

Julian Yolles and Jessica Weiss, eds. and trans., *Medieval Latin Lives of Muhammad*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 51. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. Pp. xli + 664.

The present volume is an edition of several medieval Latin accounts of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, which are revised and translated into English by Yolles and Weiss (xxxi). The thorough and detailed introduction offers an overview of the texts presented in the volume by situating them in their “historical and literary contexts” (vii) and explaining their main characteristics. The texts are arranged in chronological order, covering a period from the ninth century to the end of the thirteenth. The selected texts originate from “a variety of regions” (xxx) but predominantly from the Mediterranean, which was the main point of contact with Islam. The conclusion contains some remarks on the editions and translations. In this review, I summarize the content of the texts to trace the lines of argumentation in the accounts.

According to the cleric Eulogius of Córdoba, he discovered the *History of Muhammad* (*Historia de Mahomet*) in a manuscript in Leyre in northern Spain in 848. Eulogius, who was one of the main supporters of the so-called Martyrs of Córdoba (ix), incorporated the *Historia de Mahomet* into his *Liber Apologeticus Martyrum* in which he defends the martyrs. The *Historia* depicts Muhammad “as an instrument of the devil and a precursor of the Antichrist” (ix–x). In this account, Muhammad is called a heresiarch (2) and the “most shrewd son of darkness” (3). The Prophet himself and his followers are depicted as lustful, an accusation substantiated by the story of Zayd and his wife Zaynab in which Muhammad forces Zaynab to become his concubine and ultimately his wife (4–7). After the death of the Prophet, the resurrection that he announced to happen within three days did not happen. Instead, his body was partly consumed by dogs, an appropriate ending for a prophet who condemned not only himself but also his followers to hell, as Eulogius sums up (6–7).

The *Tultusceptru* from the Book of Lord Metobius (*Tultusceptru de Libro domini Metobii*) is preserved in a Spanish manuscript that dates from the late tenth century (x). It is a short text in which the origin of Islam is told: A Christian monk named Ozim is sent to missionize the Arabs in the region of Erribon (= Yathrib/Medina). When he arrives at Erribon, an evil angel appears and pretends to be the same angel sent to Father Osius, bishop and teacher of Ozim. The angel claims that Ozim’s true

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name is Muhammad and that his mission will only be successful if he recites the sentence “*alla occuber alla occuber situ leila citus est mohamet razulille*” (12), which clearly alludes to the Shahada (“the testimony”) of Islam. In the *Tultusceptra*’s depiction, the sentence is said to be an invocation of demons, which finally corrupt Ozim/Muhammad. Therefore, the text defines Islam as a religion of error (10–13). The sometimes-difficult Latin text is well explained in the corresponding notes.

The Latin text of the *Chronicle* harks back to the Byzantine *Chronicle* of Theophanes the Confessor (ca. 759/60–818). The Latin translation, which contains significant modifications, was made by Anastasius the Librarian (d. ca. 879), who “selectively combined three chronicles by Nikephoros, George Synkellos, and Theophanes” (xii). Yolles and Weiss edit the section of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610–641) under whose reign the rise of Islam took place, according to the *Chronicle*. This short account describes some of the stereotypes that later became popular in the Latin West, such as the “carnal Paradise” of Islam (20–21). Another example is the claim that Muhammad was an epileptic who just pretended to receive visions from the archangel Gabriel. A false monk (*pseudomonachus*) confirmed that these visions were sent to all the prophets. This convinced Muhammad’s wife Khadija, who was doubtful first, to become the first follower of the Prophet, whose religion originated from rumors (18–19). In general, the *Chronicle* explains the religion of Islam with the common and later popular motif “that Muhammad cobbled together elements of the Jewish and Christian holy texts to create his own” (xii).

