



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS
Hugvísindasvið

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*An English Translation of the Old Norse Veraldar saga, a History
of the World in Six Ages*

Ritgerð til M.A.-prófs

James Andrew Cross

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Introduction

Defining *Veraldar saga*

Veraldar saga is a medieval Icelandic prose universal history written in the Old Norse vernacular.¹ It describes the history of the world divided into six “ages” from the Biblical creation narrative until the reign of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (r. 1155-1190). The earliest surviving fragment, AM 655 VIII 4to dates from c. 1175-1225.² However, the original version is suspected to have been written between 1152-1190. Most versions of *Veraldar saga* switch to the present tense to state that “now Frederick is [emperor].” This suggests a *terminus ante quem* of 1190, the year of Frederick's death. The *terminus post quem* is derived from the most recent past tense event described in the text: the Iclander Gissur Hallsson's journey to Rome.³

The Six Ages, a common medieval method of dividing history popularized by St. Augustine which doubled as an allusion to the six days of creation, are represented in *Veraldar saga* as consisting of: 1. Creation of the world to the construction of Noah's Ark 2. Noah entering the Ark to the life of Terah, Abraham's father. 3. The life of Abraham to the reign of King Saul. 4. The reign of King David to the life of Elisha, foster-son of Elijah. 5. The Babylonian Captivity to the reign of Emperor Augustus. 6. The birth of Christ to the reign of Emperor Frederick I, though the sixth age was envisioned to last until Judgement Day.

The Sources of *Veraldar saga*

Though *Veraldar saga* follows a common European model, it is not a simple translation of a Latin work. Rather, it is a paraphrasing and synthesis of several other

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- 1 Didrik A. Seip in his essay “*Veraldar saga*” argues that the text was originally Norwegian. Einar Haugen disagrees with his general methodology and his assessment of *Veraldar saga* in particular in his review of a German translation of Seip's collected essays, “Review of 'Norwegische Sprachgeschichte.'” Jakob Benediktsson likewise dismisses Seip's argument as untenable in his entry on *Veraldar saga* in *Medieval Scandinavia*. Cf. Didrik Arup Seip, “*Veraldar saga*,” in *Nye Studier i Norsk språkhistorie* (Oslo: H. Aschenhoug & Co., 1954), 105-118; Einar Haugen, Untitled review of *Norwegische Sprachgeschichte*, by Didrik Arup Seip, *Language* 50 (1974): 575-582; Jakob Benediktsson, “*Veraldar saga*,” in *Medieval Scandinavia: an Encyclopedia*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano et al. (New York: Garland, 1993), 690.
 - 2 Kristian Kålund, ed. *Katalog over Den Arnemagnæanske Håndskriftsamling*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1888-1894), 58-67.
 - 3 Jakob Benediktsson, ed., *Veraldar saga* (Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos, 1994), L.

works. While it is impossible to fully construct a picture of the sources *Veraldar saga*'s original author used, scholars have identified some sources as well as a number of less clear relationships with other Icelandic texts. Jakob Benediktsson points to a general link to the two *Chronicae maiora* of Bede and Isidore of Seville as well as the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor.⁴ However, the links to Bede and Isidore are either extremely tacit or non-existent; their chronicles are far more terse than even *Veraldar saga*. The only major commonality between those texts is the presence of the six ages framework. Though the author if *Veraldar saga* did seem to have some familiarity with Bede the text refers to a theory of Bede's that the Crucifixion occurred on the anniversary of Adam's expulsion from heaven.⁵ On the other hand, nearly all of the material of *Veraldar saga*, particularly the first five ages, has a corresponding larger section in *Historia Scholastica*.

Historia Scholastica rapidly became a staple text of European education after its completion c. 1170. It was "[t]ranslated into every major western European vernacular", received Papal approval, and served as required reading at many European universities.⁶ As such, not only is it likely that this text was known in some form in Iceland, but it is almost wholly unthinkable that it could not have been known. There is also substantial evidence of its use in other Icelandic and Scandinavian texts.⁷ If *Veraldar saga* does indeed borrow from *Historia Scholastica*, the *terminus post quem* should be advanced approximately two decades to coincide with *Historia Scholastica*'s approximate completion. One can not borrow from a text before it exists, after all. Regarding the final age of *Veraldar saga*, later scholarship has made some progress on this front since Jakob's original edition was published.

Stefán Karlsson was the first scholar to find concrete links between *Veraldar saga* and other texts. In particular, he outlines several passages regarding the *Inventio Crucis*, the story of Empress Helena's rediscovery of the true cross in the 4th century, found in *Veraldar saga*, AM 764 4to, *Silvesters saga*, *Mauritius saga*, and a fragmentary Old Norse *Inventio Crucis* legend. He speculates that either the *Inventio Crucis* fragment is based on *Veraldar saga* and *Veraldar saga* itself borrows from

4 Jakob, *Veraldar saga*, XLV-LIII.

5 Jakob, *Veraldar saga*, 6; Or pg. 2 in this translation.

6 James H. Morey, "Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible," *Speculum* 68, no. 1 (1993): 6-35.

7 Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, "Universal history in fourteenth-century Iceland: Studies in AM 764 4to." (PhD diss., University College London, 2000), 79-80.

some version of Bede's account or the two are both based on a common version of Bede's account of the story.⁸ Stefán's work thus reinforces Jakob's original supposition.

Dietrich Hofmann discovered even more extensive connections between *Veraldar saga* and *Rómverja saga*. Many passages of *Rómverja saga* have corresponding shorter sections in *Veraldar saga*. Thus Hofmann has established a clear connection between the two texts. Since *Rómverja saga* supplies far more detail, it is impossible for *Rómverja saga* to be a derivation of *Veraldar saga*. Hofmann theorizes that *Veraldar saga* copies its Roman history from *Rómverja saga* which in turn copied its Roman history from some version of Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum*, Sallust's *De Coniuratione Catillinae*, and Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (or *Pharsalia*).⁹

Þorbjörg Helgadóttir vastly revises Hofmann's theory. She disagrees with Hofmann's assessment that *Veraldar saga* is derivative of *Rómverja saga*, instead arguing that both texts borrow from a shared body of Latin versions of Sallust and Lucan.¹⁰ She has also traced the connection between *Rómverja saga*, and by extension *Veraldar saga*, to German manuscript families of Sallust and Lucan.¹¹ Þorbjörg has even made a complete diplomatic edition of the two main redactions of *Rómverja saga* alongside the related Latin editions of Sallust and Lucan.¹² In this format, the parallels are irrefutably clear. She also includes AM 764 4to and *Clemens saga* in the same family of Sallust and Lucan derivatives as *Rómverja saga* and *Veraldar saga*. Like Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, Sallust and Lucan were both immensely popular texts during the medieval period, surviving in roughly 500 and 400 relatively complete redactions each, respectively.¹³ These seminal texts also survived in countless less-than-complete forms.¹⁴

The final part of *Veraldar saga*, which pertains to the Frankish kings and Holy

8 Stefán Karlsson, "Inventio Crucis, cap. 1, og Veraldar saga," in *Opuscula Vol. II*, 2, ed. Bent Chr. Jacobsen et al. (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1977), 133.

9 Dietrich Hofmann, "Accessus ad Lucanum: Zur Neubestimmung des Verhältnisses zwischen *Rómverja saga* und *Veraldar saga*," in *Sagnaskemmtun: Studies in Honor of Hermann Pálsson on his 65th birthday, 26th May 1986*, ed. Rudolf Simek et al. (Vienna: Hermann Böhlau), 121-151.

10 Þorbjörg Helgadóttir, ed., *Rómverja saga*, (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum Fræðum, 2010), lxxxvii,

11 Þorbjörg Helgadóttir, "On the Sources and Composition of *Rómverja saga*," *Saga-Book* 24, (1994): 203-220.

12 Þorbjörg. *Rómverja saga*.

13 Þorbjörg, "On Sources," 204 & 206.

14 Eva Matthews Sanford, "The Manuscripts of Lucan: *Accessus* and *Marginalia*," *Speculum*, 9, no. 3 (1934): 278-295.

Roman Emperors, is so terse that identifying its exact original source may never be possible. However, Sverrir Tómasson, believes that the *Chronicon universale* of Ekkehard von Aura and Frutolf von Michelsberg is a likely source.¹⁵ Though Sverrir does not elaborate on this theory, given the German-centric perspective of this section of *Veraldar saga* and Þorbjörg's evidence of borrowing from German versions of Sallust and Lucan, borrowing from a German text for this section is almost a certainty. Problematically, however, the *Chronicon universale* is so extensive that it covers much of the same ground as all of the other potential sources hereto identified and the existing scholarly literature does not consider this overlap.

The presence of such Latin texts in the early years of ecclesiastical education in Iceland was a necessary precursor to Old Norse educational texts like *Veraldar saga* and *Rómverja saga*. While a great body of vernacular histories of foreign events survive, many of which have already been mentioned, the flourishing of Old Norse texts must have been preceded by an effort to import a large number of canonical Latin texts which ultimately did not survive in Iceland. Time, obsolescence due to the creation of vernacular texts, and the Reformation's disdain for Latin texts on account of Latin's association with Catholicism likely all played a role in this textual gap.

Historiographic Contexts

As previously discussed, *Veraldar saga* inherits its six ages model of universal history from a long and popular line of authors through the Venerable Bede, Isidore of Seville, and Saint Augustine, though Eusebius of Caesarea originally invented the model. This model was not universally adhered to, however. Saint Jerome's *Chronicon* from the late 4th century also provided a model based on the four empires described in Daniel 7, though this model became problematic as he identified Rome as the last great empire.¹⁶ Frechulf of Lisieux presents yet a third model in his *Historiae* (c. 830) which traces history through the demise of temples, though still largely within the framework of the six ages.¹⁷ There are, of course, nearly as many variations on these models as there are histories. Even among texts which adhere to

15 Sverrir Tómasson, "Heimsaldrar og annálar," in *Íslensk Bókmenntasaga I*, ed. Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavík: Mál og Menning, 1992), 402-410.

16 Michael I. Allen, "Universal History 300-1000: Origins and Western Developments," in *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, ed. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 28.

17 Allen, "Universal History," 40.

the six ages model there is some fluidity with regard to where each age begins and ends. Further, though the model is described as consisting of six ages, it is common for histories to anticipate post-apocalyptic seventh and eighth ages.

The use of Latin further characterizes medieval European histories up to the time of *Veraldar saga*'s writing. This is why *Veraldar saga* is so heavily indebted to Latin sources for its compilation. However, Middle High German verse vernacular histories emerged in the 11th century, such as the *Ezzolied* (1057-1065), the *Annolied* (1077-1101), and the *Kaiserchronik* (c. 1150), though these were not universal histories.¹⁸ However, a little over a century after *Veraldar saga*'s composition, in the 14th century, vernacular histories emerged in several languages from English to Polish.

