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MANDEVILLE'S INTOLERANCE:

THE CONTEST FOR SOULS AND SACRED SITES IN *THE TRAVELS OF SIR JOHN*

MANDEVILLE

By

Robert Hakan Patterson

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2009

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Robert Hakan Patterson

December 2009

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Introduction: A Knight's Tale

A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first began
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he ridden, no man ferre,
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse.¹

In the *General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer introduces the knight before any other pilgrim. This chivalrous warrior has traveled farther than any other man and has fought in every major crusade campaign in which the English were involved in the fourteenth century. In Egypt, Prussia, Lithuania, Russia, Spain, Morocco, and Turkey, he has valiantly championed Christian causes against Muslims and pagans alike, and his past adventures seem to promise an exciting tale of crusaders marching against Christ's enemies in strange and distant lands. When it comes time for this knight to tell the first tale of the pilgrimage, however, he chooses a story unrelated to his travels into "hethenesse." Instead, the knight presents his fellow pilgrims with a romance in which two knights become prisoners of Theseus, duke of Athens, and fall in love with Emelye, Theseus' sister-in-law. The ensuing rivalry between the lovers has nothing to do with the crusades or with the foreign lands in which Chaucer's knight has campaigned, and none of Chaucer's surviving tales are about crusades of any kind.² For a tale detailing the travels and adventures of an English knight who has seen the known world, medieval and modern readers alike must set aside Chaucer and turn to a text just as if not

¹ Geoffrey Chaucer, "General Prologue," *The Canterbury Tales* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). ll. 43-49.

² At least three of Chaucer's tales do include at least some description of strange and distant lands: *The Man of Law's Tale* briefly takes readers to Muslim Syria; *The Squire's Tale* takes place in the Tartar court of the Great Khan; and *The Prioress's Tale* takes place in a Jewish community in Asia.

more popular than *The Canterbury Tales* during and after the Middle Ages: *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*.

Originally written in French sometime in the 1350s or 1360s, *The Travels* purports to be an account of the travels of an English knight named John Mandeville who

was borne in Ingeland in þe touen of Saynt Albanes, and passed þe see þe 3ere of oure Lorde Ihesu Criste m^lcccxxxij, on Myghelmesday, and seyne hiderward has bene lang tyme ouer þe see, and has sene and gane thurgh many kingdomes, landes, prouinces and iles, and hase passed thurgh Turkye, Ermony þe lesse and þe mare, Tartarye, Perse, Sirie, Araby, Egipte þe hie and þe lawe, Liby, Caldee, and a grete party of Ethiope, Amazon, Inde þe lesse and þe mare a grete party, and thurgh many oþer iles þat er aboute Inde, whare dwelles many diuerse maners of folke of diuerse lawes and schappes....³

While Chaucer's knight has traveled to and fought in Spain, North Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia Minor, Sir John claims to have visited the entire known world from Constantinople and the Holy Land to the farthest reaches of Asia. During his travels, he says he also served in the courts of the Sultan in Egypt and the Great Khan in Cathay, providing him with insider information and therefore credibility as a source for that information. Unlike Chaucer's knight, Sir John provides his audience with an extensive account of the peoples, places, empires, and holy sites he has visited, yet Sir John's adventures and Sir John himself are just as fictional as Chaucer's perfect knight.⁴ Sir John Mandeville is nothing more than a fictional avatar created by an author who

³ *The Buke of John Maundeuill being the Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Knight 1322-56* (Westminster: Roxburghe Club, 1889). 2-3. Subsequent citations from this text are in parenthetical form. Later in this introduction, I explain my choice of this version and edition of the text.

⁴ Crusades against fellow Christians are conspicuously absent from the career of Chaucer's knight, and in the edition I am using, Sir John claims to have left Europe in 1332 and traveled abroad for the next 33 years. Both knights have conveniently avoided involvement in conflicts between Latin Christian kingdoms in Europe.

probably never traveled to the Holy Land or the East.⁵ His information about the lands he describes comes from several dozen source-texts including some written by actual travelers to the Holy Land or to the East,⁶ but the Mandeville-author⁷ did much more than copy from the manuscripts at his disposal. In creating the first medieval text that combines the matter of the Holy Land with the matter of the East, he altered and reshaped his sources in order to create a new text that is much more than the sum of its parts. In this dissertation, I argue that this new text is the manifestation of the Mandeville-author's universalism – the understanding of which has significant consequences for a number of questions about the text – and his desire to represent the world as one in which Christian spiritual hegemony reigns supreme.⁸

The Text and the Major Questions

The Mandeville-author opens *The Travels* by quickly working to establish the Holy Land as the rightful heritage of all Christians, to whom Christ left the land hallowed by his “precious blude” as a father to his children (1). Jerusalem and surrounding regions are represented as occupied territory, and the Mandeville-author argues that it is the duty of every Christian to take up arms and retake Christians' heritage “oute of

⁵ Throughout this dissertation, I use “the Holy Land” to refer to the geographical area including Asia Minor, Egypt, and the Levant. “The East” refers to lands east of Jerusalem in Asia, including China, India, and the many Asian islands described in *The Travels*.

⁶ The author's main sources in writing *The Travels* are William of Boldensele's *Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus* (1336) and Odoric of Pordenone's *Relatio* (1330), but he used or consulted about three dozen texts, including histories, encyclopedias, pilgrimage and travel accounts, religious texts, romances, and a scientific treatise. See Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The “Travels” of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). 9.

⁷ Because the author of *The Travels* has yet to be identified and in recognition of the fictional nature of the text, here and throughout this dissertation, I use “Mandeville-author” to refer to the unknown author of *The Travels*, while I use “Sir John” to refer to the figure known as Sir John Mandeville in the text.

⁸ I elaborate on this point later in this introduction.

straunge men handes” (2). He also laments that “it es lang tyme passed sen þare was any general passage ouer þe see in to þe haly land” (2). Like Chaucer’s knight, Sir John’s fictional travels and his concern with retaking the Holy Land seem to promise a tale of a heroic knight crusading in the name of Christ, but Sir John quickly acknowledges that fighting amongst Latin Christian lords stands in the way of a successful recovery effort, and instead of fighting the Saracen forces controlling the Holy Land, he actually serves their leader for a number of years.⁹ As the Mandeville-author proceeds to describe the many lands visited by Sir John, the dream of a new crusade fades into the background, and instead the text concentrates on describing the lands through which Sir John has traveled, the spices and other commodities available for trade in each land, and the customs, beliefs, and practices of the peoples he has met.

Roughly half of *The Travels* is an account of Sir John’s journey through the Holy Land. Largely based on William of Boldensele’s 1330 account of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, this part of the text appears to be a pilgrims’ guide meant for those “þat wil and er in purpose to visit þe haly citee of Ierusalem and the haly placez þat er þare aboute...” (3). Accordingly, the Mandeville-author presents his readers with a number of possible routes from Europe to Jerusalem, but the narrative does not proceed directly to the Holy City. As represented by the author, Sir John begins in Constantinople and meanders through Asia Minor, the Aegean and Mediterranean islands, and Egypt before finally coming to a description of the holy sites of Palestine. Along the way, the text provides readers with accounts of various holy sites as well as the history and customs of

⁹ Thanks to his time serving in the Sultan’s court, Sir John obtains letters granting him access to a number of sacred sites he says are off-limits to the average Christian pilgrim. His service and the Sultan’s favor allow him to gather more information for his fellow Latin Christians, which in turn provides an excuse for serving the man in control of the Holy Land.

the lands and peoples Sir John has visited. In each land, the Mandeville-author focuses on the significance of its sites to Christian salvation history by pointing to the various Biblical figures and events associated with each place. A considerable amount of time is also spent on the history of Mamluk Egypt and the power of its current ruler, and after a description of Jerusalem and its holy sites, the text returns to Egypt in order to relate a private conversation between Sir John and the Sultan in which the Saracen leader criticizes Latin Christians for their lack of devotion to Christ and their sinfulness. This part of the text also includes a largely nonjudgmental explanation of Islamic beliefs and practices as well as similarities between Islam and Christianity – information gathered during Sir John’s time serving the Sultan’s court.

Although this part of *The Travels* looks like a pilgrims’ guide or a pilgrimage account, the Mandeville-author spends very little time providing readers with practical information that would actually be useful to potential pilgrims. He also takes more time detailing the beliefs and practices of Greeks and Saracens than he does talking about the rites to be performed at each holy site or the spiritual benefits of the sacred places Sir John has visited. What the Mandeville-author gives his readers is hardly a guide, which raises some of the central questions with which scholars have struggled for the past few decades: What is the purpose of this text? What exactly was the Mandeville-author trying to do or attempting to show his readers?

In choosing to combine the matter of the Holy Land with the matter of the East, the Mandeville-author ensured that *The Travels* would not fit neatly into the genre of pilgrims’ guide. The fusion of the two matters raises yet another series of questions in Mandeville studies: Why did the Mandeville-author combine them? Is the account of the

East to be read as an extension of what looks like a pilgrimage account in the first part of the text? What was he trying to say or demonstrate by putting the two matters in a single text? Can the two parts even be read as a single whole, or are they somehow in tension with one another?

As the text moves past the Holy Land and into an account of Sir John's travels in Asia, readers learn about the realms of Prester John, the great Christian king of Inde, and the Great Khan, the emperor of the Tartars and the most powerful ruler in the world. Various other peoples and places are also described, including the Bragmans and Gynosciphe (Gymnosophists) of Inde and Alexander the Great's encounters with them.¹⁰ As in the first part of the text, in the account of the East, the Mandeville-author details the commodities available for trade, the power and prestige of local rulers, and the beliefs, customs, and practices of non-Christians. Having provided a mostly nonjudgmental account of Greek and Saracen beliefs and practices in the first part of *The Travels*, he continues to avoid demonizing non-Christians or criticizing differences between Latin Christians and the non-Christians of the East, and he works to minimize those differences by likening even the strangest Eastern customs – including idol-worship – to those of his co-religionists in Europe. The Mandeville-author rarely demonizes the peoples of the Holy Land or East, nor does he criticize them as unbelievers whose faiths are completely false. Whether Eastern Christians, Saracens, or idolaters, the beliefs and practices of every people Sir John encounters are made to in some way resemble Latin Christianity or embody Latin Christian values. The Mandeville-author's "generous" representation of

¹⁰ I choose to leave most place names as they are spelled in the text since terms like "Inde" refer to geographical locations not associated with the modern state of India. Also, many of the places to which the Mandeville-author refers are imaginary locations without modern equivalents. When spelling varies within the text, I use the one that appears most often.

non-Latin Christians is one of the most distinguishing characteristics of *The Travels* when compared to the several dozen source-texts used or consulted by this “plagiarizer.” In remaking and reshaping those source-texts, he created a text that is completely useless in terms of travel information (especially since most of it is made up), and scholars have yet to discover why the Mandeville-author felt compelled to change so radically his sources’ treatment of non-Christians to be so “generous.”

The only exception to the text’s treatment of non-Christians is its vicious demonization of Jews. The same author who works tirelessly to change his sources to avoid demonizing Latin Christendom’s greatest enemies is also the author who consistently characterizes Jews as evil conspirators against Christ and Christians, and he even associates them with the evil forces of Gog and Magog and the Antichrist. This exception to the text’s “generosity” has proven quite challenging to Mandeville scholars who have attempted to reconcile the Mandeville-author’s anti-Jewishness with his apparent “tolerance” of other non-Christians. The text’s anti-Jewishness matches if not exceeds the vicious treatment of Jews in other anti-Jewish medieval texts such as Chaucer’s *Prioress’s Tale* or Matthew Paris’ account of the ritual murder of Hugh of Lincoln, and this troubling aspect of *The Travels* has only recently begun to be addressed in Mandeville scholarship. The central question that troubles scholars is how the same author could have such drastically different attitudes toward Jews and all other non-Christians.

Overview of Chapters

Because the Mandeville-author mostly avoids demonizing non-Christians, preferring instead to highlight similarities between Latin Christianity and the faiths and practices of the peoples of the Holy Land and East, many Mandeville scholars call *The Travels* “tolerant,” “generous,” or even “forward-looking” and move on to discuss other issues in the text, but thus far, there have been no sustained examinations of the text’s so-called “tolerance” or how that generosity operates in the Mandeville-author’s project. In my first chapter, I argue that “tolerant” is actually not the appropriate term with which to describe the text. Instead, the Mandeville-author’s attitude and project are better understood as “universalist”: an attitude in which all non-Christians (except Jews) are valued but only after the author has rewritten their histories and identities to coincide with Christian values.¹¹ Starting with the medieval concept of *tolerantia* and its Augustinian basis, I demonstrate that the text would not have been understood as “tolerant” by its author or his medieval audience.¹² However, when placed in the context of contemporary debates regarding universalism and salvation, it becomes clear that the author’s “generosity” allows him to erase difference, appropriate non-Christians, and locate all peoples within a strictly Christian framework that establishes Latin Christendom’s global spiritual hegemony at a time when its political and military condition could not do so.¹³ Essentially, the text remakes all peoples into proto-

¹¹ For clarification of my use of the terms “universalist” and “universalism,” see chapter one, page 22.

¹² See chapter one, pages 24-27 for a definition of *tolerantia*.

¹³ In creating a vision of the world in which Christian spirituality has penetrated the faiths and practices of all peoples, the Mandeville-author’s vision differs from that found in Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale*. In the *Man of Law’s Tale*, the prospect of Christianity’s spread into Muslim Syria is raised when the Sultan converts in order to marry Constance. However, the Sultan’s mother convinces her followers that her son has blasphemed the law as found in the Quran, and she leads the slaughter of the Christians who have come to court for a wedding banquet. Constance is sent off in a rudderless ship, and Syria remains a Muslim

Christians (people who uphold Christian values despite not having officially converted) who stand as evidence of Christian hegemony, but the erasure and rewriting of their histories, faiths, and identities is a form of violence that is far from tolerant. The Mandeville-author's treatment of Saracens, Tartars, and other pagans may seem generous, but his motives have little to do with respecting others. Instead, he is interested in a vision of the world in which others' differences are violently swept away under Christian hegemony. Setting aside terms like "tolerant" and "generous" allow for a more historicized discussion of the Mandeville-author's project, and an understanding of his universalism and the discursive violence it entails also provides a new avenue for understanding why the author who avoids demonizing non-Christians is also the author who viciously demonizes Jews at every chance he gets.¹⁴

While arguing for God's acceptance of all other peoples and including them within a global proto-Christian community governed and exemplified by Christian values, the text consistently attacks and demonizes Jews to the point where they are associated with the evil forces of Gog and Magog and the Antichrist. Until the late 1990s, Mandeville scholars largely ignored *The Travels*' anti-Jewishness, perhaps because the urge to identify the text as a foundational work of tolerance made its anti-Jewishness an uncomfortable subject. In recent years, those who have called attention to the text's treatment of Jews have left the issue largely unsettled. In chapter two, I argue that the complex origin/other relationship between Christianity and Judaism prevents the

stronghold. Unlike pagan Britain in the next part of the tale, Chaucer's Muslim Syria does not appear susceptible to Christian spiritual penetration, let alone hegemony.

¹⁴ I use "discursive violence" in order to highlight the power derived from the Mandeville-author's overwhelming appropriation of the histories and identities of the peoples of the Holy Land and East in service of his vision of the world. In erasing and rewriting those histories and identities, the Mandeville-author's vision requires a great deal of destruction.

easy appropriation of Jews in service of the Mandeville-author's universalist project. Unlike other non-Christian peoples whom he easily remakes into proto-Christians, Jews act as a foil to his vision of a world in which Christian spiritual hegemony is secure, for in them the Mandeville-author sees an other who is also his origin – an origin with competing spiritual, temporal, and territorial claims stemming from the same scriptures as his. To him, they are an enemy with a rival view of the world and its history, an adversary in the reading of scripture, and a competitor for Christian claims to the Holy Land. In the face of this foe, the Mandeville-author struggles to maintain the coherent world he has created by trying to empty it of its Jewish past, and this contest with Jews comes to a head in his description of the Temple of Jerusalem which barely mentions Saracens and is instead fixated on the site's Jewishness. Unable to erase completely the Temple's (and the world's) Jewish past because of the Christian theological dependence on Jews and Judaism, he resorts to demonizing them – a symptom of his frustration that can only be understood in terms of his universalist project.¹⁵

In my third chapter, I turn to issues of form and the two “halves” of *The Travels*. Having combined the matters of the Holy Land and East for the first time, the text presents somewhat of a challenge to scholars when it comes to the relationship between

¹⁵ I choose to use “anti-Jewishness” rather than “anti-Semitism” in order to avoid the ethnic and racial connotations of the latter. The Mandeville-author's treatment of Jews is a symptom of the theological relationship between Christianity and Judaism rather than the ethnic and religious differences emphasized by modern anti-Semitism. However, Gavin Langmuir's definition of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism can be helpful when reading *The Travels*. Langmuir distinguishes between medieval anti-Judaism in which Jews were hated because of Judaism's rival claims to truth and anti-Semitism in which Christian representations of Jews demonized them as conspirators by creating myths about their alleged evil deeds. The former is rational, whereas the latter is irrational. Using Langmuir's definitions, the Mandeville-author's treatment of Jews seems to stem from their rival claims to truth (anti-Judaism), but his characterization of Jews as conspirators bent on the destruction of Christianity is more in line with Langmuir's definition of anti-Semitism. The Mandeville-author's concern with Jews as rivals seems to propel him into this irrational anti-Semitism at key points in the text, but as I discuss in chapter two, his anxieties regarding the theological relationship between Jews and Christians is at the heart of his treatment of Jews. See Gavin I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

its two “parts.” Some, like Stephen Greenblatt, have argued that the concerns of the first “half” of the text are somehow subordinated to or in tension with the concerns of its second “half” and that the text is not about possession. On the other hand, Iain MacLeod Higgins has argued that the Mandeville author fashioned a single coherent text that envisions a global Christian empire with Jerusalem at its center. Like Greenblatt, I argue that the Mandeville-author’s text is not about possession, but I also suggest that it is concerned with the Christian claim to the Holy Land because of anxieties regarding a Jewish – and not Saracen – claim. Regardless of whether Saracens continue to occupy Jerusalem and surrounding regions, the Mandeville-author wants to make sure that he is absolutely clear that the rightful claimants to the sacred territories are his fellow Christians and not Jews. A Saracen claim is not at issue because they make no such claim in the text, and the Sultan himself states that Christians will regain their Holy Land once they bring an end to their corrupt ways. In essence, the Saracens are only temporary occupants and instruments of God’s anger at Christian sinfulness. The matter of the East then helps the author demonstrate that Jews have lost their status as the chosen people, having been replaced by Christians and the proto-Christians of the Holy Land and East who enjoy God’s blessings while the Ten Jewish Tribes of Gog and Magog are imprisoned behind the Gates of Alexander. Unlike Greenblatt, I see the second part of the text continuing the project of the first. It complements rather than abandons the account of the Holy Land in order to demonstrate further the global reach of Christianity and in order to employ the peoples of Asia in the contest against Jews.

Ultimately, I argue that an understanding of the Mandeville-author’s intolerant universalist agenda allows for a more productive discussion of questions with which

Mandeville scholars have long struggled: the motives behind his “generosity” toward non-Christians, his anti-Jewishness, and his decision to join descriptions of the Holy Land and East in a single text. I am by no means proposing that there is a single “key” to understanding *The Travels*, but I do argue that the common practice of lauding the text as an example of medieval tolerance has hindered Mandeville scholarship from adequately addressing the above issues. In the following chapters, I aim to redirect conversations about the text and demonstrate the progress that can be made toward answering major questions about *The Travels* when it is critically examined while resisting the understandable urge to praise it.

The Many *Travels*

After its composition in French in the mid-fourteenth century, *The Travels* was translated into at least seven other languages within a span of fifty years: Czech, Dutch, English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Latin. Danish and Irish translations appeared shortly thereafter, and based on the survival of around 300 manuscripts of the text, it is safe to say that *The Travels* was one of the most widely circulated and read texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁶ Many Mandeville scholars also like to point out that this is one of the texts to which a number of early modern explorers turned in preparation for and during their voyages to the Americas and the Far East, but despite the popularity of *The Travels* throughout Europe, readers of each translation or manuscript read a text that could differ a great deal from the original French text or from other translations circulating on the Continent and the British Isles. Created out of numerous source-texts, *The Travels* itself quickly turned into many texts under the same name, leading Higgins

¹⁶ *The Travels* also enjoyed widespread popularity after its first printed edition appeared in 1470.

to call it a “multilingual multi-text.”¹⁷ Some versions, like the Middle English Cotton and Egerton, are largely similar to the earliest surviving French manuscript,¹⁸ but other versions range from minor local differences to major changes to the Mandeville-author’s claims and attitudes. The Vulgate Latin version, for example, challenges the Mandeville-author’s claim that Jerusalem sits at the center of the earth while stiffening “religious attitudes to such an extent that the originally openminded Sir John here becomes a fierce advocate of Catholic orthodoxy and a sharp critic of pagan blindness.”¹⁹ The translator of this version of *The Travels* was clearly uncomfortable with the text’s largely “generous” and nonjudgmental account of non-Christian faiths and practices.

Because of *The Travels*’ composition out of several dozen source-texts and because of the multiplicity of translations and redactions that proliferated in the centuries after its completion, scholars interested in this text (or these texts) face the challenging task of determining appropriate limits to their studies. To undertake a massive study of the text, its sources, and its various versions risks sacrificing depth and accessibility. I am by no means suggesting that such a study would not be useful. Indeed, Higgins’ work on the Mandeville-author’s sources and ten versions of *The Travels* has gone a long way in reinvigorating Mandeville studies by emphasizing the importance of the text’s

¹⁷ Higgins, viii.

¹⁸ The earliest surviving French manuscript (Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale MS nouv. acq. fr. 4515) was copied in 1371. The Cotton (British Library MS Cotton Titus c. xvi) and Egerton (British Library MS Egerton 1982) versions were made sometime around 1400, and each survive in individual manuscripts. The Defective version, a third Middle English version of *The Travels*, was probably written around the same time, and the 38 surviving manuscripts, fragments, and extracts date from 1400 or later. This version got its name due to the loss of a quire in the manuscript from which it was translated. Subsequent manuscripts proliferated what is called the “Egypt Gap” since the missing sections include the description of Egypt’s history and geography.

¹⁹ Higgins, 25. Higgins’ study has been invaluable to Mandeville studies as his work provides an account of the major differences between ten of the most important versions of *The Travels*. The Vulgate Latin version of the text survives in forty-one manuscripts.

“intratextual as well as its intertextual multiplicity.”²⁰ However, in order to supplement broad (and necessary) studies that must by nature sacrifice depth, sustained studies of individual versions of the text must continue to be undertaken. As I am interested in the English Mandeville and because I strongly believe that a larger project on *The Travels* must begin with a sustained examination of one of its versions before moving to broaden that project to include other translations or redactions, in this dissertation I have chosen to focus on one Middle English version of the text: the Egerton.

Scholars who have worked on the Middle English *Travels* have generally chosen between the Cotton and Egerton versions for use as their base text,²¹ but the Cotton has appeared more frequently in recent studies. Both were produced around 1400, and with the exception of a few interpolations, neither version significantly deviates from the substance or spirit of the earliest surviving French manuscript, but the Egerton

²⁰ Higgins, viii.

²¹ Mary B. Campbell, Frank Grady, Nicholas Watson, Scott D. Westrem, and Christian K. Zacher have all chosen the Cotton version as their base texts. See Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Frank Grady, “‘Machomete’ and Mandeville’s Travels,” *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. John Victor Tolan (New York: Routledge, 2000). 271-288; Frank Grady, *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005); Nicholas Watson, “Visions of Inclusion: Universal Salvation and Vernacular Theology in Pre-Reformation England,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27.2 (1997): 145-187; Scott D. Westrem, “Two Routes to Pleasant Instruction,” *The Word of Dissimilitude: Essays from the Sixth Citadel Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. David G. Allen & Robert A. White (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992). 67-80; Christian K. Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). In their studies of *The Travels*, Stephen Greenblatt and Geraldine Heng use the Egerton version. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) and Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Heng notes that the Egerton corresponds more precisely than the Cotton to the earliest surviving French manuscripts. Heng, 423n. 2. Recently, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has argued that the Defective version is the Middle English version most eligible for the title of the English Mandeville, and Suzanne M. Yaeger prefers the Defective as well. See Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “Bodies in Motion / Mandeville, Defective,” Plenary Address to the 34th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Medieval Association, 2008; and Suzanne M. Yaeger, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). As I move forward from this dissertation, I fully intend to broaden my study of *The Travels* to include the Defective manuscript tradition (and the Cotton) and to address the effect of the “Egypt Gap” on my reading of the text; however, I choose to take on the Defective only after having attended to the Middle English version closest to the surviving French text.

corresponds more precisely to the French.²² The choice between the Cotton and Egerton *Travels* has mostly been guided by the wider availability of several critical editions of the Cotton.²³ In choosing the Egerton as my base text for this study, I seek to counterbalance scholars' preference for the Cotton in order to avoid promoting the Cotton as the representative Middle English base text for Mandeville studies.²⁴ However, I am also well aware of the implications of elevating any single manuscript of *The Travels* to definitive status; therefore, I offer the following reading of the Egerton as a starting point for a larger project on the Middle English *Travels* which would naturally include readings and comparisons of all the English manuscript traditions.

²²The Cotton, Defective, and Egerton versions all include a uniquely English interpolation at the end of the text in which Sir John claims to have traveled to Rome and presented his manuscript to the pope for approval.

²³ British Library MS Cotton Titus c. xvi has been edited and published in *Mandeville's Travels: Translated from the French of Jean d'Outremerse*, ed. Paul Hamelius, 2 vols. EETS o.s. 153–54 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1919–23), reprinted London: Oxford University Press, 1960–61; *Mandeville's Travels*, ed. M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967). Before 1953, British Library MS Egerton 1982 was only available in Warner's edition from 1889, and its inconveniently large size may have contributed to scholars' preference for the Cotton editions available at the time. The Egerton was edited and published using modernized spelling in *Mandeville's Travels: Texts and Translations: Volume I*, ed. Malcolm Letts (London: Hakluyt Society, 1953).

²⁴ My decision to use the Egerton version as my base text also stems from the fact that the edition of *The Travels* most widely available to modern readers of English since its first publication in 1983 has been C. W. R. D. Moseley's Penguin edition in which he uses the Egerton as the base text for his modern translation. See *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, tr. C. W. R. D. Moseley (New York: Penguin, 2005). In his introduction, Moseley makes a persuasive case for using the Egerton over other English versions. See Moseley, 37–38. My decision to use the Warner edition of the Egerton instead of Letts' edition is largely due to Warner being the only Egerton edition which retains the Middle English spelling of the text. Letts' edition modernizes the spelling, while Moseley's Penguin edition goes beyond modernization and actually translates the text into Modern English. In addition, Letts uses the Warner as the base text for his edition.

Chapter 1: Intolerant Universalism and the Contest for Souls

In his account of the East, the Mandeville-author describes the inhabitants of a land called Oxidrace. They are the Gynoscriche,¹ and although their beliefs and practices differ from his own, the author not only avoids criticism but even goes so far as to defend them by recounting a vision shown to St. Peter. In that vision, an angel comes to Peter and shows him beasts, snakes, and birds. Asked to take one and eat it, Peter says that he will not eat unclean animals.² The angel responds, “Call þou noȝt vnclene þat þat Godd hase clensted.”³ The Mandeville-author then uses this vision to argue for God’s acceptance of non-Christians:

Þis was done in takyn þat men despise na men for þe diuersetee of þaire lawes. For we wate noȝt wham Godd luffez ne wham he hatez; and þerfore, when I pray for þe deed and sayse my *De profundis*, I say it for all Cristen saules and also for all þe saules þat er to be prayd fore. And of þis folk I say þus mykill, þat I trowe þai er full acceptable to Godd, þai er so trew and so gude. (146)

In his reading of Peter’s vision, the author claims that non-Christians are acceptable to God. His position is not necessarily surprising since as God’s creation, all humans would indeed be acceptable to Him just by virtue of having been born. From a Christian perspective, whether or not an individual will be saved is then a matter of choosing to accept Christ and his message at some point during his or her lifetime, but in this passage, God’s acceptance of non-Christians seems to mean that they can actually be saved

¹ Known as the Gymnosophists in other medieval texts.

² For the version in the New Testament, see Acts 10:9-16. I use *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha*, ed. Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³ *The Buke of John Maundeuill being the Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Knight 1322-56* (Westminster: Roxburghe Club, 1889). 146. Subsequent citations from this text are in parenthetical form. The passage continues by explaining that the Incarnation of Christ was long ago prophesized on this island, and although the islanders believe in the Incarnation, they “knewe noȝt þe maner of his passioun.” The Mandeville-author’s “generosity” with regard to the Gynoscriche and many other inhabitants of the Holy Land and the East seems to be possible only within a Christian context.

despite not having converted to Christianity. The Mandeville-author points out that “we wate noȝt wham Godd luffez ne wham he hatez,” echoing fourteenth-century discussions regarding universal salvation and God’s two orders of power: the *potentia ordinata* and the *potentia absoluta*. Pelagians proposed that the former power governed the world and was limited by God’s various covenants with humans, while the latter was unlimited. This unlimited power was beyond human understanding and would allow God to grant salvation to anyone whether Christian or not. I am not suggesting that the Mandeville-author entirely subscribed to the Pelagian view,⁴ but the traces of their argument in this passage imply that when he says God accepts non-Christians, he means that they can be saved, for he also notes that Sir John prays for both Christian and non-Christian souls when saying the *De profundis*, a prayer said for the salvation of the dead. The author’s position regarding the fate of non-Christian souls is quite extraordinary given that the text opens by lamenting that it has been a long time “sen þare was any general passage ouer þe see in to þe haly land” (2).

For the most part, *The Travels*’ approach to the many peoples of the Holy Land and East is usually more generous than might be expected from a medieval text that opens by pointing out that Christians’ “right heritage” is in “straunge men handes” (2). As is universally agreed by Mandeville scholars, whether it is the monstrous peoples of the Asian islands, the cannibals and Bragmans of Inde, or the Saracens in the Holy Land, the Mandeville-author resists demonizing them and instead presents a largely uncritical account of their beliefs and practices. Generally speaking, he states the ways in which their faiths and customs differ from his own (minimizing those differences as much as he

⁴ “Pelagian” is not a term used by these theologians (William of Ockham, Robert Holcot, Thomas Buckingham, and Adam of Woodham) to describe themselves. Instead, they were branded as Pelagians by their opponents, most notably Thomas Bradwardine.

can), and, as in the example above, he even justifies their beliefs and practices with Christian scripture and tradition.⁵ This resistance to criticizing others leads many scholars to call this text “tolerant”; however, they do not always expand on the label. Once acknowledged, the Mandeville-author’s “tolerance” is rarely examined closely, and instead, scholars move on to discuss other issues. If the text can be called “tolerant” as many scholars claim, then why is there so little work done on this aspect of the text when the past two decades have seen numerous studies on tolerance in both the Middle Ages and in our own time?⁶

Despite the rarity of sustained studies of the “tolerance” of *The Travels*,⁷ a number of Mandeville scholars have briefly touched on the text’s sympathetic treatment of others. In most such scholarship, the Mandeville-author’s account of the many

⁵ There are a few exceptions to this, most notably the Mandeville-author’s handling of Jews. In a text that almost goes out of its way to avoid criticizing others, Jews are viciously demonized and attacked. I address this issue in chapter two.

⁶ For examples of such work on medieval tolerance, see *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (New York: E.J. Brill, 1992); *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, ed. Vivian Mann, Thomas Glick & Jerrilynn Dodds (New York: G. Braziller in association with the Jewish Museum, 1992); *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, ed. Olivia Remie Constable (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. Maria Rosa Menocal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2002); Chris Lowney, *A Vanished World: Medieval Spain’s Golden Age of Enlightenment* (New York: Free Press, 2005); *Difference and Dissent: Theories of Toleration in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Cary J. Nederman & John Christian Laursen (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration Before the Enlightenment*, ed. John Christian Laursen & Cary J. Nederman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), written in reaction to R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Malden: Blackwell, 2007). Originally published in 1987, this new edition addresses criticism of the first edition. See also *Religious Toleration: “The Variety of Rites” from Cyrus to Defoe*, ed. John Christian Laursen (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999). Studies on tolerance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are also widespread. See Michael Walzer, *On Toleration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). The bibliographies of these works provide a more comprehensive list of the work being done on twentieth- and twenty-first-century tolerance.

⁷ One notable exception is Frank Grady, *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

peoples, lands, and faiths of the Holy Land and East usually earns some kind of commendation for its “tolerance” and generosity with regard to the many others of *The Travels*, but in that scholarship, little is done to examine critically how that “tolerance” operates in the text. For example, Christian K. Zacher argues that the text “subordinates pilgrimage to a form of travel motivated by love for this world.”⁸ He is careful not to argue “from these sentiments, as some have, that Mandeville doubted Christianity’s superiority over other religions. Rather, it seems that in these moments of reflection and summary his aim is to remind other Christians that they should love their neighbors – and also tolerate and try to understand them.”⁹ He finally argues that the text’s “forward-looking belief” is meant to encourage “a fellowship of understanding and tolerance based on the love God holds for all creatures....”¹⁰ However, such statements applaud the Mandeville-author for being “enlightened” without critically examining what his generosity does in the text or whether the term “tolerance” can be applied to this text at all.¹¹

Although he does not question the labeling of *The Travels* as “tolerant,” C. W. R. D. Moseley provides one answer with regard to the text’s generous treatment of non-Christians. He sees “threads of tolerance, understanding, charity, and questioning”

⁸ Christian K. Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). 5.

⁹ Zacher, 148-149.

¹⁰ Zacher, 153, 157.

¹¹ Similarly, Scott D. Westrem points to the Mandeville-author’s “tolerant accounts of religious and social diversity” that are “taken from fourteenth-century travel narratives that use the information to prove a society’s pestiferous or abominable behavior,” but the Mandeville-author “consistently omits or reverses the prejudices and criticism of his sources.” Scott D. Westrem, “Two Routes to Pleasant Instruction,” *The Work of Dissimilitude: Essays from the Sixth Citadel Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. David G. Allen & Robert A. White (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992). 73. Westrem even describes the Mandeville-author as “fall[ing] over himself praising the inhabitants of Bragman.” Westrem, 71. Like Zacher, Westrem does not address how that “tolerance” operates in the text or question the employment of the term “tolerant.”

throughout the text and reads these “tolerant” accounts as examples with which the text contrasts the problems in Europe,¹² but “he [the Mandeville-author] treats the Greeks, the Muslims, the Jacobites and the Bragmans as interesting and honourable and worthy of sympathetic respect, not merely as sticks with which to beat European complacency.”¹³ *The Travels* does indeed use faithful and admirable others as critical mirrors for Latin Christendom, but if those others are treated as “interesting and honourable and worthy of sympathetic respect” and more than as tools with which to criticize Christians, then why does the Mandeville-author resist criticizing non-Christians when most of his sources supposedly do just the opposite? If the text’s characterization of its many others does more than act as “sticks with which to beat European complacency,” then what does it do? Essentially, the work of each of these scholars commends the Mandeville-author for being forward-thinking or ahead of his time. I am by no means suggesting that the work of these scholars is not useful when it comes to other issues surrounding the text; however, I suggest that a reading of the text would greatly benefit from a sustained exploration of the author’s treatment of others in *The Travels*, but such an exploration must also question whether “tolerant” is the appropriate term with which to describe the text.¹⁴

¹² C. W. R. D. Moseley, “Introduction,” *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, tr. C. W. R. D. Moseley (New York: Penguin, 2005). 28. Moseley’s introduction to this modern translation of *The Travels* is quite significant in that it is the edition to which most modern readers have had access since its first printing in 1983, and it therefore shapes most modern readers’ understanding of the text.

¹³ Moseley, 27.

¹⁴ In their collection on Western views of Islam, David Blanks and Michael Frassetto point out how our own historical and cultural context can affect our reading of medieval texts: “Thus we end up playing our own tricks on the dead – and for reasons not dissimilar in their psychology to those that motivated the medieval and early modern scholars that we study. In order to ease our anxieties and insecurities, we try to tease out hints of tolerance and mutual respect. In a word, we search for similarities so that we can allay our fears, much in the same way that our predecessors emphasized difference in order to allay theirs. But today there is an added dimension. By elucidating the past we seek to exorcise the guilt of our ancestors and to redress the wrongs that premodern attitudes have wrought upon the present.” David R. Blanks &

Largely avoiding the impulse to praise the text, Stephen Greenblatt also describes *The Travels* as “tolerant” – at least at first. In this text, a “crusading drive toward the sacred rocks at the center of the world is transformed into a tolerant perambulation along its rim.”¹⁵ Although the Mandeville-author demonstrates “an open acceptance of many coexisting beliefs,”¹⁶ Greenblatt does have some reservations in calling this text “tolerant”:

But should we call Mandeville’s attitude tolerance? Tolerance, we could argue, is only genuinely possible with those with whom one has to live; the customs of those at a vast distance in space or time or of imaginary beings may be admired or despised, but such responses are independent of tolerance. They are, in effect, the attitudinal equivalent of the act of categorizing: one may decide that other peoples scarcely merit the name of human beings or that they are models of virtue. In neither case do significant life choices, entailing political decisions with historical consequences, have to be made. A metaphoric embrace of the other is no doubt wonderful, but what is its exigency in the real world? What is to keep it from vanishing into thin air?¹⁷

Greenblatt insists that the word “tolerance” does not apply to *The Travels* because it deals with cultures far from the Mandeville-author’s home. He argues “tolerance” can only be applied to peoples in close proximity to one another where real life choices must be made and where there are direct historical consequences as a result of those choices. He ends

Michael Frassetto, “Introduction,” *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other*, ed. David R. Blanks & Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999). 7-8. They do not specifically address *The Travels* but comment instead on the field in general. Benjamin Braude also touches on the problem of scholars’ praise in his study of Mandeville’s Jews: “Many scholars were eager, even over-eager, to praise his [the Mandeville-author’s] tolerance and exaggerate his resemblance to the liberal values of their own era.” Benjamin Braude, “Mandeville’s Jews among Others,” *Pilgrims & Travelers to the Holy Land*, ed. Bryan F. Le Beau & Menachem Mor (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996). 141. He notes that until fairly recently, the impulse to praise the text seems to have kept Mandeville scholars from addressing *The Travels*’ extreme anti-Jewishness. I turn to this important issue in chapter two.

¹⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). 24. I address Greenblatt’s characterization of the two parts of the text in chapter three. At this point, I am only concerned with how he reads the text’s “generosity.”

¹⁶ Greenblatt, 45.

¹⁷ Greenblatt, 45-46.

up rejecting the term “tolerance” in favor of “theoretical curiosity.”¹⁸ Greenblatt’s impulse to question whether “tolerance” is the appropriate term for *The Travels* is exactly what Mandeville studies needs, and this chapter builds on his rejection by more closely examining what the text’s “generosity” actually does in its medieval context. Ultimately, I distinguish between the medieval Christian understanding of tolerance and the Mandeville-author’s universalizing tendencies, and his universalizing tendencies are far more aggressive and insidious than suggested by a neutral term like “theoretical curiosity.”

Tolerance is indeed present in the text – not in the modern sense typically used by critics but in the medieval sense of “sufference,” but even then, it is not the Mandeville-author’s. As I will discuss further below, it is the attitudes, policies, and practices of the Khan and his government (as represented by the text) that can be labeled as tolerant and that best fit *tolerantia* as understood in the Middle Ages. The Mandeville-author’s project and treatment of the others of the text, on the other hand, can and should be called universalist. More specifically, it should be called Christian universalist.¹⁹ By this, I do not mean to equate *The Travels* with the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century movements by the same name. Instead, I mean that the Mandeville-author clearly sees that Christ’s message is a universal message intended for all peoples, that all peoples have some knowledge of Christ, that their faiths in some way resemble Latin Christianity, and that adherents of all faiths are acceptable to God and can therefore be saved. I believe distinguishing between tolerance and this particular brand of universalism allows a

¹⁸ Braude follows Greenblatt in favoring “theoretical curiosity” in place of “tolerance.” Braude, 138.

¹⁹ For the sake of ease, I will simply use the terms “universalist” and “universalism,” but in each case I mean “Christian universalist” and “Christian universalism.”

reading of the text that can go beyond praising it for its “forward-looking belief” and instead see that the author’s approach to non-Latin Christians entails an aggressive discursive violence as he changes his sources in order to represent the world as one in which Christian spiritual hegemony reigns supreme and to craft an argument in favor of universal salvation that does not rely on changing the rules of what it takes to be saved.²⁰

The Great Khan’s Tolerant Empire

I begin with the Great Khan because the Mandeville-author’s account of Cathay (the Khan’s empire) provides an ideal example with which to discuss tolerance as understood by Latin Christians in the Middle Ages. Its inclusion in the text also serves to highlight the difference between the author’s treatment of non-Christians and the Khan’s treatment of the various peoples within his realm. In the massive realm of the most powerful ruler in the world, “na man es forboden in his land to trowe in what lawe þat him list leue on” (108). With an attitude similar to that of the Ottomans in later centuries,²¹ the Khan’s empire is one where those in power do not interfere with the religious practices of their subjects: “Þai suffer all maner of nacions dwell amanges þam and men of all maner of lawes and sectez withouten any lettyng” (123). This Khan and

²⁰ My argument concerning *The Travels*’ universalism has been anticipated in the work of Iain Macleod Higgins. See Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The “Travels” of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). However, my distinction between tolerance and universalism reveals a particular aggressiveness in the text that is rarely acknowledged in Mandeville studies. That aggression takes the form of discursive violence in which the text erases the histories and identities of non-Christians in service of representing them as proto-Christians who stand as evidence of Christianity’s spiritual hegemony.

²¹ Starting shortly after Mehmed the Conqueror’s conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman millet system allowed each minority group (millet) its own religious courts, leadership, and system for collecting taxes. Provided that each millet remained loyal to the sultan, the Ottoman government would not interfere in their internal affairs. The officially recognized millets were usually religious rather than ethnic groups: Jews, Greek Orthodox Christians, and Armenian Orthodox Christians. More minorities gained official status in the later Ottoman period. For further discussion of the Ottoman model and other models of toleration in multinational empires, see Walzer, 14-18.

his government tolerate the beliefs of all nations and faiths within the empire, and although the term “tolerance” or any of its forms do not appear in *The Travels*, this is one of the rare instances when the Mandeville-author uses the term “suffer,” which can mean both “to allow” and “to endure.”²² This is where the text comes closest to using the term “tolerate” as it would have been understood in the Middle Ages.

The medieval Christian concept of tolerance is primarily rooted in the work of St. Augustine.²³ In *The City of God*, Augustine divides people into two groups: human society consists of citizens of the Heavenly City (or the City of God) and citizens of the earthly city. The Heavenly City “is a community of devout men, the other a company of the irreligious, and each has its own angels attached to it. In one city love of God has been given first place, in the other, love of self.”²⁴ Citizens of each city do not know who they are, nor are citizens of the Heavenly City necessarily from one people or another. Earthly and Heavenly citizens could be living side by side or attending the same church, and that fact requires Augustine to establish what will be the foundation of medieval *tolerantia*. Because there is no tangible separation between the two groups, the earthly city and her citizens are to be tolerated by the Heavenly City and her citizens since not doing so would disturb earthly peace. Augustine says that the Heavenly City must “obey the laws of the earthly city by which those things which are designed for the support of this mortal life are regulated; and the purpose of this obedience is that, since this mortal condition is shared by both cities, a harmony may be preserved between them in things

²² “sufferen, v,” *The Middle English Dictionary Online*, July 24, 2009, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED43653>.

²³ I summarize this concept after my discussion of Augustine’s attitude since one naturally leads to the other.

