

# Fragmentology

## A Journal for the Study of Medieval Manuscript Fragments

*Fragmentology* is an international, peer-reviewed Open Access journal, dedicated to publishing scholarly articles and reviews concerning medieval manuscript fragments. *Fragmentology* welcomes submissions, both articles and research notes, on any aspect pertaining to Latin and Greek manuscript fragments in the Middle Ages.

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## Research Note

Fragments of Jerome's *Epistolae* (Mainz: Peter Schoeffer, 1470) in the Utrecht University Library

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Utrecht University Library possesses one partially complete print of Jerome's *Epistolae*, printed in 1470 by Peter Schoeffer's Mainz printing office (G fol 1). Peter Schoeffer, Gutenberg's former companion, is renowned for printing beautifully crafted incunabula on both vellum and paper, and this copy of the *Epistolae*, printed on high quality vellum and richly illuminated, is one of the treasures of the University Library. This copy, known as the Gouda Hieronymus (Henceforth GH), after the place where the first known owner of it lived,<sup>1</sup> consists of the first volume only; the second volume of the book, consisting of folios 201–408, is missing. The University Library also holds several fragments, both detached and in situ, of Jerome's *Epistolae*, printed on vellum. Several descriptions of the GH state that these fragments came from the missing second volume, but this is impossible; therefore the University Library holds the remains of at least two copies on vellum.

## The Provenance of the GH

As attested by an ownership mark on the pastedown, the GH was probably first bought by Adam van (der) Craenleyde,<sup>2</sup> a canon in Bergen op Zoom who was active as pastor of St John's Church

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\* This research was carried out as part of a traineeship at Special Collections of Utrecht University Library, April – July 2021, under the supervision of Bart Jaski, keeper of manuscripts and curator of early printed books (*rariora*).

1 Hieronymus Stridentionis, *Epistolae*, Mainz: Peter Schoeffer, 1470 (ISTC [ih00165000](#)). The modern edition is Eusebius Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, ed. I. Hilberg and M. Kamptner (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 54–56), Vienna and Leipzig, 1910–1918, 1996.

2 J. Alblas and J. van Someren, *Incunabelen Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht*, Utrecht, 1922, 80, no. 307 (*Liber Ade de Craenleyde pastoris In Gouda*

in Gouda from 1476 to ca. 1503.<sup>3</sup> It is probably after his death that the brothers of the Devotio Moderna in Utrecht acquired the book. Their establishment in the city centre, founded in 1475, was called the Hieronymus House, after their patron saint. Here the brothers copied and collected books until their collection was confiscated by the Protestant city council in 1584. From their library, eight manuscripts and about 30 printed volumes are now left, of which the GH is by far the most outstanding.<sup>4</sup> It was placed in the newly founded city library, which in 1636 also became the university library.<sup>5</sup>

There are two versions (A and B) of Schoeffer's 1470 print of the *Epistolae*, identical except for their introductions.<sup>6</sup> The University Library possesses issue II or B of the *Epistolae*, as the introduction is addressed to all the Christian people interested in the letters ("OMnes christiane religionis homines"), rather than solely to an ecclesiastical audience ("OMnibus ecclesiastici ordinis deuotis zelatoribus veritatibus").<sup>7</sup> The rubrication of this volume was done in Mainz, as was usual for Schoeffer's printing office, but further illumination could have been done elsewhere. The illustration on the first folio of the *Epistolae* of Jerome as cardinal with a jumping lion at his feet and a messenger delivering a letter (see Figure 1) is thought to have been produced in the Northern Netherlands around

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*et canonici bergensis supra Zonima* (crossed out); subsequent mark of ownership: *Pro conventu fratrum Hieronymi In traiecto inferiori*).

