

## Preface

Some years ago I had the unexpected pleasure of visiting the Dominican monastery of Zoffingen in Constance, Germany. I was spending a few days in Überlingen at the Leopold-Sophien-Bibliothek reading a Zoffingen manuscript when librarian Roswitha Lambertz asked whether I had ever visited Zoffingen. When I replied that I had not, she quickly arranged a visit for the following morning. Sr. Agnes Blank, at that time the monastery's archivist, greeted me in the upstairs archive and provided me with both refreshment and a slender manuscript dating from the late 15th century – the sisters' *Rechnungsbuch*, a record of events and donations of significance to the monastery. While Sr. Agnes went about her business (there were phone calls and other visitors while I was there) I copied from and took a few hasty notes about the manuscript. I was about to take my leave when Sr. Agnes brought out a second manuscript, this one a leather-bound tome of some 300 leaves dating from 1500. In the few moments remaining to me I could see that it was a German copy of the Unterlinden Sisterbook, a text that, as far as I knew, existed only in a single additional copy held at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel. And then I left.

Years later I returned, confirmed that the manuscript was, indeed, what I had suspected, and eventually published news of the find (DEMARIS, "Anna Muntprat's Legacy"). But not until 2016 did I return for a visit – the final one as it turned out – to photograph the full text of the manuscript, the partial basis for the critical edition presented here.

It was KARL-ERNST GEITH who, in a series of articles written in the 1980s, first clarified the relationship among the three texts that collectively are known as the Unterlinden Sisterbook. They are (1) the Latin *Vitae sororum* by Unterlinden's Katharina von Gueberschwihr, long known through a critical edition from 1930; (2) the apparently-same text, published in 1725 by Benedictine historian BERNHARD PEZ; and (3) Elisabeth Kempf's German translation of (apparently!) the same text, which survived, as far as GEITH knew, only in the Wolfenbüttel manuscript. By closely comparing these three text witnesses, GEITH recognized that the PEZ publication was, in fact, not simply a late printing of the *Vitae sororum*, but instead a new edition of it prepared by Elisabeth Kempf. And the German translation was likewise not based on the *Vitae sororum*, but on the new Kempf edition that PEZ had printed.<sup>1</sup> GEITH referred to Kempf's edition(s) as *Hausbuch*. I use his terminology, though in English, but further distinguish between her first (Unterlinden Housebook in Latin) and her second (Unterlinden Housebook in German) editions. Presented here, based on the Wolfenbüttel and Zoffingen manuscripts, is Elisabeth Kempf's second edition of Katharina's *Vitae sororum*: the Unterlinden Housebook in German.

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<sup>1</sup> The distinction among these three texts is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1, "The Evolving Unterlinden Sisterbook: Three in One." See in particular p. 4 and footnote 2 for reference to GEITH's relevant publications.

Also included in this publication is an edition of a brief text, the *Supplemental Booklet*, that was clearly intended to be transmitted together with the German Unterlinden Housebook. Its author, a *brüder Johannes*, specifically refers to Katharina's lives and directly addresses Elisabeth, referring to the translation of Katharina's work that she had completed in the previous year. It was at Elisabeth's request, *brüder Johannes* writes, that he composed the *Supplemental Booklet* as a male pendant to the lives of the sisters described by Katharina.

My intention was to prepare these two editions – the Unterlinden Housebook in German and the *Supplemental Booklet* – together with a modest introductory chapter. But three different topics required that I pursue them further, leading to the writing of three chapters (Chapters 3, 4, and 5) that could possibly have stood alone, but they concern the Unterlinden texts so directly that I determined to include them here. Thus, the modest introduction, now composed of five chapters, became Part One of this publication.

Chapter 1, "The Evolving Unterlinden Sisterbook: Three in One," begins by introducing the two Unterlinden sisters whose work generated the three texts that collectively are referred to as the Unterlinden Sisterbook; it continues by describing the content changes made by Elisabeth Kempf as she twice edited Katharina's *Vitae sororum*. Kempf's first edition adds a lengthy historical introduction to the *Vitae sororum*. It also introduces the theme of Unterlinden as garden which, by the second edition, has developed into an enclosed garden. Also in the second edition Kempf reveals a level of literary sophistication not apparent in the first. She consciously guides the reader through the text by adding a road map – a table of contents – to the introduction; by prompting us from time to time to recall earlier passages; and by providing signposts that signal transitions in the text. She also adds several entirely new texts at the end of Katharina's lives, excerpting a portion of one of them (the *Liber miraculorum*) and weaving it into her closing comments. Finally, she translates the entire text into German. Also in this chapter I introduce the *Supplemental Booklet* and make some preliminary comments about its possible author.