²⁴ Saint Augustine, *City of God*, tr. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 2003). 573.

that are relevant to this condition.”²⁵ Augustine also points to St. Paul and applies his teachings to the issue of earthly peace: “The Apostle instructs the Church to pray for kings of that city and those in high positions, adding these words: ‘that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life with all devotion and love.’”²⁶ Although citizens of the Heavenly City must aspire to more than the earthly city, while on earth they must maintain a working relationship with the others and obey their laws in order to maintain peace. They should essentially tolerate a form of evil (earthliness) in order to prevent a greater evil (discord). This seems a natural move for a man writing in a time when the Roman Empire suffered a series of setbacks culminating in the sack of Rome in 410. As Henry Bettenson highlights, Augustine would have been confronted by a number of exiles in North Africa asking how a Christian Roman Empire could have collapsed.²⁷ Peace and stability are exactly what Augustine and his contemporaries would have yearned for in the face of such chaos.

This notion of tolerating evil for the sake of peace is highlighted in Istvan Bejczy’s discussion of the medieval concept of *tolerantia*, in which he outlines three meanings of *tolerantia* in the Middle Ages.²⁸ The first has its roots in Antiquity and stands for “the bearing of anything which was a burden to the human body or, more often, to the human mind.”²⁹ A second meaning was developed by early Christendom:

²⁵ Augustine, 877.

²⁶ Augustine, 892.

²⁷ Henry Bettenson, “Introduction,” *City of God*, tr. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 2003). ix.

²⁸ The moral consequences of tolerating evil for the sake of peace are staggering. The past century alone has demonstrated that individuals and governments alike can easily turn a blind eye to oppression and genocide and justify their inaction with talk of peace and stability. However, Augustine is not talking about anything like the Holocaust or Apartheid. He is not concerned with the forces that sacked Rome in 410. Rather, he is concerned with the interaction between the citizens of the two cities.

²⁹ Istvan Bejczy, “*Tolerantia*: A Medieval Concept,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997): 368.

“*Tolerantia* still indicated the bearing of physical or psychological burdens, but with religious connotations.”³⁰ Now it referred to enduring the suffering of earthly life. These first two meanings refer to individual life, but the third meaning, developed in the Middle Ages and Augustinian in basis, was social and political. It came to mean

the forbearance of bad people (the immoral, the heterodox, the infidel) by those who had the power to dispose of them. The object of tolerance in this third sense were people and their allegedly bad habits, people who were seen as a burden to society and not, at least not primarily, to individuals. Moreover, the tolerating subject was no longer a powerless individual but a powerful collectivity that could destroy the tolerated people if it wanted to but ought not to do so. Tolerance thus came to imply the self-restraint of political power....³¹

This concept of *tolerantia* was first developed in canon law in the twelfth century and was later introduced into scholasticism, where schoolmen believed it should be adopted by the state.³² Essentially, the Church or state tolerated the evil it could not correct or punish without disturbing the peace or without causing a greater evil than the tolerated one. Bejczy points to Thomas Aquinas, whose “argument shows that one did not have to like the Jews to be tolerant; to the contrary, one had to dislike them to be tolerant, for tolerance only applied to evil. Tolerance was not an imperative to love but a restraint on one’s hatred.”³³ Tolerance as understood in the Middle Ages is not about acceptance; it is about restraint,³⁴ and that is really what the Khan does with regard to the many others

³⁰ Bejczy, 368.

³¹ Bejczy, 368.

³² For Bejczy’s full discussion, see 368-373.

³³ Bejczy, 372.

³⁴ This concept of tolerance is quite different from others developed in the Middle Ages. In Islam, for example, Jews and Christians were and are considered “Peoples of the Book.” Medieval Muslim rulers required these “Peoples of the Book” (known as the *dhimmi*) to pay the *jizya*, a special tax, but otherwise, their lives, property, and freedom of worship were (in theory) protected, and they enjoyed more rights than other non-Muslims. The special status of the *dhimmi* in Muslim lands was based upon similarities between the three faiths, for Jews and Christians share a common Abrahamic spiritual ancestry with Muslims, while

within his realm. It may seem odd that this Tartar ruler practices tolerance as understood by medieval Christians, but the Khan is represented by the testimony of a Christian author, so it is natural that the Mandeville-author's representation of the Khan's policies toward the many peoples in his realm would reflect a Christian understanding of tolerance.

The Khan and his immense power are mentioned quite early in the text. Long before getting to his account of Jerusalem, the Mandeville-author introduces the Khan during his discussion of Egypt and the Sultan of Babylon:

And þat Babilon es noȝt in þe subieccioun of þe Sowdan, bot within þe lordschippe of þe kyng of Perse. And it es halden of þe grete Caan, þe whilke es a grete emperour, 3a þe grettest of þe werld, for he es lord of þe grete Ile of Cathay and of many oþer cuntreez, and of a grete party of Inde. His land marchez with Prestre Iohn land.... He es gretter and myghtier þan þe Sowdan withouten comparison. (21-22)

When orienting his readers as to the location of the Biblical Babylon versus the city in which the Sultan dwells, it would have been enough to say that the Khan holds the lands in which the ancient city is located, but both here and throughout the text, the Mandeville-author piles one superlative over another to ensure that his readers understand the supreme power of this eastern ruler. When he finally comes to the description of the Khan's lands, he is sure to remind readers of his great power: "For sikerly vnder þe firmament es noȝt so grete a lorde ne sa riche ne na so myghty as es þe Grete Caan of Tartre. Noȝt Prestre Iohn þat es emperour of Inde þe less and þe mare, ne þe sowdan of Babiloyn, ne þe emperoure of Pers, ne nan oþer may be made comparisoun off till him" (108). Clearly, more than any other ruler in the world, this man has the

Medieval Christian *tolerantia* emphasized difference. The tolerating Christian subject tolerated the non-Christian, the Jew, the heretic, the immoral, etc.

ability to do as he pleases with the peoples under his rule, which makes his restraint with regard to other faiths all the more marvelous and significant.³⁵ Such restraint of physical force and political power is at the heart of *tolerantia*. Moreover, the Khan tolerates the others within his empire for the same reasons Bejczy says the medieval Church tolerated “bad people”: peace and stability.

Prior to telling his readers that the Khan allows nations of all faiths to live within his empire without interference, the Mandeville-author mentions a prophecy foretelling the conquest of the Tartar empire: “For þai say þaire prophecy tellez þam þat þai schall be ouercommen with schotte of archers, and þat thase men sall turne þam to þaire lawe” (123). Immediately following this prophecy, readers learn that “þai wate noȝt what men þai schall be, and þefore þai suffer all maner of nacions dwell amanges þam and men of all maner of lawes and sectez withouten lettyng” (123). The Khan’s tolerance seems to be a response to the prophecy, but the implementation of such a policy when faced with one’s destruction by a foreign enemy is odd. Frank Grady notes that

the logical response to such a prediction would doubtless be pervasive xenophobia and a fundamental distrust of all things foreign, and in the source of the passage the Tartars clearly impose their law and customs on the peoples they conquer. But the author of the *Travels* has already committed himself to a Cathay that embraces religious diversity, and he thus changes the passage to correspond to that vision.³⁶

The Mandeville-author changes his source, in this case John of Plano Carpini’s *History of the Mongols*,³⁷ to fit his own vision of Cathay as a realm in which all faiths enjoy a

³⁵ For another example of the text’s emphasis on the Khan’s power, see *Buke*, 120.

³⁶ Grady, 58.

³⁷ For the source material, see John of Plano Carpini, *History of the Mongols in Mission to Asia*, ed. Christopher Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). 25-26. Dawson’s collection of travel accounts to Asia uses John of Plano Carpini’s *History of the Mongols* translated by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey.

degree of freedom instead of merely copying his source's account. That vision is one of tolerance, and in a single sentence, the Mandeville-author links tolerance to peace and stability within the Khan's empire.³⁸

Peace and stability are of primary concern in the Khan's court. It is in the description of the court of Cathay, after all, that the Mandeville-author includes an account of how the Khan employs court philosophers for the purpose of imperial stability: "And, if any man begynne were agayne þe emperour in any cuntree, alssone þe philosophers knawez it and tellez þe emperour and his counsaile, and he sendez his oste þider to retreyne þe malice of his enmys" (116). In their role as intelligence directors, these men are responsible for maintaining stable control over a vast empire. Remarkably, the word used when describing the philosophers' role is "restreyne," perhaps emphasizing the proper restraint practiced by the Khan as opposed to the lack of such restraint on the part of his enemies within the empire.

Readers later learn that this Tartar ruler uses a vast communications and spy network that allows for information to get to the Khan (and presumably those court philosophers) quickly via a medieval Pony Express, helping him maintain order and peace in Cathay,³⁹ and stability is a theme found in the story of the first Khan: Chaanguys. The Khan asks his sons to tie twelve arrows together and to break the bundle of arrows. They fail, and he then tells them to untie the bundle and to break each one individually, which they do with ease. Using the arrows, he demonstrates that together, the sons will be unstoppable, but "alssone as 3e er diuised and stryfez ilkane with oþer,

³⁸ Grady also points to this. See Grady, 59. Grady argues that the connection between tolerance and the prophecy ultimately "authorize such toleration as the proper response to cultural and religious diversity."

³⁹ See *Buke*, 119 for the description of the Khan's communication/spy network.

alssone 3e schall be confused and schent and destruyd” (112). Peace and stability between the Khan’s twelve sons and thus the Tartar tribes are what Chaanguys gives his people and what allows for the survival and success of their empire. Whether it is his treatment of the peoples and faiths within his realm or the creation and maintenance of his spy network, stability is the Khan’s primary concern, and that concern is a central one to the practice of *tolerantia* as understood in the Middle Ages.⁴⁰

The Khan’s stable empire directly contrasts the fractious Latin Christendom described in the opening of *The Travels*.⁴¹ In lamenting the loss of Christendom’s “right heritage,” the Mandeville-author connects the Saracen occupation (without actually naming the Saracens) of the Holy Land to the failure of Christian lords in Europe whose “pride enuy and couetise has so enflaumbed þe hertes of lordes of þe werld þat þai er mare bisie for to disherite þaire neghbours þan for to chalange or conquere oure heritage before said” (2). These leaders fight one another rather than uniting in the face of a common enemy, and the author is sure that “wald Godd þat þir werldly lordes ware at gude accorde..., I trowe wele þat within a lytill tyme oure riȝt heritage before said schuld be recounsailed and putte in to þe handes of þe right heyers of Ihesu Criste” (2). Good accord is exactly what Sir John finds in Cathay. The Tartar tribes, descendants of Chaanguys’ sons, do not fight one another as the Christian lords do in Europe, and in

⁴⁰ Another fourteenth-century figure, John Wyclif, directly ties tolerance to stability: “Wyclif’s theory of toleration derives from the king’s responsibility (to God as well as to his subjects) to protect the welfare of *both* Graced and ungraced souls and to ensure that they are able to live peaceably together.” Cary J. Nederman & John Christian Laursen, “Difference and Dissent: Introduction,” *Difference and Dissent: Theories of Toleration in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Cary J. Nederman & John Christian Laursen (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996). 10.

⁴¹ The two entities mirror each other in that the Khan’s empire is politically unified but religiously diverse while Latin Christendom is religiously unified but politically diverse. Latin Christendom’s religious unity should make political unity easy, but according to the Mandeville-author, that unity evades Latin Christians because of their internal squabbles.

addition to abiding by the lesson learned from the first Khan's demonstration with the bundle of twelve arrows, subsequent Khans continue using the communication network and employing advisors as informants in order to maintain the stability they have inherited from Chaanguys. The contrast between Latin Christendom and the Tartar empire naturally leads to a reading of *The Travels* in which Cathay serves as a mirror with which to expose problems in Latin Christendom – one of the “sticks with which to beat European complacency.”⁴² The tolerant policies practiced by the Khan's empire are models that should be followed by Latin Christendom itself because Christian lords need to *restrain* themselves in their many quarrels with one another. When it comes to non-Christians beyond Europe, however, in the world in which *The Travels* was written and in the world as described by the Mandeville-author, Latin Christians were and are in no position to practice tolerance since it can be practiced by only “those who had the power to dispose of” others.

In the century leading up to the composition of *The Travels*, there was a shift in Latin Christian power beyond the Mediterranean. Although the Muslim presence in Iberia was finally diminishing and coming under better control of Latin Christians, the story was quite different in the Holy Land and East. The fall of Acre in 1291 finally ended the presence of crusader states in the Holy Land, and the fourteenth century saw the rise of the Ottoman dynasty, which pushed well into Europe around the time *The Travels* was written. Farther to the East, the Mongols, who began as a threat to Europe and later came to be seen as potential allies against the Muslims in the Holy Land, became increasingly attracted to Islam, and this severed ties to the East and with it any

⁴² Moseley, 27.

hope of an alliance. At home in Europe, political, religious, and military quarreling within Latin Christendom, such as the wars between England and France and the controversial Avignon Papacy, made it near impossible to exercise real control abroad,⁴³ and these quarrels were often blamed (by the Mandeville-author himself and many others including Matthew Paris in the previous century) for the failure to reestablish a foothold in the Holy Land.

Well before these events, thirteenth-century Latin Christians continued to crusade, and there was still a sense of hope for success in the Holy Land. However, each attempt was undermined by conflicts between Europe's rulers, most notably the disputes between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor. *The Chronicles of Matthew Paris* provide a valuable glimpse into the many internal reasons why every effort made to strengthen the Latin Christian presence in the Holy Land failed.⁴⁴ Matthew's text explains the reasons

⁴³ In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Papacy increasingly called crusades against its enemies within Christendom. These included "wars with the Hohenstaufen rulers of Germany and Sicily (1239-68), the Wars of the Sicilian Vespers to restore Angevin rule in Sicily (1282-1302), campaigns to secure papal interests in central and northern Italy during the evacuation of the papal Curia to Avignon (1309-1377) and attempts to resolve by force the Great Schism (1378-1417)." Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). 895. Crusades seemed to be called on a regular basis, especially in conflicts involving the Papacy's interests in Italy. Milan alone was targeted in 1321, 1324, 1354, 1360, 1363, and 1368. See Tyerman, 900. In the decades shortly after *The Travels* was written, all sides of the Great Schism launched crusades against one another, and in 1386, John of Gaunt's attempt to secure his wife's claim to the throne of Castile was backed as a crusade by Pope Urban VI because John I of Castile supported the other pope, Clement VII. Tyerman, 901. Though he does not directly point to these crusades against Christians, the Mandeville-author's criticism of in-fighting comes shortly before suggesting that the masses of Latin Christendom would gladly make "þis haly viage ouer þe see" if Christian lords would stop fighting one another and lead the effort. He continues by saying that it has been a long time "sen þare was any general passage ouer þe see in to þe haly land." *Buke*, 2. The proper target for a crusade is clearly over the sea and not in Europe. Crusades against Christians did not sit well with at least one other fourteenth-century author, Geoffrey Chaucer, who excludes crusades within Europe from his description of the Knight's crusading career. Chaucer's picture of a "verray, parfit gentil knyght" has no place for them. See Geoffrey Chaucer, "General Prologue," *The Canterbury Tales* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). ll. 43-100.

⁴⁴ Although Matthew explains most of the failures, there is still hope that the problems within Latin Christendom can be solved. His text certainly communicates the feeling that Europe is under threat, but there is still hope for an alliance with the Mongols or for peace at home. His rhetoric with regard to Muslims is quite vicious, especially compared to that of *The Travels*. For his treatment of Muslims, see Matthew Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History From the Year 1235 to 1273*, tr. J.A. Giles (New York:

behind each failure, but it also presents a divided and paranoid Christendom. For example, Matthew links crusade directly to the greed of the Church when the pope sends Master Thomas to England,

whom he chose and thought expedient, from their [the crusaders'] vow of pilgrimage, on receiving money from them, which he considered that he could expend advantageously for the promotion of the cause of the Holy Land. When the crusaders saw this, they wondered at the insatiable greediness of the Roman court, and conceived great indignation in their minds, because the Romans endeavored thus impudently to drain their purses by so many devices.⁴⁵

The crusaders question the pope's motives, and the result is that the "devotion of many became daily weakened, and their confidence was abated."⁴⁶ This is hardly the picture of unity in pursuit of a common cause for all of Latin Christendom.

The Europe presented in *The Chronicles* is one of discord and not unity, and that discord means less cooperation for the purposes of sending assistance to the remaining crusader states in the Holy Land. Even conflicts that had little to do with the Holy Land were blamed for hindering crusade efforts. In Matthew's account of the pope's struggle against Emperor Frederick (one of the Hohenstaufen rulers against whom a crusade was called), he includes a letter in which the pope excommunicates Emperor Frederick:

"Again, we excommunicate and anathemize him, because it is by him that the crusade is impeded, as well as the restoration of the Roman empire."⁴⁷ The conflict between

Frederick and the pope began because the Papacy was concerned with its interests in Italy and not at all because of hindrances to crusades in the Holy Land. Nonetheless, in the

AMS Press, 1968). Vol. 1, 14-28. Matthew's century and text have not yet realized the full loss of power of Latin Christendom over its neighbors to the East.

⁴⁵ Matthew, Vol. 1, 38.

⁴⁶ Matthew, Vol. 1, 38.

⁴⁷ Matthew, Vol. 1, 169.

letter as presented by Matthew, the pope blames the emperor for the crusaders' failure, and as Matthew recounts this long feud between the pope and the emperor, both sides repeatedly blame each other for Latin Christendom's failures in the Holy Land. This rhetorical move seems to have become quite commonplace. In fact, Matthew describes numerous instances when monarchs must delay going on crusade because they say they fear for the security of their realms. The French king wishes to go on crusade, but he cannot

unless the emperor were pacified and fully reconciled to the Church, travel by sea or through his territories, without great danger to all Christendom. And even if they could do so, it would not be expedient to fight for Christ in the Holy Land, when they left behind them in a Christian country such an inveterate and injurious quarrel between persons of such high stations.⁴⁸

The king of England has similar fears, but on top of fearing for the security of his realm while suspecting France, Scotland, and Wales of hostile intent, he does not trust the pope, for

we have been so often deceived by the Roman court, through its agents and proctors sent on this same business [crusade], who have only employed themselves in extorting money, that you will scarcely find any who will put faith in you [those who have come to ask the king for a crusade while holding an indulgence from Rome].⁴⁹

Whether real or imagined, rulers and writers employed a rhetoric of distrust and discord in an attempt to explain the loss of the Holy Land or to rationalize not taking action on a large scale in order to retake what has been lost.⁵⁰ Looking back on such texts and the

⁴⁸ Matthew, Vol. 2, 112.

⁴⁹ Matthew, Vol. 2, 117.

⁵⁰ In addition to Matthew, many other writers saw internal fighting among Latin Christians as the primary impediment to a successful crusade. Fidenzio of Padua, for example, saw fighting amongst European rulers as one of the reasons why they did not assist Christians in the Holy Land, which led to the loss of Acre. The anonymous author of *De excidio urbis Acconis* makes the same charge, and the chronicler William of Nangis records that the French church councils required the end of the Sicilian wars before the

events of his own lifetime, the Mandeville-author also blamed internal problems for what he saw as a weaker Latin Christendom unable to challenge Saracen and Tartar powers in the Holy Land and East.⁵¹

Latin Christendom is immediately depicted as divided and weak in the opening pages of *The Travels* where the Mandeville-author chastises Latin Christian leaders who “er mare bisie for to disherite þaire neighbours þan for to chalange or conquere þaire right heritage before said” (2). Here he clearly refers to the wars fought within Latin Christendom.⁵² Meanwhile, Saracens have been conquering lands abroad one by one. The Turks have taken all of Asia Minor (12), and in Surrie “þare was sum tyme a faire citee of Cristen men, but Sarzenes has destruyd it a grete party” (15). Sir John travels through countless other Christian cities lost to the enemy: Tyre, Triple, Acoun, Bersabee, Artiron (16, 19, 33, 74). He also visits the regions once held by Christians and now lost: “Asy þe less, Turkie, Ermony þe less and þe mare, Surry, Jerusalem, Araby, Mesopotamy, þe rewme of Halope, and of Egipte, bathe þe ouermare and þe neþer mare, and many oþer lands vnto wele lawe in Ethiope and vnto Inde þe less...” (40). Christians

preaching of a new crusade. Marino Sanudo, who wrote perhaps the most comprehensive and meticulously planned call for crusade of the Middle Ages, also argued that the Holy Land was lost because of that war. For more on these examples and others, see Antony Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land: The Crusade Proposals of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000). 53-56.

⁵¹ Matthew was writing his chronicle in St. Albans, and Sir John states that he was born there. It is tempting to see this as a nod to Matthew from the Mandeville-author, but at the very least, he probably recognized St. Albans as an important center for chronicle writing and might have had access (through circulation) to some of the texts produced there.

⁵² The Mandeville-author does not seem to have recognized that crusades could be and had been used to make peace within Christendom. In preparing for the Second Crusade, for example, Bernard of Clairvaux worked to make peace within the Holy Roman Empire: “Taking the cross could act as a focus for honourable resolution to domestic conflict under ecclesiastical supervision and guarantee. At Frankfurt in November [1146], Bernard mediated a dispute between Count Henry of Namur and Albero of Trier, joining crusade forming part of their reconciliation. On his visit to Constance in December, Bernard made contact with the circle of Conrad’s chief domestic opponent, Welf VI, a move that led to Welf taking the cross on 24 December.” Tyerman, 287. Tyerman notes Conrad III was able to use crusade to at least temporarily resolve problems at home while bolstering his image as a world leader.

keep losing territory while their lords fight amongst themselves. Meanwhile, the Saracens grow stronger and more unified, and the Mandeville-author presents his readers with a detailed sequence of events that have led to that stronger union from a history of civil war and regicide (18-19).⁵³ While Europe continues in its divisive struggles, the Sultan of Babylon has unified and stabilized five realms under his rule,⁵⁴ and the Mandeville-author follows his summary of Saracen history by providing a glimpse of the Sultan's military might:

þe sowdan may lede oute of Egipte ma þan xx^m men of armes; and oute of þe rewme of Surry and of Turkey, and oute of oþer rewmes þat er vnder his subieccion he may bring ma þan l. thousand men of armes. [...] And þare er ordanyd amanges þam in diuerse citeez amd tounes certayne persouns, þe whilk er called admyralles; and ilk ane admyrall sall hafe at his ledyng foure or fyue or sex men of armes, and sum ma. And ilk ane admyrall sall take als mykill by him self as all þa þat er vnder him. (20)

Saracens not only have impressive numbers when it comes to their army, but that power covers a wide geographical space with soldiers available in Egipte, Surry, Turkey, and “oþer rewmes” in addition to the “diuerse citeez and tounes” that provide even more men.

In illustrating the Sultan's power, the Mandeville-author's description also demonstrates

⁵³ The Mandeville-author's account of the revolts and civil wars in Egypt is a garbled history of the Mamluk overthrow of Saladin's Ayyubid descendants. Ironically, Christians had a hand in their rise to power: “From the second half of the thirteenth century, the Genoese, in particular – Christian merchants – supplied Egypt with European and other slaves for the Egyptian army. Ominously for crusading history, slaves imported for the Egyptian military came to form a core of career warriors singlemindedly trained from youth for the vocation of war, and some became the finest professional warriors in Egypt's standing forces. From the ranks of Egyptian military slaves, a line of Egyptian sultans themselves arose, creating an eponymously-named dynasty of slave-rulers – ‘Mamluks’ – who replaced the Ayyubid sultans of Saladin's line by violent overthrow.” Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). 163. Geraldine Heng also notes that the Mamluk sultan who defeated Louis IX “was said to have had blue eyes, the ostensible legacy of a European slave heritage.” The Mandeville-author specifically points to the slave trade in Egypt, but he does not mention Genoese involvement. See *Buke*, 25.

⁵⁴ There was no real Sultan of Babylon. Moseley points out that in Arabic, Cairo was known as Bab-al-yun, which later went out of use. Moseley, 58. This may be a case of confusion, but the Mandeville-author specifically mentions Babylon and Cairo separately: “Fra þeine men gase til Babilon and to þe citee of Caire.” *Buke*, 17. Relating the Sultan to Babylon might be an intentional link to Babylon, the Book of Daniel, Alexander, and resistance to empire. I return to this issue later in chapter three. Matthew also refers to the Sultan of Egypt as the Sultan of Babylon.

that there are many kingdoms united under this Saracen leader's banner and that each kingdom provides him with additional men and arms.⁵⁵ Unlike the divided Latin Christian leaders who must beg the nobility to provide men at arms and must work to assemble any kind of respectable force, the Sultan's is already in place and ready at a moment's notice to respond anywhere across his vast lands. His political organization (and the Khan's) are modeled on European feudalism, but the system actually works in the Holy Land and East while it fails in Europe.⁵⁶

Yet as powerful as he is, the Sultan is not the most powerful ruler in the world.

As mentioned above, the Mandeville-author repeatedly reminds his readers that the Khan

⁵⁵ The Mandeville-author's account of Saracen unification and their military organization bears a striking resemblance to William of Tyre's fears regarding the unification of Syria and Egypt in the late twelfth century. Noting that in the past Saracens had not united with one another in order to repel the crusaders, he expresses concern that "all the kingdoms adjacent to us have been brought under the power of one man," and they all "obey one ruler, they do the will of one man, and at this command alone, however reluctantly, they are ready, as a unit, to take up arms for our injury." William is talking about Saladin, who "draws an inestimable supply of the purest gold" from Egypt while "other provinces furnish him numberless companies of horsemen and fighters...." William of Tyre, quoted in Tyerman, 343. The First Crusade's success was due in large part to the unwillingness of Muslim rulers to band together for defense. Rather than a unified Muslim empire, the First Crusade encountered small Muslim kingdoms jockeying for power. Christopher Tyerman notes that "the impression left by the twelfth-century chronicle of Ibn al-Qalanisi of Damascus... is of the Franks as one of many fractious groups in a region of competing princelings jockeying for advantage. Ironically, the western interlopers immediately offered an additional diplomatic and military option for many Muslim rulers eager for allies, especially in the chronic rivalries between Mosul, Aleppo and Damascus." Tyerman, 182. William of Tyre was right to be anxious about Saladin's progress in unifying the lands surrounding Jerusalem, for it led to Saladin's conquest of the city in 1187.

⁵⁶ Furthermore, the Sultan reveals another power he has over Latin Christians, one that would make them quite uncomfortable. In a conversation between Sir John and the Sultan, the Sultan criticizes Latin Christians for their greed, pride, covetous, and lack of piety. *Buke*, 69. He even goes so far as to accuse Christian men of prostituting their wives and daughters as "ilk ane takes oþer wyf." *Buke*, 69. Asked how he has come to know the state of things in Europe so well, the Sultan brings in his lords who then speak with Sir John in perfect French: "And at þe last I vnderstude þat þe sowdan sent of his lordes in to diuerse rewmes and diuerse landes in gyse of marchandes...þe whilk in swilk maner visitez all rewmes for to asprie þe maners of vs Christen men and to knawe oure febilnes." *Buke*, 70. This episode inverts the relationship between self and other in an interesting manner. Spies from a wealthier and more powerful civilization reduce the Latin Christian self into an object, in effect turning the tables on Sir John. Latin Christendom seems incredibly weak and vulnerable when confronted with an empire with not only a well-funded and organized army but also with an intelligence system that provides valuable insight into even the most personal information: the sexual habits of corrupt Christians. Espionage at the hands of merchants seems to have been a concern in the century leading up to *The Travels*. Matthew relates an incident in which Saracens use trade in order to perform espionage on the French: "They poisoned the pepper, which they knew was to be sent to the Christian provinces, whereby many people in France, being unaware of this evil deed, were killed." Matthew, Vol. 2, 118.

is even more powerful (108).⁵⁷ In addition, throughout *The Travels*, he presents a number of other kings who rule over lesser kings in unified realms. On the island of Iaua, the king “es a grete lorde and a myghty, and hase vii. oþer kinges vnder him of vii. iles, whilke er aboute þat ile” (94). The king of the city of Iamcaly is also a great and might lord, “bot he es subget to þe Grete Caan; and he has vnder him xii. grete princes” (104).⁵⁸ The Sultan sits on Europe’s doorstep, but beyond him lie even bigger threats: huge empires without the problem of internal wars.⁵⁹

In the face of such unity and power, Latin Christendom has little real power over others (as portrayed by the Mandeville-author), and this makes it difficult to equate the Mandeville-author’s treatment of the peoples of the Holy Land and East or what he envisions for the realms of Europe with *tolerantia*. The Khan’s tolerance just will not work for a weak Latin Christendom because Latin Christians have no power to restrain when it comes to the peoples of the Holy Land and East. In fact, at times (in Cathay, for example) Christians are actually the objects of tolerance, putting them in an even weaker position. Instead, the Mandeville-author takes a universalist approach, allowing a certain level of generosity toward pagans and Eastern Christians only insofar as they fit into his Latin Christian framework as he aggressively appropriates them in service of the Christian coherence he imagines for the world.⁶⁰ Such an attitude does not require the

⁵⁷ The Mandeville-author’s first comparison between the Khan and another ruler is of a legendary figure. Prester John was Latin Christendom’s great imagined hope in the East, and putting the Khan ahead of him makes him that much more important and powerful.

⁵⁸ For more examples, see *Buke*, 100, 113, 119, 133.

⁵⁹ Wars among Muslim leaders and between the various Mongol Khanates were common in the fourteenth century, and Latin Christians would have been aware of those conflicts. However, the Mandeville-author chooses to depict them as unified monolithic empires free from such problems.

⁶⁰ Identifying the Mandeville-author’s project as universalist opens a new conversation that can address the text’s aggressiveness in its treatment of others, whereas labeling the text as “tolerant” can mask its aggression.

restraint of power. Where power is a prerequisite for *tolerantia*, it is not for universalism. In fact, the Mandeville-author's universalism is exactly what allows him to imagine himself and his co-religionists in a position of power over non-Christians. The issue of power aside, to tolerate someone or something implies a certain degree of "live and let live," and as will become clear below, the Mandeville-author has no intention of leaving the peoples of the Holy Land and East alone, for he intends to rewrite completely their identities (participating in discursive violence) in service of his imagined world.

If Latin Christendom is in no position to practice tolerance as found in Cathay, then the Mandeville-author requires an alternative that maintains the superiority of Latin Christendom without completely breaking with the real historical position in which it found itself in the fourteenth century. Grady argues that the Mandeville-author finds a way to "represent simultaneously the spiritual hegemony and historical crisis of Western Christendom, a faith wholly convinced of its possession of religious truth and wholly incapable of imposing that vision" by including Saracen prophecies of their own conversion and conquest, but I suggest that such prophecies are only a part of what the Mandeville-author does in order to present his readers with a world in which Christian spiritual hegemony reigns supreme despite Latin Christendom's political and military weaknesses. For example, Christians in Cathay are represented as being treated as "first among equals" as part of the Mandeville-author's "efforts to reconcile his religious orthodoxy with a fidelity to history."⁶¹ When the Khan rides through a city in procession, Christians living there come to the roadside bearing a cross and holy water, and as soon as the Khan sees the cross, "he doffez his hatte.... And þan he lowtez deuotely to þe

⁶¹ Grady, 57.

crosse; and þe prelate of þase religious men saise twa orisouns before him and giffez him benysoun with þe crosse, and he lowtes þe benisoun full deuoteley” (120). The tolerating ruler pays reverence to the tolerated faith. This and several other instances of Tartar respect for Christians introduce anomalies in an otherwise perfect example of *tolerantia*. Why would such a powerful ruler bother to pay respect to the cross, especially a ruler that otherwise practices a policy of *laissez-faire*? Grady suggests that such anomalies are part of the Mandeville-author’s attempt to reconcile two competing agendas; however, these strategies are part of a larger universalist project that is an alternative that not only provides the same stability as *tolerantia* but also trumps *tolerantia* by confirming Latin Christendom’s spiritual hegemony. The Khan’s respect for Christians may be an anomaly of his tolerance, but it must be so in order to serve the Mandeville-author’s universalism.

Christ’s Universal Message

The Travels’ approach to others and its universalist project relies first and foremost on the idea that Christ’s message is a universal message that applies to all peoples. In the exordium, for example, the Mandeville-author’s first move is to establish Jerusalem as Christians’ rightful heritage, and in doing so, he explains why Christ chose to live and die in Jerusalem:

For he þat will do any thing þat he will be knawen openly til all men, he will ger crie it openly in þe middell of a toune or of a citee, so þat it may be knawen til all þe parties of þe citee. On þe same wyse *he þat was kyng of all the world* wald suffer deed at Ierusalem, þat es in middes of þe world, *so þat it might be knawen to men of all þe parties of þe world....* (1-2, emphasis added)

Christ's life, sacrifice, and message are intended for men of all parts of the world. The author clearly establishes this early in the text, and as he moves forward, he judges non-Christian practices and beliefs by Christian standards, justifies their ways with Christian scripture, and commends them only insofar as they exemplify Christian values. He does all of this because he operates on the premise that Christ's message is universal. This seems like a natural position for a Christian to take; however, the question of who was to be included in the Christian movement and what was to be required of them was a point of much contention in the first century of Christianity. It was by no means a given that Christ's message was intended for anyone but Jews. I opened this chapter with the Mandeville-author's account of the Gynoscriche and his subsequent defense of their beliefs and practices using a vision shown to Peter. That vision in the Book of Acts plays an important role in the debate regarding the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the new Christian faith, and its inclusion in *The Travels* is quite significant since the text's treatment of the peoples of the Holy Land and East depends on the position that eventually won this first-century debate: that Christ's message is indeed a universal one meant for Jews and non-Jews alike. Understanding the importance of this debate, its outcome, and its consequences in the centuries between Paul and the Mandeville-author will make it clear that such a universalist attitude is actually incompatible with the concept of tolerance and in fact entails an intense discursive violence.

Although the author of Acts identifies Peter as the one God chooses to include the Gentiles in the new Christian faith, any allusion to this issue really points to Paul. Much of the second half of Acts concentrates on his missions to the Gentiles in Asia Minor and

Greece, ending with his arrival in Rome,⁶² and in most of Paul's letters included in the New Testament, he is greatly concerned with demonstrating that Gentiles are to be included in God's plan without being required to observe Jewish law, thus making preaching to Gentiles and converting them both possible and easier. Peter's encounter with the angels bearing unclean food is Paul much transplanted in order to fit Luke's theology in Acts. Reading Acts and Paul's letters, namely his letter to the Galatians, it is quite clear that the debate regarding Gentiles was a central one in Paul's lifetime and that he was the main advocate for their inclusion in the Christian movement without requiring them to observe Jewish law.

A central episode in the Book of Acts is what has come to be known as the Council of Jerusalem. During Paul's visit to Antioch, "certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them," they travel to Jerusalem to discuss the issue with the Christian leaders there.⁶³ After much discussion, Peter rises against requiring Gentile observation of Jewish law, and as part of his argument, he alludes to his vision regarding clean and unclean animals, claiming that God chose him to "be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers."⁶⁴ James, the main advocate for requiring all converts to observe the law, agrees with Peter, and the Council consents to their opinions and decides to impose the most basic of restrictions on Gentile converts: abstention from "things polluted by idols, and from fornication and

⁶² Interestingly, some manuscripts of *The Travels*, including the version I am using, end with Sir John's own voyage to Rome as well.

⁶³ Acts 15:1-2.

⁶⁴ Acts 15:7-11.

from whatever has been strangled and from blood.”⁶⁵ Since Luke, the traditional author of Acts, is interested in portraying Peter as the one through whom God includes the Gentiles, Paul seems to take a back seat at the Council. Luke is also writing well after these events when the debate has already been largely settled, so the account of the debate makes it seem like the outcome is easily reached. However, a look at Paul’s letter to the Galatians, written before Acts,⁶⁶ shows that the issue was not so easily settled and that Peter (as portrayed by Paul) was not so steadfast in his convictions regarding Gentiles.

The letter to the Galatians is a defense of Paul’s mission to the Gentiles. As part of his argument against the need to observe the law, he states that he “had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised.”⁶⁷ Where in Acts Luke characterizes Peter as the one through whom God includes the Gentiles, here Paul makes a clear distinction between his mission and Peter’s mission to the Jews. Nowhere in Paul’s letters is Peter associated with the Gentile mission, and in this same letter to the Galatians, Paul calls Peter out on his hypocrisy regarding the observation of the law:

But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Acts 15:13-20.

⁶⁶ In *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, the introduction to Acts dates the text between the years 85 and 95, and the introduction to Galatians dates the text to the late forties or early fifties. In addition, Acts includes an account of Paul’s journey to Rome where he was eventually executed.

⁶⁷ Galatians 2:7.

⁶⁸ Galatians 2:11-13.

This episode, known as the Antioch Incident, is an excellent illustration of how controversial Paul's ideas were. Peter seems to be fine eating with Gentiles until Paul's opponents arrive. Confronted by the "establishment," Peter changes his behavior to conform. Calling Peter a hypocrite, Paul asks, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews?"⁶⁹ The confrontation is certainly more explosive than the debates found in Acts, and in his letters, Paul is clearly the central figure when it comes to the universality of Christ's message and the Christian mission.

I have dwelled on the importance of this debate both because the Mandeville-author's inclusion of Peter's vision introduces the issue into *The Travels* and because he seems to draw on Paul and his ideas regarding Gentiles for his project. Significantly, like the weak Latin Christendom of the fourteenth century and of *The Travels* itself, Paul was also relatively powerless against his Christian opponents in Jerusalem, the Jewish establishment, and the Roman authorities. Paul's universalism (the idea that Christ's message was intended for all peoples without the need to observe Jewish law), developed in such powerless conditions, was well-suited for his fragile situation because it allowed him to imagine a spiritual hegemony for his theology at a time when Judaism and the pagan religions of the Roman Empire made no universalist claims.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Galatians 2:14. Though its more immediate source is Caesarius of Heisterbach, the sentiment of Sir John's response to the Sultan's criticism of Christian practices is similar to that of Paul in Galatians. Sir John laments that it is "grete schame þat Sarzenes, whilk hase nowþer riȝt beleue ne perfite lawe, schuld þus reprove vs of oure imperfitnes and kepez vayne lawe better þan we do þe lawe of Ihesu Criste; and þai þat schuld be turned thurgh oure gude ensauple to þe faith and þe lawe of Ihesu Criste, þai er drawn away thurgh oure wikked liffing" (70). The situation with which the Mandeville-author is concerned certainly differs in some ways from the Incident at Antioch, but both cases ask how Christians can expect others to adhere to the law (whether Jewish or Christian) when they themselves fail to do so. Paul's solution is to forget about observing the law, whereas the Mandeville-author suggests Christian reform.

⁷⁰ In fact, the text includes several tantalizing echoes of Paul. In the description of Paradise, for example, the Sir John says that "þe schall vnderstand þat na man liffand may ga to Paradys." *Buke*, 151. He repeats

In Paul's mission, his main goal is to break down the barrier between Jews and their other: the Gentiles. Perhaps his most important statement on this issue comes in Galatians: "There is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise."⁷¹ In Paul's view, the old identity markers separating Jew from Gentile are swept away by faith in Christ. Gentiles are to be included in the new faith because in Christ all are Abraham's heirs. This inclusion is a drastic departure from Jewish law and tradition that see God's promise as specifically meant for Jews. Much of Jewish law and custom actually work to mark a clear separation between Jews and Gentiles; the prime examples of such identity

the impossibility: "and so þer may na man, as I said before, wyne þider, bot thurgh speciall grace of Godd. And þerfore of þat place can I tell 3owe na mare; bot I will turn agayne...." He claims to have never been there, but the repetition of the fact that no man may go there (except through the grace of God) sounds suspicious. Paul makes a similar statement regarding his "friend's" travel to Paradise: "I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. And I know that such a person – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows – was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth." 2 Corinthians 12:2-6. Although he uses the "friend" formula to make his claim, Paul has clearly been to Paradise when he says that if he wishes to boast, he would be "speaking the truth," and in *The Travels*, the Mandeville-author makes it clear that he understands Paul to have been the "friend." In his description of Damascus, the Mandeville-author says that this is where Paul "was rauscht intill heuen, whare he sawe heuently priuetez." *Buke*, 61. The inclusion of Paul's journey earlier in the text and the explanation why Sir John could not visit Paradise seem to echo Paul. Another allusion to Paul comes much earlier in the text when the Mandeville-author briefly describes the inhabitants of Sicily who use snakes in order to determine children's paternity: "For, if þai be geten in leel spousage, þe nedder will go aboute þam and do þam na harme; and, if þai be geten in advoutry, þe nedders will stang þan and venym þam." *Buke*, 28-29. This bears striking resemblance to a story found in a fifteenth-century translation of the *Alphabetum narrationum* that "tells that while Paul was a guest at the island of Mustelan, a snake got into his clothes and did not harm him. He threw it into the fire, and from then on all children born to his good host were given immunity from these venomous beasts. Moreover, when children were born to descendants of his kin, snakes would be put into the cradles to determine the paternity of the infant." Giuseppe Carlo Di Scipio, "Saint Paul and Popular Traditions," *Telling Tales: Medieval Narratives and the Folk Tradition*, ed. Francesca Canade Sautman, Diana Conchado, & Giuseppe Carlo Di Scipio (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998). 195. This story and many others like it are part of a popular tradition that grew out of the story in Acts in which Paul arrives on the island of Malta, is struck by a snake, and is left unharmed. Acts 28:3-6. For a more thorough discussion of popular traditions regarding Paul and snakes, see Di Scipio, 191-195.

⁷¹ Galatians 3:28-29.

markers are circumcision and diet, but Paul's letters argue for the erasure of such markers, representing Christ's sacrifice as having global repercussions and opening the possibility for universal conversion.

When Paul raises the same issue in Colossians, the erasure of old identity markers is even stronger:

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all in all!⁷²

He pushes not only for inclusion but for an abandonment of the old self. Understanding God's promise as a universal promise means the boundaries marking difference must be broken, and Paul specifically mentions one of those boundary markers: circumcision.

The promise is no longer meant for a single ethnic group with specific traditions that emphasize difference. In addition, the inclusion of barbarians among the identities swept away also brings up the issue of language, for in its earliest usage, "barbarian" referred to those who spoke a different language than one's own, their language sounding like indecipherable sounds: "bar-bar." Hebrew was and still is another one of the more important markers of difference between Jews and Gentiles. Elsewhere, Paul speaks of breaking the barrier between Jew and Gentile:

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law...that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body.... So then you are no longer strangers and aliens.... In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually....⁷³

⁷² Colossians 3:9-11.

⁷³ Ephesians 2:13-22.

Paul says the dividing wall between the two groups is hostility, but that wall can also be the specifically mentioned law that marks difference: circumcision, language, rituals, and even the marking of time using a different calendar. This part of Ephesians bombards the reader with the language of oneness, creating “one new humanity in place of two” and reconciling “both groups to God in one body.” Then, following the characterization of the two groups as “strangers and aliens,” the language shifts to architectural terminology as Paul uses the imagery of the Temple – the most prominent marker of Jewish identity – to portray what Christ has done as the building of a new Temple. These kinds of statements may argue for peace between Jew and Gentile, replacing hostility and division with union and familiarity, but it comes at a great cost: the erasure of difference. Not even the Temple remains a specifically Jewish object as Paul redefines it universally and moves from the image of a wall meant to divide to a structure meant to unite.

Daniel Boyarin addresses this erasure of difference in his study of Paul’s letters. He argues that Paul’s system of inclusion is problematic. The reason for this is that “in terms of ethnicity, his system required that all human cultural specificities – first and foremost, that of the Jews – be eradicated, whether or not the people in question were willing.”⁷⁴ This eradication dissolves “all others into a single essence in which matters of cultural practice are irrelevant and only faith in Christ is significant.”⁷⁵ Where Paul includes Gentiles in God’s plan, he ultimately devalues Jewish difference.⁷⁶ The result is the appropriation of everything Jewish but also the devaluation of any difference

⁷⁴ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). 8.

