

The *Benedictiones ad Mensas*

The monastery library at St. Gall holds a manuscript that is unique and quite unusual. Codex Sangallensis 393 was most likely produced at some point in the 1030s by Ekkehart IV, a senior member of the monastic community. It contains a collection of Latin benedictions, blessings of the kind clerics were expected to say on various occasions. Among them are a large number of blessings specific to food and drink, the *Benedictiones ad Mensas*.

We do not know the history behind the *Benedictiones*, but the text states they were recorded at the request of the author's biological brother Immo, abbot of Münster im Gregoriental. This most likely happened when Ekkehart was head of the cathedral school in Mainz, before 1031. The surviving copy – it may be the only one there ever was – is believed to be by Ekkehart's own hand and was revised and edited numerous times until his death in 1054.

The *Benedictiones* are an interesting text. It is not quite clear what purpose it served. Blessings said over food were part of the daily duties of the clergy, but there is no similar record of such specific ones, so it is hard to see it as an instruction book. Its first editor, Ferdinand Keller, reads it as an account of a meal in proper sequence. I doubt that both for reasons of seasonality and because dining in that style would have gone against the spirit and the letter of the Benedictine rule. I suspect that these blessings are an intellectual diversion, a way for a highly educated monk to have fun. The blessings are thoroughly unclassical in their metre and end rhyme, but fit the fashion of the age in poetry. They may seem more humorous to us than they were meant in some cases, but clearly these verse exist for the sake of pleasure. They may be nothing more than a hobby of Ekkehart's, a man who dedicated much of his life to more serious intellectual pursuits.

This raises the question how useful they are as a source on actual food. I believe they are quite informative. There is no reason to think that they are derivative of any classical source or purely fictional. Much of the food described in them is not commonplace and certainly not fit for monastic tables, but none of it would have been outside the author's experience. Ekkehart IV was a senior cleric, head of a cathedral school under one of the most powerful archbishops of the imperial church, later a high-ranking member of a wealthy and influential monastic community. In the eleventh century, the church of the Holy Roman Empire was involved with politics at the highest level. Its leadership routinely interacted with nobles, princes, and emperors. Though I do not think they describe any meal ever served, I am convinced the *Benedictiones* talk about food that real people in Southwestern Germany in the 1030s actually ate.

There is no translation of the text into English as yet, but a commentary in that language can be found in the publication of Ferdinand Keller's edition of the Latin text¹. A more extensive recent edition with a facsimile of the original and a modern German translation was published to accompany an exhibition of the manuscript at the library in St Gall in 2024².

1 Ferdinand Keller: *Benedictiones ad Mensas Ekkehardi Monachi* in: *The Archaeological Journal* XXI (1864) p. 347-365 (https://books.google.de/books?id=PDUGAAAAQAAJ&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&dq=%22Benedictiones+ad+Mensas%22&pg=PA347&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

2 Cornel Dora (ed): *Gesegnete Speisen*. St Gall/Basel 2024 ([https://www.stiftsbezirk.ch/userdata/Stiftsbezirk/Materialien%20zu%20den%20Ausstellungen%20\(intern\)/Gesegnete%20Speisen/stibi-katalog-fruehling-24.pdf](https://www.stiftsbezirk.ch/userdata/Stiftsbezirk/Materialien%20zu%20den%20Ausstellungen%20(intern)/Gesegnete%20Speisen/stibi-katalog-fruehling-24.pdf))

Blessings for Tables

At the request of my biological brother Ymmo, abbot of St. George's Monastery

Benedictiones ad mensas Ymmoni abbati de sancto Gregorio fratri germano compactę roganti

1 May God not permit offenses over these tables

Non sinat offensas super has deus affore mensas

2 May blessing be upon these richly laden tables

Largiter impensis assit benedictio mensis

3 May the blessing fill the dishes served according to custom

Rite superpansas repleat benedictio mensas

4 May the breads on the table be free from all that causes harm

Appositi panes sint damna parantis inanes

5 May the blessing render this gift of bread healthy

Hoc munus panum faciat benedictio sanum

6 May the word (spoken) with the bread not be bereft of virtue

Verbum cum pane non sit virtutis inane

7 May the blessing of the bread benefit the sick and the healthy

Egris et sanis bona sit benedictio panis

8 May the blessing render this bread loaf³ strong

Hanc panis tortam faciat benedictio fortem

³ It is not clear what, if anything, made a *torta* different from a regular bread loaf. The likeliest explanation is that *tortae* were enriched with ingredients like oil, fat, milk, cheese, or egg while *panis* was plain bread.

9 Raise your hand, o Christ, to bless the bread loaves

Erige Christe manum tortis benedicere panum

Item

10 May the blessing render this crescent-shaped bread⁴ agreeable

Panem lunatum faciat benedictio gratum

11 May the blessing mark this boiled bread⁵ through the Crucified

Hoc notet elixum benedictio per crucifixum

12 May the blessing caress this fried bread mixed with salt⁶

Mulceat hoc frixum benedictio cum sale mixtum

13 May the holy cross render agreeable this bread leavened with egg⁷

Panem fac gratum crux sancta per ova levatum

14 May this yeast-leavened bread⁸ be marked by the cross

Sit cruce signatus panis de fece levatus

15 May the blessing render this sourdough bread⁹ healthy

4 As with the *torta*, it is likely the moon-shaped bread was made with specific ingredients and had a distinctive texture and taste we cannot really reconstruct. The shape most likely was that of the crescent moon, not the full, since the latter would be circular, like any other loaf.

5 This *panis elixum*, boiled bread, is something we encounter with some regularity and usually with little or no explanation. I believe it refers to bread that is immersed in boiling water before being baked like modern bagels or *Brezeln*. That practice is attested in later centuries, and such breads were popular as festive treats. However, it is also possible this literally means bread dough that is boiled until it is fully done. Such leavened dumplings, too, are attested later, though they were not popular in Germany as far as I can tell.

6 (*Panis*) *frixum* clearly refers to pan-frying. This could be pancakes, though I think it is more likely a kind of flatbread, perhaps salted like a cracker.

7 The practice of leavening bread with (presumably beaten) egg is interesting in this context. It may be specific to feast day breads.

8 The *faex* referred to here is most likely beer yeast, a byproduct of brewing that was used to leaven bread from at least the first century CE. Later sources suggest yeast was favoured for finer, lighter breads made with more finely bolted flour while sourdough was used on everyday bread. That may well be what the next entry refers to,

9 Strictly, *fermentatum* just means fermented, but in the context of baking, it refers to the sourdough cultures perpetuated by bakers.

