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LATE GOTHIC BOOKBINDING IN TALLINN

Bookbinding research is often pursued in two slightly diverging directions: either as primarily a study of internal structures and composition of the bindings or an investigation of cover decoration as artistic production. The former approach is mainly available for bookbinding conservators who, more readily than other researchers, can enjoy the dismemberment of old bindings and scrutinising the minute details. The latter entails examining the decorations using the methods of art history, often with the aim of establishing the patterns characteristic of specific regions or periods. In the case of blind-tooled bindings, as they generally were in the Gothic period, the study of tools and their combinations gives the main clues for determining the coherence of local artistic traditions as well as the influences from outside. Admitting that the most complete evidence could be gathered by combining both approaches, for practical reasons – keeping the bindings intact in the conditions they are – this study focuses mainly on the investigation of decorative designs. Still, the main features of construction will be briefly included, to the extent that they can be obtained with minimal intervention.

This paper aims to study bookbinding art in late-15th and early-16th century Tallinn within a distinct framework of locally developing craftsmanship. To that purpose, first establishing the corpus of surviving bookbindings created in Tallinn by a few closely interrelated binders will serve. After that, the characteristic traits of

binding construction, cover design and tooling of this tradition will be specified, which will also help to locate the bookbinders' craft in Tallinn against a broader regional background. Finally, the position of these anonymous bookbinders within the social and cultural settings of medieval Tallinn will be considered.¹

The previous scholarship on Gothic bookbinding in Estonia is scanty, limited mainly to occasional observations in studies on the history of book and book conservation. Surprisingly, the subject attracted almost no attention in Estonia in the early and mid-twentieth century when many essential contributions to the history of bookbinding appeared in Germany.² Although bookbinding art and craft in medieval and early modern Estonia made up an integral part of German bookbinding culture, Estonian material has not entered the enormous manuscript collections and printed catalogues of German bookbinding decorations.³ The decorated Gothic bookbindings in Estonian collections, chiefly in Tallinn, number around two hundred, which would already allow us to reach certain conclusions about their origins, the local bookbinding tradition, and the artistic achievement of those who created them. Earlier research has not focused on identifying the Gothic bookbinding workshops in Tallinn. Some groups of bindings in Estonian collections have received brief descriptions in local catalogues and databases. Tiina Kala included notes on the bindings of the medieval manuscripts in the catalogue of the manuscripts in Tallinn's collections; Rene Haljasmäe catalogued and described in more technical detail the bindings of the incunabula in a web database.⁴ No overview exists on the early 16th

1 I am indebted to Kerstin Schnabel, Kadri Paloveer, Tiina Kala, and Jürgen Geiß-Wunderlich for the discussions of several aspects of my study. Research for this article was supported by grant PRG1276 'Digital Livonia', financed by the Estonian Research Council.

2 For medieval and early modern bookbinding, see, e.g., Hans Loubier, *Der Bucheinband von seinen Anfängen bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Monographien des Kunstgewerbes, 21/22 (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1926); Konrad Haebler, *Rollen- und Plattenstempel des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, Sammlung Bibliothekswissenschaftlicher Arbeiten, 41–42 (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1928–1929); Ernst Kyriss, *Verzierte gotische Einbände im alten deutschen Sprachgebiet*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart: Hettler, 1951–1958).

3 Like the manuscript collections of Paul Schwenke, Ernst Kyriss, Ilse Schunke and others, all now available online in the Einbanddatenbank (www.hist-einband.de, henceforth EBDB [accessed 14 September 2024]); Haebler, *Rollen- und Plattenstempel*; Kyriss, *Verzierte gotische Einbände*; Ilse Schunke, *Die Schwenke-Sammlung gotischer Stempel- und Einbanddurchreibungen: nach Motiven geordnet und nach Werkstätten bestimmt und beschrieben*, vol. 1, *Einzelstempel*, vol. 2, *fortgeführt von Konrad von Rabenau, Werkstätten*, Beiträge zur Inkunabelkunde, 3. Folge, 7, 10 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1979, 1996) (henceforth S-S I and II).

4 Tiina Kala, *Mittelalterliche Handschriften in den Sammlungen des Stadtarchivs Tallinn und des Estnischen Historischen Museums: Katalog* (Tallinn: Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, 2007); Rene Haljasmäe et al., Hällitrukised Eesti mäluasutustes (Incunabula in Estonian Memory Institutions) database, 2007–2009, <http://www.tlulib.ee/incunabula> (the site is currently inaccessible due to technical issues).

century Gothic bookbindings with wooden boards, although they are even more numerous than earlier Gothic bindings in Tallinn. Grete Ots has issued a catalogue of medieval and early modern flapped bindings of archival books in the Tallinn City Archives, among them those decorated in blind.⁵ But no comprehensive attempt has been made to study the decorative patterns of surviving Gothic bookbindings or to assign them to particular workshops, either in Tallinn or elsewhere.⁶ Therefore, it is also difficult to assess what the proportion of locally produced and imported bookbindings in Tallinn was or who governed the local book trade during the age of the evolving printed book market.

THE STUDIED CORPUS

Among the roughly two hundred decorated Gothic bindings preserved in Tallinn's collections, a group of approximately twenty-five stands out. This is probably the most extensive corpus of extant Gothic bookbindings in Tallinn that consecutive masters have produced with the same, gradually augmented set of tools. The solid volumes with wooden boards covered in leather have been ruled and tooled in blind with a distinct set of mainly small stamps, developing and expanding over the timespan of some fifty years, in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. (Initially, two groups of tools may have been in use in two distinct binderies that merged only in a secondary phase; for more details see below. In the present study, the whole will be referred to as one workshop when the constant flow of this bookbinding tradition is meant.)

This group of bindings has almost escaped the notice of researchers. Bookbinding conservator Endel Valk-Falk has briefly remarked that some bindings in the Tallinn City Archives display the same stamps as the set of the works of St Augustine in Tallinn University Academic Library. Cataloguing the books owned by Johannes Block, Jürgen Geiß-Wunderlich encountered one early volume bound in Tallinn's

5 Grete Ots, *Uurimus klappköidetest Tallinna Linnaarhiivis: magistristöõ, lisa 2: Klappköidet Tallinna Linnaarhiivis* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2015).

6 For the rest of medieval Livonia, the series of typical Gothic bindings for both Franciscan and Dominican friaries of Riga have been isolated in Nikolai Busch, *Nachgelassene Schriften, Bd. 2. Schriften zur Bibliotheks- und Büchergeschichte* (Riga: s.n., 1937), 79–91; a detailed study is still missing. For late Gothic bookbinding workshops in Tartu, see Jürgen Geiß, 'Einbände für den Barther Reformator Johannes Block (1470/80–1544/45). Teil 3: Werkstätten aus Dorpat', *Einband-Forschung* 14 (2004), 12–19. Also the 16th-century Renaissance bookbindings and bookbinders in Tallinn have received considerably more attention, see Liia Rebane, *Lvrec – Venys – Ivditt: Tallinner Bucheinbände zu Beginn der frühen Neuzeit. Buchbinder, Einwirkungen und Verzierungen*, PhD thesis (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2018).

workshop and assigned the bindery the preliminary nickname 'Adler in Rhombus' ('eagle in lozenge') after a particular tool (stamp [6], see below) on this binding.⁷ A series of twenty bindings produced in this workshop was first briefly outlined in my article on late medieval monastic libraries in Estonia.⁸

Currently, 28 bindings belong to the studied corpus (see Table 1). All but three of them are located in Tallinn: mainly in the Tallinn University Academic Library and in the Tallinn City Archives. The City Archives' Cm 16 is the only volume in the corpus bearing the ownership inscription of the Dominican friary of Tallinn.⁹ Researchers have long agreed for both historical and book historical reasons that most of the medieval religious manuscripts, as well as early printed books in the City Archives, originally belonged to the same convent.¹⁰ The Dominican friary was the only male regular religious house in medieval Tallinn. The Archives also host the only account book (i.e. produced initially as a blank book) with semi-limp binding (TLA.191.2.19) in the corpus, which was used by the Great Guild of the merchants of Tallinn starting from 1527.

A smaller portion of the Dominican library ended up in the early modern Tallinn City Library at St Olaf's Church, whose collection now makes up the bulk of the historical collections of Tallinn University Academic Library.¹¹ The remains of the chains on the

7 Jürgen Geiß-Wunderlich, 'Katalog erhaltenen Bücher aus Blocks Gelehrtenbibliothek', *Johannes Block. Der pommerische Reformator und seine Bibliothek*, ed. by Jürgen Geiß-Wunderlich, Volker Gummelt, Herbergen der Christenheit, Sonderband 22 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2018), 221. For Block and his library, see the articles in the same volume.

8 Kaspar Kolk, 'Eesti kloostrite raamatud enne ja pärast reformatsiooni', *Reformatsioon – tõlked ja tõlgendused*, ed. by Piret Lotman, Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu toimetised, 16; A, Raamat ja aeg, 5 (Tallinn: Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu, 2019), 85–88.

9 See Kala, *Mittelalterliche Handschriften*, 185–195.

10 Gertrud von Walther-Wittenheim, *Die Dominikaner in Livland im Mittelalter: die Natio Livoniae* (Roma: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1938), 33; Tiina Kala, *Euroopa kirjakuultuur hiliskeskajast õppetekstides: Tallinna dominiiklase David Sliperi taskuraamat* (Tallinn: Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, 2001), 106–117; Tiina Kala, *Jultustajad ja hingede päästjad: Dominiiklaste ordu ja Tallinna Püha Katariina konvent* (Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2013), 212–214; Kolk, 'Eesti kloostrite raamatud', 83–85.

11 For the history of the early modern Tallinn City Library at St Olaf's Church, see Kyra Robert, 'Bibliotheca Revaliensis ad D. Olai im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', *Literatur und Institutionen der literarischen Kommunikation in nordeuropäischen Städten im Zeitraum vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Edmund Kotarski (Gdansk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 1996), 180–188; Tiiu Reimo, 'Book Collection of the 'Old Tallinn Library' (alte Revalsche Bibliothec)', *Books and Libraries in the Baltic Sea Region from the 16th to the 18th Century = Bücher und Bibliotheken im Ostseeraum vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Lea Kõiv, Tiiu Reimo (Tallinn: Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, 2006), 37–47; Kaspar Kolk, "'Vana Tallinna raamatukogu'" kolm allikat: komplekteerimisest 16. sajandil', *Tuna: Ajalookultuuri ajakiri*, 3/2017, 10–29; for the Dominican books in the St. Olaf's Library, see Kolk, 'Eesti kloostrite raamatud', 78–79, 86, 104–108.

back covers of the two volumes of Johannes de Imola's commentary on the Decretals (TLÜAR I-2338 and IV-1458) probably indicate the Dominican provenance.¹² The seven volumes of Amerbach's and Froben's edition of St Augustine (TLÜAR I-2243, AM Rmtk 2310), also with chains, and a volume of the *Casus* of civil law (TLÜAR IV-1445) arrived in the library at St Olaf's Church from the former library of St Nicholas' Church in Tallinn in 1660.¹³ The latter book had been donated (to the St Nicholas' Church?) probably around 1520 by the canon (later bishop) of Tallinn, Johannes Rotert.¹⁴ The three volumes of Pierre Bersuire's dictionary (TLÜAR X-1179) have been recorded as donations from the early 16th century priest of St Olaf's Church, Reinold Grist, in the mid-17th century inventory of the library.¹⁵ However, this might be an error or a mere conjecture, since these volumes do not occur in the list of the books donated by Grist that was composed immediately after his death in the early 1550s¹⁶, nor are there any marks of ownership or donation inside the books as with most of the surviving Grist's books. A small medical *Sammelband* (TLÜAR VIII-1502) belonged to an unidentified owner I G (?) at an early date and to Tallinn's merchant Hans Kampferbeck in 1554.¹⁷

Finally, two certain and one probable item have survived outside Estonia. A volume containing two manuscript parts dated 1481 in Tallinn and a printed edition dating from before 1479 belongs to the Evangelical Church Library in Barth, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

12 Kolk, 'Eesti kloostrite raamatud', 86.

13 Heinrich Bröcker, *Verzeichnüs derer Bücher, so von der alten Revalschen Bibliothec, sent Ao. 1552. überblieben, und jetzo, in S. Olai Kirche, anoch vorhanden sind* (Tallinn, 1658–1667; manuscript, TLÜAR Msc V-2901), fol. 9r. The parts I to III of St. Augustine have been bound together; parts VII and IX were missing already in 1660.

14 Almost vanished inscription on front pastedown: *Donum domini Ioannis Rotert*; Bröcker, *Verzeichnüs*, fol. 9r: *verehrt Johannes Rotert, Canonicus*; the mention of *canonicus* is no more visible in the book at present. For Johannes Rotert, see Leonid Arbusow, 'Livlands Geistlichkeit vom Ende des 12. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert. Dritter Nachtrag', *Jahrbuch für Genealogie, Heraldik und Sphragistik*, 1911, 1912, 1913 (Mitau, 1914), 177–178.

15 Bröcker, *Verzeichnüs*, fol. 4v; for Grist, see Juhan Kreem, 'Reinold Grist ja tema raamatukogu: pilk 16. sajandi esimese poole Tallinna vaimsetele võimalusetele', *Lugemise kunst*, ed. by Piret Lotman, Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu toimetised, 13; A, Raamat ja aeg, 2 (Tallinn: Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu, 2011), 151–165.

16 Kreem, 'Reinold Grist', 160–164 (the transcription of the inventory).

17 Kaspar Kolk, 'Teoloogiast astroloogiani. Reformatsioonijärgse kolmveerandsajandi tallinlaste säilinud raamatuid', *Piiri peal. Võim, usk ja kirjasõna siin- ja sealpool Rootsi aega*, ed. by Katre Kaju, Rahvusarhiivi toimetised = Acta et commentationes Archivi Historici Estoniae, 4 (35) (Tartu: Rahvusarhiiv, 2021), 179–180.

