

Elements for a treatise of material bibliography.

Composite typographic ornamentation (1)

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In the field of identifying the origin of editions, and particularly clandestine editions, the demonstrative value of composed ornamentation has long been established.¹ This consists of aggregates of typographic characters called *vignettes* or “small movable ornaments” in Pierre-Simon Fournier’s famous *Manuel typographique* (1766), and *bloemen* in Johan Enschedé’s *Proef van Letteren* (1768). We shall nevertheless retain the term *vignette* (Eng. *tailpiece*) to designate groups of characters decorating a title page or closing a chapter, as well as the term *bandeau* (Eng. *headpiece*) to designate the ornament that opens a chapter. The value of composed ornament compared to that of ornaments produced from a woodcut or a single-piece matrix has been widely discussed.² The following article proposes to deal with several cases involving general principles of analytical bibliography according to two axes: evolution and system.³ These cases are mainly drawn from the Rouen, Liège, and Maastricht counterfeits of the eighteenth century.

1. Variations in vignettes: accident or repair?

A model of composed ornament may present variations open to different interpretations. A first example is taken from counterfeit editions of works by Gessner and Montesquieu, whose printing is attributed to the Rouen printer Abraham-François Viret and carried out for the bookseller Pierre Machuel (illustration 1).⁴ The authentication of origin results from the foliation procedure, as defined by M. Collart.⁵ The method consists in calculating the ratio

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¹ D. DROIXHE, “Signatures clandestines et autres essais sur les contrefaçons de Liège et de Maastricht au XVIIIe siècle,” *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 10, 2001, p. 49–198.

² D. DROIXHE, “Signatures clandestines et autres essais sur les contrefaçons de Liège et de Maastricht au XVIIIe siècle,” *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 10, 2001, p. 49–198.

³ Inspired by the Saussurean distinction between diachrony and synchrony, applied by Walther von Wartburg in *Évolution et structure de la langue française*, 3rd ed., Bern: A. Francke, 1958.

⁴ D. DROIXHE, “Contrefaçons rouennaises méconnues des œuvres de Gessner (1762, 1764),” *xviii.ch – Revue suisse d’études du XVIIIe siècle*, 15, 2024, p. 77–91 [<https://hdl.handle.net/2268/325392>]; Daniel DROIXHE, “L’édition 1765: O1 des Œuvres de Montesquieu: une contrefaçon rouennaise imprimée par Abraham-François Viret pour Pierre Machuel,” *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 99, 2024, p. 174–189 [<https://hdl.handle.net/2268/320351>].

⁵ Muriel COLLART, “La production voltairienne de Bassompierre et Nouffer de Genève (1776–1777). Un cas d’heuristique éditoriale,” *Revue Voltaire*, 21, 2023, p. 371–392.

between the actual number of pages printed in a given work and that implied by the number of sheets used, based on the information provided by the list of impressions made for Machuel in a document—well known today—preserved in the *Archives départementales de Seine-Maritime*.

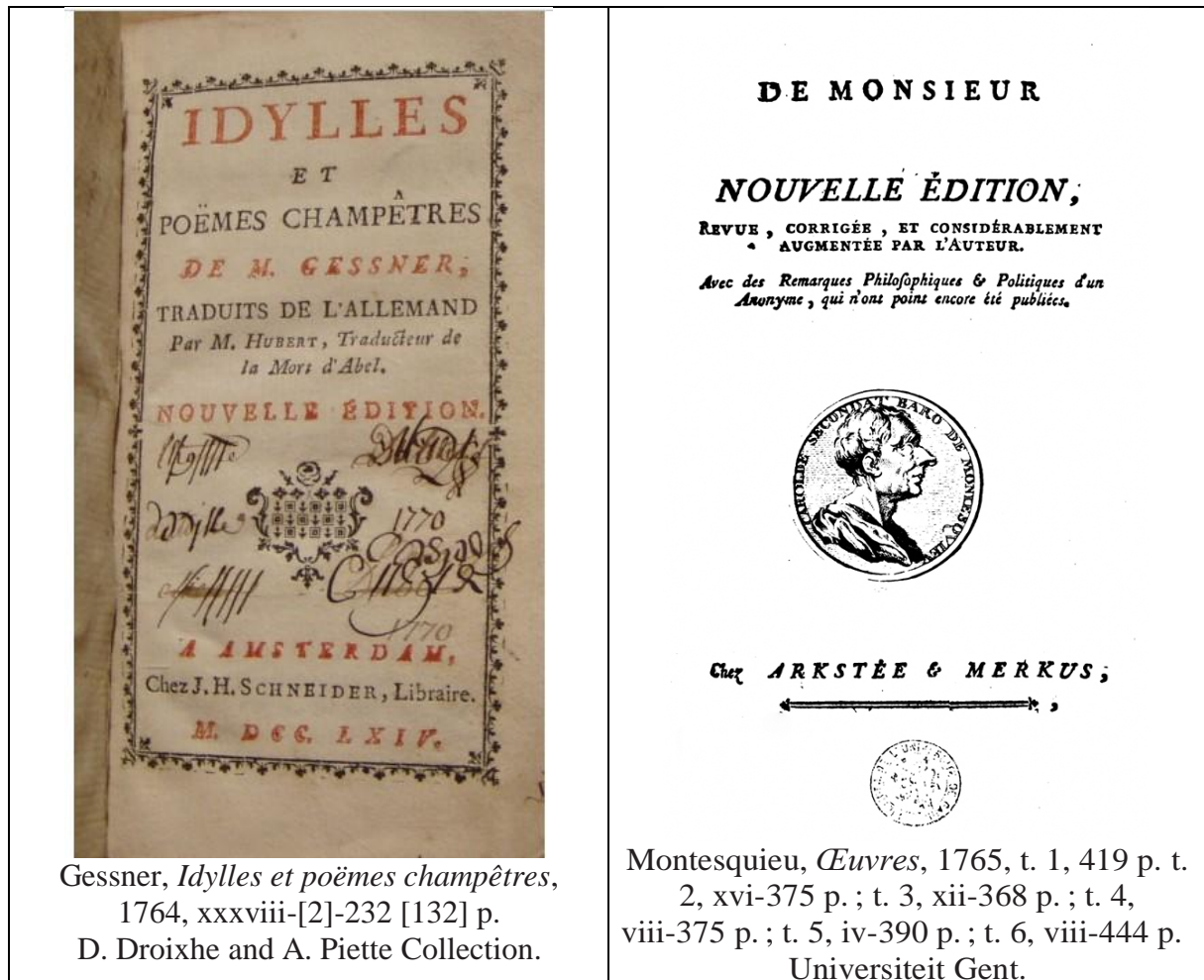


Fig. 1

The composed ornaments appearing in Salomon Gessner's *Idylles* and in Montesquieu's *Œuvres* (fig. 1) present variations. We may ask concerning the one shown below: does it result from a complete recomposition of the model, or merely from the alteration of the upper register, due to a flaw, an accident (fig. 2)? The reproductions do not allow us to decide, although the model of *Idylles*, 1764, p. 220, shows in the upper right corner an asymmetry compared to the upper left corner, which may have led to a reconstruction of the entire horizontal line.

