

18 St Macarius and the Talking Skull

Version 1

Headnotes

Source: **B** UUB C 528, f. 78v21–26 (1400–50).
Parallel texts: **C** SRA E 8900, p. 226:30–36 (1450–70).
Original text: **LegAur** 150–51.
Editions: **B** *FsvLeg* I 403; *FsvLeg* PAW II 575.

Edition (**B** UUB C 528)

- ¶ **S**anctus macharius war ok en ærmite han fan en dødhan
howdh scalla a ene mark · **O**k manadhe han ifuir gudhz nampn at sæghia sik
hwat mæn
- 3 niskio han hafðhe warit / han swara sik hedhin hafua warit / **O**k innan
hæluiti wara · **M**acharius spurdhe hwat vndi hedhnu folke ær j hælu
ti / han swaradhe at iudha **O**k nidherst vnder iudhum ær falst cristit folk
- 6 ok want :—

Translation

St Macarius was also a hermit. He found a dead skull in a field and conjured over it in the name of God to say what person it had been. Its answer[ed] that it had been

1 ¶ | om onth | cristidh folk| ¶ C; ok ... ærmite| ok en ærmi{te} B, en aff ærmetum C. 2 howdh scalla ... mark| scal{la a ene} mar{k} B, howod skalla a ødhe mark C, caput defuncti *LegAur*; manadhe ... nampn| manade a gudz wæyna C, orasset *LegAur*; at ... sik| \at sæghia sik/ B, at sighia sik C. 3 swara| swaradhe C; hedhin ... warit| wara hedhnan C; innan| j C. 3–4 **O**k ... wara| Et dixit ei Macharius: “Vbi est anima tua?” Respondit: “In inferno.” Cumque requireret si multum erat in profundo, respondit quod tantum in profundo esset quantum distaret terra a celo *LegAur*. 4 vndi ... ær| ær vnder hedno folke C. 5 at iudha| jwdha C; ær| ær/ B, ~ C. 5–6 **O**k ... want| Et ille: “Et ultra Iudeos sunt aliqui profundiores?” Cui ille: “Profundiores omnibus sunt falsi christiani qui Christi sanguine redempti tantum pretium paruipendunt.” *LegAur*; ær ... want| falst oc onth cristidh folch C.

a pagan and was in hell. Macarius asked what was below the pagans in hell. It answered that the Jews [were below the pagans] and furthest down below the Jews were the false and bad Christians.

Version 2

Headnotes

Source: A UUB C 35, pp. 184:5–185:15 (late fifteenth century).

Parallel texts: ~

Original text: ~

Edition: A SMP IV 130.

Edition (A UUB C 35)

Note: Lines 25–35 are not part of the miracle story, but rather the beginning of an exposition that explains the difference between Christians, pagans, and Jews in the eyes of God.

miraculum Swa sigx vt

aff j eno epterdømilse ok jærtekne som wj læsom

- 3 aff enom hælgom abbota som het sanctus macharius thæt
hænde j hans lifs thima ath tha han gik en
tidh vth fran clostreña ok las sina tidher vth a
- 6 markena Tha kom han a en wal gangande
huar en stridh hafde standit j fordom dagom
mellan hedninga ok cristne mæn thær fan han en
- 9 gamblan huwd skalla aff enom man ta talade
han til thæn skalla ok manade a gudz wægna
Ok badh sigia sik huat han hafde warit
- 12 j sins lifs thima tha swarade honom en røst aff
them skallanom ok sagde sik hafde warit en he
din man som thær war slagin j stridena Macharius

1 **miraculum**] |**miraculum**| A. 14 Macharius] Marchurius A.