(Barth 2° E 20). It received the ownership inscription of Johannes Block in Tartu, presumably in the early 1520s, and travelled to Barth in Block's luggage in the mid-1530s.¹⁸ A volume of Origenes's works (UUB Riga Fol. 67) is now in Uppsala. Since the book has had a chain, it evidently initially belonged to the library of an unknown religious house or other ecclesiastical institution. Afterwards, it was in possession of the Riga Jesuit College in 1584, right after its establishment.¹⁹

The binding of the sermons of Leonardus de Utino (Leonardo Mattei) printed in 1496 that once belonged to the Dominican friary of Magdeburg and later ended up in Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel probably also originates from Tallinn's bindery.²⁰ This binding currently figures as the work of the so-called Graduale-Meister (Master of the Gradual) of Lübeck in EBDB, but that relies on the false identification of two stamps.²¹ The earliest history of this book is not clear. According to a user's inscription, it was in Magdeburg in 1541 at the latest; two more similar inscriptions, one of them from 1520, have not been located.²² The book may have received its covers in Tallinn and consecutively arrived in Magdeburg with Dominican friars travelling or moving from Tallinn's convent to Magdeburg. Close contacts between the friaries of Tallinn and Magdeburg are not known. One might even suggest that the book could have been bound in Magdeburg, and the tools reached

18 Geiß-Wunderlich, 'Katalog', 221.

19 Inscription on the title page: *Liber Collegij Societatis Iesu Rigae anno 1584*.

20 Leonardus de Utino, *Sermones Aurei de sanctis* (Lugduni: Trechsel, 1495 [i.e. 1496]), Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, H: E 142.4° Helmst.

21 See EBDB k002206 [accessed 7 December 2024]. The first confusion is a plain error: the fantastic animal, EBDB s004651 [accessed 14 September 2024], used in Tallinn and present on the binding from Magdeburg is clearly not the same as a fantastic creature on the bindings of Lübeck's workshops Graduale Meister and Akelei (EBDB w000251 and w000903, respectively), e.g. Bibliothek der Hansestadt Lübeck, Ms. theol. lat. 2° 18, currently merged with the tool used in Tallinn in EBDB. The other case is not so self-evident: the herbal diamond panels with pomegranates ('Rautenplatte') featuring on the bindings of Lübeck's Graduale-Meister (S-S I, Rautenplatte 3a) and of Tallinn's workshop are fairly close. The images are basically the same; only tiny details like the number of engraved dots on one or another stem or slight variations in the positions or distances of some leaves distinguish them from each other. One might even wonder about re-cutting the same tool, but the panels were probably used partly at the same time in Lübeck and Tallinn. The dimensions of the panel on the bindings of Lübeck, Ms. Theol. Lat. 2° 18 and 61 are 75 x 44 mm. The deviation of the height of Tallinn's panel is from 77 to 79 mm and of width from 43 to 46 mm depending on the pressure applied to the block, the stretching of leather, etc. So Tallinn's tool is also slightly taller. I am greatly indebted to Kerstin Schnabel in Wolfenbüttel for the photos, for the measures and other details, and valuable discussion on these bindings.

22 Inscriptions (according to the Herzog August Bibliothek's electronic catalogue): *Liber Conventus Magdebur. ordinis predicatorum fratri Egidio Lybusch ad usum incertum concessus 1541 a; Bonifacio Bodenstein; to frater Johannes Schyffman (?) (1520)*.

Tallinn only later, either as sold or with a moving bookbinder. All but one printed book with the covers decorated with the same series of stamps in Tallinn have been printed at least a decade later than the book from Magdeburg. However, if this book had been in Magdeburg's friary from the very beginning, it could have been bound in the friary too because in the late 15th century, bookbinders were active there – yet the tooling is different from theirs.²³ But in Tallinn, five of eight stamps present on the binding from Magdeburg will become extremely common.²⁴ Therefore, it is still more plausible that the book was bound in Tallinn and arrived in Magdeburg only later.

TABLE 1. THE BOOKS BOUND IN TALLINN'S LATE GOTHIC WORKSHOP. THE VOLUMES APPEAR IN THE LIST IN THE ORDER OF PUBLICATION (FOR SAMMELBÄNDE, BY PUBLICATION OF THE MOST RECENT OF THE BOOKS). TLA = TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES (IN BRACKETS THE OFFICIAL REFERENCE CODES OF THE ESTONIAN ARCHIVAL INFORMATION SYSTEM); BARTH = EVANGELICAL CHURCH LIBRARY IN BARTH, MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN; TLÜAR = TALLINN UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC LIBRARY; HAB = HERZOG AUGUST BIBLIOTHEK, WOLFENBÜTTEL; AM = ESTONIAN HISTORY MUSEUM; UUB = UPPSALA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

TLA Cm 2 (TLA.230.1.Cm2)	Jacobus de Voragine, <i>Sermones</i> (manuscript), Germany (?), c. 1300
TLA Cm 16 (TLA.230.1.Cm16)	Vocabularius 'Ex quo' (manuscript), Türi, 1454
TLA Htr 16 (TLA.230.1.Htr16)	Roberto Caracciolo, <i>Sermones quadragesimales de poenitentia</i> , Basel: Bernhard Richel, Michael Wenssler, not after 28 Oct 1475
TLA Ink 8 (TLA.230.1.Ink8)	Johannes Contractus, <i>Sermones de tempore et sanctis per totum annum</i> , Cologne: Johann Koelhöff the Elder, not after 1478
Barth 2° E 20	Tabulae super omnes libros Bibliae (manuscript), Tallinn: Nicolaus Vageth presbyter, 1481; Roberto Caracciolo, <i>Sermones quadragesimales de poenitentia</i> , Basel: Berthold Ruppel, Michael Wenssler, not after 1479; Ps-Bonaventura, <i>Quaestiones de summo bono ...</i> (manuscript), Tallinn: Nicolaus Vageth presbyter, 1481
TLÜAR VIII-1502	Ortolf von Baierland, <i>Bok der Arstедie (Bock der arstedien van allen krankheyden)</i> , Lübeck: Bartholomeus Ghotan, 1484; Valascus de Tarenta. <i>Eyn ghud bewert regimente van den pestilencien</i> , Lübeck: Bartholomeus Bhotan [Ghotan], 1484; Michael Schrick, <i>Kraft und doghede der branden watere</i> , Lübeck: Bartholomeus Ghotan, 1484

23 S-S II, 169.

24 See below, Table 3. The use of two tools in Tallinn might even antedate the binding from Magdeburg because the stamp [4] is present on one of the most archaic-looking of Tallinn's bindings (TLA Cm 2), and also the panel [19] features on the binding of a book printed more than a decade earlier than Leonardus's book from Magdeburg.

TLÜAR IV-1445	Vivianus Tuscus, Casus longi super Digesto vetere; id., Casus longi super Infortiato; Franciscus Accursius, Casus longi super Digesto Novo; Vivianus Tuscus, Casus longi super Codice; Guido de Cumis, Casus longi super Institutis, all Freiburg; Kilianus Piscator, c. 1494 or Basel: Johann Amerbach, 1489–1497
HAB H: E 142.4° Helmst.	Leonardus de Utino, Sermones Aurei de sanctis, Lugduni: Trechsel, 1495 (i.e. 1496)
TLA Ink 11 (TLA.230.1.Ink11)	Petrus Comestor, Historia scholastica, Strasbourg: Georg Husner, 16 Nov 1503; Raimundus Lullus, Opuscula, Paris: Guy Marchant, Jean Petit, 10 Apr 1499; Johannes Hug, Quadruuium Ecclesie, Strasbourg: Johann Grüniger, 1504
TLÜAR I-2243 (vols. 1-3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11); AM Rmtk 2310 (vol. 8)	Aurelius Augustinus, Prima(–Tertia) /Quarta /Quinta /Sexta /Octava /Decima /Undecima pars librorum, Basel: Johann Petri, Johann Amerbach, Johann Froben, 1505–1506
TLA Htr 15 (TLA.230.1.Htr15)	Gabriele da Barletta (Ps.-Antoninus Florentinus), Opus quadragesimalium & de sanctis sermonum flos florum nuncupatum, Venice/Milan: Giorgio Rusconi (?), 1506–1507 (?)
TLA Htr 20 (TLA.230.1.Htr20)	Albertus Magnus, Summa de laudibus christifere virginis Marie, Cologne: Heinrich Quentel (heirs of), June 1509; Johannes Trithemius, De laudibus sanctissime matris Anne tractatus, Leipzig: Melchior Lotter, c. 1501; Legenda sanctissime matrone anne genitricis virginis marie matris et hiesu cristi auie, Leipzig: Melchior Lotter, 1507
TLA Htr 14 (TLA.230.1.Htr14)	Petrus de Hieremia, Quadragesimale de peccato. Sermones de oratione. Sermones de decem preceptis et de quadruplici lege una cum sermone de passione domini nostri iesu christi. Sermones de fide una cum theologalibus ... questionibus, Lyon: Jean de Vingle, Simon Vincent, 1512
UUB Riga Fol. 67	Origenes, Tertius /Quartus tomus operum Origenis Adamantij ..., Paris: Josse Bade, Jean Petit, 19 October 1512
TLA Htr 36 (TLA.230.1.Htr36)	Thomas de Aquino, Secunda secunde, ... a ... Petro brussellensi acuratissime castigatus ac de novo revisus, Paris: Claude Chevallon, 1515
TLA Htr 23 (TLA.230.1.Htr23)	Speculum spiritualium, in quo non solum de vita actiua et contemplatiua, verum etiam de viciis, quibus humana mens inquinatur, ac virtutibus quibus in Deum acceditur, perpulchre tractatur ... Paris: Wolfgang Hopylius, London: William Bretton, 1 Dec 1510; Thomas Cantimpratensis, Liber apum, aut de apibus mysticis, sive de proprietatibus apum: seu universale bonum, Paris: Wolfgang Hopylius, c. 1516
TLÜAR X-1179 (vols. 1, 2, 3)	Pierre Bersuire (Petrus Berchorius), Prima /Secunda /Tertia pars dictionarii in qua dictio quelibet per literas alphabeti juxta congruentiam distinguitur ..., Lyon: Jacques Sacon, Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1516–1517
TLÜAR I-2338, IV-1458 (vols. 2, 3)	Johannes de Imola, Super secundo /tertio decretalium cum additionibus novissime his operibus adiunctis ..., Lyon: Jacques Sacon, Vincent de Portonariis, 1517
TLA.191.2.19	Maigrafenbuch (Foliant M) (manuscript), Tallinn, the Great Guild, 1527–1543

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BINDINGS

All but one of the bindings in the corpus are *stricto sensu* books, medieval manuscripts or early printed books bound within solid wooden boards covered with a piece of leather. The earliest item is a parchment manuscript written around 1300 but (re)bound in the late 15th century (TLA Cm 2, Fig. 1).²⁵ Another manuscript has been written on paper and dated 1454 in Türi in central Estonia, presumably by a certain *her Marten*, whose name also appears in the codex (TLA Cm 16, Fig. 2).²⁶ One mixed volume contains two handwritten parts dated 1481 in Tallinn by an otherwise unknown priest Nicolaus Vageth and a printed edition of the sermons of Roberto Caracciolo from 1479, all on paper (Barth 2° E 20).²⁷ The remaining volumes, occasionally Sammelbände, of the books printed on paper from 1475 to 1517 number twenty-four. Only the latest item in the corpus, an account book of the Great Guild of Tallinn (TLA 191.2.19), has a kind of semi-limp binding with a flap. The covers of this volume are made of stiff leather inside, covered with decorated piece of leather. None of the surviving books has pasteboard covers.

The inner structures of the bindings will be considered only briefly here. Most of the bindings have survived in good condition, and occasionally it is somewhat difficult to perceive all the concealed features of construction with sufficient certainty. Some of the features are rather homogeneous, while others vary considerably. The bindings have three to five sewing supports, depending on size. One manuscript (TLA Cm 16) and probably also one early printed book (TLA Htr 15) has its quires sewn on leather thongs split across the width of the spine. The remaining books, in all identifiable cases, have double supports made of cord. The supports normally enter the board from outside over the bevelled spine edge; after exiting to the inner face of the boards, they travel in the channels of varying lengths at right angles to the spine, until fastened in the second hole

²⁵ For a description of the manuscript, see Kala, *Mittelalterliche Handschriften*, 36–40.

²⁶ Hans Treumann, *Vanemast raamatukultuuriloost* (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1977), 14; Kala, *Mittelalterliche Handschriften*, 185–186, 188 (inscriptions).

²⁷ Jürgen Geiß-Wunderlich, 'Pommern, Livland, Finnland – und zurück', *Johannes Block. Der pommersche Reformator und seine Bibliothek*, ed. by Jürgen Geiß-Wunderlich, Volker Gummelt, Herbergen der Christenheit, Sonderband 22 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2018), 143–144; Geiß-Wunderlich, 'Katalog', 221.

