

The King of Tars

Text is taken from *The King of Tars*, ed. by John H. Chandler, *Teams Middle English Texts* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2015), <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/chandler-the-king-of-tars>. Translation is by Alaric Hall. There are probably quite a few typos in it, so I'd appreciate any corrections!

5	<p>Herkneth to me bothe eld and ying, For Marie's love, that swete thing, Al hou a wer bigan Bituene a trewe Cristen king And an hethen heye lording, Of Dames the soudan. The king of Tars hadde a wive, Feirer might non ben olive — That ani wight telle can.</p>	<p>Listen to me, people both old and young, for the love of Mary, that sweet person, all about how a war began between an faithful Christian king and a noble heathen lord, the Sultan of Damascus. The King of Tars had a wife; there is no-one alive who is more beautiful, as anyone can see.</p>
10	<p>A douhter thai hadde hem bituen, Non feirer woman might ben — As white as fether of swan.</p>	<p>The two of them had a daughter; there couldn't be a more beautiful woman, as white as the feather of a swan.</p>
15	<p>The meiden was schast and blithe of chere With rode red so blosme on brere And eyghen stepe and gray. With lowe scholders and white swere Hir for to sen was gret preier Of princes proud and play.</p>	<p>The girl was chaste and had a cheerful look, as rosy-cheeked as a flower on a briar, and her eyes lively and pale. With elegant shoulders and a white neck, it was a great desire among proud and fun princes to look upon her.</p>
20	<p>The los of hir gan spring wide In other londes bi ich a side, So the soudan herd it say. Him thought his hert it brast ofive Bot yif he might have hir to wive That was so feir a may.</p>	<p>Her fame began to spread widely through other countries all around, until the Sultan heard of it. It seemed to him that his heart would break in five pieces unless he could have her as a wife, she was such a beautiful girl.</p>
25	<p>His messangers he gan calle And bad hem wightly wenden alle them To hir fader the king, And seyde he wald hou so it bifalle His douhter clothe in riche palle</p>	<p>He began to call his messengers and commanded them all to proceed swiftly to her father the king, and said that he wished -- by hook or by crook -- clothe his daughter in expensive fabric</p>
30	<p>And spouse hir with his ring; And yif he nold, withouten feyl, He wald hir win in batayl With mani an heye lording.</p>	<p>and marry her with his ring; and if he refused, then without question he would win her in battle against many noble lords.</p>
35	<p>The messangers forth thai went To dou the soudan's comandment Withouten ani duelling.</p>	<p>The messengers went out to fulfil the Sultan's command without any delay.</p>
40	<p>Than the king of Tars this understode Almost for wrethe he wex ner wode And seyde thus in sawe: "Bi Him that dyed on the rode, Ich wald arst spille min hert blode In bateyl to ben yslawe. Y nold hir give a Sarazin For alle the lond that is mine.</p>	<p>When the King of Tars discovered this he almost went insane from anger, and made a speech thus: "by him who died on the Cross, I would rather be slain in battle, spilling my heart's blood. I wouldn't give her to a Saracen for all the land I own.</p>
45	<p>The devel him arst to drawe, Bot sche wil with hir gode wille Be wedded to him, hirselve to spille. Hir thoughtes nought Y no knawe, "Ac Y schal wite ar than ye pas."</p>	<p>May the Devil get him instead, unless of her will she desires to marry him, to her own detriment. I do not know her views, but I will know before you depart."</p>

<p>50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100 105</p>	<p>His douhter anon was brought in plas And he axed hir bilive. "Douhter, the soudan of Damas Yernes for to se thi fas And wald thee have to wive. Waldestow, douhter, for tresour Forsake Jhesus our Saveour That suffred woundes five?" The maiden answerd with mild mod Biforn hir fader ther sche stode "Nay, lord, so mot Y thrive!</p> <p>"Jhesu mi Lord in Trinité Lat me never that day yse A tirant for to take. O God and Persones Thre One For Marie love, Thi moder fre, Gif him arst tene and wrake." The king seyde, "Douhter, be stille. Thou schalt never be wedded him tille For no bost he can make. Y schal him sende word ogein That alle his thoughtes ben in vein, For thou hast him forsake."</p> <p>Right be the self messengers That com fro the soudan fers This wordes he him sent: That sche leved nought on his maners, Sche nold nought leten hir preiers To God omnipotent. He bad him tak another thought, For of his douhter no tit him nought For tresore no for rent. The messengers herd him thus seyn; With that word thai turned ogain And to the soudan thai went.</p> <p>As the soudan sat at his des, Yserved of the first mes, Thai com into the halle. Bifor tho princes prout in pres Her tale to telle withouten les On knes thai gun doun falle. Thai seyde, "Sir, the king of Tars Of wicked wordes is nought scars. 'Hethen hounde' he gan thee calle; And ar he give his douhter thee tille, Thine hert blod he will spille, And thine barouns alle."</p> <p>When the soudan this wordes herd Also a wilde bore he ferde. His robe he rent adoun; His here he rent of heved and berd; He schuld venge him with his swerd, He swore bi Seyn Mahoun. The table so hetelich he smot It fel in to the flore fot-hot And loked as a lyoun.</p>	<p>In due course, his daughter was brought to that place, and immediately he asked her. "Daughter, the Sultan of Damascus longs to see your face, and desires you as his wife. Would you, daughter, forsake for treasure our saviour Jesus, who suffered five wounds?" The girl answered with a gentle heart where she stood before her father: "No, lord, hand on heart!</p> <p>May Jesus, my Trinitarian lord, never let me see the day that a tyrant receives me. O God, three persons in one, for the love of Mary, your noble mother, give him instead rage and revenge." The king said "daughter, be calm. You will never be married to him, whatever boasts he makes. I will send him word back that all his dreams are in vain, because you have refused him."</p> <p>Via the very same messengers who came from the fierce sultan, he sent him these words: that she did not believe in his customs; she did not wish to abandon her prayers to omnipotent God. He bade him think again, because he had no claim on his daughter either for payment nor rents. The messengers hear him speak thus; with that response they turned away and went to the Sultan.</p> <p>As the Sultan sat on his dais, with the first course served, they entered the hall. They fell down on their knees to tell their story without any lies before the those princes, proud in battle. They said "sir, the King of Tars does not lack for evil word. He was calling you 'heathen dog', and before will give his daughter to you he will spill your heart's blood, and all your barons' too."</p> <p>When the Sultan heard these words he behaved like a wild boar. He tore apart his robe, he tore his hair from his head and bears, he swore by Saint Mahoun that he would take revenge by the sword. He hit the table so violently that it fell straight to the floor, and he looked like a lion.</p>
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	Al that he raught he smot down right — Serjaunt, squier, clerk, and knight, Bothe erl and baroun.	Everything he touched he knocked right over — servants, squires, clerics and knights; earls and barons too.
110	Al thus the soudan ferd, yplight; Al that day and alle that night No man might him schast. Amorwe when it was light, His messangers he sent ful right For his barouns wel fast	The Sultan went on this way all that day and all that night; no-one could restrain him. The next day, when it was light, he sent his messengers, oh yes, to his reliable barons,
115	That thai com to his parlement Forto heren his jugement, Bothe lest and mast. When the parlement was pleyner, Tho bispac the soudan fer	both the lesser and the greater, so that they came to a council to hear his opinion. When all the council was assembled, then the fierce Sultan spoke, and in haste said to them:
120	And seyde to hem in hast: “Lordings,” he seyde, “what to red. Me hath ben don a gret misdede Of Tars the Cristen king! Y bede him bothe lond and lede	"Lords", he said, "what to do? The Christian King of Tars has done me a great wrong. I offered him both land and people, honourably, for his daughter in marriage, to have married her with a ring, and he sent me word back that I should rather be killed in battle, along with many a noble lord. For certain he must be disproved. To misfortune he was destined then, and I will bring it about.
125	For his douhter worthliche in wede To han wed hir with ring, And he me sent word ogain In bateyl Y schuld arst be sleyn And mani an heye lording!	
130	And certes he schal be forsworn. Wrotherhele than was he been Bot Y therto it bring.	
135	“And therefore ich have after you sent And assembled herer this parlement To wite your conseyle.” And alle thai seyde with gode entent Thai were at his comandment, Certeyn withouten feile.	And so I have sent for you and assembled this council here to hear your advice." And they all said — and they meant it — that they were at his command, for sure and without fail. They should be all prepared two weeks from that day with helmets and coats of mail. And when they were thus at his command that Sultan made a lavish feast in celebration of his army.
140	Right bi that day a fourtennight Thai schul ben alle redi dight With helme, hauberk of meile. And whan thai were so at his hest The soudan made a riche fest For love of his bateyle.	
145	The soudan gaderd a rout unride Of Sarrazins of michel pride Upon the king to wende. The king of Tars herd that tide; He gadred his ost bi ich a side,	The Sultan gathered a gigantic company of very proud Saracens to go against the king. The King of Tars heard that news; he gathered his army from every direction — everyone that he could summon. Then anger began to grow so that marriage might not seize that fair maiden. They set a day for the battle, Saint Helen's day, the third of May: they didn't wish to wait longer.
150	Al that he might ofsende. Than bigan wretthe to wake For that mariage might nought take Of that maiden hende. Of bateyl thai gun sett a day, Of Seynt Eline the thridde in May, No lenger no wald thai lende.	
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160	The soudan com with his pouwer With bright armour and brod baner, Into the feld to fight With sexti thousand Sarrazins fer,	The Sultan came with his might, with bright armour and a broad banner, onto the field of battle, with sixty thousand fierce Saracens,