- 3 B. Ibelings, "Een zegelstempel voor de pastoors van de Goudse St. Janskerk uit de 15e eeuw", in *De schatkamer: regionaal historisch tijdschrift Midden-Holland*, 31 nr. 1 (2017), 1–13, at 4–8; K. Goudriaan, "Erasmus en Gouda: een vluchtige relatie", *ibid.*, nr. 3, 38–43, at 40–41.
- 4 K. van der Horst et al., *Handschriften en oude drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, second edition, Utrecht 1984, 98–100, 103–104 (no. 39); A.G. Weiler, *Volgens de norm van de vroege kerk: de geschiedenis van de huizen van de broeders van het Gemene leven in Nederland*, Nijmegen 1997, 159–169.
- 5 The GH is mentioned in the earliest catalogue, *Bibliothecae traiectionae catalogus*, Utrecht 1608, quire F3r.
- 6 C. Schneider, *Peter Schöffer: Bücher für Europa*, Mainz, 2003, 34–38.
- 7 On the two introductions, see H.M. Pabel, *Herculean Labours: Erasmus and the Editing of St. Jerome's Letters in the Renaissance*, Leiden 2008, 37–39. This corresponds to Hain \*8554 and GW 12425, see <https://gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/docs/HIERSOP.htm>, where, however, the Utrecht copy is listed under GW 12424 (issue I or A); the same holds for the ISTC.



Figure 1: G fol 1, fol. 5r, with historiated initial in gold leaf with marginal decoration, an initial in gold leaf with penwork, printing in black and red, small painted initials in red and blue and rubrication (red strokes) of capital letters.



1480,<sup>8</sup> although this attribution was prompted by the ownership of van Craenleyde. The historiated initial has not been placed in a group with a similar style, nor does the penwork have characteristics that clearly point to either Gouda or Utrecht as the place of origin.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, while some gaps in our knowledge of the production and provenance of the GH remain, what we know is incompatible with the information available for the University Library's fragments of Jerome's *Epistolae*, which are almost all associated with the collection of Hubert van Buchell.

## Hubert van Buchell (1513–1599)

Hu(y)bert van Buchell was able to collect books due to his lucrative position as canon of the chapter of St. Mary's Church in Utrecht.<sup>10</sup> In recent years it has been established that he used the vellum of manuscripts of St. Mary's Church that had become obsolete as binding material for his own books. This mainly happened after his move to Cologne in 1570. This was a cheap solution for him, and aligns with a contemporary rumour that he was notoriously stingy. He used leaves from more than a hundred manuscripts and prints as flyleaves and pastedowns for his own books.<sup>11</sup> Twenty-two fragments originated from an edition of Jerome's *Epistolae* printed in Mainz in 1470, and were or still are bound in eleven host volumes.

8 Loes Kuiper-Brussen, "Hieronymus, *Epistolae*", in Van der Horst, *Vier eeuwen*, 103–104. Alblas and van Someren, *Incunabelen*, 80, no. 307, state it is 'probably German'.

9 Compare, for example, the penwork in J.W. Klein, "Marginale problemen. Penwerk in enkele Goudse handschriften en drukken", in *Middeleeuwse handschriftenkunde in de Nederlanden 1988*, ed. J.M.M. Hermans, Grave 1989, 97–114; A.S. Korteweg, "Zuid-Holland", in *Krieziels, aubergines en takkenbossen: randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de vijftiende eeuw*, ed. A.S. Korteweg, Zutphen 1992, 68–83; G. Gerritsen-Geywitz, *Het Utrechtse draakje en zijn entourage. Vijftien penwerkstijlen in Utrechtse handschriften en gedrukte boeken uit de tweede helft van de vijftiende eeuw*, Hilversum 2017.

10 Van der Horst, *Vier eeuwen*, 189–200.

11 B. Jaski, "Collecties handschriftfragmenten in de Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht", in *Perkament in stukken: teruggevonden middeleeuwse handschriftfragmenten*, ed. B. Jaski, M. Mostert, and K. van Vliet, Hilversum 2018, 22–33, at 26–31.



According to his testament, his book collection should have been donated to St. Jacob's Church in Utrecht after his death. However, it was effectively confiscated by the city council and placed in the city library, established in St John's Church in 1584. This addition nearly doubled the library's collection.<sup>12</sup>

We know that van Buchell used a copy of the *Epistolae* to bind his own books, because all the host volumes containing these paste-downs have a variation of the name '(van) Buchel' on the front page. The front page is marked with notes such as: *ex dono H. van Buchel*, *ex dono Buchelii*, *ex domine Buchell* or simply *Buchel*. There is one exception to this rule, host volume T fol 23, which was never part of the van Buchell collection, as will be discussed below.

