Reading Visual Devices in Early Books

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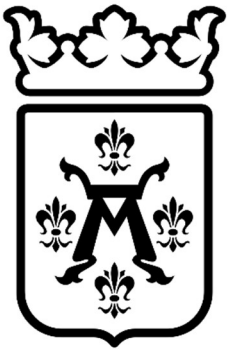

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Keynote speakers

Andrew **Riggsby**

The Segmentation of Roman Documents

This paper examines the ways ancient Romans divided document into segments, how graphic devices interact with textual features, how differently this operated in different contexts, and what kinds of usage were (dis)privileged by these configurations. It begins with a survey of mechanisms (e.g. blank space, sigla, columniation, font, formal page divisions) across a broad range of private and public document types. The most important distinction that emerges from this survey is that between single- and multi-user documents. The former exhibit a minimalist approach, even hostility, to formalisms, seen widely throughout Roman information culture. So they do not, for instance, separate out the unique information in otherwise formulaic documents. The forms of language used depend on ordinary syntax, rather than the more abstract structure of the document. Multi-user documents, by contrast, bring a number of devices to bear, often in combination with one another. (That the exceptional cases here are also distinguished by the presence of social and material scaffolding is itself also a known feature of Roman information culture.) These structures produced are typically “flat” but very granular. They seem normally to be targeted at narrowly defined effects, but the specifics of those effects vary greatly across document types. Some are meant to guarantee the integrity of individual entries. Others allow for searching out particular kinds of information, but only according to very specific search patterns. Perhaps most distinctively—and this ties directly to the notion of a “multi-user document”—segmentation is set up to provide affordances for physical transformation of the document by subsequent users.

Wendy **Scase**

Thinking with Visual Devices in a Late Medieval Gentry Household

Though there are plenty of visual devices in early books, evidence for how readers engaged with them is scarce. However, there are some exciting exceptions. This keynote lecture will identify neglected evidence for modes of engagement with visual devices, including, it will propose, use of them as tools for thinking with. It will focus on the literary collections of Cheshire landowner Humphrey Newton (1466-1536) and later members of his family. The Newton materials include a large range of visual devices, among them a harp diagram, a palmistry diagram, a quadrant diagram, Veronica's veil, a devotional sacred heart image, faces, human figures, images of hairstyles and clothing, heraldic devices, a heraldic diagram centred on a 'tun', planetary charts, genealogical charts, two zodiac diagrams, and a plan showing the size of Christ's foot. Many of these visual devices are intriguingly sketchy and informal. The family also owned, and engaged with, other material relevant to visual devices including a calligraphic pattern book, a printed, illustrated book about heraldry, and an illustrated urinary, all of which survive. Despite their range and quantity, the visual aspects of the Newton collections have attracted little previous discussion. The lecture will consider where Humphrey and other household members could have obtained models for the devices, what their notes tell us about how they understood and used them, and what these materials might contribute more broadly to our knowledge of the reception, use, and audiences for visual devices in the period.

Carla **Suhr**

The Lizard and the Rat: Images in Early English Printed Texts for Popular Audiences

In this paper, I want to look at the uses and functions of images in early English printed texts that were aimed at popular audiences rather than more learned readers. It has been argued that the use of woodcut images was something of a genre convention in some of the early popular printed texts (see e.g. Luborsky 1987, Suhr 2011), much like the use of blackletter typeface was a marker of popular versus learned texts from the late sixteenth century until the mid-seventeenth century (see e.g. Bland 1998). For this paper, I will make use of the *Early English Books Online* database to test this claim by investigating the illustrations found in three types of popular texts: romances, sensationalist news pamphlets and lay texts dealing with medical topics. How are images used in these texts? Are they found on the title-pages and/or embedded in the body text? Are the images generic or specific to the texts? Are they referred to in the text? Are there differences in the uses and functions of images in the different types of texts? These are some of the questions I want to discuss in my paper.

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Papers

Piotr **Alexandrowicz**

From the Margins to the Centre: A Visual Journey of Summaries in Early Modern Legal Books

Legal books played a crucial role in early book production. Approximately 15% of printed volumes before 1500 were legal books (M.A. Panzanelli-Fratoni), yet our knowledge of the evolution of legal books is limited. One overlooked yet interesting subject is the printed marginalia in the most important legal texts, the collections of civil and canon law (*corpora iuris*). Printers employed learned editors who provided new additions to the core source texts, leading to the development of a series of marginal paratexts, such as cases, glosses, commentaries and so on.

Small summaries (*summaria*), excerpted from late medieval handwritten legal commentaries, were transferred by editors to printed editions of legal sources. Initially, these summaries were placed in the margins, but they were soon moved to the central part of the page, which had originally been reserved for the authoritative text. This innovation proved to be very successful; today, it is almost forgotten that these summaries were not part of the original legal text but rather a later addition. They gained prominence due to their central position, close to the legal text itself.

The evolution of page layout in *corpora iuris* is just one example of how visual tools shaped the use of books. The case of the *summaria* illustrates how page layouts changed, how editors shaped the contents of books, and how paratexts influenced the experiences of readers and users engaging with these works.

Marco **Baschetti**

Through the Physician's Gaze: Tree Diagrams and Flasks in Arabic Medical Manuscripts

Medieval Arabic medical manuscripts show the power of visual communication in guiding physicians through theory and practice. This study examines two key graphic elements in Arabic uroscopy manuscripts: tree diagrams and illustrations of urine flasks. These schematic representations, originating from the Alexandrian medical tradition and evolving within Arabic scholarship, exemplify how visual devices bridged tradition and innovation in medical knowledge transmission.

The tree diagrams played a crucial role in organizing and simplifying complex medical theories into branching structures, such as the tripartition of bodily fluids (blood, pneuma, semen) and their relation to natural heat, integrating novel concepts with traditional Galenic qualities. These diagrams made uroscopic theory more accessible to practitioners, particularly street physicians, demonstrating how visual literacy facilitated the spread of medical knowledge beyond institutional contexts.

Equally significant are the diverse representations of flasks across manuscripts. These illustrations provide practical guidance on handling urine samples and observing crucial diagnostic features like color, density, and sediment position. The varying depictions – from ampules to bottle-shaped or test tube-like containers – reflect the material culture of different copyists and time periods, offering insights into the transmission of medical practices across different regions.

