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Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities

Edited by Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz

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Cover

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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Article

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.[1] 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.[2] 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.[3] This amulet collection, which an *explicit* (the last words of a textual unit, from the Latin *explicitus*, meaning 'unrolled') calls 'fundamentum Leonis pape super omnes caracteres' ('the fundamental teaching of Pope Leo about all *characteres*'),[4] is the focus of this study. What was the function of this collection of amulets? Was it used as a catalogue for verbal charms or for the production of textual amulets? Or was this collection meant to give the book itself apotropaic agency? Was the codex itself used as a magical agent?

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.[5] 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.[6]



Fig. 1: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, front cover.

[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>.

[2] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 12r–22v, 32r–134v.

[3] On the late medieval discourse on superstition and magic cf. Heiles 2021; Bailey 2019. On the medieval gernres of divination and ritual magic cf. Rapisarda 2021; Klaassen 2019; Véronèse 2019; Láng 2008, 123–143, 162–188.

[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.

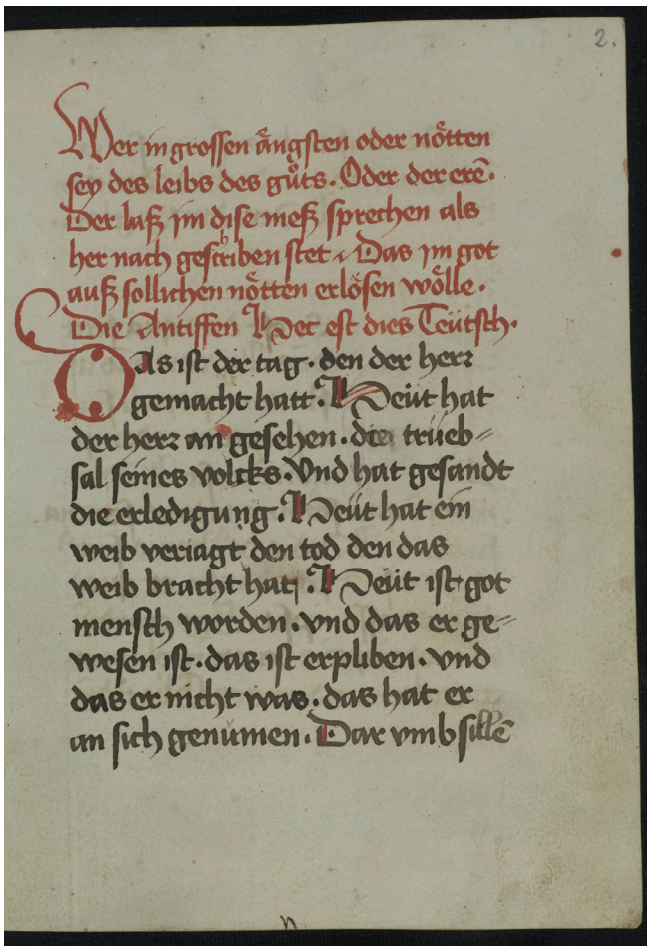


Fig. 2: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 2r, 15.5 × 20.0 cm.

There is a textile strap attached to the flap.[7] This strap is the fastening: it can be wrapped around the book two times.[8]

The manuscript is a composite and consists of three parts or codicological units[9] that were produced separately. This can be easily deduced from the quire structure and the watermarks. The book block consists of 13 quires. The first two quires (fols 1–11) are made from paper that can be dated to *c.* 1495/96 (Fig. 2). These form the first codicological unit. The paper in the following eleven quires (fols 12–134) can be dated to the years around 1515, but the quire structure is not consistent. The fourth quire (fols 23–31) separates the third quire into two parts (fols 12–22, 32–33). The paper of this inserted quire is not used in other quires and does not have the foliation numbers common 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 (*Haec est dies*, Ps 117,24) on fols 2r–10r. 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).[10] The other two mass texts on fol. 1r/v written by hand 1 and on fols 10v–11v 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 12r–22r, the *Dresdener Sandkunst der 16 Richter*.[11] Hand 5 gives us a collection of magical signs on fol. 32r and a short instruction on treasure hunting in Latin on fol. 32v.[12] 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 *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?'[13] 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.[14] The

[7] The textile strap is a modern reconstruction.

[8] For a description of this type of fastening (Untergesteckter Wickelverschluss), which is known from fifteenth-century Germany, cf. Adler 2010, 7 (B.V.1.1.1.), 75 (Abb. 4–14 and Abb. 4–15).

[9] On this concept, cf. Gumbert 2004.

[10] 'Wer in grossen ångsten oder nôtten sey des leibs des gůts oder der eren, der lasz im dise mesz sprechen als her nach geschriben stet, das im got ausz sollichen nôtten erlôsen wôlle' ('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).

[11] Cf. Heiles 2018.

[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.

[13] 'Ab eÿner lange adder kůrcz sal leben. Ab einer oůch sall erben haben. Ab das schwanger weib sůn 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. 13v. Cf. Heiles 2018. An edition of a similar text is offered by Eis 1956, 29–48.

[14] 'Jn der figur fÿndet 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.

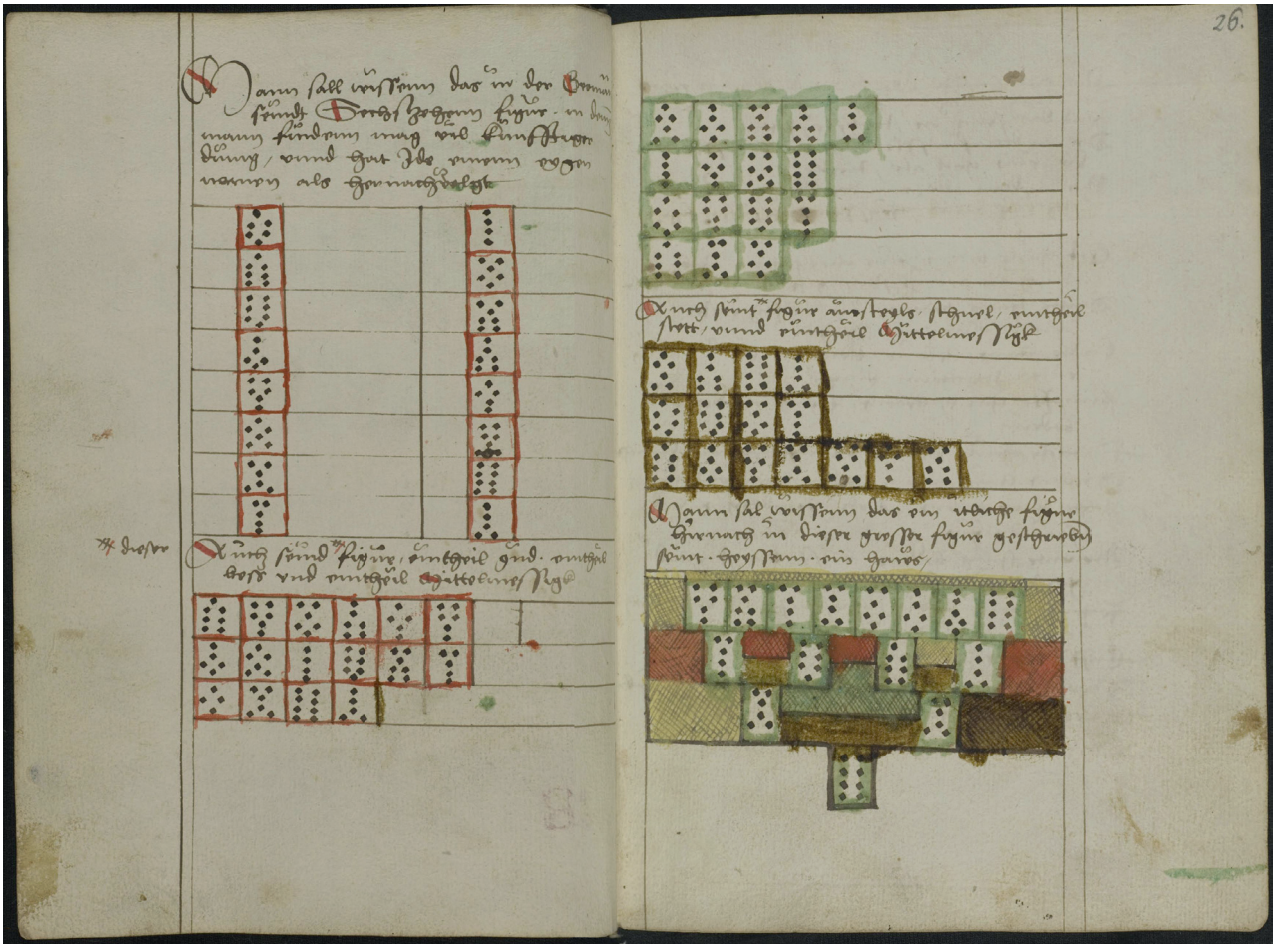


Fig. 3: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 25v/26r.

