



A DETAIL IN THE ARTISTIC PARISIAN WORLD?
THE STATUS OF ILLUMINATORS IN MODERN PERIOD (REVIEW)

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UM DETALHE NO MUNDO ARTÍSTICO PARISIENSE?
O STATUS DOS ILUMINADORES NO PERÍODO MODERNO (RESENHA)

UN DÉTAIL DE LA SCÈNE ARTISTIQUE PARISIENNE ?
LE STATUT DES ENLUMINEURS À L'ÉPOQUE MODERNE (REVUE)

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews the recent publication of Richard and Mary Rouse's investigation of the French illuminators between 1500 and 1715 and the new information brought to light regarding the evolution of their profession, their daily life and their integration into the Parisian artistic community. In doing so, further elements and reflexions are added, regarding the semantic evolution of the word *enlumineur* compared with the new word *miniaturiste* appearing in the early 17th century vocabulary and Parisian cultural world.

Keywords: Review. Illuminators. Miniaturists. Book trade. Trade's history.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a recente publicação da investigação de Richard e Mary Rouse sobre os iluminadores franceses entre 1500 e 1715 e as novas informações trazidas à luz sobre a evolução de sua profissão, seu cotidiano e sua integração na comunidade artística parisiense. Ao fazê-lo, acrescentam-se mais elementos e reflexões sobre a evolução semântica da palavra *enlumineur* em relação à nova palavra *miniaturiste* que surge no vocabulário do início do século XVII e no mundo cultural parisiense.

Palavras-chaves: Crítica. Iluminadores. Miniaturistas. Negócio de livros. História de negócios.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article est une recension de la récente publication de Richard et Mary Rouse intitulé Renaissance Illuminators in Paris. Artists & Artisans 1500-1750 (pub. 2019). De nouvelles informations y sont apportées quant à la vie, à l'évolution professionnelle et à l'intégration des enlumineurs dans la communauté artistique de Paris à l'époque moderne. L'article est complété d'indications et réflexions concernant l'évolution sémantique du terme "enlumineur" par rapport au terme "miniaturiste" qui apparaît dans la littérature au début du XVIIe siècle, et la révolution culturelle que provoque ce changement.

Mots-clés: Recension. Enlumineurs. Miniaturistes. Marché du livre. Histoire des métiers.

Here is a review of the recent publication of Mary and Richard Rouse: *Renaissance Illuminators in Paris. Artists & Artisans 1500-1750*, published in Turnhout by Harvey Miller in 2019². It should not surprise us that this book quickly becomes a reference for the study of the illuminators' profession, such as was their previous work on illuminators from the 13th to the 15th century as it offers new information on the illuminators' *métier* during the modern period³. While illuminators, and their co-workers in the book trade, were often considered as a detail in the general Art History, quite set apart from the Fine Arts, this publication certainly showcases that it was never the case in their time, and gives them their rightful place as polyvalent artists, building bridges between painters and the book trade, which included editors and printers of engravings and manuscripts, and inventing new forms of art that flourished from the 16th century, all of this in order to survive in Modern period France.

This book, also a deathbed request by the late Myra Dickman-Orth (1934-2002), an art historian specialized in Renaissance illumination, is the result of sixteen years of research. The authors have been able to reconstruct a history from fragments, starting from a simple word: *enlumineur*, illuminator in English. This word is scattered among hundreds of archival records and encompasses many information and meanings for the man living in the Modern period. This plurality of meanings and activities linked with them is explained in the essay, composed of five chapters, each linked to a specific type of archival document: legal and judicial issues (chapter 1), notarial deeds of these artists' daily life (chapter 2), the business-related papers including contracts for commissions (chapter 3) and apprenticeship (chapter 4) and the conclusion on the continuity of the illuminators trade after 1715.

² ROUSE, R.H.; ROUSE, M.A. *Renaissance Illuminators in Paris. Artists & Artisans 1500-1750*. London and Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2019. 280 pp. Colour illustrations, bibliography, and index. €125,00. ISBN 978-1-912554-28-7

³ ROUSE, R. H.; ROUSE, M. A. *Manuscripts and their Makers. Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200- 1500*. London and Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2000.

