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SAMUEL MEIENREIS AND HIS BOOKS FROM LEIDEN:  
TRACING THE PROVENANCE  
OF THE N-PSALTER FRAGMENTS\*

INTRODUCTION

The recent discovery of new fragments of the N-Psalter has been a turning point in the studies of its provenance. Unlike the previously identified strips from Cambridge (Dietz, 1968), Haarlem (Derolez, 1972), and Sondershausen (Gneuss, 1998; Gneuss, 2008; Pilch, 1997), the fragments found in Elbląg (Opalińska et al., 2023) and Alkmaar (Porck, 2024) were bound with their host volumes, which situated them in a historical context opening thereby new avenues of research. This paper explores the historical and material evidence further to demonstrate the scope and type of data uncovered thus far and its significance for future research. The analysis focuses on the parchment strips and source bindings from Elbląg which are part of one collection, known as *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana*. The

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key figure is its owner—Samuel Meienreis—a sixteenth/seventeenth-century Protestant theologian and bibliophile from Royal Prussia. By tracing the course of his life, we may reconstruct a chain of circumstances owing to which fragments of a medieval psalter from England found their way to a municipal library in northern Poland. Moreover, we may re-evaluate particular types of historical evidence and their relevance for the history of the fragmented codex and, by extension, for provenance studies, in general. Establishing a reliable set of criteria is a prerequisite for a wider search for the lost fragments beyond the local archive. In fact, as argued below, it is mainly due to several clues from the study of the Elbląg case, substantiated by the Alkmaar sources, that another missing link has been lately recovered in Cambridge.

The paper begins with a brief historical overview of Royal Prussia and Elbląg (Elbing) in the second half of the sixteenth century. With the help of external sources, I also attempt to sketch the historical and social background of Samuel Meienreis' life. Special consideration is given to brief biographical accounts by Seyler (1742) and Bauer (1929) based, in part, on the now lost *alba amicorum* of Meienreis and people from his circle. Arguably, had it not been for the circumstances of his life, typical of a young sixteenth-century educated townsman from Royal Prussia, Samuel would have probably never come into possession of books which contained the recycled N-Psalter fragments. His academic path led him to university towns popular among his peers where he pursued his scholarly career and purchased books. A number of volumes from his collection can be linked to Leiden, his last academic destination, which is likely also the place where the waste parchment fragments of the N-Psalter were put to use in a local workshop. The second part of the paper focuses on the physical aspects of these volumes and the evidence they furnish.

## 2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: ELBLĄG AND ROYAL PRUSSIA

Samuel Meienreis (1572–1604) was born and raised in Elbląg, a town located at the eastern edge of Żuławy Wiślane (the Vistula Fens), in a wealthy and respected family that held the positions of mayors and proconsuls for several generations (Gierszewski, 1992–1997, vol. 3, p. 185).<sup>1</sup> His homeland was a province of Royal Prussia, which was part of the former State of the Teutonic Order until its subjects rebelled against the authorities and submitted to the Polish king in 1454. The province then became part of the Kingdom of Poland and later, after the Union of Lublin in 1569, part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Polish kings granted numerous privileges to the wealthy merchant

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<sup>1</sup> The Meienreis' family belonged to the town's elite in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; seven men from the family served as the mayors of Elbląg (Groth, 2013).

towns of the province; Elbląg, like Gdańsk, attained the rank of a royal town subject to the king and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The German-speaking citizens of Elbląg enjoyed the prestige of the free subjects to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On the one hand, they upheld their autonomy and resisted any external interference in town matters. On the other, they assimilated to the socio-political culture of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility by participating in local council assemblies, strengthening the economic ties and family bonds with the local and state-wide elites. The relationships they built often cut across religious and ethnic boundaries. During the Reformation, the Elbląg citizens were granted religious privileges and Lutheranism became the dominant religion. This led to many conflicts with the bishops of Warmia in which the Meienreis family was involved, too.<sup>2</sup> Crypto-Calvinism was also popular among part of the town's elites, including Meienreis' teachers.<sup>3</sup>

In the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, Royal Prussia and its major towns—Gdańsk (Danzig), Toruń and Elbląg—reached their golden age. Elbląg, a medieval Hanseatic port, was a window to the world and an important centre of humanism in the northern part of the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom (Groth, 1993–2006).<sup>4</sup> Owing to the local English trade post, the town maintained close contacts with England, not just commercial but also social and cultural. Children of English merchants attended local schools and Prussian students learned English. The northern province was among the places where Shakespearean plays were performed at the earliest. The Reformation movement fostered a mutual exchange with Germany, England and the Netherlands, and boosted new intellectual and cultural trends. The circle of people engaged in literature and science was expanding as more and more educated foreigners took active part in the versatile development of the province. The development included schools which were at the forefront of innovative ideas. The Elbląg municipal school, founded in medieval times, was one of the places where the Reformatory ideas were consolidated and disseminated from the sixteenth century (Pawlak, 1985).

In 1535, the school was turned into a gymnasium and Wilhelm van der Voldergradt, *alias* Gnapheus, an outstanding humanist and pedagogue, who had fled from religious

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<sup>2</sup> One of the ensuing conflicts between Elbląg citizens and the bishops of Warmia concerned a dispute over St. Nicholas Church, where Samuel Meienreis was buried in 1604 (Bauer, 1929, p. 187). Samuel's brother, Andrzej Meienreis, the mayor of Elbląg in 1614–1617, was implicated in this long-lasting feud (Szorc, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> On the role of Calvinism in Elbląg, see Pawlak (1994, pp. 75–78); on its political and social significance, see Müller (1991).

<sup>4</sup> The six-volume *History of Elbląg*, edited by Groth (1993–2006), gives an overview of the most important literature on the town's history in Polish and German; see, in particular, volume 1, part 1 (1496–1626) and volume 6 (the bibliography of Elbląg). The history of Royal Prussia and its status in the Commonwealth is discussed by Labuda (1976), Friedrich (2006), and Kizik (2012).

persecutions in Holland to Elbląg, became its first headmaster (Gierszewski, 1992–1997, vol. 2, pp. 67–69). Gnapheus, formerly a rector of a school in the Hague, based the curriculum of the Elbląg gymnasium on the educational programme launched by influential school reformers and intellectual leaders of the Reformation—Philipp Melanchton and Johannes Sturm (Pawlak, 1985, pp. 5–9). Already in the sixteenth century, the new gymnasium gained considerable reputation beyond Royal Prussia as a Protestant academic centre for the study of arts and humanities. The school attracted students from all over the Commonwealth, Germany, Pomerania, Silesia, Czech, Transylvania, England and Scotland.<sup>5</sup> This reputation outlived Gnapheus who was forced to leave Elbląg in 1541 after Jan Dantiscus, a prince-bishop of Warmia and an avid advocate of the Catholic faith, stepped in to restrain the Protestant spirit of the gymnasium.<sup>6</sup> The attempt was futile but for some time the town council tried not to demonstrate openly the school's profile (Pawlak, 1985, p. 9).

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Elbląg gymnasium developed under the guidance of two experienced and outstanding headmasters—Thomas Rotus (1586–1596) and Jan Mylius (1598–1629); (Pawlak, 1985, pp. 11–13; on Rotus, see also Gierszewski, 1992–1997, vol. 4, p. 93). The school then gained the status of an academic gymnasium. With time, the curriculum, which comprised arithmetic, music, grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, philosophy, Latin (used as the medium of instruction for more advanced students) and Greek, was augmented by logic, theology, elements of civil law, and facultative courses in Hebrew and Polish. The latter were often taken up by German-speaking Prussian students who planned to pursue a career as town clerks or mayors (Pawlak, 1997, p. 46). The Elbląg gymnasium, founded first and foremost for educating local youth of the Lutheran confession, had impact on the public and cultural life of the town and the northern province of the Commonwealth, especially since many of its alumni held prominent positions later in life. Students took part in public debates and organised theatrical performances which attracted large audiences. An important addition to the town's cultural and intellectual rank was the establishment of a public library at the gymnasium. It was set up in 1601 by Jan Mylius in a new school building granted by the town. The collection was growing slowly, amplified mainly through private donations and acquisitions. Meienreis' select

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<sup>5</sup> Scottish and English students were mainly the sons of merchants associated with the Eastland Company based in Elbląg (Pawlak, 1985, p. 46).

