

Statutes of the Dortmund Junkergesellschaft
In Low German (Westphalian dialect), manuscript on parchment
Dortmund, Germany, c. 1455-1623

28 folios on parchment of moderate quality, paginated in pencil, bottom, outer corner, 1-54, omitting the single paper leaf after p. 40, the bifolium pp. 11-14 likely a modern addition, with a single leaf of paper, no watermark, bound after p. 40, tight modern rebinding, with singletons glued in and leaves affixed such that their original integrity is no longer discernible, makes accurate collation difficult (collation i⁵ ii² iii⁹ iv¹²), broad margins occasionally ruled in hard point, otherwise entirely unruled, (justification, hand one, c.170 x c.85 mm.), written in at least six main hands with many further additions on an irregular number of lines throughout, (i) pp. 1-7, 15-22, 54, and the dates on pp. 22-32, the principal hand, a *cursiva libraria* in brown ink, (ii) p. 7, a *semi-hybrida libraria* in faint brown ink, (iii) pp. 7-8, a *semi-hybrida currens* in brown ink, (iv) pp. 9-10, an angular early sixteenth-century *semi-hybrida currens* in brown ink, (v) p. 10, a mid-sixteenth-century current script, (vi) inserted paper leaf after p. 40, recto, an early seventeenth-century current script, and many other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century hands adding individual entries to the lists of names on pp. 22-40, with miniscule notes in at least three such hands on p. 52; twelve-line opening initial, p. 1, and two-line initials throughout pp. 1-10, 13, and 54, in brown ink; pp. 11-14, 41-51, and 53 are blank, parchment much thumbled and worn. Modern rebinding in brown leather, sewn on four cords, re-using fifteenth-century blind-tooled leather covers over rounded wooden boards, with brown leather strap attached to metal pin fixings; decoration using seven small tools arranged in a geometrical pattern, (i) eagle in circle, EBDB s015678, (ii) lion rampant in rhombus, EBDB s015670, (iii) fleur-de-lys in rhombus, EBDB s015671, (iv) fleur-de-lys, EBDB s015672, (v) six-petalled flower in square, (vi) six-petalled flower, (vii) six-petalled flower, EBDB s015679; parchment fragment with remnant of an unidentifiable Latin text, 41-42 x c.75 mm., removed from original binding, loose in volume, modern parchment pastedowns.
Dimensions 220 x 115 mm.

This unique manuscript is the only surviving copy of the founding statutes of the "Junkergesellschaft" in Dortmund: the closed society of the city's patrician elite, who were amongst the earliest in Germany to give themselves the title of "Junker" as a marker of their social status. Elegantly bound (an unusual feature), this was the manuscript kept by the two aldermen of the society, in which they recorded their names for nearly three hundred years. It is a treasure of detail for the life of the society, and especially of the ritualized dining which served to cement the social cohesion of this elite.

PROVENANCE

1. In all probability the manuscript was produced for the "Juncheren Geselschopp" in Dortmund, the closed company of the city's patrician elite, around 1455-56, the last years in the list of its aldermen (*Scheffere*) with their entries in the original hand (hand i above, pp. 21-2). The binding stamps permit identification of the workshop (*Einbanddatenbank*, Online Resources, EBDB w002361) as that belonging to the convent of the Sisters of the Common Life in Unna, founded 1459 and known as the St. Barbara-Kloster (Online Resources, *Germania Sacra* Database). This manuscript lacks the "UNNA" stamp associated with the principal example of a binding produced by this workshop (Berlin, SBB-PK, MS germ. fol. 765), but for the obvious reason that the book was not bound for the internal use of the convent (Schunke, 1996, p. 268). The town of Unna in Westphalia is about 15 kilometers east of Dortmund.

Houses of the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life are known to have supported themselves financially by copying manuscripts, in a later period by printing books, and by providing other related services (like binding) to external customers. The principal hand of the manuscript (hand i) is a notarial script, which suggests that the manuscript was copied by a paid scribe in the town of Dortmund, and then sent to be bound at a local institution with a workshop equipped for this specialist task.

2. Völlinghausen, Archive of the von Bockum-Dolffs family, where the manuscript was documented in 1979. It was thought to have entered this archive with papers from the von Berswordt family, one of the leading families of Dortmund aristocracy from the later Middle Ages onwards (Conrad, 1979, p. 34). The nineteenth-century liberal politician Florens von Bockum-Dolffs (d. 1899) was descended in the maternal line from the von Berswordt family (Online Resources below), and it was presumably through this connection that the manuscript and associated archivalia were acquired.