The development of vernacular histories coincided with the merging of national or peoples' histories with universal histories. Essentially these works begin from some “universal” starting point such as creation, the Roman Empire, or the Trojan War and eventually narrow the history down to the national or regional level.¹⁹ It is important to stress that nearly every historian who wrote about events up to approximately the time of the work's writing narrowed the work down to focus on his own nation or region. The idea of writing about and studying the histories of contemporary foreign nations did not emerge until the humanist movement of the 15th century.²⁰

Veraldar saga thus presents something of a problem in the grand taxonomy of European universal histories as described here. While it fits the six ages model, nearly every other defining attribute of universal histories of the late 12th century is missing. First, it is written in the Old Norse vernacular with only incidental usage of Latin words and phrases. Second, unlike the emerging body of Middle High German histories in the 11th and 12th centuries, *Veraldar saga* is written entirely in prose without so much as a single interpolated poem. Third, while *Veraldar saga* does eventually concentrate on history on a national level, it is on the Holy Roman Empire, not Iceland or any part of Scandinavia. *Veraldar saga* instead, taxonomically, has more in common with European works of the 14th and 15th centuries rather than the

18 James A. Schultz, ed., *Sovereignty and Salvation in the Vernacular, 1050-1150* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 1-14.

19 Norbert Kerksen, “High and Late Medieval National Historiography,” in *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, ed. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 199-209.

20 Kerksen, “High and Late,” 214-215.

12th century of its writing.

Further, *Veraldar saga* remains an anomaly even in the context of Scandinavian histories. For example, roughly contemporaneously with the writing of *Veraldar saga*, c. 1180-1230, Theodrich Monachus wrote a history of the Norwegian kings, *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*. But it is a Latin work and concerns only Norway and thus follows mainstream European developments. There is another Norwegian history, the *Historia Norvegia*, written around the end of the 12th century, that is taxonomically similar to Theodrich's *Historia*, being a Latin national history. In Denmark, two Latin national histories also survive from roughly the same period: Sven Aggesen's *Brevis Historia regum Dacie* written c. 1185 and Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* written c. 1180-1190.²¹ As such, it is clear that the model for *Veraldar saga* did not come from Scandinavia as it is wholly unlike Scandinavian histories written around *Veraldar saga*'s own time of writing.

In Iceland itself, however, *Veraldar saga* has many conceptual cousins. As the previous section on *Veraldar saga*'s sources touched upon, *Veraldar saga* has many passages which are similar to the corresponding sections of *Trójumanna saga*, *Rómverja saga*, *Breta sögur*, *Alexanders saga*, and *Gyðinga saga*.²² But while these works, like *Veraldar saga*, discuss foreign history in the Old Norse vernacular, they are not truly universal histories, though AM 226 fol, compiled in the 14th century, attempts to combine some of these texts into a cohesive history of the world.²³ Rather, they are simply national or peoples' histories, though still remarkable for the fact that they are in the vernacular and not about Iceland or Scandinavia. Further, due to the narrow subject matter of these other works, these works would not have needed to borrow from more than one or two texts a piece and thus were instead more translation or paraphrasing than genuine historiographic compilation like *Veraldar saga*.

Of special note, Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda* and *Heimskringla*, both from the early 13th century, a generation or two after *Veraldar saga*'s writing, are arguably a sort of universal history in that their prologues attempt to connect Scandinavia's

21 Kerksen, "High and Late," 196-199.

22 Stefanie Würth, "Historiography and Pseudo-History," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 166-170.

23 Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, "Heroes or Holy People? The Context of Old Norse Bible Translations," in *Übersetzen im skandinavischen Mittelalter*, ed. Vera Johanterwage, et al. (Vienna: Verlag Fassbaender, 2007), 110-111.

mythological past with the Trojan War and the story of Creation. However, this was almost certainly an attempt at Christianizing pagan mythology to avoid simply discarding the mythology altogether rather than an attempt at a serious historical narrative.²⁴

Yet *Veraldar saga* was not the only true Icelandic universal history. Two other notable texts survive: AM 764 4to and AM 194 8vo. However, both of these are later texts than *Veraldar saga*. AM 194 8vo dates from c. 1387 and by Jakob Benediktsson's estimation it is actually just a wild variant of *Veraldar saga*, not a distinct text.²⁵ AM 764 4to is also a later text, dating from c. 1376-1386.²⁶ Given nearly two centuries time between *Veraldar saga* and AM 764 4to, the circumstances and reasoning behind their composition undoubtedly varied between the two.

In short, *Veraldar saga* is out of place in both its Icelandic and European historiographic contexts when considered separately. Considered together, however, the reasons behind *Veraldar saga*'s uniqueness are discernible. The first issue, that *Veraldar saga* is not written in Latin, is the result of two factors. First, *Veraldar saga* survives in manuscripts alongside other vernacular works useful for ecclesiastical education. This suggests that the text served as a tool for students who had not yet mastered Latin or perhaps for learned laymen. Second, medieval Iceland showed an interest in vernacular texts far surpassing that of its contemporary continental Europe, regardless of topic. It is also notable that if *Veraldar saga* were not written in Old Norse, it may not have survived at all, suffering whatever fate befell its Latin sources in Iceland.

The second issue, that when *Veraldar saga* transitions from common universal history to national history it focuses on the Holy Roman Empire rather than Iceland, is a somewhat more complicated matter. On the one hand, Iceland already had oral genres of history and general storytelling before written culture emerged in Iceland. And even when written culture did emerge, the Icelanders quickly adapted the existing genres to the new medium.²⁷ Importing a foreign genre to describe Icelandic events would have served little purpose. On the other hand, the Icelanders did take an

24 Peter Orton, "Pagan Myth and Religion," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 166-170.

25 Jakob, *Veraldar saga*, LVII-LVIII; Kålund, *Katalog*, vol. 1, 442-443.

26 Svanhildur, *Universal History*, 53-57.

27 Gisli Sigurðsson, "Orality and Literacy," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 285-300.

interest in tales of foreign events generally, as evidenced by *Trójumanna saga*, *Rómverja saga*, *Breta sögur*, *Alexanders saga*, and *Gyðinga saga*. Further, adopting a foreign literary form to describe foreign events may not have been a deliberate choice. Rather, the general form of a universal history can be achieved through the simple process of compiling foreign sources into a cohesive narrative. As for why *Veraldar saga* focuses on the Holy Roman Empire rather than some other part of Europe, Þórbjörg Helgadóttir noted that the versions of Sallust and Lucan used in *Veraldar saga* were most likely German in origin. And since contemporary national histories of other nations were uncommon in Europe at the time, any contemporary histories imported from Germany would have naturally focused on the Holy Roman Empire of which Germany was a part. Therefore, *Veraldar saga*'s peculiarity may once again not be due to deliberate choice but instead due to the realities of the book trade at the time of writing. Ending a universal history with the Holy Roman Empire also makes a certain degree of stylistic sense. If universal histories, almost without exception, dedicate a significant portion to the actual Roman Empire, connecting the tale to that of its self-proclaimed successor state is only natural.

The Manuscripts

Jakob Benediktsson identifies three significant classes of surviving medieval manuscripts of *Veraldar saga* which he names A, B, and C.²⁸ The A and B classes preserve *Veraldar saga* in what is likely its entirety. However, class C exists only in the form of a lone fragment, the earliest surviving copy of *Veraldar saga* mentioned previously, AM 655 VIII 4to dating c. 1175-1225. The fragmentary nature of this class precludes its use as the basis for an edition or translation of *Veraldar saga*.

Class A consists primarily of a single manuscript, AM 625 4to. However, there are later derivative redactions within this class such as Stockh. Perg. 8to nr. 5, AM 766 c 4to, NKS 147 fol., and Lbs. 776 4to. Jakob dates the portion of AM 625 4to containing *Veraldar saga* to c. 1300-1325.²⁹ On the basis of age and completeness, it is this manuscript which serves as the primary basis for Jakob Benediktsson's edition and thus, in turn, the basis of this translation.

²⁸ Jakob, *Veraldar saga*, V-XXXIX.

²⁹ Jakob, *Veraldar saga*, XXIV. It is notable that this manuscript also contains a section dated to the 15th century. cf. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, "Skriftaboð Þorláks biskups," *Gripla* 5 (1982): 77-83; Kålund, *Katalog*, vol. 2, 39-41.

Class B consists of five redactions: AM 655 VII 4to, AM 626 4to, Stockh. Perg. 4to nr. 9, AM 766 a 4to, and AM 731 4to. AM 655 VII 4to dates to c. 1200 but survives as only a fragment, precluding its usage as the primary redaction for an edition.³⁰ The remaining manuscripts in this class date variously from c. 1450 to 1641. By Jakob's estimation, this class represents a separate rather than derivative branch of the class A manuscripts with both branches ultimately stemming from a lost common original.

So while the oldest surviving member of the class B manuscripts is older than any of the class A manuscripts, and potentially older than the one redaction from class C, class A has the oldest complete copy of *Veraldar saga* in AM 625 4to. It is on these grounds, that Jakob Benediktsson's edition is based primarily on AM 625 4to. However, as it is difficult to argue that the class A manuscripts are definitely closer to the original text than the class B manuscripts, Jakob has chosen to amend his edition with a small number of elements from the class B manuscripts. He has also made a small number of syntactic and orthographic changes. This translation silently incorporates Jakob's changes. However, virtually none of these changes affect the text in translation with a single major exception; in AM 625 4to, "Gydingi" (Jewish) changes to "heidingi" (heathen). The class B manuscripts include what was likely the original "Gydingi". Likewise, the context of the word's usage in *Veraldar saga* makes it clear that the author is speaking of the Jews specifically, not non-Christians generally.

Notes on Translation and Annotation

Translating *Veraldar saga* from the original Old Norse has proven to be particularly challenging. Currently, there is no normalized Old Norse edition of *Veraldar saga*, leaving Jakob Benediktsson's 1944 diplomatic edition as the only suitable edition for translation purposes, though there is a modern Icelandic edition also edited by Jakob.³¹ In addition to the usual difficulties of working from an unnormalized text, the manuscript on which Jakob's edition is based, AM 625 4to, leaves much to be desired with regard to orthography. To give a few examples, vowel

³⁰ Kålund, *Katalog*, vol 2., 58-67.

³¹ Jakob Benediktsson, "*Veraldar saga*," in *Sturlunga saga: Skýringar og fræði*, ed. Örnólfur Thorsson (Reykjavik: Svart á Hvítu, 1988), 15-47.

length is almost never noted. Diphthongs other than æ seem to have given the scribe a great deal of trouble. Though the dentals "ð" and "þ" are present, they are often confused with one another as well as the dentals "t" and "d". The inconsistent mixture or total absence of Latin, Greek, and Old Norse inflectional endings in proper and place names renders them quite unreliable for providing syntactic information. Further, some vocabulary is found only within *Veraldar saga* and not any other known text. Other vocabulary is found only in one or two other texts. Still other vocabulary seems to have shifted in meaning over time. The word "dýrlingr", for instance, is usually interpreted as "saint". However, its usage in *Veraldar saga* seems to be a somewhat broader term for particularly holy men. Outside of Icelandic, no translation has been made prior to this one. However, James Marchand has translated a text of allegorical interpretations of *Veraldar saga* which is found alongside *Veraldar saga* in several manuscripts.³²

Regarding sentence structure, this translation maintains the original sentence structure as much as possible, sometimes even at the expense of elegance in the translation, so long as it does not outright violate the rules of English grammar or otherwise render the translation unintelligible or overly ambiguous.

