

Fragmentology

A Journal for the Study of Medieval Manuscript Fragments

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Recycling or Rubbishing Ockham's Sentences?

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Abstract: Two bifolia from a quire of the *Prologus* to the *Sentences* of William of Ockham were used as a pastedown and flyleaf in Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale d'étude et de conservation, 198, a manuscript of the *Sentences* questions of James of Eltville copied in Paris at the College of St. Bernard around 1399. The open question is why one of Ockham's most captivating philosophical texts was reduced to its materiality and merely employed to bind a later text of the same genre.

Keywords: *Sentences* commentaries, James of Eltville, William of Ockham, quires, tacketed quires, binding, Cistercians

Binding fragments reveal what was considered waste material at the moment a book was bound. When both fragments and text of the manuscript being bound are of the same genre, they can capture the shifting fortunes of the works over the centuries. In the case at hand, a manuscript containing the questions on the *Sentences* by the Cistercian James of Eltville, based on lectures given at the University of Paris in the academic year 1369–1370,¹ was bound with

* This paper has received funding from the EU under the Horizon 2020 project RESTORY n°101132781 (<https://restory-heritage.eu/>). I am grateful to Chris Schabel and Bill Duba for joining me in Besançon to discuss this codex. Nearly all their remarks were very constructive.

1 The *Sentences* questions of James of Eltville survive in 22 manuscripts and are the object of an ongoing editorial project. The first volume was published as Iacobus de Altavilla, *Lectura in libros Sententiarum*, tomus I: *Principium. Questiones 1–6 (Prologus et QQ. 1–4 libri primi)* (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 312), ed. A. Anisie, M. Brinzei, L. Cioca, and C. Schabel, cooperantibus A. Baneu, A. Baumgarten, D. Coman, I. Curuț, A. Marinca, and M. Pantea, Turnhout 2024. Tomus II, *Questiones 7–17 (QQ. 5–15 libri primi)*, ed. Anisie, Baumgarten, Coman, Marinca, Curuț, Pantea, and Schabel, cooperantibus Baneu, Brinzei, and Cioca, is forthcoming in 2025. Eltville's popular *Sentences* questions were influential at the Faculty of Theology of Vienna and

fragments from questions on the *Sentences* by the famed Franciscan William of Ockham, who lectured on the *Sentences* at Oxford in 1317–1318.

The codex in question, Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale d'étude et de conservation (*olim* Bibliothèque Municipale), 198, was copied in Paris, at the Cistercian Collège des Bernardins, by Brother John of Theuley Abbey (60 kilometers north by northwest from Besançon) in the period 1395–1399.² At the beginning of the codex, parts of Ockham's most influential theological text served as the pastedown and flyleaf of Eltville's *Sentences*. This detail might strike students of medieval thought as surprising, since nowadays Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, and Ockham are considered the main scholastic theologians, whereas Eltville has largely been forgotten.

widely disseminated in many other places where theology was taught, such as Heidelberg, Cologne, Erfurt, and Mainz. Besides the copies circulating or produced in Vienna itself (for example codex München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 3546, copied in Vienna in 1405), the case of codex Wertheim, Evangelische Kirchenbibliothek, 608, is significant since it was bequeathed to the library of Wertheim by Conrad Wellin de Ruetlingen, former rector of the University of Cologne. The copy in Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 230 Helmst., was produced at Erfurt. While teaching in Heidelberg, Marsilius of Inghen praised Eltville. There are traces of two lost manuscripts that circulated in Mainz, one of which was probably in the possession of Gabriel Biel. For references to all these codices, see toms I of the critical edition, cited above, XXIV–LXVII. A collective volume of studies investigating different aspects of the theological doctrine in his *Sentences* questions has appeared: *The Cistercian James of Eltville († 1393). Author in Paris and Authority in Vienna* (Studia Sententiarum 3), ed. M. Brinzei and C. Schabel, Turnhout 2018.

2. Iacobus de Altavilla, *Lectura in libros Sententiarum*, toms I, xxvii–xxx. The manuscript is available in Open Access (<https://memoirevive.besancon.fr/ark:/48565/76hsjotgp8dw>), although it is misattributed on the library website to a certain Jean de Hauteville: H. Rochais and E. Manning, *Bibliographie Générale de l'ordre cistercien 6: Personnes*, Rochefort 1977, 39. The colophon of this codex reads (f. 228va): “Explicit lectura tertii libri *Sententiarum* a domino Iacobo de Altavilla monacho ordinis Cisterciensis edita et scripta per fratrem Iohannem monachum monasterii Theoloci octavadeccima die mensis Septembris in **collegio Sancti Bernardi** anno Domini m^occc^ononagesimo v^o. Scriptor qui scripsit cum Christo vivere possit.”



Figure 1 (left): Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale d'étude et de conservation, 198, cover

Figure 2 (bottom-left): Upper board, outside

Figure 3 (bottom-right): Upper board, inside



The Besançon Ockham Fragment

Although the book block of Besançon 198 is in good condition, the front board is not; half of the wood is missing, and the pieces that survive have been devoured by insects, which have also penetrated the now-detached cover [Figures 1–3].³

After the board appears the fragment in question, two parchment bifolia trimmed to the dimensions of the board (240 × 340 mm) and mounted at a right angle [Figure 4]. The two bifolia are unnumbered

³ I am grateful to Guy Lanoë for providing me with this information and for the exchange we had concerning the binding of this codex.

