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Tessa Morrison

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The Enigma of Isaac Newton: Scientist, Theologian, Alchemist and Prophet

Tessa Morrison, The University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia

Abstract: In 1687 one the most important scientific book every written, The Principia, by Isaac Newton, was published. It was a dramatic development in science and moved scientific thought from the medieval era into the modern era. Newton was haled as a genius and the greatest scientist in history and his reputation was jealously guarded. However, at an auction in 1936, the famous British economist, John Maynard Keynes, bought a large proportion of a collection of Newton's unpublished manuscripts, which had remained in a private collection in the 200 years since Newton death. Keynes later bequeathed these papers to Kings Collage Library, Cambridge. Babson College, Massachusetts and the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem also purchased a significant part of the collection. Other items were scatted all over the world, into private and public collections. There were over a million words on alchemy and the largest bulk of Newton's unpublished papers; several million words are on theology, many written in Latin. Many of these papers remain un-translated. In these manuscripts it was discovered that there were many sides to Newton, his alchemy and his deeply held (and in the 17th century heretical) religious beliefs would have seen a very different fate for Newton if they were made public as he would have been disgraced and his works shunned. Keynes called him the last sorcerer. This paper examines one aspect of Newton's sorcerer persona - that of the prophet.

Keywords: Isaac Newton, Religion, Architecture

The Image of Newton

IN MICHAEL WHITE'S biography of Isaac Newton he states, "According to a list of the most influential people in history, *The 100*, Isaac Newton ranks number 2 – after Muhammad and ahead of Jesus Christ."[1] This is an extraordinary statement written at the close of the twentieth century; a century of turmoil and rapid technological change; a century in which scientific changes and development has brought both the contrast of extreme misery and poverty, and massive prosperity and wealth. Moreover in 1999 the Sunday Times named Newton to be its 'Man of the Millennium.'[2] For a scientist who died in the early eighteenth century to be considered so influential despite the duration of time and change not only in science but also in attitude and thought is unique. Of Newton and his time Albert Einstein claimed that,

> Newton's age has long since passed through the sieve of oblivion, the doubtful striving and suffering of his generation has vanished from our ken; the works of some few great thinkers and artists have remained, to delight and ennoble us and those who come after us. Newton's discoveries have passed into the stock of accepted knowledge."[3]

However, it was Albert Einstein who demonstrated that the science of Newton was insufficient to describe the quantum world of sub-atomic particles. While Newton did play a significant role in the history of science and mathematics, and is one of the giant figures of history, his influence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is more perceived than real. He has been placed on a pedestal, out of reach and untouchable. Newton biographers have cynically been called his hagiographers[4], often with good reason, his achievements and the myths that have grown up around his memory have helped to define him as the great scientific genius of history.

In the collected memory of the public Einstein is associated with the mathematical equation $E=MC^2$, and although most people would not understand the full implication of this equation at least Einstein, a scientist, is associated with an important contribution to science. Newton could equally be associated with an equation the relationship $1/r^2$, yet Newton is more likely to be associated with an apple tree, the (mythical) inspiration of genius rather than the result of that genius.

[1] Michael White, *Isaac Newton: The Last Sorcerer* (London: Fourth Estate, 1998). p.1
[2] David Clark and Stephen P. H. Clark, *Newton's Tyranny* (New York: W.H.Freeman and Company, 2000). p.viii
[3] Albert Einstein, "Introduction," in *Opticks*, ed. Isaac Newton (New York: Dover Publication, 1952). pp.lix-lx
[4] For example Clark and Clark, *Newton's Tyranny*. p.ix, and Patricia Fara, *Newton: The Making of Genius* (London: Picador, 2002). p.80.

The image of Newton as an inspired genius, devoutly religious and working in isolation for the betterment of mankind has been propagated throughout the centuries.[5] His early biographies such as William Stukeley[6] in the eighteenth century and David Brewster[7] from the nineteenth century and many others often glossed over manuscripts, letters and events that did not fit this pristine image of genius. In Newton's lifetime and two hundred years after his death the 'real' Newton was kept very much out of sight.

