

# Fragmentology

A Journal for the Study of Medieval Manuscript Fragments

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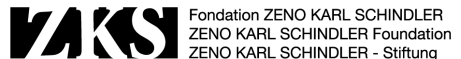
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# *Iter Helveticum Numericum*

## *Foraging for Fragments in Swiss Digital Collections*

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**Abstract:** This article describes manuscript fragments of seven different texts preserved in the bindings of early printed volumes. All fragments were studied from digital images available on e-rara, the platform for digitized rare books from Swiss institutions ([www.e-rara.ch](http://www.e-rara.ch)). This first exploration reveals how the increasing number of digital online images of medieval manuscripts and early printed books presents an opportunity for the identification and study of the fragments in their bindings. Such fragments offer vast opportunities for a better understanding of the transmission and reception of the texts that they contain.

**Keywords:** binding fragments, Grammatici Latini, Seneca, pseudo-Clement, John Chrysostom

The ever-growing availability of digital book images in freely accessible repositories on the internet has in recent times spectacularly enhanced the possibilities to develop innovative research and to broaden existing insights. Frequently, the descriptions of printed books in online catalogues remain laconic regarding the presence of manuscript waste in their bindings; most entries make no mention of the existence of pastedowns or flyleaves recycled from older manuscripts, or at best summarily acknowledge them (e.g., “Einband: Fragment einer mittelalterlichen Pergament-Handschrift”)<sup>1</sup> without adding details on their physical appearances or contents.

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\* The research for this article was carried out as part of my postdoctoral fellowship project *Mind Your Words! The Role of Medieval Translations in the History of Concepts*, funded by the Research Foundation – Flanders (12W5722N).

1 *Swisscovery* Catalog entry for Luzern, Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek, V.a 1330 (K1) (*Collationes: Das ist, Zusammen Tragungen heilsamer, andächter*

To assess the potential for a more encompassing research project on medieval manuscript waste in early printed books, I have over the last two years systematically surveyed the images available on e-rara, the platform for digitized rare books from Swiss institutions ([www.e-rara.ch](http://www.e-rara.ch)). My search was limited to books published before 1680, starting from the earliest edition available on the platform (oldest dated book 1469). The end date was determined by the practical observation that by the middle of the seventeenth century, the use of manuscript waste had all but disappeared from the specimens presented on the website.<sup>2</sup>

Obviously, several monastic centres in Switzerland and South Germany were renowned for the precious old manuscripts that they had preserved. It is likely that some of these manuscripts were not recognized for their value and ended up in the scrap parchment heap in a binder's workshop. Admittedly, the early printed books reproduced in the e-rara.ch repository represent the *current* holdings of many institutional and a few private libraries in Switzerland. Consequently, the books were not necessarily bound in the same territory, nor can the origins of most bindings that preserve the manuscript fragments be determined with certainty.

Keeping these reservations in mind, I will in this article describe several fragments of early manuscripts that my forage through the digitized Swiss early printed book collections has yielded. The fragments are currently held in Swiss collections, but their connection with the country does not necessarily stretch beyond the moment that the printed books arrived at their present locations. In many instances, though, it must be considered very likely that the parent volumes from which the manuscript waste originated have a Swiss pedigree.

The selection of fragments presented here was exclusively guided by my personal liking and preferences. I concentrated on

*vnd nützlicher Betrachtungen vnnnd Lehren*[...], Constance 1602), [https://rzs.swisscovery.sls.ch/permalink/41SLSP\\_RZS/nrc405/alma9914014720105505](https://rzs.swisscovery.sls.ch/permalink/41SLSP_RZS/nrc405/alma9914014720105505).

2 The practice was undoubtedly still in use; see, e.g., [F-ttqq] the fragment from an extremely rare manuscript of Al-Farabi's *Didascalía Rhetorice* in the Latin translation by Hermannus Alemannus preserved on the cover of a book printed in Cologne in 1671: Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, AB 40 18/i, 8.

manuscripts with a textual interest, ignoring liturgical, musical, or iconographic information. Numerous other fragments that my search had returned but that I deemed less connected with my personal interests were circulated on my Twitter channel over the previous years. They give an impression of the breadth of results that a more systematic investigation into these collections will produce. I maintain this information in a database, which currently includes about 150 items taken from the e-rara platform alone.<sup>3</sup>

In the subsequent treatment, fragments of two secular texts are presented first (since they are less numerous), followed by four works by Church fathers, and ending with fragments from a rare collection of canon law. All fragments are described in detail on [fragmentarium.ms](https://fragmentarium.ms). Unfortunately, e-rara does not systematically provide images with a ruler: therefore, adequate information on the fragments' dimensions is mostly lacking from their descriptions. Each entry begins with the title of the work and the Fragmentarium Identifier, followed by the shelfmark as provided on e-rara, and the e-rara identifier (DOI).

### 1. “Sergius”, *De littera* [F-txqk]

Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, KD XI 21, cover

e-rara: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-64066>

It is unclear whether the early-fifth-century grammarian Servius, whose works include commentaries on Vergil's *Aeneid* and on some sections from Donatus' *Ars*, should be distinguished from Sergius, who is considered the author of another fragmentarily preserved commentary on Donatus' grammar. *De littera* belongs to the latter work and contains sections on words and on their constituting parts.

The work was edited under the name of Sergius in the fourth volume of Keil's *Grammatici Latini*.<sup>4</sup> Keil relied on two primary manuscripts for the establishment of his text, one from Bobbio (eighth century, siglum B), the other from Freising (middle of the ninth century, siglum F). The latter is now MS [München, Bayerische](#)

3 P. Beullens, *Medieval manuscript fragments as binding waste*, database published 17 December 2024, <https://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14505425>.

4 *Probi Donati Servii qui feruntur De arte grammatica libri* (Grammatici Latini iv), ed. H. Keil, Leipzig 1864, 475–485.