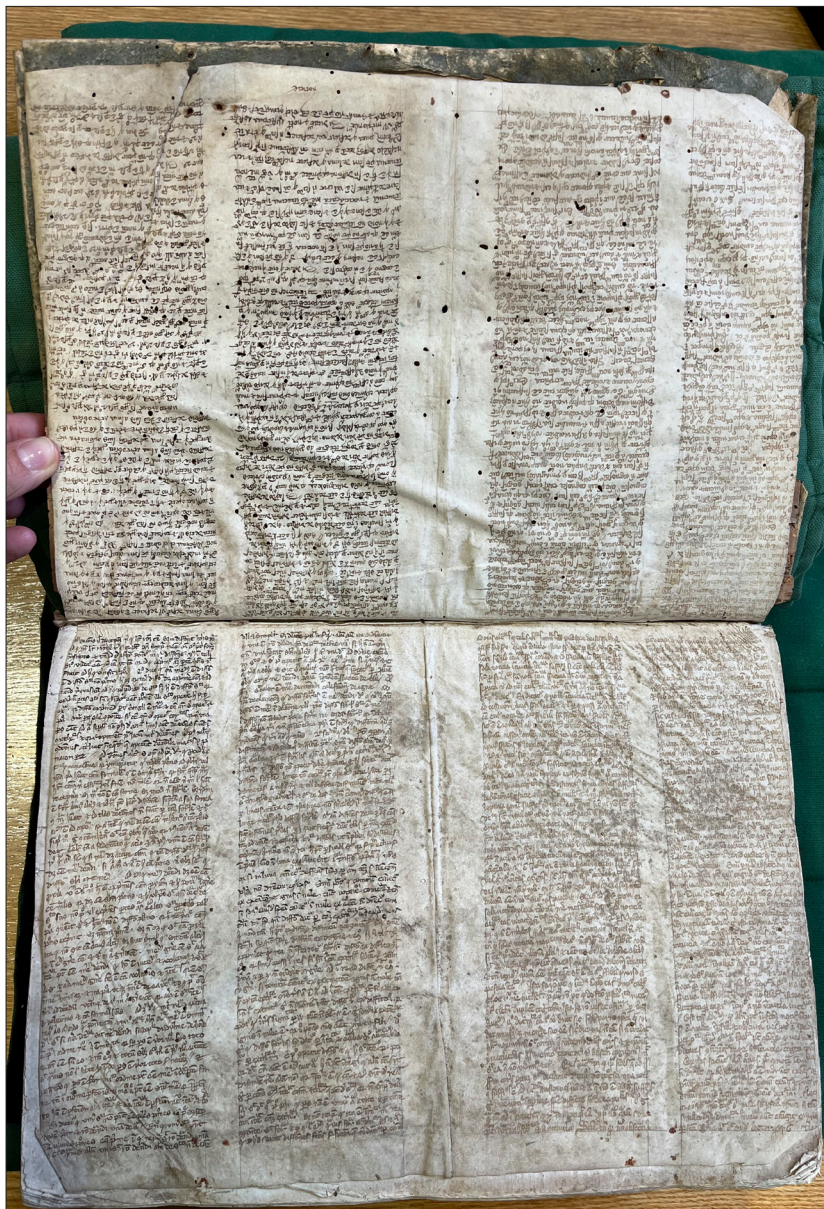


Figure 4: parchment bifolia (f. IV, above; f. IIIr, below)

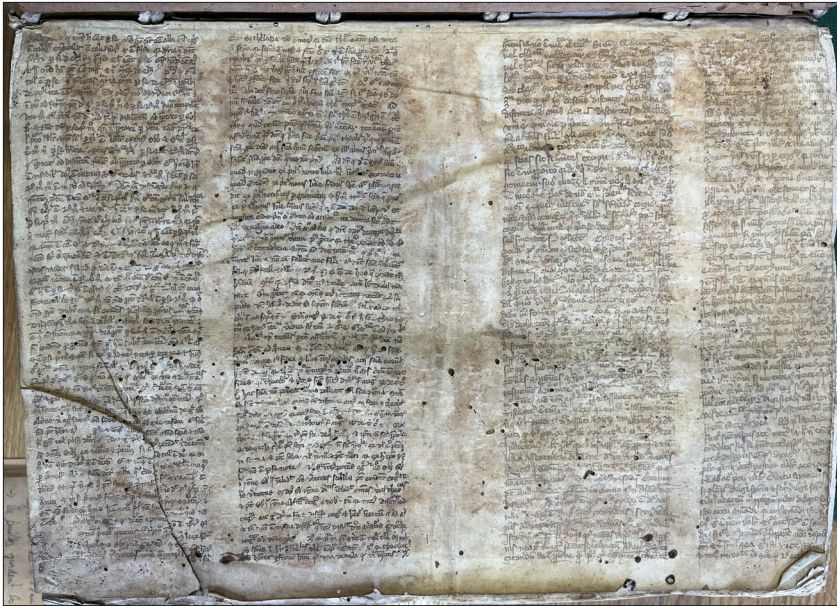


Figure 5: f. 1r, showing clasp marks at the bottom

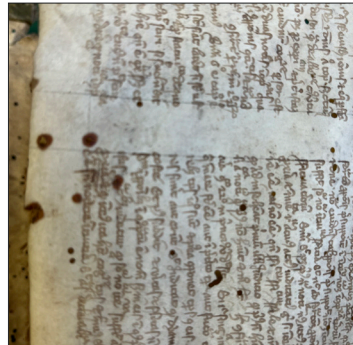


Figure 6: f. 1v, detail of clasp mark

and the first leaf of the Eltville text is foliated as f. 1; in reference to how they are bound in the host volume, I will label the two bifolia I and II.

All indications are that the binding of the Besançon codex is roughly contemporary with the production of the manuscript. The two bifolia from Ockham's *Prologus* were used in the initial binding, bearing the marks of the (now missing) clasps that were attached to the upper board [Figures 5–6].

