

Karl A.E. Enenkel, *The Invention of the Emblem Book and the Transmission of Knowledge, ca. 1510–1610*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History; Volume 295; Brill's Studies on Art, Art History, and Intellectual History; Volume 36 (Leiden: Brill 2019). Print. 463pp., \$229.00, ISBN: 9789004355255 (hardback).



Review

Emblem books, collections of allegorical illustrations accompanied by verse or prose text, enjoyed enormous popularity in Western Europe throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Aided by the invention of the moveable-type printing press in the late fifteenth century, printed emblem books made substantial contributions to the propagation of knowledge. Similarly, the digitisation of rare books in recent decades has affected renewed scholarly interest in the epistemic models of emblems as a result of this perpetual accessibility. At the same time, questions about the invention of the genre and the ways in which emblems were employed to disseminate erudition are highlighted by their increased visibility. In *The Invention of the Emblem Book and the Transmission of Knowledge*, Karl A.E. Enenkel devotes his scholarly expertise in philological analysis to respond to some of these interpellations.

Enenkel enumerates the limitations of previous studies on early emblem books as far too narrow in scope and lacking philological evidence. He argues that philological analyses should take precedent especially in the case of the 1531 printing – since the images therein were provided not by the author, Italian humanist Andrea Alciato, but by the Augsburg publisher, Heinrich Steiner. Since Enenkel deciphers Alciato's epigrams as a vehicle for communicating ideas, the book prioritises natural history, vernacular predecessors to printed Latin emblem books, emblematic commentary, and advanced emblematics.

While his focus has often been Middle and Neo-Latin Philology, Prof. Dr. Enenkel's research interests include emblems, biography, mythography, and Early Modern studies. He is known for founding the series *Intersections: Interdisciplinary*

Studies in Early Modern Culture (Brill, Leiden) and numerous scholarly contributions to the study of emblematics. The current work originates from the project 'Die neulateinische Emblematik' in the *Cluster of Excellence "Religion und Politik"* at the University of Münster, Germany, where Enenkel is currently the holder of the Chair for Middle Latin Philology and the director of the Seminar for Latin Philology of the Middle Ages and Modern times.

The study is divided into four parts, each richly illustrated with colour or black & white images. Part I (Chapter 1) begins *in media res* with the invention of the emblem genre as the title indicates. Enenkel relates a common observation that Alciato's emblem books (in text and images) treat the realm of nature and natural history extensively, 'Animals appear so often in the *Emblematum libellus* or *Emblematum liber* that one may get the impression that emblems and animals are somehow intrinsically connected' (p. 3). The author admits that the inclusion of woodcut illustrations in the 1531 edition may well have been the decision of publisher Steiner and that no evidence exists to confirm that Alciato ever foresaw a visual element of the currently accepted definition of the emblem as a tripartite structure: *motto, pictura, subscriptio*. Hence, by focusing almost exclusively on the textual inspirations of Alciato the poet, the composer of textual epigrams, Enenkel pretermits medieval bestiaries and the *Physiologus* tradition from which emblems are derived. Part II focuses on German humanist Johann von Schwarzenberg. In Chapter 2, as an apologist for the forerunners of the 28 February 1531 printed emblem book *Emblematum liber* (often considered the seminal work of the emblem genre), Enenkel gives creative credit to Steiner. Alciato is thus removed from the seat of 'inventor' of the genre and replaced by Schwarzenberg whose manuscript *Memorial der Tugent (Mirror of Religious Virtue)* was completed before 1512. Enenkel convincingly shows that Schwarzenberg's bi-medial booklet inspired Steiner's 'idea that illustrations might contribute to the understanding and perception of the poems, especially among less learned readers, via illustrated books in the vernacular' (p. 128). In Chapter 3 Enenkel thus takes us to 16 February 1531 to glimpse a book printed 12 days before Alciato's *Emblematum*:

Schwarzenberg's vernacular German translation of Cicero's *De officiis*. Enenkel argues that this simplified translation transforms Cicero from Roman politician to late medieval knight and becomes the main mode of the transmission of knowledge to the vernacular readership. Part III argues for the importance of the emblematic commentary. Chapter 4 examines the earliest comments on Alciato from 1551 by Bavarian jurist Sebastian Stockhamer. Enenkel argues for this increased attention to Stockhamer's commentary to show that his annotations are in fact scholarly, despite Mignault's assertions to the contrary. Chapter 5, then, examines interpretation and authorship in the 1565 work *Emblemata* by Hadrianus Junius. The cultural technique of emblem interpretation as an intellectual game is especially revealing in Junius' practice of self-commentary. Part IV concludes the study with a discussion of advanced emblematics. In Chapter 6, Enenkel foregrounds the role of Zoology in *Symbola et emblemata* (1590/93) by Joachim Camerarius. Chapter 7 will interest historians of Netherlandish art as it demonstrates how Dutch painter Vaenius' *Emblemata Horatiana* (for which Vaenius supplied the images and text) transmits knowledge of Horace through a fundamental appreciation of his emblematic subjects. Rigorous philological examination of Neo-Latin texts prevails as the greatest strength of the current study. Enenkel brings much scholarship from German and Dutch to the English-speaking world and, in addition to helpful footnotes, the text includes an extensive bibliography and an index of names. The reader can only wish for an index of subjects to accompany the vast amount of information dispersed throughout the pages. In this trenchant study, Enenkel provides a vital foundation for the intellectual history of emblem books as a genre and should be considered necessary reading for students and scholars of Renaissance and Early Modern European Humanities.

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