Regarding word usage, this translation uses cognates heavily where the common English meaning has not shifted considerably from the Old Norse meaning. However, while some translators such as Lee M. Hollander have gone as far as to use cognates which have not seen common usage since Middle English, this translation restricts itself to words which a modern reader of English will readily know, if not actually use. The advantage of this technique is evident in the translation of the verb "att biðja" as "to bid". While "to command" or "to request" would be more in keeping with the modern English idiom, such translation would require a continual assessment of the relationship between various figures in the text and the nature of the thing being bidden. These assessments could arguably involve complicated issues such as the nature of the relationship between kings and subjects or God and man, issues which are quite clearly beyond the scope of this translation. In instances where the text is ambiguous or the nearest English translation is problematic, the translation includes explanatory notes. In the case of foreign word usage, mostly Latin, the original word

32 James W. Marchand, "The Allegories in the Old Norse *Veraldar saga*," *Michigan Germanic Studies* 1 (1975): 109-118.

usage is preserved in the body of the translation with a footnoted definition provided at the bottom.

Regarding names, while it is typical in translations of Old Norse into English to provide the nominative form of each name as it existed in Old Norse, this translation does not adhere to this practice for several reasons. First, with the exception of a handful of Danes in the last two pages and one Icelandic on the last page--of this translation, the manuscript, and Jakob Benediktsson's edition--there are virtually no Old Norse names in the entire work. Second, because most of the names in the manuscript are foreign to the original writer and the copyist(s), the morphology is quite confused and inconsistent, to the extent that reconstructing what the imagined nominative form of each name with any degree of certainty is impossible in many instances, particularly in the case of non-Latin foreign names. Third, because of the inconsistency in the manuscript, creating a normalized form would create a false impression of order and consistency which simply does not exist in the manuscript. Fourth, for historical and linguistic reasons, many of the Biblical and Latin names appear in the manuscript just as they do in modern English which gave some readers of earlier versions of the translation the false impression that the translation mixed received English names and Old Norse names inconsistently.

Regarding numbering, the original manuscript uses primarily Roman numerals with only occasional cardinal numbers. Therefore, in contrast to many other Old Norse texts, there is no need to ever differentiate between a standard hundred (100) and the so-called long hundred (120). These numbers are rendered either as cardinal numbers or Arabic numerals depending on length, after the common fashion in formal English-language prose. However, there is one instance where the text awkwardly mixes both Roman numerals and cardinal numbers, fully spelled out, which the reader may find noted within the translation.

In addition to the annotations mentioned above, the translation provides references to the corresponding pages in Jakob Benediktsson's edition in the form of notes such as "(JB 15)" which denotes page fifteen in his edition. It is worth noting that this translation intentionally does not include any form of dating, biography, or historical explanation beyond what the text itself provides. While the text's chronology is more often than not in agreement with the chronologies of modern

historians, it is important that annotations do not override the text's conception of historical chronology in the mind of the reader. This is particularly true as arguably the primary value of this translation is in understanding what an educated medieval Icelander may have perceived the history of the outside world to be.

Text

[The First Age]

(JB3) God's saint among the Jewish people was named Moses³³. He was the first to begin the rewarding task to write holy books about God's wonders. He made five books: the first concerning the beginning of the world until his own life time and the next four concerning noteworthy events which occurred during his own life time. They are the foundation of all holy writings, both in the old law and the new.³⁴ He begins that account when God created heaven and earth, and in those works of wisdom noted all creations both heavenly and earthly.

Thus the holy books say that God made all of creation in six days. On the first day, he created all things, both seen and unseen. And at that time no part of creation was separated from any other; everything, heaven, fire, water, and earth, were joined in that role which is now occupied by four distinct elements. On that day, all the angels were created. (JB4) And when the highest angel saw his own beauty, he immediately erred and, along with all those angels who later turned against him, became God's worst enemy. It is said that a tenth of God's angels perished in this way.

On the second day of the world, he created heaven and separated the water which is over heaven from that which is under heaven. And then all other corporeal creatures were enclosed within the heavens, like a nut within its shell.

On the third day, God separated water and earth. And he clad the earth with forest and grass.

On the fourth day, God created the sun, the moon, and all the stars so that they may denote day, month, and season as well as illuminate this world.

On the fifth day, he created all sea-animals, fish, and all birds.

On the sixth day, God created all land-animals. And finally, God created man in his own likeness, in the respect that man is given sentience and understanding beyond that of any other animal. All other animals are made for service to him and for his enjoyment, if he shall remain obedient to his creator. And it has been said that all the grief which man later knows from animals or the rest of God's creation, he has

33 Saint is the typical translation of the Old Norse "dýrlingr" but this may or may not be what the original author had in mind when describing Moses' status as a holyman.

34 That is to say, both the Christian and pre-Christian laws.

because he does not wish to obey and serve God. (JB5) A place of bliss was made in the eastern realm which is called Paradise. That place is very far off from those other lands which are now inhabited by men. That place is more beautiful and fairer than any other land. There a great spring issues forth. All of that place is fertile and moist.

And from that spring runs four great rivers into the world here which men know. The first is the Ganges and the second is the Tigris. They are both east, in Asia. The third is the Nile. It flows all the way through Ethiopia and then through Egypt and from there into the sea.³⁵ The fourth is the Euphrates which flows from eastern Jewish land.

In Paradise are some of every kind of fruit tree. And the most renowned is called the tree of life and the other is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The first man was put in that holy place. And God took a rib from his side while he slept and filled the area of the rib with flesh. Then God fashioned a beautiful woman from the rib and gave her to the man to rule with him and for that certain pleasure so that from them people may be begotten. (JB6) He gave them names and called the man Adam and the woman Eve. He told them to be fecund and fill the world with their kind. Adam and Eve were not in Paradise for long that day before they broke God's commandment and were driven away from there. All of these things were done by God on the sixth day.

It is said that, on the seventh day, when the heavens and the earth, along with all their adornments, had been made, God rested from all his work. Further, he blessed and hallowed the seventh day. The Jews regard that day as holy just as dutifully as right-believing men regard the lord's day.

The first day of the world was three nights before Benedict's Mass. Also, by the reckoning of the Romans, Benedict's Mass falls on the equinox.³⁶ That is the fourth day of the world, when the sun and all heavenly bodies were created. On the sixth day of the world, Adam was created. Thus that same day is also the day of our lord's martyrdom. It is the account of Bede the priest and many other wise men that, on that day of the year and the corresponding week, God's son was tortured for the redemption of all mankind, since Adam had condemned himself and all his

³⁵ Ethiopia is described as "Bláland", meaning literally black or blue land.

³⁶ Benedict's Feast typically falls around the vernal equinox but the original text calls it a mass and does not specify vernal or autumnal.

descendants through his disobedience to God. (JB7)

And then, when Adam and Eve were so blissfully settled in Paradise that they were want for nothing and were able to speak with God and the holy angels, God bade them to abstain from the fruit-tree previously mentioned, that which is called the tree of wisdom. Further, he said to them on that same day that they would suffer the loss of the bliss which they had then and be condemned to death if they were to ever break his command since they had a duty of obedience and humility toward God.

But the enemy, the bright angel who became the Devil and was exiled from the glory of the kingdom of heaven into the utter wretchedness of hell for his arrogance, envied the bliss of man which he knew he was in exile from. For that reason, he quickened a single serpent to speak to Eve. He insisted that nothing of what God said would happen nor was there a risk that he would kill them if they were to eat the apple. Rather, it would unfold that they would become like God and understand both good and evil. Further, he said that God begrudges them this and thus has forbidden the fruit to them.

Eve pursued that scheme out of both cupidity and vanity. She ate the fruit and gave some of it to her husband who ate it as she had. (JB 8) And after that they felt carnal lust and were shamed by those body parts which accompany whoredom.

Then when God asked why they had broken his commandment and inquired if they wished to admit their misdeed and repent, they replied thusly: Adam maintained that the blame for this deed rested with Eve while Eve blamed the serpent. But God told both of them their punishment which they would receive for their sin: Adam was to spend his life in misery and toil. Moreover, God said that he would often reap little profit despite working the earth for his own subsistence until he is buried in the earth and turned into dust. The woman was to be subject to the man's dominion and to bear children in pain and anguish. Then he drove them away, out of Paradise, and set his angels to shroud that place with burning fire so that no man came there until Jesus Christ led there the soul of the thief who died on the cross alongside the lord.

From then on, Adam and Eve dwelt in the eastern part of the world in that place which is called Hebron. They had two sons, one named Abel and another named Cain. (JB 9) And when they were full-grown men, Cain became a farmer while Abel tended sheep. They both gave offerings to God, Cain from his harvest and Abel the

firstborn of his flock. But out of goodwill and kindness, God accepted Abel's offerings. Cain was envious of that fact and bore enmity toward his brother, Abel, for it. God bade him to give up the sin which occupied his mind. But he was heedless of God and eventually killed his own brother. That is how the blood of anger first came to be shed upon the earth. Then Cain and all of mankind which descends from him were driven from God. Abel, however, is exalted in every holy book and, since he was the first holy man slain for God's sake, he is God's first witness.

Adam and Eve had many children. Adam lived for 930 winters. Seth was the name of a son of his who lived for 912 years. He was a man of God. He had a son named Enos who lived for 905 years. His son was Cainan and he lived for 910 years. His son was Mahalaleel who lived for 895 years. His son was Jared who lived 962. His son was Enoch. He was in the world for 365 years. (JB10) Enoch was very close and loyal to God. God took him out of this world and he lives still. God has preserved him within that abode of joy which he alone knows. But he shall yet return to the world and confront the Antichrist alongside Elias the prophet and they will receive death from the Antichrist for God's sake. However, before he left the world, he wrote some words about the dangers of doomsday, which are found in books. He had a son named Methuselah who lived for 969 years. Lamech was his son and he lived for 767 years. Noah was the name of his son and he lived before the flood for 600 years and then another 350 afterward. He was in the ark for twelve months and ten days while the flood lasted. These ten agnates were all patriarchs during the first age of the world.

Just as there are six days of creation, so are there also six ages of this world, from the beginning until the end. The first age of the world is reckoned from the beginning to Noah's flood which is 2,242 years. During that time men were long-lived such that many lived a little less than 1,000 years and were as big as giants but all except a few were sinful and ill-mannered.

Noah had three sons when he reached the age of 500. (JB 11) They were named Shem, Ham, and Japheth. God said to Noah, "I consider you a good man and righteous in my eyes. However, I repent having created man because nearly all people are inclined to wickedness and sin. Now I have planned to drown all of mankind and all those animals which subsist on the land. But you, Noah, shall make an ark out of a sort of wood which is not prone to rotting, 300 ells long, fifty ells broad, and thirty

ells deep. You shall cover her entirely in pitch, inside and out. You yourself shall go in the ark along with your wife, your three sons, their wives, a pair, one male and one female, of every inedible kind of creature, and seven of every edible type of creature. You shall have every kind of food with you in the ark to feed yourself along with everyone and everything with you. The upper part of the ark shall be pointed and the highest part shall not be more than an ell wide."

Noah did all of these things as God bade. The vessel was under construction for 100 winters before it was completed.

