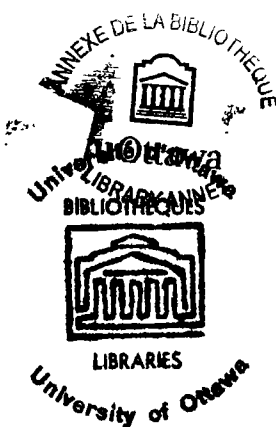


THE IMAGE OF MAHOMET
IN MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Douglas W. Veitch was born March 24th,
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PREFACE

The following statement was reported in the Ottawa Journal, June 8, 1965:

Wars start because men see other men as as blank, stereotyped enemy figures and forget they are human beings. A falsely informed public with a distorted idea of political reality, and an over-simplified, cliché-ridden view of other races and countries cannot be expected to react in any other way than with irrational and violent response.

Our own internal difficulties have forced us all to make an effort to understand each other and in this effort most of the press has shown a seriousness which has contributed rather than the reverse, to creating an informed public opinion. . . This has made Canadians more wary about the crusade attitude when applied to the peoples and problems beyond our boundaries.

--- Cardinal Leger.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE PERENNIAL IMAGE

Under the influences of Madison Avenue advertising techniques, the term "image" has come to mean any standardized stimulus with its associated response. The image appears, further, to be spontaneous evocation which awakens basic desires, determines attitudes or provokes to action, without inviting close analysis. The purchase of a bar of soap, for example, is closely associated with health, beauty, success and desirable friends. The need for status and success is satisfied by the kind of home or car we own. We are constantly aware of phrase-like "image-enhancing", "hurting one's image", "self-image", "identification with the image" to the point at which the older scholastic definition of the image as the raw material of ideas, is lost. The efficacy of image-making as a determinant of attitude needs no proof. The image of boyish charm projected by the late President Kennedy, played at least as great a part in his election as his skill in television debate. Also Canada's Prime Minister Pearson is made painfully aware of his image as winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, when policies demanding a hard line are imposed upon him. Encouraged in their dissemination by the omnipresent mass media, we live by and for images. The making of images

is a natural human function; we think, in fact, very often in images. Many of these we carefully devised from reason, experience, association of ideas and so on. But in this activity as in all human affairs, we are apt to accept ready-made products instead of the home-made variety. Hence, in our images, the use of the stereotype such as the tipsy jocular Irishman, the western movie hero, the good cop, the doting mother, the spoiled child, the henpecked husband, the man in the grey flannel suit and, at an earlier time, "the noble savage". For obvious reasons, uncritical people are happy with the ready-made images in their heads, and the emotions to go with them. We cannot legislate against images; but if we choose not to be critical of our feelings and the images stimulate them, our behaviour becomes disturbingly similar to Pavlov's dogs.

In the atmosphere of threat and fear demanded by total war, World War II propaganda welcomed the image of the brutal Nazi SS officer. Such an image eased the transference of our own aggressiveness to the enemy beyond the gates. More recently, the McCarthy hearings in the U.S.A. made it difficult for many Americans to be objective about Russian Communism. And to-day, references to "fortress America" emphasize the role of L. B. Johnson as a valiant knight facing the dragon of world Communist domination.

But image-making is not new. All times and all ages

have their major crises, and as long as each crisis remains real, or at least is felt to be real, the tendency to accept the validity of current images, especially the image of the foe behind the crisis, is apt to be unquestioned. This in itself is serious enough, but even more serious is the fact that images linger long after the crisis that aroused them has passed. Often they linger as successful literary or pictorial stereotypes. The plains Indian was once a threat to American westward expansion, therefore, the only good Indian was a dead one. It is not long since that Indians have been regarded as human beings, with movies casting them as heroes. If such a time lag exists in an era of rapid communication, the currency of an image in former times could be expected to last much longer.

The enduring image seems to be that of the arch-enemy. Accidental features may change, but the same animus and totality of evil identify him. In the Middle Ages, one of the most widely current images was that of Mahomet, the arch-enemy of the Christian world. It is our purpose in this study to collect and examine specimens of the use of the Mahomet image in medieval England. Through an examination of extant written material, we shall seek to discover the extent to which this image was used as a stock motivation. This should be made clear through the tone, temper and context of individual works. Our quest will take us through representative medieval prose and verse, through drama, romances,

travel literature, metrical paraphrase of scripture and other works. Our concern with the actual historical Mahomet and the reality of his beliefs (much of which we assume is general knowledge), will be manifested incidentally throughout the chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

MEDIEVAL DRAMA A: THE CYCLES

During the Middle Ages in England, audiences witnessed throughout the course of an entire day, successive short plays or pageants, each one a unit in a complete cycle dealing with the story of man's Fall and Redemption. Only a few manuscripts remain of the actual cycles, but extensive evidence at present being amassed indicates that productions were widespread. Such evidence accrues from research into analogues and sources,¹ as well as interesting studies of medieval staging.² The very extent of such productions testifies to their popularity. It may be assumed as well that the Biblical contents of the plays were well known to viewers,³ including villains prominent among whom is the anachronistic Mahomet.

In the Towneley Cycle, references to Mahomet appear fifty-four times compared with twenty-four in the York, ten in the Chester, eight in the Ludus Coventriae, three in the remaining plays of the Coventry Cycle, and six in the Digby

1. See Arnold Williams, The Drama of Medieval England, (Ann Arbor, 1961).

2. See Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages, 1300-1660, (London, 1959).

3. See A.P. Campbell, "The Medieval Mystery Cycle Liturgical in Impulse"; Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, (Ottawa, 1963), p. 23-37.

Candlemas. The Middle English spelling of the prophet Mahomad's name is "Mahowne" in the Towneley, "Mahounde" in the York and Chester plays, and variant spellings "Mahownde", "Mahound", and "Mahownd" in the others.

In the Towneley Cycle¹ the audience makes its first acquaintance with Mahomet in the pageant Pharao. When about to be engulfed by the Red Sea, the Egyptian ruler enjoins his followers to:

Heyf up youre hertis unto mahowne,
he will be nere us in oure nede (11.412-413).

A later line, "helpe! the raggyd devil, we drowne," (1.417), leaves no doubt that the plea is unavailing. Mahowne is invoked for aid, but the call has led to immediate judgment. The tone of the passage as well as the context suggests a parody on the "sursum corda" of the Mass. We also note that Mahowne is reviled if the petitioner is not rewarded immediately, and it would seem, miraculously. The absence of patience and acceptance would be clearly noted by a Christian audience. In this first, hence dramatically important use of Mahowne, the ascribed religious characteristics of Mahowne's followers seem to invert Christian values, but employ Christian means of petition and self-offering. Is the calling on Mahowne, then, a mere extraneous detail? The audience, already aware that a villain is being dealt with, would experience a more intense

1. All line references from The Towneley Plays, ed. George England, (London, 1960).

and dramatic gratification of feeling, through the reference to a proximate enemy, whose followers threatened the soil of Europe within living memory.

In the next pageant, Caesar Augustus, the emperor rants of his great and unique power. He threatens dire consequences to those who will not be silent, swearing "by Mahowne" (1.9). He claims absolute power; only he has power to make everything bow to his hand, "ffor I may bynd and lowse of band" (1.16). The Biblical echo of Christ's institution of the Church on the rock of St. Peter is inescapable. Caesar's assumed dignity is therefore papal. Later in sending his messenger to Sirinus for consultation concerning a prophecy of Christ's birth, Caesar prays Mahowne to speed him;

Mahowne he wyse the on thi way
That weldys wayer and wynde (1.122-123).

As creator of the elements, then, Mahowne is seen as a god. Soon after, with evident relief, the emperor hails the success of his returned emissary.

I thank the by mahowne bloode;
Thise tydyngs mekyll amendys my mode: (1.148-149).

In addition to being creator, Mahowne, is also seen as a human redeemer. The parallel to Christ is unmistakable in the reference to "blood". The servant Nuncius, meanwhile, greets Sirinus, the wise counsellor with "Mahowne thee save", (1. 127), a customary Christian greeting implying a non-fatalistic Christian hope. Sirinus is brought before the emperor for consultation. Nuncius greets Caesar Augustus:

Mahowne thee menske, my lord king
And save the by see and sand (l. 140-141).

Sirinus echoes the honour bestowed on Caesar by the messenger with:

Mahowne so semely on to call
he save the lord of lordis all (l. 151-152).

Caesar speaks of the prophecy of the Messiah, which threatens his absolute power. A startled Sirinus interjects in puzzlement, "how so! for mahownes myght" (l. 162).

Advised to seek out the child Messiah and destroy it, Caesar informs his messenger to make it clear to everyone for fear of him and as he "luffys mahowne" (l. 207), that full allegiance is demanded. As a reward Caesar promises "by mahowne" (l. 225) to make a knight of Nuncius. At the very end of the pageant, the messenger is sped on his way with the blessing:

Mahowne that is curtes and heynd
he bring thi Iornay well th synd,
and wyssh the that all wate. (ll. 238-240).

That Mahowne is a dramatic focus in this pageant is further reinforced by his being invoked at the end as well as the beginning. The tone and quality of the action is, thereby, suitably contained. We have also seen evidence of a type of liturgy giving substance to these enemies of Christ. Now also a feudal note enters in the promise of knighthood. A social dimension is added to the religious one. The forms are of Christendom, but the substantial animus is opposed to Christian ends.

The Christian epic theme dominates the four succeeding

pageants up to the Offering of the Magi, where Herod is introduced. From the outset we are aware that the characterization of Herod echoes that of Caesar Augustus. He, too, rants for silence, everyone "To mahowne and me all shall bow" (1.15). If the Fiend himself opposed him, Herod would slay him, "the feynd, if he were my fo, I shuld hym fell" (1.24). He will destroy all,

That will not trow on sant Mahowne
Oure god so swete (11. 27-28).

If there be any traitors in the land that

. . . wyll not hold holly on me,
And on mahowne, (11. 47-48).

he will "dyng" (1.39) them down. He bids his messenger to go and spy if there be anyone,

who trowes not on mahowne most myghty,
Oure god so fre (11. 57-58).

Herod forbids his messenger to slay any traitor, but to bring any such back for judgment. The envoy is sent off with the blessing,

Mahowne, that weldys water and wynde,
The wish and spede (11.70-71).

The messenger Nuncius, next addresses the people, commanding them,

To hold no kyng bot hym alon,
Anf othere god ye worship none
Bot mahowne so fre (11. 80-82).

Clearly, Herod is the only king and Mahowne the only god to be worshipped. Later Herod resolves to consult learned clerks, but having been informed of the approach of the Magi

sends Nuncius to seek them out with the blessing,

Mahowne the shelde from all kyns yll,
ffor his pauste. (ll. 335-336).

With the reference to Mahowne's power ringing in his ears,
Nuncius greets the Magi,

Mahowne you save, sir kyngs thre
I have message to you preue (ll. 337-338).

The three kings resolve to come before Herod, and Nuncius is pleased to greet his king, "Mahowne you looke, my lord so dere" (l. 354) anticipating a promised reward. Later Herod curses the learned doctors who outline the prophecies of Christ's coming,

Mighty Mahowne, as he well may,
lett you never thrfe. (ll. 467-468).

In this fairly long pageant, we are struck by not only the parallel situations of the Caesar Augustus but significant shades of difference as well. At the outset Herod couples his name with Mahowne, assuming power to oppose the very devil if need be. Unlike Caesar Augustus, Herod boasts of virtual equality with Mahowne. Yet the second invocation is to Mahowne as his god. Ambiguity is evident in the third oath where Herod demands absolute allegiance to himself, then somewhat as an afterthought, a token gesture alludes to Mahowne as well. But he echoes Caesar Augustus' acknowledgement of Mahowne as the creator of the elements, "that weldys water and wynde". The words duplicate the former oath. Such interchangeable phrases argues that we are facing a mere re-

petition of conventional utterance suitable to a similar dramatic situation. Both Caesar Augustus and Herod are Biblical villains and bear the same relationship ultimately towards Christ. Yet the shrill ranting, the more assertive egoism, the ambiguous relationship of Herod to his god, takes on heightened villany when he curses the learned doctors for accurately reporting the prophecies of Christ. A suggestion of influence with Mahowne is conveyed in the threat that "he may let you not thrive".

The utterances of Nuncius in the Caesar Augustus play, reflect in the main, the attitudes of his imperial master. An interesting exception is the mild manner of the messenger's greeting of the Magi. With the simple substitution of "God" for "Mahowne", the speech would be Christian in tone and temper.

The character of Herod in the Herod the Great pageant is different from the one we have just met. It is Nuncius this time who begins a ranting speech to the people, "Most myghty mahowne, meng you with myrth" (1.1). Herod the king "by grace mahowne" (1. 10), threatens to punish all treason. Herod is "Kyng of Kyngys" (1. 37), and rules many kingdoms from "paradyse to padwa" (1. 45), and from "sarceny to susa" (1. 48). The powers of heaven and hell cannot hurt him, only "his cosyn mahowne" (1. 54), can avail against him. A new dimension of kinship is introduced. Later fearing that the Magi might trick him, Herod swears "by mahowne in heven" (1.127)

that he will "set all on sex and seven" (l. 129). Still later when the Innocents are slaughtered, he avows "by mighty mahowne" that each of his braggart soldiers will have a lady to fulfill his lust. Further he promises money and castles to his knights who rejoice at their good fortune. Licentiousness inverts Christian beliefs on the acceptable relations between man and woman, but also gives currency to a commonly accepted notion about Mahomet's followers. The feudal cast of the pageant is unmistakable and a commonplace of medieval writing; the soldiers are knights and talk of towers and keeps and castles. The slaughter of children, however, is a rank contradiction of ideas of knightly behaviour. At the end of the pageant, Herod indulges in what the audience knows to be a precarious peace, yet he is liberal in his gestures to his followers, and thanks Mahowne with a sense of intimacy not felt before in the cycle;

A, Mahowne!
 So light is my saull
 that all of sugar is my gall (l. 473-476).

