

Translation of Rudolf von Ems's *Der guote Gêrhart*

Whatever one does with a good intention, 1
for a good goal and with good ideals,¹
that should be praised as a good thing,
since it has happened with goodness in mind.²
Whoever is driven by his nature 5
to turn to God
his heart, senses, and mind
and to enjoy doing the best possible
should guard himself against the material world.
Then all is good and praiseworthy, 10
whatever good one does out of goodness,
with a good heart and a good intention.
But when he then hopes to gain fame,
in this desire for approbation,
will bring about the end of worthiness 15
in such a bad turn of events
that through the wrong praise
the good praise will be lost on him.
Whoever does something [really] good,
does not care about the praise by the world. 20
Because the world-experienced mind
knows how to recognize and to differentiate
between bad and good
once he has understood both.
A wise person knows how to avoid [the bad], 25
and knows how to recognize what is good.
The good and wise people
rightly praise his fame.
Thus he will become widely known
and his deeds will earn him much renown. 30
If you identify those as good ones,
who look for the good by way of real goodness,
then you should stop giving praise,
since the good person will easily recognize
if he has performed, driven by the goodness in his heart, 35
something good.
The wise ones say that the person who praises himself
without being supported in that by others, must be crazy.
With this teaching [in mind] I present
my small lesson 40
for the wise ones and the foolish folks.

This teaching dawned upon me
 through a story that is guided by truth
 and evolves in the proper fashion,
 how a person would be on the wrong track, 45
 whose fame is destroyed by his accolades
 so that no one will give him praise
 except for what he is giving himself.
 His praise is of little value.
 I have learned this lesson 50
 from a mighty and wise emperor.
 The account of an amazing story
 involving him has given me insights
 which I derived from his actions,
 that is, the lesson that I am presenting here. 55
 Insofar as he disregarded that lesson himself,
 his fame declined,
 diminished and became muted.
 He considered himself so clever,
 so righteous and so good that he carried 60
 in his mind such an illusion
 that he alone believed
 to enjoy praise which carried here in this world
 the crown of joyfulness,
 combined with fame and rich praise. 65
 With such a foolish mind-set
 he praised himself so much
 that the fame was the measure of praise
 which he had given himself.
 Praiseworthiness had been 70
 the cause [beginning] for his fame,
 which was so good and so laudable,
 coming with so much acclaim,
 that he gained such recognition 75
 that in turn destroyed his own worth.
 How this all happened, under what circumstances,
 I will not hide from those
 who want to hear about it.

There once was, as I have heard told, 80
 a great, powerful emperor.
 He was friends with the greatest lords,
 and he was outstanding in honor and manliness.
 His generosity was so extensive
 that it made him known everywhere. 85

He was called Otto,
 and people called him the Red Emperor.³
 All of his mind, heart, and senses
 were directed, as it should be with an emperor,
 toward peace, a good legal system, 90
 good manners, but not toward deception.
 He was bent on truth, charity, and chastity,
 these were his imperial virtues,
 with which he had grown up in a praiseworthy manner
 from his youth to adulthood, 95
 and he was never disregarded,
 when people placed those with the highest praise
 next to each other.
 He carried God in his mind.
 He endeavored to love dearly 100
 all of His commands
 according to the wise teachings
 which Charlemagne's profound wisdom
 had set up as rules.
 He followed them so closely 105
 that he hardly ever transgressed
 what the old laws ordered him to do,
 and he did it all with great care
 and turned his mind [so closely] to it,
 that his legal courts were good. 110
 This way his name was an ornament
 for the Holy Roman Empire.
 He was married to a woman
 who was a perfect match for him and the imperial crown. 115
 She had preserved her beautiful womanhood
 with chastity and good manners for God.
 She was called Ottegebe.
 The noble, pure, and good lady
 loved in her heart 120
 God so steadily
 that the highly virtuous woman
 never forgot her creator.
 Because of the steadiness of her good manners
 she never lost God's or her husband's love. 125
 She was filled with such strong virtues
 in her mind, her heart, and her soul,
 and so much supported by God's grace
 that she wore already here in all worthiness
 the heavenly crown. 130

Saint Ottegebe the pure soul
 was so much loved by her Creator
 with all His heartfelt feelings
 and with such strong love
 that His praise of her never faded. 135
 She advised her husband, the emperor
 to think ahead of his afterlife,
 what wealth a person has here on earth,
 and that his property does not stay with him
 when he leaves this miserable world. 140
 Once it will be taken away from him,
 he should think of the rewards
 for the deeds that he has done.
 When he has served [God] well, his reward will be good.
 He will not be rewarded in any other way, 145
 but for the deeds performed.
 This the lord took into his mind
 and thought about whether he should share his goods
 in the name of God,
 so that he would heal thereby 150
 the wounds caused by his sins.
 He took it as a message
 reading the truth of Scripture
 which talks about alms:
 Whoever freely gives them, 155
 will get absolved all the time
 from sins, just as water quenches
 fire. This was for the good lord
 a dear example and a solace,
 which freed him from doubt. 160

The emperor and the empress
 discussed this among themselves
 that they would honor with the love
 of the highest empress [Virgin Mary]
 would honor God their creator 165
 and would increase service in His name
 on behalf of their [own] honor.
 They received the pure advice most praiseworthy
 through divine inspiration
 in their hearts, without any evil thoughts,⁴ 170
 as I am going to tell you now.
 They decided together
 to establish, in honor of God,
 a mighty seat for an archbishop

on their own land, 175
 through which they would be able
 on behalf of the honor of the Virgin
 to increase forever service for God.
 This happened. They donated [much]
 of their own property, and *ministeriales*,⁵ 180
 cities, castles, and also land.
 This is called Magdeburg until today;
 it is located in the territory of Saxony.
 The emperor donated at that time
 so much property that because of its wealth 185
 it shines forth through its riches
 in its highly famous name.
 When the bishopric
 was richly endowed
 just as he wanted it, 190
 he selected as canons
 only the sons of princes.
 A highly born prince
 was chosen as archbishop [Albrecht II].
 On to him bestowed 195
 the noble and powerful emperor
 the privilege that from hence forth
 the archbishop would be included
 at the council when a king would be chosen,⁶
 being a guardian, who was supposed to fight hostile wrath 200
 and unfair judicial courts.
 The mighty power [of the bishopric] well reflected
 the impact of the imperial alms-giving.
 The emperor was never tired to make every effort,
 that he wanted to be associated with this bishopric. 205
 From the bishop's hand
 he received great feudal lands [for the cathedral].
 He convinced the princes
 that they gave of their own lands 210
 and received those again
 as feudal fiefdoms.
 The bishopric became mighty
 through so much wealth.
 This was the truth, as the chronicle reports to us, 215
 and as it was written down there.
 The noble and pure empress
 was very pleased with it [as well]
 and gave from herself whatever she could

which was to increase God's honor. 220
 After the bishopric had been established,
 she never neglected to donate more.
 When this all had happened
 and the emperor fully recognized
 the adornment and the great wealth, 225
 as it was granted to the house of God,
 he was thoroughly happy about it.
 He often turned to God
 and prayed intensively,
 which he did happily 230
 in the name of God and at all times.
 Without any wrong thought in her heart
 the empress was filled with constant love
 for God.
 Now the wise emperor 235
 was much filled with the desire
 for praise by the world.
 There was nothing comparable
 to give him any joy.
 That he did so much good 240
 in honor of God,
 made him very happy,
 since that gave him all the time
 without anyone doubting him
 the praise of the world. 245
 Everyone said in full agreement,
 using the same words,
 that an act had been done by him
 in a truly imperial fashion.
 That was the common account 250
 everywhere in the country.
 Thus his praise grew everywhere.

When the emperor well perceived
 that he had earned the recognition by the world,
 he was thinking to himself: 255
 "Since I have gained the praise of the world
 by means of my goods,
 then, as I believe, I should rightly
 receive a great reward from God,
 since there was very little that held me back 260
 in doing what I did for Him.
 With my wealth I have bought [for myself]

a steady place in heaven.
 Since now my good deed brings to light,
 in a praiseworthy fashion all over the world, 265
 the crown of accolades,
 my reward also ought to be higher,
 since a good deed has been made known
 which shines before God's eyes
 so richly that there is no one living, 270
 who has given as much in worldly goods
 for the eternal life.”
 That thought never got out of his mind.
 The extraordinary praise was so deeply
 implanted in his heart 275
 that it was never free of the illusion of praise.⁷

Now I have heard the wise saying
 that no one can keep his mind hidden
 for a long time,
 neither when filled with joy nor when filled with sorrow. 280
 His tongue finally formulated a word
 somewhere according to his wish
 which planted his heart's desire
 firmly in his mind.

 This I will prove to you as I am supposed to do. 285
 The story [to be told] will prove this proverb
 in the case of the emperor,
 who finally turned
 with his words to God,
 voicing what he had kept hidden for a long time. 290
 This occurred as I am going to tell you.
 It happened one day
 in the cathedral, of all places.
 The mighty and worthy man
 knelt on the ground on his exposed knees 295
 when he was in front of the lord's altar
 and sighed deeply from the bottom of his heart.
 He said, as I will reveal to you,
 in his mind to God in the following way:
 “Oh Lord, Alpha and Omega, 300
 true creator, sweet Christ,
 I believe in You,
 in the triune unity,
 in God who carries three names,
 three names in one power, 305

who ordered everything that has ever been seen
 and also what has never been seen,
 with three powers.

Those three powers have protected 310
 with Your triune strength
 everything in creation.

The first power is the one
 within the Father.

The other power is the wisdom 315
 which carries the Son's name.

The goodness of the Holy Spirit is,
 as I fathom,
 the third power in You

according to Your wise mastery. 320

These three powers have forcefully
 merged together in one bundle,
 and that bundle has so much power
 that it will never go away.

That is You, Father Sabaoth,⁸ 325
 Your fatherly power ordained
 the eternal stability of the heaven,
 how and in what manner
 the course of the stars run and how the sun shines.

You have divided with Your power 330
 day and night.

Your art has given each
 their own time according to the right scale.

The virtues of grace, praise, peace, and blessing
 wish for You at all times 335
 to grant to You the heavenly triumph,
 which You have divided
 into nine choirs.

Those who are angels and archangels,
 praise You, Father and Son, 340
 in three names being one,
 always being pure,
 without beginning and without end,
 in divine victory.

The honor of the bishop's chair, of the bishop's office, 345
 the office of the princes, the power of the heaven,
 the constant power of all forces
 give You praise by day and night
 and Your fatherly mind.

Cherubim and Seraphim 350

are constantly ready for Your divine Highness
 to give You praise at all times.
 You are also praised steadily
 by what has, with the help of Your power,
 be hidden so secretly 355
 away from human eyes
 that it will always remain
 unseen by people.
 You are also praised by other creatures
 that I cannot, out of fear of You, 360
 identify by name;
 I recognize thereby
 that Your divine council
 has created all beings.
 Your fatherly will created that. 365
 You are sitting high on Cherubim
 and you command knowledge
 of the depth of the abyss.
 The other spirit in You I call the council
 which has joined You: 370
 that is the wisdom of the Son.
 That has created with Your strength
 in perfect manner
 air, water, fire, and earth.⁹
 They are the core of all things, 375
 created by Your pure word
 that came out of Your worthy mouth,
 and made everything that exists here in this world.
 I know, as far as I have learned,
 there is the third power in You: 380
 that is Your humility,
 the kindness of the Holy Spirit,
 with which the life of being
 is given existence.
 Whatever is living here on earth, 385
 in the air or what is swimming in the water,
 that lives in its full blossom
 through the goodness of the Holy Spirit.
 That life is triune;
 Your Spirit is the power over all. 390
 One life has living life,¹⁰
 which yet does not know about life,
 such as wood, grass, the roots:
 all that is living, but those things are not aware of it, 395

except that they grow, as you can see.
 The other form of life has the sense
 that it lives and understands that,
 and yet cannot explain it
 with the help of reason. 400
 Those are the creatures with a reason,
 that swim, fly, and walk.
 The third form of life possesses intelligence,
 senses, reason, and rationality.
 Your living spirit has granted to it 405
 law, art, speech, and life,
 such as myself and all Your children
 who are called human beings.
 That is the triune power
 which has turned to you with all might 410
 to Your sweet Godhead.
 Praise and honor to You.
 When Adam committed a wrong deed,
 it happened because of a woman's false council
 that he broke Your rule 415
 and thus all mankind was lost.
 At that point Your sweet word
 was ready for ignorant mankind,
 as a consolation for us poor people.
 Thus Your word redeemed us, 420
 your child's humanity,
 which constantly stays with You in loyalty.¹¹
 The word departed from Your chair,
 and a pure maiden received it,
 who gave birth, in a human fashion, 425
 as a mother and as a maid at the same time.¹²
 That is You, sweet pure Christ,
 since You are Your father's son.
 The Holy Spirit is both of You.
 Through Your complete worthiness 430
 I believe that Your being
 suffered death in human sorrow
 because of our foolishness
 in harsh human pain.
 And according to the words of the faith 435
 on the third day rose [from death]
 the true human being and God
 so that the Spirit through the law
 of divinity entered hell

and took freed them 440
 from eternal lamenting,
 and on the fortieth day
 He sat at Your right side,
 and did not forget his comfort
 that he had left behind here on earth 445
 as a promise.

Since I believe in that
 in a Christian fashion, just as I am supposed to,
 pure God, I am begging You
 that You grant me Your hearing 450
 because of my sweet faith
 so that I may find out,
 perceived through human eyes,
 in Your divine secrecy
 what high praise is prepared for me 455
 as a reward for my labor
 that I have done on Your behalf.
 I know in full truth, without any doubt,
 that now in these times
 in all the lands far and wide, 460
 there is no one as good a person,
 who has served You so well, Holy Christ,
 as I have done for You.
 All over the world people praise
 my great accomplishments. 465
 With the intention of serving You
 I have carried out my duties for Your divinity
 and have always been ready
 to work hard for you,
 acquiring constant praise with great strength 470
 together with many illustrious knights,
 who have sworn an oath to serve
 You ever more.
 In order to enhance Your mother's honor,
 I have given the most wealth 475
 in Your name.

Now I request, without being lost in an illusion,
 since I have donated to You
 so many fiefdoms,
 that You, very sweet, pure God, 480
 on behalf of Your mother's honor,
 show me what I will receive from You
 as a reward for all my efforts,

that I have performed on Your behalf.”

As the emperor had formulated that prayer with endearing words, he did not desire anything less but what the story is telling us, since God granted him	485
just that what he desired, that is, that he was going to see how God was going to reward him for what good he had done for Him. Now listen properly to his prayer to Him, before whom no one can hide, whose eyes look into all hearts and who knows in advance what people are going to think. That is God of the wise council who has thought ahead in His mind what will happen in the future until the Day of Judgment.	490
He heard and saw what the emperor said, who had handed over so much of his property to Him.	495
The emperor begged God intensively in so many ways to let him know, what kind of reward he was going to receive, for which he had done good deeds.	500
Then there came, as I have heard, a very trustworthy messenger, whom God had sent to him. He was eager, shining, and fast. He had a loud and clear voice. The emperor perceived how it came close to him. It was the answer to his request, filled with some wrath: “Highly worthy and mighty emperor, God has granted you much honor in this world. He gave you life, honor, and wealth, now your heartfelt mind has given you a good advice to share it all in the name of God as well.	505
	510
	515
	520
	525

You are being praised fully
all over the world.

In heaven there was a chair prepared for you,
placed next to the Highest
and at the highest rank.

530

Your [lust for] fame has lowered it.

The praise for your good deed has been silenced
because of your great arrogance,
which you did not repress toward God,
because of the advice by your misled heart
so that you have destroyed your good deed in the face of God.

535

Now you will receive as a reward,
since you have done it all in order to gain fame,
the praise of the world,
which you have manipulated
in so many ways
in order to gain God's reward.

540

He is not honored who desires goods;
he should seek to have a heart's pure mind
to achieve human salvation;
therefore he will be able to acquire
with eternal reward
the heavenly crown.

545

You could have achieved your goal well
in a grand manner with many things,
and your praise would have been great before God
if you had done, according to His command
without any evil intention
such praiseworthy good deed
as a good merchant has done,
who never earned the name of a prince.

550

That merchant's alms have gained him the reward
that his name is written
into the book of life
with God's approval.

555

You will have to amend this with God
with repentance through good deeds,
if you want that your effort will be worth anything
and come to good fruition.

560

Otherwise you will be denied
the reward that formerly had been prepared for you."

565

The emperor got so frightened
that the terror took away all of his joy.
He said to himself:

“Lord God, how can it be 570
 that that merchant could have
 served so much better than me?
 With your permission, I would like to say
 that I have made so many worthy knights
 into your servants, 575
 who could help You much better
 being ready to serve You
 in their worthiness, with their goods,
 that is, serve You, Good God,
 and Your dear mother, 580
 than such a kind of man,
 who never earned such a rank.
 But I would like to know,
 if it can be without incurring wrath,
 what his name might be, 585
 so that I could get to know him.
 Dear Lord, sweet God,
 let this happen through Your command.”
 The voice said to the emperor,
 when he had spoken those words: 590
 “I want to respond to your heart’s desire
 and properly name the merchant
 who has earned the great goodness
 with so much justification
 that his praise becomes praiseworthy 595
 in all times without any end.
 It is the Good Gerhart
 of Cologne who has protected himself
 from all sinfulness.
 He is free from all false loyalty; 600
 his generous heart makes everyone say
 that he is called a good person:
 for that reason he is called the Good One.
 His blissfulness is a decoration for the entire country
 where he has his abode. 605
 He is greatly praised everywhere.”
 “Oh, Lord, what has he done
 that he has earned so much gratitude?”
 asked the emperor immediately.
 “If you want to learn about it, 610
 then travel there one of these days
 and ask him to tell you the truth.”
 “A messenger might learn well

what I want to find out through him.”

Then the voice answered him:

615

“You should be happy

if he tells you the full truth

when you go to see him.

When he tells you the full truth

without any lying,

620

how he has served God,

then I know well that your heart will let go

the strife and will acknowledge him without any jealousy

that he has served better

God’s gracefulness than you have done,

625

however much you might boast about it.”

The emperor then immediately got ready
when the voice had disappeared.

He left the cathedral

and wondered mightily,

630

what the meaning of those words might have been

by which the merchant

had received so much praise

and such high acknowledgment.

At the beginning of the next morning

635

the emperor heard mass

in his imperial glamour.

When he came down,¹³ they had readied
his horse and he rode off.

He left all his knights behind,

640

except that he took some people with him secretly
who seemed most fitting for this.

He asked them to keep the journey a secret.

Early in the morning the mighty emperor rode

out of the city of Magdeburg

645

in such a secret manner

and with such a private group of helpers

that no one noticed it.

The worthy man sent ahead

messengers to Cologne

650

and told them to inform the bishop¹⁴

that he wanted to speak with him

within the next few days

and that he only wanted to arrive

only under the cloak of secrecy

655

together with his private group.

The messengers told him those things.
 The bishop was very pleased
 and prepared himself well
 because he wanted to welcome properly 660
 the great man¹⁵ in his palace.
 Then the emperor arrived.
 The bishop rode toward him honorably
 together with noble knights all well dressed,
 and also with a group of the burghers, 665
 who were excited about this visitor.
 According to imperial rituals,
 with bells ringing and with relics brought along
 the mighty emperor was welcomed
 in a worthy fashion 670
 in the major city of Cologne.
 The bishop asked him politely
 to tell him the news
 why he had come there
 in such a secret manner 675
 with such a small band of men.
 The noble and rich emperor then said
 displaying his best eloquence:
 "A secret revelation
 has urged me to come here privately, 680
 to find good council.
 I will need the help of all burghers
 who are sitting here.
 Now, do not forget,
 dear lord bishop, 685
 to ask all the burghers
 to come to the court the next morning.
 I want them to give council
 about one thing.
 Let on my behalf come forward to the square 690
 everyone without exception,
 both the poor and the rich,
 when the bells will ring
 and I will tell them the time to come."
 "Lord, that will be done." 695
 The bishop ordered his messengers
 to go out into the city.
 They carried out what he requested from them
 and ordered, as I have heard,
 all the burghers to come and see the emperor. 700

This took everyone by surprise
 and all burghers were wondering
 why the famous emperor had come
 all by himself.¹⁶

But they would not have wanted to go to see him,¹⁷ 705
 unless they would have put on, everyone among them,
 their best clothes
 so that they could appear in a worthy fashion
 before their lord,
 either standing, speaking, or sitting. 710
 Then the emperor went to have dinner.¹⁸
 They did not forget to offer
 an imperial meal to the emperor.
 It was presented to him out of love
 which the friendly and well-meaning bishop had for him, 715
 just as one would have expected to serve it to an emperor.
 Once they had eaten
 and had sat there for a while,
 the ruler of Rome went to sleep.
 He said good-night 720
 to the bishop after that,
 speaking from his imperial mouth.¹⁹

After the night had passed, the day arrived.
 The burghers all agreed
 to go to the palace, 725
 in order to welcome their lord properly.
 Once they had sung the early morning mass,
 they heard the sound of one bell ringing,
 calling them all to come to the council,
 telling them that the time had arrived 730
 to go to the court.
 At the time when they had heard that message,
 the emperor had already arrived at the court
 together with the bishop.
 They sat next to each other. 735
 Then the burghers arrived
 in a good procession, not in disorder,
 the old ones before the young ones.
 They were so nobly dressed
 that they were well entitled to greet 740
 in a good courtly fashion
 the emperor.
 He welcomed the burghers
 equally graciously

according to courtly standards. 745
 He asked them all to sit down
 in a wide ring in a group.
 They extended very kind greetings,
 which he returned similarly.
 He thought about it, 750
 where he should sit next to the entire group
 for whom he had gotten there.
 He looked around
 and examined quietly
 whether they might not honor one among themselves 755
 to whom they paid tribute
 above all and no one else.
 Immediately he noticed one
 who was the foremost among them
 who appeared to him to be the worthiest. 760
 He noticed in him
 that people made room for him in the crowd;
 wherever he wanted to turn,
 they stood up for him.
 He was a splendidly looking man, 765
 he had turned old in good measure.
 He was a very mature person;
 his hair was as white as ice
 both on his head and in his beard.
 He looked attractive and was impressive, 770
 just as one would like to see in a man.
 He was endowed with such manners,
 that he never lost manly praise in virtuous style.
 He completely stayed away from instability.
 He was a good person and well educated, 775
 not failing in sweet manners,
 and was loyal and fully trustworthy.
 As a wise and constant person
 he had grown up as a man.
 He was richly dressed. 780
 His dress and coat were of dark red color
 like blood, and of good quality,
 adorned with the fur of a sable.
 The coat was a blend of cloth and fur
 out of ermine, more white than a swan. 785
 He wore a ring on the finger and a brooch
 made out of good gems,
 those were the attributes of the worthy man,

and also a valuable belt.
 His hair was done in the courtly fashion, 790
 in a simple curly way.
 His beard was trimmed
 elegantly and adroitly.
 That was the Good Gerhart,
 whom the emperor was seeking out. 795
 He was the one of whom God
 had received the good deeds
 that he had performed in His name
 whatever he had undertaken in good terms
 because his heart was filled 800
 with pure intentions.
 He was as loyal as a diamond
 and shone through his manly steadiness,
 as the story's source is telling us.

When the emperor noticed him, 805
 he secretly spoke to the bishop:
 "Tell me, who is that man
 who knows how to demonstrate
 such noble manner and behavior?
 Indeed, he shines forth so splendidly 810
 that he appears to me
 as being free of any vice."
 The bishop answered immediately:
 "He is a virtuous hero,²⁰
 who can not tolerate falsitude. 815
 That is that worthy old man,
 whose heart has always pined for the true goodness.
 From childhood until today
 he has always protected himself from vicissitude.
 This is the Good Gerhart. 820
 His name is known far and wide.
 He has received this epithet for good reasons,
 since his entire attitude
 is determined by pure goodness."
 When the emperor heard this, 825
 he liked him more and more
 and felt great about him.
 "I have heard that of him"
 said Emperor Otto thereupon.
 He was pleased seeing him, 830
 since he had been told

of so many of his virtues.
 The emperor then kindly spoke,
 when he looked at the good man,
 who was standing there in such a praiseworthy manner: 835
 “Lords, I have come riding here
 to look for advice in my misery
 which forced me to undertake this travel.”
 Then everyone spoke up in likewise fashion,
 both the poor and the rich,²¹ 840
 that they would be ready to give their advice,
 if they could give him truly
 proper council,
 honoring his imperial rank.
 The emperor thanked them 845
 without any deception,
 as he knew well how to do.
 He said: “Whoever is looking for advice,²²
 ought to look for it where he can find
 advice without being deceived. 850
 For that reason I am looking for council here,
 since your smartness has always
 provided me with aid and advice in full truth.²³
 Now I would like to select one from among you (allow me to do so,
 without incurring your wrath) 855
 whom I will tell the reason
 why I have been driven to come here.
 I am looking for council from him,
 and afterwards from all of you,
 if you agree with that plan.” 860
 “Yes, oh Lord, whatever you prefer,”
 we have no concerns about it,”
 they were all saying, and:
 “whatever you want, we will be happy with it as well.”
 [The Emperor:] “Gerhart, then I would like to talk with you. 865
 My heart is drawn to you.”
 [Gerhart:] “Lord, I do not command such wisdom
 to go alone to you
 to give council for the empire,”
 said the very well mannered 870
 Gerhart, the highly virtuous man.
 But then he went with the emperor
 into a private room.
 When they stepped into it,
 the emperor locked the door 875

with a large bolt.

He went to sit down on a chair.

He did not allow the merchant to keep standing,
he also had to sit down next to him.

[Gerhart:] “Oh no, lord,” said the good man,
“I can sit well on the stool,
since that ought to be enough for me,”
he said in his excellent wisdom.

880

[Emperor:]: “No, you must sit here
right next to me.”

885

He struggled against it, but then it had to be.

Then the mighty prince said:

“Gerhart, I am going to tell you what is on my mind:
I have come here to see you.”

[Gerhart:] “Lord, that was not appropriate:

890

I do not possess enough of wealth,
do not enjoy the birth right, do not have the noble body, or mind;
you ought to recognize that yourself.

You never would have, please accept that,
any need of me

895

and if I may,

I will not give you any advice

(unfortunately my abilities are not enough for that).

I would have come to you, if fetched by a messenger,
as soon as I would have received word.”

900

[Emperor:] “Now be assured, I tell you honestly,
I have come riding here
only because of you.

Now let me witness your loyalty

and answer me what I am going to ask you.”

905

[Gerhart:] “Gladly, lord, I will do so,
if I know anything.” [Emperor:] “Yes, you do.”

[Gerhart:] “So I will do it because I am supposed to be
obedient to you.”

[Emperor:] “Then tell me openly,

910

how did it happen, through what method,

have you been called the Good Gerhart

from very early on,

and why people gave you that epithet?

I want to ask you for the favor

915

to inform me about

what you have done for God

so that you carry such a name.”

[Gerhart:] “My lord, the reason for that was

that people have the habit 920
 that they give extra names
 to those whom they observe as being reliable,
 and thus treat them as honest men.
 That is a bad custom among them.
 Lord, that also happened to me. 925
 Unfortunately I cannot tell you
 why I might be called 'the good one,'
 unless I would deceive myself.
 I have not done any special thing
 on behalf of God that I might carry 930
 with good reasons that great name,
 which is so high and praiseworthy.²⁴
 I have often had a good intention,
 but then I failed, as it often happens with people,
 since I was weak and did not have the necessary wealth. 935
 Even though I was prepared,
 I still could not do anything
 to chase after praise, honor, or fame
 and acquire any of it,
 so that it would have been to my advantage. 940
 When I wanted to do something good,
 the weakness of my intention
 took away from me the good will
 so that I helped the poor in their suffering
 with very poor means. 945
 I gave sour beer and rye bread
 as alms outside of my gate,
 when I saw the poor standing outside
 in all of their miserable suffering.
 Unfortunately, I rarely demonstrated 950
 that I had ever received from my creator
 any valuable goods.
 But whenever I thought of God
 and gave away something to fulfill his commands,
 then I handed out 955
 some old clothing,
 and sadly enough I seldom gave
 anything else.
 I have also always uttered only short prayers.
 Once I had done so at a time, 960
 It seemed to me to be enough for a year.
 My lord, I truly should be exempted
 from carrying that honorable name,

since I have not earned it.”

The emperor said: “It has to be after all
that you give me, which is my wish,
a better answer to my question. 965

I know very well that you have done
something great on behalf of God,
and you should let me know what it was,
and for what reason you earned that name.” 970

Then Gerhart answered:

“You should spare me that, lord.”

[The Emperor:] “No, that cannot be, indeed,
say it, I will not permit anything else,
you will not make me forgo my request,
you will have to reveal it,
irrespective of how much you might dislike it.” 975

Then the good man called upon God in his heart. 980

He said: “Oh dear, Lord God,
do I now have to, following your order
reveal to you whether I

have done anything good on your behalf?
Have mercy on me, Lord. 985

Consider that I, Your poor creature,
will have to do it by force,
and not in order to gain fame.

This is such a harsh man
against whom I cannot defend myself. 990

I must tell him everything
what he wants to hear from me.

Out of fear I must tell him
what good things have happened through me.
You know that, sweet Lord.” 995

With those thoughts in mind
he knelt before the emperor
with the intention

of begging him
through that method 1000

to let go of his request.

He formulated his desire as follows:

He begged the emperor to allow him
not to answer the question. And in his mind
he requested from God to let him know,
whether he would lose, through his revelation 1005

as a result of his bragging
God’s sweet grace.

He formulated out of his heart's piety
 two types of questions 1010
 one for God and one for the emperor.
 The heart separated body and mind
 because of the loyalty toward both,
 as I will tell you.

He bent his heart's knee before God, 1015
 and the body's knee before the emperor;
 the heart's mind was lying before God,
 the body before the emperor did nothing
 but that he begged him
 to let go of that question. 1020

The heart before God was such
 that it requested advice and help from Him
 so that He would, in His grace
 grant him to be freed from this obligation
 if He was so inclined, 1025
 since in those matters
 he really disliked, as he felt in his heart,
 to speak about his fame in response to the emperor's request.

Since he now had turned in prayer
 his mind, heart, and reason to both, 1030
 I believe that his heartfelt mind
 made this possible for him
 that the good was granted in a good fashion,
 as it is always the case when someone requests the right thing from Him.

The goodness of the sweet, true Christ, 1035
 who is the origin of all good,
 was present there in much purer form
 than it had been before
 in the shape of human goodness.
 In the blossom of the flower of goodness 1040
 merciful goodness blossomed there
 for the emperor's soul.
 God granted him in His graciousness
 what he had requested from Him.

The emperor did not spare [Gerhart] 1045
 to answer him what he had asked him to do.
 God who had forgiven his guilt
 because of his prayer, and this without wrath.
 The emperor did not let go
 his continuous jealousy²⁵ 1050
 and he forced the merchant to tell him
 what he wanted to learn from him.

When the Good Gerhart
 recognized this in the emperor,
 that his request was denied, 1055
 he had to tell how it had happened.
 He said: "My honorable lord,
 grant me out of your mercy,
 and accept on behalf of God,
 to take from me willingly 1060
 thousand marks that I will give you
 so that you no longer request that from me."
 This began to irritate the emperor.
 He said: "Gerhart, now tell me,
 how come that goodness rests with you so easily 1065
 and that you so easily offer me
 thousand marks in order for me
 to spare you to respond to the request.
 I will be wondering about that forever."
 [Gerhart:] "I will tell you, my lord, 1070
 why I have offered you that money.
 If I had done any good deeds
 on behalf of my creator,
 that would become meaningless
 if I were bragging about it, 1075
 whereby I would make it useless.
 He certainly knows whether I have done
 any good for Him.
 He will know how to reward me for that;
 for that I should not give praise to myself." 1080

When the emperor heard that,
 his joy was in part diminished.
 He thought by himself:
 "Oh you good Lord God,
 how is it that this man 1085
 can understand all that better than me,
 while I am rightly called
 emperor of the Holy Roman Empire?
 That a merchant has a better insight
 than my own imperial understanding 1090
 will grieve me forever.
 Lord God, I am begging You
 to forgive me
 what I have done wrong to You.
 Whatever I have misspoken, 1095
 I will repent for,

trusting Your great mercy.”