⁷⁵ Boyarin, 9.

⁷⁶ Boyarin, 202.

regardless of ethnicity. In Paul's day, this universalist attitude was not unique to him. Boyarin points out that this was part of a "general Hellenistic longing for the univocal and the universal."⁷⁷ But of course, Paul's letters would have a lasting effect, and that effect has had major consequences: "Paul's universalism seems to conduce to coercive politico-cultural systems that engage in more or less violent projects of the absorption of cultural specificities into the dominant one."⁷⁸ The eventual union of faith and empire in the centuries after Paul provided political power to this drive to convert the world, but even without such power, Paul's ideas and Christian universalism in general quite aggressively participate in cultural appropriation in service of a particular theology, and such an attitude can be very useful to those without political or military power as they imagine their place in the world and their relationship to other groups. Such universalism (an originary, Pauline universalism) and the discursive violence it entails are at the heart of the Mandeville-author's project, but in *The Travels*, the differences erased and the objects appropriated are those of the non-Christians of the Holy Land and East.

Understanding Paul's universalism in terms of the erasure of difference and in terms of the inclusion of all peoples whether they like it or not makes the contrast between *tolerantia* and universalism quite striking. The idea that Christ's message applies to all peoples regardless of their differences, which is also the premise upon

⁷⁷ Boyarin, 24.

⁷⁸ Boyarin, 228. Boyarin also suggests "that as Paul became ultimately not an embattled apostle for one kind of Christianity contending with others but gradually the source of Christianity *tout court*, and as so-called pagans faded from the scene, the function of those who 'stand in a position of difference' came to be filled almost exclusively in the discourse by the Jews, and the 'coercive move' toward sameness became directed *at* the Jews." Boyarin, 230. This might help when reading the place of the Jews in *The Travels*. Although the Mandeville-author's attitude toward non-Christians is quite inclusive, he is quite hostile toward Jews and even emphasizes their difference in language in addition to assigning them the role of the forces of Gog and Magog enclosed behind the Gates of Alexander. If the text is to treat the pagans of the East generously, another group must take their place in that "position of difference" as the text moves toward sameness.

which *The Travels* operates, is actually quite intolerant, and in the first century, this was a relatively new form of intolerance. Judaism, for example, was quite exclusive in that Jews believed their religion was only meant for themselves, but it was more tolerant in that it reflected the “live and let live” aspect of what would later come to be known as *tolerantia*. As for the Romans, they did not impose their gods on the peoples they conquered, preferring instead to see “foreign” gods as their own in another name or simply allowing local cults to remain just that: local. To a degree, they were also able to tolerate Judaism because although it claimed to possess the absolute truth, it was still confined to a specific group in a specific region. Thanks in large part to Paul’s efforts, Christianity would become a faith that claimed absolute truth but would not be confined to a local region or group. Since Christ’s message was seen as intended for all peoples, this new faith even invaded Rome itself, bringing with it the exclusive and therefore intolerant idea that there is only one God. Judaism also excluded the belief in all other gods, but it was also exclusive in terms of who was meant to be a part of its message. It was Christianity’s exclusiveness (there is only one God) and inclusiveness (it is meant for everyone whether they want it or not) that made it intolerant.

Paul believed that the End of Days was near, so he did not go beyond creating a loose confederation of churches along the Mediterranean and Aegean. His universalism (and intolerance) became much more tangible and dangerous when Christianity was joined to the imperial structure in the centuries that followed. By the second century, Melito, bishop of Sardis, saw the end of the civil wars under Augustus and the years of peace preceding the birth of Christ

as a providential dispensation to foster the spread of the gospel. Eusebius of Caesarea discerned in the rise of Constantine the time promised by the

prophet when the earth would be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. Augustine would see biblical prophecies of the ending of idolatry fulfilled in his lifetime by the edicts of Theodosius I.⁷⁹

By the fourth century, Eusebius saw Christianity and the Roman empire as made for each other: “Church and empire were fused into a single entity; the empire was an image of the heavenly kingdom, its boundaries the limits of Christendom, the emperor the representative of divine authority in the world.”⁸⁰ Augustine would later reject this idea with his distinction between the earthly and Heavenly cities, but he still maintained that the Roman Empire played an important role in the development of Christianity. His disciple, Orosius, followed *The City of God* with *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* in which he worked to demonstrate that the misfortune of the Roman Empire was not due to the adoption of Christianity. Like Augustine, he believed that the world and the empire were better off with Christianity and that the so-called universal peace under the reign of Augustus provided the necessary conditions for the birth and spread of Christianity. These centuries saw Paul’s imagined spiritual hegemony become a political hegemony that would outlast the Roman Empire. Its association with the empire provided the institutions and structures that would give the Church the power to impose its intolerant universalism on the various peoples of Europe.⁸¹

With the above in mind, the premise upon which the Mandeville-author bases all of his ideas regarding non-Christians, the universality of Christ’s message, is clearly

⁷⁹ Henry Chadwick, “The Early Christian Community,” *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, ed. John McManners (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). 60-61.

⁸⁰ Robert Markus, “From Rome to the Barbarian Kingdoms (330-700),” *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, ed. John McManners (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). 70.

⁸¹ For an excellent account of the Church’s debt to the Roman Empire for its institutions and structure, see Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power Volume I: A History of power from the beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). 301-340.

intolerant when put into practice. If there is one truth, then all other claims to truth are inherently false, and the thirteen centuries between the time of Paul and the time of the Mandeville-author are rife with examples of how a universalist understanding of Christ's message can manifest itself in the form of intolerant policies and aggression. Even without political (and military) backing, a universalist attitude favors the eradication of "all human cultural specificities," the violence of which cannot be denied. Yet *The Travels*' "generous" treatment of others remains. The Mandeville-author does not demonize non-Christians, nor does he damn them to Hell for their beliefs and practices. To the contrary, he praises their piety and argues that they are acceptable to God. While maintaining his belief in the universality of the Christian message, he also believes in universal salvation. How does the text reconcile these two competing ideas? How can the Mandeville-author argue that God saves non-Christians without invalidating Christianity and making it unnecessary for salvation?

Salvation in the Fourteenth Century

Before looking at how *The Travels* makes a case for universal salvation, I briefly turn to the context in which its case is made, concentrating on the salvation debate as found in the texts of clerics writing in Latin rather than in the numerous fourteenth-century vernacular works that take up the issue such as *Piers Plowman* and *St. Erkenwald*.⁸² I choose to concentrate on the debate among writers in Latin because understood in the context of their debate, *The Travels* seems to find a way to make an argument for universal salvation without completely disregarding the established

⁸² For an excellent article on these and other vernacular texts and their concern with pagan salvation, see Nicholas Watson, "Visions of Inclusion: Universal Salvation and Vernacular Theology in Pre-Reformation England," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27.2 (1997): 145-187.

opinions on the matter. Also, many vernacular texts tend to be concerned with the salvation of individual pagans who lived virtuously. They focus on *exceptional* salvations of individual figures, whereas I argue that *The Travels* is concerned with universal salvation on a much larger scale.

The question of what it takes to be saved, whether Christian or not, was a point of much concern ever since the early Christian centuries. The issue is actually quite complex since the debate regarding salvation included many interrelated questions: Will all Christians be saved? Is faith enough? How do good works factor in? Is baptism necessary? What about unbaptized infants? What was the fate of those who lived before Christ, especially the Hebrew prophets? What about the fate of pagans who have not heard Christ's message due to temporal and geographical limitations? Relatedly, what will happen to pagans who have heard Christ's message but have refused to convert? Will non-Christians who naturally live virtuous lives be saved? Is it up to Christians to convert them or should the task be left to God? How urgent is the situation? These questions were and still are hotly debated, and the answer to one question would have real implications for each of the other questions as well. For the purposes of my discussion, I will focus on questions regarding the fate of non-Christians, but I am by no means implying that non-Christian salvation was discussed as a separate issue from Christian salvation.⁸³ Instead, I am simply addressing the parts of this large debate that have a direct bearing on the issue as handled in *The Travels*.⁸⁴

⁸³ For example, arguing that unbaptized children of Christians will be saved requires some discussion of what that means for unbaptized non-Christians.

⁸⁴ The following summary of the debate regarding salvation is largely indebted to the following: Janet Coleman, *Piers Plowman and the Moderni* (Rome: Edizioni Di Storia E Letteratura, 1981). 108-126; Cindy L. Vitto, "The Virtuous Pagan in Middle English Literature," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 79 (1989): 5-35; Marcia L. Colish, "The Virtuous Pagan: Dante and the Christian

One of the earliest questions surrounding the issue of salvation regarded the fate of the Hebrew prophets who lived before Christ and therefore could not have received and accepted his message. One of the most important solutions to this problem was what is known as the Harrowing of Hell. This is the story of how between his death and resurrection, Christ descended into Hell in order to free some or all of the souls he found there. The exact purpose of Christ's descent, what he did there, and who exactly was saved were points of much debate among the Church Fathers. The story is found in several texts, including the Apocryphon of Jeremiah, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Epistle of the Apostles, the Odes of Solomon, and the Gospel of Nicodemus. There are also various passages in both the Old and New Testaments that hint at the idea.⁸⁵ Depending on which account one reads or which Church Father is doing the reading, Christ's purpose in Hell was to preach to, baptize, or deliver by force all or some of the souls there, and those souls ended up in Heaven, limbo, or some other place that would have been less punishing than Hell. Justin and Irenaeus both believed that Christ preached to and saved the souls who anticipated his coming, and later, Clement of Alexandria and Origen expanded this claim to include all souls.⁸⁶ These last two believed that pagan philosophers were also saved because their reason had led to some foreknowledge of or belief in Christ.

The most significant voice in this discussion came in the late fourth and early fifth centuries with Augustine who largely rejected some of the ideas of his predecessors. He did not believe Christ converted those in Hell, but he also "sanctioned the Judaic idea of a

Tradition," *The Unbounded Community: Papers in Christian Ecumenism in Honor of Jaroslav Pelikan*, ed. William Caferro & Duncan G. Fisher (New York: Garland, 1996). 43-92.

⁸⁵ For a discussion of the passages, see Vitto, 5-6.

⁸⁶ Vitto, 6.

bi-level Hell with different degrees of suffering and retained many of the earlier patristic opinions.”⁸⁷ The main idea he rejected was that of Clement and Origen: “He accepted the possibility of salvation for those alive before the Incarnation – not, however, through the truths of philosophy, but through faith in the coming Saviour.”⁸⁸ At times, Augustine contradicted himself on the finer details of Christ’s purpose in Hell and the fate of the souls there,⁸⁹ but the main point that he made and that was carried on by others in the centuries that followed him was that the Hebrew prophets were saved because they expected Christ and that anyone living “after the Resurrection lacking knowledge of the Gospel would not have the opportunity of salvation by hearing of Christ in Hell.”⁹⁰ This was picked up and modified by Gregory the Great in the sixth century, arguing that Christ saved “those who in their fleshly existence had exercised faith and (as an addition to Augustine’s teaching) good works.”⁹¹ Cindy L. Vitto notes that Gregory was not clear about whether this included pagans and Jews.

The debate regarding salvation reintensified in the twelfth century with a renewed interest in classical Greek and Roman writers. During this period, theologians concentrated on who exactly was freed during the Harrowing. Like their predecessors, they “tended to divide between those who saw value in philosophical truth and those who did not. Proponents of faith alone were more likely to believe that Christ descended to

⁸⁷ Vitto, 12.

⁸⁸ Vitto, 12.

⁸⁹ See Vitto, 13-15.

⁹⁰ Vitto, 14.

⁹¹ Vitto, 16.

liberate the Old Testament Jews who had anticipated the coming of a Saviour.”⁹² The fourteenth century saw yet another renewal of interest in the salvation debate. This time, “the belief in the harmony of reason and faith, whereby God rewarded the efforts of man’s intelligence, did not continue into the fourteenth century.”⁹³ Instead, as mentioned in the opening of this chapter, there was a new focus on the two orders of God’s power: the *potentia ordinata* and the *potentia absoluta*.⁹⁴ The former power governed the world and was limited in that it conformed to God’s covenants with and promises to humans. The latter was unlimited and trumped the former. This meant that God could grant salvation to anyone regardless of whether they accepted Christ’s message. Proponents of this view are known as Pelagians.⁹⁵ Generally, they believed a person could do good of his own free will and God could choose to reward him for it regardless of the person’s faith. Thomas Bradwardine disagreed, arguing that a person could do nothing worthy of God without divine grace (a position Augustine had taken).

Largely avoiding entering the debate regarding God’s powers, Uthred of Boldon presented a unique solution.⁹⁶ He argued that at the moment of death, each person

⁹² Vitto, 17. This latter group (the Augustinians) included Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter the Lombard, Hugh of St. Victor, and Alain of Lille. The ideas of each of these men certainly differed to some degree, but in general terms, their views can be grouped together. Peter Abelard and Thomas Aquinas took the former position that stressed reason and “extended the possibility of salvation to pagans as well.” Vitto, 17. But Abelard did not include pagans after the time of Christ, believing in the necessity of baptism and faith. Aquinas, on the other hand, included post-Incarnation virtuous pagans who have not been exposed to Christ’s message. Vitto, 25-26. Following Aquinas, Alexander of Hales believed in the ability of man’s intelligence “to prepare itself to receive an interior voice which will reveal the Christian mysteries.” Vitto, 28.

⁹³ Vitto, 28.

⁹⁴ The discussion surrounding the two orders of God’s power included numerous theological concerns, the question of salvation being only one of them.

⁹⁵ These included William of Ockham, Robert Holcot, Thomas Buckingham, and Adam of Woodham. Again, the ideas of each of these men certainly differed to some degree, but in general terms, their views can be grouped together.

⁹⁶ For an account of Uthred’s life and education as well as a more thorough discussion of his argument and the censuring of his ideas, see M.D. Knowles, “The Censured Opinions of Uthred of Boldon,” *Proceedings*

receives a *clara visio* of God and can decide at that moment either to accept or deny Christ. Uthred left the exact nature of this vision vague, but he distinguished between the *clara visio* and the beatific vision. The *clara visio* took place before the soul left the body, “and the person was therefore still a *viator*, the technical theological term for one who is still in a state of probation, with the consequent capability of meriting eternal life.”⁹⁷ Wyclif repeated and developed this position:

Just as some who are in the Church are damned, so others outside the Church are saved. If you object that, if this is so, we cannot call the Jews unbelievers, the Saracens heretics, the Greeks schismatics, and so on, I reply, “Man can be saved from any sect, even from among the Saracens, if he places no obstacle in the way of salvation. From Islam and from other sects, those who at the moment of death believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be judged to be faithful Christians.”⁹⁸

Uthred’s ideas were censured for various reasons, among them that his position negated the efficacy of baptism and rendered original sin meaningless. This was the real danger of Uthred’s ideas and the ideas of the Pelagians; their arguments regarding salvation usually looked like they were trying to change the rules of the game when it comes to what it takes to be saved. Both Uthred’s solution and his contemporaries’ employment of the concept of God’s *potentia absoluta* could also be seen as negating the need to avoid sin at all. In fact, the conflict between Uthred and his opponents was quite serious:

This controversy became so violent that it was brought before the Archbishop of Canterbury, who after imposing silence on both parties in February 1368, in the following November condemned a whole series of thirty articles as erroneous; twenty-four of these correspond to the ‘errors’ ascribed to Uthred.... The archbishop did not condemn Uthred by name.... But clearly tempers were rising, imputations of heresy were being made,

of the British Academy 37 (1951): 305-342. See also W.A. Pantin *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). 165-175.

⁹⁷ Knowles, 314.

⁹⁸ John Wyclif, quoted in R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). 82.

and men were getting away from the purely academic and friendly disputes of the schools, to something more like the violence and desperation of the Wycliffite controversy, to the real heresy hunt.⁹⁹

Clearly, getting involved in the salvation debate was risky, especially if one's position was anti-Augustinian. Despite the risk, the Mandeville-author did get involved.

However, unlike other fourteenth-century proponents of universal salvation, he found a way to argue in favor of non-Christian salvation without challenging the more established Augustinian position on the matter.

The Mandeville-author's Solution: Universal Foreknowledge

The Mandeville-author's most significant deed is not that he changed his sources to be more "generous" toward the others of the text. Instead, his truly original contribution in copying, changing, and elaborating on previous works is the crafting of an argument in favor of universal salvation that does not change the rules of the game.

Rather than going head-to-head with the authority of Augustine's position or with what the Church deemed necessary for salvation, the Mandeville-author changed the players in the game rather than the rules. He did this by reimagining or recharacterizing all non-Christians as having some articles of Latin Christian belief, some practices that resemble Latin Christian practices, and, most importantly, some foreknowledge of Christ.

Augustine and Gregory the Great both agreed that the Hebrew prophets were saved from Hell because of their foreknowledge or expectation of Christ. By presenting the peoples of the Holy Land and East as having that foreknowledge, *The Travels* can easily argue that they can be saved while maintaining this Augustinian position. In order to make sure

⁹⁹ Pantin, 169.

they are worthy of salvation, the non-Christians of the text are also shown to be virtuous, and their piety outshines that of Latin Christians at home.¹⁰⁰ Lest he be accused of disregarding the necessity of baptism and the Church, the Mandeville-author also makes a case for converting non-Christians, but he does not provide the means by which non-Christians will be converted and seems comfortable leaving their final conversion in the distant and vague future. The logic of taking both of these positions (that non-Christians will be saved because of their knowledge and/or anticipation of Christ and that they can and should be converted) is not made clear, but the Mandeville-author seems to include conversion in his scheme so as not to draw the same criticisms as the likes of Uthred and the Pelagians.

To return to the example of the Gynoscriphe, the people who are “so trew and so gude” and acceptable to God, the Mandeville-author’s account of Peter and the angel is actually the culmination of a section that begins with Alexander’s encounter with the virtuous Bragmans and builds to the point where the author’s interpretation of Peter’s vision becomes the final part of an extensive argument in favor of God’s acceptance of all peoples. Readers who would already be familiar with the Alexander/Bragman story learn that the Bragmans, though not Christian, live lives that are the epitome of Christian virtue. Avoiding sin, these people live in a land without thieves, murderers, beggars, pestilence, hunger, or any other “tribulaciouns..., as duse amanges vs because of oure synne” (144). They are “als gude as þai ware men of religioun.” After an exchange of letters between Alexander and the Bragmans, the conqueror decides to leave them alone,

¹⁰⁰ Augustine did not believe virtuous pagans could be saved, for “the virtuous pagan is a contradiction in terms, since to possess the cardinal virtues one must first possess the Christian theological values.” Colish, 58. As I discuss in this section, the Mandeville-author works around this problem by presenting virtuous pagans that do indeed possess Christian theological values even if they are not Christian.

only to encounter a similar people when he finds the Gynoscricphe. Living devout lives much like the Bragmans, the Gynoscricphe also escape conquest after an exchange with Alexander, who, faced with such piety, “had grete wondre þeroff and was gretely compuncte and went fra þam and did þam na disese” (146). He almost seems baffled by what he has seen, so he simply turns around to leave.¹⁰¹

Following these two stories of pagan virtue with which medieval readers would have been quite familiar,¹⁰² the Mandeville-author makes his move and makes the text’s most forceful case for God’s acceptance of all peoples and their salvation: “And if all þare be many diuerse lawes and diuerse sectez in þe werld, neuerþeless I trowe þat Godd euermare luffez wele all þase þat luffez him in sothefastness and seruez him mekely and trewly and sette noȝt by þe vayne glory of þe werld, as þis folke duse and as Iob did” (146). The Mandeville-author begins this argument only after he has presented two familiar stories of worthy non-Christians as if setting up his readers with examples they would already know and accept before making his bold statements that follow. But he does not stop there. He immediately follows his claim of God’s universal love with supporting scripture:

And þerfore said oure Lorde by þe prophete Ysai, *Ponam eis multiplices leges meas*, þat es to say, “I schall putte to þaim my lawes manyfalde.”
And also in þe Gospell he saise, *Alias oues habeo, que non sunt ex hoc*

¹⁰¹ Alexander’s encounter with these two peoples are also examples of a ruler tolerating groups over whom he has great power. After each exchange, he restrains that power and leaves them alone.

¹⁰² Alexander’s exchange with Dindimus was a widely circulated text that was incorporated into many of the Alexander romances, including the *Historia de Preliis* of Leo of Naples and its recensions, the *Alexander B* (also known as *Alexander and Dindimus*), the *Thornton Alexander*, the Middle English *Wars of Alexander*, and the Old French *Alexander Romance*. For an extensive description of the Alexander texts of the Middle Ages, see George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1956) and the introduction to *The Gestes of King Alexander of Macedon: Two Middle-English Alliterative Fragments, Alexander A and Alexander B, Edited with the Latin Sources Parallel (Orosius and the Historia de Preliis, J2 Recension), with Introduction, Notes, Appendicies, and Index*, ed. Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929).

ouili, þat es to say, “I hafe oþer schepe, whilk er noȝt of þis falde,” as if he said, “Oþer seruandes I hafe þan er vnder Cristen lawe.” (146)

The inclusion of scripture at this point makes it quite clear that the Mandeville-author’s attitude is one of *Christian* universalism. Although he argues for God’s love and acceptance of these peoples, he judges non-Christian practices and beliefs by Christian standards, justifies their ways by Christian scripture, and commends them only insofar as they exemplify Christian values. His paraphrase of the quoted scripture, “Oþer seruandes I hafe þan er vnder Cristen lawe,” seems to claim the opposite – that non-Christians are not held to Christian standards, yet the text still uses *Christian* scripture at this point to appropriate the peoples in question. His argument then culminates in his presentation of Peter’s vision:

Ane aungell came fra heuen and broght with him all maner of bestez and neddres and fewles, and bad him take and eet; and sayne Petre answerd and said, “I ete neuer of vnlene bestez.” And þe aungell sad agayne to him, *Quod Deus mundauit, tu ne immundum dixeris*, þat es to say, “Call þou noȝt vnlene þat þat Godd hase clensted.” Þis was done in takyn þat men despise na men for þe diuersetee of þaire lawes. For we wate noȝt wham Godd luffez ne wham he hatez; and þerfore, when I pray for þe deed and sayse my *De profundis*, I say it for all Cristen saules and also for all þe saules þat er to be prayd fore. And of þis folk I say þus mykill, þat I trowe þai er full acceptable to Godd, þai er so trew and so gude. (146)

This vision goes to the very heart of universalism as it points to a foundational Christian story used to support the idea that Christ’s message is intended for all peoples. He continues after the vision:

Þare er many prophetez amanges þam and hase bene of alde tyme; for in þir iles was sum tyme of þe incarnacioun of Criste prophecied, how he schuld be borne of a mayden, 3a iii^m ȝere and mare before þe tyme of his incarnacioun. And þai trowe wele þe incarnacioun of Criste; bot þai knawe noȝt þe maner of his passioun. (146)

This account begins with the story of Peter's conversation with the angel about consuming unclean foods and ends by consuming the other in claiming their foreknowledge of Christ.¹⁰³ It is this foreknowledge that makes *The Travels*' argument for universal salvation so innovative because instead of taking a position that would have put the Mandeville-author in an anti-Augustinian position, it actually recharacterizes non-Christians to fit Augustine's view.¹⁰⁴ Augustine believed the Hebrew prophets were saved because of their foreknowledge but not virtuous pagans because "the virtuous pagan is a contradiction in terms, since to possess the cardinal virtues one must first possess the Christian theological values."¹⁰⁵ The Mandeville-author works around this problem by presenting virtuous pagans that do indeed possess Christian theological values even if they are not nominally Christian.¹⁰⁶ In addition, careful not to devalue the necessity of baptism or the Church, non-Christians' differences in belief are swept away as the Mandeville-author portrays them as proto-Christians who need only a little instruction in Christ's passion to complete their conversion (albeit in the distant future).

¹⁰³ The argument for consuming unclean foods leads to consuming others, just as Paul's tolerance consumes the Jews.

¹⁰⁴ Non-Christian foreknowledge of Christ is also sufficient for their salvation because many can be seen as living before the Incarnation: "The geographical distance separating these peoples from Christendom, that is, indicates their place in History, where History is understood according to the widely accepted Pauline tradition of the three ages: 'ante legem' (the time before the Mosaic law), 'sub lege' (the time under the law), and 'sub gratia' (the time of grace, inaugurated by the Resurrection)." Higgins, 227. Like the Hebrew prophets, many of the peoples of the East live in a time before the time of grace, so their foreknowledge or expectation of Christ would, from an Augustinian perspective, be enough for their salvation. The presence of Christians in the East indicates that not all Easterners live "ante gratia," and the Mandeville-author's use of multiple sources (themselves the products of multiple sources) naturally leads to an East in which different places and peoples are in different Pauline ages, but for the most part, the peoples of the East tend to fall into the earlier ages.

¹⁰⁵ Colish, 58.

¹⁰⁶ Clement of Alexandria and Origen both argued for salvation through foreknowledge before Augustine, but they included pagans who were saved because their *reason* had led to that foreknowledge. Augustine rejected that idea because he believed only faith in the coming Savior and virtue stemming from theological values could lead to salvation.

Although the Alexander episodes are where the Mandeville-author's universalist approach finally turns into a clear argument for God's acceptance of all faiths, throughout his account of the Holy Land and East, he uses similar strategies in order to erase or minimize differences as much as possible in order to fit his universalist agenda. His task is relatively easy when it comes to the Saracens in the Holy Land since Christian and Saracen belief are quite similar to begin with due to their status as Abrahamic faiths. The Mandeville-author's description is one of the most accurate medieval depictions of Islam, but the majority of his account focuses on areas where he finds similarities between his faith and theirs. Saracens believe in the Incarnation, "gladly will þai speke of þe Virgin Mary," hold Christ above all other prophets, hate Jews, and say "Thesu Criste was þe worde and þe gaste of Godd" (66-68). They even show signs of respect when holding the written Gospel. Because of these and other similarities, they can be easily converted: "And, for als mykill as þai ga þus nere oure faith in þir pointes and many oþer, me think þat mykill þe titter and þe lightlier þai schuld be conuerted till oure lawe thurgh preching and teching of Cristen men" (67-68). Similarity means easy conversion, but the Mandeville-author drives his point home by repeating his statement: "And þus it semez þat þe Sarzenes has many articles of oure trouth, þof it be noȝt perfytely; and þarfore it ware þe lighter to conuerte þam and to bring þam till oure trouth, and namely þase þat er letterd and has knawying of Scriptures." Saracens even know some of the scriptures, though they do not understand them spiritually.¹⁰⁷ The text does not necessarily say that Saracens are acceptable to God in this section, but the universalist impulse is already present long before his account of the East. They are represented as already having

¹⁰⁷ In claiming that Saracens read scripture literally and not spiritually, the Mandeville-author says they are like the Jews in this respect. He immediately turns to Paul whose argument is of course that scripture should be understood spiritually. Reading spiritually is an integral part of Paul's universalist message.

knowledge of and reverence for Christ, and his suggestion that Saracens be converted allows him to maintain the necessity of the Church.

Once in the East, the peoples there do not always know scripture as the Saracens do, but that is when the Mandeville-author finds Biblical justification for their practices. Although they do not always know scripture, their lives are naturally aligned with and guided by the principles found in the Bible. The Alexander episodes are one example of such justification, and in Lamory, he does the same with the inhabitants' nudity and the absence of marriage with God's commandment in Genesis: "*Crescite et multiplicamini, et replete terram*, þat es to say, 'Waxez and beese multiplied and fillez þe erthe'" (89). At another point, he uses the same commandment to defend the existence of a harem (96). He also likens various practices to those in Latin Christendom. In Inde, the shrine of St. Thomas now houses idols, and worshippers "commez fra ferre in pilgrimage with grete deuocioun, als comounly als Cristen men commez to sayne Iames" (86). Likening what happens at a shrine in the East with one of the more popular shrines to the far West in Spain, the Mandeville-author's analogy brings these child-sacrificing idolaters as close to home as he can, continuing by telling of their practices before the idols: "And þai bring with þam incense and oper thinges swere smelland for to turify þat ymage, as we do here to Goddes body" (87).¹⁰⁸ The final words of the sentence are quite powerful. "We" and "here" suddenly take the reader out of Inde as if to remind him that he is still at home among people like him, among people who do the same things found in Inde, for likening

¹⁰⁸ I originally read "turify" as an error in the Warner edition (in place of "purify"); however, "turify" is correct. It means "to burn or offer incense in a religious rite; offer incense (to a god or an idol); to fumigate (an idol) with incense." "thurifien,v," *The Middle English Dictionary Online*, December 18, 2009, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED45716>. In his edition of the Egerton, Malcolm Letts modernizes the term to "thurify." Both Warner and Letts note that the Cotton uses "sensen" (Letts modernizes to "cense").

pagan practices to what Latin Christians do to “Goddes body” takes the analogy to an extreme by going to the very heart of Christian worship: the Eucharist. In addition to making pilgrimages to shrines, eastern non-Christians also make use of relics, such as the ashes left from cremation in Inde, which “kepez þam in steed of relyques” (88). Tartars keep feathers from a particular bird important to their mythology “as it ware a relyque” (111). The centrality of relics to Christian worship has already been well-established by this point since almost every page of the description of the Holy Land includes some mention of Christian relics, where they are located, who translated them, and what miracles accompany them.¹⁰⁹

The peoples of the East also have similar religious systems to those found at home. In Ryboth, there is a city where “dwellez þe pape of þaire lawe, wham þai call Lobassi,” and “all þe prestez and ministres of ydoles er obedient to him as oure prestez er till oure pape” (152-153). It could be argued that the Mandeville-author was simply using terminology familiar to Christians when calling these men popes and priests, but he takes the extra step in saying “as oure prestez er till oure pape.” “Oure,” repeated and employed like “we” and “here” in the episode of the shrine of St. Thomas, continues to ensure that no matter how fantastic or seemingly unacceptable to God, the representations of all eastern peoples and faiths serve the text’s universalist argument. These faiths and practices are all acceptable and make their adherents eligible for salvation because they all resemble Christian faiths and practices. The Mandeville-author reimagines them to make them so, and near the end of *The Travels*, he reiterates his stance on the fate of their

¹⁰⁹ For the importance of relics, see chapter three.

souls although in a different form that seems to pull back from the more assertive claims made during Bragman and Gynoscriphe sections.

Just before ending his account of the world, the Mandeville-author states that

in all þir landes, rewmes and naciouns, outaken þase þat er inhabited with vnresonable men, es na folk þat ne þai hald sum articlez of oure beleue. If all þai be of diuerse lawes and diuerse trowyngs, þai hafe sum gude poyntes of oure trowth. And generally þai trowe in Godd þat made þe werld, and him call þai Godd of Kynde; and þus es þe prophecy verified þat saise, *Et metuent eum omnes fines terre*, þat es to say, “And all þe endes of þe erthe schall drede him.” And in anoþer place, *Omnes gentes seruient ei*, þat es to say, “All folk schall serue him.” (154)

Once again, the universalism here is a Christian one in which the acceptability of the peoples of the earth depends on having “sum gude poyntes of *oure* trowth,” but this time there is a disclaimer of sorts; only men who are reasonable share articles of belief with Christians, leading some Mandeville scholars like Grady to call this a more conservative restatement of the text’s earlier argument.¹¹⁰ As in previous examples, the Mandeville-author’s next move is to turn to scripture in order to support the claim. He follows this by outlining what these peoples do not know: “Bot þai can noȝt properly speke of Godd, and namely of þe Trinytee, by cause þai hafe na teching. Þai can noȝt of þe Sonne, ne of þe Haly Gaste; bot þai can speke wele of þe Bible and specially of þe buke of Genesis and oþer bukes of Moises, and sum tyme of þe xii. Prophetez sayinges” (154-155).

While in the Alexander episodes there is only one mention of what these peoples do not know (“þe maner of his passioun”), here the Mandeville-author provides what could be seen as an overwhelming list of articles of belief unknown to non-Christians. However, each of these failings are presented as easily surmountable. After all, they do not know these things “by cause þai hafe na teaching,” and teaching them is made easier by the fact

¹¹⁰ Grady, 70.

that the foundation for their education has already been laid; they already know the Old Testament.¹¹¹ I am not suggesting that conversion is the Mandeville-author's main concern, for he does not propose the practical means by which missionary activities should proceed. Instead, I suggest that he includes conversion as a supplement to his argument for universal salvation in order to avoid disregarding the necessity of baptism and the Church. He is, after all, concerned with representing a world in which Christian spiritual hegemony is secure and therefore invested in the necessity of the Church, and the passage above is the point where accounts of individual peoples give way to a sweeping appropriation of all those living in the Holy Land and East in service of that universalizing impulse. Since all non-Christians know the Book of Genesis, the other Books of Moses, and some of the Prophets' sayings, they would by implication have some foreknowledge and expectation of Christ. The Mandeville-author does not explicitly say this as he does in the Gynoscriche episode, but once again, these peoples have the same knowledge provided to the saved Hebrew prophets. Ultimately, rather than changing the rules of what it take to be saved and therefore risk the controversies that plagued others in favor of universal salvation in the Middle Ages, the Mandeville-author changed the players to fit the established Augustinian rules, and in the process, his project has the same effect Boyarin sees in Paul's; the Mandeville-author's system requires "that all human cultural specificities... be eradicated, whether or not the people in question [are] willing," and it dissolves "all others into a single essence in which

¹¹¹As the Mandeville-author continues in this passage, it is quite clear that conversion is just a matter of teaching: "And of ydoles and simulacres þai say þat þer es na folk þat þai ne hafte simulacres; and þat say þai principally for þai see Cristen men hafte crucifizez and ymages of oure Lady and of oþer sayntes and do wirschepe to þam. Bot þai wate noȝt þat we wirschepe noȝt þase ymages of stane or of tree for þam self..." A simple misunderstanding can easily be fixed with a little instruction. Readers then learn that pagans believe angels speak to them through their idols, and the author says they are deceived, implying that all that is needed is someone to expose the deception.

matters of cultural practice are irrelevant and only” some knowledge of Christ is significant. His “generous” treatment of the peoples of the Holy Land and East rewrites their histories, identities, and faiths and makes them eligible for salvation, but all of this is done not for the sake of generosity but in order to demonstrate Christianity’s spiritual hegemony throughout the known world.

Intolerant Universalism, Time, and Comfort

The Mandeville-author’s approach to non-Christians is clearly universalist rather than tolerant. The manner in which the Mandeville-author crafts his argument for universal salvation is entirely intolerant, consuming others in a way that completely changes their identity and forcefully draws them into his own framework in which Christianity’s spiritual hegemony defines everything. *Tolerantia* requires a *laissez faire* attitude, and the Mandeville-author’s universalism – his belief in the universality of Christ’s message and the manner in which he remakes others in order to make his argument for universal salvation – hardly resembles a *laissez faire* attitude and in the end is far more insidious than the crusade suggested in the opening of the text. But even if the Mandeville-author had adopted such an attitude, he and Latin Christendom are still in no position to tolerate other peoples because of Christendom’s weakened state. They have no power to restrain, and the Khan’s tolerance serves to illustrate further the contrast between the project’s universalism and the emperor’s tolerance by providing an example of *tolerantia* as practiced by the world’s most powerful ruler. He restrains his power and chooses not to meddle in the religious affairs of the various peoples within his realm, and the Tartars certainly do not use their power in order to convert their subjects.

Power is a prerequisite for *tolerantia*, whereas universalism repositions the universalist into a position of power. Tolerance works for the Tartars because they are not interested in religious dominance, but it simply will not work for the Mandeville-author or his co-religionists concerned with spiritual hegemony.

Iain MacLeod Higgins also reads *The Travels* as imagining an already existent universal Christendom:

The author goes so far as to have Sir John proclaim that God accepts all who serve him meekly and devoutly, whatever their faith. This is an assertion that may be partly at odds with *The Book's* interest in power and Christian expansion, although it can be understood as an attempt to assimilate the larger non-Christian world into an imagined universal Christendom, where those who still lack revealed knowledge of the One True God nevertheless know him as "Dieu de nature."¹¹²

Higgins does not identify *The Travels* as universalist, but he also seems hesitant to call it "tolerant." Although he occasionally refers to it as such, he generally prefers to call it "open-minded" or "generous."¹¹³ Whatever his choice of label, he sees the Mandeville-author's attitude working toward assimilating non-Christians in a way that would act as "a consolation for the shrunken state of their [Latin Christians'] world."¹¹⁴ Essentially, Latin Christians need not worry since the various peoples of the East hold some form of Christian faith as it is. It is an act of appropriation that would console readers; however, I believe identifying that attitude as universalist and recognizing the important distinction between tolerance and universalism allows a reading of *The Travels* which understands how the Mandeville-author finds a way to situate himself in a position of power when he has none, erases difference where he finds plenty, and even makes an argument for

¹¹² Higgins, 202.

¹¹³ Higgins, 205, 234, 242, 244.

¹¹⁴ Higgins, 233.

universal salvation without changing the rules of the game – all with a minimum of criticism and demonization of non-Latin Christians.¹¹⁵ More importantly, my distinction highlights the discursive violence of the Mandeville-author's appropriation of the peoples of the Holy Land and East in service of his world view. Ultimately, that appropriation does something much worse than demonizing the others of the text. It strips away their identity and history until there is little left of them but their names.

The resulting remade others of the text help the Mandeville-author in providing himself and his readers with the comfort of knowing that despite Latin Christendom's relative weakness in the face of vast non-Christian empires covering much of the known world, their spiritual superiority is not at risk. Although the peoples of the Holy Land and East are not nominally Christian, they almost are. The Mandeville-author does look to the day when they will all take the final step and convert, but he seems comfortable leaving that final step in the distant future and does not bother to outline the practical means by which their conversion will take place. Is it up to Christian missionaries? Will non-Christians convert at the hands of God? For the Mandeville-author, it does not seem to matter. He seems comfortable leaving these questions unanswered because when discussing the faith and fate of these non-Christians, there is no sense of urgency. In terms of salvation history, the End is still in the distant future, and in the mean time, it is enough that the peoples of the Holy Land and East are proto-Christians. As for the immediate future, all that is required of Latin Christians in their own lifetimes is that they reform and pray. Once Christians become more devout, non-Christian conversion will naturally follow, and the remaining differences between the communities will completely

¹¹⁵ Except, of course, the Jews. I turn to this important exception in chapter two.

disappear. Until that day, Christians can follow Sir John's example and say their *De profundis* for Christians and non-Christians alike.

However, the very same text that works to provide this comforting vision of the world also exhibits a particular discomfort with Jews. They are the only non-Christians consistently demonized by the Mandeville-author, and as I argue in the next chapter, because of the complex origin/other relationship between Christianity and Judaism, they are the one group that frustrates his project of representing a world in which Christian spiritual hegemony is secure. For the Mandeville-author, Jews are an urgent problem. Unlike his attitude with other non-Christians, when thinking about Jews, he is at a different point on the timescale of salvation history. For him, they do not exist in the present. They only exist in the past at the originary moment of Christianity or in the future when they play a critical role in the Apocalypse. When it comes to Jews, the Mandeville-author does not think he has the luxury of time.

Chapter 2: Mandeville's Jews and the Contest for Sacred Sites

In almost every case, the Mandeville-author manages to find some common ground between his faith and practices and those of the peoples he describes. The similarities to which he points and the good he sees even in the rituals of idolaters and cannibals allow him to make an argument for universal salvation in which he casts the non-Christians of the Holy Land and East as proto-Christians. Although the Mandeville-author's project proceeds with praise and "generosity" toward the inhabitants of these lands, what he does in the text is far from tolerant. Rather, *The Travels* appropriates the peoples it describes (and their histories) on a massive scale in order to create some sense of coherence that secures Christian spiritual hegemony in the face of what the author sees as both internal and external threats to Latin Christendom. The Mandeville-author believed that he was writing at a time when Latin Christendom had experienced a serious shift in its ability to exercise power beyond the Mediterranean. In this moment of uncertainty, he remade the threats outside Christendom's borders into proto-Christians who seem much less foreign than the Saracens and Tartars found in earlier texts. He appropriated them in service of the coherence he wished to see in a chaotic world, and he was comfortable with the proto-Christian state in which he casts them because when thinking about and discussing these peoples, the end of salvation history is in the distant and hazy future. However, an unavoidable exception to the Mandeville-author's approach to non-Christians remains to be addressed: the Jews.

The Mandeville-author's disdain for Jews appears in the very first paragraph of *The Travels*. In the exordium, he establishes Jerusalem as belonging to Christ and thus his heirs, Christians, and in the process, he states that "in þat land he [Christ] wald lede

his lyf and suffer hard passioun and dede of þe Jews for vs synfull wormes....”¹

Ultimately, the exordium leads to the author’s lament that Christians’ “right heritage” remains in “straunge men handes” (2). Oddly, those “straunge men” are not named in this part of the text. The Mandeville-author’s readers would have assumed that he is talking about Saracens, but even though they would be the likely target of the general passage for which he hopes in the exordium, he leaves them nameless. Instead, the enemy named and introduced are the Jews. Blaming Jews for killing Christ is a common convention in medieval texts, but what makes this opening attack significant is both that no other group described in *The Travels* receives anything near the appalling treatment of the Jews and the namelessness of what readers would assume to be the real enemy when it comes to the Holy Land. Building on its first anti-Jewish remark, the text draws a striking contrast between its representation of Jews and its treatment of the Saracen “occupiers” of Jerusalem. Eventually, the Mandeville-author associates the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel with the evil forces of Gog and Magog that are destined to break forth from behind the Gates of Alexander and subjugate all Christians. For the Mandeville-author, the real threat is not the Saracen empire of the Sultan or the Tartar empire of the Khan. The real threat in *The Travels* is a Jewish threat. From the two examples above, it is clear that the Mandeville-author cannot seem to think of Jews in the same temporal terms in which he discusses other non-Christians. There is no luxury of time here. In talking about Jews, the author is clearly stuck in the New Testament where Jews appear at the first and last moments of Christianity – at the beginning when they crucify Christ

¹ *The Buke of John Maundeuill being the Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Knight 1322-56* (Westminster: Roxburghe Club, 1889). 1. Subsequent citations from this text are in parenthetical form.

and at the end when they act as the forces of the Antichrist. Because of this different timeframe in which the Mandeville-author finds himself with Jews, they are not only a threat but an urgent threat that causes him great anxiety.

With such blatant demonization of Jews in a text that goes out of its way to avoid demonizing the other others of the Holy Land and East, it is surprising that as late as 1994, Benjamin Braude could still say that “except for a few words here and there, scholars have made little mention of the anti-Jewish shadow on Mandeville’s sweetness and light.”² Since then, Iain MacLeod Higgins introduced the first book-length study of the text to appear in two decades, and it includes some discussion of the place of the Jews in *The Travels*.³ Frank Grady later addressed the Mandeville-author’s treatment of Jews in a chapter of *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England*.⁴ More recently, in “Provincializing Medieval Europe: Mandeville’s Cosmopolitan Utopia,” Karma Lochrie briefly engaged with the subject,⁵ and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen delivered a

² Benjamin Braude, “Mandeville’s Jews among Others,” *Pilgrims & Travelers to the Holy Land*, ed. Bryan F. Le Beau & Menachem Mor (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996). 139. Braude notes that Stephen Greenblatt is one of the few who have called attention to the passage regarding the Ten Lost Tribes. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). 50-51. Greenblatt’s treatment of the subject is brief, but in pointing out scholars’ inattention to the text’s anti-Jewishness, he started an overdue discussion of the less palatable side of *The Travels*.

³ Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The “Travels” of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

⁴ Frank Grady, *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005). Kathleen Biddick also briefly addresses the text’s anti-Jewishness. See Kathleen Biddick, *The Typological Imaginary: Circumcision, Technology, History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). 29-35.

