Publishing Information

Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities
Edited by Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz

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A ‘letter from Heaven’, ID no. I (33 J) 176/1963, Berlin, Museum of European Cultures (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Museum Europäischer Kulturen). Written in Ernstroda near Gotha, Thuringia, and dated 1776. The original sheet of paper was folded once, making four pages. Here we can see p. 1 with the title ‘Himmels-Brief, welchen, Gott selber geschrieben’ (‘Letter from Heaven, which God Himself has written’) and page 4. The written bifolium was then folded four times. Two words were visible on the two outer sides resulting from this: ‘Gottes Brief’ (‘God’s letter’), shown on p. 4. The upper part of the letter has been cropped and part of the illumination has been cut off. Photography: Christian Krug.

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Textual Amulets in Context: Was the Early Modern German Manuscript Mscr. Dresd. M 206 Used as a Magical Agent?

Marco Heiles | Aachen

The manuscript Mscr. Dresd. M 206 of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB) is a paper manuscript in a small quarto format. The main part of the manuscript was written in about 1515 and contains several texts in the German dialect Thuringian-East Franconian and in Latin. The textual composition of this part is without precedent in the history of German literature. Three hands collected here only texts that the majority of the clerics in this time would classify as superstition or magic: texts on divination, instructions for ritual magic and a huge collection of textual amulets. Similar blind stamping is known from workshops in Saxony. Cf. Hoffmann and Heiles 2016. This type of binding is more common in the Islamic world. Cf. Scheper 2015, 115–118. In late medieval Germany, top-edge flaps and fore-edge flaps are known from the Nuremberg Dominican (1433–1522) and Augustinian (1464–1526) workshops. Cf. Szirmai 2000, 236; Kyriß 1940, 33, 46; Bock 1928, Fig. 1.

Codicology

The quarto codex Mscr. Dresd. M 206 consists of 136 leaves. It measures 155 × 200 × 32 mm. The codex is still preserved in its sixteenth-century binding (Fig. 1). The boards are pasteboard and covered with white leather, which is decorated with blind lines and blind stamping. The leather covering of the lower board was left larger to build a fore-edge flap. This flap protects the fore edge and covers 5 cm of the upper cover.

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1 This paper is based on a detailed manuscript description by Werner Hoffmann and Marco Heiles: Hoffmann and Heiles 2016. The manuscript is digitised and available online on the web page of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek (SLUB) <http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id278681387>.


4 SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 64v. The Word characteres is used here as a terminus technicus meaning magical signs, magical characters or magical writing.

5 Similar blind stamping is known from workshops in Saxony. Cf. Hoffmann and Heiles 2016.

6 This type of binding is more common in the Islamic world. Cf. Scheper 2015, 115–118. In late mediaeval Germany, top-edge flaps and fore-edge flaps are known from the Nuremberg Dominican (1433–1522) and Augustinian (1464–1526) workshops. Cf. Szirmai 2000, 236; Kyriß 1940, 33, 46; Bock 1928, Fig. 1.
mon to all the other quires (Fig. 3). So quire three and quires five to thirteen form the second codicological unit (fol. 12–22, 32–134). This second unit consists of different kinds of paper. The fourth quire, added later, is the third codicological unit. Each unit was written by a different group of scribes. The first codicological unit was written by three scribal hands. The main text of this unit is a Latin mass for the Feast of the Annunciation (\textit{Haece est dies}, Ps 117,24) on fols 2–10. The rubric of this text by hand 2 tells us in German that this mass should be said for the protection of life, goods and honour (Fig. 2). The other two mass texts on fol. 1r/v written by hand 1 and on fols 10–11 by hand 3 were added a short time later.

