



The late medieval wills of Gdańsk's and Elbląg's ruling elites¹

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Summary

Keywords:
Last Wills, Gdańsk,
Elbląg, Middle Ages

The paper presents the closer discussion of last will documents drawn up by representatives of the ruling elites in Gdańsk Main City and Elbląg Old Town in the late Middle Ages, mostly in the second half of the 15th c. In determining membership among the city's ruling elites, the formal criterion will be used, related to the city offices held by the respective persons: the commune head (German: Vogt), city court head (German: Schulz), treasury administrator (German: Kämmerer), juror (German: Schöffe), and, finally, the mayor (German: Bürgermeister). The background for this presentation were previous analyses of historians, devoted to the image of the communities and ruling groups of both cities, in the first place based on other urban provenance sources, depicting their activity in the public and private spheres.

Detailed analyses concerned with the problem formulated in this manner need to be prefixed with a characteristic of the source base which is at pour disposal nowadays.

An important circumstance, severely limiting the results of analyses presented here, is the fact that the obligation of writing one's testament did not yet exist at that time. Usually there was even no such need, since the rules for inheriting property were specified in the appropriate articles of Chelmno law (Gdańsk Main City) and Lübeck law (Elbląg Old Town).

The largest bequests were usually made for one's parochial church, significantly smaller ones for numerous monasteries and hospitals within the city and outside of it, and the least went for the poor. The behaviour patterns of testators from Gdańsk and Elbląg do not deviate in this regard from those observed also in other European cities. In some testaments dispositions for religious purposes are absent altogether. This does not, however, mean that such burghers did not earmarked some of their wealth for that purpose. Probably they made such donations in another form than testament disposal.

¹ The study was supported by National Science Centre grant no. DEC-2012/05/B/HS3/03708.

Późnośredniowieczne testamenty elit rządzących Gdańska i Elbląga (Streszczenie)

Słowa kluczowe:

testamenty,
Gdańsk, Elbląg,
średniowiecze

W artykule skupiono uwagę na bliższym omówieniu dokumentów ostatniej woli spisanych przez przedstawicieli elit rządzących w Głównym Mieście Gdańsku i Starym Mieście Elblągu w późnym średniowieczu, przede wszystkim w drugiej połowie XV wieku. Określając przynależność do elit rządzących miastem, odwołano się do kryterium formalnego, związanego z piastowaniem przez poszczególne osoby urzędów miejskich: wójta, sołtysa miejskiego, kamlarza, ławnika, rajcy i burmistrza. Tłem dla tej prezentacji były wcześniejsze analizy historyków poświęcone obrazowi społeczności i grup rządzących obu miast, oparte przede wszystkim na innych źródłach proveniencji miejskiej, ukazujących ich aktywność w sferze publicznej i prywatnej.

Z przytoczonych przykładów widać wyraźnie, że postanowienia zawarte w testamentach członków elity miejskiej Gdańska i Elbląga wykazują wiele podobieństw, jeśli idzie o sposób podziału majątku, jak i w dyspozycjach *ad pias causas*. Co ciekawe, pomimo dysponowania przez mieszczan bardzo różnymi sumami w gotówce, od kilkuset do nawet dwudziestu tysięcy małych grzywien pruskich, to zarówno liczba, jak i wysokości legatów na rzecz konkretnych instytucji sakralnych były bardzo podobne. Najbogatsi finansowali również pielgrzymów, którzy w ich intencji odwiedzali najważniejsze ośrodki pielgrzymkowe. Czynili tak czasem również przedstawiciele elity władzy. Sumy przeznaczone na ten cel były podobne w obu miastach i zapewne odpowiadały realnym kosztom i przyjętemu zwyczajowi. Legaty dewocyjne stanowiły w wypadku bogatych mieszczan, kupców i członków elity władzy zazwyczaj niewielki procent posiadanego przez nich majątku, chyba że ofiarodawca nie miał spadkobierców. W części testamentów brak w ogóle dyspozycji na cele pobożne. Nie oznacza to jednak, że mieszczanie ci nie przeznaczali części swego majątku na ten cel. Prawdopodobnie ofiary te przekazywali w innej formie niż dyspozycja testamentowa.

