

Codices Deperditi. Medieval Latin Manuscripts from the National Library Lost During the Second World War

Summary

Among the various calamities affecting medieval and early modern libraries one of most serious ones was and still is war. In wartime libraries were ransacked and books became spoils. They were then sold or given away, which effectively contributed to the destruction and, even more so, scattering of the collections. During wars books were also damaged beyond repair. The most dramatic case is deliberate destruction of libraries by invaders referred to in the literature as *libricide*, *literary genocide* or even *bibliocaust*. The motives behind such drastic actions against the cultural heritage of a community varied. It may have been evidence of biblioclasm, the fact that a given library was considered to be unworthy of preservation, an attitude motivated by religious or cultural reasons. Book contents may have been seen by the victors as a threat to the social, political or religious order they recognised. Often, however, the motives behind the burning of entire libraries can be interpreted as a continuation of actions aimed at the ultimate destruction of the defeated opponent. Libraries were not only collections of books, but also national treasures constituting a cultural and political symbol of a state or a community. They also served as repositories and places of memory – which could be drawn on in the creation and consolidation of a group's identity. Finally, libraries were symbols of cultural status vis-à-vis other groups; they were an element of prestige building – both on the individual level (private libraries) and on the level of entire communities (modern national libraries). That is why it was so important to expand libraries and, in the case of a threat, to protect them, and why people were reluctant to cede parts of their libraries to other groups as determined by law.

Admittedly, cases of deliberate destruction of entire libraries which can be explained only as being motivated by a desire to erase the entire legacy of a community were relatively rare in the past. In any case, they subsequently became the basis of a literary topos used in description of barbarity. The most famous example of the burning of an entire library – an archetype in the literature since Antiquity – was the destruction of the Library of Alexandria. The size and significance of this book collection meant that its loss became legendary; some of the legends were created

deliberately to discredit political and religious opponents. Regardless of the doubts surrounding both the size and the circumstances of the destruction of that particular library, the burning of the Library of Alexandria became a traumatic experience for European culture. This trauma was compounded even further in the 20th century by the destruction of libraries during both world wars. In most cases it stemmed from a deliberate decision of people seeking to punish, humiliate as well as culturally and spiritually destroy their opponents. Already during the First World War the German troops intentionally burned the university library in Leuven (Louvain), Belgium.

During the Second World War the biggest campaign of systematic destruction of library collections of great scholarly and historical value occurred in German-occupied Poland. In the autumn of 1944, during the Warsaw Uprising or shortly after its fall, the German troops burned a huge part of the collections of Warsaw libraries kept in the building of the Krasieński Library. The main part comprised the pre-war special collections of the National Library. It is estimated that out of the manuscript collection of this library, which before the war comprised over 40,000 units, nearly 38,500 manuscripts were burned. Of the collection of old manuscripts (i.e. originating before 1800), which in 1939 boasted around 14,500 volumes, over 12,500 units were destroyed. Only 1848 units, i.e. about 12.7% of the pre-war collection survived.

Owing to their complicated history, the pre-war National Library collections had not been thoroughly studied before the Second World War. The items destroyed in 1944 included not only books but also files as well as hand-written and typed catalogues of the collections. That is why we do not know exactly what perished at the time. Information about the losses comes from fragmentary and incomplete sources. The aim of my book is to fill that gap at least in part. My intention was to bring together all information about medieval Latin manuscripts which until 1944 were kept in the National Library and the ashes of which reposed in the Krasieński Library building in ul. Okólnik. I hoped that thanks to my research we would learn more about what we had irretrievably lost. Each piece of information I managed to find about the origins, contents and formal features of the various codices would bring them back to life in a way.

What now requires some explanation is the title and structure of the book. It focuses on medieval Latin manuscripts. I have separated this group from the entire National Library collection in an artificial manner for the purpose of my studies. The codices I regard as medieval are those originating before 1520s. Obviously, this is an artificial cut-off point, but one that has been adopted in many studies as a moment when printed books began to prevail over hand-written works. Moreover, taking into account manuscripts originating in later periods would mean undertaking additional research e.g. into mutual relations between manuscripts and printed books in the various historical collections as well as studies e.g. into the functioning of hand-written copies of printed works in Poland in the past, which

would require an entire research team to work for many years. The adoption of the language criterion, on the other hand, was motivated by the aim of the book – an attempt to examine medieval book collections, especially Polish collections, which were dominated by codices with Latin texts. It should also be noted that Latin manuscripts were separated from other manuscripts by librarians already in the 18th and 19th centuries and marked with separate call numbers (designated “Lat.”).

