Learned Love

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Love emblems and a web of intertextuality

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The call for papers for the conference 'Learned Love: Dutch Love Emblems on the Internet' poses the following query: 'What should a digital emblem site aspire to be: a reconstruction of a seventeenth-century reading experience, a collection of search indices, or a collection of scholarly editions?' I hope to give some answers to this question.

Introductory remarks

It is commonplace nowadays, as opposed to ergocentric approaches like e.g. New Criticism, that works of literature never are isolated phenomena. Texts refer to other texts, as intertextuality teaches us, and to reality.[1] Those other texts may be written, painted or designed, or even belong to the domain of music, as in André Gide's *La Symphonie pastorale* (1919). And in a way even reality itself can be a text, because it is described in words. Julia Kristeva, who formulated the theory of intertextuality elaborating the ideas of Mikhael Bakhtin, claimed that each text is part of a textual web or even of several of those textual webs. One text may react to another text or to a dozen of texts, and may build on a dozen of other texts, or in some way quote them. In this respect not only the intention of the author is important, but also – and even more so – the reception by the reader or spectator. It is she or he who, when reading, actualises other texts, or to put it differently, who gives a text his or her meaning by using the web of texts that exists in his or her head. In this respect intertextuality departs from the same principles as New Historicism that also assumes that the interpretation of 'history' is related to the observer's point of view. Every reader or historian – who is also a reader! – constructs his or her own image of the past and of a text by actualising all the other facts, ideas and texts he knows. It is common sense that must prevent her or him from getting into the morass.

The theory of intertextuality is primarily developed and further advanced by Gérard Genette for modern texts.[2] *Mutatis mutandis* the same holds true for early modern texts such as emblem books. There is one main difference. Early modern texts, like ancient ones, are written within the context of a genre, while modern authors seem to be freer in their conception and writing of their texts, unless we take the concept of 'discourse' or the Genettean notion of the architext as veiled genre concepts. In the domain of the intentional intertextuality in emblem collections, one emblem book reacts to others or quotes them, parodies them. In the domain

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1 Bakhtin 1984a and 1984b; Kristeva 1969.
2 Genette 1982.

of intertextuality in the sense of reception in the receptive mind of the reader other emblem books and other texts are evoked, that may correspond to the author's intention, but may deviate from it as well. Emblem books are very well suited for this kind of approach, because their intention is to please and amuse the reader, especially in an intellectual way. The often multilingual character of the emblem books contributes to this intellectual play – one may even state that in many emblems the texts in different languages form intertexts themselves –, but it also influences their intertextual reception. To what extent and in what way does the choice of the languages matter to the reader's reception? Emblems lead to some other questions because of their typical form, often combining image and text. In this respect we must also keep in mind that it is well possible that similar thoughts and ideas that are introduced in emblems may be also spread or even have been spread by other genres like songs, see, f.i., the multi-generic character of Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* (1611) and of *Apollo of ghesangh der Musen* (1617).[3] For all these reasons a full 'web of intertextuality' cannot be given, but perhaps that is not necessary. The authors of emblem books do direct the readers' minds with what may be called 'clues of intertextualities', both in the texts themselves as in the paratexts they add to their work.[4] In this way some intertexts are actualised – by authors and readers – in a more direct way than others. We can speak of 'a reading experience' or 'reading experiences' that we reconstruct or, as you may understand from the discussion above, construct. The web edition made by the Emblem Project Utrecht (EPU) is of great help to detect those 'clues'.[5]

Clues of intertextualities

Early modern authors, as well as modern ones, may direct the readers' interpretation of the text and also evoke some intertextualities in their minds. There are several means by which they do that. I will start with paratextual clues.[6] One of them is the title that may refer to earlier titles. But if it is such a clue, what does it mean when Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft in 1611 publishes his *Emblemata amatoria* with exactly the same title as Daniel Heinsius's emblem book of 1607/1608?[7] Does Hooft specifically point to Heinsius's book or just to the text type 'love emblem' in general? And what about the anonymous author of the *Emblemata amatoria* of 1690? Does he refer to Hooft, Heinsius, the text type, or to these three? The same questions may be put to the courtier, emblem-maker and painter Otto Vaenius, who was born in the very city of Leiden where Heinsius had written his book of

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3 Modern editions in Hooft 1983 and Keersmaekers and Bostoen1985.
4 Cf., e.g., Conte 1986 and Hinds 1998.
5 I will build on concepts that I learnt from Hans Luijten and his magnificent edition of Jacob Cats's *Sinne- en minnebeelden* (1618/1627 and 1996), which is also available on the site of Emblem Project Utrecht.
6 On paratext, see Genette 1997.
7 This is the third edition of a book *Quaeris quid sit amor?* [Amsterdam, Herman de Buck for publisher Jan Matthijsz., 1601]

Love emblems and had moved to the southern city of Antwerp, and his *Amorum emblemata* ('Emblems of Instances of love') (1608).