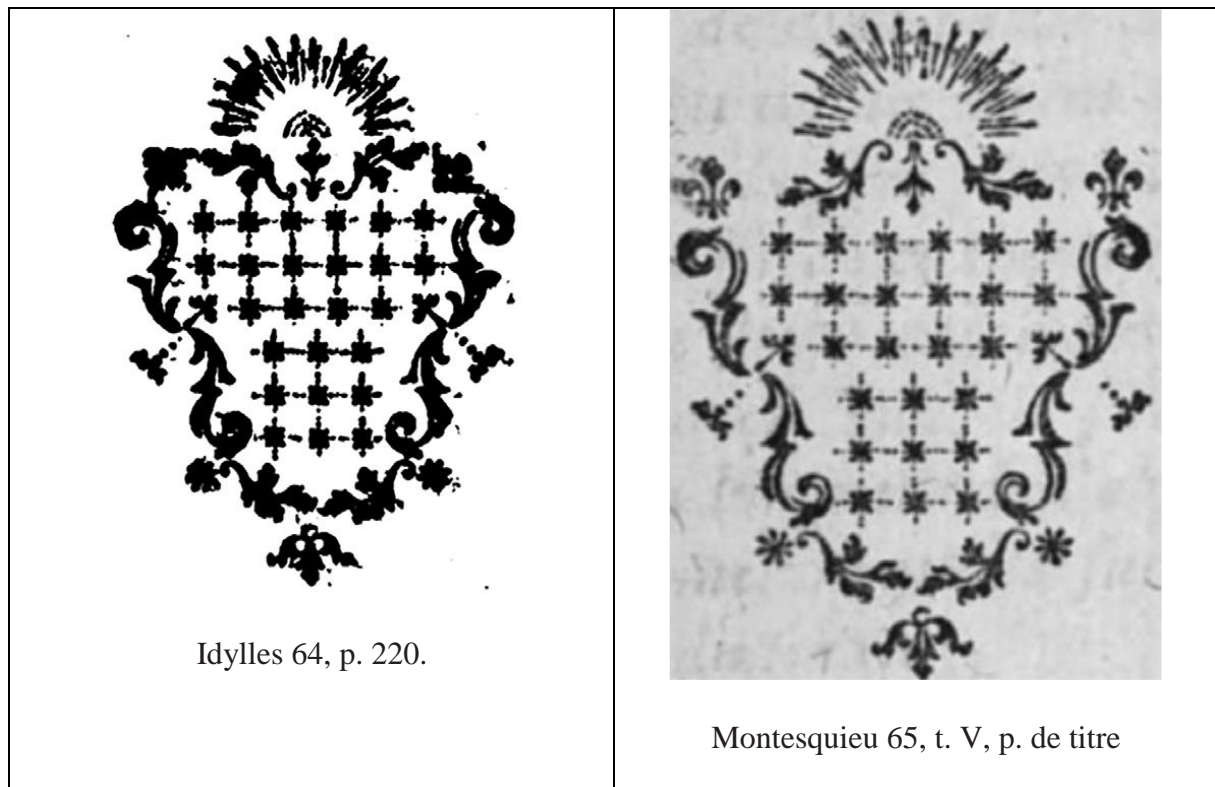


Fig. 2

2. Another variation in vignettes: deterioration

Let us consider another case of possible accident or deterioration. Two other counterfeits are implied: *La Mort d'Abel* by Gessner and Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV*, supposedly printed by Viret (fig. 3).

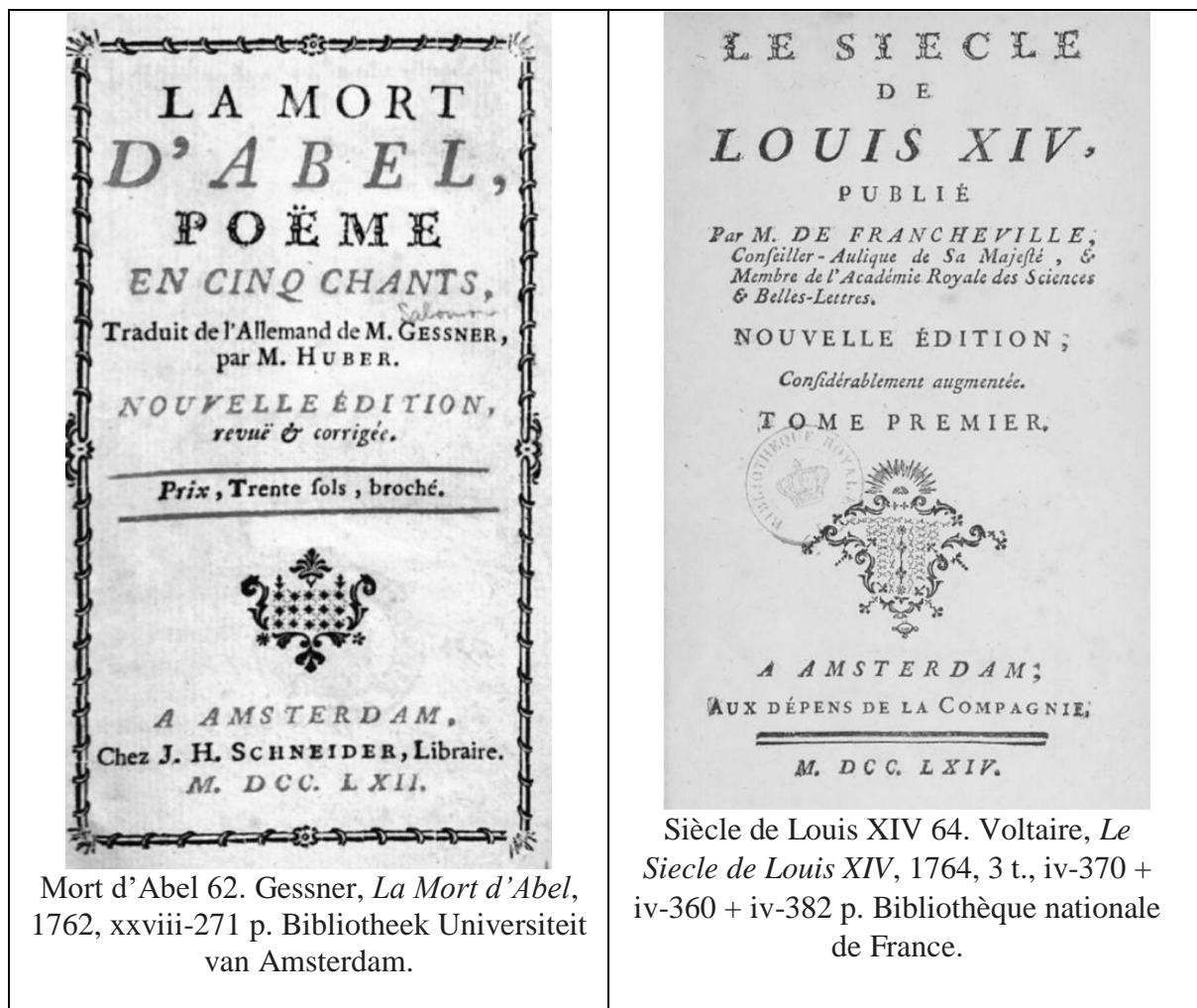
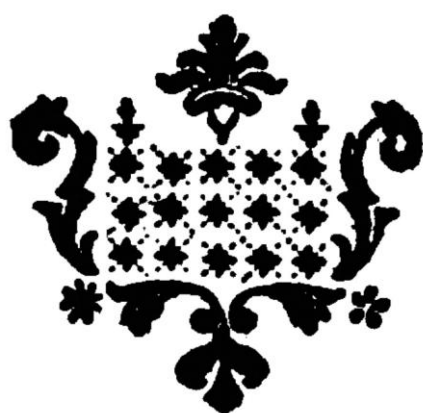


Fig. 3

A damage affected the fleuron in the shape of a hippocampus located on the left-hand side of the ornament (fig. 4).