Hoc fermentatum faciat benedictio gratum

16 May God render these hosts/wafers¹⁰ agreeable through sweetness

Has deus oblatas faciat dulcedine gratas

17 May the unleavened bread¹¹ be signed with the cross to remind us of Easter

Azima signetur cruce paschaque commemoretur

18 May much blessing fill the spelt¹² bread

Panem de spelta repleat benedictio multa

19 May the cross free the wheat bread from evil

Triticeum panem faciat crux pestis¹³ inanem

20 May divine power place its sign on the rye bread

Numen divinum signet panem sigalinum

21 If they are barley breads, may they be free from evil

Ordea si panes fuerint sint pestis inanes

22 May the oat bread be full of vigour

Robore sit plena fuerit si panis avena

10 An *oblata* is etymologically something that is offered up, in this case to God, and thus would originally have referred to communion bread. However, the word later comes to refer to the type of unleavened wafer used in that role rather than the consecrated host specifically, and very likely already does so in this case.

11 *Azimum* or *azymum* is the word used in the Latin Vulgata Bible translation for the unleavened bread prepared for Passover. This is very likely a special kind of bread prepared for Easter celebrations, maybe similar to *matzo*s.

12 At this point, the text lists blessings for breads made with different grains: spelt, wheat, rye, barley, and oats. It is not clear whether these are made entirely of one grain, or with an admixture to a base of wheat or rye. Barley and oats are not well suited to making leavened loaves, so if they were made entirely with one grain, these two must have been flatbreads.

13 *Pestis* here means evil in the sense of some harmful outside event, but not yet specifically a plague as it will come to do later.

23 May the blessing fill all kinds of bread with its gifts

Omne genus panis repleat benedictio donis

24 May the freshly baked breads be blessed with the cross

Tam noviter cocti cruce panes sint benedicti

25 May this recently baked bread be blessed by the cross

Iste recens coctus cruce panis sit benedictus

26 May these cooled breads be free from fraud and the Enemy¹⁴

Hi gelidi panes sint fraudis et hostis inanes

27 May this cooled bread be free of evil and the Enemy

Hic gelidus panis sit pestis et hostis inanis

28 May this bread baked in the ashes¹⁵ be far from evil, o Christ

Peste procul Christe sit subcineritius iste

(To speak) over breadcrumbs¹⁶

Super fragmenta

29 Nothing vacuous or vain shall harm these crumbs of bread

Nil leve nil vanum violet tot fragmina panum

30 May the hand of the Almighty be upon the breadcrumbs of the brothers

14 The fraud referenced here is an attribute of the devil (the enemy), not connected to any concrete dishonest business practice by bakers.

15 This bread baked *sub cineris* – literally under the embers – may well be the kind of simple ashcake that King Alfred is supposed to have burned. However, a well-appointed kitchen would have been able to provide stone or ceramic plates to place in the embers and perhaps even a cloche to cover it. This method was known as *sub testudo* in Latin, but since it is not referred to elsewhere, that is what may be meant here.

16 Crumbs (*fragmenta*) refers to pieces broken off a bread loaf, not crumbs as we would find them on a cutting board or in a toaster. These are substantial portions and would, of course, not be discarded, but served again.

Fratrum fragmentis assit manus omnipotentis

(To speak) for various foods

Ad Diversa Victualia

31 May the source and giver of all good things be with us

Assit cunctorum fons largitorque bonorum

32 May God grant our food and drink be unspoiled

Det deus illęsus sit noster potus et ęsus

33 May our food and drink be a blessing in their entirety

Sit cibus et potus noster benedictio totus

34 May all that is put on the table be blessed by the Holy Cross

Omne quod appositum est cruce sancta sit bened[ictum]

35 May the food that is put on the table be blessed by this sign of the cross

Sit cibus appositus crucis hoc signo benedictus

36 May our food be blessed by the power of the cross

Sit noster victus virtute crucis benedictus

37 May health¹⁷ cause this salt not to cause evil

Hunc salus ipsa salem faciat non exitialem

38 May the blessing make pure this brine¹⁸

¹⁷ This line depends on the similarity between *sal* (salt) and *salus*. That word has a wider meaning than physical health. It includes wellbeing, vigour, and rightness, and is etymologically related to *salvatio* (salvation).

Istam salsuram faciat benedictio puram

39 We eat these cooked fish blessed with the cross

Hos pisces coctos cruce sumamus benedictos

40 Bless these fish, you, who mingle them with such waters¹⁹ (i.e. cause them to exist)

Hos benedic pisces qui talibus equora misces

41 May his Holy Spirit flow over all that lives in the water

Pneuma sibi sanctum perfundat aquatile cunctum

42 May the whale from the sea²⁰ (this may refer to stockfish) be blessed a thousand times with the cross

Sit cruce millena benedicta marina Balena

43 May the Danube fish *Huso*²¹ be a flavourful food

Danubii piscis sit Huso saporis in escis

44 May the mighty salmon be a proper and healthy food

Salmo potens piscis sit sanus et aptus in escis

45 May a powerful blessing move the word into the pike (gloss: salmon)²²

Fortis in Esocem mittat benedictio Vocem

18 A *salsura* is a salted liquid, a brine to preserve foods. It is not clear what exactly is meant here. It could be a cooking liquid served as a broth or perhaps a general reference to salted foods.

19 This is a reference to Creation: God 'mixes' fish into the waters of the world.

20 This passage is genuinely complicated. *Balena* usually means a whale. The German translation by Cornel Dora renders it as *Stockfisch*, which would be dried cod. This is a conjecture based on the idea that stockfish is more plausible as a trade good eaten in St Gall. However, there was also a trade in salted whale meat from the French and Spanish Atlantic coasts at the time and we should not exclude the possibility that this is, in fact, what is meant. The eleventh century is early for the stockfish trade.

21 The *Huso*, German Hausen (*Huso huso*), is the Beluga sturgeon then still found in the Danube. This fish was considered a delicacy and traded over long distances.

22 While the word *esox* is Middle Latin for a pike, the manuscript includes a German gloss here that renders it as *lahs*, salmon. We cannot exclude the possibility that the gloss was misplaced.

46 May the Alamannic *Illanke*²³ be excellent and repel evil

Illanch p̄cellat alemannicus et mala pellat.

47 May the pike that is the same in all waters²⁴ be a delicious food

Omnibus unus aquis sit Lucius ęsca suavis

Item

47a May the cross render the char²⁵ healthy by its mighty power

Crux faciat sanam virtute potente Rubulgram

48 May the cross make the gravid burbot²⁶ develop sweetness

Crux faciat gravidam fungi dulcedine triscam

49 Bless, O God, the rare and too costly lamprey²⁷

Lampredam raram nimium benedic dee caram

50 We eat the trout blessed many times with the cross

Multiplīci troctam cruce sumamus benedictam

51 Bless all kinds of trout, you, who are above all

Omne genus Troctę benedic super omnia macte

23 *Illanch* refers to a very local fish, most likely *Coregonus wartmanni*, a whitefish species native to Lake Constance specifically and the mainstay of local fisheries.

