

Prayer Book including *Andächtiges Myrrhenbüschlein* (Devout Bundle of Myrrh) and prayers by JOHANNES VON INDERSDORF and JOHANN VON NEUMARKT

In German, manuscript on paper

Swabia, Germany, c. 1520-c. 1550

287 leaves on paper in sedecimo, paper with a pair of watermarks, a crown with a double-contoured hoop studded with pearls, above which is a double-contoured cross, above which is a single-contoured star, in use c.1520-c.1550 (Piccard-Online nos. 54278-54729), a more precise identification not possible on account of the multiple cuts produced by sedecimo format, modern foliation in pencil, top, outer corner, complete (collation i-iii<sup>s</sup> iv<sup>10</sup> v-xxxv<sup>s</sup> xxxvi<sup>s</sup> [where f. 283 is contiguous with rear pastedown]), written in two, possibly three hands, normally on 10-12 unruled lines, in black and red inks, (justification 70-65 x 55 mm.): (i) an irregular hybrida currens, ff. 1r-24v, 26r-39v, 58r-60v, and 272v-278r; (ii) a semihybrida currens, with unusually elongated ascenders, 25r-26r, 40r-57v, 61r-272v, where ff. 99r-139r might conceivably be written by a distinct, third hand, one- and two-line red penwork initials and rubrication throughout, in good condition, with some damage to endbands and lower corners, and evidence of intensive use of ff. 1-15 and 92-98. Bound in brown blind-tooled leather (binding stamps resist present identification) over wooden boards with paper pastedowns, sewn on three cords, with functional metal clasp. Dimensions 110 x 85 mm.

This small volume is the personal Prayer Book of an individual nun, a member of a convent in eastern Swabia and shows evidence of intensive reading by the nun at prayer. The prayers, one large sequence of which focuses on preparation for eucharistic reception, are accompanied by an extensive narrative of Christ's Passion (The Devout Bundle of Myrrh) that awaits scholarly investigation (known in only six other manuscripts).

## PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript is copied in an East Swabian dialect, and so can be localized in that region, the area around the cities of Ulm and Augsburg. The paper stocks provide an approximate dating to the period c. 1520-c. 1550. Occasional prayers are presented in a female voice (e.g. *zu wem ich mich armen sünderin keren sol*, f. 11; *ich befilch mich arme sinderin*, f. 92); taken together with the evidence of two hands working together, this is very likely an institutional product of a female convent. It would require identification of the binding stamps, which has not yet proven possible, to propose an association with a particular convent in the region.
2. David Gottfried Schöber (1696-1778), his inscription on front pastedown, "Dieses Ms. welches ungefehr A<sup>o</sup>1480 von einer Nonne in einem Schwäbischen Kloster geschrieben, ist der Kirschkauschen Bibliothek gewidmet. / David Gottfried Schöber / Gera A. 11 September 1761." Schöber, a merchant who was elected mayor of Gera in Thüringen in 1760, was a noted hymnologist with a significant collection of medieval and early modern manuscripts, on which he drew for his studies and textual editions (Online Resources below). A set of some 30 German prayerbooks in small formats, mostly from Swabian and Franconian nunneries of the Dominican Order, were acquired from his collection at auction in 1779 by Prince Kraft Ernst zu Oettingen-Wallerstein (1748-1802), and are now held by the Universitätsbibliothek Augsburg (see Schneider, 1988, pp. 11-12).

3. Kirschkau, Thüringen, Bibliothek der Jesus-Kirche. Schöber's inscription of donation (see above) indicates that the manuscript entered the library of the parish church in the village of Kirschkau, in Thüringen about 40 km south-south-east of Gera. That library can be documented with certainty from 1704, and the donation of this manuscript in 1761 was likely connected to the rebuilding of the church in the years 1751-1753 by Count Heinrich XII Reuß zu Schleiz, who was also responsible for the copying and donation of manuscripts to the library in the years 1756-1758 (Online Resources below).
4. Unidentified German collection, shelfmark in pencil on front pastedown, "Regal IX, Fach 3."

