

## Background

We requested scans of a German manuscript leaf from 1551 from 24 libraries in order to accomplish two primary goals:

- 1) digitally reconstruct the full manuscript as much as possible in order to find out more about it, and
- 2) provide a recommendation for best practice in digital scan requests.

## Digital Fragmentology

Fragmentology is the study of manuscript fragments. Digital fragmentology attempts to bring disparate pieces of the same manuscript together to recreate a whole text, which is made possible by technology such as online catalogs and increasingly interconnected metadata. Each institution we selected for this survey held one or more leaves from an unknown manuscript whose individual leaves were sold between 1927 and 1967.

## Leafbooks and The Foliophiles, Inc. (T.F.I.)

Destroying bound manuscripts and selling the individual leaves was not an uncommon practice. In theory, selling these "leafbooks" instead of the complete copy ensured greater access to such historical artifacts. Today, however, it has become a hindrance to viewing the completed work, since access to the whole requires tracking down each fragment.

Between 1964 and 1967, The Foliophiles, Inc. (TFI) created and sold portfolios which contained leaves from this German manuscript.

# Man, You scRipt all the Pages Out:

## Digital Fragmentology of a 1551 Manuscript and a Recommendation for Best Practice in Special Collections Digital Reproductions.

Daniel Levy and Alexander Bellairs, MLIS

Sponsor: John Mustain, Curator of Rare Books at Stanford University Libraries Special Collections

### 24 Libraries

- 2 State Libraries
- 2 Public Libraries
- 17 Public Academic
- 3 Private Academic
- 1 for sale

### Prices

- 13 free
- 3 per page
- 0 flat fee
- 2 per page and fee

### Clarifying Questions

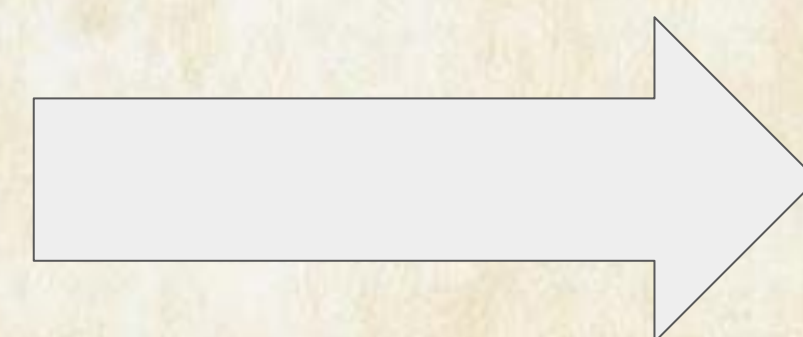
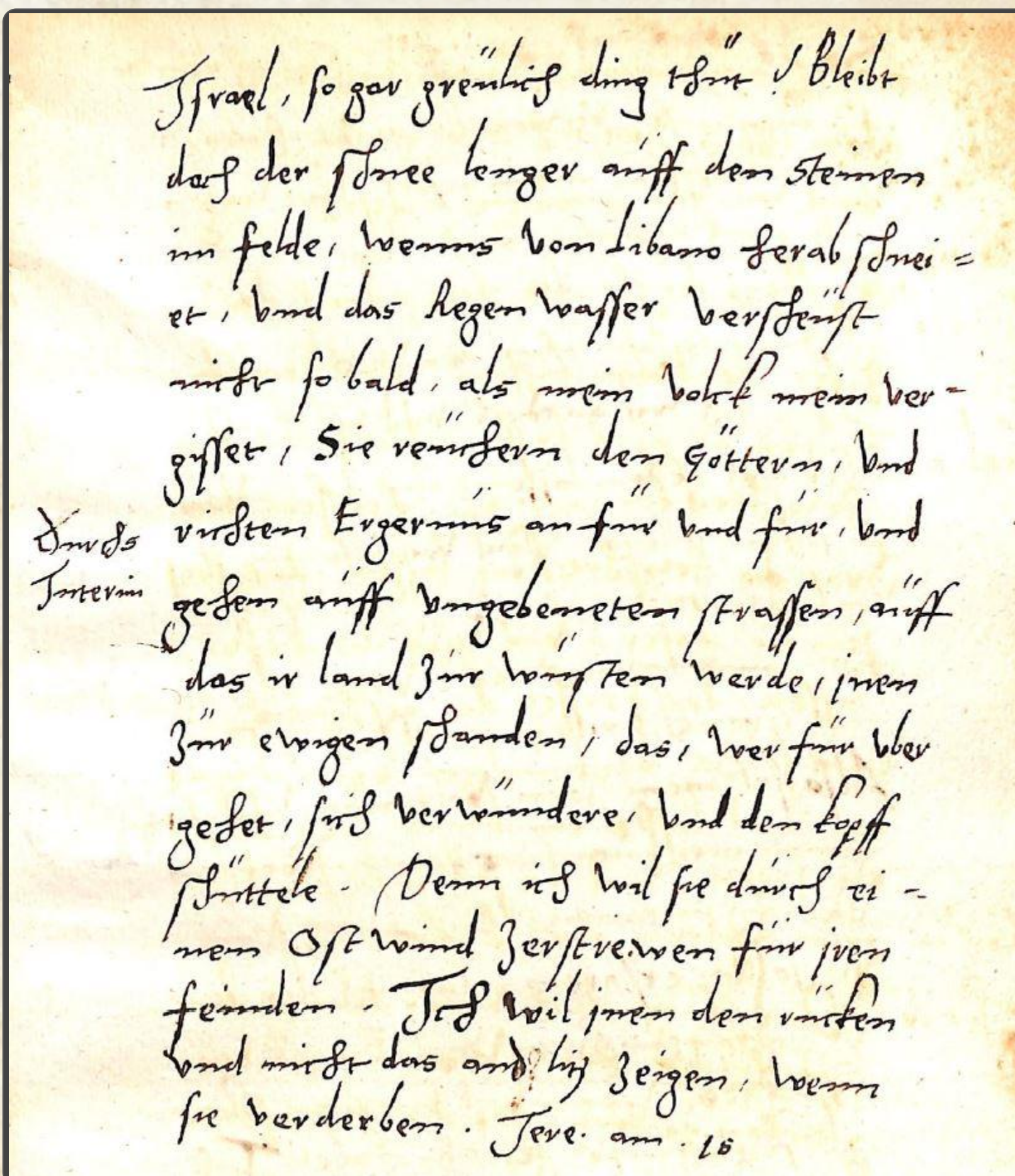
- Image type/quality
- Other copies elsewhere
- Why do you need it?
- Problems with the verso

