

## Script-Image-Language in Early Modern Humanism (online/Hamburg, 22–23 Mar 23)

online/University of Hamburg, Mar 22–23, 2023

Katharine Stahlbuhk

The prevailing image of the ‚humanists‘ is mostly derived from their activity as scholars, writers, poets and rhetoricians, that is: the study and writing texts closely tied to ‚language‘ in a broad, but supposedly dematerialised sense. But in fact the book or manuscript was around 1400 – as a new cultural elite established itself by deliberately staging

the dawn of a new era – not just a medium by which the humanists disseminated their substantive work. Rather, as an aesthetic artefact, it was explicitly central to their material and visual interests. Time and again, script, image and materiality went hand in hand, so that their aesthetics and historicization became themselves bearers of meaning.

This can be seen, among other things, in the invention of the humanist minuscule by Niccoli and Poggio Bracciolini, which opened new possibilities for the translation of rhetorical concepts into visual effects through the layout of the page. This epistemological dimension of humanist book design provides the starting point for an analysis of the broader material sources of their work. For the growing art and coin collections as well as libraries were thinking spaces (Denkräume) for the studia humanitatis, in which the comparative reception of historical writings and artefacts occurred together, side by side. Furthermore, ancient statues and monuments with their epigraphy could be studied in the public spaces, as illustrated by Poggios' (lost) Sylloge, a collection of ancient inscriptions, often with political connotations. At the same time, the likes of Ghiberti and Donatello were modernizing the use of Capitalis in bronze and marble inscriptions in their sculptural workshops. Visual markers of enthusiasm for and the reception of antiquity thus appeared beyond the boundaries of the book in works of visual art as well as in the staging of script and inscriptions in the urban space.

It is on this intersection of word and script, of content and form, of figurative language and iconicity of script that we want to focus, thus shedding light on the close connections between the studia humanitatis, the collecting of ancient artefacts and books, and the emergence of a material and visual culture of humanism.

Participation via Zoom. Please register via email to: [philippa.sissis@gmail.com](mailto:philippa.sissis@gmail.com).

Concept and Scientific Organisation:

Claudia Jentzsch

Universität Hamburg /Universität der Künste Berlin,

[c.jentzsch@udk-berlin.de](mailto:c.jentzsch@udk-berlin.de)

Philippa Sissis

Universität Hamburg /Universität Kassel  
philippa.sissis@gmail.com

Katharine Stahlbuhk  
Villa I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian  
Renaissance Studies, Florence  
katharine.stahlbuhk@gmail.com

#### WORKSHOP PROGRAM:

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

10 – 10.30 Introduction

#### Session 1 – Paratext I

Chair: Fabian Jonietz

10.30 – 11.00 Caterina Furlan, TU Dresden / Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa  
Holbein in the Print Shop of Johannes Froben. Illustrated Title Pages and the Role of the Visual  
Language in a Humanistic Publishing House.

11.00 – 11.30 Maike Priesterjahn, Humboldt-Universität Berlin  
What the Badius Book Press reveals

11.30 – 11.45 Break

#### Session 2 – Paratext II

Chair: Wolf-Dietrich Löhr

11.45 – 12.15 Paolo Celi, Villa I Tatti, Florenz  
Paper Cemeteries. Inscriptions and Typographic Devices in Vasari's Vite  
12.15 – 12.45 Elisabetta Scirocco, Bibliotheca Hertziana – MPI für Kunstgeschichte, Rom  
New Scripts on Old Tombs. The Aesthetics of the Palimpsest-Tomb in Renaissance Naples  
12.45 – 13.15 Antonina Tetzlaff, Universität Hamburg / Universität Bochum  
A Burial Underneath the "Open Devotional Book"? Image and Script in the  
Brixen Cathedral Cloisters  
13.15 – 14.15 Lunch break

#### Session 3 – Maps and Script

Chair: Angelo Cattaneo

14.15 – 14.45 Anna Perrault, Department of Art History Université de Montréal  
Totius Graecia Descriptio: Hellenism and Humanism in the 16th Century through a Map by  
Nikolaos Sophianos. A Case Study  
14.45 – 15.15 Beatrice Blümer, Universität Kassel / Deutsches Historisches Institut in  
Rom  
Humanistic Thinking in Spaces in a Manuscript: The Material and Visual Reception of the Liber  
insularum Archipelagi

#### Session 4 – Script and the Courts

15.15 – 15.45 Carmen Rob Santer, Universität Wien  
Der Bücher Schmuck und Reiz der Buchstaben als Angel und Köder für die

literarische Erziehung. Wien um 1450 als früher Angelpunkt eines humanistischen (Form-)Diskurses nördlich der Alpen

16.00 – 16.30 Closing discussion

Thursday, March 23, 2023

10.15 – 10.30 Reception / Intro

Session 4 – Script and the Courts

Chair: Paola Molino

10.30 – 11.00 Daniel Luger, Universität Wien

On the Diffusion of Humanism North of the Alps from a Paleographic-Epigraphical Perspective: Manuscripts, Charters and Inscriptions at the Court of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III (1440-1493)

11.00 – 11.30 Fabio Marcelli, Università degli Studi di Perugia

Linguaggio, scrittura e immagine nella corte urbinata di Federico e Ottavino

11.30 – 13.00 lunch break

Session 5 – Signs, Script and Notes

Chair: Brian Maxson

13.00 – 13.30 Gregor Meinecke, Universität Hamburg

Between Script, Image, and Language: Dante's Name of God

13.30 – 14.00 Giacomo Pirani, Università di Pavia

Diligenter aspice! Visual Didactics in Johannes Gallicus' Music Treatise Ritus canendi

14.00 – 14.15 Break

Session 6 – Libraries and Conception

Chair: Barry Torch

14.15 – 14.45 Konstantinos Gravanis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

A Pictorial Method of Concept Mapping and Knowledge Communication in the Private Library of Julius II

14.45 – 15.15 Ioanna Georgiou, Universität Bern

Reading In A Labyrinth? Sigmund Gossembrot's (1417–1493) Early Humanistic Library And The Drawings In His Manuscripts

15.15 – 15.45 Justin P. Meyer, Washington University in St. Louis

Memorialization through the Material Past: German Humanist Conceptions and Use of Antiquities

15.45 – 16.00 Break

16.00 Final discussion

Reference:

CONF: Script-Image-Language in Early Modern Humanism (online/Hamburg, 22-23 Mar 23). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 12, 2023 (accessed Jul 6, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38719>>.