<sup>6</sup> Joannes Dantiscus (1485–1548), born in Gdańsk as Johann von Hoeffen, humanist, poet, diplomat in the service of the kings of Poland, ambassador to the court of Emperor Charles V, bishop of the Warmian diocese. He corresponded with the most prominent people of his time, for example, Cortez and Erasmus of Rotterdam. Even though he knew Luther and maintained contact with Melanchton, as a bishop, he strongly opposed the Reformation.

library of 263 volumes became part of the gymnasium repository in 1714 (Jutrzenka-Supryn, 2016; Jutrzenka-Supryn et al., 2024, pp. 97–99; Sekulski, 1990).

The Protestant culture, developing in Elbląg and the neighbouring towns, was fuelled by constant academic contacts with the leading universities in Germany and the Netherlands. Young Prussian citizens who began their schooling programme in local academies, such as the Elbląg gymnasium, would frequently continue their education abroad. The choice of university was determined by many factors, including the level of education and prestige of the place in question, the costs of living, religious and political relations in the prospective academy and the country in which it was situated, travel conditions and safety hazards on roads leading to a given place, and in some cases, at least, the prospects of getting a scholarship (Pawlak, 1997). Many Elbląg students relied on scholarships that often determined the course of their higher academic education. The less wealthy graduates completed their studies in the nearby Królewiec (Koenigsburg).<sup>7</sup> For the more affluent ones, the latter was merely the first stop on a longer and more distant academic tour. In such cases, the studies were continued at two, three or even four different universities. Popular destinations included Leipzig, Wittenberg, Heidelberg, Halle, Jena, Göttingen and Frankfurt, to name a few. After the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 and the political tumult it raised, access to German universities was hampered and many Elbląg students moved to Dutch universities instead. Leiden, Franeker and Groningen remained popular academic destinations until the mid-eighteenth century (Pawlak, 1997, pp. 47–48).

The route from Elbląg to the Netherlands led through Frankfurt, Greifswald, Rostock and Bremen. Travelling to a university was often part of a long and planned *peregrinatio academica* during which students visited various academies, attended public ceremonies, learned about the organisation of local trade, economy and administration, explored galleries, cabinets of curiosities and botanical gardens, studied in libraries, got to know scholars and celebrities (Pawlak, 1997, p. 47). Such an extended journey was expensive and not everyone could afford it. Older and more experienced students would sometimes accompany the sons of affluent noblemen in the capacity of private tutors and peregrinate across Europe at the cost of their mentee's family.

The journeys were often documented in students' *alba amicorum* (lists of friends)—collections of autographs and entries written by people they met on their travels, professors, tutors, fellow students, compatriots, relatives and friends (Pietrzyk, 1999; Schnabel, 2003).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Królewiec (Koenigsburg) was the capital of the Ducal Prussia which was founded after the decline of the Teutonic Order. The Protestant Duchy was ruled by the Hohenzollern dynasty, and was subject to the Polish kings until 1657.

<sup>8</sup> In the literature, the term *album amicorum* has been used interchangeably with *liber amicorum*, *Stammbuch*, *Gesellenbuch*, *Philothek*, among others. For an up-to-date survey of studies on *alba*

However, as demonstrated by Reinders and Vandommele (2022, p. 3), *alba amicorum* were much more than merely collections of autographs:

From their inception, they became a focal point that encouraged the formation and consolidation of ideas about friendship, community and the self. They did this while serving multiple purposes: as memory boxes to recount experiences abroad, as maps of early modern knowledge networks, as organic collections, or even as promotional tools designed to help advance the careers of upcoming scholars.

The practice of keeping *alba amicorum* was common especially in the Low Countries between 1590 and 1620, a time frame crucial for the case discussed here. They became a common possession for scholars, law makers and other educated professionals. Some students would keep their *alba* after they graduated and would add notes and entries to them throughout their lives. Due to their multifaceted character, *alba* are an important source of information on their owners' lives, the timeline and itineraries, social encounters and circles in which they moved. As witnesses to their proprietors' experiences, *alba* help to fill in biographical lacunae especially in the case of people like Samuel Meienreis whose life is poorly documented due to the scarcity of sources.

Samuel kept an *album* between November 1600 and April 1602. Although narrow, both with regard to the time span it covers as well as the contents, it offers a glimpse of the last academically active years of his life, crucially the time when he studied in Leiden and collected books bound locally. No less important, however, is Samuel's social background, the events leading to this academic journey, which happened to be his last, and, most importantly, people he met prior to his enrolment in Leiden. All of the above had considerable impact on the field of his studies and his choice of books. I will, therefore, begin with a brief outline of Samuel's early days before moving on to the critical period of his life.

### 3. SAMUEL MEIENREIS

One source of data on Samuel Meienreis' life is the *Elbinga Litterata*, a history of Elbląg literature including the biographies of writers and scholars (Seyler, 1742, pp. 19–22). Its author, Georg Daniel Seyler, rector of the Elbląg gymnasium in 1734–1745, was not only familiar with the institution's history but also had access to the primary sources which

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*amicorum*, see the special issue of *Early Modern Low Countries*, edited by Reinders and Vandommele (2022), and references given there; cf. also the online database Repertorium Alborum Amicorum (RAA): <https://raa.gf-franken.de/de/startseite.html>.

were later lost or dispersed. Seyler's résumé is based on an obituary note by Bartholomew Keckerman, Meienreis' professor from Heidelberg, appended to a posthumously published *Resolution Epistolae ad Hebraeos* (Meienreis, 1605, pp. 110–117). Complementary to Seyler's cursory account is a later but more detailed biographical note in Hans Bauer's *Alt-Elbinger Stammbücher in der Stadtbücherei* (Bauer, 1929, pp. 181–187). A synopsis of both sources and later literature is given in Szmelter (1990), which is, by far, the most comprehensive work on Samuel Meienreis and his book collection.

According to Seyler's testimony (1742, p. 20), Samuel, raised by his parents in the love of learning and the spirit of devotion, began his education in the Elbląg gymnasium when Thomas Rotus, a Latin poet and an esteemed pedagogue, served as rector of the school. Rotus supervised Meienreis' Latin and Greek studies (cf. also Keckermann's note in Meienreis, 1605, p. 110). Young Samuel was also close to Johannes Bochmann, a senior member of the Elbląg clergy, and a proponent of crypto-Calvinism, which was gaining popularity among the current elites (Bauer, 1929, p. 181; Müller, 1991, pp. 109–127; Pawlak, 1994, p. 77). Bochmann's much later entry in Samuel's album ('lieben Sohnes und Verwandten', dated 13 November 1600) is a testimony to their close relationship and family ties.<sup>9</sup>

Owing to his family's social standing and financial independence, Meienreis was predestined to continue his studies abroad. Thus, after his graduation, he went to Wrocław (Breslau) and then, in the summer of 1594, to Altdorf (Academia Norica), where he studied philosophy, theology and Hebrew, taking active part in lectures and debates (Bauer, 1929, p. 181; Meienreis, 1605, p. 111). Three years later, Samuel matriculated at the University of Heidelberg and got close to Bartholomew Keckermann, a philosopher and theologian known for his versatility and interest in logic, metaphysics, physics, methodology of history, and Hebrew.<sup>10</sup>

Two final stops on this nine-year academic journey were at the universities of Leipzig and Frankfurt. In both places Samuel had the opportunity to meet distinguished professors, on the one hand, and give private tutorials to younger students, on the other (Meienreis, 1605, p. 111; Seyler, 1742, pp. 22–23). At the time, he also had a stab at preaching and his sermons seem to have resonated well with the reformatory audience and received acclaim (Bauer, 1929, p. 181; Meienreis, 1605, p. 112).

There is no evidence that Meienreis kept an *album* documenting the encounters during his *novennium* in Germany.<sup>11</sup> However, we may get a glimpse at the ambiance of academic towns such as Wrocław, Frankfurt or Heidelberg in the last decade of the sixteenth

<sup>9</sup> Bochmann's son, Daniel, a notary and treasurer, married Samuel's sister Ewa in 1597 (Bauer, 1929, p. 182, ft. 3).