The Second Age

(JB12) The second age of this world began when Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives went into the ark along with all kinds of creatures just as God had bidden Noah. 942 years are reckoned in that age of the world. Then it began to rain from heaven forty days and forty nights and the sea swelled in response. It made the waters so deep that they were fifteen ells above the highest mountains. Eventually all men and all creatures drowned except those that were in the ark with Noah.

The ark tossed all around the sea in the wind for twelve months and ten days. Then God made the waters recede and the lands rise up. Noah released a raven from the ark in order to find out whether or not the land had come up. It did not return. A little later, Noah released a dove from the ark. It came back that evening and had an olive branch in its mouth which had a green leaf. Then Noah waited seven days and released it again but the dove flew off and never returned. The ark ran aground on the mountains of Armenia. (JB 13)

Noah went out of the ark with his wife, sons, their wives, and all the creatures that they had there. They began to cultivate the earth and to multiply mankind in the world. God bade Noah and his sons to eat all those creatures which are now called edible. He forbade them to consume meat with blood. And at that time a rainbow, something which did not exist before the flood, was seen as a token of the peace between God and man.

Noah was the first man to build an altar to God. He brought offerings to him and God blessed him and his offerings.

All of mankind descends from these three sons of Noah. Those peoples who

descend from Ham are settled in the southern half of the world. Those descended from Shem are settled in the east and the Jewish people are from that group. And those peoples descended from Japheth are settled in the northern half.

One time it happened that Noah built a vineyard and drank wine from his harvest. After drinking, he laid down and slept in his tent-booth. He became bare, such that his genitals were not concealed. And Ham, his son, called his brothers to come and laugh. Shem and Japheth took their cloaks from their shoulders and laid them over the naked body of their father and concealed his genitals while looking away and did not look upon his limbs. When Noah woke up, he cursed his sons deservedly, each according to his conduct toward him. (JB 14)

When the multitude of men grew anew in the world, so to did immorality just as before, including both whoredom and pride. Eventually some men set upon the idea to build castles and other works of artifice in order to go up into heaven because they heard that God had flooded the whole world in Noah's flood when people were of poor morals. They meant to protect themselves from the flood but did not believe that they could resist it. But God thwarted their arrogance by making it so that none of them could understand what any others said. They fled away from these wonders, each his own way. From that resulted the creation of as many languages in the world as there were [those who fled], which was 72. Whereas before there was only the Hebrew language.

These were the forefathers and patriarchs during the second age of the world: Noah, Shem, Arpachshad, Cainan, Salah, and Eber from whom "Hebrew" comes. In the house of Eber remained the same language which had been spoken before. The Hebrew language is named after him and it is the language which is spoken in the Jewish land. After Eber came his son Salec and then Ragau.³⁷ (JB 15) During that time the first sacrifices to gods were performed. After Ragau was Serug, then Nahor, and then Terah, father of Abraham.³⁸

37 The manuscripts have "Salec" or "Salech" but Biblical sources and other medieval histories usually render this son of Eber as "Peleg" or "Phaleg". Thus this name is possibly an error rather than a product of orthographic or phonological peculiarities.

38 Usage of Abraham versus Abram follows the manuscript usage. While Abraham/Abram's name change is explained within *Veraldar saga*, the usage is not consistent and the translation mirrors this inconsistency.

The Third Age

The third age of the world began at the start of Abraham's lifetime. And it is reckoned that it was at that time that David assumed kingship over the Jewish people. 940 years are reckoned in that age of the world.

Abraham was a leader in the east, in a land which is called Chaldea. There were three brothers: Abraham, Aran, and Nahor. A great number of people are descended from each of them. During that time, many people began to sacrifice to false idols. And because Abraham and his brother Aran did not wish to sacrifice to them, they were both thrown into burning fire. But the fire was not able to harm Abraham on account of his merits and holiness. But Aran lost his life there in the fire and left behind one son who was called Lot.

Then God bade Abraham to leave his native land and his kinsmen and to find that land which we call the land of Jerusalem.³⁹ (JB 16) Then God said, "I will bless you, Abram, those that follow you, and your friends. Many nations will come from you and all nations will be blessed through your kin."

Abram then traveled with Lot, his fraternal nephew, and settled in the land of Jerusalem. Then he became so close and loyal to God that he is called the dearest of all patriarchs. And all of God's saints among the Jewish people are descended from him. So it is said that all holy souls which leave this world go into his embrace. God gave him all kinds of riches and a great kingdom, by this world's stature. He settled very near to where Jerusalem now stands.

Meanwhile, Lot and his kindred went and settled in that part of the land where Sodom and Gomorrah stood. Kings from the east came there and waged war, vanquishing the nation who lived in these cities. They obtained great loot there, including Lot and all that he owned. (JB 17)

When Abram heard that Lot was captured, he set forth in his own armor along with 318 men of his own household. They went after the warriors and came upon them unawares. They killed many of those men and took all the loot as well as Lot along with everything he owned.

³⁹ The text speaks of both a "Jorsalaland" and a "Jorsalaborg", that is, a Jerusalem-land and a Jerusalem-city or -fortress. "Jorsalaland" likely indicates Jerusalem and the surrounding territories or simply the area where Jerusalem would eventually be built. These two terms have been rendered "land of Jerusalem" and "city of Jerusalem" accordingly. The term "Jerusalem" is also used but it is not the typical Old Norse rendering. These instances have been translated simply as "Jerusalem". A similar practice is employed for other place names which have -borg or -land variants.

When Abram journeyed home from the campaign, Melchizedek, who was a king and cleric of God, met him and sacrificed gifts in praise to God, bread, and wine and thanked God for that victory which Abram had achieved. And Abram gave a tenth of his loot to him.

It was not long after that God made fire and brimstone rain down on Sodom and Gomorrah such that they, along with the regions around them, sank down so far that there is now water where they used to stand. Thus God punished the disgraces of whoredom which had been carried out there more audaciously than in any other city and with dishonor beyond anything known to man. But God spared Lot from those massacres for the sake of his goodness and those affections which God had for Abram, his paternal uncle.

Abram was the first to receive God's command for the rite of circumcision. He marked himself with the mark of chastity along with all of his household. (JB 18) That mark went on so long among his kin that Christ the lord himself was so marked on the eighth day of his life. Abram took to using the name by which he had been bidden so that later he was called Abraham though he was earlier called Abram. He had a son when he was 100 years old. He was named Isaac.

And then when he was in his prime, God tested the extent of Abraham's obedience in this way: he bade him to slaughter him and present him, whom he loved as much as his own life, in offering to God. But Abraham did not hesitate to do as he had been bidden. He went with his son to the mountain which God showed him. Then he bound his son and laid him on the altar. After that, he raised his drawn sword at him but an angel of God halted the blow. There was a ram stuck out in the woods and he was slaughtered and presented in sacrifice to God in place of Isaac. The lord God blessed Abraham anew for that deed and this act of his obedience has been remembered since. Abraham lived for 175 years.

Isaac became Abraham's successor in both wealth and character. He married a woman called Rebecca when he was forty years old and he had two sons, twins, with her. (JB 19) One was named Esau and the other Jacob. The nation which comes from Esau is called Edomite while the Jewish people are from Jacob.

When Isaac was old and blind, he blessed his son Jacob and told him many things which later came to pass regarding his kin. He thought he had spoken these

words of blessing to Esau and a great, long-standing enmity grew between those two brothers as a result.

Jacob was a close friend of God as his father and his father's father had been. He lived for 147 years and he had twelve sons. The Jewish people are descended from them. Six of them had the same mother: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. The lord Christ was descended from Judah. The Jews are also called "*Judei*" from his name.⁴⁰ And there were two others who had the same mother: Joseph and Benjamin. Still others were sons of concubines: Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

When they were grown up, Jacob loved Joseph most of all his sons. (JB 20) His brothers noticed that and envied him so much that they never said anything nice to him. They grew very bitter when he told them about a dream he had dreamt and became angry because in this dream he would become master over his brothers. Afterward, they sold him as a thrall for twenty pieces of silver and told Jacob that his son had mostly likely been killed by an animal. Jacob wept for his son for a long time.

Joseph was taken to Egypt and there he was called a thrall.⁴¹ He was so highly valued by his master that he gave him all his property for safekeeping. But his mistress desired him and wanted to have sex with him but he did not yield to the misdeed. And when she did not get [what she wanted], she lied about him and slandered him to his master.

As a result, Joseph was imprisoned and held there for some winters. God helped him then, as he had before. (JB 21) He explained dreams to two retainers of the king and foretold the death of one and the return of the other to his position with the king and to being valued just as he had been previously by the king.

Two winters later, King Pharaoh dreamed two dreams in one night but they could not be interpreted, that is until Joseph was released on the advice of the cup-bearer for whom he had interpreted the previous dream.⁴² Then he was led before King Pharaoh and the king recounted his dream to him. Joseph interpreted one of the

40 Lat. - Jew, here in the nominative plural, i.e. meaning Jews.

41 While the use of the English "thrall" instead of "slave" for the Old Norse "þræll" may be pushing the boundaries of cognates known by the reader, it is important to stress that the medieval Scandinavian and ancient forms of slavery differ greatly from our modern notions of slavery. See Ruth Mazo Karras, *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 70-82.

42 As the translation implies, the original Old Norse "Farao konung" seems to indicate a king who was actually named "Farao" or "Pharaoh".

pair to mean that seven winters of great bounty would come to nations, the likes of which no man had ever known before. But after those seven winters, another seven winters of great famine would come, the likes of which no man had ever known before. Joseph advised that the king should have some wise man make sure that only what is necessary should be consumed during the seven winters of bounty and the rest saved for the seven winters of famine which would follow. (JB 22) He said that the people would be saved, if this were done.

The king was well-disposed to his advice and afterward made Joseph a powerful counselor and leader over the people. Soon things developed in accordance with the prophecy of Joseph. He had great granaries built in each district and stored in them grain which was unneeded, to be consumed later, though the grain was no less common than sand. And after those seven years, the harvest began to worsen and famine spread across many lands. Men flocked toward Egypt in droves to buy food. Then Joseph had the granaries opened up and allowed it to be sold to each according to his need, both to foreigners and natives because there was nowhere else to buy food.

After a few seasons of famine had passed, ten of Joseph's brothers came but Benjamin was home with their father. They went before Joseph and bowed to him like other men and did not recognize him. (JB 23) However, he recognized them, yet he used an interpreter when speaking with them. He made them all very frightened and had them bound for three days. He then bade them to stay out of his sight until they had their brother, the one who was at home, with them. Afterward, he allowed them to leave with their donkeys packed but he kept their brother Simeon behind, bound. They went home thusly and said their journey had gone awry.

And when what had been obtained was exhausted, they went back again and had Benjamin with them. They went before Joseph and fell on their knees before him and he frightened them as before. But before they separated, he told them who he was and they were immediately relieved when they recognized him. He bade them to go get their father and come back along with all their followers and all their property. There he would make sure that they received every accommodation.

Jacob then came to Egypt with all of his followers and there was a greatly joyful reunion of father and son. They were all there, father and brothers, for the rest

of their lives. From them came many lines of men in that land and they were well provided for while Joseph lived. (JB 24) He lived the longest of his father and brothers and was buried with great honors in Egypt.

Here concludes the first book of Moses.

Regarding Joseph and His Brothers

After the death of Joseph, the kingship of Egypt passed to certain kings who did not know about Joseph or his kin and the standing of their kin worsened. Then they were forced to do tasks fit for slaves and beaten by the natives at the behest of the king.

