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**EL LENGUAJE DEL ARTE, DESDE LA EDAD
MEDIA HASTA NUESTROS DÍAS: EVOLUCIÓN
DE LA TERMINOLOGÍA ESPECÍFICA DE
MANUSCRITOS Y TEXTOS**

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FLOURISH AND BLOTTS OR HOW WE NAME SALIENT ORNAMENT FEATURES IN MANUSCRIPTS

Any reader above a certain age or without children may be unaware of the fact that the title of this paper originates from popular culture — it is the name of a book and stationery shop in the Harry Potter series. The choice of title is less trivial than it would seem, for a central feature of this paper is, in fact, concerned with flourishes and blots, and the sometimes rather heated discussions of scientific terminology occasionally really border on the ridiculous. And it is an incontestable fact that the ingenuity of some of J. K. Rowling's name creations is in no way matched by the convoluted, incongruous, implausible and untranslatable terminology of art history, some of it concerning rather important issues.

This paper will concentrate on the linguistic and scientific history of some of the more central terms. Here, a comparison between languages yields the most enlightening insights. Furthermore, the question of translation has been occupying me this last decade, ever since I added a multilingual glossary to my terminology book in 2008¹. The help of colleagues abroad, above all Marilena Maniaci (Cassino), who was dealing with similar issues in another language and in another discipline, has served to highlight the disparities which I have repeatedly been stating in the last years².

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¹ Ch. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, *Buchmalerei. Ihre Terminologie in der Kunstgeschichte*, Reimer, Berlin 1991; 2nd rev. ed. 1997; *Buchmalerei. Terminologie in der Kunstgeschichte*, 3rd rev. ed. in collab. with M. ROLAND, Reimer, Berlin 2008; 4th rev. ed. in collab. with M. ROLAND, Reimer, Berlin 2015. Swedish: *Medeltida bokmåleri. Illustrerat konsthistoriskt lexikon*, till svenska av P. ÅSTRÖM, Signum, Stockholm 2012. On my website, I provide the glossary for download, with an additional Swedish part taken from Patrik Åström's translation, a Spanish part provided by Marta Pavón Ramírez and a Polish one by Joanna Ewa Frońska. The English part was reworked according to works by Susan L'Engle and Patricia Stirnemann, the French one received corrections by Baudouin van den Abeele. A list of documented Latin terms is in preparation.

² Ch. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Lost in Translation. Manuscript Terminology between languages», *Gazette du livre médiéval*, 55 (2009) 1-8, <http://www.palaeographia.org/>

By way of introduction, a few generalities of language as such shall be summarized³. Scientific languages are different in three distinct ways. In the first place, there is the the actual size of the vocabulary: English possessing the largest by far, with German as the first runner-up, and Russian and the major Romance languages, French, Spanish, and Italian, following behind⁴.

In second place, there is the regional disparity with a notable variance of the monuments to be considered —compare an austere Dutch church interior with a South German Rococo chapel. Different things need different words.

And finally, in the third place, there is a significant disparity in scientific tradition. Where Italians and French have concentrated on codicology proper, which considers the material and technical properties of the manuscript, Germans are rather infamous for «counting folds» and coming up with a bewildering array of stylistic terms (*Muldenfalten*, *Schlaufenfalten*, *Löffelfalten*, some thirty terms for leaves and flowers and such). This, of course, is a result of the truly gigantic work of style-based classification undertaken primarily by German-speaking scholars from the second half of the 19th century onwards: Lamprecht, Springer, Vöge, Goldschmidt, Haseloff, Wickhoff and Koehler, among others⁵. All

glm/glm.htm?art=jakobi (retrieved 28.5.2019), a paper given at the Università degli Studi in Cassino in 2010, the 2009 edition of the journal published late, and a recent paper at the same institution: False Friends or True Friends? Problems and Chances of Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Communication in Manuscript Terminology, 10. 5. 2017.

³ Cf. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Lost in Translation».

⁴ R. LEDERER, *A Man of My Words*, St. Martin's Press, New York 2003, is probably exaggerating the numbers: «English boasts by far the largest number of words of all languages. 616,500 officially enshrined in the Oxford English Dictionary. That's almost four times the vocabulary size of its nearest competitor, German, five times the size of Russian, in third place; and six times the size of French and Spanish, tied for fourth». The number of the words registered is heavily dependent on the chosen basis. In this respect, it can be seen as highly symptomatic that the question of vocabulary size does not arise in the English Wikipedia article on «vocabulary», while its German equivalent, «Wortschatz», is rather circumspect in describing the problem of size in general, later stating the numbers of ca. 600,000 words for English and 500,000 for German (both retrieved 28.5.2019). It would seem that the «translation» of the word, once again, provides anything but an equivalent concept.

⁵ Cf. for example G. Z. ZANICHELLI, «The Role of Stylistic Analysis in the Cataloguing of the Illuminated Codex. A few observations on the Manuscripts

three factors result in widely differing terminologies with huge disparities and sometimes surprising lacunae, which in their turn can lead to a closer reflection of language and, more specifically, terminology use.

In Germany, the history of one's science is an, albeit not always properly appreciated, branch of the science itself, which should be a crucial part of any scientist's formation and should resound in his or her studies. This includes an awareness of the language one uses. Too often, things are taken as given and are not reflected, which is quite as unpardonable as the lack of a proper goal or aim, and this applies to the manuscript historian in much the same way as it does to the medical scientist or astrophysicist.

This paper will be focusing on three selected terms of description which share the fact that the phenomena in question are quite as frequent as the terms are unclear: pen-flourish ornament, lombard letters, and historiated initials.

