



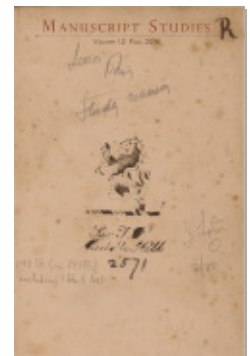
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Reverse-Engineer Medieval and Renaissance Manuscript Books  
from Constituent Fragments

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# “The Butcher’s Bill”

## *Using the Schoenberg Database to Reverse-Engineer Medieval and Renaissance Manuscript Books from Constituent Fragments*

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WHILE PRE-1600 MANUSCRIPT FRAGMENTS (i.e., *membra disiecta*) from Western Europe have been the subject of academic inquiry for over 150 years, the specialized study of incomplete or broken books called “fragmentology” has only emerged as a scholarly discipline in the past few decades.<sup>1</sup> This neoteric field poses fundamental

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1 Among the earliest fragmentology studies is Neil R. Ker’s *Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts Used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings with a Survey of Oxford Binding, c. 1515–1620* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1954), which identifies two thousand medieval fragments recycled as binding supports for printed books. More recent are Linda L. Brownrigg and Margaret M. Smith, eds., *Interpreting and Collecting Fragments of Medieval Books* (Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson Lovelace, 2000); and Sandra Hindman, Michael Camille, Nina Rowe, and Rowan Watson, eds., *Manuscript Illumination in the Modern Age: Recovery and Reconstruction* (Evanston, IL: Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, 2001). Innumerable specialist studies concentrate on fragments, such as A. N. L. Munby, *Connoisseurs and Medieval Miniatures, 1750–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972); and Pia Palladino, *Treasures of a Lost Art: Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New York: Metropolitan

questions about the quality, extent, scope, historical setting, and textual contents of a vast and diverse body of extant fragments estimated in the hundreds of thousands worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

Although fragments may be defined as any incomplete manuscripts, they can assume a countless number of identities in multiple contexts, including batches of leaves from a single codex degraded through frequent use, exposure to the elements, or historical accident; solitary leaves that have been deliberately excised from their original bindings to be recycled for utilitarian purposes (e.g., components in book bindings);<sup>3</sup> individual folios excised by biblioclasts to sell as teaching tools or as medieval works of art;<sup>4</sup> smaller “cuttings” from individual folios featuring illuminated or deco-

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Museum of Art, 2003); not to mention extensive scholarship on specific manuscript constituents, e.g., Nigel Morgan, “Some Missing Leaves from the Buckland Missal,” *Bodleian Library Record* 17 (2001): 269–75. Finally, manuscript catalogues now frequently include fragments, such as Margaret M. Manion, Vera F. Vines, and Christopher De Hamel, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in New Zealand Collections* (Melbourne: Thames & Hudson, 1989); and Scott Gwara, *A Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in South Carolina Collections* (Columbia: Thomas Cooper Library, 2007).

2 Statistically modeling the survival of manuscripts using a database of thirty thousand entries, Eltjo Buringh has estimated that 2.9 million medieval and Renaissance codices have survived (*Medieval Manuscript Production in the Latin West: Explorations with a Global Database* [Leiden: Brill, 2011], 99).

3 Ker, *Fragments*. For more recent work on the re-use of manuscripts in later bindings, see Jan Brunius, *Medieval Book Fragments in Sweden: An International Seminar in Stockholm 13–16 November 2003* (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 2005); Brunius, *From Manuscripts to Wrappers: Medieval Book Fragments in the Swedish National Archives* (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 2013).

4 On the commercial motivations for book-breaking, see Christopher de Hamel, *Cutting Up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit: The 1995 Sol. M. Malkin Lecture in Bibliography* (Charlottesville, VA: Book Arts, 1996). The American dealer Otto F. Ege (d. 1951) justified his breaking in “I Am a Biblioclast,” *Avocations* 1 (1938): 516–18. Scott J. Gwara has lately studied Ege’s manuscript trade in *Otto Ege’s Manuscripts: A Study of Ege’s Manuscript Collections, Portfolios, and Retail Trade, with a Comprehensive Handlist of Manuscripts Collected or Sold* (Cayce, SC: de Brailes, 2013). Other studies of book-breaking include Roger S. Wieck, “*Folia Fugitiva*: The Pursuit of the Illuminated Manuscript Leaf,” *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 54 (1996): 233–54; Rowan Watson, “Educators, Collectors, Fragments, and the ‘Illuminations’ Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the Nineteenth Century,” in Smith, *Interpreting and Collecting Fragments*, 21–46; and Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*.

rative elements;<sup>5</sup> or minuscule portions of leaves (often sewing supports in bindings) that only hint at their original contents. Because manuscript fragments have been created through so many processes, they exist in innumerable formats and can be found in a multitude of settings.

Regardless of date, origin, contents, format, language, or artistic merit, no manuscript genre has proven immune to fragmentation.<sup>6</sup> Since fragments represent books "lost" to scholarship, fragmentologists would ultimately like to ascertain the historical, textual, artistic, codicological, and paleographical milieux of these sources. Yet fragments rarely reveal their medieval histories with reliable precision, in part because of the loss of original historical context inherent in their fragmentation, but also because of the fragment trade's tendency to obscure their origins and deeper provenance histories, through accidental or deliberate means. As demonstrated in the case studies below, fragments migrate widely and frequently. When the commercial emphasis shifts from their historicity to a representational iconicity, little concern is felt to preserve their original contents, textual coherence, or historical provenance. Most dealers work to obfuscate the traceable provenance of the

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5 Munby, *Connoisseurs and Medieval Miniatures*.