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).[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).

Fundamentum Leonis pape super omnes caracteres

The layout of the amuletic texts in *Mscr. Dresd. M. 206* is very characteristic. The text of the fols 40r–64v is divided into 28 sections by 29 pairs or triplets of magic seals (Fig. 6). Each section contains one to three paragraphs, each beginning with a lombard initial or red headlines. Werner Hoffmann distinguished 43 textual units, but he remarks that the text borders couldn't always be determined with certainty.[16] The circular seals are inserted with multi-rayed figures, crosses, holy names, letters and other unknown signs (*characteres*). The first pairs of seals on fols 40r–55v are surrounded by Latin inscriptions,[17] the following by coloured circles (Fig. 7).[18]

Dresd. M. 206, fol. 34r. This text is a German version of *The Victorious and Vanquished*. Cf. Burnett 1988. – 'Hyr nach folget aber ein experiment Nannonis des vorgnannthen philosophi, do důrch dw magst wisszen, ab czwehn mitteinander szollen kempfenn adder ander ritterspiell treiben, welcher gewynnen adder vorlieren soll' ('Here follows an experiment by the aforementioned philosopher Nanno, from which you can learn which of two who fight with each other or play knights' games will win or lose.'), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 128v.

[15] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 74r–95v.

[16] Cf. Hoffmann and Heiles 2016, no. 4.14 and nos 4.14.1–4.14.43.

[17] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 40r, 40v, 41r, 42v, 43v, 44v, 45v, 47r, 47v, 49v, 51r, 51v, 52v, 53v, 55r, 55v.

[18] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 56r, 58r, 58v, 59v, 60r, 60v, 61v, 62v, 63v, 64r, 64v.

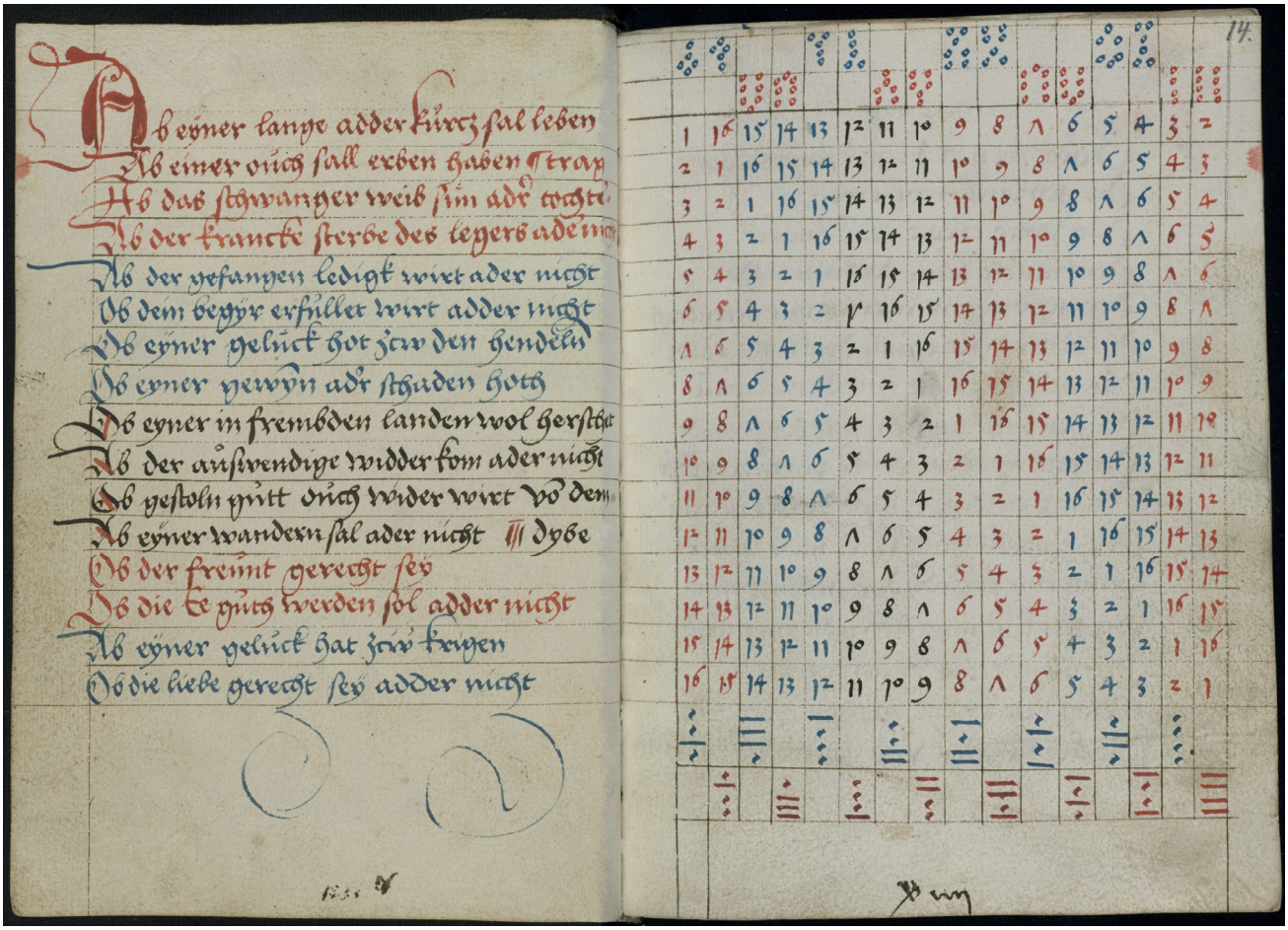


Fig. 4: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 13ᵛ/14ʳ.

Some of the inscriptions are (liturgical) invocations[19] or Biblical verses,[20] 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).[21] 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).[22] 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.[23]

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*')[24] (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

[19] E.g. 'In manus tuas, domine, commendo spiritum meum' ('Into your hands, o Lord, I commend my spirit.') (from the Compline, i.e. the Night Prayer; cf. also Psalms 30:6, Luke 23:46), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 40ᵛ. Cf. <http://cantusindex.org/id/601142> (10 December 2022).

[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. 40ʳ.

[22] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 40ᵛ, 43ᵛ, 56ʳ, 57ʳ. – SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 48ʳ. – SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 52ʳ, 56ʳ. – SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 59ᵛ, 64ᵛ.

[23] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 45ᵛ and 59ʳ. 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.

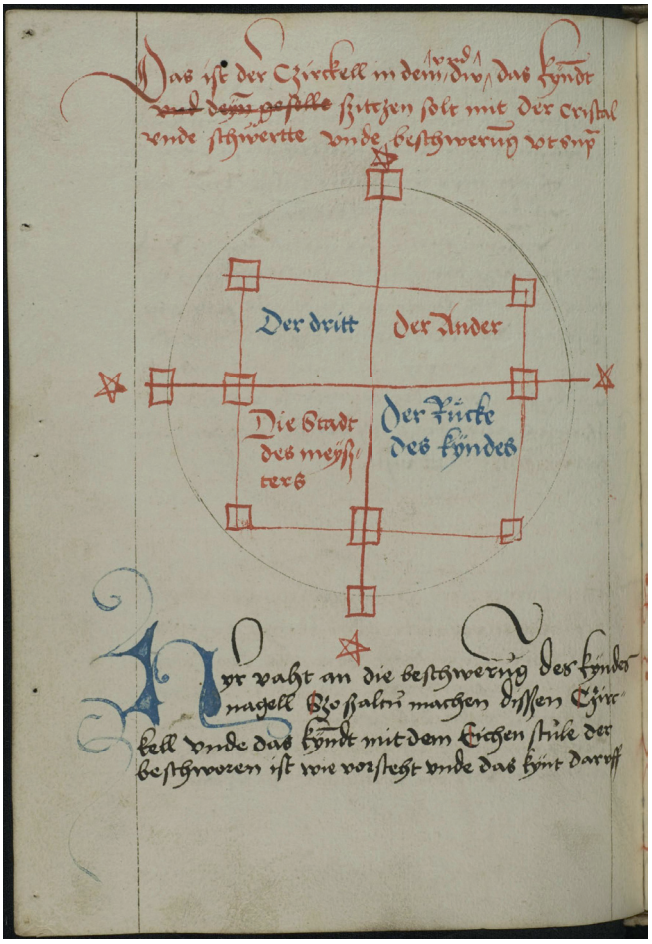


Fig. 5: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 82v.

