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in translation collaborative practices and
cooperation

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Term formation as a collaborative practice:
between translation and cooperation among experts

Beatrice Ragazzini
University of Bologna

Abstract

This study describes a 19th-century debate among scholars on the periodisation of English medieval architecture. Through this example, in this article I explore the creation of architectural vocabulary as a collaborative act, whereby the cooperation among experts shaped concepts and terms. At the same time, a translational perspective is offered through the comparison of English and French nomenclatures, which contributed to the creation of a European code of medieval architecture. To illustrate such collaborative practices of terminologists, original quotes from the debate are presented and discussed.

The analysis reveals that while "proper" term translation was not considered as possible, given the exclusively national character of architecture, experts drew inspirations from foreign scholars in the formation of terms, thus fostering international communication and exchange of ideas. Moreover, term formation, as theorised by Sager (1990), is described as a collaborative, and sometimes non-collaborative practice, where multiple actors and factors, including the co-existence of an official and several conversational nomenclatures, contributed to making scientific language evolve.

Keywords: terminology theory, term formation, collaboration, international nomenclature, diachronic perspective, knowledge advancement.

1. Introduction

This article illustrates term formation as a collaborative act. In this context, the international dimension of communication is particularly significant, as the experts addressed the creation of a European nomenclature with the aim of an effective exchange of ideas.

The subject of this study is the discussion which took place in the specialised journal *The Builder* in 1851 between a group of experts on the renewal of the official periodization of English medieval architecture.[1] It was Edmund Sharpe, an English architect, who launched the discussion when he presented his proposal for a new nomenclature and periodization of English medieval architecture. In this study I frame the debate as an example of a collaborative process of the creation of terms and description of concepts.

In this scenario, I look at different aspects of collaboration in the construction of an architectural vocabulary. My reconstruction of the dispute is inspired by John Michael Hughes' 2010 biography of Edmund Sharpe. While Hughes' work focused on an exclusively historical reconstruction of Sharpe's career in architecture, I describe in detail a single episode, i.e., the discussion of Sharpe's alternative periodisation of English medieval architecture by architectural experts and analyse this discussion from the perspective of terminology theory.

Specifically, I address the central role of architecture scholars who cooperated in the construction of the official nomenclature of the discipline. In this collaboration, all scholars contributed – through their nomenclature and classification proposals – to the definition of concepts, as the collaborative discussion entailed successful and unsuccessful naming attempts (see Sager 1990; Pecman 2014). In this process, the proposed nomenclatures were steps forward in the formation of knowledge, resulting from a collaborative and non-collaborative practice of definition of the concepts they designated i.e., periods of English medieval architecture. Following the ISO Standard 704 (2022), reported by Cabré (1999: 95), concepts are "mental constructs that are used to classify the individual objects in the internal or the external world by means of a more or less arbitrary process of abstraction": the periods of medieval architecture can be said to constitute the concepts that needed to be named in this debate.

I also observe this discussion from a terminological perspective, drawing on Sager's (1990: 60) definition of the process of 'terminologisation' i.e., the description of a concept through successive stages of naming, and on Pecman's (2012; 2014) illustration of term formation as a strategy of knowledge construction. Besides terminology theory, the existing literature describes the formation of architectural

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[1] *The Builder: an illustrated weekly magazine for the architect, engineer, operative and artist, archaeologist, constructor, sanitary-reformer and art-lover.* First published by Joseph Hanson in London, December 1842–1966. Then continued by a journal named *Building*, still in existence.

vocabulary from the perspective of the history of architecture (Skipton-Long 2018), as Sharpe's (1851a) proposal is contextualised within the evolution of the discipline, and the overall discussion among experts on the formation of scientific knowledge during the 19th century, specifically in England (Lightman and Zon 2014). The work of Snyder (2011) is also relevant in this context, as she addresses the importance of the debates among experts in the construction of 19th-century knowledge, and illustrates the discussions among William Whewell, John Herschel, and other scholars within the systematisation of knowledge in various disciplines.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces the theoretical framework in terminology theory, presenting the principles on which this study relies, while section 3 describes the methodology of this study, providing details on the research methods adopted. To elaborate on the issue of collaboration, I present a historical reconstruction of the debate in section 4, to provide the reader with the necessary information about the episode.

The central sections of the article examine multiple aspects of collaboration in term formation, as identified in the debate. In section 5.1., I present collaboration as the contemporary existence of an official and multiple conversational nomenclatures, while in section 5.2., I discuss collaboration as the derivation of the present nomenclature from previous naming attempts. Collaboration in naming is illustrated at an international level in section 5.3., as the debate among the 19th-century scholars addressed the co-existence of national nomenclatures and a shared European code. The section describes the translational aspect of term formation, as discussed by the experts.

