

## The Concept of Eschatology in the Late Thought of Martin Heidegger

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The aim of this study is to analyze the Christian heritage in the late philosophy of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. My hypothesis is that behind the concept of the “history of being” (*Seinsgeschichte*) there is an influence of the concepts of Christian eschatology and *parousia* that Heidegger dealt with in his early days as a professor in Freiburg. Although the philosopher had long since broken his relationship with Catholicism, these notions return in a secularized form years later in his thinking on the history of being.

**Keywords:** history of Being – *parousia* – eschatology – Heidegger

### Introduction

The young Martin Heidegger, born into a Catholic family in Meßkirch in 1889, began his studies as a seminarian wanting to become a priest. His theological training was supported by various scholarships from the Catholic Church during his early years as a student. But he gradually drifted away from the Catholic world between 1910 and 1920. First he abandoned his priestly project and his theological studies were replaced by philosophical readings (first Brentano, then the neo-Kantians and finally Husserl). In 1917 he married Elfride Petri, a Protestant woman, with the promise to baptize their children as Catholics (which later did not happen because of the spouse’s decision). It was around this time that Heidegger made a definitive break with Catholicism.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This was confirmed by his wife Elfride to Father Engelbert Krebs on 23 December 1918. According to the priest in his diary, Elfride had said: “My husband has lost his religious

But is this “biographical break”<sup>2</sup> also an “intellectual” break? There is no doubt that Heidegger, as his teacher Edmund Husserl affirms in 1920, “freed himself from Catholic dogmatism” (quoted in Sheehan 1979, 314), but how present is Christianity in his philosophy? Undoubtedly Heidegger’s thought is intimately linked to Christian theology. He himself admits: “Without this theological background I should never have come upon the path of thinking” (Heidegger 1982, 10). Or as he says in *Mindfulness* (1938/39):

And who would not want to recognize that a confrontation with Christianity reticently accompanied my entire path hitherto, a confrontation that was not and is not a “problem” that one “takes up” to address but a preservation of, and at the same time a painful separation from, one’s ownmost provenance: the parental home, homeland and youth. Only the one who was so rooted in such an actually lived Catholic world may be able to have an inkling of the necessities that like subterranean quakes have been at work in the pathway of my inquiry hitherto (Heidegger 2006, 368).

In this paper, I aim to trace elements of the Christian tradition in Heidegger’s later work, with a particular focus on the concept of eschatology. My hypothesis is that underlying the thinking of the “history of being” (*Seinsgeschichte*) is an eschatological view of history inherited from his early Christian training. To support this hypothesis, I will first analyze how Heidegger interprets the concepts of “*parousia*” and “eschatology” in one of his early lectures at Freiburg, specifically in the winter semester seminar of 1920/21, *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*. I will then demonstrate how these concepts reappear in a secularized form in his later philosophy, particularly in his thinking of the history of being. Much has been written about the relationship between Heidegger and Catholicism,<sup>3</sup> but the

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faith, and I have failed to find mine. His faith was undermined by doubts even when we got married” (Ott 1994, 109). Heidegger later reconfirms this decision in a letter he sends to the priest on 9 January 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding Heidegger’s separation from Catholicism, see: Ott (1994, 106 – 121) and Safranski (1998, 107 – 125)

<sup>3</sup> And particularly on the Christian concept of eschatology, it was linked with the concept of “being-towards-death” (*das Sein zum Tode*) that appears in *Being and Time*, but not with the history of being. See Wolfe (2015), Brencio (2019), Leng (2022). Brencio analyses Heidegger’s understanding of Christianity through the lens of the history of being in the context of the *Black Notebooks*. Christianity is another stage of the forgetting of being carried out by metaphysics.

connection between the history of being and the Christian tradition, so close to the philosopher in his early years, has remained particularly unexplored. This paper seeks to fill this gap.

