

Nolite renes vestros coinquinare, sed lumbos vestros pre-  
cingite, fortitudine mentis concingimini coniugium<sup>a,1</sup> am-  
plectendo, quoniam spiritus sanctus effugiet luxurie se-  
dantes, nec habitabit in corporibus subditis peccato.

Abstinete vos a malo accidie, ne vos trahat gravedine sua in  
profundum inferni.

Cavete ergo vobis ab omni peccato in etate tenera, quia  
parvus error in principio magnus erit in fine. Sed ambulate  
in lege domini sine macula, ut benedictionem accipiat ab  
eo, qui ait: *Beati immaculati in via, qui ambulat in lege  
domini,*<sup>2</sup> ut sitis *tamquam lignum, quod plantatum est secus  
decursus aquarum, quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo,  
et folium eius non defluet,*<sup>3</sup> sed *asscriptum erit in libro vite,*  
ubi *asscripta sunt nomina iustorum.*<sup>4</sup> Quod vobis prestare  
dignetur, qui *dignus fuit aperire librum et signacula eius.*<sup>5</sup>

### CAPITULUM III.

Successioni vestre diligenter scripsi verba preassumpta  
sapientie et timoris dei, quantum mea parvitas divini auxilii  
capax fuit. Nunc de vana et stulta vita mea vobis scribere

<sup>a</sup> coniugium om. mss.

<sup>1</sup> The word *coniugium* (marriage) does not appear in the original Latin.

<sup>2</sup> Ps 118:1. The passage is cited again in ch. 12.

Do not pollute your kidneys, but gird up your loins and  
surround yourself with strength of mind, embracing  
marriage.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Spirit will flee from those who give  
themselves to riotous living, nor abide in bodies subjected  
to sin.

Keep yourselves from the evil of indifference so that it does  
not drag you down into the depths of hell by its weight.

Be on your guard therefore against all sin in your youth-  
fulness, because a small error in the beginning will be great  
at the end. But walk in the law of the Lord without blemish  
so that you will receive the benediction of him who has  
said: *Blessed are those unblemished in their path, who walk  
in the law of the Lord,*<sup>2</sup> in order that you may be *like a tree  
which is planted by the streams of waters, which will yield its  
fruit in its season and its leaf shall not wither,*<sup>3</sup> but it will be  
written in the book of life where are inscribed the names of  
the just.<sup>4</sup> And may you be granted this by him who was  
worthy to open the book and its seals.<sup>5</sup>

### CHAPTER 3

For you as successors I have carefully written the foregoing  
words of wisdom and the fear of God, at least so far as was  
in my poor abilities with divine help. Now I desire to write

<sup>1</sup> Ps 1:3.

<sup>4</sup> Phil 4:3.

<sup>5</sup> Rv 5:9.

cupio, ac de exordio transitus mei mundani, ut cedere vobis valeant in exemplum. Graciam autem michi a deo infusam et amorem studii, quod mei pectoris habuit tenacitas, non tacebo, ut tanto magis speretis in divino auxilio in laboribus vobis succurrere quanto patres et predecessores vestri vobis magis annunciant. Nam et scriptum est: *Patres nostri annuntiaverunt nobis*.<sup>1</sup>

Cupio ergo vos non latere, quod Heinricus septimus,<sup>2</sup> Romanorum imperator, genuit patrem meum nomine Johannem<sup>3</sup> ex Margareta,<sup>4</sup> ducis Bravancie filia. Qui duxit uxorem nomine Elyzabeth<sup>5</sup> filiam Wenceslai secundi,<sup>6</sup> Boemie regis, et obtinuit regnum Boemie cum ea, quia masculinus sexus in progenie regali Boemorum defecerat. Et expulit Heinricum,<sup>7</sup> Karinthe ducem, qui habebat in uxorem sororem seniore<sup>8</sup> uxoris sue<sup>9</sup> dicte, que mortua est in posterum sine prole, qui regnum Boemie causa eisdem sororis ante eum obtinebat, prout clarius in cronicis Boemorum continetur.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ps 43:2.

<sup>2</sup> Henry VII of Luxembourg 1278/79–1313, King of the Romans 1308–12, Holy Roman Emperor 1312–13.

<sup>3</sup> John of Luxembourg 1296–1346, king of Bohemia 1310–46.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret of Brabant 1276–1311, married Henry VII of Luxembourg in 1292.

<sup>5</sup> Elisabeth Přemysl 1292–1330, married John of Luxembourg in 1310.

<sup>6</sup> Wenceslas II Přemysl 1271–1305, king of Bohemia 1278–1305.

<sup>7</sup> Henry of Carinthia 1265/70?–1335, king of Bohemia 1307–10.

<sup>8</sup> Anne Přemysl 1290–1313, first wife of Henry of Carinthia from 1306.

