

A Century of Cataloguing Illuminated Manuscripts in Vienna*

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Historical Background and Library History

With reference to historical holdings in general and manuscripts in particular, the Austrian National Library is one of the world's leading libraries. The importance of these treasures does not correspond with the 80,000 km² of territory of a republic created by the treaty of Saint Germain in 1919.

After World War I the inhabitants neither considered themselves Austrians nor had they a unifying culture. Instead, they regarded themselves, on the one hand, as part of the German-speaking culture, and, on the other, as Styrians, Tyroleans, Carinthians etc. Each of these crown lands ("Kronländer") had strong historical roots of identification reaching back to the middle ages. Additionally there was a supranational identification which centred on the tradition of the Habsburg monarchy intensively connected with Vienna as residential city.

This function as the centre of a monarchic empire is the basis of the library and its treasures. As a princely library some of its holdings go back to the 14th century property of the Austrian dukes, who were Habsburgs since 1282. The first milestone towards a collection was due to Frederick III (1415–1493), who merged his own holdings with those of his Luxemburg predecessors as king and emperor (Wenceslaus and Sigismund). A library with librarians and indexing began to evolve in the second half of the 16th century.

The holdings of the princely library were limited to high-end volumes (in terms of artistic decoration) and – due to the influence of humanism – to works of philological and historical interest. It was not until the 18th century that vast quantities of books of monastic and other provenances flooded the library, which then began to strive for encyclopaedic comprehensiveness. These developments owed their intellectual impetus to the tendencies of enlightenment, and thus the scholarly work with the holdings became one of the most distinguished tasks of the staff of the "Hofbibliothek".

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Scientific Basis and the Wickhoff Series

History of Art is a young science which became emancipated from the “Historische Hilfswissenschaften” (historical auxiliary sciences) such as palaeography, sigillography, etc. only during the second half of the 19th century. Therefore only then can we expect the library to focus on the decoration of its holdings in a scientific way (which must be clearly distinguished from a purely bibliophile approach).

The cataloguing of illuminated manuscripts was not due to efforts of the “Hofbibliothek” or of any other library, but grew from historical research conducted at the “Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung”¹, founded in 1854. Additionally, the indexing of monuments of different regions, which was organised by the “K.K. Zentralkommission für die Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und historischen Denkmale”², founded in 1850, must be regarded as influential, even though not mentioned by Wickhoff (see below).

Consequently, the series initiated by Franz Wickhoff (1853–1909) was not limited to one library, but tried to cumulate illuminated manuscripts from all collections of specific “Kronländer” of the Austrian part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. A formal scheme of description was developed and the series was named “Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Österreich” (Descriptive Index of Illuminated Manuscripts in Austria). The first volume was published in 1905³, but preparatory efforts reach back to about a decade before.

In his short preface Wickhoff stresses the unique importance of the systematic collection of historical sources for all joined (historical) disciplines, thus presenting this new series as a contribution to the development of art history in the direction of a method-based science.

Wie es in den historischen Wissenschaften notwendig ist, das Material an Quellen systematisch und gesammelt zu veröffentlichen, so wird es auch auf die Behandlung der Kunstgeschichte fördernd einwirken, wenn das Material für einzelne Zweige so viel als möglich vollständig bekannt gemacht wird⁴.

¹ The name changed in the course of the decades. The name cited was used until 1923 and from 1945 onwards. From 1923 to 1942 the famous institute was named “Österreichisches Institut für Geschichtsforschung”, then from 1942 to 1945 “Institut für Geschichtsforschung und Archivwissenschaften”.

² This name was used from 1873 until 1910. From 1850 to 1873 the institution was called “Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale”.

³ Hermann Julius Hermann, *Die illuminierten Handschriften in Tirol (Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Österreich 1*, ed. Franz Wickhoff). Leipzig 1905. For a full bibliographical reference to all catalogues of illuminated manuscripts see <http://paecht-archiv.univie.ac.at/dateien/kat-illum.html>.

⁴ Hermann, Tirol (cf. note 3), p. VII.

In the same way as it is necessary in historical sciences to publish the source material systematically and collectively, it will also promote the history of art if the material for the different branches is presented as completely as possible.

