The Rhetoric of Antichrist in Western Lives of Muhammad

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ABSTRACT *Reformation and Early Modern texts frequently suggest that Islam is the manifestation of satanic power, and represent the Prophet of Islam as an instrument of the devil, even as Antichrist. Such depictions have their source in medieval accounts of the life of Muhammad. This article surveys Latin, French, and English lives of Muhammad from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, including those found in the* Vita Mahumeti, *the* Otia de Machomete, *the* Roman de Mahomet, *Lydgate's* Fall of Princes, *and Langland's* Piers Plowman. *These accounts depict Muhammad as a deceptive magician, controlling his followers by means of false miracles. Like Antichrist, Muhammad is said to be eloquent, possessing material wealth and claiming to be the Messiah. The variations in these lives of Muhammad reveal how the perception of Islam developed differently in the various communities which produced these texts. These texts also reveal much about how medieval Western Christians viewed themselves in relation to the world around them.*

In 1909, Paul Alphandéry declared that the Western lives of the Prophet had been studied frequently and exhaustively, and in his own study went on to examine in some detail the association of Muhammad and Antichrist in selected medieval Latin texts.[1] Yet even though almost a century later we have available even more scholarship on Western representations of the Prophet of Islam, there still remains much to be said. There is much yet to be discovered, not just about the texts themselves, but about what they can reveal of the communities that generated them, and about how elements of those representations remain central to Western Christian understandings of Islam today. The persistent association of Islam and apocalypse and, in particular, of the Prophet and Antichrist which began during the Middle Ages, continues to colour modern popular understanding of events and leaders in the Islamic world today. This essay begins with an account of the origins and development of the association of Muhammad with Antichrist in the Middle Ages, and goes on to explain how such representation of the Prophet often signals not anxiety about an immanent Islamic threat, but rather concern about failures in the writer's own Western, Christian community.

It is widely known that during and in the wake of the Reformation, Islam was seen as a manifestation of satanic power. Reform theologians such as Martin Bucer explicitly identified Muhammad as a manifestation of Antichrist,[2] while even earlier Martin Luther himself said that the final enemy appeared simultaneously in two forms, both Catholic and Muslim: 'The Pope is the spirit of Antichrist and the Turk the body of Antichrist.'[3] The identification of Muhammad and Antichrist is found not only in the writings of theologians, but in those of laymen as well. For example, in the early seventeenth century, the traveller Sir Thomas Herbert stated that Muhammad could be

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recognized as the final enemy because the letters of his name make up 'the number 666 the marke of Antichrist.'[4] Other Western accounts of the life of the Prophet written during the same period similarly suggest that Satan was responsible for Muhammad's success.[5] Yet the origins of the Early Modern view of Islam can be found much earlier, in references to Islam in medieval texts, both literary and non-literary, and particularly in accounts of the life of Muhammad. It is important to be aware of how such a view was formed and how it developed, for it laid the foundation of Western Christian understanding of Islam, an understanding which has in some ways remained rooted in medieval misconceptions.

Before turning to medieval accounts of the life of Muhammad, it may be helpful to summarize briefly the development of the notion of Antichrist.[6] Each of the synoptic gospels contains a text known as the 'Little Apocalypse', which formed the kernel of the notion of Antichrist prevalent in the Middle Ages:

> [Jesus'] disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us ... what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?' Jesus answered them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Messiah!" and they will lead many astray'. (Matt. 24:3–5)

According to the synoptic gospels, the Antichrist will be a false messiah: someone who looks like Christ, who seems like Christ, who works miracles like Christ, but who proves to be an impostor. It is no coincidence that medieval texts often describe the Prophet of Islam using terminology also applied to the Antichrist. Several medieval authors, including Higden, Langland, and Lydgate, say that Muhammad, like the Antichrist, claimed to be the 'Messye' or messiah, and they emphasize his ability to deceive.[7] References to Islam appear in apocalyptic writings as early as the seventh century, and changes in the relationship of Christianity and Islam—the rise of Islam, the events of the crusades, the prophesied eventual defeat of the Muslims—were commonly seen as signs predicting the imminent end of things. Moreover, particular Muslim leaders were seen as precursors to the Antichrist, or even as individual 'antichrists', anticipating the final manifestation of Antichrist to come in the last days.

The idea of Antichrist served at least two purposes: first, by delineating the nature of the threat to the integrity of the Christian church, the notion of Antichrist served to reunify and reintegrate communities in crisis;[8] second, the notion of Antichrist could be used as a rhetorical weapon, to demonize one's enemies, whether religious, political, or military. This second function was perhaps most visible at the time of the early thirteenth-century confrontation between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor: Gregory IX said that the Antichrist had already come, 'in the person of Frederick', while the supporters of Frederick II replied that, clearly, Gregory's successor Innocent IV was the 'true Antichrist'.