Latin letters'.[25] But it can also stand for 'magic seal' or 'textual amulet'.[26] 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) *characteres*. 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.[27] 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.[28] 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):

> Das ist der brieff den Bapest Leo dem Kunnig Karolo, Keyszer Karolo magno gab vnde hat dÿ [!] der engel gottes Sant Gregorio geleret. Alle dy do in streitten szeÿndt, szolllen [!] szie bey yn tragen. ✠ In der ere der Heÿligen Feronica. ✠ In der ere des heyligen fronleichnams vnde bluts vnszers herren Ihesu Cristi. ✠ In der ere der gerechtigkeÿt gottes. ✠ Dw einiger fechter meynes lebens. ✠ Die gerechtigkeyt des herren hat gemacht die thůgendt vnde eynigkeyt. Die gerechtigkeÿt szeÿ mich behuthen vnde beschÿrmen in allen thůgenden Amen.[29]
>
> 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'),[30] 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')[31] can be found 21 times.[32] These texts effect invincibility, salvation from all hardships and affection.[33] They protect against all weapons,[34]

[25] Skemer 2006, 18. Gordon 2014 offers a detailed analysis of the development of characteres.

[26] Cf. Skemer 2006, 17–18.

[27] Cf. Brunet 1820, 337; Jacoby 1930/1931, 566.

[28] Cf. Jacoby 1930/1931, 566; Skemer 2006, 98–99; Davies 2009, 34–35, 92, 96, 97, 107, 128, 159, 245. There is no direct textual dependence between the Enchiridion and the Fundamentum. Cf. the edition Mainz 1633, completely digitised on the website Wolfenbüttel Digital Library (WDB) of the Herzog August Bibliothek <http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/xb-6782/start.htm> (22 October 2022).

[29] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 48r.

[30] This text type is very common. Cf. Stübe 1932; Hoffmann and Heiles 2016, no. 4.14.12; Bozoky 2003, 51; Skemer 2006, 202, 295; Holzmann 2001, 264–267; Bischoff 1967, 275–283; Klapper 1907, 36–27. On 'Charlemagne's blessing' see Sabine Kienitz' contribution in this volume as well.

[31] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 48r.

[32] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 40r, 41r (2×), 42r, 43r, 45r (2×), 46r, 46v, 47v, 48r, 48v, 52r, 56r, 56v (2×), 57v (2×), 59r, 63r, 63v.

[33] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 42r.

[34] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 43r.

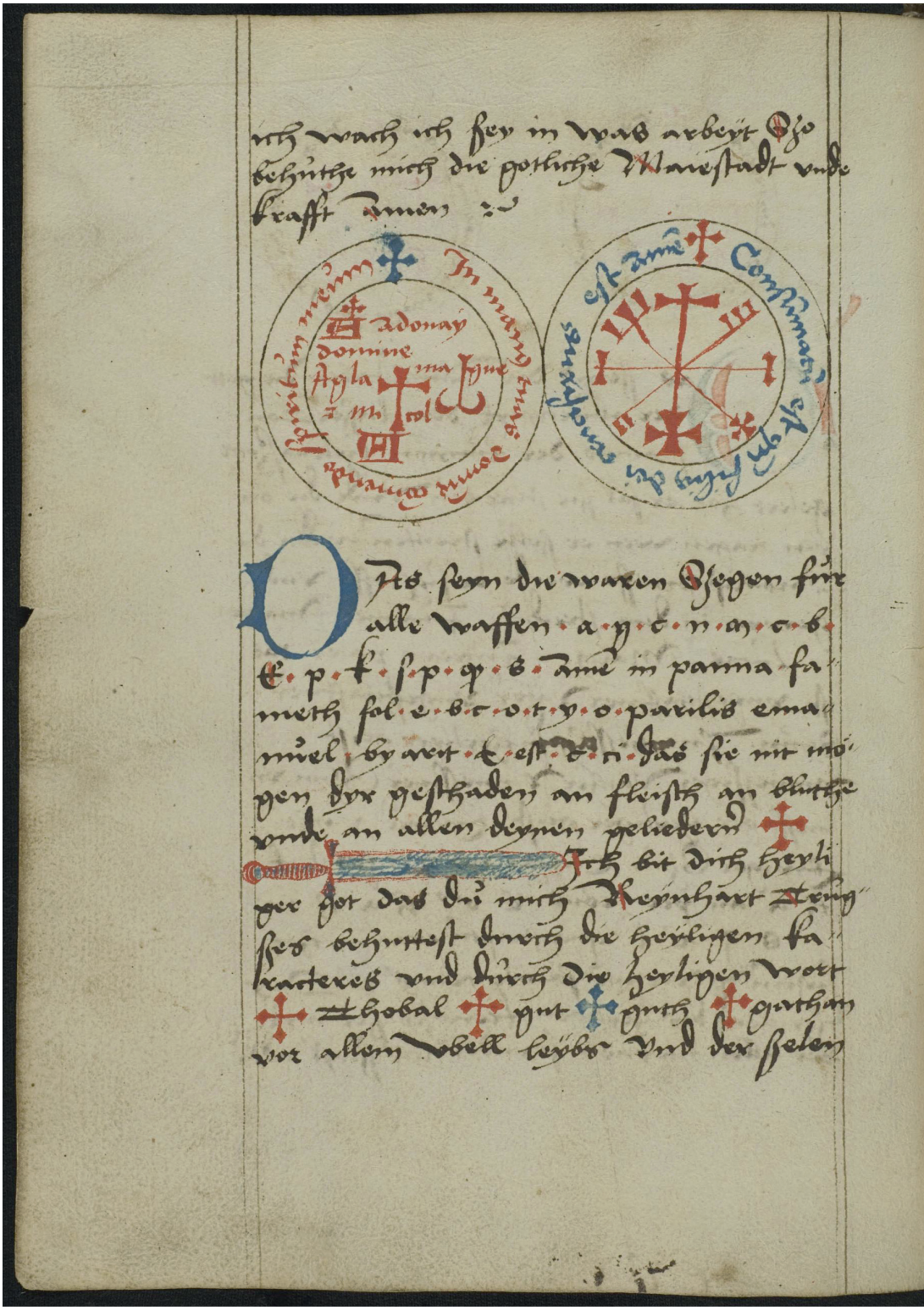
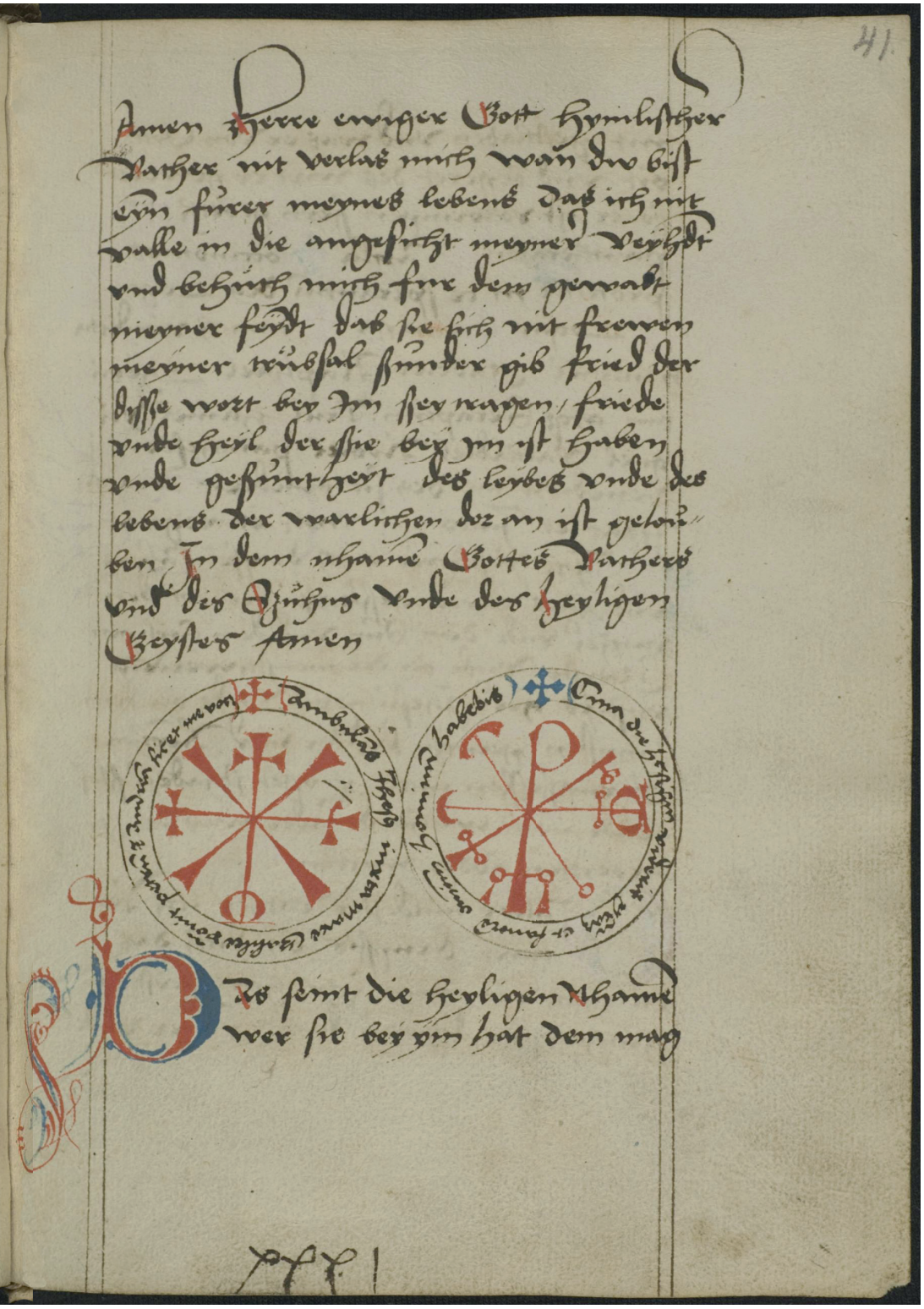


