### 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!

| Herkneth to me bothe eld and ying, | Listen to me, people both old and young, |
| For Marie’s love, that swete thing, | for the love of Mary, that sweet person, |
| Al hou a wer bigan | all about how a war began |
| Bituene a trewe Cristen king | between an faithful Christian king |
| And an hethen heye lording, | and a noble heathen lord, |
| Of Dames the soudan. | the Sultan of Damascus. |
| The king of Tars hadde a wife, | The King of Tars had a wife; |
| Feirer might non ben olive — | there is no-one alive who is more beautiful, |
| That ani wight telle can. | as anyone can see. |
| A douhter thai hadde hem bituen, | The two of them had a daughter; |
| Non feirer woman might ben — | there couldn’t be a more beautiful woman, |
| As white as fether of swan. | as white as the feather of a swan. |
| The meiden was schast and blithe of chere | The girl was chaste and had a cheerful look, |
| With rode red so blosme on brere | as rosy-cheeked as a flower on a briar, |
| And eyghen stepe and gray. | and her eyes lively and pale. |
| With lowe scholders and white swere | With elegant shoulders and a white neck, |
| Hir for to sen was gret preier | it was a great desire among proud and fun |
| Of princes proud and play. | princes to look upon her. |
| The los of hir gan spring wide | Her fame began to spread widely |
| In other londes bi ich a side, | through other countries all around, |
| So the soudan herd it say. | until the Sultan heard of it. |
| Him thought his hert it brast ofive | It seemed to him that his heart would break in five pieces |
| Bot yif he might have hir to wive | unless he could have her as a wife, |
| That was so feir a may. | she was such a beautiful girl. |
| His messangers he gan calle | He began to call his messengers |
| And bad hem wightly wenden alle them | and commanded them all to proceed swiftly |
| To hir fader the king, | to her father the king, |
| And seyd he wald hou so it bifalle | and said that he wished -- by hook or by crook -- |
| His doughter clothe in riche palle | clothe his daughter in expensive fabric |
| And spouse hir with his ring; | and marry her with his ring; |
| And yif he nold, withouten feyl, | and if he refused, then without question |
| He wald hir win in batayl | he would win her in battle |
| With mani an heye lording. | against many noble lords. |
| The messangers forth thai went | The messengers went out |
| To dou the soudan’s comandment | to fulfil the Sultan's command |
| Withouten ani duelling. | without any delay. |
| Than the king of Tars this understode | When the King of Tars discovered this |
| Almost for wretche he wex ner wode | he almost went insane from anger, |
| And seyd thus in sawe: | and made a speech thus: |
| "Bi Him that dyed on the rode, | "by him who died on the Cross, |
| Ich wald arst spille min hert blode | I would rather be slain in battle, |
| In batayl to ben yslawe. | spilling my heart's blood. |
| Y nold hir give a Sarazin | I wouldn't give her to a Saracen |
| For alle the lond that is mine. | for all the land I own. |
| The devel him arst to drawe, | May the Devil get him instead, |
| Bot sche wil with hir gode wil | unless of her will she desires |
| Be wedded to him, hirselve to spille. | to marry him, to her own detriment. |
| Hir thoughtes nought Y no knawe, | I do not know her views, |
| “Ac Y schal wite ar than ye pas.” | but I will know before you depart.” |
| 50 | His douhter anon was brought in plas and he axed hir bilive. | In due course, his daughter was brought to that place, and immediately he asked her. |
| 55 | Waldestow, douhter, for tresour Forsake Jhesus our Saveour That suffred wounds five?" | Would you, daughter, forsake for treasure our saviour Jesus, who suffered five wounds?" |
| 60 | “Nay, lord, so mot Y thrive! | The girl answered with a gentle heart where she stood before her father: "No, lord, hand on heart! |
| 65 | “Jhesu mi Lord in Trinité Lat me never that day yse A tirant for to take. | May Jesus, my Trinitarian lord, never let me see the day that a tyrant receives me. |
| 70 | Y schal him sende word ogein That alle his thoughtes ben in vein, For thou hast him forsake. | 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. |
| 75 | Right be the self messangers That com fro the soudan fers | 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. |
| 80 | As the soudan sat at his des, Yserved of the first mes, | As the Sultan sat on his dais, with the first course served, they entered the hall. |
| 85 | Bifor tho princes prout in pres Her tale to telle withouten les | They fell down on their knees to tell their story without any lies before the those princes, proud in battle. |
| 90 | Thai seyd, “Sir, the king of Tars Of wicked wordes is nought scars. | 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.” |
| 95 | Thine hert blod he will spille, And thine barouns alle.” | 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. |
| 100 | When the soudan this wordes herd Also a wilde bore he ferd. His robe he rent adoun; He shuld 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. | 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. |
Al that he raught he smot doun right —
Serjaunt, squier, clerk, and knight,
Bothe erl and baroun.

