

Rewriting the End.

The eschatological alliance between the Tatars and the Greeks in the anonymous Middle Dutch *Boek van Sidrac* and Jan van Boendale's *Lekenspiegel*[†]

by

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I. Introduction

The Middle Dutch writer Jan van Boendale († ca. 1350/1) dedicated the last book of his voluminous vernacular encyclopaedia the *Lekenspiegel* (Engl. translation: *Layman's Mirror*, written ca. 1325–1330) to the events associated with the end of the world in eschatology.² The first chapters of this last book of the *Lekenspiegel* contain an extensive description of a series of

¹ This article is based on a paper I presented at the conference 'Peoples of the Apocalypse', Frankfurt am Main, 23–25.10.2011. It is a follow-up to my PhD-research that was carried out with the support of the BOF-funds at Ghent University and that has resulted in the unpublished doctoral dissertation: ULRIKE WUTTKE, *Dit es dinde van goede ende quade. Eschatologie bei den Brabanter Autoren Jan van Boendale, Lodewijk van Velthem und Jan van Leeuwen* (14. Jahrhundert), 2012. I would like to thank Felicitas Schmieder, Joris Reynaert and Wim Blockmans for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this article and Elizabeth Boyle and Sally Chambers for proofreading. Of course, all mistakes are mine.

² Eschatology – the modern term for what in the Middle Ages was mostly referred to as the '(Four) Last Things' (Middle Dutch *Vier uitersten*, Latin *quatuor novissima*) – is used in this article as an umbrella term for 'individual' and 'universal eschatology'. Individual eschatology is concerned with the eschatological fate of the individual after death, whereas universal eschatology looks at the collective fate of humanity at the end of time. Apocalypticism is considered as a special manifestation of universal eschatology in which the end of time is expected to be very near. This division is based on CAROLINE WALKER BYNUM, PAUL FREEDMAN, Introduction, in: CAROLINE WALKER BYNUM, PAUL FREEDMAN (Ed.), *Last Things. Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (The Middle Ages Series) 2000, p. 1–17 and p. 257–261. BERNARD MCGINN, *Visions of the end. Apocalyptic traditions in the Middle Ages* (Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies 96) 1998 (1979) offers a valuable introduction to the origins of medieval end time thinking and the most popular motifs, accompanied by an extensive bibliography and translations of important sources.

eschatological battles in the Holy Land between Latin Christians, Muslims and wild heathens. Rather surprisingly – at least for the modern reader – it also describes how Greek Christians ally themselves with heathen Tatars against the Latin Christians: *tarteren ende griexe mede / Maken ene eendrachtechede* (*Lekenspiegel*, IV, c. 139, vss. 117–118).³ The role of the Muslims, Jews and heathens in the *Lekenspiegel* as enemies of the Christians before the Antichrist's coming and Judgement Day is in accordance with traditional medieval Christian eschatological expectations that go back to Revelation 20:8 (Gog and Magog).⁴ Nonetheless, the role of Christians, specifically Greek Christians, as enemies of Latin Christianity is a new development in medieval eschatological expectations that needs explanation.

Jan van Boendale did not invent the unusual alliance between Greeks and Tatars in the *Lekenspiegel*, but based it on the eschatological prophecy in the anonymous Middle Dutch *Boek van Sidrac* (Engl. translation: *Book of Sidrach*, written ca. 1318–1329). However, there are differences between the role of the Greeks in the prophecies of the *Boek van Sidrac* and the *Lekenspiegel*. The most significant difference in my opinion is that the Greeks disappear after the treacherous alliance with the Tatars and their final defeat from the eschatological scene in the *Boek van Sidrac*, but in the *Lekenspiegel* they are mentioned amongst those who will return to Latin Christianity as one of the signs of the end of time.

The eschatological alliance between the Greeks and the Tatars in the *Boek van Sidrac* and the *Lekenspiegel* is highly illustrative of the fact that the medieval Latin Christian imagination did not always differentiate between heathens and erroneous Christians and that both “others” could be considered as being equally threatening to “true” Christianity. It is also illustrative for the effects of historical and intellectual changes on eschatological scenarios, as it is a significant characteristic of prophecy that though it looks into the future, it also reflects on the present. Bernard McGinn has indicated two main

³ ‘Tatars and Greeks, shall then make an union’, my translation. The *Lekenspiegel* will be cited from the digital edition of MATTHIAS DE VRIES (Ed.), *Der Leken Spieghel. Leerdicht van den Jare 1330, door Jan Boendale, gezegd Jan de Clerc, Schepenlerc te Antwerpen. 1844–1848* (as available in the Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren (DBNL): http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/boen001mvri01_01/, retrieved 25.10.2014).

⁴ HELMUT BRALL-TUCHEL, *Die Heerscharen des Antichrist. Gog und Magog in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*. in: BARBARA HAUPT (Ed.), *Endzeitvorstellungen* (*Studia Humaniora* 33) 2001, p. 197–228 offers a general introduction to the motif of eschatological people in medieval literature.

approaches in which medieval prophecy reacted to historical, social and mental changes. Either elements of established end-time scenarios were used, or new end-time narratives were created. McGinn calls these different approaches 1) *a priori* – the employment of already existing end-time scenarios – and 2) *a posteriori* – the expansion of the existing scenario by the inclusion of allusions to contemporary events.⁵ The new role of the Greek Christians as one of the evil eschatological people is the result of an *a posteriori* approach to the end-time narrative. It speaks volumes about the tensions between Latin and Greek Christians and how the eschatological role of certain groups or persons could change. On the one hand, the growing tensions between Latin and Greek Christians after the Great Schism in 1054 (see below) left their traces in medieval chronicles as factual descriptions, rumours and mutual accusations, on the other hand, they also left their traces in eschatological prophecies.⁶ Nonetheless, in previous research only little attention has been paid to the eschatological alliance between Greeks and Tatars in the *Sidrac*-prophecy.⁷ Especially, its modification in the *Lekenspiegel* has not yet been discussed thoroughly.

I will first introduce the *Boek van Sidrac* and the *Lekenspiegel* and then contextualise the most significant differences between the Greek-Tatar-alliance in these two Middle Dutch texts against their historical and intellectual background. I will discuss the changes in contemporary thinking and politics that might have led to the new eschatological role of the Greeks in the *Boek van Sidrac* and that might have influenced the eschatological expectations of Jan van Boendale in the *Lekenspiegel*. I will argue that the

⁵ See MCGINN, *Visions* (like in note 2) p. 33–36.

⁶ Especially during the time of the crusades both sides spread rumours about each other, which added to the already hostile attitude. See NEOCLEOUS SAVVAS, Byzantine-Muslim conspiracies against the crusades. History and myth, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 36 (2010) p. 253–274, here p. 250. See also FELICITAS SCHMIEDER, Enemy, obstacle, ally? The Greek in Western crusade proposals (1274–1311), in: BALÁZS NAGY and MARCELL SEBÖK (Ed.), ... The man of many devices who wandered full many ways ...: Festschrift in honor of János M. Bak, 1999, p. 357–371.