The sources on which my studies are based are heterogeneous and scattered. Information about the oldest manuscripts, which were to be found in the National Library in the 20th century, appeared in scholarly and popular studies throughout the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. The nature of this information varied greatly – from full codicological descriptions in studies by historians specialising in the Middle Ages to brief, sometimes misleading references made by authors on the margins of other deliberations. A wealth of information about the National Library’s medieval manuscripts can be found in little known hand-written notes of Maria Hornowska, who for nearly twenty years worked on the collection of medieval manuscripts stored in the University Library in Warsaw and then in the National Library. Hornowska died in 1944, but her notes have survived and are now kept in the National Library.

Although my work is devoted only to the oldest part of the National Library collection, in discussing it I need to take into account the specificity of the entire pre-war manuscript collection kept in the National Library. Founded in 1928, the institution was intended to serve as a national treasury. This obviously affected the form of the collection – a veritable “sack” in which were found books from various libraries: private, institutional, ecclesiastical and other. Thus, the National Library collection was characterised (as is also the case today) not only by diversity in terms of provenance of books but also by complex history of the various items making up the collection. The pre-war collection of manuscripts at the National Library was – as those who saw it claimed – the richest collection in Poland at the time, richer even than the book collection of the Jagiellonian Library, which originated already in the 15th century.

There were several turning points in the history of the National Library collection, which made it what it was in the inter-war period. The first was the creation of private and institutional libraries in the 18th and 19th centuries, the second – transfer of the books to Russia (in several stages) after the partitions of Poland (1772, 1793 and 1795), as a result of repressions following national uprisings, the third – restitution and recovery of the collections, the fourth and last – destruction of the books by the Germans in 1944.

The main part of the National Library’s manuscript collection was made up of Polish collections originating in the 18th century and the first thirty years of the 19th century. These were primarily books from the Załuski Library, several Warsaw libraries – Public Library at the University of Warsaw and the library of the Warsaw

Society of Friends of Sciences – as well as books from the library of the Czartoryski family in Puławy. In order to understand the structure of the National Library collection before its destruction and the way in which its books were selected, we need to consider the problem of collecting manuscripts in the early modern period and beginning of the modern period. The passion for searching for and acquiring rare manuscripts was known already in Antiquity. It would be difficult to present here the history of collecting in the Middle Ages and early modern period; what should be stressed, however, is the dual nature of collections, especially those originating in the early modern period. On the one hand manuscripts and early printed books were collected for their aesthetic values: medieval illuminated prayer books or liturgical books were interesting to collectors primarily as beautiful objects. On the other hand manuscripts were sought, because they were valuable on account of the texts contained in them, e.g. autographs, rare copies or works important to national culture. The situation was somewhat different in the case of institutional or private libraries (e.g. family libraries), in which books were inherited and libraries comprised collections of various members of a community (e.g. family). Here an important role was played by individuals: bibliophiles who expanded the existing collections in line with their personal tastes and needs or donated their books to libraries of institutions that were close to them.

We should bear in mind that manuscript collections were usually built up by people with scholarly aspirations. In Poland this type of manuscript collecting as a form of quest for knowledge was introduced by the Załuski brothers – Andrzej Stanisław (1695–1758) and Józef Andrzej (1702–1774) – who not only undertook various projects aimed at publishing historical sources, but also encouraged others to collect works dealing with the past. The Załuski brothers also asked others to send historically important books to their library, which functioned as a central national institution.

