No. 6

Ruprecht von Würzburg: Two Merchants and the Loyal Wife

As in most other cases, the author of this verse narrative, Ruprecht von Würzburg, is not identifiable through any references to him outside of this tale. According to his own testimony, Ruprecht originated from Würzburg, but it is not certain whether he also lived there—as we know from Konrad von Würzburg (ca. 1235–1275). But his language is Franconian, and the tale was obviously greatly appreciated by someone close to the notary public for the Würzburg bishop, Michael de Leone, famous for his collection of a wide range of literary, didactic, and factual texts. The unknown scribe copied Ruprecht’s narrative into a manuscript today housed in Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, under the call number cod. Chart. A 216; the text is contained on folios 76vb–82rb. Ruprecht seems to have composed his text sometime in the first half of the fourteenth century.

Edition:

Text:
I am acting like the fools who bring to the ears what has been put into their mouths, whether it is evil or good, and let it rush out of their mouths (5) as if they had been asked for it. Likewise I, foolish man, am doing it as I am beginning with a weak mind to tell you a story (10) which is too difficult for me. It is a mere [verse narrative]. I am afraid it won’t be perfect since I have taken on this task. After all, I am void of good sense (15) and filled with foolishness. Therefore I am asking you all, whoever is going to be displeased when he hears a reading from this little book, to have mercy on me (20) and not to criticize my account composed in verses. After all, I do not do this often. May God send me His help so that I can complete this mere.

In France (25) there is a very rich town called Verdun, well known among merchants. In this town lived, free of all dishonor, the most respected men in the country (30), two merchants. Both felt great liking for the other, with upright and steady hearts. Constant friendship (35) fully ruled in their hearts. They pursued this virtuous relationship for a long time. Each of them would have been ready to risk for the other their life, their property, honor, and family (40). One of them, however, was very rich and had reached, with God’s help, a much higher rank than the other. He was called Gillot. The other stood in his service (45), as if he were his liege-man. He served him free of all shame. His name was Gillam. He had a son called Bertram.

Gillot had a daughter. He could never let an hour pass without having visited Gillam out of friendship, sitting down with him, or standing around deliberating with him (55). He was compelled to do so out of love for him.

His daughter was called Irmengart, and possessed beauty and virtues. Sir Bertram (60) was free of all evil and strove for virtue. For this reason he was praised far and wide. But his fortune [during his life] was not all perfect and well-rounded.
The two old men (65) had complete control of the city. No one could oppose them. Sir Gillot thought much about how to guarantee that he would honor Gillam (70) with so much friendship that their bond of loyalty would, because of its strength, never come apart. He believed that it would give full confidence (75) to the entire city when there would be no conflict anywhere if their two children would marry (80). He pursued his goal, deliberating it much all day long. One night, after having kept these thoughts to himself without telling his wife about them, he decided (85), when they were lying in bed, not to keep it a secret. He told her what he had in mind and said: “My dear wife, I have conceived the idea (90) to give Irmengard to the young Bertram, the son of my friend Gillam, as his wife, which would provide us with much happiness, and [our families] would rule well together.” (95) She responded: “Lord, do not say so. What crazy idea is that? Where have you lost your mind, lord? Let us forget your words, they make me quite angry (100); you are half mad.”

Gillot then replied and said: “Wife, why do you act like that? Do not speak thus and try to understand me a little (105). You are confused in your mind, I know well what you would like to have [as sons-in-law]: counts and dukes, indeed, that is not a lie, have asked for our daughter’s hand (110), hoping that I would agree to their proposals. I will always strive against this strategy because it would give me great heart-pains (115) if my daughter were to be mocked like a cow because she is not aristocratic. Listen to my idea: my daughter is to take [as husband] a man (120) who will be fitting for her.”

His wife said: “What you want, that will be done.” When she said these words, her husband replied, full of love: “May you be blessed, my dear wife, (125) for complying with me in every respect. For this reason I must love you until the end of my life. You possess such good manners (130). Let us not wait any longer and begin with the preparation to achieve our goal; I would like to reach an agreement by tomorrow morning.”

“Yes, my dear lord, do that,” (135) [she said]. Soon thereafter dawn came, and the man did not tarry. He went to Gillam and asked: “Where is Bertram? There is something that will make him happy (140): I want him to marry my daughter because I like no one better, by Christ, than him to be my son-in-law.”