The second codicological unit was written by three hands in Thuringian-East Franconian. Hand 4 writes a geomantic book of sorts on fols 12–22, the \textit{Dresdener Sandkunst der 16 Richter}. Hand 5 gives us a collection of magical signs on fol. 32r and a short instruction on treasure hunting in Latin on fol. 32v. All other texts of this unit were written by hand 6: onomantic and other divinatory texts on fols 34r–38v, the aforementioned collection of text amulets on fols 40r–64v, detailed instructions on ritual magic on fols 65r–111r and further onomantic texts attributed to Nanno Philosophus on fols 119r–130r. The \textit{Dresdener Sandkunst der 16 Richter} (Fig. 4) can be used to answer sixteen questions like: ‘Will someone live for a long time or briefly?’, ‘Will someone come into an inheritance?’ or ‘Will the pregnant woman give birth to a son or a daughter?’ The onomantic texts can be consulted for similar questions, for example, whether an ill person will die or recover, or who will win a tournament.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{10} Wer in grossen ängsten oder nötten sey des leibs des güts oder der eren, der lasz im dise mesz sprechen als her nach geschriben stet, das im got ausz solllichen nötten erloßnen wolle (‘Whoever is in great fear and distress for life, goods or honour, let this Mass be said as it is written in the following, so that God may deliver him from this distress.’), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 2r. – The orthography has deliberately been simplified in the transliterated version of the German text, with words generally being written uniformly in lower case rather than lower and upper as in the original (apart from proper nouns and the beginning of a sentence).
\item \textbf{11} Cf. Heiles 2018.
\item \textbf{12} Fol. 32 consists of two leaves that were glued together. The drawing on the reverse side of the first leaf shines through. It might be the drawing of the Almandal. Cf. Veenstra 2002, Figs 1–3.
\item \textbf{13} Ab eÿner lange adder kuercz sal leben. Ab einer oûch sollen erben haben. Ab das schwanger webb sün ader tochter trage (‘Whether someone will live long or short. Whether someone will inherit something. Whether the pregnant woman will bear a son or a daughter.’), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 2r. – The orthography has deliberately been simplified in the transliterated version of the German text, with words generally being written uniformly in lower case rather than lower and upper as in the original (apart from proper nouns and the beginning of a sentence).
\item \textbf{14} ’In der fi gur fíndet man, war eyn mensch an eynem thag siech wÿrt, ob er des sichthums sterb adder nitt’ (‘If a person falls ill one day, you will find in this diagram whether he dies of the disease or not.’), SLUB, Mscr.
texts on ritual magic, in contrast, give detailed instructions for communicating with devils. One of these texts tells the reader how to find treasures with the help of devils and the ghost of King Solomon. The text explains how a virgin boy should be used as a medium for scrying, how magic circles are cast with a conjured sword and how devils are conjured and forced to help (Fig. 5).\textsuperscript{15}

The third codicological unit, which was added after the first and second unit were brought together and foliated, was written by two hands, also in Thuringian-East Franconian, and contains texts and tables on geomancy (Fig. 3).
Some of the inscriptions are (liturgical) invocations or Biblical verses, and some inform the reader about the agency (Wirkmacht) of the respective seal. The first two seals of the collection, for example, protect the one who looks at them against sudden death and trouble (Fig. 8). In general, there is no recognizable connection between the seals and the content of the paragraphs following them. But some of the paragraphs are illustrated by pen drawings of a sword (Figs 6 and 7), a cross (Fig. 12), a ruler (Fig. 7) or a hand (Figs 10 and 11). And on two pages there are full-colour pen drawings glued into the codex. The first one on fol. 45v shows the Crucifixion of Jesus (Fig. 9), the second one on fol. 59v the Adoration of the Magi (Fig. 10). In both cases the text next to the drawings refers to the depicted scene.

The title of the compilation is given only in an explicit on its last page: ‘Finis fundamentum Leonis pape super omnes caracteres’ (‘End of the fundamental teaching of Pope Leo about all characteres’) (Fig. 11). The origin of this unique entitlement is unclear. Characteres are non-standard signs with magical power. The term can refer to ‘a strange and incomprehensible script, astrological signs, symbols without verbal equivalents, or […] long series of ordinary

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20 E.g. ‘Consummatum est’ (‘It is finished.’) (John 19:30), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 40v.

21 ‘Contra subitaneam mortem hoc signum si inspexeris’ (‘If you will have seen this sign, it [will help] against sudden death.’) and ‘In quacumque die hoc signum videris, sine molestia permanebis’ (‘The day you see this sign, it will last without difficulty.’), both SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 40v.


23 SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 45v and 59v. There is no text lost. The writer left some blank space for these (or other perhaps now covered) images.