The Publications of Newton

Newton published two scientific books in his lifetime *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica* (*The Principia*) originally published in 1687 and *Opticks* originally published in 1704 and both have been in continuous print since their original publication.[8] Newton died in 1727 and left hundreds of unpublished manuscripts, his heirs invited Thomas Pellett to examine the manuscripts and report on their suitability for publication. After just three days of examining these hundreds of manuscripts, Pellett, a qualified physician and member of the Royal Society, dismissed the majority of manuscripts as being 'not fit to be printed',[9] 'of no scientific value' and 'loose and foul papers'.[10] Pellett found only a few manuscripts suitable for publication,[11] *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended,* which was published in 1728,[12] and two manuscripts on prophecies although Pellet claimed the prophecies was imperfect, he nevertheless thought them worthy of publication. However, no publishers could be found to buy these works of prophecy and they were finally prepared for press by Newton's nephew Benjamin Smith[13] and published in 1737 as *The Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St John*.

Toward the end of Newton's life Caroline, Princess of Wales, asked him for a copy of the chronology of the ancient kingdoms she had heard that he was writing. Newton reluctantly, and with a considerable delay, complied with the royal request.[14] His reluctance and the delay were because it was possible that his chronology would reveal his heretical religious views,[15] which he did not reveal publicly. The chronology that he presented to Princess Caroline was a brief abstract from the notes he had written.

Unfortunately for Newton copies of this chronology became available and it was eventually published as the *Abstract Chronology,* despite Newton's protests.[16] The *Abstract* was heavily criticized. Newton could only justify his chronology through publication of the entire work, which he continued to work on until his death. The *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* published posthumously was a highly 'sanitized' version edited by his nephew-in-law John Conduitt, presumably to protect Newton's posthumous reputation.

Newton applied rigorous scientific methods to 'amend' history in his chronology. He first examined and compiled a thorough critique of the ancient chronologists who, according to Newton, made erroneous calculations and ignored the facts. Then he used astronomical proofs, of sightings of comets and stars, to fit dates. Finally he closely scrutinized literary evidence that was available from poets, dramatists, compilers, genealogists, historians, theologians and above all the Bible, which Newton believed was the oldest documented history of mankind.[17]

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were numerous new chronologies to establish the date of the beginning of the world and its history. Only seventy years before the publication of the *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, had in his massive book *The Annals of the World* [18]established the date of the creation to be 6.00pm, October 22, 4004BC. In 1701, the Church of England authorized this date of creation to be used in the official version of the Bible.[19] Although this

[5] see Fara, *Newton: The Making of Genius*.
[6] William Stukeley, *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton's Life,* London, 1936
[7] David (Sir) Brewster, *Memoirs of the Life, Writing and Discoveries of Isaac Newton* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable & Co, 1855).
[8] for a list of the editions up to 1986 see Derek Gjertsen, *The Newton Handbook* (London & New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986). for the *Principia* pp.455-457 and *Opticks* pp.413-414
[9] Ibid. p.426.
[10] Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1974). p.14
[11] Richard S Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). p.873.
[12] Isaac Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* (London: Histories and Mysteries of Man, 1988).
[13] Gjertsen, *The Newton Handbook*. p.399.
[14] Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton*. p.805
[15] Frank E. Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968). p.373; Thomas C Pfizenmaier, "Was Isaac Newton an Arian," *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 58, no. 1 (1997). Gjertsen, *The Newton Handbook*. p.590;
[16] Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton*. p.809; Frank E. Manuel, *Isaac Newton: Historian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963). p.19.
[17] Manuel, *Isaac Newton: Historian*. p.48.
[18] James Ussher, The Annals of the World, London, J.Crook at the Sign of the Ship in St. Pauls Church-yard and G. Bedell at the Middle-Temple-Gate, in Fleet-Street, 1658.
[19] Martin Gorst, *Measuring Eternity: The Search for the Beginning of Time* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001).p.42

date lost favour in the nineteenth century it was used in Bibles into the twentieth century.

Newton's chronology is in the conservative tradition of Ussher. Newton never gave a date for creation but he did not refute the established date given by Ussher; however, he did amend the order of the civilisations. In the seventeenth century it was established that key incidents in Greek history such as the voyage of the Argonauts and the Trojan War occurred in the thirteenth or fourteenth century before Christ.[20] These incidences were taken as factual events. Newton attempted to establish by astronomical proofs that the voyage of the Argonauts was forty-three or forty-four years after the death of Solomon, about 936BC.[21] For Newton the history of the Old Testament was the most valuable source since he believed that writing as used by the Israelites in the days of Moses and that the Old Testament was "by far the oldest records now extant."[22] Newton believed that the writing of the prophets such as Moses, Samuel and Ezra were drawn from still older records, which were now lost. William Stukeley claimed that "No man in England read the Bible more carefully than he did, nor study'd it more."[23] Newton believed in the literal truth of the Bible and any information or material that he collected for his chronology had to correspond to the history of the Old Testament or be disregarded.

