

Le Louvre des Antiquaires
2 Place du Palais-Royal
75001 Paris (France)
tel. +33 (0)1 42 60 15 58 • fax. +33 (0)1 40 15 00 25
info@lesenluminures.com

2970 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60657 (USA)
tel. +773 929 5986
fax. +773 528 3976
chicago@lesenluminures.com

[Passion Prayers and Devotions]
In Low German, illustrated manuscript on paper
[Germany, Lower Rhine, c. 1470]

215 folios, on paper (watermarks similar to Briquet no. 8527: Lettre P [Leiden, 1463-1469; Utrecht, 1468]; Briquet no. 1482: Armoiries à 3 fasces au chef chargé de 3 croix recroisetées [Utrecht, but later paper: 1526, ff. 98-100]), collation: (i¹², ii¹⁴ (12-1) [missing folio of quire probably blank], iii¹², iv¹², v⁸ (8-2) [missing blank folio between ff. 51v-52; also missing last folio of quire, prayer incomplete], vi¹², vii⁹ (12-3) [3 last folios of quire were likely blank], viii¹², ix¹⁰, x¹⁰, xi¹⁰, xii⁴ (8-4), xiii¹¹ (12-1), xiv¹¹ (12-1), xv¹⁵ (18-3), xvi¹², xvii¹², xviii¹¹ (12-1), xix¹⁰, xx¹⁰, xxi³], written in a gothic hybrid (textualis with some cursive elements) script in brown ink on up to 21 long lines (justification 90 x 65 mm) in eight (?) different hands, plummet ruling, rubrics in red, some prayers entirely copied in red (ff. 155-155v), some capitals touched in red, 1 to 3-line high initials painted in bright red ink, some underlining in red ink, 4 to 7-line high initials painted in red or blue with penwork highlighted in green wash, 7 WOODCUTS PASTED IN TEXT OR FACING TEXT ON BLANK PAGE (c. 55 x 65 mm) WITH CONTEMPORARY COLORING (ff. 52v, 54v, 145v, 154v, 163v, 171v, 179). Bound in a contemporary limp dark calf binding, smooth spine, sewn on three raised thongs, in a modern cloth case (two folios detached: f. 48, f. 116; binding worn and in need of restoration, leather missing on spine with raised thongs apparent, nonetheless contemporary condition. Dimensions 130 x 100 mm.

Unpublished hybrid book in its original state with a contemporary binding, including a series of prayers and devotional exercises on the Passion written by separate scribes as short quires and illustrated with an extraordinary series of hand-colored woodcuts (some of which are unrecorded by Schreiber) related to those in a small group of manuscripts that include the so-called *Gulden Puchlein*. The Lower Rhenish origin of our example is uncommon, as most known manuscripts originate in southern Germany, and no other examples are recorded in private hands.

TEXT

ff. 1-22v, [Prayer of Pope Benedict XII on the Instruments of Christ], rubric, *Dijt gebet machde der guederteren pauwes benedictus der .xii. ind gaff alle den genem de in genem de in genaden staent ind dyt gebet lesen in de ere der wapen Christi .xv. dusement dage aflai ind .xv. karenen oratio; incipit, "O werde metz wilch besneit dat hilige uleisch Christi suyt...";*

f. 23, blank;

ff. 24-52v, [Prayer by Saint Bernard on the Suffering of Christ]; rubric, *Dit bait gemarcht sente Bernart der soisse leirre van deme liden Christi; incipit, "Unse lieve here Jhesus Christus is vur uns gepassiet...";*

ff. 53-53v, [Three Our Fathers to say for Staving Mankind]; rubric, *Diit synt dry pater no[ster] man sal sy spreken vur stervende mynschen*; incipit, "O here Ihesu durch den anx't ind alre hillich...";

f. 54, blank;

ff. 55-74v, [A Prayer on Christ's suffering]; rubric, *Eyn gebet van ymaigen danckberheit van den waildaden ind liden Christi*; incipit, "O gemynde leve here Ihesu Christi...";

ff. 75-81, [Prayer on the Seven Blood Sheddings of Christ]; rubric, *Hie begint eyn ymich gebet zo den .vii. bloit sturizingen uns leven heren Ihesu Christi vader unse de bist in den hemelen*; incipit, "O here Jhesu Christe ich dancken...";

ff. 81-86, [Five Greetings on the Five Signs]; rubric, *Hie begynnen vunff ymige groisgyn zo den vunff mynnen tzeichen*; incipit, "Ich groissen dich mit der engelscher werdicheit...";

f. 86v, cancelled;