165	<p>That alle the felde fer and ner With helmes lemed light. The king of Tars com with his ost, With gret pride and michel bost, With mani an hardi knight, And aither ost gan other aseyle. Ther might men se a strong bateyle That grimli was of sight.</p>	<p>so that every field, near and far, gleamed with helmets. The King of Tars came with his arms, with great pride and boasting, with many resolute knights, and each army began to attack the other. There you could see a hard battle, that was fearsome to behold.</p>
170	<p>Ther hewe houndes on Cristen men¹ And feld hem down bi nighen and ten; So wilde thai were and wode That men might sen alle the fen Of Cristen both fremd and ken, The valays ren on blod.</p>	<p>There dogs chopped at Chrisian people, and felled them in nines and tens: they were so wild and enraged that you could see the they valleys run with the blood of the whole morass of Christians, both friends and strangers.</p>
175	<p>The soudan and his folk that stounde Hewe adoun with grimli wounde Mani a frely rode. Allas, to wele sped Mahoun! The Cristen men yede al adoun Was nought that hem withstode.</p>	<p>The Sultan and his people at that moment chop down, with fearsome wounds, many noble foray. Alas! Mahoun did too well! The Christian men conceded the fight: nothing withstood their enemies.</p>
180	<p>The king of Tars seye that sight; For wretthe he was neye wode, aflight. He hent in hond a spere And to the soudan he rode ful right. With a stroke o michel might, To grounde he gan him bere. Ther he hadde the soudan slawe Ac ten thousand of hethen lawe Saved him in that were — Thai sett him on a ful gode stede That was so gode at everi nede That no man might him dere.</p>	<p>The King of Tars saw that sight; he was nearly mad with anger, oh yes. In his hand he held a spear, and role straight at the Sultan. With a stroke of great force, he brought him to the ground. He would have slain the Sultan there, but ten thousand of the heathen faith saved him in that war: they put him on a fine steed, that was so excellent in all circumstances that no-one could harm him.</p>
185	<p>And when he was opon his stede, Him thought he brend so spark on glede For ire and for envie. He faught so he wald wede: Alle that he hit he maked blede. “Help, Mahoun!” he gan crie. Mani helme ther was ofweved And mani bacinet tocleved And saddles fel emtye; Mani swerd and mani scheld And mani knight lay in the feld Of Cristen compeynie.</p>	<p>And once he was on his steed, it seemed like he was burning, like a spark among coals, from anger and from spite. He fought as if he was going to go insane: everything he struck he made bleed. "Help, Mahoun!", he began to shout. Many helmets were cut off there, and many bascinets cloven in two, and saddles left empty; many swords and many shields and many knights of the Christian force lay in the field.</p>
195	<p>The king of Tars seye him so ride He fleye and durst nought abide Homward to his cité The Sarrazins folwed in that tide And slough adoun bi ich aside That Cristen folk so fre.</p>	<p>The King of Tars sees his foe ride thus, so he dared not wait and fled homewards to his city. The Saracens follwed at once and cut down, on every side, that noble Christian army.</p>
200	<p>Thritti thousand ther were yslawe Of knightes of Cristen lawe And that was gret pité. Amorwe for her bother sake Trewes thai gun bituen hem take A moneth and dayes thre.</p>	<p>Thirty thousand knights of Christian faith were slain there — and that was a great shame. The next morning, for both their sakes, they began to establish a truce between them, for a month and three days.</p>