He said: “Gerhart, now let it be,
tell me what I want to hear from you.

I have been convinced 1100
that you may do so truly
without any false self-praise.”

The good man responded:

“My lord, if it is the case 1105
that this is God’s will

(which I cannot know truly),

I would not have denied your request so far,
know this for sure.”

[Emperor:] “It is not against God’s command, 1110
since I am asking you in the name of God
that you do not keep it hidden from me
and tell me the full truth.”

[Gerhart:] “Lord, since it has to be,

God must know my mind, 1115
that I am doing it because you force me to do it
and not out of [the desire] for worldly fame.”

These were the Good Gerhart’s words,
when he was asked once again.

[Narrator:] Since things have developed this way, 1120
that he will tell the story himself,
let me become quiet.

Let us have him talk himself 1125
about the origin of the full truth,
how he got that name,
that is, how he was called ‘the good.’

Gerhart then sat down on the chair,²⁶
as the emperor had personally ordered him to do,
who had not let go of his request.

Thus [Gerhart] began to speak:

“Lord, it started that way: 1130

When my father died,
passing away in so much honor
that he had acquired such a reputation
which made him known far and wide 1135
all over the land

and recognized by the people,
his inheritance came to me,
since it was rightly mine

according to the inheritance laws. 1140
 It was such a great amount of wealth,
 and I was happy to accept it as such;
 it was certainly more than enough.
 Dear lord, then I acted
 as everyone else likes to do: 1145
 I endeavored to put my goods
 to the best possible use
 and increased my gains
 on behalf of my son whom God had granted me.
 In him I found His command 1150
 realized just as it pleased me;
 God had shown me His love for me
 in my son's goodness.
 This gave me solace
 since he grew up, as I noticed 1155
 just as my heart desired.
 When he began in his youth
 to display love for manly virtues,
 I felt great joy in my heart.
 I thought to myself, 1160
 that I would invest my good
 on his behalf,
 so that I might gain thereby
 the chance according to old customs
 that they would call him the Rich Gerhart 1165
 and would not grudge him
 to carry the name of my father,
 who was called the Rich Gerhart
 because of his wealth which he had acquired
 in a worthy fashion throughout his life. 1170
 I was prepared to trust my good fortune
 and left to my son
 a part of the goods, which he was supposed to have
 and with which he might be able to live
 like a wise man. 1175
 I took then silver from him
 which weighed 50,000 marks.
 Whatever profitable goods there were available,
 I took it with me as much as I deemed wise
 to the markets in heathen lands. 1180
 Once I had made up my mind,
 I ordered to place provisions
 in my ship enough for three years.

I had under my command
 experienced and good sailors, 1185
 who were familiar with the sea.
 A scribe also came along
 who kept an account of all goods
 and who performed without delay
 the seven daily prayers. 1190
 Once I was ready as I had intended
 for my voyage,
 just as my heart desired,
 I traveled with all my goods
 over the sea to Russia,²⁷ 1195
 to Livonia and Prussia,
 where I found many saber furs.
 From there I traveled to Samarkand,²⁸
 to Damascus and Niniveh.²⁹
 There I found plenty of merchandise, 1200
 such as many rich furs,
 more than anywhere else in the world.
 I purchased so much of it
 because I fully realized
 that, once having come home, 1205
 I would double the amount
 of [the original] in silver and even more.
 From there I returned to my voyage across the sea
 and wanted to return home.
 My business had turned out in every respect 1210
 so well beyond all of my own expectations
 that I could not have had any further wish
 which I might think of
 or any other desire.
 My intentions had been so fully accomplished, 1215
 that, whatever I might have dreamed of,
 I could not have wished it better.
 On my loyalty, I am telling you that.
 Now I realized that my plan
 should be completed, 1220
 as I had originally intended.
 At that very moment
 strong thunderstorms arose.
 They chased us toward a destination
 with all their force and great strength 1225
 for twelve days and twelve nights.
 during which we never enjoyed

a calm of the storm or the reappearance of the sun.
 We experienced much suffering.
 The storm constantly caused us much pain. 1230
 Then we reached, I am telling you,
 on the thirteenth day
 a mountain range which rose up to a high elevation.
 It was so entirely unknown
 that there was no one among the men 1235
 who recognized it,
 or could have told me
 that he had ever seen it
 in all of his life.
 It was the unknown wild world where we had arrived.³⁰ 1240
 At that moment the weather improved.
 After the long time of raging storms
 the day turned nice and clear.
 We forgot, I honestly tell you,
 all the previous suffering. 1245
 Nevertheless, we were greatly concerned
 because we were afraid of the strange land.
 The waves had brought us
 to the harbor near the mountains.
 Then I sent one sailor ahead 1250
 to climb the mountain, and I told him to take a look,
 whether he might espy somehow
 any farmed land.
 He should then inform us about that.
 This happened, the sailor 1255
 climbed on top of the mountain
 and wanted to see whether he could recognize
 any inhabited land.
 He observed, lying below the mountain,
 a wide and pleasant plain, 1260
 beautifully settled, as he told us.
 He said that he had never seen
 a land that had pleased him more.
 As much as he had measured it with his eyes
 as to its length, width, and extension, 1265
 the land did not appear known to him,
 and he could not recognize
 where that region and the land
 in their width and length came to their end.
 When he had reached the top of the mountain, 1270
 as I had asked him to do before,

he discovered a city located below
 at the foot of the mountain next to the sea.
 It seemed well fortified to him,
 with many splendid towers. 1275
 The size of the city I would compare
 to the city of Cologne.³¹
 The sea partly surrounded it;
 on one and a half sides there was water,
 a good harbor deep enough for ships. 1280
 The castle's moats were filled with water.
 The city was, indeed, well fortified,
 against threats from enemies.
 Three streets allowed to transport
 merchandise from the countryside. 1285
 On the fourth corner there was a gate
 allowing merchandise to come in from heathendom [per ship].
 The sailor observed exactly
 how people came from the countryside
 toward the city in large numbers, 1290
 pulling many carts,
 which aimed for the castle,
 filled with much valuable merchandise.
 He did not know where the many elephants
 originated from. 1295
 On the three other roads traveled
 many mules, horses, and carts,
 carrying such great merchandise,
 coming from and going to the castle,
 and this for great profit 1300
 and he swore to me
 that wherever he had traveled before,
 he had never seen
 such a huge market as he had observed there,
 and never so many objects for sale. 1305
 There was such a throng of people,
 that he swore by God,
 that he had never seen such a crowd.
 Once the sailor had learned everything³²
 about the city, the area, and the land, 1310
 he returned and told us
 how it had turned out,
 and what he had seen there.
 Then we directed our ship toward that goal,
 that is, toward the strong fortress. 1315

What the sailor had told me
 about that city,
 I found to be true,
 and just as one could only wish for.
 When I sailed into the fortified harbor, 1320
 [I noticed that] the burghers were heathens
 and yet so well mannered
 that they gave me kind greetings;
 with that they eased for me
 many of my heartfelt worries, 1325
 which had naturally occupied me deeply.
 All that gave me some comfort.
 Then I looked around everywhere
 if I might find someone
 to whom I might dare to entrust 1330
 all my goods
 and whose promise of peace might protect me.
 Right then I saw a man,
 who instilled confidence in me.³³
 He approached me in a princely manner. 1335
 He was so manly in his appearance
 that his impression made me believe
 that I should ask for his protection.
 Many worthy knights followed him
 and also many squires. I hurried 1340
 through the throng toward him
 and wanted to present my request to him.

The noble and worthy knight
 began to greet me right away
 in heathen [Arabic] language, when he espied me. 1345
 Once he had given me his greeting
 I bowed before him, as one ought to respond to greetings,
 but he realized and noticed clearly,
 as the wise people mostly do,
 that I could not understand his language. 1350
 Then the prince spoke in a courtly fashion:
 "Tell me, do you understand French!"
 [Gerhart:] "Yes, lord, I know well
 both the language and also the country [of France]."
 [Prince:] "Then may you be greeted." 1355
 I said: "*Merci beaucoup*, Sir,"
 feeling great joy in my heart.
 Then the mighty prince said:
 "Dear sir and guest, now tell me,

what has brought you to this country? 1360
 Are you a Frenchman, or what?
 What country are you coming from?"
 Then I told him everything
 that I was a merchant
 from German lands far away. 1365
 Then the lord asked me
 what I was looking for in this country.
 I answered him thereupon:
 I have been told in truth³⁴
 that in this heathen land, 1370
 there would be an annual market
 at this time. I traveled then
 with my merchandise to this land.
 The most precious goods that I could have found
 I have eagerly 1375
 brought with me to this kingdom."
 When the lord heard that,
 he immediately asked me
 whether people called me a Christian
 and whether I acknowledged 1380
 baptism according to the Christian law.
 I said that I was called according to God's command
 a Christian in the name of Christ.
 Then the prince responded right away:
 "Since you have arrived here at this time 1385
 from such a great distance
 in order to honor my overlord,
 you will not be amiss in anything,
 neither regards your personal needs nor your goods.
 In the name of my overlord 1390
 I will receive all your goods [for safekeeping].
 Whoever might do any wrong to you,
 will have done that wrong to me.
 Whatever you want to sell
 or what you might purchase, that will 1395
 remain free of any tariff
 in the name of my overlord's honor.
 Then I want to honor you even more
 because of your [long] journey.
 Since you have expressed such great love for my overlord 1400
 and wanted to visit the market,
 you will experience good fortune here
 without anyone begrudging you that.

I want to make on your behalf
 a harbor for all Christians, free of tariff. 1405
 That is situated near by,
 it was given to me by my overlord as a fiefdom,
 whatever merchandise will be brought there,
 free of any toll, that shall from now on ³⁵
 be free according to my law. 1410
 The worthy and noble king
 of Morocco has, with his own hand,
 given it to me as my own.
 In addition he granted me all this land.
 I have sworn on my oath: 1415
 whenever I will have a child,
 then that should also belong to time,
 and this by the same right as it belongs to me.
 When the market begins,
 then all goods will be free of a toll, 1420
 a privilege for all Christians, and this because of you.
 Now turn around and consider
 what lodging you would like to have.
 Once you will have tested one and found it to be good,
 it will be granted to you 1425
 without charge and any deposit
 as long as this market will last.
 Be assured, whenever you desire anything,
 turn to me without any hesitation,
 by my truth, I will help you. 1430
 I was happy about this arrangement.
 I then gave to the lord
 my grace and great thanks.
 His support happily dispersed
 whatever suffering I had ever experienced 1435
 through terrifying conditions,
 and this happened in that foreign land.
 His squires took me
 to where I chose an inn.
 It was one that seemed appropriate to me, 1440
 which was praised above all the others
 by the guests in town.
 His squires recommended it to me
 and thus fulfilled my heart's desire.
 I inquired with them 1445
 what the name might be
 of the man who had treated me so kindly

to welcome me so well.
 One of the squires informed me
 that he was called Stranmûr. 1450
 He was the territorial duke
 and was the castellan of the castle.
 [Gerhart continues:] He was so well mannered,
 although he was a heathen,
 that I am wishing him, to be sure, 1455
 always the best in the name of God.
 Now I praised God for the kindness
 that he had turned my sorrow
 so fully into happiness
 and increased my joy 1460
 in such a blissful manner for one man,
 which I have never heard of before,
 except for that moment,
 when he informed me
 about his own rulership over the harbor 1465
 and that I was so fortunate to be freed
 from paying a toll, indeed.
 I gave great thanks to God
 who had bestowed that grace upon me.
 When I went to my private chamber, 1470
 the lord offered me many honors
 and upon his own friendship
 ordered that I should receive
 whatever I should ask for.
 As a sign of his good breeding he granted me even more, 1475
 more than what I would have requested from him,
 and this all through the loyalty of companionship.
 His dedication was new to me,³⁶
 yet I begged him
 to approach me with the personal 'you'. 1480
 Thus he shared with me in lovely fellowship
 loyal company.
 One day he asked me,
 when we were together, to let him
 see the treasure of my merchandise. 1485
 I was pleased about it. I allowed him to examine it
 what I had brought with me for sale.
 He looked at it carefully.
 It all seemed valuable and wealthy to him,
 [and said] that he had never seen 1490
 anything in such splendor

anywhere in all heathen lands.

Then he turned to me
and said “Gerhart, I am telling you,
you have brought with you the greatest riches
that have ever been in this country
owned by one single man. 1495

No one in this country could pay for it
except for myself.

If you want, I will let you see
the treasure of merchandise that I own. 1500

If you like it, then we shall arrange
an exchange between us both.

I will honestly tell you
what kind of merchandise it is. 1505

If you were to take it to your land
you will nicely profit from it.

Here it is not worth anything, therefore I want to
exchange with you, if you are prepared to do so.

If you are not opposed to making a profit
you might gain a lot from it.” 1510

I said: “Wherever I can gain a profit
I will do entirely the same what anyone else would do
to gain properly acquired goods.”

[Stranmûr:] “This is a rightly acquired good. 1515

If it were as valuable for me as it will be for you
in your country, I would never receive
the appropriate amount of money for it from you.”

Now, I assumed that I would find
merchandise goods
out of silver and gold.³⁷ 1520

Then the host took me
to a private room.

I assumed to find there
great riches. 1525

But there were no wares in the room,
and yet it contained great wealth,
as I will inform you.

It was filled with goods and yet empty of goods,
stuffed with wealth and yet also with poverty,
all well protected there. 1530

I found there in a miserable shape
twelve manly and good knights
who were firmly tied with strong ropes,
and were lying there caught in iron shackles 1535

and suffered badly.

Always two were tied to a bar,
which was heavy, certainly not light,
and they were locked to them.

About thirty years old 1540
was each in his youth.

From the early childhood years of virtues
they had grown up in a manly fashion.

They displayed the first hair of a beard,
that had never been shaven.³⁸ 1545

Although they suffered deeply in their hearts
they were so lovely to look at

that the thought occurred to me,
that the universal desire for beauty must have been realized through them,
if only they could live in joyfulness. 1550

They were miserably robbed of that;
their hearts had lost all joy
through lamentable suffering and long sorrowing,
which heavily filled their minds.

Indeed, the room was 1555
devoid of goods, no doubt about that.

No goods had been placed in there
except for the pure worthiness,
shining forth from the noble knights
who were caught in that prison. 1560

My heart began to lament their suffering
and to share through the lament their burden,
which they suffered in such misery
and with such great heartfelt pain.

My heart's joy deflates [even] now 1565
when I am thinking of them.

Their lamenting and suffering will hurt me forever.

Then the host took me by his hand
and asked me to go forward,
since he wanted to let me see 1570
an [even] greater merchandise somewhere else.

I went with him

in apprehension. So I followed
in order to see it. He led me on
to another chamber. 1575

When we stepped into it,

I looked around [to find out]

how and when I was supposed to see

the greatest merchant's treasure that he would offer me.

There I found, in the same misery, 1580
 the same kind of sorrow,
 which reminded me of the others' suffering.
 The discovery was so painful for me
 and so lamentable
 that my heart could barely cope with it. 1585
 If I had ever enjoyed anything,
 the memory of it was at that moment completely removed from me.
 I saw twelve old lords
 sitting there, also caught in shackles,
 who had grown in their wisdom 1590
 to full maturity
 and were about sixty years of age.
 They had grey hair and looked pale.
 The hair on their heads and in the beards
 had turned grey. 1595
 They appeared to me as praiseworthy,
 as I could perceive it in their appearance.
 Then my heart began to tell me,
 that all their wishes would have been fulfilled
 if they did not suffer from heart-felt pain. 1600
 Their demeanor demonstrated that to me.
 Each two were bound
 in one shackle.
 Their miserable suffering
 I lamented even more than that by the young men, 1605
 since they should be honored
 because of their age, and this over the youth.
 The bold virtues of young hearts
 is often wounded,
 but this easily changes. 1610
 Youth overcomes
 what makes old age grow weak.
 Youth suffers many a pain
 from which old age receives death.
 For that reason their suffering 1615
 caused my heart pain because of their age.
 When I saw their lamentable suffering
 and heard their heavy laments,
 it hurt me deeply in my heart.
 Then the host no longer tarried 1620
 and I left together with him. We departed.
 Then the noble man took me
 away from the miserable crowd.

After I had observed their suffering,
 the host did not spare me from more. 1625
 Holding his hand I went further
 into another room.
 There I found sweet reward,
 which delights a man's mind
 in terms of love, joy, and goodness, 1630
 which, regards to worthiness and bliss,
 brings many delights of happiness,
 which in turn provides the world at all times
 with great joy in one's mind.
 This treasure of all merchandise was in that land 1635
 a brilliant mirror of good manners and good fortune,
 a diamond of loyalty and goodness,
 except that the gleaming of its light
 was dimmed through great sorrow,
 since it was often made wet 1640
 through a rain which came from lament
 in the heart, burdened with lament.
 Then I looked around.
 I saw sitting there noble ladies,
 in total fifteen of them. 1645
 That was the treasure of a merchandise
 of which I had spoken.
 They looked so pretty
 that I will wonder forever
 how God had granted them 1650
 so much delight to them,
 when he increased through His art
 their bodily beauty.
 They displayed wonderful manners
 and womanly praise in their goodness, 1655
 highly minded disposition
 in ever-lasting constancy.
 All that characterized those women
 through their feminine delights,
 not leaving anything to be desired for; 1660
 They were a sweet living fruit
 in their beauty and their feminine breeding,
 marked by their goodness without a drop of gall.³⁹
 Of all those women
 I want to mention one 1665
 who was so noble and so pure
 and in beauty superseded the others so much

that I can give her excellence the triumph
 above all other beautiful women
 with the crown of delight. 1670
 The brilliance of her loving appearance⁴⁰
 carried in terms of beauty such a wreath
 so that she was the triumph of female beauty.
 Her delightfulness was more impressive
 than that of all other women.⁴¹ 1675
 Because of her beauty I am giving the crown
 to her body, her sweet worthiness.
 To her beauty God had turned
 all his loving effort.
 Her lips were red, her neck was white, 1680
 her cheeks glowed in the rosy color
 of lilies and shone forth
 in her bright skin.⁴²
 It was not marred by anything.
 Her eyes were shining and bright, 1685
 and her hair was blond and curly,
 hanging down in a simple fashion.
 Her lovely body
 was slender and graceful.
 This well born noble lady 1690
 was perfect as one could just imagine
 and was free of any false behavior.
 When she had been born,
 nothing had been missed in terms of beauty, goodness, and virtues.
 She deserves to be praised 1695
 as a worthy woman,
 and in her body she was just perfect.
 I became sad and happy
 to have ever seen this good lady.
 I felt sorry for her suffering 1700
 and also felt happy in my heart
 to have seen her in her lovely appearance.
 Once this had happened
 and I had looked properly at those women
 and also at the poor knights 1705
 suffering in such great sorrow,
 then Stranmûr, the worthy man,
 took me away again.
 He said: "Have you seen all that well?"
 I said: "Yes." [He:] "Now tell me 1710
 whether you want to purchase them." I said: "What?"

[He:] "Have you not seen it?"
 [I:] "I have not observed anything else
 but a sorrowful crowd of people,
 who lead a terrible life." 1715

[Stranmûr:] "These I want to offer them to you in exchange [for your goods]."
 [I:] "What good would they do for me?" [Stranmûr:] "I am going to tell you that.
 If I could profit from them,
 as you might be able to do,
 I would not so easily offer them to you. 1720
 Whoever demands the right amount of ransom
 will certainly be given
 hundred thousand marks.
 He could not have in his ship
 a better merchandise, 1725
 if he lets them go after a contract has been signed.
 If their home countries were closer by to me,
 I would have secured through them a huge ransom
 in the amount of hundred thousand marks;
 that's what I estimate them being worth." 1730

Then I asked him right away
 how they had gotten into this situation.
 He said: "I am going to tell you
 how they came into my power in the first place.
 Tell me, do you know England?" 1735

[Gerhart:] "Yes, I know it well."
 [Stranmûr:] "The noble and outstanding knights
 were born in that country."
 [Gerhart:] "What had caused them to come here
 into imprisonment in this country?" 1740

They traveled from their country
 together with a hero,⁴³
 called Willehalm,
 a young prince from England,
 and went to the mighty Norway.⁴⁴ 1745
 Its king handed over his daughter
 to him as his fiancée.
 This was the high-spirited princess
 whom you were allowed to see,
 together with fourteen ladies, 1750
 and she was the fifteenth,
 in whom God did not spare anything.
 She is [King] Reinmund's daughter.
 The storm drove her and her knights
 into a harbor that belongs to me. 1755

Therefore they have rightly
 to stay here until the time has come
 as I will determine.
 (I have that privilege from my overlord,
 as I have told you before.) 1760
 If you want to purchase them from me,
 I will give them to you and assure you
 that they will pay double the amount of money as ransom
 which you will give me for them.
 The purchase, however, cannot be in any other way: 1765
 whatever I have seen in your ship
 as your merchandise
 you will have to give me as the price.
 If the king is still alive,
 he will ransom you dearly his daughter; 1770
 If he is not dead or ill,
 then King Reinmunt
 will not allow his dear child to perish.
 Amongst those who are imprisoned with her
 there are a good number 1775
 of noble and mighty princes.
 Instead of lying here a long time
 in such hardship,
 they will rather give you their property;
 I know that this would be their desire. 1780
 The wild and stormy waves and
 their complete ignorance of where they were pushed by the waves
 brought them into my shackles,
 and they are hidden here from their families.⁴⁵
 Now, their wealth and their country 1785
 is more closely situated to you, and known to you.
 Therefore I offer them to you for purchase.
 If you do not want to buy them from me,
 I will still take your goods
 as you wish to sell them 1790
 and will happily keep the promise
 that I had given you.⁴⁶

That proposition appeared very strange to me,
 that he had perceived in me
 a person with such an attitude,
 believing that I would be so minded 1795
 to hand over such great goods
 for nothing but an illusion.
 I said: "Lord, I will have to think about it well

until tomorrow morning.”
 He answered: “That pleases me. Now do so.” 1800
 With his permission I then left him.
 My heart often advised me
 to go take this or that approach.
 At last it occurred to me
 to ask God for advice, 1805
 what I should do in this case,
 so that He would send into my heart
 according to His grace,
 an understanding in my heart⁴⁷
 whether it would be pleasing to Him 1810
 that I would release those poor people
 from such misery.
 My heart was burdened with these doubts
 in the middle of the night,
 wondering whether I should free them in the name of God 1815
 and whether that would be in conformity with His commands.
 In my heart I called upon God
 until I fell asleep with the thought
 whether it would be alms [coming from me]
 or whether I should not do it. 1820
 While I was lying there, tortured by doubts,
 and yet was enjoying my sweet sleep,
 an angel came and awoke me
 (as it seemed to me). Then I woke up.
 I would not want to say 1825
 that my eyes saw him:
 rather, my heart saw him in sleep.
 When I learned that in my dream,
 it seemed to me that he called me
 and twice addressed me by name. 1830
 “Gerhart, wake up, are you still asleep?
 God is very angry with you
 that you are such a wise person
 and yet understand so little
 of God’s true wisdom. 1835
 You carry a doubt in your heart
 which is contrary to your creator.
 The sweet God, the pure Christ
 has said with His own mouth,
 when he was still seen with human eyes 1840
 in the shape of a human being:
 ‘What is being done to a poor person

is an act of kindness when it is being done for me,
 you are going to do that for me, not for the poor man.
 I am the poor one. Wherever you see a poor person, 1845
 and when you do something good for him,
 then you do something for me.⁴⁸
 Because of this comforting solace
 you ought to live without doubt
 and be strong in your heart. 1850
 You had a foolish thought
 when you thought that you had lost
 some of your goodness.
 Now be resolved in your heart:
 A good deed will never be lost 1855
 which is being done in the name of God.
 In whatever country you will relieve
 the poor and give them comfort,
 that will be the reward for your heart.
 If you do it in return for money, they will reward you, 1860
 but if you do it for honor,
 you will be praised forever;
 but if you do it to meet God's command,
 then be assured that God
 will give you as a reward 1865
 the eternal crown."

 When the angel had spoken those words
 I woke up from my sleep because of him
 and wanted to see him. But he was gone.
 When I had woken up because of him 1870
 I gave praise to God for the goodness,
 which He had sent into my mind
 out of His graciousness,
 so that I would properly recognize
 His great mercy 1875
 in face of the sorrowful group.
 I said: "Very sweet Godhead,
 You have told me enough.
 I will always give you, sweet Godhead,
 praise and honor." 1880
 Then I got up from my bed.
 I asked my scribe
 on behalf of God and for myself
 to read a mass. I listened to it
 and requested that God's sweet blessing 1885
 take care of the body and the soul

with His dear protection,
 so that I could do the best possible thing
 with my merchandise,
 and that I would never 1890
 misuse and waste it.
 Once I had listened to the very end
 of the good mass,
 I left my lodging
 and entrusted myself entirely to God. 1895
 At that moment I encountered
 Stranmûr of Castalgunt.⁴⁹
 He immediately greeted me
 and said ‘good morning,’ ‘have a good day.’
 He laughed [happily] when he uttered the greeting. 1900
 I thanked him for that.
 Then he asked me this:
 “Tell me, what is your decision?
 What advice has your mind given to you?
 Do not hide that from me; 1905
 since I want to know through your words,
 your final decision
 which your mind has given to you.”
 I said: “My dear lord,
 what decision should I make? 1910
 The purchase is too expensive;
 and I do not know whether they [the prisoners]
 would agree or not.
 If it happens without their gratitude,
 it will not be of any use to me, that’s true, 1915
 and this purchase would not be worth a hair.
 If you grant it to me
 that you let me find out
 what their intention might be,
 then I will be able to let you know 1920
 my mind and my decision,
 and what my heart might desire.”
 [Stranmûr:] “That pleases me, talk to them then,
 I happily grant that to you.”
 [Gerhart:] “Then they should profit from me 1925
 and get unlocked
 because I want to see them freed from the shackles
 and properly find out their wishes.”
 [Stranmûr:] “This will be granted to you on my behalf,
 and know for sure, you can trust me in that, 1930

that I do not know anyone
 anywhere in heathen lands
 whom I would entrust them without shackles,
 except alone to my overlord,
 from whom I had received goods and honor. 1935
 Now, I will let you see them,
 freed and unfettered,
 since I have found out
 that you have a completely
 loyal heart and command loyalty." 1940
 [Gerhart:] "My dear lord,
 you give me too much praise.
 I am not worthy of such praise,
 except that your good breeding makes you
 give me this honor, 1945
 although I have not earned it."
 So I said to the lord.
 Then he ordered his squires
 to go with me to the lords;
 he ordered to release them from their shackles. 1950
 The worthy men were unlocked
 from their shackles.
 One here, the other there;
 together they were let go
 and allowed to walk freed from their locks. 1955
 Then the squires left me
 and went out of the room.
 They kept a strong guard
 outside of the door
 to the room with the noble and highly minded men. 1960
 Those had been, that is true,
 imprisoned for more than a year,
 and yet they had not been allowed
 to look at each other.
 That had been their greatest heart-felt lament 1965
 in the prison all the time.
 When they all had gotten together,
 they shouted out such screams [of relief]
 which will always remind me
 of the great commiseration that I felt. 1970
 They began to cry
 both for love and also their suffering,
 happy that they experienced the blessing
 to see each other again,

which seemed a great gracefulness to them, 1975
so in all their suffering they were very happy.

When they lovingly
greeted each other altogether
demonstrating their love for each other,
I immediately greeted them in French. 1980
But they did not know that language as well
as I knew English. I could speak that language.
When they understood the words and me,
then the entire miserable group 1985
bowed before me.

They said: "Lord Father God,
now be praised that on Your command
someone has been sent to us very downtrodden people
someone from the Christian lands 1990
who knows our language.
May you be honored and your mouth,
the wisdom of which knows
the language and our tongue.
Dear lord, tell us on behalf of God, 1995
share with us miserable people, without mocking,
are you a Christian?" I said: "Yes."

They then welcomed me
so lovingly as I have
never been welcomed before. 2000
I joined their laments
and helped them all
to sustain the pain of their wounded hearts,
when I noticed their misery
and their heart-felt pain, 2005
which the suffering had caused them.

After I had sat there for a while,
I did not forget my words
and said: "Lords, your suffering
is worse for me than death. 2010
If I could end it,
it would surely be over.
I am grieved over your laments.
Now listen to what else I am going to tell you:
I want to let you know truly 2015
what my intentions are.
When I departed from my country
I had made up my mind
that I wanted to take with me great wealth

into the heathen world 2020
 in order to make a good profit.
 At that time I was determined
 to take fifty thousand marks
 from my treasure box⁵⁰
 and then traveled into heathendom. 2025
 I have applied that silver
 for such great purchases
 that I dare say
 swearing by my baptism (faith)
 that no one before me has ever bought more. 2030
 I brought that with me into this country
 where I knew about the markets.⁵¹
 Now, the mighty castellan
 has, in a worthy fashion,
 welcomed and honored me. 2035
 He has thus increased toward me, his honor,
 in many different manners,
 his manly reputation.
 When I came into this country,
 he took me into his protection 2040
 and offered me many honors.
 Afterwards he begged me
 to let him take a look at
 my merchandise. He then noticed
 that it was very large. 2045
 Thereupon he began to ask me
 whether I would agree to an exchange
 with him and that I would take
 his merchandise. That's what he offered me.
 The merchandise is you 2050
 and my dear lady
 whom he allowed me to visit
 yesterday, when I also saw you.
 Now, I have a lower social status,⁵²
 and am lacking in rank 2055
 as to purchase you by force.
 If, for instance, I were to help you
 by freeing you from here,
 but you would then insult me
 and confront me with hostility, 2060
 such as telling me then
 that I had never suffered from you
 any ill, and that hence I should let you go,

in that case I would rather keep my property
 before I would proceed 2065
 and attract your hatred through my loss.
 If you want to, however, I would risk
 for your sake everything that I have
 and will happily accept in your name
 both gain and loss 2070
 on the condition that you
 reimburse me for my loss.
 If I can be certain about that
 knowing that you will never
 turn against me, 2075
 then I would be happily prepared
 to ransom you here
 and lift the suffering from you.”
 The lords immediately jumped up,
 both the old and the young 2080
 and fell down before my feet.
 Everyone grabbed me
 and gave me much honor.
 With a sad voice⁵³
 each lamented badly to me 2085
 uttering only: ‘oh dear, oh dear,
 help us, dear lord!
 mercy is far away from us.
 Bring to us mercy and solace,
 so that we could get released 2090
 from this great suffering.
 We also beg you further
 in the name of God who handed Himself
 over to death in his human form,
 let us recognize in you 2095
 that you call yourself a Christian
 in the name of pure baptism.
 Help us to get away from heathendom
 and to return again to Christianity!
 Think of our heart-felt pain 2100
 and lift from us our great suffering.
 Through God and your grace,
 in the name of all knights’ worthiness,
 have pity for our affliction
 and let us be forever 2105
 in the name of God in your servitude.⁵⁴
 Whatever pleases you,

we will all swear an oath to you
 that we will double all your goods,
 except for what our lady will do 2110
 and her father who [separately] will ransom here from you
 just as you will demand,
 and if our lord is still alive,
 he will give doubly pay you for his wife.”⁵⁵
 It disturbed me and gave me grief 2115
 that they were laying before me in such a woeful sorrow
 for such a long time in lamenting manner
 and displayed such great unhappiness.
 I said: “My dear good lords,
 stand up, in the name of God, you act 2120
 differently than it behooves you
 or as it seems appropriate to me.
 You have behaved rather shamefully
 laying on the ground for such a long time
 before me and lamenting so badly; 2125
 I gladly can do without it.”
 [The English nobles:] “Mercy, sir, suffering makes us do that.
 Help us, we are dead without any joys.
 Your very sweet consolation gives us solace!
 We will be lost forever.” 2130
 [Gerhart:] “Let us go to my lady.
 If it will be her will
 that she wants to travel with me into my country
 and will demonstrate through her loyalty
 that it will be her true desire, her intention, 2135
 to reimburse me for my goods,
 if she can do so and if I request it,
 then I have rightly come here
 to risk everything
 that I own for your sake.” 2140
 They all spoke in one voice:
 “Good graciousness, sir, she will be very happy about it.”
 Then the knights went with me.
 We turned to the ladies
 toward the private chamber. 2145
 They were very surprised
 about how this miracle had happened
 that they were to see the knights.
 There I had to witness
 with the knights and the ladies, 2150
 after they had completed their greetings, much crying.