Newton nevertheless was selective, magnified the importance of some civilizations, and understated others. Newton reduced the antiquity for not only the Greek civilization but also the Egyptian civilisation.[24] In the Old Testament Moses and the Israelites escape from a mighty civilisation in Egypt but Newton disregards this and described Egypt as an assembly of small nation states rather than a civilisation. For Newton, all knowledge stemmed from the Israelites and he places the Temple in the centre of this knowledge and pure religion.

Like the *Abstract Chronology,* Newton's *Chronology* was heavily criticized[25] and later biographies assumed that his work on his *Chronology* was the work of the aging Newton who had lost his taste and ability for science as a result of the nervous breakdown he suffered in 1693.[26] Although 1693 was indeed a black year for Newton he did continue to research and add to the science of his day, albeit to a lesser degree than the productive years of his youth. In 1695 he was appointed Warden of the Mint, in 1699 he became Master of the Mint overseeing the great recoinage of England and in 1703 he became the president of the Royal Society. The overseeing of the recoinage depended not only on Newton's excellent command of mathematics but also on vast organisational skills that entailed streamlining the mint by establishing country branch Mints.[27] Furthermore the second edition of the *Principia* was revised and published in 1713 with a new improved version of his lunar theory.[28] These were not the works of an aging and perhaps senile Newton and these works were in progress when he was working on the *Chronology.*

Newton's reputation was carefully nurtured by his nephew-in-law John Conduitt and subsequent biographers who built up the image of the great British hero.[29] The unpublished manuscripts of Newton were inherited by Newton's niece and passed into the Portsmouth family; here they lay for over two hundred years - forgotten.

The Unpublished Papers

In 1936, the Portsmouth Collection was auctioned at Sothebys. At this auction, the famous British economist, Lord John Maynard Keynes bought a large proportion of the collection, which he later bequeathed to Kings College Library, Cambridge; also Babson College, Massachusetts and the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem purchased a significant part of the collection. Other items were scatted all over the world, into private and public collections. These manuscripts revealed a Newton that was entirely unknown by the public.

The manuscripts contain over a million words on alchemy. Alchemy was an important aspect of Newton's intellectual life; he saw it as a form of natural philosophy. Robert Boyle, John Locke and Newton swapped alchemical information and they swore each other to secrecy over their alchemy experiments.[30]

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[20] Manuel, *Isaac Newton: Historian*. p.41
[21] Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*. p.54-53
[22] Isaac Newton as quoted by Manuel, *Isaac Newton: Historian*. p.58 original from New Collage MS III, fol. 89.
[23] William Stukeley, *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton's Life*
[24] Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, pp191-264
[25] see Richard S Westfall, *The Life of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[26] Gjertsen, *The Newton Handbook*.pp.88-90; Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton*. pp.213-225; White, *Isaac Newton: The Last Sorcerer*.pp.222-253;
[27] White, *Isaac Newton: The Last Sorcerer*. p.262
[28] Clark and Clark, *Newton's Tyranny*. p.116
[29] see a detail account of the ways that the image and the myths of Newton developed over time see Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Faces of Genius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[30] I. Bernard Conhen and Richard S Westfall, eds., *Newton* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995). p.299

The largest bulk of Newton's unpublished papers, several million words, are on theology.[31] These papers reveal that Newton did not believe in the Trinity; he believed that Christ is the first among the creatures and He was the mediator between God and man, essentially Christ the Son was not the same essence as the God the Father.[32]This heretical position and his practice of alchemy would have excluded Newton from being a professor at Cambridge, and he would have never obtained the position of Master of the Mint and the president of the Royal Society. He would have been ostracized from society and none of his work would have ever been published.

Newton was a practicing alchemist for more than twenty years before the publication of the *Principia,* in 1687, and he continued to practice until he left for London in 1696. From the unpublished works it is clear that there is no division between Newton the natural philosopher, Newton the mathematician, Newton the alchemist and Newton the theologian. Scientific experimentation, reasoning and proofs were equally applied to alchemy and theology. Similarly, in alchemy and theological experimentation, reasoning and beliefs were applied to science. This is clearly seen in his unpublished papers but generally not seen in his scientific published works, one exception being in general schlium to the third book of the *Principia* he offered proof of the existence of God in a form of argument from design.

