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GIRDLE BOOKS AND LEATHER OVERCOVERS IN POLAND. RELICS AND ICONOGRAPHIC SOURCES*

I. THE BOOK AND ITS BINDING IN ICONOGRAPHY

Historical bookbinding is a research subject that traverses different areas of academic interest: history of art, history of artisanal handicraft and bibliology, the study of historical book collections, the books' provenance and the question of bibliophilism. However, the scientific apparatus appropriate for bookbinding studies, which focuses mainly on the relics themselves and on archival sources, sometimes turns out to be insufficient for a comprehensive solution to the problems related to historical bookbinding and the protection of historical books in a broad sense.

Nowadays iconography has become a useful source of information not only for those who study historical books but also for specialists in neighbouring fields. For bibliology it is essential to state what is the role of iconography is as compared to other sources used by researchers who study the material aspect of historical books or more general phenomena connected with their history and function. Iconography becomes particularly helpful whenever sources that are required to solve a problem are scarce or non-existent. Therefore, the research on the history of book types and functions, including book bindings, has almost always profited from a range of iconographical examples. Such sources are of prime

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utility when it comes to reconstructing the sequential stages of making a handwritten book, analysing writing methods, and recreating the equipment of a bookbinder's workshop. At the same time they provide information about how books used to be stored and what equipment might have been found in the libraries that no longer exist. Iconography is also an important source of information in the area of historical book protection, as it explicates how bound books were used, which in turn influenced their state of preservation and explains characteristic damages in the volumes. The deeper the researchers delved into the past and the fewer originally preserved bindings they found, the more their attention was drawn to the representative arts. These sorts of sources have also greatly influenced the research on the symbolism of books as carriers of intellectual content and ideas.¹

Iconography has long been an important source of information in the study of mediaeval girdle books and overcovers. In one of the first syntheses of the history of book bindings, and for the first time in the literature on the subject, Jean Loubier emphasized the abundance of characteristic girdle books representations in mediaeval art.² This approach to the study of bookbinding, initiated by Loubier and embracing the history of art, was further developed by Otto Glauning³ in the mid-1920s. He was the first to present a list of originally preserved girdle books known at the time and made an inventory of 156 works of art that depict this type of bookbinding. The list of artistic iconographic representations of such books was also expanded by Kazimierz Hałaciński⁴

- 1 E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, New York 1953, pp. 304–310 (German version, Berno 1954, pp. 306–352). The role of the secular symbolism of books as carriers of intellectual content in the humanist period was discussed by Justyna Guze ('Książka jako symbol treści intelektualnych w sztuce doby humanizmu: XV–XVI w.' [The book as a symbol of intellectual content in the humanist period art], in *O ikonografii świeckiej doby humanizmu. Tematy – symbole – problemy*, ed. J. Białostocki, Warszawa 1977, pp. 221–238). The changes in the symbolism of books in European art from the Middle Ages to the Baroque as well as the tradition of the writer's portrait in Renaissance art and the role of books in the portraits of the epoch were more deeply explored by Jan Białostocki (*Spätmittelalter und beginnende Neuzeit*, Berlin 1984, pp. 88–114). Iconographic sources in the context of 17th-century literature and plastic arts in Poland were also written about by Alina Dzieciół (*Książka jako symbol w kulturze polskiej XVII wieku* [The book as a symbol in Polish culture], Warszawa 1997, pp. 20–23).
- 2 J. Loubier, *Der Bucheinband in alter und neuer Zeit*, Berlin–Leipzig 1905, fig. 18–21, pp. 77–79.
- 3 O. Glauning, 'Der Buchbeutel in der bildenden Kunst', *Archiv für Buchgewerbe und Gebrauchsgeschichte*, LXIII, vol. I, 1926, p. 126.
- 4 Kazimierz Hałaciński ('Sakwowe oprawy książek w krakowskiej sztuce kościelnej' [Girdle books in Cracow's church art], *Silva Rerum*, III, 1927, pp. 33–35) noticed three representations: the scene of *Christ Teaching in the Temple* in Veit Stoss's altar in the St. Mary's Basilica in Cracow, a miniature from Erazm Ciołek's Roman pontifical with the scene of *Crucifixion* and the statue of St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* group in St. Mark's Church in Cracow.

and by Rev. Edmund Majkowski,⁵ who provided nine examples from the Polish territory.

Investigation into the function and typology of mediaeval book bindings exemplified by actually preserved books and by their representations in art inspired the German scholar Heinrich Schreiber to distinguish two apparently similar kinds of bindings: the girdle book and the overcover,⁶ the latter being built differently and typically used for larger books.

Based on previous contributions⁷ and on their own research, Lisl and Hugo Alker published a list of 477 related works of art and additionally grouped them according to the type of plastic art, territorial localisation and users.⁸ Later research performed mainly by German scholars increased the number of registered plastic representations to over eight hundred.⁹ More examples were added to the list of iconography of this

- 5 Edmund Majkowski (*Oprawy sakwowe. Przyczynek do historii introligatorstwa u schyłku wieków średnich* [Girdle books. Study on the history of bookbinding in the late Middle Ages], Poznań 1932) mentions a sculpture of an unknown apostle holding a red girdle book from a church in Grodzisk Wielkopolski, which has not been identified, as well as five other examples (E. Majkowski, 'Neues zum Buchbeutel in der bildenden Kunst. Beiträge aus Polen, den Niederlanden, Deutschland und der Schweiz', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 1939, pp. 331–339): the triptych from Blizanów (St. John the Evangelist), two polychrome sculptures from Koza Wielka (St. James the Greater and St. Philip (?)), a sculpture from Mikorzyn (St. Giles) and a sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* in the church in Pobiedziska (now missing).
- 6 H. Schreiber, 'Buchbeutel und Hüllenband, Funde und Betrachtungen', *Archiv für Buchgewerbe und Gebrauchsgraphik*, 76, 1939, p. 492–496. The author lists other examples of works of art depicting girdle books (H. Schreiber, 'Vom Buchbeutel und seinem Verwandten', *Sankt Wiborada. Ein Jahrbuch für Bücherfreunde*, 7, 1940, p. 13–28).
- 7 Thanks to further investigations Glauning's list was supplemented with other examples from Germany, Switzerland and Austria: F. Blaser, 'Der Buchbeutel in der bildenden Kunst. Fünf Luzerner Beispiele', *Schweizerischer Graphischer Zentralanzeiger*, 1941, p. 18–24; H. Alker, 'Beutelbücher in Österreich', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 30, 1955, pp. 238–241; H. Alker, 'Beutelbücher aus Oberösterreich', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 31, 1956, pp. 282–287; F. Dressler, 'Beutelbücher in der Bamberger Kunst', *Bericht des Historischen Vereins für die Pflege der Geschichte des ehemaligen Fürstbistums Bamberg*, 95, 1956, pp. 243–259; H. Alker, 'Unbekannte Darstellungen von Beutelbüchern aus Wiener Sammlungen', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 32, 1957, pp. 294–302; H. Alker, *Das Beutelbuch in der bildenden Kunst*, Stuttgart 1961.
- 8 L. and H. Alker, *Das Beutelbuch in der Bildenden Kunst. Ein beschreibendes Verzeichnis*, Mainz 1966, pp. 80–85. The book contains an index of places that indicates the range of territorial influences on this type of bookbinding which was limited mainly to the German-speaking countries. The index of types of plastic art indicates the prevalence of sculptures (35%) over woodcut (19%) and panel painting (17%). Even less representations can be found in book painting (11%), stone sculpture (9%) and engravings. A comparison of persons depicted with a girdle book indicates that among Christian saints it appears mainly with the apostles (48%), most often with: St. John the Evangelist, St. James the Greater, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Andrew and St. Philip. Numerous representations include Mary, or, to a lesser extent, St. Jerome, St. Anthony and St. Catherine. Girdle prayer books are also held by clergymen: monks, nuns, bishops, cardinals, popes and parish priests. Seldom do laypeople of either sex or scholars appear in this context.
- 9 H. D. Petersen, 'Unbekannte Beutelbuchdarstellungen', *Philobiblon*, vol. 11, 1967, pp. 279–280 (no. 498–501). The list was developed in successive papers – L. and H. Alker, 'Das Beutelbuch

kind by Anna Lewicka-Kamińska and Janusz Tondel.¹⁰ Also, Ursula Bruckner collected data about the few original girdle books¹¹ preserved in library collections and managed to compare the information from the iconographic sources with the twenty-three original items she had encountered.¹² After having summarised the conclusions of her predecessors who had dealt with girdle books, she pointed to the differences in their structure. Thanks to a thorough analysis, several types of apparently similar books were distinguished. The characteristic features of them were: an additional overcover meant to protect the book block – as in *chemise* binding, girdle books or a book pouch – and the ability to be worn on the belt, typical of folded books, girdle books or those with a hook or chain.

The existing studies, which are based not only on iconographic sources, have had to overcome the problem of clearly identifying the binding type. The most difficult task was to discern whether the binding is but a protective overcover or is adopted to facilitate carrying the book in different types of plastic representations of the book. This is not surprising, given that there are terminological problems distinguishing between those two types even in the case of volumes preserved in their original form. This

in der Bildenden Kunst. Ein beschreibendes Verzeichnis: Ergänzungen', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 53, 1978, p. 302–308 (no. 448–497); R. Neumüllers-Klauser, 'Auf den Spuren der Beutelbücher', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 55, 1980, pp. 291–301 (no. 502–530); U. D. Oppitz, 'Beutelbuchdarstellungen in Südtirol', *Der Schlern*, Bd. 66, 1992, pp. 566–569 (no. 538, 544, 545, 565, 575); U. D. Oppitz, 'Weitere Spuren von Beutelbüchern', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 68, 1993, pp. 311–318 (no. 537–577); U. D. Oppitz, 'Weitere Darstellungen von Beutelbüchern und Hülleneinbänden', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 70, 1995, pp. 228–239 (no. 578–709); R. Neumüllers-Klauser, 'St. Theodul mit dem Beutel', in *Lusus Campaniarum Beiträge zur Glockenkunde. Festschrift Sigrid Thurm*, ed. T. Breuer, München 1986, pp. 76–81 (no. 710–718); R. Neumüllers-Klauser, U. D. Oppitz, 'Beutelbuch-Darstellungen in der Kunst der Spätgotik', in *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, 1995, pp. 77–92 (no. 719–783); U. Merkl, 'Neuentdeckte Darstellungen von Beutelbüchern', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 72, 1997, pp. 303–306 (no. 784–813).

- 10 A. Lewicka-Kamińska, 'Z dziejów średniowiecznej oprawy książkowej na Śląsku' [On the history of mediaeval bookbinding in Silesia], *Roczniki Biblioteczne*, vol. 21, 1977, pp. 43–44. The author did not find original girdle books in Silesian collections but she noticed their presence in paintings and sculptures in the art of the region, and thus she enriched the list with the example from the *Dormition of the Mother of God* from the altar in Świdnica (previously only St. Barbara's altar had been known). J. Tondel (*Książka w dawnym Królewcu Pruskim* [Book in the former Prussian Königsberg], Toruń 2001, pp. 241–243) quoted four examples from Royal Prussia: a woodcut representation of St. Dorothy from Mątowy by Jan of Kwidzyn and the sculpture of St. James the Greater from the collection of the Muzeum Okręgowe in Toruń, St. John the Evangelist from the church in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie and an unidentified saint in the Museum in Kwidzyn.
- 11 U. Bruckner, 'Beutelbuch – Originale', *Studien zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen*, Bd. 9, 1995, pp. 5–23.
- 12 U. Bruckner, 'Das Beutelbuch und seine Verwandten – der Hülleneinband, das Faltbuch und der Buchbeutel', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 72, 1997, pp. 307–324 (no. 814–822).

difficulty arose chiefly when it came to interpreting plastic art representations; moreover, diverse temporary variations in the original bindings, successively introduced in the contributions on the subject, greatly complicated the creation of a clear and unambiguous classification. The term *camisia* or *chemise* for an additional cover of a book was introduced by Wilhelm Wattenbach¹³ as early as in the 19th century; yet, he did not specify the type of the material used for the cover. Likewise, Jean Loubier, when mentioning similar bindings in Dutch art and describing six original relics, introduced the term *Hülleneinband*,¹⁴ without considering the type of the material used. Further debate on the iconographical sources did not help to solve this problem definitively.¹⁵

Despite the problems with interpreting and naming the intermediary forms, four categories of bindings with an additional overcover have been discerned: with a protective wrap of soft leather overcover or *Hülleneinbände*, with a wrap of cloth (*chemise*), with a primary or supplementary wrap that enables carrying the book in hand or attached to the belt (girdle book), and with an additional protective wrap fixed to the book spine and partly to its covers.¹⁶ The first two categories are represented in the plastic arts in fairly large numbers. Nevertheless, of the 222 representations of leather overcovers in plastic art relics between 1425 and 1550 discovered by Jan Storm van Leeuwen 145 were covered with an unknown material.¹⁷ These examples are a representative complement to the fourteen documented original cloth bindings of the *chemise* type and the previously known 75 examples of leather overcovers.¹⁸

13 W. Wattenbach, *Das Schriftwesen im Mittelalter*, Leipzig 1871, pp. 230–231.

14 J. Loubier, *Der Bucheinband...*, op. cit., p. 45; J. Loubier, 'Hülleneinbände des ausgehenden Mittelalters', in *Bibliografiska studier tillägnade Friherre Johannes Rudbeck på hans femtioårsdag den 7 mars 1917*, ed. G. Rudbeck, Uppsala 1917, pp. 39–51.

15 J. Loubier, 'Ein Original – Hülleneinband in Göteborg', in *Werden und Wirken- Ein Festgruss Karl W. Hiersemann zugesandt am 3. September 1924 zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. M. Breslauer, Leipzig 1924, pp. 178–183; H. Schreiber, 'Buchbeutel und Hülleneinband...', op. cit., pp. 492–496; H. Schreiber, 'Vom Buchbeutel...', op. cit., pp. 13–28; V. Starcke, 'Posebind og Poseboger', *Bogvennen, New Series*, vol. 4, 1949, pp. 60–89; A. Rhein, 'Falsche Begriffe in der Einbandgeschichte', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 35, 1960, pp. 366–370.

16 J. A. Szirmai, *The Archeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, Aldershot 1999, p. 234.

17 J. Storm van Leeuwen, 'The Well-Shirted Bookbinding. On *Chemise* Bindings and *Hülleneinbände*', in *Theatrum Orbis Librorum. Liber Amicorum presented to Nico Israel on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, A. R. A. Croiset Van Uchelen, T.K. Croiset Van Uchelen, K. Van Der Horst, N. Israel (eds.), Utrecht 1989, pp. 277–305.

18 J. A. Szirmai, op. cit., p. 235. Apart from seven *chemise* bindings and 49 leather overcovers documented by J. Storm van Leeuwen there are six discovered by F. A. Bearman ('The Origins and Significance of Two Late Medieval Textile *Chemise* Bookbindings in the Walters Art Gallery', *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, vol. 54, 1996, pp. 163–187) and one by C. F. R. de Hamel (*Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Booktrade*,

II. PROTECTIVE BINDINGS OF PORTABLE BOOKS

It is hard to determine precisely the moment when the use of additional, permanently fixed protective wraps on books became common. What is sure is that different protective forms of manuscripts in travel had been used since the book first appeared, and not only in Christian culture. The usual protection for books in transport, however, was an additional wrap made of cloth or leather, or a bag, a sack, or a casing. The earliest examples of leather overcovers, which can be dated owing to the manuscripts they envelop, come from the 13th century. Similar overcovers occur throughout Europe, wherever the Roman church exerted its authority, from Portugal and Spain to the eastern border of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The popularity of this type of bookbinding was arguably due to the emergence of mendicant orders in the late 13th century, especially the Dominicans, but later also Franciscans, Carmelites and Augustinians. These orders promoted religious renewal and wanted to revive the itinerant apostolate rejected by the preceding monastic tradition. To that end they had to come up with a system and regulations that were later included in the monastic rule, so as to efficiently perform the difficult apostolic mission in travel.

This task concerned especially the order based on the Rule of St. Dominic whose founder paid particular attention to books – above all the Bible and commentaries on it – as the main tools for apostolic work. The new conditions of evangelization meant that the books which until that time had only been made for intramural monastic routine had to quit the closed rooms of the *librariae* and were thus vulnerable to damage by people and by changing weather. One of the legends is symptomatic of this and tells what happened to St. Dominic, wandering near the southern frontier of France: *And as Saint Dominic on a time came to a river toward the parts of Toulouse, his books, which had no custody, fell in the water, and he could not find them, but must leave them behind him. And the third day after a fisher cast his hook into the water, and supposed to have taken up some great fish, and drew up the books of Saint Dominic without any wetting, like as they had been kept diligently in an almary.*¹⁹

Woodbridge 1984, p. 45). This list does not include the seven leather overcovers mentioned by Lewicka-Kamińska ('Dzieje oprawy książkowej w Polsce. Stan badań, problematyka i postulaty' [History of bookbinding in Poland. State of the art, problems and postulates], in *Dawna książka i kultura. Materiały międzynarodowej sesji naukowej z okazji pięćsetlecia sztuki drukarskiej w Polsce*, S. Grzeszczuk, A. Kawecka-Gryczowa (eds.), Wrocław 1975, p. 161 – one binding), and (*Z dziejów średniowiecznej oprawy...*, op. cit., p. 44).

19 J. de Voragine, *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints*, vol. 4, transl. W. Caxton, London 1922, p. 181.

Such a prosaic event to which the legend attributes a miraculous ending draws a vivid picture of new real problems the monks had to face while travelling on foot or on horseback from village to village. Each of them had to be equipped in a way that he could realize his apostolic mission, as the Rule of St. Dominic required: *A friar, when sent to another province as lector, took with him all his annotated (glosaios) books, a Bible, and his notebooks*²⁰. Therefore the awareness of the dangers of such wanderings was reflected in the regulations that appeared in the later versions of the Rule referring to the collection, utilization and storage of the manuscripts. As Humbert of Romans has it, the books were sacred to the Dominican monks, though they were not called so in order not to be excessively venerated, but rather to remain the monks' essential tool of apostolic work.²¹

The first experiences with a novel monastic way of life, different from that of other orders, also influenced the preparation of young friars in the correct use of books. With the passing of time these issues were becoming more and more strictly regulated, being included in the Rule of the order and taught to the young adepts by the master of novices. The duty of looking after the books was shared by the librarian who was in charge of the actual library (*armarium*) and the cantor, who was responsible for the liturgical books stored in the cabinet of the sacristy or the monastery chancel. The latter was also supposed to supervise the condition of the books, and to repair the book bindings and their wraps, cases or boxes.²² We know from this provision, arguably one of the oldest, that at least some of the liturgical books were given additionally protection. It is, however, not certain whether they used separate sacks to keep books in, or if the wrap was permanently fixed to the books and thus formed the actual overcover. The monastic regulations, which resulted from practical experience, required additional protection of the books' edges with a loose strap of leather at the top of the front cover and on the outer edge of the back cover, as was done in the Nuremberg workshops of the Dominicans (1433–1522) and Augustinians (1464–1526).²³

The missions run by the Dominicans on a large scale in East-Central and Northern Europe from the 13th century naturally resulted in the

20 These are the words of the first Rule (pt. II 36.9) according to Humphreys: *The Book Provisions of the Medieval Friars, 1215–1400*, Amsterdam 1964.

21 Humbertus de Romanis, *De vita regulari*, vol. 2, ed. J. Berthier, Romae 1889, pp. 263–265, the chapter “De officio librarii” regulates questions related to the protection of Dominican book collections.

22 Ibid., p. 238–239.

23 J. A. Szirmai, op. cit., p. 236.

migrations of manuscripts. Through mendicant orders, practical theology writings, born in the west, systematically made their way there.²⁴ From the 1230s, Dominicans co-operated with Franciscans to begin missionary activity in the territories of Rus', Lithuania, Yotvingia and Moldova and continued this in Lithuania throughout the 14th century.²⁵ The monasteries in such cities as Sandomierz, Płock or Gdańsk served as a base for this activity in Prussia²⁶, and arriving there were liturgical manuscripts, homiletic literature and the works of the great masters of the scholastic tradition – for Dominicans these were above all Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.²⁷ These books, necessary for the evangelization mission, travelled the wilderness alongside the monks.

A small number of archival sources provide us with some sparse, chance information about the functioning of a portable book in the Middle Ages. Nonetheless, it cannot be determined based on these sources what sort of bindings they had. Even though this portable character may be attributed to a manuscript as its main function, this does not imply that it must have had a special bookbinding. On the other hand, we can conjecture that the protection of a book with additional material covering its outer edges, which was relatively common in the late Middle Ages, was strictly related to its being used in travel. Hence the rather succinct descriptions of the type of bookbinding found in old inventories or library catalogues, which only state the type of material used (board type, type and colour of the leather), usually do not tell us anything about the details of their structure. We may infer that a book referred to as portable might be abridged and smaller in format, so as to be more convenient for travel. In the inventory of Maciej of Szydłowo from 1498 a *Dictionarius spissus in modum viatici*... is listed.²⁸ Yet, in this case we cannot be sure what type of binding this thick dictionary had. In the Middle Ages the phrase *libri viatici* was used for different liturgical books useful for holding religious

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- 24 J. Kłoczowski, 'Dominikanie w środkowo-wschodniej Europie i ich kultura intelektualna oraz pastoralna w wiekach średnich' [Dominicans in Central Europe in the 13th–14th century and their intellectual and pastoral culture in the Middle Ages], in *Dominikanie w środkowej Europie w XIII–XV wieku. Studia nad historią dominikanów w Polsce*, vol. 3, J. Kłoczowski, J. A. Spieź (eds.), Poznań 2002, p. 168.
- 25 J. A. Spieź, 'Dominikanie w Polsce' [Dominicans in Poland], in *Dominikanie. Szkice z dziejów zakonu*, ed. M. A. Babraj, Poznań 1986, p. 155.
- 26 J. Kłoczowski, 'Zakon braci kaznodziejów' [The Preaching Order], in: *Studia nad historią dominikanów w Polsce (1222–1972)*, ed. J. Kłoczowski, Warszawa 1975, p. 36.
- 27 J. Kłoczowski, 'Dominikanie w środkowo-wschodniej Europie ...', op. cit., p. 169.
- 28 P. David, 'Biblioteka wikariuszów w katedrze krakowskiej' [Library of the vicars in the Cracow Cathedral], *Przegląd Biblioteczny*, t. 5, 1931, p. 147.

services while traveling,²⁹ and, along with other expressions, as a synonym for a portable breviary (*liber viaticus*), obligatorily used by a travelling monk or priest for the liturgy of the hours, as required by their rule.³⁰

The idea of itinerant evangelization was still strong amidst the society of the late Middle Ages. In art it was reflected, among other places, in St. James the Greater in the left wing of the *Triptych of St. John the Baptist* in the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Złotoryja (fig. 1).³¹ The apostle is shown in traveller's clothes and he points with his hand to the book of the Gospel partially visible in his bag. As can be imagined, such leather bags were used by the first Dominicans to carry the books indispensable for their evangelization work.



FIG. 1. St. James the Greater, sculpture from the left wing of the St. John the Baptist altar, 1497, St. Mary's Church in Złotoryja.

Photo: NID [National Centre for Heritage Research and Documentation, now: National Heritage Board of Poland] Archive in Warsaw.

- 29 Du Cange, Ch. Du Fresne, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis conditum a Carolo Du Fresne, domino Du Cange auctum a monaris Ordinis p. Benedicti cum supplementis integris D. P. Carpenterii, Adelungii, aliorum, suisque digessit G.A.L. Henschel, sequun*, Paris 1894, vol. 8, p. 307 – “*Rituales in quibus de Viatico administrando sermo est; vel Breviaria viatorum utilitati accommodatum*”.
- 30 W. Danielski, ‘Brewiarz’ [Breviary], in *Encyklopedia Katolicka* [The Catholic encyclopaedia], F. Gryglewicz, R. Łukaszyk, T. Sułowski (eds.), vol. II, Lublin 1976, col. 1065. This question has also been discussed by the J. Tomaszewski (‘*Libri viatici – protection and usage of portable books in mediaeval Poland*’, in *Care and conservation of manuscripts 13: Proceedings of the Twelfth International Seminar held at the University of Copenhagen 13th–18th April 2011*, G. Fellows-Jensen, P. Springborg (eds.), Copenhagen 2012, p. 474).
- 31 B. Guldán-Klamecka, A. Ziomecka, *Sztuka na Śląsku XII–XVI w. Katalog zbiorów* [Art in Silesia in the 12th–16th c. Catalogue of the collection], Wrocław 2003, pp. 379–380.

During the 14th century diverse forms of portable book bindings reached expanding groups of users. Leather overcovers protected the books of monks performing their evangelization mission, as well as clergymen serving within their dioceses. They secured the books of dignitaries sent on long trips as envoys. They may also have protected liturgical books during war expeditions and hunting, and made safe the administration books of local, royal, and ecclesiastic offices. From King Władysław Jagiełło's accounts we learn that a portable missal was made for his hunting trips.³²

As early as in the 13th century, a network of monasteries of the main mendicant orders was well established and encompassed above all the most important centres of social life. In the cities, in novel conditions, the formula of their work changed. In the monasteries of the Order of Preachers the book collections were enlarged and meticulously composed, as these were the main tool of the evangelizing activity. The custom of carrying a book fastened to a belt by an extension of the binding leather became popular outside of the mendicant orders. Prayer books or breviaries in this form were owned by members of various orders, church dignitaries, and ordinary clergymen, as well as by laypeople, often belonging to Marian confraternities created under the patronage of the orders. Iconographic representations of the latter are among the rarest. One of the engravings by Israhel van Meckenem shows genre scenes with representatives of different estates contemporary to the author, where we also see a couple of devout burghers on their way to church. The woman carries a rosary in her hands; the man holds a modest girdle prayer book whose leather covers the fastenings of the book, which is not protected by bosses or corner pieces.³³

III. BINDINGS WITH A PROTECTIVE LEATHER OVERCOVER

It appears that the books were originally protected by a binding with a leather overcover which in the course of time adopted different shapes depending on the circumstances of its use (*camisia* or *chemise*) or on additional functions it served (girdle book). The diversity of shapes of

32 "Rationes curiae Vladislai Jagiellonis et Hedvigis Regum Poloniae 1385–1420", in *Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica Res Gestas Poloniae Illustrantia*, vol. XV, p. 206: *Secundum distributa supradictarum pecuniarum per dnum Hyncziam vicethesauranum ad annum secundum sue intromissionis 1394: "...item pro I missali viatico dno Regi misso post eum ad venacionem V marc."*

33 Illustration in: A. von Bartsch, *German Book Illustration Before 1500. (Part VII: Anonymous Artists 1487–1488)*, W. L. Strauss, C. Schuler (eds.), New York 1984, vol. 9, p. 167 (no. 176).

protecting bindings and their intermediary varieties have posed many a terminological problem to the scholars.³⁴

In Polish book collections, a considerable number of leather overcovers have been preserved. Based on these we may describe the character of these sorts of bookbinding relics.³⁵ An analysis of such relics in Polish collections (listed at the end of the present paper) enables the determination of the manuscripts' content, and in consequence the circle of their readers. Of all relics most are liturgical books, Biblical texts as well as theological and homiletic literature. Only 10% are administrative or legal books, and only 3 manuscripts are related to the academia.³⁶

This sizeable collection of relics also allows us to determine the major tendencies in the technical construction of book overcovers in Poland. Of the many different types of leather that were used directly for the covers the most frequent are sheep, pig, and calf, sometimes also goat leather. Half of the cases uses soft chamois, the other half a slightly weaker sheep or calf leather, yet of greater thickness, of the whittawed or oil-tanned type fixed with the flesh side on the outside. For two missals only, from the 14th and from the early 15th century (Wrocław University Library, M. 8372; Wrocław, Library of the Chapter, ms. 47n.), a red-coloured leather was used (fig. 2a). Owing to the method of making chamois with the use of fish fat, the leather became quite waterproof. This feature, together with the considerable thickness and durability, made it a perfect material that guaranteed effective protection of the manuscript against damaging conditions.