<p>220</p> <p>225</p> <p>230</p> <p>235</p> <p>240</p> <p>245</p> <p>250</p> <p>255</p> <p>260</p> <p>265</p> <p>270</p>	<p>On a day, the king sat in his halle And made grete diol with alle, For his folk were forlore. His douhter com clad in palle Adoun on knes sche gan to falle And seyde with sikeing sore, "Sir, lete me be the soudan's wiif And rere na more cuntrek no striif As hath ben here bifore. For me hath mani man ben schent, Cités nomen and tounes brent; Allas that ich was bore!</p> <p>"Fader, Y wil serve at wille The soudan, bothe loude and stille, And leve on God almighty, Bot it so be, he schal thee spille And alle thi lond take him tille With bateyle and with fight. Certes Y nil no lenger dreye That Cristen folk for me dye — It were a diolful sight!" The king of Tars answerd tho, As man that was in sorwe and wo, Unto that bird bright:</p> <p>"Now douhter, blisced mot thou be Of Jhesu Crist in Trinité The time that thou were bore. For thou wilt save thi moder and me, Al thi preier graunt Y thee, Astow hast seyde bifore." "Fader," sche seyde withouten duelling, "For Jhesu's love, Heven king, Yif it thi wille wore, Do now swithe that Y war there Ar ani more sorwe arere That ye be nought forlore."</p> <p>The king of Tars with gode entent Hastilich after his wiif he sent, That levedi that was so hende. When sche was comen in present He seyde, "Dame, our douhter hath ment To the soudan to wende. Do loke what rede is now at thee, For now er here bot we thre To save Cristen kende." The quene answerd withouten feile "Y no schal never therto conseyle Our douhter forto schende."</p> <p>The maiden was ful of sorwe and wo. "Merci," sche crid hir moder tho With a wel reweful steven. "Moder, it is nought long ago For me were slawe knightes thro, Thritti thousande and seven. Forthi Y wil suffre no lenger thrawe</p>	<p>One day, the King was sitting in his hall, and was very mournful, because his people were going to lose. His daughter came to him, dressed in rich cloth; she fell down on her knees and said with heavy sighs "Sir, let me be the Sultan's wife, and raise no more violence or strife like we have been experiencing. For my sake have many men have been killed, cities seized, and towns burned; alas that I was born!</p> <p>Father, I will do the Sultan's desire, in rage and calm, and trust in God Almighty, in case your enemy destroys you and take possession of all your land through battle and fighting. For sure, I will no longer tolerate Christian people dying for me: it was a wretched sight." Then the King of Tars answered, like a man who was in the depths of sorrow, to that radiant girl:</p> <p>"Blessed be, my daughter, the time when you were born, by Jesus Christ in Trinity! Since you wish to save your mother and me I agree to all your requests that you have just uttered." "Father", she said without delay, "for the love of Jesus, Heaven's king, if it be your will, arrange it forthrightly so that I am there, before any more sorrow rears its head and you are totally lost."</p> <p>The King of Tars resolutely sent swiftly for his wife, the lady who was so fair. When she was in his presence he said "Lady, our daughter has decided to marry the Sultan. Consider the decision that is now before you, since now only the three of us here can save the Christian people." The Queen answered forthrightly: "I shall never, ever advise that we destroy our daughter."</p> <p>The girl was full of sorrow and grief. "Mercy!" she cried to her mother then, with a truly rueful voice. "Mother, not long ago thirty-seven thousand excellent knights were killed for me. Therefore I will no longer endure</p>
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<p>275</p> <p>280</p> <p>285</p> <p>290</p> <p>295</p> <p>300</p> <p>305</p> <p>310</p> <p>315</p> <p>320</p> <p>325</p>	<p>That Cristen folk be for me slawe, With the grace of God in Heven.” Thus, the maiden with wordes stille Brought hem bothe in better wille With resoun right and even.</p> <p>And when thai were thus at on, Messangers thai sent anon Unto that riche soudan, To make his frende that were his fon; And for he schuld his men nought slou, His douhter he graunt him than. The messangers nold no leng abide; To the soudan thai went that tide And thus thai tel him gan. When tho letters weren yradde, The soudan was bothe blithe and glad, And so was mani a man.</p> <p>So glad he was in al maners He cleped to him of his pers Doukes, princes, and kinges. Into a chaumber thai went yfers To dight unto the messangers Gode stones and riche ringes. Bi conseyl of the lordinges alle, The soudan dede bring into the halle Giftes and riche thinges, And gaf to hem grete plenté, To the messangers, with hert fre And thonked hem her tidinges.</p> <p>And seyde he was alle at his wille, Arliche and late, loude and stille, To helpe him at his nede; No more folk nold he spille. The messangers went the king till And told him of that dede. The king and the quene also Bothen hem was wele and wo, In rime also we rede. Gret joie thai hadde withouten les For that the soudan wald have pes On Cristen felawerede.</p> <p>The first day of Julii tide, The soudan nold no leng abide; To the king of Tars he sent Knightes fele and michel pride And riche jewels is nought to hide To gif to his present. The messangers, withouten duelling, Com to Tars bifor the king To have his douhter gent. Thai welcomed hem with glad chere — Of gret pité now may ye here — To chaumber when thai went.</p> <p>Thai maden cri and michel wo For thai schuld her douhter forgo</p>	<p>Christian people being killed for me, by the grace of God in Heaven.” Thus the girl, with calm words, brought them both to a better desire, with true and balanced reasoning.</p> <p>And when they were thus in accord they sent messengers forthwith to that powerful sultan: to make his enemy his friend and to prevent him killing his men, he granted him his daughter then. The messengers didn't hang about: they went right away to the Sultan and began to inform him accordingly. When the letters had been read, the Sultan was both glad and happy, and so were many others.</p> <p>He was so happy in all respects that he summoned his fellow nobles — dukes, princes, and kings. They gathered together in a chamber to prepare precious stones and luxurious rings for the messengers. On the advice of all the lords the Sultan brought gifts and expensive objects into the hall, and gave the messengers a plenitude, with noble heart, and thanked them for their news,</p> <p>and said that he was entirely at the other man's desire, early and late, rage or calm, to help him in his need. He would kill no more people. The messengers went to the King and told him about that deed. The King and Queen too were both happy and sad, as we read in the poem. They had great joy, without a lie, because the Sultan wanted to have peace with the Christian company.</p> <p>On the first day of July the Sultan wished to wait no longer; he sent many knights and great glory and expensive jewels, without any catch, to give as a gift to the King of Tars. The messengers, without delay, came before the king in Tars to have his noble daughter. When they went to the chamber, they welcomed them with glad faces — you are now going to hear a very sorrowful matter.</p> <p>They uttered cries and great sorrow, because they would have to give up their daughter</p>
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<p>330</p> <p>335</p> <p>340</p> <p>345</p> <p>350</p> <p>355</p> <p>360</p> <p>365</p> <p>370</p> <p>375</p> <p>380</p>	<p>And to the soudan hir sende. The maiden preyd hem bothe tho That thai schuld bi her conseyl do, To saven Cristen kende. "For Y wil suffre no lenger thrawe That Cristen folk be for me slawe." To halle thai gun wende And welcomed tho messangers That com fro the soudan fers With wordes fre and hende.</p> <p>Than seyde the quen to hem than, "Hou fareth your lord, the soudan, That is so noble a knight?" The messangers answeere gan "He farth as wele as ani man, And is your frende apleight." The quen seyde with milde chere, "Wele better thei mi douhter were, Bi Jhesu ful of might. Mi douhter is noght to him to gode; Y vouchesave on him mi blode, Thei sche were ten so bright."⁶</p> <p>The messangers dight hem swithe With knightes fele and stedes stithe And brought hir into chare. The king and the quen were unblithe, Her sorwe couthe thai no man kithe When thai seye hir forth fare. Into chaumber thai went tho When thai were togider bothe to Than wakened alle her care.</p> <p>The king was in sorwe bounde; The quen swoned mani a stounde For her douhter dere. Knightes and levedis ther hem founde And tok hem up hole and sounde, And comfort hem in fere. Thus the quen and the king Lived in sorwe and care, morning; Great diol it was to here. Her care was ever aliche newe, Hem chaunged bothe hide and hewe⁷ For sorwe and reweli chere.</p> <p>Nou late we ben alle her morning, And telle we of that maiden ying That to the soudan is fare. He com with mani gret lording Forto welcome that swete thing When sche was brought in chare. He kist hir wel mani a sithe; His joie couthe he no man kithe — Oway was alle his care. Into chaumber sche was ladde, And richeliche sche was cladde As hethen wiman ware.</p>	<p>if they sent her to the Sultan. Then the maiden begged them both that they should follow her advice to save the Christian people. "Because I will no longer endure this time when Christian men are slain for me." They proceeded to the hall and welcomes those messengers who came from the fierce Sultan with noble and fair words.</p> <p>Then the Queen said to them "how is your lord the Sultan doing, he who is such a noble knight?" The messengers proceeded to answer: "he's doing as well as anyone, and has pledged his friendship to you." The Queen said, with a gentle expression, "even if my daughter would be better off though Jesus, full of might — my daughter it not too noble for him, I swear it by my own blood, even if she were ten times more beautiful."</p> <p>The messengers prepared themselves quickly with many knights and strong horses and led her into a carriage. The King and Queen were unhappy — they could make their sorrow known to no-one — when they saw her travel off. Then, when the two of them were together, they went into their chamber and their worries all awoke.</p> <p>The King was wrapped in sorrow; the Queen fainted over and over on account of her dear daughter. Knights and ladies found them there and steadied them and healed them, and comfort them with company. So the King and Queen lived in sorrow and anxiety, mourning: it was sorrowful to hear. Their worries were continually renewed; both their skin and their colour changed because of their sadness and rueful mood.</p> <p>Now we'll leave off their mourning, and tell of that young maiden, who has gone to the Sultan. He came with many great lords to welcome that sweet girl when she was brought in the carriage. He kissed her a great many times; no-one could reckon his joy; all his cares had vanished. She was led into a chamber, and was arrayed richly, in the style of heathen women.</p>
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<p>385 390</p>	<p>Whan sche was cladde in riche palle, The soudan dede his knightes calle And badde that maiden forth fett. And when sche com into the halle, Bifor the heyghe lordinges alle, Toform the soudan thai hir sett. Gret diol it was forto se, The bird that was so bright on ble 390 To have so foule a mett. Thei that sche made gret solas The sorwe that at hir hert was No might it noman lett.</p>	<p>When she was dressed in fine fabric, the Sultan assembled his knights, and had the maiden brought out, and when she came into the hall, before all the noble lords, they set her in front of the Sultan. It was very sad to see that girl, so radiant in appearance, having such a hideous mate. Although she pretended to be very cheerful no-one could have stopped the sorrow that was in her heart.</p>
<p>395 400 405</p>	<p>And whan it was comen to night, The levedi that was so feir and bright, To chamber sche gan wende. And therin anon Y you plight, A riche bed ther was ydight Unto that levedi hende. 400 The levedi was to bed ybrought; The soudan wild com therin nought Noither for fo no frende — For nothing wold he neyghe that may Til that sche leved opon his lay, 405 That was of Cristen kende.</p>	<p>And when night had come, the lady who was so fair and beautiful, proceeded to her chamber. And I assure you that there a splendid bed was arrayed for that gracious lady. The lady was brought to the bed; the Sultan did not want to come in there, whether for friend or foe, because he didn't want to approach that maiden who was of the Christian people until she believed in his religion.</p>
<p>410 415</p>	<p>Wel lothe war a Cristen man To wedde an hethen woman That leved on fals lawe; Als loth was that soudan 410 To wed a Cristen woman, As Y finde in mi sawe. The soudan yede to bed al prest, Knightes and levedis yede to rest; The pople hem gan withdrawe. 415 That miri maiden litel slepe, Bot al night wel sore sche wepe Til the day gan dawe.</p>	<p>A Christian man would be very unwilling to marry a heathen woman who believed in a false religion: just as unwilling was that Sultan to marry a Christian woman, as I have heard tell. The Sultan went to bed right away; knights and ladies went to rest; everyone began to withdraw. That pretty girl slept little, weeping hard all night, until day began to dawn.</p>
<p>420 425</p>	<p>And als sche fel on slepe thore Her thought ther stode hir bifore 420 An hundred houndes blake, And bark on hir lasse and more. And on ther was that greved hir sore, Oway that wald hir take. And sche no durst him nought smite 425 For drede that he wald hir bite, Swiche maistri he gan to make. And as sche wald fram hem fle, Sche seye ther stond develen thre And ich Brent as a drake.</p>	<p>And as she fell asleep there it seemed to her that one hundred black dogs stood before her, each and every one of them barking at her, and there was one that troubled her greatly that wanted to take her away; and she didn't dare strike him for fear that he would bite her, since he was making such a palaver, and just as she wanted to flee from them, she saw three devils standing there, each burning like a dragon.</p>
<p>430 435</p>	<p>So lothliche thai were al ywrought, And ich in hond a gleive brought, Sche was aferd ful sore. On Jhesu Crist was alle hir thought; Therefore the fendes derd hir nought; 435 Noither lesse no more. Fro the fendes sche passed sounde, And afterward ther com an hounde</p>	<p>They were so hideous in form, each holding a glaive in its hand, that she was sorely afraid. She concentrated firmly on Jesus Christ: therefore the devils did not harm her in any way, shape or form. She proceeded safely from the devils, and afterward a dog came</p>

440	<p>With browes brod and hore. Almost he hadde hir drawn adoun Ac thurth Jhesu Cristes passioun Sche was ysaved thore.</p>	<p>with broad, grey brows. He had almost pulled her down, but she was saved there by Jesus Christ's crucifixion.</p>
445	<p>Yete hir thought withouten lesing Als sche lay in hir swevening (That selcouthe was to rede)</p>	<p>But she thought — I tell no lie — while she lay dozing (strange it was to say)</p>
445	<p>That blac hounde hir was folweing. Thurth might of Jhesu, Heven king, Spac to hir in manhede</p>	<p>that that black dog was following her. Through the power of Jesus, the king of Heaven, it spoke to her in human form, dressed like a knight in white clothes,</p>
450	<p>In white clothes als a knight, And seyde to hir, "Mi swete wight, No tharf thee nothing drede Of Ternagaunt no of Mahoun. Thi Lord that suffred passioun Schal help thee at thi nede."</p>	<p>and said to her "my sweet thing, you don't need to fear Ternagaunt or Mahoun at all. Your Lord who suffered crucifixion will help you in your need."</p>
455	<p>And when the maiden was awaked, For drede of that, wel sore sche quaked, For love of her swevening.</p>	<p>And when the girl had awoken she shook greatly for fear and for love of her dream.</p>
460	<p>On hir bed sche sat al naked; To Jhesu hir preier sche maked, Almighty Heven king.</p>	<p>She sat, entirely naked, on her bed; she prayed to Jesus, the almighty king of Heaven.</p>
465	<p>As wis as He hir dere bought Of that swevening in slepe sche thought Schuld turn to gode ending. And when the maiden risen was The riche soudan of Damas To his temple he gan hir bring.</p>	<p>As certainly as he redeemed her at a high cost, she thought a good ending would come about, on the basis of her dream. Once the girl had got up, the powerful Sultan of Damascus proceeded to bring her to his temple.</p>
470	<p>Than seyde the soudan to that may, "Thou most bileve opon mi lay And knele now here adoun And forsake thi fals lay That thou hast leved on mani a day, And anour Seyn Mahoun! And certes, bot thou wilt anon, Thi fader Y schal with wer slon Bi Jovin and Plotoun!</p>	<p>Then the Sultan said to that girl "you must believe in my religion and kneel down here now and abandon your false religion that you have believed in for so long, and worship Saint Mahoun! And be sure that unless you do, I will slay your father in war, by Jove and Pluto!</p>
475	<p>And bi Mahoun and Ternagant Ther schal no man ben his waraunt — Empour no king with croun."</p>	<p>And, by Mahoun and Ternagant, no-one will stand in his defence, neither emperor nor king with crown."</p>
480	<p>The maiden answerd with mild chere To the soudan as ye may here: "Sir, Y nil thee nought greve. Teche me now and lat me here Hou Y schal make mi preiere When ich on hem bileve.</p>	<p>The girl replied to the Sultan with a gentle expression, as you can hear: "Sir, I do not wish to trouble you. Teach me now and let me hear how I should go about praying when I believe in them.</p>
485	<p>To Mahoun ichil me take And Jhesu Crist mi Lord forsake, That made Adam and Eve, And seththen serve thee at wille Arliche and lat, loude and stille, A morwe and an eve."</p>	<p>I will turn myself to Mahoun and abandon my lord Jesus Christ who made Adam and Eve, and afterwards you as you wish, early and late, rage or calm, morning and evening,</p>
490	<p>Than was the soudan glad and blithe, And thanked Mahoun mani sithe That sche was so biknawe.</p>	<p>Then the Sultan was happy and cheerful, and thanked Mahoun many times that she was so sensible —</p>

