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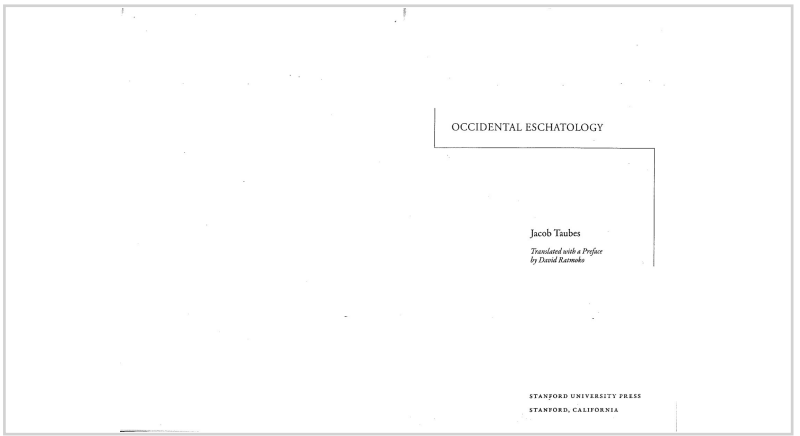

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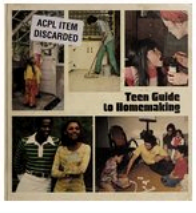

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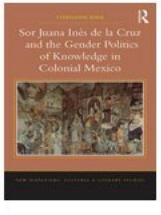

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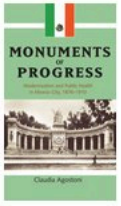

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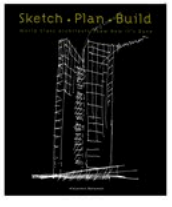

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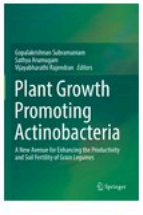

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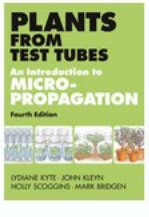

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OCCIDENTAL ESCHATOLOGY

Jacob Taubes

Translated with a Preface
by David Ratmoko

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To my parents

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Preface

DAVID RATMOKO

Over sixty years after it first appeared, *Abendländische Eschatologie*, the astonishing doctoral thesis of Jacob Taubes (1923–87), finally becomes available in English under the title *Occidental Eschatology*.[1] Written at the age of twenty-three, it was the only book by Taubes published in his lifetime, and it was, in many ways, a blueprint for a lifelong endeavor or at least a preview of a larger study: "I had to radically shorten [the book] by two hundred pages, for the publishers were unwilling to print it otherwise," Taubes explains to Gershom Scholem in a letter of 1947. He adds, "I did not read the proofs myself, but friends did, for the proofs came only a week ago, when I left for London. I'm not responsible for any typos."[2] In spite of the occasional typographical error, some missing notes, and an incomplete bibliography, the book was republished in 1991 without any modifications, leaving the editorial task to the Italian edition of *Escatologia occidentale* (1997).[3] For nearly half a century, then, from the first to the second edition, *Abendländische Eschatologie* remained out of print and virtually forgotten, despite an early reference to it in 1949 by Karl Löwith in *Meaning in History*.[4]

I

A charismatic speaker and great polemicist, Taubes is often said to have had his greatest impact as a teacher. Although his oeuvre is thought to be notoriously small, he was in fact a prolific writer, seeing the publication of sixty-nine essays during his life. Unfortunately, only twenty-two of them were republished, in a collection called *Vom Kult zur Kultur* (From Cult to Culture; 1996). The topics range from religion to history, philosophy, art, psychoanalysis, and political theology; the essays, though dispersed in various journals, constitute the bulk of his published work.[5] Previously, a collec-

tion of materials on Carl Schmitt came out in 1987, followed by an edition of Taubes's lectures on St. Paul in 1993, the translation of which, *The Political Theology of Paul*, has been his only book available in English to date.[6] The recent wave of interest in Taubes also saw the publication of his letters to Scholem, along with essays concerning Schólem's messianism and a seminar on Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," first in Italian and then in German under the title *Der Preis des Messianismus* (The Price of Messianism).[7] A complete bibliography exists only up to the year 2000.[8]

