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THE CITY'S NOTARIES IN THE CHANCERY OF CHEŁMNO FROM THE 14TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY*

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The development of municipal chanceries, both in the Middle Ages and in the modern period, was closely connected with their staff, primarily with municipal scribes, whose techniques and work organization provided these local government bodies with a distinct character and style. It was often the case that the municipal scribe (particularly in smaller urban areas) exercised considerable cultural influence on the authorities and the local community through various contacts with the scientific world, other cities and through their own work evidenced in municipal chronicles or poetry. Similar, and occasionally even more significant, influence of the scribe, both in the administrative as well as cultural and social areas, may be observed in medieval Chełmno, where the first municipal chancery was most likely established at the end of the 13th or the beginning of the 14th century,¹ even though the first documents of the city council were issued a little earlier than that.²

The medieval municipal chancery of Chełmno seems particularly worth investigating in this respect, not only because of several interesting figures of prominent municipal scribes, but also on account of the ambitions of the city itself, undoubt-

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¹ Janusz TANDECKI, *Rozwój badań nad dokumentem oraz kancelariami miejskimi w Polsce*, Studia Archiwalne, vol. 2: 2006, p. 22; idem, *Dokumenty i kancelarie miejskie*, [in:] *Dyplomatyka staropolska*, ed. Tomasz JUREK, Warszawa 2015, pp. 413–414.

² The oldest municipal document dated March 1267, by which Chełmno citizens and the council granted several buildings to the Cistercian nuns, with an obligation to commit to defending a section of a wall these buildings were adjacent to, see: *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, Bd. 1: *Das Bisthum Culm unter dem Deutschen Orden 1243–1466*, bearb. v. Carl Peter WOELKY, Danzig 1885, no. 75.

edly nurtured by the very same scribes. Locating the city, the Teutonic founders intended to make it the capital of their monastic state. The ensuing rapid economic development was related to the growing importance of the municipality, with influence exerted not only in the Pomerania region, but also in the Baltic Sea basin, through commercial and political contacts within the Hanse.³ Finally, the ambitious plans to establish Chełmno university as early as in the 14th century were associated with several brilliant medieval minds, municipal scribes among them.⁴ The gradual decline in the city's importance in the 15th century, withdrawal from active involvement in the Hanseatic League and, finally, the transition of authority to the bishops of Chełmno in 1505 diminished Chełmno's impact in the region, without making it entirely provincial, however. It thus seems warranted to study several scribes working for the municipal chancery in a city that experienced such profound transformations, as well as their impact on the culture and the people of Chełmno from the 14th to the 16th century.

Academic researchers often analysed the lives of the Old Polish municipal scribes, carrying out studies of chanceries from the time of municipal registers.⁵ Various articles appeared with extensive accounts of the lives and works of selected prominent municipal chancery supervisors, such as Sebastian Klonowicz acting as a municipal scribe for the city of Lublin in the years 1573 to 1602.⁶ It was not until the recently emerging publications, however, that the impact of the scribes

³ Zenon Hubert NOWAK, *Dzieje Chełmna do końca XVIII wieku*, [in:] *Dzieje Chełmna i jego regionu. Zarys monograficzny*, ed. Marian BISKUP, Toruń 1968, pp. 109–120.

⁴ Idem, *Starania o założenie uniwersytetu w Chełmnie w XIV i XV w.*, *Zapiski Historyczne*, vol. 31: 1966, no. 4, pp. 28–29; Jadwiga LECHICKA, *Źródła do dziejów Akademii Chełmińskiej (1386–1815)*, Wrocław 1963.

⁵ Of the numerous older publications, the following are particularly noteworthy: Marian FRIEDBERG, *Kancelaria miasta Krakowa do połowy XVIII wieku*, *Archeion*, vol. 24: 1955, pp. 277–304; Irene RADTKE, *Kancelaria miasta Poznania od XIII do XV wieku*, *Roczniki Historyczne*, vol. 27: 1961, pp. 161–189; Marian FRIEDBERG, *Kancelaria miasta Kazimierza pod Krakowem w latach 1335–1802*, *Archeion*, vol. 36: 1962, pp. 137–170; Maria STANKOWA, *Kancelaria miasta Lublina XIV–XVIII w.*, Warszawa 1968; Janusz TANDECKI, *Kancelarie wielkich miast pruskich jako ośrodki średniowiecznej kultury miejskiej*, [in:] *Droga historii. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Józefowi Szymańskiemu w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. Piotr DYMMEŁ, Krzysztof SKUPIEŃSKI, Barbara TRELIŃSKA, Lublin 2001, pp. 213–226, idem, *Dokumenty i kancelarie miejskie*, pp. 405–445. Municipal scribes working in large Prussian cities were also characterized and described by Janusz Tandecki, who discussed several chancery officials with the earliest documented references: in Gdańsk (Nicolaus Schoenen-see – 1342), in Toruń Old Town (Tilon – 1369), in Elbląg Old Town (Johannes and Conrad Vbiliser – approx. 1330). Only four Chełmno municipal scribes are mentioned (Jan Schönaue, Konrad Bitschin, Jakub Schoensee and Andrzej Zommer), see Janusz TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich jako źródła historyczne i zabytki kultury mieszczańskiej (organizacja władz, zachowane archiwalia, działalność kancelarii)*, Warszawa–Toruń 1990, pp. 203–212. Several studies appeared in recent years that presented the latest research findings on municipal chanceries, with descriptions of the duties and profiles of their scribes (see Marcin STARZYŃSKI, *Średniowieczny Kazimierz, jego ustrój i kancelaria*, Kraków 2015, pp. 103–116).

⁶ Maria STANKOWA, *Sebastian Klonowicz (Klonowicz) pisarz i rajca miasta Lublina, 1573–1602*. (*Karta z dziejów ksiąg miejskich lubelskich*), *Archeion*, vol. 46: 1967, pp. 93–109.

on the chancery's profile and their influence on the culture and mentality of the city began to be examined with due care. It is worth to point out to at least one study by Jerzy Łosowski, in which the author draws attention to the social background, education and intellectual capabilities of scribes in small, nobility-owned towns of the Lublin region.⁷ Jerzy Łosowski extends his reflections on the cultural context for small-town chanceries in the Old Polish period, identifying scribes as a separate social group.⁸ Another noteworthy publication on municipal scribes is one by Bogdan Petrišak, in which scribes are recognized as testators and inheritors, primarily in the context of pragmatic literacy.⁹ The recently published work by Ronald Czarnecki that focuses on the chronicle of the city of Namysłów is also worth mentioning here.¹⁰ The author presents a rich biography of a Namysłów municipal scribe – Froben, who was actively involved in putting the archives in order and introduced new work practices in the chancery. As a scribe, he also travelled to visit the Polish and Czech monarchs, thus acting as an envoy by the command of the authorities of his city. Nonetheless, the greatest achievement of the scribe presented in R. Czarnecki's book was writing down the chronicle of the city of Namysłów, which reflected the full scope of medieval mentality and the attitudes of 15th century townspeople.¹¹ The characteristic traits of the scribe Froben share many similarities with the great scribes working for the Chełmno chancery. Particularly of note are the connections of the Namysłów scribe with various Prussian cities, e.g. Toruń. It is above all the municipal notary's chronicling activity, however, that immediately shows strong resemblance between him and the most prominent municipal scribe in medieval Chełmno, Konrad Bitschin, who also pursued the field of civic historiography. The structure of the Namysłów chancery itself, consisting of one scribe that handled both the city council and the court of assessors, was the same as in Chełmno, which allows for numerous analogies.