So too was it the order of the king that all the male children of the kin of Israel be taken out on the river which is called the Nile. But the kin of those people grew in that land the more attempts were made to destroy it.

There a man grew up among their kin who was called Moses. His brother was called Aaron and his sister Maria. God appeared to Moses the first time in this manner: he spoke with him through a bush which seemed to him all aflame and yet did not burn. God bade him to undertake a mission to go visit King Pharaoh and relay God's message that he wants the people of Israel to go abroad from that land to freedom and not to be enthralled there any longer. (JB 25)

The king did not wish to listen to God's message. Then Moses the Holy performed many great feats with the power of God. Great wonders came over the land but God's people were not affected by these troubles. The first wonder was that all of the water in Egypt turned to blood. The second was many toads. The third was those flies which are called *cinifes*.⁴³ The fourth was those flies which are called *cinomia*.⁴⁴ The fifth, plague. The sixth was boils. The seventh was a great hailstorm with lightning. The eighth was *locusta*.⁴⁵ The ninth was darkness such that one could only grope around. The tenth was the death of all firstborns in Egypt, both men and cattle. During that night, the Jewish people were all in their houses and ate the meat of that lamb which God bade them to sacrifice that same evening and they smeared the blood of that lamb on the archways and both sides of the door frames of their houses.

43 Lat. - stinging insects; very small flies, gnats

44 Lat. - biting fly

45 Lat. - locust

A little later, God made an open path for Moses and them through the Red Sea and they went through there with dry feet even though before it was a deep sea. King Pharaoh and his army which followed him went after them and wished to drag them back and enthrall them as before. (JB 26) King Pharaoh and his entire army were drowned and not a single man made it to shore alive.

Then Moses and the sons of Israel went into the wilderness. Their guide was a pillar which descended from heaven down to the ground and it was the color of a cloud during the day but the color of fire during the night. The guide went before them for forty winters while they were on the route between Egypt and Jordan. They were given many other signs of God's support on their journey and of the miracles and intercession of Moses. Water sprang out of a certain slab of rock when Moses struck it with his wand as they were short on water prior to that. Food rained on them from heaven which was called *manna* and was like honey in the mouth.⁴⁶ They were given laws which were called the Moses Laws, that is the laws which he received during his forty day fast on Mount Sinai. There were ten individual laws, written on two slabs of rock.

Moses had a tent constructed which was called the seder tent.⁴⁷ He also did many other things for the glorification of God. At that time, the ark called the ark of the covenant. It was protected on the outside. Inside were protectively encased *manna*, the two slabs of stones containing the law, and the wand of his brother Aaron which had brought forth leaves from the dry sand in one night. (JB 27) The tent was thatched with simple wool and sheepskin and the inside was adorned with expensive woven cloth. In that tent, offerings were made to God each day.

Moses had become so bright on the mountain from his conversation with God that men were not able to look his way without covering their faces and eyes with their hands. He was on such familiar terms with God from all their conversations like no-one had ever been before.

Moses performed one such miracle on their journey that, when they were hurt by snakes and their venom, Moses had a bronze snake made and raised up on a wooden pole. And each one of his people who turned his eyes toward the bronze

46 Lat. - Borrowed from Heb. through Gre. but the exact meaning is unclear beyond the Biblical explanation, which the text paraphrases here.

47 The transliteration used in the text is "settar", from Heb. Refers to the "meeting tent" which is usually rendered as *tabernaculum* in Lat.

snake became well, even though they were previously afflicted by poison.

Then when the sons of Israel and Moses came to Jordan, God took Moses from other men on Mount Sinai and he died there but God preserved his body where no-one could find it.

Miraculum

After the death of Moses, his foster son, Joshua, took the title of leader over the Jews. He became the worthiest of men and performed many miracles in God's name.

By his miracles, the sons of Israel crossed the Jordan dry-footed. The ark of the covenant was taken out to the middle of the river. The river ran to the sea from there and above it grew as high as a mountain, but all the people walked over the dry riverbed while the river remained that way. After, when all of the people had come across, the river resumed running its course as it had before, with all the water flowing toward the sea.

It also happened that one time they toppled all the city walls which surrounded Jericho using horn blasts and war-cries. They went on to have many battles with those nations who previously inhabited the land and they seized all those lands that God had promised to Abraham.

On one occasion, Joshua halted the sun for such a long time that it did not follow its course as usual because the day was too short for the attacks that he was going to wage. (JB 29)

Joshua divided the whole land among the Jewish families, deciding which family should receive each city or region. That division of the land endured for every generation while the Jewish people dwelt in that land.

Regarding Judges

After Joshua, rule over the Jewish people passed to twelve men who were called judges, one after another and that persisted for 305 years. Among their number were Samson the Strong, Gideon, and Samuel the Prophet. Many of them were holy men and often delivered God's people from the warfare of heathen kings with God's support.

An angel of God revealed to Gideon that he would deliver the Jewish people from the hands of heathen men. (JB 30) He prayed to God to prove that it would be so and to that end he would lay out fleece in the leek-garden and dew would fall on the fleece but the garden would be dry, if God wished for the people to be free. And God granted that to him. Then one night he prayed for the dew to fall on the whole garden but for the fleece to be dry. And it happened thusly.

And when both of these signs were made, he went with a small party in fulfillment of God's commandment to fight against a great army. They carried in their right hands blasting horns and in their left hands clay pots containing lamps. And then when the band approached the army, they blew in the horns and broke the clay pots and shined their lights in front of them and put all of their enemies to flight.

Samson the Judge was so strong that he broke a city gate frame with the strength of his own hands and he carried it up a mountain.

In the days of Samuel the Prophet, the Jews appointed a king named Saul. He was the first Jewish king. Kish was the name of his father. He was good at the beginning of his life but wicked toward the end. He was king for twenty winters.

[The Fourth Age]

The fourth age of the world began when David took kingship and it is reckoned to be until the captivity of Babylon. That was 465 winters.

David was king for forty years. He was crowned king in his youth by that friend of God who is called Samuel. David was shepherd over his father's estate in Bethlehem long before then. God gave him the power to commit many great deeds. He ripped asunder the jaw of a lion and he broke a bear's paw with his bare hands during the time when he watched his father's sheep. And he killed Goliath the giant with a sling-stone and thus brought God's people out of disgrace and fear.

And then when King Saul saw that David received popularity and respect for his deeds, he became envious and hostile toward him and often thought to kill him. (JB 32) David became an exile for a long time on account of the king's deadly hatred. He endured it well, with both patience and humility. Twice David let Saul go free when he had the chance to kill him. And when he was told about King Saul's death in battle, David mourned his death as if it were that of his best friend.

David took kingship after Saul and was king in Hebron over only the kindred of Judah for seven winters until he became king over all the kindred of Israel in Jerusalem. God gave him victory wherever he had battles with his enemies. He was honored for many manly qualities and most of all his humility. He received the gift of prophecy from the Holy Spirit. David made that book which is called Psalms and which all of his kindred sang in praise of God.

Then it happened that David committed a misdeed: he took the wife of one of his knights and lay with her but he plotted his death.⁴⁸ Then God sent Nathan, his friend, to rebuke the king. Then David became greatly repentant. (JB 33) And God delivered the punishment which was to serve as his penance; Absalom, his son, rebelled against him and David was driven into exile by him. They had many battles and Absalom died in the end. David eventually had a son with that woman. He was called Solomon and he was the wisest of all men who had ever lived and of all the Jewish kings who came afterward.

Solomon made, for the glory of God, that house which is the best and finest there has ever been. The outside was made of white stone while the interior was covered with gold ornamentation such that there was nothing to look at under the roof that was not gilded. There were many vessels, candle holders, and many other treasures fashioned out of pure gold. That house was under construction for seven winters and seven months and consecrated on the eighth month of the eighth year after the start of construction. That temple which Solomon had made in the city of Jerusalem is called *Templum Domini* or Solomon's temple.⁴⁹ He made three holy books.

However, Solomon experienced great misfortune in his old age on account of his enjoyment of heathen women whom he loved too much. (JB 34) But men expect that he will receive God's mercy, as discussed by holy men such as Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome.

After Solomon, his son Rehoboam was king. He lost a large part of the Jewish people and they took a new king who was called Jeroboam. He became an idolater as all those kings after that his kingdom had one after another. After Rehoboam, his son

48 "Knight" here is used for the Old Norse "riddari" which can variously mean rider, horseman, or knight and its connection here to other European notions of knighthood is open to interpretation.

49 Lat. - Temple of the Lord

Abijah was king of Jerusalem followed by his son Asa and then his son Jehoshaphat. And from then on, the kindred of David were kings over the kingdom of Jerusalem, one after another just as God had promised to him until the Babylonian captivity.

Then sons always took kingship after their fathers as long as the Jewish people had kings. Some were friends of God but most were sinful and erred from God with regard to sacrifices and toward many other sorts of immorality which the holy books speak of. Among their number were the holy kings and saints Hezekiah and Josiah who celebrated Paschal best during that period.

In the days of the last kings of Jerusalem, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came into the land of Jerusalem with his army and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and so too Solomon's temple. (JB 35) He took a great deal of treasure from there and brought it back to Babylon. He took King Jeconiah prisoner and all of the residents of Jerusalem along with him. Among the captured were Daniel the Prophet along with Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael who composed the *Benedicite* in an oven full of burning fire.⁵⁰

In the age of kings, there were several prophets among the Jewish people who performed miracles. Elijah was the first of them. He gave life to dead men and he consulted with God regarding the weather during both times of abundance and times of scarcity. He made fire come down from heaven upon idolaters and they burned in that fire. He fasted forty days just as Moses had fasted. Afterward, he was carried aloft by angels in a chariot of fire and he is now kept away from other men, in a state of great rest. He will come within sight of men before doomsday and he will be tortured to death by the Antichrist alongside Enoch.

As the age of the Jews advanced, sacrifices and other bad customs developed in Jerusalem because of the kings and all the Jews, and they sacrificed their children to please devils. (JB 36) But God sent his prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah and many others to rebuke the nation for its barbarity and to tell them that retribution would be severe, if they did not cease. The Jews spat hatred at all the friends of God who proclaimed his message.

Following Elijah, his foster-son Elisha was a prophet who performed many miracles.

⁵⁰ That is, the *Benedicite, omnia opera* (*A Song of Creation*), a hymn based on passages from the Book of Daniel and Psalm 150.

Four are called the greater prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Each has composed a great book under the Holy Spirit's guidance. Twelve others are called the lesser and these are their names: Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Joel, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Haggai, Obadiah, Zechariah, and Malachi. They have all had the gift of the Holy Spirit. And there concludes the fourth age of the world.

The Fifth Age

The fifth age of the world began with the Babylon captivity but ended with the arrival of Jesus Christ, our lord. (JB 37) In that age there are reckoned to be 589 winters.

In the fifth age of the world it happened that all of the Jewish people were taken prisoner by King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon in the east. And Jerusalem was razed to the ground and the *Templum Domini* destroyed and burnt. All the gold was looted along with the treasures which were collected for the glory of God.

