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THE GRONINGEN STEWARD HIERONYMUS FREDERIKS († 1558):
A FRAGMENT OF HIS LOST PROPHECY
"VATICINIUM POSTREMI TEMPORIS"?¹

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Until now the demand made some 150 years ago for a biography of the famous chief priest of St. Martin's at Groningen, Wilhelmus Frederiks (ca. 1455–1525), and of his son, the municipal steward or *stadsrentmeester* Hieronymus Frederiks († 1558),² has been met only concerning the former. While a thesis was devoted to the *de facto* bishop and influential diplomat Wilhelmus as early as 1888,³ even a

¹ I wish to convey my thanks to Dr. F. Postma (Groningen) and A.H.N. van Rooijen, M.A., (Voorhout) for their valuable suggestions and advice.

² H.O. Feith, *Geschiedkundig betoog, dat de priesteren, reeds voor de vijftiende eeuw, in de Vriesche landen, tusschen het Vlie en de Wezer, zoo als overal elders, leefden in den ongehuwden staat* (Verhandelingen ter nasporing van de wetten en gesteldheid onzes vaderlands; waarbij gevoegd zijn eenige analecta tot dezelve betrekkelijk door een Genootschap te Groningen Pro Excolendo Jure Patrio, 6), Groningen, 1846, 569.

³ W. Zuidema, *Wilhelmus Friderici, Persona van Sint-Maarten te Groningen (1489–1525) en de Groninger staatkunde van zijn tijd*, Groningen, 1888. For the literature after 1888, see: H. B[rugmans], 'Aanvulling tot de biographie van Willem Frederiks', in: *Historische avonden, bundel uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap te Groningen t.g.v. zijn 10-jarig bestaan*, Groningen, 1896, 297; O. Clemen, 'Die Lamentationes Petri', in: *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 19, 1899, (431–448) 434–436; C.H. van Rhijn, *Templa Groningana. De Martini kerk, de A kerk, de Nieuwe kerk en het beheer van de Nederduitsch Hervormde Gemeente te Groningen*, Groningen, 1910, 51, 55–60; H.E.J.M. van der Velden, *Rodolphus Agricola (Roelof Huusman). Een Nederlandsch humanist der vijftiende eeuw*, Leiden, 1911, 85; J. Lindeboom, *Het bijbelsch humanisme in Nederland. Erasmus en de vroege reformatie*, Leeuwarden, 1982 (Herdruk met nieuwe inleiding van de uitgave Leiden, 1913), 163–167; M. van Rhijn, *Wessel Gansfort, 's-Gravenhage*, 1917, 127 note 5; idem, *Studiën over Wessel Gansfort en zijn tijd*, Utrecht, 1933, 148ff.; P.S. Allen/H.M. Allen, eds., *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, Vol. 4, Oxford, 1922, 483; E.H. Waterbolk, *Twee eeuwen Friese geschiedschrijving. Opkomst, bloei en verval van de Friese historiografie in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw*, Groningen/Djakarta, 1952, passim; S.P. Wolfs, *Das Groninger "Religionsgespräch" (1523) und seine Hintergründe*, Nijmegen, 1959, passim; A.F. Mellink, 'Uit de voorgeschiedenis van de Reformatie te Groningen', in: M.G. Buist et al., eds., *Historisch bewogen. Opstellen over de radicale reformatie in de 16e en 17e eeuw, aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. A.F. Mellink bij zijn afscheid als hoogleraar in de sociaal-religieuze geschiedenis aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Groningen*, Groningen, 1984, 141f.; O. Vries, *Het Heilige Roomse Rijk en de Friese vrijheid*, Leeuwarden, 1986, passim; C.G. van Leijenhorst,

coherent biographical sketch of Hieronymus is still lacking.⁴ Nonetheless, Hieronymus' life provides an important insight into the reform-humanistic climate at Groningen in general and the Groningen clandestine reformist community in the 1550's in particular. This article presents the edition of a Munich manuscript, containing a fragment of an apocalyptic vision or prophecy, probably attributable to Hieronymus Frederiks, which throws new light upon his religious concepts. This is preceded by a brief biographical outline.

1. *Biographical outline*

In current research Hieronymus Frederiks is chiefly noted for his skills as an administrator for the benefit of the district *Stad en Lande*,⁵ for his openness to dissident religious tendencies, and for his opposition to the Anabaptist movement of Davidjorism.

Administrative skills

In fact, his illegitimate birth notwithstanding, Frederiks occupied the prominent position of clerk (1536) and steward of his native city (1546–1557) as well as of clerk and steward of the *Ommelanden* (*landsrent-*

'Willem Frederiks', in: P.G. Bietenholz/Th.B. Deutscher, eds., *Contemporaries of Erasmus. A biographical register of the renaissance and reformation*, 2, Toronto/Buffalo/London, 1986, 56; F. Akkerman/C.G. Santing, 'Rudolf Agricola en de Aduarder academie', in: *Groningse Volksalmanak* 1987, 19f.; F. Akkerman/A. Vanderjagt, eds., *Rodolphus Agricola Phrisius 1444–1485. Proceedings of the International Conference at the University of Groningen 28–30 October 1985* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 6), Leiden/New York/Köln, 1988, passim, esp. 132 note 40; J.M.M. Hermans, 'De kerk in het midden. Aspecten van Groningen als cultureel en religieus centrum aan het eind van de Middeleeuwen', in: G. van Halsema et al., eds., *Geloven in Groningen. Capita selecta uit de geloofsgeschiedenis van een stad*, Kampen, 1990, 48.

⁴ Brief information only in: C.G. van Leijenhorst, 'Jeroen Frederiks of Groningen', in: Bietenholz/Deutscher, eds., *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 2, 55f. The most recent details in: S. Zijlstra, *Nicolaas Meyndertsz. van Blesdijk*, Assen, 1983, passim; Mellink, 'Uit de voorgeschiedenis', 139–158; J.G.J. van Booma, 'Enkele bronnen voor de ontstaansgeschiedenis van de Hervormde Gemeente te Groningen (1557–1579)', in: Van Halsema et al., eds., *Geloven in Groningen*, 133, 138; F. Postma, 'Regnerus Praedinius (c. 1510–1559), seine Schule und sein Einfluss', in: F. Akkerman/G.C. Huisman/A.J. Vanderjagt, eds., *Wessel Gansfort (1419–1489) and Northern Humanism* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 40), Leiden/New York/Köln, 1993, 291–324, passim; W. Janse, *Albert Hardenberg als Theologe. Profil eines Bucer-Schülers* (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 57), Leiden/New York/Köln, 1994, passim.