Despite the increasingly emerging biographical studies of municipal scribes in the Old Polish period, there has been no extensive research on either the Chełmno chancery, or its scribes. Previous works in this regard include only short biographical entries or articles that make references to the person featured in them. In a single case, we can point to the scribe Konrad from Byczyna, referred to as Bitschin, who earned a little more recognition, also in the context of his pedagogical writings.¹² Despite the scarcity of archival materials describing the history of the city

⁷ Janusz ŁOSOWSKI, *Kancelarie miast szlacheckich województwa lubelskiego od XVI do XVIII wieku*, Lublin 1997.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 220–230.

⁹ Bogdan PETRIŠAK, *Pisarze miejscy lwowscy jako testatorzy i spadkobiercy od XIV do połowy XVII wieku*, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, vol. 61: 2013, no. 2, pp. 295–304.

¹⁰ Roland CZARNECKI, *Kronika Namysłowa autorstwa Johannes Frobena jako utwór dziejopisarstwa miejskiego*, Warszawa 2015.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 54–64.

¹² Franz SCHULTZ, *Conrad Bitschin während seines Aufenthaltes in Culm (1430–38)*, *Altpreuussche Monatschrift*, Bd. 12: 1875, pp. 513–530; Arthur METHNER, *Conrad Bitschin als Danziger Stadt-*

of Chełmno, we can point to several municipal scribes referred to in various sources from as early as the 14th century, which could serve as the starting point for the subject matter discussed herein. The endpoint would be defined by the final years in office of the last known scribe in the 16th century, whose name appears in the suburban court of assessors records for the years 1480 to 1567, followed by a wide gap in available sources, preventing discovery of any references to other municipal scribes from the 16th century. The ten preserved municipal registers for the city of Chełmno (two stored in the Polish archives, eight in Berlin) allow for the extraction of ample information and references concerning the scribes working for the municipal chancery in Chełmno.¹³ Stored in the Berlin archives¹⁴ and available in print,¹⁵ the Chełmno court register for the years 1330 to 1430 is by far the most important source material with the largest number of references. Individual traces or entries pointing to specific scribes can also be found, among other sources, in suburban court of assessors records,¹⁶ as well as in the rent book of Chełmno parish church for the years 1431 to 1496.¹⁷ The chancery work of municipal scribes is also illustrated by account books compiled at the time when the Chełmno chancery employed Jan Schönau and Konrad Bitschin.¹⁸ One book, compiled and kept by Konrad Bitschin, being essentially a cartulary of documents and privileges, is particularly noteworthy.¹⁹ The majority of municipal documents issued by the city council was lost or displaced, hence individual pieces of information contained

schreiber, Zeitschrift Westpreussischen Geschichtsverein, H. 69: 1929, pp. 69–83; Zofia WARDĘSKA, *Konrad Bitschin z Łukowa zwany Konradem z Byczyny pedagog chełmiński*, Kwartalnik Historyczny Nauki i Techniki, vol. 12: 1967, pp. 253–267; Udo ARNOLD, *Bitschin Konrad*, [in:] *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, Berlin–New York 1978, pp. 884–887; Edward POTKOWSKI, *Konrad Bitschin – edukacja kobiet i pożytki czytania*, [in:] *Prusy – Polska – Europa. Studia z dziejów średniowiecza i czasów wczesnonowożytnych. Prace ofiarowane Profesorowi Zenonowi Hubertowi Nowakowi w sześćdziesiątą piątą rocznicę urodzin i czterdziestolecie pracy naukowej*, ed. Andrzej RADZIWIŃSKI, Janusz TANDECKI, Toruń 1999, pp. 349–359.

¹³ Zenon Hubert NOWAK, *Przydatność badawcza ksiąg miejskich Chełmna z XIV i XV wieku*, Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Historia VIII. Archiwistyka i Nauki Pomocnicze Historii. Nauki Humanistyczno-społeczne, issue 54, Toruń 1973, pp. 73–84.

¹⁴ Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussisches Kulturbesitz Berlin (Dahlem) (further cit. GStA PK), XIV. Hauptabteilung (further cit. HA), ref. 322A, no. 7.

¹⁵ *Das Kulmer Gerichtsbuch 1330–1430. Liber memoriarum Colmensis civitatis*, bearb. v. Carl August LÜCKERATH, Friedrich BENNINGHOVEN, Köln–Weimar–Wien 1999.

¹⁶ Archiwum Państwowe w Toruniu [State Archives in Toruń], *Księga miejska Chełmna* [Chełmno municipal records], ref. 1 (*Księga ławnicza sądu przedmiejskiego Chełmna 1480–1559 (1567)*), published by Zenon Hubert NOWAK, Janusz TANDECKI, Toruń 1990); GStA PK, XIV. HA, ref. 322A, no. 8 (*Schöffnenbuch der Kulmer Stadtfreiheit 1407–1457*, nach Vorarbeiten v. Johann Karl VON SCHROEDER, bearb. v. Bernhart JÄHNIG, Münster/Westf. 2014).

¹⁷ Archiwum Diecezjalne w Pelplinie [Diocesan Archive in Pelplin], ref. C83 (*Księga czynszów fary chełmińskiej (1435–1496)*), published by Zenon Hubert NOWAK, Janusz TANDECKI, Toruń 1994).

¹⁸ GStA PK, XIV. HA, ref. 322A, no. 3–6.

¹⁹ Ibid., XX. HA, Ordensfolianten (abbr. OF), ref. 83.

therein may be extracted from some of the available diplomatic codes.²⁰ As a result of transfer of the Chełmno municipal archives and various warfare activities, particularly those pursued in 1945, the most important municipal register accounting for the administrative undertakings of the greatest scribe of Chełmno, Konrad Bitschin, was lost or possibly even destroyed. His manuscript "Manuale Notarii Civitatis Culmen" is cited almost exclusively in excerpts by the German historians who studied him in the late 19th century. Even though a substantial part of the old Chełmno city archives was lost, it seems pertinent to collect information about all municipal scribes in one place, including the previously less known supervisors of the Chełmno chancery.

As previously mentioned, the institution of municipal chancery, operating as an office supporting the city council and the municipal and suburban courts of assessors, was most likely established as early as in the middle of the 13th century. The first scribes were appointed from among members of the clerical state, most likely coming from the local parish churches. With time, chanceries began to employ full-time scribes of whom proficient skills of reading and writing were required, not only in German, but above all in Latin.

The most important tasks of the scribe included taking the minutes of city council meetings and deliberations of the court of assessors, initially just for the municipal one and later on for the suburban unit as well. In the medieval period, the city did not employ a designated court clerk, hence the court records were often maintained by part-time councillors. Nonetheless, municipal scribes often had to take the minutes of the meetings and deliberations of the municipal and suburban courts of assessors. These often included entries certifying various contracts of sale or purchase of real estate within the city or outside its walls, as well as recorded pledges, appropriations, divisions of property and last wills. Their responsibilities also involved maintaining thorough church and city inventories, as well as registers of municipal possessions, capitals and properties belonging to the citizens of Chełmno but located in other cities.²¹ The scribes drafted all city council and ownership documents which they also had to keep in the town hall as a security measure. They also kept the list of city officials (*Kuhrbuch*), the book of citizens (*Bürgerbuch*) and handled the city's official correspondence. The scribes were also charged with drawing up bills, preparing last wills and citizen inheritance records. Occasionally, they also had to join the councillors or mayors of the city in their travels, particularly in the period of intense diplomatic activities shortly prior to the Thirteen Years' War.²² All the above activities required the scribes to demonstrate adequate knowledge and to maintain due diligence in their daily

²⁰ *Preussisches Urkundenbuch* (abbr. PrUb), Bd. 2, Lfg. 1–3, hrsg. v. Max HEIN, Erich MASCHKE, Aalen 1962; Bd. 5, Lfg. 2, hrsg. v. Klaus CONRAD unter Mitarbeit v. Hans KOEPPEN, Marburg 1973.

