

The Labyrinth at Chartres, the Malachy Prophecy,

and

Benedict XVI

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Prologue

The thing to be kept in mind when dealing with symbolism and trying to understand what it may mean in the context of the tradition within which it is considered, is that what matters are the beliefs and practices of the participants in that tradition, their frame of mind, their point of view, the way they perceive and interpret what happens from *within* their tradition, not what an “objective observer” might perceive, conceive, or deceive himself with from *without* that tradition. It is in that optic that we shall look at the prediction of the prophecy and the highly symbolic nature of the timing of both the announcement of the resignation of Benedict XVI and the effective date of that resignation.¹

1. The Chartres Labyrinth and the Malachy Prophecy

Saint Malachy (1094-1148) was Archbishop of Armagh in Ireland and is remembered for his reform and reorganization of the Irish church which he brought in obedience to Rome. He was canonized by Pope Clement III in 1190. Several miracles are

¹ For people who may be ready to dismiss off hand numerology as mere hocus pocus, it may be useful to remember that, in societies having predominantly an oral culture where books or other forms of knowledge-storage are either rare, expensive, or altogether inexistent, knowledge, for the most part, has to be kept in mind. Hence, the importance of memory and memory systems in medieval culture.

Such systems may be embodied in mythical stories generally under the form of poems easier to remember than ordinary speech through their rhythms, rhymes, assonances, and other such devices. The building of monuments according to certain canons or conventions also fulfills that purpose and so does the imaginative use of landscapes—mountain peaks, rivers, etc.

Another is what is referred to as numerology: encoding meaning in numbers and their combinations so that, through them, whole arrays of concepts may be compacted to be held, combined, and analyzed. Elaborate systems of reckoning on one’s fingers have often been used in the past and are still used by some today for that purpose. This is one way of always keeping one’s knowledge at one’s fingertips!

attributed to him as well as a vision about the popes' line of succession—the substance of this prophecy.²

Malachy—whose full name is Maelmhaedhoc O'Morgair—was a friend of St. Bernard of Clairvaux who wrote his biography. In this book, *The Life of St. Malachy*, Bernard recognized Malachy's gift of prophecy though he makes no specific reference to the prophecy in question. Malachy died at Clairvaux³ in the arms of Bernard on November 2, 1148 while visiting on his way to Rome for the second time.

St. Malachy had already gone to Rome⁴ in 1139

to give an account of the affairs of his diocese to Pope Innocent II. While in Rome, where he stayed for some time, he received (according to Father Cucherat)⁵ the strange vision of the future wherein was unfolded before his mind the long list of illustrious pontiffs who were to rule the Church until the end of time.

The same author tells us that St. Malachy gave his manuscript to Innocent II to console

² See Appendix 1. As we shall see in the following, there has been considerable controversy over the authenticity of this prophecy in the more than four hundred years of its publicly known existence. The official opinion of the Vatican nowadays is a "cautious denial" of its authenticity. Nevertheless, the prophecy is intriguing and has held the interest of would-be sleuths of various persuasions and intentions for centuries. The approach of its possible resolution in time has, of course, heightened its interest among the apocalyptic fringe.

³ He was buried, according to his wishes, at Clairvaux in Bernard's cowl as shroud. In 1153 St. Bernard in turn was buried in his friend's habit, kept for that purpose. In 1191, after Malachy's canonization, his remains were translated to the community church and laid beside the bones of St. Bernard in accordance with the wish or prediction of the latter: "We have loved him in life, we shall not be parted from him in death." (St. Bernard 1950, vol. 2, 478)

⁴ The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1913 edition. This article of the Encyclopedia is entirely based on Cucherat's account (n. 5 *infra*) and therefore may give more emphasis to the appearance of a total authenticity of the prophecy than may be warranted. Another French priest, Joseph Maître (Maître, 1901, 1902) also held to this total authenticity. Other theologians, churchmen, and even Protestant ministers, as mentioned by Cucherat, also supported this position.

It is generally accepted among serious scholars, however, that the prophecy is not Malachy's in the twelfth century but more likely from someone else in the sixteenth century, when it emerges in public view. Some consider it entirely spurious; some, prophetic in part. This is addressed in a subsequent section (8. The Controversy, *infra*)

⁵ François Cucherat was a French priest, honorary canon of Autun, chaplain at the hospital of Paray-le-Monial, and a member of local learned societies. He wrote a book in French regarding St. Malachy's prophecy, the second edition of which was published in 1873, in Grenoble, under the title *La prophétie de la succession des papes depuis le XII^e siècle jusqu'à la fin du monde, son auteur, son authenticité, et son explication* (*The Prophecy of the Succession of the Popes since the 12th Century until the End of the World, its Author, its Authenticity, and its Explanation.*)

Cucherat appears to have been a sincere and devout man thoroughly persuaded of the truth and authenticity of the prophecy. This, however, does not make him immune to possible error. In his book he relies entirely on the trust he puts in Arnold de Wion (*infra*) who reputedly found in 1590, in an Italian library (unnamed and unlocated) a Latin document giving the text of the prophecy attributed to Malachy. De Wion published it in 1595. The document itself is not mentioned as having been seen by anyone except de Wion, who does not describe it nor give any indication of its whereabouts. This, naturally together with its having remained hidden in the library for nearly 450 years without having been mentioned anywhere previously, is the main argument of the people who dispute the authenticity of the prophecy as Cucherat himself acknowledges in his Foreword.

him in the midst of his tribulations, and that the document remained unknown in the Roman Archives until its discovery in 1590. They were first published by Arnold de Wyon,⁶ and ever since there has been much discussion as to whether they are genuine predictions of St. Malachy or forgeries. The silence of 400 years on the part of so many learned authors who had written about the popes, and the silence of St. Bernard especially, who wrote the life of St. Malachy, is a strong argument against their authenticity but it is not conclusive if we adopt Cucherat's theory that they were hidden in the Archives during those 400 years.

If we assume for a moment the authenticity of the prophecy,⁷ the fact that St. Bernard did not specifically mention it in his account of St. Malachy's life, though as was said, he recognized in him the gift of prophecy⁸ should not be found proof that St. Bernard did not know about it. Given the intimacy of friendship between Malachy and Bernard as well as the close relationship that Bernard maintained with the popes of his generation, it is highly unlikely that he would not have been let into the secret by Malachy himself. However, one has only to put oneself into the political circumstances existing in society and in the Church at the time to realize the dangerous and even explosive nature of the knowledge that such a prophecy might have constituted. This was a time when the Church was engaged in various struggles abroad and at home. The

⁶ Arnold de Wion was born in Douai (Flanders) in 1554. To escape the wars and the political agitation of Flanders in those times, he went to Italy and entered the Abbey of St. Benedict in Mantua, part of the congregation of Montecassino. He became an historian of some repute. In 1595 he published in Venice a Latin book under the title *Lignum Vitae* which translates as "Wood of Life" or "Tree of Life." It is about the lives of famous men of the Benedictine Order and is dedicated to Philip II (1527-1598) King of Spain (who was also ruler of Flanders at the time) a king much devoted to the catholic cause in those days of reformation. In his book (chapter 40, p. 307 ff) de Wion transcribes the prophecy purported to be Malachy's and supposedly written in 1143.

⁷ There is a certain advantage in adopting this naïve approach to start with. For one, it allows us to consider the prophecy as a single homogeneous document and to better appreciate its overall structure and its function in the history of the Church. As mentioned above (n.4) the question of authenticity will be discussed subsequently.

⁸ In the *Life of Malachy*, St. Bernard, talking of Malachy's miracles and prophecies says, "These are facts chosen among a much larger number." (Cucherat 1873, 40). Indeed in two sermons he gave after Malachy's death St. Bernard greatly praises Malachy's gift of prophecy comparing him to Elias and Moses. The two passages are given in Cucherat's book in French and here in St. Bernard 1950, vol. 2, 445 - 454. It should be noted that the second passage in particular with its reference to Elias and Moses points to a passage in the Gospels (Luke 16:27-28 and 17: 1-21) within a context of apocalyptic tenor ("For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Luke 16:27)

The passage in the first sermon reads: "Elias has now laid aside his mantle (4 Kings ii.13): he has therefore nothing to fear, nothing about him which the temptress can touch, much less take hold of (Gen. xxxix 12). He has mounted his chariot (4 Kings ii. II): he has therefore no longer any reason to be afraid of falling. His ascent is pleasant and easy for he is borne aloft, not as by the labour of his own wings, but reclining at ease in his swiftly mounting car."

And the second reads: "O blessed Malachy, be to us as another Moses, or as another Elias; and as these to their disciples, so do thou give us of thy spirit (Num. xi. 15, 4 Kings ii. 25) for thou hast come in the spirit and power of them both (Luke 1: 17).

Second Crusade (1100-1145) was winding down in the East; in Western Europe from Cologne to Toulouse and Languedoc, from Lombardy and Italy to the Balkans heresies were endemic; contentious strivings between popes, anti-popes, emperors and sundry kings and nobles occupied a good part of the 12th century. In all this, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090/91 – 1153) was a central figure mediating these conflicts. It is therefore reasonable to assume that, even if he knew of St. Malachy's prophecy, he would, with his keen political acumen, choose not to mention it in *The Life of Malachy*, destined to a wider audience than even the sermons.

As to why we should then find some connection between Malachy's prophecy and Chartres, this would follow in part from the relation known to have existed between St. Bernard and Chartres⁹. The Diocese of Chartres being at the time one of the largest and richest in Western Europe and the seat of a prestigious school made it a dominant player in Church politics not only in France—the Eldest Daughter of the Church—as it was then styled, but in the whole of Christendom.

It is therefore very likely that the holder of a secret of this nature¹⁰ would entrust it for safe keeping to person(s) and a place likely to keep it securely as long as needed. The bishop and/or some high-ranking official in the church of Chartres would have been ideal individual(s) to be relied upon for preserving it.

Of course, the best way to keep a secret is not to write it down where it can eventually be readily read even if buried in a library but to embed it into a symbol or a monument so that only someone properly instructed would be able to decipher it. This may explain the choice of 112 for the number of “cups” around the enigmatic figure of the labyrinth to match the number of popes in Malachy's list.¹¹ What better symbol than a

⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux was a friend of Bishop Geoffroy de Lèves and of Count Thibault V, whom he visited occasionally (Lépinos, 1854: 97, 100, 101). He came to Chartres, in particular, in 1146, at the invitation of Geoffroy to preach the Crusade and many of the lords of the Beauce enrolled. Note that in spite of his friendship with Bernard, Geoffroy had defended Abelard against Bernard at the Council of Soisson in 1121.

¹⁰ One is reminded here of the secrets of Fatima revealed in 1917 to three shepherd children through an apparition of the Virgin Mary and confided to Pope Benedict XV. Two of the three secrets have been made public, the first being a vision of hell, the second, a prediction of the end of World War I and the coming of world War II. The third is still to be revealed in its totality. It is interesting to observe that what has been shown of it bears close resemblance to Malachy's having to do with the papacy and its struggles.

¹¹ In a previous study we have justified this number on grounds of astronomy and symbolism. We should see here, however, not a conflict but rather a confirmation of this choice for, as was then shown, Sun and Moon are symbolic of Christ and Church. Furthermore, the pope is explicitly the “Vicar of Christ on earth,”

labyrinth with its apotropaic connotations to hold such potentially dangerous knowledge?¹²

2. Of Patriarchs and Popes

Some apparent additional numerical coincidences between numbers in the prophecy and in the labyrinth would seem if not to bolster the plausibility of the prophecy's authenticity, at least, to show that the same numerological structure governs both labyrinth and prophecy. According to the Gospel of Matthew (1:1-17) there were 14

i.e. standing as the representative of Christ on earth so that *mutatis mutandis* pope and Christ play here similar roles.

Though Malachy and Bernard predate the construction of the present Chartres labyrinth by half a century, its design could easily have been kept "on paper" or, in fact, in memory for a generation or so. Except for the crown of cogs and other design details, the Chartres design (see Appendix 2) was known in its present form since at least 1072 (Kern, 2000, 112, fig. 183). Another manuscript from the monastery of St. Germain-des-Prés, Paris, dating from the ninth to the eleventh century, shows a hand drawing representing the Chartres design (Kern, 2000, 112, fig. 181) with a devil-like minotaur enthroned in the middle depicted as "Prince of this world" (Jn 14.30). "This parchment manuscript contains a calendar, Easter cycles, annals, etc.," adds Kern.

It is not known whether a labyrinth existed in Fulbert's cathedral, the building preceding the present one, or was planned when the present western façade was built in the late 1140s in the lifetime of both St. Malachy and St. Bernard. In any case, large labyrinths in cathedral naves were "in the air"—witness Auxerre and Amiens.

Another tantalizing hypothesis here concerning the involvement of St. Bernard with labyrinths is the purported attribution to him of certain types of "labyrinths" or "combinatory word games" whose object is to combine individual words to form moralizing maxims" (Kern, 2000, 243, fig. 463) (See Appendix 2). Percipiently enough, in the present context perhaps, the first Latin injunction in this labyrinth advises: "Do not say everything you know, for he who says everything he knows will often hear what he doesn't want." The attribution to St. Bernard is based on a panel from a Carmelite monastery on Mt. Carmel (Israel) discovered in 1874 bearing the Latin inscription *Laborinthus a vivo Bernardo compositus quae bene vivit homo*. Should this be so, it is not only the labyrinth itself, but the formulation of the maxims of the prophecy which would connect it to Malachy's "oracles." Kern suggests that "the style would indicate a considerably older date of composition."