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
That thai com to his parlement
Forte heren his jugement,
Bothe lest and mast.
When the parlement was pleyner,
Tho bispac the soudan fer
And seyd to hem in hast:
"Lordings," he seyd, "what to red.
Me hath ben don a gret misdede
Of Tars the Cristen king!
Y bede him bothe lond and lede
To han wed hir with ring,
And he me sent word ogain
In bateyl Y schuld arst be sleyn
And mani an heye lording!
And certes he schal be forsworn.
Wrotherhele than was he been
Bot Y therto it bring.
And therfore ich have after you sent
And asembled herer this parlement
To wite your conseyle."
And alle thai seyd with gode entent
Thai were at his comandment,
Certeyn withouten feile.
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.

The soudan gaderd a rout unride
Of Sarrazins of michel pride
Opon the king to wende.
The king of Tars herd that tide;
He gadred his ost bi ich a side,
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.
The soudan com with his powuer
With bright armour and brod baner,
Into the feld to fight
With sexti thousand Sarrazins fer,
so that every field, near and far, gleamed with helmets.

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.

Ther might men se a strong bateyle That grimli was of sight.

There you could see a hard battle, that was fearsome to behold.

That alle the feldes fer and ner With helmes lemed light.

That alle the fields, far and near, gleamed with helmets.

The king of Tars com with his ost, With gret pride and michel bost,

The King of Tars came with his arms, with great pride and boasting,

And aither ost gan other aseyle.

and each army began to attack the other.

Ther might men se a strong bateyle That grimli was of sight.

There you could see a hard battle, that was fearsome to behold.

165

The king of Tars com with his ost, With gret pride and michel bost,

The King of Tars came with his arms, with great pride and boasting,

With mani an hardli knight,

with many resolute knights,

And aither ost gan other aseyle.

and each army began to attack the other.

Ther might men se a strong bateyle That grimli was of sight.

There you could see a hard battle, that was fearsome to behold.

170

And feld hem doun bi nighen and ten; So wilde thi were and wode

And felled them in nines and tens: they were so wild and enraged

That men might sen alle the fen Of Cristen both fremd and ken,

That men might see all the plains of the Christian both friendly and strange,

The valays ren on blod.

The valleys ran with blood.

175

The soudan and his folk that stounde Hewe adoun with grimli wounde Mani a frely rode.

The Sultan and his people at that moment, chop down, with fearsome wounds, many noble foray.

Alas, to wele sped Mahoun!

Alas! Mahoun did too well!

180

The Cristen men yede al adoun Was nought that hem withstode.

The Christian men conceded the fight: nothing withstood their enemies.

Wolfe adoun with grimli wounde

Wod the adown with fearsome wounds.

185

Mani a frely rode.

Many noble foray.

With a stroke of michel might,

With a stroke of great force,

To grounde he gan him bere.

he brought him to the ground.

190

Ther he hadde the soudan slawe Ac ten thousand of hethen lawe Saved in that were —

He would have slain the Sultan there, but ten thousand of the heathen faith saved him in that war:

Thai sett him on a ful gode stede

They put him on a fine steed,

That was so gode at everi nede

that was so excellent in all circumstances

That no man might him dere.

that no-one could harm him.

200

And mani bacinet tocleved And sadles fel emtye; Mani swerd and mani scheld

And many bascinets cloven in two, and saddles left empty;

And mani knight lay in the feld Of Cristen compayne.

and many swords and many shields

And of Cristen compayne.

and many knights of the Christian force lay in the field.

205

The king of Tars seye that sight; For wretthe he was neye wode, aplight.

The King of Tars saw that sight; he was nearly mad with anger, oh yes.