²¹ F. SCHULTZ, *Conrad Bitschin*, pp. 516–517.

²² *Idem*, *Die Stadt Kulm im Mittelalter* (Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins, H. 23), Danzig 1888, pp. 40–41.

work. A necessary condition for ensuring effective chancery operations was a detailed familiarity with the local law, town laws (*wilkierze*) and privileges, as well as the Magdeburg rights, which was essential in another area of expertise a Chełmno scribe should exhibit, namely the filing of court appeals to Magdeburg and notary offices. The extent of these responsibilities was evident in the meticulously kept records of court rulings, which were then put together by the scribe. These duties, however, provided the scribes with no significant income, as they earned a mere one *wiardunek* out of the total of 17 paid from each appeal.²³ In addition to this remuneration, a municipal scribe in Chełmno received many other means of compensation, in varying amounts. According to F. Schultz, scribes received their salaries in amount of four *skojec* for Christmas and one *wiardunek* (later two *grzywnas*) for Shrovetide. Smaller, single payments were also arranged for Pentecost and Saint Nicholas Day (the so-called “Quatembergeld”), while on Saint Martin’s Day the scribes received seven ells of Chełmno cloth, with one *scheffel* of grain handed out on Saint Lucy’s Day. At the end of the year, when the scribes concluded their annual period of work, they received a type of remuneration referred to as “Quatenberlon.”²⁴

The first known municipal scribe in Chełmno was Mikołaj Konin, whose name appears in the Heynco von Preseczesco privilege testation of 8 March 1328, which granted the administrative office of the village Przysiersk to a person named Miłost.²⁵ The source not only confirms the existence of the position of a Chełmno municipal scribe during this period, it also indicates that the duties of this official had already extended beyond those typically associated with the role of a municipal scribe, with M. Konin being most likely the one who prepared the document for the private issuer, i.e. the owner of Przysiersk. We do not know exactly where the document was drawn up, as the dating on the privilege form does not indicate the place of issue, yet it was almost certainly Chełmno. The cited privilege is in fact the only piece of available information about the scribe Mikołaj named Konin. It is unclear where he came from, whether he was a member of the clergy and whether he was associated with Chełmno at all. The surname may suggest, however, that the scribe could have been born in the city of Konin.

Reference to another municipal scribe in Chełmno, who most likely took office shortly after M. Konin, comes from a court register filed document issued on 6 December 1333 concerning the sale of rent to the city in amount of ten *grzywnas* by a Herman referred to as Steynwec.²⁶ In the document’s testation, a “Iohannes

²³ Idem, *Conrad Bitschin*, p. 517. The author quotes a part of an entry from Konrad Bitschin’s manual – “Manuale notarii civitatis Culmen”: “Item czu wissen, wer do halet eyn gescholden ortteil der uns dovor gebet 17 gutt firdung, davon geben dy herren 1 alden firdung dem Schreiber und 4 geringe firdung den dynem, das andere den herren.”

²⁴ Ibid., p. 515.

²⁵ “Nicolaus scriptor civitatis Culmensis dictus Konin” (PrUb, Bd. 2, no. 604).

²⁶ *Das Kulmer Gerichtsbuch 1330–1430*, no. 3.

scriptor" appears. There is no other information available about this scribe aside from this reference. Subsequent entries in the register, made in the form of filed documents, make no mention of a scribe Jan, even though the same officials as in the document of 1333 appear in the testation. His hand may only be attributed to two oldest document entries in the court register of the city of Chełmno from the years 1330 and 1333, in which he himself appears.²⁷ Although further entries are almost identical in their form structure, the handwriting differed slightly from the ductus of the scribe Jan.²⁸

Another municipal scribe appears in the book of deceased donors of the Cistercian monastery in Pelplin from the years 1258 to 1402: "Liber mortuorum monasterii Pelplinensis ordinis cisterciensis." Under the date of 25 September (there is unfortunately no reference to the year), a Chełmno municipal scribe was entered, one named Teodryk (Theodricus), who made a donation to the monastery in amount of 12 *grzywnas*.²⁹ The term of his office may only be approximated based on the name of another citizen of Chełmno that appears in the book several entries further down the list. A person named Tiedeman de Hereke,³⁰ who appears in the Chełmno court register entries from the years 1363 to 1370, is referenced under the date of 9 November. We can thus roughly determine the scribe Teodryk's years in office for this time period.

Another municipal scribe referenced in the available source materials was Konrad Kesselhut, who was most likely performing his function in the years 1373 to 1383. He is also the first Chełmno scribe known to us by his surname, whose career in office can be traced back with considerable accuracy. Konrad Kesselhut also appears in the source materials as a councillor, mayor and assessor. As the mayor, he sat on the council several times, as early as in 1387 and later, in the years 1390 to 1393, 1395, 1397, 1414 and for the last time in 1416.³¹ He also served as an assessor or village administrator in the years 1409, 1413 and 1415.³² The last recorded mention of his professional activity refers to the office of mayor dated 1416. Taking into consideration the offices he held, we can conclude that he was a member of a patrician family that belonged to a group that ruled in Chełmno. His descendants also sat on either the council or the court.³³

²⁷ Ibid., no. 2–3.

²⁸ Ibid., no. 4–5.

²⁹ "Item Theodricus notarius civitatis Culmensis, qui contulit XII marcas" (*Liber mortuorum monasterii Pelplinensis ordinis cisterciensis*, published by Wojciech KĘTRZYŃSKI (Monumenta Poloniae Historica, vol. 4), Lwów 1884, p. 108).

³⁰ "Thidemanus de Hereke cives in Culm, qui dedit XX marcas" (ibid., p. 115).

³¹ Carl August LÜCKERATH, *Zur Gerichtsverfassung der Stadt Kulm im Mittelalter*, [in:] *750 Jahre Kulm und Marienwerder*, hrsg. v. Bernhart JÄHNIG, Peter LETKEMANN (Beiträge zur Geschichte Westpreussens, no. 8), Münster/Westf. 1983, pp. 37–38.

³² *Das Kulmer Gerichtsbuch 1330–1430*, no. 291, 378a, 380a.

³³ Roman CZAJA, *Grupy rządzące w miastach nadbałtyckich w średniowieczu* (Roczniki Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu, R. 93, zeszyt 1), Toruń 2008, p. 47.