⁵ I.e., the town of Groningen and the districts surrounding it, the so-called *Ommelanden*.

meester) (1554–1557).⁶ As lawyer by profession, doctorated in secular and ecclesiastical law, he was closely associated with the 1550 amendment of the Groningen district law, the *Ommelander Landrecht*.⁷ From a political viewpoint Doctor Hieronymus, as he was usually called, occupied a key position. In the 1555/56 conflict between the States of *Stad en Lande* and the lieutenant-stadtholder Marten van Naerden concerning the Summons of the States,⁸ Hieronymus is reported to have effectively acted as the syndic of the Groningen district.⁹

It is not known from which university Hieronymus received his doctorate nor what exactly his prior education was. Hieronymus was enrolled at the Freiburg university on February 5, 1522,¹⁰ presumably to study law with Udalricus Zasius.¹¹ Preliminary studies probably took place at Louvain, since early in 1521 Hieronymus' father Willem wrote a letter of thanks to Erasmus in Louvain presenting a gilt calix in gratitude for services rendered to Hieronymus, who would seem to have been in Louvain at the time.¹² Besides, it might be deduced from

⁶ J. Reitsma, 'Willem Frederiks', in: G. Acker Stratingh et al., eds., *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis en oudheidkunde, inzonderheid van de provincie Groningen*, 4, Groningen, 1867, 305; P.J. Blok, 'De financiën der stad Groningen omstreeks 1500', in: *Groningsche Volksalmanak* 1896, 10; idem, ed., *Rekeningen der stad Groningen uit de 16e eeuw*, 's-Gravenhage, 1896, X; W.J. Formsma, *De Ommelander strijd voor zelfstandigheid in de 16e eeuw (1536–1599)*, Assen, 1938, 17f.; A.T. Schuitema Meijer, *Historie van het archief der stad Groningen*, Groningen, 1977, 74f. Cf. concerning Hieronymus' activities as such: W.J. Formsma/R. van Roijen, eds., *Egbert Alting, Diarium, 1553–1594* (Rijks geschiedkundige publicatiën, Grote serie, 111), 's-Gravenhage, 1964, 8f., 28, 49, 51, 60, 68; relating the after-effects for Hieronymus' widow and heirs of his negligence in rendering accounts for the years 1555ff.: idem, 80, 92, 95, 109, 132, 513. Some protocols of the convention of the provincial council drawn up by Hieronymus in: A.F. Mellink/S. Zijlstra, eds., *Documenta Anabaptistica Neerlandica, 7: Friesland (1551–1601) and Groningen (1538–1601)* (S. de Boer et al., eds., *Kerkhistorische Bijdragen*, 17), Leiden/New York/Köln, 1995, 148–152 (January 15, 1556), 157f. (November 16, 1556) (cited as: DAN 7).

⁷ Feith, *Geschiedkundig betoog*, 568; J. Frima, *Het strafproces in de Ommelanden tusschen Eems en Lauwers van 1602–1749*, Amersfoort, 1920, 5; Formsma, *Ommelander strijd*, 39f.

⁸ Described in: Formsma, *Ommelander strijd*, 27–35. For the political situation between 1536 and 1566, see: W.J. Formsma et al., eds., *Historie van Groningen. Stad en Land*, Groningen, 1976, 181–187; F. Postma, 'Vreemde heren. Opstand en Reductie, 1536–1594', in: P.Th.F.M. Boekholt et al., eds., *Rondom de Reductie. Vierhonderd jaar provincie Groningen 1594–1994*, Assen, 1994, 64–74.

⁹ Marten van Naerden to King Philip II, November 17, 1556, in: DAN 7, 174; cf. Mellink, 'Uit de voorgeschiedenis', 149.

¹⁰ H. Mayer, ed., *Die Matrikel der Universität Freiburg im Breisgau von 1460–1656*, 1/1, Freiburg i. Br., 1907 (repr. Neudeln/Liechtenstein, 1976), 258, no. 44.

¹¹ Van Leijenhorst, 'Jeroen Frederiks of Groningen', 55f. As to Zasius: H. Thieme/S. Rowan, 'Udalricus Zasius', in: Bietenholz/Deutscher, eds., *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 3, 469–473.

¹² Erasmus to Wilhelmus Frederiks, April 30, 1521, in: Allen, Ep. 1200.1–9 and

a letter of Erasmus to Gerardus Listrius, that Hieronymus was sent to Louvain three years earlier by the rector of the Brotherhouse in Groningen, Goswijn van Halen, a friend and neighbour of Hieronymus' father, to study with Maarten van Dorp.¹³ This supposition, however, is not supported by the Louvain enrollment records.¹⁴ Nor can it be shown—although it is plausible—that as a boy Hieronymus attended the city school in Groningen (the *St. Maartensschool*) under Nicolaas Lesdorp or received additional training in the convent of the Brotherhouse under the above mentioned Goswijn, both exponents of the humanist climate of the early sixteenth-century *Devotio moderna* at Groningen.¹⁵ Apparently, after his academic studies Hieronymus took up permanent residence in Groningen, where he married and had children.¹⁶

Openness to religious dissent

Meanwhile, profiting from the moderate government policy on religious affairs in the Groningen district, humanism and evangelism had made headway in Groningen through Lesdorp's successor at the *St. Maartensschool*, Regnerus Praedinius (ca. 1510–1559), "the great rector of humanism in the north of the Netherlands".¹⁷ Trained in his younger days by Wessel Gansfort's *famulus* Goswijn van Halen, and educated at the *Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense*, Praedinius, originally an Erasmian humanist, evolved into a reformist theologian who sympathized with reformers like Oecolampadius and Bullinger in Switzerland and A Lasco in East Friesland.¹⁸ As legendary teacher and rector of the prestigious Latin school, Praedinius strongly influenced the intellectual and spiritual life in the northern regions and became one of the representatives of the reform movement at Groningen, which seemingly arose in the 1540's with the help of the nearby Emden reformed congregation.¹⁹

Vol. 4, 617.

¹³ Erasmus to Gerard Listrius, [April 26, 1518], in: Allen, Ep. 838.7–9.

¹⁴ Cf. Van Leijenhof, 'Jeroen Frederiks of Groningen', 56.

¹⁵ As regards the Groningen educational system, see Postma, 'Praedinius', 294–297; Janse, *Hardenberg*, 6 note 17f.

¹⁶ Regnerus Praedinius to Gerard thom Camp, *pridie Divi Bartholomaei*, s.a., in: S.A. Gabbema, *Epistolarum ab illustribus et claris viris scripturarum centuriae tres*, Harlingae Frisiorum, 1664, Ep. 68, 167; Schuitema Meijer, *Historie van het archief*, 75. Hieronymus contracted a second marriage with Wigbolt Hamkoten: J. Reitsma, 'Dr. Justus Velsius in Groningen', in: *Groningsche Volksalmanak* 1895, 61 note 2.

¹⁷ Postma, 'Praedinius', 320.

¹⁸ Postma, 'Praedinius', 305.

¹⁹ M. Smid, 'Kirchliche Beziehungen zwischen Groningen und Ostfriesland

In addition to Praedinius, his friend Dr. Hieronymus is reputed to have been a spokesman of the Groningen reformism.²⁰ And indeed, Hieronymus' personal relations—though scantily documented—reveal an openness to religious innovation.

