

## The Charters of the Princes of Rügen and the Display of Authority

Sébastien Rossignol<sup>1</sup>

### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

#### Die Urkunden der Fürsten von Rügen und die Darstellung von Herrschaft

In diesem Aufsatz wird am Beispiel der Urkunden der Fürsten von Rügen untersucht, wie Arenga und visueller Eindruck zum Zweck der Herrschaftsrepräsentation eingesetzt wurden. Dafür wurden sowohl die edierten Urkunden als auch in Archiven aufbewahrte Originale betrachtet. Die fürstliche Kanzlei von Rügen wird als exemplarischer Fall für die Entwicklung der pragmatischen Schriftlichkeit in Ostmitteleuropa genommen, und zwar zu einer Zeit, als in dieser historischen Region die Verwendung fürstlicher Urkunden dramatisch expandierte. Urkunden waren im Europa des Mittelalters mehr als nur rechtliche Dokumente: Sie hatten auch eine symbolische Funktion in der Darstellung von Herrschaft. Es wird hier argumentiert, dass in der Forschung zur Herrschaftsrepräsentation durch Urkunden bislang der Standpunkt der Empfänger zu wenig berücksichtigt worden ist. Die Kontextualisierung der Belege legt nahe, dass Empfänger auf die Ausgestaltung von Arenen und visuellen Mitteln Einfluss nehmen konnten.

KEYWORDS: charters, pragmatic literacy, representation of authority, *arenga*, palaeography, Rügen

<sup>1</sup> This article is part of a broader project that has been funded through a postdoctoral fellowship of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada / Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada, held at York University (2008-2010), a Banting postdoctoral fellowship held at Dalhousie University (2011-2013), and a research contract with the German Historical Institute in Warsaw (2010-2013). I would like to thank Professor Richard C. Hoffmann (York University), Professor Cynthia J. Neville (Dalhousie University) and Prof. Dr. Eduard Mühle (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster) for having made it possible for me to work in such comfortable conditions, as well as the Stralsund City Archive for the permission to reproduce images of their documents. The following abbreviations are used in this article: 'PUB': Pommersches Urkundenbuch, vol. 1: 786-1253, ed. by KLAUS CONRAD, 2nd ed., Köln et al. 1970; vol. 2, part 1: 1254-1278, ed. by RODGERO PRÜMERS, Stettin 1881; vol. 2, part 2: 1278-1286, ed. by IDEM, Stettin 1885; vol. 3, part 1: 1287-1295, ed. by IDEM, Stettin 1888; vol. 3, part 2: 1296-1300, ed. by IDEM, Stettin 1891; vol. 4, parts 1-2: 1301-1310, ed. by GEORG WINTER, Stettin 1903; vol. 5, part 1: 1311-1316, ed. by OTTO HEINEMANN, Stettin 1903; vol. 5, part 2: 1317-1320, ed. by IDEM, Stettin 1905; vol. 6, part 1: 1321-1324, ed. by IDEM, Stettin 1906; vol. 6, part 2: 1325, nebst Nachträgen und Ergänzungen zu Bd. 1-6, ed. by IDEM, Stettin 1907. 'FABRICIUS': Urkunden zur Geschichte des Fürstenthums Rügen unter den eingebornen Fürsten, ed. by CARL GUSTAV FABRICIUS, vol. 1, Stralsund 1841; vol. 2, Berlin 1859; vol. 3, Stettin 1851; vol. 4, Berlin 1859-1869. 'LaG': Landesarchiv Greifswald. 'LhaS': Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin. 'StaS': Stadtarchiv Stralsund. 'StaG': Stadtarchiv Greifswald.

This study is about how preambles and the degrees of solemnity of the script were used to display the authority of the princes of Rügen in the charters that were issued under their name. Preambles could be used to express in words the nature of the authority of the document and of its issuer. Heinrich Fichtenau has famously drawn attention to the many ways in which medieval charters offered opportunities to demonstrate symbolically the authority of those who issued them, and saw the preamble as the ‘natural centre of “monarchic propaganda”’.<sup>2</sup> Fichtenau also considered the visual effects produced by royal and imperial diplomas as means of communicating sovereign majesty.<sup>3</sup> The solemn script of charters can be understood as a visual symbol representing the gravity of the authority under whose name the charter has been produced. Going further than Fichtenau, Peter Rück brought renewed attention to the material appearance of medieval charters, and especially to their graphic symbols, describing script and signs as ‘visual rhetoric’.<sup>4</sup> The graphic symbols on charters had traditionally been interpreted primarily for their value in validating the documents: monograms obviously served to identify the issuer; other visual signs, including *litterae elongatae*, script decoration, and the typical features of the documentary script can be studied to identify chancery practices. They are, however, much more than that.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ‘Das natürliche Zentrum der “monarchischen Propaganda” in den Herrscherurkunden ist die Arenga.’ HEINRICH FICHTEAU: Monarchische Propaganda in Urkunden, in: IDEM: Beiträge zur Mediävistik. Ausgewählte Aufsätze. Zweiter Band: Urkundenforschung, Stuttgart 1977 [article first published in 1956/57], pp. 18-36, here p. 32; IDEM: Arenga: Spätantike und Mittelalter im Spiegel von Urkundenformeln, Graz—Köln 1957. On the study of charter preambles since Fichtenau, see ANNA ADAMSKA: Forschungen an Königsurkunden—über Heinrich Fichtenau hinaus?, in: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 113 (2005), pp. 269-292; and the contributions in SÉBASTIEN ROSSIGNOL, ANNA ADAMSKA (eds.): Urkundenformeln im Kontext: Formen der Schriftkultur im Ostmitteleuropa des Mittelalters (13.-14. Jahrhundert), Wien 2016.

<sup>3</sup> FICHTEAU, Monarchische Propaganda (as in footnote 2), pp. 24-32.

<sup>4</sup> PETER RÜCK: Die Urkunde als Kunstwerk, in: IDEM: Fachgebiet Historische Hilfswissenschaften: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zum 65. Geburtstag von Peter Rück, ed. by ERIKA EISENLOHR and PETER WORM, Marburg 2000 [article first published in 1991], pp. 117-139, here p. 117; see also PETER RÜCK (ed.): Graphische Symbole in mittelalterlichen Urkunden: Beiträge zur diplomatischen Semiotik, Sigmaringen 1996.

<sup>5</sup> On charters and the display of authority, see ALEXANDER SAUTER: Fürstliche Herrschaftsrepräsentation: Die Habsburger im 14. Jahrhundert, Ostfildern 2003; MICHAEL LINDNER: Verstecken durch Zeigen: Die mittelalterliche Königsurkunde als Metaphernmaschine, in: OLAF B. RADER, MATHIAS LAWO (eds.): Turbata per aequora mundi: Dankesgabe an Eckhard Müller-Mertens, Hannover 2001, pp. 191-205; IDEM: War das Medium schon die Botschaft? Mediale Form, Inhalt und Funktion mittelalterlicher Herrscherurkunden, in: TOM GRABER (ed.): Diplomatische Forschungen in Mitteldeutschland, Leipzig 2005, pp. 29-57.

For Fichtenau and Rück, charters were ‘works of art’<sup>6</sup>, combining rhetorical effects and visual means to express a sense of grandeur, transmitting a message that goes well beyond the text. Obviously in medieval Europe not everyone understood Latin and *ad hoc* translations or informal renditions only provided indirect access to the text.<sup>7</sup> One did not need training in Latin, though, to be able to appreciate the impressive solemnity and the sophisticated layout of a charter. Rück thus initiated a new field of research that is far from having been exhausted. More recently, the visual ornamentation of French royal diplomas has been studied by Ghislain Brunel<sup>8</sup>, and similar studies have been done for other parts of Europe, mostly regarding royal and imperial diplomas.<sup>9</sup> More case studies need to be done, however, on other categories of documents in order to better understand these phenomena. In addition, preambles and visual layout, in spite of the fact that both are considered symbolic expressions of authority, have not been studied together since Fichtenau.

Research has progressed since Fichtenau and Rück but the understanding of the historical significance of the visual display of charters is still tentative. To that aim, being able to reconstruct the specific circumstances of the realization of a charter is of paramount importance.<sup>10</sup> Having access to detailed

<sup>6</sup> HEINRICH FICHTEAU: *Mensch und Schrift im Mittelalter*, Wien 1946, p. 69; RÜCK, *Urkunde als Kunstwerk* (as in footnote 4), p. 117. The phrase is originally from LEO SANTIFALLER: *Über illuminierte Urkunden*, in: HANS TINTELOT (ed.): *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien: Dagobert Frey zum 23. April 1943 von seinen Kollegen, Mitarbeitern und Schülern*, Breslau 1943, pp. 218-233, here p. 218.

<sup>7</sup> On the translation and explanation of Latin charters in the vernacular languages, see ADAMSKA, *Forschungen* (as in footnote 2), pp. 289-291; MARTIN CAMARGO: *Where’s the Brief? The Ars Dictaminis and Reading/Writing Between the Lines*, in: IDEM: *Essays on Medieval Rhetoric*, Farnham—Burlington 2012 [article first published in 1996], III, pp. 1-17, here pp. 5-7; for Poland, TOMASZ JUREK: *Rozwój dokumentu polskiego w XIII wieku* [The Development of the Polish Charter in the 13th Century], in: IDEM (ed.): *Dyplomatyka staropolska*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 88-144, here pp. 128-129.

<sup>8</sup> GHISLAIN BRUNEL: *Images du pouvoir royal: Les chartes décorées des Archives nationales, XIIIe-XVe siècle*, Paris 2005; IDEM: *Entre art et pouvoir: L’illustration des chartes en France (fin du XIIIe – milieu du XVe siècle)*, in: *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 169 (2011), pp. 41-77.

<sup>9</sup> ELIZABETH DANBURY: *English and French Artistic Propaganda During the Period of the Hundred Years War: Some Evidence from Royal Charters*, in: CHRISTOPHER ALLMAND (ed.): *Power, Culture and Religion in France c. 1350 – c. 1550*, Woodbridge 1989, pp. 75-97; EADEM: *The Decoration and Illumination of Royal Charters in England, 1250-1509: An Introduction*, in: MICHAEL JONES, MALCOLM VALE (eds.): *England and Her Neighbours, 1066-1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais*, London—Ronceverte 1989, pp. 157-179; EADEM: *Décoration et enluminures des chartes royales anglaises au Moyen Âge*, in: *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 169 (2011), pp. 79-107; OLIVIER GUYOTJEANNIN: *Les chartes ornées: pour un parcours comparatif*, *ibidem*, pp. 255-268; ROBERT A. MAXWELL: *Les chartes décorées à l’époque romane*, *ibidem*, pp. 11-39.

