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THE ANTICHRIST 'VITA' AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES: AN EDITION OF "THE BYRTHE AND LYFE OF THE MOOST FALSE AND DECEYTFULL ANTECHRYST"

Rice University

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THE ANTICHRIST VITA AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES:
AN EDITION OF THE BYRTHE AND LIFE OF THE
MOOST FALSE AND DECEYTFULL ANTECHRYST

by

JOSEPH M. RICKE

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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APRIL 1982
THE ANTICHIST VITA AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES
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MOOST FALSE AND DECEYTFULL ANTECHRYST

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JOSEPH M. RICKE

The Byrthe and Lyfe of the Moost False and
Deceytfull Antechryste, a unique copy of a late medieval
English version of the life of Antichrist, resides at
the University Library of Cambridge University. The
life of Antichrist, or Antichrist vita, as developed by
scriptural exegetes, preachers, historians, and devotional
writers (discussed in Chapter One), became, in the
fifteenth century, a popular subject for early printed
illustrated vernacular texts. The German blockbook
Antichrist vitæ (appearing as early as 1460) told the
life of the "Man of Sin" in a series of 45 woodcut
illustrations, with a brief textual explanation provided
for each woodcut. These blockbooks in turn influenced
other late medieval European printers to produce typo-
graphic illustrated Antichrist vitæ, oftentimes closely
copying the original illustrations. These early books
include the German Der Antichrist (Strassburg, 1480); the
Spanish Libro del Anticristo (Burgos, 1495), the French
L'Advenement de Antechrist (Paris, 1492) and Vie du
Mauvais Antechrist (Lyons, 1495); and the English
"Coming of Antichrist," a section of The Art to Live Well
and Die Well (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1505), and The
Byrthe and Lyfe of the Moost False and Deceytfull Ante-
chryste (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1520 ?). Chapter Two
analyzes and compares these European illustrated vitae.

The two English vitae, although printed by the
same shop, and sharing many woodcut illustration, are
strikingly different. "The Coming of Antichrist"
continually links the life of Antichrist with the moral
and spiritual state of its audience. The Byrthe and Lyfe
of Antechryste, on the other hand, has more illustrations;
less moral commentary, and a more story-like tone. Chapter
Three gives a detailed analysis of the sources, the
content, and the printing history of these two works.

Its treatment of The Byrthe and Lyfe of Antechryste,
especially, relates that work to late medieval apocalyptic
beliefs, the use of scripture in pre-Reformation vernacular
literature, the characteristics of Wynkyn de Worde's
printing, and the popularity of the orthodox Catholic
interpretation of Antichrist at a time when newer
Reformist and anti-Catholic apocalyptic views were
growing increasingly popular.

The edited text of The Byrthe and Lyfe of Antechryste,
presented in Chapter Four, hopefully will prove useful
to students of medieval and late medieval apocalypticism.
Acknowledgments

The Department of Advanced Studies and Research of Rice University provided me with a grant in the summer of 1981 in order to travel to Cambridge and carry out my research. The Syndics of the University Library of Cambridge University granted me permission to edit and print the text of *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*. The good people of St. Bartholomew's Church made me feel welcome while I was a sojourner in their land. The members of my committee--Professor Nitzsche, Professor Doughtie, and Professor Garside--have provided me with sound advice and needed encouragement. And my wife Lynn, to whom this work is dedicated, has put up with my physical and psychological absences in a way that can only be explained by her dependence on God. To all of these mentioned and to the many I do not mention, my deepest thanks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................ iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION ........................................... 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRADITION ............... 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ILLUSTRATED VERNACULAR ANTICHRIST VITAE .......... 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE ANTICHRIST VITA IN ENGLAND: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BYRTHE AND LYFE OF ANTECHRYSTE AND ITS ENGLISH FORERUNNERS .... 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. AN EDITION OF THE BYRTHE AND LYFE OF ANTECHRYSTE ... 154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX I .............................................. 206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX II .............................................. 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE .................................................... 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................. 217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

A unique English copy of an early printed version (about 1520) of the medieval Antichrist legend resides at the University Library of Cambridge University. In subject and scope, The Byrth and Lyfe of the Moost False and Deceytfull Antechryst¹ has much in common with other medieval accounts of the life of Antichrist, especially the many popular early printed illustrated versions which originated with the Antichrist blockbooks from Germany (c. 1460). Numerous versions--Latin, German, Dutch, French, Spanish, and English²--have come to us from the late Middle Ages, tracing the life of a single personal Antichrist³ from his devilish conception to his grisly death at the hands of Christ and his angels.

All of these versions depend ultimately upon the New Testament warnings⁴ and the Old Testament types⁵ of a coming "son of perdition,"⁶ as these texts were developed and expanded by scriptural exegetes,⁷ devotional writers,⁸ and preachers.⁹ Allowing for diversities of emphasis R. K. Emmerson describes a standard and orthodox view of the "life" of Antichrist in the Middle Ages. He writes:

Antichrist will be a single human, a man with devilish connections who will come near the end of the world to persecute Christians and to mislead them by claiming to be Christ, he will be opposed by Enoch and Elias, whom he will kill, and will finally be destroyed by Christ
or his agent. This interpretation, here much simplified, is what is known as the "medieval Antichrist." 10

Wynkyn de Worde's *Byrth and Lyfe of Antechyrst* not only conforms structurally to this skeletal outline of the "medieval Antichrist" but also conforms, in spirit, to the purposes of most Antichrist *vita*e: to warn the faithful against becoming followers (in the flesh) or forerunners (in the spirit) of the Antichrist and to comfort the faithful with the depiction of Christ's ultimate victory over this last great enemy and his disciples.

The *Byrth and Lyfe of Antechyrst*, however, is unique in its development of the traditional materials. We shall examine later in this study how it varies in both style and structure from its most famous predecessors—the German blockbook *vita*e. Further we shall observe how de Worde's Antichrist *vita*, while being rigidly faithful to the older, orthodox medieval view of Antichrist, 11 acknowledges and challenges some of the newer, heretical (from the orthodox Catholic point of view) interpretations of apocalyptic texts which were threatening the Church of the Papacy at the end of the Middle Ages.

That medieval society was fascinated by the idea of a powerful "man of sin," who would suddenly appear and persecute the Church of God, has been well documented. Matthew of Janow (d. 1394) wrote that, because of the universal interest in the subject, even the little children would instantly recognize Antichrist at his coming. 12 Joshua Trachtenberg,
in his disturbing account of how medieval expectations of the coming of Antichrist often sparked fierce anti-Semitism in the Middle Ages, describes this fascination.\textsuperscript{13}

A favorite homiletical text dinned into their [the citizens of medieval society] ears by the preachers, constantly presented under churchly auspices and in the tract and creative literature, in poetry and drama and art, freely and frequently debated in open disputation, often at the express request of the laity, the Antichrist was no mere creature of scholarly dispute but the deeply disturbing concern of everyone.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus Wilhelm Bousset, author of \textit{Die Antichrist} (1890), could claim that "to write the history of the idea of the Antichrist in the later middle ages, would be almost to write the history of the middle ages."\textsuperscript{15}

Despite Bousset's contention, fifty years after his monumental study of the literary origins and evolution of the early Antichrist legend it could be still said that "little attention has been paid . . . to popular vernacular treatments of the various phases of eschatology."\textsuperscript{16}

Although this problem, outlined by Brother Linus Lucken in his \textit{Antichrist and the Prophets of Antichrist in the Chester Cycle} (1940), has been essentially remedied by the work of scholars such as Norman Cohn (\textit{The Pursuit of the Millenium}, 1957), Morton Bloomfield (\textit{Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse}, 1961), Marjorie Reeves (\textit{The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages}, 1969), Bernard McGinn (\textit{Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages}, 1979), and
R. K. Emmerson (Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature, 1981), a great need still exists for the individual and comparative analyses of the many late medieval expressions of the Antichrist legend. Even after the publication of his own Antichrist in the Middle Ages, a work of great significance in medieval apocalyptic studies, R. K. Emmerson has decried the lack of attention given to what he calls "the complexities of the fifteenth-century view of Antichrist," and has called for a "full-scale interdisciplinary study" of the late medieval interpretations of that ominous figure. 17

In his own work Emmerson has traced the "standard and widely accepted understanding of Antichrist" in the Middle Ages, 16 but only briefly mentions—or, in some cases, fails to mention—some of the later manifestations of that tradition. The German blockbook vitae (1450–1480), the many illustrated vitae based on the blockbooks (1480–1560), the Liber Chronicarum of Hartman Schedel (1492), The Coming of Antichrist section from both Franch and English Ars Moriendi books (1492–1505), and the Byrth and Lyfe of Antechryst (1520 ?) a detailed analysis of any or all of these texts is beyond the scope of Emmerson's groundbreaking work. My study then is intended to facilitate our understanding of the medieval tradition by examining the development of the late medieval Antichrist vitae, by providing the first detailed study of the Byrth and
Lyfe of the Moost False and Deceytfull Antechryst, and by providing a trustworthy annotated edition of the text from the copy in the University Library of Cambridge University.

To fairly assess the treatment of the Antichrist in The Byrh and Lyfe of the Antechryst, it is first necessary to understand the complex tradition which gave it life. In this first chapter we will survey the origins and development of the Antichrist tradition.19 Due to the previous work of Bousset, Lucken, and Emmerson, this section will be more of a sketch than a full-scale study. For a rich treatment of the figure of the Antichrist in medieval theology, art, and literature, I refer the reader especially to R. K. Emmerson's Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature.20 In the second chapter we will analyze the late medieval Antichrist vitae, especially the blockbooks and their successors. Because this field has remained relatively unexamined, and because of the number of these late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century illustrated Antichrist vitae, this section will depend less on the work of previous scholars and more on the results of personal research. In the third chapter we will attempt a detailed reading of The Byrh and Lyfe of the Antechryst. Particular attention will be paid to its previously unidentified immediate sources and its unique handling of the Antichrist materials. Finally its involvement in what I have called "the Battle for the Antichrist"—that is, the struggle between the older, orthodox views of Antichrist and the newer,
Reformist interpretations which were gaining strength at the end of the Middle Ages—will be examined.
Notes

Introduction

1 Hereafter referred to as *The Byrth and Lyfe of Antechryst* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, ca. 1520).

2 The most important unillustrated late medieval versions of the life of Antichrist are found in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1527); Hugh of Newcastle's *Tractatus de Victoria Christi contra Antichristus* (1319, but printed in Nuremberg, 1471); Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum* (Nuremberg: Anton Kohberger, 1493)—Although not an illustrated vita, the *Chronicarum* includes a magnificent full-page, full-color illustration of the death of Antichrist; and, especially Hugh of Strassburg's *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* (1265, but I refer to an edition printed in Paris, 1515).

The most important late medieval illustrated versions of the life of Antichrist are *Der Antichrist* (chiro-xylographic blockbook, about 1460), edited by H. T. Musper in 2 volumes (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1970); *Das Puch von dem Entkrust* (xylographic blockbook, about 1470), edited by Kurt Pfister (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1925); *Der Antichrist* (typographic blockbook, about 1480), edited by Karin Boveland, Christoph Peter Burger, and Ruth Steffen (Hamberg: Friedrich Wittig, 1979); *L’Advenement de Antichrist* (Paris: Antoine Verard, 1492)—later included with several other works to form *L’Art de Bien Vivre et de Bien Mourir* (Paris: Antoine Verard, 1493); *Livre de Auctorites de Saintbes Docteurs: Touchant de L’Advenement et du Mauvais Antechryst* (sic), (Lyons, 1495)—a strange Latin and French version which greatly influenced *The Byrth and Lyfe of Antechryst*; *Libro del Antieristo* (Spanish, ca. 1500?); *Von des Endkriests Leben* (Erfurt, 1516); and *The Coming of Antichrist included in The Art to Live Well and Die Well* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1505)—a translation from Verard.

I have consulted all of these works at the University Library of Cambridge University and the British Library. This was made possible by a generous travel grant from the Department of Advanced Studies and Research at Rice University.

3 As opposed to the tendency in some early church fathers to "spiritualize" the Antichrist, and the tendency of the Reformers to identify Antichrist with a system (the Papacy) rather than a person. In this regard Luther wrote, "For we claim the Papacy... is the horrid abomination and the Antichrist of the end, the enemy and adversary which devastates
the church, God's Word, and sets itself over and against them like a god over all gods. . . ." (Werke 38:251).


5 See especially Genesis 49:17, Ezekial 28:2, 38, and 39, Daniel 8 and 11.

6 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

7 Augustine, De Civitate Dei, and In Johannin Evangelium, and Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos; Bede, Explanatio Apocalypse, In Primam Epistolam S. Joannis, and In Principium Genesis; Gregory; Homilia in Hierachihelem Prophetum, and Moralia; Haimo of Auxerre, Expositio in Apocalypse, and Expositio in Epistolam ad Thessalonicenses; Hippolytus, Commentaire sur Daniel, and Demonstratio de Christo et Antichristo. Jerome, De Anticristo in Daniele, Commentariorum in Heizochiel, Commentariorum in Mattheum, and In Hierimiam Prophetam; John Chrysostom, In Epistolam secundam ad Thessalonicenses. Peter Comestor, Historia Scholastica; Peter Damian, De Novissimis et Anticristo; Peter Lombard, In Epistolam II ad Thessalonicenses; Rabanus Maurus, Commentaria in Libro Machabaeorum, Commentariorum in Ezechielem, and Expositio in Epistolam II ad Thessalonicenses; Rupert of Deutz, Commentariorum in Genesim, Commentariorum in Joanni Apocalypse, and De Victoria Verbi Dei; Tertullian, Aprologeticum, and De Praescriptione Haereticorum. Victorinus of Pettau, Commentarium in Apocalypse.

8 See Adae de Montier-en-Der, the Moralized Bibles, and several Apocryphal New Testament works including the Gospel of Nicodemus and the Acts of Peter. Of course the line between exegetical, devotional, and homiletical literature is never a clear one.

9 See the sermons of Aelfric, Bede, and Wulfstan. Also the Blickling Homilies and the Vercelli Homilies.


11 Emmerson, pp. 210 and 224.

14 Trachtenberg, pp. 38–39.
18 Emmerson, p. 7.
19 I will not however attempt to discover the pre-Christian mythological basis for the development, in Jewish and early Christian scripture, of an Antichrist figure. This has been attempted, with some success, by Wilhelm Bousset, in The Antichrist Legend: A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore, trans. A. H. Keane (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1896).
20 Especially Emmerson, Chapter Two (pp. 34–73), "Exegetical Interpretations of Antichrist," which, in Emmerson's words, "analyzes the apocalyptic sources for the Antichrist tradition, describes the eschatological context in which these sources were interpreted, and briefly outlines the development of polemical uses of the Antichrist tradition."
Chapter I
The Establishment of the Tradition

In his study of the medieval literary development of another biblical figure (Pilate), Arnold Williams describes the following evolutionary process, one that applies equally to the figure of the Antichrist.

The late medieval author handling the subject . . . . did not need to rely on the bare scriptural account of the four gospels. Apocrypha and legend, commentary and pseudo-history provided abundance of material for extensive additions to biblical narrative. The passion story had been elaborated by the development of minor characters . . . . and the invention of incidents. A very considerable elaboration centered around Pilate. Around this important, though sketchily characterized, figure grew up a great mass of legend, much of it contradictory.

The extensive additions to the biblical texts, the development of minor (or ambiguous) characters, the invention of non-scriptural incidents, even the contradictory nature of the "evolved" figure characterize the medieval Antichrist tradition as well.

The earliest known commentator on The Byrth and Lyfe of the Antechryst seems to have been unaware of the great body of historically developed Antichrist materials which preceded this book and of which it is one of the latest examples.
There is internal evidence the most indubitable that this tract was written by a Catholic. The tract itself appears to be a kind of Satirical, Allegorical, Drama [?], intended to blacken and check the Reformation. The writer, in prosecuting his design, represents either the genius of Reformation generally, or Luther, its greatest mover, more especially under the person of Antichrist. . . .

It is not the thesis that de Worde's book is anti-Reformation in outlook that is suspect. But the naive assumption that some Catholic writer, distressed by the challenge of the Reformation, took up his pen ("prosecuting his design") to write an original story of Luther as Antichrist, ignores fifteen centuries of a rich tradition. In fact, the events of this "life" of Antichrist are the common ones found in other late medieval vitae. It is in the subtle variations on these commonly accepted authorities that, as we shall later observe, the unique anti-Reformation slant in The Byrth and Lyfe of Antechryst consists.

Although moderns easily equate medieval apocalypticism with the radical religio-political millenarism described in Norman Cohn's The Pursuit of the Millenium, for the most part "medieval apocalypticism and belief in Antichrist resulted from serious theological and exegetical interpretations of the obscure language of the biblical apocalypses. They were the products on intellectual, rather than naive or opportunistic endeavor." The apocalyptic expectations of the Middle Ages cannot, therefore, be ultimately accounted for by
political oppression, plague, religious degeneracy, nor the primitive fear of natural phenomena. Instead they are accounted for by the fact that the foundations of medieval Christianity—the sacred texts of the Old and New Testaments and the respected commentaries of the church fathers—were unashamedly concerned with eschatology and apocalypticism.

Biblical Sources

The word Antichrist occurs only five times in scripture and only in the First and Second Epistles of John. The first passage, I John 2:18-19, links Antichrist with the "last hour" or with the end of the world, and with spiritual unfaithfulness. Both of these themes are likewise sounded in the medieval Antichrist vitae.

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist cometh, even now ther are become many Antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us.

The reference to "many Antichrists" and the continued use of the plural led to the later identification of many precursors of the Antichrist both within and without the church. In verse 22 of I John, the writer identifies the Antichrist as a liar and as he "who denieth the Father, and the Son." A deceptive anti-ministry of false teaching, intent on disproving the deity and uniqueness of Christ, became, as late as The
Byrth and Lyfe of Antechryst, one of the distinguishing marks of the medieval Antichrist. In I John 4:3, this idea is further elaborated. "And every spirit that dissolveth [or weaken] Jesus, is not of God: and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh, and he is now already in the world." The startling claim that Antichrist "is now already in the world" is clarified by the final biblical reference to the Antichrist in 2 John 7. "For many seducers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh: this is a seducer and an antichrist." Thus any spiritual seducer is a kind of antichrist. Usually this belief in multiple antichrists developed along side of, not instead of, the expectation of a single personal eschatological Antichrist. These Johannine passages, along with Matthew 24:5—"for many will come in my name saying: I am Christ"—led to an identification of hypocritical Christians, pagans (especially Turks), Jews, and heretics as "antichrists" or at least forerunners of Antichrist. St. Augustine wrote of the single eschatological Antichrist in his City of God, yet in his sermons on the epistles of John, he claimed that the church was filled with antichrists, for "whatsoever is contrary to the word of God is in Antichrist."

Probably the single most important biblical passage to the development of the medieval Antichrist tradition is
2 Thessalonians 2:3–11. Pseudo-Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Jerone, Augustine, Primasius, Haimo of Auxerre, Rabanus Maurus, Pseudo-Hugh of St. Victor, Lanfranc, and Aquinus: all these and many others wrote important commentaries on these enigmatic verses.

Verse 3

"Let no one seduce you in any manner, because the falling away will come first, and the man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition."

Exegetical Summary

Antichrist, the man of sin and son of the devil, will appear before Christ's Second Advent. He will lead a great apostasy. But first, nations and people will break away from Roman (imperial or ecclesiastical) power.

The translator of "The Coming of Antichrist" writes that "We sholde byleve and holde that our lorde Jesu Cryste shall not come to his jugement generall but that fyrste Antecryst . . . comen into the world . . . after the apostle sayth in the second epystle that he wryteth to the thessalyens the second chapytre" (II.1). Our Lord will not come, the writer adds, "tyll unto the certayne departyng, and dyvyson ben fryste comen" (II.1–II.5). The falling away or "dyvyson" is given a three-fold interpretation. Nations will depart from the Roman Empire and divide into ten realms (II.5). Entire churches will depart from their obedience to the Roman authority (II.5). Finally, many individual Christian people will depart the Catholic faith (II.5).
Verse 4

"Who opposes and is lifted up against all that is called god or that is worshipped to such an extent that he sits in the temple of God displaying himself just as if he were God."

Exegetical Summary

Antichrist will presume to raise himself against God and God's church. Specifically, he will rebuild the temple in Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans, crown himself, claim to be God, and demand to be worshipped.

Antichrist, according to The Coming of Antichrist, "shall be ryght proude and it is he as the appocalypse [actually 2 Thessalonians 2:4] sayth 'Extolletur supra omne quod dicitur Christus (Deus—Vulgate) quod colitur.' That is to saye that . . . Antechryst shall be exalted and lyft up by pryde . . . above the godhede of the redemptour." The Antichrist will then appear in the temple of Jerusalem and shall act "as and yf he were god" (II3).

Verse 6

"And now you know what detains him, so that he shall be revealed in his own time."

Exegetical Summary

The Roman Empire (in later interpretations, the Roman Church as a kingdom claiming continuity with Rome) now restrain Antichrist. But he will be revealed in his own time, after the end of the empire and at the end of the world.

As an earlier passage (see above, pp. 11-12) from The Coming of Antichrist taught, the Antichrist would not come until the breakup of both the Roman empire, and, to some degree, the Roman church. The following passage from The Byrth and Lyfe of Antechryst embodies the tradition of the Last World
Emperor—a significant and popular development of the restraining power of Rome.

Afore that the false Antechryst shall shewe hym selfe in erthe . . . ther shall come a kyng of Romayne that shall take his ways to Jherusalem. . . . And then shall this kyng go upon Golgata . . . [and] shall take the crowne from his head and shall set it upon the crosse. And then shal he joyne bothe his handes togydher toward heven and shall offre all crystendome unto the fader of heven. . . . After this same shall cease all the myght of all prynces whom the cursed Antechryst shall shewe hymself fyrrst in the worlde. (BL, pp. 164-65)

Verse 7

"For already the mystery of iniquity is working."

Exegetical Summary

The power of Antichrist identified in his types and forerunners (in the early church especially with Nero), is presently at work, particularly among heretics and false Christians in the church.

The idea that the Antichrist is presently at work in his forerunners is a fundamental organizational principle of The Coming of Antichrist. Just as Antichrist shall be a lecher, so he "shall have for his precursors the lecherous men and lecherous women, adulterers and fornicators" (II 3:1). Since the Antichrist shall pronounce blasphemies, the "blasphemators" are his forerunners (II 3:1). Because, according to scripture, the Antichrist will bribe men to follow him, so those "religious" who pander to the rich—by counseling them to employ unjustly obtained riches for the church or by promising them salvation
for a price—"ben precursors and messengers and prononcyatours of . . . antecryst" (Ii 5–Ii 6 ). Since the Antichrist will be the great persecutor of the church of God, "the persecutours of the chirche . . . ben precursors and pronouncyatours of the said Antecryste" (Ii 6 ).

Verse 8

"And then that evil one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall kill with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming."

Exegetical Summary

At the end of the world, Antichrist will be proven false and finally defeated. He cannot, however, be destroyed by any human act. Christ (at his Second Advent) or Michael (as Christ's agent) will kill Antichrist.

As in many of the commentaries, the Compendium Theologiae, the German blockbook vitae, and the Byrth and Lyfe of Antechryst, "The Coming of Antichrist" also depicts (in both text and illustration) the death of Antichrist on the Mount of Olives. "For as sayth the glose [probably the glossa reading of Daniel 11] that Antechryst shall mounte fro the sayd mountayne in to the ayre by arte magyke . . . as dyde Symon Magus." The writer then quotes the apostle's words "Revalabitur ille iniquis" to prove that, with the coming of Christ, "shall be told and shewed the iniquyte, frawde, and malyce of the sayd Antechryste" (Kk 2 ).

The two contradictory accounts of the death of Antichrist are here, as in most other accounts, more juxtaposed than reconciled. "As sayth the appostle, our Saviour and redemptoure Jhesu Cyrst shall kyll [Antichrist] . . . by the onely esperyte of mouthe.
Or after some he hym shall sle by Saynt Myghell, executoure of the worde and justyce dyvine" (Ke2v). 17

Verse 9

"Whose coming is according to the work of Satan in all power and in signs and in false marvels."

Exegetical Summary

Satan will give Antichrist, his agent, his power to work false signs and wonders in order that he can deceive the faithful.

The Coming of Antichrist develops the tradition of a Satan-inspired Antichrist in two specific ways. Both passages directly quote verse 9 as their authority. The commonly held tradition (as expressed in the exegetical summary above) was that "Antecryste shall deceyve many crysten people . . . by the doyng of myracles . . . after the apostle that sayth "Cuius adventus est secundum operationem Sathane in omni virtute et signis et prodigus mendacibus" (It4v). In this text, moreover, the birth of Antichrist is explained by references to the same text. "As sone as he shall be concveyed in the wombe of his bawdy and stynkynge moder . . . his soule damnyt shal be replete with the spyryte devyllysshe that shall incorpore hymselfe and shall lyve with her after the saynge of the apostle, etc." (It2).

Verse 11

"In order that all may be judged who do not believe the truth but instead consent to iniquity."

Exegetical Summary

God will allow Antichrist's deceptions and persecution in order to test Christians and to condemn the pseudo-Christians and all others who prefer evil above truth.
True to the tradition, the author of *The Coming of Antichrist* counsels that "antecryste and his satyllytes... shall make so many of false tokenes and of thynges mervayllables that the more grete partye of all the crysten people shall be brought and drawen in errour" (II.4v.). One reason that God will allow such deception is so "that these mockers and begylers" ben mocked and deceived" (II.5).

It is not surprising that many of the important details of the medieval Antichrist tradition were based on the Apocalypse itself. Although the book never specifically mentions "Antichrist," the description of the seven-headed beast of Apocalypse 13 was, to medieval commentators, a prophetic description of the life and "ministry" of Antichrist. As almost every verse in the chapter has specific application to the medieval Antichrist *vita*, it is here quoted in full with my own parenthetical summaries of the standard exegetical interpretation.

And I saw the beast [*Antichrist*] coming up out of the sea... and upon his heads names of blasphemy [*Antichrist claims to be God*].... And the dragon gave him his own strength, and great power [*Satan works through Antichrist*]. And I saw one of his heads as it were slain to death and his death's wound was healed [*Antichrist parodies Christ's death and resurrection*]. And all the earth was in admiration of the beast. And they adored the dragon, which give power to the beast: and they adored the beast, saying: Who is like to the beast: and who shall be able to fight with him [*Antichrist will convert much of the world by his satanic power and miracles*].
And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies: and power was given to him to do blasphemies: and power was given to him to do two and forty months (Antichrist will reign three and a half years). And he opened his mouth unto blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name (Antichrist will call himself "Christ"), and his tabernacle (Antichrist will sit upon a throne in the rebuilt temple), and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation (Antichrist will establish universal rule). And all that dwell upon the earth adored him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb (only the elect will be able to withstand Antichrist). . . . And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and . . . he caused the earth, and them that dwell therein, to adore the first beast, whose wound to death was healed (Antichrist will have disciples who will preach his anti-gospel, and convert many). And he did great signs, so that he (logically the disciples, but usually "he" is here taken to mean Antichrist) made also fire to come down from heaven unto the earth in the sight of man (Antichrist and his disciples experience a pseudo-Pentecost). And he seduced them that dwell on the earth, for the signs, which were given him to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make the image of the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and lived (The people will be made to worship an image of Antichrist). And it was given him to give life to the image of the beast, and that the image of the beast should speak; and should cause, that whatsoever will not adore the image of the beast, should be slain. (The Antichrist will make an image appear to be alive; thus seducing many). And he shall make all, both little and great, rich and poor, freeman and bondman, to have a character, in their right hand, or on their foreheads (Antichrist will brand his followers with the "mark"). And that no man might buy or sell, but he that hath the character, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (The faithful Christians, refusing to receive the mark, will be unable to live in society and will flee). Here is wisdom. He
that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man: and the number of him six hundred sixty-six [The numerical equivalents of the letters of his name somehow total 666].

The great importance of Apocalypse 13 will be demonstrated later by analysing the use made of it in late medieval Antichrist vitae, especially the blockbooks and their successors.

The legend that R. K. Emmerson has called "the most popular and widespread" addition to the Antichrist tradition, that is the legend of Enoch and Elias, also finds its source in the text of the Apocalypse.\(^{18}\) The passage, Apocalypse 11: 3-11, describes "two witnesses" (described by medieval exegetes as Enoch and Elias) who will prophecy for 1,260 days and work great miracles.\(^{19}\) Usually the future ministry of these two great prophets was thought to include the reconversion of many of Antichrist's converts, both Christian and Jew, and the comforting of the still faithful Christians. They will be killed by the beast, that is, Antichrist, and shall lie unburied for three and a half days in Jerusalem. The people of earth (Antichrist's disciples) will rejoice over the death of the prophets. Their celebrations, however, will be cut short by the resurrection of Enoch and Elias in the sight of their enemies. The legend of the ministry, death, and resurrection of Enoch and Elias became, in the later Middle Ages an important illustration of God's continuing care for his people during the time of tribulation at the end of the world.
Also found in the Apocalypse, although originally based on the prophecies of Ezekiel (chapters 38 and 39), is a reference to the forces of Gog and Magog (Apocalypse 20: 7-8).\textsuperscript{20} Often depicted as half bestial, half human, and often related to the rise of the Turks,\textsuperscript{21} Gog and Magog were interpreted to be armies of Antichrist. The significance but confusing nature of the Gog and Magog tradition will be examined later for its influence on \textit{The Byrth and Lyfe of Antecryst}.

Although the passages from 1 and 2 John, 2 Thessalonians, and the Apocalypse are the most important scriptural sources for the Antichrist tradition, several other texts were always interpreted by medieval exegetes as pertaining to Antichrist. Matthew 24 was often taken to prophesy the coming—of increasing evil and cooling charity—of the Antichrist, who would claim to be Christ, would seduce many, and would set up the abomination in Jerusalem temple.\textsuperscript{22} The prophecies of Daniel, as interpreted by medieval commentators, viewed the Antichrist as a political figure; arising from ten kings and conquering the kings of Libya, Egypt, and Ethiopia (these political scenes were always portrayed in the Antichrist blockbook \textit{vitae}).\textsuperscript{23} From Daniel 11 came a glimpse of Antichrist's savage reign, his parodic ascension from the Mount of Olives, and his death at the hands of Michael the archangel. And even the obscure numerical prophecies of Daniel 12 were embodied in the tradition as the forty-five day period of repentance between the death of Antichrist and the coming of Christ as judge.\textsuperscript{24}
The widespread expectation that the long-awaited Jewish Messiah would indeed be Antichrist, and that the Jews would be Antichrist's devoted followers (thus, making them all the more dangerous to medieval Christians) was almost always documented by Jesus' words in John 5. "I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive." Oftentimes when this passage was translated into the vernacular, as for example in The Byrth and Lyfe of the Antechryst, the prophetic tone was emphasized by dropping the conditional "if".

Thenne shall Antechryst drawe and styre the Jewes to hym . . . and they shall . . . receyve Antechryst for the ryghtwyse messyas that was promysed and graunted to them in the lawe. And it is wryten . . . I am comen to you in the name of my fader, and ye have not be wylynge to receyve me. But another, that is Antechryst, shall come in his owne name and hym ye shall receyve as the ryghwyse Messyas.