### TRANSCRIPTION

[...] Israel, so gar greulich ding chut! Bleibt doch der shnee lenger auff den steinen im felde, wennis von libano herab shneiet, und das Regen wasser versheust nicht so bald, als mein volck mein vergisset. Sie reuchern den Gottern, und richten Ergermus an fur und fur, und gehen auff ungebeneten strassen, auf das ir land zur wusten werde, inen zur ewigen shanden, das, wer fur uber geher, sich verwundere, und den kopff shuttele. Denn ich wil sie durch einen Ostwind zerstreuen fur iren feinden. Ich wil inen den rucken und nicht das am litz zeigen, wenn sie verderben. Jere. am 18



FROM A GERMAN MANUSCRIPT—an interesting anti-Catholic theological diatribe signed by five Protestant pastors and dated the third of April, 1551. The German script is clear and legible even though most of the points under discussion, such as the significance of congruent and convenient grace, are far from possessing a similar crystalline quality. In fact, the crabbed style of this Sixteenth Century holograph shows the characteristic hand of the zealous scholar rather than that of the trained scrivener. We are, of course, in the full tide of the Reformation, and it is but natural that the graces of calligraphy should wilt beneath the glare of theological controversy. © 1926, T. F. I.



### Cataloging

- 4 in archival collections
- 16 as "Pages from the Past"
- 4 as "History of the Written Word"
- 11 described at the item level

### Response Time

- Initial: 5 min. - 5 days, avg time of 22 hours
- Scans: 25 min. - 22 days avg time of 3.5 days

- 2 were already digital
- 8 did not get scans to us by time of publication.

### Request Forms

- 8 required
- 11 not required
- 5 unknown

### TRANSLATION

[...] Israel does so terrible a thing! But snow stays longer upon the stones in the field if it falls down from Lebanon, and the rainwater wastes away not so soon as my people forget. They burn incense to gods and cause nuisance for and for, and go on untrodden roads, that their land would become a wasteland, an eternal shame to them, that whoever goes past will wonder and shake their head. For I will disperse them for their enemies like an easterly wind. I will show them my back and not my face if they corrupt. Jeremiah 18[ 13-17]

### Process

- Use systems like OCLC WorldCat to locate holding institutions
- Create standard form request and contact for digital copy
- Record all transactions and code for quantitative and qualitative content
- Transcribe leaves with assistance from 1912 Luther Bible
- Use textual analysis to determine page relations

### Outcomes

- 28 manuscript pages identified.
- 24 libraries interacted with.
- 19 pages digitally acquired.
- Transcribed and translated all 19.
- Evaluated policy of each library.
- Develop recommendations for best practice in digital scan requests.

### Recommendation for Best Practice

- No cost or low cost (\$0.50 or less per page). Pay per page better than flat fee.
- Request forms: pro: covers liability for institutions, offers invariable instructions for patrons; con: often redundant info must be filled out, too formal.
- Response: timeliness is best, even if just to say that they are looking into it or to ask follow up questions.
- Organizational transparency: ensure policy, pricing, and contact info of reference staff are easy to find and clearly defined.