24 This passage is accompanied by a Latin gloss specifically noting that the pike, unlike other fish species, does not vary between different bodies of water. Pike always look the same.

25 The word *rubulgra* is obscure. Char (*Salvelinus umbla*) is simply a guess based on plausibility.

26 *Trisca* is a cognate of *Trüsche* (Lota lota).

27 This could be a reference to the sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) as opposed to the freshwater lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), which could explain the complaint about the price. Lampreys in general were high-status food, but transporting preserved ones from the coast to the shore of Lake Constance would have raised the price considerably.

52 May the salt herring²⁸ be a good food

Sit salsus piscis bonus Almarinus in ꝛscis

53 May the fish thus bitten by salt²⁹ be all sweet, o God

Sit dulcis prorsus piscis dee sic sale morsus

54 May the cross make the lampreys³⁰ (literally: nine-eyed eels) agreeable

Anguillas gratas fac crux novies oculatas

55 May the holy cross bless the swimmer³¹ upon this dish

Fercla superstantem signet crux sancta natantem

56 May He who created it extend His right to the eel

Mittat in anguillam dextram qui condidit illam

57 May a piece of such a large fish among our foods be blessed

Pars tanti piscis nostris benedicta sit ꝛscis

58 May God not permit this perch³² to lack sweetness

Non sinat hanc percam deus in dulcedine parcam

59 Let us eat this cooked fish blessed with the cross

Hunc piscem coctum cruce sumamus benedictum

28 Again, the name *piscis Almarinus* is unclear, but a German gloss clarifies *harinch*, herring. The trade in salted Baltic herring (*Clupea harengus*) is attested archeologically by the eleventh century.

29 This probably also refers to salt herring, though it may mean salt-preserved fish more generally.

30 This passage probably refers specifically to the freshwater lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*). Lampreys are referred to as *Neunaugen* (nine-eyed) in German and it would make sense for the more familiar, locally fished species to be referred to by a familiar term while the imported kind was given an originally Latin designation.

31 *Natans*, a swimming one, is used in the neuter form here and this clearly refers to a fish, not a person, though the English rendering may suggest that.

32 Likely the European perch (*Perca fluviatilis*), though it could also refer to the ruffe (*Gymnocephalus pernua*). Both are known as *Barsch* in German today. The line again hinges on the similarity between *percam* and *parcam* (sparse, poor).

60 O Creator, let this cooked roach³³ be blessed

Hunc rubricum coctum factor fore fac benedictum

61 Here is roasted fish, may he who suffered on the cross bless it

Piscis adest assus, benedicat eu[m] cruce passus

62 May he who created all foods make the crawfish nourishing

Cancrorum vescas faciat qui condidit escas

63 May the fish blessed by the power of this cross be agreeable

Piscis sit gratus crucis hac virtute notatus

64 May the fish that were peppered³⁴ with welcome eagerness be agreeable

Pisces sint grati grato studio piperati

65 May the fish peppered with the sign of the Lord³⁵ be agreeable

Piscis sit gratus signo domini piperatus

66 Eat, brothers, this fat wels catfish that was imprinted³⁶ with the cross

Hanc Walaram crassam fratres cruce sumite pressam

67 May the cross of the Almighty³⁷ meet all those small fishes

Pisciculis tantis crux obviet altitonantis

33 *Rutilus rutilus*, the common roach, is known as *Rotaug* (red-eye) in German today.

34 The fact that a separate passage on peppered fish exists suggests that the use of spices was known, but not universally practiced even by the wealthy. St Gall was a rich monastery, but clearly fish served with spices was unusual enough to attract notice.

35 I am not sure whether this means that a cross was somehow put on the fish with spices or – in my opinion more likely – they were blessed with the sign of the cross after seasoning, thus peppered under the sign of the cross.

36 The word *pressam* suggests that something, perhaps a cross, was actually imprinted on or pressed against the fish. The wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*) can be very large so this is not implausible.

37 *Altitonans* literally means “thundering from on high” and was a byname of Jupiter that was adopted as a descriptor of god in Christian parlance. I rendered it as “Almighty” for clarity.

68 Under the cross, may the goby and the chub³⁸ be free of illness

Sub cruce febre sine sit crundula cum capitone

69 May God bless thousands of small cooked fishes

Milia coctorum benedic dee pisciculorum

70 May the flesh of the beaver fish³⁹ be blessed with health-giving voice

Sit benedicta fibri caro piscis voce salubri

71 May the triune God bless all permitted things that swim

Omne natans trinus licitum benedicat et unus

72 May this fine piece of sturgeon⁴⁰ be among the gifts of the Holy Spirit

Pneumatis ex donis pars hęc bona sit Sturionis

Item

73 Bless, o Christ king, the birds that are equal to fish

Piscibus equipares benedic rex Christe volucres

74 May the cross bless this bird and render its taste pleasing

Crux benedicat avem faciatque sapore suavem

38 Dora writes that the chub (*Squalius cephalus*) was caught using the goby (possibly *Gobio gobio*, though this may also refer to one of the native *gobiidae* species) as bait. That association is possible, though even quite small fish were eaten in medieval times. It is at least possible that gobies, despite their small size, were cooked and served.

39 The beaver was widely classed as a fish for purposes of Lent, so it is not surprising to find it here. The specific addition of *piscis* – the beaver fish rather than simply the beaver – suggests that the author may not be entirely convinced by the conceit.

40 This is probably *Accipenser sturio*, the European Atlantic sturgeon, or possibly the Adriatic sturgeon (*Accipenser naccarii*) as opposed to the more prized Beluga sturgeon referenced in entry #43

75 May the undigested flesh of this peacock not harm the stomach

Nil noceat stomachis caro non digesta Pavonis

76 May this noble pheasant be healthy to the stomach by the cross

Sit stomachis sana cruce nobilis hęc Phasiana

77 May this swan dish do no harm through malign arts

Iste cibus Cigni noceat nihil arte maligni

78 May this goose⁴¹ dish be harmless to our gullets

Anseris illęsus nostris sit faucibus ęsus

79 O God, may this goose⁴² do no harm with its rough throat

Fauce malum rauca nullum paret hęc deus Auca

80 Blessed cross, bless this crane, making it healthful

Crux benedicta Gruem benedic faciendo salubrem

81 May Christ bless this duck destined to be eaten

Escis decretam benedicat Christus Anetam

82 May the swift quail that pretends to be lame⁴³ be flavourful

Sit dulcis pernix simulata quod clauda Coturnix

83 Mighty Holy Ghost, bless this pigeon by your power

Pneuma potens propriam benedic virtute Columbam

41 *Anser* is the classical Latin term for a goose. It probably means a domesticated goose in this case.