Both visual devices address practical challenges in uroscopy, such as identifying fraudulent urine samples. Some manuscripts include specific visual tools to help physicians distinguish genuine from counterfeit samples, illustrating how these devices not only conveyed knowledge but also protected professional integrity. This aspect mirrors the evolving social dynamics of medical practice in the medieval Islamic world.

By analyzing these visual forms, the paper underscores how tree diagrams and flasks illustrations complemented textual descriptions, helping physicians, especially those in non-institutional contexts, perform quick diagnoses. The adaptability of these visual

devices in meeting the needs of new audiences and professional contexts illustrates their dynamic role in the dissemination of medical knowledge.

Adèle **Charransol**

Concordances and their Insertion within Carolingian Gospel Book. Structural, Narrative and Cognitif Device (Paris, BnF, lat. 11959)

The Carolingian Gospel Book and its decoration are based on well-established principles and did not experience major changes throughout the 9th century. The fixed ordering and decorative principles meet the primary role of the gospel as a fundamental and harmonious narrative.

At the beginning of the manuscript, Canon tables work as a narrative instrument to navigate the text. Because they orient the reader and structure the handling of the book, concordances are a device/*dipositus* (*a*, *um*, “well-ordered”)[1]. Prefaces, especially the Letter of Jerome to Pope Damasus preceding concordances, rationalize the abstract quality Jack Goody recognizes to the structure of (both associative and dissociative) data in lists or tables[2]. Jerome’s letter explains the reading system, established to state “what is similar in all” as well as “[to restore] to each their own good”[3]. Moreover, the ornamental dimension and its plastic coherence make concordances corroborate the unity of the Christological message[4]. They transform the nature of the graphic process of concordances (a cognitive structure) as a “graphic reduction”[5] of a pre-existing and higher order: the *evangelion*.

The insertion of the Canon tables in the text, usually placed after the prefaces and before Matthew’s Gospel, sometimes seems to reflect other considerations: when they are formally inserted into the gospel’s structure, placed after Matthew’s prologue and summary, concordances display a striking closeness with Matthew’s incipit and Jesus’ genealogy[6].

We propose to examine some of the practical imperatives raised by concordances and their insertion into the book structure in certain Carolingian Gospel Books. Our reflection will be guided by the Gospel (Paris, BnF, lat. 11959, ca. 830, Saint-Pierre-des-Fossés ? Glanfeuil ?)[7]. In this manuscript, Canons are followed by representations of evangelists (fol. 19v-20), isolated from one another by arcs. The decorative program continues in the next folio (fol. 20v) with the Victorious Cross in front of Matthew’s incipit. Images complete

— not to clarify but rather to give concrete and emblematic foundations — the harmonic and “graphic reduction”.

From the concordances to the genealogy of Christ, a proper programmatic continuity is established to design a comprehensive scheme including both visual and verbal devices. Canons and genealogy — as cognitive and rational instruments — both act as places of Memory: that of the christological advent reported by the gospels, of which the utmost expression is the cross.

[1]*The concept of device here is the one defined by Giorgio Agamben, following Foucault and Hegel: « I call device anything that has, in one way or another, the ability to capture, orient, determine, intercept, shape, control and ensure the gestures, behaviors, opinions and speech of living beings », G. Agamben, Qu’est ce qu'un dispositif?, Paris, 2006.*

[2]*J. Goody, The Domestication of the Savage Mind, Cambridge, 1977.*

[3]*Jérôme, Préface aux Livres de la Bible, p. 479.*

[4]*The Eusebian tables and their ornamentation have often been considered in a decorative perspective. Carl Nordenfalk, and more recently, the collective work conducted by Alessandro Bausi, Bruno Reudenbach and Hanna Wimmer, have demonstrated the practical and symbolic dimension of concordances as a fixed principle revealing an artistic and structural continuum in the wider Christendom. C. Nordenfalk, Die Spätantiken Kanontafeln, Göteborg, 1938. A. Bausi, B. Reudenbach, H. Wimmer (éd.), Canones: the Art of Harmony, Boston, 2020.*

[5]*J. Goody, The Domestication…, op. cit., p. 150.*

[6]*Concordances and genealogy (as literary genre and in its visual dimension) are two structuring instruments of filiation, that of Christ for the second, filiation between the four Gospels for the first. On the genealogy of Matthew, offered to the reader as an efficient device and a prelude to the narrative: C. Rohmer, « L’écriture généalogique au service d’un discours théologique : une lecture de la généalogie de Jésus dans l’évangile selon Matthieu », Cahiers d’études du religieux. Recherches interdisciplinaires, 17, 2017.*

[7]*URL: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8426781b/f1.planchecontact*

Martin **Gardinetti**

Celestial Phenomena in Text and Image. The Case of 16th Century German *Flugschriften*

During the 16th century, a new type of media developed in the lands of the Holy Roman Empire, thanks to the advent of printing: the *Flugschriften*. *Flugschriften*, also called *Flugblätter*, are literally "flying writings or sheets". They correspond to single, irregular, serial prints on a single page. They were mostly written in German and covered a wide range of topics. This type of document has a very particular structure, almost always combining an image and a text in equal measure. It is therefore of particular interest to examine and study the relationship between text and image in this type of document. The study is based on a corpus of *Flugschriften* dealing with extraordinary celestial phenomena such as halos and parhelia. This corpus makes it possible to highlight the construction of a credible discourse on the phenomenon based on both the illustration of the celestial phenomenon and its written description. Indeed, the image in the *Flugschriften* seems to be more than just an illustration of a phenomenon, because the written description of the phenomenon is directly related to this representation. In these *Flugschriften*, text and image are completely inseparable, certainly because of the difficulty of describing such celestial phenomena in words, but also because of the difficulty of representing celestial phenomena on a two-dimensional board. Then there is a discourse in this type of document that can be compared to that of natural history, in which image and text provide strong evidence of the strange fact. Finally, *Flugschriften* were cheap prints that could be read in public, making it possible to highlight the different levels of literacy and the role that the relationship between text and image plays at different levels of reading.