One of the earliest traditions about Antichrist, and one that illustrated Antichrist vitæ almost always depicted in their initial woodcut, was Jacob's supposed prophecy that Antichrist would be a Jew, born of the tribe of Dan (Genesis 49:16-17). By the time of the writing of Cursor Mundi, for example, this passage was so familiar that neither the scriptural text nor the speaker were mentioned.

\begin{align*}
\text{these clerkes seye do \textit{be} wise} \\
\text{\textit{pat} he of jewes kynde shal rise} \\
\text{Of danes kynde he seip anone}
\end{align*}
To be sure many other scriptural texts were interpreted as Antichrist texts; yet the handful we have already discussed, and the exegetical readings of them in the Middle Ages, account for most of the elements of the medieval Antichrist tradition. Before looking briefly at those parts of the tradition which derived from apocryphal or legendary sources, let us review the almost complete sketch of the medieval Antichrist.

Near the end of the world (1 John 2:18), at a time of increasing evil and cooling charity (Matthew 24:12), the last great opponent of God and Christ—Antichrist—will appear. His forerunners ("antichrists") are already at work in the world (1 John 2:19, 4:3, Matthew 24:5, 2 Thessalonians 2:7). Since the time of Christ, the Roman empire has been restraining the coming of Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:6), but out of the decay and fragmentation of both imperial and ecclesiastical Roman power will arise the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:3, Daniel 7:7-8). Born from the Jewish tribe of Dan (Genesis 49:16-17) and received by the Jews as their long-awaited Messiah (John 5:43), he will convert many by his false teaching (1 John 2:22, 2 John 7, 2 Thessalonians 2:11) and false miracles (2 Thessalonians 2:9, Apocalypse 13:2-3, 13:13). Antichrist will blasphemously claim to be Christ (2 John 4:3, Apocalypse 13:1 and 6, Matthew 24:5) and set himself, or his image, up in the tabernacle to be worshipped as God (2 Thessalonians 2:4,
Apocalypse 13:6, 13:14, Matthew 24:15, Daniel 11:31). With the aid of his false disciples (Apocalypse 13:11-12, 11:10) and his armies—Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38 and 39, Apocalypse 20:7-8), Antichrist will reign universally for three and one half years (Daniel 7, Apocalypse 13:5 and 7). Only the elect will withstand Antichrist (Apocalypse 13:8), and they will refuse to worship him or receive his mark (Apocalypse 13:14-17). For their opposition, they will be subject to bitter persecution (Apocalypse 13:7, Matthew 24:21-22), will be unable to obtain food or other necessities (Apocalypse 13:15-17), and will have to flee to the mountains for safety (Matthew 24:16-20).

God in His mercy will send the two prophets, Enoch and Elias (Apocalypse 11:3), to testify, by preaching and miracles, against Antichrist (Apocalypse 11:3-6). But they will finally be murdered by Antichrist, and their bodies will be left unburied on the streets of Jerusalem for three days (Apocalypse 11:7-9). The rejoicing of Antichrist's disciples will be stopped suddenly by the resurrection of the two prophets—a sign of God's continuing care for His people (Apocalypse 11:11-12). For his final abomination, Antichrist will imitate Christ's death and resurrection (Apocalypse 13:3) and will attempt to ascend in glory from the Mount of Olives (Daniel 11:45). At that moment Christ will intervene for His people and slay Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:8, Daniel 12:1—Here, Michael, as the agent of Christ, slays Antichrist). After Antichrist is thrown into hell (Apocalypse 19:20), there will be a forty-five day period of grace (Daniel 12:11-12), so
that mankind might repent before the coming of Doomsday.

Apocryphal and Legendary Sources

When distinguishing between the canonical and non-canonical sources for the Antichrist tradition, it should be remembered that before the Reformation this distinction was not always clear. David C. Fowler in The Bible in Early English Literature notes that "during the first four centuries, and indeed later as we shall see, the line between canonical and extra-canonical writings was not always easy to draw."^28 For example, the Codex Sinaiticus (c. 350) contains the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas alongside the canonical New Testament books, while fragments of the epistles 1 and 2 Clement are included in the New Testament text of the Codex Vaticanus.^29 Although not finally admitted to the sacred canon (formulated c. 400), many of these writings of the early church—gospels, epistles, acts, and apocalypses—were, according to Fowler, "associated with biblical traditions during the medieval period, and were very influential in religious art and literature."^30

In reference to the Antichrist tradition, early Christian apocryphal or legendary works often served as interpretive links between the confusing scriptural apocalyptic texts and the seemingly clear exegetical interpretations of those texts. For example, the Apocalypse of Peter (c. 135) identifies the two witnesses of Apocalypse 11 with the two prophets, Enoch and
Elias. The prophets will come "to instruct them (the faithful) that this is the deceiver who must come into the world and do signs and wonders in order to deceive."\textsuperscript{31} In the later 
Gospel of Nicodemus (c. 350) the prophets are dramatically introduced in the popular scene of Christ's harrowing of hell.\textsuperscript{32} As Christ leads the righteous to the gates of paradise, they are met by "two old men."

The holy fathers asked them: Who are you, who have not seem death nor gone down into Hades, but dwell in paradise with your bodies and souls? One of them answered: I am Enoch, who pleased God and was removed here by him. And this is Elijah the Tishbite. We shall live until the end of the world. But then we shall be sent by God to withstand Antichrist and be killed by him. And after three days we shall rise again and be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord.\textsuperscript{33}

Other apocryphal sources which contributed to the later development of a "full-fledged Antichrist legend" include the 
Pseudo-Clementine Homilies (c. 313-25), Acts of Peter (c. 180-190), Apocalypse of Elijah (fourth century), Apocalypse of John (fifth century), and the Apocalypse of Thomas.\textsuperscript{34}

Early Christian Sibylline literature contributed especially to the political aspects of the medieval Antichrist tradition.\textsuperscript{35} As early as the first century, Sibylline materials were revised or newly written to embody Christian doctrine. Several early Christian writers refer to the Sibyl as an inspired authority, including Hippolytus and Augustine. Two particular later
Sibylline works made important contributions to the Antichrist vitae. The Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius included a detailed account of the Antichrist in its highly popular treatment of Christian history.⁶ Most importantly, Pseudo-Methodius details the rise of Gog and Magog and the coming of the Last World Emperor. The Middle-English version of the Revelations describes this last great Christian ruler (Antichrist being the world's last great ruler) yielding up his rule.

*pan xall come an emprere
of greys and rome lord xall he be
To Ierusalem with gret honowre
And regne vii yere in pat cunte.
hys crowne he xall sett full ryte
be ros pat cryste on deyde. . . .
Than shall he loke upward on hyte
And hold hys honds to hevyn pat tyde.
. . . But ban xall cum werst of all
Antecryst pe develys byrde.⁷

Another important Sibylline source for the tradition of the Last World Emperor was the Tiburtine Oracle—in the Patrologia Latinae mistakenly attributed to Bede.⁸ During the Emperor's reign, the heathen will be defeated, the Jews converted, and a final time of peace will be established before the bitter time of tribulation under Antichrist.⁹ The Tiburtine Oracle and other Sibylline prophecies were important sources for such late medieval works as Matthew Paris' Chronica Majora and Peter Comestor's Historia Scholastica.⁴⁰ As we shall observe in the following discussion of the late medieval Antichrist vitae; and specifically of The Birth and Life of Antichrist (here-
after modernized), these extra-biblical Antichrist materials had become respected authorities, continually referred to by late medieval authors.
Notes

Chapter 1


2 These are most probably the words of William Bateman, previous owner of The Byrth and Lyfe of Antechrist.

3 Bateman (?), inside front cover.


5 Emmerson, p. 11.

6 Important commentaries on 1 John include Augustine, Tractatus in Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos, PL 35:1,997-2,005; Bede, In Prima Epistolam S. Joannis, PL 93:85-120.

7 This is one of those rare instances where the Catholics and the Reformers agreed on an apocalyptic interpretation. Of course, on the identity of these precursors of Antichrist, there was a violent disagreement.

8 Probably by denying either the humanity of deity of Christ.

9 Emmerson, p. 64.

10 In Emmerson, p. 65.

11 With but one exception, I have used "The Coming of Antichrist" section of The Arte to Lyve Well and Dye Well (London: Wynkyne de Worde, 1505) as this typical vita. Andrew Chertsey translated this work for de Worde from Antoine Verard's L'Art de Bien Vivre et Bien Mourir (Paris: Antoine Verard, 1493) after Verard himself had published a simply horrible English translation by one Thomas Lewyngton, a Scotsman, in 1503. The three versions are almost identical in content except for the poor quality of de Worde's woodcuts—shamelessly copied from Verard's. The text of "The Coming of Antichrist", not available in a modern edition, in this country, only on microfilm copies of damaged texts.

12 The tradition of the ten-fold division of the Roman Empire, one applied by modern fundamentalists to the European Common Market, derives from Daniel's vision of the fourth beast
(interpreted as the fourth great world empire). The beast is described, in Daniel 7:7, as having ten horns. See Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, PL 198:1454: Ad finem mundi . . . tunc regnum Romanorum divedetur in decem regnem."

13 This may refer to the Lollards and early Reformers as signs of the end of the world.

14 Lewyngton's Scottish-English translation of Verard's *L'Art de Bien Vivre*, The Book Intytuled the Art of Good Lywyng and Good Dying, consistently attempts to soften the Catholic stance of the original by translating "Catholic" as "faithful" or "Christian." I am indebted to Dr. F. H. Stubbings, Librarian of Emmanuel College, Cambridge University, for the opportunity to examine one of the two extant perfect copies of this work.


17 The illustration of this scene usually pictures both Christ and Michael (or several angels) involved in Antichrist's death.

18 Emmerson, p. 41.


20 See especially Jerome, Gregory, and Rabanus Maurus' Commentaries on Ezekiel.

21 Even Martin Luther identified God and Magog with the Turks, to some degree. More specifically, he distinguished between Gog, the external, worldly enemy of the Church—that is the Turks, and Magog, the internal, spiritual enemy of the Church—that is the Papacy. In this regard see John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 246.

22 See Matthew 24:4-24.

23 Daniel 7. For the illustrations, see Musper, *Der Antichrist*; Pfister, *Das Puch von dem Entkrist*; Libro Cel Anticristo; (Strassburg, 1505); and Von des Endkrist Leben (Strassburg, 1505).
24 Daniel 12:11 states that until the time "that the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be 1290 days." But verse 12 obscurely adds: "Blessed is he who waits and comes to 1335 days."

25 See Otto of Freising, The Two Cities, tr. C. C. Mierow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928). Luther, on the other hand, applied these verses to the Papacy.

26 The Byrth and Lyfe of Antechyrst, pp. 172. Hereafter referred to as The Birth and Life of Antichrist.

27 The author of the Compendium de Vita Antichristi instructs us to note: "Primo de quia progenie nascetur quia de tribu dan ut Genesis ultimo. Fiat Dan sicut coluber in via." He also mentions the second standard reason for linking Antichrist with Dan: "In Apocalypsi dan non scribitur in catalogo sanctorum propter in detestationem Antichristi." The Compendium de Vita Antichristi usually is found with the Dialogus inter Clericum et Militem in Dutch or German early printed books. Because there is no modern edition of this work, my version is based on two versions which I consulted at University Library, Cambridge. These are: Dialogus inter Clericum et Militem (Deventer, Holland: P. Pafract, 1491) and (Cologne: Quentell, 1512).

28 Cursor Mundi, 4: lines 22009-22021.


30 Fowler, pp. 7-9.

31 Fowler, p. 11.


35 Emmerson, p. 47.

36 Emmerson, pp. 47-49.


39 See PL 90: 1,181-86.

40 Nowhere is the complexity of Medieval Apocalypticism more evident than in the legend of the Last World Emperor. Marjorie Reeves in The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959) analyzes the unresolved tension between the pessimistic and optimistic historical expectations incorporated into the Christian apocalyptic tradition. On the one hand Christian society waited for the growth of evil finally to be fulfilled in the Antichrist and his universal reign of terror. On the other hand, the Christian society awaited a mighty godly ruler who would convert the Jews, defeat the Turks, and usher in an age (albeit a short one) of peace and plenty. This second view was popularized by the Tiburtine Oracle and the Pseudo-Methodius. Since the true era of peace was placed beyond the historical realm, the belief in a great emperor became more of a racial than a religious aspiration: the French awaited a second Charlemagne, the Germans identified Frederick II as the great emperor in Ludus de Antichristo. See The Play of Antichrist, trans. John Wright (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1967).

41 See Peter Comestor, Historia Scholastica, PL 198:1,435-55.
Chapter II
Illustrated Vernacular Antichrist Vitae

The first chapter described the basis for the Medieval Antichrist tradition in biblical and extra-biblical tradition. Usually, in the earlier Middle Ages, this history of the Antichrist was embedded in scriptural commentaries on the Apocalypse, Daniel, and 2 Thessalonians; or in prophetic versions of the end of the world. By the time of the printing of The Birth and Life of Antichrist, however, specific works concerned only with the life of the Antichrist had been common for almost three quarters of a century. These "prophetic biographies" have continued from the German blockbooks of the mid-fifteenth century to the fundamentalist literature of our own day.\(^1\)

The transition from a biblical prophetic figure—a character, that is, existing only in the foreknowledge of God and revealed through His prophets—to an exciting human figure whose story demanded telling and retelling, took place, I believe, for two reasons. Quite early in the Christian era, Church Fathers shaped a definite personality and a definite history or "life" for the Antichrist based on a comparison and contrast with the person and life of Jesus Christ. They saw Antichrist as an infernal parody of Christ. This parodic structural principle deeply affected the content of the medieval Antichrist tradition; yet the tradition took on no specific literary form—for the most part scattered scriptural commentaries passed on this "life of
Antichrist" to the later Middle Ages. Later, however, the popularity of the genre of saints' lives or *vitae* provided the impulse for the formal casting of the life of the Antichrist into its most popular late medieval construction. Before directly analyzing the German blockbook *vitae*, we will briefly consider the influential formulations of the Antichrist *vita* by St. Hippolytus (third century) and Abbot Adso (tenth century).

**The Influence of Hippolytus**

As early as the third century, a comprehensive treatment of the Antichrist in comparison to Christ was set forth in St. Hippolytus' *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*. ² Hippolytus wrote:

> The deceiver seeks to liken himself in all things to the son of God. Christ is a lion so Antichrist is also a lion; Christ is a king, so Antichrist is also a king. The Savior was manifested as a lamb; so he too, in like manner, will appear as a lamb, though within he is a wolf. The Savior came into the world in the circumcision, and he will come in the same manner. The Lord sent apostles among all the nations, and he in like manner will send apostles. The Savior gathered together the sheep that were scattered abroad, and he in like manner will bring together a people that is scattered abroad. The Lord gave a seal to those who believe on Him, and he will give one in like manner. The Savior appeared in the form of a man, and he too will come in the form of a man. The Savior raised up and showed His holy flesh like a temple, and he will raise a temple of stone in Jerusalem.

Perhaps the writer of a recent fundamentalist Antichrist *vita* had Hippolytus' account in mind when he wrote:
Antichrist will be a counterfeit of Jesus Christ. Christ is God; Antichrist will claim to be God. Christ made his way to Jerusalem, died there, descended into hell, and rose again; Antichrist will die, descend into hell, and rise again. Christ inspires worship from his followers; Antichrist will demand—and get—worship. Christ performed signs, miracles, and wonders on behalf of the Kingdom of God; Antichrist will perform ostensible signs, miracles, and wonders on behalf of the Kingdom of Satan.4

If Hippolytus did not initially describe Antichrist as "the deceiver" the reader might be tempted to praise Antichrist for his likeness to Christ. Of course, that is just the point. When Antichrist comes to power, each Christian living must face the temptation to worship this apparent Messiah. Although Hippolytus establishes a strict, almost flattering parallelism between Christ and Antichrist, he qualifies the entire passage by the transitional phrase: "And his seductive arts we shall exhibit in what follows."5 Antichrist by his likeness to Christ, therefore, perversely parodies the medieval ideal of holiness—the "imitatio Christi." He strives to be like Christ in order to seduce and deceive the faithful. Like the Satan of Paradise Regained, Antichrist's goal is not a God-like character (the basis of the "imitatio Christi"), but a God-like power. Hippolytus alludes to this "anti-imitatio" when he says that "The Saviour was manifested as a lamb; so he . . . will appear as a lamb, though within he is a wolf."6 Thus many medieval writers developed their view of Antichrist by considering, or inventing, parallels between him and Christ. In this regard, the
the different implications of Antichrist's name may be the source for the belief that Antichrist would both closely parallel and yet fiercely oppose the Savior.

Hippolytus himself does not consider the different meanings of the Antichrist's name, but in his treatise describes both the parallel and antithetical relationships of Antichrist to Christ. The tenth-century religious writer, Abbot Adso of Montier en-Der—his *Libellus de Antichristo* will be considered in detail later—explains that this great enemy of the church is called Antichrist, "Quia Christo in cunctis contrarius erit, id est Christo contraria faciet." 7 Adso mentions that Antichrist will be contrary to Christ, but he also according to Linus Lucken, "points out many characteristics of Antichrist and incidents in his career which are rather parallel to the characteristics and history of Christ than contrary thereto." 8 Lucken goes on to observe that "Perhaps he meant that the opposition would be chiefly interior; but as far as exterior appearances and actions are concerned, he generally indicates parallels rather than contraries." 9

Adso, then, defines Antichrist as "contrary to Christ" and yet much of his discussion centers on Antichrist's likeness to Christ. The concept of Antichrist as like Christ rather than against Christ may derive from another implication of Antichrist's name. In his discussion of a medieval Irish account of Antichrist, Douglas Hyde describes this second implication of the Antichrist's name.
As for Antichrist himself the general opinion seems to be that his name is derived from ἀντίς, "against," meaning an opposer of Christ, but it may also be taken to mean "one resembling Christ in appearance and power," as ἀντίς Ὀδήσ means "one who resembles a god" in Homer, and later ἀντί(στρατα)νθος "a praetor," ἀντεβασίλευς "one who is king during interregnum." And this meaning seems to be in the mind of the author of this story when he says that Antichrist will raise people from the dead "in imitation of Christ."  

The characterization of Antichrist as "one resembling Christ in appearance and power," though unstated, is central to Hippolytus' account of Antichrist. We shall later see its importance to Adso's formulation of the life of Antichrist, and to the printed Antichrist vitae of the late Middle Ages.  

Unlike the late medieval Antichrist vitae, Hippolytus's Treatise on Christ and Antichrist strings together diverse scriptural prophecies and relates them (often in strange and unique ways) to Antichrist. His account only resembles a "life" of Antichrist when it attempts, not always successfully, to prevent a chronological ordering of the subject matter. In his introduction Hippolytus writes:

It is proper that we take the Holy Scriptures themselves in hand, and find out from them what, and of what manner the coming of Antichrist is; on what occasion and at what time that impious one shall be revealed; and whence and from what tribe [he shall come] . . . at what time and how he shall work error among the people, [how] he shall stir up tribulation and persecution against the saints; and how he shall glorify himself as God; and what his end shall be; and
how the sudden appearing of the Lord shall be revealed from heaven; and what the conflagration of the whole world shall be; and what the glorious and heavenly kingdom of the saints is to be, when they reign together with Christ; and what the punishment of the wicked by fire. 12

This passage clearly reveals that the essential parts of the "life" of Antichrist were fixed at this early date. Although it was much later until the creation of Antichrist vitae as such, we have, in Hippolytus, the framework for that creation. As in the later vitae, the reader is called to consider the life of Antichrist in a specific progression: His coming—how, when, and where; His ministry—false teaching, persecution, and blasphemy; His death; and the events after His death—the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the judgment of the righteous and wicked. In the body of his Treatise Hippolytus then quotes and comments extensively upon the books of Daniel, 2 Thessalonians, and Apocalypse, and other familiar Antichrist passages. Bernard McGinn, in his study of medieval apocalyptic thought, calls Hippolytus' Treatise on Christ and Antichrist "the most complete summary of early patristic tradition on the final enemy of man." 13

The Influence of Adso

If Hippolytus and other early commentators gave the biblical figure of Antichrist a personality and a life history, the tenth-century Abbot Adso cast that life into its most popular form. Unlike the earlier writers, Adso concerns himself primarily with
the life of Antichrist. He refers to scriptural texts secondarily, as a way of proof, but nowhere does Adso or the reader lose sight of the person of the Antichrist. Extant in hundreds of versions, Adso's *vita* seems to be modelled after the highly popular medieval genre of saints' lives. The Abbot Adso of Montier-en-Der, a confidant of the West Frankish royal family, was in fact a noted hagiographer, 14 He composed his *Libellus de Antichristo* (about 950 A.D.) for Gerberga, the wife of Louis IV. Because several contemporary scholars have examined Adso's sources in attempting to ascertain the originality of his work, this study will simply evaluate Adso's formulation of the Antichrist materials and suggest its relationship to the later illustrated *vitae*. 15

Adso's *Letter* has been posited as the source of many popular medieval eschatological works. The dramatic presentations of the life and work of Antichrist in the *Ludus de Antechristo* (Tergensee, Bavaria, about 1160) and "The Coming of Antichrist" (from the *Chester Mystery Cycle*, about 1360), for example, seem to derive from Adso's account. John Wright, English translator of both *Ludus de Antechristo* and Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo*, properly points out that Adso's essay was "immensely popular; it was copied and distributed widely and came to be the standard source for information on the Last Days." 16 Unfortunately, in building his case for the literary greatness and originality of the *Ludus de Antechristo*, Wright mistakenly underestimates the
achievement of Adso's work. In his introduction Wright claims that he has "tried to show how the author of the Play of Antichrist has taken the huge body of material, which was presented in a particular confused form in Adso (italics mine), his immediate source, and organized it into the most imposing and awesome play to be found in the medieval Latin drama."17

By what standard Wright judges Adso's Libellus a "particularly confused form" of the Antichrist legend, the reader is never told --surely not the pre-Adso Antichrist tradition embedded in scriptural commentary and Sibyline prophecies. Essentially he seems to chafe at the Abbot's handling of the Last World Emperor Legend--it is structurally central to the Ludus, but in Adso it is clearly secondary. Wright takes great pains to build his straw man:

Our main interest in the Essay is historical: as literature it is a piece of careles work. The chronology is poor; Adso adds the legend of the Last Roman Emperor almost as an afterthought, though properly it should stand at the beginning of his narrative. He makes little attempt to assimilate his sources, often quoting them almost word for word. His introduction is florid, his narrative garrulous and repetitive. The work shows no sign of careful revision. Despite all these faults, however, the Essay was tremendously influential throughout the Middle Ages.18

In short, Adso's narrative was thoroughly medieval. Other than the non-chronological placement of the Last World Emperor, the importance of which Wright overemphasizes, Adso's work presents a clear and orderly life of Antichrist for Queen Gerberga and later
As R. K. Emmerson has pointed out, Adso's *Libellus* develops along the same lines as the popular saint's *vitae*. By so ordering his *vita*, Adso "greatly influenced later theological discussions and artistic and literary portrayals." Medieval Christians looked to saint's *vitae* for both edification and entertainment. Like Adso's *Antichrist* *vita*, these texts told the birth to death stories of the holy men and women of faith, and, in so doing, they treated of the parentage, infancy, education, adult life, miracles, and death of the saint. The Antichrist *vita*, because of the nature of its protagonist, served more to exhort, one may assume, than edify. That it did, nonetheless, entertain is revealed by the many popular late medieval illustrated *vitae* of Antichrist.

After his "florid" introduction to Queen Gerberga, Adso introduces his *vita* with a discussion of the meaning of Antichrist's name. Antichrist, Adso teaches, "will be contrary to Christ in all things." This contrary spirit is already manifest in the world (see our discussion in Chapter 1), and Adso, following St. Jerome, names Antiochus, Nero, and Domitian as Antichrist's precursors. Furthermore Adso emphasizes the Johannine view of multiple Antichrist: "For whatever man . . . lives contrary to justice and opposes the rule of his station in life and blasphemes the good, he is Antichrist."

Adso's "life" of Antichrist begins, as it should, with the origin of the "man of sin." The Abbot is careful to emphasize
that his work is not original but, in the best medieval sense, derivative. This disclaimer became an integral part of the Antichrist vita; as we observe by comparing Adso's statement with two later medieval accounts.

Adso's Libellus

The source of my information is not my own imagination or invention; rather I found all this in written works after careful research. 24

Cursor Mundi:

No ping shal I fayne newe
But pat I for in bokes trewe. 25

Birth and Life of Antichrist:

Here begynneth the byrthe and lyfe of the moost false and deceytfull Antechryst, the whiche shall come into the worlde as the prophesy of many prophetes recorded and is taken out of sondry bokes. 26

After disclaiming any originality on his own part, Adso states that the Antichrist would be born from the tribe of Dan, from natural sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. The parentage of the "man of sin" was a hotly debated topic by medieval writers. Jerome had said that the devil would be Antichrist's father, but later writers felt that this detracted from the unique place held by the Virgin Mary in Catholic tradition. Adso takes what came to be a popular middle ground on this point by holding fast to Antichrist's natural parentage but adding that "at the very beginning of his conception, the devil will enter into his mother's womb, and by the devil's strength he will be
fostered and protected in his mother's womb, and the devil's
strength will be with him always."  

Unlike Christ who was born in the humble town of Bethhem, Antichrist will be born in a "place ... whence it is fitting that all evil will arise, namely, the city of Babylon." He will be reared in Corizain and Bethsaida, and, after a childhood spent under the tutelage of magicians and evil spirits, he will come to Jerusalem, restore the temple, circumcise himself, and claim to be the son of God. By gifts, terror, and miracles, he will attempt to convert the Christian people. Those who refuse to convert, "he will cruelly torture and put to a pitiful death in the sight of all." This will be that terrible three and a half year period of persecution, prophesied by Daniel, Christ, and Paul, known as the Great Tribulation.

At this point Adso's vita flashes back to the legend of the Last World Emperor. From the discussion of the specific time of tribulation, he moves to another time indicator of eschatological events: the coming of the Last World Emperor just prior to the appearance of Antichrist. Thus, although lapsing from strict chronological consistency, Adso's method is neither madness nor ignorance. He explains that the Antichrist will come after the apostasy—the secession of kingdoms from the Roman Empire. Adso, a Frenchman, insists, however, that as long as a French king survives, the empire will survive. Thus the Last World Emperor, who will "lay down ... his crown on Mt. Olivet," will be a
king of the Franks. 30

After a short summary of Antichrist's nature—he is a rebel, an anti-Messiah, a "son of pride"—Adso's account resumes with the introduction of Enoch and Elias. The Libellus unlike most other medieval Antichrist vitae, indicates that the two prophets will be sent before the Antichrist's deceptions begin. Even before his devilish rise to power, these "two witnesses" will busy themselves by converting the Jews and preparing the Christians for the coming of Antichrist. Although they will minister during the time of great tribulation, at its end Enoch and Elias will be slain. The remaining Christians will either be killed as well; or they will deny the faith and receive the "mark" of Antichrist. 31

After his iniquities are fulfilled, Antichrist will be slain by Christ on Mt. Olivet. 32 The Lord will then allow forty days for the elect to do penance. Adso, and other medieval authorities, carefully explained however, that they were not specifying that Doomsday would be exactly forty days after Antichrist's death. Such specificity contradicts Jesus' words in Matthew 24:36: "De die autem illa et hora nemo scit, neque angeli caelorum, nisi solus Pater." 33 After this period of penance, the Lord may delay or come quickly—"No one knows how much time will pass." 34

Except, therefore, for his parenthetical discussion of the Last World Emperor, Adso provides an orderly account of the life of Antichrist. An introductory section describing Antichrist's
character, followed by a discussion of his origin, his childhood, his ministry, his battle with Enoch and Elias, his death, and the events immediately after his death: these were the ingredients of Adso's Antichrist vita and most later vitae as well. Emmerson maintains that Adso's "organization of the tradition in the form of a vita of Antichrist made the tradition accessible and understandable to a wider audience . . . thereby contributing to the establishment of the Antichrist tradition as a major part of the religious consciousness of the later Middle Ages." 35 No clearer proof of the wide popularity of the life of Antichrist in the late Middle Ages, and thus the effectiveness of Adso's organization, exists than the Antichrist blockbook vitae and their successors.

The Blockbooks

From the scattered references to Antichrist in the scriptural commentaries, to the story-like sketch of Antichrist's life by Adso, the Antichrist tradition became increasingly popularized in the later Middle Ages. In both dramatic and visual art, the illiterate could join the clergy and the learned in considering this last great opponent of Christ. 36 Although the Moralized Bibles and illuminated Apocalypses undoubtedly contributed to the visual popularization of the Antichrist tradition, nothing has yet been discovered that can fully account for the German blockbook Antichrist vitae. 37 Based on the structure of the tradition developed by Adso, and especially as popularized in
Germany by Hugh of Strassburg's *Compendium Theologicæ Veritatis* (about 1265), these beautiful example of the art of the German woodcut were the first and finest of many such printed illustrated vernacular versions of the life of Antichrist. Wynkyn de Worde's two Antichrist *vitaes*—"The Coming of Antichrist" from his *The Art to Live Well*, and *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*—although not direct copies of German *vitaes*, are best understood in relationship to this tradition of printed illustrated vernacular Antichrist books, of which they are two of the latest examples.

The blockbook *vitaes* owe their origin, in part, to the illustrated Apocalypses of the later Middle Ages. Although most early illuminated Apocalypse manuscripts interpreted the scriptural text quite literally, representing, for example, the beast of Apocalypse 11 as a beast, in the Beatus Apocalypse series (ninth to twelfth century) the Antichrist was for the first time clearly identifiable as a man. Much like the many versions of the Apocalypse which contained a parallel text of interpretive commentary, the illustrations of Antichrist as a man (the interpretive "reading") would be juxtaposed with the illustration of the literal scriptural scene (the Antichrist as a beast). Just as later, the life of Antichrist came to be a unified narrative, separate from the commentary itself, so specific groupings of scenes depicting the life of Antichrist, became common. The later Anglo-Norman Apocalypses (about 1250-1450; five illustrations) the Velislav Bible (a picture bible, about 1350; twenty-two illustrations), and the Wellcome Apocalypse (early fifteenth-century,
eighteen illustrations) prefigured, in a sense, the later, more extensive groupings of Antichrist scenes in the blockbook *vitae*. On first encountering the German Antichrist blockbooks, however, one senses that newness of creative activity which cannot be totally reduced to sources and analogues.

Despite Arthur Hind's classification of them as "crude" and "unimportant," the German blockbook *vitae*, as attested to by their numerous successors, are vital to our understanding of popular late medieval apocalyptic traditions. Essentially free from the "taint" of Joachimist, Anti-Catholic, or Reformist apocalyptic interpretations, these blockbooks present the Adsoian life of Antichrist in a series of about 45 woodcut illustrations. Another fifteen or sixteen cuts representing the Fifteen Tokens before Doomsday and the Last Judgment are added on every known Antichrist blockbook. The coupling of the Fifteen Tokens with the life of Antichrist was a common one and is found in the patristic commentaries, the *Legenda Aurea*, the Chester Mystery Plays, the *Cursor Mundi*, and in almost all the later vernacular Antichrist *vitae* (including Wynkyn de Worde's). Both the xylographic editions, (in which both illustration and text are cut on the block) and the earlier chiro-xylographic edition (in which the illustrations are cut but the text is in manuscript) have normally two illustrations per page, one above the other, with German text above each illustration. The text of the blockbook *vitae* (there was very little variation in the text from edition to edition) was a highly condensed version of the literary Antichrist *vita*, drawing
especially on the Seventh Book of Hugh of Strassburg's *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*. The illustrations clearly carried the major burden of the story telling, while the related text, printed (or written) above each illustration, served as an explanatory note of sorts—much like the pamphlet guide one uses to study the windows of the King's College Chapel at Cambridge. Although most later vernacular illustrated versions of the life of Antichrist contained greatly expended texts, the illustrations were, in many cases, slavishly detailed imitations of the blockbook illustrations. The specific expression on a demon's face, for example, was retained in a scene shared by German, Spanish, and English typographic *vitae*.

