

rara magnetica

<https://ch-sander.github.io/raramagnetica/>

tags and vocabulary used in image metadata and classification

explanations by christoph sander

for images in this database, a controlled vocabulary was used in order to standardize all tags appearing in the metadata. tagging will always lead to disputable and vague decisions, as the complexity of the subjects tagged not always makes it easy to decide if a specific tag applies or not. to tackle this inherent quandary it will be laid out what was the rationale behind this vocabulary.

this vocabulary is hierarchical in nature. in most cases, parent tags were given if one or more child tags were given. e.g. if the tag 'compass' (child) applies, also the tag 'instrument' (parent) applies. this avoids tags such as 'other' and makes the set searchable to a higher degree. tags that only function as parent tag but are not assigned anywhere are put in square brackets.

the main distinction between all tags is whether they describe the content or the graphical elements and the medium of the image. content tags describe what is represented by the image while element tags describe its appearance and visual elements while medium tags entail information about its production.

all images are tagged against the thematic background of this project on magnetism and its (limited) corpus. other material deserves another vocabulary. quasi-universal vocabularies such as iconclass will not allow to ask the research questions that are underpinning this historical research

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for more information, please visit <https://ch-sander.github.io/raramagnetica/>

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tags and their explanation

tag

[content]

magnetic force

polarity

sphere of activity

attraction/repulsion

direction

declination

inclination

theoretical

music

mineralogical taxonomy

causal explanation

particles

astrological influence

form

material

instrument

compass

compendia

machine / gadget

specimen

practice

related to an experiment

related to a calculation

allegory and symbols

pagan

christian

[elements]

text

explanation

[relating to the semantic content of the image]

content representing or dealing with the physical magnetic phenomena in general, including geomagnetic phenomena

representations of magnetic poles (of piece of magnet and earth)

representations of the spatial extension of magnetic force

representations of attractive and repulsive forces related to magnetism

representations of magnets or needles aligning in north-south direction

representations of magnets or needles deviating from north-south direction ('magnetic declination')

representations of magnets or needles inclining below or above the horizon ('magnetic dip')

content representing or dealing with theoretical concepts not directly connected to the physical force of magnetism

representations of music, harmony, and tones

representations of taxonomy and classification in the realm of mineralogy

content representing or dealing with any attempt or idea of explaining magnetic phenomena

causal concepts relating to physical particles, atoms, corpuscles

causal concepts relating to astrological influences, astral rays, etc.

causal concepts relating to hylemorphism or other formal principles

content representing or dealing with the material use of magnets or magnetic force

representations of instruments to detect or measure magnetic force

representations of magnetic compasses and/or their use

representations of magnetic compasses included in other instruments, such as sundials or theodolites

representations of machines or gadgets making use of magnetic force

representations of a specific piece of magnet

content representing or dealing with practices

content related to or representing experiments related to magnetic phenomena

content related to or representing mathematical calculations or proofs

content representing or dealing with allegorical or symbolic interpretations of magnetism

allegories/symbols originating from a pagan context

allegories/symbols originating from a Christian context

[relating to the textual and graphical elements in the image]

the image contains textual elements

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tags and their explanation

tag	explanation
<i>letters</i>	the textual elements contain single letters
<i>numbers</i>	the textual elements contain numbers
<i>symbols</i>	the textual elements contain symbols excluding letters and numbers (e.g. astrological symbols or mathematical notations)
<i>words</i>	the textual elements contain words
<i>phrases</i>	the textual elements contain phrases of more than one word
<i>sentences</i>	the textual elements contain full grammatical sentences
<i>abstract elements</i>	the image contains abstract visual elements
<i>geometrical forms</i>	abstract elements include geometrical forms, such as circles, lines, rectangles
<i>arrows</i>	abstract elements include arrows (both symbolic and material, such as compass needles)
<i>musical notation</i>	abstract elements include musical notation
<i>tabular shapes</i>	abstract elements include tables or its visual components, such as rows and columns
<i>taxonomic shapes</i>	abstract elements include taxonomic features, such as tree-diagram structures
<i>concrete elements</i>	the image contains concrete visual elements, such as physical objects or persons
<i>physical objects</i>	concrete elements include physical objects
<i>persons or human body</i>	concrete elements include natural or mythological persons, or non-personal depictions of human bodies or parts thereof
<i>scene</i>	concrete elements are arranged as a scene, depicting an event, situation, or place
<i>topographical structures</i>	concrete elements include structures to encode topological information such as maps
<i>plasticity</i>	the image uses visual effects to create the impression of plasticity and volume
<i>light/shadow</i>	visual effects include light and shadow (e.g. 'chiaroscuro')
<i>3d and perspective</i>	visual effects include the use of perspectivity and/or show objects as three-dimensional
<i>paratext</i>	the image has a paratext situating it in the context of the book
<i>caption</i>	the paratext is a caption for the image
<i>creator signature</i>	the image contains information about its creator, such as artist signatures
<i>[medium]</i>	[relating to the medium of the image]
<i>[position]</i>	[relating to the layout position of the image]
<i>integrated in the layout</i>	the image is part of the mise-en-page
<i>part of a set</i>	the image is part of a group of images appearing close to each other on the same page
<i>in the margin</i>	the image is placed in the margin of the page, i.e. next to the text

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tags and their explanation

tag	explanation
<i>title page</i>	the image is or is part of the title page or frontispiece
<i>separate sheet</i>	the image appears on a separate sheet of different dimension as the pages surrounding it or added in the back or at a different place of the work
<i>separate page</i>	the image appears on a separate page without text outside the image excluding paratext(s)
<i>interactive</i>	the image has material parts or features that make it interactive
<i>volvelle</i>	the image is a volvelle consisting of movable parts
<i>cut out template</i>	the image is meant to be cut out and used by the reader
<i>[production technique]</i>	[relating to the technique(s) to create of the image]
<i>woodcut</i>	the image is produced as woodcut print from a woodblock
<i>engraving</i>	the image is produced from an engraved metal plate (esp. 'intaglio print')
<i>drawing</i>	the image is a drawing
<i>painting</i>	the image is a painting