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11 The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad in East Norse

Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits [...] a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (Matthew 7. 15–17)

There are several texts in East Norse – Old Swedish (*fornsvenska*, c. 1225–1526) and Old Danish (*gammeldansk*, c. 1100–1515) – that mention or describe Muslims and their religion.¹ Yet, studies on the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in medieval East Norse texts are very scarce, and usually form little more than brief prolegomena to more detailed examinations of later literature.² This article begins by looking at the portrayal and (mis)use of Muslims in East Norse literature before focusing on three texts that describe the life of Muḥammad (*The Old Swedish Legendary*, *Consolation of the Soul*, and *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*) in order to uncover the ideas about the Prophet that were circulating in vernacular texts in Denmark and Sweden during the Middle Ages. The investigation concentrates on depictions of Muḥammad as a pseudo-prophet, but also touches on representations of Muḥammad as one of several idols worshipped by the polytheistic Saracens. The reasons behind including stories about Muslims and Muḥammad in religious and non-religious Christian writ-

¹ The research leading to this article was carried out whilst a Visiting Fellow with the Humanities Research Centre, RSHA, Australian National University. I am also grateful to Linda Gale Jones (Universitat Pompeu-Fabra, Barcelona) for her advice on several aspects of this article.

Old Danish: Christiern Pedersen, *Book about Mass* (1514), *Book of Miracle Sermons* (1515), and *Vocabularium ad usum dacorum* (1510); the anonymous *Guide for Pilgrims* (1475–1500), *Sydrach* (1450–1500), *Herr Ivan* (1480–1485), *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (1459), *The Chronicle of Charlemagne* (1480), and *Flores and Blanzeflor* (c. 1500); Rev. Michael's poems (1514–1515); the Danish version of Guillaume Caoursin's *Obsidionis Rhodiae urbis descriptio* (1510), and finally some missives from the time of Kings Christian I and Hans (14 June 1511; 2 May 1512). Old Swedish: the anonymous *Old Swedish Legendary* and various miracle texts (1420–1502), *Consolation of the Soul* (1400–1450), *Seven Wise Men* (1425–1492), *Flores and Blanzeflor* (1430–1476), *Herr Ivan* (1430–1476), *The Chronicle of Charlemagne* (1430–92), *Nameless and Valentine* (1457–1476), *The Bible Paraphrase* (1425–1502); Peder Månsson's writings in Swedish (fifteenth century); St. Birgitta's *Revelations* (fifteenth century), and various texts for monastic reading (1385–1475; collected in Klemming 1877–1878).

² See, for example, Holm 2010 and Lausten 2010.

ings are discussed, and editions of the three East Norse lives of Muḥammad, together with translations into English, can be found in the appendix at the end of this article.

11.1 Muslims and Islam in East Norse

As described in the introduction to this volume, there is a rather abrupt change in how Muslims and the Islamic world are referred to in East Norse sources after the end of the Viking Age. Presumably, this also represents a shift in the perception of and relations between the Muslim and Scandinavian peoples at the time. With the introduction of manuscript culture to Scandinavia came a pejorative image of Muslims and the Islamic world that had been developed on the European mainland, from where it was imported.³ Unlike the earlier runic inscriptions, these texts do not reflect actual contact between the North and the Islamic world, but rather the incorporation of anti-Muslim polemics and the standard stereotypes of Western Christendom into East Norse literary culture. The portrayal of Muslims in East Norse literature is thus largely negative.

The most common East Norse term to refer for a Muslim is *saracen* (Saracen)⁴ or simply *hethning* (pagan). Occasionally, tribal names from the Bible are used, such as *hagarenus* (Hagarene; Genesis 16. 1–12), *ismaelite* (Ishmaelite; Genesis 16. 11), *moabite* (Moabite; Genesis 19. 37), and *amonite* (Ammonite; Genesis 19. 38). In the Old Danish *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (hereafter *Mandeville*) from 1459, we also find *araber* (Arab) and *bedoines* (Bedouin) to refer

³ On the making of this pejorative image, see Daniel 2009; Rotter 1986; Hoeppepner 1999; Tolan 2002; Akbari 2009. On the European accounts of the life of Muḥammad, see Tolan 2010 and Di Cesare 2012.

⁴ The term is also used to refer to pre-Islamic pagan groups in the East. For example, the *Old Swedish Legendary* (c. 1420) tells us that in 301 CE (over two and a half centuries before Muḥammad was born), the king of Armenia “eý at enast lot han medh sancto gregorio alt armenie folk koma til gudz tro. Vtan æmuæl manga af saracenis ok af androm landzskapom [not only had all the Armenians come to God’s faith through St. Gregory, but even many Saracens and people of other lands]”, Lund, University Library, Mh 20 (“Bergmannius”), fol. 27^r (Bonaventure 1859–1860, 308). Saracen was understood as meaning “son of Sarah” (Genesis 17. 15–18) and believed by some Christian writers to be a term the Saracens themselves used to lay claim to a noble heritage from Abraham and Sarah rather than descent from Sarah’s handmaid Hagar; see Tolan 2002, 127–128. In fact, the word comes into Latin and subsequently the European vernaculars from Arabic, شرقي (*sharqiy*, eastern) via Greek Σαρακηνός (*Sarakēnós*, Saracen).

to Muslims living outside of towns. In romances, such as *The Chronicle of Charlemagne* (from 1480; hereafter *Charlemagne*), we find the term *blaman* (black man), and only in later works, particularly from the beginning of the sixteenth century, do we encounter *mahomet* (Mohammedan) and *tyrke* (Turk). Unlike in some other European languages,⁵ East Norse *tyrke* does not refer to Muslims in general, but is restricted to Ottoman Muslims.

The term *blaman* is particularly interesting, as it refers to ethnic difference (skin colour)⁶ and carries connotations of evil. The association with evil comes from the term's frequent use in descriptions of devils in East Norse. So, for example, in a Danish sermon by Christiern Pedersen (c. 1480–1554), we read of a lavishly dressed woman who entered a church and:

Bag paa hendiss kiortel som hwn slæbede efter sig sade mange vtalige diøffle smaa som røtther oc sorte som blaamend de loge oc skogrede oc klappede deriss hender til hobe oc den ene spranck offuer den anden som fiske gøre i en wod.

[On the back of her robe, which she dragged behind her, sat many innumerable devils, small as rats and black as “black men”; they laughed and cackled and clapped their hands together and the one leapt over the other like fish do in a net.]⁷

The sense of the demonic would have been transferred to anyone defined using the word *blaman* through a “common pejorative visual vocabulary”: The association between darkness and evil is a common European tradition.⁸ In *Charlemagne*, the hordes of warriors, who fight against the fair Christians, are *blamen*.⁹ Adjectives found in connection with Muslims include *hethen* (pagan),

5 On Italian, see Soykut 2001, 8.

6 On Saracens as racial Others, see Cohen 2001 and Heng 2007.

7 Pedersen 1850–1856, I, 304. There are similar occurrences in Old Danish to be found in the *Mariager Legendary* (Copenhagen, Royal Library, GkS 1586, 4^o) and Henry Suso's *Book of Wisdom* (Copenhagen, AM 783, 4^o). Similarly, the Devil is often described as a *blaman* (*aethiops* in Latin versions) by St. Birgitta in her *Revelations*. In Book I, Revelation 99, we read, for example, how when the Devil disguises himself as a nun, “Swartaste blaman syntis j eno klostre mællan nynnona [the blackest ‘black man’ appeared in a convent among the nuns]”, Birgitta Birgersdotter 1857–1884, III, 216. Other occurrences of *blamen* in *Revelations*: Birgitta Birgersdotter 1857–1884, II, 11–12, 92–95, 100–101, and III, 71.

8 Strickland 2003, 173. On the physical appearance of Muslims in Western medieval art and literature, see Strickland 2003, 165–192 and Saurma-Jeltsch 2010.

9 For example, “Syden kam en hedhen hetth lange liiff met lm blomen the stridde mannelege pa the cristene roland sade till oliuer thette falk worder wor dødth [Then a pagan (i.e. Muslim) called Langelif arrived with 50,000 ‘black men’. They fought against the Christians. Roland said, ‘These people will be the death of us!’]”, Hjorth 1960, 308. This text exists in both Danish and Swedish in several manuscripts and early prints. Unless otherwise stated, I am quoting from Hjorth's edition of the Danish Børglum manuscript (Stockholm, Royal Library, Vu 82) from 1480.

utro (unbelieving), *ond* (evil), and *usal* (wretched). They are often referred to as *hunde* (dogs)¹⁰ whose main occupation is to *strithe* (fight, do battle) sometimes using *bamber* (drums) or banners bearing the image of an idol to scare their enemies' horses.¹¹ As can be seen, these words relate to and focus on evilness, violence, idolatry, and animal-like behaviour.

The main signifier of Otherness in the East Norse texts is illustrated in religious terms: Muslims are evil and devilish. This inner monstrosity is expressed through overtly visual, symbolic signifiers: their black skin, their giant stature (see below), and their dog-like noises and behaviour. In this, East Norse literature fits clearly within the western European tradition.

It should, however, be noted that in some romances, Muslims can be beautiful and fair (for example, Flores – who eventually embraces Christianity – in *Flores and Blanzeflor*).¹² In *Mandeville*, the sultan of Cairo is described in largely neutral or positive terms and appears as a hospitable and intelligent character,¹³ and Saracens are praised for looking after the religious sites in the Holy Land (although later accused of only doing so for the sake of money).¹⁴ A nod

10 On Muslims being compared to dogs, see Friedman 1981, 67; Strickland 2003, 204–206.

11 As in the famous episode in *Charlemagne*: 1480 version: “Sydhen droge ij hedne k. moth keyseræn [...] ok begynthæ ath strydæ Saraceni hadæ bambor Aff them wort keyserens hæstæ sky ok wylæ icke søgæ, wdhen løbæ till bagæ [Then two pagan kings advanced towards the emperor (...) and began to fight. The Saracens had drums. The horses were startled by them, and would not attack but ran back instead]”; 1534 version: “Siden droge tho hedninge konger mod Keyseren [...] oc begynte at stride, Saracenerne hagde ith banner, der stod en Affgud paa, och der fore bleffue keyserens heste sky, och wilde icke søgæ men løbe til bage [Then two pagan kings advanced towards the emperor (...) and began to fight. The Saracens had a banner on which was (depicted) an idol and the emperor’s horses were startled by it and they would not attack but ran back instead]”, Hjorth 1960, 90–91.