<sup>10</sup> On Keckermann's academic work in Heidelberg and at the Academic Gymnasium in Gdańsk, see Nadolski (1961, pp. 10–14).

<sup>11</sup> Bauer (1929) only refers to Meienreis' *Stammbuch* for the years 1600–1602.

century through another medium. Johannes von Bodeck, 10 years younger than Samuel and his later mentee, documented his first academic peregrination in several fascicles. Crucially, his route led basically via the same places as that of Meienreis. Although the original *album* is now lost, Bauer (1929, pp. 154–188) gives a relatively detailed description of its form and contents.

Bodeck travelled with his cousin Andreas Morenberg. Both men descended from noble and influential families (Bauer, 1929, pp. 169–174). Their fathers, related by marriage, generously supported the educational development of the province. It was none other than Morenberg's father (also Andreas) that brought Jan Mylius over to the Elbląg school. He was also one of the first benefactors of the newly founded gymnasium library (Chlebus, 2016, pp. 205–222). Bodeck's father, a son of the town's mayor, was a member of the Elbląg council himself. His relish for literature made him build up a substantial private library which was later transferred to Gdańsk (Bauer, 1929, p. 170). Orphaned by his father at the age of thirteen, Johannes von Bodeck, went into his uncle's care. Both cousins attended the Elbląg gymnasium until 1596 and left the school after its current rector, Thomas Rotus, had died. A year later, they were sent off on to their first academic journey to gain better education and to get acquainted with the world and other reformatory schools (Bauer, 1929, p. 170). Their route, which can be reconstructed on the basis of the entries in Bodeck's *alba amicorum* for the years 1597–1600, reproduced in Bauer (1929, pp. 168–181), ran through the places that Samuel Meienreis visited either shortly before or even at the same time. Although Bauer (1929) never states that explicitly, it is not at all implausible that their paths did cross somewhere at the time.

Through the lens of Bauer's vivid account of Johannes' first album, we get a glimpse of princes, barons, burghers, scholars, clerks, fellow students, close friends, casual acquaintances and family members who left a variety of inscriptions, mainly in Latin and Greek, but also in German, English, French and, occasionally, in Italian. The notes vary from short tag lines, through proverbial maxims and memorable quotations from classical authors or the Bible, to informal remarks on women and love, recreation and wine-drinking.<sup>12</sup> The inscriptions are interspersed with hand-painted emblems, coats-of-arms and drawings—a scene from a knightly tournament, a figure of a man in shabby clothes standing in front of a ruined castle, a portrait of a noble lady from Strasbourg. Some are more elaborate. For example, one Martin Sadlau sketched a gondola-like boat and covered it with a paper curtain which, when lifted, showed a pair of lovers seated inside. Another colleague wrote humorous verses in hexameter about the ruinous effects of drinking. There was also an image showing a desolate student with a bleeding head

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<sup>12</sup> The full text of Bauer's account can be found at <https://dlibra.bibliotekaelblaska.pl/dlibra/publication/1491/edition/1529/content>



sitting in a messy chamber with a list of debts on a board behind him; in front of him stands a woman with a child in her arms, and a beadle knocks at the door (Bauer, 1929, pp. 178–179, il. 2; Pietrzyk, 1999, p. 148).<sup>13</sup>

Despite the casual tone of some entries, Bodeck's album must have been a witness to an active peripatetic education during which students met illustrious men of their time, such as Theodore Beza, and studied at renowned universities. This small portable volume in octavo, bound in plain parchment, with no ornamentation but for the initials "J. B." and a date on the front cover, showing some single marks on the last pages, contained as many as 256 entries (Bauer, 1929, p. 168). Bodeck's *Stammbuch* may not have been as refined as the one owned by the Elbląg headmaster Jan Mylius, including maxims from his colleagues-professors, 49 in all, but it was much more varied. Would Meienreis' *album* for that part of *peregrinatio academica* be similar to that of his younger colleague or would it rather be more moderate? While we may never find an answer to this question, we are fortunate to have records of Meienreis' and Bodeck's *alba* documenting their joint journey to Leiden.

Around mid-1600 all three men, Samuel Meienreis, Johannes von Bodeck and Andreas Morenberg, were back in Elbląg only to leave it again for Leiden in November that year. Samuel accompanied the two younger scholars in his capacity of preceptor and travel companion (Bauer, 1929, p. 181; Meienreis, 1605, p. 113). Bauer's account of this journey is a blend of facts retrieved from Samuel's and Johannes' *alba*, as well as external sources. The boundaries are not always clearly distinguished in his narrative.<sup>14</sup>

Meienreis' now-lost *album amicorum* was a 480-page volume, bound in laced-case parchment with a tooled supralibros—the same that can be identified in the books from *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana*. Reportedly, it bore his signature—"Samuel Meienreis Elbigensis Borussus, A. Christi 1600, 4 November"—on page two (Bauer, 1929, p. 181). The capacity of the volume and the actual number of entries implies that many pages must have been left blank. Samuel must have planned to keep it much longer and he probably would have, if not for his deteriorating health and untimely death. The first entries, dated between 1 and 13 November, come from his Elbląg friends and acquaintances.<sup>15</sup> On November 19, the three men moved on to Gdańsk, and then via Hamburg to Bremen, where Meienreis visited Christoph Pezel and Urban Pierius—two Calvinist professors who had been deposed from Wittenberg. They reached Leiden at Christmas

<sup>13</sup> The picture have been popular at the time since it can be found in other *alba* (Pietrzyk, 1999, p. 148, ft. 74 and 75).

<sup>14</sup> Bauer (1929, p. 181) evidently regarded Samuel's *album* as a secondary witness, perhaps due to the fact that it included merely 33 entries, a relatively modest number as compared to 256 items in Bodeck's *Stammbuch*.

<sup>15</sup> The last entry from Elbląg, dated 13 November, comes from Johannes Bochmann (see above).

and, on 29 December 1600, they matriculated at the University: Johannes von Bodeck and his cousin Andreas Morenberg joined the law faculty, whereas Samuel Meienreis joined theology (du Rieu, 1875, p. 59).<sup>16</sup>

Leiden University was not a random choice for Samuel. He had been preparing for his future role as a preacher all his life and was supported financially by his home council to accomplish the task. In Leiden, he found a more serious academic rigour than in German universities, which may have suited him better. According to Bauer (1929, p. 186), in Leiden, Meienreis associated mainly with scholars, especially theologians. The entries which filled his *album* came from academics, notably Joseph Scaliger, Johannes Drusius, Bernardus Paludanus, Wilhelmus Coddæus, and last but not least, Franciscus Junius the Elder (Gordon, 2015; van Asselt, 2014).<sup>17</sup> The latter, professor of Theology at Leiden University since 1592 (formerly professor of Theology in Heidelberg), also taught Hebrew between 1597 and 1601. He supervised Samuel's public debate on the Old and New Covenant on 19 of January 1602. The text of the debate was published the same year at Johannes Paets' workshop in Leiden (Meienreis, 1602).<sup>18</sup>

During his stay in the Netherlands, Samuel would buy books, building up a collection that had already been reasonably fair for a man of his age, rank and financial resources. A catalogue of *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana*, made by Seyler in 1718, comprised 263 volumes out of which only 122 are now extant (Pludra-Żuk, 2024, p. 174). A substantial part of the collection consists of 65 theological, 27 philological and 12 philosophical works but there is also a number of miscellaneous volumes representing a variety of fields, such as medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography and politics.<sup>19</sup> It is a modern library made up of works by contemporary renaissance authors supplemented by a selection from medieval and ancient classical writers. All of the volumes are carefully bound, either in parchment or white or brown leather, which speaks to Samuel's bibliophilic spirit and his

<sup>16</sup> In *Album studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae*, Morenberg's name is misspelt as "Andreas Anrenbeek" (cf. du Rieu, 1875, p. 59).

