

KAROL PIOTR KULPA

Tyconius' Theological
Reception of
2 Thessalonians 2:3–12

History of Biblical Exegesis

4

Mohr Siebeck

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4



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For my beloved parents
Barbara and Stanisław

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	VII
Abbreviations	XIII
References to Works of Tyconius	XVII
English Translations	XIX
<i>Liber Regularum</i>	XIX
<i>Expositio Apocalypseos</i>	XIX
<i>Secondary Sources</i>	XIX
Introduction	1
Chapter I: Reception History and the Interpretation of Tyconius' Reception	11
1. Conceptual Elements of the Reception History.....	11
1.1. Transformative and Performative Effectiveness of Reception.....	13
1.2. Productive Process of Reception.....	15
2. Different Modes of Biblical Reception	18
3. Historical Criticism and Reception History	21
3.1 Evolution and Crisis of the Historical-Critical Method.....	22
3.2 Biblical Criticism and Reception History: Compatibility or Incompatibility?	26
4. Tyconius and Biblical Reception	30
4.1 Notes on Tyconius and His Works.....	31
4.2 Hermeneutical Elements of Tyconius' Reception.....	39
4.2.1 Historical Level	42
4.2.2 Literary Level.....	44
4.2.3 Theological Level.....	47
Summary.....	49

Chapter II: Historical Context of Tyconius' Reception of 2 Thess 2:3–12	51
1. The Background and the Beginnings of the Donatist-Catholic Controversy	52
1.1 Pre-Constantinian Church	52
1.2 Constantinian Church.....	62
2. The Escalation of Violence and Persecution	68
2.1 Circumcellions	69
2.2 Macarian Persecution.....	72
2.3 The Reign of Julian.....	77
3. The Consolidation of the Separation Between Two Churches	79
3.1 Parmenian and Optatus of Milevis	81
3.2 The Donatist Collecta.....	84
3.3 The Notion of the South.....	86
Summary.....	88
 Chapter III: Tyconius' Construction of the Literary World by Reception of 2 Thess 2:3–12	 91
1. Members of the Lord's Body.....	93
1.1 Homo peccati	93
1.2 Antichristus	103
1.3 Filius exterminii.....	110
1.4 Ostendens se quod ipse est Deus.....	119
2. The Opposing Activities in the Lord's Body.....	128
2.1 Mysterium facinoris	129
2.2 Detineat/detinet	148
2.3 Secundum operationem Satanae.....	156
3. The Separation within the Lord's Body	164
3.1 Discessio	166
3.2 De medio.....	181
3.3 Adventus Domini	199
3.4. In sua incredulitate morientur	207
Summary	210
 Chapter IV: Theological Insights from Tyconius' Reception of 2 Thess 2:3–12	 213
1. Bipartition of the Church's Reality.....	216

1.1 Church as a Dynamic and Processual Reality	217
1.2 Church as the Spiritual and Universal Reality	220
2. Charity as the Response to Hatred.....	223
2.1 Union of Charity Between the Head and Its Body	224
2.2 Church as the Mediator of Charity	226
3. Process of Conversion Towards the Good	227
4. Bipartition in the Nature of Human being	232
4.1 The Mystery of Being Human.....	233
4.2 Self-awareness of the Member of the Church	236
5. Faith and Reason as a Response to God's Word	239
5.1 Means for Searching the Spirit's Ways.....	240
5.2 The Holy Scriptures as the Mediator of Divine Mysteries	243
6. Process of Conversion Towards the Truth	246
7. Bipartition of the Eschatological Temporality	248
7.1 The Present and Future of the Church.....	250
7.2 Sacred and Profane Temporality	253
8. Hope as the Response to Desperateness	255
8.1 The Sin of Hopelessness	255
8.2 The Temporality as the Mediator of the Pedagogical Eschatology.....	258
9. Process of Conversion Towards the Beauty.....	260
 Conclusion.....	 265
 Bibliography.....	 273
New Testament	273
Editions and Translations of Tyconius' Works	273
Ancient Sources and Translations.....	274
Secondary Literature	278
 Index of References.....	 295
Old Testament.....	295
New Testament	296
Ancient Sources.....	300
 Index of Modern Authors	 309
 Subject Index.....	 311

Abbreviations

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
AmJT	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
Arch.Europ. Sociol.	<i>Archives Européennes de Sociologie</i>
ASE	<i>Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi</i>
ATJ	<i>The Asbury Theological Journal</i>
AugStud	<i>Augustinian Studies</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Semitic Studies</i>
BA	Bibliothèque Augustinienne
BBC	Blackwell Bible Commentaries
BDAG	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, eds., 3rd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2000
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BHF	Bonner Historische Forschungen
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibS	Biblische Studien
BIWL	Bibliographies and Indexes in World Literature
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BollClass	Bollettino dei Classici
BP	Biblioteca Patristica
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BzHT	Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CA	Collectanea Augustiniana
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CCT	Corpus Christianorum in Translation
CH	Corpus Haereseologicum
ChHist.	<i>Church History</i>
Comp	<i>Compostellanum</i>
CPhMA	Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi
CRES	Christian Roman Empire Series
CrSt	Cristianesimo nella storia

CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CWL	Collected Works of Bernard Longergan
DBS	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément</i> , vol. 6: Mystères – Passion, L. Pirot, A. Robert, H. Cazelles, J. Briend, and M. Quesnel, eds., Paris: Letouzey & Ané 1960
DS	Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique: Doctrine et histoire, Marcel Viller and Ferdinand Cavallera, eds., Paris: Beauchesne 1991
DThC	<i>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique</i> , vol. 14:2, Alfred Vacant et al., eds., Paris: Letouzey & Ané 1941
EA	<i>Expositio Apocalypseos</i>
EBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary
EC	<i>Early Christianity</i>
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EThSt	Erfurter Theologische Studien
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	<i>Hervormde Theologiese Studies</i>
HUT	Hermetische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> , vol. 1, George A. Buttrick ed., Nashville: Abingdon 1962
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JThS.NS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies, New Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testaments Studies
LR	<i>Liber Regularum</i>
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NDBT	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i> , T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, D. A. Carson, Graeme Goldsworthy, and Steve Carter, eds., Leicester: InterVarsity Press 2000
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovTSup	<i>Supplements to Novum Testamentum</i>
NRSV	<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>
NT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTCS	New Testament Commentary Series

NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTG	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . 28th edition, Kurt Aland et al., eds., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 2012
NTP	Novum Testamentum Patristicum
NTR	New Testament Readings
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTT	<i>Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift</i>
OBC	Oxford Bible Commentary
OSA	Œuvres de Saint Augustin
ParPass	<i>La Parola del passato</i>
PBGALT	Paradosis. Beiträge zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur und Theologie
PL	Patrologia Latina
PLS	Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
QH	<i>Hodayot (Hymns of Thanksgiving)</i>
QM	<i>Milhamah (War Scroll)</i>
RBén	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
REA	<i>Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques</i>
REAug	<i>Revue des Études Augustiniennes</i>
RechAug	<i>Recherches Augustiniennes</i>
RevScRel	<i>Revue des Sciences Religieuses</i>
RES	<i>Review of Ecumenical Studies</i>
RHE	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RTL	<i>Revue Théologique de Louvain</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SEAug	<i>Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SRC	A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary
SScr	<i>Sacra Scripta</i>
SSEJC	Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity
SSR	<i>Studi Storico Religiosi</i>
SThGG	Studien zur Theologie und Geistesgeschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts
StudRos	<i>Studia Rosenthaliana</i>
Thf	<i>Theoforum</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TSTP	Tübinger Studien zur Theologie und Philosophie
TTH	Translated Text for Historians
TTHC	Translated Texts for Historians, Contexts
TUGACL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur
TZTh	<i>Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>

VL	Vetus Latina
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	World Biblical Commentary
WC	Wisdom Commentary
WSA	The Works of Saint Augustine
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZB	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

References to Works of Tyconius

E.g., LR VII, 14.2^{18-19.1-4} – the Roman numeral refers to the book of the *Liber Regularum*, the following number(s) to the paragraph, and the superscript with or without apostrophe to the line in the text of Ticonio, *Libro de Las Reglas*, Introducción, texto crítico, traducción y notas de Juan José Ayán CALVO, Fuentes Patristicas 23 (Madrid: Editorial Ciudad Nueva, 2009). It is the latest critical edition of the *Liber Regularum* which has its origins in the work begun by the Spanish scholar Eugenio Romero Pose who died in 2007. The work has been completed by Ayán Calvo. The division of the paragraphs is adopted from the edition of Jean-Marc VERCRUYSSÉ in the *Sources chrétiennes*. The critical apparatus includes the variants of the various manuscripts and some testimonies of the indirect tradition. The editors limit themselves to comparisons with the previous critical edition of Francis C. BURKITT (1894, rep. 1967). The text is also accompanied by an apparatus of references to other authors that cannot always be considered as sources or literary dependencies, but rather as parallels that can help explain the text and show its impact (see Ayán CALVO, *Libro de Las Reglas*, 58–59).

E.g., EA V, 19²⁻³ – the Roman numeral refers to the section of the *Expositio Apocalypseos*, the following numeral to the paragraph, and the superscript to the line in the text of *Tyconi Afri Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Roger GRYSOŃ, CCSL 107A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

A cursive font in all the quotations from LR or EA refers to the biblical texts quoted or alluded to, even if it is not indicated as so in Calvo's edition of LR. The same applies to Gryson's edition of the EA .

English Translations

All translations of Greek text are my own unless otherwise noted. For English citations of the biblical texts I follow the NRSV.

Liber Regularum

Unless otherwise stated I follow the English translation of the Latin text of the *Liber Regularum* in Leslie D. ANDERSON, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: An Introduction and Translation*, Ph.D. diss. (Louisville, KY: South Baptist Theological Seminary, 1974). I have also consulted the English translation in William S. BABCOCK, *Tyconius: The Book of Rules*, SBL: Texts and Translations 31 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), Spanish translation in TICONIO, *Libro de Las Reglas*, Introducción, texto crítico, traducción y notas of Juan José Ayán Calvo, Bilingual Edition (Madrid: Editorial Ciudad Nueva, 2009), and Italian translation in Luisa and Deniela Leoni, eds. *Ticonio, Sette regole per la Scrittura* (Bologna: Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 1997).

Expositio Apocalypseos Unless otherwise stated I follow the English translation of the Latin text of the *Expositio Apocalypseos* in Francis X. Gumerlock, *Tyconius: Exposition of the Apocalypse*, intr. and notes David C. Robinson (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017). I have also consulted the German translation in *Tyconius und Apringius. Zwei alte lateinische Kommentare zur Offenbarung des Johannes. Deutsche Übersetzung des Tyconius-Kommentares*, trans. Albrecht und Erika von Blumenthal (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2018).

Secondary Sources

For foreign language works available translations have been used or my own translation has been provided.

Introduction

Everyone who studies Scriptures sooner or later realises how great the range of hermeneutical problems is within biblical studies. The main problem concerns the interaction between text and reader and, therefore, such issues like text production, text mediation and text reception. Increasingly noticeable, the shift in scholars' interest from questions relating to the text's form, content, or 'original settings' to those concerned with the Bible's wider impact on individuals, cultures, or societies prompts us to give more attention to the reception history of Scripture. The apocalyptic literature, for example, with its symbolism, cryptic language and dramatic scenario is a suitable material for such study, because its various interpretations and receptions over the centuries opens our eyes for a fascinating journey of the biblical texts. The passage which fits our endeavour is 2 Thess 2:3–12. According to Charles Holman, this pericope demonstrates that in the first-century church there was a custom of re-reading and christological interpretation of traditional Jewish apocalyptic motifs.¹ The apocalyptic nature of 2 Thess 2:3–12² and its complex content or, in other words, its many *cruces interpretum*, raise various questions in an ordinary reader's mind, who usually, after a while, leaves it aside perplexed, realising that certain issues of this prophecy remain unanswerable. Even the great church father, Augustine, wrestling with this passage, stated: "I frankly confess that the meaning of this completely escapes me."³ Beverly Gaventa concludes the same, but put it in a more poetic way:

Readers of the New Testament stumbling for the first time into the middle of 2 Thessalonians may be forgiven if they feel like Alice tumbling down a dark hole in Wonderland. The residents of this Wonderland are new and mysterious, their relationship to one another unclear and the stranger responds with a sense of disorientation.⁴

¹ See Charles L. HOLMAN, *Till Jesus Comes. Origins of Christian Apocalyptic Expectation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 103–110.

² "Nothing in the Pauline letters is closer to the genre of apocalypse." James D.G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 304.

³ AUGUSTINE, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 20.19.

⁴ Beverly R. GAVENTA, *First and Second Thessalonians*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 107; Michael W. HOLMES, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 228 notes that this passage is "by common consent one of the most obscure in the Pauline corpus."

Many church fathers, ancient authors, and contemporary scholars have attempted to solve the unclear issues of 2 Thess 2:3–12, proposing very diverse ways of reading this passage.⁵ In this book, we shall focus on a relatively unknown, maverick theologian and exegete, Tyconius, whose spiritual approach to 2 Thess 2:3–12 is original and suggests directions in the search for theological insights. Before we enter into the world of his reception it will be useful to have a general survey of the passage and of some scholarly discussion about it.