⁵ Karma Lochrie, “Provincializing Medieval Europe: Mandeville’s Cosmopolitan Utopia,” *PMLA* 124.2 (2009): 592-599. Lochrie suggests that the Mandeville-author’s cosmopolitanism “criticizes and corrects his own limitations by chastening the presumptive Christian perspective.” Lochrie, 598. The author’s cosmopolitan vision “exceeds and in fact implicitly critiques his anti-Judaic episodes in his book.” Although Lochrie does not ignore the text’s anti-Jewishness, she brushes it off all too easily in favor of emphasizing the Mandeville-author’s cosmopolitanism and tolerance, in effect returning to earlier readings which praise the text for its “forward-looking beliefs.” See Christian K. Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage:*

keynote lecture to the 2009 International Medieval Congress in which he discussed *The Travels*' anti-Jewishness in conjunction with Matthew Paris' account of Hugh of Lincoln.⁶ It seems *The Travels*' invisible Jews are finally being noticed by Mandeville scholars,⁷ and rightly so, for although an anti-Jewish attitude might not be considered exceptional given *The Travels*' fourteenth-century context, as already mentioned, the text's hostility toward Jews is indeed exceptional compared to its treatment of almost every other non-Christian group it describes. In addition, *The Travels*' main sources have either little or nothing to say about Jews, so the text's anti-Jewishness comes mainly from the author himself.⁸ The Mandeville-author – the same author who represents Saracens, Tartars, and even cannibals as non-threatening – seems to have a specific problem with Jews.

Why does the Mandeville-author vilify Jews when he does nothing close with other groups? How is his treatment of Jews related to his representation of the relationship between Latin Christians and non-Christians or Latin Christians and Eastern

The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). 153.

⁶ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Between Christians and Jews," Keynote Lecture to the 2009 International Medieval Congress. The story of Hugh of Lincoln is commonly used when discussing medieval Christian attitudes toward Jews, but *The Travels* is rarely included in such discussions. Cohen suggests that the Mandeville-author's version of the Ten Tribes/Gog Magog story reveals not only his own hostility toward Jews but also Jewish anger at subjection and violence (even if unintentionally).

⁷ As I write this chapter, I find that it is difficult to objectively discuss the text's horrible treatment of Jews without slipping into a tone that sounds as if I agree with the Mandeville-author's views or that somehow excuses the text's anti-Jewishness. In exploring the reasons behind the author's demonization of Jews, I am by no means trying to excuse him. Rather, I wish to investigate his struggle to fit Jews into his world and why they occupy the position they do in the text.

⁸ Higgins notes that the author's main source for the description of the Holy Land, William of Boldensele's *Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus*, is not concerned with Jews. Higgins, 81. The source for the account of the East, Odoric of Pordenone's *Relatio*, likewise has little to say about Jews. Below, I further discuss the Mandeville-author's sources for anti-Jewish accounts and how he modified them to enhance their anti-Jewishness.

Christians? I propose that the Mandeville-author lashes out at Jews because his project is frustrated by the threat they pose to the coherent world he imagines. At times, the author harnesses that threat and uses it to his advantage by demonizing Jews and employing them as the other against whom differences between Christians and non-Christians can be minimized, yet he is unable to completely appropriate Jews to his purposes because of two troubling factors: Christianity's relationship to Judaism and the scope of his project. First, the complex supersessionary relationship between Christianity and Judaism makes Jews Christians' origin *and* other. Because Christianity depends on an understanding of the Incarnation as a new beginning, it requires prior claims regarding the relationship between God and humanity against which to define itself, and because Christianity was born from Judaism, Jewish scripture provides those necessary prior claims.⁹ Jewish history and scripture (from a Christian perspective) prefigure Christ and the Church, so Christianity is in a sense the continuation and fulfillment of Judaism. However, because the Incarnation marked a new beginning, Christianity is also *not* Judaism, and the continued survival of Judaism after the Incarnation meant that Jews would become the primary other against whom Christianity defined itself. The Mandeville-author was not alone in his attempt to negotiate this complex origin/other relationship as he tried to create a coherent Christian view of the world. Numerous Christian theologians before him came up with a number of ways to deal with the problematic relationship between Christianity and Judaism. As I will further elaborate below, the Mandeville-author drew upon those solutions in his own project, but this factor in itself is not unique to *The*

⁹ Steven Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). 5.

Travels and alone does not explain his particular anti-Jewishness. Taken in conjunction with the second factor, however, the complex relationship between Christianity and Judaism becomes particularly problematic for the Mandeville-author.

The author's project – a description of the known world as the site of salvation history in which all peoples are proto-Christians accepted by God – is relatively successful in swallowing the countless others of the Holy Land and East, but the project's scope itself places a great deal of pressure on the question of how Jews fit into its world view. In reaction to what he saw as upheaval, change, and chaos during his lifetime, the Mandeville-author was so entirely committed to imagining a Christian coherence to the world that his project is absolutely massive. In *The Travels*, appropriation proceeds not only on a global scale but also through all of history. Appropriating numerous non-Christian peoples, rewriting their histories, and reinscribing their territories is a difficult task on this level, but it is done with relative ease when those peoples are only others.¹⁰ When it comes to Jews, however, the Mandeville-author is confronted with an other who is also his origin – an origin with competing spiritual, temporal, and territorial claims stemming from the same scriptures as his. In the world of *The Travels*, this complex relationship is a threat to the project of the text itself, for because Jews are other and origin, they are an enemy with a rival view of the world and its history, an adversary in the reading of scripture, and a competitor for Christians' "right heritage" in the Holy Land. In the face of this foe, the Mandeville-author struggles to maintain the coherent

¹⁰ In addition, for the Mandeville-author, those non-Christian others exist in a time when questions of their faith and fate are not urgent.

world he has created by trying to empty it of its Jewish past,¹¹ containing as many as he can behind the Gates of Alexander, and using them when possible as the other against whom all others are measured, yet he is also frustrated at every turn as he cannot vanquish this troubling origin, and that frustration ultimately comes to a head in the description of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Demonizing Jews

Jews are mentioned almost fifty times throughout *The Travels*, and at almost every instance, the Mandeville-author seizes the opportunity to demonize them in some way. Following their appearance in the exordium, Jews reappear during the description of Constantinople where there “es þe sponge and þe rede of whilk þe Iewes gafe oure Lorde to drynke, when he hang on þe crosse” (5). The location of the True Cross and a description of its construction out of various trees follows: “Of þise foure maner of treesz þe Iews made Cristes crosse for þai trowed þat he schuld hafe bene hingand upon þat crosse als lang as þat crosse myght last” (5). The author not only emphasizes Jewish responsibility for Christ’s crucifixion and the construction of the instrument of crucifixion at their hands, but he also characterizes them as particularly vicious in their choice of durable materials. The attack highlights Jews’ limited understanding (as far as Christians were concerned) of what was to happen because the resurrection was to occur only three days later. Also, by constructing a durable cross, they end up providing

¹¹ Emptying the world of its Jewish past is a double-edged sword, for it also weakens scripture shared between Christians and Jews.

Christians with a relic that still exists fourteen centuries later.¹² The attack continues by saying that Jews thought Christ's body would rot and stink; therefore, they used cypress wood "so þat þe smell of his body schuld not greue to men þat come forby" (5). The concern with rotting flesh and its stench becomes even more significant with what follows: "And þat pece þat went ouerthwert, to whilk his hend ware nayled, was of palme; for in þe alde testament was it ordaynd þat, when any man had þe victory of his enmy, he schuld be crownd with palme" (5). Here citation of the Old Testament as well as the Jews' concern with Christ's rotting flesh in the text quoted above echo a Pauline criticism of Jews that associates a literal reading of the law with flesh while associating a figurative reading with the spirit.¹³ Later, the Mandeville-author explicitly refers to Paul in this matter: "Bot þai [Saracens] vnderstand noȝt haly writte spiritually, bot after þe letter, as þe Iews does; and þefore saise sayne Paule, *Litera occidit, spiritus autem*

¹² Beginning with the First Crusade, the image of the crucifixion and the cross itself became central to preaching and recruiting for the crusades. One "took the cross" as a sign of accepting the call to retake the Holy Land, and crusaders wore crosses on their persons during campaigns. With the discovery of pieces of the True Cross in the Holy Land, the cross became even more central to crusade rhetoric. When one relic of the True Cross was lost to Saladin's forces at the Battle of Hattin (1187), it wrecked Frankish morale. Its loss "resonated throughout Christendom, raising the military disaster into a spiritual catastrophe." Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). 371. Increased emphasis on the cross and crucifixion was matched by massacres of Jews at the hands of crusaders (regardless of which crusade): "one of the words employed by Hebrew chroniclers to describe the perpetrators of the Rhineland pogroms of 1096 translates as 'those bearing insignia,' signs of an obsession with the Crucifixion and vengeance on those allegedly responsible who still denied Christ's divinity." Tyerman, 71. Relics of the True Cross (those still in Christian hands) played a prominent role in propaganda for the Third Crusade, which came at the end of a century in which crucifixes also became more prominent in mass. See Tyerman, 384.

¹³ Consider Romans 7:5-6: "While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit." I use *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha*, ed. Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). From a Christian point of view, the Jews' actions (if unintentional) are also necessary – a kind of *felix culpa* – because they play an important role in advancing salvation history by providing the conditions and materials needed for Christ's sacrifice and humanity's redemption. However, they did not understand the significance of what they were doing, and the Mandeville-author's version of these events attributes an excessive viciousness to their motives and actions. In his account, the Jews not only misunderstood the role they were playing, but they also seem to take it too far and almost relish in Christ's pain.

viuificat, þat es to say, ‘þe lettre slaiez, and þe spirit qwikkens’” (68-69). The Saracens’ error, however, is one that the author believes can be corrected through teaching and preaching, but he does not express a similar hope for Jews. Rather, Jews are perpetually bound to their literal understanding of scripture (a competing reading) and their concern with flesh.¹⁴

Shortly after his discussion of the Cross, the Mandeville-author proceeds to the Crown of Thorns, and he explains its significance by telling readers that the night Christ was taken, “þe Iews scorned him and sett a coroun on his heued and thrust it þeron so fast þat þe blude ran doune by many placez of his visage and his neck and his schulders” (7). He receives another crown when “the Iews sette him in a chaier and cledd him in a mantell; and þan made þai þe coroun of þe junkes of þe see, and þai knelid to him and coround him þerwith...” (7). These accounts are part of the author’s discussion of the various relics found in Constantinople, the question of their authenticity, and his theories regarding where the real Cross or Crown might be, but he does not miss an opportunity to link Christ’s suffering with Jewish malevolence. The image is quite gruesome as “blude ran doune by many placez of his visage and his neck and his schulders.” Nor does he pass up the chance to point to Jewish cruelty later in the text when he comes to the Temple: “And off a pynacle of þis temple kest þe Iews sayne Iame doune, þe whilk was þe first bischope of Ierusalem” (44). He mentions the death of James after a detailed account of the destruction of the Temple as punishment for the Christ-killing Jews.¹⁵

¹⁴ Like many fourteenth-century texts, the Mandeville-author’s account of the construction of the True Cross completely erases any Roman involvement in the crucifixion.

¹⁵ While Jews may have been playing their assigned role in the crucifixion, by mentioning the murder of James in the Temple itself, the Mandeville-author amplifies their viciousness.

Again, the text links Jews to Christ's death when the Mandeville-author mentions the site where the Pharisees held their council against Christ (46) and the site where they took him: "Ȝit may men see in þe roche þe prynte of oure Lorde hend, þare he thrast þam to þe roche, when þe Iews tuke him" (47).¹⁶ The rocks themselves stand as witness to the Jewish wickedness to which the author repeatedly returns, and he bolsters his attacks by describing tangible evidence in the form of relics, artifacts, and ruins.¹⁷

In the pages that follow, the text returns to an account of the Holy Land, the Saracens, and their faith. Here the reader encounters the "straunge men" holding Christians' "right heritage," but there is almost no mention of their wickedness. In describing Saracen faith, the Mandeville-author only points out how it differs from his own, and the worst most Saracens seem to do is restrict Christian access to several sites (34,41), cheat Christian travelers by selling low-quality balm (26-27), and profit from pilgrims at Christian sites they control (55).¹⁸ He does say that Bedouins are evil (33), but they are presented as a fringe group since the Mandeville-author represents Sir John as having fought in the Sultan's wars against them (18), and the only time he characterizes Saracens as evil is limited to a particular group that holds a church in

¹⁶ For another rock bearing the prints of Christ as witness to a Jewish plot to kill him, see *Buke*, 56.

¹⁷ These images of Jewish wickedness are common in Passion narratives, yet the Mandeville-author includes them in a text that opens with a call for a new crusade and that claims its purpose is to describe the known world. The Passion imagery is absent from his main source for this part of the text, William's *Liber*. William mentions the Passion relics of Constantinople in a single sentence before moving to the site of Troy, but here the Mandeville-author greatly expands on William's statement by providing detailed stories about the Cross, the Crown of Thorns, and the Jews' motives. See Higgins, 77-79.

¹⁸ Muslim tolerance toward Christian sites was not always based on abstract principles. Christopher Tyerman notes that when Saladin recaptured Jerusalem in 1187, he converted many Frankish religious buildings into Islamic schools and seminaries, but "the Holy Sepulchre was spared, some said out of a pragmatic understanding of the importance of the site not the building for Christian pilgrimage, from which in the future the sultan could profit." Tyerman, 374. Western pilgrims to Jerusalem had provided a steady source of income under Frankish rule, and Saladin may have indeed considered the Holy Sepulcher's economic value when he decided to leave it alone.

Nazareth for profit (55). These are what Higgins calls “simple-minded criticisms”¹⁹ that are largely ineffective given the pages devoted to portraying Saracens as pious under their own law.

Where one might expect demonization, very little is found. Instead, *The Travels*’ account of Saracen faith and practices, the ideal site to attack those who occupy the Holy Land, actually ends in an attack on Jews: “And þerfore þe Sarzenes saise þat þe Iewes er wikked men and cursed, for þai hafe broken þe lawe þat Godd gaf þam thurgh Moyses; and Cristen men þai say er wikked and ill, for þai kepe noȝt þe commaundment of þe Gospell, whilk Ihesus Criste bad þam” (69).²⁰ Incredibly, the Mandeville-author presents Saracen criticism of Jews and Christians and does not return the favor. In fact, he follows this statement with Sir John’s conversation with the Sultan in which the Sultan chastises Christians for their wickedness. Sir John agrees with the Sultan, saying that “it es sothe” and instead praises Saracens, who “er riȝt deuote in þaire lawe and riȝt trewe, and wele kepez þe commaundementz of þaire Alkoran...” (70). No shot is fired back at Saracens. Their piety is reinforced, as is their reprimand of Christians. The remark about Jewish wickedness is thus all the more striking given the contrasting treatment of Saracens. In addition, the Saracen characterization of Christians brings them uncomfortably close to what Latin Christians think of Jews – a discomfort with Christianity’s ambivalent

¹⁹ Higgins, 110.

²⁰ Shortly before this, the Mandeville-author says that the “Alkoran spekez of þe Iewes, and saise þat þai er wikked and cursen, for þai will noȝt trowe þat Ihesus was sent fra Godd; and þat þai lye falsly on Mary and hir son Ihesu Criste, when þai say þat þai didd him on þe crosse.” *Buke*, 67.

relationship to Judaism that I believe in part drives the Mandeville-author's anti-Jewishness.²¹

Jews make fewer appearances as the Mandeville-author focuses on describing the East;²² however, this is also the part of the text where Jews are most ruthlessly demonized. First, readers learn that “þe Iews casten on a tyme for to hafe poysond all Cristendom, as ane of þam confessed vnto me; bot, blist be allmizty Godd, þai failed of þaire purpose” (94). This conspiracy is not presented as an unfounded rumor, the likes of which were quite common in medieval Europe as a way to explain the Black Death,²³ but a confirmed fact because Sir John reports that he learned it from a particular Jew who “confessed vnto me.” With this confession, Jewish wickedness moves from the past (where it led to Christ's crucifixion) into the present, and the next time Jews appear in the text is when the Mandeville-author places their wickedness in the future in what is the most extreme example of *The Travels*' anti-Jewishness.

²¹ This is not the only instance where Saracens lump Christians and Jews together. Both groups are not permitted to enter a church in Ebron that stands over the graves of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives, “for þai hald Cristen men and Iews bot as hundes, þat schuld comme in na haly place.” *Buke*, 34. The restriction is repeated when the Mandeville-author describes the Temple. See *Buke*, 41. They are grouped together again when he says “þare dwellez many Iews, payand tribute as Cristen men duse.” *Buke*, 54.

²² In at least two instances, their appearance lacks the wicked characterization found earlier in the text. See *Buke*, 74, 83.

²³ In 1321, for example, Jews were accused of poisoning wells in France. In addition to well-poisoning, Jews were also accused of conspiracies targeting Christians for their blood since Jews needed to replenish their “debased bodies and unnatural loss of blood” with blood from “more perfect (Christian) bodies.” Kruger, 88. For a more thorough account of the events of 1320-1321, see chapters 2-4 of David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). For further discussion, see Elizabeth A.R. Brown, “Philip V, Charles IV, and the Jews of France: The Alleged Expulsions of 1322,” *Speculum* 66.2 (1991): 294-329; William Chester Jordan, “Home Again: The Jews in the Kingdom of France, 1315-1322,” *The Stranger in Medieval Society*, ed. F.R.P. Akehurst & Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). 27-45.

In his account of the East, the author describes the Caspian hills in which “er þe Iewes of þe ten kynredens enclosed, whilk men callez Gog and Magog...” (131). Chased into these hills by Alexander and trapped there through his prayer to God, they are guarded by the Amazonian queen who ensures that the few who manage to escape are quickly returned. Aside from the physical barriers barring them from escaping en masse, a language barrier also prevents the few who make their way out from communicating with anyone, for “þai can speke no langage bot Ebrew” (131-132). Elsewhere in *The Travels*, language does not act as a barrier to communication. The author presents foreign alphabets, but he does so in a way that minimizes linguistic difference. In submitting the Saracen alphabet, for example, he states that “þir foure letters hafe þai mare þan we hafe for diuersitee of þaire langage, by cause þai speke so in þaire throtes; as we hafe in oure speche in Ingland twa oþer letters þan þai hafe in þaire abce, þat es to say, þ and ʒ, whilk er called þorn and ʒok” (71). This reminder that the English alphabet also includes unique characters not used in other languages demystifies the foreign letters just presented, and each subsequent alphabet presented in *The Travels* acts as an access point to its respective language rather than a marker of exotic difference.²⁴ When it comes to Hebrew, however, language actually acts as an insurmountable barrier. Despite having included the Hebrew alphabet in *The Travels*, the Mandeville-author implies that

²⁴ Grady sees the comments about the two unique English symbols as avoiding “implying the existence of any hierarchy of tongues, and suggests, in keeping with his overall ethnographic approach, that the differences between languages are natural, almost trivial adaptations to local circumstances.” Grady, 55. For the alphabets, see *Buke*, 11, 27, 54, 71, 76, 77. The Mandeville-author even finds a way to minimize the difference of the “language” spoken by a people without tongues: “Þai speke noʒt, but hissez and makes signes as mounkes duse, ilke ane till oþer, and ilkane of þam wate wele what oþer menez.” *Buke*, 100. Though this island’s inhabitants cannot speak a language made up of words and sentences, they are likened to monks back home in a way that parallels the monks’ adaptation to their vow of silence with the islanders’ adaptation to their lack of tongues. Their hisses are simply another example of the way “differences between languages are natural, almost trivial adaptations to local circumstances.”

only Jews can understand their language – a fact that in theory disadvantages those who escape from their Caspian prison but also allows for a global Jewish conspiracy.

Readers learn that although these dangerous Jews are safely trapped behind the Gates of Alexander, they will escape, this time en masse, during the time of the Antichrist and destroy Christians. Knowing this, “all þe Iews þat dwellez in diuerse partys of þe world lerez for to speke Hebrew, for þai trowe þat þir Iewes þat er enclosed amanges þe hillez schall comme oute and schall knawe þam by þaire speche þat þai er Iews as þai er. And þan schall þai lede þam in to Cristendom for to destroy Cristen men” (132). The great Jewish threat relies on Jewish difference and the marker of that difference: Hebrew. What elevates this threat above all others is the fact that Jews living outside the Gates of Alexander and among Christians in cities throughout Latin Christendom will play a part in helping the Ten Tribes overcome Christians precisely because they continue to learn Hebrew, which in the hands of the Mandeville-author becomes a conspiratorial and subversive practice. The threat behind the Gates of Alexander may seem safely enclosed, but that same threat becomes the internal threat because Jews outside the Caspian hills still preserve their language.²⁵

Just this one example of *The Travels*' anti-Jewishness, the association of Jews and the forces of Gog and Magog, stands in stark contrast to its treatment of other non-Christians in the Holy Land and East, but such viciousness is not as surprising when seen against the backdrop of countless other anti-Jewish texts in the Middle Ages. It would be easy to dismiss the Mandeville-author's treatment of Jews as conventional for his age;

²⁵ The Mandeville-author seems to be in a bind here. He seems to want to contain the threat behind the Gates of Alexander and erase Jewish presence from as much of the world as he can, but in heightening that threat, he admits Jewish presence outside those gates.

however, he was far from conventional when it came to other non-Christians. The Mandeville-author made significant changes to his sources in order to lessen and even completely avoid the demonization of the peoples of the Holy Land and East in service of the Christian coherence he imagines for the world, and he was also active in his choice of sources. As for his treatment and representation of Jews, he seems to have been just as active in changing his sources, in this case doing so in order to add to or enhance those texts' anti-Jewishness. The Mandeville-author's treatment of Jews "represents a mirror image of the process by which he constructed the description of every other."²⁶ Higgins notes that while such representations of Jews are common in medieval texts, it is important to see that "it is altogether absent from William's *Liber* [the main source-text for much of the account of the Holy Land], which is concerned with the recent spread of Muslim power in the Levant, not with Jewish resistance more than a millennium ago to Jesus or the spread of Christianity."²⁷ In addition, several anti-Jewish episodes are particularly marked by the significant changes the Mandeville-author made to his received materials in order to enhance their anti-Jewishness.

In his description of the Temple in Jerusalem, for example, the author provides a history of the buildings that have stood at this site. He tells his readers that Titus destroyed the Jewish Temple as punishment for the killing of Christ. Later, Julian the Apostate gave Jews permission to rebuild the Temple, but an earthquake destroyed what they built. Hadrian then restored the Temple but barred Jews from entering it, allowing only Christians in the rebuilt Temple. Much of this story can be traced to the *Legenda*

²⁶ Braude, 139.

²⁷ Higgins, 81.

Aurea of Jacobus de Voragine as well as to Christian tradition dating back to the fourth century.²⁸ When it comes to Hadrian, however, the Mandeville-author makes him “a Christian avenger for Julian’s attempt in 360-363 to revive the Temple. There is symmetrical literary logic to Mandeville’s erroneous chronology. Julian, born a Christian, acts like a pagan so he makes the passage end with Hadrian, born a pagan, acting like a Christian.”²⁹ Another change can be seen in the discussion of Noachic descent in which Jews and Christians are said to descend from Japheth (109). According to Braude, this is in contradiction to both the Book of Genesis and to “the entire corpus of sources on which he himself drew – as well as Christian genealogical theology....” The Mandeville-author’s changes to the established tradition replaces “the old Israel – the Jews – with the new true Israel, Christian Europe, Israel both in spirit and in flesh,” thus removing “from the Jews the claim to Israel (as we shall see in both senses of the word). It denies them a heritage and the rootedness of their own identity.”³⁰ The change is meant to address the origin’s rival claims; however, these changes pale in comparison to what the Mandeville-author does with the legend of Gog and Magog.

The Travels’ anti-Jewishness climaxes in the account of the forces of Gog and Magog enclosed behind the Gates of Alexander. The story was well-known throughout the Middle Ages through texts like the *Revelations* of Pseudo-Methodius, Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum historiale*, and the many versions of the Alexander romances.

However,

²⁸ Braude, 142.

²⁹ Braude, 142.

³⁰ Braude, 143.

the *Mandeville*-author ignores the common tradition linking Gog and Magog with the Tartars – who, like the Saracens are mostly depicted in a positive light, despite the negative tenor of the author’s principal source after Odoric, Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum historiale*. Instead, as we have seen, the author prefers the rare anti-Jewish tradition, which he may have known through the *Compendium theologiae veritatis* compiled by Hugh Ripelin of Strassburg (d. 1268), since it has several unusual details in common with *The Book*’s account.³¹

Among the details the two accounts have in common is the Amazon queen’s role as prison warden. She and her fellow Amazonians are charged with guarding the enclosure, but the *Mandeville*-author adds that some of the Jews escape from time to time, and this allows him to “allow his imagination free rein”³² as he continues by saying that those who escape cannot communicate with anyone because they only speak Hebrew. The comforting note is quickly turned on its head when the next sentences state that at some point the Ten Tribes will manage to escape en masse, and therefore, the Jews living amongst Christians learn Hebrew in the hope of communicating with their escaped brethren. Although the account “purports to discuss the future,” this final detail “works to incite ill-feeling against the Jews in the present” as the *Mandeville*-author remakes the story of Gog and Magog into an even more powerful Jewish conspiracy theory than that of well-poisoning.³³

The *Mandeville*-author also actively altered his source materials regarding the Ten Tribes’ means of escape. He says that the Jews will escape when they see a fox burrow under Alexander’s Gate. Following the fox’s path, they will discover its den and dig their own way out of their prison. Higgins suggests that this detail probably comes

³¹ Higgins, 182.

³² Higgins, 183.

³³ Higgins, 184.

from a mid-thirteenth-century treatise entitled *Mirabilia mundi*, but once again the Mandeville-author makes several changes. The *Mirabilia* associates the Tartars rather than the Ten Tribes with Gog and Magog, and it also says that the escape has already happened since the Tartars have already been unleashed upon Christendom as punishment for its sins. This final detail would have been at home in *The Travels* since the Mandeville-author spends much time criticizing Latin Christians, but it is left out of his account of the Ten Tribes. Instead, that account ends “with the projected escape, leaving his audience to associate Jews with the fox: that is, with a powerful figure of cunning, deceit, and destruction (cf. Nehemiah 4:3), and sometimes also of heresy (the Cathars, for example, were identified with ‘the little foxes’ of the Song of Songs 2:15).”³⁴

Braude provides a convenient summary of the Mandeville-author’s innovations:

First, he makes their [the Jews’] escape much more imminent and less supernatural than earlier accounts. Second, he connects the Ten Tribes with the other Tribes of Israel in an international conspiracy of murder and mayhem linked by the vehicle of Hebrew. Third, he explicitly emphasizes Jewish landlessness whose fleeting end, through the Antichrist’s return of the Jews to the Holy Land, had been implicitly part of the Christian apocalypse. While the first idea seems original to Mandeville, the voices of Peter Comestor (1110-1179) and Jacques de Vitry (1180?-1240) can be heard in the background to the second. As for the third....³⁵

Braude hears echoes of Jerome’s *Letter to Dardanus*, in which he asserts that Palestine is the Christian and not Jewish Promised Land, in the third idea,³⁶ a significant echo to

³⁴ Higgins, 185.

³⁵ Braude, 146. In addition, Braude points to Vincent of Beauvais, who was interested in the stories linking Jews with Gog and Magog and “sought the testimony of his Dominican brothers who been [sic] stationed nearby Georgia for seven years. While there, they diligently sought out ‘Georgians, Persians, and even Jews’ to learn the truth. They concluded that no Jews were to be found there.” Nonetheless, the Mandeville-author rejected the conclusions of one of his source texts in favor of the Jewish connection. Braude, 149.

³⁶ Braude, 150.

which I return later in this chapter. At this point, however, it should be clear that as far as his account of the Jewish forces of Gog and Magog is concerned, the Mandeville-author may have employed conventional and nonconventional elements found in his source texts, but he was most certainly active in creating his own version of the story, and the power and viciousness of his anti-Jewishness should not be minimized by attributing it to mere convention (which in itself does not preclude a rhetorical purpose).

The Mandeville-author minimizes differences between Christians and non-Christians in service of his universalist agenda, but he maximizes differences between Christians and Jews. This logic works for the author when understood in terms of the very different natures of Christianity and Judaism. Where Christians believe their faith and God's message is meant for everyone and they should therefore work to convert non-Christians, Judaism is a faith meant for a single group with a common ancestry. God's message to Abraham, Moses, and the other Hebrew prophets is understood by Jews as intended for Jews alone. Jewish law actually works to create markers of difference between Jews and non-Jews. Two examples are dietary restrictions and circumcision, but another mark of difference is the use of Hebrew itself since Hebrew is the language in which the law is written, preserved, and passed on to the next generation and the language used in rituals observing that law.³⁷ In the earliest attempt to deal with Christianity's relationship to Judaism, Paul attempted to erase these differences in his arguments in favor of converting Gentiles to the new Christian faith: "In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian,

³⁷ Latin played and plays a similar role for the Catholic Church; however, it was somewhat of an "international" language for western Christendom in the Middle Ages. For someone like the Mandeville-author, Latin allowed communication with other Latin speakers regardless of nationality. In effect, it could be understood as the polar opposite to Hebrew as represented in *The Travels*.

slave and free; but Christ is all in all!”³⁸ Paul’s opponents refused to give up their requirement that Christians observe the law and essentially become Jews in order to receive Christ’s message. Paul’s views eventually won out, but Jews who did not accept Christ’s message at all continued in their own “anti-universalism” by continuing to observe the law and all it does to mark Jews as a distinct ethnic and religious group. Steven Kruger summarizes the medieval Christian view of Jews as follows:

Pauline formulations of a “faith” that makes “the law” unnecessary, of a “carnal” and “literal” understanding superseded by the “spiritual,” of an “old man” replaced by a “new,” of “death” giving way to “life” definitively write Jewish law, Jewish understanding, Jewish being as past, as an inflexible, literal-minded legalism made unnecessary by the new belief, as a blindness stubbornly resistant to spiritual enlightenment, as an immersion in the body that blocks access to salvation, as death – all ideas crucial for dominant Christian theology, and reverberating strongly in anti-Jewish polemic of the Middle Ages (and beyond).³⁹

It is this Christian understanding of Jewish stubbornness and refusal of spiritual enlightenment to which Kruger refers that the Mandeville-author recognizes as a foil to his own project, partly explaining his vehement anti-Jewishness. He does, after all, point to Jews’ literal-mindedness in the examples already mentioned above. Their competing reading of scripture and history mark them as a dangerous other, especially in light of the Mandeville-author’s representation of the various other peoples of the Holy Land and East as proto-Christians.

³⁸ Colossians 3:9-11.

³⁹ Kruger, 3.

Jews as Other

Throughout *The Travels*, the Mandeville-author takes pains to represent the peoples of the Holy Land and East as non-threatening proto-Christians with much in common with his co-religionists. Jews are the exception to this rule, but at times, the Mandeville-author is able to use this threatening exception to his advantage. Using Jews as a “foil to enhance the brilliance of pagan virtue” is a common strategy in medieval texts. In his study of virtuous pagans in late medieval literature, Grady argues that “virtuous pagan texts involving Jews complicate things by adding a third term to this neat binary. Adherence to pagan law, broadly defined, is represented as plainly virtuous through its contrast with Jewish behavior.”⁴⁰ The Mandeville-author’s Jews seem to function similarly with regard to the non-Christians of the Holy Land and East. Identifying Gog and Magog as the Ten Lost Tribes, for example, “serves to neutralize the formerly threatening Tartars by setting up a once and future enemy in their place.”⁴¹ As a result, the author can represent the Tartars and the rest of the peoples of the East as proto-Christians rather than as forces of the Antichrist or threatening monsters.

While the Mandeville-author argues that the proto-Christians of the Holy Land and East should or will (eventually) be converted, because of the complex relationship

⁴⁰ Grady, 128.

⁴¹ Higgins, 183. Higgins points out that the Mandeville-author ignores the more common tradition of linking Gog and Magog with the Tartars which is found in one of his principal sources, Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum historiale*. The Mandeville-author may have known the rare anti-Jewish tradition from Hugh Ripelin of Strassburg, who compiled *Compendium theologiae veritatis*. See Higgins, 182. Matthew Paris identifies the Tartars with Gog and Magog, but he expresses some doubt since the Tartars do not speak Hebrew and do not know anything about Mosaic law. Although he believes the Ten Tribes are really the ones trapped by Alexander in the Caspian mountains, he still says that the Tartars might be some of those enclosed in the mountains. See Matthew Paris, *Matthew Paris’s English History From the Year 1235 to 1273*, tr. J.A. Giles (New York: AMS Press, 1968). Vol. I, 313-314. He later states that the Jews believe the Tartars to be their kinsmen from the Caspian mountains. See Matthew, Vol. I, 357.

between Judaism and Christianity, he is almost unable to make a case for Jewish conversion. Kruger argues that “despite all the pressure to disavow, indeed destroy, Judaism, Christianity also expressed a certain need to preserve Jews” because “the argument that the incarnation marked a definitive new beginning could not be validated except in relation to certain prior claims about God’s relation to humanity, and, for a Christianity that arose from Judaism, these were the claims of Jewish scripture.”⁴² The self-definition of Christianity requires Jews resistant to its message, and I suggest the Mandeville-author employs those resistant Jews to strengthen the relationship he builds between Christians and non-Christians.

The Mandeville-author’s treatment of other non-Latin Christians, especially his treatment of the Saracens, takes away the other others against whom Christians had come to define their identity.⁴³ In his study of the role Christianity imagined for Islam, Michael Uebel demonstrates that “as the depository of all Christian heresies, a kind of cloacal stream of dissidence, Islam, through its cultural marginality and hybridity, became a measure of Christianity’s stability and purity.”⁴⁴ He argues that Islam was seen

⁴² Kruger, 5.

⁴³ In their introduction to *Marvels, Monsters and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger state that “on the psychological level, every self defines itself by engaging an Other, some one or thing that is both attractive and repulsive, similar and different. On a larger scale, whole social groups define themselves through the same dialectical process. Asia, Africa, and the Americas all serve as Others for Europe: Jews, Muslims, Viking ‘heathen,’ and various heretics all serve as Others for Christendom.” Timothy S. Jones & David A. Sprunger, “Introduction: The Marvelous Imagination,” *Marvels, Monsters and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. Timothy S. Jones & David A. Sprunger (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002). xiv.

⁴⁴ Michael Uebel, “Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity,” *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). 275.

as beginning “where Christianity imagined itself leaving off,”⁴⁵ thus defining what Christianity was not against the monstrous beliefs and practices of Muslims.⁴⁶ Although Uebel’s statement overgeneralizes and does not consider the diversity of medieval Christian thought regarding the relationship between the two faiths, increased contact between Latin Christians and Muslims certainly provided another group against whom Christians defined their identity. When the Mandeville-author takes Saracens out of the equation by emphasizing their similarity to Christians and the possibility of their easy conversion, however, the Jews of *The Travels* (who have always been a part of the equation) once again come to bear *all* of the pressure of Christian self-definition. For him, Jews are and always have been the one group against whom Christianity defines itself. Grady points to how common it is for Jews to play this role in literature about virtuous pagans:

The anxiety generated by an affective investment in pagan righteousness, potentially threatening to the doctrinal integrity of Christianity, is relieved by its transformation into an anti-Judaic scorn that is then free to flow along the well-worn channels of medieval anti-Semitism. And the operation of this mechanism is visible in too many texts, and too many kinds of texts, to be a coincidental or even marginal phenomenon; it is clearly part and parcel of the period’s interest in the figure of the righteous heathen.⁴⁷

An interest in righteous heathens releases a compensatory anti-Judaism, and unlike other medieval texts interested in individual virtuous pagans, the Mandeville-author’s account of the Holy Land and East is overwhelming in its presentation of dozens of non-Latin Christian peoples worthy of God’s love because of their piety and because of their

⁴⁵ Uebel, 275.

⁴⁶ Kruger also shows how Saracens came to play a role in Christian self-definition by defining what was not Christian. See Kruger, 39-56.

⁴⁷ Grady, 125-126.

foreknowledge of Christ. Under the weight of so many virtuous peoples cast as proto-Christians, the integrity of Christian identity is at serious risk of cracking, hence the author's extreme viciousness in his treatment of Jews that in part maintains a stable Christian identity that includes the non-Latin Christians of the Holy Land and East.

But why do the "anxieties generated by an affective investment in pagan righteousness" transform specifically into anti-Jewishness? The more obvious answer has to do with the scriptures shared between Christianity and Judaism. Both religions use a number of the same holy texts, but rather than providing common ground on which the two faiths could come together, these shared scriptures were a source of contention between Christians and Jews because they read and understood them differently according to their respective theologies. Broadly speaking, Christians saw the figures and events of the Old Testament as prefigurations of Christ and his life. Obviously, Jews did not, nor did they understand their scriptures as an "Old Testament" superseded by and confirming the texts making up the Christian New Testament. When confronted by Jews after the Incarnation, medieval Christians were confronted by a competing understanding of scripture, humanity's relationship to God, and salvation history that somehow persisted after having been superseded. The contested textual space of shared scriptures seems to get in the way of talking about Jews in the same terms as righteous heathens. Medieval Christian authors could write about righteous pagans because they were nowhere near as threatening to Christian doctrinal integrity as Jews because there was no contested textual space shared by Christians and non-Christians.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Mandeville-author's "generous" treatment of non-Christians and his anti-Jewishness can be understood in terms of the different temporalities in which his discussions of non-Christians and Jews take place. When thinking and writing about Jews, he seems to be drawn to the

The position of the Gog and Magog episode plays a significant part in maintaining the stability of Christian identity and enhancing the similarities between Latin Christians and non-Latin Christians. The account of the enclosed tribes comes after the Mandeville-author has described Cathay, and as he moves on in his description of the East, he swings west to lands closer to the Holy Land, thus interrupting his general progression eastward. By this point, the account of the East has already included several brief statements about pagan worship and its acceptability to God, but before getting to the story of Alexander and the Bragmans and Gynosciphe in which the author makes his first sustained argument for pagan virtue and acceptability, he returns to the other against whom all others are measured. This seems like a move that shows what is not Christian (Jewish) before making an incredibly strong argument for pagan virtue that has the potential of destabilizing a coherent Latin Christian identity. This same move also makes his argument for God's acceptance of all peoples more effective since they and the Mandeville-author's treatment of them stand in stark contrast to the evil behind the Gates of Alexander.

Shortly after his account of the Ten Lost Tribes, the text proceeds to the realm of Prester John, who "es a Cristen man, and þe maste party of his land also, if all it be so þat þai hafe noȝt all þe articles of oure beleue so clerely as we hafe" (134). Here Prester John and his subjects are labeled simply as Christians. They are not called Nestorians, nor is another descriptor used in order to distinguish them from Latin Christians. The Mandeville-author concedes that they lack certain articles of "oure beleue," but he goes

crucifixion and the coming of the Antichrist – moments when Jews are the enemies of Christ and Christians. Between this temporal configuration and the contest for scripture, it is almost impossible for him to talk about Jews in the same terms as the righteous heathens of his text. Those other non-Christians simply do not pose the same cosmic threats as Jews do.

on to say, “noȝt forþi þai trowe in Godd, Fader and Son and Haly Gaste; and full deuote men þai er and trewe ilkane til oþer, and þare es nowþer with þam fraude ne gyle” (134). As with non-Christians, the author works to minimize the difference between Latin Christians and these Eastern Christians to the point where it is only a matter of adding certain articles of belief in order to convert them fully. Those articles seem trivial since Prester John’s Christians already lead more pious lives than those in Europe who earn the Sultan’s chastisement and the Mandeville-author’s own criticism. However, because this account follows that of the Jews of Gog and Magog, the Christians of Inde seem even closer to Latin Christians.⁴⁹ He even follows this a little later with an account of the crosses Prester John has carried before him when he goes to war (135), perhaps recalling the story of the construction of the cross and the Jews’ role in it.

While the Ten Tribes precede this first account of Prester John (the text returns to him later), another menace based in another enclosure follows it: the castle of the Assassins.⁵⁰ It is located in Prester John’s realm, and “when lordes and riche men of þe cuntree persayued þis malice and wyle of him, þis Catolonabes, þai gadred þam togyder

⁴⁹ Geraldine Heng notes that there is an historical parallel to the way in which *The Travels* uses Jews in order to minimize differences between Christian groups: “It is important to observe that the *Travels*’ attested and much-remarked tolerance of Christian heterodoxy – a tolerance that exists in such pointed contrast, as critics have noted, to the travelogue’s hostility to Jews – has a *historical parallel* in Edward I’s pointed magnanimity to Rabban Sauma, a Nestorian missionary to Europe from whose hands Edward, the monarchic zealot responsible for the expulsion of the Jews from England, received the Eucharist. Whether it is political and military diplomacy that prompt Edward I to act with gracious generosity to the Nestorian Christian...or whether it is that Christian heterodoxy can be papered over when a prime scapegoat of a non-Christian variety, such as Jews, can be found on which a Christian unity might be piously established and celebrated, Rabban Sauma’s biography informs us that Edward’s acceptance of all Christians as one body, confirming only one faith, despite differences of practice, was enacted in both words and deed.” Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). 462n. 68.

⁵⁰ The Mandeville-author calls the Assassin leader “Catolonabes,” and this is the only text to use this name for the Old Man of the Mountain. For a discussion of various theories for the origins of this name and where the Mandeville-author might have found it, see Dorothee Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). 220-239.

and assailed þis castell, and slew Catolonabes, and destruyd all his ricchess and faire thinges þat ware in his Paradys, and kest doune his castell...” (138). In reality, it was the Mongols who destroyed the Assassin stronghold, but the Mandeville-author displaces that stronghold into Prester John’s realm and makes his people the ones who destroy it. Where Alexander, a western pagan, helped trap the Ten Tribes in the Caucasus, here Eastern Christians put an end to another menace, thus placing them on “our” side. Both enclosures, acting as bookends to the Prester John account, contain others that help construct a common Christian identity and emphasize sameness between the peoples the Mandeville-author is interested in presenting as acceptable to God. Bookending Prester John’s realm with the forces of Gog and Magog and the Assassins seems to have been done intentionally by the Mandeville-author. Higgins points out that the Mandeville-author’s source text for much of the second half of *The Travels*, Odoric of Pordenone’s *Relatio*, provides its account of the Assassin stronghold near the end of its description of the East. The author of *The Travels*, however, moves this episode so that it directly follows Prester John’s realm.⁵¹ The result is a double displacement since he relocates the account as well as making Prester John’s forces the destroyers of the Assassins rather than the Mongols. While historically the Assassins were a Muslim group, the Mandeville-author represents them as another fringe group unassociated with the Sultan

⁵¹ Higgins, 158. For Odoric’s account of the Assassin stronghold and its destruction, see Odoric of Pordenone, *The Journal of Friar Odoric in The Travels of Sir John Mandeville with three narratives in illustration of it: The Voyage of Johannes de Plano Carpini, The Journal of Friar William de Rubruquis, The Journal of Friar Odoric*, tr. A.W. Pollard (New York: Dover Publications, 1964). 355-357.

or Saracens. If anything, Catolonabes' conspiracy and secrecy make him and his plan seem like an echo of the Jews and theirs.⁵²

It is only after these episodes and one more significant episode, that of the Vale Perilous,⁵³ that the Mandeville-author moves to his grand argument about God's acceptance of the peoples of the Holy Land and East. Thus, beginning with the Jews of Gog and Magog, the text makes several moves that emphasize sameness in place of difference and secure Christian spiritual hegemony before making its sustained argument about the acceptability of pagans. The Mandeville-author may see Jews as a threat to the coherent world he imagines, but here he takes advantage of that threat and employs it in service of his universalist project.⁵⁴ However, although it would be tempting to read *The Travels*' Jews as other and leave it at that, the relationship between Christians and Jews is much more problematic, and that relationship prevents the Mandeville-author from getting a complete hold on Jews.