Fig. 6: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 40^{v}/41^{r}, original size.


41.
Amen Herre ewiger Gott Hymlischer
Vatter nit verlas mich wan du bist
ein fürer meynes lebens das ich nit
valle in die angesicht meyner veyndt
vnd behüth mich fur dem gewalt
meyner feydt das sie sich nit freuwen
meyner trübsal sünder gib fried der
disse wort bey Im sey nagen / friede
vnde heyl der sie bey Im ist haben
vnde gesünthayt des leybes vnde des
lebens der warlichen dez Im ist gelo-
ben In dem nhamen Gottes Vatters
vnd des Sünes vnde des heyligen
Geystes Amen
Amen dicat omnis
Christus vincit
Christus regnat
Christus imperat
Christus ab omni malo
Ambrosius Theod
Cum de sanctis
Christus vincit
Christus regnat
Christus imperat
Christus ab omni malo
Ambrosius Theod
Habebis
Dis sent die heyligen Nhamen
wer sie bey Im hat dem mag

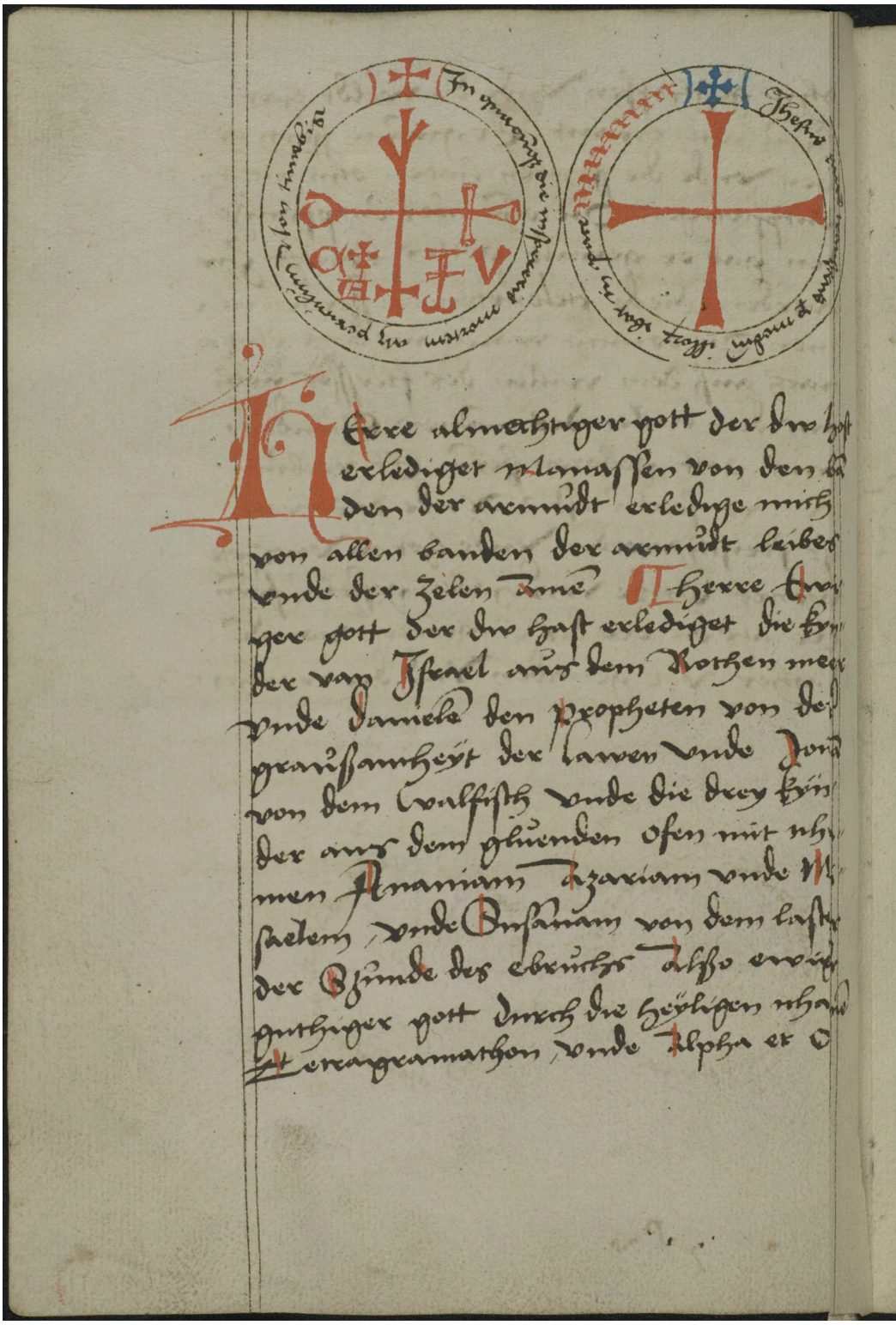
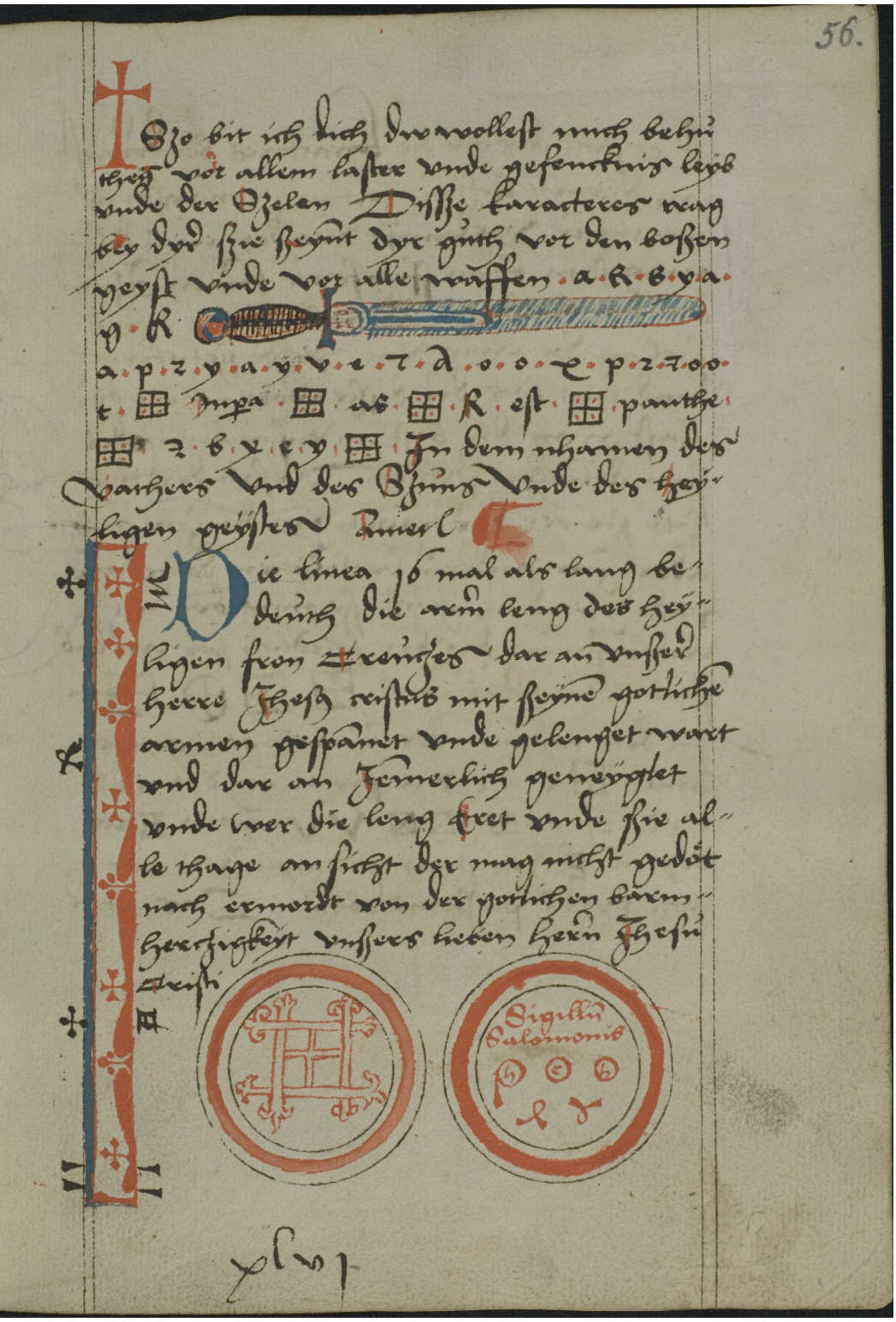


