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Martin Opitz signs a *Stammbuch*

Multiple Authorship and a ‘Different Aesthetics’ in the Emblematic *album amicorum*

Abstract

In the early 16th century, two new kinds of books appeared: the printed emblem book and the manuscript friendship album, or *album amicorum*. The two volumes intersected at an early stage. Printed emblem books were interleaved with blank pages for use as friendship albums, mainly for young men to use on their study tours. (Women also engaged in this practice, but far less frequently.) The case study presented here treats the entry by Martin Opitz into the album of Christian Weigel, who repurposed a copy of Achille Bocchi’s *Symbolicarvm quaestiovvm* (1574) as his album. The focus of my interpretation is on the dialogue between Bocchi’s printed emblem and Opitz’s manuscript entry and how the two texts are used to explore both poetics and male friendship. The epigraphic form of Opitz’s entry as well as the expression of homoerotic inclinations are also discussed here. Multiple authorship and the complex material representation of the content shaped this particular emblem construct to produce new meanings, suggesting that a different aesthetic can indicate an aesthetic of difference.

Keywords

Emblem, *album amicorum*, Achille Bocchi, Print in Manuscript, Homosociality, Book History, Queer Studies, Customized Book, Critical Reading

1. Emblem Books as Albums

In the 16th century, two new kinds of books simultaneously arose in Europe: the emblem book and the *Stammbuch*, or *album amicorum*.¹ At an early stage, these two genres – emblem and album – merged in learned practices of scholarly exchange when

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1 Several colleagues offered helpful comments at various stages of this research: Michael Bath, Glasgow University; Jill Bepler, Wolfenbüttel; Rachel Masters Carlisle, Florida State University; Tamar Cholzman, University of Tel Aviv; Justyna Kiliańczyk-Zięba, Jagiellonian University, Kraków; Simon McKeown, Malborough College; Walter Melion, Emory University; Karl Otto, University of Pennsylvania; and Ralph Rosen, University of Pennsylvania. Last, but certainly not least, I thank Anja Wolkenhauer, University of Tübingen, for her insights pertaining to the Horation ode.

the printed emblem book became used as a manuscript friendship album.² This was an especially popular practice in the 16th century,³ when emblem books were interleaved with blank pages for use as an album, thus inviting a serial form of plural authorship.⁴

Andrea Alciato's *Emblematum Liber*, published in Augsburg in 1531,⁵ is generally acknowledged as the first emblem book, while the *Stammbuch* belonging to the student Claude de Senarclens, which he began in Wittenberg in 1545, is the oldest known *album amicorum*.⁶ Both genres emanated from learned circles around men who had travelled to study at various European universities. Both kinds of books cultivate erudition and demonstrate knowledge of classical and biblical sources across shared networks of learning. Both engage learned practices of text and image presentation, such as can be found in other printed genres of the period, for example, genealogies and heraldry, medal and coin books, and portrait books.⁷ While the *Stammbuch* did not necessarily require illustrations, these albums were often illustrated and thus participated in text-image strategies of communication similar to those of emblem books, such as textual citations, mottos with loci communes, and visual topoi.⁸ In their ideal tripartite construct, emblems require an image, and the *picturæ* were most frequently integrated into the published book as woodcuts or engravings. Occasionally there were so-called *emblemata nuda*, in which the *picturæ* were described in a form of ekphrasis.

2 Nickson 1970, p. 11f., was the first to notice the close connection between emblems and albums. See also the informative online essay by Barker 2002.

3 Klose 1988, pp. XII–XIV.

4 The emblematic album offers a unique perspective on multiple authorship as it was diachronic and not synchronic and thus reflects neither collective nor collaborative authorship as defined by the Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 1391 which assumes that authorship by more than one person occurred at roughly the same time, by two or more persons.

5 Emblematica Online provides 29 editions of Alciato freely available on the web, including the first edition from 28 February 1531, courtesy of Glasgow University, <http://emblematica.library.illinois.edu/detail/book/A31a> (last accessed: 26 November 2024).

6 Klose 1988, p. XVII. It is held in the University Library, Geneva; Klose 1988, p. 3.

7 The various editions of Nicolaus Reusner's *Icones* were popular books from which to create a *Stammbuch*. See, for example, Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 225 Blankenburg, a copy from the 1587 printing used by Johann Sustermann, or Cod. Guelf. 42 Noviss. 12°, a copy of the 1590 edition used by Konrad von Rösch. Klose 1988, p. 363 lists eleven copies of Reusner's various works used as *Stammbücher*.

8 Schnabel 2003 provides the most comprehensive overview of the *Stammbuch*.

2. Multiple Authorship of Emblems and the Practice of Emblem Dedications

As a genre, an emblem book had multiple authors, and the production of a volume was the work of an ensemble. While emblem books were not always associated with early modern friendship practices, individual emblems were often dedicated to specific friends and patrons.⁹ Two 16th-century emblem books demonstrate the dedication practices in exemplary fashion. Achille Bocchi's *Symbolicarvm quaestiovvm* dedicates each of its 151 emblems to a specific person,¹⁰ while Joannes Sambucus' *Emblemata* provide 87 of the 223 emblems in his work with a dedication.¹¹ Conversely, single emblems were often entered into *Stammbücher*, as evidenced by the personal emblem, "Et Ivvante Et Conservante Deo," of the Danish artist Melchior Lorck, which he entered into the album of Abraham Ortelius.¹² The dedication practices revealed intellectual networks and contributed to plural authorship: the dedicatees can be said to have shaped the emblems when their author personally addressed a named figure with a specific emblem. The practice of dedicating emblems suggests the natural overlap with the album from a very early stage. By personalizing emblems, the authors anticipated the customization of the emblem book as an album.