Gillam responded: “Lord, please do not do that to me; why do you mock me, a poor man? (145) I have always served you loyally; allow me to continue doing so, and if you do so, you will do well. I deserve this, and then I will give my best service to you.” Thereupon Gillot answered him (150): “I am serious, this is not mockery. What would I have done with my reason if I had the intention to mock you? No one will be able to change my mind, and you should send for your son.” (155) Then both swore an oath [of friendship].

When the young man heard of this, he came rushing to his father; and soon also lady Irmengart appeared, who was pledged to the young man (160) as his future wife. He embraced the beautiful maid and pressed her tightly to himself, as I have read in my source. The maid cried loudly (165), which demonstrated her chastity and her good female manners. It would have been considered a failure of custom to hear that a woman had not been frightened (170) when she was about to be married to a man whom she had never considered as her bridegroom, and then in that situation would have remained dry-eyed.

Without any delay they organized for Bertram a wonderful wedding (175), and a better one had never been seen before or ever since. Unless anyone tells it differently, I will not question this claim. Then the sun was setting (180), and the evening star (Venus) rose according to ancient customs, if I have been told the truth about it. The two young people were welcomed by a bed, and much love happened there (185), and so a lovely embrace. — It seriously irritates me that my thoughts are led astray so far, but unfortunately, this is the case. — Let us keep quiet about the rest (190). The young man and the most beautiful maid found each other, he kissed her more than a thousand times on her rose-colored lips.
The night came to an end, filled with joys (195). The lady and my lord Bertram took each other’s hands and walked to a hall filled with the loud sound of happiness. There people played drums and violins, (200) also flutes and some stringed instruments. Many women joined in with singing. Afterwards tablecloths were brought in to set up for dinner (205). Servants covered the floor with flowers and green grass. All the noble guests in the palace had washed their hands with water. Then one could see (210) the stewards and cup-bearers arrive, who would not dare to waver in their duties. They offered their best service and much more, whatever any guest could think of (215). The host did not want to spare anything and withhold any of his goods. He had a noble character: the best person acts accordingly in the best manner.

After the wedding had come to an end (220), the young man began his life at home with his very beautiful wife whom he loved more than himself. She loved with equal strength. Neither previously nor ever since (225), in fact at no other time have there been two people so much in love with each other as these two were. They experienced no conflicts between themselves. Whatever she wanted, he also wanted (230); whatever he liked, she liked as well. So they could not help but to live in pure bliss. God had fulfilled their wishes and provided them with a paradise here on earth. There has never been a poet so wise (235) who could have fully described in poetic terms the bond of love between them. I am fully aware that it could never be torn apart (240).

What I am going to tell you is the truth. The husband took good care of his house in every respect for ten years, listening closely to good advice. In this behavior he was followed by his wife Irmengart (245) according to her special female qualities. No other woman displayed more stability based on complete virtue because she was the root of honor.

This man, my lord Bertram (250), increased his wealth through his activities as a merchant. By contrast, those who do not add to their capital and want to take away from it will experience a hard life or will lose everything (255). One day the young man prepared himself for the yearly market in Provins. He was smart and wise in many different mercantile matters, and therefore he possessed taffeta, spices, silk matter, and violet cloths, and many highly valuable clothes. With these he went to the various fairs and offered them there for sale. This made him exceedingly wealthy.

He said good-bye to his lady (265). Great anguish filled her heart because her sorrowful mind told her—as often happens with me as well—that he would stay away for too long a time (270). The young woman shed burning tears; she embraced her husband and kissed him intensely. She said: “My dear beloved husband, whom do you plan to designate as my guardian? (275) Since you want to leave me, my heart is weighed down heavily with much sorrow and it has to be plunged in great worries. All my joy will be robbed from me (280) until you come home again.” The husband’s eyes began to turn red, which was caused by his own great love for her. He said: “My lovely wife, why do you torture yourself (285) and why do you make my mind so heavy? The dear God will protect you for me! Do not doubt it at all, I will always be loyal to you. I will return in a short while (290), if God grants me good health. Your sorrow lies in my heart.”