From the manuscripts that Keynes had purchase in 1936 he intended to put his "impressions into writing to be ready for Christmas Day 1942, the tercentenary of his (Newton's) birth."[33] The Second World War intervened and the Keynes' article, 'Newton the Man' was not presented until four year after Newton's tercentenary. In 17 July 1946, 'Newton the Man' was read by Sir Geoffrey Keynes at the Newton Tercentenary Celebrations Trinity College. Keynes had died in April that year thus it was not revised for presentation. Yet 'Newton the Man' is one of the most quoted articles on Newton and no collection of papers on Newton would be complete without it.

Keynes claimed that anyone who had pored over the contents of these unpublished manuscript would not perceived Newton as the "first and greatest of the modern age of scientists, a rationalist, one who taught us to think on the lines of cold and untinctured reason." Instead they would perceive Newton as

> the last of the magicians, the last of the Babylonians and Sumerians, the last great mind which looked out on the visible and intellectual world with the same eyes as these who began to build our intellectual inheritance rather less that 10,000 years ago.[34]

Keynes described Newton as being neurotic, cautious, suspicious, quarrelsome and his deepest interests were occult, esoteric and semantic. From the unpublished papers Keynes believed Newton to be "Copernicus and Faustus in one."[35] He gave a very different image of Newton to the carefully prescribed one of his 'hagiographers.'

Prophecy and the Temple

As mentioned above the *Observations upon the Prophesies* [36] was prepared for press by Newton's nephew Benjamin Smith and published in 1737. It is a disorderly collection of texts and it appears as though little care was taken in its preparation for publication.

Like chronology, prophesy was a subject that Newton spent a great deal of time studying. His examination of the Biblical prophets also dates back to his early years in Cambridge.[37] Similarly it was not an unusual topic to investigate at that time; however, with the exception of Joseph Mede, Newton did not look upon past interpreters favourably. He claimed that "all that I have seen beside the labours of Mr Mede have been so botched & framed without any due proportion, that I fear some of these authors did not so much as believe their own interpretation."[38]

It was in the spirit of Newton's time that Biblical figures and symbols were considered to be an ancient system of codes or hieroglyphs, it was thought that they were designed to be a tool of communication to anyone that was able to interpret their meaning. Newton developed a prophetic lexicon, that of a universal languages and scientific classification; however, Newton did not stand alone in the desire to achieve this, many of Newton's Royal society colleagues such as Boyle, Hooke, Wallis, Ray, Wren

[31] Ibid. p.328
[32] Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton*. p.373; Pfizenmaier, "Was Isaac Newton an Arian." Gjertsen, *The Newton Handbook*. p.590;
[33] John Maymard Keynes, "Newton the Man," in *Essays in Biography*, ed. John Maymard Keynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). p.363
[34] Ibid. pp.363-364
[35] Ibid, p.374
[36] Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies*, ed. Samual Horsley (London: Opera omnia, 1785).
[37] Maurizio Mamiani, "Newton on Prophecy and the Apocalypse," in *The Cambridge Companion to Newton*, ed. I. Bernard Cohen and George E. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). p.387
[38] Ibid. p.395

and Evenlyn discussed and produced such a classification system; a universal system that would organize knowledge of everything in a scientific manner.[39] Work on a universal lexicon, for Newton, was not a project of old age but his manuscripts reveal that in the early 1660s he had written a paper entitled 'Of an Universal Language'[40] and for the next sixty year it remained a constant theme of research. Newton desired to understand all that was around him, to hold the keys of the codes were to understand the prophecies.

Newton believed the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse demonstrated how the corruption of the Christian Church had been foretold in the Biblical prophecies and this had been proven by historical development of the Church.[41] The majority of *Observations* is dedicated to a very complex chronology of the history development of the successive kingdoms and rules which are contemporaneous with the events and depiction of the prophecies. This prophetic chronology spans form the fall of the third Temple in Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans in 70AD to Newton own time.

