

Frühe Neuzeit

Band 115

Studien und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur
und Kultur im europäischen Kontext

Herausgegeben von
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Der Kommentar in der Frühen Neuzeit

Herausgegeben von
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Max Niemeyer Verlag
Tübingen 2006



Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Bibliothek

Die Deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

ISBN-13: 978-3-484-36615-2 ISBN-10: 3-484-36615-X ISSN 0934-5531

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<http://www.niemeyer.de>

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Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier.

Satz: Andreas Pečar, Rostock

Druck: AZ Druck und Datentechnik GmbH, Kempten

Einband: Norbert Klotz, Jettingen-Scheppach

Danksagung

Die in diesem Band gesammelten Beiträge gehen auf ein Arbeitsgespräch zurück, das vom 5. bis 7. Mai 2002 an der Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel stattgefunden hat. Die damals gehaltenen Vorträge wurden in der inzwischen verstrichenen Zeit überarbeitet und an die aktuelle Forschungs- und Literaturlage angepaßt. Ralph Häfner hat seinen damaligen Vortrag über den Kommentar des Aulus Gellius gegen eine Studie über die ‚Verteidigungsrede des Apuleius‘ ausgetauscht. Der ebenso aufregende wie amüsante Beitrag von Luc Deitz über ‚Die Scarith von Scornello. Fälschung und Methode in Curzio Inghiramis *Etruscarum antiquitatum fragmenta* (1637)‘ stand den Herausgebern leider nicht zur Verfügung. Auf sein Erscheinen im Neulateinischen Jahrbuch 5 (2003), S. 103–133 sei hier aber ausdrücklich verwiesen. Die Diskussion, die sich an diesen Vortrag anschloß, gehört zu den Höhepunkten dieser Tagung.

Der herzliche Dank der Herausgeber gilt Friedrich Niewöhner und der Herzog August-Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, den Herausgebern der Reihe „Frühe Neuzeit“, Wilhelm Kühlmann, Jan-Dirk Müller und Friedrich Vollhardt, sowie dem Max Niemeyer Verlag, welche die Durchführung des Projekts ermöglicht und konstruktiv begleitet haben. Große Verdienste um das Erscheinungsbild dieses Bandes hat sich Dr. Andreas Pečar (Rostock) erworben, der die Formatierung und textliche Bearbeitung der Beiträge mit großer Umsicht durchgeführt hat. Die Endformatierung des Umbruchs hat Dr. Gunther Viereck (Rostock) zuverlässig und sorgfältig besorgt. An den Korrekturen waren weiterhin Anne Blaudzun M.A. (Rostock) und Daniel Münzner (Rostock) beteiligt. Sie alle haben zum technischen Gelingen dieses Sammelbandes viel beigetragen.

Markus Völkel / Ralph Häfner

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Zur Einführung

Friedrich Niewöhner in memoriam

Formen und Funktionen des „Kommentars“ unterliegen in der frühen Neuzeit einer bemerkenswerten Versatilität. Die Geschichte seines Begriffs ist dementsprechend von der Antike her durch einen reich differenzierten Bedeutungsumfang bedingt. Caesars Kommentarien haben inhaltlich und formal wenig gemein mit jenen „Attischen Nächten“, die ihr Autor Aulus Gellius um die Mitte des zweiten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts als Kommentare bezeichnet hat. Der Band vereinigt die Beiträge, die zum überwiegenden Teil anlässlich des internationalen und interdisziplinären Arbeitsgesprächs vom 5. bis 7. Mai 2002 in der Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel zur Diskussion gestellt wurden. Unser Blick richtet sich vor allem darauf, etwas von jener Variationsbreite zur Anschauung zu bringen, von der die Traditionsgeschichte des Kommentars vom 16. bis ins frühe 18. Jahrhundert hinein bestimmt worden ist.

Irena Backus zeigt in ihrem Beitrag über „Common ground and confessional tensions in French Calvinist and Catholic commentaries on the Apocalypse of John, 1539–89“, daß die Johannes dem Evangelisten zugeschriebene Offenbarung vor dem Hintergrund ihrer seit dem vor-nicaenischen Chiliasmus zu beobachtenden Kommentierung insbesondere seit dem Kommentar des Joachim von Fiore eine verstärkte Aufnahme gefunden hat. In der Konfrontation zweier reformierter (Antoine du Pinet; Nicolas Colladon) und zweier katholischer Kommentare (Jean de Gagny; Pierre Bulenger) wird deutlich, daß die Instrumentalisierung der Apokalypse im konfessionellen Dissens der Zeit ganz wesentlich von solchen hermeneutischen Voraussetzungen abhängig ist, die von der spirituellen Überlieferung der Apokalypse-Deutung bereitgestellt worden waren. Die Kommentierung der Offenbarung des Johannes ist daher auch vor dem Hintergrund der Kommentare des Victorinus von Poetovio, Haimo von Auxerre und Rupert von Deutz zu sehen, die im 16. Jahrhundert wieder zugänglich waren. Die Berufung auf Autorität, der Status der Inspiration und die spirituelle Grundierung gingen hier wie dort eine höchst komplexe Symbiose ein.

Der Beitrag von Sicco Lehmann-Brauns, „Spirituelлер Kommentar und pietistische Gelehrsamkeit. Gottfried Arnolds Kommentardichtung zum ‚Hohen Lied‘ und ihre Verankerung in der Sophienmystik“ macht deutlich, daß der „Geist der Wahrheit“, der aus dem Kommentar im Umkreis pietistischer Mystik spricht, nicht an historisch-kritische Verfahren des Textaufschlusses gebunden ist. Da sich die göttliche Weisheit im Wort der Heiligen Schrift offenbart hat, ist

die Kommentierung dieses Wortes niemals bloß verstehender Aufschluß dunkler Sachverhalte, sondern vielmehr Rückführung der menschlichen Weisheit durch das geistliche Wort in den Grund der göttlichen Weisheit selbst. Arnolds Übersetzung und Kommentierung des Hohenliedes hatten demnach zum Ziel, die Spur des Heiligen Geistes im menschlichen Gemüt als spirituelle Form frommer Lebenspraxis aufzunehmen. Entsprechend vielfältig sind die literarischen Formen des Kommentierens. Sie reichen von Beglaubigungen durch frühchristliche und mittelalterliche Gewährsleute über die appellative Kraft der Dichtung bis hin zum freien Epigramm.