¹² Regarding "dangerous knowledge" see, for instance, the many attempts to know the "real" third secret of Fatima. What was revealed of it in 2000, when the Vatican "released" it, has left many believers skeptic. Cardinal Ratzinger, before he became Pope Benedict XVI, wrote a theological commentary on it and his Secretary of State while he was Pope, Cardinal Bertone, published a book about it (Bertone, Tarcisio, 2008, *The Last Secret of Fatima*, New York: Doubleday Religion). But their statements have not quelled the questions. Already in an interview for the German magazine "Stimme des Glaubens" in 1980 and published in October 1981 John Paul II is quoted as saying, "It should be sufficient for all Christians to know this much: If there is a message in which it is said that the oceans will flood entire sections of the earth; that from one moment to the next, millions of people will perish... there is no longer any point in really wanting to publish this secret message... It is dangerous to want to satisfy one's curiosity only if one is convinced that we can do nothing against a catastrophe that has been predicted." (retrieved Wikipedia, 03/02.13)

Others believe that the third secret concerns the internal problems within the Church and the fulfillment of *Revelation*. We may see some apparent confirmation of this view, not only in Malachy's Prophecy itself but in the symbolism that Benedict XVI attached to the dates of his announcement and effective resignation of the See of Rome.

generations from Abraham to David,¹³ 14 again from David to the Babylonian exile and yet 14 more from the Babylonian exile to Jesus, i.e. a total of $14 \times 3 = 42$ human generations from Abraham to Jesus.¹⁴ This is presented under the form A begat B, B begat C, C begat D, etc. In the same way, each pope may be considered as “begetting” his successor so that the list of popes is like a list of papal generations which can also be bunched in groups of 14. The 112 popes of the prophecy can therefore be seen to form 8 sets of 14. Now according to the official list of popes, the past pope, Benedict XVI, was the 265th in the succession starting with Saint Peter and 111th starting with Celestine II so that the next pope, *Petrus Romanus* would be the 266th and the last.¹⁵

We have therefore two numbers obtainable from Malachy’s prophecy: 112 and 266. These numbers have great symbolic significance.¹⁶ First, we will recall that 112, the

¹³ It should be noted that the number 14 in Hebrew gematria (the ancients used letters to represent numbers so that words can be read as numerical values and conversely numerical values may form meaningful words) is the transliteration of the word DAVID (Lanzo del Vasto, 1951, 26).

¹⁴ Assuming the traditional 30 years per generation, we obtain 1260 years. 1260 is one number associated with apocalyptic writings viz “the woman in the sun” from John’s revelation (12:6): “Herself fled into the desert where she had her place prepared by God, that there she might be taken care of for twelve hundred and sixty days.” Days are usually interpreted as years in prophetic language.

Note that $1260 = (112 \times 11) + 28$ so that this apocalyptic number is implicitly inscribed into the labyrinth (112 cups, 28 hairpin turns, and 11 rings—with these last two numbers explicitly related to Sun and Moon (28 years in the Sun cycle, 28 days of lunation, 11 days difference between solar year and lunar year: $365 - 354 = 11$). The fact that the Cathedral while physically completed toward the third decade of the thirteenth century was officially consecrated only in the year 1260, more than a generation later, in the presence of St. Louis, is another indication that the clergy of Chartres in those days were very attuned to these numerological conceptions.

Incidentally, at this point, note that $(112 \times 11) + 28$ contains all the numbers of the dates of the announcement and resignation of Benedict XVI who, as a German pope, would write them (11-2 and 28-2) and that the number of cups around the labyrinth, (112) is also the number of popes mentioned in Malachy’s Prophecy as well as the number of days in the Easter cycle.

¹⁵ See Appendix 1. The list of popes puts *Petrus Romanus* at the end after #111 but does not specifically give it a number. This, for some, means that between #111 and *Petrus*, any number of popes can be inserted. This certainly gives flexibility to “the end of time.” In de Wion’s text, however, no number is used at all.

¹⁶ These two numbers 112 and 266 both include 14 as a common factor ($112 = 14 \times 8$; $266 = 14 \times 19$) so that, grouping of “generations” in bundles of 14 is possible in the succession of popes both from St. Peter to *Petrus Romanus* and from Celestine II, in the days of Malachy, to *Petrus Romanus*. Thus, the papal generations are made to conform to the human generations in Jesus’s lineage.

However, one peculiarity in counting the popes is that, whereas the Church does not include the antipopes in the line from St. Peter to *Petrus Romanus*, they are included in the Prophecy line starting with Celestine II.

It is important here to remember what an “antipope” is as opposed to a pope. The OED defines an antipope as “a pope elected in opposition to one held to be canonically chosen; specifically of those who resided at Avignon during the ‘great schism of the west’ (so-called by adversaries).” So an antipope is nevertheless a pope but not in the eye of some adversaries even though he may have a claim on the papal see, which may be occupied by another. Ten such antipopes are included in the Prophecy (see Appendix 1).

number of cups around the labyrinth, is also the number of days in the Easter cycle and is implicated astronomically in making the labyrinth a model of the Sun/Moon cycles.

Furthermore, we remark that dividing it by:

4 yields 28, the traditional number of phases in a lunation and also the characteristic number of years of the solar cycle, where weekdays and dates recur.

6 yields 18.6, the number of years in the Moon nodal cycle

7 yields 16, the number of weeks in the Easter cycle

8 yields 14, the period of waxing or waning of the Moon; the grouping of generations in the genealogy of Christ down from Abraham.

16 yields 7, the number of days in the week and also the “Virgin number”¹⁷ and more generally a sacred number.

Besides, these numbers have fundamental symbolic meaning.

The number 266 carries significant implications. Being divisible by 14, it yields 19, the number of years in the metonic cycle when Sun and Moon fall again in the same configuration so that the dates (though not the weekdays) of Easter are the same.

Furthermore $266 \times 2 = 532$, the number of years in the Julian calendar when both the date *and* the weekdays of Easter are the same. This is indicated on the labyrinth by the marker clearly visible next to the pillar of the south side aisle. So the numbers in the prophecy are definitely connected with the cycle of Easter.¹⁸

We have also seen in our study of the symbolism of Sun and Moon that, at times, the Moon represented the Church and, at times, the Blessed Virgin Mary and that the Sun stood at times for God the Father or at times for the Son, depending on the context. The implication here is that the Church being also “the mystical body of Christ,” what befell

As is often said, history is written by the winners. The Church, over time, may decree in all serenity who was a legitimate pope and who was an antipope. However, in the heat of the moment, with the clash of interests, of political ambitions and manipulations by political powers often outside the Church, all parties, at least in their own eyes, have legitimate claims. True shepherds and wolves in sheep skins are not always easily discernible either. In any case, a prophet like the sibyl, is but a mouth piece, not the explainer of the pronouncement, so that if the prophecy is genuine, it should not be taken against Malachy. If it is not, it would then be just a computing trick to make the numbers fit significant values.

¹⁷ Seven is called the Virgin number because in the succession of natural numbers from 1-10 it is neither a factor of any other number nor does it contain any other number as a factor (e.g. 3 is a factor of 6, since $3 \times 2 = 6$, and 6 clearly contains 2 and 3 as factors. Seven is not so affected).

¹⁸ Note also that, numerologically, 266 adds up to 14, and ultimately to 5, the number for life; and 532, to 10, or unity, the completed cycle and its perfection.

Christ in his physical body is indicative of what is to befall the earthly Church. As Christ was persecuted and crucified, so shall the Church. Indeed this is Malachy's prophecy for the reign of the last pope. As Christ died and was resurrected, however, so will the Church.¹⁹ But "death" of the Church implies also the end of the line of popes.²⁰ Her resurrection will see Christ as her Head on Earth. The implication is that there will therefore be no need of a Vicar of Christ anymore.

Now, returning to the fact that $266/14 = 19$ and that among these 19 sets of 14 generations, 8 such sets begin with Celestine II²¹ in 1143 to end with *Petrus Romanus*, it follows that $19 - 8 = 11$ sets began with St. Peter and ended at Celestine II.

The total number of human generations from Abraham to Jesus and papal generations from Jesus to the last pope are therefore

$$14 (3 + 11 + 8) = 308$$

In terms of the labyrinth, this number can be rewritten

$$308 = (112 \times 2) + 84$$

If we therefore walk around the labyrinth, starting at the entrance, and going twice around it clockwise, we cover $112 \times 2 = 224$ cups. Pursuing our walk until we reach the marker chiseled in the path of the 11th external ring previously mentioned, next to the pillar on the south side, we have then covered an additional 84 cups, i.e. a total of 308 cups, a number equal to the generations in Christ's *human line* from Abraham to Christ and in "papal generations," from Christ to the last pope. The marker, therefore, is a reminder of both the great cycle of Easter and of the end of the line of the popes.²²

What may be the significance of this?

¹⁹ This interpretation of St. Malachy's vision may give another justification for the number 112 in the line of papal succession. We remember that 112 is also the number of days (16 weeks) of the Easter cycle starting with the Sunday of the Septuagesima and ending on the Saturday before Pentecost. The implication is that the tribulations of the Church will parallel those of Christ and will lead to her death (as an institution?) and a glorious resurrection—realization of the mystical body of Christ (see Appendix 3, "The Cycle of Easter).

²⁰ As the sacrificial death of Jesus brought to an end the animal sacrifices in the Temple, so the sacrificial death of the Church will ultimately bring to an end the perceived need for a priestly caste mediating between God and the people of God.

²¹ Cf. note 15.

²² When we studied the labyrinth in its connection with the calculation of Easter, we saw the marker as corresponding to the winter solstice and therefore with Christmas and the first coming of Christ. Having therefore accomplished our peregrination around the labyrinth, we find ourselves back at the same point of origin, at cup 84, and therefore ready for the new octave of regeneration (number 8) and the return of Christ—his second coming (number 4 for the return to earth).

The number 308 itself can be considered as composed of 300 and 8. In gematria, 300 represents the letter Tau (T) in the Greek alphabet. This letter in turn stands for the cross. As for 8, as we have seen many times, it is symbolic of regeneration or of eternal beatitude, among other things.²³ Therefore 308 can be interpreted as regeneration through the cross or reaching eternal beatitude through the cross. The implication is that after the reign of a number of popes and great tribulations represented by the cross, the Church will find eternal beatitude and be regenerated. This is further confirmed by a detailed analysis of the component numbers of 308.

If we look at the symbolism of the individual numbers involved in the expression $14 (3 + 11 + 8) = 308$, we remember 14 as an important lunar number recalling the 14 days of waxing and the 14 days of waning. The Moon, as we have seen, is symbolic of the Church. This therefore brings to mind a waxing and waning of the Church. The Moon also implies the Sun, symbolic of Christ—the Sun of justice—and, in this case, of his representative on Earth—the pope. If we look at the numbers in the parenthesis, the numbers of generations in Jesus’ human line, we first see 3, symbolic of the Trinity, of perfection. A reminder of the perfection of the patriarchal line of ancestry.

The next number, 11, in the line of succession corresponds to the papal “generations” in the Church from St. Peter to the days of Malachy. This number 11 is generally symbolic of sinfulness and corruption being deficient from the perfection of 12 by 1 as well as in excess of the other perfection of 10, also by 1. We recall here the strife and struggle the Church went through from the early days to precisely the 12th century—evangelization of often recalcitrant pagans, heresies, Crusades, antipopes, contests against kings and emperors, etc.

The following number, namely 8, corresponds to the line of popes following Innocent II (1130-1143) who, himself, had to defend his seat against two antipopes (Anacletus II (1130-1138) and Gregori Conti (Victor IV, 1132). Eight is the number associated with regeneration, resurrection, immortality, the return to unity, the completion of the octave.²⁴ It is said²⁵ that Malachy’s prophesy was given to Pope

²³ Hopper 1995, 21.

²⁴ That some regeneration took place within the Church in these intervening centuries is undeniable. One may think of some aspects of the Counter-reformation and concerns with social justice in some periods of the nineteenth and twentieth century as well as the witnessing of some authentic saints, but it is also

Innocent II to console him in the midst of his tribulations. No doubt, if that is the case, the numbers, particularly this one, were significant and a hopeful sign to him.

Now, adding the last two numbers, we find $11 + 8 = 19$, again the characteristic number of the metonic cycle and therefore of the return to the original harmony of sun and moon, of Christ and his Church, through the workings of the Easter cycle, of death and resurrection as predicted by number 308.

Furthermore, 266 sums up to $2 + 6 + 6 = 14$ and again to $1 + 4 = 5$, the number for life, indicating repeat, rebirth, perfection pointing to the fact that out of the line of popes, though there may not be any more popes, the Church of Christ will endure and live.²⁶

If we examine the succession of popes from St. Peter to Celestine II, we have the number $14 \times 11 = 154$. This is exactly half of the 308 generations from Abraham to the last pope²⁷ ($14 \times 22 = 308$). According to the Cabala that Malachy was said to have known, there are 22 divine true ways implying that all 22 ways will have been opened²⁸ by the time of the last pope.