Antichrist rhetoric could be used as propaganda against one's enemies, but it could also appear as part of a more detailed interpretation of contemporary history as apocalyptic.[10] It is easy to imagine how readily the rise of Islam could be understood in the context of apocalypse.[11] Islam was both a military threat, endangering Christian countries, and a religious one, offering an alternative to Christianity. For this reason, apocalypses written as early as the late seventh century, less than a century after the *hegira* of Muhammad, describe the rise of Islam as a manifestation of evil in the last days before the end.[12] Anti-Islamic polemics written on the Iberian peninsula also emphasize the relationship between Islam and Antichrist.[13] Yet in spite of the frequent association of Islam and Antichrist, Muslim leaders are not seen as the final Antichrist

himself. That is, Islam is seen as a sign of the last days, and its leaders as types or predecessors of Antichrist, rather than as the final manifestation to be seen at the end of time. Antichrist is ultimately seen as the embodiment of an internal threat, a danger of corruption within the Christian church rather than an invasive presence located outside the community of believers.

Similarly, the human being most associated with the emergence of Islam, the Prophet, could not be identified as the final Antichrist because the Antichrist would have to be a man of the generation living in the last days, and Muhammad himself was known to have lived and died in the past. But this did not prevent him from being identified as an antichrist, one of the seven heads of the hideous beast described in the biblical Apocalypse of John. For example, Joachim of Fiore identifies Muhammad as the fourth head of the beast, and the Muslim leaders 'Mesemoth' (apparently fictitious) and Saladin as the fifth and sixth heads, respectively.[14] Note how, even though Islam is not connected with the seventh head, the contemporary leader Saladin is seen as the penultimate Antichrist, a threat to Christianity second only to Antichrist himself. Roger Bacon, writing in the following century, shares this perspective, stating, 'We do not believe that another sect will come after the law of Mohammed, except for the law of the Antichrist.'[15]

I have been referring to Antichrist 'himself' but it is actually the case that many apocalyptic writers refer to not one but two manifestations of the final Antichrist, sometimes identified with the seventh head of the beast and its tail.[16] This diffusion of the notion of Antichrist into two parts is curious in view of the fact that the Antichrist should mirror the Christ he imitates: a singular Christ should have a corresponding singular Antichrist. It has been suggested that Antichrist has two manifestations in order to correspond to the two manifestations of Christ in history, 'the first hidden and the other open at the end of time.'[17] It is also possible that the Antichrist is physically doubled to signify the limits of his ability to mirror Christ, which in turn signifies the limits of Satan's ability to rival God. Christ is a perfect mediary because he has two natures, being both God and man. The Antichrist cannot match this unique manifestation of divine power, and so must necessarily be expressed in two parts. He can reflect Christ only imperfectly.

Muhammad, too, is seen as an imperfect reflection of Christ. Medieval accounts of the Prophet stress Muhammad's claim to be the messiah; for example, Lydgate in his early fifteenth-century *Fall of Princes* states no less than three times in one hundred lines that Muhammad 'Saide openli that he was Messie.'[18] Muhammad's claim is precisely what Jesus warned of in the 'Little Apocalypse' of the synoptic gospels: 'many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Messiah!" and they will lead many astray.' Lydgate, in keeping with other medieval accounts of the Prophet, goes on to stress the fulfilment of the second part of Jesus' prophecy, emphasizing Muhammad's ability to 'lead many astray.' This is accomplished primarily through false miracles, evidence not of divine power but of 'nigromauncie', 'enchauntementis', and 'craft'.[19] This aspect of the representation of Muhammad in medieval texts owes much to the tradition of Simon Magus, who was also seen as a magician working false miracles.[20]

I quote from Lydgate not because he innovates any of these traditions about Muhammad, but rather because he reproduces in a very condensed version many of the themes emphasized in earlier medieval descriptions of the Prophet. Earlier Western accounts of the life of Muhammad include the eleventh-century Latin text attributed to Embricon de Mayence.[21] This work, the *Vita Mahumeti*, is remarkable primarily for the way in which it represents the figure of the Prophet through two characters: a magician

named 'Mahumet' exerts influence over 'Mammutius', a slave of the Roman consul in Libya. Through Mahumet's efforts, the consul dies, and Mammutius marries his widow to become the wealthy ruler of Libya. As Dorothee Metlitzki notes, both characters represent the Prophet:

> The correspondence of the two names ... points to the origin of both characters in free-floating scraps of biographical information in which Muhammad's humble beginnings and his marriage to the rich widow Khadija were prominent elements.[22]