The additional overcover was usually made in a similar way. On the outer edge of the front cover the leather was pasted on the inside, while in the analogous place of the back cover the leather was fastened with another strap of leather, onto which the outer wrapping was sewn (fig. 2b). As a result, the loose flap of leather protecting the manuscript was placed at the back cover and at the upper and lower edges of both covers. Such an orientation of the wrap is typical of our part of Europe, Germany, Scandinavian countries and Czech. In Italy, England, France or Spain the loose flap was fixed inversely – on the outer edge of the front cover. This was

34 J. Loubier, 'Hülleneinbände...', op. cit., p. 15; H. Schreiber, *Vom Buchbeutel...*, op. cit., pp. 13–28; J. A. Szirmai, op. cit., p. 234.

35 In Poland the author found 53 leather overcovers and has discussed their detailed characteristic in a separate paper (J. Tomaszewski, 'Libri viatici...', op. cit., pp. 476–483).

36 A similar proportion is observed in the content of leather overcover manuscripts in other European countries. 12 of the 16 bindings with leather overcovers in Czech are found on missals and Biblical books, some *in folio* size (Hamanová, pp. 61–64). The legal books were described by Schunke (p. 492, fig. 1) and the tax books were mentioned by J. A. Szirmai (*The Archeology...*, op. cit., p. 236).

due to a different orientation of the fastenings which, in those countries, were placed on the back cover, whereas in Northern Europe they appeared on the front one.

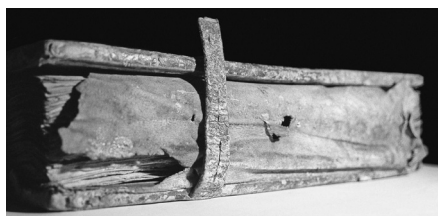


FIG. 2a. Leather protection of the front edge of the *Missale Wratislaviense*, 14th c. (Wrocław, Library of the Chapter, ms. 47n); **2b.** Detail of a leather strap sewn onto the edge of the back cover of the manuscript.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

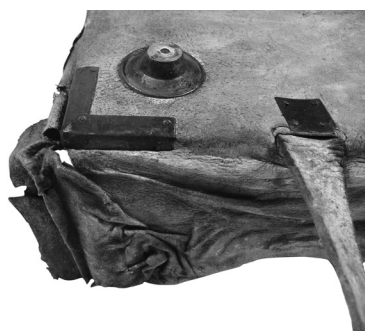


FIG. 3a. Binding with a leather overcover of Nicolaus de Lyra's *Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum* (Wrocław University Library, M. 6067 (Mil. II 13)); **3b.** The leather on the back cover is fixed with the use of bosses and corner pieces.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

Another simpler method of fixing the leather was used in the manuscripts from the library of the Franciscan Friars in Zgorzelec (currently Wrocław University Library, Mil. II 2-13; 15) (fig. 3a). The leather on the back cover was fixed without an additional strap of leather but with the use of bosses and corner guards in the outer edge of a wooden cover (fig. 3b). In just one case the outer wrap of the cover was fixed to the back cover without additional elements, but only with the use of metal corner pieces and long-strap fastenings of the book (Gdańsk, State Archives, 369, 1/118). In a large number of the relics, the leather on the outside was found to tightly adhere to the covers and is precisely fitted to the unevenness of the book spine and the cavities on the cover edges. This effect, visible in 60% of the relics, might have been produced upon fixing wet leather. It seems

that, normally, leather was not pasted to the book but applied wet onto the surface, which allowed exact fitting of the material to the unevenness around the spine. In several cases it appears that the additional leather on the outside was at least partially pasted onto the cover. On the binding of the manuscript from the Chapter Library in Sandomierz (BK San nr 110), we can clearly see that the two layers of leather were joined with adhesive around the foredge of the covers.

In practice, however, pasting additional leather to the binding was unnecessary. In most cases the leather on the surface of the covers was sufficiently fixed with bosses, furnishings and the catch plates of the fastenings, while at the outer edge of the back cover – apart from a strap of leather sewn on – the fixing elements were the straps of the fastenings, woven out through the incisions in the additional leather.

The most important feature of a leather overcover was the covering material protruding over one or more of the board edges that served to cover the edges of the book block and which protected the whole manuscript against mechanical damage and the influence of external conditions such as dust or humidity (fig. 4). Tendencies in the width and character of the fringes can only be analysed based on almost 35% of all bindings of this kind. Arguably the fringes were relatively narrow, yet wide enough to cover the edges of the manuscript. A minimalist solution was applied in most of the bindings from the Franciscan Friars Monastery in Zgorzelec: the fringes at the upper and lower edges of the cover are only as wide as



FIG. 4. Manuscript of the *Summa theologiae* Thome de Aquino wrapped in additional leather fringes, 15th c., (Sandomierz, Seminar Library, sygn. E 614).
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 5. Binding of the Elbląg Book of Land, 1417 (National Archive in Gdańsk, sygn. 369,1/117).
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

the book block, while the outer fringe barely hides the edge of the manuscript.

Particularly wide and entirely preserved fringes can be found in as little as 15% of the relics,³⁷ while partly preserved leather fringes, especially at the outer edge of the back covers only in 19% of the bindings.³⁸ On many bindings the fringes are irregular in shape due to the entire hide of an animal having been used (fig. 5). In such cases, owing to the oblong shape of the hide, it was fixed likewise. On the edge of the front cover the rear part of the leather was usually fixed, whereas at the edge of the back cover protruded the flap from the front part of the animal. This arrangement is very typical and visible also on many other bindings that have been preserved in fragments. In those cases the clear structure of the leather from the animal's neck goes horizontally through the middle of the back cover. When the whole leather was used, fringes were obviously unequal and had different widths.

All of the overcovers preserved in Poland did serve a useful purpose. Although in many cases the primary covering is marked by blind stamp, only seldom can such decoration be observed on the outer layer of the cover. Stamped lines can be seen on all bindings from the library of the Franciscan Friars in Zgorzelec and in the manuscript containing the *Gregorii Decretales* from the Chapter Library in Sandomierz (K 110). For these sorts of bindings more typical is the decoration of the edges of the protruding fringes by trimming them with red leather. Such a trim can be seen on the binding of Filippo de Bergamo's *Speculum Regiminis* manuscript from the Wrocław University Library (I F 247), in the *Erbuch* book from Elbląg dated 1417 (Gdańsk, State Archives, ms. no. 369,1/118), or the Elbląg Book of Land (Gdańsk, State Archives, ms. no. 369,1/117), additionally decorated with tassels.

Not always is it absolutely clear how the outer fringe was formed when the book was closed. This question seems quite simple when an older system of fastening was used with hasps fixed on metal pegs placed far on the front cover. When the book was being fastened, the long, flat straps were woven through the outer piece of leather and the flap of leather was placed on the covers. A very wide outer fringe hid the metal pegs, and it was necessary to make holes in it so that the leather could be placed and then the book fastened. Such a solution appears in the bindings in the National Archive (ms. no. 369,1/117; 369,1/118; 369,1/126) and in the Library of the Polish Academy of Science (Ms. Mar. F. 275), both in Gdańsk. The manner of

37 These are manuscripts whose numbers on the list are: 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 24, 31, 38.

38 Manuscripts no.: 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47, 48, 50.

placing the fringe of leather on the surface of the front cover can also be inferred from the lighter marks on the leather of the binding of the *Missale Wratislaviense* from the Wrocław University Library (M. 1162).

The question of the position of the loose leather fringe in books with clasps placed on the edge of the front cover seems obvious. The leather had to be put between the cover and the book block, otherwise it would be impossible to fasten the book. This solution can only be found in the binding of a manuscript of a collection of treatises from the University of Prague in the Library of the Kamień Pomorski Cathedral (National Library, Warsaw, 008071 II, fig. 6).



FIG. 6. Protective binding of a collection of treatises from the University of Prague, from 1377–1388 (National Library, Warsaw, sygn. 008071 II).
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

As compared to the considerable number of preserved relics in library collections, rarely do typical bindings of this sort appear in the plastic arts.³⁹ Given their purely utilitarian function they were not attractive objects of interest for visual artists in the 15th and 16th century. In consequence, most of the examples encountered in iconographic sources are the more sophisticated and eye-catching *chemise* bindings.

Also in Poland representations of such every-day-use leather overcovers are hard to find. It may be assumed that such bindings occur in liturgical books, as shown on two miniatures in Erazm Ciołek's Roman pontifical that illustrate a *Pontifical Mass* (fol. 252 v.) and the *Consecration of an altar retable* (fol. 128). In both depictions open books with fringes made

39 J. Storm van Leeuwen, 'The Well-Shirted Bookbinding...', op. cit., pp. 277–305.

of some material extending beyond the covers can be seen on the altar. Owing to the compactness of format and to the considerable distance between the main scenes of the composition it is difficult to decide whether or not it is actually this sort of binding.

These books, however, differ in binding from the others visible in the series of miniatures in the manuscript. The others have red covers and the type of their binding is clear, as they sometimes have gilded corner pieces, while the books in question have much broader and lighter fringes remarkably protruding beyond the book block. The colour of the material may suggest that uncoloured leather was used, which was typical of such bindings in Poland.

Another example of a supposedly a leather overcover depicted in the plastic arts from the Polish territory comes from Wrocław. We see this book in St. John the Evangelist's hands in a miniature, at present a separate parchment folio with the *Crucifixion* scene (now in Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, inv. no. 1250) taken from a missal with cat. no. I F 361 from 1472 that belonged to the Wrocław University Library (fig. 7).⁴⁰

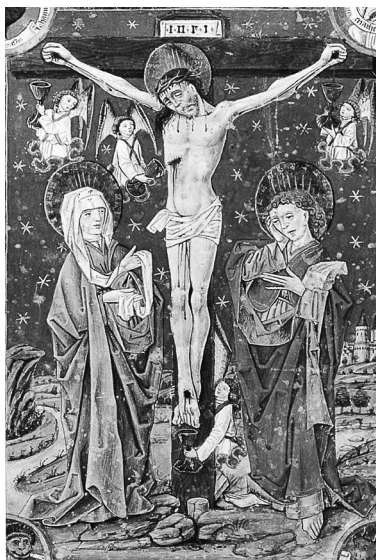


FIG. 7. *Crucifixion* scene from the Wrocław Missal, cat. no. I F 361 from 1472 (now in Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. 1250). Photo reprinted from *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* [Gothic Painting in Poland], vol. 3, A. S. Labuda, K. Secomska (eds.), Warszawa 2004, p. 480, fig. 929.

40 E. Kloss, *Die Buchmalerei des Mittelalters*, Berlin 1942, p. 180.

The miniature shows the Saint holding a book with a piece of fairly stiff material, probably leather, extending over the edge of the covers above. It is hardly probable that this book of significant size was held similarly to girdle books by the extended fringe of leather which, in this case, is too short and not good for such usage. Most of the books preserved in Wrocław, which bear traces of being carried in an additional protective layer of leather, represent a type of utilitarian binding of a similar character.

IV. *CHEMISE* BINDING

Bindings of the *chemise* type, which we regard as a more noble and elegant class of overcovers, are mainly found in 15th- and 16th-century Dutch, Spanish and French art, predominantly in religious-themed works. In such plastic representations these are above all bindings of psalters, books of the hours, breviaries and possibly various types of prayer books. Of the fourteen original bindings of the type preserved in England (9), France (2), Spain (2) and Italy (1), seven are legal and administrative texts, five are psalters and books of the hours, and the rest are secular works.⁴¹ The size of these books may vary from small prayer books to large *folio* formats.⁴² Yet it seems that the thematic diversity of the preserved relics does not correspond to the actual prevalence of such bindings. Legal books, especially those containing administrative regulations, had the chance to be saved in unchanged form in archives and libraries; devotional books, on the other hand, succumbed more easily to wear and tear, and richly illuminated psalters and books of the hours, often inherited from generation to generation, changed their original character due to renovation and repairs.

Thanks to the preserved relics we can analyse the structure of the bindings which is not always clear in plastic representations, numerous though they may be. Some of these were originally bound in stamped leather, others were covered with damask or another fabric. The second, outer layer, usually made of velvet or velour, was only fixed with the use of corner pieces or delicate bosses, or simply put around the covers as a loose wrap that could be easily removed. The top fabric usually protruded beyond the covers at all edges, usually by no more than 25 mm, and was sewn onto the cover edges or sewn with the material on the cover inside at the

41 J. A. Szirmai, op. cit., p. 235.

42 Ibid.

rim of the protruding fringes of fabric. Many scholars believe that such an impermanent manner of joining the wrap with the covers, together with the fragility of the fabric itself, is the reason why so few *chemise* bindings have been preserved to this day.

Bindings of this type are scarce in Polish iconography. This results primarily from the character of Polish art and is due to the fact that the iconographic patterns of Dutch burgher art, which would include such representations, were not transplanted onto Polish ground. It is not impossible though that such bindings were used at the court or among wealthy and economically strong burghers of the Pomeranian cities. This applies chiefly to Gdańsk, the only creative centre within the then Commonwealth that was open to the direct cultural influence of the Netherlands, Rhineland, and German countries.⁴³



FIG. 8. Circle of Andriaen Ysenbrandt, *St. Mary Magdalene Reading*, 16th c., Poznań, National Museum.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 9. Ambrosius Benson, *Mary Magdalene Reading*, first half of the 16th c., Cracow, Czartoryski Museum.
Photo: J. Myszkowski, reprinted from: F. Stolit, *Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie. Historia i wybór zabytków* [The National Museum in Cracow. History and selected objects], Warszawa 1987, cat. no. 95.

The works found in Polish art collections that show *chemise*-type bindings are either of foreign origin or somehow connected to imported objects.

43 P. Skubiszewski, *Preface*, in A. S. Labuda, *Malarstwo tablicowe w Gdańsku w 2 poł. XV w.* [Panel painting in Gdańsk in the 2nd half of the 15th c.], Warszawa 1979, p. 8.

We find examples of such bindings in two paintings on the same subject, *Mary Magdalene Reading*, depicted from an analogous viewpoint. The first of these, belonging to the National Museum in Poznań, was made in the circle of Adriaen Ysenbrandt (fig. 8), while the other one was painted by Ambrosius Benson and remains in the Czartoryski Muzeum in Cracow (fig. 9). The similarity between both compositions and their sceneries is understandable, as the oeuvre of both painters drew from one source. Both Benson and Ysenbrandt were influenced by Gerard David and based their art on their master's work. After all, the theme of Mary Magdalene reading was often used by the artists of that circle. We know several paintings which are variants of Ysenbrandt's subject.⁴⁴ There is also another analogous painting dated ca. 1530, attributed to Benson, that directly repeats the composition of the Cracow painting and is part of the Galleria Franchetti collection in Ca' d'Oro, Venice⁴⁵. The work by Ysenbrandt as well as both of Benson's paintings not only share the composition and distribution of props, but also the bindings of all prayer books held by the Saint are identical.

Another example is provided by the *Annunciation* scene from the back of the right wing of the Large Ferber Altar in the St. Mary's Basilica in



FIG. 10. *The Annunciation* (detail), back of the right wing of the Great Altar of the Ferber Family, Cologne Painter, ca. 1480–1484, Gdańsk, Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 11. Jean Bellegambe, *Triptych of the Lamentation of Christ* (detail), ca. 1500, National Museum in Warsaw.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

- 44 M. F. Friedländer ('Adriaen Ysenbrandt als Porträtmaler', *Pantheon I*, 1928, pp. 1–7) enumerates six replicas of this work and believes that the original painting was in von Pannwitz's collection in Hartecamp in 1933 (AM, XI, 1933, no. 212).
- 45 G. Sciré Nepi, A. Gentili, G. Romanelli, P. Rylands, *Wenecja. Arcydzieła malarstwa* [Venice. Masterpieces of painting], transl. T. Łozińska, Warszawa 2003, fig. 193.

Gdansk (fig. 10). In front of Mary there is an open book bound in black velvet. Two straps of fabric are visible – a shorter one at the side edge of the back cover and a longer one at the top edge of the book, hanging loose beyond the table edge. The remaining edges of fabric cannot be seen due to the book being depicted at the edge of the composition.

On the left wing of the *Lamentation of Christ* triptych by Jean Belle-gambe in the National Museum in Warsaw is a prayer book in a luxurious *chemise* binding in front of the donator, Jossine de Moscron, and is also visible only in part (fig. 11). Large fringes of dark blue velvet coming out of the outer wrap are ornamentally draped and visible only partially from three sides of the book. Decorative clasps placed under the flap of fabric are hidden, as the book is closed.

In the other depicted examples we encounter prayer books bindings of a similar character. We see such books in front of a monk in a Norbertine habit portrayed on the left wing of the *Adoration of the Magi* triptych from the first half of the 16th century (Wawel Royal Castle, Cracow),⁴⁶ and in the hands of Mary in the *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* in the National Museum in Warsaw.⁴⁷ Books of a larger format with a fabric pouch representing the same type of binding are found in the hands of St. Catherine and of an unidentified monastic Saint on the predella of the *St. Reinhold Altar* by Joos van Cleve in the National Museum of Warsaw. The Saints on the painting are portrayed with open books in *chemise* bindings whose fringes have been rolled up in this position and are held in hand. Also, on the *Virgin and Child Surrounded by Angels* by Imitator of Barend van Orley (National Museum in Poznań), a large book is visible, perhaps a psalter, with gilded and gaufered edges bound in light *chemise* with angels singing in a choir leaning down from above.⁴⁸

Bindings of a similar character are found not only in the Dutch art circle. Also in the *Virgin with Child, St. John the Baptist and an Angel* by Sandro Botticelli in the National Museum in Warsaw is an intriguing binding of a prayer book lying on the edge of the table (fig. 12). The relatively untypical position of the book suggests it may be accompanied by a separate, ornamentally draped fabric of the same colour. An attentive observer,

46 100 najpiękniejszych obrazów z kolekcji Zamku Królewskiego na Wawelu [100 most beautiful paintings from the Wawel Royal Castle collection], A. Janczyk, J. Winiewicz-Wolska, K. Kuczman (eds.), Kraków 2004, pp. 68–69.

47 Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. Katalog wystawy. Malarstwo niderlandzkie w zbiorach polskich. 1450–1550 [National Museum in Warsaw. Exhibition catalogue: Dutch painting in Polish collections. 1450–1550], ed. J. Białostocki, Warszawa 1960, pp. 101–102, fig. 83.

48 Ibid., pp. 71–72, fig. 53.

however, should come to the conclusion that the fabric is actually an extension of the book's outer wrap folded beneath. Additionally, the creases in the fabric on the cover let us infer that it is a sort of case or jacket loosely joined with the covers. The fabric, extended on the right side, is decoratively draped under the book. Unfortunately, such a depiction makes it impossible to unequivocally interpret the details of the binding.



FIG. 12. Sandro Botticelli, *Virgin with Child, St. John the Baptist and an Angel* (detail), National Museum in Warsaw. Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

This kind of binding with an additional wrap, a structure between the *chemise* and the girdle type, was made in Italy probably more often of a decorative fabric than of other materials. These wraps would ensure protection against dust in the Mediterranean climate, rather than being meant for transport. They also served as adornment and contributed to the ceremony of prayer. The book, either placed on a lectern or held in hand, as containing the word of God, would rest on fabric, according the Eastern Christian tradition. This sort of binding can be spotted among the books and other objects in one of the intarsia decorations in Prince Federico da Montefeltro of Urbino's *studiolo*, built after a drawing by Francesco di Giorgio and, presumably, by Botticelli. On the top shelf of a cabinet, with its door slightly open, there is a foreshortened book, its lower edge to the front, with a piece of fabric falling down showing an embroidery with the symbol of the Order of the Garter.⁴⁹ One may suppose that the Warsaw Botticelli's painting represents a similar structure in the binding.

49 The Prince placed the symbol of the Order in his private apartments and on the door of the *studiolo*. The symbol of that prestigious order, which the Prince of Urbino received through the English ambassador at the Grottaferrata Abbey near Rome might have appeared on his private breviary.

V. GIRDLE BOOKS

Of all nontypical book bindings represented in the plastic arts, girdle books appear the most frequently. Unfortunately this does not correlate with the number of historical bindings preserved. While known overcover and *chemise*-type bindings are relatively numerous, whatever their preservation state, only 25 original girdle books have been noted in the literature,⁵⁰ including one that has been in Poland since the end of the Second World War.⁵¹ Of all the known and preserved relics, fourteen are modelled with the first and only layer of leather, while the other nine are covered with additional material around the primary book binding. In two cases, details of the structure are unknown. The colour of the original bindings is much humbler than that of books we encounter in iconography. Fourteen relics are wrapped in undecorated, light-coloured chamois, seven in calf or sheep leather in different hues of brown, and the remaining two in green and blue velvet.⁵²

The originally preserved books in girdle books mostly date back to the second half of the 15th century and the early 16th century. These are mainly small breviaries and prayer books, save for two books: one containing the borough rights of Rewal (Tallinn, C.m.9) and a tax book (Isny Evangelisches Kirchenarchiv), which, however, were too large and heavy to be carried on the belt.⁵³ Among originally preserved relics there is a small-format binding of a printed book of David's psalms from 1525–1527, which belonged to Princess Dorothea, the first wife of Albrecht Hohenzollern, Duke of Prussia, now in the collection of the Library of the University

50 Among numerous publications on the preserved examples of girdle books the following are particularly worth mentioning: K. Kūp, 'A Fifteenth-century Girdle Book', *Bulletin of The New York Public Library*, vol. 43, no. 6, 1939, pp. 471–484; J. Tondel, 'Ein Beutelbuch aus dem altpreußischen Königsberg', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 62, 1987, pp. 313–316; J. A. Szirmai, 'The girdle book of the Museum Meermannno-Westreenianum', *Quaerendo*, 18, 1988, pp. 17–34; J. A. Szirmai, 'Ein neu aufgefundenes Beutelbuch in Berlin', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 65, 1990, pp. 336–345; H. Blumenthal, 'Girdle Books found for Waist Wear', *The American Book Collector*, vol. 13, 1963, pp. 17–23; F. Jutke, 'Ein altes Nürnberger Beutelbuch', *Fringealien*, vol. 26, 1982, pp. 47–50; M. J. Smith, 'The mediaeval girdle book: A constant companion', in *Care and conservation of manuscripts 14. Proceedings of the fourteenth International Seminar held at the University of Copenhagen 17th–19th October 2014*, ed. M. J. Driscoll, Copenhagen 2014, pp. 197–198.

51 J. Tondel, 'Ein Beutelbuch...', op. cit., pp. 313–316; J. Tondel, *Srebrna Biblioteka księcia Albrechta Pruskiego i jego żony Anny Marii* [The Silver Library of Prince Albrecht of Prussia and his wife Anne Marie], Warszawa 1994, pp. 15–16.

52 J. A. Szirmai, *The Archeology...*, op. cit., p. 237.

53 An up-to-date list of preserved girdle books has recently been published by M. J. Smith (*The mediaeval girdle book...*, op. cit., pp. 197–198).

in Toruń (cat. no.: Ob. II. 4498–4500).⁵⁴ This binding is an example of a typical solution used also in leather overcovers (fig. 13a). Dark green velvet of which the actual cover is made, is folded back at the foreedge of the front cover and sewn at its top and head. In the corresponding part of the back cover of the velvet covering, an additional strap of fabric 65 mm wide was stitched in order to support the outer wrap, and a loose fragment of fabric (107 mm wide) to protect the foreedge of the book. Its covers are only slipped into these two pouches, and the velvet is additionally attached to the covers with ornamented silver furnishings and fastenings. The extension of the fabric at the tail of the covers is longer than the book's height (160 mm) and amounts to 223 mm. Although the ending of the fragment was considerably damaged in the past, it can still be seen that it used to be tightened with a cord (fig. 13b). As compared with the other preserved relics, Princess Dorothea's prayer book is a rare example of a luxurious girdle book which resembles more exclusive *chemise*-type bindings than utilitarian protective wraps.