The number 154 is also easily marked on the labyrinth, since $154 = 112 + 42$, i.e. one turn plus $42 = (7 \times 6)$ cups or 6 sets of 7 cups or halfway from the entrance of the labyrinth clockwise to the marker at cup 84.

What is in this case the significance of 154?

We note²⁹ that it is one more than 153, the number of fishes caught in the net of Peter when he was fishing with six other disciples after the crucifixion.³⁰ They were altogether seven disciples in the boat and therefore five were missing.³¹

undeniable that a current of corruption inherent to any large scale human enterprise, exploding today with an array of scandals spanning the range of human sinfulness is also a fact.

²⁵ According to Cucherat.

²⁶ “The heart of Catholicism is a living experience of unity in Christ, which far transcends all conceptual formulations. What too often has been overlooked is that Catholicism is the taste and experience of eternal life.” (Pramuk, Christopher, *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton*. Collegeville MN, The Liturgical Press, 2009, p. 9, footnote 30.

²⁷ See Appendix 4; Structure of the Malachy Prophecy in the Context of the 42 Patriarchal Generations and the 266 Papal Generations.

²⁸ As Valentin Tomberg explains (Tomberg 1985, 325-26) twelve is the number of modalities of the will and its actions. Seven is the number of basic modalities of feeling and imagination; three is the numerical law of thought and words; one, lastly, is the number of the self who thinks, feels, and wills. The monad therefore reveals itself through the *trinity* underlying thought and word, through the *septenary* underlying feeling and imagination and through the *duodenary* underlying will and action. The sum of the numbers of reality—one, three, seven, and twelve—is twenty-two (not twenty-three, since *one* transcends the others and includes them in itself).

²⁹ Note that the number 153 is mathematically interesting: It is equal to the sum of the natural numbers

1-17; it is one of just five numbers equal to the sum of the cubes of its digits, i.e. $1^3 + 5^3 + 3^3 = 1 + 125 + 27 = 153$; in medieval numerical symbolism (cf Hopper 1995, 75): “Taking the square of a number was to give it extension; taking the cube was to add the dimension of height. A circular number was defined as a number which reproduces itself when it is raised to various powers (e.g. 5 when squared gives 25, when cubed, 125, etc. all ending in 5). When a number was cubed, it was considered to have reached the third dimension and was said to be “spherical.” It was also representative of the totality or of the supernatural world (3, as opposed to 4 for the natural world—the world of the four elements). Taking the digits individually, 153 is characteristically an abstract re-statement at the end of the Gospel of John (21.11) of the preamble of this Gospel for “1” is “in the beginning” as the origin of all numbers. And as “the Word was with God,” so is one with itself—complete, without a second, and all encompassing—itsself as itself as “the Word was with God.”

“All things were made by him” as all numbers arise from the One: *Omnia ab uno* (cf Appendix 5) “And without him was not anything made” as without “One” no number can be. For the *Divine One*, seeing its reflection in its own substance, sees the *Two*, its perfect image. Then, there *appears* to be *One* and *Two*, not to be confused, however, with the notion of One as Unity or oneness and One as unit, or digit, as in $1 + 1 = 2$. In the symbolism of the esoteric traditions, One is without a second. It can neither be repeated nor added to itself. Only *One* truly exists; all numbers come from it as modes of it. It all takes place in the domain of appearances. Consequently in this domain arises “space” to mark this apparent distinction between *One* and *Two*. That is the *Three*, consubstantial with *One* and *Two*, which constitutes the *realization* of their dynamic unity. This dynamic unity, marked by *Three*, is the eternal flow or dance within the divine substance that the Eastern Christian tradition calls *perichoresis*, referring to the interconnected, self-giving exchange between the divine persons. Within the *One* and consubstantial with it, *Two* and *Three* then form *Five*.

“That was made in him was life” as *Five*—the number of life.

“And the life was the light of men”—incomplete in itself as wholly dependent on the light of God, the Trinity, as the light of the Moon is a reflection of the light of the Sun. So it is with five, the addition of two and three, in itself incomplete compared with the perfection of six (the product of 2 by 3). For five includes the duality of “two,” the supernatural order of “three,” and the natural order of “four.” Through five, therefore, “one” reaches “six”—six where the sum of the factors is equal to their product, i.e. $1 + 2 + 3 = 1 \times 2 \times 3 = 6$ the “perfect” number—emblematic of the perfection of the sixth day and therefore of the whole creation of God and numbers. In conclusion, one is in the beginning, five is the light of men, and three, the trinity (3) that holds the perfect creation (6) together on earth (4) as in heaven (7).

In the context of Malachy’s prophecy, 153 is also interesting when seen as the product of $9 \times 17 = 153$ for verse 9 of chapter 17 of Revelation states that “and here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads [of the beast] are the seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth” while verse 18 clearly says, “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” This, to some, is a clear indication of the Church of Rome.

Now, the 153rd pope since Peter was St. Leo IX (1049-1054) who began the reformation of the papacy, later pursued by Gregory VII (1073-1085) in an effort to root out corruption. He enforced the celibacy of priests, centralized power and decision making in Rome and assumed some of the prerogatives of former Roman emperors. Thus was the beast fought a first time. But it is also now apparent that that reform (the Gregorian reform) has run its course and that some of the difficulties encountered by the Church nowadays are the results of a thousand years of interpretation and usages from its imperial structure to the administration of a curia, by now sclerotic and not exempt from corruption, to the celibacy of priests, etc. All this maladapted to the present world.

In the Christian tradition, as Schimmel (1993, 221) points out, 17 is $10 + 7$; 10 for the Ten Commandments and 7 for the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit—*lex et gratia*. Nine, on the other hand, is a number associated often with the Virgin so that 153, i.e. 9×17 in its beneficial aspect, announces the completion of the law by the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the intercession of the Virgin. And so the implication is that the woman sitting on the seven hills—the Church of Rome—will eventually be rescued by the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the intercession of Mary.

³⁰ John 21: 1-19. Note that Peter and his fellow apostles were asked to draw the fish upon Christ’s command: “Cast your net *on the right side* of the ship and ye shall find.” He did what was said. Obviously before, they had been casting their nets on the left—the wrong side of the ship (Church) in a part of the human sea that yielded nothing. Characteristically this is the last chapter of the Gospel of John.

153 may be written $100 + 50 + 3$

100, marks the totality, or the end of all things³²

50 is $49 + 1$ or $(7 \times 7) + 1$, i.e. 7×7 [years] sanctified in the 50th as in the Jubilee³³—a sanctified unity.

3 is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, of *caritas*—love³⁴

153 is therefore the sanctification of the totality of things accomplished through the love of the Holy Spirit.

Having brought their boat and fish load to land, Jesus invited the seven disciples to a dinner he had prepared for them.

As soon then as they came to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.” (John 21:9).

Jesus saith to them: Come and dine. (John 21:12)

And Jesus cometh and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise. (John 21:13)

Fish is the symbol of Christ himself—the spirit of the depths and his zodiacal sign. So when he gives the disciples fish, it is of his spirit that they partake, and when he offers bread, it is his body, as he said at the last supper. What we are witnessing is therefore the first Eucharist after the Resurrection celebrated on the beach of Lake Tiberias. As for the fire on which the fish is broiled—in which the spirit is tried—it is symbolic of the baptism of fire that Jesus went through in his Passion and that the disciples and eventually the Church will have to undergo before resurrection and final beatitude.

Peter had drawn the net (which didn’t break despite its load of 153 great fishes). The great fishes are the sanctified totality bound by the strong net of charity, of love and tradition, that the substance of the mystical Church is. So that $153 + 1 = 154$,³⁵ the net of 153 fish + Peter represent the Church and its pope. And as the fish is destined for broiling, so are Peter and the Church.

³¹ Therefore the continuity was broken ($7 + 5 = 12$); 5, the light of men is missing and 12, the completion cannot be attained. The net remains empty in spite of the effort of the 7. When the presence of Christ, *the light of men*, is realized, everything becomes possible—the net fills with 153 fish.

³²Hopper 1995, 55, 103.

³³Hopper 1995, 25, 74.

³⁴Hopper 1995, 114-117; 122.

³⁵ Note that 153 by digital addition is $1 + 5 + 3 = 9$, the number symbolic of the Blessed Mother and the Church while 154 gives $1 + 5 + 4 = 10 = 1 + 0 = 1$, the perfection of unity representing the Church and its Head.

To make it clearer, Jesus persistently and probingly asks Peter: “Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?”³⁶ To which Peter answered: “Yea, Lord: Thou knowest that I love thee.” And Jesus said: “Feed my lambs.” Then Jesus asked Peter the same question. Upon the same answer by Peter, Jesus tells him: “Feed my sheep.” For the third time, Jesus asks again the same question. Then “Peter was grieved”³⁷ ... and he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.” Then Jesus goes on to predict to Peter what he had already shown the disciples with his broiling of the fishes, namely that eventually “another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” Finally he tells him: “Follow me.” All this a clear prefiguration of what is to befall the Church, of what Malachy’s prophecy announces when describing the task of this other Peter—*Petrus Romanus*.³⁸

3. On the Papal Succession

What does all this mean for the papal succession and can we predict when it will take place if we assume the prophecy authentic and true?³⁹

With the passing of John Paul II the 264th pope in the Vatican list of popes and “assuming” that Saint Peter became “pope” in 32 of this era, as Malachy would have assumed, the average length of each pontificate has been $(2005 - 32)/264 = 7.4735$ years, or 2730 days, i.e. close to seven years, five months, and twenty days.

However, with the announcement on February 11, 2013 that Benedict XVI was resigning on February 28, 2013 at 8 pm, we see that, having been made pope on April 19, 2005, 2730 days later comes to October 11, 2012. This would, on the average, mark the

³⁶ Calling Simon, Son of Jonas, Jesus—himself a figure of Jonas, the prophet, who had stayed in the belly of the fish for three days as Jesus had in hell during the Harrowing of Hell—in a sense, takes on Peter as an adopted son as he had given John to be the son of Mary.

³⁷ The insistence of Jesus calling three times in succession to Peter might have been to remind him that his faith was not as strong after all and that the repetitions were not superfluous for did not Peter deny his Lord three times “before the cock crowed?”

³⁸ As described in the prophecy, “In extreme persecution the seat of the Holy Roman Church will be occupied by *Petrus Romanus*, who will feed the sheep through many tribulations, at the term of which the City of the Seven Hills will be destroyed, and the terrible judge will judge his people. The End.

³⁹ We make no claims here as to its truth or authenticity. We simply consider “what if...”

end of his pontificate. In actuality, extending from April 19, 2005 to February 28, 2013 it lasted 2870 days, that is 140 days or 4 months and 20 days more than the average.⁴⁰

At the end of Benedict's reign, the average length of the pontificate has therefore slightly changed to 7.4755 years, but in round figures remains at 2,730 days so that, again, based on the average, *Petrus Romanus*, by whatever name, would end his expected pontificate approximate 2730 days after, say, April 1, 2013, i.e. September 20, 2020.

With the range of age of the "papabile," this could easily extend into the 2020s barring any unexpected event.

However, from astrological considerations which pervade such speculations, since it takes 72 years to move one degree through the zodiac, the movement from the time of the beginning of the Christian era would be $2020/72 = 28.0555\dots$ degrees. The significant figure of 28 is exceeded by 0.0555 corresponding to $72 \times 0.0555 = 4$ years.

Given the importance⁴¹ attached to the number 28, this number can be thought of astrologically and numerologically to mark an important point in the era and therefore in the pontificate of the new pope, marking the year $2020 - 4 = 2016$. On the other hand, if we consider the number 112 an important cyclic number, we count $2016/112 = 18$ such cycles exactly, completed in the year 2016.⁴²

By gematria we obtain $18 = 10 + 8$, where 10 signifies I in the Greek alphabet and 8, H so that $18 = IH$ which constitutes the Greek initials of the name of Jesus.⁴³ Furthermore 18 sums up to 9, the 9 waiting for the 10, the near perfect for the perfect—the completion of the papal line in the age of Pisces waiting for the completion of the age and the dawn of the new age of Aquarius and the return of Christ. And in the case of Chartres, where the Church is also considered as the body of the Holy Mother, the number characteristic of pregnancy, giving birth to the returning Christ.

⁴⁰ Notice however that the convention of starting the year with January the 1st has not always been so. For a considerable amount of time, and in many countries, March 25th has often been taken as the 1st of the year. With that in mind, February 28, 2013 would still be in the year 2012.

⁴¹ 28 is an important astronomical number associated with the Moon and the Sun, as we have seen, but also in astrology. In one of the main medieval manuals of astrology, the *Mathesis* of Firmicus Maternus, it is used in establishing horoscopes (see Hopper, 1995, 23-24).

⁴² In medieval Christian exegesis number 18 is sometimes taken to mean the fulfillment of the law through grace ($10 + 8$); also as faith in the Trinity coordinated with good works (3×6). (Schimmell, 1993, 222.)

⁴³ Hopper, 1995, 59.

Therefore 18 exact turns around the labyrinth would be the analogy in years from the birth of Christ to the enthronization of St. Peter and the whole pontifical line from beginning to end while spelling the name of Jesus Christ, indicating indeed “the fulfillment of the law through grace.”