6 In fact, the digital project called Manuscriptlink (described below) is preparing to reconstruct volumes from constituent fragments in the following proportions: books of hours and devotional compendia (27.5%); service books such as breviaries, missals, collectars, lectionaries, manuals, pontificals, and diurnals (22.7%); Bibles (20.3%); sacred music in graduals, antiphonals, and processions (11.8%); treatises of pastoral care, including homilies (5.7%); Patristic theology, scholastic commentaries, saintly *vitae*, and martyrologies (2.4%); monastic and lay regulations, secular and ecclesiastical history, mystical writings, encyclopedias, philosophical works, scientific compilations (including astronomy, astrology, computistics, medicine, mineralogy, and veterinary science), vernacular romances, lyric verse, classical compositions (including drama, philosophy, and science), secular and ecclesiastical statutes, carularies, rent books, and estate documents (10% combined). While predominantly composed in Latin (94.2%), these fragments will also be written in Dutch (2.8%), French (1.0%), Spanish (1%), and German (0.5%), among exotic tongues like Old Catalan, Byzantine Greek, Middle English, and Czech. These manuscripts will have been produced throughout medieval Europe, chiefly in France (42.7%), Italy (19.4%), Germany (13.7%), England (10.0%), Spain (3.8%), Flanders (Belgium) (4.7%), and the Netherlands (4.7%). Most are expected to date from the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, in the following proportions: eleventh century (0.5%); twelfth century (7.6%); thirteenth century (27.5%); fourteenth century (18.0%); fifteenth century (43%); sixteenth century (3.3%).

fragments they sell, while the widespread and continuous dispersal of individual fragments from one collector to another magnifies the historical, codicological, and textual dissociation begun when the original manuscript was first broken. Since only full(er) bibliographical details would re-establish lost textual and bibliographical coherence, “restoring” manuscript codices would mean identifying and aggregating their dispersed constituents. In fact, this potential restoration is relatively straightforward for a subset of manuscript fragments represented by books dismembered specifically for commercial purposes.

As Nicolas Barker has observed, medieval manuscripts are “mobile objects,”<sup>7</sup> a reflection especially relevant to fragments esteemed for their commercial value, such as those featuring miniatures, extensive illumination, exceptional calligraphic samples, works by recognized authors, or portions of famous texts. The ever-rising cost of medieval manuscripts, as both Barker and de Hamel have stressed,<sup>8</sup> has incentivized the breaking of medieval books. The emergence of internet commerce websites like eBay and federated auction sites like Invaluable and Liveauctioneers have expanded markets to amateur middle class buyers. Yet the damage to medieval books inflicted by the fragment trade, often anonymously, can become the subject of legitimate study. In her survey of medieval fragments at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Rowan Watson proposed that modern scholars should not “equate automatically the destruction of books in the past with iconoclasm.” Rather, she considers biblioclasm—however motivated—a “historical phenomenon that can be usefully investigated.”<sup>9</sup> By identifying where, when, and how fragments emerge, disappear, and reemerge into public markets, and by recording the cost of fragments over time, researchers can discern the motivations of book-breaking, patterns of distribution, marketing strategies, changing tastes, and relative availability of certain fragment types. However, discerning the cultural aesthetics in the trade of broken books

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7 Nicholas Barker, “The Medieval Book,” *The Book Collector* 40 (1991): 9–30 at 16.

8 Barker, “The Medieval Book,” 16; de Hamel, “Cutting Up Manuscripts,” 15.

9 Watson, “Educators, Collectors, Fragments,” 21.

typically entails identifying and aggregating dispersed fragments from the same sources.

Margaret M. Smith advocated for the identification and interpretation of all fragments in *Interpreting and Collecting Fragments of Medieval Books*,<sup>10</sup> and the rapid growth of digital resources dedicated to the online dissemination of images of and associated metadata dealing with manuscripts and fragments now facilitates this necessarily collaborative work. The University of Pennsylvania's Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts (SDBM) is a powerful tool for reconstructing broken and lost medieval codices. The SDBM preserves data on the provenance of thousands of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts culled from approximately 120,000 dealer, auction, exhibition, and collection catalogs. The value of the SDBM to fragmentologists lies in a method we have devised to identify intact manuscripts from which fragments have been excised. In fact, not only does evidence recorded in the database facilitate the reverse-engineering of broken books, the SDBM also identifies information in auction records on these codices, including their provenance histories, complete contents, original number of leaves, binding details, inscriptions added by historical owners, and liturgical use. Furthermore, auction data in the SDBM may also be used to infer the approximate dates for the earliest dismemberment of manuscript books. With the SDBM information it becomes possible to interpret fragments in their broader and original textual, artistic, historical, commercial, social, paleographical, and codicological contexts.

In the following pages, we offer six "case studies" highlighting the relevance of faceted (Boolean) searching in the SDBM for fragmentology scholarship. These samples illustrate the viability of reverse-engineering manuscript sources from fragments, underscore significant outcomes of this effort, and disclose pitfalls that yield anomalous data. This analysis likewise allows us to picture the grisly aftermath of book-breaking, a figurative "butcher's bill" that emphasizes the commercial motivations behind and the scope and extent of information lost through biblioclasm.

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10 Brownrigg and Smith, "Introduction," in Brownrigg and Smith, *Interpreting and Collecting*, xi–xv at xiii.

## 1. *Destruction by Design*

Our first case study considers the deliberate destruction of the Hornby-Cockerell Bible, an illuminated, early thirteenth-century transitional Bible manuscript, 190 leaves of which now survive at Ohio State University (fig. 1).<sup>11</sup> Entering book type, dimensions, and number of lines in the “Advanced Search” interface of the SDBM can reveal potential source codices for these leaves. Because auctioneers often round dimensions to the nearest centimeter or quarter-inch, and because folios may have been trimmed for framing, the dimensions can vary from those of the parent volume. We recommend entering a minimum value five millimeters less than the actual width and height, and a maximum value five millimeters greater. These values should account for any rounding and trimming, and any greater range would yield too many search results to be useful. In this case, our search yields six references offering information on the intact codex, from its first description in print in 1880 to its final days as a complete manuscript in 1981. Yet these records also show us how the evolution of catalog descriptions over time has contributed to the destruction of codices and the distribution of constituent leaves for profit.

SDBM\_1709 refers to the 25 September 1981 Christie’s sale that preceded this Bible’s dismemberment. Working in partnership with Michael Greenberg, Bruce Ferrini, a well-known American dealer of antiquities with a reputation for breaking manuscripts, acquired the Bible and immediately cut it up. Greenberg and Ferrini shared the leaves and quickly undertook the lengthy—indeed, ongoing—process of dispersing them worldwide. Although Greenberg and Ferrini oversaw the Bible’s destruction, its ruin was sown decades before when it entered the collectors’ market. Multiple SDBM records prove that the manuscript would change owners at least seven times over seventy years.

The first printed notice of the Hornby-Cockerell Bible appeared in the 1880 catalog of the library of Henry Huth (1815–1878), one of Britain’s

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11 Columbus, Ohio State University Libraries, Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, MS MR.Frag.74.