In section 5.4., other cooperating factors are mentioned. Among them, the publisher's interests in defending a specific nomenclature and publication, or the role of tradition in naming concepts are listed. In section 6, the mutual influence of experts in proposing alternative nomenclatures is illustrated as further evidence of collaboration. In this section, this influence is analysed on an international level, through nomenclatures of foreign architecture, which the authors wrote during their travels.

Finally, section 7 concludes the study. In this section, I reflect upon the representation of term formation as a collaborative act, as consisting of the discussion of alternative nomenclatures and the balancing of contributing factors. A conclusive reflection on collaboration in term formation ends this contribution, as future research perspectives on the application of the proposed method of analysis are outlined.

2. A terminological perspective on collaboration in term formation

This section presents an overview of descriptions of term formation as a collaborative practice in terminology theory. While collaboration is not explicitly defined in terminology, the cooperation among naming attempts and actors is addressed from various perspectives as part of the description of term formation (see Humbley 2018; Myking 2020).

Specifically, the theoretical framework of this study bases on Sager's (1990) definition of terminologisation, as the progressive description of concepts through naming attempts. Pecman (2012: 1) later addresses the same idea of 'tentativeness', considering term formation as a cognitive device in scientific discourse, while various studies describe the motivations behind term formation (Humbley 2018; Myking 2020). This section mentions some significant ones to contextualise this contribution within the existing literature.

Sager's (1997) definition of primary and secondary term formation seems relevant in this context. Specifically, Sager describes primary term formation as the creation of terms for unnamed concepts i.e., concepts which were not named before, while secondary term formation is described as the formation of term variants to define already named concepts. Indeed, as Sager (1997) specifies, existing terms normally influence secondary term formation. Regarding this, Humbley (2018) examines the collective character of term formation, and he also underlines the role of experts within it or, quoting Rondeau (1984, in Humbley 2018: 442) "a group of enlightened speakers", who coin terms. Moreover, Myking (2020: 9) describes the situated nature of the process, as he argues how that differs "across domains, languages, and traditions", and thus "contextual factors" must be considered while describing it.

Additionally, Freixa (2006: 52) illustrates the cooperation of scholars among the discursive causes of term variation. According to Freixa, these can be retraced to the "different stylistic and expressive needs of the authors". Similarly, Pecman (2012) addresses the selection operated by the scientific community of the best proposal for a term. In doing this, she underlines how, most of the times, the chosen term was not new, but a variant of an existing one. This seems comparable to the dynamic represented in the debate I focus on:

> in scientific papers terminological variation can be deliberately used
> in the text to achieve a specific rhetorical function, and thus should
> not be interpreted simply as a sign of the formation of a new term.

> […] The terminology constructed can in turn play an *influential role* among the scientific community and encourage the use of the *proposed denomination* for referring to this specific *concept*, thus effectively giving birth to a new term […]. The appropriate term is regularly selected by *others*, and not by the person who coined it. It is necessarily others who choose the "right" term from amongst the *competing forms*. Through reuse, the term becomes the *common denomination* for a concept. (Pecman 2012: 51)[2]

In this quote, as in this article, the role of existing terms is central in the choice of denominations for concepts, as I describe the influence of precedent term variants and tradition as a form of collaboration. As Pecman (2012) states, term variation can also be interpreted as a declination of secondary term formation, where alternative denominations for already named concepts are proposed, due to different motivations.

In a following article, Pecman (2014) discusses the creation of terms as a cognitive device, concerning in particular "how scientists construct knowledge through term formation" (ibid.: 1). She presents the attempts at denomination as steps forward in the description of concepts, and thus in the formation of knowledge. Pecman's (2014) definition can be connected to Sager's (1990) terminologisation. Indeed, both theories interpret tentative denominations as evidence of a knowledge advancement. The debate I describe can be considered as a representation of this progress of knowledge.

It is important to note how Pecman (2014) lists the different functions of neology in scientific discourse. Quoting Cabré (1999: 206), Pecman (2014: 7) points out that an "essential feature" of neologisms is their instability, which often presents itself in the existence of "a series of variants" for the same term. On the same line, in reference to the role of the scientific community in coining new terms, Myking (2020: 10) underlines both the creative and the normative nature of term formation with the aim of "efficiency in specialised communication".

For the purposes of this article, the role of the scientific community in determining the success of new terms is noteworthy. Collaboration among participants is mentioned as a "crucial" (Meyer *et al.* 1997: 107) component of all terminology projects. Work on terminology is said to be possible only when participants possess a shared knowledge of the

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[2] Unless otherwise specified, emphasis in italic font in citations is added by the author of this article to signal the most salient aspects of the citation itself.