Fig. 7: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 55^{v}/56^{r}, original size.


56.
Sigillū Salomonis

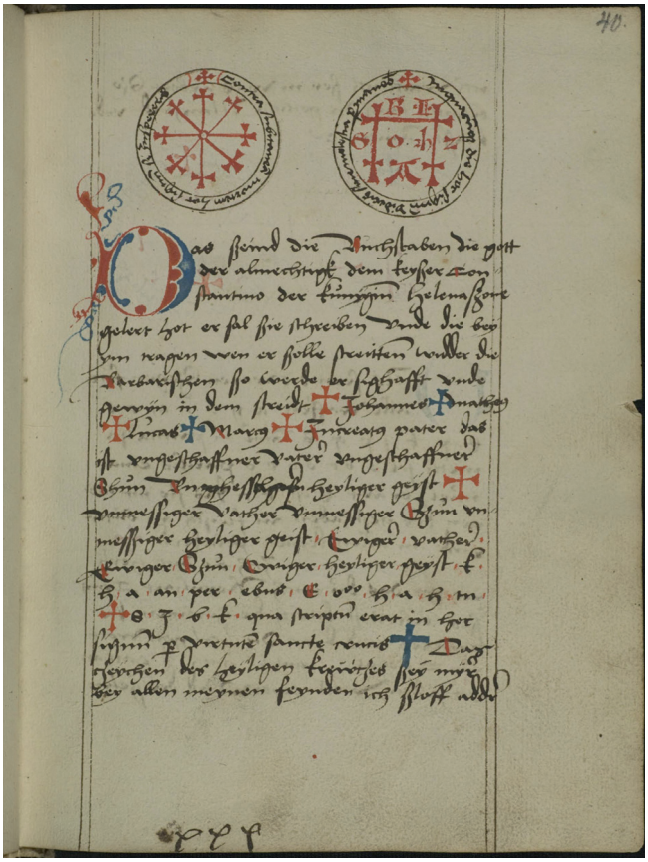


Fig. 8: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 40r.

against every kind of physical or spiritual captivity,[35] against all enemies,[36] against the devil, sorcery ('czoůbernis') and thunderstorms[37] etcetera. 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' *(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 *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. 45r.

[36] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 46r.

[37] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 47v.

[38] 'Cum aliquis vadat ad pugnandum dicat ✠ Anthipa ✠ Arabrast ✠ Asta…' ('When someone goes to fight, he shall say ✠ Anthipa ✠ Arabrast ✠ Asta …') SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 44r.

[39] 'Vnde wer die leng eret vnde szie alle thage ansicht der mag nicht gedŏt nach ermordt …' ('And whoever honours this length and worships it every day cannot be killed or murdered …'), SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 56r. This textual amulet belongs to the tradition of the 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 *Longitudo Corporis Christi*, cf. Boroffka 2017, 77–176; Spilling 2014, 184–217.

[40] 'Das szeyn heylige nhamen [!] wer szÿ geschrieben bey im tregt adder sÿ 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. 59r.

[41] 'Das szeind die buchstaben die gott der almechtigk dem keyszer Constantino der kůnygin Helena szone gelert hot. Er sol szi schreiben vnde die beÿ ym tragen. Wen er szolle streitten widder die barbarischen szo werde er sighafft vnde gewÿn 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. 56v.

[44] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 61r. In German literature, Columbanus is identified with St. Coloman of Stockerau (d. 1012), cf. Jacoby 1927; Bolte 1904, 435f.; Klapper 1907, 13. Skemer identifies him as St. Columban (543–615), cf. Skemer 2006, 202–203, 208–209, fig. 81.

[45] 'Hi vaht ahn die epistel vnszers herren Ihesi Cristi, die er mit szeÿnen gotlichen henden geschriben hot dem Konÿge Abagaro', SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 47r. For other Abgar amulets, cf. Hoffmann and Heiles 2016, no. 4.14.11; Skemer 2006, 96–104, 290–291; Brozoky 2003, 50. On the Abgarbrief in general, cf. Stübe 1927; Jacoby 1941.

[46] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 52r/v, 56r. For the text on fol. 52r, cf. Boroffka 2017, 89 with transcription in footnote 348. My transcription is also available online: <https://www.artesliteratur.de/wiki/Länge_Christi>.

[47] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 41r, 42v, 43v, 44v, 45v, 48v, 52r, 53v, 58v, 62r, 63v.

[48] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 49v–51r (Luke 1:5–17), 51r/v (Luke 3:1–6), fol. 54v–55r (John 1:1–14), fol. 62r–63r (Mathew 1:1–16). The Gospel of Mark is announced in a headline on fol. 60r, but the text itself is missing.



Fig. 9: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 45ᵛ, original size.



Fig. 10: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 59^{v}, original size.

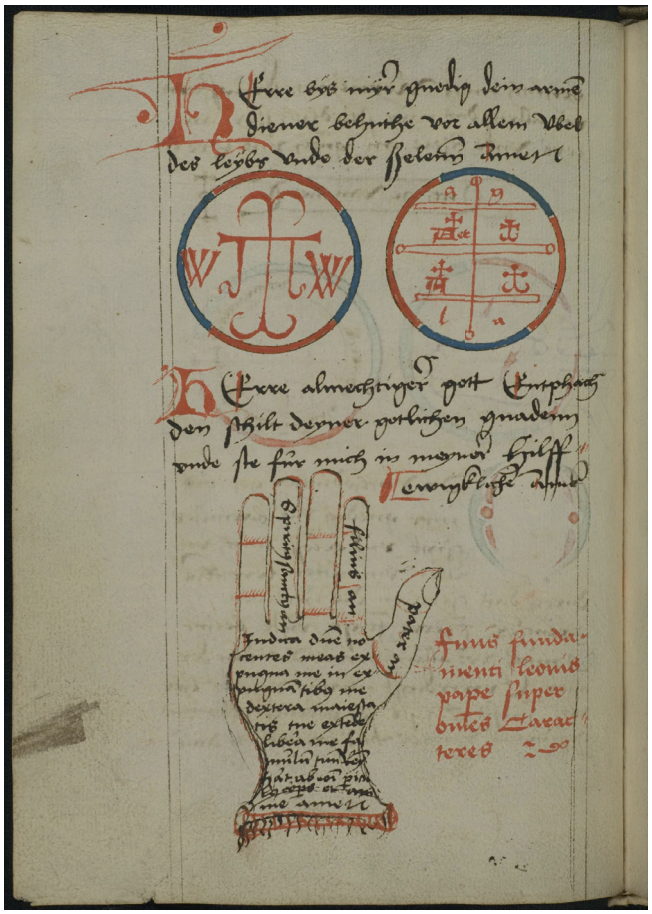


Fig. 11: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 64v.

another, all texts relate to God, who is often explicitly asked for help and protection.