Three kinds of Antichrist blockbooks have survived to our day: the chiro-xylographic, the xylographic, and the typographic. 43 H. T. Musper, in his edition of the chiro-xylographic blockbook (*Das Antichrist und die Funfzehn Zeichen*, 1970), argues convincingly that it may have been printed as early as 1460. 44 Because the cutting of the text probably represents an advanced development over the books, like this one, with woodcut illustrations but manuscript text, and, more importantly, because evidence exists that this blockbook was bound together with a manuscript version of *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* early in the 1460's, we may be reasonably sure that the chiro-xylographic is the earliest known Antichrist blockbook. For the purpose of clear reference, I will adopt Musper's terms and refer to the chiro-xylographic work as Edition C. The only full text of edition C was discovered in 1927, bound
as already noted, with a manuscript of the Speculum Humanae Salvationis.

The earliest known pure xylographic edition, Edition A, resides at the Munich State Library, and has been dated about 1470. A non-photographic facsimile edition was produced by Karl Pfister in 1925. Edition A, or Das Puch von dem Entkryst, contains fifty-seven woodcut illustrations of the Antichrist vita, the Fifteen Tokens, and the Last Judgment. In comparison Edition C has sixty-eight. Edition B survives in two issues—the anopisthographic (printed only on the recto) dated 1472 (B₁), and the opisthographic (printed in recto and verso) dated shortly after 1472 (B₂). As both B issues are very similar to Edition A, I shall usually refer only to Edition A as the xylographic Antichrist vita.

The first typographic version of the Antichrist vita was printed in Strassburg, about 1480. Its sixty-two woodcuts and text have recently been reproduced in facsimile. This version seems to have been the link between the early "pure" blockbooks and the many typographic versions which followed them in Germany and the rest of Europe. I have consulted the British Library's copy of this edition (IB 75343), as well as a later typographic Antichrist vitae (1505). These shall be referred to as S₁ and S₂. The similarities between some of the cuts from these editions (especially S₂) and other European versions, such as the Spanish Libro del Anticristo and the English Birth and Life of Antichrist, are striking.
Using the typographic version \( S_1 \) as a base text, the following section outlines the method of the blockbook vitae and attempts to demonstrate the continuity of the tradition. The parenthetical number refers to the order of the woodcuts; the text describes the illustration, and refers, as well, to other expressions of the same tradition.

(1) A full-page cut. Man embraces a woman; a demon, above has hand on each. This is apparently a late addition; it is missing from both Editions A and C. It is copied, however, in \( S_2 \), and serves, as well, as the title page for the Spanish Antichrist vita, Libro del Anticristo (often referred to, hereafter, as Libro or \( L \)).

(2) This very important cut, the first one in Edition A and C, pictures Jacob in bed, surrounded by his sons (see Genesis 49:17). Antichrist, according to the standard interpretation of Jacob's words to Dan, was to be born from the tribe of Dan. In earlier versions, Jacob is shown to the right; his sons are to the left.\(^{47}\) In \( S_1 \) however, their positions are reversed. Interestingly, Edition A clearly shows faces of nine sons and at least indicates the heads of the other three in the background. All the later versions and even the supposedly earlier Edition C show just nine sons. The Compendium Theologicæ Veritatis, so often referred to in the blockbook vitae, surprisingly does not include the Jacob prophecy. The Birth and Life of Antichrist (or BL) fails to even mention the Jacob/Dan/Antichrist tradition, but de Worde's other vita, "The Coming
of Antichrist, (or CA) strongly emphasizes it.

(3) A man and a woman (her breasts exposed) are pictured in bed. They are surrounded by four demons. Apparently this scene became progressively graphic as the blockbooks became more popular. The earliest *vita*, Edition C, contains no "bedding" scene but depicts Antichrist's father and mother (according to the text they are also father and daughter) sitting together with a demon, who points to her uterus. Edition A (1470) portrays what became the standard scene, but with Antichrist's mother/sister modestly covered up. After $S_1$, most of the *vitae* have a version of the more explicit scene. De Worde's illustration of Antichrist's conception used in BL and also in *Robert the Devyll* (but not in CA), seems to be a very detailed copy of the 1505 Strassburg edition ($S_2$). More detailed hatching and a beard on Antichrist's father distinguish $S_2$ from *The Birth and Life*. The hunt for sources is further confused by the illustration in the *Libro* which is very similar to $S_2$ and BL, but which reverses the scene and adds the fourth demon (as in the earlier $S_1$). The *Compendium* (7:7) tell us that "Hic [Antichrist] ex parentum seminibus concipietur. Sed part conceptum descendit spiritus malignis in matris uterum."

(4) This scene of the birth of Antichrist differs very little from edition to edition. Antichrist's mother is pictured lying on the ground, with a snouted demon at her feet (urging her on like a LaMaze coach). Another demon, at her head, pulls a soul from the mouth of the mother. A midwife, with an angel
behind her, pulls (rips?) Antichrist out from his mother's uterus. Editions A, C, S₁, S₂, BL, CA, and L all present essentially the same visual tradition. Again BL copies almost exactly the slightly more detailed S₂, and the Libro is very close to both of them. Babylon, the birth place of Antichrist, is always mentioned with this scene. ⁵²

(5) Antichrist, seated and nude, is circumcised. This scene depicts the beginning of Antichrist's attempt to pose as the Jewish Messiah. With some slight differences of placement (this cut is the seventh in Edition C), all of the vitae have an illustration of the circumcision. De Worde's circumcision scene, in which Antichrist is fully clothed, occurs later in the vita, and does not copy S₂ or L. ⁵³ The blockbooks at this point follow the Compendium closely. It reads: "Post hoc [the birth in Babylon] veniet in Hierusalem, et circumcident se, dicens judeis se esse Christum illis promissum" (7:7).

(6) This scene, coming just prior to number five in Edition A and C, depicts Antichrist's youth. He is shown with two women, a demon, and some wine. Bethsaida, Chorazaim, and Capharnaum were all linked with the youth of Antichrist, and cuts 6, 8, and 9 successively illustrate this part of his life. Antichrist's life in Bethsaida was always connected with sexual immorality. ⁵⁴

(7) Two men, probably Antichrist and a Jew, are shown rebuilding the temple. All the major editions, except de Worde's have similar scenes. Again, the Compendium is followed closely.
Compare the Compendium text (7:8) with the Libro chapter heading preceding this cut:

Judei namque templum: quod romani destruxerunt recidificabunt.

Como lost judíos han de reparar y reedificar et templo in Jherusalem: el cual fue destruyado por los romanos.

Wynkyn de Worde, with a typical economic pragmatism, substitutes a cut of two men scaling a tower, one he used earlier in his Gesta Romanorum (1518), instead of creating a genuine temple building scene.55

(8) Antichrist is pictured with a demon and two human helpers working in a kind of alchemist's workshop. All the German blockbooks and the Libro contain this scene which illustrates Antichrist's education in Corozaim at the hands of magicians, wizards, and demons. This commonly accepted tradition is poetically expressed in the Cursor Mundi.

Norische him shall enchauntours
Migromaunceres and Iogelours
Of alle manere eratis ille
Of al fals hede pei shul him fille.56

(9) Antichrist and a demon are pictured waling in someone else's footsteps outside of a city (Capernaum). As part of his attempt to convince the world that he is the Messiah, the Antichrist would, according to the tradition, retrace the footsteps of Christ.57
do not reproduce this scene. However, The Birth and Life does refer, in its text, to Antichrist's deceptive ministry in Capernaum.50

(10-12) This series of three cuts, found in the blockbooks and the Libro, introduces the great opponents of Antichrist, the prophets Enoch and Elias.59 The first cut depicts the two prophets together, the second and third cuts show Elias and Enoch separately preaching to crowds which include Antichrist and his demonic advisor.60 Like the Compendium, the blockbooks introduce the two prophets early and then return to them much later (cuts 37 and 38 in S1).61 The Birth and Life of Antichrist has two cuts that obviously depict the deaths of Enoch and Elias,62 but has no introductory scene of the prophets preaching.63

(13) Antichrist, two Jews, and a demon burn the books of the Old Law. This popular scene is found in every version except "The Coming of Antichrist."64 Again, as with cuts 3 and 4, de Worde copies almost exactly the S2; and the Libro is very similar to both. In the chiro-xylographic Edition C, the demon who prepares to burn the books says, "omnia comburit"—that is, "he burns everything."65

(14) Antichrist preaches the new law of his kingdom. This scene obviously complements the previous scene of the destruction of the Old Law. The Libro pictures the Antichrist (with a demon) preaching to a crowd and titles the chapter this scene precedes "Como el mismo anticristo predicara su mala seta: contradiziendo a la ley de Cristo."66 Again Edition C adds a
colorful remark, in this case from the crowd: "tu mentiris," that is, "you lie." Both CA and BL have a scene of Antichrist preaching to a crowd, but it is quite different--two nimbed figures, probably Elias and Enoch, lie beheaded at the foot of the pulpit. In fact de Worde uses this cut in BL to introduce the chapter on Antichrist's blasphemous preaching which occurs long before his chapter on the deaths of the prophets! In "The Coming of Antichrist" the cut is properly placed near the treatment of the slaying, by Antichrist's men, of Enoch and Elias.

(15-17) Three separate scenes show Antichrist making the sea to rise (15), making a dead tree blossom (16), and bringing forth a knight from an egg and a stag from a rock (17). Thus the blockbooks follow closely the Compendium, which details the "secundus modus subvertendi" of Antichrist; that is, "per false miraculis . . . per artem magica" [The first "modus" being the preaching of the new law]. After mentioning many other miracles that the blockbooks illustrate later (rising from the dead, causing images to speak, etc.), the Compendium states: "Faciet arbores cito flore et arescentur mare turbari. Naturas in diversas figuris mutari: Mortuos etiam in conspectu hominum suscitabit." The English vitae do not illustrate this tradition.

(18) The Jews, kneeling, receive the mark of Antichrist from Antichrist's servant. Antichrist and two demons look on. The earliest blockbook (Edition C) depicts Antichrist marking a
person in what appears to be a parody of the confirmation "sealing" ritual. The later version show Antichrist watching a follower mark the Jews. De Worde's Antichrist vitæ have no copy of this but, instead, BL contains a crude cut of two men holding out their hands proceeding a chapter which tells how the followers of Antichrist "shall be token or marked in theyr forheed and in the ryght hande."\textsuperscript{71} Whereas the blockbook vitæ could almost stand on their own without their text, de Worde's illustrations, in many cases, cannot be understood without the accompanying text.

(19-24) A series of six scenes illustrates first the commissioning of Antichrist's disciples to preach his new law (19), and then five scenes depicting the ministry of these disciples as they convert the Kings of the earth to Antichrist's cause. These five scenes are found in all the German blockbook vitæ and the Libro with little variation.\textsuperscript{72} In each scene a disciple preaches from a pulpit to a King or Queen and his or her followers. Included are the King of Egypt (20), the King of Libya (21), the King of Ethiopia or "morenlenade" (22), the voluptuous Queen of the Amazons (23), and the Christian people (24). In some of the other versions a disciple, or Antichrist himself, preaches to a general crowd.\textsuperscript{73} The text accompanying cut 23 always mentions the people of Gog and Magog, thought to be the lost tribes of Israel shut up by Alexander the Great, being converted with the Amazon Queen.\textsuperscript{74}

(25-26) These two cuts depict, in the words of the Libro
del Anticristo, "Come los gentes paganos de Got y Magot, egipto, ethoria, con otros muchos demandaran al anticristo par le al adorar como a su dios." These woodcuts are obviously meant to complement the preceeding scenes of the preaching of Antichrist's disciples. Cut 25 pictures the Amazon Queen, with Gog and Magog, meeting Antichrist. Cut 26 pictures the several kings and the former Christians meeting him. The fact that Edition C has a separate cut for each king leads some scholars to maintain that Edition A is actually the earlier work.

(27) Antichrist takes gold from a basket held by demons and gives it to men (kneeling). Traditionally Antichrist had four methods of winning followers: false teaching (the earlier series of preaching illustrations), bribes (this illustration), miracles (woodcuts 28 and 30), and terror or persecution (the later series of woodcuts 32-35). According to medieval authorities, "Antichristus inveniet thesauros absconditos per duos ad secundum se inclinabit plurimos." And Adso had written that "To those who believe in him, he will give great presents of gold and silver." Neither of the English vitae illustrate this particular scene but both texts dwell on the significance of Antichrist's gifts to his followers.

(28) Antichrist (left) directs a column (center) with a demon on it—to answer questions before three kings (right). One of the wonders by which Antichrist would sway the people, the speaking column can be traced back through the Compendium:
"Magica arte faciet statuorum loci, et futura predicatur," to the Apocalypse: "He was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast should even speak, and to cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain." The unique twist given this tradition by The Birth and Life of Antichrist shall be discussed later.

(29) Antichrist and a rooster-like beast watch a servant "mark" a King—according to the blockbook text, either the King of Egypt or Ethiopia. Apparently the speaking image has persuaded these Kings to become Antichrist's disciples and to receive the mark. Here the blockbooks exactly follow Apocalypse 13, where, after the warning of the speaking image in verse 15, follows the warning of the mark.

Also it [the beast] causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of his name.81

Neither BL nor CA illustrate the marking of the kings, although, as mentioned earlier, BL does include a crude cut of two men pointing to their right hands preceding the chapter dealing with the mark.

(30-31) In the first cut Antichrist raises the parents of the King of Libya from the dead. This illustrates the popular tradition, as expressed in Libro del Antecristo, that "el Rey de Libia no quiera creer al anticristo sino que le resucite delante
Portraying the effectiveness of Antichrist's miracle, the second cut shows the King of Libya receiving the mark. The text of the blockbook refers the reader to the Compendium (7:9); however that work merely mentions that Antichrist will raise the dead (not specifically the parents of the King of Libya). Although the English vitae do not illustrate these two scenes, the text of The Birth and Life of Antichrist presents one of the fullest literary treatments of this tradition:

But the kynge of Lybye shall not come to the beleve of the false Antechryst unto the tyme that he shall revyve his fader the olde kynge of Lybye and his moder. And than shall Antechryst with arte magycke or with the devilles crafte make to arysye the forsayd kynge and quene fro dethe to lyfe. And than shall they gyve unto Antechryst lawde and prayse as yf he were god. And whan that is achiyved and doone, the kynge of Lybye shall beleve on that false Antechryst, and all his people be marked with the token of Antechryst on theyr foreheedes, and upon theyr ryght handes.

(32-35) This series of four cuts (six in Edition C) depicts Antichrist's tyrannical reign of terror. Antichrist's means of conversion (three or four depending on the particular work) had already been given a dramatically progressive structure in Adso's Letter. His methods usually included gifts, miracles, false teaching, and terror. Adso wrote that "Those whom he cannot convince by miracles (or any other method) he will cruelly torture, and put to a pitiful death in the sight
of all." In the first cut (32), "mucha manera de gente" are brought before Antichrist to either accept or reject him. The blockbooks carefully picture men and women, friar and knights, peasants and townsmen coming before Antichrist. Every member of every social class, the illustrations are telling us, will be faced with the choice of Antichrist (and pseudo-peace) or Christ (and very real persecution). The second cut (33) shows the disciples of Antichrist leading captives, set apart for martyrdom, before their false Messiah. The third cut (34) portrays, with a restraint some of the other versions eschew, the torments suffered by these faithful Christians during this time of persecution. Antichrist (with an accompanying demon) watches a prisoner being flogged, while another is hanging from a pulley. The earliest blockbook (Edition C) contains three persecution scenes. In the first, Antichrist watches as a man is flogged with barbs; in the second, he watches a man, hanging upside down, beaten with sticks; and in the third he watches a man, whose arms and legs are being held apart by ropes, beaten with sticks. Lactantius, in his Divinae Institutiones, had foretold that those who refused the mark and were captured would be "put to death by exquisite tortures." The illustrated vita of Antichrist, as told in Wynkyn de Worde's Birth and Life of Antichrist, presents perhaps the most graphic combination visual/literary treatment of these tortures. The woodcut illustration depicts Antichrist, seated
in his pavillion, surveying the results of his persecution—
one man has been hanged from a rope, another has been decapitated,
and Elias. Again, de Worde's *Birth and Life of Antichrist* incorporates this tradition into its text, but does not devote a woodcut to it.

For many of the good people shall hide them in caves... but hunger and thirst shall constrain them to come out agayn. For than shall eyther meet ne drynke be solde unto them.

(36) The people kneel before Antichrist (or his images) and worship him as God: Almost all of the versions show four people kneeling looking up at a seated Antichrist. The text explains this as a great insult to the true redeemer. Antichrist's blasphemous posturing as God marks the beginning of his end.

(37-38) These two woodcuts, depicting the execution and resurrection of Enoch and Elias, are repeated in all the later versions. In the first Antichrist looks on as one of his servants executes the prophets. Two details recur in almost every version: the executioner's sword is curved, and one prophet has already been beheaded while the second awaits his death. The second illustration shows an angel, holding a globe in his hand, standing before the two kneeling prophets in some wilderness place. This scene must have been extremely popular for it remains almost identical from the earliest (Edition C) to the latest (BL) of the Antichrist *vitae* which I have consulted. The *Libro* surprisingly represents a different visual tradition, depicting Enoch and Elias rising up into the clouds while a
crowd watches from below. This tradition is actually much
closer to the text of Apocalypse 11:11-12, the source for the
belief in the resurrection of the two prophets.95

(39-40) These two cuts portray the pseudo-death and
resurrection of the Antichrist. The first represents Antichrist
and demon lying down on the ground (supposedly dead) being
mourned by a group of people. The artistic tradition, evident
in most versions, expressed the satanic deceitfulness of this
act by placing an obvious smile on the demon's face.96 The
Birth and Life of Antichrist, unlike the other versions,
incorporates the death and pseudo-resurrection of Antichrist
into one chapter and illustrates only the resurrection. The
second cut (40) shows Antichrist rising from the grave before
a crowd. Again, the different versions emphasize, to varying
degrees, the demonic aid given to Antichrist. In some the
demon merely seems to be watching, but in the Libro the demon
actually pulls Antichrist from the grave. The Birth and Life
of Antichrist stresses the satanic nature of this parody of
Christ's victory over death, by showing two demons hovering
above the shoulders of Antichrist, who is standing on top of a
tomb. In the text, the BL refers to the "devylls arte and
nygromancye" by which this act will be performed.97 The block-
books and their successors here do not follow the structure of
the Comendium, which mentions the death and resurrection of
Antichrist quite early in its text—earlier, for example, than
the deaths of Enoch and Elias. However, they do follow the content of the Compendium, which teaches that "per artem magican simulabit se mortuum et feretur a demonibus in aera, quasi ascenderet in caelum. Et sic putabitus ab hominibus resurrexisse, qui prius mortuus per triduum putabat et tunc mirabuntur populi, et adorabunt eum atque laudabunt." 98

(41) A demon (above) sends down tongues of fire which rest upon the heads of five disciples of Antichrist. In Edition C, the fire rests on the hands of two disciples. In the Libro Antichrist watches the fire fall from the sky without the help of a demon. The blockbooks all place this pseudo-Pentecost after the death and resurrection of Antichrist, emphasizing thus the consistency of Antichrist's blasphemous parody of Christ. If Antichrist could truly parallel Christ, however, the scene would occur even after his ascension. But Antichrist, his limitations perhaps being expressed for the sake of the faithful, would have no post-ascension ministry. The ascension, in fact, was to be the scene of his final judgment. Another tradition, exemplified in BL, places the pseudo-Pentecost early in Antichrist's reign. 99 In this version, also striving to parallel the followers of Christ and Antichrist, the followers of Antichrist are empowered, as Christ's disciples were after Pentecost, to "speke sondry speches and do fals myracles." 100

(42-44) This series of illustrations, probably modelled
on the Compendium's chapter De Morte Antichristi, depicts the death of Antichrist. In the initial cut (42) Antichrist, with a hill behind him, faces a crowd. In other versions Antichrist faces the crowd from the hill. This hill, as all authorities agreed, is Mount Olivet, where Christ ascended into heaven from his disciples. The Strassburg typographic edition (S₁) reverses the order of the next two full-page cuts—showing the Antichrist taken to hell-mouth (43) before it shows his death (44). The other blockbooks and the vernacular successors properly arrange these two scenes. The death scene pictures Antichrist, in the air just above Mount Olivet, attacked by demons and two angels—one with a lance and another with a sword. Christ, with two angels, looks on through the clouds. The involvement of demons, angels, and Christ remains constant in all the versions. Because of the various traditions, medieval commentators (and illustrators) were compelled to include both Christ and the angel St. Michael in their treatments of Antichrist's death. The final cut in this series features several demons dragging Antichrist to a hugh, horrible hell-mouth. Different versions portray Antichrist as roped, naked, chained, kicked, even disembowled. If the illustrations failed to discourage the would be disciples of Antichrist from sin, the text's reminder that, in hell, Antichrist's "body and soule [will] be tourmented and flagelled with the inextynguible fire of helle ever in perpetuyte without extynguysihement" should have succeeded.
(45) A group of people celebrate inside a hall; these are the followers of Antichrist, who after his death, indulge in feasting and sexual immorality. Instead of repenting after the death of their infernal lord, these disciples, according to the Compendium "post mortem illius gaudebunt, ducentes uxores, and dicentes, licet princeps nostra mortuus sit, hademus tamen potestatem, pacem, et securitatem." This scene is reproduced in all the blockbooks, but in none of the later vernacular versions. The text of "The Coming of Antichrist" does, however, closely follow the Compendium's treatment.  

(46) From one pulpit, Enoch and Elias preach to a crowd. This popular tradition, as expressed in the Libro, that "depués de la muerte del anticristo an de volver Elias y Enoch a predicar la fede christo y convertir el mundo," although found neither in scripture, Adso's Letter, nor the Compendium, is illustrated in all the blockbooks. The Libro follows, as it often does, the illustration in the later Strassburg edition (S2). Neither of de Worde's Antichrist vitae, which also often follow S2, repeat this scene. "The Coming of Antichrist" does use a similar cut, picturing two prophets preaching from one pulpit, to introduce its section on the first coming of Enoch and Elias. Following its source, "L'Advenement de Antichrist," this English version does not include the return of the prophets after Antichrist's death. The Birth and Life of Antichrist, like the inexpensive text that it is, reproduces a scene from de Worde's Knight of Swanne
which in no way relates to the text. In diagonal compartment, it pictures an angel with a scroll (top left) and a woman in a bed (bottom right). The belief in the return of Enoch and Elias probably developed from the tradition, found in the Compendium and many other works, that after Antichrist's death "Judei vero convertentur ad fidem, et sancta ecclesia usque ad finem pacificata quiescet." The prophets were to be the instruments of this last reconciliation.

(47-63) The Antichrist vita itself usually concluded with the picture of the return of Enoch and Elias. Then followed the illustrations and text explaining the Fifteen Signs before Doomsday, followed, in all the vitae which I have consulted, by an illustration of the Last Judgment. Since the signs vary somewhat from version to version and they are only peripheral to the Antichrist vita, they will be considered in an appendix. It is enough here to note that the close relationship of the Fifteen Signs before Doomsday to the Antichrist vita underscores the persistence of the eschatological nature of the Antichrist tradition, even at the end of the Middle Ages.
Notes

Chapter 2

1 I possess a copy, found in a Medical Center waiting room, of one such modern Antichrist vita---The Coming World Dictator by John Wesley White. The text purports, like the medieval vitae, to answer the following questions: "Who is He? What is He like? Where will He come from? When will He Rise to Power? Why will the world welcome Him?"


3 Hippolytus, p. 206.


5 Hippolytus, p. 206.

6 Ibid.

7 Karl Young, ed., The Drama of the Medieval Church, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 2:457.

8 Lucken, p. 12.

9 Ibid.


11 Brother Lucken discusses yet a third implication of Antichrist's name. Since Antechrist was the usual medieval spelling, he was considered to be the one coming before Christ. Lucken, p. 13.

12 Hippolytus, p. 205.


14 Ibid, p. 82.

16 John Wright, translator, The Play of Antichrist (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1987), p. 23. My references to Adso are from Wright's translation.

17 Ibid, p. 23.

18 Ibid, p. 100.

19 For example, McGinn calls Adso's use of The Last World Emperor tradition "a stroke of genius."


21 Idem, Antichrist in the Middle Ages, p. 77.

22 Wright, p. 102.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Cursor Mundi, 4: lines 22007-22008.

26 Birth and Life of Antichrist, p. 158 (page numbers refer to my edition).

27 Wright, p. 103. "The Coming of Antichrist" exemplifies the fierce debate about Antichrist's parentage. "After the conception of the sayd Antecryste the devyll shall descend in the wombe of his vyle and abhonyable moder. . . ." The author goes on the claim that "those erreth that shold be rut to flyghte and rut out as heretykes . . . the whiche sayth that the Antecryste shall be borne of a vyrsgyn, the whiche thynge is ryght false and ryght damnable and ryght lyke an heretyke. . . ." (p. 5).

28 Ibid.


31 Ibid, p. 109. Strangely Adso does not mention the resurrection of Enoch and Elias from the dead.

32 According to Adso and most other authorities, St. Michael, as the instrument of Christ, would actually slay Antichrist. See Wright, p. 109.
The passage commonly followed the account of the death of Antichrist and preceded the account of Doomsday.

Wright, p. 110.


So popularized, in fact, that some early Reformers taught that the Roman church had invented the Antichrist *vita* to blind the masses to the fact that the Papacy itself was Antichrist.


A group of Spanish illuminated Apocalypse Manuscripts which include the influential commentary by Beatus of Liebana. Emmerson, Antichrist in the Middle Ages, p. 108. Hereafter all references to Emmerson will be to this work.

"The artistic tradition also developed a series of pictures, illustrating a *vita* of Antichrist that in many ways resembled the literary *vitae* begun in Adso's *Libellus de Antichrist.*" In Emmerson, p. 124.


That is, the life as structured by Adso. The blockbooks do not depend directly on Adso's *Libellus.*

Although purists might insist that only the xylographic editions qualify as "blockbooks," I shall consider all three types under that title. For the definition of terms, see p. 50 above.

Kusper, p. 5 of English Appendix.

Das Puch von dem Entkrist (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1925).


Emmerson reproduces this scene from Edition A. See Antichrist in the Middle Ages, plate 3.
Reproduced in Emmerson, plate 3.

A₂v, cut 1.

Robert the Devyll (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1517).

In Edition C the words "Act evil midwife" accompany the scene.

See Libro, capitul 4 and Sirth and Life, Chapter 2.

Sirth and Life, B₂. It is probably influenced by Nauvais Antichrist.

The Compendium, however, does not mention the three cities connected with Antichrist's youth.


Cursor Mundi, 4: lines 22111-22114.

According to Adso, "He will trample on the places where the Lord Jesus Christ walked." See Wright, p. 104.

See Birth and Life, p. 164.

See Chapter 1, p. 18 above for our discussion of the tradition of the two prophets.

Unlike the blockbooks, the Libro and "The Coming of Antichrist" depicts the two prophets preaching from one pulpit.

Compendium 7:7 (the first chapter of its Antichrist section) mentions that Enoch and Elias will come to convert the Jews. Later an entire chapter (7:12) is devoted to the ministry of the prophets.

D₁ and C₃v (the first is out of place).

But "The Coming of Antichrist" which, supposedly shares a common series of Antichrist woodcuts with The Birth and Life, does contain a preaching illustration.

Every printed vitae, that is, mentioned in this chapter.

Edition C (Kusper), 4 vb.

Libro, C₃v.
67. Musper, 5a.
70. Ibid.
71. See Birth and Life, p. 172. For the illustration see B1.
72. Even the kings' order of appearance remains constant.
73. Musper, 7va and Libro, d9.
74. See Compendium 7:11: "De magis et mago discunt quidam quod sunt decem tribus intra montes Caspias clausae: non ita tamen quis exire possent si permittentur, sed non permittuntur a Regina Amazonum."
75. Libro, D9v.
77. Wright, p. 104.
82. Libro, D7v.
85. Wright, p. 105.
86. Libro, E1.
87. Musper; 10v, 11r, 11v.
88. Quoted by Wright, p. 105. Also see Adso's account (same pars): "Then every faithful Christian who is discovered either will deny God or will perish by sword or furnace fire or serpents or wild beasts or any other kind of torture whatever, if he should remain in the faith."
99 Birth and Life, C₁v.
100 Birth and Life, pp. 176-77.
101 Libro, E₄v, and Musper, 11v and 12v.
102 Birth and Life, p. 178.
103 See, for example, Libro, E₅v.
104 The Birth and Life has a similar scene, based on a different tradition. In this cut (Aᵥ), all the worshippers are kings, and two kings lie dead at Antichrist's feet.
105 This different tradition is also followed in "The Coming of Antichrist."
106 In Edition C, the demon (still smiling) is pictured holding Antichrist down from above.
107 Birth and Life, p. 182. For the illustration, see C₅.
108 Compendium 7:9.
109 Birth and Life, E₂v.
110 Birth and Life, ḋ Illustration on E₂v.
111 Compendium 7:14: "Occidentur antem in monte oliveti in pavilione et in solio suo, in loco circa: dæm dominus deus ascendet in coelum."
112 All of the German blockbook vitae devote full-page woodcuts to the illustration of Antichrist's death.
113 Birth and Life, pp. 186-87.
114 Compendium 7:14.
115 "The Coming of Antichrist," Kk3 : "Al be it some mynystres of the Antechyrste shall enjoye them and shall make weddynges, feestes, and playes of dyvers maners. And shall cony nue theyr synnes excercables in saynge make we good chere, for all be it that our mayster be dead. Neverthe less we have surety and pease."
106 Libro, F. v.

107 Instead, it maintains that they will be raised directly into heaven.

108 Knight of Swanne (London: Wynkyn de Wor-

109 Compendium 7:14.

110 That is, even at the end of the Middle Ages, a time of great social and religious upheaval, Antichrist was still popularly viewed not as a type of a particular political or religious system, not primarily as a figure for the forces of evil in the world, but as a future human being who would signal the imminent second coming of Christ and Doomsday.
Chapter III

The Antichrist *Vita* in England:
An Analysis of the *The Byrthe and Lyfe of Antechryste* and Its English Forerunners

The tradition of illustrated vernacular printed versions of the Antichrist *vita* surfaced in England in three related early sixteenth-century works. This chapter briefly discusses the sources of each of these texts, describes the differences of structure and content which they display, and, finally, analyzes in detail *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*. This analysis includes a discussion of the woodcut illustrations, a consideration of the work as an example of early sixteenth-century printing, a look at its tendency toward the vernacular translation of scripture, and a close look at three particularly important aspects of its presentation of Antichrist's life. My treatment of the last of these, the influence of new Reformist apocalyptic thought on *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, includes a survey of late medieval apocalyptic trends.

