

# Fragmentology

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# In situ *Manuscript Fragments in the Incunables* of the Bodleian Library, Oxford

## A *Fragmentarium* Case Study

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses the objectives, methodology, and outcomes of the *Fragmentarium* case study to catalogue *in situ* manuscript fragments in the incunables of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Drawing on summary information provided within the 2005 incunable catalogue, *A Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century now in the Bodleian Library*, the descriptions produced consider these fragments within their functional contexts. Here, the author argues that considering *in situ* fragments as constituent parts of their host volumes offers meaningful contribution to the material study of the book.

**Keywords:** *in situ* fragments, incunables, early printed books, book history, materiality, cataloguing, Bodleian Library, bookbinding

This paper is concerned with *in situ* fragments, those pieces of broken up manuscripts that find new purpose in the binding material of other books. It is born out of a project to describe *in situ* fragments in the Bodleian Library's collection of incunables (books printed in the fifteenth century) for online presentation on both the *Fragmentarium* platform, and in the Bodleian Library's online catalogue of Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries.<sup>1</sup> At present, the project team includes Nigel F. Palmer as supervisor, Franziska Schnoor working

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\* Many people have kindly given their time and expertise to this project. From *Fragmentarium*, Christoph Flüeler, Veronika Drescher, and William O. Duba provided unparalleled support and guidance in this project. Rafael Schwemmer of text & bytes worked hard to implement the ever-growing demands of the *Fragmentarium* Fellows. In turn, the Fellows provided collegial and productive conversation at two *Fragmentarium* meetings. At the Bodleian, Martin Kaufmann and Alan Coates supported this research from the beginning; Matthew Holford prepared the Bodleian's online catalogue for receiving our fragment descriptions; Andrew Honey willingly lent his expert advice on issues of conservation, bindings, and digitisation; and David Howell helped us to produce hyperspectral data for several fragments in the collection. As well as his exemplary supervision, Nigel F. Palmer generously read and commented on several versions of this paper. Amy Brown, Lily Dessau, and Kaylin O'Dell also offered comments and corrections. I alone remain responsible for any errors. Finally, this *Fragmentarium* case study would not have been possible without the generous support of the Zeno Karl Schindler Foundation.

on fragments from a late fifteenth-century missal from Würzburg, and myself as *Fragmentarium* Fellow.<sup>2</sup> Our catalogue entries combine information on the host volume (that book in which the fragments are now found), and the *codex discissus* (the manuscript that was once ‘cut up’, from which the fragments originate). The objective of our project is not to prepare a summary catalogue of *in situ* fragments, nor to select fragments according to scholarly value or textual content, but rather to present in-depth descriptions, which consider fragments as constituent parts of their host volumes. In this paper, I elaborate several examples of fragments and their host volumes to illustrate our approach and present our results. In doing so, I address issues central to the cataloguing of fragments generally, and argue that, when it comes to those *in situ*, placing the fragment in dialogue with its host – as both a codicological unit and a material object – dramatically informs our discussion of both.

Manuscript fragments are frequently employed in bindings to serve a variety of protective and supportive functions that take advantage of the strength and versatility of parchment. For example, the provision of pastedowns hooked and sewn around the first or last quire helps to hold the boards to the bookblock, and front and back endleaves protect the textblock of the host volume.<sup>3</sup> The functionality of *in situ* fragments also meant that their employment was widespread, both in time and place, with the reuse of manuscript material common across continental Europe and Britain during the period of late medieval and early modern printing, and beyond.<sup>4</sup> Having a practical purpose also meant, and still means, that fragments are vulnerable to damage and loss. Pastedowns are lost in the rebinding of books, for example, and text can be rubbed away from exposed manuscript covers through repeated touching. Yet, by virtue of the various uses which they have been put to strengthen, reinforce, or protect, these fragments contribute to our understanding of *codices discissi*, the treatment of manuscript

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1 For the Bodleian Library’s new catalogue of Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries see <https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>. All links were controlled and accessed on 08/05/2018.

2 For details of my case study, see *Fragmentarium*, “Case Studies”, [https://fragmentarium.ms/about/case\\_studies#1](https://fragmentarium.ms/about/case_studies#1).

3 The bookblock being all leaves bound in a single volume, whereas the term textblock is used to refer to the bookblock not including any endleaves. For definitions of this terminology, see Ligatus, ‘Bookblock’ <http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1227>.