12 Old Danish version in Brandt 1869, I, 285–356; Old Swedish version in Olson 1921. For a discussion of the (highly conventionalized) description of Babylon’s beauty and wonders in *Flores and Blanzeflor*, see Kinoshita 2006, 92–103.

13 On neutral and other images of Saracens and the Sultan of Egypt, see Tolan 2009.

14 For example, “Ter liggæ te helly patriarche Abraham, Ysaac oc Iacob oc Sara oc Rebecca, oc tet er næthen hoos eth bierghæ, oc stor en skøn kyrkæ ok er bigd til værn som eet slot. Saraceni kallæ te ten graf Kariarchaba, ok gømmæ te ten sted gantzæ vell oc hederligæ for te helly patriarche skil [There lie the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Sarah and Rebecca, and it is below a mountain, and a beautiful church stands there and is constructed like a castle. The Saracens call the grave *Kariarchaba (i.e. the Sanctuary of Abraham), and they look after the place quite well and respectfully for the sake of the patriarchs]”, Lorenzen 1882, 36; but later Muslims are accused of faking the Easter miracle of the Holy Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for monetary gain: “Mangæ cristnæ menniskæ tro, at tet er sent, aff tørres ret enfollicheth; ter æræ mangæ, som her om tuiyæ oc menæ, at te Saraceni, som then helly graf giømæ, giøræ tet, forty at te muæ fa tes fleræ penningæ oc skat af pelægrimæ [Many Christians out of sheer ignorance believe (the miracle of the Holy Fire) to be true; there

of recognition to Arabic science and medicine can be discerned, for example, in the preface to Henrik Harpestræng's Old Danish *Lapidarium* (c. 1300).¹⁵ These 'non-black' descriptions of Muslims and Islam represent the beauty, scientific learning, and wealth of the East, while the 'black' descriptions highlight its strangeness, moral inferiority, and horror. Negative descriptions of Muslims do preponderate, but the existence of neutral and positive descriptions, albeit rather few, reflects the split view of the Islamic world.¹⁶ Indeed, it is important to remember that representations of Muslims – even in a small corpus such as that of the extant East Norse texts – did not convey a single, unchanging meaning, but demonstrated a great variation of images that could mean different, sometimes contradictory, things in different contexts. Writers were usually not interested in attempting to reflect “real” Muslims at all but were instead invoking fictions, polemical creations, that fulfilled specific roles scripted for these characters in order to meet the needs and expectations of the Christian authors, their texts, and their audiences.

11.2 Implicit comparison: Muslims as foils

In the miracle stories of *The Old Swedish Legendary* (hereafter *Legendary*), Muslims appear as foils to demonstrate the truth of a particular Christian doctrine. So, for example, the drowning Saracen, who “promised that he would visit the

are many who have their doubts about it and think that the Saracens who are guardians of the Holy Sepulchre do it so that they can get more money and taxes from the pilgrims]”, Lorenzen 1882, 41. Entrance fees paid to Saracen guardians are also mentioned in *The Guide for Pilgrims to Jerusalem* (1475–1500): “then tiidh thet komer tha til aften, ogh templet, som then helliaē graf ær i, lades vp a Saracenis, tha skal hwer peregrim giuæ fem ducata til ingang, vden vm ther ær nogher gra brodher ny komen, han skal giuæ iij/ ducataē [When evening falls, and the temple, in which is the Holy Tomb, is opened by the Saracens, then every pilgrim must pay an entrance fee of five ducats, unless he is a newly arrived Franciscan, in which case he must pay three ducats]”, Copenhagen, AM 792, 4^o, fol. 192^{rb} (Lorenzen 1882, 217).

15 “Býriær formal af en book thær hetær stenbok gøρθ af en kunugh af arabia til nero keyðær Evax konugh af arabieland skref til nero keyser hwilkkæ ærlíkæ stenæ æræ. oc af therræ dugh hwær særlæst. oc af therræ lýt oc therræ nafn. oc horæ the mughæ hittæs oc hware [Here begins the preface to a book called *Lapidarium* composed by a king in Arabia for Emperor Nero. Evax, king of Arabia, wrote to the emperor Nero (saying) which stones are precious and of each one's special power and their colour and their names, and how and where they can be found]”, Copenhagen, Royal Library, NkS 66, 8^o, fols. 114^v and 116^r (Harpestræng 1908–1920, 174).

16 See Akbari 2009, 160.

shrine of St. Mark and become a Christian before he died”,¹⁷ is saved from certain death in order to illustrate the openness of Christianity to all those who embrace it, its miraculous salvatory power both physically and spiritually, and the effectiveness of invoking the saints to intervene in worldly affairs. It tells us nothing about the appearance or personal qualities of the Saracen, beyond his subsequent breaking of the oath: After arriving safely in Alexandria, he fails to undertake the promised pilgrimage to Venice until St. Mark appears to him “a second time, terrifying, and reproached him with threats”;¹⁸ only then does he visit the saint’s shrine. The Muslim – just as many Christian sinners do in other miracle stories – is acting solely to demonstrate the saving grace of Christianity and the sincerity with which one should request and accept it. Similarly, in the legend of St. Clare from the same work,¹⁹ the holy woman is able to thwart the Saracens’ violent attack on her convent by raising up the host in the face of the invaders who fall from their ladders as if dazzled and take flight: “[T]he boldness of these savage dogs was quashed immediately”.²⁰ Again we are told nothing of the beliefs of these Saracens, who merely act as foils in a Christian tale designed to demonstrate – and counter any doubts about – the power of the Eucharist.²¹ Besides their ungodliness, the Saracens’ religious beliefs remain obscure. However, their aggressive, military prowess is very clear: They are cruel, bloodthirsty, marauding soldiers, intent upon gaining entry to the nunnery. Rapists, robbers, and vandals they may be, but serious religious contenders they are not. Their physical strength is no match for the supernatural, divine powers of the host. In this type of text, Muslims are nothing more than poorly defined non-Christians who can serve to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. Their few named characteristics – typically deceit and violence – serve only to contrast with “Christian qualities”. Opponents of Christianity perhaps, but Muslims – even when invoking Muḥammad (or their other idols) – remain subject to its divine truth and power, and, as in the

17 “iættadhe som han gat · *sancto* marcho witia hans skrin · Ok wardha cristin æn han wndan kome”, Uppsala, University Library, C 528, fol. 53^r (Stephens 1847–1874, I, 253).

18 “andru sinne rædheliker ok awitadhe han *medh* hozlum”, Uppsala, University Library, C 528, fol. 53^r (Stephens, 1847–1874, I, 253–254).

19 In Stockholm, Royal Library, A 110, and edited as “Heliga Claras legend” in Klemming 1877–1878, 338–339.

20 “ginstan vardh nidhir slaghin thera grymma hundarna dirfue”, Klemming 1877–1878, 339.

21 On the use of religious Other to demonstrate the truth of Christian doctrine, see Rubin 1999. That there was a need to convince the laity about the doctrine of transubstantiation and the efficacy of the Eucharist in medieval Scandinavia can be seen from the case of the Swedish peasant Botolf, who was tried and executed in 1311 for denying the existence of the body of Christ in the Eucharist; see Ferm 1990.

St. Mark miracle, can be converted by means of a little supernatural persuasion, or failing that, as in the St. Clare legend, they can be repelled by the power of Christ.

Muslims as foils is a trope that appears in literature from across Europe, for example in Iberian texts such as Ramon Llull's *Blanquerna* (c. 1283) and some of the sermons of Vincent Ferrer (1350–1419). Ryan Szpiech has shown how the image of the 'hermeneutical Muslim'²² was used as unwitting testimony to Christian truth in anti-Jewish writing.²³ He makes the point that Muslims fulfil "no larger figural cycle of revelation and prophecy in Christian soteriological history" and that they play a "rhetorical role in Christian polemic only by adding another voice in harmony with Christian belief".²⁴ Muslims' belief in Mary and Jesus (as opposed to the Jews' disbelief) is testimony to the truth of Christianity. To this we might add that the use of Muslims as foils in the examples cited above also demonstrates their use as unwitting witnesses to the truth of Church doctrine.

11.3 Explicit comparison: mirrors and boundaries

The account of Sir John and the sultan of Cairo in *Mandeville* provides a fascinating and, in an East Norse context, truly remarkable example of Muslims being given a voice.²⁵ During their many discussions, the sultan fires a number of criticisms at the Christian clergy and laity. He accuses priests of living bad lives ("onder lefneth") and not performing their duties in church. They dress worldly, drink to excess ("drikcæ thøm drukcnæ"), break the rules of chastity, and are poor advisers to their rulers. Moreover, the laity do not keep the holy days: Instead of going to church, they conduct business ("køpsla"), go to the inn ("ærae j kruend"), and eat and drink to excess ("ædæ oc drikchæ til ofuerflødichedh"). Furthermore, they gossip ("tale [...] illæ"), fight, and live more filthily than dumb beasts ("vskelligæ dyur"), and they practise usury ("the ograæ"), steal, rob, cheat, and break oaths.

²² An adaptation of the well-known concept of the 'hermeneutical Jew' (Dahan 1990, 585; Cohen 1999, 3 n. 3).

²³ Szpiech 2013.

²⁴ Szpiech 2013, 176.

²⁵ Lorenzen 1882, 72–76.

Sir John is amazed, and his response is not to be filled with indignation or rage, but rather to ask the sultan how he could possibly know so much about the true state of the Christian affairs.²⁶ The sultan explains that he sends his councillors to Europe in the guise of traders transporting precious stones, ointments (“balsamo”), silk, and spices (“yrtir”), and these spies keep him up to date with developments in the Christian lands.