Notice that if, as was believed of the Fathers, the birth of Christ inaugurated the age of Pisces, in 2016, just two degrees will be required to complete the sign of Pisces before Aquarius appears. This corresponds to $72 \times 2 = 144$ years. Years of trouble, tribulations, and convulsions, no doubt.⁴⁴

This last number is again most significant from the apocalyptic viewpoint.⁴⁵ It confirms the apocalyptic character of the whole numerology associated with the prophecy, the labyrinth and, of course, the cycle of Easter.

Concerning 144, it is 12×12 . As Hopper⁴⁶ remarks, following Aquinas: “One of the 12, (i.e. 3×4) signifies (as always) faith in the Trinity diffused in the four parts of the world [or 3, the spiritual world, times 4, the corporeal world] the other [12], represents the doctrine of the 12 apostles or the 12 tribes.”⁴⁷

4. On the Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI

It is now public knowledge that Benedict XVI had been considering his exit for quite some time and therefore had the opportunity to plan it with great care. An event that has not taken place in 598 years deserves to be structured so as to carry as meaningfully and memorably as possible the message that it signifies. And so by embedding it into a physical structure and preferably a periodic, natural one such as the solar system, all elements of the message will remain *in secula seculorum* as long as the world lasts and the message itself will recur to be re-presented to the memory of generations. The letter, so to speak, the historical aspect of the message, will be conserved by a virtually

⁴⁴ Here again, notice that therefore 28 degrees has been covered in the zodiac since the birth of Christ (another clue left by the pope in his resignation statement) implying with the Roman Christian cycle coming to an end that trouble lies ahead.

⁴⁵ Revelations 7:4.: “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” Note that the thousand here is considered the ultimate of numbers and signifies perfect and the magnitude of hope (cf. Hopper, 1995, 75).

⁴⁶ Hopper, 1995, 75.

⁴⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio II in Apocalypsum VII.*

indestructible natural, physical monument. Through tradition the allegorical meaning as well as the tropological or moral sense, and, eventually through time and practice, its spiritual import will evolve as they are revealed within the tradition.⁴⁸

The choice of the date of both announcement and actual resignation are symbolically very significant and should be considered as conveying the actual message of resignation rather than the official one of old age and lack of strength—which, no doubt, are real—and the fact that the time of 8 pm marking the end of Benedict’s reign is just the time he usually he ends work every day—which indeed may be so—according to the Associated Press, January 14, 2013.

5. Concerning the Date of the Announcement of Benedict XVI

Monday February 11. Why choose that specific date among 365 possibilities? Does that date carry any special significance? A point to notice is that in Rome, as in all of Europe in general, that date would be written 11/2—the 11th day of the 2nd month. These figures spell the number 112. This number is the number of popes included in the Malachy Prophecy. It is also, as we have seen, the number of days in the Easter cycle from the Sunday of the Septuagesima to the Saturday before Pentecost Sunday. We have also shown that the cycle of Easter and the Malachy Prophecy share the same numerical structure. Besides, we have already seen that it is a structure built into the labyrinth of the Cathedral of Chartres for its use for the Easter *computus*.

Another point of interest is the fact that Monday, the day of the announcement, is Moon-Day, *lunae dies*, the day of the moon, with all the symbolism that this luminary implies. The new moon occurred February 10th so that on February 11th the moon virtually invisible⁴⁹—a pale, thin crescent in the Roman sky, like an abandoned scythe in the field after the harvest⁵⁰ seems to announce the new, invisible Church. Though

⁴⁸ What is remarkable is that this consciously structured event fits so perfectly well into the numerological structure of the Malachy Prophecy that it indicates on the part of its designer something like a conscious effort to conform to it. The implication is the existence of at least a “cautious acceptance” of the Prophecy at the highest level of the Vatican as opposed to the official “cautious denial.”

⁴⁹ The moon rise took place in Rome at 7:24 a.m. and the moon set at 7:19 p.m., only 2.1% of its surface being illuminated. As the moon rose in front of the sun, the sun was already shining full force overpowering the moon visibility by the intensity of its own light and rendering it close to invisible

⁵⁰ Perhaps a reminder that the worker in the field, tired by the work, abandons the work before finishing it.

invisible as the unseen portion of the moon “clothed” by the radiance of the sun, the Church—the mystical body of Christ made up of all the faithful, past, present and future—will nevertheless remain as real as the unseen, hidden moon.

This is as it is with John’s vision⁵¹ when

a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head, a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads...and the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of God that they should feed her there twelve hundred and sixty days...⁵²

So is the pope, through this choice of circumstances, announcing *urbi et orbi*, the *orbi* extending here within the whole orb of the solar system, that the Church is going to elect its *last* pope as the Malachy prophecy implies and also enter, at the same time, into a cycle of redemption? As Christ underwent his Passion and physical death, will the Church and her shepherd also?

Some clues to the wishes of Benedict XVI may be gleaned from the saints celebrated on that day. Among them is St. Benedict of Aniane, Abbot (AD 821),⁵³ reformer and restorer of monasticism throughout the western empire. “He was instrumental in drawing up the canons for the reformation of monasteries at the Council of Aachen in 817. His statutes, the *capitula* of Aachen, were annexed to the Rule of St. Benedict (of Nursia). His most important work is the *Concordia Regulorum*, the Concord of Rules, in which he gives those of Benedict of Nursia in combination with those of other patriarchs of monastic observance to show their similarities.”

By choosing the name “Benedict,” Cardinal Ratzinger seemed to indicate his intention to follow in the tracks of Benedict of Nursia, patron of Europe, credited as being the cornerstone of the spiritual foundation of European civilization. Though it is too early to pass judgment on his pontificate, Benedict XVI’s doesn’t appear to have been very successful in this, the re-evangelization of Europe, which such work would require.

⁵¹ Apoc. 12:1-17.

⁵² What or who is, in the context of the present day Church, this *red* dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads? With seven-crowned heads and ten horns we have indeed the image of a princely monster with more clout than wit, it would seem. And in this age of deep-seated obduracy throughout power structures, governmental or ecclesiastical, one might be inclined to see in it that red robed body of the cardinalate.

⁵³ Butler’s *Lives of the Saints*, 1991, 43-44.

One may also note that the liturgy of the day in the Proper of the Saints for February 11th is particularly well suited to the event. It is devoted to the celebration of the apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes.⁵⁴ The Gospel reading at the Mass is that of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-31), as the pope's announcement is a form of annunciation and a prefiguration of the prominent role that Our Lady will take over the new form of dispensation. While in the *Introit* (Apoc. 21:2; Ps. 44.2) we are taken back to the vision of John telling of the coming down from heaven of the New Jerusalem and therefore told of the renewal of the Church and the superseding of the old hierarchy by a spiritual one. This text ends with the verse from the Psalm, "My heart hath uttered a good word; I speak my works to the King"—what Benedict would want to say, one may presume.

The Collect: "O God, by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, You prepared a worthy habitation for your Son," emphasizes that the whole renewal will take place through the intercession of Our Lady, and the Epistle (Apoc. 11:19; 12:1-10) is striking in the circumstance: "The temple of God was opened in heaven; and the ark of His testament was seen in His temple and there were lightnings and voice and an earthquake and great hail."⁵⁵ And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars...⁵⁶

6. Concerning the Date of Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI

As is apparent, all the dates seem to be designed to convey specific messages by means of numerology. For instance the date of February 28, 2/28, contains the number 2 for the month and 28 for the day. Numerologically "two in religious traditions means disunion, the falling apart of absolute, divine Unity and is therefore the number connected with the world creation."⁵⁷ Consequently, through "2" the attention is directed to the earthly Church. "It is a number involved with contradictions, antitheses, discord,

⁵⁴ Between February 11th and July 16th 1858, the Blessed Virgin appeared 18 times and showed herself to St. Bernadette Soubirous in the grotto at Lourdes. On March 25th she said to the fourteen year old shepherdess, "I am the Immaculate Conception."

⁵⁵ Rain and lightning on Rome and St. Peter's Cathedral indeed occurred that day and shortly after, a great sign appeared in Siberia with the fall of a meteorite.

⁵⁶ As our previous study has shown, the Cathedral of Chartres, dedicated to the assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin and St. John the Baptist, is also implicitly dedicated through the icon of the *Belle Verrière* to the woman in the sun and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars (see Appendices 6 and 7).

⁵⁷ Schimmel, 1993, 46.

polarity.” Note that “February” philologically derives from Latin *Februs*, festival of purification, which used to take place in Rome during that month. The implication is that the date alludes to the need for purification and that will take place amid turmoil, discord, and chaos.

From the arithmetical viewpoint 28 is a perfect number, being the sum of its divisors, ($28 = 1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14$) and, as previously mentioned, it is connected with the moon in its 28 phases ($28 = 4 \times 7$) which leads to “the idea expressed by Albertus Magnus that the mystical body of Christ in the Eucharist appears in 28 phases.”⁵⁸ So 28 stands for moon and mystical body of Christ, i.e. for the spiritual Church, which means that the process of purification referred to above is to apply to the Church. That is the message conveyed by the date of resignation of Benedict XVI, a message that is given to the newly-elected pope.

Regarding the date and time chosen by the pope to resign, one should remember that in the ancient liturgy and, as is still the practice nowadays in the Jewish tradition, the new day, in this case the 28th of February, begins as the sun goes down on the 27th.⁵⁹

Soon after this new lunar day—the 28th—will see the moon rise in the Roman sky at 8:03 pm, a gibbous moon beginning visibly to wane into the surrounding darkness of the deepening night.⁶⁰ When one connects this with the rich ecclesiastical symbolism of the moon as the Church, the message could not be more poignant. This diminishing gibbous moon—image of a diminishing worldly influence of the Church—cannot be but a reminder of the words of the Baptist—the voice of one crying in the wilderness—“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)

⁵⁸ Ibid, 238.

⁵⁹ This in accordance with Genesis: “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night and the evening and the morning were the first day.” (Gen.1:5) Note also that the first day of the week in the Christian tradition is Sunday. Therefore the announcement of the Pope’s resignation on Monday took place on the second day of the week marked by God making the firmament and dividing the waters (Gen. 1:6-7)—a grandiose and solemn background to a papal announcement. The actual resignation, on the other hand, took place on a Thursday, the fifth day of the week, evocative in the Christian tradition of Maundy Thursday, the day commemorating Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples, a fitting day for the adieux of his vicar on earth to his closer followers.

⁶⁰ The new moon will have occurred on February 25th at 9:26 pm in Rome and will begin to show its incipient waning on the night of the 27th, i.e. on the new 28th. Of course, the “hour of the lunar day,” when the moon rises would not be a pm, since these hours would be counted from sundown, but clocks run on a solar day and the clock would indeed say 8:03 pm in Rome.

That day, February 28th, is the feast in the Roman Catholic calendar of St. *Romanus*, Abbot (circa 460), a hermit who lived in the forest of the Jura mountains between present France and Switzerland. Whoever heard of *Petrus Romanus* (the presumed last pope) need not many dots to make the connection.

The moon is also representative of the Most Blessed Mother and, again, appropriately, Benedict XVI's last day in the office of Supreme Pontiff, February 27th, is the Feast of St. Gabriel of our Lady of Sorrows. No doubt, Our Lady has much ground for being sorrowful at this point, considering the state of the Church riddled by endless scandals of perversion, prevarication, loose finances, not to mention other behaviors indicative of a state of hierarchical, systemic corruption.

Fittingly, that day, the Epistle from I John 2:14-16 is addressed to young men—which should be a comfort and good advice to aspiring priests—“I write to you, young men,” says John, “because you are strong and the word of God abideth in you and you have overcome the wicked one... If any man loves the world, the charity of the Father is not in him—For all that is of the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes...”

As for the Gospel that day (Mark 10:13-31) it is the passage where Jesus tells his disciples: “Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.” In the wake of the children abuse scandal, a stark reminder.

And so, to justify his “early retirement,” will Benedict XVI be able to say with the Psalmist as the *Tract* of the day requires: “I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners”? (Ps. 83:11)

7. On the Separation of the Two Dates

Of course, labor laws require at least two weeks for an employee to notify his employer of his desire to quit. The interesting feature concerning these two dates chosen is that they are separated by seventeen days from the announcement to the actual resignation. What is the numerological import of this? We may begin by remarking that there are seventeen verses in chapter 12 of the Apocalypse describing the woman in the sun and the battle in heaven between the dragon and Michael. And that this passage in the vision of John has traditionally been interpreted as the struggle of the Church before the

second coming, which is the expectation of Easter. And in these days of scandals in the Church, particularly the world-wide child abuse at the hands of a celibate clergy, should we consider it a mere coincidence or perhaps a stern and pointed admonition that this number of seventeen days may well also be there for directing the attention to Luke 17: 1-2; “Then he said to his disciples, ‘It is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than he should offend one of these little ones.’”

Schimmel⁶¹ reminds us also that “In the Bible, 17 is connected with the flood, which began on the 17th day of the second month to end on the 17th day of the 7th month. At that point Noah had reached Mt. Arrarat. One has speculated that 17 may be connected with the Ark.”

A number of elements are of interest here. First, the connection with the Ark, for the Church has often been considered as an ark, a ship, or *nave*, and the ark and tabernacle, are terms often associated with the Virgin. We also notice that, in the flood story, the flood lasts 5 months, where 5 is the number for life which, indeed, is the purpose of the ark, namely the continuation of life on earth—all this, a reminder of the true function of the Church.