4 Nicholas Pickwood writes: “The extensive use of such waste by binders in almost every part of Europe until the beginning of the seventeenth century, and in some parts of Europe, notably the German-speaking areas, for much longer than that, raises the interesting question of where and how these manuscripts were stored over such a long period”, in “The Use of Medieval Manuscript Fragments in Bindings” in *Interpreting and Collecting Fragments of Medieval Books*, ed. L.L. Brownrigg and M.M. Smith, Los Altos Hills 2000, 3. The use of manuscript fragments as covering material for pasteboard bindings by a nineteenth-century German bookbinder is well represented through a series of blue/black dyed volumes, many of which are found in the Bodleian. See our description of Bodleian Library, Auct. P 4.1, [F-10ax](#).

material through time, the work of bookbinders and printers, and the reception of early printed books.

The cataloguing of such fragments can seem like a daunting and impossibly big task: *in situ* fragments probably exist in their thousands in the Bodleian alone, and many are damaged, illegible, or hidden from view in tight bindings or behind spines. Furthermore, the Bodleian's collection of incunables is considerable: in 2005, Alan Coates counted, "5,600 incunable editions in [the Bodleian's] holdings, some in multiple copies, with the total number of incunabula in excess of 7,000".<sup>5</sup> Yet, such a large collection offers huge potential for the manuscript scholar and has several other advantages as a starting point for the study of *in situ* fragments. Not only is this collection discrete, it also is the subject of a thorough six-volume catalogue, *A Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford* (hereafter, Bod-Inc.), published in 2005.<sup>6</sup> The goal of the editors of Bod-Inc. was to "provide descriptions of all the Bodleian's incunabula [...] to the same standard expected for medieval manuscripts".<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of our project, it is fortunate that this standard included identifying the presence of manuscript fragments, as well as providing brief comments on their content and dating. As such, Bod-Inc. incorporates a list of fragments in the incunable bindings, which alerts readers to the presence of visible manuscript fragments. Our project consequently uses this resource to work through the survey incorporated into Bod-Inc., beginning with 'A'. By undertaking such descriptions as a *Fragmentarium* case study, it is not our immediate aim to reach 'Z', but instead to establish the full range of data necessary to provide detailed catalogue entries for *in situ* fragments and their host volumes. This data in turn allows us to observe the connections and discoveries offered by an in-depth approach to cataloguing fragments, and helps challenge the databases themselves to develop techniques for handling *in situ* fragments.

Creating in-depth descriptions which consider fragments together with their host volumes led to unexpected discoveries in our cataloguing effort. Attention to binding information, for example, brought together three leaves deriving from the same *codex discussus*, one of which now serves as a pastedown to the upper

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5 A. Coates, "The Bodleian Library and its Incunabula", in *A Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, ed. A. Coates et al., v. 1, Oxford 2005, 1.

6 A. Coates et al., *A Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, Oxford 2005 (Bod-Inc.). This catalogue has been available online since 2013, see Bod-Inc. Online <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>. It is important to note that the only qualifying feature needed for a volume to be included in the Bodleian collection of books printed in the fifteenth century is that it contain at least one incunable edition. This means that the bindings could come from the fifteenth century, or the twentieth, and that the volumes could contain one incunable amongst other sixteenth-century material, or five incunables bound together.

7 A. Coates, "The Bodleian Library and its Incunabula", 19.

board of a Bodleian Sammelband, A 2.8 Art. Seld. [F-6et3].<sup>8</sup> Bod-Inc. identifies this volume as employing an ornamental roll from an Oxford binder on the covers (Ker's Roll 1), "first used between 1515 and 1520 (and not attested after 1523)", and states that it contains a medieval leaf from the *Liber Sextus Decretalium*.<sup>9</sup> While neither Ker nor Pearson had previously associated A 2.8 Art. Seld. with Roll I, Ker lists another early printed Sammelband held in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, as employing Roll I and containing two leaves from a manuscript of the *Liber Sextus*.<sup>10</sup> An inspection of the volume in question – Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MSS 5.2.13, a 1515 Venetian edition of Ptolemy's *Almagest* bound together with two other early printed books – revealed that the two manuscript fragments serving as pastedowns were in the same hand, with the same page layout, and thus almost certainly from the same *codex discissus* as the leaf in the Bodleian Library. In this case, it was information from the host volume, rather than the fragment itself, that made it possible to establish the connection between these disparate leaves, both redeployed by the same bookbinder.

