Rubble, ruins, scraps, shards. Stark foundations, broken tablets, partial chapters, erratic transcriptions. Translations of vanished originals, titles of lost texts, palimpsests of anonymous works. Scholars of ancient and medieval periods work with fragments. The tombs and houses they excavate, and the unfamiliar genres they confront, once constituted part of coherent civilizations, of meaningful ways of seeing and representing the world. Neglectful time has destroyed or changed these civilizations, and has eroded the ligatures that connected their social structure to their built environment, their literature to their religious practices, and their landscapes to their sense of time.

The study of ancient and medieval pasts is therefore a hermeneutical endeavor: an attempt to offer the most plausible explanation and the most comprehensive interpretation of the largest amount of evidence. Whereas scholars of the modern period proceed by selection, sorting through massive archives and choosing between multiple narratives, scholars of earlier periods often find themselves at a loss to gather enough evidence for even one intermittent tale. Archaeologists across the world have long been aware of their shared interpretive difficulties, and of their shared methodologies, but scholars in the humanities have often remained divided by their distinct languages, their canons of literature and reference works, and their disciplinary dispositions. In the interim, modernists have dominated methodological debates, producing injunctions that often apply but poorly to the fragmented remains of ancient and medieval pasts.

The editorial board of *Fragments* proposes to offer a space for interdisciplinary debates about approaches to ancient and medieval pasts: an open-access, on-line journal for scholars in the social sciences and the humanities, working in periods prior to 1500 CE in any part of the world. The board encourages comparative scholarship, experimental methodologies, and theoretical explorations. By publishing articles and commentaries that work through fragmentary evidence, the board hopes to contribute to a body of diverse, critical scholarship that uses the faint, scattered traces of the remote past to challenge the presumptions of the present, and the privileged methodologies of the modern.

On behalf of the editorial board,

Christian de Pee