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German Prayer Book (Brigittine Use)
In German, decorated manuscript on paper,
Germany, Hessen or Thüringen (?), c. 1500

116 folios, incomplete (collation I¹²⁺¹ [f. 13 is glued on], ii¹⁰, iii¹⁴⁻³ [3 folios cut out after f. 32], iv¹⁰ v⁶, vi¹⁰, vii¹⁴, viii¹⁰, ix¹⁴⁻¹ [folio missing after 97], x⁴, xi⁶⁺¹ [f. 108 is glued on], xii⁸), no catchwords or leaf and quire signatures, ff. 1-62r: ruled in hard point, ff. 62v-97v: ruled in metal point, ff. 98r-116v: ruling indiscernible, written by at least 6 hands in a quick *hybrida* in dark grey ink with some flourishes in the margin, text copied on approximately 19-21 lines (justification varies) in one column, rubrics in bright red, capitals stroked in red, 2- or 3-line initials in red, some with flourishing in abstract amoeba-like shapes and some morphing into human faces (e.g., ff. 65v, 89). Bound in contemporary 16th-century white pigskin over boards, panelstamped with geometric and floral motifs with engraved brass and leather clasp and catch, back sewn on 3 thongs (Good overall condition, f. 24 loose, upper joint a little split). Dimensions 150 x 108 mm.

Unusual German prayers composed of short booklets written in several distinct hands and bound together in an original binding. Among the atypical contents, there is a prayer on Christ's Passion organized around his five tortured senses, as well as prayers featuring St. Brigit, and many prayers with large indulgences. Probably originally made for a member of a German convent dedicated to St. Brigit or for a lay member of a Brotherhood of the Virgin, the manuscript belonged very shortly thereafter to the vast collection of the famous Charterhouse of Buxheim.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in Germany, c. 1500, on the basis of script and language. The present manuscript shares a prayer (see ff. 33v-49, below) and orthographical characteristics with Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 443, and both manuscripts may have come from Hessen or Thüringen. The many prayers to St. Brigit suggest that it may have been intended for a Brigittine convent. However, the presence of other prayers directed toward members of a "Brotherhood of Mary" raises the possibility that the manuscript was made for a lay member of such a brotherhood.
2. Note of ownership of the Carthusian Monastery of Buxheim ("Cartusia Buxiana," f. 1r), written in a contemporary or near-contemporary hand. The monastery was founded in 1402 and dissolved in 1803. The impressive library of this monastery was auctioned in Munich in 1883 in a sale that included 451 manuscripts. Although the descriptions are too brief to identify the manuscript with certainty, the present manuscript may, in fact, be no. 2428 (a manuscript called a *Büchlin der ewigen wisshait* written in High German on paper with 116

folios). The Carthusian Monastery of Buxheim also owned a fifteenth-century copy of St. Bridget's Revelations (no. 2701) and many other manuscripts made outside the monastery, as well as many copied on the premises.

3. Book plate of Elof Förberg (1851-1923), the court dentist and founder of the Swedish Linnaeus Society, on front pastedown.
4. Dealer's notation in pencil, back pastedown.

TEXT

ff. 1-12, Prayers for the days of the week, beginning with a prologue and ending with a message to members of the Brotherhood of Mary, rubric, *Wie ain mensch sich keren sol zu ° derlieben hailigen durch die ganzen woche*, incipit "Das du nun ain ordnung haben...";

ff. 12-13v, Instructions for members of the Brotherhood of Our Lady to earn an indulgence of 10,000 years from Pope Leo, rubric, *Welcher mensch in der brüderschafft Marie ist genampt...*;

ff. 14-16v, Passion meditation, begins imperfectly;

ff. 16v-17, Devotion structured around recitation of 75 (or 77) Pater Nosters [Our Fathers], rubric, *Item welchen mensch well schlechtiglichen batten lxxv pater noster und sol also die pater noster tailen für die mettin xxx pater noster und für die lauß x pater noster und für die prem vij pater noster und für die tertz vij pater noster... so macht es lxxvij*;

ff. 17v-18v, Instructions to recite Pater Nosters at the canonical hours, rubric, *Item, welcher mensch aber wol batten die vij tagzeit als die closter laien brüder oder schwesteren sollen batten...*;

ff. 18v-19r, Prayer to prevent sudden death, rubric, *Ein gebet welcher mensch das alletag spricht den kan den selben tag kain ungelict angän*;

ff. 19r-21r, Indulgenced prayer, rubric, *Es sind viiij tugenten mit den man hohen lon lon [sic] verdient*;

ff. 21-31v, Passion prayer with an indulgence of 583,911 years given by Urban V (1362-70) and confirmed by Gregory XI (1370-78), distributed over the canonical hours, rubric, *Hie hept sich an ganaden und hailsame gebet von dem ganzen liden unsers heren iesu cristi...*;

ff. 31v-32v, Prayer said to have been miraculously carved in a stone in the church of San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, with an indulgence of 80,000 years given by Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303), incipit, "God der du für die anlosung der welt...";

f. 33, Rubric that begins in medias res and has been "erased" with a red wash;

f. 33, Prayer to St. Bridget, rubric, *Hie volgend nun die allen andechtigisten gebet von den hailigen liden und marter cristi und am ersten von den hailigen frauwan sant brigitten*, incipit, "O, hailige sant brigitta..."

