# Summary

## Manuscripts, Book Collections, and Archival Materials in Central Europe Across the Centuries: Losses, Migrations, Research

This collective volume addresses the dynamic history and contemporary research on the written cultural heritage of Central Europe, with a particular focus on the consequences of conflict, displacement, and archival loss. Framed within the long durée of Central European history, the book highlights how wars, border shifts, looting, and political repression have led to the destruction, dispersion, or appropriation of many valuable manuscripts, printed books, and archival materials. These disruptions have left significant gaps in the historical record, especially regarding the Middle Ages, thus compelling scholars to rely increasingly on specialized methods such as fragmentology and provenance research.

The volume reflects both the challenges and possibilities of reconstructing cultural memory through dispersed written heritage. It continues a scholarly tradition that dates back to the 19th century, when Polish historians, philologists, librarians, and archivists began documenting and recovering traces of Polish culture preserved in foreign institutions. These efforts have generated a vast body of catalogues, inventories, and source editions and continues into the 21st century with coordinated research initiatives between Polish and Central European scholars.

This book presents a series of focused case studies exploring the fate of medieval and early modern manuscripts and libraries, their transnational movements, and the methodologies used to trace and study them. The studies span four main thematic areas:

1. **Polonica in foreign institutions** – particularly in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Russia.
2. **Medieval manuscripts and their contexts** – including libraries of medieval universities and monastic communities.
3. **The impact of war on written heritage** – tracking how military events shaped the survival and loss of collections.
4. **The broader history of the book** – from manuscript culture to modern bibliographic projects.

Among the contributions, Eduard Lazorík explores the Polish connections in the libraries of the Carthusian monasteries of Skala útočišťa and Lechnica (Slovakia), documenting Polish provenance, ownership, and usage of numerous medieval manuscripts and incunabula. Miroslav Myšák provides an introductory study of *silesiana* and *polonica* found in



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the palace library of Kroměříž, emphasizing the presence of Kraków and Wrocław prints. Andrea Mariani investigates Jesuit and educational sources in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts in Moscow, revealing valuable material for the study of the Society of Jesus and the Commission of National Education in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

A second group of articles focuses on specific medieval manuscripts. Wojciech Świeboda analyses educational codices from Kraków University bursae, while Edward Skibiński reassesses the *Polish Chronicle* by Gallus Anonymus, its codicological background, and textual relationships. David Kalhous examines lost and surviving manuscripts of Cosmas of Prague's chronicle, while Marzena Matla studies the *Breslau Psalter*, tracing its creation, function, and iconography.

War and cultural loss are at the heart of essays by Marie Bláhová and Norbert Delestowicz. Bláhová chronicles the destruction of Czech historical manuscripts across six centuries of armed conflict, including World War II. Delestowicz documents the wartime fate of the Poznań Society Library, highlighting material losses and postwar recovery.

The final section addresses the intellectual history of the book and bibliographic studies. Piotr Tafiłowski examines the legacy of Professor Edward Potkowski and his unfinished handbook on medieval manuscripts, underscoring its potential to shape Polish codicology and bibliography. Grzegorz Nieć surveys the millennium-long trajectory of Czech book culture, tracing its role in national identity and resistance to cultural suppression.

This volume is deeply rooted in the collaborative Polish-Czech project "Medieval and Early Modern Polonica in Czech Scholarly Collections" (no. 11H 18 0181 86), funded by Poland's National Programme for the Development of the Humanities. The project has significantly advanced the identification, documentation, and dissemination of *polonica* and *silesiana* in Czech institutions, producing both print inventories and online databases. These efforts foster deeper international cooperation and provide a replicable model for similar initiatives elsewhere in Central Europe.

Overall, the volume contributes to the recovery of a shared cultural past and underlines the importance of cross-border academic collaboration in the preservation and study of dispersed heritage. It serves not only as a collection of case studies but also as a call for continued exploration of the lost and fragmented memory of Central European manuscript and library culture.

**Keywords:** archives; writings; polonica; libraries; manuscripts; old prints; books

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