ICCD Italian Translation Project

Getty Vocabularies Program

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I. Project Scope

The Istituto Centrale Catalogo Documentazione (ICCD) is an Italian cultural heritage and cataloging institute based in Rome, Italy. ICCD contributed approximately 10,000 Italian-language terms for inclusion in the Getty's Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT). Many of these terms remain untranslated, and have not yet been integrated into the AAT. This project sought to address that, focusing on the Italian-language terms classified under the "objects" hierarchy.

The contributed terms were in the singular form only, with some originating from the AAT and some being entirely new contributions from ICCD. However, ICCD did not note which terms they translated from the AAT and which they independently contributed. Translations included adding the plural version of the term, designating the part of speech for both the plural and singular versions, matching the term with an AAT entry or suggesting a new entry, and translating the scope note. Given the project's time constraints (120 hours over ten weeks), priority was given to translating the broadest terms that would be used more often, as opposed to more specific and specialized terms.

This project took place from March to June 2020 and was conducted remotely due to shelter-in-place restrictions for COVID-19.

II. Methodology

A. Translation Process

Given the time constraints of the project, the broadest terms that were the easiest to research and translate were prioritized. I relied primarily on an Italian dictionary, Treccani, to translate terms. For terms with homonyms or terms with specialized meanings I had never come across before, I sometimes used resources in addition to Treccani, such as bilingual dictionaries, to cross-check the term and see if all of the resources were in agreement.

Even if a term was known, it was important to still search for that term within an Italian dictionary to confirm that there were not any homonyms missed. If there was a homonym, there were a few approaches to translation possible, time depending. First, the ICCD thesaurus should be consulted to confirm which definition ICCD intended. As I did not have access to these materials until the end of the project, this was not done with all terms (see the "Issues" section below); but going forward, this is best practice. The term should then be translated and integrated into AAT using the definition ICCD intended, adding an appropriate qualifier to the term to clearly designate which homonym the entry refers to. If ICCD lists both homonyms (such as in the case of "zoccolo," in which socles and clogs are both mentioned), or if one of the homonyms seems significant and that it would be of great use to AAT, then create another entry within the spreadsheet for the homonym, again assigning a qualifier to the term that clearly designates which homonym the entry refers to.

There were some terms that were defined in Treccani, and while I could understand the description, I was not aware of an English equivalent. Wikipedia was useful in such cases, as many entries for concepts have both English and Italian entries, which you can toggle between by using the "languages" section on the left hand navigation bar of entries.

For example, "zagaglia" was defined in Treccani, but not in a way that I would know the English equivalent. Accordingly, I went on Italian Wikipedia, found the entry for "zagaglia," and then clicked the link on the left column for the equivalent entry in English, and found that the term meant "assegai."

B. Resources Used

A variety of tools and resources were used to assist with the translations.

Italian-language dictionary

This was the most helpful resource during the translation project, as the Italian-language dictionary provided thorough definitions of a very wide range of terms, including very specific items. I used Trecanni, which is maintained by the publishers of a widely regarded Italian encyclopedia (*Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*).
http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/

Italian-English bilingual dictionary
In addition to the Italian-language dictionary, I also used an Italian-English bilingual dictionary to confirm understandings of words and translate terms I did not recognize. I primarily used WordReference because it has a strong user community with forums that address language issues (e.g. the difference between *abito*, *abbigliamento*, and *vestito*).
https://www.wordreference.com/iten/

I occasionally used the Collins Dictionary, when the term was not in WordReference or when I wanted to double-check a translation provided in WordReference or Treccani.
https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-italian

Subject-area thesauri and dictionaries
ICCD released a thesaurus of approximately 6,500 terms related to artistic and historical heritage. Entries include where the term sits within their hierarchy, a definition, narrower terms (when applicable), and at times an exemplary image and where the image was sourced from. This resource was discovered near the end of the project, so it could be used much more extensively to aid with future translations. It is a valuable resource for identifying the term ICCD was likely referring to when a term has homonyms, and is also useful for providing a definition when it is difficult to find material elsewhere for the term.
A-C: http://www.iccd.beniculturali.it/getFile.php?id=2515
D-P: http://www.iccd.beniculturali.it/getFile.php?id=2516
Q-Z: http://www.iccd.beniculturali.it/getFile.php?id=2517

I also used an Italian architectural dictionary to help with the more specialized architectural terms, which was made available online by the Getty Library and HathiTrust (*Dizionario Di Architettura*, Giacomo Ravazzini, Ulrico Hoepli: 1921). The book includes illustrations and definitions of architectural concepts and elements.
https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015064582896