<sup>9</sup> John's.

to you about my fruitless and foolish life, right from the beginning of my earthly existence, so that it might serve for you as an example. However, concerning the grace with which God infused me and the love of study, which held a firm place in my breast, I shall not be silent, so that you might hope all the more to obtain divine help in your labors, to the extent that your fathers and predecessors tell you of it. For it has been written: *Our fathers have told us about it*.<sup>1</sup>

I desire therefore it not remain unknown to you that the Roman Emperor, Henry VII,<sup>2</sup> begat my father, named John,<sup>3</sup> from Margaret,<sup>4</sup> the daughter of the duke of Brabant. He in turn married Elisabeth,<sup>5</sup> the daughter of King Wenceslas II of Bohemia,<sup>6</sup> and obtained the kingdom of Bohemia through her, because the male line in the royal family of Bohemia had died out. He expelled Duke Henry of Carinthia,<sup>7</sup> who had married the older sister<sup>8</sup> of his<sup>9</sup> aforementioned wife. (This sister later died without heir.) Henry had obtained the kingdom of Bohemia before John by virtue of this sister's position. All of this is more fully contained in the chronicles of the Bohemians.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Charles refers in all probability to the *Chronicon aulae regis* (the Chronicle of Zbraslaw/Königsaal) written by Peter of Zittau of which chapters 86–108 discuss in detail the story of Henry of Carinthia [Johann Loserth, ed., *Chronicon aulae regis*, Fontes rerum Austriacarum, Scriptorum, 8 (Vienna: Karl Gerold, 1875), 215–313]. Wenceslas II, king of Bohemia, was survived by one son and two daughters. His son Wenceslas III 1289–1306 became king of Bohemia and Hungary but died heirless. John, the husband of Elisabeth, the younger daughter of Wenceslas II, obtained the crown of Bohemia after expelling Henry from the country in 1310.

Genuitque idem Johannes, rex Boemie, cum Elyzabeth regina primogenitum suum nomine Wenceslaum<sup>1</sup> anno domini millesimo trecentesimo XVI pridie idus Maii hora prima<sup>2</sup> in Praga. Deinde alium filium nomine Ottogarium,<sup>3</sup> qui in puerili etate decessit. Demum genuit et tertium nomine Johannem.<sup>4</sup> Habuitque predictus rex duas sorores desponsatas, unam tradidit Ungarorum regi Karolo primo,<sup>5</sup> que sine liberis mortua est; secundam vero dederat Karolo,<sup>6</sup> Francorum regi.

Ipso regnante in Francia anno incarnationis domini millesimo trecentesimo vicesimo tercio misit<sup>7</sup> me meus pater iam dictus ad dictum regem Francie, me existente in septimo anno puericie mee; fecitque me dictus rex Francorum per pontificem<sup>7</sup> confirmari et imposuit michi nomen suum equivocum videlicet Karolus et dedit michi in uxorem filiam Karoli,<sup>8</sup> patru sui, nomine Margaretam dictam Blanca.<sup>9</sup> Mortuaque est uxor sua, soror patris mei, anno

<sup>7</sup> misitque *mss.*

<sup>1</sup> Wenceslas, later called Charles, the author of this autobiography, 1316–78, king of Bohemia 1346–78, king of the Romans from 1346, Holy Roman Emperor from 1355.

<sup>2</sup> 5.00 a.m.

<sup>3</sup> Otakar of Luxemburg 1318–20, second son of John of Luxemburg and Elisabeth Přemysl.

<sup>4</sup> John Henry of Luxemburg 1322–75, third son of John of Luxemburg, count of Tyrol 1335–41, margrave of Moravia 1355–75.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Robert of Anjou 1288–1342, king of Hungary 1308–42; married Beatrice 1305–19, the younger sister of John of Luxemburg, in 1318.

This same John, king of Bohemia, begat through Queen Elisabeth his first-born son who was named Wenceslas<sup>1</sup> in the year 1316 on the fourteenth of May at the first hour<sup>2</sup> in Prague. Later, there was born a second son, named Otakar,<sup>3</sup> who died while still a child. Eventually there was a third son, named John.<sup>4</sup> The aforementioned king had two married sisters: one he had given to King Charles I of Hungary,<sup>5</sup> but she died without children; the second he gave to Charles,<sup>6</sup> king of the French.

While the king was ruling in France, my father sent me to him in 1323. At that time, I was in the seventh year of my youth. The king of the French had me confirmed by his bishop<sup>7</sup> and bestowed upon me his own name, that is Charles, and gave me as a wife the daughter of his uncle Charles,<sup>8</sup> a girl named Margaret, who was called Blanche.<sup>9</sup> His own wife, the sister of my father, died in that same year

<sup>6</sup> Charles IV Capet (the Fair) 1295–1328, king of France 1322–28, married Mary of Luxemburg 1304–24 in 1322.

<sup>7</sup> Some authorities have maintained that *pontifex* should here be understood as “pope” (rather than “bishop”) and so presume that it was Pope John XXII who carried out Charles’s confirmation and name change in Avignon in March/April 1324 in the presence John of Luxemburg and Charles IV Capet, king of France. But cf. BJ 28; Hillenbrand 83; Werunsky 1: 11, n. 4; Jarrett 34. According to Mezník the confirmation happened earlier (292–93). On Charles’s name change see Schneider; Seibt 117.

<sup>8</sup> Charles of Valois 1270–1325, count of Anjou and Valois, uncle of Charles IV Capet.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret/Blanche of Valois 1316–48, from 1324 wife of Charles IV of Luxemburg.