



BIBLIOCLASM



Studies in the Destruction, Dispersal, Theft
and Reconstruction of Books and Manuscripts

Peer-reviewed scholarly series and research programme



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

FIRST COLLECTIVE VOLUME — 2027

Manuscript and book theft,
mutilation, dismemberment
and biblioclasm

Provenance research,
recovery, restitution
and reintegration

Legal, ethical and
professional questions
in the manuscript and
rare-book market

Case studies, archival
research and material
history

Digital reconstruction,
new methodologies,
interdisciplinary
perspectives



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION DEADLINE
15 NOVEMBER 2026



MORE INFORMATION
www.pigouchet.com/biblioclasm-series



SUBMISSIONS
contact@pigouchet.com

BIBLIOCLASM

Studies in the Destruction, Dispersal, Theft and Reconstruction of Books and Manuscripts

BIBLIOCLASM is a new international peer-reviewed scholarly series and research programme launched by Éditions Pigouchet (Paris) and devoted to the material and documentary history of the destruction, theft, mutilation, dismantling, illicit circulation, recovery, and reconstruction of books and manuscripts.

Conceived as more than a conventional periodical, BIBLIOCLASM combines scholarly publication with an ongoing programme of research, discussion, and public dissemination. Alongside its peer-reviewed volumes, the project will promote seminars, workshops, lectures, round tables, and video contributions, creating a forum in which individual case studies can become the starting point for broader methodological and interdisciplinary discussion.

The first volume of the series, scheduled for 2027, will be a collective peer-reviewed volume, bringing together contributions selected through an international Call for Papers. Future volumes may be collective or thematic and will appear according to the development of the research programme and the quality and relevance of the contributions received, rather than according to a predetermined publication frequency.

Why BIBLIOCLASM?

Books and manuscripts reach us not only through processes of preservation and transmission, but also through histories of destruction, mutilation, theft, dispersal, collecting, sale, recovery, and reconstruction.

These histories are too often treated as secondary to the textual, artistic, or palaeographical study of the objects themselves. BIBLIOCLASM starts from a different premise: what happened to a book is part of the history of that book.

The physical history of a codex, the circumstances in which parts of it were lost or removed, the documentary record of its successive ownership, and the routes through which its leaves or fragments entered collections, catalogues, auctions, databases, libraries, and museums are therefore not ancillary information. They constitute historical evidence in their own right.

The project brings together codicology, palaeography, philology, art history, book history, provenance research, conservation, digital humanities, cultural-heritage studies, and cultural-property law, encouraging dialogue between disciplines that frequently encounter the same objects from different perspectives.

Fragments are not detached leaves

A central methodological principle of BIBLIOCLASM is the need to distinguish between historical fragments and deliberately detached leaves.

A fragment resulting from the historical transmission of a manuscript — through deterioration, accidental loss, reuse, binding practices, or other processes of material survival — is not equivalent to an intact or substantially intact leaf deliberately removed from a codex through theft, mutilation, or commercial dismemberment.

The generic use of the word fragment for both phenomena risks erasing precisely the historical event that requires investigation: the act and circumstances of separation from the parent codex.

For this reason, BIBLIOCLASM does not approach the isolated manuscript leaf as an autonomous collectible detached from its material history. Wherever the evidence permits, research should seek to determine where the object came from, when and how it became separated, through whose hands it subsequently passed, and under what circumstances it entered its present collection or the market.

Description and attribution remain essential scholarly operations, but they cannot substitute for provenance research when the material history of an object can still be reconstructed.

From dispersal to reconstruction

The study of biblioclasm is not limited to documenting destruction.

Identifying a detached leaf, tracing its provenance, recovering evidence of a dispersed codex, locating related material in public or private collections, and reconstructing the original manuscript — physically, intellectually, or digitally — are different stages of the same research process.

BIBLIOCLASM therefore gives particular attention to the possibilities offered by digital reconstruction, image comparison, databases, archival research, and other technologies capable of reconnecting dispersed manuscript material with its original context.