## TEXT

ff. 1-9v, *Dacz send die finfzechen salue wer die all samsztag spricht der wirt nit verlasen von maria spirch* (sic!) *triu salue*, incipit, "O du genedig vnd wirdige junckfraw maria bis ingedenck der grosen lieb vnd iberflissige gnad do mit du dein sún gottes von himel gezogen hast in deinen junckfreliehen keyschen ra[in] leyb ich bit dich vnd begere...";

Five prayers to Mary, each to be followed by three recitations of the *Salve regina*, hence the total 15, calling on Mary to aid the petitioner at the hour of her death and to save her from tribulation (*Anfechtung*), also found in a second manuscript in Eastern Swabian dialect that belonged to Schöber, now Augsburg, UB, Cod. III. 1. 8° 43, ff. 19-31v, c. 1545 from a Swabian Dominican nunnery (Maria Medingen?).

ff. 9v-24v, incipit, "Eya du mutter aller genaden vnd barmhertzigkait ich erman dich ..."; f. 13v, incipit, "O maria du betriepte mutter gotz ich bit dich ..."; f. 14v, *Aain hailsam gebet zů ewerben ain selligs end vnd vnser lieben frawen maria*, incipit, "O maria du fil hocher nam ich ..."; f. 17, *Ain schens gebet gebet [sic] von vnser lieben frawen*, incipit, "O maria gegries seyestu ain junckfraw ... durch aller der froden willen die ich dich ermanen bin erhorr vnd gewer mich dar vmb ich dich bitten bin amen";

Four Marian prayers begins with three that continue the theme of the previous set. They call upon Mary's intercession to aid the petitioner, explicitly identified in the female voice (f. 11), upon the instant of her death, as signalled explicitly by the rubric to the third in the set here. These first three prayers show evidence of intensive use, as does the set on ff. 1-9v that precedes them, as is to be seen from the dirt and wear evident at the lower outer corners. In the fourth and longest prayer the penitent lists to Mary the sequence of her joys, and calls on her aid in protection. This text concludes the first section of the manuscript (quires 1-3; ff. 1-24), and is copied entirely by the first hand.

ff. 25-26v, *bekandtnus so du wilt schlauffen gan*, incipit, "O herr ihesu xpe ich bekenn mich schuldig das ich disen tag ...";

Confessional text for recitation before going to bed. With this short text a new section of the manuscript begins: the second hand enters the larger part of this text (ff. 25r-26r), with which a new quire is started. The two hands were working together, as demonstrated by the change between hands in the final line on f. 26r.

ff. 26v-35v, *Ain guter seggen so du zû morgen auff stast*, incipit, "O ewiger got vatter gesegþne mich der mich beschafen hat ..."; f. 29r, *dises gebet sprich all morgen so du auff stats damit magst du dir alle deine werck so du dein tag verbringst verdenlich*, incipit, "O du aller hailligster almechtigster ewiger got barmhertziger hymelischer vatter ..."; f. 33v,, *ain gebet zû deinen engel so du des morgen auff stast*, incipit, "Ewige wirdiger vnd himlischer geist der mir von dem almechtigen got ...";

Three prayers for recitation upon waking in the morning, the first presented as a supplication for blessing. The third prayer (ff. 33v-35v), to the penitent's guardian angel, is by Johann von Neumarkt (d. 1380), the long-serving imperial chancellor to Charles IV and noted humanist; edited Klapper, 1935, no. 23, pp. 176-79. This prayer was very widely transmitted, and is found in other East Swabian manuscripts from Schöber's collection: Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. III. 1. 8° 11, ff. 328v-332r, a manuscript dated 1490, provenance unknown, and Cod. III. 1. 8° 50, ff. 191v-193r, a manuscript of the second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> c., from the same Dominican nunnery as Cod. III. 1. 8° 43 discussed above, and later in Kirchheim.

ff. 35v-42v, *Ain scheins gebet zu sprechen als vnser her ihesus xps an elþerg gangen ist*, incipit, "O aller bester hirt vnd gayttigster herr ihesu xpi du der nach dein abendessen bist ..."; f. 40, *Aain kostlichs gebett zû gut dem sun*, incipit, "O himlischer barmhertziger got in der ewigkayt mein o herr ihesu xpe ...";