Herod is pleased with his god when all serves him well, but the audience knows what will happen to him in the end. It would be easy to remember how Pharaos rejected the "raggyd devil" before he drowned. Aware also that the rewards of Mahowne take the form of loose behaviour, as Nuncius reminds us at the beginning of the pageant, the audience would know by contrast the efficacy and grace of adversity, which stands out clearly beside the arch-enemy's passion-ridden devotion to his

god.

If Herod identifies Mahowne as a cousin, the Pilate of The Conspiracy play, calling, as expected, for silence, introduces himself as "the grandser of great mahowne" (l. 12). The elaborate claim of kinship with Mahowne is made comic when immediately following a boast that he can make or destroy any man, he reveals that he fears the maker of miracles, who is to die on the cross. When Cayphas, however, indicates that Christ breaks the Sabbath, Pilate reasserts himself and avows,

Now, by mahownes bloode so dere
he shall aby this bowrdyng! (ll. 116-117).

Annas then declares that Christ calls Himself heaven's king and Pilate's wrath heightens:

By mahownes blood, that shall he aby
with bitter baylls or I ett bred !

A soldier-knight suggests that they capture Jesus in the temple. Pilate expresses shock that Jesus is there at all:

In oure tempyll? the dwill! What dyd he thare?
that shall he by, by mahownes blode!

Pilate's anger identifies him anachronistically with the Jews. Any non-Christian easily becomes a follower of Mahomet.

Later Malchus, who will have his ear severed by Peter and restored by Christ, is virulent in his zeal to take Christ "for mahownes sake" (l. 602). His remark is swiftly followed by the concurrence of all the knights to take speedy vengeance "by mahowne most god of all" (l. 631). Pilate then courteously salutes them as worthy kaisers "of kamys kyn" (l. 639), and

asks these descendants of Cain to bring Jesus before him blessing them with, "mahowne that is myghtful he menske you evermare" (l. 641). With the promise of Mahowne's reward, they go about their task.

A new note enters with the pageant The Scourging, when Pilate begins by raging of his subtlety and guile. He is proud of his treachery and the title "mali actoris" (l.13), which the clergy have given him. He demands silence "by mahowne most myghty maker on mold" (l.3). Three oaths of three torturers that follow intensify the note of enmity to Christ. The Second Torturer crowning Jesus with thorns and mocking Him, will enjoy it better than meat to see Christ hanged cold on the cross:

Now by mahownes bloode,
 Ther will no mete do me goode
 To he be hanged on roode
 And his bones be cold (ll. 238-241).

The Fourth Torturer, to encourage a reluctant Simon to bear Christ's cross, swears and threatens him, "by the myght of mahowne! thou shall lyke it full yll" (l.390), if his refusal persists. In eager anticipation of Christ's death, a Third Torturer wishes them to hurry "by mahowne, oure heven kyng" (l.408). There is no doubt of the supreme power of Mahowne here. The reference to Mahowne's blood in the presence of Christ, adds irony to suspense. In context, the torturers are servants of their god, but the satisfaction of a primal bloodlust is a further example of the enemy's demand for im-

mediate reward and gratification. Such a direful emphasis throughout the pageant follows inevitably from the initial identification of Pilate with the powers of evil. His explicit pride in being evil sets him off from a merely mistaken votary of a false doctrine or god.

At the start of The Crucifixion pageant, Pilate threatens the gallows to any who will not be silent;

by mahownes bloode, if ye me teyn,
I shall ordan sone for you (ll. 14-15).

The remainder of the play is remarkable for its use of gruesome detail. Mahowne is not necessary to hold attention at this juncture of the play, and only one oath of the First Torturer intrudes on the dramatic silence of the suffering Christ:

Bot, by mahowne! whils I may lyf,
Those prowde wordes shall I never forgyf (ll. 44-5).

The proud words the torturer will not forgive Christ's reference to Himself as Heaven's King.

The pageant, The Talents opens on a new and different note than earlier pageants dealing with Pilate. He calls for silence still, but now in Latin. Comedy enters in his assumed dignity, with bits of English intruding to indicate he still boasts of his lineage and power. He is "armnipotent, quasi-cunctipotent" (l. 38) and his laws must be kept. He is a decreed ruler of all Judea. Leaving his Latin, he threatens to hang any who will not bow to his law, "by myghty mahowne, hygh shall he hyng" (l. 50). But now it is The Law that men must bow to, not the man. The thin veneer of sophistication

implied here would make the more critical in the audience smile.

While Pilate sleeps, four torturers enter in succession. The first carries the cloak of Christ and comes to Pilate for a judicial (and presumably judicious) decision as to who should own it:

Bot to mahowne I make avowe,
hedir have I broght his clothyng now,
to try the truth before you (ll. 97 - 99).

The Second Torturer complicates the gift-giving by indicating his presence "Bot by mahowne! now am I here!" (l. 121). But the Third Torturer in staking his claim suspects that Pilate may take the gown himself and "By myghty mahowne, I wolde not he had" (l. 164). The others agree, "I assent to that sagh, by myghty mahowne" (l. 165). They will tell the truth about Jesus, but resolve that Pilate should not have the cloak. The evident aspect of this whole sequence to the audience would be the Solomon-like situation in which Pilate is placed. The cloak is indivisible, therefore, how will Pilate decide, and will his decision be wise. The emphasis on legalities and "law" in the early part of the pageant sets the tone of the interview to follow. Pilate is greeted fulsomely by the First Torturer:

Mahowne most myghtfull, he mensk you with mayn,
Sir Pilate pereles, prynce of this prese (ll. 226-227).

Pilate is glad that Jesus's death is certified, and when asked by the Third Torturer for a just disposal of the cloak, he

immediately and predictably claims it himself. The solemn Solomon parody is rendered farcical. They cavil, and to the suggestion of the Third Torturer that the garment be cut in pieces, Pilate agrees, "By myghty mahowne that mylde is of mode" (l. 267). But the coat is discovered to be seamless and dice are cast for it. Pilate loses at dice but wheedles the cloak out of the winner by the promise of rewards to all by "mahowne most myghty in castels and towres" (l. 410). The rewards promise to be worthwhile.

For our purposes, the final pageant in the Towneley Cycle is The Resurrection of Our Lord, which contains four references to Mahowne. The Third Guard, boasting at Christ's tomb swears "now by mahowne fayn would I wytt, who durst come here" (l. 219). Such intruders would get a hot reception. Later, discovering the disappearance of the body and fearing punishment, the soldiers decide to lie about its departure. They greet Pilate, Annas and Cayphas with the flattering:

Mahowne you save on sydys sere
ffro syn and shame (ll. 494 - 495).

Yet they tell Pilate the truth, who, although angered at first finally resolves on a convincing tale of Christ's disappearance and demands complicity in the lie. The first soldier concurs, speaking for the others, "yis sir, as mahowne me mende" (l. 557). Pilate blesses them in another Christian liturgical echo, "the blyssyng of mahowne be with you nyght and day!" (l. 562). This is Pilate's last appearance in the cycle.

In the twenty-four references in The York Cycle¹, less than half the number of the references in the Towneley, a change of emphasis is discernible in the citations regarding Mahomet. Yet there is evidence of direct influence of one cycle on the other. Pharaon repeats the same invocation to his god, appealing for aid just before the Red Sea claims him and his followers, and in no other cycle does this utterance occur:

Heyf up youre hertes unto Mahounde
He wille nere us in oure nede;
Kelp, the raggyd dwylle, we drowne!
Now mon we dy for alle oure dede (ll. 401 - 404).

This occurs in Pageant Nine put on by the Hosiers of York and is entitled The Departure of the Israelites from Egypt.

Herod more explicitly identifies himself with divinity in the York Cycle, and we first meet him in Pageant XVI, The Coming of the Three Kings to Herod. He claims descent from, "Jubiter and Jouis, Martis & Mercury emude," (l. 2), claims part in the revolt of Jupiter against the early classical god Saturn, who is now, "my subgett, that sotilly is hidde" (l. 5). But such a classical heritage does not exclude him from the Mahometan pantheon. He greets the Magi politely:

Mahounde, my God and most of myght
That has my hele all in his hande,
He saffe you sirs! semely in sight: (ll. 101-103).

There is no doubt, at the outset, that Mahounde is not a prophet,

1. All line references from The York Plays, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, (New York, 1963).

false or otherwise, but a pagan god upon whom his followers depend absolutely. Almost equally balanced with the identification of Mahounde with deity, are references to Mahounde's blood which makes him a saviour.

In The Massacre of the Innocents, Herod calls for peace and silence in an inescapable rant for reverence of his own person "by almighty mahounde" (l. 15). There is no hope for any "But of mahounde and me" (l. 19). The parallel between the Towneley and the York will be apparent here, except that a councillor answers the king that,

Fulle wele we undirstande,
Mahounde is gode werraye
And ye ar lorde of ilke a lande (ll. 34-36).

But Herod's Pleasure is blighted by the prophecy that a king is to be born. At this point his gloom is interrupted by a messenger who bears tidings of the approach of the Magi:

Mahounde with-outen pere
My lorde! you save! and see (ll. 73 -74).

In the final scene of the pageant when the soldiers have completed the slaughter of the children, a triumphant soldier confidently greets Herod,

Mahounde, oure god of myght
Saue the! sir herowde the kyng! (ll. 242-243).

But his pleasure in announcing the general slaughter is rudely curbed by the anger of Herod who discovers that a boy escaped. A councillor of the court rallies the company to action with the call,

As arme! euere ilke man,

That holdid on mahounde (11. 247-248).
and the pageant ends on a note of solidarity.

Jesus is in custody at the beginning of The Examination by Caiaphas, where a discussion takes place on the miracles of healing. In explaining Christ's powers of healing, Annas interjects, "A! this makes he by the myghtis of Mahounde" (1. 330). This the only place in all the cycles examined, where either Annas or Caiaphas use the name of Mahounde in any form. Shortly after this, Christ accuses Annas and Caiaphas of false witness at which a scandalized knight protests Christ's "insolence" to the judges, "My lord, will you hear, by Mahounde" (1.334). Christ is removed, stripped and beaten.

At the very end of the pageant Jesus Before Pilate, the procurator decides to send Christ before Herod. A guard bids his leader farewell with a polite, "May Mahounde, sirs, he menske you with myght" (1.542). Pilate answers in a clear anti-Christian voice:

Now in the wilde vengeaunce ye walke with that wight,
And fresshely ye founde to be flittand. (11.545-546).

The silent presence of Christ in the Trial Before Herod adds a quality of suspense and irony to the references and should be recalled in the light of each citation. Again, against those who would reprove his power and estate Herod orders unflinching obedience, "Or by the bloode that mahounde bledde, with this blad schal ye blede" (1. 8). Soon a

duke reports the miracle of Christ's feeding the five thousand, so which Herod replies:

Now be the bloode that mahounde bledde,
What! this was a wondir at all (ll. 204-205).

Two references to the redemptive blood are uttered in Christ's presence, and another occurs in the only reference to Christ's silence, which follows extensive raving by Herod who, inquires to the effect that:

And whedir the boy be abasshid of Herrowde byg blure
That were a bourde of the beste, be mahoundes bloode!
(ll. 243-244).

But his shouting has merely been to cover his lack of decision, for he calls on his councillors to advise on the fate of Christ. Interpreting his father's indecision as doing honour to Christ, the third son of Herod flatters his sire, that he treats Jesus as though he were Mahounde:

For yhe myght menske hym nomore, were he mahounde.
And sen it semys to be soo, latte us nowe assaie
(ll. 291-292).

The irony is astonishing.

Pageant XXXII deals with Judas and the thirty pieces of silver. A consultation takes place between Pilate, Annas and Ciaphas and their retainers, in which hate is engendered against Christ. One knight proves the success of the exhortation:

Lorde, fele of his ferles in faith have we fonne
Yone harlotte hevys oure hartis full of hate ire
(ll. 78-79).

Hearts are lifted up here, not in joy but in hatred, and we

witness another example of a Christian form inversely transferred to the enemies of Christ. Reassured that Christ will be well taken care of by Herod, Pilate calls:

Sir Cayphas and Annas right so nowe I thynke,
Sittis in mahoundis blissing and aske vs the wyne
the knyghtis of my corte, comaundis vs to drynke
(11. 124 - 126).

The association of Mahounde with wine indicates a cavalier disregard of prohibition in the Koran. Whether such knowledge was available or not, here is a clear indication that the making of an image does not depend on objective truth.

Later, in the same pageant, Judas is scorned for his faithlessness by his new employers. He is released from their service for "by mahoundes blode, thou wolde selle Vs all" (1.224). The degradation of Judas would be complete in the eyes of the York audience.

The situation in Christ Led Up to Calvary parallels in many details, the Towneley pageant, The Scourging. But here the knights are more desirous of company, suggesting, it seems, a greater burden of guilt. To a peevish knight his partner cries, "Pees, man, for mahoundes bloode", (1. 33). The same knight later threatens Simon, "by Mahounde" (1.277), as in the Towneley.

In the succeeding pageant, Crucifixio Cristi, Christ begs God the Father to defend all men in Adam's plight, on which a soldier places a narrow sectarian construction on Christ's universal mission:

He! herke, sir knightis, for mahoundis bloode!
Of Adam-kynde is all his thoght (ll. 61-62).