A next issue is the role of the printers and publishers. About 1608 the shrewd businessman, printer and poet Dirk Pietersz. Pers obtained Heinsius's *Emblemata* and brought it to the international market, probably stimulated by the success of Vaenius's *Amorum emblemata*, in an edition in Latin, but one that preserved the French and Italian mottoes.[8] Regarding the intricate relationship between printmaker, poet, printer and publisher it is possible that intertextuality and 'commerciality' interfere. This is also indicated by the conception of Hoofts's *Emblemata amatoria*: maybe Hooft was asked by the printer Willem Jansz. (Blaeu) to add some verse subscriptions to illustrations.[9] In the case of Justus de Harduwijn and his *Goddelycke wenschen* (1629) this title clearly refers to *Pia desideria* of 1624 by Herman Hugo. If the reader still hesitates, he is helped by the subtitle: 'Verlicht met Sinne-beelden / ghedichten / ende vierighe uytspraecken der Oudt-vaeders. Naerghevolght de Latijnsche vanden Eerw. P. Hermannvs Hvgo Priester der Societeyt Iesu' ('Illustrated by emblems, poems and stimulating quotations of the Fathers of the Church imitated from the Latin of the Reverend Father Herman Hugo, Jesuit priest'). De Harduwijn wants the reader to know that this is a truly Catholic book, inspired by another emblem book by a Jesuit priest. The reader's mind is directed towards and is made attentive to Catholic 'pious desires'. But with regard to drama, protestant schoolmasters could produce plays written by Catholic authors and vice versa, so how Catholic is the nature of such an emblem book in this context?

Sometimes the titles of single emblems or the same *picturae* refer to other, older ones. The website of the EPU provides excellent tools to inspect these. Within the emblems themselves, there are often explicit references to other texts or sources of quotations, for instance 'Seneca', 'Ovid', 'Virgil', 'St. Augustine', etc. The references themselves may lead to the domains of religion or philosophy. In the first ten emblems of Vaenius's *Amorum emblemata* we find explicit references to the philosophers Seneca (1, 5), Aristotle (2, 8), Plutarch (5), Cicero (5), Porphyry (6) and Boethius (10), the historian Tacitus (*Germania*; 7), the philosophical poet Lucretius (9), the Latin love poets Ovid (2) and Virgil (3), and the philosopher-poet who is known from the Greek Anthology**,** Philostratus (5), as well as the Jewish-Italian author on love**,** Leo Hebraeus (1460-1520; 9). Even if she or he does not know the exact provenance of the text quoted or alluded to or is mislead by the author who gives a wrong reference, the reader's mind is lead to think that this is an emblem book on love with ideas based on philosophers from Antiquity. And he will consider it in the tradition of Neostoicism, even if he would have an idea of the possible relationship between this collection and the work of Guillaume de la Perriere. The Latinising of the name Van Veen into Vaenius also contributes to this impression, since with such a Latinisation the author presented himself as a

8 Hooft 1983, 8.
9 Hooft 1983, 32-33.

learned artist in the humanistic tradition.

In 1615 the Catholic Vaenius composed and published its counterpart, the *Amoris divini emblemata* ('Emblems on Divine Love').[10] Vaenius explicitly presents this collection of pious emblems as a religious variation of his lascivious ones, inspired by Archduchess Isabella. In this emblem book the very quotations from Holy Writ, the Fathers of the Church and other theologians of early Christianity, especially St Augustine (82 quotations from 20 works of Augustine), catch the reader's eye. This emblem book may, or may not, have been inspired by Isabella, archduchess of the Spanish Netherlands (1566-1633), in her endeavour to propagate the Counter-Reformation and its pietistic tendencies. The idea pervading the whole book fits within this policy, that is that *Anima*, the Soul, can come to an *unio* with God by means of good works and through his own agency, the tenet of faith that the Tridentine Council (1545-1563) employed against the Reformation. Intertextuality may lead to a humanistic tradition of practical piety, but the overall impression the reader is likely to get still remains – in my opinion – this depiction of the spiritual travel of the *anima*, even though this 'Werdegang' tends to disappear with close reading. Grace, also one of St Augustine's main points, is certainly not absent in the *Amoris divini emblemata*, but it is not the only way to salvation. Thus in emblem 45 *Crescit spirantibus auris* ('Love grows when the winds are blowing'), with its *pictura* of a blowing Holy Spirit stirring up a fire, Vaenius quotes Augustine's *De gratia et libero arbitrio* ('On Grace and Free Will'), stating that God's Grace incites us to good deeds: 'God's grace works in us through love without us initially, bringing it to perfection because we collaborate willingly. However, without it, when it does nothing, we have not the power to do good works, even when we want to.'[11] This quotation is an alteration of Augustine's text, for in Augustine it is God who 'works in us', while in the quotation it is 'God's Grace' that works in us 'through love'. In emblem 34 (*Omnia eo unde*, 'Everything goes to where it is from') Vaenius cites Ecclesiastes, St Bernard of Clairvaux and Lactantius. One of the two quotes from St Bernard discusses the mutuality of love in bestowing the gifts of grace: 'Love is a great thing, if it runs back to its beginnings, if it is returned to its own source, if, once it has been poured back into its own source, it always takes something from where it can flow out continually'. So it is not an activity of God to which man can add to or from which he can subtract anything (which is the more Protestant view), but an answer of man to God's grace that is also necessary for salvation of the soul, the more Catholic belief. By way of the authors quoted, some readers could put into operation a 'web of intertextuality' of Christian texts that pertain to