What is remarkable here is the claim that Muslims are not just capable of moral behaviour, they are more moral and pious than Christians, and furthermore Muslims can accurately and legitimately comment on matters of Church discipline and Christian morality. This stands in stark contrast to the usual portrayal of Muslims as heathen, marauding invaders. Furthermore, the Islamic world is shown to be curious and knowledgeable about Christian Europe: The same could hardly be said about Christian knowledge of the Islamic world. Of course, the episode is meant as a prick of conscience for *Mandeville's* readers to nudge them towards a life of greater piety and as a form of mild anticlerical invective to admonish undisciplined, lazy, and immoral members of the clergy. The sultan's comments are not intended to make the reader consider the benefits of Islam – perish the thought! – but rather to reflect upon their own lack of piety and the failings of the clergy. Christianity is not under attack, but the practices and the sincerity of some of its followers are. The sultan is holding up a mirror for Christians to see themselves and their sins.

Another discussion between a Christian and a Muslim can be found in *Charlemagne*. In it, we read that just before Charlemagne launches his assault on Córdoba, Roland is sent to fight the Saracen giant Ferakude.²⁷ After some ferocious martial combat, they stop to rest and then fall into a discussion about religion. Ferakude declares he is a monotheist and therefore does not believe in the Holy Trinity, because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit must surely be three separate gods.²⁸ Roland explains the Trinity by comparing it to the

26 “Ter iek Iohannes tessæ ordh meth manghæ fleræ aff hannum hørth hadhæ, tha stodh iech oc vestæ ey megit at suaræ mod sennen. Jech vndrædæ oppa, at iech saa dannæ ord aff een vanthro Saracener høræ skuldæ; toch sadhæ iek saa til hannum: ‘Herræ, meth edher orloff, huorlund kundæ j nu vidæ thettæ saa fullæligæ, som j nu sagt hafuæ?’ [When I, John, had heard these and many more words, I stood and just did not know how to respond to the truth. I was amazed that I should hear such words from an infidel Saracen; however, I said to him: ‘Lord, with your permission, how can you know so fully about what you have now said?’]”, Lorenzen 1882, 74.

27 Saracen monstrosity in the form of giants occurs frequently in medieval European romance literature. The slaying of such monsters by Christian knights was doubtlessly meant to both entertain and reassure readers.

28 “ieg tror pa then hymmel ok iord hauer skaphth hade han hwerken sòn eller fadher som han war aff engen afflath tha afflæth han ok engen aff segh thy ær han en gudh ok icke

single sound of a harp made up of three separate elements: the frame, the string, and the hand. So too is the almond made up of a shell, a nut, and a kernel, and a man is made up of a torso, limbs, and a soul. Roland's pedagogical explanation causes the scales to fall from Ferakude's eyes, and the giant declares, "I now truly believe that God is one and three!"²⁹

The discussion continues in the style of *Elucidarius*, with Ferakude cast in the role of *discipulus*, asking questions about the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, all of which are answered in turn by Roland in the role of *magister*. Gradually, it becomes more and more apparent that the differences between Ferakude and Roland's worldviews are not so great – indeed, the boundary between Muslim and Christian becomes so blurred that Ferakude considers much of Christian doctrine to be compatible with Islam, and he seems to see no reason why either of them should not adopt the religion of the other.³⁰ Just as the boundary between the two religions begins to appear dangerously pervious, it is suddenly and dramatically redrawn through an act of violence; what Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has called a "ritual of disidentification":³¹ Roland takes Ferakude's sword and thrusts it through the giant's navel, killing him. As he lies dying, Ferakude commends his soul to his god, Muḥammad: "Ferakude shouted in the throes of death and said, 'Mament!

trefoldher [...] om ieg kaller gud fader Ok gud sön ok gud ok then helghæ andh thet ær jo iij gude! [I believe in the one who has created heaven and earth. He had neither son nor father. As he was produced from no-one, so he produced no-one from himself. Therefore, he is one God and not three (...)] If I call God father, and God son, and God the holy spirit as well, then that is of course three gods!]", Hjorth 1960, 146. Refutations of the Trinity in the Qur'ān are verses 4. 171 ("and do not say 'Three!'"), 5. 73, and 5. 116. On polemics surrounding the Trinity, see Tolan 2002, 34, 36–37, 153–154; Akbari 2009, 211, 214, 241, and especially on *tathlith al-wahdāniyya* (trinitizing the oneness of God), see Burman 2012 (with references).

29 "iegh tror nw wel ath gud ær en ok trænnæ", Hjorth 1960, 148.

30 "ferækude sade nw will ieg sloss met tegh met so danth forordh ath winder tw tha skall ieg tro pa tin gud winner ieg tha skaltu tro po myn gud! [Ferakude said, 'Now I will fight you on the proviso that if you win, I'll believe in your god, and if I win, you'll believe in my god!']", Hjorth 1960, 150. In *Mandeville*, it is said that Muslims are easily converted to Christianity, because their beliefs are already so similar in many ways; see Lorenzen 1882, 65–66. By comparison, the Florentine Dominican polemicist Riccoldo of Monte di Croce (c. 1243–1320) argues that Saracens are easily converted because they differ so much from Christians; see Szpiech 2013, 154. It is interesting to note that modern scholars have argued the opposite, viz. that Muslims were not easily converted to Christianity. Those who converted by choice tended to be slaves or house-servants, especially women, who were constantly in a Christian environment without the support of a Muslim community. See, for example, Ferrar i Marrol 1987.

31 Cohen 2001, 122.

God! Take my soul! I'm dying now!"³² Thus, Ferakude, who one minute appears almost Christian, shows his true pagan colours at the moment of death. Roland's assertion of self through an act of violence – intended as an exemplary model for confronting Islam? – re-establishes the natural order and the boundary between the true believers and the infidels, between salvation and damnation.³³

11.4 Muḥammad as idol

It should be noted that Muḥammad is not just portrayed as a heresiarch in East Norse, but sometimes as one of several idols or demons/gods worshipped by polytheistic Muslims. Just as in the European *chansons de geste*, this is the case in *Charlemagne*, where we read:

Jamwnd kallede till seg eth sende bwd ok sade ryd till myn fadher ok seg hannum ath wij haffuæ fonget stoor skadhæ ok myst iij aff wore gwdhe mamenth ok teroganth Jwpiter ok appwlim them hauer k. Fanget.

[Jamund called a messenger and said: "Ride to my father and tell him that we have been greatly harmed and lost four of our gods: Mament and Terogant, Jupiter and Appulin. The emperor has captured them".]³⁴

In *Charlemagne*, Muḥammad is often invoked before a battle, which subsequently (consequently?) ends in defeat, or his name is used to swear an oath,

³² "færækude ropede i døden ok sade mament gud tak myn siell nw dør jeg", Hjorth 1960, 152. That Ferakude sees Muḥammad and God as the same person, is shown by the use of the second person singular imperative *tak*, "take".

³³ Akbari (2009, 166) makes the point that romances characterize two types of Saracen bodies: those that are assimilable (such as Flores), and those that are not (such as black-skinned giants). Thus, as soon as "our giant Ferakude [wor kæmpæ færækude]" is introduced in the story in such unassimilable physical terms, we know that he will never become a Christian.

³⁴ Hjorth 1960, 92. Muḥammad is also called a god (or an idol) in Hjorth 1960, 86, 204, 256, 262. As far as the idols are concerned: Terogant (or Termagant) was the Muslims' chief deity according to medieval writers; Jupiter was a Roman god, and Appulin was either the Roman/Greek god Apollo or possibly the demon Abbadon featured in the Old Testament and in Revelation 9. 11. On these idols, see Flori 1992, 246 (with references in n. 7) and Kinoshita 2006, 15–45. Usually, Christian writers transposed the Trinity onto Islam in the form of Muḥammad, Terogant, and Appulin, while Jupiter was listed as one of several lesser gods; on this structuring of the gods in the *chansons de geste*, see Jones 1942, 206–208.

which is then often broken.³⁵ Depicting Muḥammad as an idol casts the Saracens as polytheists, but otherwise fulfils no real theological function and is little more than a literary motif.³⁶ Indeed, the portrayal of Saracens as idolaters may not have been due to ignorance on the part of the Christian authors, but rather an intentional fiction either intended to entertain and amuse or motivated by malice.³⁷ Even when he is presented as trying to pass himself off as a prophet, Muḥammad is typically described as being worshipped as a god – rather than just exalted as a prophet – by his followers.³⁸

11.5 Muḥammad as prophet

The great prophet of Islam, Muḥammad, was the most obvious line of attack for Christian writers, and he became a familiar figure to their readers during the Middle Ages. Characterized as a “false prophet”,³⁹ he was charged with having created a Christian heresy. This is why Dante’s *Inferno* (c. 1308–1321) place’s “Maometto” in the ninth *bolgia* of the eighth circle among the “Sowers of Discord”, the schismatics. Like many medieval Christian writers, Dante views Muḥammad as the creator of a heretical offshoot of Christianity. Negative descriptions of a deviant Muḥammad were an important part of the textual arsenal used to discredit Islam. Alarmed by the spread of Islam and the challenge he posed to the Christian view of the Prophets, the Messiah, and salva-

35 Examples of invocation: Hjorth 1960, 66, 90, 202, 228, 234, 238, 240, 246; swearing an oath: Hjorth 1960, 56, 106, 186.

36 Di Cesare 2012, 10.

37 Daniel 1984, 121.

38 As it was known in (some) learned Christian circles that Muslims did not consider Muḥammad to be a god, this may also be intended as nothing more than an amusing literary motif. Cf. Guibert of Nogent (c. 1055–1124): “Sed omissis jocularibus quae pro sequacium derisione dicuntur, hoc est insinuandum: quod non eum Deum, ut aliqui aestimant, opiniantur; sed hominem justum eumdemque patronum, per quem leges divinae tradantur [But, putting aside jokes, which are only told to deride the followers (of Muḥammad), this is a hint: that they do not consider him a god as some people think, but as a just man and their patron through whom their divine laws were given]”, quoted in Flori 1992, 254 n. 43.