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concepts, to create "a common basis for discussion" (ibid.). Along the same lines, Gilreath (1992: 138) describes term formation as an act of "participation", which can become more successful if participants in the discussion are more involved.

3. Methodology

The method I employ in this study combines multiple approaches for the analysis of the primary sources. The first stage of retrieval of the sources is followed by a secondary stage, where I analyse these sources from the perspective of modern and contemporary terminology theory from the 20th and 21st centuries.

First, historical research approaches are applied in the search for primary sources using online and physical archives, and in the reconstruction of the selected historical episodes (see Lundy 2008). Second, a case-study approach is adopted in the selection of the sources, as the study is centred on a specific episode, reconstructed in its chronological development (see Kothari 2004). Only primary sources are included in the study, which contribute to an exhaustive historical reconstruction of the case-study.

The search for primary sources is performed in online archives using a keyword strategy for the selection of relevant texts. The texts featuring the relevant keywords are then catalogued to be included in the study. The final selection of the sources is performed according to the relevance of the texts in the reconstruction of the terminological process I focus on in this article. In doing this, the primary sources are distinguished in two categories: first, the ones which attest the terminological process described in the study; second, the ones which are useful to reconstruct the historical context of the debate.

Arising from this, secondary sources mainly on terminology theory, but also on history, and the history of science, are selected as part of the theoretical framework of the study. These sources are fundamental for the reconstruction of the episode, and of its historical and social context.

In the elaboration of the primary sources, I employ discourse analysis research strategies. Specifically, I adopt a method known as 'narrative analysis' in the examination of the primary sources, which makes it possible to reconstruct "the history behind the data" (Gimenez 2010: 200). Finally,

I apply approaches pertaining to textual analysis in the elaboration of texts from the primary sources.

4. The debate in *The Builder:* a terminological discussion among experts of architecture

4.1.   Historical reconstruction

In 1851, in the sector journal *The Builder*, a discussion occurred among experts on Edmund Sharpe's proposal of an alternative nomenclature for the periodization of English medieval architecture, which he published in a volume entitled *The seven periods of English architecture* (Sharpe 1851a). Sharpe suggested that English medieval architecture should be divided into seven periods instead of the widely accepted four periods devised by Thomas Rickman (1817) in his *Attempt to discriminate the styles of English architecture.* There followed a debate in *The Builder* over the merits of each periodization. While the debate took place in English and among English scholars, the international usability of the nomenclatures was discussed, with a view to architectural explorations in Europe, in which scholars were involved at the time (Daunton 2005).

Sharpe's nomenclature was already known at the time of the debate since his volume (Sharpe 1851a), had been presented by the architect at a conference May 19th of the same year (Sharpe 1851b). On June 7th, 1851, a first letter by Sharpe appeared in *The Builder,* which agreed to present his classification (Sharpe 1851c).

In response to Sharpe's letter (1851c), on June 21st, an unidentified scholar named FSA condemned *The Builder* for giving space to Sharpe's periodization (FSA 1851a). FSA's criticism concentrated on the dating of buildings and the issue of term originality in Sharpe's classification. The scholar writing under the pseudonym of FSA would reveal his identity later in the debate, introducing himself as John Henry Parker, the publisher of Rickman's (1817) volume, in which the traditional periodization of English medieval architecture was presented. On July 5th, Sharpe responded questioning FSA's authority in determining the period of buildings. In this letter, FSA quoted Parker's (1836) *Glossary of architecture,* as main reference on dating the English ecclesiastical buildings.

On July 12th, 1851, a contribution to the debate was sent in by Edward Augustus Freeman, an architecture historian and author of another

classification in a volume entitled *An essay on the origin and development of window tracery in England* (Freeman 1851a); Freeman questioned the originality of the concept of a *geometrical* style. After him also George William Cox, Late Secretary of the *Oxford Archaeological Society,* addressed the impossibility of a universally agreed-upon categorisation of all medieval buildings. Sharpe's reply followed, on July 19th, underlining the importance of the concept of transition in history and a subsequent one by FSA on the same date, lamenting the insufficient foundation of the new nomenclature to substitute the old one. Starting from the letter published on July 26th (FSA 1851c), the tone of the discussion worsened. Bored with the participants' attitude to the debate, on August 2nd, George Gilbert Scott, architect, and architecture historian, tried to end the discussion making two points: while a secondary unofficial nomenclature, which he termed "conversational" (Scott 1851a: 480), existed already in the general use next to Rickman's traditional one, it was desirable to reach a common European nomenclature. In a following contribution, published on August 16th, Freeman, lamenting the tone of the dispute, described his own nomenclature. On September 6th, Sharpe replied to this with a methodological statement in which he argued that, given the constant evolution of knowledge, Rickman himself would have updated his nomenclature, if he were still alive.

