

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

No.10 A Tooled Fore-Edge Title

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The orientation of volumes on shelves has both differed from region to region within Europe and varied from period to period.¹ For present purposes, however, it is convenient to start with Graham Pollard's generalisation that

In Germany, Holland, England, and, I think, Spain, it was the custom about 1600 to set the books with the fore-edge outwards ...²

In chained libraries this orientation was dictated by the presence of the chain itself, since with volumes shelved upright, fore-edge out, it was attached to the front edge of one of the boards. But it has been recognized by writers on the history of binding that collections (including private collections) which were not chained might well at this early period be shelved fore-edge outwards too. The most common form of identifying volumes so shelved, whether chained or not, was to write in ink on the fore-edge details of title, author or other identification. Also found are flap-titles, the subject of an earlier note in this series, where the details were written on a slip of paper or vellum attached to the volume in such a way that it overhung one of the edges. Yet a third form of identification – the subject of this note – was occasionally employed: instead of the details being *written* on the fore-edge they were impressed in gold through the use of lettering tools. This third form is not unknown, but I believe it to be sufficiently uncommon to warrant the reporting of a further instance.

J.C.T. Oates, in discussing volumes in the Cambridge University Library so identified, has described them as having 'titles gauffered in gold on the fore-edge', but, in that gauffering (or 'goffering') is usually used in reference to decorating rather than identifying,³ I have preferred to retain the terms employed to describe the use of the same tools when impressed in leather: 'lettering' or 'tooling'.

The example of fore-edge tooling illustrated here is on an exemplar of Martin Del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex* (Moguntiae, apud Ioannem Albinvm. Anno M. D.

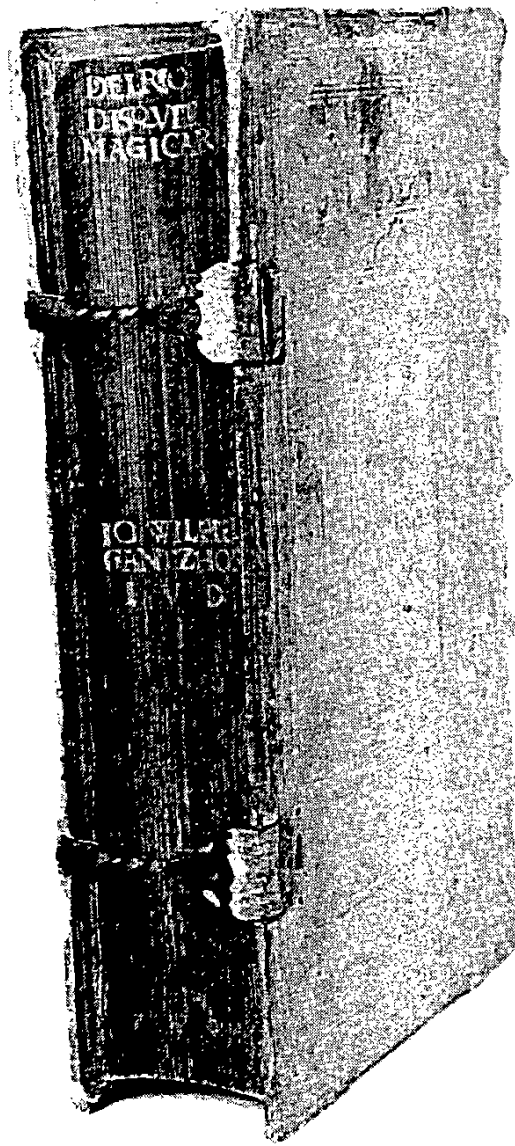
1 See the references in B.J. McMullin, 'Flap-titles', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin*, 22(1998), 107-110.

2 Graham Pollard, 'Changes in the style of bookbinding, 1550-1830', *The Library*, 5th ser., 11(1956), 71-94 (p.73).

3 Geoffrey Ashall Glaister, *Glossary of the book* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960):

goffered edges: the gilt edges of a book which have been decorated by the finisher who has heated tools to indent a small repeated pattern in them. The style was popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. Also called **chased edges** or **gauffered edges**.

chased edges: the gilded edges of a book which have been decorated by the finisher with heated tools known as goffering irons. A wavy or crimped effect results. Also known as **goffered edges**.



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CIII.), 2°,)(-2)(⁶ A-Z⁶):(-2):(4; 2A-2Y⁶ 2Z⁴ *⁶ 2*⁴; 3A-3X⁶ 3Y⁸, with a colophon on 3Y7^r repeating the information contained in the imprint.⁴ In the lower margin is the signature Joannis Wilhelmj Ganzhornij I V D' (=Juris Utriusque Doctor, or Doctor of Both Laws – i.e. Canon and Civil). The edges are stained dark blue, and on the fore-edge is the lettering in gold in three groupings:

DELRIO | DISQVIT | MAGICAR

IO WILHEL | GANTHOR | I V D

1604

The date is at variance with that in the volume itself: can it be that it is the date of the lettering? The volume is bound in pigskin over wooden boards, blind-stamped and with the original clasps. In the topmost of the six panels on the backstrip is a manuscript identification:

Mart Delrio

Disquis: Magicæ

and in the second panel are traces of a paper label. The manuscript title presumably cannot predate the lettered fore-edge title, but how much later it is I cannot suggest (my unpractised eye recognizes only that it is 'old').

Oates was unable to offer a date earlier than 1637 for an *English* fore-edge title, though he traced the model for the Cambridge binder John Houlden to Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn (1545-1617), Prince-Bishop of Würzburg. In referring to the Cambridge examples Oates suggested that 'the gauffering of titles is a technique more appropriate to the collection of some princely bibliophile than to the *bibliotheca communis* of a university'.⁵ I have not sought to identify Ganzhorn, but on the face of it the present volume suggests a socially more widespread use of fore-edge titling. The present example also confirms the form of identification as German and coincides in date with Echter's practice. But is there evidence that would extend the incidence of the practice, either geographically or temporally?

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4 Monash University, *SW f133.4 D364D. Though not germane to the present note, the title page is of interest. It is engraved and appears to have been designed for a work on Exodus; the central panel has been voided and the plate printed on a rolling press, with the Delrio details added by letterpress.

5 On the score of princely fore-edge titles it is appropriate to note T. Kimball Brooker, 'Paolo Manutio's use of fore-edge titles for presentation copies (1540-1541)', *The Book Collector*, 46(1997), 27-68, 193-209. The Paolo Manutio material is extracted from Brooker's *Upright works: the emergence of the vertical library in the sixteenth century*, announced in mid-1997 as to be 'published shortly'.