

Fragmentology

A Journal for the Study of Medieval Manuscript Fragments

Fragmentology is an international, peer-reviewed Open Access journal, dedicated to publishing scholarly articles and reviews concerning medieval manuscript fragments. *Fragmentology* welcomes submissions, both articles and research notes, on any aspect pertaining to Latin and Greek manuscript fragments in the Middle Ages.

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Reconstructing Book Collections of Medieval Elbląg

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Abstract: Medieval manuscript collections in Teutonic Prussia have been particularly affected by numerous events in modern history, such as the Polish-Swedish wars and the turmoil after World War II. Still, the attempts to reconstruct the local collections may shed new light on the intellectual history of this historical region. To this date this kind of research was based mostly on surviving manuscripts with Prussian origin or provenance, that is, manuscripts produced or used in the territory of Prussia, supplemented by evidence on lost volumes derived from archival inventories. The article, taking as an example the history of collections of the city of Elbląg, discusses the potential of systematic studies of parchment waste used in bindings of manuscripts and printed books for reconstructing the intellectual landscape of the territory in question. It presents the range of provenance evidence that can link manuscript waste to the territory of Teutonic Prussia, including content, script, musical notation, binding and other material evidence.

Keywords: Teutonic Prussia, Elbląg, medieval libraries, manuscript waste

Teutonic Prussia's history of invasion, annexation, and division has rendered difficult the reconstruction of the medieval manuscripts that were produced in or passed through the territory. Few codices that were present in the region in the Middle Ages remain there today, and few have surfaced in collections outside the region.

* An earlier version of this article was presented in the conference *From Fragment to Whole* held at the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Bristol, 16 September 2021. I would like to thank my colleagues and contributors to the project, Ewa Chlebus from the Cyprian Norwid Library in Elbląg and Marta Czyżak from the University Library in Toruń, for their important remarks. I would also like to thank William Duba for his invaluable support and help in preparing the English version of this text.

In such a situation, the study of manuscript fragments, particularly those reused in the bindings of other books, can help recover part of the written cultural heritage and rebuild the intellectual landscape of the region. Yet, at the same time, numerous challenges present themselves both in terms of specifying what constitutes a fragment from Teutonic Prussia and in identifying such fragments. Thus, in the discussion below, focusing on the town of Elbląg, a fragment can be of interest because it originated in Elbląg, it passed through Elbląg, or it currently is in the Elbląg library. Similarly, the identification of a fragment with Teutonic Prussia can be on the basis of a binding from the region, the fragment text relating directly to the region, evidence from the host volume, paleographical indications on the fragment, or the association with other fragments in the same volume.

Medieval Manuscripts in Teutonic Prussia

Repeated changes to the political landscape entailed the development, displacement, and dissolution of collections of manuscript books. In the High Middle Ages pagan tribes inhabited Prussia and underwent repeated attempts at Christianization. The arrival of the Teutonic Order, which was formally invited in 1226 by Duke Konrad I of Masovia, marked the final stage of these attempts; by 1283, the order had subdued the territory of Prussia, establishing an administrative system of commanderies, which meshed with the networks of other religious orders,¹ the secular clergy and municipal authorities. In the fifteenth century, conflicts between the Order and municipal authorities led to the Thirteen Years War, which ended with the Second Peace of Thorn in 1466, according to which the western part of the territory received the name of Royal Prussia and was subjected to the authority of Kingdom of Poland. The remaining part of the territory, with its capital in Königsberg, became a fief of the Kingdom of Poland, and, in 1525, was transformed into Ducal Prussia. This transformation brought with it the secularization of

1 For an overview of monastic institutions, see R. Kubicki, "Monastic Landscape in Medieval Prussia and Livonia", *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 24(2019), 155–191.

religious institutions, resulting in the centralization of local ecclesiastical collections, many of which found their way to the court of Albrecht Hohenzollern in Königsberg. In the seventeenth century, Swedish invasions resulted in the destruction of libraries and the appropriation of their contents. The Soviet Army's capture of the territory at the end of the World War II further entailed the dissolution of many collections, some of which today are considered completely lost. As a consequence of these movements, manuscripts from Prussian collections can now be found in numerous repositories across Europe, for example in Berlin, Uppsala, and even the Vatican Library (entering with the collection of Queen Christina of Sweden).

Today the territory of Teutonic Prussia is divided by administrative boundaries among three states, namely Poland, Russia (Kaliningradskaja Oblast) and Lithuania. While sources attest to more than 130 libraries in Prussia before 1500,² only a handful today have historical collections, and even those preserve only a fraction of the medieval holdings. As a result, current knowledge on collections of medieval books in Teutonic Prussia is fragmentary, based on surviving medieval manuscripts that once were part of local libraries³ and on inventories mentioning manuscripts, most of which are lost.⁴

A systematic analysis of manuscript waste from the bindings of manuscripts and printed books can complement our knowledge of

2 For a list of libraries in Prussia before 1500, with bibliographical references to printed editions of archival catalogues, see R.G. Päsler, *Deutschsprachige Sachliteratur im Preußenland bis 1500: Untersuchungen zu ihrer Überlieferung*, Köln 2003, 360–384. For a list of Teutonic Prussian book collections, see E. Potkowski, “Duchowość krzyżaków a lektura. Księgozbiory zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach”, *Z Badań nad Polskimi Księgozbiorami Historycznymi* 13(1993), 106–110.

3 *Katalog rękopisów średniowiecznych Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Toruniu*, oprac. M. Czyżak przy współpracy M. Jakubek-Raczkowskiej i A. Wagnera, Toruń 2016; T. Borawska, “Dawne książki warmińskie w zbiorach bibliotek europejskich”, *W kręgu stanowych i kulturowych przeobrażeń Europy Północnej w XIV–XVIII wieku*, ed. Z.H. Nowak, Toruń 1988, 179–205. See also manuscripta.pl (the database will be accessible in 2022).

4 See, e.g., Päsler, *Deutschsprachige Sachliteratur*; A. Mentzel-Reuters, *Arma spiritualia. Bibliotheken, Bücher und Bildung im Deutschen Orden*, Wiesbaden 2003.

the collections of medieval Prussia that were largely lost and scattered, and thus can contribute to reconstructing the intellectual landscape of the region.⁵ The collections from and around Elbląg provide a case study to illuminate the potential of this method.

The Libraries of Medieval Elbląg

Elbląg (germ. Elbing), a Hanseatic city situated in modern northern Poland, traces its origins to the foundation of a castle of the Teutonic Knights in 1237. During the Middle Ages, several institutions in the city had their own book collections,⁶ the oldest of these institutions being the Teutonic castle itself.