Scholarly and editorial initiatives were then undertaken by various individuals, who either created their own collections or financed and/or donated their books to institutional libraries aspiring to be a “national library”. This phenomenon was associated not only with a revival of the bibliophile movement and book collecting in Europe, but also – perhaps above all – with a desire to save the legacy of the now defunct Polish state (after the third partition of Poland in 1795). Another impulse prompting people to create such libraries came when the books from the Załuski Library were transferred to Russia in 1795 following the tsarist government’s order, which meant that Poland lost its most important national book collection. New private and institutional libraries were founded in Poland at the turn of the 19th century. Among the private initiatives we could name Tadeusz Czacki’s library in Poryck, Józef Maksymilian Ossoliński’s collection – first in Vienna and then in Lviv – Jan Feliks Amor Tarnowski’s collection in Dzików, the Czartoryski library in Puławy, Edward Raczyński’s library in Poznań, Tytus Działyński’s library in Roga-

lin and then in Kórnik, the Zamoyski library and Krasieński library as well as many other books collections, perhaps less rich in manuscripts. Collectors like e.g. Czacki or the Działyński treated their collections as a kind of national legacy. We cannot forget, however, that such a type of collecting, referred to as *pro patriae amore*, was just one trend in manuscript collecting. As early as in the 1820s Joachim Leleweł noted that in addition to private collections – built up out of love for learning – there were also bibliophilic collections featuring rare or unusual items.

Private collecting was not the only form of manuscript collecting. Institutional collecting was developing as well – e.g. in 1806 the Warsaw Society of Friends of Sciences started its collection, which subsequently found its way into the National Library. It would be difficult to speak in this case of collecting understood as intentional and deliberate amassing of specific objects. The Society's library, especially its manuscript collection, was compiled primarily out of gifts by the Society's members as well as other people donating books (and not only books) regarded as valuable as mementoes of the nation's past. The very concept of a national library, inspired by the Załuski Library, was behind the creation of various libraries, not only those of scholarly societies. Such initiatives were undertaken by the governments of the Duchy of Warsaw and Kingdom of Poland practically throughout the first three decades of the 19th century. Yet while in the times of the Duchy of Warsaw Minister Feliks Łubieński would send requests to various clergymen to donate their book collections, over a decade later the campaign became much more organised. Taking advantage of the dissolutions of monasteries carried out in 1819 and drawing on similar such actions in Austria (Josephinist reforms) and Silesia (the so-called Büsching's campaign), the government of the Kingdom of Poland caused a huge migration of entire book collections or their more valuable parts to Warsaw, where the books were stored in the Public Library at the University of Warsaw.

The most important Polish collections amassed in the 18th and 19th centuries and regarded by the contemporaries as national libraries – Załuski Library, Public Library at the University of Warsaw and others – met with the same fate. They were transported to Russia – first towards the end of the 18th century, shortly after the third partition of Poland, then as part of repressions following the November Uprising (1830–1831) – and placed in the Imperial Public Library and, for a while, in the Hermitage. Other Saint Petersburg libraries, like the Library of the General Staff or of the Roman Catholic Theological Academy, also had manuscripts from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the former from the Czartoryski Library in Puławy, the latter from monasteries suppressed in the second half of the 19th century), but these were manuscripts from the early modern period.

This plundering of libraries as well as subsequent losses during transport and after the arrival of the books in Saint Petersburg caused a serious gap in research into Polish culture of the past. The confiscated collections had not been thoroughly studied before the confiscation. Suffice it to say that the rich collections of the Public

Library at the University of Warsaw, especially the books that found their way there in the early 1820s, had not been studied before they were seized and taken out of the country in the 1830s. For several decades research into the libraries, especially their most valuable part – medieval books – had to be conducted by scholars who were forced to make pilgrimages to the Imperial Public Library in Saint Petersburg. Rarely did these scholars stay there for long, but even if they stayed for two or three years, they just conducted surveys not exhausting the research problem in question and not encompassing all manuscript collections of Polish provenance.

The manuscripts in the Saint Petersburg library were not catalogued to a satisfactory degree. A rather imperfect catalogue was compiled in the early 1840s; it was also at that time that the Polish manuscripts, hitherto distinguished in terms of their provenance and placed in separate rooms, were incorporated into the general manuscript collection. Consequently, the geographical remoteness of the books and the policy pursued by the Imperial Public Library hindered greatly the study of the manuscript collection at a time when methods used in the study of manuscripts changed.