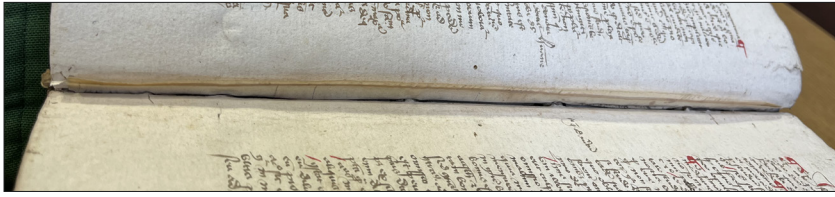


Figure 7, Figure 8: Besançon 198, Parchment stubs between f. 12 and f. 13



Both bifolia, moreover, were hooked into the first gathering of Besançon 198, and their parchment stubs can be found at the end of it (also containing 12 paper leaves as 6 bifolia), between f. 12 and f. 13 [Figures 7–9]. The clasp marks and the discoloration on f. 1r suggest that I served as a pastedown and II as a flyleaf.

The leaves on the bifolia are laid out with two columns of text, between 47–49 lines in written area that originally measured 220 × 150 mm. The text is written in an Anglican cursive from the first half of the fourteenth century.

While the two bifolia lack any identifiable paratextual elements, the text they transmit, namely the *Prologus* to William of Ockham's *Scriptum in primum librum Sententiarum*, can be used to reconstruct the order. Both bifolia are oriented so that the outwards-facing side is now the recto, the inwards-facing side is the verso, and II was originally bound inside I. In the binding, the bifolia are oriented such that the prior leaves are on top, and the posterior ones on the

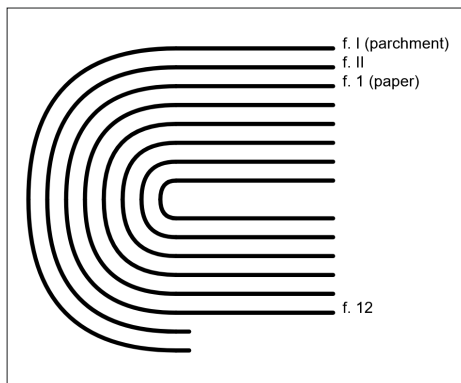


Figure 9: Visualization of first gathering of Besançon 198 created using VCEditor, December 2024

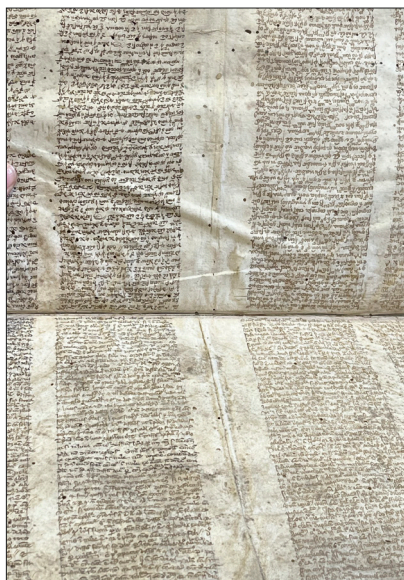


Figure 10: center fold of bifolia I and II, showing the absence of sewing stations

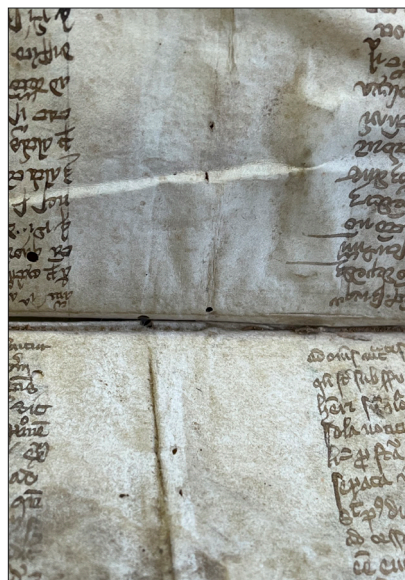


Figure 11: detail showing the holes for tacketing

bottom, and Gregory's Rule is followed, such that the inside of bifolium I (f. iv) and the outside of bifolium II (f. iir) touch flesh side to flesh side. Both parchment bifolia show signs of having been folded, and their orientation, that is, their inward-facing and outward-facing sides, can be confirmed from the creases in the parchment. Yet they lack sewing stations, except for two holes towards the top of the fold, suggesting that the quire was tacketed but never bound [Figures 10–11].⁴

- 4 A tacketed quire is a collection of folia held together by thin strings, called *tackets*. The initial purpose was to avoid disrupting the sequence of the leaves while the scribes copied the text. The holes employed to connect and to keep the leaves together were not reused in sewing when the all the quires transmitting the complete text were bound together. Such quires equally served as *conservation units* before they were eventually put together or bound. See J.-P. Gumbert, "The Tacketed Quire: An Exercise in Comparative Codicology", *Scriptorium* 65/2 (2011), 299–320. On the same topic see J.A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, Aldershot, 1999, especially 111–115 and 142. I am grateful to William Duba for informing me about the practice of tacketing quires and for inspiring discussions on this topic. He also suggested to me

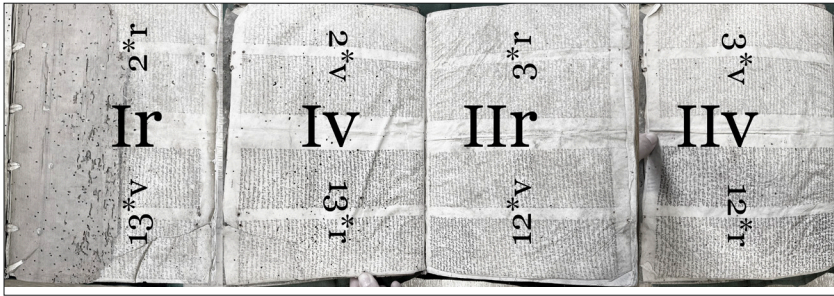


Figure 12: Bifolia (I-II) with *Prologus* foliation (ff. 2*-3*, 12*-13*)