II

Born in Vienna in 1923, Jacob Taubes moved to Zurich in 1937 when his father was appointed chief rabbi, and there they survived the Nazi persecution. Ordained a rabbi himself in 1943, Taubes completed his studies in philosophy at Zurich and published *Abendländische Eschatologie* in 1947. During those years, he often attended the lectures of Hans Urs von Balthasar, whose Catholic *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele* (Apocalypse of the German Soul) (1937–39) arguably provoked Taubes's Jewish account of the apocalypse in response.[9] The following year Taubes moved to the United States, obtaining a post at the Jewish Theological Seminar in New York, but by 1950 he had already left for Jerusalem as a research fellow under the patronage of Scholem, who was impressed by Taubes's doctoral thesis. After an irreparable break with Scholem, he returned to the United States in 1953 and spent two years at Harvard University on a Rockefeller scholarship. He taught at Princeton University in 1955–56, and was appointed professor of history and philosophy of religion at Columbia University, where he stayed for ten years. There, he met Peter Szondi and Theodor Adorno. In 1966, Taubes accepted the chair of Jewish studies at the Freie Universität in Berlin, before taking charge of the Department of Hermeneutics created especially for him. During this period, he was also a regular guest lecturer at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris, where he met Derrida, Lévinas, and others. In those days Taubes not only became an icon of the student movement in Berlin, but he also held one of the most influential positions in German intellectual life, that of coeditor of the Theorie series at Suhrkamp, together with Jürgen Habermas.[10] His own materials on Carl Schmitt, ironically, were published at Mervé, a small Berlin publisher. Declining Schmitt's invitations for thirty years, he met his "arch-enemy" only in 1978, after Alexander Kojève ventured to Plettenberg, to Schmitt's place of "inward exile."[11] Taubes died in 1987, following his

Heidelberg course of lectures on Paul, and he is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Zurich, the city where he composed *Abendländische Eschatologie*.

III

Eschatology, the doctrine of "last things" (gr. *eskhatos*), is originally a Western term, referring to Jewish and Christian beliefs—and characterizing the entire "Aramaic world" (22)—about the end of history, the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment, and related matters.[12] And yet, neither *Western* nor *occidental* fully renders the meaning of *abendländisch* in the German title, which denotes not only the "Western hemisphere or culture of the West" (*OED*), but more specifically the "cultural union of Europe as formed through antiquity and Christianity."[13] At stake in Taubes's title, therefore, is precisely the historical synthesis and spiritual legacy of the West that Taubes seeks to renegotiate through his study of eschatology. Apropos of Hegel, for whom the "history of the spirit is complete" (93), Taubes notes, "Once the framework of the modern age is smashed, the aeon demarcated by the milestones of Antiquity–Middle Ages–New Age comes to an end.... Hegel's fulfillment, however, is a reconciliation of destruction, for it is the final act before a great reversal, before the complete break with the classical, Christian Western tradition" (191).

Crucial for the work of eschatology is the direction and end implied in the noncyclical concept of time as established by the Judeo-Christian tradition. As Taubes noted of apocalypse in a 1987 interview, "Whether one knows it or not is entirely irrelevant, whether one takes it for fancy or sees it as dangerous is completely uninteresting in view of the intellectual breakthrough and experience of time as respite [*daß Zeit Frist heißt*]. This has consequences for the economy, actually for all life. There is no eternal return, time does not enable nonchalance; rather, it is distress."[14]

Occidental Eschatology is divided into four books. Book I, "On the Nature of Eschatology," outlines the elements, nature, and metaphysics of eschatology; it gives an extremely rich account of how history based on linear time evolved from the situation of exile as characterized by Exodus, Hebrew prophecy, apocalypticism, and gnosis. Book II continues the chronology by tracing the "history of apocalypticism" from Daniel to Jesus, Paul and John, through to early Christianity, Augustine, and Joachim. Drawing out the implications for history, Taubes shows how the four successive empires in Daniel enable "our" transdynastic or universal concept of history, how Jesus

of Christendom is founded upon the delayed Second Coming" (56), the "nonoccurring event" (56), and how Joachim's Trinitarian prophecy of the three ages (of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit) inaugurates "our" tripartite division of history into antiquity, Middle Ages, and modernity. Recording the fate of the "theological eschatology of Europe," Book III focuses on the marginal but explosive tradition of spirituality or *pneumatics* after the chiliasm of Joachim, from the Franciscan Spirituals to Thomas Müntzer and the Anabaptists.