## **I. Eschatology in the Young Heidegger**

Heidegger engages with the concept of eschatology very early in his work, long before introducing the notion of the history of being, within the context of his research on early Christianity. For the German philosopher, the eschatological problem is “the center of Christianity” (Heidegger 2010b, 73). However, he interprets it differently from traditional views, seeing it neither as a doctrine of ultimate reality nor as a theoretical discipline. In the winter semester seminar of 1920/21, *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, Heidegger focuses on analyzing the letters of St. Paul. While both the first and second epistles address the eschatological question, I will concentrate on Heidegger’s analysis of the first epistle. The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians in 53 A.D. from Corinth. Heidegger pays particular attention to chapter 5, where Paul discusses the “when” of Christ’s second coming. In this chapter, the apostle states:

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6).

St. Paul addresses the concept of *parousia*, which Heidegger considers central to early Christianity (Heidegger 2010a, 73). The Greek term *παρουσία* means “coming,” which for the Jews signified the arrival of the Last Judgment or the coming of the Messiah. For Christians, however, *parousia* refers to “the appearing again of the already appeared Messiah” (Heidegger 2010a, 71). To grasp this concept fully, it is crucial to approach the Pauline letters from a phenomenological rather than an exegetical perspective. This means focusing

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I do not pretend to deny this interpretation, I even find it complementary to mine. Heidegger’s position against Christian theology and philosophy does not deny the influence of the latter on the philosopher.

on the lived experience of Christian life and Paul's own experience, rather than merely interpreting dogma or conceptual content.

The question of the timing of the second coming, involving χρόνος and καιρός, which Heidegger translates as time (*Zeit*) and instant (*Augenblick*), presupposes two attitudes toward life: those who remain in darkness, feeling secure and at peace, and the children of light, who are awake. Heidegger's analysis of this distinction parallels his treatment of authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) and inauthenticity (*Uneigentlichkeit*) in *Being and Time*. Those living in darkness and feeling secure are absorbed by worldly concerns and preoccupied with daily issues. Conversely, the children of light, those living authentically Christian lives, are awake and attuned to the imminent new coming. They recognize that faith is not "a state and [a] yielding final bliss," but a struggle (Heidegger 2010a, 90). It is not a matter of knowing the exact time of the coming – the objective temporal moment – but of being prepared and vigilant for that unexpected arrival, which will come "like a thief in the night." This does not mean seeking certainty about the day and hour of the coming, nor should it be understood as awaiting the awareness of a future event. Instead, "Paul's answer to the question of the When of the παρουσία is thus an urging to awaken and to be sober" (Heidegger 2010a, 74), anticipating a new beginning. In other words, what matters is not the exact timing but how one prepares for it: what "is decisive is how I comport myself to it in actual life" (Heidegger 2010a, 70), i.e., how I relate to what is not yet imminent. The Christian must always be alert; uncertainty is constant, and there is no security in the life of the believer. "The uncertainty is not coincidental; rather it is necessary" (Heidegger 2010a, 73).<sup>4</sup>

The anticipation of Christ's return involves a transformation in the experience of temporality, creating a forward-looking tension for the believer. This authentic Christian life is illuminated by this temporality, redefined by an uncertain future that cannot be chronologically determined. In other words, the "not yet" of the second coming provides meaning to Christian life.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, a Christian should not be satisfied with the current state of the world. As Paul

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<sup>4</sup> Regarding the relationship between this seminar and the concepts of authenticity and inauthenticity in *Being and Time*, see Agamben (2005).

<sup>5</sup> Crowe (2006, 157). Crowe suggests a potential coincidence between Heidegger's early proposal and Jürgen Moltmann's works on eschatology. Moltmann argues that the prophets call for a transformation in the course of time, asserting that every conversion entails a radical change in temporality.

states in Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” It is only within this eschatological framework, this tension toward the future, that God’s eternity must be understood as perpetually delayed. For Heidegger, the Hellenization of Christianity – the incorporation of Greek conceptual frameworks, including static and objectivist notions of time – resulted in the obscuring of the original Christian eschatological experience. This Greek perspective effectively masked the authentic kairological temporality with a chronological conception of time. Consequently, Heidegger concludes that this is why Luther harbored a deep-seated animosity toward Aristotle (Heidegger 2010a, 67).