⁷ The alliance between Tatars and Greeks in the *Livre de Sidrac* is mentioned in FELICITAS SCHMIEDER, Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert (Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 16) 1994, p. 269–272. It is discussed in more detail in FELICITAS SCHMIEDER, Der mongolische Augenblick in der Weltgeschichte, oder: Als Europa aus der Wiege wuchs, in: *Das Mittelalter* 10 (2005), p. 63–73, here p. 69–70; FELICITAS SCHMIEDER, Two unequal brothers split up and reunited. The Greeks in Latin eschatological perceptions of politics and history before and after 1204, in: GHERARDO ORTALLI, GIORGIO RAVEGNANI, PETER SCHREINER (Ed.), *Quarta Crociata: Venezia – Bisanzio – Impero Latino*, 2006, p. 633–651, here p. 648.

way Jan van Boendale updates the *Sidrac*-prophecy shows that he must have been well acquainted with contemporary intellectual developments concerning universal eschatology and that it speaks for his positive outlook on history.

II. Setting the scene: The *Boek van Sidrac* and the *Lekenspiegel*

The anonymous *Boek van Sidrac* (ca. 1318–1329) is the translation of a highly popular anonymous Old French encyclopaedic prose text, the *Livre de Sidrac* (also known as *Sidrac le philosophe*, *la livre de la fontaine de toutes sciences*), written shortly after 1260.⁸ The popularity of the *Livre de Sidrac* from the 13th to the 16th century is shown by the huge number of preserved manuscripts and its translation into several European vernaculars like Middle Dutch, Provençal, Italian, German and English.⁹ The principle source of the *Livre de Sidrac* is the oldest French translation of the *Elucidarium*, a twelfth century

⁸ The *Livre de Sidrac* will be cited from: ERNSTPETER RUHE (Ed.), *Sydrac le philosophe. Le livre de la fontaine de toutes sciences. Edition des enzyklopädischen Lehrdialogs aus dem XIII. Jahrhundert* (Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter: Schriften des Sonderforschungsbereichs 226 Würzburg/Eichstätt 34) 2000. Helpful introductions to the *Livre de Sidrac* and its aftermath offer BEATE WINS, 'Le Livre de Sidrac'. Stand der Forschung und neue Ergebnisse, in: HORST BRUNNER, NORBERT RICHARD WOLF (Ed.), *Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit. Bedingungen, Typen, Publikum, Sprache* (Wissensliteratur im Mittelalter, Schriften des Sonderforschungsbereichs 226 Würzburg/Eichstätt 13) 1993, p. 36–52; BRIGITTE WEISEL, Die Überlieferung des 'Livre de Sidrac' in Handschriften und Drucken, in: BRUNNER, WOLF (Ed.), *Wissensliteratur* (like in note 8) p. 53–66. A strong candidate for the place of origin of the *Livre de Sidrac* is the Holy Land, where French was the main language, see WINS, Stand der Forschung (like in note 8); FELICITAS SCHMIEDER, Christians, Jews, Muslims – and Mongols. Fitting a foreign people into the Western Christian apocalyptic scenario, in: *Medieval Encounters* 12 (2006) p. 274–295, here p. 284. The Middle Dutch *Boek van Sidrac* will be cited from JOHANNES FREDERICUS JOSEPHUS VAN TOL (Ed.), *Het Boek van Sidrac in de Nederlanden. Met tekstuitgave naar Ms. Marshall 28 der Bodleyan Library te Oxford* (Diss. Universiteit van Amsterdam 1936) 1936 as available in the DBNL (http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_sid001boek01_01/, retrieved 25.10.2014). The *Boek van Sidrac* has only received little attention in research. Noteworthy publications are JACOBUS JOHANNES MAK, *Boendale Studies: II. Boendale en Sidrac*, in: *TNTL* 75 (1957) p. 257–290; ORLANDA S. H. LIE [e. a.] (Ed.), *Het Boek van Sidrac. Een honderdtal vragen uit een middeleeuwse encyclopedie* (Artesliteratuur in de Nederlanden 5) 2006; FRITS VAN OOSTROM, *Stemmen op schrift. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur vanaf het begin tot 1300* (Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur) 2006, p. 109–113.

⁹ See VAN TOL, *Boek Sidrac* (like in note 8), p. xxxiii–xl; WEISEL, *Überlieferung* (like in note 8); HARTMUT BECKERS, *Buch Sidrach*, in: *Verfasserlexikon* (zweite, völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage) 1 (1978) col. 1097–1099.

theological compendium written by Honorius Augustodunensis.¹⁰ The *Livre de Sidrac* and its quite faithful, though abridged, Middle Dutch translation therefore reflect the knowledge of the middle of the thirteenth century.¹¹ The prose form of the Middle Dutch translation is quite untypical, because at that time Middle Dutch vernacular literature was mostly in verse.¹² It has been suggested that the huge success of the *Boek van Sidrac* (unintentionally) paved the way for the success of literary prose in the Middle Dutch language area.¹³

Like its French source, the *Boek van Sidrac* consists of loosely related questions and answers between the heathen king Bottus and the wise man Sidrac, who is gifted with an omniscient knowledge of present, past and future, covering topics from Christ's birth to sexual advice, from animals to plants, from heaven to hell.¹⁴ According to the prologue this conversation took

¹⁰ On the sources of the *Livre de Sidrac* see MONIKA TÜRK, 'Lucidaire de grant sapientie'. Untersuchung und Edition der altfranzösischen Übersetzung 1 des 'Elucidarium' von Honorius Augustodunensis (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie 307) (Diss. Universität Würzburg 1993) p. 191–199; WINS, Stand der Forschung (like in note 8).

¹¹ The French *Livre de Sidrac* contains 1227 questions in the edition RUHE, *Sydrac le philosophe* (like in note 8). Ruhe's edition is based on a younger and longer branch of the French tradition and does not reflect the phased genesis of the *Livre de Sidrac* and its huge manuscript variance. The Middle Dutch *Boek van Sidrac* contains 421 questions in the edition VAN TOL, *Boek Sidrac* (like in note 8). The Middle Dutch translation is probably based on a short branch of the French version with about 600 questions. See VAN TOL, *Boek Sidrac* (like in note 8) p. xl.

¹² The Middle Dutch author defends this choice in a rhymed (!) prologue with the higher accuracy of prose, but explains at the same time that his translation is selective, as in his view a literal translation apparently does not have to be complete. See BART BESAMUSCA, GERARD SONNEMANS (Ed.), *De crumen diet volc niet eten en mochte. Nederlandse beschouwingen over vertalen tot 1550* (Vertaalhistorie 6) 1999, p. 10, p. 12 and p. 48–54; ORLANDA S. H. LIE, What is truth? The verse-prose debate in medieval Dutch literature, in: *Queeste 1* (1994) p. 34–65.

¹³ See JEAN-MARC VAN TOL, *De Sidrac. Een onbedoeld keerpunt in de Nederlandse literatuur*. in: *Skript 16* (1994) p. 259–267. The *Boek van Sidrac* seems to have been highly popular in manuscript and in print until the middle of the 16th century, even some of the German translations are based on the Middle Dutch version. See VAN TOL, *Boek Sidrac* (like in note 8) p. xlvi–lxiv; JAN DESCHAMPS, *Middelnederlandse handschriften uit Europese en Amerikaanse bibliotheken*, 2nd ed. (1st ed. 1970) 1972, p. 73–77; WIM VAN ANROOIJ, *Handschriften als spiegel van de middeleeuwse tekstcultuur. Rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van hoogleraar op het gebied van de Nederlandse letterkunde tot de Romantiek*, 16 december 2005, 2006 (online publication: <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/4310/OratievanAnrooij.pdf?sequence=1>, retrieved: 25.10.2014) p. 9–10.