Thus in 1544, year of crisis for Anabaptism in the northern Netherlands, Hieronymus entertained radical leaders like Adam Pastor, Menno Simons' associate, and Nicolaas Meyndertsz. van Blesdijk, son-in-law and representative of the Delft sectarian David Joris. Obviously attracted by Hieronymus' tolerant attitude towards the Anabaptists (which was, however, temporary), Blesdijk turned to him for sympathy for his persecuted spiritual mentor,²¹ while Adam Pastor visited the steward's home to consult his copy of David Joris' *Wonderboeck* (1543).²² Although that very year Hieronymus was to attack the Davidjorism, even in his 1547 recrimination Blesdijk mentioned Hieronymus' religious tolerance.²³

From quite a different quarter, also, the steward was praised for the hospitality with which he opened his house as a dissenters' hostelry. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians 16, 15, where the apostle Paul praised the helpfulness of a certain Stephanas, Praedinius by way of illustration eulogized Hieronymus' hospitality, "extended steadily and openly for years and years": "Neither exertion, nor trouble, nor costs ever daunted him. Neither fear, nor peril, great and real though they were, could restrain him from offering himself and his house—as courageously as nobly—as a protector and a free refuge by far the most benevolent to all Christians, whether compatriots or foreigners".²⁴

im 16. Jahrhundert', in: Van Halsema et al., eds., *Geloven in Groningen*, 32–34; Van Booma, 'Enkele bronnen', 132–156; Postma, 'Praedinius', 312–317.

²⁰ Van Booma, 'Enkele bronnen', 138, 140; Postma, 'Praedinius', 312f.; Postma, 'Vreemde heren', 72.

²¹ Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 76f.

²² Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 77; Mellink, 'Uit de voorgeschiedenis', 146.

²³ C.M. van Blesdijk, *Billijcke verantwoordinge ende eenvoudighede wederlegghinghe Nicolaes Meynertsz. van Blesdijck, op eenen scheltlasteringhen brief door doctorem Hieronimum Wilhelmi, der stadt Groeninghen rentmeester, etc. tegens die heylsame leere D.J. aan weylant Joncker Karel van Gelder, Stadtholder etc. gheschreven, ende overghesonnen den 18. aprilis in't jaer 1544*, s.l., 1610, 9^v; Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 76.

²⁴ 'Regneri Praedini in divi Pauli priorem epistolam ad Corinthios, Commentarius', in: *Regneri Praedini Frisii Groningensis, viri clarissimi atque doctissimi, Scholae quondam Groningae Rectoris, Opera, quae supersunt, Omnia* [...], Basileae, 1563, 410; referred to by: A. Matthaeus, *Veteris aevi analecta seu vetera monumenta hactenus nondum visa* [...], 4, Hagae-Comitum, 1738 (= Eggeric Beninga, *Chronyk of Historie van Oost-Friesland*), 528; D. Gerdes, *Historia Reformationis, sive Annales Evangelii seculo XVI, passim per Europam renovati doctrinaeque reformatae* [...], *Monumenta Antiquitatis* [...], 3, Groningae/Bremae, 1749, 201f.; J. Scheltema, *Staatkundig Nederland; een woordenboek*

The accommodation of these "Christians" should be seen in the light of the connections between Groningen and the reformed church of Emden, which appear to have come about after Praedinius' follower Gerard Thom Camp was appointed as elder in Emden (1548–1558).²⁵ In fact, among Dr. Hieronymus' guests we can identify Karel de Coninck from Ghent, who had studied with Martin Bucer in Cambridge.²⁶ Stopping over from Emden on his way to his native city in order to serve the churches under the cross in Flanders, De Coninck stayed with Hieronymus in the summer of 1556. Ignoring Hieronymus' advice not to continue his journey De Coninck was captured in Brussels and tortured to death in Bruges on April 27, 1557.²⁷ In June of 1558 we find another native of Ghent, the Emden elder Gerard de Mortaigne, in the *rentmeester's* house,²⁸ as well as Thomas a Lasco, son of the Polish reformer. The latter was sent by his father to stay with Hieronymus—supposedly for his training²⁹—and was treated like a son.³⁰ The southern Dutch protestant Jan Utenhove, who was

tot de biographische kaart van dien naam, 2, Amsterdam, 1806, 583; H.H. Brucherus, *Geschiedenis van de opkomst der Kerkhervorming in de provincie Groningen, tot aan het jaar 1594* [...], Groningen, 1821, 91–93; Feith, *Geschiedkundig betoog*, 568; Zuidema, *Wilhelmus Friderici*, 122, 152; J.J. Diest Lorgion, *Regnerus Praedinius*, Groningen, 1862, 91; Allen, Vol. 4, 483.

²⁵ Thom Camp liaised between Emden and Groningen. Cf. his letters of November 2 and December 26, 1558 on behalf of the Groningen clandestine reformed community to the Emden consistory, in: Van Booma, 'Enkele bronnen', 139–141; furthermore: Hieronymus Frederiks to Thom Camp, April 23, [?], in: Gabbema, *Epistolarum*, Ep. 69, 173–175; E. Meiners, *Oostvrieschlandts kerkelyke geschiedenisse of een historisch en oordeelkundig verhaal* [...], 1, Groningen, 1738, 394–396; J.V. Pollet, *Martin Bucer. Études sur les relations de Bucer avec les Pays-Bas, l'Électorat de Cologne et l'Allemagne du nord avec de nombreux textes inédits*, 1, (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 33), Leiden, 1985, 260; Postma, 'Praedinius', 315; Janse, *Hardenberg*, 102 note 102.

²⁶ J. Decavele, *De Dageraad van de Reformatie in Vlaanderen (1529–1565)*, 1 (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schone kunsten van België, Klasse der letteren 37, 76), Brussel, 1975, 326.

²⁷ G. Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie en andre kerkelyke geschiedenissen in en omtrent de Nederlanden*, 1, Amsterdam, 1671, 198; Gerdes, *Historia Reformationis*, 3, 202; Brucherus, *Geschiedenis*, 93, 125; Feith, *Geschiedkundig betoog*, 568; Decavele, *De Dageraad*, 1, 326f.

²⁸ Gerard de Mortaigne to Jan Utenhove, June 8, 1558, in: J.H. Hessels, ed., *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Archivum*, 2: *Epistulae et Tractatus cum Reformationis tum Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Historiam Illustrantes (1544–1622)*, Cantabrigiae, 1889, 87 (cited as: Hessels 2); cf. Brucherus, *Geschiedenis*, 124f.

²⁹ Likewise A Lasco's sons Jan and Hieronymus would have been educated at Groningen, had not Praedinius' death on April 18, 1559 thwarted A Lasco's plans: Janse, *Hardenberg*, 342 note 8.