<p>495</p> <p>500</p> <p>505</p> <p>510</p> <p>515</p> <p>520</p> <p>525</p> <p>530</p> <p>535</p> <p>540</p> <p>545</p>	<p>His joie couthe he no man kithe; He bad hir gon and kis swithe Alle thine godes on rawe. Sche kist Mahoun and Apolin, Astirot and Sir Jovin. For drede of wordes awe, And while sche was in the temple Of Ternagant and Jubiter, Sche lerd the hethen lawe.</p> <p>And thei sche al the lawes couthe And seyde hem openliche with hir mouthe, Jhesu forgat sche nought.</p> <p>Wher that sche was, bi northe or southe, No minstrel with harp no crouthe No might chaunge hir thought. The soudan wende night and day That sche hadde leved upon his lay</p> <p>Bot al he was bicought, For when sche was bi herselfeon, To Jhesu sche made hir mon, That alle this world hath wrought.</p> <p>The soudan dede cri that tide Overal bi ich a side A turnament to take And duhti men on hors to ride, And dubbed hem in that tide And knightes gan he make.</p> <p>The trumpes gun forto blowe; Knightes priked out o rouwe On stedes white and blake. Ther might men se sone and swithe, Strong men her strengthe kithe For that maiden sake.</p> <p>The Cristen maiden and the soudan In the castel leyen than The turnament to bihold. And tho the turnament bigan, Ther was samned mani a man Of Sarrazins stout and bold. To sen ther was a semly sight Of thritti thousand of helmes bright (In gest as it is told).</p> <p>Thai leyden on as thai were wrothe With swerdes and with maces bothe Knightes bothe yong and old.</p> <p>Wel mani helme ther was ofweved And mani bacinet tocleved And knightes driven to grounde. Sum ther fel down on her heved And sum in the diche lay todreved And siked sore unsounde. The turnament last tho yplight Fram the morwe to the night Of men of michel mounde; Amorwe the soudan wedded that may In the maner of his lay,</p>	<p>he couldn't express his joy. He asked her to go and straight away kiss all those gods in a row. She kissed Mahoun and Apollo, Astirot and Sir Jove. Out of fear of general scorn, and while she was in the temple of Ternagant and Jupiter, she learned the heathen religion.</p> <p>But though they taught her all the laws and she said them publically out loud she did not forget Jesus. Wherever she was, north or south, no minstrel with either harp nor crowther could change her mind. The Sultan totally believed that she had converted to his religion, but he was entirely deceived because when she was all alone she made her complaint to Jesus, who created all of this world.</p> <p>At that time, the Sultan announced everywhere, far and wide, that he would hold a tournament, with strong men riding horses, and at that event he dubbed them, making people knights. The trumpets began to blow; knights spurred their way into a row on white and black steeds. Straight away, people could see there strong men demonstrating their might for the sake of that girl.</p> <p>Then the Christian maiden and the Sultan was staying in the castle to watch the tournament. And when the tournament began many of the stout, bold Saracens where gathered together. It was a fair sight to see, with thirty thousand bright helmets (as is recounted in the tale). Knights, both young and old, set to with both swords and maces as if they were insane.</p> <p>Many helmets were knocked off here, and many bascinets cloven in two and knights knocked to the ground. Some fell on their heads, and some lay scattered in ditches, groaning with the pain of wounds. As promised, the tournament between men of great prowess lasted from the morning to the night. The next morning, the Sultan married that maiden according to his religion,</p>
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	In gest as it is founde.	as the story tells.
550	Atte his bridale was noble fest, Riche, real, and onest — Doukes, kinges with croun. For ther was melodi with the mest Of harp and fithel and of gest	At the wedding was a glorious feast, luxurious, royal, and seemly, dukes and crowned kings — since there was the greatest music-playing on harps and fiddles, recounting deeds to famous lords.
555	To lordinges of renoun. Ther was geven to the menstrels Robes riche and mani juweles Of erl and of baroun. The fest lasted fourteenight	The minstrels were given rich robes and many jewels by earls and barons. The feast lasted two weeks, with plenty of food and drink, oh yes, a plenitude and great abundance.
560	With mete and drink anough, aflight Plenté and gret fousoun. That levedi, so feir and so fre, Was with hir lord bot monethes thre Than he gat hir with childe.	That lady, so beautiful and noble, with with her husband just three months before he got her pregnant. When it was conceived, her appearance changed; the Sultan himself began to see that — he was joyful and ecstatic. While she was pregnant, oh yes, she asked Jesus, full of might, that he should shield her from shame. At the end of forty weeks the lady was delivered of her burden through the help of Mary mild.
565	When it was geten, sche chaunged ble; The soudan himself that gan se — Jolif he was and wilde. Ther while sche was with child, aflight, Sche bad to Jhesu ful of might	When it was conceived, her appearance changed; the Sultan himself began to see that — he was joyful and ecstatic. While she was pregnant, oh yes, she asked Jesus, full of might, that he should shield her from shame. At the end of forty weeks the lady was delivered of her burden through the help of Mary mild.
570	Fram schame He schulde hir schilde. Atte fourti woukes ende The levedi was deliverd o bende8 Thurth help of Mari milde. And when the child was ybore, Wel sori wimen were therfore, For lim no hadde it non, Bot as a rond of flesche yschore In chaumber it lay hem bifore Withouten blod and bon.	And when the child was born, women were very sad about that, because it has no limbs: rather it lay before them in the chamber as like a lump of butchered flesh without either blood or bones. The lady wanted to die, she was so sad, because it had neither nose nor eyes and instead lay stone-dead. The Sultan came to the chamber at that moment, and began to blame his wife so that she was beset with sorrow.
575	For sorwe the levedi wald dye, For it hadde noither nose no eye Bot lay ded as the ston. The soudan com to chaumber that tide And with his wiif he gan to chide	The lady wanted to die, she was so sad, because it had neither nose nor eyes and instead lay stone-dead. The Sultan came to the chamber at that moment, and began to blame his wife so that she was beset with sorrow.
580	That wo was hir bigon. "O dame," he seyd biforn, "Ogain mi godes thou art forsworn! With right resoun Y preve The childe that is here of thee born Bothe lim and lith it is forlorn Alle thurth thi fals bileve! Thou levest nought wele afine On Jubiter no on Apoline, A morwe na an eve,	"O lady", he declared, "you are cursed by my gods! With clear reasoning I perceive that the child, born here of you is deprived of both limbs and joints all because of your false beliefs. You do not believe properly in Jupiter or in Apollo, neither morning nor evening, nor in Mahoun or in Termagant. And so this little child is lost — no wonder they are afflicting me!"
585	No in Mahoun no in Ternagant. Therefore is lorn this litel faunt. No wonder thei me greve!"	neither morning nor evening, nor in Mahoun or in Termagant. And so this little child is lost — no wonder they are afflicting me!"
590	The levedi answerd and seyd tho, Ther sche lay in care and wo, "Leve sir, lat be that thought; The child was geten bitwen ous to. For thi bileve it farth so, Bi Him that ous hath wrought!	The lady answered then and said, as she lay in worry and misery, "honorable sir, put away that thought: the child was conceived by both of us. Therefore, believe that it has gone this way through him who created us.
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<p>605</p> <p>610</p> <p>615</p> <p>620</p> <p>625</p> <p>630</p> <p>635</p> <p>640</p> <p>645</p> <p>650</p> <p>655</p>	<p>Take now this flesche and bere it anon Bifor thine godes everichon That thou no lete it nought, And pray thine godes al yfere, Astow art hem leve and dere, To live that it be brought.</p> <p>“And yif Mahoun and Jovin can Make it fourmed after a man With liif and limes aright, Bi Jhesu Crist that this warld wan Y schal leve thee better than That thai ar ful of might. And bot thai it to live bring Y nil leven on hem nothing Noither bi day no night.” The soudan toke that flesche anon Into his temple he gan to gon Ther his godes were dight.</p> <p>Biforn his goddes he gan it leyn And held up his honden tuein, While men might go five mile.⁹ “A, mightyful Mahoun,” he gan to seyn, “And Ternagaunt, of michel meyn, In you was never no gile. Seyn Jubiter and Apolin, Astirot and Seyn Jovin, Help now in this perile.” Oft he kneled and oft he ros And crid so long til he was hos And al he tint his while.</p> <p>And when he hadde al ypreyd, And alle that ever he couthe he seyde, The flesche lay stille as ston. Anon he stert up at a breyd, And in his hert he was atreyd, For lim no hadde it non.</p> <p>He biheld on his godes alle And seye ther might no bot bifalle; Wel wo was him bigon. “O Sir Mahoun,” he gan to grede, “Wil ye nought helpe me at this nede? The devel you brenne ichon!”</p> <p>He hent a staf with grete hete And stirt anon his godes to bete And drough hem alle adoun, And leyde on til he gan to swete And gaf hem strokes gode and gret, Both Jovine and Plotoun. And alder best he bete afin Jubiter and Apolin, And brac hem arm and croun, And Ternagaunt that was her brother — He no lete never a lime with other No of his god Mahoun.</p> <p>And when he hadde beten hem gode won</p>	<p>Take this flesh now and then carry it in front of each of your gods, without sparing any effort, and pray to all your gods together, that since you are beloved and dear to them it may be brought to life.</p> <p>And if Mahoun and Jove can make it into human form with life and proper limbs, then by Jesus Christ who saved this world I shall believe even more than you that they are full of strength. But unless they bring it to life, I won't believe in them at all, either by day or by night.” Right away, the Sultan took that flesh; he proceeded into his temple where his gods were arrayed.</p> <p>He laid it down before his gods and held up his two hands for as long as it takes to walk five miles. "O mighty Mahoun", he began to say, "and Ternagaunt, of great strength, you never had any guile. Saint Jupiter and Apollo, Astirot and Saint Jove, help now in this danger!" Often he knelt and often he stood and cried so long that he grew hoarse, and was totally wasting his time.</p> <p>And when he had prayed thoroughly and said everything that he knew, the flesh lay as still as a stone. Then he stood straight up and was troubled in his heart, because it had no limbs. He looked upon all his gods and saw that no help was happening; he was very wretched. "O Sir Mahoun", he began to cry, "won't you help me in this need? May the Devil burn you all!"</p> <p>He seized a staff with great rage and immediately began to beat his gods and pulled them all down and kept going until he broke into a sweat and hit them well and hard — both Jove and Pluto. And most thoroughly of all he beat Jupiter and Apollo and smashed their arms and heads, along with Termagaunt their brother. he didn't leave a limb on any of them, nor on his god Mahoun.</p> <p>And when he had beaten them thoroughly,</p>
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<p>660</p> <p>665</p> <p>670</p> <p>675</p> <p>680</p> <p>685</p> <p>690</p> <p>695</p> <p>700</p> <p>705</p> <p>710</p>	<p>Yete lay the flesche stille so ston, An heye on his auter. He tok it in his hond anon And into chaumber he gan gon, And seyde, "Lo, have it here. Ich have don al that Y can To make it fourmed after a man With kneleing and preier, And for alle that ichave hem bisought Mine godes no may help me nought. The devel hem sett afere!"</p> <p>And than answerd that gode wiman Wel hendeliche to that soudan: "Leve sir, here mi speche. The best rede that Y can, Bi Jhesu Crist that made man, Now ichil you teche. Now thou hast proved god thine, Yif me leve to asay mine Whether is better leche. And, leve sir, prey thee this: Leve on Him that stronger is For doute of more wreche."</p> <p>The soudan answerd hir thore. In hert he was agreved sore, To sen that selcouthe sight. "Now, dame, ichil do bi thi lore. Yif that Y may se bifore Thi God is of swiche might With ani vertu that He can Make it fourmed after a man, With liif and limes aright, Alle mi godes ichil forsake And to Jhesu thi Lord me take, As icham gentil knight."</p> <p>Wel blithe was the levedi than For that hir lord the riche soudan Hadde graunted hir preier. For hope he schuld be Cristen man, Sche thonked Him that this world wan And Mari His moder dere. Now ginneth here a miri pas Hou that child ycristned was With limes al hole and fere, And hou the soudan of Damas Was cristned for that ich cas — Now herken and ye may here.</p> <p>Than seyde the levedi in that stounde, "Thou hast in thi prisoun bounde Mani a Cristen man. Do seche overalle bi loft and grounde; Yif ani Cristen prest be founde, Bring him bifore me than And Y schal ar tomorwe at none Wite what Jhesu Crist can done More than thine maumettes can."</p>	<p>still the flesh lay as still as a stone, on high on his altar. So he took it in his hand and proceeded into his chamber and said "here you go. I have done all I can to get it to have a human form, with keeling and prayer, and even though I have petitioned them, my gods cannot help me at all. Let the Devil set them on fire!"</p> <p>And then that good woman answered that sultan very courteously: "Beloved sir, hear my speech. I will now teach you the best advice that I know, by Jesus Christ who created Man. Now that you have tested your gods give me permission to see if mine is the better healer. And, dear sir, please do this: believe in him who is stronger, in case of further afflictions."</p> <p>Then the Sultan answered her. He was grievously troubled in his heart to see that freakish sight. "Now, lady, I will follow your teaching. If I can see before my eyes that your god is of such strength that he, with any power, can put it into human form, with life and proper limbs, I will abandon all my gods and turn to Jesus your lord, on my honour as a noble knight."</p> <p>The lady was very happy then because her lord, the powerful sultan, had accepted her request. She thanked him who saved this world, and Mary his dear mother, for the hope that he would become a Christian. Now a cheerful chapter begins: how that child was christened, with complete and healthy limbs, and how the Sultan of Damascus was christened for the same reason: now listen, and you can hear.</p> <p>Then they lady said at that moment "you have imprisoned many Christian men. So enquire everywhere, high and low, if any Christian priest can be found. Bring him before me then and before noon tomorrow I will know what Jesus Christ can do more than your idols can."</p>
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<p>715</p> <p>720</p> <p>725</p> <p>730</p> <p>735</p> <p>740</p> <p>745</p> <p>750</p> <p>755</p> <p>760</p> <p>765</p>	<p>Anon the prisouns weren ysought; Thai founden a prest and forth him brought Bi hest of that soudan.</p> <p>He com bifore that levedi fre, And gret hir feir opon his kne, And seyde with sikeing sore, "Madame, yblisced mot thou be Of Jhesu Crist in Trinite That of Mari was bore." The levedi seyde, "Artw a prest? Tel me sothe yif that tow best. Canstow of Cristen lore?" "Madame," seyde the prest anon, "In verbo Dei ich was on, Tuenti winter gon and more.</p> <p>"Ac dame," he seyde, "bi Seyn Jon, Ten winter song Y masse non And that me liketh ille. For so long it is now gon Ichave ben in thi prisoun of ston 735 With wrong and gret unskille." The levedi seyde, "Lat be thi fare. Thou schalt be brought out of thi care And tow wilt held thee stille. For thurth thine help in this stounde, 740 We schul make Cristen men of houndes — God graunt it yif it be His wille."</p> <p>Than seyde the soudan's wiif, "Thou most do stille withouten striif A wel gret priveté. 745 Hali water thou most make, And this ich flesche thou take, Al for the love of me, And cristen it withouten blame In the worthschipe of the Fader's name 750 That sitt in Trinite.</p> <p>"For in Him is mine hope aflight, The Fader that is ful of might Mi sorwe schal me slake. Yif it were cristned aright, 755 It schuld have fourme to se bi sight With lim and liif to wake." That levedi comand anon Hir maidens out of chaumber gon For dred of wraying sake. 760 The prest no leng nold abide; A feir vessel he tok that tide And hali water he gan make.</p> <p>At missomer tide that ded was don Thurth help of God that sitt in trone, 765 As Y you tel may. The prest toke the flesche anon And cleped it the name of Jon In worthschip of the day. And when that it cristned was</p>	<p>Straight away the prisons were searched; they found a priest and brought him forth at the command of that Sultan.</p> <p>He came before that noble lady and greeted her fairly, down on one knee, and said with heavy sighs "my lady, may you be blessed in the name of Jesus Christ in trinity who was born of Mary." They lady said "are you a priest? Tell me truly if you are one. Do you know about Christian teachings?" "My lady", said the priest immediately, "in verbo Dei I was one, twenty years ago or longer.</p> <p>But lady", he said, "by Saint John, for ten winters I have sung no masses and that displeases me. It is now such a long time that I have been in your prison of stone, wrongly and very unjustly." The lady said "put aside your complaints. You will be brought out of worry if you will keep yourself calm — for, with your help at this moment, we will make Christians out of dogs; may God grant it if it is his will."</p> <p>Then the Sultan's wife said "you must calmly, without making trouble, carry out a very secret deed. You must make holy water and take this flesh, for my sake, and christen it, innocent, in honour of the name of the Father who sits in trinity,</p> <p>because my hope is pledged to him: the Father who is full of strength will quench my sorrow. If it has been christened right it should take on a form right before your eyes, waking with limb and life." Straight away that lady commanded her maidens to go out of the chamber, for fear of betrayal. The priest didn't want to delay any longer: he took a fair vessel then and began to make holy water.</p> <p>That deed was done at midsummer through the help of God who sits in majesty, as I can tell you. The priest took the flesh immediately and gave to it the name of John, in honour of the day. And once it had been christened</p>
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770	<p>It hadde liif and lim and fas And crid with gret deray, And hadde hide and flesche and fel And alle that ever therto bifel, In gest as Y you say.</p>	<p>it life and limb and face and cried with great commotion, and had hair and flesh and skin and everything else that it should have, in the story that I am telling you.</p>
775	<p>Feirer child might non be bore — It no hadde never a lime forlore, Wele schapen it was, withalle; The prest no lenge duelled thore And yede and told the soudan fore</p>	<p>A more beautiful child might never have been born — as if it had never lost a limb, and moreover it was beautifully formed. The priest did not wait there any longer, but went to where the Sultan was in the hall and recounted this before him.</p>
780	<p>Ther he was in the halle. That levedi ther sche lay in bed That richeliche was bischred With gold and purpel palle. The child sche take to hir blive</p>	<p>The lady was richly covered with gold and purple cloths where she lay in bed. She took the child quickly to her and thanked Our Lady of the Five Joys for the glorious grace that had occurred</p>
785	<p>And thonked our levedi with joies five The feir grace ther was bifalle.</p>	<p>and said "Lord, I pray you, almighty God in trinity, give me the strength and chance that I might see the day when my husband, the Sultan of Damascus, is christened."</p>
790	<p>And seyde, "Lord, ich pray Thee, Almighti God in Trinite, So give me might and space That Y may that day yse Mi lord wald ycristed be, The soudan of Damas."</p>	<p>Then that Sultan, who was black, came, and she showed him the child with life, and limbs, and face, and spoke: she said "Mahoun and Apollo isn't worth a pig's bristle compared with the grace of my Lord!"</p>
795	<p>Than cam the soudan that was blac, And sche schewed him the child and spac With liif and limes and face. Sche seyde, "Mahoun no Apolin Is nought worth the brostle of a swin Ogain mi Lordes grace!"</p>	<p>The Sultan said "my beloved, indeed I am absolutely delighted by this child that I see." "Well, sir, by Saint Martin, if you could take half the credit for it, then you could be glad." "O lady", he said, "what do you mean? Is this child that I begat not mine?" "No, sir", she said then, "unless you are christened then you have not claim on it, for sure, neither on the child nor on me.</p>
800	<p>The soudan seyde, "Leman min, Ywis icham glad afin Of this child that Y se." "Ya, sir, bi Seyn Martin Yif the halvendel wer thin Wel glad might thou be."</p>	<p>"No, sir", she said then, "unless you are christened then you have not claim on it, for sure, neither on the child nor on me.</p>
805	<p>"O dame," he seyde, "how is that? Is it nought min that Y bigat?" "No, sir," than seyde sche, "Bot thou were cristned so it is — Thou no hast no part theron ywis, Noither of the child ne of me.</p>	<p>And unless you want to forsake Mahoun and turn to my Lord Jesus who suffered the five wounds — straight away making yourself a Christian — you should fear of misery and torment during your life. And if you were a Christian both would be yours", she went on: "the child and your wife. When you are dead, you will go into joy without end; no-one can describe your bliss."</p>
810	<p>"And bot thou wilt Mahoun forsake And to Jhesu mi Lord thee take, That tholed woundes five — Anon thou do thee Cristen make — Thou might be ferd for sorwe and wrake While that thou art olive. And yif thou were a Cristen man Bothe weren thine," sche seyde than, "Thi childe and eke thi wive.</p>	<p>When you are dead, you will go into joy without end; no-one can describe your bliss."</p>
820	<p>When thou art dede, thou schalt wende Into blis withouten ende, Thi joie may no man kithe." The soudan seye wele bi sight That Jhesu was of more might</p>	<p>The Sultan could see with his own eyes that Jesus was stronger</p>