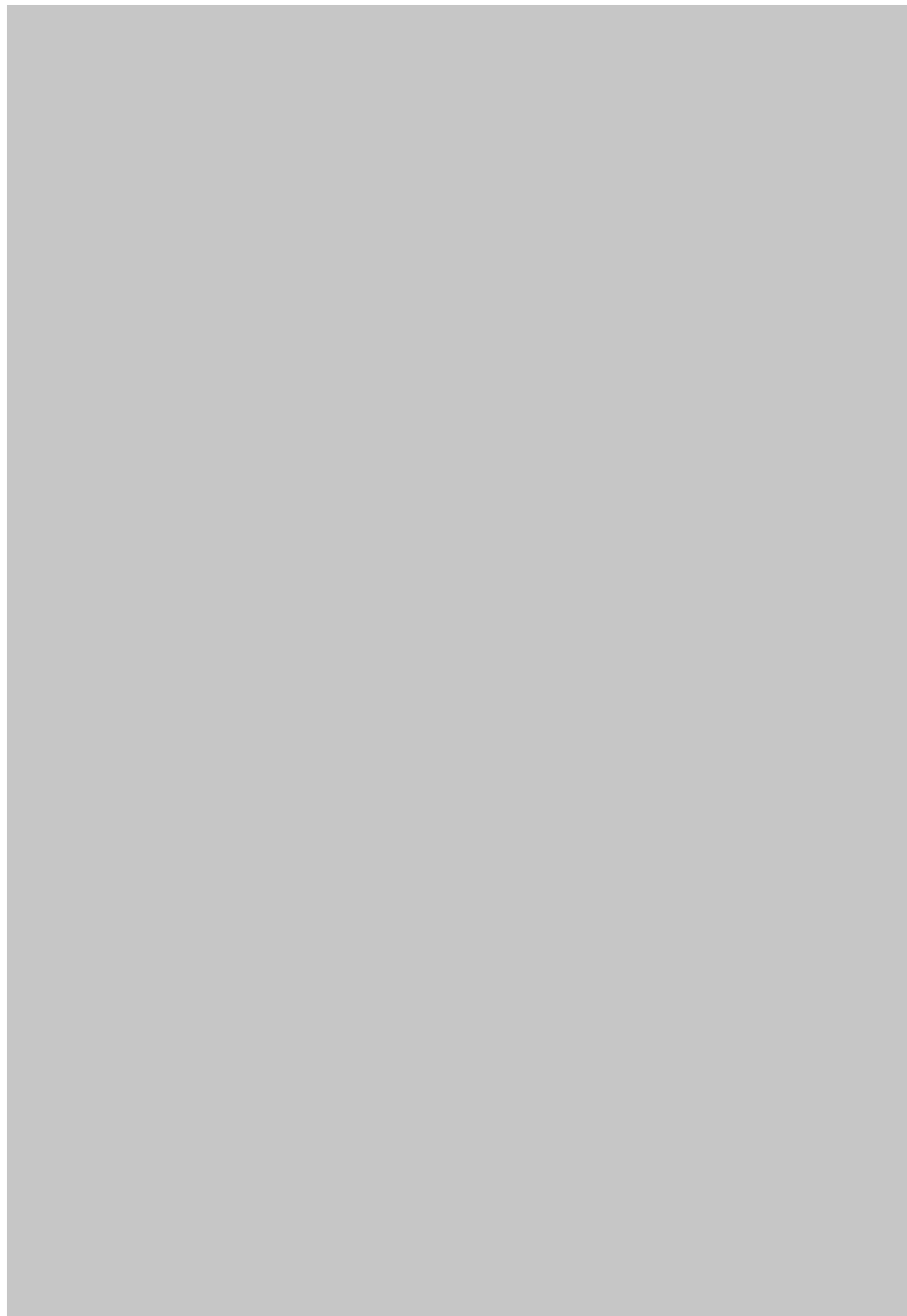


FIG. 1. TLA CM 2, BACK COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.

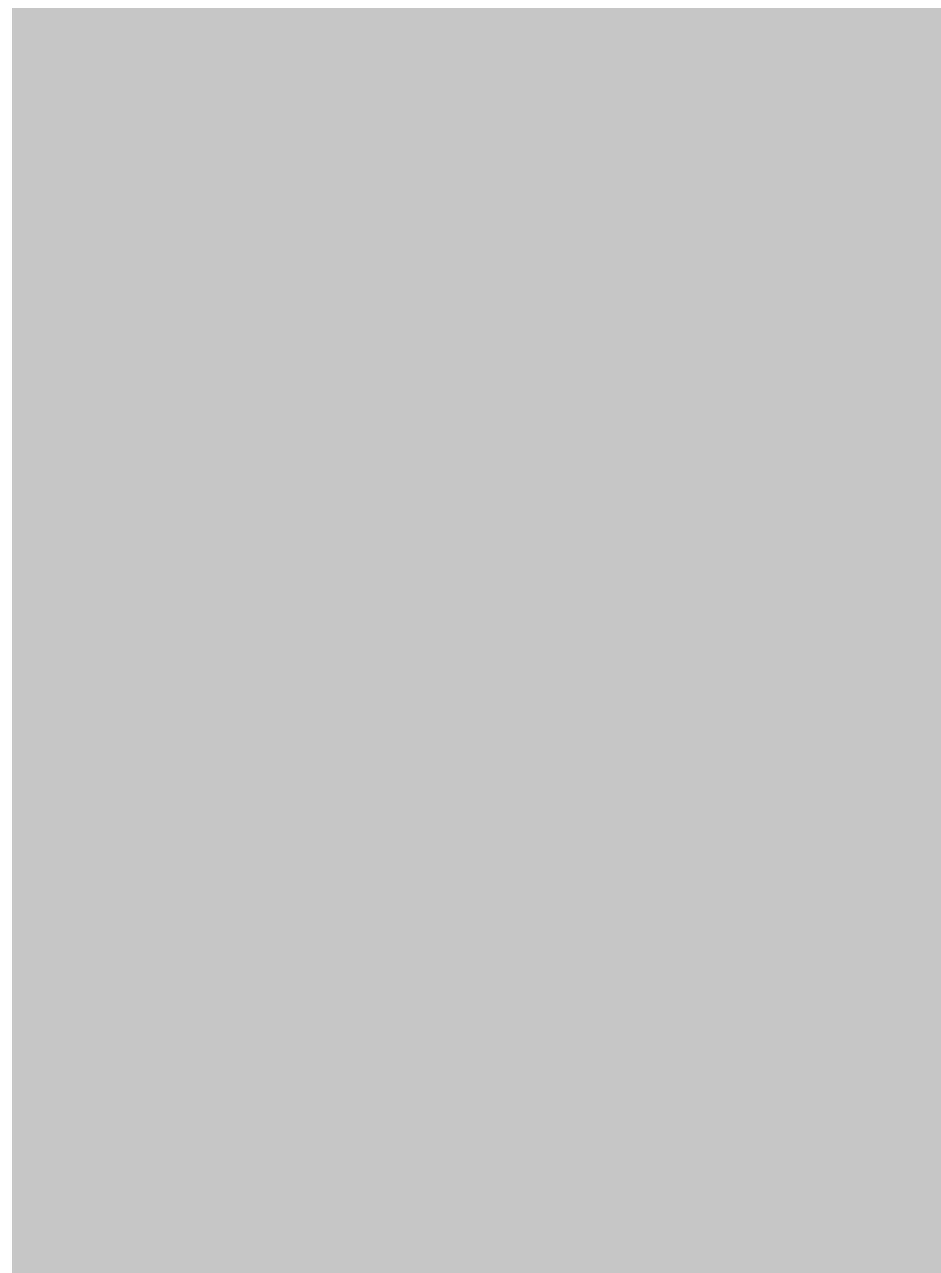


FIG. 2. TLA CM 16, FRONT COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.



FIG. 3. TLA HTR 16, FRONT COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.

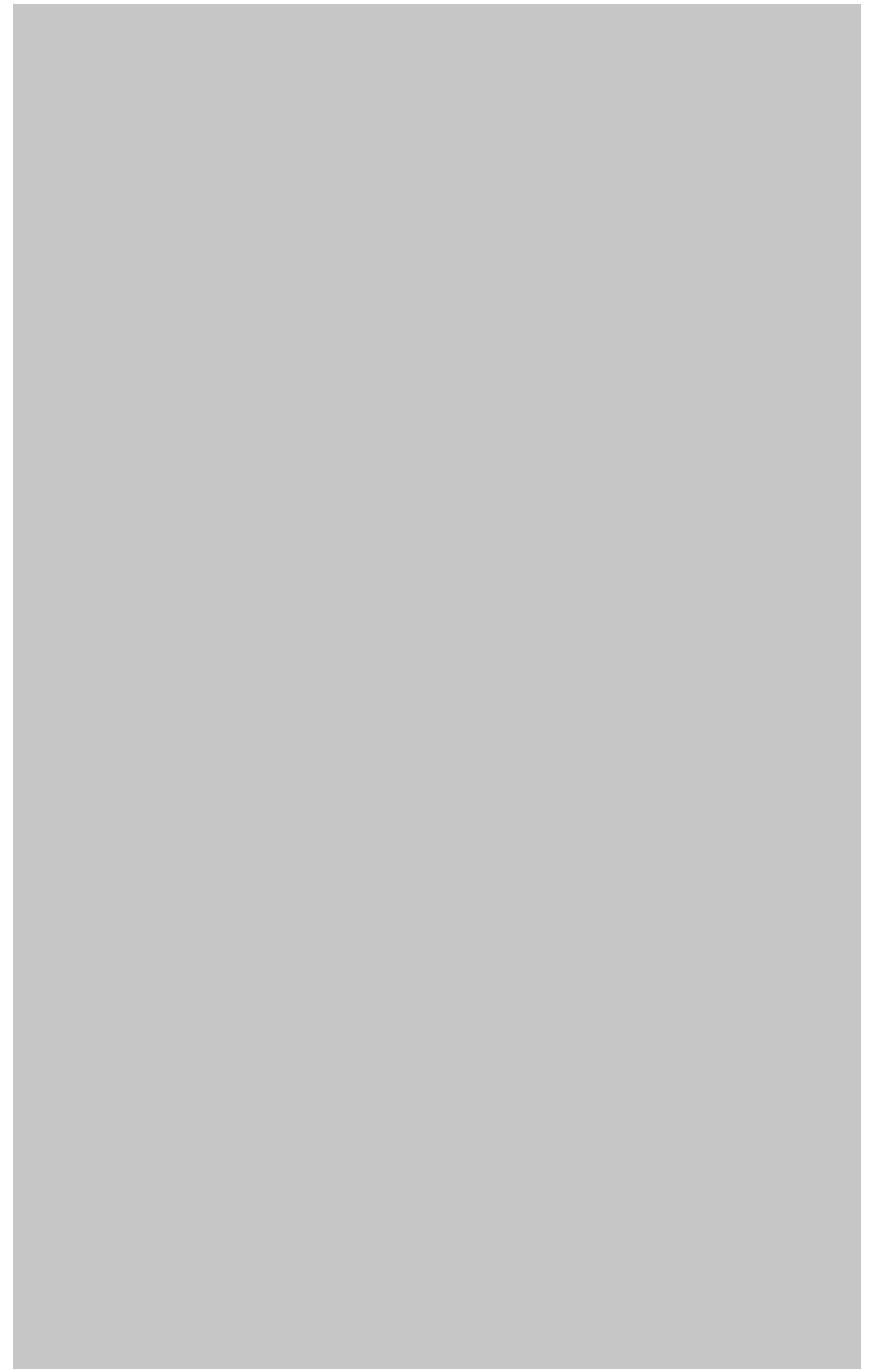


FIG. 4. TLA INK 8, BACK COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.



FIG. 5. TLÜAR IV-1445, FRONT COVER. PHOTO: STANISLAV STEPASHKO.

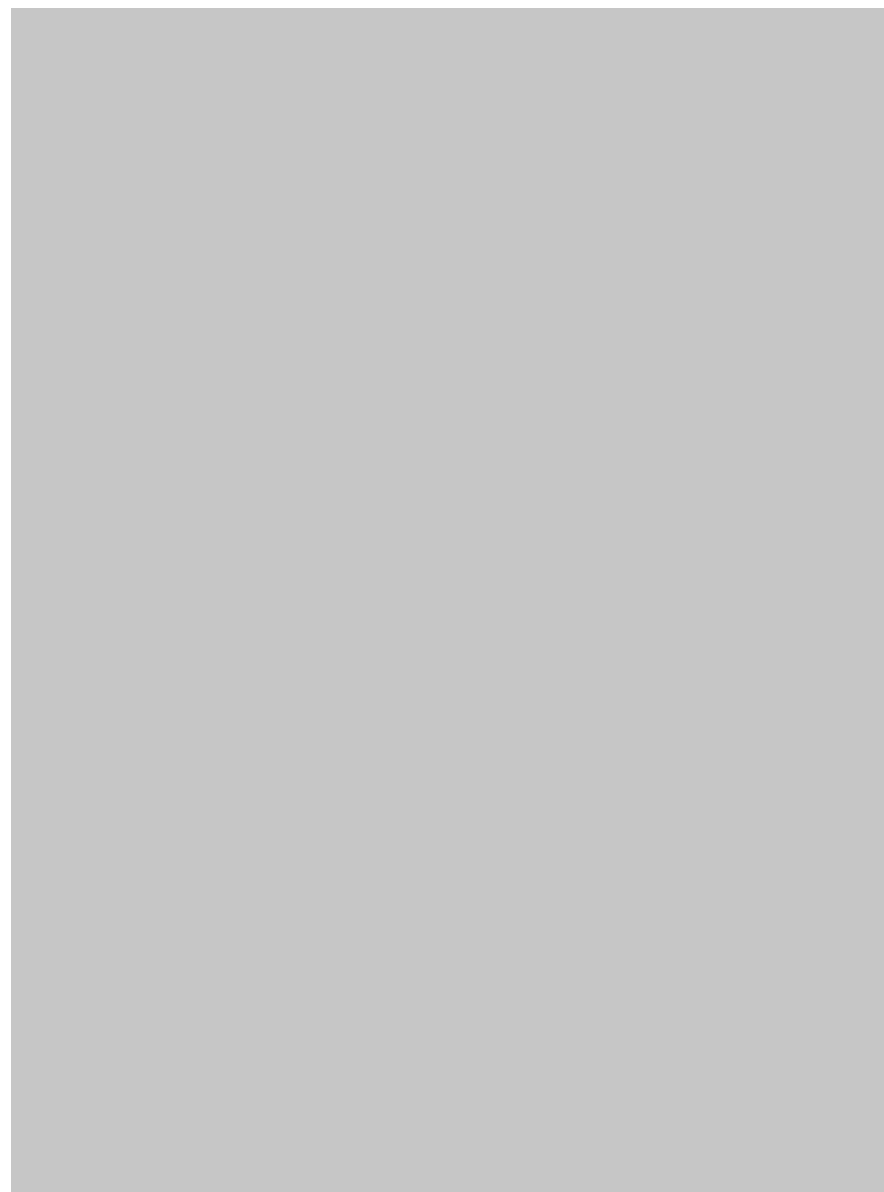


FIG. 6. TLÜAR IV-1445, BACK COVER. PHOTO: STANISLAV STEPASHKO.

with wooden pegs. The supports of one early small book (TLÜAR VIII-1502) are fastened with the pegs at some distance from the edge without exiting to the inner face of the boards. The bindings of the large volumes of Pierre Bersuire's dictionary (TLÜAR X-1179) and Johannes de Imola's (TLÜAR I-2338, IV-1458) commentary from the later period have the supports entering through tunnels cut in the sloping board edge but exiting to the inside as usual. In all cases, the supports show as raised bands on the spine.