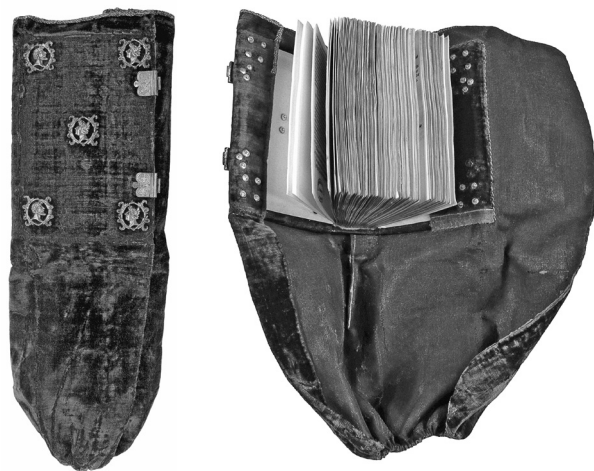


FIG. 13a. Binding of David's Psalms from 1525–1527, property of Princess Dorothea, the first wife of Albrecht Hohenzollern, Duke of Prussia (Library of the University in Toruń; cat. no.: Ob. II. 4498–4500); **13b.** Girdle book of Princess Dorothea, open.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

54 For an exhaustive description of the binding structure cf.: J. Tomaszewski, *Oprawy haftowane i tekstylne z XVI–XIX w. w zbiorach polskich* [Embroidered and textile book bindings from the 16th–19th c. in Polish collections], Warszawa 2013, vol. 1: *Kontekst historyczny* [Historical context], p. 67; vol. 2: *Katalog opraw haftowanych* [Catalogue of embroidered bindings], pp. 226–227.

The bindings of the small 15th-century prayer book (now in the National Archive in Szczecin, section: Manuscripts and Papers, cat. no. 857)⁵⁵ was presumably of a very modest character. Until the late 20th century on the binding of the manuscript made of wooden boards and red sheep leather there were fragments of an additional wrap of chamois leather which may imply that the book used to have the character of girdle book. Unfortunately, as a result of its conservation in the early 21st century these important fragments of the outer wrap were lost. Based on a thorough analysis of the pictures of the relic before the conservation, one may suppose that the book had a binding similar to those that are seen in the iconography from the Western Pomerania region. The chamois leather was arguably folded and pasted on the inside of the covers' outer edges and protruded above their upper edges by ca. 10 mm.

At the head and tail, leather straps are sewn on the outer part of the leather and pasted on the inside of the covers to strengthen the entire binding (fig. 14). Owing to part of the chamois having being damaged at the tail of the covers, we lack any direct information on the structure of the leather extension presumably forming a kind of pouch. Based on the nine examples of girdle books in sculptures from the region we may infer indirectly, though with a high degree of probability, that the girdle book



FIG. 14. Inner side of the back cover of the binding of a 15th-century prayer book (The National Archive in Szczecin, Manuscripts and Papers Section, cat. no. 857).

Photo: Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw.

55 J. Tomaszewski, 'Oprawa XV-wiecznego modlitewnika. Ad vocem artykułu Izabeli Zająć "Konserwacja XV-wiecznego modlitewnika"' [Binding of the 15th-century prayer book. A comment to Izabela Zająć's article 'Conservation of a 15th-century prayer book'], *Biuletyn Informacyjny Konserwatorów Dzieł Sztuki*, vol. 1-2, 2004, pp. 112-117.

might have been finished with a knob or a braided knot. The book had only one fastening, possibly with a metal hasp fixed on a long leather strap, attached to a brass peg on the front cover and without bosses or corner pieces. Obviously any conclusions on the structure of the additional leather covering of the binding – due to the considerable damage to it, its fragmentary preservation, and subsequent loss of some original pieces – are of a purely hypothetical nature. Nonetheless, the relic is a valuable example of the use of an additional form of protection for a small handwritten prayer book.

A particularly interesting relic is the girdle prayer book that is now in the National Museum in Cracow (no. inv. MNK IV-MO-550). Its history remains unknown up to a certain point. The manuscript arrived at the Museum from Paris in 1924, bequeathed by Ferdynand Bryndza, a French correspondent of Viennese and Budapestian newspapers, who died tragically in 1891. As early as in 1927 Kazimierz Hałaciński mentioned the relic in one of his articles, saying that its binding is a 19th-century copy of an unknown original.⁵⁶ We do not know on what ground Hałaciński based this conviction, and whether or not he had any information we have no access to.

The format of the manuscript is small: its cover is 153 mm high and 100 mm wide, and the leather extension at tail edges fastened with a knot is 171 mm long (fig. 15). The book comprises 29 parchment folios and was sewn in four relatively wide (ca. 10 mm) thongs most likely of whittawed leather, two of which, placed at the extremities of the spine, additionally serve as endbands. The manuscript was bound in two oak boards, approximately 4 mm thick each, with a straight profile from the spine, and a soft, relatively thick colourless leather of a chamois type. According to the museum description of the relic it is deer leather, although visual identification of the animal species is hardly possible, as the leather grain surface is missing and no characteristic pores of the fur can be seen.

The leather of the binding at the head and tail was folded and pasted onto the inner side of the boards. The folded rims of the leather, ca. 20 mm wide on the foreedge of the tail and along the entire loose flap of the leather, were sewn with thick threads. The chamois on the head of the covers was slightly cut and finely pasted. Along the edge of the ending of the loose flap, triangular wedges were cut, and thus a kind of dentition of wide tassels was created. The material at the ending was gathered at its rims to the inside, and tied with a leather ring 17 mm thick and 25 mm in diameter. The leather tassels protrude over the ring by ca. 40 mm.

56 K. Hałaciński, 'Sakwowe oprawy książek...', op. cit., pp. 33–35.

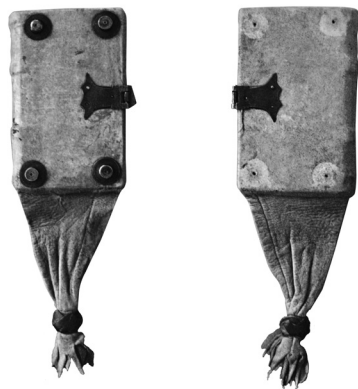


FIG. 15. Latin manuscript in the form of a girdle book (the National Museum in Cracow, inv. no. MNK IV-MO-550). Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

The book has one hook-clasp fastening made entirely of brass in a form that is typical for the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries and for the early 16th century. It consists of an oblong catch plate with an ornamentally profiled ending fixed on the front cover, and of a corresponding anchor plate on the back cover and a rectangular clasp. The catch and anchor plates, characteristically for these types of elements, are decorated with bevelled edges, engraved lines and multiple circles surrounding the rivet that fix this element to the cover. What seems important is the use of a brass pin that served as the actual handle for the hook of the clasp – a solution newer than the previously used bent slot cut in the edge of the catch plate. Among the plastic representations from Poland there is an example of such an ornamental and relatively large hook-clasp fastening: it is the girdle book on the sculpture of St. Simon in St. James's Church in Olsztyn (see fig. 35). A far greater number of analogous examples can be found in the West European plastic arts.

Also noteworthy are the metal protective elements of the binding. On each of the covers four metal hat-shaped bosses were fixed. However, all the four have been preserved only on the front cover, while on the back lighter round traces can be seen on the leather as well as holes where they were fixed.

Although the whole binding has been perfectly preserved, a thorough analysis of it allows the conclusion that the object was repaired and cleaned in the past. Surprising as it may appear for such light and porous leather, its surface is only barely covered in dirt. Its homogeneously

porous leather surface bears few brown and grey stains and discolorations. However, a more detailed examination reveals small fragments of an entirely different structure: around the spine bands, especially at the outer edges of the covers, there are small fragments of a darker, somewhat shiny original leather surface (fig. 16). Obviously the entire grain surface was cleansed in quite a drastic manner. The looseness of the structure of such oil-tanned or whittawed leather allows a fairly easy separation of the outer layer of collagen fibres stuck with dirt and grease. This is relatively simple, especially for sheep and goat leather which have an open structure of the fibres. Probably the surface of the binding was cleansed in this or another radical way, except for the fragments that enable us to assess how dirty the binding had originally been. This version is confirmed by the fact that the surface of vegetable-tanned leather with the grain side preserved used for the ring at the loose ending of the pouch is now very dirty, because the “cleansing” method applied to chamois was unsuitable to it.



FIG. 16. Details of the leather surface of a binding of a Latin manuscript in the form of a girdle book (the National Museum in Cracow, inv. no. MNK IV-MO-550).

Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

Other proofs that the binding was tampered with are visible on the inside of both covers. Single leaves of parchment covered with handwriting are pasted down there – if they are original at all, they must have been peeled off, at least in part. In order to repair the seaming of the book block with the covers, on both joints of the covers additional straps of parchment were pasted. It is very doubtful that it is an original structure, as the straps are pasted beneath the pastedowns; moreover, the strap at the

beginning of the book is rather wide and partly hides the fleuron of the initial on the first folio. Furthermore, around the outer edge of the cover a lighter trace can be seen due to the original position of the endpaper sheet. The front pastedown, must have been at least completely peeled off, if not changed altogether, for the loosened catch plate to be repaired. Thus one of the rivets is probably made of iron, as opposed to the others, which are made of brass.

We know nothing about how Ferdynand Bryndza took possession of the object. Whether he purchased it at a Parisian antiquarian's or acquired it in another way and place remains unclear.⁵⁷ As mentioned above, it is not certain on what grounds Kazimierz Hałaciński qualified it in 1927 as a copy. He believed the manuscript itself was a 15th-century original and its binding a 19th-century fake. Was it because the object seemed *too new*, to him and he believed that the binding had not actually been repaired but replaced with a new one? Or perhaps he had some information that led him to his conclusion? As it has been shown, the good preservation of the binding surface and the repairs of the endpapers can be explained by the conservation work necessary for an object that was heavily soiled and damaged owing to its prolonged use.

In this context two other questions seem important. The first concerns the manner of fixing the leather to the binding. The chamois tightly adheres to the covers and is carefully fitted to the unevenness of the spine and to the crevices on the cover edges. This may have resulted from fixing wet leather, as it often occurred with leather overcovers.⁵⁸ This method would have caused shrinking of the loose flap of leather upon drying, which is clearly visible when the book is open. To achieve such a characteristic result, not only does one need high bookbinding skills, but also familiarity with this particular kind of binding. As there are bookbinding techniques typical of specific epochs, with some experience it is not difficult to date the binding. They use the materials, methods, workshop habits, and technological solutions that were common at a certain time. This applies especially to the 19th century, when intensive changes in technology in most crafts entailed the disappearance of traditional materials and skills. So in order to produce such a binding in the 19th century, even a proficient bookbinder would need profound knowledge of tech-

57 On the inventory card the section "Country of origin" reads: "Poland (?)", which may suggest that the person who prepared the description had some information about where the manuscript had been purchased.

58 J. Tomaszewski, 'Libri viatici...', op. cit., p. 479.

nological solutions and true expertise in the study of historical objects of this kind.

Secondly, as far as the authenticity of the object is concerned, the moment when it appeared in Ferdynand Bryndza's collection seems crucial. As the collector died in 1891, the book must have entered his collection earlier. In the second half of the 19th century historical book bindings were neither particularly valued nor subject to systematic study. It is enough to invoke all the mediaeval manuscripts whose original damaged bindings were replaced with new ones, which, however, did not correspond with their character, although the curators of the collections acted in good faith. In consequence, perhaps many girdle books might have been adapted to library conditions by cutting off the superfluous flap of the leather. In light of this, it is hard to believe that new artefacts were faked when genuine ones were being destroyed. Not until the 20th century did the subject become considerably popular; Otto Glauning published his article about the representations of girdle books as late as in 1926, when the object in question appeared in the collections of the National Museum in Cracow. It is necessary to further examine the book, especially the leather of the binding, also with the use of instrumental analyses.⁵⁹ Based on the current knowledge about the object there is no evidence for it being a copy or a fake.

The three objects discussed are representative of different stylistic and technological solutions. Only the first one has undoubted documented provenance; the binding type of the second one is determined only hypothetically, its preservation being too poor. The third one requires further investigation. Given such scarce representation of originally preserved examples of girdle books, iconographical analysis is a perfect complement to the knowledge about this type of protective book binding.

It is assumed that girdle books appeared in the 14th century. This is proven by the earliest examples of such bindings that appear in plastic representations, which, albeit imprecisely, can be dated to the 2nd half of that century. The depictions of books in such bindings together with other details of the composition, are typical of late-mediaeval realism. It must be remembered, though, that the art of this period was only just beginning to introduce realistic elements, which had been characteristic of late Gothic, and usually showed the reality and schemas that were deeply rooted and typical of their time. There is no doubt that the process

59 In order to confirm the authenticity of the binding it is necessary to date the boards and the leather. It would also be useful to determine the species of animal whose leather was used and the method it was prepared with.

of introducing everyday objects into the semantic field of the composition took a long time, and could have lasted even for several generations. Therefore it is very probable that the actual girdle books had appeared much earlier, perhaps in the mid-13th century, when itinerant apostleship was reborn in the spiritual life of Europe.

Most examples of girdle books in art come from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. This phenomenon may be explained by the peak of popularity of that external protection for breviaries and prayer books with the clergy. Most of the breviaries made from the 12th up until the 14th century are based on the *Ordinarium Curiae Romanae* of 1213, codified for Innocent III and the Roman basilicas.⁶⁰ This new, abridged edition was prepared in response to the work of the new mendicant orders. The new edition turned out to be very convenient to those religious groups obliged to recite their breviary regularly by strict rules during their evangelization mission on the move. This breviary was approved during the Chapter of the Franciscan Order in 1230. Further reedited and abbreviated by the Minister General of the Order, Haymon of Faversham in 1244, it was spread all over Europe alongside with the Order itself.⁶¹

Girdle books appear in representations from different plastic arts; yet, most examples are found in sculpture. This tendency is seen both in Polish and European art. A remarkable prevalence of sculpture is quite understandable and coincides with the prevalence of sculptures preserved over other types of plastic arts. Paintings are less numerous, even including panel and mural paintings. This type of artwork has the same proportion both in Poland and in Europe. The proportions in other plastic arts vary (cf. chart 1). As compared to European art, Polish art exhibits relatively few representations in book painting and prints, the difference being particularly visible in the latter. In Poland only two such examples have been found, whereas in the Netherlands and Germany prints provide many representations which often were used as models for painting and sculpture, including in Silesia, Lesser Poland and other regions of Poland. Of the two examples mentioned only the woodcut from the book *Das leben der seligen frawen Dorothee*, 1492, by Joannes de Kwidzyn, depicting St. Dorothy, is of local provenance,⁶² while the other one showing

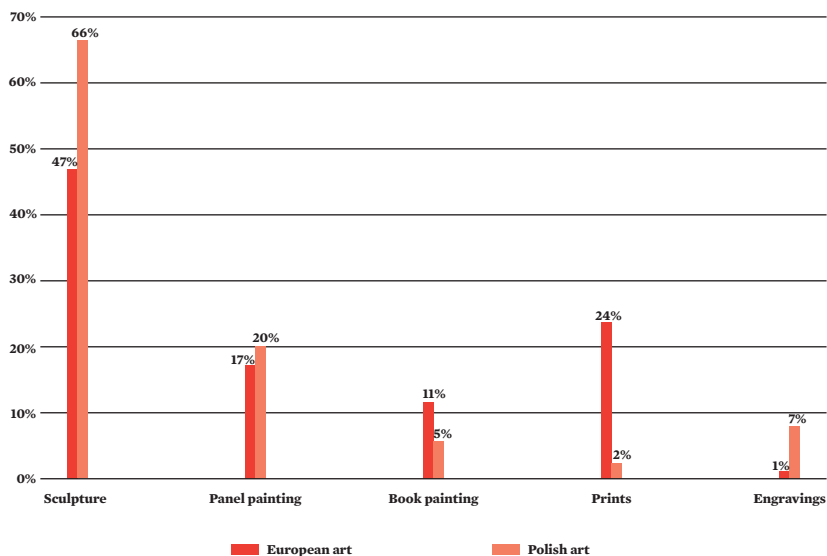
60 W. Danielski, *Brewiarz...*, op. cit., col. 1065.

61 *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, San Francisco 1967, vol. II, p. 791.

62 *Inkunabuły w bibliotekach polskich. Centralny katalog* [Incunables in Polish libraries. Central catalogue], M. Bohonos, E. Szandorowska (eds.), vol. 1, Wrocław 1970, pt. 1, p. 526 (no. 3173), pt. 2, tab. XVII; J. Tondel, *Książka w dawnym Królewcu...*, op. cit., p. 243.

Crucifixion, made by H. Schäuffelein and found in *Żywot Pana Jesu Krysta* by Baltazar Opeć, printed by Wietor in 1522 in Cracow, was originally printed in the Nuremberg edition of the *Speculum Passionis domini nostri Jesu Christi* by Ulrich Pinder from 1507.⁶³

CHART 1. DISTRIBUTION OF GIRDLE BOOK REPRESENTATIONS IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARTWORK IN POLISH AND EUROPEAN ART*



* All statistics shown in the charts are based on the analysis of 822 representations of girdle books in European visual arts quoted in the literature (see: notes 3–12) and of 96 works of art in Poland.

Source: author's compilation.

The proportion of girdle books representations in gold engravings also differs in Poland and abroad. The prevalence of such examples in Poland may result from the fact that such objects have not yet been fully investigated in Western Europe.

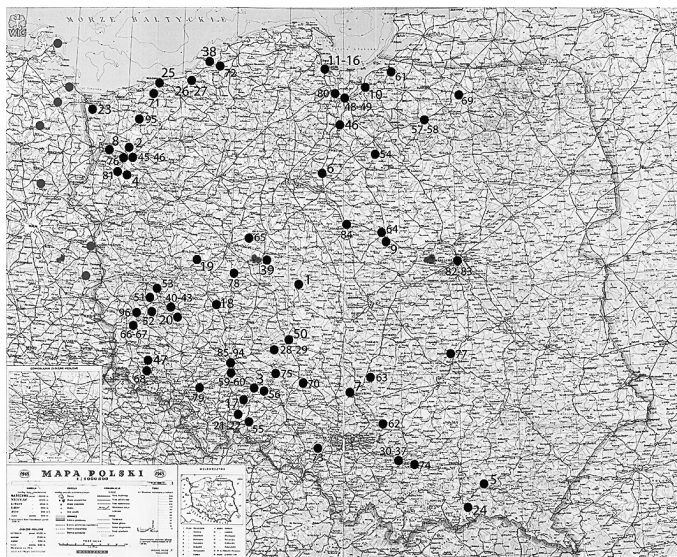
V. 1. REPRESENTATION IN THE PLASTIC ARTS IN POLAND

Thanks to the research in Polish collections the previously scanty list of relics depicting girdle books has been expanded to include as many as

63 J. Janów, *Chronologia pierwszych wydań dzieła Baltazara Opecia* [Chronology of first editions of Baltazar Opeć's works], *Sprawozdania PAU*, vol. XLVII, 1946, p. 39.

96 items.⁶⁴ This number provides us with a more factual perspective on the distribution of such relics in Poland (cf. chart 2). What is conspicuous is the concentration of such depictions within the orbit of artistic centres in Pomerania, Silesia, and Lesser Poland. This territory corresponds roughly with the direct influence of late-Gothic art on the left riverbank of the Vistula. Most relics, however, come from Silesia, Royal Prussia, and Kuyavia. Of all centres Wrocław was the most prominent one, especially on the border between Silesia and Greater Poland, and the majority of girdle book representations come from this city.

**CHART 2. DISTRIBUTION OF RELICS WITH REPRESENTATIONS
OF GIRDLE BOOKS IN POLAND**



1. Błizanów; 2. Bobrowniki; 3. Brzeg; 4. Brzesko; 5. Brzyska; 6. Chelmża; 7. Częstochowa; 8. Dąbie Szczecińskie; 9. Dobrzyków; 10. Elbląg; 11-16. Gdańsk; 17. Gnojna; 18. Golaszyn; 19. Grodzisk Wielkopolski; 20. Jakubów; 21-22. Karłowice Wielkie; 23. Karsibór-Świnoujście; 24. Klimkówka; 25. Kołobrzeg; 26-27. Koszalin; 28-29. Koza Wielka; 30-37. Kraków (Cracow); 38. Krupy; 39. Krzywa Góra; 40-43. Kurów Wiek; 44. Kwidzyn; 45-46. Lubowo; 47. Lwówek Śląski; 48-49. Malbork; 50. Mikorzyn; 51. Miocin Średni; 52. Mycielin; 53. Niwisk; 54. Nowe Miasto Lubawskie; 55. Nysa; 56. Obórki; 57-58. Olsztyn; 59-60. Oltaszyn-Wrocław; 61. Pierzchały; 62. Pilica; 63. Pławno; 64. Płock; 65. Pobiedziska; 66-67. Przecław; 68. Radomice; 69. Reszel; 70. Rożnów; 71. Sarbia; 72. Sławno; 73. Smolnica; 74. Staniątki; 75. Stare Miasto; 76. Starogard Szczeciński; 77. Szydłowiec; 78. Śrem; 79. Świdnica; 80. Tczew; 81. Warnice; 82-83. Warszawa (Warsaw); 84. Włocławek; 85-94. Wrocław; 95. Żabowo; 96. Żagań.

Source: author's compilation.

64 The list was consecutively expanded by the publications: K. Hałaciński, 'Sakwowe oprawy książek...', op. cit.; E. Majkowski, *Oprawy sakwowe...*, op. cit.; E. Majkowski, 'Neues zum Buchbeutel...', op. cit.; A. Lewicka-Kamińska, 'Z dziejów średniowiecznej oprawy...', op. cit.; J. Tondel, *Książka w dawnym Królewcu...*, op. cit., pp. 241-243.

V. 2. TIME OF ORIGIN

The oldest relic in Poland that shows a girdle book is the polychrome statue of James the Greater in St. Hedwig's altar by Jan van der Matten in St. Mary's Basilica in Gdańsk (fig. 17),⁶⁵ produced ca. 1435–1440. Five other consecutive relics date back to the mid-15th century, among them: the statue of St. Bartholomew from the Eleven Thousand Virgins' chapel in St. Mary's Basilica in Gdańsk (fig. 18), the middle painting in the St. Barbara's altar in St. Elizabeth's Church in Wrocław with a depiction of St. Felix and St. Adauctus (see fig. 33), the chalice with an effigy of St. John the Evangelist on its foot in the treasury of the Wrocław Cathedral, a small sculpture of St. John the Evangelist in the National Museum in Wrocław, and two statues of apostles, St. Bartholomew and St. James the Greater,⁶⁶ in Koza Wielka (see fig. 31, 49).

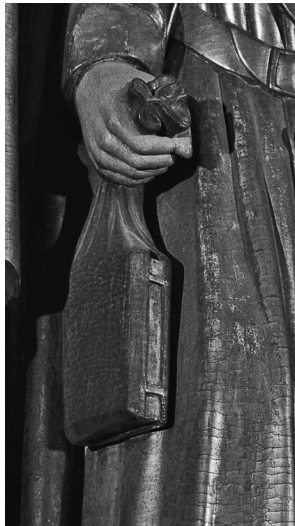


FIG. 17. Polychrome statue of St. James the Greater (detail) in St. Hedwig's altar by Jan van der Matten, in the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Gdańsk.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 18. The statue of St. Bartholomew (detail) from the Eleven Thousand Virgins' chapel in the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Gdańsk.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

65 K. H. Clasen, *Die mittelalterliche Bildhauerkunst*, Berlin 1939, p. 127, fig. 121.

66 *Katalog Zabytków Sztuki w Polsce* [Catalogue of Historical Monuments of Art in Poland], vol. 5: *Województwo poznańskie* [Poznańskie Voivodeship], ed. T. Chrzanowski, z. 7: *Powiat kępiński* [District of Kępno], T. Chrzanowski, M. Kornecki, J. Samek (eds.), Warszawa 1958, p. 10, fig. 42; E. Majkowski, 'Neues zum Buchbeutel...', op. cit., p. 335.



FIG. 19. Girdle book in the painting *Allegory of Salvation and Sin* (detail), 1596, by Hans Vredeman de Vries (Gdańsk, National Museum).
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

In the second half of the 15th century there was a gradual increase in the number of plastic art depictions of girdle books that reached its peak in the 1490s in the West, whereas in Poland it occurred chiefly at the turn of the centuries, especially in the years 1500–1510. Throughout Europe such depictions were the most popular in the years 1490–1520. From the 1520s they progressively went out of fashion, and interest in the subject in the West lasted as long as the 1560s. From the second half of the 16th century only one such depiction was found in Poland, that is the *Allegory of Salvation and Sin* by Hans Vredeman de Vries from a Lutheran retablo in Gdańsk from 1596 (fig. 19), while the last and completely isolated case is the *Temptation of St. Anthony* from a series of paintings illustrating the history of the anchorites and first hermits in the Jasna Góra Pauline Fathers Monastery from the mid-17th century.⁶⁷ This painting is modelled after a considerably earlier print from 1586 of the same title by Jan and Rafael Sadeler from the series *Salitudo sive vitae patrum eremicorum* inspired by the works of Maerten de Vos.

V. 3. USERS OF THE BOOKS

Girdle books are mostly found in the apostles' hands (cf. chart 4). In Poland, as throughout Europe, the majority of such depictions are effigies of St. John the Evangelist. Far fewer, though similar in

67 T. Rozanow, E. Smulikowska, W. Tomkiewicz, *Skarby kultury na Jasnej Górze* [The Jasna Góra art treasures], Warszawa 1974, pp. 83, 87.

proportions both in Poland and abroad, are images of St. James the Greater, St. James the Less, and St. Philip. In Poland effigies St. Matthew and St. Bartholomew are found more often, while those of St. Peter and St. Paul are hardly ever seen. Among other saints in Polish art we may also encounter St. Catherine, St. Felix, St. Lawrence and St. Mary (cf. chart 3).

Nonetheless, what is crucial for a good understanding of the character, content, and users of the book are the images of persons whose identity we may determine or whom we can place in a specific social group. In members of the clergy, determination of their position or of the monastic rule they followed is also useful. Such depictions, however, are least common, especially in Poland. Therefore, in order to determine the users of this type of binding, in Polish society as well, we ought to take into account the representations from other regions of Europe. We may also conjecture that this perspective is more reliable for clergymen, who were hierarchized in a structure that reduced the differences, than for laymen.

In the European art of the second half of the 15th century, and even more so for the early 16th century, numerous examples of girdle books are present in the images of different ecclesiastics (cf. chart 4). We can find them both in the most prominent hierarchs of the Church, and in ordinary priests or monks from various orders. In a series of woodcuts portraying clergymen by H. S. Beham from 1526 are books in this characteristic binding held by a cardinal, a canon, and by monks of different rules: a Jerusalemite, a “Mary’s servant”, and a Hospitaller.⁶⁸ Another perfect source of information is the collection of engravings by Jost Amman from 1585 that shows various monks: a white Carthusian, a black Carthusian, a Franciscan with a breviary in a sack, and again a Hospitaller and a Jerusalemite.⁶⁹ These relatively late depictions allow the conclusion that in the second half of the 16th century the girdle book was still in use by religious orders, although its occurrence in the plastic arts disappeared with the late-Gothic style in art.