<sup>10</sup> For Poland, see JUREK, *Rozwój* (as in footnote 7), pp. 127-143.

studies on the chanceries, their personnel, and their working methods—like Kazimierz Bobowski's study of the charters produced in the principality of Rügen—, obviously facilitates further research into the interpretation of the social and cultural significance of the documents.<sup>11</sup> Medieval charters represented authority; authority needs acceptance for its legitimacy and is based on a system of interactions.<sup>12</sup> The documents studied in the following pages have been produced by notaries working on behalf of the princes of Rügen and many of these notaries were also chaplains of the rulers.<sup>13</sup> The princely charters of Rügen form a well-defined corpus that serves a solid basis for a regional inquiry on a manageable scale, representing specific local evolutions that were part of broader developments in pragmatic literacy in East Central Europe. The Rügen documents have been published and most of the remaining originals—some were destroyed during the 20th century—can be consulted in easily accessible archives.

It can generally be taken for granted that most charters were produced at the request of the beneficiaries. Although specific information is usually found only in later centuries, it can be assumed that these beneficiaries had to pay fees to obtain the documents they requested.<sup>14</sup> The role of preambles and the rationale for their inclusion or omission have been studied through a variety of examples from different categories of issuers and for several regions of medieval Europe. It has often remained unclear, however, why certain char-

<sup>11</sup> KAZIMIERZ BOBOWSKI: *Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne na obszarze Księstwa Rugijskiego do 1325 roku* [Charters, Chanceries and Centres of Writing on the Territory of the Principality of Rügen to the Year 1325], Zielona Góra 2008. Bobowski has also produced similar studies on the chanceries of Western Pomerania: IDEM: *Dokumenty i kancelarie książęce na Pomorzu Zachodnim do końca XIII w. (na tle praktyki kancelaryjnej wszystkich świeckich i kościelnych ośrodków zarządzania i kultury)* [Charters and Ducal Chanceries in Western Pomerania to the End of the 13th Century (on the Basis of the Chancery Practices of All Secular and Ecclesiastical Centres of Administration and Culture)], Wrocław 1988; IDEM: *Kancelaria oraz dokumenty biskupów i kapituły w Kamieniu (do końca XIII wieku)* [The Chancery and the Documents of the Bishops and of the Chapters of Kamień (to the End of the 13th Century)], Wrocław 1990. For a study of the charters and chanceries of Eastern Pomerania, see AGNIESZKA GUT: *Średniowieczna dyplomatyka wschodniopomorska. Dokumenty i kancelarie Pomorza Wschodniego do 1309 roku* [Medieval Eastern Pomeranian Diplomatic: Charters and Chanceries of Eastern Pomerania to the Year 1309], Szczecin 2014.

<sup>12</sup> On authority ('Herrschaft') in sociological research, see ANDREA MAURER: *Herrschaft und soziale Ordnung: Kritische Rekonstruktion und Weiterführung der individualistischen Theorietradition*, Opladen—Wiesbaden 1999. In historical perspective, MATTHIAS BECHER, STEPHAN CONERMANN, FLORIAN HARTMANN, HENDRIK HESS: (Be-)Gründung von Herrschaft: Strategien zur Bewältigung von Kontingenzerfahrung. Eine interdisziplinäre Annäherung, in: *Das Mittelalter* 20 (2015), 2, pp. 1-10.

<sup>13</sup> BOBOWSKI, *Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne* (as in footnote 11), pp. 218-223.

<sup>14</sup> JUREK, *Rozwój* (as in footnote 7), pp. 133-134.

ters had a preamble, while others did not.<sup>15</sup> Why some charters had a solemn visual appearance, while others did not, remains equally evasive. It has been speculated that the grantees might have paid higher fees to obtain more impressive documents, but no specific information about these fees is available until the 15th century—only in England has the payment of a fee *pro illuminatione litterarum* been mentioned explicitly<sup>16</sup>—, so that these suppositions have remained inconclusive.<sup>17</sup> In view of the lack of positive evidence, clues about the rationale for variation in the solemnity of charters can only be gained through contextualization, which is what is intended here. Perhaps looking at the documents produced by more modest chanceries than those of kings and emperors might help shed some light on these questions.

### Rügen in the 13th Century

The principality of Rügen had its origins on the island of the same name, located in the Baltic Sea near the coast of Mecklenburg and Pomerania, and extended into the surrounding mainland. The area was populated by pagan Slavs until the 12th century. The temple of Arkona, dedicated to the god Svantevit, was the principal cult centre of the area and the last bulwark of paganism in Central Europe. The temple was destroyed during the invasion sent by the Danish king Valdemar I (1157-1182) around 1168.<sup>18</sup> The prince of the *Rani* was baptized and became the vassal of the king of Denmark, and the founding father of the dynasty that reigned over the principality until the

<sup>15</sup> In some cases, this depended upon the category of documents. See TOMÁŠ VELIČKA: Die Arengen königlicher Urkunden in Böhmen 1310-1419: Das Beispiel der für Städte ausgestellten Urkunden, in: ROSSIGNOL/ADAMSKA (as in footnote 2), pp. 61-93; ZOFIA WILK-WOŚ: *Memoriae commendare*. Memorative Arengen in den Urkunden der Gnesener Erzbischöfe im 14. Jahrhundert, ibidem, pp. 149-163. Sometimes, however, the use of a preamble seemed random. See CHRISTA FISCHER: Studien zu den Arengen in den Urkunden Kaiser Ludwigs des Bayern (1314-1347): Beiträge zu Sprache und Stil, Kallmünz/Opf. 1987, pp. 150-151.

<sup>16</sup> DANBURY, English and French Artistic Propaganda (as in footnote 9), pp. 75-76; EADEM, Decoration and Illumination (as in footnote 9), p. 173; EADEM, Décoration et enluminures (as in footnote 9), pp. 82-84.

<sup>17</sup> IVAN HLAVÁČEK: Zu den graphischen Elementen im böhmischen Urkundenwesen der vorhussitischen Zeit (bis 1419), in: RÜCK, Graphische Symbole (as in footnote 4), pp. 571-594; GHISLAIN BRUNEL: Le roi, le scribe et l'artiste: Quelques réflexions sur les chartes décorées des Archives nationales, in: IDEM, Images du pouvoir royal (as in footnote 8), pp. 35-53, here pp. 50-51.

<sup>18</sup> RALF-GUNNAR WERLICH: Der Fall Arkonas: Datierung und nationale Geschichtsschreibung, in: HORST WERNICKE, IDEM (eds.): Pommern: Geschichte, Kultur, Wissenschaft. 3. Kolloquium zur Pommerschen Geschichte 13.-14. Oktober 1993. Pommern im Reich und in Europa, Greifswald 1996, pp. 31-66.

death of Wizlaw III in 1325. After this, the territory was incorporated into the duchy of Western Pomerania-Wolgast.<sup>19</sup>

In the new Christian principality, the use of writing appeared tentatively at the end of the 12th century through ecclesiastical institutions. Like in all neighbouring regions, it is mostly in the 13th century that the use of charters became more common and in the last quarter of that century the number of sovereign documents circulating expanded dramatically. Charters responded to the growing expectation of being able to document by writing rights and possessions. Having witnesses was not seen as sufficient anymore and a sealed charter was now considered necessary. Like in most regions of East Central Europe, the process described by Michael Clanchy for England in the high Middle Ages, proceeding 'from memory to written record' and leading to the growing 'trust in writing',<sup>20</sup> developed in Rügen in an accelerated manner through the introduction of a new technology that had taken centuries to take shape in Western Europe.<sup>21</sup>

The princely chancery of Rügen and its personnel, as well as the formulary and the script of the documents have been scrutinized by Kazimierz Bobowski and this study will refer to his fundamental research as a basis for the analysis. The charters have been published, for the most part, in the multiple volumes of the *Pommersches Urkundenbuch*. The original documents discussed here are those that have been consulted in the Landesarchiv in Greifswald, the Landeshauptarchiv in Schwerin, and the city archives in Greifswald and Stralsund.

In the principality of Rügen, princely charters prepared by the beneficiaries (*Empfängeranfertigungen*) still dominated in the second half of the 13th century. Only in the 1280s did the princely chancery evolve into a stable institution. Several notaries are known to have been active, occasionally at the same time, in the entourage of the prince. Most of the time, however, *dictatus* and final redaction are attributed to the same person. For the period from 1322 to 1325, two chancellors and two notaries who worked under their guidance have been identified by Bobowski. The personnel of the princely chancery were, as far as their background can be reconstructed, chaplains of the

<sup>19</sup> INGRID SCHMIDT: Die Dynastie der Rügenfürsten (1168-1325), Rostock 2009, pp. 77-101.

<sup>20</sup> M. T. CLANCHY: From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307, 3rd ed., Oxford—Cambridge 2013.