Another interesting feature of 17 is its connection with 28 through 5, as seen in the traditional magic square based on 5.⁶² In this square each row, column, or diagonal adds up to 15, but the square formed by the four elements in the lower left corner add up to 17 while the remaining numbers add up to 28. The implication is that the interval of 17 days between the two days is a pointer to the link between these two events and not only the moon (28) but also the sun, whose cycle is also governed by number 28.

Number 17 plays also an important role in understanding certain parables, for example the relation of 17 with 153, the number of fish caught by the disciples (John 21:11) and the meaning of that number in connection with the Christian tradition and the Malachy Prophecy. In this we see that $9 \times 17 = 153$, implying here that through 17 the interval linking the two events, and the intervention of 9, the number for the virgin, we reach 153, the abundant harvest or, in plain language, that as a result of the events under

⁶¹ Schimmel, 1993, 219.

⁶² Schimmel, 1993, 220. See appendix 8.

consideration and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the Church will reach an abundant harvest.

All this makes sense, of course, on the assumption of the authenticity of Malachy's prophecy. Right from the beginning, however, there were skeptics.

8. The Controversy

In Malachy's prophecy, and in the view of some, the popes are characterized not by name but by a short Latin phrase. Cucherat⁶³ reproduces them in his book with, in addition, the pontifical names and dates of the reigns up to his own contemporary pope, Pius IX (1846-1878). He also supplied a French rendering of the Latin phrases. The phrases are generally quite sibylline in character and leave thereby a great deal to the ingenuity of the reader.⁶⁴ If one can always justify post readings on known popes, it is quite another matter to try to predict the principal characteristics of the reign of a certain future pope, let alone a name.

Since the publication of these prophecies by de Wion in 1595 critics have not been lacking. However, in the absence of factual evidence, critics and proponents have had to base their arguments mostly on their own sense of probability, intuition, and inclination. Those, like Cucherat, who favor authenticity bet on the probity of de Wion and others of standing and repute who have supported it while critics who dispute the very provenance and date of the prophecy itself often impute motives to the presumed author of the "prophecy," which they often framed into a conspiracy theory of sorts.

Cucherat, for example, considered de Wion being a Benedictine and a known historian, as a positive regarding the question of authenticity—such was the reputation of the Benedictines after giants of erudition and scholarship like Mabillon (1632-1707), Monfaucon (1655-1741) and others of the Congregation of St. Maur in the seventeenth century. Their science and integrity was somehow assumed to reflect back on members of their order even more than a century before their days!

⁶³ Cucherat 1873, 5-12. In the second part of his book, (61-241), Cucherat gives an explanation of these mottoes up to his own time (1873, Pious IX).

⁶⁴ Cf. Appendix 1. Here the French of Cucherat has been translated into English, which does not make it any more limpid!

Ciacconius, a Spanish Dominican⁶⁵ living in Rome in the days of de Wion and who had been patriarch of Alexandria, was eventually consulted by de Wion. Ciacconius interpreted the cryptic Latin sentences.⁶⁶ The fact that the list is truncated at the year 1590, the time when it was allegedly discovered, is proof for some that the complete list was made up afterward and that the truncated list in the hand of Ciacconius was but a forgery destined to influence the decision of the conclave that was in the process of electing a new pope to succeed Urban VII who reigned but barely a month.

According to Cucherat, de Wion's discovery was favorably received and commented upon by many well known orthodox Catholic theologians from across Europe (France, Italy, Germany, Spain) and even some Protestants through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and up to the days of Cucherat in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

Besides the reputation of de Wion and the support of "experts" mentioned above, the arguments in favor of the authenticity of the prophecy lacking the testimony, oral or written, of Malachy himself, relied on a "nomenclature⁶⁷ corresponding so perfectly, in number as well as in the order and symbolism of the series of pontifical sovereigns"⁶⁸— that it forces, in a way, one's judgment.⁶⁹ However, as he points out, "it is certain that if

⁶⁵ The Dominicans are another order reputed for their scholarship (Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus in the 13th century belonged to it). Ciacconius had written a book *The Life and the Acts of the Popes and Cardinals*.

⁶⁶ On pages 299 – 304 Cucherat (1873) gives the extant Latin commentary of Ciacconius, which stops with pope #74.

⁶⁷ i.e. on the descriptive adequacy of the Latin "oracles" for characterizing a pope's reign.

⁶⁸ Cucherat, 1873. 31.

⁶⁹ In our study of the labyrinth from the viewpoint of the *computus*, we saw the *computus*, a method of time reckoning originally devised for computing the date of Easter developing into an integrating factor bringing together matters of mathematics, cosmology, astronomy, astrology and medicine, chronology, patristic literature, history, liturgy and even etymology to solve important liturgical problems of finding the date of "future events" and "divine celebration."

Given the record of liturgical dances in labyrinths of some northern French cathedrals, it certainly can be said the labyrinths were designed with "divine celebrations" in mind. Further, the possibility of prediction of the date of Easter by using a labyrinth, as at Chartres, as an abacus for implementing the *computus* algorithm would qualify for linking *computus*, labyrinth, and prediction (a mild form of prophecy) together in the mind of twelfth century computists and labyrinth designers.

Therefore, the facts reported by Faith Wallace ("Number Mystique" in *Early Medieval Computus Texts*" in Koetslier 2005, 2005, 191, n. 38), namely that "probably the oldest extant *computus* MS (Vatican City BAV Reg. lat. 2077) contains, apart from Paschal tables, a treatise on the seven prophetic weeks, and a wind-rose: In short a representation of allegorical numerology" would appear to establish a connection between *computus* and prophecies early on.

one takes the sentences in isolation and without having studied the history of the popes to whom they are applied, one, often, can only see in them but puerility, ridicule, or even impropriety”—and he cites: “Innocent IX = insatiable beast; Benedict XIV = rural animal; Leo XII = dog and serpent.” Obviously this is matter for oracular interpretation requiring subtle sense and deep intuition. That is why he (Cucherat) “always cringes when he sees in contemporary publication these sentences by themselves in Latin and French without any commentary.” This, in fact, adds Cucherat, is what drove him to write his book.

Among the early doubters was the Spanish Cistercian, Angel Manriquez, who wrote the history of his own order. His doubts were founded on his sense that “the prophecies did not seem to take enough of their inspiration from the gravity of so holy a man [as Malachy].” It is mostly on the authority of Manriquez that subsequent doubters questioned the authenticity of de Wion’s discovery. Cucherat reviews a number of their arguments presented by two theologians, Moreri, author of a *Grand Dictionnaire* including a rubric on Malachy, and de Vallemont, another ecclesiastical writer, and author of *Eléments de l’Histoire* where he considers the prophecy in its tome III, p. 85 ff.

Their objections are what is to be expected from professional historians, namely “Where was it found and how, under what form? How could it have been hidden for four hundred and fifty years since the death of Malachy without anyone mentioning it ever anywhere, not even Malachy’s closest friend St. Bernard or a pope?” In other words, there is no documentation, written or even oral. The prophecy is something that emerges mid-stream and claims antecedent origin.

Of course, if one assumes the intention of secret at the outset, the argument is disposed of immediately. One can, in fact, see in its later discovery the hand of Providence which reveals it when it becomes needed. As with all such prophecies, and not just in our own day, “conspiracy theorists” read in them what they believed to be hidden behind the surface. De Vallemont, quoted by Cucherat and others before and after him, were of the opinion that “the prophecy” had been “fabricated” in 1590 after the

This may therefore be an element in favor of the plausibility of the authenticity of the Malachy Prophecy which links prophecy, the numerology of the Easter cycle, and the design of the Chartres labyrinth.

death of Urban VII perhaps during the conclave where Gregory XIV was elected. The conclave lasted two months and eight days and seemed way too long for some cardinals...Someone, to shorten the proceedings and get Cardinal Nicolas Sfondrate, a Milanese and Bishop of Cremona elected, composed “the prophecy.” This argument appears to have originated with Father Méneſtrier,⁷⁰ in the ſeventeenth century. Méneſtrier was a Jeſuit and a famous polymath, well known in the Pariſian ſalons of the time. One has to note that Méneſtrier did not furniſh any evidence to ſubſtantiate his account.⁷¹ His account was taken up by others ſuch as de Vallemont, as proof, however!

Their attempt at juſtification is based on what they detect as a near perfect matching between popes and ſentences before 1590 and a much more controversial one after that date. However, Cucherat⁷² and others after him were able, to their declared ſatisfaction, to find ſufficient adequacy between popes and ſentences paſt 1590 for ſpeaking in favor of authenticity.

In addition, other objections were raiſed—of form, of content, and on ſcriptural grounds. Some objected that antipopes were mixed with true popes in the prophecy but not in the line of ſucceſſion prior to Ceſtine II; others to obſcurity, vagueness, and arbitrarineſs of ſymbols and even to the fact that the Goſpels taught that “ye know neither the hour nor the day wherein the Son of Man cometh” (Matt. 25:13).

To this, Cucherat counters by ſimply inſiſting on the faith he has in de Wion’s intentions, his erudition, and the ſimplicity and matter of fact way with which de Wion preſents the prophecy. The book’s full title, where de Wion introduces the prophecy, is *Lignum vitae ornamentum et decus ecclesiae*; the Tree⁷³ of Life, Ornament and Glory of the Church.

The queſtion has not become clearer over the centuries. The very “cautious denial of the Vatican” and the ſymbolism that apparently preſided over Benedict XVI’s abdi-

⁷⁰ Méneſtrier, 1689.

⁷¹ This argument is picked up by the Spaniſh Benedictine Benito Feijoo in the 1730s.

⁷² Cucherat 1873, 61-241.

⁷³ *Lignum* is “wood,” more ſpecifically “fire wood” but alſo “tree.” De Wion’s book is a panegyric of famous men of the Benedictine order. Malachy was a Cistercian following alſo Benedict’s Rule. There is probably a play on the word *lignum*: theſe men forming a tree of life but alſo conſummated (as firewood) by the love of Chriſt and the glory of his Church or who have been tried by fire. The word *lignum* in Medieval Latin is alſo evocative of the True Croſs.

cation can only encourage the “conspiracy theorists” to frame up ever more fantastic theories.

In more recent times, particularly with the approach of the predicted end of the papal line, interest in the Prophecy has heightened. Discounting the sensational and conspirational theorists, perhaps the most thorough analysis ever of the Prophecy is that of a Belgian Jesuit priest, René Thibaut.⁷⁴

He sees the text of the prophecy as a sixteenth century document and the result of several hands. The first part of the prophecy, corresponding to the list of 71 popes from Celestine II (1143) to Gregory XIII (1572) would be based on the known history of the papacy.⁷⁵ On that basis and other remarks by Ménestrier, Thibaut sees in that list a work posterior to the events supposedly prophesied. However, he also sees in the last forty descriptions a list prepared with a different intention. Whereas the first 71 descriptions are justified by details such as armorial bearings, family or baptismal names, places of birth, titles, etc. i.e. by particulars of a given pope, the last 40, according to Thibaut, refer rather to the tenor of the times of a specific pontificate.

It is not clear why Thibaut sees in the first 71 descriptions the work of two hands. First an original writer, then a “forger”⁷⁶ who tweaks some of the descriptions here and there and that Thibaut restitutes to their “original” state—presumably because this “original” state better suits what he, Thibaut, wants them to be!⁷⁷

As Thibaut recognizes, however, (p.11) seeing the whole prophecy as a unity, as we have pointed out (n. 7 supra), the history of the Church and the pontificate are made to come in evidence. He concludes that “the loyalty of de Wion is unquestionable though

⁷⁴ Thibaut, 1951.

⁷⁵ Giacconius, the expert to whom De Wion had turned to make sense of the descriptions, had written a history of the popes. Some, according to Thibaut, even conjectured that Giacconius wrote the description himself together with the commentaries while Thurston (1915, 120-161) detects in the text borrowings from Onuphios Panvinius, one of the great historians of the Renaissance who had published at Venice in 1557 *Romani Pontifices* (some notes on the Roman pontiffs).

⁷⁶ This forger would have, in some ways, also been able to get rid of all manuscripts that did not carry his alterations (Thibaut, 1951, 15) a rather bold and unlikely event or possibility.

⁷⁷ As an example (p. 39- 40) the description pertaining to Benedict XIII (1394 – 1423), an antipope, *is luna cosmedina*, which, according to Thibaut, means nothing. “We conjecture,” he says, “that the original text [i.e. before the intervention of the forger] was *luna de sole*. This was a way of saying that the antipope, Peter de Luna, borrowed his shine from the legitimate pope.” Thibaut can then place the modified description into a structure associated with *crux de cruce*. “Then ‘moon of the sun’ would represent the Virgin Mary getting all her glory from Christ. But how would the forger think to replace *de sole* by *cosmedina*? One needs to know that facing *the church of St. Mary in Cosmedina* where Peter de Luna had tenure was a small temple called since 1560 *Santa Maria del Sole*. Is this not very natural? Thibaut dixit.

his critique does not carry much weight. The author of the Prophecy is unknown. Neither de Wion, nor even Giacconius perhaps, knew him.”

Thibaut will therefore concentrate his analysis on the last forty entries, which he considers genuine and prophetic. Each description is considered as a code, some form of cryptogram, often containing a chronogram⁷⁸ giving a precise date for certain events during the reign pertaining to a particular description.