Another breakthrough moment in the history of the National Library's pre-war manuscript collection came with the recovery and restitution of the books and their return to Warsaw in the 1920s and 1930s following the Treaty of Riga concluded by Poland and Soviet Russia. The returned books and manuscripts were initially stored in the Warsaw University Library. After the founding of the National Library in 1928, there began a transfer of the collections to the Library's storerooms scattered all over Warsaw. This state of temporariness lasted until 1939.

The pre-war manuscript collection of the National Library comprised manuscripts from several collections, only some of which included medieval manuscripts. The largest and the most valuable group was that of manuscripts recovered from Russia in 1923–1934 (i.e. the so-called restituted books). The group comprised 13,257 codices, i.e. over 91% of all older manuscripts. The manuscripts came from various Polish libraries and were transported in the late 18th and the first half of the 19th century to Saint Petersburg. We do not know exactly how many of them were medieval codices. In his hand-written memorial from February 1946 Piotr Bańkowski – pre-war head of the Manuscript Department of the National Library (born in 1885 and died 1976) – when describing the recovered manuscripts, wrote that there were 426 parchment codices in 431 volumes (from the 11th–16th centuries) and about 500 paper manuscripts from the 15th and first half of the 16th century – about 1000 medieval codices in total. Another group, second in terms of the number of medieval codices, was made up of the Wilanów manuscripts. They were part of a book collection donated to the Polish state in 1932 as deposit in perpetuity by the then owners of the Wilanów estate, the Branicki family. This manuscript collection, started in the early 19th century by the Potocki family, had 549 units when it was donated. Fortunately, a list of the Wilanów manuscripts donated to the National Library has survived. It was signed on 24 May 1939 by the ten director of the Li-

brary, Stefan Vrtel-Wierczyński. The list contains 36 medieval manuscripts. To this group we should also add three illuminated manuscripts of French origin bought before the war from the Branicki family. The few medieval codices were acquired or donated when the National Library was in operation. The entire collection comprised about 2,800 items in total; a substantial majority of them, however, were rare works, legacies and archives from the 19th and 20th centuries. We do not know the exact number of medieval manuscripts from this group, but there were likely several volumes. They included a few of the most precious historic manuscripts bought before the war: *Saint Florian Psalter*, the so-called *Malinowski Leaf* with a Polish translation of St. Bridget's *Revelations* and the so-called Heilsberg Codex (of Peter of Szamotuły) with a 15th-century version of Gallus Anonymus' chronicle. The last group of manuscripts in the pre-war collection of the National Library – emigrant manuscripts (Rapperswil and Batignol collections) brought to Warsaw in 1927 and 1929 – did not contain any medieval manuscripts. Smaller collections, which found their way into the pre-war National Library – like the collection of the Ponińskis of Horyniec or the archives of the Zamoyskis of Podzamcze – included manuscripts originating in the 18th century onwards.

The last definite turning point in the history of the National Library's manuscript collection was the Second World War. During the occupation the Germans stored the special collections of Warsaw libraries in the Krasieński Library in Okólnik. In the autumn of 1944 they set fire to these collections, which were almost completely destroyed. The loss of the books – mostly never studied and thus unknown to scholars – created a painful gap in our perception of Polish history and culture.

The aim of the present book is to reconstruct the contents of not the entire manuscript collection of the National Library, but – as has already been mentioned – only a small part of it: medieval Latin manuscripts, and, through an analysis of these codices to describe a part of Polish medieval book collections. The topic has not been the subject of separate studies so far. The attempt made before the war by Maria Hornowska to reconstruct Polish medieval collections was halted by the outbreak of the war in 1939 and was not completed before the scholar's death in 1944. A working typescript of only a part of Hornowska's analysis survived and was published by Halina Zdzitowiecka-Jasieńska in 1947.

Usually, when studying historic book collections, scholars adopt a retrogressive method, i.e. starting from a description of the state of preservation of a collection, they compare their results with a list/catalogue of the books compiled before their destruction. However, this is possible only when we have at our disposal an adequate description of the collection before its loss. In the case of the National Library, all files and catalogues of manuscripts were burned with the manuscripts themselves. Moreover, the earlier catalogues of manuscripts of the various collections were lost as well.