¹⁴ The possibility cannot be excluded that the dialogue structure and loose coherence of topics in the *Livre de Sidrac* are a conscious choice, because they lend it extra authority – as being based on the wisdom of an assumed pre-Christian sage – and form a contrast to the structured theological *summae* of this period. See ERNSTPETER RUHE, Wissensvermittlung in Frage und Antwort. Der enzyklopädische Lehrdialog 'Le Livre de Sidrac', in: BRUNNER, WOLF (Ed.), *Wissensliteratur* (like in note 8) p. 26–35. The *Livre de Sidrac* deals like the so-called

place 847 years after Noah's death. The wise man Sidrac is modelled on the prophets of the Old Testament.¹⁵ A veiled code-language is used in the *Livre de Sidrac* for all future events, especially for all knowledge about Christianity, to maintain the fiction of the frame narrative. For example *la cite du fils de Dieu* stands for 'Jerusalem'.¹⁶ The interlinear glosses, which in many French manuscripts solve the prophetic code, seem to have entered the main text of the Middle Dutch translation at several places.¹⁷

The *Lekenspiegel* is undeniably the *magnum opus* of Jan van Boendale (* 1279, † ca. 1350/1). This Middle Dutch writer spent most of his working life in the Brabant city of Antwerp, where from around 1314 onwards he was employed as *schepenklerk* (main secretary), a highly responsible administrative function.¹⁸ As one of his main duties was drafting and writing the city's official letters, it can be assumed that he had learned the art of document writing and received some legal schooling.¹⁹ Jan van Boendale seems to have found time to write a considerable literary oeuvre in his spare time. I say 'seems' because Jan van Boendale mentions his name only in *Jans Teesteye*. In *Jans Teesteye* (vss. 101–102) he probably refers to the *Lekenspiegel* as an earlier work, but all other works are only ascribed to him because of similarities and other textual clues.²⁰ Although some of the works

"Mirrors for Princes" with many different topics, but is not too specifically aimed at rulers which might have caused its huge and long-lasting success.

¹⁵ See RUHE, Wissensvermittlung (like in note 14) p. 30.

¹⁶ See RUHE, Sydrac le philosophe (like in note 8) p. xiii; TÜRK, Lucidaire (like in note 10) p. 196; SCHMIEDER, Christians, Jews, Muslims (like in note 8) p. 284–285.

¹⁷ This is remarked several times in VAN TOL, Boek Sidrac (like in note 8). Often the decoding of the glosses is useful, for example where the Middle Dutch text gives 'Jerusalem' instead of its codename. However, when it is said in the *Boek van Sidrac* (question 399) that the Latin Christians will fight for *Rabatta ende Anthiochen*, this information is wrong, because *Rabatta* is the codename for Antioch and not a different city. See VAN TOL, Boek Sidrac (like in note 8) p. 286, note 221.

¹⁸ See JACOBUS JOHANNES MAK, JORIS REYNAERT, Jan van Boendale, in: GÉ VAN BORK, PIET VERKRUJSSSE (Ed.), *De Nederlandse en Vlaamse auteurs van middeleeuwen tot heden met inbegrip van de Friese auteurs*, 1985, p. 85; WIM VAN ANROOIJ, *Literatuur in Antwerpen in de periode ca. 1315–1350, een inleiding*, in: WIM VAN ANROOIJ (e.a.) (Ed.), *Al t' Antwerpen in die stad. Jan van Boendale en de literaire cultuur van zijn tijd* (Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de middeleeuwen 24) 2002, p. 9–19 and p. 159–160; VAN OOSTROM, *Stemmen* (like in note 8) p. 142–175.

¹⁹ See JORIS REYNAERT, *Visies op de schrijfkunst in de late Middeleeuwen. 'Laus Scripturae' bij Jan van Boendale, Jean Gerson, Hermann Strepel*, in: *Spiegel der Letteren* 53 (2011) p. 123–152, here p. 141–145.

²⁰ The works with contested authorship are sometimes referred to as "Antwerp school". There are several reasons to assume that Jan van Boendale also wrote: *Brabantsche Yeesten*, *Van den derden Eduwaert*, *Boec van der Wraken*, *Dietsche Doctrinale*, *Korte Kroniek van Brabant* and *Melibeus*. Doubts remain concerning the *Boek van Sidrac* and the *Boec*

of Jan van Boendale are dedicated to Jan III, the duke of Brabant, or to Rogier van Leefdale, one of the duke's most important advisors, he wrote for lay people in general, or more specifically, for the members of the higher levels of medieval society, nobility and rich townspeople alike.²¹

Jan van Boendale included in the voluminous vernacular encyclopaedia the *Lekenspiegel* (almost 22.000 verses) all the knowledge he considered necessary for a lay audience. The *Lekenspiegel* covers sacred and secular history, worldly ethics and various aspects of Christian catechism.²² It seems to have been highly popular in the medieval Low Countries and it had been also translated into medieval German.²³ The perspective of the history of redemption or *Heilsgeschiede* provides the chronological order to the four books of the *Lekenspiegel*. The fourth and last book describes the ultimate climax of world history: Judgement Day and the events that will directly precede and announce it. One might describe the fourth book as Jan van Boendale's personal version of "what every layperson should know about the End". Almost half of the twelve chapters of the fourth book are dedicated to a series of battles in the Holy Land before Antichrist's birth. It is during these battles that the treacherous alliance between the Greek Christians and the Tatars occurs. The length of these passages is a clear indication that the eschatological struggle for the Holy Land was very important to Jan van Boendale and probably another expression of his strong longing for a new crusade. As a young boy he must have heard many times about the unfortunate seventh (and last) crusade during which the French king Louis IX (Saint Louis) died at Tunis in 1270. Additionally, when Jan van Boendale

Exemplaer. See JORIS REYNAERT, Boendale of 'Antwerpse school'? Over het auteurschap van Melibeus en Dietsche Doctrinale', in: ANROOIJ (e.a.) (Ed.), *Al t' Antwerpen* (like in note 18) p. 127–157, p. 177–182, here p. 128–129; VAN OOSTROM, *Stemmen* (like in note 8) p. 143; MIKE KESTEMONT, *Het gewicht van de auteur. Stylometrische auteursherkenning in Middelnederlandse literatuur* (Studies op het gebied van de oudere Nederlandse letterkunde 5) (Diss. Universiteit Antwerpen 2012) 2013, p. 153–198.

²¹ See DIRK KINABLE, *Facetten van Boendale. Literair-historische verkenningen van 'Jans Teesteye' en de 'Lekenspiegel'* (Leidse opstellen 31) (Diss. Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 1998) 1997, p. 68–73.

²² On the *Lekenspiegel* in general see HERMAN BRINKMAN, 1330, Jan van Boendale wordt berispt wegens passages in 'Der Leken Spieghel'. Een wereldbeeld in verzen', in: MARIA ADRIANA SCHENKEVELD-VAN DER DUSSEN (e. a.) (Ed.), *Nederlandse literatuur, een geschiedenis*. 2nd ed. (1st 1993) 1998; KINABLE, *Facetten* (like in note 21); VAN OOSTROM, *Stemmen* (like in note 8) p. 151–158.