In the second half of the eleventh century, the cleric Embrico of Mainz wrote his versified *Life of Muhammad*, a “long poem composed in elegiac couplets with internal rhyme, known as leonine verse, [. . .] aimed to entertain while providing instruction” (xiii). Embrico’s high level of classical education becomes evident through a host of allusions to ancient mythology. The plot is set in the late fourth century in Libya where an unnamed mage (*magus*) plans to seize power after he failed to become patriarch of Jerusalem and has been exiled by emperor Theodosius (ll. 107–204). A slave named Mammutius becomes the main instrument of the mage, who succeeds in helping the slave become king. Embrico also knows the name Muhammad (*Mahumet*), as becomes obvious in the prologue (l. 68). On his way to kingship, Mammutius is instructed by the mage to hide and train a calf so that both men can later use it to perform false miracles. The calf becomes a “demonic bull” (ll. 329–86), which is released by the mage to devastate the land, after the Christian king of Libya died without a successor (ll. 387–520). The

treacherous mage predicts that the man who can yoke the bull shall become king (ll. 521–68). Finally, Mammutius yokes the bull and fulfills the mage’s prophecy (ll. 655–95). From this point on, Mammutius and the mage begin to establish their religion, first by altering the Gospels. The religious changes that Embrico relates clearly echo Western stereotypes against Islam, such as permission granted for adultery—in the words of the mage (ll. 719–20, 724): “You should sum up your decrees with this saying: let everything that had been forbidden be permitted now [. . .] permit everything that pleases!” Then, the mage advises Mammutius to proclaim “that the sayings of previous scriptures are flawed” (ll. 727–28) and to replace them with a law that is favorable to the king’s and the mage’s power. In the course of the story, Embrico describes the sexual licentiousness that he explicitly condemns. God punishes Mammutius with epilepsy for establishing such a depraved law. But the mage, who knows that it is a punishment, explains the epileptic fits as God’s inspirations to the people and instructs King Mammutius how to benefit from the illness (ll. 838–986). The epilepsy finally causes the death of Mammutius—now named Muhammad—who falls to the ground on one of his walks and is devoured by pigs (ll. 1009–48). This fate is presented as the reason why Muslims are not permitted to eat pork (l. 1107). The mage places Mammutius’s body in a large temple and uses a magnet to make the tomb fly so that the “uneducated people” (l. 1140) believe that they witness a miracle and begin to worship Muhammad (ll. 1111–48). Embrico’s account of the rise of Islam resembles an epic because it contains a series of passages presenting only the protagonists’ speeches. The text is pervaded by legendary aspects but draws on the anti-Islamic polemic traditions of the Latin West, too. *The Life of Muhammad* hence demonstrates how Islam could be treated in the literary sphere.

Walter of Compiègne wrote the *Poetic Pastimes on Muhammad*, a poem in elegiac couplets, around 1150 (xvi), “see[king] to entertain and edify rather than supply historical information” (xvii). Therefore, “the poem may be understood as a sort of elegiac comedy” (xvii). Walter’s main source are the narratives of Garnerius, abbot of Marmoutier, who himself heard about Muhammad from an abbot of another cloister (xvi). Unlike Mammutius in Embrico’s text, Muhammad does not need a mage because he “was vell-versed in the Christian laws and faith; he was an orator, a mathematician, an expert in dialectics and geometry, a musician, an astrologer, and a grammarian”—and a slave (ll. 22–27). A Christian hermit tells Muhammad that he is possessed by a demon and that he will be responsible for the abolition of the Christian laws as well as for the introduction of a wicked law (ll. 37–71). The first long section (ll.