Mort d'Abel 62, title page



Siècle de Louis XIV 64, t. I, p. 125, 286.

Fig. 4

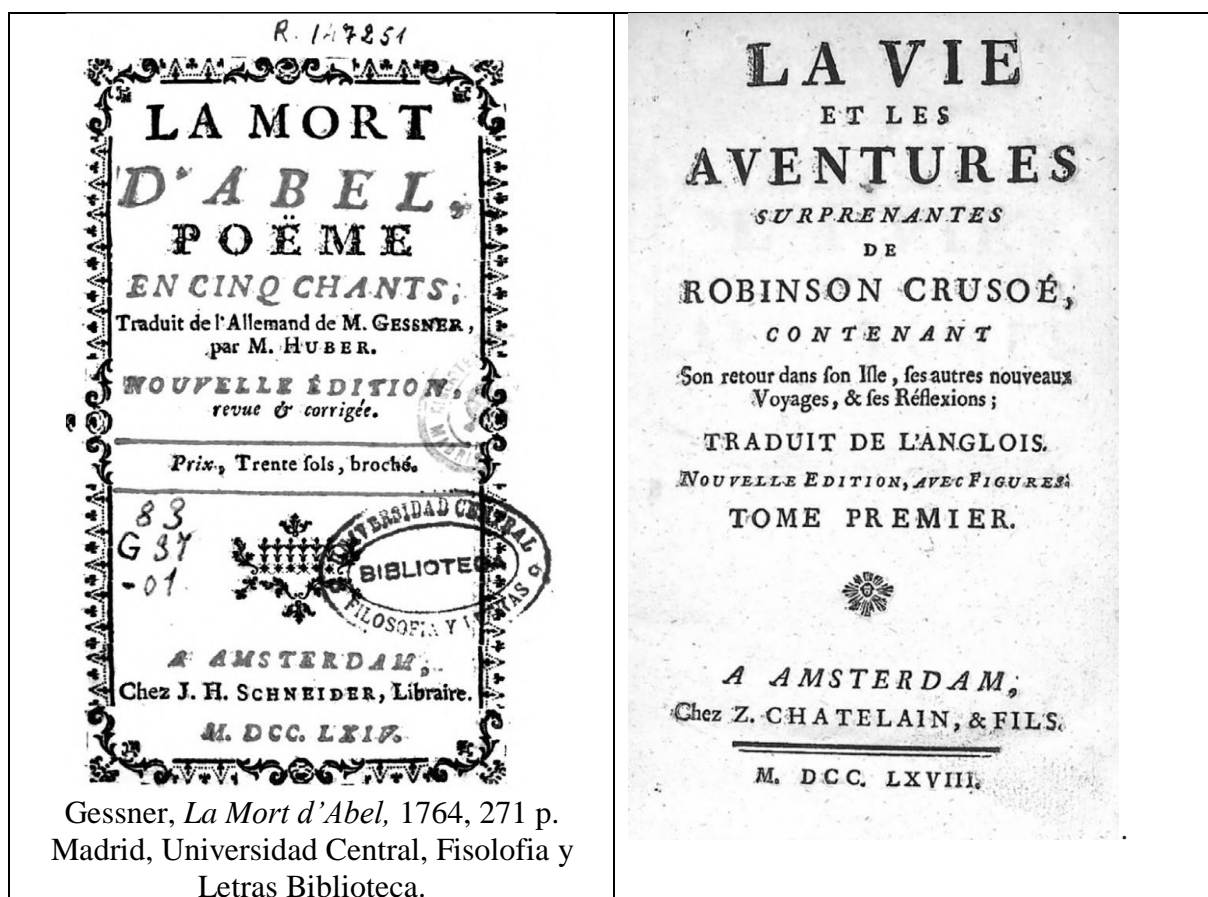
From 1764 to 1767, this led to a restoration of the original model, which was accompanied by other modifications to the fleurons at the top and bottom (fig. 5). The accident and its repair thus fall within the axis of evolution and diachrony.



Fig. 5.
Cacomonade 67, p. 39.

3. Composed vignettes: models and matrices

The “vignettes” of fig. 4 and 5 show models that feature a central element in the form of a rectangle made up of several lines composed of the same fleuron. Other vignette models are provided by counterfeits attributable to Machuel/Viret, such as Gessner’s *La Mort d’Abel* or *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (fig. 6).



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| | <p>Defoe, <i>La Vie et les aventures surprenantes de Robinson Crusoé</i>, 1768, viii-398 + x-391 p. D. Droixhe and A. Piette Collection</p> |
|--|--|

Fig. 6

To the counterfeits just mentioned may be added, on account of their provenance and the connections they establish, two other counterfeits likewise attributable to Machuel/Viret—despite bearing the imprints of Jean-François Bassompierre in Liège (*La Jouissance de soi-même* by L. A. Caraccioli) and of the Frères Estienne in Paris (*Histoire du ciel* by Abbé Pluche) (fig. 7).

