Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances

The Sultan of Babylon
The Siege of Milan
&
The Tale of Ralph the Collier

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The Sultan of Babylon

Introduction

The romance known as *The Sowdone of Babylone* survives in only one manuscript, Garrett No. 140, which passed from the Garrett collection in Baltimore to Princeton University. The manuscript dates from the mid-fifteenth century. The poem itself must have been written in the late fourteenth or the early fifteenth century since it contains echoes of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

The Sowdone of Babylone is one of the many medieval tales dealing with the exploits of Charlemagne and his band of retainers known as the Twelve Peers. The most famous of the peers were Roland and Oliver, who are heroes of *The Song of Roland*, the greatest of the medieval French epic poems or *chansons de geste*. Written around 1100, *The Song of Roland* both brought to fruition a tradition of tales about Charlemagne and inspired others. In the twelfth century, as romance replaced epic, stories about Charlemagne and the Peers continued to be written. Charlemagne himself, who lived from 742–814, was counted as one of the Nine Worthies, a group which included three personages from each of the classical, Biblical, and modern (i.e., medieval) worlds. This status ranked Charlemagne with such important figures as Hector, Alexander, Julius Caesar; Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus; Godfrey of Boulogne and Arthur. Perhaps only Arthur was of more importance to the medieval world than Charlemagne, who was, after all, credited with defending Christianity — and thus, for most medieval western readers, the civilized world — from the advancing Saracens, a more imminent and proximate threat than that which was met by the other Christian Worthies.

The stories about Charlemagne make up one of the three great 'matters' (or subjects) of medieval romance, as defined by the thirteenth-century romance writer Jean Bodel in his *Chanson de Saisnes:*

> *N'en sont que trois materes a nul home entendant*
> *De France, et de Bretaigne, et de Rome la grant.*

The stories clustered around Charlemagne make up the matter of France; stories about King Arthur and his knights, the matter of Britain; and stories of kings and heroes of

the classical world, including Troy and Macedonia, the matter of Rome. The three matters are prominent in the medieval literature of England, Italy, and Germany, as well as France, though France often provides source versions for other vernacular literatures.

The English Charlemagne romances, which are generally translations or adaptations of French originals, may be divided into three groups. The first, of which *The Sowdone of Babylone* is a member, contains those in which the exploits of the son of the Sultan, Firumbras (or Ferumbras, as the name appears in *The Sowdone of Babylone*), are highlighted. (The other two groups will be discussed in the introductions to the other romances in this volume.) These are derived from the French romance *Fierebras*, a *chanson de geste* of the late twelfth century — although it is generally believed that *The Sowdone of Babylone* is based on an Anglo-Norman retelling of *Fierebras* rather than directly on the French romance itself. The first part of *The Sowdone of Babylone*, dealing with the Saracen assault on Rome, has its ultimate source in the *Destruction de Rome*, a French poem of about 1500 lines, which describes the sacking of Rome by the Saracens. The events of the *Destruction* are introductory to those dealt with in *Fierebras*. The Anglo-Norman manuscript on which the *Sowdone of Babylone* is based abridges and adapts both of the French poems, which are, in turn, adapted by the English author of the *Sowdone*.

The poem is in an East Midland dialect. Thus we frequently find third person plural pronouns in *h-* rather than *th-* (as in 'here' = their; 'hem' = them; and, in line 2698, 'he' = 'they'); and the form of the third person singular feminine pronoun is 'she' (rather than the northern form 'scho' or the southern and western form 'heo'). In the third person singular of the present, the verb generally ends in *-th* (as in 'King Lowes witnessith' and 'corage begynneth'); and in the plural the ending is *-en* (as in 'frith and felde wexen' and 'lovers slepen'). The present participle ends sometimes in *-ing(e)* or *-yng(e)* (as in 'gyvinge' and 'seynge') and sometimes in *-and(e)* (as in 'cryande' and 'prikande'), as is typical of the East Midland dialect.

Despite the fact that *The Sowdone of Babylone* is derived from earlier works, there is a degree of liveliness and originality in the narrative that makes it interesting in its own right. It is, after all, a poem whose scope borders on the epic. The Saracen threat to Christendom, which must have been perceived in the Middle Ages much as the Communist threat to the free world was in America in the 1950s, concerned not only the fate of a country but the survival of the way of life that most in the western world knew. The conflict thus takes on the overtones of a world war. The fighting takes place in Rome and in Spain; and Charlemagne's French troops must battle forces assembled from all over the Saracen world. The Sultan's vassals come from Asia, Asia Minor, northern Africa, and parts of Europe. As W. R. J. Barron observes, the

romance 'disarms criticism of its improbable events by the sweep of its narrative' (p. 102).

This sweep allows the author to introduce exotic details that must have had a great appeal to the medieval reader. Indeed, some of them still seem interesting devices for revealing the alien nature of the people that Charlemagne must fight. When Laban, the Sultan, eats serpents fried in oil, or when he makes his vassals drink the blood of tigers, antelopes, and giraffes to inspire their courage, or when the seven-month-old children of a giant in the Sultan's service are said to be fourteen feet long, the audience, medieval or modern, experiences a fearful fascination.

But between the extremes of epic scope and exotic detail, there are other virtues to the narrative. There is in the romance a distinctive sense of character. One of the most interesting characters is Floripas, Laban's daughter. The motivation for her betrayal is slight: in a parody of courtly love, her affection for Guy of Burgundy, whom she has never seen, leads her to assist the Twelve Peers and frustrate the Sultan's plans to put them to death. But she is a striking example of a resourceful and independent female character as she aids her father's enemies.

When Laban is about to kill Roland and Oliver, Floripas advises him to keep them as hostages and then sets about to free them from the suffering and misery of their captivity. When her governess refuses to join in her plot, Floripas, on the pretext of having her watch porpoises at play, brings her to a window and shoves her out into the sea so that the governess will not betray her. To gain custody of the prisoners, she slays the jailer and convinces her father that she did so because he had fed the prisoners even though ordered not to by the Sultan.

She lends similar aid to the rest of the Peers when they become prisoners. Supplying them with food and armor, she allows them to hold out against the Sultan until assistance from Charlemagne arrives. When supplies run out, she has in reserve a magic girdle that makes anyone who puts it on feel as if he has just eaten his fill. And when the Sultan's men are about to break into the castle, she devises the stratagem of hurling down the Sultan's treasure and thus ending the attack as his soldiers scramble to get as much of the gold and silver as they can.

Floripas is in some ways a character as important in the romance as her brother Ferumbras, and the two together make Charlemagne's victory possible. Ferumbras might be seen as the *fortitudo* that complements Floripas's *sapientia* (or at least cunning). He is valiant in battle. He overcomes the Pope and has him at his mercy but scorns to kill a cleric and so spares him. He engages in a fierce combat with Oliver, as a result of which he decides to convert to Christianity and to assist the French forces. He even saves the life of Charlemagne who is abandoned in the midst of his

foes because of the treachery of Ganelyne (the Ganelon whose villainous behavior is traditional in Charlemagne tales from *The Song of Roland* on).

Of course, the conversion of his two children to the religion he hates is one of the greatest defeats that Laban suffers. The conversion of the children of the leader of the Saracens is a symbolic victory for the forces of Christianity, especially since almost all the Charlemagne romances are couched in terms of a religious struggle, even when they are not specifically *about* religion. The conversion also provides one of the thematic links between the two parts of the poem. Early in the narrative, the Sultan said to Ferumbras, 'My joye is alle in the nowe here / And in my doghter Dame Floripas' (lines 95-96). This statement echoes throughout the romance, right up to the end when he has no joy left and can only curse his son and daughter, calling her a 'hore serpentyne' and him 'fals cursed Ferumbras' (lines 3171-72).

Charlemagne and Laban are poles apart not only at the end of the romance, but throughout. Charlemagne can be unreasonable, as he is when he insists on sending all his Peers as messengers to Laban merely because each of them objected that it was foolhardy to send anyone to a man known to slay the messengers of his foes. But he is unswerving in his faith. He prays to Christ to give Oliver victory in his struggle with Ferumbras, and an angel comes to tell him his prayer has been heard. Laban, in contrast, repeatedly defies and denies his gods when he does not receive the results he has prayed for. When he is forced to flee his castle because of his daughter's betrayal, he tells the gods that they sleep too long and threatens to forsake them all if they don't help him. When the Peers sally forth and obtain provisions, Laban is so enraged that he threatens to burn the images of his deities and renounce them all. He goes so far as to have a fire prepared before his priests intervene and convince him to repent and make a conciliatory offering. Yet again when his treasure is thrown from the castle, Laban is so angry with his gods that he strikes the statue of Mahound and knocks it to the ground.

In the end, Laban can neither be faithful to his own gods nor accept the Christian faith. He spits into the font in which Charlemagne intends to have him baptized and, being recalcitrant, must be executed. His soul is taken off to join the devils in hell while Charlemagne, having rescued the relics stolen by the Saracens from Rome, entrusts the holy objects to churches throughout France.

While Barron is probably correct in saying that religion is not the real interest of *The Sowdone of Babylone*, it does play a part in defining the characters of Laban and of Charlemagne and in emphasizing the difference in their causes. And it is this polarity that forms the thematic center of the poem. Elements beyond religion enter into the contrast. One of the most important is the matching of words and works. The impetus for all the action of the romance is the robbing of the wealth on one of the

Sultan's ships by the Romans, for which he vows to be avenged. But his life becomes a study in frustration. While his vow seems to be fulfilled by the sacking of Rome, he is ultimately thwarted in achieving his revenge by Charlemagne and his Peers, and, worse, by his own children. Laban vows to Mahound that Oliver and Roland will be slain, but is dissuaded by his daughter, whose betrayal assures that they never will be executed. And later he swears that he will hang Charlemagne unless he will return Ferumbras and leave his territory. Of course, Charlemagne is never hung. Even Laban's threats against his gods are never carried out.

What develops is a pattern of rash speech which Laban does not have the power to translate into deeds. Charlemagne is just the opposite. What he says comes to pass, even if it is the rash demand that his Peers take a message to Laban. Perhaps most important in this regard and most revealing as a point of comparison is Charlemagne's vow (sworn 'by God and Seinte Denys,' not by Mahound) that unless Laban will be baptized and renounce his false faith, he will never see Babylon again (cf. lines 761-66). This is precisely what happens. At the end of the romance, when Laban refuses to convert to Christianity, he is put to death.

The contrasting vows and attitudes towards the gods and religion demonstrate that *The Sowdone of Babylone* is not as poorly structured as might first appear. There is at work in the poem a common medieval structural principle by which meaning is revealed through a series of comparisons and contrasts. The poem can be seen as a kind of diptych in which Charlemagne appears in one panel and Laban in the other. By means of parallel incidents, statements, and relationships with characters, certain qualities in the two and the worlds they represent are emphasized. Through these contrasts the poem comes full circle, and order, disturbed and threatened with extinction at the beginning of the poem, is restored in the end.

Manuscript

No. 140 in the Robert Garrett Collection of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, now at Princeton University.

Previous Editions

Romaunce of the Sowdone of Babylone Who Conquered Rome. London: Roxburghe Club, 1854.

The Romaunce of the Sowdone of Babylone and of Ferumbras His Sone Who Conquerede Rome. Ed. Emil Hausknecht. EETS e.s. 38. 1881; rpt. London: Oxford University Press for the EETS, 1969.

Lines 1491–3226 of *The Sultan of Babylon* appear in *Middle English Metrical Romances*. Ed. Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964. Volume I, pp. 239–84.

Criticism

Barron, W. R. J. *English Medieval Romance*. London: Longman, 1987. Pp. 99–103.

Smyser, H. M. 'The *Sowdon of Babylon* and Its Author.' *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 13 (1931), 185–218.

The Romance of the Sowdone of Babylone And of Ferumbras His Sone Who Conquered Rome

1	God in glorye of myghtes moost,	
	That al thinge made in sapience	*wisdom*
	By vertue of Woorde and Hooly Goost,	
	Gyvinge to man grete excellence,	
5	And alle that is in erthe wroght	
	Subjecte to man and man to The,	*Thee [God]*
	That he should with herte and thought	
	To love and serve, and noon but The:	
	For yyfe man kepte Thy commaundemente	*if*
10	In al thinge and loved The welle	
	And hadde [ne] synnede in his entente,	
	Than shulde he fully Thy grace fele;	
	But for the offences to God i-doon	*done*
	Many vengeaunces have befalle.	
15	Whereof I wole you telle of oon,	
	It were to moch to telle of alle.	
	While that Rome was in excellence	
	Of all realmes in dignite,	
	And howe it felle for his offence,	
20	Listinythe a while and ye shall see,	
	Howe it was wonen and brente	*conquered; burned*
	Of a Sowdon, that heathen was,	*By; Sultan*
	And for synne how it was shente;	*destroyed*
	As King Lowes witnessith that cas,	*Louis*
25	As it is wryten in romaunce	
	And founden in bokes of antiquyté	
	At Seinte Denyse Abbey in Fraunce,	
	There as cronycles remembrede be,	
	Howe Laban, the kinge of hie degre,	*high*
30	And syre and Sowdon of hie Babilon,	*lord; Sultan*
	Conquerede grete parte of Christianté,	
	That was born in Askalon.	
	And in the cité of Agremare	

Uppon the rivere of Flagote
35 At that tyme he sojorned there
Fulle roially, wel I wote, *know*
With kinges twelfe and admyralles fourtene,
With many a baron and knightis ful boold,
That roialle were and semly to sene;
40 Here worthynesse al may not be told.

Hit bifelle bytwyxte March and Maye,
Whan kynde corage begynneth to pryke, *natural desire; stir*
Whan frith and felde wexen gaye, *wood; grow*
And every wight desirith his like, *person*
45 Whan lovers slepen withe opyn yye *eye*
As nightyngalis on grene tre,
And sore desire that thai cowde flye,
That thay myghte withe here lovere be:
This worthy Sowdon in this seson *Sultan*
50 Shope him to grene woode to goon, *Prepared*
To chase the bore or the veneson,
The wolfe, the bere and the bawson. *badger*
He roode tho uppon a foreste stronde *then; river bank*
With grete rowte and roialte, *entourage*
55 The fairest, that was in all that londe,
With alauntes, lymmeris and racches free. *(see note)*
His huntes to chace he commaunde, *huntsmen*
Here bugles boldely for to blowe, *Their*
To fere the beestis in that launde. *frighten*
60 The Sowdon woxe wery i-nowe; *grew; enough*
He rested him undere an holme tre, *holly*
Sittynge uppon a grene sete
Seynge a dromonde com sailyng in the see *warship; sea*
Anone he charged to bekyn him with honde *beckon*
65 To here of him tidinges newe.
The maister sende a man to londe,
Of divers langages was gode and trewe,
And saide 'Lorde, this dromonde *warship*
Fro Babyloyne comen is,
70 That was worthe thousande poundis,

	As it mete with shrewes i-wis,	*criminals indeed*
	Charged with perle and precious stones	*Loaded*
	And riche pelure and spicerye,	*furs; spices*
	With oyle and bras qweynte for the nones[1]	
75	To presente yow, my lorde worthy.	
	A drift of wedire us droffe to Rome,	*impetus; weather*
	The Romaynes robbed us anone;	
	Of us thai slowgh ful many one.	*slew*
	With sorwe and care we be bygone.	*afflicted*
80	Whereof, lorde, remedye	
	Ye ordeyne by youre barons boolde,	
	To wreke the of this vilané;	*avenge yourself; villainy*
	Or certes our blis is coolde.'	
	The Soudon hirynge this tythinge,	*hearing*
85	With egre chere he made a vowe	*countenance*
	To Mahounde and to Appolyne,	
	That thai shulde by it dere i-nowe,	*pay for; dearly enough*
	Er that he wente fro theyme.	
	'Where be ye, my kinges boolde,	
90	My barons and my admyral?	
	Thes tidinges make myn herte coolde;	
	But I be venged, dyen I shalle.	*Unless*
	Sire Ferumbras, my sone so dere,	
	Ye muste me comforte in this case:	
95	My joye is alle in the nowe here	*you*
	And in my doghter Dame Florypas.	
	Sortybraunce, my counselere,	
	Lete clepe him forthe to counsaile me,	*Have him called*
	And Oliborne, my chauncelere	
100	And noble clerke of hie degre,	
	And Espiarde, my messangere,	
	To goon to Assye and to Aufrike	*Asia; Africa*
	To kinges, princes ferre and nere,	*far*
	Barons, admyralls and dukes frike,	*bold*
105	Comaundinge hem uppon her legeaunce	*allegiance*
	To come in al hast unto me,	

[1] *With oil and brass excellent for the occasion*

Wel armed with shelde and launse,
To Egremoure thon riche cité.'
In shorte tyme this message was wroghte
110 An hundred thouusande on a rowte. *company*
That robbery was righte dere boght,
Was never none derrer withouten doughte. *more costly; doubt*
The Kinge of Baldas, Sir Lukafere,
Of Aufryke lorde and governoure,
115 Spake to the Sowdon, that men myghte here, *hear*
And saide 'Sir, for thyn honoure,
Do sende for shippes both fere and nere.'
Carrikes, galeis and shippes shene, *Carracks, galleys; noble*
Sefen hundred were gadered al in fere *together*
120 And a dromonde for the Sowden kene. *warship; bold*
Sir Ferumbras of Alisaundre *Alexandria*
In the dromonde with him was,
Of Assy the Kinge of Chaundere, *Asia*
And his faire doghter Floripas.
125 Two maistres were in the dromounde, *masters*
Two goddes on hye seten thore *idols*
In the maister toppe, withe macis rounde, *maintop; maces*
To manace with the Cristen lore.
The sailes were of rede sendelle, *silk*
130 Embrowdred with riche arraye, *grandeur*
With beestes and breddes every dele, *birds; part*
That was right curious and gaye; *elaborate; bright*
The armes displaied of Laban
Of asure and foure lions of goolde. *azure*
135 Of Babiloyne the riche Sowdon,
Moost myghty man he was of moolde; *earth*
He made a vowe to Termagaunte:
Whan Rome were distroied and hade myschaunce,
He woolde turne ayen erraunte *again errant*
140 And distroye Charles, the Kinge of Fraunce.

Forth thai sailed on the flode,
Tille thai come to the haven of Rome: *port*
The wynde hem served; it was ful goode.

	Ther londed many a grymlye gome.	*fierce man*
145	Thai brente and slowen, that Cristen were,	*burned; slew*
	Town, abbey and holy chirche.	
	The hethen hade such power there,	
	That moche woo gan thai there wirch.	*work*
	Tidinggis came to Rome anone	*straightway*
150	Unto the pope, that that tyme was,	
	That the hethen came to bren and slone.	*burn; slay*
	This was to hem a sory cas.	*them; event*
	He lete cal his counsaile togeder	*had called*
	To wete what was beste to don.	*know*
155	Anone as thai were come thedere,	*As soon*
	He asked of hem al ful sone:	
	'Lordinges, it is unknowne to you,	
	That this cursed hathen Sowdon	*heathen*
	Brennyth and stroyeth oure pepul nowe,	*Burns; destroys*
160	Alive he leveth unneth not one.	*scarcely*
	Seint Petir be oure governoure	
	And save this worthi cité of Rome,	
	And Seinte Poule be oure gydoure	*guide*
	From this cursed hethen houne!'	*hound*
165	Ifrez he bispake him than,	
	Of Rome he was a senatoure,	
	And saide, 'Sendith some worthy man	
	To Charles, kinge of hye honoure.	
	He wolde you helpe with all his myghte,	
170	That noble Kinge of dowse Fraunce.'	*beloved*
	'Certes,' quod Savaris, 'that weren no righte;	*said*
	It were right a foule myschaunce,	
	To sende to that worthy kinge.	
	We have oure hedes yet al hole,	
175	Oure sheldes be not broke no thinge,	
	Hawberke, spere, ner poleyne, ner pole.[1]	
	Whereof shul we playn to him,	*complain*
	That no thinge yet have assaide?	*attempted*
	Mech vylanye we myght wynne,	*Much dishonor*

[1] *Hauberk, shield, knee-armor, nor spearshaft*

180	That for noght were so sone afrayed.	
	Ten thousande men delyvere me tyte	*quickly*
	Tomorue next into the feelde,	
	And I shall prove with al my myghte	*try*
	To breke there bothe spere and shelde.'	
185	Unto the senatours it semed welle,	
	His consaile goode and honurable.	
	This worthi duke was armed in stele	*steel*
	In armes goode and profitable;	*beneficial*
	He bare a chek of goulis clere,	*checkered cloth; red*
190	An egle of goolde abrode displayed,	*with wings spread*
	With him many a bolde bachelere.	*young knight*
	Tho spake Savaryz with wordes on hye	
	And saide, 'My felowes alle,	
	This daie prove you men worthy,	
195	And faire you al shal befalle.	
	Thenke yat Criste is more myghty	*yet*
	Than here fals goddis alle;	*their*
	And He shal geve us the victorie,	
	And foule shal hem this day bifalle.'	*them*
200	Forth than rode that faire ooste	
	With right goode chere and randon,	*speed*
	Tille thay come ful nyghe the cooste	*site*
	Of the Sowdons pavylon.	
	Ferumbras was of hem ware	*aware*
205	And sprange out as a sparkil of glede.	*spark; glowing ember*
	Of armes bright a sheelde he bare;	
	A doughty man he was of dede.	*bold*
	Fyftene thousande came oute there	
	With him at that same tyde,	*time*
210	Ayen the Romaynes for to were,	*Against; make war*
	With bobaunce, booste and grete pride.	*pomp*
	The stoure was stronge, enduryng longe:	*battle*
	The Romaynes hade there the feelde;	
	The Sarysyns thai slough amonge,	*slew*
215	Ten thousand and mo with spere and sheelde.	*more*
	Savariz was wise and ware	*cunning*
	And drowe towards that citee.	

His baner displaied with him he bare
To releve with his meyné. *rally; retinue*
220 The pope with his senatours
Thanked God that tyme of glorie,
That gafe hem that day grete honours,
Of hethen that dai to have the victorie.
Lukafere, Kinge of Baldas,
225 The countrey hade serchid and sought,
Ten thousande maidyns fair of face
Unto the Sowdan hath he broghte.
The Sowdon commanded hem anone, *straightway*
That thai shulde al be slayn.
230 Martires thai were everychon, *everyone*
And therof were thai al ful fayne. *glad*
He said, 'My peple nowe ne shalle
With hem noughte defouled be,
But I wole distroie over all
235 The sede over alle Cristianté.' *seed*
Tho spake Lukefere the Kinge,
That hethen hounde Baldas,
And saide, 'Sir Sowdan, graunte me one thinge,
Thi doghter Dame Floripas.
240 The Kinge of Fraunce I shal the bringe
And the Twelfe Dosipers alle in fere.' *together*
The Sowdan saide in that tokenyng, *as a token*
'I graunte the here, that is so dere.' *her to you*
Tho sayde Floripe, 'Sire, noon haste,
245 He hath note done as he hath saide.
I trowe he speketh these wordes in waste; *in vain*
He wole make bute an easy brayde. *blustering*
Whan he bryngith home Charles the Kinge
And the Twelfe Dosipers alle,
250 I graunte to be his derlynge *darling*
What so evere therof byfalle.'
Than on the morowe the Sowdan
Callid to him Lukafere of Baldas,
To assaile the cité anone: *straightway*
255 'And loke thou tary not in this cas!

	Thritty thousande of my menie,	*host*
	Of Gallopes, Ethiopes and Aufricanes,	*Ethiopians; Africans*
	Take hem to the walles with the.	
	Betith down wallis, towris and stones.'	
260	Lukafere blewe his clarion	*trumpet*
	To assemble the Sarasyns that tide,	
	Whereof thai knewe right welle the soune.	
	Thai made hem redy for to ride,	
	But whan thai come to the yate,	*gate*
265	The dikes were so develye depe,	*ditches; devilishly deep*
	Thai helde hemselfe chekmate;	
	Over cowde thai nothir goo nor crepe.	*walk; crawl*
	Lukafere in al the haste	
	Turned to the Sowdan agayn	
270	And saide, 'Sir, it is all in waste,	*in vain*
	We laboure nowe alle in vayne.	
	To depe and brode the dikes bene,	*ditches*
	The towres so stronge be with-alle,	*moreover*
	That by Mahounde I can note seen,	
275	How that we shulde wyne ther to the walle.'	*reach*
	Who was woode but the Sowdon?	*mad*
	He reneyed his goddis alle.	*renounced*
	He clepede his engynour Sir Mavone,	*called*
	To counsaile he did him faste calle.	
280	He tolde him the case of that myschefe,	
	How it stode at that ilke tyde.	*very time*
	Mavon gafe him counsel in breefe	
	To fille the dikes that were depe.	*ditches*
	'Every man to woode shal goon,	
285	Fagotis to hewe and faste bynde,	
	And fille the dikes faste anoon	
	With alle that we may ther fynde.'	
	'Gramercy, Mavon,' quod Laban than,	*said*
	'Mahoundis benysone thou shalt have,	*blessing*
290	Of all myn ooste the wiseste man,	*host*
	With counsaile men for to save.'	
	Alle this was done the seconde daye,	
	Men myght go even to the walle.	

	On every party the ooste laye;	*host*
295	Thai made assaite then generalle.	*assault*
	The Romayns ronnen to the toures,	
	Thai were in ful grete dowte;	*fear*
	Thai hade many sharpe shoures,	*battles*
	Thai were assailed sore abowte.	
300	Wifis and maidyns stones thai bare	
	To the walles than ful faste,	
	Thai were in grete drede and care;	
	The men over the wallis did caste.	
	Thai slowen many a Sarasyn,	
305	Ten thousande pepul of hem and moo.	*more*
	The daie passed to the fyne;	*end*
	The hethen withdrowe hem tho.	*themselves then*
	Whan these tidinges came to Laban,	
	His goddes he gan chide.	
310	He waxe both blake, pale and wan,	*became*
	He was nyghe woode that same tyde.	*mad; time*
	Tho Lukafer comfortede him welle	*Then*
	And saide 'Sir, be not dismayed,	
	For I have aspied everydele,	*completely*
315	Howe thai shalle alle be betrayede.	
	Savariz wole tomorowe with us fighte,	
	His baner knowe I ful welle;	
	I shal have an othere, I you plighte,	*promise*
	Like to this every dele.	*way*
320	When he is moste besy in bataile,	
	Than wole I with banere displaiede	
	Ride into Rome without faile,	
	Thus shal thai al be betrayede.'	
	The Sowdan was glad of this tidinge,	
325	Hopinge it shulde be so;	
	And even as it was in purposynge,	
	Right so was it aftir i-do.	*done*
	Wenynge it hade be Savarye,	*Supposing*
	Relevinge fro the hethen stoure —	*Returning; fight*
330	Wenynge doth ofte harme, withoute lye —	*Supposing*

He entred to the maister toure.
The firste warde thus thay wonne — *defence*
By this fals contrevede engyne. — *trick*
Thus was moche sorowe bygon,
335 Thai slough all that were therinne. — *slew*
Whan Savariz saugh this discomfiture
Of the Romaynes in that tyme,
And howe harde than was here aventure, — *their lot*
Of sorowe that myghte he ryme — *speak*
340 Of ten thousande men lefte no moo — *more*
But sexty men and twelfe,
And whan he sawe this myschief tho,
He turned homewarde agayn himselve.
By than he founde the gate shite — *shut*
345 With Sarisyns that hade it wone;
And Estragot with him he mette
With bores hede, blake and donne. — *boar's head; dark*
For as a bore an hede hadde
And a grete mace stronge as stele.
350 He smote Savaryz as he were madde,
That dede to grounde he felle.
This Astrogot of Ethiop,
He was a kinge of grete strength;
Ther was none suche in Europe
355 So stronge and so longe in length.
I trowe he were a develes sone, — *believe*
Of Belsabubbis lyne.
For ever he was thereto i-wone, — *accustomed*
To do Cristen men grete pyne. — *torment*

360 Whan tidinggis came to the Pope
That Duke Savaryz was dede slayn,
Than to woo turned alle his hope;
He dide calle than to counsaile
Alle the senatouris of Rome,
365 What thinge that myght hem most availe,
And what were beste to done.
Tho byspake a worthy man of counsaile,

	An erille of the senatouris:	*earl*
	'The best counsaile that I can	*(see note)*
	. . . . .	
370	Sending unto Charles the Kinge	
	Certifyinge him by your myssangeris	
	The myschief that ye are inne,	*trouble*
	That he come with his dosyperys	
	To reskue Cristianté fro this hethen.'	
375	All thai assentede anone therto;	
	The lettres were made in haste.	
	Thre messageres we ordeyn therto,	
	That went forthe at the laste.	
	At a posterne thai wente oute	
380	Pryvely aboute mydnyght,	
	And passed through alle the route.	*host*
	Of hem was war no wight.	*aware; person*
	But let we nowe the messangeris goon,	
	And speke we of Laban,	
385	Howe he dide saile the cité anoon,	*assail*
	And commaundid that every man	
	Shulde withe pikeys or with bille	*pickax; mattock*
	The wallis overthrowe,	
	That he myght the Romaynes kille,	
390	Playnly on a rowe,	
	By water he ordeynede the shippes goon,	
	The bootis bownden to the maste,	*ships' boats*
	That thai myght fight with hem anoon,	
	Honde of honde, that was here caste.	*their intention*
395	To the toure a bastile stode,	*turret*
	An engyne was i-throwe —	
	That was to the cité ful goode — [1]	
	And brake down towres both hie and lowe.	
	Tho sorowede alle the citesyns	
400	And were ful hevy than.	

[1] *[Missiles from] a siege engine were thrown — / it was a good enough machine to reach the city*

	Tho wox prowde the Sarasyns,	*grew*
	And than bispake Sire Laban	
	And saide, 'Yolde youe here to me,	*Yield*
	Ye may not longe endure,	
405	Or ellis shall ye al slayn be,	
	By Mahounde I you ensure.'	
	A Romayne drife a darte him to	*hurled*
	And smote him on the breste plate,	
	Ne hadde his hawberke lasted tho,	*hauberk*
410	Mahounde had come to late.	
	Tho was the Sowdon more than wod.	*mad*
	He cried to Ferumbras,	
	'For Mahoundes love, that is so good,	
	Destroye up bothe man and place.	
415	Spare no thinge that is alyve,	
	Hows, toure ner walle,	*House*
	Beest ner man, childe nere wife,	
	Brenne, slo and distroye alle.'	*slay*
	Tho Ferumbras ordeynede anone	
420	To bende the engynes to the town	*direct*
	And bete down both toure and stoon.	
	He cleped forth Fortibraunce and Mavon	*called*
	And saide, 'Be youre engynes goode?	
	Shewe forth here nowe your crafte	
425	For Mahoundis love, that gevith man foode,	
	That ther be no toure lafte.'	
	Tho the grete gloton Estagote	*wretch*
	With his myghty mace sware	*oppressive*
	On the gatis of Rome he smote	
430	And brake hem alle on thre thare.	
	In he entrid at the gate	
	The portecolis on him thai lete falle.	*portcullis*
	He wende he hade come to late;	*thought*
	It smote him through herte, lyver and galle.	*gall-bladder*
435	He lai cryande at the grounde	*on*
	Like a develle of helle;	
	Through the cité wente the sowne,	*sound*
	So lowde than gan he yelle.	

Gladde were all the Romaynes,
440 That he was take in the trappe,
And sorye were al the Sarsyns
Of that myschevos happe. *ill-fated accident*
Sory was the Soudon than
And Ferumbras and Lukafere.
445 Thai drowe hem till her tentes than — *withdrew themselves to*
Thai lefte him ligginge there. *lying*
Mahounde toke his soule to him
And broght it to his blis.
He loved him wel and al his kyn,
450 Of that myghte he not mys.
Anone the Pope dide somon alle;
The peple of the cité came.
To Seinte Petris he dide hem calle,
And thidere came every man.
455 He saide on hie, 'My children dere,
Ye wote wel howe it is; *know*
Ayenst the Sarisyns that nowe be here,
We mowe not longe endure, i-wis. *certainly*
Thay brekene oure walles, oure toures alle
460 With caste of his engyne. *throwing from*
Therefore here amonge you alle
Ye shall here counsaile myne. *hear*
Thai bene withdrawe to here oost, *host*
And on-armede thay ben alle.
465 Therefore, me thenketh, is beste
Tomorowe erly on hem to falle.
We have thirti thousande men;
Twenty thousande shal go with me,
And in this cité leve ten
470 To governe the comynalté.' *people of the city*
The senatouris assentede sone
And saide, 'Beter myghte no man seyne.' *say*
On the morowe this was it done;
God bringe hem wele home agayne.
475 The Pope did display than
The hie baner of Rome,

	And he assoiled every man	*absolved*
	Through gracious God in dome.	*judgment seat*
	He praide of helpe and socoure	
480	Seinte Petir and Poule also	
	And Oure Lady, that swete floure,	
	To save the cité of Rome from woo.	
	Forth thai riden towarde the oost.	
	Ferumbras romede aboute.	
485	He saw the Romaynes comen by the cost;	
	Thereof he hade grete dowte.	*fear*
	He blewe an horne, of bras it was;	
	The Sarsyns begon to wake.	
	'Arise up,' he saide in a ras,	*hurry*
490	'We bene elles alle i-take;	
	And armes anone, every wight!	*To arms*
	To horse with spere and shelde!	
	Ye may se here a ferefull sighte	
	Of oure enemyes in the felde.	
495	Ascopars, goo ye biforne us,	
	For ye be men of myghte;	
	Ethiopes, Assaynez and Askalous,	*Ethiopians; Asians; (see note)*
	Go nexte afore my sighte.	
	My fadir and I, with Babyloynes,	*Babylonians*
500	Ho shal kepe the rerewarde.	*(see note); rearguard*
	King Lukafere with Baldeseynes,	
	To venge alle, shalle have the fowarde.'	*vanguard*
	The Romaynes aspied that thai were ware	
	Of here comynge than,	
505	And therfore hade thay moche care.	
	Natheles on hem thai gon —	
	Seinte Petir be here socoure! —	
	And laiden on side, bake and bon.	*struck*
	There bigan a sturdy shoure.	*battle*
510	Sire Ferumbras of Alisaundre oon,	
	That bolde man was in dede,	
	Uppon a steede Cassaundre gaye,	
	He roode in riche weede.	*clothing*
	Sire Bryer of Poyle, a Romayne to fraye,	*Apulia; fear*

515 He bare through with a spere;
Dede to the grounde ther he lan. *Dead on*
Might he no more hem dere! *harm*
That sawe Huberte, a worthy man,
Howe Briere was i-slayn;
520 Ferumbras to qwite than *requite*
To him he rode ful even.
With a spere uppone his shelde than
Stifly ganne he strike;
The shelde he brake i-myddis the feelde;
525 His hawberke wolde not breke.
Many goode strokes were delte.
Ferumbras was agreved tho;
He smote with mayne and myghte
The nekke asonder, the ventayle also, *neck-armor*
530 That dede he sate uprighte.
There was bataile harde and stronge;
Many a steede wente ther astraye,
And leyen at the grounde i-stonge, *on; wounded*
That resyn never aftyr that day, *rose*
535 Nine thousand of the payens pride *pagans'*
That day were slayn,
And eyghte thousande of the Romaynes side,
That in the feelde dede layne. *lay*
Lukafere, that paynym proude, *pagan*
540 Slough Romaynes eyghtene. *Slew*
Of werre moche sorowe he coude; *war*
His strokes were over alle sene.
Gyndarde, a senatoure of Rome,
Hade slayne Sarsenys ten,
545 Tille he met with the cursed gome; *man*
Lukifere slough him than.

Tho come the Pope with grete aray;
His baner to-fore him wente.
Ferumbras than gan to assaye *evaluate*
550 If he myght that praye entente, *turn his attention to that crowd*
Supposynge in this thoughte,
Ther was the soverayne;

He spared him therfore right noght,
But bare him down ther in the playn.
555 Anoon he sterte on him all ane — *leapt; alone*
His ventayle for to onlace, — *neck-armor; unlace*
And saugh his crown newe shafe, — *shaven*
Ashamed thanne he was.
'Fye, preest, God gyfe the sorowe!
560 What doist thou armede in the feelde,
That sholdest saie thi matyns on morwe?
What doist thou with spere and shelde?
I hoped thou hadiste ben an emperoure,
Or a cheftayne of this ooste here,
565 Or some worthy conqueroure.
Go home and kepe thy qwere! — *choir*
Shame it were to me certayne
To sle the in this bataile;
Therfore turne the home agayn!'
570 The Pope was gladde therof certayne.
He wente home to Rome that nyght
With five thousande and no more;
Fiftene thousande lefte in the feelde aplight, — *indeed*
Full grete sorowe was therfore.

575 Nowe telle we of the messangere,
That wente to Charlemayne,
Certyfyinge him by lettres dere,
Howe the Romaynes were slayne,
And howe the contrey brente was — *burnt*
580 Unto the gate of Rome,
And howe the people song 'Alas,'
Tille socoure from him come.
'Who,' quod Charles, that worthy kinge, — *said*
'The Sowdon and Ferumbras?
585 I nyl lette for no thinge,
Till I him oute of Cristendome chace.
Therefore Gy of Burgoyn,
Mynne owen nevewe so trewe, — *nephew*
Take a thausande pounde of frankis fyne,

590 To wage wyth the pepul newe. *pay*
Take this with the nowe at this tyme
And more I wole sende the.
Loke that thou spare no hors ne shelde,
But that he dede be;
595 And faste hye the thyderwarde, *hasten*
For I drede thay have grete nede,
And I shalle come aftirwarde
As faste as I may me spede.'

Speke we of Sir Laban
600 And let Charles and Gy be,
Howe he ordeyned for hem than
To distroye Rome citee.
'Sir Lukafere, thou madiste thi boost
To conquere the Romaynes
605 And to bringe me the ooste
Of the Twelfe Peris and Charlemayne.
Uppon a condicion I graunte the
My doghter, dere Dame Floripas.
Wherefore I aske nowe of the
610 To holde covenaunte in this cas.'
'That I saide,' quod Lucafere,
'To Mahounde I make a vowe
To done al that I hight the there, *promised you*
Ye and more than for Florip love.'
615 He ordeyned assaute anone in haste *assault*
With ten thousande men and moo;
And Ferumbras at that other side faste
Assailed hem with grete woo.
The saute endured al that daye *assault*
620 From morowe tille it was nyght, *morning*
To throwe and shete by every waye, *shoot*
While that hem endured the light.
Tho wente thai home to thaire tentys,
Tille it were on the morowe.
625 Isres, in his fals ententes,
Purposed treason and sorowe.

He was chief porter of the town,
By heritage and fee so he shulde be. *(see note)*
He wente to the Sowdan,
630 For the riche cité betraye woolde he,
And saide, 'Lorde, gife me grace
For my goodes and for me,
And I wole delyver the this place
To have and holde for ever in fee.
635 The keyes of this riche cité
I have in my bandon.' *control*
'That graunte I,' quod Laban, 'the
To be free withoute raunson.' *ransom*
Ferumbras made him yare, *ready*
640 With twenti thousand men and moo,
With this Isres for to fare,
And to wynne the cité soo.
As sone as he entred was
The chief gate of alle,
645 And alle his men in aras, *rushed*
He lete the portcolys falle. *portcullis*
He smote of the traitourus hede
And saide, 'God gife him care!
Shal he never more ete brede.
650 All traitours evel mot thai fare.
If he myght leve and reigne here, *live*
He wolde betraye me;
For go he west, south or north,
Traitour shalle he never be.'
655 He dide lete bere his hede on a spere[1]
Throughoute this faire citee.
'Treson, treson,' thai cried there;
Pite it was to here and see.
The people fled by every waye;
660 Thai durst nowhere abide.
The hyewey ful of dede men laye,
And eke by every lanys side. *also; lane's*

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[1] *He [Ferumbras] had his [Isres'] head borne on a spear*

Ferumbras to Seinte Petris wente,
And alle the relekes he seased anoon, *relics*
665 The Crosse, the Crown, the Nailes bente;
He toke hem with him everychone. *every one*
He dide dispoile al the cité
Both of tresoure and of goolde,
And after that brente he
670 Alle that ever myght be toolde.
And alle the tresoure with hem thai bare
To the cité of Egremoure.
Laban the Sowdon sojourned there
Thre monthes and thre dayes more
675 In myrth and joye and grete solas.
And to his goddes offrynge he made.
He and his sone Sir Ferumbras
Here goddis of golde dide fade; *propitiate*
Thai brente frankensense
680 That smoked up so stronge
The fume in her presence,
It lasted alle alonge. *on and on*
Thai blewe hornes of bras;
Thai dronke beestes bloode.
685 Milke and hony ther was,
That was roial and goode.
Serpentes in oyle were fryed
To serve the Sowdon with-alle;
'Antrarian, antrarian,' thai lowde cryed
690 That signyfied 'Joye generalle.'
Thus thai lived in joye and blis
Two monthes or thre.
Lete we now be alle this,
And of Gye nowe speke we.

695 Now speke we of Sir Gye
That toward Rome hied with his oost. *hurried*
Whan he approched thereto so nyghe
That he myght se the cooste,
Alle on a flame that cité was

700 That thre myle al abowte
Ther durst no man that ther was
Come nyghe the cité for grete dowte. *fear*
That was a sory cité than,
Sir Gye was in grete care,
705 Ther was nowhere a soryer man,
For sorowe he sighed ful sare
And saide 'Welallas the while
For we come ar to late.
For by some treson or some gyle *guile*
710 Thai entred in at some gate.
There is no more but for to abyde
Tille Charles come, the Kinge,
In this mede under grene wode side, *meadow*
To telle him of this tithinge,
715 Howe Laban hath the cité brente
And bore the reliqes awaye, *relics*
And howe he hath hem to Spayne sente
With shippes of grete aray, *magnificence*
To Egremoure his chief cité,
720 Ther to live and ende;
And manassith Charles and his baronye. *menaces*
God gife hem evelle ende!'
King Charles he forgate nought
To come to reskowe Rome. *rescue*
725 Alle his dozypers were i-sought;
Fulle sone to him thay come.
Thre hundred thousande of sowdeoures *soldiers*
Kinge Charles with him dide lede,
They were doughty in all stourys *bold; battles*
730 And worthy men of dede.
Sir Roulande that worthy knighte,
He ladde the fowarde, *vanguard*
And Sir Olyvere, that was so wighte, *courageous*
Governed the rerewarde. *rearguard*
735 The Kinge himselfe and his baronye,
With dukes and erilles roialle, *earls*
Governed alle the medil partye.