Christianity represents an experience of factual life in which God becomes present and is revealed in history. This is why Heidegger views time not as continuous and linear but as disrupted by a revelation – a radical break from the normal course of history. Time, for Heidegger, is not chronological but “kairological.” The proclamation of Christ’s coming signifies a rupture in history, interrupting the flow of events and acting as an “initial impulse” [*Anstoß*] (Heidegger 2010a, 102). This proclamation inaugurates a new paradigm for understanding existence, breaking with all previous forms of life.

As noted above,<sup>6</sup> many pointed out the connection between the early eschatology of the young Heidegger and the concept of “being-towards-death” (*das Sein zum Tode*) analyzed in *Being and Time* (1927). For Heidegger, *Dasein* anticipate death; it does not catch them by surprise but is something they always expect to fulfill. Similarly, the expectation of the second coming does not involve knowing the exact day and hour, but it does involve the certainty that death is an unavoidable and imminent possibility. Heidegger’s focus is not on what happens after life or the “other-worldly,” but on how this certainty impacts us and manifests in our “this-worldly” existence. “Our analysis of death remains purely ‘this-worldly’ in so far as it interprets that phenomenon merely in the way in which it enters into any particular *Dasein* as a possibility of its Being” (Heidegger 2013a, 292). Death is not just a future event that has not yet arrived; it is a “not yet” that, like the parousia in his seminar on the phenomenology of religion, continuously shapes our present, influences how we understand ourselves, and reveals our existence as finite. In anticipating death, *Dasein* anticipates the possibility of its own non-existence: “Death is the

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<sup>6</sup> See footnote 3.

possibility of the absolute impossibility of *Dasein*” (Heidegger 2013a, 294).<sup>7</sup> Consequently, “this entity does not have an end at which it just stops, but it exists finitely” (Heidegger 2013a, 378). To exist in a finite mode means to comprehend the very finiteness of our possibilities, which outline the scope of manifestation that allows us to engage with entities. In other words, death reveals the potential nature of every possibility and the contingency of the forms in which *Dasein* exists, that none of the possibilities of life is definitive.

## II. Eschatology and the History of Being in the Late Heidegger

Many years later, the German philosopher asserts: “As destining, being itself is inherently eschatological” (Heidegger 2002, 246). What does Heidegger mean by this? To answer this question, we must delve into the thinking of the history of being (*Seinsgeschichte*). Here, we need to strip the word “history” of its usual meaning, such as the sum of human actions over the centuries or the discipline that studies these actions – what the German philosopher refers to as historiography, *Historie*. Neither of these meanings aligns with what Heidegger is thinking of when he speaks of the “history of being.” This is history in its original sense, *Geschichte*, the history of the unconcealment of being. It is necessary to briefly describe what Heidegger means by truth, which he understands as “unconcealment” (ἀλήθεια). Entities exist as such insofar as they are unhidden within a world or horizon of meaning. In other words, things exist as they do only because they manifest themselves within a meaningful context. These spaces of meaning, which function as the condition of possibility for entities, are not stable but variable – they are historical and finite. Throughout history, different frameworks of intelligibility emerge that allow for different forms of manifestation. Thus, if we understand truth as