He hent in hond a spere

In his hand he held a spear,

And to the soudan he rode ful right.

and role straight at the Sultan.

210

With a stroke of michel might,

With a stroke of great force,

To grounde he gan him bere.

he brought him to the ground.

Ther he hadde the soudan slawe

He would have slain the Sultan there,

Ac ten thousand of hethen lawe

but ten thousand of the heathen faith

Saved in that were —

saved him in that war:

215

And when he was opon his stede, Him thought he brend so spark on glede For ire and for envie.

And once he was on his steed, it seemed like he was burning, like a spark among coals, from anger and from spite.

He faught so he wald wede:

He fought as if he was going to go insane:

Alle that he hit he maked blede.

everything he struck he made bleed.

"Help, Mahoun!" he gan crie.

"Help, Mahoun!", he began to shout.

Mani helme ther wer ofweved

Many helmets were cut off there,

And mani bacinet tocleved

and many bascinets cloven in two,

And sadles fel emtye;

and saddles left empty;

Mani swerd and mani scheld

many swords and many shields

And mani knight lay in the feld

and many knights of the Christian force

Of Cristen compayne.

lay in the field.

220

The king of Tars seye him so ride

The King of Tars sees his foe ride thus,

He fleye and durst nought abide

so he dared not wait and fled

Homward to his cite

homewards to his city.

The Sarrazins folwed in that tide

The Saracens followed at once

And slough adoun bi ich aside

and cut down, on every side,

That Cristen folk so fre.

that noble Christian army.

Thrith thousand ther were yslawe

Thirty thousand knights of Christian faith

Of knightes of Cristen lawe

were slain there —

And that was gret pité.

and that was a great shame.

Amorwe for her bother sake

The next morning, for both their sakes,

Trewes thai gun bituen hem take

they began to establish a truce between them,

A moneth and daye thre.

for a month and three days.
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 like we have been experiencing. For my sake have many men have been killed, cities seized, and towns burned; alas that I was born!

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:

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."

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."