According to Newton the language of the Prophets is sometimes figurative and often obscure but they have a common language. "John did not write one language, Daniel in another, Isaiah in a third & the rest in others peculiar to themselves, but they all wrote in one & the same mystical language."[42] This mystical and figurative language is taken from the natural world and the world of kingdoms and empires, the political world.[43] The natural world, which consists of the stars and the heavens signifies the political world.[44] However, this political world can also be represented by a building, a city or a temple. Newton examined the ancient religious practices of the Prytanæa, which he believed was the original religion, and had been derived from Noah and his sons.[45] The Prytanæa understood the mathematical principle of God's orderly design that sustained the solar system. They practiced the ritual around a sacred fire preserving the divine wisdom of the heliocentric universe. For Newton

> as the Tabernacle was contrived by Moses to be a symbol of the heavens (as St. Paul & Josephus teach) so were the Prytanæa amongst the nations. And as the Tabernacle was a symbol of the heavens, so were the Prytanæa amongst the nations. The whole heavens they reckoned to be the true & real Temple of God & therefore that a Prytanæum might deserve the name of his Temple they framed it so as in the fittest manner to represent the whole system of the heavens. A point of religion then which nothing can be more rational.[46]

All parts of the Temple represented the political world which was the microcosm of the universe, designed by God. Newton claimed that, "Temples were anciently contrived to represent the frame of the Universe as the true Temple of the great God."[47] Newton had established that Solomon's Temple was the model of all temples. Thus this was the model microcosm of the universe and reveals the mind of the Supreme Architect – the mind of God.

He believed in prophesy as a hieroglyph, which contained historic truth as a collaboration of the natural world and the political world; this corresponded with the earthly detail of the Temple of Jerusalem and the Celestial City of the future.[48] The Temple of Solomon, ritual objects and rituals that were preformed within the Temple appear in both the prophecies of Daniel and John. In Daniel, God commanded him to shut and seal the book which, which contained the names of the people. This book would remain sealed until the end of time when they "shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."[49] . In the Apocalypse of John this book was sealed with seven seals and each is unsealed one by one marking the end of time.

Within the framework of this lexicon in Newton's unpublished manuscripts is a manuscript on the Temple of Solomon[50] which is now held in Babson College, Massachusetts. It is entitled 'Prolegomena ad lexici prophetici partem secundam, in quibus agitur De form sanctarii Judaici' (Introduction to the

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[39] Matt Goldish, *Judaism in the Theology of Sir Isaac Newton* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998). p.81
[40] Ibid, p.82
[41] S. J Barnett, "Introduction," in *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, ed. S. J Barnett (Lewiston, Queenston & Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1999). p.4
[42] Newton as quoted by David Castillejo, *The Expanding Force in Newton's Cosmos* (Madrid: Ediciones De Arte Y Bibliofilia, 1981). P.32. original quote from Keynes MS 5
[43] Newton, *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*. p.77
[44] Ibid.
[45] Isaac Newton, "Yahuda Ms 41, the Original of Religions," (Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library). 1r. Accessible through the Newton Project http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk
[46] Ibid. 6r
[47] Newton as quoted by Castillejo, *The Expanding Force in Newton's Cosmos*. p.33
[48] Manuel, *Isaac Newton: Historian*. p.10
[49] Daniel, 12:4
[50] Isaac Newton, "Introduction to the Lexicon of the Prophets, Part Two: About the Appearance (Form) of the Jewish Temple," in *Babson College* (Wellesley, Massachusetts: c1680).

Lexicon of the Prophets Part two: About the appearance (form) of the Jewish Temple) but is known by its call number Babson MS 0434. It contains a highly detailed description of the architectural design and features of Solomon's Temple, which he derived from Biblical and ancient sources. For Newton the Temple is one of the most significant symbols of ancient texts. He believed that the structure of the building and the ceremonies foreshadowed future events and that these events end in the Apocalypse.

In the opening of Babson MS 0434 Newton stated;

> Generally it is agreed that the future is foretold in the legal constitutions {the Hebrew texts} and the Apostle Paul, who bears witness to this in his writings, Colossians 2.17 and Hebrew 9.23. Thereupon these constitutions are more suitable than the natural world from which the prophets might choose the figures, and the *Apocalypse* is full of this sort of figures and theses constitutions and those of the *Apocalypse* are thus like twins, since they prophesy from the same two matters, they explain themselves mutually, they may not be understand apart. It is in fact a legal and seal up book {The Torah} at hand for Him who is seated of the throne and its seals are undone in the Apocalypse. Consider the world-universe of the Israelites and the meaning of its parts and the significant of its ceremonies, which need to be explained. [51]