39 First coined as ψευδοπροφήτης, “false prophet”, by John of Damascus (c. 645/676–749) in his *Concerning Heresies* (Περὶ αἰρέσεων / De haeresibus); see *Patrologia Graeca*, 94, 763–764. For an English translation, see John of Damascus 1958, 153. Although *Concerning Heresies* did not exert much influence on Western Christian views of Islam generally, it did include a number of conventions regarding Muḥammad (false prophet) and worship (idolatry) that also pervaded later medieval Christian writings about Islam.

tion history, writers depicted Muḥammad as the antithesis of Christian truth and often cast him in the role of the Antichrist, viewing him through an apocalyptic lens tinted by the Book of Revelation. His life was described in terms that aimed to invalidate his prophetic status by focusing on his lowly birth and improper marriages, as well as revealing his methods of deception by accusing him of being a liar and an epileptic. His followers were often portrayed as violent, carnal, and morally corrupt, and as a physical and spiritual threat to all Christendom. However, in texts about the life of Muḥammad (rather than in those that just mention Saracens or Turks), his followers appear almost as victims of the pseudo-prophet's trickery. They have been lured to damnation by his false promises and absurd laws and thus serve as warnings about the ease with which people who are not strong in their faith can be seduced into evil.

Negative writings about Muḥammad drew on a number of sources, including the polemical works of John of Damascus (c. 675/76–749), Petrus Alfonsi (1062–1140), James of Vitry (d. 1240), Matthew Paris (c. 1200–1259), Riccoldo di Monte di Croce (c. 1243–1320), and Ramon Llull (c. 1232–1315).⁴⁰ The Qur'ān was translated into Latin by Robert of Ketton in 1143, under the supervision of Peter the Venerable (1092–1156): This *Lex Sarracenorum* was subsequently mined for material that could be used to refute Islam. The East Norse treatment of Muḥammad, which is only preserved in works translated from other European languages, does not, however, involve complicated theological discussions of the challenge he posed to the Christian worldview. It basically comprises a character assassination by means of ridicule and defamation, where the emphasis is on exposing his lies (he did not receive revelations from God), and on containing Muḥammad within the history of Christianity (Islam is merely a perversion of Christianity, not an authentic religion, and will ultimately be vanquished by Christianity).

11.6 The East Norse sources

Legends are the biographies of saints that were read aloud in church on the relevant saint's day and in monasteries during meals. In all, there are approximately eight thousand legends listed in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, comprising stories of martyrdom (known as *passiones*) and lives of saints

⁴⁰ Michelina di Cesare (2012) discusses and presents the Latin works that deal with Muḥammad as a pseudo-prophet.

(known as *vitae*). *The Old Swedish Legendary* (known as *Fornsvenska legendariet* in Swedish) consists of a chronologically ordered collection of legends about the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Jesus and the Apostles, the saints, and ecclesiastical and secular events that shaped the history of the Church from its beginnings to the thirteenth century.⁴¹ Much of the content is based on Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (1263–1273).⁴² Valter Jansson makes the case that the author of the Swedish text was a Dominican, and that the text was composed at one of the monasteries in Götaland, most probably Skänninge or Skara, between 1276 and 1312.⁴³ Although there are a few details about Sweden and Denmark, the author's principal interest lies elsewhere, viz. on the great and important men and women of the Church. *Legendary* is known today from a number of manuscripts and fragments which suggests the texts were widespread.⁴⁴ The *Legendary* manuscript used here is Uppsala, University Library, C 528, edited and published by George Stephens in 1847–1874.⁴⁵

Consolation of the Soul (hereafter *Consolation*) is a popular compilation of (im)moral tales that focuses on the Ten Commandments. Stories about historical figures and heroes act as exempla in this didactic text. In Danish, there are just two extant fragments (Uppsala, University Library, C 529, and Stockholm, Royal Library, A 109), the remains (about one third) of what was once a single impressive parchment manuscript dating from c. 1425. These fragments are very similar to the Swedish version of the text (in Stockholm, Royal Library, A 108, the “Ängsö Codex”), the version used in this article. The Swedish text was translated at the beginning of the fifteenth century from the Middle Low German *Seelentrost*, but incorporates various Latin and Swedish sources. The relationship between all the manuscripts has been investigated by Johannes Brønnum-Nielsen (1934) and Ivar Thorén (1942), and the Swedish version was edited and published by Gustaf Edvard Klemming (1871–1873; used for quotations here).

⁴¹ Published in Stephens 1847–1858.

⁴² On Muḥammad in the *Legenda aurea* (or the *Golden Legend*), see Mula 2003 and Palma 2008.

⁴³ Jansson 1934, 4–10.

⁴⁴ Many of the tales also appear as exempla in sermon manuscripts.

⁴⁵ In addition to C 528, the most complete manuscripts are Stockholm, Royal Library, A 34 (known as *Codex Bureanus*), and Stockholm, National Archives, E 8900 (formerly Skokloster 3, 4° and known as *Codex Passionarius*). Other manuscripts that include *Legendary* texts in Old Swedish: Linköping, Huvudbiblioteket, Stiftsbiblioteket, B 70 a, B 70 b; Linköping, Saml. 1.a; Linköping, T 153 a; Lund Mh 20; Rome, Vat. Reg. lat. 525; Stockholm, A 3, A 9, A 10, A 49, A 54, A 58, A 110, A 124, D 3, D 4; Uppsala, C 9, C 831. On the relationship between the manuscripts, see Jansson 1934, 46–88.

Mandeville is an entirely fictitious mid-fourteenth-century description of a journey to the East undertaken by the English knight Sir John Mandeville. It was a medieval ‘bestseller’ and survives today in over 250 manuscripts and 130 print editions in at least ten languages.⁴⁶ The Latin versions of *Mandeville* are shorter than many of the vernacular versions (those in German, English, and French, for example). In all, five independent Latin versions have been recorded, but only the principal one, known as the Latin vulgate, has been printed. The print edition of this vulgate text appeared in 1484 in Strasbourg. This common abridged version served as the basis for the Danish translation, which dates from 1434 or 1444, and is extant in four manuscripts of a later date (one of which is, however, only fragmentary).⁴⁷ Marius Lorenzen published an edition of the Danish version in 1882, which is used here for quotations.

11.7 Episodes from the life of Muḥammad

Episodes from the life of Muḥammad that underscored his human qualities were of particular interest to Christian writers, as they served as arguments against his prophethood. That the Prophet’s human qualities are essential to Islamic doctrine only goes to demonstrate the hermeneutical nature of Christian argumentation in which they are presented as failings.⁴⁸ Only Christian standards are applied to Muḥammad and Islam; they are not considered on their own distinct terms.

11.8 Early life

The Prophet’s name, Muḥammad, “the praised one”, appears in several forms in the texts: “maghumet” (*Legendary*), “maghument” (*Consolation*), and “makomet” or “machomet” (*Mandeville*). Indeed, in *Mandeville*, we read, “Whatev-

⁴⁶ See Braude 1996, 136.

⁴⁷ The extant manuscripts are: Stockholm, Royal Library, M 307 (previously K 31; dated 1459); Stockholm, Royal Library, M 306 (1584); Odense, Karen Brahe Library, E III 6 (late sixteenth century), and Copenhagen, Royal Library, GkS 3559, 8° (1575). The datings are taken from Toldberg 1966, cols 309–311. For an overview of the four extant Danish manuscripts and their relationship to one another and the Latin archetype, see Seymour and Waldron 1963; Bradley 1969; Bradley 1976; Bradley 1993; Bradley 1999.

⁴⁸ Reeves 2000, 81.

er he is called, Makon or also Makomet or Mahon or Makometus, they are all the same thing”.⁴⁹ *Legendary* makes no mention of his homeland, whereas *Consolation* locates him in the land of the pagans – “Bethsermien”, presumably a corruption of Bēth Aramāyē (in present-day northern Iraq)⁵⁰ – and in *Mandeville* we read that he was born of the tribe of Ishmael in 600 in Arabia. Although *Consolation* makes no mention of his religion, it does locate his home in the land of the pagans. *Legendary* states that he was a Christian, while *Mandeville* makes the point that he was a pagan who first encountered Christianity during his journeys to Egypt. These latter two texts set the scene for a conception of Islam as a heretical and perverted product or misunderstanding of Christianity.

We can read about Muḥammad’s early working life in two of the texts. *Legendary* describes him as a merchant who transported precious stones from India to Egypt. *Mandeville* is rather more detailed and paints a pejorative picture of an uneducated man who first looked after donkeys, and then carried sacks for merchants who were travelling to Egypt, eventually becoming wealthy from this portering.

11.9 Marriage

In all three texts, Muḥammad marries a wealthy woman: in *Legendary* an unnamed queen in Egypt; in *Consolation* an unnamed rich noblewoman; in *Mandeville* Cadigeran (Khadija), the widow of a prince in Corrodana (presumably either an error for Chorozania [Chorazin], one of the cities cursed by Jesus [Matthew 11. 21]),⁵¹ or for Corocania, the dominion of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca).⁵² The suggestion is that Muḥammad’s power and success can be attributed not to his own merits but to the wealth he acquired through marrying Khadija. In terms of social rank, the union is a mismatch: Muḥammad can only bring good looks and intelligence (*Mandeville* only), as well as claims to holiness, to the marriage, whereas Khadija, as a prince’s widow, brings vast wealth and political influence. That Khadija is described as a widow in *Mandeville* may mean

⁴⁹ “Huot heller mand kaller harnum Makon eller oc Makomet eller Mahon eller Makometus, thet er thøm ther all ens”, Lorenzen 1882, 67.

⁵⁰ This location is often mentioned in connection with the Bahīrā legend.

⁵¹ Roggema 1999, 185 n. 119.

⁵² Palma 2008, 22.

that she is somewhat older than Muḥammad, which could thus also be understood as criticism of a mismatch in age.⁵³

11.10 Epilepsy

All three texts describe Muḥammad as an epileptic and follow the tradition started by Theophanes the Confessor (c. 760–817), who wrote that Muḥammad invented his visitations by angels to explain and cover up his epileptic fits.⁵⁴ Muḥammad claimed that he collapsed because he was unable to stand the light emanating from the visiting angel. In *Legendary*, Muḥammad says to his wife that he is visited by the Archangel Michael, whereas in the two other texts, it is Gabriel whom he claims causes the fits.⁵⁵ In *Consolation*, his epilepsy is described as a punishment from God for pretending to be a holy man for material gain: He invents his angelic cover story to reassure Khadija by means of deception. In *Mandeville*, Muḥammad’s explanation for his epilepsy – also invented to allay his wife’s concerns – only brings him greater praise and admiration. Indeed, *Mandeville* highlights how popular and beloved Muḥammad was among his countrymen: “He was a skilled and handsome man and extremely clever in his words and deeds, and he was chosen and loved by the people”.⁵⁶

11.11 Followers and laws

Muḥammad’s success in gaining followers is attributed in *Legendary* to his promises of paradise in the world-to-come, “where everyone would make mer-

⁵³ However, taking European noble marriage practices in the Middle Ages into consideration, this may not have struck a medieval audience as so peculiar.