Then the young man left and traveled well over ten thousand yards to the city of Provins (295). He immediately asked to be directed to the best innkeeper who would be the most experienced to host a guest. He was then taken (300) to a wealthy innkeeper who welcomed the very young guest in a friendly and courteous manner. He came up to him politely and greeted him in God’s name (305). The young man said: “May God reward you, my lord: let me have a room where I can store all my goods without facing any danger and where I can manage them all by myself.” (310)
The innkeeper complied with his request. He ordered the best quarters he had to be immediately readied for him and for his wares to be stored there. Bertram was very pleased about it (315). Once this had happened, the guest was asked to come to the dinner table in a wide dining hall, which was filled with rich merchants (320).

When the meal was over, the innkeeper asked his guests to be quiet and appealed to each of them to tell a story about their wives that would illustrate what character she had (325) and how she lived in her house. The first said: “Well, oh well! My wife is a terrible horror, she is a devil and not a wife. And if all the devils from Hell were sitting on the threshold of my house, none of them would dare to approach her.” The next merchant said: “We have well understood what you have reported to us. But I think that you commit a sin (335) against your good housewife. Mine does not behave like this toward me, instead she is happy and virtuous as soon as I leave her. She takes pity on her fellow Christians (440), which is praiseworthy in the eyes of God: therefore I am raising two bastard children.” The third one spoke thus: “That may well be; my wife is better than any merchandise, and she is characterized by constancy (345). Moreover, she knows a trick which is better than those mentioned before. She drinks so often that her speech becomes slurred. In this way my wife (350) takes care of my house and all my property.”

Such stories they exchanged among each other, and none abstained from casting blame on his wife, whereby they hurt their own honor (355). The young guest Sir Bertram silently listened to their talk and greatly praised God for all the honor that He had bestowed upon him (360). Then the host addressed him in friendly fashion and said: “How come, sir, that you do not entertain us with a story about your lovely housewife?” (365) The young man responded: “So be it. At home I have a pure wife whose very lovely appearance often makes me happy. My heart is full of joyful laughter toward her (370). When my eyes are looking at her, no woman ever felt more love toward her husband than she. She excels through her womanly virtues: chastity and a pure mind (375); moderation and real grace follow my wife, and so do self-discipline, wisdom, and proper manners, and she behaves nobly. She is the crown of all praise (380), and this crown she wears with full justification. More I cannot tell you about my wife’s reputation. She is the flower of all women and the Easter of my heart (385). I cannot compare her with anyone. She is the praise of all women, and her dignity even exceeds her virtues.”

The innkeeper said: “I observe that you must be raging mad that you want to give so much praise to your wife.” (390) “No, indeed,” said the young man, “she can identify and judge all the good things properly. Never mind how many virtues I might mention, she still commands many more.” (395) The innkeeper responded: “You had better follow my advice, and do not give her so much praise, otherwise you will lose some of your honor that you believe you can claim. You do not pursue a smart approach (400). I bet you that I can go to bed with her within half a year, if you dare to wager indeed for everything that I owe (405), if I have permission to try it. And if you don’t mind, then pledge everything that you owe in return. If you lose, you will from then on (410) have nothing but the shirt on your back. To match that, I wager all my property, which will be yours in the opposite case. Whoever loses will be obligated (415) to turn over all his goods that he previously owned or might gain in the meantime to the other, based on sworn oaths. Let us maintain this pledge, even if one of us might regret it (420), so that he cannot withdraw from the wager.”

This pledge was immediately sworn, and none of the two was inclined to withhold it. The innkeeper asked the guest to stay there and to send a messenger to his home (425), telling his wife that he had decided soon to travel to Venice without delay. The messenger should also tell his wife to treat his servants (430) in a fully honorable manner since they had always been dear to him.

When she received this news, the joy in her heart was badly destroyed (435). Her heart was filled with sorrow and pain. Her cheeks were covered with the rain of her eyes’ tears. She exclaimed: “May the true God’s blessing
always protect him! Why does his manly goodness not grant me consolation? Oh, my heart-beloved husband, will I ever see you again? (445) I am longing for your return, yet I have to forgo this for now.” But the woman found consolation and maintained the house in a praiseworthy manner.

As I have told you, the innkeeper had arrived in Verdon. This proud man, [named] Hogier, was intelligent and cunning, so he found a place to stay across from the lady’s house. Whether she went in or left the house (455), wherever she moved, he acted accordingly, so she had to give him regular greetings. This inspired him with good hopes (460) because he was very happy [about this development].

He thought to himself: “I will arrange things for sure in such a way that I will win his property and his wife. For this purpose I must dress up well in order to acquire both, otherwise I will fail miserably (465) if I do not succeed in this wager.”