The theory that van Buchell used the now-missing second volume of the GH as binding material was advanced by Jan Alblas and Jan Frederik van Someren in their catalogue of the incunabula in Utrecht University Library, published in 1922.<sup>13</sup> Loes Kuiper-Brussen repeated the notion in her description of the GH in 1984.<sup>14</sup> Considering the similarities between the GH and the fragments, as will be discussed below, this assumption seemed only logical.

## The Provenance of the Fragments

When researching the pastedowns and the flyleaves in the van Buchell collection, I found that there are six fragments of pages that also survive in the GH. As a result, van Buchell must have used a different copy (at least one) than the GH as binding material. A comparison of the fragments, the GH, and a digital copy of München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 Inc.c.a. 30 a (=M),<sup>15</sup> shows the results.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Alblas and van Someren, *Incunabelen*, 80, no. 307.

<sup>14</sup> Kuiper-Brussen, "Hieronymus", 104.

<sup>15</sup> München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 Inc.c.a. 30 a, [urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-63868-p0043-9](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-63868-p0043-9), [urn:nbn:de:bsb:00043092-3](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsb:00043092-3).

**Table 1: Fragments of Jerome's *Epistolae* (shading = same quire)**

Fragment identifier (shelfmark or fragment)	Host volume printed	Nr. + Size fragm.	distinction	M pp.		GH f.
Inc. fr. 11.17a	1584	2 × ⅛	C	147-148		75
E oct 268	1584	1 × ⅛	C	147-148		75
S qu 226	1584	2 × ¼	C	157-158		80
H fol 124	1559	1 × ½	C	163-164		83
Rariora oct. 649	1590	1 × ¼+strip	C	165-166		84
T fol 23	1555	2 × ½	D	343-344		173
G fol 210	1563	strip	K	525-526		-
H fol 114	1568	2 × ½	M	595-596	637-638	-
Inc. fr. 11.17b	-	2 × ½	M	595-596	647-648	-
F qu 170	1583	2 × ¼	M	597-598		-
H fol 118	1577	strip	M	601-602		-
E qu 81	1589	2 × ¼	M	637-638		-
F fol 202	1562	2 × ½	M	641-642		-

The fragments taken from six of the host volumes correspond to five folios from the GH, meaning that they come from a different copy of the *Epistolae*. The GH only contains the first volume of Jerome's letters, namely those that the 1470 edition classifies under distinctions 'A' to 'E'; The *epistolae* classified under distinctions 'F' to 'M' appear in the second volume. Thus, while it is conceivable that those fragments from Distinctions K and M came from the GH, it is more likely that they came from the same prints as the other fragments van Buchell used for his bindings, that is, from a copy other than that owned by van Craenleyde and the Hieronymus House, and we may infer that the copy van Buchell used originally had belonged to the library of St. Mary's Church.

The flyleaves taken out of their host volumes are also included in this table, under Inc. fr. 11.17. These fragments have traces of glue on them, so it is certain they were used as binding material. Since they are vellum fragments, like the other flyleaves, they must have been taken from the same copy of the *Epistolae*. Inc. fr. 11.17a consists of two small fragments that were taken from F oct 119 and contain

the text of an *epistola* classified under Distinction C, just like the pastedowns of the host volumes S qu 226, H fol 124 and Rariora oct 649. A comparison with the GH shows that the fragments came from the same quire (consisting of a quinion of ten folia). In the GH, this quire consist of folios 75–84. Similarly, Inc. fr. 11.17b consists of two half leaves with the text of an *epistola* under the letter 'M', just like the fragments in four other host volumes, F fol 202 [[F-ufwg](#)], H fol 114 and E qu 81 – the latter two parts of the same leaf. They were probably also part of the same quire. Moreover, the first fragment of Inc. fr. 11.17b is the top half of the first folio of H fol 114. They must have belonged to the same quire as the fragments in F qu 170 and H fol 118. It follows that van Buchell's binder cut one folio (pages 595–596 in the München copy) in half and used it to bind two different books, the top one for an unknown host volume, the bottom one for H fol 114. The same happened with a folio used for the other fragment in H fol 114 and those in E qu 81 (pages 637–638 in the München copy), and for the fragments of Inc. fr. 11.17a and E oct. 268 (pages 147–148 in the München copy). From these indications, I conclude that Inc. fr. 11.17b was also used by van Buchell as binding material.