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..."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Natural Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>That Cristen folk be for me slawe,</td>
<td>Christian people being killed for me,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>With the grace of God in Heven.”</td>
<td>by the grace of God in Heaven.”</td>
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<td>Thus, the maiden with wordes stille</td>
<td>Thus the girl, with calm words,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brought hem bothe in better wille</td>
<td>brought them both to a better desire,</td>
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<td>With resoun right and even.</td>
<td>with true and balanced reasoning.</td>
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<td>280</td>
<td>And when thai were thus at on,</td>
<td>And when they were thus in accord</td>
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<td>Messangers thai sent anon</td>
<td>they sent messengers forthwith</td>
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<td>Unto that riche soudan,</td>
<td>to that powerful sultan:</td>
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<td>To make his frende that were his fon;</td>
<td>to make his enemy his friend</td>
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<td>And for he schuld his men nought slou,</td>
<td>and to prevent him killing his men,</td>
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<td>His douther he graunt him than.</td>
<td>he granted him his daughter then.</td>
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<td>The messangers nold no leng abide;</td>
<td>The messengers didn't hang about:</td>
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<td>To the soudan thai went that tide</td>
<td>they went right away to the Sultan</td>
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<td>And thus thai tel him gan.</td>
<td>and began to inform him accordingly.</td>
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<td>When tho letters weren yradd,</td>
<td>When the letters had been read,</td>
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<td>The soudan was bothe blithe and glad,</td>
<td>the Sultan was both glad and happy,</td>
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<td>And so was mani a man.</td>
<td>and so were many others.</td>
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<td>290</td>
<td>So glad he was in al maners</td>
<td>He was so happy in all respects</td>
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<td></td>
<td>He cleped to him of his pers</td>
<td>that he summoned his fellow nobles —</td>
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<td>Doukes, princes, and kings.</td>
<td>dukes, princes, and kings.</td>
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<td>Into a chambuer thai went yfers</td>
<td>They gathered together in a chamber</td>
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<td>To dight unto the messangers</td>
<td>to prepare precious stones and luxurious rings</td>
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<td>Gode stones and riche ringes.</td>
<td>for the messengers.</td>
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<td>295</td>
<td>Bi conseyl of the lordinges alle,</td>
<td>On the advice of all the lords</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The soudan dede bring into the hal</td>
<td>the Sultan brought gifts</td>
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<td>Gifts and riche thinges,</td>
<td>and expensive objects into the hall,</td>
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<td>And gaf to hem grete plenté,</td>
<td>and gave the messengers</td>
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<td>To the messangers, with hert fre</td>
<td>a plenitude, with noble heart,</td>
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<td>And thonked hem her tidinges.</td>
<td>and thanked them for their news,</td>
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<td>300</td>
<td>And seyd he was alle at his wille,</td>
<td>and said that he was entirely at the other man's desire,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arliche and late, loude and stille,</td>
<td>early and late, rage or calm,</td>
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<td>To helpe him at his nede;</td>
<td>to help him in his need.</td>
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<td>No more folk told he spille.</td>
<td>He would kill no more people.</td>
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<td>305</td>
<td>The messangers went the king tille</td>
<td>The messengers went to the King</td>
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<td>And told him of that dede.</td>
<td>and told him about that deed.</td>
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<td>The king and the quene also</td>
<td>The King and Queen too</td>
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<td>Bothen hem was wele and wo,</td>
<td>were both happy and sad,</td>
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<td>In rime also we rede.</td>
<td>as we read in the poem.</td>
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<td>310</td>
<td>Gret joie thai hadde withouthe les</td>
<td>They had great joy, without a lie,</td>
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<td>For that the soudan wald have pes</td>
<td>because the Sultan wanted to have peace</td>
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<td>On Cristen felawerede.</td>
<td>with the Christian company.</td>
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<td>315</td>
<td>The first day of Julii tide,</td>
<td>On the first day of July</td>
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<td>The soudan nold no leng abide;</td>
<td>the Sultan wished to wait no longer;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To the king of Tars he sent</td>
<td>he sent many knights and great glory</td>
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<td>Knightes fele and michel pride</td>
<td>and expensive jewels, without any catch,</td>
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<td>And riche jewels is nought to hide</td>
<td>to give as a gift</td>
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<td>To giff to his present.</td>
<td>to the King of Tars.</td>
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<td>The messangers, withouten duelling,</td>
<td>The messengers, without delay,</td>
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<td>To have his douhter gent.</td>
<td>came before the king in Tars</td>
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<td>Thai welcomèd hem with glad chere —</td>
<td>to have his noble daughter.</td>
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<td>Of gret pié now may ye here —</td>
<td>When they went to the chamber,</td>
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<td>To chaumber when thai went.</td>
<td>they welcomed them with glad faces —</td>
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<td>320</td>
<td>Thai maden cri and michel wo</td>
<td>you are now going to hear a very sorrowful matter.</td>
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<td>For thai schuld her douhter fongo</td>
<td>They uttered cries and great sorrow,</td>
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<td>because they would have to give up their daughter</td>
<td>because they would have to give up their daughter</td>
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</table>
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.

Than seyd the quen to hem than,
“Hou fareth your lord, the soudan,
That is so noble a knight?”
The messangers answere gan
“He farth as wele as ani man,
And is your frende aplight.”
The quen seyd 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.”
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.
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 hewe
For sorwe and reweli chere.

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
Forte welcome that sweete 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.
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.

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.

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 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.

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 To have so foule a mett. Thei that sche made gret solas The sorwe that at hir hert was No might it noman lett. And whan it was comen to night, The levedi that was so feir and bright, To chambre sche gan wende. And therin anon Y you plight, A riche bed ther was ydight Unto that levedi hende. The levedi was to bed ybrought; The soudan wild com therin nought Nother for fo no frende — For nothing wold he neyghe that may Til that sche leved opon his lay, That was of Cristen kende. Wel lothe war a Cristen man To wedde an hethen woman That leved on fals lawe; Als loth was that soudan To wed a Cristen woman, As Y finde in mi sawe. The soudan yede to bed al prest, Knigheste and levedis yede to rest; The pople hem gan withdrawe. That miri maiden litel slepe, Bot al night wel sore sche wepe Til the day gan dawe. And als sche fel on slepe thore Her thought ther stode hir bifoire 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 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 brest as a drake. So lothliche thai were al ywrought, And ich in hond a gleive brought, Sches was aferd ful sore. On Jhesu Crist was alle hir thought; Therfore the fendes derd hir nought; Nother lesse no more. Fro the fendes sche passed sounde, And afterward ther com an hounde 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
With browes brod and hore.
Almost he hadde hir drawen adoun
Ac thurth Jhesus Cristes passioun
Sche was ysaved thore.