By commaundemente generall
He ordeynede grete plenté
740 Of flessh and fissh, brede and wyne,
In shippes to saile by the see,
To serven him ful wel and fyne.
Sir Gye aspied his comynge,
He knewe the baner of Fraunce,
745 He wente anoon ayen the Kinge — *to*
And tolde him of that myschaunce,
Howe that the cursed Sowdan
Hath brent Rome and bore the relekis awaye, — *relics*
And how he hath slayn alle and some,
750 That he hath founde of Cristen faye. — *faith*
And moreover he made his avowe,
To seke Kinge Charles in Fraunce
And do him wo ther i-nowe. — *enough*
God gif him moch myschaunce!
755 'A,' quod Charles, 'that nedith noght,
He shal fynde me nere.
By God, that dere me boght, — *redeemed*
He shal by it ful dere. — *pay for*
I shalle him never leve, i-wis, — *indeed*
760 Withinne walle ner withoute,
I swere by God and Seinte Denys,
Tille I have sought him oute;
And but if he will baptised be
And lefe his fals laye, — *faith*
765 Babyloyne shal he never see
For alle his grete aray. — *magnificence*
Anoon to shippe every man
With vitaile and with store, — *supplies*
Even towarde the proud Sawdan
770 Withouten any more.'
Wynde him blewe ful fayre and goode
Into the ryver of Gase,
Even over the salte flode
And over the profounde rase. — *deep sea*
775 Thirti legeez from Egremoure — *leagues*

By londe forsouth it is, *indeed*
And ther withoute any more
To londe thai wente i-wis, *indeed*
And brente and sloughen al that thai fonde, *slew*
780 And stroyed both toure and town.
Thai lefte no thinge on grounde,
That thai ne bete it down.

Tithinggis were tolde to Laban,
Howe Charles was i-come
785 And slough bouth childe, wyfe, man *slew*
And brente and stroyed alle and some
With thre hundred thousand of bacheleris, *young knights*
That were both stoute and gaye, *bold*
And with him al his dosyperis,
790 Pepul of grete araye.
'And but ye ordeyne remedy,
He wole you brenne and sloon, *slay*
Youe and youre riche baronye,
He wole leve alife nevere oon.'
795 Whan Laban herde these tidyngys,
His herte woxe alle coolde
And saide, 'This is a wonder thinge!
Howe durste he be so boolde?
Litill kennyth he what I may doo. *knows*
800 He dredith me litil nowe,
But certes he shalle, ere he goo — *before*
To Mahounde I make a vowe.'
Sir Lucafere and Ferumbras
To him dide he calle
805 And Mavon and Sortebras
And his barons alle.
'I charge you uppon your legeaunce *allegiance*
That ye bringe me that gloton *wretch*
That clepeth himselfe Kinge of Fraunce, *calls*
810 Hidere to my pavilon. *hither*
Kepe him alive; the remenaunte sle,
The Twelfe Peris ychoon. *each one*

I shalle tech him curtesye,
I swere by god Mahounde.'
815 Ferumbras anoon than
Arrayed him for to ride *Prepared*
With proude Sarasyns many a man,
That boldely durst abide.
Rowlande met with Ferumbras
820 And gafe him such a stroke
That al astonyed therof he was, *astonished*
It made him lowe to stoupe.
Ferombras smote him agayne
With myghte and mayn, with ire
825 That he stenyed alle his brayne; *astounded*
Him thought his eyen were alle on fyre. *It seemed to him*
With Lucafere Olivere mette
And hit him on the sheelde
A stroke that was right wel sette;
830 A quarter flye in the feelde. *flew*
Thus thai hurteled togedere
Alle the lefelonge daye, *livelong*
Nowe hider and nowe theder;
Mony an hors wente ther astraye.
835 The dosyperis thay foughten wele,
Duke Neymys and Ogere,
With goode swerdes of fyne stele
And so dide Gye and Syr Bryere.
Ferumbras was ever abowte
840 To fyghte with Olyvere,
And Olyvere withoute dowte
Leyde on with goode chere.
Kinge Charles saugh Ferumbras; *saw*
To him fast he rode
845 And it on the helme with his mace. *hit*
That stroke sadlye abode.
Ferumbras was woode for woo,
He myght for prees come him to *crowd*
For no worldis thinge that myght be tho.
850 King Charles anoon Joye oute-drowe,

And with his owen honde
Thirti Sarseynys ther he slowe,
That laie dede uppone the sonde; *ground*
Many of hem therfore made joy inowe.
855 Sir Lucafere of Baldas,
He presed to Charles sone,
And saide, 'Sir, with harde grace,
What hastowe here to done?
I behight Laban to bringe the to him *promised*
860 And the Twelfe Peris alle;
Now shaltowe come from al thy kyn
Into the Sowdans halle.
Yelde the to me,' he saide;
'Thy life shalle I safe.'
865 A stroke on him than Charles layde;
He made the paynym to rafe. *pagan rave*
He smote him on the helme
With Mownjoye, his gode bronde. *sword*
Ne hadde he be reskued than,
870 He hade slayn him with his honde.
Than came Baldesyns with thronge
To reskue there here lorde,
And Nubens with hem amonge *Nubians*
And Turkes by one accorde. *Turks*
875 Tho Roulande Durendale oute-drowe
And made romme abowte. *room*
Forti of hem ther he slowe;
Tho were thai in grete dowte.
Roulande as fiers as a lion
880 With Durendale tho dinge *beat*
Uppon the Sarsyns crowne,
As harde as he myght flynge. *strike*
Duke Neymys and Sir Olyvere,
Gy and Alloreynes of Loreyne,
885 And alle the noble Twelfe Peris,
Ogere and Bryere of Brytayne,
Thai foughten as feythfully in that fight,
The feelde ful of dede men laye.

Thirti thousande, I you plight, *swear*
890 Of Sarsenys ther were slayn.

Al thinge moste have an ende.
The nyghte come on ful sone;
Every wighte retourned to wende. *person turned; depart*
Ferumbras to his men gan gone
895 And saide, 'Oure hornes blowe we;
This day have we a ful ille afraye. *battle*
To saie the south and not to lye, *truth*
Oure goddis holpe us not todaye, *helped*
What devel that ever hem eilith. *ails*
900 This bataile was so sharpe, in faye, *truth*
That many a man it wailyth. *bewails*
Shalle I never in herte be glade todaye,
Till I may preve my myghte
With Roulande, that proude ladde,
905 Or with Olyvere, that is so lighte, *nimble*
That evel hath us ladde;
And in Paris be crowned kinge
In despite of hem alle,
I wole leve for no thinge
910 What so evere byfalle.'
King Charles with grete honoure
Wente to his pavilon;
Of the treyumple he bare the floure *triumph; won the prize*
In dispite of Mahounde.
915 Almyghty God and Seynte Denyse
He thanked ful ofte sithe
And Oure Lady, Marie of Paris,
That made hem gladde and blith.
He recomendide the olde knightes, *praised*
920 That that daye hade the victorye,
And charged the yonge with al her myghtes
To have hem in memorye;
'For worthynesse wole not be hadde,
But it be ofte soughte,
925 Ner knighthode wole not ben hadde,

Tille it be dere boghte.
Therfore ye knightes, yonge of age,
Of oolde ye may now lere, *learn*
Howe ye shalle both hurle and rage
930 In felde with sheelde and spere.
And take ensample of the Twelfe Peris,
Howe thai have proved her myght, *their*
And howe thai were both wight and fiers *valiant*
To wynnen honourys in righte.
935 These hethen houndes we shal a-tame
By God in magisté,
Let us make myrth in Goddis name
And to souper nowe goo we.'

'O thow, rede Mars armypotente, *red Mars mighty in arms*
940 That in the trende baye has made thy trone, *vaulted alcove; throne*
That god art of bataile and regent
And rulist alle that alone,
To whom I profre precious present,
To the makande my moone *making my moan*
945 With herte, body and alle myn entente,
A crown of precious stoones,
And howe to the I gyfe
Withouten fraude or engyne, *deceit*
Uppon thy day to make offerynge,
950 And so shal I ever, while that I live,
By righte that longith to my laye, *belongs; faith*
In worshipe of thy reverence
On thyn owen Tewesdaye
With myrre, aloes and frankensense,
955 Uppon condicion that thou me graunte
The victorye of Crystyn dogges,
And that I may some hem adaunte *somewhat*
And sle hem down as hogges,
That have done me distruccion
960 And grete disherytaunce *disinheritance*
And eke slayn my men with wronge. *also*
Mahounde gyfe hem myschaunce!'

In the semely seson of the yere,
Of softenesse of the sonne,
965 In the prymsauns of grene vere, *beginning; spring*
Whan floures spryngyn and bygynne,
And alle the floures in the frith *woods*
Freshly shews here kynde, *nature*
Than it is semely therwyth
970 That manhode be in mynde;
For corage wole a man to kith, *spirit; proclaim*
If he of menske have mynde, *honor*
And of love to lystyn and lithe, *hearken*
And to seke honure for that ende.
975 For he was nevere gode werryoure
That cowde not love aryght;
For love hath made many a conqueroure
And many a worthy knighte.
This worthy Sowdan, though he hethen were,
980 He was a worthy conqueroure;
Many a contrey with shelde and spere
He conquerede wyth grete honoure
And his worthy sone Ferumbras,
That kinge was of Alisaundre,
985 And Lucafere of Baldas,
That cruel Kinge of Cassaundre,
That wroughten wonders with here honde
With myghte and mayne for to fyghte,
And over-ride mony a manly londe,
990 As men of armes hardy and wighte. *valiant*
The Sowdan seyinge this myschief,
How Charles hade him agreved,
That grevaunce was him no thinge lese;
He was ful sore ameved. *moved*
995 He sente oute his bassatoures *ambassadors*
To realmes, provynces ferre and nere,
To townes, citeis, castels and tours,
To come to him there he were,
To Inde Major and to Assye, *Asia*

1000	To Ascoloyne, Venys, Frige and Ethiope,	*Venice, Phrygia; Ethiopia*
	To Nubye, Turkye and Barbarye,	*Nubia, Turkey*
	To Macedoine, Bulgare and to Europe.	*Macedonia, Bulgaria*
	All these people was gadred to Agremore,	*gathered*
	Thre hundred thousand of Sarsyns felle,	*fierce*
1005	Some bloo, some yolowe, some blake as More,	*Moor*
	Some horible and stronge as devel of helle.	
	He made hem drinke wilde beestes bloode,	
	Of tigre, antilope and of camalyon,	*giraffe*
	As is her use to egre her mode,	*excite their courage*
1010	When thai in were to battayle goon.	
	He saide to hem, 'My frendes dere,	
	As my trust is alle in you,	
	On these Frenche dogges, that bene here,	
	Ye moste avenge me nowe.	
1015	Thai have done me vilanye;	
	Mikille of my people have thay slayn.	*Many*
	And yet moreover thay manace me	
	And drive me to my contrey agayn;	
	Wherefore I wole at the bygynnynge	
1020	To Mahounde and to my goddis alle	
	Make a solempne offerynge;	*solemn*
	The better shall it us byfalle.	
	The laste tyme thai were wrothe,	
	We had not done our duté.	
1025	Therefore to saye the southe' . . .	*truth*
	There were many hornys blowe.	
	The preestes senden thikke i-nowe;	*plentifully*
	Goolde, and silver thikke thai throwe,	
	With noyse and crye thai beestes slowe,	
1030	And thought to spede wel i-nowe.	*thrive*
	And every man his vowe he made	
	To venge the Sowdan of his tene.	*injury*
	Here goddis of golde thai wex alle fade:	*became discolored*
	The smoke so grete was hem bitwene.	
1035	Whan alle was done, the Sowdan than	
	Charged Ferumbras redy to be	
	On the morowe, ere day began,	

	To ride oute of that cité	
	With thirti thousande of Assiens,	*Asians*
1040	Frigys, Paens and Ascoloynes,	*Phrygians*
	Turkis, Indeis and Venysyens,	*Turks, Indians; Venetians*
	Barbarens, Ethiopes and Macidoynes,	*Ethiopians; Macedonians*
	'Bringe him to me, that proude kinge;	
	I shal him teche curtesye.	
1045	Loke that thou leve for nothinge	*neglect*
	To sle alle his other mayne,	*forces*
	Safe Rouland and Olyvere,	
	That bene of grete renowne,	
	If thai wole reneye here goddis there	*renounce*
1050	And leven on myghty Mahounde.'	*believe*
	Ferumbras with grete araye	*army*
	Rode forthe, Mahounde him spede,	
	Tille he came nyghe there Charles lay	*near*
	Bysyde in a grene mede.	*meadow*
1055	In a woode he buskede his men	*prepared*
	Prively that same tyde,	*time*
	And with his felowes noon but ten	
	To Kinge Charles he gan ride	
	And said, 'Sire Kinge, that arte so kene,	*valiant*
1060	Upon trwes I come to speke with the.	*truce*
	If thou be curteis, as I wene,	*think*
	Thou wolte graunte a bone to me,	*boon*
	That I mighte fight uppon this grene,	
	With Rouland, Olyvere and Gye,	
1065	Duke Neymes and Ogere i-mene,	*together*
	Ye and Duke Richarde of Normandye —	
	With al sex attones to fight.	
	My body I profre here to the	*offer*
	And requyre the, Kinge, thou do me right,	
1070	As thou art gentille lord and fre,	*noble; generous*
	And if I may conquere hem in fere,	*together*
	To lede them home to my faderis halle;	
	And if thai me, I graunte the here	
	To be thy man, body and alle.'	

1075 The Kinge answered with wordis mylde
And saide, 'Felowe, that nedith nought;
I shal fynde of myn a childe *noble youth*
That shal the fynde that thou hast sought.'
The Kinge lete calle Sir Roulande
1080 And saide, 'Thou most with this man fight,
To take this bataile here on honde,
Therto God gyfe the grace and myghte!'
Roulande answered with woordis boolde
And saide, 'Sir, have me excused!'
1085 He saide certeynly he ne wolde;
The bataile uttirly he refused.
'The laste day ye preised faste
The oolde knightes of here worthynes.
Let hem goon forth — I have no haste;
1090 Thai may goo shewen here prowes.' *show*
For that worde the Kinge was wrothe
And smote him on the mouthe on hye,
The bloode at his nose oute-goth,
And saide, 'Traitour, thou shalte abye.' *pay for it*
1095 'Abye,' quod Roulande, 'wole I noughte,
And traitour was I never none,
By that Lord, that me dere hath bought!' *redeemed*
And braide oute Durendale there anone. *drew*
He wolde have smyten the Kinge there
1100 Ne hadde the barons ronne bytwene;
The Kinge withdrowe him for fere *fear*
And passed home as it myght beste bene.
The barons made hem at one *reconciled them*
With grete prayere and instaunce, *persuasion*
1105 As every wrath moste over-gone, *pass*
Of the more myschiefe to make voydaunce. *avoid greater trouble*

Olyvere herde telle of this,
That in his bedde laye seke sore. *sorely sick*
He armede him ful sone i-wisse,
1110 And to the Kinge he wente withoute more
And saide, 'Sir Kinge, a bone graunte me *boon*

For alle the servyse that I have done,
To fight with that kinge so free — *noble*
Tomorue day, ere it be none.' — *before noon*
1115 Charles answered to Olyvere:
'Thou arte seke and woundede sore, — *sick*
And thou also my cosyn dere;
Therfore speke thereof no more.'
'Sir Kinge,' he saide, 'I am alle hoole. — *sound*
1120 I aske you this bone in Goddis name.' — *boon*
'Certes,' he saide, 'I holde the a fole, — *fool*
But I praye God sheelde the fro shame.'
Forth he rideth in that forest
Tille he gan Ferumbras see,
1125 Where he was light and toke his rest, — *alighted*
His stede renewed til a grene tre. — *tied*
'Sir,' he saide, 'reste thou wele.
King Charles sente me hidure. — *hither*
If thou be curteys knighte and lele, — *brave*
1130 Rise up and let us fight togeder.'
Ferumbras sate stille and lough; — *laughed*
Him liste not to rise oute of the place. — *It pleased*
'My felowe,' quod he, 'what arte thou?
Telle me thy name for Goddis grace.'
1135 'Sir,' he saide, 'Generyse,
A yonge knighte late dobbet newe.' — *dubbed*
'By Mahounde,' quod he, 'thou arte not wyse,
For thy comyng shaltowe sore rewe. — *regret*
I holde Charles but a foole
1140 To sende the hidere to me.
I shall the lerne a newe scole — *teach; lesson*
If thoue so hardy to fighte be.
I wende he wolde have sende Roulande,
Olyvere and four mo dosyperys,
1145 That hade bene myghty men of honde,
Bataile to abide stronge and fiers.
With the me liste no playe begynne; — *it pleases; combat*
Ride agayn and saye him so. — *back*
Of the may I no worshype wynne,

1150 Though I slough the and such five mo.'
'Howe longe,' quod Olyvere, 'wiltowe plete? *prattle*
Take thyn armes and come to me,
And prove that thou saiest in dede,
For boost thou blowest, as thenketh me.' *you brag loudly*
1155 Whan Ferumbras herde him speke so wel,
He caught his helme in grete ire,
That wroght was of goode fyne stele
With perlis pight, rubeis and saphire. *set*
Olyvere halpe him it to onlase; *lace on*
1160 Gilte it was alle abowte.
Ferumbras thanked him of his grace
And curteisly to him gan lowte. *bow*
Thai worthed up on here stedes, *mounted*
To juste thai made hem preest, *joust; ready*
1165 Of armes to shewe here myghty dedis
Thai layden here speres in areeste. *support for a lance*
Togeder thai ronnen as fire of thondere,
That both here launces to-braste. *shattered*
That they seten, it was grete wonder; *remained seated*
1170 So harde it was that thay gan threste. *thrust*
Tho drowen thai oute here swordes kene
And smyten togeder by one assente.
There thai hitten, it was wele sene;
To sle eche other was here entente.
1175 Syr Ferumbras smote Olyvere
Uppon the helme righte on hye
With his swerde of metel clere,
That the fyre he made oute-flye.
Olyvere him hitte agayn
1180 Upon the hede than fulle sone;
He carfe awaye with myght and mayne
The cercle that sate uppon his crown. *ornamental band; head*
The stroke glode down by his bake; *glanced*
The arson he smot ther awaye *pommel*
1185 And the botelles of bawme withoute lake, *balm; indeed*
That uppone the grene ther thai laye,
That were trussed byhynde him faste. *securely*

Tho Ferumbras was full woo.
Olyvere light adown in haste. *alighted*
1190 The botellis he seased both two;
He threwe hem into the river than
As ferre as he myghte throwe.
'Alas,' quod Ferumbras, 'what deistowe, manne? *are you doing*
Thou art wode, as I trowe.
1195 Thai were worth an hundred thousand pounde
To a man that were wounded sore.
Ther was no preciosour thinge uppon grounde *earth*
That myghte helpe a man more.
Thou shalt abye, by Mahounde, *pay for it*
1200 That is a man of myghtes moost.
I shall breke both bake and crown *head*
And sle the ther thou goist.' *where*
Tho Olyvere worth up agayn, *mounted*
His swerde he hade oute i-drawe.
1205 Ferumbras him smote with mayne *strength*
And mente to have him slawe. *slain*
He smote as doth the dinte of thondir; *clap*
It glased down by his sheelde *glanced*
And carfe his stedes neke asonder
1210 That dede he fille in the felde. *fell*
Wightly Olyvere up-sterte *Nimbly*
As bacheler, doughti of dede, *young knight*
With swerde in honde him for to hirte
Or Ferumbras goode stede.
1215 That Ferumbras aspied welle;
He rode awaye than ful faste
And tiede him to a grene hasel,
And come ayen to him in haste
And saide, 'Nowe yelde the to me —
1220 Thou maiste not longe endure —
And leve on Mahounde, that is so dere, *believe*
And thy life I shalle the ensure.
Thou shalt be a duke in my contré,
And men have at thyn owen wille.
1225 To my sustir shaltowe wedded be —

It were pité the for to spille!' *kill*
'Better,' quod Olyvere, 'shul we dele, *fight*
By God that is in magisté,
And of my strokes shaltow more fele,
1230 Er I to the shalle yelde me.'
Thai smeten togeder with egre mode, *struck; angrily*
And nathir of othire dradde; *feared*
Thai persed here hauberkes that were so goode *pierced*
Tille both thayr bodyes bladde. *bled*
1235 Thay foughten soo longe that by assente
Thai drewe hem a litil bysyde,
A litil while thaym to avente, *take a breather*
And refresshed hem at that tyde.
'Generis,' quod Ferumbras,
1240 'As thou arte here gentil knighte, *noble*
Telle me nowe here in this place
Of thy kyn and what thou hight; *are called*
Me thenkith by the now evermore,
Thou shuldist be one of the Twelfe Peris, *must*
1245 That maiste fighte with me so sore,
And arte so stronge, worthy and fiers.'
Olyvere answered to hym agayn:
'For fere I leve it not ontoolde: *fear; untold*
My name is Olyvere certayn,
1250 Cousyn to Kynge Charles the boolde,
To whome I shalle the sende
Qwikke or dede this same daye, *Alive*
By conqueste here in this feelde,
And make the to renye thy laye.' *renounce; faith*
1255 'O,' quod Ferumbras than to Olyvere,
'Welcome thou arte into this place;
I have desyrede many a yere
To gyfe the harde grace. *bad luck*
Thou slough myn uncle Sir Persagyne,
1260 The doughty Kinge of Italye,
The worthyeste kinge that lyved of men.
By Mahounde, thou shalt abye!' *pay for it*
Tho thai dongen faste togedere *struck*

While the longe day endured,
1265 Nowe hithere and nowe thidere;
Fro strokes wyth sheeldes here bodies thai covered.
And at the laste Olyvere smote him so
Uppon the helme, that was of stele,
That his swerde brake in two.
1270 Tho wepen had he nevere a dele. *not at all*
Who was woo but Olyvere than?
He saugh noone other remedy.
He saide, 'Sire, as thou art gentile man, *noble*
On me nowe here have mercy.
1275 It were grete shame i-wis,
And honure were it noon,
To sle a man wepenles;
That shame wolde nevere goon.'
'Nay traitour, thou getiste noon.
1280 Hade I here an hundred and moo!
Knele down and yelde the here anoon,
And eles here I woole the sloo.'
Olyvere saugh it wolde not be *saw*
To truste to moch in his grace.
1285 He ranne to the stede that stode by the tre; *steed*
A swerde he raught in that place *seized*
That was trussed on Ferumbras stede, *steed*
Of fyne stele goode and stronge.
He thought he quyte Ferumbras his mede. *would pay; reward*
1290 Almoost hadde he abyde to longe; *waited*
For in turnynge Ferumbras him smote.
That stroke he myghte welle fele:
It come on hym so hevy and hoote *violently*
That down it made hym to knele.
1295 Tho was Olyvere sore ashamede
And saide, 'Thou cursed Sarasyne,
Thy proude pride shall be atamed, *subdued*
By God and by Seinte Qwyntyne.
Thou hast stole on me that dynte;
1300 I shall quyte the thyn hire.' *pay; wages*
A stroke than Olyvere him lente, *dealt*

That hym thought his eyen were on fire.

King Charles in his pavilon was
And loked towarde that fyghte
1305 And saugh howe fiers Ferumbras
Made Olyvere knele down right.
Wo was him tho in his herte;
To Jhesu Criste he made his mone.
It was a sight of peynes smerte *severe*
1310 That Olyvere kneled so sone:
'O Lord God in Trinite,
That of myghtis Thou arte moost,
By vertue of thy majesté
That alle knoweste and woste, *are aware of*
1315 Lete not this hethen man
Thy servaunte overcome in fyght,
That on The bileve ne kan, *Who can't believe in You*
Jhesu Lorde, for Thy myghte!
But graunte Thy man the victorye,
1320 And the paynym skomfited to be, *pagan discomfited*
As Thou arte Almyghty God of glorye!
Nowe mekely, Lorde, I pray to The.'
To Charles anoone an aungel came
And broght him tidingges sone
1325 That God had herde his praiere than
And graunte him his bone.
Tho Charles thanked God above
With herte and thought, worde and dede,
And saide, 'Blessed be Thou, Lorde Almyghty,
1330 That helpiste Thy servaunte in nede.'

These champions togedir thai gone
With strokes grete and eke sure. *also*
Eche of hem donge othir on *struck*
Alle the while thai myghte endure.
1335 Ferumbras brake his swerde
On Olyveris helme on hye.
Tho wexe he ful sore aferde; *afraid*

He ranne for an othir redyly
And saide, 'Olyvere, yelde the to me
1340 And leve thy Cristen laye, *faith*
Thou shalte have alle my kingdome free
And alle aftir my daye.'
'Fye, Saresyne,' quod Olyvere than,
'Trowest thou that I were wode, *Do you believe*
1345 To forsake Him that made me man
And boght me with His hert blode.' *redeemed*
He raught a stroke to Ferumbras; *aimed*
On his helme it gan down glyde.
It brast his hawberke at that ras *stroke*
1350 And carfe hym througheoute his syde.
His bare guttis men myght see;
The blode faste down ranne.
'Hoo, Olyvere, I yelde me to the,
And here I become thy man.
1355 I am so hurte I may not stonde;
I put me alle in thy grace.
My goddis ben false by water and londe; *(see note)*
I reneye hem alle here in this place. *renounce*
Baptised nowe wole I be.
1360 To Jhesu Crist I wole me take — *commit*
That Charles the Kinge shal sene —
And alle my goddes forsake.
Take myn hawberke and do it on the;
Thou shalte have full grete nede.
1365 Ten thousande Saresyns waiten uppon me,
And therfore go take my stede. *horse*
Lay me to-fore the, I the praye, *before*
And lede me to thy tente.
Hye the faste forth in thy way, *Hasten*
1370 That the Saresyns the not hente.' *capture*
Anoon it was done as he ordeynede,
And faste forth thai ryden.
The Saresyns anone assembled,
For to have with hem foghten.
1375 Ferumbras saugh the feelde thore *saw; there*

Of Sarsynes fully filled;
Of Olyvere dradde he ful sore, *feared*
That Saresyns shulde him have killed.
He praide that he wolde let him down
1380 'Undir yonde olyfe tree,
For if ye cast me down here, with hors shoon *shoes*
Alle to-treden shalle I be.' *trampled*

He priked forth and layde him thare *rode*
Out of the horses trase; *way*
1385 And with his swerde bygan him were,
For amonge hem alle he was.
A Saresyn smote him with a spere,
That it brake on pecis thre;
His hauberke myght he not dere, *damage*
1390 So stronge and welle i-wroght was he.
He hit that Saresyns with his swerde
Through the helme into the brayne.
He made an other as sore aferde:
He smote of his arme with mayne. *off*
1395 But than come Roulande with Durnedale
And made way him abowte.
He slowe hem down in the vale;
Of him hade thai grete dowte. *fear*
The prees of Saresyns was so stronge *throng*
1400 Aboute Roulande that tyde.
Thai sloughen his horsys with thronge *press of battle*
And dartis throwen on every syde.
Whan Roulande was on his fete,
Than was he woo with-alle. *sorrowful indeed*
1405 Many of hem he felte yete *felled*
And dede to grounde made hem falle.
At the last his swerde brake,
Than hadde he wepyn noon,
As he smote a Saresyns bake
1410 Asundre down to the arson. *pommel*
Tho was he caught; he myght not flee.
His hondes thai bounden faste

	And lad him forth to here cité,	*led*
	And in depe prison they hem caste.	
1415	Olyvere sawe howe he was ladde.	*led*
	A sorye man than was he;	
	Him hadde lever to have bene dede	*rather*
	Than suffren that myschief to be.	
	Smertly aftire he pursued tho	
1420	To reskue his dere brother.	
	The prees was so grete, he myghte not so —	*throng*
	It myghte be no othir	
	But he was caughte by verre force	
	With sixti of Ascopartes.	*By*
1425	Thai hurte him foule and slough his hors	
	With gavylokes and wyth dartis.	*javelins*
	Yet on foote, ere he were foolde	*felled*
	He slough of hem fiftene.	
	He was not slayn, as God woolde,	
1430	But taken and bounded with tene.	*malice*
	Tho were taken to Lucafere,	
	The proude Kinge of Baldas,	
	Both Roulande and Olyvere.	
	Gladde was he of that cas.	*occurrence*
1435	King Charles was in herte woo	
	When he saughe his nevewes so ladde;	*nephews; captured*
	He cried to the Frenshmen tho:	
	'Reskue we these knyghtes at nede.'	
	The Kynge himselfe slough many one;	
1440	So dede the barons bolde.	*did*
	It wolde not bene, thai were agon,	
	Magre whoso woolde.	*In spite of*
	The Saresyns drewe hem to here cité;	
	King Charles turned agayne.	
1445	He saugh under an holme tre	
	Where a knight him semed lay slayn.	
	Thederward he rode with swerde in honde.	
	Tho he saugh he was alyve;	
	He lay walowynge uppon the sonde	*ground*

1450 With blody woundes fyve.
'What arte thow?' quod Charlemayne,
'Who hath the hurte so sore?'
'I am Ferumbras,' he saide certayn,
'That am of hethen lore.'
1455 'O fals Saresyn,' quod the Kinge,
'Thou shalte have sorowe astyte; *immediately*
By the I have lost my two cosynes, *kinsmen*
Thyn hede shalle I of-smyte.' *cut off*
'O gentil Kinge,' quod Ferumbrase,
1460 'Olyvere my maister me hight *promised*
To be baptised by Goddis grace,
And to dyen a Cristen knighte.
Honure were it noon to the
A discoumfite man to slo, *wounded; slay*
1465 That is converted and baptized wolde be
And thy man bycomen also.'
The Kinge hade pité of him than;
He toke him to his grace
And assyned anoon a man *assigned*
1470 To lede him to his place.
He sende to him his surgyne
To hele his woundes wyde.
He ordeyned to him such medycyn,
That sone myght he go and ryde. *walk*
1475 The Kinge commaunded Bishope Turpyn
To make a fonte redye,
To baptise Ferumbras therin
In the name of God Almyghtye.
He was cristened in that welle.
1480 Floreyne the Kinge alle him calle;
He forsoke the foule feende of helle
And his fals goddis alle.
Nought for than Ferumbras *Nevertheless*
Alle his life cleped was he,
1485 And aftirwarde in somme place,
Floreyne of Rome cité.
God for him many myracles shewed,

So holy a man he bycame.
That witnessith both lerned and lewde: *untutored*
1490 The fame of him so ranne.

Nowe for to telle of Roulande
And of Olyvere, that worthy wos,
Howe thai were brought to the Sowdan
By the Kinge of Boldas.
1495 The Sowdan hem sore affrayned *intensely questioned*
What that here names were.
Roulande saide and noght alayned, *concealed*
'Sir Roulande and Sire Olyvere,
Nevewes to King Charles of Fraunce, *Nephews*
1500 That worthy kinge and emperoure,
That nowe are takyn by myschaunce
To be prisoneres here in thy toure.'
'A, Olyvere, arte thou here
That haste my sone distroyede,
1505 And Roulande that arte his fere, *companion*
That so ofte me hath anoyed? *offended*
To Mahounde I make a vowe here,
That tomorue, ere I do ete,
Ye shulle be slayn both qwik in fere, *together*
1510 And lives shalle ye bothe lete.' *lose*
Tho saide maide Florepas:
'My fader so dereworth and dere, *esteemed; dear*
Ye shulle be avysed of this cas,
How and in what manere
1515 My brothir, that is to prison take,
May be delyvered by hem nowe,
Bycause of these two knightes sake,
That bene in warde here with you. *custody*
Wherefore I counsaile you, my fader dere,
1520 To have mynde of Sir Ferumbras.
Pute hem in youre prison here
Tille ye have better space, *leisure*
So that ye have my brother agayn
For hem that ye have here;

1525 And certeyn elles wole he be slayn
That is to you so lefe and dere.' *beloved; dear*
'A, Floripp, i-blessed thou bee,
Thy counsaile is goode at nede,
I wolde not leve my sone so free, *noble*
1530 So Mahounde moost me spede,
For al the realme of hethen Spayne
That is so brode and large.
Sone clepe forth my gaylour Bretomayne, *jailor*
That he of hem hadde his charge:
1535 "Caste hem in your prison depe;
Mete and drinke gyfe hem none; *food*
Chayne hem faste that thay not slepe;
For here goode daies bene a-gone."'
Tho were thay cast in prison depe;
1540 Every tyde the see came inne.
Thay myght not see, so was it myrke; *dark*
The watir wente to her chynne.
The salte watir hem greved sore,
Here woundis sore did smerte.
1545 Hungir and thurste greved heme yet more:
It wente yet more nere here herte.
Who maye live withoute mete? *food*
Six dayes hadde thay right none,
Ner drinke that thay myght gete,
1550 Bute loked uppon the harde stone.
So on a daye, as God it wolde,
Floripas to hir garden wente
To geder floures in morne colde. *gather*
Here maydyns from hir she sente,
1555 For she herde grete lamentacion
In the prison that was ther nye.
She supposed by ymagynacion
That it was the prisoners sory.
She wente here nerre to here more:
1560 Thay wailed for defaute of mete.
She rued on hem anoon ful sore; *took pity*
She thought how she myght hem beste it gete.

She spake to her maistras Maragounde *governess*
Howe she wolde the prisoneres fede.
1565 The develle of helle hir confounde!
She wolde not assente to that dede
But saide, 'Damesel, thou arte woode;
Thy fadir did us alle defende *forbid*
Both mete and drinke and othere goode
1570 That no man shulde hem thider sende.'
Floripe bythought hir on a gyle *trick*
And cleped Maragounde anoon right
To the wyndowe to come a while
And se ther a wonder syght:
1575 'Loke oute,' she saide, 'and see aferre *afar*
The porpais pley as thay were wode.' *porpoises*
Maragounde lokede oute; Floripe come nere
And shofed hire oute into the flode. *ocean*
'Go there,' she said; 'the devel the spede!
1580 My consail shaltowe never biwry. *betray*
Whoso wole not helpe a man at nede
On evel deth mote he dye.'

She toke with hire maidyns two;
To Britomayne she wente hir waye
1585 And saide to him she moste go
To viseten the prisoneris that daye
And saide, 'Sir, for alle loves,
Lete me thy prisoneres seen.
I wole the gife both goolde and gloves,
1590 And counsail shalle it been.' *secret*
Brytomayne, that jaylor kene, *bold jailor*
Answered to hir sone agayne
And saide, 'Damsel, so mote I then, *thrive*
Than were I worthy to be slayn.
1595 Hath not youre fader charged me
To kepe hem from every wyght? *person*
And yet ye wole these traytours see.
I wole goo telle him anoon right.'
He gan to turne him anone for to go

1600	To make a playnte on Floripas.	*accusation*
	She sued him as faste as she myghte go	*followed*
	For to gif him harde grace.	*misfortune*
	With the keye cloge that she caught,	*block; seized*
	With goode wille she maute than.	*struck*
1605	Such a stroke she hym there raught,	*gave*
	The brayne sterte oute of his hede than.	
	To hire fader forth she goth	
	And saide, 'Sire, I telle you here	
	I saugh a sight that was me loth:	
1610	Howe the fals jailour fedde your prisonere	
	And how the covenaunte made was	
	Whan thai shulde delyvered be;	*freed*
	Wherefore I slough him with a mace.	
	Dere fadir, forgif it me.'	
1615	'My doghtir dere, that arte so free,	
	The warde of hem now gif I the.	*guarding*
	Loke here sorowe be evere newe	*See to it*
	Tille that Ferumbras delyvered be.'	*freed*
	She thanked her fadere fele sithe	*many times*
1620	And toke her maydyns and forth she goth.	
	To the prisone she hyed hire swyth.	*hastened; quickly*
	The prison dore up she dothe	
	And saide, 'Sires, what be ye	
	That make here this ruly moone?	*sorrowful*
1625	What you lakkith tellyth me	*lack*
	For we be here nowe alle alone.'	
	Tho spake Roulande with hevy chere	*somber demeanor*
	To Floripe that was bothe gente and fre	*noble; generous*
	And saide, 'Lo, we two caytyfes here	*captives*
1630	For defaute of mete dede moste be.	*lack of food*
	Six dayes be comyn and goon	
	Sith we were loked in prison here	*Since*
	That mete nor drinke had we noon	
	To comforte with oure hevy chere.	
1635	But woolde God of myghtes moost	
	The Sowdon wolde let us oute goon,	
	We to fight with alle his ooste	

To be slayn in feelde anoon.
To murthir men for defaute of mete — *lack of food*
1640 It is grete shame tille a kinge; *to*
For every man most nedes ete,
Or ellis may he do no thinge.'
Tho saide Floripe with wordes mylde,
'I wolde fayne ye were now here. *gladly*
1645 From harme and skath I wole you shelde *injury; protect*
And gife you mete with right gode chere.'
A rope to hem she lete down goon
That aboven was teyde faste. *tied*
She and hir maydyns drewe theruppon
1650 Tille up thay hadde hem at the last.
She led hem into here chambir dere
That arrayed for hem was right wele,
Both Roulande and Olyvere,
And gafe hem there a right gode mele. *meal*
1655 And whan thay hadde eten alle her fille
A bath for hem was redy there.
Therto thay went ful fayre and stille
And aftyr to bedde with right gode chere. *humor*
Now Floripas chamber is here prisone,
1660 Withouten wetinge of the Sowdon; *knowledge*
Thai were ful mery in that dongeon,
For of hem wiste man never oone. *knew*

Now lete we hem be and mery make
Tille God sende hem gode delyveraunce.
1665 Aftir the tyme that thay were take
What did Charles, the Kinge of Fraunce,
Therof wole we speke nowe —
Howe he cleped forth Sir Gy
And saide, 'On my message shaltowe;
1670 Therfore make the faste redy
To bidde the Sowden sende me my nevewes both
And the releqes also of Rome *relics*
Or I shal make him so wroth
He shall not wete what to done. *know*

1675 And by that God that hath me wroght
I shal him leve towre ner town.
This bargan shal so dere be bought *paid for*
In despite of his god Mahoun.'

Duke Neymes of Bavere up stert than *Bavaria*
1680 And saide, 'Sir, hastowe no mynde
How the cursed Sowdan Laban
Alle messengeris doth he shende? *kill*
Ye have lost inowe; lese no mo *lose*
Onworthily Olyvere and Roulande.' *Needlessly*
1685 'By God, and thou shalt with him go,
For al thy grete brode londe.'

Tho Ogere Danoys, that worthy man, *the Dane*
'Sir,' he saide, 'be not wroth,
For he saith south.' — 'Go thou than!
1690 By Gode thou shalte, be thou never so loth.' *reluctant*

'A Sire,' quod Bery Lardeneys,
'Thou shalte hem se never more.'
'Go thou forth in this same rees, *time*
Or it shalle the repente ful sore.'

1695 Folk Baliante saide to the Kinge,
'Liste ye youre barons to lese?'[1]
'Certis, this is a wondir thinge!
Go thou also; thou shalte not chese.' *choose*

Aleroyse rose up anone
1700 And to the Kinge than gan he speke
And saide, 'What thinke ye, sir, to done?'
'Dresse the forth with hem eke!' *Go*

Miron of Brabane spake an worde *Brabant*
And saide, 'Sir, thou maiste do thy wille.

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[1] *Do you want to lose your barons?*

1705 Knowist thou not that cruel lorde
How he wole thy barons spille?' *kill*
'Trusse the forth eke, Sir Dasaberde, *Go; also, Sir Good-for-nothing*
Or I shalle the sone make.
For of all thinge thou arte aferde,
1710 Yet arte thou neyther hurte ner take.' *captured*

Bisshope Turpyn kneled adown
And saide, 'Lege lorde, mercy.' *Liege*
The Kinge him swore by Seynt Symon,
'Thou goist eke; make the in hast redye.'

1715 Bernarde of Spurwse, that worthy knyght, *Prussia*
Saide, 'Sir, avyse you bette; *consider; better*
Set not of your barons so light.[1]
Thou maiste have nede to hem yette.'
'Thou shalte goon eke for alle thy boost;
1720 Have done and make the fast yare. *ready*
Of my nede gyfe thou no coost; *regard*
Therof have thou right no care.'

Bryere of Mountes, that marqwys bolde, *Montdidier; marquis*
Was not aferde to him to speke.
1725 To the Kinge sharply he tolde
His witte was not worth a leke: *(see note)*
'Woltowe for angre thy barons sende
To that tiraunte that all men sleith?
Or thou doist, for that ende,
1730 To bringe thy Twelfe Peres to the deth.'
The Kinge was wroth and swore in halle
By Him that boght him with His blode: *redeemed*
'On my messange shall ye gon alle,
Be ye never so wroth or wode.'
1735 Thay toke here lefe and forth thay yede; *went*
It availed not agayne him to sayne.
I pray God gif hem gode spede!

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[1] *Don't so undervalue your barons*

Ful harde it was to comen agayn.