68 The prints from this series were first published in: *Babstum mit seynen glidern gemalet vnd beschryben...*, Brunswick 1526 (Hollstein I, vol. III, pp. 236–237).

69 Jost Amman, *Cleri totius rom. Ecclesiae habitus artificiosissimus figuris nunc primum a Jodoco Ammanno expressi etc. Francof. sumpt. Freyerabend*, Frankfurt 1585; these prints were discussed by E. Majkowski (‘Neues zum Buchbeutel...’, op. cit., no. 21–24), and L. and H. Alker (‘Das Beutelbuch in der Bildenden Kunst. Ein beschreibendes Verzeichnis...’, op. cit., pp. 33–34).

CHART 3. PLASTIC ART DEPICTIONS OF GIRDLE BOOKS WITH APOSTLES AND SAINTS

Saint	European art	Polish art	Saint	European art	Polish art
Peter	4.7%	4.5%	Mary	6.1%	2.2%
James the Greater	5.7%	7.8%	Paul	2.9%	1.1%
John the Evangelist	17.5%	23.2%	Catherine	2.1%	1.1%
Philip	2%	4.5%	Anthony	1.8%	2.2%
Matthew	1.8%	4.5%	Barbara	1.4%	2.2%
Bartholomew	1.1%	6.7%	Felix	0.4%	2.2%
James the Less	0.9%	2.2%	Lawrence	0.4%	1.1%
Thomas	1.3%	1.1%	Nicolas	0.7%	1.1%

Source: author's compilation.

Most examples indicate that this type of binding was particularly popular with mendicant orders. A breviary in a “portable” binding was often an attribute of the main representatives or founders of mendicant orders. In several scenes of the 15th-century fresco on the walls of S. Maria di Castello Church in Genoa we see St. Dominic’s life and travels: the Saint is miraculously protected from rain and is crossing the river with a girdle book in his hand.⁷⁰ This type of binding is also found in the scenes of St. Francis and his confrères or in the effigies of St. Bernard of Siena.⁷¹

The popularity of girdle prayer books and breviaries with the clergymen, including monks from various orders, in the early 16th century may be inferred from the fact that – apart from a specific habit and a rosary – it had become one of the attributes of a cleric. This image emerged in German countries when the Roman Catholic Church was being criticized on the eve of the Reformation. Protestant satire would show an obese clergyman with a breviary held in hand by the ending of the binding.⁷² In the

70 G. Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy*, Florence 1965, fig. 72 A (2), 72 A (12).

71 Franciscan friars are seen in two miniatures by Giovanni di Paolo in an Italian antiphonary: *St. Francis before the Sultan* and *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata* (Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár). Another interesting example is a miniature by Giovanni Petro Birago from the *Sforza Hours* (Milan, ca. 1490), showing St. Bernard with his confrères who have breviaries attached to their belts (London, British Museum).

72 Such an effigy of a priest was presented by A. Dürer in one of the scenes of the *Allegory on Social Injustice* where we see a teacher and a seminarist succumbing to deceit (F. W. H. Hollstein, *Hollstein's German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts CA. 1400–1700*, Amsterdam 1991–1994, vol. VII, p. 196). A clergyman is similarly depicted on one of the woodcuts *Soldiers invade a village* in the *Glückbuch* by the Master of Petrarch, published in 1532 in Augsburg (W. Hütt,

second half of the 16th century this stereotype became further degraded: on Harman Muller's print from 1566 a gaunt mendicant monk with a girdle book is nothing more than an acerbic melancholic.⁷³ The ecclesiastical attributes were featured in the *Allegory of Salvation and Sin*, 1596, by Hans Viedeman de Vries. This overtly anti-Catholic painting shows St. John the Baptist kneeling at the cross surrounded by several objects, including a habit, a rosary, and an open girdle prayer book (see fig. 19).⁷⁴

The works of art in Poland provide no representations of laypeople with girdle books, and even clergymen are rare in such a context (cf. chart 4). A monk, possibly from one of the mendicant orders, is seen in the scene of the *Testimony before the King* on the Triptych of Pławno (fig. 20). Among



FIG. 20. Detail of the upper panel of the *Triptych of Pławno*, Cracow, early 16th c., National Museum in Warsaw. Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

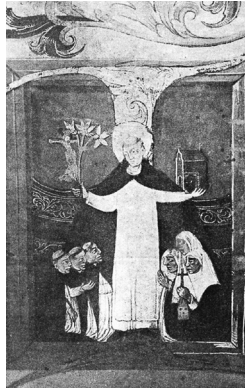


FIG. 21. Miniature with St. Dominic in the initial "I" in f. 80 of the *Wiktoryn's Graduale*, 1536, Cracow, Dominican Monastery. Photo: L. Lepšy, reprinted from: F. Kopera, L. Lepšy, *Iluminowane rękopisy księgozbiorów OO. Dominikanów i OO. Karmelitów w Krakowie* [Illuminated manuscripts from the book collections of Dominican and Carmelite Fathers in Cracow], Kraków 1926, p. 26, fig. 19.



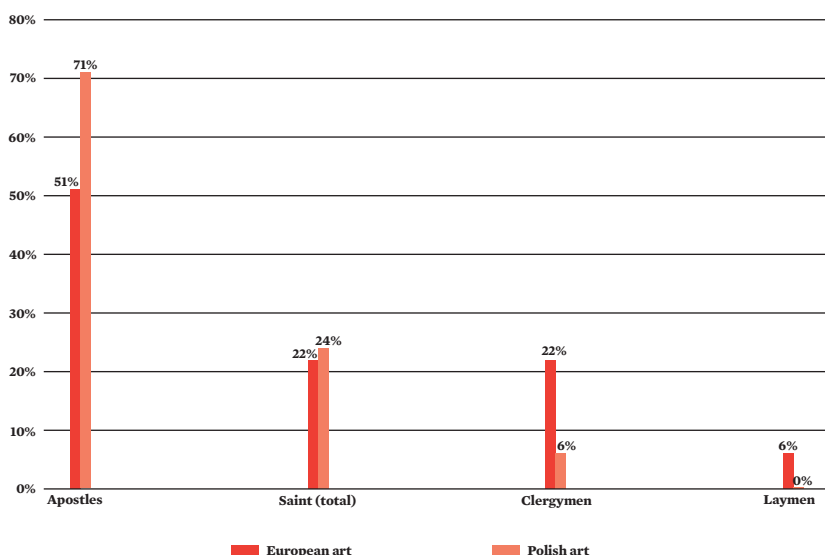
FIG. 22. Detail of the painting *St. Catherine of Siena Besieged by Demons*, from the *Life of St. Catherine of Siena* series, unknown painter, ca. 1500, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

Niemieckie malarstwo i grafika późnego gotyku i renesansu [German painting and graphics of the late Gothic and Renaissance], transl. S. Blaut, Warszawa 1985, pp. 120–121).

- 73 *Siedem grzechów głównych. Ryciny z Gabinetu PAU w Bibliotece Naukowej Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie: katalog wystawy* [The seven deadly sins: prints from the Print Room of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, in the Scientific Library of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cracow: exhibition catalogue], ed. K. Kružel, Kraków 2004, p. 225.
- 74 *Aurea Porta Rzeczypospolitej. Sztuka gdańska od połowy XV do końca XVIII wieku. Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku maj–sierpień 1997* [Aurea Porta of the Commonwealth. Gdańsk art from the mid-15th century to the late 18th century. National Museum in Gdańsk May–August 1997], vol. 2: *Exhibition catalogue*, ed. T. Grzybowska, Gdańsk 1997, pp. 111–112.

the miniatures of the brother Wiktoryn's gradual from 1536 in the Library of the Dominican Monastery in Cracow there is an effigy of *St. Dominic as the Order's Founder* (fig. 21). Under the Saint's cloak, Dominicans of both sexes are hidden – one of the nuns holds a cross and a girdle book in folded hands. A similar binding of a breviary also appears in one of a series of paintings made ca. 1500 that describe the life of a Dominican, St. Catherine of Siena. The artist from Lesser Poland who painted the panel with *St. Catherine Besieged by Demons* (fig. 22) may have purposely used the graphic pattern of Martin Schongauer and deliberately shown the Saint with a girdle book, as the German artist did.⁷⁵

CHART 4. PLASTIC ART REPRESENTATIONS OF GIRDLE BOOKS ACCORDING TO THE PERSONS DEPICTED



Source: author's compilation.

An even more interesting example is the miniature from the *Antiphonar-ium de tempore secundum consuetudinem ordinis sancti Benedicti* made in 1535 for the Benedictine convent in Staniątki near Cracow. On the miniature, at the “D” letter initial, is a Benedictine nun holding a rosary and a girdle breviary in her hands (fig. 23). This miniature may be a portrait of

75 W. Hütt, *Niemieckie malarstwo...*, op. cit., p. 51, fig. 20.

the Staniątki convent abbess, Dorota Szreniawska, who had the breviary made a year before she died.⁷⁶

There is only one case where such a binding is depicted with a person whose name we know. This nontypical binding is visible on the stone epitaph plate of an Augustinian abbot, Marcin Rinkenberg (d. 1489), in the wall of a cloister of the former Augustinian monastery in Żagań (fig. 24).⁷⁷ The book depicted there may refer to the Augustinian funeral rite which required that the monks follow the cross in a procession with their books in their hands.⁷⁸ Such a mediaeval procession of monks carrying books in cases are seen in the 1517 fresco by Jörg Ratgeb *The Carmelites and St. Louis, King of France in 1248* in the Carmelite monastery in Frankfurt.⁷⁹



FIG. 23. *Antiphonarium de tempore secundum consuetudinem ordinis sancti Benedicti*, 1535, pt. I f. A, the initial "D" (detail), Staniątki, Benedictine nuns abbey.

Photo: Z. Rozanow, reprinted from: Z. Rozanow, 'Iluminacje rękopisów klasztoru Benedyktynek w Staniątkach z połowy XVII wieku' [Illuminations in the manuscripts of the Benedictine nuns monastery in Staniątki from the mid-17th century], *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, vol. XXV, no. 3, 1971, p. 156, fig. 4.



FIG. 24. Epitaph of the Augustinian Abbot Marcin Rinkenberg, after April 28th, 1489, cloister of the former Augustinian monastery in Żagań.

Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.

- 76 Tyniec. *Sztuka i kultura benedyktynów od wieku XI do XVIII. Katalog wystawy w Zamku Królewskim na Wawelu, październik-grudzień 1994* [Tyniec. Benedictine art and culture from the 11th to the 18th century. Catalogue of the exhibition at the Wawel Royal Castle, October–December 1994], ed. K. Żukowska, Kraków 1994, pp. 37–39.
- 77 B. Czechowicz, *Nagrobki późnogotyckie na Śląsku* [Late-Gothic tombstones in Silesia], Wrocław 2003, fig. 52, p. 223.
- 78 A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Kanonicy regularni na Śląsku. Życie konwentów w śląskich klasztorach kanoników regularnych w średniowieczu* [Canons Regular in Silesia. The life in Canon Regular monasteries in the Middle Ages], Opole 1999, pp. 138–141.
- 79 E. Hils-Brockhoff, *Das Karmeliterkloster in Frankfurt am Main. Geschichte und Kunstdenkmäler*, Frankfurt am Main 1999.

The custom of mediaeval monks walking in funeral processions is also illustrated in the statues of the mourners from the sarcophagus of Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy, made by Claus Sluter about 1405–1410.⁸⁰ It shows two mourning monks, one holding a small girdle book, necessary, it may be presumed, for the funeral service.

There is another Augustinian relic from Lesser Poland dating back to the early 16th century that shows St. Anthony the Hermit with a book (see fig. 47). In the Middle Ages girdle breviaries were also used by hermits in their hermitages. We know many plastic arts depictions of hermits in a deserted wilderness who pray reading from books in such bindings. St. Francis and St. Anthony the Hermit were portrayed in woodland scenery by Lucas van Leyden in the graphic representations from 1514 and 1509,⁸¹ while *St. Jerome in the Desert* with a girdle book in his hand was shown by Hans Baldung Grien.⁸² Another representation of this type is St. Dorothy of Mały on a woodcut print from Malbork, 1492 (fig. 25).



FIG. 25. *St. Dorothea of Montau*, printed woodcut; Joannes de Kwidzyn, *Das leben der seligen frawen Dorothee*, Malbork, 1492.

Photo reprinted from: J. Tondel, *Książka dawnym Królewcu Pruskim* [The Book in the Old Prussian Königsberg], Toruń 2001, p. 242.

80 J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, New York 1954, fig. 19.

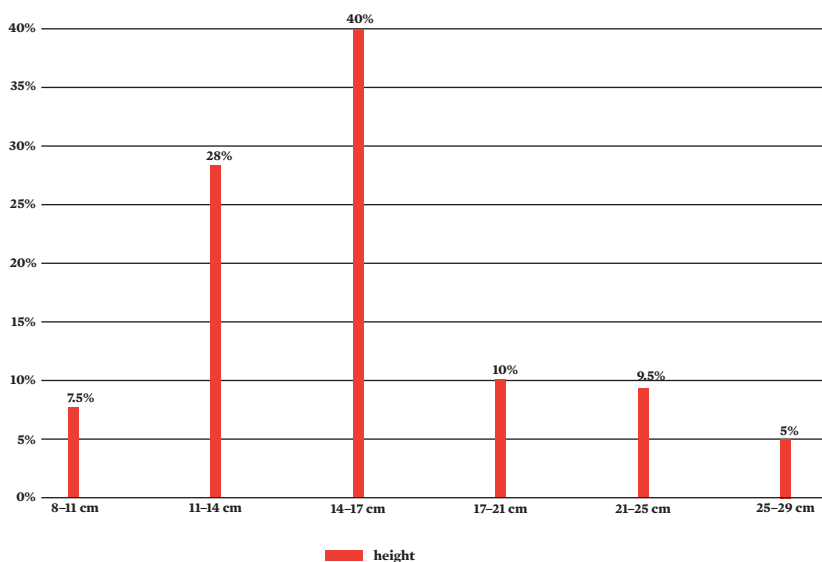
81 F. W. H. Hollstein, *Hollstein's Dutch and Flemish Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts CA. 1400–1700*, vol. 1–43, Amsterdam 1990–1993, vol. X, pp. 139, 142; *Arcydzieła grafiki XV i XVI stulecia ze zbiorów Biblioteki Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie* [Masterpieces of 15th- and 16th-century printmaking from the collection of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow], ed. M. Podlódowska-Rehlewski, Kraków 1997, fig. 66.

82 F. W. H. Hollstein, *Hollstein's German Engravings...*, vol. II, p. 110, no. 120.

V. 4. FORMAT OF THE BOOK

Scholars generally agree that girdle books were more typical of smaller-format books. This is confirmed by originally preserved bookbinding relics and by the representations in iconography. It seems appealing to try to assess the size of the designates of the bindings shown in the plastic arts. Such assessment is obviously vulnerable to a considerable statistical disturbance. It should not be forgotten that in works of art, distorted proportions in the figures are quite common, especially in the products of provincial workshops. Therefore such an assessment would best be used in high-class works of art that have veritable proportions in the persons and items depicted, and additionally show the bindings in a detail that might indicate that they were representations of actually reproduced real-life designates. Such exemplary late-Gothic representations are relatively rare in Poland. These only include the products of the top workshops that show meticulous observations of the surroundings and analysis of the proportions, which differs from the stylized and conventional representations typical of the art of the period.

CHART 5. ESTIMATED SIZE OF GIRDLE BOOKS DEPICTED IN THE PLASTIC ARTS



Source: author's compilation.

In most cases the dimensions of the bindings depicted can be estimated based on the size of the person's hand; they are actual points of reference, unless they are obviously disproportional to the rest of the body. The ratio of the hand holding the ending of the loose flap to the book which is located nearby is more reliable than the ratio of more distant elements of the composition. That being said, the data such a procedure provides can only be treated as approximate. Yet, owing to the information inferred from the works of art, it allows us to determine the type of books that had such bindings.

For all such representations from Poland, the size and proportions between particular elements of girdle books can be assessed based on 53 plastic art depictions (cf. chart 5). The books presented usually have proportions typical of blocks for the corresponding formats in the late Middle Ages. The basic assessment criterion being the height of the covers, these ranged from 8 to over 28 cm. Apart from the smallest binding in the sculpture of St. John the Evangelist of Sławno (fig. 26) and a minimally larger one in the sculpture of St. Matthew from the church in Koszalin (fig. 27), the size of 11 cm occurs only in 10% of all representations. Most examples are within the ranges 11–14 cm (28.5%) and 14–17 cm (40%), where the prevalent height is ca. 14 cm (19%). Larger formats appear more rarely, in



FIG. 26. *St. John the Evangelist*, late 15th c., Sławno (missing).

Photo reprinted from: D. Kaczmarzyk, *Straty wojenne Polski w dziedzinie rzeźby* [Polish Wartime Losses in Sculpture], Warszawa 1958, cat. no. 468.



FIG. 27. Andreas Wenzel, polychrome sculpture of an apostle (St. Matthew?), 1512, Koszalin, main altar of the St. Mary's Cathedral. Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.

the ranges of 17–21 cm (10%) and 21–25 cm (9.5%). The largest ones occur in the books shown in the statue of the Apostle of Kurów Wielki – ca. 26 cm (fig. 28) and in the sculpture of St. Felix in Wrocław-Ołtaszyn – over 28 cm (fig. 30).

The analysis of the representations also allows us to determine the character and proportions of the extension of the leather at the tail of the book, which enabled its easy transport in hand or at the belt in the form of a pouch. The length of this fragment is determinable in about 75% of the representations. It seems that the ratio of the cover height to the length of the extension at the lower edge follows no clear rules. Only in 10% of the representations is the extension shorter than the book's height, and in 17% they are equal. In the remaining 73% the extension is slightly longer than the book (39%), and in the subsequent range, at the proportion of 2:3, the extension occurs in 17%. In 13% it is twice as long as the book is high. These proportions, however, often vary. A relatively short extension may appear in both the smallest and in the much larger volumes. Likewise, a relatively long extension may appear in different formats of the books. In the analyses of the size of the bindings in the representations, attention was also paid to the total height of the book, i.e. together with the extension both at the tail and at the head of the covers. On average the total height varied within a range of 30–40 cm. The smallest objects did not exceed 20 cm, while the largest reached 50 cm. The size of the books determined thus, taking into account the extension of the books in both the smallest and largest formats, seems credible. Even the smallest books together with the extensions ought to have been at least 20 cm long, or else it would have been uncomfortable to hold them in hand or impossible to tie the loose fragment in a knot.

The largest formats of the books we encounter in plastic arts representations usually appear in bindings that represent an intermediary type between leather overcovers and girdle books, not only for their appearance, but possibly also for their structure. Most large books depicted in the European arts in a manner typical of girdle books are actually of this universal type. A large book held by a condemned monk is seen in the visionary painting the *Temptation of St. Anthony* by Matthias Grünewald from the Insenheim altar, 1512–1516. The damaged book, in a protective binding of slightly torn-off leather, is so large that it could hardly have been used as a girdle book. Certain representations from Silesia are of a similar character. A small wooden figure of St. Felix in the Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church in Wrocław-Ołtaszyn is probably the best example of this (fig. 30). The Saint holds a large book without any furnishings visible on

its surface or clasps. This may, however, be a book placed in a special sack, as the material that would tightly adhere in a girdle book, especially on the spine, does not here show the details of the book's structure. Similar are the books held by four apostles in the St. John the Baptist Church in Kurów Wielki (fig. 28, 29). Perhaps some of the original bindings that have been partially preserved, usually with their loose flaps trimmed, which are now referred to as overcover books were in fact of that dual character.



FIG. 28. Sculpture of an unidentified apostle, 15th/16th c., Lower Silesian workshop, Kurów Wielki, St. John the Baptist's Church.
Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.



FIG. 29. *St. Bartholomew*, 15th/16th c., Lower Silesian workshop, Kurów Wielki, St. John the Baptist's Church.
Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.



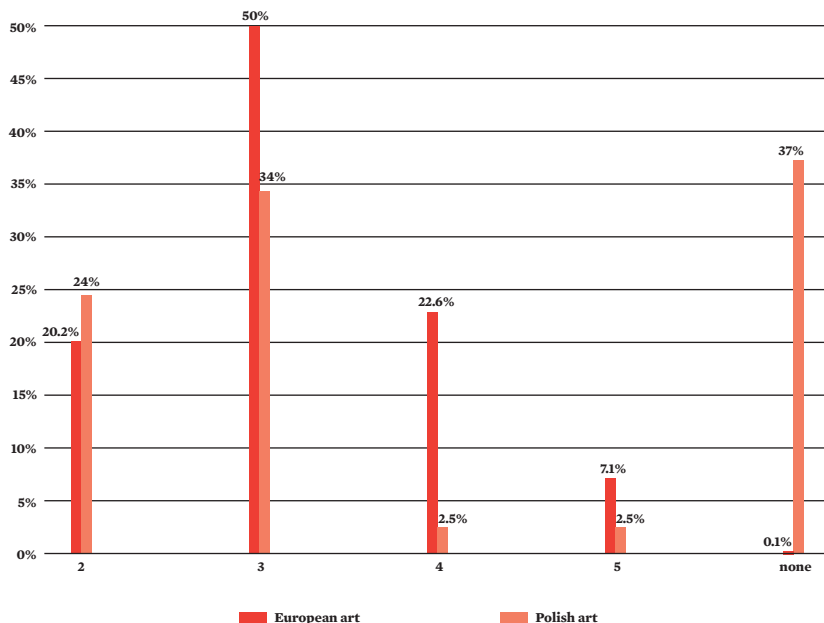
FIG. 30. *St. Felix*, Oltašzyn-Wrocław, Church of the Assumption, Silesian workshop, late 15th c.
Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.

V. 5. STRUCTURE OF THE BINDING: THE NUMBER OF THE BANDS

The number of bands visible on the spine of girdle books shown in plastic arts representations may also serve as a useful hint as to the format and size of the book. Although in the majority of the depictions, particularly from Poland, these elements are invisible or cannot always be unequivocally interpreted, the analysis of the remaining items enables an approximate characterization of this technical feature of the book block structure. If the bands are visible, there are usually three of them, sometimes two or four, and seldom five (cf. chart 6). This confirms our previous conclusions about the size of the books with this sort of binding, which usually measure ten or so centimetres. This also matches the structure of all preserved relics from the period. The most frequent scheme, not only in the late Middle Ages, are four bands for middle-sized books (20–30 cm).

Smaller formats, up to 15 cm, usually have three bands, while the smallest ones, up to 10 cm, have only two of them. What is surprising is the difference between Polish and European depictions regarding books with four bands.

CHART 6. STRUCTURE OF THE GIRDLE BOOKS: NUMBER OF BANDS



Note: the data on chart 6 are based on the descriptions of the bindings quoted by the authors, usually without the possibility of comparing them with a reproduction of the representation. The difference may result from the fact that convex endbands tend to be interpreted as ordinary bands.

Source: author's compilation.

V. 6. STRUCTURE OF THE BINDING: THE FASTENINGS OF THE BOOK

Another characteristic feature of girdle books depicted in the plastic arts is the number and type of the fastenings. Yet this is where another problem arises. In the vast majority (53%) of the depictions that render the details synthetically, these elements are omitted altogether or only implied by a fastening strap on the outer edge of the book without metal clasps. This sort of presentation enables us to infer the presence of clasps, but their detailed description is unavailable. Among the depictions where these elements are visible, books have one fastening twice as often as two of them

(cf. chart 7). This is a consequence of the small format of the books, where one fastening is enough to effectively keep the covers together.

In many cases the type of the fastening can also be described. There are two kinds of these that tell us a lot about the character and the date of origin of the binding. A previous system of long-strap fastening, made up of a leather belt and a metal hasp, the so-called *fibula*, appears more rarely and is typical of earlier depictions. Such fastenings, shown schematically, appear in the sculpture of St. Bartholomew in the church in Koza Wielka, ca. mid-15th century (see fig. 49), or in the effigy of St. Barbara on the foot of a chalice in the church in Karłowice Wielkie, dated 1476 (fig. 32). The *fibulae* were shown very thoroughly in the two bindings from St. Barbara's altar, 1477, in the St. Barbara's Church. This relic, arguably the best known in Poland to represent such a binding, held by the end of the extension by St. Felix (fig. 33a), shows a book fastened with two one-part hasps (*fibulae*) finished with braided leather pulls that made it easier to unlock the *fibulae*. Identical fastenings also appear in the open book held by St. Adauktus (fig. 33b). The binding of St. Felix's book, rendered very accurately, possibly painted from nature by the Master of St. Barbara's Altar, is a rarity on a Central-European scale. What is untypical is the localization of the fastening on the back cover, while north of the Alps,



FIG. 31. St. James the Greater, ca. mid-15th c., Koza Wielka, St. Philip and Jacob the Apostles' Church. Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.



FIG. 32. St. Barbara, engraving on the foot of a chalice, 1476, Karłowice Wielkie, St. Barbara's Church. Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.