²³ On the transmission of the *Lekenspiegel* see DE VRIES, *Der Leken Spieghel 1* (like in note 3) p. cxxii–cxxxix; DESCHAMPS, *Middelnederlandse handschriften* (like in note 13) p. 116–118.

witnessed the news of the fall of Acre, the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land, in 1291, he mourned it gravely.²⁴

It is noteworthy that the *Boek van Sidrac* is sometimes linked to Jan van Boendale. It has even been suggested that he may have written it himself. Supportive arguments are that it is stated in the prologue of the *Boek van Sidrac* that it was written in Antwerp and that Jan van Boendale used it as the main source for the end time prophecy in the *Lekenspiegel* – as well as for many other parts of this work.²⁵ It is possible that Jan van Boendale had made a working translation of (parts of) the *Livre de Sidrac* – using prose, because that would allow him to translate much faster and closer to the original – when he was working on the *Lekenspiegel* and only as an afterthought this raw translation was provided with a rhymed prologue and made available as an independent work.²⁶ Be that as it may, during the course of the *Sidrac*-prophecy in the *Lekenspiegel* a Latin source is referred to (*Lekenspiegel*, IV, 144, v. 97).²⁷ Maybe Jan van Boendale tried to prevent doubts on the credibility of his source by disguising the fact that his source was French or even Middle Dutch, or this allusion to a Latin source simply takes up the fictive story of origin of the *Livre de Sidrac*.²⁸ To conclude, it remains doubtful

²⁴ Jan van Boendale seems to have wished strongly for a crusade to revenge the fall of Acre, as has been argued concerning his version of the *Visio fratris Johannis* in the *Boec van der Wraken*. See WIM VAN ANROOIJ, Boendales ‘Boec van der wraken’. Datering en ontstaansgeschiedenis, in: *Queeste* 2 (1995) p. 40–53.

²⁵ On the authorship of the *Boek van Sidrac* see REYNAERT, Boendale (like in note 20) here p. 128–129. For a general discussion of Jan van Boendale’s reworking techniques from the *Boek van Sidrac* to the *Lekenspiegel* see BRINKMAN, *Wereldbeeld* (like in note 22). For an overview of the research on the Middle Dutch and German *Sidrac*-tradition see BECKERS, *Buch Sidrach* (like in note 9).

²⁶ See REYNAERT, Boendale (like in note 20) p. 128–129.

²⁷ The anonymous author of *Der vrouwen heimelijcheit* also refers to a Latin source although he was using a French intermediate. In the Middle Ages the language of learning, especially of academic theology and sciences, was Latin; French, the language of romance, was generally considered inferior to Latin. On Middle Dutch reflections on translation practices see BESAMUSCA, SONNEMANS, *Crumen* (like in note 12) p. 14–17.

²⁸ See VAN TOL, *Keerpunt* (like in note 13) p. 264–265. The *Livre de Sidrac* contains references to a fictional Latin source that also appear in the Middle Dutch prologue. In the *Boek van Sidrac*, however, it is stated correctly that its source was French: *Ghelooft zi God van hemelrike / In sine glorie ewelike / Dat hi mi so langhe spaerde / Ende minen zin also verclaerde / Dat ic dit werc met minen arbeide / Uten Walsce in Dietsce leide* (epilogue, vs. 1–6), ‘I thank the eternal glorious God in heaven for letting me live long enough and inspiring me to joyfully translate this work from French to Dutch’, my translation.

if the prose *Boek van Sidrac* should be included in Jan van Boendale's otherwise rhymed oeuvre.²⁹

III. Comparison of the eschatological alliance between the Tatars and Greeks in the *Boek van Sidrac* and the *Lekenspiegel*

In the last chapters of the *Livre de Sidrac* it is prophesied that many years after Christ's death Islam will rise as a new religion and that Jerusalem will be lost to the once-powerful Greek empire.³⁰ Though the Latin Christians will win back the Holy Land for Christianity, it will soon be lost again to the Saracens. Then the Tatars, a group of wild heathens, will emerge from behind two mountains and fight against the Saracens, but not against the Christians.³¹ Until this point, the eschatological prophecy in the *Livre de Sidrac* is an *ex eventu*-prophecy, that means it contains recognisable historical events. According to Schmieder, the last identifiable historical moment in the prophecy is the siege and conquest of Antioch by the Saracens in 1268, so it can be assumed that the eschatological prophecy (and maybe the *Livre de Sidrac*) was written shortly afterwards.³²

In the remainder of the *Sidrac*-prophecy a new Latin Christian crusade is forecast that brings Islam to an end. The sequence of events becomes more detailed the nearer the prophecy draws towards the end of time. Technically speaking, one might say that the author is "zooming in". The dualism

²⁹ See VAN OOSTROM, *Stemmen* (like in note 8) p. 560. The *Boek van Sidrac* has in common with the *Melibeus* and the *Dietsche Doctrinale* – two other anonymous texts that were only recently included in Jan van Boendale's oeuvre – that it is a more or less literal translation. In contrast with Jan van Boendale's other works, these works show almost no traces of creative adaption or the introduction of Jan van Boendale's own ideas. See REYNAERT, *Boendale* (like in note 20) p. 128–129. The stylometric analysis of the *Melibeus* and the *Dietsche Doctrinale* seems to support their inclusion in Jan van Boendale's oeuvre, see KESTEMONT, *Gewicht* (like in note 20) p. 178.

³⁰ Not all Middle Dutch versions of the *Boek van Sidrac* contain the complete eschatological prophecy. The *Boek van Sidrac* has only 221 questions in the so called "Comburg-manuscript". The eschatological prophecy starts only after these events with the Antichrist's coming. On the Comburg-manuscript see HERMAN BRINKMAN, JANNY SCHENKEL (Ed.), *Het Comburgse handschrift*. Hs. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. poet. et phil. 2o 22 (*Middeleeuwse verzamelhandschriften uit de Nederlanden* 4) 1997; JENNY SCHENKEL, *Tekstcollecties: willekeurig of weloverwogen? Een verkenning naar aanleiding van de 'Comburg-collectie'*, in: *Queeste* 5 (1998) p. 114–159.

³¹ Baghdad was conquered from the Saracens by the Tatars/Mongols in 1258. See SCHMIEDER, *Christians, Jews, Muslims* (like in note 8) p. 283.

³² See SCHMIEDER, *Christians, Jews, Muslims* (like in note 8) p. 286.

“Christians vs. Muslims” is replaced by the dualism “Christians vs. Tatars”.³³ After the final defeat of the Tatars and their conversion to Christianity, the Latin Christians govern the entire Holy Land and the subsequent time of peace under Latin world rule lasts until the Antichrist’s coming.³⁴

When the Greeks and the Tatars are mentioned together for the first time in the *Boek van Sidrac*, the unlikely eschatological alliance is not stated clearly:

*Ende daer na over enen tijt selen dese vanden gheberchte concorderen iegen tfolc des Goids soens, dats te wetene die Grieken, om te winnene die stad van Trabaf dats Babilonie (Boek van Sidrac, question 400)*³⁵

However, only a few lines later it is stated clearly that the Greeks are collaborating with the Tatars: *deene partie sal trecken ten Grixen die dan hulpen selen den Tartaren (Boek van Sidrac, question 400)*.³⁶ The alliance between heathens and Christians is based on the French *Livre de Sidrac*, where it is stated explicitly from the beginning:

*Aprés .i. temps cil des .ij. montaignes s’acorderont avec autres gens, Grezois, pueple du Filz Dieu, por gaaignier Trabaf (Le Livre de Sidrac, question 1150)*³⁷

³³ See SCHMIEDER, *Der mongolische Augenblick* (like in note 7) p. 69.