825	<p>Than was his fals lawe. He seyde, "Dame, anon right Ichil forsake mi god aflight — Thai schal be brent and drawe. Ac telle me now par charité, 830 And for the love thou has to me, What schal Y seyn in sawe? Now ichave forsaken mi lay. Tel me now what is your fay, And ichil lere wel fawe."</p>	<p>than was his false religion. He said "lady, I will abandon my trusted gods right away: they shall be burned and removed. But tell me now, for kindness's sake and for the love you have for me, what should I declare in speeches? I have now abandoned my religion: tell me now what your faith is, and I will study diligently."</p>
835	<p>Than seyde that levedi hende and fre, "Understond, sir, par charité, On Jhesu Cristes lay: Hou He was and ever schal be O God and Persones Thre, 840 And light in Mari that may, And in hir bodi nam flesche and blod, And hou He bought ous on the rode, Opon the Gode Friday; And hou His gost went to Helle 845 Satanas pousté for to felle And brought mankin oway.</p>	<p>They that courteous and noble lady said "understand, sir, for kindness's sake Jesus Christ's religion: how he was and will forever be one God and three persons, who came to earth in the Virgin Mary and took on flesh and blood in her body, and how he redeemed us on the cross on Good Friday, and how his spirit went to Hell to overcome Satan's power and brought Mankind out.</p>
850	<p>"The thridde day in the morning To live He ros withouten lesing As He com of the rode, And gaf His frendes comfoting And steve to Heven as mightful king Bothe with flesche and blod. As it is founden in holy writ, On His Fader right hond He sitt, 855 And is wel mild of mode; As it is writen in the crede, He demeth bothe the quic and ded The feble and eke the gode.</p>	<p>On the morning of the third day he rose up, alive, without a lie, having come off the cross, and he gave comfort to his friends and ascended to Heaven as a king, mighty in flesh and blood. As holy scriptures record, he sits at his father's right hand and is very gentle in disposition; as is written in the Creed, he judges both the living and the dead, the weak and also the good.</p>
860	<p>"And al this world schal todrive, And man arise fram ded to live, Right dome to understond. And than schal Jhesu, withouten strive, Schewe His blodi woundes five That He for ous gan fond. 865 And than schal He withouten mis Deme ich man after he is, Erl, baroun, and bond. Leve heron," sche seyde than, "and do thee make a Cristen man 870 For no thing thou no wond."</p>	<p>And he will destroy all this world, and raise people from the dead to life in order to receive correct judgement. And then will Jesus, without hesitation, will display his five bloody wounds that he received for us. And then he will, without error judge each person according to whether he is an early, baron, or bondsman. Believe in this", she said then, "and make yourself a Christian, letting nothing delay you".</p>
875	<p>Than seyde the soudan, "Dame, be stille. Y schal be cristned thurth Godes wille Ar than the thridde day. Loth me were mi soule to spille. 875 Preye now the prest, he com ous tille And teche me Cristen lay As priveleche as it may be. That no man wite bot we thre Als forth as ye may.</p>	<p>Then the Sultan said: "Lady, be calm. I will be christened, by God's will, before the third day. I would hate to destroy my soul. Ask the priest to come to us now and teach me Christian religion, as secretly as possible, so that no-one knows except us three, as expeditiously as you can. And if anyone, high or low, knows of it</p>
880	<p>And ani it wist heye or lowe,</p>	<p>And if anyone, high or low, knows of it</p>