During a gruesome attempt to stretch Christ's body on the cross a callous retainer upbraids a squeamish colleague:

A'. pees man, for mahounde,
Latte noman wotte that wondir
A roope schall rugge hym doune (ll. 129-131).

From the point of view of the medieval audience, we suspect that from the status of a pagan god there is little distance to that of a devil. A play in the York cycle, not found in the Towneley, The Harrowing of Hell, has Satan call upon Mahounde. Christ has just commanded Satan to enter a deep pit. As he sinks, waxing out of his wits, Satan cries,

Owt ay! herrowe! helpe mahounde
Nowe wes I woode oute of my witte. (ll. 343-344).

The Pentecost pageant contains the last references to Mahounde in the York Cycle. The Virgin has informed the Apostles of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Two Jewish Doctors witness the subsequent actions as forms of madness:

Harke, maistir, for Mahoundes peyne,
Howe that thes mobbardis maddis nowe (ll. 73-74).

A similar remark occurs later when the Holy Spirit descends from heaven for the comfort of all mankind:

Harke man, for Mahoundes bloode,
Ther men maddis oute of mynde (ll. 155-156).

More explicitly than the Towneley, the York Cycle completely identifies Mahounde with deity and also creates him as the supreme power of evil above Satan. Also, references to the blood of Mahounde abound and designate a human condition and

a redemptive act.

The Chester Cycle¹ like the Towneley and York stresses Mahounde's evil but more forcefully, by placing him in the mouths of demons. Nearly one-third of the total references in the Chester plays occur in The Last Judgment:

DEMON PRIMUS:

A, Sit Iudge this goeth aright,
By Mahounde much of might!
you be myne eche wight,
ever to live in woe (ll. 645-648).

Later:

DEMON SECUNDUS:

Nay, maister, forgett not these Theves two,
For by Mahounde, they shall not goe: (ll. 661 -662).

And again:

I swere by Mahounde so free,
it wel ny breakes my necke (ll. 675-676).

Of the seven remaining references in the cycle, only one indicates that Mahounde is called a saint, a qualifier absent in all citations thus far. The quotation exhibits a prayer-like quality and occurs in The Slaying of the Innocents. Expressing shame at the braggadocio of his fellows, who compare the slaughter of the children with the exploits of Samson, a soldier mutters,

but for to kill such a couioyne
be shames sore, by St. Mahounde!
to go in any place (ll. 166-168).

The remaining citations are oaths. In The Adoration of the Magi, Herod cries, "That is false, by Mahounde full of

1. All line references from Chester Cycle, ed. H. Deimling, (London, 1959).

might'." (l. 275), and Preco, Herod's servant in The Slaying of the Innocents, calls on "Mighty Mahounde that I have ment" (l. 83). Only the attribute of Mahounde's strength emerges from these characteristic oaths.

The Ludus Coventriae¹ provides eight references to Mahound, spolen by Herod, Belyall and three soldiers. The most significant reference in the cycle is found in The Temptation where Belyall says:

All þe develys pat ben in helle
shul pray to Mahound as I þe telle
Pat þou mayst spede þis journey well
and comforþe the in þis dede (ll. 62 - 66).

In common with the Chester and York Cycles, the Ludus carries on the identification of Mahound with total evil. We may recall that The Towneley Cycle, allowed Mahomet and his followers at least the subjective good which may belong to worshippers of erroneous gods. Mahowne is at least worthy in that there is no overpowering identification with Satan. In the Ludus, Adoration of the Magi, Herod makes clear the identification with evil. When he resolves to kill the children he addresses his knights thus:

my knyghtys xaln rydyn on rowe
knave chyderyn ffor to qwelle
be mahound dyngne duke of hell (ll. 90 - 93).

Mahound is "duke" in hell with full feudal rank.

The Impression of evil deepens in The Massacre of the

1. All line references from Ludus Coventriae, or the Plaie called Corpus Christi, ed. K. S. Block, (London, 1960).

Innocents, where Herod orders his knights to kill all children and turn to Mahound for encouragement. He is the best killer of children, "Mahound that best may" (l. 36). In King Herod, the king demands lordly attention:

. . . kyng most reverent
 be lawys of Mahounde, my power xal fortifye
 (ll. 5-6).

Here the temporal monarch, is related to the eternal order.

Pilate is praised for sending Jesus to Herod in the Trial Before Herod play, "Now be Mahound my god of grace" (l. 369).

Again we see operating the device of Mahound's godhead specifically used in contexts vis-a-vis Christ.

The final references in the Ludus Coventriae occur in the Guarding of the Sepulchre, wherein three soldiers, as sleep overwhelms them, call successively on Mahound, "Seynt Mahownd, this bereynge grownd you kepp" (l. 1325); "I falle, Mahownde whelpe, after þin helpe I calle" (l. 1330); "I slepe, Mahownd of myght this stone to nyght thou kepe" (l. 1338).

The Appeal as we know is futile; the soldiers sleep and Christ rises from the dead. The audience witnesses the impotence of false gods, as Pharaoh realized at the beginning of the York and Towneley Cycles.

The opening speech of Herod in Shearmen and Taylors¹

1. All line references from Two Corpus Christi Plays, ed. Hardin Craig, (London, 1957).

echoes the divine descent of Herod witnessed in our introduction to Herod in the York Cycle. He rants to claim to be creator of heaven and earth. In his fame he resembles Mahomet, and claims relationship with the classical pagan gods:

Resembelyng the faver of thatt most myght Mahound;
From Jubytor be desent and cosyn to the grett God.
(11. 5-6).

Later, if foreigners will not pay their taxes of five marks each "be Mahound, of the gett no grace" (l. 45). In the final reference in the pageant when he threatens the soldiers who will not willingly slay the children, he echoes the theme of Mahound as saviour:

be Mahound most myghtyste
that me dere hath boght
(11.50-51).

In the Digby Candlemas Play,¹ the soldiers promise to obey the commandments of Herod. One firebrand soldier holds Herod to be the Chief Regent of Jewry by ancestry and title and,

he that seith the contrary, be Mahound's habe shent
And curse the tyme that ever he was bone
(11.126-127).

Herod promises rewards, the soldiers leave and the servant Walkyn begs, "Now for Mahoundes sake make me a knyght" (l.136). Later the soldiers, demanding that the mothers give up their children, threaten them if they refuse: "Or elles be Mahounde we shall geve you a supehaunce" (l. 291). Yet they

1. All line references from The Digby Plays, ed. F. J. Furnivall, (London, 1896).

are denounced by the mothers and resisted. Walkyn barely escapes a buffeting and swears revenge,

be my god Mahounde, that is so true
Or elles be Mahoundes blood ye shall rue
(11.341-342).

At the end of the pageant, just before Herod quakes and dies, his final words suggest Christian piety both in tone and manner,

My lord Mahound, I pray the with hert enteer
Take my soule in-to thy holy hande (11.385-386).

As our study began with the futile appeal of Pharaos, it ends on the same note.

The image of Mahomet that emerges from the foregoing analysis, is that in form and practice he is a god, creator and redeemer to his followers. He is addressed and invoked in forms of Christian worship, although patently he is the god of the villains of the cycles. Substantial opposition to Christ is clearly evident from the content of the worship, and a declared opposing morality. But the clearest and most unambiguous identification with evil occurs principally in the York and Chester Cycles where Mahomet is explicitly connected with Satan. The range of the image of Mahomet's morality is, then, from at least a subjective good to absolute evil. It is early established that appeal to Mahomet is futile, and he is generally praised when things go well for his votaries. Yet Pharaos berates him and the serenity of both Herod and Satan is shortlived. Such characters as Pharaos,

Herod and Pilate provide copious references to Mahomet. These characters embody vices abhorrent to Christians like pride, arrogance, luxuriousness and self-glorification. Mahomet it appears promises to reward these vices. Pride is evident in arrogant boasting of absolute power, and in establishing of degrees of relationship and kinship with the god. Lechery, debauchery and wealth are key rewards of Mahomet, as exemplified in castles, women for pleasure, and wine. As these are mere inversions of Christian spiritual objectives, the use of the Mahometan image would not require any basic knowledge of actual Moslem belief and practice.

Other than contributing to the characterization of villains, allusions to Mahomet are secondary to the main theme of the Biblical play cycles. The next chapter will deal with two plays in which Mahomet and his followers are more directly integrated with the thought content of the plays themselves. Their study should confirm or modify, therefore, the inductive findings of this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

MEDIEVAL DRAMA B: THE
CROXTON PLAY OF THE SACRAMENT;
THE DIGBY MARY MAGDALENE

The fifteenth century miracle play, The Croxton Play of the Sacrament¹, provides new material on the medieval image of Islam. The story characterizes a merchant, Ser Jonathas the Jew and his followers who are eventually converted "by Myracle of the Blyssed Sacrament". From our point of view it is the character of Jonathas prior to his conversion that is of most interest.

Jonathas' opening speech is a devout prayer of adoration and thanksgiving to his god, Machomet. That a Jew would worship Mahomet seemed not to bother the author. The prayer, further, is Christian in tone and form:

Now Almighty Machomet, marke in thi mageste,
Whose lawes tendrely I have to fulfyll,
After my dethe bryng me to thy hye see,
My sowle for to save yff yt be thy wyll;
For myn entent ys for to fulfyll,
As my glryus God the to honer.
To do agen thy entent, yt shuld greve me yll
Or agen thyn lawe for to reporte: (ll.69-76).

That Machomet is absolute is unequivocally conveyed in the adjective "Almighty"; that his power is supreme is conveyed

1. All line references from "The Play of the Sacrament", Specimens of Pre-Shaksperean Drama, ed. John Matthews Manly, (Chicago, 1897), pp.239-276.

in "mageste". We are indeed in the presence of a pagan god. The second line "Whose lawes tendrely I have to Fulfyll", indicates a keenly sensitive relationship with God and the necessity of fulfilling His law. "Tendrely" should not be read as "scrupulously", but as "lively", in the understanding of sin. His hope and aspiration is to be with his god as his final end "Yff yt be thy wyll". He submits to God's will without question. He makes a firm resolve and intention to fulfil the honour due to God in justice, and ends with the negative declaration, that should he fail to do God's will or should he resist His demands in any way, he would be sorely grieved, "Yt shuld greve me yll". Not only are the mind and will lifted to God, but the heart also.

Should the work "Machomet" be replaced by God, it becomes apparent that the passage would be a sensitive and tender prayer to God, the Creator and Lawgiver. Both Islam and Judaism share with Christianity the reverence of one God but the form of the prayer here does not depend on such objective knowledge.

Thanksgiving is the keynote of the next stanza;

For I thanke the hayly that hast me sent
 Gold, sylver & prsyous stonys,
 And abundance of spycis thou hast me lent,
 As I shall rehearse before yow onys: (ll.76-79)

What he will "rehearse" takes three-and-a-half stanzas, in the best tradition of medieval cataloguing, such as is found in the compilations of precious and not-so-precious stones of

the medieval lapidary books. Spices and fruits also occupy the holds of his ships. The riches of the world are to Jonathas "me lent". The Christian idea of stewardship is suggested in the utterance.

In the sixth stanza he identifies himself as Jew Jonathas and introduces his four companions, Jazon and Jazdon, Masfat and Malchus. The names may only satisfy the needs of alliteration, although they do sound Hebraic and in one case Roman; Malcus will be remembered as the legendary name of the soldier who loses his ear to St. Peter's sword. The name Masfat, though suggestive of girth has an Arabic ring. The base of their operations is Eraclea. In the seventh century when Mahomet lived, Heraclius was the emperor of Byzantium, against whom Mahomet, or more accurately, his zealous successors waged continuous war.¹ By an easy transference, the name of the emperor designates a vague geographical area.

The prayer ends with the affirmation that "The Beleve of thes Crysten men ys false.", because they believe "on a cake". (l.119). Jonathas asserts that belief in the Blessed Sacrament is "Onkynd", that is unnatural. He touches on the doctrine of Transubstantiation, of

"how the prest dothe it bynd,
And be the myght of hys word makes yt flessch & blode

1. N.A. Daniel, "Holy War in Islam and Christendom", Blackfriars, (London, 1958), p. 17-27.

And thus be a cenceyte, thei wolde make us blynd,
 And how that yt shuld be he that deyed upon the rode.
 (11.121-125).

Hence, by a "conceit" or by verbal jugglery, the priest brings this about. Villains make the accidents of the sacrament its essence.

Besides the prayer, there are two other references to Machomet. One, an oath by Jonathas, "Syr, almyghty Machomyght be with you", (l. 252) is used in thanking the priest who is to steal the host for him. The other has Jasdon swear "by Machomyth so myghty, that meuyth in my mode!" (l. 373), that he will crucify Christ once more. These echo the belligerence and boasting noted in the great cycles.

In reference to the crucifixion of Christ, Jonathas consults "ower old bookys" (l. 78) where he discovers that Christ "was jugett to be hangyd as a thefe." (l. 79). The teachings of Islam on Christ are that he was a specially chosen prophet, born without sin, who did ascend to the Father. The claim that Christ is not God, however, marks a fundamental difference between the two faiths. Islam cannot believe that Christ was crucified, as being unworthy of his special relationship with God, and offers the interpretation that at the last minute Christ escaped and a thief hanged in his place.¹

1. See J.J. Saunders, "Mohammed in Europe", History, 1954. p.12-20.

In "The Play of the Sacrament", we have seen Christian forms of prayer, which would be known to the playwright and the audience, supply the dominant form for a prayer to an alien god. The phenomenon of transference is observed and verifies earlier suggestions in the great cycles. But there is a limiting factor, in that the prayer is to God, the Law-giver in "mageste"; that thanksgiving is for abundance of precious wordly good and success, which, so lovingly catalogued, belies in a sense the wholehearted devotion of the first stanza of Jonathas' prayer. But nothing indicates that we are dealing with a consummate hypocrite.