Cosima **Gillhammer**

Visualising History: Peter of Poitiers' *Compendium Historiae in Genealogia Christi* as a Source in Late Medieval England

Compiled in the twelfth century, the *Compendium Historiae in Genealogia Christi* by Peter of Poitiers (c.1130–1205) was a widely disseminated and influential chronicle of biblical history in diagrammatic form, using tables, schemata, and other illustrations to visualise knowledge. Included are graphic devices describing a diverse array of information, such as the generations of the tribes of Israel, topographical features of Jerusalem, as well as the forty-two encampments of the Israelites on their way through the desert. With these concise diagrams containing genealogical, chronological, and spatial information, the *Compendium* remained influential throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, often accompanying the *Historia scholastica* of Peter Comestor and other chronicles and historical writings. In late medieval England, the *Compendium* served as a source for chronicles and histories in the vernacular. The knowledge contained in the *Compendium* in the form of graphic devices was transmitted in various forms in such late medieval texts, ranging from directly incorporating diagrams into vernacular writings to excerpting information from the diagrams and instead summarising it verbally. Both approaches can be found in late-medieval historical texts such as the late-fifteenth-century history of the biblical and ancient world in Oxford, Trinity College, MS 29, thus transforming the visual devices of its source text in creative ways.

Using select examples, the proposed paper will examine the use of graphic devices in Peter of Poitiers' *Compendium*, focusing on two questions: 1) How do the diagrams in the *Compendium* function in their original context as devices to visualise, summarise, and transmit knowledge? 2) How are these visual devices in the *Compendium* copied and adapted in late medieval England in vernacular history writing? The paper will reveal that the use and reception of the graphic devices in the *Compendium* is a dynamic process which is subject to continuous transformation and adaptation in different genres, languages, and centuries.

Sivan **Gottlieb** and Shahrzad **Irannejad**

Diagrams as Imagetexts in Rhazes's *Liber Ad Almansorem*

The *Kitāb Al-Manṣūrī fi-ṭ-Ṭibb* by al-Rāzī (865–925 CE), is a concise encyclopedia of medicine which gained popularity during the Middle Ages, as evidenced by its extensive manuscript tradition and numerous translations: from Arabic to Latin by Gerardo da Cremona (12th century), Arabic into Hebrew by Shem Tov ben Isaac of Tortosa (13th century), and Latin to Hebrew by an anonymous translator (13th century). Across the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin traditions, numerous diagrams can be detected of the ventricles of the brain, abdomen and chest, trachea, and the heart. These simple diagrams were intended to be educational and practical, and served as *aide memoire*. They were not meant to copy reality or precise anatomy, and they were most probably executed by the scribe/copyist. What is interesting to us in this paper is the translation and transmission of such visual knowledge. What is particularly intriguing is the variation in anatomical structures depicted within and between cultures. These differences in the visual representation raise questions about the role of visual elements in translating text into image, and image to image. In this paper, with an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on the methodological toolbox of manuscript studies, history of medicine and history of art, we intend to problematize these diagrams as "imagetexts", that not only combine image and text in the representation of knowledge, but also "designate [...] a problematic gap, cleavage, or rupture in representation" (Hamburger 2022: 6). Furthermore, at the intersection of codicology and philology, we explore the usefulness of family tree metaphor (*stemma codicum*) in establishing the relationship of various manuscripts based on the visual affinities of their respective diagrams. We ask to what extent the establishment of anatomical truth and reconstructing the archetype needs to be the focus versus exploring the dynamism of visual representation as a result of scribal practices across time and space.

Hedwig **Gwosdek**

John Holt's Grammar *Lac puerorum*: An Unstudied Textbook Around 1500 Using Woodcuts as Teaching Devices

Teaching and learning aids for children of earlier periods have come down to us only in very small numbers, for the most part due to how their users and owners treated them. Their losses also go back to the attitude of libraries to consider them worthy of attention. John Holt's grammar illustrates this practice. The text of this elementary Latin grammar written in English only survives in three complete copies of different editions printed in London and in Antwerp. Most of the extant copies are fragments which are now located in libraries on two continents. The text has been mentioned by scholars in the past and also in modern works, but it has not yet been studied. It deserves to be rescued, made available in a critical edition and examined for a number of reasons. It contains innovative features in its presentation of grammatical rules and uses terminology which has not been contained in schooltexts which have already been studied.

My presentation aims to make familiar with the text, its organisation and its author. It relates it to its grammatical tradition and also to its most prominent student, the future Henry VIII. Finally, it concentrates on its most striking and unusual feature: the three woodcuts which are used as teaching and learning aids of grammatical rules.

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Antti **Ijäs**

Text and Image in Konrad Kyeser's *Bellifortis*

Around the turn of the fifteenth century, Konrad Kyeser of Eichstätt (1367–after 1405) composed a work on military and other technology and related esoteric topics under the title *Bellifortis*. *Bellifortis* survives as two authorial manuscripts, Göttingen, UB, ms. philos. 64a dated 1402 and 63 dated 1405, prepared as presentation copies to Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia and his successor Rupert of the Palatinate, respectively. Other early manuscript copies (Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 348; Roma, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1994) represent a third recension most likely originating from under the auspices of the author. The bulk of the work is made up of illustrations of various machines and technical innovations captioned with obscure Latin verse, which may be identified as attemped hexametre. The captions and the images complement each other, meaning that neither text nor image is understandable alone (and, arguably, sometimes not even together). In addition, *Bellifortis* incorporates several recipes on various topics, some lifted from Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' *De mirabilibus mundi.* The three authorial versions differ in the way individual recipes are illustrated, but unlike the images of the various machines and technological marvels, these illustrations rarely contribute to the conveying the information contained in the recipes. Nevertheless, both types of illustrations of *Bellifortis* also appear without the accompanying text in the transmission, raising the question of how they were understood by the later copyists and readers. My paper will discuss how images are used to convey information in *Bellifortis* and how they relate to the text, contrasting and comparing the use of text and image in the somewhat related genre of fight books or works that convey the body technique of fighting.

Sebastian Bank **Jørgensen**

A Music-Theoretical Mnemonic and its Changing Visual Exemplarity During the Sixteenth Century

The earliest forms of pitch-specific musical notation developed during the eleventh century. This represented a paradigmatic shift in the visualisation of musical sound which grew out of pedagogical necessity: an extremely large repertoire of plainchant had developed, and current ways of teaching were no longer efficient – a new strategy was needed.