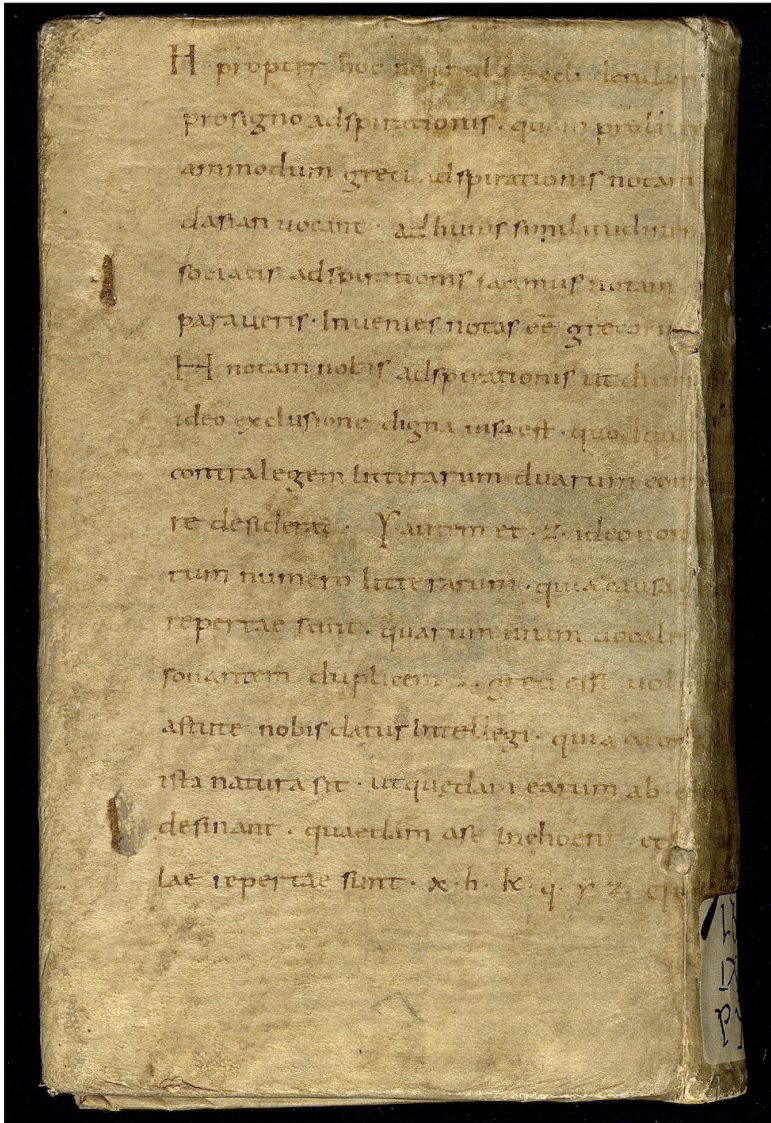


Figure 1: [F-txqk] "Sergius", *De littera*. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, KD XI 21, front cover

[Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6281](#). When Keil saw the former, it was MS Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 16, yet after the first World War, it was returned to Naples, whence it had been removed two centuries earlier. It is currently known as MS Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, Lat. 2. Keil claimed without providing further evidence that the older manuscript B preserves the most reliable text, which he assessed against the readings of the slightly younger F. Although he knew of the existence of many more manuscripts that contain the complete text or parts of it, among which he cited seven, mostly from the tenth century (MSS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. [7491](#), [7520](#), [7530](#), and [7559](#); Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 432; [St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 876](#); and the slightly earlier MS [Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 122](#), from the ninth century), he dismissed their variants as more recent interventions without authority (“*inventis recentiorum grammaticorum depravata sunt*”).<sup>5</sup>

Since Keil was not particularly generous in providing information about textual variants in the extant manuscripts of Sergius’ treatise, it remains a precarious enterprise to precisely situate any newly discovered witness of the text in its transmission history. Yet there can be no doubt that any contemporary manuscript of Keil’s two primary witnesses deserves a closer examination.

The remains of a bifolium from Sergius’ text was re-used upside down as a cover for a convolute of three editions, all printed in Basel in the second and third decades of the seventeenth century. The volume is known under shelfmark Kd XI 21 in the Universitätsbibliothek of Basel (= siglum U below).<sup>6</sup>

The writing on the bifolium dates from the middle of the ninth century. It displays some characteristics that may place its origin in (North) Italy. The execution of the letters is pleasingly regular and spacious without the use of the ampersand or abbreviations, not even in word endings. Ligatures are rare. Greek characters are written as majuscules. Vertical strokes are straight and mostly on the writing line, except for the *s* with a minimal descender and the *f* descending far below the line. The scribe consistently uses the

5 *Probi Donati Servii*, ed. Keil, XLVIII–XLIX.

6 Only the front cover is accessible in e-rara. Benedicta Erny was kind enough to send me scans of the spine and the rear cover.



uncial *a*, while the spelling of the diphthong *æ* varies between its full form and an *e* with or without cedilla.

The text on the two partially readable pages of the bifolium covers the sections 477,20 *h propter hoc...* – 478,5 *quae ... inchoant*, and 483,15 [ ] *syllaba pars...* – 483,29 *duobus legitimis ac*[ ]. The legibility of the text is made difficult by the fact that the bifolium was used upside down and trimmed to match the dimensions required for the binding. As a result, the text of the former section fills the front cover of the book, runs over the spine and ends on the right of the rear cover, while the left part of the text from the latter passage can be seen on the left side of the rear cover. A modern label on the top of the spine indicates the book's current shelfmark and at the same time masks some of the text.

As far as textual variants are concerned, the fragment almost always sides with F against B, although it is difficult to assess which variants are connective errors for the specific branch represented by either manuscript or just individual mistakes.

477,23: nos FU : *om.* B

477,29: repertae sunt FU : repertae sint B

478,4: repertae sunt FU : repertae sint B

483,24: dictionibus FU : sermonibus B

483,29: legitimis duobus accentibus F : legitimis duobus iure

B : duobus legitimis ac[ ] U

On the other hand, the scribe of U correctly spells the Greek words with B (*dasian* and *psilen* 477,23 against *dasen* and *silen* in F) and sides with the same manuscript in preserving the formula *ut diximus* (477,25), which is missing from F. Finally, U transmits a few variants of its own that might deserve to be critically considered.

477,23: quia U : quod B : pro F

478,1: consonantem duplicem U : duplicem consonantem F :  
duplicem B

In conclusion, fragment U is a precious witness of the early circulation of this grammatical treatise. As for its value for the establishment of the text, the limited extent of the bifolium, of which only the outward side is readable, and the scarcity of information on readings of other manuscripts than B or F in Keil's edition provide

us with an unsatisfactory picture of the hypothetical position of the lost parent volume of U.

## 2. Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* 97 [F-g2jr]

Zürich, ETH-Bibliothek, Rar 7949, cover

e-rara: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-30977>

Seneca's *Letters* were very popular reading matter during the Middle Ages and many manuscripts circulated in the period. Still, the early and abundant availability of manuscript witnesses is only partial and limited to letters 1–88, since the remaining letters 89–124 were transmitted along a different path and in considerably less preserved witnesses. Only one complete early manuscript of those



Figure 2: [F-g2jr] Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* 97. Zürich, ETH-Bibliothek, Rar 7949, back cover

letters is extant: MS [Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc.Class.46](#) (B), from the ninth century. In his study of the medieval textual history of Seneca's letters, L.D. Reynolds was able to reconstruct two other independent branches of the tradition on the basis of fragmentarily preserved manuscripts and some of their apographs whose scribes had had access to the incomplete manuscripts before they were mutilated.<sup>7</sup> The first of these manuscripts is MS [Brescia, Biblioteca Queriniana, B.II.6](#) (Q) from the tenth century, which contains all letters except for the last three. The text of those lost letters in Q can be retrieved from early copies of the manuscript. In addition, by using apographs of two lost siblings of Q, Reynolds was able to hypothetically reconstruct the ancestor of Q and its relatives, which he labels as  $\phi$ . Finally, MS [Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8540, fol. 31-32](#) (p) from the tenth century contains parts of letters 121 and 122 in a different tradition. Reynolds concluded that p has a considerable number of descendants that preserve the complete set of letters 89–124. He chose its two oldest copies from the twelfth century, MSS Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 123 (W) and [Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 45.24](#) (X) to reconstruct their lost ancestor  $\psi$ .<sup>8</sup>

In view of this particular transmission history, the discovery of a leaf from the twelfth century that contains part of letter 97 deserves special attention. It was glued over the cover of the volume Rar 7949 of the ETH-Bibliothek in Zürich (Z), the edition of a treatise in German on the art of fortification printed in Montbéliard (Mümpelgardt) by Jacob (Jacques) Foillet in 1612.<sup>9</sup> Whether the cover was manufactured in the printer's shop or ordered by a buyer of the book is difficult to establish. The front paper pasted down, which is glued over the folds of the parchment cover leaf, bears a handwritten note

7 L.D. Reynolds, *The Medieval Tradition of Seneca's Letters*, Oxford 1965, 35–53.

8 "There are, as far as I know, only three twelfth-century  $\psi$  manuscripts; there are a number of later manuscripts, but the  $\psi$  text was always comparatively rare. My main criterion in selecting WX as the best witnesses of  $\psi$  was one of date. (...) WX both belong to the late twelfth century." Reynolds, *The Medieval Tradition*, 42. The third twelfth-century witness is [Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire Historique de Médecine, H 445](#).