Two weeks later, on September 20th, 1851, Scott addressed the so-called "honour of precedence" (Scott 1851b: 590) in the naming of periods, claiming that nomenclatures were essentially arbitrary and proposing a simpler numerical system, as was adopted in other European countries. In a letter published on October 18th, the participant under the pseudonym of FSA revealed his identity, while discussing the nomenclatures' international applicability. Sharpe's last letter, published on November 8th, 1851, ended the dispute by comparing his own and Rickman's classifications. In a final statement, Sharpe admitted the prescriptive purpose of his nomenclature. Contradicting his initial intention to present a nomenclature which would contribute to the description of buildings, Sharpe concluded the last published letter of the debate stating that he wanted to prescribe his own terms, according to his subjective view of the periods.

5. Collaboration in the primary sources

In this section, I illustrate multiple aspects of collaboration in term formation, through original quotes from a 19th-century debate among

experts of architecture. Among these aspects, the scholars mentioned the translational perspective, through their intention to create a shared European nomenclature for medieval architecture. The premises of this lie the impossibility of translating terms, due to the exclusively national character of the architectural tradition to which they refer. Section 5.3. provides an example of these national nomenclatures, which compares the English and French traditional terms.

Specifically, this section sheds light on the importance of alternative nomenclatures in history, trying to underline how each nomenclature, in presumably every discipline, is selected among alternatives and through a collaborative process of discussion and evaluation among members of the scientific community. The contribution of these naming alternatives to the shaping of the scientific concepts and their meaning is claimed in this paper to be of great relevance in the progress of knowledge.

5.1. Collaboration as a dialogue between official and "conversational" nomenclatures

The discussion analysed above shows multiple aspects of collaboration. First, the coexistence of an official and multiple unofficial or "conversational" (Scott 1851a: 480) nomenclatures, which architecture historians used in the daily practice for the description of ecclesiastical buildings. In this section, I address the contemporary existence of official and unofficial nomenclatures as a form of collaboration. Indeed, while being used in different contexts, all nomenclatures were useful in the description of buildings and the research advancement in the field. According to the experts, the choice of an official nomenclature did not exclude the contemporary presence of other unofficial classifications, which could be used to specify the description of buildings and periods.

As Scott (ibid.) pointed out in the following quote, an unofficial nomenclature, like Sharpe's proposed one, was already used by experts in their daily practice. The main reason for that appeared to be the necessity of a more detailed division of the periods, for an efficient description of English architecture. Indeed, the wish for a precise classification seemed to be one of the reasons the scholars provided in favour of a substitution of Rickman's (1817) traditional division of English medieval architecture into four periods:

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> We all, for many years past, have practically adopted, and that we
> must of necessity in practice use, *a system of division* closely resembling,
> and often *in words* as well as in facts *coinciding with Mr Sharpe's Periods.*
> [...] Thus far our *vernacular, conversational nomenclature* is *identical* with
> that adopted by *Mr Sharpe*, and the two remaining divisions we only
> differ upon so far as name go, calling one *"Flowing"* vice *"Curvilinear",*
> the other *"Perpendicular"* instead of *"Rectilinear". Where then we do
> practically differ?* Simply in this, that Mr Sharpe in some cases gives the
> dignity of *separate styles or "periods"* to divisions which we generally
> consider merely as *sub styles.* (Scott 1851a: 480, August 2ⁿᵈ, 1851)

In Scott's words, two issues needed to be underlined. First, the
acknowledgement of the coexistence, in the daily practice of architectural
description, of two nomenclatures: Rickman's official one, and a
"vernacular" or unofficial one, resembling Sharpe's own. Relating to this,
Scott did not understand Sharpe's intention to substitute Rickman's official
nomenclature; and not making his nomenclature "subservient" (FSA 1851b:
446) to Rickman's more general one. In this second case, the nomenclatures
would collaborate: while Rickman's would remain official, Sharpe's own
would be used by experts in the daily practice, as the two nomenclatures
together would have ensured an efficient description of buildings and
periods.