³⁰ Gerard de Mortaigne to Jan Utenhove, June 8, 1558, in: Hessels 2, 87;

Praedinius' guest in 1556,³¹ could also be counted among Hieronymus' acquaintances.³²

Presumably the Bremen reformer Albert Hardenberg from Overijssel (ca. 1510–1574), another follower of Martin Bucer, was a respected guest in Hieronymus' home. It must be assumed that the friendship between the lawyer and the theologian dated from the latter's stay at the Groningen Brotherhouse and city school during 1517 to 1527, and at the Cistercian monastery in the nearby Aduard from 1527–1530 and 1540–1542/3.³³ In 1547 Hardenberg married the well-to-do former Groningen beguine Truytje Sissinghe, who in consequence was disinherited. At Hardenberg's request, Dr. Hieronymus made a vain attempt to settle the inheritance matter.³⁴ But it was not only for legal aid that Hardenberg appealed to his friend. In the Bremen eucharistic controversy (1555–1561), he was charged with Calvinism by the Lutheran orthodoxy, and in March of 1557 Hardenberg turned to Hieronymus and Praedinius for their theological support as well, in view of his approaching defence at Bremen.³⁵ Hieronymus, however, was not able to lend his personal assistance. Did he think himself theologically incompetent to sustain a cross-examination concerning the subtleties of the Bremen doctrine of ubiquity? In the end, after deliberating with a number of rulers from the country Hieronymus warmly recommended the Emden elder Gerard de Mortaigne to Hardenberg, as somebody who "in my opinion can hold his own with great men in sacramental questions".³⁶

Yet it is even more likely that compliance with Hardenberg's request for theological assistance would have been too risky for Dr. Hieronymus. It is well known that in the following year, 1558, the Groningen municipality took measures to restore religious unity, which had been threatened by the emergence of Protestantism. As a concession to Johan de Mepsche, the newly-appointed confirmed

Brucherus, *Geschiedenis*, 93.

³¹ Postma, 'Praedinius', 316.

³² Gerard de Mortaigne to Jan Utenhove, June 8, 1558, in: Hessels 2, 87.

³³ Janse, *Hardenberg*, 6–14.

³⁴ Albert Hardenberg to Hieronymus Frederiks, October 20, 1548, in: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München (abbreviated as BSB München), Clm 10359, no. 22; Hardenberg to Petrus Medmann, August 8, 1556, in: BSB München, Clm 10351, no. 35, 156^{r-v}; Hieronymus [Frederiks] to Hardenberg, March 15, 155[7], in: BSB München, Clm 10359, no. 29; cf. Janse, *Hardenberg*, 14 note 87.

³⁵ Hieronymus [Frederiks] to Hardenberg, March 15, 155[7], in: BSB München, Clm 10359, no. 29.

³⁶ *Ibidem*; cf. Janse, *Hardenberg*, 74.

Catholic lieutenant of the *Hoofdmannenkamer* (the main provincial court of law), the city council once again promulgated the ordinance of 1538, which curtailed religious freedom.³⁷ On the 26th May of the same year the council interdicted the assembling of conventicles and the lodging of clergymen, which put an end to the nearly two-year stay of the Emden minister Feito Ruardi at Groningen.³⁸ However, even before these events, it was clear how precarious the situation of the reformed community was. As far back as 1556, Hardenberg in Bremen thought it too hazardous to accept a call—were one to be offered—“to purify the doctrine” at Groningen. If he were to come to Groningen at all, then only on the condition that Hieronymus, Praedinius and the Emden elder Thom Camp totally dedicated themselves to his cause.³⁹ When, a year later, Dr. Hieronymus refused to have his child baptized according to the Roman Catholic rites, his expulsion from Groningen was to be feared.⁴⁰ In those days Hieronymus sighed: “Oh, if only my foretelling were false and unfounded my fears, which paralyze me all the more acutely as I see increase every day more the haughty stupidity and tyranny of certain people”.⁴¹ Shortly afterwards Feito Ruardi complained to the Emden consistory—which had already been informed by Dr. Hieronymus by letter—about the impossibility of arranging either secret or public meetings at the city of Groningen during the daytime, while at night people were too sleepy, “so that he was not able to serve them according to their needs”.⁴² And when on August 26, 1558 Hieronymus died, three months after the conventicle interdiction, Thom Camp informed Hardenberg that

³⁷ Mellink, ‘Uit de voorgeschiedenis’, 142f.; Postma, ‘Praedinius’, 306f.

³⁸ Smid, ‘Beziehungen’, 33; Van Booma, ‘Enkele bronnen’, 133, 138f.; Postma, ‘Praedinius’, 317f.

³⁹ Albert Hardenberg to Petrus Medmann, August 8, 1556, in: BSB Munchen, Clm 10351, no. 35, 155^f. Cf. Janse, *Hardenberg*, 263f.

⁴⁰ Gerard de Mortaigne to Jan Utenhove, April 11, 1557, in: Hessels 2, 62. Cf. Gerdes, *Historia Reformationis*, 3, 269; Brucherus, *Geschiedenis*, 124; P. Hofstede de Groot, *Geschiedenis der Broederenkerk te Groningen. Eene bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der Hervorming en der Roomschegezinde gemeente in deze stad*, Groningen, 1832, 28; Diest Lorgion, *Regnerus Praedinius*, 90; Mellink, ‘Uit de voorgeschiedenis’, 150.

⁴¹ Hieronymus [Frederiks] to Albert Hardenberg, March 15, 155[7] (see note 35): “Atque utinam vanum sit vaticinium metusque meus qui me tanto amplius tenet modo, quanto indies magis magisque video quorundam arrogentem inscitiam tyrannidemque crescere”.

⁴² H. Schilling, ed., *Die Kirchenratsprotokolle der reformierten Gemeinde Emden 1557–1620*, 1: 1557–1574 (Städteforschung, C, 3, 1), Köln/Wien, 1989, 4 (July 26, 1557). Cf. Meiners, *Oostvrieschlandt*, 1, 394; Brucherus, *Geschiedenis*, 126f.; Smid, ‘Beziehungen’, 33; Van Booma, ‘Enkele bronnen’, 133, 138.

he had burned most of the latter's epistles to Dr. Hieronymus, "lest they should cause danger to anyone".⁴³ The oration delivered by Praedinius at Hieronymus' funeral, in which the steward's unique political and religious merits were exalted,⁴⁴ confirms the image of Hieronymus' pivotal—and ultimately perilous—role in the Groningen clandestine reformed community in the 1550's.⁴⁵

Disapproval of Davidjorism

Hieronymus' openness to religious dissent was of only short duration where it concerned the above mentioned protagonist of Davidjorism, Nicolaas Meyndertsz. van Blesdijk. Dr. Hieronymus' initial tolerance, reflected in his appointments with Blesdijk in Emden in October of 1543⁴⁶ and in his home at Groningen in March of 1544,⁴⁷ was reversed after the perusal of David Joris' explication of his tenets, notably in his *Wonderboeck* (1543). During Lent of 1544 the steward denounced Davidjorism in the Groningen Council and sent a précis of Joris' teachings to A Lasco in Emden,⁴⁸ which contributed to the severance of the superintendent's contacts with the Jorists and led to their banishment from East Friesland in the summer of 1544.⁴⁹ On April 18 Hieronymus sharpened his pen for a scathing condemnation of Davidjorist doctrine in a letter to the former Stadtholder of Groningen, the bastard son of the Duke of Gelre, Karel van Gelder. It was the latter who had passed on to Dr. Hieronymus the copy of the *Wonderboeck*, given him by the Deventer Davidjorist Jorjaen Ketel.⁵⁰

⁴³ Gerard thom Camp to Albert Hardenberg, March 28, 1559, in: H.O. Feith, 'Twee brieven van Gerardus tom Campo, betreffende eenige hervormingsgezinden uit de 16e eeuw in Oostfriesland en Groningen', in: *Kerkhistorisch Archief, verzameld door N.C. Kist en W. Moll*, 2, Amsterdam, 1859, 54.

