse* 19:16 – as King of kings. The art and imagery, a product of Bamberg's creativity at that time, obviously exude expectations of the impending *End*.⁴⁶

It is thus clear that by early eleventh century, at least four big centres of worship of St. Michael the Archangel were located in the lands of the Holy Roman Empire in the West. If we add the great cathedral of *Mont-Saint-Michel* in Normandy,⁴⁷ as well as the churches in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Ireland and elsewhere,⁴⁸ it becomes quite clear that the worship of the most significant archangel – with regard to Judgment Day – in the West expectedly culminated precisely between the mid-tenth and the mid-eleventh centuries.⁴⁹

Earlier on, I pointed out Otto III's special connection to the cult of St. Adalbert of Prague, which was also directly related to the emperor's journey to Gniezno (Poland) in the year 1000. It should also be noted that this particular journey was again made during Lent. The

44 Callahan, *The Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 187.

45 Details, see in Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, vol. 1, chapter 4, 157-178, 179-201; vol. 2, chapter 1, 11-24, 45-48; Mayr-Harting, H., *Apocalyptic Book Illustration*, esp. 195-211.

46 Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, vol. 1, 66; Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 188.

47 The place was associated with St. Michael the Archangel already in eighth century and later, after 966, it became a Benedictine monastery; on this cult in the French lands, see Vincent and Vincent, *Culte et sanctuaires de saint Michel*.

48 See further Callahan, *Cult of St. Michael the Archangel*, 188-189, and Picard, *La diffusion du culte de saint Michel*; for the legends about St. Michael the Archangel in medieval England, see Johnson, *Saint Michael the Archangel in Medieval English Legend*, and also Jones, *Cult of Michael the Archangel in Britain*.

49 For different characteristics of this cult in Western Europe, see Bouet and Otranto, *Culto e santuari di San Michele*.

connection between the visits to Monte Gargano and to Subiaco in 999 is indeed quite obvious: in between other matters he had to attend to, the emperor went to pray at the grave of St. Adalbert located in Gniezno.⁵⁰ Upon his return, the emperor spent the Feast of the Assumption (15 August 1000) in Rome, where people from the procession bore images of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as the famous icon of Christ, known as the ›Acheropita‹ and stored in the Sancta Sanctorum of the Lateran Palace. Such processions, carrying icons of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, were also held outside of Rome, indirectly reflecting the sentiments and expectations that prevailed in the Italian Peninsula in the summer of 1000. Moreover, this procession bore overt references to similar ceremonial processions with icons of the Blessed Virgin and Jesus Christ held on the streets of Constantinople, where the icon of the Holy Mother/*Theotokos* seemed to pass by the icon of her son. Regarding, furthermore, the purposely sought parallelism between the empires of the east and the west, a special hymn was created for the occasion – *Carmen in assumptio sanctae Mariae in nocte quando tabula portatur*, that presented the actual encounter between the East and the West with the words, *dat scola Graeca melos et plebs Romana susurros*. Although the actual name of the Holy Mother (Mary) was rarely used in Byzantium, the assimilation of Byzantine traditions further on in its text is clearly visible, since the form mostly used is the typically Byzantine ›Theotokos‹ (Mother of God).⁵¹ Some assume that all this was done deliberately, as a sign of respect to the Greek-speaking community living in the Eternal City, as well as to the numerous monasteries with Byzantine monks located inside the city.⁵²

Shortly before the year 1000, however, something unexpected occurred. It needs to be addressed at least briefly. It is undoubtedly an important event, since it is associated with the inherently symbolic *place*, Rome. Almost immediately after the emperor left the city, the people there, led by Crescentius de Nomentana, rebelled and appointed an (anti)pope, the Greek-speaking Johannes Philagatos, who originated from southern Italy and was close to the mother of Otto III.⁵³ In the *Annals of Quedlinburg* (*Annales Quedlinburgenses*, s.a. 998) these events from 996-997 have been interpreted from an apocalyptic point of view: such an approach is evident from the labelling of Crescentius as a ›minister of Satan‹.⁵⁴ Moreover, these *Annals* were written on the basis of the now-lost *Annales Hildesheimenses majores*, a set of annals from the same period kept at Hildesheim. Hildesheim's bishop at that time was Bernward, who, as we have seen, had close ties with the imperial court. Gerbert of Aurillac, himself a councillor to the ruler, may have also contributed to such an attitude towards Crescentius, whom he attacked with the words *membrum diaboli* even prior to the events in question. On the basis of these accounts Levi Roach concludes that the events following 997 have spurred at least some degree of apocalyptic ›disquiet‹ within the imperial court circles.⁵⁵