Pen-Flourishing (with and without Blots)

In an international and interdisciplinary conference on illuminated charters⁶, a colleague from Medieval History and Auxiliary Sciences offered a strangely cumbersome-sounding description of several initials he was discussing. When asked why he avoided using the accepted art-

of Parma», in *Katalogisierung mittelalterlicher Handschriften in internationaler Perspektive. Vorträge der Handschriftenbearbeitertagung vom 24. bis 27. Oktober 2005 in München*, hrsg. von der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, pp. 99-112 (Beiträge zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen, 53). Cf. U. KUDER – H.-W. STORK (edd.), *Arthur Haseloff als Erforscher mittelalterlicher Buchmalerei*, Ludwig, Kiel 2014.

⁶ *Illuminerte Urkunden. Von den Rändern zweier Disziplinen ins Herz der Digital Humanities / Illuminated Charters. From the Margins of Two Disciplines to the core of Digital Humanities*, International Conference, Vienna, 12.–14. September 2016, organized by M. Roland, G. Vogeler, A. Zajic, G. Bartz, M. Bürgermeister, M. Gneiß, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Proceedings now published: G. BARTZ – M. GNEISS (edd.), *Illuminerte Urkunden. Beiträge aus Diplomatie, Kunstgeschichte und Digital Humanities / Illuminated Charters: Essays from Diplomatie, Art History and Digital Humanities*, Böhlau, Köln 2018 (Archiv für Diplomatie, Schriftgeschichte, Siegel- und Wappenkunde. Beiheft, 16). Cf. *ibid.* O. KRAFFT, «Das Aufkommen verzierter Initialen in den Papsturkunden des hohen Mittelalters», pp. 125-152. I would like to thank Otfried Krafft for discussion and inspiration.

historical term, he stated that he didn't like it, thinking its literal significance inappropriate for the ornament. The ensuing terminological discussion had to be aborted due to time restrictions. This was a shame, for the phenomenon in question was, or is, the most widespread element of decoration found in any manuscript from anywhere in Western Europe. Many scientists working on manuscript catalogues rarely encounter anything else than pen-drawn, almost exclusively initial-related, ornament, mostly in blue and red, which originated in the twelfth century, and for the very reason of its omnipresence provides the most reliable indicator of date and origin, second only to the script itself, in manuscripts from the twelfth century onward⁷. And it is one of the more baffling occurrences of international art history that practically no language came up with a satisfactory term of description for a phenomenon which comes close to the archaeologist's potsherd in terms of occurrence and classificatory usefulness⁸.

The Italian term is *lettera / iniziale filigranata*. This is an adjective, a past participle, derived from a noun and meaning «furnished with filigrans». The noun itself cannot be used, for in manuscript terminology, *filigrana* means something different, namely the watermark, or the mark left in a sheet of paper during the manufacturing process. And then again, both adjective and noun are loans from another area of craftsmanship, namely, metalwork. Originally, the word derives from Latin «fine thread» and «grain», both denoting a manner of intricate decoration in metal threads and beads. It should be remarked that the Italian language has recurrence to a rather distant craft for the denomination of not one, but two, distinct, but each of them eminently central, phenomena of book terminology.

⁷ The number of monographs and articles on this subject is still alarmingly limited, cf. M.-Th. GOUSSET, «Étude de la décoration filigranée et reconstitution des ateliers: le cas de Gênes à la fin du XIII^e s.», *Arte Medievale*, 2, 1 (1988) 121-149; S. SCOTT-FLEMING, *Pen-Flourishing in Thirteenth-Century Manuscripts*, Brill, Leiden 1989; P. STIRNEMANN, «Fils de la vierge. L'initiale à filigranes parisienne: 1140-1314», *Revue de l'art*, 90 (1990) 58-73; W. AUGUSTYN – Ch. JAKOBI-MIRWALD – C. SAUER – M. ROLAND, «Fleuronné», in: *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, Bd. IX (1996), coll. 1113-1196; in: RDK Labor <http://www.rdklabor.de/w/?oldid=89543> (retrieved 28.5.2019); JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Buchmalerei», pp. 65-70.

⁸ By the way, it is interesting that even the seemingly innocent potsherd is anything but: why does the Latin-originated *terra sigillata* in use in, for instance, German translate as *Samian ware* in English?

The case is similar in French, if slightly varied in terms of grammar: *lettre à filigranes* means the same as the Italian version, if expressed with a preposition and the noun proper. Again, the noun does not denominate the decorative element itself, for here again it is used for the watermark. Once again, there is no independent noun for defining the ornament in question. Some thirty years ago, J.-P. Gumbert tried to introduce the word *fioriture* in lieu of the decoration *en filigrane*⁹, but to my knowledge, this attempt was never pursued. Still, Gumbert was one of the first to point out the relation to the medieval word *florare*, as well as its vernacular derivations¹⁰, for the application of the word in question, a word relevant for the English as well as the German term.

At first sight, the English language would improve on the situation, since it distinguishes between the technical phenomenon of the watermark and the ornamental device of *pen-flourishing* (no blots, though). Two nouns are joined in a hyphenated form, denoting both the tool and the action (present participle of *to flourish*). Now, strictly speaking, a pen-flourish could theoretically also be the doodle produced with a ball-point-pen while speaking on the telephone, and a *flourish* can even be a fancy gesture. In place of pen-flourishing, the even simpler, more nondescript term *penwork* is also in use. Both are far from ideal terms, but still, one may want to count one's blessings. The noun offers a rather clear reference to the actual production of the thing, indicating the crucial use of the pen as opposed to the paintbrush used for *miniatures*¹¹, and, in the first case, a description of

⁹ J.-P. GUMBERT, «Et si on dessinait des fioritures?», *Gazette du livre médiéval*, 2 (1983) 9-12.