The author of 2 Thessalonians 2⁶ addresses the misconception of the Thessalonian community on the *parousia* of Christ (vv. 1–2) instructing it that the “Day of the Lord” is a future event (vv. 3–12), not as some believed as already a reality described in the words *ὡς ὅτι ἐνέσθηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου* (v. 2b).

⁵ See, for example, Anthony C. THISELTON, *1 and 2 Thessalonians Through the Centuries*, ed. Judith Kovacs (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010).

⁶ The dubious authorship of 2 Thessalonians has provoked an unfisher discussion among the scholars. It started in 1801 with Johann E. Christian Schmidt who noticed inconsistencies between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In 1903 William Wrede argued against authenticity of 2 Thessalonians (see Charles A. WANAMAKER, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 17–19). Before Wolfgang Trilling’s work *Untersuchungen zum Zweiten Thessalonicherbrief*, EThSt, 27 (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1972), the main evidence against Pauline authorship was based on comparing two different eschatologies of 1 Thess 5:1–11 (no timetable of events preceding the *parousia*) and 2 Thess 2:3–12 (concrete though unclear description of scenario before the *parousia*). Trilling’s study brought new arguments against Pauline authorship grounded on style, form criticism and theology. They were opposed by Wanamaker who defended Paul as the author of the letter (see *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 1990: 21–38). Apart from Wanamaker some other scholars arguing for the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians: Béda RIGAUD, *Saint Paul: Les épîtres aux Thessaloniciens* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1956); Ernest BEST, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Reprinted with additional bibliography, BNTC (London: Black, 1977); I. Howard MARSHALL, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); Abraham J. MALHERBE, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000); Gregory K. BEALE, *1–2 Thessalonians*, NTCS (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); Ivor H. JONES, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2005); Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, SRC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Gordon D. FEE, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). Among scholars disputing or denying Pauline authorship are mainly German scholars. Apart from Trilling see, for example, Willi MARXSEN, *Der zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, ZB 11.2 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1982); Franz LAUB, *Erster und zweiter Thessalonicherbrief*, 2nd ed. (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988); Eckart REINMUTH, “Der zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher,” in *Die Briefe an die Phillipper, Thessalonicher und an Philemon*, N. Walter, E. Reinmuth und P. Lampe, NTD 8.2. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998); see also Maarten J.J. MENKEN, *2 Thessalonians*, NTR (London: Routledge, 1994); Tobias NICKLAS, *Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief*, KEK 10:2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019). The authorship of the letter and the scholarly dispute about it does not affect our study of reception of 2 Thess 2:3–12 by Tyconius, therefore, we neither confirm nor reject Paul as the author of the letter and simply speak of “the author.”

The interpretation of this statement determines the overall understanding of the entire letter. Most scholars presuppose that v. 2 characterises the “Day of the Lord” in futuristic terms. Mary Ann Beavis notes that it can be a reaction to “a contemporary doctrine that living believers had already spiritually ascended to the ‘heavenly places’ with Christ, as expressed in the Deutero-Pauline letters Colossians and Ephesians (Col 3:4; Eph 2:6).”⁷ Tobias Nicklas and Michael Sommer, criticising two monographs by Norbert Baumert and Maria-Irma Seewann who claim that 2 Thess 2:2 is not concerned with matters of *parousia*, argue for the text’s pseudepigraphy. Nicklas and Sommer, analysing the context of vv. 1–2 in light of a parallel in Hippolytus’ Commentary on Daniel, develop their own interpretation of the statement, from which emerges the possibility that the “Day of the Lord” can become apparent to everyone not in the same way.⁸ The “Day of the Lord,” however, cannot come before the “rebellion” (v. 3b: ἡ ἀποστασία), along with the Revelation of the “Man of Lawlessness,” (v. 3c: ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας) whose identification is one among various problems of the above pericope. He is also labelled as the “Lawless One” (v. 8a: ὁ ἄνομος) and the “Son of Destruction” (v. 3c: ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας), who is presented as an arrogant being (v. 4a: ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ υπεραϊρόμενος) to the point of establishing himself in the temple of God and declaring himself to be God (v. 4b: ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει ἀποδεικνύοντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός). At present, however, he is restrained by something (v. 6a: τὸ κατέχον) or someone (v. 7b: ὁ κατέχων), that is, held back from being openly revealed, but he continues to work through the mystery of lawlessness (v. 7a: τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἦδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας). He is the agent of Satan (v. 9a: οὗ ἔστιν ἡ παρουσία κατ’ ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ) and comes with power, false signs, and miracles (v. 9b: ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν ψεύδους), brings wicked deception (v. 10a: καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ ἀδικίας) and those who follow him will perish (v. 10b: τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις). God is sending (v. 11: πέμπει) a deceiving force (ἐνέργεια πλάνης) that brings error on them and uses the deceit of the “Man of Lawlessness” in order to ultimately defeat him and his followers who do not believe the truth, but consent to iniquity (v. 12: εὐδοκίησαντες τῇ ἀδικίᾳ). Jesus, who is the future judge *par excellence*, will destroy the “Lawless One” and make him ineffectual (καταργήσει) by the appearance of his *parousia* (v. 8: ἡ ἐπιφάνεια τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ).⁹

⁷ Florence M. GILLMAN, Mary Ann BEAVIS, and HyeRan KIM-CRAGG, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, gen. ed. Barbara E. Reid, WC 52 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017), 141.

⁸ See Tobias NICKLAS and Michael SOMMER, “‘Der Tag des Herrn ist schon da’ (2 Thess 2:2b) – Ein Schlüsselproblem zum Verständnis des 2. Thessalonicherbriefs,” *HTS* 71 (2015): 1–10 (Art. 2874 – <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i1.2874>).

⁹ The use of the definite article in the important concepts of the passage (ἡ ἀποστασία, ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, τὸ κατέχον, τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ κατέχων, ὁ ἄνομος, ἡ ἀπάτη, τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ ψεῦδος, ἡ ἀλήθεια) indicates that the addressees of the letter are to some degree familiar with them (cf. v. 5) or the terms have the connotation

The *parousia* of the “Lawless One” (cf. v. 9a: ἡ παρουσία) is clearly presented in this passage as “a parody of the *parousia* of Christ”¹⁰ and seems to refer to two Satanic beasts in Rev 13, which imitate some features of the Lamb of God. As expressed by Robert Charles, “Thus as the Revelation of God culminated in Christ, so the manifestation of evil will culminate in Antichrist, whose *parousia* (2 Thess 2:9) is the Satanic counterfeit of the true Messiah.”¹¹ For Thessalonians, as Edgar Krentz notes, the salvation (v. 10b: εἰς τὸ σωθῆναι) is vindication at the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus.¹² Furthermore, he points out that 2 Thessalonians does not present abstract or theoretical theology; it is rather a response to human need, hope, and aspiration in a time of persecution. The fundamental conviction that God is a God of justice who will vindicate his suffering church underlies this theology and gives it unity.¹³

Jesus in 2 Thessalonians is the κύριος, the agent of God’s ultimate vengeance, whom Frederick Danker and Robert Jewett describe as an apocalyptic benefactor (cf. 2 Thess 2:13–3:5).¹⁴ A fixed apocalyptic schema which we find in this letter assures a peaceful life of the community that otherwise could be shaken by apocalyptic enthusiasm.¹⁵ Hans LaRondelle observes that 2 Thessalonians 2 forms an important link between the synoptic Apocalypse and the large-scale Apocalypse of John. The basic chronological order of the prophetic events presented in 2 Thess 2:3–12 “can be in harmony with, and complementary to, one another.”¹⁶ As well, Fritz Röcker demonstrates that passages from the Thessalonian Letters “are connected with the synoptic Apocalypse down to individual linguistic parallels.”¹⁷ Although neither of the Thessalonians Letters contains explicit quotations from the Old Testament, they undoubtedly refer to various terms and motifs of the Jewish Scriptures. The comparison of some key linguistic expressions in 2 Thessalonians 2 with some passages from the

of ultimacy. See Daniel B. WALLACE, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 217–18; 222–25.

¹⁰ J. Terence FORESTELL, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, et al. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968), 235.

¹¹ Robert H. CHARLES, *Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism and Christianity: A Critical History* (New York: Schocken, 1963), 439.

¹² See Edgar KRENTZ, “Traditions Held Fast: Theology and Fidelity in 2 Thessalonians,” in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Raymond F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 509.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 505.

¹⁴ See Frederick DANKER and Robert JEWETT, “Jesus as the Apocalyptic Benefactor in Second Thessalonians,” in Collins, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, 486–98.

¹⁵ Cf. Helmut KOESTER, “From Paul’s Eschatology to the Apocalyptic Schema of 2 Thessalonians,” in Collins, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, 457.

¹⁶ Hans K. LARONDELLE, “Paul’s Prophetic Outline in 2 Thessalonians 2,” *AUSS* 21:1 (1983): 61.

¹⁷ Fritz W. RÖCKER, *Belial und Katechon. Eine Untersuchung zu 2 Thess 2,1–12 und 1 Thess 4,13–5,11*, WUNT 2:262 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 5.

prophets Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah strongly suggests that the author of the letter describes the “Lawless One” by combining three OT Revelations about anti-God powers: the rise and desecrations of the Anti-Messiah in Dan 7:25, 8:10–13, 11:36–37; the demonic character in the self-exaltation and self-divinisation of the kings of Tyre and Babylon in Ezek 28:2.6.9, and Isa 14:13–14; and the final annihilation of the wicked one by the glorious appearance of the royal Messiah, in Isa 11:4. An interesting observation is proposed by Marvin Pate who recognises in the divine struggle between the “Lawless One” and Christ depicted in 2 Thess 2:1–12 Adamic theology. He believes that the passage presents the *Urzeit – Endzeit* (the beginning – the end) schema in which the serpent in the garden (cf. Gen 3) is eschatologically personified in the figure of the Antichrist, who attempts to oppose Christ’s fight for recovering Adam’s lost dominion and glory. This apocalyptic theme is, according to Pate, connected with the theme of the suffering people of God who will share Christ’s, the true Adam’s, future glory.¹⁸ Sigve Tonstad observes that the author of 2 Thessalonians

is not merely featuring Old Testament passages in a metaphorical or typological sense. The evil power that is to have a personal manifestation before the coming of Jesus, traces its roots to a source that is primordial as to its origin and personal as to its cause.¹⁹

This Old Testament perspective reflected in the myth of cosmic rebellion (cf. Isa 14:12–20 and Ezek 28:12–19), according to Tonstad, “is harnessed to explain the delay of the *parousia* and the eschatological unveiling of evil, understood as a process that will afflict the church from within.”²⁰

This preliminary information and scholarly overview paints for us a horizon of this challenging pericope, of which the worldview is “thoroughly apocalyptic and envisions a conflict between good and evil that has a cosmic scope.”²¹ We shall explore 2 Thess 2:3–12 more as we go through this book and observe its reception by Tyconius.

Anthony Thiselton is right when he notices that some receptions shape the “*pre-understandings* of subsequent generations of interpreters” or have “held particular influence in theology and the life of the church.”²² Tyconius’ reception of 2 Thess 2:3–12 certainly belongs to this category and should not be overlooked. This book will hopefully remind the academic world about his important contribution to the fields of biblical and theological studies and let

¹⁸ See C. Marvin PATE, *The Glory of Adam and the Afflictions of the Righteous: Pauline Suffering in Context* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1993), 291–312.

¹⁹ Sigve K. TONSTAD, “The Restrainer Removed: A Truly Alarming Thought (2 Thess 2:1–12),” *HBT* 29 (2007): 141.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

²¹ J. Christiaan BEKER, *Paul’s Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 14–15.

²² Anthony C. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), 196.

us see him not only through the eyes of Augustine, but through a close study of his extant texts. It is worth noting that Augustine initially had many reservations about the value of Tyconius' writings, but these reservations decreased during his episcopacy. The bishop of Hippo refers to Tyconius several times in his writings, for example, in *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani*,²³ *De doctrina Christiana*,²⁴ or in *Epistula* 41,²⁵ 93 (43–44),²⁶ and 249,²⁷ but he was not always able to understand Tyconius' hermeneutical theories. Augustine's strategy of fighting the Donatists, based on getting closer to an alliance with the Roman Empire, unjustly made Tyconius a heretic. We should be grateful to Augustine for letting us remember Tyconius, who otherwise could be forgotten, but we also have to recognise how much Augustine has benefited from the wisdom of his older fellow citizen and theologian.²⁸

In this study, we shall see that 2 Thess 2:3–12 plays a crucial and decisive role in Tyconius' interpretation of Scripture and verses 3 and 7 become for him his world-constructing verses. On the themes that he draws from them he builds his vision of the church, the human being, and ultimate realities. We shall discover it while examining his reception of this passage in the *Liber Regularum* and in the recently reconstructed text of the *Expositio Apocalypseos*. Based on that analysis, we shall be introduced to an innovative structure of reception history articulated in three levels: historical context, literary themes, and theological insights. This book intends to fill a gap in the research on the importance of 2 Thess 2:3–12 in the North African context at the end of the fourth century. It is hoped that a holistic and structural approach to the reception history presented in this work can become relevant for biblical and theological scholars who deal with the reception history of the New Testament texts.