<sup>17</sup> Although there is no record of what the actual entries looked like in Meienreis' *album*, examples of inscriptions from all of the above-mentioned scholars may be found in various extant *alba*. By way of example, consider the entries by Joseph Scaliger (33) and Francis Junius (49) in Daniel van Vlierden's album (1593–1613) in "The Memory" database at <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=urn:gvn:AA:0234>, or entries from Samuel Bacchareus' *album* (1602–1610) reproduced in *Vrienden vereend* (2012, 1.13): <https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/1843461>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://dlibra.bibliotekaelblaska.pl/dlibra/publication/47960/edition/43455/content>. Johannes Paets (fl. 1572–1622) printed a large assortment of books, including Dutch Bibles and translations of classical authors. From 1602 to 1620, he served as a university printer, producing academic dissertations, orations and *carmina* (see Hoftijzer, 2018, pp. 177–178).

<sup>19</sup> One volume on legal matters included in the collection belonged to his brother (Szmelter, 1992).

care for the books.<sup>20</sup> A distinguishing feature is a gilded supralibros with a quotation from Psalm 133 (132): “Ecce quam bonum habitare fratres in unum”, encircling his initials and a group of trees, and the date 1604—the year of Samuel’s death. The supralibros tooled on the front cover of each volume and Meienreis’ signature on the title page in many of them are clear ownership marks that help to identify his books.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4. SAMUEL MEIENREIS’ LIBRARY AND THE BOOKS FROM LEIDEN

As shown by Pearson (2019, p. 4ff), studies of book collections are an integral part of provenance research, since they provide evidence of interaction between books and their users. Getting to know the contents of someone’s library helps us to understand not only their life and thinking but also the patterns and trends over time. Moreover, if books from a given collection contain *in situ* manuscript fragments from the same source, knowing the contents and the physical properties of the books increases the odds of finding other host volumes and selecting those that may potentially contain matching *membra disiecta*. This was exactly the case in searching for the N-Psalter binding sources.

Judging by the selection of authors and the proportion of books in the respective disciplines, *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana* reflects Samuel’s professional and academic interests, on the one hand, and the reception of general trends in the humanities (and science) among educated citizens from Royal Prussia, on the other. Particularly prominent in this context are works related to the ongoing theological disputes.<sup>22</sup> Although there are no extant treatises by Martin Luther in the collection, the Reformation ideas are represented by authors, such as Philipp Melancton, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, to name the most renowned. Worth mentioning is also a treatise by Faust Socyn (Fausto Sozzini), the main theologian of the Polish Antitrinitarian movement. Moreover, the theological section includes works of the Church Fathers, a treatise by Erasmus of Rotterdam, several works by Catholic authors, and a single work by Moses Maimonides. Editions of the

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<sup>20</sup> Szmelter (1999, p. 75) asserts that the bindings were not made on Meienreis’ order. Recent analyses have indicated that at least some of the parchment bindings were made in the Netherlands, presumably in a local workshop in Leiden (see below).

<sup>21</sup> In one case, the ownership stamp has been tooled on the spine. The supralibros was probably made and stamped on the books after Samuel’s death by his family, perhaps around 1714, before they handed the entire collection over to the Elbląg Library.

<sup>22</sup> Needless to say, the proportions may have been somewhat different when the collection was complete. However, based on the extant sources, we may deem that Samuel’s vocation may have been as much an effect of his personal preferences, as of the circumstances of his life, especially since he was in close contact with people like Johannes Bochmann and Bartholomew Keckermann in the formative years of his life.

Bible (complete or in parts) in Latin, Greek and Syrian, and concordances to the Old and the New Testament complement the section. Judging by the diverse character of the theological collection, and the fact that it comprises works which critically appraise the Christian dogma not only from the Protestant angle, we may assume that Samuel Meienreis was an ambitious and open-minded student, rather than a biased follower of the doctrine he professed himself (Szmelter, 1999).<sup>23</sup>

The philological section of Samuel's library consists of studies on rhetoric and dialectic by classical and contemporary authors, for example, Dion Chrysostom and Philipp Melancthon. There are works on epistolography popular at the time, a collection of maxims compiled by Erasmus, books on language and grammars of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. All of the above must have been helpful in preparing public theses, dissertations and preaching.<sup>24</sup> However, the presence of literary works by classical Latin and Greek authors, books of poetry, or a popular fourteenth-century Iberian romance *Amadis de Gaula* in *Bibliotheca Meienreisiانا* suggests that its owner did not collect books for practical reasons only. This conviction is substantiated by a selection of works from disciplines which were outside his professional domain, for example, a study on Roman genealogy, on numismatics, a compendium on arithmetic, music and geometry, medical treatises by contemporary Dutch physicians. To conclude, it is a collection of a young and ambitious bibliophile preparing for a theological career, a promising young scholar with an open and searching mind and some flair for writing.

Samuel collected books from the early stages of his academic life, and it is not always possible to determine when individual volumes found their way into his library. Latin and Greek primers as well as the elementary books on philosophy, mathematics and logic, must have been part of his collection from the early days when he attended the Elbląg gymnasium and the school in Wrocław.<sup>25</sup> A few books were gifts from his friends and teachers, as indicated by the inscriptions on title pages, but even these may pose problems when it comes to dating.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Sekulski (1990, pp. 31–33) for a brief discussion of the theological collection in the library of the Loitz family.

<sup>24</sup> In addition to the aforementioned thesis, Samuel also wrote a study on *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, which was published posthumously (Meienreis, 1605); see Bauer (1929, p. 187) for details of these and other writings.

<sup>25</sup> Notes and figures on the margins and in-text underlining in some books are the evidence of active reading (cf. Szmelter, 1999, p. 66). A comprehensive analysis of these marginal additions is essential before it can be concluded if they were rendered by Samuel, indeed. It was a common practice at the time to share books with friends, so some marginal notes may have been added by other readers.

<sup>26</sup> For example, in two books the inscriptions include details on the place and date, i.e., "Suo Concji et Amico Samueli Meienreis Elbing librum Martinus Gryn. Elbing Altorfi A°1596" (Lambert, *Ethicaes Christianae*), and "Suo Samueli Meienreis mittit Jonas Helt Altorfie A°99" (Socyn, *Refutatio Libelli*). By contrast, the inscription in Parnus' *Davidis Parci...*, signed by his Heidelberg professor Bartholomew

Owing to provenance notes, it is possible to identify several volumes that Samuel bought in Leiden. All of them have his signature, a place and/or date, sometimes a short inscription on the title page. A list of volumes that have been so far unambiguously identified as Leiden acquisitions (1600–1602) is given below, while images of two such notes are shown in Figures 1 and 2 that follow.<sup>27</sup>

- (1) Elbląg, C. Norwid Library SD.XVI.1480  
Waser, Kaspar, *Archetypus Grammaticae Hebraeae. Duabus Praecipuis partibus, etymologia et syntaxi absolutus...*, Basel, Conradus Waldkirchius, 1600; Provenance note: “Samuel Meienreis”.
- (2) Elbląg, C. Norwid Library (1289) SD.XVI.2430  
*Concordantiae Bibliorum utriusque testamenti, veteris et novi: quas merito maximas et absolutissimas liceat appellare*. Lugduni ex officina Iutarum, 1560; Provenance note: “Samuel Meienreis emebat Lugduni Batav.1601”.
- (3) Elbląg, C. Norwid Library (1311) SD.XVI.2454.1  
Biblia Latina, Hanoviae, 1596, Impensis Andreae Veheliheredum, Claudii Marnii, & Ioannis Aubrii; Provenance note: “Samuel Meienreis Elbingensis emebat non tam pro se quam pro amicis litteratis Lugduni Batt. Ao 1601. 10 Calend Augusti”.
- (4) Elbląg, C. Norwid Library (1312) SD.XVI.2454.2  
Biblia Latina, Hanoviae, Impensis Andreae Veheliheredum, Claudii Marnii, & Ioannis Aubrii, 1596.<sup>28</sup>
- (5) Elbląg, C. Norwid Library (1355) SD.XVI.2488  
Biblia Novum Testamentum Latina, 1585, Geneveae, Apud Petrum Sanctandrea-num; Provenance note: “Samuel Meienreis Elbing. Borussus emebat Lugduni Battav. Anno 1601 26 Sept.”.
- (6) Elbląg, C. Norwid Library (9017) SD.XVI.2199  
Kimchi, David, *Radicum Liber: sive, Hebraeum Bibliorum Lexicon...*, Venetia, printer unknown, 1546. Provenance note: “Samuel Meienreis Elbing. Borussus Lugduni Batt. emebat Ao. 1601 15 April”.
- (7) Elbląg, C. Norwid Library (293) Ob.6.II.3021<sup>29</sup>

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Keckermann, has no date, though it may be tentatively inferred from the stamp on the cover, saying “1590”.