¹⁰ W. WATTENBACH, *Schriftwesen im Mittelalter*, Leipzig 1896, pp. 356, 366, 372, cf. P. STIRNEMANN – M.-Th. GOUSSET, «Recherche sur le vocabulaire technique employé par les enlumineurs médiévaux. Sources textuelles – observations archéologiques», paper presented at the conference *Vocabulaire du livre et de l'écriture au moyen âge, colloque organisé par le CIVICIMA, le Comité Du Cange et l'IRHT, le 24-26 septembre 1987*, published in abbreviated form: P. STIRNEMANN – M.-Th. GOUSSET, «Marques, mots, pratiques: leur signification et leurs liens dans le travail des enlumineurs», in O. WEIJERS (ed.), *Vocabulaire du livre et de l'écriture au moyen âge. Actes de la table ronde, Paris 24-26 septembre 1987*, Brepols, Turnhout 1989, pp. 34-55 (CIVICIMA, 2). I am very grateful to Joanna Ewa Frońska for acquainting me with the more extensive unpublished version of this important paper.

¹¹ I elaborated on this issue in the Cassino conference in 2017, cf. above note 2. In addition to the four shifts of meaning which this word underwent on its way to the modern use of «mini-», I alluded to the very recent creative language use to be found

the overall floral appearance with the use of a word derived from Latin *flos* or *flosculum* (a root which will be returning in the German section). What is more, the *watermark* is denoted by its own, unrelated word.

The result is still disappointing. The English language, with the largest and richest vocabulary and a famous aptitude to appropriate and absorb words from all imaginable languages, doesn't seem to have outdone itself in creating this word for a crucial ornament feature.

German, as the last language in discussion, has been well known for its marked propensity to create terms for ornament forms, so one would expect something truly inspired, something perfect here. And one would almost be right. The term *Fleuronné* is a noun, stylishly imported from French, with the same root as the English *flourish*: *fleuron* (flower ornament) in the past participle *fleuronné*, meaning «decorated with flowers». At least, in French it is a past participle; German has equipped the word with an important upper-case letter and an article to go with it: *das Fleuronné*, capable of hyphenating and composition to form words like *die Fleuronné-Initiale* or *das Palmettenfleuronné*. The leading German dictionary of art-historical facts and objects, the *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, has devoted an exhaustive article to the phenomenon, describing the development, components and stylistic varieties in no less than forty pages¹². The word is no loan from unrelated crafts, no confusion with paper-manufacturing is possible (with *Wasserzeichen* corresponding to the English *watermark*). There is even the historically documented fact that the Verb *florieren*, as well as *musieren*, was in —German— use in the 15th century to denominate, among others, the activity of applying the mentioned ornament: for instance in the *liber illumistarum* of the Bavarian monastery of Tegernsee, a highly valuable technical repertory now made available in an exemplary edition¹³. This *florieren* could, if traced further abroad, also have given rise to the English *flourish*, of course, coming from the same root. One would like to expect it to signify penwork, distinkted

on a major New Zealand film production: the truck-size town models built for the Lord of the Rings-series were dubbed «bigatures».

¹² AUGUSTYN – JAKOBI-MIRWALD – SAUER – ROLAND, «Fleuronné».

¹³ München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 821, cf. A. BARTL – C. KREKEL – M. LAUTENSCHLAGER – D. OLTROGGE, *Der «Liber illuministarum» aus Kloster Tegernsee. Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar der kunsttechnologischen Rezepte*, Franz Steiner, Stuttgart 2005, p. 614 (Veröffentlichung des Instituts für Kunsttechnik und Konservierung im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, 8).

from *musieren*, but disappointingly, if typically, both are indiscriminately used to denote «decorating» in the most general sense of the word.

A closer look, however, uncovers the flaws of this seemingly perfect German word. To begin with, it is not German, but French. More troubling is the fact that it is not the French word for the same thing: a classical «false friend», for in modern French, *fleuronné* exists merely as the past participle of the verb *fleuronner*, which is the action executed by flowers or trees in spring. Interestingly, two major French dictionaries (both the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* in its 9th edition¹⁴ and the *Trésor de la Langue Française*¹⁵) signal the existence of the combination *lettre fleuronné*, but both leave the term unclear, and it has since dropped out of language use. Therefore, a French art historian would look rather nonplussed, if a German colleague would want to indulge in knowledgeable discussion concerning «Fleuronné».

The second problem with the word is one of orthography, for the aforementioned Reallexikon article has decided to do away with the second -e at the end. Understandably so, for the feminine ending derives from French *lettre fleuronnée* which never seems to have been used in this

¹⁴ Cf. «fleuronné» in: *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 9^e ed. Vol. 1: 1992, online 2000, the following volumes are digitized on publication (<http://atilf.atilf.fr/academie9.htm>, retrieved 28.5.2019): XVII^e siècle. Participe passé de l'ancien verbe *fleuronner*. 1. Qui est orné de fleurs, de fleurons. *Lettres fleuronnées*. HÉRALD. Voir *Fleuré*. 2. BOT. Qui contient des fleurons ; dont certaines fleurs sont des fleurons. *La pâquerette est une plante fleuronnée*.