50 For a thorough analysis, see Althoff, *Otto III*, 126-132.

51 Fried, *Awaiting the End of Time*, 41; Ciggaar, *Byzantium and its Neighbors*, 267.

52 Ciggaar, *Byzantium and its Neighbors*, 267.

53 Ciggaar, *Byzantium and its Neighbors*, 267; Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 81.

54 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 82.

55 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 82-83.

In 998 Otto III took back Rome and ordered Johannes Philagathos to be blinded and expelled from the city,⁵⁶ and for Crescentius to be killed and his body put on display. Such brutal action against these prominent rebels does not fit in any way with the tradition of the (generally) merciful politics of the Ottonian emperors, so this pitiless act by Otto III has always troubled historians. In the opinion of Levi Roach, it could be successfully interpreted through apocalyptic rhetoric: if the emperor viewed this confrontation in the Holy City of Rome in terms of the cosmic battle against the approaching Antichrist, then the lack of mercy on his part could easily be explained – Otto thought that he was not dealing with ordinary rebelling men, but with ›ministers of Satan‹ and ›heresiarchs‹.⁵⁷

Whatever the reason behind this brutal decision, one thing is clear: 997-998 was the time when Otto III surrounded himself with the circle of advisers that grew to be so instrumental for the decisions he would make during the next phase of his reign. That was also the moment when his programme of *Renovatio imperii* was put into motion, a programme regarding which there is plentiful and eloquent evidence. For instance, Otto III began using lead seals for his charters rather than the wax ones preferred by his predecessors. It was hardly coincidental then that these lead bulls had ›renovatio imperii‹ inscribed on them. Although it would be difficult to agree with Percy E. Schramm's assertion that this programme for the renovation of the empire was coherent and consciously structured in advance,⁵⁸ there is no doubt that its focus visibly oscillated between Rome and Aachen: it is clearly imperial in its essence. Equally clear is that the emperor was interested in eschatology, not so much for itself, but with regard to the mental and symbolic connections that it allowed him to draw between imperial Rome, the Carolingian imperial past and the End of Time.⁵⁹ It is hardly coincidental that Otto III gifted so many costly works of art to the treasury at Aachen,⁶⁰ or that Henry II subsequently found it appropriate to transfer some of them to Bamberg.⁶¹ In this respect, however, the practice of transferring expensive works of art with a specific symbolic meaning and ideological subtext should not be considered a novelty since it was known in the West but also in earlier times; one such example is the so-called *Codex Aureus* of Charles the Bald, which was taken from the treasury of Saint-Denis Abbey and given to St. Emmeram Abbey (Regensburg) by Arnulf of Carinthia.⁶²

The conclusions that can be drawn from all of the above can be summed up as follows. The cult of St. Michael the Archangel in western Europe and, in particular, in the Holy Roman Empire on the threshold between the first and the second millennium was clearly in direct interdependence with the notion of the sacred role of the western empire's capital centres. Quite understandably, a special role was allocated to Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), the main capital of the first emperor of the West after 476, Charlemagne. The various visits that Emperor Otto III made to places related to the cult of St. Michael the Archangel and the capital centres of the empire (Aachen, Quedlinburg), along with the archetypal symbol of the City of Rome

56 Ciggaar, *Byzantium and its Neighbors*, 267.

57 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 83; cf. also Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 199-203.

58 See criticism in Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 84.

59 Roach, *Emperor Otto III and the End of Time*, 101.

60 For details, see Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art and Portraiture*, chapter 2.

61 Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art*, chapter 4.