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10 See Bloemendal 2002, 273-278 and Buschhoff 1999, 39-76; also Arnoud Visser's contribution to this volume.

11 'Gratia Dei per amorem sine nobis operatur incipiens, quod volentibus cooperatur perficiens: sine illo autem nihil operante, cùm volumus, ad bona opera nihil valemus'; Augustine, *De gratia et libero arbitirio* 17.33 (PL 44, col. 901: 'Ut ergo velimus, sine nobis operatur; cum autem volumus, et sic volumus ut faciamus, nobiscum cooperatur: tamen sine illo vel operante ut velimus, vel cooperante cum volumus, ad bona pietatis opera nihil valemus.'

God's grace and man's love in answer to that, or in other words: how the *Anima* is purified and enlightened so as to be united with God in an *unio mystica*. Of course it depends of their literacy to what extent this intertextuality is noticed and appreciated.

The process of making an emblem book

All these considerations do pertain to the reading of emblems, not to making them. In this process of composing emblems, intertextual references can be directed by several means: other emblem texts that serve as stores of commonplaces, or intermediary texts like the *Polyanthea nova* by Langius or other commonplace books.[12] Also when the author takes the quotation and the reference from such an intermediary book, the intertextual connection is in some way significant for the status of an emblem book. In the *Amoris divini emblemata* just mentioned the quotation from St Augustine almost certainly stems from Langius's commonplace book, for it was included in the section *Gratia* ('Grace') with the same alterations as Vaenius's text had.[13] Under the same heading the quote from St Bernard had its place.[14] In this respect there are many more quotations that could also be found in Langius's *Polyanthea*, in most instances in the sections on *Amor Dei* ('The Love of God'), *Amor proximi* ('The Love of One's Neighbour'), *Charitas* ('Charity' or: 'Love') and *Spes* ('Hope').[15] Even the title *Amoris divini emblemata* may be intertextually inspired: one of the chapters of Thomas a Kempis's *De imitatione Christi*, 3.5, is named 'De mirabili affectu *divini amoris*' ('On the wonderful emotion of divine love'). Vaenius took three quotations from this very chapter. It may be a way to attract and direct the readers' minds, but for Vaenius this must also have been a way to produce an emblem book efficiently. Here we see one of the restrictions of an emblem site: it cannot give all the sources, intermediary sources or other possible intertexts of an emblem.

Emblem books and their functions, combined with intertextuality

So far we looked at the intertexts of an emblem book from the perspective of its sources and forerunners. We can also reverse this perspective. Emblem books were read and used, love emblems were bought by young men for their actual or hoped-for girlfriends. One of them could have been Constantijn Huygens. In his youth he was 'in love' with the girl next door, Dorothea van Dorp.[16] When he studied in Leiden she sent him a letter every day. Suddenly these letters stopped coming because she loved someone else. The latter friendship ended in failure and Dorothea wan-

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12 Bloemendal 2002, 281-282.
13 Langius 1607, 462A i.v. 'Gratia': Gratia ad hoc datur, ut lex compleatur, ut natura liberetur, et peccatum non dominetur, ut velimus, sine nobis operatur incipiens, quod volentibus cooperatur perficiens: sine illo autem nihil operante, cum volumes ad bona opera nihil valemus. *Idem de gratia et libero arbitrio.*'
14 Langius 160, 463.
15 See Bloemendal 2002, 281-282.
16 See Bloemendal and Leerintveld 2005, 275-285.

