

The Riqor Nitor

the (definite article, English): referring to a specific instance of the object signified by the symbols which follow syntactically

nitor (deponent verb, Latin): meaning “I struggle,” or “I try to prove,” or “I advance,” etc.

riqor (maybe a noun, ?): ?

(taken from a clipping taken from a paper; the scrap had no date on it, but it was yellowed and stiff, suggesting old age):

“...significant in that moment, when it became clear to me that the text mimics languages its moment in history had no business knowing.

Imagine how bewildering all of it was. If they were using the articles we use today thousands of years ago, then clearly our model of how at least some of our language has evolved is flawed. The word “the” simply should not have been possible given the age of the parchment, how result after result I received back from that laboratory insisted on the same moment in history as the material’s temporal origin. How is it possible? How old is our language? It keeps me up at night.”

(taken from elsewhere, electronic presentation of some supposedly sociological text):

“What’s perhaps most unfortunate is the phrase had to manifest as the title of a book—or, at least, so we suspect. It becomes a difficult matter to discern whether “Riqor” was meant as a noun, capitalized in the same manner we see in contemporary German, or something else. Is it meant to be read as some sort of title, or epithet, of the lost story’s protagonist? We might be able to read it as we would read ‘The Black Smith,’ suggesting a moment in which a particular compound word corresponding in some way to “riqornitor” was written as individual, separated, capitalized words. And imagine the anthropological implications! The only mention of a riqornitor in all of history. Where did they stand in society? Priests, warriors, farmers. Is this new category of ancient man a subtle variation of some caste we’ve been aware of for centuries, a position that exists in some way today? Has the riqornitor been lost to history, or, perhaps, is it the early incarnation of a contemporary social phenom which we’ve simply misattributed to something else? These are extreme, theory-breaking concerns, and this is a discovery which is as apt to propel us generations ahead of our current historical models or force us back to square one. It is not inconceivable to suppose that we are close to having to reconstruct everything we thought we knew of our human world in the light of the riqornitor.”

(an op-ed):

“How much do we really know about Jeanne n’Janee? When she first fell into the national spotlight she was a joke, a delusional woman who claimed that she dreamt of some nonsense and that we should all take that nonsense extremely seriously. She isn’t the first of this

flock, and certainly won't be the last, but what shocked the world was the discovery, months later, of an ancient parchment with the very same words written into it. How convenient is that? The 24 hour news cycle had already moved on from her, and for some reason the negative attention just rubbed her the right way and she couldn't stand not getting more of it. So suddenly, right when the last person on earth uttered the name "Jeanne n'Janee" for the last time (I'm sure whatever trailer trash she comes from had forgotten her name long ago, probably about when she quit school and her alcoholic mother kicked out of her home at the wonderful age of fourteen), the news comes out that she was "right all along." "Jeanne n'Janee, Blowing our Minds!" "Jeanne n'Janee, the Most Influential Woman in Every Field Ever" "Jeanne n'Janee, will you Marry Me?" What a joke. Either she knew all along that that discovery was going to be made and asked the discoverer to hold off, or she used the pittance that fell into her lap along with her five seconds of fame to generate an elaborate hoax. And therein lies the heart of the matter: it's a giant hoax, and she's a crusty bitch. Why are we still talking about her at all?"

(a comment):

"I feel like you lose some of your credibility when you call your subject a 'crusty bitch.'"

(another text, found elsewhere):

"The resemblance that *riqor* shares with the noun *rigor* is suggestive of some etymological evolution or another—one character transforming into another with time. If we, for example, rewrite the Greek symbol μ enough times it comes to resemble the letter 'm.' Rewrite g enough: it can easily be mistaken for a q. This, of course, suggests some sort of temporality about it all, and if we take *riqor* to be a stand-in for *rigor*, we must assume that, for some reason, the latter evolved into the former, then back into the latter without anyone ever noticing that intermediate stage. And is that, evolutionarily speaking, particularly reasonable? I think not. There is no evidence for some reversion humanity underwent only to progress forward again, regaining exactly what had been lost."

(yet another text):

"Why are we allowing the alien 'riqor' to subsume all discussion? It is mysterious, surely, but we are linguists, and not the cult-like followers of some mystery religion from the far east. Information to which we have access is not superior to that which prevents its understanding. We know the first and last words of the phrase in question, and consequently have all the information we need: the only type of word that makes grammatical sense sandwiched between an article and the first-person conjugation of a verb is a noun, a noun which undoubtedly shares some connection with the verb. Nitor evokes an eldritch sense of power, of light, a great energy that emanates through and around us like an ether; to entertain this notion as something active, something which *I* perform, is to imagine a magnificent feat of will. Clearly, the ambiguity of *riqor*, and the inappropriately placed q in the center of the word is meant to

confound that personal willpower. We may therefore come to think of *riqor* as we do the albatross, and whatever story (if, indeed, the phrase had titled a lost story) that originally followed “The *Riqor Nitor*” is a tale of overcoming, a sense which fits neatly in our already established historical and literary frameworks. It is no greater shame that we have lost it than it is to have lost any of the innumerable other works we shall never uncover.”

(one more):

“It’s a misspelling of ‘*reconnoiter*.’ Although to be fair, we must assume the existence not only of English, but of the advent in English which borrowed the word from French. And while it is certainly the case that this crossing-over of language has existed for millennia, to imagine an intermingling of languages which had not supposedly existed those thousands of years ago is indeed an extraordinary fantasy.”

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