24 SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 64v.
Latin letters'. But it can also stand for 'magic seal' or 'textual amulet'. In this sense, our extensive collection of magic seals and amuletic texts might be called a ‘fundamental teaching’ of all (or at least plenty of) *characters*. The connection to a Pope Leo seems arbitrary, since a Pope Leo occurs only in one short text of the collection. But in the sixteenth century, another Latin collection of amuletic texts connected to a Pope Leo is known. *The Leonis papae enchiridion* (‘Handbook of Pope Leo’) was first printed in 1525 in Rome. Although the text was listed in the *Index librorum prohibitorum* (‘List of prohibited books’), it was frequently reprinted, enriched and translated until the nineteenth century. While the first printing was ascribed to Pope Leo I Magnus (440–461), later editions are attributed to Pope Leo III (795–816) or Leo X (1515–1521). The Pope Leo in the *Fundamentum Leonis pape* (Fig. 12) is also Pope Leo III, who was a contemporary of Charlemagne (742/747–814):


This is the letter Pope Leo gave to King and Emperor Carolus Magnus and this letter was taught to Saint George by God’s angel. Everyone who is in combat should carry them [!] with himself. In the honour of Saint Veronica. In the honour of the holy Corpus Christi and the holy blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the honour of God’s righteousness. You sole fighter of my life. The righteousness of the Lord has made virtue and unity. The righteousness shall protect and shelter me in all virtues. Amen.

Like this *Kaiser-Karl-Segen* (‘Blessing of Emperor Charles’), most of the texts in this collection tell us that they have the ability, not to say agency, to protect a person who carries the text on his body. Phrases like ‘szolllen szie bey yn tragen’ (‘they should carry them with themselves’) can be found 21 times. These texts effect invincibility, salvation from all hardships and affection. They protect against all weapons.
Fig. 6: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 40r/41v, original size.
Amen. Verte dieser Gott. Kumilisius, 

Von der erst mit wund, wann der ist 

Ein ferner meines lebens. Das mir mit 

Welle im die angefertigt, meine versucht 

und beginnt mit für den, jemanden 

meiner feint. Die sie auf mit fremden 

meinerwindows. Himmel gab fried der 

diese wolke der den angelegen. Frie die 

vorsein, der die sie der ist geben 

unde geschmied. Des lebens und des 

lebens. Des vornlassen der ist geben 

in dem, jemanden Gott. Feinsund 

und des Jüngers und des fehls. 

Geist. Amen.
Fig. 7: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 55v/56r, original size.
against every kind of physical or spiritual captivity,\(^{35}\) against all enemies,\(^{36}\) against the devil, sorcery (‘czoubernís’) and thunderstorms\(^{37}\) et cetera. In contrast, there are only three texts that take effect in a different way. In the first one, the reader needs to pronounce certain holy names.\(^{38}\) In the second one, he needs to look at the figure of the ‘Measure of the Holy Cross’ (\textit{Longitudo Corporis Christi}) every day (Fig. 7).\(^{39}\) The third text takes effect if somebody carries the text with him or reads the texts or hears the text being read.\(^{40}\)

The agency of the textual amulets is explained and justified by a number of historical narratives (historiolae). Already the first text of the \textit{Fundamentum} gives ‘the letters, which the almighty God taught Emperor Constantine, the son of Queen Helena. He shall write them down and carry them with him. Whenever he fights against the barbarians, he will be victorious and win the battle.’ (Fig. 8).\(^{41}\) Other texts are said to go back to an unnamed angel,\(^{42}\) the archangel Raphael\(^{43}\) or Saint Coloman\(^{44}\) and one even to Jesus Christ himself. This text is ‘the letter of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he wrote with his divine hands to King Abgar’.\(^{45}\) Like these, all texts profess that their agency is based on the power of God. Two texts give the aforementioned measurements of the holy cross\(^{46}\) and at least eleven texts use holy names.\(^{47}\) Others are just excerpts or pericopes from the Gospels: Luke 1:5–17, Luke 3:1–6, John 1:1–14 (Fig. 13) and Mathew 1:1–16.\(^{48}\) But in one way or

\(^{35}\) Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 45v.

\(^{36}\) Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 46v.