Poland included, these elements were normally placed on the front cover. Such a different orientation of the book's fastenings is characteristic of Southern Europe: Italy, Spain, England, and, in part, France as well.⁸³ In this respect, a *chemise*-type prayer book held by St. Adauctus is noticeable in the middle painting of the St. Barbara's altar. The fastening of that book is situated on the front cover, according to the north European tradition. The fact that the Master of St. Barbara's Altar painted two differently fastened books next to each other suggests that he might have been shaped artistically in a region where northern and southern influences in book-binding coexisted.⁸⁴



FIG. 33a. *St. Barbara's altar*, 1447, National Museum in Warsaw, St. Felix with a girdle book;
33b. *St. Adauctus with a prayer book*.
 Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

A sign of the uniqueness of St. Felix's book is that at the tail of the book the bookmarks' *tenaculum* are shown. This element is usually absent in other representations of girdle books, whereas it frequently appears in numerous depictions of liturgical books in ordinary bindings. As a rule, in most books the ends of the bookmarks were at the tail of the book, while a crossbeam that gathered them all was at the top edge. A typical position

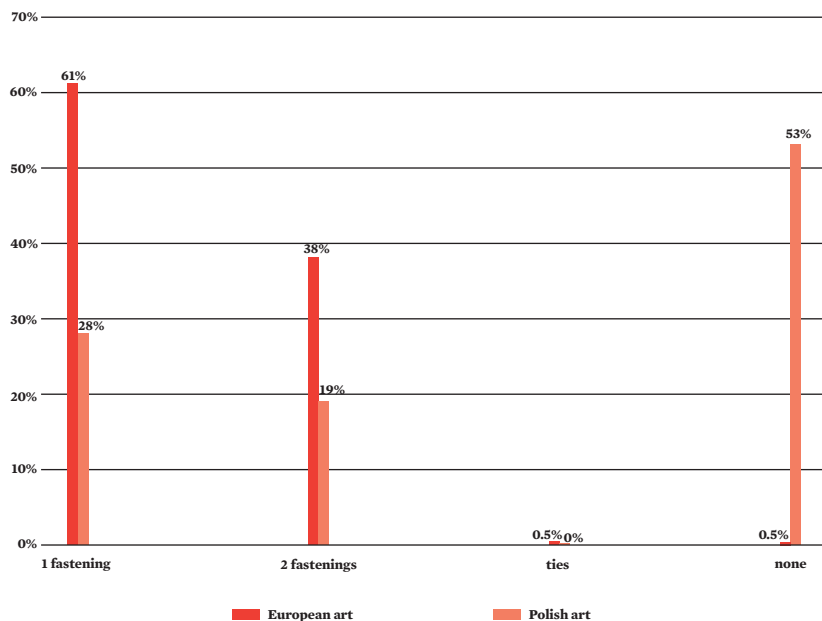
83 J. A. Szirmai, *The Archeology...*, op. cit., pp. 167–169, 251–262.

84 Ibid., p. 253, table 9.16. The region where the two traditions mingled and both localizations of fastenings could be observed was the borderline of the Lake Constance and Burgundy.

of the *tenaculum* is visible, among others, in the book in the *Allegory of Salvation and Sin* by Hans Viedeman de Vries (see fig. 19). In the book held by Felix it is the opposite. Based on this we may conjecture that in girdle books a different rule was applied.

This must have been due to the fact that the book was carried up-side-down, so the bookmarks could slip out. An interesting example of an analogous position of the *tenaculum* is the stained glass from Wil: these show *Abbott Otmar Kunz Pledging Allegiance to Pope Pius IV* and *Emperor Maximilian Granting the Privilege to Abbott Otmar Kunz* from 1565, now in the Historical Museum of St. Gallen.⁸⁵ One of the Benedictine monks holds a breviary with bookmarks finished with tassels at the tail. This inconspicuous detail also draws our attention to the cultural circle where the anonymous author of the Wrocław St. Barbara's Altar matured as an artist.

CHART 7. STRUCTURE OF THE GIRDLE BOOK: NUMBER AND TYPE OF FASTENINGS



Source: author's compilation.

85 *Kultura opactwa Sankt Gallen* [Culture of the St. Gallen Abbey], ed. W. Vogler, Kraków 1999, p. 27, table 3a, 3b.

Another, later system of hook-clasp fastenings that had been used in Poland since about the mid-15th century and grew popular in the last decades of that century appears in plastic arts representations much oftener than the older system. In most cases, however, these fastenings are shown in a schematic, simplified manner. Most of the relics that depict them date back to the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, the earliest being arguably the scene from the Cracow altar by Veit Stoss (fig. 34). A large catch plate, ornamentally finished and typical of late-Gothic books, is present in the St. Simon statue, early 16th century, in St. James's Church in Olsztyn (fig. 35) – it recalls the girdle book fastening in the National Museum in Cracow (see fig. 15). Another examples come from the statue of St. John the Evangelist in St. Mark's Church in Cracow, ca. 1500 (fig. 36), and of St. James the Greater in the Regional Museum in Toruń, 1508 (fig. 37), as well as the effigy of an apostle on the relief in Gnojna, early 16th century (fig. 38). Most of the books shown in these representations both in Poland and in western European art have one fastening.



FIG. 34. Veit Stoss, altar of the *Dormition of Mary, Christ Among the Doctors* (detail), Cracow, St. Mary's Church.
Photo: S. Kolowca, reprinted from: Wit Stwos. *Oltarz krakowski* [Veit Stoss. The Cracow altar], ed. S. Dettloff, Warszawa 1964, fig. 14.



FIG. 35. *St. Simon*, field triptych, early 16th c., Olsztyn, St. James the Greater Church.
Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.



FIG. 36. *St. John the Evangelist*, ca. 1500, Cracow, St. Mark's Church. Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 37. *St. James the Greater*, 1508, St. Wolfgang workshop in Toruń, polychrome sculpture from the Chelmża Cathedral (Toruń, Regional Museum). Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

V. 7. TYPES OF GIRDLE BOOK STRUCTURES

In most of the depictions it is hard to unambiguously determine the type of the material used as the outer wrap of the girdle books shown. The degree of difficulty is related to the quality of the work, the artistry of its author, and their ability to realistically render the features of the material. As mentioned above, the least problematic is the determination of the material in panel painting which usually uses formal means that enable faithful and clear rendering of the material. It is much less feasible in sculpture, all the more so if the sculptures are smaller and play a lesser role in the composition of the whole altar. These features become indecipherable in book painting, prints, embroidery or engraving. Of all the representations in Poland the determination of the material is possible in 25% of the objects. Of these only 15% are bindings covered with fabric, silk or velvet, and 85% are possibly leather. What is important is that the bindings from the smaller group are luxurious and can be partly classified as *chemise*. In those bindings the material on the surface of the covers is not additionally fixed with bosses or corner pieces, and the extension of the material is usually not tied at its end.

Regardless of the type of material used for the covering of girdle books, which greatly influences the final character and appearance of the book, four types of girdle book can be distinguished. Generally, in the most frequent cases the material at the head and foreedge of the covers was fixed on their inside. This is the simplest structure that enables the book to be carried in the characteristic way, yet does not protect the edges of the book. Such is the structure of the original binding of the prayer book in the National Museum in Cracow. Although this “proper” form of girdle books is the most frequently depicted in European art, in Poland it occurs more rarely in favour of the other variants. Examples of such bindings can be found in artworks from the whole period when girdle books were used. The earliest examples come from the first half of the 15th century: a stand-alone sculpture of St. James the Greater in St. Hedwig’s altar in St. Mary’s Church in Gdańsk (see fig. 17) or the binding held by St. Felix on St. Barbara’s altar in Wrocław (see fig. 33a). Later examples come from the turn of the century and the early 16th century. A fairly precise rendering of the binding is seen in the figures of St. John the Evangelist in the *Crucifixion* scene at St. Mark’s in Cracow (see fig. 36), in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie (fig. 39) and in the scene with *Christ with St. Thomas* from Gnojna, early 16th century (fig. 38).

The remaining types in their different variants have an extension of the material beyond the covers to protect the book in transport. In the second



FIG. 38. *Christ Appearing to the Apostles* (detail), from Gnojna, Silesian workshop, early 16th c., Wrocław, National Museum. Photo: R. Stasiuk.



FIG. 39. Girdle book in the hand of St. John the Evangelist in the group of *Crucifixion* (detail), Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, St. Thomas the Apostle’s Church, unknown workshop, ca. 1500. Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

variant, most frequently depicted in art, the material is extended at the head of both covers and at the foreedge of the back cover. It is a structure typical also of leather overcovers and serves as proof that these two forms are related. Such a solution was applied in the original binding of the Psalms of David owned by Princess Dorothea, now in the Library of the University in Toruń (see fig. 13a). While the flap of the material is loose at the tail of the book, sometimes forming minor folds, the material extending at the outer edge of the back cover encompasses the foreedge of the book block and is placed under the front cover or on its surface. Based on the originally preserved relics of this variant of girdle book, we know that the edges at which the outer material was extended were usually additionally strengthened with trimmings of material sewn on and pasted on the inner side of the covers.⁸⁶ The entire structure was fastened with a fastening that was drawn through a slit in the material and reached both the edge and the flap of leather on the top.

Thus in plastic arts representations, the strap of the fastening is always visible, though in many cases it is not certain if the artist had intended the edge of the book to be additionally covered by the material. An example of such a solution is the binding of a book held by James the Greater from Chełmża in the Regional Museum in Toruń (see fig. 37), which – albeit devoid of polychrome – has its foreedge covered with a flap of material, as proved by how the tail of the book is shown. Sometimes, however, lack of precision in sculpting the book makes it impossible to recognize the structure of the binding, unless the artist had used different colours for the material covering the binding and the edge of the book block. Numerous examples, among others, of books held by the apostles James the Less and Simon in St. James Church in Olsztyn (see fig. 48, 35), St. John the Evangelist in the scene of the *Crucifixion* from Blizanów (fig. 40), as well as the book at the side of the apostle in the *Assumption* scene from Szydłowiec (fig. 41) prove that this structure was fairly popular, as it provided good protection against unfavourable conditions.

In many cases the material visible at the head (i.e. at the bottom of the book carried upside-down by the end of the extension) was considerably long. Some of the iconographic sources presenting books with remarkably extended material show another interesting detail that has not been paid attention to so far. A relatively long, wrinkled fringe is gathered at the end and forms a shape similar to that at the opposite side of the book. This effect may have emerged after the wet leather had been fixed to

86 J. A. Szirmai, *The Archeology...*, op. cit., p. 341.



FIG. 40. *Crucifixion* – middle panel of the *Blizanów Triptych* (detail), workshop of the Master of the Blizanów. Triptych, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 41. Polyptych of the *Assumption* (detail), Painter of the Szydłowiecki Family, 1510, Szydłowiec Church. Photo reprinted from: J. Gądomski, *Gotyckie malarstwo tablicowe Małopolski 1500–1540* [Gothic Panel Painting in Little Poland 1500–1540], Warszawa 1995, fig. 108.

the covers and the material shrank while drying. The method of pasting down wet leather on the covers, as a traditional technique for covering the book with material, might also have been used when the additional wrap was placed to obtain a leather overcover or girdle book. The other, outer leather, was not usually pasted to the surface of the covers and spine of the book but fixed with bosses and trimmings or fringes sewn on and pasted on the inside of the covers. As may be supposed, using wet leather, which was easier to shape and then shrank, is not the only reason for such a shape of the loose ending of the material. This shape was arguably strengthened due to the book being carried at the belt. To perfectly illustrate this, one may invoke two examples: one, the *Crucifixion* scene from Blizanów (fig. 40), and the other, in the middle part of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary polyptych in the parish church in Szydłowiec (fig. 41).

In the next version of this type of girdle book structure, the outer wrap was folded onto the foredge of the covers and protruded beyond them only at their head and tail. This intermediary solution might have been quite common in Western Pomerania, which is largely confirmed by iconography. Such examples can be found in the figure of an apostle from the parish church in Żabów (fig. 42) and held by St. Simon in the group of apostles from Dąbie Szczecińskie (fig. 43). Further examples are encountered in the figures of the apostles St. John the Evangelist and St. Matthew



FIG. 42. *Apostle* (detail), sculpture from the Żabowo Church, late 15th c., Szczecin, National Museum.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 43. Book held by St. Simon in the group the Apostles: Bartholomew, Simon and Andrew (detail), Master of the St. Peter and Paul Triptych in Szczecin, ca. 1510–1520, Szczecin, National Museum.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 44. Andreas Wenzel, sculpture of *St. John the Evangelist*, 1512, Koszalin, main altar in St. Mary's Cathedral.
Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.



FIG. 45. St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* scene, first half of the 16th c., Krupy, Pomeranian workshop.
Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.



FIG. 46. Figure of an unknown saint, Kwidzyn Castle Museum.
Photo: Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences.



FIG. 47. St. Anthony the Hermit figure from the Augustinian Monastery in Cracow, early 16th c. Cracow, National Museum.
Photo reprinted from: F. Kopera, *Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie. Wybór i opis cenniejszych zabytków* [National Museum in Cracow. Selection and Description of the Finest Works of Art], Kraków 1933.

in the Cathedral in Koszalin (fig. 44, see fig. 27), and of St. John the Evangelist in Sławno (see fig. 26) and in Krupy (fig. 45). In all of these cases the apostles hold books with a material that is clearly wrinkled at the head of the covers.⁸⁷ Hypothetically, such a structure occurred also in the original binding of the small 15th-century prayer book from the National Archive in Szczecin that was discussed above (see fig. 14).⁸⁸ The bindings in sculptures by an unidentified sculptor from Kwidzyn (Castle Museum in Kwidzyn, fig. 46) or the figures of St. Anthony the Hermit from the Augustinian monastery in Cracow (National Museum in Cracow, fig. 47) display a similar structure.

In the last of the girdle book variants, the outer material protrudes outside all of the covers. It could be fixed either with trimmings sewn on the cover edges or with bosses, corner pieces, and fastening elements. An interesting example of such a binding is depicted in Hans Viedeman de Vries's painting the *Allegory of Salvation and Sin* in the National Museum in Gdańsk (see fig. 19). It shows an open girdle book lying on the ground. The book, covered with a red material, is wrapped in additional light grey leather. This overcover that exceeds the covers in all directions was possibly fixed with furnishings or by pasting. Although we cannot be certain, we can suppose that no trimmings were used to better join the outer wrap with the covers whose edges are clearly covered only with the primary red material. The clasps of the fastenings, fixed on short straps, were not drawn out through the outer material layer. When the book was closed they were hidden beside the leather flat and invisible during transport. Thanks to such a simple structure in the binding, the outer leather wrap could be removed effortlessly and without a trace. Among the originally preserved bindings there is a similar one, that of a manuscript of the *Code of Jutland* of 1490, made ca. 1540, fifty years after the manuscript, and kept in the Royal Library in Copenhagen.⁸⁹ The outer wrap that was added much later and protrudes in all directions beyond the cover is fixed mainly with corner and centre pieces. This relic, however, differs from the binding depicted in the Gdańsk painting as far as fastenings are concerned. In the latter case the straps of the fastenings encompass the fringe of loose leather at the foredge of the cover, which enables effective protection of the book edge in transport.

87 J. Tomaszewski, 'Oprawa XV-wiecznego modlitewnika...', op. cit., pp. 116–117.

88 Ibid., pp. 112–117.

89 *Living Words & Luminous Pictures. Medieval book culture in Denmark. Catalogue*, ed. E. Petersen, Copenhagen 1999, pp. 42–45; V. Starcke, *Posebind...*, op. cit., pp. 60–89.

A similar structure, though with slightly different characteristics, occurs in some of the bindings of prayer books with an additional wrap of an ornamental fabric. Among the bindings with such a “jacket”, very popular with the courtiers and wealthy burghers in the Western Europe, diverse types can be distinguished, which still gives rise to a great number of terminology issues. Some scholars classify this type of bindings with the *chemise* type. While the structure of the outer jacket does not differ from that of a girdle, in other cases, where the fabric is of the same length at all of the cover edges, it resembles more the leather overcover type.

V. 8. STRUCTURE OF THE BINDING: THE ENDING OF THE POUCH

The character of the girdle book is greatly indicated by the considerable extension of the material at the tail of the book that allows its easy transport in hand or at the belt, as if in a sack or in an actual pouch. The material could be gripped by the hand, tied with a braided knot, a special knob, a hook, or a ring to fasten the book to the belt (cf. chart 8).

In the plastic arts representations of girdle books in Poland, this fragment of the book is not always visible. Sometimes the ending of the extension is hidden in the person’s hand. The type of the ending is discernable in 76% of all such representations. Of these, in nearly 55% the additional flap is not adorned in any way, as seen in St. Felix’s hand in the middle painting of St. Barbara’s altar (see fig. 33a), with St. James the Greater in St. Hedwig’s altar in Gdansk (see fig. 17), or with St. John the Evangelist in the Blizanów triptych (see fig. 40). In the statue of St. John the Evangelist from the parish church in Sławno (now missing) (see fig. 26) the larger fragment of the ending falls ornamentally onto the saint’s hand, like in the sculpture of James the Less in the Field Triptych in St. James’s Church in Olsztyn, where the loose flap is draped over the saint’s forearm (fig. 48).

Sometimes the long extension is rolled and forms a loop hidden in the hand. Such a depiction is seen in the figure of St. Bartholomew from St. Philip and James the Apostles’ Church in Koza Wielka (fig. 49) and in the sculpture of one of the apostles on the predella in the triptych of the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Brzeg Castle Museum (fig. 50). The loose ending of St. Catherine’s book is decoratively draped in the sculpture on the main altar of the church in Ołtaszyn-Wrocław. A book with such an extension would either be carried in hand or hung at the belt. We observe a book of this type with its extension slipped in halfway through the belt



FIG. 48. *St. James the Less*, field triptych, early 16th c., Olsztyn, St. James's Church. Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.

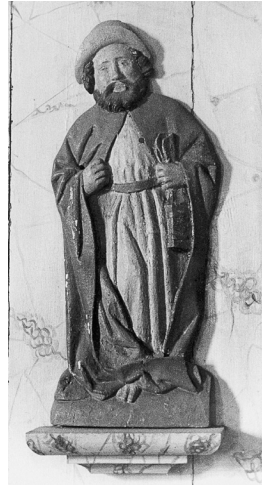


FIG. 49. *St. Bartholomew*, ca. mid-15th c., Koza Wielka, St. Philip and Jacob the Apostles' Church. Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.



FIG. 50. Apostle from the predella of the sculpted triptych of *The Adoration of the Magi* from Wojanów (detail), workshop of the Master of the Dormition from the Corpus Christi Church in Wrocław, ca. 1510, Brzeg Castle Museum. Photo: R. Stasiuk.



FIG. 51. Polyptych of *The Dormition of Mary* (detail), workshop from Veit Stoss's circle, 1492, Świdnica, St. Wenceslaus and Stanislaus's Church. Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

of St. Catherine of Siena in a scene illustrating her life (see fig. 22). A similar representation is that of a book at the side of an apostle in the middle painting of the polyptych of the *Assumption of the Virgin Mary* from 1510 in the church in Szydłowiec (see fig. 41).

An extension with a knot or a knob is encountered more rarely, that is in 42% of the depictions. The version with a knob occurs most often; the knob could be quite large, as in the binding held by an apostle in the scene with *Christ with St. Thomas* from Gnojna (see fig. 38). However, most of the depictions show middle-sized round knobs proportional to the book's format. We find them in most of the relics from Western Pomerania, Royal Prussia, often from Silesia and Greater Poland, and relatively seldom in Lesser Poland. These knobs were often made of metal, as we learn from the bindings shown in the figure of St. Simon from the *Field Triptych* in St. James's Church in Olsztyn (see fig. 35) or in the polyptych of the *Dormition of the Mother of God* in St. Wenceslaus and Stanislaus's Church in Świdnica (fig. 51).

CHART 8. STRUCTURE OF THE GIRDLE BOOK: THE OUTER WRAP TYPOLOGY

Arrangement of the material at the head and foredge of the covers	European art (15%)	Polish art (70%)	Type of ending of the extension at the tail	European art (56%)	Polish art (76%)
Material at the head is extended	15.4%	38%	Loose end	65%	55%
Material at the head is wound inside the covers	84.6%	62%	Knot or knob	34%	42%
Material at the foredge is extended	12%	35%	Hook	1%	-
Material at the foredge is wound on the inner side of the covers	88%	65%	Cord	-	3%

Source: author's compilation.

In two cases we can observe special rings that gather the terminal fragment of the material extension. They are found on an epitaph plate of Marcin Rinkenberga, an Augustinian abbot, in a post-Augustinian church in Żagań (see fig. 24) and in the sculpture of St. Giles in the parish church in Mikorzyń (fig. 52). In both representations the special ring is placed beneath the edge of the leather and thus it forms a kind of tassel by itself.

Nonetheless, the most convenient manner of fastening the book at one's belt was to use a buckle, a hook, a hoop, or a ring permanently fixed to the ending of the flap. We do not find details of such a structure in the depictions of girdle books in Poland. However, an analogous usage is shown in Anton Möller's painting *The Tribute Money* from 1601 (fig. 53) in the Cash

Office Hall of the Gdańsk Main Town Hall. In the scene drawn from the Gospel one of the Pharisees has a book at his side. Yet it is not a girdle book but a book with a ring used to fasten it at one's belt. This simple solution, often with a hook, replaced the previous use of girdle books; it was used from the 16th century, as attested by iconography in Poland and abroad.⁹⁰ A book with a hook is visible at belt of the monk who symbolizes Time in a print from the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries in Hieronymus Wierix's *Triumph of Truth*, after Maerten de Vos.⁹¹ The latter quite often utilized the motif of a hanging book or case at the belt of a character. Similar examples are also seen in de Vos's *Temptation of St. Anthony*, as for example in the picture from 1591–1594 in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp, or in that used by the printmakers Jan I and Rafael Sadeler, and later by a painter of the *Częstochowa* series of hermits' lives, another aforementioned work of his on this subject. All of the books in question have leather bindings and are placed right below the character's belt, whereas the metal fastening elements remain invisible.



FIG. 52. *St. Giles* (detail), ca. 1500, Mikorzyń, St. Giles's Church.. Photo: J. Tomaszewski.



FIG. 53. Anton Möller, *The Tribute Money* (detail), 1601, Cash Office Hall of the Gdańsk Main Town Hall. Photo reprinted from: T. Grzybkowska, *Złoty wiek malarstwa gdańskiego na tle kultury artystycznej miasta 1520–1620* [Golden age of the Gdańsk painting], Warszawa 1990, fig. 112.

90 Ch. Alschner, 'Ein "Hakenband"-Weiterentwicklung des Beutelbuchs?', *Fringealien*, vol. 2, 1984, pp. 57–61.

91 K. Krużel, 'Przegląd grafik XV i XVI stulecia w Bibliotece Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie' [Overview of 16th- and 17th-century prints in the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow], in *Arcydzieła grafiki XV i XVI stulecia ze zbiorów graficznych Biblioteki Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie* [Masterpieces of 15th- and 16th-century printmaking from the collection of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow], ed. M. Podlódowska-Reklewska, Kraków 1997, p. 67, fig. 96.

V. 9. STRUCTURE OF THE BINDING: METAL PROTECTIVE ELEMENTS ON THE COVERS

The presence of protective elements on girdle books not only results from their character, but also provides clues as to their structure and the fixing of the outer material that covers the book. Based on the shape of the bosses or corner and centre pieces visible on the binding its time of origin can be determined. These types of bindings had the same protective elements as were commonly available and used in other kinds of books. St. Felix, in the middle painting of the St. Barbara's Altar (see fig. 33a), is portrayed with a book with cylindrical bosses with wide round bases that were normally used around the mid-15th century. Late-Gothic furnishings characteristic of the late 15th century are seen in the girdle books that accompany the figures of apostles in the side altar of *St. Mary, St. Andrew and the Virgin and Child with St. Anne* in St. Mary on the Sand's Church in Wrocław (fig. 54), and in the polyptych of the *Dormition of the Mother of God* in the St. Wenceslaus and St. Stanislaus Church in Świdnica (see fig. 51).

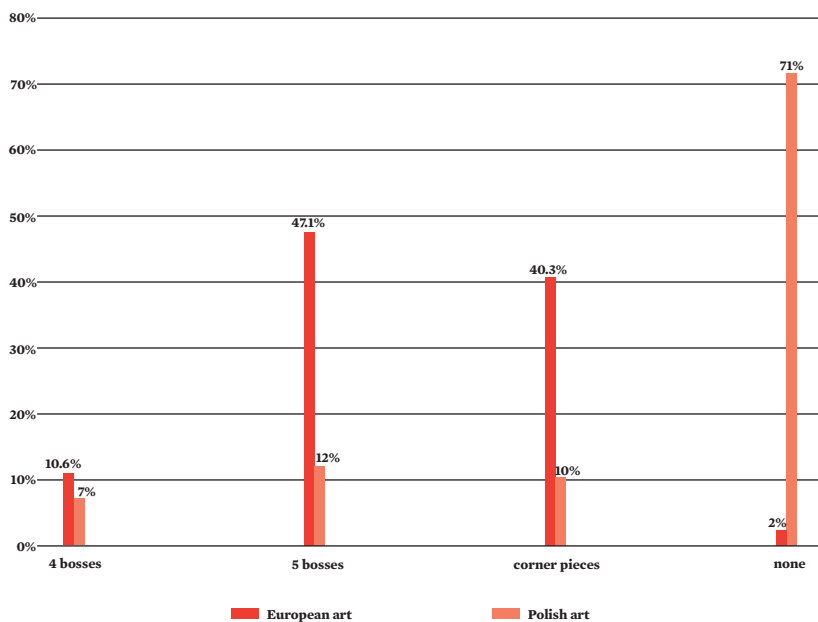


FIG. 54. Side-altar of *St. Mary, St. Andrew and the Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, Silesian workshop, 15th/16th c., Wrocław, St. Mary's Church.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

The comparison of protective elements that appear in Polish and foreign iconography reveals conspicuous, basic differences in the nature of the bindings. In a considerable part of Polish depictions girdle books have no protective bosses or corner pieces (cf. chart 9). This fact, however, cannot

be explained by the technical limitations of the plastic arts or the inaccurate rendering of details by their authors. The absence of protective metal elements is equally observed in objects of different artistic qualities. It is hardly possible that Veit Stoss had failed to render minute details; yet, in his *Jesus Teaching in the Temple* in the St. Mary's Basilica's altar (see fig. 34), the girdle book is shown with one fastening only and without further protective elements. With respect to these a coherent picture arises from iconographic sources from Western Pomerania: all the girdle books shown in the eight representations from that area have no bosses or furnishings at all.⁹²

CHART 9. THE STRUCTURE OF THE GIRDLE BOOKS: METAL PROTECTIVE ELEMENTS



Source: author's compilation.