Second, as Scott argued, official terms were derived from vernacular
ones used in the experts' daily practice. Indeed, this derivation of terms
from existing denominations could be considered as another aspect of
collaboration, or derivation among terms, in a diachronic perspective. As I
state in the next sections, most terms that the authors proposed were already
familiar to the scientific community, who employed them in architectural
description. The main merit of the authors was in most cases to have
collected the existing terms in dedicated publications, where they were
organised in classifications and defined. As a matter of fact, in all these
publications, the so-called "honour of precedence" (Scott 1851b: 590) i.e.,
the original attribution of terms to previous experts, was signalled, as well
as the inspiration they took from past term variants.

The coexistence and parallel use of official and unofficial
nomenclatures can be considered as a form of collaboration, since different
terms used in different contexts contributed to a better description of
concepts. Concurrently, the inspiration from previous nomenclatures and
the work of past scholars can be considered a further form of collaboration
among experts in term formation.

5.2. Collaboration as the relation between originality and non-originality of terms

The non-originality of terms, or what Scott (1851b: 590) termed "the honour of precedence" in the use of terms confirmed their collaborative nature. In this sense, the scholars addressed collaboration in a diachronic perspective, as they acknowledged the derivation of a term from a previous denomination and the work of past experts. Indeed, in the following quote, Scott stated how other experts invented the terms presented by Rickman and Sharpe in their volumes. As Scott affirmed, those terms existed already, and the authors merely arranged them into new nomenclatures. Stating this, Scott addressed the nature of terms as results of a collaboration among experts in time. From this point of view, the evolution of terms towards their contemporary form saw the contribution of multiple experts to their formation:

> Of the *two leading systems* of classifying Pointed Architecture, the *three-fold division* (Early English – Decorated - Perpendicular) is popularly attributed to *Mr Rickman* and the four-fold (Transitional – Lancet – Geometrical - Rectilinear) to *Mr Sharpe*. To neither of these gentlemen, however, does the honour of precedence justly belong, though to each is to be attributed much credit for placing their several systems in a popular and generally intelligible form. The *honour of precedence* belongs, for Rickman's system to the "Description of the Cathedral Church of Ely" by Reverend *George Millers*. […] I will next claim for my friend *Mr Freeman* the honour of precedence over Mr Sharpe as to the four-fold division. (Scott 1851b: 590, September 20th, 1851)

Scott's statement hinted at the fact that only the arrangement of terms in new systems was attributable to Rickman and Sharpe, not their invention. With reference to the aspect of collaboration I described in the previous section (see section 5.1.) and following Scott's (1851b: 590) last quote, Millers' (1808) and Freeman's (1847) terms could presumably also had been already in use in a vernacular terminology, as the authors collected existing terms in their volumes. This, too, reveals the collaborative nature of term formation in a historical perspective, as a continuous discussion and elaboration among experts in the field.

A further aspect of collaboration in term formation, connected to the issue of originality, was the attribution of a nomenclature to a specific

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author. At recurring stages in the debate, the authorship of the nomenclatures and the possibility to connect a specific classification to one's own name seemed more important than the logic and usability of the nomenclature itself. Indeed, as Scott (1851a) stated, the value of any nomenclature did not depend on the name of their author. On the contrary, the traditional nomenclature was valid and applicable regardless of the name of its author and should therefore be separated from it. As a matter of fact, some authors of the time seemed to be more concerned with the survival of their name and authorship than with the actual benefit of the classification, and thus of the progress of knowledge in their own field of studies. This progress would be connected, for instance, to the didactic purpose of a nomenclature and to its use by students while learning:

> His [Rickman's] classification […], with his *selection of the distinctive characters* of each style, and his *fixation of the language* of the science, were strokes of genius which quite changes the aspect of the subject, as soon as their influence was generally diffused. Instead of a wavering use of *vague terms,* and a loose reference to undefined distinctions, which had previously prevailed in works on Christian Architecture, Mr Rickman offered to the world a *phraseology* so exact that, as he said, "*the student should be able to draw the design from the description*", and a division of styles, followed out into its characters in every member of the architecture. He thus enabled his reader to acquire a knowledge of details as precise as that possessed by practical builders, […] and by this means the literary and the practical architect were brought to *a mutual understanding,* which has been of immense service to both. (Whewell 1842: XIV, in Yanni 1997: 211)

According to Whewell, the *didactic purpose* of creating a nomenclature which would enable both the students and the world to describe buildings was the aim of multiple authors, not just of Rickman. In that, the subjective role of the author in promoting his own nomenclature seemed at times more important than the evolution of knowledge itself. By contrast, the advancement of knowledge and the convenience of a nomenclature to that purpose should prevail over the name of the author, as Parker (1851: 656) stated. The four-fold division, which Rickman's volume made traditional since 1817, should, indeed, remain traditional, even if not connected to its author's name, which was, according to Parker (ibid.) "not at all essential" to his system.

