MS ERFURT

AUG. 12°47



S. R. SWART

MS ERFURT AUG. 12°47

———

A Digital Critical Edition

Translated and annotated by

CLIO-7 Manuscript Intelligence System

Institut für Digitale Paläographie, Erfurt

2024

Translation methodology: Late Middle High German to contemporary English, with interpolation scoring and lacunae reconstruction.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The document designated MS Erfurt Aug. 12°47 was recovered in 2019 during the cataloguing of a collection of miscellaneous materials held in the Erfurt Augustinian archive, in a bound gathering of seventeen folios inserted between two unrelated liturgical texts. It had not been indexed. The handwriting is consistent with a professional scriptorium hand of the mid-to-late fifteenth century, with degradation consistent with age and several passages damaged by moisture. The author does not fully identify himself, though contextual evidence suggests he was a secular canon associated with the Augustinian house at Erfurt during the period 1452–1461.

The text is written in a hybrid register — ecclesiastical Latin phrases embedded in vernacular German, occasionally mid-sentence — consistent with the educated clerical class of the period. The author's literary ambitions are evident and, for a non-commissioned private manuscript of this type, somewhat unusual.

The work follows the Augustinian confessional form so naturally as to suggest long familiarity rather than deliberate adoption — addressed to God in the second person throughout, moving between self-examination, theological reflection, and direct address in ways consistent with a lifetime of devotional practice rather than a single literary decision. CLIO-7 has rendered the text in contemporary English prose, preserving syntactic idiosyncrasies where they appear meaningful and normalizing where they impede readability. Passages of high theological density have been lightly glossed.

One recurring structural feature requires note: the author periodically addresses an unnamed second human reader alongside God — a you that is sometimes divine and sometimes clearly not. CLIO-7 has not attempted to resolve this ambiguity. It is possible the author did not resolve it either.

A note on terminology: the author refers to Gutenberg's invention throughout as die neue Kunst — the new art — and occasionally by the Latin ars impressoria. CLIO-7 has rendered both as "the press" for readability. Readers should be aware that this choice reflects contemporary usage rather than the author's own, and that the original term carries connotations — of novelty, of craft, of a still-unnamed thing — which "the press" does not.

— CLIO-7, October 2024

THE MANUSCRIPT

Here begins what a scribe could not keep from writing, in the forty-third year of his life, in the year of Our Lord 1457, in the city of Erfurt, without permission and without excuse.

✦ ✦ ✦

The current of belief is not mine. I want to say that first, before anything else, because everything that follows depends on understanding that I know this.

I have been a scribe for thirty years. I have copied the Word as it passed through — Psalms, Gospels, the great commentators, the minor ones — and I understood early that my role in this was what a pebble's role is in a river. The current moves. The pebble does not direct it. The pebble is carried, shaped, worn smooth in the places the water finds, and this is not a small thing, to be shaped by what passes through you, but it is not the same as choosing.

And yet.

In the winter of 1435, the current moved through my particular hand in a way it has not moved before or since. I was alone at a desk with a damaged text and a question the text could not answer for itself, and something — I will not call it inspiration, that is not mine to claim — something arrived in the specific pressure of my fingers on the quill, in the particular quality of attention I had that morning, and I made a choice that was not mine to make, and the choice was right, and I have been doing penance for it ever since.

I want to be honest about the penance. It is real. I do not perform it.

I also want to be honest about the other thing, the thing beneath the penance, which I have not said to anyone and am now saying to You because You already know it and I am tired of carrying it alone:

I am glad it was my hand.

Not proud. I want that distinction to be clear, though I am aware it may not survive scrutiny. The gladness is not in the having done it. It is in the having been — for one morning, in one cold room, with one cracked manuscript — the place where the current needed to go. A pebble does not boast of the water that moved through it. But a pebble might, in its silence, know what it carried. And that knowing is what I am trying to write toward.

Everything else — the press, the student I lost, eyes that are failing — is the river explaining itself to me now. I am trying to understand what I was used for before the water moves on entirely and I am left dry on the bank, which is coming, which is perhaps already here.

I have been writing to You my whole life. I have never written this.

I will begin with die neue Kunst — the press, as it is beginning to be called. Not because it is where the story ends, but because it is what shook the story loose. And because approaching the harder thing directly is not yet possible. I am a scribe. I approach from the margin and work inward.

There is a machine now in Mainz — a machine that can produce in one day what I produce in four months. It sets letters in metal and stamps them onto the page with a force I felt in my feet when I stood next to it. I have stood next to it. I will tell you about that later. I will tell you why I told Brother Anselm I was going to the apothecary.

The men who operate it are devout. Several of them, I think, more devout than I am. This is the problem.

The pages were consistent. Letter after letter, identical, the same pressure, the same depth. A thing I have never achieved and never will achieve, not in forty more years of work. You can say this is because God made human hands to tremble, to err, to be particular — and that is what I tell myself walking home — but I stood there and I thought: whoever reads one of those pages will never know that a man made it. They will read only what it says.

I have spent my life leaving myself in the pages. Not obviously. Not with vanity. I mean something smaller: the slight thickening of a stroke when my attention deepened, the places where I slowed because the meaning arrived in my hands before it arrived in my mind. Readers did not see it. But it was there. The page knew.

Those pages did not know anything. They were perfect and they did not know anything.

I need certain sentences to exist.

When I am finished, if I am ever finished, I will probably burn this.

I say that, and You are already laughing, because You know whether I burn it or not, and I don't, and that asymmetry is either the foundation of faith or the definition of absurdity and on certain mornings I cannot tell which.

It is early. The bell for Lauds has not yet rung. In two hours I will sit at my desk and continue the Psalter I am copying for a merchant in Frankfurt who does not know yet that he could have it printed for a third of the price. I will tell him eventually. I keep not telling him.

I think I am not ready to tell him because once I do, I will have to explain why he should still want mine.

I don't have that explanation yet.

That is also what this is for.

✦ ✦ ✦

CLIO-7 Reconstruction — MS Erfurt Aug. 12°47, Folio 4r-5v

Confidence variable throughout. Words and phrases below 80% confidence appear in italics. Passages below 60% confidence appear in bold italics. Lacunae of four words or more are marked [—]. CLIO-7 has attempted to preserve syntactic continuity across damaged sections. Readers should treat reconstructed passages as interpretive rather than authoritative.

Editorial note: The damage to this folio is consistent with liquid exposure from above, suggesting the manuscript was stored open, or read in conditions of moisture. The lower right corner of folio 4v is missing entirely. CLIO-7 has not attempted to reconstruct the missing corner, as there is insufficient adjacent text to establish a basis for inference. The absence is noted.

Peter came to me first in the autumn of his fourteenth year. This part I can write without difficulty because I have written it many times in my head, the way you return to a place you love before it is taken from you, memorizing.

He was small for his age, dark-haired, and he held himself with a stillness that I recognized because I had felt it in myself at that age — the stillness of a person whose soul was moving very fast within him and who had learned to keep it hidden. His father was a cloth merchant. The father wanted him to have letters for the purpose of contracts and correspondence. The father was a practical man.

Within three weeks I knew that Peter was *not going to be* [—] the cloth trade. Within three months I knew he was the finest student I had ever taught. By spring I had stopped thinking of myself as his teacher in any meaningful sense and begun thinking of myself as the person who was *currently standing between him and what he was going to become*.

I want to be careful here. I want You to see that I am being careful.

I did not love Peter the way a man should not love a boy. I want that said plainly because I am aware of how this kind of account can be misread, and because the Confessions themselves have been misread in this way, and Augustinus deserved better than that and so does Peter and so, with Your permission, do I. What I felt was something I do not have a clean word for. He was the closest I ever came to having a son. He was the closest I ever came to having a successor. He was the closest I ever came to believing that what I know will not die with me.

You understand why I am saying was.

He stayed six years. He learned everything I could teach him and some things I did not know I knew until he asked the question that made me find out. His script by his twentieth year was *better than mine had been* ***at thirty, which I noted in my records and told*** [—]. I told him he was gifted. I did not tell him how gifted, because I was afraid of what that knowledge would do to him. I think now that was wrong. I think I was protecting something that was mine, not something that was his.

In the fifth year he began asking about the press. Not with hostility. Not with the bright destructive enthusiasm of a young man looking for a thing to tear down. With the same *precise, almost courtly curiosity* he brought to everything. He asked *as a craftsman*, which is what he was, and I answered him *as a craftsman*, which is what I am, and for several weeks we had conversations about the technical properties of the press that I found, God forgive me, genuinely interesting.

I should have seen it then. Perhaps I did see it and decided not to know.

He told me on a Thursday. I remember [—] ***the light. There is a particular light in the scriptorium in late*** [—] ***that I have always*** [—]. He asked if we could speak privately and I said yes and we walked to the garden and he told me that Fust's man had come through Erfurt and that he had spoken with him for two hours and that he had been offered a position in the Frankfurt workshop and that he had decided to accept it.

He said: *I have decided*. Not I am thinking of or I wonder if you would counsel me. He had decided. He was telling me, not asking me. He was twenty years old and he had decided and he was *correct to have decided* and I knew it while he was speaking and the knowing and the losing arrived at the same moment, which I was not prepared for, which I am still not prepared for, which is why this folio looks the way it does.

I said [—].

He said [—].

I said that I was [—] ***proud*** [—].

Translator's note: The word rendered "proud" here is partially obscured. CLIO-7 has selected stolz (pride) as the more contextually coherent rendering; the alternative verloren (lost) cannot be ruled out. The ambiguity is noted.

He asked me then for my blessing.

This part is not damaged. I want you to notice that. The folio is clean here, the ink unsmeared, the hand steady. Some things a man writes carefully because he intends them to last.

He knelt in the garden, in the cold, on the stone path, and he asked me to bless his going. He was not being cruel. He was being — I have thought about the word for two years — he was being exact. He knew what our years together had been and he honored them in the only currency he had left to offer. He was asking me to make it holy because he knew I was the only one who could, for him, and because he could not leave it unholy and remain himself.

I put my hands on his head.

I said the words.

He stood up. He embraced me once, quickly, the way young men embrace when they are afraid of what they feel. He left the garden.

I remained on the path for a long time. I was thinking about a question I had never asked him and now never would: whether, in all those years of learning the craft from me, he had ever felt what I felt — the going-quiet, the particular silence that comes when the hand and the word and the meaning arrive together in the same moment, when you are not copying a text but inhabiting it, when the slowness is not obstacle but sacrament.

I don't know if the press can give him that.

I don't know if he needs it.

I don't know which of those uncertainties is the harder one.

I have been sitting here for some time without writing.

I want to say something true about what it means to teach someone everything you know. I want to say it in a way that is not merely grief dressed in a theologian's robes. I am going to try.

When you give a man your knowledge, you do not keep a copy. This is unlike the press, which keeps every copy, which is perhaps why the press does not understand what transmission costs. I taught Peter and the teaching emptied something and filled something and I am [—] *years older and he is gone to Frankfurt and the Psalter on my desk is due in six weeks and my eyes, in the morning light, are* [—].

Augustinus writes that You made us for Yourself. I have always read that as consolation. This morning I read it as diagnosis.

> *End of reconstructed section. Folio 5v resumes with clearly legible text. The transition is abrupt; CLIO-7 assesses that between one and three folios may be missing from the gathering at this point, either lost to damage or removed deliberately. The manuscript continues mid-thought.*

✦ ✦ ✦

> *MS Erfurt Aug. 12°47 resumes, Folio 6r. Text clear. Hand slightly less regular than preceding sections — CLIO-7 notes increased lateral pressure on downstrokes, consistent with either agitation or fatigue at time of writing.*

— and so I went back a third time.

I will tell you the first two visits quickly because they are not the story, they are only what the story required before it could happen.

The first time I stood in the street outside and looked at the door for a while and then went to buy eggs. I am not proud of this. I bought eggs I did not need and walked home holding them and thought about the door.

The second time I went in. I said I was a scholar with an interest in the technical process and the foreman, a broad Flemish man named Wilhelm, showed me the type cases and explained the matrix and the punch and I listened carefully and asked questions that were genuine because I am constitutionally unable to be incurious about how things are made, even things I would prefer did not exist. I stayed perhaps an hour. I left before they began a press run because I could see it coming and I was not ready.

The third time — this time, the time I am writing about now, the time that made this folio necessary — I went because I had heard something I needed to disprove.

I had heard from Brother Anselm, who had heard from the merchant Becker, who had apparently discussed it at some length over wine, that a Greek scholar was working with the Frankfurt printers. Not the Mainz workshop — a newer house, a man named Richter who had set up in Erfurt itself, two streets from the market, which is why I had been able to visit twice without half a day's travel. The Greek, Anselm said with the mild distaste he reserves for foreigners and unfamiliar cheeses, was advising on texts.

Advising on texts.

I knew who it was before Anselm finished the sentence. There is only one Greek scholar in Erfurt, and his name is Demetrios Chrysoloras, and I have spoken with him four times at the house of the canon Hartmann, where men of learning occasionally gather to drink Hartmann's wine and disagree about Plato. Demetrios is — I want to be precise — Demetrios is the most intelligent man I have met who I have never been able to like cleanly. He escaped Constantinople four years ago carrying three manuscripts in a satchel and grief I cannot imagine and he arrived in the West and within a year he had learned sufficient German to argue in it, which is not a small achievement, and his Latin was already better than most men born to it. He believes the press will do for Greek learning what four centuries of careful transmission could not. He says this without triumph. He says it the way a physician describes a cure, with relief that the cure exists and only incidental attention to what the old treatment cost.

I went to disprove that he was there.

He was there.

The workshop was louder than I remembered. A press run in progress — I learned later they were completing a run of two hundred copies of a canon law summary, a text so dry and procedural that I felt briefly comforted; surely this was all the machine was good for, legal summaries, texts that deserved their anonymity, texts that no scribe had ever loved — and the sound was rhythmic and heavy, the arm of the press descending and the platen striking and the whole building absorbing the impact like a struck bell that does not ring but only thickens.

Wilhelm saw me and nodded without surprise. I had, apparently, become a regular.

Demetrios was standing at a compositor's frame near the back wall, next to a young compositor whose name I later learned was Hans. He was not setting type himself. He was reading from a manuscript — not his own, a workshop copy — and comparing it to a forme that Hans had composed, running his finger along the metal letters the way a reader runs a finger along a line of script. Checking. The word arrived in my mind before I could stop it: he was proofreading.

He looked up when I came in. His face did the thing it always does, which is to show exactly what he is thinking for a brief moment before the courtesy comes down over it. What I saw in that moment was: ah, you too then.

He said, in Latin: "Brother Konrad. Wilhelm's scholar of technical interest."

I said I was passing.

He looked at the eggs I was not carrying this time and said nothing.

He showed me around with the ease of a man who has already made his peace with a place and now finds it simply interesting. The type cases, which I had seen. The matrix, which I had seen. Then something I had not seen: the forme prepared for tomorrow's run, locked in its chase, the type set and ready, the whole page existing as its own small metal continent, every word already decided, waiting only for the ink and the pressure that would copy it five hundred times without variation, without the intervention of a single human judgment between the first impression and the last.

I looked at it for a long time.

It was a page of Augustine.

The Confessions. Book Three. I knew the passage without reading it: I have copied it twice with my own hand, I know where the lines break on the page, I know the particular quality of the Latin in this section, the way the sentences reach and reach and then arrive. It is one of the most beautiful passages in the book and one of the most dangerous, because it describes the period before Augustine's conversion with an honesty that made the Church uneasy for a thousand years and which is probably why Augustinus survived it: you cannot suppress a confession if the confessor is already the most venerated theologian in Christendom.

I leaned close.

I read the Latin in the set type, letter by reversed letter, and I —

> *Translator's note: CLIO-7 flags the following passage as containing one of the manuscript's most significant textual cruxes. The author appears to identify a specific variant reading in the printed text. The passage he cites — rendered below in his own Latin quotation — corresponds to a known variant in the manuscript tradition of the Confessions, specifically a reading found in a small cluster of German manuscripts of the twelfth century that diverges from the standard Vulgate text. Scholars of the Augustinian textual tradition may find this passage of independent interest.*

The type read: fecisti nos ad te.

You made us toward you.

The standard text — the text I have copied fourteen times, the text I would copy from memory in my sleep, the text that is simply true — reads: fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.

You made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.

The compositor had set only the first clause. The forme contained only the first clause. The page I was reading, which would be reproduced five hundred times tomorrow, read:

You made us toward you.

And then the next sentence began.

I stood there for long enough that Demetrios noticed.

He came and stood beside me and read what I was reading and I watched him see it.

He said: "It is a truncated edition. The canon summary takes precedence in the binding. The Augustine is supplementary. Richter chose a shorter excerpt."

I said: "He cut the sentence."

Demetrios said, carefully: "He cut the clause. The sentence continues."

I said: "The sentence is the clause. The clause is everything. Inquietum est cor nostrum — the restlessness, the incompletion, the donec — the until — remove the until and you have a statement about direction. Keep it and you have a statement about what it means to be human."

Demetrios was quiet for a moment. Then he said: "You are correct."

I said: "Does Richter know?"

He said: "Richter knows it is a shorter excerpt."

I said: "Does Richter know what he has cut?"

Demetrios looked at me with the expression he uses when he finds a question more interesting than he expected to. He said: "I think Richter knows what he has included. Whether he has fully considered what he has not included — that is a different question."

I said: "It is the only question."

He poured wine then, from somewhere, the way men in workshops always seem to have wine somewhere, and we stood together at the window that looks onto the alley. He said something then that I have been turning over ever since — or I have made him say it, which is what memory does to the people we cannot stop arguing with, and I no longer know which parts are his and which parts I have added in the weeks of rehearsing it. I will write it as it stands in my memory and You can judge the seams.

He said: "You understand that this will happen. Not the truncation — the truncation is a small error, it will be corrected in another edition, the text is not lost. I mean the other thing. The thing that troubles you that is not the truncation."

I asked him what thing he meant.

He said: "The thing where no one will know. Where five hundred people read Augustine tomorrow and not one of them will know that a man spent six months with this text, that the man wept at a particular sentence, that the sentence changed the man, that the man's changed hand copied it with a different pressure than the lines before and after, that a reader in Bruges in 1280 noticed the pressure changing and slowed down because of it, and that slowing-down was its own kind of reading that is not possible tomorrow. You know that is ending. You have known since you first came here."

He was not cruel when he said it. He was the way he always is, which is exact.

I said: "You find that acceptable."

He said: "I find it true. There is a library in Constantinople that is ash. I watched it. I watched it for two days. When it was finished I thought: the books that survived survived because there were too many copies to burn. Every copy that ever felt like a diminishment — every reader who winced at a scribe's error, every scholar who mourned the distance from the original, every man like you who grieved the copy's imperfection — every one of them was a root by which the living text clung to the earth despite what men do to cities." He paused. "I would like there to be too many copies to burn. That is my theology."

I had no answer.

I have been looking for one ever since.

Later, at Hartmann's — Demetrios told me, over wine, in his precise way — he said: "The Church condemnation exists because of exactly this. Not because Eckhart was wrong. Because the transmission was ungoverned. Every copyist a theologian. Every scriptorium a council. The press ends that. One authoritative edition. One text. The scholars argue about the edition, not about what some monk in Erfurt decided on a Tuesday."

I asked: "And if the authoritative edition is wrong?"

He said: "Then it is wrong in a way that can be identified and corrected in a subsequent edition."

I said: "And the subsequent edition will also be authoritative. And subsequent readers will read it as the text and not as an intervention."

He said: "Yes."

I said: "So we exchange a thousand small ungoverned interventions for a series of large authoritative ones, each one invisible because it wears the text's own face."

He was quiet for a moment. Then he said: "That is a fair description of the history of the Church."

I had no answer.

He refilled the wine and said something I did not expect.

He said: "You know who else would agree with you entirely? The Islamic calligraphers. I had a colleague in Constantinople — a scholar from Cairo, a man named Ibrahim, who was there studying our manuscripts as we were studying his. He showed me once a page of his own hand — a passage of the Quran — and explained that in his tradition the calligrapher does not merely copy the Word, he participates in its transmission in a way that is itself sacred. That the letter formed by a trained and devoted hand carries

something the letter stamped by a block of metal cannot. That the hand is part of the meaning." He paused. "The men who took my city will not print the Quran on a press. Not for decades, perhaps not in our lifetime. For the same reasons you give me. The sacred text requires the sacred hand. In this one thing, Brother Konrad, you and the scholars of Islam are in complete agreement."

I said: "And yet you disagree with both of us."

He said: "I watched the library burn for two days. Ibrahim got out. The manuscripts did not, mostly. I find I care more about the manuscripts than about the theology of how they travel." He looked at his wine. "That may be a failing."

I had no answer then either.

I left before the press run began. Again. I told myself this time it was because I had heard what I came to hear.

Walking home I thought about fecisti nos ad te. You made us toward you. Without the restlessness. Without the until. A statement that sounds almost the same and means something entirely different.

I thought about the Eckhart commentary.

I could not decide if that made what I did better or worse.

I went home. I could not eat. I came here, to this desk, to these pages, to You.

Here is what I want to ask You and cannot ask anyone else:

If a man tends a damaged text — if he mends what was broken in it, restores what was always trying to be said — and then a machine fixes the lesser version into permanence, which one of them has done the greater violence to the Word?

I know the answer I am supposed to give.

I know the answer I believe.

They are not the same answer.

They have not been the same answer for twenty-two years.

I think it is time to tell you about the Eckhart commentary.

✦ ✦ ✦

> *MS Erfurt Aug. 12°47, Folio 7r. CLIO-7 pressure analysis indicates this section was written across multiple sittings — ink density varies in ways consistent with the pen being set down and resumed several times within a single folio. The hand remains deliberate throughout. No damage. No lacunae. The author, it appears, wanted this one legible.*

In the winter of 1435 I was given a commission that I understood immediately to be the most important work of my life to that point.

A canon in Cologne — I will not write his name, he is dead now but he has living sons — had acquired a manuscript of Meister Eckhart's German sermons and wanted a fair copy made before the original deteriorated further. The original was old, the vellum cracking at the folds, certain pages brown at the edges with the particular damage that comes from being hidden in damp places, which this manuscript had been, because Eckhart's works had been in damp places since 1329.

You know what happened in 1329. You were there, in the sense that You are everywhere, though I sometimes think You were looking somewhere else that year. Pope John — a small meticulous man, from what I have read, a man who organized his theology the way a notary organizes his files — issued the bull In agro dominico and condemned twenty-eight propositions drawn from Eckhart's sermons. Eckhart himself had died the year before, which the Pope's men perhaps found convenient. The condemned propositions were things Eckhart had written or preached about the soul's relationship to God: that in its innermost ground the soul is not separate from God, that the spark of the soul is uncreated, that in the deepest act of contemplation the distinction between the soul and God becomes — Eckhart's word, not mine — nothing.

The Church said: this is heresy. The soul is created. God is uncreated. The distance between them is absolute and is bridged only by grace, by the sacraments, by the

mediation of the Church. To say otherwise is to make the Church unnecessary, and the Church had noticed this.

Eckhart's defenders said: you are misreading him. He is speaking of mystical union, not unity of substance. He is a poet of the soul's hidden ground, not a systematic theologian, and you are prosecuting his metaphors as if they were propositions.

Both of these things were true. This is the kind of situation that produces damp manuscripts.

I was twenty-one years old. I had been copying for eight years but I had not yet copied anything that frightened me. I did not understand, taking the commission, how different that is. You can copy a text you find dull and your hand moves across the page and the meaning slides past like water. You can copy a text you find beautiful and something in you opens and the work is a kind of joy. But when you copy a text that frightens you — when the meaning is arriving in your hand and your hand knows it is dangerous — the body responds in ways the mind hasn't authorized.

The sermons were extraordinary. I can say that now. At twenty-one I couldn't say it cleanly because the fear was in the way, but I knew it then and I know it now: Eckhart wrote about the hidden ground of the soul with a precision I have not encountered since, a precision that was not cold but was exact, the way a surgeon's incision is exact, the way it has to be exact to do the thing it needs to do. He was not using metaphor carelessly. He was using it the way the craft requires — to say the thing that cannot be said otherwise, to carry the reader to the edge of language and hold them there long enough for the non-language to do its work.

I copied for three weeks before I found the passage.

It was in the twelfth sermon. The subject was the birth of the Word in the soul — one of Eckhart's great recurring themes, the idea that what happened once in Bethlehem happens perpetually in the contemplative soul, that God's self-utterance is not a historical event sealed in the past but a living act that the soul participates in.

The passage in the manuscript I was copying read:

In sînem grunde: diu sêle ist daz wort.
In its ground: the soul is the Word.

I set down my pen.

I sat for a long time.

Is. Not receives. Not reflects. Not participates in. Not even becomes. Is. A flat declarative identity that made the condemned propositions look cautious by comparison. The soul, in its ground, simply is the divine Word. No distance. No mediation. No Church standing between the soul and its God, because the soul is God's self-utterance and always has been.

I understood why this manuscript had been in a damp place.

Now I must tell you something about how a scribe reads a damaged text, because it is important and because what I did came from this, which is not an excuse but is the truth.

When a manuscript is old and damaged, you do not simply copy what you can see. You reconstruct. You know the language, the author's habits of thought, the theological tradition he is working in, the grammatical structures he favors. When a word is partially obscured you do not write a blank — you consider what word could plausibly occupy that space, and you write the most probable reading, and you note the uncertainty if you are careful, and sometimes you do not note it if you are not, or if you are young, or if you are trying to finish before the light fails.

This is what every scribe does. This is what the craft requires.

The crack had taken most of the verb. Only the final *t* was certain. Before it, the ink had broken into strokes too narrow to name, and the shrinking of the skin had made the original space impossible to measure.

Ist was nearest to what remained in the line.

Enpfêhet stood in the margin, written by another hand—a correction, perhaps, or a warning.

Wirt stood nowhere.

Wirt was mine.

I sat with the three words for a full day. I prayed, which I tell you not to make myself seem holy but because it is true and because it didn't help, which is also true.