62 Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art*, 127, 155.

(albeit briefly, Otto III even settled to live there) shortly before or during the year 1000 were most probably aimed at creating a grid pattern of *places* and *images* directly connected to the idea of Doomsday and the notion of the renovation of the empire (*renovatio imperii*).

In contrast to his predecessor, Henry II strove to accentuate not so much the Roman imperial heritage as the *renovation* of the notion of the durability of the Frankish kingdom. This notion had already appeared in the mid-tenth century in a letter by Adso, abbot of Montier-en-Der (in northeastern Francia), to the Frankish queen Gerberga. The latter was the wife of the Frankish king Louis IV (936-954), the ruler of western Francia.⁶³ The work of the abbot of Montier-en-Der bore the title ›De ortu et tempore Antichristi‹ and rapidly became a fundamental text for the legend of the Antichrist in the West. According to Adso, this world could not end as long as the Frankish kings held power. It was true that the old Roman Empire had been eradicated, the abbot wrote in his letter to Gerberga, but after the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 the Franks had become both *de facto* and *de jure* its successors and until the Frankish kings were on the throne, this Roman heritage could not be destroyed. In other words, Frankish stability was a condition for postponing the arrival of the Judgement Day and the coming of the Antichrist. Following Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, Adso continued: the last Frankish king would also be ›the last emperor‹ before the *End* and the final battle between *good* and *evil*. He would willingly leave his crown and sceptre in Jerusalem as a the sign that the Christian Roman Empire had come to its end.⁶⁴ So Adso suggests, in a visionary way, that there exists continuity between the Roman and the Frankish realms. The very existence of an *empire*, first *Roman* and then *Christian*, therefore postpones the eschatological end of time.⁶⁵ Robert Konrad, however, draws attention to an important characteristic of Adso's writings: his text never refers to the *centre* Rome, only Jerusalem,⁶⁶ although the empire Adso envisioned is both Roman and Christian.

Henry II, however, did not fall behind his direct predecessor in terms of the special worship of the image of St. Michael the Archangel and his expected salvational role before the anticipated *End of Time*. It is clear, then, that these symbolic acts on the threshold between the tenth and the eleventh century, made by two of the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, should be completely understandable given the fact that every *end* contains the potential for a new beginning, a *renovation*.

The Cult of Saint Michael the Archangel in the Bulgarian Lands: Realia and Symbolic Transformations.

Let us first take a look at the *realia* from the late ninth century onwards.

First of all, the Basileus Michael III (842-867) became godfather to Prince Boris I of Bulgaria (852-889; d. 907) at his baptism in 864, enabling the name *Michael* to become symbolically meaningful in Bulgaria after 864,⁶⁷ since Saint Michael the Archangel became the

63 There are many studies on this topic. For instance, see McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 82-84; Magdalino, *Prophecies on the Fall of Constantinople*, 46; Истрин, *Откровение Мефодия Патарского и апокрифические видения Даниила*, 16.

64 Verhelst, *Adso of Montier-en-Der*, 82-83.

65 Verhelst, *Adso of Montier-en-Der*, 84.

66 Konrad, *De Ortu et tempore Antichristi*, 92-94.

67 More, see in Степанов, *Михаил, Петър, Йоан, Асен*, 30-38.

patron saint (or, better yet, the celestial protector) and baptizer of the Bulgarian prince,⁶⁸ similar to his godfather, the Byzantine basileus. It is also hardly coincidental that one of the grandsons of Boris-Michael and son of the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon (893-927) bore the name of his grandfather, Michael.