In addition, the two-part representation of the Prophet emphasizes the bifurcated nature of his power: it is expressed both openly, through temporal might and wealth, and covertly, through the ability to work apparent miracles by means of magic. Only the latter aspect is based on the figure of Simon Magus. The other aspect of Muhammad seen in this text, that of the secular ruler, supplements the Simon Magus tradition and goes beyond it. The two-part figure of Muhammad in the *Vita Mahumeti* resembles the two-part figure of Antichrist described by authors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries such as Joachim of Fiore and Peter Olivi.[23] Though the *Vita Mahumeti* predates Joachim of Fiore's development of the notion of a two-part Antichrist, one wielding secular power and one a deceptive magician,[24] it may perhaps be the case that some elements of such a notion of Antichrist circulated in oral tradition prior to the twelfth century. Certainly some belief in a two-part Antichrist appeared as early as the fourth century in the writings of Lactantius.[25] If the notion of a two-part Antichrist circulated in some form during the eleventh century, the representation of Muhammad as two men, magician and ruler, in the *Vita Mahumeti* may have been intimately involved in subsequent theories of a two-part Antichrist.

Several of the qualities consistently associated with Muhammad were also associated from an early date with the Antichrist: these include wealth, eloquence, the ability to work miracles, and the power to rise into the air. As early as the beginning of the fifth century, Jerome indicated that Antichrist's rise to power would in large part be fuelled by wealth.[26] Correspondingly, medieval Western accounts of the life of Muhammad invariably begin by stressing the crucial role of money in his rise to power: his career as a successful merchant and his marriage to a rich widow are recounted at length, presumably to stress that his success was based on material wealth. The ability to persuade and deceive attributed to the Antichrist in the synoptic gospels is echoed in the frequent characterization of Muhammad as 'eloquent', or, in the Latin texts, possessing '*facondia*'.[27] For both the Antichrist and Muhammad, the ability to deceive people is primarily manifested, of course, in the working of miracles. I will describe some examples of these shortly. Finally, among the Antichrist's deceptive miracles is included the ability to ascend into the air.[28] This phenomenon is also emphasized in accounts of Muhammad, both in references to the *mi'rāj* or miraculous journey to heaven and hell recounted in Islamic texts, and in curious portrayals of Muhammad's tomb found in Western texts, which claim that his sarcophagus levitated after his death.

These last two phenomena which appear in accounts of both the Antichrist and the Prophet, the ability to work miracles and to levitate, are described in striking detail in the thirteenth-century *Roman de Mahomet* and its Latin source, the early twelfth-century *Otia de Machomete*. Muhammad is said to work a number of miracles designed to make his ignorant countrymen believe that he has divine power and should be obeyed. Though the people are deceived, however, the reader is not: the author takes pains to describe how Muhammad stages the apparent miracles. He hides pots of milk

and honey on a mountain top, so that when he leads his people there he can claim that the milk and honey have appeared miraculously, and are a sign of the abundance that the people will enjoy when they begin to obey Muhammad's new 'law' (1500–1503). But this is only the preliminary to another, similarly staged miracle. Muhammad has hidden a white bull upon the mountain, and mounted a stone tablet between its horns engraved with the law he wants them to obey. When the bull miraculously appears, Muhammad is able to claim that it was sent from heaven bearing laws written by God himself.[29] For the author of the *Roman de Mahomet*, these staged miracles are evidence of a character trait frequently associated with Muhammad: his 'subtlety'.[30] He deceives both through his eloquence and through the crafty ingenuity that allows him to trick people.

Muhammad's resemblance to the Antichrist is further emphasized in the *Roman de Mahomet* by an elaborate description of the Prophet's tomb, which is falsely assumed by the author to be the focus of worship at Mecca. The tomb is said to levitate above the ground, in a kind of parody of Christ's ascent into heaven. The ascent of the tomb is parodic because it is partial: just as the apparent miracles are evidence of human ingenuity rather than divine power, the levitation of the tomb is evidence of something less than, or other than, divine power. What that something else is can be found in another account associating Muhammad and levitation. In his *De naturis rerum*, Alexander Neckam describes a statue of Muhammad seen in the Holy Land which, apparently miraculously, floats in the air. But Neckam explains precisely why the statue levitates: 'There are in the walls of the temple many concealed adamantine stones, equal in size and strength, which through their equal strength in like properties support the iron which has been set up in the centre.'[31] Here, an apparent miracle is shown to be caused in fact by human ingenuity. This kind of explanation pervades the *Roman de Mahomet*, as each apparent miracle is revealed as a hoax, a manifestation of craftiness rather than of divine power.