The odd one out in the list above is a convolute with the shelfmark T fol 23.<sup>16</sup> Unlike the others, it is not listed in the catalogue of 1608 as part of the van Buchell collection.<sup>17</sup> The reason van Buchell had obtained so many books from St. Mary's Church was probably because it had hidden the books of its library among its canons after the Iconoclastic Fury ('Beeldenstorm') of 1566.<sup>18</sup> We have to presume that van Buchell was not the only canon in whose house books of St. Mary's Church were hidden, and that some were similarly used as binding material by other canons or

16 T fol 23 contains Simon Grynaeus, *Novus orbis regionum ac insularum veteribus ...*, Basel 1555 and Peter Martyr, *De rebus Oceanicis ...*, Basel 1533. The binding is different from those of the books of van Buchell. Since it also contains the year 1560 stamped in the leather, it was bound before the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566, suggesting that some books were already used as binding material prior to that event.

17 The volume now known as T fol 23 appears in the *Catalogus Bibliothecae Ultrajectinae*, Utrecht 1670, 72 and 74, under the old shelfmark N.100p.

18 Van der Horst, *Vier eeuwen*, 137.

came into the hands of other persons and were then used accordingly. In support of this hypothesis, the collection of van Buchell includes binding fragments from manuscripts that, minus a few quires, stayed or were returned to the library of St. Mary's Church.<sup>19</sup>

In the above analysis it also appears that the Jerome fragments come from a small number of quires, rather than being taken at random from the printed book as a whole. Hence van Buchell may not have a complete copy of the *Epistolae* from St. Mary's Church in his possession, but merely a handful of quires.

## Parchment Quality, Decoration and Humanist Handwriting

We have now established that, in binding his books, van Buchell definitely used a 1470 print on vellum of Jerome's *Epistolae* that was *not* the GH. This is also proven by the quality of the parchment of the fragments. The quality of the vellum in the GH is high; the vellum is very white, there are no or little traces of follicles. Most holes in the vellum have been fixed with needle and thread before the printing process. The fragments van Buchell used are mixed in quality, even those coming from the same quire or an adjoining one. This difference in parchment quality further lessens the chance that he somehow used folios from the missing second volume of the GH.

It is also instructive to look more closely at the printing of the fragments and additions made by hand. Some of these were done immediately after the printing process in Mainz, by the same shop, and some were done elsewhere. Peter Schoeffer printed the *Epistolae* in two colours, black and red. The printed red was reserved for captions, such as the titles of the *epistolae*, and for names, such as when two or more people are in conversation. The red colour of the

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<sup>19</sup> These manuscripts with missing quires are now found in the collection of Utrecht University Library, including most notably Ms. 130 and Ms. 709; see Jaski, "Collecties", 27–28. Of the latter, four adjoining bifolia surfaced in the nineteenth century in the hands of a private owner. Leaves of the former were used to bind, among others, G fol 210 and H fol 118, each of which also contains a strip (or perhaps strips) from the *Epistolae* attached as support around the back below the cover.

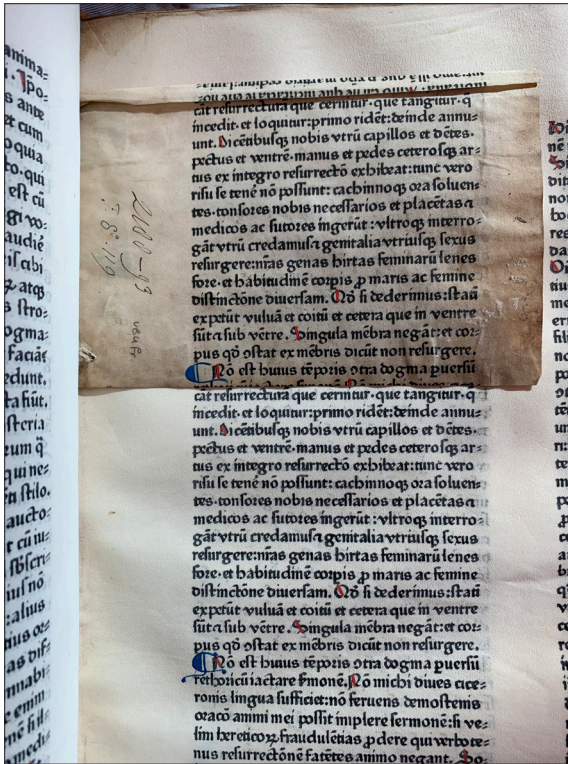


Figure 2: Inc. fr. 11.17a placed on top of the GH, above the same passage in the GH, fol. 75r. Note the difference in quality of the parchment. The blue paragraph mark and the rubrication are very similar.