	Thou schalt be brent and Y todrawe And we forsoke our fay.”	you will be burned and torn apart and we will abandon our faith.”
885	Anon the prest answerd than Hendeliche to that soudan “Sir, icham redi here With alle the pouwer that Y can For to make thee Cristen man And Godes lay to lere.”	The priest answered graciously to that sultan forthwith: "Sir, I am here, ready with all my might to make you a Christian and learn God's religion."
890	His hond opon his brest he leyd, “In verbo Dei,” he swore and seyde, “Unto you bothe yfere, Wel trewe and trusti schal Y be With alle that ever falleth to me To help with mi pouwere.”	He laid his hand upon his breast, swearing and saying " <i>in verbo Dei</i> ": I shall be true and reliable to you both together regarding all my responsibilities to help you with my abilities."
895	Amorwe, when the prest gan wake, A wel feir fessel he gan take With water clere and cold, And halwed it for the soudan sake And his preier he gan make	The next day, when the priest awoke, he took up a very fine vessel with clear, cold water, and blessed it for the sake of Sultan, and began to make a prayer
900	To Jhesu that Judas sold And to Marie, His moder dere, Tho that the soudan cristned were, That was so stout and bold,	to Jesus, whom Judas sold, and to Mary, his dear mother, that when the Sultan, who was so stout and bold, was christened
905	He schuld gif him might and space Thurth his vertu and his grace His cristendom wele to hold.	he should, through his power and grace, give him strength and opportunity to sustain his Christianity well.
	And when it was light of day The riche soudan ther he lay Up bigan to arise.	And when there was daylight the powerful Sultan began to get up from where he lay.
910	To the prest he went his way And halp him alle that he may That fel to his servise.	He made his way to the priest and helped him in every way he could that pertained to his role.
915	And when the prest hadde tho Dight redi that fel therto In al maner wise, The soudan with gode wille anon Dede off his clothes everichon To reseve his baptize.	And when the priest had then prepared everything that appertained to this in every way, the Sultan willingly took off all his clothes to receive his baptism.
920	The Cristen prest hight Cleophas; He cleped the soudan of Damas After his owen name.	The Christian priest was called Cleophas; he named the Sultan of Damascus after his own name.
925	His hide that blac and lothely was Al white bicom thurth Godes gras And clere withouten blame.	His skin, that was black and hideous, became entirely white through God's grace, and pure, without sin.
930	And when the soudan seye that sight, Than leved he wele on God almighty; His care went to game. And when the prest hadde alle yseyd And haly water on him leyde, To chaumber thai went ysame.	And when the Sultan saw that sight he believed well in God almighty; his worry turned to joy. And when the priest had said everything and put holy water upon him, they went together to the chamber.
935	When he com ther the levedi lay, “Lo, dame,” he gan to say, “Certeyne, thi God is trewe.” The levedi thonked God that day; For joie sche wepe with eyghen gray,	When he arrived where the lady lay, "look, lady", he began to say, "for certain, your God is trustworthy". The lady thanked God that day; she wept for joy with her grey eyes —