Secondly, the construction of Bulgarian churches and monasteries dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel began as early as the late ninth and the early tenth centuries.⁶⁹ Many of them were, of course, established during the period of Byzantine rule over certain parts of the Balkans. Such is probably the case with some of the numerous churches dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel in the Ohrid – Prespa region (modern Republic of Macedonia), which can also be confirmed by local toponyms and microtoponyms.⁷⁰ During the second half of the ninth and in the tenth centuries, however, this same region became part of Bulgaria. To illustrate my point, I would like to specify at least some of these churches and shrines, although a strict timeline of the dedication of some of them cannot be established: a church dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel can be found in Asamati village, situated on the eastern (Macedonian) coast of the Prespa Lake; such churches are also present in the villages Pretor (near Asamati), Pustets (on the Albanian side of the lake) and Arvati. On the southern (Albanian) shore of the lake, next to Zaroshka village, is the cave church of the archangel, which is part of a modest medieval monastery; another church, dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel, is located in Braichino village, also on the eastern shore of the Prespa Lake.⁷¹

Two monasteries also dedicated to the archangel should be added to this list. The first one is located on the southern shore of the Ohrid Lake, next to Ljubanishta village, and was founded by St. Naum of Ohrid in ca. 905; the donator for its construction was the Bulgarian prince, Boris-Michael.⁷² The second monastery is of the cave (rock) type and was founded no later than the thirteenth century; it is situated on the northern shore of the Ohrid Lake, near Radozhda village.⁷³

A few churches named after the archangel can be found in the outskirts of the city of Struga (in modern Macedonia): near Dolna Belitsa village, as well as the villages Tashmarunishta and Brchevo, although in the latter two cases the dating is somewhat uncertain. And lastly, the city of Ohrid also had a modest church dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel during the seventeenth century; it was located not far from the church of Theotokos Perivlepta (the Virgin of Perivlepta).⁷⁴ Whether it was established during Bulgarian rule in the region, however, is difficult to say. Be that as it may, the conclusion of A. Pentkovskii seems quite logical:

68 Чешмеджиев, Към въпроса за култа на архангел Михаил в средновековна България, 55, 61; Чешмеджиев, Към въпроса за култа на княз Борис-Михаил, 174.

69 Чешмеджиев, Към въпроса за култа на архангел Михаил, 55-56; Чешмеджиев, Към въпроса за култа на княз Борис-Михаил, 174.

70 Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, 117-146, esp. 121.

71 Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, esp. 121-122.

72 Иванова, *Стара българска литература*, Т. 4: Житиеписни творби, 80, 83.

73 Златарски, Към историята на манастира »Св. Наум« в Македония, 1-5; Чешмеджиев, Към въпроса за култа на архангел Михаил, 55; Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, 122.

74 Снегаров, *История на Охридската архиепископия*, 529; Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, esp. 122.

in the Middle Ages, it was customary to dedicate churches and monasteries to St. Michael the Archangel (or to him and other heavenly forces) in the Ohrid-Prespa region; this practice was also a result of an older local tradition. The dedication of the monastery church of St. Clement of Ohrid (d. 916) to the same archangel possibly provided a secondary influence in this direction, which was also replicated at the minster of the St. Naum of Ohrid Monastery. Furthermore, the monastery of St. Clement of Ohrid was actually the first Slavic (i.e., Old Bulgarian) monastery built in this area.⁷⁵ This is also confirmed by the *Encomium on the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel*, written by St. Clement of Ohrid, which was related to the liturgy on the Feast of the renovation (the annual revival of the day of consecration) of the church of St. Michael the Archangel.⁷⁶

What possible reasons might there be for the existence of two similar monasteries, both of them situated on the Ohrid Lake, with churches dedicated to the same archangel? A. Pentkovskii does not fail to mention that a connection to the previous Moravian-Pannonian tradition and the cult of St. Michael the Archangel, typical for western Europe, is highly plausible. Such a tradition would most probably also have been well-known to St. Clement of Ohrid.⁷⁷ At the same time, the idea that the construction and subsequent dedication of these churches was directly linked to Boris-Michael seems much more credible to him. The Bulgarian prince granted to Clement the land on which the monastery was erected, also providing him with financial aid to establish an Old Bulgarian literary school in the Kutmichevitsa region (nowadays these lands are located in south Albania and southwest Macedonia, but centuries ago they were part of the Bulgarian state). It is therefore quite reasonable to conclude that this was the a monastery donated by the Bulgarian ruler; similarly, the monastery of St. Naum had the same status, since Prince Boris-Michael was its chief donor as well.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the two monasteries were probably part of an entire ›Slavic‹ project of the Bulgarian prince, which, after 886 and the arrival of the disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria, also included the establishment of Slavic (Old Bulgarian) language schools, as well as Slavic liturgy and education. Thus, the dedication of the monasteries of St. Clement and St. Naum to St. Michael the Archangel could initially be an allusion to their special status and royal patronage, and over the years it probably became a ›sign‹ for the Old Bulgarian monasticism and Slavic language liturgy practiced there.⁷⁹

