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ANONYMOUS, *Würzburger Wundarznei* [Medical Miscellany]

In German, manuscript on paper

Germany, East Franconia (Würzburg?), c. 1488-1500, with later additions up to around 1525

98 folios, complete (collation [irregular quire-scheme]: i⁸, ii¹²⁺⁴, iii⁶, iv¹²⁺⁴, v⁸, vi¹², vii⁸, viii¹², ix⁸⁺² [after f. 47 one leaf omitted, after 48: 48a, between fol. 84 and 91 foliation corrected, some blank leaves]), modern foliation, watermarks ("Mountain with cross and star," cf. Briquet, *Mons*, nos. 1816, 1488-1507, e.g. Vienna and Freiburg i. Br.), written in dark brown ink in a bastard script on one column (justification varies, c. 230-250 x 133-144 mm.), no ruling of horizontal lines, varying between 28-32 depending on scribe, outer margins ruled in dark brown ink at between 133 and 138 mm., including blank sheets, initials of each passage advanced into the left margin and comprising an average of three lines, written by 6 different hands (one main plus five additional scribes): Main band: fol. 2-10v, 14-18, 21v-23v, 24-27, 28-28v, 30-31, 32-33, 35v-46v, 48-48v, 50-54v, 95-96v; Additional hands numbered according to their importance: Hand 2: fol. 11v-13v, 18v, 47av, 48v, 48a-48av, 81-95v; Hand 3: fol. 1-1v, 24, 46v-47av; Hand 4: fol. 11-11v, 23v, 24 (bottom); Hand 5: 11v (middle of the page), 18v, 48a (upper portion). Contemporary late 15th or early 16th century binding of quarter alum-tawed pigskin over wooden boards, designs enclosed within a triple-fillet border, some stamps now difficult to decipher although one recurring stamp of the type "blattwerk mit knospe" (compare L. Sprandel-Krafft, *Die Spätgotischen Inkunabeln der Universitätsbibliothek Würzburg*, 2000, pls. 21-23, from Würzburg, Bamberg, Franconia), sewn on three raised thongs, brass mountings for a clasp, now lost. Dimensions 310 x 215 mm.

In its original Würzburg binding this manuscript belongs to the literary genre of the medical manual that developed around 1400 in the German-speaking regions and represents a typical means for the transfer of surgical knowledge. Much influenced by works of the famous surgeon Peter von Ulm, the *Würzburger Wundarznei* is the only representative of this genre extant from eastern Franconia.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in East Franconia based on linguistic features; the watermarks point to Vienna and Freiburg i. Br. between 1488 and 1507.
2. Early ownership note on the inside of front cover: 1528 *hab ich Villus Wallcher von Wurzburg meinem* (two lines erased) *das buch zuegestellt*. Above: various notes: table of planets and days of the week ruled out.
3. Germany, Private Collection (on long-term deposit in the department of medical history of the University of Würzburg, see "Literature" below).

TEXT

ff. 1-13v, Medical plasters (with additions on the originally blank leaves from fol. 11 onwards);

ff. 14-21, Ointments (later additions on f. 18v; f. 19-21 blank);

f. 21v "Item wilou machen tygelldey" (lower portion of the page blank);

ff. 22-22v, Ointments continued ("Item wilou machen eyn gute alte ce");

ff. 22v-24, Powders (with additions on f. 23v-24)

f. 24v, Haemostatics;

f. 25-27v, Decocts/extracts (f. 27v blank);

f. 28-29v, Antiphlogistika (antiinflammatories, f. 29 blank);

ff. 30-31v, Essential oils (f. 31v blank);

ff. 32-35, Antitoxins/antidotes ("Item wilou machen eyn guen edelen wundtränke," f. 33v-35 blank);

ff. 35v-47v, Miscellaneous recipes (with additions from the end of f. 46v, through ff. 47 and 47v);

f. 48-49v, Fistula treatment (with additions on f. 48 and 48a; f. 49 blank);

f. 50-54v, Distillates; f. 55-78: blank, f. 79: Additions, f. 79v-80v: blank, f. 81: addition, f. 82: blank, f. 82v-94v: Additions;

f. 95-95v, Rules for bloodletting (esp. for the plague);

f. 96r-v, and pastedown, list of ingredients.