<sup>27</sup> It is possible that yet another volume from *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana* should be included in the list, though at present it is not certain. The volume in question is a text block containing various prints, including a number of theses printed in Leiden in 1595–1596 by Thomas Basson, Francis Raphalengius, and Johannes Paets and Johannes Balduini.

<sup>28</sup> This is a companion volume of the Bible listed as volume (3) above. The provenance note is written in volume one only.

<sup>29</sup> Based on the provenance note, Samuel bought this book in Leiden. However, its binding differs from that of the remaining books on the list. Judging by the style, it may have been bound in Italy

Carbone Lodovico, *Divinus orator, vel, de rhetoric divina libri spetem: in quibus benedicendi recteque concionandi doctrina et divinis scriptoribus collecta*, 1595, Venetiis. Apud Societam Minimam; provenance note: “Samuel Meienreis Elbingensis Lugduni Batt. 1602 5 Janu 1602”.

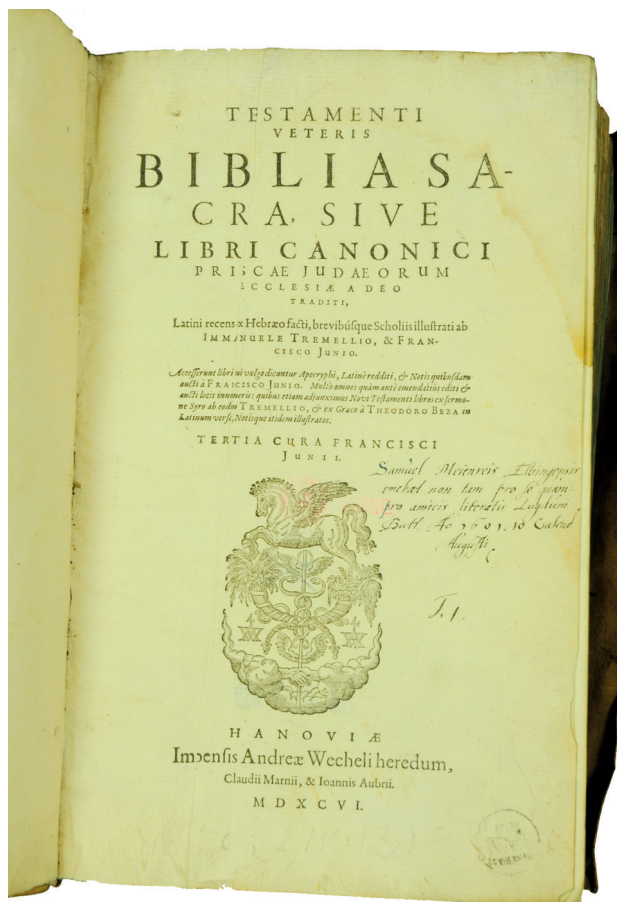


Figure 1. Example of a provenance note in Samuel Meienreis' book bought in Leiden. Elbląg, C. Norwid Library (1311) SD.XVI.2454.1. *Biblia Latina*, Hanoviae, 1596, Impensis Andreae Veheliheredum, Claudii Marnii, & Ioannis Aubrii. Provenance note: “Samuel Meienreis Elbingensis emebat non tam pro se quam pro amicis litteratis Lugduni Batt. Ao 1601. 10 Calend Augusti.” By permission of the C. Norwid Library in Elbląg

(where it was printed) or in the Netherlands by an Italian binder (Ewa Chlebus, correspondence). In all likelihood, it comes from a different bookbinding workshop.



Figure 2. Example of a provenance note in Samuel Meienreis' book bought in Leiden. Elbląg, C. Norwid Library (1289) SD.XVI.2430; *Concordantiae Bibliorum utriusque testamenti, veteris et novi...* Lugduni ex officina Iutarum, 1560; Provenance note: "Samuel Meienreis emebat Lugduni Batav. 1601." By permission of the C. Norwid Library in Elbląg

## 5. THE N-PSALTER FRAGMENTS AND THE HOST VOLUMES

All the volumes listed above, with the exception of (7) (see ft. 29), share another important feature: they all have a very similar (laced-)case parchment binding with cover extensions and Samuel Meienreis' supralibros tooled on the front cover.<sup>30</sup> The cases with their parchment covers and overlapped corners, are attached to the book blocks in volumes (3–7), but only partially so in the case of (1).<sup>31</sup> Each book block has from three to five double sewing supports, millboards and paper lining under the parchment coverings

<sup>30</sup> The description of the binding structure is based on Ligatus: <https://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/index.php>; see also Opalińska et al. (2023).

<sup>31</sup> In the case volume (2), the binding structure was intact, but it has been removed during the conservation process (see below).

and on the spine. Some of them have red-sprinkled (1–2, 6) and some blue-painted edges (3–5). The endbands show sewing with light green (1), light blue (2), pink and green (3–4), green and brown (5), and pink and green (6) threads, with tiedowns.

Partially detached pastedowns in the first two volumes have revealed parchment fragments of a glossed Latin psalter made in the eleventh-century England, the so-called N-Psalter (Bremmer & Dekker, 2006, pp. 63–65; Pulsiano, 2001, p. xxxvi; Roberts, 2017, p. 38; Toswell, 2014, pp. 182–183). In Waser's *Archetypus grammaticae hebraeae* (1) there were two endleaf guards: the front one was exposed and partially sewn to the book block. The rear one was almost completely hidden under a paper pastedown and, initially, only a vertical protrusion on the lining and a tiny cavity at the bottom of the pastedown revealed the presence of a narrow endleaf guard beneath. When the latter was detached from the bookbinding structure, it turned out that both strips were contiguous fragments of one and the same leaf containing parts of Psalm 113:16.8–26, a rubricated title and the opening to Psalm 114 (cf. Opalińska et al., 2023). For the sake of clarity, the internal structure of the binding with the front endleaf guard attached to the book block in this volume is shown in Figure 3.

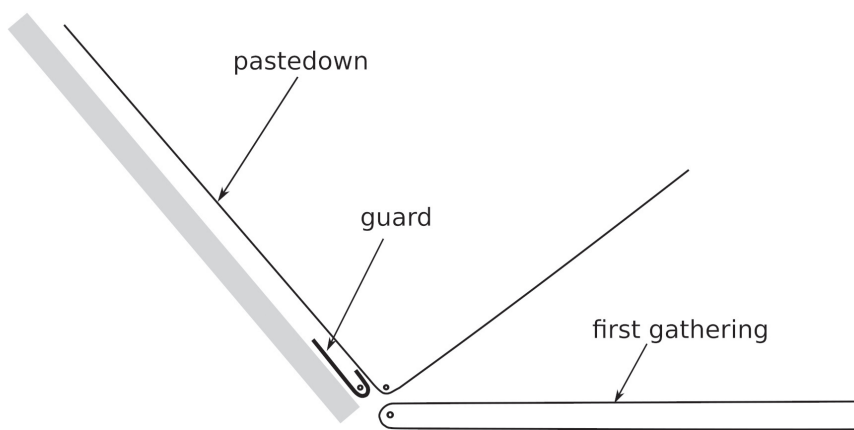


Figure 3. A diagram showing the binding structure with the front end-leaf guard in Elbląg, C. Norwid Library SD.XVI.1480. Courtesy of Ewa Chlebus

In 2023, more fragments from the same Psalter were identified in volume (2), *Concordantiae Bibliorum...* In this case, apart from two endleaf guards under the front and rear pastedowns, several smaller fragments have been uncovered that were used as spine-linings. Since *Concordantiae* is a substantially bigger volume than Waser's *Archetypus* in octavo, the binding supports are more sizeable and there are more of them. The endleaf guards alone furnish palaeographical and textual details that are missing on the



fragments found in Waser's volume. These include double glosses, musical notation and distinctive verse-final punctuation, all of which are important links with one or another of the N-Psalter fragments identified so far. Due to the fact that the parchment spine supports are still attached to the book block and only partly readable, the analysis and edition of the fragments from this volume have not been completed. What little can be seen on the parchment pieces projecting from the spine is additionally obscured by ink residue from the removed vertical endleaf guards. Nevertheless, there are clues that more substantial philological details will be revealed once these strips are detached from the binding too, one of them being another fragment of a rubricated psalm *titulus*.<sup>32</sup>

The remaining volumes from Leiden (i.e., 3–6) are more intact, their cases attached to the book blocks and the pastedowns in place. Fragments of manuscript waste are discernible under the pastedowns and on the spines but, based on visual assessment alone, it is impossible to say whether they come from the N-Psalter or another source. To establish that, a non-invasive X-ray fluorescence scanning has been applied through parchment covers and paper pastedowns.<sup>33</sup> The images have revealed different fragments of texts written with iron-gall ink, some initials (presumably red, as indicated by high levels of mercury), and notes on staves. Due to the significant deformation of the covers, it has been difficult to acquire focus optimal enough to make the text on the fragments legible, but the size and form of the handwriting, as well as the layout, indicate clearly that none of them come from the N-Psalter.