Both at night and during the day he strove very hard to figure out how to achieve his goal (70). He began to send little gems and many greetings to the woman. But she threw everything on the floor and stepped on it, filled with great disgust (475). She had told him in all earnestness that she would complain about him to her relatives, which would destroy all his plans.

As this plan failed, and this bait did not work (480), he went to her servants and bribed them heavily, making sure that they were thinking of him when they would sit with their mistress. Then they should speak to her about him (485). He emphasized: “I’ll be deeply obliged, I promise, and if you help me to achieve my goal, you can count on me to receive a great reward, which will ingratiate you to me for ever.” (490)

Once this had been arranged, the servants began to give high praise about the merchant [the innkeeper]. The lady said: “Children, are you crazy? If you want to sell this man, then seek out another merchant. I have no intention of buying him. I will never accept him for money. Stop your talking altogether, or I will give orders for you to be (500) badly spanked.” Immediately they were all quiet about him, changed the topic, and lowered their heads as if they had sneezed (505). They never mentioned this matter again and kept quiet about it.

When Sir Hogier heard this news, which was very bad for him (510), he lost all joy. Since this strategy had failed and did not work at all, he thought of a new plan. He thought: “I must achieve my goal (515) in a short while, it does not matter at what cost. One morning as he was walking to church, he took aside one of the lady’s chambermaids, the one who was her favorite (520), and said to her: “No poet has described such love pangs as I have to suffer. I will surely be a dead man if I do not win your lady.” The maid was called Amelin (525). He said further to her: “Would you like to earn some money?” She answered: “I would not be opposed to it.” So he put a pound of silver into her bodice and offered her even more reward [if she complied with his request] (530). He said: “Offer your lady possession of my goods: she can take as much as she would like, and I would not want to be miserly toward her. In fact, I would like to give her a hundred marks (535) if she grants me my wish.” “I’ll be happy to do so,” said the maid Amelin, because she was anxious to get the reward, and continued: “The power of good fortune shall be in your hands (540). I will go to my lady and let her know what you said.”

[But the lady retorted:] “Keep your mouth shut and never even think of it, or I’ll arrange it that you will be severely punished (545). I possess enough money; I will not sell my honor.”

As this plan had not worked, Hogier immediately offered two hundred marks (550). But the lady did not care for it a bit. This increased his worries. The time agreed upon [with Bertram] came close. At last he offered a thousand marks to the lady (555) in return for enjoying one night with her. Amelin said: “What do you think? Don’t you want to earn this money? You act very badly toward my lord (560). Certainly he travels through many countries, but he will never have the good fortune of winning so much money; dear lady, think about it and change your mind (565) if you do not want to arouse my lord’s anger.” Her lady Irmenengart answered her—and no
woman had ever shown more loyalty—; “Do not say one more word. I will complain to my relatives (570) who will give you a harsh beating.” [The following section consists of highly idiomatic formulations that can hardly be translated, hence I am using an adaptation.] The maid said: “Do as you wish, I would not blame the one who will criticize you. Your disgrace will become public (375). When your husband comes back and hears of this matter, he is going to say that you should have been willing to accept the offer (580), as this would have been his own wish. You should rather do it quietly, before it becomes public and you might become an object of contempt for all (585) and they might shame you.” She said: “God forbid that I ever will be disgraced. Here on earth nothing worse could happen to me (590), if I were observed wallowing in vice and in the greatest sin, because then the waves of sulphur will torture me in the depths of Hell.”

Once this exchange had come to an end (595), the lady lamented: “Oh, dear Bertram, if you knew of these words, you would immediately return to this country.” This pure lady (600) went to one of her aunts and started talking to her, telling her that she would complain about this offer to her father. The aunt replied: “Keep quiet. If you let pass such a rich award (605), neither my heart nor any of your relatives will ever feel kindness toward you. Even a rich empress can do this without losing her honor. Once this man will have left you (610), you lock the door and then you will be just the same as you used to be before.”