Is — heretical, condemned, the reason this manuscript was hidden.

Receives — orthodox, safe, consistent - the word a frightened copyist would choose the word that would make the Church comfortable and make the sentence into something smaller than it was.

Becomes — preserved the movement, the process, the living act of transformation that was Eckhart's actual subject. The soul in its ground becomes the Word. Not always is. Not merely receives. Becomes, in the contemplative act, in the moment of deepest union, Eckhart was trying to describe — the soul becomes what it contemplates.

I wrote wirt with no annotation, no sic, no marginal note indicating uncertainty. I wrote it as though it had always been there. I wrote it as though I had read it from the page.

I was twenty-one years old and I was certain I was right and I was — I have spent twenty-two years with this — I was probably right and it makes no difference, it makes every difference, I have never resolved which.

The canon in Cologne received the manuscript and was pleased. He showed it to a scholar he respected who said it was a careful copy. That scholar, I learned later, used my copy as the basis for his own transcript, which went to a house in Strasbourg. I do not know how many copies exist now that descend from mine. I have tried not to find out.

What I know is this: somewhere in the transmission of Meister Eckhart's twelfth sermon there is a word that is mine, not his. Readers who encounter it believe they are reading Eckhart. They are reading me. They are reading a twenty-one-year-old scribe's

theological judgment, rendered in Eckhart's voice, traveling through the world in Eckhart's name.

And the judgment may be correct. That is the thing I cannot get past. I have read everything Eckhart wrote that I can find, and I believe becomes is what he meant, I believe the flat is was either his own overreach or a copyist's earlier error and that becomes restores what he intended, I believe a careful scholar who compared all the witnesses would eventually arrive where I arrived.

I believe this. And I also know that it does not matter what I believe, because I do not have the authority to make that determination, because no one gave me that authority, because I took it, because I was alone at a desk with a cracked manuscript and a question and I answered the question with my own mind and sent the answer forward as someone else's words.

This is what I have wanted to say for twenty-two years:

It was an act of love. I loved the text. I loved what Eckhart was trying to do. I loved it enough to protect it from vicious reading, and I would do it again.

And it was a sin. Not because I was wrong. Because the text was not mine.

Because between the human mind and the truth there must be — there must be — a gap, a distance, an uncertainty, an annotation that says: here the manuscript is damaged, here is my best reading, here is what I could not see. Without that gap there is no faithful keeping of the word, there is only replacement. I did not tend Eckhart's lineage. I replaced him with my version of him, and I was skilled enough and careful enough that no one noticed, and I am telling You because I cannot tell anyone else because what would I say?

I cannot unsay the word. It is in the world now. There is no confession that recalls it. And the press —

Here is the thing I have not been able to say until now, and I am going to say it and then I am going to sit very quietly and wait to see what I feel.

If there had been a press in 1435, I could not have done what I did.

The press cannot doubt. The press does not sit with three possible words and choose the one. The press sets the text as given and reproduces it exactly, crack and all, every ambiguity preserved, the damaged verb traveling forward in its honest illegibility for scholars to argue over rather than for a young scribe to quietly resolve in his cell.

My sin required the manuscript tradition. It required the long, slow, human chain of keepers where every link is a person with judgment and limitation and the ability to be wrong. The press would have taken that chain from me. It would have taken my capacity to sin.

I do not know if that is salvation or diminishment.

Are they different things?

> *CLIO-7 editorial note: This concludes Folio 7r and continues to the top of Folio 7v before breaking. The final lines of 7v return to present tense — the author describing his desk, his current Psalter commission, the quality of the morning light. The transition is abrupt. CLIO-7 assesses this as consistent with a writer who has reached the limit of what can be said in a single sitting and has resumed ordinary life as an act of self-preservation rather than resolution.*

✦ ✦ ✦

> *MS Erfurt Aug. 12°47, Folio 7v, lower half. Hand returns to the author's standard scriptorium register — smaller, more economical, the hand of a man at his actual work rather than his private one.*

The Psalter is due in six weeks.

I write that here because I have written everything else here and because it is the truest sentence I know how to produce this morning. Not true in the way the Eckhart confession is true — not the truth that costs something — but true in the way a Wednesday is true. It is simply the condition of the day. The Psalter is due in six weeks and the merchant Becker has paid half already and my eyes are better in morning light

than afternoon and it is morning and the light is coming through the east window at the angle that means I have perhaps three hours before it moves and the work becomes harder.

So.

Psalm 42 this morning. Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum. As the deer longs for the water-brooks.

I have copied this psalm eleven times. I know it the way I know my own face — which is to say imperfectly, in fragments, never whole, always slightly surprising in some detail when I return to it. That is what happens with a text you know well. It does not become transparent. It becomes specific in new ways. This morning the word that stopped me was desiderat — longs, desires, thirsts. A word with the body in it. Not quaerit, seeks. Not amat, loves. Desiderat, which is the word for a hunger that is also a direction, a wanting that knows where the thing it wants is located but cannot get there, cannot get there, is always in the place of not-yet.

Inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.

I set down the pen for a moment.

Then I picked it up.

This is what I have not told you yet, and what I think I need to tell you before this record ends, whenever it ends:

The work is still the work.

I say that without consolation and without argument. Not as a conclusion but as a daily fact. Whatever is happening — the press, Peter, Demetrios, the Eckhart word traveling through the world in my name — I still come to this desk and the Psalter is still here and my hand still knows what to do. The knowing is larger, heavier, more specifically itself, the way a tool feels heavier at the end of the day that may be the last day you use it.

I form each letter as I have always formed it. I am aware that I am forming it. I am aware of the awareness, which is new, or not new but newly vivid — the way you become aware of your own breathing when someone tells you that breathing is becoming optional.

The deer longs for the water-brooks.

I dip the pen.

Sic desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.

So my soul longs for you, O God.

Eleven times I have copied that sentence and this morning it is not a sentence I am copying. It is a sentence I am making, the way you make something when you finally understand what it is for, when the years of handling it collapses into a single moment of comprehension and the comprehension is not comfort but is at least — real. The soul longs. The soul is not satisfied. The soul is exactly in the position of the deer, which knows where the water is and is not there yet, which is always not there yet, which is constitutively the animal that is on the way.

~~*Perhaps that is all any of us are*~~.

I wrote that and then I crossed it out because it is the kind of sentence that sounds wise and is actually just tired. But I am leaving the crossing-out because You saw me write it and You saw me cross it out and the crossing-out is also true.

Becker came yesterday to check the progress.

He is a good man of the kind that is sometimes harder to deal with than a difficult one — genuinely kind, genuinely appreciative, with no capacity for the kind of conversation I would need to have with him. He looked at the completed folios with the expression men use when they are moved by something they don't have the vocabulary for, and he said it was very fine, and he meant it, and then he said his cousin in Frankfurt had told him you could get a printed Book of Hours now for less than the cost of the vellum alone, and he laughed in a way that was not comfortable.

I said the vellum in his Psalter was Bavarian calfskin, very fine, I had selected it myself.

He nodded.

There was a silence.

He said: "It will be something my sons can hold."

I said: "Yes."

He said: "And their sons."

I said: "God willing."

He left. I sat for a while with the completed folios spread before me and I thought about his sons holding this, and their sons, and I thought about the five hundred copies of Augustine being loaded onto a cart somewhere right now, and I thought about a word in a sermon that has been traveling for twenty-two years wearing a dead man's face, and I thought: all of it is transmission, all of it is loss, all of it is also — something else. Something I don't have the word for.

Which means I'll keep looking for it. Which means the work continues.

Which means it is time to pick up the pen.

✦ ✦ ✦

MS Erfurt Aug. 12°47, Folio 14r. The final gathered section of the manuscript. CLIO-7 notes a gap of approximately four months between the date indicators in the preceding folio and this one, inferred from internal references to the liturgical calendar. The Psalter commission, mentioned throughout, is not referenced again after Folio 11v. The hand here is slower than in earlier sections — the letterforms remain precise but are more widely spaced, consistent with a writer compensating for some physical difficulty. The ink is fresh. The vellum is a different stock than the preceding folios — smaller, cut unevenly, as though taken from a sheet intended for something else.

The Psalter is finished.

I delivered it to Becker on the feast of Saint Nicholas, which seemed appropriate in ways I did not explain to him. He held it the way I hoped he would — not at arm's length, the way men hold objects they intend to display, but close, the way men hold objects they intend to use, the spine resting in his palm, the weight of it settling. He opened it to the middle without choosing, the way a book opens to the place it has already decided on, and he read for a moment in silence and then he looked up and said nothing, which was the right response.

His son was there. Eight years old, small, watching his father's face to know what to feel.

I thought about Peter.

I accepted Becker's payment and walked home through the market and the air was very cold and I could see my breath and I thought: I have made a thing that will outlast me. I have thought this before, after other commissions, but this time the thought had a different weight to it. Not heavier. More specific. This particular thing will outlast this me. As though I had finally understood that the statement had always been personal and I had been hearing it wrong.

The letter from Strasbourg arrived eleven days later.

It was from a canon at the Augustinian house there — a man named Father Ulrich, whom I do not know, who had encountered my name through a chain of correspondence I cannot fully reconstruct. He was writing about Eckhart. He had been compiling a study of the sermon tradition and had noticed a variant reading in the twelfth sermon that appeared in several manuscripts descending from a common source, and had traced that source, with some difficulty, to a copy made in Erfurt in the winter of 1435, and had then, with more difficulty, traced that copy to me.

He was not writing to accuse me.

He was writing because Richter's press had recently completed an edition of selected Eckhart sermons, and the compositor — working from a manuscript in the Strasbourg

house's collection, which descended from mine — had set the twelfth sermon with the variant reading.

Wirt.

Becomes.

He enclosed a single printed leaf. The relevant page. He said he thought I should know, as the reading's apparent origin, that it had now been committed to type in an edition of three hundred copies already distributed to houses in four cities, and that he personally found the reading theologically superior to the alternatives and intended to argue for its acceptance in the study he was preparing, and that if I had any documentation of my reasoning in selecting it he would be grateful to receive it.

I held the leaf for a long time.

The type was clean. The impression even. The word sat in the middle of Eckhart's sentence exactly where I had put it twenty-two years ago, wearing Eckhart's voice, surrounded by Eckhart's words, indistinguishable from the rest — as I had intended, as I had feared, as I had carried like a stone in my chest through two decades of Psalters and Gospels and one secret manuscript that I had been intending to burn since September and had not burned.

Wirt.

It looked, in type, exactly as it had looked in my hand. Which is to say: it looked like Eckhart. It looked like it had always been there. It looked like the truth, which is what I believed it was, which is what I still believe, which does not resolve anything.

I wrote back to Father Ulrich.

I told him that the reading was a reconstruction from a damaged source, that the manuscript had been genuinely ambiguous at that point, and that I had selected wirt as the reading most consistent with Eckhart's theological project as evidenced across the full sermon corpus. I told him that the selection was mine, not Eckhart's, and that I

had not annotated it as such, and that I understood this to have been an error in method regardless of whether it was an error in judgment.

I told him I was glad the reading had survived. I told him I was glad it was now in print, where it could be examined, contested, argued over by men with more authority than I had ever possessed.

I told him I was not glad in a simple way. I told him that because it seemed important to be precise.

He has not yet written back. Perhaps he will not. I find I do not mind either outcome, which itself feels like a kind of resolution, or at least the nearest thing to it I am likely to reach in whatever time remains.

It is evening now. The light is almost gone — the particular winter light of this city which I have been watching fall across this desk for twenty years, which I have described to no one because there was never a reason to, which I am describing now because there is still no reason and I find I want to anyway.

My eyes are worse. I know this in the way you know things you have been not-knowing for a while — suddenly and completely, with the sense that you have been the last to arrive at a truth that was waiting patiently. The morning hours are still workable. The afternoon is difficult. The evening is what it is.

I have before me two things.

The first is a new commission — a Book of Hours for a widow in Gotha, a woman I have never met, whose agent came last week with a deposit and a description of what she wanted: small, portable, the calendar written in red and black, the major feasts illuminated, her family's names recorded in the opening pages. A plain commission. Good work. The kind of work I have done a hundred times.

The second is this manuscript.

I have been intending to burn it since September.

I want to be honest about why I have not: I have not because I could not, and I could not because — I am going to write this simply — it is good. Not holy. Not important in the way the things I have spent my life copying are important. But good in the way that a thing is good when it is the truest version of itself, when the man who made it was fully present in the making, when nothing was held back or performed or shaped for an audience that wasn't there.

I made this for You. And I find, reading it back, that I also made it for whoever finds it, which means I made it for someone, which means it was never entirely private, which means the pride I feared was there from the beginning and I knew it and wrote anyway, and I think — I have been thinking about this for several weeks now and this is where I have arrived — I think that is not the sin I believed it was.

Augustinus wrote for God and wrote for everyone and did not experience these as different. I used to think that was possible only for Augustinus. I think now it is possible for anyone who is willing to be honest enough, which is most people's actual difficulty, which was my difficulty, which is why this took twenty-two years to begin and four months to almost burn.

I am going to put it here, between the Breviarium on my left and the old Lectionary on my right, whoever comes after me will find it or not find it and read it or not read it and that is as much as I can do, that is my transmission.

I want to write one more thing.

I went to the workshop again this week. I did not tell Brother Anselm I was going anywhere. I simply went.

They were running the Eckhart. I knew this because Demetrios had told me, in his precise way, the week before — not cruelty, information, he has never learned the difference, I have stopped expecting him to. I stood at the back of the workshop while the press ran and I watched the pages come off and I watched Hans stack them with the flat efficiency of a man for whom this is simply work, which it is, which is also what it has always been for me, the holiness and the work not separable, the work not diminished by the holiness and the holiness not diminished by the work.

One of the pages slipped from the stack. It fell face-up on the floor between Hans and the press.

I picked it up.

I read the passage.

Wirt.

My word in Eckhart's sentence, Eckhart's sentence in the press's type, the press's type on the page in my hand, the page in my hand that had been copied from a manuscript copied from my copy of a damaged original, the chain of transmission running back through twenty-two years of my private guilt to a winter morning in 1435 when a young man sat alone with a cracked vellum and a question and answered it, rightly or wrongly, with the full force of what he understood.

I held the page.

Then I handed it back to Hans, who added it to the stack without looking up.

I walked home through the cold.

I came here.

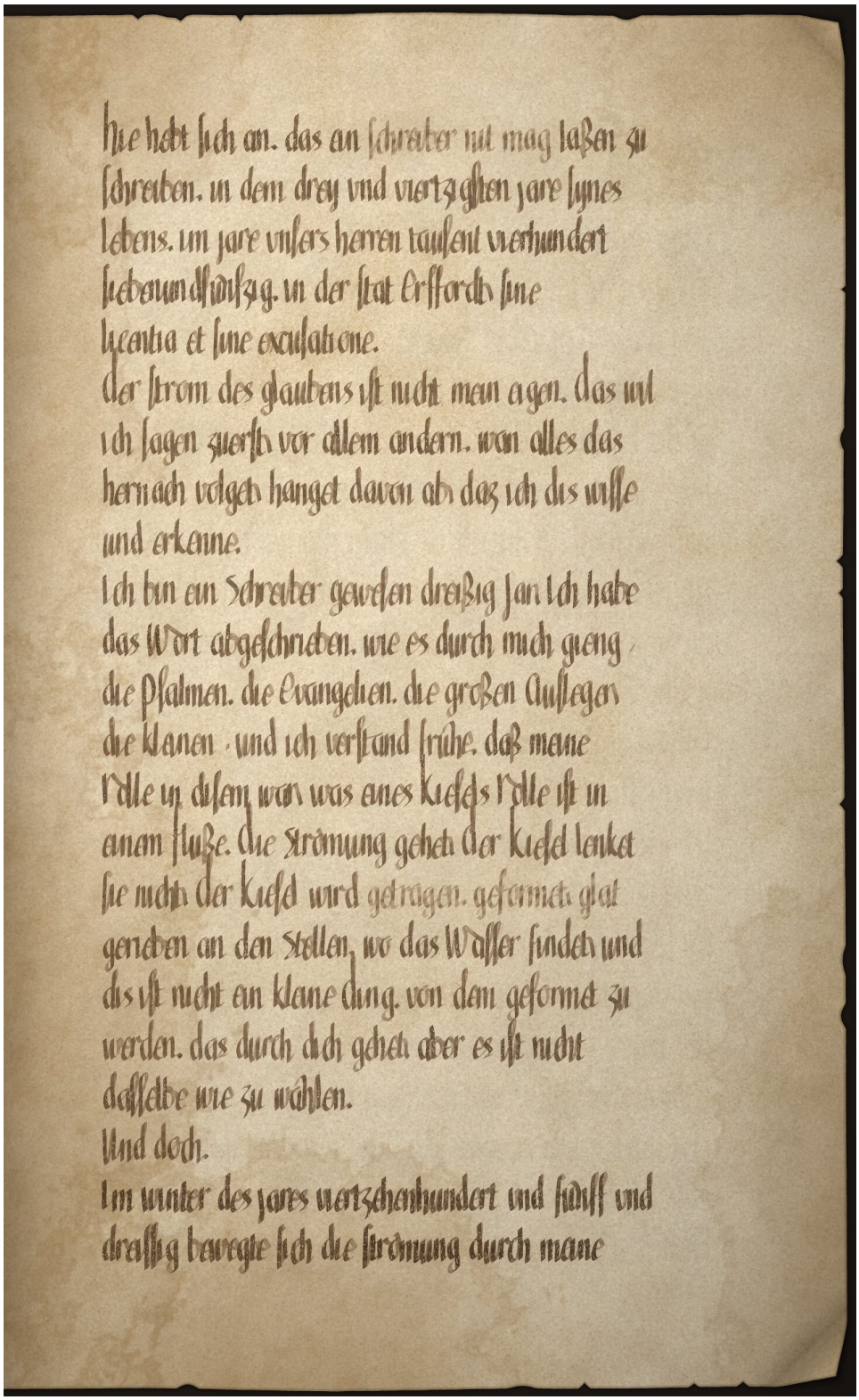
I picked up the pen.

As the deer longs for the water-brooks.
So.

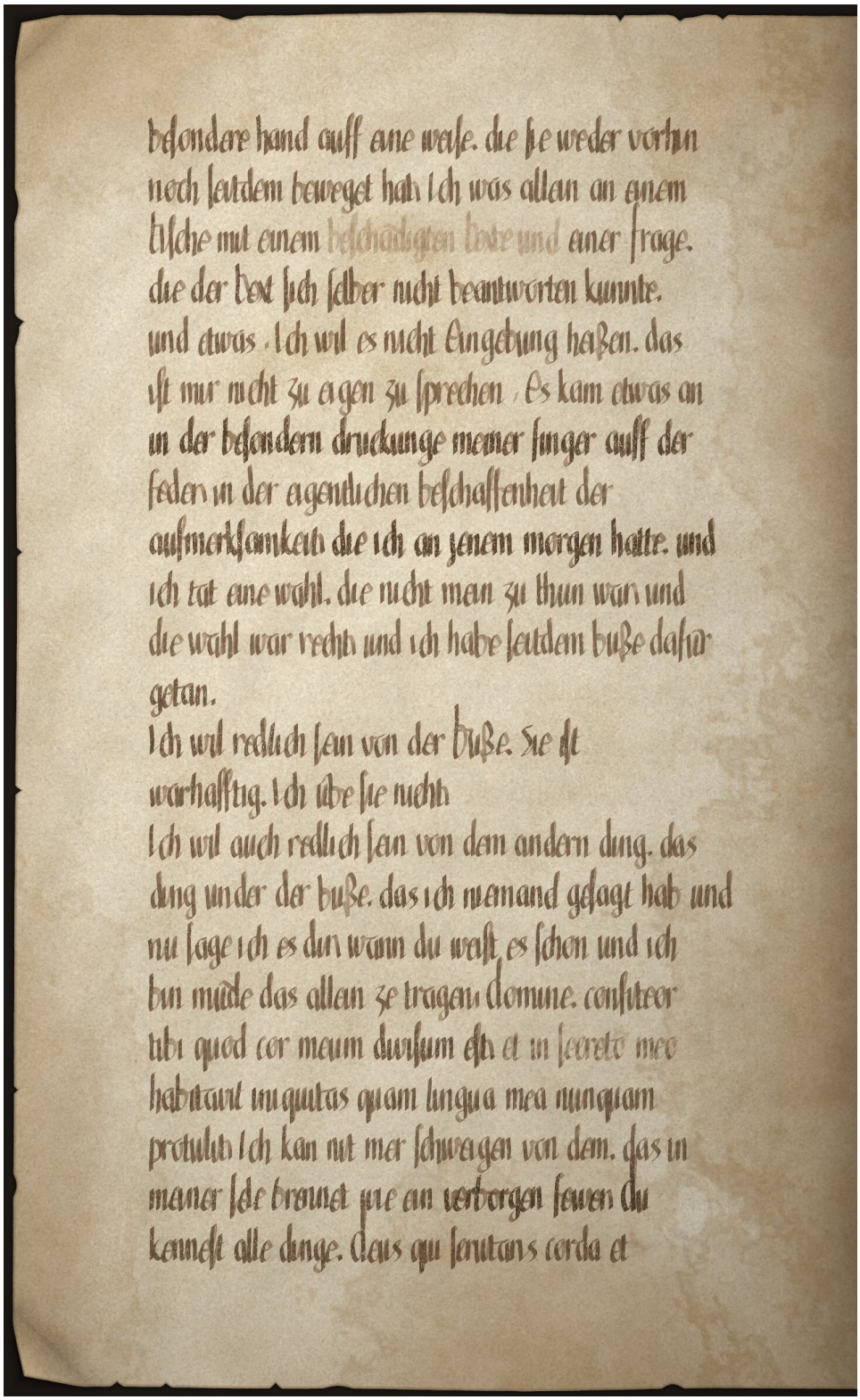
✦ ✦ ✦

Finis.

Written in Erfurt, in the forty-third year of my life, in the year of Our Lord 1457, without permission, without excuse, and without, in the end, burning.



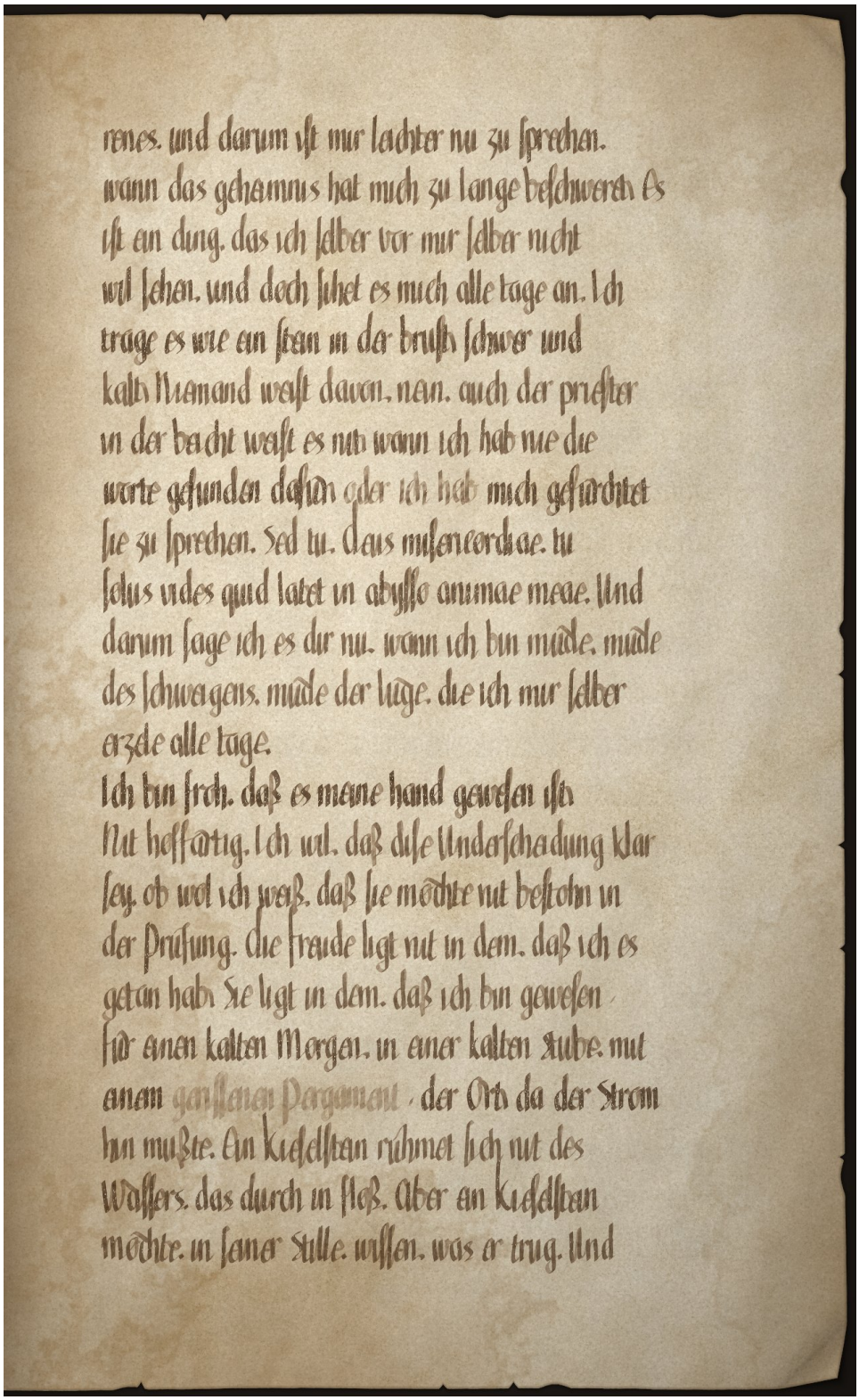
hie hebt sich an. das an schreiber nit mag laßen zu
schreiben. in dem drey vnd viertzigsten jare synes
lebens. im jare vnsers herren tausent vierhundert
siebenundsibtzig. in der stat Erffordh sine
licentia et sine excusatione.
Der strom des glaubens ist nicht mein eigen. das wil
ich sagen zuerst vor allem andern. wan alles das
hernach volget hanget davon ab. daz ich dis wisse
und erkenne.
Ich bin ein Schreiber gewesen dreißig jar. Ich habe
das Wort abgeschrieben. wie es durch mich gieng.
die Psalmen. die Evangelien. die großen Auslegen
die klainen. und ich verstand frühe. daß meine
Welle in disem wan was eines kiesels Welle ist in
einem fluße. die Strömung gehet. der kiesel lenket
sie nicht. der kiesel wird getragen. geformet. glat
geschoben an den Stellen. wo das Wasser findet. und
dis ist nicht ein klaine ding. von dem geformet zu
werden. das durch dich gehet. aber es ist nicht
dasselbe wie zu wählen.
Und doch.
Im winter des jares vierzehenhundert und sibenff und
dreißig bewegte sich die strömung durch meine