Our final study in the drama of medieval England takes us to the Digby manuscript Mary Magdalene¹. Here, Mary is characterized as an apostle sent out to teach all nations and convert them to Christ. Filled with the Holy Spirit, she leaves Jerusalem and is forced by weather to land in the domain of the King and Queen of Marcyll.

In Part II, Scene 21, at the Palace of Marcyll, the king, in Herod fashion, rants of his power, "Hed am I heyst of all hethennesse holld!" (l. 935); He praises his lovely wife "ful fayre in hyr femynte" (l. 943), and the most delicious creature alive to the extent that "when I loke on this lady, I am lofty as the lyon" (l. 945). Still praising

1. All line references from "Mary Magdalene", The Digby Mysteries, ed. F.J. Furnivall, (London, 1882), p.96-114.

her, she,

In my syth,
Of delycyte most deycyous
Of feachys most felicyous
Of all bodys most favarows
O! my blysse! I bevlous brygth'. (l. 958-959)

The queen thanks him for his praise, and he declares she is
a Beryl of Beauty,
berel brytest of bewte!
rubu rody as the rose! (l. 967-968)

He is so delighted in her presence that he orders goods,
"Bring spycys and wyn her in hast!" (l. 972).

In this relatively short sequence, we are given no direct indication of the ultimate allegiances of the King. It is interesting, in the light of what is to follow, to note how he is characterized. He is interested in the sensual aspects of life in his devotion to his queen. His dedication to her physical attributes is evident in the richly suggestive comparisons with delicious fruits, colour, and lustre.

His power is enhanced in the effects she has upon him, making him bold as a lion. There is perhaps an overdedication here, but in itself nothing that differentiates him from attachment to this world in many other heroes or villains. That lovemaking is in the offing is suggested not only by the note of impatience evident in the above paeon of praise, but in the calling for spices and "wyn". We are in a sense still in the rich catalogue of Jonathas the Jew, but

also in the realm where goods subserve a paradise of sensual delights. Calling for wine rings either of hypocrisy regarding the Mahometan beliefs on drinking, or the Koranic prohibition is merely ignored in the context of delights. It is not until five scenes later, in which Mary Magdalene is laid down upon the shores of Marseilles, that we resume our acquaintance with the king and queen.

In Scene 26, the king proposes sacrifice to his gods, especially to Mahound,

in my memoryall,
 this day to do sacryfyce
 with multetude of myrth, before ower goddes all
 eche creature with hartt de-mure
 To that lord curteys and keynd,
 mahond that is so mykyll of myth
 with minstrelly and myrth in mynd
 Let us go over in that high kynges syth
 (11.1134-42).

Consistent with the philosophy of delights he proposes sacrifice to Mahond courteous and kind, and full of might. With great mirth the sacrifice is to be done, with minstrelsy, yet with heart demure. Perhaps such an arrangement is not possible. Yet to medieval man, an understanding of the word "solempnyte" had a connotation of doing what was fitting to the circumstance -- each event had ITS "solempnyte". In mirth one would be paying fitting tribute to the sacrifice.

A farcical parody of the Mass follows with trappings in evidence, yet the whole sequence is an irreverent aside to

the main sacramental end of the service. The tone is set at the beginning in the Temple of Marcyll, where a presbyter orders his boy to get the alter ready and ring the bells;

To or thre!
for here xall be grett solemnyte (11.1145-46).

Liturgical carelessness is evident in ringing two or three bells, not designated to any part of the service. The Clericus then asks the priest if he wants his wench.

Whatt, master, woldyst thou have
thi lemman to thi beddes syde? (11.1148-49).

To which the presbyter curtly rejoins,

boy!
no swyche wordes to the I spake. (11.1150-51).

The boy becomes disrespectful towards the priest. His lemman would prefer him (the boy), for the priest's belly is as big as the Devil's and "on-shaply thou art to sel". (1.1158).

When women come to hear the sermon, the boy can "hawk" with them; Kuchon and Marion love him better than the priest who is so fat he would break a horse's back.

PRESBYTER:
A! thou lyyst, boy, be the dyvll of hell!
I pray god mahond mott thee quell!
I xall why the tyll thi as Xall bellel.
On thi ars com mych wondyr. (11.1167-70).

The boy keeps up the altercation:

A fartt, master, and kysse my grenne!
the dyvll of hell was thi emme
this kendred is a-sprongyn hate
Loo, mastyr, of swych a stakke he cam

PRESBYTER:
mahovndes blod, precyows knave!

shypps on thi ars thou Xall have
& rappys on thi pate! (ll. 1171-77).

A stage direction tells the presbyter to beat the boy. The king interrupts, and insists they get on with the service.

The priest calls for his book and instructs the boy:

now, boy, to my awter I wyll me dresse
On xall my westment and myn aray (ll. 1180-81).

The boy promises,

now than the lesson I woll expresse
like as longyst for the servyse of this day:
(ll. 1182-83).

Here follows a mocking nonsensical service:

Lecayo mahowndys, viri fortissim sarasenorum
glabriosum ad glvmandum glvmardenorum,
gormondorum, alocorum, cursorum stampatinastum,
(ll. 1186-88).

And so on for another nine lines. In "sarasenorum" the term "Saracen" is used here for the first time in our exploration. As we shall see, it is used commonly in other works. That the playwright had access to Mahometan material is evident from the use of "alocorum" which, despite the Latin declension ending, sounds strangely like "Al-Koran", the scriptures of Islam.

At the end of the Latin doggerel the boy pronounces "benediction":

Howndes and hogges, In hegges and helles
snakes and toddes mott be yower belles;
ragnell and roffyn, and other, In the wavys,
gravnt you grace to dye on the galows
(ll. 1198-01).

The priest turns to the people, bids them all kneel and make

Now, lordes and ladyys, lesse and more,
knele all don with good devocyon;
yonge and old, ruch and pore,
do yower oferying to sentt mahownde,
& ye Xall have grett pardon,
that longytt to this holy place;
& receyve the xall my benesown
and stand in mahowndes grace (11.1202-09).

mahound, thou art of mytes most,
 In my syth a gloyus gost;
 Thou comfortyst me both In contre and cost
 with thi wesdom and thi wytt (11.1210-13).

for truly,lord, In the is my trust,
good lord, lett nott my sowle be lost!
all my cownsell well thou wotst
Here in thi presens as I sett,
thys besawnt of gold, rych and rownd,
I ofer it for my lady and me,
That thou mayst be ower covnfortes in this
 stownd
seth mahovnd, remembre me! (11.1215-23).

I home and I hast, I do that I may,
with mery tune the trybll to syng, (11.1227-28).

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After the offertory, the priest produces efficacious relics,
patterning the act on God's descent in Holy Communion:

For here may ye se relykes brygth
mahoundes own nekke bon
and ye xall kisse all this holy bon:
Mahoundys own yee-lyd,
Ze may have of this grett store,
& ye knew the cause wherfore,
Ytt woll make yow blynd for ewer-
more (11.1232-39).

The relics are the much prized neck bone and eyelid of Mahomet. Great value accrues to those who kiss the relics. Their virtue consists of the power to blind. A last blessing concludes the rite:

Lorddes and ladyys, old and ynge
mahound the body, and dragon the dere
golyas so good, to blysse ewer-lasting
that ye may ther in Joy syng
be-fore that comly king,
that is our god in fere. (11.1241-46).

A parody on Father, Son and Holy Ghost is suggested here. The rejoicing tone is Christian, but the rewards and final ends diabolical. The dramatic power of these rhythms should not be forgotten.

The inversion is effective because of familiarity with the sacred model. Certainly the feelings of fear and antipathy would be aroused. The comic aspect of by-play eliminates sympathy with the adherents of such a creed. The king, however has dignity. Dramatically speaking, since he is to be converted, this is not surprising.

In a later scene, when Mary arrives at the king's palace

in "Marcyll", she begs to be allowed to remain there in Christ's name. The king scorns her with, "I defy the and thyn a-pryon. Who made Christ and who made God?" (l. 1414). Mary quotes Genesis that God created the world. But no, the king's "god" did this. His "mageste" threatens to cut out Mary's tongue. The saint wishes to know how the king's god releases his followers from tribulation. To prove how, the king removes her to his temple. The medieval love of the debate is evident here.

In the temple, the king implores his god to speak to Mary, but a priest intervenes stating that the god will not speak with a Christian present, "Lord, he wall natt speke whyle cristen her is" (l.1547). Mary asks leave to pray to her God, and the king permits her to "try till your knees ake" (l.1552). As soon as Mary begins to pray, the idol quakes. We have seen Mahomet so far as a pagan god or devil to which hearts were raised. Now he is a visible idol. Mary prays that God show his power "pat don the pryd of mamentes violatt" (l.1557). The term "mamantes" is synonymous with idol and its history extends into the Renaissance as such. Trevisa translates from the Latin Polychronicon of Ranulphi Higden, the term "Mau-metries" for "idols".¹ Here Mary supplies only a variant of of this term.

1. See Norman Daniel, Islam and the West, (Chicago, 1962), p. 80.

A stage direction follows in some detail: "Here xall comme a clowd from hevene and sett the tempyl one fyre, and the pryst and the clerk xall synke; and the kyng gothe home". Somewhat chagrined we may expect.

At the king's home Mary notes the queen's barrenness (an interesting postscript to the sensual pleasures delineated at the beginning of the play). Just before retiring the sick king tells Mary that he will embrace her faith if the Christian God will make his wife pregnant. Mary prays through the night and in the morning knows that the queen is with child.

At the end of the play, the king will punish all heretics and defies Mahomet, "Mahond and his lawys I defye" (1.1987). We have seen Mahomet as a pagan god, a devil, an idol with his own liturgy. Now we become somewhat aware of the view of Islam as heretic. Our medieval ancestors in a united Christendom, secure in the belief of a universal Church, must have found it very difficult or impossible to think of a rival religion as anything but a form of doctrinal or moral apostasy.

The two plays considered have dealt with more explicit material making up the Mahomet image, filling out the image gleaned from the mainly incidental references in the cycles.

We turn now to a possible source of much of the scriptural material used thus far, to seek the kind and extent

of our image there.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CURSOR MUNDI

A primary work of the middle ages is the vast Northumbrian metrical paraphrase of scripture and religious tradition known as the Cursor Mundi,¹ a possible source of Biblical themes for the religious play cycles from which were garnered so many telling references to Mahomet and his followers. The extent of repetitions of a fixed image, however, are less frequent in the Cursor than in the works hitherto examined, although in many cases equal in rancour. The survival of four Mss of this poem might testify to its popularity, hence its choice as an example of this kind of literature.

As in former instances the references in the poem are ancillary to the main Biblical themes and are used with the same anti-Christian bias already noted in this study. In the Prologue, we are reminded of the reading tastes of the time; how men delighted in romances of Greece and Troy, of Arthur and his knights, of Julius Caesar as the first conqueror of England, of the fated Tristram and Isolde, and of Roland's fights with the Saracens,

How Charles kyng and rauland faght

1. All line references from The Cursor Mundi, ed. R. Morris (London, 1874).

Wit sarazins wald pai na saght. (11.15-16).

The work then testifies to the extensive popularity and literary rivalry of the great romance themes of the period. But the poet's purpose is to chastise the frivolity of such readings, for all these works bode ill for the consumer. The true poet's task must be not with the phantoms of this world, but with the constant singing of praise to the Virgin Mother. It is to her that this history of the course of the world, the seven Biblical stages of man, will be dedicated. With such a purpose, references to Mahomet and the Saracen will argue the depth to which the image had penetrated.

From the account of Genesis to the building of the tower of Babel, no explicit references are made to Mahomet or the Saracens, but we learn that Nimrod was the first to worship idols, termed "maumet" (l. 2284), a popular Middle English equivalent for idol.¹ The Saracens worship with their kings.

pat nembrod was þe formast king
 pat in maumet fand mistruing;
 Lang he rengud in þat land,
 In maumet first throuth he fand,
 þat þan bigan, þat leistes yeit;
 Sarzin wil it noght for-leit. (11.2284-2290).

The Saracen will never forego maumetry.

Later in the story of Abraham, we learn of his rejoicing at the birth of Ishmael to his servant Hagar. Although

1. See Footnote 1., p.41.

there is no attribution of the descendancy of Mahomet from Ishmael in the Cursor, this is perhaps the most widespread legend of the prophet's ancestry. Both Mandeville and Lydgate assume such descendancy in their accounts.¹ In the Cursor it is enough, perhaps, that Ishmael's characterization be one of cruelty and ferocity:

For godd sal couer þe of þi care;
 He sal be fers and cruel bath,
 Again all ledis wonder wrath,
 Egain him all, egain all he. (ll. 2630-33).

Later Sarah rebukes Abraham for allowing Isaac and Ishmael to play together. An angel commands that Hagar and her son be sent into the desert without bread or water. Ishmael becomes an archer and marries an Egyptian, a "wife he spoused of egipte". (l. 2640). Perhaps this is a sufficient clue to a Saracenic identity, for later, when Joseph is sold to Potiphar of Pharaoh's kingdom, the Egyptian overseer respects Joseph's religion though he himself "War of sarasin lede" (l. 4247). To the Cursor poet then, Egypt is identified with the Saracen religion and people. The corollary of this statement would read, - as the Egyptians were pagan, they were classed as Saracens.