<sup>21</sup> ANNA ADAMSKA: The Introduction of Writing in Central Europe (Poland, Hungary and Bohemia), in: MARCO MOSTERT (ed.): New Approaches to Medieval Communication, Turnhout 1999, pp. 165-190; EADEM: 'From Memory to Written Record' in the Periphery of Medieval Latinitas: The Case of Poland in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, in: KARL HEIDECKER (ed.): Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society, Turnhout 2000, pp. 83-100.

princes. They were responsible for the liturgy at the court and, in addition, were occasionally requested to produce charters.<sup>22</sup>

The organization of the princely chancery reached its apex under Wizlaw III (1303-1325). The compilation of the *Codex Rugianus*, a unique piece of work for Central Europe in this period, is attributed to his reign: a book into which the texts of charters were copied and in which they were classified according to themes. Since it is improbable that the members of the princely chancery would have had access to the archives of the grantees, and since mention is explicitly made of a *registrum*, Martin Schoebel, who studied the manuscript, assumes that some form of register existed, into which the texts of the charters issued by the prince had been systematically copied.<sup>23</sup>

In the course of the 13th century, Rügen became a solid, autonomous principality, ruled by princes who established themselves with an important position in the geopolitics of the region around the southern shore of the Baltic Sea. The dynasty of the princes of Rügen provided the principality with stability and continuity. This stability was reflected in the *intitulationes* of the princely charters of the 13th and early 14th centuries. From the outset, the notaries drafting the charters of the princes of Rügen refrained from using the title *dux*; instead, the ruler was consistently styled 'princeps'. This indicated the vassalic subordination to the Danish king.<sup>24</sup> A subordinated position had not, however, necessarily been obvious for the rulers of Rügen. A coin of Jaromar I (1168-1218) exhibits the inscription 'REX RVGIANORVM' and a depiction of the prince with a crown.<sup>25</sup> Royal claims were soon abandoned, however, and in four charters issued between 1193 and 1209, Jaromar I was styled 'princeps Roianorum'.<sup>26</sup> Wizlaw I (1218-1249) continued this tradition and was named 'Ruianorum princeps' in charters issued from 1221 to 1245.<sup>27</sup> This remained the norm under his successors. Even Agnes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, wife of Wizlaw II (1260-1303), was styled 'princeps Ruyanorum'.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), pp. 215-238.

<sup>23</sup> MARTIN SCHOEBEL: Der Codex Rugianus und die Kanzlei der Fürsten von Rügen, in: RODERICH SCHMIDT (ed.): Tausend Jahre pommersche Geschichte, Köln et al. 1999, pp. 165-193.

<sup>24</sup> BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), p. 64.

<sup>25</sup> SVEN WICHERT, FRITZ PETRICK: Rügens Mittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit, 1168-1648, Putbus 2009 (Rügens Geschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart in fünf Teilen, 2), p. 25; SCHMIDT, Dynastie (as in footnote 19), p. 79.

<sup>26</sup> *Princeps Roianorum*, PUB vol. 1, no. 123 (1193); *Roianorum princeps*, PUB 1,124 (1193/1199); 1,145 (1207); *Ruianorum princeps*, PUB 1,148 (1209).

<sup>27</sup> PUB 1,208 (1221); 1,226 (1225); 1,277 (1231); 1,282 (1232); 1,284 (1232); 1,307 (1234); 1,343 (1237); 1,375 (1240); 1,380 (1241), *dictatus* of the grantee; 1,382 (1237/1241); 1,399 (1242); 1,400 (1242), *dictatus* of the grantee; 1,408 (1242); 6,3926 (1242); 1,439 (1245); 1,457 (1242/1249).

<sup>28</sup> PUB 3,1795 (1297), possible forgery; 4,2022 (1302).

## Preambles in the Princely Charters of Rügen

Preambles were used sparsely by the notaries composing the texts of princely charters in Rügen. Bobowski has identified 187 charters of the princes of Rügen as having been composed by notaries of the princes; 50 of these charters have a preamble; only five of those were issued after 1300. This indicates that the use of preambles in the documents prepared by these notaries evolved over time.

In the earliest charters that were produced by princely notaries, from the 1250s to 1290s, preambles were used quite randomly.<sup>29</sup> Few of these documents were for religious institutions; most of those that were, however, did have a preamble.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, charters drafted by the grantees themselves—that is, by the notaries of religious institutions—, did, in the majority of cases, have a preamble.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> With preambles: Pub 2,604 (1255); 2,626 (1256); 2,661 (1258); 2,903 (1269); 2,929 (1270); 2,931 (1270); 2,1021 (1275); 2,1099 (1278); 2,1132 (1279); 2,1173 (1280); 2,1181 (1280); 2,1215 (1281); 2,1229 (1282); 2,1276 (1283); 2,1330 (1285); 3,1371 (1286); 3,1459 (1288); 3,1533 (1290); 3,1535 (1290); 3,1548 (1290); 3,1552 (1290); 3,1574 (1291); 3,1579 (1291); 3,1637 (1293); 3,1728 (1295); 3,1766 (1296); 3,1767 (1296); 3,1788 (1296); 3,1815 (1297); 3,1843 (1298); 3,1925 (1299); 3,1927 (1299); 3,1938 (1300); 3,1949 (1300); 3,1959 (1300). Without preambles: Pub 2,593 (1254); 2,616 (1255); 2,633 (1256); 2,656 (1258); 2,683 (1260); 2,691 (1260); 2,822 (1266); 2,1091 (1278); 2,1106 (1278); 2,1107 (1278); 2,1157 (1280); 2,1245 (1282); 2,1290 (1284); 2,1296 (1284); 2,1351 (1285); 2,1389 (1286); 3,1550 (1290); 3,1580 (1291); 3,1581 (1291); 3,1682 (1294); 3,1893 (1299).

<sup>30</sup> With preambles: Pub 2,705 (1261, Dominicans in Stralsund); 2,746 (1263, hospital in Stralsund); 2,998 (1274, Bukow); 2,1031 (1276, Eldena); 2,1040 (1276, Ivenack); 3,1663 (1293, bishop of Roskilde); 3,1915 (1299, hospital in Lübeck). Without preambles: Pub 2,1284 (1283, cathedral chapter, Riga); 3,1844 (1298, Neuenkamp).

<sup>31</sup> Monastery Bergen, with preambles: Pub 1,282 (1232); 1,488 (1249); 2,1354 (1285); 3,1582 (1291); 3,1687 (1294); 3,1762 (1296); 3,1763 (1296); 3,1765 (1296). Monastery Bukow, with preamble: Pub 2,908 (1270); 2,918 (1270); 2,935 (1271). Monastery Dargun, with preamble: Pub 2,1022 (1275). Monastery Doberan, with preambles: Pub 1,400 (1242); 3,1481 (1288). Monastery Eldena, with preambles: Pub 1,145 (1207); 1,148 (1209); 1,380 (1241); FABRICIUS no. 65b, vol. 4, p. 35 (1242/1249); Pub 1,457 (1242/1249); 1,450 (1246); 2,846 (1267); 2,934 (1271); 2,1017 (1275); 2,1076 (1277); 2,1238 (1282); without preambles: Pub 1,207 (1221); 1,551 (1252). Monastery Hiddensee, without preamble: Pub 3,1933 (1299); 3,1940 (1300). Monastery Neuenkamp, with preambles: Pub 1,277 (1231); 6,3946 (1246); 2,637 (1257); 2,813 (1266); 2,855 (1267); 2,861 (1268); 2,879 (1268); 6,3971 (1269); 2,955 (1272); 2,968 (1273); 6,3974 (1273); 2,1016 (1276); 2,1026 (1276); 2,1030 (1276); 6,3985 (1278); 2,1184 (1280); 2,1244 (1282); FABRICIUS no. 193, vol. 3, Nachtrag zum ersten Heft des Urkundenbuchs, p. 26 (1277); Pub 2,1133 (1279); 2,1195 (1281); 2,1279 (1283); 2,1322 (1285); 2,1403 (1286); FABRICIUS no. 446b, vol. 3, Nachtrag zum ersten Heft des Urkundenbuchs, p. 108 (no date); without preambles: Pub 6,3957 (1262); 2,748 (1263); 2,787 (1265); 2,948 (1272); 2,1185 (1280); 2,1291 (1284); 2,1314 (1284); 2,1223 (1281); 3,1427 (1287); 3,1446 (1287); 3,1450 (1288); 6,4024 (1291); 3,1599 (1291); 6,4026 (1293); 3,1630 (1293); 3,1631 (1293); 3,1635 (1293); 3,1665 (1293); 3,1764



In the early 14th century, preambles became rare in documents prepared by princely notaries. Preambles could be used in charters intended for burghers or individuals<sup>32</sup>, for urban communities<sup>33</sup>, or for a hospital<sup>34</sup>. All other charters written by the princely notaries were addressed to secular grantees and all of them lacked a preamble.<sup>35</sup>

This can be summed up in a few observations. Since the mid-13th century, preambles were especially popular in princely charters issued for monastic or ecclesiastical beneficiaries, but most of these documents were prepared by the grantees themselves. In the early 14th century, by contrast, few charters had any preamble at all. During that time many charters were issued for affairs of temporary value and there were perhaps fewer imperatives to provide them with solemn formulae. It can be noted, however, that by the early 14th century, preambles were hardly seen as necessary anymore in charters for city burghers, although such documents had often had preambles before this time. The use of preambles does not appear to have ever been perceived as very

---

(1296); 6,4053 (1298). Monastery Sonnenkamp, without preamble: PUB 2,788 (1265). Bishop of Schwerin, with preamble: PUB 3,1629 (1293). Bishop of Ratzeburg, with preamble: PUB 1,226 (1225). Bishop of Riga, with preamble: PUB 1,343 (1237). Clerics of Rügen, with preamble: PUB 3,1768 (1296). Lübeck, without preamble: FABRICIUS no. 65c, vol. 4, part 1, p. 4 (1242/1249); PUB 1,515 (1250/1254). Riga, with preambles: PUB 2,823 (1266); 6,3966 (1266); 2,1242 (1282). Stralsund, with preambles: PUB 2,973 (1273); without preambles: PUB 1,307 (1234); 3,1515 (1289); 3,1529 (1290); 3,1578 (1291).

<sup>32</sup> PUB 4,2137 (1304, princely scribe); 4,2166 (1304); 4,2558 (1309); 6,3793 (1324).

<sup>33</sup> PUB 5,3222 (1318, princely scribe); 6,3456 (1321).

<sup>34</sup> PUB 6,3647 (1322).