A pair of prayers to Christ, focusing in turn on Christ's nocturnal prayer and inner suffering in Gethsemane as he submitted his human will to his divine father, and then on the suffering he experienced on his willing submission to suffering in his crucifixion. Copied by the two different hands, here working together on the same quire.

ff. 42v-48, *Das send die sibben gaub des hailigen geists Veni sancte*, incipit, "Hailiger geyst verleych mir rechte gettliche forcht in der ich ..."; f. 47, *sprich daz gebet darauff*, incipit, "O hailiger geyst vnd ewiger gott ...";

A set of prayers structured as supplications to receive the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, with each prayer to be followed by recitation of the Latin sequence *Veni sancte spiritus*; circulated in other late medieval Prayer Books from southern Germany, including Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 845, ff. 119-121, and Cgm 4637, ff. 41v-44.

ff. 48-49v, *Das send die finf fredt maria*, incipit, "Fre dich du gebererin gottes du vnbefleckte iunckfraw ..."; f. 49, *sprich darauff also*, incipit, "Bis gegriest du klare gilg der scheynenden wunsamen trifaltikait ...";

Antiphon from the Marian Psalter, in German translation. This text, initially an antiphon from the *Hymni et Psalterium de sancta virgine Maria* by Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1109), circulated in translation quite widely in late medieval Prayer Books from the German south-east. Six copies were already assembled by Georg Steer (see Steer, 1978, cols 380-81); the text is edited from a single manuscript, in parallel to the Latin original, in Klapper, 1935, no. 119, p. 379.

ff. 49v-50v, *Von meinem lieben zwelf botten ain gebett*, incipit, "O ir wirdigen himel firsten mein liben zwelf botten vnd fir sprecher [in margin: *S. filipi vnd iacobi*] vor dem almechtigen got ...";

Johann von Neumarkt, *Prayer to the Guardian Apostle*, edited in Klapper, 1935, no. 24, pp. 180-81. The second prayer by the imperial chancellor and humanist Johann von Neumarkt (d. 1380) (see also ff. 33v-35v above), this is formulated as an address to one's guardian apostle. It enjoyed a very wide transmission, and the text here shows the effect of multiple copying in its form when compared with the version in the critical edition. In the left-hand margin of f. 49v, the nun who copied this prayer (our 'second hand') has entered the name of her own guardian apostles, SS. Philip and James, in red ink: an indication, perhaps, that the manuscript was intended for her personal use.

ff. 51-57v, *Am ersten soltu beten iii pater noster der aller gailigesten trifaltikait vnd sprich darnach zů dem vatter also*, incipit, "Lob ere vnd danck sey dir gott ewiger vatter das du mich beschaffen hast ..."; f. 52v, *Ain costlich gebet zů got dem sun ist gar balsam zů sprechen*, incipit, "O herr ihesu xpe ich sag dir von ganzem herczen lob ..."; (f. 57v), incipit, "O herr ich senck mich in die tieffin deiner wunden O herr wesch mich mit deinem minniglichen rosen farben blůt...";

A set of prayers that begins with invocations of praise which preface a very short prayer to Christ to ask for his protection from erroneous belief and assistance at death, followed by a much longer prayer asking for Christ's mercy and support, with a request special attention to the souls of the petitioner's parents and all of her lineage. The final text asks for the petitioner to enter Christ's wounds and be bathed in his redemptive blood to participate in his merits (f. 57v), also found in a second Swabian prayerbook from Schöber's collection, Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. III. 1. 8° 53, ff. 37v-38.

ff. 58-66, *ain gutz gebet zů got dem heren zů bete*, incipit, "Herr ich bin der arm mensch den du beschaffen hast ..."; f. 59, *Das gebet sprich noch der busz so gebeychtet hast*, incipit, "O herr ihesu xpe ich opffer huit mein claine bus ..."; f. 61, incipit, "O her ich opffer dir huit mein klaine bůsz ..."; f. 62, incipit, "O herr ihesu xpe ich wirff die groshait meiner sind in die grosz vnd bittrikait deiner marter ..."; f. 62v, incipit, "O aller gietigister vnd barmherzigister herr ..."; f. 64, "O almechtiger vnd barmherziger gietiger gott du hast alweg berait dem menschen ...";