Introduction

Research into the functioning of ruling groups in mediaeval cities has had a long and well-founded tradition². An important element of this type of studies is the analysis of sources produced by the very urban elites, also including last will instructions (testaments). Indeed, there are few sources which allow researchers insight into multiple spheres of the private lives of mediaeval people³. On the basis analysing the testators' decisions regarding the administration of their property, a closer look is permitted both at the sphere of their family life, their relations with relatives by blood or

² For definitions and studies on the issue in the case of the cities discussed here see (Czaja 2008: 16–25).

³ Important comments on the scientific value of mediaeval burghers' testaments have been formulated by Brandt (1973: 5–32). An incomplete review of Polish research into burghers' testaments has been provided by Wysmułek (2014: 299–312).

marriage, as well as the forms of religious practice and faith, which were expressed through bequests for religious purposes (*ad pias causas*), made with the intention to save one's soul. The latter, if not always revealing to us the personal motivations and convictions of the donors, shed some light on the customs and preferences subscribed to in a given community. Last will instructions usually also provide valuable data on the circle of persons in which a testator operated, informing of their general material situation and the property they possessed⁴. Of course, sources of this type pertain primarily to the highest tiers of urban communities, authority figures, merchants, and to a significantly lesser extent to craftspersons and the broadly-defined commoners.

With these limitations in mind, which hamper attempts at reconstruction of the image of the urban community as a whole through the prism of burghers' testaments, we shall at this point give focus to closer discussion of last will documents drawn up by representatives of the ruling elites in Gdańsk Main City (German: Rechtstadt Danzig)⁵ and Elbląg Old Town (German: Altstadt Elbing)⁶ in the late Middle Ages, mostly in the second half of the 15th c. In determining membership among the city's ruling elites, the formal criterion was used, related to the city offices held by the respective persons: the commune head (German: Vogt), city court head (German: Schulz), treasury administrator (German: Kämmerer), juror (German: Schöffe), and, finally, the mayor (German: Bürgermeister). The background for this presentation shall be current analyses of historians, devoted to the image of the communities and ruling groups of both cities, in the first place based on other urban provenance sources, depicting their activity in the public and private spheres.

Testaments of the burghers of Gdańsk Main City and Elbląg Old Town

Detailed analyses concerned with the problem formulated in this manner need to be prefixed with a characteristic of the source base which is at our disposal nowadays. Information of the content of burghers' last wills, including members of the ruling elite, is garnered both from surviving to this day original testaments as well as entries in city registers dating to 1450–1526. The adoption of such extreme dates was supported by the survival of numerous testaments of Elbląg burghers from the second half

⁴ More about material culture in the content of the testaments from Elbląg see (Kubicki 2010: 199–213; Kubicki 2020: 98–108).

⁵ In research on the bourgeoisie of Gdańsk Main City for a long time there has been used information contained in surviving testament disposals. In a number of papers those have been referred to by (Samsonowicz 1959: 760–778; Samsonowicz 1960; Samsonowicz 1976: 505–511; Samsonowicz 1990: 47–55). An attempt at a comprehensive study of last will instructions of Gdańsk burghers from the second half of the 15th c. has been undertaken by (Możejko 2004: 127–162; Możejko 2010). The papers met with numerous critical comments (see Długokęcki 2011: 115–139). Data collected by Możejko subjected to a more in-depth analysis by Łozowski (2012: 227–236).

⁶ Information present disposals in Elbląg burghers' testaments have been used by Toeppen 1871–1873. Recently, these sources have been subjected to analyses in a number of papers (see Kubicki 2006: 199–208; Kubicki 2010: 199–213; Kubicki 2010a: 179–188; Kubicki 2011: 8–27; Kubicki 2012: 25–44; Oliński 2008: 389–398, 460–466; Oliński 2010: 181–192; Kubicki 2020: 64–163).