Nowe let hem passe in Goddis name
1740 And speke we of the Sowdon,
Howe he complayned him of his grame — *grief*
And what that he myght beste done.
'Sortybraunce and Bronlande,' sayde he,
'Of consail ye be fulle wyse.
1745 How shal I do to avenge me
Of Kinge Charles, and in what wyse? — *manner*
He brennyth my toures and my citees,
And burges he levethe me never oon. — *towns*
He stroieth my men, my londe, my fees. — *destroys; fiefs*
1750 Thus shalle it not longe goon.
And yet me greveth most of alle
He hath made Ferumbras renay his laye. — *renounce; faith*
Therfore my counselors I calle
To remedy this howe thay best maye.
1755 For me were lever that he were slayn — *I would prefer*
Thane he a Cristen hounde shulde be,
Or with wolfes be rente and slayn, — *torn apart*
By Mahounde myghty of dignyté.'
To answerde Sortybraunce and Broulande — *Replied*
1760 And saide, 'Gode counsaile we shal you gyfen.
If thoue wilte do aftyr covenaunte, — *according to your word*
It shal you profit while you lyven.
Take twelfe knightis of worthy dede
And sende hem to Charles on message nowe.
1765 Araye hem welle in roial wede — *clothing*
For thy honoure and for thy prowe. — *advantage*
Bidde Charles sende thy sone to the
And voyde thy londe in alle haste — *leave*
Or ellis thou shalt him honge on a tre
1770 As hye as any shippes maste.'
'Nowe by Mahounde,' quod Laban,
'This counseil is both trewe and goode;
I shalle him leve for no man — *(see note)*
To parforme this, though he were woode.'

1775 He did his lettris write in haste;
The knightes were called to goo therwith
That thay hyghe hem to Charles faste — *hasten*
And charke hym uppon life and lithe. — *charge; limb*
Forth thai ride towarde Mantrible than.
1780 In a medowe was fayre and grene
Thai mette with Charles messageris ten.
Duke Neymes axed hem what thai wolde mene — *asked; intend*
And saide, 'Lordynges, whens come ye
And whider ye are mente, telle us this tyde.' — *bound*
1785 'From the worhty Sowdon,' than saide he,
'To Charles on message shalle we ride.
Evel tithyngges we shalle him telle
Fro Laban that is lorde of Spayne.
Farewelle, felowes, we may not dwelle.'
1790 'Abyde,' quod Gy, 'and turne agayne;
We wole speke with you er ye goon,
For we be messengeris of his.
Ye shal aby everichone,
So God brynge me to blis.'
1795 Anoon here swerdes oute thay brayde — *drew*
And smoten down right al aboute
Tille the hethen were down layde —
Thai reseyved many a sore cloute. — *blow*
Thai smyten of here hedes alle;
1800 Eche man toke one in his lappe.
Fal whatsoever byfalle,
To the Soudon wole they trappe. — *go*
Tille thai come to Egremoure
Thai stynte for no worldes thinge; — *stopped*
1805 Anone thai fonde the Sawdan thore — *there*
At his mete proudely sittynge
And that maide, faire dame Floripas,
And fourtene princes of grete price — *worth*
And Kinge Lukafere of Baldas
1810 Thas was both bolde, hardy and wyse.
Doughty Duke Neymes of Bavere
To the Sowdone his message tolde

And said, 'God that made heven so clere,
He save Kinge Charles so bolde
1815 And confounde Laban and all his men
That on Mahounde byleved
And gife hem evel ending, amen.
Tomorue, long er it be even,
He commaundith the uppon thy life
1820 His nevewes home to him sende
And the reliqes of Rome withoute strife,
And ellis getist thou an evel ende.
Twelfe lurdeynes mette us on the waye; *louts*
Thai saide thay come streight fro the.
1825 Thai made it both stoute and gay.[1]
Here hedis here maistowe see.
Thai saide thai wolde to Charles goon
Evel tiddingges him to telle.
Loo here here heddis everychone; *every one*
1830 Here soulis bene in helle.'
'O,' quod Lavane, 'what may this be,
To suffre this amonge my knightes alle,
To be rebuked thus here of the
At mete in myn owen halle?
1835 To Mahounde myghty I make a vowe:
Ye shall be hanged alle ten
Anoon as I have eten i-nowe,
In presence of alle my men.'
Maide Floripas answered tho
1840 And saide, 'My derworth fadir dere, *esteemed; dear*
By my counsaile ye shal not so
Tille ye have your barons alle in fere *together*
That thai may se what is the best
For to delyvere my brother Sir Ferumbras;
1845 And aftirward, if that ye liste, *it pleases you*
Ye may gife hem ful evel grace.' *favor*
'Gramercy, doghter, thou saieste welle; *Thanks*
Take hem alle into thy warde. *custody*

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[1] *They behaved boldly and light-heartedly*

Do feter hem faste in iren and stele
1850 And set hem in strayghte garde. *strict*
Thus was I never rebukede er nowe.
Mahounde myghty gyfe hem sorowe!
Thay shalle be flayn and honged on a bowe *bough*
Long ere tyme tomorowe.' *Very early in the morning*

1855 Florip toke these messangeris
And ladde hem up into here toure,
There thai founde two of here feris.
Thay thanked thereof God of honoure.
Tho sayde Duke Neymys of Bavere,
1860 'Gladde men we be nowe here
To fynde Roulande and Olyvere
In helthe of bodye and of goode chere.'
Thai kissed eche other with herte gladde
And thanked God of his grace;
1865 And eche toolde othir howe thay sped hadde *fared*
And howe thay come into that place
By helpe of mayde Florip hireself:
'God kepe hir in honoure,
For thus hath she brought us hider alle twelfe
1870 To dwelle in her owen boure.' *apartment*
Tho thay wessh and wente to mete *washed*
And were served welle and fyne
Of suche goode as she myght gete,
Of venyson, brede and gode wyne.
1875 There thai were gladde and wel at ease;
The Soudon ne wist in noght. *knew*
Aftyr thay slepe and toke her ese,
Of no man than thay ne roght. *cared*

On the morowe Florip, that mayde fre,
1880 To Duke Neymes spake in game. *playfully*
'Sir gentil knight,' tho saide she,
'Telle me, what is your name.'
'Whi axe ye, my lady dere, *ask*
My name here to knowe alle?'

1885 'For he spake with so bolde chere
To my fadir yestirdaye in his halle.
Be not ye the Duke of Burgoyne, Sir Gy,
Nevewe unto the Kinge, Charles so fre?'
'Noe, certes, lady, it is not I;
1890 It is yondir knight, that ye may see.'
'A, him have I loved many a day
And yet knowe I him noght
For his love I do alle that I maye
To chere you with dede and thought. *deed*
1895 For his love wille I cristenede be
And lefe Mahoundes laye.
Spekith to him nowe for me,
As I you truste maye.
And but he wole graunte me his love,
1900 Of you askape shalle none here.
By Him that is almyghty above,
Ye shalle abye it ellis ful dere.'
Tho wente Duke Neymes to Sir Gye
And saide, 'This ladye loveth the;
1905 For thy love she maketh us alle merye
And baptizede wole she be.
Ye shalle hir take to your wedded wife,
For alle us she may save.'
'By God,' quod Gye, 'that gafe me life,
1910 Her wole I never have;
Wyle I never take hire ner no woman
But Charles the Kinge hir me gife.
I hight him, as I was trewe man, *promised*
To holden it while I lyve.' *abide by*
1915 Tho spake Roulande and Olyvere,
Certifyinge him of here myschefe, *their plight*
Tellinge him of the parelles that thay in were, *perils*
For to take this lady to his wedded wife.
'But thou helpe in this nede,
1920 We be here in grete doute. *danger*
Almyghty God shalle quyte thy mede; *repay you*
Elles come we nevere hennys oute.'

Thus thay treted him to and fro; *entreated*
At the laste he sayde he wolde.
1925 Floripas thay cleped forth tho
And brought fourth a cuppe of golde,
Ful of noble myghty wyne
And saide, 'My love and my lorde,
Myn herte, my body, my goode is thyn,'
1930 And kissed him with that worde.
And, 'Sir,' she saide, 'drink to me
As the gyse is of my londe; *custom*
And I shalle drink agayn to the
As to my worthy hosbonde.'
1935 Thay clipped and kissed both in fere *hugged*
And made grete joye and game *sport*
And so did alle that were there:
Thai made ful mery alle in same. *all together*
Tho spake Floripas to the barons boolde
1940 And saide, 'I have armure i-nowe;
Therfore I tel you what I wolde
And that ye dide for your prowe. *advantage*
Tomorue, whan my fadir is at his soupere,
Ye shalle come in alle attonys. *at once*
1945 Loke ye spare for no fere; *fear*
Sle down and breke both bake and bones.
Kithe you knightis of hardynesse! *Manifest yourselves*
Ther is none helpe but in this wyse.
Then moste ye shewen your prowes
1950 And wynne this castel in this guyse.' *manner*
Thai sayden alle it was welle saide,
And gladde thay were of this counsaile.
Here armure was forth layde,
At souper the Sowdon to assaile.

1955 King Lucafere prayde the Sawdon
That he wolde gif him lysence
To the prisoners for to goon
To see the maner of her presence. *their present state*
He gafe him lefe, and forth he wente *permission*

1960 Up unto Floripas toure.
To asspie the maner was his entent,
Hem to accuse agayne honoure. *contrary to*
Whan he come he founde the dore fast i-stoke. *secured*
He smote thereon with his fist
1965 That the barre began to broke.
To make debate wel him list. *argument; it pleased him*
'Who artowe,' quod Floripas,
'That maketh here such araye?' *Who makes such a scene here*
'I am Kinge Lucafere of Baldas;
1970 The Sowdon sente me hidir, in faye. *faith*
To seen his prisoneris is my desire
And speke with hem everychon,
To talke with hem by the fire
And speke of dedis of armes amonge.' *meanwhile*
1975 Tho saide Duke Neymes, 'Welcome be ye
To us prisoners here.
What is your wille, nowe telle ye,
For we be men of feble chere.' *ill fortune*
'I woolde wete of Charles the Kinge,
1980 What man he is in his contré,
And what meyné he hath, and of what thinge
He rekyneth moost his dignyté.'
Duke Neymes saide, 'An emperoure
And kinge he is of many a londe,
1985 Of citeis, castels, and many a toure,
Dukes, erles, barons bowynge to his honde.'
'But saye me, felowe, what is your use
To do in contré aftyr the none,
And what is the custome of your hous
1990 Tille men to souper shalle gone?'
'Sir, somme men jouste with spere and shelde
And some men carol and singe gode songes;
Some shote with dartis in the feelde,
And somme play at chesse amonge.' *now and then*
1995 'Ye bene but foulis of gode dissporte.[1]

[1] *You are ignorant of good diversion*

	I wole you tech a newe play.	*game*
	Sitte down here by one assorte	*in one group*
	And better myrthe never ye saye.'	*saw*
	He teyde a tredde on a pole	*thread*
2000	With an nedil theron i-fest	*fastened*
	And theruppon a qwik cole.	*burning*
	He bade every man blowe his blast.	
	Duke Neymes hade a long berde.	
	Kinge Lucafere blewe even to hym;	
2005	That game hade he never before lered.	*learned*
	He brent the here of Neymes berde to the skyne.	*hair*
	Duke Neymes than gan wex wroth,	
	For he hade brente his berde so white,	
	To the chymneye forth he goth	
2010	And caught a bronde him with to smyte.	*brand*
	With a goode wille he him smote	
	That both his eyen bresten oute.	
	He caste him in the fire al hote;	
	For sothe he hadde a right gode cloute.	
2015	And with a fyre forke he helde him doune	
	Tille he were rosted to colis ilkadele.	*every bit*
	His soule hade his god Mahoun.	
	Florip bade him warme him wele.	
	'Sires,' tho saide Floripas.	
2020	'Entendith nowe al to me.	*Listen*
	This Lucafere of Baldas	
	Was a lorde of grete mayne.	*power*
	My fadir hade him ever yn chere.	*friendliness*
	I telle you forsothe everydele	
2025	He wolde anoon aftyr him enquere,	*inquire*
	And therefore loke ye arme you well.'	
	Florip wente in, as the maner was,	
	To here fadir at souper tyme.	
	No man spake worde of Kinge Baldas	
2030	Ner no man knewe of his sharp pyne.	*suffering*
	The Twelfe Peris armed hem wel and fyne	
	With swerdes drawe and egre chere	*fierce; mood*
	While thay were drinkyng the wyne	

And sittinge alle at here soupere.
2035 Thai reheted the Sowdon and his barons alle — *attacked*
And maden orders wondir fast; — *administered blows*
Thai slowe down alle that were in the halle
And made hem wondirly sore agast. — *afraid*
Olyvere egerly sued Laban — *followed*
2040 With swerd i-drawe in his honde.
Oute at the wyndowe lepte he than
Uppon the salte see stronde, — *shore*
And he skaped away from hime.
But woo was he therfore
2045 That he went awaye with lym — *unharmed*
To worche hem sorowe more.
Roulande than came rennynge
And axed where was Laban.
Olyvere answerede moornynge
2050 And saide howe he was agoon.
Tho thai voided the courtes at the last — *emptied*
And slowen tho that wolde abyde
And drewe the brigge and teyed it fast — *drawbridge; tied*
And shitte the gatis that were so wyde. — *shut*

2055 Laban that by the ebbe escapede — *ebb-tide*
Of harde er he come to londe, — *With difficulty*
He alle astonyed and a-mapide — *astonished; astounded*
For sorowe he wronge both his honde
And made a vowe to Mahounde of myght
2060 He wolde that cité wynne
And never go thens by day nor nyght
For foo, for frende, ner for kynne.
'And tho traytouris will I do honge — *have hung*
On a galowes hye withoute the gate; — *outside*
2065 And my doghter, that hore stronge, — *great whore*
I-brente shal be thereate.'
To Mauntryble he gan sende anoon
Aftir men and tentis goode
And engynes to throwe with stoon
2070 And goode armure many-foolde.

The sege he did leyen abowte
On every side of that cité.
To wallis with engynes thai gan rowte — *assemble*
To breke the toures so fre.
2075 Tho saide Florip, 'Lordingges goode,
Ye bene biseged in this toure;
As ye bene wight of mayne and moode, — *person; strength; courage*
Proveth here to save youre honoure.
The toure is stronge, drede you nought,
2080 And vitayle we have plenté. — *provisions*
Charles wole not leve you unsought;
Truste ye welle alle to me.
Therefore go we soupe and make merye — *dine*
And takith ye alle your ease;
2085 And thirti maydens lo here of Assye, — *Asia*
The fayrest of hem ye chese. — *choose*
Take your sporte and kith you knyghtes — *manifest yourselves*
Whan ye shalle have to done;
For tomorowe when the day is light
2090 Ye mooste to the wallis goon
And defende this place with caste of stoon
And with shotte of quarelles and darte. — *(see note)*
My maydyns and I shall bringe goode wone, — *quantity*
So everyche of us shalle bere hir parte.' — *every one*

2095 On morwe the Sowdon made assaute
To hem that were withinne.
And certes in hem was no defaute, — *failing*
For of hem myght thay nought wynne.
Here shotte, here cast was so harde
2100 Thay durste not nyghe the walle. — *draw near*
Thay drowen hem bakwarde;
Thay were beten over alle. — *overcome*
King Laban turnede to his tentes agayn.
He was nere wode for tene.
2105 He cryede to Mahounde and Apolyne
And to Termagaunte that was so kene
And saide, 'Ye goddes, ye slepe to longe;

Awake and helpe me nowe
Or ellis I may singe of sorowe a songe
2110 And of mournynge right i-nowe.
Wete ye not wele that my tresoure
Is alle withinne the walle?
Helpe me nowe, I saye, therfore
Or ellis I forsake you alle.'
2115 He made grete lamentacion,
His goddis byganne to shake.
Yet that comfortede his meditacion
Supposinge thay didde awake.
He cleped Brenlande to aske counsaile
2120 What was best to done
And what thinge myght him moste avayle
To wynne that cité sone.
'Thou wotist welle that alle my tresoure
Is there in here kepinge
2125 And my doughter, that stronge hore, *great whore*
God yif her evelle endyng!' *give*
'Sir,' he said, 'ye knowe welle
That toure is wondir stronge.
While thay have vitayle to mele, *provisions for meals*
2130 Kepen it thay wole fulle longe.
Sende to Mauntreble, youre cheif cité
That is the keye of this londe,
That non passe, where it so be,
Withoute your speciall sonde, *order*
2135 To Alagolofure, that geaunte stronge *giant*
That is wardeyne of that pas, *guardian*
That no man passe that brigge alonge *bridge*
But he have special grace. *permission*
So shalle not Charles with his meyné
2140 Reskowe than Agramoure. *Rescue*
Than thay shalle enfamyched be *famished*
That shalle hem rewe ful sore.' *distress*
'Mahoundis blessynge have thou and myne,
Sortybraunce, for thy rede.' *advice*
2145 'Espyarde, messangere myne,

In haste thou most the spede
To my cité Mauntreble
To do my message there
To Alogolofre, that giaunte orrible.
2150 Bydde him his charge wele lere — *learn*
And tel him howe that the last day
Ten fals traytours of Fraunce
Passed by that same waye
By his defaute with myschaunce, — *failure; unlucky results*
2155 Charginge him uppon his hede to lese
That no man by the brigge, — *bridge; (see note)*
Be it rayne, snowe or freze,
But he his heede down ligge.' — *lay*

Espiarde spedde him in his waye
2160 Tille he to Mauntrible came
To seke the geaunte there he laye
On the banke bysyde the dame
And saide, 'The worthy Sowdon,
That of alle Spayn is lorde and sire,
2165 Uppon thy life commaundeth the anoon
To deserve better thyn hire. — *To better earn your keep*
The laste day thou letist here passe
Ten trattoures of douse Fraunce. — *beloved*
God giffe the evel grace
2170 And hem also moche myschaunce!
He charged the uppon life and deth
To kepe this place sikerlye. — *securely*
While in thy body lasteth the breth,
Lette noon enemye passe therebye.'
2175 Alagolofur rolled his yen — *eyes*
And smote with his axe on the stone
And swore by Termagaunte and Apolyne
That therby shulde passen never one
But if he smote of his hede — *off*
2180 And brought it to his lord Laban
He wolde never ete no brede
Nere never loke more on man.

	Twenti-four cheynes he didde over-drawe	*chains*
	That noo man passe myght,	
2185	Neyther for love nere for awe,	*fear*
	No tyme by daye nere by nighte.	
	'Go telle my lorde I shalle it kepe;	*protect*
	On payne of my grete heede	
	Shalle ther no man goo ner crepe	*walk; crawl*
2190	But he be take or dede.'	*captured; slain*
	This geaunte hade a body longe	
	And hede like an libarde.	*leopard*
	Therto he was devely stronge;	
	His skynne was blake and harde.	
2195	Of Ethiope he was bore,	
	Of the kinde of Ascopartes.	*race*
	He had tuskes like a bore,	
	An hede like a liberde.	*leopard*
	Laban nolde not forgete	*would not*
2200	The saute to renewe;	*assault*
	To wynne the toure, he wolde not lete.	*cease*
	Here trumpes lowde thay blewe.	
	Every man wente to the walle	
	With pikeys or with bowe.	*pickaxe*
2205	Thai made assaute generalle,	
	The walles downe to throwe.	
	But thay withinne bare hem soo	
	Thay slowe of the Saresyns thre hundred.	
	Thay wroghten hem both care and woo;	
2210	Uppon her fightinge thay wondride.	
	Tho cryed Laban to hem on hye,	
	'Traytours, yelde you to me;	
	Ye shall be hongede els by and bye	
	Uppon an hye galowe tree.'	
2215	Tho spake Florip to the Sowdon	
	And sayde, 'Thou fals tyraunte,	
	Were Charles come, thy pride were done	
	Nowe, cursede myscreaunte.	*infidel*
	Alas that thou ascapediste soo	

2220 By the wyndowe uppon the stronde. *beach*
That thy nek hade broke a-twoo!
God sende the shame and shonde!' *disgrace*
'A! stronge hore, God gife the sorowe.
Thou venomous serpente.
2225 Withe wilde horses thou shalt be drawe tomorowe *drawn*
And on this hille be brente
That al men may be ware by the
That cursed bene of kynde. *nature*
And thy love shalle honged be,
2230 His hondes bounde him byhynde.'
He called forth Mavon, his engynoure, *engineer*
And saide, 'I charge the
To throwe a magnelle to yon toure *machine for hurling stones*
And breke it downe on thre.'
2235 Mavon set up his engyne
With a stoon of six hundred wight *weight*
That went as even as eny lyne
And smote a cornell down right. *battlement*
Woo was Roulande and Olyvere
2240 That that myschief was befalle,
And so were alle the Twelfe Peres.
But Florip than comforte hem alle:
'Sires,' she saide, 'beith of goode chere.
This toure is stronge i-nowe.
2245 He may cast twies or thries or he hit ayen ther; *before*
For sothe I telle it you.'

Marsedage, the roialle kinge,
Rode in riche weede, *clothes*
Fro Barbary commyng
2250 Uppon a sturdy stede,
Cryinge to hem uppon the walle,
'Traytouris, yelde you here.
Brenne you alle ellis I shalle,
By myghty god Jubytere.' *Jupiter*
2255 Gy aspied that he came nere;
A darte to hime he threwe ful even. *straight*

He smote him throwe herte and liver in fere.
Dame Floripe lough with loude steven — *voice*
And saide, 'Sir Gye, my love so free,
2260 Thou kanste welle hit the prikke. — *bull's-eye*
He shall make no booste in his contré.
God giffe him sorowe thikke!' — *plentiful*
Whan Laban herde of this myschief,
A sory man was he.
2265 He trumped, his mene to relefe, — *signalled; recall*
For to cease that tyme mente he.
Mersadage, Kinge of Barbarye,
He did carye to his tente
And beryed him by right of Sarsenye
2270 With brennynge fire and riche oynemente
And songe the Dirige of Alkaron, — *Office of the Dead; the Koran*
That Bibill is of here laye, — *Bible; faith*
And wayled his deth everychon
Sefen nyghtis and sefen dayes.

2275 Anoon the Sowdon, south to say,
Sente thre hundrid of knightis
To kepe the brigge and the waye — *guard; drawbridge; road*
Oute of that castil rightis,
That noon of hem shulde issue oute
2280 To feche vitayle by no waye. — *provisions*
He charged hem to wacche wel all abowte
That thay for-famelid myght dye. — *starved*
Thus thay kepte the place sefen dayes
Tille alle hire vitaile was nyghe spente.
2285 The yates thai pas the streyte weyes; — *(see note)*
Tho helde thai hem within i-shente. — *considered; destroyed*
Tho spake Roulande with hevy chere
Woordes lamentable,
Whan he saugh the ladies so whighte of lere — *pale of complexion*
2290 Faile brede on here table — *Lack*
And saide, 'Charles, thou curteys kinge,
Why forgetist thou us so longe?
This is to me a wondir thinge.

Me thinkith thou doiste us grete wronge
2295 To let us dye for faute of mete, *lack*
Closed thus in a dongeon. *fortress*
Tomorowe wol we asaye what we kon gete,
By God that berithe the crown.'
Tho saide Floripas, 'Sires, drede noghte
2300 For noon houngre that may befalle;
I knowe a medycyne in my thoughte *cure*
To comforte you with-alle.
I have a girdil in my forcere, *chest*
Whoso girde hem therwith aboute,
2305 Hunger ner thirste shal him never dere *harm*
Though he were sefen yere withoute.'
'O,' quod Sir Gye, 'my love so trewe,
I-blessed mote ye be.
I pray you that ye wole us alle hit shewe *show*
2310 That we may have oure saule.' *fill*
She yede and set it forth anoon; *went*
Thai proved alle the vertue *tested; power*
And diden it aboute hem everychon.
It comforted alle both moo and fewe, *everybody*
2315 As thai hade bene at a feste. *feast*
So were thay alle wele at ease;
Thus were thai refresshed both moost and lest
And weren bifore in grete disese. *distress*

Laban wondred how thai myght endure
2320 Withouten vitaile so longe.
He remembred him on Floripas sencture *cincture*
And of the vertue so stronge. *power*
Tho wiste he welle that through famyne
Might he hem never wynne.
2325 He cleped to him fals Mapyne,
For he coude many a fals gynne; *knew; trick*
He coude scale castel and toure
And over the walles wende. *go*
'Mapyne,' he saide, 'for myne honoure,
2330 Thou mooste have this in mynde:

That hore, my doghter, a girdil hath she;
From hounger it savyth hem alle
That wonnen may thay never be — *defeated*
That foule mote hir bifalle!
2335 Kanstowe gete me that gyrdill by craft,
A thousande pounde than shal I gefe the,
So that it be there not lefte
But bringe it hithire to me.
Thou kanste see by nyghte as welle
2340 As any man doth by daye.
Whan thay bene in here beddes ful still,
Than go forth thider right in thy waye.
Thou shalt it in here chamber fynde;
Thou maist be thereofe sure.'
2345 'Sir, thereto I wole me bynde, *commit*
If my life may endure.'
Forth wente this fals Mapyne
By nyght into the toure —
God gife him evel endinge! —
2350 Even into Floripas boure. *chamber*
By a chemney he wente inne.
Fulle stilly there he soughte it.
He it founde and girde it aboute him,
And aftyr ful dere he boght it. *paid for*
2355 For by the light of a lampe there
Floripas gan him aspye,
Alle afrayed oute of hir slepe for fere; *startled; fear*
But lowde than gan she crye
And saide, 'A thefe is in my boure; *chamber*
2360 Robbe me he wole or sloo.'
Therwith come Rouland fro his toure
To wete of hir woo. *know*
He founde Mapyne bysyde hir bedde
Stondinge amased for drede. *startled; fear*
2365 To the wyndowe he him ladde
And ther he smote of his hedde *off*
And caste him oute into the see.
Of the gyrdille was he not ware;

But whan he wist the girdel hade he, *realized*
2370 Tho hadde he sorowe and care.
Floripe to the cheste wente
And aspyed hire gyrdel was goon.
'Alas,' she saide, 'alle is it shente! *lost*
Sir, what have ye done?
2375 He hath my girdel aboute hym.
Alas, that harde while! *difficult time*
A rebelle hounde doth ofte grete tene; *harm*
Howe be we alle begilede.'
Tho spake Roulande with chere boolde,
2380 'Damselle, beyth noughte aferde.
If any vitaile be aboute this hoolde,
We wole hem wynne withe dinte of swerde.
Tomorowe wole we oute-goon
And assaye howe it wole be.
2385 I make a vowe to God alone,
Assaile hem wole we.
And if thay have any mete
Parte withe hem wole we, *Share*
Or elles strokes thay shal gete
2390 By God and Seynte Mary, myn avoure.' *protector*

In the morne, er the larke songe,
Thai ordeynede hem to ride
To the Saresyns that hade so longe
Leyen hem besyde.
2395 Duke Neymes and Ogere
Were ordeynede to kepe the place. *guard*
The ten othir of the Twelfe Peres
Wente oute to assaye here grace. *try their luck*
Thay founden hem in logges slepynge; *huts*
2400 Of hem hade thay no thought.
Thai slowen down that came to honde.[1]
Mahounde availed hem noghte.
In shorte tyme the ende was made;

[1] *They slew anyone they encountered*

Thay ten slough thre hundred there. *slew*
2405 Tho founde thai vitaile, thay were glad,
As moche as thay myghte home bere.
Duke Neymes and Ogere that kept the toure
Say hem with here praye. *Saw; plunder*
Thai thanked God, hye of honoure,
2410 That thai spedde so that day. *fared*
Thay avaled the brigge and lete him yn; *lowered; drawbridge*
Florip and here maydyns were gladde
And so were thay that were withyn,
For alle grete hounger thay hadde.
2415 Thai eten and dronken right i-nowe
And made myrth ever amonge. *meanwhile*

But of the Sowdon Laban speke we nowe,
Howe of sorowe was his songe.
Whan tidyngges came to him
2420 That his men were slayn
And howe thai hade stuffed hem also *supplied themselves*
With vitaile in agayne,
For sorowe he woxe nere wode.
He cleped Brenlande and Sortybraunce
2425 And told hem with angry mode *humor*
Of his harde myschaunce.
'Remedye ordeyne me —
Ye be chief of my counsaile —
That I of hem may vengede be;
2430 It shalle you bouth availe.
O ye goddes, ye faile at nede,
That I have honoured so longe.
I shalle you bren, so mote I spede,
In a fayre fyre ful stronge.
2435 Shalle I never more on you bileve
But renaye you playnly alle.
Ye shalle be brente this day er eve —
That foule mote you befalle!'
The fire was made; the goddes were broght
2440 To have be caste thereinne.

Tho alle his counsaile him bysought
He shulde of that erroure blynne — *cease*
And saide, 'Sir, what wole ye done?
Wole ye your goddis forsake?
2445 Vengeaunce shalle than on you come
With sorowe, woo and wrake. — *suffering*
Ye moste make offrynge for youre offence,
For drede of grete vengeaunce,
With oyle, mylke and frankencense
2450 By youre prestis ordynaunce.'
Tho he dide bere hem in ayen,
And to hem made dewe offerynge. — *due*
The prestis assoyled him of that synne, — *absolved*
Ful lowly for him prayinge. — *humbly*
2455 Tho he cleped his counselers
Brulande and Sortybraunce,
Axynge howe he myght destroye the Twelfe Peres, — *Asking*
That Mahounde gife hem myschaunce.
Thay cowde no more theron
2460 But late saile ayen the toure. [1]
With twenti thousande thai gan gon
And bigonne a newe shoure — *attack*
To brake down the walles
With mattokes and with pike — *mattocks; pickaxes*
2465 Tille four hundred of hem alle
Lay slayne in the dike. — *ditch*
So stronge was the cast of stoone,
The Saresyns drewe hem abakke
Tille it was at hye none.
2470 Tho gonne thay ayen to shake. — *charge*
Tho fayled hem cast[2] that were withinne;
Tho cowde thai no rede [3]
For stoone was ther noone to wynne. — *get*

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[1] *Except to have the tower assailed again*

[2] *Then they ran out of stones for throwing*

[3] *Then they didn't know what to do*

Tho were thay in grete drede.
2475 Than saide Florip, 'Beith not dismayde.
Ye shalle be holpe anoon. *helped*
Here is sylver vessel i-now,' she sayde,
'That shulle ye prove goode woon.' *resource*
She set it forth; thay caste oute faste
2480 Alle that came to honde.
Off silver and goolde vessel thay made waste
That wast down uppon the sonde. *ground*
Whan thai saugh that roial sight,
Thai leften alle here dede
2485 And for the tresoure thay do fight,
Whoso myghte it awey lede.
Tho the Sowdon wexe nere wode,
Seinge this tresoure thus dispoyled *plundered*
That was to him so dere and goode
2490 Laye in the dike thus defouled.
He bade that thai shulde leve
And turne hem agayne in haste.
He wente home tille his tente than
With grete sorowe and mournyng mode.
2495 To-fore his goddis whan he came
He cryed as he were wode:
'O fals goddis that ye beth,
I have trustid to longe youre mode.
We were levere to suffre dede *death*
2500 Than lif this life here lenger nowe.
I have almoste loste the breth.
Twelfe fals traytours me overe-lede *oppress*
And stroyen alle that I have. *destroy*
Ye fals goddis, the devel youe spede!
2505 Ye make me nowe for to rave.
Ye do fayle me at my nede.'
In ire he smote Mahounde
That was of goolde fulle rede,
That he fille down to the grounde
2510 As he hade bene dede.
Alle here bisshopes cryden oute

And saide, 'Mahounde, thyn ore!' *mercy*
And down to the erthe wele lowe thay loute *bowed*
Howlynge and wepynge sore
2515 And saide, 'Sire Sowdon, what have ye done?
Vengeaunce shalle on the falle
But thou repente the here anone.'
'Ye,' quod he, 'I shrewe you alle.' *curse*
Thai made a fyre of frankencense
2520 And blewen hornes of bras
And casten in milke hony for the offence
To-fore Mahoundes face.
Thay counsailed Laban to knele adown
And aske forgevenes in that place.
2525 And so he didde and hade pardon
Throgh prayere and specialle grace.

Then this was done, than sayde Roulande *When*
To his felowes eleven:
'Here may we not longe holde londe,
2530 By God that is in heven.
Therefore sende we to Charles the Kinge
That he wolde reskowe us sone
And certyfye him of oure strayghte beinge, *severe condition*
If ye thinke it be to done.
2535 Richard of Normandye, ye most goon;
I holde you both wyse and hende. *valiant*
And we shalle tomorowe as stil as stoon
The Saresyns awake er ye wynde. *go*
And while we be mooste bysy in oure worke
2540 And medel with hem alle in fere,
Stele ye awaye in the derke; *dark*
And spede you faste, ye were there.'
On the morowe aftire the daye
Thay were armede ful ryghte;
2545 Thay rode forth stilly in here way —
God governe hem, mooste of myght! *guide*
Floripe and here maydyns kept the toure
And woonde up the brigges on hye

And prayde God to kepe here paramoure, *lover*
2550 The Duke of Burgoyne, Sir Gye.
She preyde to Rouland, er he wente,
To take goode hede of him, *care*
That he were neyther take nere shente, *killed*
As he wolde her love wynne.
2555 On thay set with herte stronge
And alle hem sore afrayed.
Richard the whiles away he wronge, *hurried*
While thai were alle dismayede.
Towarde the Mountrible he hyed him faste
2560 To passe, if that he myghte.
Thedir he came at the laste.
God kepe him for his moch myght! *great*
His twelfe felowes besyed hem soo *busied*
That many of hem thay sloughe. *slew*
2565 Gye slowe the Kinge of Babyloyne tho; *slew*
The Babyloynes of his hors him drowe
And with force him drowe there
And bounde his hondes ful fast.
A newe game thai gan him lere, *teach*
2570 For in depe prison thay him caste.
But Laban wolde him first se
To wete what he was. *know*
'Telle me thy name nowe,' quod he,
'Thy songe shalle be 'alas.''
2575 'Sire,' he saide, 'my name is Gye;
I wole it never forsake.
It were to me grete vilanye
An othir name to take.'
'O fals traytour,' quod Laban,
2580 'My doghtir, that stronge hore,
Hath me forsake and the hath tan; *taken*
Thou shalte be honged therefore.'
Roulande made grete moone; *moan*
It wolde noon other be.
2585 Homwarde thai gan goon;
Thre hundred Saresyns ther saye he *saw*

That kepte the pace at the brigge-ende, *guarded; passageway*
Armed wel in goode araye,
That thai sholde not in wende
2590 But be take or slayn that daye.
Roulande to his felowes saide,
'Beth alle of right gode chere
And we shal make hem alle afrayde
Ere we go to oure soupere.'
2595 There byganne a bykeringe bolde *fighting*
Of ten bachelers that tyde
Agayne thre hundred men i-tolde *all-told*
That durste righte wel abyde. *stand firm*
Tho was Durnedale set a-werke:
2600 Forti of hethen he sloughe. *slew*
He spared nether lewde ner clerke,
And Floripas thereof loughe.
The shotte, the caste was so stronge,
Syr Bryer was slayn there
2605 With dartes, gavylokes and speres longe — *javelins*
Twenti on hym there were.
Roulande was woo and Olyvere;
Thay sloughen alle that thai mette.
Tho fledde the Turkes alle for fere — *fear*
2610 Thay durste no longer lette — *delay*
And saide thai were no men
But develis abroken oute of helle:
'Thre hundred of us agayn hem ten.
Oure lorde Mahounde hem qwell! *kill*
2615 Forti of us here be ascaped
And hardde we be bistadde. *pressed*
Whoso wole of hem more be japed, *mocked*
I holde him worsse than madde.'

Tho Roulande and Olyvere
2620 Maden grete woo and sorowe
And token the corps of Sir Bryere
And beryed it on the morowe.
Floripe asked Roulande anoone,

'Where is my love, Sir Gye?'
2625 'Damesel,' he saide, 'he is goon,
And therefore woo am I.'
'Alas!' she saide, 'than am I dede;
Nowe Gye my lorde is slayn
Shall I never more ete brede
2630 Tille that I may se him agayn.'
'Be still,' quod Roulande, 'and have no care:
We shal hym have ful wele.
Tomorowe wele we thiderward fare
With spere and shelde of stele.
2635 But we bringe him to this toure
Leve me elles no more — *Believe*
With victorye and grete honoure
Or thay shalle abye it ful sore.'
On the morowe whan tha day was clere,
2640 Laban ordeynede Gye honged to be. *ordered*
He cleped forth Sir Tampere
And badde him do make a galowe tre
'And set it even byfore the toure
That thilke hore may him see, *whore*
2645 For by lord Mahounde of honoure
This traitour there shalle honged be.
Take withe the thre hundred knightes
Of Ethiopis, Indens and Ascopartes
That bene boolde and hardy to fight
2650 With wifles, fauchons, gavylokes and dartes *axes, swords, javelins*
Leste that lurdeynes come skulkynge oute, *cowards*
For ever thay have bene shrewes. *villains*
Loke eche of hem have such a cloute *See that*
That thay never ete moo sewes.' *broths*
2655 Forth thay wente with Sir Gye
That bounde was as a thefe faste
Tille thay come the towre ful nye;
Thai rered the galowes in haste. *raised*
Roulande perceyved here doynge
2660 And saide, 'Felows, let armes! *to arms*
I am ful gladde of here comynge;

Hem shall not helpe her charmes.'
Oute thai riden a wele gode spede, *at quite a good speed*
Thai nine towarde hem alle.
2665 Florip with here maydyns toke gode hede
Biholdinge over the toure walle.
Thai met first with Sir Tampere —
God gife him evelle fyne! *end*
Such a stroke lente hym Olyvere *gave*
2670 He clefe him down to the skyne. *clove*
Rouland bare the Kinge of Ynde
Ther with his spere frome his stede.
Four foot it passed his bak byhynde:
His herte blode there didde he blede.
2675 He caught the stede — he was ful goode —
And the swerde that the Kinge hadde
And rode to Gye there he stode *stood*
And onbounde hym and bade him be gladde
And girde him with that goode swerde
2680 And lepen uppon here stedes.
'Be thou,' he saide, 'righte nought aferde
But helpe us wightly at this nede.' *boldly*
An hundred of hem sone thay slowe
Of the beste of hem alle;
2685 The remenaunte away fast thay flowe — *fled*
That foule motte hem byfalle!
Rouland and his felowes were glad
That Gye was safe indede. *indeed*
Thay thanked God that hem hadde
2690 Gyfen such grace to spede.

As thay wente towarde the toure,
A litil bysyde the hye waye,
Thai saugh comynge with grete vigoure
An hundred uppon a laye. *field*
2695 Costroye ther was, the admyrall,
With vitaile grete plenté
And the stondarte of the Sowdon roial. *standard*
Towarde Mauntrible riden he, *they*

Four chariotes i-charged with flessh and brede — *loaded*
2700 And two othere with wyne
Of divers colouris — yolowe, white and rede —
And four somers of spicery fyne. — *pack horses*
Tho saide Roulande to Olyvere,
'With these meyne moste we shifte — *company; share*
2705 To have parte of here vitailes here,
For therof us nedith, by my thrifte.' — *prosperity*
'Howe, sires,' he saide, 'God you see.
We pray youe for youre curtesye,
Parte of your vitaile graunte me;
2710 For we may nother borowe ner bye.'
Tho spake Cosdroye, that admyral:
'Ye gete none here for noght.
Yf ye oght chalenge in speciall, — *in particular*
It most be dere i-boght.'
2715 'O gentil knightes,' quod Olyvere,
'He is no felowe that wole have alle.' — *partner*
'Go forth,' quod the stondart, 'thou getist noon here; — *standard-bearer*
Thy parte shalle be fulle smalle.'
'Forsoth,' quod Roulande, 'and shift we wole; — *share*
2720 Gete the better, who gete maye.
To parte with the nedy, it is gode skille;[1]
And so shalle ye by my faye.'
He rode to the admyral with his swerde
And gafe him suche a cloute —
2725 No wonder thogh he were aferde —
Both his eyyen braste oute. — *eyes burst*
Olyvere met withe the proude stondarde; — *standard-bearer*
He smote him through the herte.
That hade he for his rewarde.
2730 That wounde gan sore smerte.
Thai were slayn that wolde fight
Er durste bikure abyde. — *Or dared do battle*
Thai forsoke her parte anoon right;
It lefte alle on that on side.

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[1] *It is reasonable to share with the needy*

2735 Forth thai drewen that vitaile
Streight into the toure.
There was no man durst hem assayle
For drede of here vigoure.