¹⁵ Cf. «fleuronné» in: TLFi (*Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*, <http://atilf.atilf.fr/>, retrieved 28.5.2019), the sixteen-volume dictionary codifying a slightly aged vocabulary, albeit in a very extensive manner: I. *Part. passé de fleuronner**. Fleuronné de. *Il y avait parmi les parures (...) une pleine couronne de marquise, enchâssée de pierreries et fleuronnée de perles* (Feuillet, *Camors*, 1867, p. 188). *La couronne de Charlemagne, brillante de rubis, de saphirs et d'émeraudes, fleuronnée de quatre fleurs de Lis* (France, *J. d'Arc*, t. 1, 1908, p. 516). II. *Adjectif A*. Qui est orné de fleurs, de fleurons. *Colonnnettes très-élégantes, fleuronnées à la place du chapiteau* (Du Camp, *Hollande*, 1859, p. 228). *Magnifique porcelaine de vieux saxe fleuronnée, moulée et dorée* (Erckm.-Chatr., *Ami Fritz*, 1864, p. 23). *Spécialement 1. HÉRALD*. Synon. de *fleuré* (cf. *florencé*). 2. *PALÉOGR*. Qui est orné de fleurs, de fleurons. *Lettres fleuronnées* (Ac. 1878–1932). 3. *RELIURE*. *Riches reliures à arabesques fleuronnées du siècle dernier* (Goncourt, *Journal*, 1894, p. 687). 4. *SCULPT*. *Génie fleuronné*. *Enfant ailé dont la partie inférieure du corps se termine en naissance de rinceaux, de feuillages ou de fleurs*. (Ds dict. gén. du XIX^e s. ainsi que Quillet 1965 et *Lar. Lang. fr.*). B. *BOT*. Qui est entièrement formé de fleurons. *Plante fleuronnée* (DG).

sense. But for decades, German art historians have got used to *Fleuromnée* with two e at the end, and tradition is something that is definitely neither argumentative nor sensible, but tenacious. Having been part of the redaction team of the relevant article, I am loyal in using the «single-e-form», but in this I go against my own instincts. I know from experience that it is notoriously difficult, nigh impossible, to introduce changes of any kind to a language, let alone a terminology. Like other reforms of orthography, this one too led to confusion.

The third problem is one of meaning. A learned user, which is to say, every scientist, may balk at the «flowers» which form the constitutional part of the word *Fleuromnée*. Strictly speaking, the ornament in question consists, apart from lines, loops and spirals, of either crimped leaves (*palmettes*) or buds in the later forms. Even frogspawn is being used as a descriptive term, but the very thing that is obstinately missing is, well, flowers—apart from the occurring comparison of some of the bud-forms to lilies of the valley¹⁶. Any user who chose to take umbrage at this fact and point it out would be perfectly right.

This discussion of a major element of ornamentation and its terminology in four major languages of research including etymology and grammatical properties has, so far, yielded the fact that the solutions of the languages are so dissimilar that even a simple glossary entry under the heading *pen-flourishing* is impossible, for neither Italian nor French have this noun.

The second result is that, among the four, there is not one term that does not come with one or even more problems: grammatical, orthographical, etymological or semantical inconsistencies.

In third place, the mentioned semantical problems can cause misunderstandings. The historian in the conference avoided an accepted art historical term, which led the present art historians to more or less openly doubt his ability to use the accepted, correct terminology. But the historian actually knew the terminology and found it far from correct: flawed, erroneous, offensive. He was not ignorant, he was reluctant. The ensuing discussion led nowhere, just as the efforts to correct an ambiguous terminology within a language and a field of research usually lead

¹⁶ Maiglöckchen-Fleuromnée, cf. e. g. the short terminology by B. Koll on the site of the Universitätsbibliothek Salzburg (*Fleuromnée* with two e), <http://www.ubs.sbg.ac.at/sosa/inkunabeln/inkinit.htm> (retrieved 28.5.2019).

nowhere — as elucidated by the success, or lack thereof, of the single-e version of German *Fleurronné*. A recent suggestion — from a neighbouring discipline — to take over the Romance descriptive term *Filigran* (or in English, *filigree*)¹⁷ does have something to recommend it: the languages which would have to adapt (German and English) lack the confusion with the watermark, and the term would be somewhat international and less offensive in terms of meaning. It would, however, only be feasible in addition to the established terms, and the question of acceptance and possible confusion (see the single-e issue again!) remains unsolved.

To sum up: A terminology which needs ample justification does not do the job. And this is by no means the only example.

To Lombard or not to Lombard

The *lombard* question seems to be an international one. Marta Pavón Ramírez happened to ask it at the same time as the 2017 participants of SCRIPTO Summer School Nürnberg¹⁸. During the work with several 13th-century manuscripts, most of them legal manuscripts from Northern Italy and France, the question soon arose whether the term *lombard* was appropriate or not¹⁹.

I have provided an, admittedly too cautious, description in my terminology book²⁰, and mentioned the term in a 2010 paper on minor

¹⁷ I am most grateful to Kirsten Wallenwein and Tino Licht (Mittellateinisches Seminar der Rupprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg) for sharing their objections and suggestions with me.

¹⁸ SCRIPTO (Scholarly Codicological Research, Information & Palaeographical Tools) is a graduate programme of the FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg initiated and directed by Michele C. Ferrari, and has been held in different forms since 2007; https://mittellatein.phil.fau.de/scripto/scripto_de.html (retrieved 28.5.2019).

¹⁹ The lowercase spelling of this word, where the geographical derivation would seem to call for an uppercase letter, is decided in accordance with Keith Houston's spelling of roman (letters), to distinguish form from content (such as historical —Roman— inscriptions), cf. K. HOUSTON, *Shady Characters. The Secret Life of Punctuation, Symbols & Other Typographical Marks*, W. W. Norton, New York 2014, p. 69 (second note). Houston justifies a practice apparently well in use, cf. S. GARFIELD, *Just My Type. A Book about Fonts*, Profile Books, London 2010, where it is used without comment.

²⁰ JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Buchmalerei», pp. 63-64.

decoration elements in a group of primarily Northern Italian Liber Extra manuscripts²¹. It has to be stated, however, that the terminology book did not result from a prescriptive impulse, but from a compilation of extant and accessible descriptions. In the case of the Lombard, a useful hint is the origin from typography. A more general dictionary yields the typographical definition «an initial of uncial character»²².