³⁴ As this article focuses on the eschatological role of the Greeks in the *Boek van Sidrac* and the *Lekenspiegel*, the eschatological role of the Tatars will not be considered extensively. For the latter see SCHMIEDER, *Europa und die Fremden* (like in note 7) p. 258–284; SCHMIEDER, *Der mongolische Augenblick* (like in note 7); SCHMIEDER, *Christians, Jews, Muslims* (like in note 8). The Tatars were often identified with Gog and Magog or the Ismaelites. For the history of the motif of Gog and Magog and how it became connected with the Tatars see MARION STEINICKE, *Apokalyptische Heerscharen und Gottesknechte. Wundervölker des Ostens in abendländischer Tradition vom Untergang der Antike bis zur Entdeckung Amerikas* (Diss. Freie Universität Berlin 2002) 2002 (online publication: http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/receive/FUDISS_thesis_00000001863, retrieved: 25.10.2014).

³⁵ ‘A bit later the people from the mountains [that is: the Tatars] will make an alliance against the people of the Son of God [that is: the Latin Christians], that is the Greeks to conquer Trabaf, that is Babylon’, my translation. The Middle Dutch translation seems to have gone wrong or some words are missing, because it almost sounds like the Greeks are the ‘people of the Son of God’, where it actually should say that the Greeks will collaborate with the Tatars against the Latin Christians.

³⁶ ‘One band shall go to the Greeks who by then will be helping the Tatars’, my translation.

³⁷ ‘After some time the people from between the two mountains shall make an alliance with other people, the Greeks, Christians, to win over Trabaf [that is: Babylon]’, my translation. The English translations of the citations from the *Livre de Sidrac* are based on a German working translation, which was kindly provided to me by Petra Waffner (FernUniversität Hagen), who is currently preparing a PhD-thesis on the French *Livre de Sidrac*.

Also in the *Lekenspiegel* the alliance between Tatars and Greeks is described based on the *Boek van Sidrac*:

*Als ic in die prophecie versta,
Sullen Tarteren ende Grieken mede
Maken een eendrachtichede,
Die gheviande waren te voren (Lekenspiegel, IV, c. 1, vs. 116–119)³⁸*

It is notable that in the *Lekenspiegel* the defeated Tatars are said to return to Turkey after several battles at the so-called “Arid Tree”:³⁹

*Trecken so sal deene partie
In dat lant van Torkie,
Ende dander in Grieken lant,
Also die ghene die sijn ghescant;
Want uut dien tween landen, seit tLatijn,
Sullen si meest gheboren sijn (Lekenspiegel, IV, c. 2, vs. 93–98)⁴⁰*

It is difficult to say from where Jan van Boendale got the inspiration for this strange geographical attribution, as it neither appears in the French *Livre de Sidrac* nor in the *Boek van Sidrac*. In the French source no concrete geographical attribution can be found at all:

*Les uns penront autre chemin et se metront en lor terre de coi le plus
d’els seront de cele terre; et les autres iront en celle terre dont il
issirent, et les autres se perderont au desert (Le Livre de Sidrac,
question 1150)⁴¹*

³⁸ ‘I understand this [end time] prophecy this way that Tatars and Greeks, who were enemies before, shall then make an union’, my translation.

³⁹ There also exists a version of the legend of the Arid Tree in which the Turks appear together with the Tatars. See SCHMIEDER, *Europa und die Fremden* (like in note 7) p. 270, esp. note 381, and *ibid.* p. 284, note 448; WOLFRAM BRANDES, *Konstantinopels Fall im Jahre 1204 und ‘apokalyptische Prophetien’*, in: WOUT J. VAN BEKKUM, JAN WILLEM DRIJVERS, ALEX C. KLUGKIST (Ed.), *Syriac Polemics. Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 170)* 2007, p. 239–259, here p. 257–259.

⁴⁰ ‘Then much ashamed one band shall leave to Turkey and the other to Greece, because these are the two countries where most of the hostile people will come from according to my Latin source’, my translation.

⁴¹ ‘Some take another way and go to their land, because most of them come from this land; others will go to the land from which they came from, others will vanish into the desert’, my translation.

In the corresponding passage in the *Boek van Sidrac*, Greece and Tatory are mentioned as home countries of the departing enemies:

*Deen parthie van dien selen nemen eenen anderen wech ende trecken te hairen lande weert, dats in Gryecken, want die meeste parthie sal van dair sijn. Ende dander parthie sal trecken te Tartaryen weert want sij van dair sijn (Boek van Sidrac, question 400)*⁴²

The intriguing question is why or how *Tartaryen* became *Turkye* in the *Lekenspiegel*, especially if Jan van Boendale was indeed responsible for the translation of the *Boek van Sidrac* as has been suggested (see above).

The possibility cannot be excluded that Jan van Boendale equated Tatars and Turks.⁴³ In some texts *Turckie* is used as name for the land where the Saracens lived, but that does not really explain why the Tatars are said in the *Lekenspiegel* to have come from there. The Tatars did not originate in the Saracens' lands, but in some Middle Dutch texts they were equated with the Saracens.⁴⁴ As the Tatars are said in the *Sidrac* to have conquered the East (= *Turckie*), it is possible that Jan van Boendale wants to express the idea that they return to their new home country. Additionally, when Jan van Boendale was writing the *Lekenspiegel*, the Tatars had lost most of their power in the East and the Turks were the rising military and political force. In general, Western Europeans from the early fourteenth century onwards became increasingly aware of the Turks as a pressing problem. This seems to have led

⁴² 'One party will take another route and return to their land, that is Greece, because the biggest group of people will come from there. The other party will go to Tatory, because this is where they come from', my translation. The Middle Dutch translator could have derived this extra geographical information from the context or even from an interlinear gloss.

⁴³ In the *Boek van Sidrac* (question 400) the enemies of the Latin Christians are said to have come from *Gryecken* and *Tartaryen*. In VAN TOL, *Boek Sidrac* (like in note 8) no references to Turkey in the transmission history of the *Boek van Sidrac* are mentioned. The version in the Comburg manuscript (compare note 30) does not contain this passage. Maybe not all versions of the *Lekenspiegel* have (had) Turkey here. However, I was not able to consult all *Lekenspiegel*-manuscripts, but for example the manuscript Den Haag, KA 23, f. 154ra also has *turkenye*. I am indebted to Era Gordeau (Universiteit van Amsterdam UvA) who is currently preparing a PhD-thesis on the material transmission of the *Lekenspiegel* for this information.