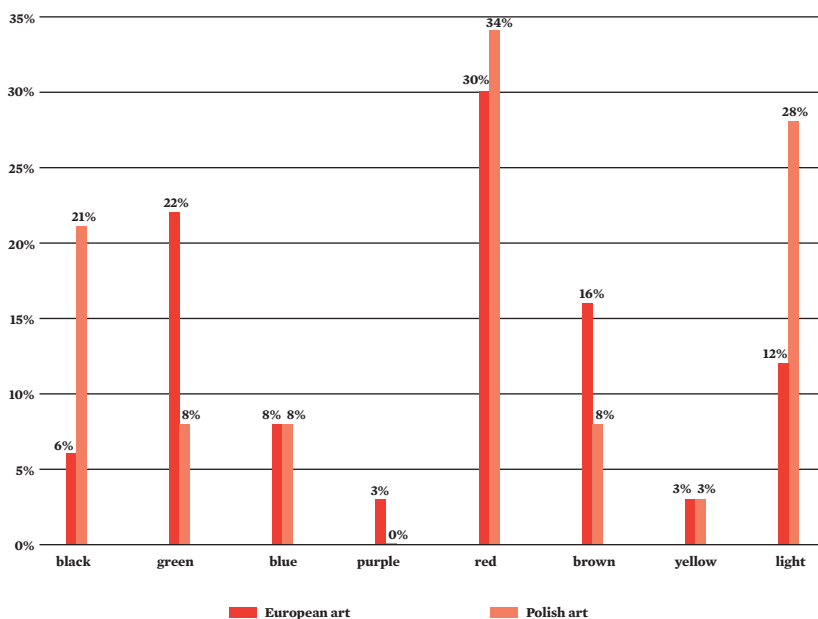
92 To this group of objects – which includes the sculptures of St. Matthew and St. John the Evangelist from Koszalin Cathedral (cat. no 26–27, fig. 27, 44), the figures of St. John the Evangelist from Krupy (cat. no. 38, fig. 45) and Sławno (cat. no. 72, fig. 26), the sculpture of St. Nicolas in Świnoujście-Krasibórz (cat. no. 23), St. Bartholomew from the apostles group in Dąbie Szczecińskie (cat. no. 8, fig. 43), an unidentified apostle from the Apostolic College in Zabowo (cat. no. 95, fig. 42) (the latter two now in the National Museum in Szczecin), and James the Greater from the painted predella of the *Last Supper* triptych with the scene of *The Sending of the Twelve Apostles* in the Co-Cathedral of Kołobrzeg (cat. no. 25) – also belong the figures of St. John the Evangelist and St. Nicolas in the Koserow Church, Germany, which display the same type of binding (J. Tomaszewski, 'Oprawa XV-wiecznego modlitewnika...', op. cit., pp. 116–117).

It seems that additional reinforcement of the extra leather applied onto the covers with the use of protective elements was not necessary to obtain durable bindings for small books. The leather trimmings themselves were effective enough when sewn onto the outer wrap and pasted to the inside of the covers. Such a structure proved good enough for the practical usage of the book. Nevertheless, this solution enabled easy and fairly traceless removal of the protective leather from the girdle book. The prevalence of it may explain why no complete relics of this type of girdle book have been preserved in Poland to this day.

V. 10. THE COLOUR SCHEME OF GIRDLE BOOKS

Another important issue to be paid attention to is the colour of the material that covered the bindings. Such a comparison, however, is only partially reliable and should be treated with reservation. In many cases we cannot be sure if the natural colour scheme is genuine, especially in sculpture. Many of the sculptures show traces of multiple repaintings that did not copy the original colours of the composition details. Moreover, it

CHART 10. THE COLOUR SCHEME OF GIRDLE BOOKS



Source: author's compilation.

should be borne in mind that the colour scheme was often dependent on the entirety of the work and served to accentuate its attributes and important details and not to reflect the actual colours of the objects.

A further difficulty that influences the statistical comparison of the colours is that we lack full data both in foreign and Polish relics. Yet, despite significant objections we cannot omit this feature because it does give us a general idea of the prevalent tendencies in binding colours. In chart 10, where the colour schemes of girdle books is compared in Polish and European art, we distinguish basic groups of the most frequent colours. Generalizations have been made as all shades of a certain colour were reduced to its basic variant, e.g. as with the “green”. In the single category of “light” also fall cases described as “white”, “grey” “off-white”, “light with a shade of greenish-grey”, on the presumption that they represent undyed, natural-colour leather. In western European art the most frequent colours are red (30%), green (22%), brown (16%), and light colours, while in Polish relics this order is somehow different. Light colours prevail (28%), followed by the red (24%), black (21%) and then green, blue and brown (8% each). These differences suggest that for the artists from central and eastern Europe, girdle books were more often associated with light, undyed leather. This is not surprising, as the most popular material for bindings in 15th-century Poland was whittawed leather, the colour of which was close to the white, or dyed on the surface in red or, much less frequently, in other colours.⁹³

VI. BOOK BAGS, CASES AND POUCHES

Cases, bags, and pouches, though they are not directly or permanently attached to the binding, are important additional protective elements of books, not only in the period in question. Furthermore, this way of protecting and transporting books, together with other forms of permanent and integrated safeguards (girdle and books with a leather overcover), seems the easiest way to protect the book and works as an archetype of protective bindings. In addition, this is probably the oldest manner of preserving books in the Christian world, thanks to its simplicity and universality, and it was effectively used longer and oftener than books with leather overcovers

93 These remarks are partially confirmed by two manuscripts: the one from Cracow, which Lewicka-Kamińska classifies as an example of a girdle book (*‘Rzut oka na rozwój oprawy książkowej w Krakowie’* [Brief overview of the development of book bindings in Cracow], *Roczniki Biblioteczne*, vol. XVI, 1972, p. 51), and the one from Szczecin (J. Tomaszewski, *‘Oprawa XV-wiecznego modlitewnika...’*, op. cit., pp. 112–117), that used to have an additional wrap made of light-coloured leather.

or actual girdle books. Sadly, in present-day Europe, there are hardly any examples of this sort of protection apart from archival resources, mainly iconographical ones. Therefore, we cannot confirm our knowledge with any relics: in Poland there are no such bags or sacks. These were for practical use, and once they stopped being useful for the missal in a chapel, or for a book in transit on one's way to church, or when they had become worn out, they could be removed from the objects without leaving a trace.

Nonetheless, the identification of the bag's shape in iconography entails some difficulties. Not always can we unequivocally state whether the depicted item is a bag or a sack, or maybe a schematic, unskilful representation of a girdle book. Such doubts arise in several of the cases we know of, and are as difficult to resolve as they are in the related or intermediate forms of leather overcovers and girdle books. Classical examples where classification is problematic are the relics from Kurów Wielki (see fig. 28, 29). A Lower-Silesian sculptor of the apostles' figures, including four holding girdle-like books – Bartholomew, Philip, Peter and an unidentified one – showed the books, treated as their attributes, in a simplified manner. The hypothesis that they are covered with a sack is supported by the fact that even in very schematic representations of girdle books, the raised bands were usually marked on the spine and were a sign of the material being tightly fitted to the books. In this case, however, we encounter regular cubic blocks, sometimes with the bands slightly visible on the rounded book spines. It is obvious that the ends of these "pouches", held by the saints, are not finished in any way. Yet, the likelihood cannot be eliminated that these are bindings schematically and simplistically depicted with outer material actually attached to the covers.

Ambiguous character is also one of the features of the books shown in several other objects, among others in the sculpture of St. Felix from Wrocław-Ołtaszyn (see fig. 30), an unidentified apostle in the predella of the Wojanów Triptych (see fig. 50), the sculpture of St. Bartholomew of Radomice (fig. 55), the effigies of St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* scene in Erazm Ciołek's missal (fig. 56), a relief from the church in Klimkówka, now in Archdiocesan Museum in Przemyśl, or the sculpture from the church in Pilica (fig. 57). In none of these cases can we be sure whether it is a girdle book, an intermediate form between a girdle and a leather overcover book, or merely a sack that fits the shape of the book. Save for scarce examples of books, whose type cannot be definitely classified, in most cases we are able to distinguish an ordinary sack or bag from the girdle book based on their characteristic traits. In superficial analyses of the iconography these two forms are hardly different. In both cases the



FIG. 55. Dawid Grossman from Jelenia Góra, late Gothic triptych from 1491, sculpture on the front of the right wing: St. Bartholomew or St. Thomas, ca. 1510, Radomice.

Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.



FIG. 56. *Crucifixion*, miniature from the Erasm Ciolek's Missal, National Library, Warsaw, (BN rkps 3306), f. 121 v., 1515–1518.

Photo: National Library, Warsaw.



FIG. 57. St. John the Evangelist, sculpture from a *Crucifixion* group on the rood arch, 16th c., Pilica, St. John the Baptist's Church.

Photo: NID Archive in Warsaw.

book hidden in a sack reminiscent of a girdle book is held in a similar way and is similar in shape. Due to this, book sacks or bags were not always distinguished from the girdle book *par excellence*.⁹⁴

A bag is visible in many European arts works. Particularly precious are those which clearly indicate the social class where it was customary to carry a prayer book, breviary, or other type of book in this manner. We find examples of using this small sack as a luxurious accessory to a prayer book with a sumptuous binding by courtiers and rich western-European burghers who imitated the court. Such instances can be found in Netherlandish art together with other material signs of the late Middle Ages' devotional customs. In the *Annunciation* scene by Robert Campin from 1427, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, we see two protective forms of the book typical of these social classes.⁹⁵ Mary holds a book in a white *chemise* binding made of a fabric. On the table nearby there is another book, lying on its bag. Both the book and its bag are lavish; the prayer book, arguably richly illuminated, has gilt and gauffered edges of the pages and its bag is made of expensive green velvet with an amaranth

⁹⁴ This issue was paid no heed to by Lisl and Hugo Alker (*Das Beutelbuch...*, op. cit., no. 182, 254), who classify the bags as girdle books.

⁹⁵ D. de Vos, *Flämische Meister. Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling*, Köln 2002, p. 28.

lining, finished with embroidery and decorative tassels. The opening of the bag is fastened with a double ornamental ribbon which also serves as a handle. The character of such bags did not change throughout the 15th century. Similar examples can be found in two paintings by Gerard David: in the *Annunciation*, 1506, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,⁹⁶ and in the *Mary and Child and milk soup*, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, precisely illustrating the everyday realities of a burgher house.

Many examples indicate that book bags in the 16th century were also used by the clergy, notably monks. Many of them, representing various orders, are portrayed with a book bag in several iconographic series showing monks outside their monasteries, travelling clergymen or fund-collecting monks with their respective attributes.⁹⁷

The bags were usually used by monks and served to protect and transport breviaries, like the girdle book. Characteristic bags are visible in the effigy of a white Carthusian and a Franciscan on the prints made by Jost Amman, partly modelled after the earlier Hans Sebald Beham woodcuts from 1526.⁹⁸ Both depictions, owing to the format and rather imprecise woodcut technique, allow us to decipher only the most significant details of the bags structure. We do see, however, the fairly characteristic shape of a bag made of a relatively thick material which is independent of the book itself and conceals details of its structure, that would be well visible, were it a girdle book. We also see decorative tassels stitched at the bottom, in the corners, and at the opening of the bag. The woodcut of the Carthusian displays an important additional aspect that tells us about the manner of using the bag. The small sack is cut arch-like above the book, which made it easier to take the book out of it.

It may be conjectured that much more frequent was the use of less ornamental bags made of leather or canvas to serve mostly a purely utilitarian function. Not only were they used as additional protection against changing weather outdoors, during the transport of a book, but also for keeping books indoors. The regulations of the Dominican Order regarding the care of liturgical books, normally accompanied by sacks and usually stored, in the sacristy,⁹⁹ were also used in other orders and ecclesiastical

96 The string behind the bag is probably a rosary, and not an ornamental handle of the bag.

97 P. P. Gach, 'Habity zakonne w średniowieczu. Zarys problematyki' [Monastic habits in the Middle Ages. An overview], in *Klasztor w kulturze średniowiecznej Polski* [Monastery in medieval polish culture], A. Pobóg-Lenartowicz, M. Derwich (eds.), Opole 1995, pp. 491–516.

98 Jost Amman, *Cleri totius rom. Ecclesiae habitus artificiosissimus figuris nunc primum a Jodoco Ammanno expressi etc. Francof. sumpt. Freyerabend*, Frankfurt 1585.

99 Humbertus de Romanis, *De vita...*, op. cit., p. 238.

institutions. The archives confirm that in Poland this additional form of protection appeared as late as in the early 16th century.

The royal accounting books from the year 1533¹⁰⁰ tell us that a special leather sack, “*sacculo de corio ad missale*”, was made for the missal used in the Sigismund’s Chapel in Wawel Cathedral. The missal was not the only book from the royal chapel to receive such a safeguard. In the accounts we find the information that sacks for such purposes were also made for other objects, including two paxes.¹⁰¹

Keeping books in special sacks was probably even more common, not only for liturgical books that were supposed to be used outside the place they were kept in. From Matthias de Miechow’s inventory we know that he kept part of the books in two sacks, possibly made of leather. One contained eight manuscripts, and the other one thirteen of them.¹⁰² Yet, we do not know what was the original use of those sacks: whether they had been accidentally adapted in the scholar’s study or if they belonged to the portable equipment and protected the books Matthias took with him in long travel. The use of sacks for books stored in the study was no extraordinary case and had occurred before as well. Among the belongings of Helena Ostroskowna, a burgher from Cracow, catalogued in 1497, was a sack with books contained in a large chest.¹⁰³

Similar cases of using bags or sacks for preserving books are also found in the iconography. In many Renaissance effigies of the Fathers of the Church, depicted in a scholar’s study, on the shelves there are volumes wrapped in a sack: sometimes these are examples of leather overcover books.

There is no doubt that such a sack is depicted in the drawing from a handwritten satire on the Reformation movement by Jan Dymitr Solikowski “*Facies perturbatae et afflictatae reipublicae eiusque restaurandae ratio per visionem in Patmo insula revelata*” from 1565 (fig. 58), now in the PAS Library in Gdańsk.¹⁰⁴ On the drawing, captioned “*Egregius Miles*”, a clergyman is shown

100 A. Bochnak, ‘Mecenat Zygmunta Starego w zakresie rzemiosła artystycznego’ [Sigismund the Old’s patronage over artistic craft], *Studia do Dziejów Wawelu*, vol. 2, 1961, p. 168 (AGAD, section XIX, book 2–16; *Regestrum rationis generalis Severini Bonari a die prima martii 1533 ad diem ultimam decembris 1535*, f. 75).

101 Ibid.

102 L. Hajdukiewicz, *Księgozbiór i zainteresowania bibliofilskie Piotra Tomickiego na tle jego działalności kulturalnej* [Piotr Tomicki’s library and bibliophilia in the context of his cultural activity], Wrocław 1961, p. 83.

103 J. Ptaśnik, ‘Studia nad patrycjatem krakowskim wieków średnich. Część druga’ [Studies on the Cracow’s patriciate in the Middle Ages. Part two], *Rocznik Krakowski*, vol. XVI, 1914, p. 65 (no. 38).

104 Rękopis o sygnaturze Ms. 1509 (O. Günther, *Katalog der Handschriftenziger Stadtbibliothek*, vol. 2, Danzig 1903, s. 270–271).



FIG. 58. Priest Forced to Defend his Homeland, drawings in a handwritten satire on the Reformation movement by Jan Dymitr Solikowski (?) "*Facies perturbatae et afflictiae reipublicae eiusque restaurandae ratio per visionem in Patmo insula revelata*", 1565, Gdańsk, Polish Academy of Sciences Library (sygn. Ms. 1508). Photo: PAS Library in Gdańsk.

having been compelled by the warfare to carry a weapon. From his clumsy stature we can infer that the priest would rather carry a prayer book than an immense sword. He carries his breviary in a sack with the word "*breviari-um*" written on it, fastened with a ribbon that also serves as a handle.

The practical form of keeping books, especially prayer books, breviaries, and liturgical books in sacks has significantly outlived the actual girdle book. As late as in the second half of the 17th century it was customary to carry prayer books in ornamental velvet sacks.¹⁰⁵ A sign of this is the exceptional account in the poem "*Tak ta niwa Rodzi*" [Thus this land bears] by Wacław Potocki, where the poet criticizes the ways of the rich nobility and their liking for luxury:

„(...) Dziś w złoconych workach
Noszą za pany chłopcy książki przy paciorkach,
Książki, żeby pamiętać, o które potrzeby
Prosić, za co dziękować (...)
A worki drogie na co? Dla pychy, dla chluby,
I pacierz przyjemniejszy z aksamitnej szuby”.¹⁰⁶

105 J. P. Bystroń, *Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce. Wiek XVI–XVIII* [History of the Polish customs. 16th–18th century], vol. I, Warszawa 1976, p. 316.

106 W. Potocki, *Dzieła* [Works], ed. L. Kukulski, vol. III: *Moralia i inne utwory z lat 1688–1696* [Moralia and other works from the years 1688–1696], Warszawa 1987, p. 170.

[Today in gilt sacks / lads carry prayer books for their masters / Books to remember what should be / Asked for and what should be thanked for ... / And what are these costly sacks for? For vanity, for pride, / The prayer is pleasanter when read from a velvet cloak.]

A velvet or satin sack must have been quite common among wealthy nobility of the period. Potocki would not have paid attention to that characteristic detail, had it not been a frequent sight during church ceremonies as a fashionable accessory that was part of the superficial piousness criticized by the poet.¹⁰⁷

VII. BOOK CASKETS AND BOXES

As early as in the early Middle Ages a custom emerged to preserve particularly valuable liturgical manuscripts in special boxes, caskets, or casings. In Ethiopia, where the tradition of making and using handwritten books has been a relic of the first appearances of the codex form, most church books are still protected with leather cases referred to as *mahdär* in Amharic with a leather strip that can be worn on the shoulder during travel or hung on a hook in the monastery.¹⁰⁸

In Europe various forms of additional protection for the book, which itself happened to be preciously bound, were applied not only for keeping codices but also to transport them. Scarce reliquary-shaped boxes have been preserved, called “*Cumdach*” and dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries. They protected the psalters and missals used by Christian monks of the Celtic Rite. We know of such relics that were used to protect religious manuscripts and were called “*Cathach*”, “*Misach*”, “*Stowe Missal*”, “*Soiscéal Molaise*” or “*Lough Kinale*”.¹⁰⁹ It was in Ireland that the encasing of books in boxes, usually sheathed with sheets of gilt copper or silver, was the most widespread. We may assume, however, that to a lesser extent this custom was also known on the Continent, where missionary activities required the use of diverse protective forms for important liturgical codices.¹¹⁰ Casings for books were not only used

107 J. Tomaszewski, *Oprawy haftowane i tekstylne...*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 42.

108 S. Hable Selassie, *Bookmaking in Ethiopia*, Leiden 1981, p. 26; J. Tomaszewski, M. Gervers, ‘Technological aspects of the monastic manuscript collection at May Wäyni, Ethiopia’, in *From Dust to Digital. Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme*, ed. M. Kominko, London 2015, p. 49, fig. 3.1.

109 J. J. Buckley, ‘Some Early Ornamented Leatherwork’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. XLV, part IV, 1915, pp. 300–309.

110 M. Craig, *Irish Bookbindings*, Dublin 1976, p. 48.

by missionary orders, including the Dominicans, as proved by the provisions of the Order's Rule,¹¹¹ but they also protected liturgical books for everyday ceremonies.

Usually these casings were supposedly not as richly ornamented as those made by the Celtic monks. They were of a more utilitarian type, sometimes being decorated with *cuir-ciselé* technique and having metal pieces.¹¹² In the late Middle Ages casings or boxes were used to protect and keep missals, also in Poland. In the Polish royal court's accounts there is an entry of 9 *groszes* having been spent on making a box for the missal founded by Elizabeth of Austria, wife of King Casimir IV of the Jagiellonian dynasty.¹¹³

Examples of book casings and boxes can also be found in iconography. In the painting by the Master of the Aix Annunciation showing Jeremiah the Prophet, now in *Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts*, Brussels,¹¹⁴ above the prophet's head a bookshelf is visible with, among other codices, a casket with an ornamental lock and a loose strap to wear over the shoulder. There are also other books representing diverse binding forms with additional wraps and protection for travelling. Next to a girdle book with an untypical knot tied at the end of the extended fringe of material at the tail, we can also see a leather overcover and a limp binding with a front-edge flap. The portable equipment of a missionary monk from the Order of Preachers might have looked quite similar to the book collection presented in the painting.

Missals and psalters of a larger size were accompanied with custom-made boxes that could be worn on a strap hung over the shoulder, whereas different smaller prayer books and abridged breviaries for every-day prayer could be carried in leather casings attached to the belt, similarly to girdle books, the casing being more effective in protecting the book from mechanical damage than a girdle book. Originally preserved casings from the period and rare iconographic sources allow us to approximately determine their character, appearance, and utilization. A good example drawn from Netherlandish art is St. Dominic from Rogier

111 See note 22.

112 Noteworthy are the Hebrew Bible caskets from 1331 (Dresden, *Sächsische Landesbibliothek*, Manuscr. Dresd. A. 46) and 14th-century Books of Moses (Vienna, *Nationalbibliothek*, Cod. Hebr.19) – M. Bollert, *Lederschnittbande des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig 1925, table 2.

113 *Rachunki królewskie z lat 1471–1472 i 1476–1478* [Royal accounts from the years 1471–1472 and 1476–1478], S. Gawęda, T. Perzanowski, A. Strzelecka (eds.), Wrocław 1960, p. 203.

114 T. H. Borchert, *Jan van Eyck, Flämische Meister und der Süder und seine Zeit 1430–530*, Stuttgart 2002, fig. 147.

van der Weyden's "Lamentation" (National Gallery, London)¹¹⁵ It shows a red box hung at the belt on the Saint's left side with a characteristic oblong metal lock. The casing could be opened at the top edge so that the prayer book could be easily taken out of it.

Most of the rectangular boxes that are modelled precisely after the book's shape were attached to the belt vertically in two manners. In the first type the casing was hung on a cord or a leather strap drawn through metal eyelets on the sides or on the back of the book box. It is in that manner that St. Dominic's casing in van der Weyden's London painting is attached, and that of St. John the Evangelist from the wing of the "Our Lady of Sorrows" retable from 1507, formerly in the St. John's Archcathedral in Wrocław, now in the National Museum in Wrocław (fig. 59), as well as in the sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from the early 16th century in the Parish Church in Wieliczka.¹¹⁶ The casing at the side of St. John in the Wrocław painting, partly hidden in shadow, whose shape can only be discerned, gives us no significant details apart from how it is attached. A similar manner of attaching the casing on the sides is seen in the preserved casings in the National



FIG. 59. *St. John the Evangelist* from a wing of the *Our Lady of Sorrows* altar from St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Wrocław, 1507, Brzeg Castle Museum.
Photo: R. Stasiuk.

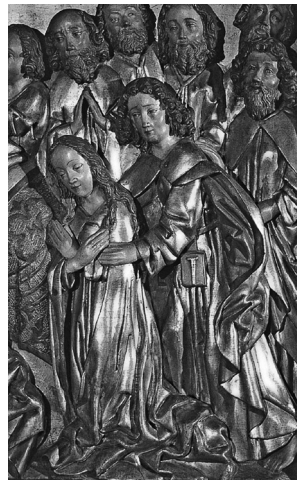


FIG. 60. Master of the Polyptych of The Annunciation with a Unicorn, *Polyptych of The Annunciation with a Unicorn* (detail), ca. 1480, from St. Elizabeth's Church in Wrocław, National Museum in Warsaw.
Photo: J. Tomaszewski.

115 Ibid., fig. 203.

116 *Katalog Zabytków Sztuki w Polsce* [Catalogue of Art Monuments in Poland], vol. I: *Województwo krakowskie* [Cracow Province], ed. J. Lepiarczyk, z. 6: *Powiat krakowski* [District of Cracow], ed. J. Lepiarczyk, Warszawa 1951, fig. 44.

Library in Oslo,¹¹⁷ or in the casing-casket from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries in the Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.¹¹⁸ In the Wieliczka sculpture, the leather strap is attached clearly on the back of the book box.

A different manner of attaching the casing is found in several other iconographic representations. In the scene of the *Dormition of Mary* in the Polyptych of the *Annunciation with a Unicorn* from ca. 1480, originally in St. Elizabeth's Church, Wrocław, now in the National Museum in Wrocław (fig. 60), at the side of St. John the Evangelist is a red casing with a metal fastening and a broad strap of leather sewn on which forms a loop used for carrying the book at one's side. A similar solution was used in the unidentified apostle shown twice in different scenes of the triptych of the *Assumption of Virgin Mary*, 1520, Warta. We see it on the middle painting and in the scene of the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*.¹¹⁹ This manner of attaching the casing was probably much more comfortable while the owner was moving, as it increased the casing's stability.

We may suppose that the casings, like the girdle books, were used by a similar group of people to protect books of an identical character. The former were mainly clergymen who had received the greater orders and monks who were active outside their monastery. A small book protected with a casing is seen with the apostles, St. Dominic, or a clergy writer.¹²⁰ It seems, however, that in the Middle Ages the use of a casing for the protection and transport of small prayer books was not as popular as the girdle book. Their representations are more rarely found in art and few actual relics of them have been preserved in libraries or museums.

ANNEX I. CATALOGUE OF GIRDLE BOOK DEPICTIONS IN ART IN POLAND

1. Blizanów (*województwo: wielkopolskie, powiat: kaliski*) Church of the Nativity of Mary (now: Warsaw, National Museum), *Crucifixion*, painted triptych (also called the triptych of Żerniki), workshop of the Master of the Blizanów Triptych, ca. 1480.

117 Oslo, Nasjonalbiblioteket, Schoyen Collection (MS 4614), www.nb.no/baser/schoyen/5/5.8/index.html#15.7 [access: 20/11/2016].

118 J. Loubier, *Der Bucheinband...*, op. cit., p. 73.

119 T. Dobrzeński, *Malarstwo tablicowe. Katalog zbiorów. Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. Galeria Sztuki Średniowiecznej* [Panel painting. Catalogue of the collections. National Museum in Warsaw. Mediaeval Art Gallery], vol. I, Warszawa 1972, pp. 67–73, fig. 24 B1 c.

120 A casing can be seen with the writer depicted in the illuminated bordure of the *Hours of Catherine of Cleves* by the Master of Catherine of Cleves (no. 50, f. 34 v) (illustration in: J. Marrow, *Die goldene Zeit der holländischen Buchmalerei*, Stuttgart–Zürich 1989, pp. 163–164, fig. 91).

Middle panel: St. John the Evangelist holding a grey-green girdle book in his right hand; the loose end of a long pouch, half-dome bosses on round bases (2×5). The extension of the material below the upper the edge is narrower at the bottom, probably due to having often been held by this part. The foredge of the book is protected by a covering material.