Floripe hem resceyved with honoure
2740 And thanked Roulande fele sythe — *many times*
That she saugh Gye hir paramoure, — *lover*
That wolde she him qwite and kithe. — *repay; recognize*
Thai eten and dronken and made hem gladde.
Hem neded ther aftyr fulle sore
2745 Of suche as God hem sente hade,
I-nowe for four moonthes and more.
Florip saide to Roulande than,
'Ye moste chese you a love — *choose*
Of alle my maydyns, white as swan.'
2750 Quod Rouland, 'That were myscheve; — *sin*
Our lay wole not that we with youe dele — *have to do with you*
Tille that ye Cristyn be made,
Ner of your play we wole not fele — *Nor*
For than were we cursed indede.' — *indeed*

2755 Nowe shall ye here of Laban.
Whan tidynnges to him were comen,
Tho was he a fulle sory man.
Whan he herde howe his vitaile were nomen — *taken*
And howe his men were slayne
2760 And Gye was go safe hem froo, — *from*
He defyed Mahounde and Apolyne, — *renounced*
Jubiter, Ascarot and Alcaron also. — *the Koran*
He commaundede a fire to be dight — *prepared*
With picche and brymston to bren. — *pitch*
2765 He made a vowe with alle his myght:
'Thai shal be caste therinne.'
The prestes of here lawe theron
Thai criden oute for drede
And saide, 'Alas, what wole ye done?
2770 The worse than moste ye spede.' — *then must; fare*

The Sowdon made a grete othe
And swore by his hye trone — *throne*
That though hem were never so loth
Thai sholde be brente ichon.
2775 Tho came the bisshope Cramadas
And kneled bifore the Sowdon
And charged him by the hye name Sathanas
To saven his goddes ychon,
'For if ye brenne your goddes here,
2780 Ye wynnyn her malison. — *curse*
Than wole no man do you chere — *be friendly towards you*
In feelde, cité, nere in town.' — *nor*
The Sowdon was astonyed than — *astonished*
And gan him sore repente
2785 Of the foly that he bygan
And els hade he be shente. — *otherwise; lost*
A thousande of besauntes he offred thaym to,
By counsail of Sir Cramadas,
To please with his goddys tho,
2790 For fere of harde grace.
The Sowdone commaunded every daye
To assaile the toure with caste; — *hurling of stones*
But thai within gafe not an eye, — *gave not an egg (i.e., didn't care)*
For thai wroghte in wast. — *worked in vain*

2795 Nowe speke we of Richarde of Normandy
That on message was sente —
Howe he spede and his meyné.
Whan he to Mauntrible wente,
He founde the brigge ichayned sore:
2800 Twenti-four were overe-drawen — *24 [chains]; pulled across*
Alagolofure stode there byfore
That many a man hade slawene. — *slain*
Whan Richard saugh ther was no gate — *passage*
But by Flagot the flode — *the river Flagot*
2805 His mesage wolde he not lete. — *abandon*
His hors was both bigge and goode.
He kneled, bisechinge God of his grace

To save him from myschiefe.
A white hende he saugh anoon in that place — *hind*
2810 That swam overe the cliffe.
He blessed him in Godis name
And folowed the same waye
The gentil hende that was so tame — *hind*
That on that othir side gan playe.
2815 He thanked God fele sythe — *many times*
That him had sente comforte.
He hied him in his message swithe
To speke with Charles, his lorde.

But I shalle you telle of a traytour
2820 That his name was called Genelyne.
He counseiled Charles for his honoure
To turne homewarde ageyn.
He saide, 'The Twelfe Peres bene alle dede,
And ye spende your goode in vayne;
2825 And therfore doth nowe by my rede — — *advice*
Ye shalle see hem no more, certeyn.' — *surely*
The Kinge bileved that he saide
And homwarde gan he fare.
He of his Twelfe Dosiperes was sore dismayed;
2830 His herte woxe right fulle of care.
Rycharde of Normandy came prikande — *riding*
And hertly to ride begane.
Kinge Charles aspyed him comande.
He commaunded to abide every man.
2835 'What tidingges?' quod the Kinge to Richarde.
'Howe fare my felowes alle?'
'My lorde,' he saide, 'God wote, ful harde;
For thai be byseged within ston walle, — *besieged*
Abydynge youre helpe and youre socoure
2840 As men that have grete nede.
For Jhesues love, Kinge of honoure,
Thiderward ye you spede.'
'O Genelyne,' quod the Kinge,
'Nowe knowe I thy treson,

2845 I shalle the qwite, be Seynte Fremounde, *repay*
Whan this viage is don.' *journey*

The Kinge turned him ageyn
And alle his ooste him with
Towarde Mountrible certeyne —
2850 And graunte him gree and grith! *favor; protection*
Richarde him tolde of that place,
Howe stronge it was i-holde
With a geaunte foule of face,
The brigge hath chayned many-folde.
2855 The river was both depe and brode;
Ther myght no man over-ryde.
'The last tyme that I over-rode,
By myracle I passed that tide.
Therfore, sir, I shal you telle
2860 Howe ye mote governe you here. *act*
In yonde wode ye moste dwelle
Prively in this manere;
And twelfe of us shalle us araye
In gyse of stronge marchauntes *merchants*
2865 And fille oure somers withe fog and haye *pack-horses; grass*
To passe the brigge currauntes. *moving along*
We shalle be armed under the cote
With goode swerdes wele i-gyrde.
We moste paye tribute, wele I wote,
2870 And elles over we may not sterte. *go*
But whan the chaynes be lete down
Over ther for to passe,
Than wole I that ye come on
In haste to that same place.
2875 Whan I see tyme for to come,
Than shalle I my horne blowe.
Loke ye be redy alle and some,
For that shall ye welle knowe.'
Forth thay wente in that araye
2880 To Mountrible, that cité.
Alagolofure to hem gan seye,

'Felawes, wheder wole ye?'
Richarde spake to the geaunte
And saide, 'Towarde the Sowdon
2885 With dyvers chaffere as trewe marchaunte — *merchandise*
We purpose for to goon
To shewen him of pellure and gryse, — *(see note)*
Orfrays of Perse imperyalle. — *Gold embroidery; Persia*
We wole the yefe tribute of assaye — *proven worth*
2890 To passe by lycence in especyall.'
'License gete ye noon of me.
I am charged that noone shall passe,
For ten lurdeyns of Fraunce were here — — *villains*
God yefe hem evell grace! — *give*
2895 Thay passed this way to Egramoure;
Thay have done the Sowdon grete tene. — *harm*
Thay have wonne his toure and his tresoure
And yet holde thai it, I wene. — *suppose*
Wherfore, felawes, I arest you alle
2900 Tille I knowe what that ye bene.'
Sire Focarde brayde oute his swerde with-alle; — *pulled*
Wel sore he gan to tene — *grow angry*
And saide, 'Fye on the, Sarasyne!
For alle thy grete harde hede,
2905 Shaltow never drinke water ner wyne.
By God, thou shalte be dede!'
He smote at him with egre chere,
But he gafe thereof right nought. — *cared*
'Alas,' quod Richard, 'thou combrest us here, — *encumber*
2910 By God that me dere hath boghte.'
The cheynes yet were all faste;
The geaunte wexe nere wode.
Richard blewe his horne in haste,
That was both shrille and goode.
2915 King Charles hied him anoon
Towarde the brigge so longe.
The geaunte faught with hem alone,
He was so harde and stronge. — *hardy*
With a clog of an oke he faught, — *log*

2920 That was wele bound with stele.
He slough al that evere he raught, *struck*
So stronge was his dinte to dele. *blow; deliver*
Richard raught him with a barre of bras *struck*
That he caught at the gate. *seized*
2925 He brake his legges; he cryed 'Alas'
And felle alle chekmate.
Loude than gan he to yelle —
Thay herde him yelle through that cité
Like the grete develle of helle —
2930 And saide, 'Mahounde, nowe helpe me!'
Four men him caught there,
So hevy he was and longe,
And cast him over into the rivere.
Chese he whither he wolde swymme or gong. *Choose; walk*

2935 Anoon thay brast the chaynes alle
That over the brigge were i-drawe.
The Saresyns ronnen to the walle;
Many Cristen men were there i-slawe.
Than came forth Dam Barrok the bolde *Dame*
2940 With a sithe large and kene *scythe; sharp*
And mewe adown as thikke as shepe in folde *mowed*
That came byforne hir bydene. *immediately*
This Barrok was a geaunesse, *giantess*
And wife she was to Astragote.
2945 She did the Cristen grete distresse;
She felled downe alle that she smote.
There durst no man hire sithe abyde; *scythe*
She grenned like a develle of helle. *growled*
King Charles with a quarel that tide *bolt from a crossbow*
2950 Smote hir, that she lowde gan yelle,
Over the frounte throughoute the brayn. *forehead*
That cursede fende fille down dede.
Many a man hade she there slayn.
Might she never aftyr ete more brede!
2955 Charles entred in the firste warde *vanguard*
With fiftene knightis and no moo;

	Of hym his oste toke no garde;	*care*
	He wende his oste hade entred also.	*thought*
	The Sarysyns ronne to the gate	
2960	And shet it wonder faste.	*shut*
	Charles men come to late;	
	Tho was Charles sore agaste.	
	Betwene two wardes he was shit,	*castle walls; trapped*
	Defende he him if he can.	
2965	The Sarysyns with him thay mette;	
	Grete parel was he in than.	*peril*
	Tho Genelyne saie the Kinge was inne	*saw*
	And the yates faste i-stoke.	*locked*
	Ther myght no man to him wynne	*go*
2970	So was he faste withinne i-loke.	*locked*
	To his frendes he gan speke	
	And saide, 'The Kinge is dede	
	And all twelfe peres eke.	
	'On peyne,' said he, 'to lese myn hede,	*lose; head*
2975	Let us hye to Fraunce warde.	*towards France*
	For I wele be crownede kinge.	
	I shalle you alle wele rewarde,	
	For I wole spare for no thinge.'	
	Anoon thay assented to Genelyne;	
2980	Thay saugh ther was no better rede.	*counsel*
	The Frenssh men drewe hem al ayene;	*back*
	Thay wende the Kinge hade bene dedde.	*thought*
	Tho Ferumbras with his meyné than	
	Came for to seke the Kinge	*seek*
2985	And saugh hem turne every man,	
	Him thought it was a wondir thing.	*It seemed to him*
	'Where is the Kinge?' quod Ferumbras.	
	Quod Genelyne, 'Within the walle;	
	Shaltowe nevere more seen his face!'	
2990	'God gyf the an yvel falle.	
	Turne agayne, thou traytoure,	
	And helpe to reskowe thy lorde.	
	And ye, sires, alle for youre honoure!'	
	Thay turned agayne with that worde.	

2995 Ferumbras, with axe in honde,
Myghtyly brake up the gate.
Ther myght laste him noon yron bonde.
He hade nere-honde i-come to late; *nearly*
The Kinge hadde fought so longe withynne
3000 That onnethe myght he no more.[1]
Many ther were abouten him;
His men were wounded ful sore.
Ferumbras came with gode spede;
He made the Sarasyns to fle.
3005 He reskowed the Kinge at his nede;
Forti Sarasyns sone killed he.
Thai ronnen aweye by every side;
Thai durste nowhere rowte. *assemble*
In shorte tyme was falled her pride;
3010 Thay caught many a sore cloute. *blow*
That cité was wonne that same daye
And every toure therynne
Of Mountreble that was so gaye
For alle here soubtile gynne, *subtle contrivance*
3015 Fulle of tresoure and richesse,
Of silver and goolde and perre *jewelry*
And clothes of goolde, wroght of Saresynes, *made by Saracens*
Of rich aray and roialte.
Richarde, Duke of Normandy,
3020 Founde two children of sefen monthes oolde,
Fourtene fote longe were thay;
Thay were Barrakes sonnes so boolde;
Bygote thay were of Astragot.
Grete joye the Kinge of hem hade.
3025 Hethen thay were both, wele I wote;
Therfore hem to be cristenede he bade. *christened*
He called that one of hem Roulande,
And that other he cleped Olyvere
For thai shalle be myghty men of honde.
3030 To kepen hem he was fulle chere. *pleased*

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[1] *That he could hardly [fight] anymore*

Thay myght not leve; her dam was dede; *live; mother*
Thai coude not kepe hem forth. *alive*
Thai wolde neyther ete butter nere brede,
Ner no men was to hem worthe.
3035 Here dammes mylke they lakked there; *mother's*
Thay deyden for defaute of here dam. *died; lack; mother*
Kinge Charles made hevy chere
And a sory man was than.
The Kinge lete ordeyne anoon *ordered*
3040 The cité to be governed
Of the worthyest of hem ychon
That weren of werre best lerned. *war; schooled*
Duke Richarde of Normandy,
He was made chief governoure,
3045 And two hundred with him in hys company
To kepe the brigge and toure.

Forth he rode to Laban than
With his ooste and Sire Ferumbras.
A spye to the Sowdon fast ran
3050 And told him al that cas: *event*
How Charles was come with his ost
And Mountrible hade he wonne,
'Alagolofur slayn is for alle his bost; *boasting*
This game was evel begon.'
3055 Whane Laban herde of his comynge,
Him thought his herte gan breke.
'Shalle I never be withoute moornynge *mourning*
Tille I of him be wreke.' *avenged*
He commaunded to blowe his claryons *trumpets*
3060 To assemble alle his ooste.
His counsaile to him he lete calle *had called*
And tolde how Kinge Charles was in that coost, *region*
Hadde wonne Mountrible and slayn his men
'And dishiryth to disheryte me *desires; disinherit*
3065 And proudely manessith me to fleen *warns; flee*
Or drive me oute of this contré.
Me mervaylythe moch of his pride,

By Mahounde, moost of myght!
Ye, and my sone withe him doth ride; *Yea*
3070 To the develle I hem bedight! *commit*
But I be venget of hem both *Unless*
And honge hem on a tree —
To myghty Mahounde I make myne othe —
Shalle I never joyfulle be.
3075 Therfore I charge you in alle wyse *in every way*
That thay be taken or slayn.
Than shalle I pynne heme at my gyse[1]
And don hem alle qwike be flayn.' *alive*

On the morowe whan it was day,
3080 King Charles was in the felde
Byfore Agremoure in riche aray,
On stede with spere and sheelde.
Floripe lay on the toure on hye
And knewe the banere of Fraunce.
3085 To Roulande she gan faste crye
Tidynges of goode chaunce:
'Kinge Charles is comen and Ferumbras;
Here baners both I do see
With alle her oste yondere in that place.
3090 Welcome to us thay alle be.'
Roulande and Olyvere
Arayed hem for to ride.
And here felawes alle in fere
To Charles thay gon that tyde.
3095 Laban come forth with his mayné:
Saresyns that were ful felle, *fierce*
Turkes, Indens and Arabye,
Ye, and of the Ethiopes like the develes of helle.
There were stronge wardes sette *guards*
3100 By ordynaunce of dyvers batayle. *battle array; different companies*
Whan thay togeder were met,
Eythir othir sore gan assayle.

---

[1] *Then shall I torment them in my accustomed manner*

Ther were Saresyns al to-hewe; *hewed down*
Roulande sloughe many one.
3105 Thay lay so thikke dede on rewe *in a heap*
That onnethe myghte men ride or goon. *scarcely*
King Charles met with Laban
And bare him down of his stede. *off*
He lighted down and ceased him than; *seized*
3110 He thought to qwite him his mede. *give him his reward*
He brayde oute Mownjoye wyth gode wille
And wolde have smeten of his hede;
Ferumbras prayde him to abyde stille
To crysten him, er he were dede.
3115 The Saresyns saughe Laban take; *saw; taken*
Thay fledden away fulle faste.
Lenger durste thay no maistryes make; *combat*
Thai were so sore agaste.
The Cristen hem chased to and fro
3120 As a grehounde doth the hare.
Thre hundred ascaped with moche woo
To Belmore gan thay fare.

King Charles ladde Laban
Into Agremoure cité;
3125 And whan that he there came,
A ful sory man was he.
His doghter welcomed him
With right gode chere.
He loked on hir al grymme *grimly*
3130 As he wode wroth were *insanely angry*
And saide, 'Fye on the, stronge hore;
Mahounde confounde the!'
Charles saide, 'Hereof no more,
But let us nowe mery be.'
3135 'Sir,' she saide thanne,
'Welcome ye be into this toure.
Here I presente to you, as I can,
Relikes of grete honoure
That were at Rome iwonnen

3140 And broght into this halle.
That game was evel bygonnen;
It sithen rewed us alle.' *subsequently grieved*
Kinge Charles kneled adown
To kisse the relikes so goode
3145 And badde there an oryson *offered; prayer*
To that Lorde that deyde on Rode *died; Cross*
And thanked Floripe with al his herte
That she had saved his meyné
And holpe hem oute of peynes smerte *sharp*
3150 And kepte the relekes so fre.
King Charles did calle Bisshope Turpyn
And bade him ordeyne a grete fat *vat*
To baptyse the Sowdon yne:
'And loke what he shalle hat. *be called*
3155 Unarme him faste and bringe him nere;
I shal his godfader be.
Fille it fulle of watere clere,
For baptysed shalle he be.
Make him naked as a childe;
3160 He moste plunge therinne,
For now most he be meke and mylde
And i-wassh awaye his synne.'
Turpyn toke him by the honde
And ladde him to the fonte. *led*
3165 He smote the bisshope with a bronde *sword*
And gaf him an evel bronte. *blow*
He spitted in the water clere
And cryed oute on hem alle
And defied alle that Cristen were.
3170 That foule mote him byfalle!
'Ye and thou, hore serpentyne,
And that fals cursed Ferumbras —
Mahounde gyfe hem both evel endyng
And almyghty Sathanas!
3175 By you came all my sorowe
And al my tresure forlorne. *lost*
Honged be ye both er tomorowe.

In cursed tyme were ye born.'
Ferumbras saide to the Kinge,
3180 'Sir, ye see it wole not be;
Lete him take his endynge
For he loveth not Cristyanté.'
'Duke Neymes,' quod Charles tho,
'Loke that execucion be don. *See to it*
3185 Smyte of his hedde — God gyfe him woo! *off*
And goo we to mete anoone.'
It was done as the Kinge commaunde.
His soule was fet to helle *fetched*
To daunse in that sory lande
3190 With develes that wer ful felle. *ferocious*
Dame Florip was baptysed than
And here maydyns alle
And to Sir Gye i-maryed.
The barons honoured hir alle.
3195 Alle the londe of Spayne
Kinge Charles gyfe hem two
To departe bitwyxt hem twayne, *divide; two*
Ferumbras and Gy also.
And so thay livede in joye and game, *pleasure*
3200 And brethern both thay were.
In pees and werre both i-same, *alike*
There durste no man hem dere. *defy*
King Charles turned home agayn
Towarde his contré.
3205 He charged Sir Bryere of Bretayne
His tresourere for to be *treasurer*
To kepe the relikes of grete pris *worth*
And his other tresoure
And bringe hem safe to Parys,
3210 There to abide in store. *storage*
He saide, 'Farewell, Sir Ferumbras,
Ye and Gye, my dere frende,
And thy wyf Dame Floripas.
For to Fraunce nowe wole I wende.
3215 Be ye togeder as brethrn both.

No man ye nedith to drede,
Be ye never togedere wroth[1]
But eyther helpe othir at his nede.
Vysityth me whan ye have space; *time*
3220 Into Fraunce makith your disporte. *Set out for France*
God wole you sende the better grace
In age to do me comforte.'
Thai toke leve of the Kinge
With ful hevy chere
3225 And turned agayn both mornynge
With wepynge water clere.

King Charles with the victory
Sailed to Mounpeleres *Montpellier*
And thanked Almyghty God in glorye
3230 That he hade saved his dosiperes
And fende him of the Saresynes *protected him from*
The hyer honde to have,
For alle here strenghe and her engynes *strength*
The relikes of Rome to save.
3235 At Our Lady of Parys
He offred the Crosse so fre;
The Crown he offred at Seynte Denyse,
At Boloyne the Nayles thre. *Boulogne*
Alle his barons of him were gladd;
3240 Thai gafe him grete presente.
For he so wele hade i-spedde,
Thay did him grete reverence.
The Kinge hade wel in mynde
The tresone of Genelyne;
3245 Anoon for him he dide sende
To yefe him an evel fyne: *give; ending*
'Thou traitour unkynde,' quod the Kynge, *unnatural*
'Remembrist thou not how ofte
Thou hast me betrayed, thou fals Genelyne?
3250 Therfore thoue shalt be honged on lofte. *aloft*

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[1] *So long as you're never angry with one another*

Loke that the execucion be don
That throgh Parys he be drawe
And honged on hye on Mount Fawcon, *Mounfaucon*
As longeth to traytoures by lawe, *is fitting*
3255 That alle men shall take hede
What deth traytourys shall fele
That assente to such falshede,
Howe the wynde here bodyes shal kele.' *cool*
Thus Charles conquered Laban,
3260 The Sowdon of Babyloyne,
That riche Rome stroyed and wan *destroyed; conquered*
And alle the brode londe of Spayn.
. . . . . d of his barons
. . . . . s pride
3265 . . . . . eligons
. . . . . that tyde
. . . . . on Charles soule
. . . . . s also
. . . . . Peter and Poule
3270 God lete hem never wete of woo
But bringe here soules to goode reste
That were so worthy in dede.
And gyf us joye of the beste
That of here gestes rede. *deeds read*

Here endithe the Romaunce of the Sowdon of Babylone and of Ferumbras his sone who conquered Rome, and Kyng Charles off Fraunce with the Twelfe Dosyperes toke the Sowdon in the feelde and smote of his heede.

Notes

A note on the text: In the manuscript, large initial letters appear at lines 1, 383, 575, 599, 695, 940, 963, 1051, 1491, 1679, 1687, 1691, 1695, 1699, 1703, 1711, 1715, 1723, 1739, 2419, 2755, and 2795. Since these generally mark shifts in the action and so were clearly meant to begin new structural units, I have used a space between lines to divide the text where they appear — except that I have moved the break before line 2419 so that it now appears before 2417, where it seems more natural and more in keeping with the practice of the poet or scribe. The other breaks indicated in the text I have added, for ease of reading, at points where there is a shift in action not marked by a large initial letter.

1 Ms. reads 'myghteste.'

11 The 'ne' is not in the manuscript, but the sense of the line requires it.

27 Denis was the patron saint of France. In 626 Dagobert I founded the Abbey of Saint-Denis in Paris at the site where St. Denis was believed to be buried.

32 'Askalon' or Ascalon is a city in Palestine, north of Gaza, on the Mediterranean. It was captured by Crusaders in 1153 and recaptured by Saladin in 1187. The city is referred to again in line 1000 ('Ascoloyne').

46 Cf. the 'General Prologue' to the *Canterbury Tales* (lines 9–11), where Chaucer refers to this belief that nightingales sleep with an open eye.

56 An 'alaunt' is 'a highly prized ferocious dog of a breed used in hunting, bull-baiting, etc.'; a 'lymmer' is 'a hound trained to be led on a leash and to track game by scent'; 'racche' refers to 'a dog that hunts by scent' (MED).

86 Mahounde and Appolyne (Apollo) are gods thought to be worshipped by the Saracens.

113 Baldas is probably Bagdad. In *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, the form 'Baldake' (for Bagdad) appears. The fact that Lucafere is also called 'That

cruel kinge of Cassaundre' (line 986) does not necessarily argue against identifying Baldas as Bagdad. Cassaundre is probably Cassandria in Macedonia. However, Lucafere, who is also 'Of Aufryke lorde and governoure' (line 114), seems to have been granted many lands because of his prowess. It is also possible that the poet made Lucafere king of Cassaundre because he needed a rhyme for 'Alisaundre' in line 984.

127 The maintop is a platform at the head of the mainmast.

148 Here, as often in the romance, 'gan' is used as an auxiliary to indicate a past tense, much as we might use 'did.'

202 Ms. reads 'than,' but, as Hausknecht suggested, 'thay' seems the correct reading.

241 The 'Dosipers' are the Twelve Peers or principal warriors of Charlemagne. The term, from the French 'douze pairs,' comes to be used as a synonym for 'peer' or 'knight,' so that we often find the etymologically redundant 'Twelve Dosipers,' as we do here. In the *Chanson de Roland*, the Twelve Peers are said to be Roland, Olivier, Gérin, Gérier, Bérengier, Otton, Samson, Engelier, Ivon, Ivoire, Anséis, and Girard. The list varies in different works. In this romance, as lines 1688 ff. suggest, the Twelve Peers are Roland, Oliver, Gy of Burgoyne, Duke Neymes of Baver, Ogere Danoys, Bery Lardeneys, Folk Baliant, Aleroyse, Miron of Brabane, Bishop Turpyn, Bernard of Spruwse, and Bryere of Mountez.

257 The 'Gallopes' are perhaps the people from Gallipoli on the Southern shore of the Gallipolli Peninsula, at the east end of the Dardanelles.

360 The *p* in 'Pope' is illegible in the ms.

369–70 There is a blank line in the ms. between these lines, and the sense suggests that something has been omitted here.

473 Hausknecht suggests reading 'thus was it done' or 'this was i-done.'

495 The correct reading here is probably 'Ascopars' rather than the ms. 'Astopars.' Forms of the name with the *c* appear, as Hausknecht notes, in lines 2196 and

2648. A similar confusion between *t* and *c* takes place in line 1424 (where I have again emended to read 'Ascopartes'). The Ascopartes are apparently a fearsome race of giants subject to the Sultan.

497 'Askalous' are people from Askalon (see note to line 32), also referred to as 'Ascoloynes' in line 1040.

500 Hausknecht suggests emending 'Ho' to 'We'; but 'Ho' as a variant of the adverb 'o' (meaning 'continually' or 'ever') is a possible reading.

551 Ms. reads 'thoughe.'

561 Matins is the first of the canonical hours (i.e., the fixed parts of the Divine Office to be recited or sung at specified hours of the day). Matins is followed by lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, and compline.

628, 634 To hold 'in fee' means to possess 'by a heritable right subject to feudal obligations' (see OED, 'fee,' sb. 2, 1b).

650 Ms. reads 'met,' probably an error for 'mot.' (A similar error occurs in line 2433.)

663 St. Peter's Basilica was built by the Emperor Constantine (beginning c. 324) and completed by his son Constantius (in c. 354). Tradition says it was built over the grave of Peter the Apostle.

689 Smyser sees details such as the reference to the Saracens' cry of 'antrarian' to signify 'joye generalle' as a sign that the author took 'an innocent if slightly ostentatious delight in airing his learning of things Saracen' (p. 209).

716 Ms. reads 'religes,' as it does again in line 1821.

850, 868 There seems to be some confusion in this poem between Charlemagne's sword 'Joyeuse' and the battle cry of his troops, 'Monjoie.' The identification of the two by the poet is paralleled by a linking of the two in the *Chanson de Roland* (see line 2510). The battle cry is derived, according to one theory, from Monte Gaudia, the hill from which pilgrims first see the eternal city. Another theory suggests that a 'montjoie' was 'a mound or cairn of stones set up to mark the

site of a victory' and that the cry 'Montjoie St.-Denis' or, in a shortened form, 'Montjoie' 'derived from the cairn set up at Saint-Denis on the site of the saint's martyrdom (his spiritual victory)' (see Dorothy Sayers' translation of the *Chanson de Roland*, note to line 1181).

857 The phrase 'with harde grace' (literally 'with bad luck') is used as an imprecation.

871 The 'Baldesyns' are the people of Baldas (Bagdad).

875 Durendal is the famous sword of Roland, given to him by Charlemagne who received it from an angel.

953 Tuesday is the day of Tiu, the Germanic war god, identified with Mars. The Latin name for Tuesday, 'dies Martis' (which survives in the French 'mardi') attests to the longstanding association of Tuesday with Mars.

954 'Myrre' or myrrh is a gum-resin used in perfumes and incense; 'aloe' is the fragrant resin or wood of the agalloch; 'frankensense' or frankincense is the gum resin chiefly from East African or Arabian trees of the genus Boswellia, which is used for incense.

986 On 'Cassaundre,' see note to line 113.

999 'Inde Major' probably refers to the part of India between the Ganges and the Himalayas.

1001 'Barbarye' refers to the Saracen lands on the north coast of Africa. The 'Barbarens' in line 1042 are the people from this region.

1025 The sense suggests that there is a gap of one or more lines after line 1025, though nothing in the manuscript indicates the omission.

1040 'Paens' (pagans) suggests non-Christians, here probably referring to Muslims or Saracens. On the 'Ascoloynes' see the note to line 497.

1154 Ms. reads 'and thenkes.' Hausknecht suggested the emendation to 'as thenketh' ('as it seems').

1179–80 In the ms. line 1179 reads 'Olyvere him hitte agayn upon the hede'; then there is a blank space at the beginning of line 1180, followed by the words 'the hede than full sore.' Hausknecht suggests emending the lines to appear as they do above in the text. His emendation restores the rhyme.

1298 St. Quentin is, according to *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, a 'martyr of unknown date, recorded by Bede and some early martyrologies, mentioned by Gregory of Tours as having a church dedicated to him. The place where he suffered, Augusta Veromanduorum, is now called Saint-Quentin (Aisne).' Legend makes him 'a Roman citizen who came to preach the Gospel in Gaul with St. Lucian of Beauvais; Quentin preached at Amiens where the probably fictitious prefect Rictiovarus arrested and interrogated him, finally killing him by a series of fearsome tortures. . . .'

1341 Hausknecht suggests that 'alle' in line 1341 is an error for 'half.'

1357 It is common in Middle English to use contrasting pairs to suggest completeness. Thus to say that the gods are false 'by water and londe' implies that they are entirely false.

1361 Hausknecht suggests reading 'se' for 'sene' in order to restore the rhyme.

1390 In this line, 'he' refers to the hauberk.

1423 I have followed Hausknecht's suggestion in emending ms. 'cowthe' to 'caughte' and have also emended ms. 'Be' to 'But.'

1445 The 'holme' tree is probably 'the evergreen oak (Quercus ilex)' (MED).

1604 MED indicates that the form 'maute' as a past of 'mene' (here used in the sense of 'to aim a stroke at someone') is an error. The normal past forms would be 'mente,' 'mant,' or 'mende.'

1645 Ms. reads 'harme skathe' rather than 'harme and skathe.'

1691 As Hausknecht suggests, 'Bery Lardeneys' must be a corruption of Thierry (sometimes appearing as 'Terry') d'Ardane.

1713 According to tradition, St. Simon the Apostle went with St. Jude to Persia, where they suffered martyrdom (see *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*).

1726 The phrase 'not worth a leek' means 'of little or no value.'

1773–74 French and Hale suggest that 'leve' should be taken in the double sense of 'leave alone' and 'fail.' The sense of the lines is that Laban will follow the advice and force Charlemagne to surrender Ferumbras and depart from his territory.

1816 Hausknecht suggests emending 'byleved' to 'byleven' (which would restore the rhyme).

1885 Hausknecht suggests emending 'he' to 'ye'; but reading 'he' in the sense of 'a man' or 'someone' allows us to maintain the manuscript reading.

1967–68 These two lines are written as one in the manuscript.

2033 Ms. reads 'While thay mery drinkyng. . . .' Hausknecht is probably correct in suggesting that 'mery' is miswritten for 'were.'

2042 I have followed Hausknecht in reading 'stronde' for the ms. 'strowde.'

2085 Hausknecht suggested reading 'Assye' for the ms. 'Assyne.' This is surely the right reading, as it restores the rhyme.

2092 A 'quarelle' is 'a bolt for a crossbow, an arblast, or a siege engine' (MED).

2156 The verb of motion is understood in this line.

2224 The 'u' in 'Thou' does not appear in the ms. I follow Hausknecht in adding it.

2285 French and Hale suggest emending 'pas' to 'par' (bar, close). As it stands, the line suggests that the gates 'pass by' or 'extend across' the narrow paths.

2384 In Hausknecht's edition the line reads 'And assaye howe it wole it be.' The second 'it' is not in the manuscript and is clearly a misprint in the edition.

2421 Hausknecht suggests that 'also' should begin line 2422.

2433 The ms. 'mete' is probably an error for 'mote' (the emendation Hausknecht made).

2477 Hausknecht is probably correct in suggesting that ms. 'and now' should read 'i-now.'

2558 I follow Hausknecht in emending ms. 'Thile' to 'While.' The Roxburghe Club edition, however, reads 'Thile' as a contraction for 'the while.'

2601 'The untutored and the learned' is a contrasting pair used to indicate all people. Thus the meaning of the line is, 'He spared no one.'

2650 I follow Hausknecht in emending 'Gamylokes' to 'gavylokes.'

2689–90 I follow Hausknecht in emending the ms. reading: 'Thay thanked god that thay him hadde / Gyfen thaye such grace to spede.'

2694 Ms. reads 'alaye.'

2761–62 Jupiter and Ascarot, like Apollo and Mohammed, are taken to be gods of the Saracens.

2787 A 'besaunte' is 'a gold coin first struck at Byzantium or Constantinople . . . in value between the English sovereign and half-sovereign or less' (OED).

2845 Hausknecht believes that 'Fremounde' 'cannot be the true reading, as it does not rhyme with *kinge*.' There are, however, other places in the text where the rhyme is less than perfect. If he is correct, it may be that the scribe substituted the name of Fremund because he was an English saint. Though he may have been a fictional character, he was reputedly, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 'a relative of Offa, king of Mercia, and of Edmund, king of East Anglia [who] became a hermit. But as he had royal blood, he was a possible claimant to the throne of Mercia and was killed by an apostate kinsman Oswy, with the help of some of the same Danish army who slew Edmund.'

2885 The *e* in 'dyvers' does not appear in the ms. Hausknecht suggested the addition.

2887 'Pellure' refers to furs in general; 'gryse' is 'a grey fur; prob. fur from the back of the Russian gray squirrel in winter' (MED).

2951 French and Hale emend Hausknecht's 'Euer the founte' to 'Over the frounte' (over the forehead). The ms. does, in fact, read 'frounte,' which is the reading of the Roxburghe Club edition. Reading 'frounte' makes the emendation of 'Ever' to 'Over' even more plausible.

3127–28 The two lines are written as one in the ms.

3263 ff. Some of the text is lost due to a torn manuscript page.

The Siege of Milan

Introduction

The Sege of Melayne is found in the British Museum manuscript Additional 31042 (fols. 66b–79b). Referred to as the London Thornton manuscript, it is one of two collections of medieval writings known to have been copied by Robert Thornton of East Newton in Yorkshire. (The other is the Lincoln Cathedral manuscript 91, commonly referred to as the Thornton manuscript.) The British Museum manuscript dates from about 1450, though the poem itself was probably written some time in the second half of the fourteenth century. The poem is written in a northern dialect. Features of this dialect include the present participle in *-and(e)* rather than *-ing* (as in 'gronande' and 'spekande'); the third person plural of the present tense in *-es* or *-is* (as in 'men that luffes' and 'knyghtis bledis'); third person plural pronouns in *th-* (as in 'thay' and 'tham'); and particularly northern forms such as 'till' (for 'to'), 'sall' (for 'shall') and 'solde' (for 'should').

The Sege of Melayne is fragmentary, the romance ending in the manuscript just as the French forces are besieging Milan and, surely, just before they capture the city — with, undoubtedly, a good deal of heroics by Archbishop Turpin. The poem is written in a twelve-line stanza rhyming *aabccbddbeeb*, though there are places where the rhyme scheme is not perfectly maintained.

The Sege of Melayne is considered part of the Otinel (or Otuel) group of Charlemagne romances. Otinel is a Saracen knight who, like Ferumbras, is converted after a fierce battle with one of Charlemagne's Peers, in this case Roland. The combat itself is described in the Middle English poems *Otuel* and *Otuel and Roland*. Neither the combat nor even the character of Otuel appears in this poem as it has come down to us, but it is classified with the Otinel romances because only in these is Garcy the ruler of Lombardy.

But perhaps more interesting than its place in a cycle of romances is the fact that there is no known source for *The Sege of Melayne*. Dieter Mehl has suggested that the poem may have 'originated in England' (p. 153). The conjecture is plausible because, more than any other Charlemagne romance, *The Sege of Melayne* is a poem about a religious struggle rather than a glorification of the military prowess of the French king

and his warriors. There is a sense that God, not Charlemagne, is directing the action and working through his minister, Turpin. As W. R. J. Barron observes,

> the focus of interest has shifted so that the religious theme of defense of the faith dominates almost to the exclusion of the feudal theme of conflicting loyalties, while the rare miraculous interventions of the early *chansons* now rival the military action in importance. (p. 97)

It is a vision in which an angel appears to Charlemagne and gives him a sword that inspires the holy war against the Saracens. And throughout the poem, God assists those fighting the Saracens in symbolic and real ways, so much so that 'the romantic story-material is . . . given a strictly religious interpretation and is often embellished in the manner of Saints' legends' (Mehl, p. 156). Richard of Normandy, mortally wounded himself, is comforted by a vision of the slain French knights being led to heaven. When the Sultan Arabas tries to show the powerlessness of the God of the Christians by burning a crucifix, not only does it not burn but a fire flashes forth and blinds the Saracens, giving the French captives time to slay Arabas and to escape on horses miraculously provided for them (horses which equally miraculously disappear when the knights have reached safety).

Central to the shift towards a religious focus is the character of Bishop Turpin. Although the term may seem alien to medieval romance, *The Sege of Melayne* borders on being a character study. Turpin is pictured as an unswerving defender of the faith. He demands high standards and correct action from those around him and even more from himself. Nor is he afraid to use the spiritual or political power of his religious position. When he hears how Roland's forces have been defeated by the Saracens, he assembles the clergy of the realm and leads them in the vanguard of an attack on their enemy. He curses Ganelon for his bad advice and when Charlemagne, following Ganelon's counsel, refuses to lead the forces against the Saracens, Turpin excommunicates Charlemagne and declares him an enemy of God and, in effect, a coward. Turpin is ready to fight Charlemagne at the very moment of this confrontation. They are restrained by the lords of the land, but Turpin threatens to besiege Paris and to burn and raze the city. When Turpin assembles his troops before the city, Charlemagne is forced to relent and ask forgiveness from the Archbishop.

In addition to this major conflict, there are some small touches that make the character of Turpin interesting. When he hears of the defeat of the French forces, he says, in a passage almost reminiscent of Laban's complaints against his gods in *The Sowdone of Babylon*, that Mary is to blame for the loss of the French lives and tells her that if she had not been born (and thus had not brought Christ and his religion into the world), those good men would not have died. He is so preoccupied with the disas-

ter that when he encounters Charlemagne he doesn't even greet him, a small detail that suggests Turpin's single-minded dedication to his cause.

When Turpin and Charlemagne return to avenge the loss, the Archbishop once again displays unwavering dedication to the struggle and becomes the voice of conscience reminding others of their duty. Turpin's own squire stops to despoil the body of a Saracen named Arabant, whom the Archbishop has slain. But his master tells him that he should not be worrying about gold when there are more Saracens to kill. He beats the squire with his sword to make him drop his loot and return to the battle.

Perhaps the most impressive and revealing action taken by Turpin is his refusal to allow any attempts to treat his wounds until the city of Milan is recaptured. Earlier, he reminded Charlemagne of the suffering of Christ and berated him for being unwilling to suffer in Christ's cause. Turpin himself shows no such unwillingness. Twice wounded, he looks to Christ's example: 'He askede no salve to His sare, / Ne no more sall I this tyde' (lines 1346-47). Despite his wounds he encourages Charlemagne to attack a greatly superior force. And though the manuscript breaks off before the fall of the city, there can be no doubt that Turpin honored his vow not to accept treatment or to eat or drink until Milan was taken.

By giving such a clear picture of a man devoted to a cause, *The Sege of Melayne* presents an interesting variation on the usual themes of the Charlemagne romances. Though containing a number of traditional motifs, such as Ganelon's treachery, Charlemagne's conflict with one of his Peers, and the battles between large numbers of troops, *The Sege of Melayne* achieves some originality through its emphasis on Turpin as the military, political, spiritual, and moral center of the poem.

Manuscript

BM Additional 31042 (called the London Thornton Ms.), fols. 66b–79b.

Previous Editions

'The Sege off Melayne' and 'The Romance of Duke Rowland and Sir Otuell of Spayne' . . . Together with a Fragment of 'The Song of Roland.' Ed. Sidney J. Herrtage. EETS e.s. 35. London: N. Trubner for the Early English Text Society, 1880.