If the term "maumet" means idol to the poet, it is a short step to terming "maumetry", idolatry. Such occurs in the section on Moses delivering the Law to the Israelites.

1. See Chapter VI, p. 69.

Four distinct spellings of term appear in dialects of fourteenth century England and read respectively in the Cotton, Fairfax, Gottingen and Trinity Mss., "mametri", "mawmetry", "maumetry", and "maumetrie". Such evidence indicates how extensively the term was used as a synonym for "idolatry".¹ Those who kept God's law were safe, but generally, the people were almost faithless. Such is proven when they intermarry with Saracens, "and ledd þe law of sarazin" (l. 6984) into thraldom.

The references become more copious in the battle sequence of David and Goliath, and may have as the classic model, the Roland-Ferragus duel in the Chanson de Roland, the main features of which also occur in Guy of Warwick.² Goliath boasts before the ranks of the Israelites. Goliath's history is related in the most repulsive manner. He was begotten "in foule horedom" (l. 7454), and resembles Satan "him

1. There are many examples of the Middle English equivalent of idolatry, a few of which will suffice here. We learn Avarus quod est ydolorum servitus, that is to say, a covetous man is thraldom to mawmentis". For love of worldly goods, "thei do mawmentri and they make suche worldley goods here mawmentes and here fals goddes". We learn that a temple of peace was constructed in Rome, "þan þei jnto jente a mawmente þat þeihad þat was called Appolyn" who prophecies the Collapse of the temple when "a mayde have borne a child". (See Middle English Sermons, ed. Woodburn O. Ross, London, 1940, p. 107.

In "A Notabill Tretys off the Ten Commandements Drawene by Richard the Hermyte off Hampull", the first commandment reads, "In this commandement is forboden all mawmetryse, all wycheecraft and charemyne". (See EETS, 20, p. 10).

2. Chapter V, p. 58 ff.

semed satanas on to se" (1.7446). When he is armed to fight he calls out to Saul to send him a warrior, whom he would "sle bi seynt mahowne" (1.7458). The conventional oath makes a saint of Mahomet who will guide his champion to victory. Upon Goliath's death, the "sarazines pat were nere biside" (1.7589), flee, though many fall and many are wounded.

Later, Saul fears the growing power of David and plots against him. Meanwhile the Saracens group their forces and put Saul to flight, "the sarazins pai him vmsett" (1.7751). Saul sustains a wound and begs his squire to kill him rather than be "wip sarsines hondes slone" (1.7766). The squire obliges but "þe sarsines on þat opere day" (1.7779) find the body and behead it. Saul's protestations reveal a supreme revulsion against dying defeated at the hands of the Saracen. The taking of one's own life, a dire offence against the moral law, is to be preferred to defeat and death at the hand of the Saracen. One scholar tells us that in the Charlemagne romances, one of the conditions of defeat is conversion,¹ hence the ferocity of the wars. Perhaps further, the taking of Saul's head would be a disgrace commensurate with his villainy towards David. However that may be, according to the plan of the Cursor, Saul's death and possible disgrace ends the third age of the world.

1. See C. Meredith Jones, "The Conventional Saracen of the Songs of Geste", Speculum, XVII (1942), p. 220.

The fourth age opens with the account of David's kingship. While travelling with his retainers, he comes across the three wands of Moses which, according to the apocryphal story, will comprise the cross of Christ. When David holds the wands aloft they shine with a great light and cure a rich man in their presence. During the procession, four rich Saracens appear, black and misshapen, with mouths in their breasts, ears and eyes in their foreheads, and arms hairy. The description in the Gottingen ms. of the Cursor is a full one:

Foure sarazins wid þe king gan mete,
 Blac and bla as led þai ware,
 Mekil riches wid þaim þai bare,
 þat saw man neuer bigore þat oure,
 Sua fraward schapin creatoure,
 Of þair blac hew it was selcuth
 And in þair brestes þai bar þair muth,
 Land and side þair boues wern
 And recched al a-boute þair ern.
 þair muthes wid, þair eyen brad,
 Ful wonderful was þair facis mad!
 In þair forhefd was þair sight,
 Loke ne miht þai noght vpright;
 þair armys hari, wid harplid hide,
 war sett til elboues in þair side,
 Crumplid knes, and bouch on bac;
 Quen þaim biheld þat kinges here,
 was nan þat lahuter miht for-bere: (ll.8072-90).

They fall on their knees and implore the king in the politest terms to allow the wands to heal them. They are made whole and fall down in praise. All the assembled weep for joy over the miracle and the subsequent conversion of the Saracens. The converts offer their riches to the king and return to their homelands. Mandeville has described such monsters, but

identified them as Ethiopians.¹ Here, a convenient fancy identifies them with the hated creed.

The Cursor Mundi in the best Old Testament fashion, next catalogues the successors of Solomon. We learn that Manasseh and Amon "honoured euer Maumetry" (l.9188). Mandeville cites that one of the names given the Saracens is Amonites.² Such parallels reveal the interdependency of medieval writings on the topic of Mahomet. Still later, we learn that in Zedekiah's time, Judea was taken "al in to Sarsynes hond" (l.9202), and the temple burned by Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians are, it would appear, also Saracens, the generic enemy of the chosen people. We now enter the fifth stage of the world which is the Christian era.

Christian, Jew and Saracen all celebrate the feast of John the Baptist, a fact Mandeville also records.³ The Poet tells us the feast occurs in the summer,

His (John's) fest it es in somers time,
It halus bath Iuu and sarazine (ll.11071-72).

In the next section, when Mary and Joseph flee Bethlehem for Egypt with the infant Jesus, they arrive at a village where priests are offering worship to their gods. Mary takes the infant Jesus into the temple and the idols fall to the

1. Mandeville's Travels, ed. P.Hamelius, (London, 1919), p. 42.

2. Ibid., p. 91.

3. Ibid., p. 42.

ground. This is a fairly common medieval story, but the interesting point in the Cursor versions is a slight variation in the telling, setting up an ambiguity or indecision whether the idols are animate or inanimate. The priests have been making sacrifice to "pair maumett" (l.11754) and the idols fall. The Cotton version has "idels....grouelling..Grund" (l. 11759); the Fairfax, "pair mawmettes....grouelling....grounde" (l.11759); the Gottingen "ydels....grouelling.....grund. (l.11759). Maumet and idol, it would seem, are terms sufficiently interchangeable to indicate no conflict in the three accounts. But idols which grovel imply life, hence an inherent contradiction is set up. The inconsistency is removed by the author or scribe of the Trinity version "realistically" making them devils; "Allo po develes ...grouellinggrounde" (l.11759). Despite some internal difficulty the imputation of idolatry to the Saracen is clear and explicit as we saw in the Digby "Mary Magdalene". Given the doctrine of Islam, of course, idolatry is impossible, but such factual knowledge had little bearing on a convention so avidly desired by medieval Englishmen.

In the same story in the Cursor, the term "maumetry" is given a more refined application than the term idolatry might connote. A liturgy and practice is implied in an account of the conversion of a Saracen leader. The leader of the town

1. See Chapter III, p. 34. ff.

calls his retainers to do battle for their gods, but when he sees the gods lying around the temple floor he rebukes them and is converted from "his goddes and his maumetry".

(1.11781). The practice of worship is renounced along with the gods themselves. The convert forsakes his gods and the liturgy imposed by those gods, i.e. "maumetry".

An irascible Herod is found in the Cursor as in the mystery cycles. His scurvy death is lovingly catalogued, but here he swears no oaths "by mahounde" nor any other power. Dramatically speaking however, the general character outlines argues for a close interdependence between the Northumbrian poem and the play cycles.

Throughout the section relating to the life of Christ, no mention of the Saracen or Mahomet is given. When Christ is suffering on the cross however, we learn that the jeering mob is constituted of not only Jews but Saracens, who tell Him, "Bath sarazin and Iu" (1.16714), to come down from the cross if he is truly the Messiah.

While Christ lies in the tomb, the poet recounts the facts of His birth and age, and the people responsible for His death. The reader should make no mistake and remember He was slain at the hands of the Jews and the Saracens,

"we shul þus understonde
Iewes and sarasynes him slowze with honde"
(11.18590-1).

The Saracen along with the Jew is to be a scandal to Chris-

tians.

But when the Apostles go out to convert and succour non-Christians; those other than Jews become the neutral sounding heathen, "Boþ to heþen folk and iewes" (1.19739). Indeed St. Peter is shocked to think he must eat the food of heathens. Peter is rebuked for his scrupulous exclusiveness, and realizes that God wishes to draw all men to Him by love of His law. In the four Mss. successively the Cotton, Fairfax, Gottingen and Trinity versions, Christ's universal mission to all men reads as follows: "Iuen or haipen, thral or fre", "Iew or heþin þralle or fre", "Iuu or sarsin, thral or fre", "Iewe or sarasyn bonde or fre". An easy interchangeability of the terms for heathen and Saracen is apparent on examination of these four statements. In the first two Mss. however, a semantic toning down of sentiment, in the light of the section's theme, may account for the use of the less emotionally charged term. On the basis of the mere dating of manuscripts, it would be rash to advance the opinion that a general change of attitude was underway in any part of England.

In a later section, Antichrist and Mahomet are closely linked, both being archetypal enemies of Christ. Antichrist will arise in Babylon, where maumetry along with pride are the symbols of his birth-place. Enchanters, necromancers, and jugglers shall nourish him and fill him with falsehood. He will flourish in Bethsaida and Chorazin, "Heed of Maumetri

pat tide,/ Bethsaida and corozaym." (11.22101)-2). According to Lydgate and Mandeville, the bride of Mahomet was the queen¹ of Corozan, a wealthy widow named Khadijah, and Mahomet ruled there as king. Byron Smith suspects that no such place existed, that a place; "The name of the country may have been suggested by Khadija's own name, or by the name of Muhammad's tribe, Quraysh".² But the association of Mahomet with Antichrist is enhanced by the use of magic, for Mahomet won the wealthy widow by magical means, "Muhammed, by the use of witchcraft, flattery and spices so won the queen that she considered him to be the greatest of the prophets, or even the Messiah".³ After becoming king, Mahomet began his wars of conquest against the Eastern emperor, Heraclius.

In the section on St. Paul, the Apostle is to have said "before þe sarrezins and þe antecrist" (1.22280) dissension will reign among the kings of the earth. It will be noted that the Jews are not the followers of Antichrist, but the Saracens. When Antichrist does come, he will exalt himself above all gods, "Ouer Iubiter and appolyn,/ þat goddes were of sarasyn" (11.22285). The identification here is patent. Antichrist will die in Babylon by either the sword of St.

1. See Footnote 1, p.46.

2. Byron Smith, Islam in English Literature, (Beirut, 1939), p.5.

3. Ibid.

Michael or the hand of Christ Himself. Babylon "papilon bat muche felle" (1.22403) is a term that resonates with associations of evil and guilt. Near Nairo there was, supposedly, a town called Babylon the Less, a seat of the caliphs and sultans¹. In choosing Babylon as the place of death for Antichrist, the poet "artistically" relates Antichrist to Mahomet, but also settles on the prophet's shoulders, guilt by association with the older Babylon and the slavery of the chosen people.

In the final homiletic section on sin, the poem canonically and legalistically sets forth and defines the various sins, their punishments and their absolution. Certain sins, we learn must be forgiven by the Pope. Fifteen sins are catalogued which merit cursing. Among these latter, is the rendering of help to Jew or Saracen. The Cotton Galba version reads "pat helpes till iews or sarzins" (1.29303). The Cotton version, the only other surviving manuscript of this section of the Cursor Mundi, reads, "pat helpand es to sarazines" (1.29303). The Cursor ends then, with a final condemnation of the Saracen as an irredeemable arch foe.

1. Travels, p. 20.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROMANCES: GUY OF WARWICK

Examination of works of a religious nature has revealed the depth and extent to which the image of Mahomet and the Saracen had penetrated the consciousness of the Middle Ages. A change of genre may or may not involve a change of image. To broaden the base of critical exploration, we propose to analyze a popular secular work.

The Materie of France, particularly the Chanson de Roland, provided the romance writers with models for the vast number of crusading romances demanded by an avid public.¹ A characteristic common to all the romances is the repetition of stock situations, prominent among which is the duel of Saracen and crusader.² Highly representative of these romances is Guy of Warwick, the examination of which should reveal the essential elements of the image of Mahomet and his followers common to the crusading romances.

While a guest of the German emperor, Guy learns that

1. See R.S.Darbishire, "Islam in the 'Chanson d'Antioch'", Moslem World, XXVIII, pp. 114-124.

2. See Jones, pp. 201-225.

3. All line references from The Romance of Guy of Warwick, ed. Julius Zupitza, (London, 1876).

the Greek emperor against this rich and powerful enemy who commands fifteen heathen kings and sixty emirs and who will not do honour to God:

The ryche sowdan of Sysane
 To honowre god wyll he not payne
 xv kyngys of hethynesse
 And syxty amerals, more or less. (11.2372-75).

The resolution of the crusader must face impressive opposition in power, numbers and arrogance. But he will fight these "sarazns kene" (1.2741) who destroy castle and city and persecute Christianity, "And makyll anoyen crysyante" (1.2766). Enmity toward Christ, and keen purpose to destroy his followers and their possessions, enhances the opposition when combined with impressive material advantages.

At Constantinople Guy learns from the emperor how desperate the situation is. The Saracens have taken all the Eastern empire but the imperial city. The emperor prays that Guy will avenge him and recover his land:

The sarasyns have beset me
 And left me nothur towne nor cyte
 But oonly thys, þat we are ynne,
 Some þey stroye and some þey brenne
 Now y prey the for Mary Sone
 And for the rode he was on done
 That thou helpe to venge me
 And make my lond recoverd be. (11.2800-08).