The first to notice a particular role of 2 Thessalonians 2 in Tyconius' *Liber Regularum* was an American scholar Pamela Bright (1937–2012). She notes that this letter, although not quoted as often by Tyconius as the letters to the Romans or to the Galatians, plays a significant role, especially in his presentation of the Antichrist. She mentions also that the two phrases *in medio* (“in

²³ See 1.1.1–1.2.2 and 2.13.31 (CSEL 51.19–20 and 83).

²⁴ See 3.30–37 (CCSL 32.102–16).

²⁵ See CSEL 34:2.83.

²⁶ See CSEL 34:2.486–87.

²⁷ See PL 33.1065.

²⁸ See, for example, Peter CONSENSUS, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 269; Catherine Brown TKACZ, “Typology,” in *Saint Augustine through the Ages*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999): 855. Pamela Bright discusses the ways in which Augustine adapted Tyconius' rules for his own purposes. See her article “‘The Prepondering Influence of Augustine’: A Study of the Epitomes of the *Books of Rules* of the Donatist Tyconius,” in *Augustine and the Bible. The Bible through the Ages*, ed. and trans. Pamela BRIGHT, vol. 2 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999): 103–18 (orig. pub. *Saint Augustin et la Bible. Bible de tous les Temps*, ed. Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, vol. 3 [Paris: Beauchesne, 1986]).

the midst”) and *de medio* (“from the midst” [cf. 2 Thess 2:7c]) and the motif of *mysterium facinoris* (“mystery of iniquity” [cf. 2 Thess 2:7a]) are crucial for Tyconius’ ecclesiology.²⁹ More than that, she shows that the theme of the *mysterium facinoris* has a structural function in the *Liber Regularum*:

Positioned at the point of transition between one rule and the next, the theme of the ‘mystery of iniquity’ in the Church is integrated into the argument of the next rule. In this way Tyconius not only achieves the pedagogical and stylistic purpose of alerting the reader to the next stage of the argument, but he deepens this theme as he moves through the frame of the seven rules.³⁰

Her observation is an important impulse for the present study, because it directs our attention to the ecclesiological dimension of Tyconius’ exegesis and prompts us to verify the centrality of the theme of the *mysterium facinoris* in his *Expositio Apocalypseos*. Bright, in her studies, considers the background of the debates and schisms among the African churches in the third and fourth centuries and indicates some factors which initiated such tensions like, for example, the problem of recognition of the “mystery of iniquity,” the signs of the Antichrist’s presence, the locus of evil, or the question of the separation of the just from the unjust. She explains Tyconius’ ecclesiological point, who in opposition to his fellow-Donatists, maintains that evil is enthroned not outside but inside the church, and the separation between the good and the evil members of the community will not take place until the Judgment which has already been revealed in the Scriptures. She emphasises that the goal of Tyconius’ scriptural interpretation is to present a subtle working of the Spirit in the church who, on the one hand, encourages her, but, on the other hand, admonishes her and calls her to repentance. The Spirit reveals that lovelessness and separateness are signs of the “mystery of iniquity.”³¹

Another important scholar who influences this work is Eugenio Romero-Pose (1949–2007). He analyses the importance of 2 Thess 2:7 in both the *Liber Regularum* and the *Expositio Apocalypseos* in light of the eighth century Commentary on the Apocalypse written by the Spanish monk Beatus from Liébana.³² Romero-Pose notices an important eschatological dimension of this verse in the context of the end of the fourth century in Northern Africa and its influence on the idea of “Antichrist.” For Tyconius, as we will further discuss,

²⁹ See Pamela BRIGHT, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius. Its Purpose and Inner Logic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 42, 49, 142, 155. This book is a rewriting of Bright’s doctoral dissertation entitled, *Liber Regularum Tyconii: A Study of the Hermeneutical Theory of Tyconius, Theologian and Exegete of the North African Tradition*, and presented in 1987 at the University of Notre Dame.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

³¹ See Pamela BRIGHT, “The Church and the ‘Mystery of Iniquity’: Old Testament Prophecy in Fourth Century African Exegesis,” *Consensus* 23 (1997): 39–49.

³² See Eugenio ROMERO-POSE, “2 Tes 2,7 en la literatura donatista,” *Burgense* 37 (1996): 247–63.

his understanding of the term “Antichrist” is parallel to the literary motif of *homo peccati* (cf. 2 Thess 2:3c). Similar to Bright, Romero-Pose also notices the significance of the phrases *in medio* / *de medio* and recognises their applicability to Tyconius’ theology.

Kevin Hughes, the historical theologian, explaining Tyconius’ spiritual exegesis of 2 Thessalonians 2,³³ suggests that Tyconius’ interpretation of this biblical text in the *Liber Regularum* is a response to the problems of the North African Church. Hughes observes that Tyconius consults 2 Thessalonians 2 for his hermeneutical insights, especially in dealing with the theme of the bipartite church and uses different elements scattered throughout the text in order to create an innovative typology suitable for explaining ecclesiological problems. Without doubt, Hughes, like the previously mentioned scholars, stresses both the ecclesiological and eschatological dimensions of Tyconius’ theology.

It is also worth mentioning the young historical theologian David Robinson who recognises a particular importance of the literary motif of *mysterium facinoris* in Tyconius’ interpretation of the Book of Revelation. He considers the present activity, restraint, and future Revelation of this mystery as dominant themes of Tyconius’ exegesis.³⁴

The present book proposes, along with ecclesiological and eschatological dimensions, the anthropological one, because, as we shall see, it is the human being who is at the centre of the present life of the church and it is the human being who in the church defines his or her eschatological future. During the development of the argument, it should become clearer that the anthropological dimension has a central and ingenious place in the theological systematic application of Tyconius. Undoubtedly, further investigation of the multifaceted texts of the African theologian can result in an appreciation of other theological dimensions like, for example, pneumatology or Christology, but in this work, we shall limit ourselves to the ones mentioned above.

A systematic theology requires an identification of its systemic nucleus. In the structure of the present study, we understand reception as such a nucleus which is composed of historical, literary and theological levels. From the fact that the systemic nucleus is inclusive and dynamic, we assume that the reception justifies the unity of the three above-mentioned levels, and we will notice it in the course of reading. In other words, the structure of the work reflects the methodological process.

³³ Cf. Kevin L. HUGHES, *Constructing Antichrist: Paul, Biblical Commentary, and the Development of Doctrine in the Early Middle Ages* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 82–94.

³⁴ David C. Robinson is the author of the introduction and notes of Tyconius: Exposition of the Apocalypse, translated into English by Francis X. Gumerlock (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017) from the Latin edition of Roger Gryson who reconstructed Tyconii Afri Expositio Apocalypseos, CCSL 107A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). See introduction and p. 82, n. 150.

The aim of the first chapter is twofold. Firstly, we shall identify the epistemological elements of the reception history, briefly discuss its relation to the historical-critical method and attempt to advocate a reconciliation and collaboration between both approaches. Secondly, we examine Tyconius' hermeneutics, the understanding of which is indispensable for following his interpretative logic of biblical texts, especially 2 Thess 2:3–12. Both endeavours are related, because it is precisely the reception of the Bible that helps Tyconius to interpret his historical context, and at the same time, the hermeneutics which he applies guarantee him conditions for biblical reception.

The second chapter focuses on the historical context of Tyconius which becomes for him an impulse for the reception of 2 Thess 2:3–12. By analysing the historical situation of the fourth century North African church, we shall 'put ourselves in Tyconius' shoes' and attempt to understand the factors that pushed him to approach this passage in his own specific way. We shall, therefore, examine some historical facts of the so-called Donatist-Catholic³⁵ controversy in Northern Africa and its consequences, namely persecutions, martyrdom, and separatist expectations, which should help us to better see the encounter of horizons between Tyconius as a reader and 2 Thess 2:3–12 as a text.

In the third chapter we make a *dia*-textual examination of the *Liber Regularum* and the *Expositio Apocalypseos* by identifying all traces of reception, namely cases in which Tyconius cites, alludes to, or echoes 2 Thess 2:3–12. They are organised in thematic groups, taking into consideration their contexts within the dynamic of the author's presentation, in view of drawing from them a coherent meaning. This literary analysis results in identifying several motifs, among which *homo peccati* (the "Man of sin"), *mysterium facinoris* (the "mystery of evil"), and *discessio* (the "departure" or "separation") are most important for Tyconius. He interprets, elaborates, and reads them as a response to his own historical context and uses them for his theological purposes. All motifs are joined together into a logical wholeness by the theme of the presence of evil in the church.

The theological insights that emerge from Tyconius' reception of 2 Thess 2:3–12 and their applicability are discussed in the fourth chapter. We shall explore the functionality of bipartition, the central concept of Tyconius, which appears to be not only an essential element of the church's nature, but also of the human being and temporality. We shall read his insights theologially by putting him into dialogue with some contemporary theologians who might help us to discover actuality of the problem presented by Tyconius.

This study is constituted on the basis of the *heuristic structure* which is composed of two dynamisms: *emergence* and *convergence*. In this sense all the involved levels (historical, literary and theological) are mutually related, but at the same time respect their own position in the course of analysis. It is

³⁵ For a detailed explanation of the nomenclature see pp. 63 n. 48 and p. 64 of chapter II.

why we speak of the historical level first, literary second and theological third. From the historical level emerges the literary level and from these two the theological one emerges. At the same time each level holds its own dynamism, in which internal elements converge with each other. Therefore, we should be *attentive* to the historical context of the fourth century North Africa, *intelligent* in examining the construction of the literary world presented in Tyconius' writings, his morphological, semantic and syntactic work on 2 Thess 2:3–12, his inner logic while dealing with this passage, and *reflective* upon the theological insights that emerge from the previous two operations.

Index of References

Old Testament

<i>Genesis</i>		22:23	208
2:8	96		
2:9	181	<i>2 Chronicles</i>	
3	5	7:9	61
3:3	181		
3:5	5, 39, 76, 96, 97, 98, 123, 134, 138, 168, 169, 171, 178, 180, 181, 190, 196, 219, 267, 286	<i>Nehemiah</i>	
3:15	76	8:18	61
18:6–19:28	196	<i>Psalms</i>	
19	97, 98, 134, 138, 168, 169, 171, 178, 180, 190, 267	8:2	124
19:15–17	97, 98, 168, 178	50	196
19:16	169	50:17	196
19:23–24	138, 190	137:9	151, 185
19:26	169	140:5	84
19:29	5, 39, 76, 96, 97, 98, 123, 134, 138, 168, 169, 171, 178, 180, 181, 190, 196, 219, 267, 286	<i>Ecclesiastes</i>	
25:23	5, 39, 76, 96, 97, 98, 123, 134, 138, 168, 169, 171, 178, 180, 181, 190, 196, 219, 267, 286	3:6	139, 171
		4:7	179
<i>Exodus</i>		<i>Song of Songs</i>	
7:14–24	196	1:7	86
12:3	61	4:12–13	84
		4:16	136
<i>Leviticus</i>		5:1	95, 247
23:26	61	6:8	84
26:18.21.24.28	177, 197	<i>Isaiah</i>	
		1:10	98, 168
<i>Deuteronomy</i>		1:19	39
16:8	61	11:1	178
<i>1 Kings</i>		11:4	5
		14	5, 115, 123, 124, 151, 245, 267
		14:12	5, 115, 123, 151
		14:12–13	123
		14:12–20	5, 151
		14:12–21	115, 123
		14:13–14	5, 124

14:14–17	124	32	182, 267
14:16	124	32:10	184
14:22–27	245	32:32	184
23:17	185	36:16–36	202
24:1–13	185	37	182, 267
24:6	114	37:9	153
32:6	145	37:21–28	183
33:20	112	39:1–4	137, 187
33:23	112	39:17–20	187
45:1	39		
45:15	108, 126, 172	<i>Daniel</i>	
52:11	62, 179, 191, 198	7:2–3	141, 153
58:3	124	7:17–18	141
63:2	103	7:24–25	107
63:10	245	7:25	5
		8:10–13	5
<i>Jeremiah</i>		9:27	148
2:13	84	11:31	126
25:15–19	186	11:31.36–38	126
25:15–29	114	11:36	105, 120, 126
51:45	62	11:36–37	5
		<i>Hosea</i>	
<i>Ezekiel</i>		12:2–4	39
9:4	193		
14:9	208	<i>Obadiah</i>	
22:19–21	192	3:4	123
26:15–18	184		
26–28	182, 267	<i>Habakkuk</i>	
27:26	136	2:3	149, 151
27:27–36	184	3:3	87
28	99, 262		
28:2	5, 99, 115, 123, 125, 187	<i>Zephaniah</i>	
28:2–3	99, 125	2:13–3:5	183
28:2.6.9	5		
28:12–19	5	<i>Zechariah</i>	
28:14	163, 181, 188	13:8	101, 116
28:16	188, 189	14:11–13	114
28:18	137, 138, 188, 189	14:11–16	114
28:19	115, 138		