\(^{38}\) ‘Cum aliquis vadat ad pugnandum dicat ✓ Anthipa ✓ Arabrastr ✓ Asta…’ (‘When someone goes to fight, he shall say ✓ Anthipa ✓ Arabrastr ✓ Asta…’) SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 44v.

\(^{39}\) ‘Vnde wer die leng eret vnde szie alle thage ansicht der mag nicht gedöf nach ermordt …’ (‘And whoever honours this length and worships it every day cannot be killed or murdered …’), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 56v. This textual amulet belongs to the tradition of the \textit{Longitudo Corporis Christi}, in which a fraction of the measure of the body of Christ or of the Holy Cross is depicted. For the textual history of the \textit{Longitudo Corporis Christi}, cf. Boroffka 2017, 77–176; Spilling 2014, 184–217.

\(^{40}\) ‘Das szeyn heylige nhamen []! wer szŷ geschrieben bey im tregt adder sý liest adder horet leszen, deme mag nit geschaden vnde wirt erlediget von allen szeynen veÿnden szie szeyn sichtigk adder vnsichtig.’ (‘These are holy names; whoever carries them written on his person or reads them or hears them read will suffer no damage and he will be freed from all his enemies, be they visible or invisible.’), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 59v.

\(^{41}\) ‘Das szeind die buchstaben die gott der almechtig dem keyszer Constantino der künigyn Helena szone gelert hot. Er sol szit schreiben vnde die beÿ ym tragen. Wen er szolle streitten widder die barbarischen szo werde er sighafft vnde gewyn in dem streidt.’ SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 40r.

\(^{42}\) Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 46r.

\(^{43}\) SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 56r.

\(^{44}\) SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 61v. In German literature, Columanus is identified with St. Columan of Stockerau (d. 1012), cf. Jacoby 1927; Bolte 1904, 435f.; Klapper 1907, 13. Skemer identifies him as St. Columban his divine hands to King Abgar’.\(^{45}\) Like these, all texts profess that their agency is based on the power of God. Two texts give the aforementioned measurements of the holy cross\(^{46}\) and at least eleven texts use holy names.\(^{47}\) Others are just excerpts or pericopes from the Gospels: Luke 1:5–17, Luke 3:1–6, John 1:1–14 (Fig. 13) and Mathew 1:1–16.\(^{48}\) But in one way or

\(^{45}\) ‘Hi vaht ahn die epistel vnszers herren Ihesi Cristi, die er mit szeÿnen'

\(^{46}\) Others are just excerpts or pericopes from the Gospels: Luke 1:5–17, Luke 3:1–6, John 1:1–14 (Fig. 13) and Mathew 1:1–16.\(^{48}\) But in one way or
Fig. 9: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 45v, original size.
Fig. 10: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 59r, original size.
The whole collection is arranged for one person, Reynhard Trugses, who might have written the text, too. Reynhard is the ‘speaker’ of the texts, which often have the form of petitionary prayers (Fig. 6):

Das seyn die waren szegen für alle waffen, ‘• a • g • c • n • m • c • b • E • p • k • s • p • q • s • Amen in panna • fameth sol • c • b • c • o • t • y • o • parilis emanuel by arit • E • est • c • ci •’, das sie nit mögen dyr geschaden an fleisch an bluthe vnne an allen deynen geliedern ∠[drawing of a sword] Ich bit dich heyliger got, das du behuttest durch die heylligen karacteres vnd du durch die heylligen wort, ‘∠ Thobal ∠ gut ∠ guth ∠ gathan’, vor allem vbell leÿbs vnd der szelen. Amen. Herre ewiger gott hymlisher vather nit verlas mich, wan dw bist eyn fører meynes lebens, das ich nit valle in die angesicht meyners veÿnyndt. Vnd behüth mich fur dem gewalt meyners feynet, das sie nit frewen meyners trübsal, szunder gib fried der disze wort bey im szey tragen. Friede vnne heyl

Reynhart’s name appears especially in the beginning of the collection in almost every text and altogether 18 times. Unspecific phrases like ‘der disze wort bey im szey tragen’ (‘who carries this word on his person’) are used only to specify the terms of the agency of the texts. Other names or a placeholder for names are never used.

