

Mathesius, Johann, 1504-1565.

[Joachimsthaler Chronica.] Begins "Ein kurtzer Bericht, von der Lehr...."
Bound with "Chronik der Rammelsberg Bergwerke" (binder's title), by
unidentified author(s).

MS f⁶⁸.

Germany.

Ca. 1583?

The first of the two main parts of this manuscript is a report by the Protestant minister Johann Mathesius concerning the church and school reforms he carried out in the town of St. Joachimsthal. Mathesius, often referred to as "der alte Bergprediger von Joachimsthal" (the old mountain-preacher from J.), was well known and widely read both in his own time and afterwards. Born in Rochlitz in 1504, he became acquainted with Luther's writings while still a student at the University of Ingolstadt. Deeply impressed by what he had read, the young Mathesius went to Wittenberg in 1529 to hear lectures by Luther and Melancthon. After a few years as rector of the school in Joachimsthal (where he acquainted his pupils with Luther's catechism), he returned to Wittenberg and became one of Luther's closest friends and companions. Drawing on the experiences and impressions of his Wittenberg years, Mathesius later wrote one of the best-known biographies of Luther, a work which was reprinted many times over the space of several centuries. In 1545 Mathesius became pastor in St. Joachimsthal. During the years that followed he worked hard to bring the ideas of the Reformation to his people there.

According to the manuscript, Mathesius wrote this particular account of his reforms in 1551, in the form of a letter to a friend. In his description of the manuscript, Edgar J. Goodspeed (see below) says: "Mathesius' pamphlet is probably his autograph." This seems rather doubtful, however, since the account begins: "A short report concerning the teaching and ceremonies of the Christian churches in S. Joachimsthal, made by the old man Johann Mathesius..;" and there are insertions throughout the work of phrases like "thus writes the old man." It

appears more likely that Mathesius' account was simply recopied here by someone else--something not too improbable, since it appears to have been quite a well-known work. Printed versions of a Joachimsthaler Chronica (probably the same as the account we have here) by Mathesius appeared in 1564, 1578, 1587, 1618, 1664, etc.--either separately or as part of a work entitled Sarepta (see below).

The report itself is found on ff. 1r - 16r, and is divided into sections under the following headings: Von der Lehr (Concerning the Teachings); Von der Heiligen Tauffe (Concerning Holy Baptism); Von der Absolution (Absolution); Vom Abendmal des Herrn (Holy Communion); Vom Catechissmo (Catechism); Von den Litaneyen (Litanies); Vom Begräbnis (Burial); Von Kirchen Dienern (Servants of the Church); Von Ceremonien (Ceremonies); Von Geburten (Births); Verschluss (Conclusion). Of these reforms and proposals Ledderhose (the biographer of Mathesius in Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie) writes: "The order of service, which was introduced in Joachimsthal mainly through the efforts of Mathesius, was completely in accord with the Gospel. One can only rejoice over it when one reads it."

The second main part of this manuscript is a chronicle of the Rammelsberg Mines by an unidentified author or authors. These were apparently located in northwestern Bohemia near St. Joachimsthal, which was the center of a thriving silver mining industry which began early in the 16th century. (Our word "dollar" comes from a silver coin called the "Joachimsthaler," which was first minted here in 1517.) According to this chronicle, the Rammelsberg Mines began operation in 1527; the last date mentioned in the manuscript is 1583.

The chronicle itself is divided into three sections, each of which is in a different hand. The first section (ff. 19r - 42v) appears to be a general history of the mines. The second section (ff. 45r - 75r), which also bears an old page-numbering (1 - 62) in ink, is entitled: "Concerning the progress of the rise and fall of the mining companies. Concerning officials and histories of mining towns." In the third section (ff. 76r - 140v) the chronological his-

tory of the mines is continued; this section is also accompanied by Latin marginal notes in a scrawling hand.

There are some interesting watermarks in the manuscript: a galloping unicorn; a kobold over the letters A H H S on the one, a crowned bell on the other half-leaf.

Folio, 12 quires of varying numbers of leaves. 33 x 20 cm.
140 leaves - completely foliated.

Bound in quarter-cloth with marbled-paper boards by Carolyn Horton.

German script: second of the three hands in the Chronicle-section is fairly legible - others are more difficult to read.

Probably part of the Hengstenberg collection, originally acquired by the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1869-70. See also the description of the manuscript in: Edgar J. Goodspeed, A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Libraries of the University of Chicago (Chicago, 1912) pp. 88-9; and De Ricci, Census, I, 564.

Bibliography

For biographical information about Mathesius, see:

- 1) his autobiographical sketch, included in his Auslegung des Sirach (1598).
- 2) biographies of him by Joh. Balth. Mathesius (1705) and Friedrich Scholtzen (in Evang. Kern-Postilla, 1720).
- 3) Ledderhose, Das Leben des M. Joh. Mathesius, des alten Bergpredigers in Joachimsthal (Heidelberg, 1849).
- 4) articles in the standard biographical works, Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie and Jöcher's Allgemeines Gelehrten-lexikon.

Some of Mathesius's most important works are:

Analecta Lutherana et Melanthoniana. Tischreden Luthers und Aussprüche Melancthons, hauptsächlich nach Aufzeichnungen des Johannes Mathesius...
hrsg. ... von Georg Loesche (Gotha, 1892).

Ausgewählte Werke... hrsg. ... von Georg Loesche (Prague, 1897-1908).

Betbüchlein und Oeconomia (Nürnberg, 15--).

Ein christlicher vnterricht wes sich gottselige unterthanen verhalten können (Nurnberg, n.d.).

Historien von des ehrwürdigen in Gott seligen thewren manns Gottes doctoris Martini Luthers (Nurnberg, 1566, 1567, 1570, 1573, 1855).

Postilla; das ist Auslegung der sontags und fürnembsten fest evangelien (Nurnberg, 1568).

Postilla prophetica (Leipzig, 1589).

Sarepta; doer, Bergpostill sampt der Jochimssthalischen kurtzen chronicken Johann Mathesii (new edition, Nurnberg, 1564).

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