The Teutonic Castle Library and the Brigittine Convent

A surviving inventory from the Teutonic castle, dated to 1440, lists 37 liturgical manuscripts, 18 Latin texts (some contained in one volume) and nine items written in German; nevertheless, such an inventory of property provides little information, making at best uncertain any identification of volumes listed with surviving manuscripts.⁷ Shortly after the inventory was written, the castle was destroyed in a conflict between the Order and the city. In 1454, the Brigittines established a convent in the building founded on the

5 Anette Löffler has described in two volumes detached and in-situ fragments from the former Historische Staatsarchiv in Königsberg, which after the World War II found their way to Berlin via Grasleben, Goslar and Göttingen: *Fragmente liturgischer Handschriften des Deutschen Ordens im Historischen Staatsarchiv Königsberg*, Lüneburg 2001, and *Fragmente nicht-liturgischer Handschriften aus dem Historischen Staatsarchiv Königsberg. Mit ausgewählten Schrifttafeln zum gesamten Fragmentbestand*, Osnabrück 2019.

6 For an overview of the history of the book in medieval Elbląg, see J. Sekulski, *Książka w Elblągu do roku 1772*, Gdańsk 1990, 10–24 (without references to sources) and H. Stobbe, *Das Buch im alten Elbing. Sonderdruck aus dem Westpreußen-Jahrbuch 1965. Jahrgabe 1965 der Truso-Vereinigung*, Münster 1965; see also Päsler, *Deutschsprachige Sachliteratur*, 366–367.

7 *Das grosse Ämterbuch des Deutschen Ordens mit Unterstützung des Vereins für die Herstellung und Ausschmückung der Marienburg*, ed. W. Zieseimer, Danzig 1921, 93, 9–26.

remnants of the castle,⁸ and it is assumed that the nuns took over some of the books previously held in it. Unfortunately, we have no direct information concerning the Brigittine library. Besides some evidence that can be found in manuscripts discussed below, we have a few indications of books that local citizens bequeathed to the nuns.⁹ What can be assumed is that the poor financial condition of the house precluded assembling a large library. Owing in part to financial troubles, the monastery was dissolved before 1521, and the nuns moved to Gdańsk, taking some belongings with themselves, but books were not mentioned in this context.

St. Nicholas Church

The parish church of St. Nicholas owned an extensive library held in a separate room, built in 1403 during the rectorship of Nikolaus Wulsack, a former student of Prague University.¹⁰ Its 1569 catalogue, published in 1874 by Franz Hipler,¹¹ lists nearly 300 items, many of which are referred to as *libri sine titulo*. Still, we have no exact indication if the titles referred to medieval manuscripts. According to a description of Elbing published in 1818, in 1623 a sale took place in order to purchase better books, selling the old ones for 14 *grossi* per pound of parchment and 10 *grossi* per pound of paper. In total, the weight of the books sold amounted to 205 pounds of parchment and 75 pounds of paper, providing some idea of the size of the collection

8 For the history of the Brigittine foundation in Elbląg see M. Toeppen, *Elbinger Antiquitäten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des städtischen Lebens im Mittelalter*, Heft 2, Danzig 1872, 139–147; S. Kamińska, *Klasztory brygidek w Gdańsku, Elblągu i Lublinie: założenia i uposażenie*, Gdańsk 1970.

9 In the will of Jacob Struch from 1464: “Item quia libros meos de elemosinis pauperum comparavi et aliquos in testamentum et alias propter Deum suscepimus do et lego eidem monasterio Beate Birgitte [...]”; edition in: R. Kubicki, “Testamenty mieszkańców Elbląga z drugiej połowy XV w.”, *Rocznik Elbląski*, 28(2018), 37–50, at 47. See also Toeppen, *Elbinger Antiquitäten*, 140–141.

10 *Altpreußische Biographie*, ed. C. Krollmann, im Auftrage der Historischen Kommission für ost- und westpreußische Landesforschung, Marburg/Lahn 1974, vol. 2, 472; F. Hipler, “Analecta Warmiensia. Studien zur Geschichte der ermländischen Archive und Bibliotheken”, *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands* 5(1874), 316–488, at 420–422.

11 Hipler, “Analecta Warmiensia”, 422–426.

sold.¹² In 1926, only 25 manuscript volumes remained in the library.¹³ Their later fate is unknown.

The Dominican Convent

The Dominican Convent of Elbląg was founded in 1327 and abandoned in 1542. No description of the library survives, and, the only information on the medieval history of the collection states that some books were lost in a fire in 1504.¹⁴ A document dated 1514 attests that some books were donated to the convent during the post-fire reconstruction.¹⁵ After 1542, the conventual church of St. Mary was handed over to the Lutheran congregation and its library was gradually scattered. In 1544, the city came into the possession of some 35 volumes, but already in 1565 as many as 21 of those were missing.¹⁶ In his *Adressbuch der Deutschen Bibliotheken*,¹⁷ Paul Schwenke describes a collection of fifty manuscripts bequeathed to the city by a merchant named Convent, who died in 1812. In 1893 they were kept in the Municipal Museum in Elbląg.¹⁸

Surviving Elbląg Manuscripts and Fragments

Except for a few manuscripts of Dominican provenance held today at the Museum of Archaeology and History in Elbląg and two manuscripts in the Elbląg Library, no medieval collection has been preserved in the town. One more Dominican manuscript from Elbląg is held in nearby Gdańsk.¹⁹ Further abroad, 39 medieval codices

12 M. Fuchs, *Beschreibung der Stadt Elbing und ihres Gebietes in topographischer, geschichtlicher und statistischer Hinsicht*, v. 1, Elbing 1818, 203. For this information I would like to thank Ewa Chlebus from the Elbląg Library.

13 E. Chwalewik, *Zbiory polskie. Archiwa, biblioteki, gabinety, galerie, muzea i inne zbiory pamiątek przeszłości w ojczyźnie i na obczyźnie w porządku alfabetycznym według miejscowości ułożone*, t. 1, Warszawa-Kraków 1926, 80.

14 R. Kubicki, *Środowisko dominikanów kontraty pruskiej: od XIII do połowy XVI wieku*, Gdańsk 2007, esp. 101–102; Toeppen, *Elbinger Antiquitäten*, 360–366; Sekulski, *Książka w Elblągu*, 13–16.