Florian Neumann geht in „Petrarcas literarische Autorität und die Genese der Kommentare zu seinen *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* im 16. Jahrhundert“ der Frage nach, in welcher Weise die erst seit dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert blühenden Kommentare zu Petrarcas volkssprachlichen Werken die Kanonisierung des *Canzoniere* begünstigt haben. Die Klassizität des „Petrarca volgare“ ist demnach das Ergebnis eines komplexen Transformationsprozesses, der sich in einem von den lateinischen Vorbildern dominierten Umkreis vollzieht. Die Kommentare (oder kommentierten Ausgaben), mit denen Gelehrte seit Pietro Bembo Petrarcas Dichtungen zugänglich machen, lassen in ihren unterschiedlichen Zugangsweisen sehr verschiedene Wissenskulturen erkennen. Wortverzeichnisse, die sich an der Lexikographie des 16. Jahrhunderts orientieren, sezieren Petrarcas Werke, um geeignete Mittel für eine erfolgreiche Nachahmung des Klassikers aufzuzeigen und bereitzustellen.

In „Marsilio Ficinos Platon-Kommentar“ erkennt Thomas Leinkauf eine bemerkenswerte Koinzidenz von Übersetzung und Deutung. Hatte Ficino in seinem Kommentar zu Platons *Menon* betont, die Aufgabe des Kommentators sei es, das Einzelne zu erörtern („singula discutere“), so faßte er dieses Verfahren der Erörterung doch ganz im Sinne neuplatonischer Platon-Kommentierung auf. Leinkauf unterscheidet vier Aspekte der Kommentierung: „Implementierung“: Unter dem Leitbegriff der Paideia stellt Ficino die platonischen Dialoge in einen umfassenderen Zusammenhang. „Fokussierung“: Ficino greift Problembereiche heraus, deren Ausfaltung nicht mehr durch die Schriften Platons gedeckt sind. „Vernetzung“: Ficino verweist auf andere Platon-Texte sowie auf seine eigenen Kommentare. „Digression“: Indem sich Ficino ganz vom Ausgangstext löst, gelingt ihm die Freilegung des theologischen Kerns des platonischen Denkens im Blick auf die Lebens- und Denkform einer „philosophia christiana“.

Ann Blair untersucht in ihrem Beitrag „The Collective Commentary as Reference Genre“ das diffuse Feld von Sammelwerken unterschiedlichster Art, deren innere Struktur von Sammlungen von Sentenzen und *loci communes* über *lectiones antiquae* und kollektive Kommentare bis hin zu Wörterbüchern reichen können. Das Beispiel von Étienne Dolets *Commentarii linguae latinae* (1536–1538) zeigt eindrucksvoll, daß verschiedene Definitionen des Kommentars – als „memoriae promptuarium“, im Sinne von „capita“ und „summae rerum“ und als Exposition eines Autors – in der frühen Neuzeit gleichberechtigt nebeneinander stehen. Bücher von der Art wie Niccolò Perottis *Cornucopiae*,

Caelius Rhodiginus' *Lectiones antiquae* oder Adrien Turnèbes *Adversaria* wurden kaum jemals im ganzen durchgelesen. Indem man über mannigfaltige Indices Zugang zu bestimmten Sachproblemen fand, erzeugte die „vermischte Ordnung“ ein Vergnügen, das die Lektüre mindestens ebenso anleitete wie die Aussicht auf Belehrung.

Im Gegensatz zu den petrarkistischen Tendenzen der Zeit kam in jenen Jahrzehnten eine Form der literarischen Auseinandersetzung zur Entfaltung, die Martin Mulso mit dem Titel „Subversive Kommentierung. Burleske Kommentarparodien, Gegenkommentare und Libertinismus in der frühen Neuzeit“ belegt. Ausgehend von dem Anti-Petrarkisten Francesco Berni richtet der Beitrag unseren Blick auf die Parodiestructur von Kommentaren zwischen 1520 und 1715, die durch Einbeziehung niederer und populärer Themen zu einem erstaunlichen Experimentierfeld für intellektuelle Innovationen geworden sind. Werke wie Bernis Lob des Kartenspiels oder Annibale Caros *Commento [...] sopra la prima ficata del Padre Siceo* (1538) gerieten zu einer geradezu karnevalesken Parodie bekannter Kommentierungsverfahren, indem sie sozial problematische Sachverhalte mit der Berufung auf die Autorität altehrwürdiger Gewährsleute gewissermaßen sanktionierten. Auf dem weiten Probierfeld des *libertinage érudit* gab Thémiseul de Saint-Hyacinthe (1716) die gelehrte Form von kumulativem Kommentar und Mehrfachindices der Lächerlichkeit preis und stellte die Möglichkeiten poly-, historischer Erkenntnis damit selbst in Frage.

Politische, gesellschaftskritische und gelehrte Aspekte des Kommentierens konvergieren auch in Ralph Häfners Beitrag „Der Kommentar als Spiegel einer Lebensform. Apuleius' Verteidigungsrede (Apologia pro se de magia) in Ausgaben von Isaac Casaubon, Scipione Gentili und Johannes Pricaeus“. In einer Zeit, die dem Phänomen der Magie hohe Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt hat, mußte Apuleius' Apologie auf großes Interesse stoßen. Neben der seit langem kontrovers diskutierten Sprachform des Afrikaners erläuterten die Kommentatoren den alten Text im Blick auf eine Widerlegung der Zauberei durch das Argument des gesunden Menschenverstandes. Pricaeus (1635) rückt dann archäologische Gesichtspunkte stärker in den Mittelpunkt. In der Archäologie der Wörter findet er die Möglichkeit, die spätantike Kultur anhand von materialen Sachverhalten zu rekonstruieren.