King Zedekiah and all the great men of the city of Jerusalem were captive in Babylon and enthralled there for seventy winters. Among the captured were some friends of God, those who, with God's support and in his name, performed many miracles in order to comfort the miserable people who were there serving the heathen kings.

Among them was Daniel the Prophet who at a young age in the king's hall underwent the ordeal of having nothing but peas and water for sustenance. But God gave him so much more wisdom, understanding, and prophetic ability than other men that he told the king about his dream which he would not speak about himself. He then advised him of great events which would unfold throughout the whole world. (JB 38) The king raised him to the highest rank and made him the most cherished of all men after that miracle.

He explained a second dream of the king to mean that he would go mad and live like an animal or cattle out in the woods for seven winters on account of his pride and arrogance. Afterward, he said that the king would come to his senses and return to his kingdom. Events later went like that.

After Nebuchadnezzar, the kingship stayed within his family for the duration of the lives of several kings until King Belshazzar was slain. After that Darius was

high king.

Daniel became the subject of evil men's envy because Darius had a great love for and high opinion of him. And the envious men deceived the king in such a way that he allowed them to seize Daniel against his will to sell him into slavery. But instead they put him in a pit with wild animals which were starved so that they would be even more vicious than usual. (JB 39) God saw to it that his friend was hale and unmaimed for nearly a week with the animals. And they lay beside him for a week without food. God sent food to him there. It was brought by Habakkuk the Prophet to him from the land of the Jews, conveyed there and back again by an angel of God in the blink of an eye. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were foster-brothers and kinsmen of Daniel who was also known as Belteshazzar. They were thrown into burning fire, bound securely, by the order of King Nebuchadnezzar. In the fire, the bonds burned off of them and they went free in the fire and that song of phrase which is the beginning of the *Benedicite*. An angel of God went into the fire beside them and drove the flames away from them.

After Darius, Cyrus, his kinsman, was high king. (JB 40) Cyrus was the best of kings, though he was heathen. He allowed the Jews to return to the land of Jerusalem. Jesus was the name of a noble cleric who was leader on the journey. They then began to restore Solomon's temple which had been burnt. They built it up just as big as it had been before but less richly adorned than it had been before. They were at the church construction for 47 winters because they had to defend themselves against those nations who would hinder their work. Since their departure from Babylon, bishops governed the Jewish people for a long time.

After Cyrus, his son Cambyses was king in Babylon. He had New Babylon made in Egypt and he is sometimes referred to as Nebuchadnezzar. During his reign, Holofernes, his duke, was killed by Judith, the holy widow.

After Cambyses, the kingdom of Babylon endured until Alexander the Great, king of the Greeks, slew King Darius and took possession of his entire kingdom. Alexander explored the whole southern half of the world and fought many kings. He always had victory. (JB 41) He also placed yokes around the necks of the kings and had them pull a cart which he stood on around their cities. Alexander was high king for 12 winters. He drank a deadly poison in Babylon. He had a capital made in Egypt

which is called Alexandria. Alexander divided his kingdom between twelve men and they are all kings after him. From then on, the Greeks ruled there, that is until the Romans came to power.

After Alexander, Ptolemy was king over Egypt and each king after him had the title "Ptolemy" just as kings had previously been called "Pharaoh". Ptolemy the First was king for forty winters.

Regarding Kings

Antiochus was the name of a grim and evil king in Syria. His name was given to the city of Antioch which he had built. He took kingship when 133 winters had passed since Alexander took possession of Babylon.

Antiochus pressed the Jews hard and defiled Jerusalem and also the *Templum Domini* with sacrifices to heathen gods. He tortured many Jews to death, those who held fast to God's laws, that is until Mattathias and his sons opposed him. (JB 42) First they killed the messengers of Antiochus and then Mattathias was made leader of the Jews

And after him, Judas Maccabee, his son, was leader of the Jews. He fought many battles with heathen nations and always had victory. Those brothers defended their laws and lands by strength of arms. Those brothers accomplished such great deeds that none became greater heroes nor more victorious among the Jewish people. Their last kinsman was John, grandson of the leader Mattathias. But his life came to end shortly before the birth of Christ.

Regarding Idols

There was a king named Belus in foreign lands. Because of him, sacrifices began because he was sacrificed to once he was dead. He had abided idolatry because he was a worshiper of the dead. An idol was made in his image which some nations called Baal but the Jews name Beelzebub and they said that in him resided the leader of all devils. (JB 43)

Ninus was the name of the son of Belus. He had the city of Nineveh built which is the greatest ever built in the world. Ninus had a wife who was called Semiramis. She had Old Babylon built in the place where Babel had stood, as the

spire was called that the giants built and believed would reach all the way up to heaven. They believed that they would be secure if a flood occurred like Noah's flood.

There have been four kingdoms of the mightiest sort in the world before the Roman kingdom was established. One was the kingdom of the Assyrians in Nineveh. Another was the kingdom of the Chaldeans in Babylon from the days of King Nebuchadnezzar onward. The third was the kingdom of the Persians from when Cyrus was king. The kingdom of the Greeks was the fourth after Alexander the Far-traveler was king.

Regarding Mattathias *et Filii Eius*⁵¹

After the grandsons of Mattathias died, Jews had only leaders about which little is said in books. (JB 44)

Aristobulus was ruler of the Jews and he held the title of both king and bishop as did all those leaders who came after Aristobulus and so on until the heathen King Herod held dominion over the Jews by order of the Romans around the time when Christ was born and he was a grim and evil king.

The greatest and best of battles told of in heathen books is when the Greeks conquered that city which is called Troy. That battle started shortly after the days of Moses and Joshua.

Priam was the name of the king of Troy. His sons were Hector, Alexander, Helenus, Deiphobus, and Troilus. Alexander took a woman from Greece who was called Helen. She was fiercely beautiful. She was married to Menelaus, brother of Agamemnon, king of the Greeks. The brothers raised an army and traveled to Troy with seventeen ships short of 1,200. Priam also had an immense army. He had a number of champions and leaders around. (JB 45)

In the Trojan army, the greatest champions were Hector and Troilus, the sons of Priam, as well his son-in-law Aeneas. In the army of the Greeks, the greatest champions were Achilles, Ajax, and Diomedes. Their counselors were Nestor and Ulysses. The Greeks laid siege to Troy for ten winters before the city was conquered.

In the fighting between them, a great number fell on both sides and most of all the leaders fell. There all the sons of Priam fell except Helenus. On the side of the

⁵¹ Lat. - and his sons

Greeks, Achilles and Palamedes fell. Then when most defenders of Troy had left except for Priam, who would never give up, Antenor and Aeneas betrayed Priam and opened the city during the night for the Greeks. Then King Priam was felled along with many of the city's soldiers. But Antenor, Aeneas, and Helenus escaped. The Greeks destroyed all of Troy and then burned what was left. Menelaus had his wife Helen with him and his brother King Agamemnon.

After the battle, Antenor and his sons governed the kingdom which is called Phrygia and in which Troy had resided. (JB 46) Not long after, Helenus, son of Priam, took possession of that kingdom which is called Epirus. His mother Hecuba left Troy with him along with Andromache who had been married to his brother Hector. Some time after, the sons of Hector took possession of the kingdom of Troy with the help of their uncle Helenus.

Aeneas traveled abroad from Troy along with his old father who was called Anchises and with his son who was called Ascanius or Iulus. Aeneas traveled extensively and was never able to settle before he came to that land which is called Italy. There he felled a champion named Turnus. He was the son of Daunus who held power in that place which is now the city of Rome. Aeneas went on to marry Lavinia, daughter of King Latinus for whom the Latin tongue is known on account of the fact that his wife Nicostrata invented the Latin alphabet. Aeneas was king of Italy for three winters. After him, his son Ascanius was king for 37 years. He built the city which is named Alba and which stands a short distance away from the city of Rome. In that city, they maintained kingship for fifteen reigns, that is until the brothers Romulus and Remus built the city of Rome. (JB 47) Then Romulus caused the death of his brother Remus. But he gave the city a name derived from his and called it "Roma". Romulus held power 38 years. After that, the Romans were ruled by kings, that is until Tarquin the Proud was king. Brutus, a leader of the Romans, drove him from the kingdom on account of his wickedness and arrogance. Then there were two leaders of the Romans each year and they were called *consules*. (JB 48) Things went on like that for 444 years and *consules* governed the Romans the whole time. The kingdom of Rome grew most during those days.

Toward the end of that period, there were three leaders placed over the Roman army. One was Pompey the Great. Another was Marcus Crassus. The third was Julius

Caesar. Pompey Magnus went to the east and battled with many kings and constantly had victory. He subjugated the Jews under the Romans and they were made to pay tribute along with many other nations. Marcus Crassus went into northern Africa with his army and fought many battles there. He was taken prisoner by men of Babylon. They let him die by pouring molten gold in his mouth and they said this to him: "Since you thirst for gold, you now drink the gold." Julius Caesar went north over the mountains and fought many battles with Saxons and he also traveled north to England. Julius Caesar was north of the mountains for ten winters and made all those kingdoms which are there tributaries to the Romans.

Following that, animosity grew between Pompey and Julius. They filled the ranks of their armies with troops from all over the world and had huge battles. (JB 49) Their greatest and last was in Thessaly. That is in Bulgaria. It became a great slaughter and Julius had victory. But Pompey fled to Egypt and hoped for support from King Ptolemy but he betrayed the trust of Pompey and killed him.

Then Julius went to Egypt and Ptolemy wanted to betray him as well. Ptolemy drowned in that river which is called the Nile after he was overcome in battle by Julius. Julius gave Egypt to Queen Cleopatra, sister of Ptolemy and his own concubine. She governed it for a long time afterward.

Julius Caesar was the first Roman to be high king of the whole world. Each king whom that kingdom had had after him was called "Caesar" from his name. Julius established the calendar and reckoned leap years just as the Latin people reckon them now. The month which is called "Julius" took its name from his name but was called "Quintilis" before. Julius held power for five years and he was killed in the main temple of the city of Rome. He was afflicted with 25 wounds. There was a man named Brutus and another named Cassius who were the instigators of Julius' killing. (JB 50)

After the death of Julius, the leaders of the world were Augustus Octavian and also Antony. He held power across the sea. But Augustus [held power] over the north. Antony abandoned one of the sisters of Augustus and went on to marry Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. On account of that, a disagreement developed between Antony and Augustus. They had three great battles. Antony was overwhelmed and killed himself and so too did his wife Cleopatra. From then on, Augustus became sole

emperor over all the world's realms.⁵² He established peace throughout the world and had the names of all men written. The month of "Augustus", which was previously called "Sextilis", receives its name from him. Each high king of the world is called "Augustus" from his name. He held power for 56 years.

The Sixth Age

The sixth age of the world is reckoned from when Christ was born until the end of the world. Augustus had been emperor for 42 winters when Jesus Christ was born.

At that time, Herod, a heathen by birth, was king over the Jews. (JB 51) He had children killed in Bethlehem and a little later he was swarmed by maggots in hell. After him, Archelaus, his son, was king over the land of the Jews. But the Jews spoke poorly of him to Augustus and Augustus drove him from the kingdom and into exile. He died there.