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 fůr alle waffen, '• a • g • c • n • m • c • b • E • p • k • s • p • q • s • Amen in panna • fameth sol • e • b • c • o • t • y • o • parilis emanůel by arit • E • est • c • ci •', das sie nit mögen dyr geschaden an fleisch an bluthe vnde an allen deynen geliedern ✠ [drawing of a sword] Ich bit dich heyliger got, das dů mich Reÿnhart Trůgszes behuttest durch die heÿligen karacteres vnd důrch die heyligen wort, '✠ Thobal ✠ gut ✠ guth ✠ gathan', vor allem vbell leÿbs vnd der szelen. Amen. Herre ewiger gott hymlischer vather nit verlas mich, wan dw bist eÿn fůrer meynes lebens, das ich nit valle in die angesicht meyner veÿnendt. Vnd behůth mich fur dem gewalt meyner feÿndt, das sie sich nit frewen meÿner trübsal, szunder gib fried der disze wort bey im szey tragen. Friede vnde heÿl der szie beÿ im ist haben vnd geszůntheÿt des leÿbes vnde des lebens der warlicher dor an ist geloůben. In dem nhamen gottes vathers vnd des szůhns vnde des heyligen geystes. Amen.[49]
>
> This is the true benediction against all weapons, '• a • g • c • n • m • c • b • E • p • k • s • p • q • s • Amen in panna • fameth sol • e • b • c • o • t • y • o • parilis emanuel by arit • E • est • c • ci •', that they should not harm your body, your blood or your limbs. ✠ [drawing of a sword] I beseech you holy God that you protect me through the holy characteres and through the holy words, '✠ Thobal ✠ gut ✠ guth ✠ gathan', against all evil of the body and the soul. Amen. Lord, eternal God, heavenly Father don't leave me, because you are a guide of my life, so that I don't fall into control of my enemies. And protect me against the force of my enemies, so that they will not be delighted by my misery. But give peace to him who carries these words with him. [Give] peace and salvation to him who has them with him and [give] health of body and life to him who truly believes in it. In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reynhart's name appears especially in the beginning of the collection in almost every text and altogether 18 times.[50] Unspecific phrases like 'der disze wort bey im szey tragen' ('who carries this word on his person')[51] 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.'[52] Comparable German-Latin artefacts from the fifteenth and sixteenth/seventeenth centuries were studied and published by Pogliani[53] and Klapper,[54] exemplars

[49] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M 206, fols 40v–41r.

[50] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 40v, 41v, 42r, 42v, 43r, 43v, 44r, 45r, 49v, 51v, 52r, 53v, 57r, 60r (2×), 62r, 64r, 64v.

[51] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 40v.

[52] Page 2019, 440.

[53] Pogliani 2009.

[54] Klapper 1929, 164–167.

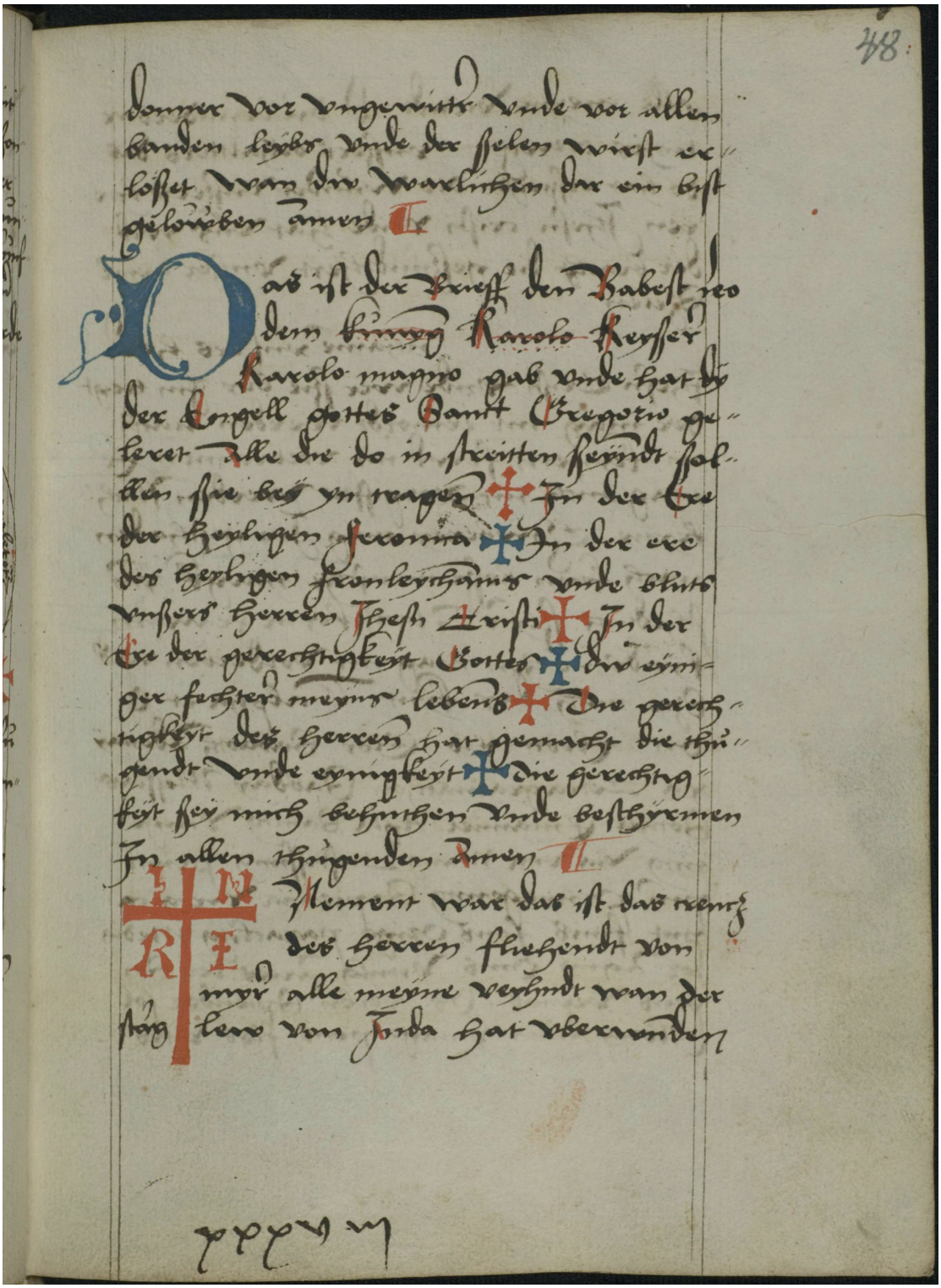


Fig. 12: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206 fol. 48r, original size.

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 caracteres* 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 Abgar[59] and the *Kaiser-Karl-Segen* that Pope Leo gave to Carolus Magnus.[60] There are also two versions of the *Longitudo Corporis Christi*[61] and several texts with holy names, also including Hebrew names of God[62] and the 72 names of Christ[63].

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 54^{v}–55^{r} it is part of the *Fundamentum Leonis pape super omnes caracteres*. Here, the text of the Gospel (John 1:1–14) is framed by the Latin phrases that the priest (*Inicium sancti ewangelii secundum Johannem*, 'The beginning of the Holy Gospel according to John'[64]) and the server (*Gloria tibi, domine*[65] / *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. 55^{r} by its Latin wording. The excerpt of the Gospel of John is here

[55] Skemer 2006, 199–214, 285–304.

[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.

[61] 'Hec linea quatuor', SUBHH, Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19, col. 3. Cf. Spilling 2014, 208–210.

[62] 'Primum nomen domini Hea idem fortis …', SUBHH, Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19, col. 2 and 4. Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 52^{r}.

[63] 'Omnipotens sempiterna maiestas …', SUBHH, Cod. in scrin. 31, Fragm. 19, col. 4. Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 48^{v}–49^{v}.

[64] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 54^{v}.

[65] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 54^{v}.

[66] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 55^{r}.

[67] Cf. Fortescue 1909; Jungmann 1962, 554–559.