- 15 sporde huar hans siæl war han swaradhe ok
 sagde sik wara j hæluite tha sporde abboten till
 vm nagra siæla waro diwpare j hæluite en
- 18 han aff hedningana flere hans kompana ok wider
 lika **R**østin aff skallanom swarade ok sagde at
 falska cristne mæn som widher trono tagha ok dōpilse
- 21 **O**k sidan wanwōrda gudh ok hans hælgha
 nampn *mædh* sinom fulom syndom ok misgærningom
 ok a mote thy the haffua loffuat ok skilias
- 24 the swa aff wærlдена vtan anger ok scriftamall
The æro diwpare j hæluite æn nagre hedninge
 som ocrisna æro swa mykit diwpare om thæt mō
- 27 gelikit waro ath sigia / som millan himmel ok
 jordh thætta ær rygelikit cristna folk ath tænkia
 ok ey vnderlikit for thæn stora kærleken ok go
- 30 dha wilkoret som wj haffuom aff gudi fram
 for hedninga ok juda **F**or thy war hærra gør
 en atskilnadh mellan them ok oss j swa mat
- 33 tha j sinom kærlek ok godgærninga swa som en goder
 husbonda gør millan sina legadrængia ok
 sin ælskelikin barn

Translation

A miracle

So, it is told in a parable and miracle that we read by the holy abbot who was called St Macarius. It happened during his lifetime that when he had once left the monastery and was reading his book of hours in a field, he came walking upon a field where a battle had taken place in the days of yore between pagans and Christians. There he found an old skull of a man. Then he spoke to the skull and conjured on God's behalf and commanded it to say what it had been during its life. Then a voice answered him from the skull and said that he had been a pagan who had been killed in the battle there. Macarius asked where his soul was. He answered and said that it was in hell. Then the abbot asked whether any souls were deeper in hell than those of his pagan companions and the like. The voice from the skull answered and said, "False Christians who accept the faith and

24 scriftamall] scristamall A.

baptism and then scorn God and his holy name with their vile sins and misdeeds and against what they have promised, and they depart the world without remorse and confession.”

They are deeper in hell than any pagans who are non-Christians, so much deeper – if it is possible to say – than between heaven and earth. This is plenty for Christians to think about, and [it is] not strange because of the great love and good, free will that we have received from God ahead of the pagans and Jews, because Our Lord makes a difference between them and us in such way in his love and deeds as a good husband does between his servants and his beloved children.

Version 3

Headnotes

Source: A SKB A 108, p. 58:20–30 (1400–50).

Parallel texts: ~

Original text: **SelTro** 52–53 (no. 24).

Editions: A *SjäTrö* 71; *SjäTrö* K.

Edition (A SKB A 108)

- Sanctus* macharius gig eentidh ofwer ena mark / oppa hulko han
 fan ena dødha mærniskio hofwudh skalla / han badh wan herra tee sik
 3 om *thet* ware *cristna* mærniskio hofwdh eller ey / **Oc** spordhe hofwdhit sielfft
 hwa *thet* war / hofwdhit sswaradhe / **Jak** ær eens hedhnunga hofwdh
 Macharius sagdhe / hwar ær thiin siel / hofwdhit swaradhe / min siel ær
 6 j hælfwite / Macharius spordhe hur dyupt ær hon j hælfwite / *han* swaradhe
 swa dyupt som ær fran hymblenom oc til iordhinna **Macharius** saghdhe / ær
 nokor dyupare vnder idher j hælfwite / **Hofwudhit** swaradhe / **Vnder** oss
 9 æro iwdhane / **Oc** vnder them æro onde *cristne* **aldra** dyupast / thy mit
 kæra barn lat thik thetta wara til kænnedom / hafwer thu *cristit* nampn / tha
 haff ok *cristelika* gerninga

1 eentidh] ~ *SelTro*. 2 wan herra] vnsen leuen here *SelTro*. 4 hwa] wat *SelTro*. 6 Macharius]
 he *SelTro*. 8 vnder ... hælfwite] deper wen gj *SelTro*; oss] vns heydenen *SelTro*. 9 mit] mit
 [kæ] A. 9–10 mit ... barn] Kynt leue *SelTro*.

Translation

St Macarius was once walking across a field where he found the skull of a dead person. He asked Our Lord to reveal whether it was the head of a Christian, or not. He asked the head itself who it was. The head answered, "I am the head of a pagan." Macarius said, "Where is your soul?" The head answered, "My soul is in hell." Macarius asked, "How deep is it in hell?" He answered, "As deep as it is from heaven to earth." Macarius said, "Is there anyone deeper than you in hell?" The head answered, "Below us are the Jews, and below them, deepest of all, are the bad Christians." For this reason, my dear child, let this be a lesson: if you have a Christian name, then also do Christian works!