Yete hir thought withouthen lesing
Als sche lay in hir swevening
(That selcouth was to rede)
That blac hounde hir was folweing.

Thurth might of Jhesu, Heven king,
Spac to hir in manhede
In white clothes als a knight,
And seyd to hir, “Mi swete wight,
No tharf thee nothing drede
Of Ternagaunt no of Mahoun.
Thi Lord that suffered passioun
Schal help thee at thi nede.”

And when the maiden was awaked,
For drede of that, wel sore sche quaked,
On hir bed sche sat al naked;
To Jhesu hir preier sche maked,
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.

Than seyd 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!
And bi Mahoun and Ternagant
Ther schal no man ben his waraunt —
Empour no king with croun.”

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.
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.”

Than was the soudan glad and blithe,
And thanked Mahoun mani sithe
That sche was so biknawe.
His joie couthe he no man kithe;  
He bad hir gon and kis swithe  
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.  

And thei sche al the lawes couthe  
And seyd hem openliche with hir mouthe,  
Jhesu forgat sche nought.  

Wher that sche was, bi northe or southe,  
No minstral with harp no crouthe  
No mighty chaunge hir thought.  

The soudan wende night and day  
That sche hadde leved opon his lay  
Bot al he was bicought,  
To Jhesu sche made hir mon,  
That alle this world hath wrought.  

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  
That alle this world hath wrought.  

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 thrithi thousand of helmes bright  
(Inv as it is told).  

Wel mani helme ther was ofweved  
And mani bacinet tho cleved  
And knights driven to grounde.  
Sum ther fel doun 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,
In gest as it is founde.

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
To lordinges of renoun.
Ther was geven to the mensstrels
Robes riche and mani juweles
Of erl and of baroun.
The fest lasted fourtenight
With mete and drink anough, aplight
Plenté and gret fousoun.
That levedi, so feir and so fre,
Was with hir lord bot monethes thre
Than he gat hir with childe.
When it was geten, sche chaunged ble;
The soudan himself that gan se —
Jolif he was and wilde.
Ther while sche was with child, aplight,
Sche bad to Jhesu ful of might
Fram schame He schulde hir schilde.
Atte fourti woukes ende
The levedi was deliverd o bende
Thurth help of Mari milde.
And when the child was ybore,
Wel sori wimen were therfore,
Bot lay ded as the ston.
The lady was delivered of her burden
Through the help of Mary mild.

"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,
No in Mahoun no in Ternagant.
Therfore is lorn this litel faunt.
No wonder they are afflicting me!"

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.
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.

"And yf 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.
Biforn his goddes he gan it leyn
And held up his honden tuein,
While men might go five mile.9
"A, mightful 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 peril.
Oft he kneled and oft he ros
And crid so long til he was hos
And al he tint his while.

And when he hadde al ypreyd,
And alle that ever he couthe he sayd,
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.
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!"

He hent a staf with grete hete
And still anon his godes to bete
And drough hem alle adoun,
And leyd on til he gan to sweate
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.

And when he hadde beten hem gode won
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| 660  | "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 seyd, "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 afer!"  |
| 665  | 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!"  |
| 670  | "And than anwerd 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."  |
| 675  | And then that good woman anwered  
      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."  |
| 680  | The soudan anwerd 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."  |
| 685  | 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."
| 690  | 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.  |
| 695  | 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 ychristned was  
      With liis al hole and fere,  
      And hou the soudan of Damas  
      Was cristned for that ich cas —  
      Now herken and ye may here.  |
| 700  | Than seyd 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 bifor me than  
      And Y schal ar tomarowe at none  
      Wite what Jhesu Crist can done  
      More than thine maumettes can.”  |
Anon the prisouns weren ysought;
Thai founden a prest and forth him brought
Bi best of that soudan.

He com bifore that levedi fre,
And gret hir feir opon his kne,
“Madame, yblisced mot thou be
Of Jhesu Crist in Trinité
That of Mari was bore.”
The levedi seyd, “Artw a prest?
Tell me sothe yif that tow best.
Canstow of Cristen lore?”