Prayers to Christ (copied by the first and second scribes) with a tripartite petition to request mercy in recognition that man is created in God's image, followed by five prayers for recitation after confession, printed at the start of the 1520 edition of the *Gilgengart* by Hans Schönsperger in Augsburg (Online Resources). Whether the text in this manuscript was copied from the printed edition, which would supply an important terminus *post quem* for this manuscript, or whether the *Gilgengart* drew on textual material that had earlier circulated in manuscript form, is uncertain.

ff. 66-92, *wan du wilt gan zů dem hochwirgigen sacrament so sprich dise gebett mit andacht deines herczen*, incipit [i], "O herr ich sag dir danck das du mich so hertiklich hast erarnet ..."; f. 67v, incipit [ii], "Ach zarter herr gott ich bitt dich demietiklich dein selbs ere ..."; f. 68v, incipit [iii], "Zarter herr ihesu xpe du miniklicher herr vnd got ..."; f. 72, incipit [iv], "O herr ihesu xpe ich armer sinder fall huit fir dich vnd naig mich fir ..."; f. 74v, incipit [v], "O du wirdiges opffer wan von deiner crafft die hell zerbrochen wart ..."; f. 75v, incipit [vi], "O herr ihesu xpe ain sun gottes hilf mir das ich dich entpfach ..."; f. 76v, incipit [vii], "O herr ich gang zů dir das ich arm bin vnd nun mir dein fasten deyn ..."; f. 78, incipit [viii], "Himlischer vatter mein sind send so fil das ich die

nit ablegen kan ..."; f. 79, incipit [ix], "O du ewige weyshait herr ihesu xpe du hast vns menschen hie auf erden ..."; f. 80, incipit [x], "O herr ihesu xpe du gnaden reycher schacz ..."; f. 81, incipit [xi], "Eia du ewigs wort gefloszen ausz dem herczen deines himlischen vatters kum ..."; incipit [xii], "Ich bitt dich got himlischzer vatter du wellest mich ..."; [... f. 82v, [xiii], f. 83, [xiv], f. 84, [xv], f. 84v, [xvi], f. 85, [xvii], f. 85v, [xviii] ...]; f. 85v, *wan du gleych hin zû wilt gan schp̄rich also*, incipit, [Mt 8,8, adapted], "O herr ich bin nit wirdig ... mein arme sel"; *nach der empfachung*, incipit [xix], "O ewiger himlischer got wer bin ich oder wer ..."; f. 87, incipit [xx], "O du sieses himel brot herr ihesu xpe ain ..."; f. 88v, incipit [xxi], "Mein sel lobt got dem hailigen geyst durch das wircken des hailigen froleychnams ..."; [... f. 89v, [xxii], f. 90, [xxiii], f. 90v, [xxiv] ...]; f. 91v, incipit [xxv], "O barmhercziger ewiger got ich befilch mich arme sinderin in dein blût farb seynten in der do lag dein truies rains hercz...";

Set of 25 eucharistic prayers, with the first 18 preparatory prayers for recitation prior to sacramental reception, followed by an adapted version of Mt 8,8 for recitation at the moment of reception, and a further seven prayers for recitation after reception, the final two addressed to Mary. Two blocks of prayers, nos. ix-xii and xix-xxi, are by the Augustinian canon Johannes von Indersdorf (d. 1470), being nos. 1-4 and 7-9 of his cycle of ten eucharistic prayers from the so-called "Gebetbuch I. für Elisabeth Ebran", written 1426 (Haimerl, 1952, pp. 152-57, incipits listed at p. 153 n. 946; Haage, 1983, cols 647-51; Haage, 1968, pp. 49-59, 64-97, and 533-34).