⁵² Jacques de Vitry's account of the Assassins includes a brief comment about their connection to Jews: "they retain in part the alphabet of the Jews, having mixed letters from Hebrew and Chaldean." De Vitry, quoted in Braude, 148. Braude continues by arguing that "de Vitry and the other chroniclers of the Crusades knew the Assassins as a murderous stealthy enemy, worthy of the plot which Mandeville attributes to the Jews. All are linked by the Hebrew language." Braude, 148.

⁵³ A valley through which only the devout and pious Christian can travel unharmed as long as he does not take any of the riches found therein, the Vale Perilous episode helps establish Christian spiritual hegemony in the East shortly before including the Bragmans, Gynoscriphe, and by extension all other non-Christians and non-Latins in his argument that they are all proto-Christians that can easily be converted. I further discuss the Vale Perilous episode in chapter three.

⁵⁴ In her study of anti-Jewishness in medieval texts, Lisa Lampert observes that "even as they attempt to present Christian identity as complete and whole, Christian authors acknowledged it to be fragile, created, tenuous, representing Christianity and the Christian community as simultaneously universal and vulnerable. And it is at moments of the most profound instability – such as that of conversion – or in relation to theological controversies – such as those surrounding transubstantiation or the Incarnation – that representations of Christians and Jews alike are often most extreme, even violent." Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). 2. The Mandeville-author is making an argument for just such a theological controversy: universal salvation.

Jews as Problematic Origin

In both *The Travels* and in medieval Christian representations of Jews in general, Jews are both other *and* origin. As Lampert notes, “One cannot conceive (of)...Christianity without Judaism.”⁵⁵ The placement of “of” in parenthesis is crucial to her statement. Indeed, Christianity proceeds from Judaism as a child from a mother; one cannot *conceive* Christianity without Judaism. Christianity’s claims to truth depend on its supersession of Judaism, and “the argument that the incarnation marked a definitive new beginning could not be validated except in relation to certain prior claims about God’s relation to humanity.”⁵⁶ As a result, “like any ancestor, Judaism provides Christianity with an inheritance, which is always, Derrida suggests, spectral (not of the present, but influencing, appearing in, the present, demanding some present response) and ‘heterogeneous’ (*resisting in its complexity any reductive response*)....”⁵⁷ Another problem arises from the fact that Jews remained Jewish after the coming of Christ, serving as ever-present reminders of Christian dependence on Judaism.

In *The Travels*, the Mandeville-author is concerned with this Christian dependence on and proximity to Judaism. Although *The Travels*’ emphasis on the similarities between Latin Christian and non-Christian beliefs and practices partly explains its anti-Jewishness, that same demonization of Jews can also be attributed to the closeness of Judaism to Christianity and the resulting anxieties regarding that proximity to and dependence on the origin. At several points, the text presents uneasy moments in which Christians and Jews are too close for comfort. In one example already mentioned,

⁵⁵ Lampert, 2.

⁵⁶ Kruger, 5.

⁵⁷ Kruger, 11. My emphasis added.

Saracens lump the two groups together as they criticize Jews who “hafe broken þe lawe þat Godd gafe þam thurgh Moyses” and Christians who “lepe noȝt þe commaundement of þe Gospell, whilk Ihesus Criste bad þam” (69). Both in structure and content, this comment parallels the Jews’ violation of their law with the Christians’ violation of theirs,⁵⁸ and the Saracens also group the two faiths in their policies regarding tribute: “For þare dwellez many Jews, payand tribute as Cristen men duse” (54). Also, Saracens in possession of tombs in Ebron “suffer na Cristen men ne Iews com in þare, bot if þai hafe special lefe of þe sowdan; for þai hald Cristen men and Iews bot as hundes, þat schuld comme in na haly place” (34).⁵⁹ That Saracens should hold Christians in the same contempt in which they hold Jews would have provoked considerable anxiety in the Mandeville-author’s readers because it brings Jews all too close to Christians.

One strategy with which Christians dealt with their concern with Jews as origin/competitors was by distinguishing between Biblical (or Scriptural) and historical Jews and appropriating Biblical Jews for Christian purposes. In her discussion of how this distinction developed, Elisa Narin van Court points to an important statement in Paul’s letter to the Romans:

The dual injunctions of Romans 11:28-9, “secundum evangelium quidem inimici propter vos, secundum electionem autem clarissimi propter patres” (As concerning the gospel, indeed, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching election, they are most dear for the sake of the fathers”), initiate a division in Christian doctrine concerning the Jews. This division is seen in its broadest and most simplistic form in those medieval representations of the Jews which are articulated through two paradigms of opposition: in the first, the Jew is the other (*inimici*) vis-a-vis the Christian; in the

⁵⁸ The Saracen criticism of Christians is particularly biting when likened to Jewish wickedness. This is another example of the Mandeville-author using the Jewish threat for his own purposes. It also creates a sense of urgency since it suggests Christians are losing the competition against Jews.

⁵⁹ The restriction is repeated in the account of the Temple. See *Buke*, 41.

second, given the exigencies of Christian claims to a Hebraic heritage (*patres*), distinctions are made between Scriptural Jews, who are revered as the possessors of the Old Law (and prototypes of Christ), and historical Jews, who are reviled as killers of Christ.⁶⁰

As the most important figure in Christianity's transformation from a small Jewish sect to a religion in and of itself, Paul realized that he had to define Christianity's relationship to Judaism. His theology required a break with Judaism but also relied on Jewish scriptural heritage, so he laid the ground work for the complex relationship between Christianity and its Jewish origin/other. The distinction between Biblical and historical Jews that grew out of Paul's dual injunctions regarding Jews became commonplace in the centuries after he wrote to the Romans and into the Middle Ages. Since Hebrew scripture and the Hebrew prophets were an important part of the Christian inheritance from Jews, Biblical Jews could not be demonized in the same way as the historical Jews who killed Christ and continue to live in Europe in the fourteenth-century. The Mandeville-author consistently treats Hebrew prophets with reverence, and he presents their tombs and various places associated with them as important Christian pilgrimage sites. He is able to do so in a text that also demonizes Jews because of the medieval distinction between Biblical Jews who were appropriated for Christian purposes and the historical Jews who "hafe broken þe lawe þat Godd gafe þam thurgh Moyses." The parallelism between the statement about Jewish violation of Mosaic law and the one that follows about Christian failures may bring Christians and Jews uncomfortably close, but that same parallelism also works to contrast the law of Moses and its "inadequacy as a source of spiritual guidance in a post-Incarnation world" with "þe commaundement of þe Gospell, *whilk*

⁶⁰ Elisa Narin van Court, "Socially Marginal, Culturally Central: Representing Jews in Late Medieval English Literature," *Exemplaria* 12.2 (2000): 300.

Ihesus Criste bad þam.” The same sentence criticizes Christians while at the same time asserting the supersession of the law and identifying living Jews as historical. It is those historical Jews whom the Mandeville-author attacks so viciously as he works to distance them by enclosing the Ten Tribes behind the Gates of Alexander and by emphasizing difference when it comes to the Jews he is forced to admit still live throughout the world.

The Pauline division between Biblical and historical Jews allowed for the partial appropriation of Jews. At the very least, Biblical Jews could be easily integrated into a Christian understanding of the world and history by stripping them of their original meaning and replacing it with a Christian one. The role to be played by historical Jews, on the other hand, was to be more definitively laid out by Augustine who, several centuries after Paul’s letter to the Romans, developed what would be known as the doctrine of Jewish witness. The doctrine is outlined in Book XVIII of Augustine’s *The City of God*:

They [Jews] were dispersed all over the world... and thus by the evidence of their own Scriptures they bear witness for us that we have not fabricated the prophecies about Christ.... As for us, we find those prophecies sufficient which are produced from the books of our opponents; for we recognize that it is in order to give us testimony, which, in spite of themselves, they supply for our benefit by their possession and preservation of those books, that they themselves are dispersed among all nations, in whatever direction the Christian Church spreads.⁶¹

Surviving Jews have been scattered throughout the world as witnesses to the truth of Christianity. The texts used to validate Christianity were produced and continue to be preserved by these Jews who do not accept Christianity’s message, so Christians cannot

⁶¹ Saint Augustine, *City of God*, tr. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 2003). 827-828. This and the following quote from the same text are quoted in Jeremy Cohen’s discussion of Augustine’s doctrine of Jewish witness. See Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). 32-33.

be accused of fabricating prophecies regarding Christ. Augustine fully capitalizes on the current situation of the Jews of his day; Jeremy Cohen points out that while “Jews survive as living testimony to the antiquity of the Christian promise, ...their enslavement and dispersion confirm that the church has displaced them.”⁶² Scattered and “enslaved” Jews also stand as proof of the Church’s supersession of Judaism, and as Augustine continues, he quotes Psalm 59:12: “Do not slay them, lest at some time they forget your Law; scatter them by your might.”⁶³ Understanding this to mean that Jews should not be destroyed that they may act as witnesses to the truth of Christianity, he specifically points to “scatter them” and the necessity for Jewish witnesses to be available throughout the world because the Church “is everywhere.” Jewish rights must also be limited since their oppression stands as evidence for the truth of Christianity and the Church’s supersession of Judaism.⁶⁴

Augustine’s doctrine of Jewish witness would have a profound influence on how Christians understood the place of Jews within Christendom. His ideas accorded Jews “a role in Christendom: alive, but in servitude; alive, but socially and economically degraded; alive, but as symbols of Christ’s Passion and witnesses to the truth of Christianity.”⁶⁵ Cohen suggests that Augustine

⁶² Jeremy Cohen, 33.

⁶³ As quoted in Augustine, 828.

⁶⁴ Jeremy Cohen also notes that Jews provided Christianity with antiquity: “Ancients placed the highest value on antiquity, and Greco-Roman civilization typically respected the Jews as one of the oldest peoples of all. From an ancient Mediterranean perspective, why convert to Christianity if its novelty, perhaps the very source of its attraction, constituted prima facie evidence of its invalidity? The discourse of *Adversus Iudaeos* supplied the answer: Despite their literal observance of the biblical law, the Jews had forsaken God’s covenant of old, whereas the Christians, interpreting the law figuratively, had maintained it.” Jeremy Cohen, 10.

⁶⁵ van Court, 302.

made a fourfold contribution to Christian anti-Judaism in the medieval West: the recognition of a definite need for the Jews (appropriately dispersed and subjugated) within Christian society; the focus of anti-Jewish polemic on the interpretation of the Old Testament; the direction of such polemic to Christian and pagan – but not to Jewish – audiences; and a lack of concern with postbiblical Judaism.⁶⁶

This final contribution – “the lack of concern with postbiblical Judaism” – meant that Augustine and his successors “presupposed a Jew very different from the Jews of the Roman Empire: a Jew who had remained stationary in useless antiquity, a Jew who, in fact, never was.”⁶⁷ Medieval Christian texts about the role of Jews in a post-Incarnation world were not writing about the real Jews walking the streets and living in the cities of Christendom. Instead, they wrote about Jews they themselves created. Scholars have proposed several terms with which to label these created Jews; Kruger calls them “spectral Jews”; Sylvia Tomasch calls them “virtual Jews”; Cohen proposes “hermeneutical Jews,” and Alain Finkielkraut prefers “imaginary Jews.”⁶⁸ Whatever the term, Christian writers created Jews who were taken out of time and space in order to serve a particular writer’s theological agenda. Moreover, it was crucial that this Jew who “never was” remained stationary and unchanging. In serving as witnesses, Jews had to preserve their scriptures and their religion as they were in and before the time of Christ.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Jeremy Cohen, 65.

⁶⁷ Jeremy Cohen, 64.

⁶⁸ Kruger, xx; Sylvia Tomasch, “Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew,” *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave, 2000). 250-253; Jeremy Cohen, 2-4; Alain Finkielkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*, tr. Kevin O’Neill & David Suchoff (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994). Kruger also points to Denise L. Despres, who prefers “protean Jews” and Kathleen Biddick’s “paper Jews.” See Kruger, xviii-xix.

⁶⁹ Jews also served as witnesses in narratives of relic discovery and recovery. In “Remains of the Jew: Imperial Christian Identity in the Late Ancient Holy Land,” Andrew S. Jacobs demonstrates that fifth- and sixth-century stories regarding the discovery and recovery of relics often rely on Jewish figures to authenticate the relics, but the Jew in each of those stories also stands as the “appropriate object of the

Augustine's doctrine passed through many hands in the centuries leading to the late Middle Ages, and the changing circumstances of the Church and the different attitudes of each theologian meant the doctrine of Jewish witness would continue to be addressed, modified, and even challenged.⁷⁰ In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, the Augustinian doctrine of Jewish witness was, according to Cohen, put under greater pressure from several factors, one of which was increased Christian attention to postbiblical Judaism which led to the realization that "Talmudic Judaism had not remained stationary in useless antiquity. Its adherents did not uphold and represent an obsolete biblical law of old whose only acceptable development lay in the new covenant of the church."⁷¹ The entire reason behind the relative toleration of Jews was undermined. Jews' privileged status in Christendom "applied only as long as the Judaism practiced conformed to the religion described in scripture or could easily be inferred from scripture,"⁷² and since the Judaism practiced in the Middle Ages included developments dating from after Christ, such as the Talmud, medieval Jews could no longer serve their

relic's imperial power." Andrew S. Jacobs, "Remains of the Jew: Imperial Christian Identity in the Late Ancient Holy Land," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33.1 (2003): 28.

⁷⁰ There were certainly other significant ideas regarding the proper place of Jews in a post-Incarnation world, but Jeremy Cohen argues that these did not go so far as to replace Augustine's doctrine. Cohen provides a thorough discussion of a number of significant contributors to the Christian discussion regarding Jews, and he demonstrates that "during the centuries that followed Augustine medieval theologians received, resisted, modified, adapted, challenged, and undermined – but never rejected outright – his injunction of 'Slay them not.'" Jeremy Cohen, 394. For the sake of brevity, I do not go into detail about each of Augustine's successors, deferring instead to Cohen's invaluable work.

⁷¹ Jeremy Cohen, 396. During this time, Christian scholars increasingly interacted with Jewish scholars in order to learn what they could about the Old Testament. Talking to a rabbi was like "telephoning the Old Testament." Jeremy Cohen, 153, quoting Beryl Smalley. But there was a problem with this, for "increased cultural contacts, including interreligious debate, intensified Christian sensitivity to contemporary Jews and Judaism, aggravating the perception of them as a threat to the integrity of Christendom." Jeremy Cohen, 154.

⁷² Jordan, 29.

Christian purpose.⁷³ Augustine's once successful appropriation of historical Jews was no longer working.

The Mandeville-author was keenly aware of the gap between the Judaism as required of Jewish witnesses and the Judaism as practiced by real living Jews. As I have already shown above, the author tells his readers that Saracens hate Jews because they “er wikked men and cursed, for þai hafe broken þe lawe þat Godd gafē þam thurgh Moyses” (69).⁷⁴ This statement can be understood in two ways. First, the Jews have broken the law of Moses through their rejection of Christ because the Old Testament prophesizes his coming. Shortly before this point, the Mandeville-author says that the “Alkoran spekez of þe Iewes, and saise þat þai er wikked and cursen, for þai will noȝt trowe þat Ihesus was sent fra Godd; and þat þai lye falsly on Mary and hir son Ihesu Criste, when þai say þat þai didd him on þe crosse” (67). So the Jews' violation of the Mosaic law may indeed be their rejection of Christ since they do not “trowe” in the prophecies regarding the Messiah. However, the Saracens' accusation has a stronger resonance when understood in terms of the doctrine of Jewish witness and the realization that Jews could no longer act as witnesses because they no longer preserved the Judaism required of them in that role. They break the law of Moses because they have changed and added to their

⁷³ Jordan points out that “the French crown had long before taken the position that accretions to the religion, especially as embodied in the text of the Talmud, were both blasphemous to the Christian faith and perverted biblical Judaism.” Jordan, 29. Lampert also notes that by 1240, the Talmud was burned in France as Christians “attacked and destroyed the document that presented so vividly a Judaism living and growing well after the time of Jesus.” Lisa Lampert-Weissig, “‘Why is This Knight Different from All Other Knights?’ Jews, Anti-Semitism, and the Old French Grail Narratives,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 106.2 (2007): 232.

⁷⁴ Higgins notes that this is in fact the only time Jewish *belief* is remarked upon in the entire text. Otherwise, *The Travels* is concerned with their anti-Christian activities. See Higgins, 81.

religion, and that violation is evidenced – as far as Christians are concerned – in the Talmud.

The two readings of the violation of Mosaic law are not mutually exclusive, but I would stress the latter because the Mandeville-author accuses no other group in the Holy Land or East of violating their own law. Saracens “kepez þaire vayne lawe better þan we do þe lawe of Ihesu Criste,” and the Mandeville-author reiterates their commitment to their law only a few sentences later: “Bot þai er riȝt deuote in þaire lawe and riȝt trewe, and wele kepez þe commaundementz of þaire Alkoran...” (70). In his account of the East, he reminds readers that Job “serued Godd full deuoutely after þe custom of his lawe, whas seruyse was acceptable to Godd” (76), and Prester John’s subjects are “full deuote men” (134). In Inde, the Bragmans “er gude folk and trewe and of gude faith and gude lyf after the maner of þaire conuersacioun,” and unlike the Jews who violate the Mosaic law, they “kepe wele þe ten commaundementz” (145). Likewise, the Mandeville-author judges the Gynoscriche to be equally virtuous just before his first sustained argument that all of these peoples of the East are acceptable to God: “And if all þare be many diuerse lawes and diuerse sectez in þe werld, neuer þe latter I trowe þat Godd euermare luffez wele all þase þat luffez him in sothefastness and seruez him mekely and trewly...” (146). At this point, he makes it quite clear that differences in law are not the issue most important to him, for he states that men should “despise na men for þe diuersetee of þaire lawes” (146). Adherence and devotion to one’s law, whether Christian or otherwise, is of the utmost importance to the text’s argument about universal salvation and therefore the coherent Christian world it imagines. The peoples of the Holy Land and East can be easily reimagined as lawful, but the option is not available for an

author writing in a Latin Christendom accustomed to accusing Jews – the intimate other living among Christians – of breaking their law.

To a degree, much of what the Mandeville-author does with regard to Jews reflects the unfortunately common conventions of his time. He blames Jews for killing Christ, accuses them of well-poisoning, denounces them as violators of their law, and vilifies them at every chance. He deals with Jews as other and as origin in ways that might be expected given the context in which he was writing. However, medieval representations of Jews and the purposes for which those representations were used were not entirely consistent. In some cases, Jews were used as examples of virtue. One might expect this to be common with Biblical Jews, but van Court observes that “so too, to a lesser extent, are invocations of contemporary, living Jewish communities.”⁷⁵ She points to a sermon by Thomas Brunton, the late fourteenth-century Bishop of Rochester, as one example: “I preach against the injustice of certain rich men who show less compassion towards the poor than do the Jews.... The leaders of the Jews collect from the rich that the poor may be fed. The princes of the Christians, however, collect from the poor that the rich may be supported in their pride.”⁷⁶ Here Jews stand as virtuous examples for Brunton’s congregation.⁷⁷ Likewise, Anthony Bale argues that “the Jewish trope meant

⁷⁵ van Court, 322.

⁷⁶ Thomas Brunton, quoted in van Court, 322.

⁷⁷ Van Court admits that in his praise for the Jews, there is “a subtle suggestion that *if even* the Jews can behave charitably, certainly Christians can do so. Nonetheless, these commonplaces in which living Jewish communities become exemplars for and critique of the Christian community remain singularly generous statements about Jewish community and testify... to the instability of Christian response to the Jews (other sermons by the same author are considerably less generous....” van Court, 322. Emphasis in the original. She also points to Gower and Langland who “reprise the commonplaces of sermon literature and refashion living Jewish communities into exemplars in their literary narratives. Neither author, however, sustains this staging of Jews as exemplars.” van Court, 323.

many and different things, contingent on text, agency, audience, time and place,”⁷⁸ and he emphasizes that “available Christian frameworks, such as Augustine’s doctrine of Jewish witness..., were not always whole-heartedly embraced.”⁷⁹ For Bale, the Jew is not always a stabilizing figure but also a “destabilising figure”⁸⁰ that can be employed to various ends because of the “multiplicity of images available to medieval Christians in the discursive construction of Judaism.”⁸¹ Between Augustine’s formulation of the doctrine of Jewish witness and the century in which *The Travels* was written, Christians continued to develop new ideas regarding their relationship to Jews, and those “new ideas never displaced the old ones; rather, they took their place beside them.”⁸² By the time the Mandeville-author was vilifying Jews, he would have had a wealth of representations of Jews and ideas regarding Christians’ relationship with them from which to choose, and as discussed earlier, looking at his source-texts and what he chose to include in *The Travels*, it seems that the Mandeville-author was just as actively altering his sources’ attitudes on Jews as he was in altering and enhancing their treatment of other non-Christians.

I suggest that it is not a foregone conclusion that *The Travels*’ anti-Jewishness and the ends to which that anti-Jewishness is employed are simply a matter of common medieval convention. The Mandeville-author actively chose and remade his sources in order to emphasize their anti-Jewishness. Moreover, the “spectral,” “virtual,” or “hermeneutic” Jew was not always used for the same purposes. As aptly demonstrated

⁷⁸ Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). 20.

⁷⁹ Bale, 25.

⁸⁰ Bale, 31.

⁸¹ Bale, 89.

⁸² Jeremy Cohen, 16.

and argued by Cohen, Bale, and van Court, there was a “multiplicity of images available to medieval Christians in the discursive construction of Judaism.”⁸³ Those numerous available images could be employed to a number of ends. As a result, the Mandeville-author’s anti-Jewishness can and should be understood as strategic, for even the most commonly accepted models or traditions regarding Jews in the Middle Ages could be actively reshaped to suit a variety of rhetorical purposes.

Jews as Competitors: The Temple of Jerusalem

Having already briefly touched on *The Travels*’ account of the Temple in Jerusalem and how the Mandeville-author reshaped his source materials in order to use that account as evidence of Jewish wickedness, Jews’ punishment for that wickedness, and Christianity’s victory over Judaism, in this section I return to *The Travels*’ description of the Temple as the disputed site the Mandeville-author is most at pains to empty of a Jewish past. This is where the complex relationship between Christianity and its Jewish origin/other fully manifests itself as a competition for the Holy of Holies in the city at the center of the world of the text, and this is where Jews most trouble the Mandeville-author’s project because as Christianity’s origin, they will not fit neatly into the role of other.

In the first pages of the text, the author works quickly to establish the Holy Land as disputed territory that rightfully belongs to Christians:

Þis es þe land þat es hight til vs in heritage; and in þat land he wld die and
desse þare in, to leefe it to his childer. For þe whilk land ilke a gude
Cristen man þat mey, and has wharoff, suld enforce him for to conquere

⁸³ Bale, 89.

oure right heritage and chace oute þerof þaim þat er mistrowand. For we
er called Cristen men of Criste oure fader; and if we be riȝt childer of
Criste, we awe for to chalange þe heritage þat oure fader left to vs, and for
to do it oute of straunge men handes. (2)

Even if the Jews were not specifically named, in this part of the text, with its focus on Christ's life and sacrifice in the Holy Land, Jews would have been present for medieval readers, for the Mandeville-author's impassioned case for Christians' rightful claim to the Holy Land contains an "unstated, but echoing, element" that invokes "a well known passage from the revered Jerome who mentioned another rival for the land."⁸⁴ That well-known passage is from Jerome's *Letter to Dardanus*: "This land which has now through Christ's passion and resurrection become our promised land, is believed by the Jews – so the Jews may contend – to have belonged to the Jewish people when they took possession after their return from Egypt."⁸⁵ The Mandeville-author's concerns in the opening are the same concerns that troubled Christian writers such as Jerome for centuries. Later in *The Travels*, when the author finally gets to his account of Jerusalem, he reminds readers that "þis land of Ierusalem has bene in many diuerse naciouns handes," and the first nation he mentions is the Jews (38). Both at the beginning of the text and at the beginning of its description of Jerusalem, the Jews are thus rival claimants to the Holy Land – rivals with whom the text seems much more concerned than with the Saracens. Before turning to the central role of Jerusalem and the Temple in the text, however, I turn first to Christian thought about the Temple and the history of the site in order to contextualize *The Travels*' charged account.

⁸⁴ Braude, 137.

⁸⁵ Jerome, quoted in Braude, 137.

The physical state of the Temple Mount, political control over the city, and spiritual control over the sacred site all had (and have) great significance to the theological questions regarding Christianity's identity and its relationship to Judaism. In the year 70, Titus destroyed Herod's Temple and took the sacred treasures housed within it to Rome. Sixty years later under Hadrian, a Jewish revolt erupted, and following the rebellion, the Romans renamed the city and built a temple to Jupiter on the Temple site.⁸⁶ The next major change to the Temple site and Jerusalem came shortly after the Council of Nicaea when Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem received authorization from Constantine to demolish the temple of Jupiter. At about the same time, Constantine's mother is said to have identified where Christ was crucified and buried and had the Church of the Holy Sepulcher built on the spot.⁸⁷ The Temple Mount would remain a ruin as Christians built a New Jerusalem filled with Christian sites:

The idea was that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre would draw to itself all the symbolism, the cosmic symbolism, of the Temple itself, including the idea that the Temple was the Navel of the World, thus reestablishing Jerusalem as the pivot and center of the world, and distinctively downgrading the importance of the Temple Mount itself.⁸⁸

In addition to building physical structures to replace and appropriate the significance of the Temple, a number of liturgical practices reflecting those of the Temple were instituted in the Holy Sepulcher, and by the end of the fourth century, most of the Old and New Testament traditions and stories associated with the Temple had been moved to various

⁸⁶ John M. Lundquist, *The Temple of Jerusalem: Past, Present, and Future* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2008). 155.

⁸⁷ Lundquist, 156. See also Hugh Nibley, "Christian Envy of the Temple," *The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series* 50.2 (1959): 113. Nibley's article is continued in a subsequent issue: 50.3 (1960). In referring to these two articles, I will use "Nibley, 1959" to refer to the one in volume 50 issue 2 and "Nibley, 1960" to refer to its second part in volume 50 issue 3.

⁸⁸ Lundquist, 156.

sites in the city, most notably to the Holy Sepulcher.⁸⁹ Sylvia Schein best characterizes what was happening: “As the Temple was transferred to the buildings of Constantine, the Cavalry and the Anastasis, Mount Moriah disappeared from the ‘holy geography’ of the city.”⁹⁰ The ruined site of the Temple would stand as “a sign of God’s wrath upon the Jews and as the fulfillment of the prediction in the gospels that no stone shall remain upon another stone,”⁹¹ thus confirming Christianity’s supersession of Judaism.⁹²

The fact that the Temple remained in ruins may have been comforting to Christians, but those same ruins also caused them notable anxiety. There was always the fear that the Temple might be restored,⁹³ and

the churchmen recognized with a shudder that if they [the Jews] ever got their Temple back again the same Jews would be very dangerous indeed. “If the Jews had their ancient institutions,” Athanasius observes, “then they could deny Christ had come; but now all is sealed, and their gift of prophecy, their holy city, and their Temple are taken away – forever.” That ringing “forever” is the key to the whole problem.⁹⁴

Even the ruins themselves were a reminder of what could happen, and although from the fourth century Christians were taught to see the Holy Sepulcher as the religious center of the universe as opposed to the Temple, they “could never escape the claims and traditions

⁸⁹ Sylvia Schein, “Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre: The Changing Traditions of the Temple Mount in the Central Middle Ages,” *Traditio* 40 (1984): 175.

⁹⁰ Schein, 177.

⁹¹ Oleg Grabar, *Constructing the Study of Islamic Art IV: Jerusalem* (London: Ashgate, 2005). 196. For Grabar’s seminal work on Jerusalem, see Oleg Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁹² The Christianization of Jerusalem was briefly interrupted around 363 when Julian the Apostate ordered that the Jewish Temple be rebuilt as part of his efforts to “paralyze” Christianity. The project did not get very far, but the plan became notorious in a number of Christian stories regarding Julian, including a brief but significant mention in *The Travels*. Julian’s failure would be seen as a great miracle that once again confirmed Christianity’s truth and victory. See Nibley, 1960, 235.

⁹³ Nibley, 1959, 98.

⁹⁴ Nibley, 1960, 232-233.

of its predecessors – in Jerusalem the pilgrim was never out of the shadow of the Temple....”⁹⁵

The building programs of Constantine and Theodosius II and Justinian after him were meant to combat such anxieties as much as possible by Christianizing the city.⁹⁶ In 543, a large church called the Nea was completed under the rule of Justinian.⁹⁷ It was built on a hill opposite the Temple Mount and was intended to replace the Temple, and Justinian even went so far as to order the Temple treasures looted by Titus to be placed in the new church. The replacement did not last long as it was destroyed by Jews who saw it “as an unwelcome Christian usurpation of the Temple Mount.”⁹⁸ It sat in ruins just like the site it was meant to replace.

The Temple Mount remained empty as a sign of Christianity’s triumph and the fulfillment of Christ’s prophecy of the Temple’s destruction,⁹⁹ but everything changed in the early seventh century with the Muslim conquest of the city. When Caliph Omar entered the city, he saw that Christians had turned the Temple Mount into a garbage

⁹⁵ Nibley, 1959, 121. Emphasis in Nibley.

⁹⁶ Those same building programs created some problems as far as Pope Leo I was concerned. During his pontificate in the mid-fifth century, Leo worked to replace Jerusalem with Rome as Christianity’s center, and he “saw in the Temple at Jerusalem his most serious opponent.” Nibley, 1959, 115. The church could not have two centers, so Leo promoted the idea that “the tomb of Peter now performs the functions that once belonged to the *templum* of Hadrian... while Hadrian’s image now stands in the Temple of Jerusalem – the roles of the two cities have been neatly reversed.” Nibley, 1959, 116. Rome had theoretically taken over the rites of the Temple. Nonetheless, building continued in Jerusalem.

⁹⁷ Justinian had already completed his attempt at a New Jerusalem in Constantinople. The Haghia Sophia was to be the New Temple, and to ensure that his new church reigned supreme, he ordered that the treasures of the Temple, looted from Jerusalem by Titus, taken to Rome, and subsequently taken to Carthage by the Vandals, be brought to Constantinople to be housed in the Haghia Sophia. According to Nibley, “the haughty Justinian for the only time in his life heeded the advice of the hated Jews and in superstitious dread ordered the vessels returned ‘in haste to Jerusalem, where he had them deposited in a church.’” Nibley, 1959, 115. Those treasures would be deposited in the Nea.

⁹⁸ Lundquist, 158.

⁹⁹ Matthew 24:1-2.

dump. As the story goes, Omar was infuriated and “made the Patriarch Sophronios crawl through the refuse on the deserted site, a humiliation to redress the humiliation of the holy site, and began the process of restoration.”¹⁰⁰ A simple mosque was built on the Mount, but fifty years later, it received the Dome of the Rock.¹⁰¹ Muslim building projects, including the Dome and the Al-Aqsa Mosque next to it, resulted in what Oleg Grabar calls the “resacralization of the area of the Herodian Temple.”¹⁰² This resacralization changed the nature of the city: “Instead of a willfully ruinous area of the Temple, Christians coming out of the Holy Sepulcher see now the shining and colorful Dome of the Rock.”¹⁰³ Now that the Temple Mount supported a new sacred building that was more impressive than the Holy Sepulcher, the city was “religiously charged rather than contrasted through an active western Christian pole [Rome] and a negative, ruined eastern one [Jerusalem].”¹⁰⁴ Muslims came and glorified a Jewish site, upsetting the fragile comfort the Church enjoyed when their spiritual competitors’ Temple had remained in ruins, and worse, Christians no longer controlled Jerusalem.

The building projects of a number of Muslim Caliphs certainly had some impact on Christian attitudes toward the site of the Temple, but real change in *Latin* Christian attitudes came when the First Crusade’s successful conquest of Jerusalem brought a large number of western Christians to the city. In her study of the changing traditions associated with the Temple Mount, Schein identifies 1099 – the year of the conquest – as

¹⁰⁰ Simon Goldhill, *The Temple of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). 113. See also Nibley, 1959, 118-120.

¹⁰¹ Built by Caliph Abd al-Malik in 691.

¹⁰² Grabar, *Constructing*, 197.

¹⁰³ Grabar, *Constructing*, 197.

¹⁰⁴ Grabar, *Constructing*, 197.

the turning point in “the place assigned to the Temple Mount in the ‘holy geography’ of Jerusalem.”¹⁰⁵ The Crusaders made the Temple Mount the center of their government, but the site’s spiritual status also changed. It was immediately converted into the Church of the Temple of the Lord, and some even believed that the building was originally built by Constantine or his mother.¹⁰⁶ Some Old Testament traditions and stories that had been moved to the Holy Sepulcher were now reintroduced to the Temple Mount, and New Testament traditions also began to be associated with the site:

Before the Crusades, Calvary was identified as the place where Zacharia, son of Barachia, was slain, and as the site of Abraham’s sacrifice, but during the thirteenth century both became associated with the holy rock of the Lord’s Temple. Because such traditions were moved in this way, it was possible for some of them to be shown at two different shrines. Thus, the site of the Navel of the Earth (*umbilicus mundi*) was said in the twelfth century to be both on Calvary and in the Temple of the Lord.¹⁰⁷

The Muslim conquest of Jerusalem and the building projects in the centuries that followed resacralized the Temple Mount, and when the Crusaders took the city, the changes introduced to various Old and New Testament traditions resulted once more in two spiritual centers: the Christian Holy Sepulcher and the formerly Jewish, now Christian Temple. This change was reflected in maps and royal seals, but the Temple seems to have surpassed the Holy Sepulcher. As Schein notes, in some twelfth-century maps of the city, the Temple fills the upper half of the map while the lower half is divided between the quarter of the Holy Sepulcher and that of the Order of St. John.¹⁰⁸ In

¹⁰⁵ Schein, 175.

¹⁰⁶ Schein, 181. The Dome was partly rebuilt to adapt to its new function and was consecrated on April 9, 1141. Schein, 183.

¹⁰⁷ Schein, 188. For a more thorough discussion of the changes in traditions linked to the Temple Mount, see Schein, 188-190.

¹⁰⁸ Schein, 190.

Matthew Paris' map, the Christian center disappears; the Temple Mount's buildings are shown, but there is no Holy Sepulcher!¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the fact that Christians controlled the city allowed for such emphasis on the Temple. With the site firmly in their hands, there would be little need to be anxious about its Jewish past.

The situation changed once more when Muslims reconquered the city in 1187. Christians were barred from the Temple site, but it remained on the pilgrimage route, and some ignored Muslim threats and successfully visited the Temple.¹¹⁰ For the first century after the loss of the city, traditions associated with the site remained largely the same, but those traditions began to change in the fourteenth century. Schein attributes the changes to a group of Franciscans who were the sole western Christian representatives in Jerusalem and who acted as official guides for pilgrims. They focused

now on sites of the New Testament linked to the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary and more particularly to Christ's passion. Jerusalem was presented as the Jerusalem of the New Testament, and as the scene of the Lord's sufferings during his last days on earth. The Temple Mount underwent the same metamorphosis. The traditions of the Old Testament gradually disappeared and were replaced by new, mainly apocryphal, traditions associated with the Virgin Mary.¹¹¹

Now that Christians had to compete with Muslim claims to the land, the Jewish past of the Temple was suppressed just as it was before the crusaders took the city. The city had to become a Christian city of the New Testament now that they did not control it. Some Old Testament traditions and stories were shifted back to the Holy Sepulcher as if Christians were reasserting their control over that Jewish past, and the Temple site

¹⁰⁹ Schein, 190.

¹¹⁰ Schein, 191.

¹¹¹ Schein, 192.

became a New Testament site.¹¹² Whether in the case of Muslim building projects on the Temple Mount, the Crusader conquest of the then resacralized site, or the Muslim reconquest of Jerusalem, in Christianity's struggle to deal with its various anxieties regarding its relationship with its Jewish past and the place of the Temple, the struggle with Jerusalem's third claimant, the Muslims, played an integral part. Changes in political control over the city and Temple Mount as well as changes in the physical status of the Mount itself meant that Christians kept having to readdress the claims of a Temple and of a Jewish past that were much easier to deal with when the site sat in ruins.

The Travels' account of the Temple came in the fourteenth century after these drastic shifts in the meaning and place of the site had reproblematised Christianity's relationship with the Temple and its Jewish past, and it is absolutely clear that for the Mandeville-author Latin Christians' real competitors for this holy space are not the Saracens but the Jews. Although *The Travels* opens with a statement about retaking Jerusalem "oute of straunge men handes" (2), once the Mandeville-author gets to his account of Jerusalem and the Temple, there are few Saracens to be seen. He only mentions them in order to inform his readers that "Sarzenes will suffer na Cristen men ne Jews comme þerin; for þai say þat so foule men schuld noȝt comme in to so haly place" (41), giving him the opportunity to enhance his credibility due to his exclusive access to this and other sites because of letters given him by the Sultan after "I was lang in his

¹¹² Despite Muslim control of Jerusalem, Latin Christian pilgrims flocked to the Holy Land in the century in which *The Travels* was written: "From the 1330s and entrenched by the 1370 Cypriot-Egyptian treaty, the Mamluk rulers of Palestine followed the precedent of Saladin in allowing western Christians access to the Holy Sites at a price. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries witnessed a resurgence of large-scale western pilgrimages to Palestine and Egypt and a welter of published accounts of pilgrims' experiences as well as formal itineraries." Tyerman, 884.

courte and in his seruice” (41). The only other comment regarding Saracens in this section is a comment about their devotion:

To þe temple *Domini* duse þe Sarezens grete reuerence, and saise þat þat place es riȝt haly. And, when þai gang in to it, þai do off þaire schone and knelez oft sythez with grete reuerence. And, when my felawes and I sawe þam do so, we didd off oure schoos and thoȝt it ware mare skill þat we Cristen men didd swilke wirschepe þare at þe reuerence of Godd þan mistrowand. (42)

Where one might expect some kind of verbal attack against the Saracens who “occupy” Jerusalem and the Temple, the author presents another glimpse into their virtue, one to be mimicked by him and his fellow Christians. The Mandeville-author may not have been directly aware of the fact that it was Muslim reverence for the Temple Mount that resacralized the site and religiously charged Jerusalem (reproblematizing the site’s and the city’s Jewish past for Christians), but the Mandeville-author’s imaginary history of the Temple follows the same pattern of renaming and resacralizing as the actual history of the site. His comments about Saracen reverence for the Temple hint at the importance of Muslim involvement in Jerusalem for the complex place of the Temple in the city’s religious topography, yet *The Travels*’ account of Jerusalem and its sacred sites includes only these few references to Saracens. Saracens rarely appear in this part of the text, and the Mandeville-author seems fixated on Jews and the Jewish past of both the city and its Temple. Rather than a three-way conflict between Jews, Christians, and Saracens, the contest for the Holy Land is presented as a two-way conflict between Christians and their Jewish origin/other, and the Mandeville-author’s vicious anti-Jewishness saturates his

account of this shared sacred territory.¹¹³ The passage that provides a glimpse into Saracen devotion stands in stark contrast to the vicious demonization of Jews found in the very same passage. This is the same place where “off a pynnacle of þis temple kest þe Iews sayne Iame doune, þe whilk was þe first bischope of Ierusalem” (44). The Temple, built by Jews, is more highly revered by the “occupying” Saracens than the Jews themselves as Jews have killed a saint on its very pinnacle, but this short accusation is not the least of the text’s demonization of them.

After telling his readers about the Sultan’s letters granting Sir John access to restricted sites, the Mandeville-author immediately emphasizes the Temple’s Christian past: “In þis forsaid temple *Domini* ware wont to be chanouns reguleres; and þai had ane abbot to whom þai ware obedient. And in þis temple was Charlemayne, when þe aungell broght him þe prepuce of oure Lord, when he was circumcised; and afterward kyng Charles gert bere it to Parysch” (42). This is not a surprising move since the Mandeville-author has been doing the same with the space and history of the Holy Land since the beginning of the text, but where he has been doing so as a way to rechristianize what has been occupied by Saracens,¹¹⁴ here the Saracens almost disappear. Instead, the author focuses on Jews as he empties the Temple and Jerusalem of Jewishness in favor of a Christian past, reflecting the New Testament Jerusalem emphasized by the fourteenth-century Franciscan guides.¹¹⁵ Readers also learn that this is not Solomon’s Temple,

¹¹³ Like the problem of a shared scripture, a shared Holy Land does not act as common ground for the two faiths. Instead, for medieval Christians, Jewish claims to and understanding of scripture and the Holy Land were a threat to a Christian understanding of these texts and places.

¹¹⁴ Chapter three more fully discusses the rechristianization of the Holy Land’s space and time, but here it must be noted that the Temple is represented as the Temple of the New Testament rather than of the Old.

¹¹⁵ Since the Mandeville-author did not travel to Jerusalem, it is unlikely his New Testament Jerusalem is the direct result of the Franciscan guides’ new emphasis on a Christian Temple. His main source for this

for Tytus...layde ensege vnto Ierusalem for to destruy þe Iews, for þai did Criste to deed withouten leue and ascent of þe emperour. And, when he had taken þe citee, he gert brynne þe temple and cast it doune and destruyd it and tuke all þe Iews and slew of þam elleuen hundreth thowsand; and þe remenaunt he putte in presoun and salde of þam xxx. for a peny, for he had hed tell þat þai salde Criste for xxx. penyys. (42)

The pre-Incarnation Temple no longer exists, having been destroyed specifically because of the wickedness of Jews. The loss of the Temple is explicitly presented as punishment for their treatment of Christ, and it means that Jews no longer have a legitimate claim to the site. This Christianized account of the pagan Titus' destruction of the Temple in the year 70 begins a lengthy account of the history of the Temple site after 70, and the Mandeville-author uses his version of events in order to erase the site's Jewish past in favor of a Christian past that secures a Christian claim to the site, the city, and the greater Holy Land.

The Temple's reconstruction, readers learn, was at the hands of "Iulyan Apostata, whilk renayed and forsuke Cristen fayth" and gave permission for Jews to build a new Temple "for þe hatredyn þat he had till Cristen men..." (42). This time, the Temple was destroyed by God during an earthquake, confirming that the Jews deserve punishment and should no longer control the Temple. Finally Hadrian repairs the Temple, "bot he wald suffer na Iew com þerin, bot all Cristen men; for, if all it ware so þat he ware noȝt Cristen, he lufed Cristen men mare þan any oþer men, saue men of his awen fayth"

part of *The Travels*, William's *Liber*, comes from a man who did indeed travel to the Holy Land in the fourteenth century, but his text is more concerned with the spread of Muslim power than Christianity's anxious relationship with Jews. The Mandeville-author may have heard oral accounts from recent pilgrims who were guided by Franciscans emphasizing a New Testament Jerusalem, but even without recent oral accounts, I believe the Mandeville-author is driven by the same factors as the Franciscans: reasserting Christian control over the city's and the Temple's Jewish past at a time when physical control was no longer (and not yet, the Mandeville-author would say) possible.

(42).¹¹⁶ This Temple remains, but this time Jews are barred from entering, thus leaving it completely in Christian hands; however, Hadrian does much more than rebuild the Temple: “And þis emperour gert enclose þe kirk of þe sepulcre with a wall and made it to be within þe citee, þat before was withouten” (42). Bringing the Holy Sepulcher within the city walls clearly marks Jerusalem as a Christian city, and to complete the city’s transformation, Hadrian even renames it, but the Mandeville-author is forced to admit that the name did not stick.¹¹⁷ As previously discussed, this part of the account reorders historical events by placing Julian (fourth century) before Hadrian (second century) in order to remake the pagan Hadrian into a Christian avenger of Julian’s attempt to rebuild the Temple. The anachronism works to invalidate Jewish claims to the site.