9 Martin Bosshard kindly sent me pictures of the volume's spine, which are missing from [e-rara.ch](#).

dated to the year 1636. The implication must be that the cover with the parchment leaf was produced in the first decades after the book was printed.

The leaf contains a passage from 97,7 (*admissum est...* 403,21 Reynolds) to 97,15 (*...metus non posset* 405,16 Reynolds). The text is written in two columns of approximately 32 lines. The leaf was tilted and glued sideways over the covers and the spine. On the spine, part of the parchment was lost, some sections are concealed by a modern shelfmark label. The remaining surface of the leaf suggests that the original manuscript must have been generously executed with wide margins, which apparently were not used for notetaking.

A careful comparison with Reynolds' critical edition of letter 97 showed many variants that could not be matched with his apparatus.<sup>10</sup> I could only attribute two variants of Z to one of the branches of the tradition as reported in Reynolds' apparatus:

97,8 (404,3 Reynolds): sunt ista  $\psi$ Z : ista BQ  
 97,15 (405,16 Reynolds): posset  $\psi$ Z : posse BQ

Assuming the possibility that space constraints prevented the editor from reporting variants that he considered irrelevant for the establishment of the critical text, I compared the preserved passage in Z with one of the representatives of the  $\psi$  branch used by Reynolds, X, which is conveniently accessible online. The comparison showed that numerous variants of Z are confirmed by the readings of X as probable mistakes of the lost archetype of the branch  $\psi$ :

97,8 (404,2 Reynolds): nudandarum meretricum : nudandarum  
 more (ss. Z) meretricum ZX  
 97,10 (404,16 Reynolds): praecipites : praecipites ZX  
 97,10 (404,18 Reynolds): deerrantem : errantem ZX  
 97,11 (404,20 Reynolds): aegro medicus : medicus aegro ZX  
 97,11 (404,23 Reynolds): nec ante : negantes Z : negante X  
 97,12 (404,26 Reynolds): negligi : negligi ZX  
 97,14 (405,12 Reynolds): et expavescere et securitati : ac expavescere et securitatis (-s in corr. X?) ZX  
 97,14 (405,12 Reynolds): ego : ergo ZX

10 L. Annaei Senecae *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, vol. 2, Libri XIV–XX, ed. L.D. Reynolds, Oxford 1965, 403–405.

97,<sup>14</sup> (405,<sup>13</sup> Reynolds): nequitiam liberem : nequitiae me non  
liberem ZX

From these observations, it is safe to conclude that Z is another very fragmentary witness for the twelfth-century circulation of Seneca's letters 89–124 in the  $\psi$  branch. Its parent manuscript was closely related to the text as preserved in X. Although the  $\psi$  tradition is “exceedingly and demonstrably corrupt”,<sup>11</sup> the identification of the text in Z significantly adds to our knowledge of the transmission of Seneca's letters in the medieval period.

As for the provenance of the leaf, there are few clues to follow up. The host volume was printed in Montbéliard in 1612 by Jacques Foillet, who happened to also run a binder's workshop.<sup>12</sup> It is a likely guess that he re-used old parchment leaves for some of his bindings. Evidence for that assumption comes from the inventory drawn up after his death in 1619, where are listed: “Deux livres pesantz, en environ, de parchemin escrit, servant pour la couverture.”<sup>13</sup> Whether the parent volume of our Seneca once belonged to that supply cannot be established with certainty, but it looks like a distinct possibility. Considering the numerous locations where Foillet exercised his craft, the probable passage of the Seneca volume through his workshop cannot bring us closer to determining its original provenance.

### 3. (Pseudo-)Clemens, *Recognitiones*, in the Latin translation of Rufinus [[F-lwdo](#)]

Genève, Bibliothèque de Genève, BGE Ctb 498

BGE Bc 3336, cover

e-rara: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-72188>

While the Greek original of the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones* was almost completely lost, its Latin translation produced by Rufinus early in the fifth century enjoyed a wide circulation. The

<sup>11</sup> Reynolds, *The Medieval Tradition*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> Leon Nardin, *Jacques Foillet. Imprimeur, libraire & papetier (1554–1619). Ses pérégrinations à Lyon, Genève, Constance, Bâle, Courcelles-les-Montbéliard, Besançon & Montbéliard d'après des documents inédits*, Paris 1906, 115–117.

<sup>13</sup> Nardin, *Jacques Foillet*, 242.



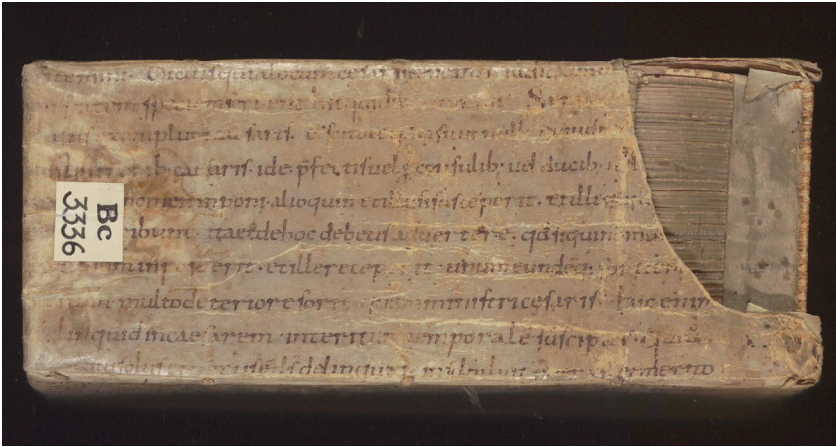


Figure 3: [F-lwdo] (Pseudo-)Clemens, *Recognitiones* (trad. Rufinus). Genève, Bibliothèque de Genève, BGE Ctb 498 BGE Bc 3336, cover of spine

popularity of the text is demonstrated by the more than one hundred manuscripts known to the editors of the critical edition. About a dozen of them date from the ninth century or earlier, a few are as old as the sixth or seventh centuries.<sup>14</sup>

In their extensive preface, which relies on scholarly work performed for over a century by numerous researchers, the editors succeeded in classifying the extant manuscripts, ranging in time over nearly a millennium and over one hundred in number, into various branches. The resulting groups of manuscripts are labelled according to the geographical regions where their witnesses predominantly originated. As can be expected with such a popular and widely disseminated text, the different branches influenced each other early in the transmission history, resulting in contaminated text versions.

The single ninth-century leaf of this text on the cover of the printed book, apparently with the double shelfmark BGE Ctb 498 BGE Bc 3336 from the Bibliothèque de Genève will not decisively alter our understanding of the text's transmission. Yet it is a valuable witness for the work's early circulation, and additionally for

14 *Die Pseudoklementinen. Vol. II, Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung*, 2nd edition, ed. B. Rehm (†) and G. Strecker, Berlin 1965.



the decline in its appreciation; ironically, the leaf is preserved on the cover of a copy of Jean Calvin's *Institutio christianae religionis*, printed in Geneva in 1618 on the presses of Jacobus Stoer.

The scribe uses a clear Carolingian minuscule, systematically beginning sentences with a slightly larger uncial letter. Abbreviations are limited to the expected range, including nomina sacra and the use of the ampersand. The diphthong *æ* is written in full or as *e* with or without cedilla. The only striking ligature combines the high *s* with the following *t*.

The preserved passage on the leaf comes from book v (18,8 *mundum omnia... – 21,1 ...vos aliorum*; 175,5–176,16 ed. Rehm-Strecker). Some of its readings clearly link the leaf with the so-called southern French branch of the manuscript tradition ( $\Pi$ ).