Content

The text in the bifolia includes material from questions 1-7 as found in the modern edition of Ockham's *Prologus*. The reconstruction below concludes that I and II were most likely the second- and third-outermost bifolia in a septenion that served as the first gathering of a copy of the work. On this reconstruction, I and II originally contained ff. 2-3 and 12-13. To avoid multiplying numbering schemes unnecessarily, we have anticipated this reconstructed foliation in situating the bifolia in their original context [Figure 12], and mapping the text against page and line in the St. Bonaventure critical edition [Table 1].⁵

To establish a baseline of text covered per page, each page was measured against the corresponding lines in the St. Bonaventure

that this practice might give “a glimpse into the ephemeral items in medieval libraries”. Such quires were probably common in academic libraries; for example when Annibaldo di Ceccano organized the library of the Collège de la Sorbonne in 1321, he famously arranged for all the *reportationes* and “unbound books of little value” to be given away or sold. See P. Glorieux, *Aux origines de la Sorbonne. I Robert de Sorbonne. L'homme – Le collège, Les documents*, Paris 1966, 215, “Item quia multi ibi iacent **libri parvi valoris, non ligati**, occupantes locum, sicut reportationes et antiqui sermones, fuit ordinatum quod darentur beneficiariis nostris qui possent esse ad usum eorum, et alii iuxta ordinationem sociorum ad hoc deputatorum venderentur sociis de domo vel aliis si aliquid offerretur pro eius; et de illa pecunia emerentur alii libri deficientes nobis”.

- 5 Guillaume de Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum. Ordinatio. Prologus et distinctio prima* (Opera theologica 1), ed. G. Gál and S. Brown, St. Bonaventure, NY 1967.

2*r = Ir, top

Inc.: habitus ille non est metaphysica nec theologia. Si cum (*sic!*) per esse habitum metaphysicum ... (q. 1, p. 13, l. 23)

Expl.: ... et medius in voluntate. Ideo concedo quod duo actus (*trimmed*) (q. 1, p. 20, l. 2)

2*v = Iv, top

Inc.: (*trimmed*) secundum nego maiorem, quia sufficit quod sit causa partialis. Patet ... (q. 1, p. 20, l. 3)

Expl.: esse sine notitia intuitiva, sicut alias declarabitur. Per hoc patet (q. 1, p. 27, l. 10)

3*r = IIr, top

Inc.: ad omnes auctoritates quod tales veritates contingentes non possunt sciri de istis sensibilibus nisi ... (q. 1, p. 27, l. 10)

Expl.: ... perfecta ratione, sicut dicit quidam doctor, Quodlibet, quaestione 6. Nec (*trimmed*) (q. 1, p. 34, l. 6)

3*v = IIv, top

Inc.: (*trimmed*) motivas formales, quod scilicet in cognitione intuitiva res in propria ... (q. 1, p. 34, l. 6)

Expl.: ... Augustinum 13 De Trinitate, capitulo 1, ubi dicit: Rerum absentium praesens (q. 1, p. 41, l. 10)

12*r = IIv, bottom

Inc.: ibidem. Igitur omnis quaestio est de definitione tamquam de medio. Sed omnis conclusio demonstrationis est quaeribilis ... (q. 5, p. 158, l. 17)

Expl.: ... qua praedicatur de suo subiecto primo, puta de anima intellectiva. Item in medio (*trimmed*) (q. 5, p. 166, l. 10)

12*v = IIr, bottom

Inc.: (*trimmed*) (t)alis demonstrationis nihil debet poni nisi quod habet rationem causae; sed in definitione hominis ponitur ... (q. 5, p. 166, l. 10)

Expl.: ... quod Philosophus vocat definitiones factas secundum speciem quae non dantur per causam (q. 5, p. 172, l. 11)

13*r = Iv, bottom

Inc.: aliam; illa autem quae dantur per alias causas materiales vocantur. Igitur formales dantur per causas intrinsecas ... (q. 5, p. 172, l. 11)

Expl.: ... propositione simpliciter necessaria quod sit per se, quia pertinet ad demonstrationem omnis (q. 6, p. 179, l. 17)

13*v = Ir, bottom

Inc.: Si dicatur quod tunc haec esset per se: omnis homo potest esse albus; omnis ignis ... (q. 6, p. 179, l. 18)

Expl.: ... non haberet perfectiorem habitum quam una vetula, quod videtur inconueniens. Alia (q. 7, p. 187, l. 3)

Table 1: Ockham's *Scriptum* in the Besançon Fragment

f. q(q).		St. Bonaventure edition		
		from	to	total lines
2*r	1	p. 13, l. 23	p. 20, l. 2	135
2*v	1	p. 20, l. 3	p. 27, l. 10	161
3*r	1	p. 27, l. 10	p. 34, l. 6	152
3*v	1	p. 34, l. 6	p. 41, l. 10	144
12*r	5	p. 158, l. 17	p. 166, l. 10	166
12*v	5	p. 166, l. 10	p. 172, l. 11	153
13*r	5-6	p. 172, l. 11	p. 179, l. 17	166
13*v	6-7	p. 179, l. 18	p. 187, l. 3	168

Table 2: correspondence between the Besançon Fragment and the St. Bonaventure Edition

edition (ignoring the blank lines and inserted titles) [Table 2]. The text that runs from f. 2*r to f. 3*v covers a total of 592 lines in the modern edition, with both f. 2* and f. 3* containing precisely 296 lines, an average of 74 lines per column. Since the column f. 2*ra starts with text found on the bottom of p. 13, l. 23 in the critical edition, we can deduce that text corresponding to 227 lines in the modern edition of Ockham’s *Prologus* preceded f. 2*. This amount of text could almost have been encompassed in another three similar columns preceding A.