Only the older bindings display endbands at the spine edge. The endbands of the two old manuscripts have been brought over the outside of the boards and pegged into holes at some distance. Sewing through the spine gives them additional reinforcement. The endbands of the older folio volumes of mainly printed 15th-century books usually enter the boards from outside over the edge like the supports, but after exiting to the inner face, they run diagonally to the board corners in shallow grooves.²⁸ They also hide underneath the spine, but have not been sewn through. All the remaining bindings have either integral endbands at some distance from the spine edge, functioning as additional single sewing supports, or the endbands are omitted altogether and only a link-stitch change-over is visible instead.²⁹ On the spine, they might show as slightly raised bands, occasionally as false bands whose position does not coincide with the actual location of the endbands or change-over.

Parchment manuscript waste has been used for endleaves in all but one (TLÜAR VIII-1502) smaller binding; often both pastedowns and flyleaves occur.³⁰ The folio volumes received paper endleaves, normally blank from early on; on one occasion (TLA Htr 16), endleaves of paper manuscript waste have survived. Parchment waste pastedowns (TLÜAR I-2338) or mirrored text from lost endleaves, probably parchment fragments (TLÜAR X-1179, vols. 1, 3), appear only in the latest large volumes. Later bindings of all sizes often feature extra layers of paper waste flyleaves added to parchment

28 The endbands of TLÜAR IV-1445 have not survived.

29 TLÜAR VIII-1502 has only a link-stitch change-over preserved, but it may have originally had proper endbands, too.

30 The contents of the manuscript fragments will be briefly discussed below.

fragment endleaves. Both manuscript and print waste, at least in one case printer's waste, occur.³¹

The boards have always been covered in tanned leather, in distinguishable cases probably calfskin, never pigskin. All bindings have preserved, or have once had, metal fastenings of hook-clasp type, the account book of the Great Guild has a metal buckle. The clasps are all of very diverse design and origin. Only two early folio volumes from around the turn of the century (TLÜAR IV-1445, TLA Ink 11) display the complete set of four corner pieces and a centre piece on each board; later even larger volumes never do. All but one binding with wooden boards in the Tallinn City Archives, the set of seven volumes of St Augustine, the two volumes of Johannes de Imola and the works of Origenes originally had chains, some of them also now extant, completely or partly.

TABLE 2. STRUCTURAL FEATURES AND COVER LAYOUT. 1 SUPPORTS (L = LEATHER, C = CORD); 2 ENDLEAVES; 3 SPINE LININGS (PARCHMENT WASTE, BETWEEN THE SUPPORTS; BLANK = NOT KNOWN); 4 FASTENINGS (OF HOOK-CLASP TYPE, MOSTLY PARTLY LOST); 5 CORNER PIECES AND CENTRE PIECES; 6 CHAIN; 7 FRONT COVER DESIGN (PD = PANEL DESIGN: CENTRE PANEL WITH A SURROUNDING FRAME CONSISTING OF EIGHT RECTANGULAR CLOSED COMPARTMENTS, CP = CENTRE PANEL, DIAGONALS = PANEL DIVIDED IN FOUR TRIANGLES BY CROSSING DIAGONALS); 8 BACK COVER DESIGN (CF. FRONT COVER); 9 FILLETS (2X/3X = DOUBLED/TRIPLED FILLETS; TOOLS: TTT = THIN-THICK-THIN, 1 = SINGLE LINE, 3T = TRIPLE THICK, 2T = DOUBLE THIN, 3T = TRIPLE THIN).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
TLA Cm 2	C	written and blank parchment		+		+	diagonals	diagonals	TTT
TLA Cm 16	L	written parchment		+		+	large lozenge	large lozenge	TTT, 2x1
TLA Htr 16	C	written paper		+		+	PD (CP: diaper design)	PD (CP: diagonals)	2x1
TLA Ink 8	C	blank paper		+		+	PD (CP: diaper design)	PD (CP: diagonals)	2x1

31 TLA Htr 36: a Middle Low German indulgence of Pope Leo X, corresponding to parallel English versions of USTC 501567 and 516236 (see www.ustc.ac.uk [accessed 14 September 2024]); TLA Htr 23: roughly contemporary paper manuscript; TLÜAR X-1179, vol. 2: an unidentified theological print; TLÜAR I-2338 and IV-1458: Antoninus Florentinus, *Summa theologica*, Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1486–1487 (GW 2189). In the last case, both volumes have the same bifolium that probably indicates that long neglected (as of 1517) printer's waste had been put in use as provisional wrappers for unbound quires during the transport and later re-used in final binding.

Barth 2° E 20	C	blank paper		+			PD (CP: double diagonals)	PD (CP: diagonals)	3T
TLÜAR VIII-1502	C	blank parchment and paper	-	+			open	open	-
TLÜAR IV-1445	C	blank paper	+	+	+		PD	PD	3T
HAB H: E 142.4° Helmst.		written parchment		+			PD, additional rows of three compartments on the top and bottom	PD, additional rows of three compartments on the top and bottom	2x1
TLA Ink 11	C	written parchment	-	+	+	+	PD (CP: diagonals)	8 rectangles (2 coll.)	2x2t
TLÜAR I-2243 (1-3)	C	blank paper		+		+	PD	6 rectangles (2 coll.)	2x3t
TLÜAR I-2243 (4)	C	blank paper		+		+	PD	6 rectangles (2 coll.)	2x3t
TLÜAR I-2243 (5)	C	blank paper		+		+	PD	4 rectangles, diagonals	2x3t, 2x2t
TLÜAR I-2243 (6)	C	blank paper		+		+	PD	6 rectangles (2 coll.)	2x3t
AM Rmtk 2310 (8)	C	blank paper		+		+	PD	6 rectangles (2 coll.)	2x3t
TLÜAR I-2243 (10)	C	(lost)	+	+		+	PD	diagonals (? lost)	2x3t
TLÜAR I-2243 (11)	C	blank paper	+	+		+	PD	6 rectangles (2 coll.)	2x3t
TLA Htr 15	L	written parchment	+	+		+	CP, top, bottom compartments	CP, top, bottom	3T
TLA Htr 20	C	written parchment	-	+		+	PD	diagonals	2x2t
TLA Htr 14	C	written parchment	-	+		+	PD	diagonals	2x2t
UUB Riga Fol. 67	C	written parchment	+	+		+	PD	diaper design	2x3t
TLA Htr 36	C	written parchment, print		+			PD	diaper design	3T
TLA Htr 23	C	written parchment and paper		+		+	PD	diaper design	TTT
TLÜAR X-1179 (1)	C	written parchment (lost)	+	+			PD	6 rectangles (2 coll.), diagonals	2x3t, 3x3t, 2x2t
TLÜAR X-1179 (2)	C	print	+	+			PD	diaper design	2x3t
TLÜAR X-1179 (3)	C	written parchment (lost)	+	+			PD	diaper design	2x3t

TLÜAR I-2338 (2)	C	written parchment, print	+	+		+	PD, 2 surrounding circles	PD (CP: diaper design)	2x3t, 2x2t
TLÜAR IV-1458 (3)	C	print	+	+		+	PD, 2 surrounding circles	PD (CP: diaper design)	2x3t
TLA.191.2.19	C	written parchment					diaper design, horizontally halved	diaper design	3T

COVER LAYOUT AND DESIGN

All the bindings are decorated in blind. The overall designs of the cover layout split into two consecutive main groups, the earlier being more diverse and forming three subgroups. The early medical *Sammelband* (TLÜAR VIII-1502) is the only binding with an open design, featuring a single central floral diamond panel stamp ('Rautenplatte') on each cover with no fillets. The two early manuscripts in quarto size have different designs from each other, but each displays a similar pattern on both the front and back cover. Some areas of the original decoration of the earliest parchment manuscript (TLA Cm 2) have largely vanished over time making difficult the exact perception of its initial layout; additionally, the ornament on the back cover runs curiously obliquely, at least in its present state. The centre field has been divided in four by crossing diagonals. However, at least the upper margin of the back cover has additional horizontal lines on the very top, leaving an impression of an oddly deficient panel design with just one more closed compartment above the centre panel (the top of the front cover has been concealed underneath the parchment title label). Similarly, the covers of the paper manuscript (TLA Cm 16) have wide margins, but the centre panel is filled by a large lozenge. Most of the lines on these bindings have been drawn with a thin-thick-thin tool; the central lozenge on the back cover of TLA Cm 16 has apparently been created by double lines of a one-line tool.

Most of the remaining bindings in the corpus present the most typical version of the late Gothic panel design, or frame pattern, at least on the front cover. They display a large centre panel surrounded by a frame consisting of narrow top, bottom, left and



FIG. 7. TLÜAR I-2243 (11), FRONT COVER. PHOTO: STANISLAV STEPASHKO.

right compartments and four small square corner compartments, all separated from each other and the outer border area by fillets. Three apparently earlier folio volumes (TLA Htr 16, Fig. 3; TLA Ink 8, Fig. 4; Barth 2° E 20) have all the centre panel divided into multiple compartments with several crossing oblique lines on the front cover (all bindings have somewhat different patterns from each other). Their back covers feature four triangles with crossing diagonals in the form of saltire. In two cases, the covers are ruled by doubled one-line fillets; on the third binding, a triple-thick three-line tool has been used.

In the last and most heterogeneous subsection of the earlier phase, three bindings again each have the same pattern on both covers. The in-folio *Casus longi* (TLÜAR IV-1445, Fig. 5–6) displays the ordinary complete panel design with no further division of the centre panel. Two others deviate from the usual panel design. Leonardus de Utino's in-quarto sermons (HAB H: E 142.4° Helmst.) present a redundant design with fifteen compartments created by additional rows of three on both the top and bottom. Gabriele da Barletta's in-octavo sermons (TLA Htr 15) have another kind of deficient panel design with a centre panel joined by smaller compartments just on the top and bottom, probably due to its small size. The first and the last ones again have triple-thick, and the middle one doubled one-line, fillets.

The number of different stamps used on each of the earlier bindings is small, ranging normally from two to five, and also the total number of impressions is often modest. The total stamp impressions on a folio binding could be confined to seven, with no one of them on the back cover (TLA Ink 8). Many compartments, in one case (TLÜAR IV-1445) even the large centre panel, remain blank. The bindings containing printed books strictly observe the principles of symmetry and balance. Only the bindings of the two early manuscripts have been more abundantly decorated, albeit not always very carefully. The stamps have been almost equally scattered across all fields, including the outer borders. Some later items of the earlier phase already mark the transition to the later stage with more lavish decoration. Two smaller volumes from the transitional period (HAB H: E 142.4° Helmst. and TLA Htr 15) are exceptional in the whole corpus, having precisely the same patterns of tooling (not only of general layout) on both covers. While keeping the traditional fillets,

symmetry, and uniformity of cover layout, they now display tooling covering most of the surface.

The bindings of the more recent larger group of the books from the late first and the second decades of the 16th century are relatively homogeneous. All have front and back covers that are different from each other. The front covers of both in-quarto and normal folio volumes always display a panel design with surrounding compartments (Fig. 7); the extra-large volumes of Johannes de Imola's commentary even have two circles of surrounding compartments. The back covers show a greater diversity. The whole can be divided either into four triangles with crossing diagonals (Fig. 10) or into multiple lozenges by several crossing oblique lines, creating a diaper pattern (e. g. TLA Htr 23, Fig. 12–13). Larger volumes can have rectangular divisions into six or eight compartments in two columns (TLA Ink 11, Fig. 11, and the seven volumes of St Augustine, TLÜAR I-2243/AM Rmtk 2310). On two occasions (the fifth volume of St Augustine and the first volume of Pierre Bersuire's dictionary, TLÜAR I-1179, Fig. 14), a similar rectangular division into four, resp. eight has been crossed by a diagonal division in four. Both volumes of Johannes de Imola's commentary present the panel design with the diaper pattern in the large centre panel. Normally the lines have been drawn with narrow two- or three-line tools and are always doubled (on one occasion even tripled); the triple-thick and thin-thick-thin fillets are each present in one case (TLA Htr 36, TLA Htr 23).

Although the diversity of stamps is great in the later phase, the total number extending to twenty-two, most stamps appear on most bindings, producing a uniform look common to the whole series. The number of different stamps on each binding ranges from seven to twelve. The total stamp impressions on one folio binding can amount to around 330 (TLÜAR I-2338, Fig. 15–16; IV-1458), most of them of closely adjacent small stamps appearing in the frame compartments. Normally, the stamps lie symmetrically within the fields, with balanced distances between them. Although the density of tooling is now much bigger than in the earlier period, leaving no areas unembellished, a certain overload occurs rarely. Only on the back covers of some large volumes can tooling coincide with fillets, and many similar stamps, like eighteen small griffins [24] or five horizontally halved pomegranates [31], may be scattered all over in a disorderly manner (TLÜAR X-1179, vol. 1).

In the diaper pattern emerging on back covers in the late 1510s, each lozenge holds one large pomegranate or shrub stamp. This kind of design probably emerged under the influence of contemporary Flemish bookbinding. The books with Flemish bindings appear to have been imported in considerable numbers to Estonian towns (Tallinn and Tartu) around the same time.³² The same diaper design is present on both covers of the latest item in the corpus, the archival book with semi-limp covers with a flap (TLA 191.2.19, Fig. 17–18). Here, all the lines have been impressed with a triple-thick tool. An additional horizontal triple fillet halves the middle row of lozenges on the front cover, producing two series of triangles; the quadrangular envelope flap also has a distinct structure due to its shape.