175,5: mundo] mundum  $\Pi$

175,11: consules + vel  $\Pi$

175,16: rationibus] ratione  $\Pi\Phi^{15}$

175,18: potestatum] potestatem  $\Pi$

The limited available text contains a potential hint that, despite its venerable age, the parent volume may already have been the subject of scholarly work or 'contamination'. At 176,12, the editors print the word *hibin*. However, the spelling *ibin* is also found, and the two variants are present in representative manuscripts of every branch. In the Geneva fragment, the body of the text has the spelling *ibin*, yet the scribe or a corrector added the letter *h* above the line (as he did with the word *yrsum* in the preceding line). This admittedly rather insignificant element might be used in evidence for the hypothesis that the parent volume had been subjected to some form of editorial revision during or after the copying process by comparing its text to that of another manuscript belonging to a branch different from its own model.

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15 With the Greek letter  $\Phi$ , the editors indicate the north French manuscript branch.

#### 4. Johannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliae in epistulam Ad Hebraeos*, in the Latin translation by Mutianus Scholasticus [F-5waj]

Zürich, Zentralbibliothek Rp 6o8, cover

e-rara: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-61193>

The sixth-century Latin translation of John Chrysostom's 34 sermons on Paul's epistle to the Hebrews by Mutianus Scholasticus had an early and abundant circulation. Albert Siegmund cites eight manuscripts from the Carolingian period and one palimpsest from the late seventh century (the lower script in MS London, British Library, Add. 43460).<sup>16</sup> Recently, a more complete list, which contains a supplementary ninth-century manuscript, was published by Camille Gerzaguët.<sup>17</sup> To that overview, I can now add a fragment from the ninth century preserved on the cover of the printed book from the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich. The host volume is a collection of humanist letters written and received by Christophorus Longolius. It was published by Gosouinus Cholinus in Cologne in 1605. According to the online catalogue of the Zentrabibliothek, the book belonged to the library of Rheinau monastery. The paper flyleaf bears the ex libris of Johann Kaspar Peijer, certainly a member of the influential Peyer im Hof family of Schaffhausen in Switzerland (Johann Kaspar proudly added his city and country to his name). However the history of the book went, the binding was in all likelihood produced in Switzerland, which forms a firm indication for the manuscript leaf's provenance.

A critical edition of the Latin translation has not yet been published, although its text was printed in volume 63 of the *Patrologia*

16 A. Siegmund, *Die Überlieferung der griechischen christlichen Literatur in der lateinischen Kirche bis zum zwölften Jahrhundert* (Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Benediktiner-Akademie 5), München-Pasing 1949, 98. The palimpsest was first brought to the attention of the scholarly world by E.A. Lowe, "An Uncial (Palimpsest) Manuscript of Mutianus in the Collection of A. Chester Beatty", *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1927), 29–33.

17 C. Gerzaguët, "Du Sud de l'Italie au Nord de l'Angleterre : le parcours du Chrysostome traduit par Mutien à Vivarium (viiie–ixe siècle)", in *La réception des Pères grecs et orientaux en Italie au Moyen Âge (Ve–XVe siècle)*, ed. B. Cabouret, A. Peters-Custot, C. Rouxpetel, Paris 2020, 85–106, at 98.

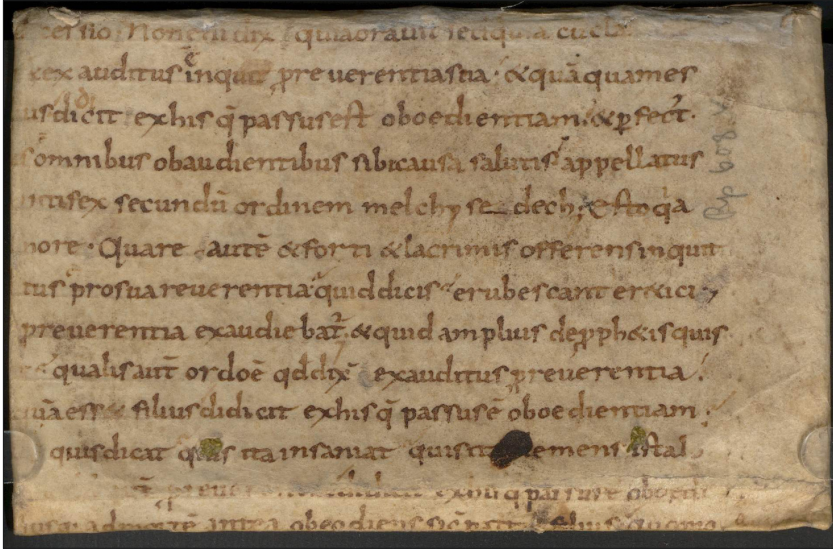


Figure 4: [F-5waj] Johannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliae in epistulam Ad Hebraeos* (trad. Mutianus Scholasticus). Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Rp 608, back cover

*Graeca* (cols. 237–456). The editors thus acknowledged its importance for the establishment of the Greek text, since the translation (and even its earliest preserved witnesses) predate the oldest Greek manuscripts by several centuries.

The Carolingian minuscule used by the scribe of this fragment displays the typically clubbed ascenders. Ligatures are limited to the combination *st*, the standard selection of abbreviations can be found including ampersand and *nomina sacra*, and the diphthongs *æ* and *œ* are written in full or as simple *e*'s. The text passage preserved on the fragment is an extract from the eighth sermon (PG 63, 291–292, 30–52). As can be expected, it shows several divergences with the printed text of the *Patrologia Graeca*. As long as a critical edition remains unavailable, it is impossible to assess the value of these variants for the textual transmission of the text.

## 5. Hieronymus, *Epistula 28 Ad Marcellam de diapsalmate* [E-j8rm]

Basel, Universitätsbibliothek FB\* VI 43, cover

e-rara: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-5147>

Jerome's *Letters* had an intricate transmission: most letters were copied and spread individually, and they did not reach a standard order in the form of a corpus before the later Middle Ages. As a result, Hilberg in his landmark edition listed the relevant manuscripts for each letter at the top of the apparatus on the first page of its text. The editor published 154 letters in the three volumes 54 to 56 of the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* between 1910 and 1918, but his death in 1919 prevented him from also explaining the principles that governed his editorial choices in a planned fourth volume.

Still Hilberg's edition provides sufficient information to formulate at least a provisional assessment of the interest of the ninth-century leaf from Jerome's 28th letter glued onto the cover of the book from the Universitätsbibliothek of Basel, printed by Oporinus in that same city (siglum: Bas). About half of the letter can be read on the preserved surface (227,12 [I]icae uarietatis... - 229,9 ...dicitur pacificus, ed. Hilberg).<sup>18</sup>

The top of the leaf was cut off and pasted vertically on the right side of the front cover. The text on the second leaf of the bifolium was trimmed away to fit the size of the cover of the host volume, leaving only about five rubbed and faded characters visible at the beginning of each line. It was therefore impossible to determine which passage the complete second leaf would originally have contained.

The basis for the text constitution of this letter seems firmly established: Hilberg listed five manuscripts that can be assigned to the ninth century or earlier. Little could therefore be expected to be gained for the understanding of the transmission from this supplementary ninth-century witness, all the more so because four more

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18 S. Eusebii Hieronymi Opera (Sect. I Pars I). *Epistularum Pars I. Epistulae I–LXX* (CSEL 54), ed. I. Hilberg, Vienna 1910, 227–232.