We have previously discussed the popularity and influence of the Antichrist *vita*, as structured by the
German blockbook artists, upon later German and Spanish typographic versions. The three typographic versions from Germany, published in 1480, 1505, and 1516, essentially reproduce the same scenes, with the same text, as the earlier blockbooks. Yet the quality of the woodcut illustrations of these same earlier scenes degenerated with each successive version. The later Strassburg edition (1505) shows a definite relationship to the Spanish Libro del Anticristo and, to a lesser degree, Wynkyn de Worde's two Antichrist vitae—"The Coming of Antichrist" and The Birth and Life of Antichrist. The Libro follows the blockbooks closely: it represents the life of Antichrist in forty-six woodcuts which vary only slightly from the forty-six of S₁ or the forty-three cuts of the earlier Edition A.¹ The printed English Antichrist vitae, however, depart from this strict adherence to the blockbook formula. We have previously mentioned some of the many similarities between de Worde's two Antichrist vitae and the German models. For example, the illustrations of the conception of Antichrist, the birth of Antichrist, the burning of the books of the law, and the resurrection of Enoch and Elias in The Birth and Life of Antichrist, reproduce, almost exactly, those same scenes in the 1505 Strassburg Anti-
chreist vita (S₂) and in Libro del Anticristo. Furthermore, many of de Worde's other Antichrist cuts, although not
exact copies of the German or Spanish forerunners, are similar in spirit and are placed in roughly the same sequence. If it were not for the discovery of another specific source for The Birth and Life of Antichrist, one might conclude that it is a careless adaptation of the German Antichrist vita. At this point, however, I want to briefly consider the other Antichrist vita printed by Wynkyn de Worde, "The Coming of Antichrist."

The source of "The Coming of Antichrist" has long been known to be Antoine Verard's "L'Advenement d'Antichrist," a chapter of his Art de Bien Vivre et de Bien Mourir (Editions in 1493, 1496, and 1498). Verard originally issued this, his "most important work," 2 in three sections: De Bien Mourir (I, 18 July 1492), Traict de L'Advenement de Antichrist (II, 28 October 1492), De Bien Vivre (III, 15 December 1492). He reissued it as one book on 12 February 1493/4 (mistakenly printed as 1453/4) with essentially the same text and illustrations, but modifying the order of the sections to III, I, and II. Thus the L'Advenement de Antichrist was properly placed, eschatologically speaking, at the close of this compendium of the Christian life.

Texts concerned with The Art of Dying or Ars Moriendi, of which Verard's L'Art de Bien Vivre et Bien Mourir is a late example, were extremely popular in the late Middle
Ages, as attested to by the twelve blockbook editions listed by Arthur Hind. Furthermore important moveable type editions, based to varying degrees on the blockbooks, were produced in Leipzig (1493), Lyons (1485-90), Paris Verard’s, 1492), Delft and Zwelle (1488-91), Venice (1490 and 1503), Paris (the English version, 1503), and London (de Worde’s, 1505). It has not yet been shown just how and where the Antichrist tradition (with the Fifteen Signs before Doomsday) became connected with the Ars Moriendi tradition; however the rationale behind the union seems obvious. In fact, Verard’s work treats all four of the components of medieval eschatology—death (Ars Moriendi), judgment (Antichrist, the Fifteen Signs, and Doomsday), heaven (The Joys of the Redeemed), and hell (The Torments of the Damned). Whatever the origin of this combination of the Antichrist vita with the traditional Ars Moriendi, the English translations of Verard’s L’Art de Bien Vivre et Bien Mourir are careful to retain it.

"The Coming of Antichrist"

"The Coming of Antichrist" is a very close translation of Verard’s L’Advenement de Antichrist, as the larger work it is a part of, The Art to Live Well and Die Well, is a close translation of L’Art de Bien Vivre et Bien Mourir. De Worde’s book however has thirteen Antichrist woodcut illustrations, many of which are also used in The Birth
and Life of Antichrist, and none of which are found in Verard's work. Verard's *L'Advenement de Antichrist*, in fact, has no Antichrist illustrations. I discovered this only after months of waiting to look at a copy of *L'Art de Bien Vivre* in order to ascertain the relationship of de Worde's Antichrist woodcuts to Verard's. Verard's magnificent volume, each section of which, except the Antichrist section, is profusely and tastefully illustrated, has no Antichrist illustrations at all. Arthur Hind's description of Verard's woodcuts, and the well known fact that de Worde's *The Art to Live Well and Die Well* slavishly copies Verard's entire work had led me to assume that the Antichrist woodcuts in "The Coming of Antichrist" were copied from *L'Advenement de Antichrist*. Hind had noted that Verard's Antichrist section "contains large cuts, each with two border pieces, illustrating the *Quinze Signes de l'Advenement*, followed by a Last Judgment and a full-page cut of the Blessed in Heaven illustrating *Les Joutes de Paradis*." Since de Worde's woodcuts of the Fifteen Signs and the Last Judgment obviously copied Verard's, it was probable that in at least one of the editions of *L'Art de Bien Vivre et Bien Mourir*, Wynkyn de Worde had found the source for his Antichrist cuts. The true evolution of these cuts, which will be further discussed later, is not, however, so simple.
After his great success in France, Verard attempted to break into the lucrative religious book market in England by printing, in 1503, what has come to be one of the most denounced (and therefore famous) early English printed books. This was The Book Intytulyd the Art of Good Lywyng and Good Deyng (printed in Paris, 30 May 1503), of which the Emmanuel College Library of Cambridge University holds a perfect copy. Verard's English edition, also referred to as The Traytte of God Lywynge, is visually every bit as beautiful as his French editions. It was, according to Emmanuel College Librarian F. H. Stubbings, "illustrated partly with the blocks originally made for the French version (1493), partly with copies of them." The language of this "translation," however, is a strange and wonderful thing. One scholar has kindly remarked that the translation was wrought by "a young Scotchman with a very imperfect knowledge of French." Another has more pointedly described the work as "an uncouth translation" with "the vilest spelling that can be imagined." A. W. Pollard termed the translator "some wild Scotchman," while an early student of the "linguistic peculiarities" of The Traytte of God Lywynge and Kalender of Shyppars (another attempt, in the same year, by Verard and his translator to break into the English market) has stuffily concluded it to
be "the most extraordinary 'hash' to be found in the history of bad translations".8

Nevertheless, the much-maligned Traytte contains probably the first printed Antichrist vita in English. None of the earlier Ars Moriendi translated and printed by Caxton include the Antichrist story,9 the Cursor Mundi and Chester Antichrist play existed only in manuscript, and the Legenda Aurea (several versions before 1503) gave only a short condensed account of Antichrist.10 Since both Verard's Traytte and de Worde's Art to Live well are close translations from Verard's L'Art de Bien Vivre et Bien Mourir, the content of the Traytte's Antichrist section will not be discussed separately except for the following comments. Like its source, the Traytte does not contain any specific Antichrist woodcuts.11 However, it does include a strange cut of a man in bed, and a man and a woman talking in the background, on the first page of the Antichrist section—the page on which de Worde illustrates the birth of Antichrist.12 Secondly, the translator, Thomas Lewyngton,13 consistently softens the strong Catholic stance of Verard's French version by translating "Catholic" as "faithful" or "Christian." Three examples of this tendency follow:
Art to Live Well

Antichrist will not allow the scriptures to be expounded by "Doctours Catholyques."

In the last days men will refuse to hear "the holy catholyque doctryne of Jhesu Cryst."

Antichrist will torment "the good and the true Catholyques . . . ."

Traytte

"faithful doctors."

"holy and faithful doctryne."

"the faithful and good crysten (people)."

Most probably Wynkyn de Worde was attracted to producing a translation of Verard's L'Art de Bien Vivre et Bien Mourir not so much by theological concerns (restoring the word "Catholic," for example) as by economic possibilities. Surely de Worde, like Verard before him, believed that an excellent potential market for such a work existed. After all, Caxton, Pynson, and de Worde himself had already printed Ars Moriendi (without illustrations, without the other three sections included by Verard) in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Given the popular appeal of such a work, and given Lwyngton's unreadable translation from the French, de Worde needed only to copy Verard's woodcuts (a common practice) and turn to one of his available translators, probably Andrew Chertsey, to produce, in January of 1505, his own edition: The Art or Crafte to Live Well and to Dye Well.
One particular characteristic of the Antichrist section of the Art to Live Well raises a confusing problem for our investigation into illustrated Antichrist vitae printed in England. The first page of "The Coming of Antichrist" contains the familiar scene of the birth of Antichrist—quite like the scene in the early blockbooks, almost exactly like the scenes in the 1505 Strassburg typographic vita ($S_2$) and Libro del Anticristo, and, without a doubt, the same woodcut that appears in The Birth and Life of Antichrist (the only copy of which has been dated no earlier than 1520). Wynkyn de Worde, by supplying the woodcut illustrations of the important scenes in Antichrist's life, had done what Verard had failed to do in either his French or English editions: link his printing of an Antichrist treatise with the European tradition of illustrated Antichrist vitae. For the most part, however, de Worde's Antichrist woodcuts are not drawn from the typographic Strassburg edition or from the Libro. And since many (but not all) of the same woodcuts are found in The Birth and Life of Antichrist, an earlier, now lost, edition of that work may have been printed by 1505. This earlier edition of The Birth and Life of Antichrist could have been the source of de Worde's Antichrist woodcuts in "The Coming of Antichrist." Edward Hodnett, in his English Woodcuts, 1480–1535, advances this theory of an earlier edition of
The Birth and Life of Antichrist. This plausible theory is upset, however, by the fact that two Antichrist woodcuts in "The Coming of Antichrist," obviously related to the larger group of de Worde's Antichrist woodcuts, are not found in The Birth and Life, for which, according to this theory, all the Antichrist woodcuts were created. Out of this confusion we can clearly affirm only this much: 1.) Wynkyn de Worde owned at least thirteen Antichrist woodcuts by 1505, for they appear in "The Coming of Antichrist"; 2.) two of the woodcuts are exact copies of S₂ and Libro (compared to four in The Birth and Life); 3.) eleven of the thirteen cuts in "The Coming of Antichrist" do appear in The Birth and Life, but the two that do not are almost certainly part of a larger series of Antichrist cuts; and 4.) except for the first woodcut, which illustrates the birth of Antichrist even though the text's discussion of this event occurs two pages later, the woodcuts closely reflect the concerns of the text.

Except for the two woodcuts that follow S₂ and Libro, no definite source can be located for the illustration of "The Coming of Antichrist." Although not exact copies, however, these woodcuts do bear a close resemblance to the illustrations of the French/Latin L'Advenement et [sic] du mauvais Antechrist (1495?). Since this work, or perhaps its source, is undoubtedly the source for most of the text
of *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, and since, with only two exceptions, the woodcuts of "The Coming of Antichrist" are shared by *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, I will discuss these woodcuts in my treatment of *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*.

Although only one section of a much larger work, "The Coming of Antichrist" is an integrated, complete Antichrist *vita* in its own right. It shares eleven woodcuts with the "later" work, *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, and it shares its basic content with most of the other medieval Antichrist *vitae*—his birth, his miracles, his death, etc. It is, however, quite different from both *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* and the earlier blockbooks, and therefore deserves an independent analysis. Before turning our full attention to *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, we will briefly consider "The Coming of Antichrist" as an Antichrist *vita*.

The "Coming of Antichrist" is more a moral treatise than a story. In a way unknown to *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, it continually strives to apply the Antichrist tradition to the spiritual life of its audience. At certain points its narrator addresses the audience in a tone of warning and exhortation; at other times he or she engages in a controversial theological argument, only marginally related to the life of Antichrist. This moral
emphasis no doubt reflects the fact that "The Coming of Antichrist" is a part of a larger moral treatise—a compendium on present and future living in light of Christian eschatological beliefs. The entire work, of which this particular Antichrist vita is a section, attempts to instruct medieval mankind how "to live well and to die well", as the introduction to the "Coming of Antichrist" makes clear.

Before we treat of the joyes of paradise, helpynge our lorde, we have intencyon for to treate of all the thynges the whiche may exhorte man for to drede god and too love, and consequently for to deye well. And fyrste we shal treate the comynge of Antecryst . . . and afterwars . . . we shal treate of the xv tokens . . . before the grete jugemente. . . . 21

The Antichrist vita upholds this purpose throughout. Contemporary examples of a society which refuses to "drede god" and "love" are cited as evidences of the workings of Antichrist in the world. In the introduction we are told that the Antichrist "shall come in the tyme in the which the synners shal be in grete haboundance in lyke wyse as they ben nowe." 22 The almost homiletic tone of the treatise is most clearly evident in the following long passage, again, from the introduction, which discusses the great time of sin preceding Antichrist. Note especially the religious use of the "Übi Sunt" theme.
What [who] is he the whiche putteth in doubte that the tyne of the sayd Antecryste approcheth not, beholdynge that there are, by cursed custome, ylles infynyte ben done and accomplysshed. For without dyffuculte that [these evils] that these vertuous men of tyme paste weren wonte to have in rebuke and angre semeth to be ryght honorable and juste unto men as now. Whereis nowe the chastyte and honeste of maryage, the contynence and relygyon of the people of the churche. Nowe the symnes of the fleshe, harloytres and fylthes, ben open in the men and in the women, in the one and in the other. Sexe and kynde, faith and loyalte, ben in exyle. Marchaundes re useth more than of leyes and beglynges of othes and forswerynges exoral for to sell and bye more dere, without ony fere of god before theyr eyen. Wherfore reste not but that the sayd Antecryst arryveth as the forewalker and myncyatour of the ende of the worlde.23

It is instructive to note that of the four signs said to precede the coming of Antichrist—the fragmentation of the Roman Empire, the break of certain churches with Rome, the departure of "many crysten people" from the faith, and the time of great sin (which we have already referred to), the first three signs have a total of four sentences and 144 words devoted to them, while the fourth, the one most easily related to the moral and spiritual life of the individual Christian, has almost an entire folio page and 439 words (over five percent of the entire "Coming of Antichrist") devoted to it.
This same tendency to "exhort man to drede god and too love" appears in "The Coming of Antichrist"'s discussion of Antichrist's character. Just as Antichrist will be lecherous, rich, and blasphemous, so those who are likewise lecherous, uncharitably rich, or blasphemous are the fore-runners of Antichrist. In some cases the exhortation may be given in a single short statement: "Antecryst shall pronounce blasphemes toward god . . . and therfore the blasphematours ben precursours of Antecryst." In other cases, a long warning passage details the likeness of the evil social conditions of the present world to the characteristics of Antichrist. The following passage (slightly condensed), unlike anything in The Birth and Life of Antichrist, expands upon the tradition, based on Daniel 11:37, of Antichrist's lechery.

The sayd Antecryst shall be above all lecherous. . . . That is to saye that the sayd Antecryste shall be habandonned unto al concupyscence and lechery of women . . . for at the comynge of Antecryste, men and women shall synne so openly that they shall have no shame to do and accomplysshe theyr lecheryes and adoutryes. But they shall do them nece as openly without havynge any shame.25

After describing both the character of Antichrist and the prevalent conditions at the time of his coming, the writer narrows his or her focus to the present age.
It is grete pyte at this daye [italics mine] of the lecherys the whiche rymmeth in the worlde. For many enjoye them in theyr malyces, lecheryes, and harlotryes, and suche people ben the precursors and messangyers of the antecryste.26

The text then seeks to make the appearance of Antichrist even more imminent by comparing these "lecherous men and lecherous women, adulterers and fornycateurs" with John the Baptist. Just as surely as Jesus followed closely on the heels of his chaste forerunner, John, so Antichrist will soon follow his sinful prophets of sensuality.27

Beyond simply warning its readers, on the basis of similarities between the present time and the time of Antichrist's coming, of the great "Man of Sin's" soon appearance, "The Coming of Antichrist" endeavors to give spiritual counsel, in advance, to those who may very well live during his reign. Thus the events of Antichrist's career--his false teaching, his miracles, his bribes, and his persecutions--are specifically related to an exhortation to follow Christ. For example, after explaining the impressive miracles that Antichrist will work to confirm his false claims to be the Messiah, the text bluntly states that the "grete partye of all the crysten people shall be brought and drawen in errour."28 Because of this great temptation, the narrator, as spiritual counselor,
first encourages the potentially tempted Christian, and,
in doing so, explains the purpose of the treatise.

Ryghte happy shal be he that shall have
parfyte fayth and the which shall persyste
in the lawe and doctryne of our savyour
Jhesu Crist. The whiche thynge many maye
do whan they shal be duely advertyised of
the begylynges and invencyons of the sayd
Antecryste. These deceitful miracles
they may understode by the auctour of this
present treatysse.\textsuperscript{29}

Furthermore, the writer attempts to answer the age-old
question of God's faithful people: why does God allow the
wicked (in this case, Antichrist and the demons involved
in his false maracles) to succeed? In the long passage
treating this difficult question, three specific reasons
are advanced: those who live as deceivers in the world
(false Christians?) shall be deceived, the good shall be
exercised in virtue so that their faith will be perfect,
and the Christians shall have a clear line of division
between themselves and the followers of Antichrist--for,
according to Saint Gregory, only the wicked will be
allowed to do miracles in the last days.\textsuperscript{30}

Another of Antichrist's four means of converting the
world, the giving of bribes, occasions an extended reproof
of all those caught up in avarice. Even the "false
prophetes and cursed prechers deceitful clerics" who
pander to the rich by promising them salvation in exchange
for contributions to the church are attacked.\textsuperscript{31} After a long passage treating the perversion of contemporary society by avarice, the writer, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, concludes, "it is good tofore that we be not nere the tyme of the antecryst . . ." since all classes of society--lettred and ignorant, noble and ignoble, rich and poor--"ben taken with this stynkyng fyre of covetyse as and yf they sholde dwel perpetually in this worlde." \textsuperscript{32}

Similar to the spiritual counsel given to those potentially facing Antichrist's deceptive miracles, a mixture of encouragement and practical advice is interjected in the section describing Antichrist's fourth and final method of conversion--the torment and persecution of his opponents. This great persecution will be unlike any preceding it; in fact, "the crystyens then shall suffre more grete in the tyme of antecryst" than the holy martyrs of the early church did.\textsuperscript{33} However, the text characteristically balances this fearful picture of the future with the encouraging promise of grace:

\begin{quote}
In lyke wyse, the holy and good crystyens that shall be in that tyme shal be more stronge and more constant than these other that have ben here before. And undoutefull wyse the gracie that shall be . . . a grete grace to them by the whyche they may suffre and susteyne the above sayd trybulation. . . .\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}
But lest any Christian, filled with spiritual pride, proclaim his or her desire to serve Christ during the time of Antichrist, and boast of the great faithfulness with which he or she will suffer persecution, the narrator rebukes this foolish presumption, predicting that "for a ryght lytel persecucyon [such a person] shal leve and habandone the fayth."\textsuperscript{35} Taking again the role of spiritual counselor, the narrator asks the readers to consider Saint Peter. If the great rock of the church proudly boasted of his faithfulness, and yet pitifully denied Christ at the simple words of a maiden and a servant, "what may the poore crystyens than do that shal be put in more grete and in more sharpe trybulacyon than ever hathe be sene syth the begynnynge of the worlde."\textsuperscript{36} Not spiritual pride, but complete dependance upon the God who gives grace to the humble, will conquer the temptation to renounce Christ in the face of Antichrist's persecution.

As a final example of the tendency toward moral admonition in "The Coming of Antichrist," I want to consider its treatment of the death and punishment of Antichrist. Whereas Adso had only mentioned the place (Mount Olivet) and instrument of Antichrist's death (Christ, or Michael his agent),\textsuperscript{37} The Birth and Life of Antichrist and other later versions of the Antichrist tradition made the punishment of Antichrist a major feature of the vita. In
The Birth and Life of Antichrist this punishment includes not only the "everlastynge fyre" but the derision and scorn heaped upon Antichrist by the devils of hell.\textsuperscript{36} In that "horryble gulfre of hell," we are told, "shall [his] body and soule be tourmented and flagelled with the inextynguble fyre of hell ever in perpetuyte without extynguishment."\textsuperscript{39} "The Coming of Antichrist" presents an altogether different version of the punishment of Antichrist--one that resembles the meditations on the pains of the damned that are found throughout medieval moral texts. This scholastic-like consideration of the pains of Antichrist, in light of the inclination throughout "The Coming of Antichrist" to call the reader to reflection and moral conversion, is certainly intended to save the potential forerunner or follower of Antichrist from a similar fate. In typical scholastic fashion, the narrator forms a question for his "ideal reader," and proceeds to analytically examine the answers.

A man may demaunde how he [Antichrist] shall be punysshed in hell. Truely his Payne shal be mervaylous, terryyble, horryble, and sen-syble. For first he shall be put from the vysyon of god after the worde of the prophete Yaaye: Iniquite gessit non videbit gloriam dei. That is to saye, the cursed Antechryst . . . hath employed his tyme for to do evyll and for this cause he shall not se the glory of god-- the whiche thynge is the gretest Payne of the dampned. . . . Secondly the sayd Antechryst shal be for evermore payned and tormented, brennt and beten in hell with-out ever to dye. . . . That is to saye that
Antechrist shall suffre in hell the paine of all the evylles that he hath done. . . . All be it that his paine be semblable unto the paine of other dampned as unto the duracyon and infynyte for as moche as it shall be eternall. Not withstanding as unto the straytenesse, aercyte, and crudelyte, the paine of the sayd Ante-cryst shall exceede the paine of the other dampned more than men can tell. . . . The thyrde paine . . . shall be that he shall drawe for evermore eternally in the company and vsyon horrrible of devylles. . . . 40

Although the internal consistency of the "meditation" breaks down—the three pains of Antichrist (eternal loss of visio Dei, eternal sensible pain, eternal company of demons) do not strictly correspond to the four kinds of pain introduced—its ability to conjure up an image of the horrors of hell is beyond question.

The intense effort to link the life and character of Antichrist with the moral life of its readers makes "The Coming of Antichrist" a highly fascinating and important example of the Antichrist vitae. Nevertheless, heeding another important moral admonition about missing the visio silvae propter arbores, the following summary of the Antichrist vita according to "The Coming of Antichrist" particularly intends to emphasize its similarity to the other late Medieval Antichrist vitae. Since "The Coming of Antichrist," unlike most other late medieval illustrated vitae (including de Worde's Birth and Life of Antichrist),
has no chapter divisions, the eight sections of my summary discussion are to be seen as descriptive only.

I. General Introduction

This Antichrist treatise specifically relates to a larger work—one which exhorts man to reverence and charity. Before discussing the Fifteen Tokens, the Day of Judgment, and the Joys of Paradise, the life of Antichrist—his birth, his reign, his persecution, his death and punishment—will be considered.

II. Pre-History of Antichrist

According to the scriptures the Lord Jesus will not come to judgment until after the coming of Antichrist. Four specific occurrences precede the coming of Antichrist: the ten-fold division of the Roman Empire, the separation of particular churches from obedience to Rome, the departure of many Christians from the faith, and the coming of a great time of sin. During that time sin will abound, wicked rulers will govern, charity will grow cold, and society, in general, will show signs of degeneration and collapse.

III. Birth and Childhood of Antichrist

Antichrist, a Jew, will be born in Babylon from the tribe of Dan. Dan, Jacob had prophesied, is a snake; and
Antichrist will bite the faithful with his poisonous doctrines. Babylon signifies pride; whereas Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, signifies humility. His parents shall be lecherous, and Satan will enter his harlot mother's womb at conception. Those who claim that Antichrist's mother will be a virgin are heretics, for there is always only one virgin mother, Mary. Antichrist will be reared in Corosaim and Bethsaida in fulfillment of the "woes" pronounced by Christ on these two cities which rejected him.

IV. Nature and Ministry of Antichrist

In his first act of public "ministry," Antichrist will enter the rebuilt temple of Jerusalem, submit to circumcision, and proclaim himself to be the Messiah. The foolish Jews will be deceived by this. In fact, Antichrist himself will be deceived by Satan into truly believing that he is God. On the contrary, Antichrist will be the vessel of all vices; opposed to the Messiah, the vessel of all virtues. Unlike Christ, Antichrist will be lifted up with pride, will oppress the humble, and will magnify sinners. Rather than the crucifix and the sign of the cross, the worship of Antichrist will revolve around his image and the mark he will have imprinted in his followers' foreheads and right hands. Antichrist will be,
as his forerunners are, lecherous, uncharitably rich and powerful, and blasphemous.

V. The Four Means of Conversion

Antichrist's four means of conversion will be false teaching, miracles, bribes, and torture. His preaching will center around a "new law" which glorifies sin, denies Jesus as the Christ, and prohibits the exposition of scripture by orthodox theologians. Antichrist's preaching of the broad way of sensuality shall replace the old "straight and narrow" of penitential humility, and many will gladly submit to this new law.

With the help of Satan, Antichrist will perform false miracles to confirm his false teachings. He shall make trees bloom and dry up, images speak, the sea and air storm and then rest, dead bodies to rise (actually devils shall enter the bodies), and fire to fall from Heaven (in a pseudo-Pentecost). His disciples, parroting Christ's apostles after their Pentecost, shall go about preaching and working so many false miracles that most Christians, in fact, will be deceived. God has a purpose, though, for allowing satanic miracles and power. It is not the place of the Christians to perform miracles or to question God, but instead to be faithful to the truth, and thus to merit heaven.
Again with Satan's help, Antichrist will discover the treasures that have been hidden in the earth, and, with these, he will purchase the obedience of all classes of men.\textsuperscript{44} The rich and powerful will join with Antichrist in killing the faithful Christians. Since avarice reigns in the present social order, even, to some degree, in the church, and since contemporary men will give up anything for material gain, the world is ripe for the coming and reign of Antichrist and his bribes.

Antichrist's fourth method of conversion will be the horrible torments that he and his men will invent for his opponents.\textsuperscript{45} As the prophets foretold, this great time of persecution will be unlike any other before it. Although the forerunners of Antichrist have persecuted the church in the past and do so presently, the coming persecution will be more terrible even than that faced by the early Christians. No one should be tempted by spiritual pride to desire martyrdom at the hands of Antichrist; however God will give special grace to those whom he calls to suffer for Him at that time.

VI. Enoch and Elias

In his concern for the faithful, God will send the prophets Enoch and Elias from the terrestrial paradise to oppose Antichrist.\textsuperscript{46} Their mission will be fourfold: to comfort the faithful Christians by preaching the true
gospel against Antichrist, to call the deceived back to the faith, to convert the Jews to the true Messiah, and to be an example to the newly-united church of humility and holy martyrdom. Antichrist's attempts to deceive, flatter, and threaten them into silence will all fail, leading him ultimately to torture and kill them.\(^{47}\) As the Apocalypse teaches, the bodies of the prophets will lie unburied in the streets of Jerusalem for three and one half days, during which time the true Christians will be sorrowful and afraid while the followers of Antichrist will rejoice with great feastings and celebrations. After the three and one half days the faithful God will raise again his prophets to life, thus rejoicing the Christians' hearts and bringing fear upon Antichrist's disciples.\(^{48}\) In the sight and hearing of all the people, the prophets will ascend into heaven at the command of God. Although the Christians will glorify God for this, and many people shall be converted to the faith, their suffering, at the hands of Antichrist's disciples, shall be increased.

VII. The Death of Antichrist

Blasphemously parodying Christ, Antichrist will feign death and a third-day resurrection,\(^{49}\) his followers shall receive a satanic pentecost of power enabling them to preach and work miracles,\(^{50}\) and he shall attempt to ascend from the Mount of Olives. Christ, or Saint Michael
his agent, will slay Antichrist with the "spirit of his mouth," and the great deceiver shall fall into hell, guilty of every mortal sin.\textsuperscript{51} His punishment shall consist of three great pains: the loss of the vision of God, eternal sensible torment—greater than any other human's pain, and the eternal company of horrible demons.\textsuperscript{52}

VIII. The Last Days

Although only God the Father knows the exact day of judgment, at least forty days shall pass between the death of Antichrist and Doomsday. During this period, however long, the church, including the newly converted Jews, shall dwell in peace. But the apostate disciples of Antichrist shall continue in their sin; feasting and celebrating (as in the days of Noah) until the coming of judgment. God, in his mercy, will allow this period for penance before the day of judgment, and, so that no one will be ignorant of its approach, the Fifteen Tokens before Doomsday are described and illustrated in the following treatise.\textsuperscript{53}

Thus "The Coming of Antichrist" presents a relatively standard, late medieval Antichrist \textit{vita}. It differs, however, from the blockbook \textit{vitae} and \textit{The Birth and Life of Antichrist} by its consistent application of the life of the great opponent of Christ to the moral life of its contemporary audience. In doing so, it fulfills its role in
the larger work of which it is a section. We now turn our attention to the only late medieval work printed in England which concerns itself, solely, with the life of the Antichrist--that is, The Birth and Life of Antichrist.

The Birth and Life of Antichrist

As mentioned in the introduction, The Birth and Life of Antichrist depends upon a great body of historically developed Antichrist materials. Although I will contend that, to some degree, it does take up the challenge of newer reformist interpretations of Antichrist, it is more (whether first published in 1505 or 1520) a traditional medieval Antichrist vita than an anti-Reformation tract. This latter assumption was naively made by the writer of the earliest known commentary on The Birth and Life of Antichrist, probably its previous owner, William Bateman. R. K. Emmerson, who briefly mentions de Worde's two printed Antichrist vitae in the concluding chapter of his Antichrist in the Middle Ages, correctly maintains that "The Byrthe and Lyfe represents the continuing influence of the medieval tradition on the art of the printed book." Although, as we have previously noted, a printed English Antichrist vita had appeared as early as 1503 in Verard's Traytte on God Lyvryng, The Birth and Life of Antichrist is the only extant early printed book from England solely devoted to
the life of the Antichrist.\textsuperscript{56} It is to be a detailed analysis of this unique work that the rest of this study is devoted.

Our earlier consideration of the developing medieval tradition of the life and character of Antichrist eliminates the need for a historical "background" section for our treatment of \textit{The Birth and Life of Antichrist}. The story of Antichrist as developed in scriptural commentaries, homiletic literature, Adso's \textit{vita}, the \textit{Compendium Theologicae Veritatis} of Hugh Ripelin, the German blockbooks, and the later vernacular \textit{vitae} will provide an all-important rule by which to assess the achievement of de Worde's text. By comparing \textit{The Birth and Life of Antichrist} to these related works, I hope to offer some conclusions as to its unique place in the library of apocalyptic literature.

\textit{The Birth and Life of Antichrist} owes its structural principles, at least indirectly, to the fifteenth-century German blockbook \textit{vitae}, or perhaps to an earlier grouping of scenes on which the blockbooks were based. The fact that de Worde probably drew on a late fifteenth-century illustrated French/Latin \textit{vita}, for his text (and, as we shall show, for many of his woodcuts) does not disprove the influence of the blockbooks. In fact, that French/Latin work, \textit{L'Advenement et du Mauvais Antechrist}, loosely
follows the blockbook arrangement as well. Although Wynkyn de Worde does rely heavily on the *Mauvais Antechrist* for his text, he does not copy it in the way that he copied Verard’s *L’Art de Bien Vivre et de Bien Mourir* for his *Art to Live Well and Die Well*. Since, to some degree, all the illustrated Antichrist *vitae* were controlled by the woodcut illustrations of Antichrist’s life, this study will first consider the text’s woodcuts, their sources, and de Worde’s arrangement of them.