of the 15th c. 1526 is the date of writing the testament of Gdańsk resident Lorenz Coppe (see Możejko 2010: 83). In Gdańsk Main City, which was governed by Chełmno (German: Kulm) Law, there have survived more or less extensive data on the content of more than 130 burgher's testaments entered into juror registers from the years 1466–1476 and 1499–1506, and further mentions of disposals from the entire period 1451–1526 (together with the previously mentioned 144)⁷. Unfortunately, only a few testaments are independent documents⁸. Whereas in the case of last will bequests of Elbląg Old Town residents, where Lübeck Law was in force, there are available to us predominantly independent documents. From the period 1450–1515, there have survived a total of 128 testaments (Kubicki 2006: 204–208). In all, we therefore are in possession of information on testators' disposals recorded in over 270 documents issued by representatives of different groups of the urban populations of Gdańsk and Elbląg in the years 1450–1526. This number is not too impressive, if the number of both urban areas in the second half of the 15th c. are taken into account, which in the case of Gdańsk is estimated at 35,000 residents, and in Elbląg at 10,000 residents. (Approximate data for 1500 after Bogucka, Samsonowicz 1986: 116, 120). However, including only persons holding official positions in the cities in the period between 1450 and 1520, in Gdańsk there were 159 (jurors, councilmen, mayors) and in Elbląg 111 (commune heads, city council heads, treasury administrators, councilmen, mayors). Calculations based on registers of persons holding offices (see Czaja 2010; Skowrońska-Kamińska 2007: 53–59, 130, 161; Zdrenka 2008). Following the formal criterion of confirmation of the fact of wielding power in the city or being the closest family of such a person (wife, children), in Gdańsk Main City per 144 testament disposals 5 were authored by jurors, councilmen and mayors⁹, whereas in Elbląg Old Town there are a total of about 18 such documents per the collective number of 128 testaments¹⁰. Thus, in all, the last will instructions of 23 persons

⁷ Calculated based on (Możejko 2010: 34–35). In the Main City juror's register from the years 1466–1476 (Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku/The State Archives in Gdańsk: APG, sign. 300,43/2b) there are 70 testaments entered. The most documents were entered in said register in 1474, as many as 19. For a breakdown of all testaments from 1426–1521 see (Możejko 2010: 42–47, tab. 1). There were omitted bequests of Marqwart Knake and Bernd Spytha, which we not testaments (see Długokęcki 2011: 121, 127).

⁸ A small amount of last will instructions and testaments of Gdańsk burghers were announced in print. Fragments of disposals in a handful of testaments were announced by Löschin (1837: 17–24). Complete documents were announced by Simson (1915: 42–48), Haßbargen (1926: 78–94). Whereas the testament of Gdańsk merchant Peter Strufunck from 1498 entered in the juror's register of Gdańsk Old Town was published by Samsonowicz (1960: 99, footnote 359).

⁹ These are documents of councilor and mayor Martin Cremon (1467), councilor and mayor Philipp Bischof (1483), lay judge (German: Schöffe) and councilor Otto Angermünde (1492), Philipp Bischof junior (1501) and Katharina Budding, widow of councilor Johann Winkeldorf (1501), (see Możejko 2010: 56–57, 68–72, 77–78, 114).

¹⁰ There were taken into account documents prepared by persons holding official positions and their closest of kin: mayor Peter Storm (1450), Ulrich Ulrichs (1450), Hans Witte (1452), cousin of the two councilors Herman Rauber (1453), Hans Willems (1455), Margarethe wife of a councilor Michael Brugkmann (1457), Michael Brugkmann son of a councilor (1459), Reymer Bylandt (1460), mayor Lorenz Pilgeryn (1461), the commune head (German: Vogt) Mattis Folmer (1470, 1484), councilor Jeremias Voith (1473), councilor Philipp Lange (1484), Elysabeth widow of a councilor Gregor Rawtenberg (1488), city court head (German: Schulz) and treasury administrator (German: Kämmerer) Caspar

out of a total of 270 known testaments of Gdańsk and Elbląg burghers were drawn up by representatives of broadly-defined city authorities, where in both cities there were a total of 270 such persons holding such offices at the time. Therefore, we know the testaments of merely 8.5% of representatives of the urban elites of both cities from that time, at most. Of interest to us here are all documents drawn up by persons who in power in the cities, holding one or several offices. Thus defined power elite does not, however, always mean the group of the richest burghers. This is because from the analyses were excluded wealthy merchants who in their testaments disposed of property comparable to or even greater than jurors, councilmen, or even mayors. The reason was to isolate a more uniform social group, for whom participation in wielding power was the main occupation.