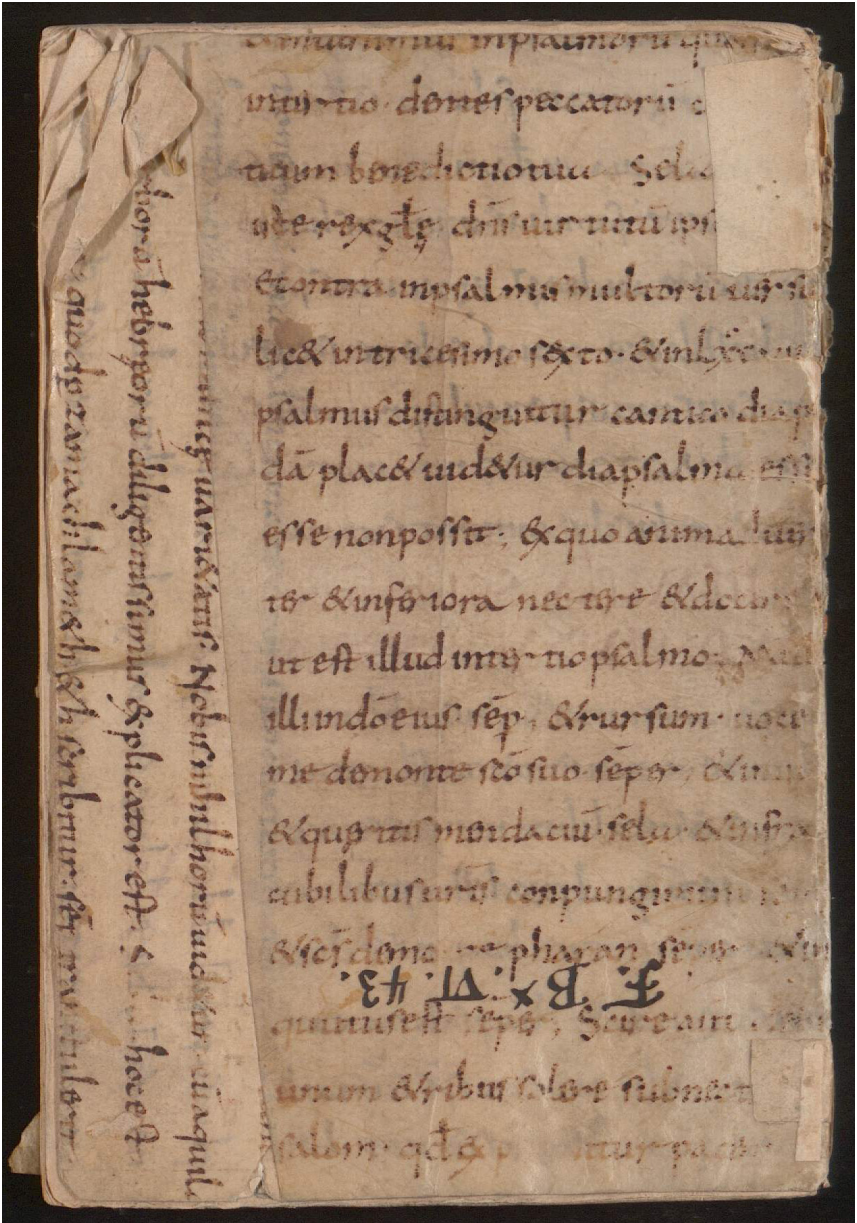


Figure 5: [F-j8rm] Hieronymus, *Epistula 28 Ad Marcellam de diapsalmate*. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, FB\* VI 43, front cover



manuscripts from the same period were recorded in the *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana manuscripta*.<sup>19</sup>

Comparing the variants on the leaf (Bas) with the apparatus in Hilberg's edition, I noticed that several of them connect its tradition to that of the additions and corrections of the second hand in MS [Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Phillipps 1675](#) (B) from the twelfth century. When I checked the online images of the manuscript (*Letter 28* is on fol. 58v–59v), other common variants not reported in Hilberg's apparatus appeared (on the meaning of the siglum G, see below).

- 228,3: ex samech] per zamech B<sup>2</sup> : per zamach Bas G  
 228,9: semper]diapsalma Bas, *add.* B<sup>2</sup> : diapsalma hoc est semper G  
 228,10: inueniatur] inuenitur B<sup>2</sup> Bas G  
 228,13: uidetur] placet G, *add.* B<sup>2</sup> : placet uidetur Bas  
 228,17: tertio] psalmo Bas G *add.* B<sup>2</sup>  
 229,5: semper] et in abacuch deus ab austro ueniet et sanctus  
 de monte Pharan semper et infra iuramenta tribubus quae  
 locutus es semper B<sup>2</sup> : *in textu* Bas G

The variants and supplements, in particular the long additional sentence, demonstrate that a reader of B used a manuscript for comparison and correction that is closely connected with the tradition to which Bas belongs. In that fragment, the variants and additions inserted between the lines and in the margins of B belong to the body of the text itself. Consequently, the corrections in B represent remains of a textual tradition that had its origin in the ninth century or earlier. According to Hilberg's apparatus, the editor only gained access to the readings of this early tradition through the second hand in manuscript B, which itself dates from the twelfth century.

In an attempt to reach an adequate assessment of the situation, I decided to compare the other ninth-century manuscripts of the letter that were unknown to Hilberg. MSS [Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1869](#), and [Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HB VII 12](#), have a text in the same tradition as the one printed by Hilberg. I was not able to consult images of MS Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 30. Finally, MS [St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod.](#)

19 Bernard Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana manuscripta. La tradition manuscrite des œuvres de Saint Jérôme*, tome 1B, Steenbrugge 1969, 487.



[Sang. 317](#) (siglum G; *Letter 28* on pp. 5–7) provided the evidence to confirm my hypothesis about the origin of the reading of B<sup>2</sup>. All readings shared between Bas and B<sup>2</sup> are confirmed or at least explained by the variants in the text of G (see the list above; the readings of 228,9 and 10 were added in G at the bottom of the page during the correction stage after the scribe had omitted a complete sentence through inadvertence). What is more, Bas shares several variants with G that were either not seen or not reproduced by the scribe of B<sup>2</sup>.

- 228,4: inueniamus] inuenimus Bas G
- 228,10: inueniatur] inuenitur sicut Bas G
- 228,16: conectere aut certe] nectere et Bas G
- 229,3: semper et alibi] sela et infra Bas G
- 229,8: pacificus dicitur] dicitur pacificus Bas G

As a consequence, the discovery of fragment Bas and its location within the textual transmission has revealed an important branch of the tradition of *Letter 28* that goes at least back to the ninth century, if not further. Since it was only known to the editor Hilberg in the form of corrections in a second hand of the relatively late manuscript B, he seems to have underestimated their value (although he is to be commended for at least reporting the variants in his apparatus, which allowed me to establish their connection with Bas). In addition, I could demonstrate that the readings of this early branch of the tradition are preserved in G, which contains the complete text of *Letter 28*, as opposed to the limited fragment Bas or the selection of variants transmitted by B<sup>2</sup>. The omitted sentence, which clearly results from homoeoteleuton, has every chance to be authentic and should probably be included in the critical text of Jerome's letter.

Unfortunately, G contains only *Letters 30* and *28*. It will therefore be of limited assistance to the editor of a future and more reliable edition of Jerome's corpus of *Epistulae*. However, the study of fragment Bas and its links with G and B<sup>2</sup> have shown that the three witnesses provide different ways of access to the same tradition. At that point, the composition and the history of B become relevant. The volume results from the scholarly activities of the Carthusian

prior Guiges du Châtel early in the twelfth century.<sup>20</sup> Guiges is known to have identified as inauthentic several letters ascribed to Jerome. It is quite conceivable that his critical attitude also led him to compare different copies of the same texts. Since B contains several dozens of Hieronymian letters, and the whole manuscript seems to preserve additions and corrections similar to those in *Letter 28*, the future editor of these texts should seriously consider their content and origin as variants that potentially represent a tradition from the ninth century or earlier.