As explained in our treatment of the blockbook *vitae* and their successors, four of the woodcuts of *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* (1, 2, 13, and 17 as numbered in my appendix), are almost exact copies of woodcuts found in the 1505 Strassburg typographic *vita* (*S₂*) and the Spanish *Libro del Antichristo*. Yet it is obvious that neither of these works directly influenced the general structure of de Worde’s *vita*. Both *S₂* and *Libro*, firmly in the blockbook tradition, contain over forty Antichrist woodcuts, and are followed by sixteen individual woodcuts illustrating *The Fifteen Signs Before Doomsday* and *The Last Judgment*. On the other hand, *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* contains only twenty-four total woodcuts: one illustrating the first of *The Fifteen Signs*, one illustrating the last judgment, and twenty-two (actually twenty with two repeats) illustrating the life of Antichrist. Where
de Worde obtained the four European woodcuts, we do not know. The theft or copying of competitor's woodcuts, however, was a common practice for de Worde and his contemporaries.

Of the sixteen Antichrist woodcuts which are not derived from the blockbook tradition, ten can be identified as rough copies of the woodcuts of the *Mauvais Antichrist*. These woodcuts, in both works, depict a royal Antichrist who wears a crown and royal robes, holds a sceptre, sits on a throne in a pavilion, and is accompanied by either kneeling subjects or armed guards. For an example of the influence of the *Mauvais Antechrist* upon *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, consider the treatment of the tradition of Gog and Magog in both texts. In the blockbooks and their direct successors, the hosts of Gog and Magog--mysterious peoples from the North--were always considered in connection with the Queen of the Amazons. Usually in two woodcuts they were represented, with her, as receiving the preaching disciples of Antichrist, and then coming on horseback to Antichrist's kingdom. The text of *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, following the *Mauvais Antechrist*, says nothing about the Amazon Queen. Instead it claims, on the authority of "Iosephus, the Mayster of the Hystoryes" and other doctors, that, after a great earthquake in the north hills of "Caspy," shall come forth
Gog and Magog, "as grete a multytude of people armed with malycoysnes as sholde well suffysse for to fulfyll xiii kyngedomes." The illustration accompanying this chapter pictures the royal Antichrist, seated in his pavilion, with four armored men (two on each side of Antichrist) who undoubtedly represent Gog and Magog. De Worde used this same woodcut to represent a king and his knights in The Dystrucyon of Jerusalem (1506, 1513, and 1528). The Chronicles of England (1515, 1520, and 1528), and Robert the Devyll (1517). Because Wynkyn de Worde, considered the most business-minded of early English printers, often economically reused woodcuts (in doing so often stretching his audience's ability to connect the poorly-adapted illustration to the text), one might suppose that this scene was simply adapted from these earlier works to the purposes of the Antichrist story. This would help to explain the dissimilarity between de Worde's Gog and Magog illustration and those of the blockbooks. However, the discovery of the dependence of The Birth and Life of Antichrist on the Mauvais Antechrist clarifies the situation. The illustration in the Mauvais Antechrist, which immediately follows the section on Gog and Magog (unlike other vitae, its woodcuts follow the text which they illustrate), pictures a royal Antichrist, seated in a pavilion, with armed men to right and left. De Worde obviously copied this scene for
The Birth and Life, but here, as elsewhere, he economized by replacing the two groups of men, representing the hosts of Gog and Magog, with just two men on each side. Thus, we may safely conclude that de Worde's woodcut (6, Hodnett 759) primarily depicts Antichrist, Gog, and Magog, and was later adapted to these other works. For a comparison of the Mauvais Antechrist's woodcuts with those from The Birth and Life see Appendix One.

Of the twenty-four woodcuts with which Wynkyn de Worde illustrated The Birth and Life of Antichrist, nine do not appear to be derived from either the blockbook tradition or the Mauvais Antechrist. This is not to say, however, that these nine cuts do not illustrate some of the same scenes as the woodcuts from the other works. The final woodcut of The Birth and Life is a familiar scene of the Last Judgment; similar to that found in most of the blockbooks and in the Mauvais Antechrist. Its source, though, is probably Verard's L'Art de Bien Vivre et Bien Mourir. Likewise, the penultimate woodcut--illustrating the first sign before doomsday, the rising of the sea--derives from either Verard's work or John Von Doesbroch's treatise The XV Tokens before Doomsday. Of the other six woodcuts (really seven, but 8 and 15--Hodnett 761--are identical), two are poorly adapted reused cuts from other books printed by Wynkyn de Worde, one is obviously based on an
illustration of one of the fifteen signs, and three are of unknown origin. The first type is represented by de Worde's illustration of the rebuilding of the temple. This scene, highly detailed in the blockbooks and their successors, is simply represented by a cut, also used in his Gesta Romanorum sometime before 1518, of two men scaling a tower. In perhaps the poorest example of adapting text to illustration, The Birth and Life depicts the resurrection of Enoch and Elias with a cut from The Knysht of Swanne (1512) which, in two diagonal compartments, illustrates an angel with a scroll (above left) and a woman sleeping in bed (below right). He illustrates Antichrist's destruction of the temple with a scene used in the fifteen signs section of the Art to Live Well to depict the sixth of the fifteen signs—the falling of fire from heaven and the falling down of all castles and towers. Of unknown origin are woodcuts depicting the Last Roman Emperor (an excellent, detailed scene); the lame, blind, and limbless coming to Antichrist for healing (used twice, 8 and 15); and two men pointing to their open palms, apparently discussing the tokens of Antichrist. This latter cut may be an example of a specific economical practice of de Worde's. Colin Clair, in his History of Printing in England, notes that "both Wynkyn de Worde and Pynson had a set of narrow upright cuts of men and women
with blank labels over their heads into which the name of
the character could be inserted, with the result that
Cayaphas on one page could be speedily transformed into
Joseph on another, as in de Worde's Nychodemus Gospel of
1518." 68

De Worde's grab-bag technique of illustrating The
Birth and Life of Antichrist necessarily deemphasizes the
importance of the woodcuts in relation to the text.
Unlike the masterful woodcuts of the German blockbook
vita, these illustrations, drawn from several sources,
are organized only in that each chapter is given one
accompanying woodcut scene. This is a far cry from the
blockbooks in which the illustrations presented a unified,
organized life of Antichrist by themselves.

The Birth and Life of Antichrist contains most of the
events of Antichrist's life as described and illustrated
in the earlier vita. It is, however, as R. K. Emmerson
has noted, more selective in its use of woodcuts. 69
Because it, like the blockbooks, has only one woodcut
for each chapter--more properly for each section, since
the blockbooks did not designate "chapters--it has only
about half of the chapters/sections of the blockbooks.
Whereas each section of a blockbook vita used just a few
lines of text to comment upon an illustration, each chapter
of text in Wynkyn de Worde's vita is at least equal to, if
not more important than, the illustration which accompanies it. Thus the text of The Birth and Life expands upon the life of Antichrist in a way that is foreign to the blockbooks. Furthermore, it includes some traditions which are totally absent from the blockbooks and their successors. For example, it devotes an entire chapter and an excellent woodcut to the Last World Emperor tradition.

The entire work is divided into a vita of twenty-two chapters; with an introduction concerning the scriptural prophecies of the last days, and a conclusion describing the Fifteen Signs before Doomsday and the Day of Judgment. Due to a printer's error, the chapter numbering skips from Chapter 2 to Chapter 6 (ii to vi);\textsuperscript{70} and because I have retained de Worde's mistaken chapter headings, Chapters 6 through 25 of my edition are properly Chapters 3 through 22. Each woodcut illustration is placed directly beneath or beside the chapter heading. For example, after the introduction, the text states: "The fyrst chapytre specifyth how the fader shall lye with his daughter and shall engendre on her the chylde of perdycoyon, that is Antechryst."\textsuperscript{71} Directly beneath this heading, and taking up more than one-third of the entire folio page, de Worde placed the illustration of Antichrist's mother and father embracing in bed. The following outline will
provide an introductory overview of the concerns of the Antichrist vita according to The Birth and Life of Antichrist.

A. Introduction—Prophecies concerning the last days.

B. The Vita
   1. The Conception of Antichrist.
   2. The Birth of Antichrist.
   6. The Youth of Antichrist.
   7. The Last World Emperor.
   8. Antichrist and the Kings of the Earth.
   10. Antichrist's Blasphemous Preaching.
   11. Antichrist's False Miracles.
   14. The "Mark" of Antichrist.
   15. Antichrist destroys and rebuilds the Temple.
   16. Antichrist and his Disciples.
   17. Antichrist and the Great Persecution.
   18. The Ministry of Enoch and Elias.
   19. The Deaths of Enoch and Elias.
   20. The Resurrection of Enoch and Elias.
   23. The Death of Antichrist.
   24. The Punishment of Antichrist.
   25. The Return of Enoch and Elias.

C. Conclusion
   1. The Fifteen Signs before Doomsday.
   2. Warning of Doomsday.

What primarily distinguishes The Birth and Life of Antichrist from most other illustrated Antichrist vitae is the importance of its narrative. Even though "The Coming of Antichrist" shares many of the same woodcuts and treats much of the same matter, almost one-half of its text is taken up with spiritual and moral exhortations to its
readers. The texts of the early blockbook *vitae*, on the other hand, clearly serve to comment upon the woodcuts. For all its crudeness, the "story" of *The Birth and Life*, breaking away from the domination, though not the influence, of scriptural commentaries and highly detailed woodcut illustrations, represents an important breakthrough into a more literary vernacular narrative form.

H. S. Bennett describes the kind of work of which *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* is an example in his *English Books and Readers: 1475-1557*. Retreating from the creation of the masterful but expensive volumes of the late fifteenth-century, such as Caxton's 898 page *Legenda Aurea* of 1483, Wynkyn de Worde and other printers, Bennett explains, "saw that something smaller was called for."72 To meet this demand these printers began to produce a series of smaller volumes, oftentimes telling the story of the life of a particular saint. "These lives," Bennett continues, "in verse or prose, were often accompanied with crude woodcuts, and were so popular that they have been well nigh thumbed out of existence."73 *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* also qualifies as one of what another scholar calls, "the great number of books intended neither for the Theological student nor for the practical requirements of the priests . . . but primarily . . . as reading matter for clergy and laity alike."74 The really popular books, which
"seem to have had a wide circulation for a considerable period," were oftentimes the ones which could provide the greatest amount of "religious thrills." According to Colin Clair, Wynkyn de Worde, known for his shrewdness in judging the book market of his day, was, "in the main," a popular printer of small works at modest prices. Thus the compact, according to Emmerson, "selective" organization of The Birth and Life of Antichrist, probably evolved from de Worde's primary printing concern—the production of small and saleable volumes with popular appeal. This Antichrist vita also reflects de Worde's tendency to print an originally European text, often directly copying its woodcuts, in England for the first time. As H. S. Bennett claims: "de Worde was ever ready to print some new thing."

The fact that only one extant copy of The Birth and Life of Antichrist remains, then, in no way implies that the work was not popular or important. In fact, Rudolf Hirsch in his Printing, Selling, and Reading: 1450-1550, maintains that three kinds of early printed books were more likely to disappear than any others: cheap books, small books, and vernacular popular literature. All three categories apply to Wynkyn de Worde's Birth and Life of Antichrist.
An important feature of early printed vernacular religious texts, such as The Birth and Life of Antichrist, was the vernacular translations of scriptural texts which they depended upon. According to H. S. Bennett, Wynkyn de Worde gave England "probably the earliest printing . . . of the Lord's prayer in the vernacular."81 While reading the numerous early English books containing vernacular translations of scripture, it is important to remember that it was not until 1525 that Tyndale produced the first printed English New Testament. In fact, according to a recent Historical Catalogue of Printed Editions of The English Bible, Caxton's Golden Legend of 1483 was "actually the first printed book to contain portions of the Bible in English."82 Apparently, despite the intense opposition by Catholic authorities to the vernacular translation of the Bible, these text-by-text translations, especially when appearing within works which also included interpretations by accepted Catholic authorities, were considered safe.

The importance of printing to the growing conflict between Catholic orthodoxy and the reformist movements, however, produced a new and valuable market for polemical works--one which Wynkyn de Worde could not resist entering. We know that in 1525 he was temporarily in disfavor with the ecclesiastical hierarchy for publishing a Lutheran pamphlet.83
But de Worde's Antichrist vita, in its handling of scripture, reflects the faith of a Thomas More rather than that of a Luther or a Tyndale. Its standard appeal to authority--not the authority of the "plain sense" of scripture as the Reformers would have it, but the traditional authority of the church's magisterium--and its attack on the Antichrist's abuse of the "plain sense" of scripture as part of his deceptive ministry,84 closely parallel Thomas More's words in his Conflatation of Tyndale (1532). Because of what he considered its anti-Catholic slant, and therefore its anti-objectivity, More argued that the first printed English New Testament was "not worthy to be called Christ's testament, but either Tyndale's own testament or the testament of his master Antichrist."85

On page after page of The Birth and Life of Antichrist, the reader confronts scripture. What is important about de Worde's use of Biblical texts, however, is not the number of them but rather the insistence on translating them into English. As a general rule the text presents the Vulgate passage and then translates it into English. In some cases the English text translates more of the original Latin than is printed. For example, in the introduction, the words of Christ in Luke 21:25a, foretelling the signs before the end of the world, are given thus in Latin: "Erunt signa in sole et lunat, et in terris
pressura gentium." Following this Christ's words from the second half of verse 25 and most of verse 26 are included in English.

That is to say, Tokens shall be in the sonne, in the mone, and sterres, and in the erthe grete oppressyon of people thrugh the confusyon of the noyse and cryenge of the see and fordes. The people shall waxe dry and waste awaye thrugh the ferefull curse that shall come over all the worlde. 86

In a few exceptional cases the English translation even stands alone, without the Latin text. Note for example, again from the introduction, the following accurate though confusing translation from Daniel 12:1. "Lyke as Danyell sayeth in ca. xii: Thenne shall come the tyme that never was syth the worlde beganne, ne shall be unto that tyme." 87

In its dedication to vernacular translation, The Birth and Life of Antichrist differs radically from the immediate source of much of its text, the Mauvais Antechrist. Although the catalogues classify this work as French/Latin, Latin is the medium of its narrative. At the end of each chapter, a short French summary appears. Furthermore, its biblical references are always taken from the Latin text and are never translated. Interestingly, those passages in de Worde's vita that are condensed in the Latin but expanded in the English translation are also quoted in full, in Latin, in the Mauvais Antechrist. Its introductory
section refers to the same Lucan passage (21:25-26) as The Birth and Life of Antichrist, but continues it, in Latin, to the exact place where de Worde's English text cuts off. Perhaps de Worde, desiring to preserve the Latin scriptural texts for the sake of authority (and safety), yet wanting to insure the popularity of his work by offering all of its text, including scripture, in the vernacular, reached this condensed/expanded structure as an economical compromise.

De Worde's economical publishing methods probably also account for the many errors in citation of and quotation from biblical texts. Like the printers rebuked by Erasmus for trying "to save every penny" and, in doing so, passing on "contaminated, mutilated, lacerated, and generally bad texts," this great English businessman-printer probably adapted his degree of textual care to the potential audience of his works. For the readers of The Birth and Life of Antichrist, it may not have mattered greatly whether Gog and Magog were referred to in the thirtieth or the thirty-ninth chapter of Ezekiel.

We have earlier noted the difference between The Birth and Life of Antichrist and both the blockbook vitae and de Worde's "Coming of Antichrist." Whereas the text of the blockbooks briefly comments upon the illustration it accompanies (usually in the form of "As it says in the
Compendium Theologicae..."), and the text of "The Coming of Antichrist" draws heavily on the homiletic tradition of using apocalyptic events to preach moral regeneration, the text of the Birth and Life is, above all, a popular, exciting story of an all-too-real evil figure. Although it does rely on the scriptural tradition, major sections of this Antichrist vita, like the following example from Chapter 16, present the events of the life of Antichrist in a new and dramatic way. For the sake of the argument, I have modernized the language in the following passage, so as to enhance the flavor of its narrative flow.90

After that time, Antichrist shall bid the Jews to bring before him the books of the law. And they shall then say, "They are in the temple, and we have been charged to bear no books out of it." Then will Antichrist make to fall down to the earth, in the presence of all the people, the temple which he had built in his youth; so that one stone shall not stand upon another. At this the Jews will be so sore abashed that they will not know what to do. When Antichrist shall see the great sorrow and fear among the Jews, he shall say to them: "Be not afraid, for this same temple which you see here lying on the ground, I shall build again within three days through the might of my father." Then Antichrist shall let two days pass without touching the temple. And when some Jews shall demand of Antichrist how many days will pass before the temple is completed, the devil shall say to him: "Tell the Jews that the temple shall be fully built on the third day, before midnight." Then, with the help of the devils,
the temple shall be built in an hour... before the rising of the sun on the third day. Then, early the next morning, all the common people shall run to see if the temple has been built or not. And when they see that it is fully built, and nothing lacking, they shall greatly marvel that such a great edifice could be built in such a short time. And they shall then say, weeping, to Antichrist: "Oh good lord, have mercy on us." And he shall then say: "All sit down in the name of my father, who will follow my leading and have a steadfast belief in me."⁹¹

Of course, the entire Birth and Life of Antichrist does not maintain this vivid narrative style, but from this passage and many others,⁹² it is clear that the narrative style of this book, like the physical construction of it, contributed to the creation of a unique and fascinating Antichrist vita. Since we are by now familiar with the essentials of the medieval Antichrist vitae, the following discussion shall note only the unique or particularly important aspects of The Birth and Life of Antichrist.

The comparison of Antichrist, the pseudo-Messiah, with Christ, the true Savior, had been central to the Antichrist tradition since Hippolytus' Treatise on Christ and Antichrist. Wynkyn de Worde's Birth and Life of Antichrist continues this tradition by both stated and unstated comparisons. Although the German blockbook vitae visually presented the life of Antichrist in such a way that the comparison with Christ was unmistakeable, The Birth and
Life of Antichrist exceeds them in the many fascinating details it adds. For example, not only does it mention Antichrist's Jewish parents, it names them. Moreover, it goes beyond comparing Antichrist's place of birth, Babylon, to Christ's, Bethlehem, by teaching that a strange star will signify the event. In contrast to the peaceful Christ child of medieval belief, Antichrist will be born in a great confusion. His mother, who will die in childbirth, will fall to the earth with a great cry, and Antichrist "shall . . . breke oute at her bely unnaturally before all the people." Unlike the night of Christ's nativity, which was turned to "resplendysshynge bryghtnesse" in honor of the incarnation of the Light of the world, the day of Antichrist's birth will be shrouded in a mist, "lyke a grete smoke that one shal not se another." This smokey mist perhaps signifies the hellish influence on Antichrist's birth; it certainly signifies the confusion which the deceiver will cause upon earth. One of the more interesting details of this text's account of Antichrist's birth reveals both the intense effort to contrast his birth with Christ's, and further the charitable spirit toward the Jews which The Birth and Life of Antichrist displays. No doubt meant to suggest the lowing of the oxen at the birth of Jesus, de Worde's vita teaches that at Antichrist's birth "shall there be herde a grete noyse of creyenge as
yf it were the gruntyng of a sowe or swyne." This, we are
told, "shall be done in the dyspyte or angre of all good
Jewes." 97 Although the Christian author does add that
"alas, there ben but fewe [good Jews] now in these presente
dayes lyvynge," even the remorseful tone of this statement
contrasts with the antagonistic approach toward the Jews
found in many other medieval accounts of Antichrist. The
entire question of the representation of the Jews in The
Birth and Life of Antichrist shall be taken up later in
this chapter.

In some cases, a particular passage will both openly
express a comparison of Christ and Antichrist, and, at the
same time, subtly embody a less obvious comparison. For
example, Ecclesiastes 4:15 ("Vidi cunctos sub sole
ambulantes cum adolescente secundo") is interpreted to
mean: "I have seen two bachelors or Jouvencelles walkynge
under the sonne. The fyrst hath ben good and is the sone
of god . . . The seconde shall be growynge in voluptuositie
and in all unhappynes. This shall be Antechryst." 98 The
description of Antichrist's youth—"growing in voluptuositie
and in all unhappynes"—parallels the scriptural descrip-
tion of the childhood of Christ from the second chapter of
Luke: "and Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and
in favor with God and man." 99
Although this particular Antichrist *vita* depends more on the description of action than theological commentary, it does contain several extended passages which contrast the characters of Christ and Antichrist. For example, Chapter 10, which deals primarily with Antichrist's deceitful preaching, forewarns its readers, in a passage reminiscent of Hippolytus' *Treatise*, of the future deceiver's character.

Our lorde Jesu Crist cam upon the erth in the moost lowlyest maner that he might. And Antecrist shal come in the mooste superbyous wyse that he may. Our lorde cam for to reysye the true people, and for too brynge symners to the ryght waye. And Antecryste shal come to usurpe the good people and put theym to death; and he shal exalte the vycous. Also our lorde gave the glory and laude to his fader, but Antecryste shal observe prayse to hymself.

De Worde's English Antichrist *vita* describes Antichrist not only by comparing his actions and character to Christ's, but also by comparing their uses of language. It is not just that Antichrist is a deceiver, not just that he comes, as Christ predicted that he would, saying "I am Christ," but that he usurps the very rhetoric of Christ for his own purposes. This concern for character development through speech is not totally surprising given the vernacular narrative method which we have already noted in *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*. 
Like Christ, who claimed that he came into the world only "to do the will of my Father," Antichrist continually acknowledges his "fader."\textsuperscript{102} The text makes the irony of this rhetoric quite clear when, after mentioning that Antichrist would give away his goods to the poor "in the name of his fader," it acknowledges that "no man shall knowe his false menyng and entent."\textsuperscript{103} No doubt recalling to its audience the words of Christ--"Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it up again"--the text represents Antichrist saying to the Jews, "Be not affrayed for this same temple which ye se here lyenge on the grounde, I shall buylde agayne within thre dayes through the myght of my fader \textit{[italics mine]}." After the temple is rebuilt, and the Jews beg him for mercy, the great "son of perdition" will say to them all: "Syt all downe in the name of my fader."\textsuperscript{104} Antichrist will even appropriate the famous creedal definition of the true nature of Christ. After his pseudo-resurrection he will say to the people: "Behold ye and se me whiche am veray god and man."\textsuperscript{105} In an ironic twist on the familiar Christ/Antichrist structural principle, Antichrist will accuse the true Christ, like the Christian writers of the Antichrist vitæ accuse the future Antichrist, of being "a nygrorumancyer, or one that hath knowen the arte magycke."\textsuperscript{106}
The Birth and Life of Antichrist purposes not only to warn, but to encourage its readers by causing them "to understande that the reygne of Antechryst shall not longe endure." Thus it portrays Antichrist, at the end of his life, being humiliatingly exposed as the literally stinking sinner that he is. Despite his proud words and proud claims to be the Messiah, despite having conquered all worldly powers, despite his lavish attempt to imitate our Lord's death, resurrection, and ascension, he will be "caste down deed at the commaundement of our lorde." The text dramatically describes Antichrist's final desperate attempt to imitate Christ:

Wenyngge too folowe oure lorde Jhesu Cryste, as moche as our lorde shall suffre hym, (Antichrist) shall set his chayre in a ryche pavylyon, over gylte and set with perles and precyous stones, ryght sumptuously upon the mounte of Olyvete, fro the whiche mountayne our lord Jhesu Cryst ascended gloryously unto his celestial kyngdome. . . . And Antechryste, wyllyngge to do as our lorde dyde shall be taken up and lyft in to the aye, and shall ascende towarde heven by the myght of the devyll and arte negromancy in the syght of all the people. . . .

The following essential characteristics of the life and nature of Antichrist here receive their final detailed expression: The intense desire to "imitate Christ"—for evil instead of good purposes, the over done self glorifying revealed in the gaudy trappings of his pavilion, the
obession with acting "in the sight of all the people," and the dependence upon the aid of devilish forces. Yet, ultimately, God will reveal, in His victory over Antichrist, that this great "Man of Sin" is only a pitiful, foolish human. Antichrist's Messianic posturings will finally be brought to an end, not by great armies but "throughe the onely worde of the mouthe of our saviour Jesu Cryst."\textsuperscript{110} The emptiness of Antichrist's seeming nobility, holiness, and sovreignty, will, in his death, be displayed to all.

For he shall be cast out the ayre deed, and his bely bursten, his entrayles hangynge out, and shall fall downe to the fote of the Mounte Olyvete, in the sight and presence of all the people. And then shall all the people renne from hym fro the stynkynge odour that shall come out of his body.\textsuperscript{111}

His true nature revealed, the Antichrist will finally be taken to hell (the scene of the true Christ's victory over Satan), not to a king's welcome, nor to a reception of his faithful followers, but to the bitter derision of the fiends.

The development, in The Birth and Life of Antichrist, of the relationship of Christ and Antichrist is much deeper than this sketch illustrates. The many subtle uses of this structural principle can best be observed by reading the entire text with it in mind. The notes of my edition endeavor to point out most of these uses.
Another common feature of the Antichrist tradition—Antichrist's relationship to the Jews—is given a unique and detailed treatment in *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*. It is presented, however, without the harsh anti-Jewish slant which characterized so many other expressions of the medieval Antichrist tradition. The following analysis in no way exhausts the references to this conflict within *The Birth and Life*. Instead it merely suggests the charitable spirit with which the conflict is handled.

As R. K. Emmerson has written, "one of the most pervasive beliefs concerning Antichrist is that he will be born a Jew."112 This belief, part of a larger anti-Jewish view of history and eschatology, reveals itself in most medieval Antichrist texts. Interpretations of Jacob's "blessing" of his son Dan--"Let Dan be a snake in the way"--linked Dan with Antichrist. The omission of Dan's tribe from the list of the 144,000 to be saved from Israel, as prophesied in Apocalypse 7:4-8, confirmed this theory. Although *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, unlike other vitae, does not directly mention Antichrist's Jewish parentage, his parents' names, "Ulcas and Schalcus," are no doubt meant to suggest Hebrew names.113 Furthermore the text specifically links Antichrist with the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, calling him "the chylde the which the Jewes have spoken of so longe and taryed after hym."114
Even though de Worde's _vita_ obviously depicts Antichrist as the Messiah of the Jews, it does not use this belief as a rationale for attacking them. The Jews in _The Birth and Life_ are a deceived people—fooled, like many of the Christians, by the miracles, authority, and nobility of Antichrist. Far different is the French play in which "a Jewish prostitute eagerly offers herself up to her satanic paramour in order that she may bear a child . . . through whom Christendom will be destroyed, and Jewry raised up again."\(^{115}\) Likewise, a German play depicts the Jews rejoicing that their new Messiah, Antichrist, will "put an end of Christendom."\(^{116}\) In this same spirit, many medieval versions of the Antichrist legend conclude with the destruction of the Jews along with their master, Antichrist. In de Worde's book, however, the Jews follow Antichrist only after being deceived, they never desire or attempt to destroy the Christians, and finally, after seeing Antichrist revealed for the deceiver that he is, most of the Jews will return to God through the preaching of Enoch and Elias. Only Antichrist's "disciples," never specifically linked with the Jews, will be punished with him in hell.\(^{117}\)

_The Birth and Life of Antichrist_ does, therefore, represent Antichrist as the Jewish Messiah, but ignores the excessive and uncharitable interpretations of that
belief. Perhaps this *vita* expresses the same religiously charitable and economically practical approach to the "Jewish question" as that outlined by Pope Martin IV (1417-1431):

> Since the Jews are made in the image of God, since a remnant of them shall be saved, since, further, their trading is profitable to Christians, and lastly, since they solicit our countenance and compassion, thus will we [grant it].

We have earlier referred to the "stronge noise," like the grunting of a sow, heard at the time of Antichrist's birth. This, the text explains, "shall be done in the dyspyte or angre of alle good Jewes." In his youth, according to Chapter 3, Antichrist will, like Christ with the Jerusalem elders, amaze the Jews by rebuilding the temple. After his hidden years of Satan-inspired learning, he shall begin his ministry by simulating great holiness and humility. He shall give away his clothing to the poor, and clothe himself with sackcloth. The text pointedly maintains, in an uncondemning way, that "he shal begyle the people thrughe the myght of the devyll." The deception of the Jews is perhaps most fully explained in de Worde's Chapter 13. The Jews, "which have ben dystroyed and seperate by all the world," shall, somewhat understandably, be swayed by this powerful ruler who comes to Jerusalem asking for circumcision, thus showing a concern
for the Jewish law. Although it hints at the medieval tradition of the greedy Jew, de Worde's text almost may be read as an apology for the deceived Jews.

And whan the Jewes shall se that he hath so good fortune, and dooth to them so grete worship, and he hymself and his dysciples do so many miracles, and that he hath subdued all the kynges of the worlde [who, it must be remembered have made life miserable for the Jews] . . . they shall be ryght Joyous. Thenne shall Antechryst drawe and styre the Jewes to hym with grete gyftes and dowayres. And they shall fall in a great wan hope and dyspayre and receyve Antechryst for the ryghtwyse Messyas. . . .121

The concept of the "good Jew" continues to surface throughout The Birth and Life of Antichrist. When Antichrist will command the Jews to bring out the books of the law from the temple (so that, we later learn, he may burn them), they shall resist him, saying, "they be in the temple, and we ben charged te bere no bokes out of it."122 Upon their refusal Antichrist will cause their sacred temple, and the books of the law as well, to be destroyed. Only after Antichrist displays his apparent absolute power over their sacred place by rebuilding it again will the Jews wholeheartedly enter the deceiver's fold.123

This deception will last until the death of Antichrist. At that time:
The Jewes shall well apperceyve that they have ben begyled, and shall be sore ashamed of Antechryst. And than they shall torne to the Crysten fayth and beleve. And than shall be accomplysshed the prophecy of Jeremye . . . . In diebus illis salvabitur juda et habitabit confident. 124

Finally the "good Jews," deceived by Antichrist's promises of power, and the Christians, many of whom will have believed in Antichrist "for fere of his cruel and tyrannous tourmentes," 125 will be given a second chance—the forty-five day period for penance and conversion after the death of Antichrist. Ironically then, according to The Birth and Life of Antichrist, this great Satan-inspired hater of all men, will be the instrument of uniting those bitter enemies of the Middle Ages, the Christians and the Jews.

The late date of Wynkyn de Worde's Birth and Life of Antichrist raises the question of the influence upon it of the newer anti-Catholic interpretations of apocalyptic texts, prevalent at the end of the Middle Ages. Although the German blockbook vitae appear to be essentially free from the "taint" of Joachimist, anti-Catholic, or Reformist apocalyptic views, the trend in the later Middle Ages was toward "a radically different view of Antichrist." 126 These radical views surfaced as early as the prophetic writings of the great Joachim of Fiore (about 1135-1202); grew strong in the years of Hus, Wycliffe, and the Lollards;
and, R. K. Emmerson claims, "ultimately prevailed in the sixteenth century with the Protestants."\(^{127}\) The many examples of these new apocalyptic understandings all somehow linked Antichrist with the Roman Papal system. Joachim had said—and although he meant something quite different than they did, the Reformers fondly quoted him as an authority—that "the Antichrist may now be living in Rome."\(^{128}\) Two centuries later Wycliffe contended that "it seemeth that the Pope is Antichrist here on earth, for he is against Christ both in life and lore."\(^{129}\) And the great reformer, Martin Luther, whom William Bateman, the nineteenth-century owner of the only copy of *The Birth and Life of the Antichrist* had pointed to as the model for the work, accused the Papacy of being "the horrid abomination and the Antichrist of the end, the enemy and adversary which devastates the Church . . . and sets itself over against (it)."\(^{130}\)

To the proponents of this new interpretation, the older, traditional view of the personal eschatological Antichrist, with a birth, youth, and personality attributed to the biblical figure, was considered ridiculous. Some even indicated that the real Antichrist, the Papacy, had created this other version to cover up its own evil work. Thus the Protestant polemicist John Jewel (1522-1531) notes the popularity of the medieval
Antichrist story, gives a good description of its content, but blasts it as a "fond tale" created to deceive. With a typical Reformer's wrath, Jewel attacks the (to his mind) over-developed medieval tradition.