3. The Individual and the Collective in the *album amicorum*

The emblem book as friendship album, that is, as *album amicorum* or *Stammbuch*, is a particular instance of the asynchronic intersection of the individual and collective in early modern book production, whereby an individual – usually, but not exclusively, a young man on a study tour – had a printed book of emblems interleaved with blank pages for the purpose of providing space for manuscript entries by the people he met. In the case of the *Stammbuch*, the collective represents the persons who serially signed the individual's album in different geographical locations at various times. This collective generally consisted of like-minded persons who shared mutual aspirations of cosmopolitanism, humanistic values, and learning. While contributing a brief record of personal encounters as written memories, the persons who signed the album themselves participated in a social web at whose centre was the album owner. While the album signatories did not necessarily know one another, at one point in time they all encountered the

9 Schnabel 1998.

10 See *Emblematica Online*: There are three copies of the 1574 edition held at the libraries of the Getty Research Institute, Duke University, and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in *Emblematica Online*, the latter fully indexed. See also Rolet 2015.

11 See also Visser 2005, especially Chapter 4: "The Use of Dedications," pp. 111–132, and Appendix 2.

12 See Lorck's entry on scan page 47 of Abraham Ortelius' *album amicorum*.

album owner.¹³ In a sense, the persona of an album holder was shaped by those he met and could even be considered a product of collective authorship.

Keeping an album was an act of self-fashioning whereby the owner situated himself and his learned networks amid the ethical tenets and classical knowledge articulated in the emblems. When the emblem book was used as an album, the authorship multiplied and became more complex, even polyvalent. A new aesthetic developed around the printed emblem through the addition of the manuscript entries.

4. Gender in the Emblematic Album

The world of early modern learning was homosocial; schools and universities were not open to women, and very few women knew Latin, the language of international scholarly communication.¹⁴ Thus, it is unsurprising that both emblems and albums strongly code masculine. Owning a printed emblem book appears to have been customary, or at least desirable, among early modern intellectuals and elites, particularly among men.¹⁵ The database for *Stammbücher*, the *Repertorivm Alborvm Amicorvm* (RAA), lists 285 printed emblem books used as *alba*, only four of which were owned by women.¹⁶ For men as well as the few women who had emblematic albums, the intersection of the two genres reveals social practices of friendship and learning, and religious and dynastic affiliation in an exemplary fashion. Gender played a clear role in the constitution of emblematic *Stammbücher*, whereby a woman's album often affirmed her connections of family and friendship based on a book of devotional emblems.¹⁷ Intense expressions of homo-social friendship, as seen in the case study presented below, were also articulated in the emblem book as *Stammbuch*.

13 When an album had two owners, for example, and was used by a father and a son, or two brothers, the complexity grew exponentially. See Schnabel 2003, p. 166.

14 Skafte Jensen 2004, p. 38.

15 Klose 1988, p. XIV, note 34, mentions the apparent desirability of owning such customized emblem books in the 16th century.

16 See RAA: The women are Anna Catharina of Brandenburg (Queen of Denmark, wife of Christian IV), Magdalena Sibylle of Brandenburg (Electress of Saxony, wife of Johann Georg I; listed twice, once under each dynasty), both of whom used Montenay's *Emblemata christiana* in the 1584 Zurich edition. Dorothea von Anhalt (Duchess of Brunswick Lüneburg, wife of August the Younger) used Friedrich's *Emblemata Nova* in the 1617 German edition. Dorothea's second *Stammbuch* (catalogued under her son Rudolf August in RAA) was Montenay's *Stamm Buch / Darinnen Christlicher Tugenden Beyspiel*. The fourth woman was Elizabeth Reid, who used Pieter Hooft's *Emblemata Amatoria* as an album. This work was first published in 1611; the dates of Reid's use are unclear. *Emblematica Online* offers three copies of Hooft's work.

17 Wade 2017; Wade 2018; Wade 2020.

5. The Emblem Book Becomes an Album

By creating a manuscript album between the pages of a printed emblem book, the album owner invited signatories to enter into the book in a very literal way. As learned practices among educated elites became bound together in a single book, the emblem book and the *Stammbuch* converged to create a new aesthetic. Sometimes the author of an album entry in an emblem book initiated a dialogue with a specific emblem, expanding it as a form of extended plural authorship.

The emblem book was often especially prepared when it was made into an album. In addition to interleaving the printed book with blank pages before binding,¹⁸ some emblem books as albums also received a special binding that customized the cover with *supralibros* that could include the owner's initials, the year, a heraldic device, or decorations stamped into the leather. The year marked the date when the volume was made into a *Stammbuch*, and its customization established the important milestone for this personal monument to friendship, community, networked knowledge, and shared aspirations.

Christian Weigel's *Stammbuch*, now held at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, has a customized binding.¹⁹ He created his album within a copy of Achille Bocchi's *Symbolicarvm quaestionvm* (1574).²⁰ The initials on the cover, "C. W. C. S.," indicate his name and origins, "Christian Weigel Carnoviensis Silesius," that is, from Jägerndorf in Silesia (Fig. 1).²¹ The cover also bears the date 1613, when he acquired the book for use as an album and had it interleaved with blank pages and bound to accompany him on his student journeys. The book has 18 entries from Liegnitz, Münsterberg, Breslau, and Prague.²²

The layout of the customized book is consistent throughout. Each of Bocchi's emblems begins as an opening, that is, motto and *pictura* on the left-hand side and *subscriptio* on the right, the latter in some cases continuing on further pages (Fig. 2). The basic emblem unit is the opening, left and right.²³ By making Bocchi's volume into a *Stammbuch*, Weigel quite literally opened the emblems for new authorial interventions by placing the interleaved pages between the two sides of the emblem opening, inviting signatories to sign within a specific emblem.

18 Brendecke 2005.

19 *Stammbuch* of Christian Weigel.

20 Bocchi: *Symbolicarvm quaestionvm de universo genere*; see *Emblematica Online*. In addition to Martin Opitz's entry, discussed here, I have also written about the entry into Weigel's *Stammbuch* by Valentin Ludovicus, fol. 228, at *Symbolum CVIII*, that is Emblem 108; see Wade 2023.

21 Schulz-Behrend 1978, Opitz: *Briefwechsel und Lebenszeugnisse*, pp. 163 and 216; Opitz: *Lateinische Werke*, pp. 2f. and pp. 275–277 (commentary).

22 As registered in the description of the book by Giermann 1992, p. 176.

23 There is a striking exception at *Symbola CXLIX* (Emblem 149) which has individual pages in this order: a Greek *subscriptio*, the *pictura*, and then a Latin *subscriptio* – all as a single emblem construct. See *Stammbuch* of Christian Weigel, fol. 346–348.