New Testament

<i>Matthew</i>		13:24–43	106
2:6	178	13:28	99, 125
2:16–18	75	13:39	99, 125
7:8	161	18:18	177
11:2–4	246	23:25	161
11:25–27	246	23:27–28	147, 163

23:37	192	<i>Romans</i>	
24:2	112, 132, 168, 182	1:20	219
24:4	104, 121, 157	1:24,26,28	208, 209
24:5	125	4:7	94
24:14	80	6:6	238
24:15	43, 105, 117, 126, 148, 161, 169, 170, 178, 179, 198, 267	6:19	94, 130
24:15–16	43, 169	8:9	245
24:16	171, 173, 204	8:29	224
24:21	103, 157, 204	9:32	151
24:24	135, 143, 159, 161	9:32–33	151
24:24,26	135, 159	11:8	208
24:46,48,51	158	11:26	141, 154
26:57	85	13:12	108, 109, 116, 117, 140, 161, 195
26:64	121		
<i>Mark</i>		<i>1 Corinthians</i>	
13:14	173, 204	1:23	151
13:22–23	161	1:24,30	246
<i>Luke</i>		1:26–29	265
2:1	178	2:7	246
4:43	96	5:2	181
10:21–22	246	15:23	200
16:8	99, 125	16:17	200
17:28–30	168	<i>2 Corinthians</i>	
17:29	114, 134, 169, 178, 202	4:2	157
17:29–30	114, 134	4:4	156
17:29–32	169, 202	6:13–18	62
21:11	100	6:14	94, 130
21:21	173, 204	6:17	62
<i>John</i>		7:6,7	200
1:14	107	10:10	200
4:3	93	11:2	95, 247
8:21	209	11:4	104
10:30	39	12:8	166
11:40	108	13:8	157
14:6	108	<i>Galatians</i>	
20:26–27	162	2:4	96, 133
<i>Acts of the Apostles</i>		2:5	157
7:51	96, 133, 245	4:4–5	224
21:21	166	5:7	157
		5:10	96, 133
		14	157
		<i>Ephesians</i>	
		1:13	157
		2:5–6	195
		2:6	3

- 2:15 238
 2:21 112, 132
 4:15–16 225
 4:22–24 238
 5:13 106
 5:30 224
 6:12 96, 113, 114, 133, 134,
 139, 140, 142, 143, 148,
 159, 161, 171, 193, 195,
 201, 206, 218, 267
- Philippians*
 1:26 200
 2:12 200
 3:18 96, 113, 133
 3:19 106
- Colossians*
 1:5 157
 1:23 178
 2:14 181
 3:1 195
 3:4 3
 3:9–11 238
 6 157
- 1 Thessalonians*
 2:19 200
 3:13 200
 4:15 200
 5:23 200
- 2 Thessalonians*
 2 2, 4, 6, 8, 50, 51, 52, 62,
 85, 89, 91, 93, 94, 97,
 103, 104, 110, 114, 119,
 120, 121, 127, 128, 129,
 147, 149, 156, 165, 166,
 181, 182, 189, 199, 200,
 206, 211, 213, 214, 280,
 283, 285, 287
 2:1–2 165, 210
 2:1–12 5, 95, 152, 293
 2:2 3
 2:2b 3, 289
 2:3 X, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12,
 16, 17, 18, 27, 30, 31, 42,
 51, 62, 91, 92, 150, 160,
 210, 211, 213, 214, 215,
 216, 265, 266, 267, 268
 2:3–12 X, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12,
 16, 17, 18, 27, 30, 31, 42,
 51, 62, 91, 92, 210, 211,
 214, 215, 216, 265, 266,
 267, 268
 2:7 7, 114, 130, 181, 182,
 194, 195, 203, 218
 2:7a 7, 16, 41, 44, 50, 51, 69,
 96, 102, 109, 110, 113,
 127, 128, 130, 133, 134,
 137, 138, 139, 140, 143,
 144, 146, 147, 152, 159,
 171, 175, 176, 195, 201,
 220, 222, 225, 226, 227,
 235, 237, 240, 241, 242,
 243, 246, 248, 250, 256,
 258, 260
 2:7ab 187
 2:7ac 231
 2:7b 151, 154
 2:7bc 151, 186
 2:9 4, 96, 104, 113, 119, 127,
 133, 143, 157, 159, 160,
 161, 200, 201
 2:10 119
 2:10a 119
 2:11–12 165, 208, 209, 210
 2:12 209, 247
 2:13–3:5 4
 3:3 239
- 1 Timothy*
 2 166
 2:1–2 166
 4:1 166
 6:6 138
 6:14 200
- 2 Timothy*
 2:19 166, 179
 2:20 191
 4:1.8 200
 4:4 208
- Titus*
 2:13 200
 2:14 94

<i>Hebrews</i>		3:10	43, 81, 107, 126
1–2	219	3:16	116
10:17	94	4:1	154
		4:2.4	194
<i>1 Peter</i>		4–5	139
2:5	189	4:6	193
2:8	151	4:7–8	142
2:21	192	4:8	194
3:15–16	253	5:1	40, 142
3:20	135	5:5	198
		5:6	194
<i>1 John</i>		5:7	195
2:9	107, 146	5:10	194
2:18	93, 103, 104, 267	5:11	194
2:22	96, 113, 133	6:1–2	116
3:4	94	6:3–4	116
4:1–3	106	6:4	140, 197
4:2	106	6:5–6	108, 116, 140, 161, 194
4:3	96, 103, 267	6:6	37, 140, 195
4:20	107	6:6–13	37
5:21	135	6:7–8	100, 108, 117
22	93, 103, 267	6:8	43, 81
		6:12	103, 203
<i>2 John</i>		6:12–7:17	203
7	93, 103, 267	6:13	167, 172
		6:16–17	173
<i>Jude</i>		7:1	141, 153, 154, 155
1:18	166	7:3	155, 195
		7:14	102
<i>Revelation</i>		7:16–12:6	37
1:12b–13a	190	7:17	195
1:13	142, 191, 225	8:1	154, 205
1:13a	190	8:7	173, 174
1:15	139, 171, 191	8:9	117
1:16.20	191	8–11	61
1:18	108	8:12	101, 116
2:1	191	8:13	195, 196
2:1a	192	9:5.10.14	43, 81
2:1b	192	9:10.19	145
2:2	192	9:11	156
2:4	192	9:12–11:14	203
2:8–9	192	9:13–15	103
2:13	226	9:14	141, 154, 155, 205
2:17	161	9:15	174, 205
2:18–4:1	37	9:19–20	209
2:21	198	9:19–21	209
2:24	193	9:21	209
3:1	191	10:1	154
3:4–6	193	10:1–11:14	205

10:11	43, 81	16	103, 162, 178, 179, 197, 203, 206, 209, 210
11:2	102	16:1	154
11:3	102, 142, 205	16:12	103, 154, 203, 206
11:3–14	142, 205	16:12–16	203
11:8	98, 168, 192, 196	17	109, 110, 118, 127, 146, 147, 152, 153, 163
11:9	198, 206	17:1	154
11:9b	196	17:4	163, 198
11:11	102	17:10	109, 110
11:14	206	18:4	62, 179, 191, 197, 198, 205
11:15	205	18:9	118
11:18	206	19:1–3	180
11:19	154	19:7	95
12:1	143	19:11	154
12:3	126, 143	19:17–21	187
12:6	102	19:18.21	118
12:9	143	20	103, 110, 118, 155, 204, 228, 251
12–13	143	20:1	154
12:17	143, 144	20:3	103, 110, 204
13	4, 73, 101, 102, 126, 127, 144, 145, 146, 160, 162, 175, 179	20:4–6	228
14:3	95	20:11	154
14:6	44, 196, 197	21	198, 199
14:6–7	44, 81, 196	21:2	95
14:8	175, 197	21:18	180, 260
14:15	175, 176, 177	21–22	139
14:17	176	21:27	198
14:18	176	22	198, 199
14:20	102, 176, 177	22:1–2a	199
15:1	154, 177, 197		
15:6	178		
15:8	162		

Ancient Sources

Ambrose

De officiis ministrorum

2.11 99

Ammianus Marcellinus

Res gestae a fine Cornelii Taciti

22.5, 3–4 78

15–25 78

Aristotle

Nicomachean Ethics

2.1 224

Augustine

Breviculus collationis cum donatistis

3.13.25 59

<i>Contra Cresconium grammaticum et Donatistam</i>		<i>Epistula ad catholicos de secta Donatistarum</i>	
2.22.27	58	16.40	86
<i>Contra Gaudentium donatistarum episcopum</i>		<i>Gesta conlationis Carthaginiensis</i>	
1.28.32	69–70	1.2	31
		3.30–4	64
		3.123	64
<i>Contra epistulam Parmeniani</i>		<i>Sermo 46</i>	
1.1.1	33, 222	15.38	87
1.1.1–1.2.2	6	16.40	87
1.11.18	70		
2.13.31	6	Bede the Venerable	
2.8.21	83	<i>Explanatio Apocalypsis</i>	
2.11.23	83	PL 93.133	37
3.3.18	72		
<i>Contra litteras Petiliani</i>		Caesarius of Arles	
2.23.53	72	<i>Exposition on the Apocalypse</i>	
2.105.241	99	38, 100	
<i>De baptismo contra Donatistas</i>		Cassian, John	
1.4.5	63	<i>De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium</i>	
<i>De civitate Dei</i>		PL 50.188–193	34
19.4	230		
20.19.2	122	Constantine	
<i>De doctrina christiana</i>		<i>Aeterna et religiosa</i>	
3.30	33	65	
3.32.45	48		
3.33	34	Cyprian	
3.30–37	6, 32	<i>De lapsis</i>	
<i>Epistulae</i>		2	56
41	6	29	57
44.3.5	74	33	58
93.10.44	33	34	56
93.11	81		
93.13.51	83	<i>Testimonia ad Quirinium</i>	
93.24	86	97	
93.25	86	<i>Sententiae episcoporum de haereticis baptizandis</i>	
93.43–44	6	87 1	83
185.2.10	76		
185.4.15	71		
249	6		

- Erasmus
Ecclesiastes sive concionator evangelicus 3
 5.1034D–1035A
 23
 1043B–D 23
- Eusebius of Caesarea
De laudibus Constantini
 7.13 122
- Historia Ecclesiastica*
 6.43.2 57
 10.5 62–63
 10.6 63
 10.7 63
- Vita Constantini*
 1.44 65
- Ex Concilio Carthaginensi
 PL 8.774 75
- Filastrius
De haeresibus
 57.1 69
- Flavius, Josephus
Jewish Antiquities
 14 120
- The Jewish War*
 1.470 129
- Gennadius of Marseilles
Liber de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis
 18 31–33
- Gesta apud Zenophilum*
 frag. 19b 71
- Gesta conlationis Carthaginensis*
 1.133 72
- Hilary of Poitiers
Commentarius in Matthaeum
 17.7 124
- Hippolytus
Commentarii in Daniele
 4.49 122
- De Christo et Antichristo*
 5–6 104
 53 123
 61.1 104
- Hugo de St. Victor
De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris
 1.5 22
- Didascalicon*
 PL 176.791 34
- Iohannes Saresberiensis
Metalogicon
 3.4.45 269
- Irenaeus of Lyons
Adversus haereses
 5.26 80
 5.25.2 122
 5.25.4 104
 5.28.2 103–104
- Isidore of Seville
Liber numerorum
 1 109
- Sententiae*
 1.19 34
- Jerome
De viris illustribus
 93 86

John Chrysostom		<i>In Genesim homiliae</i>	
		3.7	104
<i>In Epistolam Secundum ad Thessalonicenses homiliae</i>		7.2	96
PG 62.485–91	153	<i>In Ieremiam homiliae</i>	
		12.12	124
Lactantius		<i>De principiis</i>	
<i>Divinae institutiones</i>		3.2.2	22
7.25	80, 153	Possidius	
		<i>Vita Augustini</i>	
Nicholas of Lyra		10	69
<i>Postilla super totam bibliam</i>		Primasius	
PL 113.31–34	34	<i>Commentarius in Apocalypsin</i>	
		3.12	104
Optatus		Pseudo-Cyprian	
<i>S. Optati Milevitani libri VII</i>		<i>De duobus montibus Sina et Sion</i>	
2.17	78	3.1	124
2.17–19	78	Quodvultdeus	
2.18	79	<i>De promissionibus</i>	
2.19	79, 83	PL 51.848	34
2.2	82	Suetonius Tranquillus	
2.23	83	<i>De vita Caesarum</i>	
2.6–9	82		109
2.8	82	Sulpicius Servus	
3.3	72	<i>Chronica</i>	
3.4	69–70	2.33	76
4.5	79	Tertullian	
4.7	84	<i>Ad Scapulam</i>	
4.9	84	2	80
6.1	83	2.6	152
6.3	79	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i>	
6.4	79	5.16	104
6.5	79	<i>Apologeticum</i>	
6.6	71	1–18	240
6.7	79	32.1	80
Origen			
<i>Contra Celsum</i>			
3.45	99		
6.45	229		
<i>Commentarii in Iohannem</i>			
32.214	104, 158		
<i>Commentarii in Matthaem</i>			
33	104, 157		