Recovery and reconstruction are understood in the broadest sense: not only the physical restitution of an object, where possible, but also the restoration of its historical identity, codicological context, provenance, and documentary history.

Scholarly independence

The project is founded on a clear distinction between independent scholarly research and commercial activity in cultural property.

BIBLIOCLASM does not accept scholarly contributions from individuals professionally involved in the commercial trade of manuscripts, manuscript leaves, rare books, or related cultural property, including dealers, commercial intermediaries, auction-house specialists or consultants, and paid advisers involved in acquisition, attribution, cataloguing, valuation, or sale.

This principle does not exclude the study of the manuscript and rare-book market. On the contrary, auction catalogues, dealers, collections, commercial networks, ownership histories, and market practices constitute important subjects of research for BIBLIOCLASM. Such research, however, must be conducted from a position of scholarly independence and supported by verifiable evidence.

The series welcomes contributions from established academics, early-career scholars, independent researchers, heritage professionals, conservators, legal scholars, and specialists from relevant disciplines, provided that they meet these principles of independence and methodological rigour.

A publication series and a research forum

Publication is only one dimension of BIBLIOCLASM.

Each volume is intended to generate and preserve a wider scholarly conversation. Depending on its subject and contributors, the research developed within the series may be accompanied by:

- international seminars and research workshops, bringing together specialists around particular cases or methodological problems;
- lectures and masterclasses, including activities aimed at early-career researchers;
- round tables and scholarly discussions on provenance, biblioclasm, restitution, reconstruction, collecting, and professional responsibility;
- video essays, interviews, and short research presentations, allowing individual discoveries, objects, and methodological questions to reach audiences beyond the printed volume;
- digital resources and reconstruction projects connected with research published in the series.

These activities are conceived not as promotional supplements to the publications but as an integral part of the project. They allow research to remain open to discussion, comparison, further documentation, and new discoveries after publication.

Where appropriate, seminars, workshops, lectures, and video materials will be made available through the project's digital platforms, creating a growing research resource alongside the published series.

The inaugural volume — 2027

The first BIBLIOCLASM volume, scheduled for publication in 2027, will be a collective international volume assembled through an open Call for Papers.

It will bring together original studies addressing different forms and historical contexts of biblioclasm, manuscript and book theft, deliberate dismemberment, problematic circulation, provenance research, recovery, and reconstruction.

Particular attention will be given to documented case studies based on archival, codicological, palaeographical, photographic, legal, bibliographical, or market evidence, as well as to contributions capable of developing new methodological approaches to the study of dispersed material.

The inaugural volume is intended not simply as the first publication bearing the BIBLIOCLASM name, but as the foundation of a broader international research network. Contributors may therefore also be invited to participate in seminars, workshops, recorded discussions, or other scholarly activities connected with the project.

Future volumes will develop from the research generated by this network and may take the form of collective volumes, thematic volumes, or other peer-reviewed scholarly publications. No artificial publication frequency will be imposed: new volumes will appear when the scientific coherence and quality of the available research justify them.

An open international project

BIBLIOCLASM seeks to create a space in which the study of books and manuscripts includes the study of what has happened to them.

Its purpose is to connect objects that have been separated, evidence that has been dispersed, and disciplines that have too often worked independently; to document processes of destruction without normalising them; and, wherever possible, to move from identification to contextualisation, from dispersal to reconstruction, and from documentation to protection.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

First Collective Volume — 2027

Éditions Pigouchet contributions to the first collective volume of BIBLIOCLASM, a new international peer-reviewed scholarly series and research programme devoted to the destruction, theft, mutilation, dismantling, illicit circulation, recovery, and reconstruction of books and manuscripts.

BIBLIOCLASM is conceived as more than a publication series. Alongside its peer-reviewed volumes, the project will promote international seminars, workshops, lectures, round tables, video essays and research presentations, creating an interdisciplinary forum for the investigation of biblioclasm and the material histories of books and manuscripts.