Owing to the loss of the manuscript collection and the library files, it is impossible to adopt this method in this case. The problem is compounded by the fact that the medieval Latin manuscripts were never treated as a separate collection in the National Library and we do not even know its size. The unknown number of medieval Latin manuscripts as well as the destruction of direct sources, force us to try to establish the size and form of this part of the collection on the basis of indirect sources. What should be the starting point is, of course, the current state of preservation: in the case of the National Library's oldest manuscripts an inventory has recently been published. As has already been mentioned, it is estimated that out of the pre-war collection of older manuscripts (assuming that there were 14,500 volumes in total) 1848 volumes, i.e. about 12.7%, have survived. In this group over 100 manuscripts are codices originating before the mid-16th century and it should be noted that these are manuscripts not only from Latin codices, but also from Polish, German and Dutch codices. Most of the surviving codices are the most valuable manuscripts transferred to the West in 1939 as part of a campaign to evacuate Poland's most precious cultural goods, as well as Latin and German manuscripts not burned by the Germans in 1944.

This made all the subsequent steps in the research process were complicated. I had to use all available published and hand-written documents dealing with both the various pre-war collections of the National Library as well as the history of the entire manuscript collection. I needed to start with examining the beginnings of various libraries and collections in the 18th and 19th centuries which later became the core of the National Library collections, and then to assess the state of research into medieval manuscripts in their chronological aspect, from the loss of the National Library collection in 1944. This meant I had to use studies from the 18th–20th centuries. Valuable as they are, they nevertheless contain all kinds of errors stemming from the imperfect research methodology and shortcomings in dealing with manuscripts at the time.

I have divided my book into three volume. The first provides a historical introduction, the second contains a list of medieval Latin manuscripts from the National Library's pre-war collection. The third volume features excerpts from sources – primarily from Maria Hornowska's notes – concerning both individual manuscripts and entire collections, as well as indexes.

The first volume consists of two parts, which are like two mirrors facing each other. In the first part I explore the main elements of the National Library's pre-war collection as well as the history of the collection from the 18th until and 20th century. I describe in it the various libraries, trying to capture all available information about medieval manuscripts.

The second part is a presentation of the collection of medieval Latin manuscripts – a collection characterised on the basis of studies described in part one. My recon-

struction of the collection is, of course, based on various studies and notes, the most important of them being Maria Hornowska's hand-written notes – until recently considered to have been destroyed – in which she described nearly 700 medieval codices she knew from personal experience. In many other printed publications and hand-written notes I have managed to find over twice as many other descriptions, which, together with the manuscripts from the Wilanów Library, brings the total number of identified medieval Latin manuscripts to 1446.

When it comes to their medieval provenance, these 1446 manuscripts can clearly be divided into three groups: 1. manuscripts from Polish ecclesiastical institutions and secular collections, 2. codices of foreign origin and 3. codices of unknown provenance.

The first group encompasses over 740 codices which came nearly exclusively from ecclesiastical libraries, including libraries of cathedrals (9), collegiate churches (29), monasteries (645) and parishes (20). The predominance of codices of monastic provenance is a result of amassing of books, especially after the dissolutions of 1819, which makes the “geography” of the collections correspond to the 19th-century borders of the Duchy of Warsaw and Kingdom of Poland. This is also the reason why the biggest book collections which found their way into the National Library came from monasteries located mainly in the northern part of the Małopolska region. These manuscripts formerly belonged to the Benedictines (282 codices), Cistercians (157), Canons Regular (17), Canons of the Holy Sepulchre (152), Order of the Holy Ghost (2) and Pauline Fathers (18); there were also a few manuscripts representing collections of the Premonstratensians (4), Franciscans (3 plus 12 Bernardine codices) and Dominicans (2).

A much smaller collection comprised manuscripts that came from Polish cathedrals and collegiate churches. In the case of the cathedral manuscripts, these were isolated books from the libraries of the Kraków and Płock cathedrals, which found their way into the Załuski Library. Codices formerly belonging to collegiate churches were part of a collection brought by Samuel Bogumił Linde (1771–1847) to Warsaw in 1819. Particularly important was a group of nearly 30 codices from the Collegiate Church of Our Lady in Wiślica; in addition, there were also some volumes from the collegiate churches in Sandomierz and Łęczyca.