To assure Guy's assent, the emperor promises the hand of his daughter in marriage, but negotiations are interrupted by news that the sultan's cousin is before the city.

The sultan's strongest supporter, Coldran, is likened

to a serpent's poison, "Wyth venome bytterer þan galle" (l. 2824). The hateful characterization suits the name "Coldran," showing the effect he has on his enemies. But Guy is fearless at the head of the emperor's armies and removes Coldran's head. But arrayed behind the slain Saracen, kings and emirs advance into fighting position. A battle of the classic chanson pattern is now possible. First the king of Turrye, then Gandynere of Almayne are killed, but Astadart, a "sarasyn of wyckyd parte" (l. 2876), kills a few knights before escaping. Aularde, "a bolde sarasyn wyth a darte" (l. 2880), follows but is slain by Harrowde and Guy. The names of these Saracen warriors have no specific attributes, with the possible exception of Coldran, but may have a biblical or symbolic origin.¹ "Astadart" at least has a venomous sound to it, from the simple viewpoint of onomatopoeia.

Guy pursues the fleeing Saracens, calling on Astadart to turn and joust with him. But against his will, the Saracen must press on to inform the sultan of the defeat. But he promises a future encounter, swearing by Mahounde that he will have Guy's head for his "lemman" (paramour);

I the swere, wytterly,
Be thys day and be my browe
And be Mahounde pat y en trowe. (ll. 2936-38).

Blood lust, linked here with licentiousness, is delivered in

1. See Jones, p. 207.

a tone of contempt.

Understandably, the sultan renews his oath to beseige Constantinople. He,

. . . sware bye hys crowne,
Be Apolyn and be Mahoune (11.2951)

Oaths add to the warlike fervour of the romance. The pagan god Apollo enters the Saracenic pantheon, thereby identifying Islam with the more general concept of heathendom, "hethynesse".

Following a typical romance pattern, a misunderstanding arises between Guy and his host. Guy threatens to change sides and improve his fortunes in the service of the sultan. Dissuaded, Guy informs the emperor of a new assault by "sarasyns bothe black and kene" (1.3225). Not only are the Saracens black and Zealous, but are made more relentless by the sultan's oath to Apollo, "He hath sworne by Apolyne" (1.3234). Religious sanction makes them fierce opponents.

We learn also that they are noisy and boastful as well as grim and stout. The king of Tyre first meets the Greek forces who are surrounded by "sarasyns grymme and stowte" (1.3284). They "made moch noyse and boste" (1.3296) and swore "wyth pryde" (1.3297) to impose a direful fate on Guy and his men. One doughty king bares a fantastically long sword with which "He thoghte to crysten men to carpe" (1.3322). Guy dispatches him however and ". . . slewe paynymys thyckfolde" (1.3325). The king of Nubia, a villain, "of grete felonye"

(1.3334) captures a hill wherefrom he gives thanks to Apollo and Termagaunt, "helpe goddys myne, Termagaunt and Apolyn" (1.3324). Another god enters the fray and constitutes with Mahownde and Apolyn, a Saracenic trinity.

Guy is finally victorious, although Abelle escapes to the sultan who retires to his pavilion with great shame. He orders his gods brought in to his tent where he berates them for their ingratitude. He beats them so effectually with a stick that he breaks their arms and legs, then casts them out. The portability of idols is an interesting sidelight of this section. The sultan is fierce in his denunciation, for the function of the gods seem to be how well they serve him:

"A goddys, 'he seyde, 'ye are false;
 The devyll you honge be the hals
 I have done you many a gode dede;
 Evyll ye have qwylyt me my mede.
 Ye wolde me serve, yf ye myght stonde
 As ye have done before honde:
 He take a staff of appulle tree
 And bete hys goddes all thre
 He brake of þem boþ legges and arme:
 'Ye dud me never gode, but harme.
 Gode may ye do me nonw
 More than the harde stone?
 He take þem be the fete faste
 And dud þem sone owte caste (11.5040-54).

No conversion ensues, however, as was the case in the Digby "Mary Magdalene"¹. But that conversion is made a condition of defeat, will be noted in a later connection. The Saracenic trinity is confirmed here by the reference to three gods, and

1. See Chapter III, p. 34 ff.

gives some support to the theory that the conventional Saracen was a mere inversion, or negative counterpart of the Christian crusader¹ in worship as well as action, based on the absence of extensive knowledge of the Moslem.

The romance continues with the resolution to settle the wars by single combat. Guy is sent to the sultan's pavilion. He recognizes it by the insignia of a golden eagle, which may be a fierce counterpart of the symbolism of the dove. He interrupts a battle conference by calling down all believers in Mahomet, defeating incidentally the purpose of his mission.

That ylke kyng þat sytteth in hevyn,
That made the erthe and the planetys seven
And in the see the sturgon,
Yeve the, syr sowdan, hys malysons
And all, that y hereynne see
That beleve in Mahowndys poste. (ll.5931-37).

About to be seized, Guy cuts off the sultan's head and flees, with Saracens in hot pursuit.

Meanwhile Harrowde dreams that Guy is in danger from lions and leopards. Guided by his dream of these exotic but dangerous beasts, he comes upon Guy and assists him in battle. He removes the head of the nearest Saracen, muttering triumphantly, "There halpe hym not syr Mahowne" (l. 6030). They are received as heroes with rejoicing in Constantinople.

In a further episode, Triamour, the king of Alexandria, can only save the life of his son by fighting, in person or

1. See Jones, p. 221 ff.

by Deputy, a gigantic Saracen. He searches long for a champion. Guy, in disguise, volunteers for the task. The king wishes him well by Mahownde and Termagant:

Y þe grawnte,
Mahownde þe helpe and Termagawnte (1.7851).

But Guy, in a typical exchange denies the efficacy of Mahownde's power in battle, calling on Mary's Son to witness,

that Mahownde he ne poste
to helpe nodur the nor me (1.7959-60).

The king immediately promises to honour the Christian God, if Guy wins the duel. He and all his people will become Christians, and exclude all other worship, "Ther schell be none in hethynesse (11.7967).

On the appointed day Ameraunt, the giant, is brought forth. He is outrageously strong, to Guy, the very devil. The encounter is long and even. At one point Guy grants the giant a drink of water accompanied by a request that the giant surrender. Later, to underscore the treachery of the Saracens, who will take unfair advantage, the giant refuses permission for Guy to drink and pays for this discourtesy with his life.

Towards the end of the romance, the English king Athelstan needs a warrior to fight the Danish champion Colbrande. Guy complies. During the fight, Guy breaks his sword and requests some weapon from his opponent. Like the water episode above, this seems to be a convention of the

romance duel. Predictably he is refused, and in no uncertain terms:

So helpe me Mahownde of myght,
Harnes to take þe into þy bandone (ll.10891-2).

Geography it would appear does not define the votary of Mahomet, as we have seen in the plays and the Cursor Mundi Goliath. All enemies worship Mahounde.

Our examination of Guy of Warwick reveals the image of Mahomet and the Saracen to be essentially the one gleaned from the work of previous chapters. Mahomet is seen as a pagan god, worshipped as an idol and patron of warriors, who sometimes forms a Sarascenic trinity with Apollo and Termagant. The image of the Saracen invited us to note a devilish nature, to witness the Saracen's great size, grimness and strength, as well as his great zeal against Christians, his oaths and boasting, his treachery and opportunism.

It remains for us to consider certain representative serious works among which supposed factual information about Mahomet the prophet, is given and evaluated.

CHAPTER SIX

DUNBAR, LYDGATE, MANDEVILLE'S TRAVELS
AND OTHERS

A further test of the currency of the conscious but uncritical use of the image of Mahomet in vernacular English literature would be achieved in an examination of various other works of the Middle English period. Nor will this examination be confined to one geographic segment.

The West Midland Gawain-poet, for instance, in the poem Patience, has men of diverse creeds aboard a fated ship. Each in his peril calls upon his god. The list of these includes Mahomet:

Bot vchon glewed on his god þat gayned hym beste:
 Summe to Vernagu þer vouched avowes solemne
 Summe to Diana deuout, & derf Nepturne,
 To Mahoun & to Mergot, þe Mone & þe Sunne, 1
 & Vche lede, as he loued & layde had his hert.

The incidental reference to Mahoun among a catalogue of pagan gods would argue the extent to which the image of Mahomet was accepted and acceptable in a very serious religious poem.

From the West Midlands, we turn to the poetry of the Scottish court to sample the extent of the image and attitudes towards it there. William Dunbar is a skilful practitioner of the medieval "flyting" or scurrilous verbal attack

1. Harley Bateson, ed., Patience, A West Midland Poem of the Fourteenth Century, (Manchester, 1918), p.6.

on supposed enemies. In "The Flyting of Kennedy", the Saracens (because followers of Mahomet) occupy a place of distinction among devils and dragons, mad werewolves and venomous scorpions, infernal fiends and sybarites:

Dathane devillis fone and dragon Difpitous,
 Abuonis birth, and bred with Beliall;
 Wod werewolf, and fcorpion vennemous,
 Luciferis laid, fowll feyndis face infernall;
 Sarazene, fyphareit fra fanctis celestially,
 Put I nocht fylence to the, fchiphird knaif,
 And thow of new begynis to ryme and raif,
 Thow falbe maid blait, blair eit, beftiall.¹

Plainly the Saracen is associated with the devil. The Saracen is in Lucifer's lair far from celestial sanctity. The worst insult would be to label an opponent, Saracen.

The poetry of revulsion is further expressed in "The Tretis of the Tua Mariet Wemen and the Widow". The prevalent medieval theme of marriage is being discussed. The first lady speaks of her marriage to one older than herself, repulsively describing his embrace. Eight lines of unfavourable comparison in the manner of the "flyting" above is climaxed with:

Quhen that glowrand gaist grippis me about
 Than think I hiddowus Mahowne hes me armes,
 and none can save her from "that auld Sathane"³. She can

1. David Laing, ed., The Poems of William Dunbar, Vol. II, (Edinburgh, 1834), p. 75.

2. James Kinsley, ed., Poems: William Dunbar, (Oxford, 1958), p. 33.

3. Ibid.

offer no resistance, Mahowne and Satan are used synonymously.

In "A Dream Vision", we witness Mahown presiding over a pageant in hell before an audience of devils. The idea of chaos is captured in the wild swirl of the dance which Mahown calls for at the outset of the celebrations on Fastern's Eve. Mahown ponders as to who shall begin, then decides to call on the seven deadly sins, who caper in turn, led by Pride. Everyone laughs but Mahown, "But yet luche nevir Mahown"¹. Gravity during the dance would be a mark against him, for a common picture of the devil is that he is so serious. Further, he is even set off from other occupants of hell.

Anon Mahowne calls for a highland pageant, "Then cryd Mahown for a heleand padyane"². But Makfadyne and his Gaelic rowdies raise such a noise and crowd Mahown who occupies most of the space, that Mahown smothers them with smoke in the deepest part of hell, referring to them as "teremagantes with tag and tatter"³. These fellows cannot compare with the caperings of the seven deadly sins. Termagants here are not gods on an equal footing with Mahown as in the romances, but very minor devils. That the courtly Dunbar may be satirizing the ruder elements of the country only heightens the effect of insult by association with Mahomet.

1. Kinsley, ed., Poems: William Dunbar, p. 50

2. Ibid., p. 51

3. Ibid.

In a group of poems entitled by the editor Kinsley, "Life at Court", a keeper of Venus House has received the gift of a frightful dog from the sultan Gog-ma-Gog: the "grytt Sowdan Gog-ma-Gog"¹. The scriptural false god is made the temporal ruler of Islam. The association of the pagan goddess of love with the sultan further testifies to the acceptance of the belief that Islam accepted licentiousness among its faithful.

Fear is evoked in reference to the terrifying power of the enemy. A dwarf on one occasion cries out for help against "A soldane out of Seriland land"². We have seen in the romances that one of the characteristics of Saracen opponents was fearsome size. In using a dwarf, this impression is enhanced. In a later poem, the speaker travels throughout the East and is impressed by the "Sophia and soldane strong"³. Demands of the alliterative line are served by the impressive strength of the powers of Islam.

Two serious poets, then, make full use of the conventional image of Mahomet and the Saracen. We are much more aware of the image evoked in the beholders of the mystery cycles, when an oath to Mahomet was uttered or casually dropped. But we have seen very little thus far of Mahomet as heresiarch or false prophet, known to the readers of the Latin

1. Kinsley, ed., Poems: William Dunbar, p. 87

2. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

chronicles.¹ In the Fall of Princes,² William Lydgate presents us with data on the prophet that was accepted as accurate.

In the reign of the Christian emperor Eraclius, according to Lydgate, appeared Mahomet, a false prophet and magician, "As bookis olde weel rehearse can" (l.54). These "bookis" also testify to the fact that Mahomet was born in Arabia of low kindred, and lived all his life an idolator, "an idolastre in deede" (l.56). Tradition, then, insists on the role of idolator to the Moslem (a basic impossibility according to the creed of Islam). His low origins would denigrate him in the eyes of the feudal fiefholder, and the authority of old books invoked to support opinion and value judgment, already condemns that which is to be established (Q.E.D.). The conditioned reader can now enjoy the report to follow.