By explaining the human, rational basis of the miracles, the author of the *Roman de Mahomet* reduces the ominousness of Muhammad's power, emphasizing that the miracles are simply the work of a man, not supernatural manifestations caused by Satan. In this respect, the representation of Muhammad seems to differ from accounts which represent the Antichrist as Christ's antagonist in the last battle. Yet accounts of the Antichrist emphasize that, though he is able to fight against Christ, he is a human being, one through whom Satan works. Similarly, Muhammad's ability to deceive his people is presented in the *Roman de Mahomet* as Satan working through a human being. Early in the romance, Muhammad embarks on a trade expedition prior to the beginning of his preaching. He sees a Christian hermit who prophesies that Muhammad is the agent of Satan and will invent a false religion. Interestingly, the author of the *Roman de Mahomet* modifies his Latin source in describing the relationship of Satan and Muhammad: while the Latin source simply states that Muhammad is '*possessio demonis*', or possessed by a demon, the French text emphasizes the presence of Satan himself in Muhammad. The hermit states that Muhammad has the devil himself in his body (153), and now enjoys wealth because, having gone over to the devil, he now shares his possessions.[32] The prophecy of the Christian hermit at the outset of the romance indicates that Muhammad is a man through whom Satan works; in this, he is at least *an* antichrist, prefiguring the final Antichrist in whom, as Jerome puts it, 'Satan will totally dwell in a corporeal way.'[33]

The *Roman de Mahomet* is typical of medieval accounts of Muhammad in stressing qualities also associated with Antichrist: material wealth, eloquence, the ability to work

miracles and to levitate, and the claim to be messiah. It is suggestive that the thirteenth-century *Roman de Mahomet* seems to emphasize the resemblance of Muhammad and Antichrist even more than does its early twelfth-century Latin source. This may indicate that changes in the association of Muhammad with the Antichrist are the consequence of changes in the relationship of the Christian West to the Islamic East. This phenomenon can be seen, for example, in later medieval redactions of the tenth-century apocalypse of Adso, which include modifications that can be linked to the effect of the crusades.[34]

Yet changes in the association of Muhammad with the Antichrist may also reflect changes within the Christian community itself. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the fourteenth-century allegory by William Langland, *Piers Plowman*. In some respects, Langland's depiction of the Prophet is in keeping with the other texts I have described. He too associates Muhammad with the accumulation of material wealth, blaming the spiritual degeneration which precedes the apocalypse on the twin evils of 'Makometh and Mede' (B3.329). Like the author of the *Roman de Mahomet*, Langland attributes false miracles to Muhammad, describing how through fakery he deceived his people, and stresses Muhammad's claim to be the messiah (C17.159). Yet Langland's depiction of the Prophet differs from those I have discussed earlier in that he increases the emphasis on the role of Islam as a Christian heresy, grouping 'Sarzens and scismatikes' (B11.120) and stressing the similarity of Christianity and Islam (B15.393–395, 604–612; cf. C17.132–135). In this he resembles another medieval poet who worked for reform of the Church, Dante, who places Muhammad among the Christian schismatics in the *Inferno*.[35]

By comparing Christianity and Islam, Langland invites a comparison between Christ and Muhammad. The comparison is particularly evident in an episode which Langland may have adapted from Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*.[36] Langland reports that Muhammad trained a white dove to come peck corn from his ear; when his people saw the dove at his ear, he said that the bird came from heaven as a messenger from God (B15.406–407). This kind of false miracle is familiar from texts like the *Roman de Mahomet*, where Muhammad was said to hide pots of milk and honey to make them seem to appear miraculously; like the author of the Roman de Mahomet, Langland presents the false miracle as evidence of Muhammad's subtlety ('sotile', B15.399). In addition, however, this episode serves to underline Muhammad's imitation of Christ. The dove, a 'messager to Makometh', is clearly a parody of the Holy Spirit, characteristically represented as a white dove both in scenes of the Annunciation and in scenes depicting Christ's baptism.[37] The dove is a false 'messager', not a true mediator of divine power as the Holy Spirit is; correspondingly, then, Muhammad is also a false messenger, not a true mediary like Christ. This is why Langland states of the Muslims, 'in a feith lyueth that folk, and in a fals mene' (B15.506): 'those people believe in a false faith, and in a false mediary.'