15 Kubicki, *Środowisko dominikanów kontraty pruskiej*, 102, p. 79.

16 Ibid., 102.

17 Schwenke, *Adressbuch der Deutschen Bibliotheken*, Leipzig 1893, 109 (no. 449).

18 I would like to thank Ewa Chlebus for this information.

19 Kubicki, *Środowisko dominikanów kontraty pruskiej*, 101, p. 78.

originating directly from Elbląg are currently held in the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, in Cambridge.²⁰ They were brought to Cambridge after 1626 by an Anglican priest, Richard Pernham, and his wife Mary, whose name appears in most of the manuscripts. The Pernhams stayed in Elbing from 1618 to 1626²¹ and were connected to the local English trading post. According to notes that can be found in some of the codices, prior to coming into the possession of the Pernhams, at least some of these codices belonged to the Brigittine monastery in Elbing. Still, this attribution does not necessarily apply to all the items in the collection, and, in any case, as noted above, the Elbing convent's history was very brief (1454–1521), and we know very little about the books' pre-Brigittine provenance. What can be said, however, is that provenance notes and content connect some of the books to the University of Prague,²² and some supposedly come from the Teutonic castle in Elbing.²³

In addition to these collections, at present two more manuscripts of Elbląg provenance are known, the first of which is held in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg,²⁴ and the second in the Russian State Library in Moscow.²⁵ Both were purchased in the second half of the twentieth century. In addition, the State Archive

20 The collection is described in M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge*, 2 vols., Cambridge 1912.

21 M. Perlbach, "Elbinger Handschriften in Cambridge", *Mitteilungen des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins* 19(1920), 36–37.

22 J. Kejr, "Díla pražských mistrů v rukopisech knihovny Corpus Christi College, Cambridge" ["The works of Prague Masters in the manuscripts of the library of Corpus Christi College"], *Acta Universitatis Carolinae. Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis* 26(1986), 109–148 [English summary, 145–148].

23 Päsler, *Deutschsprachige Sachliteratur*, 366.

24 L. Neubaur, *Katalog der Stadtbibliothek zu Elbing*, Bd. 2, Elbing 1894, 565; Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Bibliothek, Hs. 198393. <https://handschriftencensus.de/13767>; <http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/dokumente/html/obj90292636.T>; digital surrogate.

25 Moscow, Russian State Library (Российская государственная библиотека), Fond 218, Nr. 1241; see manuscripta.pl, <http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/dokumente/html/obj31301422>; D. Barow-Vassilevitch, M.-L. Heckmann, *Abendländische Handschriften des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit in den Beständen der Russischen Staatsbibliothek (Moskau)*, Wiesbaden 2016, 262–265; *Zapiski Otdela Rukopisej*, 26:1963, 386–387.

in Gdańsk holds three leaves of the Chronicle of Jeroschin from the collection of the Municipal Archive in Elbląg.²⁶

Until now, our knowledge of lost manuscripts is based chiefly on archival inventories, bolstered by a few references found in the wills of local citizens.²⁷ Fragments can help complete the picture. In particular, manuscript fragments reused in the bindings of other books can provide an idea of the types of texts and the range of sources that circulated in medieval Elbląg. The present study considers fragments in the bindings of the manuscripts from Elbląg in the Parker Library, as well as those in the bindings of books printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and currently held in the Elbląg Library (Biblioteka Elbląska im. Cypriana Norwida), which inherited the collection of the Elbląg Gymnasium.

While founded in 1535 as the first gymnasium in Prussia, and, for that matter, the Kingdom of Poland, the Elbląg Gymnasium did not have a library until 1601, when the city council bought the collection of the late rector, Thomas Rotus, to establish one.²⁸ Over the following decades, the library was enriched with the books of many local citizens, such as Andreas Neander, the Loitz family, and Samuel and Andreas Meienreis, whose libraries consisted not only of local purchases but also testified to travels abroad.²⁹ The historical printed books collection for the most part has been preserved and

26 Gdańsk, Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe, 492/656, 492/657, and 492/658; <https://handschriftencensus.de/2842>; images: https://www.bbaw.de/forschung/dtm/HSA/Elbing_700329900000.html

27 Kubicki, "Testamenty", 49.

28 About the history of the Elbląg Library see: H. Bauer, "Alt-Elbinger Stammbücher in der Stadtbücherei: I. Biographische Beiträge aus Stammbüchern der kryptokalvinistischen Zeit um 1600", *Elbinger Jahrbuch* 8(1929), 149–205; J. Lassota, "Zarys dziejów Biblioteki Elbląskiej (1601–1945)", *Rocznik Elbląski* 1(1961), 97–120; *Biblioteka Elbląska 1601–2001. Materiały z sesji naukowej zorganizowanej z okazji 400-lecia Biblioteki Elbląskiej*, Elbląg, 23 XI 2001 r., ed. W. Długokęcki, Elbląg 2001; *Biblioteka Elbląska – przeszłość i teraźniejszość = Elbląg Library – past and present: praca zbiorowa*, ed. P. Derlukiewicz, Elbląg 2005; *Zbiory zabytkowe Biblioteki Elbląskiej. Materiały z sesji naukowej zorganizowanej w Bibliotece Elbląskiej 24 listopada 2006 r.*, ed. W. Długokęcki, Elbląg 2006, <http://www.kpbc.ukw.edu.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=27564>.

29 See K. Podlaszewska, "Prywatne biblioteki mieszczan elbląskich w XVI w. i w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku", *Studia o Bibliotekach i Zbiorach Polskich* 5(1993), 47–69; Sekulski, *Książka w Elblągu*, 25–33.

today is held at the Elbląg Library, although its recent history was far from straightforward. Because the library building was damaged as a result of the Soviet invasion in 1945, it was decided to move the collection in deposit to Toruń and its newly established Nicolaus Copernicus University, and the collection was stored in chests awaiting the move. By the time of the move in 1947, 18 chests had been taken to an unknown location.³⁰ What concerns the manuscript collection, the evidence of the manuscript catalogue from the 1780s shows that, in the eighteenth century, the collection largely held volumes produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³¹ Still, it cannot be excluded that, apart from two preserved pieces mentioned above, the library had some medieval manuscripts which could have been lost along with printed books directly after World War II.

Many of the binding fragments studied have foreign provenance or are of uncertain origin and provenance, and cannot be traced back to Prussia with any certainty. Nevertheless, there are some cases where the binding materials can be directly linked to medieval Prussia. In effect, we use five types of evidence to link fragments to Prussia: bindings, fragment text, host volume provenance, paleographical indications, and parchment waste context.