We learn next, that Mahomet was the first to use camels for transportation which enabled him to trade, "fals and double, sotil in his deuises" (l.61), and to mingle with Jews and Christians in order to learn both the Old and New Testaments. The image of a dishonest trader is a familiar medieval one. Constant references are made to him in satires of

1. See D. C. Munro, "The Western Attitude to Islam", Speculum, VI, (1931), 329 ff.

2. All line references from H. Bergen, ed., Lydgate's Fall of Princes, Book IX, (London, 1924), pp. 920-923.

complaint and sermons¹. It would be impossible for such an initial characterization to be rehabilitated in the succeeding passages.

Mahomet's next significant act was to entice the lady Cardigan or Khadija to flee Egypt with him to Corezan (Khorasan) by means of subtle seduction, "Thoruh his sotil fals daliaunce" (1.69). Besides being an accomplished flatterer and liar, he employed necromancy (which was condemned by the Church). Such powers in combination were not to be resisted. With the wealth of the widow now at his disposal, he declared himself to the Jews as the Messiah. The Jews made him their "grettest prophete and ther souereyn kyng" (1.77). Medieval man had such a low opinion of the Jews, that anything added to their already lost state would be acceptable. But Lydgate goes on to say that it was Mahomet who led the people astray. Because Mahomet's success helped her believe in his "divinity" Khadija married him.

Lydgate next deals with the lineage of Mahomet. The prophet was an Ishmaelite who suffered from the falling sickness. He excused his attacks by claiming them to be occasion for the visit of St. Gabriel to instruct him "Be the Hooli Goost", (1.91); this statement ignores, or is innocent of, the unitarian teachings of Islam. Mahomet's origin in the

1. See G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England, (New York, 1961), p.249.

unchosen son of Abraham by his servant Hagar, combined with the Biblical testimony of Ishmal's wildness, would fittingly condemn Mahomet in the eyes of a people familiar with scripture.

Next the prophet promulgated new laws and feigned to be "lik Moises" (1.101). In order to convince his followers, he hung pots of milk and honey on the horns of a great bull, "Smale pottis with milk & hony born,/ Of a grete bole wer hangid on ech horn" (11.104-5). This was a promise of plenty to his people, now in the text, suddenly changed from Jews to Saracens, "Sarsyns as thei gan to hym drawe" (1.111). Lydgate does not use a variant of this legend,¹ that of the Koran being presented to Mahomet on the horns of a bull. The stories are attributed to Sergius, a Nestorian monk who trained Mahomet, and as his clerk, wrote down the stories. But this too is another legend.²

Eventually Mahomet is made prince of not only the "Arabiens and Sarsyns" (1.120), but of the Medes and Persians and "Hismaelites" (1.121) as well. He gathers armies and makes war on Eraclius, winning through to Alexandria and subjecting all cities in his wake. But failing to become king (for what reason is not given), he claims that the purpose of his mission is to provide prophets to guide the

1. See Smith, p. 6.

2. Ibid.

people. Because he is "lecherous of corage" (l.129), he ordered an idol of Venus made, which his followers are to worship on Friday. The statue of the classical goddess of love set up on a Friday, would attribute to the prophet a disrespectful rivalry with the Christian holy day, thereby enhancing the characterization of enmity.

Mahomet's death, according to Lydgate, revolves around the prohibition of wine in the Koran. Mahomet tells the people to drink water, but does not deny himself wine. As there is no Christian prohibition against the moderate use of wine, such a denial stresses a negative difference between the traditions of Christianity and Islam. But as he drinks himself, he is being accused of hypocrisy. Nor is Mahomet moderate in the use of wine, for "whan he drank wyn he fill in dronkeness" (l. 138). Lydgate resorts to the device of having his narrator Bochas not wish to dwell on Mahomet's errors, because all his laws can be found in the Koran:

Whi list to seen his lawes euerichon
 Youe to Sarsyns, his book can ber witnesse,
 As thei be set in his Alkeroun
 Echon in ordre groundid on falsnesse (ll.148-152).

Since there was "no English version of the Koran available at the time, not even a Latin one, outside the walls of Cluny"¹, this is gratuitous advice. Mahomet meets an abrupt end by falling, drunk with wine, into a puddle where he is ignomi-

1. See Munro, p. 334.

niously devoured by swine, whose meat was forbidden to the Moslem. The medieval reader would readily note in the irony of Mahomet's fate, the obvious hand of God's justice:

This was the eende of fals Machomeete,
For al his crafftis of nigromancie,
The funeral fyn of this seudo prophete,
Dronklew of kynde, callid hymself Messie
Whom Sarsyns so gretli magnefie. (11.156-9).

The concluding stanza summarizes much that has been said, his necromancy and death, his claim to be Messiah, and the loyalty of his Saracen followers. We have seen a story not of a god, but a villain, a false impostor; one who pretended to be the Messiah.

In the present context, the importance of Lydgate is his positive and unequivocal condemnation of the prophet. Such a simple attitude is absent from Mandeville's Travels. Mandeville supplies us with the same information contained in Lydgate's account, but much more. That he is aware of the common attribution of evil to Mahomet and the Saracens is shown in his list of common names used to designate the Koran: "For here bokes of here lawe þat Mahomete betoke hem, which þei clepen here ALKARON and summe clepen MESAPH and in anoper langage it is cleped HARME"¹. In the Travels, further, there are pejorative references to Mahomet and the Saracens. But one problem in connection with Mandeville is the interpretation of tone. Critics have insinuated that Mandeville, in

1. Travels, p. 47.

the good things he has to say about the Saracens, is merely using a convenient technique to show up the deficiencies of his fellow Christians, engaging in the fairly common medieval practice of sharp social criticism, such as is found in Piers Plowman, John Gower and many others. One editor of Mandeville suggests that the author is carrying on a "veiled libel against the Roman Church in which the propagandist prefers innuendo to direct statement . . . since it was a danger to defy the power of the Church barefaced"¹. Since Mandeville is aware of and attests to the commonly accepted notion of Mahomet (see the names of the Koran p. 72), we prefer not to make any judgment on Mandeville's motives in finding good things to say about the Saracens. Either he was using the conventional technique to criticize others, in which case we are not sure that he was sincere in his observations; or he was one of the few who dissented from the commonly accepted notions of Mahomet. Along with other voices of dissent, the good things he had to say about Mahomet will be found in the Appendix.

If Mandeville actually did go on his Travels, he no doubt came across actual pictures of the arch-enemy and prophet, as he wandered through Spain, Italy and set out for the Orient. He may even have looked at manuscripts, such as

1. Travels, Introduction, p. x.

one in the Toledo Collection containing the doodle of a Spanish scribe, which depicts the figure of Mahomet as a composite creature with an expressionless human face on the body of a dragon.¹ He may also have looked at the early Latin manuscript which contains a representation of the prophet that is actually quite familiar in the Travels: Imago Mahumeti. Here, the prophet stands in a pavilion and is dressed in conventional oriental garb; one hand rests on an outsize broadsword, while the other holds a small sheaf of paper bearing the writing lex et alcoranus. From his neck dangle what appear to be talismans. His emaciated face wears a straggly beard.² Mandeville may have also gazed at the frescoes in Italian churches. A Pisan fresco places the prophet in a circle of Dante's Hell with Averroes and Antichrist. In the Church of San Petronia in Bologna, another fresco on the theme of hell has Mohamet warn a friar against advocating a plurality of wives³. Along with what appears to be a continental condemnation of the prophet, Mandeville did find unfavourable things to say which bear on the common image of Mahomet.

Emnity towards Christians is revealed, for example, in the account of the destruction by Saracens of Tyre labelled

1. See Daniel, Plate 5, facing p. 251.

2. Ibid., Plate 2, facing p. 135.

3. See S. Chew, The Crescent and the Rose, (New York, 1937), p. 402.

anachronistically a Christian city, "þer was sometime a great City & a gode of crystenemen"¹, but Saracens in great part destroyed it. Another passage deals with paintings in the churches of Alexandria being covered with whitewash, "at Alizandre a faire chirche all white withouten peynture and so ben all the othere chirches þat weren of the christene men all white withyn, For the Paynemes and the Sarrazynes maden them white for to fordon the ymages of seyntes þat weren peynted on the walles"². This description gives rise to an interesting conjecture. The event of the whitewashing may be factual, on the grounds that Islam prohibits the use of representative images or statues. We have seen already that this fact is ignored in the attribution of idolatry to the Saracens. The medieval reader, then, quite feasibly might construe the account as pointless vandalism on the part of a foe.

Contempt mixes with hostility in the story of Saracen reverence for the sepulchres of the Patriarchs. They guard and keep the holy places zealously, and allow no Christian to enter unless by grace of the sultan, for they "holden cristene men and Jewes as dogges"³, who should not defile the holy places.

1. Travels, p. 30

2. Ibid., p. 36.

3. Ibid., p. 43.

The deceit and guile of the Saracen is emphasized in the making of counterfeit balm. Only Christians can grow the healing balm, but Saracens counterfeit it and sell it to unwary Christians. For this account Mandeville claims personal experience, "For the Sarazines countrefeten it be sotyltee of craft for the deceuen the cristene men as I haue see full many a tyme"¹. Deceit has further sanction in Mandeville's departure from Lydgate on the subject of Mahomet's marriage. Mandeville informs us that Gadrige (Khadijah) was made to believe that fits of "fallynge evyll"², for which she was sorry she had married Mahomet, were visitations of St. Gabriel, whose light blinded him and threw him to the ground.

When in Power, the Saracens are heartless and oppressive. In Cairo, the seat of the sultans, was a slave-market where Saracens "sellen men and women commonly of others lawe as we don here bestes in the market"³. The comparison underlines the superior virtue of the west. Also, they keep the holy place Nazareth for profit, where they are wicked, destructive, and maliciously scornful, "And they ben full wykked sarrazines and cruel and more dispytous & han destroyed all the chirches"⁴.

1. Travels, p. 43.

2. Ibid., p. 90.

3. Ibid., p. 31.

4. Ibid., p. 75.

To prove that the Saracens are untrustworthy, Mandeville cites the word of the great Khan to the effect that he prefers Christian to Saracen physicians, "he trusteth more in cristene leches than in the Sarazines"¹. The opposite was closer to the truth.²

That the Saracen was improvident and complacent, is another fault described in the conquest of Bagdad by the Khan's general, Halaon. Mandeville first informs us that Mango Khan became Christian and gave "littres of perpetuell pes"³ to all Christian men. He sent his brother Halaon with multitudes to win the Holy Land and "put it in to cristene mennes hondes for to destroye Machametes lawe"⁴. The Mongol hordes which invaded the Middle East in the late middle ages are here made Christian crusaders. This proves the persistence of crusading zeal⁵ as a desirable attitude towards religious rivals. The captive caliph is asked why he did not spend

1. Travels, p. 157.

2. See H. Gibb, "The Influence of Islamic Culture on Medieval Europe", Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Vol. XXXVIII, (1955), p. 89.

3. Travels, p. 151.

4. Ibid.

5. This theme would find its source in episcopal and papal calls to a holy war against the enemies of God; a good example would be Pope Urban's famous exhortation: "Go then with confidence, to attack the enemies of God. God will be gracious to those who undertake this expedition that they may have a favourable year, both in abundance of produce and in serenity of season. Those who may die will enter the mansions of heaven; while the living shall behold the sepulchre of the

his treasure on warlike preparations, to which he replies that he had enough of his "owne propre men"¹. Then Halaon accused the caliph of setting himself up as a "gode of sarrazines"², who could not defile himself by eating mortal meat. He is, therefore, advised to eat his treasure. Surrounded by his gems and precious metals, the caliph dies of "hungre and threst"³. Thus presumption on divine favour is punished, but also the Midas sin of materialism is imputed to the Saracen.

Sensual as well as material values are stressed in the description of Paradise according to the Moslems. Paradise is a "place of delyte"⁴ where man will find all manner of fruits in all seasons, rivers that flow with milk and honey, wine and sweet water, where they dwell in fair and noble houses of their own choice made of precious stones of gold and silver. Such land-of-Cokaigne descriptions were a common enough motif in the middle ages. But in the Moslem paradise, every man "schall have iiij wyfes all maydenes and he schall have ado every day with hem"⁵ and yet it shall find them ever Lord". (as found in William of Malmesbury, Chronicle of the Kings of England, tr. J. A. Giles, London, 1847, p. 363).

1. Travels, p. 151.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

maiden. The sultan's life on earth, however, parallels essentially this paradise. For he has four wives according to the heavenly plan, with the interesting embellishment that one is a Christian and three are Saracen women, who live at different capitals, Jerusalem, Damascus and Ascalon. Besides he has as many concubines as he wishes, "And he hath as many paramours as hym lyketh"¹.

An example of the type of criticism in which vice pays a kind of left-handed tribute to virtue concludes our examination of Mandeville's Travels. Still, there is a good deal of the homiletic against Christian excesses in the alleged account. The reasons for Christian defection are reported to Mandeville by the sultan who claims that churchmen set bad example to the common people to the point "þat cristene men ne reeche right noght how untrewely to serve gode"². The "comownes" spend their holy days not in church, but in taverns where they "ben þere in glotony & eten & drynken as bestes"³ that have no reason and know not when to stop. On other occasions, Christians are pugnacious and proud of fashions in dress, "all manire gyses"⁴ when they should be meek and simple and full of "almesdede", as Jesus was in whom they were sup-

1. Travels, p. 88.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. p. 89.

4. Ibid.

posed to "trowe"¹. Christians also are covetous and immoral. The sultan claims, that for a little silver they will sell their daughters, sisters and wives and thereby "putten hem to leccherie"². For these reasons, concludes the sultan, the Holy Land was lost by sins of Christians into "our hondes"³. But through prophecies the sultan knows the Christians will regain the land when they serve God devoutly. Because they are as they are now, the Saracens have no fear of them.⁴ Despite the absence of Saracen vice in this passage, it is fairly clear that the role of the Saracen in the Christian Scheme of things, remains one of substantial opposition.