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The Sege of Melayne

[Primus Passus: A Fitt]

	All werthy men that luffes to here	*love; hear*
	Off chevallry that byfore us were	*knights*
	That doughty weren of dede,	*bold*
	Off Charlles of Fraunce, the heghe kinge of alle	*high*
5	That ofte sythes made hethyn men for to falle	*oftentimes; heathen*
	That styffely satte one stede.	*stalwartly; steed*
	This geste es sothe, wittnes the buke,	*story; true*
	The ryghte lele trouthe whoso will luke	*honest*
	In cronekill for to rede.	*chronicle; read*
10	Alle Lumbardy thay made thaire mone	*Lombardy; complaint*
	And saide thaire gaummes weren alle gone,	*pleasures*
	Owttrayede with hethen thede.	*Destroyed by heathen people*
	The Sowdane, Arabas the stronge,	*Sultan*
	Werreyde appon Crystyndome with wronge	*Made war; wrongfully*
15	And ceties brake he downn,	*cities*
	Robbyde the Romaynes of theire rent,	*wealth*
	The Popys pousty hase he schente	*Pope's power; ruined*
	And many a kynges with crownn.	
	In Tuskayne townnes gon he wyn	*Tuscany*
20	And stuffede tham wele with hethyn kyn,	*manned*
	This lorde of grete renownn.	
	And sythen to Lumbardy he wanne;	*afterwards; reached*
	Mighte to lett hym hade no man.	*hinder*
	Thus wynnes he many a townn.	*conquers*
25	The emagery that ther solde bee,	*[sacred] images; should*
	Bothe the Rode and the Marie free,	*Cross; noble*
	Brynnede tham in a fire.	*Burned*
	And than his mawmettes he sett up there	*idols*
	In kirkes and abbayes that there were,	*churches*
30	Helde tham for lordes and syre.	
	To Melayne sythen he tuke the waye	*Milan; then*

	And wanne the cyté apon a daye,	*conquered*
	Gaffe his men golde till hyre.	*as pay*
	Many a martyre made he there	
35	Off men and childire that there were	*children*
	And ladyes swete of swyre.	*lovely; neck*
	The lorde of Melayne, Sir Alantyne,	*Milan*
	Sawe the Crystynde putt to pyne.	*torture*
	Owte of the townn he flede	
40	To a cyté that was thereby;	
	All nyghte he thoghte therin to ly.	
	He was full straytly stede.	*severely; beset*
	Thay myghte it wynn with spere and schelde;	
	Appon the morne hym buse it yelde[1]	
45	Or laye his lyfe in wede.	*stake his life*
	Was never no knyghte putt to mare care.	*more*
	Full hertly to Criste than prayes he thare	
	To knawe the lyfe he ledde.	*should lead*
	The Sawdane sent hym messangers free	*Sultan; noble*
50	And bade hym torne and hethyn bee	*convert*
	And he solde have his awenn:	*should; own*
	Melayne, that was the riche cité,	*Milan*
	And alle the laundis of Lumbardye,	
	And to his lawe be knawenn:	*[Saracen] faith; professed*
55	'And if he ne will noghte to oure lawe be swornne,	*faith*
	He sall be hanged or other morne	*before another*
	And with wylde horse be drawen,	
	His wyffe and his childire three	*children*
	Byfore his eghne that he myghte see	*eyes*
60	Be in sondre sawenn.'	*asunder cut*
	He prayede the Sowdane than of grace	*Sultan*
	That he wolde byde a littill space	*time*
	Whils one the morne at daye,	*Until*
	And he sall do hym for to witt	*let him know*

[1] *It behooves him to surrender it in the morning*

65	If that he wolde assent to itt	
	To leve apon his laye.	*believe; faith*
	Bot than heves he up his handis to heven,	*raises*
	To Jesu Criste with mylde steven	*voice*
	Full hertly gane he praye.	
70	'Lorde,' he saide, 'als Thou swelte appon the Tree,	*died*
	Of Thy man Thou hafe peté	*pity*
	And Mary mylde, that maye.	*maiden*
	'If I solde Crystyndome forsake	*should*
	And to hethyn lawe me take,	*faith*
75	The perill mon be myn.	*must*
	Bot, Lorde, als Thou lete me be borne,	*as*
	Late never my sawle be forlorne	*Let; lost*
	Ne dampnede to helle pyne.	*damned; torments*
	Bot, Lorde, als Thou swelte on the Rode	*died; Cross*
80	And for mankynde schede Thi blode,	
	Some concelle sende Thou me —	
	Whethire that me es better to doo,	*Which*
	The hethyn lawe to torne too	
	Or my lyfe in lande to tyne.'	*on earth to lose*
85	Than wente that knyghte unto bedde	
	For sorowe hym thoghte his hert bledde,	*it seemed to him*
	And appon Jesu than gan he calle.	
	And sone aftire that gane he falle one slepe	
	Als man that was wery for-wepe.	*As; worn out with weeping*
90	Than herde by hym on a walle	
	Ane angelle that unto hym gane saye,	
	'Rysse up, Sir Kynge, and wende thy waye,	
	For faire the sall byfalle	*shall befall you*
	To Charles that beris the flour-delyce —	*fleur-de-lis*
95	Of other kynges he berys the pryce —[1]	
	And he sall wreke thy wrethis alle.'	*avenge; injuries*
	The angelle bade hym ryse agayne,	

[1] *He is superior to other kings*

	'And hy the faste to Charlemayne,	*hasten yourself*
	The crownnede Kynge of Fraunce,	
100	And say hym God byddis that he sall go	*shall*
	To helpe to venge the of thy foo	*foe*
	Both with spere and launce.'	
	The Kynge was full fayne of that;	*glad*
	His swerde in his hande ge gatt	
105	And therto graythely he grauntis.	*quickly; obeys*
	He garte swythe sadyll hym a palfraye[1]	
	And even to Fraunce he tuke the waye.	*directly*
	Now herkenys of this chaunce.	*listen to what happened*
	The same nyghte byfore the daye	
110	Als Kyng Charls in his bedde laye	*As*
	A swevn than gan he mete.	*dream; dream*
	Hym thoghte ane angele lyghte als leven[2]	
	Spake to hym with mylde steven,	*voice*
	That gudly hym gane grete.	*greet*
115	That angele bytaughte hym a brande,	*entrusted; sword*
	Gaffe hym the hiltis in his hande,	*hilt*
	That even was handefull mete	*That just fit the hand*
	And saide, 'Criste sende the this swerde	
	Mase the His werryoure here in erthe —	
120	He dose the wele to weite.[3]	
	'He biddes thou sall reteyne it tyte	*possess; quickly*
	And that thou venge alle His dispyte,	*injury*
	For thynge that ever may bee.	
	And sla alle there thou sees me stryke	*slay*
125	And sythen thou birnne up house and dyke,	*then; wall*
	For beste He traystis in thee.'	*trusts*
	The walles abowte Melayne townne	

[1] *He quickly had a palfrey saddled for himself*

[2] *It seemed to him an angel as bright as lightning*

[3] *Christ's sending you this sword / makes you his warrior here on earth; / he lets you know it well.*

	Hym thoghte the angele dange tham downn	*It seemed to him; struck*
	That closed in that cité,	
130	Sythen alle the laundis of Lumbardy	*Then; Lombardy*
	Townnes, borows and bayli.	*fortresses; walls*
	This was selcouthe to see.	*marvelous*
	When Charls wakenede of his dreme,	
	He sawe a bryghtenes of a beme	*from*
135	Up unto hevenwarde glyde.	
	Bot when he rose, the swerde he fande	
	That the angelle gaffe hym in his hande	
	Appon his bedde syde.	
	He schewede it thanne to his barouns alle,	*showed*
140	And than saide his lordes bothe grete and smalle:	
	'The sothe is noghte to hyde;	*truth*
	We wote wele that Goddis will it es	*know; is*
	That thou sall conquere of hethennesse	
	Countres lange and wyde.'	
145	To mete than wente that riche kynge,	*meal*
	Bot sone come there newe tydynge	
	Als he in sete was sette.	*seat*
	The lorde of Melayne he sawe come in,	
	That was his cosyn nere of kyn,	*relative*
150	And hym full gudely grette.	*greeted*
	The grete lordis alle hailsede hee	*saluted*
	And prayede tham all sesse of theire glee	*stop their merrymaking*
	And sayse to Charls withowtten lette,	*delay*
	'Jesu Criste hase comannde thee	
155	To fare to the felde to feghte for mee,	
	My landis agayne to gette.'	
	He tolde tham alle at the borde and by	*table*
	That the Sarasenes had wonn Lumbardy —	
	Thay mornede and made grete mone —	*were very sorrowful*
160	And how the angelle bade hym goo.	
	The Kynge tolde his sweven alsoo;	*dream*
	Thay accordede bothe in one.	*agreed*

Thane sayde the Beshope Turpyne:
'Hafe done! Late semble the folke of thyne. *Have assembled*
165 Myn hede I undirtake *head; pledge*
That Gode es grevede at the Sarasenes boste. *angered; boast*
We salle stroye up alle theire hoste, *destroy*
Those worthely men in worde.'

Bot alle that herde hym Genyenn
170 That was a lorde of grete renownn
And Rowlande modir hade wedde. *Roland's mother*
Thare wery hym bothe God and Sayne John! *curse*
The falseste traytoure was he one
That ever with fode was fedde. *food*
175 For landis that Rowlande solde have thare
Dede fayne he wolde that he ware,
The resone ryghte who redde.[1]
His firste tresone now bygynnes here *begins*
That the lordis boghte sythen full dere *paid for*
180 And to ladyse grete barett bredde. *distress caused*

'Sir,' he sayde, 'that ware a synfull chaunce.
What solde worthe of us in Fraunce *should become*
And thou in the felde were slayne? *If*
Thyselfe and we at home will byde
185 And latte Rowlande thedire ryde,
That ever to bekyre es bayne *fight; ready*
With batelle and with brode banere. *army; broad banner*
Of his wyrchippe wolde I here, *valor*
Witt ye wele, full fayne.' *Know; gladly*
190 For Rowlande this resone he wroghte; *explanation*
Everemore in his herte he thoghte
He solde never come agayne. *should; back*

The kynge than sent a messangere
To grette lordes bothe ferre and nere

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[1] *He [Ganelon] wished that he [Roland] were dead, / whoever would understand the correct explanation [of Ganelon's treason].*

195	And bade tham make tham yare.	*ready*
	Bot the peris take a concelle newe	*peers*
	That made alle Fraunce ful sore to rewe	*grievously to regret*
	And byrdis of blyse full bare.	*ladies; bliss; deprived*
	Thay prayede the Kynge on that tyde	*time*
200	That he hymselfe at home walde byde	*would abide*
	To kepe that lande right thare,	
	'And sendis Rowlande to Lumbardy	*Lombardy*
	With fourty thowsande chevalry	
	Of worthy men of were.'	*war*
205	Then Rowlande, thus his were than made,	*trouble*
	Fares forthe with baners brade;	
	The Kynge byleves thare still	*remains*
	Within the cité of Paressche	*Paris*
	For to kepe that townn of pryce	*guard; splendor*
210	Als thay accordede till.	*agreed to*
	And if the Sowdane wane the felde	*Sultan*
	Lyghtly walde they it noghte yelde	
	To thay had foughtten thaire fill.	*Until*
	Bot be comen was the feftenede daye	*by [the time that]*
215	Therfore myghte mornne bothe man and maye	*maiden*
	And ladyse lyke full ill.	
	To Melayne even thay made tham bownn	*set out*
	And batelde tham thare byfore the townn,	*prepared for battle*
	Those knyghttis that were kene.	*bold*
220	And into the Sowdane thay sent a knyghte	
	And bade hym come owte with tham to fyghte,	
	To witt withowtten wene.	*without doubt*
	The Sowdane grauntis wele thertill	*agrees*
	That tornede oure gud men all to gryll	*grief*
225	And many one mo to mene.	*lament*
	Than the Sarasene come owte of that cité	
	Forty thowsandes of chevalrye,	*knights*
	The beste in erthe myghte be[ne].	
	The forthirmaste come a Sarasene wyghte,	*first; man*

230	Sir Arabaunt of Perse he highte;	*Persia he was called*
	Of Gyon was he kynge.	
	He saide ther was na Cristyn knyghte,	
	Ware he never so stronge ne wyghte	*bold*
	To dede he [ne] solde hym dynge.	*death; strike*
235	And one Sir Artaymnere of Beme	*Bohemia*
	That was Sir Olyveres eme —	*uncle*
	Byfore the stowre thay thrynge.	*battle; push forward*
	And even at the first countire righte	*encounter*
	The Sarasen slewe oure Cristyn knyghte.	
240	It was dyscomforthynge.	
	The lorde of Melayne to hym rade,	*rode*
	Sir Alantyne withowtten bade,	*without delay*
	The Crystyn knyghte to wreke;	*avenge*
	Bot he stroke oure Cristyn knyghte that stownde	*time*
245	That dede he daschede to the grounde,	*dead; fell*
	Mighte no worde after speke.	
	Sythen afterwarde he bare down	*struck*
	Worthy lordes of grete renownn,	
	Ay to his launce gane breke.	*until*
250	And sythen areste thaire nobill stedis	*seized; steeds*
	And to the hethyn hoste tham ledis.	
	Loo thus-gates fares the freke.	*in such a way; man*
	Bot by that was done the grete gon mete,	*were meeting*
	Barouns undir blonkes fete	*horses' feet*
255	Braythely ware borne doun.	*Violently*
	Thay stekede many a staleworthe knyghte;	*pierced*
	The hethen folke in that fyghte	
	The moste were of renownn.	
	Oure knyghtis one the gronde lyse	*lie*
260	With wondes wyde one wafull wyse:	*wounds; in a piteous manner*
	Crakkede was many a crownn;	*Broken; head*
	Riche hawberkes were all to-rent,	*slashed up*
	And beryns thorowe thaire scheldis schent	*men through; wounded*

That many to bery was bownn.[1]

265 The Sarasens semblede so sarely — *attacked; fiercely*
That thay felde faste of oure chevalrye; — *struck down; knights*
Oure vawarde down thay dynge. — *vanguard; strike*
Righte at the firste frusche thay felde — *charge*
Fyve thowsande knyghtis trewly telde — — *counted*
270 This is no lesynge. — *lie*
Oure knyghtis lyghtede one the bent; — *fell; field*
Thorowe thaire scheldis are they schent. — *Through; wounded*
Of sorowe than myghte thay synge.
Than oure medillwarde gane tham mete, — *main body*
275 Thare myghte no beryns oure bales bete, — *men; woes make better*
Bot the helpe of hevens Kynge.

The medillwarde Sir Rowlande ledde; — *main body*
That doghty in felde was never drede — *bold man; afraid*
To do what solde a knyghte. — *should*
280 Fyfty lordis of gret empryce, — *prowess*
Of Fraunce that bare the floure-delyce, — *fleur-de-lis*
Hase loste bothe mayne and myghte. — *strength*
Our medillwarde sone hade thaye slayne, — *main body*
And Rowlande was in handis tane — *taken prisoner*
285 And other seven that were knyghtes.
Bot als God gaffe hym that chaunce,
Thay wende he hade bene Kynge of Fraunce — *thought*
That lyfede in thase fyghtis. — *participated in these battles*

Bot of a knyghte me rewes sore — *I grieve greatly*
290 That in the felde laye wondede thore: — *wounded there*
The Duke of Normandy.
He lukes up in the felde,
His umbrere with his hande up helde; — *visor*
On Rowlande gane he cry:
295 'Rowlande, if the tyde that chaunce — *if the opportunity befalls you*
That thou come evermore into Fraunce,

[1] *So that many were ready to be buried*

For the lufe of mylde Marie,
Comande me till oure gentill Kynge — *Commend*
And to the Qwene, my lady yynge, — *young*
300 And to all chevalrye. — *knights*

'And if thou come into Normandy,
Grete wele my lady
And Sir Richerd my sonne;
And dubbe hym duke in my stede — *place*
305 And bydde hym venge his fadir dede,
Of myrthe if he will mone. — *think*
Bid hym hawkes and houndes forgoo
And to dedis of armes hym doo,
Thase craftes for to konne — *learn*
310 Appon the cursede Sarasens for to werre, — *make war*
Venge me with dynt of spere, — *thrust*
For my lyfe is nere done.

'A, Rowlande, byhaulde nowe whatt I see: — *behold*
More joye ne myghte never bee
315 In youthe ne yitt in elde. — *old age*
Loo! I see oure vawarde ledde to hevene — *vanguard*
With angells songe and merye stevene — *voice*
Reghte as thay faughte in the felde.
I see moo angells, loo, with myn eghe, — *more; eye*
320 Then there are men within Cristyanté
That any wapyn may welde. — *wield*
To heven thay lede oure nobill knyghtis
And comforthes tham with mayne and myghtis, — *strength*
With mekill blysse and belde.' — *much; protection*

325 Bot by Rowland gan a Sarasene stande
That braydede owte with a bryghte brande — *drew; sword*
When he harde hym say soo; — *heard*
And to the Duke a dynt he dryvede. — *blow*
At the erthe he smate righte of his hede. — *To; smote; off; head*
330 Therfore was Rowlande woo. — *sorrowful*
And Rowland styrte than to a brande — *rushed; sword*

And hastily hent it owte of a Sarasene hande, *seized*
And sone he gane hym sloo. *slay*
With that swerde he slewe sexty,
335 The beste of the Sarasens chevalrye,
Off hardy men and moo. *more*

Than Rowlande in handis is taken agayne
And putt unto full harde payne
That sorowe it was to see.
340 And foure nobill knyghtis than have thay slayne
Byfore that were in handis tane
With Sir Rowlande the free. *noble*
The Sowdane comandis of his men
An hundrethe knyghtis to kepe tham then, *guard*
345 Rowland and other three,
And to oure rerewarde sythen thay rode. *rear guard*
Oure barouns boldely tham abode. *withstood*
Nowe helpe tham the Trynytee!

The Duke of Burgoyne, Sir Belland, *Burgundy*
350 The fadir of Sir Gy of Nevynlande,
The rerewarde than rewlis hee. *rear guard; leads*
He comforthede alle oure nobyll knyghtis,
Said, 'Lordis, halde your feldes and your ryghttis *protect*
And no Sarasene yee flee.
355 And thofe ye see thies lordis be slayne *though*
Ne hope ye noghte for alle thaire payne *expect*
That ne we sall solance see; *solace*
By the werkynge of oure wondis sare *inflicting*
Of the paynes of helle fele we no mare
360 Bot hy to heven one heghe.' *hasten; high*

Thay fruschede in fersely; for Goddis sake *charged*
Grete strokes gane thay gyffe and take
With wondis werkande wyde. *inflicting everywhere*
Bot yitt the Sarasens with thay speris
365 Full ferre on bakke oure batelle berys *backwards; army pushes*
And knyghtis felde undir fete. *felled*

Walde never no Crystyn knyghte thethyn flee — *from there*
Thoghe that he wyste ryghte there to dye,[1]
I doo yowe wole to wytt. — *I let you know well*
Bot alle in fere thay endide righte thare — *together*
That sewede the Sarasenes sythen full sare — *pursued*
For lordis that levede the swete. — *lost their lives*

Thus fourty thowsande hafe thay slayne
Safe foure that were in handis tane, — *Except for four; taken prisoner*
Rowlande ande other three.
One was the gentill erle, Sir Olyvere;
Another was Sir Gawtere,
The Kyngis cosyns nere; — *Near kin to the King*
The thirde was Sir Gy of Burgoyne —
His fadir in the felde laye there slone; — *slain*
The soryare myghte he bee.
They ledde thies lordes into Melayne;
With that the Sowdane turnes agayne, — *Thereupon*
Righte gladde of his menyee. — *army*

[Secundus Passus: A] Fytt

To the Sowdane chambir many a man
Oure foure lordis ledd thay than
To rekken of theire arraye. — *evaluate; condition*
Thay ette and dranke and made tham glade,
Bot littill myrthe oure lordis hadde.
The Sowdane gane tham saye,
'Welcome be thow, Kynge of Fraunce;
The bytide a cely chaunce: — *befell; happy*
Thi lyfe was savede this daye.
The false lawes of Fraunce sall downn; — *beliefs; be overthrown*
The rewme sall leve one seynt Mahownn — *realm; believe in*
That alle the myghtyeste maye!' — *Who is most powerful*

And Rowlande answerde full gentilly,

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[1] *Though he knew he would die right there*

	'I ne rekke whethir I lyfe or dye,	*care*
	By God that awe this daye.	*governs*
400	Kynge of Fraunce ame I none,	
	Bot a cosyne ame I one	*relative*
	To Charlles, by my faye.	*faith*
	He will gyffe me golde and fee,	*fief*
	Castells ryche with towris heghe —	*high*
405	That lorde full wele he maye.	
	Bot Goddis forbode and the holy Trynytee	
	That ever Fraunce hethen were for mee	*heathen; on account of*
	And lese oure Crysten laye.	*lose; faith*
	'For sothe, thou Sowdane, trowe thou moste	*believe; must*
410	One the Fader and the Sone and the Holy Goste.	
	Thire thre are alle in one	
	That borne was of Marye free	
	Sythen for us dyede one a tree;	*Then*
	In other trowe we none.'[1]	
415	Thane loughe the Sowdane withe eghne full smale	*laughed; eyes*
	And saide, 'Ane hundrethe of youre goddis alle hale	
416a	Have I garte byrne in firre with bale	*had burned; (see note)*
	Sen firste I wanne this wone.	*dwelling*
	I sawe at none no more powstee	*power*
	Than att another rotyn tree	
420	One erthe, so mote I gone.[2]	
	'Goo, feche one of theire goddis in	
	And if he in this fire will byrne	
	Alle other sett att noghte.'	*consider worthless*
	Than furthe ther rane a Sarasene in that tyde	*time*
425	To a kyrke was there byside;	*church*
	A faire rode in he broghte	*crucifix*

[1] *We believe in no other [God]*

[2] *I saw from none of them any more power / than from some other rotten tree / [lying] on the ground, as I might walk*

	Fourmede ewenn als He gane blede.[1]	
	Oure Cristen knyghtis bygane thaire crede	
	And Rowland God bysoughte	
430	And saide, 'Thou that was borne of a may,	*maiden*
	Schewe thou, Lorde, Thi meracle this day,	*Show*
	That with Thi blode us boghte.'	*redeemed*
	They keste the rode into the fire	*crucifix*
	And layde brandis with mekill ire;	*wood; great wrath*
435	Fayne wolde thay garre hym birne.	*make it burn*
	The Sowdane saide, 'Now sall ye see	
	What myghte es in a rotyn tree	*rotten*
	That youre byleve es in.	*faith*
	I darre laye my lyfe full ryghte	
440	That of hymselfe he hase no myghte	*of itself it has*
	Owte of this fire to wyn.	*come*
	How solde he than helpe another man	*it*
	That for hymselfe no gyn ne kan,	*itself; plan*
	Nother crafte ne gyn?'	*skill; contrivance*
445	Thay caste one it full many a folde;	*many times*
	The rode laye still ay as it were colde.	*crucifix*
	No fire wolde in hym too.	*take hold in it*
	All if the crosse were makede of tree	*Although; wood*
	The fire yode owtt that come ther nee.	*went; near*
450	Than wexe the Sowdan woo.	*became; aggrieved*
	'And yif the devell,' he sayde, 'be hym within,	*Even if; it*
	He sall be brynt or ever I blyne';	*It; before; stop*
	Of hert he was full throo.	*furious*
	'Thies cursede wreches that are herein	
455	Has wethede thaire goddis that thai may not byrn;	*wet*
	I wote wele it es soo.'	*know*
	Than bromstone that wele walde birn	*brimstone*
	And pykke and terre mengede therin	*pitch; tar mixed*
	Thay slange in the fire full bolde.	*threw*

[1] *Made just as He bled (i.e., the carving depicted Christ bleeding on the Cross)*

460	Torches that were gude and grete	
	For to helpe that mekill hete	*great heat*
	Thay caste in many a folde.	*many times*
	The fire wexe owte at the laste;	*burned out*
	Oure knyghtis made thaire prayere faste	
465	To Criste that Judas solde.	
	The rode braste and gaffe a crake	*crash*
	That thamm thoghte that alle the byggynge brake	*building*
	That was within that holde.	*stronghold*
	A fire than fro the crosse gane frusche	*leap*
470	And in the Sarasene eghne it gaffe a dosche,	*eyes; blow*
	Ane element als it were,	
	That thay stode still als any stone.	
	Haundis nore fete myghte thay stirre none	*move*
	Bot drery wexe in chere;	*became sorrowful; countenance*
475	Thay wyste nother of gude ne ill.	*knew*
	Than Rowlande sais his felawes untill,	
	'Sirs, hy us alle hethyn in fere.	*hasten; from here together*
	This meracle es schewede thorowe Goddis grace,	*worked*
	For alle the Sarasenes in this place	
480	May nother see nore here.'	*hear*
	Sayde Sir Gy of Burgoyne, 'Yitt or I goo	*before*
	The Sowdane sall have a stroke or twoo	
	That glade sall hym no glee.'	*will bring him no joy*
	He ferkes owte with a fawchon	*strikes; sword*
485	And hittis the Sowdane one the crownn	
	Unto the girdyll welle nee.	*belt; near*
	Thay tuke the grete lordes with ire	
	And brynte tham in that bale fire;	
	Those doughty garte they dye[1]	
490	Bot sythen the Sarasenes crouned Sir Garsy,	
	Thay ofte sythes chaste oure chevalry —	*oftentimes*
	A bolde Sarasene was he.	

[1] *They caused those bold men to die*

Alle that was than in that place
Thay slewe clenly thorow Goddis grace, *deftly*
495 Oure worthy men and wyghte. *valorous*
And sythen owte at the gates they yede. *went*
Ilkone of tham fande a whitte stede *Each one*
Sadlit and redy dighte. *prepared*
Thay stirtt up on those stedis full steryn; *formidable*
500 Thay fande no man that tham wolde warne, *hinder*
Oure ferse men, felle in fighte. *valiant*
And als the cronekill yitt will saye,
Even to Fraunce thay tuke the waye; *straight*
To Paresche thay ryde full righte. *Paris; directly*

505 Bot yitt thay wolde noghte come att Paresche *to*
To thay had offerde to Seyne Denys *Until*
And wendis to that abbaye, *go*
And leves thaire stedis righte at the gate
And wightly in thay tuke the gate, *boldly; made their way*
510 Thaire prayers for to say.
And by thay hade thayre prayers made
Agayne thay come withowtten bade. *delay*
Thaire horse than were away
And alle the bellis that in that abbaye was
515 Range allone thorowe Goddis grace
Whils it was pryme of the day. *Until*

And thereby wiste those lordis of pryce *knew; worthy lords*
That the myghte of God and Seynt Denys
Had broghte tham thethyn away. *from there*
520 Thaire horse that so there come to handes
Was thorowe the prayere of Seynt Denys — *through*
Thus will the cronecle say.
Bischope Turpyne than come fro Paresche townn
To Seynt Denys with grete processiownn
525 For thiese lordes for to pray
That was in Lumbardy at the were. *war*
And when he sawe Rowlande there
He saide, 'Lordis, morne we may.'

Thay mervelde why the bellis so range
530 And the clergy lefte theire sange,
Thoghte ferly of that fare. *Thought that event wondrous*
Thay hade mervelle whate it myghte mene.
Als sone als the Byschoppe hade Rowlande sene,
To hym he went full yare. *eagerly*
535 Sayd, 'A, Rowlande, how fares Lumbardye
And all oure nobill chevallry
That thou hade with the thare?' *there*
'Certis, Sir Bischoppe, it is noghte to layne, *lie*
The Sarasenes hase oure gude men slayne;
540 Thou seese of tham na mare.'

The Bischop keste his staffe hym fro, *cast*
The myter of his hede also. *off*
'I sall never were the more, *wear*
Ne other habite for to bere, *clothes; wear*
545 Bot buske me bremly to the were *arm; fiercely; war*
And lerene one slyke a lore. *only such*
A, Mary mylde, whare was thi myght
That thou lete thi men thus to dede be dighte *death; put*
That wighte and worthy were? *valiant*
550 Art thou noghte halden of myghtis moste, *held to be*
Full conceyvede of the Holy Goste?
Me ferlys of thy fare.[1]

'Had thou noghte, Marye, yitt bene borne,
Ne had noghte oure gud men thus bene lorne. *lost*
555 The wyte is all in the. *blame*
Thay faughte holly in thy ryghte *entirely*
That thus with dole to dede es dyghte.
A Marie, how may this bee?'
The Bischoppe was so woo that stownnd *grieved; time*
560 He wolde noghte byde appon the grownnd *in that place*
A sakerynge for to see; *consecration [of the mass]*
Bot forthe he wente — his handis he wrange —

[1] *I wonder at your way of doing things*

And flote with Marye ever amange[1]
For the losse of oure menyee. *army*

565 Then come Kynge Charls appon pilgremage
Fro Paresche town with his baronage;
To Seynt Denys he went.
Bot when the Bischoppe mett with the Kynge,
He wolde noghte say 'Gud mornynge'
570 Ne ones his browes blenke. *eyebrows raise*
The Kynge had mervelle what that myght be;
Bot als sone als he Rowlande see,
Wyghtly to hym he went. *Quickly*
Be Rowlande had his tale tolde, *By [the time that]*
575 The Kynge myghte noghte a tere holde. *tear withhold*
For bale hym thoght he brynt. *sorrow*

'Allas,' he saide, 'cosyn syne, *(see note)*
Whare are alle the nobill knyghtis of myne
That ever to fighte were fayne?' *glad*
580 'Sir, bi God and by Sayne John,
The Sarasenes alle bot us hase slone — *slain*
It is no bote to layne. *use; lie*
Bot we were taken into holde;
Bot als that Criste hymselfe wolde
585 That we wan owte agayne, *made our way*
Thorowe the grace of God omnipotent
In his chambir or we went *before*
The Sowdane have we slayne.'

Genyonn saide, 'Lorde, by my rede, *advice*
590 All if the Sowdane thus be dede, *Although*
Thay will have another newe,
A more schrewe than was the tother, *cruel; the other*
Garcy that is his awenn brothir, *own*
That more barett will brewe. *trouble*
595 These landes of hym I rede ye halde *advise*

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[1] *And complained to Mary continuously*

	Or he will kindill cares full calde;	*stir up*
	Yhe trowe this tale for trewe.	*You*
	Or ells within thies monethes three	
	Als qwhitte of Fraunce sall yhe bee	*deprived; you*
600	Als yhe it never ne knewe.'	
	'Now Cristis malyson,' quod the Bischoppe, 'myghte he have	*curse*
	That Charls first this concell gaffe	*gave*
	And noghte bot it be righte.	*(see note)*
	To make homage to a Sarasene —	
605	Jesu kepe us fro that pyne	*affliction*
	And Marie His modir bryghte.	
	Bot at home, Sir Kynge, thou sall kepe nanne	
	Bot alle thy gud men with the tane	*take*
	That worthy are and wighte	*valiant*
610	Appon yone cursede Sarasenes for to were	*make war*
	And venge the one tham with dynt of spere	*yourself on them; thrust*
	That thus thi peris hase dyghte.	*peers; treated*
	And alle the clergy undirtake I	*pledge*
	Off alle Fraunce full sekerly	*surely*
615	Thay sall wende to that were.	*turn*
	Of the Pope I have pousté:	*power*
	Att my byddynge sall thay bee,	
	Bothe with schelde and spere.'	
	The Bischoppe sendis ferre and nere	
620	To monke, chanoun, preste and frere	*clergyman; friar*
	And badd tham graythe thaire gere	*prepare*
	And keste thaire [care] clene tham froo,	*from*
	Come helpe to feghte one Goddis foo,	*foe*
	All that a swerde may bere.	
625	The clergy grauntes alle ther-to,	*agree*
	Als doghety men of dede solde do	
	That worthy were and wyghte.	
	Be comen was wekes three	*In three weeks*
	Thare semblede a ful faire menyhé	*assembled; army*
630	In baneres burneschid bryghte.	*adorned*

A hundrethe thowsande were redy bownn — *prepared*
Of prestis that werede schaven crownn — *wore shaved heads*
And fresche men for to fighte. — *vigorous*
Thay lightede appon a lawnde so clere — *alighted*
635 Undir the Mownte Mowmartere: — *Montmartre*
It was a ful faire syghte.

With that the Bischoppe Turpyn come
And also a cardynall of Rome
With a full grete powere.
640 Thay semblede appon another syde,
Baners bett with mekill pryde, — *ornamented; great*
The clergy that was so clere. — *pure*
And appon thaire knees thay knelide down;
The Bischoppe gafe tham his benyson, — *blessing*
645 All hollyly in fere. — *solemnly together*
And thane sent he in to the Kynge
And badde hym forth his barouns brynge
And saide, 'My prestis are here.'

Bot yitt this false Genyonn
650 Conselde the Kynge ay with treson — *always*
That hymselfe solde duelle ther still: — *remain*
'And lette the Bischoppe wende his waye,
Doo at yone Sarasenes that he maye; — *to; what*
There sall he feghte his fill. — *fight*
655 And byde thiselfe in this citee.
Slayne in the felde gife that thou bee, — *if*
Alle Fraunce may like it full ill.'
And with his concelle and his fare — *demeanor*
Slyke concell he gaffe tham thare — *Such*
660 The Kynge grauntis thertill. — *thereto*

And forthe to the Bischoppe than sendis he,
And for thynge that ever myghte bee
He solde hym never beswyke. — *betray*
Bot take his nobill chevalrye
665 And wende forthe into Lumbardy,
'For I will kepe my ryke.' — *protect; kingdom*
The Bischoppe saide, 'By Goddes Tree,

Or that Charls doo so with mee
  Full ill it sall hym lyke!
670 I sall hym curse in myddis his face. *to his face*
What! sall he nowe with sory grace
  Become ane eretyke?' *heretic*

The Bischoppe leves his powere thare *leaves; forces*
And into the cité gane he fare *he went*
675 And the Cardenall with hym.
And when he come byfore the Kynge,
There was none other haylsynge *greeting*
  Bot stowte wordes and grym. *menacing*
He saide, 'Allas, Sir Charllyone,
680 That thou thus sone becomes a crayon! *coward*
  Me thynke thi body full dym. *sinful*
Alle the false councell that touches the crown *advisors; affect*
Here gyffe I tham Goddis malyson, *curse*
  Bothe in lyfe and lyme. *limb*

685 And Cristis malyson myghte he have *curse*
That fyrste to the that concell gaffe; *you; advice*
  And here I curse the, thou Kynge!
Because thou lyffes in eresye, *heresy*
Thou ne dare noghte fyghte one Goddes enemy.' *against*
690 And a buke forthe gane he brynge.
And the sertayne sothe als I yow telle *certain truth*
He dyde all that to cursynge felle. *pertained*
  This was no manere of lesynge. *lying*
'Nowe arte thou werre than any Sarasene, *worse*
695 Goddes awenn wedirwyne; *own enemy*
  Of sorowe now may thou synge.

'If Cristyndome loste bee
The wyte bese casten one the. *blame*
  Allas that thou was borne!
700 Criste for the sufferde mare dere, *grievously*
Sore wondede with a spere,
  And werede a crown of thorne;
And now thou dare noghte in the felde

For hym luke undir thy schelde,
705 I tell thi saule for lorne. *count; lost*
Men will deme aftir thi day *judge*
How falsely thou forsuke thi laye *faith*
And calle the Kynge of Skornne.'

Bot then Kyng Charls withowtten wene *hesitation*
710 At the Byschopp was so tene, *angry*
A fawchone hase he drawen. *sword*
And the Bischopp styrte than to a brande, *rushed; sword*
Hent it owt of a sqwyers hande *Seized*
Both with myghte and mayne
715 And braydes owte the blade bare. *draws*
Be myghtfull God than he sware: *By*
'If I wiste to be slayne,[1]
Charls, and thou touche mee, *if*
Thou fares noghte forthir fete thre
720 Or it be qwitt agayne.' *repaid*

Than grete lordes yede tham bytwene; *went*
The Kynge comande his knyghtis kene
The Bischopp for to taa. *take*
And the Bischopp said, 'Sirres, I will yow no scathe *I wish you no harm*
725 And bi my faythe it es grete wathe *danger*
Bot if ye late me gaa. *Unless; go*
For certis I will noghte taken bee
With nane that I now here see
Bot if yee firste me slaa. *slay*
730 And whilk of yow that touches me *whichever*
Withowtten harme passes noghte hee.'
Than with his horse come thay.

'Here,' he said, 'I avowe to mylde Marie
And to hir Sone, God Almyghttye,
735 I sall noghte leve the soo.
For we are halden with the righte,

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[1] *Even if I knew [I would] be slain*

Clerkes appon cursede men to fighte.
I calle the Goddes foo. *foe*
I sall gerre buske my batelle bownn *I shall have my army readied*
740 And halde the, Charls, within this townn:
Withowt thou sall noghte goo. *Outside*
Was never kynge that werede a crown
So foule rebuytede with relygyon; *rebuked*
Thou sall sone witt of woo. *know about sorrow*

745 'Goddes byddynge hast thou broken;
Thurghe the traytour speche spoken
Alle Cristendom walde thou schende. *destroy*
When Criste sent the a suerde untill, *sent a sword to you*
Thou myghte wele wiete it was His will *know*
750 That thiselfe solde thedir wende. *thither go*
Therefore I sall stroye the, *destroy you*
Byrne and breke downn thi cité
If thou be never so tene. *angry*
Then to yone Sarasenes wende sall I,
755 Fighte with tham whils I may dry, *endure*
In Goddes servyce to ende.'

The Bischopp and the Cardynere *Cardinal*
Appon thaire horses gatt bothe in fere; *together*
Owte of the townn thay rade
760 Also faste als thay myghte dryve *As . . . as*
To the grete batelle belyfe *quickly*
And buskede baners full brade. *raised*
They romede towarde Paresche town *advanced*
And thoghte to bete the cyté downe *batter*
765 With the powere that he hade.
(Slyke clerkes beris my benysone, *Such; have; blessing*
For trewere men of relygyoun
In erthe were never none made.)

Charls over the walles bihelde
770 And sawe the hoste come in the felde
And drawe towardes the town.
Bot than said Duke Naymes unto the Kynge:

'Sir, yonder comes us new tythynges
With baners buskede alle bown.
775 I rede ye praye yone clergy sesse — *advise; cease*
And aske the Bischoppe forgyfnesse
And absolucioun.
And graunt hym graythely for to goo — *quickly*
For to feghte appon Goddis foo, — *foe*
780 Or loste es thi renownn.'

'In faithe,' saide the Kynge, 'I graunt.' — *agree*
The Bischopp es gude and on evynhaunt — *(see note)*
With baners bryghte of hewe
Before tham a furlange and mare. — *furlong*
785 The Kynge undid his hede alle bare —[1]
The Bischopp wele hym knewe —
And appon his knees he knelid down
And tuke his absolucyoun.
Theire joye bygane to newe. — *be renewed*

790 The Kynge says: 'Haly fader free, — *generous*
This gilte I praye the forgyffe me
And I will wirke your will.
And with your clergye tournes agayne;
Riste and ryott yow by the water of Sayne, — *Rest; refresh yourselves; Seine*
795 Ay whils I come yow till.' — *until; to*
The Bischoppe grauntis hym in that tyde — *agrees with; time*
And pyghte pavylyons with mekill pryde, — *pitched pavilions*
With wyne and welthes at will. — *luxuries*
The Kynge into the citee went
800 And aftir his baronage he sent,
All forwardes to fulfill. — *agreements*

And by the thre wekes comen were, — *by [the time that]*
Charls had semblede a faire powere. — *assembled*
Hymselfe come all at hande — *came to him*
805 Erles, dukes and the Twelfe Duchepers, — *peers*

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[1] *The King bared his head by undoing his helmet*

Bothe barouns and bachelers,
  Knyghtis full hevenhande. *worthy*
Thay offerde alle at Seynt Denys
And grete lordes to armes chesse, *resolved upon*
810 And Charls tuke his hande
And thus romewes that grete powere. *leads off*
The levenynge of [thair] baners clere *flashing; bright*
  Lyghtenes all that lande.

[Tertius] Passus: A Fitt

Thus Charls with his chevalrye
815 Unto he come at Lumbardy *Until*
  In no place wolde he hone. *delay*
And to the Sarasenes was it tolde
That Charls make werre appon tham wolde
  To venge that are was done. *formerly*
820 The grete lordes than togedir spake:
'It is better that we Sir Garcy take
  And crownn hym the Sowdane sone.' *quickly*
Than sent thay to many an hethyn knyghte;
Thay badde that alle solde come that myghte,
825 By the heghten day at none. *eighteeenth; noon*

When thay were semblede sekerly, *assembled securely*
Thay crownnede the Sowdane Sir Garcy
  That solance was to see[ne]. *joy*
Sexty knyghtis of dyverse lande,
830 Ilkon sent hym sere presande *Each; different gift*
  To witt withowtten wene. *Indeed; hesitation*
Thay dressede on hym a dyademe *placed*
And made hym emperour, so hym seme, *as it seemed fitting for him*
  Those knyghtis that were kene.
835 Syne present hym with golde
And stones of vertu that was holde, *that were held to have power*
  The beste in erthe myghte bene.

The Kynge of Massedoyne lande *Macedonia*

	Sent the Sowdane a presande,	*gift*
840	The meryeste one molde:	*earth*
	Sexty maydyns faire of face	
	That cheffeste of his kyngdome was	
	And faireste appon folde;	*earth*
	Sexty fawconns faire of flyghte;	*falcons*
845	And sexti stedis noble and wyghte	*horses; swift*
	In everilke journay bolde	*every battle*
	And appon ilke a stede a knyghte sittande	*each horse*
	With a fawcon appon his hande	*falcon*
	And a cowpe full of golde;	*cup*
850	Sexty grewhondes unto the gamen;	*greyhounds; hunt*
	And sexti raches rynnande in samen,	*hunting dogs; together*
	The beste in erthe myghte bee.	
	He come hymselfe with this presande	*gift*
	And broghte in his awenn hande	*own*
855	That was worthe thiese three:	
	Invisebill, a full riche stone,	
	A safre, the beste that myghte be one	*sapphire; best one that might be*
	To seke alle Crystiantee.	*If all Christendom were searched*
	The Sowdane was full fayne of this	*glad*
860	And kyndely gan his cosyn kysse	
	With mekill solempnytee.	*much solemnity*
	When he his powere semblede hade,	
	A ryalle feste the Sowdan made	*feast*
	Of worthy men in wede.	*armor*
865	Of alle the damesels bryghte and schene	*beautiful*
	The Sowdane hade hymselfe I wene	*suppose*
	Thaire althere maydynhede.	*The maidenhead of them all*
	By tham ilkone he laye a nyghte	*each one*
	And sythen mariede hir unto a knyghte:	
870	Thay leffed one haythen lede.	
	So mekill luste of lechery	*much*
	Was amange that chevalry	
	That thay [myg]hte noghte wele spede.	*prosper*

To Charls now will I torne agayne
875 That passes over mountayne and playne;
At [Me]layne wolde he bee.
And when he come into that stede — *place*
Whereals the Cristyn men byfore weren dede,
Off Fraunce so grete plentee,
880 There heghe appon an hill, appon highte, — *high*
Turpyn garte an awtre dyghte — *had an altar prepared*
That alle the folke myghte see;
And off the Trynytee a messe he says — *of; mass*
And hertly for the saules he prayes
885 And the bodyes that thare gan dye.

The Bischopp sone gane hym revesche; — *put on his vestments*
In gude entent he says a messe — *mass*
In the name of God Almyghte.
He blyssede the awtere with his hande — *altar*
890 And a fayre oste of brede therappon he fande — *fairer host*
That ever he sawe with syghte. — *Than*
His chalesse was so full of wyne — *chalice*
There myghte no more hafe gone therin —
It come fro heven on highte. — *high*
895 He dide his messe forthe to the ende — *mass*
And thankede Gode that it hym sende
And Marie, His modir bryghte.

The Bischopp in his hert was fayne — *glad*
And thankede God with all his mayne — *strength*
900 And Marie, His modir free.
He tolde the hoste with lowde steven — *voice*
How brede and wyne was sent fro heven,
Fro God of moste poustee: — *power*
'And all that ever hase sene this syghte,
905 Yee are als clene of syn, I plyghte, — *pledge*
Als that day borne were yee.
And whoso endys in this felde — *dies; field*
In His byggynge sall he belde, — *dwelling; find shelter*
Evermore in blysse to bee.'