## 6. Pelagius, *Expositiones on the Pauline epistles*

[F-c6gr]

Genève, Bibliothèque de Genève, BGE Cth 2281 BGE Bc 432, cover e-rara: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-6152>

Pelagius was an extremely controversial figure in early Christianity, who happened to have his own heresy named after him. That probably explains why his *Expositiones XIII epistularum Pauli* had such an intricate and irregular transmission, which was in great detail unfolded in Souter's admirable multi-volume study and critical edition from nearly a century ago. Souter concluded that the pure form of the commentary is preserved in MS [Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 119](#) (A), written in Reichenau in the ninth century. He claimed that its archetype was written in an Italian half-uncial from the fifth or sixth century.<sup>21</sup>

Most other manuscripts transmit a text in slightly longer forms, probably aimed in late Antiquity at completing the comments on verses from the Pauline epistle that were not dealt with in Pelagius' initial text. Those versions were influenced by the Pseudo-Jerome commentary or based on editorial work done by Cassiodorus and his team at Vivarium. Souter's main witness for that second branch is MS Oxford, Balliol College, 157 (B) in an Italian hand from the

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20 H.B. Pabel, *Herculean Labours. Erasmus and the Editing of St. Jerome's Letters in the Renaissance*, Leiden 2008, 151–152.

21 A. Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St Paul*, v. 1, Cambridge 1922, 202.

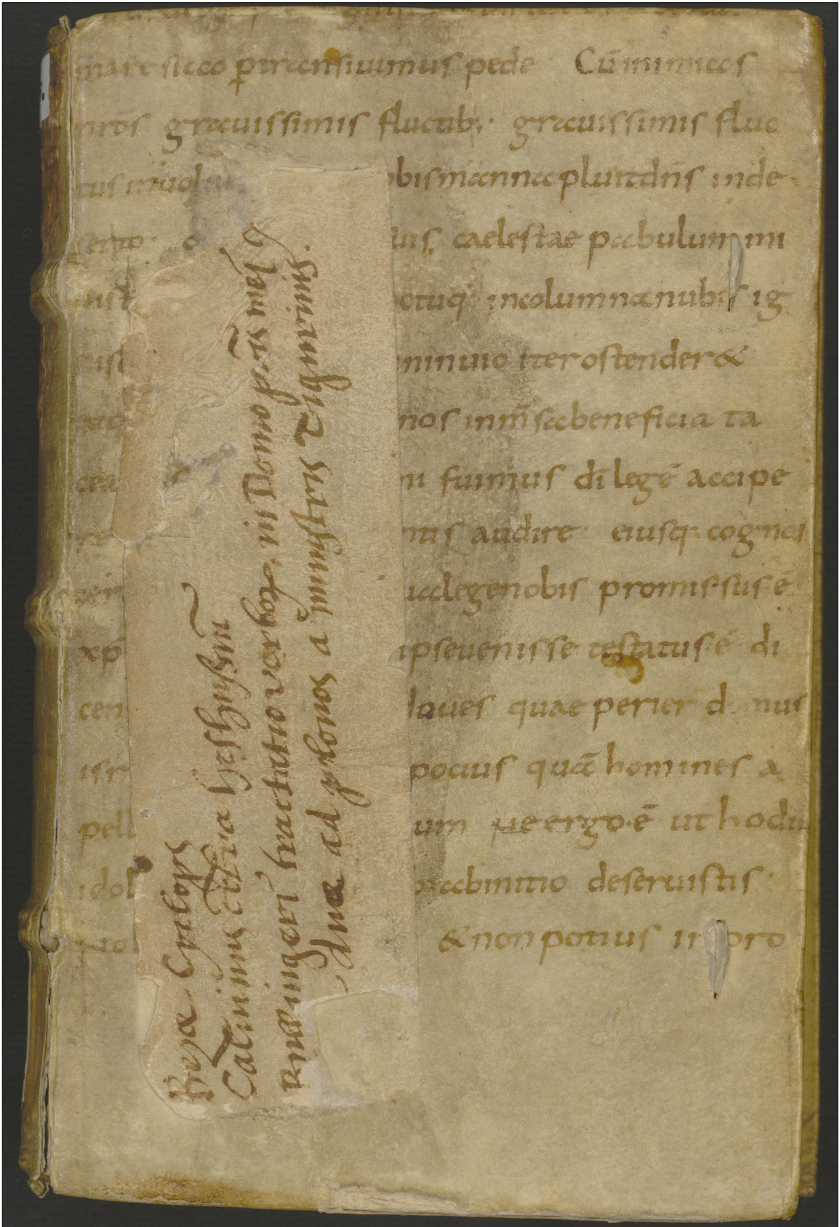


Figure 6: [F-c6gr] Pelagius, *Expositiones XIII Epistularum Pauli*. Genève, Bibliothèque de Genève, BGE Cth 2281 BGE Bc 432, front cover

fifteenth century, which was likely produced using an early model in insular script, possibly from Bobbio.<sup>22</sup>

Other important witnesses of *Pelagius' Expositiones* are MSS [Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 653](#) (V), a combination of various text forms from the end of the eighth century, and [Città del Vaticano, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 10800](#) (R), a bifolium from the seventh century that was once used as a flyleaf.

Consequently, the identification of two leaves of an early manuscript of *Pelagius' Expositiones* used on the cover of a convolute of four Swiss printed editions all dated to 1561 brings a serious challenge to situate the lost manuscript in time and in the textual tradition. The fragments are preserved covering a volume with shelfmark BGE Cth 2281 (1) BGE Bc 432 (1) in the Bibliothèque de Genève.<sup>23</sup>

As far as the chronological evaluation is concerned, the writing style is a very crisply executed early Carolingian minuscule. The occasional use of an uncial *N* suggests that the scribe still had some recollection of half-uncial left in his quill, as does the variance between the uncial *a* and the alternative in the form of the double *cc*. The diphthong *ae* is always written in full, albeit with some hint of hypercorrection, as the spelling of the adverb *caelestae* shows. All ascenders and descenders are straight and ligatures are rare except in the combination *st*. Nomina sacra are shortened, ampersand and other abbreviations are used:  $\bar{e}$  for *est*, a bar over a vowel for *n* or *m*,  $\bar{p}$  for *prae-*, and *-qz* and *-ibz* for *-que* and *-ibus*.

The tension between the presence of uncial forms and the consistent use of *æ*, though with a suggestion of fading awareness of its proper meaning, and on the other hand the already advanced use of abbreviated forms points to a period of origin in a time of transition between the uncial and Carolingian writing systems in the later part of the eighth century.

The early date of the fragment does not necessarily require that the manuscript contained the pure text of the *Expositiones*, for the circulation of manuscript forms that had undergone the influence of the Pseudo-Jerome commentary or the Cassiodorus revision had

<sup>22</sup> Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions*, v. 1, 216.

<sup>23</sup> Only the front cover is accessible in e-rara. Alexis Rivier and Jean-Luc Rouiller kindly sent me more pictures of both covers and the spine of the volume.

already started several centuries earlier. Moreover, most characteristics of the interventions were situated on a more structural level. Some groups of manuscripts display significant modifications of Paul's text from the original Latin quoted by Pelagius into the later commonly used text of the Vulgate. The same or others are distinguished on the basis of the introduction of added commentary sections, rather than in the presence of particular variant readings. Since only two small portions of the text from the manuscript have survived and no Biblical text is quoted in them, only tentative conclusions can be drawn.