printed letters differs from the red of the rubrication (the red strokes through the capital letters of each new sentence), meaning that the rubrication was painted or stamped on the printed capital letters in black after the printing itself was finished. The same applies to the paragraph marks and lombards, which are either blue or red. Given the uniform appearance of the rubrication, paragraph marks and lombards, they were all added in the same environment, presumably Schoeffer's own printing shop. While further illumination, such as painted initials and miniatures, could also have been done there, it is just as equally possible that they were added elsewhere, by the bookshop or workshop where the book was bought, depending on the buyer's personal taste and budget.<sup>20</sup>

20 For decoration added in Schoeffer's own printing shop, see L. Hellinga, *Incurabula in Transit: People and Trade*, Leiden 2018, 103–104, 109–118.

Peter Schoeffer clearly strove for a uniform look for his products. Although his goal was to make nearly identical copies, very small differences in the additions by hand point to different persons working in the same shop. Unfortunately, the fragments contain no distinctive paragraph marks or initials from which to draw conclusions.<sup>21</sup> The lombards, however, are more numerous, although not all of the fragments have them. Those that do are distinct from the München copy of the *Epistolae*, printed on paper. The lombards of the fragments are more stretched, oval-shaped instead of round, and more ink is applied. See, for example, the lombards of the fragments in figures 3–6, compared to the lombards of the München copy in figures 7–10. The shape of the lombards is more fluid with few unnecessarily elongated strokes. The fragment of T fol 23 (figure 6), the only host volume not from the Buchell collection, has a lombard similar in style to the other fragments, supporting the conclusion that it too comes from the *Epistolae* we have assigned to St. Mary's Church.

Instead, the lombards in the van Buchell fragments and the lombard of T fol 23 are similar to those in the GH. Compared to the lombards in the München copy, they have the same fluid strokes, and lack the 'dot' on the ends. For example, the lombard 'P' of the GH on folio 173r is nearly exactly the same as the lombard 'P' on the flyleaf of T fol 23 (figures 11 and 6), suggesting that they were both added by the same person in Schoeffer's workshop. This similarity, combined with others, such as the printing on parchment and identical rubrication, may have prompted Alblas and van Someren to think they belonged to the same copy. One should also note that the *Epistolae* contain many quotations in which Greek and Hebrew words and sentences have been transliterated into Latin. The marginal notes in the GH restore them to their proper form in Greek and Hebrew letters and a corrected Latin transliteration – quite a learned endeavour. None of the fragments have any handwritten annotations in Latin, Greek or Hebrew. We do find two cases of

21 For more information on distinctive paragraph marks in the works of Peter Schoeffer, see L. Hellenga, *Incunabula in Transit*, 113. See also her article "Peter Schoeffer and His Organization: A Bibliographical Investigation of the Ways an Early Printer Worked", *Biblis Yearbook*, ed. G. Jonsson, Stockholm 1995–96, 67–106.





Figures 3–6: F fol 202, H fol 114, H fol 114, T fol 23



Figures 7–10: München, p. 642, 637, 638, 343

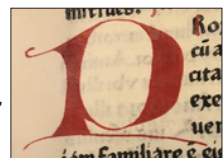


Figure 11: GH, f. 173r

marginal notes that point to some leaves having been used by van Buchell as wrappers.<sup>22</sup>

When taking the quality of the vellum, the shape of the lombards and the lack of annotations into account, the conclusion must be that van Buchell used a single vellum copy of the *Epistolae* as binding material, and that this copy is not the GH but rather came from St. Mary's Church, where he used to be a canon.