42 *Auca* is a postclassical Latin term for a goose. The author may be using it to refer to a wild as opposed to a domestic goose. It is equally possible that he is just showing off his broad vocabulary.

43 The quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) is known to play dead to distract predators. Pretending to be injured is something other bird species are known to do.

84 May the triune God bless this pair of turtledoves

Turtureis paribus benedicat trinus et unus

85 May the Lord bless all pigeons in one

Omne columbinum dominus benedicat in unum

86 May the sacred cross make this cooked chicken⁴⁴ blessed

Gallinam coctam sacra crux faciat benedictam

87 May the flesh of the capon harmful to none

Castrati Galli sit iam caro noxia nulli

88 May plentiful blessing be on the smallest chickens

Plurima tantillis assit benedictio pullis

89 May the poultry they have eaten be agreeable to all

Sit bona se functis volucrina comestio cunctis

90 May the ptarmigan⁴⁵ that quickly hides under the snow taste good

Sub nive se pernix mersans sapiat bene perdix

91 God, grant a thousand crosses to these small birds

Infer tantillis dee mille cruces volucellis

92 May these small birds caught in slings⁴⁶ harm none

44 *Gallina* specifically refers to a female, egg-laying chicken

45 The *pernix* referenced here is most likely *Lagopus muta helvetica*, the isolated Alpine population of rock ptarmigans. As in entry #82, it is striking how closely the author observes the birds' behaviour

46 The word *decipula* can also mean traps more generally, but slings are probably meant here. That is one method by which songbirds were traditionally caught in Europe, the others being thrown nets or glue traps.

Nil noceant ulli de decipulis volucelli

93 May the cross render the birds which have its shape⁴⁷ healthful

Crux faciat salubres quibus est sua forma volucres

94 May all permitted flying creatures be sanctified under the cross

Sub cruce sit sanctum licitale volatile cunctum

Item

95 May this dish of beef be harmless and digestible to the stomach

Sit Bovis illęsus stomachoque solubilis ęsus

96 May this beef be blessed under the divine cross

Sub cruce divina caro sit benedicta bovina

97 May the exalted figure of the cross fatten this tender veal⁴⁸

Inpinguet Vitulum Crucis alma figura tenellum

98 May a thousand signs of the cross bind themselves to the sheep meat

Signa crucis mille carni socientur ovilleę

99 Christ, paint the sign of the Cross on this lamb

Christe crucis signum depinxeris hunc super Agnum

100 Drive all evil, O God, from this goat⁴⁹ meat

Omne malum pelle, deus, hac de carne Capelleę

47 This is no reference to any specific kind of bird, but a religious analogy associating the silhouette of birds in flight with the cross.

48 This is an interesting observation about what was valued in meat. Today, we favour lean cuts. Here, the author hopes for the veal – probably of a very young animal as male calves were eaten soon after birth – to become fatter.

49 *Capelle* seems to be an unusual diminutive from *caper*, an adult billy goat. I am not sure whether this implies young animals.

101 May the holy cross prevent this meat of a young goat⁵⁰ from harming us

Crux sacra nos lēdi vetet his de carnibus Eđi

102 May this billy goat be a harmless and digestible food

Sit cibus illęsus Caper et sanabilis ęsus

103 You who sees everything, bless this roast meat⁵¹

Omnia qui cernis benedic crustamina carnis

104 May the omnipotent word sound over this cooked shoulder⁵²

Omnipotens sermo cocto super intonet armo

105 Here is the cooked pork. May Satan and hell be far from here.

Coctus adest porcus. Procul hinc Satan absit et Orcus

106 May this sow meat be blessed by the holy signs⁵³

Per sacra vexilla caro sit benedicta suilla

107 May all the wiles of hell be far from this dish of pork

Scultellę porci procul omnis sit dolus Orci

108 We call this cooked ham blessed with the cross

Pradonem coctum cruce signamus benedictum

50 *Haedus* (here rendered *edus*) means specifically a young billy goat in Classical Latin.

51 The word *crustamina* is unusual. It seems to derive from *crusta*, a crust, shell, or rind. This may be the hard skin or caramelised outside of roasted meats, or possibly a dough shell of some kind, but it could plausibly refer to many other foods. The interpretation as a roast depends mainly on the variant *assamina* found in another manuscript of the text.

52 *Armo* is a Germanic borrowing and means the foreleg of an animal, probably the shoulder of a pig, here.

53 The word *vexilla* refers to outward signs that are carried or worn. Originally, flag-like *vexilla* were carried in the Roman army, and the tradition survives in Christian processions to this day. The practice was very likely familiar in St Gall.

109 May the highest right hand bless this tender piglet

Dextera porcellum benedicat summa tenellum

110 May the blessing make the boiled bacon⁵⁴ agreeable

Lardum lixatum faciat benedictio gratum

111 Let us eat chopped⁵⁵ meat blessed by the cross

Carnes conflictas cruce sumamus benedictas

112 May God render this roast piece of boar⁵⁶ flavourful

Hanc verris massam dulcem faciat deus assam

113 May this cooked piece of boar be blessed with the cross of Christ

Pars verris cocta cruce Christi sit benedicta

114 May the spit-roasted meat bear Christ crucified⁵⁷

In cruce transfixum gerat assa veru caro Christum

115 We bless the boiled and subsequently roasted⁵⁸ meat

Carnibus elixis benedicimus atque refrixis

Item

116 May this game meat blessed under the divine cross

54 *Lardum* or *laridum* means fat pork. This is the cut from which bacon is produced, but it is not necessarily salt-cured. Here, it is served boiled which suggests that it is some kind of cured and maybe smoked pork belly.

55 *Carnes conflictas* (plural) derives from *confligo* which means to beat or strike repeatedly. I interpret this as chopped meat, perhaps a kind of meat loaf or a dish of small pieces fried in a pan, but it could also mean meat that is tenderized by beating as a Schnitzel is today.

56 *Verres* refers to a domestic boar. The word for wild boar is *aper* (see #120)

57 Unlike in #103, the interpretation is clear here. *Veru* means a roasting spit, *assare* is to roast or fry.

58 Dora favours the interpretation as “cooled”, but specifically notes that the word could equally mean “fried” or “roasted”. Since parboiling before roasting is a common practice later, I consider this the more plausible reading.

Sub cruce divina benedicta sit ista ferina

117 May all game meat be flavourful under the divine cross

Sub cruce divina sapiat bene quæque ferina

118 May the bear be medicinal once and again by the cross

Et semel et rursus cruce sit medicabilis ursus

119 Physicians know it as healthful and harmful to none

Hunc medici memorant sanum nullique nocivum

120 May the wild boar that is feared for its tusk be less harsh as it is touched by the cross

Dente timetur Aper cruce tactus sit minus asper

121 May the blessing of peace be upon the meat of the swift deer

Cervi curracis caro sit benedictio pacis.