⁵⁴ *Chronographia* 334 in Theophanes the Confessor 1997, 464. The *Chronographia* was translated into Latin by Anastasius Bibliothecarius (“the Librarian”) in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (871–874). In the Middle Ages, epilepsy was usually attributed to demonic possession, lunacy, or punishment from God – hardly qualities befitting of a world leader, let alone a divine prophet. On the history of epilepsy, see Temkim 1945.

⁵⁵ The *Legenda aurea* has the Archangel Gabriel, as of course does the Qur’ān (2. 97).

⁵⁶ “Han wor een fulltagæ mand och skøn och ofuer madæ clog vdy hans ord oc gerninggher, oc vor han fræm drawn oc ælsker aff falkith”, Lorenzen 1882, 68.

ry with food and drink and truly beautiful women”,⁵⁷ and which can only be accessed through him (cf. John 14. 6).⁵⁸ This sensual paradise is held up for mockery and stands in stark contrast to Christian ideas about a spiritual afterlife. In *Mandeville*, we read:

J muæ oc vidæ, at the Saracener ok hetningæ oc allæ andræ, som ikcæ æræ Cristnæ eller Iødher, te thro, ath ikcæ er andet hemmærigæ, ter som godæ oc helgæ menniskæ j blifueæ skullæ efther tettæ neruærendes liff, som vy her vdh y lefuæ, vdhen thet Paradiis, som paa iorden er, ther som voræ forældræ Adam oc Eua foræ theris vlidelssæ voræ vdh scutunnæ ov vth kastæ. Tee siæ och, ath ther ryndher honikh, melk oc vin, oc at the faa ther costæligæ hus foræ thøm bigdæ meth gul oc sølf oc kostæligæ stenæ oc allæ honnæ legemligæ løst oc glæde til euig tyd, effther thi som her huer fortiant hafuer. Tessæ forscrefnæ faræ thi ver blindæ, effther ty at tee hafuæ ikcæ tee helly trefollichets thro, oc tro ikcæ ponnæ Ihesum Christum, gutz enigæ søn. Jtem Cristnæ oc alle som døptæ æræ, oc Iøder, the troo oppa tet hemmelskæ Paradiis, oc at allæ menniskæ efther tørres godgæringher skulæ ther hafuæ lön meth gudh oc nydæ oc see guts claræ enlydhæ oc neruelssæ met vbegrifuælich ewinnælig glædæ til euig tiidh.

[You should also know that the Saracens and heathens and all those, who are not Christians or Jews, believe that there is no other Heaven (where good and holy people will be after this current life which we are living here) than that Paradise that is on Earth and from which our parents, Adam and Eve, were removed and cast out because of their sin. They also say that honey, milk and wine flow there, and that they will have exquisite houses built for them of gold and silver and precious stones, and (there will be) all sorts of sensual pleasure and joy for all eternity, according to what each person has earned in this life. These aforementioned people are unfortunately lost, as they do not believe in the Holy Trinity, and do not believe in Jesus Christ, the only son of God. Christians and all those who have been baptized, and Jews, believe in the celestial Paradise, and that all people according to their good deeds shall receive their reward there with God and enjoy seeing God’s bright face and presence with incomprehensible eternal joy for all eternity.]⁵⁹

The Christian lens through which Islam is viewed can also be discerned in *Consolation*, where we read that Muḥammad was seen as a God by the people (cf. Jesus). In *Legendary*, we read that Muslims view Jesus as a prophet, presumably in order to attract as many converts from Christianity as possible.

57 “ther alla skemtan hafua · medh math ok dryk ok wænasta quinde”, C 528, fol. 132^r (Stephens 1847–1874, II, 726). A paradise of delights – eating, drinking, and sex – is first mentioned by Theophanes among the “many other things full of profligacy and stupidity” promised by Muḥammad, see Tolán 2010, 227.

58 “han jætte allom them hanum trodo [he promised all those who believed in him]”, C 528, fol. 132^r (Stephens 1847–1874, II, 726).

59 Lorenzen 1882, 63. In this passage the author of *Mandeville* also shows an (unsurprising) lack of precise knowledge about Jewish eschatology and the afterlife.

Mandeville also tells us that Muḥammad gained followers “because of the expensive gifts that he distributed, and precious promises and advantages that he promised and announced”.⁶⁰

The same text tells us that Muḥammad revealed his “accursed book” and made it law in 621. *Legendary* describes it as nothing but an amalgam of his own beliefs, rules and customs, Jewish laws, and Christian rites. All three texts focus on elements of Islam that would have shocked the sensibilities of their Christian readers: polygamy (*Legendary* and *Consolation*),⁶¹ punishments for adultery (stoning and whipping; *Consolation*),⁶² and prohibition against alcohol (*Mandeville*) – a heady brew of moral laxity, sensual pleasures, brutality, and irrational attitudes about wine, the blood of Christ. On alcohol, *Mandeville* also accuses Muslims of hypocrisy, claiming that many of them disregard the prohibition and drink a sweet sugar-based alcoholic concoction in private. *Consolation* describes fasting during Ramaḍān with scarcely hidden ridicule: They gorge themselves during the night and fast during the day. Thus, Islamic nighttime feasting is implicitly compared to Christian fasting during Lent. The same work also mentions *wuḍūʿ*, ritual cleansing in preparation for formal prayers (Qurʾān 56. 79). The author might be attempting to show that whereas Christians can cleanse their souls through confession, contrition, penitence, and prayer, Muslims – bound to the physical world – can at best only wash the filth from their bodies before they pray in vain. It is, however, noteworthy that *Consolation*, does concede that some of Muḥammad’s articles of law were good, even if some were good for nothing (“somlik waro goodh oc somlik dughdho alzenkte”). Presumably, even a little misinterpreted Christianity in the guise of Islam is better than paganism.

11.12 Christian companions

In Islamic legend, a monk called Baḥīrā recognizes Muḥammad’s special status and foretells his destiny. In Christian traditions, beginning in Byzantium, the

⁶⁰ “for kostæligæ gafuer / som han udh gaff / oc kostælich iæth oc fardeel / som han udh iætthæ oc fran sek sadæ”, Lorenzen 1882, 69.

⁶¹ However, after his (monogamous) marriage to Khadija, Muḥammad’s further unions are not mentioned.

⁶² The punishment for adultery in the Old Testament was also death (Deuteronomy 22. 22; Leviticus 20. 10), so stoning may not have been entirely shocking to the Christian audience who would at least have been familiar with it from Scripture. Cf., however, the teaching in John 8. 7.

monk Baḥīrā (later referred to as the heretic Sergius or Nicholas) is given a much more sinister and central role in the formation of Muḥammad, whom he uses to corrupt the Arabs and prevent them from obtaining salvation through the Church.⁶³ Thus, Islam becomes a Christian heresy instigated by a disgruntled and vengeful monk. In *Consolation*, a large part of the story of Muḥammad is given over to the role of the apostate Sergius and his success. Following Peter the Venerable's story of Sergius, a monk expelled from the Church who fled to Arabia, this man convinces Muḥammad to seek power and gives him the tricks to do so.

In *Mandeville*, two unnamed Christian hermits are mentioned. The first lives in the desert between Arabia and Egypt and was visited by the young Muḥammad on his trips. This hermit is a pale shadow of the Christian Baḥīrā/Sergius figure, and we learn little about him other than that Muḥammad “in particular [...] learnt from a hermit who lived in a desert [...], where he often spent the night”.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, it is made clear that this Christian played a part in Muḥammad's religious education. The second hermit is also a desert dweller, whom Muḥammad visits in the years after becoming king of Arabia. We learn little about him, other than that he is unpopular among the king's councillors who kill him whilst he and Muḥammad are asleep after an evening of drinking. The men blame their liege for killing the hermit while he was drunk, which results in Muḥammad decreeing a prohibition against alcohol.⁶⁵ The episode is meant to demonstrate that Islamic law is not inspired by God's will, but by Muḥammad's whims, and that by insisting upon such nonsense, Muḥammad damns his own soul: “This curse affects his own head, because it is written that wine cheers both God and man”.⁶⁶

11.13 Tricks

In addition to the texts' inclusion of the story of Muḥammad using his epileptic fits to trick people into believing he was a prophet, *Consolation* includes – at length – the story of how, thanks to help from Sergius, he was able to train

⁶³ Roggema 1999; Szilágyi 2008; Daniel 2009, 105.

⁶⁴ “sinderligæ nam han aff eet ærmæthæ / som bodhæ vdhy een øtken [...] / ther som han offtæ natitess”, Lorenzen 1882, 68.

⁶⁵ Lorenzen 1882, 69–71. The injunction is in Qur'ān 5. 91.

⁶⁶ “huylken forbannelssæ skal gongæ ofuer hans eygit hofueth / effther ty ath thet stonther screfueth / at win glædher bodæ gud och memiskæ”, Lorenzen 1882, 71. Cf. Judges 9. 13.

animals to give the illusion that he was a holy man: a dove that would land on his shoulder to look for grain in his ear (giving the illusion of the Holy Spirit speaking the word of God into his ear)⁶⁷ and an ox that would lay its head down in his lap to eat food from his hands (giving the illusion of a wild animal bowing down before God – a kind of inverted tale of the Golden Calf; Exodus 32. 1–6).⁶⁸ Muḥammad’s circus tricks contrast with the miracles performed by Jesus in the New Testament and only demonstrate the pseudo-prophet’s false claims to divinity.

Traditionally Muslims have always downplayed or denied that Muḥammad worked miracles precisely to emphasize his humanity. In these East Norse texts, Muḥammad is seen entirely through a Christian lens and consequently as he declared himself a prophet he must have performed miracles (as this is what prophets did in the Judaeo-Christian tradition), but as he is not a real prophet (in the eyes of the Christian writers), his miracles must have been nothing more than tricks. These passages about Muḥammad’s trickery are excellent examples of Christian hermeneutical argumentation and the creation of straw-men in polemics against Islam.