The first volume, scheduled for publication in 2027, will be a collective international volume bringing together original research selected through this Call for Contributions.

Fragments, detached leaves, and biblioclasm

One of the central aims of BIBLIOCLASM is to establish greater methodological precision in the study of dispersed manuscript material.

A fragment produced through the historical transmission of a codex is not equivalent to an intact or substantially intact leaf deliberately removed from a manuscript through theft, mutilation, or commercial dismantling.

The circumstances in which an object became separated from its original codex form an essential part of its history and provenance.

BIBLIOCLASM therefore encourages research that moves beyond the isolated description, attribution, or cataloguing of detached material to investigate how, when, and under what circumstances separation occurred, and how such objects subsequently entered collections, catalogues, auctions, libraries, museums, databases, or the international art market.

The generic designation of deliberately detached leaves as “fragments”, without consideration of the circumstances of their separation, is incompatible with the methodological principles of the series.

Provenance is not ancillary information. The physical history of an object, the circumstances of its removal or dispersal, and the documentary history of its subsequent circulation constitute evidence that must be examined together with its textual, palaeographical, codicological, and artistic features.

Suggested areas of research

Contributions may address, but are not limited to:

- manuscript and book theft from libraries, archives, museums, religious institutions, and private collections;
- deliberate mutilation and commercial dismantling of manuscripts and rare books;
- historical and modern forms of biblioclasm;
- provenance research and reconstruction of ownership histories;
- manuscript leaves and book material circulating on the antiquarian and auction markets;
- identification of stolen, missing, or illicitly removed material;
- restitution, recovery, repatriation, and reintegration;
- historical fragments, detached leaves, and the terminology of manuscript dispersal;
- the history and ethics of collecting;
- professional responsibility and due diligence in the manuscript and rare-book market;

- scholarly responsibility in the description, attribution, cataloguing, and publication of detached material;
- dealers, collectors, auction houses, commercial networks, and the history of the manuscript and rare-book market;
- libraries, museums, collections, and institutional responsibility;
- cultural-property law and the protection of manuscript and book heritage;
- archival investigations of historical thefts and dispersals;
- digital reconstruction of dismantled or dispersed codices;
- technologies and methodologies for identifying and reconnecting dispersed manuscript material;
- case studies concerning recovered, reconstructed, or still dispersed books and manuscripts.

We particularly welcome documented case studies based on previously unpublished archival, codicological, palaeographical, photographic, legal, bibliographical, or market evidence.

Scholarly independence

Because many of the subjects addressed by BIBLIOCLASM concern provenance, ownership histories, market transactions, institutional responsibility, and the circulation of cultural property, the series is founded on a principle of scholarly independence from the commercial manuscript and rare-book market.

BIBLIOCLASM does not accept scholarly contributions from authors who are professionally involved in the commercial trade of manuscripts, manuscript leaves, rare books, or related cultural property.

This includes, but is not limited to, individuals acting as dealers, commercial intermediaries, auction-house specialists or consultants, or paid advisers involved in the acquisition, attribution, cataloguing, valuation, or sale of such material.

This policy does not exclude the scholarly study of the manuscript and rare-book market. On the contrary, BIBLIOCLASM welcomes rigorous historical and critical research into dealers, auction houses, collectors, catalogues, sales, and commercial networks, provided that such research is conducted from a position of scholarly independence.

Who can contribute?

BIBLIOCLASM welcomes proposals from established scholars, early-career researchers and independent researchers, as well as specialists in conservation, cultural heritage, law, libraries, archives, museums, and the digital humanities.

Academic status or institutional affiliation will not constitute a selection criterion.

Proposals will be evaluated exclusively on the basis of their originality, methodological rigour, documentary foundations, relevance to the aims of the project, and potential contribution to the field.

Selection of proposals

Abstracts will undergo a preliminary evaluation by the Scientific and Editorial Board.