He then argues why a new “edition” of artistic sources is necessary: above all, Wickhoff underlines that many libraries are in remote places and difficult to reach. But even major libraries have not hitherto sufficiently succeeded in including the decoration of books within their catalogues. Therefore this new series has an important task to fulfil.

When Wickhoff wrote this preface, ground-breaking and extensive studies dealing with illuminated manuscripts had already been published, for example his own study on the Vienna Genesis (1895)⁵ or the fundamental article about the manuscripts of King Wenceslaus by his student Julius von Schlosser, presented in 1893⁶. Wickhoff was aware that studies of this kind and his project of indexing vast quantities of illuminated manuscripts were two completely different things. Thus he wrote:

Die vorliegende Arbeit ... hat nicht den Zweck, das Material wissenschaftlich zu erschöpfen, sondern sie soll in ihrer knappen Fassung die Fachgenossen mit dem Material bekannt machen.⁷

The present work does not aim at an exhaustive scholarly treatment of the matter but is meant as a concise way of familiarising the scientific community with the material.

After the presentation of the volume dealing with the Tyrol (1905) compiled by Hermann Julius Hermann (cf. note 3) within the same year, the manuscripts in the province of Salzburg were published⁸. This volume and the one about Carinthia⁹ – both announced by Wickhoff in his preface – appeared in quick sequence, whereas the work on the holdings in Bohemia, said by Wickhoff to have been completed in major parts, was never published. Wickhoff also refers to the “überreichen Besitzes des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses an kostbaren, illuminierten Handschriften” (abundant holdings of precious illuminated manuscripts of the Most High Imperial House), whose description he considers “zum grössten Teil durchgeführt” (accomplished in major parts)¹⁰. As we are still working hard to perform this task one century later, Wickhoff’s appraisal must be considered somewhat over-optimistic. On the other hand, the quick progress of respective volumes after World War I testifies to the substantial research

⁵ Wilhelm von Hartel, Franz Wickhoff, *Die Wiener Genesis*, Beilage zum *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*. Wien 1893 und 1895 (reprint Graz 1970).

⁶ Julius von Schlosser, *Bilderhandschriften Königs Wenzel I.*, in: *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 14 (1893), 214–317 (several reprints).

⁷ Hermann, Tirol (cf. note 3), p. VII.

⁸ Hans Tietze, *Die illuminierten Handschriften in Salzburg (Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Österreich 2*, ed. Franz Wickhoff). Leipzig 1905.

⁹ Robert Eisler, *Die illuminierten Handschriften in Kärnten (Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Österreich 3*, ed. Franz Wickhoff). Leipzig 1907.

¹⁰ Hermann, Tirol (cf. note 3), p. VII.

performed by Hermann Julius Hermann – then the leading figure of the second series – who was in charge of the Vienna holdings from the very beginning.

Until 1917, a total of seven volumes were issued, comprising 1,342 manuscripts, whose descriptions fill over 1,300 pages accompanied by over 1,000 illustrations¹¹.

Still, impressive figures do not guarantee forward-looking methods and ideas¹². The basic hint why this project became so important lies in the title “Beschreibendes Verzeichnis” (Descriptive Index). Index refers to the clearly structured scheme, which allows the reader to find information in consistent sequence¹³: starting with a consecutive number within the volume, the library’s shelf mark, a title describing the contents, codicological information, characterisation of script, an abstract giving the number and the different types of decoration, and finally binding. A second paragraph contains localisation and date and – if known – further details about scribe, illuminator and provenance. The following part is descriptive, enumerating the decoration from beginning to end and often including also information about elements of content when connected to the decoration or important for the classification.

“Nur einige besonders hervorragende Codices sind etwas ausführlicher beschrieben.”¹⁴ (Only some especially prominent manuscripts are described in greater detail.) This last sentence of Hermann’s characterisation of his scheme is a bit unclear: it does not refer to a more extensive “description” but to Hermann beginning his description in these cases with an art historical argument scientifically documenting his classification.