Markus Völkel bestimmt in seinem Beitrag „Der Kommentar zu Historikern im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert“ die Historie in ihrer grundsätzlichen Kommentargestalt und machte an ihr einen doppelten imitativen Aspekt aus: In Beziehung auf die *res* beschreibt die Historie eine moralische *imitatio*, in Rücksicht auf die *verba* ist sie eine nach Gattung, Autor und Stil bestimmte *imitatio*. Obwohl in hohem Grade fiktional, wird Geschichte mit einer faktischen, sie beglaubigenden Referenz ausgestattet. Neue Zeugnisse eröffnen der Historie eine „futuristische Differenz“, die eine innere semiotische Drift erkennen läßt. Die Kommentierung antiker Historiker ist sowohl von einem Sach- als auch einem Stilinteresse geleitet, auch wenn selbst in Tacitus-Ausgaben die stilistische Anlehnung an Cicero und Livius dominiert. Die Kommentierung

mittelalterlicher, byzantinischer und neuzeitlicher Historiker zeichnet sich demgegenüber durch eine stärkere moralisch-pragmatische Aufarbeitung des Stoffes aus. Die historische *prudenza* des Lesers zu fördern, ist das ausgesprochene Ziel der Kommentierung von Guiccardinis *Historia d'Italia* durch Tommaso Procacchi (1583).

Die Erforschung des frühneuzeitlichen Kommentarwesens hat inzwischen eine bemerkenswerte Dynamik entwickelt. Der Band versteht sich als Baustein zu entsprechenden Erkundungen, die von italienischer, französischer und angelsächsischer Seite insbesondere in den vergangenen zwei Jahrzehnten unternommen worden sind. Die Funktionsweisen, denen die Objekte der „intellectual history“ unterliegen, beschreiben Strukturfelder kultureller Räume, denen nur eine transdisziplinäre Form der Auffassung gerecht zu werden verspricht. Dieser Anspruch auf eine am überlieferten Material stets überprüfbare Rekonstruktion historischer Zustände, dem die Beiträge der beteiligten Historiker und Literaturwissenschaftler, Theologie- und Philosophiehistoriker geschuldet sind, fand in der angenehmen Atmosphäre konstruktiver Diskussionen lebhaften Ausdruck.

French Calvinist and Catholic Commentaries on the Apocalypse of John, 1539–1589

Common Ground and Confessional Tensions

I. Introduction

The chiliast ante-Nicene fathers who took the Apocalypse to be the work of John the Evangelist held it in great esteem. Irenaeus, particularly in *Adversus haereses* V, was convinced of its apostolic origin and used it to defend chiliasm against the doctrine of spiritual resurrection put forward by the Valentinian Gnosis. As chiliasm began to lose hold in the Eastern, particularly the Alexandrian Church, the respectability of the Apocalypse was challenged. In the West, however, the attribution to John the Evangelist was maintained and the text was viewed more favourably. Indeed Commentaries on the book from Antiquity to the Renaissance tend to be Western. They are shaped in different ways by the commentaries of Victorinus of Poetovio (d. 304) who saw the book as a recapitulation of one and the same vision and of Tyconius (d. ca. 380) who removed from it all eschatological connotations. Beatus, Primasius and the Venerable Bede whose chief innovation was to divide the book into seven sections represent the spiritual exegesis of the book which grew up in the early Middle Ages. The twelfth century saw the birth of the historico-prophetic school of exegesis as represented by Rupert of Deutz and Nicholas of Lyra. Commentators belonging to that school relate the book's prophecies to real events in the history of the church and tend to put an eschatological interpretation on the final chapters. The major breakthrough in exegesis of the Apocalypse, however, came with the commentary of Joachim of Fiore (1195) who, while retaining a certain number of spiritual elements, took the book to be prophesying a spiritual age which would take place on earth prior to the Last Judgement and after the defeat of the Antichrist, whom he described as an individual emanating from Rome.

Joachim's interpretation was adopted and expanded in the 14th and 15th century by the spiritual Franciscans who openly identified the Antichrist with the papacy or even with particular popes. The object of this paper is to examine the most influential Commentaries on the Apocalypse, which appeared in French speaking areas of Europe (France and French speaking Switzerland) at the time of the Wars of Religion. The Wars themselves gave rise to Roman Catholic sermons which identified them with the imminent advent of the end of history and the Last Judgement, but also to protestant polemical literature which

tended to gloss over eschatology while making extensive use of the book's potential for anti-Roman and anti-papal polemic. We shall examine whether and to what extent the same tendencies are reflected in the commentaries on the Apocalypse of the period produced by Catholics and Protestants. Is an interest in eschatology a predominant characteristic of Roman Catholic commentaries? Are protestant commentaries first and foremost polemical? Are commentators, whatever their confession, influenced by contemporary events or do they prefer to take refuge in the traditional historico-spiritual method? If the latter were the case, this would suggest that methods of commenting on the Apocalypse were as it were autonomous and that a commentary had to conform to a set of traditional norms to be considered respectable. This in turn would mean that necessarily there had to be much common ground between Catholic and protestant commentaries as both had the same exegetical tradition to draw on. This is the hypothesis that we propose to test.