These words troubled Irmengard deeply, and she returned home immediately (615), where she went to see her father and her mother. She said: “Good father, and also my dear mother, listen to this that I need to tell you, I need to share my suffering with you. (620) Help me to carry it loyally.” Once her father had learned the whole matter, he said: “Oh, dear Bertram, if only my daughter Irmengard would be sound in mind concerning this issue (625) so that she can win this money before we will lose it! Listen, my dear daughter, drop your soul-searching and comply with his wish, or you will lose my love. If this money gets lost [because of your refusal], I will show you my great wrath, and when God will send Bertram back home, you will truly be blinded.” (635)

The lady’s misery greatly increased, and tears mightily welled up in her, which was caused by her chaste modesty. Then she went to Sir Gillam and to her dear mother-in-law (640) and sat down with them. She lamented her heart’s suffering to them. The father-in-law said: “Daughter, listen, do what they have advised you, otherwise I will let you feel it (645) with all my might, and your back will receive a great beating. If you do not gain this money, you will truly have to die once Bertram will have come home.” (650)

She lost all joy and she felt deep shame. Once she had listened to these words, the happiness in her heart was destroyed and totally torn up (655). Her heart was deeply touched by the rays of sorrow. In her mind she thought: “I must make a last all-out effort and find out what they really think about this (660) and whether they will dare to support this in public.” She immediately arranged it and called all her relatives together in a beautiful room (665). They all gave the same advice, both the women and the men, as they had done before. And I am telling you the truth, no one deviated from this recommendation. This grieved Irmengard badly in her heart and almost killed her. They all left her behind in great sorrow, when the women and men (675) departed without delay.

The lady sat down and cried. She considered her situation from many different perspectives and thought how she could overcome this egregious shame and the sinful burden (680), and how she should go about it to preserve her loyalty toward her dear husband. Many times she spoke: “Have mercy upon me, sweet God, (685) and also Mary, you virginal maid! Allow me to send my lament to you, and so also my great suffering.” Then God recognized her great loyalty and inspired her with good advice (690) because He never abandons those who unwaveringly entrust themselves unto Him.

She said to the maid Amelina: “You have truly often given me advice, both privately and in public, (695) that I should acquire this great fortune. Now tell me, do you have the attitude and does it seem all right for you to take
one hundred marks and sleep with this man for one night?” (700) She did not need to think long about it and said: “I would accept it for half that much.” This soothed her mind, and she encouraged Sir Hogier to send her the money (705). Thereupon she would fulfil his wish. He only had to do it secretly and come to her without being seen when the night would set in. He should wait for her at the gate (710) where the maid Amelin would expect him and would let him in to her lady.

This pleased Sir Hogier very much. He sent the thousand marks to Lady Irmengart, as he had promised her (715). He made sure to arrive right on time. In the meantime Lady Irmengart had dressed the maid in her own clothing and then had herself put on the maid’s dress (720). She placed the maid on her own bed, which filled Amelin with great joy. Hardly had the lady arrived at the gate when she noticed that the merchant had arrived (725). She let him in very quietly and welcomed him politely. He believed that everything was happening according to his plan. She asked him to be quiet, (730) with which he complied. He right away slipped more than ten silver coins into her pocket, for which she thanked him much (735) and wished for him that God would strengthen his honor without end and without fail. Then she said: “You do not need to stand here longer: come with me to my lady, (740) to her wonderful bedroom.” Sir Hogier followed her quietly since she had asked him to do so repeatedly. All this happened in the dark, and so this man was deceived (745).

Lady Amelin welcomed him kindly. He approached her on the bed. She wore a short silken blouse and a coat trimmed with ermine fur (750). This was all valuable enough. She was only thinly covered and possessed such a shield that she won the victory [over him—here a sexual metaphor]. He did not hesitate for long (755) and quickly tore off her coat. The same happened to the blouse. The woman did not take it without a counter-attack, and hit him with a kiss which almost might have made him lose the victory (760). This aroused his anger because he was a warrior. He tore the shield-cover apart, and aggressively he stormed toward her because he was a monstrous man (765). He desired kisses from her, but the woman knew how to defend herself. So, when he gave her one kiss, he had to let her kiss him twice. This game they played for a long time (770), but the woman won the victory at the end, which he granted her. He succeed in making a great purchase which I also would enjoy when I am lying in bed with a beloved woman (775). Such a purchase does not break an arm or a leg, and one does not fall on any stone which would crack a man’s skull.