122 May Satan and the evil spirits flee this roast⁵⁹ deer

Hęc Satan et Larvę fugiant crustamina Cervę

123 May the blessing mark the horn-mighty bison⁶⁰

Signet Vesontem benedictio cornipotentem

124 May the right hand of the true God be with the meat of the aurochs

Dextra dei veri comes assit carnibus Uri

59 As we saw above (#104), it is not fully clear what *crustamina* refers to, but a roast is not an implausible reading.

60 This of course refers to the European bison (*Bison bonasus*) also known as *wisent*. The Latin term used here is related to the modern German name.

125 May the wild cattle⁶¹ be healthy under the triune name

Sit bos silvanus sub trino nomine sanus

126 May the meat of the wild horse⁶² be sweet under this cross of Christ

Sit feralis equi caro dulcis in hac cruce Christi

127 May the blessing render the defenceless hind excellent

Imbellem Dammam faciat benedictio summam

128 May the quick, high-jumping roe deer⁶³ be blessed

Capreus ad saltum benedictus sit celer altum

129 May the roe deer doe be a harmless dish. May she be lovely food.

Sit cibus illęsus Capreę. Sit amabilis esus

130 May the roe deer calves⁶⁴ give easy nourishment to those who eat them

Capreoli vescam dent se comedentibus ęscam

131 May the meat of the ibex bring no ill effect

Carnes Verbicum nihil attulerint inimicum

132 Be good, quick chamois, whether boiled or roasted

Pernix Cambissa bona sis elixa vel assa

61 It is not entirely clear whether this refers to the previous two as a general term or a separate category of animal. There are no wild bovines native to Europe other than the bison and aurochs, but domestic cattle will go feral if abandoned.

62 That passage became famous because as far as we know, the papal prohibition of 732 against eating horses was still in full force. This line suggests that the distinction between domesticated (forbidden) and wild (permitted) horses goes back to at least the 11th century. More on horse-eating can be found at: <https://www.oxfordsymposium.org.uk/having-friends-for-dinner/>

63 *Capreus* referred to a goat in classical Latin, but comes to refer to the roe deer in Middle Latin. That looks like a plausible reading here

64 This reading depends on *capreus* meaning the roe deer. The diminutive can then mean juvenile animals. In modern taxonomy, *capreolus* means the roe deer in general.

133 May the meat of the hare be sweet under the divine cross

Sub cruce divina caro dulcis sit leporina

134 May the blessing render the marmot fat

Alpinum Cassum faciat benedictio crassum

135 May the meat of all forest creature be healthful by the power of the cross

Sit caro silvana crucis omnis robore sana

Item

136 May this container⁶⁵ of milk be life and strength to those who consume it

Hoc mulctro lactis sit vita vigorque refectis

137 Bless the milk in the memory of Him who was first blessed by it

Primitus hoc macti memores benedicite lacti

138 May the right hand of God bless this cheese⁶⁶ inside and out

Hunc caseum dextra signet deus intus et extra

139 May the cheese curds⁶⁷ (lit. that which is pressed from the milk) produce no stones

Parturiat nullos lactis pressura lapillos

140 Honey⁶⁸, pepper, and wine cause milk to be less harmful

Mel Piper et Vinum lac dant minus esse nocivum

65 A *mulctra* or *mulctarium* is a milking pail, but it is hard to imagine milk being brought to the table in a bucket. Perhaps it was served out from a common container.

66 *Caseum* is the classical term for cheese and here it seems to describe an aged cheese with a rind (an outside) and body (an inside).

67 A *pressura* is something that is pressed or squeezed, which seems like a good description of curds. That interpretation also gives us the contrast to aged cheese – *caseum* in #138.

68 Many medieval texts are suspicious of the health impact of cheese, and here we have three entries that emphasise the role of honey in mitigating any harm. The combination is pleasant and suggested in other sources as well.

141 May the cross prevent this cheese curd from being harmful through honey

Lactis pressuram crux melle premat nocituram

142 Cheese is best eaten when it is served with honey

Optime sumetur caseus si melle [lacuna] detur

143 The physicians hold that the milk of goats is more healthful

Lac mage caprinum medici perhibent fore sanum

144 May God sweeten this honey so it gives savour without harm

Hoc mel dulcoret deus ut sine peste saporet

145 God, bless this honey of a thousand spices⁶⁹

Hoc millenarum benedic dee mel specierum

146 Bless the nectar⁷⁰ of this honey, o God who drives out sadness

Tristia qui pellis benedic dee nectara mellis

147 Good Christ who is himself a sweet honeycomb, bless the honeycombs

His bone Christe favis benedic favi ipse suavis

148 Blessings be on the porridge with snow-white drops⁷¹

69 I am not sure whether this is just a flowery description of the complex aroma of good honey or whether it actually means spices were added to it. The latter is possible. We know meat was sometimes cooked with honey and spices, and honey-based sauces are known in both Roman and medieval cuisine. Honey and pepper make a delicious combination, and despite the ‘thousand’ spices mentioned here, even one would have shown wealth and sophistication.

70 The nectar described here may simply be a poetic description; the Gods on Mount Olympus live on nectar and ambrosia, and it is not clear what either actually is. It could also be a technical term, though. My first guess would be that it describes the liquid honey that flows from harvested honeycombs purely by gravity rather than that which has to be pressed or boiled out. This was considered especially good.

71 The white colour of the porridge could be produced by cooking it with milk and by using a finely bolted flour. Both would have represented status. The porridge of most working people was not white.

Pultibus et iuttis niveis benedictio guttis

149 May this joyful blessing join the joyful *moretum*⁷²

Iungatur lęto benedictio lęta moreto.

150 May grace enter into all these hot liquids⁷³

Gratia fervores inflēt quosunque liquores

151 May the addition of the cross render this spiced (wine?)⁷⁴ agreeable

Hoc pigmentatum faciat crux addita gratum

152 Let these artfully⁷⁵ prepared dishes be blessed, God of art

Arte cibos factos deus artis fac benedictos

153 May all (dishes) be agreeable that this pepper sauce⁷⁶ is poured over

Omnia sint grata perfusa per hęc piperata

154 Let us joyfully eat this mixture⁷⁷ of biting vinegar

Sumamus lęti mixtam mordentis aceti

155 May the cross of the Lord join with the sharp bite of the mustard

72 It is not quite clear what a *moretum* is. Several earlier text describe it as a strongly seasoned, mashed dish. The most famous, a pseudo-Virgilian poem, has it made from cheese and garlic, but other sources describe *moretum* made with nut kernels. I believe it is a sauce or relish here.