II. Catholic Sermons and Protestant Polemical Literature

Religious climate in France was particularly uncertain in the 16th century and the Wars of religion naturally lent themselves to a prophetic or even a quasi-millenarian interpretation as the final struggle before a period of peace or the Last Judgement itself. This point of view is particularly evident in French Roman Catholic sermons of the period. I shall confine myself to two examples from the sermons of Simon Vigor (1515–1575) French controversialist preacher elevated to the see of Narbonne in 1572. In his sermon “pour le lundy d’après le premier dimanche du Caresme” dating from the 1560s¹ he announces that the Wars are a sign of the approaching Last Judgement in the following terms:

Il y a cinquante ans que la guerre est en la France. Et combien avez vous veu de mouvemens de terre et d’inondations? Parquoi ces signes là nous doiuent bien faire peur et nous faire penser au iugement Et vn autre signe qui est, que refrigescet caritas multorum et abundabit iniquitas: la charité de plusieurs refroidira et l’iniquité abondera: il y aura tant de faux ministres et de faux prophètes qui seront les precurseurs del’Antechrist.²

And further on in the same sermon:

Ce sera vn iour d’indignation: ainsi l’ont appellé pour nous faire peur et tremeur, afin que nous nous gardions d’offenser Dieu. Neantmoins ce malheureux Calvin en son Catechisme enseigne le contraire. Car quand ce vient à cest article du iugement: *Inde venturus est iudicare*, le maistre demande au disciple: et bien doit on craindre ce iugement pourtant? Le disciple respond: et pourquoi le craindrons-nous? Veu que celui qui nous iugera est nostre

¹ Several collections of Vigor's sermons were published posthumously. I am referring to: Simon Vigor: *Sermons catholiques pour tous les iours de Caresme et feriés de Pasques, faits en l'Eglise S. Etienne du mont à Paris par feu de bonne memoire maistre Simon Vigor [...] Reveuz pr Jean Christi [...] et repurgez de fautes survenues en la premiere edition*, Paris, Nicolas Chesnault 1580 [first edition : 1576]. Hereafter cited as Vigor: Sermons.

² Vigor: Sermons (Anm. 1), fol. 55r.

advocat? Et ainsi il veut oster aux hommes la crainte de ce iugment et par consequent donner une liberté à mal faire et assurer les meschans.³

However, the prophetic perspective was less present in *protestant* polemical literature in France and French speaking area of Europe. Authors like Viret, Farel or Calvin himself tended to exploit the association between the Antichrist and the papacy for purely controversial ends and did not consider its eschatological implications. The best instance of this is the famous passage in Calvin's *Institutio* IV. 2, 12:

Daniel et S. Paul ont prédit que l'antéchrist serait assis au temple de Dieu: nous disons que le pape est le capitain de ce regne maudit et exécration, pour le moins en l'Eglise occidentale. Puisqu'il est dit que le siège de l'Antéchrist sera au temple de Dieu, par cela il est signifié que son règne sera tel qu'il n'abolira point le nom du Christ ni de son Église [...].⁴

Given this differing eschatological perspective between the two confessional extremes as represented by Vigor on the one hand and Calvin on the other, it is legitimate to ask whether the difference is as flagrant when we come to examine biblical commentaries produced by the two sides, especially commentaries on the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse of John.

Some work has been done in recent years on the prophetic significance of Apocalypse 11, 1–14 in 16th–17th century protestant circles and on the importance of prophetic teaching in the Lutheran Reformation generally.⁵ Moreover, some historians take it for granted that the Reformation possessed an eschatological dimension, which was not confined to its Anabaptist “lunatic fringe”.⁶ However, if one excepts Richard Bauckham's classic study of 16th century English attitudes to the Book of Revelation,⁷ there has been very little work done on exegetical approaches to the book in the 16th century. It was to remedy this lacuna that I devoted some years to researching the main Calvinist and Lutheran commentaries for the period 1525–1584 and also to the issue of the book's place in the canon after the strictures passed on it by Erasmus and

³ Vigor: Sermons (Anm. 1), fol. 60v.

⁴ I am referring to the edition of Jean-Daniel Benoit; Jean Calvin: Institution de la religion chrétienne, ed. Jean-Daniel Benoit, Paris 1958, p. 52.

⁵ See Rodney Petersen: Preaching in the Last Days. The Theme of Two Witnesses in the 16th and 17th Centuries, New York / Oxford 1993; Robin Barnes: Prophecy and Gnosis. Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation, Stanford 1988.

⁶ See Denis Crouzet: Les guerriers de Dieu. La violence au temps des troubles de religion (vers 1525–vers 1610), 2 vol., Seyssel 1990. On the Anabaptist millenarianism see esp. Klaus Deppermann: Soziale Unruhen und apokalyptische Visionen im Zeitalter der Reformation, Göttingen 1979; George H. Williams: The Radical Reformation, 3rd Ed., Kirksville (Missouri) 1992, p. 553–588.

⁷ See Richard Bauckham: Tudor Apocalypse. Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation, From John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman, Appleford 1978. See also Richard Bauckham: Heinrich Bullinger and the English, in: Henry D. Rack (Hg.): The Swiss Connection. Manchester Essays on Religious Connections between England and Switzerland between the 16th and the 20th centuries, Manchester 1995, p. 9–54.

the young Luther.⁸ It then became clear to me that Roman Catholic commentaries from the same period were very few and far between particularly in the French speaking areas of 16th century Europe where the Wars of Religion were propitious to both prophecy and polemics. Furthermore, although the plastic nature of its text and its hostility to Rome made the Apocalypse the ideal book for medieval radical movements⁹ which could use it to attack not just the papacy but particular popes and could read specific historical events into e.g. the opening of the seven seals, French speaking protestants who interpreted the book eschewed all historico-prophetic exegesis, while exploiting to the full the book's potential for anti-papal polemics.¹⁰ As is well known, John Calvin did not comment on the book and, contrary to what some have asserted, there is absolutely no reason for placing him or his followers in the tradition of reformed Apocalyptics.¹¹

My aim in this paper is simply to compare two protestant and two Roman Catholic commentaries published in France or for French use in the time of confessional conflicts in order to examine their exegetical method and the use they make of the polemical and prophetic potential of the Book of Revelation. So as not to make this paper unnecessarily general, I have decided to concentrate on passages most likely to reveal the commentators' approach, eschatology and polemical inclinations and have therefore chosen Apc. 4, 6–8 (the four animals), Apc. 5, 1 (scroll with writing inside and out), Apc. 6; 8, 1 (the seven seals), Apc. 9, 1 (the fallen star), Apc. 13 (the two beasts), Apc. 20, 2 (thousand years).