ff. 33v-49, Prayer that St. Bridget prayed in front of an image of Christ, rubric, *Hie haben sich nun an die obgemelten xv aller andechtigisten gebet den würdigen und hailigen frauen und witten [?] sant brigitten von der hailigen marter und leiden unsers herren Jesu criste das si knient vor dem bild unsers herren Jesu cristi...*, incipit, "Allor güttigster her iesu criste..." divided into 15 sections and followed by an antiphon, versicle and collect, with a post-script rubric, *Hie enden sich die gebet der hailigen frauen und witten sant brigitten die papst bonifacius der ix bestet hat...*. This prayer also appears in Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 443, ff. 32v-56; edition in Montag, *Birgitta*, 1968, pp. 25-34;

ff. 49-56, Passion meditation, in which the blood shedding of Christ and his judicial trials are enumerated, no rubric;

ff. 56v-60, Prayer organized around the Seven Last Words of Christ, incipit, "O, herr, ich er manen dich und dancken dir des ersten worts das du sprachest an dem stamen des hailigen cruz...";

ff. 60v-62, Prayer to the Holy Spirit, rubric, *Hie nach setz ich vij gebet dar durch du solt bitten got den hailigen gaist umb sein vij gauben*, incipit, "O, hailiger gaist kum und gib uns dem forcht..."

ff. 62v-77v, Prayer structured around Psalm 21 with its gloss, distributed over the seven canonical hours, rubric, *Von dem psalmen Deus, deus respice in me mit der glossa...*, incipit, "Got vatter aller ding durch die schöpfung....";

ff. 77v-96v, Passion and compassion meditation, organized around Christ and Mary's five senses, rubric, *Hie hept sich an die gar nutzlich betrachtung des leidens unsers herren Jhesu Criste von seinen funff sinnen und von Marie seiner werden mutter mitleiden und ist genant die wang des grossen schweren leiden iesu criste...*, incipit, "In dem namen iesu biegen sich alle knie, O, susser..."; Whereas there were many prayers for which the reader expressed remorse for having sinned with his five senses, this prayer is unusual in that it presents an extended meditation on Christ's suffering through his five senses, and Mary in turn experiences compassion through her five senses;

ff. 97-97v (ends imperfectly) Prayer to the Veronica (rubric follows the prayer), incipit, "Ich armanen dich lieber here Ihesu criste Deines ellenden betrüpten usgangs den du tettetst under dem stamen des hailgen froncütz...", rubric, *Item, als offt man dis obgeschreiben gebet spricht allweg zü funff maul mit funff patter noster und ave maria vor ainer rechten veronicken...*; the rubric promises a large indulgence ("grosser aplaus");

ff. 98-99, Prayer to Mary, organized around the recitation of 30 Ave Marias [Hail Mary's], rubric, *Wiltu unser lieben frauwen dise [?] besunder wol dienen so sprich ir altag zelob xxx ave maria die also geordnet sein, des ersten*;

ff. 99-101, Prayer to the Five Wounds of Christ, rubric, *Hie nachvolget ain schöne predig von den blütuer giesen unsers herren hand und fuß und sainer hailigen seitten wie du es eren solt*, incipit, "Von seinem blüt...";

f. 101v, blank;

ff. 102-108v, Prayer for salvation, rubric, *Der weg weyser zü der ewigen selighait*;

ff. 109-115v, Guide to earning indulgences on various feast days throughout the year, incipit, "Hie nach stat beschriben die genau und er aplaus..."; the text mentions indulgences in the new year after the Circumcision of Christ for 3000 years and 3000 days given by "Iohannes der xx," probably an error for John XXI (1276-77), indulgences for the first Sunday of the month, indulgences for Epiphany, and throughout the year.

ff. 116, blank.

This manuscript contains several unusual prayers, many of which are designed to earn indulgences for the reader, including the highly unusual (unpublished?) prayer at the end of the manuscript for earning indulgences throughout the year, and the indulgence at the beginning of manuscript (ff. 12-13v) with instructions for members of the Brotherhood of Our Lady to earn an indulgence. Indeed, the manuscript could have been owned by a member of such a brotherhood. Alternatively, given the emphasis on St. Brigit in the manuscript, with two of the major texts related to her, the manuscript could have come from a Birgittine convent, of which there were many in Germany in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Traces of glue on f. 97, now blank, suggest that the manuscript formerly had a print (or less likely a miniature) pasted onto the sheet in fulfillment of the rubric's demand that the prayer be read in front of the "veronica." The image would have measured 79 x 45 mm.

This manuscript was made by assembling related prayer booklets of the same size and binding them together. Some of the quires (or groups of quires) therefore form independent units, written by a single scribe. For example the final three quires: xi (ff. 98-101), xii (ff. 102-108), and xiii (109-116) each comprise independent booklets and were written by different scribes. There are differences in paper quality and style of ruling in each booklet. It is possible that these scribes belonged to the same convent or brotherhood and that the booklets were bound together at the time of their creation.

LITERATURE

Montag, Ulrich. *Das Werk der beiligen Birgitta von Schweden in oberdeutscher Überlieferung: Texte und Untersuchungen*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, xviii, Munich, 1968.

Morris, Bridget and Veronica O'Mara, eds. *The Translation of the Works of St. Birgitta of Sweden into the Medieval European Vernaculars*, Medieval Translator, vii, Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.

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Nyberg, Tore. *Birgittinische Klostergründungen des Mittelalters*, Bibliotheca Historica Lundensis, xv, Lund, 1965.

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Stöhlker, Friedrich. *Die Kartause Buxheim 1402-1803/12*, Neue Reihe, Salzburg, Institut für Anglistic und Amerikanistik, 1974.

ONLINE RESOURCES

On Elof Förgerg

http://linnaeus.se/eng/link2_1.html

Manuscripta Mediaevalia (database of manuscripts in German collections)

<http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/>