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<sup>7</sup> The idea that death is the possibility of impossibility may seem contradictory at first glance: 1. If death is a possibility, and 2. The possibilities of *Dasein* are modes of being, 3. Then death would be a possible mode of being for *Dasein*, a possibility defined by the fact that existence cannot be. How can a possible mode of human existence be said not to exist? However, if we consider the technical sense that Heidegger gives to the term “possibility,” we understand that death is a possibility in terms of *Dasein*’s self-understanding, rather than a mere contingent event that has not yet occurred. This means that *Dasein* anticipates its limit, its own death, in its forward projection. The debate on this apparent contradiction between William Blattner and Paul Edwards is well known. I will not delve further into this issue as it diverges from the central topic: the relationship between being and finitude. For more details, see Blattner (1994) and Edwards (1975). I have explored the question of death in *Being and Time* in Belgrano (2018).

uncovering, we cannot attribute to it the characteristics traditionally ascribed to it, such as universality, immutability, or necessity. The uncovering of entities, their appearing, occurs historically within a particular horizon of meaning. The late Heidegger uses the term “clearing” (*Lichtung*) to refer to what I have been calling a “horizon,” “space of meaning,” or “framework of intelligibility.” The clearing evokes the image of a forest clearing – a space of light amid the darkness and impenetrability of the foliage. Therefore, the clearing is what allows entities to reveal themselves. However, this clearing or space of meaning opens up historically thanks to the *Ereignis*, usually translated as “event.” But this is not to be understood in the usual sense of the word, as a happening or an event in the course of history, such as the landing of man on the moon or the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. The event, in Heidegger’s sense, is that which establishes a clearing, a space of meaning. By introducing new possibilities for the manifestation of being, it establishes history. Being refers to the various historical spaces of meaning through which entities manifest, and the succession of these spaces is what Heidegger calls the “history of being” (*die Seinsgeschichte*). This term first appears in *Contributions to Philosophy*. Although the idea was already implicit in earlier works, such as in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” where Heidegger states: “To the transformation of the essence of truth there corresponds the essential history of Western art” (Heidegger 2002, 52). In other words, Heidegger’s thesis is that the work of art inaugurates, throughout history, the various frameworks of intelligibility that allow entities to appear.

The history of being (*Seinsgeschichte*) must be understood as the succession of epochs or frameworks of intelligibility that are sent to us (*geschickt*) by being itself. Heidegger intentionally plays with the words *Geschichte* (history), *Geschick* (destiny), and *schicken* (to send). History (*Geschichte*) is something that is sent (*geschickt*) to us by being as destiny (*Geschick*). The clearing from which the world around us is revealed is not something we create, but rather something given to us – sent, or destined, by being. This means that human existence, or *Dasein*, is passive in the face of this donation; meaning is not something that depends on human will but rather something that can only be received or appropriated by us. The term *Ereignis* further emphasizes this notion of appropriation. The German word *Ereignis* is linked to the adjective *eigen*, meaning “one’s own.” The prefix *er-* denotes intensity, and *ereignen* means “to appropriate.” Thus, *Ereignis* contains within it two intertwined nuances: it refers to an event, but at the same time, it signifies appropriation.



But two questions arise: (1) In this succession of epochs or openings of being, is there an underlying order or law governing these original events? (2) Are these openings of being throughout history finite and quantifiable, or are they innumerable? Heidegger offers different, sometimes contradictory, answers to these questions throughout his intellectual journey. Let us begin with the first one.

The “concept” of the history of being, understood as the succession of different forms of intelligibility, bears clear Hegelian influences. Heidegger himself acknowledges that it was Hegel who was the first and only thinker to adequately conceptualize the history of thought (Heidegger 2002, 243). The similarity lies in the following: just as the history of being represents the succession of different frameworks of intelligibility that allow entities to acquire meaning, for Hegel, the history of thought encompasses the various stages in which the Absolute becomes self-conscious. In both cases, the individual is passive in the face of this unfolding; it is being, or the Spirit, that reveals entities. This is why Herman Philipse argues that a neo-Hegelian leitmotif runs through Heidegger’s intellectual journey (Phlipse 2014, 151 – 172). Philipse interprets the late philosophy of the Freiburg professor as a form of neo-Hegelian historicism, which ultimately prevails over the Husserlian essentialism that characterized Heidegger’s earlier work. According to Philipse, if truth is always historical – dependent on a historical a priori framework that determines its conditions of unknowability – then nothing can be true in the traditional sense of adequacy; every statement is contingent upon a prior, meaningful historical context. Philipse is not claiming that Hegel himself is a historicist (since, for Hegel, all human knowledge is merely a moment within an all-encompassing truth, part of the process of the Absolute’s self-consciousness). Rather, it is Heidegger’s later reappropriation of these ideas that embodies historicism (Phlipse 2014, 170 – 171).<sup>8</sup>