TEXT

pp. 1-10, incipit, "In nomine domini amen. Dey geselschopp dey men nomet d[--] juncheren geselschopp. dar sollen ynne sijn gude ersame ersaten lude dey hebn hijr vormaile gude wyse lude vnse vorvaren alsoe gemaket vnd gehalden vmb ere vnd nüt der Stad vnd dat sich gude lude alt vnd junk dey leyflicher erliker vnd eyndrachtliker to samene halden ... Dar na woirden gekoren van jaren to jairen als hijr na gescreuen steit in dem jair M^o ccc lxxxvij [1387] etc.", [p. 7], incipit, "Anno domini Millesimoquadrigen-tesimoquinquagesimoquarto [1454] up vastauent. ouerdroich de gheselschop eyndrechtliken...", incipit, "Ouch soe is de gheselschop sementliken ouerkomen. soedane twe mark als eyn itlich van der geselschop plecht to geuene...", [p. 9], incipit, "Anno domini dusent vyffhundert vnd twe / up sent blasius dach [3 February 1502] do was de gemeyne selschop by en andere vergadert vmme etlike gebrecke de entstanden waren vnder der selschop...", [p. 10], incipit, "Anno vyffteinhundert vnd einvnd vertich vp dach Sancti Reinoldi [7 January 1541] / is durch dey gemeyne Geselschop eyndrechtich verdragen vnd geslotte ... dat alßdan sin brocke dubbelt sin sall sunder genade ane widderede / Actum et conclusum in ede domine virginis"; [pp. 11-14, blank];

Statutes of the Dortmund Junkergesellschaft ("Juncheren Geselschopp"); text edited from this manuscript by Rothert, 1902, pp. 1-6. This manuscript is the sole surviving copy of these statutes, and their text has hitherto been known only from Hermann Rothert's edition. Rothert stated merely that the manuscript was owned by an aristocratic family, and its location was unknown to Dietrich Thier in his study of 1987 (see Thier, 1987, p. 9).

The "Junkergesellschaft" of Dortmund was founded in the mid-1380s as a means by which the leading older families of its patrician elite sought to protect their status. These were the descendants of ministerial families in service of the imperial possessions in Dortmund (the "Reichsgut"), whose positions could only be secured by inheritance; but after the sale of those possessions in 1376 to the city of Dortmund, it became possible for others to purchase additional shares therein, and so engage in social climbing. Guild members and artisans were explicitly excluded from membership (see Thier, 1987, pp. 135-39 and 340-43; for an account of a ministerial family of this kind, see pp. 217-40 on the Klepping, with discussion of the significance of their membership of the "Junkergesellschaft" at p. 237). Political circumstances

may have given rise to societies like this in the fourteenth century, but they were less political corporations than social corporations. They intentionally cultivated particular norms of elite lifestyle – feasting, formal dance, tournaments, civic processions, “chivalric” virtues – that in their eyes dignified and distinguished them as a social group with noble standing (see Rogge, 2003, with particular mention of the Dortmund “Junkergesellschaft” at pp. 106 and 116, and Fouquet, 2003, pp. 23-30). Accordingly the central preoccupation of these statutes is to define the responsibility for organizing the biannual feasts of the society, and to specify the criteria for admission to those feasts. The manuscript was likely produced either for a putative central archive of the society, or (perhaps more likely) to be kept by its aldermen, who served in rotation for annual terms.

pp. 15-40, incipit, “Anno domini M^o ccc lxxxvij. [1387] Johan wystrate. Johan wale. lxxxviij. [1388] Her Euert wistrate. Johan murman Junior. lxxxix. [1389] Her Arnd Suderman. Herman Cleppink. xc. [1390] Johan vanme schide. Johan Brake ... 1622. Albrecht der Hane in Goie dedit pecuniam. 1623. Andreß Kleppinck fil. Solus”; [pp. 41-51, blank];

The *Scheffere* of the Dortmund Junkergesellschaft, 1387-1623; edited by Rothert, 1902, pp. 6-14. Each year the society would elect two of its number to serve as its *Scheffere* (derived from the Latin *scabinus*, “alderman”). They were required to organize, host, and finance the biannual feasts, and to choose their successors as aldermen for the following year.