An important circumstance, severely limiting the results of analyses presented here, is the fact that the obligation of writing one's testament did not yet exist at that time. Usually there was even no such need, since the rules for inheriting property were specified in the appropriate articles of Chełmno/Kulm Law (Gdańsk Main City) and Lübeck Law (Elbląg Old Town). Old-Chełmno/Kulm Law provided for inheritance by the wife and children, with equal rights of sons and daughters. A widow of her deceased, childless husband received half of their shared property. It included real properties and movables, with the exception of those contributed by the wife as her dowry/trousseau (so-called *gerada*) (Możejko 2010: 23–24; Długokęcki 2011: 117–119). Whereas according to the rules of inheritance in Lübeck Law, the scope of law of inheritance permitted a limited form of bequest. In the event of leaving a testament, the inheritance guardians had a significant role to play. From her deceased husband, the wife with her children would inherit movable and real property. Additionally, the wife had to consent, should the husband have wished to sell that portion of the property which she brought into the shared household. What is more, her dowry could be sold only forcibly, in a situation where one of them had been taken into slavery, or facing hunger. The wife and children inherited the husband's wealth on a par with her children. If they were minors, the court nominated guardians who protected the entirety of the property until they came of age. If the widow entered into another marriage, her portion of the property was separated from that going to the children (Rozenkranz 1991: 28). For this reason, testaments were drawn up usually in the case of bequests for religious purposes or a desire to place disposals going beyond the common rules of inheritance (Samsonowicz 1960: 92). The universality of this practice confirms the example of the city of Stralsund (Schildhauer 1991: 291–301). It is interesting that there are known cases where one person would write several versions of their last will, or even a separate document covering only legacies for religious purposes, to pay for prayers for redemption of their soul, disposing of their movables and cash remaining after

Langerbeyn (1491), councilor Peter Reese (1495), councilor Pawell Lange (1500), Hans Lantgreffe (1513), Urban Wrede (1515) (see Kubicki 2006: 204–208, no. 23, 25, 31, 41, 44, 47, 49, 50, 66, 70, 100, 108, 113, 118, 133, 148, 150). Information on holding official positions in the cities based on (Czaja 2010; Zdrenka 2008).

satisfying the rights of the heirs. The testaments of Gdańsk resident Nicolaus Stuffing and Heinrich Eggerd of Dortmund (Możejko 2010: 32, 40–41). Similarly in Elbląg, burgher Mattis Folmer in 1470 wrote his first testament, and in 1484 he supplemented it with a second document, containing only legacies for religious purposes (Kubicki 2012: 19).

Testaments of the ruling elite of Gdańsk Main City and Elbląg Old Town

In the overall number of surviving last will documents (Elbląg Old Town) and information on disposals entered into city registers (Gdańsk Main City), considering its number in the urban population, the group of power elite members (councilmen, mayors and their families) along with merchants is the relatively best-represented one. Such persons controlled property worth several hundred and more of small mark (further: m.) in Prussian cash¹¹. In the case of Elbląg Old Town, 28% of testaments were written by persons disposing in their will of a total sum of more than 200 m. in cash, 26% from 50 m. to 200 m., and 68% up to 50 m. These estimations can be compared to information on the wealth of Elbląg residents based on the criterion of the number of real property possessed. According to calculations by Czaja, in 1479 the group of wealthy residents amounted to 8%, of average means – 28%, and the poor – 64% (see Czaja 1992: 42; Kubicki 2010: 199, footnote 10). The power elite and merchants disposed of at least 200 m (Kubicki 2011: 13, tab. 1). This is based on the division adopted in the tax rate which was discussed at state conventions of Teutonic Prussia in 1431 and 1433, where the population was divided into three groups: 1 – “the most affluent citizens (patricians, rich merchants wielding power in the city) and the other representatives of the mercantile stratum and brewers, 2 – “common citizens” and craftsmen, 3 – “casual people” (hired labourers, one-day workers, guild apprentices, suburban population) (Czaja 2008a: 445; Kubicki 2011: 10 footnote 17).