<sup>35</sup> For counts: PUB 4,1988 (1301); 4,2320 (1306). For burghers and individuals: PUB 4,2035 (1302); 4,2137 (1304); 4,2327 (1306); 4,2342 (1307); 4,2347 (1307); 4,2460 (1309); 5,2710 (1312); 5,2776 (1313); 5,3009 (1316); 5,3011 (1316); 5,3020 (1316); 5,3207 (1318); 5,3384 (1320); 6,3502 (1321); 6,3503 (1321); 6,3505 (1321); 6,3507 (1321); 6,3517 (1321); 6,3518 (1321); 6,3554 (1321); 6,3601 (1322); 6,3632 (1322); 6,3661 (1323); 6,3752 (1324); 6,3801 (1324); 6,3863 (1325). For urban communities: PUB 4,2195 (1304); 4,2295 (1306); 4,2297 (1306); 4,2366 (1307); 5,2784 (1313); 5,3010 (1316); 5,3047 (1317); 5,3201 (1318); 5,3245 (1319); 5,3247 (1319); 5,3248 (1319); 5,3250 (1319); 6,3509 (1321); 6,3498 (1321); 6,3499 (1321). For merchants: PUB 5,3249 (1319); 5,3251 (1319). For knights: PUB 4,2161 (1304); 4,2443 (1308); 5,2983 (1315); 5,3022 (1316); 5,3308 (1319); 6,3506 (1321); 6,3524 (1321); 6,3640 (1322). For a reeve: PUB 5,3170 (1318); 5,3318 (1319); 6,3566 (1322). Debts: PUB 5,2956 (1315); 5,3410 (1320); 5,3051 (1317); 5,3055 (1317); 5,3066 (1317); 5,3070 (1317); 5,3427 (1320); 6,3553 (1321); 6,3803 (1324); 6,3836 (1325). Confirmation charters ('*Transsumpts*'): PUB 5,2834 (1313); 5,2835 (1313); 5,2836 (1313); 5,2837 (1313); 5,2838 (1313); 5,2839 (1313); 5,2840 (1313); 5,2841 (1313); 5,3183 (1318); 5,3185 (1318). Others: PUB 5,2873 (1314); 5,2880 (1314); 5,2922 (1314); 5,3065 (1317); 5,3378 (1320); 6,3597 (1322); 6,3620 (1322); 6,3783 (1324); for altars: PUB 5,3003 (1316); 5,3225 (1318); 5,3402 (1320).

important for the notaries of the princes of Rügen. The more developed the chancery, the less important the preambles became.<sup>36</sup>

### Preamble Motifs

The most common preamble motif in the charters of the princes of Rügen is that of 'writing in the service of *memoria*' highlighting the imperative of using written documents to commemorate important events.<sup>37</sup> Many of these preambles are found in charters prepared by the grantees; several churches and monasteries are amongst them<sup>38</sup>, but others are the city council in Stralsund or other urban institutions<sup>39</sup>. In several additional cases, however,

<sup>36</sup> BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), pp. 215-238.

<sup>37</sup> For the most commonly used typology of charter preambles, see FICHTEAU, Arenga (as in footnote 2). On the motifs of the charter preambles of the princes of Rügen, see SÉBASTIEN ROSSIGNOL: Preambles and Politics: Ducal and Princely Charters in Silesia, Western Pomerania, and Rügen (ca. 1200 – ca. 1325), in: ROSSIGNOL/ADAMSKA (as in footnote 2), pp. 95-118, here pp. 112-116.

<sup>38</sup> Jaromar II: FABRICIUS no. 65b, vol. 4, part 1, p. 3 (1242/1249), Eldena *dictatus*; PUB 1,465 (1248), for the church in Schwerin; 1,466 (1248), for the church in Schwerin; 1,563 (1253), for the Cistercian monastery Neuenkamp; 6,3946 (1256), Neuenkamp *dictatus*. Wizlaw I: PUB 1,343 (1237), *dictatus* of the bishop of Riga; 1,375 (1240), princely *dictatus*; 1,382 (1237/1241), princely *dictatus*; 1,399 (1242), for Neuenkamp; 1,457 (1242/1249), *dictatus* of the Cistercian monastery Eldena. Wizlaw II: PUB 6,3971 (1269), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,908 (1270), *dictatus* of the Cistercian monastery Bukow; 2,935 (1271), Bukow *dictatus*; 2,955 (1272), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,968 (1273), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1016 (1275), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1017 (1275), Eldena *dictatus*; 2,1022 (1275), *dictatus* of Cistercian monastery Dargun; 2,1026 (1276), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1076 (1277), Eldena *dictatus*; 6,3985 (1278), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1133 (1279), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1184 (1280), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 3,3989 (1281), for Neuenkamp; 2,1195 (1281), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1244 (1282), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1322 (1285), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1354 (1285), *dictatus* of Cistercian convent Bergen; 3,1481 (1288), *dictatus* of Cistercian monastery Doberan; 3,1582 (1291), Bergen *dictatus*; 3,1687 (1294), Bergen *dictatus*; 3,1689 (1294), for the Cistercian convent of the Holy Cross in Rostock; 3,1762 (1296), Bergen *dictatus*; FABRICIUS no. 446b, vol. 3, Nachtrag zum ersten Heft des Urkundenbuches, p. 108 (no date), Neuenkamp *dictatus*. Wizlaw II and Jaromar III: PUB 2,861 (1268), Neuenkamp *dictatus*. Wizlaw II, Wizlaw III and Sambor: PUB 3,1765 (1296), Bergen *dictatus*. Wizlaw III: PUB 4,2304 (1306), Eldena *dictatus*.

<sup>39</sup> Stralsund: Wizlaw II, Wizlaw III and Sambor, PUB 4,1983 (1301), Stralsund *dictatus*; 4,2008 (1301), Stralsund *dictatus*. Wizlaw III, PUB 3,1542 (1290); 4,2167 (1304); 4,2299 (1306), Stralsund *dictatus*; 4,2300 (1306), Stralsund *dictatus*; 4,2301 (1306), Stralsund *dictatus*; 5,2694 (1311); 5,2695 (1311); 5,2808 (1313), Stralsund *dictatus*; 5,3329 (1320); 5,3425 (1320). Wizlaw III and Sambor: PUB 4,2088 (1303), Stralsund *dictatus*. Sambor: PUB 4,2104 (1303), Stralsund *dictatus*. For the hospital in Lübeck: Wizlaw III and Sambor, 4,2056 (1302). *Dictatus* of the bishop of Riga: Wizlaw II, PUB 2,823 (1266); 3,3966 (1266). For church in Barth: Wizlaw III, PUB 6,3884 (1325).

these are preambles in charters written by the notaries of the prince. Several of these preambles have formulations inspired by those found in the formulaary textbook of Ludolf of Hildesheim.<sup>40</sup> Almost all of these are charters documenting the rights of urban communities or individual burghers; a few of them concern the rights of villagers; only a small number are addressed to monasteries or other religious institutions.<sup>41</sup>

A few preambles have moral connotations. Two charter preambles of Wizlaw II insist on the importance of 'truth' ('veritas'); both were composed by notaries of the beneficiaries, the bishop of Riga and Neuenkamp Monastery.<sup>42</sup> Some preambles express variations on the theme of complaints about the state of the world ('Weltklage'). At least some of these were dictated by notaries of

<sup>40</sup> BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), pp. 67-68, 70, 72.

<sup>41</sup> Princely chancery: Jaromar II, PUB 2,604 (1254), donation for Barth; 2,626 (1256), sale to a burgher; 2,661 (1258), *locatio* of the town Damgarten. Wizlaw II, PUB 2,705 (1261), confirmation to the Dominicans of Stralsund; 2,903 (1269), revocation of town of Schadegard near Stralsund; 2,931 (1270); sale to burghers; 2,998 (1274), donation to Bukow Monastery; 2,1173 (1280), *dictatus* of notary Henry, rights for a village; FABRICIUS no. 217, vol. 3, Nachtrag zum ersten Heft des Urkundenbuches, p. 33 (1280), *dictatus* of notary Henry, rights for a village; PUB 2,1181 (1281), *dictatus* of notary Henry, rights for a village; 2,1215 (1281), *dictatus* of notary Henry, confirmation for the city of Riga; 2,1229 (1282), confirmation for the city of Riga; 2,1276 (1283), sale to an individual; 2,1330 (1285), law of Lübeck to town Tribsees; 2,1371 (1286), sale by individuals to town Ribnitz; 3,1459 (1288), sale to Greifswald; 3,1535 (1290), *dictatus* of notary Johannes de Sale, donation to an individual; 3,1574 (1291), rights for a village; 3,1579 (1291), sale to Stralsund; 3,1637 (1293), *dictatus* of notary Johannes de Sale, rights for Barth; 3,1728 (1295), donation to individual; 3,1788 (1296), sale to an individual; 3,1925 (1299), sale to an individual; 3,1959 (1300), sale to individuals. Wizlaw II, Wizlaw III and Sambor: PUB 3,1766 (1296), *dictatus* of notary Johannes de Sale, rights for a village; 3,1767 (1296), *dictatus* of notary Johannes de Sale, confirmation for a village; 3,1843 (1298), donation to an individual; 3,1915 (1299), sale by individuals to the Hospital of Lübeck; 3,1927 (1299), sale to the inhabitants of villages; 3,1938 (1300), sale to an individual. Wizlaw III: PUB 4,2166 (1304), donation to a widow; 4,2558 (1309), sale to individuals; 5,3222 (1318), sale to Stralsund; 6,3456 (1321), donation for town Tribsees; 6,3647 (1322), *dictatus* of *cancellarius* Theodoric Speckin, sale to hospital in Greifswald. Wizlaw III and Sambor: PUB 4,2137 (1304), donation to burghers.

