

LES ENLUMINURES, LTD
2970 North Lake Shore Drive 11B
Chicago, Illinois 60657

tel. 1-773-929-5986
fax. 1-773-528-3976
chicago@lesenluminures.com

LES ENLUMINURES
Le Louvre des Antiquaires
2 place du Palais-Royal
75001 Paris

tél : 33 1 42 60 15 58
fax : 33 1 40 15 00 25
info@lesenluminures.com

Miniature Lutheran Prayer Book
In German, manuscript on parchment
Germany, Nuremberg (?) c. 1550-1600

iii + 31 leaves, complete (collation: 1³[of 4, i pastedown], 2-8⁴, 9³[of 4, iv pastedown]), written on 9 lines frame-ruled in red (justification 50 x 32 mm.), in black ink in a handsome German Fraktur script, rubrics in red, black-silver and gold, calligraphic incipits and initials and interlace tailpieces of the same colors open and end each prayer (some cropping at upper and outer margins, tiny tear in outer margin of opening folio). Bound in contemporary brown taffeta over pasteboards, endbands of green and red silk still visible (now very worn, spine cracked). Dimensions 80 x 65 mm. (binding); 73 x 59 mm. (leaves).

This manuscript of the Protestant Reformation written in beautiful "Fraktur" calligraphy and in miniature format contains Martin Luther's debate on the Seven Petitions of the Lord's Prayer from his undated work *Vater unser*. In this work, Luther revisited the issue, central to his theology, of the importance of vernacular prayer for children, especially the Lord's Prayer, which appears fully spelled out in the Small and Large Catechisms of 1529.

PROVENANCE:

1. An inscription on the first flyleaf, signed H.L., records his mother Ursula Lemvin's gift of the book to him on 7 July 1607 and that it was written by his father Ulrich Lemvin with his own hand: "A[nno] 1607 dem 7 july verehit mir mein liebe mutter Ursula Lemvin dieses buchlein so mein lieber Vatter See: Ulrich Lemvin eigner hant gescriben."

2. Cornelius J. Hauck (1893-1967), heir to a Cincinnati beer brewery fortune, given to Cincinnati Museum Center, his sale, New York, Christie's, "The History of the Book: The Cornelius J. Hauck Collection of the Cincinnati Museum Center," 27 June 2006 (in pencil on f. 3: "Prayerbook 1540, Masterwork in Manuscript").

TEXT

f. i, inscription recording the ownership of H. L., and attributing the writing to his father Ulrich Lemvin (see "Provenance");

f. ii, Prayer in German, incipit, "Allmechtiger ewiger Gott ...";

f. iii, notes in pencil [20th century], "Prayerbook, 1540, Masterwork in Manuscript";
f. 1, calligraphic rubric, "Ein gebat vor der predig", incipit, "Allmechtiger ewiger Gott ...";
f. 3, "Ein wunderschon gebat";
f. 5v, "Ein gemeine danncksagung nach dem Sacrament";
f. 6v, "Darnach so spricht ...";
f. 8v, "Ein gebatt Salomonis ...";
f. 10v, "Ein gebet und danncksagung Hiob in sinem betrubnusz ...";

ff. 11v-30, [Martin Luther, *Catechism*, on the Seven Petitions in the Our Father] "Volget ein kurzer begriff des Vatter unsers. Die Seel..."; f. 12, "Gott Malachie 1? ..."; f. 13, "Die erste bitte die Seele ..."; f. 15, "Gott. Esaie ..."; f. 15v, "Die ander Bitte. Die Seel"; f. 17, "Gott. Deuter ..."; f. 18, "Die 3 Bitte die Seel ..."; f. 19v, "Gott. Psalm 77 ..."; f. 21, "Die vierdte Bitte die Seel ..."; f. 23v, "Gott. Jeremie ..."; f. 24v, "Die funfste Bitte die Seel ..."; f. 26v, "Gott. Psalm 78 ..."; f. 27, "Die sechste Bitte die Seel ..."; f. 28, "Gott. Psalm 11 ..."; f. 29, "Die Seel ...";

Martin Luther (born 1483; died 1546) is surely the greatest figure of the Protestant Reformation. In 1505, he was a monk at Erfurt, and he received his Doctor of Theology in Wittenberg in 1512. 1517 is the year he nailed the 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church, and four years later in 1521 he was outlawed and exiled. He returned to Wittenberg in 1522, married in the same decade, and published his magnum opus, the complete Bible in German in 1534. His Large and Small Catechism, which form the basis for his ideas concerning vernacular worship and prayer, both date before his Bible translation in 1529. The two great works of Martin Luther were those by which he gave to the common people a vernacular Bible and vernacular worship, that through the one, God might speak directly to the people; and in the other, the people might speak directly to God. Luther's Bible, along with his other works, gave life not only to the churches of the Reformation, but to German nationality and the German language.