Fragments in Prussian Bindings

Bindings are very useful in identifying the provenance of the fragments they contain, especially late Gothic bindings, which are relatively easy to identify on the basis of specific sets of decorative tools and techniques. Naturally, this identification depends on the assumption that binders used fragments from manuscripts discarded locally and has to be taken with caution.³² In the Elbląg Library can be found bindings connected to mostly Central European

30 D. Czyżak, "Zanim księgozbiór elbląski do Torunia dotarł", *Rocznik Elbląski* 18(2002), 145. The collection returned to Elbląg in 2001.

31 J. Sekulski, "Księgozbiór biblioteki gimnazjum elbląskiego w XVIII w.", *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie* 3(1982), 197.

32 A. Reynolds, "'Worthy to Be Reserved': Bookbindings and the Waste Paper Trade in Early Modern England and Scotland", *The Paper Trade in Early Modern Europe*, ed. D. Bellingradt and A. Reynolds, Leiden 2001, 342. N. Pickwoad, "The Use of Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts in the Construction and Covering of Bindings on Printed Books", in *Interpreting and Collecting Fragments*

binding workshops: Nürnberg (Koberger officine), Leipzig and Silesia, among others. There are, however, some bindings produced by bookbinders who were active in Prussia.³³

Paul Schwenke, who researched Prussian bindings over a century ago distinguished two workshops located specifically in Elbląg (Elbing I and Elbing II). In the Elbląg Library six bindings come from the workshop known as Elbing II, characterized by its typical set of stamps, mostly of a floral character (stylized leaves, twigs and rosettes) combined with arch-shaped stamps and a speech scroll with the name 'Maria'.³⁴ In one such binding, produced at the turn of the fifteenth century for an incunable containing *Sermones Pomerii de sanctis* by Pelbartus de Themeswar, printed in Hagenau in 1499 by Henrich Gran for Johann Rynman (Inc. 24), the front and back partial flyleaves are parchment fragments of a fourteenth-century missal [F-b3nn], which will be discussed below in relation to musical notation.

While Elbląg Library does not have any bindings from a second bindery connected to Elbląg, Elbing I, one such binding can be found in Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, [MS 516](#). In the binding of a fifteenth-century manuscript containing medical *quaestiones* appear parchment snippets, which, when put together, form part of a twelfth-century calendar leaf for February and March [F-5aeo]. Directly above the kalends of March is written the name *Bononius monachus et presbyter sancti Stephani* (f. 1ar), a saint who was celebrated in Piedmont. This entry, as well as the script of the text, suggests that the liturgical book was written in Italy. What is puzzling in this case is that the saint in question was celebrated in fact on 30 August. It seems probable that the name of Bononius was introduced by a second hand by mistake instead of Bonosius (Bonosus), the bishop of Trier celebrated on 17 February³⁵. In between the

of *Medieval Books. Proceedings of the Seminar in the History of the Book to 1500*, Oxford 1998, ed. by L.L. Brownrigg and M.M. Smith, London 2000, 2–3.

33 E. Chlebus, "Oprawy późnogotyckie w zbiorach biblioteki elbląskiej", *Zbiory polskie*, ed. A. Wagner, Toruń 2021, 51–80.

34 Chlebus, "Oprawy późnogotyckie", 73, I. Schunke and K. von Rabenau, *Die Schwenke-Sammlung gotischer Stempel- und Durchreibungen*, Bd. 2, Berlin 1996, 73.

35 I would like to thank Mr Sławomir Szyller (manuscripta.pl) for this suggestion.

lines have been inserted obits that now are hardly readable. As they can bring important information on the place where the manuscript was used, they deserve further investigation with multispectral imaging.

In addition to the Parker codex, a handful of other Elbing I bindings can be found in the Seminary Library in Pelplin³⁶ and in the University Library in Uppsala.³⁷ These bindings have still to be investigated for the presence of manuscript fragments.

Besides Elbing I and II, bindings from other Prussian workshops can be identified among the books currently in Elbląg Library. A binding for an incunable from Elbląg Library, Inc.44 can be ascribed to the Brethren of the Common Life in Chełmno.³⁸ It contains *Vocabularius iuris utriusque*, printed in Basel by Michael Wenssler no later than August 1475. Parchment flyleaves made of two bifolia came from one of the most typical binding waste texts, the *Doctrinale* of Alexander de Villa Dei, in this case a late-fourteenth-century copy probably made in Prussia, as suggested by the type of script [F-otyg]. While earlier the stamps used in the binding were associated with Gdańsk,³⁹ more recent studies ascribe the tools to a Chełmno workshop.⁴⁰ The possibilities that at some point the bindery was moved from Chełmo to Gdańsk or that the tools changed owners have yet to be investigated.⁴¹

Another Prussian binding that can be found in Elbląg Library was produced in the so-called *Marien-Schriftband* bindery in Königsberg in the first two decades of the sixteenth century (Inc.84–85).⁴² The composite volume contains *Polyanthea, opus suavissimis floribus*

36 Pelplin, Biblioteka Diecezjalna im. Biskupa Jana Bernarda Szlagi, Ms 200(121), 245(49), 253(67), 269(253).

37 Uppsala, Universitetsbiblioteket, C660.

38 Chlebus, "Oprawy późnogotyckie", 67–69.

39 O. Günther, *Katalog der Handschriften der Danziger Stadtbibliothek*, Bd. 5: *Die Handschriften der Kirchenbibliothek von St. Marien in Danzig*, Danzig 1921, Taf. III; Schunke and von Rabenau, *Die Schwenke-Sammlung*, 66.

40 E. Szandorowska, "Biblioteka i pracownia introligatorska Braci Wspólnego Życia w Chełmnie: Próba rekonstrukcji", *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej* 9(1973), 265–285.

41 Chlebus, "Oprawy późnogotyckie", 69.

42 Chlebus, "Oprawy późnogotyckie", 69; Schunke and von Rabenau, *Die Schwenke-Sammlung*, 140.

exornatum by Domenico Nani Mirabelli, printed in Venice by Peter Liechtenstein in 1507, and Jerome's *Commentaria in Bibliam* printed in Venice by the brothers Giovanni and Gregorio De' Gregori in 1498. A fragment of a bifolium containing Psalms written in a fourteenth-century hand was used as a flange hooked around the first quire of the book [F-8re6].⁴³

Elbląg Library bindings can also be ascribed to Gdańsk binderies. The researchers of previous generations defined some binderies relying solely on stamp motifs.⁴⁴ The results of such an analysis can be taken only as a starting point for further research, since binding tools often travelled between workshops. Indeed, as Ewa Chlebus argues, only a systematic reexamination that combines the ornamentation of binding stamps with the analysis of specific binding techniques can refine the identification of the binders active in Gdańsk.⁴⁵ In any case, some bindings from Elbląg Library can be ascribed more generally to Gdańsk, and their specific attribution has to be taken with caution.⁴⁶ For example, SD.XVI.2143, has a characteristic set of small stamps pressed densely on the cover, and these have been used to identify the volume as bound in the *Mosaik II* workshop in the first decade of the sixteenth century.⁴⁷ The volume contains *Librorum Francisci Petrarche Impressorum Annotatio* printed in Venice by Simon de Luere for Andrea Torresano de Asula in 1501. Two parchment flyleaves are made out of two bifolia containing sermons by the Dominican preacher Anthonius de Azaro [F-eud3]. Another Elbląg Library book bound in Gdańsk comes from the so-called *Rankenstabbuchbinder*,⁴⁸ active in the last decade of the fifteenth

43 E. Chlebus, "Elementy przybyszowe w oprawach późnogotyckich – formy, funkcje, terminologia", *Roczniki Biblioteczne* 61(2017), 81.