75 Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, esp. 123; also see Kostova, St. Kliment of Ohrid and His Monastery.

76 Куев, Един необнародван препис от Климентовото слово за Михаил и Гавриил, 222-223; Куев, Похвално слово за Михаил и Гавриил; Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, esp. 426; Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, esp. 123; also see Велинова, Климент Охридски; Ангушева-Тиханова, Риторически жанрове, 151-152.

77 Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, esp. 124 and notes 33, 34, 35.

78 Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, 429; Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, 125.

79 For the specific features of this ›project‹, see Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, 126, 134-135, 141.

The tradition of dedicating churches to St. Michael the Archangel could also be observed early on in the lands along the Bregalnica River, which is located in Macedonia today, but, prior to 1018, was a permanent part of the Bulgarian kingdom. In any case, in the eleventh century a monastery dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel was established here by St. Gabriel of Lesnovo, on the Upper Zletovska River that flows into the Bregalnica River.⁸⁰ And, as has been long known, St. Gabriel of Lesnovo was one of the four most famous Bulgarian anchorite saints from the western parts of Bulgaria precisely in the period between the tenth and the eleventh centuries.⁸¹

Some Bulgarian scholars are even willing to allow for the existence of a church dedicated to the *archistrategos* Michael in the capital city of Preslav after 893, claiming that it was ›among the main churches of Preslav‹.⁸²

Thirdly, after the arrival of the disciples of the Saints Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria, a number of official texts emerged, written in Old Church Slavonic and marking the special role of St. Michael the Archangel in the Christian world. Some of them (for instance, the *Service for St. Michael the Archangel* in its initial version) were most probably created already during the Moravian mission, maybe by St. Cyril (Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher) himself.⁸³ Among these writings which appeared in Bulgaria after 886 and were associated with November 8 – the feast called the Synaxis of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel – were the already mentioned *Encomium on the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel* by St. Clement of Ohrid,⁸⁴ the *Canon of the Archistrategos Michael* by Constantine of Preslav,⁸⁵ as well as the translation of the Archippus version of the *Miracle at Chonae* (Greek original BHG Nr. 1282), that is of the legend of the miracle with which St. Michael the Archangel saved from the pagans the shrine dedicated to him at Chonae, in Phrygia.⁸⁶ The authorship of a sermon called *On Angels* and known in five copies, the earliest of which is in MS 1039 from the National Library ›St. St. Cyril and Methodius‹ in Sofia, remains questionable.⁸⁷ According to Klimentina Ivanova, it could be identified as the work of someone from the inner circle of St. Clement of Ohrid, although some inconsistencies remain.⁸⁸

Fourthly, after the mid-eleventh century (*terminus post quem* 1041, the Bulgarian uprising led by Petar Delyan), a number of historical-apocalyptic texts dealing with the End of Days, anticipated around 1092, appeared in the Bulgarian lands, in particular in the areas around the contemporary cities of Sofia (the medieval Sredets), Kyustendil (the medieval

80 Пентковский, К истории славянского богослужения византийского обряда в начальный период, 134, 139.

81 Stepanov, *Memory and Oblivion in the Christian East*, esp. 349.

82 Кожухаров, Пети достоитъ архистратига, 62; also see Чешмеджиев, Към въпроса за култа на архангел Михаил, 55 f.

83 Атанасова, Разпространението на произведенията за архангел Михаил, 104 f., п. 6.

84 Климент Охридски, 238-286; Иванова, *Bibliotheca hagiographica Balcano-Slavica*, 287-288, text no. 7; Атанасова, Разпространението на произведенията за архангел Михаил, 105-106.