Hence, the term is of typographical origin and was applied to a very stereotypical form of letters in early prints, letters which were at first added by hand in a manufacture-like way, and which were later also cut for print. The form was found especially, but not exclusively, in Northern Italian Manuscripts, hence the somewhat fitting name of regional origin. The forms are distinct: mostly uncials, rounded, with stark contrast between thin strokes and almost angularly swelling thick strokes, occasional pearl ornaments and simple finials, copying at least the red colour if not the alternating red and blue and the occasional bipartite «puzzle» ornament of the manuscript versions.

It is little surprising that the reapplication of a term used in the context of prints for a standardized form of secondary letter back to the manuscript exemplars is fraught with problems. True, the term *lombard* evokes a very distinct, clear mental image, but this is the result of its simplification for the uses of print. And if the term takes a more or less consciously reflected detour back to the manuscripts, it may there result in a wrong image, especially in manuscripts from other regions than Northern Italy.

A general recommendation would be to reserve the term to the actual exemplars, i. e. Northern Italian manuscripts. In every other case, it is far less thorny to use the more neutral terms *paragraph initials* and *sentence initials*, respectively, for the simpler initials subdividing and organising the texts, according to their position at the beginning of a paragraph or

²¹ Ch. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Initials and Other Elements of Minor Decoration», in M. BERTRAM – S. DI PAOLO (curatores), *Decretales Pictae. Le miniature nei manoscritti delle Decretali di Gregorio IX (Liber Extra). Atti del colloquio internazionale tenuto all'Istituto Storico Germanico, Roma 3-4 marzo 2010*, indici compilati da M. PAVÓN RAMÍREZ, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, ArcAdiA, Roma 2012, 344 pp. [+ 92 n.n.], 339 fig. Pubblicazione elettronica in formato pdf, 7 maggio 2012, sul sito <http://dspace-roma3.casur.it/bitstream/2307/695/4/Christine%20Jacobi-Mirwald.pdf> (retrieved 28.5.2019).

²² U. RAUTENBERG (ed.), *Reclams Sachlexikon des Buches*, Reclam, Stuttgart 2015, p. 217.

within the text block at the beginning of a sentence²³. French and Italian does not provide this distinction (*letrine, majuscule, iniziale maiuscola*), German, however, does (*Initialmajuskel, Satzmajuskel*). The term *lombard* is most unambiguously used if reserved for letters in prints, and if used for manuscripts, for the regionally distinct exemplars.

By way of an aside: there is a very characteristic feature in the same group of manuscripts: blocks of display script accompanied by parallel lines and rows of curlicues, for which the accepted English term is *interlocked letters*, in Italian *lettere inchiavardate*, in French *lettres enclaves*²⁴. German does not offer its own word, and the rather feeble substitute *verschachtelte Auszeichnungsschrift* I am suggesting in the glossary seems to be too complicated for even myself to remember. Word creation, apparently, is something that is better left alone. However, to suggest the adoption of the Italian term may also be a bit hazardous and lead to spectacular mispronunciation.

What is an Historiated Initial?

The third item is the most troublesome one. *Historiated initial* has at an early stage been introduced into manuscript description, literally meaning «initial with narrative matter». However, the extent to which this term is both misunderstood and inconsistently used has only recently come to my attention, and a solution seems impossible. But first, a look at the word's history.

The term *historiated initial* appears to have been coined in analogy to *chapiteaux historiées* for the iconographic capitals in French cloisters, and it has ever since been applied to initials containing a narration, a story,

²³ Cf. E. RODRÍGUEZ DÍAZ, «Reflexiones sobre terminología codicológica en España», in this volume pp. 123-157, especially her discussion of the terms *capital, capitular, cabtinal, cardinal*. The issue seems to have been whether displayed initials are always of capital form, cf. the question of the use of palaeographical terms in display script terminology, cf. Ch. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Die Auszeichnungsschriften in mittelalterlichen Handschriften. Versuch einer Terminologie», in P. RÜCK (ed.), *Methoden der Schriftbeschreibung*, Jan Thorbecke, Stuttgart 1999, pp. 107-117, esp. pp. 108-109 (Historische Hilfswissenschaften, 4).

²⁴ JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Initials and other Elements», p. 195. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Buchmalerei», p. 210.

iconographically relevant matter in the broadest sense of the word. Used in this sense, the historiated initial in its early stages was the subject of my PhD thesis²⁵ and of further papers²⁶.

The art historian who has been credited with the introduction of the term to English art history was M. R. James²⁷. This man shares the fate of the philologist J. R. R. Tolkien insofar as he is far more widely known for his non-scientific work, in his case, several series of witty Ghost Stories, still popular to this day²⁸. Contrarily to the slim, but enduring scientific oeuvre of Tolkien, younger by about a decade, James has also produced a vast output of some thirty manuscript catalogues, among other works that have spanned his scientific work as an archaeologist, bible scholar, historian, art historian, and literature translator. A survey of his and other contemporary manuscript catalogues yielded the —expected— result that he was probably in fact the first one to use the term historiated initial, at least in the English language. And he did it rather matter-of-factly, in the context of one of the first manuscript catalogues written in English (as opposed to Latin), in 1895, practically on the first page²⁹. Let us keep this fact in mind for our summary: it is the context of a manuscript catalogue where a central term seems to have been casually coined and introduced.

²⁵ Ch. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, *Text – Buchstabe – Bild. Studien zur Entstehung der historisierten Initiale im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (PhD thesis Kassel 1997), Reimer, Berlin 1998.

²⁶ For instance: Ch. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Beschreiben oder Vorschreiben. Terminologie zwischen Bestandsaufnahme und Normierung», *Internationale Tagung der Handschriftenbearbeiter, 19.–21. September 2011* Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Bibliotheca Augusta, http://jakobi-mirwald.de/onewebmedia/2011_Beschreiben%20oder%20Vorschreiben_Christine%20Jakobi-Mirwald.pdf (retrieved 28.5.2019).