“In verbo Dei ich was on,
Tuenti winter gon and more.
Ac dame,” he seyd, “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
With wrong and gret unskille.”
The levedi seyd, “Lot be thi fare.
Thou schalt be brought out of thi care
And tow wilt held thee stille.
For thurth thine help in this stounde,
We schul make Cristen men of houndes —
God graunt it yif it be His wille.”

Than seyd the soudan’s wiif,
“Thou most do stille withouten striif
A wel gret priveté.
Hali water thou most make,
And this ich flesche thou take,
In the worthschipe of the Fader’s name
That sitt in Trinité.

“For in Him is mine hope aplight,
The Fader that is ful of might
Mi sorwe schal me slake.
Yif it were cristned aright,
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 dreed of wraying sake.
The prest no leng nold abide;
A feir vessel he tok that tide
And hali water he gan make.

At missomer tide that ded was don
Thurth help of God that sitt in trone,
As Y you tel may.
The prest toke the flesche anon
And cleped it the name of Jon
In worthschipe of the day.
And when that it cristned was

Straight away the prisons were searched; they found a priest and brought him forth at the command of that Sultan.

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,”<i>in verbo Dei</i> I was one, twenty years ago or longer.

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.”

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,
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.

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
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.

Feirer child might non be bore —
It no hadde never a lime forlore,
Wele schapen it was, withalle;
The priest no lenge duelled thore
And yede and teld the soudan fore
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
And thonked our levedi with joies five
The feir grace ther was bifalle.

And seyd, “Lord, ich pray Thee,
Almghty God in Trinité,
So give me might and space
That Y may that day yse
Mi lord wald ycristned be,
The soudan of Damas.”
Than cam the soudan that was blac,
And sche schewed him the child and spac
With liif and limes and face.
Sche seyd, “Mahoun no Apolin
Is nought worth the brostle of a swin
Ogain mi Lordes grace!”

The soudan seyd, “Leman min,
Ywis icham glad afin
Of this child that Y se.”
“Ya, sir, bi Seyn Martin
Yif the halvendel wer thin
Wel glad thou be.”

“O dame,” he seyd, “how is that?
Is it nought min that Y bigat?”
“No, sir,” than seyd sche,
“Bot thou wert cristned so it is —
Thou no hast no part theron ywis,
Noither of the child ne of me.

“And bot thou wilt Mahoun forsake
And to Jhesu mi Lord thee take,
That tholed wounde 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 seyd than,
“Thi childe and eke thi wive.
When thou art dede, thou shalt wende
Into blis withouten ende,
Thi joie may no man kithe.”

The soudan seye wele bi sight
That Jhesu was of more might

The Sultan could see with his own eyes
that Jesus was stronger
Than was his fals lawe.  
He seyd, "Dame, anon right  
Ichil forsake mi god aplight —  
Thai schal be brennt and drawe.  
Ac telle me now par charité,  
What schal Y seyn in sawe?  
Now ichave forsaken mi lay.  
Tel me now what is your fay,  
And ichil lere wel fawe."

Than seyd 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,  
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  
Satanas pousté for to felle  
And brought mankin oway.  
"The thridde day in the morning  
To live He ros withouten lesing  
As He com of the rode,  
And gaf His frendes comforting  
And steye to Heven as mightful king  
Bothe with flesche and blod.  
As it is founden in holy writ,  
OOn His Fader right hond He sitt,  
And is wel mild of mode;  
As it is written in the crede,  
He demeth bothe the quic and ded  
The feble and eke the gode.  
"And al this warld schal todrive,  
And man arise fram ded to live,  
Right dome to understond.  
And than schal Jhesu, withouten strive,  
Schewe His blodi wounds five  
That He for ous gan fond.  
And than schal He withouten mis  
Deme ich after he is,  
Erl, baroun, and bond.  
Leve heron," sche seyd than,  
"And do thee make a Cristen man  
For no thing thou no wond."