As a municipal scribe, he was first mentioned in 1374 in a court register entry stating that the municipal scribe K. Kesselhut bought rent for 15 *grzywnas* in Piotr Blandou's house. The legal act was performed before the judge Hildebrand Senkelant.³⁴ The term "notarius" appears next to his name. We do not know the year in which K. Kesselhut stopped working as a scribe, although presumably it might have been 1383. He does reappear in the entries and documents from 1384, among councillors and assessors in the testation, but with no clear indication of still holding the office of a scribe. This occurs in case of a city council document dated 3 March 1384 concerning the sale of emolument in the form of annual rent to priest Mikołaj de Wareszchow, as well as in a document certifying a donation to Jan, the provost of St George's Hospital outside the city walls, dated 31 June 1384.³⁵

This is, undoubtedly, the first Chełmno municipal scribe that sources refer to, who was not a priest but a citizen that began his career as a scribe, taking the office of the mayor of the city later on. There is no information available on where K. Kesselhut came from. It is possible that, similar to the Chełmno's commander family, K. Kesselhut also came from Saxony or Thuringia. Sources provide no specific information about his education, although he was most likely a well-read and well-versed man, since he managed to become a scribe without being a priest. It is quite possible that he initially received his education in the parish school run by Chełmno parish church. Sources also point to his wife of an unknown first name, in a time when she was already a widow (1404).³⁶

Analysing K. Kesselhut's handwriting ductus, we can assume that he was a conscientious scribe performing his duties with utmost diligence. This is evidenced by various records and documents that he drew up very carefully and clearly, often with additional decorative embellishments, such as initials.³⁷

Following K. Kesselhut, the next municipal scribe known by his first name was Albert, who most likely remained in office in the years 1384 to 1392. Information about Albert appears in the list of accounts for St George's Court in Chełmno dated 1384, in a crossed off annotation in the left margin.³⁸ Apart from this short reference, there is no further information available about this official. However, based on handwriting analysis, we can infer that he was in charge of the municipal chancery up to the year 1392, when he made the last entry concerning tax regulations applicable to fishermen.³⁹

Equally scarce reference information can be found about another municipal scribe known under the name Piotr (Petrus), who, according to the identification of his ductus in the Chełmno court register, most likely held his office in the years

³⁴ "Conradus Kessilhut, notarius civitatis nostre" (*Das Kulmer Gerichtsbuch 1330–1430*, no. 117).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 206–207.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 421.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 7, 15–18, 28, 32, 45–48, 69, 73, 117, 123, 137, 180, 343–344, 363, 369, 430c (entries dated 1373–1383); see ductus analysis: *ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁸ "Albertus, scriptor" (*ibid.*, no. 409).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 425.

1399 to 1405. He may almost certainly be identified as Piotr (Petir) Maienburg – a scribe mentioned by Arthur Methner.⁴⁰ The only reference to him dates back to 1405 and concerns a confirmation of rent payment made by the scribe in the amount of 1/2 a *grzywna*.⁴¹

Another municipal scribe, this time with a better documented background and frequent references in source materials, was named Jan (Johannes) Schöнау, coming most likely from Grudziądz, where he could have also served as a municipal scribe.⁴² It is more probable, however, that he was a notary public for the Bishopric of Samland.⁴³ He began working as a Chełmno municipal scribe in 1407, as evidenced by a note in the court register that confirmed the appointment of J. Schöнау to the position of a municipal scribe by the councillors of Chełmno.⁴⁴ He held this office until the year 1430, when he got replaced by the most distinguished of all Chełmno scribes in the Middle Ages, K. Bitschin. Following the analysis of his handwriting ductus, it is worth noting that the entries made by his hand date back to 1406, which may suggest that he had worked as a chancery secretary before he became a scribe.⁴⁵ This period coincided with his work as notary public carried out since 1405, most likely already in Chełmno.⁴⁶

The exact place of origin is not known for J. Schöнау or his family. He was, undoubtedly, the first scribe to introduce new pace of work and professional standards in the Chełmno chancery. His main contribution involved the unification of records and reorganization of the city archives. He was most likely the one who compiled several municipal registers, putting together loose documents, notes and records drawn up by his predecessors. It is possible that the court records for the years 1330 to 1430 were compiled by J. Schöнау by putting together a number of older notes made on separate sheets. This notion is supported by an attached parchment sheet with the aforementioned note from 1407 on the appointment of Johannes to the position of a municipal scribe. It was probably on his initiative that another municipal register was created, containing rent lists from the years, approximately, 1403 to 1415, as well as a regulation by the Grand Master for the

⁴⁰ Arthur METHNER, *Die Namen der Kulmer Bürger im ersten Drittel des 15. Jahrhunderts*, *Alt-preussische Geschlechterkunde*, Jg. 7: 1933, p. 44.

⁴¹ “Nota, quod Petrus, notarius civitatis, exemit illam 1/2 mr. anno CCCCXV” (*Das Kulmer Gerichtsbuch 1330–1430*, no. 201). In the records of the proscribed from 1401, there is a reference to scribe Jan (Hannus), a plaintiff acting before the court, most likely, on behalf of the murdered victim (“Michil Gnype et Nicclos Gabilnow pro homicidio, actor Hannus schriber, interfectus Peter Lorencz” (ibid., no. 303a). There is no evidence, however, that would prove that he was a Chełmno municipal scribe.

⁴² Dieter HECKMANN, *Der öffentliche Notar im Geflecht der preussischen Schreiber des frühen 15. Jahrhunderts*, *Ordines militares. Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders*, vol. 19: 2014, p. 164.

⁴³ PrUb, Bd. 5, Lfg. 2, p. 528 (footnote).

⁴⁴ “In anno Domini millesimo CCC septimo ipso die Palmarum Iohannes Schonaw dominorum consulum susceptus est in notarium” (*Das Kulmer Gerichtsbuch 1330–1430*, no. 1).

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 27, no. 4a.

⁴⁶ *Schöffenbuch der Kulmer Stadtfreiheit*, p. 20.

blacksmiths and goldsmiths of Chełmno from the years 1394 to 1397, along with two undated town laws (*wilkierze*) for the municipality and its suburbs.⁴⁷ It was likely the intention of its maker that the volume was to constitute a comprehensive municipal register (*Stadtbuch*), hence its introduction contained an accurate topographic description of the four quarters of the city with a clear outline of their borders. The aforesaid nature of this document is also evidenced by the fact that it contained town laws (*wilkierze*) and regulations by the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights. The layout, content clarity and accurate presentation of rent payment dates, all point to the fact that this was indeed a comprehensive municipal record. Lack of amendments, annotations or deletions suggests a short-term use of the manuscript by the municipal chancery.

It was also, presumably, J. Schöнау who could have been the author of the court of assessors records containing the minutes of the suburban court of assessors from the years 1407 to 1457, i.e. dating back to the moment he assumed the office of a scribe. His handwriting ductus, however, can only be attributed to a few entries from the years 1421 to 1423, which means that he was rather absorbed in other activities in the chancery, leaving the minutes of the suburban court to part-time assessors.⁴⁸ It is impossible to estimate whether the scribe served in office until his death or whether he left Chełmno after 1430.

Jan Schöнау's successor to the position of municipal scribe was the most prominent supervisor of the medieval Chełmno chancery – Konrad Bitschin, who took this office in 1430.⁴⁹ This figure deserves special attention not only because of his outstanding intellectual capability that distanced him from other scribes, but primarily due to the wide range of works he performed for the Chełmno chancery and the city archives during his tenure, all with the purpose to organize and arrange the most important municipal regulations, town laws (*wilkierze*), legal acts, records and documents. Of all Chełmno scribes from the medieval period, K. Bitschin is also the one with the best documented professional background and career progression.