131–399) relates how Muhammad manages to marry the wealthy widow of his former master. Even after a eulogy of his abilities and his loyalty, Muhammad is rejected by the widow because she is afraid of rumors and a loss of reputation. Therefore, Muhammad manipulates some nobles to influence the woman. They advise her to marry a husband who is already among her slaves, but she is not aware that it should be Muhammad. Eventually, the widow finally accepts Muhammad when he is presented by the nobles. During the wedding festivities, Muhammad suffers an epileptic seizure. Scorned by his wife for his disease, he pretends to have received messages from God through Gabriel, which caused his fits. Muhammad also pretends that he has been assigned the task of renewing the Christian law, which he alleges to be corrupt (ll. 400–554). Because his wife has grave doubts, he intimidates the Christian hermit to confirm his claims (ll. 555–656). The story of the tame calf first appears in very few verses (ll. 661–70). In the following section, the text describes how Muhammad deceives the nobles and his people. He fakes a divine portent by constructing a streamlet mixed from milk and honey. In addition, Muhammad makes the calf, now a bull whose horns are inscribed with invented laws, come to him. He finally succeeds in convincing the people about himself and his religion (ll. 671–884). In the penultimate section of the text, the Persians wage war on the followers of Muhammad, who lose in the end. Muhammad is sent to lead the women, children, and everybody unfit for war to safety. After the defeat, he takes the opportunity to firmly install his law of marriage, which explicitly permits polygamy and sexual licentiousness (ll. 885–1054). The last section focuses on the tomb of Muhammad and its veneration. Placed in a square building in Mecca, the iron coffin is said to fly because of the natural attraction of diamonds fitted into the walls. Walter allegorizes the city's name with adultery (Lat. *Mecha* = *moecha* = Engl. *adulteress*) and interprets it as a portent of Islam's fate, which he considers to be analogous to Babel and Egypt (vv. 1055–90). Like Embrico's *Life of Muhammad*, the *Poetic Pastimes on Muhammad* contain extensive passages of direct speech, especially of Muhammad. The general structure of the plot resembles a contemporary courtly epic. Therefore, the lack of reliable information about Islam in the text is no surprise. Even most of the common stereotypes against Islam—if they appear in the text at all—are mitigated by the narrative technique. Nevertheless, Muhammad is depicted as a vile and vicious deceiver. Even more so than Embrico's poem, Walter's *Poetic Pastimes* is a purely literary account.

The *Life of Muhammad* was written around the middle of the twelfth century, probably in the Levant, perhaps in Antioch, which had become

a melting pot of languages and traditions since the city was conquered in the First Crusade. The author is unknown except for the name “Adelphus” and some information contained in the text. Although the text is aware of the “long tradition of religious polemic” (xviii) constituted in Antioch, this account contains “notable innovations” (xviii) because it introduces the Christian monk Nestorius, who helps Muhammad to compile the Qur’ān and its false doctrines from the Old and New Testaments. In Yolles and Weiss’s edition, the text is divided into twenty-six sections (in my synopsis, I cite the section numbers except where page numbers are indicated). The *Life of Muhammad* explains the circumstances of its own composition: Adelphus was informed about Islam by a Greek man who clarifies first that the Saracens stem from Ishmael, the son of Hagar, and should thus be called Hagarenes (2–3). According to the Greek man, Muhammad was instructed by Nestorius, the archbishop of Constantinople in the fifth century, who was responsible for the Nestorian Schism. Nestorius is presented as an evil heretic guided by the devil. The devil leads a swineherd (Muhammad) to Nestorius, who has been exiled to Mount Lebanon. This swineherd is said to be well educated in necromancy and magic even before he is infested with Nestorius’s teachings (5–6). Together they compiled the Qur’ān (7): “And so the craft of the two men so mixed and twisted the New and Old Testaments,” the “new error” (page 191). Then, they plot to convince the people of the surrounding cities by leading them to the place where Nestorius lives so that he can teach them. To support his doctrine, Nestorius performs a false miracle that has been prepared by Muhammad (8–13). Muhammad first suggests that he should act as an emissary of Nestorius’s teachings to convert the people who live far away (15), but he notices that there is a need for a “superhuman authority” (page 201). Thus, he concocts another false miracle. Together with Nestorius, he writes down the Qur’ān on parchment, which is tied to the horns of a young cow. Muhammad makes use of the cow that comes to him while he speaks to the Hagarenes. To deceive the people, he interprets the cow as a messenger from God bringing the new law (17–20). Because he is jealous of the veneration Nestorius still receives and wants to achieve sole rule, Muhammad murders him (21). The text uses this episode to explain the Muslim prohibition of wine, for the murder is said to have been committed as a result of drunkenness. Shortly afterward, “the King of the Hagarenes of Babylon died” (page 207). Muhammad manages to marry the widowed queen. Elevated to royal rank through marriage, he spreads his religion throughout the realm and is worshipped like a god (22–24). At the height of his power, Muhammad dies on a hunting