Memory remained the most crucial tool for learning throughout the Middle Ages, and ecclesiastical music education remained an oral tradition. While notation was crucial for liturgical books, a large part of the repertoire was still taught via imitation and rote learning. Thus, not all musical concepts were necessarily represented by musical notation; simpler and well-known concepts were not deemed worthy to be musically notated – a visual device that could take up a lot of precious parchment.

In this context of efficient oral pedagogy, during the thirteenth century, several mnemonic verses for singing plainchant began to emerge. These mnemonics represent excellent examples of simple concepts that were rarely presented visually in medieval treatises; however, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when these mnemonics continued to be popular, authors began representing them visually – not just in notation, but also in diagrams and tables. Why, then, was this the case? And what might be the reasons for the varying representations in the different sources?

This paper seeks to answer these questions by examining one such mnemonic verse, termed ‘Pri re la’, and discussing how it was visually represented across a range of treatise from the first half of the sixteenth century. Focusing on the choice of visual device (notation, tables, or diagrams), as well as the design of such devices and how these were linguistically framed, this paper ultimately seeks to uncover how varying visual representations of an identical concept might correspond to changing conventions in music pedagogy.

Thomas **Kelly**

‘Numbered Diagrams’ in Late-Antique Greek Mathematical Papyri

The ‘lettered diagram’ is one of the most characteristic features of Greek mathematics (see esp. Netz 1999). Far less attention has been paid to the only type of diagram attested in the ‘direct’ evidence for Greek mathematics from late antiquity, that is, the ‘numbered diagrams’ accompanying geometrical problem texts on Greek papyri (1st-6th centuries CE). These diagrams are preserved without the intermediary copying stages of transmission in the medieval manuscript tradition. My paper examines how these diagrams were used and understood by readers of the papyri which contain them.

Many of the diagrams present interpretive problems, and it is sometimes difficult to see how they can be an accurate representation of the geometrical object with which an individual ‘problem-text’ is concerned (though these ‘mistakes’ can often be instructive – see Roby 2023). However, as I argue in this paper, different scribes used diagrams in different ways, and to different ends. Often, this can be seen in signposting of the diagrams in the problem-texts themselves, and sometimes the result is a relatively sophisticated integration of the diagram into the specific procedure the scribe has chosen to solve a problem. Observing the diagrams closely can allow us to see more clearly how users of these texts thought about the processes they contained. I argue that, given a recurring feature of the diagrams is the deployment of ‘stock’ images of geometrical objects, a key function of the diagram is to emphasise the relationship between the geometrical object and the ‘algorithmic’ processes used to determine facts about it, between the ‘type’ of problem and the ‘type’ of solution. Furthermore, they allow scribes to show how procedures that are worked through with specific numerical values are valid in general, perhaps even allowing us to suggest that these texts together with their diagrams could be understood as ‘proofs’.

Far from being incidental to the framing of the problem, these diagrams were therefore key cognitive tools to allow a scribe and reader alike to visualise and understand the otherwise relatively opaque procedures the papyri contain.

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Christophe **Leblay**, Gilles **Caporossi** and Hakim **Usoof**

What Does Data Visualisation Tell Us About Writing Processes?

The text genetics method is an invaluable tool for understanding digital writing (Leblay & Caporossi, 2015; Caporossi & Leblay, 2011). Emerging from the broader tradition of genetic criticism (critique génétique), which originated in France in the 1970s as a response to the limitations of traditional textual scholarship, text genetics represents a significant shift in focus from static texts to dynamic writing processes (Deppman et al., 2004; Hay, 1996). It allows us to look beyond value judgments and focus on the intrinsic qualities of the written and rewritten text.

The text genetics methodology is not concerned with identifying the optimal text or the most accurately recorded version. Philology, a discipline with roots in classical antiquity and the Renaissance, is traditionally concerned with establishing authoritative texts and often assumes a gradual decline in textual quality over time (Greetham, 1994). Consequently, each subsequent version, from the original, is perceived to have lost some degree of quality. In contrast, the concept of chronological progression enables us to recognise that writing is primarily a process of rewriting, with no inherent loss of quality. This perspective aligns with the modern understanding of writing as a fluid, iterative process, shaped by technological advancements and evolving scholarly practices (Kirschenbaum, 2008; Van Hulle, 2004).

The text genetics approach has two clear objectives: 1) to bring together the material traces of the creative processes; 2) to relate them to each other and to the works to which these processes have generally led. In particular, it aims to order them in a chronological sequence that reflects the stages in the development of the work. They must then be analysed and interpreted as clues to the temporal and spatial development of the genesis of the event. Finally, recurring elements and regularities must be identified, as well as singularities and breaks.

While keystroke logging is an invaluable tool for understanding the writing process, it is extremely challenging for researchers to analyse the resulting log. Over the years, various statistics have been made and various visualisations have been proposed (cf. GIS

representations). Usoof *et al.* (2020) & Leblay *et al*. (Accepted) proposed an alternative visualisation based upon the concept of a mathematical graph, built of nodes (points) and edges (lines) eventually joining pairs of nodes. This structure is ideal for analysing relationships among objects. The objective of data visualisation is to assist researchers in their analysis, enabling them to understand the data and identify patterns. Visualisation is not just drawings of data; it is an analysis tool.

This presentation will show how different visualisations can be used to (re-)construct the evolution of the text from his graph (Becotte et al., 2019). By situating these visualisations within the historical trajectory of text genetics and its evolution from genetic criticism, we aim to highlight their contribution to the ongoing study of digital writing processes.

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Saila **Leskinen**

The Last Sight: Funerary Objects in Early Modern Finnish Prints

A black, heavy textile covers the coffin. The cloth is so large that it is draped and touching the ground. Underneath, wooden legs and long handles peek, giving away the funeral bier.

This was a familiar sight in Early Modern funerals. In upper-class funerals, the coffin was carried inside the church on a bier and left standing next to the pulpit. This was the sight the mourners were watching while listening to the funeral sermon and eulogy. This was the last sight – the last time the deceased was seen on this Earth.