unfoliated paper leaf after p. 40, incipit, “Anno 1593. Georg Cleppingk alleine. 1594. Gaspar Schwartz alleine. 1595. Hillbrandt de Hane, weil aber binnen jahrs seine haußfraw[--] gestorben, hatt er das gelt darfur ge[--]. 1596. Herr Godefried de Hane alleine ... 1610. Herr Georg Cleppingk, und Gaspar Schwartz der junge, dieser h[--] gelt geben. 1611. Gaspar Schwartz d[...]. (verso) Diethmar Cleppingk. 1612”;

Officials (?) of the Dortmund Junkergesellschaft, 1593-1612; edited by Rothert, 1902, pp. 14-15. A list of names originally kept separately in the volume, incorporated in the modern rebinding. The names do not correspond to those of the aldermen (*Scheffere*) in the volume, and it is unclear what office these individuals held in the Junkergesellschaft.

p. 52, incipit, “Anno xv^c nono in dem vastelauende [15-20 February 1509] heben de geselschop geschaffett int erste de kernerer van der burgermester wegen...”; [p. 53, blank];

Notes pertinent to chamberlains elected by the Junkergesellschaft to serve the mayor of Dortmund in the years 1509-12; edited by Rothert, 1902, pp. 15-16.

p. 54, incipit, “Der Juncheren geselschopp hebben des jairs erfliker Renthe. [--]t eirste vyte Coird Jackenstikers huys gelegen beneuen deme Raithuse an dey westsyde alle jair – eyn mark ... Item vyte deme huys to Copinhauen by dem Sunnenschyne – j mark.”

Incomes pertinent to the Junkergesellschaft from properties in Dortmund; edited by Rothert, 1902, p. 16.

Guilds and related societies and confraternities were essential elements of civic life in the Middle Ages. Most must have kept written statutes, at least at some point in their history. This

manuscript, however, stands out from ordinary copies, in particular because of the formality of its binding. This is a formal, carefully bound codex, and as such it is quite different than most surviving statutes, which are usually preserved in in "archival" quality coverings (little paper booklets, or folded single sheets of parchment like a charter).

LITERATURE

Conrad, Horst. "Archivpflege im Regierungsbezirk Arnsberg im Jahre 1978," *Archivpflege in Westfalen und Lippe* 12 (1979), pp. 31-34.

Fouquet, Gerhard. "Trinkstuben und Bruderschaften – soziale Orte in den Städten des Spätmittelalters", in Gerhard Fouquet *et al.*, eds., *Geschlechtergesellschaften, Zunft-Trinkstuben und Bruderschaften in spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Städten. 40. Arbeitstagung in Pforzheim 16.-18. November 2001*, Stadt in der Geschichte 30, Stuttgart, 2003, pp. 9-30.

Rogge, Jörg. "Geschlechtergesellschaften, Trinkstuben und Ehre. Bemerkungen zur Gruppenbildung und den Lebensordnungen in den Führungsschichten mittelalterlicher Städte," in Gerhard Fouquet *et al.*, eds, *Geschlechtergesellschaften* (as above), pp. 99-127.

Rothert, Hermann. "Das Buch der Dortmunder Juncheren Gesellschaft," *Beiträge zur Geschichte Dortmunds und der Grafschaft Mark* 11 (1902), pp. 1-16.

Schunke, Ilse, continued by Konrad von Rabenau. *Die Schwenke-Sammlung gotischer Stempel- und Einbanddurchreibungen nach Motiven geordnet und nach Werkstätten bestimmt und beschrieben*, vol. 2, *Werkstätten*, Beiträge zur Inkunabelkunde 3. Folge 10, Berlin, 1996.

Thier, Dietrich. *Melius Hereditati. Untersuchungen zur Dortmunder Führungsschicht im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert*, Bochumer historische Studien: Mittelalterliche Geschichte 8, Bochum, 1987.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Archivpflege in Westfalen-Lippe

http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/Archivamt/Publicationen/Archivpflege_Westfalen-Lippe

Einbanddatenbank [here EBDB]

<http://www.hist-einband.de/>

Germania Sacra database, entry for the Sisters of the Common Life in Unna (GSN: 990)

<http://klosterdatenbank.germania-sacra.de/gsn/990>

Handschriftencensus, entry for this manuscript

<http://www.handschriftencensus.de/25393>

Neue Deutsche Biographie, entry for Florens von Bockum-Dolffs

<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd116214996.html>

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