Sir Hogier was deceived by a fog before his eyes (780), which is true, I am not lying. Sir Hogier and Lady Amelin spent the night with many joys until dawn. I believe that he had never had a better night (785). When the morning star rose, Lady Irmengart walked, which was strange, to her own bedroom [normally she would have spent the night there]. She called: “Get up, sir, you must leave (790), if you want to save your life.” He answered: “Lady Amelin, I will do so.” Then he turned and said: “My dear lady, give me a little piece of jewelry which will allow me for the rest of my life (795) to think of you.” “I have nothing,” said the maid. Thereupon he took a small but very sharp knife out of his pocket and cut off a finger from her hand (800). This brought to an end to all her joy. Then he returned home to his country.

When he had come home, he said: “Sir Bertram, I own everything that you have.” (805) Bertram replied: “Do not say so, since it is certainly not true.” Hogier answered: “Your efforts do not help you; I will not forfeit our wager and have no intention of hesitating (810). I demand everything that is in your possession, both here and at your home.” This deeply disturbed Bertram, and sorrow filled his heart. He was greatly frightened, (815) and he thought of his honor: “How did he manage to do this? He must have truly come up with a lie in order to gain control of all my property. My wife is of such a steady nature (820) that she cannot have wavered in her virtue.” He said: “Whatever might happen, I will turn to the courts because I have certainly won the wager.”
Sir Hogier answered: “That is just fine with me.” Both then went to Verdun where the agreement that they had reached was going to be investigated. Sir Hogier was sure to be the winner (830) and said: “Organize a festivity at which we will settle the conflict. There all your relatives shall see who has truly won the victory and who will be delighted about the triumph.” (835) Bertram responded: “I would be foolish if I did not follow through with this.”

When Lady Irmengart heard of her husband’s arrival, she quickly went to him (840) and embraced him joyfully. She welcomed him and said: “My dear lord, your return brings me much happiness. My heart is singing (845) a song of joy because it is so delighted.” Her husband thanked her, but sighs made it almost impossible for him to speak, which frightened his wife deeply (850).

The very sad Sir Bertram invited everyone to a big festival. He thought: “Now I had better share all my bread with my relatives, because if I have to hand over all my property to this man (855), then I won’t own anything any more. But if good fortune turns toward me and all his property comes into my possession, then it is my full intention to enjoy my generosity.” (860)

Many chickens were prepared, and other foods necessary for such a festival. But worries crept into Bertram’s heart, which his wife clearly noticed. Modestly she went over to him (865) and said: “My dear lord, tell me what worries you, if you truly love me so much. I will always be loyally at your side.” (870) He answered: “My dear lady, my heart is filled with sorrow, but I do not dare to tell you, in your female chastity, and your eyes will see it anyway.” (875) She answered: “My heart-beloved husband, keep in mind that I have been obedient to you since childhood and that I have always fulfilled your wishes (880). Therefore you ought to let me know the cause of your worries. My beloved husband, I might easily give you advice which could help you to get rid of your worries (885) and which could turn your situation to the better.”

Once he had told her the full truth, she said: “Now be well, your heart should no longer mourn (890). Hogier’s cunning cannot help him at all. His property fully belongs to us.” The man was very happy about this announcement and joyfully held the festival. Once they had eaten enough (895) and the tables had been removed, Sir Hogier asked them all to be quiet and began to tell them the whole story and why they had been invited. They all turned pale (900) and looked like dead people. Sir Hogier spoke triumphantly: “I can prove everything here.” He pulled the maid’s finger out of his pocket and said (905), letting everyone see it: “I cut off this finger of hers when I left her bed, and this will be my proof.”

All the relatives reprimanded the lady (910) and accused her bitterly. But she said: “I must lament my shame, but you all advised me to do so.” But then, with loud laughter, she showed them both her hands, (915) which were unharmed. Sir Hogier was furious because he had lost everything that he had ever acquired. Then Amelin arrived (920) and complained about her suffering. Sir Bertram politely approached his opponent: “Sir Hogier, turn over everything to me.” Filled with grief he said: “I’ll do so; take, then, everything that is my own (925), but let me be a beggar in your service.” Then Bertram married him to Amelin and gave her the hundred marks that she had earned, and so they could marry honorably (930). All the rest he kept for himself.

I have told you this story as a lesson for women and maids, that they should bridle their wild desires by means of chaste habits, which will help them not to lose their good reputation. Ruprecht von Würzburg has composed this tale and has delivered it to you. Now let us pray to God and to the sweet Virgin Mary to free us from worldly dishonor and the terrors of Hell with the power of their merciful hands.