44 Günther, *Katalog*; Schunke and von Rabenau, *Die Schwenke-Sammlung*.

45 This remark refers to all under-studied Prussian binderies; Gdańsk, as the biggest center of book production and trade in the region, constitutes a particularly complex case.

46 Chlebus, "Oprawy późnogotyckie", 61–62.

47 Schunke and von Rabenau, *Die Schwenke-Sammlung*, 64.

48 Günther, *Katalog*; 53–55, Schunke and von Rabenau, *Die Schwenke-Sammlung*, 64–65; J. Geiß, "Einbände für den Barther Reformator Johannes Block (1470/80–1544/45). Teil 2: Werkstätten aus Danzig", *Einbandforschung* 13(2003), 13–24; Chlebus, "Oprawy późnogotyckie", 62.

century, covering the 1497 Basel (Johannes Amerbach) printing of Augustine's *Explanatio Psalmorum. P. I–III* (Inc.76). In this volume one can find two strips, the first cut vertically, the second horizontally, containing fragments of the books of Amos and Abdias taken from an eleventh-century Bible [F-7kzk] (Figure 1).

Beyond the distinct and relatively easy-to-identify late-Gothic bindings, more common types of bindings can be described as being likely Prussian in origin. For example, a half-leather binding covered with green or black paint has been indicated in the literature as characteristic for German territories.⁴⁹ Thus SD.XVI.2127–2128, containing *Adriani Turnebi Adversariorum Tomi III* printed in Basel by Thomam Guarianum in 1581 and *Genealogikon Romanum De Familiis Praecipuis Regum, Principum, Caesarum, Imperatorum, Consulium Item, Aliorumque Magistratuum ac procerum Imperii Romani, ab v. C. usque ad haec tempora praesentia* by Elias Reusner printed in Frankfurt by the heirs of Andreas Wechelus in 1589, which once belonged to Samuel Meienreis, an Elbląg citizen and Calvinist priest, has a half-leather binding with four parchment fragments of Isaac Israeli's *De febribus* written in the fourteenth century [F-och8] (Figure 2). In the case of this specific binding, its origin has been narrowed down by Ewa Chlebus to Elbląg or Gdańsk on the evidence of the flyleaf paper's fish-shape watermark.

Recent research on late-Gothic bookbinders in Prussia will allow the extension of research to other repositories that can be identified as having Prussian-produced bindings. Research combining ornamental features with analysis of specific technology has to date focused on Ermland workshops. Examples of Ermland bindings can be found in such repositories as the Library of the “Hosianum” Warmia Archdiocese Seminary and of the Theological Faculty of the University of Warmia and Mazury, the Diocesan Library in Pelplin, the Copernican Public Library in Toruń or Universitetsbiblioteket in Uppsala.⁵⁰

49 Pickwood, “The Use of Fragments”, 9–10.

50 E. Chlebus, *Późnogotyckie introligatorstwo warmińskie w świetle zachowanych opraw* (PhD thesis, forthcoming). In her thesis, Ewa Chlebus identifies summarily the fragments used in the bindings. For an analysis of the binding waste used, see also E. Chlebus, “Jak franciszkanie pruscy utylizowali rękopisy, czyli

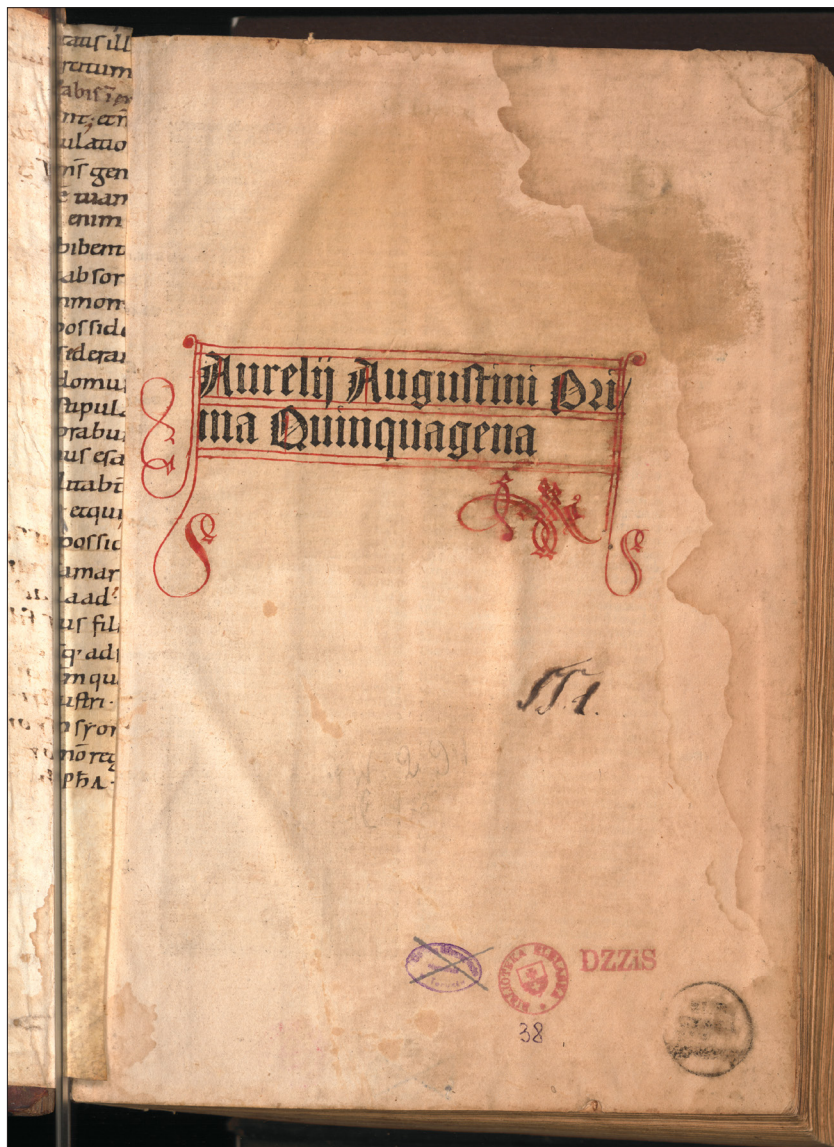


Figure 1: Biblioteka Elbląska, Inc.76 [F-7kzk]