ff. 87-119, [A Good Offering to say about the Calvary of our Lord]; rubric, *Dit is eyn goede oeffenunge we men den berch van caluarien uns heren sal gayn*; incipit: "Men sal dese bedonge...";

f. 120, blank;

ff. 121-145v, [Henricus Suso, Hundred Articles on the Passion of Christ]; rubric, *Hie begynnen hondert gedencknys se der passien uns heren Ihesus Christus. De eyn eycklich yonger Christus mach pynen degelichs mit ymicheit zo betzalen ind eine selver uns daer ymme unsem heren de voer uns gecruciget is als hij ontmodelichste mach mit begerden got licher mynnen geistlichen zo gelichen. De eerste artickel van ...*; incipit, "O here Jhesus Christus wisheit godes...";

ff. 146-154, [Prayer of Saint Bernard on the Passion of Christ]; beginning of rubric, *Eyn myrcklich gebet dat sancte Bernardus gemacht bait mit zo beschryen uns lieven heren passie...*; incipit, "Gegroit sustu myne selicheit. O du lieve here Ihesu Christe wese gegroit...";

ff. 155-163v, [Fifteen Our Fathers for Christ's Friends]; beginning of rubric, *Unse lieve here Ihesus Christus offenbaerde eyne synen vrunden .xv. pater noster. Ind is gewerdiget ind erhaven...*; incipit: "O Jhesu Christe eyne ewige soessicheit der de dich mynent...";

ff. 164-172, [A Useful Prayer on the Wounds of Christ]; beginning of rubric, *Dese na geschreven nulze gebede saltu heischen usser den wonden uns heren Ihesu Christi...*; incipit, "O vader unse de bist in den hemelen. Vader alre barmhertzicheit...";

ff. 172-179, [Prayer on the Suffering Jesus Christ]; rubric, *Hie begiint eyn ymich gebet zo den lederen uns lieven heren Ihesu Christi*; incipit, "O almechtige scheppar alre creaturen...";

ff. 179-181v, [Prayer on the Wounds of Christ]; rubric, *Dit is eyn ymich gebet zo [...] wonden uns heren Jhesu Christi zo eicklicher wonden eyn pater noster ind ave maria...*; incipit, "Loff ind glorie sy dir herer Jhesus Christus...";

f. 182, blank;

ff. 183-214v, [These are the Hours of Our Lord's Suffering]; no rubric; incipit, "Dit synt de oren da unse gesunt mecher Ihesus Christus syn bitter pyne begont..."; explicit, "[...] der leest ind regneirt ewelichen sonder ende. Amen."

ff. 215-215v, Added prayer; incipit, "Gegroit siis ... Marya..."; explicit, "[...] leven de vronde des ewichen levens. Amen."

This is a collection of miscellaneous prayers and devotional exercises written in low German mostly on the Passion of Christ, one of the most important subjects of meditation from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Among manuscripts containing Passion meditations, the Hundred Articles of the Passion by the Dominican friar Henricus Suso is one of the most popular (see "Project: Meditation Practice" below). The emphasis on the Passion was one of the central tenets of the *Devotio Moderna*, the religious reform movement founded by Geert Groote in the fourteenth century and of which the text by Thomas à Kempis, the *Imitation of Christ*, is a central example (see Hyma and Post). The reform movement put its emphasis on humility in the face of Christ's suffering which could be better understood through "imitation" in the commonly spoken and understood vernacular languages. Theirs was a practical piety, inside and outside the convent. The language of the present manuscript places the manuscript in the lower Rhenish region, close to the heartland of the *Devotio Moderna*.

It should be noted, however, that fifteenth-century Dominican spirituality, such as that expressed at St.-Katherine's convent in Nuremberg, was profoundly influenced by the spirituality of the *Devotio Moderna*, and the woodcuts included in the manuscript appear to have circulated primarily in a Dominican milieu, the chief manuscript of the group being from St.-Katherine's.

ILLUSTRATION

Seven hand-colored woodcuts punctuate the main divisions of the text, as follow:

f. 52v, Arrest of Christ, ca. 57 x 58 (lacking lower part, trimmed; composition related to Schreiber 227, 228);

f. 54v, Baptism of Christ, ca. 66/67 x 53/54 (composition related to Schreiber 132);

f. 145v, Flagellation, ca. 66/67 x 56/57 (composition related to Schreiber 302, 303);

f. 154v, Ecce Homo, ca. 65/64 x 55 (composition based on Schreiber 335m, see also 336, 336a);

f. 163v, Christ before Pilate (the Handwashing), ca. 66/67 x 56 (composition based on Schreiber 283, see also 281, 282);

f. 171v, Carrying of the Cross, ca. 66 x 56/57 (composition based on Schreiber 356; see also 360);

f. 179r, The Disrobing of Christ, ca. 65 x 55 (parts of frame trimmed, but without any loss of the depicted scene; composition based on Schreiber 369, see also 368);