2. Bobrowniki (*województwo*: zachodniopomorskie, *powiat*: stargardzki), Church of Our Lady of the Sorrows. Polychrome half-round sculpture of St. James the Greater, West-Pomeranian workshop, ca. 1520.
At the right side of the Saint is a dark-ochre cubic object resembling a girdle book. Details of the binding structure are indiscernible.
3. Brzeg (German: Brieg), Castle Museum. Sculpted triptych of *The Adoration of the Magi* from Wojanów (*województwo*: dolnośląskie, *powiat*: jeleniogórski) from the Assumption Church, workshop of the Master of the Dormition from the Corpus Christi Church in Wrocław, ca. 1510.
Predella – a red girdle book is held by an unidentified apostle. The long loose end of the pouch is rolled and hidden in the Saint's hand.
4. Brzesko (*województwo*: zachodniopomorskie, *powiat*: pyrzycki) Church of the Nativity of St. Mary, sculpted triptych of *Madonna and Child with. Virgin Saints*, Pomeranian workshop, end of 15th c.
Bottom painting of the left panel: the Apostle, the first of the three figures in the group, is holding a girdle book in his right hand – a book with one fastening and a loose-ended pouch. The covering material is folded on the inner sides of the boards at the head and foredge of the book.
5. Brzyska (*województwo*: podkarpackie, *powiat*: jasielski), Church (now: Jasło, Regional Museum). Polychrome sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* group on the rood beam, ca. 1525.
The Saint holds a girdle book in his left hand. The pouch is ended with a knob.
6. Chełmża (German: Kulmsee, *województwo*: kujawsko-pomorskie), St. Thomas Cathedral (now: Toruń, District Museum), sculpture of St. James the Greater from the former main altar, St. Wolfgang workshop in Toruń, 1508.
The Saint is holding a girdle book in his right hand. The loose end of the pouch; one fastening and two double bands. Over the head of the book is a loose extension of material, slightly gathered.
7. Częstochowa, Jasna Góra Pauline Monastery (sacristy), *Temptation of St. Anthony* from a series of paintings on the history of the hermits and first anchorites, ca. mid-17th c. After the engraving of the same title by Jan I and Rafael Sadeler, ca. 1586, from the series *Salitudo sive vitae patrum eremicorum* after Maarten de Vos.

The Saint is reading at the table with a red girdle book fastened to his belt at his left side.

8. Dąbie Szczecińskie (German: Altdamm), Church (now: Szczecin, National Museum), scene with sculpted figures of the Apostles: Bartholomew, Simon and Andrew, Master of the St. Peter Paul Triptych in Szczecin, ca. 1510–1520.

St. Bartholomew holds a red girdle book in his left hand. The pouch is ended with a knot, three distinct bands are visible on the spine, one fastening. At the head of the book is wrinkled loose material. The covering material is folded on the inner sides of the boards at the foredge of the book.

9. Dobrzyków (*województwo: mazowieckie, powiat: płocki*), Church of the Nativity of Mary. Sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* group on the rood arch, 1st half of the 16th c.

The Saint holds the pouch of a black girdle book by the knob with his right hand, and with his left hand he grips it in the middle, showing the length of the material at the tail of the binding. At the head and foredge of the book the material is folded on the inner side of the covers. No fastenings or bosses are on the covers.

10. Elbląg (German: Elbing), St. Nicolas's Cathedral; Retable of the Vistula Ferryman (*The Adoration of the Magi*) from St. Mary's Church in Elbląg, after 1505.

Upper scene of the right wing – sculpture of an Apostle with a red girdle book, with no additional attribute (Thomas? Matthew? Philip?). The Saint holds the book with his right hand; there is a fairly short loose extension of material at the tail of the book, tied in a knot or double-wound under the belt. The spine is rounded, with a double band in the middle, and single bands at the edges of the spine.

11. Gdańsk, Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Hedwig's triptych with three sculpted figures: of St. Hedwig, St. Bartholomew and St. James the Greater in the middle scene, Jan van der Matten, ca. 1435–1440.

A red girdle book is visible in the hand of St. James the Greater. The Saint holds the book, its foredge to the front, with two fastenings and a loose-ended pouch. The outer edges of the covers are beveled.

12. Gdańsk, Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Eleven Thousand Virgins Chapel, Sculpture of St. Bartholomew, 1st half of the 15th c.

The Saint holds a scroll in his right hand, while in his left hand he has a light-brown girdle book with one fastening; the material at the

- head and foredge is folded on the inner side of the covers.
13. Gdańsk, Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, polyptych (so-called Little Altar of the Ferbers), ca. 1480–1484.
Right wing – St. John the Evangelist holds a small black girdle book in his left hand. Five bosses are on each cover in the form of a wide-brimmed hat: two fastenings.
 - 14–15. Gdańsk, Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, paintings on the panel of the *St. Peter and Paul Altar* (missing), Gdańsk Painter, ca. 1500.
The Liberation of St. Peter – the Saint is pressing a girdle book to his breast, the pouch is ended with a knob.
St. Peter, Paul and Simon the Magician – St. Peter holds a girdle book in his hand (details indiscernible).
 16. Gdańsk, National Museum, *Allegory of Salvation and Sin*, painting from the Lutheran retable in the Corpus Christi Church in Gdańsk, Hans Viedeman de Fries, 1596.
St. John the Baptist is kneeling under the cross: at his side is an open girdle book (breviary). A relatively short piece of material at the book's tail is tied in a knot. Additional grey material covers the binding, larger on all sides and fastened with straps of material. Clasps are under the outer material. At the tail of the book are bookmarks.
 17. Gnojna (German: Olbendorf, *województwo: dolnośląskie, powiat: strzeliński*), Church (now: Wrocław, National Museum), sculpture of *Christ with St. Thomas*, Silesian workshop, early 16th c.
A black girdle book is in the right hand of an Apostle. The material at the head and foredge of the book is folded on the inner side of the covers. The extension of the material at the tail is finished with an oval knob. There is one fastening, two double bands and two raised endbands.
 18. Gołaszyn (German: Lindau, *województwo: lubuskie, powiat: nowosolski*), St. Martin's Church, pentaptych of *Mother of God, St. Martin and St. Dorothy*, workshop of the Master of Gościszowice, 1496.
Painted predella with Christ and apostles: St. Bartholomew holds a small girdle book with a loose-ended pouch in his left hand.
 19. Grodzisk Wielkopolski (*województwo: wielkopolskie*), St. Hedwig's Church. Sculpture of an unidentified apostle, early 16th c. (missing).
The Saint holds a red girdle book in his left hand. Two bands are visible on the spine, a knot is at the end of the pouch and there is one fastening.
 20. Jakubów (*województwo: dolnośląskie, powiat: polkowicki*), St. James the Greater's Church. Polychrome sculpture of an unidentified apostle, ca. 1506.

The Apostle holds a small green girdle book in his right hand; a spine without bands is visible.

- 21–22. Karłowice Wielkie (Gross-Carlowitz, *województwo: opolskie, powiat: nyski*), St. Mary Magdalene Church. Engraved effigies of saints on the foot of a chalice, 1476.
 1. St. Barbara with a girdle book in her left hand, a knot on the ending of a relatively short extension of the pouch. The material is folded at the head and foreedge of the book. The binding is without bosses, with one older type of long strap fastening with a *fibula*.
 2. St. Erasmus with a girdle book in his left hand, showing a loose ending of the pouch. The binding is with two hook-clasp fastenings and there is an extension of the material at the side fringe that covers the edge of the book under the fastenings.
23. Karsibór-Świnoujście (German: Kaseburg, *województwo: zachodniopomorskie*), Church of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Triptych (?), Pomeranian workshop, 2nd half of the 15th c.
Sculpture of St. Nicolas with a girdle book in his right hand, its foreedge to the front. One fastening of the book and a knob at the end of the pouch.
24. Klimkówka (*województwo: podkarpackie, powiat: krośnieński*), Church (now: Przemyśl, Archdiocese Museum), relief with the scene of the Crucifixion, from the main altar of the Church, late 15th c.
St. John the Evangelist is shown with a bright-coloured girdle book with a knob at the end of the pouch.
25. Kołobrzeg (German: Kolberg), Co-Cathedral. Painted predella of the *Triptych with the Last Supper* with the scene of *The Sending of the Apostles*, Jakub Vridach, 1494.
An Apostle (St. James the Greater?) is shown with a small girdle book hanging at his belt, bright leather, no protective bosses. The relatively short pouch is ended with a small knob.
- 26–27. Koszalin (German: Köslin); St. Mary's Church, main altarpiece sculptures, Andreas Wenzel, 1512.
 1. St. Matthew holds a brown girdle book in his left hand. Loosely wrinkled material is at the head of the book, the end of the pouch is ended with a knob. The material also covers the foreedge. There are two fastenings and two bands on the spine.
 2. St. John the Evangelist holds a brown girdle book in his left hand. The material is extended and wrinkled at the head of the

- book. A large boss is at the end of the pouch, there are two fastenings and three bands on the spine.
- 28–29. Koza Wielka (*województwo: wielkopolskie, powiat: kępiński*), St. Philip and Jacob the Apostles' Church. Polychrome reliefs, repainted in modern times, unknown workshop, ca. mid-15th c.
1. St. Bartholomew, sculpture probably from a wing of the triptych. There is a girdle book with two fastenings and a loose ending of the pouch.
 2. St. Jacob the Greater, sculpture probably from a wing of the same triptych. A girdle book is shown with two clasps and a loose end of the pouch.
30. Cracow, St. Mary's Church, Veit Stoss, altar of the *Dormition of Mary*, 1477–1489.
Christ Among the Doctors: in the middle scene a doctor (Pharisee) is shown with a red girdle book. One fastening. An extension of leather covers the foredge under the strap of the clasp, additionally extended below the head of the book.
31. Cracow, Augustinian Monastery (now: National Museum, Cracow). Polychrome sculpture (sygn. I 60 or F.JK 45) of St. Anthony the Hermit (Monk?), early 16th c.
The Saint holds a bright-coloured girdle book in his left hand, with four bands (including 2 endbands). The loose ending of the pouch is rolled and hidden in the Saint's hand. At the head of the book the fringe of the material is visibly extended. One fastening.
32. Cracow, St. Mark's Church. Polychrome wooden sculpture of St. John the Evangelist, from the *Crucifixion* scene, exhibited outside the church, ca. 1500.
The Saint is shown with a brown girdle book, held by its loose end in his left hand, its spine to the front. There are four bands, two raised endbands on the spine, and one fastening.
33. Cracow, Dominican Church (now: Warsaw, National Museum), painted scenes from the *Life of St. Catherine of Siena* (nr inw. Śr. 215), painter from Lesser Poland, ca. 1500.
St. Catherine of Siena Besieged by Demons (after the engraving by Martin Schongauer *St. Anthony Besieged by Demons*, before 1473.): a bright-yellow binding of a book is shown at the belt of St. Catherine, with one clasp and a loose ending protruding over the head of the book.
34. Cracow, National Museum (Ms Czart. 1212) Erazm Ciołek's Pontifical, 1510–1515.

Crucifixion (k. 194) – St. John the Evangelist holds a blue girdle book in his left hand. The loose end of the pouch is visible.

35. Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, manuscript: *Orationale Vladislai II Regis Bohemiae et Hungariae* (rps 4289), Bohemia, 1475–1480.

Miniature: St. Philip (f. 126 v.) holds a girdle book in his right hand.

36. Cracow, Library and Archives of the Dominican Monastery. Miniature with St. Dominic in the initial “I” in the folio 80 of the *Wiktoryn’s Graduale*, 1536.

On the right side of the scene, in the foreground, a kneeling and praying Dominican nun is shown with a cross and a girdle book folded in her hands, praying. It is a small book with five bosses on each cover, the material covering the binding is folded at the head and foredge of the book.

37. Cracow, woodcut by H. Schäuffelein on the verso of the title page of Baltazar Opec’s *Żywot Pana Jesu Krysta* (H. Wietor, Cracow 1522) with the *Crucifixion* scene. The woodcuts come from the *Speculum Passionis domini nostri Jesu Christi* by Ulrich Pinder, published in Nuremberg, 1507.

St. John the Evangelist is shown with a girdle book hanging at his right side, with five bosses and extended material at the foredge of the book.

38. Krupy (German: Grupenhagen, *województwo*: zachodniopomorskie, *powiat*: sławieński), Our Lady of Ostra Brama Church. Sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* scene, Pomeranian workshop linked with the oeuvre of the Master of Passion Figures of Sławno, first half of the 16th c.

The Saint is shown with a black girdle book with a short pouch ended with a knob held in his left hand. At the bottom of the girdle book, material is seen hanging from the head of the book. The fastenings are not visible.

39. Krzywa Góra (*województwo*: wielkopolskie, *powiat*: wrzesiński), from a roadside shrine; originally probably from a retable in one of the local churches (now: Gniezno, Archdiocese Museum). Altar sculpture of St. Barbara, early 16th c.

The Saint is shown with a small girdle book in her left hand, its spine to the front. Four bands and a loose ending of the pouch are visible.

- 40–43. Kurów Wieki (German: Gross Kauer, *województwo*: dolnośląskie, *powiat*: polkowicki), St. John the Baptist’s Church. Baroque side-altar of St. Mary, ca. 1700.

1. Sculpture of Philip the Apostle, coming from a former late-Gothic triptych from the turn of the 15th and 16th c., Lower Silesian

- workshop. The Saint is shown with a schematic representation of a girdle book in his right hand, no bands or fastenings marked.
2. Sculpture of St. Peter, coming from a former late-Gothic triptych from the turn of the 15th and 16th c., Lower Silesian school. The Saint holds a girdle book in his left hand, three wide (double) bands are marked. The extension of material is gathered in the Saint's hand over the tail of the book with the loose end of the pouch.
 3. Sculpture of an unidentified apostle, coming from a former late-Gothic triptych from the turn of the 15th and 16th c., Lower Silesian workshop. The Saint holds a girdle book in his left hand. Similarly to St. Philip, above, the schematic representation of the book may suggest it is contained in a pouch.
 4. Sculpture of Bartholomew the Apostle, coming from a former late-Gothic triptych from the turn of the 15th and 16th c., Lower Silesian workshop. The Saint holds a girdle book in his left hand, the end of the pouch is untied. The material on the covers is folded at the foredge on the inner sides of the covers, where the edges of the covers are clearly seen. No fastenings are marked.
44. Kwidzyn (German: Marienwerder, *województwo: pomorskie*, Castle Museum. Sculpture of an unknown saint, probably an apostle (without attributes), late 15th c.
The Saint holds a girdle book in his left hand. The extension of the material at the tail is ended with a large knob. Over the tail of the book the material, ca. 3 cm wide, is extended; at the foredge of the covers it is folded to the inside. The book has one fastening with a clasp on the edge of the front cover. No bosses, corner, or centre pieces.
- 45–46. Lubowo (*województwo: zachodniopomorskie, powiat: stargardzki*, now: Stargard Szczeciński, Regional Museum), sculpted triptych of *Madonna and Child, St. George with St. Catherine*, late 15th c.
On the wings of the triptych are figures of the apostles, mostly depicted with books in their hands.
1. Upper scene of the right wing – an unidentified apostle is shown with a girdle book in his left hand, the pouch ended with a knob. On the spine are four bands (including two endbands). At the head of the covers is a loose extension of material. No fastening.
 2. Lower scene of the right wing – an unidentified apostle holds a girdle book in his left hand. Shown are one fastening and three

bands on the spine (including two raised endbands), with an extension of material at the head of the book.

47. Lwówek Śląski (German: Löwenberg, *województwo: dolnośląskie*), Church of the Assumption. Painted wing of a retable, Silesian workshop, after 1500.

Scene of the *Crucifixion with Mother of God and St. John the Evangelist*. John is shown with the block of a girdle book in his left hand, his right hand holding a long extension of material, probably ended with a knot.

48. Malbork (German: Marienburg, Castle Museum). Wooden sculpture of St. Matthew, one of the five preserved figures of the apostles coming from the Ingeln altar, Silesian workshop, ca. 1500.

The Apostle holds a girdle book (with four bands, including two endbands) in his right hand. At the head of the book is a wrinkled extension of material. The sculpture is partially damaged – a fragment of the book and the Apostle's hand, holding the end of the pouch, are missing.

49. Malbork, St. Dorothea of Montau, printed woodcut; Joannes de Kwidzyn, *Das leben der seligen frawen Dorothee*, Malbork, I. Karweyse, 1492.

The Saint is shown with a relatively large girdle book in her right hand. There are two bands (plus the endbands), one large fastening and a loose ending of the pouch. At the head and foreedge of the book, an extension of material is seen.

50. Mikorzyn (*województwo: wielkopolskie, powiat: kępiński*), St. Giles's Church. Sculpture of St. Giles, now in the main altar, ca. 1500.

The Saint is shown with a girdle book, pressing it with his right forearm to his body. The pouch is ended with a kind of ring placed beneath the edge of the material. Clearly visible are bands on the spine.

51. Mirocin Średni (German: Herzogswalde, *województwo: lubuskie, powiat: nowosolski*), (now: Wrocław, St. Mary on the Sand Church, property of the Archdiocese Museum, sygn. 16), pentaptych of *St. Mary, St. Andrew and the Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, Silesian workshop, 15th/16th c.

In the upper scene of the left wing is a sculpture of St. Matthew with a green girdle book in his right hand. There are four corner pieces and one hook-clasp fastening. No raised bands on the spine.

52. Mycielin (*województwo: lubuskie, powiat: żagański*), St. Nicolas's Church. Sculpted predella with the scene of *The Dormition of Mary* from the triptych of *Mother of God and St. Nicolas*, workshop of the Master of the Gościszowice Altar circle, ca. 1520.

- One of the apostles is shown with a girdle book, kneeling at the bed with Mary resting on it.
53. Niwisk (*województwo*: lubuskie, *powiat*: zielonogórski), St. Catherine Church (now: Warsaw, National Museum), painted wings of a pentaptych, 1505.
Recto of the left wing: St. Philip holds a bright-coloured girdle book in his right hand; the untied end of the pouch and one fastening are visible.
 54. Nowe Miasto Lubawskie (German: Neumark, *województwo*: warmińsko-mazurskie), St. Thomas the Apostle Church, sculpted passion, unknown workshop, ca. 1500.
St. John the Evangelist holds a black girdle book in his left hand. Three bands are visible, as well as one long-strap fastening and the loose end of the pouch. At the foredge and head of the book, the material is folded on the inner side of the covers.
 55. Nysa (*województwo*: opolskie), St. James the Greater Church, middle scene of a sculpted triptych of the *Crucifixion*, early 16th c.
St. John the Evangelist holds a light girdle book in his right hand. The extension of the material is visible at the head and foredge of the book, as well as the untied end of the pouch. The surface of the covers is decorated with a schematic linear stamping, with two fastenings and no bosses on the covers.
 56. Obórki (Schönfeld, *województwo*: opolskie, *powiat*: brzeski), triptych of *The Virgin and Child*, Wrocław workshop, ca. 1450/1460.
Lower scene of the left wing: sculpture of St. James the Greater with a girdle book hung at his belt, showing the loose ending of the extension of material at the tail of the book and one fastening. On the remaining edges the material is folded to the inner side of the covers.
 - 57–58. Olsztyn, German: Holstein, St. James the Greater Church, field triptych offered by Wilhem Groze to Emperor William, intended for the chapel at Malbork Castle, early 16th c.
Sculptures of the Apostles:
 1. Left wing, lower scene: St. Simon, shown with a girdle book in his left hand (three bands, one fastening, knob at the end of the pouch, loose extension of material at the head of the book).
 2. Right wing, upper scene: St. James the Greater, shown with a girdle book in his left hand (three bands, loose end of the pouch, the ending gathered at the head of the book).
 - 59–60. Ołtaszyn-Wrocław (*województwo*: dolnośląskie), Church of the Assumption, polychrome sculptures in the new altar coming from a Gothic predella, Silesian workshop, late 15th c.:

1. St. Catherine is shown pressing a girdle book to her body. The loose ending of the pouch is visible, five bosses on each cover.
2. St. Felix is shown holding a cross in his right hand, and a large girdle book in his left hand, no bosses.
61. Pierzchały (*województwo*: warmińsko-mazurskie, *powiat*: braniewski), Church, triptych of *Mother of God on a Crescent Moon, St. Margaret and St. John the Baptist*, workshop of Master Schofstain, ca. 1515 (missing).
Right wing, lower scene: sculpture of St. Lawrence shown with a girdle book. The knob gathering the extension of the material at the tail of the book is slipped under the Saint's belt.
62. Pilica (*województwo*: śląskie, *powiat*: zawierciański), St. John the Baptist Church, polychrome sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from a *Crucifixion* group on the rood arch, early 16th c.
The Saint is shown with a girdle book, holding a knot or knob placed at the end of the pouch. The material coming from the tail of the book forms a pouch gathered nearer to the spine. No bosses or fastenings.
63. Pławno (*województwo*: łódzkie, *powiat*: radomszczański, now: Warsaw, National Museum), sculpted triptych, workshop of Hans of Kulmbach, Cracow, ca. 1514–1518.
The scene of the *Testimony Before the King*: a girdle book is visible in the monk's left hand. The pouch has a loose end, without bosses or raised bands.
64. Płock, Cathedral of the Assumption and St. Sigismund (now: Warsaw, National Library), Erazm Ciołek's Missal, Cracow, ca. 1515–1518. Miniature: *Crucifixion* (k. 121v). To the right of the Cross St. John the Evangelist is shown with a large blue girdle book in his left hand, only partly visible, held by the loose end of material. At the bottom (at the head of the depicted book) a slightly wrinkled extension of material is visible.
65. Pobiedziska (German: Pudewitz, *województwo*: wielkopolskie, *powiat*: poznański), St. Nicolas's Church, polychrome sculpture of St. John the Evangelist, late 15th c. (missing).
The Saint holds a girdle book in his left hand, the pouch ending in a knot. No fastenings.
- 66–67. Przeclaw (*województwo*: lubuskie, *powiat*: żagański) St. James's Church (now: Wrocław, St. John the Baptist's Church), pentaptych of *Mother of God, St. Barbara and St. James*, Silesian workshop, ca. 1503.

In the wings of the altar the sculptures of the Apostles are arranged in threes in each of the four scenes.

1. Lower scene of the left wing, middle figure: St. Matthew shown with a red girdle book in his right hand, with late-Gothic rhombus-shaped corner pieces painted in gold. Over the Saint's hand is a knot at the end of the pouch.
 2. Upper scene of the right wing, middle sculpture: St. Philip shown with a red girdle book in his right hand, resembling that of St. Matthew's in the left wing of the altarpiece.
68. Radomice (*województwo: dolnośląskie, powiat: lwówecki*), St. James and Catherine Church, late-Gothic triptych from 1491 with sculptures added later, Dawid Grossman from Jelenia Góra.
Left wing of the triptych – sculpture of St. Bartholomew or St. Thomas from ca. 1510 – an apostle is shown with a relatively large book of a type intermediate between a girdle book and a leather overcover.
69. Reszel (German: Rössel, *województwo: warmińsko-mazurskie, powiat: kętrzyński*), St. Peter and Paul's Church, the figure of St. Paul on a silver reliquary (missing since 1945), first quarter of the 16th c.
The Apostle is shown with a girdle book in his left hand, a simple geometrical ornament on the covers.
70. Rożnów (Gross Rosen, *województwo: opolskie, powiat: kluczborski*), St. Peter and Paul's Church, sculpted triptych of *Mother of God, Bishop Saint (St. Nicolas?) and Archangel Michael*, late 15th c.
Upper scene of the left wing: sculpture of St. Peter. The Saint holds a large red girdle book ended with a knot in his right hand.
71. Sarbia (*województwo: zachodniopomorskie, powiat: kołobrzeski*), St. John the Baptist Church, sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from the group of the Crucifixion on the rood arch, second half of the 15th c.
The Saint holds a brown girdle book in his left hand. The book has five half-dome bosses on round bases and one hook-clasp fastening with a catch plate widened at the end. On the spine are four raised bands and two endbands. The pouch is ended with a knob. The leather is folded at the head of the book.
72. Sławno (German: Schlawe, *województwo: zachodniopomorskie*), post-Joannite Church, sculpture of St. John the Evangelist (missing), sculptor from Kamień (Master of Passion Figures of Sławno), late 15th c.
The Saint is shown with a girdle book with a loose ending of the pouch and an extension of material at the head of the book.

73. Smolnica (*województwo*: śląskie, *powiat*: gliwicki), Church, sculpted triptych of *Mother of God, St. Barbara and St. Dorothy* (missing since 1944), Silesian workshop, ca. 1470.
Lower scene of the left wing: polychrome sculpture of the Apostle (St. Philip). The Saint holds a girdle book in his right hand. The length of the loose extension of material is equal to the book's height.
74. Staniątki (*województwo*: małopolskie, *powiat*: wielicki), Benedictine nuns abbey, manuscript of the *Antiphonarium de tempore secundum consuetudinem ordinis sancti Benedicti*, 1535.
Miniature in the initial "D" depicting a Benedictine nun holding a rosary and a girdle book (breviary). The material is considerably extended at the head of the book. Loose ending of the pouch, two fastenings.
75. Stare Miasto (*województwo*: opolskie, *powiat*: namysłowski, church in Muchomor Wielki), St. Nicolas's Church, triptych of *Mother of God and the Four Virgins*, workshop of the Master of the Lubin Figures, ca. 1495.
Upper scene of the right wing: sculpture of an unidentified saint with a large girdle book in his left hand, its foreedge to the front.
76. Starogard Szczeciński, (*województwo*: zachodniopomorskie), Church, polychrome sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* group (missing), early 16th c.
The Saint holds a girdle book in his left hand, holding down the end of the pouch to his hip. The material coming from the tail of the book is ended with a knob visible above the Saint's hand. Four bands are on the spine (including two endbands).
77. Szydłowiec (*województwo*: mazowieckie), St. Sigismund's Church, polyptych of the *Assumption*, Painter of the Szydłowiecki Family, 1507–1510.
Middle painting – on the right side of the composition is one of the apostles with the end of a red girdle book hung over his belt. The end of the extension of material is visible at the tail of the book, gathered with a cord on the other side of the Saint's belt. At the head of the book is a relatively long extension of material. Both at the head and tail of the book, the material is considerably shrunk and its shape results from being held in the hand multiple times. On the surface of the cover oblique intersecting lines are seen.
78. Śrem (*województwo*: wielkopolskie), Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, engraving on the foot of a chalice, 15th c.
An unidentified saint is shown with a pouch-like book hung at his

- belt. The cord or thong forms a loop for the pouch to be hung at the belt fixed to the knob at the pouch's end. The very schematic representation allows no certain determination of the book's character.
79. Świdnica (German: Schweinitz, *województwo: dolnośląskie*), St. Wenceslaus and Stanislaus's Church (burgher chapel), sculpted polyptych of *The Dormition of Mary*, workshop from Veit Stoss's circle, 1492. Middle scene: an unidentified apostle with a large green girdle book in his left hand. Visible are corner pieces, an octagonal centre piece, one fastening, and a loose extension of material below the head of the book.
 80. Tczew (German: Dirschau, *województwo: pomorskie*), St. Cross Church, engraving on the foot of a late-Gothic chalice of a fraternity of priests, third quarter of the 15th c.
St. John the Evangelist in the *Crucifixion* scene holds a girdle book in his hand. The extension of material at the tail of the book is exceptionally long, with a loose ending. The decoration of the covers includes lines shaped like St. Andrew's cross with marked bosses at their ends.
 81. Warnice (German: Warnitz, *województwo: zachodniopomorskie, powiat: pyrzycki*), St. Joseph Church, apostles figures from ca. 1450–1480 coming from a Gothic retable, Brandenburg workshop, later fixed to the main altar made in 1604.
In the lower scenes of the left wing, one of the apostles holds a greenish-grey girdle book in his left hand, with its foredge to the front. The extended material is visible at the heads of the covers, with two fastenings. It is a book of a relatively large format (proportionally speaking ca. 15–20 cm), with an even longer extension of leather forming a pouch at the tail ended with a knot.
 82. Warsaw, National Museum, polyptych of *The Life of Mary and Christ*, from the Hamburg Cathedral, Absolon Stumme, 1499.
A sculpture of St. Matthew, later transferred from the side wings of the altar (one of twelve mediaeval figures purchased in Brunswick by C. Steinbrecht and added to the altar in Malbork). A blue girdle book is shown, having two fastenings with long thongs with pointed ends, without visible bands. The foredge of the book is also blue, which may mean it is covered with the extension of the cover material as well.
 83. Warsaw, National Museum, painting: *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and an Angel*, Sandro Botticelli, 1480s.
On the table in the foreground is a book in a white textile binding, an intermediary form between a girdle book and a *chemise* binding.