In the content of disposals entered into record of the alderman court books – German: Schoeffenbuch (Gdańsk) and testaments preserved in the form of separate documents (Elbląg), there can be seen a clear division into two bequest groups. The first one is concerned with property cases, bequests for family members, kin and friends. It also includes settlements of debt obligations, both one's own as well as debts to be collected from other persons, which was mostly left to the executors of the last will, and the amounts to be potentially collected from debtors would be allocated for religious purposes. This, however, only applied to merchants. Indeed, such provisions are not found in documents of power elite members. The other bequest group present

¹¹ The Prussian mark was only a settlement unit in Teutonic and Royal Prussia. “The weight of the Chełmno mark was determined at 191.29 g of silver and it was to be enough for minting 720 denarii (pfennigs)” (Odyniec 1990: 406). In the first half of the 15th c., when the actual content of silver in minted coins was reduced, good mark started to be distinguished from small (little) ones, in the ratio of 1 to 2.

in some of the testaments pertained to disposals for religious purposes (*ad pias causas*), donations intended for churches and monasteries as well as hospitals and the poor.

In the settlements there were taken into account first of all the payment of the trousseau (dowry) contributed by the wife and bequests for the children and the closest kin. Wife was mentioned in the testaments of: mayor in Elbląg Peter Storm (1450); councilor in Elbląg Jeremias Voith (1473); councilor in Elbląg Peter Reese (1495); councilor in Elbląg Pawell Lange (1500); councilor in Gdańsk Martin Cremon (1467); lay judge and councilor in Gdańsk Otto Angermünde (1492). Of course, the greatest number of bequests for the kin occurred when a testator had no direct heirs. Such a situation took place in the case of Elbląg mayor Lorenz Pilgerym, who in 1461, after his wife had passed, almost all of his property devised in various parts to his sister and her many children (three daughters and a son), and his nephew (publication of the document see F. N[eumann] 1828: 2–3). It is also characteristic for burghers belonging to power elite to dispose of numerous real properties: houses, land owned and rents secured on it. In 1467, Gdańsk councillor Martin Cremon endowed his wife Barbara with 40 m. of rent. Considering the average city pension rate applicable at that time (8.5%), it must have been derived from a capital invested in purchasing the rent in the amount of about 400 m (Samsonowicz 1960: 102). Numerous real property, gardens and land in the country were mentioned in the disposal in his last will in 1491 by Elbląg treasury administrator Caspar Langerbeyn (APG, Elbląg City Archives, Collection of Elbląg documents, sign. 368/III,61), similarly, in 1495 Elbląg councillor Peter Reese devised to his wife, beside a share in the house, also gardens, a shed (residential-and-farming buildings on a second-rate city plot) and two granaries¹². Whereas in 1500, Elbląg councillor Pawell Lange devised to his wife some land, a house and a brewery with equipment, among others¹³.

***Ad pias causas* bequests in testaments of the ruling elite of the Gdańsk Main City and Elbląg Old Town**

As has been mentioned, apart from devising property to family members, in many testaments there were bequests for religious purposes (*ad pias causas*). What is obvious, power elite representatives, beside merchants, stood out in this regard as compared to other urban population groups, both in terms of the number of bequests, as well as their global total. In Gdańsk, from among 130 testaments entered into juror's registers from the years 1466–1476 (90 disposals) and 1499–1503 (40 disposals), legacies for devotional purposes were found in 14 (15,5%) and 18 bequests (45%) respectively (Możejko 2004: 127–162; Możejko 2010: 48–107). Numerous

¹² „dys halbe haws, datczu gebe ich ir die ander helfte disselbigen hawss unde ii meyne garten im Grupenhagen unde den dritten in der Grunengasse unde meyne bude in der Hilgeistgasse und meyne zwene speicher“ (APG 368/II, 113).

¹³ „gebe und beschede yr meyne legende gruende, also das hawß, do ich inne wone, dorczu das brewhauß hynder meynem hauße mit aller czubehorunge“ (APG 368/II, 90).

corrections and supplementations to these discoveries were introduced by Długokęcki (2011: 115–139). While in the Late Middle Ages there were occurring significant changes in testator's behaviour. The most popularity gained efforts to secure prayers for the donor's soul and their family, which was ensured by bequests for parochial churches and mendicant friaries. While of lesser importance were bequests for the poor and hospitals (Samsonowicz 1990: 50). Whereas in Elbląg, out of 128 testaments from the period 1450–1515, bequests for religious purposes and for the poor were placed in as many as 101 (78.9%) (Kubicki 2006: 204–208).