<p>940</p> <p>945</p> <p>950</p> <p>955</p> <p>960</p> <p>965</p> <p>970</p> <p>975</p> <p>980</p> <p>985</p> <p>990</p>	<p>Unnethe hir lord sche knewe. Than wist sche wele in hir thought That on Mahoun leved he nought For chaunged was his hewe. For that hir lord was cristned so, Oway was went al hir wo — Hir joie gan wax al newe.</p> <p>“Mi lord,” sche seyde with hert fre, “Sende now this prest in priveté To mi fader the king, And pray him for the love of me That he com swithe hider to thee With alle that he may bring. And when mi fader is to thee come, Do cristen thi lond alle and some, Bothe eld and ying, And he that wil be cristned nought, Loke to the deth that he be brought, Withouten ani duelling.”</p> <p>The soudan tok the prest bi hond And bad him wende and nought no wond To the king of Tars ful gare, And do him al to understand Hou Jhesu Crist thurth His sond Hath brought hem out of care, And bid him bring with him his ost Priveliche withouten bost — For nothing he no spare. And Cleophas, with gode entent, To do the soudan’s comandment To Tars he gan fare.</p> <p>And when the prest, Sir Cleophas, Com to the court thurth Godes grace Withouten ani duelling, He told the king alle that cas: Hou the child ded born was, A misforschapen thing, And thurth the preier of his wiif Hou God hadde sent it leme and liif In water ate cristening, And hou that hethen soudan Was bicome a Cristen man Thurth the might of Heven king.</p> <p>He radde the letter that he brought,¹⁰ And in the letter he fond ywrought — In gest as Y you say — Hou that the soudan him bisought To com to him and lat it nought Opon a certeyne day, And bring with him alle his ost To take his lond bi everich cost, And serche in his cuntray; Who that wold nought cristned be, He schuld be honged opon a tre Withouten ani delay.</p>	<p>she hardly recognised her husband. Then she knew well in her heart that he did not believe in Mahoun at all, because his colour had changed. Because her husband had been christened thus all her mistery had gone away — her joy began to grow again.</p> <p>"My lord", she said with noble heart, "send this priest now, secretly, to the king, my father, and request that, for his love of me, he come swiftly here to you with everyone he can bring. And when my fathre has come to you, convert each and every part of your land, and both old and young. And he who will not be christened, arrange that he be brought to death without any delay."</p> <p>The Sultan took the priest by the hand and asked him to go without hesitating very swiftly to the King of Tars, and have him understand how Jesus Christ, through his messenger, has brought them out of worry, and to bid him bring with him his army secretly, without fanfare, for he should spare nothing. And Cleophas began to travel to Tars with good will to fulfil the Sultan's command.</p> <p>And when the priest, Sir Cleophas, came, with out any delay, by God's grace, to the court he told the King the whole situation: how the child was born dead, as a misbegotten thing, and how through the prayers of his wife God had sent it limbs and life in the water at christening, and how the heathen sultan had become a Christian through the power of Heven's king.</p> <p>He read the letter that he brought him and in the letter he found written — as I am telling you in the story — how the Sultan had sought him to come to him on a certain day, not letting up, and to bring with him his whole army to take his land by every coast and search throughout his country: whoever would not be christened should be hanged from a tree without any delay.</p>
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995	<p>Blither might no man ben. He cleped his barouns and the quen And told hem thus in sawe Hou the soudan stout and kene Was cristned withouten wene And leved on Cristes lawe, “And therefore he hath don sent me bi sond He wil do cristen alle his lond Yif that he might wel fawe, 1000 And he that wil nought take cristening, No be he never so heye lording, He schal hong and drawe.</p>	<p>No-one could have been happier. He called his barons and the Queen and told them thus in a speech how the Sultan, stout and fierce, had been christened, without doubt, and believed in Christ's religion: "and therefore he has communicated to me by messenger that he wants to make his whole land Christian, and he can achieve that, and anyone who will not accept baptism, even if he is such a noble lord, will be hung and drawn.</p>
1005	<p>“And therefore Y pray you now right, Erl, baroun, douk, and knight, Do alle your folk bide With helme on heved and brini bright That ye ben alle redi dight To help me at this nede.” 1010 Thai sent over al bi ich a side For mani Cristen men that tide That duhti were of dede. The king him dight for to wende With sexti thousande knightes hende That was a feir ferred.</p>	<p>And therefore I request you now, earls, barons, dukes, and knights, command all your people to have helmet on head and bright mail-coats so that you are all prepared to help me in this moment of need." From every direction, they sent at that moment for many Christian men who were doughty in deed. The King prepared to go with sixthy thousand courteous knights: that was a fair company.</p>
1015	<p>The king com withouten lett The selve day that him was sett To the soudan wel gare. And when thai were togider mett, A miri greteing ther was gret 1020 With lordinges lasse and mare. Ther was rewthe forto sen Hou the levedi fel on knen Biforn hir fader thare; Ther was joie and mirthe also 1025 To here hem speken of wele and wo Her aventours als thai were.</p>	<p>The King came without delay to the Sultan on the very day that was set for him, very swiftly. And when they met together a merry greeting was offered there with lords both great and small. It was touching to see there how the lady fell to her knees before her father; there was joy and merriment also, hearing them speak of success and failure in their various adventures.</p>
1030	<p>The soudan dede his barouns calle And seththen anon his knightes alle And after alle his meyné, And when thai come into the halle, He seyde, “Hou so it bifalle, Ye mot ycristned be. Miselven, ich have Mahoun forsake And Cristendom ich have ytake, 1035 And certes so mot ye. And hye that wil nought so anon Thai schul be heveded everichon Bi Him that dyed on tre.”</p>	<p>The Sultan summoned his barons, and thereafter all his knights, and then his whole company, and when they had come into the hall he said "however it comes about, you must be christened. I have myself abandoned Mahoun and I have accepted Christianity, and so must you, for sure. And those who do not want this right now — they will all be beheaded, in the name of him who died on the tree".</p>
1040	<p>When he hadde thus ytold 1040 Mani Sarrazin stout and bold That in his court were, Mani seyde that thai wold, And mani seyde that thai nold Be cristned in non maner. 1045 Tho that Mahoun wald forsake, Cristen men he lete hem make</p>	<p>When he had thus told many stout and bold Saracens that were in his court, many said that they wanted to — and many said that they didn't want to be christened in any way. Those who wanted to abandon Mahoun he had made into Christian,</p>

1050	<p>And were him lef and dere; And he that dede nought bi his rede Anon he dede strike off his hed Right fast bi the swere.</p>	<p>and they were beloved and dear to him; and he immediately struck off the head anyone who did not follow his decision forcefully through the neck.</p>
1055	<p>The soudan had in prisoun dight Ten thousand Cristen men, yplight, Of mani uncouthe thede. He dede hem liver anon right</p>	<p>The Sultan had imprisoned ten thousand Christian men, oh yes, from many unfamiliar peoples. He had them freed right away,</p>
1060	<p>And tho that were strong and wight, He gaf hem armour and stede; And tho he seye that might nought so, He gaf hem mete and drink therto And alle that hem was nede.</p>	<p>and gave armour and steeds to those who were strong and brave. And to those whom he saw were not like this he gave food and drink, and everything that they required.</p>
1065	<p>Ther might men se with that soudan Mani blithe Cristen man, In gest as so we rede.</p>	<p>You could see there, with that Sultan, many a happy Christian man, as we read in the story.</p>
1070	<p>When he hadde don thus that tide, Over al his lond bi ich aside The word wel wide sprong. Five hethen kinges that tide And mani hethen douke unride With pople gret and strong</p>	<p>When he had done that at that moment word spread far and wide across his land in every direction. Five heathen kings at that moment and many savage, heathen dukes with a large and strong army</p>
1075	<p>Thai sent aboute ner and fer Opon that soudan for to wer, And seyde for that wrong, Bi Mahoun and Ternagaunt, Ther schuld nought ben his warant¹¹ Bot ben drawe and hong.</p>	<p>sent word out near and far to make war on that sultan, and said, by Mahoun and Ternagaunt, that because of his wrongdoing he should enjoy no protector, but be hung and drawn.</p>
1080	<p>Tho fif kinges of prout parayle Dight hem redi to that bateyle; Wel stout and strong thai were. Hou the soudan gan hem aseyle And what thai hete withouten feile,</p>	<p>Those five kings, valiant in appearance, prepared themselves for that battle; they were very stout and strong. Now listen and you can hear what they were called,</p>
1085	<p>Now herken and ye may here. King Canadok and King Lesias, King Carmel and King Clamadas, And King Memarok her fere. Opon the soudan with wer thai went, His men thai slough, his tounes brent With strengthe and gret pouwer.</p>	<p>how the Sultan began to attack them: King Canadok and King Lesias, King Carmel and King Clamadas, and King Memarok their companion. They werent against the Sultan in war, slew his men, and burned his towers with strength and great force.</p>
1090	<p>The king of Tars and the soudan, Day of bateyle thai gun tan Ogein tho kinges five. Ac ever ogein a Cristen man, Ten hethen houndes wer than Of Sarrazins stout and stithe.</p>	<p>The King of Tars and the Sultan established a day of battle against the five kings. And for every Christian man there were ten heathen dogs then from the stoud and strong Saracens.</p>
1095	<p>Now herkneth to me bothe old and ying Hou the soudan and the king Amonges hem gun drive, And hou the Sarrazins that day Opped hevedles for her pay — Now listen and ye may lithe.</p>	<p>Now listen to me, both old and young, how the Sultan and the King began to charge amongst them, and how that day the Saracens hopped, headless, in return — now listen and you can hear,</p>
1100	<p>The Cristen soudan that tide Toke a spere and gan to ride To Canadok that was kene.</p>	<p>At that time the Christian Sultan took up a spear and began to ride against fierce Canadok.</p>