Chapter 2 introduces the "Text Witnesses." Both the Wolfenbüttel copy of the German Unterlinden Housebook (W) and the single surviving manuscript that transmits the *Vitae sororum* (C) have been described elsewhere; I provide a reference to those descriptions, but also include additional information about the Wolfenbüttel manuscript. I suggest, for example, that it once belonged to the Dominican sisters in Basel (to the sisters *an den steinen*), a provenance not previously suggested in the scholarship. For the Zoffingen manuscript (Z) I provide a full description, including identification of the hand of Elisabeth Muntprat – biological sister of the manuscript's donor, Anna Muntprat – on the manuscript's opening leaf. That identification allows me to speculate that St. Gallen's Dominican monastery, where Elisabeth Muntprat was a sister, might also have owned an Unterlinden Housebook [SG], one that served as the Zoffingen source.

In Chapter 3 I trace the multiple intersections between the three editions of the Unterlinden Sisterbook and the works of Johannes Meyer, a Dominican and contem-

porary of Elisabeth Kempf. As the chapter's title suggests ("Johannes Meyer and the Identity of *brüder Johannes*"), I argue that the author of the *Supplemental Booklet* was Johannes Meyer, and that his authorship of the text was the culmination of several years of collaboration with Elisabeth Kempf. Although there is no definitive evidence of that collaboration (no surviving letter from one to the other, for example), several surprising coincidences suggest that the two Dominicans shared texts and ideas as they worked on their respective literary-historical projects.

Some 250 years after Elisabeth Kempf's death, her first edition appeared in print under the auspices of Melk Benedictine BERNHARD PEZ. Although clearly based on Kempf's Latin edition, the publication includes puzzling hints that PEZ also had access to her German edition (and to the *Supplemental Booklet*). Complicating matters further, PEZ entitles the publication *Vitae sororum* and attributes its authorship strictly to Katharina. From this mingling of all three editions in a single publication comes, in all likelihood, the long-time confusion among them. In Chapter 4 ("Matthias Thanner and Bernhard Pez: Early Publication of the Unterlinden Housebook in Latin") I discuss how a Freiburg Carthusian was instrumental in transmitting these intermingled versions of a Colmar Dominican text to a Melk Benedictine, who finally published it in 1725. Autograph letters held today in Melk and 17th-century manuscripts held in Einsiedeln, all prepared by additional Carthusians at the Charterhouses in Ittingen and in Gaming, document that complicated transmission.

Elisabeth Kempf's German edition of the Unterlinden lives includes a narrative about an unnamed Unterlinden sister who died of grief after being required to gaze at an image of the crucifix. Although this narrative does not appear in either Katharina's *Vitae sororum* or in PEZ's publication of Kempf's Latin edition of that text, versions of it do appear in numerous publications beginning in the 19th century, which in turn refer to even earlier sources. Chapter 5, "The Afterlife of an Unnamed Sister," explores how the narrative of the unnamed sister jumped some 200 years from Kempf's German edition of the Unterlinden Housebook into a series of inscriptions, publications, and – as recently as 2000 – into a Colmar exhibition about the Unterlinden Dominicans. Curiously, the narrative, otherwise present only in the Wolfenbüttel and Zoffingen manuscripts, also has a reflex in an Adelhausen (Freiburg) manuscript associated with Johannes Meyer.

Part Two of the publication contains the two critical editions: Elisabeth Kempf's German edition of the Unterlinden Housebook and the *Supplemental Booklet* by *brüder Johannes*. The Wolfenbüttel manuscript serves as the lead manuscript (in fact, the only manuscript for the *Supplemental Booklet*, which is only transmitted there). Although the Zoffingen manuscript is missing several of Katharina's chapters and large portions of the concluding section added by Kempf, it nonetheless provides an important check. The Wolfenbüttel manuscript, for example, abbreviates the chapter about Gertrud von Brugg considerably, while the Zoffingen manuscript provides its full text – comparable to the same chapter in both Katharina's text and in Kempf's Latin edition – allowing us to see both the abbreviated and the full version here.