(Fig.1) The essay is followed by the basis of their research: a Register of more than 500 names, ordering alphabetically all the illuminators and their co-workers such as parchment-makers, scribes and editors that have been mentioned in the *Fichier Laborde*, a repertoire recording christenings, marriages, deaths, etc.⁴ The Rouses' choice to publish only those named as illuminators proper or correlated to their work, like parchment makers, highlights one very important idea: an illuminator works on a book. This detail is quite important as in the end of the 16th century, this profession broke away from those using the same pictorial technique but only for independent works of art: the miniaturists. Although they may work together, they may combine both skills, and they use the same technique and materials, these productions cannot be mistaken for the same, much like the words used to name them. Hence this paper gives in details a review on this book about illuminators only, followed by further thoughts on their links with miniaturists, and more generally, the art world surrounding them.

Until the 16th century, illuminators were painters of the books' pages and as such, linked to the book trade professions which included librarians, parchment makers, scribes, bookbinders, etc. This group of workmen were all under the jurisdiction of the University of Paris, and not gathered in corporations as were all the other professions in Paris⁵. According to the Rouses and recent research, book trade had

4 This *Fichier* is a repertoire of craftsmen that have appeared in the Parisian archives, most of them destroyed during the uprising of *La Commune* in Paris in 1871, all compiled by art historian Léon de Laborde. It is one of the most useful tools for the documentation of artists' lives, including not only painters and sculptors, but also masons, musicians, and so on. The *Fichier Laborde* or *Répertoire alphabétique de noms d'artistes et artisans, des XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, relevés dans les anciens registres de l'État civil parisien...* is kept at the French National Library, and is entirely digitized: Laborde, L. de. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, NAF 12038-12215 [Online, last visited on January 22nd]: <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc11638z>.

5 Until the Revolution in 1789, almost all professions were ruled by corporations, that is to say by groups of men making sure their coworkers were trained and working according to the proper standards of their profession. Workers were often controlled that there were not cheating on the quality of their products (especially for textiles and goldsmithery) and that their behaviour was not threatening their co-workers livelihood. Further reading : LESPINASSE, R. De ; BONNARDOT, F. Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris : XIIIe siècle, Le Livre des métiers d'Etienne Boileau. Paris : Imprimerie Nationale, 1879 ; COORNAERT, E. Les corporations en France avant 1789. Paris, Gallimard, 1868.

been one of the most important professions in France since at least the 13th century⁶. In this field, Paris concentrated most of the workforce, being one of the main production centres in Europe in addition to being France's main political, economic, and cultural hub⁷. Upon the advent of the press and during the modern period, it was only shadowed by Venice, its greatest rival. Even the terrible events of the 16th century, what with regicides and Religious Wars, did not have any impact on its production⁸. Nevertheless, this invention of the printing process and the evolution of European thinking, with the development of Humanism and Reform, shaped this workforce which included among others, librarians becoming editors, parchment sellers and copyists quickly disappearing, and of course, illuminators. The latter, although they have survived up to now⁹, had to quickly evolve over a few decades while their livelihood was being threatened.

Without restrictions, the illuminators were able to offer various productions: from book illumination, they produced independent miniatures, could paint playing cards and illuminate engravings. However, freedom comes with self-sufficiency and only the well-connected artists could hope to thrive. Consequently, by the 16th century, many illuminators had no other choice than joining the Painters' corporation (ROUSE; ROUSE, 2019, p. 21-23). It is unfortunately very difficult to

6 Apart from the Rouses' publication of 2000 (see note 1), you can read: LABARRE, A. Histoire du livre. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 2001 and also CASSAGNES-BROUQUET, S. La passion du livre au Moyen âge. Rennes : Éd. Ouest-France, 2003.

7 JOUANNA, A. La France du XVI^e siècle, 1483-1598. 2nd édition. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 2006. LE FUR, D. Une autre histoire de la Renaissance. Paris : Perrin, 2018.