The Tyrol volume contains the holdings of various institutions which, since inhomogeneous in size, have been arranged by library shelf numbers. Needless to say, the material thus arranged is not in coherent order – neither in terms of date nor of origin. This shortcoming was eliminated with the fourth volume which describes the vast holdings of two monastic libraries in Styria¹⁵. Paul Buberl, the author responsible, argues that the relationship between the manuscripts of the scriptoria would not be obvious at all if the material were arranged by size (the usual criterion for the sequence of shelf marks). Therefore he introduced an arrangement by local schools and, within these groups, a chronological and stylistic order. Whether this substantial methodological development was approved of by Wickhoff, who died in 1907, is not mentioned in Buberl’s preface.

¹¹ Complete bibliographical reference: <http://paecht-archiv.univie.ac.at/dateien/kat-illum.html>.

¹² We are confronted with the very same problem today considering the evaluation of projects aiming to digitise historical material. I am convinced that gigantic figures of digitised pages are no proof that there is any convincing idea behind the project.

¹³ Hermann, Tirol (cf. note 3), p. IX–X.

¹⁴ Hermann, Tirol (cf. note 3), p. X.

¹⁵ Paul Buberl, *Die illuminierten Handschriften in Steiermark 1: Die Stiftsbibliotheken zu Admont und Vorau (Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Österreich 4/1, ed. Max Dvořák)*. Leipzig 1911.

This scheme became the most influential reference for other institutions which planned to publish catalogues of illuminated manuscripts. Catalogues in Athens¹⁶, Basel¹⁷, Berlin¹⁸, Frankfurt¹⁹ and Heidelberg²⁰ were structured quite similarly. A late but noteworthy fruit of this scheme is Zofia Ameisenowa's catalogue of 1958²¹.

But was the idea for the catalogue really new? Wickhoff does not mention any older publication he considered as source of reference. Nevertheless, there are noteworthy older examples²², but the clear structure of the Viennese indexes has no obvious predecessors.

“Miraculous” Restart in Vienna – The Hermann Julius Hermann Series

In 1905 Franz Wickhoff optimistically announced in his preface to the first volume of his series that further material had been surveyed – including the rich holdings of the “Hofbibliothek” in Vienna – and would be published. The dissolution of the Habsburg Empire and the creation of a republic nobody identified with would have made it the most plausible scenario for such an ambiguous project not to be realised.

However, and this is one of the most astonishing accomplishments, a new sub-series of the “Beschreibendes Verzeichnis” was initiated by Julius Schlosser and Hermann Julius Hermann concentrating on the holdings of the former Hofbibliothek:

¹⁶ Paul Buberl, *Die Miniaturenhandschriften in Athen (Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Denkschriften 60)*. Wien 1917. Buberl was part of the team of the “Beschreibendes Verzeichnis” (cf. note 15).

¹⁷ Konrad Escher, *Die Miniaturen in den Baseler Bibliotheken, Museen und Archiven*. Basel 1917. Escher refers directly to the Viennese model (p. IX).

¹⁸ Joachim Kirchner, *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Miniaturen und des Initialschmucks in den Philipps-Handschriften (Beschreibende Verzeichnisse der Miniaturen-Handschriften der Preussischen Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin 1)*. Leipzig 1926. Direct reference is evident from the title and mentioned in the preface. Further catalogues were issued following the same scheme.

¹⁹ Rosy Schilling, *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Einzelminiaturen des Mittelalters und der Renaissance in Frankfurter Besitz*. Frankfurt/Main 1929. The reference to Vienna is on page XIII; despite the quotation Schilling significantly refined the scheme.

²⁰ Hans Wegener, *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der deutschen Bilder-Handschriften des späten Mittelalters in der Heidelberger Universitäts-Bibliothek*. Leipzig 1927. Wegener explains that the older manuscripts have already been described by A(dolf) von Oechelhaeuser, *Die Miniaturen der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Heidelberg 1*. Heidelberg 1887. But reviewing this publication we detect a continuous text without structure which cannot be compared to the modern indexes of the Viennese type.

²¹ Zofia Ameisenowa, *Rękopisy i pierwodruki iluminowane Biblioteki Jagiello'nskiej*. Wrocław Kraków 1958.

²² An important role is played by Édouard Fleury, *Les manuscrits à miniatures de la bibliothèque de Laon (...)*, 2 Vols. Laon 1863, which was one of the first trial balloons of an art historian's approach to manuscript cataloguing. An even earlier example, Achille Durieux, *Les miniatures des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Cambrai avec catalogue des Volumes à Vignettes et un Album de dix-huit Planches in 4°*, contenant plus de cent Dessins (au trait fac-simile). Cambrai 1861, to which Fleury refers, was not available to me.

Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Nationalbibliothek in Wien
(The Illuminated Manuscripts and Incunabula of the National Library in Vienna)

Two aspects are noteworthy: the name of the Library changed and the new one obviously deliberately evades the name of the nation (Austria); and from the beginning the incorporation of incunabula was planned. Especially this latter fact is ground-breaking because it stresses the integrity of “Buchwesen”, a German term not exactly translatable²³. The institutions responsible for editing were the “Österreichisches Institut für Geschichtsforschung” (cf. note 1) in cooperation with the “Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität Wien”.

The concept has proved its qualities, and thus the multi-volume task could start in 1923 with the chronologically first volume cataloguing copies of manuscripts from late antiquity and the early medieval holdings of Western manuscripts²⁴. In quick sequence Hermann Julius Hermann, who was in charge of the description of the illuminated manuscripts of the library from the beginning of the project, was able to publish the respective volumes. This continuity explains why the publication could be realised so quickly. 13 of the 15 volumes published from 1923 to 1938 are the life’s work of Hermann Julius Hermann, with two volumes contributed by Paul Buberl, who started in 1930 to describe the Byzantine heritage. His contribution is methodologically most interesting, because the first volume focuses on two objects only: the Dioscurides and the Vienna Genesis (1937), thus questioning the system of merely indexing the holdings, whereas the second is a survey of 111 manuscripts from the 10th to the 18th centuries (1938).

From 1923 to 1938, a total of 15 volumes were issued, comprising nearly 1,500 manuscripts whose descriptions fill over 3,400 pages accompanied by over 1,250 illustrations. Compared to the first series the parameters had changed: most significantly, the space for one manuscript now grew from under one page to over two pages. The ratio between manuscripts and illustrations remained stable regarding overall figures, but the type of illustrations changed. After the third volume illustrations were no more included in the text, and all were presented on the wonderful plates mostly produced in collotype printing (“Lichtdruck”), which had been a characteristic of this series from the beginning. These plates often present one prominent page, but there are cases with up to six details so that the ratio of ca. 1.5 illustrations per manuscript remains more or less stable.

Considering the method nothing had changed, and looking to the total task we can state that all Byzantine manuscripts, all Western manuscript holdings up to the end of the

²³ The “Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen des Mittelalters” (cf. p. 8) translates its title as “Commission of Paleography and Codicology of Medieval Manuscripts in Austria”.

²⁴ Hermann Julius Hermann, *Die frühmittelalterlichen Handschriften des Abendlandes (Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Österreich* 8, ed. Julius Schlosser, Hermann Julius Hermann = Neue Folge: *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Nationalbibliothek in Wien* 1). Leipzig 1923.

Romanesque style, and furthermore all later Italian manuscripts and incunabula were indexed. From the Western European holdings all material until around 1400 was included²⁵. The last volume, dealing with French and Iberian materials of the first half of the 15th century, was published in 1938, the year the Austrian republic – enthusiastically welcoming the desperately needed *better* times – was integrated into Nazi-ruled Germany. Hermann Julius Hermann was not willing to cooperate with the new regime and the series was suspended.

Initiatives after World War II

World War II caused Austria severe physical loss and suffering; most astonishingly, though, politicians of all colours and major parts of the population had developed an identity as Austrians under the Nazi regime. This crucial difference to the first republic made the reestablishment of the state possible, and after ten difficult years the independence from the allied forces and emergence as a neutral republic became reality in 1955. This new “national” self-confidence found numerous cultural points of identification, but the indexing of illuminated manuscripts was no explicit focus. No art historian and no institution felt responsible to continue the “Beschreibendes Verzeichnis”.

Franz Unterkircher’s Inventory

For the first time the library itself started an initiative, and between 1957 and 1959 Franz Unterkircher published two volumes which – in the order of shelf marks – indexed all of the more than 5,000 illuminated manuscripts of the “Österreichische Nationalbibliothek”²⁶. Each item filled two to four lines of text (with some exceptions): shelf mark, short title, language, number of leaves, material, and measurements on the one hand, an abstract giving the number and different types of decoration as well as date and localisation on the other²⁷. Tables (“Zeittafeln”, “Ortstafeln”) allowed the user to search for specific information, but neither illustrations nor iconographic information were included. Unterkircher compiled information, but as a theologian did not himself conduct art historical research.