⁴⁴ Ibidem. Cf. Postma, 'Praedinius', 319.

⁴⁵ We may assume, as Postma, 'Vreemde heren', 72 does, that Hieronymus was an 'elder' of the congregation, in view of the mention of 'deacons' by Thom Camp in his letter of November 2, 1558 on behalf of the Groningen reformed community to the Emden consistory (in: Van Booma, 'Enkele bronnen', 140). Nevertheless, it is conceivable that Hieronymus did not hold the position officially, but acted as a prominent parishioner.

⁴⁶ On that occasion Blesdijk delivered to Hieronymus a letter from David Joris: Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 76.

⁴⁷ Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 76–78.

⁴⁸ Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 78.

⁴⁹ Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 64–75, 78f.; Postma, 'Praedinius', 314.

⁵⁰ See Gerdes, *Historia Reformationis*, 3, 202; Brucherus, *Geschiedenis*, 91f.; Feith, *Geschiedkundig betoog*, 569; J. de Hullu, *Bescheiden betreffende de Hervorming in Overijssel. Eerste deel: Deventer (1522–1546)* (Werken uitgegeven vanwege de Vereniging tot

In his philippic of April 18, Hieronymus denounced Joris' summons to a spiritual self-annihilation. He flayed the megalomaniac pretensions of the Delft stained-glass artist to be the third person of the trinity and the true David (i.e., the spiritual Christ), in whom the Old Testament prophecies on the promised David were fulfilled, and dismissed Joris' contempt for the letter of the Scriptures, and for marriage and morals.⁵¹ Through Karel van Gelder, who was compromised by his connections with Jorjaen Ketel, Hieronymus' letter found its way to the Magistrate of Deventer and the Court of Brabant.⁵² As Ketel was arrested in May of 1544, it was ultimately this letter that brought about his sentence and execution in August of 1544.⁵³ When Blesdijk learned to his horror of the role of his former Groningen "friend" in this inquisition trial, he countered Hieronymus' indictment in his *Billijcke verantwoordinge* ("Fair account") of 1547, in which he included the steward's letter *in extenso*. The *Verantwoordinge* was not published until 1610.⁵⁴

2. The "Vaticinium postremi temporis"

In the light of Hieronymus' criticism of this variant of Dutch Anabaptism, the mention—in a letter by Thom Camp—of his proclivity to prognosticate the world's end is somewhat curious. In writing prophecies and vaticinations, Hieronymus availed himself of a genre that was pre-eminently familiar to the adepts of the Radical Reformation.⁵⁵

beoefening van Overijsselsch Regt en Geschiedenis, 20), Deventer, 1899, 302–305; Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 75–83.

⁵¹ Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 83–90.

⁵² J. Revii, *Daventriae illustratae, sive Historiae urbis Daventriensis, libri sex* [...], Lugduni Batavorum, 1651, 265f.; Brucherus, *Geschiedenis*, 91f.; De Hullu, *Bescheiden*, 295–302; Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 80f.

⁵³ Revius, *Daventria illustrata*, 266f.; Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie*, 1, 144f.; De Hullu, *Bescheiden*, 276–295, 302–305; Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 79, 81f. As to Jorjaen Ketel and his relations with Karel van Gelder: P. Valkema Blouw, 'Printers to the 'arch-heretic' David Joris. Prolegomena to a bibliography of his works', in: *Quaerendo* 21, 1991, 180f.; G.K. Waite, *David Joris and Dutch Anabaptism, 1524–1543*, Waterloo, 1990, 153–157, 197–201; idem, 'The Dutch Nobility and Anabaptism, 1535–1545', in: *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 23, 1992, 468–472.

⁵⁴ C.M. van Bleesdijck, *Billijcke verantwoordinge* (see note 23); Hieronymus' letter on 102^v–105^r. Cf. Zijlstra, *Blesdijk*, 75, 78f., 83.

⁵⁵ In fact, there is some similarity in style between the fragment edited below and the anonymous Anabaptist letter to the Court of Holland, [winter 1534/35], seemingly written by David Joris, which was published by G.K. Waite/S. Zijlstra, 'Antiochus Revisited: An Anonymous Anabaptist Letter to the Court at the Hague', in: *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 66, 1992, 26–46.

In his letter of March 28, 1559 to Albert Hardenberg, in which he mentioned Hieronymus' decease,⁵⁶ Thom Camp wrote: "I send your Reverence Dr. Hieronymus' prophecy on the court ("vaticinium de aula"), which he personally committed to paper a few days before he died, on this condition, that you give me a copy of his writing that he sent you at some time on the prophecies on the end of time ("de vaticiniis postremi temporis"), in which it says: 'Measure the temple and exclude the outer court etc.' [Rev. 11, 1f.].⁵⁷ For this writing was stolen from me while I was collecting his writings. In fact I had a copy and I put it back, but much to my regret it has been taken from me. I know that you own a copy. Please, share it with me".⁵⁸

Whereas Hieronymus' *Vaticinium de aula* must be considered lost, a fragment of the copy of Hieronymus' *Vaticinium postremi temporis*, requested by Thom Camp, may have been found, as I have suggested elsewhere,⁵⁹ in the form of a single, undated, unaddressed, unsigned, and untitled folio sheet written in Albert Hardenberg's hand in the Camerarius collection of *Hardenbergiana* in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek at Munich.⁶⁰ This fragment is presented below. In this text part, apparently the opening section of a longer treatise, "all papists and robbers of souls" are virulently attacked for having oppressed the true believers, and are therefore exhorted to instant repentance. Appealing to a divine mandate, the author proclaims under the pseudonym name "Ezra the scribe" ("Esdras scriba") the rapid approach of the end of time and of Judgement Day. In an apocalyptic idiom larded with citations from Old and New Testament prophetic and apocalyptic writings, "Ezra" incites "the hypocrites" to forsake their "Babylon" (the Roman Catholic Church) and to renounce "the Roman Antichrist and

⁵⁶ See note 43.

⁵⁷ Rev. 11, 1f.: "I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, 'Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months'".

⁵⁸ See note 43: "Vaticinium Doctoris Hieronimi manu sua conscriptum de aula, paucis diebus antequam moreretur, hac lege ad tuam praestantiam transmitto, ut mihi copiam des illius scripti, quod ad te aliquando misit, de vaticiniis postremi temporis, in quo hoc, metire templum et atrum proiice foras etc. Nam hoc scriptum mihi suffuratum fuit, dum illius scripta colligerem. Habui enim ac reposui, sed magno cum dolore mihi subtractum fuit; scio te exemplar habere, quaeso communitas". Cf. Mellink, 'Uit de voorgeschiedenis', 152f.

⁵⁹ Janse, *Hardenberg*, 271-273.

⁶⁰ BSB München, Clm 10351, no. 38A, 168^r. The MS. is not listed in the *Catalogus Codicum latinorum Bibliothecae regiae Monacensis*, 2/1, Monachii, 1874 (repr. Wiesbaden, 1968), 190.

his sorceries" (the papacy), for "the day is near in the valley of vengeance and crushing". Neither chariots, nor confederates, nor bow or bombards shall bring relief, for "the great eagle" (king of the birds, standard of the Roman legions, i.e., the secular power protecting the Roman Catholic Church) shall lose his wings and feathers.