5.3. The construction of a European nomenclature as a form of collaboration

The translational aspect of term formation was present in the debate in two different declinations. First, in the influence of the French scholarship on the formation of English terms, which was presented in the debate in a comparison of the traditional periodisation of medieval architecture of the countries. Second, the experts acknowledged the impossibility of translation in the discussion, as they recognised terms as typical of a cultural context and language. Moreover, the experts proposed collaboration, in the form of a coexistence of a national and a European nomenclature of medieval architecture. While each nomenclature and architectural production were intrinsically national, a European code was needed, to assure international comprehension and knowledge exchange.

The experts also stated the importance of international collaboration in the construction of architectural periodizations. In Parker's words, Rickman's traditional periodization was recognised abroad at the time. For this reason, he felt that the traditional nomenclature should not have been substituted, since it constituted the basis of scientific communication at an international level:

> I find *no difficulty in conversing with them*, and discussing with them [the experts of architecture in France] […] the uses of the various buildings […] this sort of *friendly intercourse* between those engaged in kindred pursuits in different countries I hold to be very desirable and useful to both parties; but if compelled to adopt Mr Sharpe's system only, it would be *impossible for me to continue it,* and necessary *to abandon the acquaintance and correspondence with my friends in France.* No one who has studied Gothic architecture by Mr Sharpe's system only, can ever hope to establish a similar correspondence or even to understand anything of *foreign Gothic.* (Parker 1851: 655; October 18th, 1851)

To further focus on the translational aspect of term formation, in the following paragraph I compare Rickman's (1817) official periodization of English medieval architecture, to the official one in France, by Arcisse de Caumont (1825), who presented this classification in his *Essai sur l'architecture religieuse du moyen-âge, particulièrement en Normandie.*

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Thomas Rickman (1817) – *An attempt to discriminate the styles of English architecture*
Norman – to 1189 A.D.
Early English – 1189 – 1307 A.D.
Decorated English – 1307 – 1377 A.D.
Perpendicular English – 1377 – 1630/1640 A.D

Arcisse De Caumont (1825) – *Essai sur l'Architecture du Moyen Age*
Roman Primordial - depuis l'expulsion des Romains de la Gaule jusqu'au Xème siècle.
Roman Secondaire – Fin du Xème et XIème siècle.
Transition – Fin du XIème et première moitié du XIIème siècle.
Gothique Primordial – Fin du XIIème siècle et première moitié du XIIIème siècle.
Gothique Secondaire – Fin du XIIIème siècle et XIVème siècle.
Gothique Tertiaire – XVème et XVIème siècle.

While the former list was composed of four terms, the latter work divided medieval architecture into six periods. As becomes evident from the classifications, the distinction of the general term *Gothic*, into more specific ones, was very important in England, where also the adjective *English* appeared in the terms used to identify the periods, to highlight the exclusively national character of the styles. Indeed, English experts extensively discussed a subdivision of the *Gothic* into more specific periods, while France traditionally adopted a relatively simpler subdivision into a primary, secondary, and tertiary style, both for the Roman and the Gothic style.

It is worth highlighting that the importance of Rickman's periodization for international communication was not only due to its diffusion within the scientific community. As a matter of fact, the periods of Rickman's nomenclature were so broad and general, that they could ideally be applied to the periodization of all medieval architecture in Europe, and thus also be used to understand the "Foreign Gothic", as Parker claimed (1851: 655).

In the following quote, Scott addressed the issue of international communication, which could be considered as particularly forward-looking. To enhance international knowledge exchange, Scott hoped for the creation of a European periodization of medieval architecture. Specific national classifications could coexist with the European nomenclature, as further

subdivisions of that periodization. The possible coexistence of a European nomenclature and specific national ones could also be considered as a collaborative practice in the formation of the European specialised language of architecture:

> *Mr Rickman's terms, I fear, must be relinquished sooner or later:* it will never do to go on talking about Early English and Decorated. Whether the fourfold division of pointed architecture be right or not *I should certainly hope for a European code.* Mr Sharpe's is exclusively English, which is one of the great objections to Rickman's. (Scott 1851a: 481; August 2nd, 1851)

Although Rickman's nomenclature remained official at the end of the debate, the experts acknowledged its limits. A more detailed classification was needed, for the advancement of knowledge, as the architects recognised the necessity of using both an official and a "conversational" (Scott 1851a: 480) nomenclature for the description of buildings. This could be seen as an extraordinarily modern approach to the use of terms. As a matter of fact, the parallel use of multiple terms denoted the sensitivity of the experts to employ the appropriate terms in different contexts, as well as the necessity of multiple terms to describe concepts from various perspectives.