Fig. 1. Front cover, album of Christian Weigel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 225 Noviss. 8°.

6. Martin Opitz Signs the *Stammbuch* of Christian Weigel

That a signatory often put a great deal of thought and consideration into his choice of emblem is attested by entries into Christian Weigel's album. (Weigel's dates are unknown; presumably he was a student when he used his album and thus about the same age as Martin Opitz.) The entry by the German poet Martin Opitz (1597–1639) demonstrates how he created a dialogue with the printed emblem in his manuscript poetry. Opitz's text exploited the emblem to signal his hopes for his future as a poet, while he effusively praised Weigel. This particular emblem-album construct exemplifies the workings of this hybrid emblematic album and confirms how multiple authorship created a new aesthetic for scholarly communication.

There is a definite social hierarchy in the *album amicorum*, and signatories had a clear sense of their own social rank and knew where to make their entries along a social spectrum from the highest ranking through the social orders to the end of the album. As appropriate to his social standing as a young student, a peer, and social equal of the book's owner, Martin Opitz signed Weigel's album near the end of the book, well behind famous teachers and others of higher rank.²⁴ Opitz was only 17 years old when he signed the album, and not yet the great poet he would become. However, his *Stammbuch* entry next to the emblem of the crowning of a poet clearly confirms the ambitious trajectory he had set for himself.

Opitz created his entry next to Bocchi's *symbola* CXLV (145) "Philologia Symbolica" with the text "Magnam hisce habendam gratiam laboribus" ("That great grace is to be had by these labors"; Fig. 3).²⁵ The emblem depicts Andreas Bocchi himself receiving the poet's crown of laurels from the hand of Felsina, the personification of Bologna. Modern editions of Opitz's works with their transcriptions and translations have described the emblem but not interpreted it.²⁶ They focus on Opitz's manuscript entry. Without interpreting the reciprocal relationship between the emblem and the album entry in any detail, only Georg Schulz-Behrend suggested that Opitz consciously chose this specific emblem for his entry, "that Opitz had carefully chosen this particular spot for his entry and had considered *Symbola* 145 as a whole."²⁷ The new emblematic construct created by his entry must be read as a compound emblem, not only as the vehicle for an Opitz autograph.

24 Stammbuch of Christian Weigel, fol. 336 between the opening of *Symbola* 145. It is worth noting that Opitz chose even more carefully than Schulz-Behrend suggests.

25 For a detailed analysis of *Symbola* 145 and translation into French, see Rolet 2015, vol. 2, pp. 830–833. Rolet translates the motto as: "Grande Reconnaissance est requise pour ces travaux."

26 Schulz-Behrend 1978. See also Opitz: *Briefwechsel und Lebenszeugnisse*, pp. 212–216. See also the text with a German translation in Opitz: *Lateinische Werke*, pp. 2–4, with commentary pp. 275–277. The comment "not in Dünnhaupt" is spurious, since Dünnhaupt's magisterial bibliography includes printed works only.

27 Schulz-Behrend 1978, p. 91. His remark was repeated by later scholars; see Opitz: *Briefwechsel und Lebenszeugnisse*, pp. 212–216, and Opitz 2009b, pp. 275–277.

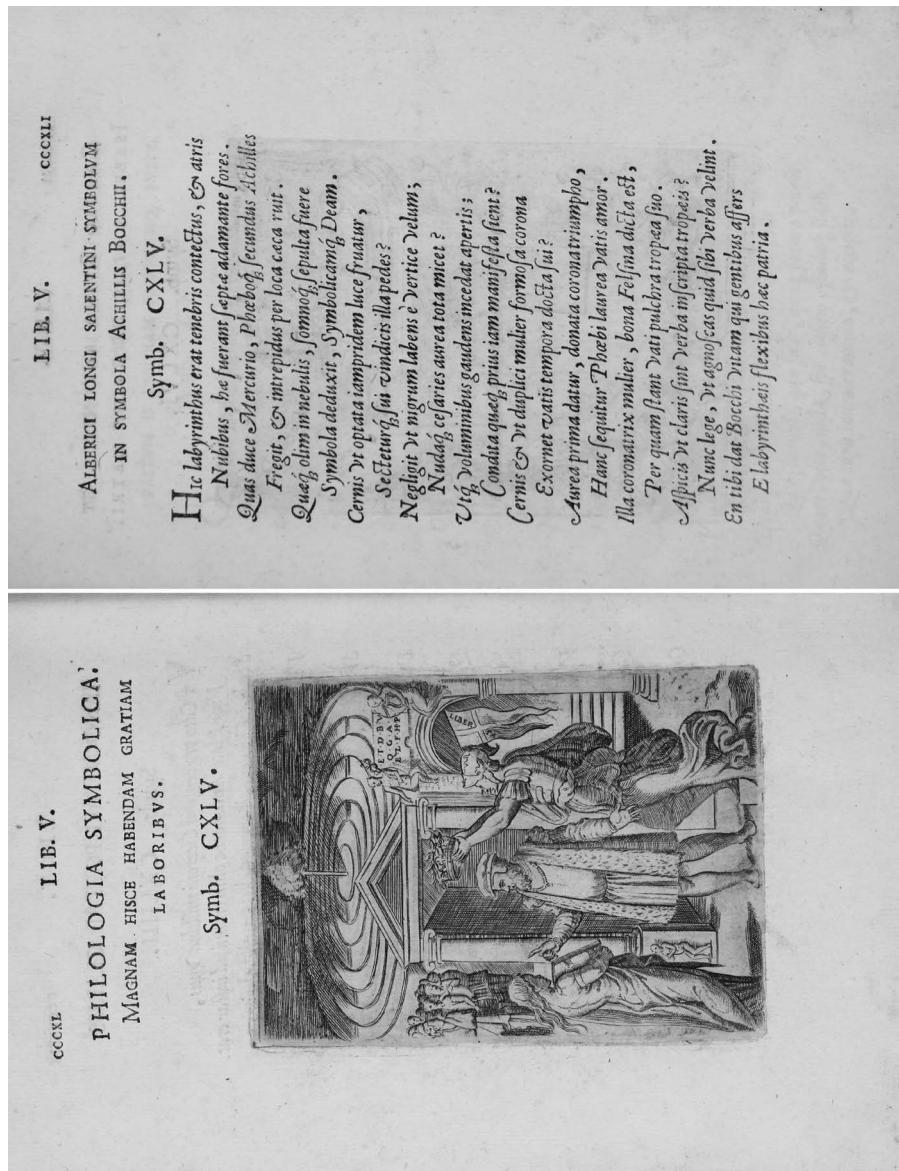


Fig. 2. Achille Bocchi: Symbola 145, Symbolicarum quaestionum, Bologna 1574, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois University Library.