Konrad Bitschin was most likely born in 1395 in Lusatia, although some Polish and German academic researchers believed that he came from the Silesian Byczy-na. Several references to his higher education and the obtained degree of bachelor at the University of Leipzig in 1416 point toward Lusatia as the most likely place of origin.⁵⁰ Some members of his family must have established close ties with Leipzig too, since the available source materials contain reference to Ambroży Bitschin, who was the mayor and municipal scribe in that very city.⁵¹

⁴⁷ GStA PK, XIV. HA, ref. 322A, no. 3; J. TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich*, p. 93.

⁴⁸ *Schöffnenbuch der Kulmer Stadtfreiheit 1407–1457*, no. 153–169, 187–193.

⁴⁹ F. SCHULTZ, *Die Stadt Kulm im Mittelalter*, p. 41. The author wrongly assumed that Johannes Schöнау was the successor to Konrad Bitschin.

⁵⁰ Z. WARDESKA, op.cit., p. 254.

⁵¹ A. METHNER, *Conrad Bitschin*, p. 81.

Approximately in the year 1420, Konrad was already residing in Gdańsk, where he initially served as an assistant to the municipal scribe, Mikołaj Wrecht, and following his death in 1423 was himself appointed as the new municipal scribe.⁵² Working as the head of the Gdańsk chancery, he had already distinguished himself as a truly versatile intellectual with great organizational skills, which was evidenced in the introduction of a new set of municipal records. At the beginning of his work in this position, he prepared a series of missives and a list of city officials, which greatly improved the performance of the municipal chancery in Gdańsk. He was most likely also the author of a draft book entitled "Manuale Notarii ciuitatis Danczk," equivalent to "Manuale Notarii Civitatis Culmen" and constituting a collection of documents, municipal charters and privileges, as well as handwritten notes by the scribe himself. Konrad Bitschin can also be identified as the author of Dutch and Flemish maritime law codes, which must have been exceptionally useful resources in a chancery of a great Hanseatic city of Gdańsk.⁵³

In 1430, Konrad Bitschin was appointed as the municipal scribe in Chełmno, where he was to remain until 1457, long after he resigned from the office of the scribe, which took place in either 1438 or 1439, only to pursue a career as a member of the clergy.⁵⁴ This period also turned out to be the most creative and progressive for him, not only because of the reform and restructuring of the city archives and the introduction of new standards for accuracy and diligence in the work of the municipal chancery, but mainly because of his numerous organizational efforts, with the attempts to establish a Chełmno university together with the distinguished mayor Jan Sterz, being by far the most noteworthy. During the time K. Bitschin held the office of Chełmno municipal scribe, he created some of his arguably most important works in the field of law, philosophy and pedagogy, including the monumental *De vita coniugali* or "On married life," known to us only in excerpts.⁵⁵ Discussing the scribe's work as the chancery supervisor, however, one should focus primarily on his achievements in the area of recordkeeping and chancery administration.

The main source of information about the period of K. Bitschin's work for the Chełmno chancery was a manuscript he created upon his arrival in Chełmno, titled "Manuale notarii civitatis Culmen super diversis causis et negotiis memorabilibus," which was a reference draft book for the municipal scribe. It served a similar purpose to the Gdańsk manual, also written by Konrad. Unfortunately, the Chełmno manual did not survive and we only know some of the shorter excerpts cited in the works by F. Schultz. The manuscript was developed throughout

⁵² Ibid., pp. 73–74.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 74–76.

⁵⁴ Z. H. NOWAK, *Starania o założenie uniwersytetu w Chełmnie*, pp. 28–29.

⁵⁵ Both the concept of *Labyrinthus vitae coniugalis* and the work titled *De vita coniugali* (eight books, 1432) were published by German historians (Richard Galle and Max Toppen) in fragments only.

the entire period of the municipal scribe's tenure, also by Konrad's successors later on, and contained lists of city officials from the year 1430 until the 16th century, the list of newly admitted citizens, as well as various recorded documents, council regulations or handwritten notes that helped the scribe navigate through the complex relationships between various bodies of the municipal government.⁵⁶ It was also in this book that Konrad Bitschin recorded some information about the general condition of the chancery and city archives and the scope of his work. The opening entry on the title page of the manual pointed to the date he got employed by the Chełmno municipal chancery in 1430.⁵⁷

Assuming the post of the municipal scribe in Chełmno, K. Bitschin found the city archives in considerable disarray, with merely 16 municipal registers, the list of which was also noted in his manual. According to Schultz, who cited an excerpt from the source material, these were primarily law books, including the widely used "Saxon Mirror" (German *Sachsenspiegel*) with comments, inquiries to the court in Magdeburg, books of the Magdeburg Law counting two volumes and a Latin translation of the "Saxon Mirror."⁵⁸ Out of the city books taken over from his predecessor, J. Schönau, K. Bitschin lists "ein Stadtbuch mit einem coemptorio," which can be identified as a rent book from the years c. 1403 to 1415 containing town laws (*wilkierze*) and regulations of the Grand Master as well.⁵⁹ The list of books also contains a volume defined as "ein Buch für die Aechter," which could have been a court register for the city of Chełmno from the years 1330 to 1430. It is also possible, however, that it was just a part of it, compiled as a separate book of the proscribed. In addition to these manuscripts, several accounting books were listed there as well, including: "ein Rechenbuch," "zwei alte Rechenbücher," which contained rent records that were later used by K. Bitschin to prepare new and updated tax records. It is impossible, however, to identify the manuscript listed as "ein Buch, in welches der Stadtzins eintragen wurde." This particular volume might have contained the oldest rent records dating back to approximately 1320. What is also interesting is the information about four wax tablets, which confirms the use of wax polyptychs by the Chełmno chancery system for recording current information, e.g. rents.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ F. SCHULTZ, *Conrad Bitschin*, pp. 514–515.

⁵⁷ The author cites an illegible inscription from the title page of Konrad Bitschin's manual: "Quoniam ut dicit C. do 1...omnia in memoria hasrent, et in nullo errare poties est divinitas quam humanitas, humanitas enim labilis est memoriae propter volumtates, petulantiam otiositatem... desidiam. Quia scribitur... derenitur... Nisi tu pridem... Voluptas et otium sunt retia ad... capiendos memoriaque, quia labilis est indiget adiutorio dirigente, libris videlicet et... quae vasa memoriore nuncupantur. Id circo ego Conrado Bitschin anno Domini [1430] quo ad notariatus officium proh dolor immerito...perveneram putavi... memoriarum diversarum" (ibid., p. 515).

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 517.

⁵⁹ J. TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich*, p. 94.

⁶⁰ F. SCHULTZ, *Conrad Bitschin*, p. 517.