I clearly recognized
 that their pitiful suffering
 came from heart-felt pain.
 Then an old lord took me 2155
 by my hand, and I asked him
 in what language my lady, blessed by good fortune,
 had been raised.
 [Gerhart:] “Does she speak French!” He said: “Yes.”
 Then I greeted my lady in that way, 2160
 as it seemed fitting to me,
 trying to avoid misbehavior.
 She was very thankful to me
 in her womanly courtliness.
 Her eyes were filled with tears. 2165
 I then said to the knight:
 “Lord, speak on my behalf.”
 He responded: “No, the treasure of fortune
 adorns your soul.
 After a wise flowering 2170
 you have brought forth the fruit of fortune.
 God was in a most kind mood,
 when He granted to you human life
 filled with such virtues.
 You are so filled with pure wisdom, 2175
 your mouth can speak for itself.”
 Then I began to speak.
 I said: “Lady, I am a man
 who must pursue the life of a merchant,
 I have always been bent on purchasing 2180
 wherever I found affordable goods.
 I have gained to some extent
 many goods through purchase:
 I have brought it here into this land.
 The castellan desires to acquire it 2185
 through offering you to me.
 He wants me to have you in exchange,
 if I give him everything what I own,
 and he wants to give me the knights,
 who endure a miserable life here. 2190
 But now this purchase
 is somewhat too costly for me,
 if you were to be my payment.
 A piece of cloth or silk
 I might trade more easily, 2195

where I might find it at a good price,
 instead of such great lordship.
 If I now had so much wealth
 in goods that I might be able
 to take you away from here, 2200
 and you would then, dear lady,
 reimburse me my goods,
 I would ransom you immediately.
 The kingdom of England
 is located so near to my home country, 2205
 if you do not mind,
 I will keep you surely
 in such good manner
 that it will never seem to you a misbehavior
 until they will learn 2210
 and think about it how to find out
 whether the young prince of England
 is still alive or not,
 who is engaged with you.”
 The lady got up from her chair 2215
 and wanted to kneel before me,
 but I objected to that.
 I approached her
 and begged her in the name of her virtues
 to let that go and not do that. 2220
 Thereupon her eyes filled with tears.
 She knew how to beg
 in such an innocent [child-like] and pure way
 that I recognized well at her manners
 how much she had placed very serious thoughts 2225
 on her request.
 This I clearly noticed in her.
 Although being very young, she had the wisdom of an older person⁵⁶:
 [Erene:]⁵⁷ “Mercy, sweet pure man,
 allow me to profit from the fact 2230
 that a woman gave birth to you.
 Be so kind and show grace
 to me on behalf of all worthy women.
 On your graciousness, you most fortunate man,
 allow me to lament my worries to you 2235
 on behalf of the most holy maid
 who is the mirror for all women.⁵⁸
 She delivered the most holy Christ,
 the emperor of all emperors,

and to whom the angel announced [the miracle]. 2240
 The virginal mother without original sin,
 was still virgin after the birth,
 just as she had been before.
 The sun's gleam shines forth in strong force
 because of her virginity. 2245
 The flower of virginity
 remained with her in complete splendor.
 As much as the highest beams of the sun
 elevated her to a mother-virgin,
 as little did she ever lose the name of a virgin, 2250
 this glorious queen of heaven.
 To her I extend my heart very much,
 dear man, for you,
 so that you keep in mind that I carry
 her name, 2255
 since I am known as a virgin,
 as it is the case with the other ladies here.
 Now allow us to become your children!
 Dear father, dear solace,
 redeem us from suffering. 2260
 Mercy, sir, since you represent
 the Christian fulfillment,
 honor Christ's name with us
 in a divine, praiseworthy manner
 and through the strength of the pure baptism. 2265
 Free us from heathendom,
 since God has sent you here.
 I will travel with you to your country,
 and whatever you want I also want.
 My father will happily ransom me, 2270
 for which I will vouch.
 And I know in truth,
 if the prince of England is still alive⁵⁹
 and knows of me also as living,
 that he will not let me wait for long, 2275
 if he is still in good health.⁶⁰
 But if they are all dead,
 who were supposed to protect me from danger,
 then there is still God, who will give you a reward
 for all the grace that you will grant to me. 2280
 Help me to return to Christianity
 in the name of God, and let it be a grief to you
 that I am suffering such great pain

without any fault;
 and have also pity for the noble ladies here. 2285
 Oh dear, if I will never see again
 my father, friends, or the Christian lands,
 then God would have put His shackles
 in wrath on me
 in sorrowful suffering!" 2290
 The women all cried heavily,
 their delightful eyes wetted
 the God-given pure meadow of May,
 which was blooming in the colors of roses and lilies
 on their cheeks. 2295
 The sparkling delight, the bliss of happiness
 poured its heart-felt dew,
 which came from their hearts' sorrow.
 Their lamenting hearts were deprived of all joy.
 Their laments, a darkness of clouds, 2300
 covered their delightful sunshine,
 the beauty of which was yet so intense
 that in the summertime
 it came through after all.
 Rain came falling from the clouds, 2305
 which dropped onto the wonderful eyes
 in such an intensity that a part of the beauty
 that had shone forth before was gone.
 Their crying was so sweet
 that both the mouth and the eyes 2310
 invited me to take a bath in them without being invited.
 Their childlike shedding of tears forced me
 to join their crying.
 My will merged so much with theirs
 that I was happily ready to do, 2315
 whatever the good woman asked me for.
 Her crying penetrated into my heart;
 her female request conquered me
 so that I could not reject anything
 which her red lips uttered 2320
 since I observed through the good women
 that her lamentable sorrow
 seriously came from deep in her soul.
 When she addressed her request to me,
 she was serious, there was no doubt about it. 2325
 Her sweet request was an order for me
 to take her deep grief

with laments into my heart.
 I then clearly noticed the struggling;
 fear, sorrow, lamentations, and misery 2330
 often teach wise words,
 where deep wisdom finds a small treasure
 in the right thoughts.
 Childish words disappear,⁶¹
 where sorrow and heartfelt grief 2335
 are constantly present.
 I learned that through my lady
 in cumbersome fashion
 so that I have to say, as I noticed:
 my lady formulated already in her blossoming youth 2340
 an old wisdom.
 In her young childhood she would have been denied
 such meaningful wisdom,
 but because she experienced such frightful sorrow,
 she had learned through her suffering. 2345
 Know this from these wise words,
 that she understood how to beg me intensively
 through her such wise breeding.
 I said: "Dear good lady,
 have joyful confidence, 2350
 let your lamentable sorrow go.
 Since I can change your great pain
 with my goods,
 it will not be kept away
 from you or spared any longer. 2355
 Lucky I am that all those goods ever have come to me,
 so that I can chase away your sorrow
 and so also your suffering.
 Now, I want to purchase with my goods
 all your grief, 2360
 and will beg God to grant me
 what I will ask Him to do for me
 so that I can actually achieve that goal.
 May God bring it about
 that I will not be without success. 2365
 Now, let me request from you truly
 that you will reimburse me then,
 for that what I will spend for you,
 in likewise fashion
 on your behalf." 2370
 This brightened up her soul.

The knights and the good ladies
 cried out for joy
 so much that I felt
 great pity in my heart. 2375
 The noble but poor people
 received so much comfort through my consolation
 that I freed their hearts
 from great lamentable sorrow,
 because I gave them my solace. 2380
 Then I left them behind
 and went where I found the castellan.
 The well-bred man
 greeted me friendly and politely.
 He said: "Now, what do you think? Tell me
 whether this purchase pleases you well." 2385
 I said: "Yes, my lord, truly.
 I will be happy to carry out that purchase
 [on the conditions] as I am going to specify to you." [Stranmûr:] "Then tell me, how?"
 [Gerhart:] "Aren't here not any of their goods?" [of the prisoners] 2390
 [Stranmûr:] "Yes, they are so well kept
 that not one penny was hidden in the ground."
 [Gerhart:] "So I would like to achieve for the good people
 if you grant it so,
 that they receive all their goods again 2395
 and can prepare for their voyage
 their ship as it had been before,
 and that none of their property stays behind,
 neither small nor large,
 and that everything will be handed over 2400
 into their possession,
 and that you give me all the food
 necessary as provisions.
 If you agree to that
 and are willing to do so, as I have detailed it, 2405
 then I will leave behind
 what I have brought here with me,
 and then the contract can be agreed on."
 Then the worthy castellan
 proved his honor to me out of his desire [to acquire my goods].⁶² 2410
 He said, demonstrating his courtly manners:
 "That will all be made ready.
 You have negotiated well.
 I will do whatever you request from me;
 then the purchase will be completed." 2415

I received from his hands
 the miserable hostages⁶³
 and he took over my goods,
 which I turned over to the castellan.

A reliable guarantee bound us together, 2420
 confirming this purchase.
 The contract specified
 that he had to be trustworthy.
 Then he took over all my property
 and I received the prisoners. 2425
 He called together many of the people
 in the city to his court.
 The [former prisoners] came with me, as he had ordered it,
 filled with joy, to the palace
 where the seat of the government was. 2430
 He turned them over to me.⁶⁴
 Whatever property had been taken from them,
 he ordered it to be returned to them.
 There was reconciliation amongst all sides,
 which naturally instilled strong feelings 2435
 in me and many other people.
 Mixed into the joy there was much lamenting.
 The joy pushed away a part of the sorrow,
 which had been the origin of the heart-felt pain
 and the strong suffering. 2440

They received without delay
 what property they had brought
 to that country when they had arrived from across the sea.
 This gain resulting from the purchase
 pleased the castellan mightily. 2445
 He ordered to unload my ship
 and to load [the former prisoners'] ship.
 He compensated them for their losses
 in terms of physical goods, but not in terms of their suffering.
 He commanded that all my property 2450
 be carried off.
 He arranged that sand and stones
 would be brought to me as a load
 so that my ship would sail uprightly
 without leaning when being on the sea. 2455
 The wise knight Stranmûr
 ordered provisions to be provided for me and the entire group,
 that is fresh new provisions,
 which was all brought to the ship.

He also arranged that we received enough
 food for the voyage, 2460
 so that we would not, if we were driven,
 as is often the custom of wild waves,
 into a foreign country,
 then run out of food, 2465
 and hence might perish.
 We ought to have good food
 in great plenty.
 All this the highly worthy lord arranged.
 Truly, to me it seemed 2470
 that I was a blessed man.
 Then I led my lady,
 her maids, and the knights [to the ship].
 There was much happiness to be observed
 and much joyfulness, 2475
 because the miserable imprisonment
 had been overcome in a good way.
 The heathens also cried
 out of love for the wonderful ladies,
 pitying them for their long suffering; 2480
 whoever saw their tearful eyes
 had to lament their sorrows;
 and their friendly laughter
 made all people feel
 very joyful. 2485
 Whoever saw what demeanor the lady displayed
 being happy and enjoying a happy life,
 had to acknowledge that himself.
 Even if he did not experience joy because of that,
 he felt joy because of her beauty. 2490
 Whenever she was to smile out of happiness,
 as she was supposed to do,
 then her rose-colored lips
 sent joy to those who were unhappy,
 and those who looked at her happily, 2495
 gave her high praise.
 For the night we stayed there.
 For the guests a bath was prepared
 and they washed themselves.
 My goodness, how lovely 2500
 did the guests look afterwards!
 When I saw that, I forgot all my losses
 which I had suffered because of them.

Once they had received new clothes,
 then my lady, a flower of pure virtues 2505
 carried the crown of all desires
 in bright beautiful colors.
 Both the old and the young knights
 displayed accordingly great beauty.
 What one expects from youth, 2510
 that is to display fully their beauty,
 one could perceive now in the physical appearance
 of those who demonstrated fresh chivalry
 through their youth and strength.
 This was visible through their bodily presence. 2515
 Beautiful, impressive, white, and gray
 were the old knights,
 displaying their good demeanor.
 The women's beauty was so amazing,
 except that my lady was the most charming 2520
 in praiseworthy honor,
 yet the other women did not lack
 in charming beauty,
 all wearing the crown of praise and admiration.⁶⁵
 Early the next morning 2525
 I prepared myself
 since I wanted to depart from there.
 I prayed that the ladies
 and the knights⁶⁶ be protected
 by God's blessing,⁶⁷ 2530
 since they had never heard
 the true word of God
 during their imprisonment.
 After mass we went back
 and sat down happily. 2535
 At that moment the honorable
 Stranmûr, who was the castellan there, arrived,
 who demonstrated much kindness to me
 at the table,
 where many knights and squires were sitting. 2540
 He displayed his good breeding.
 To the knights and the ladies
 the loyal and trustworthy man raised
 his cup to greet them all
 and saluted everyone, 2545
 for which I had to wish him all the best
 as it befitted me in accordance to my breeding.

When the meal had been completed,
 we said good-bye and prepared for the voyage.
 [Stranmûr:] “I want to entrust you, dear Gerhart, 2550
 to the care of your God,
 may He protect your life.
 But if there might be anyone more powerful,
 then His help may be there for your assistance.
 My dear God Jupiter 2555
 shall provide you with a blissful journey.
 May Pallas and Juno
 make you joyfully happy;
 to Mohammed and Mercurius,
 and to Thetis and Neptune, 2560
 who command the waters,
 may your journey homewards,
 along with the group of guests, be entrusted.⁶⁸
 Through just a little good fortune on the sea
 may he help you, through his powers, 2565
 Aeolus, the god of winds
 that you and your people
 will succeed in everything
 by means of favorable winds
 and that the journey will turn out well.” 2570
 Those were the words of the castellan.
 Immediately I bowed before him.
 He then gave me his blessing.
 Then he said again:
 “Let me assure you once again 2575
 that I want to honor the entire Christianity
 on your behalf,
 since God has placed so much blessing on you
 in this world,
 that your body and your life 2580
 must always be honored.
 My heart is wishing you that.”
 Then he began to cry out of sorrow [to see me leave],
 and we both cried, he and I,
 because we had to part from each other. 2585
 Because of this sorrow
 we experienced painful loyalty.
 Thereafter we departed.
 He was pleased about the purchase,
 and I was also happy about the exchange. 2590
 He believed to have made a profit,

and I also thought the same
 believing that my profit would not be lost,
 but the reward depends on God's grace
 according to His great mercy 2595
 and according to my needs.
 We both were sure that we had not been cheated.
 Soon the sails were hoisted
 in the harbor.
 Thus we left from there 2600
 very happy along the way.
 We took good care of ourselves
 and defended ourselves against the devil.
 Soon, a strong wind from our back
 rose on the sea. 2605
 Let me tell you honestly,
 we could not be happier about it,
 just as I had desired it,
 driving us forward most swiftly.
 The son of the pure maid, [Christ], 2610
 gave us good company and a delightful journey,
 and He protected us from danger.
 The person who has trust in Him
 will never experience bad fortune.
 Now, His sweet support guaranteed for us 2615
 a fortunate journey.
 The force of the wind pushed us forward,
 for twelve days and nights
 taking us on the right path toward the location
 where we had been lost before. 2620
 We followed that direction.
 Soon the time had come
 when we made so much progress
 that we could clearly perceive
 high mountains and lands 2625
 that were well known to me.
 When I perceived that mountain range,
 I said to the captain:
 "Tell me, do you not know
 these heights and the country?" 2630
 [Captain:] "Oh yes, I know where we are."
 [Gerhart:] "Then note, where the ways part
 either toward Austria or England,⁶⁹
 aim the ship immediately to that site."
 [Captain:] "Near the present location 2635

where the high mountains are situated,
that is the point where the two routes
are specifically marked,
as you can clearly recognize.”

From there we sailed directly
toward the goal. 2640

I ordered the ships to anchor there
in a harbor, which was situated
near the high mountain range,
that separated the two roads 2645
in clearly two directions.

When our anchor had taken hold
firmly in the ground,
I ordered all our provisions
to be divvied up equally 2650
for both ships.

I handed over equal parts to each ship,
one part for the other ship, the other for my ship.
I said: “My lords, I and you
now have to part from each other. 2655

Tell me, who amongst you all
originates from England?
To you I want to entrust that ship
that had been taken away from you.
And who has come with my lady 2660
from her father’s country?
Tell me that, I need to know it.”

One of them told me:
“My lady and two of the maids
had been sent from Norway. 2665

The twelve [knights] are from England,
and all the others as well.
From her father’s country
a large group of people had come along.
They are all lost in the sea. 2670

When my lord’s ship sank,
he himself must have drowned.”
Then I separated from the lords
the lady and the other group
that had come along with [the speaker]. 2675

I took my lady
and her two maids
to my own ship.

After I had sent the good lords,

as it seemed right to me, 2680
 to their own ship,
 and after I had the lady under my protection
 together with her two maids,
 I decided for myself,
 to give the lords leave to depart, 2685
 to travel back to their country.
 I said: "My dear lords,
 we will part here, it has to be.
 Return to your country
 and be reminded by me, 2690
 if I have served you well,
 then do not forget that
 and observe that loyally.
 I want that my lady travels
 together with me to [my] country. 2695
 If her fiancé is still alive,
 I want to keep her for him,
 and serve her so honorably
 that she will never feel insulted.
 For her father, if he is mindful of her, 2700
 that is, King Reinmunt [of Norway],
 I will keep her sound and safe
 in an honorable fashion without any fail,
 if God happily grants her
 to stay healthy and without any burden." 2705
 The upright heroes
 lamented our departure very much.
 They all spoke with one voice:
 "No, our very dear lord,
 let us always stay with you 2710
 until we will have redeemed your property.
 Your best pawns we are ourselves.
 Take us under your guardianship
 until we will have, to your satisfaction,
 completely re-paid you all your goods, 2715
 with which you, in your pure virtue,
 freed us from our manacles
 and gave us joy in our sorrow."
 I thought by myself:
 "I want to leave their castles and income 2720
 to Him, the Good One,
 on whose behalf I had done that."
 I said: "Go on in the name of God.

Your lands and your goods
 are too far away. 2725
 I know you characters so well
 that your word is my guarantee.
 You have suffered for so long in the shackles
 that my hand should not be a new repression.
 It would not be appropriate 2730
 if someone were to have control over you.
 After such great misery
 go home and rest, may you have a better life,
 and your friends should find out
 that you are as healthy as before. 2735
 Their long waiting [for you] has hurt them.
 Let me admonish you, however,
 when I will send you my messengers,
 asking for my repayment, if that is ever going to happen,
 that you then will give it to me, and not in any other way. 2740
 I know for sure anyway
 that I have enough pawns and bailsmen,
 who do not aim for disloyalty
 and will reimburse me thousand-fold
 what I have given on your behalf. 2745
 If your lord is still alive
 and will ask for his lady,
 then tell him of the princess
 whom I will keep in my protection
 so that she will never lose 2750
 whatever had been granted to her
 in terms of women's virtues."
 The lords fell to the ground before my feet,
 they cried and [yet] were happy.
 Out of joy they shed many tears 2755
 because it was my intention
 to let them go for free.
 They forgot their suffering
 and became very delighted.
 They all spoke with one voice: 2760
 "God who allowed us to become free,
 whose power came from heaven
 and created a great spirit,
 may give you a good reward
 for what you have done for us out of love. 2765
 Even if we had inherited
 ten kingdoms,

we would never be able
 to repay you the good spirit of your heart,
 or your merchandise. 2770
 We entrust it all to your power,
 may the mighty God reward you,
 who is richer than we are;
 He may remunerate you your goodness
 with everlasting recognition. 2775
 May he bestow upon you forever
 the heavenly crown.
 Our promise will stay for you,
 dear father, as you wish.
 our promise will never fail, 2780
 because you have returned to us
 honor, goods, our bodies, and our lives.
 May the good God take care of you
 and protect you in His sweet embrace.⁷⁰
 May the strength of the holy cross 2785
 provide you with triumphant joy
 in human blissfulness;
 may you reach the end of your life
 without any sorrow,
 so that God may bring you 2790
 in happy joyfulness
 high up to heaven.”
 Then they kissed me and I kissed them.
 Full of sorrow we said good-bye to each other
 and yet with joy and without any hatred. 2795
 They did not tarry any longer
 and turned away from me
 in order to travel to England,
 while I went my way to my homeland,
 which I know so well. 2800

The road led me straight on
 from the mountains to the ocean and then to the Rhine,
 toward the city of Cologne.
 To my friends I sent word
 in a most happy mood, 2805
 that I had never returned home
 with so much wealth and so much happiness,
 and that I was richer
 than ever before in my life.
 I let my wife know 2810

that my merchandise was so large
that never any of my fellow merchants
would have ever thought of acquiring
such a great treasure.

My friends were happy about that. 2815
Their joy became exuberant
when they heard that I was going to arrive.

My wife called her friends together
and also my son. They came to her house
and anxiously awaited my appearance 2820
happy about my great good fortune.

A large group of burghers
came riding to meet me at the Rhine.
I and my dear lady
were well received then. 2825

Subsequently my friends came
and went on board of my ship.
The merchandise did not please them:
they found nothing but stones.

That seemed too little for them 2830
since those goods were worth nothing.
Thereupon I took my merchandise
leading her at my hand.

The others did not find anything
but my dear lady. 2835

“Dear Gerhart,” said my wife,
“tell me by God, where are your goods?
Your messenger had given me great hope,
he told me of superior riches,
of which I have found here little.”⁷¹ 2840

[Gerhart:] “Well, see, I took my lady
as a pawn for all of my goods.”
“Are you mocking me?”
“No, it is true, so help me God.
even though I do not know whether it pleases you.” 2845

“Gerhart, dear friend, now tell me
in the name of God the full truth,
how did she get into your power?”
“I am going to tell you that:

see, no one should act wrongly, 2850
who wants to enjoy my friendship.
Let your anger go,”
said Gerhart. “My dear child [his wife],
and all who are present here.

This is the way how friendship goes. 2855
 It is just right and proper
 to accept in friendship
 what pleases your heart.
 That also ought to be in all your minds.
 God knows well, my dear father, 2860
 for that what you have done for Him,
 you will receive my acknowledgment.
 If I see this correctly,
 we still have enough goods,
 and we will certainly receive 2865
 divine grace.
 Now, praise to the sweet Christ
 that you have returned to me in good health.”⁷²
 Then my beloved son spoke:
 “My lady and those who are with her 2870
 are welcome here
 to God and to my heart.”
 The good lady thanked him
 in a friendly manner
 because the greeting of a woman and of the son 2875
 can make a bad mood disappear.
 Whether the worth of the purchase
 pleased anyone or not,
 I did not care, I was delighted about it.
 My lady I then took 2880
 together with her two maids
 happily into my house
 and arranged a good space for them,
 pleasant and well equipped
 in a room. 2885
 I ordered that it would be filled
 with valuable vessels.
 As far as noble dresses were concerned,⁷³
 which she could wear honorably,
 I gave her more than enough 2890
 as it pleased her.
 I observed carefully what she needed,
 since my lady’s sweet child-like purity,⁷⁴
 determined by innocent virtues
 was manifested by her delightful youthfulness. 2895
 It did not seem too much to me
 to invite from my friends
 beautiful young virgins,

innocent as one could only desire, and very pretty,
 to be her companions 2900
 (since they were in their sweet childishness
 characterized by a childish mind).
 I provided them with dresses fitting for noble children,
 in the fashion appropriate for my dear lady
 in order to honor her innocent worthiness. 2905
 They were honorable friends for her.
 This pleased my lady in her sweet mind,
 to have such pure company,
 which made her very happy.
 She asked me to get for her 2910
 gold and much soft silk.
 I told myself: "Whatever the good lady wants,
 she will receive fully."
 Then I collected everything for my lady
 what she needed, 2915
 silk and gold.
 She knew how to make out of them
 imperial fabric,
 whatever you could sew out of silk.
 She knew well how to sew 2920
 rich and noble clothes
 and accomplished this task in a masterly fashion.
 This art she taught the other maids.
 Her products made such an impression,
 and never before had any better clothes been worn, 2925
 adorned with valuable pearls and dotted
 with noble gems.
 Her needle work was so precious
 that I had to appreciate it a lot.
 Silken cloth and phellet-silk, 2930
 the best that have ever been worn
 the good lady gave to me more than enough.
 I gained great profit from that.
 When the lady then decided
 to rest after the work, 2935
 oh my goodness, what womanly brilliance
 shone forth from her body!
 She was so extremely beautiful⁷⁵
 that all my desire to feel happiness came true, and this through her.
 Because of much good fortune 2940
 I received so much delight
 that nothing in my business ever went wrong.

Whatever I undertook, it worked out well.
 All my wishes were translated into my works
 and everything was just as I wanted it, 2945
 and as I was supposed to wish for.
 When I experienced something sorrowful,
 which caused me pain,
 I went to her and looked at her.
 Immediately afterwards I was able to return filled with joy, 2950
 since I had recovered thereby from sorrow,
 however great my sorrow had been.
 Whoever could take a look at her beauty,
 whatever pain he might have experienced,
 he then could not help but be filled with joy 2955
 and be healed from sorrow.
 He could take away from her an inner delight because of her.
 If I had brought back home with me my goods,
 I know in truth and without any delusion,
 I would have delighted in it 2960
 only half as much compared to the delight which she created in me.
 This great fortune
 God granted me through the blessedness,
 which he had granted her.
 Then my lady stayed with me, that is true 2965
 for more than a year
 during which I never received a message
 from the prince, her fiancé,⁷⁶
 any certain news,
 how he had fared. 2970
 I never heard anything
 from her mother or from her father.
 At the same time I never got news
 from England.
 I was very surprised about that 2975
 and thought to myself:
 “Indeed, I know in truth
 that I should not worry
 that the prince of England
 might have perished, except that I have never 2980
 heard any trustworthy news.
 Before he would abandon his lady
 here without having seen her,
 he would rather accept woes,
 unless he had died. 2985
 The king of Norway

has also passed away, that must be true,
 since it is now one and a half years ago
 that he sent from his country
 my lady. 2990

If he knew that she lives with me and is healthy,
 I would have seen repeatedly
 his messengers here.
 They are all dead; I am afraid to say.”

Now my heart was torn all the time 2995
 and filled with conflicting thoughts,
 wondering whether they were alive or not.
 I pondered much about the options
 and was finally convinced of their demise.

Now, I observed that my lady handled 3000
 her suffering in a well mannered female fashion.
 However happy she was, when her friends
 mentioned the name of a man [her fiancé],
 of whom she never received a word,
 then that name made her cry, 3005
 as soon as she heard it,
 his name who was deep in her heart
 in a loving company.

She often cried,
 lamenting her secret sorrow, 3010
 because stern *Minne* [Love]
 had implanted the young hero
 in her youthful soul.

One heart contained both their lives,
 he carried their lives, his heart carried her body, 3015
 although she had not yet married him.
 Love is often placing her rope
 between two hearts,
 who know very little about Love’s strategems.

Love operates with a trick, 3020
 that two people declare their love for each other
 as soon as they have gazed at
 each other in a loving fashion.
 Love is often gaining riches,
 because she works with the constancy of feelings 3025
 so that love does not disappear
 from either one among the two.

Love is inseparable
 which is granted to two lovers
 who are bonded by love.⁷⁷ 3030

Love revealed its truth to me,
 as I perceived it in my lady,
 because she held such strong feelings
 for the young noble man
 and yet never received in his arms 3035
 love through a kiss.
 Love's work would normally disappear as a result of separation,
 except that love bloomed through them,
 of whom I have spoken here.
 Each one of them granted love 3040
 to each other,
 once each had been hit
 by the gaze of love,
 when they looked at each other
 for the first time,⁷⁸ 3045
 and when they experienced love in their hearts.
 I recognized that entirely in the lady,
 and understood it completely.
 I thought about it
 and often reflected upon it: 3050
 "My God, what will happen next?
 Since I have released my noble lady
 from great sorrow,
 how shall I then worthily
 arrange her situation, 3055
 so that she will not always be unhappy?
 She will always experience sorrow,
 great pain and misery,
 as is fitting for her kind,
 unless I will remove it from her 3060
 as far as I might be able to do it.
 Whatever riches I have acquired
 until today,
 that would not be enough
 to find a husband for my lady 3065
 who would be worthy of receiving a fiefdom from her father.⁷⁹
 Since I do not possess so much wealth,
 which would be appropriate for her nobility,
 I will probe with her
 whether she might consider 3070
 to become the wife of a rich merchant
 instead of suffering
 in servile misery."
 Then the thought occurred to me: 3075

“I would be unhappy forever,
 if I were to break love’s constancy,
 which she holds for her beloved friend.
 Oh dear, that is, however, nothing else
 but an illusion, even though it is
 engraved in her heart. 3080
 Now, I doubt it that he is still alive,⁸⁰
 no, that lord is dead.
 For that reason she is suffering even more pain,
 since it is only a dream, 3085
 of which she believes to draw her joy.”
 Thus I lamented for her in manifold ways.
 One day I went to see her.
 The good lady greeted me
 very lovingly. 3090
 I said: “My dear lady,
 would you grant me your favor
 and care to listen to me?”
 [She:] “Yes, my lord father, now speak.
 Whatever might please you, 3095
 I will happily listen to it, my dear, tell me then.”
 [Gerhart:] “Lady, may God reward you for that.
 This is a blissful response
 from your worthy sweetness.
 Allow me then, if I might say something 3100
 hurting your graces,
 that you do not take it badly against me
 and let it stand, by your kindness,
 if I voice a request to you.”
 [She:] “I will do so, father, in the name of God. 3105
 Your request is a command for me,
 that I will happily comply with.
 Whatever you desire in your heart,
 I will gladly accept it, I will be content with it.”
 I responded to my lady: 3110
 “I am speaking up then, since I have your permission.
 Lady, please into consideration
 what miracles have happened with you.
 I have unfortunately recognized truly
 that no one is still alive 3115
 who could be called your friend.⁸¹
 They are, sad to say, all dead.
 Now, because of your hardship
 I have often great worries

and sharp pain in my heart, 3120
 wondering how things will develop for you.
 My greatest worry,
 as God knows, my lady, concerns
 you and troubles me all the time.
 Those worries have weighed heavily on me. 3125
 Now, often I thought that,
 before you suffer from poverty,
 you should accept wealth and property
 to a great extent
 in the social community 3130
 in which I am called a merchant.
 You know well of my son
 that he commands great virtues
 and dignity, according to his name,
 that is, a dignity corresponding 3135
 to the status of a merchant.
 That's what I wanted to suggest, if you permit
 and if you agree to it, my lady,
 that you accept him as your husband.
 I cannot imagine 3140
 how else you would regain
 the status⁸² that you have lost
 with the disappearance of the highly acknowledged prince,
 Willehalm of England.
 He has, unfortunately, 3145
 passed away."⁸³
 My lady politely answered then:
 "Lord father, I am glad
 that you have tried so hard for me.
 What you want I also desire, 3150
 since that is proper and correct.
 If you were asking me to marry
 your servant upon your recommendation,
 I would do that for your sake
 very willingly, undoubtedly; 3155
 since you and our Lord God
 have returned to me completely⁸⁴
 my body and my life.
 I do not talk about your son.
 The lowest person in your service 3160
 would be fully adequate for me,
 just as you were requesting from me.
 It is true, the young man is worth to receive

the highest fortune one could aspire for,
 as he demonstrates through his demeanor. 3165
 I would be happy, if he agrees [to marry me].
 Dear father, now do as well,⁸⁵
 what I will request from you.”
 [Gerhart:] “Gladly, my lady, that will be done.”
 Then let me wait one more year, 3170
 if you agree readily,
 to find out whether our Lord will let me know
 whether my fiancé is still alive,⁸⁶
 and whether He will return him to me.
 I know for sure and do not doubt, 3175
 that, if he is still alive, he will find me
 before this year will have come to an end.
 If that does not happen, I will have to console myself
 about his demise. 3180
 Allow me to wait in that hope,
 and then I will fulfill your wish.”
 [Gerhart:] “Gladly, lady, that will be,
 I will happily allow you to wait,
 since God, throughout time,
 has never created an individual so virtuous as you are 3185
 in such an innocent youth,
 with such a blessed body.
 I am most pleased,
 that you have accepted my request
 just as my heart had desired, 3190
 and therefore I have to be even more jubilant
 in my heart
 as long as I will live.⁸⁷
 May God always happily grant you
 forever a blessed life! 3195
 The fact that I had given away my goods for your sake,
 pleases me more and more,⁸⁸
 since it was truly done out of love for you.”⁸⁹
 Then I left my lady
 She was sad and I was happy, 3200
 that she had kept her love in mind.⁹⁰
 I was joyful that I had received from her
 an answer just as I had hoped for.
 Her loving eyes
 had filled with tears because of her longing 3205
 for the one whom she never forgot,
 I mean her worthy fiancé.