Because Langland draws this comparison between Muhammad and Christ, and because he characterizes Muhammad using conventions familiar from other medieval accounts linking Muhammad and Antichrist, we might expect to find some allusion to the Prophet in the final passus of *Piers Plowman*, where Langland depicts the coming of Antichrist. Instead, Langland distinguishes clearly between Muhammad and Antichrist: while he repeatedly calls Muhammad 'a man' (B15.396, 398), he implies that Antichrist is almost Satan himself, 'a fals fend' (B20.64) appearing 'in mannes forme' (B20.52).[38] Langland's association of Muhammad and Antichrist is much more limited than that found in other texts on the Prophet. This is because Langland uses Muham-

mad, not as a type of Antichrist, but as an example to establish the central role of the 'mene' or mediary.[39] For Langland, Muhammad differs fundamentally from Christ in being a 'fals mene'; only Christ, as both God and man, is a perfect mediator between heaven and earth. As a 'fals mene', Muhammad serves as an example of those who should be imitators of Christ, mediaries between the faithful and God: Langland concludes his account of Muhammad by stating that 'English clerks feed a dove called covetousness, and behave like Muhammad so that no man holds to the truth.'[40] The account of Muhammad is not an indictment of Islam; instead, it is an indirect criticism of the failings of English Christian clerics, and a call for their reform.

Langland himself points to the reason why it is necessary to criticize these clerics indirectly: he begins his comparison of the clerics to Muhammad by saying 'for drede of the deeth I dar noght telle truthe' (B15.413). It can be dangerous and difficult to call for reform of one's own community; doing so through a comparison to some group or person wholly alien to the community makes it easier. The representation of Islam in medieval texts often fulfils this function: it allows authors to point out gaps or weaknesses in their own communities indirectly, by condemning that gap or weakness in an alien culture. During the Reformation and following, condemnation of Islam continued to be used as a means to condemn indirectly movements within European Christianity. To mention just one small example, an edition of Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale* published in 1624 includes a lengthy marginal comment in Latin alongside Vincent's account of Islamic theology. The commentator compares Calvinism to Islam, and Luther to Muhammad himself.[41] The reciprocal comparison could, of course, also be made: Luther criticized the Catholic church in Europe by identifying its canonical texts as '*unsern Alcoranen*' 'our Qur'ans'.[42]

Like allusions to Islam, apocalyptic language continued to be used during the Reformation and afterwards in order to condemn groups or persons within the Christian community. During the sixteenth century, English Protestants such as Thomas Cranmer, John Bale, and John Jewel increasingly identified the Pope with Antichrist.[43] Yet the Antichrist could be identified with a secular leader just as easily as with a religious leader, as was evident during the early thirteenth-century confrontation between Gregory IX and Frederick II. Similarly, during the sixteenth century, Elizabeth I was identified as the manifestation of Antichrist by English Catholic exiles such as Nicholas Sanders.[44] The Reformation marks a change, however, in the use of apocalyptic rhetoric. While in the Middle Ages, Antichrist was usually identified with either the rise of Islam or with papal power, in the Early Modern period, Antichrist came to be associated with both simultaneously.[45] This phenomenon is vividly illustrated in the *Faerie Queene*. The representation of Islam in Spenser's poem merits consideration here both because it has exerted considerable influence on popular understanding through being widely read both during its own time and subsequently, and because it dramatizes how the image of Islam can be used to produce a polemic against one segment of a Western, Christian nation.

Like many other English Protestants, Spenser was eager to depict the conflict of Catholicism and Protestantism in England in apocalyptic terms.[46] This is particularly evident in the first book of the *Faerie Queene*, where Spenser depicts the final battle between the Red Cross Knight, who represents Christ, and the 'angrie witch' Duessa, mounted on a many-headed purple beast (I.8.6, 13–14).[47] Duessa is clearly to be identified with the Whore of Babylon, that is, Rome. Her associate, Archimago, is associated with Catholicism when he first appears as an old man who 'told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore/... strowd an Ave-Mary after and before' (I.1.35). It is

nothing new to depict the conflict between rival forces within Christianity in terms of the conflict between Christ and Antichrist. What is unusual, however, is to couple that analogy with an analogy based on the conflict between Christianity and Islam. When Duessa first appears, 'clad in scarlot red', her association with the east is signalled by her headdress, a 'Persian mitre' (I.2.13). Her champion, Sansfoy, is a 'faithlesse Sarazin' (I.2.12) and, like his brother Sansloy, a 'proud Paynim' (I.3.35). By depicting the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism within England in terms of a battle 'Twixt that great faery Queene and Paynim king' (I.11.7), Spenser heightens the contrast between the forces of good and evil which he had already established by using apocalyptic rhetoric likening the battle to that of Christ and Antichrist.