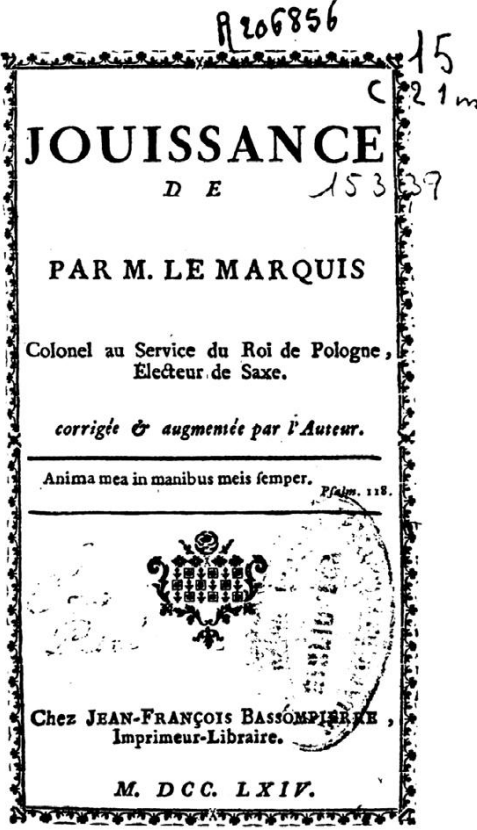
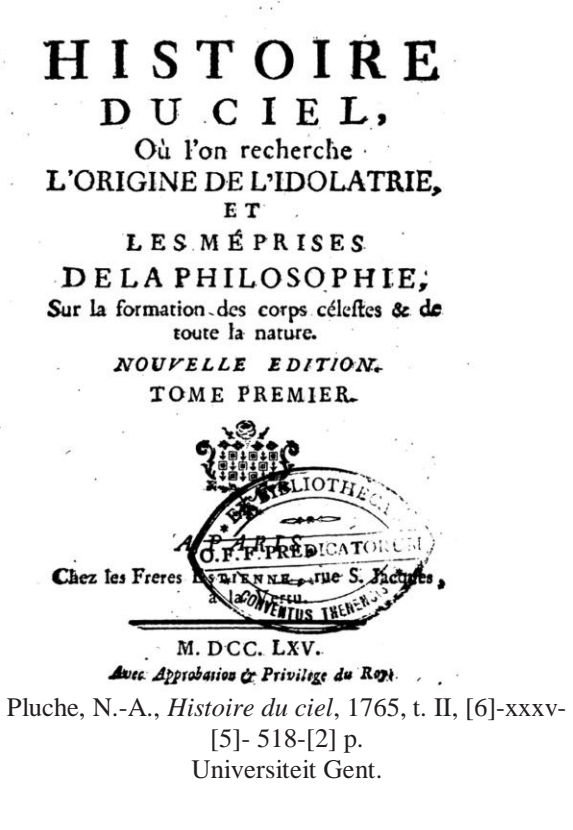
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|  <p>Caraccioli, L. A., <i>La jouissance de soi-même</i>, 1764, xx-404 p. Bibliothèque nationale de France.</p> |  <p>Pluche, N.-A., <i>Histoire du ciel</i>, 1765, t. II, [6]-xxxv-[5]-518-[2] p. Universiteit Gent.</p> |
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Fig. 7

The title-page vignettes are topped by a characteristic fleuron in the shape of a rose (fig. 8). The central ornament consists of four lines of fleurons whose evolution is characteristic. In the initial model, from 1764, the three main lines are formed of six alternating types of fleurons. A fleuron at the far left had already fallen away in 1764. But the model was restored in 1765. It then underwent a change in 1767: small florets appeared at the upper ends. The four-line model, in which three lines are made up of two alternating fleurons, constitutes a

structural “matrix” within the vignettes. Other matrices, with different combinatorial patterns, should be identified.

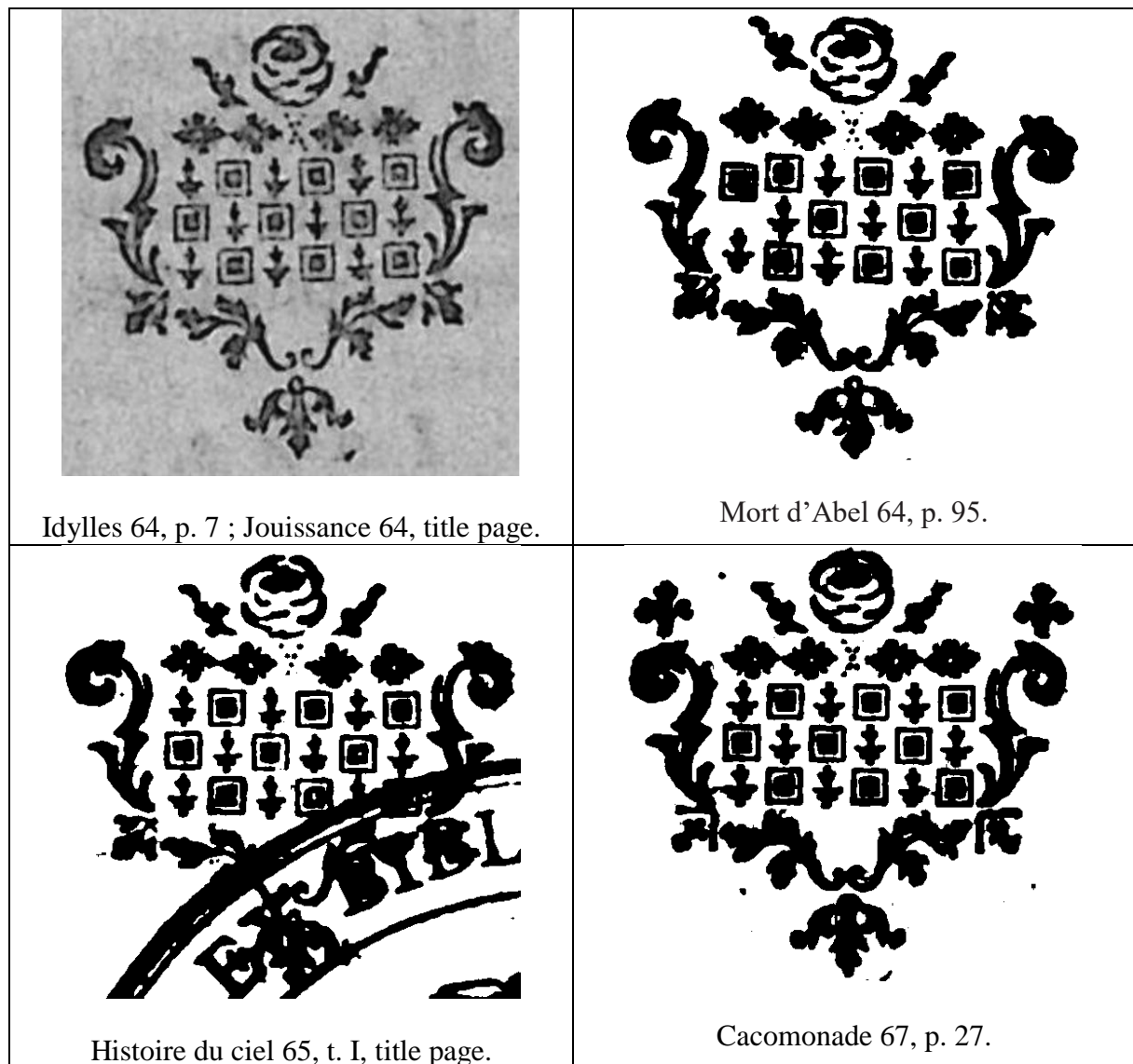


Fig. 8

4. Typefaces and fonts of the Liège and Maastricht counterfeits (1773)

In 2021, under the direction of Cecil P. Courtney, a *Bibliography of the Editions of Guillaume-Thomas Raynal 1747–1843* was published.⁶ This represents a completely new version of the bibliography first published in 2010 in the opening volume of the critical

⁶ Cecil Patrick COURTNEY (ed.), with the collaboration of David ADAMS, Gilles BANCAREL, Daniel DROIXHE, Claudette FORTUNY, Gianluigi GOGGI, Iryna KACHUR, Hans-Jürgen LÜSEBRINK, and Nadine VANWELKENHUYZEN, *Bibliography of the Editions of Guillaume-Thomas Raynal 1747–1843*, Paris, Champion, 2021.

edition of Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, under the direction of A. Strugnell.⁷ Our concern here will be with the editions designated as H-1773:07 and H-1773:08.⁸

The first comes entirely from the presses of the Liège printer-bookseller Clément Plomteux, whose biography is well known.⁹ It has been established that edition H-1773:08 resulted from a collaboration between Plomteux and the Maastricht printer-bookseller Jean-Edme Dufour, whose biography is likewise well known.¹⁰ Knowledge of his production has been updated by M. Collart.¹¹ One may assume that Plomteux had undertaken this edition in order to renew edition H-1773:07, which was quickly sold out due to the success of the *Histoire des deux Indes* and its first counterfeits published as early as 1772, numbered H-1772:02 and H-1772:03.