The religious thesaurus *Thesaurus del corredo ecclesiastico: Furniture, Objects, Linen, Clothing, and Musical Instruments of the Roman Catholic Faith* will be a useful resource once access is available again. The Getty Research Institute has several physical copies; no online editions are available, and thus could not be used in this project.
https://primo.getty.edu/permalink/f/19q6gmb/GETTY_ALMA21130795460001551

Wikipedia
While an academic or peer-reviewed resource should ultimately be used to translate a term and provide warrant for the scope note, Wikipedia can be a good starting point. This is especially the case for more specialized terms (see the "Translation Process" section above for more details). The references section of a Wikipedia entry can also be helpful for sourcing academic articles and books about the topic.
https://it.wikipedia.org/

III. Issues

While generally a straightforward translation endeavor, there were a few issues that arose, some by virtue of the terms and some due to the remote working environment caused by COVID-19.

Religious terms

Many of the terms were very specific items relating to religious cultural practices that would require a deep understanding of Catholicism and its heritage items. Absent this background, there is a thesaurus that would have been a great help (*Thesaurus del corredo ecclesiastico: Furniture, Objects, Linen, Clothing, and Musical Instruments of the Roman Catholic Faith*, Paris: Editions du Patrimoine, 1999); however, the Getty Research Institute only has physical copies of this book. Having a copy of this thesaurus is necessary given the terms. As a solution in the interim, I have flagged terms that should be checked against this thesaurus once access to this book is available again (see the "Designations" section below).

Homonyms

There were a number of terms that were homonyms, but it was unclear which meaning ICCD was referring to. For example, "copertina" could refer to a covering, a light blanket, or a book cover, which are all plausible items that ICCD could be cataloging. Such instances were handled by creating multiple entries to describe each meaning; however, this practice runs the risk of incorrectly assigning ICCD's original subject ID to the incorrect meaning (i.e. for the example above, if they were describing a blanket, but we assigned their subject ID to the entry describing a book cover). For such instances, we used the best judgement possible to guess what would be the most likely object they would be describing. Now that we have access to the ICCD thesaurus, going forward such instances should be handled by referring to the thesaurus to verify which homonym the entry relates to.

Specialized terms

I had to focus on the broader, more general terms, given the time constraints of the project (120 hours over ten weeks). Accordingly, I was not able to give as much treatment to the specialized terms or their homonyms. For example, ICCD provided the term "cappellina"; Treccani specifies three different types of hats the term could refer to. While we have the information, creating these three very particular entries would not align with the project priorities, as these terms would not likely be used frequently. Instead, terms with a wider use, and thus a higher likelihood of impact, were prioritized.

Time passed

It is possible that the initial contributors at ICCD would have had advice regarding the terms (such as coverage, scope, and which terms from their perspective were the most pressing to translate). We weren't able to take advantage of this knowledge since the initial contributors no longer work at ICCD.

IV. Designations

The following designations refer to the working translation spreadsheet, and should provide more context for how to use filters to navigate the translations.

Finished (column A)

This column describes what stage the entry is within the translation process.

- *yes* - the term has been reviewed by the translator and is ready to be input in VCS. Terms that have been reviewed by the translator and deemed inappropriate for inclusion in the AAT (i.e. compound terms) will also receive this designation, and will have the designation "too particular" in the "Problem" column (column C).

- *entered* - the term has been entered into VCS.

- *needs further research* - the term has been reviewed by the translator and would be a good candidate for inclusion in AAT. However, more research is required to find the true definition; most often this means that the term should be checked against the *Thesaurus del corredo ecclesiastico* when access to the book is available again.

- *second review* - the term has been entered into VCS, but a revision is needed.

- *blank* - this term has not been reviewed by the translator. This could be because of time constraints, or because preliminarily research was done for the term and it became clear that much more research would be required to determine if it would be a good candidate for AAT.

Problem (column C)

This column describes whether or not there is a problem with the translation of the term.

- *yes* - there is an issue with the translation of this term that is described in the "Problem note" column (column V).

- *maybe* - there might be an issue with the translation of this term that is described in the "Problem note" column (column V).

- *too particular* - this term is very particular and thus in most cases, it will not be recommended for inclusion in AAT (e.g. compound terms like "five-armed candelabra"). In some cases, such as very specialized religious terms, further research may be recommended.

- *blank* - there is no issue with the translation of this term.