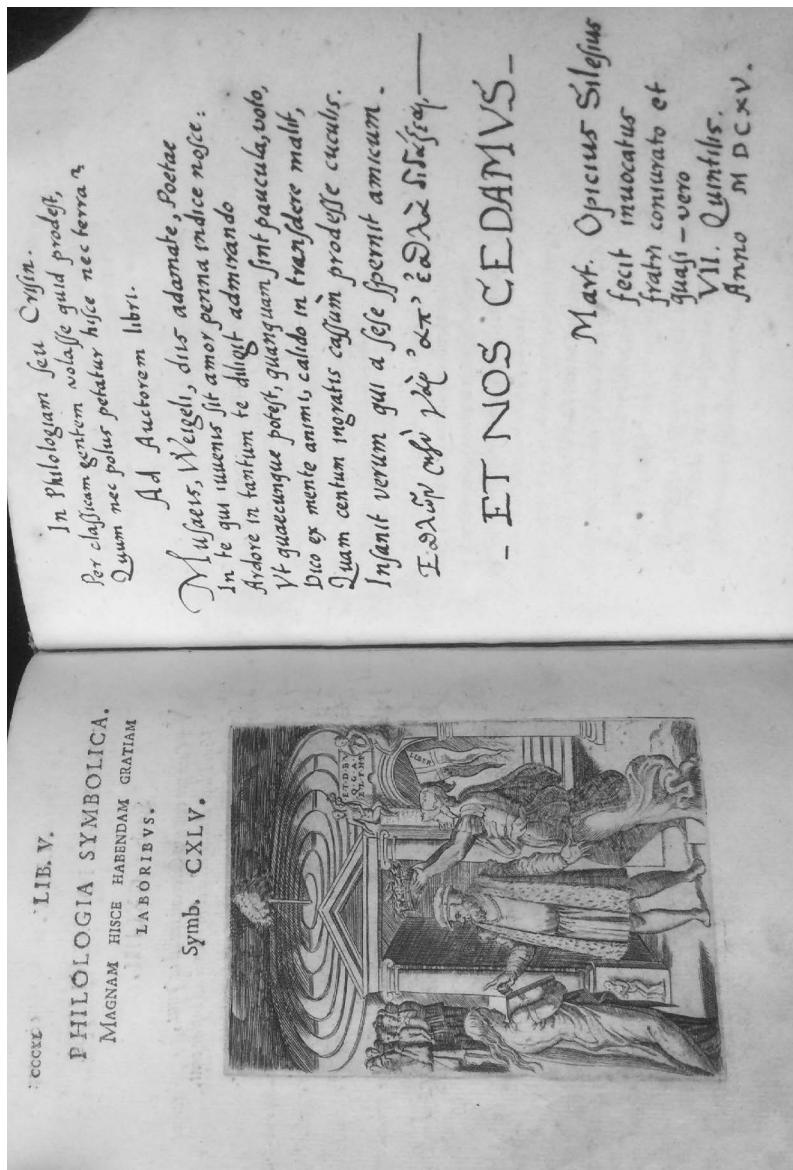


Fig. 3. *Symbola 145*, album of Christian Weigel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 225 Noviss. 8°.

7. The Poetry of the Printed Emblem

In the following, the printed emblem is studied first, followed by Opitz's manuscript entry and the interpretation of his intervention. The printed emblem provides the following text:

Philologia Symbolica

Magnam hisce habendam gratiam
Laboribus

Alberici longi salentini symbolum
in symbola Achillis Bocchi.
Symb. CXLV.

Hic labyrinthus erat tenebris contextus, et atris
Nubibus, hae fuerant saepta adamata fores.

Quas duce Mercurio, Phoeboque secundus Achilles
Fregit, et intrepidus per loca caeca ruit.

Quaeque olim in nebulis, somnoque sepulta fuere
Symbola deduxit, Symbolicamque Deam.

Cernis ut optata iampridem luce fruatur,
Secteturque sui uindicis illa pedes?

Negligit ut nigrum labens e vertice velum;
Nudaque cesaries aurea tota micet?

Utque voluminibus gaudens incedat apertis;
Condita quaeque prius iam manifesta sient?

Cernis et ut duplici mulier formosa corona
Exornet vatis tempora docta sui?

Aurea prima datur, donata corona triumpho,
Hanc sequitur Phoebi laurea vatis amor.

Illa coronatrix mulier, bona Felsina dicta est,
Per quam stant vati pulchra tropaea suo.

Aspicis ut claris sint verba inscripta tropaeis?
Nunc lege, ut agnoscas quid sibi verba velint.

En tibi dat Bocchi vitam qui gentibus affers
E labyrinthaeis flexibus haec patria.

Symbolic Philology

That great grace is to be had by these labours.

A symbol of Alberigo Longo of Salento
among the symbols of Achille Bocchius.

Symbol 145

This labyrinthus was covered over in shadows and with murky clouds; these doors had been enclosed by iron.

With Mercury and Phoebus [Apollo] at the lead, the second Achilles [Achille Bocchi, M.R.W.], following, broke them down, and rushed undaunted through the pathless realms.

He carried forth each and every symbol that was at one time buried in clouds and sleep, and he wed the goddess of the symbol.

Do you see how she enjoys the long desired light and how she follows after the feet of her deliverer?

Does he overlook how, with the dark veil falling from her head and her golden locks laid bare, she shines completely?

And how she gladly advances with open pages, and how everything that was once hidden is now made manifest?

Do you also see how the comely woman adorns the learned temples of her poet with a double crown?

A golden one is given first, a crown bestowed by triumph; this one is followed by a laurel one, the love of the poet Phoebus.