The following criteria will be taken into consideration:

- relevance to the scientific aims of BIBLIOCLASM;
- originality of the research question;
- clarity and coherence of the proposed argument;
- solidity and relevance of the documentary or material evidence;
- methodological rigour;
- appropriate distinction between documented facts, scholarly interpretation, and hypothesis;

- attention to provenance and material history;
- capacity to distinguish historical fragmentation from deliberate excision or dismemberment;
- potential contribution to manuscript studies, book history, provenance research, or cultural-heritage studies.

Acceptance of an abstract constitutes an invitation to submit the full article and does not guarantee publication.

Peer review

All articles submitted for the collective volume will undergo independent external peer review.

Following preliminary editorial assessment, manuscripts meeting the scientific, methodological, and ethical requirements of the series will be sent to specialists selected according to their expertise.

Reviewers will be asked to assess the originality of the research, the reliability and sufficiency of the evidence, the appropriateness of the methodology, the accuracy of references and documentation, the coherence of the argument, and the significance of the contribution.

Following peer review, manuscripts may be accepted, accepted subject to revision, invited for substantial revision and resubmission, or rejected.

The final decision on publication rests with the Scientific and Editorial Board.

Research integrity and documentary transparency

Authors must clearly distinguish between:

- documented facts, supported by identifiable and verifiable evidence;
- scholarly interpretations, explicitly grounded in the evidence presented;
- hypotheses or proposed reconstructions, clearly identified as such.

Archival references, catalogue and sale records, provenance information, bibliographical references, photographs, databases, and other evidence must be identified as precisely as possible so that the principal claims of the article can be independently verified.

Authors remain responsible for the accuracy of factual statements, transcriptions, attributions, references, captions, provenance information, and documentary evidence.

Undocumented allegations, unverifiable claims, fabricated evidence, or assertions concerning individuals or institutions unsupported by evidence relevant to the scholarly argument will not be accepted.

Any potential conflict of interest concerning objects, collections, ownership, attribution, authentication, provenance, or market transactions must be disclosed to the editors.

Artificial Intelligence and authorship

BIBLIOCLASM considers scholarly authorship to entail personal intellectual responsibility for the research, evidence, argumentation, and conclusions presented.

Generative Artificial Intelligence systems may not be credited as authors or co-authors and may not replace the author's own scholarly analysis, interpretation, argumentation, or evaluation of primary and secondary sources.

AI-generated or substantially AI-composed scholarly content presented as the author's own intellectual work will not be accepted.

Generative AI must not be used to fabricate or supply unverifiable quotations, archival evidence, bibliographical references, provenance information, historical data, transcriptions, descriptions of objects, or images presented as documentary evidence.

Limited use of digital or AI-assisted tools for language correction, translation assistance, bibliographical organisation, or technical processing does not preclude submission. Where such use has materially affected the preparation of the article, it must be transparently disclosed.

Authors retain full responsibility for the accuracy, authenticity, and traceability of all information contained in their submissions.

Beyond the volume: seminars, workshops and video contributions

The publication of the collective volume forms part of a wider research programme.

Authors whose proposals are selected may also be invited to participate in online or in-person seminars, workshops, lectures, round tables, recorded discussions, or short video presentations related to their research.

These activities are intended to encourage discussion between contributors, develop methodological questions emerging from individual case studies, involve early-career researchers, and make significant discoveries accessible beyond the printed volume.

Participation in these additional activities will be arranged separately and is not a condition for publication.

Submission

Articles may be submitted in English, French, Italian, or Spanish.

Final articles should normally be between 5,000 and 10,000 words, including notes and bibliography.

Proposals should contain:

1. a 300–500-word abstract, presenting the research question, corpus or case study, methodology, principal sources, and expected contribution;
2. five keywords;
3. a short biographical note, including principal research interests and institutional affiliation, where applicable;
4. the proposed language of the article.

Calendar

Abstract submission deadline: 15 November 2026

Notification of selection: 15 January 2027

Full article deadline: 1 March 2027

Peer review: March–April 2027

Revisions and final acceptance: May–June 2027

Publication of the first collective volume: Second half of 2027

Proposals should be sent to:

contact(at)pigouchet.com