The commentaries I shall be considering are (1) the first edition of the *Familière et briefue exposition sur l'Apocalypse de saint Jehan*, one of the rare vernacular biblical commentaries of the period first published in 1539 (and then with revisions in 1543, 1545, 1552, and 1557) by Antoine du Pinet, Calvin's

⁸ Irena Backus: *Reformation Readings of the Apocalypse* (Geneva, Zurich, Wittenberg, 1525–84), New York / Oxford 2000. See also Irena Backus: *Les sept visions et la fin des temps. Les commentaires genevois de l'Apocalypse entre 1539 et 1584*, Genève / Lausanne / Neuchâtel 1997 (Cahiers de la Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie, 19) and Irena Backus: *The Church Fathers and the Canonicity of the Apocalypse in the Sixteenth Century: Erasmus, Frans Titelmans and Theodore Beza*, in: *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 29 (1998), p. 651–665.

⁹ On this see e.g. Howard Kaminsky: *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, Berkeley / Los Angeles 1967; Randolph E. Daniel: *Reformist Apocalypticism and the Friars Minor*, in: Michael F. Cusato / F. Edward Coughlin (Ed.): *That Others May Know and Love. Essays in Honor of Zachary Hayes*, St. Bonaventure 1997, p. 237–253; Howard Kaminsky: *Joachimism and John Calvin: New Approaches*, in: Roberto Rusconi (Hg.): *Storia e figure dell'Apocalisse fra '500 e '600. Atti del 4 Congresso internazionale di studi gioachimiti*, San Giovanni in Fiore, 14–17 sett. 1994, Rome 1996, p. 163–73.

¹⁰ Historico-prophetic exegesis does, however, figure prominently in post-Zwinglian and Lutheran commentaries of the period. See Backus: *Reformation Readings* (Anm. 8), p. 87–112.

¹¹ See Kaminsky: *Joachimism and John Calvin* (Anm. 9).

friend and translator into French of his *Epistola ad Sadoletum*;¹² (2) the practically contemporary *Breissima Scholia in D. Ioannis Apocalypsim* first published in 1543 by Jean de Gagny, chancellor of the University of Paris and one of the most conservative doctors of the Paris Theology Faculty;¹³ (3) the *Methodus facilima* [!] *ad explicationem sacrosanctae Apocalypsews Ioannis Theologi* published in 1581 by Nicolas Colladon, Calvin's former friend expelled from Geneva in 1572 after a quarrel with the Company of Pastors;¹⁴ (4) the *Ecphrasis et scholia in Apocalypsim*, published in 1589 by Pierre Boulenger (or Boulenger) of whom nothing much is known except that he came from Troyes, taught in a school at Loudun¹⁵ and was a fervent supporter of Henri de Lorraine, third duke of Guise, the leader of the Roman Catholic malcontents executed by King Henry III on 23 december 1588,¹⁶ before he had a chance to see the commentary that was dedicated to him. Indeed, the commentary, its author and the milieu at which the work was directed were considered sufficiently dangerous for the printer to heed the advice of those who thought

¹² Antoine du Pinet: *Familière et briefue exposition sur l'Apocalypse de saint Jehan*, Geneva 1539. On Antoine du Pinet, see Backus: *Reformation Readings* (Anm. 8), chap. II, p. 37–60. Brief characterisation of his commentary on the Apocalypse in Backus: *Les sept visions* (Anm. 8), p. 43–54. All the editions of du Pinet's commentary were published in Geneva by Jean Girard. It is thought that particularly the first (anonymous) and the fourth (pseudonymous) editions were intended for export to France.

¹³ The Scholia on the Apocalypse appeared together with Gagny's scholia on the Pauline and on the Catholic Epistles, Gagny feeling that someone who undertakes to comment on the New Testament is duty-bound to include the Apocalypse. Here I shall be referring to the second printing of the work; Ioanne Gagnaeio: *Breissima et facillima in omnes D. Pauli Epistolas scholia, vltra priores editiones, ex antiquissimis Graecorum authoribus abunde locupletata. Itidem in septem Canonicas Epistolas et D. Ioannis Apocalypsim Breissima scholia recens edita*, Parisiis (apud Viuantium Gualtherot) 1550. On Gagny's life and work see André Jammes: *Un bibliophile à découvrir*, Jean de Gagny, in: *Bulletin du bibliophile* (1996), p. 35–81. Brief descriptions of his scholia on the Apocalypse in Backus: *Les sept visions* (Anm. 8), p. 17–22 and Backus: *Reformation Readings* (Anm. 8), chap. III, p. 83–85.

¹⁴ Nicolas Colladon: *Methodus facilima* [!] *ad explicationem sacrosanctae Apocalypsews Ioannis Theologi*, 3rd Ed., Morges 1584. I shall be referring to the expanded third edition published in Morges by Jean le Preux in 1584. Although I have treated Colladon and his commentary in some detail in Backus: *Reformation Readings* (Anm. 8) chap. III, this is the first time I examine his exegesis of Apc. 4, 6–8; 5, 1; 6; 8, 1; 9, 1 and 13. I have investigated his exegesis of Apc. 20, 2 in Irena Backus: *Apocalypse 20, 2–4 et le millénium protestant*, in: *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses* 79 (1999), p. 101–117.

¹⁵ On Boulenger see Christian Gottlieb Jöcher: *Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexicon*, Leipzig 1750, Bd. 1, Sp. 1475. This commentary on the Apocalypse was printed in Paris: *Petri Boulengeri Trecensis in Apocalypsim D. Ioannis Apostoli Ecphraseos et scholiorum libri septem*, Parisiis (apud Michaellem Sonnum) 1589.