Thus, at least one leaf preceded f. 2*. Of the seventeen complete copies of the *Prologus* studied for the 1967 critical edition, all but one begin the codex. That one exception, Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, 718, has a bifolium with a table of questions bound before the first gathering, and the second gathering begins with a blank recto, with the *Prologus* following on the verso. In that case, however, the table of questions was clearly produced well after the rest of the manuscript.⁶ Therefore, the witnesses to Ockham’s massive *Prologus* follow the general tendency of *Sentences* commentary manuscripts to form by themselves codicological units, and thus

6 Gál and Brown, introduction to Guillelmus de Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum. Ordinatio. Prologus et distinctio prima*, 11*-17*.

begin with a new gathering. Most likely, a single leaf preceded A, which must have begun with a colophon, a giant initial, larger lettering, or a combination of those factors, a phenomenon attested in surviving complete manuscripts.⁷ In such a case, the two bifolia here would have been the second and third outermost bifolia of their gathering.

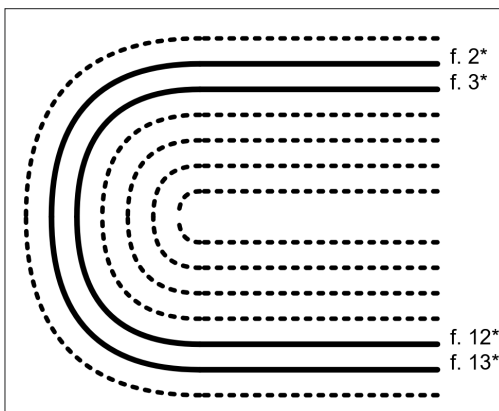


Figure 13: Reconstruction of *Prologus* septenion. Visualization made using VCEditor

The number of bifolia in the gathering can be determined by comparison to the edition; where ff. 2*r–3*v cover 596 lines of the St. Bonaventure edition, ff. 12*r–13*v, corresponding to parts of questions 5–7 of the *Prologus*, are represented by 653 lines. Between the prior and posterior parts of bifolium II falls a text corresponding to 117 pages in the critical edition, for a total of 2561 lines of edited text, enough for four bifolia, or 32 columns, in the manuscript. Thus, bifolia I and II were originally part of a gathering composed of seven bifolia (a septenion) [Figure 14], which at the end of the fourteenth century was not unusual, at least in the circle of scholars from the Faculty of Theology.⁸

7 Indeed, in the copy of Ockham's *Sentences* in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 15904, f. 1ra, the manuscript opens with a giant decorated initial that takes up a third of the first column.

8 Paula Busonero remarks that the typical division into sexterns was less frequent during the fourteenth century, when quires of different sizes began to circulate more often. One can spot this easily in university texts, and a recent examination of seven codices of Étienne Gaudet's notebooks from the University of Paris after 1360 revealed the use of various sizes of quires by the same person. P. Busonero, "La fascicolazione del manoscritto nel basso medioevo", in *La fabbrica del codice. Materiali per la storia del libro nel tardo medioevo*, ed. P. Busonero, M.A. Casagrande Mazzoli, L. Devoti, and E. Ornato, Roma 1999, 31–139. For more on the composition of quires, see M. Maniaci, ed., *Trends in Statistical Codicology*, Berlin 2022, *passim*. On Gaudet's quires, see A. Baneu and M. Brinzei, "From Notebooks to Quires: The Case Studies of

The text in the Besançon fragment ends with the passage corresponding to the edition's page 187, l. 3. At the end of f. 13*v, the text stops in the middle of question 7. This question runs in the modern edition until page 206, with nearly 400 lines, more than enough to fill four columns in the manuscript's handwriting. In sum, this copy of the *Sentences* questions of William of Ockham originally had a first gathering that was likely a septenion containing questions 1–6 and most of question 7 of the Venerable Inceptor's *Prologus*. Nevertheless, the possibility that the first quire was a sextern should not be totally excluded, given the nature of the text in the fragments.

Philological Significance

As a witness to the text of Ockham's *Scriptum* on the *Sentences*, these two bifolia in Besançon present only the second uncontaminated copy of the prior version of the text. Its characteristics call into question the editors' assertion that these two versions are in fact one and the same redaction, which was expressed in an incomplete and complete way.

The first to observe two different versions of Ockham's *Scriptum* was Philotheus Boehner in 1942. In a pioneering survey of the manuscript tradition, he found that Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. soppr. A. 3. 801 (A), Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, 718 (B), and Oxford, Balliol College, 299 (C) were the three best witnesses, but that A alone contained a first "redaction" of the text, to which redaction Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 894 (F), another important manuscript, was somehow related.⁹ On the basis of blank spaces in A and B, additions in B, and references to adding material in B, Boehner concluded that Ockham must have added passages in the margin that were then incorporated into the text of later witnesses, which thus preserve a second "redaction." Boehner

Etienne Gaudet", in *Medieval University Notes in the Library of Étienne Gaudet*, ed. A. Baneu, Berlin (forthcoming).

9 P. Boehner, "The Text Tradition of Ockham's *Ordinatio*", *New Scholasticism* 16 (1942), 202–241; The sigla are those used in the critical edition: Guillelmus de Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum. Ordinatio. Prologus et distinctio prima*, ed. Gál and Brown.

cautioned that there are not two redactions in the normal sense, but two versions of the *Scriptum* that mirror different stages in the composition of the text.¹⁰ Following Boehner's lead, in 1948 Evan Roche edited question 10 of distinction 2 using ABCF.¹¹ In the first volume of the modern critical edition of the *Scriptum*, published in 1967, the editors boldly stated that Ockham did not pen different "redactions" of the text (*non scripsit duas vel plures 'redactiones', sed unam tantum*), but then they confirmed Boehner's theory that the text circulated in two versions, a shorter version that they dubbed the *redactio incompleta* and an extended one that they labeled the *redactio completa*.¹² The editors meant that Ockham wrote only one redaction, but left blank spaces, intending to fill them in later. Since copies were made before he finished, we have in effect two redactions, the earlier *incompleta* and the later *completa*. Thus, the longer *completa* version contains paragraphs or arguments that are not found in the shorter *incompleta*. For the editors, only A contains just the *redactio incompleta*, as it sometimes leaves blank spaces to be filled and sometimes notes them,¹³ and witnesses of the *redactio completa* have indeed text added in those spots. Nevertheless, the editors also underscore that Ockham also made additions that were not foreseen by A.