His analysis appears indubitable, numbers appear to check. It is premises that are sometimes difficult to accept. He recognizes it himself⁷⁹ as when he decides to add the numbers of syllables, words, and phrase members in the last description relative to *Petrus Romanus* to decide the number of Roman pontiffs under the symbol *Petrus Romanus* and he counts

Number of letters	158	
Number of syllables	67	
Number of words	26	
Number of phrase members	9	
Total	260	Et voilà!

And he adds: “The idea of adding letters, syllables, words, and members of phrase does not at all impose itself to the mind. Who is to assure us that it has occurred to the mind of the author of the prophecy?”

He believes however in the prophetic gift of the author of the last forty descriptions and that, even if this author was not conscious of it, this prophetic gift of his, as the poetic gift of a great poet, mysteriously would include these arrangements within the text.

If we accept these gifts in the writer of a prophecy, nothing much may be presented against it. However, the extreme subtlety of Thibaut’s arguments incline one to think that they owe perhaps more to the ingenuity of a cryptographer full of verve reading

⁷⁸ A chronogram is a phrase in which certain letters representing Roman numerals, namely the seven letters M, D, C, L, X, V, I, are added together to form a specific date. Chronograms were popular in the Middle Ages and through the eighteenth century. Thibaut describes it as “a date wrapped up in letters” (p. 43). Thus the first description, the one corresponding to Celestine II: *ex castro tiberis* contains the Roman numerals X, C, I, I whose total is 10 + 100 + 1 + 1 = 112, the very number of descriptions and therefore of popes to follow.

⁷⁹ Cf infra...

the text rather than to the inspiration of a sober prophet delivering it. Generally, Thibaut prefaces his most audacious hypothesis by the phrase “the idea occurred to us that....”

It is interesting that Thibaut in many of his combinations and cryptograms ends up with the date 2012, which he characterizes as the end of an era within the Church marked by the destruction of the city of Rome.⁸⁰ He also makes parallels between the first 56 popes and the last 56 in the list of the 112 starting with Celestine II, which he matches with the patriarchs. But he does not elicit the grand symmetry that is so evident on the figure of Appendix 4 (infra).

Perhaps one of the most elaborate of Thibaut’s calculations has indeed to do with the year 2012.⁸¹ One begins to understand here what Einstein meant when he said; “God is subtle but he is not malicious.” And so is Thibaut, we might add.

⁸⁰ Thibaut, 1951, 30. From what we now know of the beginning 21st century it would seem that he was partly prescient in this case. The unexpected abdication of Benedict XVI would seem to confirm it. But as we also know, the city of Rome is still in the same place after 28 centuries.

⁸¹ It is given here to illustrate Thibaut’s method and show that if it is less than straightforward or even convincing at times, it has nevertheless to be considered a monument of ingenuity. This is like watching an acrobat at the Cirque du Soleil or a cat of nine lives always falling on his feet.

The following is a translation of pp. 43- 45 of his text.

The principal data [namely that there are] still 40 popes before God’s judgment leaves the number of years very uncertain. Beforehand it is impossible to say if this delay represents one, two, three, four, or five centuries! However, the “prophet” knew (we shall prove it) or at least conjectured that the 40 popes would reign 440 years. He knew or conjectured that the length of time of the 40 reigns posterior to St. Pius V, under whose reign he was writing, would begin in 1572 to end up in 2012. Too many indices converge toward this exact date to see in it a fortuitous event. Even if hazard intervened, hazard was not left to itself for hazard is nothing, and of itself, can do nothing. It is for the reader to judge the value of the numerous coincidences that we are going to point out.

Medium corpus pilarum axis in medietate signi.

Thus begins the list of the 40 last descriptions which, according to us, have all escaped the forger’s tamperings. Their mysterious sense will become clearer later, but already we see naturally and overwhelmingly in this the signal of a “middle” or a “new beginning.” We are warned that there remain to come as many years as have already passed since Innocent II (elected in 1130) [i.e. 1572 – 1130 = 442]. Calculation of the numeral letters abounding in the two descriptions confirm this first impression.

MMMMDDCLXVVVIII = 5182

This sum means nothing; at most it suggests 1582, the date when Gregory XIII promulgated the new calendar. Thus 1582 would well mark the beginning of a new year. Let us put aside

MDLXVVVIII = 1582.

There remain MDC = 1600 and MM = 2000. What do these two secular years [i.e. ending a century] have to do with 1582? [Well,] one knows that one of the main points of the calendrical reform was to eliminate the bissext [the intercalary day in leap years] of secular years, with the exception of those who number preceding the double zero is divisible by 4. The years 1600 and 2000 will therefore keep the bisext taken away from the years 1700, 1800, and 1900. This is a way of telling us that the year 2000 would be reached by the 40 popes to come. [Now] we affirm

that this would be exceeded by twelve years: Between the last M of *medium corpus pilarum* and the first M of *axis in medietate signi* we find exactly XII. How do we know that these XII have to be added to MM?

Let's consider the first of the two descriptive statements by itself. Its [numerical] value is

$$\text{MMMDCLVVVII} = 3667, \text{ i.e. } 1667 + 2000$$

The idea occurred to us that 1667 had to be reduced to 1572. In this way we would obtain the extreme years marking the period included by the 40 statements. For [in this case], to MM would be added XII which are thrown back into the following description so as to distinguish this addition from that which belongs to MD. We easily increase 2000 to 2012, but how do we reduce 1667 to 1572? [Simply] by replacing C by V as the text invites us to do by reading CORPV backward: V pro C! [V for C; indeed replacing C by V in MDCLVVVII (1667) gives MDLVVVVII = 1572]. Did the author [of the Prophecy] think of this substitution? Probably not, but do not believe that hazard has thought of it just by itself! Is it not likely that this should be suggested at the very beginning of the 40 descriptions.

[Further] the idea occurred to us that the letters representing numbers in the conclusion [the statement relative to Petrus Romanus, see Appendix 1] should indicate the final year 2012. In the 26 words or 158 letters [of that statement] we find 6 M, 5 D, 6 C, 5 L, 2 X, 20 V, 20 I. These seven quantities are not random. Let us put together the M's and C's on the one hand, the D's and L's on the other, as the equal number of their appearances invites us to do. We obtain 6600 and 2750. If we add 15 I's to the second sum, we get 2765. The remaining 2 X, 20 V, and 5 I's added to the first sum bring it to 6725. These two sums are made up of the same digits. Both point to the year 2012 when count not from the birth of Christ but one, 2765, from the foundation of Rome in 753 B.C. ($2765 - 753 = 2012$). The other, 6725, from the triple 1 [i.e. the beginning] of the Julian period in 4713 B.C. ($6725 - 4713 = 2012$).

[The Julian period is a period of 7980 years where the metonic cycle of 19 years, the solar cycle of 28 years and the Roman indiction cycle of 15 years return to synchronization, i.e. when the beginning of each cycle, its 1, coincide together. The Julian period was introduced in 1583 by Joseph Scalinger (1540 – 1609), an Italian philologist and founder of modern Chronology who named it in honor of his father whose first name happened to be Julius Caesar and is considered one of the great Renaissance scholars. C.F. Evans (1998, 171-175)].

It starts with year 0 in 4713 B.C. and ends with year 7989 in 3267 A.D. We readily notice here that $3267 - 2007 = 1260$. As appendix 4 would seem to confirm, 2007 would then indeed mark the end of an era. So, to put the apocalyptic tenor one step further, one can perhaps state that in the year 2007 we entered the period when "the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed here there a thousand two hundred and three score days (Rev. 12:6) (i.e. 1260 years in prophetic speech, equivalent again to 42 human generations of 30 years or, if actual days are considered, 42 months, i.e. three years and a half of 360 days during which "there was a war in heaven... and the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandment of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Hence, possibly, troubles for 42 generations as preparation for a new age. But what a perfect pendant to the generations from Abraham to Jesus which started all these cycles!

$$42 - 1112 - 42 - 1112 - 42.$$

Coincidences? Hazard? Should we also conclude, as Thibaut, that, in this case, hazard was not left to its own devices?

Thibaut concludes: “The year 2012 will tell whether or not the “prophet” has clearly seen.”

Well, the year 2012 has come and gone. Rome still stands where she has been for the last 28 centuries. Whether future historians, whose job it is to group centuries in meaningful chunks for making sense of history for their own generation, will see a break, an unraveling or a new beginning in this period will have to be left for them to decide. *Qui vivra verra.*

9. Conclusions

Authentic or not, the concordance between numbers found in, or deduced from, the prophecy and those in the Chartres labyrinth show the prophecy as having a numerological structure that conforms, as that of the labyrinth, to the cycle of Easter. The theme of Easter— tribulation, passion, death and resurrection—reinforces the apocalyptic message of the prophesized reign of *Petrus Romanus*,⁸² the presumed last pope, while making it resonate to the strong note of hope of Easter. The Apocalypse then appears more as the revelation, the unveiling that its etymology implies than the destruction of the world that popular culture likes to emphasize. It may be the end of *a* world but not the end of *the* World.

The labyrinth may have therefore been a useful memory device in the process of getting a sense of the eschatological direction of the Church for clerics in the secret of the prophecy, if such there ever were prior to its publication.⁸³

Remembering for each day of the sixteen weeks of the Easter cycle the corresponding characteristic sentences of Malachy and associating them with the feasts of the day, one could form very clear previsions of the trajectory of the life of the earthly Church and the destiny of the papal line of succession.

What we see at work here regarding the nature of prophecies may perhaps be best understood from our viewpoint in the light of another of Malachy’s visions, namely that

⁸² The question now then is “Is *Petrus Romanus*, Franciscus Episcopus Romani?”

⁸³ Note that the idea of applying the Easter cycle, i.e. the model of Christ’s life, Passion, and resurrection to the Church as a whole is something that should not surprise any sincere Christian who is even superficially acquainted with the concept of the *imitatio Christi*, the imitation of Christ, particularly popularized by the Rhenish mystics in the 14th century.

related by St. Bernard of Clairvaux in his *Life of Malachy*.⁸⁴ Intent to bring to Ireland the Cistercianism he had experienced during a visit at Clairvaux in 1140, he selected a location for building a stone oratory in the manner of the Cistercians to replace Irish wooden chapels. He gathered the means for building it and convinced a few of his senior brothers of the worthiness of the project. As Bernard relates it:

Returning from a journey one day as he approached the place he looked at it from some distance away. And behold a great oratory appeared built of stone and extremely beautiful. He considered it carefully, its position, its shape and its arrangement, and when he undertook the work confidently, he first told his vision to the older brethren, but only to a few. Certainly had had attentively noted everything regarding the place, manner, and quality with such diligent observation that once the work was finished, the completed oratory was so like the one he had seen that anyone would believe that he, with Moses, had heard it said: 'See that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown to you on the mount.'
[Hebrews 8:5, citing the Exodus story of God's instructions for fashioning the Tabernacle.] By the same kind of vision the oratory, and in fact the whole monastery build in Saul, had been shown to Him before it was erected.

Malachy's total Clairvaux impressions were "summed up" for him in the building of the oratory. He could then re-collect it in a vision back in Ireland. However, the vision is no photograph stuck onto another of the site. What he re-members is modified to fit the new surroundings.

This, of course, is reminiscent of the rhetorical feature of *copia*, the importance of which Richard Krautheimer⁸⁵ showed to be crucial in understanding "copying" in medieval architecture. In Roman rhetoric (cf. Cicero and *Ad Herennium*), the orator would use a building (real or imaginary) and select some of its architectural features such as receptacles or memory places for concepts, ideas, or facts, to be used later when he retrieves them selectively while "walking in his mind through the building" as his speech proceeds. These items—concepts, ideas, facts or whatever "stored" in the "memory places"—would be picked up and re-presented in a form that is appropriate to the new setting.

Similarly, aware of the common equation, Church/Body of Christ, Malachy, or whoever wrote the prophecy, could use the memorized cycle of Easter arranged around

⁸⁴ Carruthers, 1995, 225 ff.

⁸⁵ Krautheimer, 1969.

Christ's Passion and Resurrection as a path through which the steps of Christ's journey could be assimilated to those of the Church up to the time of the Prophecy and then extrapolated to the end of the cycle. In this he might have been inspired by Bede's fundamental assumption underlying *de templo*, one of Bede's exegetical works that "since the Incarnation and Passion of Christ the Church had spiritually replaced the Tabernacle and the Temple on earth but was itself incomplete, awaiting its future fulfillment in heaven."⁸⁶ The Malachy Prophecy then gets articulated from his vision where the Church moves, *mutatis mutandis*, Christ-like, through her passion, death, and resurrection.

Through this, we get a glimpse at how prophecies are a way of "remembering the future." Carruthers,⁸⁷ basing her retelling on Boncompagno da Signa's discussion of rhetorical *memoria*, mentions that Boncompagno says that *memoria*, the means by which humans comprehend time, enables us to recall past things, embrace present things, and contemplate future things *through their likeness to past things.*" The cycle of Easter is such a "past thing" which, for "Malachy," is a pattern to see the future. Similarly, Guilbert de Nogent (in *Vita Sua*, I.16) tells us that "his mother, in her dreams, recalled the Virgin Mary in the likeness of the Virgin in the cathedral at Chartres," i.e. having seen the likeness of the Virgin, probably in the window of the *Belle Verrière* or the statue of Notre Dame de sous-terre, the virgin appearing in her dream had that very same likeness.