8 Sixteenth century has been most eventful for the French history. Six kings came on the throne. Next to European rivalry between France and the Holy Roman Empire and Kingdom of Spain of Charles V and then Philip II on one side, and Henry VIII's then Elizabeth I's England on the other, religious turmoil of the Reformation brought out civil war, starting from Henri II's reign (r. 1547-1559), reaching to the well-known Saint-Bartholomew's massacre on August 24th 1572 and ending with Henri IV (r. 1589-1610). These religious wars also led to two regicides: the one of Henri III in 1589 by the monk Jacques Clément, and in 1610 of his successor Henri IV, known as protestant, although he converted to Catholicism to ascend the throne of France, by Ravallac. Further reading about French history: KNECHT, R.J. The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France 1483-1610. London: Wiley Blackwell, 2001. (2nd ed., 1st ed. in 1996 by Fontana Press).

9 In France, the métier is still alive; it is taught at the Institut Supérieur Européen de l'Enluminure et du Manuscrit (ISEEM), located in Angers: <https://iseem.fr>.

decipher whether these multitalented artists were considered painters first or illuminators: while Flemish born Noël Bellemare (a. 1512-1546), may have qualified as the latter, his fellow countryman Jean Clouet (a. 1515-1540), may have been deemed the former instead. If they were few in the early 16th century, the number of painters-illuminators quickly increased in time, enough for them to petition King Henry IV for their own corporation in 1608. The King's refusal would lead to even more illuminators entering the Painters' corporation.

This versatility in their production was necessary for them to thrive. Thus, many illuminators were given several titles. Among the 500 names in the Register of the Rouses' publication here reviewed, 135 are known to have at least another string to their bow: 70 of them were painters, 8 were carvers, 29 were also *enlumineur en taille douce*, producing engravings and illuminating them, and some of them were called embroiderer-illuminator (ROUSE; ROUSE, 2019, p. 25-26; 40). The objects which they worked on also varied considerably and, from the early 17th century, many craftsmen specialized themselves in painting on fans (like Charles Binet and Charles Delafont), crystals, enamels, and so on. Consequently, if we disregard the circa 50 other book-trade craftsmen still within the book-trade, more than half of the illuminators had at least one more activity, that is to say more than 200 craftsmen out of the circa 500 names of the Rouses' Register. This plurality of titles perfectly illustrates the necessity of evolution for these originally book-painters, but also shows how the University was quickly seeing the lack of necessity to protect them, now that they proved no longer useful to the book trade. Only few of them remained in its vicinity, adding gilding, printing and parchment-making to their illuminating skills.

This skilfulness became ever more important when shared among the different members of a family. This publication's authors have analysed the case of three important families, whose history had remained relatively overlooked: the Hardouin, the Chuppin and the Richer. Between the 16th

and the early 18th century, approximately fifty families prospered thanks to the exchange of skills between their different members. Indeed, training fees were inexistent in the case of a father passing down his knowledge to a son and heir. The heir would sometimes go to another workshop in order to enhance his abilities and would come back to work in the family trade. In doing so, these families could respond to specific requests, with no further expenses, as the commission could be entirely produced among relatives.

Besides, partnerships seem to have been one of the important ways to thrive. They allowed artists to share expenses and profits, and to sign more substantial contracts. The latter enabled them to benefit from large orders like the illumination of prestigious books in several volumes for instance. These partnerships could have been short-termed, ending at the end of the commission, or long-termed, such as the one between illuminators Geoffroy Ballin, Jean Pignot and wood-engraver Jean de Gourmont mentioned by the authors (ROUSE; ROUSE, 2019, p. 65). This lifelong partnership aimed at producing prints to be sold, of which Ballin and Pignon would be the designers, and Gourmont the engraver and possibly printer. However, these long-term partnerships were quite exceptional, and short-term ones, around a particular commission, were more usual.

The evolution in the illuminators work influenced the entire community around the University. As the separation with the librarians was now complete, they moved closer to the printers, gilders and goldsmiths, but also closer to their possible commissioners, settling down in the vicinity of the Louvre palace, on the *Île de la Cité*, where Notre Dame stands still, and in the neighbourhood of Saint Paul, now called the *Marais*, where the fashionable elite of the 17th century build their *hotels particuliers*.



FIGURA 1.