It was a wonderful time for me,
 seeing this good lady in my presence,
 who never transgressed womanly virtues
 through unwomanly thinking. 3210

The year followed the other,
 during which I never received, indeed
 any certain news what the situation
 of the prince of England might be,
 or how her father [the king of Norway] fared. 3215

The lady waited the whole time
 in such good manners
 that it added to her blessed praise
 in a glorious fashion. 3220

My good fortune grew
 and my misfortune dwindled.
 Because of her blissfulness it seemed to me
 that my joy increased much,
 since my efforts and my thinking
 were turned toward the good lady,
 especially because I believed
 that she might always stay with me.⁹¹ 3225

When the year drew to an end
 and we began to reach the deadline,
 I went back again to the room
 where I found my lady. 3230

I said: "Lady, you know well
 what I must ask you once again.
 The time has come,
 upon which we had agreed before:
 the year has been completed." 3235

She said: "Father, you are right."
 [Gerhart:] "Now tell me, my dear good lady,
 what is in your mind now!" 3240

[Lady:] "Well, I must abide by it
 what I had promised to you.
 Whatever you want me to do, my dear father,
 I will comply with." 3245

In my soul I was very happy about it.
 I was pleased about what she said
 and thanked her in the name of God,
 who made her to demonstrate such goodness
 that she did not feel shame about it
 to abandon the name of 'queen' 3250

and was called a merchant's wife on my behalf.
 For that her blessed person
 may be honored forever
 through joy-bearing teachings.

Then, as I had planned ahead, 3255
 I had convinced her,
 my pure good lady,
 to say with a delightful mind
 that she was ready to fulfill my request
 in willing constancy. 3260

I was happy about this great fortune,
 since none of my fellow [merchants]
 had won such great worthiness,
 as that which I enjoyed
 through my lady's dignity. 3265

I rode then to my lord [archbishop]
 at the court in his palace,
 where he stayed in his private chamber.
 I got off the horse and went to him.

Out of his heart-felt nobility 3270
 my dear lord
 welcomed me amicably.

I thanked him for that grace.
 Then he asked me the following:
 "What is the purpose, Gerhart,
 that you have come today to me? 3275

Did something bad happen to you?" I answered: "No,
 but a secret matter
 forces me to turn to you,
 my lord, I need your advice." 3280

He said: "Indeed, you will receive it
 as much as my wits allow me to do.
 Tell me what concerns you."
 Then the lord invited me
 to sit down next to him 3285
 and asked me to tell him what concerned me.

I said: "Lord, I will tell you,
 why I have to request advice from you,
 for which reason I have come here.
 You have certainly heard 3290
 how it happened to me,
 that I found in prison
 highly-minded noble knights
 and a worthy princess,

all shackled tightly 3295
 in the wild heathendom,
 and how I ransomed them with my goods
 from their misery
 on behalf of God and for their own gratitude.
 Their laments forced me to do the sale. 3300.
 I wanted to help all of them.
 When I had freed the poor people
 from the heathens,
 I let the knights return home
 to their country, sailing across the sea. 3305
 Together with her two maids
 I brought the princess here.
 It was my intention and also my wish
 to guard her on behalf of her fiancé,
 if he were alive and searched 3310
 for his fiancée, hoping to find her
 in good honor, free from any disloyalty.
 Thus she stayed with me, that is true,
 more than a year,
 during which, in truth, 3315
 I never heard from her fiancé.
 Then I had a conversation with the good lady,
 whether I would be allowed to give her comfort
 by granting to let herself be convinced⁹²
 to take as her husband 3320
 my son. She pledged that with her own words,
 and she agreed to my request.
 She greatly praised my willingness
 that I had given her an extra year as a goal to find out
 whether her fiancé would come back, 3325
 so that she then could marry him.
 That year has come to an end.
 Still, the my dear lady is ready
 to stick to her firm promise 3330
 and give her virginal body,
 by becoming my son's wife;
 I am overjoyed about that.
 This great, joyful blessing
 urged me to turn to you, 3335
 so that I can understand from your
 teaching, help, and advice.
 After all, my very pure lady
 is of such extraordinary beauty,

and if she then becomes my son's wife 3340
 I will always enjoy the highest
 fortune, goodness, and honor.
 Whatever blissfulness I had experienced before,
 since the moment when I had seen the good lady the first time,
 it was all a blissfulness, 3345
 which God had bestowed upon her."

My lord responded then: "Since your mind has urged you
 to turn to me for advice,
 I will not cut off your bliss,
 since God with gracious willingness 3350
 has crowned your happiness in such a way
 that it will stand upright in full bloom
 in complete and wonderful perfection.
 Whoever recognizes this properly,
 will be obliged to tell you 3355
 that God through His own blessed will
 has bestowed upon you
 eagerly so much good fortune
 as He had never done for any other living person.
 Since now God has permitted you to enjoy your fortune, 3360
 which has never happened before,
 it would always give me grief,
 if I were to diminish all that,
 or to weaken, to repress, or to decline it.
 I want to increase your good fortune in whatever way I can do. 3365
 Your son is a merchant
 and also a very virtuous man.
 He shall receive the rank of a courtier
 and carry a sword
 and become a worthy member of knighthood. 3370
 A man who is decorated with a coat of arms
 pursues the world's highest honor.
 In that way I want to support you
 and honor your blessedness."

[Gerhart:] "Lord, may God recompense you for that 3375
 through His divine command.
 This is such a great honor
 which will dignify and elevate me.
 My misfortune is sliding away, 3380
 since your kindness
 has granted me such excellent advice
 that I am overflowing with happiness.
 I will never forget the great blessing,

which your great mercy grants me, 3385
 as long as I will live.
 Since I now am obliged to admit
 that I have experienced through you
 such great honor which no one
 has ever received from his lord, 3390
 that is, so much graceful recognition,
 as I have gotten from you,
 I ask you to place the crown on my spirit
 and on the blessed good,
 for which I will have to be so thankful, 3395
 because you have provided so much support,
 and I hope that you will not mind, my dear lord
 to attend the feast
 that will take place at Pentecost,
 since I want to give at that event 3400
 my son the sword
 and the very sweet and worthy lady
 as his wife, if Christ will grant it,
 who is the creator of everything.”
 My lord praised me for all that. 3405
 I then left him and was happy about the outcome.
 Filled with joy I rode back to the city
 where I found
 the local lords
 who rule over the city and the country 3410
 and asked them to attend
 the festival.⁹³ We both were honored,
 my dear son and myself
 because all the nobles paid me respect,
 counts, free men, and knights,⁹⁴ 3415
 and I got the promise
 from more than three hundred of them,
 all of them well-off and outstanding individuals,
 the best in their nobility,
 to be my guests 3420
 during my son’s celebration,
 each trying to be more chivalric than the others.
 Then I returned to the city.
 My fellow-citizens I asked
 to come and attend 3425
 the festival
 together with their wives.
 Yes, that’s what I asked. They promised

to fulfill what I had requested of them.
 Everyone who was worthy for it, 3430
 I asked to come on my behalf,
 so that everyone would be present.
 All without exception pledged it
 to come as guests without fail.

Then I ordered in preparation of the festival 3435
 to set up a wide ring of stands,⁹⁵
 and for the tournament I had them built a fence
 in such a wide circle
 that, when a knight properly wanted to turn around
 and intended to rush down the field, 3440
 he would still complete his joust well,
 because his charger could jump freely.
 I also made sure that both
 horses and rich clothes
 were readied for me and my son, 3445
 and also for the squires, who happily served
 in my son's company.
 I made sure that I ordered lavishly
 much food for all.

I hardly could wait 3450
 for the event to take place
 and that the holy evening would come.
 The candles were lit, which made me happy.
 Upon my request there came
 the lords from the entire country 3455
 together with many knightly companies.
 My son, in great dignity
 rode toward them out of the city gate
 together with his squires,
 whom he had asked to accompany him, 3460
 and who were dressed in a knightly and noble manner.
 The citizens were also ready
 and came with their worthy wives,
 for whom I had ordered
 to prepare generous hospitality 3465
 along with wonderful music from string instruments,
 which was performed in the evening at the court.
 My lord the archbishop
 also arrived in princely splendor,
 riding with me into the courtyard 3470
 accompanied by loud music, aiming for the stands.
 Thus they were sitting there and enjoyed food.

Once the meal had been completed,
 my lord addressed his courtiers,
 the counts, the barons, and the knights. 3475
 There were also the cathedral canons
 and many of the burghers.
 I had invited them all with the intention to receive their advice.
 Together with their support
 my son received a great fiefdom, 3480
 it was just right according to feudal rules.
 With everyone's approval
 he became an equal to the nobles.⁹⁶
 This wonderful rise in status
 took place in public 3485
 so that everyone heard about it and observed it,
 that is the honorable people present there:
 priests, knights, noble ladies.
 I was exceedingly happy about it, there is no denying it.
 On that holy day, 3490
 we all heard mass,
 it did not take long after the blessing
 for me to take my lady [Erene] by her hand.
 I brought her, as was proper,
 to my lord who was sitting there 3495
 and where every worthy man
 delighted to look at her in good manners,
 giving her the highest praise.
 What else could I say about it?
 She was given to my son 3500
 in proper marriage,
 and this in presence of many noble knights.⁹⁷

Then we rode in high spirits
 accompanied by a group of cheerful men,
 clamoring, until we reached the bleachers. 3505
 The good knights
 all engaged in a bohort [melee]⁹⁸
 with flying banners.
 Their saddle blankets were splendid.
 In a most courtly manner 3510
 my lord in his rich worthiness,
 wonderfully rode next to my lady.
 He sat down next to her on a chair,
 which was my request and my desire.
 Finally everyone had found a seat. 3515
 We had not forgotten anything.

I was riding one way, my son the other way,
 intending thereby
 to honor everyone
 who had come to the festival on our behalf. 3520
 We made every effort to achieve our goal
 to be the best hosts possible,
 and we served everyone in great joy.
 All guests attending the wedding
 looked at us [with delight]. 3525
 I rode throughout the entire range of bleachers
 and noticed a guest who looked miserable,
 although he was not missing anything in terms of hospitality.⁹⁹
 My son rode many times up to my worthy lady
 because he wanted to enjoy repeatedly 3530
 his heart-felt love for her.
 That had to happen many times,
 and he exchanged gazes with her,
 since he enjoyed it so much.
 When the meal had come to an end, 3535
 then we turned our attention to entertainment,
 according to the schedule of the day.
 The day turned into evening,
 and the holy night arrived.
 My son busily tried 3540
 to think hard about it
 how he could give the courtly people
 some kind of gifts
 that would be a form of honor.¹⁰⁰
 In the evening he sent out written notices, 3545
 since he had not yet been made fully to a man
 according to knightly customs.
 Since he was only a 'servant,'
 he was still denied as a husband for his wife.
 She was not joined with him. Just a maid 3550
 as she was called in the morning.
 His love was still unknown to her.
 That was correct and proper.
 Once he had become a knight,
 her love then influenced his feelings 3555
 in such great force that his desire
 for the lady's love burned strongly.
 He began to love her so ardently
 that he forgot, out of pure joy,
 whether he had ever, in proper fashion, 3560

turned his attention to worthy ladies.
The reason for that was the princess's pure beauty.

Early the next morning
we were all prepared
to go to mass 3565
and listen to the religious message,
including my lady and all the knights.

My lady wore in courtly fashion
a most delightful dress,
which in its preciousness 3570
could certainly be worn by an empress.

It was made out of silk and moiré cloth.
The dress and the coat were long,
mixed in was white ermine's fur,
and below she wore a white blouse out of silk. 3575
The highly honorable lady
had put on a headgear, wore clasps, and a ring
and a delightful belt.

She displayed a pure, virtuous mind
under her rich clothing.¹⁰¹ 3580

Now, according to knightly customs,
my son wore rich, delightful, well-cut clothing
at that wedding,
made out of rich silk,
which was green as grass. 3585

Mixed in was fashioned
a red silken cloth.
My son wore that clothing full of joy,
and with him twelve worthy companions,
who were supposed to receive the sword with him, 3590
so they wore the same clothing as he did
in the name of his and their own courtliness.

Once the mass was over
the young, high-spirited men
went in an orderly procession 3595
to my lord, [the archbishop].
He blessed their swords.

Noble knights attached
to those new young heroes
their swords in proper fashion.¹⁰² 3600

After God's blessing
the sword-carrying heroes
rushed out of the church doors with loud clamor.
There they found their chargers, richly adorned

already prepared for them. 3605
 All those jumped on their chargers,
 who had the rank of a knight.
 Before the entire group
 many banners were flying in brilliant colors.
 There was also loud clamor, 3610
 music from drums and trumpets could be heard,¹⁰³
 and there were many musicians playing string instruments
 who demonstrated their skills,
 playing knightly melodies
 in the sweet courtly style. 3615
 Many worthy ladies
 displayed their wonderfully courtly manners.
 My lady [the princess,] was led most politely
 by the archbishop
 to the court. 3620
 She was followed by noble ladies,
 in an orderly fashion, without rushing.
 The worthy noble ladies
 also found their palfreys ready. They got on and rode off. 3625
 No one waited then any longer,
 they took their shields
 under their arms and followed.
 The strong young men
 rushed ahead of the ladies 3630
 according to a well arranged custom.
 The procession was thus carried out
 in a wonderful manner.¹⁰⁴
 The music was just splendid.
 It could be heard all over the city. 3635
 The sound was very pleasant,
 when they entered the ring.
 “Come on closer! Get here, push!
 Hurry, move on, let the others through!
 Rush forward! Let us fight 3640
 from the bleachers down to the sand,
 we recognize these knights!”
 Those were the common shouts,
 uttered by the knights anxious to gain love.
 “Wow, what a chevalier! Look at this woman!¹⁰⁵ 3645
 May God protect you, pure ladies!”
 Those were their cries uttered in a loud voice.
 Then there arrived a group,
 then a second and a third;

after that followed a splendid one, 3650
 a great group of knights, rushing forward,
 which was not ready to spare
 the horses, wherever they were.
 They began to joust
 on the large field. 3655
 The colorful banners
 strongly rustling in the wind.
 One could hear in the court
 the ringing of many horse bells.
 In a knightly fashion 3660
 they pursued many joys,
 so they led the high-minded lady
 to the stands
 so that she also could enjoy the happy events.
 When the worthy crowd of ladies 3665
 had arrived at the seats,
 the knights stopped fighting in groups.
 The squires did not ignore
 the horses there; they led them away.
 They took good care of them. 3670
 Then I divvied up the seats according to the knightly ranks
 in each group,
 as was fitting for them.
 One side of the stands was occupied
 by the knights, proud and in a great mood, 3675
 the other side was taken by the good ladies;
 the stands on the other side I assigned
 to the barons and to the counts.
 Thus everyone had a place to sit
 according to his social rank. 3680
 My lord sat next to the lady.
 Squires, who were attentive and fast,
 brought water immediately to them.
 Everyone carried out
 his duties properly, whatever task was assigned to him 3685
 in honor of the guests and also of the honorable day.
 Stewards and cupbearers
 had to watch carefully
 that the guests were well served.
 The field was filled with worthy squires, 3690
 who in their courtly manners
 would have disliked to neglect their training.
 They paid close attention

to whatever wishes were voiced [by anyone].

Now, God could not give us a more brighter day
than it was at that time
as delightful as it was.

Bright flowers and grass [grew everywhere]
which the good month of May
had brought to us in delightful colors.¹⁰⁶

I expressed my thanks to God
and His sweet commands
in heartfelt manner and with many joys.
When I rode through the bleachers
to look at the dear guests,
I stopped before my worthy lady,
got off the horse and looked at her,
offering her a cup to drink.

When I wanted to leave again,
I saw standing over there at a column
a man near my lady,
who wore very poor clothing,
which was a sign of great poverty.

He had on a rough coat
and a dirty shirt.

From his entire face
all color had disappeared.
His red lips were nothing
but pale and weak.

His youthful age was revealed to me
by his thin beard, which was not long,
since it just had begun to grow
and which never had been shaven.
This was the result of his youth.

The miserable man stood there void of all joys.
His arms and legs were exposed
and not covered.

His sorrow was great.
The joyless stranger
had dirty hands,
a sunburned neck and legs.

Yet the beautiful appearance of his body
came shining forth thanks to God's effort.
His beautiful body
was more white than snow¹⁰⁷
wherever the clothing did not cover the body.¹⁰⁸

That was obvious, just as one would have imagined it.

His hair was blond

and fell down to his shoulder in curls.

He had grown to the right measure,

3740

neither too big nor too small,

looking attractive, being slender,

with a strong body,

altogether well built.

He had a delightful face

3745

since God had planted his grace

into his appearance,

although he stood there void of happiness.

When I saw that good man,

I went over to him and looked at him,

3750

wondering what might be going on with him.

He stood there like a pilgrim

as if he were filled with pain.

He constantly looked toward my lady

who was sitting on her chair.

3755

When he gazed upon her, his eyes filled with tears

out of his grievous lament

caused by a deep and secret pain.

When they flowed over

and the tears dripped down

3760

he put his fingers toward his eyes

and whisked them quickly

out of his bright eyes.

Then he looked at her again

with great sorrow, over and over.

3765

Every new moment

his eyes filled with new tears;

because he lamented and suffered pain

he had to cry all the time.

He covered his head under his cloths,

3770

and wiped his eyes, and then he looked at her again.

Yet, when he looked at the lady,

he had to cry once again.

He suffered great pain.

I thought then: "Oh, dear God

3775

in the name of your divine command,

what does all this mean

that this particular man

cries so much in heartfelt pain?

Yes, my lord God, what is the meaning

3780

that he suffers such great grief
 because of my lady?
 He receives so much pain from her.
 Sweet God, who might he be,
 that he is standing there and is unhappy?" 3785
 I then approached the brother and said:
 "May God protect you, sir pilgrim."
 "Good grace to you, my dear lord."
 "Good man, why are you standing here in this way?"
 "What do you mean?" "You are unhappy." 3790
 "No, I am not, my dear good lord,
 I am quite content."
 "No, my brother." "But I am, in truth."
 "By God, what is in your mind?"
 "Have you been hurt?"¹⁰⁹ He said: "Yes." 3795
 "Dear man, now tell me where."
 "Nowhere, and yet too much,
 of which I do not want to speak."
 "Good man, what does that mean?"
 "My lord, I know well what it is." 3800
 "Dear man, you should tell me,
 if some wrong has happened to you here."
 No, that's not it; if I were suffering,
 then that would have been caused to me
 before I arrived here. 3805
 Whoever might experience pain,
 would regain his happiness here."
 Then I asked the foreigner
 to walk with me away from the stand
 "Dear lord, let me stay here," 3810
 said the miserable man.
 [Gerhart:] "Dear brother, now come with me."
 He did not want to comply,
 but then the pilgrim followed me.
 I led him down from the balcony 3815
 to a private room.
 I said: "Dear good brother,
 please do what I will ask you for."
 "Gladly, sir, I will do that."
 "Brother, then reveal to me 3820
 who you are, tell me that by God
 in full truth and without lying."
 "Lord, I am a miserable man,
 who has gained much heart-felt pain

in his lifetime. My heart is filled 3825
 with pain, sorrow, laments, and suffering,
 making my body truly miserable.
 You notice, lord, that I do not possess
 any wealth or a strong body that would demand respect.
 You may as well repress your own question. 3830
 I am the most miserable person
 who has ever been called a man.”
 Then I asked the brother again:
 “Good man, how did this happen
 that my lady’s beauty caused you 3835
 so much pain in your heart?
 I saw you standing there lamentably,
 suffering from painful sorrow.
 What happened to you there? What did you lament about?
 By God, tell me that. 3840
 I pledge by my Christian faith,
 whatever you are going to tell me,
 that it will not hurt you in any way
 and yet might easily help you to regain your joy.”
 The pilgrim responded then: 3845
 ‘Since I have lived in such heavy sorrow
 until today,
 I will take the risk and tell you
 at the danger of losing my life, since I am suffering heart-felt pain
 anyway and also great sorrow. 3850
 If I have to die, so be it,
 since I have been born, unfortunately
 without love and without any consolation.
 If I am not going to be liberated from my pain,
 then death will be my preference; 3855
 because of the endless suffering
 my life is in danger.
 Let me tell you then my name
 in response to your question
 and reveal what strange adventures have happened to me. 3860
 Then anything may happen to me just as God wills it.
 I am going to tell you fully,
 as far as I know the truth,
 what suffering I have gone through.
 I am called Willehalm, 3865
 the kingdom of England
 was supposed to be my rightful inheritance.
 My dear father wore there

in great esteem
 the kingdom's crown, 3870
 through which he gained much praise.
 When he died an honorable death,
 I inherited the rich kingdom
 according to the laws, but I was
 a young man, just a child. 3875
 When the lords of the land
 elected me according to princely virtues,
 and treated me well,
 as it behooved their honor,
 I took their advice well to heart. 3880
 They were pleased about that, observing that in me.
 Both I and they were happy to learn
 the good news
 that King Reinmunt [of Norway]
 had raised a dear child, 3885
 very beautiful, not lacking in any blissfulness,
 who was very fitting for me,
 and the princes recommended
 that I should marry her.
 I sent my messengers there 3890
 to find out what this beauty and her father might think about it.
 Once they had seen her,
 they returned and informed me
 that the wishfulness of all good fortune
 was fulfilled in her, 3895
 and that Reinmunt of Norway
 would be happy to have me as his son-in-law.
 This my messengers told me then.
 I was happy about it and traveled there
 together with a delightful company; 3900
 they had joined me
 in their chivalric worthiness.
 I selected the best whom I found
 all over the kingdom of England:
 twelve of them were the most outstanding, 3905
 nearly sixty years of age,
 and twelve of them were honorable
 and had reached the age of about thirty.
 Some of them were
 mighty princes, 3910
 the others were barons and knights.
 I had also taken with me twelve maids,

who were supposed to be the companions
 for my dear lady.

I traveled with this wonderful band of people 3915
 over the sea to Norway.
 I was well received there.
 Once all that had taken place
 then King Reinmunt right away
 gave me the virgin, 3920
 the Princess Erene.
 Before he entrusted his daughter,
 whom I was supposed
 to marry,
 I had to promise to him 3925
 and swear many oaths,
 to grant him my pledge that,
 while I was still a squire,
 I would not to lie with her
 nor treat her as my wife.¹¹⁰ 3930
 I did so, since it had to be.
 Only then he consented to my wooing
 and granted me the pure good woman,
 the noble, high-spirited,
 and highly-born lady, indeed. 3935
 Then I had our ship be made ready
 with everything necessary for the sea voyage.
 The king sent with me a large army
 of worthy knights to accompany me home.
 Then I made up my mind 3940
 to place the young princess
 in one of the ships
 together with the company of English lords,
 whom I had brought with me from home,
 and I wanted to travel with the other group 3945
 across the sea to my country.
 I did this in order to comply with my oath.
 I was afraid that the guarantee
 that I had promised for my lady
 might torture my heart so much, 3950
 that I would have to undergo great suffering
 and would feel much pain
 as a result of my longing for her;
 since she was not supposed to become my wife
 before I would be recognized as a knight. 3955
 I was worried that the bonds of love

might make me break the oath
 and would teach me to experience sorrow,
 as suffering always comes from love.
 Because of that fear it had to be 3960
 that both I and she, that is, both of us
 had to be separated on the sea.
 Then I turned, together with the good lady,
 toward the stormy sea.¹¹¹
 We then separated, but only physically. 3965
 With my future wife¹¹²
 I left my heart and also my soul.
 I took from the good lady
 her soul, heart, and mind
 in heart-felt love, 3970
 which she offered me with many kisses
 under tears, as I did as well.
 She took a ring from me,
 and I took one from her.
 I am still wearing it at my finger. 3975
 It has reminded me often ever since
 in painful heart-felt sorrow
 of the sweet pure woman who had given it to me.
 When we were about to depart from the land,
 I was filled in many ways 3980
 with unhappiness and great sorrow.
 Misery, suffering, and troubles
 have ever been with me since then.
 I have never recovered from unhappiness
 since I had to experience the greatest misfortune 3985
 which anyone has ever had to undergo
 in suffering, that is, when I witnessed
 and truly observed
 great sorrow, affecting us both,
 a very rueful separation 3990
 and the great suffering of dear friends,
 whom I observed losing their lives.
 This happened as I am going to tell you.
 One day, while we were on the sea
 strong and great storms rose. 3995
 My ship was driven toward a mountain,
 that seemed very scary.
 The storm slammed us against a rock,
 which broke up our ship into pieces.
 I saw how many worthy men 4000

next to me drown in the sea,
 and the entire company died
 and no one survived
 who had come along with me.
 When my ship completely fell apart 4005
 I held onto a boat
 that carried me to the land.
 However, I had no idea
 where my very dear lady had gotten.
 I traveled through many countries 4010
 and searched in many kingdoms
 for the noble and loving lady,
 yet I never heard in truth
 anything about her.
 Believe me, as you can realize, 4015
 it has now been four and a half years
 that I have been searching for the good one
 and cared very little
 about my country, the crown, and my life
 because of the most endearing lady 4020
 who had been born to cause me so much pain,
 and who is the reason that I have now lost
 life, country, and property,
 heartfelt joy and my high-spirited mind.
 I have now found her here. 4025
 The deeply-felt longing for her,
 which I have carried secretly
 was terrible, and it is now even more intense;
 I feel worse than ever. 4030
 Before I drew some solace from hope.
 Now I have to let that go.
 Prior to this I enjoyed the illusion of love,
 and now I have to abandon that as well,
 for which reason I feel even more badly than before. 4035
 Oh dear, and always, oh dear!
 How should I find any consolation
 for the pain deep in my heart?
 Oh dear, how strangely God
 has demonstrated his incomprehensible power 4040
 in an astonishing way!
 His workings¹¹³ have lowered
 so much the spirit of my heart,
 turning it this and that way.
 He can certainly bring about wondrous things. 4045

That has become visible in my case:
 while I lost the good lady,
 whom I had chosen as the love of my heart,
 for that He has given me
 and added to it all 4050
 more worries than anyone
 has ever earned through heart-felt love.
 I have gained and I have lost
 love created through the pain in my heart.

The loss in my gain 4055
 consists in nothing else but that I have come here
 so that I can observe
 the Easter Day of my joy.¹¹⁴
 It is a rich discovery for me
 that I know that she is still well. 4060
 Yet, I know that I have to give up my life
 for my dear lady,
 since I will now have to lose her.
 Because of this terrible pain
 I will have to die, 4065
 and perish in grievous laments.

Oh, you wounded body!
 If I will never be able [again] to hug
 this lovely lady,
 then great pain will afflict me 4070
 and powerful sorrow in my heart.
 Then I would have purchased knighthood
 for a high price, while I was still a squire!
 If I had not given my promise [to her father],
 I would have been with my lady 4075
 in sweet friendship
 all the time before and ever since.¹¹⁵
 Now, I feel great pain in my heart
 because I must depart from her
 and lose her sweet person, 4080
 since your son is supposed to marry her.
 He enjoys greatest joy in his heart,
 while I am going to lose from my heart
 all the joy.

Thus our lives are separated. 4085
 He has gained my heart-felt joy.
 My reward is the suffering resulting from love,
 heart-felt love having turned into heart-felt pain.
 That's the reason why you saw me crying

and lamenting here. 4090
 This is getting worse for me,
 as I will have to lament ardently
 and to cry as a result from the pain in my heart,
 which I am feeling because of the love that I carry in my heart.
 That is all just as I have told you. 4095
 I have told you the full truth
 and revealed my mind to you,
 and my name and informed you who I am.
 What else can I say?
 Whatever you might want from me, that will happen. 4100
 I will have to do as you might wish.
 In truth, I will never recover [from my misery].
 If I have to face my demise here,
 then so be it, it would be God's intention.
 Dear lord, as you command, 4105
 so it will be.
 I was born to experience suffering,
 which has sworn to be with me.
 Therefore I cannot push it away,
 and whatever misery will happen to me, 4110
 that will happen to me because of a woman,
 that is, because of the blessed person
 to whom God has given life.
 For that reason I do not regret the suffering
 that I am experiencing here. 4115
 I have wasted my life for her.”
 I said to the brother then:
 “Dear man, is that the case
 as you have told me now?”
 “Yes, my lord, so help me Christ. 4120
 What good would it do to me if I lied,
 and deceived myself so much?
 If I wanted to tell you something else
 than what my eyes have witnessed,
 then I would lie and deceive myself. 4125
 That would go very much to my discredit.
 For what purpose would I deceive both of us,
 for good or for bad?
 Everything has to proceed as God wants it to be.
 Your son ought to enjoy 4130
 love in his heart, while I will have pain in my heart.
 That is what has happened, what else would you want?
 I am poor and he is rich.”¹¹⁶

[Gerhart:] “[No, no], be happy,
my lord, do not be so sorrowful. 4135
Since God has arranged matters in His own way
He wants to demonstrate to you
with a miracle His great power,
so you should not stay unhappy;
shed all your lamentable sorrow. 4140
Whatever God wants will happen,
let us witness that miracle in you;
and you will profit from it undoubtedly.”
In that way I consoled the lord
who was burdened in his heart 4145
with greatest pain and sorrow.
I said: “Lord, wait here,
until I have returned.” Then I left
and ordered squires and tailors
to come from the city, asking them 4150
to fashion good clothes for the lord,
which would be appropriate
for the rank of a king.
I urged them on
to do their job as fast as possible. 4155
They eagerly followed my command.
They immediately prepared for him
an elegant dress, skillfully cut;
nothing else I would have accepted.
I ordered him to be given a bath and to be shaven 4160
and to make him look like a new person.¹¹⁷
Whatever clothes a person needs,
I had prepared for him.¹¹⁸
Then I rode off and left him behind
in his room. 4165
Filled with joy I got off the horse
where I found my dear lord.
I told him secretly:
“Listen a little to me, lord.”
“[Archbishop:] “Gladly, tell me, what has happened?” 4170
[Gerhart:] “Listen to the greatest miracle
which has ever happened in these days,
and which God wants to demonstrate to me
at this time in a wondrous manner.”
My lord then leaned over the table 4175
and said then:
“Tell me, what do you want to inform me about?”