⁴⁴ See the entrees *Tartarien*, *Tatre*, and *Turckie* in WILLEM KUIPER (e.a.) (Ed.), *Repertorium van eigennamen in Middelnederlandse literaire teksten, corpus Epiek, 1993–2014* (online publication: <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/dsp/scriptamanent/remlt/remltindex.htm>, retrieved 25.10.2014).

to a growing popularity of the Turks as eschatological people in late medieval prophecies, paralleling the rise of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁵

The changing role of the Greeks in the two Middle Dutch texts is especially interesting. In contrast to the *Boek van Sidrac* – where the Greeks disappear from the end time narrative after the battles at the Arid Tree – it is described in the *Lekenspiegel* that after the miracle of the Arid Tree the Greeks convert with the heathen Tatars to Latin Christianity:

*Ende over enen tijt hier na
 (Alsic inden boec versta),
 Also die Tarteren ende die Grieken
 Dat vernemen ende verriecken,
 Dat God so groten voorspoet
 Aen dit salighe volc doet,
 Sullen si dan met allen
 Aen dat goede ghelove vallen,
 Dats aen dese van Noort;
 Ende van dan sullen si voort
 Gods zoons kindre bistaen
 Ende hem altoos sijn onderdaen (Lekenspiegel, IV, c. 3, vs. 75–86)⁴⁶*

⁴⁵ See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 644: “After already Saint Paul had promised that heathens and finally even the Jews would be converted before the end, with Ps.-Methodius the defeat of the Saracens (much later the Turks) was added, then Joachim’s Greek union closed the list.” For the Turks in the writings of Johannes de Rupescissa († 1366), where they are unlike the Tatars explicitly said to not belong to those who will be baptised before Judgment Day, see SCHMIEDER, *Europa und die Fremden* (like in note 7) p. 278–280. The Turkish conquest of Palestine (and finally Jerusalem) from 1071 onwards actually caused the First Crusade. For the historical role of the Turks and their perception in Western Europe see HARRY W. HAZARD, NORMAN P. ZACOUR (Ed.), *The impact of the Crusades on Europe* (*A History of the Crusades* 6) 1989 (accessed online: <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.CrusSix>, retrieved 25.10.2014) here p. 222–275. For the Turks as eschatological people in the Latin West see MICHAEL KLEIN, *Geschichtsdenken und Ständekritik in apokalyptischer Perspektive. Martin Luthers Meinungs- und Wissensbildung zur ‚Türkenfrage‘ auf dem Hintergrund der osmanischen Expansion und im Kontext der reformatorischen Bewegung* (Diss. FernUniversität Hagen 2004) 2004 (online publication: http://deposit.fernuni-hagen.de/34/1/Titel_Osmanen.pdf, retrieved 25.10.2014).

⁴⁶ ‘I understand from my source that after some time when the Tatars and Greeks have heard of the fortune of the blessed people [that is: the Latin Christians], all of them shall convert to the right faith, that is Latin Christianity, and from then on they will always help them and be their subjects’, my translation.

The additional conversion of the Greeks not only increases the effect of the miracle of the Arid Tree, but also significantly changes the eschatological role of the Greeks as will be argued in the following section.

IV. Historical and intellectual contextualisation of the eschatological role of the Greeks in the *Sidrac*-prophecy and the *Lekenspiegel*

The reputation of the Greeks declines rapidly at the end of the *Boek van Sidrac*. After initially rewarding the Greeks for being one of the first people to become Christians, God punishes them for becoming too proud and too vain by sending Mohammed who diminishes the power of the Greek Empire. Later, the Greek Christians fight together with the heathen Tatars against the Latin Christians. This rapid decline of the reputation of the Greek Christians and their negative eschatological role in the *Sidrac* has to be understood in the larger context of the Latin eschatological tradition.

The first non-biblical prophecies that reached the Latin West during the High Middle Ages were the *Tiburtine Sibyl* and the *Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*. Originally created in Byzantium or Syria during the Early Middle Ages, these prophecies were rather positive about the eschatological role of the Greeks. In both prophecies, a Roman and Greek Last Christian World Emperor is predicted and the similarity between Latin and Greek Christians is stressed.⁴⁷ However, the positive image of the Greeks in these originally Eastern prophecies is rather exceptional and forms a stark contrast with the negative image of the Greeks in other medieval Latin genres, in which they were often portrayed negatively as *perfidii Greci*.⁴⁸ Therefore, in later

⁴⁷ See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 636–637. Seminal on the motif of the Last World Emperor is HANNES MÖHRING, *Der Weltkaiser in der Endzeit. Entstehung, Wandel und Wirkung einer tausendjährigen Weissagung* (Mittelalter-Forschungen 3) 2000. The *Pseudo-Methodius* was probably written by a pro-Byzantine author for a Syrian audience as a kind of propaganda tool. Given the fact that the monophysite Syrian Christians were hostile against the Byzantine Church and Empire and rather preferred to live under Islamic rule, it is warned in the *Pseudo-Methodius* that those Christians who align themselves with the Muslims will be lost forever. See GERRIT J. REININK, *Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser*, in: WERNER VERBEKE, DANIEL VERHELST, ANDRIES WELKENHUYSEN (Ed.), *The use and abuse of eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, series 1, studia 15) 1988, p. 82–111. English translations of the most important parts of the *Pseudo-Methodius* and the *Tiburtine Sibyl* can be found in MCGINN, *Visions* (like in note 2).

⁴⁸ See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 636. Even the reputation of Alexander the Great was ambivalent during the Middle Ages: sometimes he was depicted as a

adaptions of these highly popular prophecies, the Last World Emperor often becomes a *Roman* Last World Emperor. The increasing awareness of the religious differences after the Great Schism (1054) and the growing estrangement between Greek and Latin Christians also led to a general shift of the eschatological role of the Greeks in the Latin tradition and last but not least to the conquest of Constantinople in 1204.

In November 1095, when Pope Urban II called the kings and knights of Europe to help the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos against the Turks and to reconquer Jerusalem from Islamic rule, nobody could have expected that one hundred years later Constantinople, the Christian metropolis that was the capital of the Byzantine Empire, would be captured by members of a crusade. Whereas the First Crusade ended with the conquest of Jerusalem, the holiest city of Christianity, in 1099, members of the crusading army of the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) made a detour and conquered Constantinople on 12 April 1204.⁴⁹ The capture of Constantinople was followed by a three day long extremely violent sacking of the city, during which many of its inhabitants were killed, huge parts of the city were destroyed, and many churches, palaces and even the grand library were looted and vandalised.

Why did the Latin Christian crusaders turn against their Greek fellow-Christian brothers, instead of fighting the Islamic forces? Although the most important reasons for the attack on the enormously rich city of Constantinople seem to have been economic and political, there were also ideological reasons that had their origin in the growing religious tensions. Already in 1054 the patriarchs of the Latin and the Greek Church had excommunicated each other.⁵⁰ Subsequently, the Church was split into a Latin and a Greek branch. This division is often referred to in literature as the Great

representative for knightly values and sometimes as a heathen, evil, and arrogant villain, see SABINE MÜLLER, Asceticism, gallantry, or polygamy? Alexander's relationship with women as a topos in medieval romance traditions, in: *The Medieval History Journal* 11 (2008) p. 259–287.

⁴⁹ On the fall of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, especially on the influence of this event on medieval eschatological mentalities, see BRANDES, *Konstantinopels Fall* (like in note 39) esp. p. 240, note 4.

⁵⁰ See EVELYNE PATLAGEAN, Die Beziehungen zwischen Konstantinopel und Rom von der Mitte des 11. bis zum Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts, in: ANDRÉ VAUCHEZ (Ed.), *Machtfülle des Papsttums (1054–1274)* [Apologée de la Papauté et Expansion de la Chrétienté (1054–1274)]. Dt. Ausg. bearb. und herausgegeben von Odilo Engels. Ungekürzte Sonderausgabe (1st ed. 1994) (*Die Geschichte des Christentums: Religion – Politik – Kultur, Mittelalter 2*) 2004, p. 372–387.