The texts and title pages of volumes IV to VI of H-1773:08 are entirely the work of Plomteux and bear the marks of his production: Enschedé typeface (shape of the letters T, E, and Q), the older and traditional spelling of endings in *-ens*, *-ans*, a rococo-style ampersand with pronounced flourish, etc. The texts and title pages of volumes I and II are the work of Dufour and also bear the marks of his production: Fournier typeface, the modern spelling of endings in *-ents*, *-ants*, a simpler type of ampersand, etc. Dufour continued printing the new title pages by also producing that of volume III, whose text had been supplied by Plomteux. As a result, this volume alone exemplifies the composite character of this joint edition.

These differences and characteristics were already the subject of a chapter devoted to the *Histoire des deux Indes* in the collection of studies *Signatures clandestines*, published in Oxford in 2001. That chapter benefited from the collaboration of N. Vanwelkenhuyzen and I. Kachur.¹² The chapter in question has since been partially revised.

4. Vignettes and headpieces: partial modification or complete recomposition?

⁷ Guillaume-Thomas RAYNAL, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*. Critical Edition. Vol. I, Anthony STRUGNELL, Editorial Committee (ed.), Andrew BROWN, Cecil Patrick COURTNEY, Georges DULAC, Gianluigi GOGGI, and Hans-Jürgen LÜSEBRINK, Ferney-Voltaire, Centre international d'étude du XVIIIe siècle, 2010.

⁸ C. P. COURTNEY, *Bibliography...*, op. cit., pp. 155–160.

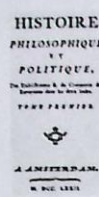
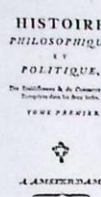

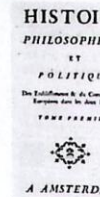
























⁹ D. DROIXHE, *Une histoire des Lumières au pays de Liège. Livre, idées, société*, Liège, Les Éditions de l'Université de Liège, 2007, pp. 179–189, 244–245, 250–251, 262–264, and passim.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 185–190, 240–245, and passim.

¹¹ Muriel COLLART, “Des beaux ornements aux belles bibliothèques. À propos de l'édition clandestine des *Œuvres* de Brantôme par Jean-Edme Dufour (Maastricht, 1779),” *Histoire et civilisation du livre*, 13, 2017, pp. 167–183.

¹² D. DROIXHE, *Signatures clandestines...*, op. cit., pp. 163–182; D. ADAMS and D. DROIXHE, “A bibliographical enigma: the H-1773:08 edition of Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes*,” forthcoming.

Cecil P. Courtney had the excellent idea of providing a table of title-page vignettes from the counterfeits of the *Histoire des deux Indes* in which Plomteux was involved (fig. 9).

|  <p>H-1772:01, Plomteux</p> | |  <p>H-1772:03, Plomteux</p> | |  <p>H-1773:07, Plomteux</p> | |  <p>H-1773:08 Plomteux-Dufour</p> | |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Édition | Tome I | Tome II | Tome III | Tome IV | Tome V | Tome I VI | |
| 1772:02 |  |  |  |  |  |  | |
| 1772:03 |  |  |  |  |  |  | |
| 1773:07 |  |  |  |  |  |  | |
| 1773:08 |  |  |  |  |  |  | |

15. *Histoire des deux Indes*, rééditions in-8 de 1772 à 1774.

Fig. 9.
From Courtney 2021, planche 15.

The aim here is not to establish absolute identities that would trace networks of correspondences among these vignettes. It is already clear enough how the simple bust, without a medallion and surmounted by a count's coronet, develops beginning with volume III of 1772:02—first as the vignette of volume VI of the same edition, and then in those of volume III of 1772:03 and volumes III–IV–V of 1773:07—with the same displacement of the acorn in the lower register. The vignette of volume VI of 1773:08, with the bust reversed while the fleurons forming the frame seem to present the same arrangement as in the preceding vignettes, would tend to confirm that this was a reworking limited only to the Bust (fig. 10).

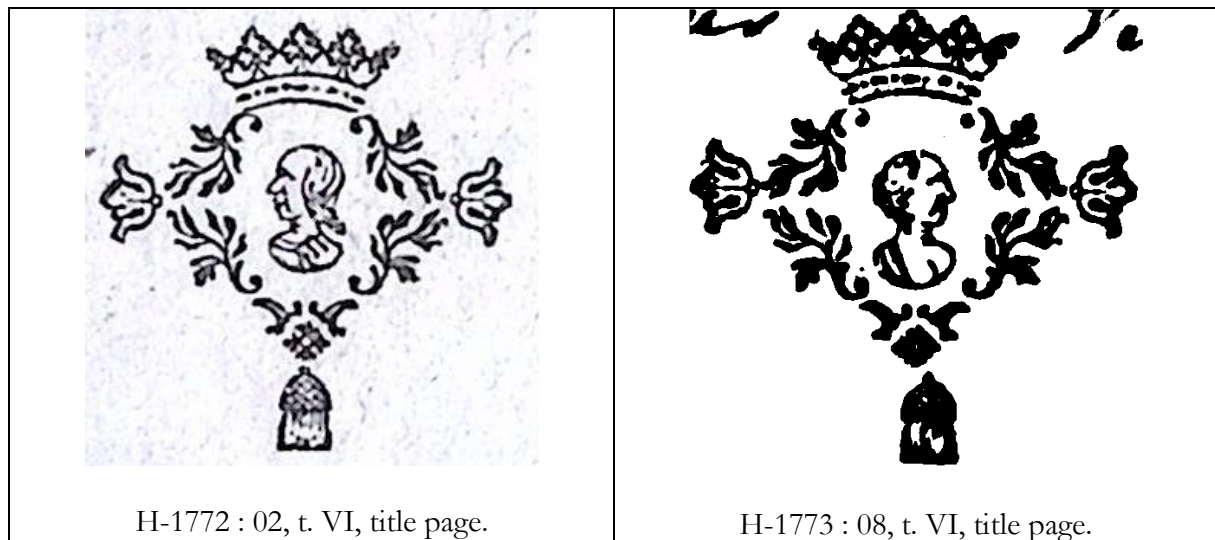


Fig. 10

Composed headpieces from edition H-1772:02 display the same internal composition within a frame whose corners differ (fig. 11). They raise the same question of whether this represents a partial modification or a complete recomposition.