The city archives certainly contained other documents, privileges and letters accumulated since the 13th century, which the scribe chose not to include in the list. He also mentioned no court of assessors records, including the minutes of the suburban court of assessors that survived to our times.⁶¹

The first task that the new municipal scribe took upon himself was to collect and organize all privileges, town laws (*wilkierze*) and any other documents that were of critical importance to the performance of the Chełmno local government. The result of his efforts was a book created as early as 1431, entitled “Colmische Privilegia und Gewichtten, Huebenmas, Muntz und Pflueg getreidicht allerlei Arten von Drillkunn [?] und Handwercks-Zunften. Item Magdeburgische gehalte Antworten auf anderscheidtliche Fragen. Ab Anno 1431 zuesamgetragen und verfasst.”⁶² This manuscript was a prime example of a cartulary of municipal documents and privileges, which served as a great administrative resource for the city. This book was most likely also created based on various loose files, handwritten notes and perhaps some older books replaced by the scribe when he started working for the Chełmno chancery. Drawing from the experience gained during his employment at the Gdańsk chancery, K. Bitschin structured the manuscript himself from the very beginning, providing margins and headers on subsequent pages, an effort subsequently ignored by his successors. Janusz Tandecki suggests that during the preparation of the book, the scribe could have used older manuscripts, such as the previously mentioned “Ein Stadtbuch mit einem coemptorio” created by J. Schönau. The author of the cartulary also collected all town laws (*wilkierze*), privileges and guild statutes kept in the city archives. The opening part of the manuscript listed the renewed terms of the Chełmno privilege of 1251 in both Latin and German. The book also contained documents issued by the Pomeranian princes, Grand Masters and bishops of Chełmno. A detailed list of privileges included at the beginning of the cartulary points to considerable diligence of the entire endeavour. Unfortunately, Konrad's successors failed to continue taking care of the book with as much attention as its creator.⁶³

Using older manuscripts, K. Bitschin also unified a number of Chełmno accounting records. The results of these efforts survived in the form of three rent books he created or renewed himself. The first one, titled “Registrum censuum civitatis Culmensis” consists of three separate rent registers from the years c. 1430 to 1455, that include municipal and suburban rent records listed for individual quarters.⁶⁴ What is particularly noteworthy is the fact that the manuscript used a letter system to identify rent payment dates.⁶⁵ It's difficult to confirm whether it

⁶¹ *Schöffenchuch der Kulmer Stadtfreiheit 1407–1457*.

⁶² GStA PK, XX. HA, OF, ref. 83; J. TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich*, p. 90.

⁶³ J. TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich*, pp. 90–93.

⁶⁴ GStA PK, XIV. HA, ref. 322A, no. 4; J. TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich*, pp. 94–95.

⁶⁵ Tomasz JASIŃSKI, Janusz TANDECKI, *Literowy i równoległy system kancelaryjny w starotoruńskich politykach woskowych*, *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, vol. 28: 1983, pp. 105–161.

was first introduced in the Chełmno chancery by K. Bitschin himself, or whether it was already in use before. As indicated by J. Tandecki, the final part of the book was a rent register that also featured the lettering system, which could be dated to the end of the second decade of the 15th century.⁶⁶ This system was also applied in the *Schoss* tax register dated to the years 1430 to 1450, containing several tax records.⁶⁷ Bearing in mind the three, initially separate tax registers, which were later on combined, we can identify them as the three books K. Bitschin came across when he started working as a scribe for the Chełmno chancery, namely: "Ein Rechenbuch" and "Zwei alter Rechenbucher." These books might have been put together by K. Bitschin or his successor, Jakub Schoensee.⁶⁸ Another rent book compiled by the scribe Konrad was a Chełmno parish church rent register with entries dating back to 1435.⁶⁹ This volume may be identified as the sixth item on the list of books from K. Bitschin's manual: "Item eyn Rechenbuch von der stat ampten als kirchenczigel und kalk ampt," which was apparently one book, later divided, that covered several municipal offices, as well the church, brickworks and limestone factory administrations.⁷⁰

Apart from these improvements that Konrad introduced in the chancery, there is a number of other developments that are equally notable, such as the management of correspondence between Chełmno and other cities or chancery units. The list of books compiled by Konrad contains a manuscript described as: "Item eyn buch von mancherhande fredebrieft beyde ewig und czufrist czwischen der Cronen czu Polen und den landen czu Prassen" which included various letters collected by the chancery as a result of lively correspondence between the Prussian States and the Polish Kingdom in the 15th century. The list, however, makes no reference to any book that would suggest that Konrad created a series of missives similar to those compiled in Gdańsk, that held copies of outgoing letters and concepts.⁷¹

Apart from his strictly chancery-related activity, K. Bitschin was also absorbed by creative, literary work. Introducing workplace reforms and compiling the book of privileges, for instance, he could still apply his skills, as well as the acquired information, to continue his chronicle work or other creative endeavours.⁷²

Historiographic initiatives were usually endorsed by municipal authorities that typically commissioned various chronicles, covering the scribe's fee. In this case, however, we are witnessing an independent historiographic enterprise of a municipal scribe. During the term of his office as a Chełmno scribe, K. Bitschin continued the work of the Teutonic priest and chronicler, Peter of Dusburg, that focused on describing the history of the monastic state. This manuscript also served the

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 95.

⁶⁷ GStA PK, XIV. HA, ref. 322A, no. 6.

⁶⁸ J. TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich*, p. 99.

⁶⁹ *Księga czynszów fary chełmińskiej*, pp. VIII–IX.

⁷⁰ F. SCHULTZ, *Conrad Bitschin*, p. 519.

⁷¹ Ibid.; J. TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich*, p. 102.

⁷² F. SCHULTZ, *Conrad Bitschin*, pp. 521–522, E. POTKOWSKI, op. cit., pp. 352–359.

purpose of a city chronicle of sorts and as such was kept by the Chełmno chancery.⁷³ It is possible that the decision to compile a book of city privileges was to some extent dictated by the scribe's need to collect all information and documents in one place, so that he could then use them to work on the chronicle.

One of the most outstanding literary achievements of the scribe Konrad was his voluminous work of encyclopaedic nature that treated about the married life. *De vita coniugali*, containing an interesting pedagogical treatise, was created during the scribe's most prolific period, that is during his stay in Chełmno in the years 1430 to 1457. The fourth book of the work, titled *De prole et regimine filiorum*, is by far the most arresting one. It was almost certainly written between 1432 to 1433 and it contained a number of useful instructions on how to raise and educate young boys and girls. Pedagogical works by K. Bitschin were probably heavily influenced by the writings of Aristotle and his *Ethics*, *Economics* and *Politics*, or those of Giles of Rome, but also by the finest minds of the Middle Ages, e.g. Peter of Blois.⁷⁴ Tapping into the late medieval trend of individuals shaping the consciousness of the townsfolk society, Konrad points in his pedagogical treatises to the need for education and science, but also to the necessary schooling of the young. In the fourth book of his work, *De prole et regimine filiorum*, the Chełmno scribe captures the Aristotelian spirit in the context of education through developing the body, intellect and spirit. He also introduces a revolutionary approach to the issue of upbringing and educating girls, pointing to the need for ensuring their literacy from an early age, a truly novel idea for the medieval period.⁷⁵

The pedagogical works and interests of K. Bitschin took a practical turn in his efforts to establish a *stadium generale* in Chełmno, first in collaboration with the mayor Jan Sterz, and later as part of a delegation sent to the emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg. Konrad became probably more active in his efforts in the field of education upon retiring from his office of the municipal scribe and embarking on a clergyman career, as evidenced by a scholarship founded for four municipal school students, where he appeared as a vicar.⁷⁶ Economically weak, Chełmno struggled with numerous disputes and conflicts with the monastic authorities and ultimately failed to secure the necessary conditions that would allow for a real possibility of founding a university, despite several formal acts and decisions, including those by Sigismund of Luxembourg. It is possible that the indifference of the Order towards the efforts of the city intensified the bitterness and reluctance of Chełmno citizens, Konrad among them, for their Teutonic superiors. Considering the above, the scribe's criticism against the Order in his anti-Hussite *Epistola ecclesie deplanctoria*... does seem justified and although no specific reference was

⁷³ Janusz TANDECKI, *Dziejopisarstwo miejskie w Toruniu i w Prusach w średniowieczu i na progu czasów nowożytnych*, Rocznik Toruński, vol. 38: 2011, pp. 12–13.