Schism (or East-West Schism). The Great Schism of 1054 and the Gregorian reform movement drew more attention to the religious differences and the Greek Church's denial of the Latin Church's authority in general and rumours started circulating that Greek treachery had led to the failure of the Second Crusade (1145–1149).⁵¹ The traumatic conquest of Constantinople by parts of the crusaders did not help to improve the relationship. One might say that although the decisive separating event had been the schism of 1054, only the conquest of Constantinople revealed the serious break that had taken place.⁵² Finally, Latin and Greek Christians had become so estranged from each other that they would consider the respective other branch as having odd religious views, behaviours and customs and to be worse than heretics, heathens or Jews.⁵³

The first influential expression of the estrangement between Latin and Greek Christians after the Great Schism can be found in the writings of the famous apocalyptic prophet Joachim of Fiore († 1202) in the second half of the twelfth century.⁵⁴ In one of his later works, the *Tractatus super quatuor Evangelia*, he describes how the Greeks, who were the first Christians and therefore the first in God's grace, have fallen from His grace because of their theological errors. He predicts that they will be saved by their voluntary return to the flock, e. g. Latin Christianity, before the end of time. For Joachim, the Greeks were a separate religious group with a separate eschatological destiny.

⁵¹ On the growing tensions between Latin and Greek Christianity and how important contemporaries reacted to this problem see BRETT EDWARD WHALEN, *Dominion of God. Christendom and apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 2009, p. 83–90. The rumours that were spread in the Latin West during the Middle Ages about conspiracies between Greeks and Muslim (which are repeated in some modern studies) cannot be proven. See SAVVAS, *Byzantine-Muslim conspiracies* (like in note 6).

⁵² The consensus between historians seems to be that the conquest of Constantinople was more decisive for the split of the churches than the actual schism. See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 633; BRANDES, *Konstantinopels Fall* (like in note 39) p. 239; WHALEN, *Dominion* (like in note 51) p. 24–31.

⁵³ On anti-Latin sentiments in contemporary Byzantine literature see BRANDES, *Konstantinopels Fall* (like in note 39). On anti-Greek sentiments on the Latin side see WHALEN, *Dominion* (like in note 51) p. 83–90.

⁵⁴ This outline of Joachim's teachings is based on SCHMIEDER, *Europa und die Fremden* (like in note 7) p. 273–274; SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 638–644. The literature on Joachim of Fiore is vast. The seminal study is still MARJORIE REEVES, *The influence of prophecy in the later Middle Ages*, 1969. See also GIAN LUCA POTESTÀ, *Il tempo dell' apocalisse. Vita di Giacchino da Fiore*, 2004.

Although Joachim of Fiore had predicted in his *Tractatus super quatuor Evangelia* the voluntary return of the Greek Christians to the Latin Church, his influence was not strong enough to prevent the invasion of Constantinople by parts of a Latin crusading army only two years after his death. Joachim's vision of the reunion of the two churches before the End quickly became popular in historiographical and prophetic literature, especially when the reunion – though by force – seemed possible.⁵⁵ The future reunion – together with the conversion of the heathens and Jews, according to Saint Paul and the defeat of the Saracens or Turks, according to Pseudo-Methodius – became one of the most popular eschatological predictions concerning “others” in the Latin West.⁵⁶ The eschatological discourse apparently offered an attractive means to deal with the “Greek problem”.

Constantinople was no longer in the hands of the Latin crusaders when the *Livre de Sidrac* was written in the late 1260's because it had been recaptured by the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos († 1282) in 1261. This act was considered in the Latin West as an illegal and forceful opposition to the real faith.⁵⁷ Not much progress was made at this point towards a reunification of both Churches, though the same emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos would shortly afterwards agree to it.⁵⁸ It has been argued that the persistent tensions between the two Churches were the reason why a prophet from the East – the wise man Sidrac – was created who comments on some of the most controversial theological issues between Latin and Greek Christianity, like the *filioque*, purgatory and transubstantiation.⁵⁹ I would argue that the prediction of an eschatological union between Greeks and Tatars is also a reaction to the state of affairs between Latin and Greek Christians.

It would stand to reason that this union also reflects on rumours in the Latin West about collaborations between the Byzantine Empire and non-Christians. In other words, this union expresses a fear for the future, an important

⁵⁵ See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 644.

⁵⁶ See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 644.

⁵⁷ See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 649–650.

⁵⁸ The union was subsequently performed at the Second Council of Lyon (1274), but almost immediately afterwards refuted by the emperor's heir. See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 644–645; WHALEN, *Dominion* (like in note 51) p. 193–201.

⁵⁹ These questions are discussed at length in Thomas of Aquino's *Contra errores Graecum* (written in 1263) and were at stake at the Second Council of Lyon (1274). See RUHE, *Wissensvermittlung* (like in note 14) p. 31. Although Thomas' work could have been known to the Middle Dutch translator of the *Livre de Sidrac*, the relevant questions are not contained in the Middle Dutch translation.

catalyst of the prophetic discourse.⁶⁰ There were some rumours that the Byzantine emperor Isaac II († 1204) had made arrangements with the powerful Islamic ruler Saladin († 1193) around the time of the Third Crusade, though these rumours have not been proven to have ever resulted in an official pact.⁶¹ Choosing unbelievers as a military ally against other Christians was considered as an act of serious religious treason.⁶² This probably explains why the eschatological union between Christians (the Greeks) and heathens (the Tatars) against Christians is – at least to my knowledge – a unique feature of the *Sidrac*-prophecy that can be found in Middle Dutch literature only in the *Boek van Sidrac* and subsequently in the *Lekenspiegel*.⁶³

However, in my opinion it is not entirely unthinkable that the alliance between Tatars and Greeks also echoes the vain Latin hope of working together in the East with the Tatars against Islamic forces and the dream of world conversion. This assumption is based on the fact that the Tatars not only fight against the Saracens, thereby unintentionally helping the Latin Christians, and later partially convert to Christianity, as has already been argued by Schmieder, but also on the fact that the Tatars are shown to actually collaborate with Christians.⁶⁴ Despite the fact that during the Middle Ages a pact between Christians and non-Christians was generally considered problematic, the rise of the Tatars as important military and political power in the East also raised the hope that they were the long awaited allies of the Christians against the advance of Islam.⁶⁵ During the twelfth century, missionary projects and diplomatic missions were undertaken to further the dream of world conversion, both on behalf of the papacy and the French king Louis IX. These embassies were often led by members of the new mendicant orders such as the Franciscan John of Carpini or the Dominican Andrew of

⁶⁰ See SCHMIEDER, Christians, Jews, Muslims (like in note 8) p. 284–286.

⁶¹ See BRANDES, Konstantinopels Fall (like in note 39) p. 247–248.

⁶² Felicitas Schmieder describes the alliance between the Greeks and the Tatars in the *Livre de Sidrac* as a case of „[r]eligious treason“ (SCHMIEDER, Two unequal brothers (like in note 7) p. 648), but does not elaborate on it.

⁶³ It is noteworthy that a similar motif appears for example in the later *Libellus* of Telesphorus of Losenza (written in 1386). In the *Libellus* an evil German Emperor and a German pseudo-pope perform an alliance with the Saracens and Turks. See FRANCES COURTNEY KNEUPPER, The empire at the end of time. Identity and reform in Late Medieval German Prophecy, in print, esp. p. 80. I am indebted to Courtney Kneupper for sending me her manuscript.

⁶⁴ See SCHMIEDER, Europa und die Fremden (like in note 7) p. 271; SCHMIEDER, Christians, Jews, Muslims (like in note 9) p. 277–278.