ted to renew the friendship with Huygens. He elegantly refused with a 106 verse poem in Dutch 'Is 't quelling sonder vreucht' ('Is it torment without joy…'), addressed to Dorothea, who in this poem as in 'Doris oft herder-clachte' (Doris, or the Shepherd's Complaint)[17] is called Doris. In the poem Huygens contrasts love with all its agony to friendship with all its joys. He offers Dorothea his friendship but makes clear that he will never marry her. What makes the poem interesting for emblematics, is that Huygens in his manuscript added twenty five quotations in Greek and Latin to the poem that were suitable for some lines in it, or even were the source of inspiration. They stem from Roman authors: the philosopher Seneca (ca 4 BC-65 AD), the *Sententiae* of Publilius Syrus (1st cent. AD), the poet Virgil (70-19 BC), the satirist Persius (34-62 AD), the philosopher and statesman Cicero (106-43 BC) and the orator Apuleius (ca 125-ca 185 AD), and from Greek ones: the then popular philosopher Plutarch (ca 46-120 AD), the writer of tragedies with philosophical leanings Euripides (480-406 BC), the writer of philosophers's biographies Diogenes Laertius (3rd cent. AD) and a quotation of the obscure comedy author Theodectus, that could be found in the better known Anthology of Stobaeus. A contemporary quotation is derived from the Italian humanist Leo Hebraeus in his *De amore dialogi*. It is striking that eight of the quotations can also be found in the *Amorum emblemata* of Vaenius. Moreover, they contain the same alterations, the same wrong attributions, and the same translation of a Greek saying of Socrates. For instance, the quotation *ad* vs 63 reads, exactly as in *Amorum emblemata* 9: 'Amoris finis est ut duo unum fiant voluntate et amore. Socrat.' ('The goal of love is that two people become one in will and love. Socrates.'). And in a quotation by Cicero both Vaenius's emblem (*Amorum emblemata* 28) and Huygens's poem (also *ad* vs 63) have the variant reading *amore* ('Love') instead of Cicero's *amicitia* ('Friendship'), in a context where in fact friendship would be more suitable.

> Myn hert, myn lust, myn wensch wordt derwaerts niet gedragen,
> Het goet dat ick bejaech besit ick in 't bejagen,
> (65) Een vruntschap sonder sorgh, een liefde sonder smert,
> Twee herten in een siel, twee sielen in een hert,
> Een twee-gemeynen wil, een eendracht van gepeynsen,
> Een onbeduchte trouw, een vrede sonder veynsen,
> Dat's all dat ick besit, dats al dat ick bejaegh,
> (70) Dats myn rust, dats myn lust, myn ooghmerck, myn behaegh.
>
> ('My heart, my joy, my wish does not tend into that direction,
> The good thing I pursue, I possess when pursuing,
> A friendship without sorrow, a love without grief,
> Two hearts in one soul, two souls in one heart,

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17 Adopted in Davidson and Weel 1996.

One pair's common will, unanimity of thoughts,
Faithfulness without fear, peace without hypocrisy,
That is all I possess, that is all I pursue
That is my rest, that is my joy, my wit, my pleasure.')

One of the quotations: 'Amare et sapere vix Deo conceditur' ('The deity hardly permits to be in love and to be wise at the same time', or: 'Even a god is hardly permitted to be in love and to be wise at the same time') is ascribed to Seneca, both by Vaenius and Huygens, although it comes from the famous *Sententiae* by Publilius Syrus. The quotations that may have been taken from Langius are found in six emblems, all over the book, i.e. nrs 5, 9, 28, 31, 70 and 122. It is premature to claim that *therefore* Huygens took his quotations from Vaenius's book, for we do not know if he possessed a copy of it. We do know that he had a copy of Vaenius's *Quinti Horati Flacci Emblemata* (1607). Also, it was not uncommon for a young man to possess such a book of love emblems and to give it to his beloved lady. Would it be possible that Huygens had given a copy of Vaenius's *Amorum emblemata* to Dorothea and now in a kind of farewell poem refers to it? But could she read the Latin lines? Did she actually see them, or are they only in Huygens's own copy of the manuscript? Was it his way of impressing her? Were the same quotations and ideas disseminated through other genres? Questions galore, but it is far too early to integrate these data into Huygens's biography.

Final remarks

In any case, our discussion makes clear that emblems had a function in social and personal life. They were read, used, and adapted. So they acquired a place in the world wide web of literature, either as a genre in its own right, or in a web of other genres. When seventeenth century literate people read them, a set of texts was in their minds, especially when they read the names of the authors or putative authors of the quotations used. Often these intertextualities were part of the process of composition of the emblems. In their turn the emblems became part of a seventeenth century reading experience and therefore played their role in intertextuality. To assess this role of emblems is a challenging task for which the EPU offers wonderful tools. It is not the end of a development, but the start of exploring new horizons. It can be of help to 'reconstruct a seventeenth-century reading experience', or rather to construct an outline of such an experience. It is wonderful when a digital emblem site gives a collection of search tools and indices to a collection of reliable editions so that a scholar may reconstruct some items of such a reading experience. And like the intertexts of the emblems themselves lead the reader to love, be it divine or secular, thus the emblem site leads us to the emblems.

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