<sup>42</sup> 'That which is obvious and stands before the eyes of the faithful, it is not necessary to explain with the multiple proofs of narratives. For the truth suffices to itself and the truth is a friend of simplicity, and comes forward in the open without any veil, so that it can be easily recognized' ('Que manifesta sunt et oculis subiecta fidelibus, non oportet multis narrationum probacionibus explicari. Veritas enim sibi sufficit et veritas amica simplicitat[i]s absque velamine prodit in publicum, ut simpliciter cognoscatur'), Wizlaw II: PUB 2,1242 (1282), Riga. 'Because the truth often suffers false accusations, it should be reinforced by protections, like the trust in witnesses and in writings, so that it might retain equal force when it is pleaded' ('Quia veritas multociens calumpniam patitur, ut fide testium et scripturarum, que parem vim retinent in agendo, patrociniis roboretur'), Wizlaw III: PUB 4,2626 (1310), Neuenkamp.

the grantee, in Neuenkamp Monastery or in the city of Stralsund; one of them, however, was composed by a princely notary for a charter addressed to a knight.<sup>43</sup> Some charters include a ‘remuneration preamble’ (‘Lohnarenga’); at least one of them, in a charter documenting a donation by Wizlaw III to a widow, was written by a princely notary.<sup>44</sup>

Other preambles touch on subjects connected with princely government. Two preambles discuss the theme of the ‘search for the common good’ and highlight the mutual benefits of good government for the ruler and his subjects. They are to be found in charters for urban communities—Szczecin and Barth—prepared by different notaries of Wizlaw II.<sup>45</sup> Some charter preambles, by contrast, describe the qualities of a good ruler. In charters written by princely notaries for urban beneficiaries, ‘pietas’<sup>46</sup> and ‘concordia’<sup>47</sup> are

<sup>43</sup> Jaromar II: Pub 1,488 (1249), Bergen *dictatus*. Wizlaw I: Pub 6,3926 (1242), sale to Neuenkamp. Wizlaw II: Pub 2,1099 (1278), donation to a knight, with *dictatus* of princely notary Henry; 2,813 (1266), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1030 (1276), Neuenkamp *dictatus*. Wizlaw II, Wizlaw III and Sambor: Pub 4,2014 (1302), Stralsund *dictatus*. Wizlaw III and Sambor: Pub 4,2147 (1304), Stralsund *dictatus*; 4,2150 (1304), Stralsund *dictatus*.

<sup>44</sup> Agnes: Pub 4,2022 (1302), donation to a chaplain. Wizlaw I: Pub 1,277 (1231), foundation charter of Neuenkamp; 1,282 (1232), for Bergen Convent. Wizlaw II: Pub 2,918 (1270), Bukow *dictatus*. Wizlaw III: Pub 6,3793 (1324), princely *dictatus*.

<sup>45</sup> ‘It is the duty of our office to watch over the benefits to our subordinates, because as we shake off their burdens, as we remove causes of offence, we rest in their calm and we foster in peace’ (‘Officii nostri debitum invigilat commodis subditorum, quia dum eorum onera excutimus, dum scandala removemus, nos in ipsorum quiete quiescimus et fovemur in pace’), Wizlaw II: Pub 2,1021 (1275), *dictatus* of notary Henry. ‘It is fitting principally for princes to anticipate the grateful solitudes of the faithful with gratuitous benefices, so that they, to whom the hand of liberality is extended, might bring into effect more eagerly a disposition to devotion, and that through such an example others might be provoked faster to yield’ (‘Decet principaliter principes grata devotorum obsequia gratuitis beneficiis prevenire, ut hii, quibus manus porrigitur largitatis, devocionis affectum promptius in effectum et exemplo huiusmodi ad obsequendum ceteri cicius provocentur’), Wizlaw II: Pub 3,1533 (1290), *dictatus* of notary Johannes de Sale.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Because it is pious before God to offer compensations to those placed in the prison of God and to the afflicted’ (‘Quoniam pium est apud deum solacia prebere in carcere dei positis et afflictis’), Wizlaw II: Pub 2,746 (1263), princely *dictatus*, confirmation for the Hospital in Stralsund.

<sup>47</sup> ‘These things, that have been concluded by the tribunal or through mutual agreement, should persist in a strong and undiminished manner, and so that they not fall back into the uncertainty of recurring contention, it is agreed to reinforce them with the protection of authentic letters and of trustworthy witnesses’ (‘Ea, que iudicio vel concordia terminantur, firma debent et illibata persistere, et ne in recidive contencionis scrupulum relabantur, convenit illa litterarum auctenticarum et fidedignorum testium presidio communiri’), Wizlaw II: Pub 3,1663 (1293), princely *dictatus*, probably by Johannes de Sale, rights for Barth.

alluded to. In charters composed by the ecclesiastical grantees, 'ius'<sup>48</sup> and 'iusticia'<sup>49</sup> are mentioned. The theme of 'imitatio maiorum' appears in several preambles of princely charters written in monasteries or, in a singular case, in Greifswald.<sup>50</sup> The imperative for the prince to protect the Church appears in several preambles of charters addressed to monasteries; a few of them were composed by notaries of the prince.<sup>51</sup> Finally, two preambles in charters issued by Wizlaw II imply that princely power comes from God. At least one of them was composed by a notary of the prince.<sup>52</sup>

In summary, most preambles written by princely notaries are variations on the theme of 'writing in the service of *memoria*'. Other preambles touch on themes that were also used in charters prepared by the grantees. Occasionally, preambles composed by princely notaries invoke 'pietas', 'concordia', or the duty of the ruler to protect the Church; only once does a preamble evoke the divine origin of princely authority. In fact, the beneficiaries seem to have been keener than the princely notaries to emphasize the qualities of a good ruler, as they did with preambles alluding to the 'search for the common

<sup>48</sup> 'Among all of our concerns, this one should be held to be especial, that we preserve for anyone his right' ('Inter cunctas sollicitudines nostras illa debet esse precipua, ut ius suum unicuique conservemus'), Wizlaw II: PUB 3,1629 (1293), *dictatus* of bishop of Schwerin.

<sup>49</sup> 'Although we have been divinely called forth to possess the helms of the public good for the cause of solicitude, we are expected, out of zeal for righteousness, for all those who are placed in our territory, to preserve justice, which is granted to anyone as they have it, especially however it is the churches and the ecclesiastical persons, without whom the worship of the sacred faith cannot be maintained, that we want, through the protection of pious defence, to foster in their immunities and liberties' ('Quamvis ad rei publice possidenda gubernacula in partem sollicitudinis divinitus evocati omnibus in districtu nostro positus ad conservacionem iusticie, que unicuique, quod suum est, tribuit, ex zelo rectitudinis teneamur, maxime tamen ecclesias et personas ecclesiasticas, sine quibus fidei sacre religio stare non prevalet, pie defensionis presidio volumus in suis emunitatibus ac libertatibus confovere'), Wizlaw II, Wizlaw III and Sambor: PUB 3,1768 (1296), *dictatus* of clerics of Rügen.

<sup>50</sup> Jaromar I: PUB 1,148 (1209), donation for Eldena. Wizlaw I: PUB 1,380 (1241), Eldena *dictatus*. Jaromar II: PUB 1,450 (1246), Eldena *dictatus*. Wizlaw II: PUB 2,934 (1271), Eldena *dictatus*; 6,3974 (1273), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,1009 (1275), rights for Bukow Monastery; FABRICIUS no. 193, vol. 3, Nachtrag zum ersten Heft des Urkundenbuches, p. 26 (1277), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; PUB 3,1763 (1296), Bergen *dictatus*; 4,2180 (1304), Greifswald *dictatus*. Jaromar III: PUB 2,1238 (1282), Eldena *dictatus*. Wizlaw III: PUB 2,1403 (1286), Neuenkamp *dictatus*.

<sup>51</sup> Jaromar I: PUB 1,145 (1207), donation for Eldena. Jaromar II: PUB 2,637 (1257), Neuenkamp *dictatus*. Wizlaw I: PUB 1,226 (1225), donation for cathedral chapter in Ratzeburg. Wizlaw II: PUB 2,855 (1267), Neuenkamp *dictatus*; 2,929 (1270), princely *dictatus*, for Neuenkamp; 2,1031 (1276), *dictatus* of princely notary Henry Reschinkel, for Eldena; 2,1040 (1276), *dictatus* of princely notary Henry Reschinkel, for Ivenack Monastery; 2,1279 (1283), Neuenkamp *dictatus*.

<sup>52</sup> Wizlaw II: PUB 2,973 (1273), Stralsund *dictatus*; 3,1815 (1297), donation to a knight, with princely *dictatus*.

good', to the importance for the ruler to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors, or to connections between rulership, the Church, and God. Such preambles do not reflect strategies of princely propaganda; on the contrary, they indicate that princely authority was important for the recipients of the charters, who apparently wanted their documents to reflect what they expected of an exemplary ruler.

### Charters with an Indistinct Script

The charters of the princes of Rügen display a broad variety of levels of solemnity in the visual impression provided by the script. The princely charters, however, never include a *chrismon*, a monogram, or the other graphic symbols that had become habitual in papal bulls or in imperial and royal diplomas. Visual effects are produced solely by the script.

The notaries of the princes of Rügen sometimes produced charters with a quite indistinctive visual appearance. The script of these charters does not exhibit any decoration or any of the characteristic features of a documentary script; it has a cursive appearance and often seems to have been written quickly. Such documents were seldom used for donations and attestations of rights intended for churches and monasteries; a few of those, however, were produced at the beginning of the 14th century under Wizlaw III and his brother Sambor.<sup>53</sup> Also not very common are princely charters with such un-specific appearance issued for individuals. In addition to a donation charter issued in 1242 by Wizlaw II to a Magister Iwan, a small number of charters can be mentioned here that document donations and the granting of rights; they were issued in the early 14th century by Wizlaw II and Wizlaw III for burghers and officials.<sup>54</sup>

Slightly more numerous are the charters of this category that were issued by the princes of Rügen documenting donations and the granting of rights for the urban communities of Stralsund and Demmin. Several such charters were issued by Wizlaw II or by Wizlaw III and Sambor between 1300 and 1319.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> LaG, Rep. Neuenkamp, no. 76 = PUB 3,1844 (Wizlaw II, Wizlaw III and Sambor, 1298, for Neuenkamp Monastery); StaS, Depos. St. Mariae, no. 1 = PUB 5,3003 (Wizlaw III, 1316, for an altar in the church in Prah).

<sup>54</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 4 = PUB 1,408 (1242, for Magister Iwan); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 81 = PUB 4,2035 (1302, for a certain Gottschalk *dictus de Molen-dino*); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 136 = PUB 5,3170 (1318, for the *advocatus* Nicholas Poddin). With unclear attribution of the script: StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 92 = PUB 4,2167 (1304, for Theodericus de Alen and his wife Rykezen, burghers of Lübeck); StaS, Depos. Heilgeist Kloster, no. 12 = PUB 5,3304 (1319, for Hinrike van dem Vehove, burgher in Stralsund).

