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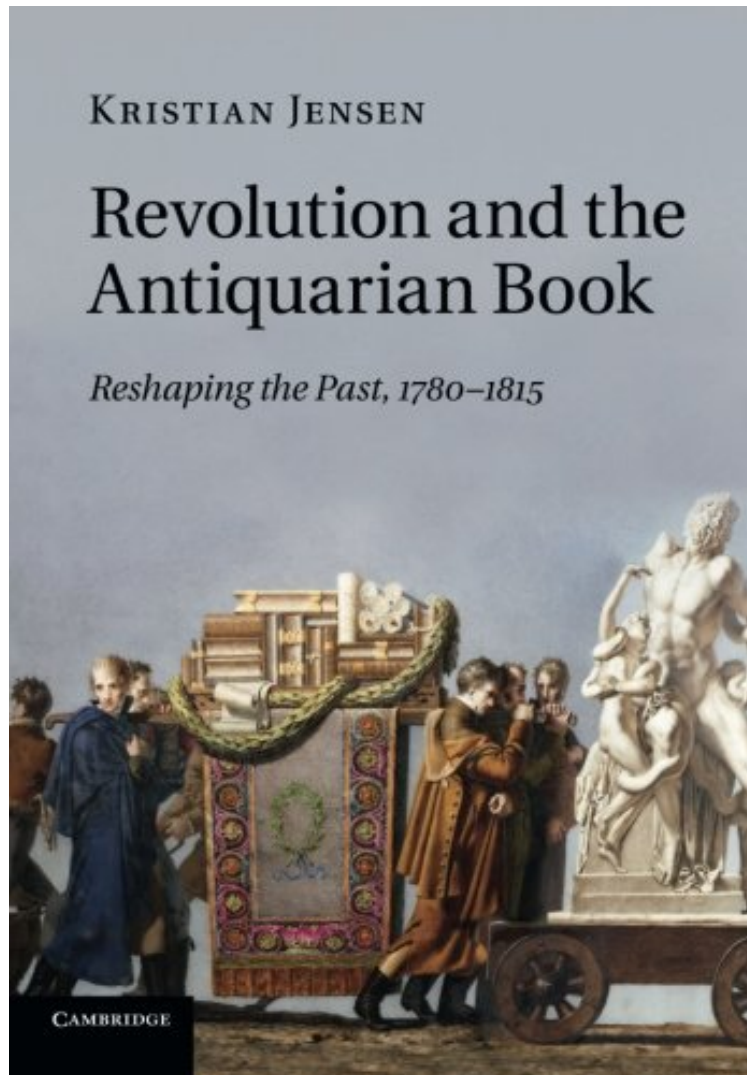
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Revolution and the Antiquarian Book: Reshaping the Past, 1780-1815

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At the end of the eighteenth century, noblemen and revolutionaries spent extravagant sums of money or precious

military resources competing to acquire old books, which until then had often been regarded as worthless. These books, called incunabula, achieved cultural and political importance as luxury commodities and as tools for mastering a controversial past. Men of different classes met in a new, shared marketplace, creating a competition for social authority, as books were no longer seen merely as sources of textual information but as a way of controlling the past in the service of contemporary concerns. The old books themselves were often changed to meet new expectations of what important historic objects should be. Focusing on Paris and London, but taking a resolutely pan-European view, this book examines the emergence of this commodity and of a new historical discipline created by traders and craftsmen.

"Kristian Jensen's *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book: Reshaping the Past, 1780-1815* traces the history of antiquarian book collecting in England and France following the French Revolution of 1789, focusing on changes in the value and definition of incunabula during this period and on the emergence of public national libraries alongside and in competition with major private collections." --Recent Studies in the Nineteenth Century
About the Author
Kristian Jensen is currently Head of British Collections at the British Library. He is also the author of *Incunabula and their Readers: Printing, Selling and Using Books in the Fifteenth Century* (2003). He was elected Lyell Reader at the University of Oxford for 2008, and this book is based on his Lyell Lectures.