The majority of the present manuscript consists of a transcription of Luther's dialogue on the Lord's Prayer, published (date known) as *Vater unser*. The Lord's Prayer was central to Luther's reforming program. For Luther, prayer in general and the Lord's Prayer in particular sets out to deliver the faithful "from the unprofitable and burdensome babbling of the Seven Canonical Hours ... they would only, morning, noon, and evening, read a page or two in the Catechism, the Prayerbook, the New Testament, or elsewhere in the Bible, and pray the Lord's Prayer for themselves and their parishioners ..." Luther wants all the devout to esteem prayer, which he sees as a duty every father of a family needs to enact for his children and servants. In order to esteem prayer in the Seven Petitions of Our Father (the Lord's Prayer), "there is comprehended in seven successive articles, or petitions, every need which never ceases to relate to us, and each so great that it ought to constrain us to keep praying it all our lives." Luther returns again and again to the Seven Petitions, focusing on them in each of the Catechisms and, again, in the later *Vater unser*, where he

rephrases his thoughts in the form of a dialogue or debate between a Soul (or spirit) and God. According to Peeters (cf. Russell's review of Peeters, p. 510), the Lord's Prayer was for Luther the epitome of Christian prayer, "because God uses the sacraments to bestow grace, and this grace establishes the faith-relationship with the church." Although not identified, the prefatory prayers, before preaching, after the sacrament, and so forth, are also entirely in keeping with Lutheran thought and are likely to be found amongst German vernacular prayers of the Reformation.

The ex-libris in which a son (H. Lemvin) records the gift by his mother to him of a book of Lutheran prayer written by his father is entirely in keeping with Lutheran Protestant ideals, which viewed instruction in prayer as a familial duty.

The text of this Prayer book is a fine example of *Neudörffer Fraktur*, a style of calligraphic script named after the famous German writing master Johann Neudörffer. The *Fraktur* (owing to the broken character of the strokes) was developed in the early sixteenth century in Nuremberg at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (reigned 1493-1519). The new *Fraktur* type and script became very popular, and the *Neudörffer Fraktur* was used by Albrecht Dürer, the most celebrated artist of Nuremberg, for printing several of his theoretical works, for example *Underweysung der Messung mit Zirkel und dem Rochtscheyd* in 1525. The calligraphic initials and tailpieces are very like those practiced by Neudörffer himself and his many pupils. This collection is an unusually small display of the elegant and skillful manuscripts associated with German writing masters.

LITERATURE

Bottigheimer, Ruth. *The Bible for Children: From the Age of Gutenberg to the Present*, New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 1996.

Bottigheimer, Ruth. "Bible Reading, 'Bibles' and the Early Bible for Children in Early Modern Germany," *Past and Present* 139 (1993), pp. 66-89.

Martin Luther. *The Large Catechism*, by Martin Luther, translation F. Bente and W.H.T. Dan, in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church*, St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1921.

Martin Luther. *Luther's Little Instruction Book: The Small Catechism of Martin Luther*, translation Robert E. Smith, in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church*, St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1921.

Peeters, Albrecht, and Gottfried Seebass, eds. *Kommentar zu Luthers Katechismen*. Band 3: *Das Vater Unser*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993 (reviewed William Russell, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 25/2 [1994], pp. 509-510).

ONLINE RESOURCES

Luther: Liturgies, Chants, and Hymns

http://www.goodshepherdinstitute.org/giving_opportunities/luther.php

Luther's *Vater unser* (transcription)

<http://www.luther.glaubensstimme.de/luther68.html>

Luther's Small Catechism

<http://bookofconcord.org/smallcatechism.html>

Luther's Large Catechism

<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/wittenberg-luther.html#sw-lc>