The woman who crowns is called 'good Felsina': through her, the beautiful trophies for her own poet are standing.

Do you notice that words have been inscribed on the illustrious trophies? Now read, so that you may understand what the words intend.

Behold, Bocchius, the fatherland gives you life: you who bring these things to the nations from the windings of the labyrinth.

An abbreviation on the temple connects the emblem *pictura* and motto to the page with the *subscriptio*. The first letters of each word of the final Latin distich – E. T. D. B. V. Q. G. A. E. L. F. H. P. – are inscribed on the right-hand arch between the two upper figures. Longo calls attention to the letters and also to the book the poet is reading: “Aspicis ut claris sint verba inscripta tropaeis? Nunc lege, ut agnoscas quid sibi verba velint.” (‘Do you notice that words have been inscribed on the illustrious trophies? Now read, so that you may understand what the words intend.’) The abbreviation directly relates the emblem *pictura* to the poetry and emphasizes the particular praise for Bocchi for opening the labyrinth.

As the note at the top of the emblem indicates, this is an emblem by Alberico Longo in honour of Bocchi, “a symbol of Alberigo Longo of Salento among the symbols of Achille Bocchius.”²⁸ Including an emblem from another author in one’s own emblem book is relatively rare and illuminates the complicated practices of dedicating emblems.²⁹ The printed *subscriptio* interprets the image and explains its iconography.³⁰ Depicted as an elegant Renaissance figure in a fur-trimmed coat and cap, Bocchi is praised for having burst the gates to the labyrinth of *Philologia* and opened them to *Symbola*, that is, to emblems and the symbolic logic that is the title of his printed work. He gestures with his finger to an open book, while Felsina offers him both a crown and laurels.

This image of poetic greatness appealed to the aspiring German poet who placed his signature on the interleaved page separating the *pictura* and *subscriptio* of *Symbola* 145. In this manner, Opitz created a dialogue between the emblem and his own entry. He signaled his lofty aspirations by choosing the emblem where Achille Bocchi, the author of the *Symbolicarum Quaestiones*, is praised for having discovered the hidden labyrinth of Philology and emblems. In a complex act of self-promotion involving visual and written associations within the emblem, Opitz positioned himself as a poet to be reckoned with in the future. Just as Bocchi freed Italian for symbols, Opitz liberated German verse.

28 Longo, a member of Bocchi’s academy, was murdered in 1555, the year of the publication of Bocchi’s epigrams. See *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 2005; Weston 1993, p. 62; Rolet 2015, vol. 2, pp. 830–833.

29 The crane emblem from Johannes Sambucus, “In labore fructus” (Sambucus: *Emblemata*, p. 200) and Emblem 21 “Eruditionis décor Concordia merces Gloria” (Junius: *Emblemata*, p. 27) can serve here as examples. Junius had an emblem similar to that of Sambucus, for which the printer Christophe Plantin used the same *pictura*, while the epigrams are different. Sambucus dedicated his Emblem “Neglecta virescunt” to Junius; see Sambucus: *Emblemata*, p. 140. See also Visser 2005, p. 62–69.

30 There it is entitled “Alberic Longi Salentini Symbolum in Symbola Achillis Bocchii” (The symbol of Alberico Longo from Lecce in the symbology of Achille Bocchi).

8. Martin Opitz's Manuscript Entry

PHILOLOGIA SYMBOLICA

Magnam hisce habendam gratiam laboribus
Symb. CXLV

In Philologiam sue Crisin.

Per classicam gentem volasse quid prodest
Quum nec polus petatur hisce nec terra?

Ad auctorem libri.

Musaeis, Weigeli, diis adamate, Poetae

In te qui iuuenis sit amor penna indice nosce:

Ardore in tantum te diligit admirando

Vt quaecunque potest, quanquam sint paucula, voto,

Dico ex mente animi, calido in transdere malit,

Quam centum ingratis cassum prodesse cculis.

Insanit verum qui a sese spernit amicum.

Ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἀπ' ἐσθλὰ διδάξεαι. —

— ET NOS CEDAMUS —

Mart. Opicus Silesius.

Fecit inuocatus

Fratri coniurato et

Quasi – vero

VII. Quintilis Anno MDCXV.

SYMBOLIC PHILOLOGY³¹

That great grace is to be had by these labours.
Symbol 145.

To Philology or Decision.

What good is it to have flown through the preeminent people, when neither heaven nor earth may be sought through them?

To the author of the book.

Weigel, beloved of the divine Muses, know
what love – that of the young poet – is in you by the mark of a pen:
it cherishes you with so ardent an admiration
That it prefers, by its fervent prayer, to render whatever it can,
though they be small things (I am speaking from the seat of my soul),
Than to benefit in vain a hundred thankless fools.
Whoever spurns a true friend is raving mad.
For you shall learn noble things from noble people.

_ AND LET US YIELD _

Martin Opitz of Silesia
made [this], having been called upon,
For his sworn and,
As it were, his true brother.
The 7th of July of the year 1615.

³¹ My thanks are due to Dr. Jeremy Thompson, Bonn, who translated the Latin of both Bocchi's emblem and Opitz's manuscript entry into English.

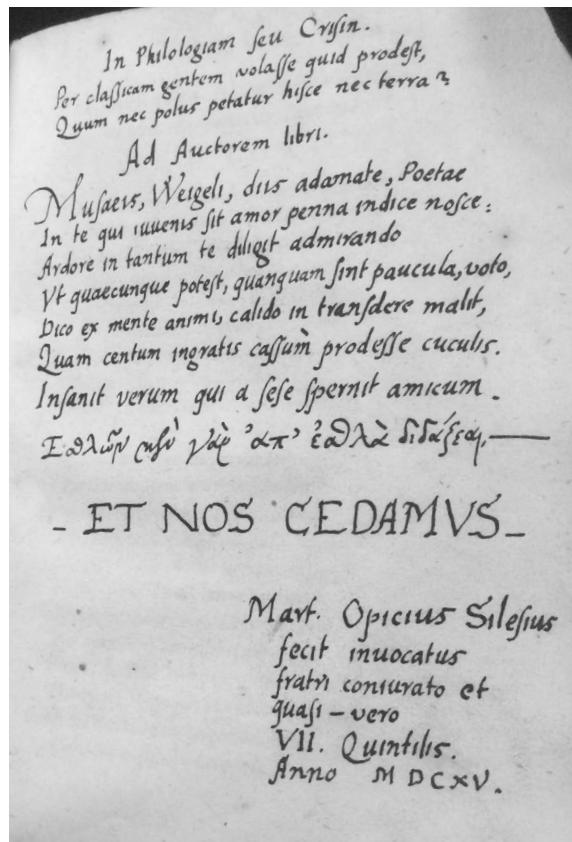


Fig. 4. Martin Opitz's entry in Christian Weigel's album, following the *pictura* of *Symbola* 145, Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 225 Noviss. 8°.