Heidegger understands the history of being not as progressive, but as regressive, meaning that the history of the West – equivalent to the history of metaphysics from the Greeks to the present – represents a gradual concealment of being. As Michel Haar suggests, this perspective entails an inversion of Hegelianism: history is not a progressive development of the Spirit toward self-transparency but rather a gradual obscuring of being (Haar 1999, 51). The idea is this: when being inaugurates an epoch, opening a new space of

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<sup>8</sup> I have worked on the connection between Heidegger and Hegel in Belgrano (2023) and Belgrano (2022).



meaning, it simultaneously conceals itself behind this foundation – it becomes an “epoché” of itself.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the history of being, or the history of Western metaphysics, is the history of the forgetting of being. Heidegger writes, “every epoch of world-history is an epoch of errancy” (Heidegger 2002, 254). Starting with the Greek world, passing through medieval and modern cultures, and culminating in the present technical epoch, being has been progressively hidden, forgotten. But in what sense is being forgotten? The history of the West is replete with philosophers who have discussed the problem of being; was it not Aristotle who questioned it? Did not Thomas Aquinas dedicate years of his career to the problem of *esse*? So, in what sense can we speak of the forgetting of being? Here, “being” must be understood as Heidegger conceives it – as that which makes entities possible, as meaning (*Sinn*). Things exist insofar as they are embedded in a space of meaning, acquiring significance within a particular context. The history of metaphysics has overlooked this crucial issue, interpreting being as just another entity – specifically, the entity that possesses being to the highest degree or perfection (substance, the unmoved mover, God, *res cogitans*). In other words, the forgetting of being refers to the failure to recognize the distinction between being and entities, to the forgetting of the clearing (*Lichtung*).

As we can see, there seems to be a certain teleology or order moving toward a particular end – the oblivion of being. Is this the essence of Heidegger’s eschatology? However, Heidegger also states, “nor is there, as Hegel thought, only a systematics that can fashion the law of its thinking into the law of history and simultaneously subsume history into the system” (Heidegger 2010b, 255). Heidegger asserts that there is no rational law inherent in history that humans can uncover. The history of being sends its gift without any underlying reason or logic. If there is no intrinsic logic, it would seem that epochs open abruptly, with no continuity between them. Consequently, the history of being is neither predictable nor calculable, unlike the pretensions of our technical epoch. Heidegger writes: “When and how it will come to pass after the manner of a destining no one knows....Only when man, as the shepherd of Being, attends upon the truth of Being can he expect an arrival of

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<sup>9</sup> “This illuminating, keeping to itself with the truth of its essence, we may call the ἐποχή of being. Here, however, this word which is taken from the language of the Stoics does not mean, as it does for Husserl, the methodological setting aside of the act of thetic consciousness in objectification. The *epoche* of being belongs to being itself. We think it out of the oblivion of being” (Heidegger 2002, 254).

a destining of Being and not sink to the level of a mere wanting to know" (Heidegger 2013b, 41 – 42). There is no necessary succession, as in Hegel, but rather a "free succession" (*eine freie Folge*) of epochs.