The textual and pictorial composition of our collection is very similar to that of single-leaf textual amulets from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century. According to Page ‘the earliest surviving textual amulets with multiple figures date from the thirteenth century and are portable, densely written objects folded multiple times and intended to be carried on the body.’ Comparable German-Latin artefacts from the fifteenth and sixteenth/seventeenth centuries were studied and published by Pogliani and Klapper, exemplars

50 Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 40v, 41r, 42v, 42r, 43v, 43r, 44v, 44r, 45v, 49r, 51r, 52r, 53r, 57v, 60 (2×), 62v, 64v, 64r.
52 Page 2019, 440.
53 Pogliani 2009.
54 Klapper 1929, 164–167.
Fig. 12: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206 fol. 48r, original size.
from fourteenth- to seventeenth-century England by Skemer.55 Like these, our collection is a ‘concatenation of scriptural quotations, divine names, common prayers, liturgical formulas, Christian apocrypha, narrative charms or historiolae, magic seals, word and number squares, characteres (non-standard or magical script), devotional images, crosses and other religious symbols’ 56

The Fundamentum Leonis pape super omnes carateres shares, for example, several texts and features with a Latin parchment amulet of the Staats- und Universitätsbibiothek Hamburg (SUBHH) (Figs 14 and 15).57 The textual amulet with the shelf mark Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19 was produced in Southern Germany in the first half of the fifteenth century.58 It is a large-format sheet of parchment (66 × 51 cm) with five closely written columns and a frame in which magic seals and depictions of the twelve apostles alternate with texts in red and black. The amulet is also illustrated with depictions of the Passion, including the Crucifixion of Jesus, and the four evangelists. In the centre of the bottom half there is an extensive circular diagram of magic seals. The sheet was folded seven times to a format of 33.5 × 9.5 cm. Judging from the wear on the reverse side of the amulet, it was most probably worn on the body. It was made to protect a certain Heinricus, whose name is marked in red several times and who is the speaker of the petitionary prayers of this amulet. Like the Fundamentum, the text includes the beginnings of the Gospels of John and Mathew and other biblical texts, the heavenly letter from Jesus to King Abgar59 and the Kaiser-Karl-Segen that Pope Leo gave to Carolus Magnus.60 There are also two versions of the Longitudo Corporis Christi61 and several texts with holy names, also including Hebrew names of God62 and the 72 names of Christ63.

There are no structural differences between the composition of the textual amulet for Heinricus and the text for Reynhard Trugses. Both compilations were produced to protect one specific person and both tell us that they were meant to be carried on the body of this person. But unlike the amulet for Heinricus, the amuletic texts for Reynhard are just one part of a codex. Was the whole codex meant to be carried around? And how does this amulet compilation relate to the other texts of the codex?

Context

Although some parts of the codex Mscr. Dresd. M. 206 existed separately for some time, this is not true for the amulet compilation. It begins in the middle of a quire and ends in the middle of another quire. In its codicological unit, it is surrounded by texts on divination and ritual magic. There is no evidence that the amulets ever existed without the other texts of the second codicological unit. In fact, they are not only connected by materiality and the caprice of the scribes: the amuletic texts and the texts on ritual magic were written by the same author or translator. The beginning of the Gospel of John is used three times in this manuscript. On fols 54r–55r it is part of the Fundamentum Leonis pape super omnes carateres. Here, the text of the Gospel (John 1:1–14) is framed by the Latin phrases that the priest (Inicium sancti evangelii secundum Johannem, ‘The beginning of the Holy Gospel according to John’64) and the server (Gloria tibi, domine65 / Deo gracias,66 ‘Glory be yours, O Lord! / Thanks be to God’) would say when the priest read the Gospel as the Last Gospel at the end of mass after the blessings (Fig. 13).67 In this situation, he would genuflect at the words Et verbum caro factum est (‘And the Word was made flesh’), which are marked at fol. 55r by its Latin wording. The excerpt of the Gospel of John is here