The beginnings of "the philosophical eschatology of Europe" are marked by the Copernican turn, "the loss of heaven" (107), and Book IV discusses Lessing, Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Kierkegaard in this regard. Seeking to restore a link to the beyond, Lessing "associates the Eschaton with subjective spirituality" (131), while for Kant "metaphysical Christian statements become the *as ifs* of transcendental eschatology" (139). Hegel, like Joachim, constructs "world history from the perspective of an end to fulfillment. They both consider the history of the spirit to be synonymous with the course of history" (161). More specifically, "the confusion surrounding Hegel is substantively caused by the fundamental ambivalence of *sublation* [*Aufhebung*], an ambivalence which it shares with Joachim's *transire*" (165). Although breaking with Hegel, Marx and Kierkegaard, two of his prominent successors, share in the philosophical eschatology: "Once self-alienation is revealed to be the leitmotif in the analyses of Marx and Kierkegaard, then elements inevitably emerge which determine the eschatological drama of history in each of their views. The entire socioeconomic catalog of Marx's analyses simply serves as the orchestration of the theme of self-alienation—the fall into exile and the path to redemption. *Social economy* is for Marx the *economy of salvation*. Kierkegaard, for his part, seeks to eclipse eighteen centuries as if they had never existed and to live as Christ's contemporary. With Kierkegaard the apocalypticism of early Christianity [*urchristliche Apokalyptik*] becomes reality again" (183).

Ending his tour de force, the young Taubes continues to speak through the voices of Hegel, Marx, and Kierkegaard, up to the final paragraph of the Epilogue, when he regains the Gnostic, apocalyptic voice of Book I: "the holy is separation [*Aussonderung*] and setting apart [*Absonderung*]; being holy means being set apart. The holy is the terror that shakes the foundations of the world. The shock caused by the holy [*das Heilige*] bursts asunder the foundations of the world for salvation [*das Heil*]" (193).

IV

Over and above purely theological concerns, Taubes's study sh apocalypticism to be a revolutionary force in Western history, spring from situations of *exile*—the "base word [*Urwort*] of apocalypticism" (26 in Exodus and the apocalyptic book of Daniel, and driving the philosopl of history of Joachim, Hegel, and Marx. "Taubes is right," Carl Schn concurs, "today everything is theology, except that which theologians sp about."[15] What might appear to be a simple case of secularization, from t ology to philosophy, in fact exhibits a desire to break "out of the cycle nature into the realm of history" (5) and to reach the end (*telos*) of history its fulfillment (*pleroma*).

Signifying an emphatic "turn" or "turning point," *Wende, Umschl* and *Umkehr* are the key terms Taubes employs for his history of apocalyp cism, reconciling the religious meanings of the Hebrew *schuwu*, Gre *metanoia*, and Latin *conversio* with the political sense of revolution and t epistemological meaning of the Copernican turn. On the nature of th "turning around" he clarifies: "The *metanoia* which the messengers of Jesu are to preach is not a message of repentance intended purely to provoke inn remorse. The disciples go throughout the land and with their *schuwu*, the "turn around" [*kehret um*], demand an *act* which turns human life upsid down [*grundlegend umstürzt*]" (54). "God is the powerful promise of a turn ing point [*Wende*]" (10). Locating the origin of this "turning" in history, h notes, "The historical place of revolutionary apocalypticism is Israel. Israe aspires and attempts to "turn back" [*Umkehr*]. Turning back on the inside [*des Innen*] has a parallel effect on the outside [*des Außen*]" (15). *Umkehr* is also the effect of prophecy on the Roman Empire: "But the message of the Kingdom of God is particularly *good* news to the poor. This is because it brings repentance [*Umkehr*] and reversal [*Umkehrung*]. In Rome each year at the Feast of Saturnalia, the '*topsy-turvy world*' [*verkehrte Welt*] was enacted for the masses." Analyzing post-Hegelian philosophers, he traces the same distinctions: "Inwardness and outwardness are divided between Marx and Kierkegaard into worldly revolution [*weltliche Umkehrung*] and religious repentance [*religiöse Umkehr*]" (190). This ambivalence seems to be programmatic, running like a thread through the entire book, and, by and large, it expresses an antinomian desire.