With his handwritten texts, Opitz created a new textual environment for this *pictura* of poetic laureation, whereby the two sets of emblem paratexts must be read together.

The motto alludes to several layers of complexities with respect to the new emblem construct. Readers can situate his motto “In Philologiam seu Crisin” (‘To Philology or Decision’) above the image of a poet being crowned and read his new texts as the emblem *subscriptio* (Fig. 4). In a common emblematic practice, Opitz employed the emblem *pictura* for an entirely new statement, that is, to criticize his contemporaries and position himself as a future great poet. It has been speculated the word “Crisin” in the motto might refer to an illness at its crisis point while simultaneously playing on the word “critici,” that is, the great philologists Scaliger and Salmasius.³² Reading “Crisin” as the inflection point of a decision aligns well both with Opitz’s aspirations to ‘remedy’ German poetry and with his passionate praise of Weigel. Opitz’s emblem-

32 Opitz: Lateinische Werke, p. 277 (commentary).

atic *subscriptio* consists of two parts: the opening distich criticizing contemporary poets and the second poem where Opitz personally addresses Weigel. Opitz made the decision to move beyond abstract poetics to personal poetry. Positioned in the middle of the printed emblem, Opitz's entry interrupts the printed opening to create this new meaning. His distich reads:

Per classicam gentem volasse quid prodest
Quum nec polus petatur hisce nec terra?

What good is it to have flown through the preeminent people [poets], when neither heaven nor earth may be sought through them?

These lines must be understood as a reference to Horace's poetological Ode 2.20, where the poet, in the form of a swan, soars over the landscape: "non usitata nec tenui ferar / pinna biformis per liquidum aethera" ('I will be borne, a two-formed poet, not by a slight or common wing through the liquid airs').³³ Horace is concerned here with the eternal fame of the poet, whose work, based on his poetic accomplishments and his metaphors, persists after his death. His ways of working and his poetic processes are so unusual and expressive, as he illustrates with the metamorphosis into a swan. A general criticism of poetry is inscribed in his self-awareness as a poet: Horace's poetics are not the usual ones ("non usitata [...] pinna"), not the methods employed by others. Opitz takes this blend of criticism and pride and articulates his own dissatisfaction with contemporary poetry, expressing his hunger for new forms and content. The poetological refocusing of Horace's ideas reflects typical emblematic strategies to set new emphases. In this particular case, it illuminates Opitz's forward-facing intention to renew German poetry and poetics, which he accomplished in the following decade.³⁴

Opitz makes tangible the Horatian metaphor of flight that illustrates how literary fame is borne into the world, one might say, in the manner in which he treats the book as an object. The Latin "volasse" is reminiscent of the German 'fliegen, überfliegen' (fly, fly over). The allusion resonates with "durchblättern," that is, to 'leaf through,' and connects the abstract meaning with the material fact of the book. Opitz's interposed manuscript leaf flies through the two pages of *Symbola* 145. With his entry interpolated into the volume on a blank page, Opitz literally "flies through" or "between" the famous poets ("preeminent people"). His album entry is positioned on a leaf between "heaven and earth."³⁵ Metaphorically, he aspires to soar above the others.

33 Horaz: *Odes and Epodes*, 2,20.

34 My thanks are due to Professor Dr. Anja Wolkenhauer, Tübingen, for her careful reading and comments on my work. This paper has profited from her insights.

35 Schulz-Behrend 1978, p. 91, interprets the distich as criticizing the contemporary superficiality of poetry that neglects Christian virtues (*polus*) and has no practical relevance (*terra*).

In a pivot from poets and poetry in general, Opitz then turns to address his friend Christian Weigel, a pivot from the emblem to the album. The shift occurs when he directly addresses Weigel as the author of the album: “ad auctorem libri.”³⁶ This change is accentuated by the position of the phrase in isolation on the page. Casting Weigel as the author of the emblematic album has significant implications for this combined genre as a work of multiple authors. In the very small poetic space of *Symbola* 145, there are four authors: Achille Bocchi as the author of the emblem book; Alberigo Longo as the author of this particular emblem; Christian Weigel as the author of the album; and Martin Opitz as the author of this entry. By inserting blank pages into Bocchi’s emblem book, Weigel has created the space for more poetry; by inviting people he has met to sign his album, he has created a document of his own academic networks and authored his own intellectual persona.

Following his declaration of Weigel as author, Opitz’s Latin hexameters proclaim Weigel to be a great poet. His language is unambiguously erotic: *adamate* (adored, beloved), *poetae iuvenis amor* ([erotic] love of a young poet), *diligit* (love, often in erotic contexts), *ardore* (heat, often used erotically), and *voto...calido* (referring to a fervent promise or vow). Opitz states his “ardent admiration” and “fervent prayer” “from the seat of his soul.” He prefers to render “small things” to this one friend rather “than to benefit a thousand thankless fools.” While exuberant professions of eternal friendship are standard in the *album amicorum*, Opitz’s entry is strikingly effusive in its praise for the otherwise unknown Weigel.³⁷ Opitz employs aphorisms attesting to strong ties of friendship: the Latin professes loyalty and true friendship, while the Greek serves to underscore friendship and nobility of spirit. Both demonstrate Opitz’s own classical knowledge:

Insanit verum qui a sese spernit amicum.

Ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἀπ' ἐσθλὰ διδάξεαι. —³⁸

Whoever spurns a true friend is raving mad.

For you shall learn noble things from noble people.