Manuscripts of parish provenance were rare. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that an important source providing an insight into parish libraries of the late Middle Ages can be found in books donated by parish priests (but also curates) to monasteries. In exceptional cases a manuscript belonged to a lay person, usually a burgher. In addition, I have managed to identify several manuscripts likely to have functioned in the University of Kraków circles. These manuscripts were owned by students and professors.

The second group comprises manuscripts of foreign origin which found their way into Polish libraries of the early modern period. It has proved possible to establish

the provenance of 148 manuscripts from across Europe, including a group of 13 hitherto unknown codices from the medieval Carthusian monastery in Vauvert and two codices from King Matthias Corvinus' library. A substantial majority of manuscripts from this group came from the Załuski Library and was brought to Poland by Józef Andrzej Załuski or by his agents operating in various European cities.

There is also a group of manuscripts that may have arrived in Poland already in the Middle Ages. Among them are not only liturgical books, brought by monks to newly founded monasteries, but also books bought by clergymen abroad, especially in the 15th century, when the book market was thriving. There is no doubt – although the phenomenon is barely perceptible – that texts and books circulated between Bohemia and Poland. Contacts between the clergy (e.g. monks) of both countries, links between the universities in Prague and Kraków, finally the influx of Bohemian clergy to Poland and Silesia led to the arrival of various books in Poland.

The third group comprises all the remaining manuscripts (about 600), i.e. codices for which it has proved impossible to establish their medieval or early modern origins. Their modern provenance is known in a considerable majority of cases; only in the case of 24 codices has it proved impossible to establish any provenance, apart from ascertaining that the codices originated in Poland. As this piece of information is missing, it is impossible to say in what circles these manuscripts circulated.

After reconstructing – as much as the sources allow – the contents of the National Library's collection of medieval manuscripts, I then proceeded to an analysis of ecclesiastical libraries of medieval Poland, libraries to which the identified codices belonged. I was primarily interested in the social functioning of books and libraries. Having at our disposal incomplete information about medieval manuscripts found in specific libraries in the early modern period, we are, however, facing a dilemma of what we really can study. Theoretically, what should be applied here is a research questionnaire used to analyse library inventories, i.e. to determine the size of a collection, ways of compiling and expanding it (writers' milieu) as well as its specificity and function. However, there is a certain risk involved. Wherever we have early modern library inventories, any attempt at reconstruction is based to a large extent on the general premise that medieval manuscripts had "always" been in a given library. In this case, we have no such inventories. On the other hand, determining the authors of the books on the basis of colophons can be misleading, because in many cases it is impossible to say whether we are dealing with a person associated with a specific milieu (monastery, collegiate church) or whether a given manuscript was donated by someone from the outside. Moreover, given the incomplete and imprecise descriptions of the various codices, pronouncing judgements on the specificity of a collection seems far-fetched. Just as doubtful methodologically seems to be analysing the contents of a collection with regard to the genre of the texts recorded in the manuscripts. Describing such a medieval collection according to traditional

thematic divisions into e.g. the Bible, Church Fathers, theology, church law, secular law etc. is an anachronism, because such a classification was used in the early modern period, whereas in medieval libraries what was noted was more often the place where the books were kept (chest, cabinet, desk), in which were to be found manuscripts that were not necessarily thematically uniform. Instead, book collections should be analysed with respect to the functions of the manuscripts and the texts contained in them. We should also take into account aspects like a didactic or formative nature of a library as well as its symbolic (formal) functions. In monastic circles, in particular, books were a source of information not only about doctrinal matters, but also (above all) about the Divine order of the world; they were the basis of organising time (not only liturgical time) and providing guidance on the earthly space. A library was also a place of memory as well as a place where group identity was shaped and confirmed. Institutional libraries (those of cathedrals, collegiate churches and monasteries) held not only historiographic works associated with a specific area (chronicles, annals) but also – especially in the case of monastic libraries – texts concerning the past of a given religious order and serving to cultivate tradition. I used such a complex formula – referring to the social functions of books – and not a simple thematic division in my own research.