FIGURE 1. Folio from the Hornby-Cockerell Bible, England, ca. 1220, dispersed by Bruce Ferrini and Michael Greenberg in 1981. Columbus, Ohio State University, Thompson Memorial Library, Rare Books & Manuscripts Library MS MR.Frag.74.372.



foremost book collectors.<sup>12</sup> Reporting no origin, number of folios, binding, dimensions, or contents, the sparse record roughly dated the manuscript to the fourteenth century, and it offered a summary description of the Genesis initial, stating that the first initial of each book was similarly historiated. Alfred Henry Huth (1850–1910) took possession of the manuscript upon his father’s death, and, after the younger Huth’s own passing, it was consigned to Sotheby’s for auction (15 November 1911, lot 645, SDBM\_7667).<sup>13</sup>

Doubtless realizing that a laconic description would not inspire fervent bidding, Sotheby’s supplemented its own description with a few qualitative statements: “richly painted and brilliantly illuminated” . . . “of very high artistic merit” . . . “thick and brilliant gold.” These evocative terms enhanced its commercial appeal, and the noted firm Quaritch purchased the Bible on behalf of C. H. St. John Hornby (1867–1946)—a collector and lover of elaborately decorated books and manuscripts—who kept it for the next thirty-five years. During this time he had it rebound by Katharine Adams (1862–1952), a respected binder who had worked for Hornby’s Ashendene Press.<sup>14</sup> In 1946 Hornby bequeathed his Bible to Sir Sydney Cockerell (1867–1962), who, in turn, sold it to Quaritch early in 1957 (SDBM\_119113).<sup>15</sup> Quaritch held the volume for less than sixty days, selling or trading it to the dealer Heinrich Eisemann in February. Following Eisemann’s ownership the manuscript dropped out of sight for several years, but reappeared in *Catalogue 58* of the American dealer Harry A. Levinson.<sup>16</sup> Levinson’s description builds upon Sotheby’s earlier account, redating the manuscript

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12 *The Huth Library: A Catalogue of the Printed Books, Manuscripts, Autograph Letters, and Engravings, Collected by Henry Huth, with Collations and Bibliographical Descriptions*, vol. 1 (London: Ellis & White, 1880), 159.

13 *The Famous Library of Printed Books, Illuminated Manuscripts, Autograph Letters and Engravings: First Portion* (London: Sotheby’s, 15 November 1911), 180, lot 645.

14 Jane Griffiths, “Adams, Katharine (1862–1952),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38543>, accessed 22 July 2015.

15 *Manuscripts, Including Important Volumes from the Collection of Sir Sydney Cockerell, Litt. D.: Deed and Documents, Books Printed before 1700* (London: Quaritch, 1957), item 767.

16 *Catalogue 58: A Selection of 104 Rare Books and Manuscripts* (Beverly Hills, CA: Harry A. Levinson, ca. May 1962), 12–13, item 20.

to the late thirteenth century and adding substantial details on the illuminated initials, thereby amplifying their value. In contrast to Sotheby's characterization of the illuminations as "fine," Levinson's catalog describes them in superlative terms, each of "the highest quality" and "in the finest state of preservation." Emphasizing the outstanding quality of the manuscript's illuminations marks a pivotal moment in its history. The historiated initials are now distinguished as potentially attractive to book-breakers in search of profit.

On 8 November 1965 a Fort Worth attorney and book collector named Arthur Haddaway (1901–1981) purchased the manuscript from Levinson for \$17,000.<sup>17</sup> Haddaway kept the manuscript intact, since it next appeared in an exhibition of illuminated manuscripts at the University of Texas in 1971 (SDBM\_48968).<sup>18</sup> The exhibition catalog addressed this Bible in scholarly terms as evidence of medieval book production, especially that of illuminated Bibles. No further academic attention was given to the manuscript before Haddaway's death in February 1981, only seven months before the Bible's dismemberment.

Haddaway's heirs consigned this Bible to Christie's in 1981, and its catalog description effectively serves both as an obituary and a shopping list.<sup>19</sup> Now accurately dating the manuscript to the first half of the thirteenth century, the description provides details about its codicological features as well as its textual and artistic contents. Most striking, however, is a list at the heart of the entry itemizing the finer illuminations and drawing attention to their luxury and abundance. Ferrini and Greenberg had secured a convenient list of marketable pages, and what had been an intact codex on the morning of 25 September 1981 became that evening a pile of 440 individual folios ready to be sold at a profit or donated for substantial tax advantages.

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17 Acquisitions note from Haddaway's inventory of his manuscript collection, Haddaway Archive, the Grolier Club, New York.

18 *Gothic and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts from Texas Collections*, 23 April–23 June 1971 (Austin: Miriam Lutchter Stark Library, University of Texas at Austin, 1971), 13–14, item 1, with an illustration of the initial opening the Book of Esther on p. 4.

19 *Early Printed Books and Manuscripts Including Important Bibles* (London: Christie's, 25 September 1981), 11, lot 2, with a black-and-white plate featuring the opening initial of Luke and a color reproduction of the Genesis initial (p. 2).

The continuing dispersal of these leaves is partially traceable through dealer and auction catalogs that have included fragments over the past thirty years. The earliest appearance of single folios found so far occurs in Phillip J. Pirages, *Catalogue 11* (ca. 1983).<sup>20</sup> Additional leaves appeared in Quaritch, *Catalogue 1036* (1984) and *Catalogue 1056* (1985);<sup>21</sup> Ferrini, *Catalogue One* (1987);<sup>22</sup> catalogues of sales exhibitions at London's Schuster Gallery (1987)<sup>23</sup> and Tokyo's Maruzen International, Ltd. (1988);<sup>24</sup> Maggs's *European Bulletin 21* (1997);<sup>25</sup> and Sotheby's, 5 December 2006 (lot 60) and 10 July 2012 (lot 57).<sup>26</sup> Most recently, a single lot of six lavishly illuminated leaves hammered at Christie's on 1 December 2015.<sup>27</sup>

In some cases, individual leaves appear in multiple catalogs as they pass from dealer to dealer or cycle between collections and the marketplace. One example illustrates this diffusion. Folio 215, which featured a historiated initial of Daniel in the Lion's Den, appeared at Sotheby's in December 2001,

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20 *Catalogue 11* (McMinnville, OR: Pirages Fine Books, ca. 1983), items 10–12, with black-and-white illustrations of all three leaves.

21 *Catalogue 1036: Bookhands of the Middle Ages, Medieval Manuscript Leaves Principally from a Collection Formed in the 19th Century* (London: Quaritch, 1984), 52–55, items 64–66, with illustrations of two folios on pp. 52 and 54; *Catalogue 1056: Bookhands of the Middle Ages, Pt. II: Medieval Manuscript Leaves with a Selection of Charters* (London: Quaritch, 1985), 10–11, items 6–7, with an illustration of a single folio on p. 10.