¹⁶ On Henri de Lorraine see Arlette Jouanna u.a. (Ed.): *Histoire et dictionnaire des Guerres de religion*, Paris 1998, p. 955–960, p. 1042–1044. In his preface addressed to Henri, Boulenger states that his object in producing the work was to free the Apocalypse „from the pernicious comments with which it had been contaminated by cursed men” (a 4r.)

that he should wait before publishing it, which so angered Boulenger that he decided not to publish any more works of theology.¹⁷

Given the orientations of the four commentators, it is interesting to see whether they share any hermeneutical presuppositions about the text they are commenting or whether polemics be it of the anti-papist sort or of the more eschatological anti-protestant variety, is their chief concern. In fact, we can state from the outset that all four practice spiritual exegesis deriving from Tyconius' lost commentary and perpetuated in the commentaries of Primasius and Bede, which were readily available. Equally, all four are very aware of standing in an exegetical tradition, even though Colladon refuses to cite the commentaries to which he referred.¹⁸ Apart from Primasius and Bede, Haymo of Auxerre, Victorinus of Poetovio, Rupert of Deutz and Arethas are the most frequently cited authors both in the Catholic and in the protestant commentaries. Victorinus of Poetovio's work was available from 1543 onwards without the millenarian ending. Haymo of Auxerre belonged very much to the spiritual tradition and Rupert of Deutz, although a historical exegete and more precise in his identification of the Antichrist, did not see John's prophecy as extending beyond the Council of Nicea. As for the glosses of Arethas, they were no more than a 9th century collection of isolated comments on the Apocalypse by Greek theologians.

And yet, despite the common exegetical tradition they draw upon, our four 16th century commentators have very different aims. Du Pinet's commentary has a strong pastoral orientation, comforting the French protestants in their difficult hour and instructing them on their duties and obligations. Gagny seems to have directed his scholia at a learned audience and, being most reluctant to comment on the Apocalypse as a difficult, obscure and somewhat dubious book, claims that he did no more than compile what others before him had said about it. Colladon, on the other hand, claims that he had inside knowledge of Calvin's views on the text and that his *Methodus* was no more and no less than the commentary Calvin himself would have written had he lived.¹⁹ Finally, Boulenger intends to free the Apocalypse from protestant polemic and to recover it for Catholic use.²⁰

¹⁷ Boulenger: In Apocalypsim (Anm. 15), a 4v: "Illa [exegesis] quidem longo iam tempore in apertum prodiisset, si bibliopola ad quem miseram, vt a doctissimis theologis probatam aeneis typis excuderet, stetisset promissis, nec fidem nonnullorum hominum dictis temere habuisset, qui male de religione sentientes ac videntes me serio impudentissimam linguae ipsorum procacitatem coercere et reprimere, hominem a proposito auerterunt. Quae certe quidem res ita me offendit vt apud animum statuerim nihil in posterum quod ad sacram theologiam spectaret literis mandare."

¹⁸ See Backus: Reformation Readings (Anm. 8), chap. III, p. 68f.

¹⁹ Backus: Reformation Readings (Anm. 8), chap. III, p. 68f.

²⁰ Boulenger: In Apocalypsim (Anm. 15) a 4r: „Ac cum pestiferos homines styli mucronem in catholicam Christi ecclesiam et salutaria eius dogmata exacuisse et diui Ioannis Euangelio-graphi Apocalypsim impiis suis commentis contaminasse animaduertentem, aliquid coelesti fultus ope in medium adferre constitui quod ad Dei gloriam et aliquam studiosorum vtilitatem redundaret."

a) Apc. 4, 6ff.

The four commentators' exegesis of the animals in Apc. 4, 6ff. reflects very well their respective stances without any overt desire for polemics being made manifest. Thus according to du Pinet the four animals represent all the true faithful in the world who constantly announce the word of God. They *have eyes all over* (Apc 4, 8) because they see and recognise the truth while others walk in darkness. It is to arm them against the power of persuasion of false brethren that the Lord has endowed them with the capacity to thus distinguish between the true and the false doctrine.

It is more than probable that du Pinet did not know the commentary of Victorinus of Poetovio who interpreted the four animals as the four Gospels. However, he certainly knew the work of Irenaeus who had also interpreted the passage in that way in *Adu. haer.* 3, 11, 8 as well as the explanation of Jerome and Augustine and the commentary on the Apocalypse of Rupert of Deutz, which had been available in print since the 1530s. It is thus more likely choice than simple ignorance which made him interpret the four animals as incarnating the main virtues of the true faithful: the lion, patience and courage; the ox, usefulness and tranquillity; the human – who could also be a child, notes du Pinet referring to the visions of Ezekiel 1, 4–13 and 10, 8–14 – prudence, innocence and submission to God; and the eagle, alacrity in executing God's orders and serving his glory.²¹

Just as du Pinet ignores all learned explanations of the meaning of the four animals, so Gagny ignores all the pastoral significance they might have. Moreover, he seems quite uninterested in broadening his audience's knowledge of the Bible and does not even mention that the vision is to be found in the Book of Ezekiel. What interests him most of all are the discrepancies in identification found in the different Fathers. Thus he notes that Irenaeus identifies the lion with the Gospel of John, whereas Jerome prefers to identify it with Mark. All agree that the ox represents the Gospel of Luke and almost all think that the eagle stands for John but Augustine differs from other Fathers in preferring to identify the third animal with the Gospel of Mark. Gagny does not try to iron out the discrepancies and does not put forward any alternative identification. Only his exegesis of *eyes all over* (Apc. 4, 8) gives away something of his convictions as he applies the phrase not only to the Evangelists but to all those who "*eorum vicem gerunt doctores et pastores*"; in other words to the ecclesiastical hierarchy who have to be careful and prudent in their actions and in their thoughts.²² Thus whereas for du Pinet it is the true faithful who surround the throne of God in the celestial service in Apc. 4, 6 ff., for Gagny it is the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Colladon who devotes very little time to the passage, gives it as Calvinist an interpretation as possible: the four animals represent the whole of creation; the

²¹ Du Pinet: Briefve exposition (Anm. 12), p. 57–60.