A full collation of the text in the two bifolia in Besançon (X) against the critical edition reveals that the Besançon fragments belong to the *redactio incompleta*. In other words, X omits all the passages that are missing in Firenze (A) and are marked in the critical edition between §...§ to indicate additions in the *redactio completa*

10 Boehner, "The Text Tradition of Ockham's *Ordinatio*", 219.

11 E. Roche, "Edition of Quaestio 10a Dist. 2ae of Ockham's *Ordinatio*", *Franciscan Studies* 8 (1948), 173–191.

12 See the introduction of Gál and Brown to Guillelmus de Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum. Ordinatio. Prologus et distinctio prima*, 19*–23*.

13 For example, on f. 15vb the scribe of A left some lines blank, corresponding to the end of q. 11 (pp. 321–323 in the edition), such that the entire solution to the question is missing. Another example can be found on f. 27va in distinction 1, question 5 (pp. 479–485 in the critical edition), where one finds blank lines where Ockham later added his solution. The scribe of A must have known that the text had not been finalized, as Boehner argued, and hence left blank spaces.

in the other witnesses. Thus the Besançon fragments constitute the only known witnesses to the *redactio incompleta* other than A itself. Moreover, A and X are independent, since Besançon has a number of unshared variants, ranging from three to six per page of the critical edition, such as numerous inversions, omissions of one or two words, a few larger omissions (see examples for pp. 19, 173, and 184, on Table 3), and at one point the inversion of two sentences (p. 36, on Table 3), none of which is reproduced in A. Conversely, there are variants in A, including large omissions, that are not reproduced in X.¹⁴

In the text common to the *redactio incompleta* and the *redactio completa*, the Besançon text (X) is closest to A (Firenze), E (München, Universitätsbibliothek, F. 52), and F (Mazarine). Since the *apparatus criticus* of the critical edition is not exhaustive, I collated A and F *in situ* in Florence and Paris. Not surprisingly, shared variants and significant omissions in AX indicate that they stem from a common model that contained these omissions (see for example, pp. 39, 163, 166, and 167, on Table 3). AX also share some variants with E, but this is easily explained by the fact that the scribe of E had access to two models and the text in E exhibits signs of contamination.¹⁵ Some shared variants between AFX (see examples at pp. 171 and 184, on Table 3) indicate that F is linked to AX in some way. As will be seen below, FX share significant variants against the rest, but they are independent.¹⁶ One does not expect Besançon to be a copy of F; in confirmation, the *apparatus criticus* of the critical edition records a number of unshared variants in F where X contains the text as

14 For example, p. 159, ll. 3–4 *similiter – definitionem*] *om. hom.* A (10 words missing) || l. 10 *istam*] *om. A*; p. 161, l. 8 *sola demonstratio*] *scientia demonstrata* A || ll. 19–20 *a fine – formam*] *om. A* (missing 14 words).

15 See the introduction of Gál and Brown to *Guillelmus de Ockham, Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum. Ordinatio. Prologus et distinctio prima*, 21*–22*.

16 Besides the important instances given below, here are examples of minor variants in F not reported in the *apparatus criticus* of the critical edition that are shared with X: p. 16, ll. 13–14 *obiectum sed etiam illi*] *sed etiam* FX || l. 21: *intellectus*] *quantumcumque assentitur* *add. FX*; p. 18, l. 5 *illa*] *aliqua* FX; p. 25, l. 15 *notitiam*] *evidentem* *add. in marg. F, add. X*; p. 29, l. 12 *dilectionem eandem*] *inv. FX*.

p. 19, ll. 7–8: vel rationem propter quam nunc primo assentit. Et ita ille habitus primo adquisitus non inclinatur ad actum] <i>om. hom. X</i>	
p. 36, l. 20 – 37, ll. 1–6	X, f. 3 ^{va}
Igitur omne idem et sub eadem ratione quos est obiectum intuitivae notitiae potest esse obiectum abstractivae. Et manifestum est quod quidquid reale potest cognosci abstractivae, potest etiam cognosci intuitive; igitur etc. <i>Similiter, secundum istos, alibi deitas sub ratione deitatis potest cognosci abstractivae. Sed ista est perfectissima ratio Dei, secundum eos.</i>	<i>Similiter, secundum istos, alibi deitas sub ratione deitatis potest cognosci abstractivae. Sed ista est perfectissima ratio Dei, secundum eos. Igitur omne idem et sub eadem ratione quos est obiectum intuitivae notitiae potest esse obiectum abstractivae. Et manifestum est quod quidquid reale potest cognosci abstractivae, potest etiam cognosci intuitive; igitur etc.</i>
p. 39, ll. 3–5: Sicut si videam intuitive stellam existentem in caelo, illa visio intuitiva, sive sit sensitiva sive intellectiva, distinguitur loco et subiecto ab obiecto] <i>om. hom. X</i> , partially shared with F: illa visio – obiecto] <i>om. F</i>	
p. 158, ll. 16–17: causae. Sed causa dicitur propter quid; “propter quid autem et quod quid est idem”; ibidem. Ergo (= igitur X) omnis quaestio est] <i>add. EFX (or om. hom. in ABCDGHZ)</i>	
p. 160, l. 5: vel ab efficiente] et nunc diffinitiones materiales X sunt <i>add. F</i>	
p. 162, l. 1: secundum naturam] <i>om. X</i> ll. 8–9: sit medium] <i>om. X</i>	
p. 163, l. 4: a priori] igitur (= ergo F) altera praemissarum in qua scilicet (s. = <i>om. F</i>) ponitur definitio passionis de subiecto est demonstrabilis (= est demonstrabilis de subiecto F) a priori <i>add. FX</i> ll. 9–10: secundum eos] <i>om. X</i>	
p. 165, ll. 4–5: sed impossibile est quod informetur a forma nisi causet compositum] hec non essent nisi esset compositum X	
p. 166, ll. 2–4: non per definitionem hominis sed per animam intellectivam, – ponatur quod conveniat soli animae intellectivae] ponatur quod conveniat soli animae intellectivae non per definitionem hominis sed per animam intellectivam FX	
p. 167, l. 2: in demonstrationibus seu] <i>om. FX</i>	
p. 170, ll. 5–6: vel per declarantia principia essentialia] <i>om. hom. AEXZ</i>	
p. 171, ll. 20–21: hoc est per conceptus exprimentes principia intrinseca] <i>om. AFX</i>	
p. 173, l. 24: a talibus tempestatibus etc.] <i>om. X</i>	
p. 184, l. 3: proprie dicta; sed] <i>om. X</i> (dicta <i>om. H</i>) l. 4: sunt diversae opiniones] <i>om. X</i> l. 9: nec cognitio evidens in nobis] <i>om. AFX</i> l. 12: principia non sint evidenter nota] non principia AX	