Later Augustus appointed four leaders over the Jewish people. Then Earl Pilate managed Jerusalem. But King Herod, who was called *Tetrarcha*, he governed the district of Galilee.⁵³ He was son of the wicked Herod. His wife was Herodias, to whom his brother Philip had previously been married. That couple brought about the death of John the Baptist. Then the same Herod agreed with Pilate regarding the torture of our lord. Emperor Gaius condemned Herod to exile and he died there.

After Herod *Tetrarcha*, Herod Agrippa, son of Archelaus, was king over the Jews. He had Jacob the Apostle, brother of John the Apostle, killed. He had Peter the Apostle chained until the angel of God freed him from prison. Shortly thereafter, the angel of God killed Herod and he died in that manner.

De Tiberio⁵⁴

After Augustus, Tiberius, his step-son, was emperor for 22 years. He was a guileful man and he drank a lot. During his days, Jesus Christ was crucified. That displeased Emperor Tiberius greatly. He wanted to incorporate Jesus into the pantheon

52 The use of "emperor" is employed solely to translate the word "keisari" found in the manuscripts. This complements the consistent translation of "konungr" as "king", regardless of titles applied in current historiography.

53 Lat. from Gre. - ruler of a quarter

54 Lat. - Regarding Tiberius

but the Roman senators would not believe in him.

After Tiberius died, then Gaius was emperor for four years. He was a difficult and grim man. He wished to have himself worshiped as a god. He was evil to all nations and worst of all to the Jews. He had an idol setup in the city of Jerusalem and bade that the people should worship it. Earl Pilate was so greatly distressed by his orders that he killed himself with his own hand. Gaius indulged in nearly every kind of vice and engaged in a great deal of sorcery. His countrymen killed him.

Claudius was emperor next for thirteen years and seven months. He was good and blessed with victory. During his reign, Mathew made his gospel in the Hebrew tongue. Also during his reign, Peter the Apostle took the papal seat in the city of Rome.

Nero was emperor after Claudius. He the last emperor from the kin of Julius Caesar. (JB 53) Nero killed his own mother, brother, and his foster brother who was named Seneca and who had been the best of men toward him. Nero left nothing undone with respect to the whoredom which men have foolishly thought to practice among themselves. He was emperor thirteen years and seven months. Nero ordered the first hostilities against Christian men. He had Peter the Apostle crucified and Paul beheaded. A little later, Nero went insane and became mad with terror. Men believe that animals ripped him asunder out in the woods.

Vespasian, a powerful man and hard ruler, was emperor next for 10 years. Then his son Titus was for barely two years. Every child loved him and he said that a day passed in which he did not do some excellent and good deed was lost. Titus was also merciful beyond other heathen kings.

Vespasian and his son took their army into the land of the Jews and laid siege to the city of Jerusalem around the time of Passover. Portents of every sort manifested in Jerusalem before the army of the Romans arrived and more evils afflicted the Jewish people than any other nation until the city was conquered and given up. There people ate their own children and all sorts of other inedible things on account of hunger. Residents of the city killed each other for small amounts of food. (JB 54) During the siege of the city of Jerusalem, Titus hit twelve champions within twelve arrows.

After that, the Romans razed all of Jerusalem to the ground and each house

within such that no stone lay there as before. Thus what Christ our lord said about the desolation of Jerusalem shortly before he was tortured came to pass. Then all the Jews were driven abroad from the land of Jerusalem and many were sold into bondage nearly all over the world. That was two winters less than fifty winters after the torture of Christ.

After Titus, his brother Domitian the Younger was emperor for sixteen years. He ordered the next hostilities against Christian men after Nero. He placed John the Apostle in boiling olive oil and when he did not come to harm by that, the Emperor had God's apostle taken into exile on an island which is called Patmos. There John the Apostle saw a heavenly vision and the book which he made there was called "Apocalypse". In that year, Domitian was killed by order of the senators in the city of Rome.

Nerva was emperor fifteen or sixteen months. By his leave, John the Apostle came out of exile to city of Ephesus and made his gospel there. (JB 55)

Trajan was emperor 26 months. The kingdom of the Romans had rather diminished since Augustus was emperor. However, Trajan expanded it greatly in many ways during his reign. In that time there were hostilities toward Christian men and Pope Clemens lost his life for God's sake at the bidding of Trajan. However, he had many good qualities and regarding him it is written that Pope Gregorius has retrieved his soul from the torments of hell.

Aelius Hadrian was emperor 21 years. He had the city of Jerusalem rebuilt and bade that it should be named Aelia after his name. He oppressed the Jews who were previously disobedient and forbade them to reside Jerusalem. After that were emperors regarding whom little is said.

Antonius the Great was emperor for twenty years. Then Marcus Antonius Verus was [emperor] for eighteen years. During his reign there were hostilities toward Christian men. Lucius Antonius Commodus [was emperor for] thirteen years. Helvius the Old [was emperor for] seven months. Severus [was emperor for] thirteen years. (JB 56) Then there were hostilities toward Christendom. Then Perptua and Felicitas were bitten to death by animals. Antonius Bassianus Caracalla [was emperor] for twenty years. Macrinus [was emperor for] one year. Marcus Aurelius [was emperor for] three years. Aurelius Alexander [was emperor for] thirteen years. During his reign

there were hostilities toward Christian men. His mother was named Mammaea. She became Christian due to the words of Origen the priest. Alexander was well-disposed to his mother and lessened hostilities toward Christian men for her sake. Maximinus [was emperor for] three years. Gordian [was emperor for] six years. Philip and his son Philip [were both emperor] for seven years. Both father and son were good Christians. Decius was emperor not all of two winters. He killed both Philips. And, on account him being ill-disposed toward them, Decius ordered the greatest hostilities toward Christian men. Then Pope Fabian died for God's sake along with Archbishop Cyprian. Gallus was emperor two years. Everything went as wished during the beginning of his rule but later he ordered hostilities toward Christian men and because of that lost both his rule and his life. Valerian and Gallienus, his son, [were both emperor for] fifteen years. They ordered hostilities toward Christians. (JB 57) But then Valerian was taken prisoner by that king who is named Shapur and was then blinded. He spent the rest of his life in hardship and disgrace. King Shapur stepped on his back before he mounted his horse and Valerian would stand under his feet for him, on his hands and knees. He died in that state of misery. Gallienus was afraid of the fate which befell Valerian and gave peace to Christian men. During their reigns, the kingdom of the Romans suffered many losses. During that time, Pope Stephen lost his life for God's sake, followed by Pope Sixtus and Archdeacon Laurence by the order of that king who is named Decius.

Claudius was emperor one year and nine months. He achieved victory against that nation which are named Goths. Aurelian [was emperor for] five years and six months. He ordered hostilities against Christendom. Lightning struck so close to him that it is a great wonder. Not long after, he was killed. Tacitus was emperor for six months and was killed. Florian [was emperor for] hardly three full months. Probus [was emperor for] six years and three months. He made peace north of the mountains and drove away those raiders who had created strife for a long time. Carus and his sons Carinus and Numerian [were all emperor for] two years. An in-law of his who was named Aper killed Numerian. (JB 58) Diocletian killed him with his own hands in revenge for Numerian.

Diocletian and Maximian Herculus were both emperor for twenty years. Their reign was very prosperous. But toward the end of their days, they ordered hostilities against Christian men.

At that time, great strife arose across the Roman kingdom and the greatest and most enduring was that of God's Christianity. In a single month, in the city of Rome and the villages in the surrounding area, 17,000 people lost their lives for God's sake. Then these men were tortured: Pope Gaius, Sebastian, Tiburtius, Pantaleon, Vitus, Vincent, Cosmas, Damian, and Erasmus.

Diocletian abdicated his rule and was considered a man of little consequence. Maximian died by that time. Maximinius, son of Diocletian, and Maxentius, son of Maximian, were called emperors for five years. Then Pope Marcellus, Cyriacus, and Timothy were tortured.

Constantine, son of Constantius and Helena, was emperor for thirty years and ten months. He waged many battles before he controlled all of the Roman kingdom. At the beginning of his reign, there were hostilities against Christian men. Constantine was leprous during that time. Then Pope Silvester came and baptized him and during the baptism, the emperor became healed of leprosy. (JB 59) After that, Constantine bolstered God's Christianity most of all men. He had a church built at the *Latran* for John the Baptist and John the Apostle.⁵⁵ The seat of the pope is there. He also had Peter's church built in that place where Peter was crucified. He had Paul's church made outside of the *Latran*, there where he was beheaded. In the city of Rome, he had that church which is called Jerusalem built and the cross of our lord placed there. Constantine had the church of Agnes built at the request of his daughter Constancia. He had the church of Lawrence built. He had the churches of Marcellinus and Peter built and had the body of his mother Helena lain there in a glorious tomb. Emperor Constantine established that all bishops should obey the Pope just as kings the emperor and he placed all the city of Rome under papal authority. Then he had a great city built and from his name it is called Constantinople The emperor's seat is there. It is the supreme city in the Eastern kingdom.

During the reign of Constantine, Arius the Priest started a heresy from Alexandria: he reckoned the son of God and the Holy Spirit to be less than God, the father, and he reckoned the son and the Holy Spirit created but not creators. (JB 60) Because of this, he abandoned the idea of a whole but triune God and he wanted to believe in a unified, singular God. Following him, many people adopted that view.

⁵⁵ Lat. - The Lateran, i.e. the place which was previously occupied by the *gens Laterani* in Rome.

Arius died suddenly and his innards fell out of him. The manner of his death was kept secret by his friends for a long time.

But when many people had fallen into the heresy which Arius the Priest had begun, the bishops had a council in that city which is named Nicea. Present at the council were Pope Silvester, Emperor Constantine, eighteen bishops and 300.⁵⁶ At that council, it was made clear that the father, the son, and the Holy Ghost are a single God in a trinity and that both the son and the Holy Ghost are God and they are one God but not three. At that same council, the whole Christian faith was defined. And all those men were excommunicated who contradicted the declaration of their faith which was defined there or who did not obey those commandments which were established there.

Constantine sent Helena, his mother, to look for the cross of our lord in Jerusalem. By her demand and the guidance of that man who is named Judas, the cross of our lord was taken from ground on spring Feast of the Cross.

After Constantine, his sons Constantius, Constantine, and Constans were all emperor. Constantius lived the longest of them. He strayed in his faith and wanted all men to follow that belief which Arius the Priest proclaimed. (JB 61) His brother Constans adhered to the true faith during his lifetime. Those brothers had power for 24 years, five months, and thirteen days. During that time, Bishop Athanasius was the greatest antagonist against heretics.

Julian the Apostate was emperor for two winters and eight months. He was a Christian in his youth and a consecrated teacher. Later he forsook the Christian religion and made himself skilled in magic. He wrote books against the gospels and had many men tortured who wished to follow the Christian religion. Julianus was wounded in battle by divine power and died while blaspheming. It is said that his body boiled in pitch abroad.

Jovian, a good leader and quite Christian, held power for eight months. Valentinian and Valens, his brothers, were both emperor for eleven years. Valens was a heretic and greatly believed in Arius' heresy. He fled from battle to a certain village and was burned in fire there by those men who are called Goths. At that time, Bishop Hilarius was renowned for his teaching and miracles. Valentinian died before Valens.

⁵⁶ Presumably this means 318 bishops. However, the manuscripts curiously mix a cardinal number ("atian") and Roman numerals ("ccc.").