⁷⁴ Z. WARDESKA, op. cit., pp. 256–257.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 259–263.

⁷⁶ Z. H. NOWAK, op. cit., pp. 28–29.

made there, it clearly showed his resentment for the Teutonic Knights.⁷⁷ This is where the issue of K. Bitschin's approach to the Polish-Teutonic conflict and the liberation of Prussian cities in the first half of the 15th century becomes evident. Perhaps, the creation of a separate book containing copies of correspondence between the Polish Kingdom and Prussia was the result of diplomatic efforts of the scribe and his participation in the peace negotiations in Brześć Kujawski in 1435. Undoubtedly, as an official of such an important city, he had to take a side in this conflict and the situation in Chełmno and entire Prussia suggests that it was not the "Teutonic side."

We do not know the exact date of K. Bitschin's resignation from the office of scribe. The most frequently quoted year for the end of his active work is 1438. However, according to A. Methner, we can also assume that it occurred a few years later, even after 1439.⁷⁸ Indisputably, in 1445, K. Bitschin is already referenced in various source materials as vicar in the Church of the Holy Spirit in Kwidzyn and parish priest in Nieborów. He also served as a subcollector for the Papal Curia in Chełmno and Gdańsk Pomerania.⁷⁹ Although he decided to pursue the career of a clergyman, he remained a resident of Chełmno, as evidenced by an entry in Chełmno parish church rent book, which stated that his house was located near St Martin's Church cemetery.⁸⁰ The scribe did eventually leave the city in 1457, the same year it was captured by the Teutonic mercenary commander, Bernard Szumborski, who went on to ruin it economically in the next few years. The Chełmno chancery never had another equally enlightened and highly educated municipal scribe, neither in its medieval, nor modern history. There was no other successor to his office in the years to come that would show similar disposition or nearly as ingenious a medieval mentality that resulted in numerous pioneering initiatives, both in the field of literary and organizational endeavours.

None of K. Bitschin's successors distinguished themselves with comparable achievements and versatility, both in chancery work and beyond. The next Chełmno municipal scribe after Konrad was Jakub Schoensee, referred to only in the book of municipal privileges kept in Dahlem, Berlin. He could have assumed the office c. 1445, finishing his work as a municipal notary in 1452.⁸¹ Despite the absence of detailed information about this scribe, we can assume that he continued working on the books compiled by K. Bitschin, supplementing and updating rent registers and the book of privileges. As it turns out, however, he was not as diligent in these tasks as his predecessor, which is evidenced in the manner new rent records were added to Konrad's book, "Registrum censuum civitatis Culmensis"

⁷⁷ Z. WARDĘSKA, op. cit., p. 258.

⁷⁸ A. METHNER, *Conrad Bitschin*, p. 79.

⁷⁹ Z. H. NOWAK, op. cit., pp. 28–29.

⁸⁰ "Her Conradt Bitcze. Tenetur 4 sc. von dem garte bey seyner wonunge und an Sente Merten-kyrchhof gelegen" (*Księga czynszów fary chełmińskiej*, no. 315).

⁸¹ GStA PK, XX. HA, OF, ref. 83, pp. 109, 132; *Księga czynszów fary chełmińskiej*, p. VIII.

or in the lack of consistency in adding subsequent entries to the cartulary of privileges and town laws (*wilkierze*).⁸²

Scarce number of available source materials does not allow for a closer examination of the origin and educational background of this scribe, as well as the extent of his work for the Chełmno chancery. It is also impossible to determine who the immediate successor to J. Schoensee was.

The next municipal scribe known by his name and referenced in the available sources was Andrzej Zommer. He appears in the entry to the suburban court of assessors records from the year 1484, when he repurchased a garden in the suburbs from a woman named Urszula Tilchenynne.⁸³ The same scribe is also mentioned in a different entry dated 1487, certifying his sale of a garden previously bought from a woman named Reszkynne to a daughter of Jehans referred to as Plone.⁸⁴ Andrzej Zommer was also directly involved in another sale of property in 1489, when Margrith Muldenerynne repurchased from him a half of a pear tree garden.⁸⁵ The scribe resigned from the office most likely in 1494, which may be concluded based on an entry in Chełmno parish church rent book that referred to a new register established by churchwarden Hans Rewentcz and scribe A. Zommer.⁸⁶ It is possible that the scribe had himself removed the first twelve pages of the manuscript that contained entries from the brickworks and limestone factory administrations, which, when put together, formed a single volume compiled by Konrad Bitschin.⁸⁷ In the absence of reliable source materials, there is no way to determine the scope of scribe Andrzej's activity, although it seems that during the term of his office new municipal registers might have been compiled. F. Schultz refers to that by citing a list of books from the old city archives that dated back to c. 1488. As it turned out, the "Manuale notarii civitatis Culmen" originally created by the scribe K. Bitschin was rewritten, most likely by A. Zommer himself, as indicated by the inscription "Ein neu Manuale diesem gleich."⁸⁸ A new list drawn up in the eighties of the 15th century also shows that the scribe could have taken inventory and reorganized the city archives.

⁸² J. TANDECKI, *Średniowieczne księgi wielkich miast pruskich*, pp. 91, 96.

⁸³ *Księga ławnicza sądu przedmiejskiego Chełmna*, no. 48.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 76.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 100.

⁸⁶ "Dis ist eyn new kirchen zinsbuch geczewget bey her Bartsch Twingesteyn, kirchvater, Hans Rewentcz, kirchenveter und is hot geschreiben Andreas Zommerer uf dy zeit statschreiber der erszame rath" (*Księga czynszów fary chełmińskiej*, no. 496).

⁸⁷ Cf. footnote 54.

⁸⁸ The author cites a list of books included in the manual from the eighties of the 15th century: "1. Zum erste dies Manuale, 2. Ein neu Manuale diesem gleich, 3. Ein rothes Buch, der Stadt Zinser und Kirchenzinser und etliche magdeburgische Fragen enthaltend, 4. Der Sachsenspiegel auf Pergament, 5. Ein altes grosses Buch der Stadt Privilegien, andere Dinge mehr Hantfesten, u. s. w. enthaltend, 6. Ein Buchlein der Stadt Willkor in rotem Leder" (F. SCHULTZ, *Die Stadt Kulm im Mittelalter*, pp. 5–6).

Following A. Zommer's term of office as Chełmno municipal scribe, there is a considerable time gap due to the lack of sources, which prevents identification of subsequent scribes. The next municipal scribe that the available source materials make reference to, and the final one covered here, was Jerzy (Georgius) Hawcke who most likely held this position in the years 1539 to 1548. This scribe is the second known to us official, after K. Kesselhut, who took a different career path than the one typically chosen by other Chełmno scribes. It seems as if Jerzy Hawcke was a city councillor at first, and over time sat on the suburban court as one of the assessors. Typically, the suburban court of assessors provided young councillors with great promotion opportunities as future members of the municipal court, or even mayors. Jerzy Hawcke was a suburban court of assessor at least since 1533, and left this office probably in 1540, although it appears a bit more complex than that. In a notation found in the book of the suburban court of assessors dated 4 April 1539, Jerzy Hawcke is mentioned as a municipal scribe involved in legal action confirming the purchase of real estate, a so-called *litkup* ("leynkowffe") that traditionally involved consumption of alcohol with all concerned parties. Another participant of the "litkauf" was a municipal treasury manager (*kamlarz*), Wawrzyniec Gassener.⁸⁹ In a different entry from 1540, J. Hawcke, still referred to as an assessor, points to certain irregularities that occurred during the sale of a field located on the gallows hill (Galgkberge), from which Marcus von Berge once withheld Jerzy Unrüge's rent.⁹⁰ These references suggest that he performed the function of a municipal scribe and a suburban assessor at the same time, which was somewhat unusual. In the absence of a larger number of surviving source materials dating back to J. Hawcke's term of office, it is not possible to reconstruct the course of this municipal scribe's career.