expedition: a herd of pigs kills and consumes him. The text derives the Muslim prohibition of pork from this episode, which makes a reference to Muhammad's former existence as a swineherd (25). The final section is a lengthy *explicit* (26). Adelphus's *Life of Muhammad* adds to the polemic repertoire some new motifs, for example the murder committed by Muhammad that contributes to the characterization of the Prophet as an evil person and disciple of the devil. It is also very uncommon to portray the historical Nestorius as playing a leading part in the rise of Islam because Nestorius—or a monk of this name—usually functions as the initiator or advisor in the conception of the Qur'ān or as Muhammad's initial instructor. Thus, the text depicts Islam as a Christian heresy.

The *Apology of al-Kindī* is part of the "*Toledan Collection or Islamo Latin Corpus*" (xix) initiated by Peter the Venerable (1092–1156) in 1142/43. The *Apology* partly adopts features of epistolary literature, but has most probably been written by a single author (xxii). Therefore, it consists of two "letters": a letter by a Muslim, which displays some basic Islamic teachings and tries to refute Christianity, and one by a Christian defending the Christian doctrine and attacking Islam; the attack mainly targets the biography of the Prophet that is supposed to be discredited to prove Islam wrong. As the *Apology* is the longest text in the edition, I can only briefly summarize the main arguments here. The editors divided the text into two letters and then divided each of them into smaller chapters, which are referred to by their numbers (by the editors and in the summary below, except when page numbers are indicated). The letters are prefaced by a short prologue that locates the debate at the court of Caliph al-Ma'mūn (ninth century), where the dialogue partners meet (1). The *Apology* begins with the *Letter of the Saracen* (2–64). The Muslim clearly frames the letter's purpose (7): "I, for my part, will only debate with you with fair words [. . .] Perhaps you will convert and do justice to the truth" (page 221). In contrast to the other depictions in the volume, the Muslim appreciates the Nestorians because he regards their belief to be more compatible with Islam (11). One essential point of his argumentation is an issue debated by polemic writings throughout the Middle Ages (20): the Muslim denies the Christian Trinity and instead defines God as "a singular and indivisible unity, who has not had a wife or child, and who knows no equal to himself" (page 233). The religions are incompatible on that point. In the further course of the conversation, the argumentation is inspired by the Five Pillars of Islam, for it focuses on rites of prayer, the pilgrimage, the fasting, and the confession of faith (21–29). In this context, Muhammad, who has allegedly received divine inspiration, is explicitly presented as the last of the prophets

(21–23). A long section with numerous quotations from the Qur’ān contains a detailed description of the delightful Islamic paradise (30–39). This description is contrasted with a description of hell waiting for the infidels and those who do not believe in Muhammad’s prophethood; it also resorts to numerous quotations from the Qur’ān (40–46). Again, it addresses an essential issue of Islam when the expiation of oaths is explained (54). Toward the end of the first letter, the Christian authorship of the *Apology* becomes obvious in a tendentious “summary” of Islam (60): “Enter into this faith that brings salvation, whose way is easy, whose beliefs are wholesome, whose path is spacious” (page 265). In general, the Muslim consistently claims the truth of his faith and his words in his letter. Referring to the truth of the Qur’ān, he rejects the constituting elements of Christianity time and again.

The *Reply of the Christian* is more than five times longer than the Muslim’s letter, and features its own enumeration of chapters. The text begins with the story of Abraham and his monotheistic heritage to answer the Muslim’s assertion that Abraham was a Muslim as well (6–9). This approach prepares the reader for the extensive justification and explanation of the Christian Trinity (10–22). In chapter 25, there is a direct answer to “the statement that God did not have a wife, nor a son, nor anyone equal to himself” (page 287). It is followed by a philosophical discussion (26–34) of God’s substantial and accidental qualities that culminates in the result “that God is one in essence, but threefold in persons” (page 295), which is why the divine Trinity is true. Afterward, there are passages defending the Christian faith against the accusation of polytheism (35–39).