The Books of Law and the Apocalypse, the opening of the seals, are explained mutually and for Newton "the Temple is the scene of the visions"[52] of the prophets. In *Observations* Newton explained the opening of the seven seals in the Apocalypse of John through the ceremonies of the Temple. In Revelation IV: 4 around the Throne of God sit the twenty-four elders. Newton positioned them in the Temple "twelve on the south side, and twelve on the north side of the Priest's Court."[53] He examined the vision of John and each of the events in the Apocalypse and positioned them in the Temple. For example;

> *And out of throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices* (Revelation IV:5) viz. the flashes of the fire upon the Altar at the morning-sacrifice, and the thundering voices of these that sounded the trumpets, and sung at the Easter gate of the Priest's Court…*And before the throne was a sea of glass clear as crystal* (Revelation IV:6); the brazen sea between the porch of the Temple and the Altar filled with clear water.[54]

In Babson MS 0434 the Temple's plan, architecture and the function of the chambers and courts are carefully defined in great detail. But above all everything is measured and Newton checked those measurements against a wide range of ancient sources.[55]

In Revelation XI: 1-2 John was commanded by the Angel to "Rise and measure the Temple of God and the Altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the Temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles." Newton claimed that the Temple plus the court of the Gentiles refers to Ezekiel's measuring the Temple of Solomon but that the measuring of the 'Temple of God and the Altar, and them that worship therein' without the Gentiles court signified the building of the second Temple.[56] Solomon's Temple, the first Temple represented the history of the Jewish people while John's prophesies were of the second Temple, which was symbolic of the history of the Christian community.

In Newton's interpretation of the Apocalypse the measuring and the Temple were the important elements to understanding of John's vision. In Revelation 11:19 John saw the Temple of God open and there was seen in his temple the ark of the Covenant, Newton argued that since the Temple contained the Ark it was the first Temple. However, the Angels, whom poured out the seven vials of wrath that destroyed the Earth and that destruction was signalled by the seventh trumpet, come out of the second Temple for it had no courtyard. Prophesy of the Book was represented by the Book of the Law. The High Priest read aloud from the Book of Law in the Temple and this is therefore repeated and interpreted in John's vision as prophesy of the Apocalypses, which begins with the Temple of God open to Heaven and ends with the sound of the seventh trumpet.[57] The microcosm and the macrocosm were both enacted in the Temple and this building is a key to understanding the prophets.

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[51] Newton, "Introduction to the Lexicon of the Prophets, Part Two: About the Appearance (Form) of the Jewish Temple." fol.1 (My translation from Latin)
[52] Newton, *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*. 259
[53] Ibid. p.261
[54] Ibid. pp.261-262
[55] He cited a wide range of Biblical texts; the Greek text *Septuaginta* and Hebrew, Vulgate Latin, Alexandrian Codex and the Arabian version. In addition he references: Flavius Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* (Antiquity of the Jews), *Bellum Judaicum* (The Jewish Wars) and *Contra Apionem* (Against Apion); Philo, *Upon the Monarchy;* Maimonides, *De Apparatu Templi* (Apparatus Temple) and *Tratado Sobre el culto Divino* (Treaty upon the divine worship).
[56] Newton, *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*. p.270
[57] Ibid.p.272

The importance of the Temple to Newton's understanding of the prophets is essential – it was the blueprint to heaven. In archaic thought temples are thought to be the centre of the universe and were a mediator between God and man[58] this is strongly implied throughout Newton writing on the Temple. In Babson 0434 he carefully reconstructed the Temple as a means to understanding. In his *Chronology* Newton had placed the civilisation of the Israelites as the beginning of civilization. This was the point in history of supreme understanding of the ancient and prophetic knowledge.

However, over successive periods this knowledge had become corrupted. This corruption, particularly of the early Christian Church,[59] had lead Newton to his heretical beliefs.[60] According to Newton it was now only for a select few to able to search for the key to the language of the prophets and he clearly considered himself as one of those few.[61]

In his interpretation of the prophetic language Newton was not looking for prophecy of the future but he believed that in disclosing the key to understanding the prophets would reveal that they *had* predicted the truth. This was further proof of God's continued involvement in the fate of man.[62]

Newton made no distinction between science and theology. He approached both in exactly the same method and applied the same rigorous logical rules in his analysis of the Scriptures that he did with *The Principia*. In 'Fragments from a Treatise on Revelation'[63] there are sections which are entitled 'Rules for interpreting the words and language in Scripture,' 'Rules for methodizing the Apocalypse' and 'Rules for interpreting the Apocalypse.' Pronouncements of the Second Coming were frequent in the seventeenth and eighteen centuries, William Whiston, Newton's successor as the Professor of Mathematics in Cambridge claimed that the Bible foretold of His imminent arrival[64] and Whiston continually revised the date as successive dates come and went. Newton never made any such prediction.