It remains to be established if any of the parchment pieces identified on scans from volumes (3–6) match the non-N-Psalter fragments found in the binding of *Thesaurus Graecae linguae* from the Alkmaar Regional Archive in the Netherlands. In this four-volume set, bound in the same way as Meienreis' books from Leiden, Thijs Porck has singled out manuscript waste from a twelfth-century codex of *Decretum Gratiani*, in addition to 21 pieces from the N-Psalter itself (Porck, 2024).<sup>34</sup> This means that the book-binder who worked on the volumes from *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana* and Alkmaar must have had access to bifolia from the N-Psalter as well as *Decretum Gratiani*, among others. This is an important clue, for it extends the range of specific binding resources that need to be taken into consideration while searching for volumes released from the workshop.

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<sup>32</sup> The volume is currently undergoing conservation at the University of Nicolaus Copernicus in Toruń.

<sup>33</sup> The macroXRF analysis has been conducted by Piotr Targowski and Magdalena Kowalska at the Modern Interdisciplinary Technologies at the University of Nicolaus Copernicus in Toruń.

<sup>34</sup> Other books from Alkmaar that were most probably bound in the same workshop contain fragments of a Middle Dutch Book of Hours, and a Latin commentary to Peter Lombard's *Libri quattuor sententiarum*; Thijs Porck (correspondence).

The first working hypothesis concerning a possible location of the workshop in which the N-Psalter bifolia were re-used as binding supports relied on the fact that Meienreis' Hebrew grammar (1) showed features characteristic of both French and Dutch bindings of the period (Opalińska et al., 2023). Given that, we assumed that the book may have been bound in two separate stages—first in France and then in the Netherlands, entirely in France by a Dutch bookbinder, or by a bookbinder working in the Netherlands who was familiar with French binding techniques.<sup>35</sup> Subsequent findings have helped to refine this hypothesis. Based on cumulative evidence, including the binding techniques, provenance notes and the history of local antiquarian acquisitions, Porck (2024) has demonstrated that the workshop must have been located in the Netherlands and that it, in fact, may have been set up in Leiden by a bookbinder who had experience with French binding techniques. The provenance notes from Meienreis' volumes in (1) provide another important link with Leiden and support this hypothesis further.

The examination of the Elbląg and Alkmaar volumes with *in situ* fragments has shed light on how the N-Psalter *membra disiecta* were actually fitted into the binding structure. Although the shape and physical features of the fragments from Haarlem, Cambridge and Sondershausen offered sufficient evidence to assume that they must have served as endleaf guards, the actual arrangement of the strips inside the books was unknown since the carrier volumes remained unidentified.<sup>36</sup> With the new evidence available, this problem has been partially resolved.

First, Porck (2024) revisited Derolez' (1972) idea that “the *membra disiecta* in the Haarlem collection must have been removed from the bindings of the books still in the Haarlem library”, and established that the host volume for the Haarlem bifolium must be a Greek copy of Eusebius' *De euangelica praeparatione libri XV* (Haarlem 168 B 4).<sup>37</sup> According to Porck (2024), this volume “shows signs of restoration which may have involved the removal of *membra disiecta* and the hand responsible for writing the shelfmark ‘168 B 4’ on the N-H fragment is the same hand that wrote this shelfmark on the inside of the binding of this copy of Eusebius (as can be gleaned from the distinctive capital B)”. The assertion that Haarlem 168 B 4 is indeed the source binding of the Haarlem bifolium is additionally strengthened by the fact that the book is bound in the same way as the other N-Psalter host volumes (from Elbląg and Alkmaar), and has flyleaves with

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<sup>35</sup> These assumptions are compatible with the results of Pickwoad's research showing that book blocks were often issued from a printing house without binding or in a temporary binding that was to be added or changed elsewhere (Pickwoad, 2020).

<sup>36</sup> On the methodology devised for finding host volumes from which manuscript fragments had been removed, see Murray (2019).

<sup>37</sup> Derolez (1972, p. 401) originally rejected the possibility that this book was the host volume, though he did not provide any explanation for this assertion (see Porck, 2024).

the same watermark as the flyleaves found in *Thesaurus Graecae* and Wasser's *Archetypus*. Furthermore, Porck (2024, p. 29) identified the Haarlem book and its companion volume in an auction catalogue of the library of Daniël van der Meulen, the sale of which took place in Leiden on 4 June 1601, which once again brings into perspective Leiden at the time when Meienreis stayed there.

Second, in August 2023, another host volume was identified: this time it was the former carrier of the two fragments from Cambridge (Opalińska, 2023). Both fragments are currently stored in a cardboard box deposited in the Cambridge University Library, each in a separate Melinex envelope (Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 312, no. 32, items i–ii). Apart from the two N-Psalter endleaf guards, the boxes contain manuscript waste removed from various books from Pembroke College Library. Unlike the Haarlem bifolium, neither of the vertically cut strips from the N-Psalter in Cambridge shows any additional notes or a pencilled shelfmark. In the absence of any overt provenance clues, Pembroke College—the last place to which these fragments could be traced—became the focus of attention. The assumption was that the host volume must have been at some point (and perhaps still was) part of Pembroke College Library. One additional clue pointing at Pembroke College came from Bauer (1929, pp. 187–188) who reported that Meienreis and Bodeck in the company of other men went to England upon leaving Leiden in April 1602. After visiting London for three months, the group split. Some returned to the Continent, others, including Bodeck, travelled further north to the universities in Cambridge and Oxford. Crucially, Meienreis had left even earlier. In May, already ailing, he was on his way home to Elbląg via Denmark. It is not clear if young Morenberg accompanied him or not (Bauer, 1929, p. 188).

Several entries in Bodeck's *album amicorum*, documenting his English peregrination, come from the people that apparently had some connection with Pembroke College in Cambridge: Hieron[ymus] Beate, Joh[annes] Jones, Nathan Gissard, and Wilhelm Rychius (Bauer, 1929, p. 188). Although none of them are listed in the *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, the most comprehensive database available for Cambridge students prior to 1900, it seemed worthwhile to verify the hypothesis.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the fact that many of the rare books from that library have been rebound, there was a slight chance that the carrier volume would nonetheless be identifiable owing to circumstantial evidence like the one in Haarlem where the host volume showed signs of restoration, which suggested the removal of *membra disiecta* (Porck, 2024). The search criteria relied on the evidence furnished by the already identified host volumes and

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<sup>38</sup> *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900*; J. A. Venn; <https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/Documents/acad/2018/search-2018.html>

included four basic parameters: binding features, volume size, time and place of printing, and the subject matter of the potential book. First, it was assumed that the volume should be bound in (laced-)case parchment covers with extensions; it might have blue, green, pink or green and brown endbands with tiedowns, and possibly red sprinkled or blue painted edges.<sup>39</sup> The second parameter that was cautiously taken into consideration was the book size. Previously identified volumes were either in quarto (e.g. *Concordantiae*) or in octavo (e.g. Waser's *Archetypus*), and the Cambridge fragments themselves measured 225 × 40 mm and 217 × 39 mm (see Bremmer & Dekker, 2006, pp. 63–64). Third, it was assumed that the book may have been printed in one of the places which issued the related volumes, namely, Geneva, Paris, Basel, Lyon, Hagenau, Venice or Leiden, sometime in the sixteenth century. Given the time framework for Bodeck's stay in Cambridge (May–December 1602), it seemed reasonable to assume that 1602 was the *terminus ante quem*, since after that he would have gone to Oxford. Fourth, the book was likely related to the study of language, be it Hebrew, Latin, Greek, or theology *sensu lato*. These criteria were treated as signposts for navigating the Library's archival repository rather than as a finite set of distinctive features.