²² Gagny: Breuissima scholia (Anm. 13), p. 255f.

lion, all the wild beasts; the ox, all the domestic animals; the human, humans and the eagle, birds. They are to be found in the centre, around the throne because they submit to God who created them. They have *eyes all over* (Apc. 4, 8) not because of any prudence, wisdom etc. that they themselves might possess but because God's all-seeing providence works *through* them. They all sing *sanctus, sanctus, sanctus* so as to demonstrate the power of God over all of creation.²³

Given that our protestant commentators tend to identify the four animals with either all the faithful or all of creation, which is governed by divine providence, one would expect Boulenger to adopt a similar line to Gagny and interpret the four animals as the ecclesiastical hierarchy assembled around God's throne. In fact, Boulenger is not at all interested in identifying each of the animals with a Gospel. Instead, he suggests two alternative interpretations of Apc. 4, 6 ff. One is to interpret the animals as embodying the main virtues of the true faithful, exactly as du Pinet did, with the lion standing for patience and courage; the ox, for usefulness; the human, for utilising correctly whatever God sends and the eagle, for placing one's faith in Christ above all earthly things. Only the interpretation of the human as someone endowed with enough free will to make good use of whatever God sends distinguishes Boulenger's exegesis from the protestant du Pinet's. The other interpretation of the passage is to take the animals as standing for the whole of creation through which God accomplishes everything.²⁴ There seems to be no substantial difference between Boulenger's second interpretation and Colladon's exegesis of the same passage. It would thus seem that the potential for a confessionally biased interpretation of Apc. 4, 6ff. was only partly exploited by commentators in France.

b) Apc. 5, 1 (a scroll with writing inside and out sealed up with seven seals)

Apc 5, 1 does not offer a better example of confessionally biased exegesis. Du Pinet was obviously not sure how to interpret the passage. He notes that some take *inside and out* to denote knowledge of things present and of things future, whereas others take it that the scroll is full of laments and woes, which like the laments and woes in Ezekiel 2, 10 are too numerous to be contained inside. Others yet take *inside* to refer to the Scripture and *out* to external ceremonies, which prevent us from knowing Scripture. He finally opts for interpreting the scroll as the perfect book of God's counsel not accessible to men²⁵, i.e. a symbolic representation of God's providence.

Gagny adopts the interpretation which goes back to Victorinus of Poetovio:²⁶ The scroll is the Old Testament and only Christ was able to open it, i.e. unseal its spiritual meaning when he rose from the dead. Gagny also adopts Arethas'

²³ Colladon: Methodus (Anm. 14), p. 83–85.

²⁴ Boulenger: In Apocalypsim (Anm. 15), fol. 137v.–139r.

²⁵ Du Pinet: Briefve exposition (Anm. 12), p. 62f.

²⁶ See Victorin de Poetovio: Sur l'Apocalypse et autres écrits, ed. Martine Dulaey, Paris 1997 (Sources chrétiennes, 423), p. 74f.

interpretation of the scroll as standing for God's memory with all the names of the true faithful written on the inside and the names of the wicked on the outside,²⁷ interpretation very similar to du Pinet's and indeed Colladon's, who unlike du Pinet, is quite clear that the only correct way to interpret the passage is to take the scroll to stand for the perfect book of God's counsel,²⁸ i.e. not a book in any literal sense.

Boulenger, although he reviews several likely interpretations, including the one adopted by Gagny, finally also opts for the "protestant" interpretation of the passage, which goes back to Arethas.²⁹

c) Apc. 6; 8, 1 (the opening of the seven seals)

Few passages lent themselves better to a polemical interpretation than chapters six and thirteen. In chapter six it was difficult to resist the temptation to show the course of the history of the Christian church with the fifth seal standing either for the reign of Pepin the Short or for the reign of Hildebrand, and marking the beginning of the reign of the popish Antichrist. The Zurich reformers³⁰ all adopted this interpretation. Did the French protestant commentators do the same and did the Roman Catholic commentators put up an anti-protestant interpretation in defence?

In fact, all four commentaries are astonishingly similar in their interpretation of the seven seals, with the sole exception of Colladon whose exegesis is ahistorical. Thus du Pinet takes the prophecy of the seals to extend from John's own time until the Last Judgement.³¹ The first seal represents the very first years of the reign of the Gospels, and the rider of the white horse is Christ himself "qui vse de ses apostres et disciples comme d'un cheual blanc, c'est adire pur et net."³² The second seal (the red horse) stands for the persecution of the Christians in ancient times. The rider of the red horse can only be Satan, although, as du Pinet is quick to point out, Satan can only destroy peace in the world; he can never destroy the peace in the hearts of the faithful.³³ The third seal stands for the ancient heretics and the pair of scales the rider holds represents the way they weigh everything up according to their wish and interpret the Scripture exactly as it pleases them.³⁴ Only his interpretation of the fourth, fifth and sixth seals gives the reader an inkling of du Pinet's confessional stance. The pale horse represents hypocrites who take up where the ancient heretics left off. He sees hypocrisy, Satan's main instrument, as extending into

²⁷ Gagny: *Breuissima scholia* (Anm. 13), fol. 256r.

²⁸ Colladon: *Methodus* (Anm. 14), p. 86f.

²⁹ Boulenger: In *Apocalypsim* (Anm. 15), fol. 149r–151r.

³⁰ See Backus: *Reformation Readings* (Anm. 8), chap. IV, p. 87–112.

³¹ Du Pinet: *Briefve exposition* (Anm. 12), p. 69: "Or il est certain que saint Iehan applique ceste prophetie à son temps, poursuyuant tousiours iusques au dernier iour."

³² Du Pinet: *Briefve exposition* (Anm. 12), p. 70.

³³ Du Pinet: *Briefve exposition* (Anm. 12), p. 71.