This particular arrangement of 25 prayers appears to be unique to this manuscript, although some of the prayers are known elsewhere. No. xiv, edited in Klapper, 1935, no. 46, pp. 216-18, as a "Reuegebet vor Christus." No. iv is transmitted in several late medieval manuscripts from southern Germany. No. xviii, a prayer which begins with the petitioner asking to be washed in Christ's blood as she enters the depths of his wounds, is known from two other manuscripts in Schöber's collection and elsewhere besides (Haimerl, 1952, pp. 48-49 n. 247, p. 53 n. 267, and p. 143 n. 897). No. xxii is also known in other manuscripts (Haimerl, 1952, pp. 48-49 n. 247, p. 53 n. 267, and p. 143 n. 897).

ff. 92-96, *Von der krenung vnsers herren*, incipit, "O herr ihesu xpe ich danck dir mit dein selbs wirdigkait deiner bittern schmerczlichen peyn ...";

Extended prayer that focuses on Christ's coronation with thorns, with vivid details (e.g. the blood that ran down Christ's body as the thorns penetrated his head, the damage inflicted on his brain as the thorns were pressed into his skull). This prayer shows indications of intensive use; the lower outer corners of the pages are almost translucent from repeated handling. On the narrative elaboration of the coronation with thorns in later medieval texts from the German-speaking lands see Kemper, 2006, pp. 199-207.

ff. 96-98v, *von allen zwelf botten ain gebet*, incipit, "O ir besundern ausserwelten von got ir hailige zwelffbotten vnsers lieben herren ...";

Prayer to the Apostles, which consists in large part of an extended praise of the apostles, expressed as a series of apostrophes ("O, you twelve gemstones on Aaron's priestly robe", etc.); also found in Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. III. 1. 8° 55, ff. 157r-160v, a late fifteenth-century manuscript in central Bavarian dialect with Eastern Swabian features, and Cod. I. 3. 8° 1, ff. 117r-121r, a manuscript of the first quarter of the sixteenth century from Nuremberg.

ff. 99-262, *Fasciculus mirre dilectus meus michi inter vbera mea comorabitur conticorum*, incipit, "Zu machen ain gestlichs mirren büschelin auff daz hercz zû legen alz die lieb haberin des herren spricht mein geliebter ist mir ain mirren büschelin vnd wond in meinen herzen ... wir mit got ains send so sol vns vnser aug hin zû im stan wan durch in sollen wir billich alle ding leyden amen."

*Andächtiges Myrrhenbüschlein*; this extended Passion narrative, the "Devout Bundle of Myrrh," is the quantitative core of the manuscript. It belongs to that medieval tradition of interpreting Christ's Passion in relation to Ct. 1,12 ("Fasciculus murrae dilectus meus mihi ..."), first developed at length by Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard's approach to contemplation of Christ's Passion by means of mental recapitulation of a series of episodes of suffering from the course of Christ's life was highly influential for the later medieval tradition: as, for example, for the *Arbor vitae crucifixae* of the Franciscan Spiritual Ubertino da Casale (see Mossman, 2009, pp. 229-34).

The *Andächtiges Myrrhenbüschlein* is one of a number of late medieval German and Dutch treatises that adopt the Bernardine premise of interpreting Ct. 1,12 in relation to the contemplation of Christ's Passion (for a conspectus see Kemper, 2006, pp. 161-63), known in just six other manuscripts, not including this one (Schmidtke, 1987, col. 835 [his no. III. A. 2]; Online Resources). To judge on this evidence, it is a later fifteenth-century composition from the German south-east, and one that has received no scholarly attention whatsoever. It begins with a short prologue, in which Bernard's 43<sup>rd</sup> sermon on the Song of Songs is quoted directly and extensively, and then proceeds to narrate episodes of suffering from Christ's life, beginning while he was as yet unborn in Mary's womb (for this tradition of extending Christ's suffering across the length of his life, see Mossman, 2010, pp. 67-102).

ff. 262-270v, *Hie nach folgent die siben ausgang vnsers lieben herren*, incipit, "O herr ihesu xpe ain scheyn der vetterlichen eren vnd seyner magestat diser pater noster sey dir gesprochen ...";

Seven prayers, each to be accompanied by recitation of the Lord's Prayer, structured around the seven processions of Christ: the first is his emanation from his Father's heart into Mary's womb; the second is his birth, and so on. The text is known from a second Prayer Book from Schöber's collection, a manuscript of c. 1545 in Eastern Swabian dialect (Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. III. 1. 8° 43, ff. 1-9v), noted above in relation to the text on ff. 1r-9v of this manuscript, and in Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. 0737, ff. 83r-89r, noted above in relation to the prayer at ff. 72r-74v, a sixteenth-century manuscript in Bavarian dialect; and in the same collection also in Ms. 1568, ff. 74v-79r, a later fifteenth-century manuscript from Augsburg, potentially from the Dominican nunnery of St. Katharina. In both of those manuscripts this text is also accompanied by the following text in this manuscript (i.e. ff. 270v-272v), although in the reverse order.