The same sight accompanies words in printed form as well, sometimes on the title page of a funeral sermon, sometimes associated with an epitaph, a song, or a poem. The still life of a coffin, funeral pall and a bier is more than a mere ornament, or a generic death symbol: it represents the deceased individual and their last moment on Earth.

Very few objects of this kind from the 17th century (or earlier) have survived in Finland. In the absence of actual objects, or written descriptions of them, we can take printed images as evidence that they once existed. But can we hold them accurate depictions of real-life objects? Can we trust the details we see in them? Should these images be considered as documents, symbolic or emblematic works of art, or visual ekphrases of the objects they describe?

Marta Luigina **Mangini** and Ludovica **Invernizzi**

Beyond the Text. Notaries' Visual Culture and its Impact on Italian Libri Iurium

In the last 20 years the *Visual Turn* and the subsequent development of the so-called *Visual History* brought a great deal of renewal in History in general as well as in the specific field of Diplomatic Studies, rising new questions on the relation between the different graphic elements composing documents and on their meaning and purpose(s). Moving on from the most recent research lines emerged on this topic, our contribution aims at presenting some considerations on the knowledge and the skills expressed by notaries in interpreting and reworking concepts and ideas by drawing not only on the tools of oral and written communication, but also on that graphic-expressive-artistic culture they participated in. We will deal with many aspects permeating their book-documentary production in the second half of the Middle Ages. In particular, the paper means to focus on the visual devices involved in the production of the "libri iurium", a peculiar category of documentary collections that appeared among Italian municipal writing systems in the late 12th century and kept thriving through the 13th and 14th centuries. These manuscripts were usually conceived by the Communes to gather their most significant documents and they manifest great variety when it comes to both their content and their formal aspects, including the graphic ones such as actual decorative elements (illustrations, incipital letters, marginal *maniculae*), authentication marks (imperial monograms, *signa manuum*, *signa notariorum*), or even the script type chosen for the transcription. Considering the peculiar nature of the "libri iurium", halfway between jurisdictional tools and monumental memorabilia, it is our intention to investigate whether the presence or abscence of certain elements relates to specific communication strategies and to determine the existance of tendencies on a geographical and/or chronological base.

Hanna **Mazheika**

Images of the Dance of Death and the Elizabethan Settlement in England

Using the iconography of the Dance of Death as a case study the paper looks into the changes in common attitudes towards death and dying in Reformation England, and the impact which the Reformation made on visual culture. It argues that the Dance of Death was a much more widespread theme than it has previously been thought. Throughout the fifteenth century the iconography of the *danse macabre* became very popular and spread across the English realm in the forms of wall paintings, misericords, stained window glasses, tapestries, and stained and painted cloths. While the popularity of the genre obviously went into a decline during the Reformation, a new revival of the interest in the genre seems to have been observed with the accession of Mary Tudor and during the reign of Elizabeth I. The images of the Dance of Death featured in printed book illustrations, and the *danse macabre* was a recurrent element in literary works. Elizabethan editions of the Dance of Death prove that a sort of secularisation of attitude towards death and perceptions of death took place. A number of anonymous editions depicting the Dance of Death, published definitely for entertaining purposes, testify that the genre lost its primary religious meaning and was adapted by the laity as a part of national folklore. While having appeared as a Catholic phenomenon, it became a Protestant outlet, capable of resolving social and psychological needs of the population during the Elizabethan Religious Settlement.

Sara **Norja**

Alchemy, the Vernacular, and Text Production in Late Medieval England: Presentation Strategies in Trinity College, Cambridge, MSS O.5.31 and R.14.37

The article studies the strategies that late-medieval scribes used to present alchemical texts to their audience. Investigating two late-fifteenth-century alchemical codices – Trinity College, Cambridge, MSS O.5.31 and R.14.37, both almost exclusively written in English – we demonstrate that the copyists took considerable pains to present reader-friendly texts. They provided neatly separated textual units, furnishing them with headings, manicules (pointing hands), and even a table of contents; this organisation is supported by the use of various ink colours, letter sizes, and framing devices. Indeed, the appearance suggests significant pre-planning, perhaps even in a commercial context. We argue that these manuscripts highlight how readers engaged with alchemical texts and by extension the importance aU’orded to texts and the vernacular as a vehicle for dissemination of alchemical knowledge. In other words, it is not only the number of surviving manuscripts and their alchemical contents that are good indicators of late medieval valuations of alchemy; our study underscores that the visual materiality of the extant textual artefacts also constitutes crucial evidence for our understanding of how practitioners used alchemical texts, the place of alchemical texts in the text production industry of the time, and the status of fifteenth-century alchemy more widely.

Oleksandr **Okhrimenko**

(Un)read books: a Case Study of Guido Bonatti's *Decem Tractatus Astronomiae* (Augsburg, 1491)

The study is dedicated to Guido Bonatti's *Decem Tractatus Astronomiae* copies (1491 Augsburg edition) from Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine (two copies from different sources) and Linda Hall Library (one copy and e-version) in three aspects. Firstly, how the editor and printer – Johannes Engel and Erhard Ratdolt – solved the problem of astronomical illustrations in early printing by comparing the 1491 edition with other astronomy editions and 15-century manuscripts. Secondly, I want to describe the books (three researched copies and other examples from the MEI database) as objects for the owners and readers of early modern times – how they collected them, read and unread. Thirdly, I will present those copies as reader experiences in two dimensions – late medieval physical and electronic today's versions. I intend to show the book as an object of interaction – via study bindings/e-links, a system of navigation inside the book (and e-version of it), text and image, and reading signs (of historical readers and today's e-readers). In general, in this case study of one edition but different physical and electronic forms, I see the same object in several contexts and have in mind to demonstrate the interaction with a book as a specific experience.