The text on the rear cover is the end of the *Argumentum omnium epistularum*, an overarching introduction to the commentaries on each of the thirteen Pauline epistles (4,28 *inrepat...* – 5,11 *...epistulis* ed. Souter), which most manuscripts transmit. It is missing from B due to the loss of its first leaf, but there is an indirect access to its variants through the slightly younger copy MS Oxford, Merton College, 26 (O). The other preserved leaf contains a passage close to the opening of the prologue on the epistle to the Romans (6,6 *mare...* – 6,19 *...potius in pro[]* ed. Souter).<sup>24</sup>

A few variants may shed light on the position of the parent volume in the textual transmission. In the following overview, the reading printed in Souter's edition, which mostly follows A, is always cited before the bracket.

The most significant variant in the preserved passage from the *Argumentum* seems to be the transposition of the paragraph 5,11–14 summarizing the epistle to the Thessalonians after its counterpart on the Colossians, just as in O (and probably also in B before the loss of its first leaf). An equally relevant variant shared with O is 5,5 *quod] hoc tantum quod* OH<sub>2</sub>Alb. The variant is also found in H<sub>2</sub>, which is the tradition influenced by Pseudo-Jerome in its longer form, and in Alb, which refers to a group of twelfth- and thirteenth-century British Bible manuscripts sharing a version of the text's prologue that circulated at Saint Albans in the later Middle Ages.<sup>25</sup> On the same line, the fragment shares another variant with Alb but not with

24 A. Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St Paul*. v. 2, Cambridge 1926.

25 Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions*, v. 1, 344.



O (*iam*] *namque* O : *uero iam* Alb), although a few lines further it agrees with A and O against Alb (5,9 *qui*] *quia* Alb). The possibility of a direct connection with the manuscripts of the Alb group, which was already unlikely on geographical and chronological grounds, seems thus refuted, especially since the fragment contains the individual error *nihil hominus* for the correct *nihilo minus*. Yet it cannot be excluded that the parent volume of our fragment was related to a distant ancestor that contained the version of the prologue as transmitted in the Alb tradition.

The second passage, from the prologue on the Epistle to the Romans, provides very few variants that allow for a classification within the manuscript tradition, especially since part of the leaf is covered by an early modern label pasted over the text. The spelling *perierund* (6,15) for *perierunt* is remarkable but insignificant for the transmission. More weight must possibly be given to the variant *grauissimis fluctibus*, which oddly is copied twice, in the sentence that Souter prints as *cum inimicos nostros grauissimi fluctus inuoluerent*. The ablative makes the sentences incomprehensible, yet it has to be stressed that, on the fragment, the verb remains hidden under the label mentioned above. In addition, the word *dominus* is missing from the next sentence on the same line. One might hypothesize that it hides with the preceding verb (in its singular form *inuolueret*) under the label, which would start the intervention of the Lord one sentence earlier than in the text as transmitted in other witnesses, and conveniently explain the doubly attested ablative case of *grauissimis fluctibus*. Only the test of removing the obstructing label can decide that issue with certainty.

The host volume's provenance, to which Jean-Luc Rouiller of the Bibliothèque de Genève kindly drew my attention, may shed some light on the origin of the venerably old fragment. An early catalogue documents that the book already in 1572 belonged to the Bibliothèque de l'Académie, to which the Bibliothèque de Genève is a successor.<sup>26</sup>

26 A. Ganoczy, *La Bibliothèque de l'Académie de Calvin. Le catalogue de 1572 et ses enseignements*, Genève 1969, 210–211, no. 148. The assessment of the leaf on the cover as “feuille de ms du Xlle siècle” is definitely incorrect! I owe this reference to Jean-Luc Rouiller.



On the title page of the third component of the convolute, a handwritten dedication by the author Heinrich Bullinger to Pietro Vermigli, the Augustinian canon from Florence, can be read. It proves that at least that book belonged to his collection. When Vermigli died in 1562 in Zürich, Theodore of Beza had his books bought to be merged into the library of the Geneva Academy.<sup>27</sup> Whether Vermigli was responsible for the gathering of the four editions into one volume, or the binding was ordered for the library of the Academy, there can be no doubt that it was produced in Switzerland and that the manuscript waste used for it was lying around in a Swiss binder's workshop. The early availability of Pelagius' work in that country is no surprise: an interpolated form of the text similar to H2 is preserved in MS [St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 73](#) (G), from the first part of the ninth century.<sup>28</sup> Intriguingly, the part of the "Argumentum" and of the prologue on the epistle to the Romans that is preserved in our fragment is missing from G, so no textual agreements can be established.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the preserved text on the fragment is so limited that it is impossible to assess the link of its lost parent volume to the text of H2 with any degree of certainty. However, it is an attractive hypothesis that G and the parent volume of our fragments shared a common (insular, according to Souter) model.

### 7. *Collectio Canonum XII partium* [[F-40c8](#), [F-ziev](#)]

Zürich, Zentralbibliothek 7.365 and 5.379, covers

e-rara: [doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-842](https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-842), [doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-754](https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-754), [doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-756](https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-756)

Canon law circulated in numerous collections and various forms throughout the Middle Ages. The field is so enormous that research has only started to record the manuscript evidence and to assess

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27 Incidentally, Vermigli himself published a commentary on Paul's letter to the Romans in 1558 in Basel "apud Petrum Pernam".

28 Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions*, v. 1, 232–245.

29 The handwriting of the fragment in long lines is definitely different from that of G in two columns – therefore, the fragment cannot possibly have belonged to G.

the potential influence of each collection. Important surveys were published by Lotte Kéry and Linda Fowler-Magerl.<sup>30</sup>

Thanks to their efforts, it has become a feasible task to identify the texts of canon law on the bifolia found as covers of two printed volumes of the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich (shelfmarks 7.365 and 5.379).<sup>31</sup> The leaves are written in a late Carolingian minuscule of the eleventh century, with chapter titles in red ink by the same hand. Chapter numbers in red and references to the sources of the sections were written in the margins, which unfortunately were for the most part trimmed off.

On the basis of the titles, incipits and explicits of the chapters, and their order, the text on the leaves belonged to a manuscript of the so-called *Collectio XII partium* in its first version.<sup>32</sup> The production of the collection was connected to Freising and the circle of Burchard of Worms. Its date of production in the early eleventh century situates our leaves chronologically close to the actual composition of the *Collectio*. Only two complete manuscripts of the collection in this version are extant: MSS [Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, 246](#) (first half of the eleventh century) and Saint-Claude, Médiathèque Le Dôme, 17 (twelfth century).<sup>33</sup> Two fragments likely complete the list of witnesses of the *Collectio XII partium*, although it remains a debated issue among scholars whether they can be considered genuine representatives of the tradition due to their limited extent.<sup>34</sup>

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30 L. Kéry, *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages (ca. 400–1140)*. A Bibliographical Guide to the Manuscripts and Literature, Washington, D.C. 1999; L. Fowler-Magerl, *Clavis Canonum. Selected Canon Law Collections Before 1140. Access with data processing*, Hannover 2005.

31 The images of Zürich, Zentralbibliothek 7.365 on e-rara do not include the second book of the convolute volume. Sandra Weidmann kindly sent me pictures of its title page and rear cover.

32 Fowler-Magerl, *Clavis canonum*, 91–93. Updated information online: [https://data.mgh.de/databases/clavis/wiki/index.php/Collectio\\_XII\\_partium\\_\(first\\_version\)](https://data.mgh.de/databases/clavis/wiki/index.php/Collectio_XII_partium_(first_version)). The collection is labelled TX.