11.14 Death

In *Consolation*, we read that Muḥammad received an ignominious death: He was poisoned. Muḥammad’s murder and very human death is meant to contrast with Christ’s crucifixion and the supernatural end to his earthly life. His body was placed in an iron casket that was housed in a purpose-built temple (“mønstir”), and magnetic stones in the vaulted ceiling of the temple caused the casket to be suspended in mid-air: “Then all the people said that it was due to his sanctity and still believed in him”.⁶⁹ The story of Muḥammad’s floating coffin is first recorded in Gautier of Compiègne’s *Otia de Machometi*,⁷⁰ which also includes stories about the false miracles of the dove and the bull, and was probably the ultimate source of the colourful legendary material about

⁶⁷ For biblical accounts of the Holy Spirit appearing in the form of a dove, see Mark 1. 10–11; Luke 3. 22; John 1. 32 (cf. also Genesis 8. 8–12).

⁶⁸ On the evolution of these stories from hearsay to Gautier of Compiègne’s *Otia de Machometi* (c. 1137–1150), see Di Cesare 2012, 6; cf. Mula 2003, 179–180.

⁶⁹ “Tha saghdhe alt folkith at thet war hans hælagheth oc trodho stadhlika oppa han”, Klemming 1871–1873, 139.

⁷⁰ On the floating coffin, see Reichert 2007.

Muḥammad in *Consolation*. *Mandeville* does not provide a cause of death, but has him anointed and placed in a coffin that is kept in the town in Arabia where he had his first followers (Corrodana). In 900, the text tells us, the “vile maggot’s body”⁷¹ was moved to a more worthy city, called “Merk”. The name “Merk” is similar to Mecca and indeed most medieval writers thought that Mecca was the site of Muḥammad’s tomb.⁷² The Ḥajj to Mecca was thought to be a pilgrimage to his grave, just as Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem centred on the Holy Sepulchre. Indeed, *Mandeville* goes on to say that his tomb is visited by many people. However, in the *Legenda aurea*, Muḥammad’s resting place is said to be in “Merch vel Iachrib [Merch or Yathrib (pre-Islamic name for Medina)]”. If “Merch” and “Iachrib” are to be understood as the same place, then perhaps *Mandeville*’s “Merk” should be understood as a name for Medina.

11.15 Conclusion

The treatment of Muslims and Muḥammad fits clearly within Western European traditions of describing and denigrating Islam. The texts aim to expose the truth about Muḥammad and Islam – but they all do so in slightly different ways. *Mandeville* follows a historiographical approach. Muḥammad’s year of birth, the year of the revelation of the Qur’ān, and the year of the translation of his body to Medina are provided (albeit inaccurately). Geographical locations (Egypt, Arabia, “corrodana”) and the name of his wife (“cadigeran”) are provided. The style is factual, portraying a heresiarch whose success is put down to marrying into money and power, his good looks, and his intelligence. *Consolation* takes a quite different approach, with Muḥammad painted as a colourful scoundrel who uses numerous tricks to fool people into believing in his prophethood. Only one place is mentioned (“bethsermien”) and one person (“Sergius”). Apart from that, the tale provides no details of his life story beyond his false miracles. The much shorter *Legendary* text – surprisingly – follows the East Norse historiographical tradition, and includes little legendary material (only epilepsy). Although dates and names are largely absent, the text describes Muḥammad’s early life, marriage, and popularity, and presents elements of Islamic doctrine without mentioning the false miracles. The many legendary elements found in the *Legenda aurea*, which is in fact more similar to the text of the *Consolation*, are missing from the Old Swedish *Legendary*.

⁷¹ “teth fulæ ass / hans legemmæ”, Lorenzen 1882, 71.

⁷² Rotter 2009.

In East Norse texts, Muslims are employed as foils to demonstrate the truth of Christian teaching or as mirrors to make Christian readers reassess their own (lack of) piety and morality. The treatment of Muḥammad is, however, not that of being a Muslim foil. The texts aim to neutralize Muḥammad and turn him into an anti-hagiographical, heresiological figure by denigrating his background and intentions, as well as the Qur'ān which he is seen as having composed. His religion is passed off as a mixture of his own ideas, (heretical) Christianity, and elements of Judaism, a seductive blend forged to deceive Christians (and Jews?) and gain Muḥammad as many followers as possible. He is presented as a fraudster, driven by lust for power and wealth, who employs magic tricks, distributes gifts, and makes attractive promises in order to gain and keep his followers from among simple, gullible people. Thus, these texts simultaneously denigrate Islam and explain its success in gaining adherents.

Whereas finding a historiographical account of Muḥammad in the *Mandeville* account of the Middle East, with its datings and use of toponyms and personal names, is hardly surprising, the inclusion of Muḥammad in edifying literature, such as *Consolation* and *Legendary*, may seem unexpected. Yet, by placing Muḥammad within the framework of Christian history and Christian theology, he is contained: He becomes merely one of many heretics in the long history of the Church and he – and his followers – are powerless when confronted with its teachings and sacraments. The anti-hagiographical life of Muḥammad is an inverted parody of the life of Christ: Muḥammad's motives are the opposite of the *vita Christi* ideals of poverty, chastity, and humility, and his theatrical miracles, which are nothing but staged attempts to acquire Old Testament-style prophetic status, pale in comparison to the New Testament stories of Jesus' miraculous deeds. Within the magnificent and eternal framework of Christianity, Muḥammad, his concocted religion, and his followers are shown to be of no importance whatsoever.

Given the amount of East Norse literature that is translated from other European vernacular and Latin materials, it is not surprising that Scandinavian examples of Arabs, Muslims, Muḥammad, and Islam also depend on these earlier accounts and show little innovation or independent development. Just like the other European materials, they reflect a fascination with the East that spans cautious enquiry to outright fear and is viewed entirely through western European Christian values. The most noticeable difference between East Norse and other accounts is one of quantity: It would seem that although textual Muslims could act as a didactic tool for writers, they were not particularly popular in the North. For example, they appear but rarely in Christiern Pedersen's sermon collections from the beginning of the sixteenth century (despite being written at the height of the Ottoman Empire). It may be that vernacular litera-

ture was not felt to provide an appropriate platform for discussing the theological problems posed by Islam. Moreover, there was a long tradition of authoritative refutation of that other enemy of Christendom: the Jew. There existed a wealth of material answering the Jewish case, the challenges of Judaism had long been defeated, and the multifaceted but thoroughly negative image of the Jew, especially the New Testament Jew, was so embedded and widely understood that it could be used as an effective literary tool in various popular contexts, even in regions like Denmark and Sweden without a resident Jewish population.⁷³ Although the extant material shows that Danes and Swedes were familiar with literary portrayals of Muslims and Muḥammad, for some reason (lack of contact; disinterest; paralysis in the face of Islamic expansion?), Islam and its Prophet were not actively employed by vernacular authors who instead preferred anti-Christian tropes that were more developed or closer to home.

Appendix: texts

1. *Old Swedish Legendary*

Source: Uppsala, University Library, C 528 (Codex Bildstenianus), fol. 132^r (1400–1450); *Original text:* Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea* [*The Golden Legend*, 1263–1273] = Iacopo da Varazze 1999, 1261–1266; *Editions:* Stephens 1847–1874, II, 725–726.

¶ Vm then thima war maghumet fulaste falsare som drogh fra *christo medh* willo dyghran del aff væruldinne ¶ Han war først en cristin køpman ok idhnadhe føra dyra stena fra indie land til egyptum oc gilde ther ena drotningh *medh listum* han war brutfællinger ok fik drotningin ther aff dighran stygh widh *mannin* ¶ Han løgh sik wara gudz prophetam oc at michael · archængil bar hanum opta gudhlekan budskap · ok sik falla vidh hans enlitis lius ok ey for soth skuldh ¶ Sidhan vaxte han mærare en før allom landum · han jætte allom them hanum trodo paradys / ok ther alla skemtan hafua · *medh* math ok dryk ok wænasta quinde ok ther for trode hanom alt osinnoght folk ¶ Han dictadhe them ok scref sina thro ræt ok sidi en del epte judha laghum ok en del æpter *cristna manna sidhum* · ¶ Som dictade han aff nyio · at hwariom manne lofuat ware hafua swa manga husfrur som han matte fødha ¶ Han sagdhe gudhz ænghil hafua · sænt sik the laghin som han skreff / allæ the hans lagh halda

73 On this see Lausten 1992 and Adams 2012; Adams 2013a; Adams 2013b; Adams 2014.

heta saraceni tho lofuar han j sinom laghum varn herra ihesum *christum* · ok sipher at enghin faar himerike vtan han thror hans læst ok prophetum

[At that time, Maghumet was a truly abominable fraudster who on purpose was leading a large part of the world away from Christianity. At first, he was a Christian merchant and made a living by transporting precious stones from India to Egypt, and there married a queen by means of trickery. He was an epileptic, and the queen was greatly repulsed by the man because of this. He lied, saying that he was God's prophet and that the Archangel Michael often carried divine messages to him and that he collapsed because of the light from (Michael's) face, and not due to illness. Then, he grew even more famous in all countries. To all those who believed in him, he promised paradise, where everyone would make merry with food and drink and truly beautiful women, and for this reason all foolish people believed him. He fabricated and wrote down his beliefs, rules, and customs, partly copying Jewish laws and partly copying the customs of Christians. Some things he invented anew; that to every man is allowed as many wives as he is able to feed. He said that God's angel had sent him the laws that he was writing. All those who keep his laws are called Saracens. In his laws he praises Jesus Christ and says that no one enters heaven unless they believe his writings and prophecies.]

2. *Consolation of the Soul*

Source: Stockholm, Royal Library, A 108, pp. 84–86; *Original text:* Middle Low German *Seelentrost*; *Editions:* Klemming 1871–1873, 136–139.

Letters rubricated in red are in bold.