Matti **Peikola**, Sirkku **Ruokkeinen**, Mari-Liisa **Varila**, Aino **Liira**, Jan **Korpelainen**, Teea **Lintula** and Otso **Norblad**

Quantifying Early Modern English Graphic Devices

The Early Modern Graphic Literacies (EModGraL) project at the University of Turku examines the use and contextualisation of graphic devices in English printed books from the late 15th to the mid-18th century. This paper presents quantitative findings from the project, based on a dataset collected from the Early English Books Online (EEBO) and Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) databases. The classification of the graphic devices follows the principles outlined in Ruokkeinen et al. (2024), consisting of three main types of device (general image, diagram, table) with subtypes. For the 15th through 17th centuries, the analysed books comprise all material in English in EEBO for the years c1473–1500 (all incunabula), 1521, 1546, 1571, 1596, 1621, 1646, 1671 and 1696 (4,346 books altogether). For the 18th century, a representative sample from ECCO of altogether 1,180 books published in 1721 and 1746 was analysed.

A manual scrutiny of the digital facsimiles of these 5,526 books yielded over 40,000 graphic devices. In addition to discussing the absolute and relative frequencies of different types of graphic device across and within the sampled years, the paper reports results from a mixed model analysis conducted on the dataset. The variables whose effect on the distribution of the graphic devices were statistically tested in the analysis included the year of publication and the subject field (domain) of the book, both individually and as a combined effect, the bibliographic format of the book, as well as the layout of the facsimile image sets in EEBO and ECCO. The image layout variable was included to alert us about possible effects ensuing from differences between the basic units analysed in the two databases (either one page or an opening of the book).

The results indicate that domain, the combined effect of domain and year of publication, and format were all statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$) for the distribution of a large majority of the ten device subtypes examined in the study (9, 8 and 8 device subtypes of 10 respectively), while publication year alone showed clearly less overall significance across the subtypes (3 of 10). Image layout was statistically significant only for one device subtype, which shows that the difference in the analysed basic units between EEBO and

ECCO did not have a major effect in the analysis. In our paper, we interpret these findings in the context of British book history (e.g. scholarship reported in The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, vols. III–V) and previous research on graphic devices in Early Modern England (e.g. Acheson 2013; Peikola, Tyrkkö and Varila eds 2025). Our discussion also recognises potential caveats concerning the use of EEBO and ECCO for quantitative research in book history (e.g. Tolonen, Mäkelä and Lahti 2022).

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Lidia **Pivovarova** and Mikko **Tolonen**

Data-Driven Analysis of Graphical Devices in Eighteenth Century British Books

Illustrations and ornaments in early modern books were often reused, rather than produced specifically for a given book. Image reuse included printing multiple copies from the same woodblock, carving slightly different versions of the same image or simply using a shared motive. The question of intentionality is central for understanding image reuse: selection of certain ornaments for a book was neither a completely free choice of the publisher nor a random pick of the printer. Rather, it was a complex interweaving of motives related to the book content, desire to preserve the publisher's style and practical considerations. While previous studies firmly associated certain images with specific publishers, we approach the question of intentionality with an agnostic data-driven approach. To that end, we scrape all images from the Eighteenth Century Collection Online and group them automatically, using the most recent machine learning techniques. This allows us to find large clusters of duplicates and semi-duplicates, up to several hundred instances of the same image. We then combine these results with metadata, which reveals complex patterns of image circulation over time and space. In particular, we study circulation of headpieces associated with the prominent Tonson-Watts publishing enterprise. Our analysis reveals complex ownership dynamics of publishing tools, as not all Tonson-Watts ornaments remained in Watts' stock after the death of Jacob Tonson Jr.'s in 1735. At the same time, we found many cases of similarity between headpieces from books printed by Tonson in London and from their reprints in Dublin, which hints to deliberate attempts to preserve the publisher style between different cities.

We advocate for further extension of this approach for other graphical materials, as it is a fruitful way to study complex printing practices in the past.

Robert B. **Riter**

Reading Visual Devices as Evidence and Information: Early Bibliographic Investigations

In this paper I provide an analysis of how printers' devices, ornaments, and decorative visual elements (including borders) appearing in early printed books came to be recognized as bibliographic expressions meriting study, and the associated development of analytical frameworks for reading, analyzing, and categorizing these visual devices. Emphasis is placed on examining the analytical contributions of bibliographers, including R. B. McKerrow, A. W. Pollard, and W. W. Greg, and their development conceptions of visual devices as bibliographic evidence. Attention is given to placing this activity within the context of early 20th century bibliographic scholarship, demonstrating how individual and communal bibliographic values informed early evaluations of these printed expressions as evidence.

This research is situated in the fields of history of bibliography and the history of scholarship. Here, I provide a history of how bibliographers related to the printers' devices, ornaments, and decorative elements, offering an object biography and intellectual history. For visual devices to be studied as bibliographic evidence or as independent printed expressions, they first had to be valued as elements meriting bibliographic, historical, and/or artistic attention, and assigned evidential and information value. In this paper I offer a discussion of this activity.

Hanna **Salmi**

Paths on the Dance Floor: Representing Movement in Space in Early Dance Manuals

During the Renaissance, dance became fashionable across Europe, and this popularity was reflected in the publication of numerous dance manuals and treatises. However, dance is obviously a challenging phenomenon to present through the print format. Various approaches were developed. McGowan notes that in Italian treatises, instructions consisted of “extended discussion and demonstration”, while in Northern Europe, “signs and alphabetical shorthand" were preferred (2008: 37). Later, geometrical patterns were added to this repertoire of options (ibid.).

In this paper, I will focus on the specific issue of representing movement in relation to the room. This can be achieved by entirely verbal means (*left, right, up, down* etc.), by using various types of diagrammatic approaches, or later by using dance notation. Most of the diagrammatic approaches are based on the notion of seeing the room from above. I will examine an extensive selection of European dance manuals from the early modern period, accessed through the Library of Dance online collection. The site contains 2,123 downloadable sources in total. My aim is twofold: 1) to provide quantitative data on the number of manuals choosing each of the options mentioned above, and 2) to carry out a more detailed qualitative analysis of variation within the visual approaches.

This broad overview will shed light on emerging practices and conventions regarding graphic devices in dance manuals and treatises of the early modern period.