In the course of research, it soon turned out that the third criterion was the least reliable one, since many books from the designated printers and fitting into the relevant time framework were bound in a completely different way, had the wrong format and/or showed no evidence for the removal of the N-Psalter manuscript waste. Accordingly, the research focused on the sixteenth-century volumes bound in plain parchment successively fetched from the library shelves by the endlessly patient and helpful Pembroke College librarians.<sup>40</sup>

Among the books selected for examination was Reuchlin's study on Hebrew: *De Accentibus, et Orthographia, Linguae Hebraicae*, published in Hagenau, in 1518 (Pembroke College Library, Ms. 11.3.27)—a quarto volume bound in parchment case with cover extensions and red sprinkles on the sides of the book block. The volume had indeed been rebound and some elements of the original binding were altered in the process. In particular, the endbands were taken out and new pastedowns were attached to the original cover. Crucially, the former paper pastedowns were not removed in the process, but turned into flyleaves, which was a deliberate decision, as indicated by a note in a modern hand rendered on the new front and rear pastedowns: "Preserve this sheet." The rationale for this decision became immediately apparent: both sheets show offset marks of the

<sup>39</sup> Meienreis supralibros was not considered relevant since it was most probably stamped on his books after his death.

<sup>40</sup> My special thanks go to Elizabeth Ennion-Smith, Archivist at Pembroke College Library and Archive in Cambridge.

Cambridge N-Psalter endleaf guards, similar to those found in the Meienreis' *Concordantiae* from Elbląg (Figures 4 and 5).

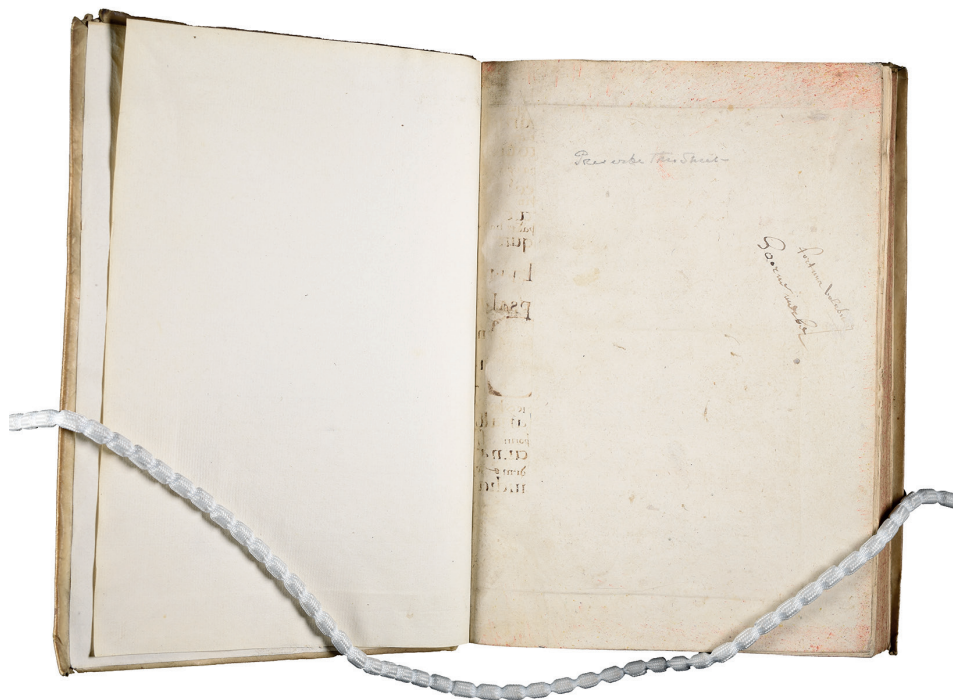


Figure 4. The old pastedowns with offset marks of the Cambridge N-Psalter endleaf guards. The front endleaf guard with an offset mark of MS Pembroke 312 C 1.2.1r. By permission of the Master and Fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge, 11.3.27

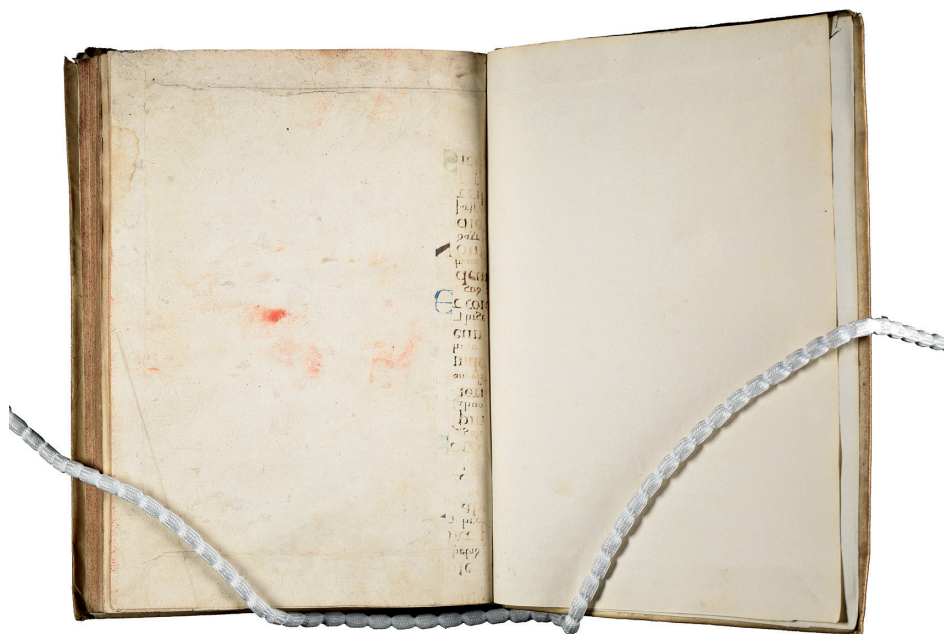


Figure 5. The old pastedowns with offset marks of the Cambridge N-Psalter endleaf guards. The back endleaf guard with an offset mark of MS Pembroke 312 C 1.2.2v. By permission of the Master and Fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge, 11.3.27

It is far from clear how Reuchlin's work found its way to Pembroke College Library. However, the initial hypothesis that the book was brought along by Johannes von Bodeck while he was visiting Cambridge in 1602 must be revised in the light of evidence furnished by the volume itself. First, given Bodeck's academic background, his studies at the faculty of law, and his later diplomatic career, a specialised book on Hebrew seems to be an odd choice, even if Reuchlin was a widely-read author with an established reputation as a celebrated Hebraist. Second, and more importantly, on the title page, below the printer's signet, there is a signature of the presumed former owner of the book—Balthasar Lydius.<sup>41</sup>

Lydius was a Dutch theologian of German origin, a poet, writer and translator. He studied in Leiden like Samuel Meienreis (Lamping, 2006, pp. 175–177; Witte, 2017, pp. 19–33). Four years younger than his Prussian colleague, Balthasar matriculated at the faculty of theology on 30 June 1599 (du Rieu, 1875, p. 56), and held a public debate on the justification of man before God (*Disputatio theologica de iustificatione hominis coram Deo*) in October of the same year (Lydius, 1599). Like Samuel's thesis, Balthasar's dissertation

<sup>41</sup> I thank Thijs Porck for drawing my attention to this detail.

was supervised by Francis Junius and printed at Johannes Paet's workshop in Leiden (see above).<sup>42</sup> On 27 March 1602, less than two months after Meiereis' public debate, Lydius defended another thesis—*De resipiscentia* (The Conversion), also supervised by Junius (Lamping, 2006, p. 175). In 1602, he became a reformed minister in Dordrecht and held the office until 1629. Two inscriptions in his hand rendered in Johannis Narsius' and Samuel Naeranus' *alba amicorum* come from this period—both signed in 1603 in Dordrecht. Four other inscriptions in his hand come from 1618–1619, when he attended the Synod at Dordrecht.<sup>43</sup>