The *Apology* then turns to the first years in the life of Muhammad, who was consecrated to the pagan gods by his uncle Abū Ṭālib, to the marriage with Khadija, and to Muhammad’s claim of prophethood and his first followers (40–47). The text begins by refuting the prophethood of Muhammad based on the Prophet’s military campaigns (48–58). This refutation then focuses on Muhammad’s sexual activities and his married life, also listing each of his seventeen wives (59–63). The next chapters focus on the working of miracles, the signs of a true prophet, and Muhammad’s death (64–85). A long section deals with the status of the law that Muhammad brought: The Christian-Nestorian monk Sergius, who also assumes the name Nestorius, educates Muhammad. They compose the Qur’ān that is said to be compiled from the Old and New Testaments and heavily influenced by certain Jews (93–100). Thereafter, the Christian tells the textual history of the Qur’ān and its reception (101–14) to draw the conclusion that “this book ended up being

completely untrustworthy” (page 355). The Christian continues with a series of attacks on several elements of the Islamic faith, such as the pilgrimage, circumcision, and the prohibition of pork (119–34). Then, there is a special emphasis on the use of violence, including martyrdom. In this context, Muhammad is accused of having missionized with the sword (144–64). This is followed by a long exhortation to accept Christian doctrine and to convert to Christianity (165–79). The letter proceeds to a defense of the Christian worship of the cross (180–87). In the following sections, the Christian interprets various aspects of the Christian faith, mostly relying on quotations from the Bible; he consistently claims the truth of his interpretations and contrasts them with the Islamic views (188–200). With this argument, the writer prefaces the defense against the Muslim objection to the distortion of the scriptures (Arab. *tahwīf*). This objection is an essential issue between the two religions and is thus discussed in the *Apology* (201–7). The Christian intends to prove the truth of Christianity by retelling and summarizing the Gospels so that the life and teachings of Jesus can be contrasted with Muhammad’s life and his doctrine (208–35). These passages are pervaded by numerous quotations from the Bible and very few from the Qur’ān. The success story of Christianity is told by listing miracles worked by Jesus, deeds of the apostles, and the resurrection (236–51). It is especially the sending of the apostles that corroborates the defense against the objection of distortion (247). The last section contains a long exhortation to conversion and extensive praise of Christianity (252–65). In the epilogue, though, the Caliph adjudicates the debate in favor of Islam (266). In general, the *Apology* has a polemic and tendentious tone since it harshly attacks Islam and especially Muhammad, but the text is also apologetic: the author shows good knowledge of Islam and the Qur’ān so that he can provide defenses against the main objections of the pro-Muslim text. Although the text addresses the crucial issues in this contemporary religious debate, some of the common stereotypes against Islam can nevertheless be found in the *Apology* (for example, in the sexual licentiousness and the violent nature of Muhammad and his followers). The text was very influential in the Latin West, as its manuscript transmission ranges from mid-twelfth century to the sixteenth century and its reception can be traced in the works of Dominican authors such as Ramon Martí and Riccoldo da Montecroce.

With the *Book of Nicholas* (*Liber Nycholay*), the volume proceeds to the second half of the thirteenth century. The *Book of Nicholas* was most likely written in Italy in the context of the mendicant orders, especially the Dominicans (xxv). The work provides only superficial information about