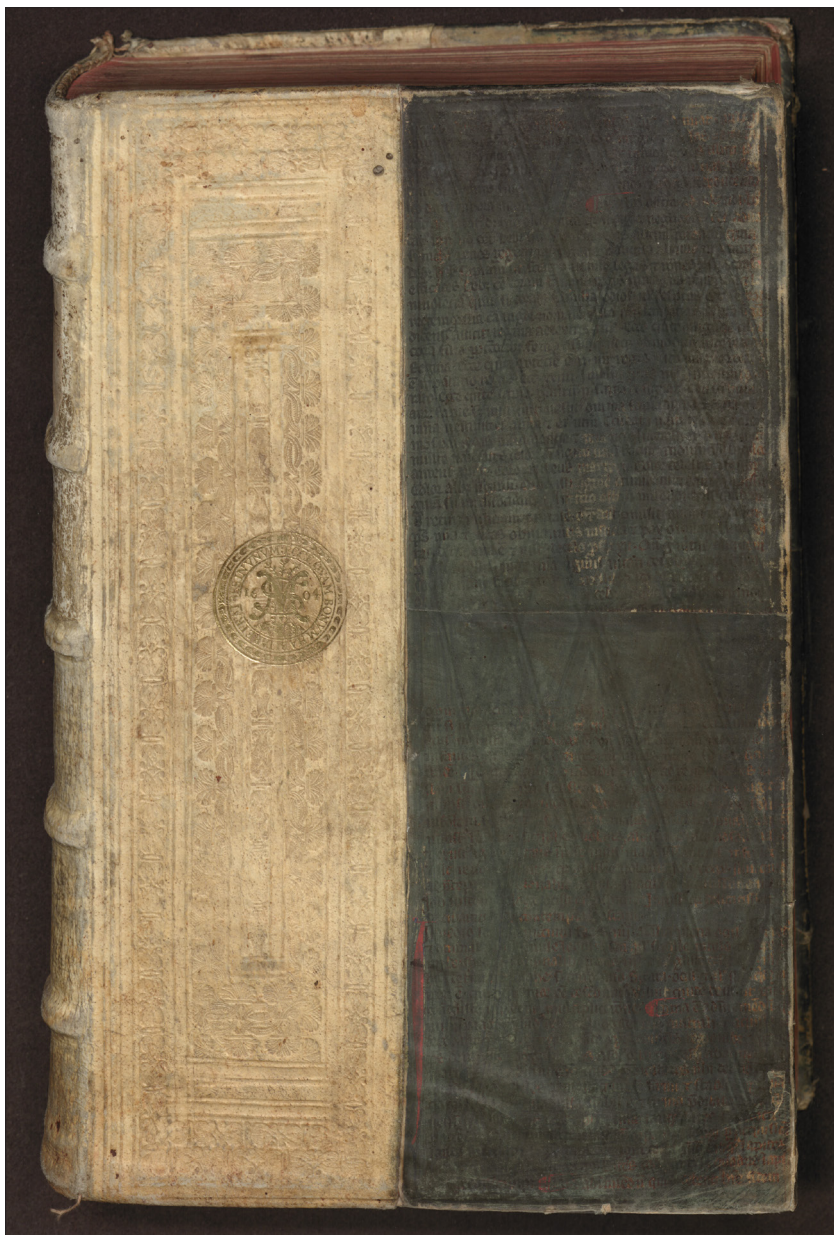


Figure 2. Biblioteka Elbląska, SD.xvi.2127-2128 [F-och8]

Fragment Text

The next type of evidence is the content of the fragment itself, which occasionally reveals a Prussian origin. Most famously, a fragment of the Prussian Chronicle of Nikolaus von Jeroschin was previously used to bind a manuscript preserved today in the University Library in Toruń.⁵¹ For Elbląg fragments, in several cases, archival documents used in the binding strongly suggest a Prussian provenance. For example, a charter used as a pastedown in Cambridge, Parker Library, [Corpus Christi College 520](#), containing among others *Apparatus ad Summam Henrici* by Henricus de Barben, *Aurora* by Petrus Riga and *Historia scholastica* by Petrus Comestor, mentions the citizens of Elbląg explicitly.⁵² The charter relates to the controversy between citizens of Elbląg and the Teutonic Knights and concerns specifically the Elbląg commune's rights of appeal to Lübeck [F-oykc]. It contains the second of two legal opinions that has been issued by the canons of Lübeck between 5 January and 24 July 1296 in response to a delegation of Elbląg citizens.⁵³ The document was edited in 1860 in the *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*⁵⁴ from an original then held in the Municipal Archive of Elbląg, now part of the Elbląg *fonds* in the State Archives in Gdańsk.⁵⁵ As Kwiatkowski assumes, it is likely that the document was prepared in two copies (as was the case for the second opinion of canons of Lübeck), one for the citizens, and one – the Cambridge charter – for the Teutonic Order.⁵⁶ Indeed, it is very probable that the charter now in Cambridge was kept in the castle of Teutonic Order in Elbląg. Supporting this

o znaczeniu badań makulaturowych dla prawoznawstwa”, *Textus et pictura. Średniowieczny kodeks rękopiśmienny jako nośnik treści, znaczeń i wartości artystycznych*, Toruń 2019, 253–302.

51 *Katalog rękopisów średniowiecznych Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Toruniu*, 422–423.

52 James, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, v. 4, xvii– xviii, 472–473.

53 K. Kwiatkowski, “Qui bona fide a non domino emit”, *Zapiski Historyczne*, 82,3(2017), 12–16.

54 *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis, oder Regesten und Urkunden zur Geschichte Ermlands*, Bd 1: *Urkunden der Jahre 1231–1340*, Mainz 1860, no 117, 203–208.

55 Gdańsk, Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe, 368/III,7 (olim I.23); see E. Volckmann, *Katalog des Elbinger Stadtarchivs*, Elbing 1875, 7.