The virtual reconstruction of *codices discissi*, while not our primary objective, is a potential outcome of our in-depth approach, which examines the shared material history of incunable and fragment. In the case of Bodleian Library, Auct. 2Q 5.19 [F-8fo3], a Sammelband made up of two incunables, one printed in Louvain between 1477–83 (Bod-Inc. B-613) and one printed in Gouda between 1481–82 (Bod-Inc. A-301[2]), our approach to the fragments uncovered information about the early history of the bound volume. The undecorated binding of calfskin on wooden boards gives away little concerning the volume's provenance, yet the *in situ* fragments supporting this binding reveal clues that shed light on the construction and early use of this Sammelband. The fragments consist of a bifolium, reused to serve as a pastedown (which is now raised) and conjugate endleaf. The script is identifiable as a Northern Textualis from England or Northern France and is datable to the fourteenth century. As with Bodleian Library, A 2.8 Art. Seld., the *in situ* fragments in this volume are from the *Liber Sextus Decretalium*. These examples provide testament to the well-known fact that it is not uncommon to find fragments of the *Liber Sextus* repurposed in the bindings of early printed books. Following the first printing in 1465, in a practice that seems to have been particularly prevalent among university bookbinders with easy access to manuscripts of canon law, large numbers of *Liber Sextus* manuscripts were dismembered and reused in bindings. In addition to the manuscript

8 The term 'Sammelband' refers to a collection of textblocks bound as a single item. Cf. *Ligatus*, Language of Bindings, "Composite Textblocks", <http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1257>.

9 Bod-Inc., A-037, v. 1, 65.

10 N.R. Ker, *Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts Used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings: with a Survey of Oxford Binding c. 1515-1620*, Oxford, 2004, 7–9; D. Pearson, *Oxford Bookbinding 1500-1640: Including a Supplement to Neil Ker's Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts Used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings*, Oxford 2000, 155–56.

leaves, there are twenty sewing guards found throughout both incunables, used for strengthening at the centre of every quire. Unlike the *Liber Sextus* fragments, these are clearly identifiable as from English manuscripts. While the strips are narrow, there is enough text surviving to identify four unique scripts: three sets are copied in English Secretary hands of the late fifteenth century, and one is an English Northern Textualis script of the fifteenth century. This evidence is enough for us to say with some confidence that both incunables were bound with the fragments in England.

We can gather more evidence of English provenance from the inscriptions on sig. aiv of the first incunable – the name ‘Frater Johannes Maxsey’ and inscription ‘Monachus de Thorney’ (crossed out) help us to identify the earliest known user of the bound *Sammelband* as John Maxsey, a monk of the Benedictine Thorney Abbey in Cambridgeshire who died before 1540.<sup>11</sup> From the evidence of the entire material object – the name of an early English owner, sewing guards indicating an English binding, and the repurposing of the *Liber Sextus* fragments – we might suggest an origin for this *Sammelband* within the English university context of the 1480s. As we can see from this example, in which the sewing guards provide more definitive provenance information than the two almost-whole leaves, the size or quality of each fragment is not necessarily the marker of most significance in the cataloguing of *in situ* fragments. It is not easy or even possible to predict the ways in which the fragments will inform the study of the host volume, or vice versa, and therefore our in-depth cataloguing approach allows for a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the entire book object. To demonstrate the depth of research associated with our fragment descriptions, and to show how such fragment research contributes to codicological scholarship more generally, I spend the rest of this paper detailing one particular example.

Bodleian Library, 4<sup>o</sup> I 1 Th. Seld. [[F-iogq](#)] is a *Sammelband* containing two incunable editions – one a devotional miscellany associated with the Rosary printed in Gouda between 1483 and 1484 (Bod-Inc. F-095 [2]), and the other a pseudo-Albertine treatise on the medicinal properties of plants printed in London in ca. 1485 (Bod-Inc. A-116). The entry for Bod-Inc. A-116 (the second item in the Selden *Sammelband*) notes that there are, “[t]hree parchment leaves from a thirteenth/fourteenth-century manuscript containing a French translation of III Rg 11”.<sup>12</sup> This information is enough to alert the reader to the presence of the French leaves, but does not provide a detailed account of their content, or employment in the host volume. In fact, the leaves come from a manuscript of the *Bible française du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, the earliest French translation of the entire Bible, and contain passages from the second book of Samuel and the first book of Kings

<sup>11</sup> See Bod-Inc., v. 6, 2892.