Jean-Pierre Rousselet, *The Agony in the Garden*, circa 1720-1730, gouache and gold leaf on vellum. Los Angeles, Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig V 8 (83.MG.83), fol. 2v (Public domain : <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/3146/jean-pierre-rousselet-the-agony-in-the-garden-french-about-1720-1730/>)

The evolution of the book-trade's craftsmen can only be deciphered thanks to the archival records. Unfortunately, very little documentation concentrates on them. A small number of after-death inventories give us a better understanding of their workshop practices and materials. Apprenticeship contracts confirm that several of these workshops were indeed thriving. For instance, illuminator Nicolas I du Hanot, known only between 1543 and 1547, took no less than three apprentices over this short period of time. Jean Le Gay (or de Quay), active between 1539 and 1551, took four apprentices between 1539 and 1549 (ROUSE; ROUSE, 2019, p. 106, 190, 218-219). To these examples may be added those of painters who also practiced the art of illuminating, like court painter François Clouet (c. 1510-1572), of which we only know two apprentices, but who may have had many in order to take on all the commissions he received from both court and city¹⁰. The latter is not included in the Rouses' Register, unlike his father Jean Clouet, although he is known for having practiced this art, if the attribution to him and his workshop of the miniature portraits in the *Book of Hours of Catherine de Medici* (Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, NAL 82) and the many independent miniatures do stand. In a time when both illuminators and miniaturists were still considered one and the same, he ought to have been included.

Unlike for the painting in oils, almost no business-related documentation (contracts, receipts, inventories) are preserved. Extant contracts deal with illuminated books, given that they entailed considerable expense for materials (including gold) and wages. Here will be mentioned the contract between Bonaventure Mezoulle, illuminator, and Anthoine Fayet, vicar at Saint-Paul's church (Paris, *Archives Nationales*, MC/ET/CV/296, dated April 1st, 1606) (ROUSE; ROUSE, 2019, p. 86). However, by the end of the 16th century, illuminated books were the least important part

¹⁰ Cachaud C. « François Clouet ». *Recensement de la peinture en France au XVI^e siècle*, 2021 [Online, visited January 28th 2022] : <https://agorha.inha.fr/ark:/54721/675bda0a-713e-4fcb-aae9-6a-c45ef218a0>. Extensive bibliography is indicated.

of their work; they spent their time producing small *tableaux enluminés* or *tableau en parchemin*¹¹, illuminated prints and portrait miniatures. As mentioned by the authors: “An *enlumineur* was someone who made small, coloured pictures” (ROUSE; ROUSE, 2019, p.49). These artworks were unfortunately considered economical, low-valued, and quickly done, although they depicted with minute precision and great details, many scenes and portraits that traditional painters spread on walls, canvases and larger wooden panels.

There lie the limits of the Rouses’ publication. As too few archives are preserved, it is very difficult to acknowledge the actual production of these craftsmen. In the 16th century, illuminating book was still a great part of their work, hence hundreds of them are documented, but this craft declines quickly during Louis XIV’s reign (r. 1643-1715), despite the King’s commissions. In addition, we should consider that only about 300 portrait miniatures which were painted in France between 1520 and 1630 are known¹². Hundreds more must have been produced but only a very few are actually documented. Even less seem to have been preserved for the 17th century, as many “portrait miniatures” were produced by enamellers, such as in Toutain’s and Petitot’s workshops, or in oil on copper in painters’ studios – and those pieces are not considered “miniatures”¹³. Next to the books illumination and the independent little

11 Coyecque, E. *Recueil d’actes notariés relatifs à l’histoire de Paris et de ses environs au XVI^e siècle. T. II 1532-1555*. Paris : Imprimerie nationale, 1923, n° 3760 and n° 3770 [Online, last visited on January 22nd] : https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/mm/media/download/FRAN_ANX_008001.pdf.

12 This author is currently undertaking research on French Renaissance portrait miniatures: CA-CHAUD, C. *Le portrait miniature sur vélin à Paris au XVI^e siècle: Renaissance, développement, déclin*. PhD thesis project, supervised by Prof. F. Elsig, University of Geneva. It ought to be defended in 2025.