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------|---|
| 46 | 240 | II, 15 | 142 |
| <i>De baptismo</i> | | II, 21 | 198, 251 |
| 15 | 54 | II, 22 | 194, 224 |
| <i>De praescriptione haereticorum</i> | | II, 24 | 224–225 |
| 7 | 53 | II, 25 | 225 |
| <i>De resurrectione mortuorum</i> | | II, 26 | 194 |
| 24 | 80 | II, 32 | 116 |
| | | II, 33 | 116, 174 |
| | | II, 34 | 108, 116, 140, 195 |
| | | II, 35 | 43, 81, 95, 100–101, 104,
108–109, 111, 116–117,
148, 161 |
| Theophilus of Antioch | | II, 36 | 117 |
| <i>Ad Autolycum</i> | | II, 37 | 203 |
| 3.28 | 80 | II, 38 | 167, 172, 203 |
| | | II, 39 | 172 |
| Tyconius | | II, 40 | 172, 203 |
| <i>Expositio Apocalypseos</i> | | II, 41 | 203 |
| 45–47 | 115 | II, 43 | 41, 173, 177, 203–204,
225 |
| I, 1 | 135, 191, 225 | II, 44 | 141, 153–154, 204, 222 |
| I, 2 | 142 | II, 47 | 155, 195 |
| I, 5 | 139, 146, 171, 177,
191–192, 233, 247 | II, 55 | 195 |
| I, 7 | 221 | II, 56 | 263 |
| I, 11 | 75, 192, 218, 232 | II, 57 | 231 |
| I, 12 | 192 | II, 58 | 205, 251 |
| I, 14–15 | 116 | III, 2 | 244 |
| I, 17 | 247 | III, 10 | 117, 173–174 |
| I, 19 | 116, 192–193, 232 | III, 14 | 118 |
| I, 22 | 160, 226 | III, 17 | 46 |
| I, 24 | 116 | III, 18 | 196 |
| I, 26 | 161 | III, 20 | 156, 238 |
| I, 27 | 116, 198, 229, 249 | III, 22 | 41 |
| I, 28 | 247 | III, 24 | 229 |
| I, 30 | 193, 218 | III, 35 | 75, 81 |
| I, 32 | 225 | III, 36 | 156 |
| I, 34–35 | 116 | III, 37 | 205 |
| I, 36 | 193 | III, 38 | 43, 155, 205 |
| I, 37 | 161 | III, 39 | 174 |
| I, 39 | 107 | III, 39–48 | 205 |
| I, 40 | 116 | III, 46–47 | 75 |
| I, 41 | 43, 81, 104, 107, 126,
172, 193, 203, 218–219,
256 | III, 48 | 103, 209 |
| I, 42 | 135 | III, 49 | 205 |
| I, 43 | 192, 232 | III, 50 | 225 |
| I, 46 | 75, 223 | III, 56 | 244 |
| II, 7 | 46, 193 | III, 57 | 205 |
| II, 10 | 194 | III, 60 | 44, 81 |
| | | III, 64 | 142, 205 |
| | | III, 66 | 142 |

- | | | | |
|----------------|--|---------------|--|
| I, 13 | 111, 122, 132, 167, 182,
191, 201 | IV, 19.2 | 123, 157–158, 205 |
| II, 1 | 47, 242 | IV, 19.21 | 245 |
| II, 9 | 112 | IV, 20.1 | 114, 186 |
| II, 10 | 48, 261 | IV, 20.3 | 134, 186 |
| II, 11 | 41, 229, 244 | V, 1 | 46, 109 |
| II, 12 | 158 | V, 3.1 | 251 |
| II, 13 | 41, 112, 132 | V, 4.1 | 191 |
| II, 14 | 112, 132 | V, 6.2–6.4 | 201 |
| III, 4 | 47 | V, 6.7 | 221, 247 |
| III, 8 | 245 | V, 7.3 | 247 |
| III, 12 | 47 | V, 8.1 | 221 |
| III, 16 | 40 | V, 8.2 | 122 |
| III, 20.1 | 113 | V, 8.3 | 135 |
| III, 20.2 | 245 | V, 18.2 | 221 |
| III, 23 | 113 | VI | 176, 198 |
| III, 24 | 202 | VI, 1 | 46, 48, 241, 243, 251 |
| III, 25–29 | 123 | VI, 2 | 46, 163, 169, 202, 209,
247, 251 |
| III, 26 | 157 | VI, 3.1 | 43, 46, 74, 81, 95, 98,
110, 168, 170, 175 |
| III, 27.1 | 158 | VI, 3.2 | 41, 243, 251 |
| III, 27.1–27.2 | 158 | VI, 4.1 | 41, 46, 104–105, 157,
159, 241, 243, 251 |
| III, 29 | 95–97, 110–111, 113,
133, 158–159, 168, 201,
245 | VI, 4.1–4.4 | 160 |
| IV, 1 | 45, 208, 241, 243, 244,
247 | VI, 4.2 | 104, 106, 107, 146, 223,
225 |
| IV, 2.2 | 45, 242 | VI, 4.2–4.4 | 163 |
| IV, 3.1 | 202 | VI, 4.4 | 104, 106, 135, 157, 159 |
| IV, 5 | 18 | VI, 8.2 | 251 |
| IV, 6 | 203 | VII, 1 | 48, 160, 242 |
| IV, 8.1 | 228 | VII, 2 | 123 |
| IV, 8.1–8.2 | 228 | VII, 2–7 | 205 |
| IV, 9.1 | 122 | VII, 3.1 | 123, 256 |
| IV, 12 | 122, 158, 221 | VII, 3.2 | 104 |
| IV, 13.1 | 48 | VII, 3.3 | 123, 157 |
| IV, 13.2 | 112, 183–184 | VII, 3.3–4.1 | 158 |
| IV, 14.1 | 48, 184, 201 | VII, 4.1 | 123–124, 157 |
| IV, 14.2 | 113, 184 | VII, 4.1–4.3 | 205 |
| IV, 14.3 | 184 | VII, 4.3 | 110, 136–137, 152, 168,
170, 184, 187, 203, 222 |
| IV, 14.4 | 112 | VII, 5.1 | 122, 124, 126 |
| IV, 15.1 | 112, 185 | VII, 5.3 | 124 |
| IV, 15.2 | 48, 185 | VII, 6.2 | 115 |
| IV, 15.3 | 185 | VII, 8 | 104, 125, 188, 262 |
| IV, 15.4 | 113–114, 185, 221 | VII, 8–13 | 187 |
| IV, 15.5 | 114, 185, 221 | VII, 9.1 | 125 |
| IV, 17 | 95, 98, 110, 168, 221 | VII, 9.2 | 125 |
| IV, 18 | 152, 185, 205, 221 | VII, 9.2–10.1 | 99 |
| IV, 19.1 | 45, 110, 151, 168, 185,
186, 205, 221 | VII, 10.1 | 95, 125 |

VII, 10.2	209, 248	VII, 17.1	125, 159, 209, 243, 247, 262
VII, 11	125	VII, 17.2	137
VII, 12.1	125, 137	VII, 18.1	137–138
VII, 12.2	229	VII, 18.2	110, 138, 168, 171, 189
VII, 13	125	VII, 19	115, 138
VII, 14.1	96, 157	Victorinus de Pettau	
VII, 14.2	XVII, 104, 162–163, 229, 238	<i>Commentarius in Apocalypsin</i>	
VII, 14.3	137, 235	8.2	155
VII, 15	189	13.3	104
VII, 16.1	157, 189		
VII, 16.2	189		

Index of Modern Authors

- Alexander, James A. 33, 48
- Bakel, Hendrik A. van 213
- Barton, John 25, 28
- Beal, Timothy 20, 30
- Beale, Gregory K. 2, 121, 130, 156, 166, 200
- Beaver, Robert Pierce 71
- Benedict XVI *see also* Ratzinger, Joseph 220, 223, 225, 257, 259
- Best, Ernest 2, 131, 157, 166, 200, 207
- Betz, Otto 149
- Boxall, Ian VII, 266
- Bright, Pamela 6–8, 39, 42, 45, 63, 82–83, 86, 115, 131, 182, 213, 221, 228, 244–245, 252
- Brown, Stephen G. 182–183, 280
- Bruce, Frederick F. 121, 182, 207
- Congar, Yves M.J. 32, 275
- Crossley, James G. 20, 29–30
- Daly, Robert S.J. 154
- Danker, Frederick 4, 199
- Dearn, Alan 67
- Dobschütz, Ernst von 166, 181
- Donfried, Karl P. 129
- Dulaey, Martine 32–33, 39, 252, 278
- Edwards, Mark 70, 83–84, 109, 275–277
- Eliade, Mircea 182, 253–254
- Ellicott, Charles J. 120
- England, Emma 18, 20–21, 26, 28–29
- Fee, Gordon D. 2, 121, 200, 207
- Ferré, Alberto Methol 219–220, 262
- Fishbane, Michael A. 181–182
- Frame, James E. 120–121, 207
- Fredriksen Landes, Paula 66, 102, 168, 250, 252
- Frend, William H.C. 53–55, 60, 66–69, 72, 74–75, 78–79, 81–82, 86–88
- Frey, Jörg VII, 20, 129, 248
- Fulford, Henry W. 181
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg 12–15, 18–19, 27, 266
- Gaeta, Giancarlo 48, 242
- Gaumer, Matthew A. 55
- Gaventa, Beverly R. 1, 121, 156
- Giblin, Charles H. 94, 121, 148
- Gillingham, Susan E. 20–21, 25, 27–29
- Gillman, Florence M. 3
- Green, Gene L. 129, 181
- Gryson, Roger XVII, 8, 37–39, 109, 274
- Guardini, Romano 234–236
- Gumerlock, Francis X. XIX, 8, 101, 109, 274
- Gunda, Masiwa Ragies 18
- Hahn, Traugott 32, 37, 229
- Harding, James E. 21
- Hartman, Lars 208
- Hiebert, D. Edmond 208
- Holland, Glenn S. 129, 150
- Holman, Chalres L. 1, 93
- Holmes, Michael W. 1
- Holub, Robert C. 13
- Hoover, Jesse A. 36, 39, 55, 64, 74–76, 80, 85, 87, 117
- House, H. Wayne 166
- Hughes, Kevin L. 8, 42, 47
- Iser, Wolfgang 27–28
- Jauss, Hans–Robert 12, 15–18
- Jewett, Robert 2, 4, 199
- Jones, Ivor H. 2, 253
- Kaczewski, Józef 150

- Kannengiesser, Charles 11, 41–42, 44–46, 49
- Käsemann, Ernst 238, 257
- Kaufman, Peter 64
- Klancher, Nancy 13
- Koester, Helmut 4, 266
- Körtner, Ulrich H.J. 244
- Kovacs, Judith L. 2, 45
- Krentz, Edgar 4, 25
- LaRondelle, Hans K. 4
- Laub, Franz 2
- Lenski, Noel 65–66, 71, 77
- Lietaert Peerbolte, Lambertus J. 149–150
- Linke, Waldemar 214
- Lof, L.J. Van der 32
- Lonergan, Bernard J.F. 23, 240, 249, 269
- Luz, Ulrich 13–14, 19, 24, 29, 31
- Lyons, William J. 18, 20–21, 26–29
- Maier, Jean-Louis 67–68, 73–74, 78, 88, 277
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 2, 94, 120, 130, 166, 200, 207
- Marone, Paula 64
- Marshall, I. Howard 2, 13, 94, 121, 157, 200, 207
- Martin, D. Michael 93, 200
- Martini, Carlo M. 242–243, 273
- Marxsen, Willi 2
- Menken, Maarten J.J. 2, 120, 200
- Merkt, Andreas VII, 11, 19, 30, 155
- Metzger, Paul 148–150, 273
- Miles, Richard 65–67, 70, 76, 83, 86
- Moltmann, Jürgen 232, 237, 249–250, 254, 258, 260
- Monceaux, Paul 32, 67
- Morgan, Jonathan 28
- Morris, Leon 130, 156, 166, 200
- Mueller, Joseph 39
- Müller, Paul-Gerhard 149, 181
- Neil, William 121
- Nicholl, Colin R. 149
- Nicklas, Tobias VII, 2–3, 11, 20, 30, 91–92, 111, 130, 149, 155–156, 166, 214, 269
- Oort, Johannes van 38–39, 72, 233
- Pannenberg, Wolfahrt 12
- Parris, David P. 13, 15, 17
- Pieper, Josef 255–256, 259
- Pollmann, Karla 33, 41
- Popkes, Enno E. 149
- Pottier, Bruno 70, 72
- Quacquarelli, Antonio 229, 242
- Ratzinger, Joseph *see also* Benedict XVI 33, 48, 220–222, 238, 242
- Reinmuth, Eckart 2
- Rigaux, Béda 2
- Robinson, David XIX, 8, 13, 37, 39, 75, 274
- Röcker, Fritz W. 4, 94, 149–150
- Romero-Pose, Eugenio 7–8, 36–38, 75, 122
- Rowland, Christopher 19, 45
- Sawyer, John F.A. 13
- Shaw, Brent D. 64, 70, 73, 88
- Shogren, Gary S. 121
- Steinhauser, Kenneth B. 37, 177, 251
- Talbert, Andrew R. 266
- Thiselton, Anthony C. 2, 5, 28, 54
- Thomas, Robert L. 121
- Tilley, Maureen A. 60–61, 66–68, 73, 75–76, 82–86, 278
- Tonstad, Sigve K. 5, 94–95, 150–151
- Trilling, Wolfgang 2, 149–150, 157
- Vercruyssen, Jean Marc XVII, 32, 35, 48, 119, 245, 274
- Wanamaker, Charles A. 2, 111, 130, 200, 207
- Weima, Jeffrey D. 94, 111, 130, 158, 167, 209
- Whitehouse, John 66
- Witherington, Ben III. 2, 94, 121, 130, 200

