

Preface and Acknowledgements

Cultures of Eschatology is a result of the SFB (Spezialforschungsbereich) “Visions of Community: Comparative Approaches to Ethnicity, Region and Empire in Christianity, Islam and Buddhism (400–1600 CE) (VISCOM)”, funded by the Austrian Research Fund (FWF) during the period 2011–2019.¹ In this interdisciplinary research cluster, historians, social anthropologists, philologists and art historians worked together in order to examine, in a comparative and cross-cultural perspective, the role of universal religions in the formation of particular communities in medieval Eurasia.² This thematic and methodological approach has inspired much of our research on eschatology and apocalypticism. Our intensive interdisciplinary exchange within the VISCOM project was carried out in the framework of the “transversal working group” “End Times”; its results were subsequently presented and discussed at the international conference “Making Ends Meet: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on the End of Times in Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism” that took place in the “Theatersaal” of the Austrian Academy of Sciences on 24–26 September, 2015.³ These two volumes, which are the somewhat expanded proceedings of this event, include contributions by members and associated researchers of the VISCOM project team as well as by invited scholars whose expertise allowed us to address a wide range of topics in different religious and political contexts. We are very grateful to all of them for their enthusiastic participation, their contributions and their willingness to share their research results with us. We are also very grateful to the FWF and the SFB’s two host institutions, the Austrian Academy of Sciences (AAS) and the University of Vienna, for their generous support. The Institute for Medieval Research (AAS)

1 See Introduction, n. 1.

2 First results have been published in the volume *Meanings of Community across Medieval Eurasia*, edited by Hovden, Lutter, Pohl (Brill, 2016), which addresses problems of comparative methodology, see Pohl, “Introduction: Meanings of Community in Medieval Eurasia”, and the thematic issue of *History and Anthropology: Visions of Community: Comparative Approaches to Medieval Forms of Identity in Europe and Asia* edited by Gingrich and Lutter (Taylor & Francis, 2014). Other joint publications are the volumes *Medieval Biographical Collections*, edited by Ó Riain, Vocino, Mahoney (Brill, forthcoming 2020), the six-volume series *Historiography and Identity* (Brepols, 2019 and forthcoming), the volumes *Practising Community in Urban and Rural Eurasia*, edited by Hovden, Kümmeler and Majorossy (Brill, 2021) and *Rethinking Scholastic Communities across Medieval Eurasia*, edited by Kellner and Hugon (forthcoming 2020/2021). Important for the project was also the publication *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World*, edited by Pohl, Gantner, Payne (Routledge, 2012). For further information see <https://viscom.ac.at/home/> and https://viscom.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/ONLINE_EDITION_viscom_PUBLIKATIONEN_17072019.pdf. [Last accessed, 1 July, 2019]

3 A section of the project’s midterm conference in November 2013 was also dedicated to eschatology and apocalypticism. Some of the contributions in the present volumes were originally presented there. See https://viscom.ac.at/fileadmin/mediapool-viscom/pdfs/programm_midterm_web.pdf [Last accessed, 1 July, 2019]

has provided an excellent institutional hub for our work. We would like to express our thanks to the institute's staff and its VISCOM partner institutions, the Institute for Social Anthropology (AAS) and the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia (AAS) for providing a fertile environment for exchange and discussion. For their help with organising the conference we would like to thank Anna Denkmayr, Sophie Gruber and Jelle Wassenaar. For their diligent work with copy-editing we would like to thank Peter Fraundorfer, Thomas Gobbitt, Cinzia Grifoni, Diarmuid Ó Riain, Brita Pohl, Christina Pössel, and Bojana Radovanović. Erik Goosmann created the maps, and Dagmar Giesriegl was responsible for the wonderful cover illustrations and for the visual preparation of all pictures included.

The editors

Note on the transcriptions of Arabic words: Readers will notice that the transcription or romanisation of Arabic words generally follows the rules of IJMES (International Journal of Middle East Studies) but are not consistently handled across all articles. If geographical or other names have a commonly used form in English, this is used, e.g. Mecca (not Makka), Medina (not al-Madina). Instead of Coran, Qur'an or Qur'ān is used.

The transcription of Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese expressions fully conforms to the generally recognised international standards: for Sanskrit, the latinisation system adopted at the 10th International Congress of Orientalists held in Geneva in 1894; for Tibetan, the Wylie system; for Chinese, the pinyin romanisation method.