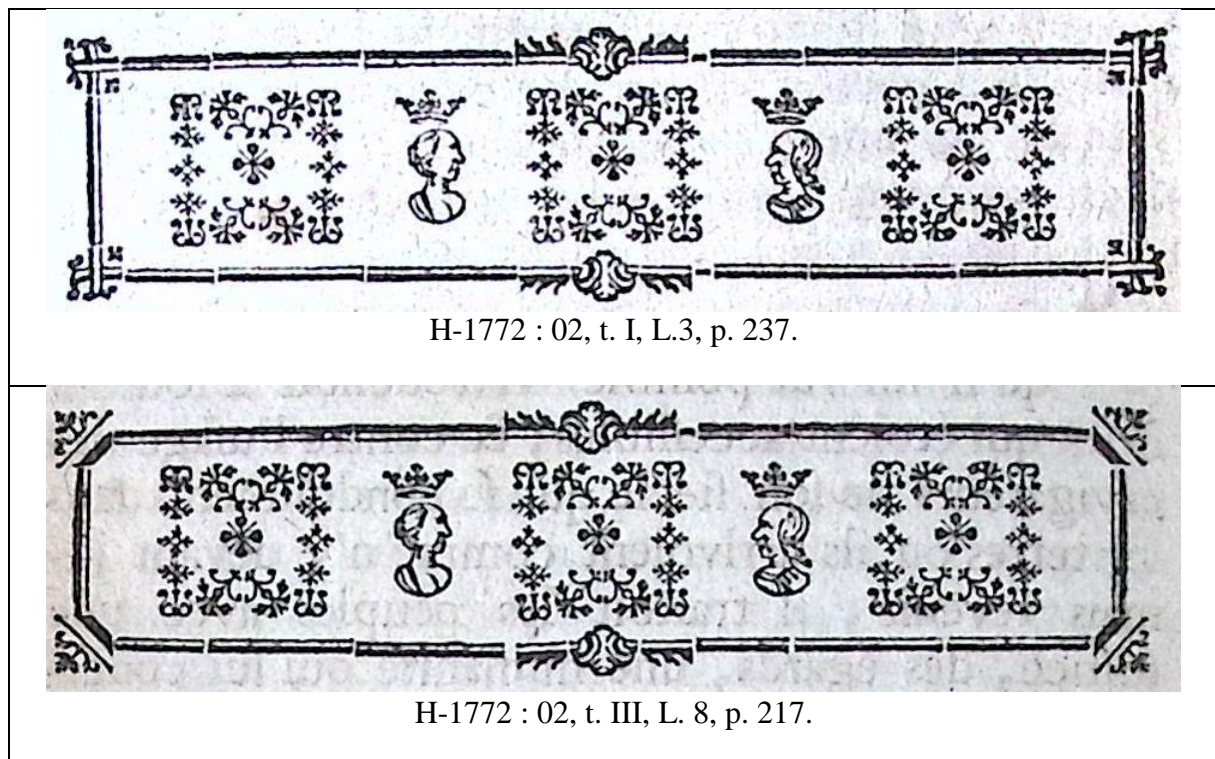


Fig. 11

5. A more complex case of headpiece between evolutionary reworking and systematic recomposition

The 2001 *Signatures clandestines* article on the *Histoire des deux Indes* noted that two composed headpieces belonging to editions H-1773:07 and H-1773:08 “are almost identical”

(fig. 12). These show, in particular, “a common asymmetry, to the right of the crowned bust,” which “seems to indicate that we are dealing with one and the same composition.”¹³ One should note that the asymmetry generally affects three of the four pairs of fleurons framing the “crowned bust,” with clover-like forms topped with crosses. Only the upper right pair is truly symmetrical. Yet it is correct, as the commentary then remarks, that “the fleuron forming the lower right corner is not placed in the same way in the two versions.”

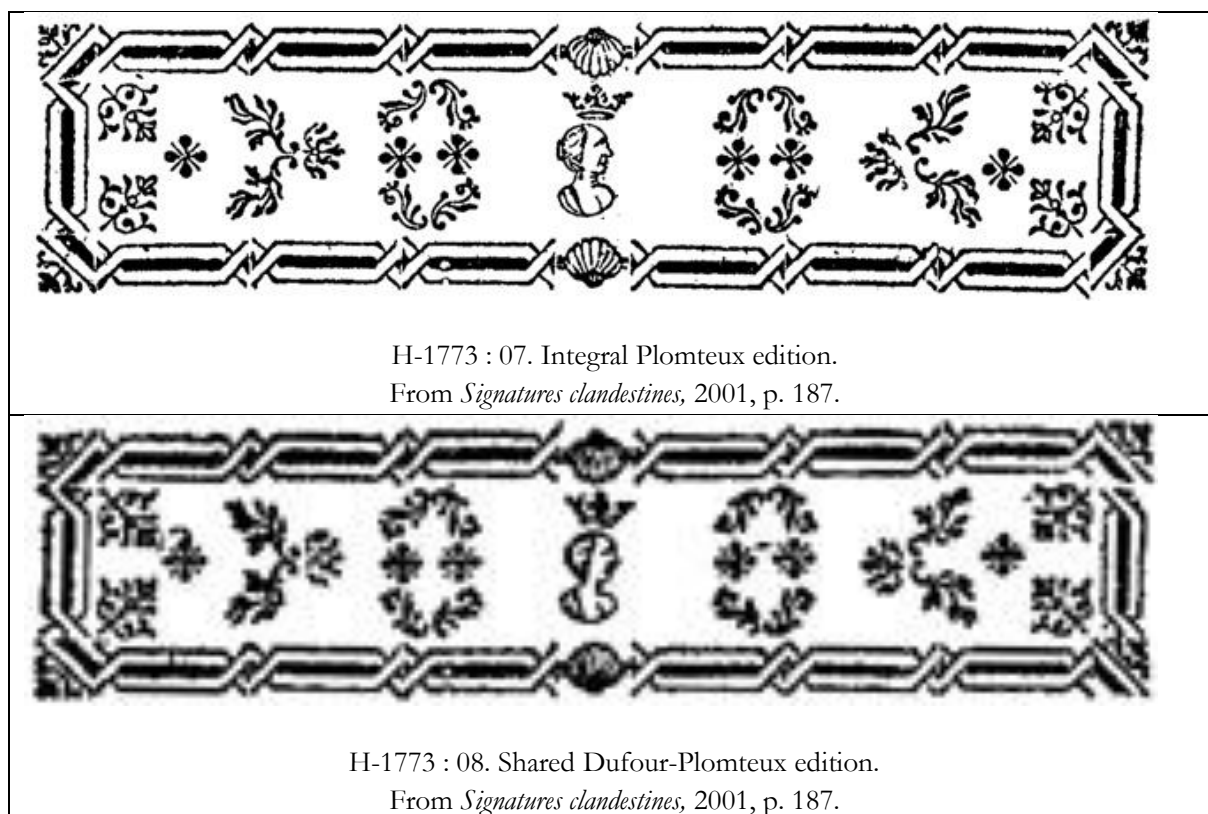
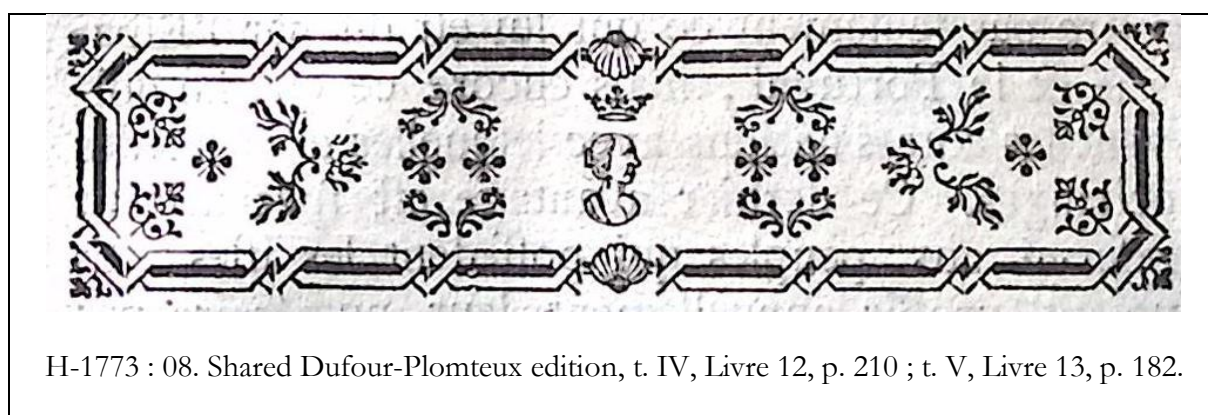