Table 3: Illustrative variants between X (Besançon) and the St. Bonaventure edition

edited, and my collation revealed several more.¹⁷ Conversely, on each page of the critical edition, X has a few variants not shared by F.

These examples show that not only do the Besançon bifolia belong to a version of Ockham's *Prologus* that was previously known to survive in just one witness, A, but that, just as A is also valuable as one of the best three witnesses to Ockham's text, X itself is significant for reconstructing the text as edited. According to Gál and Brown, the variant on p. 158 just noted is an omission *per homoeoteleuton* in ABCDGHZ in which the text is contained only in a contaminated manuscript, E, and in a complicated representative of a separate but inferior family of the *redactio completa*, F. The fact that X also contains the text, while A does not, suggests that X is the sole surviving representative of a branch of the *redactio incompleta* that, while generally inferior to A, occasionally preserved a superior reading and somehow left a mark in the branch of the tradition of the *redactio completa* represented by F.

This then raises a question concerning the origin of Ockham's *Scriptum*. A is a copy of the *redactio incompleta* with some spaces left for additions in the *completa*; B is similar, but with those (and other) additions present. In both cases, the person producing the manuscript knew that there would be additions, and, on these grounds, Gál and Brown stated that there was only one redaction, just in complete and incomplete form. The version presented by X gives the *incompleta* in a version that appears to relate to the archetype independently of all the retained manuscripts, except those that the editors identify as coming from complex traditions. Unfortunately, the surviving pieces of X do not correspond to passages where A or B has left blank spaces, and thus the question remains open.

17 For example, on p. 171 the *apparatus criticus* reports five individual variants of F that are not shared by B: l. 12 alia] *om.* F || l. 13 igitur] *sed* F || l. 22 competit] *datur* F || l. 23 patet] *om.* F || realiter *om.* F. —Examples of omissions in F not reported in the *apparatus criticus* and not shared by X: p. 20, l. 6–8 Sufficit – conclusionis] *om.* F; p. 37, l. 5 similiter – secundum eos] *om.* F; p. 38, l. 20–39, l. 1 existentem – rem] *om.* *hom.* F.

Ockham's *Scriptum* in Paris

The text of the *Prologus* is copied in an English hand, but it is hard to determine if the bifolia were produced in France or in England. Other manuscripts of Ockham's *Sentences* questions combine a French and an English hand for different sections of the four books of the *Sentences*, which seems to suggest that scribes trained in England worked in Paris and were involved in the process of rapidly producing copies of Ockham's text. The only certain detail is that it is now bound in the book containing the *Sentences* of a Cistercian master, James of Eltville, which was copied at Paris in the College of St. Bernard during the closing years of the fourteenth century. If the book was not bound in the Cistercian college, it was almost surely bound in Paris. By the early fifteenth century, this witness to Ockham's work was recycled.

This fact raises the difficult question of motivation, given the importance of this work in general, as witnessed by the continued interest in Ockham's thought by contemporary historians and philosophers. For that matter, Ockham's *Sentences* questions were first printed in an *incunabulum* dated 1483, relatively early in the history of printed books,¹⁸ but too late to explain the disposal of this copy.¹⁹ Moreover, the section contained in the first quire held particular interest, since the prologue transmits Ockham's fascinating doctrine on the intuition of non-existing objects, a topic examined closely in many subsequent *Sentences* commentaries.²⁰ Why would someone discard a seemingly good and valuable copy of such a text?

18 On the first edition of Ockham, see L. Hain, *Repertorium bibliographicum: in quo libri omnes ab arte typographica inventa usque ad annum MD. typis expressi, ordine alphabetico vel simpliciter enumerantur vel adcuratius recensentur*, vol. II, Milano 1948, p. 518b, n° 11945.

19 A good example of a manuscript being recycled after the print version circulates involves a bifolium of Vincent of Beauvais used as a cover for a pile of folia in Braşov in the fifteenth century: A. Dinca, "A Manuscript Fragment of Vincent de Beauvais's *Speculum historiale* in Romania (Sibiu, National Archives, U.V. 1926)", *Chora* 17 (2019), 301–310.

20 See here for example the testimony of Peter of Candia, known for his synthetic mind concerning general trends on specific topics: Petrus de Candia, *Lectura in libros Sententiarum* I, q. 1 (*Prologus*), a. 3, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 1081, f. 15vb: "Videtur ergo huius Doctoris

It is possible that witnesses to the *redactio incompleta* were not deemed worth saving, or that the corruption of the text in X was noticeable, and hence it was reused as binding material. Furthermore, the fact that the manuscript was never bound may have consigned its fate to housekeeping.