<sup>12</sup> Bod-Inc., A-116, v. 1, 97.

(II Rg 19-20 and III Rg 11-12).<sup>13</sup> While there are three folios of an endleaf-quire *in situ*, our description identifies two imperfect leaves from the *codex discissus*.<sup>14</sup> The *codex discissus* was originally twice the size of the Sammelband, which contains incunables printed in quarto.<sup>15</sup> The fragments have been folded in order to be used as an endleaf-quire at the front of the volume, positioned so that the text of the fragments reads sideways in relation to their host. The endleaf-quire would have once been a binio of four leaves, but the third leaf has been torn out and lost, leaving just a stub conjugate with the second folio.

As is often the case when parchment material is reemployed in bindings, the order of the leaves from the *codex discissus* is disturbed. The difficulties in presenting the fragments lie in their differing functions – as an *in situ* endleaf-quire consisting of three leaves (ff. 1-3), and as two incomplete leaves from the *codex discissus* (Fragm. I and II). *Fragmentarium* makes provision for presenting images in multiple orders by allowing the cataloguer to develop unlimited ‘ranges’ for each description. For the Old French fragments, I have formulated two image ranges: one for ‘physical order’ (that is, the extant position of the *in situ* fragments in relation to the host volume), and one for ‘content order’ (the original order in the *codex discissus*). These two different organisational structures represent independent moments in the history of these leaves – as they were read in the *codex discissus*, and as they are now presented in the Sammelband. As the host volume and the fragments are orientated sideways to each other, the image rotation function of the *Fragmentarium* database also allows readers to view images of the fragment according to the host volume, or according to the Old French text.

As well as constituting the final leaf of the endleaf-quire, the fragment closest to the textblock (f. 3), has another function in the host volume as a palimpsest. The Old French Bible text has been partly erased and, in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, written over with a table of contents listing the items contained in the Sammelband. A woodcut, cut out from sig. air of the first incunable and depicting the sacred heart, the crown of thorns, a rosary with flowers for the five wounds, and two manicules, has been pasted in below the text on

13 We have compared the text of our fragments to that of a thirteenth-century manuscript in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, français 899, and found it corresponds closely. A reproduction of this manuscript is available online on Gallica, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90068265>. We are grateful to Clive Sneddon for identifying the text and providing further advice.

14 My definition of ‘endleaf-quire’ is equivalent to Ligatus’ definition of an ‘endleaf unit’: “[t]he individually-sewn groups of leaves which make up the endleaves at either end of a bookblock”; see <http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/2887>. I choose here to refer to a ‘quire’, because I believe it gives a more explanatory description of the collection of leaves bound adjacent to the bookblock.

15 The cropped leaves measure 280 x 207 mm, with the two-column written area measuring approximately 227 x 159 mm.

this page. The manuscript addition on f. 3v provides eight headings, from three different incunables. The first seven correspond to the texts contained in the two incunables, but the eighth heading, ‘liber sermonum de quatuor nouissimis’, refers to a third item, now missing. It probably denotes either a copy of Gerardus van Vliederhoven, *Cordiale de quattuor novissimis*, or, more likely, the *Sermones quattuor novissimorum* (frequently printed from ca. 1482–83 in Paris and the Netherlands, cf. ISTC ib00944100; GW 4804). The late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century table of contents predates the current seventeenth-century binding (blind-tooled calfskin on wooden boards, probably commissioned by John Selden).<sup>16</sup> Wormhole damage to f. 1 of the endleaf-quire, which does not correspond to the current binding, shows that this three-incunable assembly was bound in boards as a *Sammelband*, along with our endleaf-quire, prior to the current binding.<sup>17</sup> This third incunable must have been lost prior to, or perhaps during, the book’s rebinding in the seventeenth century. While we might expect a volume bound with an endleaf-quire at the front to contain one also at the back, there is no evidence to indicate how the lower board of the earlier binding was attached.<sup>18</sup>