Following this Christianization of the Temple, the Mandeville-author makes his remark regarding Saracen reverence for the holy site and turns to a physical description of the space. But when he comes to describe the Holy of Holies, he provides a brief account of the Jewish rituals that took place in the Temple. Readers learn “whare þe ark of Godd stude and oþer reliques of þe Iews” (43). Why does he acknowledge the

¹¹⁶ There is an interesting parallel between the Khan and this Roman emperor. Neither is Christian, but both of them hold Christians above all other men save their own. The Tartars say they see with both eyes, Christians see with one, and all others are blind. See *Buke*, 107. Also, both rulers have ancestors who were once Christians but reneged. For Mango Caan’s conversion from Christianity to Islam, see *Buke*, 113. Two examples of pagan emperors from the greatest empires of the East and West further establish Christian spiritual hegemony.

¹¹⁷ Here the Mandeville-author introduces yet another anachronism when claiming that Hadrian’s building projects brought the Holy Sepulcher within the walls of Jerusalem. The Holy Sepulcher was built two centuries later under Constantine. However, during Hadrian’s rule, a temple of Venus was constructed where the Holy Sepulcher would be built later. The anachronism can be read as yet another way in which the Mandeville-author represents the pagan Hadrian as Christian in his actions. Interestingly, there is no mention here of the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher in 1009 under the Fatimids. It would have been a powerful charge with which to demonize the Saracen rulers of Jerusalem, but it would have violated the text’s emphasis on Saracen piety and their proto-Christian state.

Temple's Jewish past if he is interested in erasing it? The building and site are sacred because of their place in Jewish history, and a Christian Temple is only useful as a sign of supersession if the site has some Jewish significance, but the Mandeville-author works to counteract the possibility of Jewish claims he has just opened.¹¹⁸ Immediately recognizing the danger of Christians' competitors for the Temple having a claim on the site based on what he has just said, the Mandeville-author quickly turns to another strategy aimed at negating that claim: "þis ark gert Titus lede with þe reliques vnto grete Rome, when he had discumfit þe Iews" (43). The destruction of the Temple and the eventual Christian possession of the Temple at the hands of Hadrian are not enough. The text now presents Titus emptying the Temple of Jewish treasures and thus Jewishness, taking the objects to Rome and thus appropriating those treasures in a way that legitimizes Rome as another center:

In þe forsaied ark also was a vessell of gold full of manna...with many oper ournamentz and clething of Aaron and of þe tabernacle. And þare was a table of gold, euen sqware, with xii. precious stanes, and a boist of grene iasper with foure figures and viii. Names of oure Lord þerin, and vii. candelstiks of gold, apou whilk þai had cherubyn of gold xii. span lang, a cercle with þe xii. singnez of þe firmament, and a tabernacle of gold, and xii. trumppes of siluer, and a table of siluer, vii. haly lafes, and many oper reliques and precious thinges þat pertende to Goddes seruice before þe incarnacioun of Criste. (43)

Like a shipping invoice, the long list of objects removed from the Temple is intended to have the effect of emptying it of anything Jewish. Even the tabernacle, the Temple's predecessor, is moved. The final statement at the end of the list is what gives this

¹¹⁸ It is important to remember that during the Mandeville-author's lifetime, Old Testament traditions were being moved to the Holy Sepulcher in order to erase the Temple's Jewish past and to remake the site into a New Testament site. The Mandeville-author's attempt to erase the Temple site's Jewish past in favor of a Christian one that bolsters Christian claims to the Holy Land parallels the movement of traditions in fourteenth-century Jerusalem.

passage the power to negate any Jewish claim to the Temple and its former contents. These were all things that pertained to the worship of God “*before* þe incarnacioun of Criste.” The Incarnation itself changes everything by altering the rules of the game. It legitimizes the Christian claim, and the Mandeville-author has already demonstrated how the Incarnation makes Jerusalem Christians’ “right heritage” in the exordium when he describes it as the place where Christ chose “to enuiron þat land with his blissed fete” and hallowed it of his “precious blude” (1). Nothing before this moment can have a legitimate claim (the Mandeville-author hopes). However, those same treasures can indeed legitimize the institution in which the Incarnation resulted: the Church.

By the Middle Ages, the Temple treasures had long since disappeared. Textual evidence for their removal from Jerusalem to Rome comes from Josephus, who recorded that they were brought to Rome and paraded by Titus and his father Vespasian.¹¹⁹ Five centuries later, Procopius, an advisor to Justinian’s general Belisarius, included the fate of the treasures in his *History of the Wars*. According to Procopius, they were taken in the Vandal sack of Rome in 455 and removed to Carthage. In 534, the Byzantine army recovered the treasures from Carthage and took them to Constantinople where Justinian planned to house them in his new Haghia Sophia, but he eventually returned them to Jerusalem to be placed in the Nea in Jerusalem. This church was destroyed, and after the sixth century, there are no further textual references to the location of the Temple treasures.

¹¹⁹ The following is a summary of a discussion in Marie Therese Champagne, “‘Treasures of the Temple’ and Claims to Authority in Twelfth-Century Rome,” *Aspects of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages*, ed. Brenda Bolton & Christine Meek (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2007). 108-109. Champagne notes that the last of all the spoils in the procession was a copy of the Jewish law. Here, the copy of Jewish law is clearly intended to symbolize Roman victory over the Jews, but for later Christian readers of Josephus’ account, its inclusion in the procession would have been yet another sign of the supersession of the law.

Nonetheless, by the twelfth century, a popular belief that they were in Rome, specifically in San Giovanni in Laterano, had developed, and the papacy encouraged and exploited that belief.¹²⁰ For example, the private papal chapel was renamed as the *Sancta Sanctorum*, and the “papal *adventus* ceremony was expanded in the twelfth century to include the display of the Torah to the Pope by representatives of the Roman Jewish community, an action pregnant with meaning in terms of the superseding by Christianity of Judaism...”¹²¹ Alexander III even ordered that the *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae*, first composed c.1073-1118, be revised extensively with specific attention to the Temple treasures supposedly housed in the Lateran.¹²² Marie Therese Champagne suggests that the papacy encouraged the belief that it held the treasures because of political challenges to papal power during this time, and although *The Travels* was written two centuries later, there is little reason to doubt that the same belief continued to at least some degree into the fourteenth century. Within this context, the Mandeville-author’s account of the removal of Temple treasures to Rome makes not only a theological statement regarding Christianity’s relationship to Judaism but also a political statement regarding papal authority and legitimacy, for *The Travels* was written during the Avignon papacy. In addition, many of the versions of the text were copied, translated, and altered during the Great Schism. In fact, the three main English versions of the text add an episode at the end of the text in which Sir John travels to Rome in order to present his text to the pope and ask for his approval. Higgins suggests that the English interpolation “looks like a

¹²⁰ According to Champagne, some Jews also believed that their treasures were in Rome. She points to the *Itinerary* of Benjamin of Tudela in which Benjamin says he believes the treasures are either beneath or near the Lateran. Champagne, 109.

¹²¹ Champagne, 110.

¹²² Champagne, 113.

conscious and not altogether simple-minded attempt to enlist the English Knight and his book on behalf of the pro-Roman camp by showing him and the pope endorsing each other's authority...."¹²³ England had indeed declared for Rome in the dispute, and the interpolation also adds another layer of significance to the Mandeville-author's description of the Temple treasures, for it serves both to confirm Christianity's supersession of Judaism and to legitimate the Roman pope. Paradoxically, however, using stories about the Temple treasures and their removal for political or theological ends relies on their Jewish past. That Jewish past cannot be completely erased if the objects are to have any value to papal authority or to Christian claims regarding supersession.

Similarly, the very same passage in *The Travels* that empties the Temple of its Jewishness remains dependent on Jews. They must be conjured in order to be vanquished, and so they continue to "haunt" this part of the text.¹²⁴ Frustrated by this Jewish past, the Mandeville-author resorts to vilifying them at every chance: "On þis roche oure Lord sette him, when þe Iews wald hafe stoned him to deed, and þe roches clafe in twa, and in þat rift he hidd him; and a sterne come doune and gafe him light" (43). Once again, the rocks themselves stand as witness to Jewish wickedness, but they also remain as evidence of Christ's divinity since the rocks split to provide him with cover and a star came to provide him with light. Next come the murders of Zachary and

¹²³ Higgins, 255.

¹²⁴ One of the factors preventing the Mandeville-author from completely erasing the Temple's and the world's Jewish past is the scripture shared by Christianity and Judaism. Erasing Jewish history weakens the claims of Christian scripture because of its dependence on the Old Testament. When it comes to other non-Christians, the Mandeville-author is free to rewrite their histories and identities as he pleases in order to fit his vision of the world because he has no stake in their past. These non-Christians do not share scripture with Christians, nor does Christianity depend on them for an origin.

James in the Temple, and the text continues with Peter healing a man in the same structure. The Mandeville-author even mentions that the Templars recently dwelled there, moving to accounts of various saints and their association with the Temple and other sites nearby before coming to a close with the evil deeds of the three Herods (44-45). Here, the Temple is represented as a New Testament and specifically Christian site. Old Testament stories and traditions cease as the author only includes what has happened at the Temple site since the Incarnation, including the wicked deeds of Jews.

The Mandeville-author's choice of sources and the changes he made to those sources for his account of Jerusalem and the Temple reveal a great deal about his concern with its Jewish past, but perhaps the most telling sign of his anxiety is the omission of a particular detail found in one of his sources for the anti-Jewish version of Gog and Magog story. Hugh Ripelin of Strassburg states that "the Jews say that at the end of time they will emerge and go to Jerusalem and with their Messiah build the temple."¹²⁵ However, the Mandeville-author omits this detail and instead tells readers that Jews will subjugate all Christians (132). Had he included the Jews' plans as found in his source, the Jewish threat to Christendom and therefore Christian hatred toward Jews would have been heightened but at the risk of acknowledging not only the Temple's Jewish past but also a possible future. By the time the Mandeville-author introduces the Ten Tribes' conspiracy, his account of Jerusalem is well behind him. Whether or not he successfully made a case against the Jewish past and Jewish claim to the Holy Land in the earlier part of the text, he seems to have chosen not to broach the subject of the Temple again,

¹²⁵ Hugh Ripelin of Strassburg, quoted in Higgins, 182.

especially the idea of a new *Jewish* Temple. If he works so hard to erase the Temple's Jewish past, he certainly cannot allow it to have a future.

The past and the future are consistently on the Mandeville-author's mind when talking about Jews, for when thinking about Jews, he thinks in different temporal terms than when discussing most other non-Christians. To him, Saracens, Tartars, and the other peoples of the Holy Land and East exist in either the present or some kind of "middle time" in which the end of salvation history is in the distant and hazy future. In a few instances, Jews also seem to live in the present. Those who do not live in captivity behind the Gates of Alexander and who continue to learn Hebrew in anticipation of the prison break of their brethren and those who conspire to poison wells are some of the few Jews the Mandeville-author acknowledges as living in the present in Latin Christendom, the Holy Land, and the East. However, the vast majority of the Jews in *The Travels* are discussed in terms of the past or the future. Early in the text, they constantly appear in the role they are said to have played in the crucifixion with special emphasis on the construction of the cross and the placing of several crowns made of thorns on Christ's head. In the description of the Temple, the author points to Jewish crimes against Christ's early followers and the Roman punishment for Jews' wickedness. Later, Jews appear in the story of Gog and Magog – a story about the future and the coming of the Antichrist. It seems the Mandeville-author can only (or prefers to) think of Jews in terms of their place at the beginning and end of Christianity. He is essentially stuck in the New Testament and pivotal moments in Biblical time.¹²⁶ This helps explain why the

¹²⁶ Jews are conspicuously absent from the Mandeville-author's comments regarding trade. He points to places visited by merchants from Venice and Genoa (See *Buke*, 62, 71, 81) and consistently mentions cities good for trade and the merchandise available there, but throughout *The Travels*, there is no mention of the

Mandeville-author sees the contest for the Holy Land as a two-way conflict between Jews and Christians rather than as one between Christians and Saracens or a three-way conflict between all three faiths. However, this focus on the New Testament makes Jews an urgent, menacing threat and a theological competitor.

The longstanding complexities of the origin/other relationship between Christianity and Judaism, shared scriptures, shared sacred sites, different temporalities – all of these factors shape the Mandeville-author’s treatment of and attitude toward Jews. *The Travels*’ anti-Jewishness is not a simple matter of common convention or simple hatred; it is the result of an inability to fit Jews into the Mandeville-author’s vision of a coherent Christian world because of those many factors. On top of those many factors, the fourteenth century added yet another factor that pitted Christianity against Judaism: the contest for God’s preference. In his history of the crusades, Christopher Tyerman argues that the later Middle Ages saw the emergence of the idea of the Elect: “As the universal homeland of these New Israelites or Maccabees, Christendom (*Christianitas*) became fragmented into distinct kingdoms, principalities or cities, *patriae*, these appropriated to themselves the concept of a Holy Land and the Old Testament images of the Chosen People.”¹²⁷ The various peoples and rulers of Latin Christendom came to see themselves as the chosen of God. In 1311, for example, Pope Clement V stated, “Just as the Israelites are known to have granted the Lord’s inheritance by the election of

important role played by Jews in medieval trade and the raising of capital for both trade and crusade itself. To the Mandeville-author, their presence in the present must be limited, and he certainly cannot risk admitting Latin Christian economic dependence on Jews. Christian anger for reliance on Jews in financial matters is one factor that may have led to the massacres of Jews during preparations for several crusades when crusaders needed to raise capital quickly to pay for the mission ahead.

¹²⁷ Tyerman, 907.

Heaven... so the kingdom of France has been chosen as the lord's special people."¹²⁸

Later in the fourteenth century, Chancellor Adam Haughton declared, "God would never have honoured this land in the same way as he did Israel... if it were not that He had chosen it as His heritage."¹²⁹ This trend toward seeing one's own nation as the Elect of God persisted in the centuries ahead, but if the English, French, or Christians as a whole saw themselves as chosen, then what about those who were the first chosen people? This new rivalry – not for scripture or sites but for God's preference – added a new dimension to the contest with Judaism. It could not have been lost on the Mandeville-author as he was writing in the middle of the century in which such sentiments took shape. Those sentiments placed even more pressure on the question of how Jews fit into a Christian world, their claims to the Holy Land, and their claims to God's favor.

¹²⁸ Clement V, quoted in Tyerman, 909.

¹²⁹ Adam Haughton, quoted in Tyerman, 911.

Chapter 3: Land and the Two Parts of *The Travels*

In his attempt to create a coherent world in which Christian hegemony is secure, the Mandeville-author focuses on the peoples of the Holy Land and East and the fate of their souls, remaking them into proto-Christians whose faith and practices in some way resemble those of Latin Christians. His project concentrates on souls because the political and military realities of his day precluded the possibility of Latin Christian dominance in those arenas. Recognizing that a politically fractured Latin Christendom was powerless in the face of the mighty Saracen and Tartar empires, the Mandeville-author shifted his concern to theological issues, allowing him to by-pass political, military, and economic obstacles to dominance because they are irrelevant in the contest for souls. His appropriation of non-Christians in service of his project entails a discursive violence far more insidious and powerful than physical violence and gives him the power to fashion the Christian world he wishes to see despite Latin Christendom's relative weakness. However, *The Travels* is a text not only about the various peoples it describes but also about the lands through which Sir John travels. How does the Mandeville-author imagine and represent the territories of the Holy Land and East? What role do they play in his project? To which lands do Christians have a rightful claim, and does he envision Christian possession of those lands as part of an empire? In addition to the fate of the lands described in *The Travels*, one of the most troublesome issues in Mandeville studies has been the Mandeville-author's pairing of a description of the Holy Land with an account of the East. How does that pairing operate in his project?

Thanks to a statement made near the beginning of *The Travels*, the first part of the text reads much like a pilgrim's guide. The Mandeville-author claims to write his book

“for þaim þat wil and er in purpose to visit þe haly citee of Ierusalem and the haly placez þat er þare aboute; and I schall tell þe way þat þai shall hald þider, for I hafe many tymes passed and riden it in gude company of lordes.”¹ The Mandeville-author’s main source for the first part of the text is the German Dominican William of Boldensele’s *Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus* (1336), a narrative of William’s pilgrimage to Egypt and the Holy Land, so the first part of *The Travels* naturally resembles a pilgrimage account. However, the second part of *The Travels*, in which the Mandeville-author recounts Sir John’s travels to parts east of the Holy Land, presents a problem when reading this text as a pilgrim’s guide. The author’s main source for this second part is Friar Odoric of Pordenone’s *Relatio* (1330), an account of the friar’s travels to the East. This second source hardly falls under the category of pilgrims’ guide, nor does the second half of *The Travels*. What, then, can we make of this pairing of sources? Why does *The Travels* seem to go beyond its stated goal?

As Iain Macleod Higgins observes, the Mandeville-author “is virtually unique among medieval travel writings in expanding the pilgrims’ guide with a survey of the world beyond the Holy Land.”² The reason behind the Mandeville-author’s move beyond the Holy Land into the Far East has been an issue of much contention. Christian K. Zacher suggests that “Mandeville’s book effectively subordinates pilgrimage to a form of travel motivated by love for this world.”³ For Stephen Greenblatt, on the other hand,

¹ *The Buke of John Maundeuill being the Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Knight 1322-56* (Westminster: Roxburghe Club, 1889). 3. Subsequent citations from this text are in parenthetical form.

² Iain Macleod Higgins, “Defining the Earth’s Center in a Medieval ‘Multi-Text’: Jerusalem in *The Book of John Mandeville*,” *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, ed. Sylvia Tomasch & Sealy Gilles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998). 40.

³ Christian K. Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). 140.

the pairing is “an abandonment of the dream of a sacred center upon which all routes converge and a turning instead towards diversity, difference, the bewildering variety of ‘marvelous things.’”⁴ Higgins disagrees, arguing instead that the two parts work together to bolster Jerusalem as a center in “the task of renewing belief in the possibility of a universal Christendom and using it as an enticement to Latin Christians to reform themselves.”⁵ His reading regarding the possibility of a universal Christendom anticipates my argument in chapter one, but ultimately, Higgins argues that *The Travels* intends to reignite the dream of a global Christian empire by attempting “to fashion a single, more or less coherent textual and geographical world out of the diverse works collected in the miscellanies, and to do so by setting that world firmly between two privileged sites of Christian History: Jerusalem and the Earthly Paradise.”⁶ His claim that the Mandeville-author envisions a global Christian empire is at odds with Greenblatt’s argument that the text is a “renunciation of possession” in which “a crusading drive toward the sacred rocks at the center of the world is transformed into a tolerant perambulation along its rim.”⁷ He goes on to read “circulation or wandering as an alternative to ownership, about a refusal to occupy,”⁸ and he sees a “powerful tension between the mobility that leads the pilgrim toward Jerusalem and the mobility that leads the traveler beyond the Holy Land.... One place continues to be linked to the another, but instead of the solidifying pull toward the center of the circle, there is a pacing or

⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). 29.

⁵ Higgins, “Defining the Earth’s Center,” 45.

⁶ Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The “Travels” of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). 51.

⁷ Greenblatt, 24.

⁸ Greenblatt, 27.

measuring of the outer rim.”⁹ He does not see an envisioned empire in *The Travels*. In addition, Greenblatt’s reading places the Khan (and the position of the rest of the East) in an outer circle beyond the binary of Muslim/Christian. Such a reading, however, sees the second part of *The Travels* as somehow undoing the work of the first or somehow disconnected from it.¹⁰

In this chapter, I argue that the Mandeville-author’s interest in land does not extend to imperial ambitions. Although the text represents the Holy Land as rightfully Christian, it does not go much beyond making the claim. The Mandeville-author only seems interested in making sure that the Christian claim to the Holy Land is secure in the face of its rival claimants: the Jews. My position here is similar to Greenblatt’s in that I do not read *The Travels* as a text with imperial ambitions, but I do see a particular interest in asserting and defending the Christian claim to the Holy Land against a rival Jewish claim. Greenblatt touches on the Mandeville-author’s treatment of Jews and suggests “they are... rivals in the dream of repossession....”¹¹ I propose that this rivalry is the main concern of the text when it comes to the territories of the Holy Land.¹² The Mandeville-author’s frustration with the Jewish other/origin drives not only his anti-Jewishness as I argue in chapter two but also the manner in which he represents land. If the Jewish claim can be invalidated, then Christian hegemony is already secure since the Saracens are represented as falling under that hegemony. There is no need (or realistic possibility) for

⁹ Greenblatt, 41, 42.

¹⁰ In this chapter, I suggest the account of the East instead breaks the binary of Muslim/Christian by imagining a world in which Latin Christendom, the Holy Land, and the East are intimately bound in one another’s affairs and in which the spiritual pull of a Christian Jerusalem extends to the farthest reaches of the known world.

¹¹ Greenblatt, 51.

¹² This concern continues into the account of the East as well. Later in this chapter, I argue that the Christian-Jewish rivalry binds the two parts of the text.

actual Christian possession of the land. Once past these contested sites, the account of the East is not even interested in making a claim, let alone possession, for the peoples of the East, namely the Khan, are represented as rightful owners and rulers of their lands. Yet the question of why these two matters are joined in a single text remains. As I will demonstrate, the second part of *The Travels* is not at all “an abandonment of the dream of a sacred center upon which all routes converge,” nor is there a “powerful tension between the mobility that leads the pilgrim toward Jerusalem and the mobility that leads the traveler beyond the Holy Land.” Rather, the account of the East is where the Mandeville-author’s universalist tendencies intensify and where he fully establishes a global Christian hegemony with a Christian (as opposed to Jewish) Jerusalem at its center. The second part of the text actually solidifies the “pull toward the center of the circle.” If Christianity is intended for all peoples, then demonstrating its hegemony means doing so in a description of the entire known world – not just the Holy Land or just the East. It also means using not only the account of the Holy Land but also the account of the East in the Mandeville-author’s contest with rival Jews.

The Christian Holy Land

The opening of *The Travels* makes Higgins’ reading particularly attractive, for the Mandeville-author immediately works to establish the Christian claim to the Holy Land and builds to the point where he calls for a crusade: “Sen yt es so þat þe land bezond þe see, þat es to say þe land of repromission, þat men calles þe Haly Land...and es blissed and sacred and halowed of þe precieuse blude of oure Lorde Ihesu Criste...” (1). Higgins

points to the way in which the text piles several meanings on the word “land.”¹³ The first meaning is geographical in that it places “þe land beyond þe see,” thus “announcing its concern with ‘there’ in relation to ‘here,’ and not simply with the nature of place, but also with orientation in space.”¹⁴ The text then moves “to place it in relation to ‘universal’ time with the next two definitions.” The Mandeville-author then refers to this land as “Haly,” using it “to situate the land overseas relative to both biblical and recent Christian history. This move from physical description to spiritual evaluation thus symbolically collapses the spatial distance only just established between the land ‘there’ and the audience ‘here.’” And before that, by referring to this land as “þe land of repromission,” the exordium connects “the absent land and the present audience” by “reminding its audience that their future fortunes are connected with the distant land.” Piling these meanings on the word “land” in quick succession overwhelmingly represents Jerusalem and surrounding areas as a specifically Christian Holy Land because Christ chose to “enuiron þat land with his blissed fete” and used Jerusalem to deliver his message (1).¹⁵

In the same passage, the Mandeville-author declares all Christians have a duty to take their “right heritage” out of “straunge men handes” (2). Coming after his passionate case for Christian claims to the Holy Land, at this point he seems to be genuine in his call for a new crusade, but the following sentence instantly introduces an obstacle: “Bot now pride enuy and couetise has so enflaumbed þe hertes of lordes of þe werld þat þai er mare

¹³ Higgins, *Writing East*, 33-35. Here Higgins analyzes the French text of *The Travels*; however, since the Egerton follows the French quite closely, I believe the language of the Egerton has an effect similar to that of the French.

¹⁴ Higgins, *Writing East*, 34. The following quotations from Higgins are from this page.

¹⁵ Greenblatt notes that “in the *Glossia ordinaria* the Bolognese jurist Accursius recorded Justinian’s definition of possession as a ‘pedibus quasi position,’ rather than ‘a sedibus’ – quite possible a simple error of transcription, but one that laid a particular emphasis upon possession by the placing of the feet, that is, by standing or perambulation.” Greenblatt, 28. This is how the Holy Land belongs to Christ and thus to Christians, for Christ chose “to enuirun þat land with his blissed fete.”

busie for to disherite þaire neighbours þan for to chalange or conquere þaire right heritage before said” (2). Squabbling amongst Christian rulers prevents successful crusade,¹⁶ and Greenblatt sees this as the point where the text turns its aggression from the “straunge men” occupying the Holy Land to “fellow Christians who are greedily trying to possess an inheritance that is even less rightfully their own.”¹⁷ The Mandeville-author states that when such discord ends, success is guaranteed, but for now, that success is a distant dream. Instead, the text’s readers will have to make do with the text itself: “And for als mykill as it es lang tyme passed sen þare was any general passage ouer þe see in to þe haly land, and men coueytes to here speke of þat land...” (2). This is finally the point when the text introduces Sir John himself who declares that since there has not been a general passage in a long time, he will satisfy his readers’ need to hear of that land and all the lands to which he has traveled. After this moment, there is no further talk of crusade: “He [Sir John] travels to Jerusalem not as a conqueror reclaiming his heritage but as a pilgrim dependent upon the special protection of the Sultan whom he depicts as the wise and temperate ruler of an obedient, devout, and for the most part honest people.”¹⁸ The

¹⁶ The Mandeville-author is not alone in blaming internal fighting amongst Christian rulers for failure in the Holy Land. In fact, a writer discussing crusade in the fourteenth century would almost be required to pair the two, for the fall of Acre in 1291 required an explanation for the failure of the Crusader states, and any new call to crusade would need to address that failure in order to ensure the success of any new attempt. Fidenzio of Padua, for example, saw fighting amongst European rulers as one of the reasons why they did not assist Christians in the Holy Land, which led to the loss of Acre. The anonymous author of *De excidio urbis Acconis* makes the same charge, and the chronicler William of Nangis records that the French church councils required the end of the Sicilian wars before the preaching of a new crusade. Marino Sanudo, who wrote perhaps the most comprehensive and meticulously planned call for crusade of the Middle Ages, also argued that the Holy Land was lost because of that war. For more on these examples and others, see Antony Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land: The Crusade Proposals of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000). 53-56.

¹⁷ Greenblatt, 28.

¹⁸ Greenblatt, 28-29.

exordium introduces the dream of retaking the Holy Land, but it is pushed aside in favor of the text itself as an alternative to conquest.¹⁹

Later in the text, the Mandeville-author returns to the possibility of repossessing the Holy Land several times in the form of prophecies. In describing Jerusalem, he includes a list of the many nations who have held Jerusalem and follows the list by declaring “thurgh þe grace of Godd þai schall noȝt hald it lang” (38). He repeats the prophecy after mentioning the many lands once held by Constantine: “Bot, when Godd will, riȝt as þise landes er lost thurgh synne of Cristen men, so schall þai be wonnen agayne by Cristen men, thurgh helpe of Godd” (40). It is tempting to see these statements as evidence of the Mandeville-author motivating his fellow Latin Christians to build a Christian empire; however, while both of these hopeful statements raise the prospect of reconquest, they rely on God’s help in the distant and hazy future, and the last prophecy of recovery to appear in the account of the Holy Land further distances that help. The final prophecy comes not from Sir John but from the Sultan himself in a conversation in which the Sultan criticizes the greed and hypocrisy of Christians, especially their priests. In the process, the Saracen ruler says,

And we wate wele þat, when ȝe serue ȝour Godd duely and wele and plesez him with gude werkes, na man schall mow agaynstand ȝow. We knawe wele also by oure prophecyes þat Cristen men schall recouer þis land agayne in tyme commyng, when ȝe serue ȝour Godd wele and deuotely. Bot as lang as ȝe liffe, as ȝe do, in wikkednes and in synne, we hafe na drede of ȝow; for ȝour Godd will noȝt helpe ȝow. (69)

This time, the prophecy seems more credible; it comes from the ruler of the empire occupying the Holy Land, and instead of merely saying that God will eventually help

¹⁹ The text as an alternative provides an imagined Christian hegemony, and the discursive violence with which it establishes that hegemony is actually far more insidious than physical force.

Christians, the Sultan provides the exact conditions that need to be met. Christians must simply be better Christians. However, Sir John has no reply; he does not pursue the matter; he merely asks how the Sultan got this information, and he learns that the Sultan has been sending his lords to Europe as spies. Coming after a lengthy and biting criticism of Christian devotion, the conditions of the prophecy seem out of reach. Sir John seems overwhelmed by the reality of his co-religionists' sinfulness, and this more credible and detailed prophecy appears less helpful than those that came before it.

Greenblatt reads this as the moment when the dream of repossessing the Holy Land is – if not completely abandoned – pushed to the end of time: “in the face of Christian sinfulness, the political and military project proclaimed at the start has been evacuated, transformed into an appeal for moral renewal and a vague, chiliastic hope for redemption.”²⁰ Reconquest will have to wait until the Second Coming, but this episode, while unsettling to Christian readers, also asserts Christian hegemony by tying the fate of the Saracen empire to Christian salvation history. If the Mandeville-author cannot provide the immediate satisfaction of repossessing the Holy Land, he can provide the comfort of knowing that these Saracens are merely playing their assigned roles in God's plan for Christians. As long as the Christian claim to the Holy Land and Christian spiritual hegemony are assured, the Mandeville-author seems comfortable leaving actual recovery vague and distant.²¹

²⁰ Greenblatt, 29. Like Greenblatt, Frank Grady also sees the exchange with the Sultan as the moment when the reconquest of the Holy Land is pushed into the distant future: “speculation about the inevitable...demise of Islam not only diminishes the urgency of the call for a crusade or an elaborate program of proselytizing, it also reduces the duty of Christians interested in the intractable problem of the Saracens to the mere maintenance of the orthodox faith, which is bound to triumph by its very nature.” Frank Grady, “‘Machomete’ and *Mandeville's Travels*,” *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. John Victor Tolan (New York: Routledge, 2000). 278.

²¹ In addition, as Grady notes, “the recourse to prophecy allows the author of the *Travels* to assert the moral successes of the virtuous heathen while yet containing them within a larger Christian context.” Grady,

This final prophecy of reconquest and its resulting evacuation of crusade as an option come shortly before the Mandeville-author moves on to describe Sir John's journey into the East. It is the last indication of the fate of the Holy Land before leaving it behind for the more distant lands of Asia. If he truly envisioned a reconquered Holy Land, this would have been the moment to leave his readers with a call to crusade in the same passionate language used in the exordium. Instead, with each prophecy he mentions, the Mandeville-author gradually reduces his call to a vague hope.²² If this text reignites the dream of a global Christian empire, its flames are indeed very dim. Yet both

"Machomete," 278. Although they prevent Christians from retaking the Holy Land, these Saracens are appropriated to further demonstrate Christian hegemony. The Sultan's criticism is also based on a Christian standard. He accuses Christians of not living "as Criste was," nor do they rightly follow "þe lawe þat Criste gaffe." For the full text of the Sultan's criticism, see *Buke*, 69. His remarks echo medieval Christian criticisms of Islam. For a comprehensive look at polemical attacks on Islam, see Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003). This is the latest reprint of Daniel's 1960 study which was revised and updated in 1993.

²² The Mandeville-author's call for a crusade and the subsequent reduction of that call to a vague hope reflects a shift in crusade's place in fourteenth-century Latin Christian culture. Throughout the fourteenth century, many authors continued calling for crusades against Muslims and even wrote texts detailing the steps necessary for success. As late as 1395, Philip de Mezieres wrote letters to Richard II and his French counterpart encouraging the monarchs to commit to peace and join his Order of the Passion in preparation for a new crusade to retake the Holy Land. See Philip de Mezieres, *Letter to King Richard II: A Plea Made in 1395 for Peace Between England and France*, tr. G.W. Coopland (New York: Harper & Rowe Publishers, 1976). Earlier in the century, Philip V of France convened a number of crusade planning conferences. However, nothing on the scale of the First, Second, or Third Crusades materialized with Jerusalem as its target. Instead, active crusades against Muslims, such as the sack of Alexandria in 1365, were smaller in scale or targeted the Ottomans in Anatolia and the Balkans. This is not to say that the recovery of the Holy Land was no longer on the minds of Latin Christians. On the contrary, it was deeply engrained in their culture. Christopher Tyerman points to two guilds founded in Norfolk in 1384 which began each meeting with a prayer for the recovery of the Holy Land, and "in 1378, Charles V of France entertained the emperor Charles IV of Germany in Paris with a lavish production of the siege of Jerusalem, possibly stage-managed by Philip of Mezieres." Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). 878, 887. In the 1360s, both courts had actively planned for a crusade, demonstrating "continued official engagement, even of a generalized sort." Tyerman, 888. Prayers for the recovery of the Holy Land became a regular part of liturgical practices, and many surviving wills from the fourteenth century bequeath money for crusade: "However, the lack of association with active crusading suggests that the liberation of the Holy Land provided a spiritual metaphor, both for the liberation of the individual soul from the consequences of sin, as in the English Gregorian Trentals, and, more widely, for the struggle against the ungodly." Tyerman, 890. Just as the Mandeville-author's account of Sir John's conversation with the Sultan focuses on the need for Latin Christian spiritual reform rather than active military engagement in the Holy Land, by the latter half of the fourteenth century, "the only action prescribed for the recovery of the Holy Land was prayer..." Tyerman, 890. By mentioning crusade, the Mandeville-author was invoking the image of crusade which continued "as a central Christian devotional activity long after fighting for the cross had become a rarity." Tyerman, 890.

in the exordium and throughout the account of the Holy Land, the Mandeville-author is at pains to represent it as Christian land to which Christians have a rightful claim, and rather than the Saracens, what drives the his representation of the land as such is his concern with Jewish rival claims to Christians' rightful heritage.

Throughout the first part of the text, in which the Mandeville-author describes Constantinople, Egypt, Jerusalem and the lands between them, the land is described in terms of its Christian history, landmarks, people, or objects. The account of Constantinople, for example, begins not with a geographical description of the city but with a church: "Þare es þe best kirk of þe werld and þe fairest, and it es of saynt Sophie" (4). He repeats this approach in Egypt as well: "In Babilon es a faire kirk of oure Lady, whare scho dwelled viii. 3ere, when scho fledd oute of þe land of Iudee for drede of Kyng Herod" (18). Readers' first glimpse at each city involves a Christian landmark, and short pieces of information about the saint or Biblical figure with which the church is associated place each land in a Christian historical context.

As the Mandeville-author's account approaches Jerusalem and surrounding areas, these kinds of pairings (of place and Christian event/person) pile on top of one another and come in rapid succession. Every page of the text contains several such instances of stories and events, but nothing comes close to what is found in the heart of the Holy Land:

And in þat place sawe Dauid þe aungell.... And on þis roche oure Lorde sette him.... And on þis roche satt oure Lady and lerned hir sawter.... And þare oure Lorde forgafe synnes to þe womman þat was taken in avoutry. And þare was Criste circumsised. And þare schewed þe aungell þe natiuitee of sayn Iohn Baptist. And þare fferd Melchisedech prayand til oure Lorde in takennyng of þe sacrement þat was to come. And þare kneled Dauid, þare he wald hafe made þe temple.... And in þat temple was þe prophete Zachary slayne. And off a pynnacle of þis temple kest þe

Jews sayne Iame doune.... And in þat place dwelled knyghtes, þat ware called Templeres.... In þat cisterne ware aungels wont to bathe þam and stirre þe water.... And þare was þa man made hale þat was seke.... And þare oure Lorde said.... (43-44)

The text overwhelms its reader with these accounts, mixing Biblical stories, traditional accounts, and more recent Christian history with mention of the Templars. The words “þare,” “whare,” and “in þat,” begin each phrase and build upon one another in such a way as to assert powerfully a Christian claim to this land. Churches, tombs, and shrines, both those still standing and those long destroyed by Saracens, Turks, or others, dot the landscape.²³ All of these landmarks stand as evidence that this is the “right heritage” of Christ’s “childer.”

This approach to describing a pilgrimage to Jerusalem is not new. Mary B. Campbell points to the *Peregrinatio ad terram sanctam* of Egeria, the first Christian to write of a journey to the Near East in the fourth century, which also describes the Holy Land in terms of what happened or who lived there: “There are in fact no ‘places,’ only ‘places where.’”²⁴ The guidebooks of the fourteenth century also employ the same formula.²⁵ After all, those people and events are why Christian pilgrims would travel to the Holy Land in the first place. However, what makes *The Travels*’ use of the same formula different is the context in which it is found. Egeria’s letter uses the formula in order to participate “in sacramental rites at every site, working continually to elevate her raw sense experience into a form of communion with that sacred world which *in illo tempore* merged for a while with this one,” and she acts as an “intercessor, opening a

²³ See, for example, *Buke*, 4, 12, 16, 18, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. From p. 37 on through the description of the areas in and around Jerusalem the text becomes jammed with churches, tombs, etc.

²⁴ Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). 32.

²⁵ See Campbell, *Witness*, 127-128.

door for us in the wall between our place and the sacred places.”²⁶ The guidebooks use the same formula in a “lifeless and depersonalized” manner; they are “completely nonnarrative in structure and, most importantly, voiceless.”²⁷ The Mandeville-author, however, employs this pairing of place with person or event after having reminded his readers that Christians are heirs to the Holy Land and having included several prophecies of its (distant) recovery with the help of God himself.²⁸ Like Egeria, he opens a door in that wall between home and elsewhere, but he does not take the time to describe sacramental rites or Sir John’s emotional responses, preferring instead to emphasize the sheer quantity of Christian sites which stand as evidence of the Christian claim to this land (and God’s backing of that claim) because of the context in which they are presented (beginning and ending with reminders of the Christian claim). This is done with more than just churches and places; relics play an important role as well.²⁹

From Constantinople to Jerusalem, sacred artifacts and saints’ bodies litter the path along which Sir John travels. In Constantinople, for example, “lies saynt Anne, oure Lady moder, wham saynt Helyne gert be broght fra Ierusalem” (8). Leaving

²⁶ Campbell, *Witness*, 32-33, 25.

²⁷ Campbell, *Witness*, 127,128.

²⁸ Although the prophecies reduce the urgent need for crusade, they at least confirm that Christians do indeed have a claim to the land and will recover that land when they please God. Even the fact that they currently do not possess the Holy Land because of their sins in a way confirms their claim because God is withholding their “right heritage” specifically because of their sins – not because they have no right to it.

²⁹ The pairing of place with Christian person or event is also common in geographical texts. Book I of Ranulf Higden’s *Polychronicon*, for example, presents a geographical description of the world before the subsequent six books provide its history, and although Books II and III are devoted to what we would now call Biblical history, Book I’s description of Judea cannot help but delve into history and connect the geographical description of the land to Biblical persons and events. See Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis; Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Churchill Babington & Joseph Rawson Lumby (London: Longman & Co., 1865-86). For the description of Judea and Canaan, see Vol. 1, 102-129. Also, various surviving *mappamundi* either illustrate or allude in writing to the Biblical event or person associated with a particular site. See *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and Their Context*, ed. P.D.A. Harvey (London: The British Library, 2006).

Constantinople, travelers will pass “by a place whare sayne Nicholas lies” (11), and in Cypre an abbey holds the “crosse of þe gude theeffe Dismas, as I hafe said before” (14). Also on that island “lyes sayn Genouefe” and “þe body of saynt Hillarion” (14). In Egypt “lies þe body of þe haly virgyn sayn Barbara” (18), and in the Sultan’s realm, at the foot of Sinai stands an abbey where the monks “schew þe heued of Sayne Kateryne, and þe clathe þat it was wonden in, when þe aungelles broght þe body vp to þe mount of Synai” (31). As the text gets closer to the gates of Jerusalem, relics appear even more frequently.³⁰ This parallels the manner in which the accounts of Christian Biblical and historical events increase in frequency. A relic, of course, draws its significance from its having been present at the actual event or having been touched by one of the people involved in the story. People in the Middle Ages saw these relics as a way to connect physically with their past, and their presence in this text allows a way to touch those important past events in the present. In medieval travel writing, “places are almost always ‘places where’ someone once did or said something; geography tends to be history; description then comes in the form of narration. Where the historical human figure is absent, human artifacts take their places and descriptions of communal rituals of devotion take the place of historical anecdote.”³¹ The relics presented in *The Travels* would then act as doorways to a Christian past. One need only be in their presence to be transported to the person or event with which the relics are associated. The Christian

³⁰ I have pointed to Christian landmarks and relics in Constantinople, Egypt, and other territories outside Jerusalem’s immediate surroundings because when Sir John enters this part of the world (Asia Minor, the Aegean islands, the Levant, Egypt), he enters a vast area with numerous sacred Christian sites. It is as if the spiritual power of Jerusalem flows outward and saturates all of the lands surrounding it. As represented by the Mandeville-author, the Holy Land consists of more than just Jerusalem; it consists of all of the lands that have played an important role in the early days of Christianity.

³¹ Mary B. Campbell, “‘The Object of One’s Gaze’: Landscape, Writing, and Early Medieval Pilgrimage,” *Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination*, ed. Scott D. Westrem (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991). 6.

claim to the Holy Land is not just based on some event in the past; it comes from sacred events that are ever-present to Christian worshippers, and relics provide physical evidence of the events that legitimate that claim.³²

Sir John's conversation with the Sultan and the prophecy of recovery at the end of that conversation come at the end of the account of the Holy Land. By the time readers arrive at this point, the Mandeville-author has taken them through a Holy Land littered with Christian sites and objects that confirm its place in Christian history and therefore its rightful claimants. Although the Saracen prophecy pushes recovery into the distant future, the Sultan's words also confirm Christians' claim to the lands he occupies. The Sultan makes no claim to the Holy Land on behalf of the Saracens and instead characterizes himself as its temporary custodian – as God's agent – until the day when Christians reform and are worthy of their inheritance. Here near the end of the account of the Holy Land, this episode acts as a bookend to the first part of the text by mirroring the opening. Both the exordium and the Sultan's words confirm the Christian claim to the Holy Land, mention some kind of recovery, and criticize Christian failures, thereby replacing recovery with a "vague, chiliastic hope for redemption." By beginning and ending the account of the Holy Land in this way, all that remains is the Christian claim to it.

It seems odd that the Mandeville-author would be so concerned with stressing the Christian claim to the Holy Land when he downplays crusade and immediate conquest as

³² The Mandeville-author does not take the issue of relic authenticity lightly. The first relics he mentions are the True Cross and the Crown of Thorns (arguably two of the most important relics in Christianity), and he includes a lengthy discussion of their authenticity. *Buke*, 5-7. If they are to stand as evidence of the central events in Christian history, they cannot be fakes. In addition, thanks to the manner in which Jerusalem is represented in the exordium, the Holy Land of *The Travels* is itself a land-relic due to its having been "halowed of þe precieuse blude of oure Lorde Ihesu Criste" (1). Although Christians might not agree about the authenticity of other relics, this land-relic's authenticity is unquestionable.

an option. If an armed struggle is doomed to fail because of the fractious nature of Latin Christendom, the sinfulness of Christians, and God's resulting displeasure with them, then all of the work he does to stress that claim seems useless. If everything will work itself out as long as Christians morally reform themselves, then an approach similar to that of Egeria in which she participates "in sacramental rites at every site, working continually to elevate her raw sense experience into a form of communion with that sacred world which *in illo tempore* merged for a while with this one" would be more useful in stimulating piety and devotion in readers. *The Travels* includes nothing close to Egeria's approach. It mentions each site and the person or event associated with it and moves on. The Mandeville-author seems more concerned with piling Christian site after Christian site in rapid succession rather than taking the time to detail sacramental rites and Sir John's emotional responses in churches, tombs, and shrines. The claim is what really matters to him – not because of the Saracen occupation of that land but because of the rival claimant that consistently frustrates his project: the Jews.