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56 Skemer 2015, 127.
57 SUBHH, Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19. Digital images of the manuscript are available in the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/CodScrin0031Fragm19>.
58 Cf. Brandis 1972, 83–84. Brandis dates this amulet according to its script. Spilling 2014, 208 dates it to the 14th century without giving reasons.
59 ‘Beatus es Agabar rex qui me non uidisti …’, SUBHH, Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19, col. 1.
60 ‘Epistola quam Leo papa misit fratri suo Karulo regi …’, SUBHH, Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19, col. 4.
64 SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 54r.
65 SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 54r.
66 SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 55r.
Fig. 13: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 54v/55r, original size.
ohm gestussiben undie woldt gar
sein mitt erstant de gott in seinem
und die seel eine haben ohn mitt
empfangen die ohm aber entspringt
den gab er gevallgottes kinder zu
werden diesel geborenen in seelennah
men die des mits waren aus dem eignen
dem auf dem willen des fleischs noch
auf dem willen des wunders selbst
auf gott geboren sein. Et verbimi
er asko farri ist ein der das wort
ist fließt worden undie hat in unze ge
wonet und de wett haben geheem sein
die auf die ere des eingeboren von de
Nachter vol geworden und der wunder
Der gegen rivos permone demci Ema
gel jindirgeat nichs der in albu fery
und minus merke mmund atpe delusta in
Fig. 14: Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19, recto, 66.0 × 51.0 cm.
Fig. 15: Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19, recto (detail).
second-person singular imperatives, and the placeholder ‘N’ is used instead of the practitioner’s name or the concrete place name of the destination. Second-person singular imperatives, and the placeholder ‘N’ is used instead of the practitioner’s name or the concrete place name of the destination.71 The conjurations have no agency until they are spoken in the right ritual, in the centre of a distinct magic circle and in combination with other conjuring texts. However, the wording of all three versions of John 1:1–14 is almost the same. All versions derive


69 SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 100r.

70 SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 109r.

71 ‘Sprich disze nachgeschrieben wort vn de preijt den mantel vff die erden und sprich alszo: “Ich beschwere dich Sathan … Nußbeschwer ich euch alle vier + Belczebub + Sathan + Ruffe + vnde Rubin, das jr kommet szchnel vnde stille vnde fuett mich vff disszem mantel gehn N adder wo hyn ich will haben … Alszo solzt jr mich N fiiren vnde leijten vff disszem Mantell …” Vnde sprich fünff pater noster vnde fünff aile Maria vnde setze dich evff den mantell. Vnde wie du dich szetzt also bleijb szetzen vnde kreutz dich niecht mehr vnd sprich: “Wolaißf Belczebub, Sathan, Ruffe, Rubin. Das er Lucifer wolt!” (‘Speak these following words and spread your coat out on the earth and speak thusly: “I invoke you, Satan … Now I invoke you all four: Beelzebub, Satan, Ruffe and Rubin, that you come swiftly and quietly to bring me on this coat to N or wherever else I want … So shall you guide and lead me N on this coat …’). And speak five “Our Fathers” and five “Hail Marys” and sit down on the coat. And when you have sat down, so remain seated and do not make the sign of the cross any more and speak: “Good health, Beelzebub, Satan, Ruffe, Rubin. Lucifer shall command it.”’), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 108r–110r.
from the same German template, as the transcription and the variant list in the appendix show. Especially the texts on fols 54 ‐ 55 and 109 ‐ 109 are almost identical, while all three versions differ significantly from other German translations. Therefore, both the amulet collection and the collection of instructions on ritual magic were most probably composed by the same man and most likely for Reynhard Trugses and this manuscript. The Fundamentum Leonis pape super omnes carac teres was meant from the beginning to be accompanied by other texts with magical agency. Even if these texts needed to be spoken out in mass or in magical ritual, they are powerful and should possibly potentiate the apotropaic agency of this codex.

The Codex Dresden, Landeshbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206 was certainly produced to have (at least) two functions. On the one hand, it functioned as a manual for divination and ritual magic. On the other hand, it was meant to be a powerful apotropaic magical agent. Its sheer presence effected supernatural protection. Despite its 136 leaves, the codex – 20 centimetres high and just three centimetres thick – is still small enough to be carried around by someone on his body. The requirements of travelling might also explain the extraordinary binding: it spares the usual but bulky wooden boards and its flap protects even the fore edge of the book block against dirt and destruction. In this form, the codex was a perfect vade mecum offering both advice and protection in every difficult situation.