The script of the two fragments, a Northern Textualis Libraria displaying the full range of fusions typical of the later gothic period, is datable to the middle or second half of the fourteenth century and is more likely from Northern France than the Anglo-Norman world. The provenance and binding of this book is otherwise only associated with England, and the two incunables preserved in the *Sammelband* were printed in Gouda, the Netherlands, and London, England. We know that the volume, as a *Sammelband* bound in boards, was in England shortly after the books were printed due to the glossing of the incunables in late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century English hands. While most of the glosses are in Latin, one reader of the second incunable has glossed the text in Middle English. There are at least three hands, which appear throughout *both* incunable items, showing not only that the incunables were brought together shortly after printing, but also that the *Sammelband* was studied by multiple readers. It is difficult to speculate on this evidence alone exactly what stage the fragments were

<sup>16</sup> The *Sammelband* was later donated to the Bodleian Library as part of Selden’s library in 1659.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Pickwoad refers to bindings in boards as ‘inboard bindings’, see N. Pickwoad, “The Interpretation of Bookbinding Structure An Examination of Sixteenth-Century Bindings in the Ramey Collection in the Pierpont Morgan Library”, *The Library* 6-17:3 (1 September 1995), 209–49. See also the entry for ‘inboard bindings’ on Ligatus Language of Bindings, <http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1395>, which describes them as “[b]indings in which the boards are attached to the bookblock by whatever means before the book was covered”. I find the term ‘bound in boards’, however, to be more explanatory.

<sup>18</sup> We may never know whether an endleaf-quire to the lower board was lost with the third incunable.

used in a binding for these incunables, but we can say that the fragments were an integral part of the host volume from a very early stage in the book's history.<sup>19</sup>

The glosses and table of contents are not the only marks of English readership within the host volume. The blank verso at the end of the first item (sig. d6v) begins with a popular verse prayer to the Holy Name ('Jesu for Thy holy name/ And for Thy bitter Passion') in an early sixteenth-century English hand. The *Digital Index of Middle English Verse* (DIMEV) identifies twenty-two manuscripts with these lines, one inscription, and three print witnesses, but does not record this copy.<sup>20</sup> Every witness listed in the DIMEV contains between four and six short lines, and although the poem is supposed to contain exactly thirty-three words to represent Christ's mortal years, several are incomplete. The version in the Selden *Sammelband* contains six short lines and thirty words (three are missing):

Jhesu for thy holy name / 7 for thy bytter passion  
 Saue vs from synne / 7 from endeles dampnacion  
 And bring to the blysse which neuer shal mysse swet ihesu amen.

The verse prayer is immediately proceeded by a response in prose:

In this forsayd prayer be conteyned .xxxiiij. wordes | iustly representing the xxxiiij. yers of the age of | our lord ihesu crist. The pardon therof in the me- | moryal of al his woundes grete and smalle is | v.m.cccc.lxxv yers. And here is to be noted | that the first whyt bede stone betokenyth that | name of ihesu / and the red bede stone the passion | of ihesu / the first blak the synne of man / the. | secunde black the paynes of helle / and the last whyt | bede synfyeth euerlastynge ioye and | blysse. Amen. |

The wondes that our lord suffered for vs. | ben v.m.cccc.lxxv. and so many eres | of pardon be graunted to al them that . say | deuoutly this forsayd prayer.

These lines designate symbolic beads to assist meditation on the first five subjects of the prayer – a white bead is associated with the Holy Name, a red bead with the Passion, a black bead with the sin of man, another black bead with the pain of hell, and another white bead with the joy of heaven.<sup>21</sup> The choice of this prayer and indulgence is likely in direct response to the content of the first incunable in the *Sammelband*, a devotional collection on the rosary, and shows an early user providing additions that relate to the content of the host volume.

The meditation using five coloured beads corresponding to the Middle English prayer has a well-attested connection to Syon Abbey (the Bridgettine double house on the Thames in Isleworth), and Jan Rhodes identifies at least five manuscripts witnessing an explicit link between the prayer, the beads, and

19 Possibilities might include a bookseller in France or the Low Countries collecting three incunables and binding them with an endleaf-quire before sending them across the Channel or, perhaps more likely, an English bookbinder using an Old French Bible as manuscript waste.

20 Digital Index of Middle English Verse, 2840, <http://www.dimev.net/record.php?recID=2840>.

21 There are five beads, most likely a reference to the five wounds. The five wounds are also illustrated in the woodcut taken from sig. air of the first incunable and pasted onto f. 3v of the endleaf-quire.

