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### **Sixteenth-Century German Blind-Stamped Bindings in the Alexander Turnbull Library: Identifying and Interpreting Motifs**

The Alexander Turnbull Library's rare books collection includes several sixteenth-century German blind-stamped bindings, each of which serves as a cultural and historical artefact. This paper aims to present a comprehensive analysis of these bindings, focusing on the identification and interpretation of the motifs present as decorative or religious elements. By utilising a combination of visual analysis and historical context, the paper will uncover the symbolic meanings and aesthetic choices embedded in these designs.

Furthermore, the paper will highlight the ownership histories of the selected books, along with resources and methodologies available in print and online for such an analysis. A key resource is the Einbanddatenbank (EBDB), an invaluable tool for identifying and comparing binding stamps hosted by the Berlin State Library.

The goal of this paper is not only to enhance our understanding of the specific bindings within the Alexander Turnbull Library but also to contribute to the broader field of book history and art history by demonstrating the rich interpretive potential of bookbindings as cultural artefacts. The findings will offer insights into the visual language of sixteenth-century German artisans and it is hoped will encourage further studies based on similar bindings held in Australasian collections.

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Anthony Tedeschi is a book historian with 20 years' experience working with rare book collections. He has been Curator of Rare Books and Fine Printing at the Alexander Turnbull Library since 2015. Anthony holds an advanced degree in Library Science from Indiana University, graduating with a specialisation in Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship and an MA with Distinction in English Literature from the University of Otago. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, a Churchill Fellow and is active in numerous library and book-history organisations.