Than seyd the soudan, "Dame, be stille.  
Y schal be cristned thurth Godes wille  
Ar than the thridde day.  
Loth me were mi soule to spille.  
Preye now the prest, he com ous tille  
And teche me Cristen lay  
As priveliche as it may be.  
That no man wite bot we thre  
Als forth as ye may.  
And ani it wist heye or lowe,
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| 885  | Thou shalt be burnt and ye drawe and we forsoke our fay."
|      | The priest answered graciously to that sultan forthwith: |
| 890  | Anon the priest answered thand Hendeliche to that soudan "Sir, I am here, ready with all my might to make you a Christian and learn God's religion."
|      | "Sir, ich am here, ready with all the power that I can for to make thee Cristen man and Godes lay to lere."
|      | His hond opon his brest he leyed, He laid his hand upon his breast, "In verbo Dei," he swore and seyd, 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."
|      | "Unto you bothe yfere, Wel trewe and trusti schal Y be with alle that ever falleth to me To help with mi pouwere." |
| 895  | Amorwe, when the prest gan wake, The next day, when the priest awoke, A wel feir fessel he gan take he took up a very fine vessel With water clere and cold, with clear, cold water, And halwed it for the soudan sake and blessed it for the sake of Sultan, And his preier he gan make and began to make a prayer To Jhese that Judas sold to Jesus, whom Judas sold, And to Marie, His moder dere, and to Mary, his dear mother, Tho that the soudan cristned were, that when the Sultan, who was so stout and bold, Was so stout and bold, was christened He schuld giff him might and space he should, through his power and grace, Thurth his vertu and his grace give him strength and opportunity His cristendom wele to hold. to sustain his Christianity well. |
| 900  | And when it was light of day And when there was daylight The riche soudan ther he lay the powerful Sultan began to Up bigan to arise. get up from where he lay. To the prest he went his way He made his way to the priest And halp him alle that he may and helped him in every way he could That fel to his servise. that pertained to his role. And when the prest hadde tho And when the priest had then Dight redi that fel therto prepared everything that appertained to this In al maner wise, in every way, The soudan with gode willie anon the Sultan willingly Dede off his clothes everichon took off all his clothes To resyve his baptize. to receive his baptism. |
| 905  | The Cristen prest hight Cleophas; The Christian priest was called Cleophas; He cleped the soudan of Damas he named the Sultan of Damascus After his owhen name. after his own name. His hide that blac and lothely was His skin, that was black and hideous, Al white bicom thurth Godes gras became entirely white through God's grace, And clerewithouten blame. and pure, without sin. |
| 910  | And when the soudan seye that sight, And when the Sultan saw that sight Than leved he wele on God almight; he believed well in God almighty; His care went to game. his worry turned to joy. And when the prest hadde alle yseyd And when the priest had said everything And haly water on him leyd, and put holy water upon him, To chaumber thai went ysame. they went together to the chamber. |
| 915  | When he com ther the levedi lay, When he arrived where the lady lay, "Lo, dame," he gan to say, "look, lady", he began to say, "Certeyne, thi God is trewe." "for certain, your God is trustworthy". The levedi thonked God that day; The lady thanked God that day; For joie sche wepe with eyghen gray, she wept for joy with her grey eyes —
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 al hir wo —  
Hir joie gan wax al newe.

"Mi lord," sche seyd with hert fre,  
"Sende now this prest in privete  
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 duelleing."

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 understond  
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.

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 become a Cristen man  
Thurth the might of Heven king.

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.
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.

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 sixty thousand courteous knights: that was a fair company.

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.

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".

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,
<table>
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| 1050 | 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.  
The soudan had in prisoun dight  
Ten thousend Cristen men, yplight,  
Of mani uncouthe thede.  
He dede hem liver anon right  
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.  
Ther might men se with that soudan  
Mani blithe Cristen man,  
In gest as so werede.  
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  
Thai sent aboute ner and fer  
Opon that soudan for to wer,  
And seyd for that wrong,  
Bi Mahoun and Ternagaunt,  
THER schuld nought ben his warant  
Bot ben drawe and hong.  
Tho fif kinges of prout parayle  
Dight hem redi to that batyle;  
Wel stout and strong thai were.  
Hou the soudan gan hem aseyle  
And what thai heten withouten feile,  
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.  
The king of Tars and the soudan,  
Day of batyle thay gun tan  
Ogein thay kinges fives.  
Ac ever ogein a Cristen man,  
Ten hethen houndes wrer thay  
Of Sarrazins stout and stithe.  
Now herkhen 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.  
The Cristen soudan that tide  
Toke a spere and gan to ride  
To Canadok that was kene.  
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.  
The Sultan had imprisoned  
ten thousand Christian men, oh yes,  
from many unfamiliar peoples.  
He had them freed right away,  
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.  
You could see there, with that Sultan,  
many a happy Christian man,  
as we read in the story.  
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  
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.  
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,  
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.  
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.  
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,  
At that time the Christian Sultan  
took up a spear and began to ride  
against fierce Canadok.
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 has good falchion;
  he stuck off with a clean cut
the king's head with the whole hood.