²⁷ Ch. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «To find out all that I could about various matters and to make friends – Der Wissenschaftler und Geister-Erzähler M. R. James», in J. AUFREITER – G. REISINGER – E. SOBIECZKY – C. STEINHARDT-HIRSCH, *Kunst Kritik Geschichte. Festschrift für Johann Konrad Eberlein*, Reimer, Berlin 2013, pp. 423–442; cf. L. DENNISON (ed.), *The Legacy of M. R. James. Papers from the 1995 Cambridge Symposium*, Shaun Tyas, Donington 2001.

²⁸ James began publishing various collections of *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* in 1904; cf. *A Chronological Listing of M. R. James's Ghost Stories* (2006–2007) by Rosemary Pardoe, <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~pardos/MRJStories.html> (retrieved 28.5.2019); several collections are available as free e-books.

²⁹ M. R. JAMES, *A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of Eton College*, Cambridge 1895.

The German *historisierte Initiale* suffers from a twofold flawed heritage: the hiatus-avoiding *s* in the middle moves the term dangerously close to the German equivalents of «historical» and «historizing», i. e. pretending to be older, and this has given rise to endless misunderstandings, all of which could easily be avoided by using the term «historiiert»³⁰. On the probability of successfully correcting scientific terminology, see the «second-e discussion» concerning *Fleuronné*.

The second matter is one of meaning, and it is creating even more confusion. From the earliest attempts to provide definitions for the term *historiated initial* in the 19th century, there has been the attempt to define it in a formal manner, meaning a frame around a scene³¹. As a result of this definition, letters formed by the figures being inhabited by them would not be *historiated*, but something else — notwithstanding the fact that they, too, can transport a *historia*.

The most influential terminology originates from a leading scholar of German tongue, Otto Pächt³². In his university lectures on medieval manuscripts, held in the 1960s and first published in 1984 with subsequent re-editions and translations, he introduced the triad *historisierte Initiale* — *bewohnte Initiale* — *Figureninitiale*³³. The second is a calque of the then established term *inhabited scroll*, for a typical Romanesque scroll ornament with little figures or animals climbing around, the third applied to the widespread examples of initials formed partially or in total by elements of the

³⁰ JAKOBI-MIRWALD, *Text – Buchstabe – Bild*, pp. 12-13.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16 ff., cf. V. LEROQUAIS, *Les psautiers manuscrits latins des bibliothèques publiques de France*, vol. 1, Protat, Mâcon 1940, p. XL: «J'ai appelé initiales historiées, le lettres dont le champ est rempli par une histoire peinte [...] autrement dit, par un tableau si petit soit-il.» Cf. J. PORCHER, «Aux origines de la lettre ornée médiévale», in *Mélanges E. Tisserant*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1964 (Studi e testi. 235), pp. 273-276: «la lettre encadrant un petit tableau au naturel» (p. 276); and J. GUTBROD, *Die Initiale in Handschriften des 9. bis 13. Jh.*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 1965, pp. 33-34.

³² O. PÄCHT, *Buchmalerei des Mittelalters. Eine Einführung*, ed. by D. THOSS – U. JENNI, Prestel, München 1984¹, 2000⁴. Engl.: *Book Illumination in the Middle Ages*, transl. by K. DAVENPORT, Harvey Miller, London – Oxford 1986, 1993². Ital.: *La miniatura italiana. Un'introduzione*, trad. a c. d. D. THOSS – U. JENNI, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1987. The terms concerning the initials occur on p. 77 in the German edition of 1984.

³³ PÄCHT, «Buchmalerei» (see note above), p. 77; cf. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, *Text – Buchstabe – Bild*, pp. 20-21.

scene, as encountered in some of the best-known examples of the kind, the well-known Cîteaux Moralia in Hiob³⁴.

Notwithstanding the fact that Pächt's text was meant as a university lecture and not a prescription for manuscript cataloguing, it had the greatest impact on terminology, for the simple reason that, for a long time, it was the only readily accessible introduction to book illumination as such. The formal triad *historiated*–*inhabited*–*figured* has been reproduced in various terminologies³⁵, most notably in Austria and Italy³⁶.

The problem, in my view, is that all *three* of these forms can transport iconographic content, i. e. be «historiated» in the more general sense of the word. A sort of rapid poll abroad yielded the result that most German and English-speaking colleagues use *historiated* in the general sense of «with iconographic matter», while Austrian and Italian colleagues tend to use it in the sense of «frame-like initial» as opposed to «initial constructed of figures» or «inhabited initial»³⁷. Further confusion is generated by the question whether *historiated* also applies, firstly, to non-text-related, but identifiable, scenes such as the wood-cutting monks in the abovementioned Gregory manuscript, and, in second place, to initials featuring merely a single, static or indicating, figure, whether within a frame or forming the initial itself. And there seems to be a readiness to employ «figured» not in the sense of «constructed of figures», but rather «featuring a single figure».

³⁴ Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 169–173.

³⁵ The confusion around the term can be found in a nutshell in the two definitions provided by Marilena Maniaci in the *Terminologia*. The first concerns the term *istoriato*: «che rappresenta una scena, un personaggio o un oggetto significativo, relativo o meno al testo» (M. MANIACI, *Terminologia del libro manoscritto*, Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro – Editrice Bibliografica, Roma 1998², p. 251). The second, however, for *iniziale istoriata*, runs as follows: «Iniziale contenente scene autonome della sua struttura [and I add: as opposed to the *iniziale figurata*] e talvolta in relazione con il testo.» (*ibid.*, p. 320). F. MANZARI, «La rinascita dell'iniziale figurata nella miniatura gotica e la sua circolazione tra Europa e Italia settentrionale», *Arte Medievale*, 4, 6 (2016) 213–226, likewise points out that the fact that the two types start to overlap in Gothic initials.

³⁶ V. JEMOLO – M. MORELLI (edd.), *Guida a una descrizione uniforme dei manoscritti e al loro censimento*, ICCU, Roma 1990.