Subject Index

- abomination 43, 105, 117, 126, 146–148,
161, 178–179, 198, 204, 218
- Ambrose 36, 99
- advent 96, 102, 104–105, 110–111, 113,
119, 121, 132–133, 144, 155, 159–160,
165, 167–168, 182–183, 199–206, 210,
248, 255, 258
- adventus Domini* X, 165, 199, 205
- African 6–9, 12, 18, 31–32, 36, 39, 43–44,
53, 55–58, 64–66, 68, 74, 80–83, 85,
87–88, 91, 109–111, 116, 124, 143,
145, 156, 165, 175, 210, 213–215,
220–221, 224, 228, 232–234, 243, 245,
249, 251–252, 258, 262, 265, 267–268
- altar 71, 78–79, 82–83, 120, 176
- angel 15, 23, 27, 41, 82, 92, 99, 125, 141,
149, 153–156, 169, 172–178, 192–198,
205–206, 209, 217, 219, 221, 226, 228
- antichrist (*antichristus*) 4–8, 42–44,
47–48, 67–68, 73–74, 76, 80–81, 85,
98–99, 102–110, 112, 114, 116, 123,
126–127, 130–131, 135, 146, 149,
152–153, 157, 159, 161, 166, 172, 180,
201–204, 223, 226–227, 229, 233, 252,
254, 267
- apostasy 56–57, 68, 70, 83, 85, 93–94,
103, 111, 166, 168, 207
- Babylon 5, 42, 44, 53, 99, 115, 118, 123,
147, 151, 155, 175, 179–180, 185–186,
197–198, 202, 205, 248
- baptism 33, 54, 56–57, 59, 63, 81–83,
106, 124, 140, 160–161, 163, 184, 194,
199, 228, 251–252
- beast 4, 55, 66, 69, 73, 78, 101–102, 118,
127, 141, 144–146, 153, 160, 162–163,
174, 179, 183, 187, 209
- beautiful 48, 95, 188, 233, 235, 247,
260–261, 263, 266
- beauty 137, 145, 164, 215–216, 246,
261–263, 266
- belief 43, 53–54, 59, 78–80, 84, 86, 147,
157, 163, 208–209, 224, 241–242,
247, 270
- bipartite 8, 33, 39, 42, 45, 47–48, 97–98,
102, 111–112, 115, 127, 131–133, 136,
139, 141, 143, 151–155, 158, 162,
164–165, 168, 176, 178–180, 182–189,
191, 193, 196, 200–201, 204, 210–211,
214–217, 220–221, 226, 229–230,
232–237, 241, 244–245, 248, 252–254,
256, 258–259, 261, 267
- bipartition 9, 48, 128, 132, 153, 195, 199,
215–217, 230–233, 236–237, 239, 242,
248–250, 252, 257–259, 267–268, 270
- bishop 6, 31, 33–34, 53, 55–57, 59–68,
71–75, 77–84, 87–88, 101, 140, 143,
145, 161–162, 213
- blasphemy 102, 127, 144, 175
- body of Christ 47, 57, 83, 85, 88,
104–105, 112, 121, 146, 155, 163, 191,
193–194, 213, 222, 224, 226–227,
229–232, 258
- body of the devil 101, 106, 119, 124, 127,
144–145, 155, 160, 162, 165, 174, 177,
180, 188, 192, 203, 205, 229, 262
- brothers 62, 65, 96–97, 101, 103,
105–106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 116–117,
119, 123–124, 127, 133–135, 138,
140–143, 146–148, 152–155, 157–161,
164–165, 167, 170–177, 179–180, 184,
186, 189, 191, 193–198, 204, 208, 215,
219, 223–227, 229–231, 233, 246–248,
255–258, 263, 267
- Caecilianists 64, 66–68, 70–74, 76–77,
79–80, 82–84, 86–87, 93, 98, 104, 112,
116, 127, 135–136, 140, 160, 165, 179,
184, 198, 214, 267–268

- Cassian 34
catholic VII, XIX, 8–9, 23–24, 26, 31, 33,
43, 51–52, 54, 60–65, 69, 74, 78, 81,
86, 88, 100, 216–217, 223, 240, 269,
274, 278
catholicity 82, 165, 175, 221–223
charity XI, 215–216, 218–219, 223–224,
226–227, 231, 240, 265
Christian 1–2, 6, 19, 22–23, 30–31,
33–34, 36, 39, 41–46, 48, 50–80,
82–83, 85–86, 88, 91, 93–94, 97–98,
100, 102–104, 106, 108–110, 112, 114,
119, 123, 126, 128–131, 135, 139–140,
143–147, 149–152, 159, 162, 164, 166,
170, 172–173, 180, 186, 191, 194, 201,
203, 209, 213–216, 218–220, 222–226,
228–233, 239–241, 244–245, 248–250,
252–253, 255, 258–259, 265, 267–271,
273, 275–278
Christianity 4, 11, 20, 26, 39, 43, 51–55,
58, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 77, 80,
83, 86–88, 109, 128–129, 154, 211,
221–223, 240, 242, 250, 258, 267, 270
church X, XI, 1–2, 4–9, 16, 19, 21–22,
25–26, 29–34, 39, 41–44, 47–88,
91, 93, 95–119, 121–128, 130–149,
151–211, 213–237, 239–240, 243, 245,
247–263, 265–271, 273, 277–278
Circumcellions X, 68–72, 78–79, 81
collecta X, 38, 61, 80, 84–85, 228, 275
conflict 5, 33, 39, 43–45, 49–53, 55–56,
59–61, 72–73, 78, 80, 82, 88, 93, 97,
102, 106, 117, 133, 136, 139, 165, 174,
188, 196, 217, 246, 258–259, 278
confrontation 12, 191, 193, 214, 217, 243
constantinian X, 52, 62, 66–67
controversy 9, 51–52, 64–65, 76, 85–86,
88, 101, 106, 136, 170, 275
conversion 33, 53, 115, 136, 139, 142,
173, 195–196, 215, 218–219, 222,
227–228, 230–231, 233–235, 237,
244–247, 263, 265, 267
criticism IX, 2, 11, 13, 24–26, 28–30, 116
de medio X, 7–8, 44, 62, 107, 111, 126,
132, 137–138, 141, 151–152, 154, 167,
170–172, 177–179, 181–183, 185–191,
193–194, 196–198, 201–204, 210
death 32, 55–56, 59, 62, 65, 68, 73, 81,
93, 100, 108, 113–114, 117, 137, 181,
184–185, 205, 223, 230, 236, 238, 248
demonic 5, 100, 134, 149–150, 186
demons 1, 4, 12–13, 75, 84, 99–100, 146,
158–159, 173, 183, 193, 201, 208, 211,
223, 232, 241, 267–268
departure 9, 31, 81, 97–98, 102, 134, 139,
144, 159, 165–169, 171, 173–177,
179–180, 190, 198, 202, 217, 234, 249
destruction 3, 77, 83, 93, 96–97, 110–111,
113–119, 127, 132, 138, 142, 150,
152–153, 156, 158–159, 166, 170,
176–177, 183, 190, 200–201
devil 33, 48–49, 60, 65, 67–68, 73, 75, 78,
85, 96–97, 99–101, 103, 106, 108–110,
114–119, 121, 123–128, 131, 133–137,
140, 143–146, 155–165, 173–177,
179–180, 187–188, 190, 192, 194, 197,
201, 203–205, 209, 221, 223, 226,
228–230, 237–238, 242, 246, 248, 253,
256, 262
devil's body 114, 116, 123, 128, 146, 157,
160, 163, 173, 180, 188, 201, 209
discessio X, 9, 52, 62, 81, 92, 97–98, 102,
133, 139, 144, 159, 165–171, 173–177,
179–182, 189–190, 204, 210–211, 226,
248, 250, 267
divine XI, 5, 32, 40–42, 45–46, 48–49,
57, 66, 75, 82, 87, 98–99, 116, 120,
130, 132, 142, 159, 172–174, 176, 186,
188, 203, 207–210, 215, 217–218, 222,
224, 227, 230–231, 233, 239, 241–246,
250, 256, 266, 268
division XVII, 48, 51–53, 57, 61, 66,
75–76, 79, 81–83, 99–101, 134–135,
164, 175, 178, 183, 197–198, 215,
217–218, 226, 232, 245, 263
doctrine 3–4, 8, 23–24, 39, 47, 54, 104,
109, 165, 214, 246, 250
Donatism 55, 63–64, 67, 71, 73, 81, 83,
85–86, 88, 136, 216, 239
Donatists 6–7, 32, 52–54, 60–61, 63–68,
70–88, 93, 103–104, 107, 112, 116,
126–127, 135–136, 139–140, 160,
164–165, 168, 170, 179, 184, 198, 214,
218, 225, 233, 267–268, 275–276

- dynamic XI, 8–9, 17, 21, 42, 52, 113, 132, 203, 217–220, 233–235, 247–248, 253, 265
- ecclesial 39, 52, 75, 88, 102, 108, 202, 226–227, 237, 239
- ecclesiology 7, 33, 50, 57, 77, 81, 83, 158, 211, 214, 217, 226, 268
- ecumenical 223, 269–270
- enemy body 95–99, 102–104, 111, 114–115, 121, 125–126, 142–143, 145–147, 157–158, 174, 188, 201
- eschatological 5, 7–8, 43–44, 46, 49, 60, 73, 80, 84–85, 95, 97–98, 102–103, 107–108, 110, 113–114, 120, 128, 130, 148–150, 156, 165–168, 170, 173, 177, 180, 183, 185–187, 189, 197, 199–202, 210, 215, 232, 234–235, 239, 248–252, 254, 257–262, 265, 268
- eschatology XI, 4, 33, 54, 81, 86, 93, 102, 110, 119–120, 165, 171, 190, 208, 210–211, 214, 248–250, 252, 258, 268
- eternal 76, 100, 111–112, 147, 183, 185–186, 199, 202, 204, 206, 216–217, 219, 229–230, 233, 246, 248, 250, 252, 254, 259, 261, 263
- evil 3–5, 7, 9, 16, 34, 43, 48, 50, 53–55, 59, 62, 70, 76–77, 82, 96, 100, 102, 104–106, 108, 110–113, 115–119, 123–124, 127–129, 131–148, 150–165, 167–177, 179–182, 184, 186–191, 193–196, 198, 201–206, 208–209, 214–215, 217–222, 224–231, 233–240, 245–247, 254–261, 263, 265, 267
- exhortation 61, 227
- external VII, 34, 52, 56, 59, 93, 95, 103, 128, 140, 144, 160, 192, 198, 215, 248
- faith 22, 24, 41, 46–48, 53–58, 61, 68, 89, 95, 101, 107–108, 121, 127–128, 133–134, 140, 143, 148, 150, 166–167, 178, 186, 188, 192–193, 207–208, 213–216, 223, 225, 234, 239–245, 247, 250, 254–255, 259–260, 270–271
- faithful 37, 49, 55, 58, 61, 85, 99, 104, 131, 137, 145, 147, 167, 173, 188, 191, 193, 196, 202, 209, 222, 238, 266
- false 3, 43, 48, 58, 82–83, 93–94, 96, 99–101, 103–108, 110–114, 116–117, 119–120, 126–127, 133–135, 138, 140–143, 145–148, 152–165, 168, 170–172, 174, 176–180, 184, 186, 188, 193, 195, 197–198, 201, 203–204, 207–210, 215, 227, 229, 233, 235–239, 246–248, 256, 262–263, 265, 267
- Filastrius 69
- filius exterminii* X, 96–97, 110–111, 113, 118, 133, 158, 201
- final 5, 16, 52–53, 55, 61–62, 64, 67, 74, 76, 85, 95, 102–103, 105, 110, 115, 119, 126, 131, 147, 152–153, 162, 164–165, 170–171, 173, 177, 180, 188, 190, 197–198, 200–206, 209–210, 215, 218, 220, 226, 228, 231–232, 235, 237, 248–251, 255, 257–263
- fire 71, 99, 104, 114, 117–118, 138–139, 163, 169, 171, 188–192
- from the midst 7, 108, 112, 126, 129, 132, 137–138, 141, 151–152, 154, 165, 170, 172, 177–178, 181–183, 186–190, 193, 195, 197–198, 201, 203–204, 218
- future XI, 2–5, 8, 22, 27, 43–44, 60, 85, 101, 109–111, 114, 119–121, 127, 129, 131, 139, 142–143, 145, 148, 154, 156, 158, 161, 165–166, 168–171, 173–175, 180–183, 185, 190, 196–199, 203–207, 210–211, 214–216, 230, 245, 248–261, 263, 267–268
- general 2, 18, 25, 35, 45, 93–94, 113, 120, 145, 152, 160, 162, 211, 230, 233, 245, 268
- good 5, 7, 37, 40–41, 43, 48, 56, 59, 61–62, 70, 76, 105–106, 108, 110, 112, 115, 117, 119, 127–128, 131–132, 134, 136–137, 139, 145, 153, 156, 158–159, 162, 164–165, 167, 169, 172–174, 180–181, 184, 186, 188, 191–193, 196, 198, 203–204, 206–208, 213, 215–231, 233, 235–238, 240, 245–248, 252, 254–263, 265, 267, 269
- grace 42–43, 45, 47, 113, 133, 135, 137, 149, 159, 171, 199, 218, 222, 227–228, 231, 233, 240, 242, 244–245, 268
- growth 40, 106, 193, 196, 217, 239, 242, 256