Table 1. The number of last wills in Elbląg Old Town and in Gdańsk Main City

Name of city	Elbląg Old Town	Gdańsk Main City
Last wills from year to year	1450–1515	1466–1476, 1499–1503
Total number of last wills	128	130
Wills with bequests for religious purposes	101 (78,9%)	32 (24,6%)
Number of last wills (ruling elites)	18	5
Number of persons holding official positions in the cities	111	159

Sources: (Możejko 2004: 127–162; Możejko 2010: 48–107; Kubicki 2006: 204–208).

Let us examine what it looked like in detail on the example of the bequests of selected representatives of the power elite of Gdańsk and Elbląg. The content of disposals included in several testaments of Gdańsk burghers compared against their general material situation has already been discussed in the literature. These were last will bequests of Hildebrand van der Wolde (1471), Heinrich Eggerd (1473), Filip Bischof (1483), Otto Angermünde (1492) and Peter Strufunck (1498) (Samsonowicz 1960: 93–99; Możejko 2010: 63–64, 68–72). Among these, city offices had been held by Heinrich Eggerd (juror), Filip Bischof (juror, counsellor and mayor) and Otto Angermünde (juror and counsellor). The counsellor's office had also been held by Martin Cremon (his last will disposition from 1467) (Możejko 2010: 56). All four made bequests of a devotional character: Martin Cremon (36 m.), Heinrich Eggerd (620 m.), Philip Bischof (427 m.), Otto Angermünde (500 m. and 565 m.) (Samsonowicz 1960: 93; Simson 1915: 45; Możejko 2010: 56, 63). Considering the total amounts which they disposed of in their testaments, disposals for religious purposes constituted merely a small percentage. The total wealth of Filip Bischof is purported to have been approximately 40,000 m., Otto Angermünde – 30,000 m., and Heinrich Eggerd about 14,000 m. Estimations as to the entirety of the property of said merchants were conducted by Samsonowicz (1960: 95–98). This was due to the testators' donating *ad pias causas* 1%, 3.5% and 4.5% of their property, respectively. These data are based solely on general estimations, since we do not know their financial situation at the time of writing their last wills. In the case of disposals for the poor as on average 0.2% of total inheritance in the Baltic catchment area, and devotional legacies as 37% of a testator's movable property in Lübeck, Gdańsk

and Cracow were estimated by Samsonowicz (1976: 509–510). Numerous, detailed instructions are present in the testaments of councillor Martin Cremon, juror, councillor and mayor Filip Bischof, and juror and councillor Otto Angermünde.

The first of them donated small sums, of 2–4 m., for several Gdańsk hospitals (St. Gertrude, Corpus Christi, All God's Angels), Franciscan and Carmelite friaries, as well as 20 m. for the Main city parochial church (St. Mary's Church)¹⁴.

Much greater legacies were allocated for this purpose by Gdańsk mayor and known diplomat, Filip Bischof. Just as Martin Cremon, he donated small contributions to hospitals in the city and the surrounding area, 3 m. each (St. Gertrude's, St. Elizabeth's, Holy Spirit's, St. Barbara's, All God's Angels, Corpus Christi's). Other bequests included the support of two priests at the 11,000 Virgins Chapel in St. Mary's Church, each of whom was to receive 12 m. annually, which meant the investment of a capital of about 300 m. While the Fraternity of St. George, grouping the power elite in the city, he passed his best suit of armour, 3 m. to the Dominicans, 10 m. in grain or cash to the Carthusians, to the Cistercians of Oliva 24 m. or a last of barley and a last of oats with a horse kept in Mokry Dwór (German: Nassenhuben), 10 m. to a priests' fraternity, and finally, 5000 bricks to the Olive Cistercians, however on the condition that his brickyard would prosper (Löschin 1837: 17–18; Możejko 2010: 68–70; Długokęcki 2011: 130–131). For the elite nature of the Fraternity of St. George see (Czaja 1997: 109; Czaja 2008: 81–82).