<sup>55</sup> LaG, Rep. 38b U Demmin, no. 9 = PUB 3,1949 (1300, for the town of Demmin); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 113 = PUB 5,2784 (1313, for the town Stralsund); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, nos. 149 and 150 (two versions) = PUB 5,3247 (1319, for the

A similar document was issued in 1275 by Wizlaw II that freed the merchants of Schwerin from customs duties, which would have facilitated trade and thus benefitted the cities of the principality of Rügen as well.<sup>56</sup> Also to this category belong a few charters from the early 14th century, which document agreements made between Wizlaw III—sometimes with Sambor—and the towns of his principality after periods of strife.<sup>57</sup> Finally, some confirmation documents ('Transsumpts') issued by Wizlaw III for Stralsund have a similar, unspecific appearance.<sup>58</sup>

Overall, the notaries working on behalf of the princes of Rügen seldom produced charters in which the script was not decorated and which did not display typical features of a documentary script. Such documents were especially unusual when the beneficiaries were Church institutions. They were, however, more regularly produced in the case of documents addressed to secular grantees, be they urban communities or individuals of varied backgrounds, and were issued mostly in the early 14th century.

### Charters with a Slightly Decorated Script

In some charters, by contrast, the script is ornamented and exhibits some of the typical features that can be recognized as belonging to a documentary script. Some of these features include prolonged shafts, some of which can be decorated with abstract ornaments or decorated abbreviation signs.<sup>59</sup> The script of a number of princely charters stands out primarily through the slightly prolonged or decorated shafts, especially for the first line, like the donation charter issued in 1256 by Jaromar II (1249-1260) for burghers.<sup>60</sup> A donation charter by Wizlaw I for Neuenkamp Monastery from 1279 has slightly deco-

---

town Stralsund). Unclear attribution of the script: StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 89 = PUB 4,2156 (1304, for the council in Stralsund).

<sup>56</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 15 = PUB 2,1021 (1275, for the merchants of Szczecin).

<sup>57</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 90 = PUB 4,2161 (1304); LaG, Rep. 38b U Demmin, no. 13 = PUB 4,2366 (1307).

<sup>58</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 138 = PUB 5,3183 (1318, for Stralsund); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 139 = PUB 5,3185 (1318, for Stralsund), probably by the same scribe. See BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), p. 174.

<sup>59</sup> On the characteristic features of the documentary script, see OLIVIER GUYOTJEANNIN, JACQUES PYCKE, BENOÎT-MICHEL TOCK: *Diplomatique médiévale*, 3rd ed., Turnhout 1993, pp. 67-71; JACQUES STIENNON: *Paléographie du Moyen Âge*, Paris 1991, pp. 121-125. For the Rügen princely charters, see BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), pp. 159-162.

<sup>60</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 6 = PUB 2,626 (1256, for Heinricus Holewecthe and Theodericus de Demin, burghers in Stralsund).

rated letters for the name of the prince.<sup>61</sup> In addition to slightly ornamented shafts throughout the text, slightly decorated abbreviation signs appear in a charter from 1291, through which Wizlaw II freed merchants visiting his principality from the stranding regulations.<sup>62</sup> Another document has slightly decorated shafts and a slightly ornamented majuscule for the name of the prince: a charter issued in 1301 by Sambor that confirms the possessions of a burgrave.<sup>63</sup> These charters issued by the princes of Rügen had appeared irregularly since the mid-13th century; in most cases these were documents issued for secular grantees and produced by the notaries at the court of the prince. This mostly corresponds to the period before a well-organized princely chancery had taken shape; scribes working for the prince were experimenting with different methods.

### Charters with a Decorated Initial

Charters prepared by the notaries of the princes of Rügen sometimes stand out primarily through their initial; these appeared late. The earliest were produced at the end of the 13th century, and most of them at the beginning of the 14th century. Among these is a donation charter issued in 1296 by Wizlaw II for Neuenkamp Monastery and in 1307 a charter with which Wizlaw III gave revenues to a surgeon, Henning Menzen; both have an enlarged initial—the ‘W’ of Wizlaw’s name—but no other script decoration.<sup>64</sup> A similar charter was issued in 1302 by Wizlaw II together with his sons Wizlaw III and Sambor, and documented a donation for Hiddensee Monastery.<sup>65</sup> The script does not display any particular feature, but a majuscule—the ‘O’ of ‘Omnibus’—is slightly decorated at the outset of the text. A charter of comparable appearance was issued in 1304 by Wizlaw III and Sambor stating that they were reconciled with the towns and vassals of their principality.<sup>66</sup> A 1302 charter issued by Wizlaw II’s wife, Agnes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, with which she gave an altar to her chaplain, has a slightly decorated initial and a series of

<sup>61</sup> LaG, Rep. Neuenkamp, no. 39 = PUb 2,1133 (1279, for Neuenkamp Monastery, with mention of notary Henry).

<sup>62</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 34 = PUb 3,1580 (1291, for merchants coming to Rügen).

<sup>63</sup> LaG, Rep. 2—Weltliche Urkunden—Rügen (Karton 217-220), no. 1 = PUb 4,1988 (1301, for Matheus, burgrave in Slawno).

<sup>64</sup> LaG, Rep. Neuenkamp, no. 71 = PUb 3,1764 (1296, for Neuenkamp Monastery, with mention of chaplain Johannes de Sale in the list of witnesses); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 100 = PUb 4,2342 (1307, for Henningus Menzen, *sirurgicus*). The latter was possibly written by the same scribe as PUb 4,2104 and 4,2216.

<sup>65</sup> LaG, Rep. Kl. Hiddensee, no. 11 = PUb 4,2032 (1302, for Hiddensee Monastery).

<sup>66</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 91 = PUb 4,2161 (1304).



decorated shafts.<sup>67</sup> The variety of contents and addressees of these charters with a similar degree of visual solemnity is noteworthy.

### Charters with a Solemnly Decorated Script

Charters with a more impressively decorated script, with features described by Bobowski as 'ornamental elements'<sup>68</sup>, were also occasionally produced by the notaries of the princes of Rügen since the late 13th century. In these charters, the degree of visual solemnity is more pronounced than in those discussed so far. Such documents exhibit a script with a sophisticated decoration, including a wide range of methods used to exemplify a diplomatic script.

Rarely were these solemn documents intended for Church institutions. Singular is such a document issued in 1304 by Wizlaw III with which he confirmed to Hiddensee Monastery the disputed possession of an island, and which was produced in two very visually different copies. The first version is written in a book script and displays several decorated majuscules; the script has been described by Bobowski as 'very beautiful and clear'.<sup>69</sup> The second version, by contrast, is in the habitual documentary script and looks very unspecific, except for an exceptionally large initial, decorated with great care, depicted by Bobowski as 'a beautiful vegetal interlacing with rich inflorescence'.<sup>70</sup> Although he does not discuss the implications of this finding, Bobowski believes that both documents were produced in the princely chancery, but by different scribes.<sup>71</sup> Another charter has, in addition to decorated shafts, a series of ornamented majuscules: a document of Wizlaw III from 1306 with which he sold fishery rights to Neuenkamp Monastery.<sup>72</sup>

The charters of this category issued by the princes of Rügen and addressed to urban communities are spread out over a long period. Several of them were issued for the city council of Stralsund. There is a 1273 charter of Wizlaw II stipulating the dues owed by the city, with decorated shafts in the first line and a series of decorated majuscules throughout the text<sup>73</sup>; a charter of the same ruler providing rights, in 1291, with decorated shafts and majuscules

---

<sup>67</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 80 = PUB 4,2022 (1302), possibly by the scribe Gerhard de Rode. See BOBOWSKI, *Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne* (as in footnote 11), p. 170.

<sup>68</sup> BOBOWSKI, *Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne* (as in footnote 11), pp. 159, 162.

<sup>69</sup> LaG, Rep. Kl. Hiddensee, no. 14 = PUB 4,2169 (1304, for Hiddensee Monastery). See BOBOWSKI, *Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne* (as in footnote 11), p. 168.

<sup>70</sup> LaG, Rep. Kl. Hiddensee, no. 15 = PUB 4,2169 (1304, for Hiddensee Monastery). See BOBOWSKI, *Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne* (as in footnote 11), p. 169.

<sup>71</sup> BOBOWSKI, *Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne* (as in footnote 11), p. 169.

<sup>72</sup> LaG, Rep. Neuenkamp, no. 86 = PUB 4,2293 (1306).

<sup>73</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 11 = PUB 2,973 (1273, for Stralsund).

throughout the text<sup>74</sup>; a charter of Sambor from 1303, with which he gave the right of patronage of a school to the city, with a series of shafts that are ornamented in a particularly sophisticated fashion<sup>75</sup>; and finally, a document of Wizlaw III from 1318, with which he sold customs duties revenues to the council, and which shows an irregular series of prolonged or decorated shafts<sup>76</sup>. In addition, similar charters were issued in other circumstances: a confirmation charter issued by Wizlaw II in 1283 for possessions sold to a burgher, with a few prolonged shafts throughout the text, or a donation charter of the same Wizlaw for the city of Greifswald in 1288, which has *litterae elongatae* for the *invocatio* and a series of prolonged, sometimes reinforced shafts throughout the text.<sup>77</sup>

A few more documents fall into this category. There is a charter prescribing rights to some burghers of Stralsund that was produced by Wizlaw II in 1278, with prolonged and sometimes decorated shafts<sup>78</sup>; a donation charter issued by Sambor in 1304 for burghers, including a series of slightly decorated majuscules<sup>79</sup>; and finally, a charter issued in 1305 by Wizlaw III, with which he bequeathed the possession of towns and lands to his wife, Agnes of Lindow-Ruppin, after his death, with a somewhat enlarged and ornamented initial and some prolonged and decorated shafts in the first line.<sup>80</sup> A series of 'Transsumpts' issued by Wizlaw II between 1291 and 1299 also have a decorated script, including ornamented majuscules throughout the text.<sup>81</sup>

Lastly, a charter should be mentioned here that shows an especially high degree of visual solemnity. The script, described by Bobowski as 'very beautiful' and having 'a very stabilized graphic movement'<sup>82</sup>, is made in a strikingly more pompous manner than any other, and includes a series of ornamented majuscules spread out through the text. This is a document issued in 1300 by Wizlaw II together with his sons Wizlaw III and Sambor, with which

<sup>74</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 33 = PUB 3,1579 (1291, for Stralsund).

<sup>75</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 83 = PUB 4,2104 (1303, for the council in Stralsund), possibly by the same scribe as PUB 4,2342 and 4,2216.

<sup>76</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 145 = PUB 5,3222 (1318, for Stralsund).