Content, tone, and style stamp the Munich fragment as an expression of visionary spirituality that may be interpreted as a form of opposition to injustice and an attempt to endure the momentaneous repression. Moreover, the designation "Esdras scriba" may point to a Groningen environment, being the pseudonym of the author of the *Lamentationes Petri* [Zwolle, 1521].⁶¹ This writing, originated in Modern Devotion circles and advocating a return to the *bonae litterae* and to evangelical truth, was dedicated to the *Persona* of St. Martin's, Hieronymus' father Willem Frederiks. In addition to Willem, it also mentions the Groningen Brotherhouse, its rector Goswijn van Halen, and the Groningen councillor and city clerk Jelmer Canter.⁶² Hieronymus, who was posthumously praised as an "unparalleled lover and most vigilant investigator of antiquities",⁶³ must have been aware of the *Lamentationes*. Considering that the Ezra pseudonym refers to the

⁶¹ *Lamentationes Petri, autore Esdra Scriba olim, modo publico sanctorum Pronotario, cum annotationibus seu additionibus Iohannis Andree*, [Zwolle, 1521]. I consulted the copy of the Hamburg City Library. Cf. Clemen, 'Die Lamentationes Petri'; Janse, *Hardenberg*, 272.

⁶² *Lamentationes Petri*, A3^b-4^a. The author of the *Lamentationes* sounds their praises, comparing Willem Frederiks to Augustine, Goswijn van Halen to Gregory the Great, and Canter to Ambrosius. He omits the name of a fourth, youthful Groningen genius, whom he compares to Hieronymus, in order not to make him presumptuous: "Quartus qui solus desideratur, Hieronymus est. Neque tamen hic deesse potuit, quem optimis linguis audio succrescere; vocabulum prudens supprimo, ne immaturior aetas insolescat" (A4^a). J.G. de Hoop Scheffer's suggestion, in his 'Geschiedenis der Hervorming in Nederland van haar ontstaan tot 1531', in: W. Moll/J.G. de Hoop Scheffer, eds., *Studiën en Bijdragen op 't gebied der historische theologie*, 1, Amsterdam, 1870, 466 note 4, that this veiled description should be taken as an allusion to Hieronymus Frederiks in order to flatter his father is not implausible. This cannot be a reference to the lawyer Hieronymus Verrutus, syndic of the *Ommelanden* (as Gerdes, *Historia Reformationis*, 3, (5), and Brucherus, *Geschiedenis*, 57 propose), as the *Lamentationes* were published in 1521, while Verrutus was born in 1546. To Clemen, 'Die Lamentationes Petri', 437, the passage is a mystery.

⁶³ By Cornelius Kempius, *De origine, situ, qualitate et quantitate Frisiae, et rebus a Frisiis olim praeclare gestis, libri tres* [...], Coloniae Agrippinae, 1588, 157, with reference to Hieronymus' concern about a manuscript from his father's estate, also recorded by Menso Alting, *Descriptio [...] sive Notitia Germaniae Inferioris, Cis et ultra Rhenum; Qua hodie est in Dicione VII. Foederatorum* [...], 2, Amstelædami, 1697, 74f.; cf. Feith, *Geschiedkundig betoog*, 568; Reitsma, 'Willem Frederiks', 305 note 2; Allen, Vol. 4, 483.

Groningen environment in general, and to Willem Frederiks in particular, the Munich manuscript may be seen as a Groningen production, or to be more precise as Hieronymus' work. The steward may have become acquainted with the stylistic device of prophecy in his earlier contacts with Anabaptists, using the Ezra pseudonym in his *Vaticinium* as a reminiscence of the bygone religious liberty under his father. The author's further introduction as "pastor of the people of God in the church of Jesus Christ" may refer to Hieronymus' leading position (presumably as elder) in the Groningen community. Although the fervent phrasing of the *Vaticinium* may seem unhumanist, it is in line with that of Dr. Hieronymus' condemnation of David Joris' *Wonderboeck* of April 18, 1544 to Karel van Gelder,⁶⁴ and is understandable if the *Vaticinium* is dated in the period of increasing tension 1556–1558. The satiation of the *Vaticinium* with biblical rhetoric, which betrays the author's profound familiarity with the Scriptures, notably the prophetic writings, is striking.

The fact that the manuscript contains no reference to Revelation 11, 1f. ("Measure the temple and exclude the outer court"), the passage which was mentioned by Thom Camp, and by which Hardenberg would recognize the lost vaticination, might argue against the identification of the manuscript with Hieronymus' *Vaticinium postremi temporis*. However, this lack can be accounted for by the fragmentary nature of the Munich text. A more serious counterargument might be the fact that the author's call to repent is directed to all papists "of Germany" ("... yea of all Europe"), whereas the address "of Groningen" or "of the Habsburg Lands" might be more obvious—unless the designation refers to the totality of the Habsburg territory to which Groningen had belonged since 1536. The author may, in a broader sense, have had in

⁶⁴ See note 50 and 54. Cf. Van Bleesdijck, *Billijcke verantwoordinge*, 104^v, where Hieronymus calls David Joris a sly devil ("dese listige duyvel"), a false prophet, a false Christian (105^r), and an Antichrist (103^r, 104^v) ("dat dese D.J. die selfde sijn sal, of ten weynichsten, dat die selfde gheen krachtiger of gheweldigher erdom onder een schijnsel van heylichey sal kunnen voorstellen, als dese" (103^r), "want hoe kan eenich Kint der verdervinghe (daer Paulus 2 Thessal. 2 van seght) grouwelijcker in Godes stede sittende [...] in sodanigen hoogen grouwel meer verschijnen, als dese doet?" (104^v). By the "grootte donckerhey ende doortoghene listicheyt", "schynende heylichey", and "verleydinghe ende valsche leere" of Joris' book, Christ's honour and the doctrine of the faith "werde [...] geheel verdruckt, vernielt ende vertreden" (102^v, 103^r), while "onder sodanen heylichen schijnsel, die aldergrootste vervoeringhen bedeckt werden, die sint der Apostolen tijt geweest sijn" (103^v). I consulted the copy of the Amsterdam University Library.

mind all servants of Antichrist throughout the Christian world, being inspired by the current circumstances, such as the great famine of 1557, and the Habsburg-Valois war, flared up since 1551, which in conjunction with pestilence might have been interpreted as the notorious triplet, foreboding the end of the world.⁶⁵ For the time being, the question mark in the title of this contribution indicates some lingering reservations.

Nonetheless, apart from the question whether the identification of the Munich manuscript proposed here proves to be correct or not, it is clear from Thom Camp's letter that the tradition of apocalypticism, which is so typical of medieval⁶⁶ and (radical) reformation Christianity,⁶⁷ even found an exponent in a reform-humanistic milieu, and was diffused in reformational circles beyond.⁶⁸ This adds another shade to the coloration of the mid-sixteenth century reform movement at Groningen.