²⁵ The title of the Western series (volume 7: “Die westeuropäischen Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Gotik und Renaissance mit Ausnahme der niederländischen Handschriften” [The Gothic and Renaissance Manuscripts and Incunabula of Western Europe excluding manuscripts from the Netherlands]) implies that material from the Netherlands was not integrated. As the volumes of the Pächt Series clarify, only two examples from Holland and eight from Flanders were painted before 1400.

²⁶ Franz Unterkircher, *Inventar der illuminierten Handschriften, Inkunabeln und Frühdrucke der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, 2 vols. Vienna 1957 and 1959 (Inventory of Illuminated Manuscripts, Incunabula and Early Prints in the Austrian National Library). The first volume comprises Western manuscripts, the second Greek, Slavic, Hebrew, Oriental and other manuscripts and the illuminated incunabula and later prints. Not included are illuminated materials from within the Papyrus collection, the collection of maps, the theatre collection and the portrait collection, none of them containing medieval material.

²⁷ If an item was indexed within the “Beschreibendes Verzeichnis” Unterkircher added this information, but further references are very limited; scientific arguing is not intended at all.

The Otto Pächt Series

Otto Pächt, born in Vienna in 1902, was one of the leading scholars of the strictly methodologically oriented “Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte”. He emigrated to England, where he focused his research on illuminated manuscripts; beside other important studies he published a catalogue of illuminated manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (in collaboration with Jonathan J. G. Alexander)²⁸. The first volume appeared in 1966 (with some delay); it arranged the material in local schools and then chronologically. The entries have the form of a very short handlist, but often include substantial scientific expertise. The major part of the manuscripts described is represented by at least one illustration.

After his return to Vienna in 1963, his main task was to teach at the “Kunsthistorisches Institut” of the University of Vienna, but nonetheless he started a revival of cataloguing illuminated manuscripts by initiating a new series:

Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (The Illuminated Manuscripts and Incunabula of the Austrian National Library)

The Austrian Academy of Sciences replaced the “Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung” and the Department of History of Art (University of Vienna) as leading institution. In 1966, three years after Pächt’s return, the Academy founded the “Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen des Mittelalters” (cf. note 23), and within this framework initiated by Herbert Hunger Otto Pächt could realise his plan to continue the “Beschreibendes Verzeichnis”.

Together with his assistant Dagmar Thoss, he started with the remaining French material²⁹, also relying on research undertaken by Hermann Julius Hermann († 1953), the mastermind behind the project until his dismissal by the Nazis in 1938. Although Hermann was well aware that his manuscript for the later French material, which he gave to the “Kunsthistorisches Institut” after the war, no longer represented state of the art, he hoped that it might serve as initial point for a future restart. Indeed, Pächt used this basis, but created a new scheme and layout³⁰, which was intended to be less abundant but focus on a scientifically reliable classification. Therefore he introduced the paragraph “Stilistischer Kommentar”

²⁸ Otto Pächt, J(onathan) J. G. Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library Oxford 1–3*. Oxford 1966, 1970, 1973. In his preface Pächt praised the “Beschreibende Verzeichnisse” published in Vienna as shining examples, while he has to limit himself to a summary handlist.

²⁹ Otto Pächt, Dagmar Thoss, *Französische Schule I (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften 118 = Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen*, ed. Herbert Hunger, Reihe 1: *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek 1*, ed. Otto Pächt). Wien 1974.

³⁰ Most significantly, the proud folio format was replaced by humble A4, and refined collotype tables were replaced by standard offset printing. On the other hand, the colour plates now presenting the most important elements of decoration are a significant improvement. Each volume is divided into two parts, one with the catalogue and the comparative illustrations, and the other with the plates.

(stylistic commentary) and used comparative illustrations to prove stylistic analogies³¹, a feature which has remained unique until today and is the hallmark of the new Viennese series. Compared with the scheme used today, which – in terms of the layout – is close to the conception of Pächt's first volume of 1974, it becomes clear how much has been borrowed from the older model concerning structure, and how significant the step forward has been in the field of art historical research.