TOOLING

All in all, thirty-seven different stamps occur. Some of them are present on just one extant binding, primarily those of the earlier period. Others appear on several or even the majority of bindings, mainly in the later stage, with one [2] appearing throughout almost half a century. All but two are small stamps. Two slightly different floral diamond panels with a pomegranate ('Rautenplatte') occur in earlier and later phase, respectively. The rolls were probably not used in the Tallinn workshop – unlike the contemporary binderies in northern Germany and also nearby Tartu.³³ Instead of the rolls, the oblong rectangular decorative foliate stamps [33, 34], closely adjacent to each other, or small staffs [27] in combination with small leaves [28] attempt to create the impression of a continuous pattern in the frame compartments. In this way, the new fashionable aesthetics of flowing border design was achieved but with much more effort than with rolls. Both the design of the tools and the patterns of applying them changed gradually over time.

The list of stamps:

- (1) star with six rays, in circle, 12 mm
- (2) five-petal rose with two circles of petals, 15 mm
- (3) head of Christ (Vera Icon), in lozenge (square), 27 × 27 mm
- (4) shrub (flowering shrub), in pointed oval, 23 × 14 mm, EBDB s001450

32 Jürgen Geiß, 'Einbände für den Barther Reformator Johannes Block (1470/80–1544/45). Teil I: Einführung, Werkstätten aus Antwerpen', *Einband-Forschung* 12 (2003), 22–30; Kolk, 'Eesti kloostrite raamatud', 77–81.

33 For Tartu, see Geiß, 'Einbände ... Dorpat', 13–14, 17–19.

- (5) Evangelists' symbol, John / eagle, with banner below, in barbed quatrefoil, 30 mm
- (6) heraldic eagle, in lozenge, 25 × 18 mm
- (7) four-petal blossom, in lozenge, 22 × 15 mm
- (8) finial, 20 × 14 mm
- (9) a small circle, 2 mm
- (10) Evangelists' symbol, John / eagle, with banner below, in circle, 21 mm
- (11) fleur-de-lis, in lozenge, 16 × 11 mm
- (12) staff with foliage, in rectangle, 24 × 10 mm
- (13) unidentified, in circle, 22 mm
- (14) star with six rays, in circle, 6 mm
- (15) ten-petal blossom, 2,5 mm
- (16) Virgin Mary monogram (letter M), in circle, 8 mm, EBDB s008247
- (17) staff with foliage, in rectangle, 28 × 14 mm, EBDB s005670
- (18) diamond panel ('Rautenplatte'), 75 × 40
- (19) diamond panel ('Rautenplatte'), 78 × 47 mm, EBDB p000007
- (20) foliage with several stems bound together, 22 × 15 mm, EBDB s000801
- (21) double-headed eagle with star, in rectangle, 34 × 25 mm, EBDB s000409
- (22) budding shrub, 42 × 26 mm, EBDB s001416
- (23) mythical creature (winged boar?), in lozenge, 16 × 19 mm, EBDB s004651
- (24) griffin, in lozenge, 15 × 18 mm
- (25) pomegranate, in lozenge (square), 24 × 24 mm
- (26) four-petal blossom, in lozenge (square), 25 × 25 mm
- (27) curved staff, 18 mm
- (28) threepart leaf, 9 × 9 mm
- (29) fleur-de-lis, in lozenge, 12 × 9 mm
- (30) pomegranate with four feathered outer leaves, 40 × 28 mm
- (31) pomegranate with four feathered outer leaves, halved horizontally, 23 × 27 mm
- (32) pomegranate with four feathered outer leaves, halved vertically, 40 × 14 mm
- (33) foliate ornament, in rectangle, 31 × 10 mm
- (34) staff with foliage, in rectangle, 31 × 9 mm
- (35) griffin, in barbed cinquefoil, 31 mm
- (36) unidentified, in rectangle, 13 × 25 mm
- (37) budding shrub (with rose), 48 × 24 mm

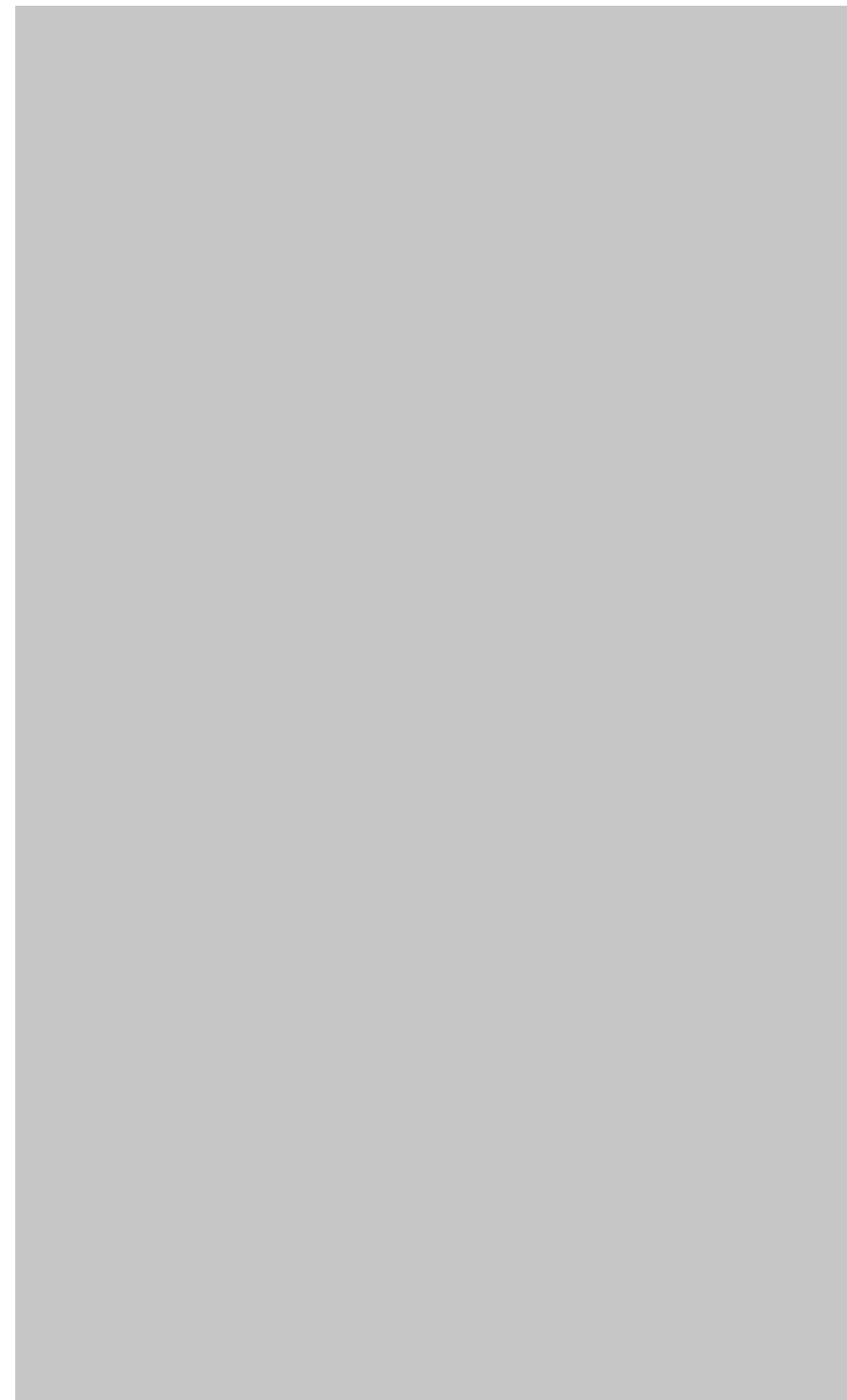


FIG. 8. THE STAMPS OF TALLINN'S LATE GOTHIC WORKSHOP.



FIG. 9. THE STAMPS OF TALLINN'S LATE GOTHIC WORKSHOP.

Two main stages can also be distinguished in the use of tooling, largely coinciding with the two periods of the cover layout. Again, variation is bigger in the earlier group and, at least judging from extant bindings, two distinct subgroups appear. As said before, the number of different tools used on each of the earlier bindings is small, usually not exceeding five, regardless of the size of each volume. In the smaller subgroup of two early manuscripts of approximately in-quarto size (TLA Cm 2 and Cm 16), three stamps [1, 2, 9] are common to both bindings, and only one of the manuscripts (Cm 2) presents three more stamps [3, 4, 5]. Three of these six tools at least occasionally also remained in use in the later stage of the workshop [2, 3, 4]. In the other subgroup of four folio volumes of mainly printed matter, one stamp [6] occurs on three bindings, two on two bindings [5, 7], and six more small tools [10–15], plus the panel

TABLE 3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF STAMPS ON BINDINGS. THE BINDINGS APPEAR IN THE TABLE IN THE ORDER OF PUBLICATION OF THE RESPECTIVE BOOKS (FOR SAMMELBÄNDE, THE DATE OF PRINTING OF THE MOST RECENT OF THE BOOKS). BOLD TEXT STANDS FOR PANEL STAMPS.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8–18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33–37	
TLA Cm 2	c. 1300	x	x	x	x				8, 9																
TLA Cm 16	1454	x	x						9																
TLA Htr 16	1475					x	x		10–12																
TLA Ink 8	1478					x			13																
Barth 2° E 20	1481						x	x	14, 15																
TLÜAR VIII-1502	1484									x															
TLÜAR IV-1445	1489–1497						x	x	18																
HAB H: E 142.4° Helmst.	1496			x					16, 17	x	x	x	x	x											
TLA Ink 11	1504									x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
TLÜAR I-2243 (1–3)	1506									x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
TLÜAR I-2243 (4)	1506									x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
TLÜAR I-2243 (5)	1506	x								x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
TLÜAR I-2243 (6)	1506									x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
AM Rmtk 2310 (8)	1506									x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
TLÜAR I-2243 (10)	1506	x								x	x	x			x		x	x	x	x				33	
TLÜAR I-2243 (11)	1506									x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
TLA Htr 15	1506–1507		x							x															
TLA Htr 20	1509						x					x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
TLA Htr 14	1512	x								x	x							x	x	x				34	
UUB Riga Fol. 67	1512	x			x						x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
TLA Htr 36	1515	x									x	x	x	x		x				x	x	x			
TLA Htr 23	1516	x									x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x				
TLÜAR X-1179 (1)	1516	x								x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
TLÜAR X-1179 (2)	1516	x								x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
TLÜAR X-1179 (3)	1516	x								x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x					
TLÜAR I-2338 (2)	1517	x								x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x				35	
TLÜAR IV-1458 (3)	1517									x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x				35	
TLA.191.2.19	1527		x									x	x			x				x	x	x	x	36, 37	

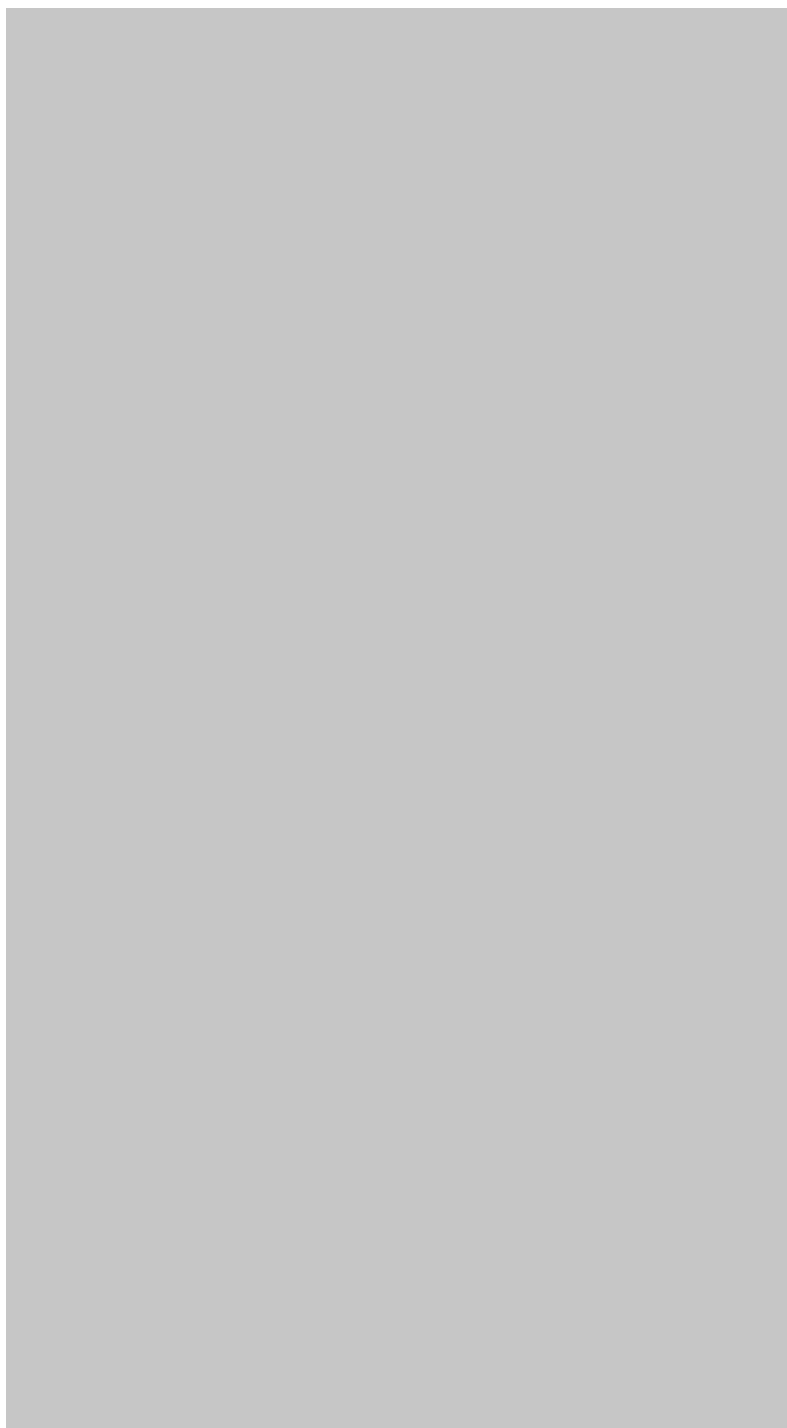


FIG. 10. TLA HTR 14, BACK COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.

stamp [18], on one binding each. Only the most common stamp [6] is also present on two extant bindings from the later period. Thus, to our present knowledge, the later group is connected to the earlier subgroup of manuscripts by the use of three stamps and to the other subgroup by one. Remarkably, there are no coincidences in the use of tools between the two early subgroups – if this is not a mere illusion caused by the limited number of surviving bindings.