Some say he should be a Jew of the tribe of Dan; some that he should be born in Babylon; some, that he should be bred up in Bethsaida and Corazin ... ; some, that he should turn trees upside down, with the tops in the ground, and should force the roots to grow upward, and then should flee up into heaven, and fall down and break his neck. These tales have been craftily devised to beguile our eyes, that, whilst we think upon these guesses, and so occupy ourselves in beholding a shadow or probable conjecture of antichrist, he which is antichrist indeed may unaware deceive us."

Thus the Antichrist became, as he always had been to a lesser degree, a polemicist's tool. By the time of the printing of The Birth and Life of Antichrist, literary attacks, linking the Papacy with Antichrist, had been common for over a century. In England, the radical theology of Wycliffe and the Lollards had long substituted the adjectiveal use of Antichrist for Roman Catholic--various texts refer to Antichrist's heretics, Antichrist's clerks, Antichrist's ordinance, Antichrist's tyranny, Antichrist's power and Antichrist's church. The degree to which these newer interpretations of Antichrist influenced The Birth and Life of Antichrist is the concern of the final section of this chapter.
A detailed discussion of Joachimist, Lollard, or Reformist apocalypticism is hopelessly beyond the scope of this study. Fortunately the work of Marjorie Reeves, John Headley, and others may be consulted for the appropriate background information.\footnote{133} Put into its simplest terms, the new interpretation of Antichrist developed as follows. Joachim had described a three-fold view of Christian history which substantially altered traditional medieval history and eschatology. He taught that history could be divided into three ages or "status," each corresponding to a member of the Trinity, each characterized by a particular spiritual principle, and each culminated by a particular manifestation of evil (an Antichrist-like figure). The first age lasted from the creation until the end of the Old Testament period. It was the age of the Father, characterized by law, and Antiochus Epiphanes, a popular medieval type of Antichrist, came at its end. The second "status" would last until approximately 1260. It was the age of the Son, characterized by grace, and would be brought to an end by Antichrist. The third age, the age of love and the Holy Spirit, would last until the coming of Gog and Magog. Only after this final evil manifestation would Christ come again. Clearly Joachim and his followers, living in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, believed that they were on the threshold of
a new age, a "renovatio mundi." Differing from traditional medieval eschatology, Joachim posited a millenial age of love before the actual physical return of Christ; he separated the reign of Antichrist from the Second Advent by an entire age, rather than the traditional forty-five days; and he considered "Antichrist" to be only one of many age-ending evil figures. Although Antichrist would soon appear, his appearance would not indicate the imminence of doomsday. Further Joachim linked Antichrist with a Roman pseudo-Pope. His prophecy of a new age of spirituality after the defeat of this evil figure, made him a favorite theorist for later Anti-Catholic apocalyptic interpreters.

Like Joachim, the later Reformist thinkers were not interested in detailed descriptions of some future dramatic figure known as Antichrist. For them Antichrist was found within the church. In denouncing Antichrist, they were denouncing the sin of ecclesiastics, or, in the purest Reformation position, the sin of an entire ecclesiastical system. Loyalty to the Papacy and the Roman establishment, for Wycliffe and Hus, meant capitulation to Antichrist. The Lollard version of the "life of Antichrist," rather than describing a future ruler and deceiver, pointed to the obvious deceiver within the church, who at that moment was opposing the spread of true faith and righteousness.
Antichrist, for them, had already appeared and the world was caught in his deception. Like Enoch and Elias of the traditional *vita* (and the Reformers did in fact equate themselves with the "two witnesses" of the Apocalypse), they intended to reveal Antichrist's deceptions and to call the world back to the true faith. Thus a prologue to a later version of the Wycliffe Bible states:

> it seemeth open heresy to say that the gospel with its truth and freedom sufficeth not to salvation of Christian men without keeping of ceremonies and statutes of sinful men . . . , that be made in the time of Satan and Antichrist [the present age].

Luther himself maintained that his discovery that the Papacy was indeed Antichrist lifted a tremendous burden from his shoulders and freed him for the spiritual battles ahead of him. To Luther, and to many of his forerunners and followers, Antichrist had existed throughout the church age, had increased in power during the Middle Ages, had instituted the false doctrines and ceremonies which obscured the true faith, was presently being opposed by the two witnesses (the Reformers), and was in the process of being revealed and defeated. Reformation art, as well, embodied this new apocalyptic view. Antichrist, for example, was usually pictured wearing the papal tiara. The two witnesses on the other hand, were portrayed, by Lucas Cranach, as contemporary German university professors.
The interpretive chasm then was deep and wide. Several late medieval and Renaissance Catholic works took up the challenge of this new apocalyptic vision, and attempted to refute the attack on the Papacy. In some cases these answers were misguided attempts to argue on the basis of traditional "facts" that the Reformers no longer accepted anyway. One late copy of the *Compendium Theologicæ Veritatis*, for example, includes a Catholic commentary to its Antichrist section which attempts to prove that the Pope cannot be Antichrist, since, among other things, he is not a Jew.\(^{139}\) Of course, since tradition, and not the plain sense of scripture, taught that Antichrist was a Jew, the argument was meaningless to the Reformers.

*The Birth and Life of Antichrist* attempts, I believe, to subtly reassert the accepted medieval Catholic view of Antichrist. Although some of its isolated passages actually seem to embody the newer Reformist apocalyptic views, probably this is due to the common late medieval practice of uncritically mixing apocalyptic authorities. For example, Joachim, despite his radically different approach to apocalyptic thought, was quite commonly accepted as just another authority foretelling the coming of Antichrist. Thus many late medieval versions of the older Catholic Antichrist tradition utilize some parts of Joachim's message without incorporating the thrust of his message.
In general, and in many specific details, *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* not only presents the older Catholic Antichrist tradition, but seems to acknowledge and refute some of the newer anti-Catholic views. Just as the new polemists were attacking the Papacy by linking its practices and beliefs with the scriptural Antichrist, so *The Birth and Life*, I believe, takes some of the traditional features of the medieval Antichrist *vita*, and intentionally links them with these opponents of the Catholic faith. Since there is substantial evidence that an earlier edition of de Worde's book had appeared by 1505, it is doubtful whether this counter-attack, or "Battle for Antichrist," was launched specifically against Luther or his followers. However, the Reformist apocalyptic interpretations which it opposes, had already gained great popularity before the formal split with Rome.

This linking of Luther or the Reformation with the Antichrist of Wynkyn de Worde's book occurs in the commentary, probably by William Bateman, its nineteenth-century owner, on the inside front cover.

There is internal evidence the most indubitable that this tract was written by a Catholic. The tract itself appears to be a kind of Satirical, Allegorical, Drama, intended to blacken and check the Reformation. The writer, in prosecuting his design, represents either the genius of Reformation generally, or Luther its greatest mover, more especially, under
the person of Antichrist, who draws away
the mass of the people by manifold wicked
arts from the true faith, burning the books
of the Law, expounding the sacred scriptures
too plainly, and with too great a leaning
to the gratification of sensual appetite. . . .
On the appearance of Luther as a Church-
Reformer, many of the Catholics of the
day considered him to be Antichrist, on
account of the letters of his name:
Luderus (in German) numbering by the
alphabet 666—though the notion was con-
troverted by later Catholics.140

Although I have elsewhere objected to this writer's naive
assumption that a Catholic writer sat down and developed a
story about Antichrist which would somehow stop Luther
and the Reformation, the text does, I believe,
the "genius of Reformation," that is the anti-Catholic
apocalyptic views which we have considered, with Anti-
christ.

The fact that, according to The Birth and Life of
Antichrist, Antichrist "shall destroy the figures of the
holy cross and images of saints,"141 hints that the work
may have anti-Reformist intentions. Another more dramatic
passage clearly links the Reformist hatred of "images" in
the churches with the Antichrist.

Then shall the servants of that false
Antichrist . . . do many miracles by the
operator and might of the devil and,
in the presence of the said martyrs, they
shall make the crucifix of our Lord and
the images of our lady and of other saints
to fall. The which images they will
make to speak and say that "all the
worship and honour the which ye have
done to us is false and vayne. This is the veraye Messyas unto whome ye ought to do reverence."\textsuperscript{142}

Although Antichrist is not specifically equated with a particular person or group, and although, according to the text he has yet to appear, the reader of such a passage would be predisposed to see in the iconoclasts of Europe "the servauntes of that false Antechryst."

Another popular early printed book, Sebastian Brant's \textit{Ship of Fools} (First edition, 1494) had already treated this problem in a similar way. Although not an Antichrist vita, the \textit{Ship of Fools} does embody many features of the tradition in order to counter the claims of Reformist doctrines. It contrasts St. Peter's Ship, piloted by the Pope, with the Ship of Fools, captained by the great opponent of Christ and the Papacy, Antichrist. Brant characterizes Antichrist as a perverter of doctrines. According to the Ship of Fools, the Catholic faith rests on absolution, doctrine, and books (probably meaning tradition)--all three of which Antichrist and his followers attack.\textsuperscript{143} The familiar tradition of Antichrist's deceptive teaching ministry is described, in the \textit{Ship of Fools}, with the urgency characteristic of an age on the brink of radical change:

\begin{quotation}
He's sent a message out to man,
False things he spreads where'er he can,
Creeds, dogmas false in every way,
Now seem to grow from day to day.\textsuperscript{144}
\end{quotation}
Printed in a time when many unsettling popular voices were calling into question the traditional religious authority of the Middle Ages, *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* linked those who "drawe awaye the people of God" with its main character. It taught Antichrist would:

> With secrete and fals documentes, drawe away the people of God. And the people shall torne to his false beleve. For he shall have knowledge in all scryptures, and declare them to the pleasure of carnall affeccyon, and he shall saye that the scrypture is not so to understande. And he shall preche all to the corporall delyte.¹⁴⁵

The Reformist emphasis on scriptural knowledge (both before and after Luther), the reinterpretation of Christian doctrine, and the freedom from Church "bondage" for those who trust in "sola gratia" instead of ceremonies and tradition, are all easily translatable into characteristics of the medieval Antichrist.

In another passage the Reformist insistence on Sabbath-keeping may be alluded to. Antichrist, we are told, "shall commaunde the Sondaye to be veray straughtly kepte for the pleasure of the Crysten people."¹⁴⁶ Later the deceptive message of Antichrist and his disciples is summarized:

> And Antechryst and his unhappy dysciples falsly shall declare the holy scripture, and shall expone them to the people all to the pleasure and delectacyon of the flesshe, and too the carnall affeccyon. And thereby they shall drawe the more people unto
theyr miserabyle lawe and beleve. The dangerous doctrine of salvation by faith alone, the marriage of priests and nuns, and the expressions of individual religious liberty were often cited as evidence of the essential carnality of the Reformers. In this same spirit, Pope Hadrian, in a letter to the German Duke Frederick, turned the interpretive table on Luther and his ilk:

The fruits of his evil are evident. For this robber of churches incites the people to smash images and break crosses... He has rejected or corrupted the sacraments, repudiated the expurgating of sins through fasts... Does this sound to you like Christ or Antichrist?

The fear that, if these anti-Catholic movements succeeded, the political powers would permit the control or even the persecution of the Catholics no doubt prompted Pope Hadrian's concern. The Birth and Life of Antichrist embodied this same fear in the traditional Antichrist vita. At the same time, if its description of the time after the death of Antichrist is read as signalling the defeat of the enemies of the faith, it also holds out the hope for a victorious Catholic future.

After that the Antechryst hath fynisshed his lyfe... they [Enoch and Elias] shall preche the holy fyght to the people in the countrees and places where as Antechryst had dwelshed and enhabited.
And thanne they shall reverte and torne
all kynges, prynces, dukes, erles,
lordes, and all maner of comen people
to the crystal faythe. And than shall be
as the holy scrypture sayth: "Erit
pastor unus et ovile unum."149

It is this unity of faith and practice, this uni-
versal Catholic system, that the Antichrist of Wynkyn de
Worde's work endangers. Like the twentieth-century comic,
Wynkyn de Worde's Antichrist vita bears both bad news and
good news. The bad news for its audience is that Anti-
christ will yet arise out of the radical new anti-Catholic
movements which claim, like Antichrist, to be true means
of salvation for mankind. The good news is that he will
ultimately be defeated and that Christ, shortly before
his Second Advent, will vindicate and restore his holy
Catholic Church. The vita proper150 concludes with an
exhortation to faithfulness and a promise of future
reward:

Thenne . . . let us pray devoutly unto
our soveryane redemptoure and lorde
Jhesu Cryst, that he of his infynyte
mercy and bounteous grace, graunte us
to be stedfast and ferme in the sacred
fayth crysten, and that we may gladly
abyde after his advenement and comynge
with his most gloryous puysaunce into
the ayre above the vallye of Josephat:
there to give Jugement upon the quycke
and deed, and that we maye be on the
ryght hande of his mercy as his true
chosen chyldren and heyres. Amen.151
Notes
Chapter 3

1 As noted in Chapter 2, Edition C has several more woodcuts than any other version.


3 Ibid., 1:660.


7 In Transactions of the Bibliographic Society 3 (1896):196.

8 W. Roberts, The Bockworm (London, 1891), pp. 165-68. The following sample from the Traytè torturously explains Antichrist's tortures in hell: "The thryd payn of the sayd antecryst ys that he shal abyd eyermor in the company and wysyon of the horrybyl dewyllys and that alys dewyllys followys sych lyk al them of ys allegens not oonly of oon payn bot wyth all the paynys that ys in hel he shal be punyshyt of al the paynes of hel of the quych we have wrytten afor qwych thayr ys dyvers et syndry tormens."

9 In fact, the Caxton version of the Ars Moriendi was not related to the version made popular by Verard and de Worde. See Sister Mary Catherine O'Connor, The Art of Dying Well: The Development of "Ars Moriendi" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p. 159.
However the *Legenda Aurea* does mention the four manners of deception—false teaching, miracles, bribes, and torments—practiced by Antichrist, and includes a version of the Fifteen Signs before Doomsday.

Although both Verard and de Worde illustrate the Fifteen Signs before Doomsday.

Travette, Aa. Stubbings does not really identify this woodcut. He only describes it as a "chaper heading to treatise on the coming of Antichrist." Stubbings, p. 11.

Stubbings, p. 2.

"The Coming of Antichrist," II₃v.

Ibid., II₄.

Ibid., II₅.

Caxton (1490 and 1491), Pynson (1495), and de Worde (1506). Colin Clair, in *A History of Printing* (London: Cassell, 1965), describes Wynkyn de Worde's shrewdness in judging the market for new books (p. 29). He specialized in cheap books for great numbers, because, according to Clair, "he was a businessman, not a scholar" (p. 27).

CHEL, 2:329.

De Worde published two editions: STC 792 in 1505 and STC 793 in 1506.


"The Coming of Antichrist," II₁.

Ibid., II₁v.

Ibid., II₁v-II₂.

Ibid., II₃v.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., II. 3v.

28. Ibid., II. 4v.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., II. 5. Apparently Enoch and Elias are excepted from this powerlessness.

31. For the entire passage linking Antichrist's tribes with the avarice of society see II. 5-II. 6 of "The Coming of Antichrist."


33. Ibid., II. 6.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., II. 6v.

36. Ibid.


41. The woodcut illustration which introduces this section (number 1, Birth and Life 2, Hodnett 756), depicting the birth of Antichrist, would more properly be placed two pages later.

42. The woodcut (number 2, Hodnett 773) depicts Antichrist preaching to crowds on both sides.
The woodcut (number 3, BL 8 and 15, Hodnett 761) pictures three men---one blind, one lame, and one legless---coming to Antichrist for healing.

The woodcut (number 4, BL 5, Hodnett 758) shows three kings being beheaded.

The woodcut (number 5, BL 14, Hodnett 766) shows the tortures undergone by the Christians.

The woodcut (number 6, Hodnett 774) depicts the two prophets preaching from one pulpit.

Two woodcuts (number 7, BL 16, Hodnett 767; and number 8, BL 7, Hodnett 760) illustrate the death of the prophets. The first, similar to the scenes in the blockbooks, shows the prophets beheaded before Antichrist on his throne. The second shows Antichrist preaching to a crowd from a pulpit at the bottom of which the two prophets lie decapitated.

The woodcut (number 9, BL 17, Hodnett 768) illustrating their resurrection is an almost exact replica of the blockbook version. It portrays an angel and the two prophets kneeling.

The woodcut (number 10, BL 18 and 19, Hodnett 769) pictures Antichrist standing on top of an open tomb.

This pseudo-Pentecost had already been mentioned earlier in "The Coming of Antichrist."

The woodcut (number 11, BL 20, Hodnett 770) follows the death of Antichrist scene in The Birth and Life. The text, as we have observed, treats it quite differently.

The woodcut is identical with BL 21 (Hodnett 771).

See Appendix 2, The Fifteen Tokens Before Doomsday.

For more on William Bateman see my introduction to the edition of The Birth and Life of Antichrist in Chapter 4.
55 Emmerson, p. 224.

56 There were many Reformation Antichrist tracts, but these do not qualify as vitae. They are, instead, spiritualized interpretations of Church history and doctrine, designed to expose the Papacy as Antichrist.

57 As noted earlier, two of these appear in "The Coming of Antichrist."

58 Emmerson wrongly counts twenty-one (p. 224).

59 These are 5, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 18 (19 is identical with 18), 20, and 21.

60 *Birth and Life*, p. 167.

61 Hereafter "royal Antichrist" will refer to a throned and pavilioned Antichrist, with a crown, sceptre, and royal robes.

62 If, that is, the only extant copy was the first printing.

63 *Mauvais Antechrist*, A.7v.

64 These are 3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 15, 22, 23, and 24.

65 The same cut, number 24, is used in *The Conversion of Sinners* by Stephen Hawes. It is reproduced by Henry Plomer in *Wynkyn de Worde and His Contemporaries* (London: Grafton and Co., 1925), p. 79.

66 STC 793.3.

67 The fire from heaven, not mentioned in the text, is plainly visible in the illustration.

68 Clair, p. 53.

69 Emmerson, p. 224.

70 The error occurs on A.4 of the text.
71 The Birth and Life, A2v, p. 159.

72 Bennett, p. 74.

73 Ibid., p. 75.


75 Ibid., p. 70.

76 Clair, p. 29.

77 Ibid., p. 27.

78 Clair claims that "out of a total of over 700 works he printed between 1492-1532, some 70% were printed for the first time" (p. 29).

79 Bennett, p. 111.

80 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967), pp. 3-4. Hirsch claims that in the sixteenth century, a new audience for printed books "attracted by the vulgar and sensational" arose. "By the end of the hundred year period (1450-1550), printing showed signs of decadence, in type designs, typesetting, illustration, press work, and quality of paper, not to mention the choice of texts to be printed."

81 Bennett, p. 29.


83 Clair, p. 30.

84 Antichrist is accused, as were the Reformers, or preaching a gospel that appeals to the flesh. See Birth and Life, p. 178.

86 The text of the Vulgate after "gentium" reads: "praec confusione sonitus maris et fluctuum, arescentibus hominibus prae timore et expectatione quae supervenient universo orbi. . . ."

87 Daniel 12:1 reads: "et veniet tempus quale non fuit ab eo ex quo gentes esse coeperunt usque ad tempus illus."


89 Birth and Life, p. 167, incorrectly gives Ezekiel 30 as the source of the Gog and Magog tradition.

90 Transitional words have been slightly altered. Instead of the repetitive "and," I have used "then," "at this," etc.

91 Birth and Life, pp. 173-74.

92 See, for example, pp. 162-64.

93 Ibid., p. 160.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid., p. 161.

96 Ibid.

97 The importance in the Middle Ages of the cattle at Christ's is clearly expressed in the incident in the life of St. Francis at Greccio. There Francis had a cave arranged, complete with animals, to celebrate Christmas. See Edward A. Armstrong, St. Francis: Nature Mystic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 132-42.

98 Birth and Life, p. 162.

Birth and Life, p. 168.


John 5:30, and elsewhere.

Birth and Life, p. 163. Antichrist's continual reference to his "fader" may be based on Christ's words to the Jews in the eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Although they claimed Abraham as their father, Christ insisted that their father, and the father of all those who oppose the truth, was the devil. See John 8:38-47.

Ibid., pp. 174.

Ibid., p. 183.

Ibid., p. 171.

Ibid., p. 159.

Ibid., p. 184.

Ibid., pp. 183-84.

Ibid., p. 185.

Ibid., p. 185. This tradition probably developed from the account of the death of Judas in Acts 1:18. Cursor Mundi portrays Antichrist's death in a similar, but even more embarrassing, manner: "Al be fulpe of his mawe/ shal brest out of him bihynde/ For drede of god as we fynye/ Sua shal he peris. al be-shitin/ buþ wip drede and sorou bitin" (4:1280-81).

Emmerson, p. 79.

Birth and Life, p. 160.
114*Birth and Life*, p. 160.

115In Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, p. 36.


117*Birth and Life*, p. 186.


123Even then, the Jews are never portrayed as being specifically antagonistic towards the Christians.

124*Birth and Life*, p. 185-86.


126Emmerson, p. 7.


130Headley, p. 222.

132Emmerson, p. 72.

133See especially Reeves, The History of Prophecy; Headley, Luther's View of Church History; Firth, The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain; and Margaret Deansley, The Lollard Bible.

134Reeves, p. 9.

135Emmerson, p. 71.

136Fowler, pp. 160-1.

137Bainton, p. 124.

138Emmerson, p. 222.

139(Venice, 1588). Cambridge University Library.

140Birth and Life, inside front cover.

141Birth and Life, p. 168.

142Ibid., p. 179.


144Ship of Fools, p. 334.

145Birth and Life, p. 164.

146Ibid., p. 171.

147Ibid., p. 176.

148In Bainton, pp. 193-94. Luther did not help his cause by lightly tossing off easily misinterpreted comments like his famous one to Melanchthon: "Sin for all you are worth, for God can only forgive a lusty sinner." Bainton, p. 175.
149 Birth and Life, p. 187.

150 The vita proper was followed by the account of the Fifteen Signs Before Doomsday.

Chapter IV

... An Edition of

The Byrth and Lyfe of Antechryste

A small quarto volume, The Byrth and Lyfe of the Moost False and Deceytfull Antechryst (STC 670) is extant in only one copy (Cambridge University Library, Syn. 7.52.17). Although its title page ($A_1$) is missing, I have taken its title from the incipit on the first page of text ($A_2$):

Here begynneth the byrth and lyfe of the moost false and deceytfull Antechryst/ the whiche shall come into the worlde as the prophesy of many prophetes recorded/ and is taken out of sondry bokes/ With the tokens and sygnes that shall falle before the comynge of oure lorde Jesu cryst to the generall Jugement.

On the other hand, one might take a slightly different title from the colophon ($D_4$):

Thus endeth the byrthe and comynge of Antechryste. Emprynted at London in the fletestrete at the sygne of the sonne by Wynkyn de Worde.

Because of the degenerate state of some of the woodblocks, which appeared fresh in The Art to Live Well (1505), the work is usually dated in the 1520's. Quite probably, again because of woodcut evidence, an earlier edition was produced by 1505.
Cambridge University Library purchased the book, according to a note included within it, from "the Bateman Sale" in May of 1893. On the inside front cover an identification shield with the words "Wm Bateman, F. A. S., of Middletown-by-Yolgrave, in the County of Derby" has been glued on. Both William Bateman, and his son, archaeologist Thomas Bateman (1821–61), devoted their time and wealth to collecting and cataloguing their family's museum and library. But in 1893, "the Valuable Library of Printed Books and Manuscripts formed by the late W. Bateman Esq. and T. Bateman Esq." were auctioned off "by order of the Court of Chancery" (information from List of Catalogues of English Book Sales, 1676–1900. London: British Museum, 1915, p. 418).

Besides his interpretive comments, which I discuss in Chapter Three, William Bateman left a record of his attempt to certify the work's uniqueness by contacting the most famous bibliographers of his day. On an added first page, he writes:

This tract is probably unique—as neither Ames, Herbert, or Dibdian, nor indeed any other writer on bibliography, appears to have seen it. Dr. Dibdian informed me by letter, 16 April 1832, that he "is a stranger to it." Whence I conclude that it is not to be found in any existing collection, public or private.

The text lacks A₁; and the collation formula is 4 : A₂
B₄ C₆ D₄. The last page of text, which contains the colophon, is D₄. The verso (D₄v) has De Worde's printer's device, "the sygne of the sonne" (number twenty in McKerrow's listing).
Signatures are used on the first three leaves of each gathering, with the exception of A2. The work has no running headlines but, beneath the text on the inner margin, the word "Antechryste" is printed on every signed leaf except D3. The type is Caxton's number eight, one commonly used by de Worde. Other than the many misspellings, most of which, in the absence of a direct English source to refer to, I have retained, the major error is found in the chapter numbering.

Each chapter is introduced with a short statement of its content, which immediately precedes or is parallel to the chapter's woodcut illustration. Thus the "fyrste chapyte," we are told, "specyfye," and the "seconde chapyte sheweth." Thereafter, however, the chapter numberings are given in roman numerals, and, in the first example-- Chapter Three--a mistake is made which is incorporated throughout the rest of the book. Probably due to a careless compositor, Chapter Three is titled "the .vi. chapyte." This edition retains de Worde's mistaken numberings.

In the edition that follows I hope chiefly to provide a trustworthy text of and clarifying notes to The Byrth and Lyfe of the Moost False and Deceytfull Antechryste. I have not attempted to modernize the English or correct the Latin, except in the case of those obvious printer's errors which significantly alter, in my opinion, the original meaning. Obvious abbreviations have been silently expanded, while less obvious forms have been underlined. Capitalization and
punctuation have been added in as light a manner as possible. Direct discourse has been set off in quotation marks. To aid the reader and to please the eye, I have added short titles to each chapter. The foliation of the original text has been embedded, in brackets, in this one. Some previous owner, perhaps Bateman, has extensively marked up the original text—usually in order to correct it. I have ignored these changes, but noted them in the apparatus. The textual notes immediately follow the text and refer to the line numbers printed in the right margin. The explanatory notes, which refer to the raised numbers within the text, then follow.
Here begynneth the byrthe and lyfe of the moost false and deeytfull Antechryst, the whiche shall come into the worlde as the prophesy of many prophetes recorded, and is taken out of sondry bokes. With the tokens and sygnes that shall falle before the comynge of oure lorde Jesu Cryst to the generall Jugement.

At this present tyme shall be wryten of the ferefull sygnes that shall happen before the comynge of oure lorde Jhesu Cryst to the Jugement at the dreedefull daye of dome, with the forth comynge of the moost false heretyke Antechryste, as is sygnyfied by the mouthe of oure savyoure Jhesu Cryst in the xxixi chapytre of Saynt Luke saynge thus: Brunt signa in sole et luna, et in terris pressura gentium. That is to say: Tokens shall be in the sonne, in the mone, and sterres, and in the erthe grete oppressyon of people thruche the ferefull curse that shall come over all the worlde. Yet sayth our lorde Jesus, Mathei xxiixiiii: Erit tunc tribulation, qualis non fuit ab initio mundi neque fiet, ac. That is to sayes: Than shall there be suche a trybulacyon that never none was lyke to it sythe the begynnynge of the worlde, ne yet shall be but at that tyme. But yf it were that the
dayes were made shorter, there sholde no man abyde stedfast ne no man be saved. But for the pleasure and wyll of our lorde they shall be made shorte. That is to understand that the reygne of Antechryste shall not longe endure. Lyke as Danyell sayeth, chapter xii: Thenne shall come the tyme that never was syth the worlde beganne shall be unto that tyme. And saynt Jherome wryteth that he hathe redde in the yere boke of the Hebrewes of the xv sygnes that shall come before the dreadefull day of Jugement of our lorde Jhesu Chryst. But of the daye and houre of that Jugement no man knoweth nor also the aungells, but onely god the fader. As wryteth Saynt Mathew in his xxiii chaptyre: De die autem et hora illa nemo scit necque angeli celorum sed solum pater. And as the prophete Ysay wryteth in his lxiii chaptyre sayenge thus: Dies enim ultionis in corde meo est, annus retributionis mee venit. That is to say: The day of punysshement is in my herte, and the yere of my payment is come.

The fyrst chaptyre specyfyeth how the fader shall lye with his daughter and shall engendre on her the chylde of perdycon, that is, Antechryst.

Chapter 1--The Conception of Antichrist

And also as I have redde and as Appocriphum sheweth us aparte, the whiche the holy doctours wyll not
evidently wryte nor specify unto us, but the tyme for
to come at the advenymnet of the cursed Antechryst
shall be shewed a sterre\textsuperscript{9} upon an unfaythfull countre
about a towne the whiche is called grete Babylon.\textsuperscript{10}
And than there shall be borne the chylde the whiche the
Jewes have spoken of so longe and taryed after hym.\textsuperscript{11}
In lyke wyse as the holy prophetes and patryarkes syttynge
in the fourth parte of hell saynge thus: Disrumpe celos
tuos et descende. That is to saye: Lete breke thy hevens
and descende downe to us for too unbynde us of the
bondes of the fendes of hel, ac.\textsuperscript{12} And this moost
ungracyous chylde shall be unnaturally engendred of a
man, the which shall be named Schalkus and shall be
fader too Antechryst. And this sayd man Schalkus shall
have a daughter, the whiche shall be called Ulcas,\textsuperscript{13}
and shall be the moder of the foresayd Antechryste.
Thus shall this daughter Ulcas conceyve this wretched
chylde of her naturalle fader, and shall be bothe
moder and syster of the sayde Antechryste.\textsuperscript{14} And Ante-
cryste is as moche for to say in the Grekes language
by interpretacyon as contrary unto Chryst.\textsuperscript{15}

The seconde chapytre sheweth how the cursed
Antechryst shall come fyrst into the lyght of this
present worlde. And of the deth of his moder at his
natyvyte.
Chapter 2 -- The Birth of Antichrist

[\(A_3\)] And when the tyme is come that this chylde shall come into this worlde, his moder Ulcas, in goinge by the strete in the towne of Babylone, shall fall unto the erthe with a grete noyse and crye. And than shall Antechryste breke oute at her belly unnaturally before all the people, and he shall speke incontinent boldely and wysely dyvers languages, as thoughte he had ben upon the erth longe, and his vysage shall be chaungeable. And in that tyme shall be a myst or tenebrosyte lyke a grete smoke, that one shall not se an other. In contrary wyse as our lorde was borne in a derke clowdy nyght, which was sodaynly chaungened in to resplendye shymge bryghtnesse. And then shall there be herde a grete noyse of cryenge, as yt it were the gruntyngge of a sowe or swyne. Thereof speketh Taberius, saynge that it shall be done in the dyspyte or angre of alle good Jewes. Alas, there ben but fewe now in these present dayes lyvyngge. And in that \([A_4]\) tyme of the devyll, the whiche shall be unbounden, that is Lucifere. But unto that tyme he shall lye faste chayned, and as Saynt Johan wryteth in the appocalyps. For the devyll shall occupy all his falsheide throughe Antechryste. And some doctours wryteth that lucyfer shall goo with Antechryst in erth bodyly, and shall be of his moost preyvy couneyll.
Yet shall not Antechryst knowe it hymselfe. And in
his chyldehode the fendes shall rejoyce of the erthly
worshyp and dygnyte whiche shall be done to Antechryst,
and they shall be worse and more ingraine than ever
they were. Ecclesia, in the iii chapytre, sayth that
the wyseman prophyceyd thus: Vidi cunctos sub sole
ambulantes cum adolescente secundo.23 That is for to
saye: I have seen two bachelors or Jovencilles
walkynge under the sonne. The fyrst hath ben good
and is the sone of god, our soverayme sayour Jhesu
Chryste, The seconde shal be growynge in voluptuosoyle
and in all unhappynes.24 This shall be Antechryst.