22 *Catalogue One: Important Western Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts* (Akron: Ferrini Rare Books, 1987), 29–30, items 9–11, with a full-color illustration of a single folio on p. 20, and a detail illustration of an additional historiated initial in black and white on p. 28.

23 *Illuminated Manuscripts* (London: Schuster Gallery, 1987), 15–16, items 4–7, with illustrations of a pair of folios on p. 15.

24 *Cloister, City, and Court: Miniature Painting in the Later Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Tokyo: Maruzen International, Ltd., 1988), 6, items 2–4.

25 *Catalogue 1227: Illuminated Leaves and Mediaeval Miniatures* (London: Maggs Bros, Ltd., 1997), 6–7, items 10–11, with a full-color illustration of an illuminated folio on p. 7.

26 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 5 December 2006), 28, lot 60, with a full-color illustration; and *The History of Western Script: Sixty Important Manuscript Leaves from the Schøyen Collection* (London: Sotheby's, 10 July 2012), 105, lot 57, with a full-color illustration.

27 *Valuable Books and Manuscripts* (London: Christie's, 1 December 2015), 10, lot 5, with a color illustration featuring all six leaves.

estimated at £2,000–£3,000, but unsold.<sup>28</sup> Not long after, it was listed for \$5,500 in *Pirages Catalogues 47–49* (2002–2003), acquired as part of a private treaty sale of fragments bought at Sotheby's. The Daniel leaf appeared again at Sotheby's in June 2004, estimated at £1,500–£2,000, presumably having been submitted for sale by Pirages after they failed to sell it through their catalogs.<sup>29</sup> The frequency with which leaves have traveled through the market testifies to their fast and wide dispersal. In addition to the 190 leaves at Ohio State University, folios can be traced to institutional and private collections in North America, England, Norway, Japan, and Australia.

What is the butcher's bill for the Hornby-Cockerell Bible? What has been lost, in other words, by this manuscript's dispersal? Catalogs discovered through the SDBM attest that it had 440 leaves, with eighty-one illuminated initials and seventy-one additional historiated or inhabited initials attributed to at least four different artistic workshops. We also know that this book belongs to a family of rare transitional Bibles testifying to the dynamic evolution of scriptural formats and contents during the first decades of the thirteenth century.<sup>30</sup> The disaggregation of this manuscript has reduced our understanding of the textual transmission, transitional formats, illumination style, and workshop practice.

In trade for this unique and irreplaceable cultural heritage, Ferrini and Greenberg banked vast profits. Based on the available data for leaves sold in the marketplace and the appraised value of fragments donated to institutions, we estimate the cost of restoring this manuscript at \$450 per text folio and \$6,500 per illuminated folio. Together, the 326 text leaves and 114 illuminated leaves would command \$887,700 today. Based on the 1981 purchase price of \$23,100—approximately \$60,000 in today's dollars—this

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28 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 6 December 2001), 14, lot 10, with a color illustration of the historiated initial.

29 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 22 June 2004), 15, lot 14, with a color detail illustration of the historiated initial.

30 For a detailed introduction to transitional Bibles, see Laura Light, "French Bibles c. 1200–30: A New Look at the Origin of the Paris Bible," in *The Early Medieval Bible*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 155–76.

book-breaking results in a total estimated profit of \$827,700, a 1,380 percent return on investment. By providing access to the catalogs of broken manuscripts like the Hornby-Cockrell Bible, the SDBM supplies valuable information about the provenance of fragments. At the same time, however, it also shines a stark light on the financial incentive underpinning biblioclasm, as well as the ways that catalog descriptions motivate dealers to break manuscripts by emphasizing their individually commodifiable elements.

## 2. *A Long-Lost Relative*

In 2012 Truman State University (Kirksville, Missouri) acquired a single folio from an exceptional large-format medieval Bible (s.n.) (fig. 2). The Truman State leaf from the Book of Job was written in twenty-six lines and measures 470 mm x 335 mm (fig. 3). Searching the SDBM for likely candidates with these parameters yields two results, the first a reference to six folios offered in an H. P. Kraus catalog (SDBM\_20328),<sup>31</sup> and the second a listing for a Bible volume described in the 1921 catalog of manuscripts at the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester (SDBM\_126484). The online copy of the Rylands Library illustrates MS 16, the item cited in the SDBM, with a page identical in script to that of the Truman State fragment. While the dimensions (460 mm x 335 mm) do not match perfectly,<sup>32</sup> the Truman State fragment from Job would not have originated in the Rylands manuscript (Genesis through Ruth), but rather in the second volume of this multi-volume giant Bible. It seems entirely plausible that the Rylands Bible has been reduced in dimensions from rebinding.

The 1980 catalog of the Rylands Latin manuscripts describes MS 16 as “the most substantial surviving fragment . . . of volume 1 of a large-format

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31 *Catalogue 95: Twenty-Five Manuscripts* (New York: Krauss, 1961), item 7.

32 M. R. James, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Latin Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library at Manchester* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1921), 44–45, item 16 (“Pars Bibliorum”).