<sup>77</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 18 = PUB 2,1276 (1283, for Bernard de Scaprodus, burgher in Stralsund); StaG, Rep. 2, no. 22 = PUB 3,1459 (1288, for Stralsund).

<sup>78</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 16 = PUB 2,1091 (1278).

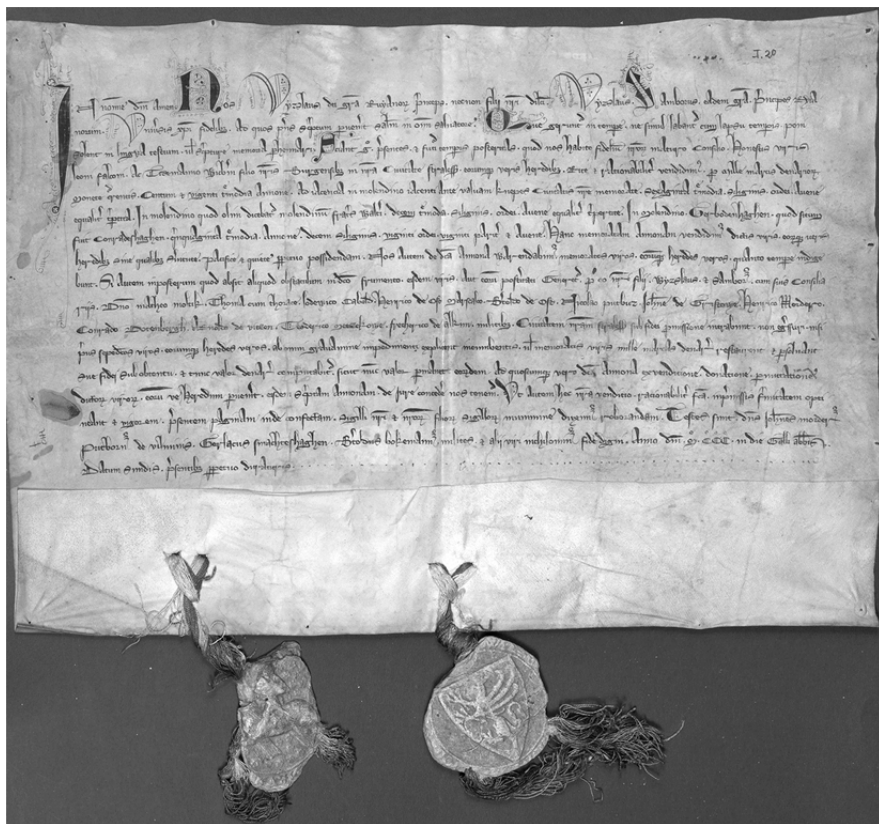
<sup>79</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 86 = PUB 4,2137 (1304, for Tidemannus de Dorpen, Johannes Straceborch and Johannes Hermeling, burghers in Stralsund).

<sup>80</sup> LhaS, 1.10-2 Eheverträge nichtmecklenburgischer Fürsten, no. 1 = PUB 4,2216 (1305), possibly by the same scribe as PUB 4,2342 and 4,2104.

<sup>81</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 31 = PUB 3,1577 (1291, for Reinfeld Monastery); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 32 = PUB 3,1578 (1291, for Stralsund); LaG, Rep. 38b U Loitz (Karton 300), no. 2 = PUB 3,1888 (1299, for the town Loitz), attribution of the script unclear.

<sup>82</sup> BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodku skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), p. 166.

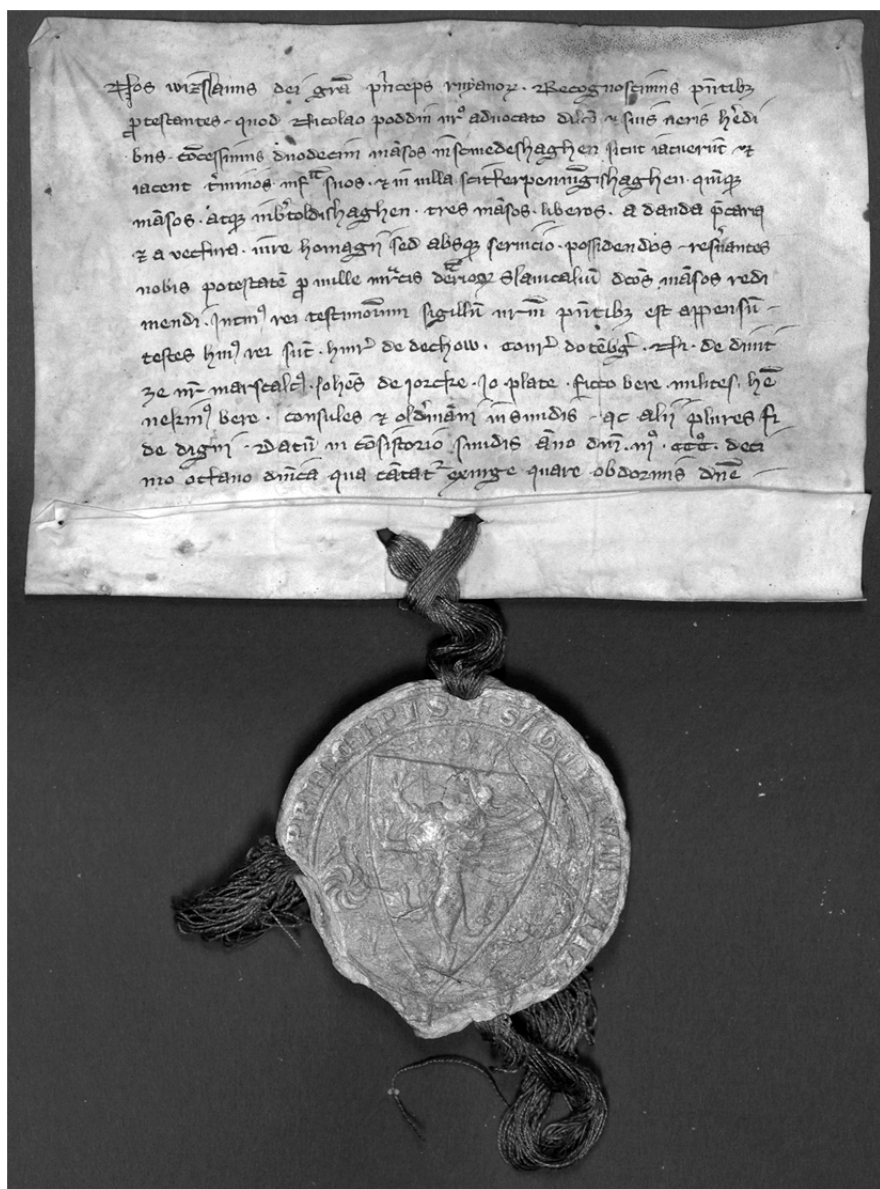
they sold a lease to two burghers in Stralsund, Leo Falco and Tidemann, son of Wicbern (ill. 1).<sup>83</sup>



Ill. 1: Wizlaw II, prince of Rügen, and his sons Wizlaw III and Sambor, sell to Leo Falco and Tidemann, son of Wicbern, burghers of Stralsund, a mill lease of 120 *trimodia* of grain for 1000 mark in pennies. Sundis, 16.10.1300. Stralsund, Stadtarchiv, Städtische Urkunden, no. 44 (PUB 3,1959)

What is interesting to note is that some charters attributed by Bobowski to the same scribe can sometimes reveal different levels of visual solemnity. A document of Wizlaw III for an *advocatus* has an unspecific script without any decoration; another one of the same prince, addressed to the council in Stralsund, has several decorated shafts throughout the text. Bobowski comes

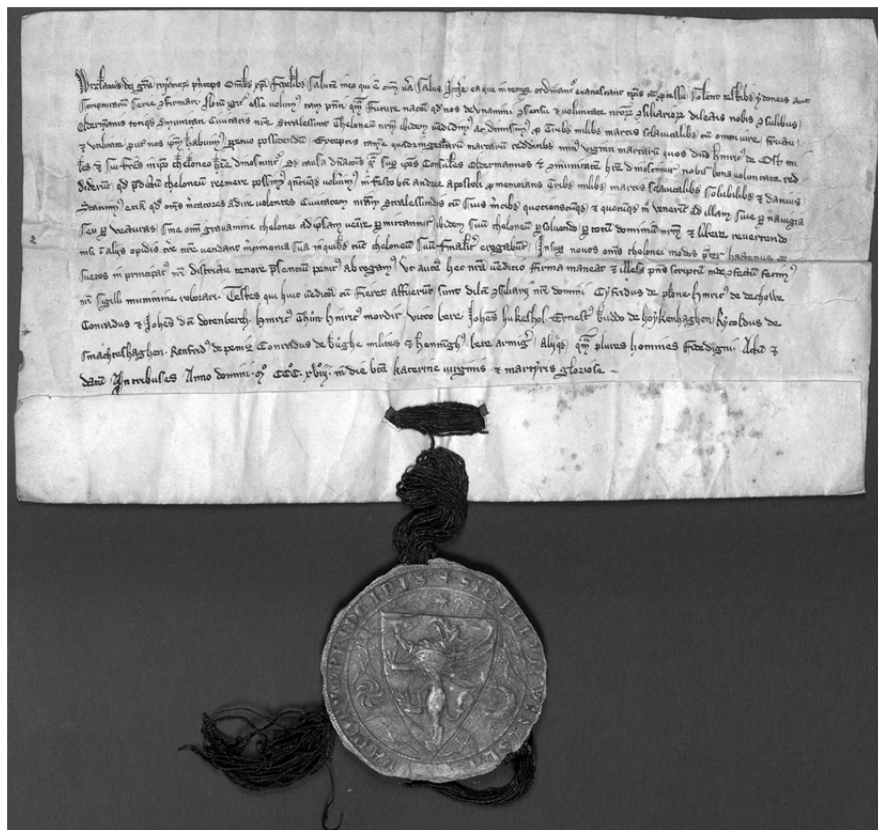
<sup>83</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 44 = PUB 3,1959 (1300). The script is similar to that of other charters of that time, but should probably be attributed to a different scribe. See BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodki skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), p. 166.