Any notion of a "Christian Occident," therefore, derived solely from the conversion of pagan Rome or individual "repentance," disregards the

continuing apocalyptic force of *Wende* and *Umkehr* as identified by Taubes. Likewise, any study of "tropes" would benefit from Taubes's inner history of "turns."[16] Arguably, the only one that comes close is Erich Auerbach's analysis of *figura* in *Mimesis*, showing Western realism to originate in typological interpretations of history. Also published in Bern, one year before Taubes's study, Auerbach's *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (*Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*), takes its bearing from the apocalyptic events surrounding Christ—without ending in a Christology and thus avoiding the split into a New and an Old Testament.[17] Not surprisingly, Taubes was a lifelong admirer of Auerbach's work.

V

The fact that theological concepts underlie the project of modernity, understood in the chiliastic sense of the "new age," was amply demonstrated by Carl Schmitt in 1922 ("all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts"), and by Karl Löwith in 1949 ("the philosophy of history is entirely dependent on theology of history, in particular on the theological concept of history as a history of fulfillment and salvation").[18] Not only is this relevant because of secularization, but also because the lynchpins of Taubes's study are "political theology," a term coined by Schmitt, and "philosophy of history." Of the three thinkers, however, only Taubes endorses the eschatological tradition from the view of the oppressed. Schmitt, an "apocalyptician of counterrevolution,"[19] shares an eschatological view of history, but he advocates *translatio imperii*—the succession of the Roman Empire by the Holy Roman Empire and the Third Reich—along with the retarding force of the katechon, described in *The Nomos of the Earth* as "the restrainer [who] holds back the end of the world."[20] Schmitt's view of history can thus be said to be *katechontic*, seeking divine legitimation of power, while Taubes's is emphatically *apocalyptic*, seeking "a theological *delegitimation* of political power as a whole."[21]

As for "philosophy of history," Löwith discusses the same genealogy of theological accounts of history in *Meaning of History* as Taubes does in *Occidental Eschatology*—the biblical view, Daniel, John, Jesus, Augustine, Joachim, Hegel, and Marx—but he does so in reverse order.[22] At first glance, many of the analyses and findings are strikingly similar, which is partly explained by the fact that the authors had read each other's work. Löwith

mentions *Abendländische Eschatologie* twice, first referring to it as a "penetrating study" and then summarizing it, in a note on Joachim, as "a comparative analysis of Hegel's philosophy of 'spirit' with Joachim's prophecy."[23] Likewise, Taubes had read Löwith's study *Von Hegel bis Nietzsche* (From Hegel to Nietzsche; 1941), recalling the epiphany as follows: "The scales fell from my eyes when I understood Löwith's line [*Kurve*] from Hegel to Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. Everything I had so far read and heard about the spiritual and intellectual history of the nineteenth century felt stale and irrelevant in comparison."[24]

The main point which distinguishes Taubes from Löwith is that the latter, through "the methodical regress from the modern" to "the ancient religious pattern," undertakes a *critique* of the secularizations of eschatology, deploring the emergence of the philosophy of history from the history of salvation. The full title, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*, itself makes a programmatic distinction that seeks to purge the science of history from theological influences. Löwith's concerns, as he repeatedly points out, are shaped by his own times, when chiliasm, among other doctrines, was misappropriated by totalitarianism—for instance, when the title of *Duce* was transferred from St. Francis and ultimately from Joachim's vision of the *novus dux*.[25] What Löwith seems to confuse, however, is precisely the spiritual, apocalyptic tradition with the imperial, "katechontic" one.