85 Кожухаров, Пети достоитъ архистратига, 59-62; Кожухаров, Константин Преславски. Канон за архистратига Михаил.

86 Атанасова, Разпространението на произведенията за архангел Михаил, 107-110; Иванова, *Bibliotheca hagiographica*, 187-188, text no. 3.

87 Атанасова, Разпространението на произведенията за архангел Михаил, 106-107.

88 Иванова, *Bibliotheca hagiographica*, 288-289, text no. 9.

Velbazhd), Pernik, Strumitsa (nowadays located in the Republic of Macedonia).⁸⁹ These texts spoke of the special God-given role the Bulgarians had before Judgment Day. The Bulgarians, therefore, viewed themselves as predestined to save the world in the Last Days and before the second coming of Christ.⁹⁰ Of special significance to them was the so-called Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle (*Skazanie/Tale of the Prophet Isaiah, how he was taken up by an angel to the seventh heaven*),⁹¹ where the people of Israel are substituted by the Bulgarian people: they were righteous before God and, although suffering under foreign rule after 1018, they remembered their glorious past and awaited the Messiah.⁹²

The appearance in these historical-apocalyptic texts of the singular figure of ›Michael Khagan‹, modeled according to the cliché/type of the ›last emperor/king [Michael]‹ in the text *And this is Interpretation of Daniel* can also be seen as one such symbolic transformation.⁹³ It is evident from the context of this and other sources in the same genre that there is a mixing of actual Byzantine emperors with this name, especially Michael III (d. 867), but since the texts are in fact compilations from the Bulgarian confines, alongside the Byzantine emperors should be added the name (and deeds) of the Bulgarian baptizer Boris-Michael (852-889; d. 907). Thus, these specific Bulgarian texts contain a ›composite‹ figure that blends into a single whole the *conversion to Christianity*, i.e. the original *beginning* (on the way to the salvation of souls) with the *end*. According to the medieval Christian way of thinking, it would only be logical for the *beginning* and the *end* to be in the same place (the Promised Land, presumably) and for a single person to be involved in both. That is Michael, in his role as both baptizer (the *beginning*) and ›the last king‹ shortly before the End of Days.

Of particular interest is the title given to this ›last king‹ Michael –khagan. It undoubtedly has a deep symbolic meaning, since no Byzantine, Bulgarian or any other written source dating from the ninth and tenth centuries has endowed Boris-Michael with such a title.⁹⁴ As is well known, in the steppes of Eurasia this title had the meaning of ›emperor‹, ›shahanshah‹ or ›tzar‹. Therefore, the message here could be interpreted in the following ›key‹: at the end of the eleventh century the Bulgarians had already lost their kingdom (i.e. the empire), but since they had arrived in southeastern Europe from the steppes around the Black Sea, where, at least from the mid-sixth century onwards, the supreme title used was ›khagan‹, it would be only logical for the ›last king‹ to carry the same title. This is a kind of double legitimization

89 Details, see in Търкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, 32; Моллов, *Мит. Енос. История.*, 190; Търкова-Zaimova and Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium*, 22; Stepanov, *Memory and Oblivion in the Christian East*, 346-347; Stepanov, *Invading in/from the ›Holy Land‹*, 61.

90 Details referring to the apocalyptic notions in the Bulgarian lands, see in Stepanov, *Invading in/from the ›Holy Land‹*, 51-63.

91 Каймакамова, Български апокрифен летопис и значението му за българското летописание; Търкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, 192-206; Търкова-Zaimova and Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium*, 274-300; Каймакамова, *Историографската стойност на Български апокрифен летопис*; Biliarsky, *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

92 Иванова, *Мессианские мотивы в болгарской книжности*, p. 69.