73 Dora translates this as ‘beverages’ (Getränke), but given the context it occurs in, I think this may refer to sauces. A later change to the manuscript to ‘hot and warm’ (fervores calidosque) does not clarify matters. “Hot” is almost certainly a reference to temperature, not spiciness.

74 Again, the interpretation as a beverage is Dora’s. The word pigmentatum just refers to a spiced thing. Interpreting it as a sauce makes more sense in the context.

75 The Latin uses a noun “by art” which suggests that these are what we would later call ‘made dishes’, combinations of ingredients that relied on flavourings like herbs and spices.

76 The sauce is again interpretation, but here my reading agrees with Dora’s. The original word only means something made with pepper. I think this practice may be the origin of the *pfeffer* sauces so frequently found in German medieval cuisine later.

77 We do not know what was mixed with the vinegar, but this could be an early form of the ‘green sauce’ of fresh herbs, spices, and a sour liquid.

Crux domini Sinapis iungatur morsibus acris

156 May health be added to these pounded herbs⁷⁸ with words

Tot pinsis erbis salus ipsa sit addita verbis

157 May the blessing render this mixture (of herbs?)⁷⁹ pure

Istam mixturam faciat benedictio puram

158 May the almighty hand be with these spices, by the cross

Hac cruce pigmentis assit manus omnipotentis

159 May the sign of the cross be with these agreeably prepared cakes⁸⁰

Grate commentis crucis assint signa Placentis

160 Let us eat this agreeable spelt cake⁸¹ marked with the cross

Hac cruce signata comedamus Adorea grata

161 May the creator bless the life-giving eggs with hope

In spem nativa benedicat conditor ova

162 Christ, may your divine power season every legume

Christe tuum numen cruce condiat omne legumen

163 Holy Ghost, pour out your power over this legume

78 Again, regrettably, we do not know what kind of herbs are meant here. The word could refer to greens in general, a dish similar to creamed spinach, but it is much more likely that it is a sauce or relish. Many Roman sauces depended on fresh herbs ground to a paste, and we still enjoy pesto made in much the same way.

79 And once more, the text leaves much unsaid. A *mixtura* is just a mixture. Herbs or spices are suggested by its context, and I could well imagine a mix of salt and powdered dried herbs, but we cannot be sure. What is clear is that the cuisine of Ekkehart's time was not simple.

80 A *placenta* is a flat cake, the word deriving from Greek *plakous*. The most famous recipe is from Cato's *de agri cultura*, a layered honey cheesecake, but there is no reason to think the name was specific to this kind alone. This could be any kind of rich, sweetened baked item.

81 Here, 'cake' is a matter of interpretation. *Adorea* merely means something made from spelt, but since bread was covered in an earlier section, I suspect that a kind of sweet dish is meant.

Pneuma tuum numen super istud funde legumen.

164 May God make this bean porridge⁸² flavourful

Pulmentum fabę faciat deus esse suave

165 Supreme giver, bless these beans which you created

Summe dator Fabas benedic quas ipse creabas

166 Bless this kind of chickpeas⁸³, you, who maintains all things

Hanc speciem Ciceris benedic qui cuncta tueris

167 May the cross of the Lord descend on these many peas

Crux domini Pisas descendat in has numerosas

168 Bless, God, these peas that are hostile to bladder stone

Vessicę invisas petris benedic dee pisas.

169 May the right hand of the almighty bless these dishes of lentils

Dextra cibos lentis benedicat cunctipotentis

170 May a blessing be on the lentil which sold the birthright⁸⁴

Primatum sit vendenti benedictio lenti

171 May the red lentil that sold the birthright be a slowly cooked dish⁸⁵

82 A *pulmentum* could describe any kind of cooked vegetable dish, and here the most likely explanation is mashed beans. That would contrast with beans cooked whole described in the following entry. These are, of course, fava beans (*Vicia faba*).

83 The *species* of chickpeas is probably introduced here only for the sake of metre, but other sources distinguish between light and dark (usually called white and red or white and black) chickpeas.

84 This is a reference to the Biblical story of Jacob and Esau. The lentils are directly credited with this attribute as a participle – birthright-selling lentils.

85 This is a useful piece of information, and it is owed strictly to the wordplay the writer makes with *lens* – the lentil – and *lente* – slowly. Thus we now know that lentils came in different kinds and the red ones were cooked slowly.

Sit primogenita vendens rubra coctio lenta

172 May this cooked millet be blessed above all

Hoc Miliū coctum super omnia sit benedictum

173 May this millet give nobody the chill and heat of fever

Non pariat miliū febris ulli frigus et estum

174 Christ who dwells in heaven, comfort the sad phaselum⁸⁶

Christe habitans cęlum solabere triste Phaselum

175 May all legumes be blessed by the holy cross

Sint cruce sub sancta benedicta legumina cuncta

Item

176 May the gifts of God picked from trees be blessed

Arboribus lecta sint dona dei benedicta

177 Faithful Christ, may these fruit be gentle gifts to us

Hęc pie Christe dona sint nobis mitia poma

178 May light and pace make this fruit of the olive tree blessed

Hunc Oleę fructum faciat lux pax benedictum

179 May Peter of Rome grant that the citrons be mild

Da Petre de roma sint mitia Cedria poma

⁸⁶ Variation of *phaselum* show up in a number of sources dating to before 1492, and the exact translation is disputed. Today, *phaseolus* is the name for all New World beans, but those clearly cannot be meant. I tend towards black-eyed peas (*Vigna unguiculata*).

180 May the citrons give strength and bring health

Cedria virtutem dent poma ferantque salutem

181 May blessing and grace be upon these thick fig purees⁸⁷

Ficorum grossis benedictio gratia massis

182 May grace be with the thick dates⁸⁸

Assit Dactilicis palmarum gratia grossis

183 May no pest be permitted to approach the grapes

Appropiare Botris sit nulla licentia tetrīs

184 May the blessing render the pomegranate agreeable

Mala Granata faciat benedictio grata

185 May the blessing make the different kinds of apples sweet

Malorum species faciat benedictio dulces

186 May the creator himself grant this pear miraculous⁸⁹ sweetness

Conditor ipse Pyra fore det dulcedine mira

187 May the anger of the bladder be soothed by the wild pears⁹⁰

Ad lapidosa pira vessicę torpeat ira

188 May the bladder be well thanks to the wild pears

Ut lapidosorum bona sit vessica pirorum

87 It is not quite clear what these *massis* are, but a fruit puree seems likely. Figs may have grown as far north as St Gall, but dried fruit are the more likely explanation here.

