

Review

Learned Love. Proceedings of the Emblem Project Utrecht Conference on Dutch Love Emblems and the Internet (November 2006)

Els Stronks and Peter Boot (eds). *The Hague: DANS*, 2007. 225 pp. ill. ISBN 978-90-6984-510-4. € 20 (paperback). Freely available on <http://www.knaw.nl/publicaties/pdf/20061101.pdf>

This volume contains 16 papers originally presented at the *Learned Love* conference held in Utrecht on November 6 and 7, 2006, a conference which was organized to celebrate the Emblem Project Utrecht (EPU) and to discuss its outcomes. This project began in 2002 with the purpose of publishing an Internet site with scholarly and searchable editions of Dutch emblem books. It ended in November 2006 with the website containing 26 texts (<http://emblems.let.uu.nl/>).

The book is structured in two main sections that reflect the organization of the conference itself. The first section is devoted to the study of Dutch love emblems, while the second section analyzes the project's outcomes, its future, and the digitization process.

The thorough introduction, written by the two editors (Els Stronks and Peter Boot), reports the background of both the conference and the project, and outlines the content of the book. In the first essay, Alison Saunders addresses the origins of the Dutch love emblem by reporting the recent discovery of a French emblem book by Guillaume La Perrière which dates from 1548. This is a second edition of the lost first edition of 1543, which may have influenced the subsequent Dutch production of love emblem books of the seventeenth century. Both of these books are significantly earlier than the first book included in the EPU which was published in around 1601 by Daniel Heinsius.

The following three papers (by Arnoud Visser, Mark van Vaeck, and Els Stronks) investigate the corpus of emblems from a religious point of view. Some of the books that compose the corpus are devoted to divine love and deal with religious matters. In the period covered by the publication of the Dutch love emblems dramatic religious changes (and wars) were taking place in the Netherlands, with Catholics and Protestants each seeing success and failure in alternation. Such an alternation is evident also from the (divine) love emblems books. In his essay, Arnoud Visser compares Otto Vaenius's *Amoris divini emblemata* (1615) with Michael Hoyer's *Flammulae amoris* (1629). Both books are products of a catholic environment and strongly relate to Augustine's doctrine, but while the first book finds its place within an highly educated catholic aristocracy, the second conveys a strong pedagogical content in the attempt to improve perceptions of the Augustinian order, perceptions which were seen to have been wounded by the deceit of Luther. Mark van Vaeck discusses how Jesuits used the genre of love emblems through the publication of two volumes of emblems in 1640, one in Latin and the other in Dutch. Such books simultaneously reveal both celebrative and pedagogical intents, the former being more evident in the Latin publication which was designed for an educated and aristocratic public, while the latter transpires more clearly from the vernacular publication which was targeted to a more variegated middle and mercantile class. The last of the 'religious' papers is by Els Stronks who used the search tools offered by the EPU website to show that religious influence on the secular love emblems arose during the seventeenth century and assumed different shades (catholic and protestant, both with varying degrees of mysticism) according to the different political and historical conditions which were present at the moment of

the publication, and according to the place of publication (northern or southern). In this way Stronks questions the strict separation between profane and religious emblems books.

Sagrario López Poza examines the Spanish epigrams in the multi-language *Amoris divini emblemata* (1615) by Vaenius, written by Alonso de Ledesma, and situates them in the larger context of the Spanish literature of the period. In the following paper, Jan Bloemendal tries to trace the literary dependencies of love emblems in the larger context of seventeenth-century literature, discussing also the influences that love emblems had on contemporary literature and arts.

Stefan Kiedron and Joanna Skubisz present a case-study of the spread of Dutch love emblems throughout Europe, tracing the ways by which two copies of the 1615 edition of Helsius's *Ambacht von Cupid* arrived in Wrocław in the mid-seventeenth century and how such a book, specifically tailored to the Dutch market, was received in Poland. The following contribution by Arie Jan Gelderblom investigates the connections between the production of love emblems and the Dutch economy that was flourishing at the exact time in which this production was blooming. He examines concepts such as the profitable usage of time and money from the point of view of both love and the market, and he uses examples drawn from material included in the EPU.

The last contribution of the first section is by Peter Boot and represents a special case within the book as it was written after the conference. Boot reports on the discovery that a cycle of paintings in the Chateau de Coulon, in Graçay (Cher), was almost certainly inspired by the *Théâtre d'Amour*, an anonymous early seventeenth century adaptation of Heinsius' *Quaeris quid sit amor* (1601). Such a discovery was possible because the owner of the chateau contacted the EPU research team after having spotted several similarities between the iconography of the pictorial cycle and some of the images available from the EPU website. This fortunate event shows the great impact and usability of the EPU site, a point that is confirmed by the impressive level of use reported in the introduction of the volume.

The second section of the book is fully devoted to digitization of the love emblems books for the EPU project. The first paper by Els Stronks presents the design of the website as an implementation of the 'knowledge site' outlined by Shillingsburg (2006), in which a digital scholarly edition is integrated with research tools able to present the texts and other scholarly materials in new, user-tailored ways. The second contribution is by Edward Vanhoutte and constitutes certainly the most theoretical paper of the whole book, discussing the standards and the editorial practice for the production of any digital scholarly edition, not specifically the ones included in the EPU site. He outlines three different models for the production of digital editions: a) digitizing an existing printed edition; b) creating an electronic edition by recording the variants offered by different witnesses; c) generating electronic editions from a repository of encoded texts. Of the three models, he prefers the third, concluding that, in his view, the digital edition based on a static opposition of invariant and variant texts is obsolete and that digital (critical and non-critical) scholarly editions require a new theoretical framework. Vanhoutte introduces here the concept of *relative calibration*, borrowed from genetic criticism (Van Hulle, 2004), as a more suitable editorial perspective.

In his contribution, John Tilstra outlines the technical choices ('backbone') behind the implementation of the EPU, from the point of view of both digitization and web design, documenting the usage of international standards such as XML and TEI. The following paper, by Peter M. Daly, offers a thorough evaluation of the EPU website. He outlines the scholarly needs and expectations of a digital edition of emblems books by describing the state-of-the-art of the research in this field; he then considers the way the EPU website meets such expectations. Next, Thomas Stäcker presents what he sees as the next logical steps for the EPU project, namely to connect the outcomes of the project with similar products. The use of XML allows the implementation of a harvesting procedure by which the user can query different repositories at the same time, such as the ones produced in Glasgow, Munich, La Coruña, and Illinois, for instance.

The last contribution is by Peter Boot and discusses perspectives that can be opened to scholars by providing digital resources such the EPU website. In particular he discusses the ways in which reading, writing, and publishing activities may be modified in a field in which there is rich, scholarly controlled material such the digital editions of the Dutch love emblems. He then introduces the concept of ‘mesotext’ to describe the corpus of annotations that may support future studies and then considers how such a corpus might be managed.

In summary, this book deserves serious attention. Emblems scholars will certainly appreciate the first section for the rich and thorough examination of the emblems from literary, religious, and socio-economic points of view. On the other side, anyone with some interest in digital publication should find within the second section a rich account

of best practice in a digital research project, along with appealing new theoretical perspectives on digital publication in general.

References

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