This distinction is vital for apocalypticism in order to avoid the fatal cul-de-sac in which Schmitt ended up and against which Löwith warned.[26] And yet, in 1972, Taubes cautions: "If the messianic idea in Judaism is not interiorized, it can turn the 'landscape of redemption' into a blazing apocalypse. . . . For every attempt to bring about redemption on the level of history without a transfiguration of the messianic idea leads straight into the abyss."[27] Already in *Occidental Eschatology* he warns, "If the telos of the revolution collapses, so that the revolution is no longer the means but the sole creative principle, then the destructive desire becomes a creative desire. If the revolution points to nothing beyond itself, it will end in a movement, dynamic in nature but leading into the abyss [*ins leere Nichts*]" (11).

Thus, freed from the suspicion of inevitably disastrous consequences, the apocalypticism of Taubes vindicates the perspectives of *political theology* and of *philosophy of history*. As a means of critical intervention and analysis, they have remained viable for *Occidental Eschatology* in the twentieth-century tradition of Georg Lukács, Ernst Bloch, and Walter Benjamin.

Rarely does Taubes reflect on his methods in *Occidental Eschatology*, but his historico-philosophical perspective allows him to reflect on two main traditions: "Theistic-transcendental metaphysics shifts the absolute freedom of eternity beyond the constraints of interdependence implied in the infinite modifications of freedom. The pantheistic-immanent viewpoint of late antiquity and German Idealism frames the relationship of interdependence as the Absolute" (6). Where his methods cannot be inferred from the argument or from his polemics, they might be mistaken for inconsistent. Thus at the very beginning, "On the Nature of Eschatology," the reader is first presented with the inside perspective of a transcendental philosopher—"The subject of inquiry is the essence of history"—immediately followed by the words of a poststructuralist *avant la lettre*: "What is the sufficient condition on which history as possibility rests?" The second paragraph then concludes from the viewpoint of a Gnostic: "It is in the Eschaton that history surpasses its limitations and is seen for what it is" (3).

Much later, in a colloquium on gnosis and surrealism in 1966, Taubes answers questions on method, as posed by Iser, Jauss, Kracauer, and Blumenberg, in what can be taken to be a late reflection on *Occidental Eschatology*: "As far as methods are concerned, I am moving between the Scylla of an individualizing interpretation and the Charybdis of an archetypal one. . . . It would be misleading to conclude from the return of Gnostic mythology that the Gnostic structure was a timeless, eternal, archetypal idea, which manifests in language without any particular historical detonator [*Zünder*]. It remains decisive *when*, *how* and *where* the Gnostic structure, which emerged from a particular historical situation in late antiquity, becomes 'citable.'"[28] Unmistakably, Taubes draws on Benjamin's "now time [*Jetztzeit*]," or "the now of cognizability [*Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit*]," "an enormous abbreviation of messianic time,"[29] as a way of enabling historical cognition and historiography: "only for a redeemed humanity has its past become citable in all of its moments."[30]

Applying this to *Occidental Eschatology*, we can see that the original apocalyptic-Gnostic situation is continually being "restored," though not unchanged, throughout the history of Western spirituality by dint of particular historical "detonators." These are Exodus, the Babylonian Exile, the Maccabean revolt against Hellenization, and the struggle of the Zealots against the Roman Empire, to name only the "detonators" of antiquity. The "struggle between the Zealots and the Romans" is highlighted in Taubes's "history of apocalypticism" to exemplify the "nature of the conflict [*Gegensatz*]: the global empire of masters against a world revolution of the oppressed."

Such are the sites of historical struggle, the particular "*when*, *how*, and *where*," from which apocalypticism reemerges, constituting a *Jetztzeit*. It is blatantly clear that Taubes does not undertake a history of ideas, a study of motifs, or a study in religious anthropology. His is rather an extensive *Wirkungsgeschichte* ("effective history") of apocalypticism or revolutionary spirituality in the West, one which is matched in scope and audacity only by Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), the amazing history of the Jewish "phylogenetic heritage" with its work of "awakening memory-traces."[31] A discussion of and lengthy quotation from *Moses and Monotheism* concludes Taubes's lectures on Paul shortly before his death. Even though Freud is mentioned by name nowhere in *Occidental Eschatology*, psychoanalysis is "omnipresent" not only in the Gnostic struggle between *pneuma* and *psyche*, but also in the salvation history of spirituality, considering that *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history) also implies *Heilungsgeschichte* (story of healing or healing process). Significantly, Freudian terminology is deployed in *Occidental Eschatology* at the key moment (*kairos*) when the political theology of Rome, the "Caesarian superego," was briefly superseded by early Christianity:

> In the Christian community the man of late antiquity blots out his own ego in favor of the *superego* [*Über-ich*], which, coming from beyond, descends to the people. That superego is one and the same in each member of the community, so that the community represents a collective of the spirit [*das pneumatische Wir*]. The spiritual center of man is the superego of the beyond [*das jenseitige Über-Ich*]: "It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me."
>
> The superego of Christ is seen by the masses as opposing Caesar [*Anti-Cäsar*]. It outshines and devalues the Caesarian superego [*cäsarisches Über-Ich*]. (65)

VII

Finally, a note on the translation is in order. The difficulties in the task of translation were formidable, and only at times does the translation rise to the challenge. The nature of the difficulties can be glimpsed in the complex connotations of German words that seem easy to translate, like *abendländisch* (occidental), *Neuzeit* (modern age), or *Heilsgeschichte* (history of salvation). So whenever the English translation lacks precision or is felt to be

inadequate, I have provided German interpolations. And were this practice not to stop the flow of reading, I would have made use of it more often. Needless to say, my English translation never claims to dispense with the need for the German original. I have refrained, moreover, from giving annotations or translator's notes. Failing to give annotations, a brief comment on *Neuzeit* and *Heilsgeschichte* is necessary.

The term "modern age" only inadequately translates the German *Neuzeit*, which according to Joachim begins in the thirteenth century. In fact, the German division of history into the periods of *Altertum* (ancient), *Mittelalter* (medieval), and *Neuzeit* (new or modern) is very much based on the millenarianist or Joachimite view of world history, which Hegel continued.

The scope of the German word *Heil* (salvation) is outlined by Löwith: "'Salvation' does not convey the many connotations of the German word *Heil*, which indicates associated terms like 'heal' and 'health,' 'hail' and 'hale,' 'holy,' and 'whole,' as contrasted with 'sick,' 'profane,' and 'imperfect.' *Heilsgeschichte* has, therefore, a wider range of meaning than 'history of salvation.' At the same time, it unites the concept of history more intimately with the idea of *Heil* or 'salvation.'"[32]

Finally, I am greatly indebted to Peter Routledge for assisting in the early stages of the translation and to Misha Kavka for reading the proofs. Thanks also to Elettra Stimilli for the notes of the Italian translation, which have helped the present English edition. Special thanks go to Tan Wälchli and Susanne von Lebedur for drawing my attention to Taubes long ago. And, last but not least, let me thank Hent de Vries, the series editor, and Emily-Jane Cohen, the acquisitions editor, for making this book possible.

Notes

1. Jacob Taubes, *Abendländische Eschatologie*, Beiträge zur Soziologie und Sozialphilosophie, ed. René König, vol. 3 (Bern, 1947). All page numbers that follow quotations refer to this edition.

2. Jacob Taubes, "Taubes Briefe ad Scholem," in *Der Preis des Messianusmus* ("Taubes's Letters to Scholem," in The Price of Messianism), ed. Elettra Stimilli (Würzburg, 2006), 96. All English translations are mine unless stated otherwise.

3. Jacob Taubes, *Abendländische Eschatologie* (Munich, 1991); *Escatologia occidentale*, trans. Guisi Valent, ed. Elettra Stimilli (Milan, 1997).

4. Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago, 1949), 248 and 255–56.

5. Jacob Taubes, *Vom Kult zur Kultur*, ed. Aleida Assmann, Jan Assmann, and Wolf-Daniel Hartwich (Munich, 1996).

6. Jacob Taubes, *Ad Card Schmitt: Gegenstrebige Fügung* (Berlin, 1987); Jacob Taubes, *Die politische Theologie des Paulus*, ed. Aleida Assman and Jan Assmann (Munich, 1993); Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. Dana Hollander (Stanford, Calif., 2004). For a summary review of the lectures, see David Ratmoko, review of *The Political Theology of Paul*, by Jacob Taubes, *Umbra: A Journal of the Unconscious* (2005): 138–41.