¶ Wi finnom oc scifwit aff enom som maghument hetir / Jak thror at han foor aff sinom guddom ey mykyt bætir **Aff maghument**

Thet war een høghferdhoghir munkir heth sergius / Han stodh æptir storum oc werdhogheth oc herradømø j pawans gardh j room oc thet kunde honom ekki ske / **H**an fik ther aff ena mistrøst oc fiol j wanhop ffortidde sin || cristindom oc flydhe in j hedhindomin ok kom til bethsermenien / **H**an selladhe sik til een vngan man heth maghument / talande til hans oc saghdhe swa / wilt thu mino radhe følghia Jak wil thik ofwir alt thetta land til een storan herra gøra / **O**c folkit skal bidhia til thik / oc halda thik for thera gudh / **H**an swaradhe thet gerna wilia gøra / **T**ha tok munken ena vnga duwo oc inne leste hona j enom camera / **O**c loth engin gaa in til henna vtan manghument eensamen / **t**ha han skulde hona mata tok han kornit oc stak j sith øra oc satte duuona oppa sina skuldro / **O**c swa tok hon sin math vth aff hans øra / **V**m sidhe wardh

hon swa ther til wan / at æ nar han kom ffløgh hon oppa hans skuldre oc stak
 sit næb j hans øra oc søktø æptir sinne fødho **Then** sami maghument hafdhe
 ok een vngan oxa innelestan til hwilkin engin ingig vtan han ensamin / **Han**
 gaff honom fodhir / oc hafdhe vxan ther til want at han bøgghdhe sik for honom
 oppa sin knæ oc ath sith fodhir aff hans skøth **Ther** æptir loth then fornempde
 munken alt folkit saman koma oc taladhe til them oc saghdhe **Jak** wil idhir
 wisselika bewisa hwem j skulin tilbidthia oc for idhan gudh halda / **Then** j seen
 then hælgha anda ofwir koma j duwo liknilse oc sæthia sik oppa hans skuldre /
 then ær gudz son / **Han** skulin j hedhra for idhan gudh oc herra / **Tha** han
 hafdhe thetta sakt / gig han hemelika borth oc loth dufwona vthflygha / **Hon**
 fløgh alla wegna kring om folkit **Oc** wardh vm sidhe warse hwar maghument
 stodh / **Hon** fløgh oppa hans axl ellir skuldre **Oc** stak sit neb j hans øra som
 hon war wan søkiande æptir sinne fødho **Tha** saghdhe munken **Seen** j thet
 wel / then helghe ande hwiskar j hans øra hwat han skal idhir læra / **ther** æptir
 loth han vxan vthløpa **Oc** aff thy han hafdhe længe inne standit wardh han
 swa grymbir oc øør at engin thordhe honom nalkas ellir gripa / **Vm** sidhe gig
 maghument mot honom / **Oc** genstan fiol vxsen a knæ oc laghdhe sin mula j
 hans skøt / **Oc** søkte sit fodhir som han war wan / **Ther** æptir hult alt folkit
 maghument for een gudh **Oc** han gaff folkeno ena handa lagh huru the skuldo
 lifwa / **Naar** the fastadho / skuldo the enkte æta then daghin **En** vm nattena
 matto the æta swa opta the wildo / **Naar** the wildo bidhia skuldo the fōrra twa
 thera || lykama / **Thet** matte oc een man hafwa fyra laghgipta hustrur til lika /
 the matto **ok** taka sina magha oppa **thet** maghskapit blifwi thes fastare **Hwilkin**
 man gripin wordhe **met** annars hustru / them skulde man badhin stenka /
 wordhe een man gripin **met** løsø qwinno / han skulde hafwa xvij slag aff ene
 gisl **Oc** mang annor stykke som han gaf them at halda somlik waro goodh oc
 somlik dughdho alzenkte **J** them tymanom war ther een riik landis fru / hon
 throdhe alt wara wist oc sant oc tok sik han til bonda **Swa** kom han j stora
 rikedomo oc mykyt godz / **Ther** æptir sænde gudh honom een warnaghla oc
 gaff honom ena plagho at han skulde sik bethænkia oc bætra / **Thet** war at
 han fiol j bruth threm sinnom hwar dag **Ther** aff drøfdhis frun storlika oc
 mykyt sørghdhe / **Han** badh hona ekki sørghia oc saghdhe at **thet** war aff thy /
thet sancte gabriel plæghadhe tala **met** honom / oc han gat the clarheth aff
 honom gig ekki lidhit / **Langt** ther æptir wardh honom forgifwit / **Han** loth
 gōra eeth skriin af iærn j hwilkit the skuldo han læggia tha han ware dōdhir /
Oc loth byggia eet mōnstir / **Oc** loth hwælfwa **thet** **met** sæghil steen / **Tha** han
 war dōdhir oc burin in j mōnstrit j the iærnskrineno / **Tha** vpdrogho stenane
 som waro j hwalfweno iærnskrinit til siin oc bleff ther hængiande **Tha** saghdhe
 alt folkith at **thet** war hans hælagheth oc trodho stadhlika oppa han **Swa** thro
 saraceni æn j dagh oppa honom oc halda hans lagh **Swa** daradhe han folkit oc
 swek sik ila sielfwan

[We also find described someone called Maghument. I think that he did not fare much better with his divinity. About Maghument.

There was a haughty monk called Sergius. He sought greatness and dignity and dominion in the pope's court in Rome, and nothing came to him. This made him despondent, and he fell into despair: He forsook his Christianity and took flight to the pagan lands and came to Bēth Aramāyē(?). He joined a young man called Maghument, speaking to him he said thus: "Do you want to follow my counsel? I will make you a great lord of all this country, and the people will worship you and consider you their god". He replied that he wished to. Then the monk took a young dove and locked it in a room and did not allow anyone to go in there except Maghument alone. When he (Maghument) was to feed it, he took the grain and stuck it in his ear and placed the dove upon his shoulder, and then it took its food out of his ear. In the end, it was so used to doing this, that whenever he arrived, it flew up onto his shoulder and stuck its beak in his ear and looked for its food. The same Maghument also had a young ox locked indoors, which no one went in to except he alone. He gave it fodder and the ox became so used to this that it would kneel before him and eat its fodder from his lap. Then, the aforementioned monk had all the people assemble and spoke to them and said: "I want to prove to you for sure whom you should worship and consider your god. The man whom you see the Holy Spirit descend upon in the form of a dove and whoever's shoulder it sits on, he is the Son of God. You shall praise him as your god and lord!" When he had said this, he went secretly away and released the dove. It flew all around the people and finally became aware of where Maghument was standing. It flew upon his shoulder and stuck its beak into his ear as it was in the habit of doing to look for its feed. Then the monk said: "You see it clearly! The Holy Spirit is whispering into his ear what he should teach you!" Then, he released the ox, and as it had been standing a long time indoors, it became so wild and crazed, so that no one dared approach it or take hold of it. In the end, Maghument went towards it and the ox fell to its knees straightaway and placed its muzzle in his lap and looked for its fodder, as it was in the habit of doing. After this, all the people considered Maghument to be a god. And he gave the people a kind of law by which they should live. When they fasted, they should eat nothing during the daytime, but during the night they could eat as often as they wished. When they were to pray, they should wash their bodies beforehand. It was also allowed for a man to have four legal wives. They could also take their partner to make family relationships stronger. If any man was caught with another's wife, they should both be stoned. If a man was caught with an unmarried woman, he should be given eighteen lashes with a whip. And he gave them many other articles of law to obey: Some of them were good, and some of them

were good for absolutely nothing. All that time, there was a rich noble lady. She believed it all to be certain and true and took him (Maghument) as her husband. Thus he acquired great wealth and many possessions. After this, God sent him a warning and gave him a punishment so that he would consider his actions and better his ways. This was that he collapsed three times every day. His wife was greatly perturbed by this and was very distressed. He ask her not to be sad and said that it was because St. Gabriel used to talk to him and he could not endure the radiance that emanated from him. Long afterwards he was poisoned.⁷⁴ He had a reliquary of iron made in which they should place him when he was dead. And he had a temple built and had magnets placed into the vaulted ceiling. When he was dead and carried into the temple in the iron reliquary, the magnetic stones that were in the vaulted ceiling drew the iron reliquary upwards towards them, and it remained suspended there. Then, all the people said that it was due to his sanctity and still believed in him. So the Saracens still believe in him today and keep his laws. Thus, he fooled the people and greatly deceived himself.]

3. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*

Source: Stockholm, Royal Library, M 307 (previously K 31), pp. 50–55; *Foreign parallels: Itinerarius domini Johannis de mandeville militis* (Strassburg, 1483); *Johannis de monte; villa Itinerarius in partes Iherosoliminitanas. Et in vltiores transmarinas* (Cologne, c. 1500); *Editions: Lorenzen 1882, 67–72.*

The manuscript contains several lacunae and sections of corrupt text. Words that I have supplied are in triangular brackets. Text from the later manuscript, Stockholm, Royal Library, M 306 (dated 1584), is in square brackets. Letters rubricated in red are in bold.

Her effter maa mandh fongæ ath høræ aff machomets lefneth Capitulum xxij. etc. etc.