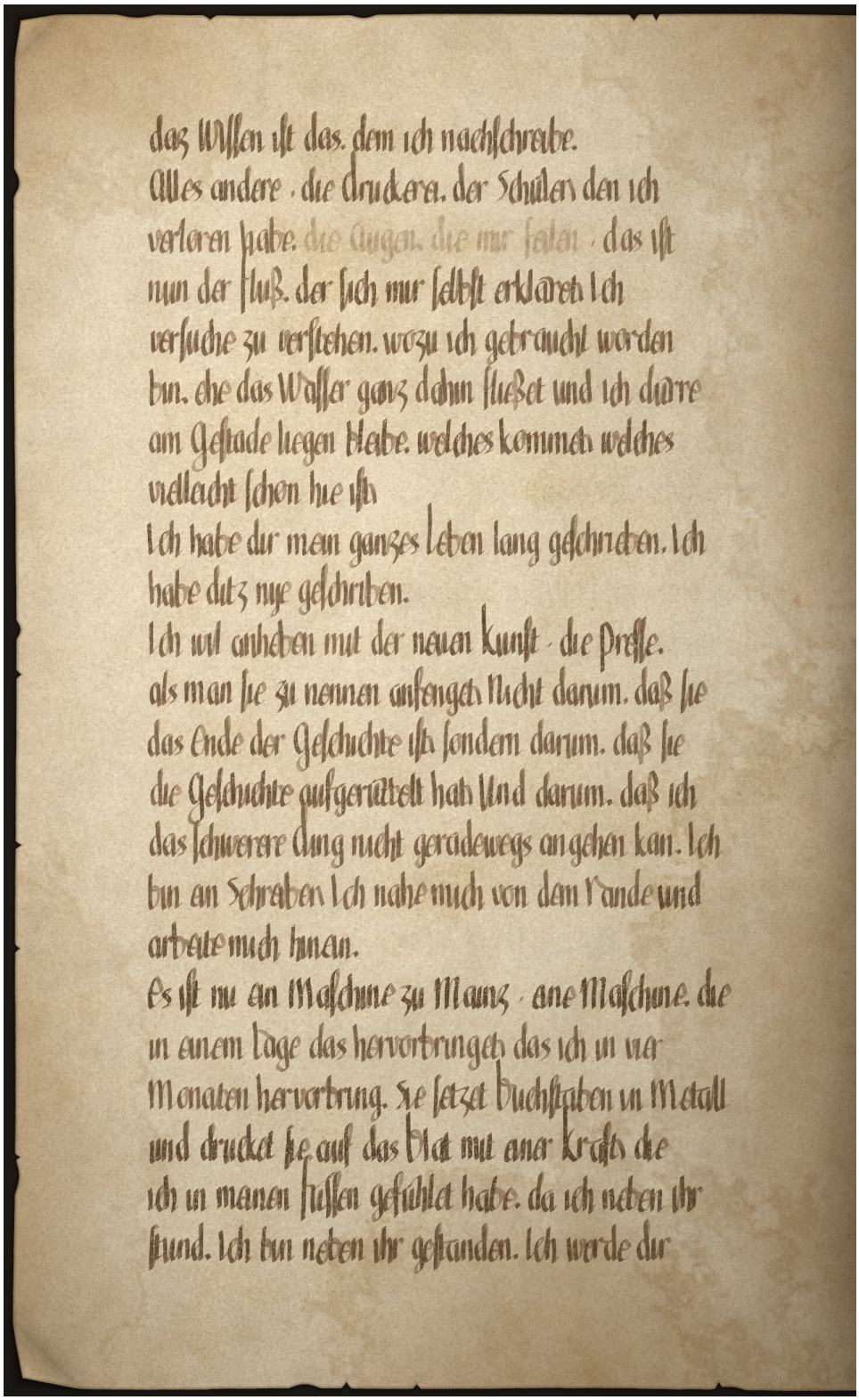
besondere hand auff eine weise. die sie weder vorhin noch seitdem beweget hat. Ich was allein an einem Tische mit einem beschädigten Tinte und einer frage. die der Text sich selber nicht beantworten kunnte. und etwas. Ich wil es nicht Eingebung haßen. das ist mir nicht zu sagen zu sprechen. Es kam etwas an in der besondern druckunge meiner finger auff der federn in der eigentlichen beschaffenheit der aufmerksamkeit die ich an jenem morgen hatte. und ich tat eine wahl. die nicht mein zu thun war. und die wahl war recht. und ich habe seitdem buße dafür getan.

Ich wil redlich sein von der Buße. Sie ist warhafftig. Ich übe sie nicht.

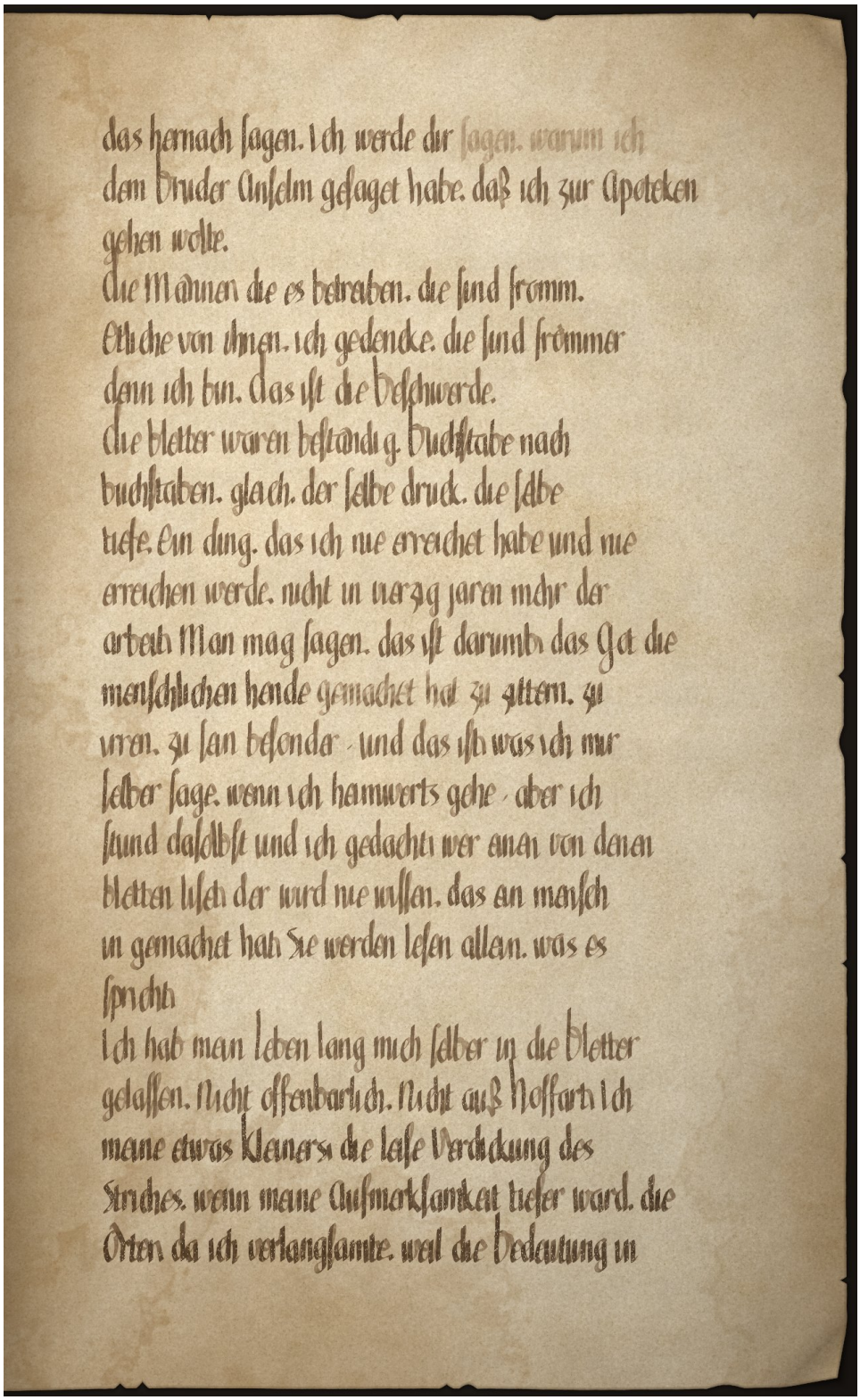
Ich wil auch redlich sein von dem andern ding. das ding under der buße. das ich niemand gesagt hab. und nu sage ich es dir. wann du weist es schon. und ich bin müde das allein zu tragen. domine. confiteor tibi quod cor meum durissum est. et in secreto meo habitant iniquitas quam lingua mea nunquam protulit. Ich kan nit mer schweigen von dem. das in meiner seele brennet wie ein verborgen feuer. du kennest alle dinge. deus qui scrutans corda et



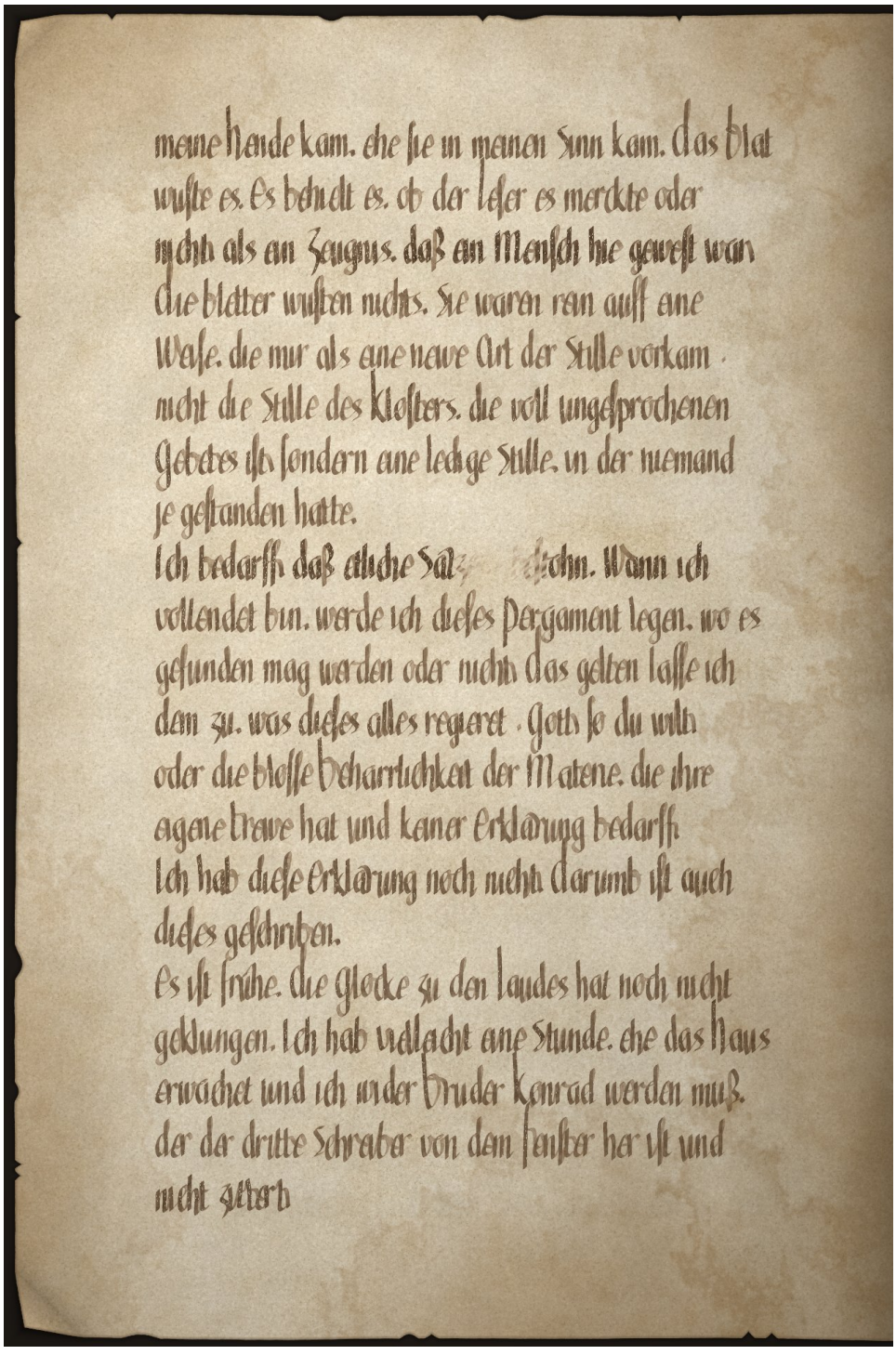
renes. und darum ist mir lachter nu zu sprechen.
wann das gehemnus hat mich zu lange beschweret. Es
ist an dir. das ich selber vor mir selber nicht
wil sehen. und doch stehet es mich alle tage an. Ich
trage es wie ein stein in der brust schwer und
kalt. Niemand weist davon. nein. auch der priester
in der beicht weist es nit wann ich hab nie die
worte gefunden dafür oder ich hab mich gefürchtet
sie zu sprechen. Sed tu. Deus misereordiae. tu
solus vides quid latet in abysso animae meae. Und
darum sage ich es dir nu. wann ich bin müde. müde
des schweigens. müde der lüge. die ich mir selber
erzele alle tage.
Ich bin froh. daß es meine hand gewesen ist.
Nit hoffärtig. Ich wil. daß diese Underschaidung klar
sey. ob wol ich weiß. daß sie möchte nit bestohn in
der Prüfung. Die freude ligt nit in dem. daß ich es
getan hab. Sie ligt in dem. daß ich bin gewesen
für einen kalten Morgen. in einer kalten Kuhe. mit
einem ganzlenen Pergament. der Ort da der Strom
hin mußte. Ein Kieselstein rühmet sich nit des
Wassers. das durch in fließ. Aber ein Kieselstein
möchte. in seiner Stille. wissen. was er trug. Und



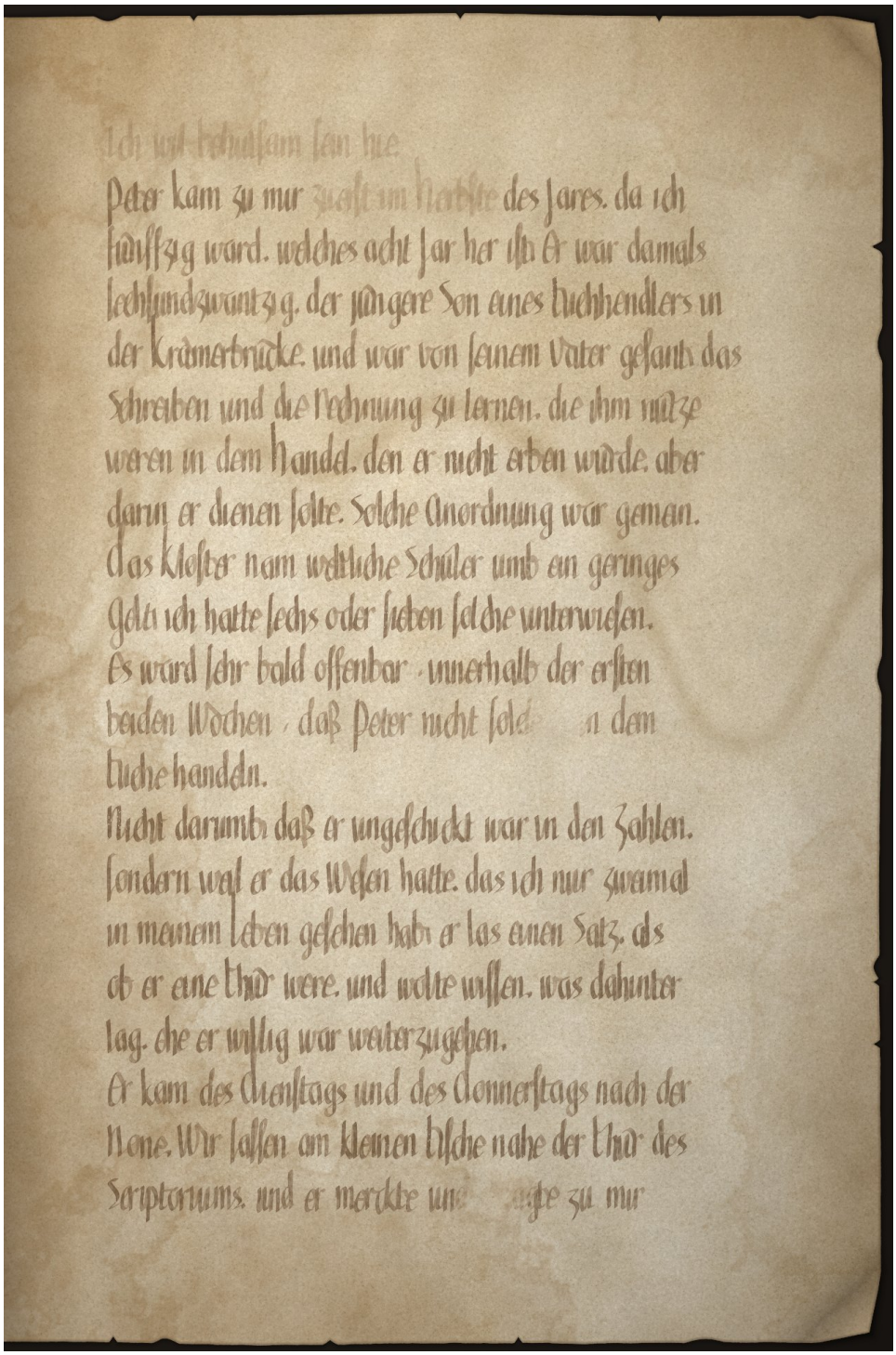
das Wissen ist das. dem ich nachschreibe.
Alles andere · die Druckerey. der Schülern den ich
verloren habe. die Augen. die mir fehlen · das ist
nun der Fluß. der sich nur selbst erklären. Ich
versuche zu verstehen. wozu ich gebraucht worden
bin. ehe das Wasser ganz dahin fließet und ich dürre
am Gestade liegen bleibe. welches kommen welches
vielleicht schon hie ist.
Ich habe dir mein ganzes Leben lang geschrieben. Ich
habe dirs nye geschriben.
Ich wil anheben mit der neuen Kunst · die Presse.
als man sie zu nennen anfenget. Nicht darum. daß sie
das Ende der Geschichte ist. sondern darum. daß sie
die Geschichte aufgerüttelt hat. Und darum. daß ich
das schwerere Ding nicht geradewegs angehen kan. Ich
bin an Schraben. Ich nahe mich von dem Rande und
arbeite mich hinein.
Es ist nu ein Maschine zu Mainz · eine Maschine. die
in einem Tage das hervorbringet. das ich in vier
Monaten hervorbring. Sie setzet Buchstaben in Metall
und drucket sie auf das Blat mit einer Kraft. die
ich in meinen Füssen gefühlet habe. da ich neben ihr
stund. Ich bin neben ihr gestanden. Ich werde dir



das hernach ſagen. Ich werde dir ſagen. warum ich
dem Bruder Anſelm geſaget habe. daß ich zur Apoteken
gehen wolte.
Die Mannen die es betraben. die ſind fromm.
Etliche von ihnen. ich gedencke. die ſind frömmer
denn ich bin. Das iſt die Beſchwerde.
Die bletter waren beſtandig. Buchſtabe nach
buchſtaben. glach. der ſelbe druck. die ſelbe
tiefe. Ein ding. das ich nie erreichet habe und nie
erreichen werde. nicht in vierzig jaren mehr der
arbeit Man mag ſagen. das iſt darumb das Got die
menſchlichen hende gemachet hat zu gittern. zu
irren. zu ſan beſonder - und das iſt was ich nur
ſelber ſage. wenn ich hamwerts gehe - aber ich
ſtund daſelbſt und ich gedachte wer einen von denen
bletten leſen der wird nie wiſſen. das an menſch
in gemachet hat Sie werden leſen allein. was es
ſpricht
Ich hab man leben lang mich ſelber in die bletter
gelaſſen. Nicht offenbarlich. Nicht auß hoffart. Ich
meine etwas kleiners die leiſe Verdickung des
Striches. wenn meine Aufmerkſamkeit tiefer ward. die
Orten da ich verlangſamte. weil die Bedeutung in