The translational and international aspect of term formation were addressed in this section with reference to two specific subjects in the debate. First, the necessity of the scholars to create a shared European nomenclature for medieval architecture, to be used in combination with the traditional national ones. Second, the experts' acknowledgement of the impossibility of term translation, given the exclusively national character of all nomenclatures, which was due to the specific building traditions. While scholars were aware of the impossibility of translating national terms, international communication based on the shared knowledge and comparison of different national systems, as exemplified in the comparison of the English and French traditional nomenclatures. In this perspective, descriptive and precise terms became even more important for international communication and knowledge exchange.

5.4. Other contributing factors

Extending the perspective, other 'external' factors appear to have been involved in the process of term formation as a collaborative practice, such

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as the publisher's interests in maintaining the official nomenclature and the role of tradition in terminology against term variation.

The publisher of Rickman's (1817) volume containing his nomenclature, John Henry Parker, contributed to the debate. Indeed, altering the official nomenclature would have presumably meant a substantial decrease in the diffusion of the volume, as well as a loss of relevance in the field of studies. Due to the power and reputation of Parker in the field, probably all scholars in the debate were aware of the possible consequences of altering the traditional nomenclature. Possibly, this factor could have influenced the final rejection of Sharpe's proposal, to maintain Rickman's official classification:

> Some such classification as that I propose, by whatever terms it should be characterised, […] appears to me *"so obvious, so easy and so natural",* would inevitably *force itself into general use.* […] It unfortunately happens, however, that no change of this kind can be made in the nomenclature of any art or science, which does not *affect certain vested interests represented by those publishers* who possess *the stock and copyright*, as it were, of the system about to be superseded. I have strong reasons to believe that it is one of this class, who under the signature of FSA complains so loudly. (Sharpe 1851d: 417; July 5th, 1851)

A further factor to consider in the debate was the role of tradition and the possibility to alter a shared nomenclature. Numerous scholars in many disciplines decided not to update existing terms, since the wide usage sanctioned their validity. Indeed, the main criticism other experts directed to Sharpe concerned his intention to substitute Rickman's traditional nomenclature, instead of supporting and specifying it with parallel subdivisions of the official system:

> But Sharpe does not want to make his observations *subservient to the general system*, he refuses to adopt the general system of four great divisions (corresponding nearly to the four centuries) with subdivisions and transitions between each. He wishes to establish a new system of his own, with seven great divisions, which he calls periods. *It is against this change of system that I protest*, as these proposed new divisions are less marked, less true, than the old ones. (FSA 1851b: 446; July 19th, 1851)

This issue could presumably be connected to Sharpe's wish to attach his name to the new official periodization of his own field of studies, making it

significant for the future of the discipline, as this intention could probably be considered as the main reason for the failure of Sharpe's attempt. As FSA (1851b) remarked, if Sharpe's detailed periodization had been proposed as a parallel subsystem for the subdivision of Rickman's four traditional periods, with the intention of supporting Rickman's more general nomenclature, his proposal would probably have been approved by the scientific community. This aspect of the debate can be described as a failed form of collaboration among experts.

To conclude, the personal aspirations of each scholar seemed to have strongly influenced the process of naming in the debate, and therefore the construction of knowledge. While the authors, such as Sharpe, promoted their nomenclature to become official, they appeared to oversee the condition of the specialised language of architecture employed in the daily practice, i.e. the co-existence of multiple nomenclatures at once.

Indeed, all fields of studies needed multiple parallel nomenclatures at the time. While one of them could have been official and traditional, all the unofficial and auxiliary ones were equally important, considering the progress of knowledge as their aim. This is, back then as nowadays, decisively dependant on the possibility of an accurate description of the reality through terms, as in this case the periods and buildings of medieval architecture.

6. Collaboration as mutual influence of alternative nomenclatures: a perspective from outside the debate

A further form of collaboration in term formation was the experts' custom of comparing alternative nomenclatures. These proposals, as the subject of the debate among scholars, provided competing linguistic descriptions of multiple aspects of the concepts to be classified. Among them, the experts chose the most suitable denomination for each concept.

As illustrated through the following examples, competing nomenclatures, as well as their authors, influenced one another. This mutual influence can be described as a form of collaboration, and it improved the definition of both terms and concepts. Moreover, with reference to Sager's (1990: 60) 'terminologisation', successive naming attempts improve the definition of concepts, while describing them from different perspectives, which are mirrored in multiple terms.