Pächt and his collaborators Dagmar Thoss and Ulrike Jenni presented two volumes, thus completing the French material (1974, 1977), and then started with the huge portion of manuscripts from the Netherlands omitted by Hermann (cf. note 25): one volume deals with Holland (1975), four are planned for the Flemish part. The first appeared in 1983 under the guidance of Otto Pächt († 1988), the second in 1990. Dagmar Thoss is preparing two further volumes to bring the cataloguing of manuscripts from Western Europe to a successful end.

A new effort was made by Dorothea Duda. Her proposal for a catalogue of illuminated oriental manuscripts was presented first to the National Library and then to the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Herbert Hunger, chairman of the "Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen", accepted her offer and suggested integration into the series edited by Otto Pächt. She adapted her preparatory work to the scheme of the series and followed Hunger's proposal of arranging the material according to language. She completed her task in three volumes (Persian, Arabic, and Turkish) published in 1983, 1992 and 2008. Within these categories the descriptions follow the order of the library shelf marks, the illustrations are in chronological sequence. Thanks to the personal initiative of Mrs Duda, a gap often overlooked was filled and the universal claim to index all manuscripts was taken an important step nearer to realisation.

The Gerhard Schmidt Series

Just as the "Otto Pächt Series" was no official term, the same is true in this case. After Pächt's death Gerhard Schmidt took over responsibility for the cataloguing, which was even easier since he was – like Pächt – both Professor at the "Institut für Kunstgeschichte" and member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. On the one hand he supported Dagmar Thoss in her attempt to complete the description of the Flemish material, on the other he initiated the "Mitteleuropäische Schulen" (MeSch – Central European Schools) to close the last remaining gap in the indexing of illuminated manuscripts of the Austrian National Library.

As Paul Buberl had demonstrated in 1911, a substantial adaptation of the scheme seemed again necessary. The young colleagues who prepared the first volume of this sub-

³¹ Additionally, the quires and texts were checked and the results were part of the description of each manuscript.

series³² focused on adding information of codicological relevance (e.g. Chroust's formula for quires) and additional data with regard to the contents. All aspects of an illuminated manuscript should be considered, since the manuscript was regarded as "Gesamtkunstwerk" in which different cultural techniques participate.

More, and much differentiated, information deserves a clear structure, distinguishing between codicological data and script (first paragraph), binding, provenance and contents³³. All this is somehow the prelude, or rather basis, of the art historical description and classification to follow. The caption "Buchschnuck" (book decoration) stands for the descriptive section: from the smallest elements (such as e.g. red captions) onwards all categories of decoration are listed. The first paragraph of this section finishes with a quantitative abstract of the elevated decoration described in detail below³⁴. In most cases an integrated model is used to describe the different types of decoration e.g. penwork lombards, penwork initials, initials painted in body colour with or without scrolls, historiated initials, miniatures, border decoration and autonomous elements such as sketches. Only in the case of iconographically relevant figurative elements the material is enumerated piece by piece.

The section called "stylistic commentary" in the Otto Pächt series now figures as "Stil und Einordnung" (style and classification). The idea was to stress the integrity of the object and the fact that the information used derived from all relevant fields, whether art historical or otherwise. Such has been the case from the beginning of cataloguing, but we thought special emphasis should be put on this interdisciplinary aspect. The description ends – as has been the case before – with the relevant bibliographical references.

But not only the scheme was adapted, also the method to establish the material basis needed a new approach, since during the preparation of MeSch I the inventory of Unterkircher (cf. note 26) proved to be unreliable because some categories of decoration (esp. penwork) had been almost completely omitted. Around 2000 a group of colleagues were allowed to check every single manuscript in the library, thus laying a secure basis for the volumes from MeSch II onwards.

A challenging effect of this has been that enormous quantities of objects from the late medieval local Austrian production flooded in and deserved processing. The greater part of this material is of low profile. Nevertheless, recent investigations have clarified that localisation and dating is possible by analysing penwork ("Fleuronné"), thus opening a new and very broad field of research.

³² Andreas Fingernagel, Martin Roland, *Mitteeuropäische Schulen I (ca. 1250–1350)* (*Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften 245 = Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen*, ed. Otto Kresten, Reihe 1: *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek 10*, ed. Gerhard Schmidt). Wien 1997.