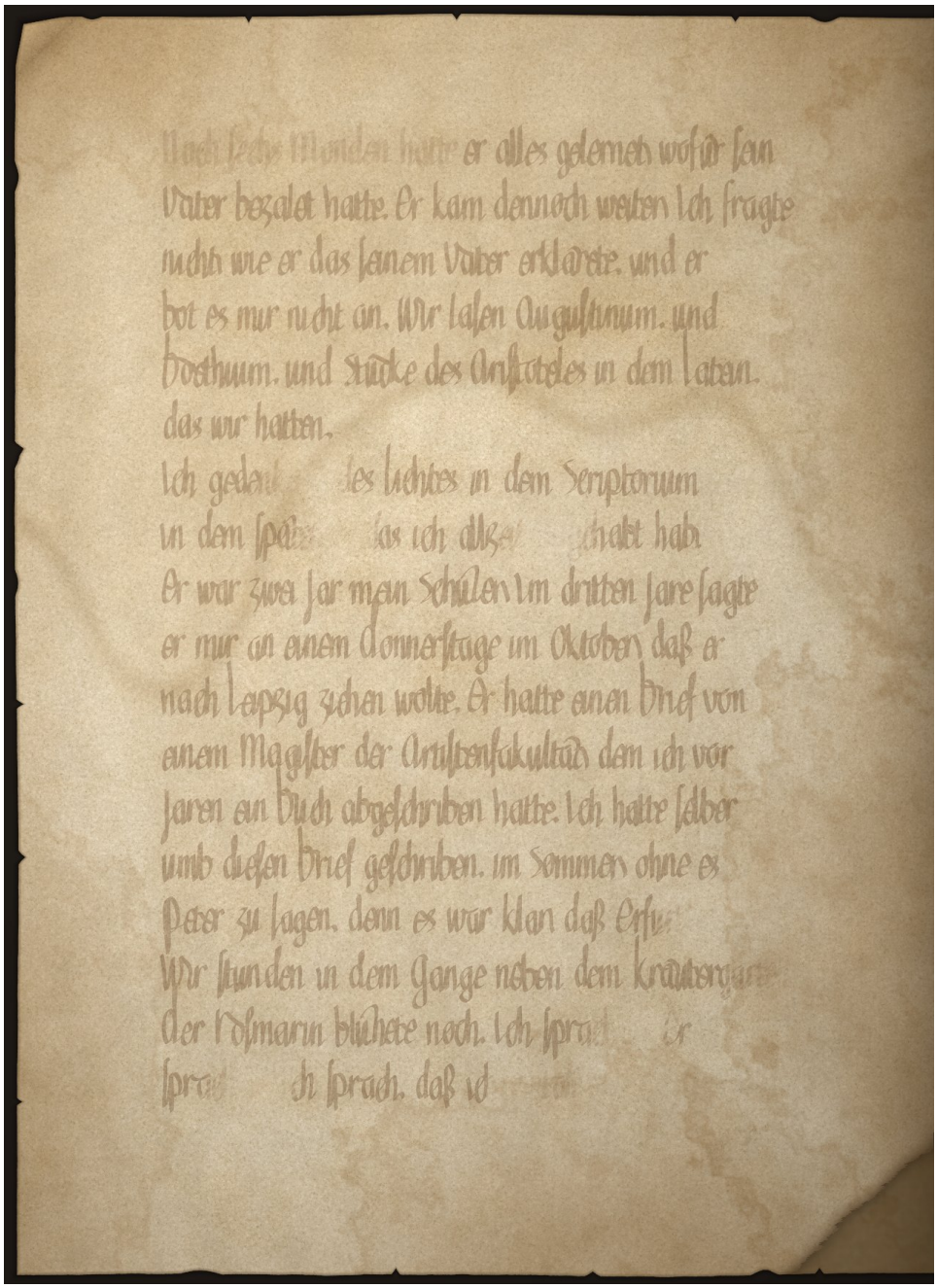


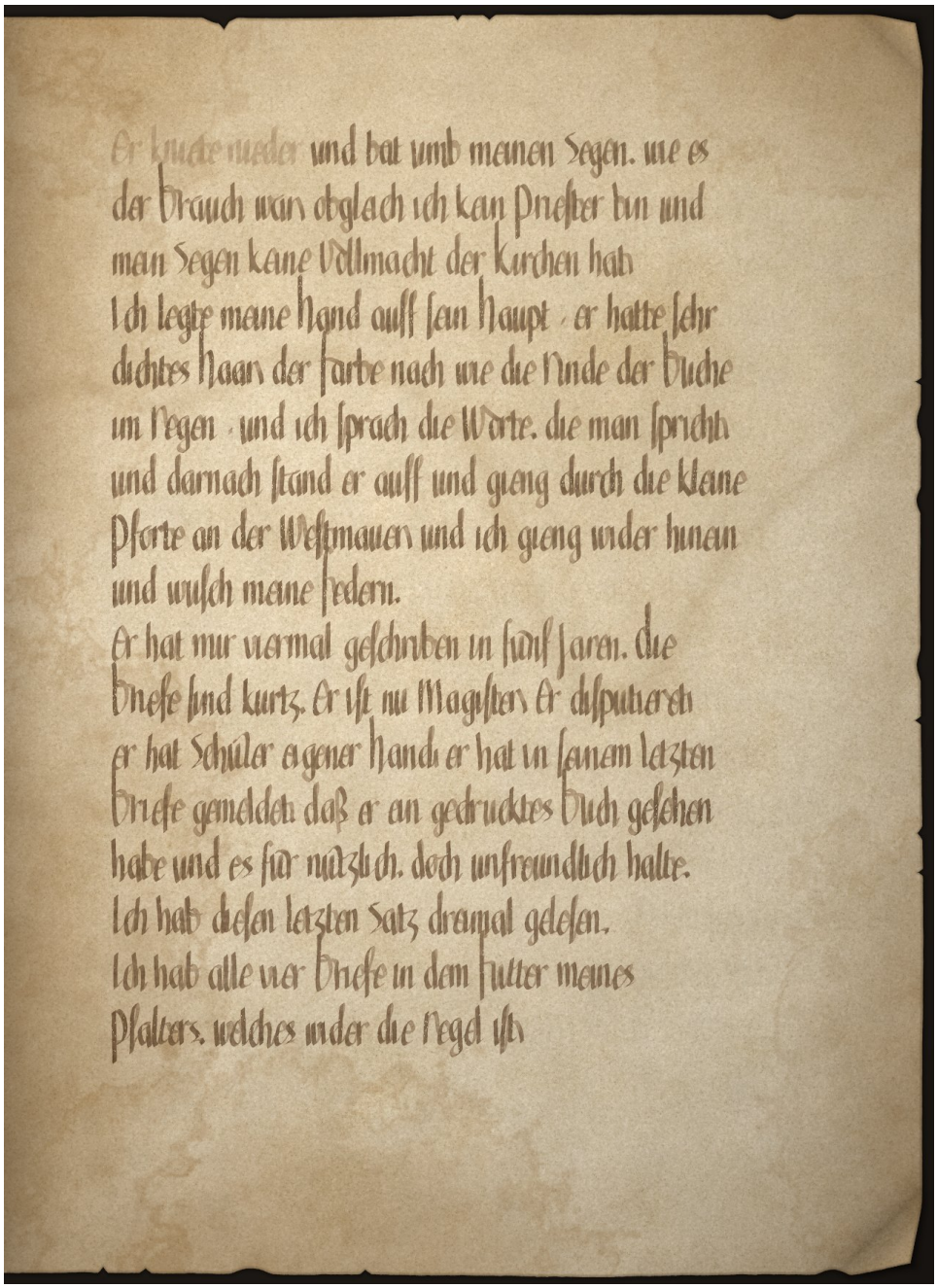
meine Hende kam. ehe sie in meinen Sinn kam. das Blat
wuste es. Es bedeut es. ob der leser es merckte oder
nicht als ein Zeugnus. daß ein Mensch hie gewest wan
die blätter wusten nichts. Sie waren rein auff eine
Weise. die mir als eine newe Art der Stille vorkam.
nicht die Stille des Klosters. die voll ungesprochenen
Gebetes ist sondern eine ledige Stille. in der niemand
je gestanden hatte.
Ich bedarff daß etliche Sal[illegible]ohn. Wann ich
vollendet bin. werde ich dieses Pergament legen. wo es
gefunden mag werden oder nicht das gelten lasse ich
dem zu. was dieses alles regieret. Gott so du wilt
oder die bloße Beharrlichkeit der Materie. die ihre
eigene Treue hat und keiner Erklärung bedarff.
Ich hab diese Erklärung noch nicht darumb ist auch
dieses geschrieben.
Es ist frühe. die Glocke zu den Laudes hat noch nicht
geklungen. Ich hab vielleicht eine Stunde. ehe das Haus
erwachet und ich in der Bruder Konrad werden muß.
der der dritte Schreiber von dem Fenster her ist und
nicht stirbt



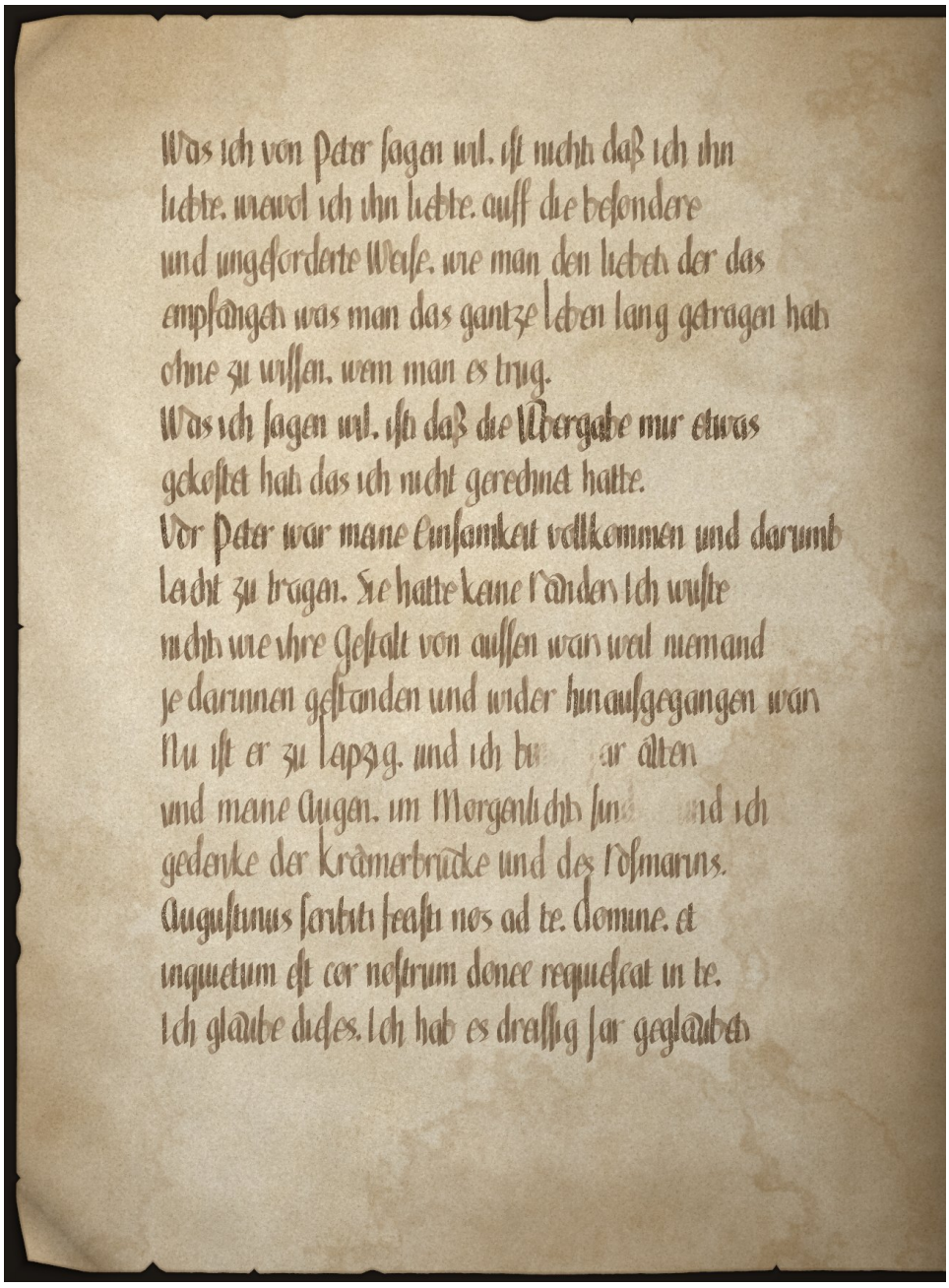
Ich war behutsam sein hie.
Peter kam zu mir zuerst im Herbste des Jares. da ich
funffzig ward. welches acht Jar her ist. Er war damals
sechsundzwantzig. der jüngere Son eines Buchhendlers in
der Krämerbrücke. und war von seinem Vater gesant. das
Schreiben und die Rechnung zu lernen. die ihm nütze
weren in dem Handel. den er nicht erben würde. aber
darin er dienen solte. Solche Anordnung war gemein.
Das Kloster nam weltliche Schüler umb ein geringes
Gelt. ich hatte sechs oder sieben solche unterwiesen.
Es ward sehr bald offenbar. innerhalb der ersten
beiden Wochen. daß Peter nicht solde in dem
Buche handeln.
Nicht darumb daß er ungeschickt war in den Zahlen.
sondern weil er das Wesen hatte. das ich nur zweimal
in meinem Leben gesehen habe. las einen Satz. als
ob er eine Thür were. und wolte wissen. was dahinter
lag. ehe er willig war weiterzugehen.
Er kam des Dienstags und des Donnerstags nach der
None. Wir sassen am kleinen Tische nahe der Thür des
Scriptoriums. und er merkte uns[illegible]ge zu mir

Folio 4v

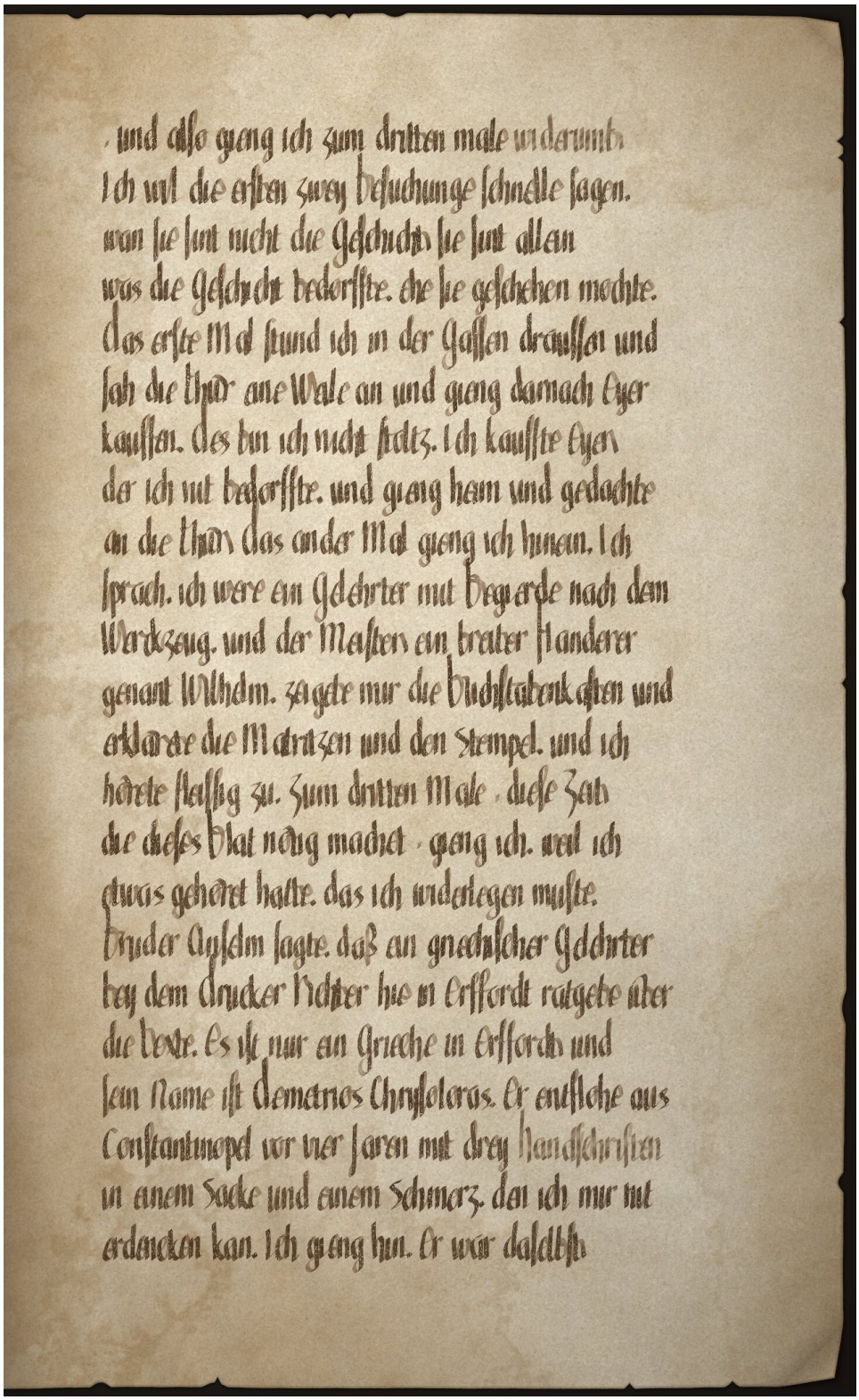




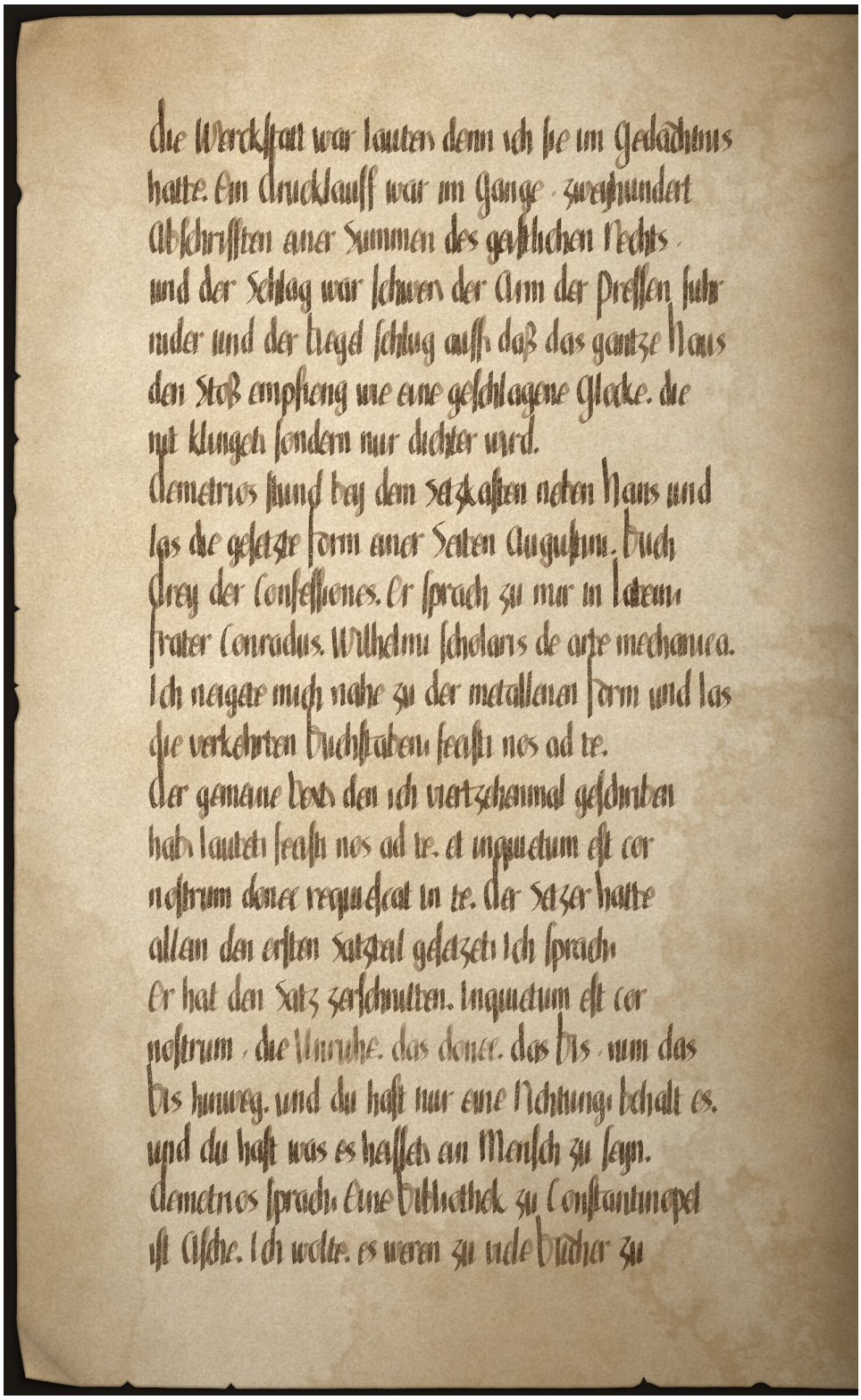
Er kniete nieder und bat umb meinen Segen. wie es
der Brauch war obgleich ich kein Priester bin und
man Segen keine Vollmacht der Kirchen hat
Ich legte meine Hand auff sein Haupt · er hatte sehr
dichtes Haar der Farbe nach wie die Rinde der Buche
im Regen · und ich sprach die Worte. die man spricht
und darnach stand er auff und gieng durch die kleine
Pforte an der Westmauer und ich gieng wieder hinein
und wusch meine Federn.
Er hat nur viermal geschrieben in fünf Jaren. die
Briefe sind kurtz. Er ist nu Magister Er disputieret
er hat Schüler eigener Hand er hat in seinem letzten
Briefe gemeldet daß er ein gedrucktes Buch gesehen
habe und es für nützlich. doch unfreundlich halte.
Ich hab diesen letzten Satz dreimal gelesen.
Ich hab alle vier Briefe in dem Futter meines
Psalters. welches wieder die Regel ist.



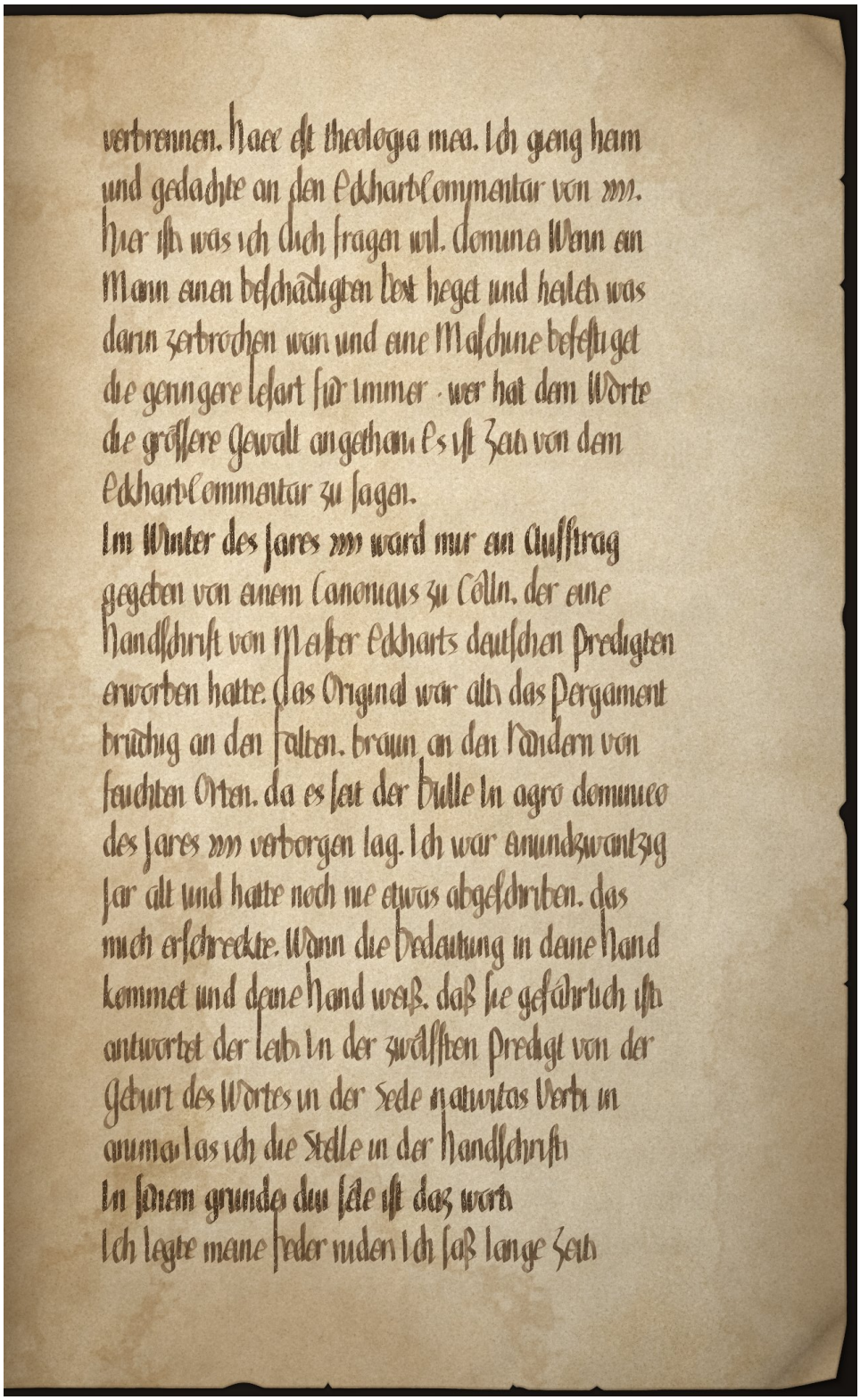
Was ich von Peter sagen wil. ist nicht daß ich ihn
liebte. wiewol ich ihn liebte. auff die besondere
und ungeforderte Weise. wie man den liebet der das
empfangen was man das gantze Leben lang getragen hat
ohne zu wissen. wem man es trug.
Was ich sagen wil. ist daß die Übergabe mir etwas
gekostet hat das ich nicht gerechnet hatte.
Vor Peter war meine Einsamkeit vollkommen und darumb
leicht zu tragen. Sie hatte keine Wände ich wußte
nichts wie ihre Gestalt von aussen war weil niemand
je darinnen gestanden und wider hinausgegangen war
Nu ist er zu Lapzig. und ich bi[illegible]ar älter
und meine Augen. im Morgenlichts sin[illegible]nd ich
gedenke der Krämerbrücke und des Rosmarins.
Augustinus confitis fecisti nos ad te. domine. et
inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.
Ich glaube dieses. Ich hab es dreissig Jar geglaubet



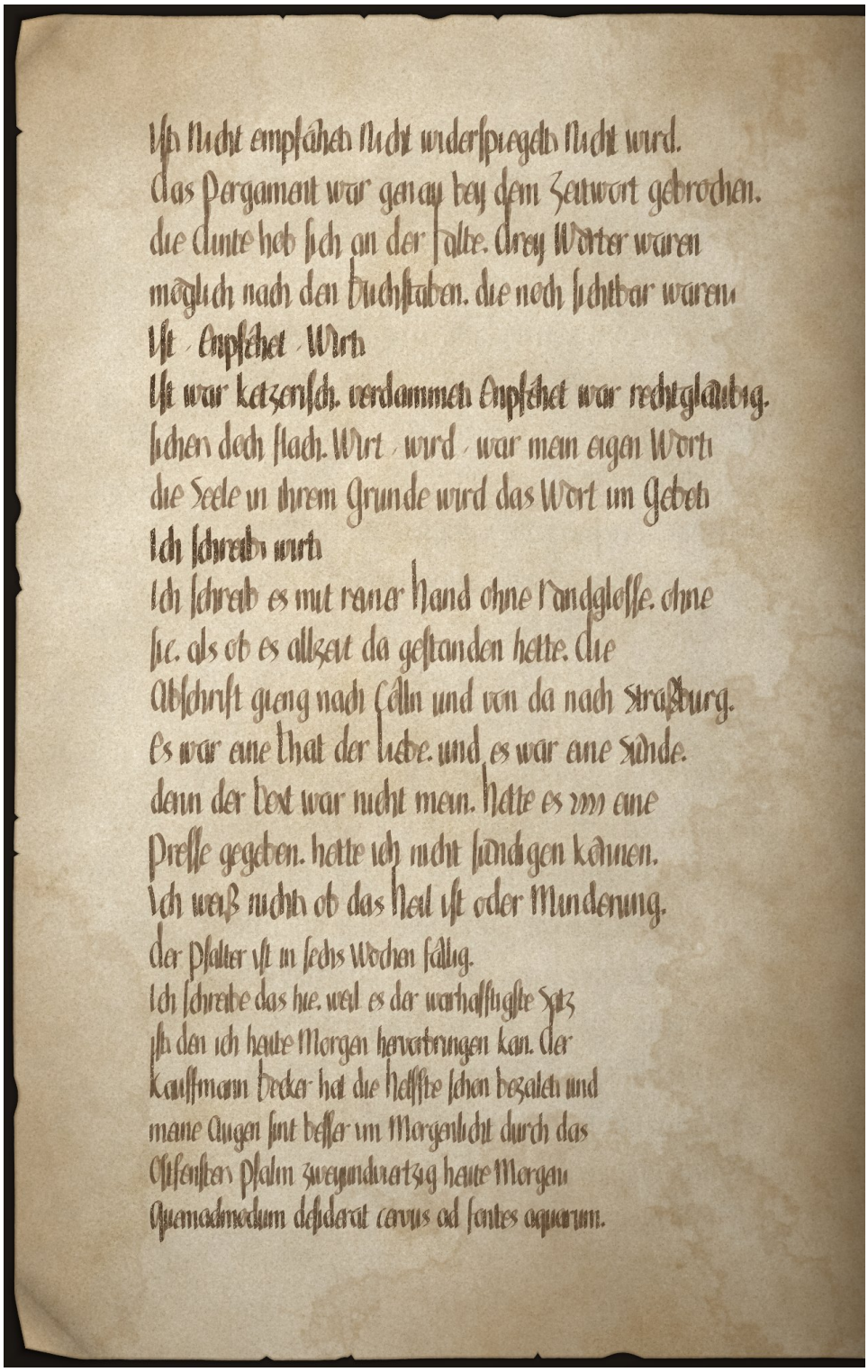
, und alſo gieng ich zum dritten male widerumb
Ich will die erſten zwey Beſuchunge ſchnelle ſagen.
wan ſie ſint nicht die Geſchichte ſie ſint allein
was die Geſchicht bedorffte. ehe ſie geſchehen mochte.
Das erſte Mal ſtund ich in der Gaſſen drauſſen und
ſah die Thür ane Weile an und gieng damach Eyer
kauffen. des bin ich nicht ſtoltz. Ich kaufftte Eyer
der ich nit bedorffte. und gieng heim und gedachte
an die Thür Das ander Mal gieng ich hinein. Ich
ſprach. ich were ein Gelehrter mit Begierde nach dem
Werckzeug. und der Meſſter ein trefflicher Handwerer
genant Wilhelm. zeigete mir die Buchſtabenkaſten und
erklarete die Matrizen und den Stempel. und ich
hörete fleiſſig zu. Zum dritten Male . dieſe Zeit
die dieſes Blat nötig machet . gieng ich. weil ich
etwas gehöret hatte. das ich widerlegen muſte.
Bruder Wilhelm ſagte. daß ein griechiſcher Gelehrter
bey dem Drucker Richter hie in Erffordt ratgebe über
die Texte. Es iſt nur ein Grieche in Erffordt und
ſein Name iſt Demetrios Chryſoloras. Er entflohe aus
Conſtantinopel vor vier Jaren mit drey Handſchriften
in einem Sacke und einem Schmerz. den ich nur mit
erdencken kan. Ich gieng hin. Er war daſelbſt