Both editions have two apparatuses. The first, a traditional critical apparatus, shows variations in the Zoffingen manuscript and indicates, for example, when either manuscript has corrected a passage or added marginal notes; occasionally I use a reading from Zoffingen in the edition, but provide the Wolfenbüttel alternative in the critical apparatus. The second apparatus provides commentary on unidentified citations (biblical and patristic, for example); historical figures; difficult Middle High German words; passages where the German edition varies from either Katharina's *Vitae sororum* or Kempf's Latin edition; identity of the sisters, insofar as their names appear in additional records; and Dominican religious practice, life, and customs.

I have chosen not to translate the text into modern German or English. Katharina's *Vitae sororum* is available both in its original Latin in ANCELET-HUSTACHE's 1930 edition and more recently in DE JOUX's 2021 French translation; Kempf's Latin edition (as published by PEZ) has been translated into modern (1863) German by LUDWIG CLARUS.

A few preliminary comments about vocabulary choices are necessary:

1. The title *Vitae sororum* invites us to use the term *lives* or *biographies* to refer to the narratives about the Unterlinden sisters.<sup>2</sup> In most cases the lives provide minimal information about a sister's life before she entered Unterlinden: if she was widowed, her husband's name and number of children might be listed; often her home town is named; and if she is of noble birth, prominent relatives might be named. But the majority of each life is devoted to enumeration of her virtuous or religious practices and/or the graces that have been visited upon her by God. Hence, the lives are hagiographic in nature, with emphasis on the religious and not the secular. A newly-recognized genre – life-writing – encompasses a range of writing, including writing about “parts of lives.” I will not use the term (it seems cumbersome), but acknowledge that it might be appropriate at some level for the lives in Katharina's *Vitae sororum*.<sup>3</sup>

2. I most often refer to the Unterlinden women as sisters, rather than as nuns. The broader term allows me simultaneously to include the *conversae* or laysisters who are the subject of several chapters.

3. Similarly I often use the term *text witnesses* (German *Textzeugen*), which allows me to refer simultaneously to both the manuscripts and published works (in particular, PEZ's 1725 publication) that are part of the transmission history of Katharina's text.

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2 RINGLER's discussion of the genre (*Viten- und Offenbarungsliteratur*, especially 8–15) and how best to refer to it is still valuable today.

3 For an introduction to “life-writing” in the medieval period (though almost exclusively in the English context) see WINSTEAD's 2018 publication (*Oxford History of Life-Writing*, 1–6). Pp. 7–79 deal with “career religious” and holy women, but there are no examples of women writing about other women. More recently (2019) a symposium organized by the Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft in conjunction with the Chairs of Medieval Studies at the Universities of Augsburg and Bamberg visited the topic; the ensuing publication documents the symposium and includes several articles relevant to “religiös-spirituell-mystischen Lebensbeschreibungen” (BENNEWITZ and LÖSER, *(V)erdichtete Leben*, 2).

4. Katharina is known to us through a toponymic surname (von Gueberschwihl). As long as context makes her identity clear, I most often refer to her simply as Katharina. I most often refer to Elisabeth Kempf and Johannes Meyer; on the other hand, by their surnames.

Reading and writing are solitary occupations, but they are enlivened when friends and colleagues contribute their own insights and expertise through conversation, email exchange, and their own written work. I extend my thanks above all – but posthumously, to my great regret – to Karl-Ernst Geith, whose publications and epistolary advice started me on the right track in understanding the complicated relationship among the three versions of the Unterlinden Sisterbook. Geith's former student, Claudia Bartholemy, generously shared with me a transcription she made of the Wolfenbüttel manuscript; often when I stumbled in reading the text I could consult her excellent work, relieving me of many frustrations and uncertainties. Sr. Élie Cails (St. Jean-Baptiste d'Unterlinden at Orbey), Ulrike Heinrichs (Paderborn), Bernhard Rameder (Göttweig Abbey, Austria), and Antje Willing (Jena) all responded to my queries with gracious assistance, despite the fact that we had not previously met or been in contact. Kristina Freienhagen-Barmgardt guided me to a set of online dictionaries not previously known to me; for that and for the friendship forged at the Bayerische Akademie in Munich I am deeply grateful.