Contrast this with the disciples who didn't recognize Christ on the way to Emmaus until he brought in something from the past, namely the breaking of the bread.

If the prophecy is true, as some construe it to be based on what they perceive as the accuracy of its forecasts, as Cucherat believes or coded messages, as Thibaut thinks, then that it is from the mouth of Malachy in the twelfth century or from another anonymous prophetic voice in the sixteenth, should not matter.

If the prophecy is not from a prophetic voice but from a clever mind, imaginative with symbols, rituals, and numbers, but still providing appropriate concordance between popes, events and sentences, no one would know the difference of origin. For the independent observer, the two cases would appear to be the same. The adequacy of the

⁸⁶ Cf Introduction by Jennifer O'Reilly to Bede 1995, xxi.

⁸⁷ Carruthers, 1998, 69.

prophecy has to be judged from the perceived accuracy of its interpretation. Given the ambiguity of the statements, it boils down to the faith one has in the interpreter of the oracles. The ultimate test will evidently be to see if, when and how the papal line comes to an end. The next few decades, or perhaps even the next ten years may provide the definite answer. But with the prophesized arriving of antipopes and false prophets, who will recognize the True Shepherd?

In any case, the quasi-unprecedented gesture of Benedict XVI, through its numerical symbolism, throws in a new twist and would appear to add credence to the probability of the realization of the Prophecy, though it does not affect its attribution to Malachy or someone else.

Whether the end of the line of popes means the end of the Catholic church as it is now so that a “purified” Church will be resurrected, whether it means also the end of the church of Chartres through a conflagration as in 1194 so that “an even more beautiful palace to the Virgin may be built” are questions still waiting for an answer.

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Appendix 1: Succession of Popes in Malachy's Prophecy

Pope No.	Name (Reign)	Motto No.	Motto (and English rendering)
165	Celestine II (1143-1144)	1	<i>Ex castro Tyberis</i> (From a castle on the Tiber).
166	Lucius II (1144-1145)	2	<i>Inimicus expulsus</i> (The enemy routed)
167	Eugene III (1145-1153)	3	<i>Ex magnitudine montis</i> (From the greatness of the mount)
168	Anastasius IV (1153-1154)	4	<i>Abbas Suburranus</i> (An abbot of Suburra)
169	Adrian IV (1154-1159)	5	<i>De rure albo</i> (From the white countryside)
Antipope	Victor IV (1159-1164)	6	<i>Ex tetra carcere.</i> (From a black prison)
Antipope	Paschal III (1164-1168)	7	<i>Via trans-Tyberina</i> (the trans-Tiberian way)
Antipope	Calixtus III (1168-1178)	8	<i>De Pannonia Tusciae</i> (From the Pannonia of Toscana)
170	Alexander III (1159-1181)	9	<i>Ex ansere custode</i> (Of the guardian goose)
171	Lucius III (1181-1185)	10	<i>Lux in ostio</i> (The light in the door)
172	Urban III (1185-1187)	11	<i>Sus in cribo</i> (The pig in a sieve)
173	Gregory VIII (1187)	12	<i>Ensis Laurentii</i> (The sword of Laurent)
174	Clement III (1187-1191)	13	<i>De schola exiet</i> (He will come out of school)
175	Celestine III (1191-1198)	14	<i>De rure bovensi</i> (From the bovine country)
176	Innocent III (1198-1216)	15	<i>Comes signatus</i> (Appointed Count)
177	Honorius III (1216-1227)	16	<i>Canonicus de latere</i> (The canon from Latran or the canon from the side)
178	Gregory IX (1227-1241)	17	<i>Avis Ostiensis.</i> (Bird of Ostia)
179	Celestine IV (1241)	18	<i>Leo Sabinus</i> (The lion of Sabin)
180	Innocent IV (1243-1254)	19	<i>Comes Laurentius</i> (Count Laurent)

181	Alexander IV (1254-1261)	20	<i>Signum Ostiense</i> (The sign of Ostia)
182	Urban IV (1261-1264)	21	<i>Hierusalem Campaniae</i> (Jerusalem of Champagne)
183	Clement IV (1265-1268)	22	<i>Draca depressus</i> (The crushed dragon)
184	Gregory X (1271-1276)	23	<i>Anguinus vir</i> (The man [with] serpent)
185	Innocent V (1276)	24	<i>Concionatur Gallus</i> (The French preacher)
186	Adrian V (1276)	25	<i>Bonus Comes</i> (The good count)
187	John XXI (1276-1277)	26	<i>Piscator Tuscus</i> (The Tuscan fisherman)
188	Nicholas III (1277-1280)	27	<i>Rosa composite</i> (The composed rose)
189	Martin IV (1281-1285)	28	<i>Ex teloneo liliacei Martini</i> (From the office of Martin of the lilies)
190	Honorius IV (1285-1287)	29	<i>Ex rosa leonine</i> (From the Leonine rose)
191	Nicholas IV (1288-1292)	30	<i>Picus inter escas</i> (The woodpecker in the food)
192	Nicholas IV (1288-1292)	31	<i>Ex eremo celsus</i> (Elevated from a hermit or the desert)
193	Boniface VIII (1294- 1303)	32	<i>Ex undarum benedictione</i> (From the benediction of the waters)
194	Benedict XI (1303-1304)	33	<i>Concionator patereus</i> (The preacher from Patara)
195	Clement V (1305-1314)	34	<i>De fessis Aquitanicis</i> (From the bundle of Aquitaine)
196	John XXII (1316-1334)	35	<i>De sutore osseo</i> (Of the cobbler of Osseo)
Antipope	Nicholas V (1328-1330)	36	<i>Corvus schismaticus</i> (The schismatic crow)
197	Benedict XII (1334-1342)	37	<i>Frigidus Abbas</i> (Cold abbot).
198	Clement VI (1342-1352)	38	<i>De rosa Atrebatensi</i> (From the rose of Arras)
199	Innocent VI (1352-1362)	39	<i>De montibus Pammachii</i> (From the mountains of Pammaque)
200	Urban V (1362-1370)	40	<i>Gallus Vice-comes</i> (A French Viscount)

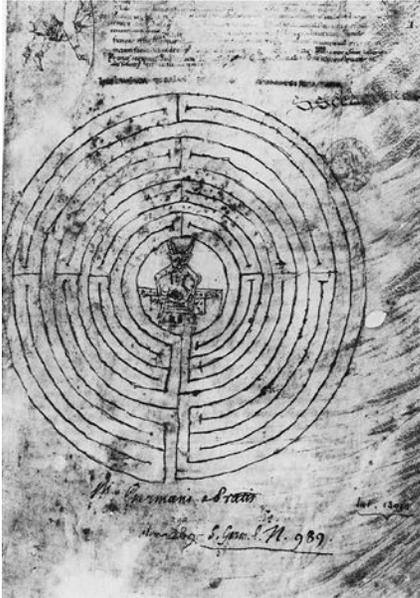
201	Gregory XI (1370-1378)	41	<i>Novus de Virgine forti</i> (New through a strong Virgin)
Antipope	Clement VII (1378-1394)	42	<i>De cruce Apostolica</i> (From the Apostolic cross)
Antipope	Benedict XIII (1394-1423)	43	<i>Luna Cosmedina</i> (The Cosmedian moon)
Antipope	Clement VIII (1423-1429)	44	<i>Schisma Barcinonicum</i> (The schism of Barcelonese)
202	Urban VI (1378-1389)	45	<i>De Inferno praegnanti</i> (From the hell of Pragnani)
203	Boniface IX (1389-1404)	46	<i>Cubus de mixtione</i> (The cube of mixture or out of the mixture)
204	Innocent VII (1404-1406)	47	<i>De meliore sydere</i> (From a better star)
205	Gregory XII (1406-1415)	48	<i>Nauta de ponte nigro</i> (The pilot of black bridge)
Antipope	Alexander V (1409-1410)	49	<i>Flagellum Solis</i> (The sun's whip)
Antipope	John XXIII (1410-1415)	50	<i>Cervus Sirenae</i> (The siren's stag)
206	Martin V (1417-1431)	51	<i>Corona veli aurei</i> (The crown of the golden veil)
207	Eugene IV (1431-1447)	52	<i>Lupa caelestina</i> (The celestial she-wolf)
Antipope	Felix V (1439-1449)	53	<i>Amator cruces</i> (Lover of the cross)
208	Nicholas V (1447-1455)	54	<i>De modicitate lunae</i> (Of the smallness of the moon)
209	Callistus III (1455-1458)	55	<i>Bos pascens</i> (Grazing ox)
210	Pius II (1458-1464)	56	<i>De capra et Albergo</i> (Of the she-goat and the inn)
211	Paul II (1464-1471)	57	<i>De cervo et Leone</i> (Of the stag and the lion)
212	Sixtus IV (1471-1484)	58	<i>Piscator Minorita</i> (The lesser fisherman)
213	Innocent VIII (1484-1492)	59	<i>Praecursor Siciliae</i> (The precursor of Sicily)
214	Alexander VI (1492-1503)	60	<i>Bos Albanus in portu</i> (The white ox in the harbor)
215	Pius III (1503)	61	<i>De parvo homine</i> (Of the little man)
216	Julius II	62	<i>Fructus jovis juvabit</i> (He will love the fruit of Jupiter)

	(1503-1513)		
217	Leo X (1513-1521)	63	<i>De craticula Politiana</i> (From the grill of Politiana)
218	Adrian VI (1522-1523)	64	<i>Leo Florentius</i> (The lion of Florent)
219	Clement VII (1523-1534)	65	<i>Flos pilae aegri</i> (The flower with sick cattle cake)
220	Paul III (1534-1549)	66	<i>Hiacynthus medicorum</i> (Physician's hyacinth [precious stone or flower])
221	Julius III (1550-1555)	67	<i>De corona Montana</i> (From the crown of the mount)
222	Marcellus II (1555)	68	<i>Fruementum floccidum</i> (Flaky wheat)
223	Paul IV (1555-1559)	69	<i>De fide Petri</i> (Of Peter's faith)
224	Pius IV (1559-1565)	70	<i>Aesculapii pharmacum</i> (The medicine of Aesculapius)
225	St. Pius V (1566-1572)	71	<i>Angelus nemorosus</i> (The angel of the woods)
226	Gregory XIII (1572-1585)	72	<i>Medium corpus pilarum</i> (The body between the balls)
227	Sixtus V (1585-1590)	73	<i>Axis in medietate signi</i> (The axis in the middle of the sign)
228	Urban VII (1590)	74	<i>De rore caeli</i> (From or of the sky dew)
229	Gregory XIV (1590-1591)	75	<i>De antiquitate Urbis</i> (From the antiquity of the city)
230	Innocent IX (1591)	76	<i>Pia civitas in bello</i> (Pious city in war)
231	Clement VIII (1592-1605)	77	<i>Crux Romulea</i> (The cross of Romulus)
232	Leo XI (1605)	78	<i>Undosus Vir</i> (The man with the waves)
233	Paul V (1605-1621)	79	<i>Gens perverse</i> (The perverse nation)
234	Gregory XV (1621-1623)	80	<i>In tribulatione pacis</i> (In the tribulations of peace)
235	Urban VIII (1623-1644)	81	<i>Lilium et rosa</i> (The lily and the rose)
236	Innocent X (1644-1655)	82	<i>Jucunditas cruces</i> (The joy of the cross)
237	Alexander VII (1655-	83	<i>Montium custos</i> (The guardian of the mountains)

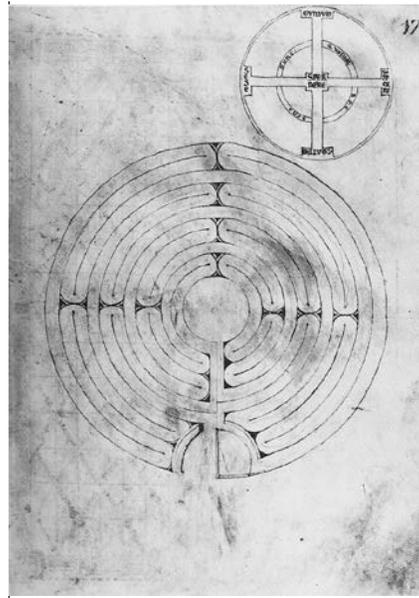
	1667)		
238	Clement IX (1667-1669)	84	<i>Sydus Olorum</i> (Constellation of swans)
239	Clement X (1670-1676)	85	<i>De flumine magno</i> (Of the great river)
240	Innocent XI (1676-1689)	86	<i>Bellua insatiabilis</i> (The insatiable beast)
241	Alexander VIII (1689- 1691)	87	<i>Poenitentia gloriosa</i> (The glorious repentance)
242	Innocent XII (1691-1700)	88	<i>Rastrum in porta</i> (The rake at the door)
243	Clement XI (1700-1721)	89	<i>Flores circumdati</i> (Flowers all around)
244	Innocent XIII (1721-1724)	90	<i>De bona Religione</i> (Of good religion)
245	Benedict XIII (1724-1730)	91	<i>Miles in bello</i> (Soldier in war)
246	Clement XII (1730-1740)	92	<i>Columna excels</i> (The elevated column)
247	Benedict XIV (1740- 1758)	93	<i>Animal rurale</i> (Rural animal)
248	Clement XIII (1758-1769)	94	<i>Rosa Umbriae</i> (The rose of Umbria)
249	Clement XIV (1769-1774)	95	<i>Ursus velox</i> (The fast bear)
250	Pius VI (1775-1799)	96	<i>Peregrinus Apostolicus</i> (The apostolic pilgrim)
251	Pius VII (1800-1823)	97	<i>Aquila rapax</i> (The rapacious eagle)
252	Leo XII (1823-1829)	98	<i>Canis et coluber</i> (Dog and snake)
253	Pius VIII (1829-1830)	99	<i>Vir religious</i> (Religious man)
254	Gregory XVI (1831-1846)	100	<i>De balneis hetruriae</i> (Bath of Etruria)
255	Pius IX (1846-1878)	101	<i>Crux de cruce</i> (Cross of the cross)
256	Leo XIII (1878-1903)	102	<i>Lumen in caelo</i> (Light in the sky)
257	St. Pius X (1903-1914)	103	<i>Ignis ardent</i> (Ardent fire)