Fig. 12

An edition of H-1773:08 exists in which the same headpiece model, repeated, shows a perfect symmetry of the pairs of fleurons (fig. 13). It is difficult, if not impossible, to discern any further discrepancies in comparison with the two other occurrences from H-1773:07 and H-1773:08.



¹³ D. DROIXHE, *Signatures clandestines...*, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

Fig. 13

From these comparisons two hypotheses may be drawn: either the asymmetry in these occurrences was noticed and a correction was made without altering the rest of the headpiece composition; or else the headpiece was each time recomposed through the more or less mechanical reproduction of the same model, hence the variants. A reworking places the first case within the category of evolution. A complete recomposition falls under the repetition of a model within the framework of a stylistic ensemble constituting a system.

6. Reconstruction as a Puzzle

The authentication of origin for the counterfeit H-1773:08 of the *Histoire des deux Indes*—that is, the edition shared between Plomteux and Dufour—relies in particular on the relationships between the volumes printed by Dufour and other of his editions, whether confirmed or clandestine. In particular, reference is made to Louis-Gabriel Du Buat-Nançay's *Éléments de la politique*, published under the imprint “London” in 1763 but manifestly due to Dufour. Alongside other typographical correspondences, a composed headpiece from the *Histoire des deux Indes* (fig. 14) has not been found in this edition, as an additional confirmation.

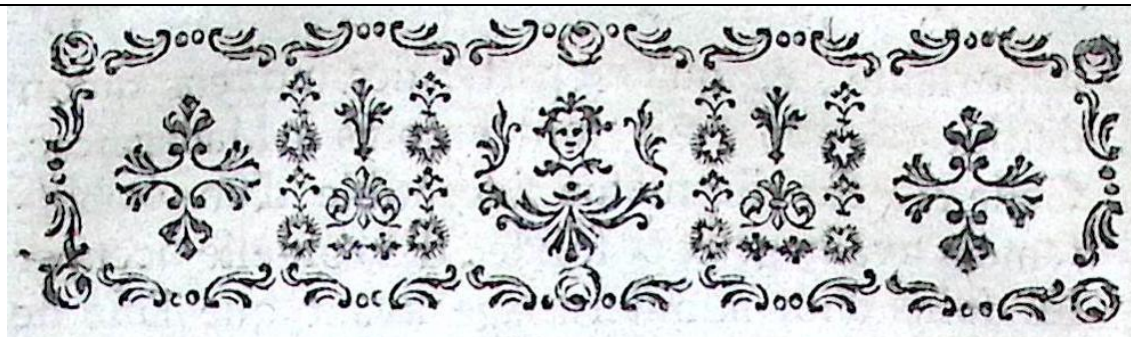


Fig. 14.

H-1773 : 08, éditions partagée, t. II, composé par Dufour, p. 146.

However, an examination of other composed headpieces attested in Dufour's work (fig. 15-16) makes it possible to reconstruct a virtual headpiece corresponding to that of the *Histoire des deux Indes*. The headpiece of edition H-1773:08 can be broken down into three modules representing its interior. The first, central one consists of a face framed by two fleurons in the shape of leaves or birds, surmounting a large characteristic fleuron. The same ornamental ensemble is found in Dufour's edition of Du Buat (fig. 15).

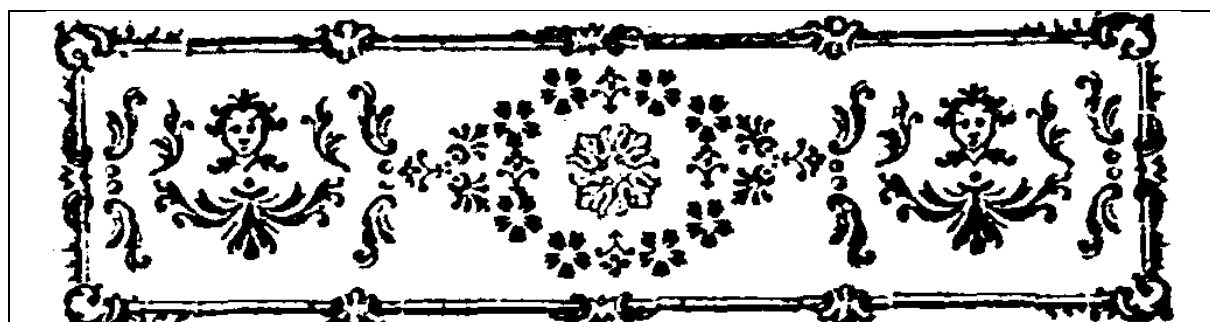


Fig. 15.
Du Buat, *Éléments*, Dufour, t. I, p. 13 ; t. III, p. 229.

In the headpiece of H-1773:08 (fig. 14), the central module is framed by symmetrical ensembles featuring small florets, stars, a fleuron in the shape of a fleur-de-lis, and so on. This module is also found as the central element in another headpiece by Dufour (fig. 16).

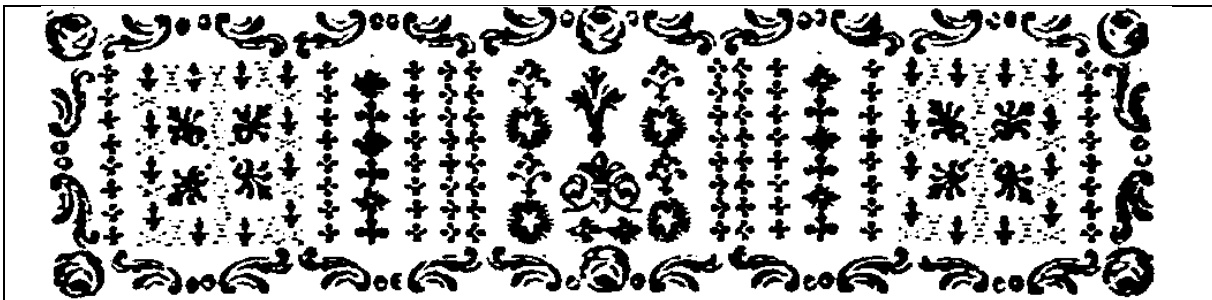


Fig. 16.
Du Buat, *Éléments*, Dufour, t. V, p. 1.