- hate 40, 74, 96, 98, 106–107, 113–114,
 124, 131, 133, 146–147, 172, 179, 201,
 214, 223, 236, 259
- hatred 51, 64, 68, 71, 74, 77–79, 81, 98,
 106, 109, 114, 128, 134–135, 143,
 146–147, 159, 163, 171, 179, 201, 204,
 223, 226–227, 229, 236
- head XI, 47–48, 71, 78, 82–84, 97, 99,
 101, 112, 114, 123, 132, 143, 146–147,
 157, 160, 162–164, 172, 190, 194,
 220–221, 224–228, 230, 232, 244, 254,
 257, 259–260, 265
- hermeneutical IX, 1, 6–8, 13, 19, 25–26,
 29–31, 33–34, 36, 39–40, 42, 45,
 49–50, 95, 97, 99, 102, 132, 154, 169,
 186, 190, 211, 213, 237, 267
- hermeneutics 9, 12–15, 17, 20, 26–31, 33,
 41–48, 50, 100, 131, 178–179, 194,
 216, 245, 267
- hidden 12, 40–41, 49, 55, 101, 108,
 116–117, 120–121, 125–126, 128, 130,
 132, 135–136, 139–140, 142–143, 147,
 156, 159, 161, 163, 171–173, 178, 186,
 191, 194, 199–202, 204, 208, 218–219,
 227, 230, 241, 244–245, 247, 250, 252,
 258, 260–261, 263, 266, 271
- Hilary of Poitiers 124, 135
- historical IX, 6, 8–18, 21–30, 42–45,
 48–49, 51–53, 60, 64, 74–75, 79,
 88–89, 91–92, 97–98, 104–105, 110,
 112, 114, 128, 130–131, 142, 147, 151,
 164, 169, 175, 183, 202, 210, 213–214,
 234, 236, 240, 249, 251, 254, 257,
 261, 265–266, 268–269, 271, 277
- history IX, 1, 4, 6, 9, 11–15, 17–23,
 25–30, 34, 37, 43–44, 49–51, 57, 63,
 65, 70, 76, 78, 80–81, 85, 88–89, 131,
 133, 135, 147–148, 154, 177, 181–184,
 213, 218–219, 222, 238, 242, 248–251,
 253, 255, 258, 266, 269, 274, 276, 278
- holiness 73, 83, 112, 131, 135, 138, 172,
 188, 217–218, 229, 236
- Holy Spirit 22, 41, 45, 48, 54, 82, 88,
 96–97, 108, 133, 149, 173, 176, 208,
 215, 218, 221–222, 226–228, 230–231,
 241–246, 250–251, 270–271
- homo peccati* X, 8–9, 51–52, 92–93, 95,
 97–103, 115–116, 125, 168, 177, 204,
 211, 233, 250, 267
- hope 4–6, 22, 27, 58, 113, 123, 188,
 215–216, 237, 249–250, 253–260,
 262, 265
- hopelessness XI, 66, 255–256, 259, 265
- human being 6, 8–9, 16, 31, 33, 44, 50,
 52, 100, 104, 112, 128, 152, 155–156,
 164, 188, 193, 211, 214–216, 223–224,
 227–228, 232–239, 241–243, 245–248,
 253–263, 268, 270
- humility 229, 253, 270
- hypocrite 61, 119, 146, 158, 160–164,
 171, 174, 177, 179–180, 196, 206
- identity 60, 73, 77, 80, 82, 84–85, 88,
 103, 117, 145, 147, 151, 170, 203, 228,
 230, 238, 263
- image 21, 31, 46–47, 73, 84–85, 95–96,
 100, 102, 112, 124, 126–127, 131,
 134–136, 138–139, 151, 153, 158, 162,
 168–169, 171–172, 177, 180–181, 187,
 191, 193–194, 196, 202, 205, 209, 218,
 220, 223, 225, 228, 233–234, 236–237,
 239, 252, 258, 268–269
- imitation 25–27, 100–101, 157
- in the midst 7, 61, 69, 80, 85, 131, 135,
 138, 140, 165, 182–188, 190–192,
 194–197, 199, 214, 221, 229, 246, 252,
 259, 267
- incarnation 34, 105–107, 110, 114, 146,
 200, 223, 225, 236, 249, 253–254
- iniquity 3, 7, 43, 50, 81–83, 86, 109, 131,
 137, 145, 161, 179, 188, 193, 204, 236
- inside 7, 101, 117, 127, 134–135, 142,
 147, 161, 163, 171, 183, 186–188, 192,
 209, 213, 235, 243, 269
- internal 10, 12, 34, 52–53, 56, 59, 72,
 102–103, 139–140, 171, 192, 198, 215,
 233, 248, 261–262
- invisible 12, 31, 40, 47, 97, 144, 165, 191,
 194, 197, 209, 216, 218–219, 221,
 226–227, 245–246, 261
- Iohannes Saresberiensis 269
- Israel 4, 61, 99, 112–113, 132, 137, 141,
 154, 166, 178, 181–184, 187, 192,
 201–202
- Jerusalem 24, 53–54, 95, 111–112,
 120–122, 132, 139, 151, 191–192, 196,
 199, 202, 240

- judgment 7, 14–15, 17, 61, 96, 103, 115,
117, 133, 153, 155–156, 164–165, 176,
180, 184, 187, 195–196, 200, 206, 210,
231, 248–249, 270
- justice 4, 57, 70, 85, 102, 108, 116, 128,
132, 136, 138, 140, 175, 184–186, 190,
195, 197, 227, 255–256, 262–263, 265
- kingdom 59, 61, 102, 110, 137, 141,
153–154, 183, 185, 187, 195, 214, 229,
236, 248
- lawless 3–5, 94, 119, 130, 150, 156,
199–200, 207
- lawlessness 3, 93–95, 110–111, 119–121,
129–130, 148, 150, 156–157, 166, 181,
199, 207
- life 4–5, 8, 12, 14–15, 24–25, 31–32,
49, 51–56, 60, 62, 73, 77, 82, 88–89,
99–100, 106–109, 113–114, 125,
128–129, 140, 143, 161–162, 164, 169,
181–182, 185–186, 198–199, 214–216,
218, 222, 224–225, 227–228, 230–231,
234–236, 238, 247–248, 250, 253–258,
260–263, 265, 267, 269–271, 276
- literary IX, XVII, 6, 8–10, 12–13, 15–18,
22–24, 30–31, 39, 41–42, 44, 49, 53,
68, 89, 91–92, 96, 100, 116, 123, 136,
141, 150, 210–211, 213–214, 265–267,
270
- love 7, 53, 58, 64, 67, 77, 81, 86, 95, 97,
106–107, 109, 119, 128, 131, 135, 139,
143, 146–147, 152, 157–159, 163,
171, 188, 191–192, 194, 199, 201,
213, 219–220, 223–225, 227, 229, 236,
239–240, 254, 256–257, 259–260, 270
- macarian X, 68, 72, 74–75, 79, 81–82, 85
- man of sin 9, 95–103, 107, 110–111,
114–116, 118, 120, 122, 125–128, 131,
134, 144, 147, 153–154, 156, 159–160,
165–170, 174–175, 177, 180, 182,
190–191, 202–204, 206, 210, 214,
219–220, 227, 233, 238, 247–248, 252,
256, 258, 260
- manifestation 4–5, 96, 98, 113, 133, 153,
158–159, 200–202, 205, 219, 241, 253,
258, 260–261, 266
- martyrdom 9, 44, 51, 54–56, 59, 61,
68–69, 73–76, 84–85, 228
- mediator XI, 27, 172, 218, 220–221, 224,
226, 243, 258–259
- member XI, 6–7, 21, 32, 40, 48, 58, 65,
68–69, 78, 83, 92–93, 95–96, 99, 104–
107, 111–114, 116, 118, 121, 123–124,
127–128, 132–134, 138, 140, 143, 146,
148, 151–152, 157–159, 164–165, 167,
169–170, 172–173, 179–180, 184, 186,
188–191, 193, 196, 201–202, 207–208,
215, 217, 219–222, 225–234, 236–237,
239, 245, 247, 253–254, 256–257,
261–263, 265, 267, 271
- membership 24, 67, 83, 93, 103, 184
- mercy 58, 65–66, 173, 204
- mysterium facinoris* X, 7–9, 41, 44,
50–51, 69, 92, 96, 113, 128–129, 131,
133–134, 136, 138–140, 148, 152, 158,
187, 195, 201, 211, 225–227, 235, 237,
240–243, 248, 250, 256, 267
- mystery XI, 3, 7–9, 16, 41, 45, 50, 82–83,
86, 96, 100, 102, 105, 110, 112–113,
127–148, 151–152, 154–157, 159,
161–164, 167–168, 170–171, 173–176,
179–182, 186–187, 189–190, 194–195,
201, 203–204, 207–208, 214, 216–218,
220, 222, 225–227, 233–234, 236–239,
246–247, 255, 258, 260
- mystical 22, 40–41, 45, 47, 100–102, 109,
127, 139, 163–164, 191, 205–206, 208,
214, 226, 228, 230–231, 239, 241–247,
251, 268
- nature 1, 9, 19, 28, 39, 41, 47–48, 53,
72, 95–96, 100, 111, 114, 118, 121,
128–130, 139, 155, 160, 164, 180,
182, 186, 211, 214–215, 221, 223–224,
226–227, 229–230, 232–241, 248,
253–254, 268
- Nicholas of Lyra 34
- north 87, 120, 187
- North Africa 6–10, 32, 36, 39, 42–43,
51–53, 55, 58–61, 63–64, 66–70, 73,
75–76, 80, 82–83, 85–86, 88, 91, 98,
116, 136, 151, 175, 191, 210–211, 214,
267
- obscurity 88, 157

- ontological 100, 201, 234, 256, 261, 263
 opposition 7, 78, 82, 95, 97, 108, 126,
 175, 187, 219, 234–236, 241–242,
 247, 253
 orthodoxy 57, 106, 213, 270
 outside 7, 50, 54, 57, 60, 65–66, 68, 75,
 93, 101–103, 116–117, 127, 133–134,
 142, 147, 149, 163, 177, 180, 192, 209,
 213, 219–220, 232, 243, 246, 256