910 The Bischopp than keste of his abytte — *cast off; habit*
And aftir armours he askede tytte; — *immediately*
For egernesse he loughe. — *laughed*
A kirtill and a corsett fyne,
Therover he keste an acton syne — *(see note); then*
915 And it to hym he droughe
An hawbarke with a gesserante;
His gloves weren gude and avenaunte. — *beautiful*
And als blythe als birde one boughe
He tuke his helme and sythen his brande, — *sword*
920 Appon a stede, a spere in hande
Was grete and gud ynoghe. — *enough*

Sayse, 'I praye yow, all my cleregy here,
Assembles undire my banere;
The vawarde will I have. — *vanguard*
925 Charls and his knyghtis kene
Lete erles and barouns with hym bene,
Both sqwyers and knave — *page*
I beseke freschely for to fyghte
That the [le]wede men may se with syghte
930 And gud ensample have. — *example*
Standis [now baldly f]or youre trouthe;
Appon yo[ne Sarasen]es haves no rewthe. — *pity*
For golde in erthe, none save.'

Thus Ch[arls led]eth a faire menyhé — *army*
935 Bifo[re Mela]yne, that riche cité,
Braydes up baners yare. — *Raises; quickly*
And when the Sowdane hase tham sene,
He comandes his knyghtis kene
That thay solde make tham yare. — *should; ready*
940 And or he wolde passe owte of the townn,
He made his offerande to Mahownn —
The wars, leve Gode, tha fare.[1]
And sythen owt of that citee

[1] *God grant that they may fare the worse*

	Off heythen men an hugge menyhee	*army*
945	That semyde als breme als bare.	*fierce; boar*
	Sir Arabaunt, with ire and hete,	*hatred*
	A furlange bifore the batelle grete	*furlong; army*
	Come and askede fighte.	
	And byfore of oure folke had he slayne	
950	Bothe the lorde of Melayne	
	And many another knyght.	
	Than sayde the Bischopp, 'So mot I spede,	*prosper*
	He sall noghte ruysse hym of this dede	*boast*
	If I cane rede aryghte.'	
955	And or any knyght myght gete his gere	
	The Bischopp gart hym with a spere	*struck*
	Appon his tepet lighte.	*(see note)*
	Turpyn strake hym so sekerly	*surely*
	Thurgh the breste bone all plenerly	*completely*
960	A lange yerde and more	
	That dede he daschede to the grounde	*dead; fell*
	Grysely gronannde in that stownde,	*Terribly groaning; place*
	Woundede wonderly sore.	
	The Bischopp than lighte full apertly	*boldly*
965	And off he hewes his hede in hy	*cuts; instantly*
	That are was breme als bare.	*formerly; bold; boar*
	His horse unto the Cristen oste gan spede;	
	A sqwyere broghte agayne his stede	*back*
	And one he leppe righte thare.	
970	The Bischopp sqwyere in the place	
	Saw that the Kynge dede was	*(Kynge = Sir Arabaunt)*
	That had bene of grete powere.	
	His helme and his hawberke holde,	*dependable*
	Frette overe with rede golde,	*Adorned*
975	With stones of vertue dere	*rare power*
	His gowere pendande on the grounde —	*(see note)*
	It was worthe a thowsande pownde	
	Off rubys and safere.	*sapphires*

	He lowttede down, up wolde itt ta;	*bent; take*
980	The Bischopp bad hym fro it ga:	*go*
	'Go fonnge the another fere.	*get; companion*
	To wyn the golde thou arte a fole;	*fool*
	Thou bygynnes sone for to spoyle.	*[too] soon; despoil*
	Loo! yonder comes moo.	
985	Thou settis more by a littill golde	
	That thou seese lye appon the molde	*earth*
	Than to fighte one Goddes foo.	*against*
	Loo! yonder comes Sarasenes in the felde;	
	Go kill tham down undir thi schelde.	
990	Slyk [w]orchippes were gude to do.'	*honorable deeds*
	He tuke the pendande in his hande;	*pendant*
	The Bishoppe bett hym with his brande	
	[That] he keste it hym fro.	*So that; cast*
	With that come girdande Sir Darnadowse,	*charging*
995	A nobill knyghte and a chevallrouse,	*chivalrous*
	Prekande one a stede.	*riding*
	He was the chefe of Famagose,	
	A Sarasene that fayne wolde wyn lose,	*fame*
	And to the Cristen oste gan spede.	
1000	He bad sende owte Charlyon	
	If he dare come to wynn pardonn,	
	A bofett for to bede.	*blow; offer*
	He wolde noghte fighte bot with a kynge;	
	He calde hymselfe withowt lesynge	*lie*
1005	The chefe of hethyn thede.	*people*
	Then Kyng Charls tuke his spere hym to;	
	The Bischopp Turpyn and other mo	
	Prayede God solde hym spede.	
	'A, dere lorde,' said Rowlande in heghe,	
1010	'Late me fare to fighte for thee,	
	For Hym that one Rode gan blede.'	*Cross*
	Than Charls sweris by Saynt Paule:	
	'Sen ilke a man feghtis for his saule,	*each; soul*

I sall for myn do mede. *duty*
1015 Slayne in the felde gif that I bee,
Kynge off Fraunce here make I the,
With reghte the reme to lede.' *realm; lead*

Than withowtten any more habade *delay*
Theis two kynges togedir rade *rode*
1020 With ire and grete envy. *hatred*
And at the firste course that thay ranne
Thies kynges two with horse and manne
At the grounde bothe gun ly. *On; both lay*
Deliverly up sone bothe thay stirtt *Nimbly; leaped*
1025 And drewe thaire swerdis with noble hertt,
Withowtten noyse or cry.
Thay dalt so derfely with thaire brandes *struck; valiantly*
Thay hewe theire scheldis to thaire handis *cut*
In cantells hyngand by. *segments; hanging*

1030 So darfely bothe thaire dynttis thay driste *valiantly; blows; struck*
A littill while thay wolde tham riste; *rest*
The Sarasene prayede hym styntt. *stop*
'Nowe certis, sir,' he saide, 'me rewes of thee *I regret*
A Cristynn man that thou solde bee:
1035 Thou arte so stronge of dyntt.
Bot torne unto oure lawes and take tham to
And I sall gyffe the rewmes two, *realms*
And elles will thou harmes hentt.' *receive*
Bot the Bischoppe Turpyn than cryes on heghte,
1040 'A! Charles, thynk appon Marie brighte,
To whayme oure lufe es lentt. *whom; given*

'And if ever that thou hade any myghte,
Latt it nowe be sene in syghte
What pousté that thou hase. *power*
1045 Latte never oure Kynge with dynt of brande
B[e] slayne with yone Sarasene hande
Ne ende, Lady, in this place.
A [God] wote we sall be safe;

[Never] the lyk wolde we hafe
1050 Of oure comly Kynge of face.
[Thou Ma]kere bathe of son and see, *sun; sea*
[Pity t]he dole w[e d]ree for Thee *suffering; endure*
And graunte us of Thi grace.'

[Charls] saide, 'Sir Bischopp, nay,
1055 [Never sall I] forsake my lay.' *faith*
And togedir gan thay goo.
So stiffely aythere at othere strake;
Appon his helme Sir Charles brake
His nobill swerde in two.
1060 Bot than the Franche folke with nobill stevenn *voice*
Thay cry up unto the Kynge of Hevenn
And for thaire lorde were wo. *sorrowful*
The Sarasene was curtays in that fighte *courteous*
And lawses owt a knyfe full righte; *draws*
1065 His swerde he keste hym fro.

And Charles voydede his broken brande; *threw away*
Owte he hent a knyfe in hande. *took*
And samen thay wente full tytte. *together; quickly*
Thay daschede full darfely with thaire dynt. *struck; valiantly*
1070 Mighte no steryn stele tham stynt, *pain-inflicting; stop*
So styffely bothe thay smyte.
In sondre braste thay many a mayle; *Asunder burst; metal ring*
Thaire hawberghes thurgh force gan fayle. *hawberks*
To see had lordis delitte. *delight*
1075 Botte a felle stroke Sir Charls gafe hym one
Evyn at the breste bone;
That strake his hert gan blende. *reached*

The Sarasene was dede of that strake
And Charls gan this fende up take; *fiend*
1080 And with his awenn brande *own*
He broches hym so boldely *pierces*
That his hert blode sekerly *surely*
Rane to oure Kynges hande.

And thare he wane the Sarasene swerde
1085 And certis that with one the erthe
He conquered many a lande.
The Cristen folke were never so fayne;
Bot by the Kynge was horsede agayne — *by [the time that]*
The batells were doande. — *doing [i.e., being waged]*

1090 And hawberkes sone in schredis were schorne — *shreds; cut*
And beryns thorowe the bodys borne — *men; stabbed*
And many a Sarasene slayne.
Knyghtis one the bent bledis;
Many lay stekede undir stedis — *pierced*
1095 In gilten gere full gay[n]e; — *excellent*
Other with glafes were girde thurgh evyn. — *spears; pierced*
We may thanke Gode that is in heven
That lent us myghte and mayne. — *gave*
Thay sloughe tham downn with swerdis bright.
1100 The Cristynnd faughte in Goddis righte;
The Bischopp loughe for fayne. — *joy*

Bot, als the cronakill yitt will telle,
Ther come a Sarasene fers and felle — *ferocious*
And to the Bischoppe glade, — *went*
1105 And stroke hym righte thorowe the thee — *thigh*
And agayne to the hethen oste gane flee; — *back*
And Turpyn after hym rade.
The Bischoppe folouede hym so ferre
That the Sarasene hade the werre — *worse*
1110 For the maystrie that he [made].[1]
He stroke hym so in the Sowdane syghte,
He fande never man that after myghte
Hele the hurt [he had]e. — *Heal*

Bot they helde in the Bischoppe in that rowtte — *company*
1115 That he ne myghte noghte wyn owte — *get away*
And ther he [was doande]. — *fighting*

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[1] *For the outrage that he committed*

The Kynge of Massedoyne land with a spere
The Bischop fro his horse gane bere
  And sette [on hym his hande].
1120 The Sarasenes sware he solde be dede
And the Kynge sayde, 'Naye,' in that stede
  'For no Sarasene liffande.' *living*
And righte als thay solde oure Bischopp slo,
Thay smote the Kynge of Massaydoyne fro *slay*
1125 Clenly of his reghte hande.

Bot than Kynges men of Massaydoyne weren wo
When thay saughe thaire lorde was wondede soo
  And trowede he walde be dede. *believed*
Thay braydede owte swerdes full bryghte *drew*
1130 Agaynes the Sowdane folke to fighte
  Full styffely in that stede.
For that gane fyfetene thowsandes dy
Of the Sowdans chevalry,
  Laye bledande than full rede. *bleeding*
1135 And with that Turpyn gatt awaye
To Charls oste — full fayne were thay.
  A horse thay to hym lede.

Bot when the Bischoppe was horsede agayne,
Alle the cleregy weren full fayne
1140 And presede into the place.
So depe wondes that day thay dalt *gave*
That many on wyde opyn walt *many a one gaped wide*
  That wikkidly wondede was.
Thay sloughe so many an heythen kynge
1145 That at the laste thay tuke to flyinge *fleeing*
  Als God us gaffe the grace.
Many a Sarasene garte thay falle, *they made fall*
And Turpyn with his clergy alle
  Folowede faste one the chase.

1150 And Charls on the tother syde
Sloughe tham downn with wondis wyde;

The doughty garte thay dy.[1]
The Sowdane hymselfe so harde was stedde — *pressed*
That with ten thowsande away he fledde,
1155 And faste to Melayne gatt he.
The Cristen men chasede tham to the barres — *barriers*
And sloughe righte there fele folke and fresche, — *many*
All that there walde byde and bee.[2]
Bot than Kynge Charls tuke the playne
1160 And semblede all his folke agayne — *assembled*
To luke how beste myghte [the]. — *thrive*

Thay myghte noghte the cité wynn,
The strenghe of the Sarasenes that were within.
The Bischoppe said, 'I rede — *perceive*
1165 Of oure knyghtes in the felde
Es many woundede undir schelde
And also some are dede.
And yone Sarasenes full of tresone es. — *treachery*
There I concelle bothe more and lesse
1170 We stirre noghte of this stede
Ne or tomorne serche never a wounde — *Nor before; probe*
Bot luke than who may be sownde.
Lat Criste wirke.' And forthe he yede. — *went*

Here to a[c]ordes everilkon; — *agrees everyone*
1175 Lordes [haf] thaire horse tone — *taken*
And comen es the nyghte.
Fo[r alle] the Sarasenes there
Th[ay ne mygh]te no forthir fare
Bot bydis in brenys bryghte. — *abide; coats of mail*
1180 Ch[arles acordede] als thay rade. — *agreed; advised*
All [nyghte on]e the bent thay bade — *field; waited*
With standardes even up streghte.
The Kynge prayede the Bischoppe fre — *noble*
His wonde that he wolde late hym see — *wound*

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[1] *They made the bold [foe] die*

[2] *All who would stand fast there and be [slain]*

1185 That he hade tane in that fighte. *taken*

Bot the Bischoppe saide, 'A vowe to God make I here:
There sall no salve my wonde come nere
Ne no hose of my thee *from; thigh*
Ne mete ne drynke my hede come in,
1190 The cité of Melayne or we it wyn
Or ells therfore to dye.'
He garte dele his vetells then *had his rations divided*
Furthe amanges oure wonded men,
Bot no mete neghe wolde hee. *food; come near*
1195 Bot als so sore wondede als he was,
Knelande he his prayers mase *makes*
To Gode of moste pousté. *power*

Oure folke hade done so doughtily
That many of tham weren ful wery —
1200 So hade thay foghten than.
Bot one the morne the Cristen stode,
A thowsande, over theire fete in theire blode,
Of theire awenn wondes wane. *leaden-hued wounds*
Othere refreschynge noghte many hade
1205 Bot blody water of a slade *stream*
That thurghe the oste ran. *encampment*
The Sowdane sent a messangere
To Kynge Charles als ye may here;
And that sawe many a man.

1210 The messangere bare a wande *branch*
Of an olefe in his hande, *olive tree*
In takynnynge he come of pece. *As a token that*
And lowde he cryede appon Charls the Kynge
And saide he myghte his handis wrynge
1215 Appon lyfe if that he es: *If he is alive*
'For oure Sowdane hase by Mahownn sworne
That he salle mete hym here tomorne
With full prowde men in prese, *battle*
With fowrty thowsande of helmes bryghte:

1220	Was never yitt frekkere men to fighte	*bolder*
	Sene in hethynnesse.'	*Seen*
	And Charles ansuerde at that tide,	
	'In faythe I sall tham here habyde,	*await*
	Wode giffe that thay were.	*Mad if*
1225	If that he brynge alle the Sarasenes	
	That es alle heythynnesse within,	
	Hyne will I noghte fare.'	*Hence*
	The messangere agayne than rade	
	And they sett wache and still habade	*waited*
1230	Whills pryme was passede and mare.	*Until*
	Bot or the nonnee neghede nee,	*before noon approached*
	To tham than soughte a felle semblé	*Towards; moved a fierce army*
	With baners breme als bare.	
	Bot than Sir Charles spekes full gudely	
1235	To Rowlande his nevewe that stode hym by	*nephew*
	And said, 'Sir, so God the spede,	
	This day wirke thou manfully	
	With thi nobill chevalry	
	And of the Sarasenes hafe [no dre]de.	*fear*
1240	Thou sall see that I sall noghte be sparede;	
	Myselfe sall have the vawarde.	*vanguard*
	There Jesu [Crist the spe]de.'	
	The trumpetes trynes one righte than;	*strike up*
	To joyne so jolyly thay bygane,	
1245	Oure worthy men in wede.	*armor*
	Thay ruysschede samen with swilke a rake	*charged; such a rush*
	That many a Sarasene laye on his bake;	*back*
	And one the lawnde righte ther thay lay	*field*
	Full grisely gronande one the grete,	*groaning; ground*
1250	Stekyde undir stedis fete,	*Pierced*
	And liste nothynge of playe.	*took no pleasure from battle*
	So darfely than thay dynge tham downn	*valiantly; strike*
	Thay saide the myghte of saynt Mahownn	
	Was clenely all awaye.	

1255 'A! Mountjoye!' oure lordes gane crye,
And Charles with his chevalrye
Full freschely faughte that day. *eagerly*

They hewe of hethen hedis in hye. *cut off*
Oure Cristen men so sekirly *surely*
1260 Of tham hade littill drede
Bot brittenesse tham with brandis bare *cut to pieces*
And Sarasenes thurghe the schuldirs schare *cut*
That to the girdill it yode. *went*
Thay tuke none hede of gudes nore golde, *heed; goods*
1265 Lay never so mekill appon the molde, *ground*
Oure worthy men in wede, *armor*
Bot beris abake the batells brade; *force back the scattered battalions*
Fowrty thowsande in a slade *valley*
Laye stekede under stede.

1270 And so harde bystade was the Sowdane, *pressed*
Hymselfe with ten thowsande than
To Melayne tuke the gate. *made his way*
Oure Cristen knyghtis with thaire speres
The hyndirmaste fro thaire blonkes beres *rearmost; horses knock off*
1275 And chacede tham to the gate.
The owte barres hew thay downn *outer barriers*
And slewe hethynn kynges with crownn
And thaire powere therate. *forces*
To sawtte the cité sadly thay bygann; *assault; valiantly*
1280 Off Cristyn men many a cruelle man *fierce*
The hethyn wex all mate. *became; distraught*

With speris and with spryngaldes faste, *catapults*
With dartis kenely owte thay caste,
Bothe with myghte and mayne.
1285 With gownnes and with grete stones *engines of war*
Graythe gounnes stoppede those gones[1]
With peletes, us to payne. *missiles; harm*

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[1] *Men rapidly loaded those machines*

	Our Cristyn men that were of price	*worthy*
	Bendis up bowes of devyce	*(see note)*
1290	And bekirs tham agayne.	*shoot; back*
	Appon bothe the sydis so freschely thay fighte	
	That by it drewe unto the nyghte	
	Fele folke of Fraunce were slayne.	*Many*
	There were of oure clergy dede	
1295	And other lordes in that stede	
	Or thay of sawte walde sesse.	*assault; cease*
	By than thay sawe it was no bote to byde	*no use to abide*
	And fro the cité warde thay ryde,	*(see note)*
	Oure prynces provede in presse.	*battle*
1300	The Bischoppe es so woundede that tyde	
	With a spere thoroweowte the syde	
	That one his ribbis gan rese.	*struck against his ribs*
	Thurgh the schelde and the browe bare	*(see note)*
	A schaftemonde of his flesche he schare —	*(see note); cut off*
1305	Lordynnges, this es no lese.	*lie*
	He pullede it owte, keste it hym fro,	*cast*
	And weryde the handis that it come fro	*cursed*
	And that it lete forthe glyde.	
	The Sowdane over the wallis byhelde	
1310	And sawe the Cristen in the felde	
	Frowarde the cité ride.	*Away from*
	And appon Kynge Charls than cryes he:	
	'What Charls, thynkes now to flee?	
	I trowe the moste habyde.	*believe you must abide*
1315	I sall the mete tomorne in felde	*tomorrow*
	With fourty thowsand under schelde,	
	Sall fonde to felle thi pryde.'	*try; bring down*
	Says Charls, 'Thou false hethyn hownde,	
	Thou ne dare noghte byde appon the grounde.	
1320	Ther evermore worthe the woo;	*may sorrow come to you*
	Bot aythire of thies dayes ilyke	*alike*
	Hase thou stollen awaye lyke a tyke.	*cur*

The develle myghte with the goo!
That cité bot thou yelde to me — *unless; yield*
1325 And fully trowe and Cristyn be — *believe*
Appon one God and no moo,
In felde yif ever I see the mare
I sall by myghtfull God,' he sware,
'Hewe thi bakke in twoo.'

1330 Then of oure Cristen men in the felde
Many semblede under schelde
And some ware wondede sare. — *wounded*
Thay that were bothe hale and sownnde
Comforthed tham that were evyll wounde, — *wounded*
1335 So als Criste wolde it were.
The Kynge than of his helme tase — *off; takes*
And to the Bischoppe swythe he gase — *quickly; goes*
And sayde, 'Fadir, for Goddes are, — *mercy*
Thy woundes that thou walde late me see;
1340 If any surgeoun myghte helpe thee,
My comforthe ware the mare.'

'What! wenys thou, Charls,' he saide, 'that I faynte bee — *think*
For a spere was in my thee, — *thigh*
A glace thorowte my syde. — *small wound*
1345 Criste for me sufferde mare.
He askede no salve to His sare,
Ne no more sall I this tyde.
I sall never ette ne drynke
Ne with myn eghe slepe a wynke, — *eye*
1350 Whate bale als ever I byde, — *pain*
To yone cité yolden bee — *Until; yielded*
Or ells therfore in batelle dye —
The sothe is noghte to hyde.'

Als thay stode spekande of this thynge, — *speaking*
1355 To Charls come a newe tydynge
That blenkede all his blee. — *made pale; complexion*
Thay saide that one Sir Tretigon,

That was the Sowdane syster son
  And the best of Barbarye, *the Saracen world*
1360 'Certys, Charls, he comes at hande
With men of armes a sexty thowsande
  To strenghe with yone cité.' *reinforce*

[At least one leaf of the manuscript is lost at this point. In the missing lines, Charlemagne apparently tells one of his knights to ride to France for help.]

'Now sone, when I hafe foughten my fill,
I sall avise me gif that I will *consider*
1365 One thi message to wende.' *mission*

'Now Sir Bawdwyne, buske and make the bownn.' *prepare; ready*
He saide, 'Allas, thou Charelyoun,
  That ever I tuke thi fee; *became your vassal*
For yitt myselfe es saffe and sownnde,
1370 My body hole withowttyn wounde, *without*
  Als thou thiselfe may see.
I walde noghte, for all thi kyngdome,
That ever that worde unto France come
  I solde so feyntly flee. *should*
1375 Gett the a currour whare thou may; *courier*
For, by God that awe this day, *governs*
  Thou sall have none of mee.'

'A, Sir Ingelere, for a knyghte thou art kyde.' *renowned*
'Whi, Sir Charls, what walde thou that I dide?'
1380 'I pray the wende thi waye.'
'Bi Jesu Criste that sittis aboffe,
Me thynke thou kydde me littill luffe *show; love*
  When thou that worde wolde saye.
Bot me sall never bytyde that taynte. *befall*
1385 I hope thou wenys myn herte be feynte.[1]
  I say the schortly, naye.
That I sall never so fremdly flee, *unnaturally*

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[1] *I suppose you think my heart is faint*

God lett me yif it his wille bee
  Never habyde that daye.' *live to see*

1390 The Duke Berarde was wondede sare:
Thurgh the schelde into the body bare
  He was borne with a brande. *struck*
Of this message thay gun hym frayne, *they asked him*
Bot he hade no worde to speke agayne
1395 Bot grymly stude lukande.
Than Turpyn gan to Charls say,
'Here arte thou servede, bi my fay,
  Thou fayles of that thou fande. *try*
The Duke es woundede so wonder sare
1400 It ware grete syn to greve hym mare;
  Gude Sir, thou late hym stande.'

Thay prayede a banarett than of pryce, *asked then a worthy knight*
One Sir Barnarde of Parische, *Paris*
  For grete gyftis he wolde wende.
1405 And he saide, 'Lordynges, by my faye,
I ame over symple to yow to saye *of too low a degree*
  Whereever ye will me sende.
I aske ordir of knyghte thertill. *thereto*
Bot giffe your giftis where ye will;
1410 Elles ye be my frende.' *In another manner*
Thay made hym knyghte with full gud chere;
He tuke leve at the Twelve Duzepere,
  This curtayse knyghte and he[nde]. *noble*

He saide than: 'Have gud daye, Charls, in this stede,
1415 For thou sall never gyffe me brede
  Ne in thy burdynge say *joking*
If I be pore of golde and fee *property*
That I fro this grete journee *siege*
  Fayntly fledde away.'
1420 He rydis even to the gatis of Melayne
And there with Sarasenes was he slayne.
  He dide full wele that day.

And Charls for hym in hert was woo;
Bischoppe Turpyn and othere moo
1425 For his dede sore mournede thay. *death*

Thus have thay prayede everylkone,
Bot there wolde goo never one;
The symple thay bade none sende. *The people of the lower class*
The Bischoppe Turpyn cryede appon highte:
1430 'Sen ye are so frekke for to fighte *bold*
God of his myghte yow mende. *help*
Yitt are we ten thowsande here
That are yitt bothe hole and fere, *uninjured and strong*
That wele for kene are kende, *boldness; known*
1435 And of gude men that none will flee
To fourty thowsande or we dye
In the felde to make thaire ende.'

Bot als Turpyn lenys hym on his brande, *leans*
Over an hill he saw comande
1440 Ful many a brade banere.
The Duke of Bretayne, Sir Lyonelle, *Brittany*
That Charls was thare he herde telle
And had mystere of powere. *need of troops*
He broghte hym thirty thowsande fyne, *good men*
1445 Vetaylls gude and nobill engyne, *Provisions; machines of war*
This bolde with full blythe chere.
Than Turpyn gan to Charls say,
'I see a felle hoste, bi my fay, *fierce*
That sone will neghe us nere. *draw near to us*

1450 Yone are the Sarasenes mekill of mayne,
The full powere owt of Spayne,
That sone sall full ill spede.
For, by Hym that swelt on tree, *died*
This day no Sarasene sall I see
1455 Sall gerre me torne my stede.' *make me turn*
And in his hande he caughte a launce — *grasped*
'Have gud day, Charls, and grete wele Fraunce!' — *greet*

And agayne that hoste he yede. *went*
In fewter sone he keste his spere
1460 And thoghte the boldeste down to bere
That batelle walde hym bede. *Who would do battle with him*

So blody was that Bischoppis wede *armor*
His conysaunce ne yit his stede *heraldic device; rank*
The Bretons ne couthe noghte knawe.
1465 Bot als an harawde hym byhelde *herald*
He lukede up into his schelde
And sayde to alle one rawe, *all together*
'If Bischoppe Turpyn appon lyve be,
In faythe, lordynges, yone es he
1470 That ye se hedirwarde drawe.' *hither*
Thay ferlyde why he fewterde his spere. *marveled; leveled*
'A Mountjoye!' cryes one that he myghte here: *hear*
He was glade of that sawe. *saying*

The wardayne rydis hym agayne *(see note)*
1475 And said, 'Sir Bischoppe, for Goddis payne,
Who hase greved the?'
He tuke his spere owt of reste adownn
And gaffe tham alle his benysoun, *blessing*
The Bretons when he tham see.
1480 The Bischoppe tolde tham of his care;
Bot than the Bretons hertis were sare
For the dole oure oste gun dryee. *distress; endured*
A messangere went to telle the Kynge.
So fayne was Charles never of thynge
1485 With eghe that he gan see. *eye*

And or Turpyn myghte his tale halfe telle,
He sawe come hovande over a felle *rising; hill*
Many a brade banere,
Standardis grete with stalworthe men.
1490 Sexti thowsande wele myghte thay ken
In brenyes burnescht clere. *mail burnished bright*
Under the cante of an hille *slope*

Oure Bretons beldis and bydis stille — *take shelter*
  When thay wiste whate thay were.
1495 The Bischoppe saide, 'Bi Goddis myghte,
Thaym sall rewe or it be nyghte
  The tyme that thay come here.

'Go we to yone company
With "Mountjoye" baldly and tham ascrye; — *challenge*
1500 Late ther be no lettynge.' — *delay*
An hawrawde saide, 'To fewe are we — *herald*
To fighte with slyke a grete menyé;
  It is better wende to the Kynge.'
'A, sir, whare thay are sexti thowsande men,
1505 And if thay were mo bi thowsandis ten,
  [Bi] God that made all thynge,
The more powere that thay be
The more honour wyn sall we.
  We dowte noghte tham to dynge.' — *fear*

1510 The Bischoppe to the Kyng sent
And prayes hym to byde appon the bent, — *stay in the field*
  The cité for to kepe — *guard*
That there no Sarasene solde come owte
To thay had rekkenede with that rowte — *Until; dealt; host*
1515 Thay sawe come overe the depe.
Oure Bretonns kyndely comforthes he,
Sayse, 'Alle the Sarasenes ye yonder see,
  Thaire frendis sore may wepe.
We sall wirke tham wondis full wyde; — *inflict on*
1520 I hete tham be thaire lemans syde — *pledge; lovers'*
  Sowndely never sall thay slepe.'

For isschuynge owte of the cité
Kynge Charles with his menyé
  Helde his batelle still.
1525 Oure Bretons bolde that fresche come in
Thoghte that thay wolde wirchipp wyn — *honor*
  And gatt the cante of the hill. — *side*

The Sarasenes were so strange and stowte
Thay late no lede that thay wolde lowte, *acknowledged; people; bow to*
1530 Thay were so wykkede of w[ill].
Oure Bretonns dide so doughtyly
That lange or none sekerly
The Sarasenes lykede full ill.

Samen than strake that grete stowre
1535 Als it were aftire the none ane houre —
It was noghte mekills mare. *much*
Bot many a Sarasene in that stownde
Lay grysely gronande on the grownde,
Woundede wonderly sore.
1540 Bot there God will helpe ther es no lett; *where; hindering*
So stronge strokes thay one tham sett
With burneschede bladis bare *burnished*
That fourty thowsande Sarasenes kene
With brandis lay brettenyde one the grene: *cut to pieces*
1545 So bolde oure Bretonns were.

And to the cité the tother wolde have flede
And Rowlande thoghte he wolde tham stedde; *stop*
Ten thowsande was with hym.
And when he with the Sarasenes mett,
1550 Full grym strokes he over tham sett
With growndyn speris and grym. *sharpened*
Charles appon the tothere syde
Sloughe tham downn with woundis wyde
And made thaire dedis full dyme. *deaths; dismal*
1555 And thus thay chase tham here and thare
Als the howndes dose the hare
And refte tham lyfe and lyme. *deprived them of*

Rowlande rydis to Letygon
That was the Sowdane sister sone
1560 And stroke hym with a spere
That dede he daschede in the felde. *fell*
Helme ne hawberke he myghte none welde *use*

Ne never after none bere.
Of sexti thowsande, sothely to say,
1565 Passede never one qwyke away; *alive*
Bot evyll thay endide there.
The Cristenyde knelide down in that place
And thankede God that gaffe tham grace
So worthily tham to were. *make war*

1570 The false in the felde thus gun thay felle. *strike down*
The Kynge callede Sir Lyonelle
And avauncede hym full heghe. *advanced*
The Duke of Burgoyne bifore was dede.
He sessede hym in his stede[1]
1575 And gafe hym his doughter free.
And to the Bischoppe than swythe he gase *goes*
That wery and sore woundede was
And fastande dayes three.
Be that tyme he myghte note wele a worde owt-wyn. *By; utter*
1580 The teris rane over Charles chynn
That sorowe it was to see:

'And thou dy, than dare I saye *If*
The floure of presthode es awaye, *has passed away*
That ever hade schaven crownn. *shaved; head*
1585 For there ne is kynge ne cardynere *cardinal*
In Cristyndome may be thi pere *equal*
Ne man of religiownn.'
He will no man his wondes late see
Ne mete ne drynke none neghe hym ne, *come near*
1590 For prayer ne for pardownn.
Oure oste for the Bischoppe mournes alle
And graythes tham to Melayne walle *prepares to go*
With baners buskede bownn. *raised*

New vetailles the Bretons broghte than,

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[1] *He [the King] gave him [Sir Lyonelle] his [the Duke of Burgoyne's] property in his place*

1595 That refresschede many of oure men,
Of brede, brawne and wynne. *meat*
A nobill hurdas ther was graythede *(see note); prepared*
And baners to the walles displayede
And bendis up thaire engyne. *aim*

[The manuscript ends at this point.]

Notes

A note on the text: There are places where the manuscript is illegible. Herrtage reconstructed those portions in his edition and I have generally accepted his reconstructions (which are indicated by brackets). There are some places where Herrtage apparently could make out letters that are no longer visible in the manuscript. In this case, I have left his reading on the assumption that the manuscript may have deteriorated in the intervening period.

19 Here, as often in this text, 'gon' or the alternate spelling 'gan' (past tense of 'gin,' ['to begin']) is used as an auxiliary (like 'did' in more modern times) indicating the past tense of a verb. Thus 'gon he wyn' means 'he conquered.'

25 Herrtage places the 'r' in 'ther' between brackets, but it is clearly present in the manuscript.

121 I have emended 'resteyne' to 'reteyne' (as the MED suggests).

168 Herrtage suggests emending 'worde' to 'wone' to achieve something nearer a rhyme. Mills also so emends.

169 Ganelon is the traditional traitor of the Charlemagne romances. In *The Song of Roland* his hatred for Roland leads him to betray Charlemagne's rear guard at Roncevalles.

315 I follow Herrtage and Mills in emending the ms. reading 'age' to 'elde,' which restores the rhyme.

358 I have emended 'Bot' (which makes no sense here) to 'By.'

364 Mills emends 'thay' to 'thayr.'

384–85 'Passus' and 'fitt' (which is an English translation of the Latin term) refer to structural units within a poem. The divisions into passus or fitts are not regularly marked in the manuscript. At this point the manuscript reads 'Prymus passus the first Fytt.' This probably marks the end of the first passus and the beginning of the second. The passus beginning at line 814 is indicated in the manuscript without a number.

395 'Mahownn' is Mohammed, whom medieval Christians believed was worshipped by the Saracens as a deity.

406 'Goddis' is the singular possessive form depending on the noun 'forbode' (a forbidding or prohibition). 'Goddis forbode' = 'God forbid!'

408 I follow Mills in emending ms. 'lawe' to 'laye,' which restores the rhyme.

416a Metrically this is an extra line in the stanza. Mills sees the line as another example of the 'triplets' which are used instead of couplets 'quite often in the Thornton text of *Isumbras*' (p. 193). But the line remains an aberration in the metrical pattern of *The Sege of Melayne*. A 'bale-fire' is a blazing pile or heap kindled to consume something.

420 'So mote I gone' is one of those near meaningless expressions often used to fill out a line in the Middle English metrical romances.

471 The reference is to the elements or four substances (earth, air, fire, and water) which were believed to make up all material things.

503 I follow Mills in emending 'Eeven' to 'Even.'

506 On St. Denis, see the note to *Sowdone of Babylone*, line 26.

516 'Prime' is the canonical hour (a fixed part of the Divine Office to be sung or recited at a specific time) for the first hour of the day (6 a.m. or sunrise).

577 Herrtage notes that 'syne' must be a corrupt reading 'but the true reading is not clear.' Mills emends to 'fyne.' 'Syne' must be a form of 'son,' the unusual spelling being for the sake of rhyme. It is perfectly appropriate for Charlemagne to refer to his nephew as the son of his relative.

603 If we translate 'bot' as 'but' in this line, 'it' must refer to the cursing of the advisor, in which case the line translates: 'and undoubtedly it [cursing him] is right.' Another (though less likely) possibility is to read 'bot' as a form of 'boute' (meaning 'about') and translate: 'and nothing about it [the advice] is right.'

622 I follow Herrtage and Mills in adding 'care' to this line.

704 Here and again in line 989 the phrase 'under thy schelde' means something like 'in battle.'

773–74 If we translate the lines literally, line 774 must be taken as an almost meaningless metrical filler. It only makes sense if we extend the meaning of 'tythynges' beyond the 'event' or 'news' (the literal meaning) to those people who represent the new event referred to. They could come 'with banners raised.'

782 Herrtage notes that 'on evynhaunt' is probably 'a corruption of *avenaunt*' (meaning 'gracious' or 'noble' here) which appears in different forms in lines 807 and 917. Mills emends the ms. by deleting 'on.'

856 This line presents some difficulty and may be corrupt. Herrtage admits in a note 'I do not exactly understand this line'; and Mills glosses it only with a question mark. As it stands it seems to suggest that the sapphire presented to the Sultan is invisible.

870 The word 'lede' normally means 'people'; here it must mean something like 'the customs of a people.' Thus the line means: 'They believed in heathen customs.'

878 'Whereals' is used here in the sense of 'where.'

913–16 A 'kirtle' is 'a man's tunic or coat which reached to the knees'; a 'corset' refers here to the 'corslet' which is 'a piece of defensive armor covering the body'; an 'acton' is 'a stuffed jacket or jerkin, at first of quilted cotton worn under the mail; also, in later times, a jacket of leather or other material plated with mail'; a 'hauberk' is a coat of mail; a 'jazerant' or 'jesserant' is 'a light coat of armor composed of splints or small plates of metal riveted to each other or to a lining of some stout material.' (Definitions are from the OED.)

935 In this line I follow Mills's reconstruction rather than Herrtage's ('For[th to Mela]yne'). The line in the manuscript clearly begins with a *B*.

957 The OED defines 'tepet' (see under 'tippet,' where this line is cited) as 'camail,' which is 'a piece of chain-mail armour attached to the basinet or head-piece, and protecting the neck and shoulders.'

976 A 'gowere pendande' is a 'pendant attached to a coat of mail' (MED).

997 'Famagose' is Famagusta on Cypress.

1163 There seems to be a connective missing at the beginning of this line (e.g., 'for'). Mills translates 'Because of the strength of its Saracen garrison.'

1233 In this line 'baners' must refer to the men assembled around the standard or the phrase 'breme als bare' would be a totally meaningless filler.

1286 Herrtage takes 'gones' as an alternate form of 'gomes' (men). Mills emends to 'gomes.'

1289 Herrtage explains 'bowes of devyce' as 'cross-bows worked with a rack or winch.'

1298 The suffix '-warde' is here separated from 'fro' (= 'from'). Thus the line translates 'And they ride away from the city.' (Compare this line to line 1311: 'Frowarde the cité ride.')

1303 The word 'browe' does not fit the context since the spear wounded him in the side. Perhaps the correct reading is something like 'brawne.' Mills emends the word to 'browne' and translates the line: 'Through the tough skin and unprotected flesh.'

1304 A 'schaftemonde' is 'the distance from the end of the extended thumb to the opposite side of the hand, used as a measure = about 6 inches' (OED).

1388 I follow Mills in emending ms. 'wills' to 'wille.'

1402 The definitions of 'baneret' in the MED and the OED indicate that the term is generally applied to a high order of knighthood. However, the context here makes it clear that Sir Barnarde is a standard bearer who has not yet achieved such distinction. He calls himself 'over symple' to refuse the task, as some other knights have, and asks to have the order of knighthood conferred on him for agreeing to deliver the message.

1459 A 'fewter' is a support for a lance on a knight's saddle.

1474 A 'warden' is one in charge of a division of an army.

1536 Mills emends 'mekills' to 'mekille.'

1597 A 'hurdas' is a temporary rampart used for assault.

The Tale of Ralph the Collier

Introduction

The story of *Rauf Coilyear* has come down to us in an edition printed in 1572. No manuscript survives, and only one copy (owned by the National Library of Scotland) of this earliest printed text exists. The poem is a late product of the movement known as the Alliterative Revival, a revival — or more likely the continuation of a tradition — of the use of alliterative verse that extends back to the Old English period. The poems written in alliterative verse employ alliteration as a controlling metrical device. As in Old English, lines are divided into two half-lines linked by similar initial sounds. Middle English alliterative verse does not follow strictly the rules of the Anglo-Saxon, but the basic metrical principles survive. While examples of Middle English alliterative verse can be found from the twelfth century on (Layamon's *Brut* being the prime example), from the middle of the fourteenth century well into the fifteenth there is once again a widespread use of alliterative verse. Some of the greatest Middle English poems, including *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Piers Plowman*, and the alliterative *Morte Arthure* are products of this revival.

The romance was written in the latter part of the fifteenth century in a Scottish dialect and exhibits many of the characteristic traits of that dialect. In the present tense, both the third person singular and the third person plural are indicated by the ending *-is* (as in 'buik sayis'; 'he rydis'; 'menstrallis playis'; and 'men that counteris'). The present participle is indicated by *-and* rather than *-ing* (as in 'lykand' and 'walkand'). The pronoun 'she' appears as 'scho'; and the third person plural pronoun has forms in *th* (as in 'them,' where southern and central dialects would use 'hem'). A number of other spellings and forms found in the poem are also typical of the Scottish dialect. The Old English long *a*, which becomes *o* in central and southern dialects, remains as *a* (as in 'hame' for 'home'; 'ga' for 'go'; and 'sa' for 'so'). The *wh* of other dialects appears as *quh* (as in 'quhair' for 'where'; 'quhat' for 'what'; and 'quhen' for 'when'). The *sh* of more southern dialects appears as *s* in 'sall' (for 'shall'), 'suld' (for 'should') and 'salbe' for ('shall be'). Other typically Scottish forms include 'schir' for 'sir' and 'till' (occasionally) for 'to.'

Rauf Coilyear is written in the thirteen-line stanza used in such other alliterative poems as *Golagros and Gawaine* and the *Awntyrs of Arthure*. The stanza generally contains nine long (four-stress) lines, each of which is governed by alliteration, and four shorter lines which may or may not alliterate. The stanza also has a rhyme scheme of *abababababcdddc*. As in all alliterative verse, there is considerable use of such formulaic phrases as 'proudest in pane' or 'with birny and brand,' which are used repeatedly within alliterative poetry to satisfy the metrical/alliterative needs of a portion of a line. Despite the traditional nature of these recurring phrases, the poet has — as Elizabeth Walsh observes in her article on the poem — used alliterative formulas in such a way that they 'can be said to have some significance in the poem as elements of characterisation and/or as relating to thematic content' (p. 17).