Syon.<sup>22</sup> This association is evident in our volume too. On the initial blank recto of the second incunable (sig. air), the same hand has copied indulgences of the 'bedes of Syon' and 'Shene the charterhows' (the Carthusian monastery of Sheen, across the river from Syon). The indulgences, supposedly granted by Popes Julius II (1503-13) and Leo X (1513-21), are as follows:

Here foloweth the pardon of the bedes of Syon | for euery pater noster, Aue maria and Crede cccc daies of pardon And so for the hole ladys saliter lxvij.m. yeres of pardon. | Here foloweth the pardon of the bedes of Shene the charterhows for euery pater noster, Aue maria and Credo xxx yeres of pardon. | Secundum annorum xiiij.m.cccc.xl | Also the olde pardon of shene the charterhous for euery worde on the pater noster, Aue maria and crede lxxx of pardon. | Secundum annorum cclxxviiij.m.cccclxxxiiij days. | Also for the .x. salutations of our lady whiche is graunted by pope Julius and Leo for the x Aues x.m. days And for the pater noster x.m.yers. Amen.

While the beads are associated with Syon, their appearance in multiple sources means that we cannot assume a direct connection of this volume to Syon or Sheen. It is possible, however, that the name of Syon and Sheen lent prestige to these devotions, and that this made them popular among other English institutions in the sixteenth century. The content of the first incunable, a devotional treatise on the rosary, and the thrust of the English indulgences, prayers, and glosses, as well as the woodcut with the five wounds pasted to f. 3v, might suggest a Carthusian or Carthusian-influenced context. The Middle English additions were copied by the same person at approximately the same time, and across both incunables. As the indulgences on sig. air claim to be granted by Pope Leo X (1513-21), we know the addition cannot be dated prior to 1513, and the script suggests a date in the first half of the sixteenth century.

When we gather all this information together, it is evident that between 1513 and ca. 1550, an early English reader had access to both incunables as a bound *Sammelband*. By this time, the Old French fragments had joined the volume where they remain to this day. We also find notes in multiple contemporaneous hands throughout both incunables and a late fifteenth-/ early sixteenth-century table of contents. This, along with the fact that the second incunable was printed in London, all supports a claim of early English institutional ownership. The fact that fragments of a continental French manuscript are integrated into a volume whose provenance history, insofar as it can be established, is otherwise entirely English prompts the question of what it means that parchment scrap from such an extensive, large-format manuscript in French was available in England at the end of the fifteenth century. While the information we have uncovered does not

22 J.T. Rhodes, "Syon Abbey and Its Religious Publications in the Sixteenth Century", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993), 11-25, at 12-13, n. 9. Rhodes does not imply this list is exhaustive, and identifies the following manuscripts as 'examples': "Bodleian Library, MSS Gough liturg. 19, fo. 21v; MS Douce 54, fo. 35v; MS Laud misc. 19, fo. 31v; BL, MS Harley 541, fo. 228v; 494, fo. 106".

provide a definite answer, it is more plausible to suppose that the French Bible manuscript once formed part of an English collection than to speculate that parchment waste was exported from the continent to England. Through our in-depth approach of combining information from the host volume and fragment, we flesh out a picture of the Selden Sammelband's early provenance, and learn more about the context of, and responses to, *in situ* fragments as binding material through time.

Medieval manuscript fragments are scattered around the world, and they exist in uncountable numbers. The development of online platforms such as *Fragmentarium* makes these fragments more visible as a valuable scholarly resource and enables us to widen our fragment-related research questions. My case study has considered a range of *in situ* fragments, from tiny sewing guards to consecutive leaves, within multiple host volumes, yet I have interrogated a central issue – how the combined evidence of host volume and fragment informs our understanding of the material book. I have shown that these *in situ* fragments, which sometimes seem so insignificant, can nevertheless offer valuable contributions to the study of codicology, manuscript studies, and book history. Our descriptions on *Fragmentarium* present the analysis of host volume and fragment together. This means that users can learn about the content and function of *in situ* fragments alongside information such as the provenance of host volumes, the construction methods employed by bookbinders, and the treatment of medieval manuscripts by later users. Ultimately, this case study demonstrates that the in-depth cataloguing of *in situ* manuscript fragments gives us the chance to gather material evidence on both *codices discissi* and their host incunables, and this in turn informs discussions on the history of the book.