

WORDS FOR CODICES

A Codicological Terminology in English

An Attempt by J.P. Gumbert

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Part 2: Scribes and Their Tools

Part 3: From Sheet to Page

Part 2 very far from final

Part 3, chapters 31 and 32 advanced

chapter 33 less advanced

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PREFACE

The London colloquium ‘An English Codicological Vocabulary’, held in July 2004, enjoyable and useful as it was, left me with mixed feelings: it did not give me the confidence that a book was being planned such as I felt was needed.

One should be clear about the distinction between a work explaining what words mean, and a work explaining how to call things. The first starts from the words (*e.g.* those provided by Muzerelle), the other from the things. A *dictionary* explaining what English words mean (those now in use, or perhaps also those used by earlier scholars, making it into a historical dictionary) would be interesting and useful; the *need*, however, is for a TERMINOLOGY: a *structure* (not just a list) *of words* to express our best understanding (as it is at this moment) of the *structure of facts*. As long as we have not embedded the facts in a structure of words, they are not yet sufficiently clear to ourselves, and it will be difficult to observe them, or to communicate our observations to others (whether colleagues or students). This also requires that each term is provided with a *definition*, without which it would be useless as a term.

Of course one would not now begin such a work without starting from Denis Muzerelle’s *Vocabulaire codicologique* of 1985. But one cannot be content with translating that work. In the first place because it is now twenty years old, and even in a quiet corner of scholarship such as ours that is not a negligible span of time; in the second, because it did not have quite the intention of creating a terminology; in the third, because it is French, and French is not English. One must necessarily work as well with Pilar Ostos, M^a Luisa Pardo, Elena Rodríguez, *Vocabulario de codicología*, 1997, and especially with Marilena Maniaci, *Terminologia del libro manoscritto*, 1996. But even the combination of these three models will not save us the really difficult work: to *rethink* the whole subject, from the bottom up; to decide on a sensible structure and order for a sector; to arrange existing material in that order, deciding which terms are perhaps superfluous and — more importantly — noting concepts which are missing; and then to write an English text, with English terms, keeping close to the French and Italian where it suits our own plan, but not where it does not, and creating English terms where needed. (Also rejecting some English terms: because they are obsolete or simply wrong; because they have many meanings, and one wishes to restrict them to only one of these; or for other reasons.)

Who should undertake such a tremendous task? Ideally, a compact working group (containing at least scholars from Great Britain and the United States). It would take them an enormous amount of time, in the space of several years, and much heartbreak. For one scholar to attempt it is temerarious (although both Muzerelle and Maniaci made one-man books, and none the worse for that); if that scholar is not a native speaker of English, it is downright presumptuous.

Still I decided, rather than wait for someone else to take the first step, to make at least a start myself. I may claim a reasonable competence in at least some sectors of the field, so that I can propose a ‘structure of thought’, with its definitions, with some confidence — although discussion with other scholars is certainly needed, even for the sections in which I am

most at home. But in the choice of terms I am severely handicapped; here particularly I need as much help as I can get.

Here I present a first chapter, in a very undefinitive version. (The first section of it is based on work I did, in Dutch, together with Jan-Willem Klein, about 1986; the shape it has taken grew out of my experience in making *Kneep en binding*, together with Kees Gnirrep and Janos Szirmai, 1992.) Degree signs ° mark words which are terms in their own right and are defined elsewhere. Question marks and black squares ■ mark those terms about which I am most doubtful, or of which I am already aware that they are quite wrong, only I am waiting for someone to suggest the right one; this does not mean that I trust all the unmarked terms to be above discussion.

The basic structure retains that proposed by Muzerelle, although my ‘structure of thought’ is not identical with his. For each term I mention the parallels, approximate parallels or divergences from the terms proposed in the French, Spanish and Italian versions. A very full index is presented at the end; also concordances with the ‘other’ three books, to allow users of those to find out what I did with the terms in them.

What I hope is that this experiment will elicit some help towards what I believe to be an ambitious, but worthy goal.

Gratefully I acknowledge the thanks due to Kevanne Kirkwood and Marilena Maniaci, for help in thoroughly (but not yet finally) discussing earlier stages of the work; to Klaus-Peter Schäffel, for his marvellous fonts, two of which I used; and to the Universities of Nijmegen, for producing this booklet, and Utrecht, for paying for it.

Lopik, 22.1.2005

J.P. Gumbert

Here a further state is presented, of two chapters (or ‘parts’; but without the above-mentioned index); it is now Oxford which I have to thank.

Oxford, 13.5.2009

J.P. Gumbert

Slightly modified again, May 2010.