33 Kéry, *Canonical Collections*, 155–157. She labels the collection as 2CDP.

34 P. Brommer, “Ein Fund zur ‘Collectio duodecim partium’”, *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 13 (1983), 57–58 (two then-unnumbered leaves from the Stadtarchiv Schwäbisch Gmünd, now Co8 Bü 2); H. Mordek, “Analecta canonistica I”, *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 16 (1986), 1–16, esp. 9–11 (MS Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 370(194), f. 32).

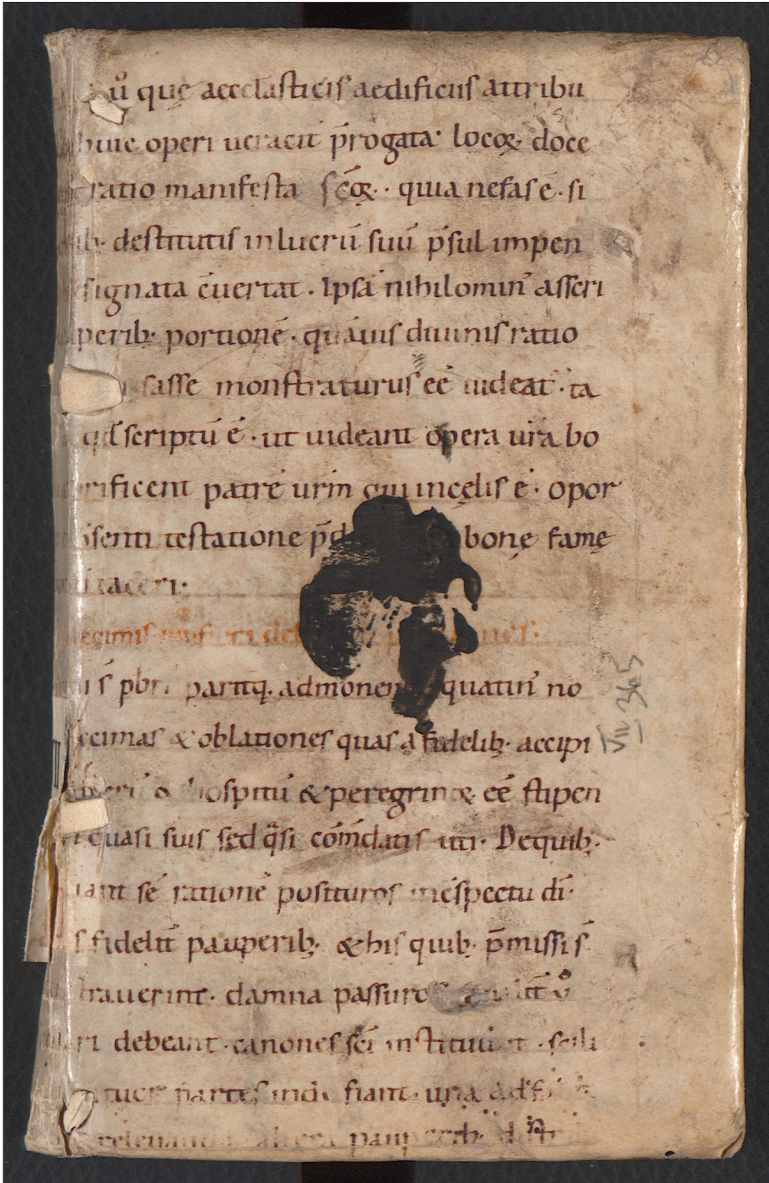


Figure 7: [F-40c8] *Collectio Canonum XII partium*. Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, 7.365, front cover

With that reserve in mind and in the absence of an edition of the *Collectio*, I decided to compare the text on the leaves with the oldest witness, MS Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, 246. Not only the titles, but also the text of the chapters turns out to be identical. The text of the leaves covering volume 7.365 can be identified as *Collectio XII partium*, book 5.193–198 (= Troyes 246, f. 122r–v). Volume 5.379 preserves book 8.7b–9 (= Troyes 246, ff. 152v–153r).

Can we learn something about the environment in which the lost parent volume of the leaves circulated? The likeliest clues may be found in the books between the covers made from our discarded manuscript. Both volumes contain two editions each. All four editions were printed in Zürich, more precisely in the workshop of Rudolph Wissenbach, although most of them have no printer's name on the title page. It seems an obvious conclusion that the printer or a binder who worked in close relation with the Wissenbachs (or one working for an early owner of the volumes) had the leaves of the old manuscript of canon law piled up for re-use in his workshop. Potentially, more pages of the manuscript might eventually come to light.

There might exist another puzzling connection between the *Collectio XII partium* and the early-modern printing trade in Zürich. On the fragmentary leaves preserved in Schwäbisch Gmünd, a later hand wrote the following indications referring to the titles of the books for which they were used as covers: 'Gualteri in Iacob. Apocal. Homiliae' and 'Gualteri in 1 et 2 Corinthiorum...'. The most likely author to whom these cryptic headings might refer is the Zürich born theologian Rudolf Gwalther (1519–1586). His sermons on the books of the Gospel, the Pauline and Catholic epistles, and various parts of the Old Testament received numerous print runs in Zürich, mainly at the hands of Christoph Froschauer and his successors, from the middle of the sixteenth century through the early seventeenth. Although it is unlikely that there lies a direct link between the two sets of fragments in Schwäbisch Gmünd and in Zürich, the coincidence is too obvious not to consider a possible connection. At least, it

confirms Brommer's statement that the *Collectio XII partium* had a wider circulation than previously thought.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

"Manuscript fragments often have a troubled history of silence."<sup>36</sup> My article was prompted by the availability of unacknowledged manuscript fragments in online images of early printed books. Their presence was unintentionally silenced by cataloguers who focused on the printed content of the books and yet, in publishing the digitizations, they made them available, when so many early prints can only be accessed in situ in their physical forms. This was a further stage in their troubled history, after early-modern binders had cut the leaves from the contexts of their parent manuscripts. That fragmentation muted the initial provenance of the leaves and their role in the transmission of the texts that they contain. At the same time, the procedure incorporated the fragment into a new context, in which the text on the writing surface was no longer its *raison d'être*.

As Mateusz Fafinski pointed out in the recent article that provided the quote above, scholars must be aware that their attempts to undo the fragmentation process and to reconstruct the history and value of the lost parent volumes in themselves impose new instances of fragmentation on the information. The scholarly endeavour will never succeed in the "perennial and never fulfilled attempt to be complete."<sup>37</sup> As I confessed at the beginning of my article, the fragments described here were selected without an objective criterion. As a result, I consciously distorted the overall impression that one gets while perusing the online images. In addition, my descriptions do not discuss several important aspects: e.g. a treatment of the various methods of adaptation of the original leaves to their new functions in the book bindings might have brought valuable insights. Even the use of digital images changes the researcher's viewpoint:

35 Brommer, "Ein Fund zur 'Collectio duodecim partium'", 58.

36 M. Fafinski, "In an Archive of Fragments: The Loud Silences of Cod. Sang. 1394", *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures* 13 (2024), 286–301, at 286.

37 Fafinski, "In an Archive", 287.

as a result of their focus on the printed material, photographers understandably often did not include all binding material in their image record of the books that they published on e-rara, or spread the manuscript remains at the front and the rear of the binding over various items (and consequently different DOIs).

My article was intended to show the potential of manuscript fragments in book bindings for more encompassing and systematic studies. As the theoretical framework for fragmentology is developing at a quick pace, there is decidedly sufficient material available to already consider the study of manuscript fragments an established discipline.