Iech iettæ foræ j boghen at siæ || nogit aff makomets lefnýt som tee s<ar>acener settæ tørris **høxtæ** troo oppa som iech hafuer fundit bescrefuit och jech hafuer hørt j therriss landh huot heller han **kaller hannum** makon eller oc makomet eller mahon eller makometus *thet* er thøm ther all ens the menæ ther ath han er fødh aff ysmaels folk eller **aff** hans slekth som vor abrahams søn huylkin han hadæ meth agor hans husfrues tiænestæ qwynnæ oc ther aff kaless end **sommæ saracener** ýsmaelite oc **sommæ** agareni oc **sommæ** moabite ok **sommæ**

⁷⁴ The participle “forgifwit” could also mean “forgiven” (i.e. by Khadija). The Middle Low German “Dar na ouer langk wart eme vorgeuen” is similarly ambiguous.

amonite aff thoo lots sønner moab oc amon som føddess | aff too hans eynæ døtter per incestum Jtem vor tennæ forscrefnæ makomet fødder vor herræss ardh sex hundrædæ vdy arabia han vor først een fatik mand oc giømdæ asnæ oc ther nest fuldæ han en køpmænd ind vdy egipten och bor therriss sekcæ om sin halss foræ løn skild oc then tid vor egiptus cristen thy nam han oppa thee reyser han tiidh ford nogit aff ten helly throo oc sinderligæ nam han aff eet ærmæthæ som bodhæ vdhÿ een øtken som ther j melløm wor ther som han oftæ natitess och aff sadannæ reyser och andher biæringh wordæ han møgith riigh saa at falkith beg<i>nnædhæ || til oc hollæ aff hannum sa lenggæ til han wor tagen til een styeræ øuer eet land som hedher corrodana som ligger vdy arabie koninghæ ryghæ Saa lenghæ til ther dødæ end herræ j teth sammæ landh som han styrere wor [oc machomet fich hanns huszfrue som hed cadigeran / oc siden bleff hand oc for hindis Skyld / megit megre ophøyet. hand vor]⁷⁵ een fultagæ mand och skøn och ofuermadæ clog vdy hans ord oc gerningghre oc vor han fræmdrawn oc æs ælsker aff falkith Jtem hadæ han then fallendæ sooth oc thet vestæ engin Ten tid hans husfruæ teth fornæ taa wor hun høfuæligæ bedrøfueth at hun hadæ fonghet sadan mand huylket han forsuarædæ oc sueg husfruen meth een falsk orsagæ oc sadæ ath guts helly engild galbriel vor sender til hannum at syæ hannum nogit aff guts hemmæligæ vellia oc at han oftæ plæyædæ saa ath giøræ thy kundæ han ikcæ lydæ hans clarhedh oc neruarelssæ vdhen hannum burdhæ at fallæ til iordhen oc then tid tessæ ord voræ obenbarædæ thaa kom [hand] vdy eet stort loff sa aat <tha> koningin aff arabia bleff dødth nogith ter effter tha wor han for hans falskæ skalkæ par och hans falskæ helliheth som aff hannum sadess oc for kostæligæ gafuer som han udh gaff oc kostælich iæth oc fardeel som han udh iæththæ oc fran sek sadæ kesther til koningh || ofuer alt arabie konings ryghæ Ten sinnum han vor stadfester vdy hans rygæ och høxstæ maiestaath som vor ard effther gudz byrdh sex hu<n>dret oc eet oc tyuæ oc hundretæ oc pannæ tet toltfæ dawæ die iouis som er om een torsdagh tha obenbarædæ han oc lod vykynnæ then forbarnædæ bogh oc logh full aff vantro oc villelsæ som han dictet hadhæ oc bødth allæ sinæ vnderdanæ ath the hermæ saa hollæ skullæ all hans tidh udh Huylken bog saa mangæ wtalyghæ ardh intil thennæ dagh aff sa møgith wtallichth folk til therriss eghen forderuelsæ nu holdess for troo ok low effter | hans død Tet ma stor soruæ oc vselhed wæræ at sa megit folk skal blifuæ forsømmit foræ end mantz villelssæ skildh Jtem vor eet annet ermetæ vdy hans rigæ arabia then tidh han vor koning j øtken huilket ermetæ han oftæ plæyædæ ath søghæ oc hadæ meth sek noger aff hans rodh och tiænæræ

75 Missing in M 307.

oc thet fortrøth thøm oftæ at han tid faræ villæ saa oftæ thy hadæ tee j vellie ath tee villæ slaa tet ermetæ j hell Teth skedæ sa een nath at koningin vor hoos ermetet oc tee drukchæ thøm bodæ druknæ aff win sa ath tee sofnædæ bodæ til sammen. Ten tid hans tiænæræ fornummæ at tee voræ bodæ druknæ oc lowæ til sammen oc sofuæ || ta vdh drowæ thee hemmæligæ koningins suerd som han hoos sin sidæ hadæ oc stungæ ærmedet iheel Ter koni<n>gin oppuoknædhæ oc sa mannen liggæ dødth hoos sek ta vor han megit galend oc vreder oc skyldædæ sinæ tiænæræ ter foræ oc sadæ at the teth giort hadæ oc villæ ther foræ hafuæ dødth thøm allæ sammen Ter han meth thøm foræ kom foræ visæ mend oc foræ rethhæ taa sadhæ the allæ ath koningin hadæ teth seluer giorth j sin drukcen skaph [thij huer mand det icke viste oc till itt tegenn sagde de at hanns suerd vor ennd blodigt i Skedenn / oc at hannd icke afftiurde blodit / før end hand ind stack suerdet /]⁷⁶ oc han | fan suerdet sa blodict oc tertil han hørdæ sa manghæ vitnæ omod sek ta søruædæ han megit saræ och gik meth stor blueissæ bort oc forlofuædæ ath drikcæ vin nogher tidh j sinæ daghæ oc forbød vdy sin logh noger mand at drikchæ win oc forbannædæ tøm allæ tøm som vin plæyædæ at drikcæ eller at seliæ huylken forbannelssæ skal gongæ ofuer hans eygit hofueth effther ty ath thet stonddher screfueth at win glædher bodæ gud och menniskæ oc foræ tennæ sag skild taa drikcæ saracener ikcæ win Huot som the ikcææ || giøræ obenbaræ teth giøræ tee tok een deel aff tøm hemmæligæ teth som tee hafuæ foræ foræ drik tet søs er søth oc løstict at drikcæ oc tet <f>øther vel oc teth er giort aff kallamell som sukcher pleyer at vordæ aff Jtem nor fornefnæ makomet vor dødther taa vord han kostæligæ smurder met yrther oc lauth udý een kistæ kostæligæ giort met guldh oc sølff vdy een stad arabian ter som te begindæ ath hollæ hannum foræ eend hellig mand oc foræ gutz vessæ sendæ budh til tøm oc effter gutz byrdh nyhu<n>dret ard vor [det] fulæ ass hans legemmæ tæden ført oc til | een verdigæræ stad som kaldess merk ter som han nu hetris oc søgess aff megit falk som suýgnæ æræ aff diæfuælingd oc hollæ hannum foræ enn hellich mandh.

[Below you can hear about Machomet's life. Chapter 24.

I promised earlier in the book to tell something about the life of Makomet, in whom the Saracens place their greatest faith, whom I have found described and have heard about in their land. Whether he is called Makon or also Makomet or Mahon or Makometus, they are all the same thing. There they believe that he was born of the tribe or family of Ishmael, who was Abraham's son, whom he begat on Hagar, his wife's servant-woman, and therefore some Saracens are called Ishmaelites and some Hagarenes, and some Moabites and some

⁷⁶ The corrupt text in M 307 reads: "suerdet huylkeyt konunggin sa fan blodict huilket the sadæ ath teth skulæ varæ eeth tegin at hans suerd tet vor blodict"

Ammonites after the two sons of Lot, Moab and Ammon, who were born from incest by two of his daughters.

Also this aforementioned Makomet was born in AD 600 in Arabia. At first, he was a poor man and looked after donkeys, and then he accompanied a merchant to Egypt and carried their sacks around his neck for payment. And at that time, Egypt was Christian, so on these journeys, which he undertook often, he learnt something of the holy faith, and, in particular, he learnt from a hermit who lived in a desert, which lay between (Arabia and Egypt), where he often spent the night. And he became very rich from such journeys and other means of support, so that people began to value him so much that he was appointed ruler of a country that is called Corrodana, which is located in the Kingdom of Arabia, until a prince died in the very same country where he was ruler, and Makomet married his wife, who was called Cadigeran, and thanks to her, he became much more exalted. He was a skilled and handsome man and extremely clever in his words and deeds, and he was chosen and loved by the people.

Also he had epilepsy, and no one knew this. When his wife noticed this, she became exceedingly sad that she had married such a man. He defended this and tricked his wife with a false reason and said that God's holy angel, Gabriel, had been sent to him to tell him something of God's secret will, and that he often used to do this. He could not tolerate his radiance and presence, so he began collapsing to the ground. And when these words were made public, he received even greater praise, so that when the king of Arabia died some time later, he was – because of his wicked cunning and his false holiness which was told about him, and because of the expensive gifts that he distributed, and precious promises and advantages that he promised and announced – elected king of all the kingdom of Arabia. When he was installed in his kingdom and highest majesty, which was 621 years and a hundred days after the birth of God on the twelfth day, *die Jovis*, that is a Thursday, he made public and acknowledged the accursed book and law, full of superstition and error, which he had composed, and commanded all his subjects to obey this book until he died which, for so many innumerable years since his death until this very day, has been obeyed as faith and law by so many innumerable people, leading to their own destruction. It is a great sorrow and misery that so many people should be squandered because of one man's error.

Also there was another hermit in the desert in his kingdom of Arabia, when he was king. He often used to visit this hermit and took with him some of his council and servants, and they regretted often that he wanted to go there so frequently. So, they decided that they would kill the hermit. It happened one night that the king was with the hermit, and they drank themselves into a

drunken stupor with wine, so that they both fell asleep together. When his servants sensed that they were both drunk and lay together and slept, they secretly drew the king's sword, which he had at his side, and stabbed the hermit to death. When the king woke up and saw the man lying dead beside him, he became very furious and angry and blamed his servants for it and said that they had done it, and for this he wanted to have them all put to death. When he came before wise men and a court of law, they all said that the king himself had done it in his drunkenness, although he did not know it, and as evidence they said that his sword was still bloody in its sheath, and that he had not dried the blood off before he replaced the sword, and he found the sword so bloodied. And when he heard so many witnesses against him, he went away greatly ashamed and swore never to drink wine again during his life and forbade anyone by law from drinking wine and cursed all those who used to drink or sell (wine). This curse affects his own head because it is written (Judges 9. 13) that wine cheers both God and man. And for this reason, Saracens do not drink wine. What they do not do publicly, some of them do however in private. What they drink is sweet and delightful to drink, and it is nutritious and made from caramel, which sugar is usually made from.

Also when the aforementioned Makomet had died, he was anointed with herbs and placed into a coffin, expensively crafted with gold and silver, in an Arabian town, where they first began to consider him to be a holy man and God's certain messenger to them. And in AD 900, the vile maggot's body was transferred from there to a more worthy site, which is called Mecca/Medina(?), where he is now honoured and visited by many people who have been deceived by the devil and consider him to be a holy man.]

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