In many instances, the design of the earlier tools is plain and uncomplicated, with few artistic details [1, 7, 8, 14, 15]. Both motifs such as rose, fleur-de-lis, blossom and star, and their realisations are ubiquitous. The most peculiar among the simple forms is the highly unconventional, almost unrecognisable finial with a hexagram top [8]. Two eagles of St John the Evangelist stand out among more intricate designs. The Evangelist's symbol in a circle [10] belongs among the most naturalist depictions of St John's eagle on Gothic blind tools; the eagle in a barbed quatrefoil [5] is almost identical to the analogous device used by the Knotenmeister workshop in Lübeck.³⁴ The rectangular foliage stamp [12] applied horizontally in the decoration is close to the similar late 15th-century patterns known from Lübeck and from elsewhere in northern Germany.³⁵ The earlier floral diaper panel ('Rautenplatte') [18] again resembles closely the respective tools from Lübeck and its nearby areas.³⁶

A heterogeneous intermediate group again stands out, but in terms of tooling, it adheres more to the later stage. Although we never know exactly when a particular book has been bound, it looks like one more very similar diamond panel stamp [19] was introduced approximately at the same time (around 1490?) when the 'earlier' one [18] appeared. While the 'earlier' panel has survived on only one extant binding, the 'later' one appeared on most of Tallinn's bindings since then. The 'later' panel is almost indistinguishably close to Lübeck's Graduale-

34 'Knotenmeister' in S-S II, 165–166; in EBDB, the workshop figures as 'Schwan im Kreis aus Lübeck' (w004490); both S-S and EBDB quote allegedly two known bindings from this workshop, but all these records refer to a single 15th-century manuscript, Stadtbibliothek Lübeck, Ms. theol. germ. 2° 6. Neither S-S nor EBDB registers all stamps present on this binding, but their selections differ.

35 E.g. EBDB s005658, s014596 (both Hinrich Coster, Lübeck), s005662, s000668 (both Braunschweig), s036032 (Kiel).

36 EBDB p000006 = S-S I, Rautenplatte 5/5a (Lübeck, Meister der Weideleute?, or Rostock, Akademischer Buchführer?) is perhaps the most similar; EBDB p000019 = S-S I, Rautenplatte 6a (Lübeck, Schwedischer Buchführer) and p000020 = S-S I, Rautenplatte 7a (Lübeck, Pommerscher Buchführer) are also close [accessed 14 September 2024].



FIG. 11. TLA INK 11, BACK COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.

Meister's similar tool, which caused confusion between the two (see above). The first three small bindings where the panel occurs all display it in the central position on both the front and back covers. It was the only stamp applied on the medical *Sammelband* (TLÜAR VIII-1508), one of two on Gabriele da Barletta's sermons (TLA Htr 15), and one of eight on Leonardus de Utino's sermons (HAB H: E 142.4° Helmst.). Both latter bindings retain one stamp each from the earlier period [3 and 4, respectively]; all remaining stamps on the Leonardus's binding are new [16, 17, 20–23].

The new stamps on Leonardus's binding appear to have different backgrounds. The large shrub with a bud on the top [22] is the most widespread form, occurring in many parts of Germany at the very end of the fifteenth and in the early decades of the sixteenth century.³⁷ In addition, the type of small stamp with the letter M, the Virgin Mary monogram [16], was in use diffusely in different areas and doubtless one of the most universal motifs.³⁸ The panel stamp [19] is of clearly Lübeck origin. Likewise, the staff with foliage [17] is not distant from the apparently slightly earlier similar tool with northern German connections [12] (see above). Although small lozenge-shaped stamps with fantastic creatures are all too common, a winged wild boar [23] is unique. The exceptionally large double eagle in a rectangle [21], with its robust beak wide open, has no close parallels in the published repertoires of stamps.³⁹ The same applies to the foliage [20] and the smaller shrub [4], which look especially unfamiliar in the north. This kind of floral imagery would instead point towards southern German origin. This series of tools received influences from different areas, or were themselves tools of diverse origin.

The six stamps featuring on the binding of the book from Magdeburg need not be the only ones introduced then in Tallinn. The small lozenge-shaped stamp with a griffin [24], emerging on known bindings slightly later, is morphologically very close to the stamp with the same size and shape, representing the other fantastic creature resembling a winged wild boar [23]. Tools analogous to the

37 Cf. EBDB, Knospenstaude.

38 Cf. EBDB, Schrift / Maria-Monogramm.

39 The few heraldic eagles in rectangle or quadrate concentrate chiefly around the Middle and Lower Rhine area (S-S I, Adler 277, 279, 281, 283, 284, 289–291, 430–432, 435, 437) but occasionally occur elsewhere too, including northern Germany (282, 287, 438, 439); usually, they are of much smaller size.



FIG. 12. TLA HTR 23, FRONT COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.

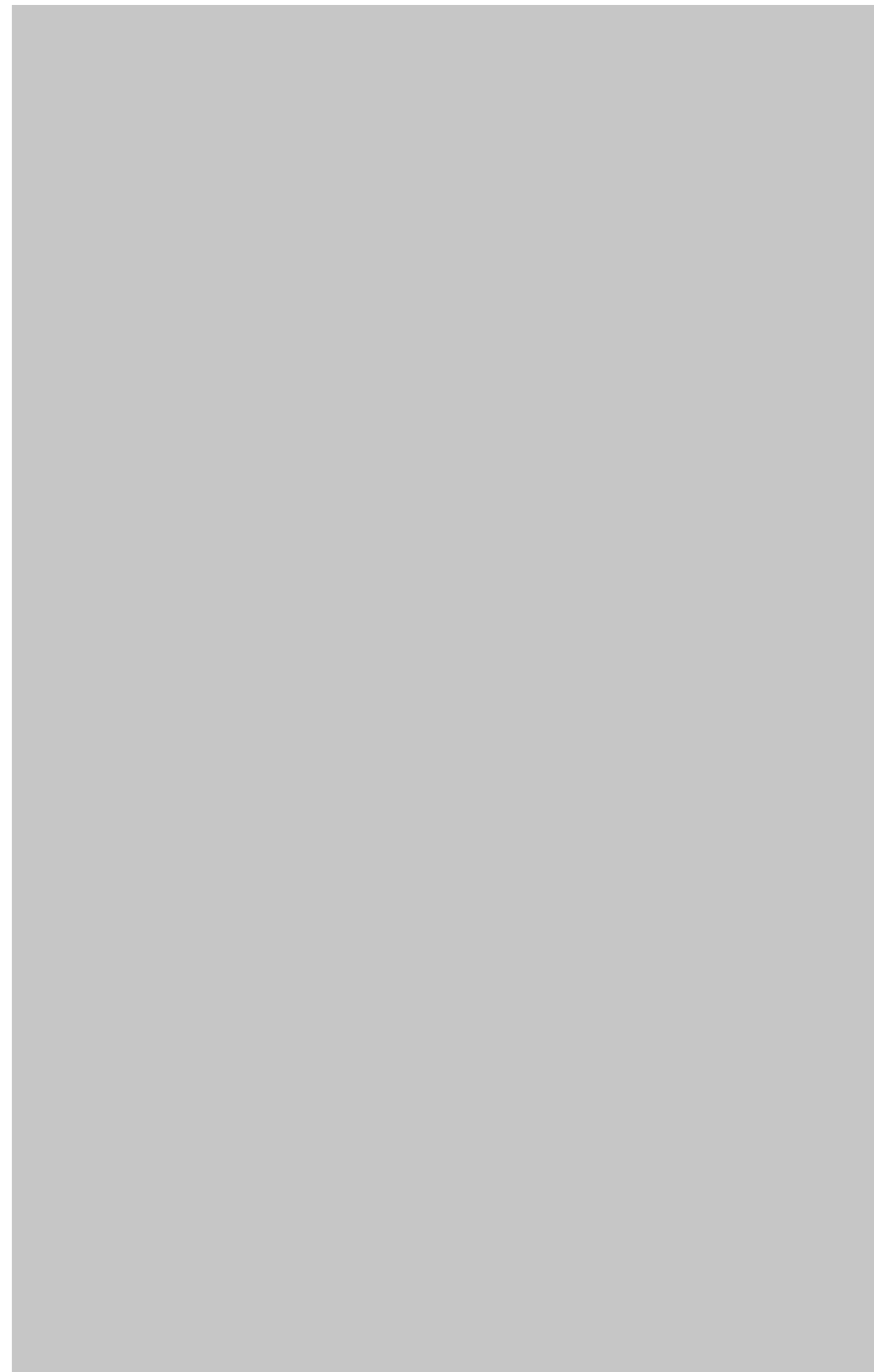


FIG. 13. TLA HTR 23, BACK COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.

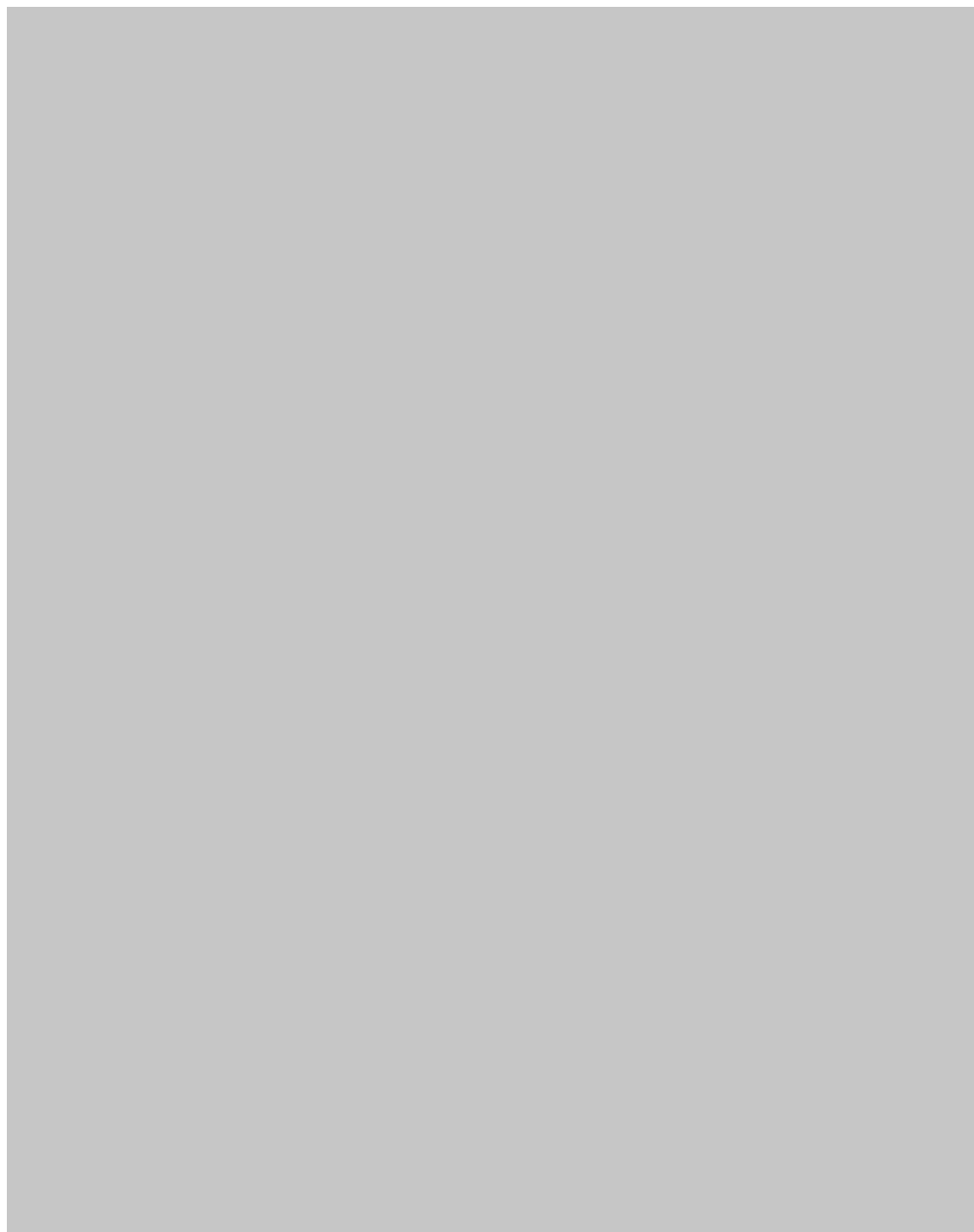


FIG. 14. TLÜAR X-1179, BACK COVER. PHOTO: STANISLAV STEPASHKO.

small triple leaf [28] frequently appear in other northern centres of bookbinding on late Gothic bindings from the end of the fifteenth century.⁴⁰ These tools might have arrived along with the above-mentioned ones.

Starting from the two collections of sermons (HAB H: E 142.4° Helmst., TLA Htr 15), both the general design of the bindings and the repertoire of the tools began to alter significantly. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, at least eight more new small tools [24–30, 33] appear. During the 1510s, four more new stamps emerged on the bindings [31, 32, 34, 35], and two more additions [36, 37] are only visible on the latest binding of the corpus from the 1520s (TLA 191.2.19). As said before, now the bindings were abundantly adorned with both a variety of tools and a multiplicity of impressions of them, and most of the tools were used on most of the bindings. Although it has been observed that ‘the increased book production from the second half of the fifteenth century called for means to speed up the process’⁴¹, the evidence suggests that sometimes even more effort was put into tooling in early 16th century than half a century earlier.

