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## Gerekin of Alvastra

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## **Gerekin of Alvastra (14th c.)**

1. Name variants: –

2. Places: Alvastra (Swedish abbey)

3. Biography: G. is said to have been an exemplary lay brother of Alvastra, who, for forty years, never left the monastery and was completely devoted to his prayers. He was known for his visions. At the elevation of the host during mass, he once saw Jesus as a child. He objected to Birgitta of Vadstena taking up residence near his monastery, but a voice informed him that she was God's friend. He had a vision in which he was told she would provide wisdom to many. When dying, he saw the names of the brothers Peter, Olav, and Tordo written in gold, indicating their acquisition of heavenly joys.

4. Cultus:

a. Relics: –

b. Liturgical commemoration: 1 Aug (HENRIQUEZ)

c. Patronage: –

d. Attributes: –

5. Fontes: C. HENRIQUEZ, *Menologium Cisterciense*, Antwerp 1530; Birgitta of Sweden: *Life and Selected Writings*, ed. M. T. HARRIS, translated by A. R. KEZEL, New York 1990; *Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte*, 619.

6. Literature: J. FRANCE, *Separate but Equal. Cistercian Lay Brothers 1120–1350* (2012), 317–319. B. P. MCGUIRE, *The Cistercians as a Scandinavian Elite*, in: T. M. S. LEHTONEN / E. MORNET, *Les Élités Nordiques de l'Europe occidentale*, Paris 2007, 120.

7. Illustrations: None known, but see chapter 'Lay Brothers' in: J. FRANCE, *The Cistercians in Medieval Art*, Collegeville 1998, 122–138.

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