56 Kwiatkowski, “Qui bona fide”, 15–16.

supposition, a second fragment used in the binding contains texts of documents involving the Teutonic Knights and dated 1275, 1277 and 1285, respectively [F-4nr**b**]. In this case, binding waste can provide additional clues for where the volume was bound.

Host Volume Evidence

Similar evidence for Prussian provenance can be the place of production of the host volume, for example the location of the printing house. Since the printing craft was only developed in Elbląg in the seventeenth century, no example of this kind could be indicated for books printed in the time frame in question. Nonetheless, examples can be found for other collections connected to Prussia.⁵⁷

Obviously, other provenance evidence in the host volume indicating that the binding was made in Prussia can be useful in tracing relations between the fragments and local medieval collections. For example, much can be learned from the annotations in a composite volume that belonged to Samuel Wolf, an administrator and poet born in Silesia (modern Jelenia Góra) in 1549. As provost of a Calvinist school in Lewartów (Lubartów) near Lublin in modern eastern Poland, municipal secretary in Elbląg and author of a few pieces of poetry, Wolf was in close acquaintance with many local personalities of some renown, and the network of his connections can – at least partially – be reconstructed thanks to dedicatory notes which can be found in the books he owned.⁵⁸ In a composite volume with generally poetic content, all of which was printed after Wolf took the position of municipal secretary in Elbląg (Biblioteka

57 Such an example can be found in Toruń, Pol.6.II.724–732 [F-3835], an early print from Königsberg, with a cover consisting of a leaf from a thirteenth-century copy of the fourth book of Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*; the book was owned by David Bläsing (1660–1719), who was born in Königsberg, later studied in Leipzig (1683), and then became a professor of mathematics (1690) and provost of the University in his hometown (1714). Bläsing donated this volume, along with 3000 others, to the University Library in Königsberg; now around 400 volumes are held in Toruń. It was printed by a local printer, Georgius Osterberger, and thus was probably also bound in a local workshop. I would like to thank Marta Czyżak for sharing this example.

58 J. Tondel, “Krąg przyjaciół Samuela Wolfa, rektora szkoły Kalwińskiej w Lewartowie”, *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 30(1985), 183–190.

Elbląska, SD.XVI.31–36),⁵⁹ appears the dedication of Andreas Calagius (*Dn. Samuelo Wolfio s. amico Autor mittit*)⁶⁰ inscribed in one of the individual printed books. Since this note appears in the middle of the composite volume, it attests that, when the volume was bound, all the books in it were already in Wolf's possession. In addition, a note on the pastedown indicates the price of the books contained in the volume, expressed in Prussian currency (*Constat in universum 27 g Pruten.*), which is an additional indication that the volume was bound when Wolf settled in Elbląg. The manuscript used in the binding is a fourteenth-century copy of the *Apparatus in quinque libros Decretalium* by Innocent IV (Sinibaldo dei Fieschi) [F-xdgz] (Figure 3), which also appears in two other bindings from the same owner (SD.XVI.975 [F-qtvq] and SD.XVI.984–985 [F-wgqb]). The fragments of the *Apparatus* come from different parts of the page and thus enable us to reconstruct the layout of the pages of the original manuscript.

Paleographical Indications

Owing to a lack of systematic studies of Prussian paleography, the potential of paleographical evidence has yet to be realized.⁶¹ A starting point for paleographical research can be the identifications

59 The composite volume contains the following texts: Cornelius Schonaeus, *Tertius Christianus utpote comoediis sacris transformatus...*, Coloniae Agrippinae: apud Gerardum Greuenbruch, 1592; *Selectorum Carminum Ex Doctiss. Poetis Collectorum, Et nunc primum in lucem editorum Libri Quatuor: I. Iberica. II. Gvisiaca. III. Varia Poemata. IIII. Cantica Sacra*, [Genève]: apud Israellem Taurinum, 1590; Plateanus Johannes, *Virgilio Centones Probae Falconiae...*, Coloniae Agrippinae: apud Ioannem Gymnicum, sub Monocerate, 1592; Hülrich M[arcus] Schober, *Olbiopolis Seu Civitas Beata*, Lipsiae: imprebat Michael Lanzenberger, 1592; Calagius Andreas, *Epigrammatum Farrago*, Witebergae: ex officina Mathaei Welaci, 1583; *Henrici Meibomii Lemgoviensis E Saxonibus Vvstuali Parodiis Horatianarum Libri Duo ad Nicolavm Caasam Magnum regni Danicae Cancellarium*, Helmaestadii: excudebat Iacobus Lucius, 1588.

60 H. Palm, "Calagius, Andreas", *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 3(1876), 691–692, online version: <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd128705671.html>

61 For the literature concerning the state of research on medieval scriptoria in Prussia see M. Marszałkowski, *Średniowieczne kodeksy iluminowane z cysterskiego skryptorium w Pelplinie. Problematyka zabytkoznawcza*, PhD thesis, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, 2020, 74–79.

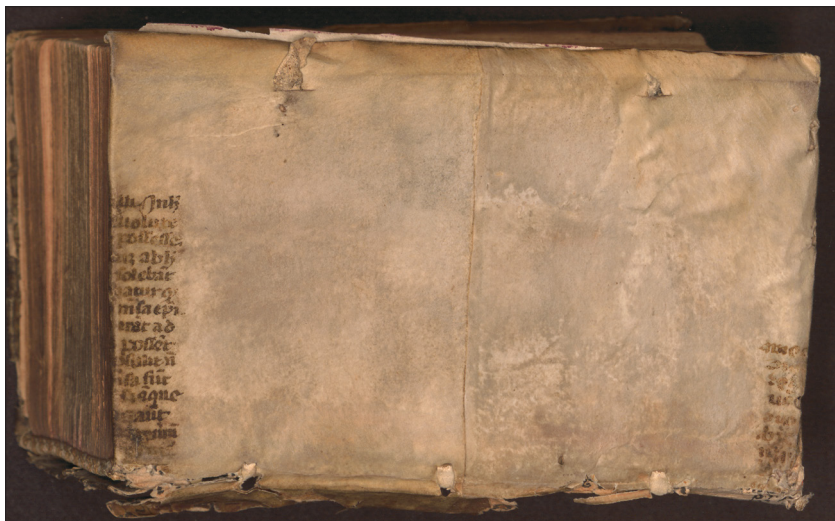


Figure 3. Biblioteka Elbląska, SD.XVI.31-36 [F-xdg2]

made in the catalogue of medieval manuscripts of the University Library of Toruń, which uses context and decoration to associate some manuscripts with Prussian scriptoria.⁶² Nevertheless, none of the fragments analyzed could be unambiguously assigned to one of the identifiable scriptoria. The same applies to the identification of penwork initials that sporadically appear in manuscript waste. The systematic analysis of initials created in local scriptoria has only recently been undertaken, and then with respect to aforementioned collection of the University Library of Toruń,⁶³ as well as the Seminary Library in Pelplin (a town 50 km south-west of Elbląg),⁶⁴ a part of whose holdings come from the former Cistercian abbey of Pelplin, founded in 1276.