Some of these stamps not present on currently known early bindings and appearing only in the later phase preserve the plain texture and forms of the earlier period. The design of the four-petal blossom in lozenge (square) [26] corresponds both technically and morphologically closely to the earlier lozenge-shaped blossom stamp [7]; the pomegranate in lozenge (square) [25] stylistically conforms with both of them too. This closeness would suggest that the square blossom stamp and the pomegranate could also have already originated from the earlier period, but the respective bindings are not extant any more. Similar pairs of square and lozenge-shaped blossom stamps were occasionally in use in other northern centres

40 E.g. EBDB s000475 (Danzig, Art des Rosettenbuchbinders II, see S-S II, 65), s009898 (Magdeburg, Dreikönigsmeister, Mitarbeiter spätgotisch, see S-S II, 170–172), s000476 (Hildesheim, Christuskopf, see S-S II, 119, also pp. 130, 230–231, cf. Brigitte Pfeil, ‘Hildesheim Fraterherren im Lüchtenhof (Christuskopf), nicht Rostock Mohnkopf, Clus Rispe (zu S-S II, S. 230 f.)’, *Einband-Forschung* 20 (2007), 49–54. The cover layout of the bindings from these workshops already deviates from the established northern German Gothic patterns, featuring either four compartments surrounding the centre panel, often with oblique lines in the corners, or just one continuous surrounding area. Their decorations frequently encompass rolls, herbal stamps, and diaper designs, all characteristic of the latest phase of Gothic bookbinding.

41 So J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 243; cf. e.g. Mirjam Foot, *The History of Bookbinding as a Mirror of Society* (London: British Library, 1998), 9.



FIG. 15. TLŪAR I-2338, FRONT COVER. PHOTO: STANISLAV STEPASHKO.

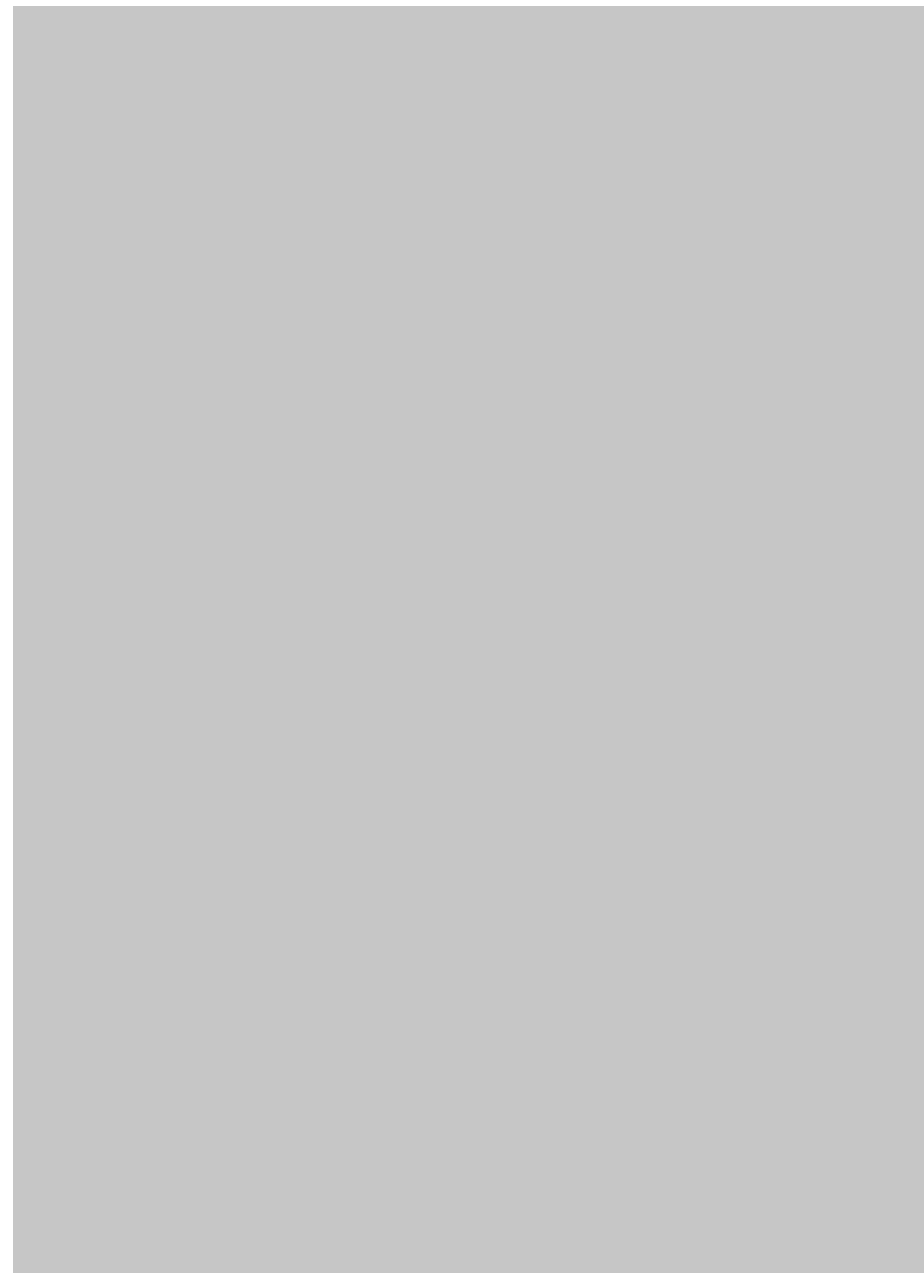


FIG. 16. TLŪAR I-2338, BACK COVER. PHOTO: STANISLAV STEPASHKO.

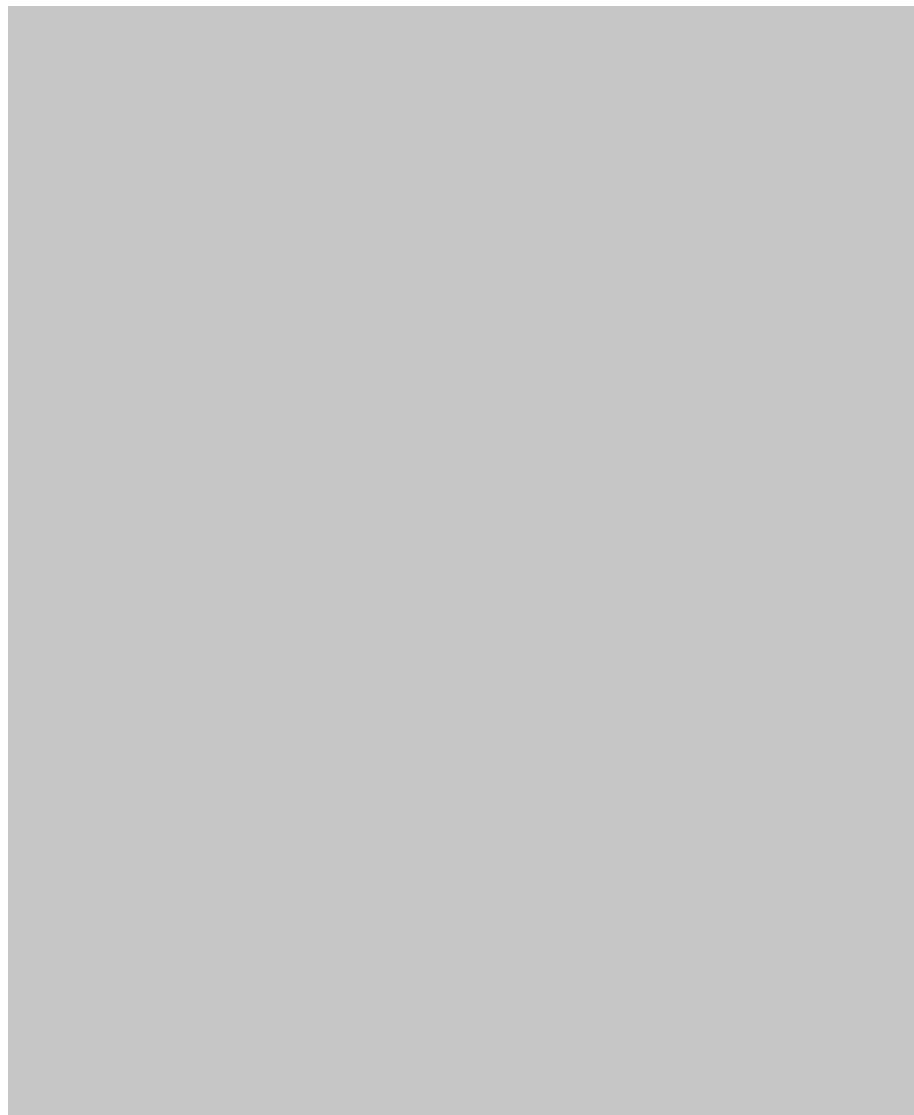


FIG. 17. TLA 191.2.19, FRONT COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.

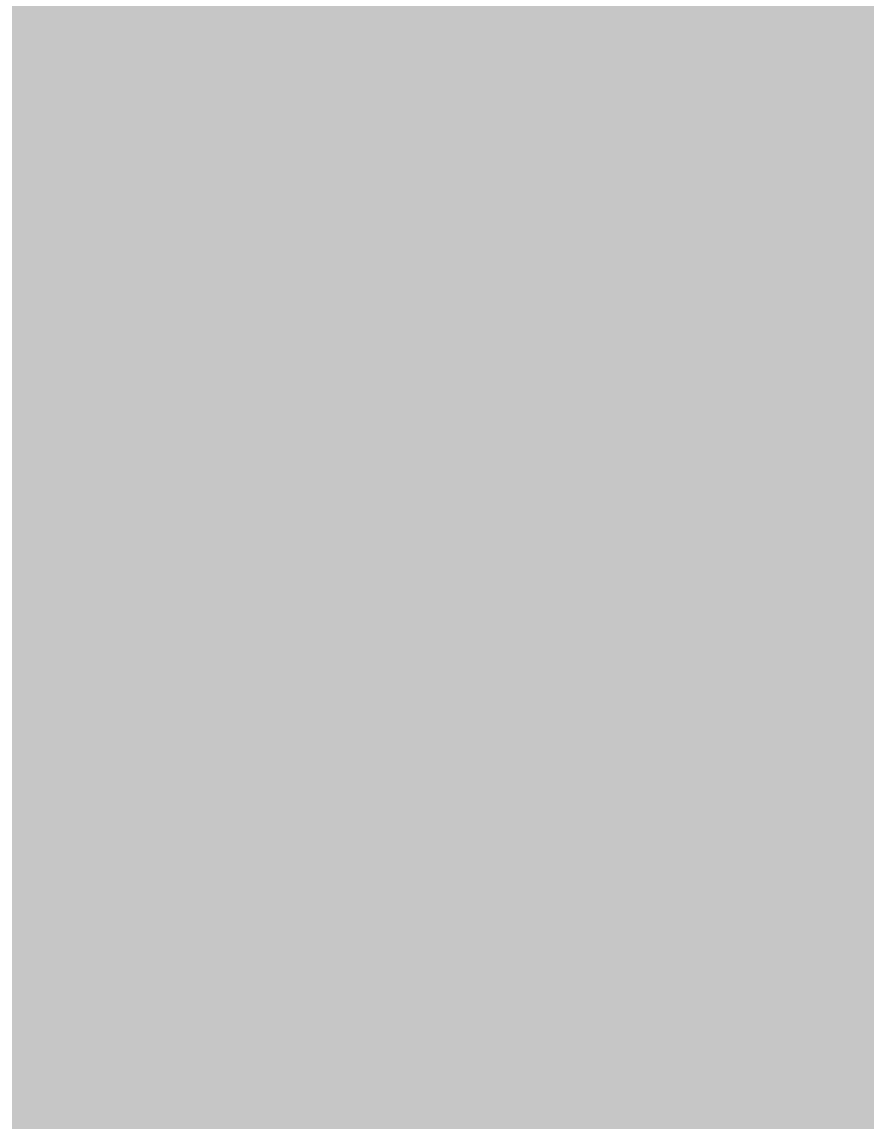


FIG. 18. TLA 191.2.19, BACK COVER. PHOTO: TALLINN CITY ARCHIVES.

of bookbinding, as in Braunschweig or Magdeburg⁴², which makes it possible that in each case, one engraver could have cut both tools. However, other earlier stamps with plain and uncomplicated designs [1, 14, 15] were probably soon discarded in favour of more fashionable substitutes with more intricate designs. Likewise, St John's eagles [5, 10] never occur anymore. The more abstract lozenge-shaped heraldic eagle [6] reappears on two and Christ's stamp [3] on one more attested occasion. Since then, only one certainly earlier stamp remained in general use [2].

New tools did not just replace the old ones, but the typology of the stamps also changed. A whole series of purely decorative refined herbal designs appeared. The subtly engraved foliate and floral patterns prevail among the new tools [4, 17, 20, 22, 28–34, 37]. The only other motives are a few imaginary creatures [21, 23, 24, 35] and a small decorative wave-like staff [27]. Among the remaining herbal stamps, the finely engraved ornamental border tools with floral motifs [33, 34] have no close parallels elsewhere. The subtype of the shrub with a bud surmounted by a rose [37], occurring in the latest phase of the workshop, was in use in several workshops in northern Germany.⁴³ The combination of a large lozenge-shaped pomegranate stamp and both horizontally and vertically halved counterparts [30–32] features prominently in diaper patterns of the Flemish bindings approximately from 1510 on.⁴⁴ This is the most modern-looking design pattern on Tallinn's bindings, and was adopted remarkably soon after its introduction in Flanders. As elsewhere, the complete pomegranate was already in use in Tallinn earlier, during the late first decade of the 16th century, which would mean that precisely matching halved tools were probably engraved locally around 1515. This again makes it probable that local artisans such as goldsmiths or mint masters might have also cut some earlier tools.

42 EBDB s002017, s002014 (Braunschweig), s002016, s002013 (Magdeburg). In both cases, S-S and EBDB attribute the use of respective tools to different bookbinders active in the same cities.

43 Pace S-S II, 296, considering it an indication of southern German origin; but cf. e.g. S-S I, Blattwerk 588 (Rostock, Universitätsbuchbinder), 592 (Lübeck, Akelei).

44 Cf. EBDB w002084, w002138, w002120; the last one has received the nickname 'Antwerpen, Doppeladler bekrönt' in Geiß, 'Einbände ... Antwerpen', 29–30 (cf. also Geiß, 'Katalog', 203); all three Tallinn pomegranate tools were extremely close to those utilised in that workshop.