The vi chapytre sheweth how, by the chylde
counceyle, the temple shall be reedefyed in the cyte
of Jherusalem.

Chapter 6--The Youth of Antichrist

[Aiv] After this, the Jewes shall take that
chylde Antechryst and brynge hym into the Cyte of
Jherusalem, and shewe unto hym the same temple that
was dysstroyed by the Emperour Tytus and Vespasyan. And
they shall saye unto that chylde that they wyll take
hym for a veray messyas yf he can gyve them counseyl
how the temple myght be made agayne. And therupon
he shall gyve answere agayne veray sadly and dyscretly.
And after his counseyl, the sayd temple shal be edfyed
agayn.25

And than shall he go to Corosaym.26 And than they shall take grete thought for hym leest he sholde be doone too as our lorde Ihesu Crist was amonge the Jewes, and as Herode dyde perseuynge hym.27 And in this sorowe they shall ordeyne a man whiche shal have this chylde in his kepynge. And also they shall gyve unto hym a discrete scole mayster, the whiche shall ensygyne and teche hym in al maner of scyence.28

And the sayd Jewes shal retorn home agayne, and they shall commaunde that no man shal say where the chylde is becom. And this sayd chylde shall lerne every thynge that is sayd hym through the ayde and helpe of the devyll, in such wyse that his scole mayster shall have grete mercayle. And there shal he be kept secretly tyl that he be xxi yere of age.

And thanne he shal shewe hymselfe veraye servysable, and shall take upon hym a veray holy levenge with subtynnes.29 And so shal he bygyle the people throughe the myght of the devyll, and shall gyve all his goodes to poore folkes,30 and shall saye that he gyveth it in the name of his fader. But no man shall knowe his false menyng and entent. And he shall say that he wyll leve the worlde and serve god, vysytynge holy places. And he shall gyve the poore [A₂] people his owne clothyng, and he shall be clothed agayne with a sacke clothe.
And than shall he go in to Capharnaum and shewe hymselfe to the olde women, for they wyl lyghtly beleve hym. He shall be loved of every man and woman, and specyally of relygeois people. And soo he shall, with secrete and fals documentes, drawe awaye the people of god. And the people shall torne to his false beleve. For he shall have knowlege in all scryptures, and declare theym to the pleasure of carnall affecccyon. And he shall saye that the scrypture is not so to understande. And he shall preche all to the corporall delyte.

The vii chapytre speketh how a kynge of Romayns shall abyde x yere in the cyte of Jherusalem.

Chapter 7--The Last World Emperor

Afore that the false Antechryst shall shewe hym selfe in erthe, Saynt Methodius in his revelacion and prophecye wryteth these wordes folowyng: Post ebdomadam cum comprehenderint civitatem Jopem descendet rex Romanorum et demorabitur in Hierusalem septimana temporum et dimidia et tunc apparebit filius perditionis. That is for to say: [A5v] There shall come a kynge of Romayne that shall take his waye to Jherusalem, and there he shall dwell a weke and an halfe of tyme. That is x yeres and an halfe, takynge for the vii dayes a yere, ac. And when the x yeres ben at an ende, shall come forthe
the chylde of perdycyon, that is Antechryste. And then shall this kynge go upon Golgata, that is mounte of calvary, where as our lorde Jhesu Chryste suffred his passyon and dethe for us. And the sayd kynge shall take the crowne from his heed and shall set it upon the crosse. And than shall he joyne bothe his handes togyder towarde heven and shall offre all crystendome unto the fader of heven. And after that he shall not lyve longe.

And in some other revelacyons other devout doctoures have founde wryten somewhat lykely to this: That it shall be a kynge of Frauce called the moost crysten kynge. For the frenshe kynes in olde tyme have more defended the crysten fayth than any other kynes. But for al this it may be possyble that there shall be a kynge that shall be bothe kynge of Fraunce and of Rome, wherof this wrytynge maketh mencyon. After this same shall cease all the myght of all prynces, whan the cursed Antechryst shall shewe hymselfe fyrst in this worlde.

The vili chapytre sheweth us how Antechryst shall gete many kyngdomes and londes under his domynacyon and subjectyon. And also he shall put unto dethe many kynes and grete lordes that wyll not beleve in his cursed laws.
Chapter 8—Antichrist and the Kings of the Earth

As it is wryten in the Appocalyps: Adtrahet ad se magnum partem stellarum. Antechryst shall drawe unto him a greate parte of the sterres, that is for to knowe hyghe prynces reignynge on erthe. For some he shal gete to himwarde by force, and some by dowayres and gyftes. In lykewyse it is wryten in the Appocalyps in the thyrde chaptyre: Unto hym is gyven myghte in all the generacyon or kyndred of people. But after the prophetyssyng of Danyell, and of Saynt Johan in the Appocalyps in his xiii chaptyre, and Johannes Camestor in Scolastica Historia, Antechryst shall caste thre kynges out of the oryente. That is, to wete, the kyng of Affryke, the kyng of Egypt and the kyng of Ethyope: the which he shall put to dethe. And vii other kynges shal become subject to hym. And other kynges of the erthe he shall subdued by stronge hande. But the kyng of Lybye shall not come to the beleve of the false Antechryst unto the tyme that he shal revyve his fader, the olde kyng of Lybye, and his moder. And than shall Antechryst, with arte magycke or with the devilles crafte, make to aryse the forsayd kyng and quene fro dethe to lyfe. And than shall they gyve unto Antechrst lawde and prayse as yf he were God. And whan that is achyved and doone, the kyng of Lybye shall beleve on that false
Antechryste, and all his people. And than shall all his people be marked with the token of Antechryste on theyr foreheedes, and upon theyr ryght handes. And with this marke Antechryst shall subdue the worlde to hym and his myserable credence, as it is wryten in Compendio Theologie in the vii boke and ix chapytre.

The ix chapytre sheweth how the people of God and Magog shall come for to serve Antechryste out of the mountayne of Caspye.

Chapter 9—Gog and Magog

Josephus, the mayster of the hystoryes, and also other doctoures speketh of that falls Antechryst. In the north hylles of Caspy shall be a grete erthquav that one hyll shall fal upon the other. Than shall come out of the castelles of Gog and Magog as grete a multytue of people armed with malcyousnes as sholde well suffyse for to fulfyll xiii kyrgedomes. And these shall come unto Antechryst and shall be his helpers. And he shal be one Emperour over all the worlde, and the most proudest. And Ezechyell sayth in his xxx chapytre: Et dabo in die illa gog et magog locum nominatum sepulchrum in israel. That is to say: I shal gyve in those dayes unto Gog and Magog the place the whiche is named the sepulcre in Israel. And they shall take the holy cyte of Rome and shall destroye the castels
of Spayne.  

The x chapytre speketh how the malycyous Antechryst shall stande and preche, shewyng hymself better than God by his grete pryde.

Chapter 10--Antichrist's Blasphemous Preaching

Our lorde Jesu Cryst cam upon the erth in the moost lowlyest maner that he might. And Antecrist shall come in the mooste superbyous wyse that he may. Our lorde cam for to reyse the true people, and for too brynge synners to the ryght waye. And Antechryste shall come to usurpe the good people, and put theym too dethe. And he shall exalte the vycyous. Also our lorde gave the glory and laude to his fader, but Antechryste shall observe prayse to hymself. As the ii chapytre ad Tessalonicenses sayth: Et extollet se super omne quod dicitur deus. Antechryste shall lyft hymselfe above all that is sayd of God, and he shall not suffre that our lorde be honoured, nor pray to none other than to hym onely. And he shall dystroy the fygures of the holy crosse and ymages of sayntes. And he shall brynge moche people to his lawe, som by false myracles and som by gyftes. As Job sayth, chapter xli: Sternet sibi aurum quasi lutum. He shall sowe gold as donge and dust. For the devyll shall shewe hym al secrete treasours that be hydde in
in the worlde, and all that is lost in the see.\textsuperscript{51}

The xi chapytre telleth how Antechrist shal do many false myracles, tornynge moche people to his belove.

Chapter 11--Antichrist's False Miracles

[32] This forsayd Antechryst shall do many fals myracles, the sooner to deceyve the people. As sayth Saynt Johan in the Appocalyps, the xiii chapytre: Seducet habitantes in terra \textit{propter} signa que data sunt illi.\textsuperscript{52}

That is to say: Antecryst shall begyle the \textit{habytauntes} of the erthe by false myracles that he shall do by the subtlyyte of the devyll, and by his false predycacyons and techynge confermyng. Thus shall he shewe his fayned myracles.\textsuperscript{53} For he shall make the trees to blossom and bere leves incontynten that bare no fruyte in many yeres afore, and to fade other. He shall make symulacres and ymages to speke, he shall make tempest upon the see, and torne too fayre weder and make it calme sodaynly agayne. He shall make the ayre to be troubled with thonder and lyghtnyng, he shal make hayle and snowe to fal agaynst theyr naturall tyme of the yere, and he shall do many myracles upon the people. He shall make dombe men for to speke, the defe people for to here, the blynde for to se, and the lame to goo, the madde people to have theyr wytte and
understandyng agayne. And he shal tourne the bryghtnes of the sonne into derkenes openly in the presence of the people. And he shall tourne the mone into blode. And many other deceyvable myracles shall he doo whiche were over moche to expresse, which I passe over.

The xii capytre maketh demonstracyon how Ante-
chryst shall cause fyre to fall oute of the ayre upon his false dyscyples, and cause them to speke dyvers languages.

Chapter 12--Antichrist's Pseudo-Pentecost

\[B_2v]\] Antecryst shall make many deed bodyes too aryse, and revyve theym to lyfe.\(^{54}\) The whiche shall rendre hym thankes at there uprysynge, which shall be done by the devyls arte. For fendes shall entre into the deed bodyes and shal say that Antechryst revyved them.

Also oure lorde sente the Holy Goost in lykenes of fyre upon the apostles, causynge theym for to speke dyverse languages and to do many grete myracles. In lyke wysse Antechryst shall cause the devyll to descende, in lykenes of fyre, upon his false dyscyples and cause them to speke sondry speches and to do false myracles.\(^{55}\) And as Saynt Austyn sayth in the boke (de civitate die), and also Franciscus de Maro sayth in his xiii and in his xxviii chapitre, the dyfference
of these two askynges is: Apud christianos erit falsus christianus et finget se virum ecclesiasticum. That is to say: Amonge chrysten people shall be one false crysten man.\textsuperscript{56} And he shall sayn hymselfe a devoute catholyke, to the ende that he may converte the more people to his false wyll and entencyon. And he shall commaunde the Sondaye to be veray strayly kepfe for the pleasure of the crysten people. And also he shall commaunde the Saterdaye to be observed for to \textsuperscript{[3]} please the Jewes, as it standeth wryten in De Consecratione Distinc., chapytre ii: Perveniet, ac.

The xiii chapytre speketh how Antechryst shall cyrcumcyse hymselfe in the presence of the Jewes in the temple of Jerusalem.

Chapter 13-- Antichrist and the Jews

The Jewes, which have ben dystroyed and seperate by all the world, in that tyme shalle come togyder agayne. Thenne shalle Antechryst come into Jherusalem and shalle sytte in his mageste and have grete power. And than shalle he cyrcumcyse hymselfe and shal say to the Jewes that he is the veray messyas that was promysed unto them in theyr lawe.\textsuperscript{57} And he wyll say that our lorde Jhesu Cryst, with his dyscryples, hath ben a nygromanyer, or one that hath knowne the arte magycke.\textsuperscript{58} And whan the Jewes shalle se that he hath so good fortune, and
dooth to them so grete worship, and he hymself and
his dysciples do so so many myracles, and that he
hath subdued alle the kynges of the worlde and brought
them under his subyectyon, they shalle be ryght Joyous. 59
Thenne shall Ante [3v] chryst drawe and styre the
Jewes to hym with grete gyftes and dowayres. And they
shall fall in a grete wanhope and dyspayre, and
receyve Antechryst for the ryghtwyse messyas that was
promysed and graunted to them in the lawe. And they
shall praye to hym and do hym worship as unto God. As
Saynt Johan sayd in his secretest revelacyon, in the
xiii chaptyre: Et adorabunt bestiam quorum non nomina
sunt scrypta in libro vite. 60 That is to say: They
shall praye to the beest, that is Antechryst, and their
names shall not be wryten in the boke of lyfe. And it
is wryten in the v chaptyre of Saynt Johan, how our
savyour Jhesu Cryst sayd to the Jewes before: Ego
veni nomine patris mei et non recepistis me, ac. 61 I am
comen to you in the name of my fader, and ye have not
be wylynges to receyve me. But another, that is Ante-
chryst, shall come in his owne name, and hym ye shall
receyve as the ryghtwyse Messyas.

The xiii chaptyre declareth how alle they the
whiche shalle beleve in the cursed lawe of Antechrist
shalle be tokened or marked in theyr forheed and in
the ryght hande with the token of Antechryste.
Chapter 14--The Mark of Antichrist

[\(n_4\)] Than to the ende that Antechryst maye the better knowe them that beleve in hym,\(^62\) and the soner to subdue the good people that wyll not stylve in hym, he shall do to be made coyned money without crosse or pyle, sauf onely a smale rounde cercle or rynge and none other token theron. And of the same coyn he shalle doo make a sygnet or token whiche shall be prynted hote in every mannes forheed, and also in the ryght hande, in sygnyfyaunce that he shal be stedfast in his beleve. As it is wryten in the Appocalyps 10 and in Compendio Theologie, ac.\(^63\)

The xv chapytre speketh how Antechryst shal cast downe the temple and in thre dayes byylde it agayne.

Chapter 15--Antichrist and the Temple

After that tyme Antechryst shall byd the Jewes to brynge before hym the bokes of the lawe. And they shal say that "they be in the temple, and we ben charged to bere no bokes out of it."\(^64\) Thenne shall Antechryst make to fal downe to the erthe, in the presence of al the people, the temple the whiche he had doo make in his youth; \([n_4n]\) that one stone shall not abyde upon the other. And the Jewes shall be so sore abasshed that they shall not knowe what to do. And the bokes of the lawes shall be wasted and broken under the temple.
And when Antechryste shall see the grete sorowe and fere amonge the Jewes, he shall say to them: "Be not affrayed, for this same temple whiche ye see here lyenge on the grounde, I shall buylde agayne within thre dayes throughe the myght of my fader." And then he shall lete two dayes passe over without touchynge of the temple. And than some Jewes wyll demaunde of hym how many dayes shall passe or the temple be accomplishshed. And the devyll shall say to Antechryst:

"Say to the Jewes that the temple shall be ful made at the iii daye before none in the nyght." And than, by the helpe of devylles, the temple shall be made in an houre. And whan all that shall be done, they shall make grete tryumphe with blowynge of trompettes, basons, and claryons. And all this shall be doone before the uprsynge of the sonne the same thyrde daye. And thenne in the mornynge erly, all the comyn people shall renne for to se yf the temple be made or not. And whan they se that it is ful made and nothynge lackynge, they shall have grete mervayle that suche a grete edyfyc is made in so shorte space. And thenne they shall saye wepynge: "O good lorde, have mercy on us." And he shall saye then: "Syt al downe in the name of my fader that wyll folow my letynge, and have a stedfast beleve in me."

The xvi chapytre sheweth how Antechryst shall
sende his fals dysciples throughe all the worlde to brynge forth all the bokes of the lawe and make them to be casten in a grete fyre and brenne them.

Chapter 16--The Disciples of Antichrist

[ Cooke ] As sone as Antechryst hath brought all the Jewes unto hym, he shall goo and dwel in al the places where as our lorde Jhesu Cryst hath dwelled afore. And thenne shall he of veray dyspyte and wrathe make alle the bokes of the lawe for to be brought afore hym. And than shall do to be made a grete fyre, and cast theym therin, and so brenne them all. And sone after that he hath done moche faslshed, and hath torned moche people unto hym, and that his power is grete, he shall sende his fraudelent dysciples thrughe al the worlde. And they shall do many myracles as theyr mayster Antecryst shall do. And in this maner they shall begyle and drawe moche people unto them. As our lorde Jhssu Cryst hath sayd before in the gospell of Mathew in the xiii chastre: Vide nesi quis vos seducat, ac. Loke well before you that ye suffre not youre selfe to be begyled. For there shall come in my name those whiche shall say, I am Cryst, and he shall deceyve moche people. For whan falhede is not set by, the love of our lorde God waxeth colde in crysten people.
And Antechryst and his unhappy dysciples falsly shall declare the holy sorypture, and shall expone them to the people all to the pleasure and delectacyon of the flesshe, and too the carnall affeccyon. And thereby they shall drawe the more people unto theyr myserabyle lawe and beleve. And all the wordes that they shall pronounce shall be false and untrue. For Saynt Poule the holy appostle sayth: Si secundum carnem vixeritis morte moriemini. That is to say in Englysshe: If ye lyve after the delectacyon of the flesshe, ye shall dye of dethe. That is, after the deth of this present worlde to be everlastyngely in helle, where as is deth in lyvynge and lyfe in dyenge.

The xvii chapytre sheweth how Antechryst shall persecute the good people with gret tourments and afflyccyons that he shall do to theym. As Saynt Gregory sayth in the xxxii Moralyte.

Chapter 17--Antichrist and the Great Tribulation

[Co2] So whan Antechryst shall sytte in his pryde and tryumphant mageste, reysed upryght as a Cedre tree, he shal make his men and satilytes to dyvyse many grete paynes and tourmentes, as the martyres in tymes past were payned with. With the whiche paynes this most false Antechryst shal persecute the good people. For some he shall put to dethe with the
suerde. Of some he shall cut away the handes and fete, and of some to drawe the guttes out of theyr belyes all quycke. And some he shall cast amonge furious beestes to be devoured and slayne. And some he shall make to be rosted all quycke. And some he shall brenne to pouder. And some with other meravylous paynes whiche were over longe to tell. For he shall fynde other tyrannous engyms that never were seen a fore.\textsuperscript{72}

And oure lorde shall shewe dyvers myracles for the good people in theyr tourments and anguyshhes.\textsuperscript{10} Then shall the servauntes of that false Antechryst, whiche purysshe the good people, doo many myracles by the operacyon and myght of the devyll. And, in the presence of the sayd martyrs, they shall make the crucyfyxe of our lorde and ymages of our lady and of other sayntes to falle. The whiche ymages they wyll make to speke and saye that "all the worshyp and honoure the whiche ye have done to us is false and vayne. This is the veraye Messyas, unto whome ye ought to doo reverence."\textsuperscript{73} And they shall make deed bodyes to revyve in the presence of them, and they shall say: "tourne to hym, for hour beleve is false--this is the veray messyas."

And this Antechryst shall make to roste the good people, as Saynt Lawrence was.\textsuperscript{74} And thenne shall he make to ryse fro dethe to lyfe the fader and moder of
them that thus is rosted, \([C_2v]\) and they shall say: "Good chyldren ye ben out of the ryght way, for ye beleve not well ne ryght wysly. This is the veray messyas that was promysed in the lawe, and therfore torne agayne to hym and save your lyfe." O good lorde what trybulacyon and vehement calamyte shall be then in the worlde. Than shall be the tyme of hevynes,\(^75\) of the whiche dayes the holy man Job was affrayed, and he desyred entenyfly of our lorde that he myght not lyve those dayes.\(^76\) In lyke wyse Saynt Poule desyred also of our lorde not to lyve unto the dayes of the regne of Antechryst.\(^77\) Alas, who shall than be stedfast and sure syth these holy men wereabayshed and dredde. How shal we poore wretched and myserabile synners than doo? We ought than to be fore esmayed and troubled. For many of the good people shal hyde theym in caves and holes, among the cragged roches, for fere of the paynes and tourmentes of Antechryst.\(^78\) But hunger and thyrst shall constrayne them to come out agayne. For than shall neyther meet ne drynke be solde unto them. For than shall Antechryst do make a generall proclamacyon and commandement throughout all the worlde that no man ne woman shall be so hardy to selle to ony persone meet or drynke, but that he have the token of Antechryst, both in the forheed and also in the ryght hande--upon payne to forfeyte bothe the body and goodes.\(^79\)
The xviii chaptyre sheweth how Enoch and Helyas shall rebuke the frowarde Antechryste evydently before all the people.

Chapter 18--The Ministry of Enoch and Elias

[C3]

In the tyme that the false Antechryste shall reyne and sytte in his mageste, all prechers and doctoures shall be stylly and dare not preche the holy scryptyre and oure beleve as our moder holy chyrche techeth, for drede of the tourmentes that Antechryste shall ordeyne. And there shall be no man that dare say agaynst hym for fere of payne, and some by gyftes of possessyons, or by decepyon of false myracles. And there shall be many that shall not knowe the holy scryptyre. But our lorde for his blyssed wyll shall sende two of his messengers, that ben the two prophetes, Hely and Enoch, that shall come oute of [C3:v] paradyse terrestre. As Saynt Johan sayth in the Appocalyps, in the xi chaptyre: Dabo duobus testibus meis et predicabunt et prophetabunt diebus mille ducentis et sexaginta. That is to say: I shall sende two of my testefyres that shall preche and propheeye a thousands two hundred and thre score dayes. That is, thre yere and an halfe. And these two shall have the power to close the hevens and let the rayne. And these shall have the power to torne all waters into blode. And
they shall have power througheoute all the worlde to punysshe it with sekenes and other trybulacyons, as longe as they wyll themself. And these two holy prophetes, Enoch and Hely, shall be clothed with lymmen clothe to gyve us example that we sholde not be proude in our araye and clothyng.

The xix chapytre speketh and declareth how the Antechryste, the mooste ennemye of our lorde Jhesu Cryst, shall put to dethe the two holy prophetes, Enoch and Hely, with the crowne of martyrdom.

Chapter 19--The Deaths of Enoch and Elias

And soone after this, the two holy prophetes, Enoch and Hely, shall be taken and put in the pryson of Antechryst by sergeautnes, and than put to deth in the stretes of Jherusalem. And so they shal receyve the gloryous crowne of martyrdom. And through the commaundement of Antechryst, there shal no man be so hardy to bury those ii bodyes. And so they shal lye in Jerusalem upon the stretes iii days long and more. But the angelles of God shal have the bodyes in kepynge. As Danyell wryteth in his viii chapytre: Cum multiplicate fuerint iniquitates surget rex imprudens et roborabitur in malicia et interficiet tortes. That is to saye: When that falsehede shall multyplye in the bodyes of the people, there shall aryse an unprudent kyng (that
is Antechryst), and he shall be enforced in his malyce and shall put to dethe the stronge (that is Hely and Enoch and the devout people). 87 As Saynt Johan sayth in the Appocalyps, in his seconde chaptyre: Et cum finierunt testimonium suum bestia que ascendit de abysso vincet et occidet eos. 88 That is to saye: whan the holy prophetes shall have fynysshed and made an ende of theyr wytnesse, the beeste that is ascended oute of the abysme shall overcome and sle them. That is, to wete, the cursed Antechryst shall put to dethe the holy prophetes, Enoch and Hely.

The xx chaptyre sheweth how God sahl sende his holy angell downe for to reyse the two holy prophetes, Enoch and Hely.

Chapter 20--The Resurrection of Enoch and Elias

[C4v] As Enoch and Hely, the prophetes, hath lyen thus dede, our lorde Jhesu Chryst shall say unto them: "Stande up frome dethe and lyve." 89 And they shall aryse and stande up incontynente upon theyr fete in the syght of all them that have argued agenst our lorde Jhesu Cryst. And than they shall rebuke all the subtylnes and myracles of the false Antechryste and his cursed dyscyples. As it standeth wryten in the Appocalyps of Saynt Johan in the xi chaptyre: Et post tres dies et dimidium spiritus vite intrabit in
eos et steterunt super pedes eorum. That is to say:
After thre dayes and an halfe, the spyrytes of lyfe
shall entre in to theym and they shall stands upon
theyr fete. And they that shall se this myracl shall
be sore aferde and abasshed. And the holy prophetes
shall conforte the good people and knytte theym sted-
fastly in the beleve of the crysten fayth, and shall
promyse theym the realme of heven yf they kepe theym
constantly fro the false creunce of Antechryst.

Chapter 21--Antichrist's Pseudo-Death and Resurrection

After that the cursed Antecryste hathe decayed
many a man by his false beleve, by the devylles arte
and nygromancye he shall fayne hymselfe as he were dead.
And thenne shall the people wepe that they have loste
theyr lorde. And he shall seme deed the space of
thre dayes, and on the thryde daye he shall seme to be
rysen agayne frome dethe to lyfe. And all they
that repreveth hym, and saye that he is a negromancyer,
and that he worketh with the devylles arte, and that
his dethe is but faynt, and his resurrecyon also,
shall be put to a cruell dethe. And therby shall
moche people be decayed, specially them there about
dwellynge. And alle this shall he do to be the more worshipped and gloryfied amongst the people. And in this wyse he shall shewe hym selfe to be rysen fro dethe to lyfe in the presence of al the people.

And thenne he shall speke to the kynges and prynces, dukes, erles, lorde, barons, and unto all maner of people saynge thus: "Beholde ye and se me whiche am veray god and man." Thenne shall the people falle downe upon theyr knees and praye to hym as unto God, and he shall make many lesynges. And so, through the myght and power of the devyll, he shall do many marvaylous thynge for to begyle the wretched pepole, the whiche ben bryttle and unstedfast.

The xxii chapytre speketh how Antechryste shalle ascende towarde heven by the devylles myght.

Chapter 22--Antichrist's Pseudo-Ascension

Antecrist, the mooste enmy of oure lorde Jhesu Cryste, at the ende of iii yere and an half, whan he hath begiled the people and shall have done many myracles, through the helpe of the devylle, wenyng too folowe oure lorde Jhesu Cryste as moche as our lorde shall suffre hym, shall set his chayre in a ryche pavlylon, over gylte and set with perles and precyous stones ryght sumptuously upon the mounte of Olyvete. Pro the whiche mountayne our lorde Jhesu Crist ascended
gloryously unto his celestyal kyngdome and habytacyon in heven above all other hevens. And there as all the queres of aungelles prayed unto hym, yet do, and shall do ever incessauntly. And Antechryste, wyllynge to do as our lorde dyde, shall be taken up and lyft into the ayere, and shall ascende towarde heven by the myght of the devyll and arte nygromancy, in the syght of all the people. As Saynt Poule sayth (as thessalonicenses) in the seconde chaptre: Nisi revelatus fuerit homo peccati filius perditionis: qui adversatur et extollitur supra omne quod dicitur deus. That is to saye in our materneall tonge: As the chylde of perdyceyon shall shewe which is the body of synne, that is the ennemye of God, he shall reyse and magnyfy hymselfe above that whiche is sayd of God. For Antechryst shall be the inventoure and fynder of all fraudenlent subtylytees and enormytees of mychefe.

The xxiii chaptre specifyeth how Antechryst shall be cast downe deed at the commaundement of our lorde by the archaungel Saynt Myghell before all the people.

Chapter 23--The Death of Antichrist

The holy doctours Saynt Jherome, Saynt Ambrose, and many other, sayth that within v dayes after that the two holy prophetes, Enoch and Hely, be put
unto deth by the crowne of martyrdom, the mooste
cruell Antechryste shall be put to the moost cruell
and abhomynable deth that may be extemede, through the
onely worde of the mouthe of our savyour Jesu Cryst. That is to say at his commandement, by the dylygent
service of the arckeavengell Saynt Myghell. For he shall
be cast out the ayre, deed and his bely bursten,
his entrayles hangynge out, and shall fall downe to
the fote of the mounte Olyyvete in the syght and presence
of all the people. And then shall all the people
renne from hym fro the stynkynge odour that shall
come out of his body, and for grete feere of the syght.
But how longe the worlde shall stande after Antechryste,
no man knoweth but onely he that formed it, that is
Almyghty God. But after the prophecy of Danyel, in
his xii chapytre, there shall be xlv dayes after
Antechryst for to do penaunce and satysfaccyon for
alle suche as have beleveth in Antechryst for fere
of his cruel and tyrannous tourmentes, in recompensacyon
of theyr synnes. And thenne the Jewes shall well
apperceyve that they have ben begyled, and shall be
sore ashamed of Antechryst. And than they shall torne
to the crysten sayth and beleve. And than shall be
accomplysshed the prophecy of Jheremye where, as he
wryteth in his xxii capyter: In diebus illis salvabitur
juda et habitabit confident. That is to saye: In
those dayes shall be saved the generacyon of Juda
and shall abyde stedfastly.\textsuperscript{100}

The xxiiiij chapitre sheweth how Antechryst shal be \[D_1\] he brought with body and soule to the depe pytte
of hell for his falsnes.

Chapter 24--The Punishment of Antichrist

Than at the commaundement of our savyour Jesu
Cryst, the mooste cruel tyraunt and ennemy of our lord
and our fayth, that is antechryst, shal be taken of
the devylles and borne into hell bothe body and soul
with his false dyscyiples into the everlastynge fyre,
thurge the servyce of the devyll. And there shall
he be punysshed eternally with his dyscyiples. And
they shall curse the day and houre that they were
borne. As Saynt Johan sayth in the Appocalyps, in
the xii chapytre: Et projectus est ille draco magnus
qui seducebat gentes in stagnum ignis eterni. That is
to saye: The grete dragon (that is Antechryst), the
desceyver of people, shall be caste into the ever-
lastynge fyre.\textsuperscript{101} And as Ysay sayth in his xiii chamber:
Infernus subter te turbatur in occurrsum
adventus tui. That is to saye: Hell is troubled
agaynst the, and shall renne to the in thy comynge.\textsuperscript{102}
That is, when Antechryst hathe broken his necke, all
the devylles in helle shall come for too receyve
hym. And the fenes shall saye by grete dyryson unto [D1v] hym: "Thou cursed prynce Antechryste, thou arte hurte with the stroke that we were hurte with, that is, with eternall afflycicyon. And thy pryde is throwen and tumbled into the horrible gulfre of hell. And there shall thy body and soule be tourmented and falgelled with the inextynguyable fyre of helle, ever in perpetuyte without extynguyishment."

The xxv chapytre relateth how the two prophetes, Hely and Enoch (after that they ben reysed to lyfe and that the cursed Antechryst is deed), shal come agayne and preche to the people, and call theym to the ryghte waye whiche they had lost by Antechryst.