Lydius owned a substantial library of over 5000 works in various languages, including nearly 80 books in English (Witte, 2017, p. 32). His collection was among the largest ministerial collections which sold at auction in the seventeenth century (Strickland, 2023, pp. 87–88, see also Witte, 2017, p. 25ff.). The interest in the English language and religious culture ran in the family—Balthasar's son, Jacobus, wrote poetry in English and owned even more books in that language than his father (Witte, 2017, p. 21). Jacobus was sent on a diplomatic mission to England with a Dutch delegation in 1643. Whether his father, Baltasar, ever visited England remains to be established.<sup>44</sup> In any case, Balthasar's signature on the title page of Reuchlin's work and the subject matter of the book convergent with his vocation indicate that he must have been the owner of the book at some point.<sup>45</sup>

The Pembroke College volume 11.3.27 provides yet another provenance clue, namely, a donor plate of Roger Long (1680–1770) who was Master of Pembroke College from 1733 until his death. His name in pencil is rendered at the top right hand corner of the title page, along with the shelfmark and the year of book publication. Long bequeathed all his books to Pembroke Library in his will (cf. Pearson, *Book Owners Online*, and

<sup>42</sup> Although Meienreis and Lydius studied at the same university and had the same teachers, there is no direct evidence that the two of them ever came into contact with each other.

<sup>43</sup> The late inscriptions are rendered in *alba amicorum* of Adrianus Hofferus (1 December 1618), Theodorus Aerarius (2 April 1619), Joannes Rufalaert (16 May 1619), and Alewinus Petri (24 April 1619). The latter is available on "Alvin. Platform for digital collections and digitized cultural heritage", <https://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/view.jsf?pid=alvin-record%3A176601&dswid=-9522>; the remaining ones on "The Memory", <https://geheugen.delpher.nl/en/geheugen/results?query=alba+amicorum&page=1&maxperpage=36&coll=ngvn>. In addition to these, Balthasar's inscription from an earlier period, when he was a student at Franeker, can be found in Jacques Vander Cruis' *album* now held at Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Unfortunately, the volume's margins have been trimmed and the date of the inscription is partially cut off; Gallica dates it to 1598, cf. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b103036949/f351.item>

<sup>44</sup> Balthasar's brother, Johannes, who studied in Leiden around the same time, married an English wife and hoped to become a minister in England with the help of Isaac Casaboun (Meyjes, 1998, pp. 321–322); [https://resources.huylgens.knaw.nl/retroboeken/blnp/#source=4&page=322&accessor=accessor\\_index&size=1219&view=imagePane](https://resources.huylgens.knaw.nl/retroboeken/blnp/#source=4&page=322&accessor=accessor_index&size=1219&view=imagePane)

<sup>45</sup> During his studies in Leiden, Balthasar was taught Hebrew by Wilhelm Coddæus (Witte, 2017, p. 21).

references given there). However when and how this particular volume came into his hands is yet to be established.<sup>46</sup>

## 6. CONCLUSION: NEW RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND REMAINING QUESTIONS

The identification of the host volume in Cambridge has steered research in a new direction, bringing Leiden and its academic environment into focus yet again. It is quite possible that more students had their books bound in the same workshop as Samuel Meienreis and Balthasar Lydius and thus, unknowingly, came into possession of the N-Psalter fragments. Equipped with students' registers, *alba amicorum* and booksellers' catalogue lists we may yet make unexpected discoveries while searching for the dispersed parts of the N-Psalter. Many questions pertaining to Meienreis and *Bibliotheca Meienre-isiana* remain open, especially since approximately a half of the original collection has been scattered or lost. Similar questions pertain to Meienreis' fellow countrymen from Elbląg—Johannes von Bodeck and Andreas Morenberg, known to have had a considerable book collection each.<sup>47</sup> A promising though yet not fully explored research area involves the activities of the Lydius family, especially their liaisons with England and the fate of their books. Searching the Book Sale Auction Catalogues of the various members of the Lydius family might be a way to establish the course of their books' history and shed light on the provenance of Reuchlin's volume found in Pembroke College Library (cf. Strickland, 2023, p. 67, ft. 3). The latter finding puts on stage yet another figure, namely, Roger Long, Master of Pembroke College, whose part in the process of the acquisition and provenance of the host volume is yet to be established. While many questions regarding the Psalter's provenance are still unanswered, it is clear that comprehensive analysis of its historical, social and biographical context should be part of the research project.

Analyses of the systematically growing material evidence are of paramount importance. Now that several volumes with *in situ* fragments have been singled out, the identification of the bookbinding workshop in which the codex was dismembered seems more viable. With every new book thus identified, the relevant criteria become more clearly defined.

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<sup>46</sup> Pembroke College Library catalogue card does not have any additional information except to note that the book was given by Roger Long. For a brief biographical note and an image of Long's inscription in another volume from the Library, see [https://bookowners.online/Roger\\_Long\\_1680-1770](https://bookowners.online/Roger_Long_1680-1770).

<sup>47</sup> There are no comprehensive studies on these private libraries and many facts regarding their history are far from clear. The history of the Elbląg book collection is also complex and obscure, especially during the period when it was being transferred to Toruń after the Second World War. A substantial part of the archival documents and some rare books were lost in the process (cf. Czyżak, 2002).



The most reliable so far include the technique and materials used by the bookbinder, especially the parchment binding, watermarks on paper pastedowns, and manuscript waste from other known sources. With all the evidence collected hitherto, finding the Sondershausen host volume and possibly other, yet unknown, host volumes with *in situ* fragments of the N-Psalter or at least their offset marks is now within our reach more than ever before.

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SAMUEL MEIENREIS AND HIS BOOKS FROM LEIDEN:  
TRACING THE PROVENANCE OF THE N-PSALTER FRAGMENTS

S u m m a r y

This paper presents the historical background and provenance research into fragments of a Latin Psalter with Old English glosses (N-Psalter), discovered in the bindings of early printed books from the collection of Samuel Meienreis, a Protestant theologian and bibliophile from Royal Prussia, who lived at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries. Comparative and material analysis of the volumes with fragments *in situ*, currently held in the C. Norwid Library in Elbląg, indicates that they must have been bought in the Netherlands and bound in a local bookbinding workshop, most likely during Meienreis' two-year studies at Leiden University. The data collected during the research made it possible to establish a set of criteria relevant to the Psalter provenance studies and to verify them in light of a new finding at the Library of Pembroke College in Cambridge.

**Keywords:** Samuel Meienreis; *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana*; Elbląg; N-Psalter; manuscript fragments; host volumes; Pembroke College Library

SAMUEL MEIENREIS I JEGO KSIĄŻKI Z LEJDY:  
NA TROPACH FRAGMENTÓW PSAŁTERZA N

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Artykuł przedstawia historyczne tło odkrycia i proveniencję fragmentów Psalterza łacińskiego z glosą staroangielską (tzw. N-Psalter), odnalezionych w oprawach druków z kolekcji Samuela Meienreisa, protestanckiego teologa i bibliofila z Prus Królewskich, żyjącego na przełomie XVI i XVII wieku. Badania porównawcze i materiałowe tomów z fragmentami *in situ*, znajdujących się obecnie w Bibliotece C. Norwida w Elblągu, wskazują, że musiały być one kupione w Niderlandach i oprawione w lokalnym warsztacie introligatorskim, najpewniej podczas dwuletnich studiów Meienreisa na Uniwersytecie w Lejdzie. Zebrane w trakcie prac dane pozwoliły wyodrębnić kilka istotnych kryteriów, które należy uwzględnić w dalszych badaniach nad proveniencją Psalterza oraz zweryfikować ich wartość poznawczą w świetle przesłanek pochodzących z kolejnego elementu zbioru odnalezionego w Bibliotece Pembroke College w Cambridge.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Samuel Meienreis; *Bibliotheca Meienreisiana*; Elbląg; Psalterz N; fragmenty rękopiśmienne; woluminy z makulaturą rękopiśmienną; Pembroke College Library

A u t h o r ' s   b i o

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