While in the Appendix along with Gower and Mandeville, we quote Langland as an opposer of the predominant crusading zeal, yet in a typical medieval manner Langland uses the current image of Mahomet. He tells us that Mahomet was a cardinal who, disappointed in his ambition to become Pope, fled from Rome and in Arabia announced himself as prophet:

Men fyndep þat makamede · was a man ycrystned,
And a cardinal of court · a gret clerke with-alle,

1. Travels, p. 88.

2. Ibid., p. 89.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

And porsuede to haue be pope • pryns of holychurche.¹
Having been baptised, Mahomet becomes clearly a heretic. Such a designation is understandable, for it would be difficult for medieval man to recognize a religious dispensation other than his own.

This chapter has dealt with diverse works of the Middle Ages. Serious poets have illustrated how deeply the stereotyped image of Mahomet and his followers had penetrated the medieval mind and undergone rapid geographical extension. Supposedly factual accounts attempt to inform us of real events in the life of Mahomet, and some of the conditions and circumstances to which these gave rise in the practices of his votaries.

1. Langland's Vision of Piers Plowman, Text B, ed. W. W. Skeat, (London, 1874), Passus XVIII, ll. 165-167.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Our study has occupied itself with an analysis of the composite of the image of Mahomet and of the influence, extent and permeation of the image in the writing of medieval England. Our search has taken us through medieval drama, romance, scriptural paraphrase, and other more or less homiletic poetry, and finally Mandeville's Travels. Allowing for the change of emphasis from one element to another, we can say that there was a pretty consistent picture of Mahomet, the arch-enemy of God and the Christian, as heretic, false prophet, pagan god and vigorous devil.

The image of the Sarcaren follower is drawn almost entirely in profile. With few exceptions, we have only aspects of his religious life to judge him by, characteristics which only rarely correspond with what we know to have been historically true. But even the few non-religious traits that he is given by the writers show that he was modelled on the Biblical heathen idolator. The effect of the image was to disfigure, and the few instances where there is a more or less faithful representation of reality are accidental. In general, it is true to say, that the image of Mahomet and his followers was drawn upon by every new literary craftsman, who re-

produced it in almost identical language, making use of a set of traditional and conventional episodes, which in the context of the total image, could not be altered.

Our concern has not been to consider either the question of deliberate and conscious distortion on the part of the western Christians, for indeed there seems little doubt that the process was quite unanalytical and without culpability. Nor has it been our purpose, except accidentally, to show that the portraits clashed radically with the truth both of Mahometan doctrine and practice. Future ages are always correcting the conceptions of their ancestors; our understanding---recent enough----of the more genuine Mahometan was restricted, it would seem, to a rather small number of medieval thinkers. We have noticed flashes of understanding on the part of Gower, Langland and Mandeville. These have been, however, so few that they have been relegated to an Appendix, as a kind of medieval afterthought.

Further study could be made of other areas of Europe and its literature. There is little doubt that there, the image would be consistent with the one current in England, just as the images cited in our introduction have nearly universal currency in the west. It might be suggested that the Mohametan image retained its currency until the catastrophic split in the Christian church in the sixteenth century, paralleled by National wars in the west which absorbed the at-

tention of the new nation states. At that time new enemies nearer home demanded new and more urgent image creation, allowing that of Mahomet to fall into disuse.

APPENDIX

DISSIDENT VOICES

Whatever his sources, Mandeville does report certain aspects of Islam in a favourable light, and the general picture he gives does correspond somewhat to what modern knowledge of Islam verifies.

According to Mandeville, the Koran teaches that Mahomet was taught by the angel Gabriel to "speken gladly"¹ of the Virgin Mary and the Incarnation as "Mari forechosen from the begynnyng to ber Christ as a Virgin--so witnesseth here boke".² The Saracens believe Christ to be free from sin, "an holy prophete & a trewe in woord & dede & meke & pytous & ryghtful & withouten ony vice".³ Elsewhere, says Mandeville, the Koran tells us that Jesus was sent from God Almighty "to ben myrour & ensample & tokne to alle men, for the salvacoun of the worlde".⁴ Jesus is more than a prophet; He is "worthi next God".⁵ Also, He made the Gospels in which is

1. Travels, p. 86.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

"gode doctryne & helpfull, full of Charitee & sothfastness".¹
 He lived without sin, healed the afflicted, and rose into heaven.

But, Mandeville's account continues, the Koran bears witness against the Jews, who are cursed for not believing that Christ came from God, and because they slander Mary and Christ "seyinge þei hadden crucifyed Ihesu, son of Marui".²

The Saracens are angered by this belief, for they deny the death of Christ by crucifixion. Mandeville claims that the Saracen holds that Judas Iscariot died, appropriately, in Christ's stead, for the Moslem believes God cannot have allowed the innocent to suffer. Christian men, too, are in error on this point; "cristene men belive folyly & falsly"³ that Christ was crucified.

But because they hold identical views on the first article of their creeds, "I believe in one God", not only Christian but Saracen may be saved through perfect faith. Further, because of these close affinities, Saracens, when well instructed, are easily converted. They believe in God, Doomsday, and the Prophets,⁴ but have a certain confused notion of the Trinity, "þei ben iiij persones, but not o god.

1. Travels, p. 86.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Alkoran spekes not of trinity".¹

Perhaps some of the points above tend to accommodate too readily the differences between Christianity and Islam. A desire and a tendency to find points of resemblance between Christian and Moslem faiths may mark a reaction against the predominant crusading zeal, but the possibility of a genuinely ecumenical spirit cannot be overlooked.

Such a spirit is clearly evident in John Gower's Confessio Amantis. Aman persistently questions his confessor, and finally brings up the question of his duties in regard to the crusades:

Mi fader, understoned it is,
That ye have seid; bot over this
I prei you tell me nay or yee,
To passe over the grete See
To warre and sle the Sarazin,
Is that the lawe?

To which the priest replies:

Sone myn,
To preche and soffre for the feith,
That have I herd the gospell seith;
Bot forto slee, that hiere I noght.
Crist with his oghne deth hath boght
Alle othre men, and made hem fre,
In tokne of parfit charite:²

A complete reversal of the usually dominant medieval practice of virtuously slaying the Saracen and Jew would be the

1. Travels, p. 87.

2. The Complete Works of John Gower, Vol. II, ed. G. C. Macaulay, (London, 1900), p. 293.

For were preest-hod more parfyt * þat is, þe pope
formest,
That wiþ moneye menteyneþ men * to werren vp-on
cristine,
A-zens þe lore of oure lorde * as sent luk wytnesseþ,
Michi uindictam, (& ego retribuam, dicit dominus, &c)
Hus prayers with hus pacience * to pees sholde brynge
Alle londes to loue * and þat in a lytel tyme;
The pope with alle preestes * pax-uobis sholde make!
And take hede hou makamede * þorwe a mylde doue,
He hald al surrye as hym-self wolde * and sarasyns in
quyete;
Nouht þorw manslauht and (mannes) strengthe * makamede
hadde þe mastrie,
Bote þorw pacience and pyruy gyle * he was prynce ouer
hem alle.
In suche manere, me þynkeþ * moste þe pope,
Prelates, and preestes * prayen and by-seche
Deuowtliche day and nyzt * and wiþ-drawe hem fro synne,
And crye to crist þat he wolde * hus coluere sende,
The whiche is þe holy gost * þat out of heuene de-
scendede,
To make a perpetuel pees * by-twyne þ prynce of heuene
And alle manere (of) men * þat on þis molde lybbeþ.
Yf preest-hod were parfit and preyede thus * the people
sholde amende,
That now contrarien cristes lawes * and cristendom
despisen.
For sutthe þat þes sarasyns * scribes, and þese Iewes
Hauen a lippe of oure by-leyue * þe lightloker, me
þynkeþ,
Thei sholde turne, (who so) trauayle wolde * and of þe
trinite techen hem.
For alle paynymes preyen * and parfitliche by-leyuen
In þe grete heye god * and hus grace asken
And maken here mone to makamede * here message to shewe
Thus in a faith lyueþ þat folke * and in a false mene;
And þat is reuthe for þe (ryghtful) men * þat in þe

reame wonyep,
 (And perel for þe prelates * þat þe pope makeþ;)
 (þat) bereþ name of Neptalym * of Nynyue and of damaske.
 For when þe holy kyng of heuene * sende hus sone to
 erthe,
 Meny myracles he wrouthe * man for to turne,
 In ensample þat men * sholde seo by sad reyson,
 That men myghte nat be sauede * bote þorw mercy and
 grace,
 And þorw penaunce and passioun * and parfyt by-leyue;
 And by-cam a man of a mayde * and metropolitanus,
 And baptisede, and busshoppede * with þe blode of hus
 herte
 Alle þat wilnede oper wolde * with inwit by-leue hit.
 Meny seint sitthe * suffrede dep al-so;
 For to enforme þe faithe * ful wyde-where deyden,
 In Inde and in alisaundrie * in ermanye, in spayne,
 And fro mysbyleue * meny man turnede,
 In sauacion of mannys saule * seynt thomas of
 Caunterbury
 Among vnkynde cristene * in holychurche was sleye,
 And alle holychurche * honoured for þat deyinge.
 He is forbusne to alle busshopes * and a bryzt myrour,
 And souereynliche to all suche * þat of surrye bereþ
 name;
 And nat in engelande to huppe abowte * and halewen
 menne auters,
 And crepe in a-monge (curatours) * and confessen a-zen
 þe lawe;
Nolite mittere falcem in messem alienam.
 Meny man for crystes loue * was martred a-mong romaynes
 Er cristendome were knowe þer * oper eny croys
 honoured.
 Eueriche busshope, by þe lawe * sholde buxumliche wende
 And pacientliche, þorgh hus prouynce * and to hus peple
 hym shewe,
 Feden hem and (fillen) hem * and fere hem fro synne;
In baculi forma * sit presul hec tibi norma,
Fer, trahe, punge gregem * seruando per omnia legem;
 And enchaunte hem to charite * on holychurche to
 be-leyue.
 For as the kynde is of a knyzt * oper for a kyng to be
 take,
 (And) among here enemys * in mortails bateles
 To be culled and ouercome * þe comune to defende;
 So is þe kynde of (curatour) * for cristes loue to
 preche
 And deye for hus children * to destroye dedly synne;
Bonus pastor;
 And nameliche þer as lewede lyuen * and no lawe knownen.

Ac we crystine conneþ lawe * and hauen of oure tounge
 Busshopes and bookes * the byleyue to teche.
 Iuwes lyuen in þe lawe * þat oure lord tauhte,
 Moyses to be maister þer-of * til messie come,
 And in þat lawe þei leyue * and leten hit for the beste.
 And zut knewe þei crist * þat cristenedome tauhte,
 And for a parfyt prophete * þat muche people sauede,
 And of selcouþe sores * sauede men ful ofte;
 By þe myracles þat he made . messie he semede,
 Tho he lyfte vp lazarus * þat leyde was in graue,
Quatriduanus cold * quik dude hym walke.
 Iuwes seyden, þat hit seyn * with sorcerie he wroute,
 And (stodieden) hou to struyen (him) * and struyeden
 hem-seue,
 And here power thourh hus pacience * to pure nouht
 brouhte.
 And (zut) thei seien sopliche * and so dop þe sarrasyns
 That Iesus was bote a Iogelour * a Iaper a-monge þe
 comune,
 And a sophistre of sorcerie * and pseudo-propheta,
 And hus lore was lesynge * and lacken hit alle,
 And hopen þat he be to comynge * þat shal hem releue:
 Moyses oper Makemed * here maistres deuineþ;
 And haueþ suspencion to be saf * boþe sarrasyns and
 Iewes,
 Thorwe Moyses and makemed * and myghte of god þat
 mad al.
 Now sytthe þat these sarrasyns * and al-so þe Iewes
 Conne þe ferste clause of oure by-leyue * Credo in
deum patrem,
 Prelates and preestes * sholde preoue, yf thei myghte,
 Lere hem lytulum and lytulum * & in iesum christum,
filium eius,
 Til þei couþe speke and spelle * & in spiritum sanctum,
 Recorden hit and rendren hit * wyth remissionem
peccatorum,
 Carnis resurrectionem, & uitam eternam, amen. 1

1. The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman,
Text C., ed. W. W. Skeat, (London, 1873), Passus XVlll, concl.

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ABSTRACT

Our thesis set out to establish the extent of the fixed image of Mahomet and his followers in Middle English works. On the basis of our knowledge of image consciousness, we examined the mystery cycles and assessed the tone and temper of Mahomet references there. To these we added an examination of two non-cyclic plays, the Digby "Mary Magdalene" and "The Croxton Play" of the Sacrament. Examination of the Cursor Mundi discovered a use of the Mahomet image similar to that employed in the above mentioned plays.

Moving from the religious area, our study examined the secular romances, discovering once again, the pervasive Mahomet image along with his followers, the Saracens.

Lydgate's Fall of Princes yielded images of Mahomet as a detestable false prophet and heretic. Mandeville recounted pejorative pictures of the habit and manners of his followers. That two images of Mahomet as a pagan god and as a false prophet could exist simultaneously, indicated the readiness with which people accept and enjoy literary stereotypes.

An Appendix indicated that certain voices were raised against the image as a product of crusading zeal and advocated instead of hatred, love and understanding. The dissident voices of Langland, Gower and Mandeville argue, by contrast,

the almost universal acceptance of the image of the foe.