THE IDENTITY OF THE WORKSHOP

Let us now proceed to more precisely distinguish and date the consecutive phases and different anonymous bookbinders operating the workshop (or workshops). As we have seen, in the earlier phase, the groups of manuscript and printed book bindings diverge from each other – both in terms of the internal structure and the decoration of the bindings, in addition to which the tools are different. That would probably mean that in the last decades of the fifteenth century, there were two distinct bookbinders active approximately at the same time, both with his own working habits. The 'binder of printed books' might have been active from the late 1470s until some time in the 1490s. His designs are orderly in every detail, strictly symmetrical, and generally scanty in the use of tooling. The bindings have supports made of cords and proper endbands. His tools are often similar to those used in the workshops of Lübeck and its surroundings, which makes it likely that either he or his tools arrived from that area.

The 'binder of manuscripts' would be harder to date. Only two of his bindings have survived, both of them of manuscripts from earlier periods. Perhaps he even worked longer, mainly keeping to his old practices. The supports of his bindings are either of leather or cord, the endbands are sewn through the spine. This binder initially used just a small number of stamps, but at a later stage, perhaps in the 1490s, he also applied some newly acquired tools. The designs are less orderly and not so carefully executed, with a certain overload of tooling. His tools and surviving bookbindings are too few to make claims about his background or origins with more precision than the Baltic and northern German area. These two masters may have represented two distinct workshops. In this case, the workshops merged only after them, or a successor of one of them who took over the workshop could have also acquired the tools of the other bindery. Alternatively, perhaps the two early binders still worked in close cooperation and it is mere chance that the joint use of any of the stamps is not known, due to the small number of surviving bindings.

It is difficult to tell who the author of the earliest binding featuring the 'newer' diamond panel was (TLÜAR VIII-1502). It was probably not the work of the early 'binder of the printed books' because he had another diamond panel. In view of its early date (printed in 1484), it

might have been the work of the 'binder of manuscripts'. But looking at its plain but harmonious decoration with no disorderly features, it would more likely be the early work of a new binder from the next generation. All the remaining bindings may well be the works of this same master. In that case, his style gradually evolved over time. First, his tools and practices bear a resemblance to each of the earlier masters, although he also introduced innovations that differ from both. The inner structures of his bindings clearly show more recent developments: supports are always of cord (with one possible exception), and 'true' endbands are missing. The small volumes from around the turn of the century present a strictly symmetrical layout, identical on both covers. This symmetry is close to that employed by the early 'binder of printed books' but the tooling will already become much denser, leaving no unadorned areas. Perhaps it was the bigger size of almost all the later volumes that allowed more freedom or even excess in tooling and somewhat loosened the constraints of symmetry. From now on, the decorations are usually lavish, and the front and back cover layouts are always different from each other. The designs of the front covers retain harmony, but the back covers are occasionally less carefully executed. Over the years, this master used a number of stamps and fillets. The minor changes in both inner structures and cover designs at a later date can be chiefly viewed as developments of his craft. However, hiring apprentices could have caused occasional deviations.

The origin of the later binder remains unclear. He may well have been an apprentice or a collaborator of one or even both masters of the previous generation. Nothing clearly points to his arriving in Tallinn from outside. That, of course, does not rule out the possibility that he had temporarily been a journeyman abroad and also obtained some of his tools then. His techniques bring nothing essentially new but are rather developments of those of earlier local masters. He continued using some of the tools of his predecessors, more of the 'binder of manuscripts'. Around the turn of the century and further, during at least the first decade of the sixteenth century, he obtained a whole series of new tools. After that, most of the earlier tools fell into neglect. The new tools look like they are of diverse origins. Some of them were probably acquired from abroad, being a random assortment of tools available on the market. But others were crafted locally, imitating the patterns featured in the designs of the imported bindings.

Who could have been the bookbinders running this workshop? Little is known about the people involved in the bookbinding trade in Tallinn in the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries from the documentary record. There was no craft guild of bookbinders in Tallinn at that time. In the account book of St Nicholas' Church (Est. Niguliste), expenses on bookbindings have been recorded on eight occasions between 1473 and 1520; only once was the binder's name, Hinrek, mentioned, in 1495.⁴⁵ This binder may well have been associated with the same church, as many of the bookbinders in Tallinn were clerics, even until the early seventeenth century.⁴⁶ A bookbinder called Lauwerens participated in a festival of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads in 1490.⁴⁷ He was probably a lay artisan, possibly a wandering journeyman. Although no more bookbinders appeared with their names before the 1530s, the almost contemporaneous presence of two bookbinders in the town shows that there was probably a certain demand for their trade. However, nothing allows us to securely identify any of the masters of the workshop studied here as one of these two known bookbinders. The bindings themselves bear no marks or inscriptions of their authors. The designs give no hint either – the images on the stamps and the iconography of the bindings of mainly religious books are extremely common to all Western Christianity and do not point to any identifiable person or institution.

We remember that many books bound in this workshop can be associated with the Dominican friary of Tallinn. The earliest known owners of almost all the remaining items were the religious institutions or clergymen of Tallinn. The most conspicuous, the seven-volume series of the works of St Augustine, had its earliest provenance recorded in 1660 when it arrived in St Olaf's Library from the former St Nicholas Church library (see above). No written record on the St Nicholas Church library has survived from the time before the Reformation (Tallinn adopted the evangelical doctrine in 1524–1525); the library was first mentioned only in 1558.⁴⁸ In 1587, the St Nicholas

45 Treumann, *Vanemast raamatukultuuriloost*, 34.

46 See Rebane, *Lvrec – Venvs – Ivditt*, 237–238.

47 Anu Mänd, *Urban Carnival: Festive Culture in the Hanseatic Cities of the Eastern Baltic, 1350–1550*, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 101 and n. 181.

48 Treumann, *Vanemast raamatukultuuriloost*, 34.

Church's library allegedly contained the books originating from the 'monasteries'.⁴⁹ Its last remaining books ended up in St Olaf's library in 1660.⁵⁰ Apart from the volumes of St Augustine, no more chained books have been attested for the St Nicholas Church library. Since both the fate of most books from the dissolved Dominican convent and the early origins of the St Nicholas Church library are obscure, one might argue that the set of works of St Augustine could also have had early Dominican provenance. Likewise, the seemingly early provenance of the three-volume Pierre Bersuire dictionary has been recorded only in the mid-17th century and could be erroneous (see above).

The workshop may well have operated in the Dominican friary. If a considerable number of similarly tooled bindings can be associated with the same monastic provenance, it seems reasonable to assume that they were made there.⁵¹ The catalogue of Schwenke and Schunke lists at least sixteen Dominican houses as runners of bookbinding workshops in Germany, many of them active for longer periods and producing a considerable number of (still extant) bindings.⁵² The documentary evidence doesn't say anything about the bookbinding in the Tallinn friary. The financial record of the convent has survived almost intact only from the last full year of its existence, 1524; some parts of some of the transaction records are still extant starting from 1510.⁵³ No expenses on bookbinding have been recorded, which makes it likely that the books were bound inside the friary. The incomes from bookbinding have not been mentioned either, but perhaps the orders from external customers were not frequent. Since the lay ownership of books was still negligible in early 16th century Tallinn⁵⁴, it would be logical to assume that the books were bound where there was a demand for them.

The fact that three *Sammelbände* contain books of diverse content and origin printed over several years shows that these bindings were

49 Ibid.

50 Bröcker, *Verzeichnüs*, fol. 9rv.

51 Mirjam M. Foot, *Studies in the History of Bookbinding* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993), 132.

52 S-S II, *passim*.

53 Kala, *Jutlustajad*, 143–145.

54 Cf. Kadri-Rutt Hahn, *Revaler Testamente im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: LIT, 2015), 149–151; Kolk, 'Teoloogias astroloogiani', 160–162.

not produced for sale in a bookseller's shop. In any case, this workshop did not produce for distant markets: its output probably didn't reach even the closest cities of Tartu and Riga in any considerable numbers. The only known examples of the early travels of the bindings are the three books that now lie outside Tallinn. But even in these cases, the first mentions of their being somewhere else derive from at least decades after they had been bound. Moreover, the workshop seems not to have actively participated in the lively market of blank books used as account books, etc., in Tallinn, evidenced by numerous surviving examples from approximately the same period, with just one from this workshop (TLA.191.2.19).⁵⁵ Leaving aside the dubious ownership of Pierre Bersuire's dictionary, even the best-known book owner of early 16th century Tallinn, Reinold Grist, owned no books bound in this workshop among his approximately fifty extant volumes.

The pieces of manuscript waste used as endleaves add further evidence in favour of a Dominican workshop. A pastedown in the binding of the manuscript TLA Cm 16 is a parchment fragment of the Constitutions of the Dominican Order.⁵⁶ This manuscript was most likely used and subsequently discarded in the Dominican friary in Tallinn. Readers of texts like Thomas Aquinas's *De sensu et sensato* and Adamus Bucfeldus's *Expositio in librum Aristotelis de longitudine et brevitate vite* (on rear endleaves of TLA Cm 2) in a town with no more regular religious houses or higher schools were also most probably the Dominicans.⁵⁷ Other fragments include more scholastic commentaries (front flyleaf of TLA Cm 2, TLA Htr 14), biblical commentaries (TLA Ink 11, TLÜAR I-2338), the liturgy (TLA Cm 16, TLA 191.2.19), two collections of sermons (UUB Riga Fol. 67), canon (TLA 191.2.19) and civil law (TLA Htr 23 and Htr 36), medicine (TLA Htr 20) and Boethius's *De institutione arithmetica* (HAB H: E

55 Cf. Ots, *Uurimus klappkõidetest*, p. [43]; Ots's catalogue lists 165 flapped bindings of archival books in the Tallinn City Archives, almost 90 per cent of them from the 15th and 16th centuries.

56 See the entry (created by Tiina Kala) in the *Fragmenta membranea Estoniae* database, <http://hdl.handle.net/10062/54965> [accessed 14 September 2024].

57 See *ibid.*, <http://hdl.handle.net/10062/58938> (entry created by Tiina Kala).

142.4° Helmst.).⁵⁸ The fact that fragments of the same manuscript probably never appear in more than one extant binding indicates that old manuscripts would have been dismembered in the friary in large quantities during the last decades of its existence. Many more fragments have survived as spine linings between the sewing supports in most bindings (see Table 2).

Returning to the three bookbinders distinguished above, the 'binder of manuscripts' most likely worked in the Dominican friary: one of the manuscripts (TLA Cm 16) has the ownership inscription of the convent and Dominican manuscript waste, the other also has fragments connected to the Dominicans. The 'binder of printed books' may or may not have been a Dominican: two of his bindings (TLA Htr 16 and TLA Ink 8) probably belonged to the Dominicans, two others (Barth 2° E 20 and TLÜAR IV-1445) had private owners, at least a few decades later. His surviving bindings contain no manuscript waste endleaves.⁵⁹ If he worked on his own or in external cooperation with the friary, the Dominicans would only have acquired his tools later. The binder of the later stage was again closely associated with the Dominicans: many of his bindings probably belonged to the friary and others possibly. He extensively used manuscript waste clearly originating from a religious institution for endleaves. According to the survey conducted by Schwenke-Schunke-Rabenau, two chief masters and a third 'subordinate' bookbinder were active largely simultaneously in Magdeburg Dominican friary from the 1460s to 1480s.⁶⁰ Something similar could also have happened in Tallinn, although here two distinct stages are clearly distinguishable, and the status of the 'binder of printed books' is not so clear.

58 See *ibid.*, <http://hdl.handle.net/10062/54964> (TLA Cm 16); *ibid.*, <http://hdl.handle.net/10062/63012> and <http://hdl.handle.net/10062/63013> (both TLA 191.2.19, all entries created by Tiina Kala); I owe thanks to Tiina Kala for preliminary identifications of the uncatalogued fragments in the Tallinn City Archives.

59 At least TLÜAR IV-1445 has small pieces of manuscript waste spine linings.

60 S-S II, 168–169.

CONCLUSION

The presence of a distinct late Gothic decorative pattern on twenty-five bookbindings preserved in Tallinn (and some abroad) allows us to locate the bindery that produced these bindings in Tallinn. In earlier research, no medieval bookbinding workshops had been identified in Tallinn. Over approximately half a century, from the 1470s to the 1520s, at least three consecutive masters utilised a series of almost forty tools, evolving and augmenting over time. Two earlier binders acted roughly at the same time; the third took over some of the tools of both of them and added several more approximately at the turn of the century. The three artisans each possessed a distinct style of decoration, but the cover designs of all of them remained relatively conservative. The tools of the first generation of craftsmen chiefly belonged to the northern German tradition, particularly of Lübeck. The stamps of the third master look like they were of more diverse origin, but possibly some of them were engraved locally, imitating the patterns learnt from the imported bindings. One earlier binder and the more recent one almost certainly worked in Tallinn's Dominican friary; the other early master may have had a looser connection to the Dominicans. The sequence of these bookbinders represents hitherto the earliest chapter of the history of bookbinding art in Tallinn.

KASPAR KOLK: LATE GOTHIC BOOKBINDING IN TALLINN

KEYWORDS: GOTHIC BOOKBINDING; BLIND TOOLING; DOMINICANS; MEDIEVAL TALLINN

SUMMARY

The central issue of this study is establishing the corpus of late Gothic bookbindings produced in Tallinn by a few consecutive and interrelated binders in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The survey of decorative tools and bookbinding designs allows the attribution of twenty-eight currently known surviving bindings to these binders. The designs of the tools used in Tallinn's workshop reveal the northern German, primarily Lübeck area, connections of the earlier generation of late Gothic binders in Tallinn. In the second phase, more diversified tooling appears that could hint at the

import of tools from different areas or production of the tools locally, imitating the stamps on imported bindings of various origins. The style and techniques of both stages remain conservative, preserving the medieval symbolic and decorative imagery. Since most of the surviving bindings have been preserved in Tallinn, and many originate from the Dominican friary, it is reasonable to conclude that the bindery was also closely connected to the friary. The Dominican manuscript waste reused in the bindings adds corroboration to this assumption.

CV

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