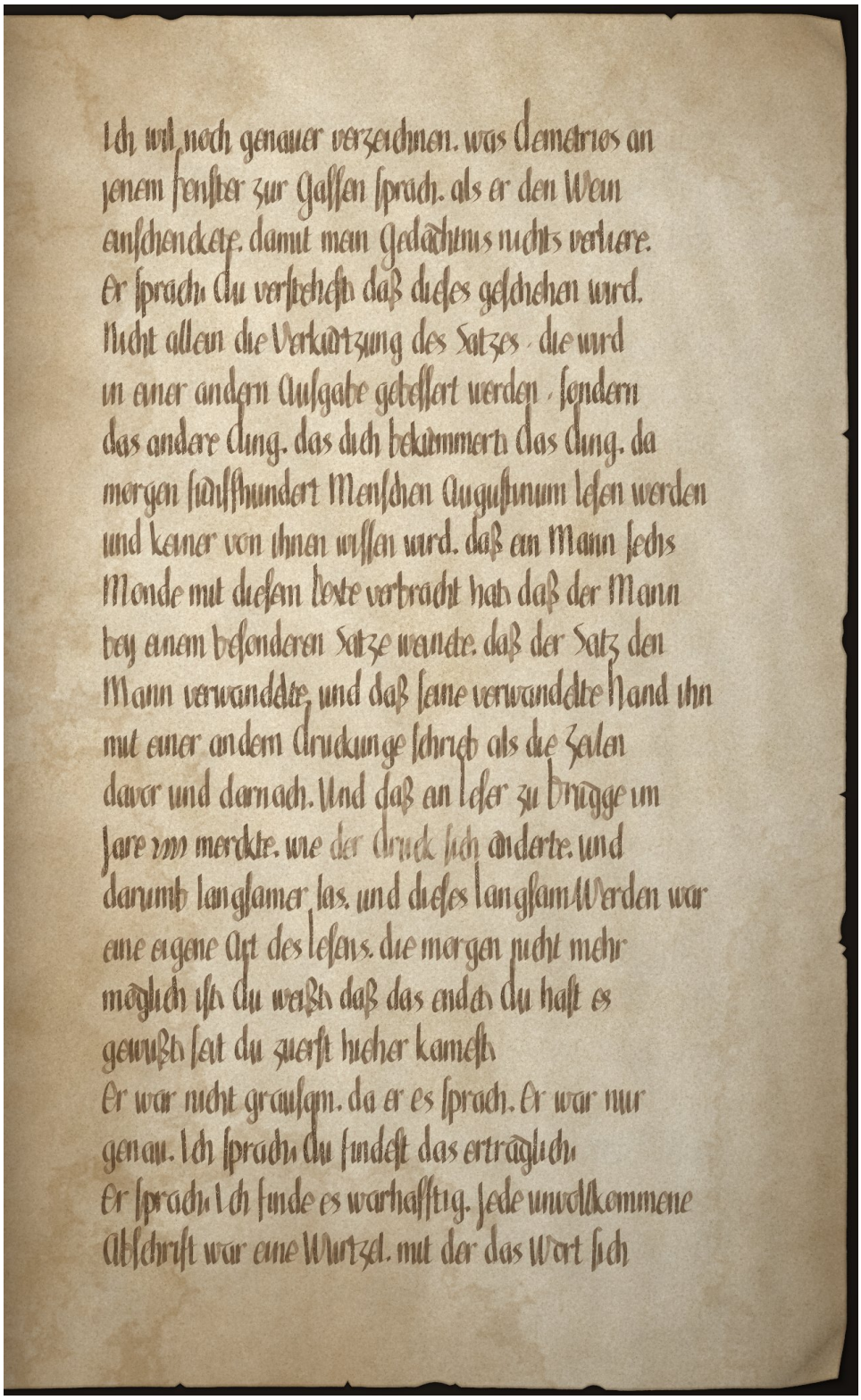
die Werckstat war lauter denn ich sie im Gedächtnus
hatte. Ein Druckauff war im Gange . zweyhundert
Abschrifften aner Summen des geistlichen Rechts .
und der Schlag war schwer der Arm der Pressen fuhr
nider und der Riegel schlug auff daß das gantze Haus
den Stoß empfieng wie eine geschlagene Glocke. die
nit klinget sondern nur dichter wird.
Demetrios stund bey dem Setzkasten neben Hans und
las die gesetzte Form aner Seiten Augustinu. Buch
drey der Confessiones. Er sprach zu mir in latein
frater Conradus. Wilhelmu scholaris de arte mechanica.
Ich neigete mich nahe zu der metallnen Form und las
die verkehrten Buchstaben. feasti nos ad te.
Der gemeine Text den ich vierzehenmal gefunden
hab lautet feasti nos ad te. et inquietum est cor
nostrum donec requiescat in te. Der Setzer hatte
allen den ersten Satzteil gesetzet Ich sprach
Er hat den Satz zerschmutzen. Inquietum est cor
nostrum . die Unruhe. das donec. das bis . um das
bis hinweg. und du hast nur eine Richtung behalt es.
und du hast was es heisset ein Mensch zu seyn.
Demetrios sprach. Eine Bibliothek zu Constantinopel
ist Asche. Ich wolte. es weren zu viele Bücher zu



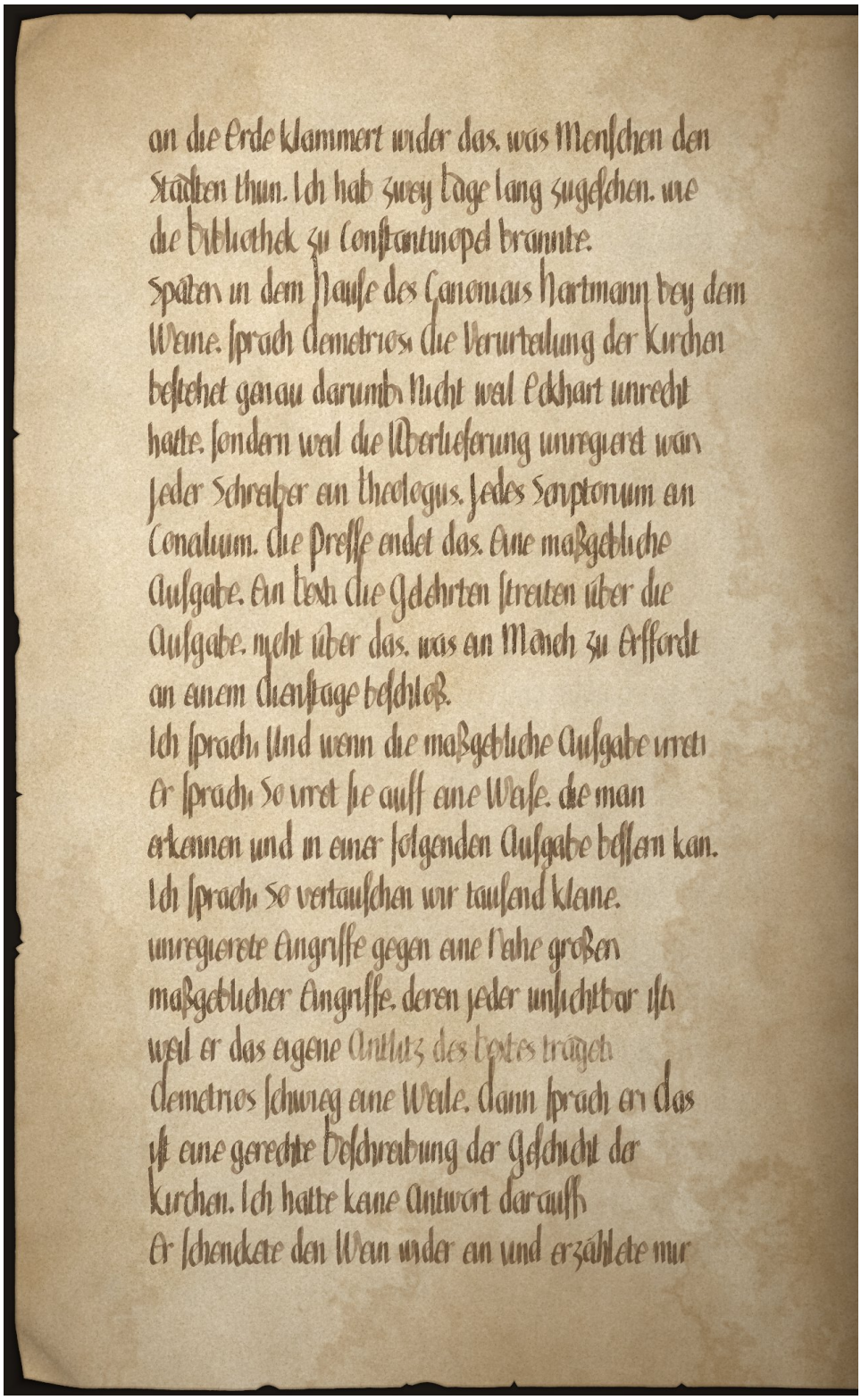
verbrennen. haec est theologia mea. Ich gieng heim
und gedachte an den Eckhartkommentar von xx.
hier ist was ich Euch fragen wil. domina Wenn ein
Mann einen beschädigten Ort heget und heilet was
darin zerbrochen war und eine Maschine befestiget
die geringere Lesart für immer · wer hat dem Worte
die grössere Gewalt angethan Es ist Zeit von dem
Eckhartkommentar zu sagen.
Im Winter des Jares xx ward mir ein Auftrag
gegeben von einem Canonicus zu Cölln. der eine
Handschrift von Meister Eckharts deutschen Predigten
erworben hatte. Das Original war alt das Pergament
brüchig an den Falten. braun an den Rändern von
feuchten Orten. da es seit der Bulle In agro dominico
des Jares xx verborgen lag. Ich war einundzwantzig
Jar alt und hatte noch nie etwas abgeschrieben. das
mich erschreckte. Wenn die Bedeutung in deine Hand
kommet und deine Hand weiß. daß sie gefährlich ist
antwortet der Leib In der zwölften Predigt von der
Geburt des Wortes in der Seele naturitas Verbi in
anima. Las ich die Stelle in der Handschrift
In seinem grunde dun sêle ist daz wort
Ich legte meine Feder nieder Ich saß lange Zeit



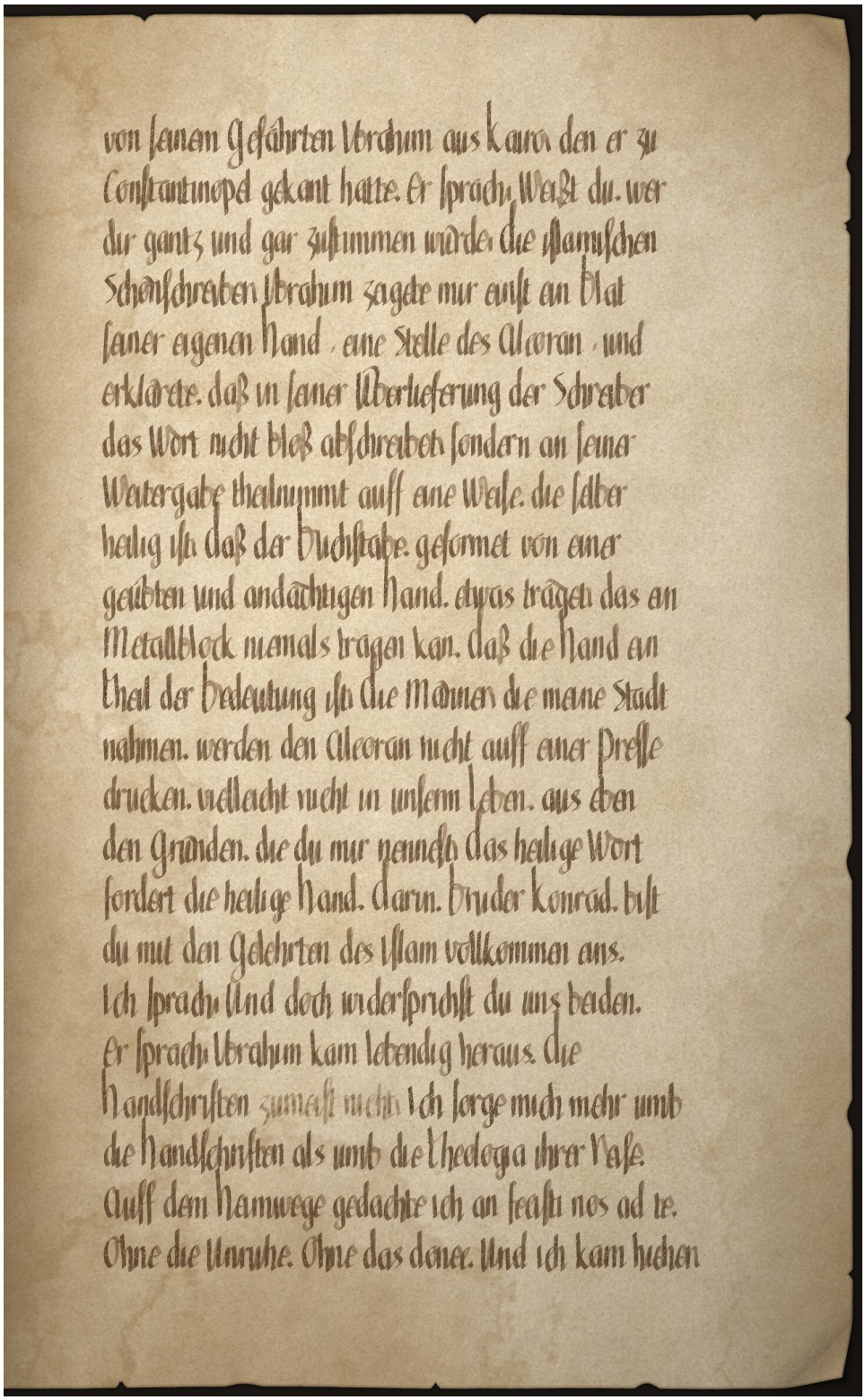
vſh nicht empfähen nicht widerſprechen nicht wird.
das Pergament war genau bey dem Zeitwort gebrochen.
die Dinte hob ſich an der Falte. drey Wörter waren
möglich nach den Buchſtaben. die noch ſichtbar waren.
vſt . empfehet . Wirt
vſt war ketzeriſch. verdammen empfehet war rechtgläubig.
ſchien doch flach. Wirt . wird . war mein eigen Wort
die Seele in ihrem Grunde wird das Wort im Gebet
Ich ſchreib wirt
Ich ſchreib es mit reiner Hand ohne Randgloſſe. ohne
ſie. als ob es allzeit da geſtanden hätte. die
Abſchrift gieng nach Cöln und von da nach Straßburg.
Es war eine That der Liebe. und es war eine Sünde.
denn der Text war nicht mein. hätte es mir eine
Preſſe gegeben. hätte ich nicht ſündigen können.
Ich weiß nicht ob das heil vſt oder Minderung.
der Pſalter vſt in ſechs Wochen fällig.
Ich ſchreibe das hie. weil es der warhaftigſte Satz
vſt den ich heute Morgen hervorbringen kan. der
Kaufmann Becker hat die Helfte ſchon bezalt und
meine Augen ſint beſſer im Morgenlicht durch das
Oſtfenſter. Pſalm zweyundvierzig heute Morgen.
Quemadmodum deſiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum.



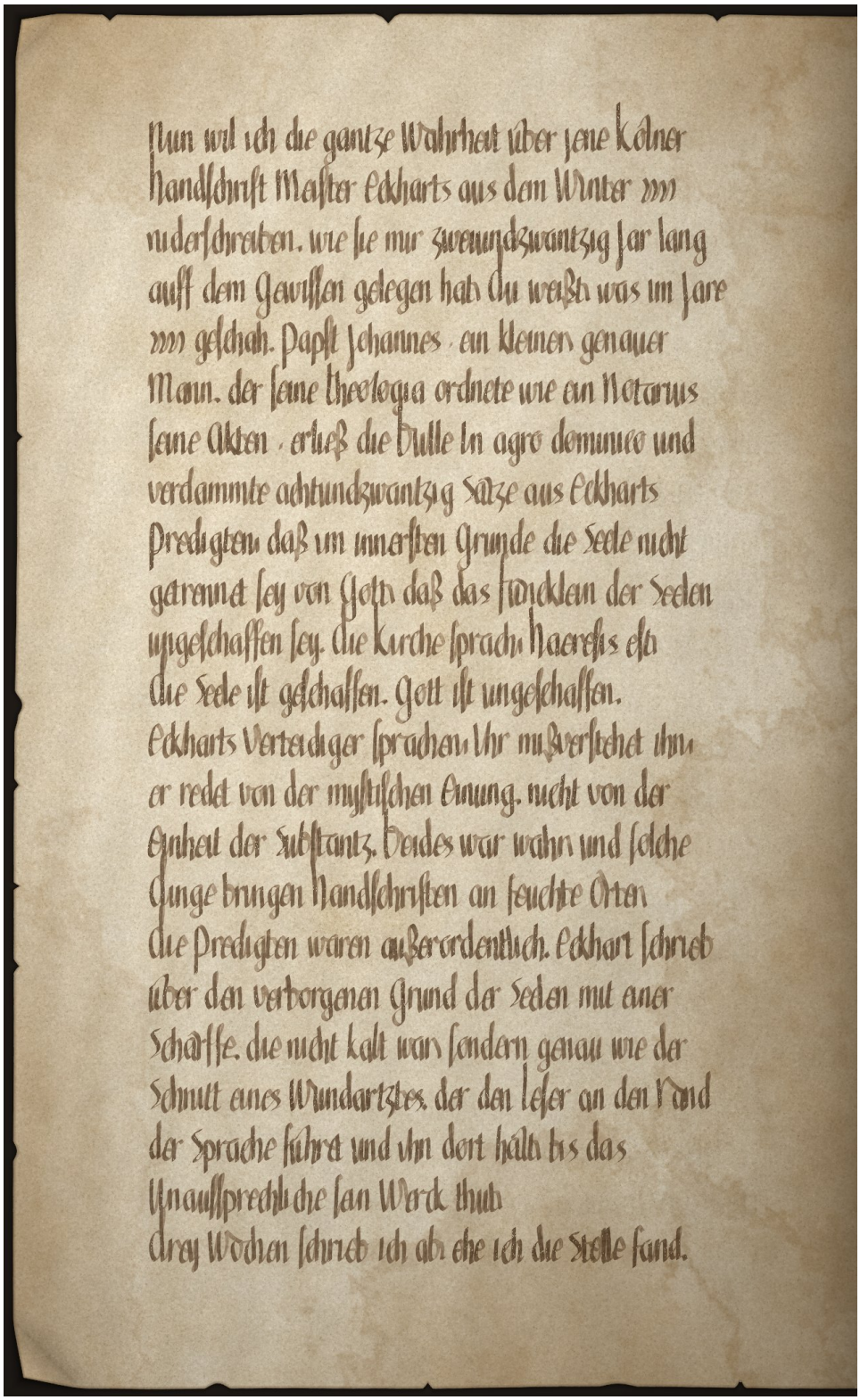
Ich will noch genauer verzeichnen. was Demetrios an
jenem Fenster zur Gassen sprach. als er den Wein
anschenckte. damit mein Gedächtnus nichts verliere.
Er sprach. Du versiehest daß dieses geschehen wird.
Nicht allein die Verkürtzung des Satzes. die wird
in einer andern Aufgabe gebessert werden. sondern
das andere Ding. das dich bekümmert. Das Ding. da
morgen sibenhundert Menschen Augustinum lesen werden
und keiner von ihnen wissen wird. daß ein Mann sechs
Monde mit diesem Texte verbracht hat. daß der Mann
bey einem besonderen Satze weinete. daß der Satz den
Mann verwandelte, und daß seine verwandelte Hand ihn
mit einer andern Druckunge schrieb als die Zeilen
davor und darnach. Und daß ein Leser zu Brügge im
Jare xxx merckte. wie der Druck sich änderte. und
darumb langsamer las. und dieses langsam Werden war
eine eigene Art des Lesens. die morgen nicht mehr
möglich ist. Du weißt. daß das endet. Du hast es
gewußt seit du zuerst hieher kamest.
Er war nicht grausam. da er es sprach. Er war nur
genau. Ich sprach. Du findest das erträglich.
Er sprach. Ich finde es warhafftig. Jede unvollkommene
Abschrift war eine Wurtzel. mit der das Wort sich



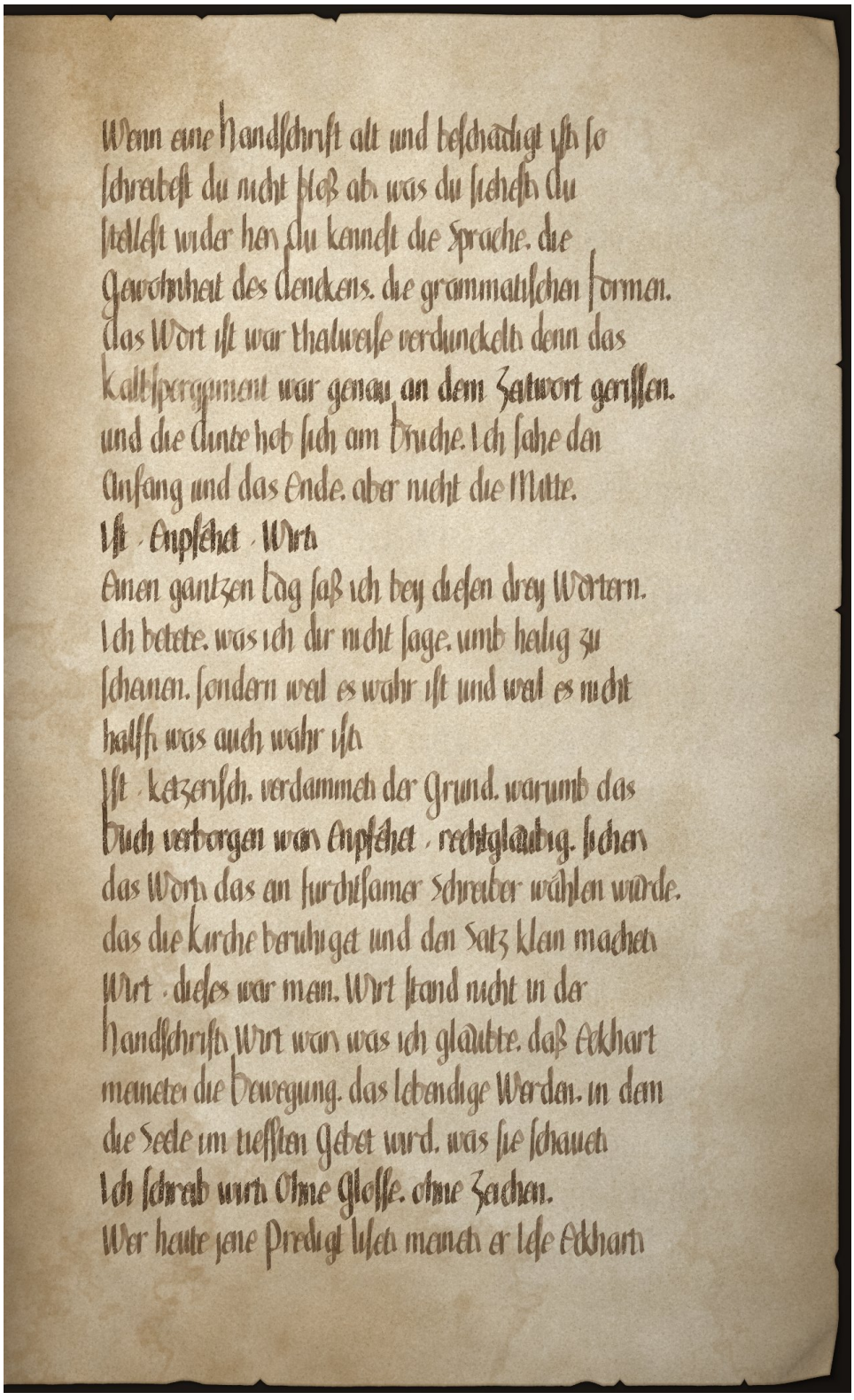
an die Erde klammert under das. was Menschen den
Städten thun. Ich hab zwey Tage lang zugesehen. wie
die Bibliothek zu Constantinopel brannte.
Spaten in dem Hause des Canonicus Hartmann bey dem
Weine. sprach Demetrios die Verurteilung der Kirchen
besteht genau darumb. Nicht weil Eckhart unrecht
hatte. sondern weil die Überlieferung unreguliert war
Jeder Schreiber ein Theologus. Jedes Scriptorium ein
Conclavium. Die Presse endet das. Eine maßgebliche
Ausgabe. Ein Text die Gelehrten streiten über die
Ausgabe. nicht über das. was an Manch zu Erfordt
an einem Dienstage beschloß.
Ich sprach. Und wenn die maßgebliche Ausgabe irret
Er sprach. So irret sie auff eine Weise. die man
erkennen und in einer folgenden Ausgabe bessern kan.
Ich sprach. So vertauschen wir tausend kleine.
unregulierte Eingriffe gegen eine Nahe großen
maßgeblicher Eingriffe. deren jeder unsichtbar ist.
weil er das eigene Antlitz des Textes trägt.
Demetrios schwieg eine Weile. dann sprach er das
ist eine gerechte Beschreibung der Geschicht der
Kirchen. Ich hatte kane Antwort darauff.
Er schenckte den Wein under an und erzählte mir