³⁷ For their quick reactions in dialogue and written form I am indebted to Marina Bernasconi, Susan L'Engle, Marilena Maniaci, Francesca Manzari, Lawrence Nees, Giulia Orofino, Joachim Ott, Martin Roland, Christine Sauer, Alison Stones and Baudouin Van den Abeele.

The terms in use are far from unambiguous, which has led scholars like, for instance, Giulia Orofino, to avoid the term *istoriato* altogether in favour of *lettere con figura o con storia*³⁸, both of which are terms that occur in contemporary texts referring to book decoration.

My attempt to keep the *historiated* term strictly to the presence of iconographic matter, and describe an initial's form in a second set of terms causes confusion among those who are used to Pächt's terminology.³⁹ Apparently, the readiness to distinguish between form and content is not quite as widespread as my linguistic formation has led me to believe. The matter is still very far from being solved.

Solutions?

The three cases discussed above have showcased different disturbances. The first, *pen-flourishing*, displayed a more or less randomly created term differing widely from language to language, hence conducive to major misunderstanding across scientific boundaries. The strange etymologies either go unreflected and simply used by the art historians, or arouse the suspicion of other scientists who take the words at their literal value. The second term was the *lombard* with its origin from another context of book manufacturing, resulting in a rather difficult applicability for the description of manuscripts. In the third place, we have considered *the historiated initial* and the subtle shift of possible meanings. What has only been hinted at is the observation that different languages frequently fail to neatly line up. This is a problem, especially considering the fact that, for instance in a manuscript catalogue or the preparation of an exhibition, scientists from different disciplines and countries are meant to cooperate. The problems are far from new, but recent developments especially in large international databases and digitizing programmes online have outlined them in harsh detail.

³⁸ G. OROFINO, «Il catalogo dei codici decorati dell'Archivio di Montecassino», in S. MADDALO – M. TORQUATI (edd.), *La catalogazione dei manoscritti miniati come strumento di conoscenza. Esperienze, metodologia, prospettive. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Viterbo 4-5 marzo 2009*, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo, Roma 2010, pp. 93-101 (Nuovi Studi Storici, 87). I thank Giulia Orofino for her enlivening communication and insights.

³⁹ JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Buchmalerei», pp. 56-60.

What is more, there is no real solution. The failure of the German-speaking community to accept the missing -e in *Fleuronné* makes one shudder at the mere thought of attempting to introduce another word, even in the abovementioned way of an alternative, for this widespread ornament. What would that be, by the way? The German word itself is far from bad. But it would be a Herculean effort — not exactly to come up with an international, probably Latin-based, word like *floritura* or similar for the ornament in question, but to make it palatable to English, German, Italian, French, Spanish, Belgian etc. etc. scholars. It, and a wide array of similar words. Everyone would have to learn new words. The thought is too awful to contemplate.

And this considering the fact that we actually *are* in possession of a lingua franca which would perfectly match our field of research, at least in theory. A language every single one of us should be familiar with. Up to one hundred and fifty years ago, manuscript catalogues were written in Latin — as were University dissertations, by the way. But these times, when there would have been a chance to actively introduce a truly international terminology comparable to the Latin-based ones of botany or medicine, have passed beyond recall. Furthermore, I suspect that even the likeable discussion contribution of a Hungarian colleague during a conference in the Eighties, who resorted to Latin, attempting — and succeeding! — to make himself understood by the entire audience, would no longer be possible today. Alarmingly, Latin as an actively used language is about to join artificial languages like Esperanto, Klingon, or Quenya and Sindarin, and its presence in schools is fighting a losing battle. It is a worrying fact that in their aggressive quest for students in order to secure their own survival, the historic departments of German universities are abandoning the Latin requirement even for subjects like classical archaeology, blithely ignoring the question how scientists thus formed are supposed to conduct scientific research.

The fact that Latin is not the solution for the terminology problems, however, is not a result of its waning presence in academic life — English would fare no better. The reason is the well-known conservatism of language, a fact that I have already illustrated by the failure of the renowned palaeographer Bernhard Bischoff to introduce a new and perfectly sensible term for the Roman script *Capitalis Rustica*⁴⁰. New creations have very little hope of success.

⁴⁰ JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Die Auszeichnungsschriften», p. 112. Bischoff proposed «kanonisierte Kapitalis», deeming «rustic capitals» misleading for the actual

In my eyes, the solution lies in a renewed and marked emphasis on science history. This special field of research may not always be properly appreciated, probably not only within art history. The curious and sometimes almost offensive strange termini merit an in-depth consideration that, if made known, can render them more acceptable, quite apart from the fact that these considerations may well yield even further insights. In other words, we must stop pretending that strange words are «normal». A coherent and logical multilingual glossary seems to be an impossible wish, even if a reduced and somewhat simplified version such as the one I offer in my book is, in fact, possible. However, it can and should never be more than a crutch — science history is not so simple.

Still, this seems to be what people wish for. Once a more or less comprehensive collection of relevant words is available, they expect ready-made solutions for every visual phenomenon they occur, notwithstanding the fact that most of the terminologies on offer today are compilations and organizations of extant terms and not «prescriptions»⁴¹. My goal was to provide a short-cut to the relevant terms in use, in manuscript catalogues, seminal papers and even older guidelines. This includes ambiguities of use, abortive efforts of unification and sometimes even rather misleading terms which I hesitate to «correct» for the abovementioned reasons. And this is also why I have recently answered the question if an innocent little squiggle next to a chapter title has a name with an invitation to create one: it might meet with success, and maybe one day *tadpole* will actually be joining the already extant *frogspawn*.