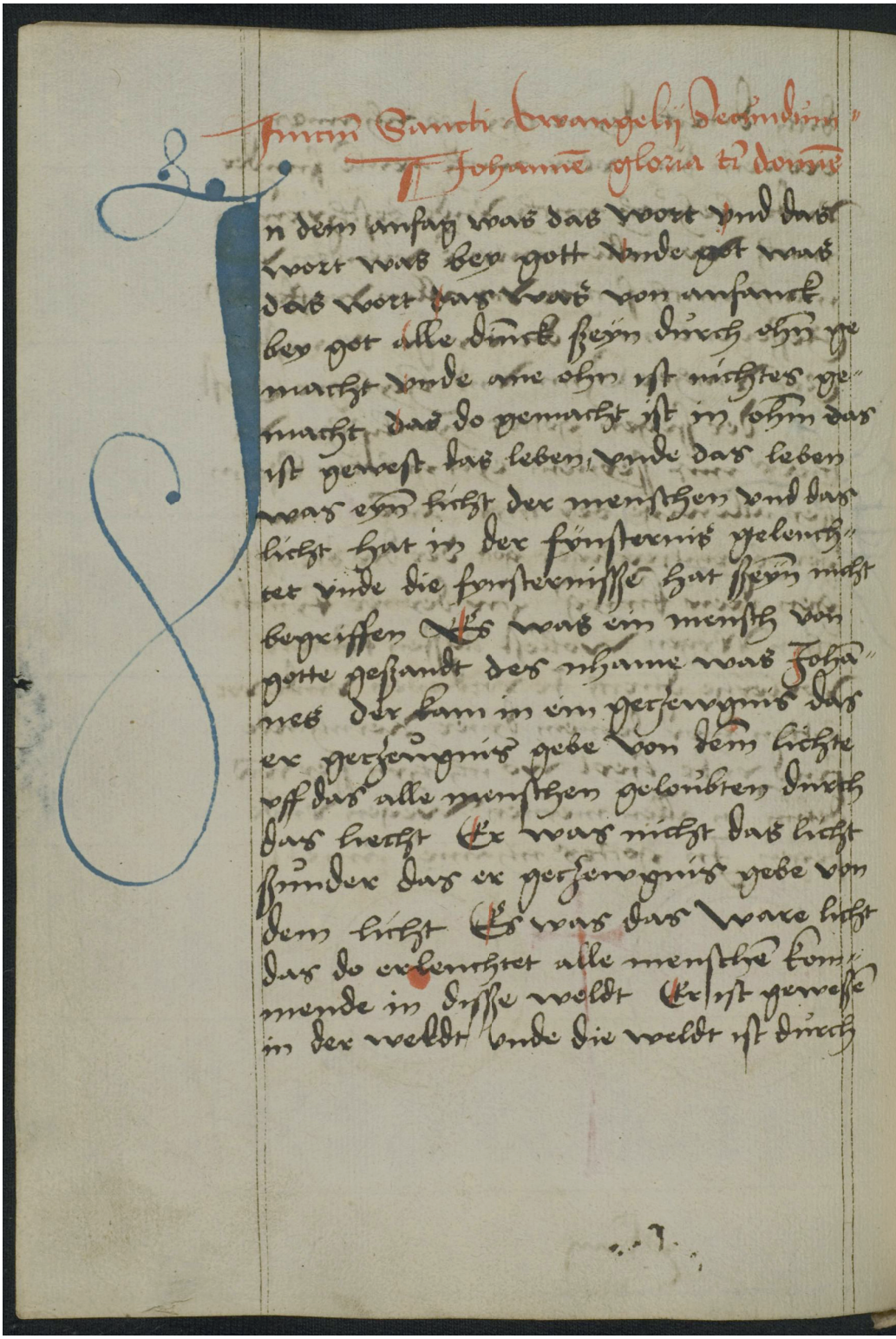


Fig. 13: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 54v/55r, original size.

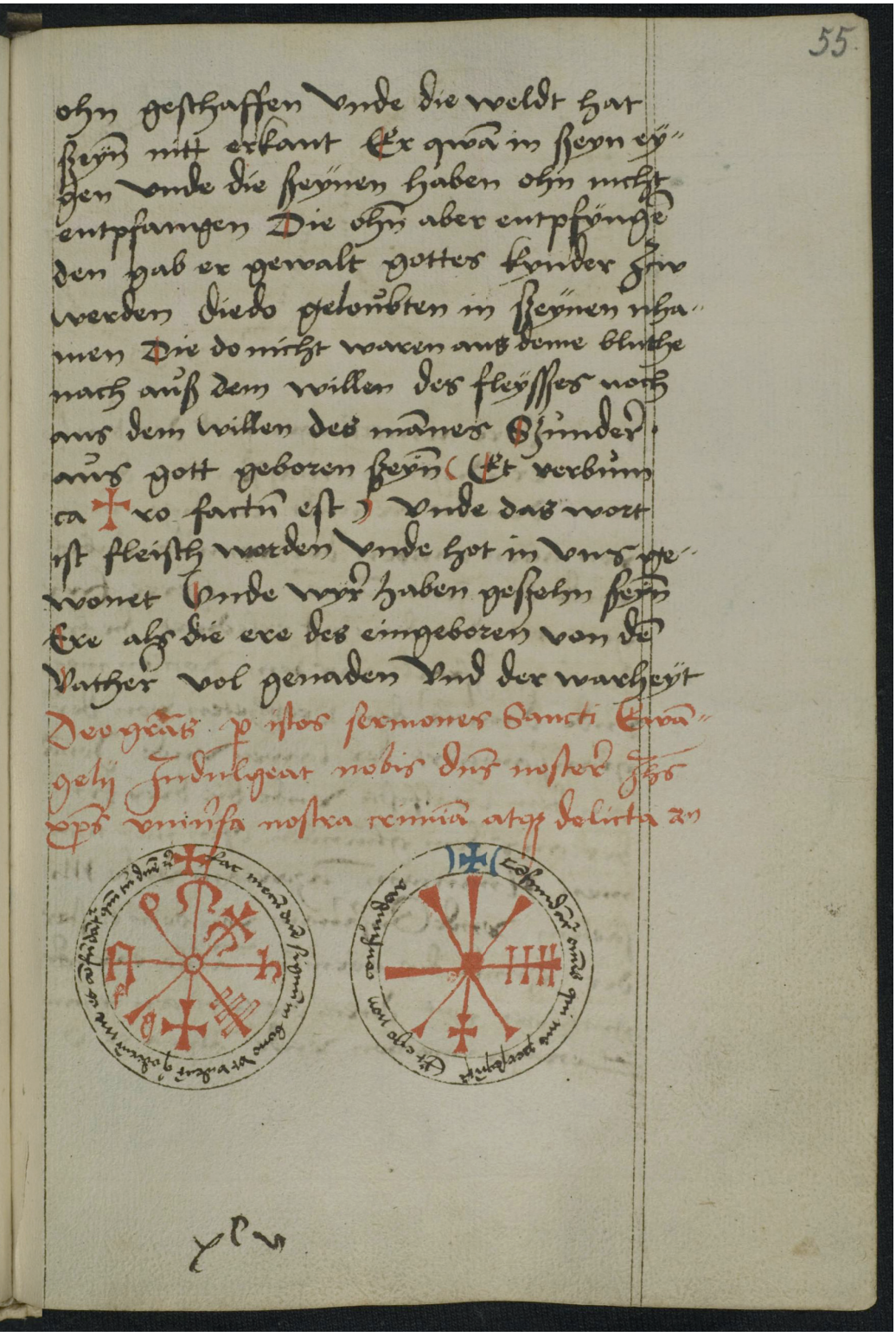

55.
ohn geschaffen vnde die weldt hat
seyn nitt erkant Ex qwa in seyn ey-
gen vnde die seynen haben ohn nicht
entpfangen Die ohn aber entpfenge
den hab er gewalt gotter kynder zu
werden Die do gelouben in seynen nha-
men Die do nicht woren aus deme blithe
nach auss dem willen des fleysses noch
aus dem willen des manes Sondern
aus gott geboren seyn (Et verbum
ca ro factu est) vnde das wort
ist fleisch worden vnde hot in vns ge-
wonet Vnde wir haben gesehen seyn
Ere ahr die ere des eingeboren von dē
Vather vol genaden vnd der warheyt
Deo gras p istos sermones Sancti Evan-
gely Fridelgeat nobis dnt nostrō Jhc
Xps veniā nostra remitta atqz delicta nr



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).