³⁴ Du Pinet: *Briefve exposition* (Anm. 12), p. 72.

his own day. "Car nous voyons ces hypocrites contrefaisans leurs faces, ayans le col tort, soubz l'vmbre de piété et religion, dresser guerre mortelle contre Iesus Christ"³⁵ – is obviously an allusion to Roman Catholic clergy. Du Pinet also follows the exegesis which originates with Victorinus and so sees the pale horse as standing for famine, not of earthly commodities, however, but of the word of God. As examples of this, he cites the spreading of Islam in Africa and Asia and the ban on vernacular Bibles in France (decreed on 5th February 1526).³⁶ The fifth seal, the saints under the altar, aims to show the faithful that the Lord will avenge them and their suffering after a long period of waiting. Although no contemporary event is mentioned, the memory of the persecutions following upon the "Affaire des placards" in 1535 was sufficiently fresh for du Pinet's words to find an immediate echo with the French protestants. As if to make his point more clearly, he sees the sixth seal as the outpouring of God's wrath on all those who persecute the true servants of Christ.³⁷ The seventh seal (Apc. 8, 1) does not stand for the Last Judgement but for a period of peace for the Church which, according to du Pinet, is called symbolically a *thousand years* in Apc. 20, 2–4. That period follows upon the defeat of "la miserable Babylone" and is characterised by the conversion of the Jews. Once it has elapsed, Satan will be unleashed for the final time.³⁸ Du Pinet obviously envisages some sort of period of peace on earth for the prosecuted protestant Church and wants to impress this on his readers so as to give them hope. However, as we shall see, he is very careful to correct this impression in his exposition of Apc. 20, 2ff. so as not to be taken for a millenarian. It is interesting to note too that not once in his exposition of the seven seals does he refer explicitly to the papacy or to Rome but prefers to talk about the defeat of Babylon. This timidity or perhaps a genuine wish to conceal his real convictions and intentions meant that his commentary would have appealed to the most zealous but also to more hesitant Protestants in France.

Thus it is not really surprising to find that Gagny's exposition of the seven seals does not differ substantially from du Pinet's. The main difference is in fact the absence of all allusions to contemporary events and Gagny's continued identification of the four animals (who invite John to witness the opening of seals one to four) with the four Evangelists. Furthermore, unlike du Pinet, Gagny does not envisage (however tentatively) any earthly period of peace for the church, prior to the final unleashing of Satan. This is not surprising, seeing that, as a member of the Establishment, he needs neither to console his readers nor to define his church. Thus for Gagny, the first seal and the white horse represent the elect in the primitive church. The rider is Christ "qui in sanctis suis sedet et habitat".³⁹ The second seal and the red horse stand for persecutions

³⁵ Du Pinet: Briefve exposition (Anm. 12), p. 73.

³⁶ Du Pinet: Briefve exposition (Anm. 12), p. 73f.

³⁷ Du Pinet: Briefve exposition (Anm. 12), p. 75–77.

³⁸ Du Pinet: Briefve exposition (Anm. 12), p. 85.

³⁹ Gagny: Breuissima scholia (Anm. 13), fol. 257v.

of the early Christians beginning with Nero. Like du Pinet, Gagny thinks that the rider is Satan himself. His exegesis of the third seal fully accords with du Pinet's. The black horse represents heretics raised up by the devil once he saw that he could not stop the progress of Christianity by persecutions. The scales in the hands of the rider stand for the Holy Scripture, which the heretics interpret not according to the consensus of the church but as their fancy takes them. Although Gagny does make overt allusions to protestant practices elsewhere in the Scholia, e.g. in Apc. 11, 1 where he refers the measuring of the temple to adjusting the church's teaching to the masses who are incapable of understanding the Bible unless it is first interpreted by the church,⁴⁰ he says nothing about the protestants in his interpretation of the third seal.⁴¹ Similarly he refers the fourth seal and the pale horse to hypocrites who "emaciate their faces so that they look as if they were fasting" without any further comment.⁴² The fifth seal represents the souls of martyrs who have to wait to enter the kingdom of heaven until the whole of Israel is saved.⁴³ As for the sixth seal, he does not interpret it as Lord's vengeance, but as the time of the Antichrist prior to the Last Judgement.⁴⁴ The seventh seal then signifies not the period of peace before the final unleashing of Satan but the brief period of silence for the church militant after the death of the Antichrist and before the Last Judgement.⁴⁵

Colladon, whose commentary taken as a whole condemns the Roman church and the papal Antichrist almost to the point of boring his readers, chooses to give a completely atemporal and therefore non-polemical interpretation of the seven seals. He states quite frankly that the opening of the seals has nothing whatsoever to do with the unfolding of time and concerns simply the ordering of John's vision. He does admit, however, that the sixth and the seventh seal represent the approach of the Last Judgement and the Last Judgement itself.⁴⁶ For the rest, Colladon considers the opening of the seals as an event, which is reflected by the blowing of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven bowls. All the three visions represent punishments that the Lord inflicts on his enemies and are designed to warn us not to desire consolation from earthly things.⁴⁷ Boulenger's interpretation of the seven seals echoes Gagny's even to the extent of identifying the four animals as the four Evangelists. It would therefore seem that even Boulenger who aimed to recover the Apocalypse for

⁴⁰ On this see Backus: *Les sept visions* (Anm. 8), p. 20f.

⁴¹ Gagny: *Breussima scholia* (Anm. 13), fol. 258v.

⁴² Gagny: *Breussima scholia* (Anm. 13), fol. 259r.

⁴³ Gagny: *Breussima scholia* (Anm. 13), fol. 259r.-v.

⁴⁴ Gagny: *Breussima scholia* (Anm. 13), fol. 259v.-260v.

⁴⁵ Gagny: *Breussima scholia* (Anm. 13), fol. 262r.

⁴⁶ Colladon: *Methodus* (Anm. 14), p. 7: „Neque enim septem sigillorum apertio ordinem temporis interuallis certis distinctum semper denotat, sed saepe tantum ad ordinem diuinae narrationis et sanctae visionis spectat. Vnum tamen excipio quod septimum sigillum omnino est vltimus dies et sextum praeparatio magis ac magis aduentantis proximeque instantis illius diei.”

⁴⁷ Colladon: *Methodus* (Anm. 14), p. 108-118, p. 164, p. 251.