ff. 270v-272v, *Das ist gar kostlich zû sprechen bey ainem sterbenden menschen vnd send die dry pater noster*, incipit, "O err [sic] ihesu xpe das gebet sey dir zû lob deinem lesten zigen vnd allen deinen ...";

Three prayers, each to be accompanied by recitation of the Lord's prayer, and specified in the rubric as particularly valuable for recitation by or for a dying person. This text travels as a pair with its predecessor.

ff. 272v-277, *Item von disen nachgeschriben drey pater noster bat man iij tausent jar apblas vnd was tods der mensch begriffen wirt das er doch von got nit geschaiden wirt*, incipit, "O herr ihesu xpe dein ersten pater noster sey dir zů lob er ...";

Three prayers, each to follow recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and associated with three "sighs" exhaled by Christ upon episodes associated with his Passion: his entrance into Jerusalem, his setting down of the cross at the site of his crucifixion, and his inspection of the nails that were to be used to crucify him. The rubric associates recitation of these prayers with the acquisition of a thousand years of indulgence, and God's steadfast assistance at the hour of death.

ff. 277v-278, *Esz was ain geischlicher korber der selb bet dise gewonhait an im wa er ain crucifyx bat gesechen oder dar fur gangen ist bat er all weg vnseren herren trulichen ermant vnd gebeten auch geeret mit disen noch geschriben gebet...*; [ff. 278v-287v, blank].

A rubric to a prayer that was never copied (the final leaves remain blank); the rubric takes the form of an edifying exemplum: a canon whose custom was to recite this prayer on encountering a crucifix, whereupon he would also call to mind the events of Christ's Passion, was greeted at the moment of his death with a heavenly voice that told him his petitions would be granted.

The tradition of German-language prayers is one with its roots in the Old High German period, but the first Prayer Books to consist primarily or entirely of German-language texts date to the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Whereas by c.1490 most other textual types had wholly switched to production in the new technology of print – and German-language printed Prayer Books do exist from the incunable period – the tradition of manuscript copying of Prayer Books thrived right into the later sixteenth century. The reason for this is surely the opportunity these books provided to create an entirely individual assembly of texts with which to shape and assist one's spiritual life, compiled not just from existing books, but from a flourishing culture of texts exchanged in single-sheet copies and as letters.

This small volume was copied in an East Swabian dialect by nuns in a convent in the region around Ulm and Augsburg in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. It is a very personal book, with devotions designed to accompany its owner throughout her daily life. The nun copying a prayer by the imperial chancellor and humanist Johann von Neumarkt (d. 1380) (one of two in the book) to one's guardian apostle added the names of her own guardians, Saints Phillip and James. The first eight prayers in the volume, petitions to Mary to aid at the hour of one's death, and an extended meditation on the Christ's suffering and the crown of thorns, show signs of particularly intensive use (dirt in the outer corners, and handling to the point where the parchment is almost translucent). The long sequence of prayers which focuses on preparation for Eucharistic reception, and the extensive narrative of Christ's Passion (the *Andächtiges Myrrhenbüschlein*, Devout Bundle of Myrrh), this version known in only seven manuscripts including this one, are of special interest to scholars studying devotional practices of the later Middle Age.

Overall, the individuality of late medieval and early modern Prayer Books, as well as the rich repertory of texts they contain, make them particularly important sources for scholars today.

## LITERATURE

*Das büechlin ist genant der Gilgengart ainer yetlichen Cristeliche sel [...]*, Augsburg, Hans Schönsperger, 1520 [VD16: G 2035 (<http://gateway-bayern.de/VD16+G+2035>)]

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*Handschriftencensus* entry for "Myrrhenbüschel-Texte," including all six hitherto identified copies of the *Andächtiges Myrrhenbüschlein*

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