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Jessica L. **Savage**

Star Shapes and Fabled Skies: Reading the Iconography of Constellation Diagrams in Early Books with Global Medieval Context

Astronomical texts often contain diagrammatic representations of celestial bodies which organized the components of a vast universe into graphic devices for early readers. In the Middle Ages, constellation diagrams were frequently represented in treatises, such as Cicero's *Aratea*, and the *Liber Astrologiae*, to illustrate astrological systems, including those from Persian, Indian, and Greek *sphaera*. As Latin translations of these texts spread, primarily from Greek and Roman worlds to the early medieval West, a revived interest in constellation images and their meaning is evidenced in the use of *carmen figuratum*, or shaped verse, to portray mythological figures and animals in early medieval books.

These verbal-visual poems, which formed the outlines of mythical figures through text and image, held significant emblematic weight for readers. Their personified celestial bodies, which were laid over a star network, conveyed otherworldly knowledge about the actions and circumstances of life. Moreover, the visual forms attached to these figures, such as Pegasus, Pisces, Cetus, and Andromeda, were far-reaching in medieval thought and belief. Along with zodiac and bestiary sources, constellation figures inspired a rich iconographic tradition, indelibly linking figures with their legendary attributes (i.e. Perseus and the harpoon). By the twelfth century, Arabic scholarship, which preserved classical knowledge in astronomy and astrology, held a growing influence over western thought. Within this context of a globally diverse medieval history, this paper will explore the arc of constellation art in the Middle Ages. As a basis, the graphic visual devices of *carmen figuratum* depicting constellations in early medieval manuscripts provides the means to read their multivalent meaning. The astrological signs in these diagrams were the product of distinct cross-cultural interaction and held a worldly iconographic heritage that dynamically converged on the pages of these early books.

Ray **Schrire**

Seeing Patterns: A History of Cognitive Transfer from Humanism to Science

Early members of the Royal Society, along with their wide networks of informants, mastered the historically rare cognitive expertise of thinking with tables—why? This essay traces the visualization techniques used by seventeenth-century natural historians back to the unlikely environment of the humanistic grammar school. The talk first adopts a *longue durée* perspective, examining the evolution of grammatical tables from antiquity through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance. Then, focusing on seventeenth-century England, it examines grammar books in conjunction with scientific manuscripts, revealing how the visual demands placed on early modern schoolboys later influenced their ability to handle new tasks, such as recording observations and identifying patterns in the natural world. Taken together, this paper argues that the use of grammatical tables is a case of cognitive transfer—the ability to apply techniques learned in one domain to another—and highlights the far-reaching implications of major, yet unnoticed, aspects of "old humanist learning" for the "New Science."

Janne **Skaffari**

Pronouns on the Page

The personal pronouns of English are high-frequency words exhibiting multiple features which other noun phrases no longer carry in Present-Day English (e.g. gender, accusative case). They thus merit a great deal of attention in any grammar of English. Moreover, pronouns have undergone unusual changes: Middle English saw *they, them, their* and *she* replace their Old English counterparts; in Early Modern English, the patterns of using *thou*, *ye* and *you* altered quickly; and today, *they* is increasingly used as a 3rd person singular pronoun.

The proposed presentation aims to explore the description of personal pronouns in grammars of English from Bullokar to Biber. Informed by the Pragmatics on the Page and Early Modern Graphic Literacies approaches (e.g. Carroll *et al*. 2013, Ruokkeinen *et al*. 2024), the talk will address the graphic presentation of the pronouns in a range of grammar books from six centuries. Discussions of personal pronouns (and verbs) were often supported in grammars by tables and the like (Skaffari & Tyrkkö *forthcoming*). In addition to Early and Late Modern English material, other grammars will also be consulted for more evidence of the development of pronoun system visualisation.

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Marta **Szada**

The Visual Representation of Time and Space in the *Chronographia Scaligeriana* (Parisinus Latinus 4884)

The late 8th-century manuscript *Parisinus latinus* 4884, housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, is the only known copy of a Latin translation of a Greek chronographical compilation, the original of which is not extant. This manuscript was discovered by Joseph Scaliger and is therefore often referred to as the *Barbarus Scaligeri*. For a long time, it was relatively neglected by scholars until R.W. Burgess (2013) illuminated several complex issues regarding its dating and content.

However, what calls for further analysis is the visual representation of information in the text. The translation was intended to be illustrated, as evidenced by blank spaces left between sections of the text, with some of the planned illustrations discernible through copied captions and comparisons to extant manuscripts of similar content. Although it is possible to hypothesize to some extent about the themes and sources of these planned illustrations (e.g. Kessler 2008)—since some blanks are accompanied by captions and parallels exist with illustrated chronicles from Late Antiquity—in this paper, I will focus primarily on what is actually visible: how the scribe planned the layout of the pages in preparation for images, and what kind of interactions between the main text, captions, and illustrations he may have envisioned.

A second question concerns the visual presentation of the text itself, as the scribe employed various devices such as columns, indentations, numbering, and frames. These devices not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the words and letters—especially when repeated phrases are spatially arranged for visual effect—but also guide the reader's interpretation of the genealogical, chronological, and geographical content of the compilation.

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Tiina **Tuominiemi**

The Vignette of *Le Petit Poucet* by Charles Perrault (1697)

The last tale in Perrault's famous collection of fairy tales, *Histoire ou Contes du temps passé. Avec des Moralitez* (1697), is *Le Petit Poucet*. It is a story about a feeble little boy who defeats a giant and saves all his family by relying only on his wits and good sense. In the auctorial edition the tale is accompanied by a vignette showing a little man taking the boots off a sleeping giant. These boots, as Perrault tells us, are known to have the capacity to grow larger or smaller to adjust to the person wearing them. The theft of the boots depicts an exciting moment in the tale, but it also echoes an interesting anecdote that Montaigne tells of antique orators in his *Essais*. Even in the face of clear evidence, the orator's skill is revealed through his capacity to convince his audience of the contrary. As an educated man who took particular interest in literature, Perrault would have known his Montaigne just as well as the antique authors and orators Montaigne refers to.

My presentation focuses on explaining the relationship of the vignette to Perrault's text using the notion of *transtextuality* by Genette (1982), developed further by Adam & Heidmann (2009). At the overture of the tale, the vignette guides the reader to pay special attention to the scene it evokes and suggests that it has a key role in the interpretation of the tale. I claim that as a *peritextual element*, the vignette in *Le Petit Poucet* is also an *intertextual device* that resets the scene of what first appears to be a children's or a folk tale to the literary and social realities of the French 17th century where the capacity to master words was essential to anyone wishing to succeed.

