

## The Image of the Book (Philadelphia/online, 16-18 Nov 23)

Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts; Free Library of Philadelphia & Online, Nov 16-18, 2023

Nicholas Herman

16th Annual Lawrence J. Schoenberg Symposium on Manuscript Studies in the Digital Age: "The Image of the Book: Representing the Codex from Antiquity to the Present", Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Free Library of Philadelphia & Online.

A great deal of recent research has focused on the objecthood of the pre-modern book and its associated materiality. But only sporadic attempts have been made to understand the role of visual representations of the book in conveying ideas about knowledge. How can our understanding be transformed when the dictum that "a picture is worth a thousand words" is put into practice, when the how of depiction is accorded as much importance as the what of textual content? This symposium will examine the means by which the book, and in particular the manuscript, is described across a wide variety of media, from painting and sculpture to digital media and film. Topics to be addressed include the book as a symbol of authority, wisdom, or piety; the visual archeology of otherwise vanished bookbinding styles, reading practices, and study spaces; and the re-imagining of the physicality of the codex through digital means.

The event will also mark the public launch at Penn Libraries of the Books as Symbols in Renaissance Art (BASIRA) project, an innovative, public-access web database of thousands of depictions of books in artwork produced between about 1300 and 1600 CE. The database, like the symposium itself, aims to engage historians of religion, literacy, art, music, language, and private life, as well as book artists, conservators, and interested members of the public. The symposium is organized in partnership with the Rare Book Department of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

The program will begin Thursday evening, November 16, 5:00 pm, at the Free Library of Philadelphia in the Rare Book Department, with a reception and keynote address by Jeffrey Hamburger, Kuno Francke Professor of German Art & Culture, Harvard University. The symposium will continue November 17-18 at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

The symposium will be held in person with an option to join virtually. All are welcome to attend. Use this link to register: <https://libcal.library.upenn.edu/calendar/kislak/image-of-the-book>

### PROGRAM

THURSDAY, November 16, 2023, 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Rare Book Department, Free Library of Philadelphia, Parkway Central Library, third floor

All registrants are invited to a reception before the lecture. The lecture will begin at 6:00 pm.

Keynote: Avatars of Authorship, Jeffrey Hamburger (Harvard University);  
With opening remarks by Janine Pollock (Free Library of Philadelphia),  
Sean Quimby (Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Penn Libraries)  
and  
Nicholas Herman (Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies, Penn Libraries)

FRIDAY, November 17, 2023

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts,  
Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center, sixth floor

9:30-10:00 am: Coffee

10:00-10:15 am: Welcome and Introduction, Nicholas Herman (Schoenberg Institute for  
Manuscript Studies, Penn Libraries)

10:15-11:30 am: MEANING

Book History's Genesis in Exodus: Revisiting the Round Topped Tablets, Sonja Drimmer (Universi-  
ty of Massachusetts Amherst)

Under Construction: Making and Metaphor in Medieval Images of Book Production, Beatrice  
Kitzinger (Princeton University)

11:30-11:45 am: Coffee

11:45 am-1:00 pm: MAKING

Representations of Wax Tablets: Codices in Greco-Roman Art and their Importance for Unders-  
tanding their Making and Use, Georgios Boudalis (Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki)

Visual Metaphors: Exploring Bookbinding Structures through Visual Representations, Alberto Cam-  
pagnolo (University of Udine)

1:00-2:30 pm: Lunch (with display of real and replica items in Lea Library)

2:30-4:00 pm: FORMAT

Artisanal Books: Ceramic and Lacquer Imitations from the Qing Court, Devin Fitzgerald (Yale Uni-  
versity)

A Sampling of Blooks: A Foray into the Fascinating World of Book-form Objects, Mindell Dubansky  
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art), this session will conclude with a showcase of book-form  
objects

4:00-4:15 pm: Coffee

4:15-5:00 pm: Official Launch of BASIRA: The Books as Symbols in Renaissance Art Database, Bar-  
bara Williams Ellertson (Independent Scholar and SIMS) and Nicholas Herman (SIMS)

5:30-7:00 pm: Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies 10-year Celebration Event

SATURDAY, November 18, 2023

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts,  
Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center, sixth floor

9:30-10:00 am: Coffee

10:00-11:15 am: IDENTITIES

The Image of the Book at the Ottoman Court, Emine Fetvaci (Boston College)

Imagining Religious Identity and Difference Through Book Formats: Scrolls and Codices in  
Judaism and Christianity, Thomas Rainer (University of Zurich)

11:15-11:30 am: Coffee

11:30 am-12:45 pm: AVATARS

Scrolling through Scrolls and Books in Books of Hours, Dominique Stutzmann (Institut de  
Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes)

Virtual Manuscripts in Virtual Spaces, Sabina Zonno (University of Southern California)

12:45-2:15 pm: Lunch (with demo of Manuscripts in VR)

2:15-3:30 pm: ICONS

The Medieval Book as Gateway: Contemplation, Meditation, and Image Making in the Lives of the  
Desert Fathers, Denva Gallant (Rice University)

Iconic Books in Renaissance Art, James Watts (Syracuse University)

3:30-3:45 pm: Coffee

3:45-5:00: TRANSFORMATIONS

Manuscript Images of the Destruction and Salvage of Books, Lucy Freeman Sandler (New York  
University)

Pop Bibliography: Finding Book History in Popular Media, Allie Alvis (Winterthur Library)

5:00-6:00 pm: Closing Reception

Reference:

CONF: The Image of the Book (Philadelphia/online, 16-18 Nov 23). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 11, 2023 (accessed  
Apr 11, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/40323>>.