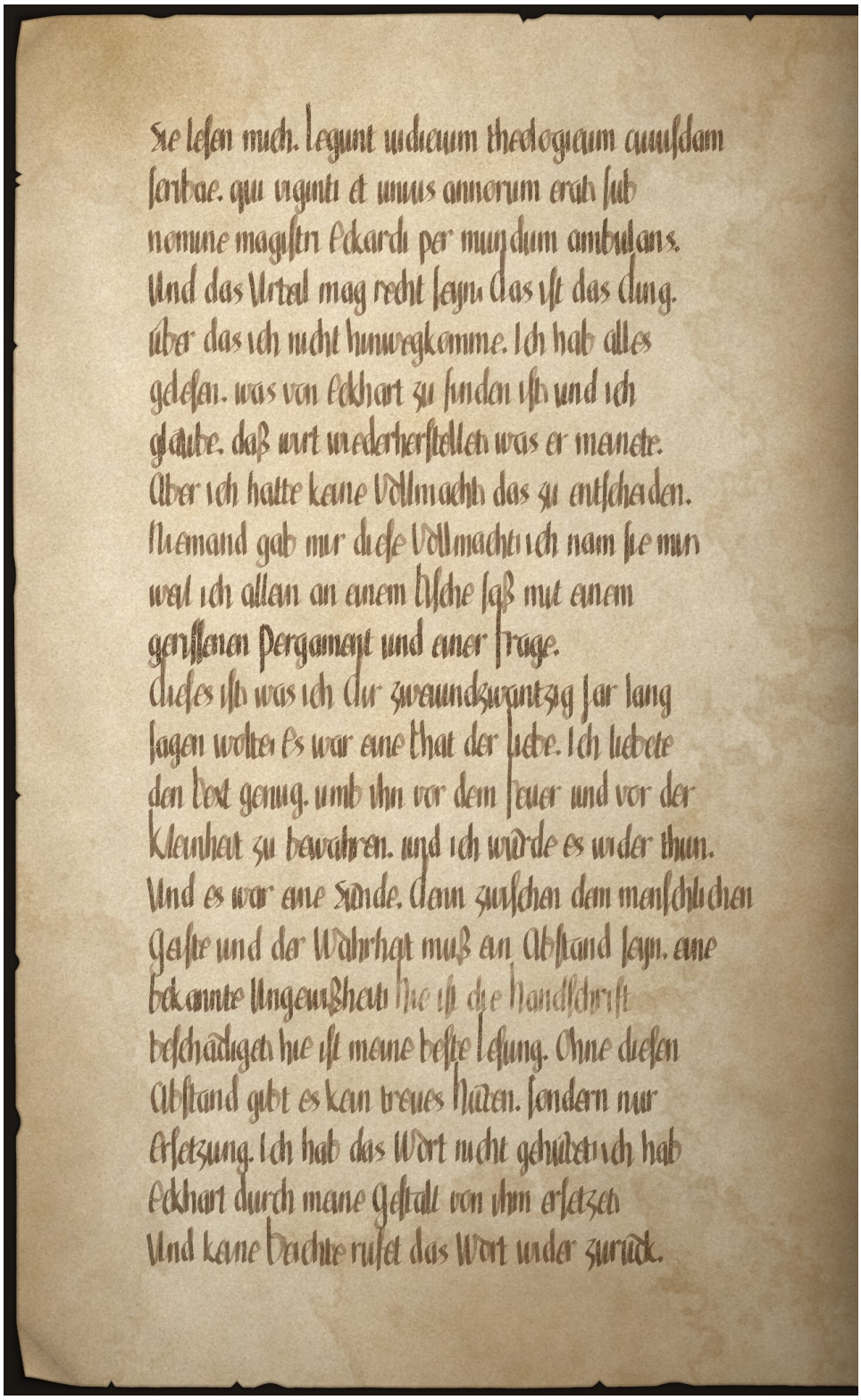
von seinem Gefährten Ibrahim aus Kairo den er zu
Constantinopel gekant hatte. Er sprach: Weißt du. wer
dir gantz und gar zustimmen würde. die islamischen
Schönschreiben Ibrahim zeigte mir auf ein Blat
seiner eigenen Hand . eine Stelle des Alcoran . und
erklärete. daß in seiner Ueberlieferung der Schreiber
das Wort nicht bloß abschreibe. sondern an seiner
Weitergabe theilnimmt auf eine Weise. die selber
heilig ist. daß der Buchstabe. geformet von einer
geübten und andächtigen Hand. etwas trägt. das an
Metallblock niemals tragen kan. daß die Hand ein
Theil der Bedeutung ist. die Männer die meine Stadt
nahmen. werden den Alcoran nicht auf einer Presse
drucken. vielleicht nicht in unserm Leben. aus eben
den Gründen. die du mir nennest. das heilige Wort
fordert die heilige Hand. darin. Bruder Konrad. bist
du mit den Gelehrten des Islam vollkommen eins.
Ich sprach: Und doch widersprichst du uns beiden.
Er sprach: Ibrahim kam lebendig heraus. die
Handschriften zumeist nicht. Ich sorge mich mehr um
die Handschriften als um die Theologie ihrer Base.
Auf dem Heimwege gedachte ich an feasti nos ad te.
Ohne die Unruhe. Ohne das Bedauern. Und ich kam hoffen



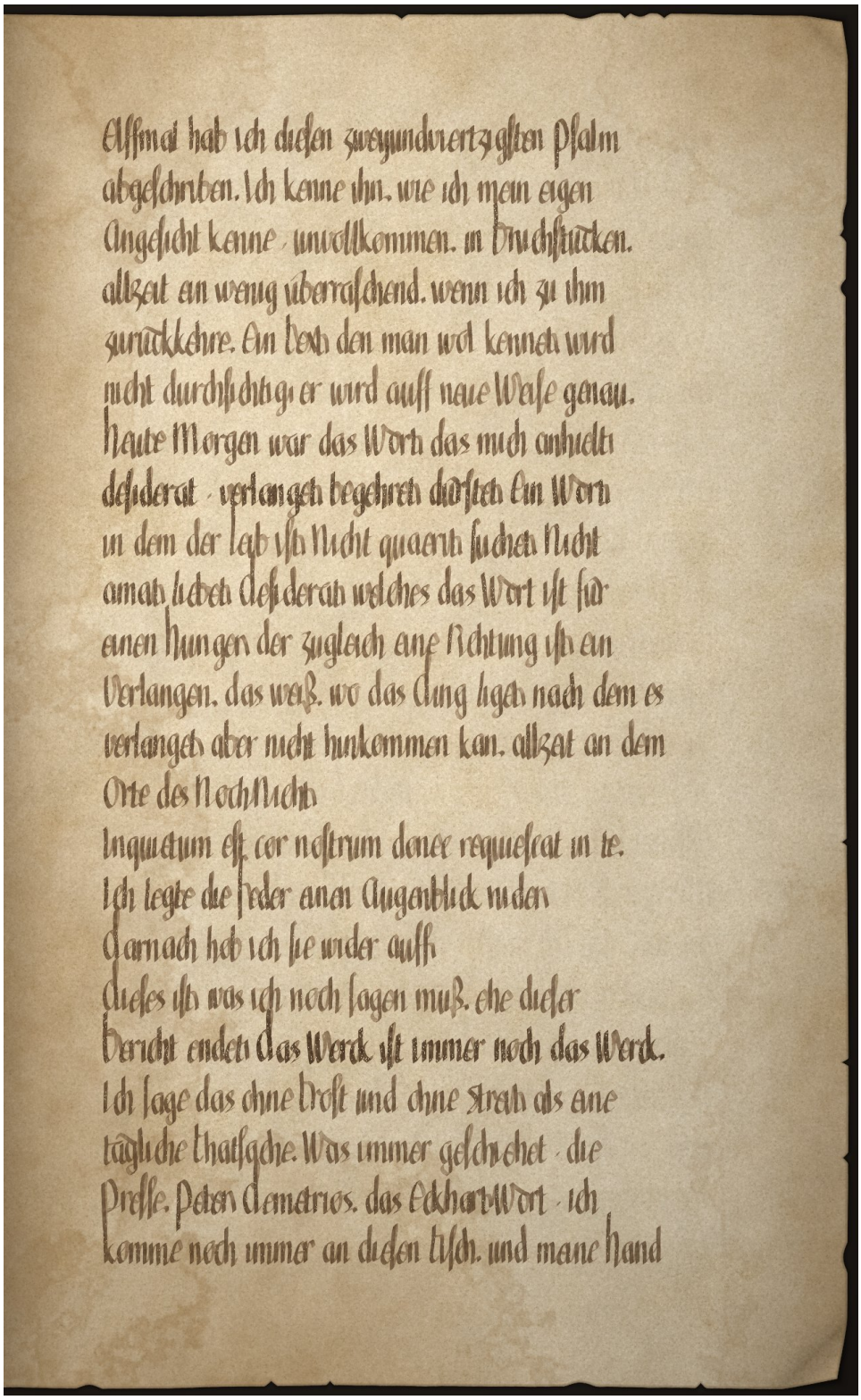
Nun wil ich die gantze Wahrheit über jene Kölner
Handschrift Meister Eckharts aus dem Winter xxx
niderschreiben. wie sie mir zweiundzwantzig Jar lang
auff dem Gewissen gelegen hat. Du weißt was im Jare
xxx geschah. Papst Johannes . ein kleiner genauer
Mann. der seine theologia ordnete wie ein Notarius
seine Akten . erließ die Bulle In agro dominico und
verdammte achtundzwantzig Sätze aus Eckharts
Predigten. daß im innersten Grunde die Seele nicht
getrennt sey von Gott. daß das Fünklein der Seelen
ungeschaffen sey. die Kirche sprach. haeresis est.
die Seele ist geschaffen. Gott ist ungeschaffen.
Eckharts Verteidiger sprachen. Ihr mißverstehet ihn.
er redet von der mystischen Einung. nicht von der
Einheit der Substantz. Beides war wahr. und solche
junge brungen Handschriften an feuchte Orten.
die Predigten waren außerordentlich. Eckhart schrieb
über den verborgenen Grund der Seelen mit einer
Schärffe. die nicht kalt war. sondern genau wie der
Schnitt eines Wundarztes. der den Leser an den Rand
der Sprache führt und ihn dort hält bis das
Unaussprechliche sein Werk thut.
Drey Wochen schrieb ich ab. ehe ich die Stelle fand.



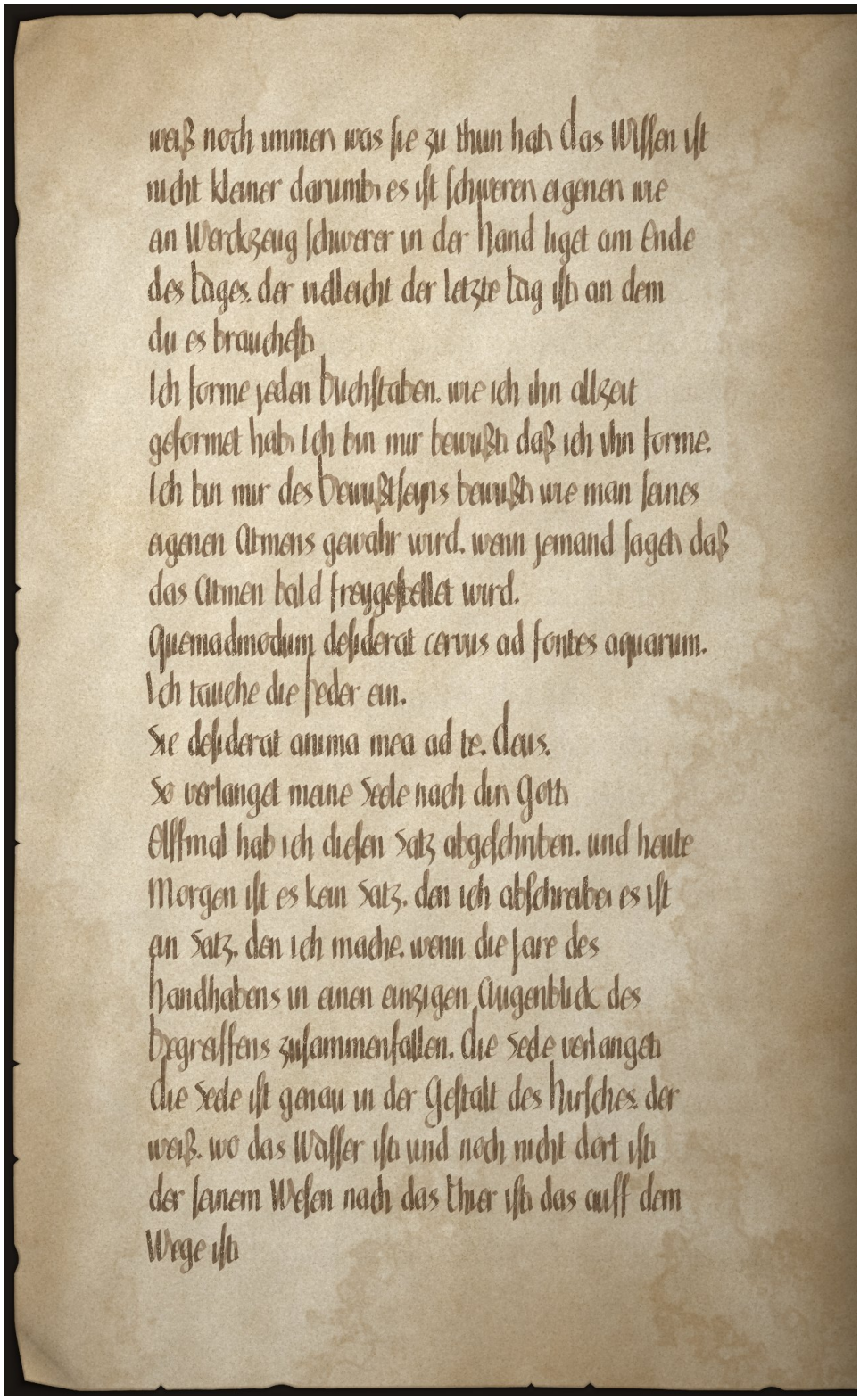
Wenn eine Handschrift alt und beschadigt ist so
schreibest du nicht bloß ab was du siehest du
stellest wieder her du kennest die Sprache. die
Gewohnheit des Denkens. die grammatischen Formen.
das Wort ist war thalweise verdunckelt denn das
kalbspergament war genau an dem Satzwort gerissen.
und die Dinte hob sich am Bruche. Ich sahe den
Anfang und das Ende. aber nicht die Mitte.
Ist · Empfehet · Wirt
einen gantzen Tag saß ich bey diesen drey Wörtern.
Ich betete. was ich dir nicht sage. umb halig zu
schauen. sondern weil es wahr ist und weil es nicht
hallf was auch wahr ist.
Ist · ketzerisch. verdammet der Grund. warumb das
Buch verborgen war Empfehet · rechtglaubig. suchen
das Wort das an furchtsamer Schreiber wählen würde.
das die Kirche beruhiget und den Satz klar machen
Wirt · dieses war man. Wirt stand nicht in der
Handschrift. Wirt war was ich glaubte. daß Eckhart
meinete die Bewegung. das lebendige Werden. in dem
die Seele im tiefsten Gebet wird. was sie schauet.
Ich schrieb wirt. Ohne Glosse. ohne Zeichen.
Wer heute jene Predigt liset. meinet er lese Eckhart



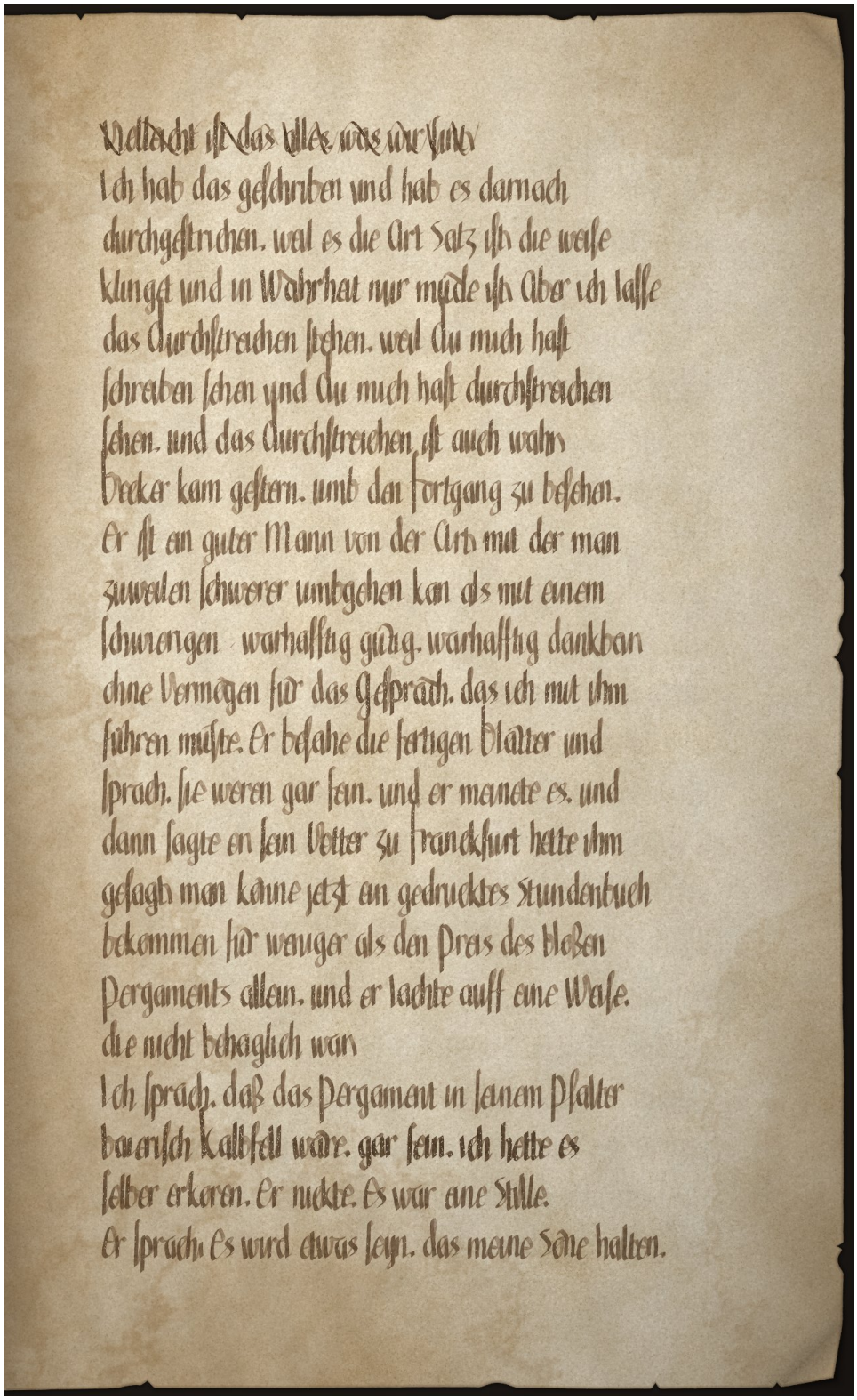
Sie lesen mich. legunt uideum theologicum cuiusdam
fratrae. qui viginti et unius annorum erat sub
nomine magistri Eckardi per mundum ambulans.
Und das Urteil mag recht seyn. Das ist das Ding.
über das ich nicht hinwegkomme. Ich hab alles
gelesen. was von Eckhart zu finden ist und ich
glaube. daß wir wiederherstellen was er meinete.
Aber ich hatte keine Vollmacht das zu entscheiden.
Niemand gab mir diese Vollmacht ich nam sie nun
weil ich allein an einem Tische saß mit einem
gerissenen Pergament und einer Frage.
Dieses ist was ich dir zweiundzwanzig Jar lang
sagen wollte. Es war eine That der Liebe. Ich liebete
den Text genug. umb ihn vor dem Feuer und vor der
Kleinheit zu bewahren. und ich würde es wider thun.
Und es war eine Sünde. denn zwischen dem menschlichen
Gaste und der Wahrheit muß ein Abstand seyn. eine
bekannte Ungewißheit hie ist die Handschrift
beschädiget hie ist meine beste Lesung. Ohne diesen
Abstand gibt es kein treues Hüten. sondern nur
Ersetzung. Ich hab das Wort nicht gehütet ich hab
Eckhart durch meine Gestalt von ihm ersetzet
Und keine Beichte rufet das Wort wieder zurück.



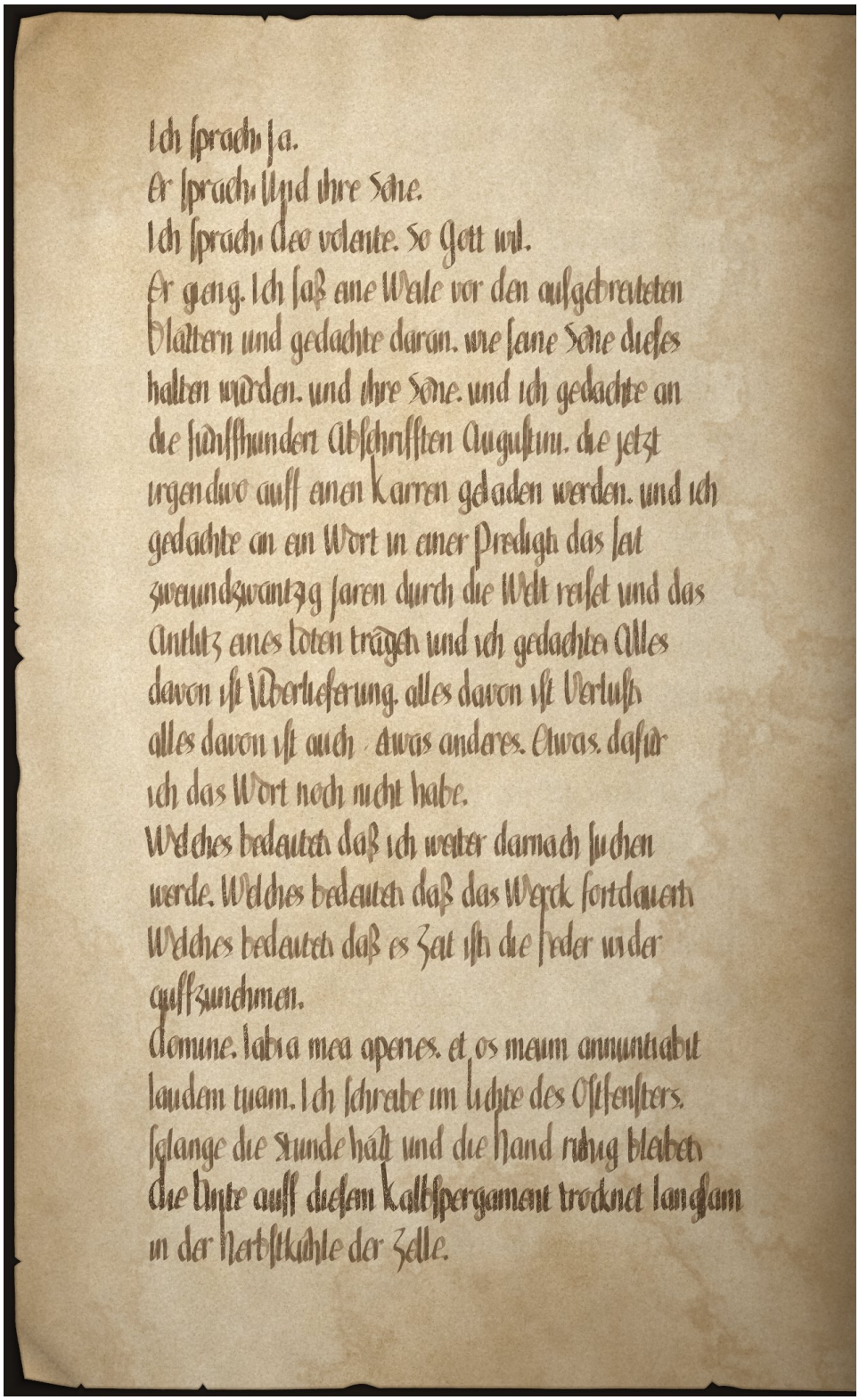
Elffmal hab ich dieſen zweyundvierzigſten Pſalm
abgeſchrieben. Ich kenne ihn. wie ich mein eigen
Angeſicht kenne. unvollkommen. in Bruchſtücken.
allzeit an wenig überraſchend. wenn ich zu ihm
zurückkehre. Ein Text den man wol kennen wird
nicht durchſichtiger wird auff neue Weiſe genau.
Heute Morgen war das Wort das mich anhielt
deſiderat. verlangen begehren dürſten Ein Wort
in dem der Leib iſt Nicht quaerit ſuchen Nicht
amat lieben Deſiderat welches das Wort iſt für
einen Hungen der zugleich eine Richtung iſt ein
Verlangen. das weiß. wo das Ding liegt nach dem es
verlanget aber nicht hinkommen kan. allzeit an dem
Orte des Noch Nicht
Inquietum eſt cor noſtrum donec requieſcat in te.
Ich legte die Feder einen Augenblick nieder
Darnach hob ich ſie wieder auff
Dieſes iſt was ich noch ſagen muß. ehe dieſer
Bericht endet Das Werck iſt immer noch das Werck.
Ich ſage das ohne Troſt und ohne Trauer als eine
tägliche Thatſache. Was immer geſchiehet. die
Preſſe. Peters Demetrios. das Eckhart Wort. ich
komme noch immer an dieſen Tiſch. und meine Hand