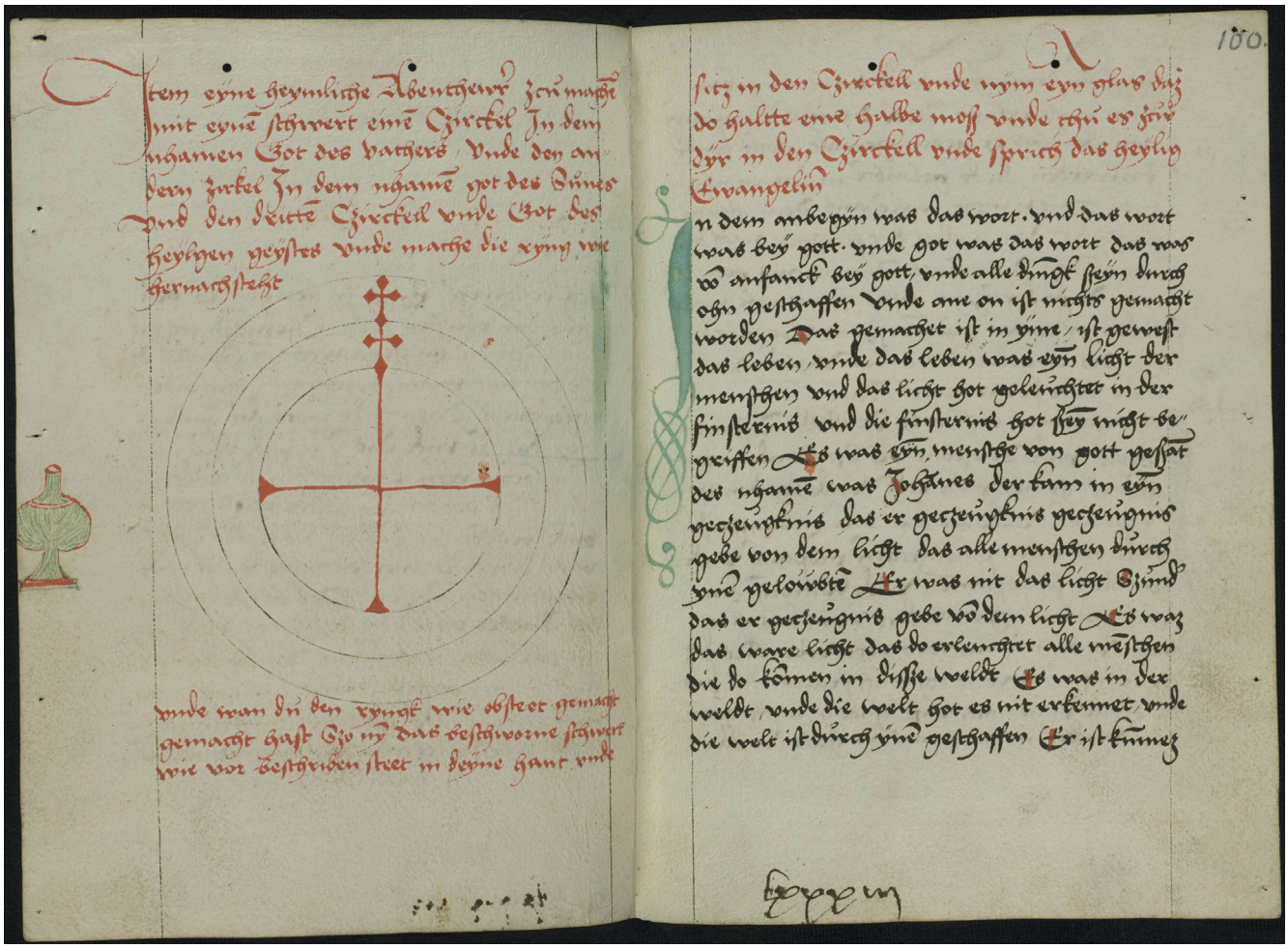


Fig. 16: Dresden, Landesbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fols 99v/100r.

inserted as a blessing text and is explicitly meant to give indulgence to its reader.[68] But on fol. 100r/v, the Gospel text is used in another way (Fig. 16). Here it is part of a conjuration of the devils *Astarot, Berit and Belczebůb*,[69] who should be banned into a bottle and answer questions to the practitioner of this magical ritual. The same applies to fol. 109r/v: the text of John is here part of the invoking of *Sathan, Belczebůp, Ruffe and Růbÿn*,[70] who are supposed to make a coat fly and transport the practitioner to any place he wants. In these two instructing texts, the text of the Gospel written down on paper as has no unmediated agency. It is here integrated in a handbook on ritual magic. Here the reader is addressed with 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

[68] 'Per istos sermones sancti ewangelii indulgeat nobis dominus noster Jhesus Cristus vniůersa nostra crimina atque delicta'. ('Through these words of the Holy Gospels, our Lord Jesus Christ gives us indulgence for all our sins and vices'). SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 55r. On the apotropaic agency of John 1:1–14 cf. Rosenfeld 1962; Ruh 1983.

[69] SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 100v.

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

[71] 'Sprich dissze nachgeschrieben wort vnde preÿt den mantel vff die erden vnde sprich alszo: "Ich beschwere dich Sathan … Nů beschwer ich eůch alle vier ✣ Belczebůp ✣ Sathan ✣ Ruffe ✣ vnde Růbin, das jr kommet szchnel vnde stille vnde fůret mich vff disszem mantel gehn N adder wo hÿn ich will haben … Alszo szolt jr mich N fůren vnde leÿtten vff disszem Mantell …" Vnde sprich fůnff pater noster vnde fůnff aůe Maria vnde setze dich evff den mantell. Vnde wie du dich szetczest also bleÿb szitczen vnde kreůtz dich niecht mehr vnd sprich: "Wolaůff Belczebůp, Sathan, Růffe, Růbin. Das er Lůciper waltt"' ('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^{v}–55^{r} and 109^{r}–109^{v} are almost identical, while all three versions differ significantly from other German translations.[72] 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 caracteres* 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[73] or in magical ritual, they are powerful and should possibly potentiate the apotropaic agency of this codex.

The Codex *Dresden, Landesbibliothek, 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.

[72] Cf. Rosenfeld 1962; Schönbach 1904, 124–137.

[73] Cf. SLUB, Mscr. Dresd. M. 206, fol. 2^{r}, cited above in note 10.

APPENDIX

Transcription of the Last Gospel (John 1:1–14) from fols 54v–55r (A), with textual variants from fols 100r–100v (B) and 109r–109v (C)	Translation
Inicium sancti ewangelii secůndům Johannem. Gloria tibi, domine.	*Beginning of the Gospel of John. Glory be to the Lord.*
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 szeÿn důrch ohn gemacht vnde ane ohn ist nichtes 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 fÿnsternis geleuchtet vnde die fynsternissze hat szeÿn nicht begriffen. Es was ein mensch von gotte geszandt, des nhame was Johannes. Der kam in ein geczewgnis, das er geczeůgnis gebe von dem lichte, vff das alle menschen geloůbten durch das liecht. Er was nicht das licht, szůnder das geczewgnis gebe von dem licht. Es was das ware licht, das do erleuchtet alle menschen, kommende in dissze weldt. Er ist gewezen in der weldt vnde die weldt ist důrch [fol. 55r] ohn geschaffen vnde die weldt hat szeÿn nitt erkant. Er qwam in szeyn eÿgen vnde die szeÿnen haben ohn nicht entpfangen Die ohn aber entpfÿngen, den gab er gewalt gottes kinder zcw werden. Die do geloůbten in szeÿnen nhamen, die do nicht waren aus deme bluthe, nach aůsz dem willen des fleysszes, noch aus dem willen des mannes, szůnder aůs gott geboren szeÿn. (Et verbům ca ☩ ro factum est.) Vnde das wort ist fleisch worden. Vnde hot in vns gewonet. Vnde wÿr haben geszehen szeÿn ere als die ere des eingeboren von dem vather vol genaden vnd der warheÿ	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.
Deo gracias. Per istos sermones sancti ewangelii indulgeat nobis dominus noster Jhesus Cristus vniůersa nostra crimina atque delicta. Amen.	*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,* anbegÿn *B,* anfangk *C.*
5 Alle: Vnde alle *B*.
5 ohn[1]: jen *C*.
5 gemacht: geschaffen *B*.
5 ohn[2]: Jhen *C*.
6 gemacht: gemacht worden *B*.
6 Das do gemacht: das gemachet *B*.
6 ohm: ÿme *B*, ÿem *C*.
6 das ... 7 ist: ist *B*.
8 Vnd das licht … geleuchtet: Vnd das licht hot geleůchtet in der finsternis *B*.
12 vff das: das *B*.
12 geloů̊bten … 13 liecht: důrch ynyn gelů̈bten *B*.
13 szů̊nder: szů̊n= *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 důrch ÿnen geschaffen *B*.
18 qwam: ist kummt *B*.
18 eÿgen: eÿgenthů̊m *BC*.
19 ohn: jnen *B*, jen *C*.
19 entpfangen: erkant *B*.
19 Die … entpfÿngen: 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 szů̊nder: alleÿne *B*.
24 szeÿn … est: *vacat B*.
24 das … 25 fleisch: der szohn 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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