As an example of the previous statement, a mutual influence among scholars can be recognised in the debate I examine in this paper, where other scholars proposed contemporary classifications to Sharpe's own (cf. section 5.2.). Among them, John Henry Parker, the editor of Rickman's (1817) volume, shared his proposal in his *Glossary of architecture* (1836). Additionally, Edward Augustus Freeman (1849) suggested a similar one in his *History of architecture*, discussing the appropriateness of terms as *geometrical* and *flowing* for the classification of window tracery (ibid. 1847).

The same mutual influence in term creation can be recognised at an international level, as scholars advanced periodisation proposals not just for English architecture, but also for other countries. Among others, Robert Willis, author of the *Architectural nomenclature of the Middle Ages* (Willis 1844), suggested a classification of Italian medieval architecture in his *Remarks on the architecture of the Middle Ages, especially of Italy* (ibid. 1835), as William Whewell travelled to Germany and France, to then present a periodisation similar to Rickman's traditional English one in a volume entitled *Architectural notes on German churches: With notes written during an architectural tour in Picardy and Normandy* (Whewell 1830). Moreover, in the same volume of *The Builder* in which the dispute on Sharpe's classification occurred, Edward Lacy Garbett (1851: 620) proposed some alternatives to the "names hitherto used" for the English periods.

Numerous scholars at the time proposed alternative periodizations for English medieval architecture, mostly as part of a dedicated volume on the subject. Among others, John Britton classified English churches in *The cathedral antiquities of England* (1814) and *The architectural antiquities of Great Britain* (1807), while Banister Fletcher (1905) compared the existing periodizations of English medieval architecture in *A history of architecture on the comparative method for the student, craftsman and amateur*. While almost all treatises began with a chapter on the nomenclature used in the text, they proposed periodizations of English medieval architecture as based on the classification of different architectural element, such as the vaults, the window tracery, and the mouldings. These were presented in the form of a glossary, where terms were defined and often illustrated. More than defining new terms, these glossaries aimed to clarify the terms used in the treatises and their definition, according to the author. Notably, these definitions were not always the same for the same terms: from a terminological perspective, this process of definition of the same terms by different scholars seemed to help their knowledge and the description of their meaning.

7. Conclusions and future research

In this essay I presented a 19th-century debate on the periodization of English medieval architecture as an example of collaborative term formation. Concepts were established as terms through the discussion among experts in the sector journal *The Builder* in 1851, with the aim of fostering international communication and knowledge exchange. The most significant features of this collaboration were the following.

First, a possible contemporary employment of an official nomenclature, and multiple "conversational" (Scott 1851a: 480) alternatives was illustrated since, in the daily practice of the profession, the experts employed multiple nomenclatures to describe the historical buildings.

Second, the scholars discussed collaboration as the co-existence of multiple nomenclatures in a diachronic perspective. Specifically, they addressed the originality of terms, and referred to it as the "honour of precedence" (Scott 1851b: 590) in the creation of terms and their attribution to their rightful author.

Concurrently, the experts introduced the coexistence of national nomenclatures and a European code, as they addressed the translational perspective in term formation. While terms were impossible to translate, due to the exclusively national character of architecture, comparisons across national nomenclatures in Europe were conducted, as a shared European classification was felt to be necessary. Thus, the English and French nomenclatures were compared, to address collaboration in naming internationally.

In a final section, other aspects of collaboration – or lack thereof – in the definition of a nomenclature were addressed. Among them, the publisher's interests in maintaining the existing nomenclature were mentioned, as well as the role of tradition in naming. In the end, a significant factor in the description of term formation as a collaborative practice was the mutual influence of scholars in proposing alternative nomenclatures. As the object of discussion on the selection of the most appropriate term for each period, these alternatives constituted not just an advancement of knowledge, but also the result of a collaborative and non-collaborative practice among experts through successive stages of naming, as Sager (1990) suggests.

Ultimately, future research perspectives to this study should include the application of this analysis to other disputes among scholars. This should be done with a twofold purpose. First, to contextualise term

formation within a process of discussion of alternatives which is not normally analysed from a terminological perspective. Second, it would be worth describing other contributing factors to this process. Indeed, if further nomenclatures were examined, these would presumably be found to result from a collaborative process, instead of being the production of the single author to which they were attributed. While the nomenclature legitimately had an author, its affirmation in a discipline was the result of the collaboration and influence of both experts and other naming proposals.

To conclude, this paper would like to encourage a more detailed historical contextualisation of terminological practices, and to consider them, as previously stated, as the result of collaboration among scholars, not necessarily belonging to the same discipline, and of external factors. While this might be obvious for historical events and achievements, it is not so in the description of nomenclatures and terminological practices in the existing literature to date.

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