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Mari-Liisa **Varila**, Sirkku **Ruokkeinen**, Aino **Liira**, Otso **Norblad** and Matti **Peikola**

Developing a Classification Model for Graphic Devices in Early Printed Books

In early modern books, information was transmitted not only verbally but also visually, for instance through graphic devices such as images, diagrams, and tables. Previous models of graphic representation typically either focus on present-day materials or chart the development of individual devices or device types, for instance the pie chart or tree diagram. However, a comprehensive historical taxonomy of graphic devices is useful for tracing the overall patterns of visual communication in the early modern period. In this paper, we present the Early Modern Graphic Literacies project's classification model for graphic devices in early English print, drafted on the basis of a literature review of previous taxonomies of visual communication and further developed through our survey of early English printed books from 1473–1700. We also discuss some of the problems of building a taxonomy of devices suitable for diachronic research.

Andrea **van Leerdam**

Early Modern Eye-Tracking: Rubricated Images in Early Printed Books

Rubrication is a pervasive visual device in early printed books that is still too often considered as mere decoration. In addition to *textual* rubrication, which had been common in manuscripts for centuries, *graphic* rubrication – printed images with manually added red accents – can be found in dozens of volumes from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As a preliminary and non-systematic survey reveals, such rubricated woodcuts occur across a range of genres, including works of medicine, natural philosophy, devotion, and history. However, the appearances and meanings of this phenomenon have been investigated even less than is the case for textual rubrication.

Building on Margaret M. Smith's approach of rubrication as 'textual articulation' rather than decoration, this paper explores to what extent rubricated images can be considered a means of *visual* articulation. The relevance for the study of graphic literacies is twofold. In the first place, rubrication in images – applied by a professional rubricator or, seemingly often, by a reader – offers a rare opportunity to track what caught the eyes of early modern readers/viewers. Thus, it helps us understand how contemporaries approached and interpreted printed visual devices such as illustrations and decorative borders. Secondly, it sheds new light on rubrication as a visual device of its own: what was rubricated, why, and how? Whereas the practice of rubricating texts more or less died out by the 1520s, the rubrication of images seems to have remained conventional for several more decades.

This paper surveys rubricated images across a wide selection of volumes, mostly from the Low Countries and the German lands, and identifies some striking patterns in the iconographic elements that were accentuated in red. Moreover, the paper raises fundamental, methodological questions about what these red stripes and dots tell us about readers' perceptions of and interactions with illustrated books.

Diana **Wallis**

The Heptarchy Diagrams of Matthew Paris - the Creation of a Persistent Visual Historical Narrative

This paper will present the unique visual nature of the so-called Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy diagrams of Matthew Parris (1200 – 1259) as a specific form of historical diagram which was used to convey a founding narrative of the English realm from seven disparate kingdoms. The Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy is a visual narrative that has remained persistent to the present day as it transformed, over the centuries, from the original diagrams into a more obvious map format of historical geography.

Specifically, these diagrams have previously received little attention, either having been seen as an integral part of Parris' genealogical rolls or appearing placed together with other materials, particularly maps, designated as 'prefatory' within his main written chronicles. In fact, it will be argued that these diagrams are themselves an important and unique visual device. The Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy image engages the viewer on several levels, presenting both a historical story and a spatial representation of England, thus managing to convey a resilient image of a national founding narrative one that, despite its questionable historical accuracy, has remained persistent to this day.

The paper will situate the Heptarchy diagrams within the tradition of Peter of Poitiers compendium format but being the first to take this tradition into a secular historical dimension as per De Laborderie.[1] Further constructing what Worm recently designates as a 'historiogram'; building on both these approaches which neither writer applies directly nor specifically to the Heptarchy diagrams.[2] In turn following through the development of the diagrams into an historical map as tracked by Goffart and Hiatt.[3] Finally bringing these elements together to demonstrate a very persistent visual image of a national foundation narrative.

[1]*Olivier de Laborderie, Histoire, memoire et pouvoir. (Paris, France – in French: Garnier, 2013)*

[2]*Andrea Worm, Geschichte und Weltordnung. (Berlin, Germany – in German, Deutscher Verlag fur Kuntswissenschaft, 2021).*

[3]*Walter Goffart, "The First Venture into 'Medieval Geography': Lambarde's Map of the Saxon Heptarchy (1568)," in Alfred the Wise, ed. Jane Roberts & Janet L. Nelson with Malcolm Godden (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 60.*

Alfred Hiatt, "Topographies of the Past": The Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy and the Birth of Historical Geography," in Orbis disciplinae, hommages en l'honneur de Patrick Gautier Dalche, ed. Nathalie Bouloux and Anca Dan (Tourhout: Brepols, 2017), 701

Malcolm **White**

Towards a Fuller Understanding of the Role of Catch-Words in Some Late Medieval Manuscripts

The margins of manuscripts are an important subject of enquiry in philological scholarship. Although catch-words are an extremely familiar feature in the margins of the medieval codex, there is almost nothing in the way of sustained attention exploring how they were used, framed and understood. What there is narrowly defines catch-words as exclusively for the attention of the producers of manuscripts, and as serving solely pragmatic purposes (correct compilation and binding).

However, in this paper I challenge this perspective by studying some decorated catch-words from *Wycliffite Bible* manuscripts. I argue that their combination of text and image, use of colour, scale and page-positioning shows that these catch-words were graphic devices designed to be consumed by the readers and owners of manuscripts. Today, we worry about the reliability of the information we receive, especially from social media and the Internet. For a medieval reader, it is likely that questions about the reliability of a text could be just as pressing, especially if the text in question was important or contentious, like the *Wycliffite Bible.* I propose that the reason that scribes and decorators took such trouble to decorate their catch-words was to ensure that the technology that determined correct order was seen, by readers and owners, to guarantee it.

As part of an on-going research project, I am able to situate these *Wycliffite Bible* catch-words in the wider frame of reference of a large sample of catch-words from different genres of late medieval manuscripts made in England. In this context, these catch-words were not complete outliers. However, they were executed with more dynamism, vibrancy and consistency than others, which may reflect the high stakes of the first translation of the Bible into English.