The manuscript contains a set of seven stylistically uniform woodcuts in versions not recorded in Schreiber. The compositions of the woodcuts are based on a series probably produced in South Germany, ca. 1440-1450 (see Field). The series is extant in as many as fifteen related Passion sets of differing extent and quality, of which the fullest is pasted into a manuscript in the Graphische Sammlung, Munich, known as the *Gulden Puchlein* (Golden Booklet) and made for the St.-Katherine Cloister of Nuremberg (see Weigmann, and more recently Schmidt, 1998, pp. 72-80, for a spreadsheet of extant examples, and idem, 2004, pp. 19ff and 348-53). The *Gulden Puchlein*, containing a miscellany of texts on the life of the Virgin and the passion of Christ, is illustrated with seventy woodcuts pasted in the text in spaces left blank by the scribe: compare our f. 54v (Baptism of Christ) with GP f. 89 (Schmidt, fig. 5). Other comparisons include our f. 54v and Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. I.3.8° 5, f. 135v (Schmidt, fig. 32); our f. 171v (Calvary) and Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, MS Will II, 19.8°, f. 104 (Schmidt, fig. 66); Munich, Bay. Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 20131, f. 8 (Schmidt, fig. 115); our f. 171v and Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, SMPK (Schmidt, fig. 197); and Munich, Bay. Staatsbibliothek, Cgm, 1126, f. 52v (Flagellation reversed). Many of these manuscripts were produced in a Dominican milieu. The woodcuts of the present set, which are hitherto unrecorded, are qualitatively finer than most of the extant versions.

Most of the woodcuts were inserted on blank pages or at the lower section of pages in unwritten areas following the conclusion of texts or text sections. The subjects of many do not correspond with the texts they accompany, and the chronological order of the Passion is not followed in the sequence. These observations could indicate that they were added only as afterthoughts to a completed manuscript. But in at least one instance (f. 179r) the woodcut was set between the conclusion of one text and the beginning of the rubric for the following one, which suggests that the scribe knew how much space to leave for the woodcut which now appears there.

According to Schmidt's estimates, there were at least fifteen different series of the lives of Christ and the Virgin in the "Gulden Puchlein" group, and it is likely that each contained different versions of the subjects. Field (in Parshall, 2005, p. 105-106) estimates a production of nearly 3,000 sets, an extraordinary number of prints, which wholly justifies Schmidt's description of the series as "the most successful cycle of woodcuts before Albrecht Durer. The present manuscript will be published in the forthcoming catalogue by P. Schmidt and R. Cermann (*Katalog der deutschsprachigen illustrierten Handschriften des Mittelalters*, forthcoming).

LITERATURE

Field, Richard S. *Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and Metalcuts from the National Gallery of Art*, Washington, D.C., Washington, n.d. [1965], nos. 25-27, 44-45.

Korteweg, A. *Kriezels, aubergines en takkenbossen. Randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de vijftiende eeuw* (exhibition catalogue), The Hague, Rijksmuseum Meermanno-Westreenianum and Koninklijke Bibliotheek Zutphen, 1992.

Parshall, Peter, R. Schroch, D. S. Areford, R. S. Field, and P. Schmidt. *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and their Public*, Washington, New Haven and London, National Gallery of Art, Yale University Press, 2005.

Schmidt, Peter. *Gedruckte Bilder in handgeschriebenen Buechern. Zum Gebrauch von Druckgraphik im 15. Jabrbundert*, (Pictura et Poesis Interdisziplinäre Studien zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Kunst, 16), Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, 2003.

Schmidt, Peter and R. Cermann. *Katalog der deutschsprachigen illustrierten Handschriften des Mittelalters*, forthcoming, Band 5, 2/2.

Schmidt, Peter. "Rhin supérieur ou Bavière? Localisation et mobilité des gravures au milieu du XVe siècle," *Revue de l'Art* 120 (1998), pp. 68-88.

Schreiber, W. L. *Handbuch der Holz- und Metallschnitte des XV. Jabrbunderts*, 8 vols., Leipzig, 1926-1930.

Weigmann, Otto. *Holzschnitte aus dem Gulden Puchlein von 1450 in der Graphische Sammlung zu München* (Graphische Gesellschaft, XXIV. Veröffentlichung), Berlin, 1918.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Project: Meditation Practice: The passion meditations of Henry Suso
www.niwi.knaw.nl/en/oj/nod/onderzoek/OND1300395/toon

Dominican Spirituality in Germany
<http://www.op.org/domcentral/study/ashley/ds05germ.htm>