The literary genre of the medical manual developed around 1400 in the German-speaking regions and represents a typical means for the transfer of surgical knowledge. Whereas a couple of manuscripts survive from the Netherlands and the area of the Upper-Rhine, as well as a few documents from the northern and eastern parts of Germany and Bohemia, the *Würzburger Wundarznei* is the only representative of this genre extant from eastern Franconia.

The manuscript comprises a selection of recipes for medication, arranged in various categories. The basic structure consists of twelve sections, of which seven center around pharmaceutical aspects, each one revolving around one specific medication, while the remaining five each focus on a specific basic symptom and the respective therapeutic treatment.

The main scribe who copied the text provided an occasion for subsequent users to add further medical material to the respective sections. This is the purpose of the blank leaves we find after each section, on some of which different hands have subsequently made their contributions. This procedure is typical of medical manuals. Further blanks have been left between some of the recipes, probably for rubrication. Those as well as other means of highlighting were, however, never executed. We do not know the reason for this phenomenon, which is all the more surprising since the manuscript with its numerous corrections seems to have been carefully edited. Lack of time during the completion of the manuscript therefore cannot have accounted for this.

The core of the present compilation consists of nine parts: medical plasters, ointments, powders, haemostatics, decocts/extracts, antiphlogistics (anti-inflammatories), essential oils, antitoxins/antidotes ("Wundtränke"), and miscellaneous. While parts one to eight consist exclusively of medical recipes, the ninth chapter comprises also short or fragmentary treatises. The internal structure follows the well-known pattern with categories such as provenance, symptom, basic substance or drug or galenic. Three additional segments (fistula treatment, distillates ["Gebrannte Wässer"], and plague bloodletting) present a different structure and composition and are thereby clearly set apart from the preceding core segments. The manuscript has been extensively studied and edited in a series of Ph.D. dissertations in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Würzburg.

Moreover, the extent of the *Würzburger Wundarzney* with its over 500 formulas is worth mentioning too, as it exceeds even the *Buch von guten Pflastern und Salben* (Book on plasters and ointments) (cf. Keil, in: *VL*, col. 1458-1460). The original text, from which the compiler of the *Würzburger Wundarzney* copied the present manuscript at hand, most likely comprised only nine segments ending with the miscellaneous smaller texts, which are often found towards the end of medical manuals. The last three parts (fistula treatment, decocts and bloodletting rules) originate from a different textual tradition. The sections on fistula treatment and the bloodletting rules are almost like independent treatises and do not follow the structure of the preceding parts.

The Upper Rhenish origin of the *Würzburger Wundarzney* is readily apparent in the sources the scribe used to compile the manuscript. Parts of the recipes follow word for word recipes of Peter of Ulm (fl. 1427-62). Moreover, links can be established with the *Buch von guten Pflastern und Salben* as well as to the fourteenth-century "chirologist" Ortolf von Würzburg. The main scribe seems to have restricted himself to sources in German by different authors, which found their way into the present compilation. Within the core content of the first nine parts of the manuscript an older tradition localized to the Franconian region between Moselle and Rhine stands out against a younger Swabian tradition. The main scribe must himself have his origins in the medical milieu, as can be deduced from his access to the "materia medica" of such outstanding surgeons as Johann Beris, Peter von Ulm and Hans von Göppingen. According to Bentele and Keil, this scribe fundamentally determined the structure of the text and thus created a compilation which has all the characteristics of a manual in its own rights and which in its extent equals the most famous representatives of this literary genre, such as the *Cirurgia* of Peter von Ulm or the *Köpenbager Wundarzney* (Bentele/Keil 2000, p. 366)

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Studies and related texts:

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