 paradigm 26, 44, 73, 107, 170, 182, 214,
 221, 233
 parousia 2–5, 79, 94, 102, 149–150, 153,
 156, 199
 participation 143, 145, 147, 164, 221,
 227, 258, 266
 particular 5–6, 8, 12, 14, 18–20, 26–27,
 33, 41, 43–45, 51–52, 82, 89, 91–92,
 96, 112, 116, 121, 123, 138, 141, 154,
 160, 168, 170, 177, 182–183, 219–220,
 233, 237, 241, 249, 268
 past 11, 14, 17, 19, 27, 45, 60, 77, 86–87,
 89, 110, 116–117, 119, 131, 145, 165,
 169, 173–175, 183, 204, 206, 215, 217,
 219, 249–252, 255, 263, 265, 268
 patristic VII, 11, 19, 30, 34, 37, 44, 48,
 219, 245
 pedagogical XI, 7, 102, 119, 165, 201,
 210, 218, 249–250, 258, 267
 perdition 101, 111–112, 115–119, 127,
 131, 133, 256
 performative IX, 12–13, 18, 30–31,
 91–92, 213, 267
 persecution X, 4, 9, 43–44, 51, 55–60,
 62, 65–68, 70, 72–77, 80–82, 85, 98,
 103, 107–108, 110, 116, 118, 128, 131,
 134–135, 137, 142–144, 147, 155,
 166–167, 170, 172–173, 176–177, 180,
 184, 190–191, 196, 201, 203–206,
 209–210, 248, 250–252, 257–258,
 260, 278
 perseverance 48, 135, 151, 167
 pneumatological 41, 245
 Possidius 69
 power 3, 5, 48, 53, 57, 59, 61, 70–72, 78,
 96, 100–101, 103, 113, 115, 117–119,
 126–127, 133, 140, 144–145, 150, 153,
 155–156, 159–162, 176–177, 191–195,
 201, 203–204, 207–210, 218, 225, 228,
 230, 240, 246, 256, 258, 261, 268
 prefiguration 165
 present XI, 3–10, 12–15, 17–18, 20, 24,
 26, 30, 32, 34, 37–38, 41, 44–46,
 48–49, 51–53, 56, 60–63, 66–69,
 72–73, 75–76, 81, 85, 87–89, 92,
 95–105, 110, 112–120, 122–132, 134,
 137–146, 148, 151, 153–155, 158,
 160, 162–165, 168–191, 194–199, 203,
 206–208, 211, 213, 217–219, 222, 224,
 230, 234–237, 239, 241–242, 244–245,
 247–263, 265–270
 pride 96, 99, 115, 123–124, 127–128, 133,
 218, 256
 process IX, 5, 8, 12, 14–18, 20–21, 23,
 27, 30–31, 43, 51, 57, 89, 92, 119, 156,
 164–165, 169, 189, 200–201, 213, 218,
 222–224, 226–227, 230–233, 235, 240,
 246–247, 255, 257–263, 266–267, 269
 processual XI, 217
 productive IX, 12, 15, 17–18, 30–31, 213,
 216, 254, 260, 267
 profane XI, 40, 52, 182, 221, 253–254,
 259–260
 prophecy 1, 7, 40, 43–44, 80, 84–85, 98,
 110–111, 120–121, 130, 150, 169, 171,
 173, 183–185, 190, 202, 204, 208, 251
 Pseudo-Cyprian 124
 punishment 70, 72, 76, 113, 174,
 176–177, 184–185, 188, 196, 206,
 209–210, 237
 pure 20, 24, 32, 52, 54, 61, 70, 79, 82–85,
 95, 103, 106, 137, 170–171, 173, 179,
 215, 218, 233, 235, 259–260

 reason 14–15, 21, 23–24, 43–44, 46–47,
 51, 56, 64, 72, 77–78, 89, 92–93, 96,
 98, 123, 128, 133, 142, 150, 157–158,
 167, 170, 178, 180, 193, 197, 208,
 215, 217, 219–220, 237, 239–245, 247,
 255, 263, 265–266
 recapitulation 33, 45–46, 60, 98, 103, 110,
 154, 163, 169–170, 173, 175, 203,
 205–206, 251, 255
 reception IX, 1–2, 5–6, 8–9, 11–13,
 15–22, 26–31, 37–39, 49, 51–52,
 91–92, 97, 104, 118, 127, 140, 147,

- 149, 153, 165, 177, 210–211, 213–214, 216, 265–269
- relationship 1, 16–19, 21, 28–29, 68, 71, 77, 81, 88, 100, 102, 119, 167, 171, 216–217, 231, 235, 237, 239–240, 242, 244, 246, 255, 258, 268
- remnant 77, 80, 85, 164, 168, 184, 202, 210, 222
- repentance 7, 47, 56, 58, 116, 119, 150, 155, 173, 196, 228–229
- restrainer 5, 130, 148–151, 181
- restraining 142, 148–149, 152–153, 181
- rhetoric 28, 39, 42, 45, 64, 97, 111, 149, 168, 206, 251
- right 5, 16, 19, 24, 28–29, 36, 48, 50, 53, 56, 78, 82, 98–99, 106, 112, 122, 134, 138, 146–147, 152, 158, 163, 166, 168, 174, 176, 179–180, 183–184, 186–187, 192–193, 200, 216, 219–220, 229–230, 235, 237, 239, 241, 250, 256, 263, 268, 271
- righteousness 66, 77–78, 112–113, 118, 138, 156, 190, 192, 197, 203, 207, 210, 229
- rule XIX, 6–7, 22, 28, 31–36, 39–50, 58, 60, 62, 70, 80–81, 83–84, 95–97, 100–102, 104–105, 107, 110, 114–115, 122–123, 126–127, 131–139, 142–143, 146, 151–152, 157, 159–160, 163, 168–169, 172, 178, 182–184, 187, 190–191, 200–202, 205, 208, 213, 221, 233–234, 239, 241–247, 251–252, 256, 262, 268, 273–274
- sacrament 33, 68, 82–83, 140–141, 161, 194–195, 220–221, 226, 254
- sacramental 54, 140, 163, 220–221
- sacred XI, 11, 41, 52, 59, 64, 68, 70–73, 79, 88, 129, 181–182, 184, 220–221, 239, 243–244, 253–254, 258–260, 268
- salvation 4, 42–43, 49, 57, 97, 99, 113, 115, 119, 125, 128, 140, 150, 183, 202, 221–222, 224, 229, 242, 256
- Satan X, 3–4, 55, 66, 70, 94, 96, 110–111, 113, 119, 123, 129, 133–134, 151, 155–160, 186, 192, 200–201, 205, 207, 226
- schism 7, 33, 36, 51, 57–58, 63–67, 70, 76, 81–84, 86, 88, 116–117, 165, 170, 173, 175, 192–193, 232, 268, 278
- Scripture(s) XI, 1, 4, 6–7, 15, 20–25, 28–31, 33–34, 36, 39–42, 44–50, 57–60, 76, 82, 84, 91–92, 98, 109–110, 112–114, 119, 127, 129, 131–134, 137, 139, 144, 147–148, 151, 164–165, 169–170, 172–173, 181, 185–186, 189–190, 192, 202–203, 206, 208, 211, 213, 217–218, 227, 231, 239–241, 243–247, 250–252, 263, 266–268, 270–271
- second advent 200–203, 205–206
- secret 40, 44, 96–97, 103, 128–129, 131, 133–134, 137, 148, 156, 174, 182, 187, 194, 208, 246
- separation 7, 9, 51, 61–62, 72, 80, 82, 85–86, 88, 92, 95, 98, 115, 119, 123, 129, 131, 152, 162, 164–165, 167–170, 172–173, 175–177, 179–180, 186, 188–189, 191, 196–201, 203–204, 206, 210, 214, 220, 226, 229–231, 235, 240, 248, 250, 252, 257–263, 267
- sign 3, 6–8, 15–16, 25, 27, 39, 41–42, 48–49, 51, 53, 58, 64, 67–68, 73, 76, 80, 83, 87, 91, 93–94, 96–98, 102, 104–107, 110–113, 116–117, 119, 121, 123–124, 128, 130–131, 133–135, 141–143, 146–147, 151, 155–163, 165, 170, 172–173, 177, 180, 182, 191, 194–199, 201–202, 204, 206, 222–223, 228, 231, 237–238, 241, 243, 246, 250–253, 260, 263, 265, 267, 270
- sin XI, 1–3, 9, 11, 13, 15–16, 21, 26, 32–33, 36, 38–40, 42–44, 46, 48, 51, 54–55, 57–58, 62–65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75–77, 79–80, 82–83, 85–86, 88–89, 91–92, 95–105, 107–111, 113–131, 133–134, 136–142, 144–147, 152–175, 177–180, 182–185, 187–193, 195–198, 200–210, 213–215, 217–222, 225–227, 230, 233–244, 246–250, 252–256, 258–262, 266–268, 270
- sinner 57, 62, 83–85, 98, 113, 208, 218, 225, 229
- sisters VII, 97, 194, 215, 219, 223–227, 229–231, 233, 246–248, 255–257, 263, 267

- slavery 25, 85, 133, 201, 237–238, 247
- south X, XIX, 81, 86–87, 136, 166, 183–184, 187
- spiritual XI, 2, 8, 20, 22, 33, 41–42, 44–46, 49–50, 54–56, 60, 69, 79, 83, 96–97, 102–104, 106, 111–117, 119, 122, 124, 128, 131–134, 136, 138–139, 141–145, 151–155, 159–162, 164–165, 170, 179, 183, 185–186, 188–189, 191, 193–199, 201–203, 206, 209, 211, 216, 218, 220–224, 226–231, 233–234, 239–240, 245, 247–248, 250, 252, 257–258, 260–263, 265, 267–268
- spiritually 3, 45, 82, 98, 104, 110, 114, 116–118, 151, 157–158, 168–169, 174, 179–180, 185, 187, 189, 192, 194, 196, 198, 221, 227, 230, 232, 245, 252, 254, 256, 258–260, 263
- Suetonius Tranquillus 109
- suffering 4–5, 56, 76, 126, 128, 136, 150, 152, 164–165, 187, 191–192, 194, 214, 227, 229, 234, 237, 250, 257, 270
- supernatural 23, 156, 219, 225, 229, 239
- synecdoche* 45, 95, 99, 102, 109, 121, 142, 181, 206, 216, 223, 237, 242
- temporality XI, 9, 33, 44, 52, 215, 248–249, 253–255, 257–260, 270
- theological IX, XIX, 2, 5–6, 8–10, 12–13, 15–16, 18, 30–33, 42, 44, 47–49, 52, 81, 84, 88, 92, 97, 104, 109, 121, 147, 149, 165, 211, 213–216, 220, 223–224, 227, 232, 235, 239, 243, 246, 249, 261, 265–268
- theology VII, 1–2, 4–5, 8, 12, 19, 26, 30, 32, 55, 80, 83, 91, 120, 133, 136, 147, 149, 157, 165, 210, 213–217, 223, 226, 232, 243–244, 249–250, 254, 258, 260–261, 268–269
- Theophilus of Antioch 80
- traditores* 58–59, 61, 70, 73, 82–83, 87, 106
- transformation 12, 18, 31, 186, 218–219, 222–223, 228, 233, 253, 258–259
- transformative 12, 18, 31, 185, 218–219, 222–223, 228, 233, 253, 258–259
- transformative IX, 12–13, 15, 17–18, 30–31, 51, 104, 213, 267–268
- treasure 40–41, 47, 137–138, 191, 208, 235, 241, 244–247, 271
- tribulation 139, 142, 166, 171, 176, 196, 228, 252, 257
- truth 3, 13–15, 18, 23–24, 27, 40–41, 46, 50, 58, 75, 82, 84–85, 97–98, 103, 105–107, 110, 112, 114–115, 118–119, 130, 132–135, 138–139, 145–147, 152, 157–160, 163–165, 169, 172–174, 176, 186, 192, 195, 199, 202–203, 207–209, 215–216, 225, 233–234, 236–239, 242, 244–247, 249, 257, 261–263, 265–266, 268–271
- typology 6, 8, 42
- unbelievers 58, 132, 207–208, 259–260
- unfaithful 49, 58, 131
- union XI, 57–58, 61, 63–64, 73, 78, 82–83, 115, 124, 147, 216, 218, 222–226, 228, 254, 256–257, 259, 261, 263
- universal XI, 63, 65, 149, 165, 168, 179, 187, 198, 217, 220–224, 244
- universality 42, 222
- violence 51, 64, 66, 68, 70–72, 76, 79, 81–82, 84, 88, 98, 128, 131, 135–136, 145, 147, 156
- visible 12, 54, 57, 70, 93, 128, 131, 134, 164, 190, 193, 196, 198, 201–202, 208, 213, 216, 219, 221–222, 226–227, 230, 246, 252, 257–261
- war XI, 2, 13–17, 20–21, 24–25, 28, 32, 46, 50, 55, 60–62, 64, 67–69, 72–73, 76–79, 85, 87, 89, 93, 97, 99, 104, 106, 112–113, 115, 119–120, 123, 127–129, 132–136, 139, 141–142, 144, 147, 151, 154–156, 161–163, 165, 171, 173, 175, 179, 182, 184, 186, 188, 192, 196, 198, 206–208, 210, 214–221, 224–234, 236–237, 240–243, 246–248, 250–253, 255, 258–260, 263, 265–267, 269, 276
- warning 20, 42–43, 98, 125, 157, 173, 180, 190, 195, 211, 227, 255
- wholeness 9, 41, 47, 131, 191, 233
- wicked 3, 5, 48, 65, 108, 124, 128, 134–135, 141, 152, 154, 156, 193, 198, 204, 206, 218–219, 252

- wickedness 65, 96, 113, 131, 133–135,
138–143, 145, 159, 161, 171, 193, 195,
201, 206, 218, 226, 247, 252
- will 42, 94, 113, 131, 141, 145, 155,
158–159, 162, 172, 176, 188, 200, 219,
223, 226–227, 229–231, 240, 245–246,
254, 256
- wisdom VII, 6, 41, 45, 100, 153, 170,
172, 180, 207, 209, 218–219, 245–248,
263, 269
- world 2, 5–6, 10–11, 13, 16–18, 25, 30–
31, 33, 39, 43, 50–54, 56, 58–60, 68,
70, 73–76, 79–81, 84, 88–89, 91–93,
95, 98, 100–102, 105, 107, 109–110,
115–118, 126–130, 141, 151–154, 156,
159–161, 164–165, 168–171, 175,
180–182, 184–186, 188–190, 193, 197,
201–203, 209–211, 213–214, 218–222,
226, 229, 238–239, 242, 247–250,
252–253, 257–258, 260, 262, 266–270
- wrath 58, 78, 114, 149, 173, 177–178,
186, 190–192, 197, 206, 209–210