Whereas juror and councillor Otto Angermünde made in his testament considerable bequests for construction of churches in the city (100 m. for St. Mary's, 10 m. for St. Bartholomew's, 5 m. each for St. Cathrine's, St. Peter and Paul's and St. John's). He also included small amounts for hospitals in the city its vicinity (10 m. for St. James, St. Barbara's and St. Gertrude's each, 5 m. for Holy Spirit's, Corpus Christi's and All God's Angels). Bequests were also given to monasteries in the city (30 m. for the Dominicans and the Franciscans, 20 m. for the Bridgettines and the Carmelites each). Additionally, he donated 10 m. for the Fraternity of St. Olaf, and 10 m. for St. Mary's Chapel in the Our Lady Church in Gdańsk. 100 m. each were given to the Cistercian nuns in Żarnowiec (German: Zarnowitz) and the Carthusians in *Paradisus Mariae* (today's Kartuzy, German: Karthaus), 20 m. each to the Carthusians in Świdwin (German: Schivelbein) the Franciscans Observants in Lębork (German: Lauenburg), and 10 m. each to the Norbertines of Żukowo, Benedictine nuns of Chełmno and Toruń (German: Thorn) (Simson 1915: 45; Możejko 2010: 71–72; Długokęcki 2011: 133–134). As a whole, he disposed in this manner of 565 m. for specific purposes, and further 500 m. he ordered his wife to spend for God's glory, with the intention of saving his soul (Simson 1915: 44; Długokęcki 2011: 134). While Heinrich Eggerd the entirety of his bequests for religious

¹⁴ „Item giffet he und bescheidet den grawen moncken 4 ger. m., to sunte Gertruden 4 ger. m., to dem Hilligen Lichnam 4 ger. m. Item to den wutten monken 2 ger. m. und to Alle Godes Engelen 2 ger. m. Item unsir Leuen Vrowen kerke 20 ger. m.” (APG 300,43/2b k. 87b; Możejko 2010: 56).

purposes allocated for St. Mary's Church, including 600 m. for the St. Mary's Chapel inside church and 20 m. for the church (Mozejko 2010: 63).

Similar was the case of bequests made for religious purposes by the burghers, including power elite representatives of Elbląg. As far as the most affluent were concerned, the adopted solution, just as in Gdańsk, was to cover with legacies a majority, or even all of the church institutions in the city. First, the parochial church, then the local Dominican friary, municipal hospitals, paying for pilgrimages, and finally, for the poor of Elbląg and the numerous monasteries in the whole of Prussia (Kubicki 2011: 15, 17, 20–21).

Of course, only the richest would include in their bequests also numerous institutions outside Elbląg (Oliński 2010: 190–191). Among testators controlling amounts in excess of 500 m., monasteries and churches outside Elbląg were allocated 22.5% of the total amount of bequests for religious purposes, 19.5% among those disposing of between 200 and 500 m., and from 100 to 200 m. – only 12%. The other testators, however, did not provide for such donations at all. There is also a special relationship of the wealthiest burghers with the churches of Elbląg Old Town, where they would direct the most sizeable bequests (over 30% of total legacies for religious purposes) (Kubicki 2011: 13, tab. 1).

These regularities can be seen on the example of several characteristic disposals of persons belonging to the power elite. In the testament of mayor Peter Storm from 1450, who disposed of property totalling 1523 m. in cash, for religious purposes and for the poor there were allocated only a little more than 100 m. (6.5%). This included 10 m. for the parochial church, a further 6 m. for a mass held before the Virgin Mary's altar in that temple, where the testator was to be interred, 10 m. for the Dominicans of Elbląg, 2 m. each for every Beguine convent in the city, 50 m. for the poor, for clothing and footwear, and 30 m. for poor girls, so that they could get married. In his testament the mayor also included minor bequests for a total number of six mendicant friaries outside the city (24 m. in all), among these for three Dominican convents (Chełmno, Toruń and Gdańsk), two Franciscan ones (Braniewo – German: Braunsberg, Gdańsk) and one Augustinian convent (Mamonowo – German: Heiligenbeil). All these, similarly to the Carthusians in *Paradisus Mariae* (present-day city of Kartuzy), whom he bequeathed 10 m., were to hold vigils and masses for his soul (APG 368/III, 26; Oliński 2010: 190).