What kind of miracle will happen with you?"

I said: "My dear lord,
take more time now

4180

for the meal and the company here,
because I am going to welcome a guest
who is also supposed to sit down with you.

He really needs favors;
he has arrived here only recently."

4185

[Archbishop:] "Dear Gerhart, who is he?"

[Gerhart:] "A guest whom God has sent to me.

Prince Willehalm of England

has arrived now." [Archbishop:]: "Are you mocking me?"

[Gerhart:] "No, it is him, truly by God."

4190

[Archbishop:] "Where has he come from,
in the name of God, and where is he?"

[Gerhart:] There [in the room], the tailors are preparing him his clothes"

[Archbishop:] "Who arrived with him here in this country?"

[Gerhart:] "No one, he is here alone.

4195

Dressed in rags he came by here,
in the appearance of a naked [miserably dressed] pilgrim.

He was standing there near my lady
and looked at her, crying his eyes out.

When I noticed that, I took him aside
and asked him who he was.

4200

The pilgrim told me
his proper name

and how his conditions were.

How the lady was handed over to him,

4205

and what I learned during my journey,

he told me himself

confirming thus the full truth.

Since God now shows us His gracefulness

and His great kindness

4210

and makes this all known to us

by way of sending him [Willehalm] here [to Cologne]

in such a miraculous way,

I request, my lord, that you could give me

good advice in this matter,

4215

so that I can approach him in this regard

in such a way that I can bring forth God's kindness

with good fortune in him."

[Archbishop:] "As you desire, I will give you my advice."

[Gerhart:] "My lord, so help me

4220

in convincing my son to let go
 of the princess,
 [I mean] his dear fiancée,
 whom he has not married [officially],
 and grant her in friendship to her [true] fiancé.
 He might act like the other young people. 4225
 He has enjoyed such great success
 that he might prefer sinfulness
 instead of letting go of the princess.
 Now advise him and tell him that.
 It would be more appropriate 4230
 for him to marry a woman rightly gained
 than a woman not rightly granted.”
 Then my lord said: “I will do that.
 God has blissfully honored you
 through great fortune. 4235
 With your mouth you provide the right teaching,
 which the Holy Spirit in Its wisdom
 has taught you intelligently.
 Now, bring your son here [to me]
 Let me try to find out whether he 4240
 will be ready to follow both of us,
 once I will have explained to him
 God’s proper teachings regarding marriage.”
 I did not linger any moment
 and rushed to find my son 4245
 I took him respectfully
 through the throng to the throne.¹¹⁹
 Before my dear lord
 we sat down, my son and I.
 The archbishop turned to us both. 4250
 I said: “Lord, let us hear your words.”
 [Archbishop:] “No, you talk, your mouth knows better
 how to speak according to your mind
 than mine. And whatever I will hear,
 what his [the son’s] answer will be, 4255
 thereupon I will be able to provide a response.
 Let me hear soon what you have to say,
 since I have clearly seen
 that the young people are anxious
 to receive the permission 4260
 to do jousting on the tournament field.
 I notice well that this urges them on.”
 Thereupon I said: “Son, my dear man,

these words pertain to you.”

[Son:] “How, my father?” [Gerhart:] “I am going to tell you that. 4265

I want to ask you that you will not

be angry with me about that

what I will have to ask you from the bottom of my heart.”

[Son:] “My father, you hold the authority

over me. 4270

Whatever you will command, my father,

that will be done according to your graces.”

[Gerhart:] “May the highest God, dear son

grant you, according to His command,

fully a sweet reward. 4275

Listen then, to what I want to request from you.

You know well, son, what kind of miracle

has happened here in our time,

how I liberated

my lady from misery 4280

with the help of both of our goods

and how I then gave you,

to make you happy, a great fortune

through my dear lady.

If you could have her rightfully 4285

—which unfortunately cannot be—

I would be most delighted forever.

But now it has happened

that her fiancé has returned

whom she had been robbed wrongly 4290

and to whom she had been given before

in rightful marriage. It has now come about

that God has sent him here

for us as a solace, into this country,

so that we can now aspire 4295

for His grace, and this with all our good intentions.

Dear son, allow this to happen,

since our Creator has granted us to observe

His manifold miracles,

since He has given us some authority, 4300

with which we ought to be content.

This means that we can do badly or well

with this lord [Willehalm].

We will enjoy the more honor,

the more we display our gracefulness to him, 4305

since we have the authority to do so.

Insofar as this authority is given to us,

it would be very little effort
 to do well for him.
 Whoever has to exert power, 4310
 ought to be humble
 and to display a humble mind.
 Then the highest hand [God]
 who is called the glorious one, will elevate him.
 Now, our situation is most favorable, 4315
 since the prince himself
 is in our presence,¹²⁰
 so that we can return his legitimate fiancée¹²¹
 without any constraints
 and lower before him in humbleness 4320
 our high-minded spirit
 in servile goodness.
 Thereby God's hand will elevate us,
 since He will be the judge
 at the Day of Judgment 4325
 according to the statements by the prophets."¹²²

My lord then added the following:
 "Listen to what I want to tell you,
 Gerhart, this is [also] my wish.¹²³
 Allow this to happen with a good will, 4330
 since it is God's command.
 When the creator of this world, God,
 brought into existence everything according to its own worth,
 angels, heaven, and earth,
 and when through Lucifer's pride 4335
 the tenth choir [of angels] was destroyed¹²⁴
 through his imitating of God,
 then God wanted to replace it
 with the creation of mankind.
 Adam was placed by Him 4340
 in the delights of Paradise.
 God took from him with His own hand
 a rib and called it his wife.
 He said: 'These two are one body,
 with two souls; but only one being 4345
 may be this man and also this woman,
 and all those who will be brought together
 through a legitimate marriage
 from the beginning until today will form a new unit
 in a pure marriage. Upon them will be placed, 4350
 in marital loyalty,

this bond, without ever any change to occur.’
 Some time thereafter
 the Church Fathers have taught us
 the meaning of the Holy Spirit, 4355
 upon which it is written as follows¹²⁵:
 The very wise messenger is telling us,
 that what God has bound together,
 man’s hand should not separate.
 What God’s idea has shaped, 4360
 that is well according to His grace,
 and no one should tear it apart.
 How could, anyway, our mind
 separate from each other what God has created?
 Think of that 4365
 and do not act against God
 which makes you disobedient against Him.
 If you transgress against that
 what God has granted you,
 then you disregard 4370
 the advice by God and the prophets.
 What will you then say on Sundays,
 when God arrives
 and brings everything to its end,
 thereupon giving you his judgment? 4375
 He will say: ‘You have taken from me
 the bond of my loyal words.
 When my messenger had been sent to you,
 you should have taken what I had given him,
 the staff of a fruitful life, 4380
 so that he would, according to my wish,
 return it
 with every fruitful plentitude
 the fruit of human fertility.
 As my words have told you, 4385
 you cannot legitimately have
 what is supposed to belong to my messenger,
 or you belittle my messenger.
 Otherwise you will be disinherited.’
 Keep this in your mind. 4390
 Gerhart, dear young man,
 think deeply about this
 and let the lady go in the name of God.
 If you disregard His command,
 you will be lost forever 4395

and suffer God's great wrath.
 Give up this lady.
 She is the prince's legitimate fiancée.¹²⁶
 Therefore you cannot keep her,
 you would not be an appropriate husband. 4400
 Since God has sent the prince into this country
 at such a good moment,
 He had wanted to create a miracle thereby,
 since He sent you [the merchant Gerhart] as a helper
 for the prince and the princess. 4405
 Now, let it become apparent
 that you are fortunate enough
 to possess the loyalty of a steady heart.
 I am asking you both for that,
 in the name of God, making no distinction." 4410
 To my lord and to me
 my son turned, asking: "What is your opinion?¹²⁷
 Shall I set free my lady?"
 [Archbishop:] "Yes, if you want to enjoy God's grace."
 [Young Gerhart:] "Can I not marry her under any other condition?" 4415
 [Archbishop:] "Indeed, no. As long as one will observe you
 being together with her in an illegitimate way,
 God's blessing will stay away from you,
 because another man is supposed to marry her,
 to whom you must rightly grant her." 4420
 [Young Gerhart:] "Oh, woe about this situation, and again, oh, woe!
 Now I will have to lament forever
 about the fact that God is so strange,
 demanding from me the agreement
 to let go of my lady, 4425
 from whom I have gained bliss and honor.
 Oh, woe about this lamentable suffering
 that my heart has ever made me
 to receive such great happiness
 from my dear lady, 4430
 whereas now I have to let her go!
 I will never receive any consolation
 for this heart-felt sorrow.
 When I will depart from her,
 I will have to give up on my love 4435
 and will have to live for the rest of my life in sorrow."
 I said to him: "Son, be in good spirit.
 No one ought to call himself
 inconsolable.

If the lady were not to love you, 4440
 how much would you then lose regarding Christ?
 The more you love something,
 the greater the reward will be,
 when you do not look for a reward.
 Therefore you should let go of this love, 4445
 if you want to receive a reward after your life.
 The good God rewards you
 according to your heart's attitude.
 If you are ready to give up your love on his behalf,
 He will give you a life filled with heart-felt love." 4450
 Politely my son said:
 "My father, this misfortune
 I will accept because you command it from me;
 because of my lord [the archbishop] and God
 I will let the lady free. 4455
 It will not matter how much pain I will feel because of her,
 she will have her husband, and that is what will happen.
 Oh well, now let me see him
 who will receive my lady.
 In the name of God I will be happy for him to have her." 4460

 In my heart I felt truly delighted.
 My lord was also very pleased together with me
 that we could not help but,
 out of love and also out of sorrow
 we began to cry together with my son. 4465
 Then we left that place
 and returned to the location
 where we found the prince.
 They had carefully put on him
 most noble clothing. They had dressed him 4470
 most worthily.
 I found him there clothed
 in silk and gold-threaded moiré,
 decked out with sable and ermine,
 decorated with valuable pearls. 4475
 I ordered that trimming be brought,
 which he put on.
 He had on his feet elegant soft shoes,
 what a splendid-looking man he was!¹²⁸
 On his chest there gleamed 4480
 a shining ruby,
 which emitted a bright light.

Also, his hair was, according to courtly customs,
 cut and trimmed fashionably,
 so that it fell nicely, 4485
 in brightly yellow color and curly,
 down to his shoulders.
 His lovely face shone
 in a modest manner,
 because he had to accept sorrow 4490
 for such a long time prior to then.
 Everything was ready now,
 as a soft beauty, not too exuberant
 shone on his face.
 He had such a lovely male appearance, 4495
 and if I were ever to live up to a thousand years,
 I would never see again,
 just as one could imagine,
 such an attractive man.
 He wore valuable clothing, 4500
 my goodness, he was so lovely to look at!
 His wonderful youthfulness was
 like the mirror glass of good fortune!
 He was perfect in sweet courtly virtues,
 entirely raised to perfection. 4505
 He had implanted the desire in his soul
 to gain the world's praise for his excellent manners.
 He was the highest fruit of all blissfulness
 in his bodily appearance.
 The proof of the highest worthiness 4510
 rested in his pure soul.
 His heart pursued many high virtues.
 He was not lacking
 in generosity, chastity, good manners,
 courage, honesty, high spirit, 4515
 trustworthiness, loyalty, and goodness,
 eloquence and wisdom.
 God had bestowed upon him
 the highest glory of a man
 as displayed in his body's purity. 4520
 The highest goal of bliss had been realized in him.
 I observed all that clearly in him,
 once I got to know better
 this man so rich in virtues.
 When my dear son saw him, 4525
 he said politely to the lord:

“In the name of God and my heart,
 be welcome,
 my lord, here in this land.”
 Immediately the lord 4530
 politely thanked him for that,
 displaying his courtly manners.
 I had then not forgotten,
 once everyone had sat down,
 to order the stewards 4535
 not to neglect their duty
 and to serve us diligently.
 I also asked the worthy crowd
 in polite terms to sit down and to wait for me.
 They praised me for that and it thus had to be, 4540
 until everything was prepared,
 my lord [the emperor as listener], just as I have told you.
 I did not ignore the prince any longer
 and ordered a charger to be prepared for him,
 on which he rode with both of us. 4545
 The noble and virtuous man
 rode between us full of joy,
 displaying happiness without any heart-felt sorrow.
 They were wondering much,
 all those who were sitting there, 4550
 who this worthy man might be.
 Knights and ladies
 gazed at him attentively
 and wanted to find out
 who that knight might be. 4555
 I took him to my lord,
 and in front of him we all dismounted.
 I spoke then to my lord:
 “Lord, take a higher seat,
 allow me to ask you that, 4560
 and grant that this knight take a seat down there.”
 My lord took good note.
 He moved a little higher.
 The proud guest then did repress it,
 he wanted to get to her [the lady] where she sat on the bench, 4565
 and he jumped up to the stand.
 My lady, in full bloom, said,
 when she saw him sitting next to her:
 “Now tell me, my dear father,¹²⁹
 who might be this knight.” 4570

[Gerhart:] "Lady, is he unknown to you?
It is the prince of England,
your fiancé whom you love in your heart."

The lady then began to cry:

 "O, my dear father, in the name of God,
why have I deserved this mockery?"

4575

For what reason, and why?

You have never done to me
such a hurtful thing before.

Dear man, for what reason are you ridiculing
your very poor daughter?

4580

By God, stop with this mockery."

[Gerhart:] "My lady, so help me God,
I am serious, and am not trying to ridicule you."

Then she looked at the unknown man
with tear-filled eyes.

4585

The latter thereupon cried as well.

He said: "If you do not recognize me,
then look at this ring on my finger,
your heartfelt love of my heart,
and study the ring that I have on my finger.

4590

Lady, let yourself be reminded,
of the time when I, in my youth, departed from you.

You gave me that ring
with woeful lament, as you know.

4595

[In turn,] the ring that you carried,
my lady, I gave to you
and I requested that it would accompany you
so that you would think of me
and would be loyal to me
with heartfelt love for me.

4600

You promised that.

Thereupon we parted from each other,
lamenting our heartfelt pain."

 The lady, filled with sorrow,
looked at him over and over and probed carefully
whether it was him or not.

4605

Then their gazes met
between them.¹³⁰

He looked at her and she at him.
She drew from him and he from her,
driven by their hearts' longing,
loyalty in constant love.

4610

Steady love without sorrow

in a steady mind 4615
 was given to them by constant *mine* [love],
 who bound them together with the strength of constancy.
 When my lady recognized
 her heartfelt lover, the goal of her heart's desire,
 she spoke out of exuberant joy: 4620
 "Blessed am I, fortunate woman!
 Sweet man, loved from the bottom of my heart,
 be welcome here, a thousand times!"
 After she had greeted him she experienced
 out of love such extreme pain 4625
 that she leaned down onto her fiancé's lap
 and lost her consciousness.
 She was so deeply moved by this joy
 that she no longer heard or saw anything,
 and did not understand or speak a word, 4630
 just like the person who is dreaming
 and who is lost in the illusion
 of thoughts giving her wise directions,
 which even lead her when she is walking around awake.¹³¹
 That's what happened to the good lady. 4635
 This was the case with her mind and her mouth,
 except that she began to think:
 "Oh, heartfelt love, oh, sweet man,
 oh dear consolation, now give me solace!
 Oh, dear friend, let me see you!" 4640
 That was her dream and her thought,
 which forced her [to remember] her great love.
 The overflow, the fruit of love,
 which blossoms in such perfection
 and with such great joy 4645
 effloresced in her high spirit,
 when she saw her heartfelt lover,
 for whom she felt such intense emotions
 that it caused her great pain in the heart
 as a result of her profound love.¹³² 4650
 She had no way of being moderate about it,
 since nature drove her to that.
 She had chosen such great sorrow,¹³³
 when she had lost her beloved,
 that she hardly had survived it. 4655
 But now she became happy again
 because love removed that pain,
 when she found the love of her heart.

In this way love can cause great sorrow,
 when it exerts its power to an extreme, 4660
 when a heartfelt love is filled with too much love,
 then its strength gives
 so much power to the experience of joy
 that the suffering gains the upper hand
 when the happiness is at its highest, 4665
 that is, where love responds to love,
 which before had been lost in the foreign
 and then is being found again.¹³⁴

The prince took the princess,
 his beloved friend, 4670
 into his arms¹³⁵, hugging her
 and kissing her lovingly,
 his sweet lady, the pure woman.
 He said: "heart-beloved friend,
 you sunshine of my happiness 4675
 now give consolation to my heart,
 which will happen if you are happy.
 I cannot give solace to myself,
 if you wanted to live in sorrow.
 You ought to grant to yourself and to me 4680
 full joy without any restraints.
 Your suffering gives me unhappiness,
 your joy delights my soul,
 your pain hurts me.
 Be well and look at me. 4685
 Your dear friend is greeting you
 with loving love."
 He pressed his mouth
 onto her lips and her chin,
 and he kissed her more than a thousand times 4690
 embracing her sweetly.
 For a long time her red lips
 rested on his,
 in love he exchanged kisses with her.
 That had to be after all the sorrow. 4695
 He kissed her over and over,
 he searched for happiness and consolation with her.
 Her most loving consolation
 was close to his heart,
 since she would not be free 4700
 from heartfelt heaviness,
 if he were a stranger to her.

Thus he returned to her what she had been robbed of,
 she recovered her joy
 through her heart-beloved man. 4705
 When she thought properly about it
 and recovered her senses,
 she listened to his laments,
 and his request came back to her mind,
 so she looked up and gazed at him. 4710
 Her red lips spoke full of sadness:
 “Oh dear, why did I sleep, oh dear!
 Did I sleep or what happened with me
 when I was separated from you,
 you who are my heartfelt beloved? What happened then to me? 4715
 My grievous sorrow made me sad.
 Oh dear, my beloved, where have you been,
 since you left me joyless woman
 in great lamentable loneliness
 and in heavy sorrow?” 4720
 Then her sadness really set in,
 and she embraced him with both her arms,
 she pressed him tightly to her chest.
 With tears she lamented the sorrowful situation,
 in which she had had to suffer so badly 4725
 for such a long time.
 Her rose-colored lips
 laughed because of the recovery of joy
 which she had been blessed with through the rediscovery of him,
 whom she recognized so joyfully,
 when she found the love of her heart. 4730
 Thus her love-filled mind
 could express itself with tears and with joy.
 Both [young people] began to shed tears.
 Out of two bodies
 love made one: 4735
 through lovely bonds
 both their bodies became one,
 the woman became a man and the man became a woman,
 with one mind, one soul, one in all oneness,¹³⁶
 one body with one love, one heart not separated, 4740
 one love and one company.
 The strength of love’s loyalty
 rested in their love for each other,
 all in one and not distinguished,
 her body was his body, her mind was his mind, 4745

his body was her body, and his good was her good.
 Her heart contained the hero's body,
 his heart was in this pure woman.
 When he laughed, she was happy;
 when he lamented something, she did so with him; 4750
 when he kissed her, she kissed him back.
 Thus both their minds
 expressed themselves in them equally
 through love free from sorrow.
 By means of constant love without any evil doubt 4755
 their minds became strong again
 through steady and great love.
 They embraced each other
 in a hearty hug.¹³⁷
 Their past sorrow had to move to pity 4760
 anyone who watched them,
 noting their joy shared between them.
 They did not get tired of being together:
 there were sweet hugs, soft embraces,
 lovely kisses, sweet faces. 4765
 They did not say anything else to each other but:
 "Kiss me, kiss me, and kiss me,
 kiss me, beloved, I am going to kiss you.
 I feel so delighted in my heart
 that I have found you, my love. 4770
 Heartfelt beloved, you give me delight.
 You are love in my heart
 Honor be given to sweet Christ
 in whose name you have arrived
 granting me your blissful presence. 4775
 Honored be the pure woman
 who gave birth to you.
 Oh dear, my love, I was so destroyed
 when I lost you out of sight.
 Your disappearance made its effects appear on me. 4780
 I lost when you were lost.
 Whatever would you had ever observed on me,
 I shared with you.
 You are mine, I am yours, I want to be yours."
 Each one then tenderly offered 4785
 their red lips to the other.
 This was a sweet kiss,
 exchanged in a passionate manner.¹³⁸
 His cheek rested on hers

in a soft way. Their love 4790
 found its way from red lips to red lips,
 and each kiss was repaid with a thousand kisses.

I have to say honestly,
 that no lovers have ever
 exchanged with each other more delightfully. 4795
 I know for sure that no one has ever seen
 such loving companionship,
 such force of sorrowful joy,
 such full love imbued with graciousness,
 or such minds determined by goodness 4800
 and by constant loyalty.

The sorrow comes back to me
 if I consider in my heart
 the pain that they had to endure in their hearts,
 and then the greeting, the love, and the bliss 4805
 which subsequently made them happy again.
 I will always be happy about their happiness.
 Their exchanges then came to an end¹³⁹
 because the noble knights
 arrived at the table 4810
 who wanted to observe the exchanges and the laments
 by the lord and the lady.

Many a stout person began to cry.
 There was neither a man nor a woman
 who did not have the mind-set 4815
 not to cry on behalf of the good lady
 and the lord,
 to empathize with their suffering
 and to feel great joy because of their joy,
 to share their joy by being happy as well. 4820

The noble lovers
 caused heavy sorrow
 with laments and longing pain
 to many loving hearts,
 who desired to experience love as well. 4825
 Their longing was so loving
 that many hearts had to endure
 the flight of joy because of sorrow
 as a result of the loving exchanges between the two.

Those must experience longing 4830
 who pursue, out of loving loyalty,
 the pain of longing sweetness.
 Their longing caused longing in those

who were sympathetic to longing
 for the love of his/her heart: 4835
 their longing gave them longing pain.
 Their longing greeting entered deeply
 into the thoughts of many people filled with longing,
 while longing for love.
 Their longing meant love. 4840
 The pain of longing caused longing love
 which revealed the truth of loyalty.
 The heartfelt love spoke up
 and their shared loyalty became visible
 to those who had in his/her mind 4845
 the loving embrace,
 the sweet kiss, the soft hug,
 the fast flight of loving love,
 which, with the greeting of longing love,
 was shooting in both of their hearts. 4850
 Their lament and their love
 inflamed many people's hearts,
 which had to burn hotly
 for love in longing fashion,
 that is, those who were wounded by love. 4855
 About their love and then the joyful reunification
 many people had to cry,
 courtly knights and noble ladies
 and many other people.
 [Gerhart:] For the fact that I have ever gained 4860
 that good from which that love originated
 I will always feel joy.
 Truly, I want to tell you,
 if I were to have twelve times as much
 gold and silver [as I have now], 4865
 and if I then would have to let it go for them,
 I would never have complained about it.
 I need to give my creator
 grace, praise, and honor
 with everlasting joy, 4870
 because I received the honor [to witness]
 what resulted from my goods,
 that is, the strength of loving love,
 such loving companionship
 in those two lovers, 4875
 who had been separated before,
 until God had granted me the grace

that I was able to unify them again
with the means of my goods.

Now, in their high spirit,
the company of knights was ready
to do the bohort,¹⁴⁰ so without further worries
we enjoyed for the rest of the day
much entertainment.

You could observe there
many types of amusements
by knights and ladies.
There were bohorts and dancing,
carried out joyfully all day long.
Whatever one could think of
any form of festive activities, that was practiced there.
I then went to my masters,
the prince and the princess,
and to my dear lord [the archbishop].

I said to the prince:
“Since it has come about,
my lord, that your oath
has fulfilled the pledge
that you would not be close to my lady
while you are still a squire,
so I request, my dear lord,
that you stay with me,
until you have put on the sword;
and then will be honored
the love of a marital friend
by the sweet princess.”

[Willehalm:] “Gladly, father, I will do that.
God has given you so much blessed honor
through my person that
whatever your mind instructs you,
will happen according to your wishes,
since you, my very dear lord,
have freed me, who was ill from longing,
from suffering.”

Now, my lord demonstrated his honor to me.
I am not saying that he wanted, for my sake,
to dub [the prince] a knight.
The fact that my wish was fulfilled
was brought about by the love
of the worthy
princess,

4880

4885

4890

4895

4900

4905

4910

4915

4920

a love which forced him to pursue intense love as well.¹⁴¹

I would be rather pompous to claim
that the prince of England
was dubbed a knight because of me;
instead it was the desire by God and the lady,
which brought about my greatest fortune.

4925

The day passed with joys.

After the night had spread its darkness
all over the world,
then very quickly
the light of the next day appeared again.

4930

The knightly company agreed
to attend mass,
where the prince received
the name of a knight and hence joined knighthood.

4935

With the double force of joy
this day was even better than the day before
in terms of the knights' various amusements,
like the joy which had made the previous day
so enjoyable to all.

4940

That day was filled with many joys,
when the prince received the sword;
the lord had arrived as a squire
and here gained the name of a knight.

After my dear lord had become a knight

4945

in the knightly fashion,
and once the bohort had been completed
and everyone was supposed to sit down,
we did no longer waited:

my dear son and I rode then
to where my lord was sitting.

4950

I said: "Lord, since sweet Christ
has arranged it so
that this day is yours
(yesterday the festival was mine),

4955

everyone present is requesting
that they will be allowed to stay with you.
So you should ask them for that favor, and I will do so as well,
until your wedding festival will be over."

My lord did not tarry,
he rode together with me to the court.

4960

My lord the archbishop
granted him that request.

Whomever he asked [to stay]
 praised us for that immediately. 4965
 Many proud warriors
 promised to stay for the festival
 and did not object to that.
 We became very happy in our hearts.
 On the bleachers 4970
 were sitting knights and ladies,
 who demonstrated to the prince
 their worthiness
 through many joys, free of all sorrow.
 To those with a sweet steady mind, 4975
 to all the dear guests
 we offered such good hospitality
 that I will be acknowledged forever
 in the name of all my territorial princes.
 They demonstrated to my lord [the prince] 4980
 their good breeding, their excellent courtliness,
 with courtly joyfulness,
 as if he were their lord.
 Whatever amusement was acceptable,
 that was not ignored on that day 4985
 in knightly fashion.
 No one thought that it lasted too long,
 except for one man who was pressured by love,
 whose heart was closely bound to love,
 who pursued a woman's love, 4990
 who in great heartfelt love
 locked his heart close to her own.
 Lady Minne also told me
 that with the same mind-set
 sorrow was fighting in her heart 4995
 a lady, who longed for the next night,
 but not because of womanly habits.
 Why she hardly could wait,
 Lady Love told me
 out of her smart womanhood. 5000
 The power of love, the bond of *minne*,
 overpowered her womanly heart,
 so that she was wounded by love.
 The heart of her fiancé, who was familiar with sorrow,
 rested in her own heart. 5005
 The same longing tortured her,
 since she longed for the night,

driven by the power of her heart.

Who might be those two,
 who so much wanted to have, instead of the delightful sunshine,
 the arrival of the night? 5010

What had daylight done to them,
 which gives everyone in the world so much pleasure
 during the wonderful summer time?

Lady Love told me the secret,
 those were the princess
 and also the prince.¹⁴² 5015

Her suffering filled with laments, her pain of longing
 were lifted when the night arrived,
 since her laments then came to an end. 5020

The day passed away in a joyful manner.
 When evening set in,
 they prepared an excellent bed for the prince,

performing their task as diligently
 as this ought to happen for a king's son.¹⁴³ 5025

They brought the princess to him,
 she being his love for him, his heart was burning in desire.
 For all the suffering that he had to go through before,
 God recompensed him now well,

to speak the truth. 5030
 Since I had brought love together
 with love, as it appeared to me,
 I left from there and was very happy.

I wished them good-night,
 God had granted me honor through them. 5035

Their night was filled with so much love
 that they had never felt better before.
 Who might contradict me in that?

No one can say anything against that.
 Those who have previously experienced a good night,
 now had to wish them [also] a good night. 5040

Their night of sorrow had resulted
 into the joys of a happy day.

The lover lay in his beloved's arms
 pressed to her chest as he desired. 5045

Their passion was to pursue love
 and to chase sorrow away from their hearts.

Once it began to dawn,
 he gave her lovingly
 a rich good-morning gift: 5050
 his heart, body, mind, and soul,

governance, land, people, and property,
the strength of love among friends,
ever-lasting company of love,
constancy of loving love, 5055
the good guarantee of loyalty,
the stability of the heart
without failing in trustworthiness.

Not long thereafter
one could see the sun rising above the horizon, 5060
and its bright light shone delightfully.
Then maids arrived,
beautiful, pure, just as one might wish them to be,
entering the bedroom.
They offered both of them clothing. 5065
Once they were dressed,
they heard the ringing of many bells.
We took them to the church where the mass was performed.¹⁴⁴

When the service was over,
then everything imaginable was done 5070
that could bring about joy.
The entire company of knights
had assembled in the stands,
where there were all the minstrels.
All the nobles had come together. 5075
Everyone present received from me
very rich gifts.¹⁴⁵

After the breakfast
the knights joyfully said good-bye
and rode off. 5080
We rode with the worthy company
until outside the city, likewise being full of happiness
and thanked them all for coming.
My lord did not spare his words:
He promised all the knights 5085
that if one of them would be forced by an external might
to vacate his land,
if he then were to come to him [the archbishop],
he would be restored in his position peacefully,
if God were ready to send him back to his land 5090
with His friendly support.¹⁴⁶

The knights were very pleased about that.
They thanked him deeply
and extended to him their grace,
promising the good lord 5095

constant loyalty in their service,
trust and constant steadiness,
always doing their best for him.

Once this all had been discussed
and the festivities had been completed 5100
and all the guests had left
in such a delightful fashion,

I looked at these two with great joy,
at the prince and the princess,
and understood their feeling of love,¹⁴⁷ 5105
whenever I saw them
experiencing such heartfelt love.

Their show of love inspired people
to feel love in their own hearts
and to gain high spirits. 5110

My lord, who was a blissful man
became loved by the other people,
when they observed his virtues,
and the best among them praised him highly.

The virtuous man [Willehalm] 5115
took me and my son
one day secretly aside
and said to me, as I am going to report to you¹⁴⁸:

“Father, you whom I love deeply in my heart,
since God has granted you this great grace 5120
by allowing you to help me,
and since He brought the opportunity that
your constant blissfulness carries
the high crown in heaven,

hence complete your goodness, which God has granted you 5125
by helping me further
and provide me with your advice
how I should live and what I should do.