⁶⁵ A detailed bibliography on the year of dearth 1557 in: P. Hoppenbrouwers, 'Juickreet of uitroep van wanhoop? De herinnering aan het duurtejaar 1557 in twee Groninger kerken', in: *Groninger Kerken*, 10, 1993, 137-143.

⁶⁶ Cf. R. Konrad, 'Apokalyptik/Apokalypsen, VI: Mittelalter', in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, 3, Berlin/New York, 1978, 275-280; B. McGinn, *Visions of the End. Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (Records of civilization: sources and studies, 96), New York, 1979; P. Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (K. Bosl, ed., Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 23), Stuttgart, 1981; R.K. Emmerson, *The Coming of Antichrist: an Apocalyptic Tradition in Medieval Literature*, Stanford University, Ph.D., 1977; idem, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*, Seattle, 1981; idem/R.B. Herzman, *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Medieval Literature*, Philadelphia, 1992; idem/B. McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca/London, 1992.

⁶⁷ Cf. G. Seebass, 'Apokalyptik/Apokalypsen, VII: Reformation und Neuzeit', in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, 3, 280-289; H.-J. Goertz, 'Träume, Offenbarungen und Visionen in der Reformation', in: R. Postel/F. Kopitzsch, eds., *Reformation und Revolution. Beiträge zum politischen Wandel und den sozialen Kräften am Beginn der Neuzeit* (Festschrift für Rainer Wohlfeil zum 60. Geburtstag), Stuttgart, 1989, 171-192; R.L. Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days. The Theme of 'Two Witnesses' in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, New York/Oxford, 1993.

⁶⁸ The Vaticination on the last days as well as the Vaticination on the court made their way to Hardenberg in Bremen and to Thom Camp in Emden, see note 58.

[VATICINIUM POSTREMI TEMPORIS]⁶⁹

Esdras, scriba⁷⁰ et pastor in populo dei in Ecclesia Jesu Christj, omnibus papistis, animarum latronibus, Cardinalibus, pseudoepiscopis, Canonicis, Monachis, Sacrificis unctis et rasis eorumque satellitibus,⁷¹ Tyrannis et nebulonibus, quam celerrimam resipiscentiam.

Quae ad vos scribo, ex precepto dei ad vos scribo doque optionem uobis, an recipere uelitis nec ne. Erit breuj, qui rationem exiget. Nouissima uobis tuba⁷² sonat, audiat in tempore qui habet aures.⁷³ Scio en certissimo inditio scio omnibus uobis praesens⁷⁴ exilium imminere, nisi ex animo resipiscatis et babilonem⁷⁵ uestram relinquatis.

Antichristo Romano eiusque uenefitijs renuntietis. Facite aut non facite, admonitos vos interim scitote. Deus respexit, immo despexit malitiam uestram, uidit malitiam quam in terra operati estis, ut corruptae sunt uiae uestrae. Jtaque in foribus est iudicium ipsius,⁷⁶ quo vos omnes pariter in proximo peribitis, atque adeo cito peribitis, ut non statuum an hec scriptura an gladius ceruicibus uestris imminens sit vos praecoccupaturus, nam iuxta est dies perditionis uestrae et adesse festinant tempora.⁷⁷ Judicabit vos Dominus in ira furoris sui quicumque hanc tubam spernitis.⁷⁸ Venit finis super vos, mittet dominus furorem suum in vos, iudicabit vos iuxta uias uestras, ponetque contra vos abominaciones uestras, non parcet oculus eius super vos, non miserebitur amplius.⁷⁹ prope est dies occisionis. Effundet de propinquo iram suam super vos, complebit furorem suum,⁸⁰ quoniam irritastis ipsum.

⁶⁹ See note 60. Publication by courtesy of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Germany. The MS. has no title; the present title is taken from Thom Camp's letter of March 28, 1559 (see note 56). The transcription is in accordance with the diplomatic method described in the *Richtlijnen voor het uitgeven van historische bescheiden, samengesteld in opdracht van het Nederlands Historisch Genootschap en van de Rijkscmissie voor Vaderlandse Geschiedenis*, 's-Gravenhage, 1988⁶, provided that punctuation and paragraphing are added.

⁷⁰ Cf. Ezra 7, 6.

⁷¹ MS.: satellitis.

⁷² Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 52; Rev. 11, 15.

⁷³ Cf. Rev. 2, 7; 13, 9.

⁷⁴ MS.: presens.

⁷⁵ Cf. Rev. 17f.

⁷⁶ Cf. James 5, 9.

⁷⁷ Cf. Zeph. 1, 14.

⁷⁸ Cf. Ezek. 33, 4f.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ezek. 7, 3f.

⁸⁰ Cf. Ezek. 7, 8.

Clamat sanguis testium ipsius⁸¹ contra vos, qui adhuc calidus de digitis vestris distillat. Completum est tempus breue, quod datum est sanctis dei sub altari indutis stolis candidis. Completus est hoc tempore numerus fratrum suorum.⁸² Punctum temporis uobis reliquum est, postea desolatio, calamitas, tribulatio et angustia. Qui emistis hactenus, ne leteminj; qui vendidistis, ne ploretis,⁸³ nam aliud est quod lugeatis, quia ira dei super vos⁸⁴ latrones, etiam excisores⁸⁵ in Ecclesiam dei. Hypocritae, iam securis contingit radicem antichristianae arboris.⁸⁶ Fugite, fugite, in puncto ne inuoluaminj,⁸⁷ non enim parceret oculus eius.⁸⁸ Appropinquauerunt dies et sermo omnis uisionis.⁸⁹ Quis contristabitur super vos? Non erit ultro omnis haec monitio cassa, neque diuinationo ambigua,⁹⁰ non prolongabitur amplius.⁹¹ In diebus uestris in articulo hoc implebitur, o domus exasperans.⁹² Verbum quod locutus fuerit, Deus complebit.⁹³ Ululate, vae vae dicite,⁹⁴ iuxta⁹⁵ enim est dies dominj,⁹⁶ dies nubis,⁹⁷ tempus ultionis et ueniet gladius.⁹⁸ En adest in puncto, in ipsa hora.

Reddet dominus vicissitudinem super capita uestra,⁹⁹ quia iuxta est dies in valle¹⁰⁰ ultionis et concisionis. Jam vastitas a domino adierit. Venit dies ille crudelis et indignationis plenus, plenus irae ad ponendum idola et excelsa, castra, aras, simulacra et prophana uestra in solitudinem, et vos de terra conteret.¹⁰¹ Luctum quasi unigenitj facite, planctum amarum, vel nunc ad resipiscentiam vel sane mox ad