From what has been discussed so far, it seems that the history of being involves the sudden emergence of new horizons of meaning without any discernible order or rationality. In other words, there doesn't appear to be a teleological order or any form of continuity. How, then, can we account for the gradual concealment of being? Heidegger asserts: "Only the 'that' – that the history of Being is in such a way – can be said" (Heidegger 1972, 52). The gradual concealment of being throughout its history does not stem from any intrinsic law or logic within being itself; rather, it simply reflects what has unfolded up to this point.

In *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger identifies two pivotal "beginnings" in history: the first and the second beginning. A historical beginning (*Anfang*) marks the opening of a new instance of manifestation. Heidegger associates the first beginning with the Presocratics, who grasped truth as ἀλήθεια, recognizing that being is intertwined with manifestation and meaning. However, while the Presocratics acknowledged this, they did not fully explore its depth; they merely touched upon it. The decline began with Plato and Aristotle, who reinterpreted ἀλήθεια as adequacy or conformity, moving away from the original understanding of truth as unconcealment. This reinterpretation marks the onset of the forgetting of being, a process that has persisted through the centuries, culminating in the modern age of technology. The era of *Gestell*, or "enframing," represents the essence of technology and the final stage in the history of metaphysics, signifying the complete oblivion of being. In the technological paradigm, entities are revealed in a way where calculability and availability dominate; everything is perceived as a means to satisfy human desires. This paradigm presents itself as the singular and absolute horizon. As Loscerbo puts it, technology is "blind to itself" because it fails to recognize that it is merely one mode of revealing, not the only one (Loscerbo 1981, 242). *Gestell*, as a clearing, imposes itself as the sole and totalitarian field of meaning. The true danger of technology lies in the forgetting of how entities are constituted, how they acquire meaning, and the general oblivion of the finite horizon of understanding that shapes daily life in the Western world – in other words, the oblivion of being. This is the peril that Heidegger warns of: "the approaching tide of technological revolution in the atomic age could be so captivate, bewitch, dazzle, and beguile man that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practiced as the

*only* way of thinking” (Heidegger 1996, 56). Everything is now understood within the history of metaphysics, within the horizon of the first beginning. Heidegger emphasizes this point, stating: “Not only do we lack any criterion which would permit us to evaluate the perfection of an epoch of metaphysics as compared with any other epoch. The right to this kind of evaluation does not exist” (Heidegger 1972, 56). Thus, while there is a succession of epochs that emerge throughout history, they all occur within the overarching history of metaphysics.

But then, in what sense can we speak of eschatology? In “Anaximander’s Saying,” Heidegger asks: “Do we stand in the very twilight of the most monstrous transformation of the whole earth and of the time of the historical space in which it is suspended? Do we stand before the evening of the night of another dawn?” (Heidegger 2002, 245). Heidegger explicitly distances himself from the theological-dogmatic conception of eschatology. Here, the end, *eschaton*, refers to a future yet to come – the new beginning where being as such is revealed, emerges from its concealment, and “the God of gods” appears (Heidegger 2001, 266). In this context, God should not be understood as a divine-religious entity but rather as that which makes any divine figure possible: the clearing, the space of meaning.<sup>10</sup> The second coming is no longer that of Christ, but of being itself; it is the *parousia* of being. Herman Philipse suggests that Heidegger’s history of being represents a post-monotheistic interpretation of the Holy Spirit’s role throughout history. Early Christians, disillusioned by the delayed return of Christ, came to view the Holy Spirit as active in history, preparing for Christ’s eventual return. Similarly, the being hidden in history prepares for “the new beginning,” which will only occur when the metaphysical-technical history of the West reaches its culmination (Phlipse 2014, 302).