Then the sons of Valentinian, Gratian and Valentinian, held power with their uncle for four years. (JB 62) Valens bade that monks should practice soldiery or else they would be beaten to death with sticks. Gratian and Valentinian held power for six years. Gratian gave power to Theodosius. He had many battles with heathen nations and was always victorious. During that time, Bishop Martin of Tours was famous for his holiness and those miracles which he performed.

Maximus was the name of the king in Britain. He traveled with his army to Francia and dealt with Gratian so cunningly that he was killed in that city which is named Lugdunum.⁵⁷ Then Maximus drove Valentinian and Justina, his mother, out from Italy. She was a heretic following the belief of Arius the Priest and she ruined things a lot for her husband and so too her son.

Theodosius the Great was king for six winters in the Eastern kingdom along with Gratian but after his reign he was emperor for eleven years. Valentinian the Younger fled to him. And Theodosius led him into the true faith and he helped him to avenge his brother. He killed Maximus near the city which is named Aquileia. During that time, Queen Justina died. Then Theodosius felled that brigand who was named Eugenius and had claimed the Roman kingdom for himself.

During that time, Bishop Ambrose of the city of Milan was very beloved and famous. (JB 63) At the same time Jerome the Priest was also very famous for his wisdom.

Arcadius and Honorius, the sons of Theodosius, held power for thirteen years. Honorius along with Theodosius the Younger [were both emperor] for fifteen years.

In that time, Alaric, king of the Goths, took possession of the city of Rome. He burned part of the city and died a little later. In that time, the relics of Stephen, the first martyr of Jesus Christ, were found just as it was revealed to Lucian the Priest. Theodosius the Younger, son of Arcadius, was emperor for 26 years. During his reign, Bishop Augustine, a great teacher from Africa, died. Eudocia, wife of Theodosius, brought the relics of Stephen to the city of Rome and he is now venerated there in the church of Laurence.

Marcian and Valentinian had power seven years. In that time, the head of John the Baptist was found out in the land of Jerusalem just as he himself had shown to two

⁵⁷ Approximately modern Lyon.

monks.

Leo the Elder was emperor for two years. Leo the Younger was emperor seventeen years. Zeno was emperor seventeen years. During his reign, Barnabas was found just as he had revealed, accompanied by a copy of the gospel which Mathew the Apostle wrote himself. (JB 64) In that time, Theodoric, king of the Goths, took possession of the city of Rome.

Anastasius was emperor for 28 years. He adopted that heresy which Eutyches established and ordered hostilities against Christian men. Eutyches said that Jesus Christ, the son of God who truly is both God and man, is now only God and not man.

Justin the Elder was emperor for eight years. During his reign, Theodoric killed Pope John. A little later he killed two Roman leaders, one named Symmachus and another named Boethius. A little later, Theodoric died suddenly. In that time, Abbot Benedict of Monte Cassino performed all kinds of miracles as Pope Gregorius sets forth in that book which is named *Dialogus*.

Justinian the Great, nephew of Justin, was emperor 38 years. He defeated many nations who previously harmed the Roman kingdom such that they never grew powerful again, including both the Vandals and the Goths who had done the most evil before. (JB 65) Justinian had a great law book made. In that book he reconciled the old law and the new Christian law so that all men may keep one law in his kingdom. That book is called the *Codex Justiniani* and that law still survives in many parts of the southern kingdom as prescribed in that book.⁵⁸ He added an entirely new set of laws which he established and that book is called *Novella*.⁵⁹ In Constantinople, Justinian had a temple to God built which, in the Greek tongue, is called the *Agia Sophia* but which we call *Ægisif*.⁶⁰ And that building is the best and greatest in the whole world as we know it.

Justin the Younger was emperor for eleven years. Narses the Senator was slandered before both him and his wife Sophia by Romans for the sake of envy with the result that they took from him all honors on account of the slander of a troublesome man. He lived a short while after. Narses destroyed the whole kingdom of the Goths and killed the king Tutila by commission of Justinian the Great. (JB 66)

58 Lat. - Book of Justinianus

59 Lat. - New or young, here referring to law.

60 Gre. - Holy Wisdom.

Tiberius Constantine was emperor for seven years. During his reign, Gregorius was the messenger of Pope Pelagius in Constantinople and he had great prestige from Emperor Tiberius and all good men. He explained the book of Job just as Bishop Leander had asked him to.

Maurice was emperor for 21 years. During his reign, the holy Gregorius took the papacy. He sent Bishop Augustine to England who Christianized most of this land and who had Canterbury as his bishop's seat. During the reign of Pope Gregory, Agilulf, king of the Lombards, created many problems for the Romans before Theodolinda, his wife, bade him to cease raiding against the Romans. Pope Gregory sent to her that book which is called *Dialogus* and made by the pope.

Phocas was emperor for eight years. He gave Pope Boniface that heathen house of worship which is called the Pantheon. He cleansed it of heathen worship and made it a church to Maria and all the saints. (JB 67) In that time, King Khosrau raided in the land of Jerusalem. He took the cross of our lord away from Jerusalem and performed much evil.

Heraclius was emperor for 25 years. He achieved victory against the army of Khosrau and killed him himself. Then he sent the cross of our lord back to Jerusalem and on that day which the mass of the cross is held during the autumn, the holy cross returned to Jerusalem.

Heraklonas and his mother, Martina, held power for two years. Constantine, son of Heraclius, [held power for] six months. Constantine was emperor for 28 years. He erred from the faith and had Pope Martin sent into exile on account of the fact that the pope stood against the heresy that the emperor commanded. Martin died in exile in that place which is called Cherson. Many miracles occurred there on account of his holiness. Constantine went into the city of Rome and plundered many holy temples of their ornaments and valuables. He extensively robbed men with unlawful seizures. He was killed in a bath.

After him, Constantine, son of the previous Constantine, was emperor for seventeen years. During his reign, there was a meeting of 150 bishops in Constantinople. (JB 68) Then heretics were excommunicated and Patriarch Gregory, who had previously followed heresy, was set aright. Emperor Constantine strongly adhered to the true faith. He let Bishop John, messenger of Pope Agatho, sing mass

for him on the eighth day from Easter day.

Justinian the Younger was emperor for ten years. He ruled with a stern hand but later erred from the faith and was forced into exile. During his reign, Bishop Nicholas of Myra died and at that time Willibrord was ordained bishop by Pope Sergius and he was later Archbishop of Utrecht in Frisia.

Leontios was emperor for three years. At that time, Bishop Cuthbert of England became famous for his holiness and miracles.

Tiberius had power for seven years. After him, Justinian returned to his kingdom then along with Tiberius, his son, was emperor for six years. He had Leontius executed along with Tiberius who had taken possession of his kingdom in view of a great many people who saw their death. During that time, Pope Constantine went to Constantinople at the invitation of Justinian and was very well received. Then Justinian received the *corpus domini* from the hands of the pope and he commended himself to his prayers. Then Justinian sent his army to kill Philippikos whom he had previously sent into exile and the pope strongly advised against this. Then the army defected to Philippikos and returned to Constantinople with him.

Then Justinian was killed and Philippikos had power for one year and six months. (JB 69) He was the greatest heretic while he lived. Anastasios seized Philippikos and blinded him. He was emperor for three years and was extremely faithful.

Theodosios was emperor for one year. He had a great battle with Anastasios and captured him. He swore an oath to Theodosios and was ordained a priest by his advice. During that time, the heresy which Philippikos had started had died out and this was the doing of Theodosios.

Leo was emperor for eleven years. During that time, Liutprand was king of the Lombards and he translated the bones of Augustine out of Sardinia from an island there which is named Pavia and had them placed in a lordly dwelling in Peter's church.⁶¹ Leo Constantine was emperor 35 years. Queen Irene along with his sons were emperor for ten years. Constantine [was sole emperor for] seven years. Irene [was sole emperor for] five years. Nikephoros [was emperor for] nine years. Michael *Curopolates* [was emperor for] two years.⁶² Leo the Armenian [was emperor for]

61 Augustine's bones were actually moved from Sardinia to Pavia but the text's reading is clear.

62 Lat. from Gre. - Literally the one who manages the palace. It was one of the highest titles in the

seven years. Michael [was emperor for] nine years.

During the reigns of these emperors, the Lombards and many other nations overran the Roman kingdom. They often asked the emperors who were in Constantinople to help them. But they were not able to reinforce the Romans because they had so many problems that they could hardly defend their own kingdom against heathen nations which attacked them, much less come to the aid of others. (JB 70) Because of that, they sought protection from those leaders who were beyond the northern mountains in Francia. And then when Pippin took kingship over the Romans at the request of Pope Stephen, the Romans withdrew from under the kings of Constantinople. We have no reliable stories from there since the Romans split from them. Since then, each of the two, the emperor in Constantinople and the emperor in Saxony, calls himself the greater.

These are the forefathers of Emperor Charles the Great: Bishop Arnulf the Holy of Metz, Duke Ansegisel, Pippin, and Charles. He was king in Francia. His son was Pippin, father of Emperor Charles the Great. King Pippin was coronated by Archbishop Boniface in the city of Mainz and later he was coronated by Pope Stephen.

Charles the Great, son of Pippin, was the first emperor beyond the northern mountains. (JB 71) He lived for a total of 45 years but was emperor for seventeen. He was coronated by Pope Leo on the first day of Christmas in Peter's church in the city of Rome. Then all the people shouted three times, "May Charles the Great, emperor of the Romans, coronated by God, retain victory and longevity."

After him, his son Louis was emperor for 27 years. It is said that he never laughed at anything. Then his son Louis and along with his brothers Lothair, Charles, and Pippin were emperor for 36 years. After that, Charles, son of Louis, along with his brothers Carloman and Louis were emperor for eleven years. Then Arnulf, son of Carloman, was emperor for thirteen years. He achieved victory against the Danish kings Gudfred and Sigfred who had previously raided throughout all of Saxony and Francia. He killed 100,000 of them.

After Arnulf, his son Louis was emperor for twelve years. Then Conrad, son of Conrad, held power for seven years. Then Duke Henry [was emperor for] eight years.

Byzantine Empire during this period.

His son was Otto the Great who had power for 38 years. He destroyed the Danevirke and forced Harald, son of Gorm, to convert to Christianity. Otto, his son, had power for nine years. Otto, grandson of the great Otto, had power for eighteen years. A woman killed him with poison in the city of Rome but he had previously had her husband, named Crescentius, killed. (JB 72) After him, Duke Henry of Bavaria was emperor for 23 years. Then his son Conrad the Mild [was emperor for] fifteen years. Next, his son Henry the Mild was emperor for seventeen years. He had the church of Mary built in Speyer and he was married to Gunhilda, daughter of Canute the Mighty for three winters and Canute went with him to Rome. Then Henry was [emperor] for 49 years. He destroyed the city of Rome on account of his disagreement with Pope Gregory the Sixth. After him, his brother Henry was emperor for seventeen years. He died in Utrecht. Next, Duke Louis of Saxony was emperor. He was called Lothair. He placed Pope Innocent in his own seat and he drove away Earl Roger of Sicily from Policastro. Lothair was emperor for three years. Conrad was emperor when Gissur Hallsson was in the south. And now Frederick is [emperor].

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