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FRAGMENTED CULTURAL HERITAGE: REINTERPRETATION AND CIRCULATION IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: 30/06/2027

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Throughout history, those who interact with cultural heritage have consistently devised different practices of divorcing objects from their past. The concept of «heritage cropping» that we propose in this special issue refers to those deliberate actions aimed at the selection, transformation and re-evaluation of carefully chosen pieces that, once separated from the cultural artefacts to which they originally belonged, came to acquire new meanings and a new material form.

The subject of "manuscript cuttings" has been addressed in recent years in a particularly fruitful manner through the study of illuminated manuscripts. Various studies have shown how numerous medieval codices were cut up to supply a market particularly interested in acquiring individual illuminations, historiated initials or borders. The removal of these elements allowed the manuscript to be adapted to new forms of visual consumption: the cuttings could be framed, exhibited as standalone works or incorporated into albums created specifically for this purpose, regardless of any codicological basis. Similar processes occurred with regard to printed books whose pages were cut in order to produce independent illustrations. From this perspective, the historiography of mutilated codices and printed books has revealed that the fragmentation of a heritage object does not merely represent an episode of material loss but also marks the beginning of other forms of circulation, interpretation and re-evaluation of new cultural objects.

While remaining within the sphere of cuttings from illuminated manuscripts —a subject still central to this project— this monograph aims to broaden the discussion to cultural heritage in a wider sense, with a desire to explore these mechanisms from a cross-disciplinary and global perspective. There are numerous examples to be found in other material media, although studies of these —which are generally scattered— require systematic collation. This is the case with textiles, which are selected for the quality of their designs, their colour schemes or the rarity of their materials or techniques, regardless of their original function; with mural or floor works, such as Roman and Late Antique mosaics, which have been subjected to plundering, relocation and reassembly; or sculptural and architectural ensembles —façades, altarpieces, tombs or monumental elements— which were dismantled, fragmented and recomposed to be integrated into new artistic or museographic arrangements. In all these cases, the separated parts acquired a new visual autonomy and a new aesthetic legibility, detached from their original contexts.

The time frame covered by this monograph is limited to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a period in which the loss of cultural heritage emerged as a phenomenon deeply linked to the development of the international antiquity market, the rise of bourgeois collecting and the consolidation of modern museums, as well as to certain practices of forgery that thrived within this same context. The significance of this monograph lies not merely in documenting losses, acts of vandalism or looting, but also in analysing and understanding the processes that linked these actions to the cultural heritage within contemporary cultural frameworks.

This special issue invites submissions of original articles that examine practices of heritage fragmentation carried out in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, provided that such fragmentation can be understood as a conscious act aimed at producing a new object, one that can be reinterpreted and revalued through new cultural and artistic lenses.

Particular consideration will be given to contributions that examine these processes from comparative, transmedia or methodologically innovative perspectives, as well as to studies focusing on the art market, collecting, museum institutions and new forms of exhibition.

Themes that may be accepted include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Collecting and the antiques market
- Aesthetic and iconographic reinterpretation of clippings
- Techniques and processes for extraction and dismantling
- Fakes, recreations
- Reconfiguration and assembly in new display formats
- Circulation, dispersal and trajectories of clippings
- Musealisation and exhibition of dismembered objects
- Physical and intellectual reunification of fragmented collections
- New technologies applied to the virtual reconstruction and restoration of fragmented cultural heritage

The deadline for submissions is June 30th, 2027. Articles must follow the journal's publication guidelines. Submission will be made through the journal's platform, which can be accessed through its website: https://revistas.usal.es/uno/index.php/1989-9289/

Figure: "The Spanish Forger" (activo en Paris, h. 1890s-1930s?). Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Libraries, Evanston, Illinois.