88 Dates would, of course, be imported dried fruit.

89 We should not read this to mean it would be a miracle if a pear is sweet. The words *pyra* and *mira* rhyme.

90 This *pyrus lapidosa*, literally a stony pear, is most likely the European wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*).

189 May the pears mixed with apples not feel the anger of the stomach⁹¹

Malis iuncta pira stomachi non sentiat ira

190 May the finely haired quinces be agreeable under the cross

Sub cruce sint sana tenera lanugine mala

191 Make the chestnuts soft, you who rules over all

Castaneas mollēs fac qui super omnia polles

192 May this peach be blessed with the holy cross

Persiceus fructus cruce sancta sit benedictus

193 May the one majesty bless these yellow plums

Maiestas una benedicat cerea Pruna

194 Bless, O Christ, our cherries with your right hand

Christe tua dextra benedic Cerasia nostra

195 The earth of Iberia and Lucullus gave this (i.e. the cherry) to the Italians

Hiberię tellus dedit hęc Italisque Lucullus

196 Christ, render the Iberian tart cherries mellow through the cross⁹²

Christus Amarinas cruce mulceat Hiberianas

197 May the cross that comes over the hazelnuts make them healthy

91 This may actually be a dish, possibly some kind of puree or compote made of apples and pears.

92 It is again not quite clear what these are, but it is customary in later German sources to distinguish different words for sweet and tart cherries. If it is a reference to what are later called *Weichseln*, though, it would be hard to explain how they are Iberian.

Crux in Avellanas veniens det eas fore sanas

198 May the triune grace render sweet the walnuts⁹³ that grew for its sake

Gratia trina Nuces sibi partas det fore dulces

199 May the walnut retain the manifold glory that was in its flowers

Quos dedit in flores nux plurima servet honores

200 May all the different kinds of nut be blessed

Sit genus omne nucum specie distans benedictum

201 May the warmth of the Holy Ghost cause to flourish what each tree gives

Pneumaticus fervor foveat quę quisque dat arbor

202 May the triune one bless the burden of all trees

Arboris omnis onus benedicat trinus et unus

203 May the cross cause these radishes⁹⁴ to have a sweet taste

Gustu radices faciat crux has fore dulces

204 May the Lord let this kind of seed⁹⁵ give health

Seminis hanc speciem dominus det ferre salutem

205 May Christ make these cabbage seeds⁹⁶ lighten the stomach

Hoc holeris semen stomacho fac Christe levamen

206 May this medicine be blessed under the holy cross

93 The word *nux*, meaning nut in general, usually refers to the walnut unless it is qualified.

94 As with the nut, *radix* just means root, but if used without a qualifier most likely means radishes.

95 I am not sure which kinds of seed were eaten here, but there are a number of plants that produce edible seeds.

96 I have never eaten cabbage seed and suspect this may be meant as a medicinal preparation.

Sub cruce divina benedicta sit hæc medicina

207 May the highest giver expel all bitterness from this herb

Summus ab hac erba dator omnia pellat acerba

208 May the fruit of the gardens be blessed by the holy cross

Hortorum fructus sancta cruce sit benedictus

209 May God who creates all good things bless this cabbage

Hoc benedicat holus qui cuncta creat bona solus

210 May the cross render the cooked and the raw leeks⁹⁷ free from fever

Coctos seu crudos Porros crux det febre nudos

211 May blessing fill the mushrooms boiled many times⁹⁸

Sæpius elixos repleat benedictio fungos

212 May the blessing make all kinds of cabbage⁹⁹ agreeable

Caules omnigenas faciat benedictio sanas

213 Mighty Christ, place your sign upon these melons

Christe potens pones super hos tua signa pepones

214 May the garlic give weakened stomachs their customary strength

Virtutem stomachis solitam dent allia lassis

97 We know from other contexts that leeks were cooked with milk and clearly they were eaten boiled.

98 As our sources often do, the mushrooms are left undefined., Boiling mushrooms repeatedly was a customary way of reducing the harmful qualities they were credited with.

99 There are two words for cabbage: *holus* (#209) and *caules* (#212). Possibly the first refers to loose-leaved types while the second, a plural, refers to cabbage heads, but that is speculative.

215 But may it not give the kidneys thousands of stones

Sed non millenas renibus operentur arenas

216 May the pumpkin¹⁰⁰ be blessed with the name of the highest Lord

Nomine sit domini benedicta Cucurbita summi

217 May the lettuce from the garden¹⁰¹ be blessed by the powerful cross

Lactucis horti benedictio sit cruce forti

218 May the cross place chopped bitter herbs in vinegar¹⁰²

Concisas erbas in acetum crux det acerbas

For everything

Ad omnia

219 May all evil flee far from this sign of the cross

Ad crucis hoc signum fugiat procul omne malignum

220 May all edible things be blessed by the power of the cross

Omne sit edulium virtute crucis benedictum

221 May the triune one bless all his gifts

Omne suum munus benedicat trinus et unus

Blessing of drinks

Benedictio potum

100 Today, curcubita is used exclusively for New World crops, but here it obviously refers to the bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*). Most modern pumpkins are New World plants.

101 There is no instruction for serving lettuce here, but Hildegardis Bingensis (*Physica xc*) suggests adding garlic, dill, or vinegar to counteract its harmful effect. That is not implausible here, too.

102 This may be the germ of a recipe, but in its environment it could well be medicinal rather than culinary. Equally, of course, it could be a reference to the Passover meal.

222 May these cups of wine taste of the joy of the Lord

Lętitiam domini sapiant hęc pocula vini

223 May all our drink be a blessing of the Lord

Sit noster potus domini benedictio totus

224 May the holy right hand of God bless our cups

Sancta dei dextra benedicat pocula nostra

225 May blessing fill entirely the drink of this brother

Hunc fratrum potum repleat benedictio totum

226 May the triune one bless the gift of so many chalices

Tot calicum munus benedicat trinus et unus

227 Christ, pour out your dew over this liquid

Christe tuum rorem super hunc effunde liquorem

228 May the vintner bless the gift of this mild vine

Vinitor hęc mitis benedicat munera vitis

229 May grace bless this drink made from the vine

Vitibus enatum benedicat gratia potum

230 God Christ, bless this intoxicating drink made from the vine

Vitibus enatum benedic dee Christe temetum

231 Derive pleasure joyfully from the true vine

Lęti haurite de vera gaudia vite.