- III. 2: Wizlaw III, prince of Rügen, lends to the *advocatus* Nikolaus Poddin twelve *mansi* in Schmedshagen, five *mansi* in Zitterpenningshagen and three *mansi* in Bartelshagen. Stralsund, 26.02.1318. Stralsund, Stadtarchiv, Städtische Urkunden, no. 136 (Pub 5,3170)

to the conclusion that both have been written by the same anonymous scribe (ill. 2 and 3).<sup>84</sup>

According to Bobowski, 'at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the fact of the application of different forms of characteristic features was a quite widespread phenomenon', and this would not necessarily indicate that different scribes were at play.<sup>85</sup> Bobowski, however, who is primarily interested in identifying scribes and reconstructing the working methods of the chancery, does not offer explanations for these singularities.



Ill. 3: Wizlaw III, prince of Rügen, sells to the city of Stralsund his customs duty there for 3000 Wendish mark, promises to the merchants entry into the city without customs duty, and relinquishes the right to new customs duty. Tribsees, 25.11.1318. Stralsund, Stadtarchiv, Städtische Urkunden, no. 145 (PUB 5,3222)

<sup>84</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 136 = PUB 5,3170 (1318, for the *advocatus* Nicholas Poddin); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 145 = PUB 5,3222 (1318, for Stralsund). See BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodku skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), pp. 173-174.

<sup>85</sup> BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodku skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), p. 174.

## The Significance of the Visual Solemnity of Charters

It should be noted once again that overall few charters were produced by the notaries at the court of the princes of Rügen for monasteries or Church institutions. The majority of the charters issued by the princes for churches and monasteries were, until the very end of the reign of Wizlaw III, prepared by the grantees themselves. It is nonetheless striking that altogether relatively few charters produced by the notaries of the princes exhibit high levels of typical elements of solemnity. Several charters produced by princely notaries either have a very unspecific appearance, with a script that hardly reveals typical features of a documentary script, or have a script that is only slightly decorated. Among the charters issued by the princes of Rügen for urban communities and for individuals, however, a striking variation can be found in the degrees of visual solemnity. The script of some of these documents looks very ordinary, while that of others displays a higher degree of sophistication. In the earliest charters, scribes appear to have experimented with different approaches to characterizing the script. At the end of the 13th and mostly at the beginning of the 14th century, by contrast, a time when the princely chancery was becoming more organized and more documents were being produced, scripts seem to have been used in a more systematic manner, which might reflect some conscious strategies.

The rationale for this variety in the visual features of the charters, especially in the 14th century, is not easy to pin down. No obvious pattern for the choice of different levels of attention to the visual sophistication of the documents can be recognized. The most solemn documents were sometimes for affairs that, from the point of view of the prince, would not necessarily have been the most important—like the lease contract for the burghers of Stralsund, Leo Falco and Tidemann, or other charters for individual burghers. At the time when the princely chancery was taking shape, charters with a more solemn appearance were produced in very different circumstances: a charter for a monastery, attesting conciliation after a dispute; privileges for individuals from an urban background; privileges for towns, especially Stralsund. Similarly, charters with an unspecific appearance were produced at the same time by the notaries of the princely chancery for monasteries and churches, for individuals, and for towns, and for a variety of purposes.

If one looks at the charters produced on behalf of the princes by the grantees, namely by scribes in the scriptoria of churches and monasteries, however, the impression that emerges is very different. Many of them have a very sophisticated visual appearance.<sup>86</sup> Obviously these monks and clerics knew how to produce visually impressive documents. This is not the case regarding

<sup>86</sup> For example, LaG, Rep. 1 Kl. Neuenkamp, no. 12 = PUb 2,637 (1257); LaG, Rep. Eldena, no. 32 = PUb 2,846 (1267); LaG, Rep. Neuenkamp, no. 28 = PUb 2,1026 (1276); LaG, Rep. Eldena, nos. 37a and 37b (1276) = PUb 2,1031 (1276); LaG, Rep. Eldena, no. 48 = PUb 2,1238 (1282).

the documents produced in towns. In Stralsund, the foundation charter from 1234 was made by scribes related to the town council. The script is uncharacterized and does not exhibit any ornamentation or typical feature of a diplomatic script at all.<sup>87</sup> Charters produced in an urban milieu throughout the 13th and early 14th century all have such an ordinary appearance.<sup>88</sup> Nothing there can be found that is comparable to the solemn documents produced in the princely chancery or in monastic scriptoria. It does not appear that the scribes working for the urban élites knew how to produce such documents. The only exception is a confirmation charter for rights and possessions issued by Wizlaw III in 1321 for Stralsund. The script reveals some slightly decorated shafts, spread out irregularly throughout the text.<sup>89</sup> According to Bobowski, apart from these somewhat erratic attempts at decoration, the script is typical of the scribes of Stralsund.<sup>90</sup>

At the end of the 13th, and mostly at the beginning of the 14th century, during the reign of Wizlaw III, relations between the prince and Stralsund were growing tense. Wizlaw III was unhappy with the increasing independence of the burgher community and wanted to take advantage of the wealth of the city to finance his wars. Wizlaw faced serious economic problems and had accumulated heavy debts. His military involvements were costly and Wizlaw was very keen on tournaments and chivalric festivities, which even-

<sup>87</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 1 = PUB 1,307 (1234).

<sup>88</sup> For example, StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 22 = PUB 3,1515 (1289); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 23 = PUB 3,1529 (1290); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 27 = PUB 3,1552 (1290); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 77 = PUB 4,1983 (1301); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 78 = PUB 4,2008 (1301); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 79 = PUB 4,2014 (1302); StaS, Depos. Heilgeist. Kloster, no. 5 = PUB 4,2147 (1304); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 110 = PUB 5,2776 (1313); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 111 = PUB 5,2777 (1313); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 114 = PUB 5,2788 (1313); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 115 = PUB 5,2789 (1313); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, nos. 131 and 132 = PUB 5,3065 (1317); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 133 = PUB 5,3066 (1317); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 135 = PUB 5,3070 (1317); StaS, Depos. St. Nicolai, no. 1a = PUB 5,3201 (1318); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 146 = PUB 5,3244 (1319); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, nos. 137 and 148 = PUB 5,3245 (1319); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 151 = PUB 5,3248 (1319); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 153 = PUB 5,3249 (1319); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 154 = PUB 5,3251 (1319); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, nos. 168 and 169 = PUB 6,3498 (1321); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 170 = PUB 6,3499 (1321); slightly decorated script or slightly decorated initial, perhaps made in Stralsund: StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 25 = PUB 3,1548 (1290); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 143 = PUB 5,3207 (1318); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 152 = PUB 5,3248 (1319); StaS, Städtische Urkunden, no. 157 = PUB 5,3329 (1320).

<sup>89</sup> StaS, Städtische Urkunden, nos. 166 and 167 = PUB 6,3497 (1321, for Stralsund), two copies with similar script, probably from the same scribe in Stralsund.

<sup>90</sup> BOBOWSKI, Dokumenty, kancelarie i ośrodku skrypcyjne (as in footnote 11), pp. 182-183.

tually ruined him. In 1317, unable to subdue Stralsund, Wizlaw sold many rights to the council to repay his debts.<sup>91</sup>

Is it imaginable that, in the principality of Rügen, the grantees would have been ready to pay additional fees to obtain princely documents with a solemn appearance, as has been suspected in other circumstances? In the case of monasteries, this would explain why the monks preferred to make the documents themselves. They knew how to make solemn charters in their own scriptoria and may have wanted to avoid paying additional fees to request the unnecessary expertise of the princely notaries. This would explain why Stralsund obtained several charters with a solemn appearance. The urban scribes apparently did not have the know-how to produce such documents. It does not seem very far-fetched to imagine that the members of the city council, the wealthy merchants of Stralsund, or other well-off burghers, would have been ready to pay additional fees for that, whatever these fees might have been. One could also imagine, however, that this could have been a strategy on behalf of the princes to garner support from the city council by giving them impressive-looking documents.

In the case of individual burghers like Leo Falco and Tidemann, or of the surgeon Henning Menzen, who obtained documents with a solemn appearance, the payment of additional fees or some form of influence on their part might be the likeliest explanation for the particular attention paid to the layout of the documents by the princely scribes. It seems indeed difficult to explain why the scribes of the princely chancery would have gone out of their way to produce charters of the highest quality for these individuals out of their own initiative. In contrast, it does not seem far-fetched to imagine that wealthy burghers would have been able to exert some influence and would have attached importance to these visual displays of authority.

These observations can be added to those that have been made for other types of documents and for other parts of Europe. In many occasions it is difficult to explain why in the same chanceries, the same scribes produced documents that sometimes looked very solemn, sometimes very unspecific, independently of the importance of the affair or of the category of the recipient. Ultimately, it cannot be proven if or how the grantees paid fees for their documents, or if the amounts differed depending on the quality of the documents produced. Nonetheless, it appears likely that the beneficiaries, in one way or another, were able to exert influence on the efforts that princely scribes invested in producing their charters.

---

<sup>91</sup> WESLEY THOMAS, BARBARA GARVEY SEAGRAVE: *The Songs of the Minnesinger, Prince Wizlaw of Rügen*, Chapel Hill 1967, pp. 26-30; SCHMIDT, *Dynastie* (as in footnote 19), pp. 70-71; ROSSIGNOL, *Preambles and Politics* (as in footnote 37), p. 114.



## Conclusion

The combined study of preambles and of the ‘visual rhetoric’ of medieval charters undertaken here has produced results that point in the same direction. In the case of preambles, contextualization indicates that while the notaries of the princes of Rügen paid little attention to the propagandistic opportunities offered by preambles, the grantees preparing documents on behalf of the princes did care about the messages of these preambles. In the case of the visual appearance of the documents, contextualization suggests that the apparently random variations in the levels of solemnity might be explained by some form of influence exerted by the recipients. Perhaps rulers, after all, only cared so much about the methods used to display their authority in the documents issued under their name. The grantees, by contrast, could have had a stronger interest in having documents that made a solemn, striking impression, thus strengthening the symbolic value of the documents they would later use to prove their rights. It might be useful, in charter scholarship, to consider authority as a system of interactions, and to pay more attention to the interests and intentions of the grantees, and less to the rulers. Hopefully yet more case studies will help understand these phenomena.