The different modules make it possible to reconstruct a virtual headpiece through a procedure that may be described as a “puzzle.” The productivity of such a procedure is confirmed by the comparison between two actual headpieces from the *Histoire des deux Indes* and from Du Buat (fig. 17-18). The central square of H-1773:08, printed by Dufour, brings together the same fleurons as those in the *Éléments* printed by him, while combining them in a different way. The same applies to the hippocampus-shaped fleurons and those forming vertical lines. The frame of Du Buat is the same as the inner frame of the *Deux Indes*. One may use the entire stock of fleurons or *bloemen* shown in illustration 18 to constitute, for the most part (except for the frame), the complex ornament of illustration 17.

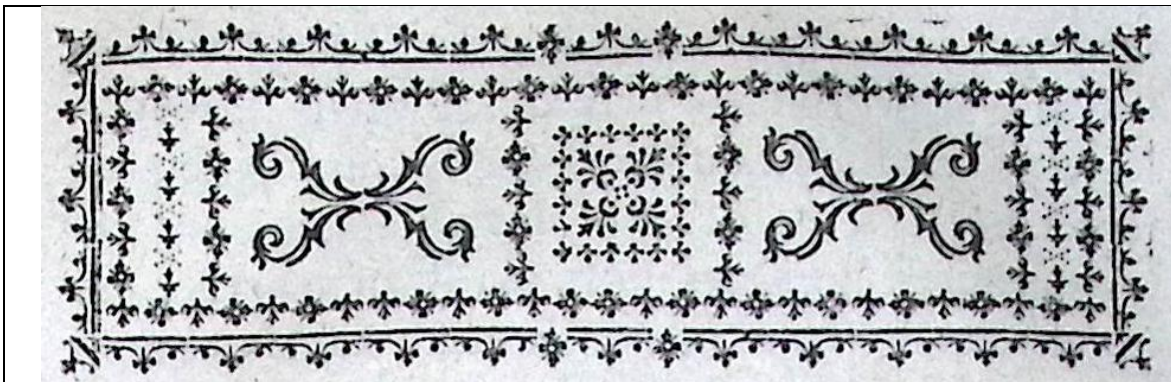


Fig. 17.
H-1773: 08, t. I, p. 237.



Fig. 18.
Du Buat, *Éléments*, Dufour, t. IV, p. v.

Conclusion

The case studies just presented are, of course, only preliminary steps toward a theorization and a more methodical application of the typographical material offered by composed ornamentation. The demonstrative value of engraved ornamentation had, for example, already been established in 1980 by Giles Barber with regard to Voltaire's *Candide*.¹⁴ These remain useful for identifying a counterfeit *Candide* printed by the Rouen printer Louis-Joseph Oursel for Pierre Machuel in 1775.¹⁵ The resources of composed ornamentation, for their part, allowed Robert Granderoute in 1994 to classify editions of Marmontel's *Bélisaire* of 1767 that bear the Parisian imprint of Merlin.¹⁶ More recent publications—by David Adams, by Muriel Collart on Montesquieu, by Cecil Courtney and Claudette Fortuny on the *Histoire des deux Indes*, or by David Smith on Madame de Graffigny—not only emphasized modes of ornamental composition but have also at times begun to provide reproductions that make these specifications more visible and verifiable.¹⁷

It will now be necessary to take critical account of the possibilities for constructing databases of composed ornaments offered by the convergence of library catalogues and reproductions on the internet through Google, Archive, or Europeana. The catalogues of the largest libraries, as well as those forming regional or local networks, are often incomplete and disappointing. One example may be cited concerning the catalogues of the BnF and the CCFr.¹⁸ The capture of documents reproduced online is of variable quality. Ornamental composition, by its nature, should permit a digital identification whose methods have already been outlined.¹⁹

¹⁴ VOLTAIRE, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Theodore BESTERMAN, vol. 48, *Candide*, ed. René POMEAU, Oxford, The Voltaire Foundation, 1980.

¹⁵ D. DROIXHE, “La contrefaçon rouennaise...,” quoted.

¹⁶ Jean-François MARMONTEL, *Bélisaire*, edited, presented, and annotated by Robert GRANDEROUTE, Paris, Société des textes français modernes, 1994, pp. lxi–lxviii; D. DROIXHE, Muriel COLLART, and Alice PIETTE, “‘Je suis à la troisième édition de *Bélisaire*’. Une contrefaçon du *Bélisaire* de Marmontel par le Liégeois Jean-François Bassompierre (1767),” *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 98, 2023, pp. 185–198 [<https://hdl.handle.net/2268/305447>].

¹⁷ David ADAMS and D. DROIXHE, “Quelle contrefaçon rouennaise du *Théâtre* de Diderot a été imprimée par Louis-Joseph Oursel pour Pierre Machuel en 1770–1771?,” *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, 58, 2023, pp. 211–218 [<https://hdl.handle.net/2268/309739>]; Claudette FORTUNY, “La troisième édition de l'*Histoire des deux Indes* de l'abbé Raynal,” *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 12, 2001, pp. 260–297; idem, “Les éditions lyonnaises de l'*Histoire des deux Indes* de l'abbé Raynal,” *Histoire et civilisation du livre*, 2, 2006, pp. 169–188; David SMITH, *Bibliographie des œuvres de Mme de Graffigny 1745–1855*, Ferney-Voltaire, Centre international d'étude du XVIIIe siècle, 2016, pp. 204–207; Muriel COLLART, “L'édition Machuel des *Lettres persanes* (1760),” *Histoire et civilisation du livre*, 20, 2024, pp. 287–309.

¹⁸ D. DROIXHE, “The Rouen nebula of counterfeiting. AI, the BnF and Voltaire's editions,” forthcoming?

¹⁹ D. DROIXHE, “Une contrefaçon du *Siècle de Louis XIV* de Voltaire imprimée par Abraham-François Viret pour Pierre Machuel en 1764. Style ornemental et identification numérique,” forthcoming in *Revue Voltaire*.

Photographic captures from originals using a scanner with HD high-definition camera (27 MP) are recommended.

The present study has left unresolved the question of the relationship—sometimes conflicting—between ornamentation and foliation. This problem will also be addressed elsewhere, with the use of Venn diagrams to evaluate the degree of tolerance and the meaning that a discrepancy may present.

Literary history, moreover, would need to open itself more fully to technical and economic investigations that often escape its preferred field of study, even though production and distribution affect reading and the sociology of reception. It is also clear that digital technology could bring considerable progress in the processing – by clustering (the ancient atomic clinamen of Epicurus) – of ornamental characters or flowers. We must hope that the same clinamen will not stop the research by a deviation feared by the mathematician René Thom. He wrote: “Plunging the evolution of phenomena into a sort of ‘artistic blur,’ imagining oneself at the crossroads, and by an involuntary flick of the finger hurling the world into an abyss of successive catastrophes...”²⁰

²⁰ Quoted by CHRIS ANDREWS : *How to Do Things with Forms. The OuLiPo and Its Inventions*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2022, pp. 147-149, “Clinamen: A swerving notion”.