Islam, as its focus is “to satirize the papal Curia” (xxvii). In the text, Muhammad is identified with Nicholas, whose biography is depicted positively. Pope Agapetus chooses Nicholas “who is called Muhammad” (chapter 1; page 519; references to the text below are by chapter except as indicated) as his successor. Nicholas is an erudite man. The plot is hard to date because the names as well as other information point to different centuries (2; pages 519, 636). Because of a mistake, an old cardinal named John becomes pope instead of Nicholas (3–5). The latter furiously decides “to subvert the Christian religion and [to] found a new sect” (6–7; page 523). The following chapters contain the doctrine that Nicholas derives from the Bible and his own ideas (8–10). The text explains that the name “Saracens” stems from Sarah, Abraham’s wife, and that Muhammad is God’s messenger. Therefore, all Saracens are children of Abraham. Nicholas also adds some rules for praying, fasting, the celebration of Easter, the consumption of wine, burial customs, and circumcision, which is a necessity for every man (10–14). Then, “[w]hen he had written all of these instructions down, he set out to travel and returned to those whom he had converted from idolatry to the Christian faith” (16; page 529). Nicholas/Muhammad recruits his first followers among these people who accept him as messenger of God (17). By working miracles, Muhammad heightens the Saracens’ worship (18). After his death Muhammad ascends to heaven and leaves only his foot behind, as a woman called Carufa asserts. His faithful Saracen followers produce a foot relic, which is kept in a gilded casket (19). The pilgrimage to Mecca is explained as a way to worship the foot (20). Additionally, the casket floats in the air as an effect of magnets—a legendary aspect that also figures in Embrico’s *Life of Muhammad* and Walter’s *Poetic Pastimes* (see above). The next part of the *Book of Nicholas* focuses on the biography of the Prophet: Muhammad has three wives. All of them bear him sons, who die when they are still children (24). The Prophet is said to have taken up residence in Baghdad (25), “where he went the way of all flesh” (page 535). There, he has adulterous intercourse with Carufa. Caught in the act, he is killed by her husband. To protect themselves from punishment by the Saracens, Carufa and her husband claim that Muhammad has entered Paradise and that only his foot is left behind (25). The last chapters (27–28) deal with episodes from history—for example, the battle of Charlemagne against a Muslim army in Spain. The legendary episodes do not seem to aim at disparaging Islam but to stem from the author’s (or his sources’) lack of information. It must be emphasized that the descriptions have a neutral tone. The final sentence indeed reveals that the author of the *Book of Nicholas* does not intend to

depict Islam as a hideous religion: “Yet all worship one God, creator of heaven and earth—Christian, Jews, and Saracens—and all believe without doubt that they will be saved. Amen” (page 537). Thus, this work differs significantly from the polemical writings of the Latin West.

According to its Latin *incipit*, the text *Where Wicked Muhammad Came From* can also be called *Qualiter*. It can probably be dated to the late thirteenth century. The text is preserved in a single manuscript from the Dominican convent of Saint Catherine in Pisa (xxix–xxx). The plot seems to be set in the second century. Again, Nicolas (!) appears as an important protagonist but is not identical with the Prophet. In contrast to the *Book of Nicholas*, Muhammad is a disciple of Maurus, who himself is a disciple of Nicolas. Nicolas, who failed to occupy the Apostolic See, is presented as a wicked and adulterous man whose vicious teachings threaten the unity of the church (chapters 1–2; references to the text below are by chapter, except as indicated). His most fervent disciple is Maurus, who is educated in necromancy and knows many languages (3). Because of his teachings, Nicolas is finally imprisoned in a tower in Rome, where he dies (4). But Maurus flees to the East. Pretending to live as a pious hermit, Maurus attracts the people of a nearby Christian town (5–6). Among them, there is a camel driver, a boy named Muhammad who becomes Maurus’s disciple (7). Muhammad is taught “science and literature of every language” (page 545). Maurus instructs him to bring two calves and a dove and teaches him how to tame and train the animals (9–10). When the king and the bishop of the Christian town have died, the devil causes a schism so that many apostatized from the Christian faith; the people are doubtful about their religion. Finally, they decide to ask Maurus for advice (11–15). Taking advantage of the people’s uncertainty, Maurus contrives a plan to make Muhammad the king of the town. Thus, he instructs Muhammad in feigning miracles making use of water and a trained bull, which is one of the animals he once tamed (16–21). After being crowned as king, Muhammad proclaims a new religion (22–23). Together with Maurus, he “create[s] a wicked heresy by combining elements from the Old and New Testament” (page 559). In the following chapters (24–25), the *Qualiter* stresses some polemic stereotypes, such as sexual licentiousness and permission for homosexuality. In a manner similar to that described in Embrico’s *Life of Muhammad*, Maurus and Muhammad tie the Qur’ān to the horns of a bull to deceive the people: they feign the appearance of an angel of God that manifests in the bull and brings the new law (25–28). Additionally, the trained dove that appears and perches on Muhammad’s shoulder is interpreted as another angel speaking to the king (28). Muhammad