81 Cf. Gen. 4, 10; Rev. 17, 6; 11, 7.

82 Cf. Rev. 6, 9-11.

83 MS.: plorentis.

84 Cf. Ezek. 7, 12.

85 Cf. Isa. 33, 1.

86 Cf. Mt. 3, 10.

87 Cf. Prov. 6, 15b.

88 Cf. Ezek. 7, 9.

89 Cf. Ezek. 12, 23.

90 Cf. Ezek. 12, 24.

91 Cf. Ezek. 12, 28.

92 Cf. Ezek. 12, 25.

93 Cf. Ezek. 12, 25 and 28.

94 MS.: dici.

95 MS.: iuxta.

96 Cf. Isa. 13, 6.

97 Cf. Zeph. 1, 15.

98 Cf. Jer. 46, 10.

99 Cf. Joel 3, 4 and 7.

100 Cf. Joel 3, 14.

101 Cf. Isa. 13, 9; Ezek. 6, 3f.

interventionem, quia repente ueniet uastator super vos.¹⁰² Venerunt dies retributionis,¹⁰³ quoniam profunde peccastis, sicut in diebus Gaba;¹⁰⁴ recordabitur dominus iniquitatis uestrae et visitabit peccata uestra.¹⁰⁵ Conturbentur omnes papistae habitantes in Germania, imo in tota Europa, quia dies uenit dominj, hora tenebrarum super vos et rubiginis, dies nubis et turbinis. Similis uobis non fuit ab initio.¹⁰⁶ Fuga est iuxta, est, inquam, et uelox nimis. Quis dabit uobis cor et intellectum,¹⁰⁷ ut fugiatis a facie arcus?¹⁰⁸ Quis erit, demonstra. Vos fugiatis a facie dominj, quia uenit: uenit iudicare terram.¹⁰⁹

Vox diei dominj amara: tribulabimini hic, qui uobis uidemini fortes.¹¹⁰ Non in curribus, non in satellitis, non in arcu, non Bombardis, non in aquilis neque uolucris¹¹¹ uobis amplius respiratio. Aquila grandis¹¹² perdet ipsa alas et plumas suas. Pristinus [end of fol.168^r] (the manuscript ends here).

Translation

[PROPHECY ON THE LAST DAYS]

Ezra, scribe [cf. Ezra 7, 6] and pastor of the people of God in the church of Jesus Christ, to all anointed and tonsured papists, robbers of souls, cardinals, pseudo-bishops, canons, monks, and priests with their henchmen, tyrants, and wind-bags: let them repent as soon as possible.

What I am writing to you I write at God's command. You must choose whether to accept or reject it. He who calls to account shall soon come. The last trump [cf. 1 Cor. 15, 52; Rev. 11, 15] sounds for you. He who has ears, let him hear while there is yet time [cf. Rev. 2, 7; 13, 9]. I know, yea by sign that cannot be doubted, I know that you are all under threat of instant banishment, unless you wholeheartedly return to your senses and forsake your Babylon [cf. Rev. 17f.].

Renounce the Roman Antichrist and his sorceries. Whether you do

¹⁰² Cf. Jer. 6, 26.

¹⁰³ Cf. Hos. 9, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Judg. 19.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Hos. 9, 9.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Joel 2, 1f.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. 1 Chron. 22, 12.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Isa. 21, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Ps. 98, 9.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Zeph. 1, 14.

¹¹¹ Cf. e.g. Hab. 1,8; Jer. 48, 40.

¹¹² Cf. Ezek. 17, 3.

so or not, know then that you have been warned. God has seen, nay has looked down upon your wickedness; he has seen the evil you have done on earth, how corrupt your ways are. For that reason his judgment is imminent [cf. James 5, 9], by which all of you alike shall shortly perish, yea, so soon, that I know not, whether you will be caught by this epistle or by the sword that threatens your necks. For near is the day of your perdition and the times hasten [cf. Zeph. 1,14]. In the anger of his wrath the Lord shall judge whosoever of you, who scorns the sounding of this trumpet [cf. Ezek. 33, 4f.]. The end has come upon you. The Lord shall unleash his anger over you; he shall judge you according to your ways; he shall hold your abominations against you. His eye shall not spare you; he shall not continue to be merciful [cf. Ezek. 7, 3f.]: close is the day of slaughter. Soon he shall pour out his wrath upon you; he shall slake his anger [cf. Ezek. 7, 8] because you have incensed him.

The blood of his witnesses [cf. Rev. 17, 6; 11, 7], still dripping warm from your fingers, cries out against you [cf. Gen. 4, 10]. Fulfilled is the short time allotted to the saints of God under the altar, clothed in white raiments. Full is now the number of their brothers [cf. Rev. 6, 9-11]. For you but a moment remains and then shall come desolation, calamity, tribulation, and anguish. Ye who have purchased till now do not make merry; ye who have sold do not wail, for what you should be bewailing, is that the wrath of God is upon you [cf. Ezek. 7, 12], robbers, yea destroyers of the church of God [cf. Isa. 33, 1]. Hypocrites, already is the axe at the root of the Antichrist's tree [cf. Mt. 3, 10]. Flee, flee, truly in the twinkling of an eye shall you be broken [cf. Prov. 6, 15b], for his eye shall not spare [you] [cf. Ezek. 7, 9]. The days are at hand and the performing of the word of every vision [cf. Ezek. 12, 23]. Who will mourn for you? Likewise shall the whole of this admonition not be vain, nor this prophecy uncertain [cf. Ezek. 12, 24]; it shall not tarry any longer [cf. Ezek. 12, 28]. In your days, o exasperating house, in a decisive moment this shall come to pass [cf. Ezek. 12, 25]. God shall perform the word he shall have spoken [cf. Ezek. 12, 25, 28]. Wail, cry "woe", "woe", for close at hand is the day of the Lord [cf. Isa. 13, 6], the day of darkness [cf. Zeph. 1, 15], the time of vengeance, and the sword shall come [cf. Jer. 46, 10]. See it shall come in a moment, in this very hour.

The Lord shall requite your deeds upon your own heads [cf. Joel 3, 4, 7], for the day is near in the valley [cf. Joel 3,14] of vengeance and crushing. Soon the Lord's destruction shall come. It is coming, that

cruel day full of indignation and wrath to lay waste [cf. Isa. 13, 9] your idols and high places, strongholds, altars, images, and sacrilegious things, and in that day you shall be exterminated from the earth [cf. Ezek. 6, 3f.]. Mourn with bitter wailing as for an only son, be it now for repentance or be it surely soon for intercession, for suddenly the destroyer shall come upon you [cf. Jer. 6, 26]. The days of retribution have come [cf. Hos. 9, 7] because you have sinned grievously as in the days of Gibeah [cf. Judg. 19]. The Lord shall remember your evil and he shall punish your sins [cf. Hos. 9, 9]. Let all papists of Germany, yea of all Europe be confounded, for the day of the Lord is coming, an hour of darkness and soot over you, a day of cloud and tempest, the like of which you have not seen of old [cf. Joel 2, 1f.]. Exodus is close by, nay shall be only too quick. Who shall give you a heart and understanding [cf. 1 Chron. 22, 12] that you may flee from the sight of the bow [cf. Isa. 21, 15]? Who shall it be? Point him out! Flee from the face of the Lord, for he is coming: he comes to judge the earth [cf. Ps. 98, 9].

The cry on the day of the Lord shall be bitter when you who think you are strong shall be oppressed [cf. Zeph. 1, 14]. Neither chariots, nor confederates, nor bow or bombards, neither eagles [cf. e.g. Hab. 1, 8] nor vultures [cf. e.g. Jer. 48, 40] shall ease your breath. The great eagle himself [cf. Ezek. 17, 3] shall lose his wings and feathers. The former [the manuscript ends here].