Interestingly, Spenser draws upon a species of the Western representation of Islam different from the more historically accurate one used by Langland. He uses the depiction of Islam and of Muslim knights found in the *chansons de geste* and Middle English romances.[48] This is particularly evident in the second book of the *Faerie Queene*, when the antagonists begin to swear 'by Termagaunt' and 'By Mahoune' (II.8.30, 33). Like Langland, however, Spenser refers to Muslims not in order to criticize Islam itself, but in order to criticize parts of the English community indirectly. By describing English Catholics as 'Turkes and Sarazins' (I.10.40), Spenser makes his own countrymen seem to be aliens, people wholly excluded from the community: they are 'forrein Paynims, which invade thy land' (III.3.27). This is similar to what Langland accomplishes by likening corrupt Christian clerics to Muhammad; but Spenser's comparison is more dramatic, because it is also couched in terms of an apocalyptic battle between good and evil. By using a representation of Muslims found in the *chansons de geste*, which feature climactic battles between physically repulsive 'pagans' and virtuous Christians, Spenser heightens the importance of the final battle already established by the language of apocalypse. Spenser causes the English Catholics to appear alien so that they can be excluded and excised from the community. This is particularly necessary in the context of a religious war, when shared national identity competes with religious difference.

The depiction of Islam and particularly of Muhammad is in part dependent on historical developments such as the crusades and the later conflict with the Turks;[49] but it also responds to internal events within Europe, such as heretical movements and religious debate within the Church. The representation of Islam thus often serves to indicate the status of the Christian community itself: commentary on the other is very frequently commentary on the self. The depiction of Islam generally relies upon rhetoric drawn from the apocalyptic tradition, with its emphasis on sexual deviance and licentiousness, excessive wealth, the miraculous ascent of its leader, and the notion of Islam as Christian schism.[50] In this respect, Islam seems to be a terrible force, one allied with Satan himself. In the end, however, the imagined face of Islam is simply a reflection of the face of the alien as it emerges within one's own culture. It is particularly worthwhile to observe this phenomenon in literary texts, for even though they contain the most distorted pictures of Islam, it is these pictures which have most captured the popular imagination and shaped subsequent Western perceptions of Islam.

NOTES

1. *La légende occidentale du Prophète a été à maintes reprises étudiée et, une fois tout au moins, de façon presque exhaustive.* Paul Alphandéry, Mahomet–Antichrist dans le Moyen Age latin, in: *Mélanges Hartwig Derenbourg* (Paris, 1909), 261–277.

2. Victor Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme: Etude sur l'attitude des Reformateurs Zurichois envers l'Islam (1510–1550)* (Lausanne, Editions l'Age d'Homme, 1978), 112.
3. '*[P]apa est spiritus Antichristi, et Turca est caro Antichristi. Helffen beyde einander wurgen, hic corpore et gladio, ille doctrina et spiritu.*' *Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Tischreden*, 6 vols (Weimar, 1912–1921; Rpt, Graz, Akademischen Druckund Verlagsanstalt, 1967), Vol. 1, pp. 135, 330.
4. Sir Thomas Herbert, *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique*, 2nd edn (London, 1638). Cited in Byron Porter Smith, *Islam in English Literature* (1939; 2nd edn, Ed. S. B. Bushrui & A. Melikian, Delmar, NY, Caravan Books, 1977), 15. Already in the first edition of his work, Herbert identified Muhammad as 'heire apparant unto Lucifer' (*A Relation of Some Yeares Travaile into Afrique, Asia, Indies*, London, 1634; Rpt, The English Experience 349, Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum/New York, DaCapo, 1971, 158).
5. See Jane Smith, French Christian narratives concerning Muhammad and the religion of Islam from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 7 (1996), 47–61, esp. 50–51.
6. See Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: two thousand years of the human fascination with evil* (San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1994); Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Aqes: a study of medieval apocalypticism, art, and literature* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1981).
7. Ralph Higden, *Polychronicon* lib. 5, in *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis together with the translations of John Trevisa and of an unknown writer of the fifteenth century*, Ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby, 9 vols; Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores (London, 1876), 6: 22. William Langland, *Piers Plowman: a parallel-text edition of the A, B, C and Z versions*, Vol I: Text, Ed. A. V. C. Schmidt (London and New York, Longman, 1995), C 18.159. Subsequent quotations from *Piers Plowman* are cited by line number within the text. John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, Ed. Henry Bergen (Vol. 3, EETS 123, 1924 [for 1919], rpt 1967), bk 9, 11.75, 98, 158.
8. 'Antichrist traditions offer unusually strong resources for group solidarity and action against threats, imagined or real' (McGinn, *Antichrist*, 109); on the function of apocalypticism in times of crisis, see also Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: apocalyptic traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1979), 31.
9. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 152–154.
10. See McGinn's distinction between 'Antichrist language' and 'Antichrist application' in *Antichrist*, 120–121.
11. For a brief survey of this phenomenon, see Harald Suermann, Muhammad in Christian and Jewish apocalyptic expectations, *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 5 (1994), 15–21.
12. See the account of Pseudo-Methodius (ca. 691) in McGinn, *Antichrist*, 90–92 and *Visions of the End* 70–76. His apocalypse was widely disseminated, having been translated into Latin in the early eighth century and into several vernaculars, including Middle English in the late fourteenth century (*Antichrist*, 329, n. 3). It resurfaced during the Reformation in the writings of Wolfgang Aytinger (*Visions of the End*, 274).
13. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 85–87.
14. See McGinn, *Antichrist*, 138–139; *Visions of the End*, 126–141, esp. 137.
15. *The Opus Malus of Roger Bacon*, Ed. John H. Bridges, 3 vols (London, 1900), I: 268.
16. For Joachim of Fiore's identification of two Antichrists, see McGinn, *Antichrist*, 140–141; on Peter Olivi, see *Antichrist*, 161 and *Visions of the End*, 210–211; on Ubertino of Casale, see *Visions of the End*, 212–214; on John of Rupescissa, see *Visions of the End*, 230–233.
17. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 140.
18. Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, 9.75; cf. 9.98, 158.
19. Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, 9.69–73.
20. See the entry 'Simon Magus' by G. N. L. Hall in Vol. 11, pp. 514–525, of the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Ed. James Hastings, 13 vols (New York, 1913–1927). McGinn notes that, as early as the fourth century, the legend of Simon Magus contributed to the development of the notion of Antichrist as deceptive magician (*Antichrist*, 71 and 30, n. 64).
21. The *Vita Mahumeti* was previously attributed to Hildebrand, Bishop of Mayence. The text, edited by F. Huebner, appears in *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* 29 (1935), 441–490.
22. Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1977), 201–202. Cf. Lepage's Introduction in *Le Roman de Mahomet de Alexandre du Pont (1258)*, Ed. Yvan G. Lepage (Paris, Klincksieck, 1977), 36.
23. On the development of two Antichrists in the thought of Joachim of Fiore, see McGinn, *Antichrist*,