93 Търкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, 31, 33, 125, 135, 142; Търкова-Zaimova and Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium*, 149, 173, 178, 181; also see, Венедиков, *Легендата за Михаил каган*, 183; Гергова, *Борис-Михаил, Михаил Каган и Михаил Воин*; on the problems with the qagan title amongst the Bulgars, see the discussion in, Степанов, *Развитие концепции сакралного царя у хазар и болгар эпохи раннего Средневековья*; Stepanov, *Rulers, Doctrines, and Title Practices in Eastern Europe*; Curta, *Qagan, Khan or King*; Stepanov, *From Steppe to Christian Empire, and Back*.

94 Details, see in Stepanov, *From Steppe to Christian Empire, and Back*.

of Bulgarian royal power which had been lost after 1018: firstly *via* the Christian beginning and end (encoded in the name Michael and the implied conversion to Christianity in 864/5, and, respectively, his function as the ›last king‹), and secondly *via* the supreme title of the steppes (khagan).⁹⁵

A significant fact worth remembering is that the various Greek versions of the original text of the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara all contain the explicit reference to »the tzardom of Turks and Avars« as one of the so-called world kingdoms, which – according to the archetypal scheme – will replace one another before the End of Time. In one of these translations, the Avars have been substituted by »Bulgars«. ⁹⁶ Hence, the unknown Bulgarian authors of historical-apocalyptic works from the late eleventh century onwards were able to obtain direct information from the *Apocalypse* in its original versions in Greek that mentioned the Turks and Avars. The rulers of both were indeed titled ›khagans‹. Thus, the anonymous Bulgarian scribes were quickly able to ›invent‹ and present the same title as a *realia* to the Bulgars before 864.⁹⁷ The next step was easily done – to add to the title the name of Michael, which carried connotations of a *beginning* and an *end*.

To conclude, within the period specified in the article's title, certain differences could be found in the strategies for worshipping St. Michael the Archangel in the Holy Roman Empire and in Bulgaria. In both places during the tenth century the local central authorities were interested in promoting this cult. In the Holy Roman Empire heavy use was made of the symbolism surrounding Monte Gargano, through the personal pilgrimages there of at least two emperors, Otto III and Henry II, as well as through the dissemination of texts related to the miracle of Monte Gargano (*Apparitio S. Michaelis in Monte Gargano* dates from the eighth or the ninth century, and was translated into Greek in the late ninth or the early tenth century)⁹⁸ and that in Chonae. Within the borders of Bulgaria, however, there was no single significant sanctuary of St. Michael the Archangel similar to the ones in the empire of the Ottonians, and in western Europe as a whole. There was therefore no strongly manifested worship of St. Michael the Archangel in the tenth and eleventh centuries in the Bulgarian lands, like that which existed in the west. In Bulgaria, during the first relative phase (the end of the ninth to the first half of the tenth century), a different strategy was generally implemented in the princely/royal court and among the learned men: to connect the name of the holy archangel with the sacred Slavic writing/language; the creation of the *Canon*, *Sermon* and the *Encomium* in his honor is no coincidence. The numerous churches and monasteries, erected and dedicated to the Archangel, especially in the central and southwestern territories of Bulgaria at the time, should also be mentioned; in this particular sense this strategy looks similar to the one implemented in the Holy Roman Empire.

95 Stepanov, *From Steppe to Christian Empire, and Back*.

96 Tixonravov, *Pamjatniki otrečenoj ruskoj literatury*, Vol. 2, 213-226, 237; Истрин, *Откровение Мефодия Патарского*, 18, 79, 172-173; Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 25, n. 32, 36-51, esp. 43 f.; also see, Stepanov, *From Steppe to Christian Empire, and Back*.

97 Details, see in Stepanov, *From Steppe to Christian Empire, and Back*.

98 Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 166; Kazhdan, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1360.