36 While Opitz commentators assume that Weigel gave his poetry to Opitz, one could interpret Weigel as the *auctor* of this *liber amicorum*, see Schulz-Behrend 1978, p. 91.

37 Opitz’s *Briefwechsel und Lebenszeugnisse* register album entries by Opitz from this very early period, but only one predates the entry into the Weigel *Stammbuch*, namely Opitz’s entry into the album of Andreas Lucae on 8 December 1614 (pp. 205f.). There he also enthusiastically encourages the owner of the album to write poetry: “Aut Homo aut Poeta” (Either man or poet), although the expressions of friendship are much less intense. There are more album entries by Opitz before 1620, dating from 1617 (p. 229), 1618 (pp. 232 and 234), and 1619 (p. 242).

38 Schulz-Behrend 1978, p. 91, and those following him identify the Greek passage as a segment of a longer quotation from Theognis that he renders in Latin as “Honesta enim ab honestis disces.” Plato and Xenophon, among others, also employed this citation. Part of Theognis’ known poetry focuses on verses to his *eromenos* Cyrus.

The last line of the Opitz poem is from Virgil (*Eclogues* 10, 69) and deserves particular attention here:

_ ET NOS CEDAMUS _
_ AND LET US YIELD _

This particular text would have been completed in the minds of all readers:

[Omnia vincit amor,] _ ET NOS CEDAMUS _ [Amori]
[Love conquers all things,] so we too shall yield [to love].

By carving out “_ ET NOS CEDAMUS _” Opitz forces our attention on that segment of the line, “and we too shall yield.” The plural “we” encompasses both Opitz and Weigel. In a strategic act of hiding and revealing common to emblems, Opitz omitted both the first half-line and the final word of the well-known verse, both of which refer to love. His reference would have been widely understood because his citation practice exploits the well-stocked minds of the readers of emblems and albums who would recognize the quotation from Virgil, noting its missing elements. These aphorisms and citations make a somewhat disjointed impression, yet behind them they comprise a web of learned allusions. In a typical emblematic strategy, Opitz’s *subscriptio* does not overtly provide the interpretation of his new emblem construct; instead he directs the learned reader to its subtler meanings. Readers are left to assemble the missing puzzle themselves.

The earliest scholar to have written about this Opitz autograph, Georg Schulz-Behrend, felt compelled to comment on Opitz’s excessive praise of Weigel’s poetic abilities, and these observations have been repeated in successive scholarship.³⁹ Opitz’s praise for Weigel was so effusive that Schulz-Behrend imagined that Weigel presented Opitz with a collection of youthful poems, which elicited Opitz’s disproportionate admiration. The great Opitz scholar Schulz-Behrend dismisses these imagined schoolboy verses by Weigel as amateurish. However, the scenario Schulz-Behrend offers is a fictitious projection attempting to account for such extravagant praise. As far as is known, this Christian Weigel never wrote any poetry, and he never published any work at all, in any genre.⁴⁰ Both the words that are and are not uttered offer compelling clues on how to interpret the intense friendship between these two young men.

39 Schulz-Behrend 1978, p. 91, speculates that Weigel must have given Opitz his schoolboy poems: “Opitz takes this booklet (*liber*) as an opportunity to speak in effusive praise of a poet (*fratri coniurato et quasi vero*) ‘related’ to him.” This reading is echoed in Opitz: *Briefwechsel und Lebenszeugnisse*, p. 215f. and Opitz: *Lateinische Werke*, p. 277.

40 See Seidel, p. 271. Schulz-Behrend 1978, p. 91, writes: “Weigel likely presented the seventeen-year-old Opitz with a collection of handwritten Latin poems,” which has been frequently reiterated in subsequent research.

9. The Aesthetic of Difference

Past scholars' discomfort with the excessive praise for Weigel indicates that we should examine the text more closely. The inability to account for Opitz's admiration of the otherwise unknown Weigel suggests that traditional interpretive strategies are inadequate. Sarah Ahmed's premise concerning the disorientation necessary for new queer readings of the past provides a useful tool for the analysis of Opitz's *Stammbuch* entry.⁴¹ A queer reading does not necessarily mean an attempt to determine if a historical figure actually engaged in homosexual behaviours, whereas this new hermeneutical approach embraces a range of gender attitudes and opens texts to fresh readings. The alternative reading proposed here draws on three key points: 1) acknowledging the erotically charged language; 2) completing a fragmented, well-known text; and 3) reading the architectural organization of the entry on the interpolated page to direct the interpretation of its contents. Points 1 and 2 have been addressed above; point 3 is addressed below.

Signatories of albums generally display a range of penmanship from execrable to exquisite. Self-conscious signatories often prepared their entries carefully and considered not only their words but also the different aesthetic impact of their handwriting in terms of layout and design. Opitz's album entry was not spontaneous but deliberate. How Opitz penned his powerful attestation of affection structures our reading of his album entry as a poem at the intersection of classical poetry and homosociality. The use of majuscules, flowing script, Italic hand, different alphabets, changes in scale, and their placement on the manuscript page all create a striking impression of the text as a monument. The design and format of this manuscript page are meaningful and carry more than decorative signification. Opitz reflected not only on the content of his words but also on their visual impact, striving for maximum possible effect.

Opitz's intervention into Bocchi's emblem reflects his desire to position himself among classical humanists with his use of majuscules, scale, and page format. He suggests a form of paper epigraphy. The motto is centred on the page, followed by a distich centred below it. The pivot in addressing Weigel ("Ad auctorem libri") is also centred and double spaced, emphasizing the shift in topic and elevating Weigel to the role of co-author with Bocchi. His prominence is confirmed by the large font for "Musaeis, Weigel," which is followed by the smaller scale for Opitz's longer poem, whose conclusion in a fair Greek hand is emphatically marked by a dash. Most striking is the " _ ET NOS CEDAMUS _ " in majuscule. It is justified right, which suggests the longer omission of the first half of the Virgilian line "Omnia vincit amor" and with the shorter space at the end of the line for the single absent word "Amori." The visual focus is on the words " _ ET NOS CEDAMUS _ " which are set off by dashes. The added punctuation not only empha-

41 See Ahmed 2006.

sizes the large font of the words, it emphatically gestures to the omitted parts of the Virgilian text. “_ ET NOS CEDAMUS _” (‘so we too shall yield,’ or, ‘let us yield’) leaps off the page at readers much like an ancient inscription on a monument or a contemporary headline.⁴² It demands to be read, completed, and understood in the complex message of poetic innovation and male bonding. Citations of classical texts in early modern poetry, particularly in an emblematic context, often reveal more by what is not said than what is said. Readers must complete the absent words and think about the meaning of love left unspoken, about why this love has no voice. By omitting “omnia vincit amor” and “amori,” Opitz draws more attention to the missing words than if they had been written out in majuscule.