The second coming is no longer that of Christ, but of being itself; it is the *parousia* of being. This “new beginning” or “turn” (*Kehre*) will only arrive when the history of metaphysics reaches its end in the age of technology. Only at that moment will the new beginning break forth. As Gianni Vattimo (2002) suggests, just as the second coming presupposes the prior arrival of the Antichrist, the end of metaphysics – the decline of the West – serves as a

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<sup>10</sup> I have worked on the connection between the figure of the gods and the donation of meaning in Heidegger’s later philosophy in Belgrano (2020).

transition to another beginning.<sup>11</sup> “No one, and above all not the speculators and chatterboxes, can say: ‘the day has come’; ‘now’ is grasped as ‘the now’ when it comes, because before this the Antichrist must appear” (Heidegger 2010a, 110). There would then be an analogous relationship between the Antichrist, which for Heidegger signifies the forgetting of the authentic experience of temporality, and the oblivion of being that characterizes metaphysical epochs. Just as the Antichrist “continually tests the faithful and drives them to idolatrously identify the Messiah with figures who falsify his meaning refers to representational” (Vattimo 2002, 133), metaphysics tempts humanity to equate being with mere entities, leading to an understanding of being from a representational-objectivizing perspective.

The history of being is a linear process with a beginning – the inauguration of a space of meaning in ancient Greece – and an end, or a second beginning. The structure of this history clearly has a Christian background, even though Heidegger does not explicitly acknowledge it. The German philosopher envisions a secularized history of being that, in the words of Massimo Liritano, inherits a “historical sickness” (Liritano 2018, 339) – Christian eschatology.

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<sup>11</sup> Vattimo offers a compelling interpretation of the history of being by linking it with the theology of Joachim of Fiore. For the Italian philosopher, history should be seen as a gradual process of “awakening” and dissolving metaphysical structures, akin to the overcoming of metaphysics and the advent of the second beginning proposed by Heidegger. “So far, the meaning of Joachim’s teachings for our discussion seems to lie in the ‘discovery’ that historicity is constitutive of revelation. This historicity, in my view, corresponds to the ‘event’ character of Being discovered by post-metaphysical philosophy. It is useless to stress, once again, that for philosophy this ‘discovery’ has the same character of Joachim’s prophecy of the third age. The end of metaphysics is an event that announces itself and demands to be recognized, promoted, and realized, or at least to be explicitly clarified as the guideline for our choices. The signs of the approaching third age, which today we call the end of metaphysics, are obviously not the same ones observed by Joachim. However, Joachim’s text can still be our guide because of the general meaning of the age of spirit, which stresses not the letter but the spirit of revelation; no longer servants but friends; no longer awe or faith but charity; and perhaps also not action but contemplation. We could dare to think of the long process of secularization that separates us from the historical epoch of the abbot from Calabria as the realization of the conditions that are bringing us closer to the advent of the third age” (Vattimo 2002, 31). On the reception of Joachim of Fiore by postmodernity, see Liritano (2018, 338 – 344).

### III. Conclusion

"If we are to think from out of the eschatology of being we must one day await the 'once' of the dawn [*Einstige der Frühe*] in the 'once' of what is approaching [*Einstigen des Kommenden*] and must today learn to ponder this 'once' from out of this approach" (Heidegger 2002, 247). Just as in the Pauline letters, the focus is not on when the event will occur, but on how we anticipate what is to come. Calculative thinking aims to fix the exact day and hour of an event that is inherently unpredictable, always surpassing us and arising unexpectedly. We must prepare ourselves for the new beginning in the same way that Christianity calls for readiness for the second coming. In contrast to the rational and calculating individual of the metaphysical age, Heidegger refers to those who remain vigilant as "the futures ones" (Heidegger 1999, 313 – 320), acting as custodians of the possibility of the new beginning.

Throughout this paper, I have aimed to demonstrate that, despite Heidegger's break with Catholicism, his Christian upbringing continued to influence his philosophical journey. His conception of the history of being is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. Heidegger expressed concern over the advance of technology and calculative thinking. There is little for the individual to do but to prepare for this new beginning and to be properly disposed. As Heidegger puts it, "philosophy will be unable to effect any immediate change in the current state of the world. This is true not only of philosophy but of all purely human reflection and endeavor. Only a god can save us" (Heidegger 1981, 57).

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