232 May God mix this Falernian¹⁰³ with inner strength

Misceat interna deus hęc virtute phalerna

233 May blessing be on this wine by the gift of God

Munere divino sit huic benedictio vino

234 May the cross give this must¹⁰⁴ a flavour of pleasing sweetness

Crux det in hoc mustum placida dulcedine gustum

235 May the must flavoured by the spirit taste good

Quam sapiant gusta condita pneumate musta

236 May new grace render this drink of the vine fortunate

Hunc vitis haustum faciat nova gratia faustum

237 May Bromius not know these cups and Bacchus¹⁰⁵ avoid them

Nesciat hęc Bromius fugiat charchesia Bachus

238 May it please Christ to bless the light-coloured¹⁰⁶ must

Complaceat Christo niveo benedicere musto

239 May the blessing make the recently pressed must pleasing

103 Falernian wine from Campania was prized in the Roman Empire for its flavour and the fact that it aged well. The best kind could be kept for decades. It is highly unlikely that the monks of St Gall actually drank Falernian, but the word may well refer to a wine of similar qualities, or just a particularly good one.

104 The word *mustum* refers to freshly pressed juice as well as young wine still in fermentation. Since it is contrasted with old wine in #240, the latter is the likelier interpretation. Today, the German word *Most* often refers to apple or pear wines, but here it is clearly grape wine.

105 Bromius (the roaring or thundering one) is a byname of Dionysos, hence Bacchus. This is a poetic reference to noisy drunkenness, something monks were expected to avoid decorously.

106 Niveo literally means snow-coloured, so this is probably something like Federweißer.

Musta recens hausta faciat benedictio fausta

240 Christ Jesus, make the must and the old wines good

Christe hiesu musta bona fac et vina vetusta

241 May both the old and new wines be good

Vina vetustatis bona sint simul et novitatis

242 May the drunkenness of the Holy Spirit¹⁰⁷ make the minds be joyful while sober

Pneumatis ebrietas mentes det sobrie letas

243 May the Creator strengthen this wine against all poison

Conditor hoc vinum confortet in omne venenum

244 May the intoxicating drink of the living vine render the heart joyful

Cor faciat letum viva de vite temetum

245 May this pure drink be entirely perfused by the admixture of Christ

Christi mixtura sit perflua potio pura

246 May this spiced wine be watered with dew from above

Hoc pigmentatum supero sit rore rigatum

247 May the blessing render the sweet juniper wine¹⁰⁸ agreeable

Dulce Savinatum faciat benedictio gratum

107 Sobriety was considered a virtue for monks, but intense religious experience – being drunk with the Holy Spirit – was encouraged.

108 Here begins the section on drinks other than grape wine. Whether *savinatum* was grape wine flavoured with juniper berries or actually derived in part or wholly from their juice is unclear.

248 Christ, make the juice of the apples into a flavourful cider¹⁰⁹

Sucum pomorum siceram fac Christe saporum

249 May the drink made of mulberries be full of excellent flavour

Potio facta moris superi sit plena saporis

250 May this raisin wine¹¹⁰ cause nobody's head to become weak

Neminis hoc Passum caput efficiat fore lassum

251 May the Holy Spirit breathe his dew into this mead

Pneuma suum rorem det in hunc spirando Medonem

252 May a thousand flavourful cups be healthy from good mead

Mille saporum bonis sint pocula sana Medonis

253 May the celestial right hand of God bless this honeyed wine¹¹¹

Dextra dei celsa velit hęc benedicere Mulsa

254 When the foe is repelled, may blessing be on this honeyed wine

Hoste propulso sit huic benedictio mulso

255 May the strong barley beer be blessed by the unconquered cross

Fortis ab invicta cruce Coelia sit benedicta

256 Through this did cursed Numantia suffer many deaths

109 *Sicera* is a Biblical term of uncertain meaning. It refers to some kind of alcoholic beverage. In the Middle Ages, it is often used to refer to cider and perry, as is the case here, and eventually takes on that meaning exclusively.

110 *Passum* was a particularly sweet and flavourful wine made from grapes that were partly dried on the vine to concentrate their sugar and flavour. It may already have been made using fruit affected by *Botyris cinerea* or 'noble rot', but we cannot be sure of this. It is tempting to think that Ekkerhart already savoured a *Trockenbeerenauslese*, though.

111 *Mulsum* (honey wine) is not mead (Latin *medo*), but grape wine flavoured with honey.

Dira per hanc fortes subiit Numantia mortes

257 Grace be upon this excellently and recently brewed beer

Optime provisę vix gratia sit Cerevisę

258 May no admixture be done to the well-brewed beer

Non bene provisę confusio sit Cervisę

Item

259 May the unadulterated drink of water make the heart clear

Cor faciat clarum potus sincerus aquarum

260 May the hand of the Almighty cleanse this drink from the spring

Hunc haustum fontis mundet manus omnipotentis

261 May no living spring be harmful to the stomach, o Christ

Nulli fons vivus stomacho sit Christe nocivus

262 As for Timothy whom Paul gave wine for medicine

Timotheo vinum Paulus cui dat medicinam

263 May this chalice be cold through your merit, unique and happy one

Frigidus iste calix mercede sit unice felix

264 May the sacred dew of the Spirit render these waves clean

Pneumatis has mundas faciat fore ros sacer Undas

Dutiful verse

Dictamen debitum

265 More than wine does (the water) of the fountain serve for medicine

Pluris quam vina fontana valet medicina

266 Wine makes the heart joyful, the fountain (of water) heals with double its strength

Vinum letificat cor fons vî duplice salvat

267 Together with only bread, the fountain (of water) comforts the hungry heart

Nudo cum pane fons cor confortat inane

268 Water strengthens the heart of man together with a taste of bread

Firmat cor hominis aqua cum gustamine panis

269 No thing in creation is of greater worth than pure water

Nulla creatura preciatu aqua mage pura

270 Water strengthens the body, the sickness of the soul is cured by the holy (water)

Corpus aqua durat animę morbos sacra curat

271 It is through this (i.e. water) that Paradise returns the original life

Hęc est qua vitam paradysus reddit avitam

272 While it divides the sacred rivers¹¹² in the shape of a four-sided cross

In cruce solemnes quadra dum dividit amnes

273 It also effects the sacred ablutions

Efficit et sacra [lacuna] lavacra

112 This is a reference to the four rivers of Paradise, Gen. 2:10-14.

274 Washing away evil either by Baptism or by tears

Aut baptizando mala tergens aut lacrimando

275 As it flowed from the side (of Jesus), grace plays through water

Hanc latus ut fudit per eam sibi gratia ludit

276 the game of the Father through which the evil of Adam and Eve was nullified

Ludo patris Adę mala quo nullantur et Aevę

277 This is the path of virtue, this is the hope of salvation without end

Hęc via virtutis hęc spes sine fine salutis

278 This, mixed with wine, is the sweetest drink of Christ

Hęc vino mixto dulcissima potio Christo

279 Sweet and mighty when its companion is the bread of grace

Dulcis et immanis comes est si gratia panis

280 With these we celebrate masses for the one and triune Lord

His missas domino persolvimus unice trino

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