The placement of the majuscule inscription “_ ET NOS CEDAMUS _” also bears further scrutiny. It is as if written in stone. Instead of being at the top of the page or monument, it is the last line before Opitz’s signature and thus closely links yielding to love with his own person, “Martin Opitz of Silesia,” and that of the dedicatee Christian Weigel. His name is the line directly beneath the majuscule inscription, stating Martin Opitz “made [this inscription], having been called upon” by his “sworn” and almost “true brother.” Opitz and Weigel are intimately connected in the concluding text. The placement of “_ ET NOS CEDAMUS _” – of yielding to love – at the bottom of the page represents it as the culmination of the poem that directly addresses Weigel. The position of the love that conquers all suggests that it is also situated in a different place, ‘disoriented,’ directed “as it were” at an almost “true brother.” Through the employment of fragmented classical citations and deliberate material layout and page design of his entry, Opitz signaled his intense, even passionate, feelings for Christian Weigel. The organization of the page supports this interpretation and involves text-image strategies for a fresh approach that embraces a spectrum of attitudes toward homosocial friendship and love. The colloquial employment of verse fragments was a common practice in early modern language usage and a majority of album entries used fragments often and even exclusively. Opitz’s intense praise for Weigel has been remarked upon by all commentators in the wake of Georg Schulz-Behrend.⁴³

As Minna Skafte Jensen has observed, the new social order of early modern intellectual elites often removed the young man from traditional family and kinship networks and instead emphasized bonds between men, the ability to choose one’s own “family,” and a new kind of friendship that is “self-established and secular.”⁴⁴ The importance of male friendship increased markedly, took on new significance, and found effusive

42 Cholzman 2018.

43 See Schulz-Behrend 1998, p. 91; Opitz: Briefwechsel und Lebenszeugnisse and Opitz: Lateinische Werke.

44 Skafte Jensen 2004, p. 55.

expression among contemporary poets. Not only did Opitz imagine a new poetics, he imagined a new way of being in the world, which found expression in the emblematic *Stammbuch*.

10. Martin Opitz, the Poet Laureate

The young Martin Opitz was extraordinarily bold in claiming the emblem of a poetic laureation and in his articulation of love for his friend. Opening the German language for new forms of expression is precisely what Opitz did when he published his *Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey* (1624) and his *Acht Bücher Deutscher Poematum* (1625). In the former he offered a theory of German metrics and in the latter examples of the new German verse.⁴⁵ Opitz himself burst the confines of earlier German poetic forms and, with a single stroke, brought elegance to German poetry, elevating it to new heights, rendering German every bit as aesthetically beautiful as poetry in other vernacular languages. In 1625, Emperor Ferdinand II (1578–1637) personally laureated Martin Opitz, the only poet whom that emperor had so elevated.⁴⁶ In 1629, Opitz was admitted into the German language society, the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, under the societal name “der Gekrönte” (the crowned man). His societal emblem depicts in a pavilion in a landscape both a laurel tree and a crown of laurels on a table, echoing the emblem motto “Mitt diesem” (‘With this’ [laurel, crown]). The eight lines of verse beneath the motto and *pictura* attest to the public recognition of Opitz’s poetic abilities and confirm the confident projection of his self-assuredness: “Ich selbsten krönte mich” (‘I crowned myself’).⁴⁷ Matthias Bernegger called Opitz the “German Virgil.”⁴⁸

Martin Opitz, unmarried, died of the plague in Danzig ten years later in 1639. There is no further information about the owner of the *Stammbuch*, Christian Weigel.

11. The Different Aesthetic, or The Aesthetic of Difference

The opportunities for interpersonal communication expanded exponentially when the two genres of emblem book and *Stammbuch* coincided. The possibility of reciprocal enrichment of manuscripts in print was often fully exploited. In this particular case, the meaning of the printed emblem was extended by handwritten personal sentiments, allowing the signatory to customize the emblem to reflect both his own aspirations and

45 Dünnhaupt 1991, pp. 3026f.

46 Flood 2006, pp. 1450–1452.

47 Martin Opitz: “Mitt Diesem,” “Der Gekrönte,” Mitglied 200, 1629. See Ludwig: *Der Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft Nahmen/Vorhaben/Gemählde und Wörter*, sig. Eeeij.

48 Flood 2006, p. 1252.

his relationship to the person who kept the book. A dialogue evolved from the interplay of texts and images, print and manuscript. The hybrid volume became a vehicle for additional layers of meaning in the context of social networks and friendship. The space for interpretative elaboration became multiplied and created new pathways for emblematic reading strategies, which are *de facto* non-linear.⁴⁹

Given the homosocial world of intellectual elites and the prominent role of friendship in humanistic circles, the tone of much early modern European Neo-Latin poetry strikes modern readers as excessive, although it was not at all unusual.⁵⁰ Martin Opitz's strong homosocial bond with Weigel can be traced in his intervention into the 'disoriented' emblem. Combined with the opportunity for the creation of personal identity and *memoria*, the emblematic *Stammbuch* involving plural authors invites alternate, recursive readings. The plural authorship and complex material representation of this particular emblem construct evoke the authority of classical epigraphy. It also confirms that a 'different aesthetics' can be interpreted as an aesthetics of difference.

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49 These observations can be taken further when one takes into consideration both the act of reading and the positioning of the individual entry within the social hierarchy of the album. Because there was only a narrow band breadth in the social organization of the album, however, such considerations have built-in limits. For example, persons of great social standing signed at the front of the album and then down through the social hierarchies. Thus, Opitz, as a young student who had not yet established himself as a poet, signed at the end of the album.

50 Skafte Jensen 2004.

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