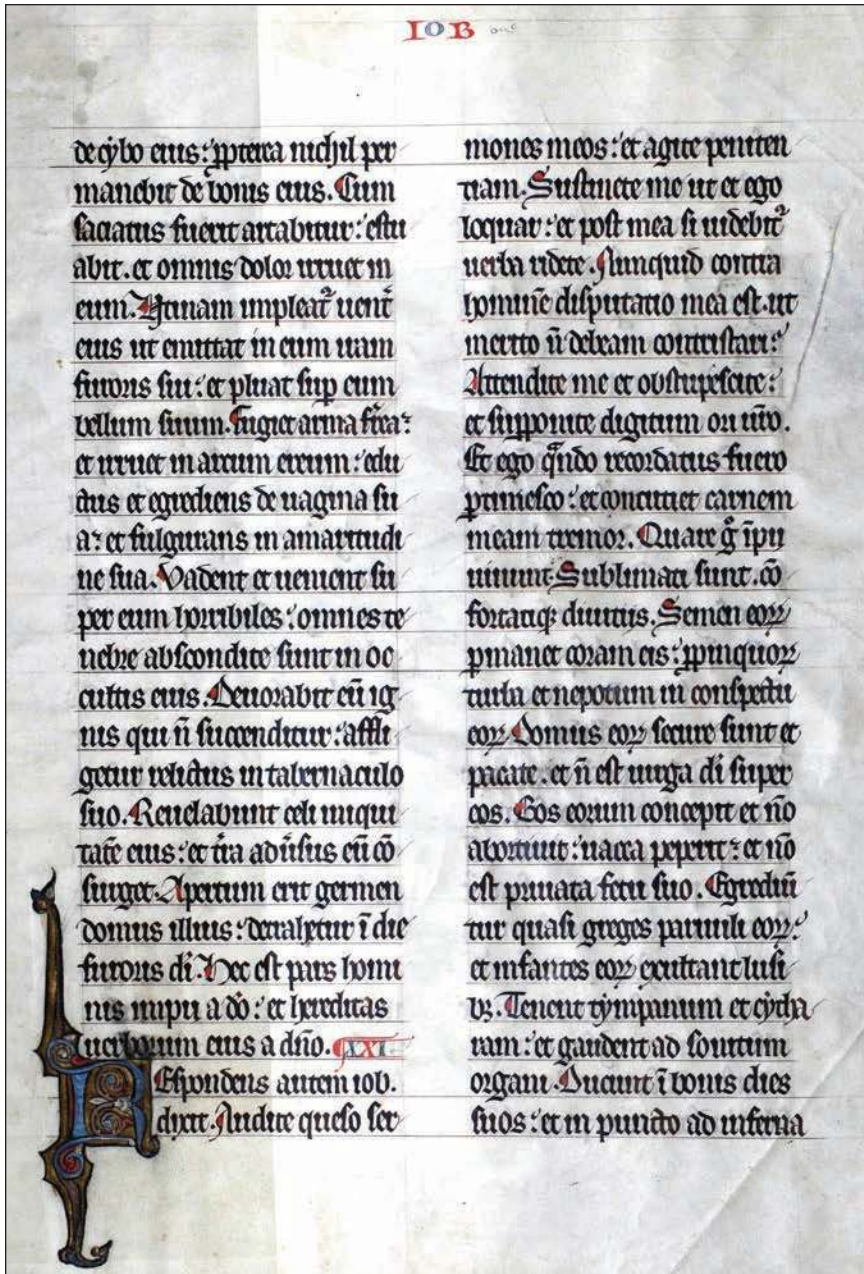


FIGURE 2. Folio from the "Glazier-Rylands Bible," Hainault, ca. 1270. Kirksville, MO, Truman State University, Pickler Memorial Library, s.n.



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FIGURE 3. Reverse-engineering the Truman State bible fragment using the “Advanced Search” feature of the Schoenberg Database.

four-volume Bible in northeast France or Belgium ca. 1260/1270.”<sup>33</sup> The description provides locations for other parts of this Bible: a quire of six folios at the Pierpont Morgan Library that proves to be the missing first gathering of the Rylands codex;<sup>34</sup> three individual folios from 4 Kings, Canticles, and 2 Maccabees at the Royal Library in Brussels;<sup>35</sup> a single column of text with the end of Luke and the beginning of the prologue to John, its current location unknown but listed in a 1949 Sotheby’s catalog;<sup>36</sup>

33 James, *Descriptive Catalogue*, reprinted with Introduction and additional notes by Frank Taylor (Munich: Kraus Reprints, 1980), 13.

34 New York, Morgan Library and Museum, MS G.64.

35 Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS II 1339.

36 *Catalogue of Fine Illuminated Manuscripts Comprising the Property of Major J. R. Abbey* (London: Sotheby’s, 29 November 1949), 4, lot 2.

and another single column containing part of the prologue to John and the beginning of his Gospel now at the Cleveland Museum of Art.<sup>37</sup> We have since discovered another portion at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), whose catalog identifies the manuscript as the "Glazier-Rylands Bible," ascribes its creation to either Cambrai or Tournai, or the Hainaut more broadly, and provides information about its breaking, noting that the V&A acquired its folios from the art historian William Henry James Weale in 1883.<sup>38</sup>

Data from the Truman State folio reunites it with leaves in London, Manchester, Brussels, New York, and Cleveland. The SDBM provides the butcher's bill (information lost by dismemberment and dispersal): it once belonged to the second volume of an illuminated four-volume lectern Bible produced in Tournai or Cambrai, or at least in the Hainaut, around 1270. Although the Rylands portion first emerged in Belgium around 1836, it was first recorded at public auction in 1884,<sup>39</sup> and the further dispersal of its parts through the years may have been inspired by the Bible's perceived fragmentary nature, a common motivation for further breaking by dealers and collectors who cite a volume's textual incompleteness as justification for further dismemberment. We now know that the Truman State fragment belonged with three other leaves from the second volume, 1 Samuel through Sirach. In a very real sense, the SDBM has helped this particular manuscript orphan find its extended family.

### 3. *Historical Place*

Our third case study demonstrates how the SDBM can tie manuscript fragments seemingly without historical provenance to a specific time and place.

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37 Acc. 52.565. This fragment also appeared as lot 3 in the 29 November 1942 Sotheby's sale, p. 5.

38 The V&A holds five complete leaves, identified as Museum Numbers 8986 A–E, and four single-column clippings preserving historiated initials, identified as Museum Numbers 8987 A–D.

39 James and Taylor, *Descriptive Catalogue* (1980), 13.

A recognizable quaternion from an English psalter at the Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University matches a single fragment at the Cleveland Museum of Art and another nine folios at Ohio State University (fig. 4).<sup>40</sup> Here we can immediately ascertain some details about the wide dispersal of this manuscript in a university library and two private art museums. The search terms “psalter,” 30 lines, and 265 mm x 175 mm return only a single record: a 1969 Sotheby’s sale (SDBM\_2997). Yet the item description from this auction catalog provides a wealth of data, including a reproduction of the illuminated leaf now at the Cleveland Museum of Art. The discursive description states that the manuscript was likely produced between 1290 and 1310; still existed in its medieval binding at the time of sale; originally consisted of seventy-six folios and included seven historiated initials, each itemized; included a “rough but impressive” full-page pen drawing of King Edmund the Martyr on a now missing flyleaf; contained a flyleaf inscription connecting it to Pond Hall and Orfforde in Suffolk; and was possibly written for the church of St. Botulph at Iken, also in Suffolk.<sup>41</sup> Such details contextualize this psalter by locating its home, identifying the church of St. Botulph itself, and speculating on the possible motivation behind its creation as a product of the English wool trade, potentially commissioned for St. Botulph’s by a local guild.