Musical notation can provide more precise information. On the basis of characteristic traits, a significant part of Elbląg fragments can be connected to the northern part of modern Poland. Let us

62 See *Katalog rękopisów średniowiecznych Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Toruniu* 19, 26, 38, 86, 110, 144, 154, 168, 195, 207, 210, 215, 224, 234, 262, 271, 286, 327, 331, 339, 343, 388, 402, 408.

63 *Katalog rękopisów średniowiecznych Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Toruniu*.

64 Marszałkowski, *Średniowieczne kodeksy iluminowane*.



Figure 4. Biblioteka Elbląska, Inc.24 [F-b3nn]

return to the example discussed above (Biblioteka Elbląska, Inc.24 [F-b3nn], Figure 4), of an Elbląg (Elbing II) binding with two flanges (partial flyleaves) containing fragments of a missal with a sequentiary, featuring notation using German-Messine contact neumes written in a fourteenth-century hand. On the basis of the partially reconstructed set of signs and the structure of some neumes, it is highly probable that the manuscript came from Pomerania. Certain calligraphic features of some neumes (the *virga* resembles an inverted Arabic numeral 1, and the first element of the *pes* is written with a horizontal line) point to the Cistercian house in Pelplin as a possible place of origin of the manuscript. Nevertheless, such an attribution needs confirmation from additional comparative source studies.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ The fragment was identified and described by Dr. Irina Chachulska from the Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences.

Contextual Fragments

Finally, I gave the working title ‘co-waste evidence’ to the case of a fragment of a Biblical concordance used in the bindings of four sixteenth-century legal books printed in Lyon (Biblioteka Elbląska, SD.XVI.2477.1 [F-aunh], SD.XVI.2477.2 [F-oy37], SD.XVI.2516 [F-fog2], SD.XVI.2515 [F-gdzg]) and bearing no indication of provenance. Based on paleographical evidence, the concordance appears to have been produced in France at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The stamps used on the sixteenth-century bindings bear the likeness of sixteenth-century reformers (Erasmus, Luther, Melanchthon and Huss). The ornamentation indicates that the bindings were produced in German territory, but it was used sufficiently broadly that the location cannot be narrowed down any further. The more functional, rather than ornamental, character of the binding (half-leather, manuscript waste) testifies to its practical use, but cannot connect the binding to any specific cultural environment. Nevertheless, another fragment used alongside the concordance in one of the bindings (SD.XVI.2515) comes from a different manuscript – a breviary containing chants for the feast of the St. Hedwig of Silesia [F-8387] – and thus indicates a connection to the territory where St. Hedwig was worshipped. Therefore, combining the evidence from the binding and from the popularity of St. Hedwig, we can assume that the concordance was most likely fragmented in Prussia or Silesia.

Conclusion

This article aimed to use the preliminary results of research on medieval Elbląg to show the potential of studying manuscript fragments in bindings. What seems particularly promising in this respect is the cooperation between specialists in different areas of manuscript studies, namely binding studies, paleography, musicology, diplomacy and art history with the special focus on penwork decoration. The collaboration is not unidirectional: Fragmentology complements and completes these fields, providing new research questions and additional information. What has to be stressed is

that the current state of research of many intertwined fields connected to the history of the book in Prussia and lack or insufficient scope of systematic studies not allows conclusions. There is still a need of parallel systematical investigation that should involve fragmentology.

At present, no more than fifty volumes of medieval manuscripts with provenance connected to different Elbląg institutions have been identified in Polish or foreign libraries. Due to incompleteness of sources and inaccuracy of the descriptions of books contained in historical inventories, it is not possible to estimate the number of manuscripts that circulated at place during the Middle Ages. The perturbations that affected the collection after World War II make the situation even more complex. An analysis of fragments in the bindings of books belonging to collections historically connected to Elbląg can complement our knowledge on local medieval libraries. Among around 200 medieval fragments in our investigation, only a handful can be connected explicitly to Elbląg. The strongest evidence that can indicate such a connection are late-gothic bindings identifiable as produced in Elbląg binderies (as in the case of Biblioteka Elbląska, Inc. 24 and Parker Library, MS 516) or other provenance evidence indicating that the binding was produced in Elbląg (such as the three volumes from the library of Samuel Wolf). Still, much more fragments can be connected to other Prussian cities or to the territory of Prussia without indicating specific location.

The content of the fragments identified so far, both for fragments that were in medieval Elbląg and those currently there, mostly conforms to expectations for in-situ fragments from medieval codices and early modern printed books, with a large number of liturgical and legal texts and a smaller portion of grammatical, pastoral, and medical texts. The most surprising find was two flanges taken from an eleventh-century Psalter with contemporary Anglo-Saxon glosses [F-x8t7], a piece otherwise unique for Polish repositories.⁶⁶ In terms

66 The results of preliminary research on the fragment have been recently presented by Monika Opalińska during the conference *From Fragment to Whole. Interpreting Medieval Manuscript Fragments* held in University of Bristol, Center for Medieval Studies in a talk "A Phantom Psalter from Late Anglo-Saxon England – a New Piece of the Puzzle".

of when they were copied, most manuscripts used in the bindings examined come from the fourteenth century, with a second group being twelfth-century items that were brought to Prussia from other territories. The provenance evidence described above can help to connect the fragments with Prussian territory, whether they were locally produced, or brought to Prussia from abroad. In two cases discussed above, the parchment fragments can be shown to have come directly from manuscript waste that was locally available (namely Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 520, which has a charter involving the citizens of Elbląg, and Biblioteka Elbląska, Inc.24, which features musical notation likely used in nearby Pelplin). Only wider research on manuscript waste from this territory can help in sketching the patterns of circulation of this material in late medieval and early modern Prussia.

Our current research has only examined a small part of fragments preserved in medieval or early modern book bindings connected to Elbląg. The next step will be to investigate books originating from Elbląg, with special emphasis on books from the Elbląg Library now in other Polish repositories, and on bindings identified as produced in Elbląg, now in the Seminary Library in Pelplin and Universitetsbiblioteket in Uppsala.