Chapter 25--The Return of Enoch and Elias

After that the cursed Antechryst hath fynisshed his lyfe in this damnable wyse, ther shall come agayne, by the suffraunce of God and his mercyfull grace, the two holy prophetes, Enoch and Hely.103 And they shal preche the holy fayth to the people in the countrees and places where as Antechryst had dwelled and enhabyted. And thanne they shall reverte and torne all kynges, prynces, dukes, erles, lordes, [D2] and all maner of comen people too the crysten faythe. And than shall be as the holy sorcypure sayth: Erit pastor unus et ovile unum. That is to saye: There
shall be one shepeherde and one shepecote. And than shall there be no man in surety of ony tympe to lyve, or whan the daye of dome shall be. And every man shall be sore adredd of that day. So that the husband mane for fere shal lete his ploughe stande, and leve all his clothynge behynde him in the felde, and renne home for fere of the dreedefull daye of dome and that the last day take them not in the feldes. And the holy scripture sayth that our lorde shaile, by his blyssed wyl, shorte the dayes, that the people for fere and trybulacyon fall not in to theyr false and myscreaunte beleve agayne, as it is declared in Compendio Theologie. Thenne, syth it is so, let us praye devoutly unto our soverayne redemptoure and lorde Jhesu Crist that he of his infynyte mercy and bounteous grace, graunte us to be stedfaste and ferme in the sacred fayth crystyen. And that we may gladly abyde after his advenement, and comynge with his moost gloryous puyssaunce into the ayre above the valaye of Josepha--there to gyve Jugement upon the quycke and deed. And that we maye be on the ryght hande of his merch as his true chosen chyldren and heyres. Amen.

Than whan Antechryst shall be slayne and brought to helle, body and soule. And after that shal be shewed xv sygnes, the whiche Saynt Jerome hath founde in the
yere boke of the Hebrewes, as they shall be shewed hereafter by order.\textsuperscript{107}

The Fifteen Signs Before Doomsday

\[D_2\] The fyrst sygne that shal go before the Jugemente generall shall be that the see shall aryse xl cubytes above all the hylles of the worlde, and shall stonde so in token of a myracle \textit{without} rennyne or goynge downe more in one place than in another, but abyde stedfast. For that the wordes of the psalmyst sholde be true, as it is sayd: \textit{Mirabilis elationes maris}, ac.\textsuperscript{108}  

The seconde sygne that shall go before the Jugement is that the see shall go downe into the erthe, as yf the sonne had dryed it away.

The thyrde sygne shall be that all the beestes and fysches of the see shal come togyder and make a grete complaynt.

\[E_3\] The fourthe token shall be that the see and all other ryvers shal brenne with the fyre that shall dyscende frome heven.

The fytte sygne shall be that all herbes, and trees in forestes, and busshes shall sweet sanguynyous droppes as bode.

The syxte sygne shall be that all townes, castelles, and toures, houses, and other buyldynges
shall falle downe and breke.

The seventh sygne shall be that stones shall bete and fyghte togayder and breke asonder, and in theyr fyghtynge shall make grete noyse.

The syghte sygne shall be that there shall be a generall erthequave, the whiche shall be shewed over all the unyversall worlde.

The nynt sygne shall be that all hylles and valeys shall be playne. And it shall be as Ysaye sayth in the xl chapytre. 109

The x sygne shall be that all men and women that were hydde in the caves of the erthe shall come outhe agayme as madde people.

The xi sygne shall be that all monumentes and tombes shall stande open fro the upr上百ge of the sonne tyll the goynge downe agayne. And also the deed bodyes shall aryse.

\[D_{3}v\] The twelfth sygne shall be that the sterres shall fall frome heven. For all the planettes that goeth aboute with the cours of elementes, and all they that ben fyxed ben called stelle errancie in latyn.

The xiii sygne shall be that all men and women and chyldren that ben on lyve in the worlde shall dye without any remedy.

The xiii sygnes shall be that heven and erthe and
all the elementes shall brenne, and specyally all
thynges that is upon erthe.

The xv sygne shall be that heven and erthe shall
be chaunged and made newe.

Epilogue

So whan all the prophecyes shall be accompl-
lysshed and brought to an ende, our savour Jesu
Cryste shall come to the generall Jugement in his moost
possyble, and shall Juge all reasonable creatures. And
than shall he shewe the sygnes of his passyon--unto
the good more glorye, and to the badde the more payne.
Whan he shall say to the wretched synners this horryble
worde: Ite maledicti in ignem eternum. That is to
saye: Go ye cursed into the fyre eternall of helle.
And unto the good he shall say this blysfull worde:
Venite benidicti patris mei, ac. That is to saye:
Come ye blyssed of my fader and possed the realme
whiche hath ben prepayred for you syth the begynnynge
of the worlde. For whan I hongred, ac. Unto the
whiche brynge us the Fader, the Sone, and the Hyly Scoost.
Amen.

Thus endeth the byrthe and comynge of Antechryst.
Enprynted at London in the fletestrete, at the sygne of
the sonne, by Wynkyn de Worde.
Textual Notes

Page 5

2-6 The following words, all on the outer margin, have been water damaged: false (2), into the (3), recorded (4), and (5), lorde (6).

21 none, marked out by a later hand (Bateman?). Hereafter these scribal deletions are identified simply as B.

Page 6

2 no, B.

6-10 The following words, all on the inner margin and directly opposite the words on page 5, lines 2-6, have been water damaged: shall (6), beganne (7), wryteth (8), dredefull (10).

Page 7

2 advenyment, B.

9 Lele, B.

9 hevens, B.

Page 8

19 tyme, text has tyon.

21 and, B.

Page 10

13 hym, a later hand adds "to" before hym.

Page 13

9 prophetsynge, B.

11 Johannes, B.
wan (of wanhope), a later hand marks out and replaces with vayne.

the token, text has the the token.

crosse and pyle, the two sides of a coin.
to, text has te.

he, missing in text.

letrynge, leading.

sheweth, text has seweth.
mageste, text has magest with e added by later hand.

abayshed, text has aba shed.
token, text has toke with tilde added by later hand.

prysou.

seconde, B.

pepole, sic.
3  xxiii chapitre, text has xxiii with i added by later hand.

Page 36
24  and toures, text has and and toures.

Page 38
8  possyble, powerful or capable.

23  The verso of the final leaf (D₄v) contains the printer's mark, "the sygne of the sonne."
Notes

Chapter 4

1. This insistence on authoritative sources ("sondry bokes") is common to medieval Antichrist texts. Adso had written: "I found all this in written works after careful research" (p. 102). According to the Curso Mundi poet, "No ping shal I fynne news/ But pat I fond in bokes trewe."


5. Traditionally Antichrist vitae were followed by a description of The Fifteen Tokens before Doomsday.


8. The title "child of perdition" derives from 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

9. In contrast to the star which led the magi to the place of Christ's birth.

10. The birthplace of Antichrist according to almost all medieval authorities. See Adso, in Wright, The Play of Antichrist (hereafter simply Adso), p. 103.

11. That is, the Jewish Messiah.


13. I have been unable to locate the source for Antichrist's parents' names.

14. Antichrist's birth is both natural (human and not
supernatural) and unnatural (incestuous). The specific manner of Antichrist's conception was a hotly debated topic in the Middle Ages.

15"He will be contrary to Christ in all things."
Adso, p. 102.

16This entire chapter, like several others in The Birth and Life of Antichrist, is remarkably free from scriptural quotations and commentary.

17Antichrist's unnatural birth contrasts with Christ's supernatural birth.

18The negative effects of Antichrist's birth upon the natural world contrast with the beautiful picture of nature's homage to Christ in Milton's Nativity Ode and many other medieval and renaissance works.

19For the emphasis on "good Jews" in The Birth and Life of Antichrist, see Chapter 3.

20Apparently the coming of Antichrist signalled the loosing of Satan.

21Probably refers to Apocalypse 13:2-4: "And the dragon [Satan] gave him [Antichrist] his own strength, and great power. . . . And they [the people of earth] adored the dragon, which gave power to the beast."

22See Adso, p. 107: "the fullness of diabolical power and of depraved nature will dwell bodily in him, where there will be hidden away all the treasures of malice and iniquity."

23Ecclesiastes 4:15. The vita here depends upon a strange reading of a poor Vulgate text. "Vidi cunctos viventes qui ambulant sub sole cum adolescente secundo qui consurget pro eo."

24The diction suggests the description of Christ's childhoos in Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

25Adso, p. 104: "He will restore the temple, now in ruins, which Soloman built to God into its original form."
26 Corosaim, Bethsaida, and Caphernaum were all associated with the youth of Antichrist.

27 A rare and interesting example of the common practice of comparing and contrasting Christ and Antichrist.

28 Adso, and most other medieval authorities, taught that "Antichrist will have magicians, criminals, soothsayers, and wizards, who, with the devil's inspiration, will bring him up and instruct him in every iniquity, trickery, and wicked art." Adso, p. 103.

29 Peter Comestor, PL 198:1465: "Nam Antichristum castus erit ob simulationem religionis."

30 A tradition probably based on the great "caritas" passage from 1 Corinthians 13:3: "If I give away all I have . . . but have not charity, I gain nothing."

31 The deception of "olde women" and the earlier characterization of Antichrist's pseudo-religion owes much to St. Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:1-7. Paul teaches that in the "last days" evil men, appearing to be religious but actually full of sin, will come. They will "make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth."

32 The opponents of the Reformation, like the earlier opponents of the Apostle Paul, contended that the preaching of unmerited grace was really an excuse to "continue in sin" (Romans 6:1).

33 Adso, pp. 106-7, writes: "Indeed certain of our learned men tell us that one of the Kings of the Franks, who will come very soon, will possess the Roman Empire in its entirety. And he will be the greatest and last of Kings. He . . . will ultimately come to Jerusalem and lay down his sceptre and crown on Mount Olivet. This will be the end and the consummation of the Empire of the Romans and Christians. And immediately . . . they say that Antichrist will soon be at hand."

35 A good example of the conflation of two apocalyptic traditions in one text. Here Pseudo-Methodius and Adso are combined.

36 The Apocalypse never really says this. Apocalypse 12:4 and 8:12 are related texts and probably the source for this passage.

37 Adso writes: "He will exalt himself against the faithful in three ways: fear, gifts, and miracles." Adso, p. 104.

38 Really Apocalypse 13:7b: "And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation."

39 Neither Daniel nor St. John refer directly to Antichrist or the three kings. However, medieval exegetes linked Antichrist with the little horn rising from the ten-horned beast (the Roman Empire) of Daniel's vision. This little horn, according to Daniel 7:24, shall "put down three kings." Apocalypse 13 describes a beast with ten horns, but says nothing about the battle of the horns, that is, the battle between Antichrist and the kings of the earth. Peter Comestor, in his Historia Scholastica (PL 198: 1454) links the three horns with the kings of Africa, Egypt, and Ethiopia.

40 The blockbook vitae depict Antichrist converting these three kings instead of killing them.

41 The raising of the King of Libya's parents from the dead was a common component of the Antichrist tradition.

42 Apocalypse 13:16-18. Also Adso, p. 109, writes: And whoever believes in him will receive the sign of his letter upon the forehead."

43 Compendium 7:9: "Nec vendetur eis, cree emetur ab eis, nisi habeant characteram, id est signum aliquod ad literam."

44 In Chapter 3 I compare this version of the Gog and Magog tradition with that found in the blockbook vitae.
45 Actually Ezekiel 39:11, not Chapter 30. The text, moreover, refers only to Gog: "In die illa dabo Gog locum nominatum sepulcrum in Israel."

46 It seems here that Gog and Magog are conflated with the Turks, and Antichrist with "Mahomet." See Michael Paull's essay, "Antichrist and Mahomet," Comparative Drama 5 (1971): 187-204. In it he argues that "Mahomet is the god of the tribe of Cain, the figure of Antichrist who seeks to overthrow Christ and to establish a kingdom based on the temporal, the earthly" (p. 199).

47 This passage closely parallels the words of Adso: "Christ came as a humble man; he will come as a proud man. Christ came to raise up the lowly, to pass judgment on sinners; he, on the contrary, will cast down the lowly, glorify sinners, exalt the impious, and always teach vices which are opposite to virtues. He will . . . seek personal glory and call himself the Almighty God" (p. 102).

48 2 Thessalonians 2:4: "Filius perditionis . . . qui adversatur et extollitur supra omne quod dicitur Deus aut quod colitur."

49 Perhaps linking the iconoclasts with the forces of Antichrist.

50 Job 41:21. The text refers to Leviathan, a common medieval type of Antichrist.

51 Compendium 7:9: "Ipse namque antichristus inveniet thesauros absconditos, per quos ad sequendum se inclinabit plurimos."

52 Apocalypse 13:14. The English translates more of the Latin text than de Worde prints. The verse continues after "illi," in the Latin, as follows: "et seduxit habitantes in terra propter signa quae sunt illi facere in conspectu bestiae." Here, as in many other passages, the English interprets rather than translates. The writer refers to "Antichrist" instead of "the seductive beast," "by the subtlety of the devil" instead of "in the presence of the beast," and adds to the text the phrase, "by his false predictions and teachings confirming."
Adso, p. 104, writes: "He will also make many signs, great and unheard of miracles. He will make fire come terribly from the sky, he will make trees suddenly bloom and dry up, the sea rage and suddenly become calm, natural objects change their forms, rivers change their courses, the sky tremble with winds and storm and other countless and stupendous things."

Adso, p. 104, writes: "He will even bring the dead to life in the sight of men."

Based on Apocalypse 13:13: "It [the second beast] works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of men." The Compendium glosses this verse as follows: "Id est malignorum spiritum faciet super suos descendere, ut loquantur variis linguis. Spiritus enim malignus descendet in eos in conspectu hominibus, sicut spiritus sanctus descendit in apostolos christi" (7:9).

The passage concerning the "false Christian man" I have not found in either Augustine or Rabanus Maurus.

According to Adso, Antichrist "will circumcise himself, saying to the Jews, 'I am the Christ promised to you, who am come for your salvation, to gather together and protect you who were dispersed.'"

This same charge is levelled at Antichrist in Chapters 11 and 12.

The deception of the Jews by miracles may refer to the many New Testament passages which suggest that the Jews have an inordinate desire for "signs" or miracles. Christ reprimanded the Pharisees for seeking a sign (in Matthew 12:38-39). St. Paul teaches that the preaching of the cross is a stumbling-block to the sign-seeking Jews (1 Corinthians 1:22-23).

The scriptural passage, John 5:43, is conditional. By omitting the word "if," medieval exegetes made it a prophetic passage. The proper translation is: "I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive."

"And whoever believes in him will receive the sign of his letter upon their forehead." See Adso, p. 109.

Apocalypse 13:16-17: "And he shall make all . . . to have a character in their right hand or on their foreheads. And that no man might buy or sell, but he that hath the character or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Also see Compendium 7:8: "Omnes suo charactere signari in manu dextera, et frontibus suis."

This Jewish opposition to Antichrist is a far cry from the common equation of the Jews with the evil servants of Antichrist.

Based on Christ's words to the Jews in John 2:19.

Based on the scriptural account of the musical celebration at the dedication of Solomon's temple (in 2 Chronicles 5:12-14).

"He will trample on the places where the Lord Jesus Christ walked . . . and will then send his messengers and preachers throughout the whole world." See Adso, p. 104.

The miracles of the disciples of Antichrist are an extension of the presentation of the life of Antichrist as a parody of the life of Christ.

Actually this passage is based on Matthew 24:4-5 and 12, not Chapter 14. "Videte ne quis vos seducat. Multi enim venient in nomine meo, dicentes: Ego sum Christus, et multus seducent. . . . Et quoniam abundavit iniquitas, refrigescent caritas multorum." De Worde's translation of this last verse is puzzling.

Romans 8:13.

Adso, p. 105, writes: "Thus every faithful Christian either will deny God or will perish by sword, or furnace fire, or serpents, or wild beasts, or any other kind of torture whatever, if he should remain in the faith." This list of martyrs is no doubt inspired by the account of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:35-38: "But others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection. And others had trials of mockeries, and stripes, moreover also of bonds and prisons. They were stoned, and they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword... Of whom the world was not worthy."

I argue in Chapter 3 that this passage reveals a conscious anti-Reformist emphasis.

The Golden Legend describes the death, by burning, of St. Lawrence at the hands of the Emperor Decius. See Ryan, Golden Legend, pp. 440-42.

That is, the time of tribulation.

To the best of my knowledge, Job contains nothing of this kind.

St. Paul's only discussion of Antichrist, in 2 Thessalonians 2, does not mention Paul's desire to escape that time.

Adso, p. 105, writes: "Then those who are on the plains will flee to the mountains, saying 'Fall upon us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us up.' Also see Matthew 24:16.

Apocalypse 13:16-17.

For the ministry of Enoch and Elias, see Matthew 17:11; Apocalypse 11:2-4; Adso, pp. 107-8; and my first chapter.

Although the general context of this passage is anti-Reformist, it may draw on the Reformist view of the "two witnesses." Luther and others saw themselves as the two witnesses, proclaiming the word of God against Antichrist.
82 See Chapter 1, p. 2 above.

83 From this point on, the rest of Chapter 18 is a fairly close translation of Apocalypse 11:3-6. Of course the scriptural text does not name the two witnesses, neither does it interpret the significance of their clothing.

84 Apocalypse 11:7: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh out of the abyss, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."

85 Adso, p. 109, also refers to the "crown of martyrdom."

86 Apocalypse 11:8-9: "And their bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city . . . where their lord was crucified. . . . And they shall see their bodies for three days and a half: and they shall not suffer their bodies to be laid in sepulchres."

87 Daniel 8:23-24: "Cum creverint iniquitates consurget rex impudens facie et intelligens propositiones; et roborabit fortitudine eius, sed non in viribus suis, et supra quam credi potest universe vastabit, et prosperabitur et faciet, et interficiet robustos et populum sanctorum." Although The Birth and Life of Antichrist only translates and interprets certain sections, this entire passage was commonly applied to Antichrist.

88 The reference is actually to Apocalypse 11, not Appocalypse 2. See note 84 above for the passage in question (Apocalypse 11:7).

89 Apocalypse 11:12: "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither." The scriptural text goes on to describe their ascension into heaven, saying nothing about a continuing prophetic ministry.

90 Apocalypse 11:11. The English text translates the passage not given in Latin: "et timor magnus cecidit super eos qui viderunt eos."

91 Apocalypse 13:3: "And I saw one of his [the beast's] heads as it were slain to death; and his death's wound was
healed. And all the earth was in admiration of the beast." The three days obviously suggest Christ's resurrection.

92 Antichrist here appropriates the creedal definition of the Person of Christ: "True God and true man."

93 Although it does not mention Mount Olivet or an ascension, Daniel 11:45 provided the source for this tradition. "And he shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain, yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

94 Based on the pseudo-ascension of Simon Magus, a common medieval type of Antichrist.

95 Thessalonians 2:3-4: "Ne quis vos seducat ullo modo; quoniam nisi venerit discessio primum, et revelatur fuerit homo pecatti, filius perditionis que adversatur et extollitur supra omne quod dicitur Deus aut quod colitur, it ut in templo Dei sedeat ostendem se tamquam sit Deus."

This description of the Man of Sin sitting in the temple undoubtedly influenced the tradition of Antichrist's pavilion as found in this chapter. Note the hyperliteral reading of "qui .... extollitur supra omne quod dicitur Deus" to mean that Antichrist will ascend into heaven.

96 This five day period between the death of the prophets and Antichrist's death is impossible. The text has already maintained that Enoch and Elias will lie dead for three and a half days after their execution (Chapter 20). It also teaches that Antichrist will feign to be dead for three days before rising again (Chapter 21). 2 Thessalonians 2:8 teaches that "the Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth." Also see Adso, p. 109: "Whether the Lord Jesus kills him .... of the Archangel Michael kills him, he will perish through the virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ."

97 Like Judas, a type of Antichrist, who "burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out" (Acts 1:18).

98 Matthew 24:36: "But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father above."

99 Daniel 12:11-12 mentions two periods of time--
1290 days and 1235 days--from which this tradition developed. Adso (p. 109) refers to a forty day period. Wright, in his note on this passage, wrongly claims that "Adso is referring to Gabriel's Prophecy of Weeks (Daniel 9:24-27)."

100 Actually Jeremiah 23:6, not Jeremiah 22.

101 Actually Apocalypse 12:9 teaches that this "great dragon" will be "cast out into the earth," not the lake of fire. De Worde's text conflates this verse with Apocalypse 19:20 which teaches that the beast will be cast into a lake of fire.

102 Isaiah 14:9-11 (commonly believed to describe Satan's fall from Heaven): "Hell below was in an uproar to meet thee at thy coming. . . . All shall answer and say to thee: Thou also art wounded as well as we, thou art become like unto us. Thy pride is brought down to hell, thy carcass is fallen down."

103 This tradition contradicts the scriptural account (Apocalypse 11:12).

104 John 10:16.

105 Mark 13:16: "And let him that shall be in the field, not turn back to take up his garment." Why this man would be ploughing in the nude, as The Birth and Life of Antichrist suggests by its diction, shall never be explained until Doomsday.

106 Matthew 24:22: "And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened. See Compendium 7:13.


110 Matthew 25:31-46.
Appendix I

The Woodcut Illustrations

In the following list of the woodcut illustration in *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*, the initial descriptions are taken from Edward Hodnett's *English Woodcuts, 1480-1535*. When necessary, additional descriptive information about the woodcut has been supplied. I have also indicated the specific sources of or general influences upon a particular illustration whenever possible.

1) A₂v. Hodnett 755. Also in Wynkyn de Worde's *Robert the Devil* (STC 21071). (Left) and (Left Center) Two devils on the far side of a bed in which a naked man (Right) embraces a naked woman. The head of a devil peering from beneath the bed. Reproduced by Hodnett (figure 70).

*S₂* and *Libro del Anticristo* have similar cuts.

2) A₃v. Hodnett 756. Also in *Art to Live Well*. The birth of the Antichrist. (L) A snouted devil. (C) A woman lifting a baby from the abdomen of a woman lying on a flag floor. An angel. A soul being lifted from the mouth of the mother (RC) by a devil (R).

*S₂* and *Libro*, again, have similar cuts.
3) A₄. Hodnett 905. Also in Wynkyn de Worde’s *Gesta Romanorum* (printed sometime before 1518). (L) A man on a ladder resting against a square tower about which is scaffolding. (R) Another man on a ladder.

This cut is poorly adapted to the tradition it illustrates. The blockbook *vitae* and their successors clearly depict the building of the temple.

4) A₅. Hodnett 757. The Last World Emperor offers up his reign to God. (L) A cross. (LC) An emperor’s crown held by a king (RC) in armour, on one knee, an orb in his left hand.


Mauvais Antechrist (Cut 5, A₆v) has a similar cut.

6) A₇v. Hodnett 759. Also in *Destruction of Jerusalem* (1508, 1513, and 1528), *Chronicles of England* (1515, 1520, and 1528), and *Robert the Devil* (1517). (L) Two soldiers with halberds. (C) The Antichrist seated under a canopy, a sceptre in his right hand. (R) Two more soldiers, one with a black sword. Reproduced by Hodnett (figure 44).

See Mauvais Antechrist (6, A₇v).
7) B₁. Hodnett 760. Also in Art to Live Well.
(L) A woman and a man (LC) seated. Others behind them.
(C) Two decapitated saints and a cross on the ground.
The Antichrist in a pulpit. (RC) A black demon in the air.
(R) Two men standing.

Hodnett fails to mention that Antichrist holds out a bag of money with his right hand, as in Mauvais Antichrist (7, A₂v).

8) B₁v. Hodnett 761. Also in Art to Live Well.
(L) A man wearing a cap. (LC) Another kneeling, his hands on a little stool. (Upper C) The torso of a soldier. (R) The Antichrist.

Because of the context, and because each figure, except Antichrist, uses something to support himself, I believe this illustration depicts the lame and limbless coming to Antichrist for healing.

9) B₂v. Hodnett 762. Also in Art to Live Well.
(L) and (LC) Two bareheaded men with ermine collars, kneeling. Flames descending. (C) The Antichrist enthroned. (RC) and (R) as (L) and (LC).

See Mauvais Antichrist (8, B₁v). In the foreground of that illustration however, four men, with the help of demons, rise from their graves.

10) B₂. Hodnett 763. Also in Nicodemus Gospel.
(1509, 1511, and 1518) and Chronicles of England (1515, and 1528). (L), (LC), and (RC) Three men in turbans. (R) The Antichrist seated on his throne.

Hodnett fails to mention that Antichrist holds a knife just above his lap—apparently ready to circumcise himself. In the Mauvais Antechrist (9, B₂v), Antichrist is clearly cutting himself.

11) B₂v. Hodnett does not identify this scene. (L) A man holds up his right hand and points, with his left forefinger, to his right palm. (R) A man holds up his right palm.

This crude woodcut, obviously not part of the Anti-christ series, depicts the receiving of the mark of Anti-christ.

12) B₄. Hodnett 764. A church (the temple) falling down. (L) and (C) The bases of two columns. (UC) A falling spire. (R) A stone wall.

Hodnett does not mention what appears to be fire falling from the sky. This woodcut copies one used in many vitae to depict one of the Fifteen Tokens before Doomsday.

This scene closely copies similar ones in $S_2$ and Libro.

14) $C_{1v}$. Hodnett 766. Also in Art to Live Well. (LC) A naked man staked to the ground. A blindfolded man hanging on a gallows. (C) A decapitated figure. (RC) Two soldiers, one with a halberd. (R) The Antichrist enthroned, a headless sceptre in his left hand.

The Mauvais Antechrist (11, $B_{4v}$) includes two hangings, two crucifixions, one burning, and more.

15) $C_{2v}$. A repeat of 8, Hodnett 761.


The Mauvais Antechrist (13, $B_{6v}$) adds a dog, unconcerned with the deaths of the prophets, to the scene.

17) $C_{4v}$. Hodnett 768. Also in Art to Live Well. (LC) An angel, a sceptre over his right shoulder, an orb in his left hand. (RC) and (R) Two kneeling saints in double nimbes.

This scene closely copies the visual tradition established in the blockbook vitae.
18) $C_5$. Hodnett 769. Also in *Art to Live Well*. (C) The Antichrist standing on a lid athwart a tomb. Behind him, on both sides, a multitude. In the air (L) and (R) are two black demons.

*Mauvais Antechrist* (15, B8v) depicts Antichrist lying on a tomb lid. Men kneel to his right and left.

19) $C_{5v}$. Repeat of 18, Hodnett 769.

20) $C_6$. Hodnett 770. Also in *Art to Live Well*. (Lower L and R) Faces look up to see (L) a fleeing devil. An angel poking the falling Antichrist (C) with a long lance which ends in a cross. (Upper C) God in a cloud. (R) A devil and an angel (as L).

In *Mauvais Antechrist* (17, C2v), Antichrist's pavilion is overturned by an angel with a lance. Again, people below watch and the demon's flee.

21) $D^1$. Hodnett 771. Also in *Art to Live Well* and in *Ship of Fools* (1509 and 1517). (L) Flaming hell-mouth. (Above LC) A devil holding one arm of the Antichrist (RC), a second (R) holding the other arm, and a third his foot.

Hodnett fails to mention that, as the text teaches, Antichrist's entrails burst out from his stomach. As in *Mauvais Antechrist* (19, C4v), these demons are much larger than the demons pictured throughout the rest of the book.
22) $D_1 v$. Hodnett 426. Also in Knight of the Swan (1512). (Left diagonal compartment) (C) An angel with a long scroll. (Right diagonal compartment) A woman in bed, her head at the right.

 Obviously this scene does not related to the preaching of Enoch and Elias (the main concern of the text). It probably intends to portray the sudden coming of Doomsday—"like a thief in the night."


 This illustration of the first sign before Doomsday, the rising of the sea, does not follow the illustration of the same scene in Art to Live Well. This is the only one of the signs illustrated in The Birth and Life of Antichrist. See Appendix II for a discussion of the Fifteen Tokens.

24) $D_3 v$. Hodnett 790. Also in Art to Live Well and in Conversion of Sinners (Stephen Hawes, 1506). The Day of Judgment. (C) An angel bending forward, with one hand holding scales in which two souls are balancing, with the other hand thrusting a processional staff into the mouth of a prostrate devil (L). (R) A female soul half-risen from a black grave. Another empty grave. (Above) Jesus in a cruciform nimbus seated on a rainbow, his feet on a globe, a palm at his right shoulder, a sword at the
left. (Upper L) Mary, kneeling. (Upper R) John Baptist, kneeling.

This scene is reproduced in Henry Plomer, Wynkyn de Worde and His Contemporaries (London: Grafton and Co., 1925), p. 79.
Appendix II

The Fifteen Tokens Before Doomsday

The popular tradition of the Fifteen Tokens before Doomsday was included with the treatment of the life of Antichrist in such diverse works as the Legenda Aurea, "The Coming of Antichrist" play from the Chester Mystery Cycle, Peter Comestor's Historia Scholastica, and almost all of the early printed Antichrist vitae; including the German blockbook vitae, Libro del Anticristo, "The Coming of Antichrist" from Art to Live Well, and The Birth and Life of Antichrist. Unlike the other vitae, The Birth and Life of Antichrist does not illustrate all fifteen signs. The Dutch printer Jan Von Doesbroch published A Lytel Treatise of the XV Tokens in 1505. The Vie du Mauvais Antechrist, source for much of the Birth and Life of Antichrist, surprisingly does not include this tradition at all. The various versions of the Tokens are essentially alike, but contain many minor variations. Although the order of the signs in some of the printed vitae changes, the illustrations depicting these signs differ little from version to version.

The illustrations and text describing this tradition in "The Coming of Antichrist" from Art to Live Well closely copy Verard's L'Art de Bien Vivre. Unlike "The Coming of
Antichrist," which discusses each sign in depth. *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* describes each sign with only one or two short sentences. The fact that the text is shortened and the illustrations (except for that of the first sign) are omitted is probably due to the compact and non-scholarly nature of the entire work. The basic order of the Fifteen Tokens in *The Birth and Life of Antichrist* follows that of Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, which teaches that "Hieronymous autem in annalibiis Metraeorum inveniet signa quindecim dierun ante diem judicii. . . . Prima de eriget se mare quadraginta cubitis super altitudinem montium stans in loco sui quasi murus" (PL, 198:1611). Comestor then goes on to list the other fourteen signs in the same order as *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*. The list on the following page compares three versions of the Fifteen Tokens with *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*. An asterisk indicates that this version agrees with *The Birth and Life of Antichrist*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth and Life</th>
<th>Libro del AC</th>
<th>Edition A (and S)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) The sea rises</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) The sea falls</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Sea creatures cry out</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Sea burns with fire</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Trees sweat blood</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) All buildings fall to earth</td>
<td>Birds refuse food</td>
<td>Great earthquake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Stones fight together</td>
<td>Buildings fall</td>
<td>Buildings fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Great earthquake</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Stones fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Hills and valleys levelled</td>
<td>Mountains fall</td>
<td>Mad people roam the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Mad people roam the earth</td>
<td>Great earthquake</td>
<td>The dead arise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Dead arise</td>
<td>Mad people</td>
<td>The stars fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) The stars fall</td>
<td>Dead arise</td>
<td>All people die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) All people die</td>
<td>Stars fall</td>
<td>Heaven and earth consumed by fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Heaven and earth consumed by fire</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Mountains levelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) New heaven and earth</td>
<td>Mountains levelled</td>
<td>*</td>
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