The poet demonstrates his craftsmanship not only as an alliterative poet but also as the author of a Charlemagne romance. For here too, he has made use of the traditional with great skill. *Rauf Coilyear* is one of those Middle English Charlemagne poems known as 'detached romances.' That is, it belongs neither to the Ferumbras nor the Otuel group. There is, in fact, no known source for this poem, though there are analogues to each of the two parts. As a number of critics have pointed out, the first part of the poem is a version of the king-in-disguise motif common in folklore. In England the motif goes back to a story told about Alfred the Great. (In her edition, Walsh refers to many other analogous stories.) The second part of the poem parodies, as Barron has observed, 'the Christian-Muslim combats of *Otuel* and *Firumbras*' (p. 181). These two parts are woven together only loosely by a developing line of action. More important is the thematic unity that links the two parts.

The first part of the poem treats the rough but sincere hospitality Charlemagne receives from the simple collier. The treatment is much rougher than that to which the King is accustomed. When Rauf and Charlemagne arrive at Rauf's house and the guest stands aside to let his host enter first, Rauf accuses him of being discourteous and shoves him into the house, telling the King that he ought to 'mak me lord of my awin' (line 128). Later, after another breach of courtesy, Rauf strikes the King and instructs him to do as Rauf tells him because it is his (Rauf's) house. The King's reactions show that he realizes he should have recognized the right of a man to rule in his own home.

Charlemagne's failure, initially, to recognize Rauf's preeminence is matched by a lack of recognition on Rauf's part. He does not recognize (in the two senses of the word) the King. He does not know what his monarch looks like and so unquestioningly accepts a pseudonym as his real name, even when Rauf's wife has difficulty in believing that their grand guest is 'Wymond of the Wardrop'; and Rauf fails to observe the King's laws, at least as regards hunting in the royal forests. Rauf's lack of

knowledge goes even further than not knowing what the King looks like. When invited to bring a load of coal for sale at court, Rauf admits that he has 'na knawledge quhair the court lyis' (line 246).

By having Rauf come to the court, the King begins his knightly education by having him recognize — in both senses — his ruler. But Charlemagne also wants Rauf to prove himself, to win his shoes. As Rauf rides out in quest of adventure, his awareness is again deficient. He cannot distinguish between the Saracen Sir Magog and Sir Roland whom he has previously challenged — even though Magog rides a camel instead of a horse. Upon learning that Magog is a Saracen, Rauf is overjoyed to be fighting for the faith.

When Roland rides up and interrupts the battle, he immediately recognizes Magog as an infidel and even comments on this recognition: 'Thow art ane Sarasine, I se be my sicht' (line 871). Instead of wishing to fight Magog, Roland wants to convert him. Just as Rauf was taught to recognize a king in two senses, so he is taught to recognize a Saracen on two levels: first physically and then as a religiously errant soul to be saved. Roland shows Rauf that victory over Magog's false faith is more important than victory over his person.

But even more transpires in this scene. When Roland interrupts the combatants and encourages Magog to convert, the Saracen refuses and wants to continue fighting. Roland points out the foolishness of this course of action and after being threatened again tells Magog that it is folly to enjoy worldly wealth now and to spend eternity in hell. But he seems to contradict himself when he offers the Saracen profit and pardon if he will convert. At least he is not wholly aware of the meaning of the words he has just spoken (in lines 918–20). Thus Roland, like Rauf, needs to be made more aware of the true values his knighthood and religion stand for. Both can learn a lesson from the reaction of the Saracen who doesn't care about riches but says that if 'thy God be sa gude as I heir the say, / I will forsaik Mahoun' (lines 937–38). Magog thus becomes another agent in the education of a knight; and the tested Roland can learn from him as well as the untried Rauf can. Magog's reply makes (or should make) both of them aware of the distinction between a faith based on personal gain and a faith based on love of God.

The author uses the debate surrounding the conversion as both a satiric comment on Roland's failure in religious awareness and as the final phase of instruction for Rauf. The author has skillfully manipulated the Christian-Saracen conflict so that the verbal contest becomes more important than the martial.

The two parts of the poem are thus linked by the theme of recognition or awareness — on the political, religious and personal levels that must combine to make one a good knight or, we might say, a good person. (The blurring of the distinction is

significant in this late poem where the heroic conventions of earlier romance and certainly of the *chansons de gestes* are taken with a grain of salt.) The theme is evident from the very beginning of the poem: the storm in which Charlemagne loses his way is a perfect symbol for the lack of awareness that must be dispelled in the course of the romance.

Though the author makes a serious point, he does so through a comic tale. It would be a mistake to read *Rauf Coilyear* without recognizing the humor involved in the harboring of a king by a simple collier. Many incidents contribute to this humor — from the slapstick buffeting of Charlemagne, the emperor instructed by a collier, to Roland's mild annoyance at being sent out to watch the lonely road on a day that is supposed to be a holiday. The elements of parody contribute to the humor. The traditional fight with the Saracen turns into a religious debate. The King's being separated from his followers has echoes of the separation of Charlemagne from his troops and his abandonment due to the treachery of Ganelon in *The Sowdone of Babylone*. This lighthearted use of the Charlemagne material makes *Rauf Coilyear* perhaps the best and certainly the most entertaining of the Middle English Charlemagne romances.

Manuscript

No manuscript survives. All modern editions are based on the 1572 edition of Robert Lekpreuik, reproduced in a facsimile edition: *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear: Printed by Robert Lekpreuik at St. Andrews in 1572: A Facsimile of the Only Known Copy*. Keppie Facsimiles No. 1. Ed. W. Beattie. Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, 1966.

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The Taill of Rauf Coilyear

	In the cheiftyme of Charlis, that chosin chiftane,	*reign; Charlemagne*
	Thair fell ane ferlyfull flan within thay fellis wyde [1]	
	Quhair empreouris and erlis and uther mony ane	*Where; many another*
	Turnit fra Sanct Thomas befoir the Yule tyde.	
5	Thay past unto Paris, thay proudest in pane,	*attire*
	With mony prelatis and princis that was of mekle pryde.	*great*
	All thay went with the King to his worthy wane;	*dwelling*
	Ovir the feildis sa fair thay fure be his syde.	*rode*
	All the worthiest went in the morning —	
10	Baith dukis and duchepeiris,	*(see note)*
	Barrounis and bacheleiris.	*young knights*
	Mony stout man steiris	*proud; proceeds*
	Of town with the King.	*From*
	And as that ryall raid ovir the rude mure,	*king; rough moor*
15	Him betyde ane tempest that tyme, hard I tell.	*befell; heard*
	The wind blew out of the eist stiflie and sture,	*east fiercely; strong*
	The deip durandlie draif in mony deip dell;	*continuously*
	Sa feirslie fra the firmament, sa fellounlie it fure,	*wildly; came on*
	Thair micht na folk hald na fute on the heich fell.	*hold footing; high hill*
20	In point thay war to parische, thay proudest men and pure;	*perish*
	In thay wickit wedderis thair wist nane to dwell. [2]	
	Amang thay myrk montanis sa madlie thay mer,	*dark; were confused*
	Be it was pryme of the day,	*By [the time that]; 6 a.m.*
	Sa wonder hard fure thay	*fared*
25	That ilk ane tuik ane seir way,	*each one took; different*
	And sperpellit full fer.	*were dispersed; far*

---

[1] *There occurred a fearful storm in those wide hills*

[2] *In that severe storm no one knew where to stay*

	Ithand wedderis of the eist draif on sa fast,	*Constant violent winds; drove*
	It all to-blaisterit and blew that thairin baid.	*blasted; remained*
	Be thay disseverit sindrie, midmorne was past;	*By [the time]; were separated*
30	Thair wist na knicht of the court quhat way the King raid.	*knew; what; rode*
	He saw thair was na better bot God at the last.	
	His steid aganis the storme staluartlie straid;	*horse; strode*
	He cachit fra the court, sic was his awin cast,	*wanders; such; own fate*
	Quhair na body was him about, be five mylis braid.	*Where*
35	In thay montanis, i-wis, he wox all will, [1]	
	In wickit wedderis and wicht,	*severe winds; tempestuous*
	Amang thay montanis on hicht:	
	Be that it drew to the nicht	*By [the time]*
	The King lykit ill.	*was displeased*
40	Evill lykand was the Kyng it nichtit him sa lait,	*Displeased; became night*
	And he na harberie had for his behufe;	*shelter; need*
	Sa come thair ane cant carll chachand the gait, [2]	
	With ane capill and twa creillis cuplit abufe.	*horse; baskets joined*
	The King carpit to the carll withouten debait, [3]	
45	'Schir, tell my thy richt name, for the Rude lufe.'	*real; for love of the Cross*
	He sayis, 'Men callis me Rauf Coilyear, as I weill wait;	*know*
	I leid my life in this land with mekle unrufe,	*much trouble*
	Baith tyde and time, in all my travale;	*time; labor*
	Hine ovir sevin mylis I dwell,	*From here*
50	And leidis coilis to sell.	*carry coal*
	Sen thow speris, I the tell	*Since you ask I tell you*
	All the suith hale.'	*whole truth*
	'Sa mot I thrife,' said the King, 'I speir for nane ill;	*ask; hostile reason*
	Thow semis ane nobill fallow, thy answer is sa fyne.'	
55	'Forsuith,' said the Coilyear, 'traist quhen thow will,	*trust whenever*

---

[1] *In those mountains, in fact, he became completely lost*

[2] *There came a lively countryman making his way*

[3] *The king spoke to the countryman in a friendly manner*

For I trow and it be nocht swa, sum part salbe thyne.' [1]
'Mary, God forbid!' said the King, 'that war bot lytill skill; *sense*
Baith myself and my hors is reddy for to tyne. *perish*
I pray the, bring me to sum rest, the weddir is sa schill, *cold*
60 For I defend that we fall in ony fechtine. *forbid; quarreling*
I had mekill mair nait, sum freindschip to find; *much more use*
And gif thow can better than I, *if*
For the name of Sanct July, *Julian*
Thow bring me to sum harbery, *shelter*
65 And leif me not behind!' *leave*

'I wait na worthie harberie heir neirhand *know; shelter; nearby*
For to serve sic ane man as me think the: *such; as it seems to me you are*
Nane bot mine awin hous, maist in this land, *own; greatest*
Fer furth in the forest, amang the fellis hie. *Far; high hills*
70 With thy thow wald be payit of sic as thow fand, [2]
Forsuith thow suld be welcum to pas hame with me *go home*
Or ony uther gude fallow that I heir fand *found*
Walkand will of his way, as me think the; *lost*
For the wedderis ar sa fell, that fallis on the feild.' *winds; violent*
75 The King was blyth quhair he raid *glad; rode*
Of the grant that he had maid, *offer*
Sayand, with hart glaid,
'Schir, God yow foryeild!' *repay*

'Na! thank me not ovir airlie, for dreid that we threip, *too early; quarrel*
80 For I have servit the yit of lytill thing to ruse; *served you; praise*
For nouther hes thow had of me fyre, drink, nor meit, *have; food*
Nor nane uther eismentis for travellouris behuse. *amenities; benefit*
Bot, micht we bring this harberie this nicht weill to heip, [3]
That we micht with ressoun baith thus excuse,

---

[1] *For I believe that if it is not so [that you find me a noble fellow], some part [of the blame] will be yours*

[2] *Provided that you'll be pleased with such as you found [there]*

[3] *But if we might bring this lodging tonight to a good conclusion*

85	Tomorne, on the morning, quhen thow sall on leip, [1]	
	Pryse at the parting how that thow dois;	*Appraise*
	For first to lofe and syne to lak, [2] Peter! it is schame.'	
	The King said, 'In gud fay,	*faith*
	Schir, it is suith that ye say.'	*truth*
90	Into sic talk fell thay,	*such*
	Quhill thay war neir hame.	*Until; near*
	To the Coilyearis hous baith, or thay wald blin,	*before; stop*
	The carll had cunning weill quhair the gait lay:	*knowledge; way*
	'Undo the dure belive! Dame, art thow in?	*door; quickly*
95	Quhy devill makis thow na dule for this evill day?	*Why; complaint*
	For my gaist and I baith cheveris with the chin.	*guest; shiver*
	Sa fell ane wedder feld I never, be my gude fay!'	*fierce a storm felt; faith*
	The gude wyfe glaid with the gle to begin —	*proceeded; entertainment*
	For durst scho never sit summoundis that scho hard him say — [3]	
100	The carll was wantoun of word, and wox wonder wraith.	*rough; became; angry*
	All abaisit for blame,	*dismayed*
	To the dure went our dame,	*door*
	Scho said, 'Schir, ye ar welcome hame,	*home*
	And your gaist baith.'	*guest*
105	'Dame, I have deir coft all this dayis hyre,	*dearly bought; wages*
	In wickit wedderis and weit walkand full will.	*wet; astray*
	Dame, kyith I am cummin hame, and kendill on ane fyre;	*recognize; kindle*
	I trow our gaist be the gait hes farne als ill. [4]	
	Ane ryall, rufe, het fyre war my desyre,	*magnificent, strong, hot fire*
110	To fair the better, for his saik, gif we micht win thairtill.	*attain thereto*
	Knap doun capounis of the best, but in the byre — [5]	
	Heir is bot hamelie fair — do belive, Gill.'	*simple fare; act quickly*

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[1] *Tomorrow, in the morning, when you shall mount up*

[2] *First to praise and then to find fault*

[3] *For she never dared to ignore orders that she heard him give*

[4] *I believe our guest has had just as hard a time on the road*

[5] *Strike down the best capons, out in the barn*

	Twa cant knaifis of his awin haistelie he bad:	*lively servants; own*
	'The ane of you my capill ta,	*horse take*
115	The uther his coursour alswa;	*steed also*
	To the stabill swyith ye ga.'	*quickly; go*
	Than was the King glaid.	*glad*
	The Coilyear gudlie in feir tuke him be the hand	*graciously together*
	And put him befoir him, as ressoun had bene;	*reasonable*
120	Quhen thay come to the dure, the King begouth to stand,	*When; began to wait*
	To put the Coilyear in befoir maid him to mene. [1]	
	He said, 'Thow art uncourtes; that sall I warrand!'	*[He = Rauf]; shall; warrant*
	He tyt the King be the nek, twa part in tene,	*seized; angrily*
	'Gif thow at bidding suld be boun or obeysand,	*If; command; ready; obedient*
125	And gif thow of courtasie couth, thow hes forget it clene!	*if; knew*
	Now is anis,' said the Coilyear, 'kynd aucht to creip,	*once; nature; crawl*
	Sen ellis thow art unknawin,	*otherwise; uncouth*
	To mak me lord of my awin;	*own*
	Sa mot I thrive, I am thrawin;	*angry*
130	Begin we to threip.'	*quarrel*
	Than benwart thay yeid, quhair brandis was bricht,	*inside; went; logs*
	To ane bricht byrnand fyre, as the carll bad.	
	He callit on Gyliane his wyfe, thair supper to dicht;	*prepare*
	'Of the best that thair is, help that we had,	
	. . . . .	
135	Eftir ane evill day to have ane mirrie nicht,	
	For sa troublit with stormis was I never stad.	*beset*
	Of ilk airt of the eist sa laithly it laid,	*each direction; fiercely; laid on*
	Yit was I mekle willar than,	*much more lost then*
	Quhen I met with this man.'	
140	Of sic taillis thay began,	*such*
	Quhill the supper was graid.	*Until; prepared*
	Sone was the supper dicht, and the fyre bet,	*ready; made up*
	And thay had weschin, i-wis, the worthiest was thair.	*washed indeed*

[1] *Acted as if he intended to put the collier in before him*

'Tak my wyfe be the hand in feir, withoutin let, *together; delay*
And gang begin the buird,' said the Coilyear. *go to the head of the table*
'That war unsemand, forsuith, and thyself unset.' *unseemly; not seated*
The King profferit him to gang, and maid ane strange fair. *go [first]*
'Now is twyse,' said the carll, 'me think thow hes forget!'
He leit gyrd to the King, withoutin ony mair, *struck; at once*
And hit him under the eir with his richt hand, *ear*
Quhill he stakkerit thair with all *So that; staggered*
Half the breid of the hall; *breadth*
He faind never of ane fall
Quhill he the eird fand. [1]

He start up stoutly agane — uneis micht he stand — *[The King] rose up; scarcely*
For anger of that outray that he had thair tane. *insult; received*
He callit on Gyliane his wyfe, 'Ga, tak him be the hand, *[He = Rauf]; go*
And gang agane to the buird, quhair ye suld air have gane. *go; table; before*
Schir, thow art unskilfull, and that sall I warrand; *uncouth; warrant*
Thow byrd to have nurtour aneuch, and thow hes nane. [2]
Thow hes walkit, i-wis, in mony wyld land;
The mair vertew thow suld have, to keip the fra blame!
Thow suld be courtes of kynd and ane cunnand courteir. *by nature; wise*
Thocht that I simpill be, *Though*
Do as I bid the: *you*
The hous is myne, pardie, *by God*
And all that is heir.' *here*

The King said to himself, 'This is ane evill lyfe, *harsh*
Yit was I never in my lyfe thus-gait leird; *in this way instructed*
And I have oft-tymes bene quhair gude hes bene ryfe, *good men; numerous*
That maist couth of courtasie, in this Cristin eird. *Who knew most; world*
Is nane so gude as leif of and mak na mair stryfe, [3]
For I am stonischit at this straik, that hes me thus steird.' *blow; staggered*
In feir, fairlie he foundis with the gude wyfe, *courteously; walks*

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[1] *He never stopped falling / until he struck the ground*

[2] *You should have good manners enough, but you have none*

[3] *Nothing is better than desisting and making no more trouble*

175 Quhair the Coilyear bad, sa braithlie he beird. *violently; behaved*
Quhen he had done his bidding, as him gude thocht, *as seemed good to him*
Doun he sat the King neir *near*
And maid him glaid and gude cheir,
And said, 'Ye ar welcum heir,
180 Be Him that me bocht.' *By; redeemed*

Quhen thay war servit and set to the suppar,
Gyll and the gentill king, Charlis of micht, *noble; might*
Syne on the tother syde sat the Coilyear. *Then*
Thus war thay marschellit, but mair, and matchit that nicht. [1]
185 Thay brocht breid to the buird and braun of ane bair, *table; meat; boar*
And the worthyest wyne went upon hicht; *was raised up*
Thay beirnis, as I wene, thay had aneuch thair, *people; expect; enough*
Within that burelie bigging, byrnand full bricht. *excellent building; shining*
Syne enteris thair daynteis, on deis dicht dayntelie; [2]
190 Within that worthie wane *dwelling*
Forsuith wantit thay nane. *they lacked nothing*
With blyith cheir sayis Gyliane, *happy countenance*
'Schir, dois glaidlie.' *be glad*

The carll carpit to the King cumlie and cleir: *said; handsome; distinguished*
195 'Schir, the forestaris, forsuith, of this forest,
Thay have me all at inuy, for dreid of the deir; [3]
Thay threip that I thring doun of the fattest. *chide; shoot*
Thay say, I sall to Paris, thair to compeir *appear*
Befoir our cumlie king, in dule to be drest; *gracious; sorrow; treated harshly*
200 Sic manassing thay me mak, forsuith, ilk yeir, *Such menacing; each year*
And yit aneuch sall I have for me and ane gest. *enough*
Thairfoir sic as thow seis, spend on, and not spair.' *partake of*
Thus said gentill Charlis the Mane *Charlemagne*
To the Coilyear agane: *in response*
205 'The King himself hes bene fane, *glad*
Sum tyme, of sic fair.' *such fare*

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[1] *Thus were they arranged, without more ado, and paired that night*

[2] *Then the delicacies come in, elegantly arranged on the table*

[3] *They are angry at me for fear of [what I might do to] the deer*

	Of capounis and cunningis they had plentie,	*capons; rabbits*
	With wyne at thair will, and eik vennysoun;	*also*
	Byrdis bakin in breid, the best that may be;	*baked; bread*
210	Thus full freschlie thay fure into fusioun.	*eagerly; proceeded; abundance*
	The carll with ane cleir voce carpit on he,	*spoke aloud*
	Said, 'Gyll, lat the cop raik for my bennysoun,	*pass round the cup; blessing*
	And gar our gaist begin, and syne drink thow to me;	*make; guest; then*
	Sen he is ane stranger, me think it ressoun.'	*Since; proper*
215	Thay drank dreichlie about; thay wosche and thay rais; [1]	
	The King with ane blyith cheir	*happy demeanor*
	Thankit the Coilyeir;	
	Syne all the thre into feir	*Then; together*
	To the fyre gais.	*go*
220	Quhen thay had maid thame eis, the Coilyear tald	*comfort*
	Mony sindrie taillis efter suppair.	*various*
	Ane bricht byrnand fyre was byrnand full bald.	*intensely*
	The King held gude countenance, and company bair, [2]	
	And ever to his asking ane answer he yald;	*gave*
225	Quhill at the last he began to frane farther mair,	*Until; ask*
	'In faith, freind, I wald wit, tell gif ye wald,	*know; would*
	Quhair is thy maist wynning?' said the Coilyear.	*usual dwelling*
	'Out of weir,' said the King, 'I wayndit never to tell: [3]	
	With my lady the Quene	
230	In office maist have I bene,	*mainly*
	All thir yeiris fyftene,	*these*
	In the court for to dwell.'	
	'Quhat-kin office art thow in, quhen thow art at hame,	*What kind of*
	Gif thow dwellis with the Quene, proudest in pane?'	*array*
235	'Ane chyld of hir chalmer, schir, be Sanct Jame,	*attendant; chamber; by*
	And thocht myself it say, maist inwart of ane;	*though; intimate*
	For my dwelling tonicht, I dreid me for blame.'	*tarrying; fear*

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[1] *They drank deeply in turn; they washed and rose [from the table]*

[2] *The king was pleasant and companionable*

[3] *'Without a doubt,' said the king, 'I never hesitated to tell'*

'Quhat sall I call the,' said the Coilyear, 'quhen thow art hyne gane?' *hence*
'Wymond of the Wardrop is my richt name; *Wardrobe; real*
240 Quhairever thow findis me befoir the, thi harberie is tane. *lodging; assured*
And thow will cum to the court, this I underta, *If; promise*
Thow sall have for thy fewaill, *fuel*
For my saik, the better saill, *sale*
And onwart to thy travaill, *payment for*
245 Worth ane laid or twa.' *load; two*

He said, 'I have na knawledge quhair the court lyis,
And I am wonder wa to cum quhair I am unkend.' *extremely reluctant; unknown*
'And I sall say thee the suith on ilk syde, i-wis, *truth; each; indeed*
That thow sall wit weill aneuch or I fra the wend: *know; before*
250 Baith the King and the Quene meitis in Paris
For to hald thair Yule togidder, for scho is efter send. *she is sent for*
Thair may thow sell, be ressoun, als deir as thow will prys; [1]
And yit I sall help the, gif I ocht may amend, *if; anything; make better*
For I am knawin with officiaris in cais thow cum thair. *case*
255 Have gude thocht on my name,
And speir gif I be at hame, *ask*
For I suppois, be Sanct Jame,
Thow sall the better fair.' *fare better [by asking for me]*

'Me think it ressoun, be the Rude, that I do thy rid, [2]
260 In cais I cum to the court, and knaw bot the ane; *only you*
Is nane sa gude as drink and gang to our bed, *The best thing is for us to*
For als far as I wait, the nicht is furth gane.' *know; night*
To an previe chalmer belive thay him led, *private chamber quickly*
Quhair ane burely bed was wrocht in that wane, *fine bed; made; house*
265 Closit with courtingis, and cumlie cled; [3]
Of the worthiest wyne wantit thay nane. *lacked*
The Coilyear and his wyfe baith with him thay geid, *went*
To serve him all at thay mocht *that; might*

---

[1] *There you can sell, properly, as dearly as you will set the price*
[2] *It seems reasonable to me, by the Cross, that I follow your advice*
[3] *Enclosed with curtains and handsomely covered*

Till he was in bed brocht. *led*
270 Mair the King spak nocht, *More*
Bot thankit thame thair deid. *deed*

Upoun the morne airlie, quhen it was day,
The King buskit him sone, with scant of squyary. *readied; scarcity; attendants*
Wachis and wardroparis all war away, *Guards; valets*
275 That war wont for to walkin mony worthy. *accustomed; awaken; many a*
Ane pauyot previlie brocht him his palfray, *small page privately; horse*
The King thocht lang of this lyfe and lap on in hy; [1]
Than callit he on the carll, anent quhair he lay, *opposite*
For to tak his leif; than spak he freindly. *leave*
280 Than walkinnit thay baith, and hard he was thair; *awakened; heard*
The carll start up sone,
And prayit him to abyde none: *wait until noon*
'Quhill thir wickit wedderis be done
I rid nocht ye fair.' *advise; travel*

285 'Sa mot I thrive,' said the King, 'me war laith to byde; *reluctant; wait*
Is not the morne Yule day, formest of the yeir? *tomorrow; chief [day]*
Ane man that office suld beir be tyme at this tyde,
He will be found in his fault that wantis, foroutin weir. [2]
I se the firmament fair upon ather syde; *sky*
290 I will returne to the court, quhill the wedder is cleir; *while; weather*
Call furth the gude wyfe; lat pay hir or we ryde
For the worthie harberie that I have fundin heir.' *found*
'Lat be! God forbid!' the Coilyear said, *Stop*
'And thow of Charlis cumpany,
295 Cheif king of chevalry,
That for ane nichtis harbery
Pay suld be laid.' *given*

'Yea, sen it is sa that thow will have na pay, *since*

---

[1] *The King grew weary of this way of life and mounted in haste*

[2] *And he who should perform his duty early in this season / will, without a doubt, be at fault if he's missing*

Cum the morne to the court, and do my counsall: *tomorrow; follow my advice*
300 Deliver the, and bring ane laid, and mak na delay; *load*
Thow may not schame with thy craft gif thow thrive sall. *be ashamed of*
Gif I may help the ocht to sell, forsuith I sall assay, *anything; try*
And als myself wald have sum of the fewall.' *also; fuel*
'Peter!' he said, 'I sall preif the morne, gif I may, *try tomorrow*
305 To bring coillis to the court, to se quhen thay sell sall.' *coals*
'Se that thow let nocht, I pray the,' said the King. *delay*
'In faith,' said the Coilyear,
'Traist weill I salbe thair, *shall be*
For thow will never gif the mair,
310 To mak nane lesing.' *lie*

'Bot tell me now lelely quhat is thy richt name? *truthfully; real*
I will forget the morne and ony man me greif.' *tomorrow if; annoy*
'Wymond of the Wardrop, I bid not to lane; *want; hide*
Tak gude tent to my name, the court gif thow will preif.' *heed; try*
315 'That I have said, I sall hald, and that I tell the plane; *plainly*
Quhair ony coilyear may enchaip I trow till encheif.' [1]
Quhen he had grantit him to cum, than was the King fane, *promised; glad*
And withoutin ony mair let, than he tuke his leif. *delay; leave*
Than the Coilyear had greit thocht on the cunnand he had maid, *agreement*
320 Went to the charcoill in hy, *haste*
To mak his chauffray reddy; *merchandise*
Agane the morne airly *In preparation for*
He ordanit him ane laid. *prepared; load*

The lyft lemit up belive, and licht was the day; *sky brightened up quickly*
325 The King had greit knawledge the countrie to ken. *recognize*
Schir Rolland and Oliver come rydand the way,
With thame ane thousand, and ma, of fensabill men *more; fighting*
War wanderand all the nicht ovir, and mony ma than thay *more*
On ilk airt outwart war ordanit sic ten, [2]
330 Gif thay micht heir of the King, or happin quhair he lay; *hear; chance upon*

---

[1] *Where any collier may trade, I trust to succeed*

[2] *Ten such as these were sent out in every direction*

To Jesus Christ thay pray that grace thame to len. *give*
Als sone as Schir Rolland saw it was the King,
He kneillit doun in the place,
Thankand God ane greit space;
335 Thair was ane meting of grace *a providential meeting*
At that gaddering. *reunion*

The gentill knicht, Schir Rolland, he kneilit on his kne,
Thankand greit God that mekill was of micht; *great; might*
Schir Oliver at his hand, and bischoppis thre,
340 Withoutin commounis [1] that come, and mony uther knicht.
Than to Paris thay pas, all that chevalrie, *body of knights*
Betuix none of the day and Yule nicht; *Between noon*
The gentill Bischop Turpine cummand thay se
With threttie convent of preistis revest at ane sicht, *(see note)*
345 Preichand of prophecie in processioun. *preaching*
Efter thame baith fer and neir
Folkis following in feir, *together*
Thankand God with gude cheir
Thair lord was gane to toun.

350 Quhen thay princis appeirit into Paris, *those; appeared in*
Ilk rew ryallie with riches thame arrayis. *Each rank; adorns*
Thair was digne service done at Sanct Dyonys, *worthy*
With mony proud prelat, as the buik sayis.
Syne to supper thay went, within the palys;
355 Befoir that mirthfull man menstrallis playis; *minstrels*
Mony wicht wyfis sone, worthie and wise, *valiant woman's son*
Was sene at that semblay ane and twentie dayis,
With all-kin principall plentie for his plesance. *excellent bounty; pleasure*
Thay callit it the best Yule than,
360 And maist worthie began,
Sen ever King Charlis was man, *Since*
Or ever was in France.

---

[1] *Not to mention commoners*

Than upon the morne airlie, quhen the day dew, *dawned*
The Coilyear had greit thocht quhat he had undertane; *undertaken*
He kest twa creillis on ane capill, with coillis anew, *baskets; coals enough*
Wandit thame with widdeis, to wend on that wane. *Tied; ropes; dwelling*
'Mary, it is not my counsall, bot yone man that ye knew *unless*
To do yow in his gentrise,' said Gyliane; *place yourself at his mercy*
'Thow gaif him ane outragious blaw and greit boist blew; *boasted greatly*
In faith, thow suld have bocht it deir, and he had bene allane. *paid for; if*
For-thy, hald yow fra the court, for ocht that may be; *Therefore; anything*
Yone man that thow outrayd *insulted*
Is not sa simpill as he said;
Thairun my lyfe dar I layd; *Thereupon; stake*
That sall thow heir and se.' *hear*

'Yea, dame, have nane dreid of my lyfe today; *fear for*
Lat me wirk as I will; the weird is mine awin. *fate; own*
I spak not out of ressoun, the suth gif I sall say; *unreasonably; truth*
To Wymond of the Wardrop, war the suith knawin. *were the truth known*
That I have hecht I sall hald, happin as it may, [1]
Quhidder sa it gang to greif or to gawin.' *Whether; goes; gain*
He caucht twa creillis on ane capill and catchit on his way *placed; went*
Ovir the daillis sa derf, be the day was dawin, *sdales; rugged; had dawned*
The hie way to Paris, in all that he mocht, *as well as he could*
With ane quhip in his hand, *whip*
Cantlie on catchand *Boldly going*
To fulfill his cunnand, *agreement*
To the court socht. *went*

Graith thocht of the grant had the gude king, *Immediate; agreement*
And callit Schir Rolland him till, and gaif commandment, *to*
(Ane man he traistit in, maist atour all uther thing, *trusted; above*
That never wald set him on assay withoutin his assent): *engage in combat*
'Tak thy hors and thy harnes in the morning; *armor*
For to watche weill the wayis, I wald that thow went. *roads*
Gif thow meitis ony leid lent on the ling, *person passing; moor*

---

[1] *I will keep my promise, whatever happens*

Gar thame boun to this burgh; I tell the mine intent. *Direct them; town*
Or gyf thow seis ony man cumming furth the way,
Quhatsumever that he be,
Bring him haistely to me,
400 Befoir none that I him se *noon*
In this hall the day.' *today*

Schir Rolland had greit ferly, and in hart kest *wonder; considered*
Quhat that suld betakin, that the King tald. *betoken*
Upon solempnit Yule day, quhen ilk man suld rest, *solemn; each; should*
405 That him behovit neidlingis to watche on the wald, *necessarily; moor*
Quhen his God to serve he suld have him drest. *applied himself*
And syne, with ane blyith cheir, buskit that bald. *prepared; bold man*
Out of Paris proudly he preikit full prest. *rode; readily*
In till his harnes all haill, his hechtis for to hald, [1]
410 He umbekest the countrie, outwith the toun. *went around; outside*
He saw na thing on steir, *astir*
Nouther fer nor neir,
Bot the feildis in feir, *all together*
Daillis and doun. *Dales; hill*

415 He huit and he hoverit quhill midmorne and mair, [2]
Behaldand the hie hillis and passage sa plane; *road so open*
Sa saw he quhair the Coilyear come with all his fair, *load*
With twa creillis on ane capill; thairof was he fane. *glad*
He followit to him haistely, amang the holtis hair, *hoary woods*
420 For to bring him to the King, at bidding full bane. [3]
Courtesly to the knicht kneillit the Coilyear,
And Schir Rolland himself salust him agane, *greeted him in return*
Syne bad him leif his courtasie, and boun him to ga;
He said, 'Withoutin letting, *delaying*
425 Thow mon to Paris to the King; *must [come]*
Speid the fast in ane ling, *directly*
Sen I find na ma.' *Since; no other*

---

[1] *In his sound armor, to keep his promises*

[2] *He paused and waited until midmorning and later*

[3] *Very eager to do as commanded, to bring him to the King*

'In faith,' said the Coilyear, 'yit was I never sa nyse; *foolish*
Schir Knicht, it is na courtasie commounis to scorne: *commoners*
430 Thair is mony better than I, cummis oft to Parys,
That the King wait not of, nouther nicht nor morne. *knows*
For to towsill me or tit me, thocht foull be my clais, [1]
Or I be dantit on sic wyse, my lyfe salbe lorne.' *Before; daunted; lost*
'Do way,' said Schir Rolland, 'me think thow art not wise, *Stop*
435 I rid thow at bidding be, be all that we have sworne; *advise; be obedient*
And call thow it na scorning, bot do as I the ken, *instruct*
Sen thow hes hard mine intent: *Since; heard*
It is the Kingis commandement,
At this tyme thow suld have went *gone*
440 And I had met sic ten.' *Even if; ten such [as you]*

'I am bot ane mad man that thow hes heir met; *(see note)*
I have na myster to matche with maisterfull men, *skill; powerful*
Fairand ovir the feildis, fewell to fet, *Traveling; fuel; fetch*
And oft fylit my feit in mony foull fen; *befouled*
445 Gangand with laidis, my governing to get. *loads [of coal]; living*
Thair is mony carll in the countrie thow may nocht ken; *instruct*
I sall hald that I have hecht, bot I be hard set, *promised; unless; beset*
To Wymond of the Wardrop, I wait full weill quhen.' *know; when*
'Sa thrive I,' said Rolland, 'it is mine intent
450 That nouther to Wymond nor Will
Thow sald hald nor hecht till, *keep nor make a promise*
Quhill I have brocht the to fulfill *Until*
The Kingis commandment.'

The carll beheld to the knicht as he stude than; *looked at*
455 He bair, gravit in gold and gowlis in grene,
Glitterand full gaylie quhen glemis began,
Ane tyger ticht to ane tre, ane takin of tene. [2]

---

[1] *To handle me roughly or drag me off, though my clothes be foul*

[2] *He bore, engraved in gold and red on a green background, / glittering quite colorfully when light gleamed on it, / a tiger tied to a tree, a token of wrath*

Trewlie that tenefull was trimland than, [1]
Semelie schapin and schroud in that scheild schene; [2]
460 Mekle worschip of weir worthylie he wan, *Great honor; war*
Befoir, into fechting with mony worthie sene. *in fighting*
His basnet was bordourit, and burneist bricht *helmet; bordered; burnished*
With stanis of beriall deir, *beryl*
Dyamountis and sapheir, *Diamonds; sapphires*
465 Riche rubeis in feir,
Reulit full richt. *Arranged decorously*

His plaitis properlie picht attour with precious stanis,
And his pulanis full prest of that ilk peir; [3]
Greit graipis of gold his greis for the nanis, *(see note)*
470 And his cussanis cumlie schynand full cleir. *thigh-pieces; handsomely*
Bricht braissaris of steill about his arme banis, *vambraces; bones*
Blandit with beriallis and cristallis cleir, *Studded; beryls*
Ticht ovir with thopas and trew-lufe atanis; *(see note)*
The teind of his jewellis to tell war full teir. *tenth; tiring*
475 His sadill circulit and set, richt sa on ilk syde; *circled; adorned*
His brydill bellisand and gay, *elegant; beautiful*
His steid stout on stray, *powerful; road*
He was the ryallest of array,
On ronsy micht ryde. *horse*

480 Of that ryall array that Rolland in raid
Rauf rusit in his hart of that ryall thing; *admired*
'He is the gayest in geir that ever on ground glaid; *armor; walked*
Have he grace to the gre in ilk jornaying. [4]
War he ane manly man as he is weill maid,

---

[1] *Truly that wrathful one was shaking [with anger] then*

[2] *Handsomely formed and protected in that bright shield*

[3] *His armor plates were fittingly studded all over with precious stones, / and his knee-armor [was] quite ready [for battle], equally matching*

[4] *May he be graced with victory in every battle*

485 He war full michtie, with magre durst abyde his meting.' [1]
He bad the Coilyear in wraith swyth withoutin baid, *anger quickly; delay*
Cast the creillis fra the capill and gang to the King. *go*
'In faith, it war greit schame,' said the Coilyear;
'I undertak thay suld be brocht
490 This day for ocht that be mocht; *no matter what*
Schir Knicht, that word is for nocht *useless*
That thow carpis thair!' *speak*

'Thow huifis on thir holtis and haldis me heir, *delay; wooded hill*
Quhill half the haill day may the hicht have.' *whole; reaches its height*
495 'Be Christ that was cristinnit, and His Mother cleir, *pure*
Thow sall catche to the court — that sall not be to crave. *go; question*
It micht be preifit prejudice, bot gif thow suld compeir, [2]
To se quhat granting of grace the King wald the gaif.' *give*
'For na gold on this ground wald I, but weir, *earth; without a doubt*
500 Be fundin fals to the King, sa Christ me save!'
'To gar the cum and be knawin, as I am command, *make*
I wait not quhat his willis be, *know*
Nor he namit na mair the,
Nor ane uther man to me,
505 Bot quhome that I fand.' [3]

'Thow fand me fechand nathing that followit to feid; [4]
I war ane fule gif I fled, and fand nane affray, *fool; cause for fear*
Bot as ane lauchfull man, my laidis to leid, *lawful*
That leifis with mekle lawtie and laubour, in fay. [5]
510 Be the Mother and the Maydin that maid us remeid, *gave us redemption*

---

[1] *Should he [Roland] be as courageous a man as he is a well-formed [one], / that one would have to be very powerful who dared to withstand a hostile encounter with him*

[2] *It might be considered an insult unless you appear*

[3] *Nor did he name you to me / any more than [he named] another man / but [said to bring] whomever I found*

[4] *You found me bringing nothing that led to enmity*

[5] *Who lives with much honesty and hard work, in faith*

And thow mat me ony mair, cum efter quhat sa may, *oppose*
Thow and I sall dyntis deill, quhill ane of us be deid, *exchange blows*
For the deidis thow hes me done upon this deir day.' *special*
Mekle merwell of that word had Schir Rolland; *Great marvel*
515 He saw na wappinnis thair,
That the Coilyear bair,
Bot ane auld buklair, *buckler*
And ane roustie brand. *rusty sword*

'It is lyke,' said Schir Rolland, and lichtly he leuch, *likely; laughed gently*
520 'That sic ane stubill husband man wald stryke stoutly; *rough country-man*
Thair is mony toun man to tuggill is full teuch, *countryman; struggle; tough*
Thocht thair brandis be blak and unburely; *swords; inelegant*
Oft fair foullis ar fundin faynt, and als freuch. *birds; frail*
I defend we fecht or fall in that foly; *forbid; fight*
525 Lat se how we may dissever with sobernes aneuch, *part; peacefulness enough*
And catche crabitnes away, be Christ, counsall I. *send quarrelling*
Quhair winnis that Wymond thow hecht to meit today?' *dwells; promised; meet*
'With the Quene, tauld he me;
And thair I undertuke to be,
530 Into Paris, pardie, *by God*
Withoutin delay.'

'And I am knawin with the Quene,' said Schir Rolland,
'And with mony byrdis in hir bowre, be buikis and bellis; *ladies; chamber*
The King is into Paris, that sall I warrand, *warrant*
535 And all his advertance that in his court dwellis. *retinue*
Me tharth have nane noy of myne erand, *I need; worry*
For me think thow will be thair efter as thow tellis *just as*
Bot gif I fand the forrow now to keip my cunnand.' *(see note)*
'Schir Knicht,' said the Coilyear, 'thow trowis me never ellis, *believe me*
540 Bot gif sum suddand let put it of delay; *Unless; hindrance*
For that I hecht of my will, *promised; freely*
And na man threit me thairtill, *forced; thereto*
That I am haldin to fulfill, *bound*
And sall do quhill I may.'