140–142; also Robert E. Lerner, Antichrists and Antichrist in Joachim of Fiore, *Speculum* 60 (1985), 553–570.

24. Joachim of Fiore likens these two to Nero and Simon Magus. See the extract from *Il Libro delle Figure* translated in McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 137.
25. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 66–68.
26. Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 11:39, Ed. F. Glorie, *Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars I, Opera Exegetica* 5 (Corpus Christianorum 75A, Turnhout, Brepols, 1964); cited in McGinn, *Antichrist*, 75.
27. '*Il est de si grant eloquenche/Que merveille est se la gens toute/Ne le croit ki l'ot et escoute.*' *Roman de Mahomet*, lines 1495–1497; '*eloquenche*' appears as '*facondia*' in the facing page edition of the *Otia de Machomete*, l, 751. Similarly, Trevisa in his translation of Higden's *Polychronicon* says that Muhammad had 'nobil ffacounde and faire speche' (Rolls series, Vol. 6, p. 23).
28. See McGinn, *Antichrist*, 74 on the origins of this 'important element in the developing legend.'
29. In Higden's *Polychronicon*, the animal is identified as a camel rather than a bull. Instead of carrying a stone tablet between its horns, it bears the Qur'ān hanging from its neck (34–36).
30. Of the miracles of the milk and honey and of the bull, the author remarks '*soutilment les dechoit*' (1521), and states soon afterwards, '*Soutius est li fels ypocrites*' (1638).
31. Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum*, Ed. Thomas Wright in *Alexandri Neckam: De naturis rerum libri duo* (London, 1863) 183; quoted with translation by Julian A. Smith in Precursors to Peregrinus: the early history of magnetism and the mariner's compass in Europe, *Journal of Medieval History* 18 (1992), 21–74, quotation from 36.
32. The hermit sees '*Que le dyable en son cors a*' (153), and tells Muhammad, '*Tu ieu au dyable toz quites/Et si ies sa possessions*' (166–167).
33. Quoted in McGinn, *Antichrist*, 74; see also 49.
34. See McGinn, *Antichrist*, 103 and 313, n. 130. The later versions appear in D. Verhelst, *Adso Dervensis: De Ortu et Tempore Antichristi necnon et Tractatus qui ab eo Dependunt* (Corpus Christianorum 45, Turnhout, Brepols, 1976), 30–166.
35. Dante calls Muhammad '*seminator di scandalo e di scisma*' (*Inferno* 28.63). Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Ed. and trans. Charles S. Singleton (1970) 3 vols, Bollingen Series 80 (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980).
36. In the *Speculum Historiale*, the story of the dove is immediately followed by the story of the bull recounted in the *Roman de Mahomet* (ch. 40). Kerby-Fulton suggests that the *Speculum Historiale*, which includes a summary of some medieval apocalyptic thought, may have been known by Langland. See Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism and 'Piers Plowman'*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 7 (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1990)), 215, n. 57; 235, n. 38.
37. The Holy Spirit appears as a dove in literary texts as well. For example, in the Middle English romance *Otuel and Roland*, a white dove representing the Holy Spirit descends on the pagan Otuel and brings about his conversion. Langland himself indicates that the dove represents the Holy Spirit: priests should 'crie to Crist a wolde his coluer sende/The whiche is the hy Holy Gost that out of heuene descendet' (C24.246–247).
38. On the complex role of apocalypse in Langland's poem, see Morton W. Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1962), and Kerby-Fulton's more recent study, *Reformist Apocalypticism and 'Piers Plowman'*. For a brief account of the relation of Muhammad and Antichrist in Langland's poem, see Michael R. Paull, Mahomet and the Conversion of the Heathen in *Piers Plowman, English Language Notes* 10 (1972), 1–8.
39. The role of the 'mene' or mediary is of central importance for Langland, not only in the context of the relationship of God and man (B7.197, 9.34) but also in the context of knowledge and faculty psychology (B8.121) and in the smooth functioning of the community (B1.160).
40. 'Englisshe clerkes a coluere fede that Coueitise highte,/And ben manered after Makometh, that no man useth trouthe' (B15.414–415).
41. '*Calvinistarum secta recta ad Machometum spectat, nec ulla unquam fuit. Machometismo propior. Certe Lutherus ipse omnium hareticorum nostri saculi antesignanus agregie in omni turpitudinis dedecore est Machometum imitatus. Quantum etiam Beza in hac faditate sit tota vita volutatus, scripta ipsius abunde declarant. Unde nemini dubium esse potest Lutheranismum et Calvinismum proxime ad Machometismum vita primum, deinde etiam doctina accedere.*' Marginal note to *Speculum Historiale*, cap. 44, p. 914; in Vincentius Bellovacensis, *Speculum Quadruplex sive speculum maius*, Vol. 4 (Duaci, 1624, rpt Graz, Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1965).