Another research problem is one concerning the dissemination of texts. A question arises as to whether descriptions of manuscripts enable us to determine how texts were transmitted. In the case of monastic collections, not easily accessible to outsiders, this question become particularly relevant. How and from where did books and texts reach monasteries? Did the monastics take part in transmitting knowledge onwards by means of writing? I have attempted to answer some of these questions; the remaining ones require further in-depth studies.

An analysis of information about medieval books from the National Library's pre-war manuscript collection makes it possible to formulate several general conclusions. First of all, the information makes it possible to verify the thesis whereby Polish monasticism was in crisis in the late Middle Ages, at least judging from the size and contents of monastic libraries. The information I have collected suggest considerable activity of monastics in the writing culture of late medieval Poland, contrary to the assertions made by earlier historiography.

Another crucial question concerns the way in which books were acquired by various ecclesiastical institutions. The information I have collected about the transmission of texts and manuscripts shows that in late medieval Poland there was a complex network bringing together monasteries, cathedrals, collegiate churches, parishes and Kraków scholars. What mattered within this network were not only personal contacts between men of letters – people engaged in writing and/or using texts and books every day – but also a sense of being part of a specific institutional or geographical community. It was a network of individuals frequently in touch with university circles, a network encompassing not only the capital, Kraków, but

also practically the entire realm. The group included both the clergy – from cathedrals, collegiate churches, parishes and monasteries, professors of the University of Kraków – and the laity: magnates, burghers, notaries. An important factor in the transmission of books was the clergy's mobility. Books were collected by ecclesiastics working their way up the Church hierarchy. Often they would keep books from their university days. Later on in life they would donate books to ecclesiastical institutions, often dividing their – sometimes impressive – collections among several churches and monasteries. Mobility and attempts to acquire texts can be seen even in monastic circles – monks would travel to copy the texts they needed not only to monasteries of the same rule, but also to those of other religious orders.

Obviously, we can speak of centres which held, first, more books, second – books regarded as being of better quality. Such places attracted people looking for specific works; they were also regarded as appropriate places to store texts and acted as places where specific works were disseminated. Generally, we can distinguish several such institutions – on the one hand interested in disseminating specific texts and on the other regarded as trustworthy. One of such places was undoubtedly the seat of government in the Wawel Castle in Kraków, which, for example, held the best works on German law. Other such centres were the cathedrals – here priests had an opportunity and duty to copy texts of synodal statutes, which was intended not only to harmonise liturgical and pastoral practices, but also to provide help with pastoral ministry. Moreover, bishops made it mandatory for ecclesiastics to acquire also other texts regarded as important. We can assume that the best copies or models of synodal statutes (as well as other works, e.g. *vitae* of St. Stanislaus or *miracula*) were to be found in cathedrals or main centres of worship. Another centre was undoubtedly the University of Kraków or, more broadly, scholars associated with Kraków. The university collection was regarded as a source of the best texts in terms of accuracy.

University scholars themselves – using the written word on a daily basis – contributed significantly to the dissemination of texts. This group included, of course, students: not only future priests holding various positions in dioceses and archdioceses, but also monastics who remained in touch with the university even after their profession. Some professors would donate manuscripts from their collections not only to the university but also to monasteries, collegiate churches or parish churches, which was, of course, a manifestation of piety and may have also testified to the existence of ties, including intellectual ties, with a specific institution.

Within the social exchange network people would also disseminate texts originating in Kraków. These were not only sermons or theological and philosophical treatises, but also texts containing practical advice. Such communication between Kraków theologians associated with the university, and regular and secular clergy is evidenced by e.g. *opiniones* – a collection of various penitential problems discussed by professors of theology and canon law, who in any case often served

as judicial vicars or vicars general *in spiritualibus*. Among them were people like Mikołaj Kozłowski, Jan Kanty, Stanisław of Skarbimierz and others. What should be stressed here is the bidirectionality – though not on a comparable scale – of the flow of texts between the university circles on the one hand, and diocesan and monastic clergy on the other. Texts and books “came out” of the Kraków university circles, but also “came in” as direct gifts from people associated with the university (e.g. former students and alumni) or indirectly, through acquisition of books for future students.