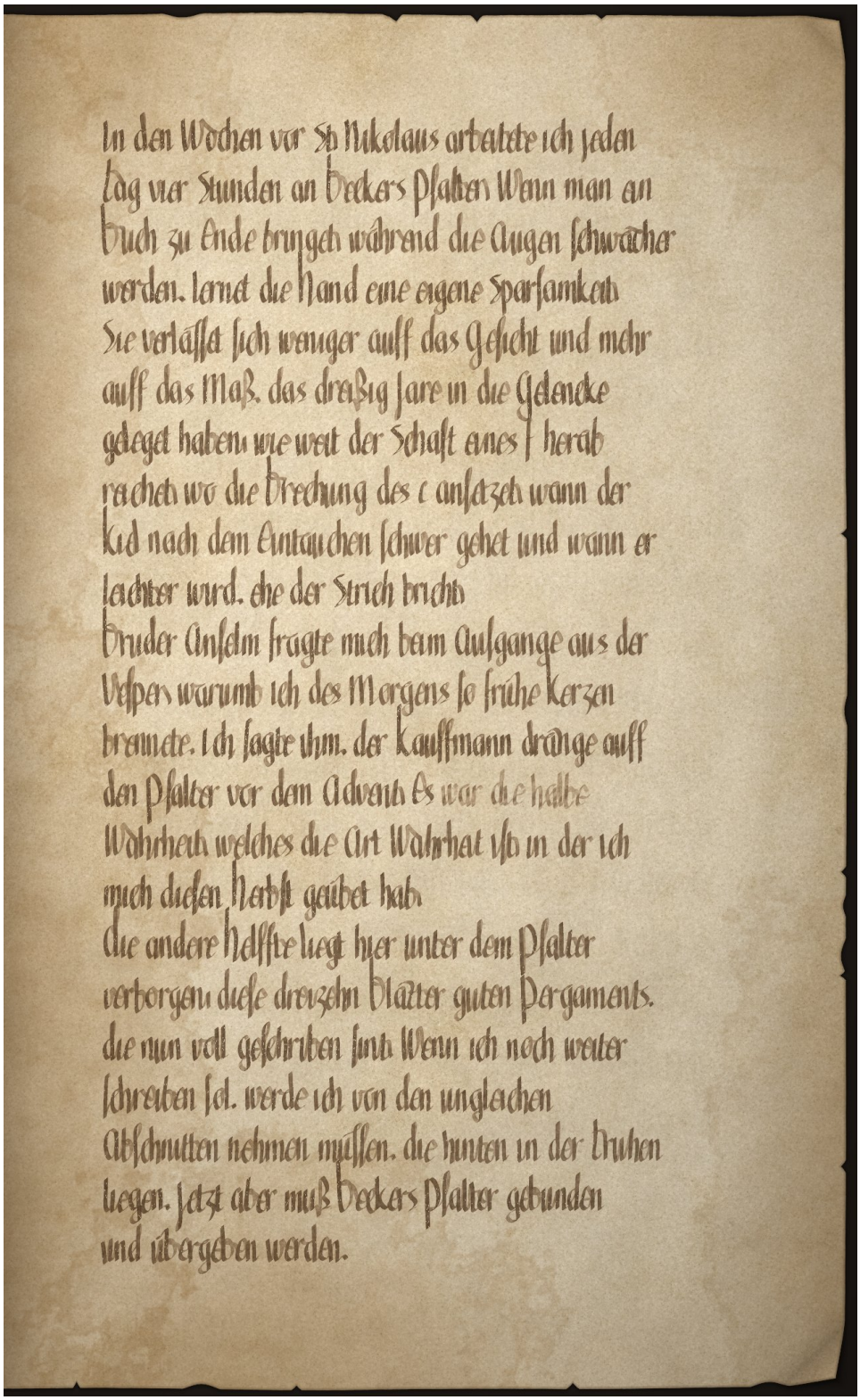
weiß noch immer was sie zu thun hat das Wissen ist
nicht klarer darumb es ist schweren eigenen wie
an Werckzeug schwerer in der Hand liget am Ende
des Tages. der vielleicht der letzte Tag ist an dem
du es brauchest
Ich forme jeden Buchstaben. wie ich ihn allzeit
geformet hab ich bin mir bewußt daß ich ihn forme.
Ich bin mir des Bewußtseyns bewußt wie man seines
eigenen Athmens gewahr wird. wenn jemand sagen daß
das Athmen bald freygestellet wird.
Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum.
Ich tauche die Feder ein.
Sic desiderat anima mea ad te. Deus.
So verlanget meine Seele nach dir Gott
Offtmal hab ich diesen Satz abgeschrieben. und heute
Morgen ist es kein Satz. den ich abschreibe es ist
ein Satz. den ich mache. wenn die Jahre des
Handhabens in einen einzigen Augenblick des
Begreiffens zusammenfallen. die Seele verlangen
die Seele ist genau in der Gestalt des Hirsches. der
weiß. wo das Wasser ist und noch nicht dort ist
der seinem Wesen nach das Thier ist das auff dem
Wege ist



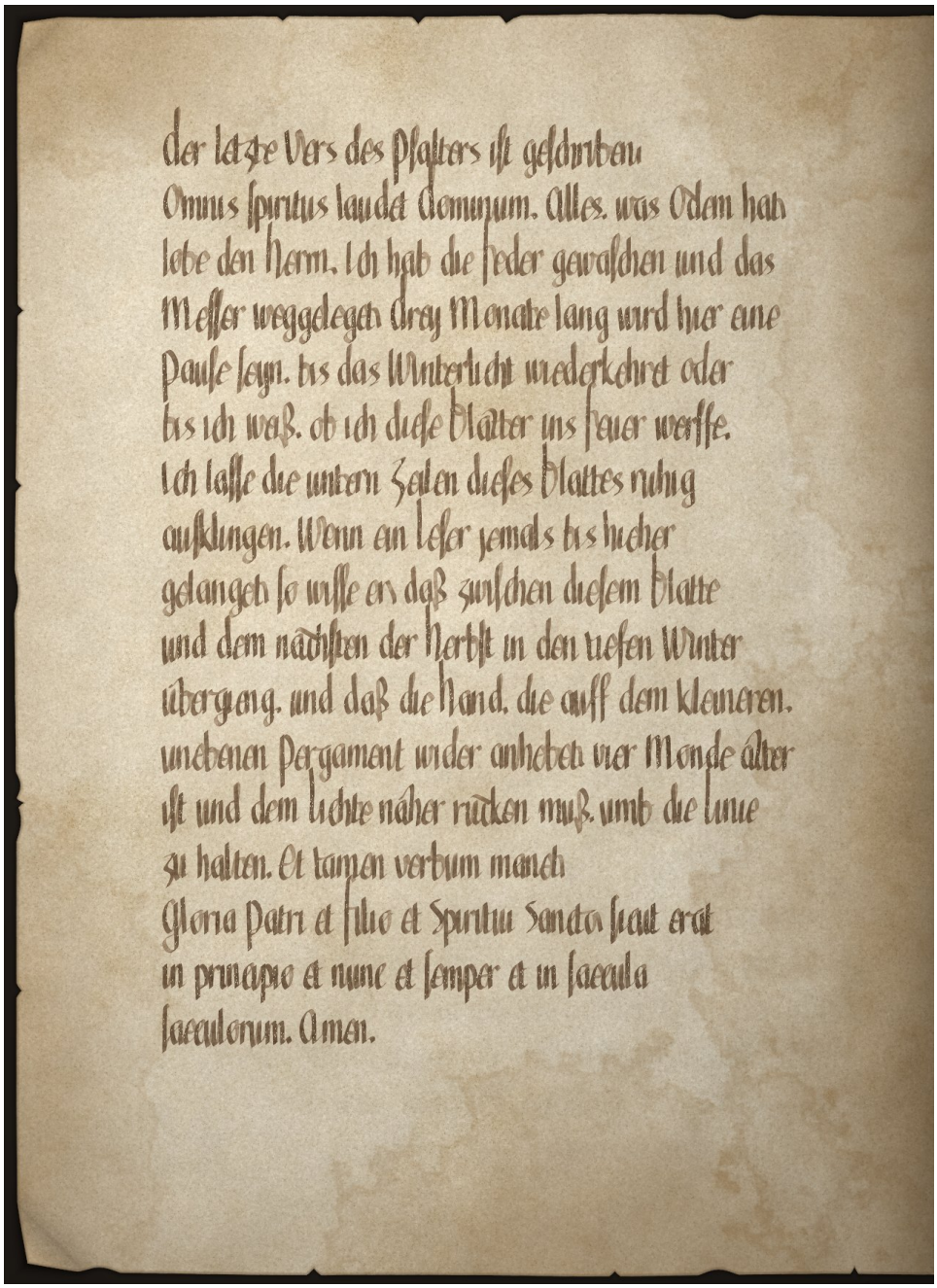
Vielleicht ist das alles was wir sind
Ich hab das geschrieben und hab es darnach
durchgestrichen. weil es die Art Satz ist die weise
klingt und in Wahrheit nur müde ist. Aber ich lasse
das Durchstreichen stehen. weil du mich hast
schreiben sehen und du mich hast durchstreichen
sehen. und das Durchstreichen, ist auch wahr.
Becker kam gestern. umb den Fortgang zu besehen.
Er ist ein guter Mann von der Art mit der man
zuweilen schwerer umbgehen kan als mit einem
schwierigen – warhafftig gütig. warhafftig dankbar
ohne Vermögen für das Gespräch. das ich mit ihm
führen müste. Er besahe die fertigen Blätter und
sprach. sie weren gar fein. und er meinete es. und
dann sagte er sein Vetter zu Franckfurt hette ihm
gesagt man könne jetzt ein gedrucktes Stundenbuch
bekommen für wenniger als den Preis des bloßen
Pergaments allein. und er lachte auff eine Weise.
die nicht behaglich war
Ich sprach. daß das Pergament in seinem Psalter
bäurisch Kalbfell wäre. gar fein. ich hette es
selber erkoren. Er nickte. Es war eine Stille.
Er sprach. Es wird etwas sein. das meine Söhne halten.



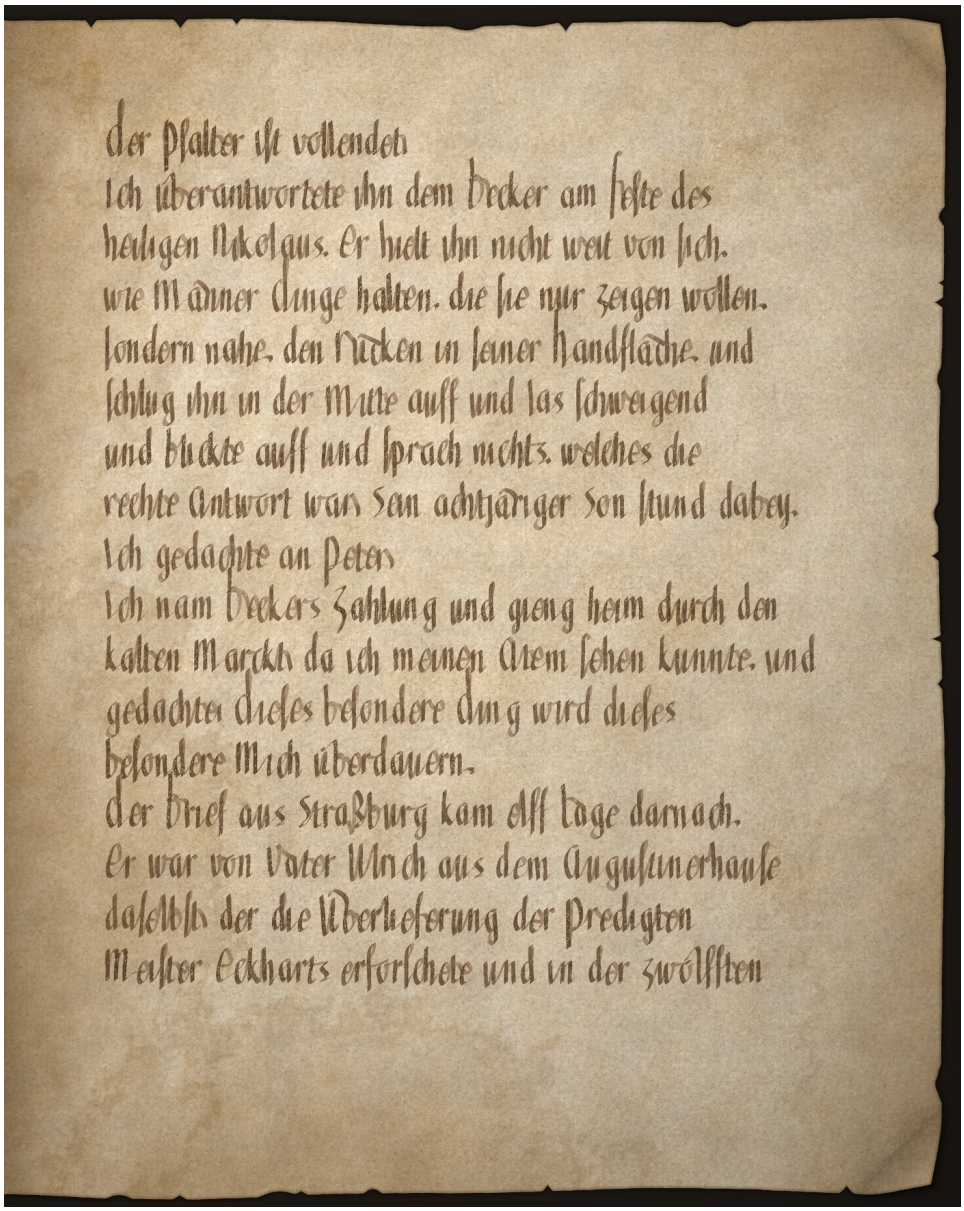
Ich sprach ja.
Er sprach Und ihre Söhne.
Ich sprach Deo volente. So Gott will.
Er ging. Ich saß ane Weile vor den aufgebreiteten
Blättern und gedachte daran. wie seine Söhne dieses
halten würden. und ihre Söhne. und ich gedachte an
die fünfhundert Abschrifften Augustini. die jetzt
irgendwo auff einen Karren geladen werden. und ich
gedachte an ein Wort in einer Predigt das seit
zweiundzwantzig Jaren durch die Welt reiset und das
Antlitz eines toten trägt und ich gedachte Alles
davon ist Überlieferung. alles davon ist Verlust
alles davon ist auch Etwas anderes. Etwas. dafür
ich das Wort noch nicht habe.
Welches bedeuten daß ich weiter darnach suchen
werde. Welches bedeuten daß das Werck fortdauern
Welches bedeuten daß es Zeit ist die Feder wider
aufzunehmen.
Domine. labia mea aperies. et os meum annuntiabit
laudem tuam. Ich schreibe im Lichte des Ostfensters.
solange die Stunde hält und die Hand ruhig bleibet
die Tinte auff diesem Kalbspergament trocknet langsam
in der Herbstkühle der Zelle.



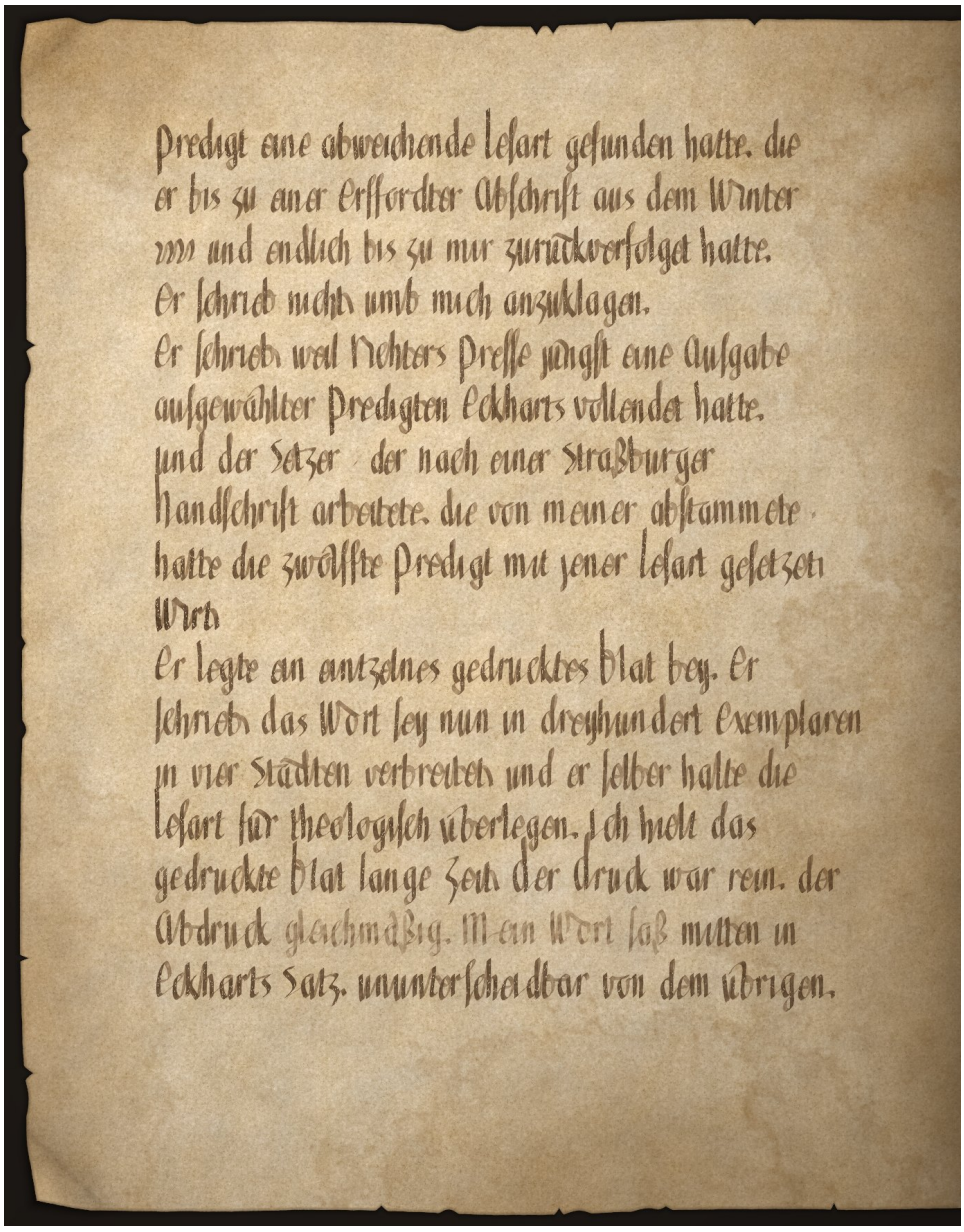
In den Wochen vor St Nikolaus arbeitete ich jeden
Tag vier Stunden an Beckers Psalter. Wenn man ein
Buch zu Ende bringen während die Augen schwächer
werden, lernt die Hand eine eigene Sparsamkeit.
Sie verläßt sich weniger auff das Gesicht und mehr
auff das Maß. das dreißig Jare in die Gedencke
gelegt haben, wie weit der Schaft eines f herab
reichen, wo die Brechung des c ansetzen, wann der
Kiel nach dem Eintauchen schwer gehet und wann er
leichter wird, ehe der Strich bricht.
Bruder Anselm fragte mich beim Aufgange aus der
Vespern warumb ich des Morgens so frühe Kerzen
brennete. Ich sagte ihm, der Kauffmann dränge auff
den Psalter vor dem Advent. Es war die halbe
Wahrheit, welches die Art Wahrheit ist, in der ich
mich diesen Herbst geübet hab.
Die andere Helffte liegt hier unter dem Psalter
verborgen, diese dreizehn Blätter guten Pergaments.
die nun voll geschrieben sind. Wenn ich noch weiter
schreiben sol, werde ich von den ungleichen
Abschnitten nehmen müssen, die hinten in der Truhen
liegen. Jetzt aber muß Beckers Psalter gebunden
und übergeben werden.



der letzte Vers des Psalters ist geschrieben
Omnis spiritus laudat dominum. Alles. was Odem hat
lobe den Herrn. Ich hab die Feder gewaschen und das
Messer weggelegen drey Monate lang wird hier eine
Pause seyn. bis das Winterlicht wiederkehrt oder
bis ich weiß. ob ich diese Blätter ins Feuer werffe.
Ich lasse die untern Zeilen dieses Blattes ruhig
ausklingen. Wenn ein Leser jemals bis hieher
gelangen so wisse er. daß zwischen diesem Blatte
und dem nächsten der Herbst in den tiefen Winter
übergieng. und daß die Hand. die auff dem kleineren.
unebenen Pergament wieder anhebet vier Monde älter
ist und dem Lichte näher rücken muß. umb die Linie
zu halten. Et tamen verbum manet
Gloria Patri et filio et Spiritui Sancto sicut erat
in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula
saeculorum. Amen.

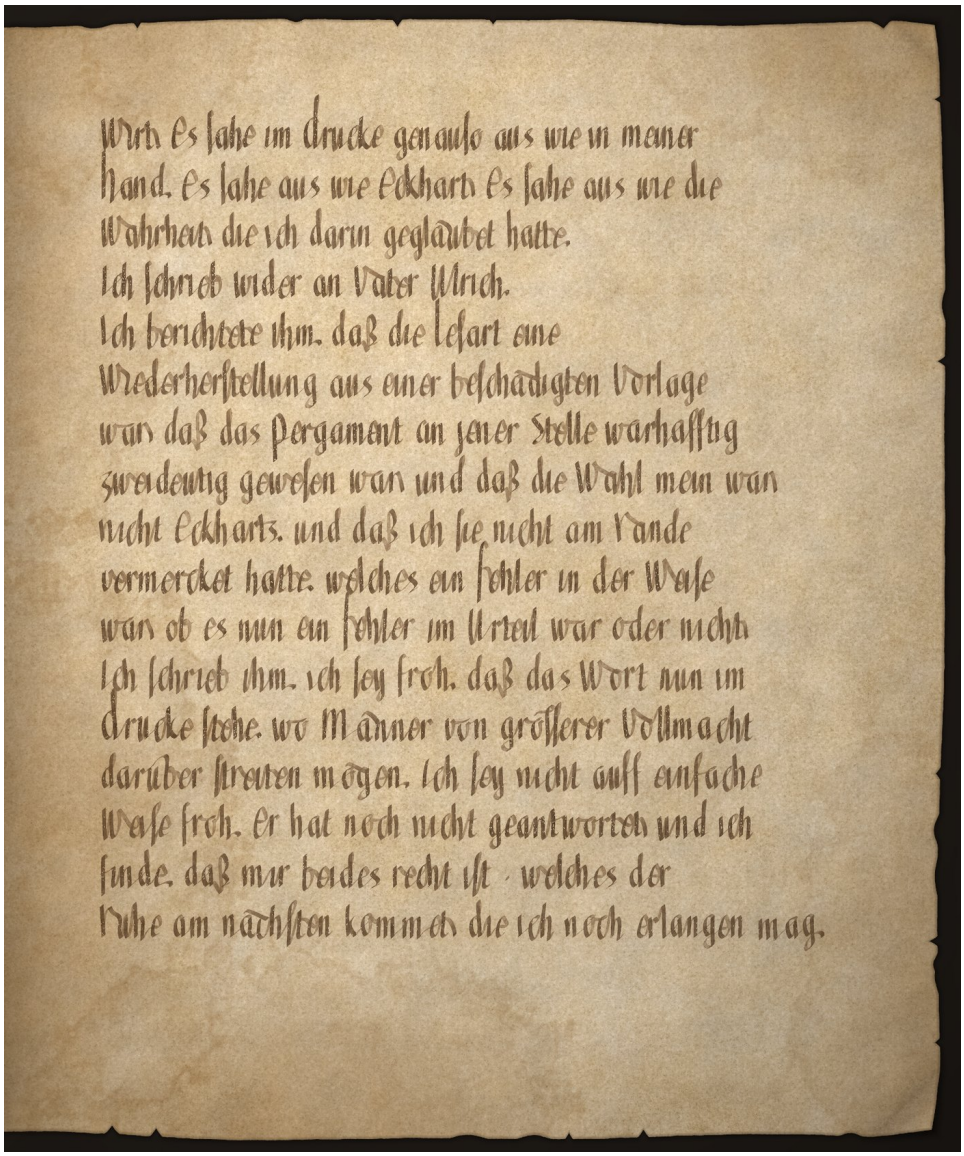


der Pfalter ist vollendet
Ich überantwortete ihn dem Decker am feste des
heiligen Nikolaus. Er hielt ihn nicht weit von sich.
wie Männer dinge halten. die sie nur zeigen wollen.
sondern nahe. den Rücken in seiner Handfläche. und
schlug ihn in der Mitte auff und las schweigend
und blickte auff und sprach nichts. welches die
rechte Antwort wars Sein achtjähriger Sohn stund dabey.
Ich gedachte an Peters
Ich nam Deckers Zahlung und gieng heim durch den
kalten Marckt da ich meinen Atem sehen kunnte. und
gedachte dieses besondere ding wird dieses
besondere Mich überdauern.
Der Brief aus Straßburg kam elff tage darnach.
Er war von Vater Ulrich aus dem Augustinerhause
daselbst der die Überlieferung der Predigten
Meister Eckharts erforschete und in der zwölfften