⁶⁵ See SCHMIEDER, Christians, Jews, Muslims (like in note 8) p. 287–288.

Longjumeau.⁶⁶ Some oriental Christians seem to have lobbied actively in the Latin West for taking advantage of the military prowess of the Mongols over the Muslim forces, if not actually trying to collaborate with the Mongols, and prophecies like the *Sidrac*-prophecy seem to have been one of the lobbying means.⁶⁷ In the developing contemporary theory of missions, the chances for the eventual conversion of the heathen Tatars/Mongols to Christianity were considered higher compared to the Muslims and indeed some Tatars were baptised during the Second Council of Lyon (1274).⁶⁸

V. Conclusion

The return of the Greeks to Latin Christianity in the *Lekenspiegel* is probably Jan's van Boendale invention. I would argue that he adapted the eschatological prophecy of the *Boek van Sidrac* to fit new historical circumstances and his authorial intentions.⁶⁹ By doing this he actually added a Joachimite touch to the original *Sidrac*-prophecy, which was one of the few new prophecies written around the late thirteenth century without traces of Joachimite thinking concerning the eschatological role of the Greeks.⁷⁰ The question of whether the author of the *Livre de Sidrac* was acquainted with Joachim's ideas or refuted them intentionally is intriguing. I would argue that, given the wide dissemination of Joachimite thinking, his silence should be taken as a sign of disapproval.⁷¹ Thus, where the author of the *Sidrac*-

⁶⁶ See WHALEN, *Dominion* (like in note 51) p. 149–176 on these missionary and diplomatic means which were intermingled with the eschatological prophecy of Prester John who was supposed to rule a Christian Kingdom in the East and would come and assist the Latin Christians.

⁶⁷ See SCHMIEDER, *Europa und die Fremden* (like in note 7) p. 271–273.

⁶⁸ See SCHMIEDER, *Christians, Jews, Muslims* (like in note 8) p. 278. The baptism of the Tatars at the Second Council of Lyon is described in the *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*, a popular chronicle written by Martin of Troppau († 1278), one of the sources of the *Lekenspiegel* (see *Lekenspiegel*, II, c. 45, v. 140). It is not unthinkable that this account has inspired the conversion of the Tatars in the end time (see under). On the Tatars in Martin of Troppau's chronicle see SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 644–645.

⁶⁹ For example, whereas the decisive battle against the Saracens is won in the *Boek van Sidrac* (question 399) by Charlemagne († 814), in the *Lekenspiegel* (IV, c. 1, v. 53) this victory is ascribed to Godfrey of Bouillon († 1100). This adaption was probably inspired by Jan van Boendale's general enthusiasm for the crusading idea and not the least by the fact that Godfrey had been margrave of Antwerp before he left for the Holy Land.

⁷⁰ See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 647.

⁷¹ See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 648: “[P]resumably nobody interested in prophecy at that time [that is, the end of the 13th c., U.W.] could not be influenced by Joachim's ideas”.

prophecy left no room for a future reconciliation of Greek and Latin Christians, Jan van Boendale adopted the positive outlook of Joachim of Fiore and envisaged the final return of the Greeks to the 'flock'.⁷² His update has a strong conciliatory note: he gives the Greeks a chance to make up for their former mistake of allying with heathens. However, even though Jan van Boendale added the return of the Greeks to Latin Christianity, he envisaged only a minor eschatological role for the Greeks, as he pays much more attention to the eschatological role of the Jews.⁷³

We have seen that the description of the eschatological alliance between the Greeks and the Tatars in the *Lekenspiegel* and the *Boek van Sidrac* differs significantly. This difference draws our attention one last time to the question of whether Jan van Boendale based this part of the eschatological prophecy in the *Lekenspiegel* on his own translation of the *Boek van Sidrac*. In my opinion, the modification of the eschatological scenario in the *Lekenspiegel* does not answer conclusively the question whether or not Jan van Boendale was responsible for the Middle Dutch translation of the *Livre de Sidrac*. It remains questionable why he would carefully select and update useful knowledge from the *Boek van Sidrac* for the *Lekenspiegel* and later nevertheless spread the *Boek van Sidrac* with its unusual (for him and the literary conventions of his time) prose form. However, no better candidate has yet been nominated as author of the *Boek van Sidrac*, and thus the possibility cannot be excluded that Jan van Boendale has indeed authored at least the prose part.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, the reworking technique from the *Boek van Sidrac* to the *Lekenspiegel* does offer an intriguing insight into Jan van Boendale's eschatological mentality. As the *Lekenspiegel* is one of his most original and individual intellectual works, it does not come as a surprise that he gives a personal touch to the end-time narrative.

⁷² However, if the Greek Church would not have been considered as being different and cast out from the story of redemption in popular view, the conversion would not have been necessary at all (as the Greek Christians would not have been considered equal to heathens).

⁷³ Whereas in the *Boek van Sidrac* the Greeks are less negatively described than the Saracens and Tatars, in the *Lekenspiegel* all eschatological people are described quite neutrally except the Jews, who are explicitly characterised as evil and unclean. Seminal on the Jews in medieval German apocalyptic thinking is ANDREW COLLIN GOW, *The Red Jews. Antisemitism in an apocalyptic age, 1200–1600* (Studies in Medieval and Reformation thought 55) 1995.

⁷⁴ Compare note 26.

To conclude, Jan van Boendale brings the eschatological story of the Greek Christians in the *Lekenspiegel* to a positive end, at least from the view of the Latin Church. He elaborates, updates and maybe even implicitly criticizes his source, the *Sidrac*-prophecy. He probably knew from the chronicle of Martin of Troppau about the reunion of the two Churches and the baptism of Tatar legates at the Second Council of Lyon (1274).⁷⁵ He must also have been aware of the subsequent rather pessimistic mood as the baptism of the legates stayed without consequences and the reunion was rather short-lived.⁷⁶ Even with the dream of the reunion of the two Churches being shattered and the Tatars having turned out as an uninteresting military ally, Jan van Boendale actively promotes in the *Lekenspiegel* the dream of the conversion of all mankind to Latin Christianity. A dream that was still virulent in the West, because then the end of time would begin.⁷⁷ Jan van Boendale not only knew the eschatological traditions of his time very well, but also skilfully adapted them to his means.

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⁷⁵ For Jan van Boendale's knowledge of the chronicle of Martin of Troppau see note 68. I was not able to identify a reference to the Council of Lyon in the *Brabantse Yeesten*. Maybe Jan van Boendale did not consider this event important enough to be contained in a chronicle mainly concerned with the history of the dukes of Brabant. I was also not able to identify references to this council in Lodewijk van Velthem's 'Fourth Part' of the *Spiegel Historiae*, though the Tatars are treated quite at length and are said to have conquered Turkey in book seven, chapters 50 and 52. These passages are contained in the fragments Gent UB, 2541, and Berlin, SB, Preußischer Kunstbesitz, ms. Germ. quart. 2018.

⁷⁶ For the general pessimistic mood after the Second Council of Lyon see WHALEN, *Dominion* (like in note 51) p. 193–202.

⁷⁷ On the role of the dream of world conversion in Latin Christian eschatological thinking see WHALEN, *Dominion* (like in note 51) esp. p. 149–176. The Greeks kept playing a role in Latin Christian prophecies. See SCHMIEDER, *Two unequal brothers* (like in note 7) p. 650.