Yet even more can be deduced. Cornell’s accession number 80.052.001a–h gives a date of donation by which time the manuscript must have been broken. The accession records also document the leaves as a gift of Michael A. Greenberg, Bruce Ferrini’s partner in the dismembering of the Hornby-Cockerell Bible. In fact, Ferrini’s *Catalogue One* (1987) includes three folios from this Iken Psalter.<sup>42</sup> Information in this source attributes the illuminations to a “follower of the Master of the Queen Mary Psalter,” a detail providing one art-historical context. The entry states that two of Ferrini’s

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40 Ithaca, NY, Cornell University, Johnson Museum of Art, acc. 80.052.001a–h; Cleveland Museum of Art, Jeanne Miles Blackburn Collection, 1999.125; Columbus, Ohio State University Libraries, Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, MS MR.Frag.56.1–9.

41 *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts and Miniatures including a Highly Important Anglo-Saxon Manuscript* (London: Sotheby’s, 10 December 1969), 20, lot 36.

42 *Catalogue One* (Ferrini), 60–61, items 38–41.



FIGURE 4. Iken Psalter, England, ca. 1300, with constituents at the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University. Columbus, Ohio State University, Thompson Memorial Library Rare Books & Manuscripts Library MS MR.Frag.60.1.

fragments appeared for sale in an earlier, undated Edward R. Lubin catalog.<sup>43</sup> Finally, the catalog supplies images of two unknown and currently untraced illuminations.<sup>44</sup> With the images from Cornell, Ohio State, and the Cleveland Museum of Art, we can now identify six of the seven historiated initials from this codex.

Other Ferrini catalogs have even more evidence. *Catalogue Three* (1995)<sup>45</sup> confirms this psalter's association with St. Botolph's, Iken, as recorded by A. G. Watson in his *Supplement to the Second Edition* of N. R. Ker's *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*.<sup>46</sup> Watson's own entry provides additional evidence of provenance, noting that the presumably complete manuscript appeared for sale in Traylen's *Catalogue 77* in 1972, and that a single leaf appeared in Quaritch's *Catalogue 1036* in 1984.<sup>47</sup>

In this case study, then, a single entry from the SDBM secured original codicology, contents, illustrations, date, origin, and provenance. Additional catalog records not only confirmed the earlier provenance, but also enabled us to illustrate six historiated initials and attribute them to an artistic milieu. Just as significantly, this print evidence proves that the codex was dismembered between its last known appearance as a complete object in 1972 and its emergence as loose fragments in 1980, when Greenberg donated a quire to the Johnson Museum at Cornell.

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43 Edward R. Lubin, *European Illuminated Manuscripts* (Turin: U. Allemandi, ca. 1985), nos. 16 and 17.

44 See pp. 54 and 61 of *Catalogue One* (Ferrini).

45 *Catalogue Three: Medieval & Renaissance Miniature Paintings Catalogue Three* (Akron: Ferrini Rare Books, 1995), item 14. Ferrini offered a text leaf from this manuscript a year later in *Bulletin Two: Selections from Inventory* (Akron: Ferrini Rare Books, early winter 1996), item 16.

46 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1987), 73.

47 *Catalogue 1036: Bookhands of the Middle Ages* (London: Quaritch, 1984), 13, item 16. Additional fragments from this psalter appear in *Catalogue 9* (McMinnville, OR: Pirages Fine Books, before 1982), item 11; *Catalogue 65* (McMinnville, OR: Pirages Fine Books, 2013), item 52; *Illuminated Manuscripts* (Schuster Gallery), item 20; and *Cloister, City, and Court* (Maruzen), item 18.



#### 4. Mistaken Identity

A single leaf of Peter of Tarantaise's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* now owned by the University of South Carolina (USC) represents our fourth case study (fig. 5).<sup>48</sup> A search of the SDBM (59 lines, 350 mm x 247 mm) yielded a single record (SDBM\_115289) for a disbound batch of forty folios sold by Sotheby's in December 2004.<sup>49</sup> While the catalog gives information about date and origin (northern France during the fourteenth century), alongside some codicological and textual details, this is the only unillustrated lot of sixty-five. Why not include a picture to attract more potential bidders? The cost of including a photo is negligible (about £100), but it would make the manuscript easily traceable. The absence of an image invites scrutiny, especially because the South Carolina leaf represents the first one in the manuscript. The catalog description explains that a few leaves are missing at the beginning of the manuscript's first quire, with the "remainder now loose." Both the USC manuscript and the Sotheby's lot have two-column layouts of fifty-nine lines, virtually identical measurements (350 mm x 247 mm versus 350 mm x 245 mm resp.), with textual lemmas in each underlined in red. A potential link is compelling but inconclusive.

Confirmation came from thirteenth-century fragments of Peter Lombard's glossed Pauline Epistles acquired by South Carolina at the same time as the Peter of Tarantaise folio. The dimensions of both fragments are identical, but the Lombard is earlier and laid-out in fifty-five gloss-lines. A search for the Lombard folio in the SDBM uncovered eight leaves from the same manuscript offered in a 2007 Quaritch catalog (SDBM\_93163).<sup>50</sup> Duplicate records appended to this SDBM listing<sup>51</sup> reveal that a manuscript of this description consisting of 285 folios emerged on the market in May

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48 Columbia, University of South Carolina Libraries, Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Early MS 70.

49 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 4 December 2007), 126, lot 54.

50 *Catalogue 1348: Bookhands of the Middle Ages: Part VIII, Medieval Manuscripts* (London: Quaritch, 2007), 78, item 95.

51 SDBM\_1063, 35707, 71690, 86048, 93163, and 201720.



[illegible]

1988, after being deaccessioned from the collection of Martin Schøyen. Intact in 1988, this codex included a fourteenth-century copy of a commentary on Romans by Peter of Tarantaise. A second record of the same manuscript at Sotheby's in June 2003 (SDBM\_35707) verifies that USC's fragments originated in the same volume.<sup>52</sup> The auction listing also describes how a corner of parchment had been cut from the upper margin of the Peter of Tarantaise, which began on fol. 239r. The South Carolina folio is missing the same strip of parchment and underneath the foliation "240" the number 239 has been erased. Finally, the collation of the original manuscript in the Sotheby's listing conforms to the evidence recorded in the 2004 Sotheby's catalog. This composite manuscript, which may once have belonged to Rebdorf Abbey, remained complete until 2003 in a late-medieval German chained binding. It had resided in the libraries of two celebrated modern collectors, Martin Schøyen and J. R. Ritman.