Another compelling reason for reusing Ockham around 1400 rests on a state of affairs overlooked by the dominant narrative in the history of philosophy concerning the philosophical stature of the Venerable Inceptor: perhaps Ockham's *Sentences* questions were simply no longer in vogue among the theologians of the late fourteenth century in Paris. Perhaps his text was trashed because it was not trendy. I have already argued that in the second half of the fourteenth century theological debates were dominated by such figures as Gregory of Rimini OESA or John of Ripa OFM.²¹ Explicit citations of Ockham's *Sentences* questions in theological works from this period are comparatively infrequent, and often when Ockham is mentioned, it is rather for his *Dialogus* than for his *Sentences* questions.²² In the circle of James of Eltville, more precisely among the German scholars in Paris, Ockham did not enjoy much popularity, either as an ally or an adversary, at least as far as one can deduce from the explicit references to Ockham, for example in the *Sentences* questions of John Hiltalingen of Basel,²³ who lectured

[scil. Subtilis] opinio in hoc consistere: quod non potest haberi notitia intuitiva obiecti presentia separata. Secunda vero opinio huic contraria habet multos defensores, non parve auctoritatis viros, inter quos existunt dominus Petrus Aureoli, Guillelmus Ochan, et Iohannes de Ripa”.

21 See M. Brînzei, “Epilogue: Commentaries on the *Sentences* in Paris around 1370”, in *Philosophical Psychology in Late Medieval Commentaries on Peter Lombard's Sentences* (Rencontres de philosophie médiévales 21), ed. M. Brînzei and C. Schabel, Turnhout 2020, 407–430, and more recently on Ripa's reception M. Brînzei and C. Schabel: “The Legacy of Jean of Ripa”, *Studi sull'aristotelismo medievale (secoli VI–XVI)* 4 (2025), 361–423, in a special issue on John of Ripa edited by Andrea Nannini.

22 The critical edition of the *Dialogus* was completed in 2024; see: <https://publications.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/pubs/dialogus/ockdial.html>.

23 Cited above in brief, but here more fully: Iohannes de Basilea, *Lectura super quattuor libros Sententiarum* (Cassiciacum-Supplementbände 20–22): vol. 1: *Super primum librum* (Principium I, Qu. 1–3), ed. V. Marcolino, coop. M. Brînzei, C. Oser-Grote, Würzburg 2016; vol. 2: *Super primum librum* (Qu. 4–35), ed. V. Marcolino, coop. M. Brînzei, C. Oser-Grote, Würzburg 2017;

Volume	William of Ockham	Gregory of Rimini	Hugolino of Orvieto
Vol. 1 (Book I: <i>Principium</i> , q. 1–3)	9	4 ¹	45
Vol. 2 (Book I: q. 4–35)	12	68	46
Vol. 3 (Book II)	10	45	49
Vol. 4 (Book III)	2	2	16
Book IV (in progress)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 4: Citations of William of Ockham, OFM, Gregory of Rimini, OESA, and Hugolino of Orvieto, OESA, by John Hiltalingen of Basel, OESA

in the Augustinian convent in Paris in 1368–1369, the year before Eltville, who was intimately familiar with Hiltalingen's work.

Ockham was known but did not enjoy the same level of popularity as others among the contemporaries of Eltville. Even Eltville himself refers here and there to Ockham's *Sentences* questions, from which he quotes in book I Ockham's *Prologus* (q. 1) and distinctions 1, 2, 3, 5, 17, 27, and 44,²⁴ but these references do not surpass the number of quotations from Gregory of Rimini, John of Mirecourt, and Alphonsus Vargas of Toledo. Another extreme example is that of the German theologian Angelus Dobelin, who read the *Sentences* at Paris in 1374–1375 and who apparently does not quote Ockham at all.²⁵

The identification of the contents of two parchment bifolia inserted to protect the main paper text of codex Besançon, BMAC, 198, provoked the following question: why was the *Sentences* commentary of William of Ockham, a major figure of the fourteenth century, used around 1399 to reinforce the text of a lesser-known author, James of Eltville? Trying to answer to this question led to others: were copies of Ockham's text so abundant in Paris around

vol. 3: *Super secundum librum* (Principium II, Qu. 1–28), ed. V. Marcolino, coop. M. Brinzei, C. Oser-Grote, Würzburg 2018; vol. 4: *Super tertium librum*, ed. V. Marcolino, M. Brinzei, coop. C. Oser-Grote, Würzburg 2020.

²⁴ See the index of the published volumes.

²⁵ See the list of explicit citations in his *Sentences* in A. Trapp: "Angelus Dobelin, Doctor Parisiensis, and his Lectura", *Augustinianum* 3/2 (1963), 389–413.

1400 that dismantling one to reinforce another manuscript was not considered a big sacrifice?²⁶ Is the poor quality of the text and its incomplete nature the reason why the work was valued more for its parchment than for what was written on it? Were these two bifolia just fragments of a lone quire lying among other scraps on a desk in the *scriptorium* of the Collège des Bernardins, where Eltville himself had written his own work, and the scribe of Besançon 198 simply joined them to the main text, a good reuse of some valuable parchment? Or did Ockham's *Sentences* commentary simply no longer inspire much interest among the Cistercians in Paris toward the end of the fourteenth century and was therefore deemed fit for physical recycling? The reader is free to choose her own answer, keeping in mind that all these questions reiterate the same Fragmentology dilemma between "what a fragment is" and "what it was" that William Duba clearly identified recently.²⁷

26 For example, four copies of Ockham's text survive in Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14313 and 15561, and Bibliothèque Mazarine, 893 and 894. To this should be added that the codex from Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. soppr. A.3.801 has parts copied by a French hand and was probably also produced in Paris.

27 W. Duba, "Finding the Prior Leaf", *Fragmentology* 6 (2023), 5–65, at 6.