84. Włocławek, Cathedral Treasury, engraving on the foot of a chalice (no. 3) from the donation of Władysław Oporowski (1434–1449).
St. John the Evangelist holds a girdle book in his hand. It shows a loose ending of the pouch, four bosses, a long-strap fastening, six bands visible on the spine, with the material folded at the foredge and head of the book.
85. Wrocław, St. John the Baptist Cathedral, tombstone of Rudolf of Rudesheim (1468–1482) in the presbytery, Jost Tauchen.
One of the simplified figures depicted on the left bottom side against the architectural background of the composition is a Martyr Saint with a girdle book in his left hand, showing one fastening.
86. Wrocław, St. Barbara's Church (now: Warsaw, National Museum), St. Barbara's altar, 1447.
St. Felix holds a red girdle book in his right hand. Three raised bands, as well as raised endbands are visible, as well as accurately represented bosses (5) and two long-strap fastenings ended with *fibulae* with added leather pulls. Bookmarks are at the bottom of the book.
87. Wrocław, St. Barbara's Church, south vestibule, relief epitaph (inscriptions illegible, save for the date) with the *Crucifixion*, 1491.
St. John the Evangelist, to the right of the cross, is shown with a girdle book hung at his belt on the left.
88. Wrocław, Corpus Christi Church (now: Wrocław, National Museum), polyptych of the *Dormition of Mary*, Master of the Dormition of Mary, 1492.
In the lower scene of the left painted wing, St. James the Less is holding an open red girdle book on his right palm, folding the loose extension at the bottom of the book. St. James, similarly to the other Apostles on the versos of the wings, is modelled after the copperplates by Schongauer.
89. Wrocław, St. Elizabeth's Church, sandstone tabernacle in the north part of the presbytery, Jost Touchen, 1453–1455.
On the column shafts are small sculptures representing prophets, saints and angels. One of them (a prophet) holds a girdle book in his right hand.
90. Wrocław, St. Elizabeth's Church, the Krappe Family Chapel, (now: Warsaw, National Museum, sygn. 104,1), sculptures of the apostles from the *Prayer in the Garden*, before 1492.
One of the slumbering apostles, St. James the Greater, holds a girdle book with two fastenings. The black surface of the covers is visible.

91. Wrocław, (before 1945 in Schlesische Museum für bildende Künste), triptych of *St. Martha, St. Lawrence and an Unknown Saint*, central part sculpted, wings painted, 1504.
On the left wing, St. Thomas is holding a spear and a girdle book in his left hand.
92. Wrocław, National Museum (nr inw. XI-241), sculpture of St. John the Evangelist from the *Crucifixion* group, Silesian workshop; 1440–1450.
A small figure of the Saint is holding a schematically represented white girdle book in his right hand, with a loosely wrinkled ending of the pouch, and no fastenings or decorations on the covers.
93. Wrocław, University Library (Inw. Graf. 6911), a woodcut of St. Augustine, second half of the 15th c.
The Saint is depicted in crosier vestments with a pastoral in his right hand and a girdle book in the left against a landscape with a child pouring water from the river into a hole with the use of a spoon. The binding is shown simplistically, the ending of the extension at the tail is untied and has no fastening.
94. Wrocław-Ołbin (German: Elbing), Norbertine abbey, *Crucifixion*, miniature from the *Missale Wratislaviense* (now: Library of the University of Wrocław, sygn. I F 361) from 1472 (since 1875 the miniature has been in the Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, inv. no. 1250 (415 Einzelblatt)).
St. John the Evangelist is shown pressing the book to himself with his left forearm, the rather stiff leather is extended over the edges of the covers. Due to the small fringe of the material and relatively large size of the book it may be argued that it is more of a leather overcover.
95. Żabowo (*województwo*: zachodniopomorskie, *powiat*: goleniowski), Parish Church (now: Szczecin, National Museum), Apostle, sculpture from the group of 6 preserved apostles, late 15th c.
The Saint is shown with a black or dark brown girdle book. The end of the pouch is terminated with a knob or a knot. At the top of the covers is wrinkled loose material, on the foredge wound up. On the spine are two distinct bands, and raised endbands on its ends. No fastenings. The book shown with its foredge to the front.
96. Żagań (German: Sagan, *województwo*: lubuskie), ambulatory of a post-Augustinian monastery, Epitaph of the Augustinian Abbot Marcin Rinkenberk, sandstone, after 28 IV 1489.
In the middle of a rectangular stone is an abbot in pontifical vestments. In his right hand is an abbatial crosier with a *panniselus*, and

a girdle book held by the beginning of the loose material near the spine next to the tail of the book. Bosses (2x5), two fastenings and a sort of a hoop gathering the end of the pouch.

CHEMISE-TYPE BINDINGS

1. Gdańsk, Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, polyp-tych (so-called Great Altar of the Ferber Family), ca. 1480–1484.
In front of Mary is an open book in a black velvet *chemise* binding. The material is visible at the foredge of the back cover with a slightly larger piece, at the head of the book, falling over the edge of the table. All edges of the covers are also black which suggests that the book is additionally covered in a black material. The wrinkles of the material at the endbands may mean that the velvet is not fixed to the spine, and the black colour of the endband implies that the book was first covered with black leather.
2. Gdańsk, Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, (now: Warsaw, National Museum, *St. Reinhold Altar*, Joos van Cleve, 1511–1516.
Among the figures on the predella, on the left is St. Catherine and, to her right, a monk saint, both holding open books in *chemise* bindings, a reddish-brown one and a green one, respectively.
3. Gościeszyn (*województwo*: kujawsko-pomorskie, *powiat*: żniński), Church of the Annunciation, painting: *Mary and Child in the Garden (Hortus conclusus)*, painter from the Bouts workshop, fourth quarter of the 15th c.
On Mary's lap is a red book bound with thong endbands with additional yellow-ochre fabric (?) protecting the covers and forming a 'coat' (*chemise*) encompassing the edges of the leaves when the book is closed. The external material is wound to the outer edge of the front cover and extended at the heads and the foredge of the back cover. At the tail the material is longer than elsewhere.
4. Cracow, National Museum (Princes Czartoryski Museum), unknown French-Dutch painter of the 15th c. [*Woman*] *Saint with a Book* (missing since 1939–1940).
The painting most probably shows Mary with an open purple book with *chemise*-type binding, with the edges of the material decoratively finished and embroidered with threads.
5. Cracow, National Museum (Princes Czartoryski Museum), Ambrosius Benson, *St. Mary Magdalene Reading*, early 16th c.
The Saint is sitting at the table with an open prayer book in her hands, the book has a brown-claret *chemise* binding. The loosely arranged

material of a width that is similar on the upper edge and fore-edge of the covers suggests that it is a fabric. At the tail of the covers the extension of material is visibly longer than elsewhere. The same material covers both the outside and the inside of the covers.

6. Cracow, Wawel Royal Castle, Dutch painter, *Triptych with the Adoration of the Magi*, first half of the 16th c.
Recto of the right wing – in front of a kneeling monk in a Norbertine habit lies an open book in a dark-blue overcover (*chemise*) binding.
7. Poznań, National Museum, painting: *St. Mary Magdalene Reading*, Andriaen Ysenbrandt's circle, early 16th c.
The painting's composition is similar to that of the Cracow version of Benson's work. The Saint is depicted with an open prayer book in her hands which has a greyish-greenish-blue velvet *chemise* binding.
8. Warsaw, National Museum, Jean Bellegambe, painted *Triptych of the Lamentation of Christ*, ca. 1495–1500.
In the right wing, on the kneeler in front of the donator Jossine de Moscron lies an open book in a dark-blue *chemise* binding.
9. Warsaw, National Museum, painting: *Madonna and Child with St. Anne*, Dutch school, first quarter of the 16th c.
On Mary's lap lies an open prayer book in a *chemise*-type binding. On the floor can be seen a typical bag for the book with tassels and an opening closed with a cord.
10. Wrocław, John the Baptist Cathedral, (now: Wrocław, National Museum, nr inw. XI 1226), panel painting with the scene of the *Annunciation* from the epitaph of Canon von Kessel, Wrocław painter, ca. 1600.
Mary is holding an open prayer book in clasped hands close to herself. At the bottom of the book hangs a wrinkled extension of material. The spine is shown with a sunken spine with a braided (leather) endband joining the black material on the covers with the book block. Along the remaining the edges no material protrudes. Decoration consisting of an outlined frame is on the surface of the covers, separating the bordure from the inner part of the binding.
11. Wrocław, St. Barbara's Church (now: Warsaw, National Museum), St. Barbara's altar, 1447.
St. Adauktus with an open purple-red pouch prayer book. The material covering the binding resembles fabric (velvet). No corner pieces, visible long-strap fastenings with metal *fibulae* at the ends, similar to those in the hand of St. Felix. The binding of the prayer book has the character of a court-like *chemise*. See the list of girdle books, no. 86.

LEATHER OVERCOVER

- 1–2. Cracow, National Museum (Ms Czart. 1212) Erazm Ciolek's Pontifical, 1510–1515.

Miniatures:

1. *The Consecration of the Altar Retable* (f. 128). On the altar lies an open book with wide fringes of material (yellow-ochre) protruding beyond the covers of the book (leather overcover?). The small format and the considerable distance to the depiction make an accurate reading of the details debatable.
2. *Pontifical Mass* (initial O(ficio), f. 252v.). On the altar table a book is visible with a small fringe of material at the outer (?) and lower margin of the covers and a far smaller one at the head. On the back cover two fastenings are seen.
3. Poznań, National Museum, painting: *Madonna and Child Surrounded by Angels*.
Choir of Angels leaning over a sizeable book in a leather overcoat (?) with gilt and gauffered edges.
4. Warsaw, National Museum (from the Hamburg Cathedral), polyptych *The Life of Mary and Christ*, Absolon Stumme (?), 1499.
Scene: *The Dormition of Mary* – open books are in the Apostles' hands (with grey leather overcoats).

BAG

1. Gdańsk, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, “*Priest forced to defend his Homeland*”, drawing in a handwritten satire on the Reformation movement by Jan Dymitr Solikowski „*Facies perturbatae et afflictatae reipublicae eiusque restaurandae ratio per visionem in Patmo insula revelata*”, 1565.
A priest is shown holding a large sword at his waist and carrying a bag hanging on his left forearm captioned “*Breviarium*”.
2. Cracow, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, *St. James the Greater*, copperplate, Hendricks Goltzius, ca. 1589.
In front of the Saint a small book in an adjusted bag is fastened with a cord of ribbon. Through the material the raised bands and endbands can be seen.
3. Warsaw, National Museum, painting: *Madonna and Child with St. Anne*, Dutch school, 16th c.
At the bottom of the composition, in front of Mary, Anne, and Jesus lies a small book bag. Its characteristic features can be seen: tassels,

the ribbon reeved through to close the opening and a separate ribbon to serve as a handle of the bag.

CATCH, HOOK

1. Gdańsk, Historical Museum of the City of Gdańsk, Cash Office Hall of the Gdańsk Main Town Hall, wall painting *The Tribute Money*, Anton Möller, 1601.
One of the Pharisees carries a bright-ochre book hung at his belt, probably using a hook and a ring fixed directly to a cover (not visible here).

BOOK BOX

1. Gorzów Wielkopolski (German: Landsberg an der Warthe, *województwo: lubuskie*), Cathedral of the Assumption, triptych of the *Crucifixion*, second half of the 15th c.
Lower scene of the left wing: sculpture of an apostle with a book box at his side, using a wide belt.
- 2–3. Warta (*województwo: łódzkie*), St. Nicolas's Church, triptych of *The Assumption of Mary* (Warta II), (wings and predella: Warsaw, National Museum), Master of the Assumption of Warta, ca. 1515–1520.
 1. Middle painting: in the hands of the praying Apostles open books are seen with white, undecorated edges and in black bindings. On the right of the composition there is an apostle in a habit with a rectangular box hung at the belt on his left side using a leather strap.
 2. *Descent of the Holy Spirit* – open books in black bindings are in the Apostles' hands, one of them with a box hung at the belt (similarly to the middle panel).
4. Wieliczka (*województwo: małopolskie*), St. Sebaldus's Church, sculpture of St. John the Evangelist, early 16th c.
The Saint holds (in his left hand) a book bound with corner and centre pieces and two fastenings (long straps without hasps are visible); a two-part book box with an oblong fastening is tied at his side.
5. Wrocław, St. John the Baptist Cathedral, *St. John the Evangelist*, wall painting in the north-east part of the apsis, in the lower section, ca. 1500 (before 1506).
A box is hung at the Saint's belt. However, it is hard to unquestionably identify the function of the box due to the painting being damaged.
6. Wrocław, St. Elizabeth's Church (now: Warsaw, National Museum), polyptych of *The Annunciation with a Unicorn*, Master of the Polyptych of The Annunciation with a Unicorn, ca. 1480.
Scene in the right wing behind the scene of the *Dormition*: St. John

the Evangelist, supporting Mary, has a red book box with a golden oblong fastening hung at his belt on the left side.

7. Wrocław, St. John the Baptist Cathedral (now: Brzeg, Castle Museum), painted altar wings of the *Our Lady of Sorrows*, 1507.
Inner right wing, upper scene: *St. John the Evangelist* is shown with a black box for a book hung at his side.

ANNEX II. LEATHER OVERCOVER BOOKS IN POLISH COLLECTIONS

1. Gdańsk, State Archives, *Erbuch 1417 (bis saec 18)*, sygn. 369,1/118, 15th c.
2. Gdańsk, State Archives, *Das Wasebuch*, sygn. 369,1/126, (F 174), 1421.
3. Gdańsk, State Archives, *Ebschichtungsbuch 1417 [1506]*, sygn. 369,1/117.
4. Gdańsk, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, *Missale secundum notatum dominorum Teutonicorum*, Ms Mar. F. 61, 15th c.
5. Gdańsk, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, *Missale secundum notatum dominorum Teutonicorum*, Ms Mar. F. 80, 1433.
6. Gdańsk, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, *Missale secundum notatum dominorum Teutonicorum*, Ms Mar. F. 400, 15th c.
7. Gdańsk, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, *Decretum Gratiani abbreviatum Vetuloni*, Ms. Mar. F. 275, 13th c.
8. Gdańsk, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, *Missale secundum notatum dominorum Teutonicorum*, Ms. Mar. F. 402, 14/15th c.
9. Gdańsk, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, *Antyfonarium pars III*, Ms. Mar. F. 410, 1513–1523.
10. Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, *Biblia Latina cum prologis Frater Ambrosius michi tua vetus Testamentum*, rkps nr 291, 1249–1250.
11. Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, *Sermones super Evangelia dominicalia*, rkps nr 1565 III, 14th c.
12. Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, *Rudolfi Monachi Pastorale*, rkps 1602, 14th c.
13. Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, *Missale*, rkps 1608, 14th c.
14. Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, *Commentarius Igidius de Colonna da Anima Arystoteles*, BJ 631, 15th c.
15. Cracow, Library of the Metropolitan Chapter, *Missale*, rkps 2, 15th c.
16. Cracow, Library of the Metropolitan Chapter, *Biblia Sacra*, rkps 65, 14th c.
17. Sandomierz, Library of the Chapter, *Gregorii Decretales*, rkps K 110, 13th/14th c.
18. Sandomierz, Library of the Chapter, *Liber Pantheon magistri Gottifredi*, rkps K 114, 1335.
19. Sandomierz, Library of the Chapter, *Divus Thomas, Super quartum Sententiarum*, 13th/14th c.

20. Sandomierz, Library of the Chapter, Rabanus Maurus, *Liber Machabacorum et Novum Test.*, sygn. 91 (46), 1330–1370.
21. Sandomierz, Library of the Chapter, *Venerabilis Bedae Homiliae*, sygn. 47, mid-14th c.
22. Sandomierz, Library of the Chapter, *Biblia Sacra cum prologo Sancti Hieronymi. Genesis ad Paralypomenon*, sygn. 3, 14th c.
23. Sandomierz, Library of the Chapter, *Liber Tobiae – ad Malachiam*, rkps (45), 14th c.
24. Sandomierz, Seminary Library, *Summa theologica Thome de Aquino*, sygn. E 614, 15th c.
25. Toruń, University Library, *Missale*, Ms 4399, 15th c.
26. Włocławek, Seminary Library, *Biblia Sacra*, 15th c.
27. Wrocław, Library of the Chapter, *Viaticum–Breviarum Wratislaviense*, ms 21 n, 15th c.
28. Wrocław Library of the Chapter, *Breviarium*, rkps III a 1, 14th c.
29. Wrocław, Library of the Chapter, *Liber agendarum Ecclesiae Wratislaviensis*, rkps nr 152, 1302–1319.
30. Wrocław, Library of the Chapter, *Missale Wratislaviense*, rkps nr 47n, 14th c.
31. Wrocław University Library, *Missale Wratislaviense*, M. 1162, 15th c.
32. Wrocław University Library, *Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, I F 33, 15th c.
33. Wrocław University Library, *Biblia Latina*, I F 12, I 15th c.
34. Wrocław University Library, Henrico de Oythe, *Questiones determinate a venerabili... in lectura sua super pralterio in studio ugenensi scripte*, I F 50, early 14th c.
35. Wrocław University Library, *Breviarium de tempore et de Sanctis per Annom*, I F 444, 1316.
36. Wrocław University Library, Filippo de Bergamo, *Speculum Regiminis Catu moralisatis*, I F 247, 15th c.
37. Wrocław University Library, *Missale Wratislaviense*, M. 8372, ca. 1410.
38. Wrocław University Library, *Breviarium*, M. 166, 1420.
39. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Guillelmus Peraldus, Summa de Virtutibus*, 2. *Joannes de Hesdinio, Commentarius in Epistalam ad Titum* (1436), M. 6056 (Mil. II 2).
40. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Guillelmus Duranduss, Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, M. 6059 (Mil. II 5), 1435.
41. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Genesis – Ruth*. 2. *Nicolaus de*

- Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Moralis in in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Genesis- Ruth.*, M. 6060 (Mil. II 6), 15th c.
42. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. I Samuhelis – Iudith.* 2. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Moralis in in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. I Samuhelis- Iudith.*, M. 6061 (Mil. II 7), 15th c.
 43. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Psalmi.* 2. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Moralis in in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Psalmi.* 3. *Biblia Sacra. Liber Psalmorum*, M. 6062 (Mil. II 8), 15th c.
 44. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Hester – Ecclesiasticus*, M. 6063 (Mil. II 9), 15th c.
 45. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Prophetæ maiores*, M. 6064 (Mil. II 10), 15th c.
 46. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Daniel. Prophetæ minores. Libri Macchabeorum*, M. 6065 (Mil. II 11), 15th c.
 47. Wrocław University Library, 1. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Quattuor Evangelia.* 2. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Moralis in in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Quattuor Evangelia*, M. 6066 (Mil. II 12), 15th c.
 48. Wrocław University Library 1. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Epistolæ Pauli, Actus Apostolorum, Iacobi, Petri, Ioannis, Iudæ, Apocalypsis.* 2. *Nicolaus de Lyra, Ofm, Postilla Moralis in in Vetus et Novum Testamentum. Actus Apostolorum, Apocalypsis.* 3. *Index Rerum Alphabeticus in Postillam Hoc Volumine Contentam*, M. 6067 (Mil. II 13), 15th c.
 49. Wrocław University Library, Bartholomaeus Angelicus, OFM: *De Proprietatibus Rerum Libri XIX*, M. 6068 (Mil. II 15), 15th c.
 50. National Library, Warsaw, sygn. 008071 II, [Collection of treatises from the University of Prague from the years 1377–1388], 1377–1388.
 51. National Library, Warsaw, sygn. 008073 III, 1. *Das Sächsische Lehnrecht*, 2. *Das Kaiserrecht oder der Schwabenspiegel*, 15th c.
 52. National Library, Warsaw, sygn. akc. 8711, Rudolf von Ems, *Barlaam und Josephat*, 14th c.
 53. National Library, Warsaw, sygn. akc. 9871, *Biblia. Testamentum Vetus*, copied by Matthias Nosal, 1447.

SUMMARY

An overview of all works of art in Poland of the late Gothic and Renaissance periods gives us very rich resources to investigate many questions connected with the book of the time. Iconography is a perfect source not only for the bindings as such and their morphology, but also for the aspects of the book's use by different social groups: how they read them and how they preserved them. These questions are broadly related to the protection of the book and the function and character of the binding itself, adapted to the conditions of its use and storage.

One of the most interesting questions regarding book bindings in the late Middle Ages are the protective structures that are more or less joined with the book. They provide us with an account of the book's "life story", which is not always apprehensible to us now. Based on the analysis of the preserved relics of bookbinding and on the iconography we can now distinguish several interrelated types of additional protective structures of the book whose use was not limited to the Middle Ages but also persisted later on.

In Polish book collections a large number of books have been preserved, including mainly missals, in leather overcovers or displaying traces of such. However, iconographic sources show us no more than a few examples of this binding. Based on these we find no direct evidence for the occurrence in Poland of the *chemise*, the more elegant type of book-protecting, an overcover made of fabric that was widespread among the rich burghers and nobility in the Netherlands, England, France, Spain and Italy.

The fullest representation in the plastic arts in Poland is that of the girdle book. A thorough analysis of the artworks showing such bindings – chiefly in sculpture and, to a lesser extent, panel painting – has enabled us to determine the character and the users of this type of book in Poland. Plastic arts representations originating mainly from the Pomerania, Silesia and Lesser Poland from the period between the first half of the 15th century and the late 16th century show girdle books usually held by the apostles. In Poland, as all over Europe, the most comprehensive group are effigies of St. John the Evangelist, and, less often, of St. James the Greater, St. James the Less and St. Philip. Based on these depictions we are able to determine the main features of the structure and character of girdle books. Most often these are small *octavo* books with three binds on the spine and with one fastening typical of the period when the depiction was made.

The extension of the material – predominantly light or red – at the tail usually exceeds the height of the book by a bit and is more often left loose than tied in a knot. Among the plastic art representations we find all of the

structures of the outer material layer, which in most cases is not additionally fixed using protective bosses or corner and centre pieces. It seems that the lack of metal elements on the covers is quite characteristic of the bindings depicted in Polish art, which might have further contributed to the impermanence of such structures and be one of the reasons why so few leather overcovers have been preserved until now.

Aside from special, relatively durable forms of additional protection form (girdle books), iconography in Poland provides examples of the use of casings, sacks, and caskets for books. It appears that the casing was the oldest and the most universal of these forms, invented in church institutions and the archetype of subsequent forms of additional book protection. The casing was used not only for the transport of liturgical books, missals, and breviaries, but – as iconographic sources indicate – it was a convenient and common manner of storing books.

Apart from casings, the iconographical sources give us examples of caskets that were characteristic of the late Middle Ages and were mostly used for carrying small breviaries or other portable, small-size books attached to the belt. In spite of strong realistic tendencies in the late-Gothic art, these were influenced by iconographical stereotypes and stylistic schemes, relatively independent of the reality. The book box at an apostle's side was less convincing, symbolically speaking. A book in a normal binding or in form of a pouch held by the saint in hand was above all his attribute and symbol, while the less characteristic box with the book attached to the belt was more or less a merely decorative accessory, not necessarily understandable to a contemporary beholder. In reality, for pragmatic reasons it was simpler to place the necessary volume in a bag or a sack, or even add an additional leather overcover whose considerable extension at the lower edge of the book could be tied in a knot or hooked to the belt, than to make a special casing with an additional fastening.

The comparison of the preserved relics of bookbinding with the picture that emerges from the iconographic sources allows us to consider those sources as being generally reliable and fairly precise in illustrating their character. This is confirmed by the comparison of particular elements of the actual book relics with their corresponding depictions. What is more, the information from iconographic sources complements the analysis of the late-mediaeval bindings of manuscripts, as well as Renaissance printed books. The elements we cannot find in the original book binding relics but which we do encounter in the iconography are thus to be regarded as probable and taken into account in attempts at establishing a comprehensive typology thereof.

These findings are particularly useful in studying mediaeval bindings which underwent larger alterations than the accompanying relics. In many Gothic art relics we may often think that the book, as one of the elements of the composition, was depicted ineptly, simplistically, and that its depiction ignores minor details. This conclusion, however, is only partially true. Even less accomplished artists would unintentionally convey the image of the object as rooted in their experience, perpetuated in their memory and idealized, and would recreate what was characteristic and typical of the real object. Thus the apparently simple and austere blocks of the books encountered in Gothic art do reveal the authentic character of the bindings of the period.