In addition to supplying us with the information necessary to trace USC's two fragments to the same original medieval codex, the SDBM also allows us to tally the butcher's bill for this manuscript. In 2003 it sold for £30,000 (\$50,250), yielding a total of £105 (\$177) per leaf. The Peter of Tarantaise portion sold a year later for £4,250, or £106 per folio, effectively at no profit.<sup>53</sup> A group of ten folios sold by Sotheby's in December 2005 (SDBM\_71690) fetched £325 (\$566) per folio,<sup>54</sup> with another twelve selling in 2006 for £190 (\$375) per leaf (SDBM\_86048);<sup>55</sup> Quaritch sold eight folios in December 2007 for £375 (\$682) apiece (SDBM\_93163);<sup>56</sup> and Sotheby's hammered a final batch of fourteen leaves in July 2012 for £339 (\$525) per leaf (SDBM\_201720).<sup>57</sup> The average price for each folio comes to £307 (\$537), with an average profit of £202 (\$360) per leaf. The total profit made on this manuscript, excluding any illuminated leaves, amounts to £49,490 (\$88,200), demonstrating that text-only leaves, while perhaps not as lucrative as

52 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 17 June 2003), 36–41, lot 82.

53 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 4 December 2007), 126, lot 54.

54 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 6 December 2005), 8–9, lot 3.

55 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 5 December 2006), 24, lot 51.

56 *Catalogue 1348* (Quaritch), 78, lot 95.

57 *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 10 July 2012), lot 1. <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/western-manuscripts-miniatures/lot.1.html>.

illuminated leaves of the type found in the Hornby-Cockerell Bible, can still be marketable commercial objects.

### 5. *A Plagued Missal*

Our fifth case study concerns a liturgical manuscript whose constituents have been on the market for decades and can be found in collections worldwide. This dispersal has engendered confusion about the original manuscript source, as some folios seem to come from an evangeliary, while others belong to an epistolary. Using the University of South Carolina's derivative fragment, Early MS 117, as the basis of an SDBM search (25 lines, 325 mm x 233 mm) returns a reference not to a dealer or auction catalog, but to a 1989 descriptive catalog of medieval manuscripts in New Zealand (SDBM\_143114).<sup>58</sup> The very full reference records that the Dunedin Public Library acquired a single leaf of this manuscript from the London bookseller Maggs in 1982.<sup>59</sup> It goes on to state that the folio originally came from a late-fifteenth century codex produced in Venice or Padua that contained a missal preceded by an epistolary and followed by an evangeliary. The catalog also conveys that the complete manuscript was auctioned at Sotheby's (14 December 1977, lot 69) and subsequently resold (19 June 1979, lot 49) for £3,200 (\$6,720) to Philip Duschnes, a New York bookseller who defended breaking and who, in fact, cut up this missal.<sup>60</sup> If not for the SDBM, linking USC's fragment to the Dunedin folio would have been far more challenging.

Data from the Sotheby's catalog clears up some of the confusion surrounding this imposing manuscript. The catalog records that this liturgical book was formatted for twenty-six or twenty-seven lines. Yet the South Carolina and Dunedin folios each have twenty-five lines, a coincidence

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58 Margaret M. Manion, Vera F. Vines, and Christopher De Hamel, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in New Zealand Collections* (Melbourne: Thames & Hudson, 1989), 106, no. 105.

59 *European Bulletin 11* (London: Maggs Bros, Ltd., 1982).

60 Christopher de Hamel, "Selling Manuscript Fragments in the 1960s," in Brownrigg and Smith, *Interpreting and Collecting*, 47–56 at 54–55.

explaining why the SDBM did not return the 1979 Sotheby's catalog entry. Catalogers rarely, if ever, count lines on every page, and sheer accident explains how leaves randomly consulted by the cataloger in 1979 included none of twenty-five lines. Having been traced, the manuscript's varied contents can now be fully understood: an epistolary on folios 7–96, a missal on fols. 97–292, and an evangeliary on fols. 293–392. We also discover that the codex once contained an inscription by a monk named Andrew Cavalini dated 23 June 1528 detailing how he had fled with this manuscript from the plague afflicting his abbey of La Madonna di Colombini (currently unidentified) to take refuge in Monterosa (apparently northwest of Genoa). Additionally, we learn that the codex entered the library of Baron Horace de Landau (1824–1903), and ultimately passed into the commercial market through his great-nephew, Horace Finlay (d. 1945).

Our SDBM search resulted in the crucial Dunedin entry, and the note that Philip Duschnes purchased the codex in 1979 recommends an examination of Duschnes's catalogs. In fact, Duschnes listed sixteen individual leaves featuring decorated initials in his January 1980 catalog (#227) at \$250 per leaf (fig. 6), and another twenty-five decorated leaves in a 1981 catalog (#240) at \$137.50 apiece. Along with the other 351 folios of the codex, which he sold individually for \$39, Duschnes's act of biblioclasm grossed \$21,126, for a net profit of \$14,406. The monk Andrew Cavalini might have saved the manuscript from pestilence in the sixteenth century, but as we have learned through the SDBM, it succumbed to the plague of book-breaking for profit in 1979.

## 6. *Deep Provenance*

One leaf from a small book of hours acquired by the Carlos Museum at Emory University in 1971 is the focus of our final case study (fig. 7).<sup>61</sup> Our faceted search of the SDBM (12 lines, 137 mm x 90 mm) yielded nineteen results. Given the 1971 accession date, however, we can narrow potential

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61 Atlanta, Emory University, Michael C. Carlos Museum, acc. 1971.100.



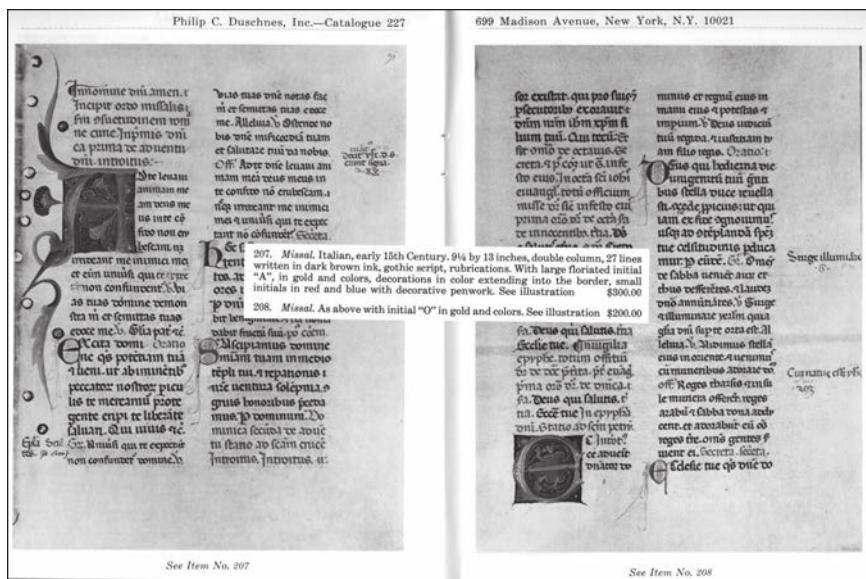


FIGURE 6. Catalogue 227 of Philip C. Duschnes, January 1980. Items 207 and 208 cut from an Italian missal auctioned by Sotheby's, 19 June 1979, lot 49.