In the light of the preserved city records and documents, the Chełmno municipal scribes presented herein can only be described briefly, with occasional presentation of references and traces hidden in the surviving sources. This is primarily due to the relatively scarce database available to researchers. Drawing up a comprehensive profile containing the social and educational background and intellectual capabilities is actually possible in the case of only one municipal scribe, namely K. Bitschin. Information about other supervisors of the medieval Chełmno chancery is limited to a few references in various books or some traces in documents, very often preserved only in diplomatic codes. Despite these difficulties, the

⁸⁹ "[...] bey dem leynkowffe die ersamen vorsichtigen her Lorentcz Gassener, statkemmerer, Georgius Hawcke, stadtschreiber, Lorentcz Echorne unde Benedict Schobel uf beyde teyl dorzcu gebeten" (*Księga ławnicza sądu przedmiejskiego Chełmna*, no. 378).

⁹⁰ "Eynem erbaren gerichte ist wissentlich, dasz der geschworne richter Georgius Hawcke offentlich in gehegetem dinge verlawtbart unde bekant hot, wie das eyn ersamer radt der stat Colmenn uffrichtiglich vorkowfft hot eynen acker, gelegen an der stat garte am Galgkberge, welchern ethwan her Marcus von Berge mit vorgonst das rath[es] am zcynsze gehalden, selbigen, dem vorsichtigen hern Jorge Unrüge; doch her Jorge Vnrüge eynen ersamen rathe volkomelich gegulden unde beczallet" (*ibid.*, no. 317).

characteristics of individual scribes, presented in the context of the organization and functioning of Chełmno municipal chancery, reveal a considerable portion of the history of this office and provide a valuable incentive for further research on other chanceries in Prussian cities.

ANNEX
CHEŁMNO MUNICIPAL SCRIBES
FROM THE 14TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY

- Nicolaus Konin 1328–?
- Johannes 1333–?
- Theodricus 1360–1370?
- Konrad Kesselhut 1373–1383?
- Albertus 1383–1392
- Petrus Meyenburg 1399–1405
- Johannes Schönau 1407–1430
- Konrad Bitschin 1430–1438 (1445?)
- Jakob Schoensee 1445–1452
- Andreas Zommer 1484–1494
- Georgius Hawcke 1539–1548?

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STADTSCHREIBER IN DER KULMER KANZLEI
VOM 14. BIS ZUM 16. JAHRHUNDERT

Zusammenfassung

Schlüsselwörter: Kulm, Stadtkanzlei, Diplomatie, Kulmer Stadtbücher, intellektuelle Elite Kulms

Der Artikel befasst sich mit bislang unbekannten oder nur erwähnten Persönlichkeiten von Kulmer Stadtschreibern im Zusammenhang mit der Entwicklung der Kanzlei in der Zeit der Eintragbücher aus dem 14. bis 16. Jahrhundert. Auf der Grundlage einer eingehenden Analyse der Quellenüberlieferung, vor allem von erhaltenen Stadtbüchern (Gerichtsbuch der Stadt Kulm aus den Jahren 1330–1430, Schöffen- und Rechnungsbü-

cher), von Urkunden (sowohl aus Büchern wie aus diplomatischen Kodizes) ließen sich 12 Schreiber identifizieren, die schon seit der ersten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts erwähnt werden. Die Aufmerksamkeit liegt besonders auf bislang unbekannten Schreibern wie Nikolaus Konin (1328), Johannes (1333) oder Theodricus (1360–1370).

Der bekannteste Leiter der Kulmer Stadtkanzlei ist Konrad Bitschin (im Amt des Schreibers in den Jahren 1430–1438), über den sowohl deutsche als auch polnische Historiker geschrieben haben. Der Artikel präsentiert den Beitrag dieses Schreibers zur Organisation und Reform der Kanzlei, wobei er zugleich auf seine Leistungen in anderen Tätigkeitsfeldern hinweist. Vom Umfang der Arbeit des Schreibers in der Kanzlei berichten Fragmente einer nicht erhaltenen Handschrift von Konrad Bitschin, „Manuale notarii civitatis Culmen“, die der deutsche Historiker Franz Schultz zitiert hat und in denen u. a. die von Bitschin angelegten Stadtbücher erwähnt werden. Ein Vergleich des Bestands des städtischen Archivs vor der Amtszeit von Konrad Bitschin mit der Liste der neuen Bände gibt ein Bild seiner Aktivitäten, bei denen es um die Ordnung des Archivs und die Optimierung der Funktionsweise der Kulmer Kanzlei ging und die zum Charakter dieses herausragenden Schreibers passen.

Bei den Nachfolgern von Konrad Bitschin, Jakob Schönsee und Andreas Zommer, wird auf den Wandel in der Führung der Kanzlei und auf die wesentlich geringere Tauglichkeit der Schreiber eingegangen, was in der weniger sorgfältigen Führung der Bücher zum Ausdruck kam.

Außer dem persönlichen Profil einzelner Leiter der städtischen Kanzlei beschreibt der Artikel auch die Arbeitsweise der Kanzlei, die wichtigsten Pflichten der Schreiber, ihre Ausstattung und Ausbildung.



THE CITY'S NOTARIES IN THE CHANCERY OF CHEŁMNO FROM THE 14TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY

Summary

Key words: Chełmno, the city's chancery, diplomacy, the city's books of Chełmno, intellectual elite of Chełmno

The article addresses the hitherto unknown notaries of Chełmno in the context of the development of the city's chancery from the 14th to the 16th centuries. On the basis of the thorough analysis of the sources – the city's books (the judicial book of the city of Chełmno of the years 1330–1430, books of town councilors, accounting books) documents (recorded in the books and included in diplomatic codices) twelve notaries appearing in the sources as early as the first half of the 14th century have been identified. The author concentrated on the hitherto unknown notaries such as Nicolaus Konin (1328), Johannes (1333) or Theodricus (1360–1370).

The best known head of the city's chancery in Chełmno is Konrad Bitschin (he held the office of the notary in the years 1430–1438) described by both German and Polish historians. The article shows the notary's contribution in the organization and reform of the chancery indicating at the same time his achievements in other fields. The range of the

notary's work in the chancery is described by the extracts of the manuscript by Konrad Bitschin cited by the German historian Franz Schultz – "Manuale notarii civitatis Culmen", where the city's books established by him were recorded. The comparison of the condition of the city's archive before Konrad Bitschin's term of office with the list of new volumes gives us a picture of intensive works, the aim of which was to order the archive and to make the work of the Chełmno chancery more effective.

Indicating the successors of Konrad Bitschin – Jacob Schoensee or Andreas Zommer – the author underlined the change in the way of running the chancery and much worse aptitude of the subsequent notaries, which was reflected in a much less accurate manner to keep the books.

Apart from the description of the individual heads of the city's chancery, the article addresses the nature of the work of the chancery, the most important duties of notaries, their remuneration and education.