also suffers an epileptic seizure (29): “Whenever he pretended to be a prophet and wished to instruct his people, the same happened to him. [. . .] and whatever fantastic and fabled words he spoke would be copied down by his miserable people” (page 567). The subsequent chapters (30–32) resemble the journey of the Prophet to the several spheres of heaven, as it is written in the *Book of the Ladder* (Arab. *Kitāb al-Mi‘rāj*), translated into Latin by Bonaventura of Siena in 1264 (page 641). After a short comment on the Islamic mission by the sword (33), the *Qualiter* again condemns Muhammad’s sexual activities (34). The last section is about the death of the Prophet (35–43). Attracted by a Jewish woman and burning with desire, Muhammad forces her to agree to sexual intercourse for one night. But the woman devises a plan to let him be killed by her relatives. After that, they cut off his left foot and leave the corpse to the pigs, who devour it entirely. The *Qualiter* derives the prohibition of pork from this episode. The Jewish woman keeps the foot and conserves it. In search for the Prophet, the Muslims finally hear the woman relate that Muhammad has been led away by angels and that his left foot remained only because she held fast to it. At the woman’s suggestion, the Muslims build a tomb for the foot. In contrast to the *Book of Nicholas*, the last sentence (44) of the *Qualiter* clearly qualifies Islam as “wicked heresy [. . .] invented through the agency of the devil” (page 579). The text largely conforms to the polemic tradition of the Latin West by harking back to legendary elements, which indicates “that it was probably meant to furnish materials for sermons, perhaps for the benefit of Dominican friars” (xxix).

The texts are accompanied by three sets of notes: the *Notes on the Text* inform readers about the sources and editions used for the constitution of Yolles and Weiss’s texts. The *Notes to the Texts* are a critical apparatus containing only few remarks. Because the apparatus is not printed below the edited texts, the critical notes do not affect the reader-friendly layout. The *Notes to the Translations* provide basic and introductory commentary and references to research as well as to other primary texts, especially the quotations from the Qur’ān and the Bible. A bibliography of primary and secondary sources lists the referenced literature and offers suggestions for further reading. It is followed by two indices: the first is a general index, the second an index of scriptural citations of both the Bible and the Qur’ān. The indices are very useful because they orient readers to the texts and make the texts much easier to handle. I have almost no critical remarks on this entirely satisfactory volume. One small point of criticism could be that in some very rare cases the commentaries are not entirely exhaustive, so one must draw on further literature,

especially for scholarly purposes. For example, the commentary on the *Apology, Reply of the Christian*, cap. 107, misses that the last sentence of the chapter refers to Qur'ān 17:88: "If the mankind and the jinn gathered in order to create the like of this Qur'ān, they could not create the like of it, even if they were assistants to each other." Of course, the editors could not provide detailed commentaries for every aspect since the volume is a text edition and not a study. Otherwise almost every text of the collection would fill an entire book.

The volume is a prudent selection because it combines prose, verse, and epistolary sources. The verse texts directly reflect how the nontheological and nonhistorical literature deals with the life of Muhammad. It is particularly commendable that the editors included the *Book of Nicholas* and the *Qualiter* in the volume because these texts have received very little scholarly attention. In general, Yolles and Weiss have published a consistent range of texts that give a holistic impression of the medieval literature about Muhammad. Other collections such as Di Cesare's repertory¹ focus on a vast variety of prose and epistolary texts but neglect poetic accounts. I hope that further volumes containing similar selections of texts about the Prophet's life will be published.

Note

1. Michelina di Cesare, *The Pseudo-historical Image of the Prophet Muhammad in Medieval Latin Literature: A Repertory*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012).

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