42. '*... da sind so viel Lugen in unsern Alcoranen, Descretalen, Lügenden, Summen und unzelichen Büchern* ...' (391–392). *Verlegung des Alcoran Bruder Richardi Prediqer Ordens. Verdeutscht und herausgegeben von M. Luther, 1542*, in Vol. 53, pp. 261–396, of *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimarer Ausgabe)*, 61 vols (Weimar, 1883–1983, rpt Graz. Akademischen Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1967).
43. On Cranmer, Bale, and Jewel, see McGinn, *Antichrist*, 218–220; on Jewel, see also Frances A. Yates, *Astraea: the imperial theme in the sixteenth century* (1975; London and Boston; Ark, 1985), 40–42.
44. On Sanders, see Yates, *Astraea*, 80–81.
45. In *Visions of the End*, McGinn notes that, although Islam was identified with the apocalyptic enemy soon after its rise in the seventh century, the papacy was not usually so identified until the thirteenth century (34). See also Bernard McGinn, Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist, *Church History* 47 (1978), 155–173. By the time of Luther, however, the papacy and the Ottoman empire were seen as a dual threat against the Reform movement, marked by their similarity: '*Turca et papa in forma religionis nihil variant nisi in ceremoniis* ...' *Tischreden*, Vol. 1, p. 549, 1095; cf. Vol. 3, p. 179, 3130, and p. 646, 3831. Luther's followers emphasized the connection even more explicitly.
46. See C. A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich, *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: patterns, antecedents, and repercussions* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984); on Spenser in particular, see Florence Sandler, The Faerie Queene: an Elizabethan apocalypse, 148–174. See also Josephine Waters Bennett, *The Evolution of 'The Faerie Queene'* (1942; New York, Burt Franklin, 1960), 109–115; John E. Hankins, Spenser and the Revelation of St. John, *Proceedings of the Modern Languages Association of America* 60 (1945), 364–381; S. K. Heninger, Jr., The Orgoglio Episode, *English Literary History* 26 (1959), 171–187.
47. The Faerie Queene, in *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, Ed. Edwin Greenlaw *et al.*, 6 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932–1938). Citations are in the text by canto and line number.
48. In addition to the *chansons de geste* and Middle English romances, Spenser also drew on the depiction of Muslims found in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata.*
49. For example, McGinn notes that, during the fifteenth century, there was a revival of interest in Pseudo-Methodius' writings, in part 'to discover the apocalyptic meaning of the Turkish threat' (*Antichrist* 189; cf. *Visions of the End* 274–276).
50. Pseudo-Methodius emphasizes the sexual deviance which will characterize the last days (McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 74); Jerome notes the crucial role of wealth in Antichrist's rise to power (McGinn, *Antichrist*, 75); and Pseudo-Hippolytus refers to Antichrist's ability to ascend into the air (74).