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72 Cf. Rosenfeld 1962, Schönbach 1904, 124–137.

Translation

Beginning of the Gospel of John. Glory be to the Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made. What was made in him, that was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men might believe through the light. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (Et verbum caro factum est.) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Thanks be to God. Through these words of the Holy Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ absolves us for all our sins and vices. Amen.

APPENDIX

Transcription of the Last Gospel (John 1:1–14) from fols 54r–55r (A), with textual variants from fols 100r–100v (B) and 109r–109v (C)

1. Inicium sancti ewangelii secundum Johannem. Gloria tibi, domine.

2. In dem anfang was das wort. Vnd das wort was bey gott. Vnde got was das wort. Das was von anfanck bey got. Alle dinck sze[y]n durch ohn gemacht vnde ane ohn ist nichts gemacht. Das do gemacht ist in ohm, das ist gewest das leben. Vnde das leben was eyn licht der menschen. Vnd das licht hat in der fynsternis geleuchtet vnde die fynsternissze hat sze[y]n nicht begriffen. Es was ein mensch von gotte geszandt, des nhame was Johannes. Der kam in ein geezewgnis, das er geezewgnis gebe von dem lichte, vff das alle menschen gelo[t]bten durch das liecht. Er was nicht das licht, szünder das geezewgnis gebe von dem liecht. Es was das ware licht, das do erleuchtet alle menschen, kommende in disse weldt. Er ist gewezen in der weldt vnd die weldt ist durch [fol. 55] ohn geschaffen vnde die weldt hat sze[y]n nitt erkant. Er qwam in sze[y]n e[y]gen vnde die sze[y]nen haben ohn nicht entpfangen Die ohn aber entpfyngen, den gab er gewalt gottes kinder czw werden. Die do gelo[t]bten in sze[y]nen nhamen, die do nicht waren aus dene blute, nach a[s]z dem willen des fleysszes, noch aus dem willen des mannes, szünder a[s] gott geboren sze[y]. (Et verbüm ca ÷ ro factum est.) Vnde das wort ist fleisch worden. Vnde hot in vns gewonet. Vnde wýr haben geszehen sze[y]n ere als die ere des eingeboren von dem vather vol genaden vnd der warheý

28. Deo gracias. Per istos sermones sancti ewangellii indulgeat nobis dominus noster Jhesus Cristus

29. vniiersa nostra crimina atque delicta. Amen.

30. Thanks be to God. Through these words of the Holy Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ absolves us for all our sins and vices. Amen. 74

74 The English translation is based on the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. It was altered in a number of places to correspond better to the original text in Early New High German.
Variants

1 Inicium ... 2 domine: vacat BC.
3 anfang: anfag A, anbegyn B, anfangk C.
5 Alle: Vnde alle B.
5 ohn1: jen C.
5 gemacht: geschaffen B.
5 ohn2: Jhen C.
6 gemacht: gemacht worden B.
6 Das do gemacht: das gemacht B.
6 ohm: ýme B, ýem C.
6 das ... 7 ist: ist B.
8 Vnd das licht ... geleuchtet: Vnd das licht hot geleuchtet in der finsternis B.
12 vff das: das B.
12 geloubten ... 13 liecht: durch ynyn gelöbten B.
13 szünber: szün= C.
14 Es: Er C.
15 kommende: die di kommen B.
16 Er ist gewezen: Es was B.
16 vnde ... 17 geschaffen: vacat B.
17 ohn: Jenen C.
17 szeÿn: es B.
18 erkant: erkennet. Vnde die welt ist durch ýnen geschaffen B.
18 qwam: ist kummt B.
18 éygen: éygenthûm BC.
19 ohn: jen B, jen C.
19 entpfangen: erkant B.
19 Die ... entpfyngen: Aber die yhnen entpfangen han B.
19 ohn: Jen C.
20 den: das C.
20 gab er: hot er geben B.
22 fleysszes: fleisches BC.
23 szünde: alleýne B.
24 szeÿn ... est: vacat B.
24 das ... 25 fleisch: der sohn gottes ist mensche B.
25 Vnde ... gewonet: vacat B.
27 von dem: des B.
28 Deo ... 30 delicta: vacat BC.
30 Amen: vacat C.
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