13 Miniature painting is defined by its technic above all else, painted with water-based colours on smooth support, such as vellum and then ivory. Although these oils and enamelled little portraits are generally exhibited with the other traditional miniatures, they are often studied separately, even if they are commissioned by the same people, and have the same functions. About enamelled miniatures, see M. Bimbenet-Privat’s publications including *Les Orfèvres et l’orfèvrerie de Paris au XVII^e siècle*, Paris, 2002 and « Une famille d’orfèvres parisiens au XVI^e siècle, les Toutain », *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartres*, 1983, vol. 141, n° 1, p. 91-115 [Online, visited January 18th 2022] : https://www.persee.fr/doc/bec_0373-6237_1983_num_141_1_450293. See also CLOUZOT, H. *La miniature sur émail en France*. Paris : Éditions Albert Morancé, 1928, and his *Dictionnaire des miniaturistes sur émail*, Paris : Éditions Albert Morancé, 1924.

miniatures, these craftsmen also produced illuminated painting, these aforementioned *tableaux en parchemin*, also called “cabinet painting”¹⁴. They were the cheaper version of the paintings on wood or canvas, but more refined than the prints. Very few examples have survived, and it is still very difficult to discern which of these are illuminated paintings and which are illuminations torn from their book. In the former category can be integrated: portraits, history painting on vellum, botanical and animal plates, maps, even costume designs, and so on. Consequently, it is through archival research, as the authors of this publication have brilliantly done, and through the study of the illuminated artworks that are preserved, that a more exhaustive register could have been offered.

Indeed, the late 16th and 17th centuries witness a shift into this profession, clearly visible in the Rouses’ publication by the absence of many miniaturists, although the actual word “miniature” doesn’t appear in French texts before the first half of the 17th century¹⁵. However, the word *enluminure* is known in the French language since, at least, Dante Alighieri’s days¹⁶. Then, it is commonly used for any production of painting on vellum¹⁷. By the 17th century, the meaning of both words was quite blurred into one another. For instance, Giulio Clovio (1498-1578), famous illuminator and painter active in Italy is mentioned by André Félibien in his *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes* as such : “*Je ne sçay si*

14 For an introduction about cabinet miniatures, see COLDING, T.H. *Aspects of Miniature Painting. Its Origins and Development*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1953, chapter IV.

15 The earliest French occurrence that we have found is in the *Trésor des deux langues espagnolle et françoise* by César Oudin, published in 1645, translating “miniadura” and the next year in the catalogue of M. de Scudéry’s cabinet.

16 In his *Divina Commedia*, Dante writes: “Oh! Diss’io lui, non se’ tu Oderisi, l’onor d’Agobbio e l’onor di quell’arte ch’alluminar chiamata è in Parisi?” which can be translated as « Oh ! I called him, ain’t you Oderisi, the honour of Agobbio and the honor of this art that is called illumination in Paris ?” (author’s translation). ALIGHIERI, D. *La Comédie*. Paris: Gallimard, coll. Poésie, 2012, p. 532-533, Purgatoire, Chant XI, v. 79-81.

17 In 1577, feeling himself sick, Flemish-born painter Jooris van der Straeten drew his will, including the debts owed to him, including 24 *écus* by the King of France for two small portraits “enluminez”, which actually are miniature portraits. See GRODECKI, C. *Documents du Minutier central des Notaires. Histoire de l’art au XVI^e siècle (1540-1600)*. Vol. II. Paris: Archives Nationales, 1986. p. 213-214, n° 851.

*vous vous souvenez d'un JULIO CLOVIO qui travailloit excellemment de miniature*¹⁸. Although the word miniature is used, Clovio was, in fact, an illuminator who mainly painted in books, but also produced independent paintings and miniatures. This can be confirmed in his oil portrait by El Greco, dated 1571 (Naples, Capodimonte museum, Q 191), in which he is shown holding a miniature, and by his own self-portrait on vellum, painted in 1528 (Vienna, *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, unknown inv. n° 4202)¹⁹. This example corroborates how porous the concepts behind such words as illumination and miniature were.

Consequently, the Rouses' Register includes famous portraitist Jean Clouet (d. 1540), active at King Francis I's court, but not his son François as mentioned before, even though he was as gifted – or possibly more – than his father (Fig.2). This is also why there is an entry for Pierre Dumonstier, for he was found as *enlumineur* in the archives, yet none for either his father Geoffroy, or his brother Côme, who were much more active in this field than him but probably could not be found mentioned as such in the archives²⁰.