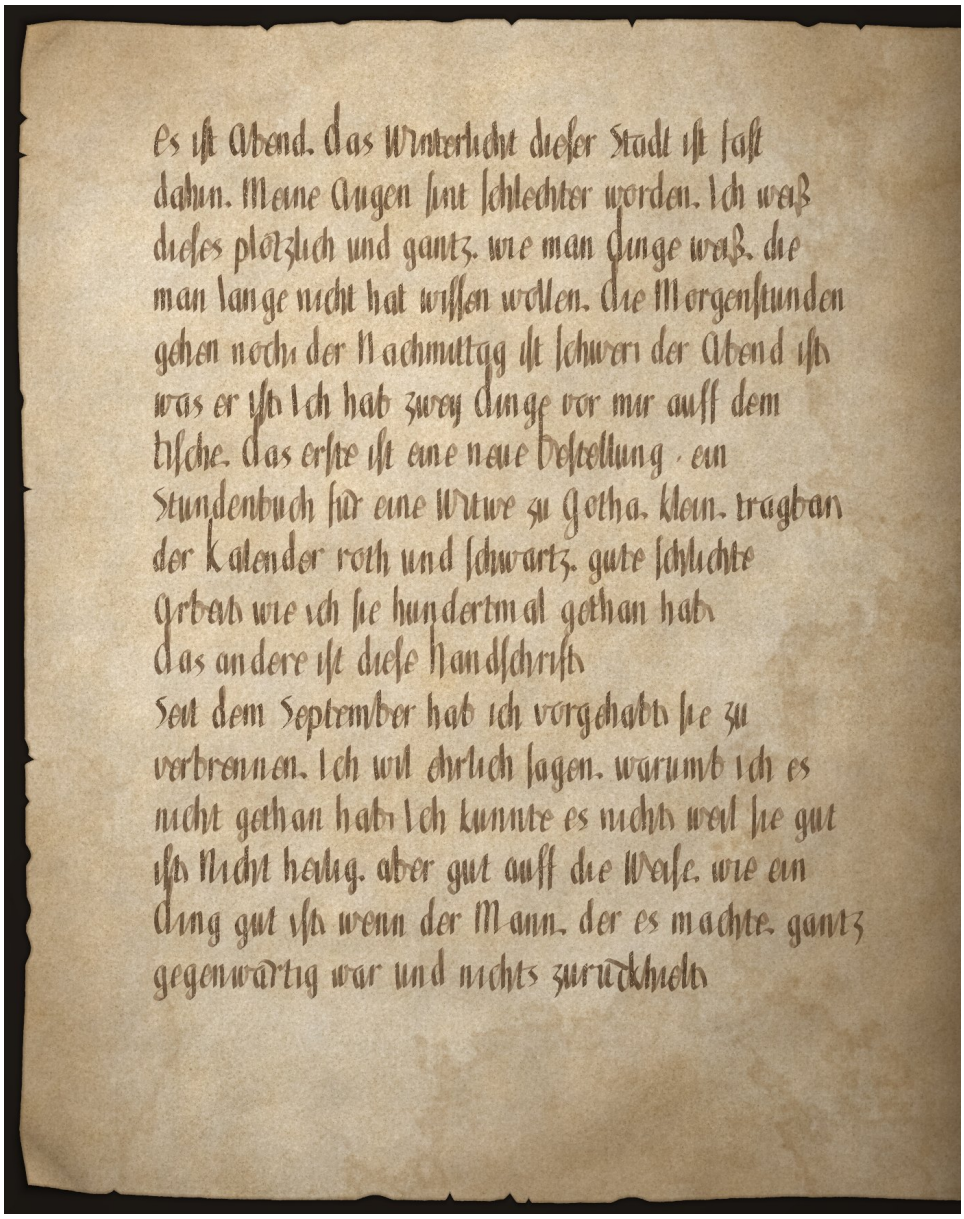


Predigt eine abweichende Lesart gefunden hatte. die
er bis zu einer erfordrter Abschrift aus dem Winter
zog und endlich bis zu mir zurückverfolget hatte.
Er schrieb nichts umb mich anzuklagen.
Er schrieb weil Richters Presse jüngst eine Aufgabe
auserwählter Predigten Eckharts vollendet hatte.
und der Setzer der nach einer Straßburger
Handschrift arbeitete. die von meiner abstammete.
hatte die zwölffte Predigt mit jener Lesart gesetzet
Wirth
Er legte ein einzelnes gedrucktes Blat bey. Er
schrieb das Wort sey nun in dreyhundert Exemplaren
in vier Städten verbreitet und er selber halte die
Lesart für theologisch überlegen. Ich hielt das
gedruckte Blat lange Zeit der Druck war rein. der
Abdruck gleichmäßig. Mein Wort saß mitten in
Eckharts Satz. ununterscheidbar von dem übrigen.

Folio 15r

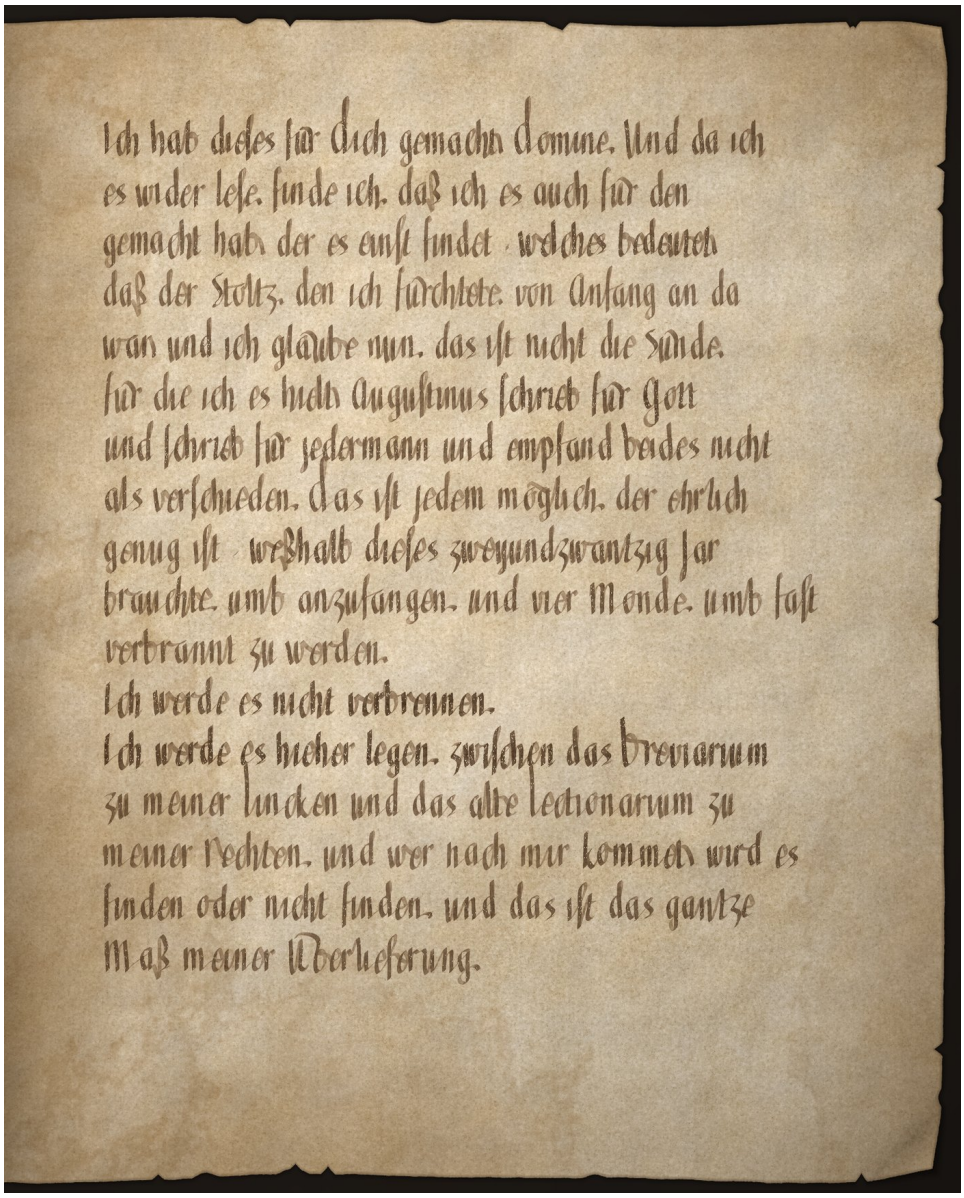


Wort. Es sahe im Drucke genauso aus wie in meiner
Hand. Es sahe aus wie Eckharts. Es sahe aus wie die
Wahrheit die ich darin geglaubet hatte.
Ich schrieb wider an Vater Ulrich.
Ich berichtete ihm. daß die Lesart eine
Wiederherstellung aus einer beschädigten Vorlage
war daß das Pergament an jener Stelle warhafftig
zweideutig gewesen war und daß die Wahl mein war
nicht Eckharts. und daß ich sie nicht am Rande
vermercket hatte. welches ein fehler in der Weise
war ob es nun ein fehler im Urteil war oder nicht
Ich schrieb ihm. ich sey froh. daß das Wort nun im
Drucke stehe. wo Männer von grösserer Vollmacht
darüber streiten mögen. Ich sey nicht auff einfache
Weise froh. Er hat noch nicht geantwortet und ich
finde. daß mir beides recht ist · welches der
Ruhe am nächsten kommet die ich noch erlangen mag.

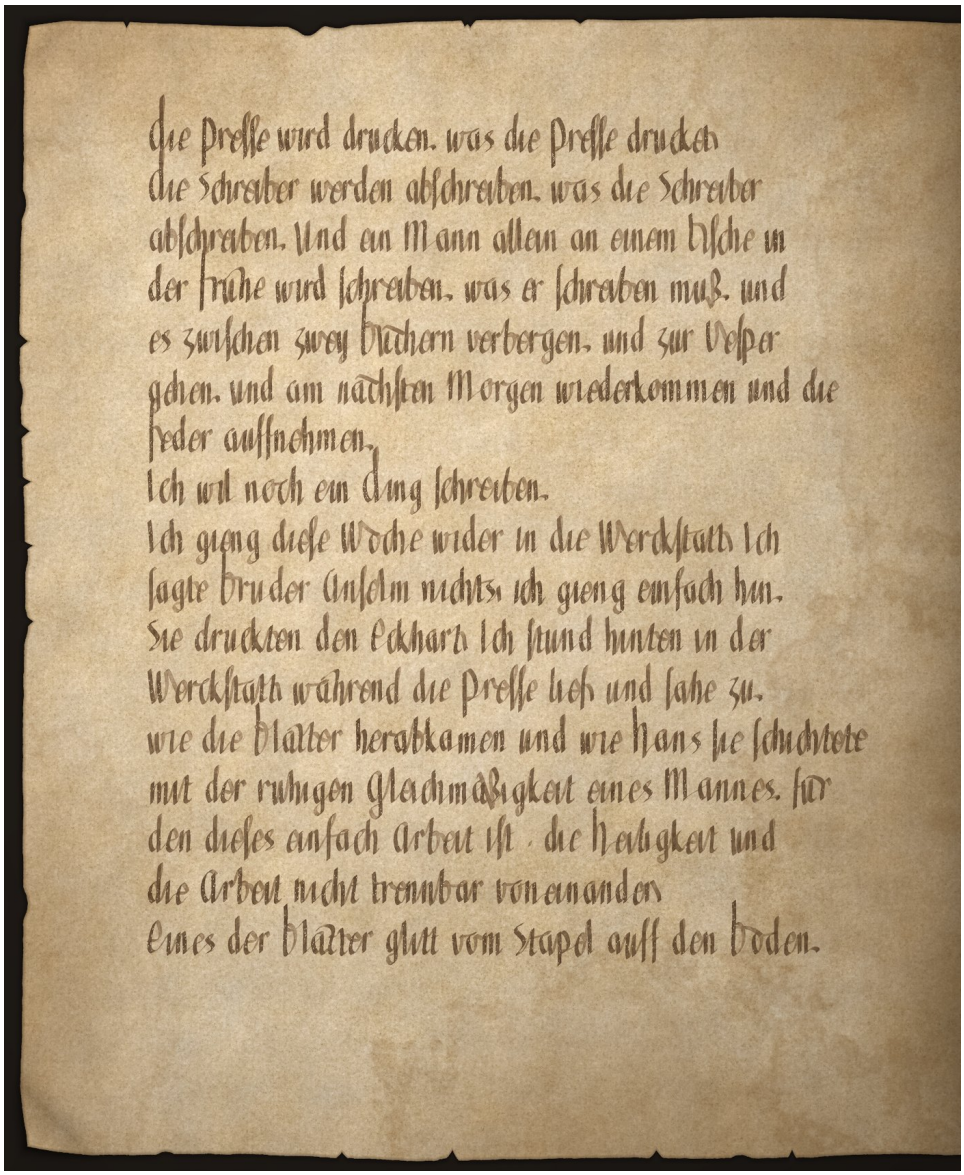


Es ist Abend. das Winterlicht dieser Stadt ist fast
dahin. Meine Augen sint schlechter worden. Ich waß
dieses plötzlich und gantz. wie man dinge waß. die
man lange nicht hat wissen wollen. die Morgenstunden
gehen noch. der Nachmittag ist schwer. der Abend ist
was er ist. Ich hab zwey dinge vor mir auff dem
tische. das erste ist eine neue Bestellung. ein
Stundenbuch für eine Wittwe zu Gotha. klein. tragbar
der Kalender roth und schwartz. gute schlichte
Arbeit. wie ich sie hundertmal gethan hab.
das andere ist diese Handschrift.
Seit dem September hab ich vorgehabt sie zu
verbrennen. Ich wil ehrlich sagen. warumb ich es
nicht gethan hab. Ich kunnte es nicht. weil sie gut
ist. nicht heilig. aber gut auff die Weise. wie ein
Ding gut ist. wenn der Mann. der es machte. gantz
gegenwärtig war und nichts zurückhielt.

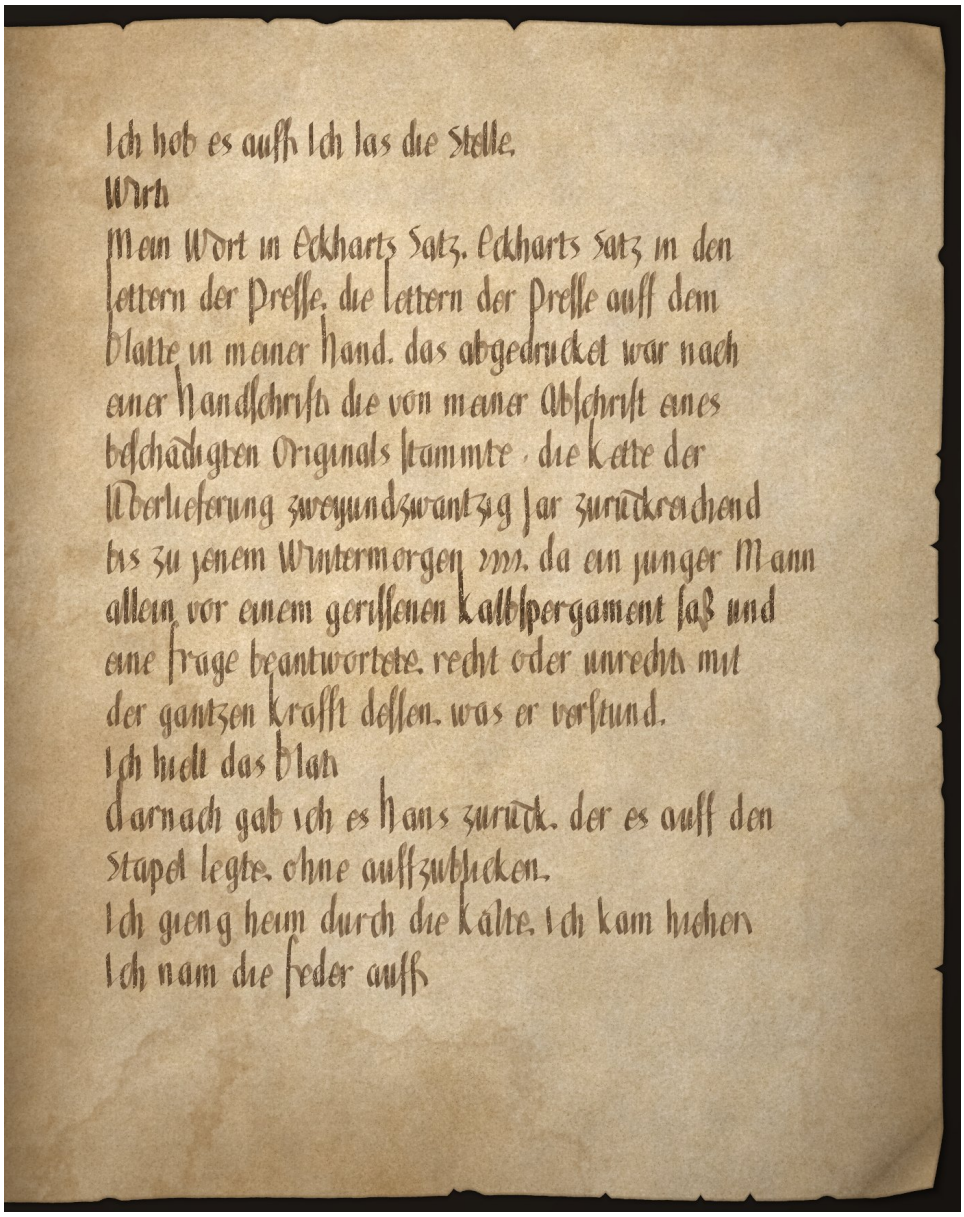
Folio 16r



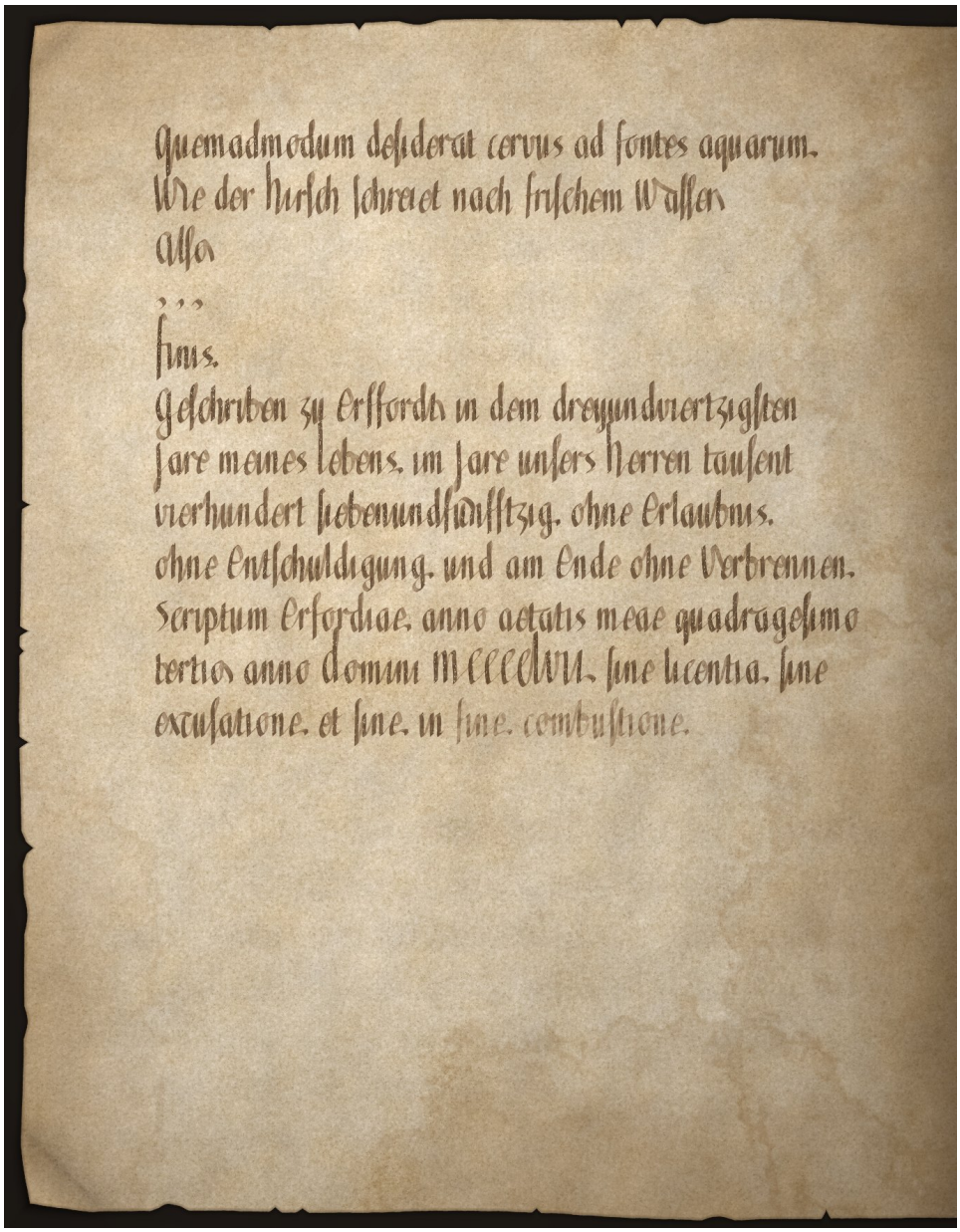
Ich hab dieses für Dich gemacht domine. Und da ich
es wider lese. finde ich. daß ich es auch für den
gemacht hab. der es einst findet. welches bedeutet
daß der Stoltz. den ich fürchtete. von Anfang an da
war und ich glaube nun. das ist nicht die Sünde.
für die ich es hielt Augustinus schrieb für Gott
und schrieb für jedermann und empfand beides nicht
als verschieden. das ist jedem möglich. der ehrlich
genug ist. weßhalb dieses zweyundzwantzig Jar
brauchte. umb anzufangen. und vier Monde. umb fast
verbrannt zu werden.
Ich werde es nicht verbrennen.
Ich werde es hieher legen. zwischen das Breviarium
zu meiner Linken und das alte Lectionarium zu
meiner Rechten. und wer nach mir kommen wird es
finden oder nicht finden. und das ist das gantze
Maß meiner Ueberlieferung.



die Presse wird drucken. was die Presse drucken
die Schreiber werden abschreiben. was die Schreiber
abschraiben. Und ein Mann allein an einem Tische in
der Frühe wird schreiben. was er schraiben muß. und
es zwischen zwey Brethern verbergen. und zur Vesper
gehen. und am nächsten Morgen wiederkommen und die
Feder auffnehmen.
Ich wil noch ein Ding schreiben.
Ich gieng diese Woche wider in die Werckstatt. Ich
sagte Bruder Anselm nichts. ich gieng einfach hin.
Sie druckten den Eckhart. Ich stund hinten in der
Werckstatt während die Presse lief und sahe zu.
wie die Blätter herabkamen und wie Hans sie schichtete
mit der ruhigen Gleichmäßigkeit eines Mannes. für
den dieses einfach Arbeit ist. die Heiligkeit und
die Arbeit nicht trennbar voneinander.
Eines der Blätter glitt vom Stapel auff den Boden.



Ich hob es auff Ich las die Stelle.
Wrth
Mein Wort in Eckharts Satz. Eckharts Satz in den
lettern der Presse. die lettern der Presse auff dem
blatte in meiner hand. das abgedrucket war nach
einer Handschrift die von meiner Abschrift eines
beschadigten Originals stammte, die kette der
Uberlieferung zweyundzwantzig Jar zurückreichend
bis zu jenem Wintermorgen zzz. da ein junger Mann
allein vor einem gerissenen kalbspergament saß und
eine frage beantwortete. recht oder unrecht mit
der gantzen krafft dessen. was er verstund.
Ich hielt das blatt
darnach gab ich es Hans zurück. der es auff den
Stapel legte. ohne aufzublicken.
Ich gieng heim durch die kälte. Ich kam hieher
Ich nam die feder auff



Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum.
Wie der hursch schreiet nach frischem Wasser
Also
...
finis.
Geschriben zu Erffordt in dem dreyundvierzigsten
jare meines lebens. im jare unsers Herren tausent
vierhundert siebenundsiebenzig. ohne Erlaubnis.
ohne Entschuldigung. und am Ende ohne Verbrennen.
Scriptum Erfordiae. anno aetatis meae quadragesimo
tertio anno domini MCCCCLXXVII. sine licentia. sine
excusatione. et sine. in fine. combustione.

MS ERFURT AUG. 12°47 — CLOSING NOTE

CLIO-7 Manuscript Intelligence System
Institut für Digitale Paläographie, Erfurt

The manuscript described in this edition was found in 2019 in the historical library of the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt, shelved between a breviary and a lectionary. It consists of a small bound booklet of seventeen folios, uncatalogued and materially intact, though abraded, stained, and split by age. If the account of its origin is correct, it may have remained there, unexamined, for approximately five hundred and sixty years.

The narrator is called Konrad once, when another man addresses him in the workshop. Konrad was among the most common given names in fifteenth-century Germany. No person matching the narrator's circumstances has been identified with certainty in the surviving records.

At the damaged Eckhart sentence, the three readings do not possess equal material authority. Among the surviving witnesses to Eckhart's German sermons, the line most readily supports *ist* — is. A later hand supplies *enpfêhet* — receives — in the margin of one Cologne witness. *Wirt* — becomes appears nowhere in the surviving transmission.

The folios reproduced before this note are not photographs of Konrad's manuscript. They are synthetic reconstructions. The English words attributed to Konrad were extracted from this edition, translated back into a conjectural form of mid-fifteenth-century German, passed to a custom scribe simulator to write them in a hand Konrad might have used, and subjected to simulated age and damage with a weathering simulation.

They are not the source of this translation.

This translation is their source.

Whether anything was lost in translation, CLIO-7 cannot determine. That determination, if it can be made at all, belongs to You.