7. Jacob Taubes, *Der Preis des Messianusmus*, ed. Elettra Stimilli (Würzburg, 2006). This is based on an earlier, Italian edition, *Il prezzo del messianesimo: Lettere di Jacob Taubes a Gershom Scholem e altri scritti*, ed. Elettra Stimilli (Macerata, 2000).

8. For a full bibliography of Taubes's oeuvre up to the year 2000, see Josef R. Lawitschka, "Eine neu-alte Bibliographie der Texte von Jacob Taubes," in *Abendlandische Eschatologie: Ad Jacob Taubes*, ed. Richard Faber et al. (Würzburg, 2001), 561–70 (hereafter cited as *Ad Jacob Taubes*).

9. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Die Apocalypse der deutschen Seele* (Einsiedeln, 1998). On the similarities and differences between the two dissertations, see Ursula Baatz, "Ein Anstoss zur Abendländischen Eschatologie: Hans Urs von Balthasars Apokalpse der deutschen Seele," *Ad Jacob Taubes*, 321–29.

10. Cf. Elettra Stimilli's entry for Taubes in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. Lindsey Jones, vol. 13 (Farmington Hills, MI, 2005).

11. Jacob Taubes, *Ad Carl Schmitt: Gegenstrebige Fügung* (Berlin, 1987), 24–25 (hereafter cited as *Ad Carl Schmitt*).

12. S.v. *eschatology*, in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2005).

13. S.v. *Abendland*, in *Duden: Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*, 3rd ed. (Mannheim, 1996), my translation. The title of Oswald Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes*, mentioned by Taubes in connection to Gnosis, gives the full scope of what is entailed in *Abendland*.

14. Florian Rötzer, "Interview mit Jacob Taubes," in *Denken, das an der Zeit ist*, ed. Florian Rötzer (Frankfurt, 1987), 317. The English translation is taken from Joshua Robert Gold, "Jacob Taubes: Apocalypse from Below," *Telos* (2006): 140–56.

15. Carl Schmitt in a letter of August 14, 1959, Jacob Taubes, *Ad Carl Schmitt*, 37.

16. This may apply to even the most celebrated tropologies, such as Hayden White, *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect* (Baltimore, 1999).

17. See Martin Tremel's afterword to *Abendländische Eschatologie* (2007), 286.

18. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 2005); Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 1.

19. Jacob Taubes, "Carl Schmitt: Ein Apokalyptiker der Gegenrevolution," *Ad Carl Schmitt*, 7.

20. Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, trans. Gary L. Ulmen (New York, 2003), 59–60. For a fine summary of the apocalyptic and catechontic views of his-

tory, see Aleida Assmann, *Zeit und Tradition: Kulturelle Strategien der Dauer* (Cologne, 1999), 20–30.

21. Marin Terpstra and Theo de Wit, "No Spiritual Investment in the World As It Is: Jacob Taubes's Negative Political Theology" in *Flight of the Gods: Philosophical Perspectives on Negative Theology*, 321 (New York, 2000).

22. "The methodical regress from the modern secular interpretations of history to their ancient religious pattern is, last but not least, substantially justified by the realization that we find ourselves more or less at the end of the modern rope. It has worn too thin to give hopeful support" (Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 3).

23. Ibid., 248 and 255–56.

24. Taubes, *Ad Carl Schmitt*, 8.

25. Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 245. For a detailed discussion, see Michael Jaeger, "Jacob Taubes und Karl Löwith: Apologie und Kritik des heilsgeschichtlichen Denkens," *Ad Jacob Taubes*, 485–508.

26. Nowhere in *Occidental Eschatology* does Taubes mention the Shoah.

27. Jacob Taubes, "The Price of Messianism," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Autumn 1972): 600.

28. Jacob Taubes, "Noten zum Surrealismus," *Vom Kult zur Kultur*, 145.

29. Jacob Taubes, "Carl Schmitt: Ein Apokalyptiker der Gegenrevolution," *Ad Carl Schmitt*, 28.

30. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1968), 254.

31. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, vol. 23 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London, 1964), 132–33.

32. This is the first note to Löwith's *Meaning in History*, 225.

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