³³ In the case of German manuscripts a paragraph dealing with linguistics is added.

³⁴ This quantification is an element Hermann Julius Hermann introduced in his very first volume (1905; cf. p. 4). Especially from MeSch II onwards this element has been used consistently.

A new scheme of condensed description became necessary for these masses of moderate manuscripts; still, also these short entries are always accompanied by an illustration. In the volumes to come a new sub-category will be introduced (“Liste der nicht beschriebenen Handschriften” – Index of manuscripts not described) to inform the user that a specific item had been deliberately excluded rather than accidentally omitted.

With the relocation of the Department of History of Art (University of Vienna) to the new campus in 1997, the team gathered by Gerhard Schmidt around himself at last had the desperately needed space for their activities: the team and the scientific estate bequeathed by Pächt (a reference library concentrating on book illumination, his scholarly correspondence and manuscripts) form the Otto Pächt Archive hosted by the Department.

The first volume of MeSch comprised the century between 1250 and 1350 and all regions of Central Europe. The very rich Bohemian materials together with manuscripts from Moravia, Silesia and Hungary from after 1350 were separated, and a first volume of this sub-section was presented in 2004 by Ulrike Jenni, Maria Theisen and Karel Stejskal.

The scheme developed by Otto Pächt was as sustainable as the one from the first series, and it was just as influential. Elisabeth Klemm, a student of Otto Pächt in Vienna, who initiated the cataloguing of illuminated manuscripts in Germany with her Munich volumes³⁵, and colleagues like François Avril, who initiated the Paris series³⁶, especially contributed to the dissemination of this scheme.

The Status quo

The main project guided by Gerhard Schmidt deals with the “Mitteleuropäische Schulen” (MeSch), Central European manuscripts of the National Library. The forthcoming MeSch V comprises Viennese and Lower Austrian manuscripts from 1410 to 1450 and was a multi-author teamwork³⁷, with Susanne Rischpler and Martin Roland being responsible for its

³⁵ Elisabeth Klemm, *Die romanischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek 1: Die Bistümer Regensburg, Passau und Salzburg (Katalog der illuminierten Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in München 3/1)*. Wiesbaden 1980. Further volumes of this series have appeared since then. In her introduction, Klemm refers to her teacher and his cataloguing efforts.

³⁶ *Manuscrits enluminés d'origine italienne 1: François Avril, Yolanta Załuska, VIe–XIIe siècles*. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale 1980. Further volumes have appeared since then. In the preface, the catalogues by Hermann and Pächt are mentioned as guiding models. Avril intended to position his project between the very detailed descriptions of the Viennese series and the Oxford type.

³⁷ *Mitteleuropäische Schulen V (ca. 1410–1450) Wien und Niederösterreich*. Bearbeitet von Christine Beier, Andreas Fingernagel, Katharina Hranitzky, Veronika Pirker-Aurenhammer, Susanne Rischpler, Martin Roland, Michaela Schuller-Juckes; unter Mitarbeit von Margit Elsigan, Martin Haltrich, Alois Haidinger, Anna Reisenbichler und Maria Stieglecker (*Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften = Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen*, ed. Otto Kresten, Reihe 1: *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* 14, ed. Gerhard Schmidt).

completion. A volume describing the remaining Austrian, German and Swiss material from the named years (MeSch VI) has basically been finished but still needs to be prepared for printing.

Due to a very special organisation of funding the main project regularly needs to recruit new personnel, whereas colleagues who have meanwhile become familiar with the special necessities of cataloguing are forced to look for new challenges. Andreas Fingernagel is now Director of the Manuscript Department of the Austrian National Library, Friedrich Simader is a curator there. Veronika Pirker-Aurenhammer is curator of the medieval collection of the “Österreichische Galerie im Belvedere”, and Karl-Georg Pfändtner works for the Bavarian State Library in Munich. Two colleagues stayed within the field of cataloguing illuminated manuscripts: Christine Beier initiated a series dealing with the material of Graz University Library, and Katharina Hranitzky occupied herself with the holdings of the “Oberösterreichische Landesbibliothek” in Linz. These careers exemplify how substantial the experiences obtained in the Otto Pächt Archive are.