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.

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,
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!"

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.

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
That ner he hadde him sleyn.

And when the soudan that yseighe
Al wode he wex for wrethe neye —
He rote to King Carmele.

He smot him on the helme an heighe
That thurth the breyn it fleighe
That no leche might him helne.

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
Among tho houndes fele.

The king of Tars in that stounde
Hadde spite of that het hen hounde
That was so stout and beld.
He swore, "Bi Him that tholed wounde
The dogge schal adown to grounde
That fightes thus in feld."

He rode to King Carmele.

He smot him on top of the helmet
so that it flew through the brain
and no doctor could heal him.

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.

That ner he hadde him sleyn.

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so that he nearly laid him low on the field
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The Sarrazins seyghen alle
When the Sarrazins all saw

That Memarok was to grounde yfalle
When Memarok had fallen to the ground
And namore up arise,
and did not stand up again,

"Alas, Mahoun!" thai gan to calle,
they began to cry "alas, Mahoun!
"Whi latestow Cristen hewe ouc smale?13
Why do you allow Christians to chop us up fine?

Wicke is thi servise!"
You reward our service badly.”

Thai fleghre for dred alle yfere
They all fled together in terror
And dreynt hem in o river.
and, so very afraid were they of them,

So sore hem gan agrise.
they drowned themselves in a river.

The bateyle last swithe long
The battle lasted a very long time
Before they could win the day —
unti it was the time of evensong.

Til it were time of evensong
Until it was the time of evensong
Er thai might win the prise.

The Sarrazins flowe bi ich aside;
The Saracens fled on every side,
The Cristen folk after gan ride,
the Christian people pursuing them
And schadde hem breyn and blod.
and shedding their brains and blood.

Til it were time of evensong
Until it was the time of evensong
Er thai might win the prise.

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The Sarrazins flowe bi ich aside;
The Saracens fled on every side,
The Cristen folk after gan ride,
the Christian people pursuing them
And schadde hem breyn and blod.
and shedding their brains and blood.
| And tho that yold hem to the pes, | And the Sultan, swore, without a lie, |
| The soudan swore withouten les | by him who died on the cross, |
| Bi Him that dyed on rode, | that among those who yielded to them peacefully, |
| He that nold nought forsake his lay, | he who did not want to abandon his religion |
| He schuld forlesse that ich day | should, that very day, forfeit |
| The bal up in the hode. | the head in his hood. |
| Thritti thousende ther were take | Thirty thousand Saracens, |
| Of Sarrains bothe blo and blac | both dark and black, were seized there |
| And don in his prisoun. | and put in his prison. |
| And he that wald his lay forsake, | And he had anyone who wanted to abandon |
| Cristen men he lete him make | his religion made Christian |
| With gret devocioun. | with great devotion. |
| And thai that wald be cristned nought, | And those who did not want to be christened |
| Into a stede thai weren ybrought | were brought to a place |
| A mile withouten the toun | a mile away from the town |
| And Cristen men withouten wene | and Christian men, without hesitation, |
| Striken off her hevedes al bidene. | struck off all their heads. |

[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.]

| Thus the ladi with hire lore | Thus the lady, with her religion, |
| Broughte hire frendes out of sore | rescued her friends from grief |
| Thorw Jhesu Cristes grace. | through the grace of Jesus Christ. |
| Al the while that thei weore thare | No-one can express what joy they shared |
| The joye that was among hem yare | the whole time they were there |
| No mon may telle the space. | nor reckon how long for. |
| Whon thei weore out of world iwent | Once they had gone from the world, |
| Bifore God Omnipotent | they were granted a place |
| Hem was diht a place. | before omnipotent God. |
| Now Jhesu that is ful of miht | Now Jesus, who is full of strength, |
| Graunt us alle in Hevene liht | grant us all light in Heaven |
| To seo Thi swete face. AMEN. | by which to see your sweet face. AMEN. |