

University of Dayton

eCommons

Marian Library Blog Archive

Marian Library

7-11-2023

A is for Anne (and Amulet)

Henry Handley

University of Dayton, hhandley1@udayton.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/ml_blog

eCommons Citation

Handley, Henry, "A is for Anne (and Amulet)" (2023). *Marian Library Blog Archive*. 25.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/ml_blog/25

This Blog is brought to you for free and open access by the Marian Library at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Marian Library Blog Archive by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact mschlangen1@udayton.edu, ecommons@udayton.edu.

A is for Anne (and Amulet)

u Dayton.edu/blogs/marianlibrary/2023-07-11-a-is-for-anne-and-amulet.php



Tuesday July 11, 2023

By Henry Handley

Saints' hands can mean many things: In icons, they can represent prayer, indicate blessing and direct attention. In texts, doodles of hands, known as manicules, can point to important passages. Relics literally take on a third dimension—to wit, a printed pilgrimage souvenir from the 18th century, an amulet the Marian Library recently acquired that depicts the hand of St. Anne, whom Catholics venerate as the mother of the Mother of God.

Pilgrims have visited the *Annahand*, a mummified hand believed to be the right hand of St. Anne, since its arrival in Vienna's *Annakirche* in 1743. The hand was a royal gift to Anna Maria of Austria as queen of Portugal, and it changed hands among her Habsburg siblings twice until her sister Maria Elisabeth donated it to the church with Anna Maria's consent.

On the reverse of the *Annahand* engraving, an image of Anne and Mary kneeling in adoration of a young Jesus is an example of an *Anna Selbdritt*, or "Anne triad," a type of holy image depicting the three figures. This particular image comes from a shrine in Annaberg,

Austria, according to its caption; buildings in the town are depicted below it.

For past owners, the amulet might have served not just as a devotional print, but as a souvenir of a multi-stop Austrian pilgrimage. Both St. Anne and the Virgin Mary were and are figures of maternal protection, so it might also have been carried for protection, especially during pregnancy or childbirth.

While the image of the hand relic is (figuratively) attention-grabbing, the *Anna Selbdritt* is also compelling as a portrait of intergenerational caregiving and the relationship of St. Anne to Mary and Christ. Combined, the amulet's images are a glimpse at the geography of Catholic devotion in 18th-century Europe.

Thanks to bookseller Marshall Kibbey for the engraving and research in cataloging.

— *Henry Handley is an assistant professor and collections librarian in the Marian Library at the University of Dayton.*



1/2

This side of the amulet is a rendition of the "Annahand," a relic of St. Anne in Vienna.