Parallel to publication efforts, the late medieval “Buchwesen” (cf. p. 6) offers new challenging possibilities: watermarks and incunabula.

Due to the cooperation with Alois Haidinger and Maria Stieglecker of the Commission of Palaeography and Codicology (cf. p. 8) our treatments of watermarks will now become state-of-the-art. At the same time the material is integrated into their database (<http://www.ksbm.oeaw.ac.at/wz/wzma.php>), thus creating – economically speaking – a win-win-situation, once more underlining the leading position of Viennese projects in both fields.

The first books printed with moveable letters, a technique developed by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, were produced after 1450. Closely following manuscript models they often contain illuminations. As the lists from the times of Hermann and Unterkircher were not accessible and most likely would not comply with our demands, a complete checking of the incunabula of the Austrian National Library was necessary to detect all illuminated specimens. This task has been undertaken by Armand Tif and will be finished in 2010.

A significant database (containing information on 3,500 illuminated manuscripts) is the linchpin of cataloguing the Central European manuscripts of the second half of the 15th century. Regina Cermann works with this tool, checking the codices and enlarging the photographic documentation, which currently comprises some 60,000 digital images from manuscripts and incunabula of the Austrian National Library³⁸.

Maria Theisen is in charge of the Bohemian sub-section and collaborates with Ulrike Jenni, who retired recently but is still active. Another active pensioner is Dagmar Thoss, focusing on the Flemish material (cf. p. 9).

³⁸ The collections of analogue photographs and digital material from other libraries (ca 25,000 images) are not included in this figure.

As mentioned above, new holdings from outside Vienna were integrated into the focus of the Otto Pächt Archive. The Graz project has been started due to an initiative of Michael-Victor Schwarz, Professor of History of Art in Vienna; it is executed by Christine Beier, who is now in charge of the 14th and 15th century volumes. An application by Professor Schwarz is being reviewed for a volume on the 13th century, with Michaela Schuller-Jukes (now collaborating on the Linz project) and Anna Reisenbichler (of valuable assistance in the main project at the moment) designated for this task.

Katharina Hranitzky, also a former team member of the main project, developed and successfully implemented a respective project in Linz. Recently she has gained new funding to continue her cataloguing.

Beside the production of printed catalogues of the Vienna scheme – the priority goal of all activities mentioned so far – new methods of presenting the material are tested by the colleagues from the Otto Pächt Archive. Maria Theisen is responsible for our website (<http://paecht-archiv.univie.ac.at>) containing information about the archive, its team and holdings and some additional scientific material³⁹. As initial web activity a database designed mainly by Friedrich Simader and indexing Romanesque manuscripts in Austria must be mentioned⁴⁰, developed within a project supervised by Martina Pippal (Department of History of Art, University of Vienna).

A new scheme of web-indexing has been tested with a short inventory of all illuminated manuscripts and incunabula from the Canons Regular of St Augustine of Herzogenburg in Lower Austria. After a survey of this comparatively small collection, over 1,500 digital images were made. These efforts have now resulted, on the one hand, in an independent and self-sufficient web presentation devised by Armand Tif and Martin Roland⁴¹. Yet from the beginning of the planning, one central idea has also been to connect this inventory to a database which is being developed by Alois Haidinger from the “Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen” (cf. p. 8) for the purpose of indexing all manuscripts kept in Austria⁴². Other little-known collections of this size (such as Stams in the Tyrol) will follow if the scheme for the first time applied to Herzogenburg is accepted by users.

Even though nobody working in the Otto Pächt Archive considers him/herself (or the institution he/she works for) to be of international excellence, a comparison of parameters reveals the contrary. A workforce of over ten highly specialised scholars, a constant output of catalogues, a specialised reference library and a vast collection of comparative images as well as a constant flow of new ideas are unequalled.

³⁹ <http://paecht-archiv.univie.ac.at/dateien/links.html>

⁴⁰ <http://homepage.univie.ac.at/Martina.Pippal/hssdata.htm>

⁴¹ <http://paecht-archiv.univie.ac.at/ki/herzogenburg.html> (online since May 2009).

⁴² http://manuscripta.at/_scripts/php/manuscripts.php

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