258	Benedict XV (1914-1922)	104	<i>Religio depopulate</i> (Devastated religion)
259	Pius XI (1922-1939)	105	<i>Fides intrepida</i> (Intrepid faith)
260	Pius XII (1939-1958)	106	<i>Pastor angelicus</i> (Angelic pastor)
261	John XXIII (1958-1963)	107	<i>Pastor et Nauta</i> (Pastor and ship pilot)
262	Paul VI (1963-1978)	108	<i>Flos florum</i> (Flower of flowers).
263	John Paul I (1978)	109	<i>De medietate Lunae</i> (From the middle of the moon or the half-moon)
264	John Paul II (1978-2005)	110	<i>De labore Solis</i> (Of the eclipse of the sun, or from the labor of the sun)
265	Benedict XVI (2005-2013)	111	<i>Gloria olivae</i> (The glory of the olive tree)
266	Francis I (2013- ?) a.k. Petrus Romanus ?	112	<i>In persecutione extrema S.R.E. sedebit Petrus Romanus, qui pascet oves in multis tribulationibus: quibus transactis ciuitas septicollis diruetur, & Iudex tremèdus iudicabit populum suum. Finis.</i> (In the last persecution, the seat of the Holy Roman Church will be occupied by Peter the Roman, who will feed the sheep through many tribulations, at the term of which the city of seven hills will be destroyed, and the formidable Judge will judge his people. The End.)

Appendix 2: Labyrinths



Kern, Fig. 181
MS St.-Germain-des-Prés

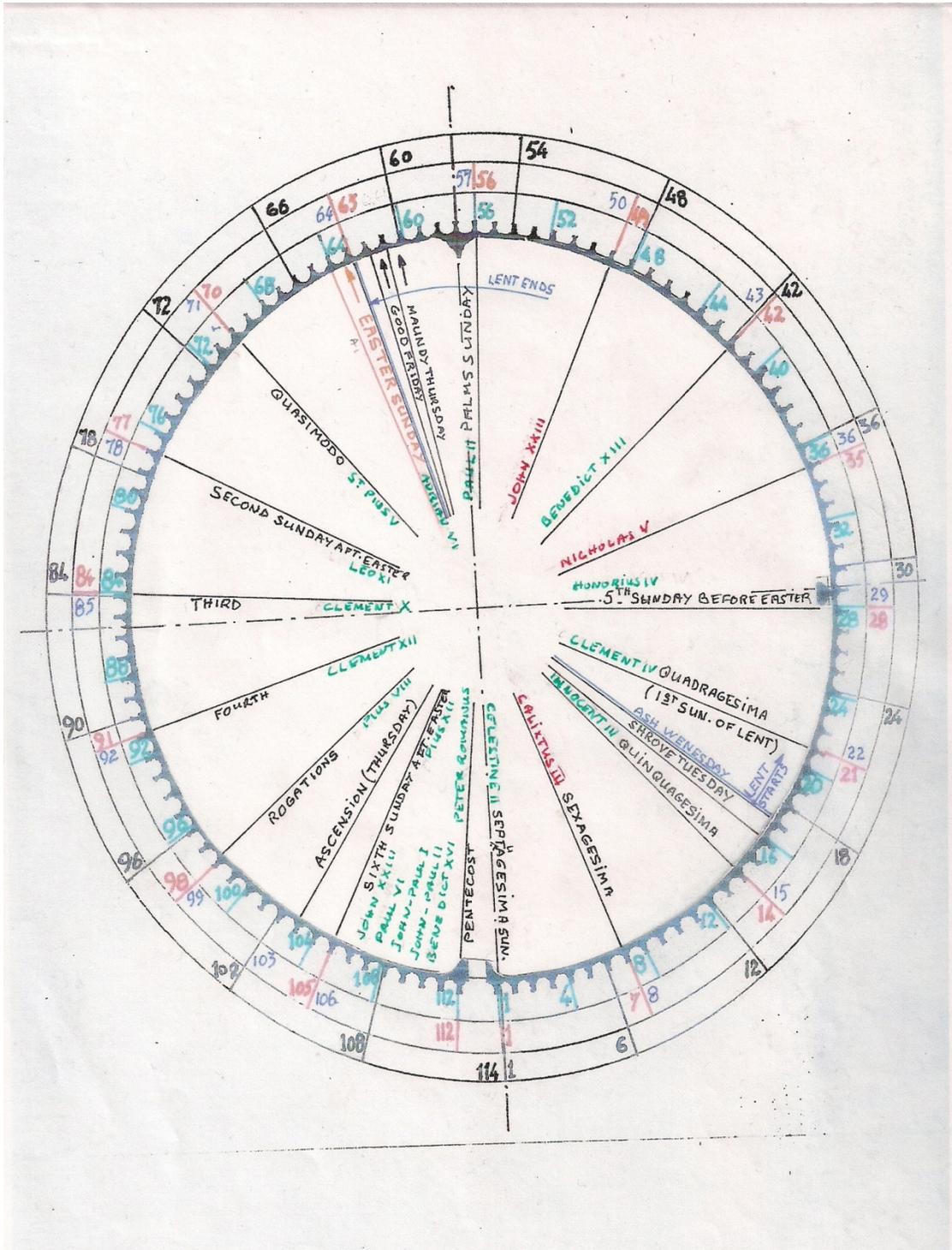


Kern, Fig. 183
MS from 1072, Monastery of
San Sebastian, Silos

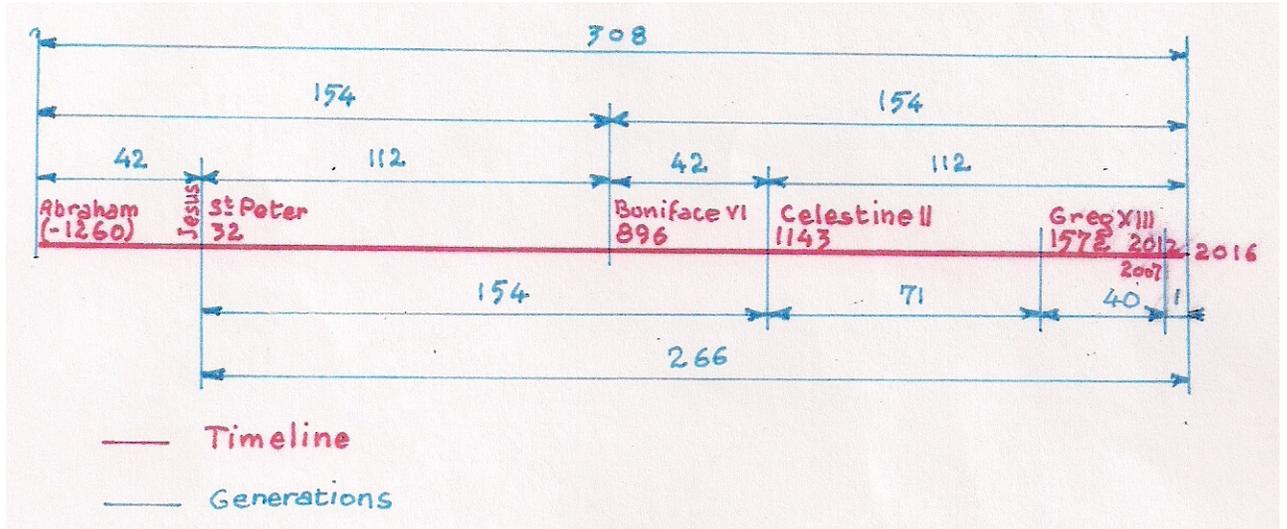
LABYRINTHUS A DIVO BERNARDO COMPOSITUS QUO BENE VIVIT HOMO					
DICERE	SCIS	DICIT	SCIT	AUDIT	NON VULT
FACERE	POTES	FACIT	POTEST	INCURRIT	NON CREDIT
CREDERE	AUDIS	CREDIT	AUDIT	CREDIT	NON EST
DARE	HABES	DAT	HABET	MISERE QUAERIT	NON HABET
JUDICARE	VIDES	JUDICAT	VIDET	CON- TEMNIT	NON DEBET
NOLI	OMNIA QUAE	QUIA QUI	OMNIA QUAE	SAEPE	QUOD

Kern Fig. 463, Labyrinth of St. Bernard

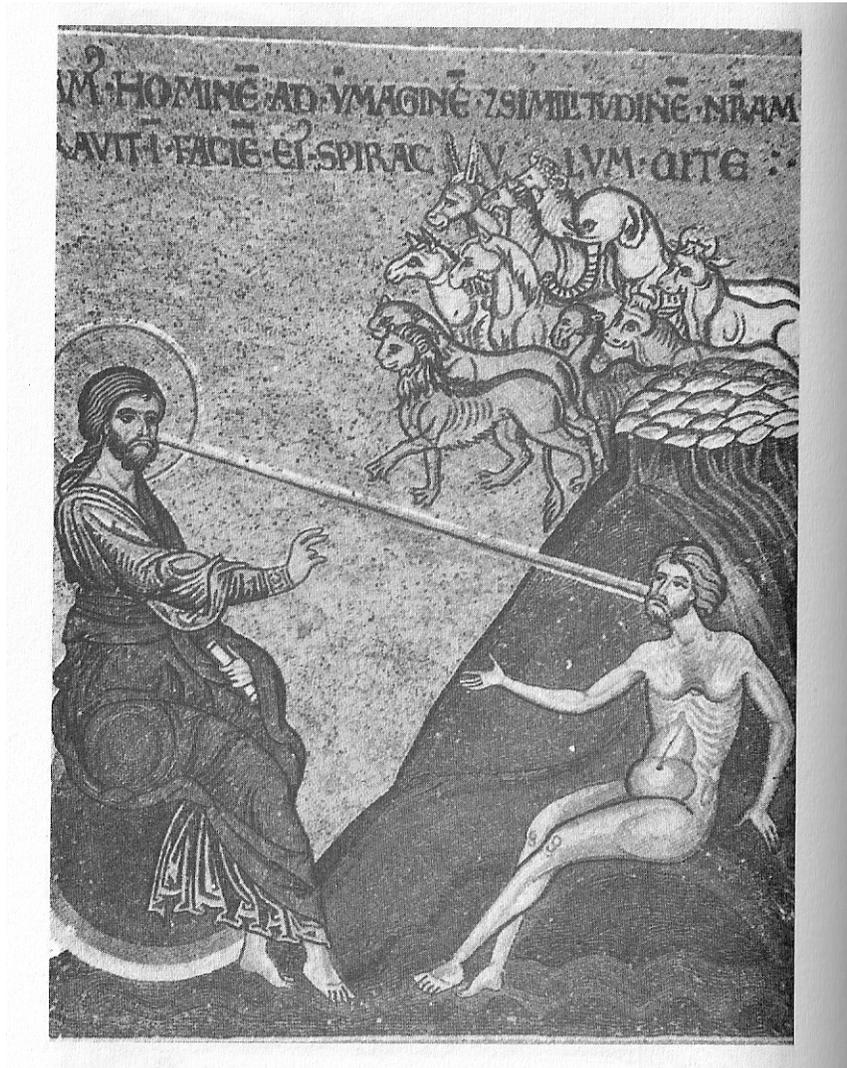
Appendix 3: The Cycle of Easter



Appendix 4: Structure of the Malachy Prophecy



This graph shows the structure of the Malachy Prophecy in the context of the human generations from Abraham to Jesus and the papal “generations” from St. Peter to *Petrus Romanus*. Abstracting the different nature of these generations, it is interesting to note the repeating pattern (42 + 112) (42 + 112) with the center of the total 308 generations falling after 154 generations with the papacy of Boniface VI in 896. Without being a prophet, it is therefore fairly reasonable to predict that, since it took $896 - 32 = 864$ years to see through the first 112 popes, chances are that the same length of time will be required, *mutatis mutandis*, for the 112 popes post 1143. Therefore one would expect the conclusion of the prophecy towards $1143 + 864 = 2007$ (see n. 81 and p. 14).

Appendix 5: *Omnia ab uno*

“Omnia ab uno”; all life comes from the One and through the One; Adam is created by God’s breath. Mosaic from the cathedral of Monreale, Sicily, twelfth century. (Schimmel, 1993, 188-89).

Appendix 6: The 5 Magic Square

17 =

4 9 2		
3	5	7
8	1	6

 = 28