You know well how things stand with me,
and how my life has been influenced 5130
through your great and rich goodness,
by way of which I could profit toward God,
so that I regained my joy and my life
and also my fiancée,
whom I had lost before. 5135

Now it will depend on your opinion
whether I should return home.
I have learned, in truth,

that some people
 in my kingdom 5140
 have risen up against me.
 Whatever you will advise me about that,
 father and my brother,
 I will carry out for sure.
 My country is in a bad shape; 5145
 my absence has caused chaos there;
 no one seems to keep me in mind,
 even though that causes havoc to the country.
 Some of my dukes
 want to be king themselves 5150
 and have taken control over
 a portion of the castles
 and of the royal treasure.¹⁴⁹
 They will have appointed themselves [to the high positions],
 if I do not return there soon. 5155.
 Yet I have also verily learned
 that the best among the lords
 still stand by me in constant loyalty.”
 I answered: “My dear prince,
 since your staying abroad causes you damage, 5160
 we ought not to stay here any longer.
 I will order a ship to be prepared for us,
 which can transport so many riches
 that we can arrive in that country
 in full honor and splendor, 5165
 and in complete worthiness,
 so that we will never have to be embarrassed.
 In case someone might have acted against you in a hostile manner,
 and against whom you will need protection,
 we will transport across the sea 5170
 many noble and worthy knights.”
 Thereupon the lord regained his high spirit
 and his great heartfelt joy.
 Politely he said:
 “Dear father, sweet man, 5175
 I cannot thank you enough
 for your great goodness,
 which so mercifully
 has given me your support and also your wise council,
 your help and your advice. 5180
 May God, who in His eternal mastership
 remains steadfast forever,

grant you the power of a reward.
 May God, through His advice filled with virtue
 help me to gain such good fortune 5185
 that I can give back to you
 what you have done for me out of your love.
 Even if I gave you everything what I own,
 it would not serve me as sufficient,
 if not God's reward would be given to you." 5190

Thereupon we finished the secret council meeting
 (my lord was pleased about the advice)
 and told everything to the princess.
 Then I ordered many clothes and food
 to be transported to the Rhine [to the ship]. 5195
 In a short time then,
 as I had arranged, a ship was ready,
 equipped with many riches,
 loaded with good clothes.
 They had brought food and equipment, 5200
 blankets, carpets, and enough rich bedding
 to the ship.
 When we prepared ourselves for the voyage,
 I handed over my goods and my dear wife
 into my friends' protection. 5205
 I entrusted myself to God
 on the day when we were about to depart.
 I begged Him to look out for us,
 offering many prayers to Him.
 I ordered that a mass be read 5210
 so that the Holy Spirit
 would help us to achieve our goal.
 We listened to the mass with joy.
 When we were ready to embark,
 many high-spirited women then arrived, 5215
 full of lament,
 and blessed my lady.
 Their eyes displayed
 womanly demeanor, they were filled with tears.
 Much shimmering tear drops 5220
 were shed because of the departure,
 which was a reflection of their womanly loyalty.

After they had left,
 my friends showed up
 and rode with us to the harbor. 5225
 In one voice they prayed

that we would be safe on our journey.
 Both men and women
 wished the best for the prince and the princess.

When we got to the Rhine, 5230
 many people burst out crying.
 My wife showed the greatest grief
 she had ever expressed,¹⁵⁰
 when she witnessed the departure
 of the lady, who was the richest in blissfulness, 5235
 whom God had ever created.
 My lady, the princess, helped her
 by lamenting and crying
 when they had to say good-bye.
 Her maids, in their lovely appearance, also could not avoid 5240
 breaking out into laments.¹⁵¹
 They cried heavily over their friend's departure,
 just as their loyal womanhood commanded them to do.
 I know for sure that when my lady had departed
 from her father, 5245
 she then did not cry as much,
 as she demonstrated it here through her [woeful] demeanor,
 when she traveled away from our country.
 The women kissed each other.

My son, my lords, and also I 5250
 said good-bye and departed.
 My friends sent us off
 with great laments,
 but our journey had to happen.

Thus we left our company 5255
 and traveled down the Rhine and across the sea,
 reaching England.
 There we immediately entered
 the mighty body of a river.

It flows just as much today as it did then 5260
 through the country and then through London.
 It is called the river Lundenne.¹⁵²
 The waves pushed us up into that river.
 It was navigable, deep, and really impressive,
 and so was its embankment. 5265

The wind drove us deep into the land toward a mountain
 where we reached a harbor.¹⁵³
 I left my lord behind
 in order to go to the capitol, London.

For that reason they have been camped here
 without ever having been able in their council
 to find someone, 5315
 in whom they could identify
 good advice and wisdom.
 They have gotten into bad fights amongst each other
 over the election.
 That could be a loss for the entire country, 5320
 if the council would thus end without any outcome.
 Now they have turned over the election process
 to twenty-four lords.
 If those might [disagree] and get into a conflict,
 there are on the council also 5325
 three archbishops.
 One of them is from here in this city.
 To support him they have appointed two bishops,
 from Eberwich and Santavit.¹⁵⁵
 Their authority is not contested 5330
 and have given their advice
 to the people in the council.
 They all have taken control of the council
 and have gone to the palace.”
 [Gerhart:] “Is that true?” The inn-keeper said: “yes.” 5335
 Thereupon I ordered my squire
 to get my horse ready. I went to the palace.
 The inn-keeper, a very trustworthy man,
 accompanied me on the way,
 demonstrating his courtly worthiness¹⁵⁶ 5340
 taking me to the palace
 where the council took place.
 Although I was not a rich man,
 I wore such splendid clothing
 that I was regarded as a wealthy man 5345
 and praised highly
 which was, unfortunately, not true in my case.
 Then I went up into the palace.
 I was well received.
 The palace was filled with worthy knights, 5350
 who greeted me in a courtly fashion.
 I bowed before them. Then I asked them
 to inform me
 where the lords of the country had assembled
 who all formed part of the council. 5355
 Many proud knights directed me

on my way through the palace
 to the door of a chamber.
 I knocked, and they let me in.
 I stepped up to the council 5360
 and the lords honored me
 by standing up and greeting me.
 They asked me to sit down.
 In the twenty-four knights
 I recognized those 5365
 whom I had freed most painfully in the heathendom.
 The council had been entrusted to them.
 They did not realize
 that it was me who had freed them from their shackles;
 I was completely unrecognizable to them. 5370
 Yet I noticed well
 that they looked attentively
 with their eyes toward me.
 Still, I was unfamiliar to them.
 I said: "My dear lords, 5375
 I would like to know, with your permission,
 what your advice will be. Let me hear it,
 and be so kind to tell me
 what your council is debating here.
 An ignorant man often gives 5380
 very wise advice in an emergency,
 which easily proves to be brilliant.
 What if God would grant us the fortune,
 although I am an ignorant man,
 that my advice might help you 5385
 and perhaps come to fruition for you!"
 One among them said:
 "If anyone might have such a wise mind
 that he could give us advice
 what might be the best for us, 5390
 we would happily accept it from him.
 A dangerous stalemate in decision-making¹⁵⁷
 has affected our minds
 and has robbed us of wise council."
 [Gerhart:] "How is that, my lord?" [Lord:] "Let me tell you that. 5395
 In the past a powerful and wise lord
 wore the crown
 in great worthiness for a long time
 and enjoyed much honor.
 When that lord died, 5400

he had a son,¹⁵⁸
 who had decided in his mind
 already in his youth that he would acquire the praise of the world;
 he was a true flower of virtues.

God had bestowed upon him 5405
 an inner drive, and this already since his childhood,
 to make his youthful honor
 to flower as a blossoming branch,
 which you can see in all of its glory.

It was certainly to be expected 5410
 that the blooming flower
 would yield a fruit of sweet goodness
 by way of delightful breeding,
 as flowers bring forth fruit.

But then the light of the shining flower dropped. 5415
 What was supposed to develop into the fruit
 following the promise of the blossom,
 turned, unfortunately,
 into crying and lamenting sorrow.

The brightness of the flower, and its fruit are dead. 5420
 The sweet childish youthfulness,
 the purely growing manly virtues
 disappeared entirely in its blossom.

He was called Willehalm,
 who was supposed to carry our crown. 5425
 Let us tell you how he perished.

He led a delightful company
 across the sea to Norway
 and there got engaged with the king's daughter.
 I have never heard anywhere 5430
 of such a lovely person.

When he took his future wife with him,
 he drowned in the sea.
 Many of us lords
 had been with the princess 5435
 who survived with us at sea.

[But] we suffered, together with our lady
 great pain in imprisonment,
 until a very good man
 ransomed us with his goods. 5440

He brought us back from heathendom;
 out of his strength of great inner humbleness
 he let us journey home again.
 He reached the agreement with us

to keep the virgin with him. 5445
 Once we would tell him in truth
 about the young man's health,
 he would turn over the virgin to him.
 He still holds her: but our lord is dead.
 Now we have assembled here because of the country's suffering 5450
 in order to elect a new lord,
 since God has taken him away
 for whom we have waited for a long time
 in great sorrow.
 Even though we deliberate wisely, 5455
 our council has not achieved anything
 in finding anyone,
 under whom we might submit ourselves
 and who could carry the crown of our land
 and whom we would enjoy having as our lord. 5460
 One person does not seem good enough to us
 because he is too soft in his attitude;
 another one seems too miserly;
 a good number of men do not appear to be strong enough
 in rulership and wealth; 5465
 some are lacking
 nobility and a high spirit,
 so no one is good enough for us."

Once he had finished speaking,
 one could see how the lords began to cry 5470
 who were members of the council,
 since they could not forget him
 of whom I have spoken before.
 When the speech was over,
 I said: "Very dear good lords, 5475
 I can well recommend to you
 a highly minded nobleman,
 whose virtues deserve to be praised
 with sweet words throughout the lands.
 I know his good manners so well 5480
 that he would be qualified to carry the crown,
 if you were to accept him as your lord."
 A virtuous prince
 then responded to me politely:
 "If you do not mind, we would like to request 5485
 that you tell us where from
 you have come into this land
 and how you are called.

Dear sir, blessed man,
 you have given a great speech 5490
 and have said very good things.
 If your blessed mind
 could help turn your words into fact,
 then the day would have to be honored,
 when you were born. 5495
 If you could choose a ruler for us,
 then you would have come blissfully
 into this kingdom.”
 Then I gave my name
 to all the lords there. 5500
 I said: “I came here into this country
 across from the sea. I am called
 Gerhart of Cologne, that is my name.
 I must say it without any shamefulness
 that I am called a merchant.” 5505
 The lords jumped up immediately,
 they kissed me happily
 and said: “Father, since God has brought you
 here to us lords,
 then the crown and also this land 5510
 will be subject to you:
 You shall be our lord.
 God has done well to us through you.”
 Then I wanted to tell them
 for what reason I had come to this country; 5515
 but my words were cut off.
 Whatever I said no one listened to it,
 they did not hear my words.
 The chamber was filled with loud clamor.
 One of the lords unlocked the door 5520
 before all the others.
 They carried me outside
 with joyful shouts.
 All the worthy lords
 received me happily. 5525
 In a respectful manner they carried me
 to the throne, beaming with joy.
 The lords, princes, and knights
 placed the country’s crown
 wonderfully on my head. 5530
 When I was crowned as king
 everyone wanted to swear loyalty to me,

young and old, poor and rich.
 I asked them all
 to listen to me and to be quiet. 5535
 I said: "Let me tell you something."
 The clamor barely died down,
 which was heard everywhere because of the great joy.
 Out of respect for me they finally kept quiet,
 and they began to listen to my words, 5540
 as if I were a high-ranking man.
 Thus I established silence.
 Then I said to the good princes:
 "For the sweet crown of goodness 5545
 for the pure willingness and pure mind,
 for the overly rich worthiness,
 which you have granted me,
 I cannot thank you quite as well
 as it would behoove me 5550
 for the worthy goodness,
 for the willingness of your minds,
 which you have shown to me.
 I have assumed with richness
 from you this kingdom here. 5555
 That I ever won this wealth,
 God will be grateful to you
 through His divine command,
 since He is richer than I am.
 May he reward you on my behalf. 5560
 My dear sweet lords,
 if I were to be the king of this country,
 I would be certainly too weak for that,
 but I must give forever
 praise for this great blessing. 5565
 Following the teachings of my mind
 I have found a man
 whom I prefer would have the crown,
 and swear with my oath
 and in the name of true Christianity, 5570
 in which I must firmly believe,
 that no one will be as appropriately
 fit for this kingdom [than him].
 No one is comparable to him,
 in his great virtues and his worthy life, 5575
 whom I will give you as your lord."
 They all responded immediately:

“Since this kingdom
 has lost its dear lord,
 who had been selected as king for us, 5580
 no one will ever please us better—
 you have to believe us that—
 than you, dear lord,
 since your fortune and your goods
 has returned to us our existence and our lives 5585
 with the help of God.
 If we possessed so much wealth
 that we could give you ten countries,
 we still would not be able, as we would be obliged,
 to repay you properly.” 5590

I responded to the lords:
 “All the good that happened to you
 through me, I will always be happy about.
 And you have provided me with such reward
 which, prior to my
 time, 5595
 no one among my companions [merchants]
 has ever received in such a rich fashion.
 I have now the crown and also the land,
 which has become my subject.
 I will happily turn it over 5600
 to my heart-beloved dear lord,
 to whom it all should belong rightfully,
 that is, King Willehalm the Younger.”
 The general mood changed
 and all joy was lost. 5605
 The entire company began to cry.
 “Sadly, he no longer lives.
 Oh dear, or does he still live?
 No, tragically, he is dead!”
 With greatest sorrowfulness 5610
 all the lords from the land spoke thus.
 Then I consoled them and calmed them down
 immediately with delightful news.
 I said: “Be happy, he is well.
 I left him this morning 5615
 free from all problems
 that could make him unhealthy.
 Queen Erene,
 his most blessed wife,
 is with him and is well.”¹⁵⁹ 5620

They cried out of sheer joy.
 “Oh my,” the noble group shouted,
 “dear man, if that only were true.”
 [Gerhart:] “I do not deceive you, not even by a hair’s breadth.
 They are healthy, so help me Christ. 5625
 Nearby, not far away,
 there is a harbor
 where I took good care of them.
 I left them behind free of any heartfelt pain
 this morning, when I rode off 5630
 and came here into this city.
 Now, come along with me and let us go there.
 I will let you see my lord
 and also his wife whom he loves from the bottom of his heart;
 both are healthy and happy.” 5635
 A mighty commotion then arose.
 One shouted here, the other shouted there
 many times: “Bring me the banner and the charger!”
 The squires ran off immediately,
 when the lords ordered them to do so, 5640
 to the lodgings,
 here six in a group, there four.
 They brought to their worthy lords¹⁶⁰
 their chargers, covered with valuable saddle blankets
 hanging down to the hooves. 5645
 Every knight ordered
 them to bring them their best clothes.
 Quickly they were all ready
 and this so orderly that it was a joy
 to observe their parade-like departure. 5650
 Thus we traveled along happily
 with a high spirit
 out of the city with great joy.
 Our company consisted
 of two thousand knights or more. 5655
 Now, I had sent my messenger ahead
 to my lord
 to inform him of the news,
 how everything had taken place
 and that all the princes of the land 5660
 wanted to see him,
 as expressed by their shouts of joy.
 My lord was very delighted about this.
 Together with the beautiful princess

he came riding toward us, 5665
 and when he noticed us,
 he rushed up to us.
 The lords hurried toward him
 in order to meet my lord there, the worthy man,
 along with the pure woman 5670
 and to welcome them.
 They exchanged sweet greetings,
 not wasting any time
 and were so happy about the meeting
 that they were with him and he with them, 5675
 cried out of joy over the good outcome
 which God had granted them.
 He kissed his loyal men.
 Their joy was mixed with great pain.¹⁶¹
 Many proud chests was wet from tears 5680
 as the intense joy forced them
 to experience this new sweetness.
 After they had finished their welcome,
 we returned to the open space
 in a most joyful manner. 5685
 When we again returned to London
 and reached the outer gate,
 we found there standing outside
 the wealthy burghers,
 who most lovingly welcomed 5690
 the prince and also the princess.
 They dazzled everyone with their splendid clothing,
 which they wore out of happiness.
 His subjects greeted the prince
 in a loving manner, and he greeted them. 5695
 The women and the men [of the city]
 treated the knights very hospitably.
 In a well-ordered manner we rode
 through the city to the court.
 There the archbishop joined us 5700
 with all the clerical accoutrements,
 with great relics,
 and he was accompanied by two fellows,
 mighty archbishops,¹⁶²
 and they were followed by many clerics. 5705
 Bishops and many abbots
 wore splendid vestments,
 stunning clothing for the church service

in honor of their dear lord.
 They carried the monstrance toward us. 5710
 Thereupon followed a throng,
 and the clamor of the people and the singing
 created so much noise
 that the sound echoed far and wide.

After we had been so wonderfully 5715
 and also so splendidly
 welcomed there,
 my lord was crowned there,
 and also the good princess.

The high-spirited princes 5720
 swore their loyalty to him.
 Then the high-born king requested
 the lords to return to their lodgings.
 He wanted to wait with the opening of his court
 until the next morning. 5725
 Near the court there was located
 a delightful palace.
 There the queen and her ladies
 took up residence.

Then there arrived 5730
 in an impressive group
 the noble citizens.
 They were hosted so richly
 that they did not lack in anything.

They addressed my lady 5735
 in very friendly terms.¹⁶³
 She had to accept
 many great gifts,
 and there was no end to be seen of them, 5740
 made out of gold and gems,
 noble, rich, and pure,
 handed over by the ladies.

A loud clamor rose at court,
 when the ladies desired 5745
 to return to their lodgings.

It was lovely to hear
 how sweetly the delightful queen
 exchanged greetings
 with many people, 5750
 when she welcomed noble guests!¹⁶⁴
 With a dazzling festival
 they passed the night filled with joy.

The ladies among them
 were often teased 5755
 and entertained with jokes.
 With hilarious witticisms
 they entertained my lady
 Discussing serious matters,
 my lord the king deliberated in order 5760
 to figure out how he could
 bring back order to the country.¹⁶⁵
 The ladies greatly enjoyed the joking,
 and also the king, together with his councilors,
 did not mind some jokes, 5765
 while they seriously pondered on advice
 how to help the kingdom.
 Early the next morning,
 after the mass had been read
 and it was time to go to eat, 5770
 my lord sat down. Thereupon
 the lords of the country
 were sent to him.
 They received from him in equal measure
 their counties, fiefs, and their land 5775
 joyfully from the king's hand.
 Afterwards they swore to uphold the rules of peace.
 Whether he was a knight or a squire,
 whoever was to break the peace
 was to be punished 5780
 in a very harsh manner
 according to the rules in a proper fashion.
 In this way the kingdom
 was peacefully judged.
 The lords of the country were happy about it. 5785
 Then the king asked for advice
 regarding legal procedures
 concerning the great injustice
 when so many a great lord
 had taken violently 5790
 the king's land, his castles, and his treasure,
 by force and without any right.
 They had dared to grab
 his land wherever possible,
 with their power, yet without any permission. 5795
 The councilors immediately advised him [the king]
 through a judgment reached in unison,

that he should give those lords
 a deadline to answer him.
 As I want to tell you, 5800
 they decided on a day,
 that in six weeks' time
 those should either defend their innocence
 or seek forgiveness
 according to the king's graces 5805
 in light of their full guilt.
 Once that judgment was pronounced,
 there was no further delay
 and the king invited
 to all parts of his country 5810
 the lords to a court festival.
 His messengers went
 all over the kingdom
 to bring the king's relatives and vassals
 to the celebration. 5815
 Having been invited by the messengers
 there arrived in cheerful companies
 from Wales and Scotland
 the two kings, traveling across the sea.¹⁶⁶
 Accompanied by a knightly army 5820
 the worthy king of Cornwall arrived as well.
 Without delay and in a delightful fashion
 proud and good princes came,
 together with noble and high-spirited knights
 from Spain¹⁶⁷ and from Ireland. 5825
 They had also invited
 [Willehalm's] father-in-law, King Reinmunt.
 When the latter learned the news,
 he came with a joyful company,
 attending this celebration [in London]. 5830
 Whoever carried the title of a knight
 anywhere in the neighboring countries,
 would have thought that he would have been denied
 the respect due to a knight,
 if he were not to attend the festival, 5835
 which was organized there.
 [Gerhart:] I had to stay in that country
 because of my lord,
 participating at the festival.
 Very soon thereafter, 5840
 the time had arrived

as it had been scheduled,
 for the guests to arrive,
 as they had been told about.

The lords did not tarry: 5845
 as they had promised before,
 they fulfilled their pledge and came to the country,
 each with a large company.

So many high-ranking and powerful princes 5850
 made their way to the fest
 coming from over the sea and over land.
 Never beforehand
 had there been a similar celebration,
 as one can give credit to King Willehalm
 without feeling any envy. 5855

With his joy-filled mind
 the virtuous man received
 the guests in a loving manner
 in the capitol of London.

He asked that the guests be lodged 5860
 in the city and on the field outside.
 The princes' tents were pitched
 everywhere on the open space.

They did this with noble thoughts,
 because the festival was, for splendor's sake 5865
 prepared out there.

One early joyful morning
 the proud King Reinmunt
 arrived there.

Immediately my lord got ready 5870
 to welcome him outside of the city.
 He was accompanied
 by a thousand knights and more.

The most impressive troop 5875
 was dressed in elegant knightly clothes.
 The king together with the queen
 rode in a most worthy fashion
 toward his dear father-in-law,
 meeting him at the stands set up in the field.

His special tournament ring and his tent 5880
 were on the opposite side.
 My blissful lady
 wonderfully welcomed her dear father,
 filled with loving joy.

All that gave them great delight. 5885

Deeply moved in their hearts
 the king and the pure woman
 and many noble persons cried.
 There were many who felt great pain,
 those who had previously lost their relatives 5890
 in the waves of the sea,
 when they had traveled with the high-ranking lord.
 The lady asked the lament to stop.
 Then all the guests arrived thereafter
 during the whole day, 5895
 causing joyous clamor.

From Cornwall and Wales,
 from Scotland and from Norway,
 from Spain and from Ireland
 the highest ranking lords 5900
 had been sent there
 together with their high-spirited knights
 invited by my dear noble lord,
 since he had sent them his request.
 They were all, together with their companions, 5905
 seated there hospitably
 in a wide circle around the field.
 One could see pitched on the field
 many precious tents.

Since the time of the British Arthur 5910
 who wore the crown of the kingdom,
 no other king has ever had
 as many noble and worthy guests
 or from as many rich countries,
 as the pure and good one, 5915
 the high-spirited King Willehalm.
 One has to acknowledge that rightfully.
 There was fiery gleaming, bright lights
 all over the field,
 coming from the banners and the shields 5920
 all placed neatly
 in a bright and royal arrangement
 everywhere on the field
 in front of the rich tents,
 both here and there 5925
 and also at all other places.

When the guests had arrived,
 they went to their lodgings
 wonderfully set up in the field.

All the lords 5930
 had come, without any objections
 to the great festival
 together with many good knights,
 richly clothed and well adorned,
 dressed elegantly and pleasantly. 5935
 Next to the noble and high-ranking princes,
 there were many high-spirited and proud knights
 wearing exquisite phellet-silk clothes,
 adorned with many gems,
 in a most elegant fashion 5940
 on that joyous day, free of all sorrow.
 Wherever a person walked or rode
 throughout the lodgings,
 one could hear nothing but loud clamor,
 one type of great music and another, 5945
 music¹⁶⁸ and drumming,
 corresponding to each other,
 from fiddles and flutes
 accompanying bohorts¹⁶⁹ and dancing
 in front of many knightly groups, 5950
 who in great joy
 were engaged in jousting and dancing
 before the tents on the field.¹⁷⁰
 The music was matched
 with those activities that are joyful 5955
 for the knights, and this all day long.

In the evening when the time had come
 to enjoy eating
 and when all the knights had sat down,
 my lord the king did not forget 5960
 to display as much as he could
 chivalric hospitality.
 It was fully performed.
 Seats were arranged
 for the high-spirited ladies, 5965
 from where they could observe
 joyfully the knightly actions.
 When the daylight
 fled before the arrival of the dark night,
 the noble and knightly company 5970
 went to the lodgings.
 The princes well ensured
 that the darkness of the night

had to give way to bright light
 because of many candles that burned there, 5975
 when the daylight had vanished.
 Because of the bright lights
 it seemed like another day
 in front of the rich accomodations.
 Musicians delightfully played 5980
 their music before the princes,
 many others played on string instruments
 presenting sweet melodies,
 and they sang beautifully of love,
 and told intriguing adventures, 5985
 as it was proper to listen
 to stories of love and knighthood
 presented most delightfully.¹⁷¹

The knights splendidly rode
 from the city out to the field, 5990
 visiting the various tents,
 going back and forth,
 in delightful groups,
 performing in a most courtly fashion,
 greeting the various guests. 5995
 They received from them
 many sweet words in response.
 Because of the wonderful jokes
 they could ignore all worries and painful anxiety.
 Their aristocratic breeding made them 6000
 to live filled with joy and happiness
 and to dismiss forever the worries by means of joyful thoughts.
 One could hear both here and there
 many light-hearted words of greeting.
 Servants brought out in courtly fashion 6005
 to the noble knights
 in their lodgings
 great wine to drink¹⁷²
 in many valuable decanters.
 Those who cared to notice 6010
 would have to admit that he had never before
 seen so many knights as there
 displaying such worthy behavior.
 My lord and I rode joyfully
 to the mighty princes 6015
 to observe in their company
 the powerful performance

of high-spirited knighthood.

After many joyful events the night came to an end.

When the morning dawned 6020
and the sun's gleaming grew steadily,
many proud guests

went to the cathedral where the mass was read.

After the singing was over, it did not take long 6025
before the knights returned
with well-decked chargers
to the tournament enclosure.

The horse bells rang loudly,
the banners fluttered strongly in the wind,
the bohort was carried out in such a knightly fashion 6030
as it had never been seen before so beautifully.

After that had come to an end
and everyone went to sit down,
my lord did not fail to ask me 6035
to take a seat at the table
next to my lady.

My son sat next to him.

I can tell for sure
that never before has anyone among my companions 6040
been seated in such great honors
and in such great worthiness.

I was treated lavishly
with great respect and joy
by the cheerful crowd. 6045

Everyone, both poor and rich,
was happy to make sure
that my good fortune increased
and that God took away 6050
all suffering from me with His might.

The entire group of knights wished that for me.

When the worthy company got up
and endeavored to give everyone a good cheer
with a bohort and dance,

those lords and their companies went 6055
then to the king
whom he denied before
friendship and grace,

which they had lost
because of their great guilt. 6060
They fell down in the grass before him
and sought his gracefulness.

They demonstrated with loud crying
 their sorrow.
 Everyone present
 tried hard through the same behavior 6065
 to beg the king for his grace
 for these worthy knights.¹⁷³
 Whatever they requested from him,
 he denied it to all of them.
 Nevertheless, it helped the entire group 6070
 that they swore to leave altogether
 the kingdom
 and that they would never
 be witnessed in England
 unless he granted them his grace. 6075
 They swore many firm oaths
 to the king,
 and gave him their pledges.
 Many people expressed their emotions
 by sharing their lamenting on that day. 6080
 When pledges had been given,
 the noble-born king
 deliberated with his friends,
 how he could reimburse me
 for the loss that I had incurred because of himself, 6085
 and how he could compensate me,
 for the loss when I had ignored all possible profit.¹⁷⁴
 His councilors advised him
 to repay me through granting me the honor
 of bestowing a dukedom upon me. 6090
 That is called Kent
 and located in England.
 Once the king had completed the deliberations,
 he returned to the people
 together with many knights. 6095
 The princes from the land
 were all present during the court council.
 Among them there were also the twenty-four men,
 whom I had freed from the shackles
 and for whom I had purchased joy and solace. 6100
 The advice [to honor me] was given by his relatives and other people.
 Then he turned to me again
 and asked everyone to quiet down
 the clamor and the noise.
 Everyone stood there in a circle. 6105

In a well-mannered way my lord said:

“Here the consolation that I receive from my friends is seated,
through which God has given me my life,
goods, bliss, and honor. 6110

I had lost property, joy, and my life,
relatives, servants, friends, and my wife,
bliss and honor, and even this country.

I was guaranteed

the greatest misfortune which anyone
could ever have experienced in his life. 6115

He [Gerhart] has bought everything back to me.¹⁷⁵

God who performs nothing but miracles,
gave my [future] wife into his hand,

and then also my friends, this country, the crown, and my life
in such astounding fashion
that I, expelled from my country
finally reached him. 6120

Out of his virtuous mind-set
he loved me as his child. 6125

The love of his own son mattered little to him
compared to the great love
which his heart felt for me.¹⁷⁶

He separated, out of love for me,
my fiancée from his son
out of his good spirit. 6130

In light of the exceeding goodness
Judging all the highest goods available
I value most the great goodness,
the sweet humbleness,
since he loved me
more than himself. 6135

He left his own country
and accepted me as king,
when the crown and the country
had been assigned to him with full authority. 6140

Now I hope that everyone present advises me,
since my very dear father
has crowned himself, and increased
his own bliss and his praiseworthiness,
on my behalf in many ways, 6145
and has become decorated and honored
since he dared to burden his own person
with such great losses for himself;
how I might lift some of its weight

doing it in an appropriate manner,
 that is, repaying him for some of his goods. 6150
 I might probably not be able
 to repay him for his great virtues.
 May God, who is supposed to reward goodness,
 honor him for his humility 6155
 by granting him His gracefulness.
 My sweet, dear father,
 your fifty thousand marks
 I want to repay to you immediately¹⁷⁷;
 the dukedom of Kent 6160
 you shall receive from me;
 and you also should not reject
 to receive this rank from me
 and double the amount of money.
 Moreover, you will be granted 6165
 anything your heart might desire
 in this kingdom.
 You shall occupy forever,
 together with your dear son
 the role of my secret councilor.” 6170
 I was very pleased about this offer.
 I said then to my lord:
 “Dear lord, sweet knight,
 you have elevated me very highly
 with your exceeding praise. 6175
 If I were wise enough
 that I could thank you
 for what you have expressed,
 for the loving promises,
 and the delightful words with which 6180
 you have praised me so much,
 I would be ready to thank you.
 May God reward you for the offer
 which you have extended to me,
 in the name of His divine governance. 6185
 If I were to assume a great territory,
 then that would be an amazing honor for me.
 That powerful dukedom
 ought to be owned by a prince who holds that rank from birth.
 The lack of my birth prevents me from that. 6190
 The rank of the duke of Kent
 is so recognized through its honor
 that counts, barons, and great lords,

and others who hold a similar rank
 would happily submit themselves 6195
 and receive a fiefdom from him.
 And they would be rightly ashamed
 to call me their lord
 and master over them all.
 That title would be too big for me. 6200
 My dear lord, if you are willing
 to reward me as it pleases me,
 then give me what I would like to receive,
 in the name of your virtuous customs.”
 [Willehalm:] “Glady, my dear father, 6205
 whatever you are going to ask for will be fulfilled.”
 [Gerhart:] “Can I be sure about that?”
 [Willehalm:] “Yes, indeed, no doubt about it.”
 [Gerhart:] “Then I desire, dear good lord,
 to grant me the grace 6210
 that you accept again,
 on behalf of me,
 those lords as your friends,
 who had lost your grace through their misdeeds.
 For them I request that you let them be 6215
 with your kind gracefulness
 here in this kingdom
 in a peaceful fashion,
 and in undiminished friendship,
 so that you never think about 6220
 whatever misdeeds they might have committed.
 In the name of your sweet graces,
 grant me this heartfelt wish.
 Accepting this request would be my reward.
 Thereby you would have given me fully 6225
 subjects and a land,
 a dukedom and wealth
 to such a large measure
 that my mind would not want anything else,
 if my wish would thus be fulfilled.” 6230
 [Willehalm:] “This will happen because of you,
 I will grant them my grace
 due to your sweet request.
 They will be freed of their oath [to go into exile],
 and they will receive their lands again. 6235
 Whatever they might have committed against me,
 that will be forgiven on your behalf.