By the 17th century, we notice that the break-up between illuminators and miniature painters seems to have been effective, although it is not explained in Rouses' publication. The former worked mainly on books and prints, the later worked on independent vellums. However, several artists painted on both mediums and appear in the Register, like Daniel Rabel (1578-1637), who painted a book of botanical plates in 1624 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Estampes, Ja 19) as well as



FIGURA 2.

Jean Clouet. *Charles de Cossé* (1506-1563), count of Brissac, c. 1535, gouache and gold on vellum, 37 mm d. New York : The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 35.89.1 (public domain : <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/435915>)

18 Vol. III, published in 1679, p. 120. "I don't know if you recall a Julio Clovio who worked brilliantly in miniature" (author's translation).

19 FALOMIR, M. (dir.). *El retrato del Renacimiento* ; exh. cat. Museo nacional del Prado, Madrid, June 3rd to September 7th, 2008. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado and Ediciones el Viso, 2008. p. 296, n° 71,

20 AVRIL, F., REYNAUD, N. ; CORDELLIER, D. (dir.) *Les enluminures du Louvre. Moyen-Age et Renaissance, catalogue raisonné*. Paris : Hazan et Louvre Éditions, 2011, p. 260 but also, BEGUIN, S.(dir.). *Dictionnaire de la Renaissance*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1998, p. 279. The Dumonstier family is known since the late 15th century with Jean Dumonstier, illuminator working in Rouen.

miniatures²¹, but also the entire family of Duguernier, all known as enlumineurs, although some worked chiefly as miniaturists (Fig.3). Nevertheless, those who have been categorized as miniature painters such as Pierre Paupelier (1621-1666), active do not appear in the Register²².

Finally, to know more about the status of illuminators, one last forgotten family ought to be added to those considered by the Rouses. As has been formerly raised in introduction, parchment makers also have their place in the Register, and the Roussel family seems to have been missed. On January 14th 1549, Robine Boulanger, widow of Robert Roussel, also named Raoulet Roussel, gave up the house she lived in with her husband on *rue des Noyers* and settled down “aux fossés de la porte Saint-Victor”, maybe at Philippe Marchand’s tavern, who acted as executor of the late Raoulet Roussel’s will²³. On the following 19th, the latter received 32 pounds to be given to the widow as result of the sale of the house that the family left upon Roussel’s death²⁴. This Robert or Raoulet Roussel left two sons, one also named Robert, here known as Robert III, already settled as a parchment maker as his father, and one Zacharie, aged fourteen years old, placed in Gilles Anguier’s workshop, master painter, only two months after the sale of the house²⁵.

The family links with the painters’ corporation do not stop there. Upon Raoulet Roussel’s death, another painter, Nicolas Chevalier, is appointed as the children’s guardian, as mentioned in the document dated January 14th. It is not known whether Zacharie enters the corporation. He appears again in April 1560, this time in the *Fichier Laborde*, baptizing his daughter Marie with his wife Simone Lemoine, while living on *rue Saint-*

21 The Louvre Museum has recently been given a miniature ascribed to Daniel Rabel : “Le musée du Louvre acquiert 25 oeuvres”, Press release, November 4th, 2021 [Online, visited January 28th 2022] : <https://presse.louvre.fr/le-musee-du-louvre-acquiert-25-oeuvres/>

22 Even though Troyes was described by Félibien in the same words as Clovio’s, mentioned earlier. See *Entretiens...* op. cit., 1688, Vol. V, p. 181.

23 Coyecque, op. cit., n° 5155

24 *Ibid*, n° 5158

25 *Ibid*, n° 5196



FIGURA 3.

Daniel Rabel and workshop, *Heroicomicol costume*, between 1614 and 1634, brown ink and pen, grey wash, gouache, watercolour, gold and silver on unknown medium pasted on paper, 264x158. Paris, musée du Louvre, Edmond de Rothschild collection, inv. 1689/DR / Recto (Photo by C. Cachaud, December 2021, public domain)

Honoré. He is mentioned as a simple “*painctre*”²⁶. No further information is available about the Roussels as parchment makers, but it ought to be brought to light that other Roussels were known as members of the painters’ corporation in Paris, during the same period.