Long before the Mandeville-author says anything about the Saracen occupiers of the Holy Land, let alone names them, he introduces the Jews on the first page of the text: "in þat land he [Christ] wald lede his lyf and suffer hard passioun and dede of þe Iews for vs synfull wormes..." (1). They are the first enemy named, and as the text progresses and represents Saracens as mere custodians of the Holy Land who fulfill the role God has given them, it becomes clear that Jews are the only real enemy in the eyes of the Mandeville-author. He consistently demonizes them and blames them for killing Christ and various apostles and saints, focusing especially on Jewish viciousness.³³ No other

³³ For examples, see *Buke*, 5, 7, 44, 47 and chapter two.

group is treated in this way, and as I have argued, for the Mandeville-author, Jews are the one group that frustrates his project of appropriating the various peoples of the Holy Land and East in service of establishing a coherent global Christian hegemony.³⁴ As Christianity's origin and other, Jews are an enemy with a rival view of the world and history, an adversary in the reading of a shared scripture, and a competing claim to the Holy Land, and when *The Travels* comes to Jerusalem and the Temple itself, the contest for the Holy Land climaxes as the Mandeville-author works to empty the city and its temple of its Jewish past in order to assert Christians' legitimate claim over the site. Unable to negate completely the Jewish claim because of the Christian dependence on Jews as origin, he resorts to vilifying them at every chance, but he also continues filling page after page with Christian sites and relics in an attempt to secure the Christian claim to the land. It is only after his (relatively unsuccessful) attempt at negating the Jewish claim to the Temple and Jerusalem that the Mandeville-author turns to the Sultan's prophecy in order to reassert the Christian claim through the mouth of a Saracen.

Yet Jews are still present in this part of the text. Right before the account of Sir John's conversation with the Sultan, readers learn that "Sarzenes saise þat þe Iewes er wikked men and cursed, for þai hafe broken þe lawe þat Godd gaf þam thurgh Moyses; and Cristen men þai say er wikked and ill, for þai kepe noȝt þe commaundment of þe Gospell, whilk Ihesus Criste bad þam" (69). Saracens hate Jews just as much as Christians do, but both claimants to the Holy Land are criticized in the same breath. The Sultan's prophecy comes shortly after and supports the Christian claim, but it is striking that the bookends to the account of the Holy Land (the exordium and the conversation

³⁴ See chapter two.

with the Sultan) both mention Jews in conjunction with the issue of the Holy Land's rightful claimants. In the face of the Saracens, the urgency of actual recovery is minimized, but the Mandeville-author's frustration and obsession with the Jews as rival claimants drive him to use whatever means necessary to assert the Christian claim to the Holy Land. As far as he is concerned, even if Christians are not meant to possess the land for now, the Jewish claim must be addressed immediately, especially since his vision of a world in which Christian spiritual hegemony is secure relies on a Christian – as opposed to Jewish – Jerusalem at its center.

The Mandeville-author's fixation with representing the Holy Land as a Christian Holy Land through the use of prophecies, churches, shrines, tombs, and relics is striking. Given this fixation, it is not at all surprising that Higgins emphasizes the text's dream of empire, but the text's evacuation of crusade and conquest as options is just as striking as its fixation with Christianizing the lands it describes in the first part of the text. Nothing like the exordium's call to crusade can be found in the rest of the text. Instead, as Greenblatt claims, recovery becomes an increasingly distant and vague option as *The Travels* progresses; however, the text's fixation with representing the Holy Land as Christian remains, and my reading differs from Greenblatt's in that I see the Mandeville-author's frustration and concern with Jews as rival claimants to the Holy Land driving that fixation in order to assert the Christian claim to Jerusalem and surrounding territories. As I will discuss below, this concern continues in the second part of the text as the Mandeville-author describes the East. Rather than abandoning the dream of a sacred center, this part of the text is grounded on a Christian Jerusalem as the spiritual

center of a world in which Christian spiritual hegemony reigns supreme and continues its struggle against Jews as rivals.

Christian Claims and the East

Even the vague dream of imperial expansion in the first part of *The Travels* completely disappears in the Mandeville-author's account of the East. As in the account of the Holy Land, possession or conquest are of no concern in the description of the territories past Jerusalem, but this part of the text is also naturally unconcerned with asserting a Christian claim to the land, for no site in the East is directly connected to Christ's life, and only one New Testament figure features in this part of the text: St. Thomas.³⁵ As the apostle to India, Thomas was supposedly martyred and buried in a city called Calamy where locals, though not Christian, consult his relics in order to resolve disputes within the community (86).³⁶ Much later in the text, Thomas' name reappears in the account of Prester John's realm where the Eastern Christians there are led by the Patriarch of St. Thomas who "es þare as it ware pape" (136), and they perform liturgical

³⁵ Although a New Testament figure, St. Thomas' mission to India and his martyrdom are not included in the New Testament and are instead part of Christian tradition. The earliest surviving story of Thomas' mission is in The Acts of Thomas which was probably written in Syria in the third century. Despite its exclusion from the Bible, the story was a popular one in the Middle Ages and was included in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (translated into English in 1483 by William Caxton). For more on The Acts of Thomas, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). 39-41. Also see The Acts of Thomas in *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). 122-134.

³⁶ Although the Mandeville-author says that the church housing Thomas' remains is filled with idols, he nonetheless likens local practices to those of Christians. They make pilgrimages to this church "als comounly als Cristen men commez to sayne Iames" and they "bring with þam incense and oþer thinges swete smelland for to turify þat image [the idol], as we do here to Goddes body." These same locals also sacrifice their children to the idols, but the passage ends with the author's regret that these people suffer more for their idols than any Christian man suffers for the love of Christ, and throughout the passage, he consistently points to their "grete deuocioun." *Buke*, 87. Despite their gruesome practices, they are represented as pious worshippers who at least continue to revere one of Christ's apostles.

practices “as sayne Thomas þe apostill taght þam in alde tyme” (148).³⁷ Unlike the many sites related to Christ, the apostles, or various saints in the Holy Land, however, these few appearances do not and cannot have the effect of making some Christian claim on the land; simply put, there are not enough of them,³⁸ and the Mandeville-author actually presents the various rulers of the East as rightfully in possession of their realms.

The greatest of these rulers is the Khan, and in his account of Cathay, the Mandeville-author includes what Frank Grady calls the Khan’s “legitimizing genealogy.”³⁹ The first Khan has a vision of a White Knight who tells him that God has chosen him to conquer and rule all of the lands around him. Chaanguys proceeds by uniting the Tartar tribes, whose leaders, having been visited by the White Knight themselves, agree to make Chaanguys their emperor (110). Just as the Christian claim to the Holy Land stems from Christ’s having bequeathed it to them as his children, the Khan’s claim to much of the East stems from God having commissioned Chaanguys to

³⁷ Since his shrine in Calamy is now home to idols and human sacrifice, Thomas’ first appearance in the account of the East might imply Christianity’s failure to penetrate this part of the world, but when his name reappears in the description of a powerful and devout Christian ruler in Inde, readers see that the apostle’s work was not in vain, for just as St. Peter’s successors continue to lead Latin Christendom, Christian leaders in the East see themselves as successors to Thomas, and they continue to practice as taught by him.

³⁸ Other Biblical figures do come up in the East, including the three kings, Job, Noah and his sons, and Adam and Eve. The three kings met in a city called Cassach before continuing to the Holy Land in order to present gifts to Christ. *Buke*, 75. Their meeting in the East is also mentioned much earlier in the text during the account of the Holy Land. See *Buke*, 36. As prominent easterners, they were the first to recognize Christ’s importance, further demonstrating that Christian spiritual hegemony and Jerusalem’s pull extend into the East. The Mandeville-author uses Job in order to present his readers with a pagan who “serued Godd full deuoutely after þe custom of his lawe, whas seruyse was acceptable to Godd.” *Buke*, 76. He seems to be the first proto-Christian in history. Noah and his sons appear throughout the text as founders of various cities. For examples, see *Buke*, 75, 77. But they also feature prominently in the Mandeville-author’s explanation of Easterners’ genealogy. I return to this later in this chapter. Adam and Eve appear several times in the account of the East. For example, the Mandeville-author justifies Lamorian nudists and their practice of mating with whomever they choose because of God’s order to be fruitful and multiply. *Buke*, 89. He also points to the hill in the East where Adam and Eve wept for a hundred years after having been driven out of Paradise. *Buke*, 98. Despite the inclusion of sites associated with each of these Old Testament figures, none of them seem to be employed in such a way as to claim land in the East. Rather, they help demonstrate the global reach of Christianity.

³⁹ Frank Grady, *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005). 56.

build an empire, and just in case there is any question that the current Khan is not the legitimate heir to that empire, the Mandeville-author makes it absolutely clear that he is the rightful descendant of and claimant to Chaanguys' realm. Chaanguys is chosen by God in part because he is the oldest of his kin (110), and one of the laws he establishes forces his subjects to "forsake all þat þai had in heritage and lordschepe, and þat þai schuld fra þaine forward hald þam payd of þat he wald gyffe þam of his grace; and þai did so" (110). Where before his subjects held their property and titles by inheritance, now they hold their property through the Khan's grace. In addition, the text thrice repeats that the Khan's oldest son is always his successor (106, 121, 124). There is also no hint of civil war or discord due to issues of succession. Unlike Latin Christendom where lords fight to disinherit their neighbors, Tartar succession is represented as orderly and uncontested, and the current Khan's claim to his empire can be traced directly to Chaanguys whom God chose. There is no Christian claim here, and the Mandeville-author actually works to confirm the Khan's legitimacy. Though he does not provide a similar account of each Eastern ruler's genealogy, as the Mandeville-author proceeds through the many other realms of the East, there is no question of the legitimacy of the various kings and emperors of Asia, and there is no indication of any Christian claim to the land.⁴⁰

The Khan's rule in the East is legitimated by divine commission, but the Mandeville-author also includes two well-known medieval stories regarding Alexander the Great, his encounter with the Bragmans and the Gynoscriphe, which seem to be

⁴⁰ Although the Mongols invaded parts of the Holy Land and Europe in the thirteenth century, the Mandeville-author pays little attention to those incursions as he works to minimize them as a threat. He does point to the Mongol invasion of the Holy Land, but he presents that campaign as one in which they were helping Christians by attacking Saracens. See *Buke*, 112-113.

instances of a western ruler going beyond his rightful claim once he is in the East. Once in Inde, the conquering Alexander comes to an impassable river across which the Bragmans live; however, for reasons unknown, a Bragman messenger is able to travel between the two sides, so Alexander exchanges letters with the Bragmans who “er gude folk and trewe and of gude faith and gude lyf after þe maner of þaire conuersacioun” (144).⁴¹ What follows is a shortened version of Alexander’s exchange with Dindimus (although he is not named).⁴² After writing a letter to the Bragmans and stating that he will “com and destroy þaire land,” the Bragmans respond by asking “Qwhat thing myght suffice to þat man, to wham all þe werld may noȝt suffice” (145)? Their response continues by stating that they have no treasure; their property is common to all (the same arrangement found in several other parts of the East), and Alexander would have nothing to gain from them except peace, which is all they have. Remarkably, at this point the Bragmans use the word “disherit,” that same word used in the exordium’s criticism of Christian lords: “And ay to þis tyme hafe we bene in peess, of þe whilk þau will now dispoile vs and *disherit* vs” (145). The ascetic easterners refuse to claim ownership of land, but they still have a sense of rightful heritage in that they claim peace as their birthright. The conqueror then “thoght in his hert þat it ware grete harme and grete vnmannhede to grefe swilk folk or truble þam; and he graunt þam suertee of peess, and

⁴¹ For my discussion of the text’s treatment of the virtuous Bragmans and Gynoscriphe, see chapter one.

⁴² Alexander’s exchange with Dindimus was a widely circulated text that was incorporated into many of the Alexander romances, including the *Historia de Preliis* of Leo of Naples and its recensions, the *Alexander B* (also known as *Alexander and Dindimus*), the *Thornton Alexander*, the Middle English *Wars of Alexander*, and the Old French *Alexander Romance*. For an extensive description of the Alexander texts of the Middle Ages, see George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1956) and the introduction to *The Gestes of King Alexander of Macedon: Two Middle-English Alliterative Fragments, Alexander A and Alexander B, Edited with the Latin Sources Parallel (Orosius and the Historia de Preliis, J2 Recension), with Introduction, Notes, Appendicies, and Index*, ed. Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929).

bad þat þai schuld continue furth þaire gude maners and vse þaire gude custommes withouten drede hauyng of him, for he schuld noȝt dere þam” (145). This shortened exchange causes Alexander to abandon his plan for conquest as he agrees not to “disherit” the Bragmans of their “peess.”

Alexander’s encounter with the Gynoscricphe comes next, and here too Alexander exchanges words with a people similar in custom to the Bragmans. This time, he immediately agrees not to conquer the Gynoscricphe and instead offers a boon. They refuse worldly riches and instead ask for immortality. The conqueror admits he cannot, for he too is mortal. The Gynoscricphe respond by asking, “Qwhare to þan gaders þou þe riches of þis werld, þat er transitory and may noȝt last” (146)? They lambast him and his presumptuousness and pride, finally stating the futility of conquest: “Þou wald make all þe werld subiecte vnto þe, and þou knawest noȝt þe terme of þi lyf ne þe day ne þe houre” (146). At this, Alexander “was gretely compuncte and went fra þam and did þam na disese” (146). Unlike most versions of these exchanges, here the Mandeville-author declares a clear loser as Alexander is greatly ashamed of himself. The great western conqueror simply turns around and leaves.

The inclusion of these exchanges alludes to the already centuries-old Alexander romance tradition in which conquest is called into question. *Alexander and Dindimus*, for example, contains the same episodes included in *The Travels*. Confronted first by the Gymnosophists (the Gynoscricphe of *The Travels*), Alexander promises to leave them alone and offers them a boon. Asked for immortality, he says he cannot grant it, and they respond asking since he knows

þat þe is demed þe deþ to dure nouht longe,
Whu farest þou so fihtinge folk to distroie,

And for to winne þe word wendest to romme?
How might þou kepe þe sckaþe with skile and with trouþe
Aȝeins ryht to bireve rengnus of kingus?⁴³

Unlike the version in *The Travels*, this time Alexander responds by saying he only does what is in his nature and what Heaven bids him do:

Men seþ wel þat þe see seseþ and stinteþ
But whan þe wind on þe watur þe wawus arereþ;
So wolde I reste me raþe and ride ferþe,
Nevere to gete more good no no gome derie,
Bute as þe heie hevene goodus wiþ herteli þouhtus
So aweccen my wit and my wil chaungen
Pat I mai stinte no stounde still in no place,
Pat I ne am temted ful tid to turne me þennus.⁴⁴

When Alexander later encounters the Bragmans and exchanges letters with their king, Dindimus, the latter also criticizes Alexander: “Whi scholde any schalk þat God schop on erþe / Have maistrie of men more þan anopir?”⁴⁵ And the Bragman king later calls conquest into question with an Augustinian statement:

Pat in þis wastinge word we ne wone nought evere;
For erþe is nouht our eritage þat evere schal laste,
Ne we ne ben nouht ibor to abide þerinne.
But we ben pore pilgrimus put in þis worde,
For we by destene of dome schulle deþ þolie;
Panne schulle we hie to þe hous þat hie is in blysse
And kaire to oure kinus nie to kenne of oure fare.⁴⁶

Perhaps the poem’s most powerful statement calling conquest into question comes couched in Augustinian terms. Like the citizens of the Heavenly City, the Bragmans are

⁴³ *Alexander B*, ll. 78-82, in *The Gestis of King Alexander of Macedon: Two Middle-English Alliterative Fragments, Alexander A and Alexander B, Edited with the Latin Sources Parallel (Orosius and the Historia de Preliis, J2 Recension), with Introduction, Notes, Appendicies, and Index*, ed. Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929).

⁴⁴ *Alexander B*, ll. 91-98.

⁴⁵ *Alexander B*, ll. 432-433.

⁴⁶ *Alexander B*, ll. 980-986.

on pilgrimage in this world. There is no need for conquest with such a theology, and by the end of the poem, Alexander decides to turn around and leave:

Pere his burnus he bad bulden of marbre
A piler sadliche ipicht or he passe wolde,
And þat þei wrouhten a wrytte and writen þeraboute:
'Hidur have ich, Alixandre, wiþ myn help fare.'⁴⁷

This monument is not a monument to victory. It is instead a monument to Alexander's failure, whether to conquer or to understand the Bragmans.

I suggest that the inclusion of these exchanges in *The Travels* provides an example of a western ruler failing in his attempt to conquer the East and calls Alexander's divine commission into question. In many Alexander stories, he is clearly an agent of God in his mission to conquer Persia. In the *Historia de Preliis*, for example, Alexander enters Jerusalem where the priests present him with the Book of Daniel, "where it was written that a Greek would destroy the might of the Persians. Convinced that he [Alexander] was the one meant by the Scriptures, he was pleased."⁴⁸ Of course, this presentation would not have been possible since the Book of Daniel was written after Alexander's death, but this meeting of temporalities is an interesting one, both in the context of the *Historia de Preliis* and in the context of *The Travels*. The Book of Daniel is, after all, a book concerned with Jews living under foreign rule and how they might coexist with their non-Jewish neighbors, and it is a book written with resistance to Rome in mind.⁴⁹ The Book of Daniel also relates Alexander's fall and the division of his empire, so the futility of conquest and the instability of empire is already an issue in the

⁴⁷ *Alexander B*, ll. 1134-1137.

⁴⁸ *Historia de Preliis: JI*, 15, in *The Romances of Alexander*, tr. Dennis M. Kratz (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991).

⁴⁹ In addition, the Mandeville-author calls the ruler of Egypt the Sultan of Babylon, perhaps hinting that just as the Babylon of the Book of Daniel fell, so too will the Sultan's empire.

Biblical text and in the *Historia* with the presentation of that book, which initially confirms Alexander's divine commission to conquer Persia, while at the same time confirming his doom. However, once he defeats the Persians, Alexander moves his army toward Inde, and along the way, his men question his plan:

It should have been enough for us that we went on an expedition as far as Persia and conquered Darius, who previously was exacting tribute from us. Why are we still wearing ourselves out marching toward India in places where wild beast dwell and forgetting our homeland? This Alexander desires nothing except embarking on military expeditions and subjugating nations to himself. Let us give him his leave and return home. Let him go where he wants with the Persians.⁵⁰

Moving past Persia, Alexander exceeds the limits of the divine commission found in the Book of Daniel, and his men's challenge marks that limit. He convinces them to continue into Inde, but from this point on, he faces greater dangers and finally comes to the point where the encounter with the Bragmans gives him no choice but to turn around, marking that spot with a column. The inclusion of the Alexander episodes in *The Travels* must have evoked thoughts of such earlier versions of the story, and that would have further complicated the question of a western claim to the East while introducing the issue of the limits of divine commission to this text, especially when coupled with the Mandeville-author's account of the Great Khan's divine commission.⁵¹ Additionally,

⁵⁰ *Historia de Preliis: JI*, 43.

⁵¹ Although the Mandeville-author is clear about Christians' rightful claim to the whole of the Holy Land, including Egypt and other surrounding territories, the issue was far from settled in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. What should be the limits of Christendom's commission? What lands can be legitimately conquered from non-Christians? Should conquest be limited to those former Christian lands now "occupied" by heathens? Or is the whole earth under "occupation" awaiting liberation by crusading armies? These were questions of great importance in the Middle Ages, and there seems to have been no consensus on the issue. Thirteenth-century canon lawyer Hostiensis argued that infidels such as the Mongols were in "unjust possession" of their land; therefore, the use of force against them was justified. Cary J. Nederman, *Worlds of Difference: European Discourses of Toleration, c. 1100-c. 1550* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). 66. A couple of decades earlier, Sinibaldo dei Fieschi, who later became Innocent IV, argued that the Holy Land and other lands taken by Muslims from Christians could be conquered legitimately, but Muslims possessed other lands legitimately since all men

medieval stories of Alexander, the ruler of what was essentially seen as the last secular western empire, fault him with hubris. His early death and the subsequent partitioning of his empire proved that because of his earthly pride, all of his efforts in life were in vain. The Mandeville-author is not interested in such earthly gain and expansion that come from hubris. Instead, he is interested in spiritual hegemony.

The Mandeville-author thus provides one ruler as the rightful claimant to much of the East while also presenting his readers with a western ruler who goes beyond that which is rightfully his because of vanity and pride, and the text also includes an episode that unquestionably rules out any Christian claim to the East specifically because of the dangers of material gain. Journeying deep into Asia, Sir John arrives at the Vale Perillous, where “er oft tymes herd man tempestes and voices vggly and hidous,” and “þis vale es full of deuilles and all way has bene; and men saise in þat cuntree þat þare es

have the right to *dominium*, the right to property and lordship. James Muldoon, “Tolerance and Intolerance in the Medieval Canon Lawyers,” *Tolerance and Intolerance: Social Conflict in the Age of the Crusades*, ed. Michael Gervers & James M. Powell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001). 121. He stated that “God, who made the world and everyone in it, has so ordered matters that all men, believers and infidels alike, can legitimately possess land and property and can select their own rulers. Such ‘things were made for every rational creature’ and so ‘it is not lawful for the pope or for the faithful to take sovereignty or jurisdiction from infidels, because they hold without sin....’” James Muldoon, “The Nature of the Infidel: the Anthropology of the Canon Lawyers,” *Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination*, ed. Scott D. Westrem (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991). 118. However, James Muldoon sees this as actually opening the door to conquest: “It was the very rationality of all mankind that meant that every human being was subject to invasion by Christians acting under papal warrant.” Muldoon, “Nature of the Infidel,” 118. *The Chronicles of Matthew Paris*, on the other hand, complicate Christendom’s commission when on several occasions Matthew relates the words of the Sultan of Babylon: “A certain motive, however slight, urges Christians to covet the land which they call Holy; but what have they to do with Egypt?” Matthew Paris, *Matthew Paris’s English History From the Year 1235 to 1273*, tr. J.A. Giles (New York: AMS Press, 1968). Vol. 2, 375. Earlier, the Sultan offers to return any territory that once belonged to the Christians in the Holy Land, provided they return Damietta to the Saracens. Because of the “pride of the count of Artois,” this was rejected, and the Christians instead demand Alexandria. Matthew believes the demand was inappropriate: “Wherefore we believe that the Lord was offended; for the Christians crossed the sea for no other purpose than to gain the possession of Christ’s inheritance. The Saracens, conversing amongst themselves, said: ‘Wait, awhile, wait; this pride and avarice, which are especially hateful to Jesus Christ their God, will destroy them all;’ and so it turned out, as the following history will fully show.” Matthew, Vol. 2, 320. Although he presents this sentiment by placing the words in Saracen mouths, Matthew seems to introduce the question of whether Christians have any right to lands beyond the territories immediately surrounding Jerusalem such as Egypt.

ane entree to hell” (138). Many men, both Christian and otherwise, come to this valley for the gold and silver it holds, but these men never come back out of the valley for their greed (139). However, “gude Cristen men, þat er stable in þe faith, may ga in to þat valey withouten grete harme, if þai...blisse þam with þe taken of þe Crosse” (139). Sir John and some of his men enter the valley, careful not to touch the riches before them and making sure to be more devout than they had ever been before or after, but of the thirteen men who enter the valley, only nine emerge on the other side. Along the way, Sir John sees numerous bodies “withouten corrupcioun, and so fresch as þai had bene euen new deed,” and “many of þase bodys þat I sawe þare semed in clething of Cristen men,” having come “for couetise of gold and oþer iowels” (140). Like a mouth, this valley devours Christian men who come only for the material goods it contains. In a way, then, the East consumes Christian men who come to claim it or its riches. David Lawton points out that “there is a strong note of Christian weakness here which is altogether absent from Odoric’s account.”⁵² This is partly a result of the Mandeville-author wishing to further the call to reform, but even the strong Christians who make it through cannot take anything out with them. They simply cannot lay claim here, but the fact that Christian piety protects Sir John and his companions in the East further demonstrates the power of Christian spiritual hegemony and the dangers of earthly gain.

⁵² David Lawton, “The Surveying Subject and the ‘Whole World’ of Belief: Three Case Studies,” *New Medieval Literatures* 4, ed. Wendy Scase et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). 29. For Odoric’s version of the story, see Odoric of Pordenone, *The Journal of Friar Odoric in The Travels of Sir John Mandeville with three narratives in illustration of it: The Voyage of Johannes de Plano Carpini, The Journal of Friar William de Rubruquis, The Journal of Friar Odoric*, tr. A.W. Pollard (New York: Dover Publications, 1964). 358-359. Lawton states that the claim to the Holy Land “can be extended to ‘the whole world’” but that the dream of empire ultimately fails. However, this episode shows that even the dream cannot be extended to the entire earth. The Holy Land is clearly rightfully Christian territory, but the East is not characterized as a land for which Christians have any claim.

Ultimately, the Mandeville-author is not at all concerned with representing the East as the “right heritage” of Christians and works to legitimize Easterners’ claim to their lands and to stress the absence of a Christian claim. It may seem odd that the Mandeville-author is so at pains to assert the Christian claim to the Holy Land in opposition to the Jewish claim while not seeming to be concerned with the Tartar claim to large parts of the East. However, unlike Jews, the Tartars and other peoples of the East are represented as unthreatening to the world as he imagines it. Quite the opposite, the Mandeville-author employs the Khan’s respect and reverence for Christians (and the proto-Christian beliefs and practices of most if not all Asians) as signs of Christian spiritual hegemony in this part of the world. The Jewish claim that drives his account of the Holy Land is entirely absent in the East. Unlike Jews, the peoples who claim and rule the East do not frustrate his universalist project. Rather, they are easily appropriated to serve as evidence of Christian spiritual hegemony.

The Holy Land and the East

If the Mandeville-author is not concerned with a Christian claim to the East, then the question of why he chose to include accounts of the Holy Land and East in the same text remains. A rival claim to the Holy Land drives the first part of the text, and no such rivalry seems to drive the second part because the text does not exhibit the same kinds of anxiety or frustration with various Asians as it does with Jews. Greenblatt’s argument that there is a “powerful tension between the mobility that leads the pilgrim toward Jerusalem and the mobility that leads the traveler beyond the Holy Land” appears sound, but as I will demonstrate below, well before the Mandeville-author combined the matter

of the Holy Land with the matter of the East, medieval leaders, travelers, and writers saw Latin Christendom's affairs in both of these parts of the world as intimately linked, and the Mandeville-author exploited that interconnectedness by combining them in a single text for the first time. Ultimately, he exploits that interconnectedness and employs the abundant lands and virtuous proto-Christians of the East in order to demonstrate further Christianity's global spiritual hegemony and because the East as he imagines it provides him with even greater tools in his contest with the Jewish claim to the Holy Land.

The main Mongol armies appeared in the West in 1236-7,⁵³ and very soon after that in 1238, an envoy from the Assassins came to the king of England, proposing an alliance against the Mongols. With regard to this proposal, the Bishop of Winchester said to Henry III, "Let these dogs destroy one another and be utterly exterminated and then we shall see the universal Catholic Church founded on their ruins and there will be one fold and one shepherd."⁵⁴ Later in 1257, the Mongols invaded the Near East, destroying Assassin strongholds which had been a menace to Christian plans in the Holy Land, and in 1258 Baghdad and the Abbasid Caliphate fell to the Mongols.⁵⁵ Christopher Dawson points to Edward I who "seems to have realized the importance of the Mongol alliance

⁵³ Even before the Mongol invasions of 1236-7, stories of Genghis Khan made their way west, and almost immediately, "Genghis Khan, or rather a garbled version of him, became King David of the Indians commonly called, as James of Vitry wrote to the pope, Prester John. This figure of legend, the Christian priest king who combated Islam from the east as the crusaders did from the west, had haunted western imagination since the mid-twelfth century, when stories of Nestorian Christians in the Far East and great victories over Muslims in the Eurasian steppes first reached western Europeans." Tyerman, 641.

⁵⁴ Matthew, Vol. I, 132. For Matthew's account of the proposed alliance, see Vol. 1, 131-132.

⁵⁵ Mongol invasions of the Near East in the 1250s disrupted trade routes, and "the consequent economic decline of Syria" caused a decline in "mainland Outremer's commercial function as well as profits...." Tyerman, 715. Although this new force from Asia did not directly attack Latin Christians in the Holy Land, their activities in Mesopotamia weakened crusaders in the face of the new Mamluk sultanate of Egypt. Even before the Mongol invasions of the 1250s, their activities in central Asia drove a Turkic group called the Khwarazmians out of the steppes of Asia and into Palestine where they allied with Sultan al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt against the Franks. This alliance eventually led to the end of Christian rule in Jerusalem. See Tyerman, 770-771.

[against the Muslims], and so long as he lived there was no cessation in the negotiations between the Mongols and the West.”⁵⁶ Edward even went so far as to set up a joint campaign, but civil war among the Mongols left him without the help he needed. Pope Innocent IV also seems to have thought of these two matters as linked since in June 1245, he called a council in Lyon to discuss both the Mongol threat and the recent loss of Jerusalem in 1244.⁵⁷ An alliance was also pursued by the Mongols themselves, who sent envoys in 1274 to the Council of Lyons in which the Act of Union between the Eastern and Western Churches took place. In 1291, the Mongols sent another proposal for a joint campaign against the Muslims, this time even offering provisions and 20,000 horses. At the time, the West was divided over the issue of Sicily. The last Christian stronghold in Palestine fell the same year, and from then on, the Mongols “were gradually absorbed by the environment of Moslem culture.”⁵⁸ From the very first appearance of Mongol armies in Europe, Latin Christians saw the matter of the Holy Land and the matter of the East as inseparable, and after the Mongols came under the influence of Islam and thus were no longer the potential allies they once were, the crucial relationship between the two matters was clearer than ever.

Travel accounts from thirteenth-century missionaries to Asia reveal that they too saw the two matters as intertwined. John of Plano Carpini’s text describes several Tartar

⁵⁶ Christopher Dawson, “Introduction,” *Mission to Asia*, ed. Christopher Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). xxvii. The only remaining Muslim power in the region, the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt, seems to have feared the possibility of a Latin Christian-Mongol alliance. Tyerman suggests that the Mamluks became increasingly aggressive toward the Franks because they wanted to eradicate potential Mongol allies in the region. Tyerman, 722.

⁵⁷ See J.R.S. Phillips, *The Medieval Expansion of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). 73. Innocent IV sent at least three missions with the purpose of contacting the Mongols and assessing their strength, but unlike Edward I, he seems to have had different ideas regarding alliances, for he hoped those missions would help build a coalition of eastern Christians and even Muslims against the Mongols. See Tyerman, 785.

⁵⁸ Dawson, xxxi.

campaigns against the Saracens,⁵⁹ and the Khan's reply letter to the pope must be translated into "Saracenic."⁶⁰ Throughout William of Rubruck's account, the Saracens are a constant uncomfortable presence, whether among the crowds of commoners or even at the court of the Khan himself where they exercise power and influence in an effort to undermine Christian missionary and diplomatic activities there.⁶¹ Even as far away as the Khan's court, the matter of Saracens and thus the Holy Land seems to be unavoidable. Dealing with the Mongols means dealing with Saracens, and dealing with Saracens means dealing with Mongols.

Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* makes similar connections when he tells of Gregory X, who "made a counsaile at Londoun for profit of þe Holy Lond, for he caste to wende þider in his owne persone. In þat counseile were massangers of þe Tartars and of þe Grekes: þe Grees byheet þat þey wolde come aȝen to þe myte of holy cherche."⁶² Here the matter of the Holy Land and the schism between the Greek and Latin churches are discussed in the presence of Tartar envoys as far west as London. Higden says nothing about their role there, but it is clear that they are somehow embroiled in the two issues raised at the council. *The Chronicles of Matthew Paris* are much more direct in illustrating the inseparability of the problems of the Holy Land and the East.

⁵⁹ See John of Plano Carpini, *History of the Mongols in Mission to Asia*, ed. Christopher Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). 22, 28, 32, 59. Dawson's collection of travel accounts to Asia uses both John of Plano Carpini's *History of the Mongols* and the *Journey* of William of Rubruck (quoted later in this chapter) translated by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey in his edition.

⁶⁰ John of Plano Carpini, 56, 67.

⁶¹ See, for example, William of Rubruck, *The Journey of William of Rubruck in Mission to Asia*, ed. Christopher Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). 111, 112, 118, 121 (Turks ask the Tartars for help against the French, especially since the Turks are originally from these lands), 124 (Saracens are given preferential treatment at court), 126 ("I wonder what devil carried the law of Mohammed there"), 134, 137, 138, 141, 144, 158, 169, 177, 184-185 (Assassins), 186, 187, 189-194 (religious debate between William, Nestorians, Saracens, and pagans), 202 (envoys from various sultans to Khan's court), 209.

⁶² Higden, Vol. VIII, 257.

Matthew includes an account of the Saracen envoy sent to propose an alliance against the Tartars in 1238, and he also tells of a later alliance proposal as well.⁶³ At one point, he describes a battle in which the Tartars were temporarily defeated and forced to retreat at the hands of “five Christian and Saracen kings, who were united for this purpose by the grace of God’s holy spirit.”⁶⁴ Throughout the *Chronicles*, it seems the Tartars cannot be mentioned without the Saracens in the same breath.⁶⁵ Matthew also includes a letter from Emperor Frederick who admonishes the pope for calling a crusade against him instead of directing it “against the tyranny of the Tartars, or the Saracens invading and occupying the Holy Land.”⁶⁶ As in Higden, this text mentions another council in which the two matters are discussed “that assistance may be speedily afforded to the Holy Land in its deplorable peril, and to the afflicted Roman empire, and that we may find relief against the Tartars...”⁶⁷ Later, the French king calls his nobles together both because of his anxiety about having assumed the cross and because of having “received an order from the king of the Tartars to become subject to him.”⁶⁸ Another report comes stating that the Tartar king has converted to Christianity. He then encourages Christians to carry on their war against the Saracens.⁶⁹ The inseparability of the East and the Holy Land becomes crystal clear when

in the midst of this general storm which disturbed the world...the hostility and tyranny of the Tartars and Saracens raged in the East, and a great many nations were compelled to pay tribute to the Tartars, as well as

⁶³ Matthew, Vol. I, 131-132, 313.

⁶⁴ Matthew, Vol. I, 253.

⁶⁵ See Matthew, Vol. I, 337, Vol. II, 66.

⁶⁶ Matthew, Vol. I, 345.

⁶⁷ Matthew, Vol. II, 49.

⁶⁸ Matthew, Vol. II, 214.

⁶⁹ Matthew, Vol. II, 319.

soldans, emirs, princes, and caliphs. Wishing to reduce the Christians to the same condition, the Tartars called on the Templars and Hospitallers, and other inhabitants of the Holy Land, to submit to their insupportable yoke.⁷⁰

From the moment the Tartars enter Matthew's text, they become entangled with the issues of the Saracens, the Holy Land, and crusade. They are the two biggest "external" threats to Christendom, and he seems to see them as interconnected. Any prospect of defeating one means allying with the other. Any venture into the Holy Land means dealing with the Tartars in addition to the expected foe: the Saracens.

The Travels, then, follows a long line of texts in which the fortunes of Latin Christendom, the Saracens, and the Mongols are inherently linked. Readers of the Mandeville-author's account would be reading this text in the context of those previous texts. The previous century's diplomatic efforts would have also contributed to this context, and the Mandeville-author builds on that foundation by reminding his readers of that relationship throughout his text. He does not, for example, wait until he has finished describing the Holy Land before introducing the Khan or Prester John. Readers first encounter these rulers shortly after they encounter the Sultan:

Fra þat Babilon þer þe Sowdan dwelles for to passe north este to þe grete Babilon er xl. Day iourneez thurgh deserte. And þat Babilon es no3t in þe subieccioun of þe Sowdan, bot within þe lordschippe of þe kyng of Perse. And it es halden of þe grete Caan, þe whilke es a grete emperour, 3a þe grettest of þe werld, for he es lord of þe grete Ile of Cathay and of many oþer cuntreez, and of a grete party of Inde. His land marchez with Prestre Iohn land.... He es gretter and myghtier þan þe Sowdan withouten comparison. Of his grete state and magestee I think to speke afterwarde, when I come þerto. (21-22)

This preview of what is to come helps remind readers that while the Sultan may be great and powerful, the shadow of the even more powerful Khan looms overhead. The

⁷⁰ Matthew, Vol. III, 250-251.

connection between these rulers continues to resurface throughout the text, especially when reminding readers of the Great Khan's power: "Vnder þe firmament es noȝt so grete a lorde ne sa riche ne na so myghty as es þe Grete Caan of Tartre. Noȝt Prestre Iohn þat es emperour of Inde þe less and þe mare, ne þe sowdan of Babiloyn, ne þe emperoure of Pers, ne nan oþer may be made comparisoun off till him" (108). However, even before the Mandeville-author introduces the Khan earlier in the text, a brief statement connects the fortunes of the Holy Land and the East. As he presents the history of civil wars that led to the current Sultan's rule in Egypt, the author tells his readers that at one point, a man named Guytoga, also known as Melechadell, deposed one of the sultans and took the throne of Egypt, but "he was ane aliene, þat es at say a Tartarene," so he too was deposed (19). No more is said of this Tartar who managed to rule Egypt for a time, and it is two printed pages later that the Khan makes his first appearance in *The Travels*. Clearly, the East is bound in the affairs of the Holy Land.

When the Mandeville-author finally comes to his account of the Khan and Tartar history, he points out that one of his ancestors, Mango Caan

was baptized and worthed till a worthy and a deuote Cristen man and a gude. He graunt his lettres of perpetuele peess till all Cristen men for to wonne in his rewme, and sent his broþer Halaon with a grete oste for to wyne þe Haly Land oute of þe Sarzenes handes in to Cristen mennez handes, and for to destroy Machomete lawe, and also for to take Calaphes of Baldac, þat was emperour and lord ower þe Sarzenes. (112-113)

He succeeds and delivers the Holy Land into Christian hands, having a direct influence on the fate of the Holy Land. The victory over the Saracens may have been temporary, but like writers in the century before him, the Mandeville-author clearly understood that

what happens in the East can have a profound effect on what happens in the Holy Land.⁷¹

The same is true in the other direction. In fact, as would be expected from a text concerned with demonstrating Christianity's spiritual hegemony, the Holy Land has an even greater effect on the East, Prester John's conversion and the genesis of his name being one of the most powerful examples of that effect. The Christian ruler of Inde traces his name and faith to an ancestor who converted as the direct result of an event in the Holy Land:

Now will I tell 3ow why þis emperour es called Prestre Iohn. Þare was sum time ane emperour in þat land whilk was a noble prince and a do3ty and he had many knyghtez with him þat ware cristned, as he hase þat now es emperour þare. And on a tyme þis emperour thocht þat he wald see þe maner of þe seruice in Cristen kirkez. And þat tyme occupied Cristen men many cuntreez toward þase partiez, þat es to say, Turkey, Surry, Tartary, Ierusalem, Palestyne, Araby, Halope and all Egipte. And so it fell þat þis emperour and a Cristen knyght with him come in to a kirke in Egipte apon a Seterday in Whisson woke, when þe bischope gaffe ordres. And þe emperour beheld þe seruice and þe maner of þe makyng of prestez, how sollempnely and how bisily and deuotely þai ware ordaynd. And þan he asked þe knyght þat was with him what maner of folk þase ware þat ware so ordaynd and what þai hight; and he said þat þai ware prestez. (147-148)

The emperor then decides to convert and be called by the name of the first priest to walk through the door, thus the name Prester John. The presence of Christians in his court leads to his wish to see church services, and he travels to the Holy Land to do so. While there, he is so moved that he converts, in effect creating the Christian realm in which the

⁷¹ Like his predecessors, the Mandeville-author also includes an account of the Assassins. After having described the manmade Paradise in which young men are brainwashed and sent to assassinate various leaders, he tells his reader that "when lordes and riche men of þe cuntree persayued þis malice and wyle of him, þis Catolonabes, þai gadred þam togyder and assailed þis castell, and slew Catolonabes, and destruyd all his ricchess and faire thinges þat ware in his Paradys, and kest doune his castell..." *Buke*, 138. Unlike previous texts, *The Travels* does not say that the Mongols were the ones to destroy this castle, but the Mandeville-author places the stronghold on an island in Prester John's realm, so we know that it is his people that attack and put an end to the Assassins. Regardless of whether the assault was by Mongols or others, it is the people of the East who relieve Latin Christendom from a problem that has been frustrating their interests in the Holy Land.

Patriarch of St. Thomas acts like a pope. While the various examples I have discussed above demonstrate the interconnectedness of the Holy Land and East in political terms, Prester John's conversion is both a political and spiritual matter. As a Christian ruler, he is a potential ally in the East, but more importantly, the story of his conversion bolsters the Holy Land as a spiritual center which exerts a strong spiritual pull on the East. He converts because of his experiences there, and the form of Christianity practiced in his realm comes from Thomas who traveled East from Jerusalem.

While *The Travels* is not the first text to portray the fortunes of Latin Christendom, the East, and the Holy Land as inseparable, its contribution to this issue and its power come from being the first to offer an account of both the Holy Land and the East in the same text. With a full account of the Holy Land in a text that also includes a full account of the East, a reader has a better chance of seeing the inseparable nature of the two matters. More importantly, combining descriptions of the two bolsters the centrality of Jerusalem by demonstrating its importance to political issues involving the East and its spiritual hegemony over not only Latin Christendom and the Holy Land but also the whole of Asia. To return to Greenblatt, *The Travels*' move into the East does not abandon "the dream of a sacred center upon which all routes converge."⁷² On the contrary, that move solidifies the center's importance on a global scale. The two matters cannot be separated, nor can the East be seen as the "rim," especially when that East is so bound up in the affairs of the center and seems caught in its spiritual pull. If the Mandeville-author is to succeed in demonstrating the spiritual hegemony of Christianity,

⁷² Greenblatt, 29.

his project must be global in nature because of the intricate relationship of the Holy Land and East.

The Un-Cursed East and the Un-Chosen Jews

The inclusion of the East in the Mandeville-author's project is also driven by his concern with Jewish rival claims to the Holy Land and allows him to use the land and peoples of the East to further the Christian cause in the contest with the true enemy in *The Travels*. For example, Grady suggests that the Khan's genealogy presents him as an echo of Moses who "upon his rise embarks on a legislative campaign equal parts Pentateuch and *comitatus*."⁷³ As represented by the Mandeville-author, like Moses, Chaanguys is chosen by God, and once the Tartar tribes accept him as their leader, his first act is the creation of a code of law in which the Tartars must be obedient to God and are required to slay their eldest sons (110-111), making the tribal leaders into echoes of Abraham while also echoing the slaying of Egypt's firstborn in the Book of Exodus. The new laws also establish a kind of feudal system in which the Khan's vassals hold their property through his grace and all capable men are required to take up arms in his service. The Tartars thus become a chosen people whose political and military systems are similar to those of Latin Christians, making them more palatable to the Mandeville-author and his readers than landless Jews who have no political or military systems at all. Chaanguys' military campaign to build his empire even includes an "inverted Exodus" in which the White Knight appears before him and states God's will that he ride to Mount Belyan and conquer the lands beyond it. There is no passage to these lands, but the

⁷³ Grady, *Righteous*, 61.

White Knight tells Chaanguys to go there and face east in worship of God. He does, and “þe see, þat before bette apon þe mount, withdrewe it and schewed a faire way of ix. Fote brade betwene þe mount and þe see” (111-112). Like the parting of the Red Sea, the sea against the mountain recedes and allows the Tartar army to pass and conquer the lands beyond it. The story thus contributes “to the *Travels*’ ongoing displacement of the Jews”⁷⁴ as it replaces them with a chosen people more to the Mandeville-author’s liking and one ruled by a leader who pays reverence to Christians in his realm. In the Mandeville-author’s hands, not only has Christianity superseded Judaism, but Jews have also been supplanted by a people who fall under Christianity’s spiritual hegemony. In effect, they have been “unchosen.” It is therefore quite significant that the story of Gog and Magog and the Ten Tribes comes after the history of the Tartars.⁷⁵ There, the Jewish tribes cornered by Alexander and imprisoned by God stand as evidence that they have lost their special status.