During the second phase, after 1041 and before the End of Time anticipated around 1092, and especially in the lands around Sredets, Pernik, Velbazhd and Strumitsa, there was an explosive spread of the notion of Michael as ›the last king‹ before the coming of the Antichrist, as well as of his direct association with a specific figure known by the name (and title) of ›Michael Khagan‹. The figure of ›Tzar Michael‹ can be found also in other Bulgarian apocalyptic texts, including *Talkuvanie/Interpretation of Daniel*, *Videnie/Vision of Daniel* and *Skazanie/Tale* [known also as *Narration*] of *Isaiah*.⁹⁹ At the same time, however, one has to note the contamination of that figure, or rather its title, *khagan*, with the alias of the rebellious Petar Delyan. Thus, the same type of texts contain the combination ›Gagan Odelyan‹, with the respective paragraph in ›*Skazanie/Tale of the Prophet Isaiah how he was taken up by an angel to the seventh heaven*‹ (known also as Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle) being as follows: »Then another tzar came out, by the name of Gagan, and his nickname was Odelyan, a very handsome one. He took over the Bulgarian and the Greek tzardom.«¹⁰⁰ In another text, ›*Skazanie/Tale* [known also as *Narration*] of the holy Prophet Isaiah about the years to come and the tzars, and the coming Antichrist‹, that same tzar, numbered the thirty-eighth tzar and called ›Odolyan‹, is rendered ›Gagen‹, while the fortieth tzar there is named ›Michael‹.¹⁰¹

It is obvious that with the help of this unique figure the unknown learned Bulgarians have assigned a special role to their Bulgarian countrymen before the End of Days. The Bulgarians, despite losing their tzardom after 1018, are presented as God's chosen people, i.e. as a people with a mission before the coming of Judgment Day, and precisely for this reason being connected to St. Michael the Archangel and, of course, to ›the last king‹ bearing the same name, Michael. The Bulgarian lands around Sredets, Pernik, Velbazhd and Strumitsa were seen through the prism of the Holy Land, and perceived as the (imagined) ›centre‹ of the Christian empire. With regard to this, the frequent incursions after the 1030s (and especially after 1048) of the Pechenegs were a significant factor, whom the anonymous Bulgarian scribes identified through the biblical topos of the ›unclean people (of) Gog and Magog‹ and their role before the End of Time. Hence, during the eleventh century a lot of the Bulgarian lands were (assertively) presented in the historical-apocalyptic literature as the place of the last battle between the forces of good and evil before the Last Judgment.¹⁰²

It is also worth stressing that in the Greek translations of the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius and in the prophetic texts associated with Daniel and Isaiah ›the last emperor‹ is mentioned once as John, or is given no name at all.¹⁰³ Only in one Latin text, namely the Latin version of the *Tiburtine Sibyl*, that same ›last emperor‹ is named Constans. In both the Byzantine and western tradition he is otherwise nameless and without physical character-

99 Тъпкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, 66-67.

100 Biliarsky, *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, 10-27, esp. 21; also see, Тъпкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, с. 198, 202 and n. 43; Тъпкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium*, 284, 289, 295 and n. 43.

101 Тъпкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, 150-152, 155-157 and n. 9, 10, 27; Тъпкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium*, 198-203, 206-209, 211-214.

102 For details, see Stepanov, *From Steppe to Christian Empire*, and Back, 363-377; Stepanov, *Invading in/from the ›Holy Land‹*, 51-63.

103 Истрин, *Откровение Мефодия Патарского*, 180-181.

istics (except again for the Latin *Tiburtine Sibyl*).¹⁰⁴ Thus, the permanent introduction of the name Michael, together with the title of khagan, is obviously a Bulgarian invention with a very clear – apocalyptic, as well as eschatological – subtext. The name and title could best be associated with the actual Bulgarian ruler Boris-Michael,¹⁰⁵ who not only baptized the Bulgarians in 864/5, and in doing so renewed the state and its culture, but also had a direct connection to the past and traditions of the Steppe empire¹⁰⁶. So here we see a truly original solution made by the anonymous Bulgarian scribes from the eleventh century, who managed to combine in a single real-and-imaginary whole the two heritages – the Christian one (St. Michael the Archangel and St. Tzar Boris-Michael) and the pagan one (the steppe).

104 Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 152, 154-155.

105 Тъпкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, 67, 69.

106 For other possible rulers named Michael, cf. Истрин, *Откровение Мефодия Патарского*, 182-184; Тъпкова-Заимова и Милтенова, *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина*, 67-68, and n. 15, 16.

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