matches to a single record (SDBM\_26934) for the 29 November 1966 Sotheby's sale of manuscripts formerly belonging to Sir Thomas Phillipps. The catalog included a black-and-white reproduction of an illuminated folio matching the Carlos Museum fragment.<sup>62</sup> The book of hours hammered to Maggs (£350), and the firm must have broken it within four years, perhaps after failing to sell it as a complete codex.

The Sotheby's record offers a number of interesting details about the manuscript, once the property of the Mantuan lord Maximiliano Gonzaga (1516–1569), and possibly commissioned for his grandfather, Giovanni (1474–1525), lord of Vescovato. More intriguingly, we learn that the manu-

62 *Bibliotheca Phillippica, Medieval Manuscripts, New Series, Second Part: Catalogue of Forty-Four Manuscripts of the 9th to the 17th Century from the Celebrated Collection Formed by Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792–1872), The Property of the Trustees of the Robinson Trust* (London: Sotheby's, 29 November 1966), 102–3, lot 78, illustrated on plate 24.



FIGURE 7. Miniature of St. Bartholomew by the San Vito Illuminator from a Book of Hours owned by Maximiliano Gonzaga (d. 1569) and sold by Luigi Celotti in 1825. © Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University. Photo by Bruce M. White, 2008.

script was consigned by the Abbate Luigi Celotti, a notorious figure often considered to be the first large-scale book-breaker, to Sotheby's (14 March 1825, lot 213).<sup>63</sup> Both the 1825 and 1966 auction records verify that the manuscript originally contained seven fine historiated initials, with much of the text written throughout in gold letters. Both of these features likely contributed to the manuscript's appeal as a profitable candidate for breaking.

63 Not long after this auction, Celotti would organize the first sale exclusively dedicated to single leaves and cuttings at Christie's on 26 May 1825, with a second sale to follow on 3 May 1826 (Hindman et al., *Manuscript Illumination*, 53).



The butcher's bill for the Emory fragment situates it in an original codex of 176 folios bound in a sixteenth-century binding, written within a distinct Franciscan orbit, and executed in a decorative style evoking Paduan influence. Additionally, the manuscript is also compellingly linked to a noble family in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Mantua as well as to two celebrated manuscript collectors of the nineteenth century. The SDBM enables users to recover this deep provenance spanning almost two centuries of ownership.

## *Conclusion*

The case studies outlined above demonstrate how hitherto unexplored faceted searching of the SDBM can yield meaningful scholarship on the history of medieval and Renaissance manuscript fragments. By revitalizing the ephemeral—a single transaction in the commercial life of a manuscript—the SDBM provides fragments with extensive context, worldwide exposure, and digital permanence. Admittedly, six cases represent the merest subset of the many thousands of complete or near-complete manuscripts broken in modern times, not all of which will be represented in the SDBM. We estimate, however, that many hundreds of medieval books now surviving as many thousands of folios can be reconstituted virtually through the reverse-engineering we have devised.

The SDBM, in fact, is a key tool in our internet resource Manuscriptlink, a collaborative digital project dedicated to undoing decades' worth of manuscript dismemberment through the virtual reconstruction of an estimated two thousand "lost" medieval codices whose constituent parts are dispersed in hundreds of institutional and private collections worldwide.<sup>64</sup> Manuscriptlink will gather tens of thousands of fragments in a single digital environment, re-creating notional codices and restoring their bibliological and textual coherence. Rationalizing incomplete or contradictory descriptions, content specialists will generate authoritative fragment-level metadata in collaboration

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<sup>64</sup> <http://lichen.csd.sc.edu/manuscriptlink/>.

with international experts. While inviting public evaluation and critique, this model of metadata curation ensures that sister leaves from the same original manuscript in multiple collections are reliably linked and systematically analyzed. This metadata will be fully searchable and users will be able to execute faceted searches of bibliographical and codicological features reminiscent of our own searches of the SDBM outlined in the case studies above to locate, for example, Bibles produced in England between 1200 and 1250, with historiated initials, with text laid out in double columns of sixty lines, and with a measurement of 200 mm or more in height.

Manuscriptlink incorporates multiple visualization tools that respect the nature of fragments both as single objects and as components of a larger whole. A CODEX visualization presents consecutive leaves in the page-spread of a virtual codex with page-turner capability, complete with a mouseover that displays abbreviated metadata for each fragment. Abbreviated shelf-marks identify the physical location of each folio and link it to comprehensive metadata. Double-clicking the images launches a PAN+ZOOM viewer that allows users to examine images in fine detail, and sequential folios from the same codex are also presented alongside the CODEX visualization in a film-strip format. A minimizable and semi-transparent BOOKSHELF applet allows users to select up to four images for analysis in a JUXTAPOSE&COMPARE visualization that enables users to examine multiple images simultaneously through separate, movable, dynamically resizable panes with independent PAN+ZOOM functionality. Finally, to facilitate research over multiple sessions, Manuscriptlink users also can save as many folios as they wish to a personal ARCHIVE. Thumbnail images and comprehensive metadata related to any fragment—or even all the fragments—included in the ARCHIVE can also be printed or exported via email in PDF format.

Together, digital resources like Manuscriptlink and the SDBM can help fragmentologists reconstruct lost and broken medieval codices on an industrial, rather than piecemeal, scale by leveraging and activating the collective power of thousands of historical records of the commercial manuscript trade, hundreds of individual fragment collections, and countless manuscript studies scholars around the world. Considering that Yale University

owns approximately 1,100 medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, our plan to restore approximately 2,000 manuscripts from hundreds of thousands of fragments through Manuscriptlink will generate a comparatively vast and representative collection. The SDBM and its ability to help us reconstruct the origins and provenance of seemingly lost manuscripts represents a key tool in this effort, connecting the physical resources to their vanished embodiments.