I will never again renew
 this heartfelt wrath.
 I accept them as kindly as before. 6240
 Now I desire that you receive
 this land from me.”
 [Gerhart:] “In truth, my lord, no, I won’t.
 The reward that I have received from you,
 will be enough for me.” 6245
 [Willehalm:] “Then let your son have
 this land, if you do not want it for yourself,
 and refuse to accept it.”
 My son said: “What my father says,
 I am also saying, and nothing else. 6250
 I am taking what my father is taking,
 nothing else would be appropriate for me.
 [Willehalm:] “Then take, as a sign of my true love
 from me a county
 and the city of London. 6255
 Whatever treasures you can find here,
 in terms of people and goods,
 I will leave to you as your property,
 as you see fit.
 You will have that as your reward.” 6260
 I was glad about the comfort from the dear one [God].
 I took then in my heart
 the country, the crown, the lordship,
 the great riches and power,
 the city, the dukedom, 6265
 the county and also its reputation,
 and sacrificed it on behalf of God,
 who upon the demand of the divinity
 had been chosen as our sacrifice
 and was born as a human being 6270
 in order to console Christianity
 by suffering death like an ordinary person
 in the name of all the faithful ones,
 that is, I sacrificed it all to Jesus, child of the pure virgin.
 I handed over to the divine power 6275
 the lordship
 and wanted to leave money and profit,
 pawn and credit to Him.
 I said: “My very dear lord,
 if I were to be the ruler over a land, 6280
 then this lordship would be too big for me.

I have seen so many people in this city
 with a higher social rank than me,
 whose worthiness was so great
 that it would not behoove me 6285
 to accept this rank,
 which one of them should have assumed properly,
 especially if he then would have to call me his lord
 and to acknowledge me as his master
 because of the lordship and the fame.” 6290

When my lord recognized
 that I declined the land and the city,
 he asked, together with his friends,
 in the name of God, for his own and all of their sake,
 whether I would take a city, three times the amount of silver, or the land 6295
 from his hand.
 In the name of God I rejected that.
 But in response to the queen’s request
 I promised, listening to her words¹⁷⁸
 that I would take some 6300
 of the silver and gold
 when I would return home.
 My worthy lady was happy about that.
 The bold knights,
 for whom I had secured the king’s grace 6305
 and who had, because of their true guilt
 been exiled by him,
 approached the benches
 in a great throng.
 They could not give me more thanks; they 6310
 kneeled down before me.
 They were so happy [about the good outcome]
 that one could see them shed many tears publicly.
 Their pain was mixed with much joy.
 They said: “Sweet good father, 6315
 your heart and your mind are so pure,
 and your pure mind drives your heart
 with blissful blessedness,
 with which God, through the blood of his blissfulness,
 grants much of bliss to the world.¹⁷⁹ 6320
 God, through His kind consolation,
 has freed many people from suffering.
 You are the shield for the loyal people suffering in hardship,
 You are the life of joy, death of suffering,
 the opponent to unhappiness. 6325

Your solace strengthens joy
 and lifts us up from sorrow.
 God was in the state of pure grace,
 when he focused on the hour,
 which brought the seed [of your life] 6330
 as a masterful product of nature
 and which granted you praiseworthy power
 in the form of a living fruit,
 when your flowering life
 emerged from a fragile blossom, 6335
 when your life began.
 After that the blossom turned into fruit
 and brought such rich breeding
 so that God displayed His art
 with you by demonstrating His grace. 6340
 May God, who granted you the power of His art
 and also the favor of happiness,
 protect your life
 and may he be inclined to give you
 everlasting delight, honor, and well-being 6345
 and share the heavenly grace with you
 amongst the sweet troops of angels.
 May He recompense you for your goodness
 and keep it in His mind
 that you did an act of love for us; 6350
 so may He give you that reward,
 which no word or the sound of the tongue
 could accomplish
 and which has never reached the bottom of the heart
 through the gateway of the ears, 6355
 nor through human thoughts,
 nor through looking
 or the gaze of the eyes.¹⁸⁰
 But you, dear good father,
 with your heartfelt sweet mouth 6360
 you have declined the rulership over people and a land
 and have freed us from the shackles of our sorrow,
 which, through its woeful pain
 had been imposed on us in a lamentable misery.
 You have freed us from suffering.¹⁸¹ 6365
 may God, through the human death
 which He suffered in human form
 and human frailty,
 give to you ever-lasting joy.

May His grace keep you free 6370
 from worldly dishonor
 and hell's fetters
 by means of divine sweetness."

Out of joy they kissed
 my hands and my feet. 6375
 This happened without my approval.
 But they did not want to end this behavior.
 Finally they had to stop with it
 and to finish their performance.
 Their expression of joy was so great 6380
 that I gained from many people
 joyful grace
 with lovely constancy.
 Wherever I went or rode on horseback,
 I was much gazed at. 6385
 Many worthy men wished upon me,
 and as their good breeding moved them,
 bliss and good health in the name of God.

The entire noble company then began to experience 6390
 great knightly joys,
 as was fitting for the festivities.
 Everyone made his contribution
 as it was possible for him
 in a joyful mood all day long.
 Some were running, others were jumping, 6395
 some were playing on stringed instruments, others sang;
 on the one side some carried out a bohort, on the other they were dancing;
 knighthood wore the garland of happiness.
 Thus the festival lasted, free of any laments
 for three whole days. 6400
 The minstrels were delighted to receive
 many rich gifts.
 The knights, along with the worthy princes,
 were given fiefdoms, silver, gold
 and valuable gems as rewards 6405
 from the king.
 Once the festival had come to an end,
 the princes, together with their courtiers,
 immediately returned home,
 leaving the kingdom of England, 6410
 traveling over water and land.
 Wherever they had come from¹⁸²
 in order to visit this country,

their heart urged them to return home.

At that moment the lady cried, 6415

when King Reinmunt,
her father, left that country.

He swore to me, upon his loyalty,
that he would always be happy to do
whatever I might request from him. 6420

The same promises were made
by many worthy men,
who thus expressed their gratitude.

All of my lord's relatives
did not spare to give their thanks to me, 6425
who esteemed my service higher
than it really had been.

Without exception
all the guests left the country.

Once the festival was over, 6430

I also made up my mind
to return home again.

I requested permission to leave.

When my lord learned about it,
and also my dear lady, 6435

both began to feel sadness.

Both cried heavily
out of grief and sorrow.

Since I wanted to be allowed to leave,
I had to tolerate that from them. 6440

Nevertheless, I urged them
until I received their permission.

I ordered that my ship be prepared,
just as it had been when I had arrived,
and to get it ready for the voyage. 6445

Whatever I would need for that,

in terms of food for the home journey,
that was wisely brought on board.

My ship was richly
and sufficiently prepared. 6450

One the day of departure
and of saying good-bye had arrived,

I went to my lord

and to the queen.

I said: "My lord and my lady, 6455
please allow me in your gracefulness

that I may travel home.”
 The king then immediately ordered
 the worthy knights to appear,
 who had traveled with me 6460
 from the heathen land.
 They felt very sorry about our departure,
 which we had to do [anyway].
 My lord, in his good breeding, spoke:
 “Heart-beloved good father, 6465
 in return for your blessed spirit,
 allow me to reimburse you for your goods.
 I would like to do that for you in the name of God.”
 Then the queen spoke:
 “On behalf of God’s sweet love, 6470
 dear good father,
 take something for my dear mother
 from my treasures.”
 [Gerhart:] “Gladly, lady, will I do that.
 But let it be as it will be appropriate for you. 6475
 Whatever I will take of your goods,
 it will then have been sufficient as full reward.
 I will not ask for any other payment,
 since that seems to be enough for me.”
 Soon they brought to me 6480
 gems, silver, and gold,
 so much of it that,
 if I had taken just half of it,
 I would have received three times as much or more
 of what I had spent of my goods [for the princess and the English lords]. 6485
 Then the queen said:
 “Take this, my dear father¹⁸³
 to my heart-loved mother.”
 [Gerhart:] “Lady, I am taking only as much with me
 as will be sufficient for her and me.” 6490
 However, I regarded God’s reward
 more valuable. Still, I took
 from the king and the queen
 a clasp and a ring
 and brought those to my wife 6495
 and nothing else.
 Both were unhappy about that.
 Then I wanted to depart from there.
 My lord accompanied me honorably,
 and so did the beautiful queen, 6500

together with a delightful company,
 down to my ship which was near-by
 in the harbor, where I had left it.
 They all displayed their good breeding
 through lamentations,
 both the men and the ladies.

6505

When I wanted to leave,
 since it was time for it,
 my lord, a truly honorable man,
 began to cry loudly.

6510

He said: "Oh dear, since I now must witness
 our separation, which is about to happen;
 I will be sad forever.

Indeed, my dear father, you have
 through fatherly actions
 done so lovingly to me
 through God and through your own spirit,
 as a father would do
 for his own child born from his seed.

6515

I have chosen you as my father
 and had figured out
 that I would be happy with you
 until the end of our lives.

6520

Now you cause me much grief,
 since you want to separate yourself from me.
 This will cause me grief forever,
 it is hurting my heart.

6525

I did not desire any other good
 than that I could see you, dear father,
 and that I would have
 joy with you.

6530

God knows, my father, that all the heartfelt pain,
 which I have ever experienced,
 was simply gone when I saw you,
 and this since the time I made your acquaintance,
 because such a blissful man [like you]
 had never been given before to the world [by God].
 From now on I will have to live in sorrow
 and to suffer in lamenting,
 because I will have to be without you."

6535

6540

I answered: "Lord, if it will be possible,
 then God will know well what is in my mind,
 insofar as I will always feel pain in my heart,
 longing for you

with sorrow in my heart. 6545
 I will be always filled with the desire
 to be united with you again.
 That, however, now cannot be.
 At present, may it be granted that God will give you
 a life always determined by happiness, 6550
 and may this also apply to my good lady.
 I will leave behind here in heartfelt love
 both my heart and my soul,
 although I have locked them well,
 and I will always feel an even stronger liking 6555
 for this country than before.¹⁸⁴
 If I only had done something in a loving fashion for you,
 of which I have unfortunately done very little,
 I would be happy and would be delighted,
 and it would have been very appropriate.¹⁸⁵ 6560
 Allow me to depart with your permission.
 May God [Christ], the child of the pure maid [the Virgin Mary]
 give you bliss and honor
 and ever-growing joy.”
 Then I kissed him and he kissed me. 6565
 We both cried, my lord and I,
 and so as well my lady and all the knights,
 shed many tears out of great sorrow,
 as it was dictated by our misery,
 when I said good-bye.¹⁸⁶ 6570
 When we prepared ourselves for the voyage,
 I entrusted the lady and her husband
 to the sweet custody of God.
 I left them behind and departed,
 sailing down the river out into the open sea, 6575
 that is, my son and I. We left the royal court
 behind us in their lamentations.
 The king and also the queen
 did not leave the beach,
 as long as they could see me. 6580
 Thus I returned to my country.
 Since then I have heard
 that he lives in high spirits,
 pursuing a king’s pure mercifulness,
 and this so praiseworthy 6585
 that his kingdom
 has ever since enjoyed
 royal honors during his lifetime.

His country constantly enjoyed peace,
 his legal courts were so esteemed 6590
 that the fame of his name
 spread to many countries.
 His and his wife's worth
 gained the crown of praise,
 wherever both of their worthiness 6595
 were talked about in stories,
 since both their wreaths of virtues
 were so complete in blissfulness
 that their praise was recognized,
 wherever their names were mentioned. 6600

When I returned home to my country
 I was received with such a greeting,
 as friends ought to give at the arrival of a friend,
 in loving agreement,
 they all treated me joyfully. 6605
 After that had been completed,
 the people regarded those good deeds as richer,
 greater, and more praiseworthy,
 than they had actually been.¹⁸⁷
 On the basis of this story 6610
 I was called 'the good one.'
 Alas, however, I do not know
 about privilege to carry this name: I am not good,
 except that the people gave me this great name
 because they thought it appropriate 6615
 regarding honor and praise.
 I am such a sinful man,
 that I cannot tell you
 whether I have ever done anything good,
 except for that what I have told you.¹⁸⁸ 6620
 If that was good, then yes, I did it.
 I cannot blame myself,
 neither in my heart nor in my mind,
 that I did not do more for the sake of goodness
 in the name of God. 6625
 But I would like to strive toward the goal
 of doing something good
 so that I could serve God better
 in the hope that he would forgive my sins,
 with which I have been stricken." 6630

Even before the story had been entirely¹⁸⁹

told to the emperor,
 the grievous crying had become so intense
 that he had wetted the clothing on his chest
 out of commiseration. 6635

When he thought of the details,
 the good deeds moved him deeply.
 He also realized how much
 his arrogant bragging
 had destroyed the [expected] reward from God. 6640

The story's great emotional appeal
 and the manly, sweet loyalty
 demonstrated by the merchant,
 made him cry and awoke repentance in him
 for the sins that he had committed 6645
 when he had become guilty of arrogance.
 His sins triggered regrets in him.
 When he thought of them,
 he lamented to God
 and said: "Gerhart, very dear man, 6650
 you are rightly called 'the good one';
 your goodness is well recognized;
 you are good; your pure mind
 is much better than just good;
 your virtuous spirit 6655
 is goodness above all goodness;
 your heart is filled with pure goodness.
 It was a blessing
 that you have been born. 6660
 The highest ranking virtues
 have pledged to you their worthiness
 which carries the crown of all virtues.

Very sweet, pure, worthy man,
 you had been afraid of committing a sin,
 if you were to relate to me this account. 6665
 In reality, no, I am telling you
 that it is much better if the story is told
 than to keep it a secret.
 If I had a such a blessed mind,
 it still would always be better for me 6670
 to work toward the improvement of my salvation,
 and to take care of sins which I am carrying.
 Your goodness and the blissful advice
 has outshined with goodness
 the weak goodness, which I have performed 6675

on behalf of my creator.

My heart says that I must follow you
insofar as I could not copy
in hundredfold efforts your example
and thus achieve the same goal.

6680

My fame has been defeated.

The scale weighs us differently;
the measuring scale grants me barely a small amount,
while the other scale gives you
twenty-five pounds in goodness,
in purely high spirit.

6685

While I founded a church on behalf of God
and endowed it, to please the divine command,
with servants and property,
then that still weighed very little

6690

in comparison with your sweet and great goodness.
The friendship of princes, counts, and their companions
you acquired by way of your great sweet goodness
and then you let them free in the name of God.

You took, on behalf of your creator,
a noble, rich princess
treating her with full respect
and then you handed her over to your son as his wife
and entrusted her to him. Immediately thereupon
you received from God
a true message.

6695

You showed that you love, strengthened by His support,
God more than yourself, being obedient like a child.

You handed over your son's wife
to her fiancé in the name of mighty Christ.

6705

Shortly thereafter
you gave the royal crown and the country
away in the name of God,
then also the shire, the dukedom,
cities, princely fame
and much worldly reputation.

6710

You rejected for the sake of your soul's salvation
the mighty worthiness here in this life.¹⁹⁰

Since now the heavenly crown
cannot be denied to you
as an ever-lasting reward,
please pray to God
to have mercy on me
as a poor sinner.

6715

I as a miserable braggart
 have ranked too highly the little good
 that I have done for God. 6720
 May God now help me to repent for that
 by means of your sweet efforts.”

Then the Good Gerhart said: 6725
 “May God, who became human for our sake,
 grant us bliss and honor
 and reveal to us¹⁹¹ the instruction
 how to pursue in this short [human] time
 [here on earth] eternity, 6730
 which lasts forever and never disappears,
 and which never experiences the end of joys,
 and for which thousand years are [just] a day,¹⁹²
 a phenomenon which no one can figure out.
 May God give us [eternal] delight.” 6735
 Then both, Gerhart and the emperor,
 said: “Amen.”

They stood up and went out
 of the room,¹⁹³
 into the courtyard. 6740
 There the burghers had waited,
 partly being rather irritated.
 They had wondered
 why the private council
 had lasted for such a long time. 6745
 In his best manners the emperor said:
 “My very dear burghers,
 Gerhart knows full well
 my intention and my purpose.
 You as a council should accept 6750
 what he will tell you with respect to me.
 Accept that as full truth.
 If he does not tell you anything, then let it be.
 That would be my pleasure as well.

I would like to request from you further: 6755
 Stay loyal to me as you have always been,
 with a steady mind
 and take care in good trustworthiness
 of the empire, as you have done so far.
 I have never found here anything else but loyalty,
 so please continue in that forever. 6760
 You have so far demonstrated much loyalty;
 may the trustworthy God reward you for that

by granting you great blissfulness.
 He rewards everyone who demonstrates constancy
 in loyalty to his lord. 6765
 God instructs us people to stand by
 our master in loyalty.
 With this I let you go.
 You have greatly helped me much; 6770
 please continue to demonstrate your constancy to me.”
 [Burghers:] “With pleasure, Lord, we will do that,”
 said all the citizens there.
 “We will always be happy
 to have served you in any way.” 6775
 [Emperor:] “I will not doubt that about you,”
 the emperor responded.
 In a wise manner
 the burghers took their leave,
 as they departed.¹⁹⁴ 6780
 They turned away from the court.
 The emperor went with his company
 to where the meal was prepared.
 There he sat down, as I was told.
 Once the Holy Roman emperor,
 who had never committed a vice,¹⁹⁵ 6785
 had spent time in Cologne, he left again.
 The archbishop and his men
 provided him, as a sign of their love
 with their company 6790
 leading him out of the city up to the open field.
 There one could see how they exchanged farewells.
 Then the emperor departed.
 He rode to Magdeburg
 and repented his guilt 6795
 in order to gain God’s grace
 with the help of the clergy.
 From early in the morning until late at night
 he did extreme penance
 toward God. 6800
 Then he thought that this account
 could be an uplifting story
 to improve Christianity, if it were written down
 and would not remain hidden.
 This story was then, as he wished 6805
 made public
 and recorded in writing.

He commissioned the clergy
 to carry this out according to the emperor's wishes
 so that it would not be lost to us. 6810
 Thus the written record preserved this treasure,
 the truth and the words of this miraculous account.
 This document gives us a clear understanding
 of the events at that time.

Let me tell you the truth, 6815
 how I learned about this story
 and how it made its way into this country.
 A man told us about it,
 who had read it in its written version,
 through which it was well preserved 6820
 in a splendid handwriting.
 That man came from Austria
 and brought it here into this country,
 just as he had found it written down.
 He shared this story 6825
 with the worthy lord of Steinach,¹⁹⁶
 Lord Rudolf, who has the same name as I.
 He asked me then
 to render this account into German
 and to cast it into proper rhyming verses. 6830
 On his behalf I began with that task.
 For his entertainment and with the goal of achieving that task
 I put all my effort into it,
 for noble people's worthiness,
 for worthy men and worthy women. 6835
 Whoever demands such loyalty
 and such humbleness that he will desire
 to enjoy this story for entertainment,
 should give me a reward for it,
 when he will hear the story read out aloud,¹⁹⁷ 6840
 and then grant me his approval,
 if I can profit from my art
 and thus secure a word of thanks,
 a reward which I have pursued all my life.
 Or he should criticize me kindly 6845
 if I am lacking in that [poetic] art,
 which brings forth in wise wisdom
 the essential ideas in an artistic fashion.

It will be my pleasure and I will be happy,
 if the one who will fault me for my lack of skill, 6850

offers such friendly advice
 that he improve my understanding.
 I will follow his suggestions.
 But whoever wants to mock at me
 and blame my text 6855
 as lacking,
 will destroy his own honor.
 However, if he cares to listen to me,
 then he should take into consideration
 what I have said before: 6860
 Whatever one does with a good intention,
 for good and in a good spirit,
 you should credit him for this in good terms
 and you should not look for his failure
 in creating a text, since it is good, 6865
 what one does in the name of God for goodness.
 I apply this to myself.
 I would gladly express myself better, if I could.
 Therefore one should acknowledge it as good.¹⁹⁸
 It would be very delightful, 6870
 if I could speak so well
 that you would be pleased with it.
 There is also another advice¹⁹⁹ following this,
 which also my ignorant mind subscribes to,
 that one should avoid bragging, 6875
 since one can [anyway] perceive the good person
 who, through the advice of a good heart,
 has produced something good.
 I am not deceived in that.
 I have proven it to you well 6880
 through this adventurous story
 that no one should brag about oneself.²⁰⁰
 Whoever cannot avoid that,
 and then turns into a braggart, will face the same experience
 as the one which happened to the emperor, 6885
 when he glorified himself too much
 and when the merchant's goodness
 in its rich humility
 overshadowed his good deeds.
 Allow me to warn you thereby, 6890
 that, if you do something good,
 then let it be just good
 without trying to get praise for it.
 You ought to do it humbly.

Then your humility will increase in value, 6895
 since it is striving for the [true] reward given for praise.²⁰¹
 The world of fame easily fades away,
 where the good is not done humbly.
 Also, God grants reward for the person,
 who in proper constancy 6900
 serves loyally.
 Now let us all hope
 in well-tempered joy
 that God will bring us
 happily into His realm, 6905
 out of this miserable world.
 The poet also requests,
 that is, he who has created this romance,
 basically driven by his good spirit
 in order to entertain you, 6910
 that you pray for him
 that he will receive blessedness in heaven,
 and allow him the privilege
 of entertaining good hope,
 that he, in case he might hear of another story, 6915
 which could be very likely,
 then will try to amend all that
 what he has failed to do in the present romance.
 This he is requesting from you,
 and so this story has come to an end. 6920

Endnotes

-
1. To translate the Middle High German term ‘muot’ properly into English might be a near impossibility. “Muot” means the affective powers of the human soul, but also refers to the psychological, intellectual, and voluntary forces in the human mind. There are many possible meanings in the modern context, such as ‘thought,’ ‘mind,’ ‘bravery,’ ‘courage,’ ‘attitude,’ ‘sense,’ or ‘spirit.’ See Otfried Ehrismann, *Ehre und Mut, Abenteuer und Minne* (1995), 148-51. Here and throughout I have heavily relied on the excellent *Wörterbuchnetz.de*, online at <http://woerterbuchnetz.de/>, especially the standard dictionary by Matthias Lexer.

 2. Armin Schulz, *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive* (2012), 77-78, rightly emphasizes that long before the development of the bourgeois world of privacy in the early modern age, the Middle Ages knew much about the intimate, the mind-set, the will, the consciousness, guilt, the intimacy of love. Rudolf’s work is a great illustration of this important dimension. The entire concept of internal goodness in contrast to worldly praise for good deeds determines the entire romance, and the theoretical aspects are revisited again in the epilogue.

 3. The poet seems to be unclear about the differences between Otto I, the founder of the bishopric of Magdeburg, then his son, Otto II, also called ‘the Red,’ and Otto IV, rival king to the Hohenstaufen King Frederick II; for Otto II, see Tina Bode, *König und Bischof in ottonischer Zeit* (2015); cf. also the excellent article online at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_II,_Holy_Roman_Emperor (last accessed on Aug. 19, 2016). In the introduction to this volume I discuss the historical issues involving Otto IV, who Rudolf probably targeted with his romance.

 4. Literally: ‘misdeeds,’ but in this context the poet really means ‘evil thoughts’ or ‘sinful thinking.’

 5. These are unfree, and yet noble servants at royal courts, assuming bureaucratic functions. The *ministeriales* rose, in the course of time, to the new dominant group of aristocrats.

 6. Thus the archbishop of Magdeburg, founded in 968 by Otto I, temporarily received the status of a high ranking imperial advisor, which was, however, only a political move by Otto IV. The emperor conceded many significant royal privileges to Archbishop Albrecht II on May 12, 1209; globally, see Bernd Ulrich Hucker, *Otto IV.: Der wiederentdeckte Kaiser* (2003); *Otto IV. Traum vom welfischen Kaisertum*, ed. Bernd Ulrich Hucker (2009); Wolfgang Huschner, “Zwischen Staufern, Welfen und Päpsten (2012), 163–172. For a detailed chronology of Magdeburg, see <http://magdeburger-chronist.de/md-chronik/ch-1200.html> (last accessed on Aug. 17, 2016).

 7. The poet indicates here already how wrong Emperor Otto’s attitude was, which will grow considerably in the following section.

 8. “The Lord of Sabaoth was a title of Jehovah; the hosts were the armies of Israel (1 Sam.

17:45) but also included the angelic armies of heaven (Judg. 5:20; 2 Kgs. 6:17; Rom. 9:29; James 5:4; see also D&C 87:7; 88:2; 95:7; 98:2).” Quoted from *Bible Dictionary*, <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bd/sabaoth?lang=eng> (last accessed on July 23, 2016).

9. These are the basic four elements, a fundamental concept in ancient and medieval scientific thinking.

10. The poet simply enjoys playing with the alliteration and a figura etymologica: “ein leben lebendez leben hat.”

11. The concept of loyalty matters deeply for Rudolf, since it determines the political, military, and personal relationship between the knight and his lord and also between friends, not to forget lovers and marriage partners, and ultimately between the Godhead and the human individual. See now the contributions to *Loyalty in the Middle Ages* (2015).

12. This is a reference to Mary’s virgin birth.

13. The weak verb ‘erbeizen’ actually means ‘to get off a horse,’ ‘to step down,’ but since the poet wanted to create a rhyme between ‘erbeiz’ and ‘berreit,’ he probably meant the opposite, that is, ‘to get up.’ Unless, as I am suggesting here, he was actually sitting in his imperial prayer alcove high up in the cathedral and so had to come down.

14. Rudolf means here the archbishop, since Cologne was one of the three seats of an archbishop, all being part of the group of seven royal electors in Germany.

15. Literally, ‘the one firm in his mine.’

16. There is a slight contradiction here. While the emperor wanted to travel by himself to Cologne, he still took a band of confidants with him. Arriving in Cologne, he was majestically welcomed, so there was no secret about that. Yet, here, they all wonder about him having traveled by himself. We have to imagine that the emperor, under normal circumstances, would have been accompanied by his entire court, so there would have been a splendid welcome, which is now totally subdued, even though the bishop and his people still greet him in all proper fashion.

17. In the original the text says the opposite, which does not make sense here: They would not have liked to come.

18. Chronologically, the narrator only means here to announce that the burghers would come to the dinner. That is following only afterwards.

19. Even though this line does not make much sense, or would be entirely unnecessary, the need for rhyming words “zestunde / munde” apparently motivated the poet to include this verse.

20. The poet uses here an archaic term, “wîgant,” meaning ‘hero,’ normally used only in older heroic epic literature, but still employed also in late medieval German epic poems dedicated to

Dietrich.

21. The true meaning here would be that everyone, irrespective of his social status, spoke up. It is very unlikely that truly 'poor' or 'destitute' people would have joined that imperial council.

22. Literally: whoever is practicing counseling, but the emperor is actively looking for advice.

23. Emperor Otto thereby might signal, which has triggered much research, as I have outlined in the introduction, how much this romance reflects a new sense of urban pride and the imperial cities's independence from local authorities. However, we would have to be very careful in such assessments because the poet simply draws from a host of rhetorical tropes and does not intend in the present context to comment on actual historical power structures in the Holy Roman Empire.

24. Here we immediately perceive the global contrast between those two men. The emperor was driven to carry out his actions in favor of the Church in order to gain God's favor; Gerhart tries to hide his own accomplishments and thus displays a venerable form of humbleness and selflessness.

25. Unclear meaning of "haz" (hatred) at this point. The poet says literally: The emperor did not forget in his case his same hatred.

26. This collective noun 'gestüele' has many different meanings, as we will observe later. It refers to any kind of wooden construction, such as bleachers, a stand, a row of chairs, a throne, or, as here, simply a chair.

27. Gerhart hence took the route down the Rhine to the North Sea, around Denmark and then across the Baltic Sea to reach the Russian harbors, then those in the Baltic countries. Perhaps a little more than other thirteenth-century romances, Rudolf explored spatial dimensions somewhat more concretely, but we can easily recognize that ultimately his geographic concept remains fuzzy and irrelevant for the narrative's development. For the 'spatial turn' in medieval literature, see Albrecht Classen, "The Innovative Perception of Space (Europe) in Late Medieval German Literature" (2016).

28. This is an ancient city in the southern part of modern-day Uzbekistan, located on the fabled Silk Route connecting Europe with China already in the Middle Ages. Samarkand is east of Turkmenistan, north of Afghanistan, and northwest of Dushanbe, the capital of Turkmenistan. There is no logical explanation how Gerhart reached that land after his time spent in the Baltic countries, but Samarkand simply served as an iconic city of Oriental wealth and incredible trading opportunities.

29. Like Damascus, Niniveh was also traditionally one of the famous Middle Eastern cities where European merchants could make huge profits in trading with Asian partners, and this since antiquity. This ancient Assyrian city is today located in northern modern-day Iraq on the eastern bank of the Tigris river.

30. This is the topical reference to the unknown world, a typical feature in most travel literature throughout times. The poet might have drawn from the anonymous *Herzog Ernst* (ms. B ca. 1220) where a storm also drives the protagonist away from the main course taking him from Constantinople to the Holy Land. *Herzog Ernst*, ed. and trans. Bernhard Sowinski (1970).

31. The poet makes a sudden switch here, from the report by the sailor to the report by Gerhart himself.

32. The words “marner” and “schifman” are used interchangeably here.

33. The poet regularly emphasizes the significance of the gaze when a person recognizes in a crowd of people one outstanding individual. Emperor Otto was thus able to identify the Good Gerhart immediately, standing amidst the crowd of esteemed Cologne citizens. This phenomenon is called “kalokagathia,” implying a direct correlation between the external, physical appearance and the spiritual, moral, and ethical virtues. Félix Bourriot, *Kalos kagathos – kalokagathia* (1995). For the opposite dimension, the external ugliness, see Paul Michel, “*Formosa deformitas*” (1970).

34. This seems to be rather made up by Gerhart since he had not even the faintest idea what country he had reached after the twelve days of a raging storm.

35. The formulation here is most difficult; the poet indicates that there will be a change of his previous politics on tariff, lifting it entirely for Christian merchants.

36. The poet is mostly playing with the assonance and alliteration of the two words: “triuwe” (loyalty) and “niuwe” (new).

37. Gerhart is preparing the emperor, hence us as the audience, for the shock that is waiting for us regarding the true nature of the ‘merchandise.’

38. It is clear that the poet wants to emphasize their youth, having outgrown their puberty, as indicated by the first showing of a beard. This undermines the previous mentioning of their age of 30, but medieval literature is never fully concerned with realistic and logical consistency.

39. It is difficult to render this cascading praise of womanhood into ordinary English. The poet relies here on a long rhetorical tradition of excessive praise, which might be hard to swallow for us today.

40. The poet refers specifically to the brilliance of her skin color.

41. Insofar as Rudolf delighted in playing with excessive descriptors, he was forced to repeat himself constantly. There is no good way of rendering all this in ordinary English without being highly repetitive.

42. The poet uses both words for ‘cheeks,’ “hiufel” and “wengelîn” without helping us understand what the difference might be.

43. Again the text has the archaic phrase “wîgande” for hero, a word normally used only in early medieval heroic poetry.

44. Some scholars, such as Zöllner, *Kaiser, Kaufmann und die Macht des Geldes* (1993), have suggested that the scribe had mistaken ‘Navarra’ in Spain with ‘Norway,’ but there is no firm proof for that idea, except that it seems unrealistic to assume that the ship with the princess and her companions had come so far off the course and gotten into the eastern Mediterranean after they had left Norway. This would presume, however, that Rudolf truly intended to project a realistic historical-geographical world view or was actually informed enough about the situation in the western Mediterranean to understand where Morocco and Navarra were located. Further, it seems unlikely that a scribe would have confused his original source so badly to copy down ‘Norway’ instead of Navarra. If we consider how unclear Rudolf proves to be also with respect to England in the latter half of the romance, we may conclude that geography was simply not his strongest ability when he composed his romance. However, throughout medieval literature, spatial precision and correctness never mattered much, so Rudolf does not differ remarkably in that regard compared to his contemporaries.