Newton believed that the Apocalypse was not imminent but was centuries away and through his analysis of the Scriptures he claimed in his unpublished manuscripts that it could not be before 2060 and he continues to say,

> I mention this period not to assert it, but only to shew that there is little reason to expect it earlier, & thereby to put a stop to the rash conjectures of Interpreters who are frequently assigning the time of the end, & thereby bringing the sacred Prophesies into discredit as often as their conjectures do not come to pass. It is not for us to know the times & seasons which God has put in his own breast.[65]

This sentiment is repeated in his published work *Observations upon the Prophecies*; "The folly of Interpreters has been, to foretell times and things by this Prophecy, as if God designed to make them Prophets."[66]

Conclusion

Isaac Newton is without a doubt one of the greatest scientist in history but he is not the sainted figure projected by his early biographies. He was as Keynes described 'neurotic, cautious, suspicious, quarrelsome' and his acts of malice, spite and revenge against he adversaries such as Hooke,[67] Leibniz,[68] Gray, Flamsteed[69] and others are now very well documented. Keynes also claimed that 'his deepest interests were occult, esoteric and semantic.' His interest in alchemy was never occult and although his interest in prophets could be considered, from a twentieth century point of view, to be esoteric and semantic it was an interest of many other in his era and could not be considered in any way unusual.

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[58] Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton*. p.376; Gale E Christianson, *In the Presence of the Creator: Isaac Newton and His Times* (New York: Free Press, 1984). p.257

[59] Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*. p.58

[60] Ibid.; Pfizenmaier, "Was Isaac Newton an Arian." Both these authors point out that it is difficult to categories this heresy of Newton – Although general considered to be an Arian he could equal have been an Socinian, Unitarian or Deist.

[61] Matania Z Kochavi, "One Prophet Interprets Another: Sir Isaac Newton & Daniel," in *The Books of Nature and Scripture: Recent Essays on Natural Philosophy, Theology, and Biblical Criticism in the Netherlands of Spinoza's Time and the British Isles of Newton's Time*, ed. James E Force and Richard H Popkin (Dordrecht & Boston: Kluwer Academic, 1994).

[62] Manuel, *Isaac Newton: Historian*. p.146

[63] Isaac Newton, "Fragments from a Treatise on Revelation," in *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, ed. Frank E. Manuel (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1974). These fragments are part of a 550-page manuscript now known as Yahuda MS 1 and is held at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem

[64] Fara, *Newton: The Making of Genius*. p.73Christianson, *In the Presence of the Creator: Isaac Newton and His Times*.

[65] Isaac Newton as quoted by Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton*. p.816. This quotation original comes Yahuda MS 7.3g f. 13 Cf. f.13v. and is held in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem

[66] Ibid.

[67] Stephen Inwood, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (London: Pan Books, 2002).; Lisa Jardine, *The Curious Life of Robert Hooke* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003).

[68] A. Rupert Hall, Philosophers at War: The Quarrel between Newton and Leibniz (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[69] Clark and Clark, *Newton's Tyranny*.

Through Newton's Alchemy and interpretation of the prophets he attempted to understand the truths of the universal and to unlock its secrets.

In 1727, Thomas Pellett took three days to decide that most of Newton's unpublished papers were of no value. It is over seventy years since the Portsmouth Collection was auctioned at Sothebys and in that time an army of scholars have pored over Newton unpublished manuscripts. Many of these manuscripts have not yet been translated and although many of these manuscripts are not to the taste or beliefs of the twenty-first century, they are significant. The manuscripts reveal that Newton thought within the confines of his time but he also thought well outside of them into the new realms of science. Prophesy was important to Newton and although he did not consider himself a prophet he continue to interpret the prophets to foresee at least the limits of the date of the apocalypse. He was a complex man whose attempts to find the key to the universe considerably advance human knowledge and he became one of the most enigmatic figures in history.

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About the Author

Dr. Tessa Morrison

Dr Morrison has a background in art, mathematics and philosophy. She is currently working as a researcher in the School of Architecture and Built Environment at The University of Newcastle and has published extensively on geometric and spatial symbolism.

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