Which neatly takes us to the elsewhere mentioned discussion of the *fibril* with the brilliant, lamented J.-P. Gumbert⁴². When asked why he used the word for a rather frequent, tiny, wavy ornament detail (a rather apt description by the way, as I have since been assured by medical scientists

canonic book script, cf B. BISCHOFF, *Paläographie des römischen Altertums und des abendländischen Mittelalters*, Erich Schmidt, Berlin 1986², p. 72 with n. 3 (Grundlagen der Germanistik, 24). The word met with little success.

⁴¹ JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Beschreiben oder vorschreiben».

⁴² Cf. JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Lost in Translation», p. 7, with Gumbert's delightful comment, p. 8. In this context, mention needs to be made of the wonderful title of an exhibition in 1992: *Kriezels, aubergines en takkenbossen: randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de 15 de eeuw (tentoonst in het Rijksmuseum Meermano-Westreenianum / Museum van het Boek, 's -Gravenhage, 30.10.1992–2.1.1993)*, ed. A. S. KORTEWEG, Walburg Pers, Zutphen 1992. Schnirpfel, indeed.

from whose terminology it derives), his answer was as succinct as it was untranslatable: «I could have called it *Schnirpfel*, couldn't I?»

How better to highlight both the absurdity of some «flourish and blotts»-terms as well as the sometimes even more absurd discussions concerning them — for this wonderfully ironic answer was triggered by the adamant refusal of some senior scientists to use this term they felt obscure. On the other hand, the fact that three or four manuscript cataloguers had independently and unconsciously taken to describe a frequent detail as *fibril*, subsequently tracing it back to a fifth scholar, should be sufficient to show that the term is functional and explanatory, despite its anatomic origins. Just as *pen-flourishing* et cetera, it may be of dubious extraction, but it works.

Tracing a term back to its «inventor» can, therefore, result in startling insights, see my research on M. R. James: it shows that it is almost always rewarding to trace the methods of work of an older scholar, especially if he originates from the time when discipline boundaries had not yet evolved to the dividing and excluding extent in which they form today's university landscape. Now, a twinkle-eyed, somewhat sloppy late-nineteenth-century Cambridge don with a penchant for spooky stories isn't always to be had. Still, one will invariably encounter questions that are still relevant and which may even lead to a rather different view of one's object or field of research.

James was enlightening in a second respect. Due to my earlier research on the terminology of display scripts⁴³, I had already anticipated one result of the paper, namely that it is frequently the people writing manuscript catalogues who come up with the relevant descriptive terminology, usually in a rather uncoordinated, unplanned way⁴⁴. This is not surprising. In pre-Internet, pre-prescriptions times, people who had to work their way through large corpuses of artworks with the aim of providing comprehensive descriptions could simply not afford to be fastidious, so they intuitively used whatever came their way, borrowing from other languages, disciplines

⁴³ JAKOBI-MIRWALD, «Die Auszeichnungsschriften».

⁴⁴ Cf., in this context, A. FINGERNAGEL, «Die Beschreibung des Buchschmucks in Handschriftenkatalogen», in *Katalogisierung mittelalterlicher Handschriften in internationaler Perspektive. Vorträge der Handschriftenbearbeitertagung vom 24. bis 27. Oktober 2005 in München*, hrsg. von der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 89-98 (Beiträge zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen, 53): «Schnörkel» and «kalligraphischer Zierrat», p. 90.

and crafts, creating associations and images. Attempts to organize and systemize a terminology usually don't predate the 1970s, and by then the different terminologies had been quietly and clandestinely introduced and accepted, including all their inconsistencies.

Therefore, I think that foraging for terminology in earlier manuscript catalogues could yield interesting subjects for future studies. An additional training as a linguist or language historian can be useful, but it is not compulsory. Further studies of historical sources may become necessary: for some words, such as the aforementioned *florieren*, one will have to probe deeper and include historical texts such as library catalogues, inventories or commissions, as well as technological literature such as the *liber illuministarum*.

Who was it, then, who recurred to metalwork when describing the pen-flourishing in Italian and French literature? In which direction did the loan go? Who came up with *pen-flourishing* itself, and were the early cataloguers — I am still suspecting them — really so easily pleased and did not feel the urgent need for a better word? What makes the German language lack a word for *opening* or *apertura* of a book? How, when and where exactly did the word *miniature* — in the sense of book illumination — originate, and how does the term relate to the other meaning of the word, loosely related to *diminutive*⁴⁵? Speaking of *illumination*: what about that itself?

Conclusion

There is work to be done, and it must be done for three reasons. First: a consistent and plausible terminology is needed, and if extant terms cannot be corrected, at least they can be explained. Second: a complacent and haughty insistence on terminological idiosyncrasies which exclude neighbouring disciplines is not called for. The use of words that other scientists find offensive to the point of avoiding them is an alarm signal. Therefore, information on the genesis and history of any term should be so readily available that everybody can find out why and how it is used. In some cases even an alternative next to an established, but offensive term may be in order. Finally, the third aspect is translation. The failure of a language to come up with an exact translation is not an oddity, but part of

⁴⁵ See above, notes 11 and 2.

the system that has to be described and explained; it will yield insights into one's own science history.

All these difficulties notwithstanding, it remains our duty to avail ourselves of a descriptive language that can not only be reasonably taught, but, if possible, made palatable to all scholars working on the same objects, in whatever language and discipline. An insufficient term, a perplexed colleague, or a missing translation should exhort us to do some research. We will probably never get a nice and easy multilingual, unambiguous and consistent terminology. But consistent work on something approaching it, keeping all the mentioned observations in mind, and making use of all the methods of association, explanation and borrowing we know from the past, we may just get something not unlike it.

One of these strategies may serve as a conclusion. Borrowing is one of the more feasible methods for coining terms —and the German version of Harry Potter, which offers a plethora of more or less happy translations for Rowling's names, leaves *Flourish and Blotts* in English.

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