545 'Yea, sen thow will be thair, thy cunnandis to new, *agreements to renew*
I neid nane airar myne erand nor none of the day.' *earlier; than noon*
'Be thow traist,' said the Coilyear, 'man, as I am trew, *trustworthy*
I will not haist me ane fute faster on the way; *foot*
Bot gif thow raik out of my renk, full raith sall thow rew,[1]
550 Or, be the Rude, I sall rais thy ryall array. *Cross; slash*
Thocht thy body be braissit in that bricht hew, *Though; covered*
Thow salbe fundin als febil of thy bone fay.' *weak; good faith*
Schir Rolland said to himself, 'This is bot foly
To strive with him ocht mair: *any more*
555 I se weill he will be thair.'
His leif at the Coilyear *leave; from*
He tuke lufesumly. *amicably*

'Be Christ!' said the Coilyear, 'that war ane foull scorne, *disgrace*
That thow suld chaip, bot I the knew, that is sa schynand; *escape unless*
560 For thow seis my weidis ar auld and all toworne, *clothes; old; worn out*
Thow trowis nathing thir taillis that I am telland. *believe not at all these*
Bring na beirnis us by, bot as we war borne, *men*
And thir blonkis that us beiris; thairto I mak ane band, *horses; pact*
That I sall meit the heir upon this mure tomorne, *here; heath tomorrow*
565 Gif I be haldin in heill — and thairto my hand — *health*
Sen that we have na laiser at this tyme to ta.' *leisure; take*
In ane thourtour way, *crossroad*
Seir gaitis pas thay, *Different roads*
Baith to Paris, in fay; *in faith*
570 Thus partit thay twa. *two*

The gentill knicht, Schir Rolland come rydand full sone,
And left the Coilyear to cum, as he had undertane; *pledged*
And quhen he come to Paris the hie mes was done, *high mass*
The King with mony cumly out of the kirk is gane. *handsome people; church*
575 Of his harnes in hy he hynt withoutin hone,[2]
And in ane rob him arrayit richest of ane; *robe; of all*
In that worschipfull weid he went in at none, *garment; noon*

---

[1] *Unless you move out of my path, very quickly you will regret it*

[2] *He hastily took off his armor without delay*

As he was wont, with the wy that weildit the wane, [1]
On fute ferly in feir, formest of all. *marvelously; first*
580 Richt weill payit was the King *pleased*
Of Schir Rollandis cumming;
To speir of his tything *ask*
Efter him gart call. *had him called*

The King in counsall him callit, 'Cum hidder, Schir Knicht!
585 Hes thow my bidding done, as I the command?'
'In faith,' said Schir Rolland, 'I raid on full richt, *rode*
To watch wyselie the wayis; that I sall warrand.
Thair wald na douchtie this day for jornay be dicht. [2]
Fairand ovir the feildis full few thair I fand;
590 Saif anerly ane man that semblit in my sicht, *Except only; appeared*
Thair was na leid on lyfe lent in this land.' *person alive passing*
'Quhat kin a fallow was that ane, schir, I the pray?'
'Ane man in husband weid, *countryman's clothes*
Buskit busteously on breid; *Proceeded roughly abroad*
595 Leidand coillis he geid *Transporting coals; went*
To Paris the way.'

'Quhy hes thow not that husband brocht, as I the bad? *countryman; ordered*
I dreid me, sa he dantit the, thow durst not with him deill.' [3]
'In faith,' said Schir Rolland, 'gif that he sa had,
600 That war full hard to my hart, and I ane man in heill.' *health*
He saw the King was engrevit, and gat furth glaid, *upset; went out gladly*
To se gif the Coilyearis lawtie was leill: *word was true*
'I suld have maid him in the stour to be full hard stad, *combat; hardpressed*
And I had wittin that the carll wald away steill; *If; known; steal*
605 Bot I trowit not the day that he wald me beget.' *deceive*
As he went outwart bayne, *quickly*
He met ane porter swayne *servant*
Cummand raith him agayne, *quickly; towards*
Fast fra the get. *gate*

---

[1] *As he [Roland] was accustomed, with the man who ruled that dwelling*

[2] *There would no valiant man be armed for combat on this day*

[3] *I fear he so daunted you that you dared not have anything to do with him*

610 'Quhair gangis thow, gedling, thir gaitis sa gane?' [1]
'Be God,' said the grome, 'ane gift heir I geif; *servant; give*
I devise at the get thair is ane allane, *perceive; gate*
Bot he be lattin in belive, him lykis not to leif. *let in quickly*
With ane capill and twa creillis cassin on the plane, *unloaded; ground*
615 To cum to the palice he preissis to preif.' *insists; try*
'Gif thow hes fundin that freik, in faith I am fane; *man; glad*
Lat him in glaidly; it may not engreif. *cause trouble*
Bot askis he eirnestly efter ony man?'
Than said that gedling on ground: *fellow*
620 'Ye, forsuith in this stound, *time*
Efter ane Wymound
In all that he can.' *As earnestly as he can*

'Pas agane, porter, and let him swyith in, *Go back; quickly*
Amang the proudest in preis, plesand in pane. *throng; attire*
625 Say thow art not worthy to Wymond to win; *go*
Bid him seik him hisself, gif thair be sic ane.' *seek; such a one*
Agane gangis Schir Rolland, quhair gle suld begin, *Back; fun*
And the yaip yeman to the get is gane; *eager attendant; gate*
Enbraissit the bandis belive, or that he wald blin, [2]
630 Syne leit the wy at his will wend in the wane. *Then; man; go; dwelling*
'Gang seik him now thyself,' he said upon hicht: *seek; aloud*
'Myself hes na lasair *leisure*
Fra thir gettis to fair.' *To go from these gates*
'Be Christ,' said the Coilyear,
635 'I set that bot licht.' *care little about that*

'Gif thow will not seik him, my awin self sall:
For I have oft tymes swet in service full fair. *toiled*
Tak keip to my capill, that na man him call, *care*
Quhill I cum fra the court,' said the Coilyear. *Until I come [back] from*
640 'My laid war I laith to lois; I leif the heir all. [3]

---

[1] *Where are you going, fellow, so quickly this way?*

[2] *Takes hold of the fastenings quickly, before he would stop*

[3] *I would be loath to lose my load; I leave it all here with you*

Se that thow leis thame not, bot yeme thame full yair.' *lose; attend; well*
In that hardy, in hy, he haikit to that hall, [1]
For to wit gif Wymondis wynning was thair. *know; dwelling*
He arguit with the ischar ofter than anis, *usher; once*
645 'Schir, can thow ocht say *at all*
Quhair is Wymond the day?
I pray the, bring him gif thow may
Out of this wanis.' *dwelling*

He trowit that the wy had wittin of Wymond he wend, [2]
650 Bot to his raifand word he gave na rewaird; *raving; regard*
Thair was na man thairin that his name kend. *knew*
Thay countit not the Coilyear almaist at regaird. [3]
He saw thair was na meikness nor mesure micht mend, *moderation; make amends*
He sped him in spedely, and nane of thame he spaird;
655 Thair was na fyve of thay freikis that micht him furth fend, *men; keep out*
He socht in sa sadly, quhill sum of thame he saird. *went; determinedly; hurt*
He thristit in throw thame thraly with threttis. *pushed; eagerly; threats*
Quhen he come amang thame all,
Yit was the King in the hall,
660 And mony gude man, with all,
Ungane to the meit. *Not yet gone; food*

Thocht he had socht sic ane sicht all this sevin yeir, *Though; sought*
Sa solempnit ane semblie had he not sene; *impressive; assembly*
The hall was properly apperrellit and paintit but peir, *furnished; peerlessly*
665 Dyamountis full dantely dentit betwene. *daintily; inlaid*
It was semely set on ilk syde seir, *adorned; each different side*
Gowlis glitterand full gay, glemand in grene, *red*
Flowris with flourdelycis formest in feir, *fleur-de-lis; foremost*
With mony flammand ferly, ma than fyftene. *brilliant marvel*
670 The rufe reulit about in revall of reid, *roof enclosed; border; red*
Rois reulit ryally, *roses arranged*

---

[1] *That bold man makes his way, in haste, into the hall*

[2] *He believed the man had known about the Wymond he was thinking of*

[3] *They considered the collier hardly worth noticing*

	Columbyn and lely;	*Columbine; lily*
	Thair was ane hailsum harbery	*wholesome shelter*
	Into riche steid.	*In; place*
675	With dosouris to the duris dicht, quha sa wald deme,	
	With all divers danteis dicht dantely,	
	Circulit with silver semely to sene,	
	Selcouthly in seir he was set suttelly. [1]	
	Blyth byrdis abufe, and bestiall full bene,	*animals; pleasant*
680	Fyne foullis in fyrth, and fischis with fry;	*woods; young fish*
	The flure carpit and cled, and coverit full clene,	*carpeted; completely*
	Cummand fra the cornellis closand quemely.	*corners fitting closely*
	Bricht bancouris about browdin ovir all,	*bench-covers; embroidered*
	Greit squechonis on hicht,	*escutcheons*
685	Anamalit and weill dicht,	*Enameled; arranged*
	Reulit at all richt	*Set in order properly*
	Endlang the hall.	*All along*
	'Heir is ryaltie,' said Rauf, 'aneuch for the nanis,	*enough for the occasion*
	With all nobilness anournit, and that is na nay;	*adorned; denial*
690	Had I of Wymond ane word, I wald of thir wanis,	*I'd go from this hall*
	Fra thir wyis, i-wis, to went on my way; [2]	
	Bot I mon yit heir mair quhat worthis of him anis,	*must; becomes; once*
	And eirnestly efter him have myne e ay.' [3]	
	He thristit in throw threttie all atanis,	*pushed; thirty; at once*
695	Quhair mony douchtie of deid war joynit that day.	*bold; deed; assembled*
	For he was unburely, on bak thay him hynt;	*rude; pushed*
	As he gat ben throw,	*As he went in through [them]*
	He gat mony greit schow.	*many a great shove*
	Bot he was stalwart, I trow,	*believe*
700	And laith for to stynt.	*reluctant; stop*

---

[1] *With tapestries hung up to the doors, whoso would judge [i.e., for all to see], / with various sorts of finery daintily arranged, / encircled with silver, handsome to see, / wondrously various, it [he = the hall] was skillfully decorated*

[2] *From these men, indeed, to go on my way*

[3] *And be intently on the lookout for him [literally: have my eye after him] constantly*

He thristit in throw thame, and thraly can thring, *pushed; roughly did shove*
Fast to the formest he foundit in feir. [1]
Sone besyde him he gat ane sicht of the nobill king.
'Yone is Wymond, I wait; it worthis na weir; *know; there is no doubt*
705 I ken him weill, thocht he be cled in uther clething, *know; dressed*
In clais of clene gold kythand yone cleir. [2] . . .
Quhen he harbreit with me, be half as he is heir.
In faith, he is of mair stait, than ever he me tald. *of higher degree*
Allace, that I was hidder wylit! *Alas; tricked*
710 I dreid me sair I be begylit.' *fear; sorely; deceived*
The King previlie smylit, *privately [i.e., to himself] smiled*
Quhen he saw that bald. *bold man*

Thair was servit in that saill seigis semelie, *hall handsome men*
Mony senyeorabill syre on ilk syde seir; *lordly; different*
715 With ane cairfull countenance the Coilyear kest his e *worried; eye*
To the cumly Quene, courtes and cleir: *beautiful*
'Dame, of thy glitterand gyde have I na gle, *gown; joy*
Be the gracious God that bocht us sa deir; *redeemed; dearly*
To ken kingis courtasie, the devill come to me, [3]
720 And sa I hope I may say, or I chaip heir. *escape*
Micht I chaip of this chance, that changes my cheir, *escape; mood*
Thair suld na man be sa wyse,
To gar me cum to Parise, *make; Paris*
To luke quhair the King lyis, *see*
725 In faith, this sevin yeir!'

Quhen worthie had weschin, and fra the buirdis went, *nobles; washed; tables*
Thay war for-wonderit, i-wis, of thair wyse Lord; *amazed; indeed*
The King fell in carping, and tauld his intent, *speaking*
To mony gracious grome he maid his record. *man; told his story*
730 How the busteous beirne met him on the bent, *rustic man; moor*
And how the frostis war sa fell and sa strait ford. *fierce; (see note)*

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[1] *Quickly he advanced to the forefront of the company*
[2] *In clothes of pure gold, revealing yon man clearly*
[3] *The devil possessed me to teach courtesy to kings*

Than the Coilyear quoke as he had bene schent, *quaked; shamed*
Quhen he hard the suith say how he the King schord. *heard; threatened*
'Greit God! gif I war now, and thyself with all, *if [only]*
735 Upon the mure quhair we met, *moor*
Baith all suddandly set, *unexpectedly situated*
Or ony knicht that thow may get
Sa gude in thy hall!'

Thir Lordis leuch upon loft, and lystinit to the King, *laughed aloud*
740 How he was ludgeit and led, and set at sa licht; [1]
Than the curagious knichtis bad have him to hing, *have him hung*
'For he hes servit that,' thay said, 'be our sicht.' *deserved; as we see it*
'God forbot,' he said, 'my thank war sic thing
To him that succourit my lyfe in sa evill ane nicht! *saved*
745 Him semis ane stalwart man and stout in stryking,
That carll for his courtasie salbe maid knicht.
I hald the counsall full evill that Cristin man slais, *advice; slays*
For I had myster to have ma, *need; more*
And not to distroy tha *those*
750 That war worthie to ga *go*
To fecht on Goddis fais!' *fight against; foes*

Befoir mony worthie he dubbit him knicht, *dubbed*
Dukis and digne lordis in that deir hall. *worthy; precious*
'Schir, se for thyself, thow semis to be wicht; *valiant*
755 Tak keip to this ordour, ane knicht I the call. *heed; order [of knighthood]*
To mak the manly man, I mak the of micht: [2]
Ilk yeir thre hundreth pund assigne the I sall. *pounds*
And als the nixt vacant, be ressonabill richt, *also; vacant estate*
That hapnis in France, quhair sa ever it fall, [3]
760 Forfaltour or fre waird, that first cummis to hand, *(see note)*
I gif the heir heritabilly, *here to be held by heritable right*
Sa that I heir, quhen I have hy, *hear; urgent need*

---

[1] *How he was lodged and treated and considered of so little worth*

[2] *To make you a good fighting man, I make you powerful*

[3] *That becomes available in France, wherever it happens to be*

That thow be fundin reddy
With birny and brand.' — *mail; sword*

765 'It war my will, worthy, thy schone that thow wan — *(see note)*
And went with thir weryouris wythest in weir; — *warriors most valiant; war*
Heir ar curagious knichtis, suppois thay the nocht ken, — *although; know*
For thy simpill degre that thow art in heir. — *Because of*
I beseik God of his grace to mak the ane gude man,
770 And I sall gif the to begin glitterand geir.' — *shining armor*
Ane chalmer with armour the King gart richt than — *chamber*
Betaucht to ane squyar, and maid him keipeir. — *Entrusted; keeper*
With clois armouris of steill for that stout knicht, — *close-fitting*
Sextie squyaris of fee — *as a feudal grant*
775 Of his retinew to be; — *retinue*
That was ane fair cumpany
Schir Rauf gat that nicht.

Upon the morne airly, Schir Rauf wald not rest,
Bot in ryall array he reddyit him to ryde; — *readied*
780 'For to hald that I have hecht, I hope it be the best,
To yone busteous beirne that boistit me to byde. — *rude man; challenged*
Amang the galyart gromis I am bot ane gest, — *valiant men; guest*
I will the ganandest gait to that gay glyde; [1]
Sall never lord lauch on loft, quhill my lyfe may lest, — *laugh aloud; last*
785 That I for liddernes suld leif, and levand besyde. [2]
It war ane graceles gude that I war cummin to,
Gif that the King hard on hicht — *heard*
That he had maid ane carll knicht,
Amang thir weryouris wicht, — *valiant warriors*
790 And docht nocht to do.' [3]

Upon ane rude runsy he ruschit out of toun; — *riding horse; hastened*
In ane ryall array he rydis full richt.

---

[1] *I will take the most direct way to that fine man*

[2] *That I should leave, out of cowardice, while still living*

[3] *And he [the carll] was able to do nothing [i.e., was worthless]*

Evin to the montane he maid him full boun, *ready*
Quhair he had trystit to meit Schir Rolland the Knicht. *arranged*
795 Derfly ovir daillis, discoverand the doun, *boldly; dales; exploring; hill*
Gif ony douchtie that day for jornayis was dicht. *bold man; combat; prepared*
He band his blonk to ane busk on the bent broun, *tied; horse; bush; moor*
Syne baid be the bair way to hald that he had hecht *waited by the open road*
Quhill it was neir time of the day that he had thair bene. [1]
800 He lukit ane lytill him fra;
He sa cummand in thra *haste*
The maist man of all tha *largest; those*
That ever he had sene.

Ane knicht on ane cameill come cantly at hand, *camel; briskly close by*
805 With ane curagious countenance, and cruell to se;
He semit baldly to abyde with birny and with brand, *boldly; stand fast; mail*
His blonk was unburely, braid and ovir hie. *mount; uncomely*
Schir Rauf reddyit him sone and come rydand, *readied*
And in the rowme of ane renk in fewtir kest he; [2]
810 He semit fer fellonar than first quhen he him fand, *fiercer*
He foundis throw his forcenes gif he micht him se. *tries; fierceness*
He straik the steid with the spurris, he sprent on the bent; [3]
Sa hard ane cours maid thay, *charge*
That baith thair hors deid lay,
815 Their speiris in splenders away *splinters*
Abufe thair heid sprent. *flew*

Thus war thay for thair forcynes left on fute baith, *fierceness*
Thay sture hors at that straik strikin deid lay than; *fierce horses; stroke*
Thir riche restles renkis ruschit out full raith, [4]
820 Cleikit out twa swordis and togidder ran. *Pulled*
Kest thame with gude will to do uther skaith, *Set about; harm*
Bair on thair basnetis thay beirnis or thay blan. *(see note)*

---

[1] *Until it was nearly the time of day that he had been there [before]*

[2] *Within the space needed for a joust, he lowered his lance*

[3] *He struck the steed with his spurs; it sprang forward on the moor*

[4] *Those noble, eager men rushed out very quickly*

Haistely hewit thay togiddir; to leif thay war laith,
To tyne the worschip of weir that thay air wan; [1]
825 Na for dout of vincussing thay went nocht away. *fear; being vanquished*
Thus ather uther can assaill *each attacked the other*
With swordis of mettaill;
Thay maid ane lang battaill
Ane hour of the day.

830 Thay hard harnest men, thay hewit on in haist; *bold armored; struck*
Thay worthit hevy with heid and angerit with all; *became; heat*
Quhill thay had maid thame sa mait, thay failye almaist, *fatigued; fainted*
Sa laith thay war on ather part to lat thair price fall. *loath; honor*
The riche restles men out of the renk past, *noble eager men; lists*
835 Forwrocht with thair wapnis, and evill rent with all; *Exhausted; badly cut*
Thair was na girth on the ground, quhill ane gaif the gaist. [2]
'Yarne efter yeilding!' on ilk syde thay call. *Surrender!*
Schir Rauf caucht to cule him, and tak mair of the licht; *proceeded; cool*
He kest up his veseir, *visor*
840 With ane chevalrous cheir. *demeanor*
Sa saw he cummand full neir
Ane uther kene knicht. *bold*

'Now, be the Rude!' said Schir Rauf, 'I repreif the! *Cross; reprove*
Thow hes brokin conditioun; thow hes not done richt:
845 Thow hecht na bak heir to bring, bot anerly we; *supporter; only*
Thairto I tuik thy hand, as thow was trew knicht.' *took*
On loud said the Sarasine, 'I heir the now lie! *Saracen; hear*
Befoir the same day I saw the never with sicht;
Now sall thow think it richt sone thow hes met with me, [3]
850 Gif Mahoun or Termagant may mantene my micht.'
Schir Rauf was blyth of that word, and blenkit with his face; *glanced*
'Thow sayis thow art ane Sarasine?

---

[1] *Rapidly they exchanged blows; they were reluctant to stop, / to lose the honor of battle that they had previously won*

[2] *There was no safety anywhere until one of them gave up the ghost [i.e., died]*

[3] *You will think it too soon that you have met with me now*

Now thankit be Drichtine — *the Lord*
That ane of us sall never hine, — *[go] hence*
855 Undeid in this place.' — *alive*

Than said the Sarasine to Schir Rauf succudrously, — *arrogantly*
'I have na lyking to lyfe to lat the with lufe.' [1]
He gave ane braid with his brand to the beirne by, — *blow*
Till the blude of his browis brest out abufe. — *blood; burst*
860 The kene knicht in that steid stakkerit sturely, — *staggered greatly*
The lenth of ane Rude braid he gart him remufe.
Schir Rauf ruschit up agane and hit him in hy; — *quickly*
Thay preis furth properly thair pithis to prufe. — *press; strengths; prove*
Ilk ane a schort knyfe braidit out sone; — *pulled*
865 In stour stifly thay stand, — *combat boldly*
With twa knyfis in hand;
With that come Schir Rolland
As thay had neir done. — *nearly*

The gentill knicht Schir Rolland come rydand ful richt, — *straight on*
870 And ruschit fra his runsy, and ran thame betwene: — *rushed; horse*
He sayis, 'Thow art ane Sarasine, I se be my sicht,
For to confound our Cristin men, that counteris sa kene. — *contend; boldly*
Tell me thy name tyte, thow travelland knicht. — *quickly*
Fy on thy fechting! fell hes thow bene. — *fighting; fierce*
875 Thow art stout and strang, and stalwart in fecht; — *fight*
Sa is thy fallow, in faith, and that is weill sene. — *opponent*
In Christ and thow will trow, thow takis nane outray.' — *if; believe; harm*
'Forsuith,' the Sarasine said,
'Thyself maid me never sa affraid
880 That I for soverance wald have praid, — *truce; begged*
Na not sall to day.

'Breif me not with your boist, but mak you baith boun, — *Address; boast; ready*
Batteris on baldly the best, I yow pray.' — *Strike*
'Na,' said Schir Rolland, 'that war na resoun, — *wouldn't be right*

---

[1] *I don't want to live by letting you [go] in friendship*

885 I trow in the mekle God, that maist of michtis may. *great; who is most powerful*
The tane is in power to mak that presoun, *(see note)*
For that war na wassalage, sum men wald say; [1]
I rid that thow hartfully forsaik thy Mahoun; *advise; heartfully*
Fy on that foull feind, for fals is thy fay! *faith*
890 Becum Cristin, Schir Knicht, and on Christ call;
It is my will thow convert —
This wickit warld is bot ane start —
And have Him halely in hart
That Maker is of all.'

895 'Schir Rolland, I rek nocht of thy ravingis; *care; ravings*
Thow dois bot reverance to thame that rekkis it nocht; *heed*
Thow slane hes oft, thyself, of my counsingis, *relatives*
Soudanis and sib men, that the with schame socht. *Sultans; kinsmen; sought*
Now faindis to have favour with thy fleichingis; *you try; flattery*
900 Now have I ferlie, gif I favour the ocht. *wonder; you at all*
We sall spuilye yow dispittously at the nixt springis,
Mak yow biggingis full bair — bodword have I brocht — [2]
Chace Charlis your king fer out of France;
Fra the Chane of Tartarie, *Khan; Tartary*
905 At him this message wald I be, *To; messenger*
To tell him as I have tauld the,
Withoutin plesance.' *pleasantry*

'Tyte tell me thy name; it servis of nocht. *Quickly; [it = your threat]*
Ye Saraseins ar succuderus and self-willit ay; [3]
910 Sall never of sa sour ane brand ane bricht fyre be brocht. [4]
The feynd is sa felloun, als fer as he may.' *as cruel*
'Sa thrive I,' said the Sarasine, 'to threip is my thocht, *quarrel*

---

[1] *For that [fighting both knights at once, as the Saracen has suggested] would be no knightly deed, some men would say*

[2] *We shall despoil you mercilessly next spring, / make your buildings quite desolate — I've brought you warning*

[3] *You Saracens are always arrogant and self-willed*

[4] *A bright fire will never come from so green a piece of wood*

Quha waitis the Cristin with cair, my cusingis ar thay; [1]
My name is Magog, in will, and I mocht, — *wishing if I could*
915 To ding thame doun dourly that ever war in my way. — *strike; sternly*
For-thy my warysoun is full gude at hame quhair I dwel.' — *Therefore; reward*
'In faith,' said Schir Rolland,
'That is full evill wyn: land — *poor profit*
To have quhill thow ar levand, — *living*
920 Sine at thine end hell. — *Then*

'Wald thow convert the in hy and cover the of sin, — *haste; redeem*
Thow suld have mair profite and mekle pardoun;
Riche douchereis seir to be sesit in, — *duchies various; invested with*
During quhill day dawis, that never will gang doun; — *Lasting; dawns; end*
925 Wed ane worthie to wyfe, and weild hir with win, — *govern; joy*
Ane of the riche of our realme, be that ressoun; — *nobility*
The gentill Duches, Dame Jane, that clamis be hir kin
Angeos and uther landis, with mony riche toun. — *Anjou*
Thus may thow, and thow will, wirk the best wise. — *if; way*
930 I do the out of dispair, — *I'll put you out of doubt*
In all France is nane so fair;
Als scho is appeirand air — *Also; heir apparent*
To twa douchereis.' — *two duchies*

'I rek nocht of thy riches, Schir Rolland the Knicht,' — *care*
935 Said the rude Sarasine in ryall array.
'Thy god nor thy grassum set I bot licht; — *goods; treasure*
Bot gif thy God be sa gude as I heir the say,
I will forsaik Mahoun and tak me to His micht, — *commit*
Ever mair perpetuallie, as He that mair may. — *who has more power*
940 Heir with hart and gude will my treuth I the plicht, — *faith; pledge to you*
That I sall lelely leif on thy Lord ay, — *faithfully believe in; always*
And I beseik Him of grace and askis Him mercy, — *beseech*
And Christ His Sone full schene. — *glorious*
For I have Cristin men sene,
945 That in mony angeris hes bene, — *troubles*
Full oft on Him cry.'

---

[1] *Whoever awaits the Christian to cause him trouble, they are my kin*

'I thank God,' said Rolland — 'that word lykis me! — *pleases*
And Christ His sweit Sone, that the that grace send.' *sent*
Thay swoir on thair swordis swyftlie all thre,
950 And conservit thame freindis to thair lyfis end, *remained friends*
Ever in all travell, to leif and to die. *travail; live*
Thay knichtis caryit to the court, as Christ had thame kend. *went; directed*
The King for thair cumming maid game and gle, *made merry*
With mony mirthfull man thair mirthis to mend. *to gladden them*
955 Digne bischoppis that day, that douchtie gart bring, [1]
And gave him sacramentis seir, *various*
And callit him Schir Gawteir,
And sine the Duches cleir *then; beautiful*
He weddit with ane ring.

960 Than Schir Rauf gat rewaird to keip his knichtheid.
Sic tythingis come to the King within thay nyne nicht *news*
That the Marschell of France was newlingis deid; *recently dead*
Richt thair, with the counsall of mony kene knicht,
He thocht him richt worthie to byde in his steid, *take his place*
965 For to weild that worschip worthie and wicht. *have; honor; valiant*
His wyfe wald he nocht forget, for dout of Goddis feid. *fear; anger*
He send efter that hende, to leif thame in richt, *noblewoman*
Syne foundit ane fair place quhair he met the King,
Ever mair perpetually,
970 In the name of Sanct July,
That all that wantis harbery,
Suld have gestning. *hospitality*

[1] *That day, worthy bishops had that bold man brought*

Notes

4 The phrase 'fra Sanct Thomas' has been variously interpreted. Amours takes it to refer to the date of the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, December 21. Walsh follows Browne in reading it as suggesting that those referred to are returning from a pilgrimage to Canterbury, where the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket is located. Bawcutt and Riddy suggest that the phrase seems to refer to a place and note the suggestion of H. M. Smyser that 'Thomas' be emended to 'Dyonys.' Speed's observation that the reference to the pilgrimage would be a literary device recalling Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is worth keeping in mind. She also notes that 'Charlemagne lived and died almost four hundred years before Thomas à Becket but such anachronism is familiar in medieval literature.'

5 The second 'thay' in this line means 'those,' as it does again in line 20 (second 'thay') and in line 22 and elsewhere in the text. In line 21 the 'thay' should be translated 'that' since 'wedderis' (technically a plural) has the singular sense of 'storm.'

10 On 'duchepeiris,' see the note to *Sowdone of Babylone*, line 241 (commenting on the 'Dosipers,' an alternate spelling of the same word).

17 The first 'deip' in the line has been emended by Speed to 'drip' and by Bawcutt and Riddy to 'drift.' Herrtage maintains 'deip' but glosses it only with a question mark. Walsh suggests that the word may be 'a noun or nominalized adjective meaning that the snow was being driven in the "deep places," — valleys and rock chasms.' This is surely the sense of the line, but the first 'deip' (assuming the reading is correct) must refer to the snow itself which has mounted up in the 'mony deip dell.'

23 'Prime' is the canonical hour, the fixed part of the Divine Office to be sung or recited at a specific time, for the first hour of the day (6 a.m. or sunrise).

46 A 'collier' is one who makes and sells charcoal.

63 'Sanct July' is Saint Julian the Hospitaller, the patron saint of inn keepers and travellers.

84 Bawcutt and Riddy emend 'thus' to 'us' and translate 'so that we might justly be forgiven (for praising the hospitality).' But the emendation doesn't seem necessary if we read 'baith' as the object of excuse.

96 The phrase 'cheveris with the chin' is the equivalent of 'our teeth are chattering.'

123 When 'part' is used with a cardinal number, it indicates 'a proportion one measure short of a whole' (MED). Thus 'twa part' is literally 'two-thirds.' The sense of the phrase is probably best conveyed in modern English by the translation of Bawcutt and Riddy: 'more than half annoyed.'

126 This line alludes to a proverb: 'Nature ought to crawl where it cannot walk.' The line translates: "'Now is one time when,' said the Collier, 'nature ought to crawl.'" The suggestion is that his guest's natural courtesy should lead him to act in a way that is appropriate to the circumstances even if different from his normal way of doing things.

134 There seem to be two lines missing at this point in the stanza.

147 In this line 'fair' seems to be used in the sense of a 'fuss' and 'strange' in the sense of 'alien'; thus the line suggests that by offering to let Rauf go before him, Charlemagne is once again extending a courtesy that is inappropriate to the circumstances and thus not really a courtesy at all.

235 The shrine of Saint James the Apostle at Compostela was a famous pilgrimage site. According to medieval legend, James preached the gospel in Spain and even fought against the Moors.

239 The Wardrobe is 'the office or department of a royal or noble household charged with the care of the wearing apparel' (OED).

309–10 These lines are difficult to make sense of as they stand in other editions ('For thow will never gif the mair / To make ane lesing'). Browne suggested translating them as 'Thou wilt nevermore undertake (give thyself) to tell a lie.' Speed

translates: 'for you will never again undertake (*literally*, give yourself) to tell a lie.' Walsh proposes translating: 'You won't give yourself anymore trouble by telling a lie.' None of these interpretations makes much sense in the context. However, by emending 'ane' to 'nane' and taking line 310 as a filler of the type employed by the poet in several other places, the lines make perfect sense. Rauf says, in effect, 'I'll surely be there tomorrow because you will never give any more, in truth [literally, to make no lie].' That is, he can never expect to receive more than on the day after he has offered shelter to his guest.

344–45 A 'convent' of priests would be those living together in one religious community. The phrase 'at ane sicht' might mean that the priests are dressed in vestments ('revest') uniformly (as Speed suggests), or it might depend on the verb 'se' — i.e., they were seen 'at a glance' or 'all together' (as Browne translates).

352 On St. Denis see the note to *Sowdone of Babylone*, line 26.

370 Walsh and Speed both suggest that the line implies that Gyliane thinks their guest didn't return the blow because she was present. It is also possible that the line might originally have read 'and he ne had bene allane'; that is, if he had his fellow courtiers with him, as he will when Rauf journeys to court, he would have punished Rauf for his insolence.

374 Amours suggests that 'layd' is a contraction of 'lay it' (i.e., stake it [my life]).

391 Browne suggests that here and in line 481 'thing' is used to refer to a person.

423 The line translates literally: 'Then bade him to cease his courtesy and prepare to go.' That is, Roland wants Rauf to stop kneeling to him, rise, and prepare to go with him to court.

441 Bawcutt and Riddy, following Laing, gloss 'mad' as 'simple.' The term thus refers to Rauf who says he is just a simple man. Walsh and Speed make 'mad man' direct address, referring to Roland. In their reading, Rauf, responding to Roland's 'sic ten' in the previous line, says, 'I am only one, mad man. . . .' Though the meaning 'simple' would be unusual for 'mad' something like 'foolish' is elsewhere attested and 'simple' is not an unreasonable extension of that meaning.

450 'To Wymond nor Will' means 'to Wymond nor to anyone else.' The common name 'Will' is used much as we would use 'Tom, Dick and Harry.'

461 Bawcutt and Riddy are probably correct in taking 'sene' as 'seen' (used pleonastically).

469 The line either means that Roland's greaves (the armor worn on the leg, below the knee) are [like] great clasps of gold indeed; or, as Speed suggests (following Amours and Browne), the word 'on' has been omitted and the line means that there are great clasps of gold *on* his greaves.

473 The line, which translates 'tied all over with topazes and true-love knots together,' probably means that the topazes were arranged in the shape of true-love knots, which the OED defines as knots 'of a complicated and ornamental form (usually either a double-looped bow, or a knot formed of two loops intertwined), used as a symbol of true love.'

511 'Mat' (meaning 'obstruct' or 'checkmate,' as in chess) is emended to 'mar' by Walsh and by Bawcutt and Riddy.

521 Editors generally take 'toun man' to mean a resident of a town as opposed to someone living in the country, but the context would seem to suggest that Roland sees Rauf as an example of a 'toun man' and not different from one. OED gives as one meaning of 'town' 'a farm with its farmhouse' and notes that it still has this meaning in the Scottish dialect. This is surely the sense intended here.

533 'By books and bells' is a mild oath. Roland is swearing by sacred books and church bells.

538 This is a difficult line. Herrtage says simply 'I do not understand this line.' Walsh translates as: 'to keep my compact unless I put you to the test beforehand.' This translation does, however, ignore the word 'now.' I suspect the line is corrupt and that the original reading was something like: 'Bot gif I fand the forward [or the alternate form 'forrad'] now to keip my cunnand' (which would give an acceptable meaning of: 'if I didn't find you more ready now to keep my compact').

563 The earliest reading 'bland' is generally emended by modern editors to 'band.'

605 Lekpreuiki's text reads *Bo* for *Bot.*

611 Herrtage glosses 'gift' as 'message.' This is the sense of the word in this context, if not the literal meaning. The thing that the swain has to give is the message about Rauf. The word was probably chosen more for alliteration than for connotation.

613 The word 'leif' is taken by Walsh to mean 'leave'; the line then translates literally: 'Unless he is let in quickly, he doesn't want to leave.' Bawcutt and Riddy take it as 'live' and translate: 'Unless he is let in straight away, he does not want to go on living.' The latter seems to make the line coincide more naturally with modern English syntax, but the former seems more in keeping with Rauf's character.

619 The phrase 'on ground' means literally 'on the ground' or 'on the earth' but here is an almost meaningless line filler. The same might be said of 'in this stound' in the next line.

701 'Can' is used here as an auxiliary indicating the past tense (the equivalent of 'did'). The line thus translates: 'He thrust in through them and eagerly pushed.'

706–07 There is a line missing between these two lines. Speed suggests that the missing line had the sense of 'He didn't have as splendid an appearance.'

731 The phrase 'and sa straight ford' has been interpreted in several different ways. Herrtage takes 'ford' as meaning 'road' or 'way' and the phrase as meaning 'so severe was the way.' Bawcutt and Riddy take 'ford' to mean 'for it' and consider this a pleonastic expression; thus 'strait,' like 'fell,' would modify 'frostis.' Walsh reads 'strait ford' as 'straight forth'; Charlemagne told how he met Rauf, how fierce the frost was, and so straight forth (to the end of his story). Herrtage's reading, though apparently rejected by later editors, does fit the context of the King's story quite well.

760 A 'forfeiture' is an estate confiscated as punishment for a crime; a 'free ward' is the estate of a deceased tenant who did not have an heir old enough to inherit the property; in this case the control of the land would revert to the overlord.

762 To 'have hy' is literally to 'have haste'; Speed seems to capture the sense of the phrase best with her gloss of 'have urgent need.'

765 To 'win one's shoes' implies proving oneself in combat.

782 'Gest' probably means 'guest' here; but Browne takes it as 'jest.'

822 Herrtage and Bawcutt and Riddy read 'bair'; Speed, following Browne, emends to 'baft' ('struck') and Walsh to 'bait.' The basic sense of the line does not change whichever of these readings we accept: 'These men rained blows on [each other's] helmets before they stopped.'

850 Mahoun (Mahomet or Mohammed) and Termagant were thought to be gods worshipped by the Saracens.

861 Speed takes 'Rude' to mean 'a rod' (a measure equivalent to sixteen and a half feet). But, considering the religious nature of the conflict, the meaning of 'Cross' might apply equally well: 'He made him move back the length of a broad Cross.' (Browne translates 'Rude braid' as 'Rood-breadth.')

882 Walsh notes that Browne thought 'breif' to be an error for 'brey' (frighten) and that the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* cites this use of 'breif' as a possible erroneous form. But it is likely that Bawcutt and Riddy are correct in reading 'breif' as a form of 'breven,' which is commonly used in alliterative verse to mean 'repeat or tell.' Their extension of the meaning to 'address' in this line seems plausible.

886 Walsh cites Browne's observation that the line ('The tane is in power to mak that presoun') would make better sense if the poet had written 'the' instead of 'that' but does not emend the line. Only Bawcutt and Riddy emend to 'the.' I follow them in so emending. It seems an obvious slip to have read 'that' instead of 'the' — especially given the appearance of the word 'that' in the previous and the following lines. The line then translates: 'The one of us has the power to make you a prisoner.'

904 Tartary was the area inhabited by the Tartars, who dwelt in 'the region of Central Asia extending eastward from the Caspian Sea. . . . First known in the West as applied to the mingled host of Mongols, Tartars, Turks, etc., which under the leadership of Jenghiz Khan (1202–1227) overran and devastated much of Asia and Eastern Europe. . .' (OED).

926 Walsh suggests that 'be that ressoun' is a line filler and rhyme tag that is 'probably best left untranslated.'

936 Bawcutt and Riddy say that 'god' is an 'obvious error' and emend to 'gold,' as do Walsh and Speed. However, 'god' in the sense of 'goods' (i.e., worldly possessions) seems a possible reading here.

957 It is interesting that Magog is given 'Gawteir' as his Christian name. In the *Sege of Melayne* there is reference to a 'Sir Gawtere' as a close relative of Charlemagne (lines 377–78). Though the characters can not be one and the same, it seems clear that the author of *Rauf Coilyear* is borrowing a traditional name for one of Charlemagne's knights.

967 Bawcutt and Riddy emend 'thame' to 'thane' and translate 'to live thenceforward'; but 'leif thame' (meaning 'live together') seems more appropriate to the context.

Glossary

abye *pay for*
agayne, agane *back, again*
als *as; also*
and *and; if*
anone *straightway, soon*
ar(r)aye *grandeur, magnificence, army, crowd*
awenn, awin *own*

bald *bold [man]*
be *by, by the time that*
beirne *man*
bent *field*
bone *boon*
bot *unless*
boun, bown(n) *ready*
boure *chamber*
brand(e) *sword*
brent *burnt*
buskede *prepared, arrayed*

capill *horse*
carll *countryman, commoner*
carpit *said, spoke*
cher(e), cheir *humor, mood, countenance*
chesen *choose*
chevalrye *knights, knighthood*
clepe *call*
creillis *baskets*
cumlie *fair, handsome, proper; appropriately*

darfely *bravely, valiantly*
dighte, dyghte *prepared, dressed, ready*
dike *ditch*
dinge, dynge *strike, beat*
dosyperys, desyperis, duchepers *twelve peers, knights*
doughty *bold*
doute *fear*
dromonde *warship*
dynt *blow*

eghe (pl. **egne**) *eye*
eke *also*
euerilkone *everyone*

fay *faith*
fayne *glad*
fele *many*
fere, feir *companion;* **in fere, in feir** *together*
foo *foe*
fre(e) *noble, generous*

ga *go*
gaist, gest *guest*
gan an auxiliary implying past tense; *began*
gentle *noble*
gif *if*
grace *chance, fortune, favor*
graythe, graythely *quickly, readily*

harbery *shelter*
hecht *promised*
heir *hear*
hem *them*
here *here; hear; their*
hicht *high*
hied *hastened*
hore *whore*
hy *haste;* **in hy** *in haste*

ilke *same, each*
i-nowe *enough*

kene *bold, valiant*

lawe *faith*
laye *faith*
loughe *laughed*

mair *more*
mayne *strength, force*
mekill, mekle *much, great, very*
mete *food*
meyné, menyee, menyhe *host, company, retinue, army*
mocht *might*
mode *mind, temper, mood, courage*

ooste *host*
or *before*

Paresche *Paris*
poustee *power*
prees *crowd, throng*

quhair *where*
quhen *when*
quhill *until, while*
quod *said*

renaye *renounce*
reskowe *rescue*
rode *cross, crucifix*
rowte, route *company, assembly, entourage, host*

salbe *shall be*
sall *shall*
scho *she*
seir *various*
sekerly *surely*
semblede *assembled*
shent *destroyed, disgraced, lost*
sic *such*
sithen, sythen *then, afterwards*
sla, slo *slay*
slyke *such*
solde *should*
sone *right away, immediately*
sore *very*
sothe, suithe *truth*
Sowdone *Sultan*
spede *thrive, prosper*
stede *place*
stede *horse, steed*
stekede *pierced*
steven *voice*
stoure *battle, combat*
strange *strong, great*
swythe *quickly, fast*
syne *then*
sythes *times*

tene *grief, anger, injury*
tha, tho *then*

thay *those*
thir *these*
thocht *though*
thoghte *it seemed*
thorowe *through*
trowen *believe*
tyde, tide *time*
tyte *quickly*

vawarde *vanguard*
vitayle *provisions*

warrand *warrant, guarantee*
waxe *become, grow*
wedderis *winds, storm*
wede *clothes*
wete *know*
wickit *severe*
wight(e), wyghte *valiant, nimble; person*
wiste *knew*
with-all(e) *indeed*
wode, woode *mad*
wote *knew*

yare *ready*
yede *went*