<p>1105 1110</p>	<p>And Canadok with gret pride, With a spere gan him abide To wite and nought atwene. So hard thai driven togider there That her launces bothe yfere Brosten hem bituene. The soudan drough his fauchoun gode The kinges heved with alle the hode He strok off quite and clene.</p>	<p>And Canadok, with great pride, was waiting for him with a spear to torment him without delay. They galloped together so hard there that their lances both shattered together, in between them. The Sultan drew his good falchion; he stuck off with a clean cut the king's head with the whole hood.</p>
<p>1115 1120</p>	<p>King Lesias of Tabarie To the soudan he gan heye, For Canadok his felawe. With a spere that was trusti He rode to the soudan wel an hey And thought him have yslawe. The king of Tars bituen hem rod And Lesias strok he abod (As Y finde in mi sawe) And smot him so on the scheld That top seyl in the feld; He made him overthrawe.</p>	<p>King Lesias of Tabarie proceeded to hurry to the Sultan on behalf of his friend Canadok. With a reliable spear he rode swiftly against the Sultan and intended to kill him. The King of Tars rode between them and struck Lesias, as I find in my story, and struck him on the shield so that the top flew to the ground; he overthrew him.</p>
<p>1125 1130</p>	<p>He lepe on hors and gan to ride And slough adoun bi ich aside That he bifor him founde. Wham that Lesias hit in that tide, Were he douk or prince o pride, He gaf him dedly wounde. The king of Tars com with a spere And thurth his sides he gan it bere That ded he fel to grounde. Than sett the Sarrazins up a cri "A, Mahoun, ful of meistri, Help ous in this stounde!"</p>	<p>He leapt onto a horse and began to ride and cut down on each side anyone he found before him. Anyone that Lesias hit at that time, whether a duke or a splendid prince, he gave a deadly wound. The King of Tars came with a spear and bore it through his sides so that he fell dead to the ground. Then the Saracens let up a cry: "O Mahoun, full of power, help us at this moment!"</p>
<p>1135 1140 1145</p>	<p>When King Carmel herd that, him was wo; To fight anon he was ful thro. A spere an hond he hent. He priked his stede and dede him go. He thought the king of Tars to slo Er he thennes went. He smot the king of Tars that tide Thurth his hauberk a wounde wide That neighe he hadde him schent. The king out of his sadel fel; 1145 The blod out of his wounde gan wel That mani man hem biment.</p>	<p>When King Carmel heard that, he was sad; he was very keen to keep fighting. He took up a spear in his hand. He spurred his steed and had him go. He meant to slay the King of Tars before he left there. He delivered the King of Tars, on that occasion, through his hauberk, a wide wound that almost killed him. The king fell from his saddle; the blood began to well from his wound so that many people lamented for him.</p>
<p>1150 1155</p>	<p>For sorwe the soudan wald wede; When he seighe his woundes blede,¹² He rode to him with mayn. 1150 He and the Cristen ferred Brought the king of Tars his stede And sett him up ogayn. And when he was on hors braught Alle that ever he araught 1155 He clef him to the brayn. King Carmel tho to him went And gaf him swiche another dent</p>	<p>The Sultan went insane from sorrow; when he saw his wounds bleeding he rode at him with force. He and the Christian company brought the King of Tars his steed and mounted him again. And when he was back on his horse he cleft everyone that he could reach to the brain. Then King Carmel went to him and gave him another blow</p>

	That ner he hadde him sleyn.	such that he had nearly killed him.
1160	And when the soudan that yseighe Al wode he wex for wrethe neye — He rode to King Carmele. He smot him on the helme an heighe That thurth the breyn it fleighe That no leche might him hele.	And when the Sultan saw that he nearly grew mad from rage — he rode to King Carmel. He struck him on top of the helmet so that it flew through the brain and no doctor could heal him.
1165	King Clamadas com rideing than With a glaive to the soudan, And thought with him to dele, And smot him oboven the scheld That neighe he feld him in the feld	King Clamadas came riding then with a glaive at the Sultan and intended to take him on and struck him over the shield so that he nearly laid him low on the field among the many dogs.
1170	Among tho houndes fele.	
	The king of Tars in that stounde Hadde spite of that hethen hounde That was so stout and beld. He swore, "Bi Him that tholed wounde The dogge schal adoun to grounde That fightes thus in feld." He rode to him anon right And smot to him a strok of might — Atuo he clef his scheld	At that moment, the King of Tars despised that heathen dog that was so strong and bold. He swore "but him who suffered wounds, the dog that fights thus in the field shall tumble to the ground." He rode straight at him and struck him with a mighty blow. He cleft his shield in two, the sword gliding through his heart; the blood ran out on either side, and so he killed him.
1175	And thurth his hert the swerd gan glide; The blod ran out bi ich a side And so he him aqueld.	
	Than was King Memaroc in gret peyn, For his four felawes were sleyn And in the feld todreved. He priked his stede opon the pleyn And fleye oway with might and mayn For dred to hide his heved. The soudan seyge him oway ride; He priked after him in that tide, For no thing he it bileved, And smot him so above the scheld That helme and heved fleyghe in the feld Ful wightlike off it weved.	Then King Memaroc was in great pain, as his four companions were dead and scattered on the field. He spurred his steed away across the plain and ran away with strength and force to hide his head in fear. The Sultan saw him ride away; he spurred after him straight away, not holding back at all, and struck him above the shield so that helmet and head flew to the ground: it came off very forcefully.
1185	When the Sarrazins seyghen alle That Memarok was to grounde yfalle And namore up arise, "Allas, Mahoun!" thai gan to calle, "Whi latestow Cristen hewe ous smale? ¹³ Wicke is thi servise!" Thai fleyghe for dred alle yfere And dreynt hem in o river So sore hem gan agrise.	When the Saracens all saw that Memarok had falled to the ground and did not stand up again, they began to cry "alas, Mahoun! Why do you allow Christians to chop us up fine? You reward our service badly." They all fled together in terror and, so very afraid were they of them, they drowned themselves in a river.
1190	The bateyle last switwong Til it were time of evensong Er thai might win the prise.	The battle lasted a very long time before they could win the day — until it was the time of evensong.
1195	The Sarrazins flowe bi ich aside; The Cristen folk after gan ride, And schadde hem breyn and blod.	The Saracens fled on every side, the Christian people pursuing them and shedding their brains and blood.
1200	Ther was non that might him hide That he nas sleyn in that tide With fight ogeyn hem stode.	No-one who stood against them in battle who might have hidden there who was not slain at that time.
1205		
1210		

1215	<p>And tho that yold hem to the pes, The soudan swore withouten les Bi Him that dyed on rode, He that nold nought forsake his lay, He schuld forlesse that ich day The bal up in the hode.</p>	<p>And the Sultan, swore, without a lie, by him who died on the cross, that among those who yielded to them peacefully, he who did not want to abandon his religion should, that very day, forfeit the head in his hood.</p>
1220	<p>Thritti thousande ther were take Of Sarrains bothe blo and blac And don in his prisoun. And he that wald his lay forsake, Cristen men he lete him make With gret devocioun.</p>	<p>Thirty thousand Saracens, both dark and black, were seized there and put in his prison. And he had anyone who wanted to abandon his religion made Christian with great devotion.</p>
1225	<p>And thai that wald be cristned nought, Into a stede thai weren ybrought A mile withouten the toun And Cristen men withouten wene Striken off her hevedes al bidene.</p>	<p>And those who did not want to be christened were brought to a place a mile away from the town and Christian men, without hesitation, struck off all their heads.</p>
<p>[the end of the poem in the Auchinleck Manuscript is lost from this point. Around 40–60 lines are probably missing. The following stanza is from the Vernon manuscript.]</p>		
1230	<p>Thus the ladi with hire lore Broughte hire frendes out of sore Thorw Jhesu Cristes grace. Al the while that thei weore thare The joye that was among hem yare</p>	<p>Thus the lady, with her religion, rescued her friends from grief through the grace of Jesus Christ. No-one can express what joy they shared the whole time they were there</p>
1235	<p> No mon may telle the space. Whon thei weore out of world iwent Bifore God Omnipotent Hem was diht a place.</p>	<p>nor reckon how long for. Once they had gone from the world, they were granted a place before omnipotent God.</p>
1240	<p>Now Jhesu that is ful of miht Graunt us alle in Hevene liht To seo Thi swete face. AMEN.</p>	<p>Now Jesus, who is full of strength, grant us all light in Heaven by which to see your sweet face. AMEN.</p>