In contrast to the formerly privileged Jews who have fallen from God’s grace, the Tartars and the rest of the peoples of the East are represented as having overcome their cursed nature. Before his account of Tartar history, the Mandeville-author relates the well-known story of Noah’s son Ham, who saw his drunken father naked and mocked him while his two brothers covered their father without looking at him. As a result, Noah cursed Ham. These three sons then divided the earth among themselves, and all the peoples of the earth descend from these three. According to the Mandeville-author, Ham was the mightiest and richest, and his descendants outnumber those of his brothers:

⁷⁴ Grady, *Righteous*, 62.

⁷⁵ For my discussion of the Jewish forces of Gog and Magog, see chapter two.

Of þe kynreden also of Cham come þe payenes and diuerse maner of men of þe iles of Inde. And for he þis Cham was so myghty þat na man myght agayne stand him, he gert call himself Goddes sonne and lorde of all þe world. And þerfore saise sum men þat þe emperour of Tartare gert call him Cham, for he es halden þe maste excellent emperour of þe werld and occupies þe same land þat he was lorde off. (109)

Sir John attributes this story to the Saracens and Samaritans, stating that after having traveled to Inde, he no longer believes it to be true. However, he does believe that “þe folk of Tartre come of þe kynreden of Cham, and all þase þat dwellez in Asy þe mare” (109-110).⁷⁶ The Asians’ ancestry would hardly be significant if they had descended from Shem or Japheth; however, a Hamitic ancestry indicates that Asians carry the Curse of Ham, which would suggest exclusion from the community of God.

The Hamitic Curse really begins with Cain. This link is especially easy to make in medieval texts like *The Travels* in which “Ham” is spelled “Cham.”⁷⁷ The two names could be easily confused in several languages:

Ham’s name (spelled “Cham” in the Middle Ages) was easy to confuse with Cain in medieval orthography, since the three minims of the m could be read as an i and an n. Confusion occurred widely in English, French, and Latin spellings. Ranulf Higden in the *Polychronicon* was alluding to

⁷⁶ Earlier in the same paragraph, Africa is assigned to Ham and Asia to Shem; however, this is a change made decades after the text was composed. According to Benjamin Braude, sometime in the early to mid-fifteenth century, scribes “crossed out the original names and substituted what has become conventional wisdom.” He also found that until the printed texts of the nineteenth century, no printed or manuscript version included the change. The manuscript originally assigned Asia to Ham, so there is no contradiction between the division of the earth among Noah’s sons and the story of the Khan’s name. After Warner’s edition of the Egerton version, the substitution appeared in the two other editions of *The Travels*: Malcom Letts’ *Mandeville’s Travels* (1953) and C.W.R.D. Moseley’s *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (1983). See Benjamin Braude, “The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser. 54.1 (1997): 103-142.

⁷⁷ See Brian Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003). 97. Murdoch gives some good examples of the almost interchangeable names: “Ham, is often rendered in medieval texts in the Vulgate form ‘Cham’, which overlaps with medieval spellings of the name ‘Cain’. The link is important. Noah’s son is called Kaym or even Kayn in a German *Historienbibel*, and he is described in the Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi* and the Irish Nennius and elsewhere as the heir and natural successor to Cain, even though he is precisely not from Cain’s direct line. If Cain’s kin perish in the flood, a post-deluvian substitute is required.”

this familiar identification when he spoke of “Cain, who is commonly called Cham.”⁷⁸

In addition to the almost indistinguishable names, the stories of both Cain’s and Ham’s kin parallel each other in ways that make Ham Cain’s successor. After Cain kills his brother, God casts Cain out of his community, and Cain “went away from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.”⁷⁹ One of the first things Cain does is build a city.⁸⁰ This is especially significant since the cities of the East in *The Travels* – and especially the Khan’s cities – are larger and more extravagant than any city found in the Holy Land. This is truly a land of great and almost unimaginable cities, just as one would expect from those carrying the curse that began with Cain. The story of Cain is one that medieval texts expand upon and further develop in order to fill in the gaps in the story. Higden’s text provides some good examples of those expansions. For example, Cain “ordeyned merkes [and] boundes of fildes and of londes, and bulde a citee and walled hit, for he dredde ful sore hem þat he hadde i-greued.”⁸¹ Here more detail is provided in order to explain why Cain might build a city. He fears for his life, so he is sure to wall it as well. Cain and his kin mark boundaries and build walls in order to divide the land, and they even divide their flocks by marking them “to knowe oon from anoþer, and departide kydes from lambren, and 3onge from olde.”⁸² *The Travels’* East is also marked with boundaries, as the Mandeville-author constantly points out where one

⁷⁸ John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981). 100.

⁷⁹ Genesis 4:16. I use *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha*, ed. Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁸⁰ Genesis 4:17.

⁸¹ Higden, Vol. II, 227. I am using Trevisa’s translation from the same volume.

⁸² Higden, Vol. II, 227-228.

ruler's land borders another's, and he is always sure to describe the immense walls surrounding these large cities.⁸³ It is also the mixing of Cain's kin with Seth's (Adam and Eve's third son, the one replacing Abel) that produces giants and monstrous races: "Seth his sones took Caym his douztres, and gete geantis."⁸⁴ Their evil descendants are why the flood became necessary, and although they are wiped out by that flood, their legacy and curse are continued in Ham when he mocks his father and is cursed. In his study of medieval expansions of the Bible, Brian Murdoch points out the parallelism between the stories of Cain and Ham: "An heroic escape by the just is followed immediately by a new breakdown in society, almost before it has started up again."⁸⁵ Ham's curse manifests itself in a new builder of cities and the ruler of the first post-flood empire: Nimrod. The Mandeville-author points this out:

Of ane of his [Ham's] sonnez þat hight Chus come Nemproth þe geant,
þe whilk was þe first king þat euer was; and he began to bigg þe toure of
Babilon. In whas tyme þer come many fendez in liknes of men and lay by
wymmen of his kynreden and gatt on þam geantz and oþer monstres of
horrible figure.... (109)

Here the parallelism between the kin of Cain and Ham is clear, and it seems significant that the Khan and all Asians should be of the same line as the first king, especially since the most powerful king of the world lives and rules in the East. With this in mind, the point near the beginning of the text when it differentiates between the Babylon of the Sultan in Egypt and the Babylon of Nimrod takes on new significance as well, for the Mandeville-author is quick to mention that the Biblical Babylon "es halden of þe grete

⁸³ For descriptions of these walls that exceed the dimensions of the walls of the Holy Land, see *Buke*, 102, 103, 105.

⁸⁴ Higden, Vol. II, 231.

⁸⁵ Murdoch, 96.

Caan, þe whilke es a grete emperour, 3a þe grettest of þe werld” (21).⁸⁶ This city should indeed belong to Ham’s descendant. Like Nimrod, he is a powerful king, and he rules cities that are part of the city-building tradition established by Cain. By linking the Khan and the Asian peoples to Ham, the text ultimately links them to Cain and his expulsion from the community of God.

However, as Grady points out, the Khan does not seem cursed at all: “The Great Chan was not cursed but blessed, or at least commissioned by God.”⁸⁷ Why include any discussion of Asians’ Hamitic descent in a text that works to represent the peoples of the East as proto-Christians in a world in which Christian spiritual hegemony extends into Asia? I suggest that the discussion of Hamitic descent actually demonstrates how far Tartars and other Easterners have come. Unlike Jews who are represented as having fallen from God’s favor because of their rejection of Christ and their inability to follow the law as given them by Moses,⁸⁸ the peoples of the East have overcome a curse going back to Ham and even Cain, presumably because of their virtue and their embrace of Christian values. Although most Easterners are not Christians, they have not rejected Christ, nor do they fail to live by their various laws as Jews fail to live by theirs

⁸⁶ The term “emperor” appears quite frequently in conjunction with the rulers of the East. The Mandeville-author repeatedly tells his readers that the Khan is the greatest emperor in the world. Prester John is the emperor of Inde, and Persia’s ruler is also an emperor. See *Buke*, 21-22, 108. The caliph overthrown by the Tartars was “emperour and lord ower þe Sarzenes,” and the term “emperor” appears five times in the few sentences devoted to explaining how Prester John got his name. *Buke*, 112-113, 147-148. It appears again in the Mandeville-author’s discussion of the Khan’s genealogy. *Buke*, 109. While the author mentions Constantine, Justinian, and the current Greek emperor, the frequency with which he employs the term “emperor” with eastern rulers in addition to specifically pointing to Asians’ descent from the mighty Ham and Nimrod (the first king) indicate that empire and earthly gain are eastern rather than Latin Christian pursuits. Empire is a thing of the past and not the future for Latin Christendom.

⁸⁷ Grady, *Righteous*, 61. Although Grady seems to pull back from calling the Khan “blessed” to being commissioned by God, in the next section of this chapter, I suggest that he does indeed come across as blessed based on the Mandeville-author’s representation of the East.

⁸⁸ See my discussion of Jewish failures in chapter two.

(according to the Mandeville-author). Rather, as proto-Christians, many of them have some knowledge and foreknowledge of Christ, and unlike the landless Jews, most of whom are confined behind the Gates of Alexander, the peoples of the East live in vast empires with great cities and abundant lands.⁸⁹ Their land stands as evidence of their blessed state and as evidence of Judaism's failure.

The Blessings of a Reimagined East

By expanding his text into an account of both the Holy Land and East, the Mandeville-author is able to both demonstrate a global Christian hegemony and use the peoples and lands of the East – as he imagines them – against Jews. I emphasize that this is the East as he imagines it because the East found in *The Travels* is unlike the East found in the texts written by missionaries who traveled there in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.⁹⁰ Those missionaries represent the East as barren and almost cursed. In order to be of any use in his project, the Mandeville-author must remake this world into an abundant place as evidence of the blessings offered to those who live virtuously under Christian spiritual hegemony as opposed to Jews who frustrate that hegemony and remain completely landless. Greenblatt's reading of the second part of *The Travels* as exhibiting a "powerful tension between the mobility that leads the pilgrim toward Jerusalem and the mobility that leads the traveler beyond the Holy Land" does not take into account this inherited East or the way the text remakes that East and employs it

⁸⁹ The peoples of the East are tied to the city-building tradition of Cain, Ham, and Nimrod, and having overcome the curse associated with their ancestors, they seem to reap the benefits of that city-builder ancestry.

⁹⁰ These include John of Plano Carpini, William of Rubruck, John of Monte Corvino, Peregrine of Castello, Andrew of Perugia, and Odoric of Pordenone.

in service of the same goals as the account of the Holy Land. As will become clear below, overlooking both the inherited and reimagined East greatly affects how one understands its place in the Mandeville-author's project.

In 1245, Pope Innocent IV sent one of the first missions to Asia and chose two Franciscans, Lawrence of Portugal and John of Plano Carpini for the job. The mission resulted in John's⁹¹ report, the *History of the Mongols*, and it became one of the most widely known accounts of the Mongols thanks to its inclusion in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*. From the onset of John's account, the world of his East presents danger more than anything else. Having been ordered by the Pope,

we chose first to make our way to the Tartars, for we were afraid that in the near future the Church of God would be threatened by danger from that quarter. And although we feared we might be killed by the Tartars or other people, or imprisoned for life, or afflicted with hunger, thirst, cold, heat, injuries and exceeding great trials almost beyond our powers of endurance – all of which, with the exception of death and imprisonment for life, fell our lot in various ways in a much greater degree than we had conceived beforehand....⁹²

This is not a safe place for these friars, and John also extends the danger to the heart of Latin Christendom. Having already mentioned the threat to "the Church of God," he says that he writes about the Mongols so that "if by chance they made a sudden attack they would not find the Christian people unprepared (as happened on another occasion on account of the sins of men) and inflict a greater defeat on them."⁹³ The danger is immense, and it gets worse: "What they may ultimately do we do not know, but there are some who are of the opinion that, if they became sole rulers, which God forbid, they

⁹¹ In order to avoid confusion, in this section I refer to John of Plano Carpini as "John" while continuing to refer to the figure in *The Travels* as "Sir John."

⁹² John of Plano Carpini, 3.

⁹³ John of Plano Carpini, 3.

would make everyone bow down to that idol.”⁹⁴ Later, the Khan wishes to send ambassadors back with the friars, but they refuse: “In the first place we were afraid lest, seeing the dissensions and wars which are rife among us, they might be all the more encouraged to attack us. The second reason was that we feared that their real purpose might be to spy out our land.”⁹⁵ The motivating factor here is fear. Fear compels John to provide what is basically intelligence information to the pope, and fear keeps him from accepting the task of escorting the Khan’s envoys to the pope lest those envoys provide intelligence to their own leader. This is a friar who is always looking over his shoulder.

While the foreigners in John’s text present a threat to both Latin Christendom and his person, the land is also characterized as inhospitable and barren. Out of all the land held by the Mongols, “not one hundredth part of the land is fertile, nor can it bear fruit unless irrigated by running water, and brooks and streams are few there, and rivers very rare.... Although the land is otherwise barren, it is fit for grazing cattle; even if not very good, at least sufficiently so.”⁹⁶ Along the way, the friars spend Lent with “nothing but millet with water and salt, and it was the same on other fast days, and we had nothing to drink except snow melted in a kettle.”⁹⁷ Elsewhere, “there is great scarcity of water and but few people dwell there,” and another group of Christian travelers “died of thirst in the desert.”⁹⁸ Once John finally reaches the Khan, he and his companions endure “such hunger and thirst that we could scarcely keep alive, for the food provided for four was barely sufficient for one, moreover we were unable to find anything to buy, for the

⁹⁴ John of Plano Carpini, 10.

⁹⁵ John of Plano Carpini, 68.

⁹⁶ John of Plano Carpini, 5.

⁹⁷ John of Plano Carpini, 57-58.

⁹⁸ John of Plano Carpini, 58.

market was a very long way off.”⁹⁹ Perhaps the most striking feature of this landscape is the absence of civilization: “And so there are no towns or cities there with the exception of one which is said to be quite big and is called Caracarom. We however did not see it, but we were as near as half-a-day’s journey to it....”¹⁰⁰ This one city remains elusive. Its existence rests on “is said to be” since John does not see it himself. He never enters a city, and when he finally gets to the Khan, it is in a military camp. Otherwise, this land is barren, inhospitable, and dangerous.

This important text presents its readers with an East that seems distant and barren. Reading John’s report, one gets the sense that he goes to the Khan to deliver the pope’s bulls, gathers as much information about them as he can (especially their military and diplomatic strategies), and gets out of there as quickly as possible. This East continues to be the East characterized and proliferated in the accounts that follow John’s, and one of those accounts comes from William of Rubruck.

William’s mission began in 1253. His report to Louis IX reached Europe in 1255,¹⁰¹ and although William’s *Journey* did not enjoy the same popularity as John’s *History* (only five medieval manuscripts are known, and it seems that it had been practically forgotten except in England thanks to Roger Bacon’s account of William in his *Opus Majus*), in it we see the very same characterization of the East as an uninviting, hostile, and barren place, and so between John and William, we have two texts that can

⁹⁹ John of Plano Carpini, 66.

¹⁰⁰ John of Plano Carpini, 5.

¹⁰¹ Seven years earlier in 1248, Louis may have considered a French-Mongol alliance when he exchanged diplomatic missions with the Mongol ruler of Persia. Nothing came of the alliance, and he is said to have regretted entertaining the idea in retrospect. See Tyerman, 785-786.

give us a general sense of how the East was imagined in the century leading up to *The Travels*.

At the beginning of his journey, William provides an account of the abundant lands through which he travels on his way to Mongol territory. He leaves from Constantinople and comes to Soldaia on the Black Sea. Here, he says,

All the merchants coming from Turkey and wishing to go to northern lands make their way thither, and similarly those coming from Russia and northern territories who wish to cross to Turkey. The latter bring squirrel and ermine and other valuable furs, while the former carry materials of cotton or bombax, silk stuff and sweet-smelling spices.¹⁰²

He also gives an account of Matrica, to which merchants from Constantinople send vessels “in order to buy dried fish, namely sturgeon and barbot and other fish in enormous quantities.”¹⁰³ These abundant places serve to contrast the lands through which he will later travel, where on one route, “we came across no water save in holes dug in hollows, with the exception of two little streams.”¹⁰⁴ At one point, William and his companions “were taken to a Saracen who did not provide us with any food,”¹⁰⁵ and as they progress farther into Mongol territory, “sometimes we went for two or three days without coming across a soul.... Of the twenty or thirty horses we always had the worst since we were foreigners....”¹⁰⁶ Even the horses have trouble getting to the next inhabited place: “For many a time the horses grew tired before we came across inhabitants.”¹⁰⁷ The barren land provides little, nor do William’s hosts: “Of hunger and

¹⁰² William, 90.

¹⁰³ William, 90.

¹⁰⁴ William, 112.

¹⁰⁵ William, 126.

¹⁰⁶ William, 132.

¹⁰⁷ William, 132.

thirst, cold and fatigue, there was no end, for they gave us no food except in the evening.”¹⁰⁸ When given food, “sometimes we had to eat meat half-cooked or almost raw, on account of the lack of fuel.”¹⁰⁹ It seems as if the hordes of the East have scoured the landscape: “In the plain I have mentioned there used to be large towns but they had, for the most part, all been destroyed, so that the Tartars could feed their flocks there....”¹¹⁰ Even worse, for William, the wilderness is not as bad as the few towns and villages he does come across: “As long as we were in the wilderness all went well with us, but the wretchedness I endured when we came to inhabited places I cannot express in words.”¹¹¹

As William prepares to leave the Khan’s camp, he spends what money he has left, “for nowhere from the time we entered Persia were we given a sufficient supply of necessities, not even among the Tartars, and there we seldom came across anything for sale.”¹¹² The return voyage presents similar problems, for “in two months and ten days we reached Baatu, during which time I never saw a town or the trace of any building other than tombs, with the exception of a village in which we did not eat bread,” and “at times we were in great peril, unable to find any inhabitants and with our food supplies getting low and our horses tired out.”¹¹³ Like John’s account of his own voyage, William’s letter to Louis paints a bleak picture of the East. Travelers from the West must endure great hardship there. Neither the land or the inhabitants provide for them, and all

¹⁰⁸ William, 133.

¹⁰⁹ William, 133.

¹¹⁰ William, 136.

¹¹¹ William, 113.

¹¹² William, 206.

¹¹³ William, 206, 207.

along, these Latin Christians feel helpless and at the mercy of their hosts for their survival.

Loneliness pervades other shorter accounts as well. John of Monte Corvino spent twelve years in a solitary mission to the Mongol Emperors in China. His second letter home serves as an example of the desperate need for companionship and help, as well as news, from his fellow Latin Christians. Although he finds many Nestorian Christians in the East, they are seen more as rivals than allies.¹¹⁴ The result is a man feeling abandoned and helpless: “And because I was alone and unable to leave the Emperor the Chaan, I could not visit that church, which is distant twenty days’ journey. Nevertheless if a few helpers and fellow workers were to come, I hope in God that all could be restored....”¹¹⁵ He pleads, “I beg for some brethren to come,” and yearns to hear of home:

For twelve years I have not received news of the Roman Curia, and of our Order and of the state of the West. Two years ago there came a certain physician, a surgeon from Lombardy, who infected these parts with incredible blasphemies about the Roman Curia and our Order and the state of the West, whereupon I greatly desire to know the truth.¹¹⁶

Even his sense of home has been shaken in the far off place, and he says that he lacks the texts necessary for his mission: “I beg...for an antiphonary, and the legends of the saints, a gradual and a noted psalter as an example, for I have nothing but a small breviary with shortened lessons and a small missal.” He continues, “If only I had an example, the

¹¹⁴ John of Plano Carpini and William also find and interact with Nestorian Christians, but like John of Monte Corvino, they see them as competitors who corrupt the faith.

¹¹⁵ John of Monte Corvino, *The Second Letter of John of Monte Corvino in Mission to Asia*, ed. Christopher Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). 226. Translated by Dawson.

¹¹⁶ John of Monte Corvino, *Second Letter*, 226.

aforesaid boys could make copies from it.¹¹⁷ John's¹¹⁸ next letter becomes more desperate. He feels completely cut off from his brethren:

The order of charity demands that those far away and above all those who travel for the law of Christ should at least be consoled by words and letters, when they cannot see one another face to face. I have thought that you may well wonder why you have never received letters from me who have dwelt so long in such a distant land. But I have wondered no less that never until this year have I received letters or good wishes from any Brother or friend, so that it seemed to me that no one remembered me.¹¹⁹

The desperation escalates from concern for the success of the mission (because of the lack of help) to a concern for being remembered at all.

Two other letters tell the same story. Peregrine of Castello, Bishop of Zaytun, writing in 1318 also wishes to be remembered: "For though I and my companions had acted like the prodigal son in flying to distant lands, as others have done, yet the Order like a good mother ought at least to remember the sons whom it has consigned to a strange exile."¹²⁰ He too needs help: "We stand in need of nothing so much as brethren, whom we long for. For Brother Gerard the Bishop is dead, and we other Friars cannot live long, and no others will come. The church will be left without baptism and without inhabitants."¹²¹ Peregrine's successor, Andrew of Perugia, gives perhaps the bleakest report: "I alone remain."¹²² These accounts portray the East as an inhospitable and lonely place in which Christians and therefore Christianity itself must fight to survive let

¹¹⁷ John of Monte Corvino, *Second Letter*, 227.

¹¹⁸ Not to be confused with Sir John or John of Plano Carpini.

¹¹⁹ John of Monte Corvino, *The Third Letter of John of Monte Corvino in Mission to Asia*, ed. Christopher Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). 228. Translated by Dawson.

¹²⁰ Peregrine of Castello, *The Letter of Brother Peregrine, Bishop of Zaytun in Mission to Asia*, ed. Christopher Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). 232. Translated by Dawson.

¹²¹ Peregrine of Castello, 234.

¹²² Andrew of Perugia, *The Letter of Andrew of Perugia in Mission to Asia*, ed. Christopher Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). 237. Translated by Dawson.

alone thrive. The barren, cityless land is not only geographically distant from Jerusalem but also spiritually, for these missionaries all communicate their lack of success. This East seems to be the cursed East one might expect to see in *The Travels* because of its discussion of Asians' Hamitic descent, for it looks as if it has been excluded from God's community.

Against this bleak East, however, the East of *The Travels* is an abundant and blessed place. In almost every land he describes, the Mandeville-author makes certain to inform his readers about the resources and goods therein as well as the magnificent cities that cover the terrain. A traveler to Cassach will find "a gude cite and a riche and plentifous of corne and oþer maner of vitales" (75), and near the two cities of Flabryne and 3inglauns grow long peppers, black pepper, white pepper, fruit, and lemons (84). Another island called Iaua holds "gynger, clowes, canell, nutemegs, macez, and many oþer" (94). In Inde, the kingdom of Mancy "es þe best land and maste lykand and plentifousest of all gudes þat es in þe power of man," and this land of Inde strikingly contrasts the empty East of earlier accounts: "þe land of Inde es þe maste plentifous land of folk þat es owerwhare" (101). This land provides everything necessary, for "þare er many oþer citees in þis land, and grete plentee of vitaile" (101). At the farthest reaches of the East, there are fewer merchants from the West, but although "marchands commez no3t so mykill" to Prester John's land, they "may fynd in þe ile of Cathay all þat [þai] hafe nede off, as spicery, clathes of gold, and oþer riche thinges" (133). Once in the Khan's land, the text continues its insistence on how plentiful the East is. In this enormous realm, "þer er in certayne placez comoun ostriez ordained, whare trauaillyng men may fynd all thinges þat er nedefull to þam in þaire iournee" (119).

Of course, the geography presented here is not correct, but the issue here is not whether the information presented is right. Instead, the important thing is the manner in which the text reimagines the East and presents it as something quite different from its predecessors' texts: an entire continent in which countless cities thrive on the goods and resources of the land as opposed to the desolate, lonely, and cityless East in previous accounts. These lands and the peoples living in them may have been cursed at some point, but that curse seems to have been overcome, and now the peoples of Asia enjoy the fruits of a blessed land.

Much of this abundance comes from the Mandeville-author's main source for his account of the East: Odoric of Pordenone's *Relatio* (1330). Odoric's account is filled with mention of supplies and goods in the East's many cities. In fact, like modern tourists to India, he raves about the affordability of those goods: "And in this country the people eat dates for the most part, whereof forty-two lb. are there sold for less than a groat."¹²³ Although the Mandeville-author uses Odoric's account in his description of the East, unlike Odoric, he specifically points to Easterners' virtue and proto-Christian beliefs and practices. He amplifies some parts of Odoric's text and omits information or commentary in others in order to show how Christian spiritual hegemony prevails in this part of the world and to show how the abundance of the East is implicitly the result of Easterners' status as virtuous proto-Christians.

The Mandeville-author is careful to avoid much of Odoric's negative commentaries on the practices and nature of its inhabitants. In place of Odoric's detestable and sinful portrait of these peoples, *The Travels'* account of them remakes

¹²³ Odoric, 329.

them into unthreatening figures and works to “naturalize” them (to use Campbell’s term). For example, Odoric writes of a particular ritual performed when a man’s father is sick, in which the son immediately goes to the local priest and demands to ask his god whether his father will recover or not. Once they ask the idol what will happen,

the devil answereth out of the foresaid idol: if he saith (he shall live) then returneth his son and ministreth things necessary unto him...but if he saith (he shall die) then goes the priest unto him, and putting a cloth into his mouth doth strangle him therewith: which being done, he cuts his dead body into morsels, and all his friends and kinsfolks are invited unto the eating therof, with music and all kinds of mirth: howbeit his bones are solemnly buried.¹²⁴

How does Odoric respond? He “found fault with that custom demanding reason thereof, one of them gave me his answer: This we do, lest worms should eat his flesh, for then his soul should suffer great torments, neither could I by any means remove them from that error.”¹²⁵ In comparison, the Mandeville-author’s account of the same ritual lacks the impulse to judgment. Having described the ceremony much in the same way as his source, his version begins to differ once having told his readers that they solemnly bury the bones:

And þus duse ilke frende till oþer; and, if it be swa þat any man þat es sibbe vnto þe deed withhald him fra þis feste and commez noȝt to þe sollempnitee, all þe kynreden will reprove him as of a notable blame, and neuer efter þat sall he be accountid amanges his frendez. Þai say þat þai ete þe flesch of þaire frende by cause þat wormes schuld noȝt ete him in þe erthe, and for to delyuer him of þe grete payne þat his saule suld suffer, if wormes gnew him in þe erthe. Þai say also, when þai fynd his flesch leen by cause of lang sekeness, þat it ware a grete synne to suffer him liffe langer or to suffer payne withouten cause. And, if þai fynd his flesch fatte, þai say þai hafe done wele þat þai hafe sleen him so sone and sent him to paradys and sufferd him noȝt overleng be tormentid in þis werld. (99)

¹²⁴ Odoric, 340.

¹²⁵ Odoric, 340.

The next sentence simply says that the king of this land is great and powerful. Not only does this version in *The Travels* omit the judgment found in its source, it also adds more emphasis to the humane motive behind the ritual. Also, unlike Odoric who demands a reason why they do this, Sir John asks no question. He simply says “þai say.” This is one of many changes that serve in reducing the potential horror and fear readers might associate with such information about the East.

In her chapter on *The Travels*, Campbell points to several other significant changes the Mandeville-author makes with regard to Odoric’s account.¹²⁶ For example, in Inde, the Mandeville-author describes a temple in which there “er grete ydoles, as þai were geantz, þe whilk þai gaffe mete and drink vnto on festiual days apon þis wyse. Þai bring before þam metes als hate as þai come fra þe fire, and þai late þe smok of þam ascend vp towards þe ydoles, and þan þai say þat þai er fedd wele ynoghe; and, when þai hafe done so, þe men of religioun etez the metez” (101). The next sentence leaves this ritual behind and tells of the “whyte hennes withouten fethers” in this country. In his version, Odoric cannot let the opportunity to criticize go: “And they said that their gods were refreshed with the smoke: howbeit, all the meat they conveyed away, eating it up their own selves, and so they fed their dumb gods with the smoke only.”¹²⁷ The tone is unmistakably derogatory, and perhaps Campbell puts it best when she calls this “gleeful hooting.”¹²⁸ Elsewhere, Odoric and the Mandeville-author speak of a monastery in which the monks feed a number of beasts found in their garden. The monks say that these beasts hold the souls of men, and the monks feed them because they are in their keeping

¹²⁶ See Campbell, *Witness*, 155-156.

¹²⁷ Odoric, 342.

¹²⁸ Campbell, *Witness*, 155.

(102).¹²⁹ Odoric's response is no less than what would be expected based on previous examples: "Then I began to refute that foul error: howbeit my speech did nothing at all prevail with him: for he could not be persuaded that any soul might remain without a body."¹³⁰ Sir John, on the other hand, has a more practical question: "I asked þe mounk þat delt þe almous, if it had noȝt bene better to hafe giffen þat relefe to pouer men þan to þase bestez, and he answered and said þat in þat cuntree es na pouer man..." (102-103). Not only does Sir John question "with far more humanity,"¹³¹ but the Mandeville-author also lets the monk have the last word. Although Campbell reads these examples as examples of diversity contributing to "a chapter suffused with a spirit of toleration and organized around the theme of plenitude,"¹³² they also serve as examples of the Mandeville-author's attempt at making this far land somehow less foreign.¹³³ As demonstrated in chapter one, *The Travels* emphasizes sameness to the point of remaking the non-Christians into proto-Christians who stand as evidence of Christianity's global spiritual hegemony. The Mandeville-author presents an East in which Christians will not encounter the vicious and demonized idolaters they would expect. Rather, the manner in which the inhabitants of Asia are remade actually implies that these once cursed peoples enjoy God's blessing in the form of a fruitful land.

In addition to making these pagans into proto-Christians whose abundant lands are evidence of the blessings of Christian spiritual hegemony, *The Travels* also presents

¹²⁹ Odoric, 345.

¹³⁰ Odoric, 345-346.

¹³¹ Campbell, *Witness*, 155.

¹³² Campbell, *Witness*, 156.

¹³³ Campbell reads these episodes in *The Travels* as instances of toleration. As I argue in chapter one, such episodes are better understood as instances of the text's universalism.

communities of fellow Christians in many of the lands of the East. John of Plano Carpini mentions several groups of Christians,¹³⁴ yet they pale in comparison to the number of Christians the Mandeville-author mentions. William of Rubruck and Odoric of Pordenone discuss the Christians they encounter on their journeys as well; however, in each of these texts the Christians of the East are presented as either ignorant or rivals and even threats to the Church. William, for example, comes across a group of Christians called Alans, who “were ignorant of everything regarding the Christian religion, with the sole exception of the name of Christ.”¹³⁵ When he comes across Nestorians and Armenians, he says that they “never put the figure of Christ on their crosses, which gives the impression that they entertain wrong ideas about the Passion or are ashamed of it.”¹³⁶ These Nestorians seem worse as William spends more time with them:

The Nestorians there know nothing. They say their offices and have their sacred books in Syrian, a language of which they are ignorant, and so they sing like our monks who know no grammar, and this accounts for the fact that they are completely corrupt. In the first place they are usurers and drunkards, and some of them who are with the Tartars even have several wives like them. When they enter a church they wash their lower members like the Saracens; they eat meat on Fridays and have feasting on that day after the Saracen custom.¹³⁷

At several points, William criticizes the Christian priests he comes across: “Those miserable priests never instructed her in the faith nor advised her to be baptized. [...] Nor do the priests rebuke them for any kind of sorcery [...] and the priests never teach them that such things are evil. On the contrary they themselves do and teach the like.”¹³⁸

¹³⁴ See John of Plano Carpini, 22, 66, 68.

¹³⁵ William, 110.

¹³⁶ William, 119.

¹³⁷ William, 144-145.

¹³⁸ William, 169.

What makes these Christians even more of a threat is the fact that some of them hold high offices with the Khan and various other Mongol leaders.¹³⁹

Odoric also keeps Christians (meaning Latin Christians) and Nestorian Christians in separate categories. In the city of Janzu, he tells his readers that there “is one receptacle for the friars of our order, and there be also three churches of the Nestorians.”¹⁴⁰ What should be perhaps the most sacred Christian shrine in the East, the church in which the body of St. Thomas the apostle lies, is instead a place defouled by idol worship and the presence of Nestorians: “The very same church being full of idols: and in fifteen houses round about the said church, there dwell certain priests who are Nestorians, that is to say, false, and bad Christians, and schismatics.”¹⁴¹

The Travels' East, on the other hand, is filled with Christians, and when the Mandeville-author mentions them, he rarely distinguishes between their practices and beliefs and those of the Latin Church. In Sarchie, “þare dwellez many gude Cristen men of gude beleue; and þare er many men of religioun, and namely of freres” (83), and “in Numidy dwellez Cristen men” (130).¹⁴² When he does distinguish between Christian groups, it comes not in his account of the East but in the account of the Holy Land instead. In addition, in the process of distinguishing between groups, he does not judge, for he cannot do so in order for the presence of Christians in these lands to work to his advantage when trying to demonstrate a unified global Christian hegemony. For example, many Christians live under Saracen rule,

¹³⁹ See William, 117, 150.

¹⁴⁰ Odoric, 346.

¹⁴¹ Odoric, 332.

¹⁴² See *Buke*, 101, 102 for further examples.

þe whilk vsez diuerse lawez and custommes after þe ordinaunce of þe rewmes whare þai dwell. Neuerþeles all er þai baptized and trowez in Godd, Fader and Sonne and Haly Gaste. Bot 3it þai faile in sum articles of oure beleue. Þare er sum Cristen men þat er called Iacobynes, þe whilk sayne Iame þe apostel conuerted, and sayn Iohn þe evaungelist baptized þam. And þai say and affermez þat confessioun suld be made all anely to Godd and no3t to man. (58-59)

There is no judgment here; the only thing the text does is point out differences, and the statement of those differences is not in Sir John's voice, for "þai say" is the key phrase here. He also allows their position to be supported by quoting numerous passages from the Psalter as well as "saynt Austyne and sayne Gregore and oþer doctours" (59). The text continues by listing other Christian groups as well:

Oþer Cristen men þer er þat er called Surrianez. Þai hald a lawe in meen betwene vs and þe Grekez. And þai late þaire berdes grow as þe Grekez dus, and makes þe sacrement of þe awter of soure bred as þe Grekez duse, and vsez þe lettres of Grewe, and schryfez þam as þe Iacobynes duse. Also þer er oþer þat er called Georgienes, whilk sayn George conuerted.... 3it es þare anoþer folk, þe whilk er called Cristen men of gyrdils, for þai er gyrdid as frere menoures er. Sum also er called Nestorienes, sum Arrianes, sum Nubienes, sum Gregorienes, sum Indynes, whilk er of Prestre Iohn land. *All er þai called Cristned men*; and many of þe articles of oure beleue þai hald and vsez, bot neuerþeles in many poyntes þay vary fra vs and fra oure faith. All þaire variaunce ware to mykill to tell. (59-60, emphasis added)

Again, there is no judgment, and the Mandeville-author emphasizes that these are all Christian men. If anything, this list provides the comfort of knowing that there are a great number of Christians out there. It is important to note that this list comes before moving into the farther East. Once there, the Mandeville-author only uses the term "Cristen," for the task of demonstrating Christian hegemony in a part of the world in which the Latin Church has had little success requires him to use any kind of Christian and even proto-Christian for the job.

Geraldine Heng points to an important change the Mandeville-author makes to Odoric with regard to the issue of the Christian presence in the East. At the court of the Khan, Odoric reports that “the physicians for the emperor’s body, were four hundred: the Christians also were eight in number, together with one Saracen.”¹⁴³ The Mandeville-author, however, states that “he hase many phisiciones, of whilk cc. er Cristen men, and xxⁱⁱ Sarzenes; bot he traistez maste in Cristen men” (117). This account drastically increases the presence of Christians at the Khan’s court, and unlike Odoric’s Khan, this one trusts Christians more than the others.¹⁴⁴ Heng writes that *The Travels* “creates new vistas in which a Christian might move...,”¹⁴⁵ so “the willed insertion of the familiar into the vastness of geographical and cultural alterity – indeed *invites* relocation: urges forth the directive to explore, expand, and even to settle.”¹⁴⁶ Heng’s ultimate argument here is that these lands might “be susceptible to contamination, might also be reconfigured from within, but this time by germinative pockets of familiar European culture in the form of (an unproblematic) Christianity.”¹⁴⁷ Like Higgins, she reads this text as one in which a global Christianity and Christian empire are envisioned. However, as I have argued, the Mandeville-author has no imperial ambitions, and he is not interested in providing practical advice for traveling and settling in the East. Nor is he interested in “reconfiguring from within,” for there is no need to reconfigure; *The Travels* gives its readers a world in which all peoples (except Jews) are already Christian or proto-

¹⁴³ Odoric, 350.

¹⁴⁴ Although scribal variants are the general rule in medieval manuscripts, this change is also present in the French text as well as the Cotton and Defective versions. Even if the change is scribal, the effect remains the same. This East contains a larger community of Christians than the East of previous accounts.

¹⁴⁵ Heng, 274.

¹⁴⁶ Heng, 275.

¹⁴⁷ Heng, 270.

Christian, and that seems to be enough for the author because it confirms Christianity's global reach despite Latin Christendom's political and military weaknesses.

The Mandeville-author's account of the East is doing much more than turn "toward diversity, difference, the bewildering variety of 'marvellous things.'"¹⁴⁸ Greenblatt fails to see how *The Travels* remakes that East, and if he does not address this reimagining, then he cannot ask why the change would be made at all. Clearly, this text does more than describe the marvels of the East. It uses that remade East to continue the universalist project started in its account of the Holy Land. The proto-Christians of the East and the blessings they enjoy confirm that Christian Jerusalem's spiritual pull has a global reach in *The Travels*.¹⁴⁹ In addition, the Mandeville-author's concern with Jews as rival claimants to the Holy Land continues in the account of the East, for it is after the account of Cathay and the Khan's court that the text circles back to the Caucasus where the truly cursed Jewish Tribes of Gog and Magog are enclosed behind the Gates of Alexander. The once chosen people of God are now imprisoned between the Holy Land and the East where oceans of Christians and proto-Christians surround them on all sides. Just as the rapid fire manner in which Christian sites and objects work to confirm the Christian claim to the Holy Land in opposition to the Jewish claim, the seemingly inexhaustible number of Christian and proto-Christian Asians stand as evidence of Jewish failure and the triumph of Christianity – of the supersession of Jews' claims to any land at all, let alone the Holy Land itself, and the confirmation of the Christian claim to the sites

¹⁴⁸ Greenblatt, 29.

¹⁴⁹ The blessings enjoyed by virtuous proto-Christians in the East also stand as proof of what would happen if Latin Christians reform themselves and become more devout. The East of *The Travels* has often been described as a self-critical mirror for the Mandeville-author's co-religionists. Understanding the extent to which the Mandeville-author remakes the East of his predecessors reveals how not only the peoples of Asia but also the abundant land itself act as mirrors for Latin Christendom. The blessed land is implicitly the reward for virtue and devotion to God.

in and around Jerusalem and to the souls of the inhabitants of the entire known world.

Thus, the move from an account of the Holy Land to an account of the East continues the contest between the Mandeville-author's vision of a spiritually dominant Christianity and the competing Jewish view of the world and claims to Jerusalem, to the Temple, to Scripture, and to God's grace.

The Travels has been described as a verbal *mappamundi*, and in the tradition of many *mappamundi* which represent the world as Christ's body with his head and limbs protruding from its edges, the Mandeville-author gives his readers a verbal description of a world where Christ's message is everywhere. The world of *The Travels* is indeed the body of Christ, but it is a body in which the Mandeville-author sees a Jewish cancer that requires him to address it even long after Sir John has left the Holy Land. In the end, this text is not about empire or the possession of land; it is about the Christian possession of history, of souls, and of scripture driven by the fear of the one group that frustrates and challenges the Mandeville-author's vision.

Coda: *The Travels* Continue

Ironically, a large part of the attraction of working on *The Travels* is its surprising generosity toward the peoples, faiths, and practices usually criticized and condemned by many medieval (and modern) Christian authors. However, scholars' impulse to praise the text as an example of medieval tolerance or cosmopolitanism has long masked the Mandeville-author's intolerant universalism.¹ Using terms like "tolerant" in regard to the Mandeville-author's treatment of non-Christians makes it difficult if not impossible to see the discursive violence and intolerance his universalism entails as he appropriates and rewrites the histories and identities of the peoples of the Holy Land and East.

Resisting the impulse to praise the text also allows for a more productive conversation regarding *The Travels*' unpalatable anti-Jewishness and the novelty of its fusion of the matters of the Holy Land and East in a single text. The Mandeville-author's anti-Jewishness and his "generosity" toward non-Christians are then two sides of the same coin rather than being in tension with one another, for that "generosity" represents the successful inclusion of non-Christians (however violently) within his vision of the world while his anti-Jewishness represents his inability to do the same with Jews. Both are symptoms of his universalism. Likewise, the form of the text can be seen as serving the author's universalist agenda as well as furthering his cause against the one group that will not easily fit into his image of a world in which Christian spiritual hegemony is secure.

In my reading of *The Travels*, my quarrel with scholars' terminology has significant consequences for some of the most troubling questions in Mandeville

¹ I include myself among such scholars. My initial fascination with *The Travels* was mostly due to my surprise with the Mandeville-author's treatment of non-Christians, but as I searched for a new way of understanding the text, I found myself troubled with terms like "tolerant" and "generous."

scholarship; however, I also suggest the need to complicate discussions surrounding all texts purporting to embrace the foreign and the strange by developing an understanding of power relations within those texts. Medieval texts such as *The Travels* can be of great use to modern scholars interested in the history of multiculturalism and the rhetoric of inclusion or acceptance, but as I argue throughout my dissertation, they are most useful if complicated and historicized rather than treated as simple examples of unexpected tolerance in an intolerant age.

My reading concentrates on one version of a text that survives in numerous manuscript traditions in almost every major European language. As I stated in my introduction, I chose to focus on one version of *The Travels* in order to avoid sacrificing depth for the sake of breadth. Broader studies such as Iain MacLeod Higgins' *Writing East* are profoundly important in developing an understanding of the multiplicity of *The Travels*; however, such studies must be accompanied by focused work on each incarnation of the text in order to ensure the continuation of work that takes all of the complexities of individual incarnations into account. To that end, I do not extend all of my claims about *The Travels* to all of its versions, but this dissertation does make a contribution to discussions surrounding other versions by suggesting a shift in how scholars approach the Mandeville-author's treatment of non-Christians and Jews as well as the form of the text.

Additionally, having begun my work on *The Travels* with a focus on the Egerton version of the text, this dissertation must be taken as a starting point for a larger project on the English Mandeville that builds on my reading of the Egerton and takes into account other manuscript traditions. In order to avoid risking a superficial examination

of too many traditions, this project would still be limited to the various English manuscript traditions, but it would be the first comprehensive and focused study of the English incarnations of the work of the man Samuel Purchas called “our Countryman.” In looking at the Bodley, Cotton, Defective, Egerton, and Metrical versions of *The Travels*,² I hope to nuance my reading of *The Travels* by taking into account the different possible readings resulting from both the subtle and drastic differences between the five traditions. Ultimately, this larger project will benefit from my focused examination of one version of the text and its context, and the broader study will help in developing an understanding of the Mandeville known to Sir John’s fellow countrymen in their native tongue. Just as *The Travels* had a long and varied life after its initial composition in the mid-fourteenth century, so too will the work in this dissertation as I move forward and outward from this one Mandeville.

² These represent all of the surviving Middle English versions of *The Travels*. All except the Defective survive in individual manuscripts.

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