P. Gregor Jäggi supervised my two-day visit to the Stiftsarchiv at Einsiedeln Abbey (Switzerland); his interest in my project, invitation to attend vespers at the abbey, and guided tour through the abbey's baroque library all combined to make my stay in Einsiedeln a true pleasure. In Colmar I was welcomed and assisted by Emmanuel Chéron and Rémy Casin at the Bibliothèque Patrimoniale des Dominicains. Despite the fact that the library was officially closed for renovations at the time of my visit and the fact that their work (and mine) was conducted at a provisional location, they enabled my access to two manuscripts and provided a comfortable working space. Christian Heitzmann at the Herzog August Bibliothek graciously corresponded with me about the Wolfenbüttel manuscript and Bertram Lesser assisted me on site when I offered speculation about the manuscript's provenance. The Dominican sisters in Constance at the Kloster zur heiligen Katharina von Alexandrien (commonly known as Zoffingen) welcomed me cordially on several occasions. Sr. Agnes Blank (d. 2000) first showed me the Zoffingen copy of the Unterlinden Housebook; Sr. Raphaela Schütt, prioress at the time of my next visit, allowed my longer access to the manuscript and hosted me at her lunch table for stimulating conversation and nourishment; Sr. Martina Amrhein, who followed Sr. Raphaela as prioress, enabled my final visit, when I photographed the entire manuscript. During both of these later visits Sr. Petra Neher supervised my use of the manuscript and located in the archives the letters that revealed why the manuscript was not cataloged or mentioned in Sr. Brigitta Hilberling's 1957 monograph about Zoffingen. To all four sisters I am deeply grateful, especially knowing that my repeated visits caused considerable disruption to the routines of the community.

CJ Jones (University of Notre Dame) has been a regular interlocutor since we met at a meeting of the Medieval Academy of America in 2015; I was astonished and delighted to find someone studying Johannes Meyer just 50 miles down the road from Valparaiso – a close neighbor by American standards. Stefanie Neidhardt (Tübingen) provided me with photographs from Zoffingen's *Rechnungsbuch* and with collaborative friendship since 2013. Anne Winston-Allen (Southern Illinois University), whose encouragement and enthusiasm has been available to me for decades, continues to inspire. I thank Sabine von Heusinger (Cologne) and P. Elias Füllenbach (Institut zur Erforschung der Geschichte des Dominikanerordens im deutschen Sprachraum, Cologne) for the opportunity to test my ideas about Konrad von Eberbach through a presentation in the 2021 Cologne lecture series "Light in the Darkness: The Richness of Early Dominican Life." Beginning in 2016 I have attended meetings of AGFEM (Arbeitskreis geistliche Frauen im europäischen Mittelalter), an informal group of professors and their advanced graduate students who are interested, as the name suggests, in medieval women religious. The group leaders – Alison Beach (St. Andrews), Letha Böhringer (Cologne), Sigrid Hirbodian (Tübingen), and Gisela Muschiol (Bonn) – graciously welcomed me into that circle, simultaneously providing me with a venue to test my ideas. I thank AGFEM participants Anna Diekjobst and Robin Pokorski for helpful conversations and the sharing of information; Tabea Scheible and Agnes Schormann provided inspiration through their dedication to the study of Dominican reform.

Closer to home, the Kapfer Research Award, administered by Valparaiso University (Indiana, USA) and funded by an endowment established by the Kapfer family in honor of Philip K. Kapfer, allowed me to make a final visit to Constance to photograph the Zoffingen manuscript in its entirety. The Endowed Ziegler Family Research Fund for the Humanities, also administered by Valparaiso University, provided further support. For those two awards and for my appointment as Senior Research Professor at Valparaiso University, I am deeply grateful. I thank Lisa D. Maugans Driver, Randa Duvick, and Timothy Tomasik, faculty colleagues at Valparaiso University, for their assistance when I was presented with linguistic problems I could not solve myself. Whenever I rushed to their offices with pleas for help, they responded without regard to their own time constraints. Richard Miller and Sara Shoppa helped make my work possible with their expertise in computer technology and library resources. Finally, and most crucially, I thank my husband (and informal editor) Richard E. DeMaris, for a lifetime of support, joy, and encouragement.

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