Another Roussel, Robert lived as a master stained-glass maker between 1525 and 1541 and died before 1544²⁷. A couple decades later, a second Robert Roussel – here known as Robert II – is known as a painter, working for Claude Gouffier, *Grand Ecuyer du Roi*, painting portraits and decorations²⁸. Although no evidence can be offered here to confirm a link between these three Robert Roussel, it is still possible to hypothesize that they all three belonged to one and the same family. Robert I, the stained-glass maker, may have been a brother of Robert/Raoulet Roussel the parchment-maker. Robert II Roussel, the painter, could have been a son of either, acting as a Master Painter as early as 1559. The family would have been complete with another parchment-maker, the young Robert III Roussel, son of Raoulet, and his brother Zacharie, also a painter²⁹.

If these links were to be confirmed, this family would be the epitome of the relationships between painters and the book-trade profession according to the Rouses. Painters could rely on parchment-makers for their materials, and on the illuminators to help them securing important commissions such as the books decoration. Indeed, I agree with Rouses’ analysis of the reasons why, in 1608, the Parisian illuminators were

26 *Fichier Laborde*, NAF 12182, n° 59601.

27 LEPROUX, Guy-Michel. *La Peinture à Paris sous le règne de François I^{er}*. Paris : Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2001. p. 187.

28 *Les Trésors du Grand Ecuyer*. Claude Gouffier, collectionneur et mécène à la Renaissance. Catalogue d’exposition : Écouen, Musée National de la Renaissance, 16 novembre 1994 - 27 février 1995. Paris : Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1994, p. 92.

29 Nevertheless, the family name « Roussel » seems to have been quite common in 16th and 17th centuries Paris, even though it has many spellings, adding more difficulties to the task. A great family of goldsmiths with the same name thrived contemporaneously for at least a hundred years (1550s-1650s), but no links have been found between them and the painters/parchment-makers. According to the *Fichier Laborde*, there were also printers, master gilders and librarians. There is a possible link between the gilders and the goldsmiths, as they invite similar godparents to the christening of their children.



FIGURA 4.

French school, after François Clouet. *Equestrian portrait of Charles IX*, late 16th century, gouache and gold on vellum, 282x213 mm. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, NMB 1668 (Photo by Anna Danielsson / Nationalmuseum, licence CC-BY-SA :

refused by King Henry IV to form a corporation and prosper separately from painters: they were quite sought out, and their being independent threatened the Painters' corporation. Officially, the reason for this refusal was that it "would be harmful to the welfare of gifted poor gentlemen and ecclesiastics who earned a living by teaching this art" (p. 23). It is possibly one of the reasons, but the main seems to be that the creation of this *maîtrise jurée* could have prevented the painters from receiving these luxurious commissions for the production of illuminated books, and the revenues that went with them, for indeed such similar cases of painters living out of the corporation were known in Paris at the same period.

To conclude, Richard H. and Mary A. Rouse's study and Register are thorough and bring new knowledge to light, including not only findings from research in the *Fichier Laborde* but also discoveries of the following publications who added information to this up-to-now much forgotten artistic profession, from Ernest Coyecque's *Recueil d'Actes notariés* (pub. 1905-1923) to Guy-Michel Leproux's *La Peinture à Paris sous le règne de François Ier* (pub. 2001), including Catherine Grodecki's findings (pub. 1986, see note 21) and Marie-Antoinette Fleury's similar book for the 17th century (I pub. 1969, II unpublished). The important collection of archival records made available to the reader highly compensates the lack of actual artworks and attributions, common for this era. Many of them will remain anonymous or lost through history. Moreover, not only the authors have studied the Parisian illuminators but also all the *métiers* surrounding them: the Register includes parchment makers, editors, book binders, scribes, etc.

The *Fichier Laborde* highlights the individual stories of these people: christenings, marriages, deaths, and such. Added to the business-related information provided by the various studies and transcriptions of the archival records preserved in the *Archives nationales* in Paris, the Rouses' publication gives life to an important artistic community of the French capital. Indeed, during their lifetime, these were not the

second-class craftsmen. Many acquired the position of *Maître* in their corporation, were named *Bourgeois de Paris*, engaged in social activities of the city, becoming the *marguillier* of their Church³⁰ or taking charge of their neighbourhood's safety and cleanliness. Although forgotten through time, I hope that this book will trigger new research on this important artistic community and allow new discoveries to flourish.

30 A marguillier is a member of the Counsel of the construction and upkeeping of their parish Church.

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