Research into the role of Kraków’s intellectual circles is associated with one more question, namely the speed with which texts could be obtained. Obviously, those whose position was privileged were the clergy who were permanently in Kraków. Hence, for instance, the excellent – as far as we can judge – book collection of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre from the Monastery of St. Hedwig in Stradom, which included the latest works. In the case of centres from outside Kraków, we should emphasise the important role of collegiate churches in the transmission of texts, especially clergymen running collegiate church schools. Collegiate church collections may have been a source of texts needed by parish priests and curates in their pastoral work in parishes. In this case, too, two directions should be noted: on the one hand texts were made available to the clergy, on the other canons and collegiate church vicars – who also served as parish priests – would donate their collections to collegiate churches. They included men like Canon Stanisław of Jankowice in the case of the collegiate church in Kielce, and Jakub of Wiślica, who donated books to the collegiate church in Wiślica, where he served as vice provost. That is why book collections of collegiate churches – as much as we can say judging from the Wiślica collection – were made up largely of donations. This is evidenced by the fact that one text (e.g. of provincial statutes) was represented in by several copies in the collection.

A question now arises: were monasteries also involved in the transmission of texts and books? Judging only from information about books donated by various ecclesiastics to monasteries, we could assume that monastic libraries were the last link in the spread of texts and books, i.e. the books did not go any further beyond them. However, this observation is erroneous – the analysed monasteries undoubtedly collected books, but they also disseminated them further, not only within their own religious orders but also outside them. Monastic libraries were also used by other clergymen and lay people. Examples include the work of Stanisław of Wojczyce, who used the Holy Cross library, or source information about books being borrowed from monastic libraries (and about bans on lending those books).

Efforts to acquire the necessary works were not confined to the Kingdom of Poland. Texts were copied in other countries as well, e.g. in Italy, German states or France. Another important region was Bohemia, although we have to stress the cautious attitude of the Church authorities to books coming from that direction, espe-

cially from 1420s. Books were also acquired during travels. They were brought by clergymen who travelled to the Councils of Constance and Basel, by pilgrims (e.g. the Cistercian Matern of Koprzywnica), students, as well as dignitaries travelling to the papal curia or to meetings of chapters. There is no doubt that the question of how books were obtained requires further, in-depth research.

In conclusion I should formulate another research problem concerning the fate of the National Library's pre-war collection of medieval manuscripts, namely whether we should regard the surviving codices from the pre-war National Library collection as a closed set and whether we can definitely determine the scale of the losses. Over thirty years ago, in 1984, a member of staff of the National Library's Manuscript Department and fine expert on medieval manuscripts, Krystyna Muszyńska, wrote about diminishing chances for discovering extant manuscripts outside the National Library. We know today that not all manuscripts collected by the Germans in Okólnik were burned in 1944. However, most codices that survived in one way or another were discovered and returned to the National Library within twenty years following the end of the war. Yet we should not lose hope of discovering more surviving books: as late as 2012 I discovered a manuscript from the National Library's pre-war collection, which, oddly enough, found its way into a German library – most likely mistakenly returned there by the Russians in the 1950s. This example shows that the entire collection of manuscripts analysed in this volume is made up of codices that were probably destroyed, but we can always hope that they have not been irretrievably lost.

That is why I consider it important to include in the subsequent volumes descriptions of identified medieval manuscripts of Latin source texts, among them extracts from non-surviving early modern catalogues of manuscripts from church libraries as well as detailed indexes (Volumes 2-3). The characteristics of the various codices may prove helpful in any future identification of new finds. There is another objective – apart from a documentary one – in the inclusion of descriptions of the manuscripts. Recording and describing – in as great detail as possible – the various extant medieval manuscripts from Polish and foreign collections as well as gathering of information about the lost collections will make it possible to create – as Edward Potkowski once called for – “ideal libraries”.

Finally, the third and the most prosaic reason. I had to leave aside many questions concerning Polish medieval libraries. I hope that the material I have gathered will prove helpful in conducting further, in-depth studies of scriptoria, libraries as well as transmission of texts and ideas. This work is essential, if we want to define the cultural, religious and intellectual climate of medieval Poland.