## Conclusion: More Copies of the 1470 Mainz Edition of the *Epistolae*

In researching the flyleaves and pastedowns of in the van Buchell collection, the remnants of a new copy of Jerome's *Epistolae*

<sup>22</sup> On F fol 202: *Buchel Schreyb Almanach 1573*, and on E qu 81: *Ein cantzeleisch formular / calender. Index librorum de annorum 87*. The first suggests that van Buchell started to use the leaves from the *Epistolae* for his own purposes not long after he had fled to Cologne in 1570.



printed on vellum in Mainz by Peter Schoeffer have come to light in Utrecht University Library. This means that there were more extant copies printed on vellum than previously thought: at least eighteen instead of seventeen.<sup>23</sup> A likely provenance has also been established: St. Mary's Church in Utrecht. One could easily assume that binders typically used old manuscripts for binding waste, because manuscripts had become redundant with the increasing number of printed editions at the end of the fifteenth century. As our fragments show, sometimes the binder's knife did not spare even intricately crafted incunabula, in this case due to the political circumstances of Utrecht in the 1460s and 1470s, and to personal decisions made by Huybert van Buchell.<sup>24</sup>

Determining the provenance of incunabula presents unique challenges compared to researching medieval manuscripts. The uniform look of incunabula likely caused Alblas and van Someren to assume that van Buchell's flyleaves and pastedowns came from the second volume of the GH, despite their different provenance.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of this note, the entry for the *Epistolae* in the Incunabula Short Title Catalogue needs updating. Besides one incomplete version of the *Epistolae* (Version B) on vellum and fragments of another vellum copy, Utrecht University Library also has, hitherto

<sup>23</sup> M. Lane Ford, "Deconstruction and Reconstruction: Detecting and Interpreting Sophisticated Copies", in *Early Printed Books as Material Objects. Proceeding of the Conference Organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Munich, 19–21 August 2009*, ed. B. Wagner and M. Reed, Berlin 2010, 291–303, at 296, which is based on personal communication with Lotte Hellinga. Compare to the ISTC entry (<https://data.cerl.org/istc/ih00i65000>, last edit 26 March 2021), where fourteen copies on vellum are noted and one mixed, but excluding Christie's, London, 20 November 2002 (Live auction 6711), lot 82, which, as Lane Ford notes, consists of fragments of three different copies printed on vellum. The ISTC does not note that Utrecht UB 307 (G fol 1) is printed on vellum. Hence, the total number of known copies printed on vellum may even be nineteen.

<sup>24</sup> For incunabula leaves as binding material, see also E.M. White, "Gutenberg Bibles that Survive as Binder's Waste", in Wagner and Reed, *Early Printed Books*, 21–35; Hellinga, *Incunabula in Transit*, 204–229.

<sup>25</sup> Alblas and van Someren had identified the whereabouts of all the fragments now known, except those in E oct 268, Rariora oct 649 (olim C qu 132), and the strips in F qu 170 and G fol 210. It is quite possible that other fragments will be found in the vast collection of van Buchell.

unnoticed, fragments of a paper copy.<sup>26</sup> This new information moves toward 4.5:1 the ratio of paper to vellum for the Mainz 1470 edition.<sup>27</sup> It further supports the notion that vellum as printing material continued to be appreciated in the fifteenth century, and that the Low Countries were an important distribution area for the German printing presses. But in the end, even texts printed on vellum – or, probably, especially texts printed on vellum – could finally meet the binder's knife.<sup>28</sup>

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26 This paper fragment consists of 12½ detached leaves, and one leaf used to cover Ms. 796 (6 E 32) (see <https://utrechtuniversity.on.worldcat.org/v2/oclc/965406117>). The detached leaves were used as wrappers for genealogical documents previously owned by the Utrecht lawyer and historian, Aernout van Buchell (Buchelius, 1565–1641), the nephew of Hubert van Buchell; see also the 1927 letter by Willem Adriaan Beelaerts van Blokland (1883–1935) to the curator and librarian, Abraham Hulshof (1874–1954), which is kept among the paper fragments in Utrecht, University Library, 222 A 40, map 81.

27 Cf. Lane Ford, “Deconstructing”, 296.

28 See further F. Eisermann, “The Gutenberg Galaxy’s Dark Matter: Lost Incunabula, and Ways to Retrieve Them”, in *Lost Books: Reconstructing the Print World of Pre-Industrial Europe*, ed. F. Bruni and A. Pettegree, Leiden, 2016, 29–54, at 38, and the literature there cited; White, “The Gutenberg Bibles”, where on p. 22 he notes that more vellum fragments of the Gutenberg Bibles survive than paper fragments.