Numerous legacies were also made in 1459 by Michael Brugkman, the son of councillor Michael Brugkman. He distributed a total of 994 m., including about 350 m. (35,2%) for religious purposes and for the poor. In his bequests he included, among others, 30 m. for pilgrimages to Rome and Wilsnack, 30 m. for the construction of the Bridgettines' convent in Elbląg, 30 m. for the Dominicans of Elbląg, 10 m. for the parochial St. Nicholas Church, minor bequests for hospitals in the city, more than 160 m. for clothes, food and baths for the poor, and a total of 31 m. for five priests praying for the salvation of his soul, 20 m. for the priests' fraternity, but also 20 m. for the Carthusians near Gdańsk, and 12 m. for the Bridgettines there (APG 368/II, 65).

Bequests for religious purposes were also made in 1461 by above-mentioned Elbląg mayor Lorenz Pilgerym, who allocated thusly 51 m. from a total of about 500 m. distributed in his testament. This included 10 m. for the parochial church, 10 m. for the Dominican friary and 3 m. for the St. George hospital in Elbląg (F. N[eumann] 1828: 2–3).

Among wealthy burghers, merchants and power elite representatives it was popular to make bequests financing pilgrims who would go to holy sites in the donor's stead (Kubicki 2010a: 179–188). Considering the cost of journey to Rome or Compostela, which ranged from 30 to 40 m., bequests of this kind were made only by the most affluent (Samsonowicz 2002: 126). In Elbląg, those were primarily power elite representatives and merchants (Kubicki 2011: 19). In the case of the richest testators, there can also be noticed particular attention to exclusive forms of prayer remembrance. An element of these was also belonging to devotional fraternities gathering merchants, as part of which one could be guaranteed participation in services, and primarily a burial and prayers for the deceased and his relatives (Czaja 2008: 78–85, 101–105). Funding of private chapels, with financing priests obligated to prayers held for the testator (Gdańsk – mayor Filip Bischof), and interment in the church (Elbląg – mayor Peter Storm). This is, of course, a result of the general shift in the approach to securing one's situation after death. At the end of the Middle Ages, testators began to focus on disposals ensuring long posthumous memory, hence mainly prayers for one's soul held only after death (Samsonowicz 1990: 50).

It is clear from the examples cited that the provisions included in testaments of the urban elite members of Gdańsk and Elbląg there can be seen major similarities, as far as division of wealth is concerned, as well as in *ad pias causas* dispositions. Interestingly, despite the burghers' disposing of very different amounts in cash, from several hundred up to even twenty thousand small Prussian marks, both the number as well as the amounts of legacies for particular church institutions were very similar. The largest bequests were usually made for one's parochial church, significantly smaller ones for numerous monasteries and hospitals within the city and outside of it, and the least went for the poor. It was also characteristic to include in testament bequests church institutions operating outside the city where the testators lived. This applies chiefly to bequests for monasteries which were to provide remembrance by prayer for the donors, masses for their souls and their family members. Such commitments were financed simultaneously at several friaries, usually those of mendicant orders (Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians and Carmelites). The behaviour patterns of testators from Gdańsk and Elbląg do not deviate in this regard from those observed also in other European cities. They match the tendency observed in the Late Middle Ages, according to which testators were particularly keen on securing prayers for their souls and their closest relatives, however, with a reduction in bequests for the poor and city hospitals.

The most affluent would also finance pilgrims, who went to visit major pilgrimage centres for them. This was at times done also by power elite representatives. Amounts

allocated for this purpose were similar in both cities and, perhaps, corresponded to the actual cost and the local custom. Usually, in the case of rich burghers, merchants and power elite members devotional legacies constituted a small percentage of their property, except when the donor had no heirs. In some testaments dispositions for religious purposes are absent altogether. This does not, however, mean that such burghers did not earmark some of their wealth for that purpose. Probably they made such donations in another form than testament disposal.

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Biogram

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