45. There is an unintentional irony here since Gerhart reached Morocco the same way, driven by the mighty storm, arriving in a foreign country where he did not want to make a stop on his way home. Hence, Stranmûr could apply exactly the same laws and confiscate all of Gerhart’s property. However, he appears as a merchant and is not a member of the nobility. Nevertheless, if the castellan were truly looking for ways to increase his wealth, he could treat him the same way as he treats his aristocratic prisoners. Yet, he is also economically minded and wants to attract other Christian merchants to his own harbor, whom he has promised freedom from paying tax on their goods. Within the literary context, of course, such inquiries regarding consistency would be inappropriate.

46. Stranmûr hence assures him that he still could carry out his ordinary merchant activities and would not have to fear anything from him if he were not interested in the offered deal, the exchange of the merchandise for the prisoners.

47. This is a typical form of repetition which Rudolf enjoys applying. I can only try to render this passage as meaningfully as possible.

48. Both the Old Testament (*Psalms*) and the New Testament contain numerous passages Rudolf could have drawn from for this theological statement. For instance, Prov. 14:31 “Anyone who oppresses the poor is insulting God who made them. To help the poor is to honor God.” Or: Mat. 25:40 “And I, the King, will tell them, ‘When you did it to these my brothers you were doing it to me!’” Or: Mat 25:45 “And I will answer, ‘When you refused to help the least of these my brothers, you were refusing help to me.’” Mat. 25:46 “And they shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into everlasting life. Or: 1 Tim. 6:18 “Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give happily to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them.”

49. We learn here for the first time Stranmûr’s full name.

50. Literally: from an arc, like Noah's Arc, but it can only mean a 'container,' 'vessel,' or 'chest' in the present context.

51. The original has 'markets' in the singular, but from the subsequent text we know that Gerhart traveled far and wide.

52. Literally: "Now I am in part too weak for you."

53. The text has "lêre," meaning 'teaching,' 'instruction,' maybe also 'command' or 'arrangement,' but none of those words would fit in the current context.

54. While the editor of this text, John A. Asher, placed a comma here, a period makes more sense, followed by the beginning of a new sentence.

55. Their lord is the English prince Willehalm, who was lost on the sea and had disappeared while they were driven by the storm to the Moroccan harbor, as we will learn later. The English lords refer here to Willehalm's 'wife,' though she is only his fiancée at this point.

56. Literally: her youth spoke up through old wisdom.

57. Erene is the name of the Norwegian princess, as we'll learn only later.

58. The entire following section is very difficult to render into a logical English since the implied causality is simply not given there, since the poet has the princess make a series of statements that are not related to any request on her part.

59. Since Willhelam is only a young man at that point, not even knighted and certainly not yet crowned king of England, I refer to him consistently as 'prince' here.

60. This is one of the many repetitions which characterize this text. In a straight prose translation I would have simply struck this line.

61. Whereas before 'childish' underscored the lady's innocence, purity, and virginity, now it implies the opposite, that is, foolishness, immaturity, etc.

62. It is not clear whether the poet simply added the word 'gir' (greed) to rhyme on the indirect personal pronoun 'mir' (to me), or whether he actually intended to criticize the castellan for his materialistic interests. I tend to reject the latter position in light of the high praise which Gerhart has given him before. The poet probably wanted to say simply: The castellan desired to demonstrate his good breeding by honoring the merchant.

63. Literally: guests from abroad.

64. The text does not quite make sense, unless I misunderstand the syntax, since he first refers to people in the city at large, and now we are supposed to assume that those are the former prisoners. It seems best to create separate sentences and to assume that each one talks about

different people.

65. Possibly the poet wanted to say that the princess was the one who wore the crown of praise, but the syntactical structure obfuscates a clear interpretation.

66. The term ‘degne’ or ‘degene’ (sword) is a synecdoche, or pars pro toto (a part representing the whole), for ‘knight.’

67. That is, he asked his clerk to read a mass for them.

68. Rudolf had obviously no clear understanding of the Islamic religion and naively mixes, very much like his predecessors and his contemporaries, names of ancient Greek gods with the name of the Prophet Mohammed.

69. It would not make sense for a merchant from Cologne to look for a direction taking him to Austria, coming from the Mediterranean. Cologne would be reached via the Channel, the North Atlantic, and then upstream of the river Rhine. However, as we will hear in the epilogue, the text source upon which Rudolf based his romance originated from Austria (either written or orally). Hence, the original scribe might have mixed up things here.

70. “huote” actually means ‘care’ or ‘protection,’ but in order to avoid duplication, I use the alternative term ‘embrace.’

71. Normally, the noun ‘zil’ means ‘goal,’ ‘end,’ ‘determination,’ ‘intention,’ ‘endpoint,’ ‘closure,’ etc., but in our context, differently what the dictionary (Lexer) tells us, the poet implies: ‘nothing.’

72. The entire passage is unclearly formulated; we do not know for sure whether Gerhart, his wife, or the princess are talking. The editor, Asher, made efforts to include quotation marks to identify the direct speech passages, but this gets confused.

73. The poet uses the unusual adjective, at least in this context, ‘ritterlich,’ which means ‘knightly,’ but we can definitely understand here the global meaning of ‘noble’ or ‘aristocratic.’

74. Rudolf here explores many different ways how to praise his lady as virtuous, youthful, innocent, pure, etc., which is hard to translate into an adequate English without sounding almost silly. He does not mean at all that she is only a child or a youth; after all, she is already engaged and performs in a most mature manner, demonstrating a high level of mature intellect. Hence, the poet tries to give us a sense of her beauty and overall charm, like a child, but already as a woman, yet entire untainted by sinfulness, moral defects, etc.

75. Here is another example of how the poet plays with one key component, ‘saelde’ (happiness, delight, good fortune, etc.) and utilizes it in many different phrases, without ever saying anything new. He operates like a musician who utilizes the same *leitmotif* and let’s it come through in many different contexts. It is almost impossible to translate all this into clear English.

76. The text might be confusing: The “künic” is not yet the king of England, but the prince Willehalm, and ‘ir man’ (her husband) is really only her fiancé.

77. One of many similar passages, working with the noun and adapting it as a verb, adverb, and so forth. There are no adequate English terms for that artistic construction.

78. Literally, when they looked at each other with their eyes for the first time. The poet uses a filler here that does not need to be translated since it is completely superfluous. See Dana E. Stewart, *The Arrow of Love* (2003). Of course, love poets throughout time have emphasized how much the erotic gaze has always served as the catalyst for love to bloom.

79. Gerhart is thinking that his lady would require as a husband a high ranking noble man who would be worthy enough in her father’s, the king’s, eyes to receive a large fiefdom.

80. Again, a typically redundant formulation: ‘that his life is still alive.’

81. He also, and actually more specifically, refers to her family members, her closest kin.

82. Literally: ‘governance,’ ‘rule,’ ‘rank,’ that is, her position as a royal princess.

83. This is a good example to illustrate the rather convoluted style pursued by Rudolf, which constantly requires me to reformulate to help the reader understand the true meaning in modern terms. Literally, these verses say: “His life has now unfortunately given an end with death.”

84. Literally: “with joy.”

85. The text is very unclear here. The princess addresses the other person as “lîp” (body, which also means: a person, somebody, life, etc.), but from the grammatical structure she can only mean Gerhart.

86. She uses the term “gemahel” (husband), but she can only mean ‘fiancé.’ This is a pattern throughout the romance.

87. Because of the rhyming structure, the syntax in the original is entirely different. For the proper translation, I had to rearrange the verses, although I still tried to stay as close to the original as possible.

88. Literally: ‘whatever I have given for you, gives me more and more love.’

89. Despite the common usage of the term ‘love’ in the conversations between Gerhart and the princess, it does not carry an erotic meaning here; instead it expresses respect, admiration, praise, and high recognition.

90. Of course, Gerhart does not delight about her feeling of sadness; on the contrary, he deeply empathizes with her, but he reveals here his great respect for her virtues and constancy of love for her fiancé.

91. It remains unclear throughout the entire text whether Gerhart is erotically attracted to this young princess, which a superficial reading might imply, or whether he simply draws spiritual happiness from her and worships her as a god-like woman who is far beyond his social rank. He wants her to marry his son, but the text might also suggest that he is interested in her more than a father would be in his own daughter (here incest excluded). Considering the larger context and the vocabulary employed for the many descriptions of her virtues and beauty, it seems most reasonable to assume, despite the emotional intensity of the language, that Rudolf aimed for an abstract glorification of womanhood.

92. This convoluted syntactical structure is part of the original text.

93. The word does not yet exclusively mean ‘wedding’ in the modern German sense of the word, and instead it is most commonly applied for a ‘courtly celebration,’ but subsequently Rudolf merged ‘festival’ with ‘wedding’ since both events—his son being knighted and also his wedding—are supposed to take place there.

94. It would be too difficult to determine whether Rudolf meant ‘patricians,’ ‘gentlemen,’ ‘gentry,’ ‘esquire,’ etc. For a good list of aristocratic ranks and titles across Europe, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_and_noble_ranks#Minor_nobility.2C_gentry.2C_and_other_aristocracy (last accessed Aug. 31, 2016).

95. The word “gestüele” covers many different kinds of wooden constructions, including a stand, a throne, a row of chairs, bleachers, etc., here fitting for a tournament. See, for instance, *Wigamur*, ed. Joseph M. Sullivan (2015), v. 2515.

96. Literally: he received companionship, or fellowship, next to them.

97. As fleeting as the comment might be, here we learn of the official marriage between Gerhart’s son, Gerhart, and Erene. It is unclear why no priest is involved; however, the archbishop might have carried out the procedure, although the narrator does not say so.

98. The verb “buhurdieren” pertains to the activity of knightly jousting in groups, imitating actual war situations, hence the noun ‘bohort’ or ‘melee.’ This mock combat was the most common activity during medieval tournaments. See, for instance, Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur: Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter* (1986), vol. 1, 348-60; English translation by Thomas Dunlap: *Courtly Culture* (1991), section 4.3; Richard W. Barber and Juliet R. V. Barker, *Tournaments* (1989); see also the excellent contributions to *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter*, ed. Josef Fleckenstein (1985); see also the useful overview online at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tournament_\(medieval\)#Melee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tournament_(medieval)#Melee) (last accessed on Aug. 31, 2016).

99. The narrative flow is uneven here. Hardly has Gerhart mentioned the strange appearance of the miserably looking man, does he turn to his own son. We will have to wait for a while until we will learn again about the new but strange guest.

100. The entire section is characterized by a narrative inconsistency not untypical of medieval literature. First we hear of a strange guest, who will later turn out to be Willehalm, but this is

immediately dropped. Then Gerhart's son indulges in gazing at his future wife. Then he is thinking about getting gifts for the guests, which leads over to a discussion of his need to be knighted. Nothing here is carried to its full conclusion, which makes this romance at times hard to read. In fact, we could go so far as to blame the poet for definite weakness in structuring his text.

101. The narrator is concerned that we might confuse the material wealth of her external appearance with the internal richness of her mind and soul.

102. Normally, at least in French and English traditions, the lord tapped the new knight on the shoulders with the sword blade (*dubbing* or *adoubement*); but here the sword is attached to the belt. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accolade> (last accessed on Aug. 31, 2016)

103. Literally, flutes, but there is supposed to be loud and festive music, so it could have been a kind of tuba, a sacbut, or, most likely, a simple pipe. By the same token, it would not have been drums, but tabors; see <https://www.music.iastate.edu/antiqua/instrumt.html> (last accessed on July 31, 2016).

104. Literally, the poet is really saying this, as incomprehensible as it might sound: Quietly, in soft customs. In many a sweet manner the sound was elevated!

105. "avoy" is a contraction from Old French "ah voi," meaning: oh, look!

106. Even though Rudolf does not include any reference to King Arthur and the Round Table in his text, the mentioning of the month of May with all of its natural delights is a direct allusion to that royal world since Arthur is regularly said to have organized his court festival at that time of the year. In other words, this long description of the court festival is an important trope directly borrowed from courtly romances. Even though Gerhart is a merchant and even though the festival takes place outside of the city, this is, after all, very much a courtly romance.

107. The poet does not realize the contradiction. First he had described the man as dirty, sunburned, looking just miserable, now he emphasizes his stunning manly beauty. However, this is a common technique in medieval romances to give vent to the strategy of 'kalokagathia,' through which inner beauty and nobility always shine forth even when the individual person has gone through rough times, such as in the case of Tristan's foster father Rual li Foitenant in Gottfried's romance (vv. 3757ff.)

108. While the text says 'where his clothing covered his body,' but the opposite is really implied.

109. "enbizzzen" is the past participle of the strong verb 'bizzzen,' meaning 'to bite' or 'to sting,' and here: 'to hurt' or 'to wound.'

110. That is, not to have pre-marital sex; the marriage would have been officially fulfilled only then.

111. As before a number of times, this is a topical expression: the flood of wild waves, meaning

simply: the sea.

112. Literally: To the dream of my wife.

113. Literally: His wonder, or: miraculous doing.

114. He refers to Christ's Passion and applies that to his own situation.

115. Willehalm refers to the voyage on two separate ships. If he had stayed with Erene, he would not have lost her out of sight. Of course, if he had stayed with her, he might have broken the oath that he had pledged to her father not to sleep with her before their marriage.

116. This comment proves to be more interesting than it might be at first sight. After all, Willehalm is the prince of England, so very powerful and rich, whereas Gerhart's son is only a merchant who has been knighted just shortly before. But Willehalm has lost everything, and the son has gained everything. The poet does not indicate a reversal of social roles, but he suggests that fortune is very volatile (cf. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, 525 C.E.).

117. This is one of countless other examples of how much hygiene mattered already in the Middle Ages. Courtly romances and many art works from the Middle Ages reflect on baths, personal health care, and cleanliness. Willehalm's dirty body stands out in strong contrast to all other participants of the court festival because he is deeply unhappy and had searched for his beloved for a long time. See the contributions to *Hygiene, Medicine, and Well Being: Cultural Explorations of Everyday Living Conditions in the Premodern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen (forthcoming).

118. Again, the poet just delights, as was very common in medieval literature, to dwell for a long time on clothes, fashion, and personal accoutrements, not hesitating to repeat himself several times. See Elke Brüggem, *Kleidung und Mode in der höfischen Epik des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts* (1989); for an excellent survey with critical comments, see now Emily J. Rozier, "Fashion" (2015), vol. 1, 415-30.

119. As before, the phrase "gestüele" is used commonly here; it is a plural noun for 'chair,' so can mean many different things, such as a 'wooden structure,' 'row of chairs,' 'podium,' or even 'throne.' Best seems to me 'throne' in this context because father and son appear before the archbishop.

120. Most problematically, the poet here consistently uses the term 'gewalt,' which carries a vast range of meanings, the least of which would be the modern 'power' or 'violence.' 'Authority' and 'legal rights' might come closer to what he means.

121. Here he talks most specifically about 'married wife,' but they are really only engaged.

122. Although the most comments about the Day of Judgment can be found in the New Testament, there are also many in the Old Testament, such as Exodus 32:33; Daniel 7:9-10; or Ecclesiastes 12:14.

123. The archbishop is now addressing Gerhart's son, who hence must carry the same name as his father; so this is Gerhart junior.

124. *The Fall of the Angels*, ed. Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (2004). The account of the fallen angel derives from apocryphal stories and was codified already in the early Middle Ages; see Brian Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible* (2003).

125. He equates the Bible itself with the Holy Spirit.

126. Again, in reality, Willehalm is not yet king and not yet married to Erene. However, for the archbishop the engagement counts as almost tantamount to official marriage.

127. From a pragmatic perspective, this question is, of course, just nonsense because both men have already spelled out in greatest detail what they want young Gerhart to do.

128. Literally: 'a man rich in virtues.'

129. She uses the diminutive form of father, hence 'little father,' or, more colloquially, 'daddy,' but stylistically this would be a break.

130. Even though the verb "cundewieren" is registered in *Lexer* and other dictionaries as an ordinary, commonly used word, the poet probably thereby also signaled his knowledge of Wolfram von Eschenbach's famous *Parzival* (ca. 1205) in which Parzival's wife is called "Cundwiramurs" (trans. Cyril Edwards, 2006). Wolfram projects a profound love between the married couple, which Rudolf here tries to replicate through this allusion to her name by means of this verb.

131. Both syntactically and grammatically the entire sentence is extremely difficult to comprehend, especially because the poet paid primary attention to the rhyming scheme and not to the meaning of the sentence itself.

132. As is typical of Rudolf's style, he repeats himself several times, turning and switching the syntactical structure to a point where logic disappears and we are overpowered by the countless puns on the same basic words of heart, love, pain, and joy.

133. This is the same critical point determining the entire romance; do the protagonists choose their own suffering, or are they objects of their emotions, as these lines insinuate.

134. The difficulty here consists of the poet's efforts to develop an entire theory of love, of love pain, joy, and sorrow, and all this without having available a more differentiated vocabulary; hence his common strategy to resort to the same words and to modify them just slightly to say almost the same, and yet not quite after all.

135. The original uses only the singular, but the following clause implies that he is holding her with both of his arms.

-
136. There is no way of rendering this phrase in a reasonable English: “ein einie ein.”
137. Literally: Each pressed the other close to him/herself / with the arms.
138. “vriuntlîch ergân” is a litotes, meaning, an understatement expression for the kiss which they exchange; however, the poet also wants to avoid any possible allusion to excessive eroticism.
139. Literally: The greeting then did not continue any longer / before the noble knights arrived.
140. Again, this is the mass tournament, a melee, in which a group of knights fights against another group, creating mock combats.
141. Rudolf intriguingly plays with the word “minne,” drawing many different registers of meaning, but he certainly does not mean that the archbishop was filled with erotic love; the true meaning is an ethical sensation, a deep respect, and admiration, for which the word ‘love’ might be the only useful expression even in English.
142. Although the original uses the subjunctive, there is no reason to avoid the indicative here.
143. Here the poet finally formulates it correctly himself; Willehalm is only a prince, not a king yet. However, in the original, Rudolf commonly refers to him as a king for metric or rhyming reasons.
144. We have to assume that the wedding was performed by the archbishop, but the text itself never exactly mentions that holy ceremony.
145. If we needed any other proof that the poet does not have a real merchant in mind, then this scene confirms this entirely. Gerhart seems to have more wealth than even the mightiest and richest members of the aristocracy. We can thus put to rest much of earlier scholarship, such as by Zöller, *Kaiser, Kaufmann und die Macht des Geldes* (1993), that had tried to correlate this text with the rising merchant class, as if *Der guote Gerhart* truly reflected changes in the social structure of that time. Nevertheless, Zöller’s investigations, by themselves, situating Rudolf’s romance within the historical context, still deserve our great respect.
146. In other words, the archbishop promises them to protect them according to the traditional customs and to guarantee their freedom from undue external exploitations.
147. Literally: “I granted myself the feeling of love.” He means that he is deeply delighted about the two young people being so strongly in love with each other. This is subsequently explained in greater detail since other people, witnessing the love of that couple, experience the same sensation as Gerhart.
148. The following is a long, convoluted sentence, but it is possible to render it into English, despite the cumbersome syntax.

149. The word “urborn” does not appear in Lexer or elsewhere. The scribe might have meant “erbe,” ‘inheritance,’ ‘property,’ or ‘treasure.’

150. This is one of the rare occasions where Gerhart’s own wife is given a short presence. Otherwise, she almost never voices her opinion and is not actively involved in any of the events organized by Gerhart.

151. These are the maids whom Gerhart had assigned as companions to his lady and who are staying behind in Cologne. They are not to be confused with the maids who had accompanied Erene from Norway.

152. As impressive as Rudolf’s general awareness of other countries might be, including Morocco and Norway (probably Navarra; see note 44 above), he only knows that a big river runs through London. This is the Thames, a name he appears to have been entirely unfamiliar with, although the etymology points to very ancient, maybe even pre-Celtic, yet still Indo-European roots of the name; see the excellent article online at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Thames#Etymology (last accessed on Aug. 8., 2016). ‘Lundenne’ is actually the Old English word for ‘London,” Robert William Ackerman, *An Index of the Arthurian Names in Middle English* (1952), 147.

153. Rudolf here follows the same topographic model as before: every time the sea voyage comes to a temporary end, the travelers reach a mountain and at first do not know where they are. This was the same when Gerhart reached Morocco, and subsequently when he returned from there, arriving at a point where the two ships separated for their respective home journey.

154. Here we finally get the clear message that the king of England was called the same as his son, Willehalm. This then parallels the situation in Gerhart’s family, with his son also called the same as his father, Gerhart. Consequently, as we have observed already in the Introduction, this is not a romance idealizing the world of the urban class, but an aristocratic ‘mirror for princes,’ insofar as the courtly audience is admonished to live up to its own ideals as best represented by Gerhart.

155. These could be nothing but invented names; however, it might be possible that Rudolf had heard of the Bishop of London, Henry Sandwich, appointed in 1263; yet this would be virtually too late considering the dating of *Der guote Gerhart* (ca. 1215-1220). For a complete list of archbishops and bishops, see <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/History/Archbishops.html> (last accessed Aug. 8, 2016). Alternatively, it might have been Henry Sandford, Bishop of Rochester near London from 1226 to 1235; see Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents* (1975), 1031-34. Again, this would be too late considering the date when Rudolf likely composed his work. Moreover, Sandford was a rather obscure figure and most likely entirely unknown on the Continent. An easier solution might be that the poet had in mind a corrupted form of ‘Canterbury.’ As to Eberwich, it is worth considering that it might be a reference to York: ‘Euerwik’ is mentioned in a record of 1297, according to Eilert Ekwall’s *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place-Names* (1936), 519. Still, we cannot assume that Rudolf really had any good sense of English politics, geography, or history. Further, the two individuals mentioned here are

identified as bishops, whereas York and Canterbury are the other seats of archbishops in England. I would like to thank Prof. Andrew Breeze, Pamplona, for his helpful suggestions.

156. It is unclear why even the inn-keeper is associated with the court, displaying courtly virtues, unless Rudolf intended to project all worthy figures in this romance as courtly, well-mannered, closely following the principle ethics and morality of courtly life.

157. Verbatim: doubtful instability, or: unsteadiness filled with doubts.

158. Literally: when the lord died, his son was born. However, the subordinate clause refers to a much earlier point in time.

159. It remains unclear when the couple got married, since there are no remarks prior to this about a formal wedding.

160. “gehiure” appears here only for the rhyme’s sake; it is normally used only as an adjective with the meaning of ‘soft,’ ‘pleasant,’ ‘familiar.’

161. This is, again, one of those difficult passages where the poet combines different emotions, sorrow and joy in order to capture the intensity and sweetness of the emotions experienced by everyone. The joy is mixed with pain resulting from the long separation.

162. Again, Rudolf was not clear at all about the actual ecclesiastical structure of England, where there were only two archbishops: in Canterbury and in York. Since the poet knew of the archbishop of Cologne, he obviously simply but erroneously assumed that the London bishop would hold the rank of archbishop as well. That is, however, not the case, at least not in the Middle Ages. The function of the Archbishop of Westminster was instituted only in 1850, when Pope Pius IX issued the *Bull Universalis Ecclesiae* on September 29, 1850. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop_of_Westminster (last accessed on Aug. 25, 2016).

163. “heimliche” actually means ‘private,’ ‘secret,’ ‘confidential,’ ‘comfortable,’ ‘personal,’ etc.

164. The poet resorts to a highly metaphorized language here, relying on the reference to lips as a substitute for the person of the queen, which then serves as a substitute for the fact that she talked with the guests.

165. The scribe seems to have confused lines here since different matters are mixed.

166. It would not have been a foolish idea to travel by ship from Scotland or Wales to London, but it seems more likely that the poet had no clear idea about the geographic conditions of England.

167. It is unclear whether Rudolf thought of Yperia (Spain) or Ypern in Belgium. But “Ibern” is actually the word for ‘Ireland,’ “Ivernia” or “Hibernia.” Gottfried von Straßburg includes this line in his *Tristan* (8814): “mit geselleschaft s’Îbernia sîn” (to travel to Ireland in company). *Tristan*, ed. Friedrich Ranke, trans. Rüdiger Krohn (1980). In his register of names, however,

Krohn identifies “Iberne” in line 8814 as “Spain” (vol. 3, 285). This makes sense if we consider the etymology of modern-day Iberia: “The Iberian Peninsula has always been associated with the Ebro, Iberos in ancient Greek and Iberus or Hiberus in Latin. The association was so well known it was hardly necessary to state; for example, Iberia was the country ‘this side of the Iberus’ in Strabo. Pliny goes so far as to assert that the Greeks had called ‘the whole of Spain’ Hiberia because of the Hiberus River. The river appears in the Ebro Treaty of 226 BC between Rome and Carthage, setting the limit of Carthaginian interest at the Ebro. The fullest description of the treaty, stated in Appian, uses Iberus. With reference to this border, Polybius states that the ‘native name’ is Iber, apparently the original word, stripped of its Greek or Latin -os or -us termination.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iberian_Peninsula#Etymology (last accessed on Aug. 9, 2016).

168. “galm” means generally ‘noise,’ ‘sound,’ ‘echo,’ etc.

169. “bohorts” are methods in a tournament to fight in groups against each other.

170. It is never quite clear why the poet repeats himself so many times, using almost the same words. We can only surmise that he was enamored with the attractive mechanism of having words rhyming with each other and with the strategy of a chiasmic word order.

171. In a way, Rudolf replicates exactly the same situation in which his romance would have been performed, presented by being read aloud to the courtly audience. This is hence another narrative strategy to mirror the external framework through an account about parallel events within the story.

172. The poet does not specify that they drink wine, he only says: “wonderful drinks,” but since it was common practice in the Middle Ages for members of the aristocracy to drink wine, while the peasants were limited to beer and ale. See Ernst Schubert, *Essen und Trinken im Mittelalter* (2006), 169-205; Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times* (2004), 49-51, 93-95, et passim.

173. In other words, there is a collective effort to secure from the king his forgiveness of the evil deeds which those lords had committed who had taken royal lands and properties during Willehalm’s absence without having been entitled to them.

174. This refers to the prisoners whom Gerhart had ransomed from the Moroccan castellan. It might also include a reference to all the expenditures which Gerhart had with the festival in honor of Willehalm and Erene back in Cologne.

175. Even though scholarship has reached the consensus that Rudolf did not project an ideal image of the rising burgher class or of thirteenth-century cities as gaining unforeseen power and influence, throughout the narrative, such as here, the mercantile vocabulary is clearly present.

176. Willehalm does not imply that Gerhart has no love for his own son, but underscores only how much the merchant has embraced the English prince with all of his love.

177. It is unclear where this figure might come from. The castellan Stranmûr had surmised that Gerhart could earn, as a ransom for the prisoners, hundred thousand marks (v. 1729). Perhaps Willehalm calculates that half of that money would have to be paid for the English prisoners, the other half for the Norwegian prisoners.

178. Literally: I pledged to her red mouth (i.e., lips).

179. Here we face another one of those passages in which it is hard to recreate the syntactical structure, to connect the verb with the subject, to reformulate the chiasms, and to render the endless play on a few key words in their artistic interconnectedness into a meaningful English.

180. Though Rudolf uses slightly different words, he repeats the same statement twice: “ougen sehen” (‘see through the eyes’) and “ougen brehen” (‘break through the eyes’).

181. Once again, the poet delights in repeating the same words and playing with them in new syntactical contexts, here “nôt,” meaning ‘worry,’ ‘sorrow,’ ‘emergency,’ ‘suffering,’ ‘pain,’ etc.

182. The poet uses the past participle form of the verb ‘senden,’ “gesant,” meaning ‘sent.’ This rhymes on the noun “lant,” but he really wants to imply the active voice, since there is no indication that those princes had been sent as their kings’ diplomats or emissaries.

183. For the sake of the rhyme she uses the diminutive of “vater,” “väterlin,” which normally could mean a more affectionate expression.

184. We must keep in mind that Gerhart speaks fluently English; hence he must have had many business dealings with England before, which would not be unusual for Cologne merchants. See, for instance, *The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Later Middle Ages*, selected and ed. E. M. Carus-Wilson. Sec. ed. (1967/1968); T. H. Lloyd, *The English Wool Trade in the Middle Ages* (1977); *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products*, ed. John Blair and Nigel Ramsay (2001); see now Jeroen Puttevils, “Medieval Merchants” (2015), 1039-56.

185. This is Gerhart’s usual humility formula, pretending as if he had barely ever helped the English prince regain his beloved fiancée and the throne of his kingdom. The very opposite is, of course, the case.

186. Note the significant parallels between Gerhart’s departure from the castellan in Morocco and his departure from the king of England. Emotions of friendship and love apparently bond people all over the world and across all religious divides if they pursue the same courtly virtues and values, as Rudolf indicates through his romance.

187. Again, another example of Gerhart’s typical humility.

188. This would be an extreme form of litotes, or an expression of humility, especially since the entire account so far has covered years doing good deeds and involved the merchant’s entire fortune, both abroad as a merchant and back home on the domestic market, which he has constantly risked on behalf of the English lords and the Norwegian princess.

189. Literally: the truth of the report. “maere” is a highly open term, carrying numerous meanings, including ‘story,’ ‘account,’ ‘news,’ ‘miracle,’ etc.

190. The entire section represents a remarkable narrative strategy by Rudolf who makes Emperor Otto retell in briefest form the entire account delivered by Gerhart, and this almost like a synopsis following the lengthy report by the protagonist.

191. The verb “ougen” might be unusual, but it simply means ‘to bring to the eyes,’ or ‘to expose,’ ‘to make visible to the eyes.’

192. This is a famous quote from 2 Peter 3:8: “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

193. Literally: ‘through the door of the room.’

194. This is not an error by the translator, but the usual characteristic of Rudolf, repeating himself by slightly varying the same statement several times.

195. Contrary to this statement, we know that he had become a victim of his own pride; hence his visit to Cologne to learn Gerhart’s story. But the poet needed to find a rhyming word on “vogt”: “Dô der rœmische vogt, / dem nie wart laster ûz erbrog,”

196. We cannot say for sure whether Rudolf means that the unnamed man who had come from Austria brought a written copy with him or simply told the entire story from memory: “der seite ez ze mære / dem werden Steinachære.” Or he might have had a manuscript and read from that out aloud. It seems very hard to imagine how Rudolf would have been able to retain the entire account in his memory, especially if it had been in Latin, and then rendered it into Middle High German verses. The most likely scenario seems to be that our poet had a Latin text in front of him and translated from that, transforming a prose text into a rhymed romance.

197. The poet refers to the typical situation that a text was read aloud to an audience; silent reading was reserved for religious, private devotion. This huge topic has been thoroughly examined, above all, by Manfred G. Scholz, *Hören und Lesen* (1980); D. H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading* (1994).

198. Rudolf approaches his self-presentation here in the same way as he does in his later *Willehalm von Orlens*, employing the ‘captatio benevolentiae’ topos. See Armin Schulz, *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive* (2012), 383.

199. Literally: proverb, saying, etc.

200. Middle High German proves to be very difficult at times because individual words such as “versprechen” such as here can have many different meanings, from ‘to promise’ to ‘to vouch,’ ‘to protect,’ ‘to engage,’ ‘to contradict,’ ‘to reject,’ ‘to pledge,’ ‘to speak badly about oneself,’

or, as in our case, 'to brag.'

201. Unless I misunderstand this line, Rudolf formulates a contradictory statement, since he just has urged his readers not to strive for fame. He might mean, though: "where she desires reward without fame." Possibly, the poet intended the adverb "nâch" to mean 'beyond,' or 'apart,' hence: without fame?