Literature and Multilingualism in the Low Countries (1100–1600)

QUEESTE 22

Language Games

The Multilingual Emblem Book and the Language Question in the Low Countries[1]

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Introduction

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, language was an important topic for discussion in learned circles throughout Europe. Scholars, printers, and authors were engaged in debates about which language should be used in certain situations and what rules should apply to the spoken and written form of these tongues.[2] These questions led to the creation of grammar systems and dictionaries for many of the languages of Europe, including Dutch. In the Dutch-speaking areas of the Low Countries, debates arose about the status of the Dutch vernacular in society and its required form. Grammarians argued that the Dutch language needed a standardized and purified form that would allow it to function autonomously, without the help of loanwords from other languages.[3] They called for extending the functions of Dutch to all domains of public life by replacing and excluding French and Latin.[4]

Historical linguists have shown a keen interest in the pursuit to standardize and purify languages and the growing sense of pride in the mother tongue.[5] In recent years, several socio-historical linguistic and cultural historical studies on the topic have put the importance of the standardization and purification of vernaculars into perspective. They demonstrated that the quest for pure and standard vernaculars was only one element of a broader intellectual movement characterized by a particular interest in language and the search for a suitable means of communication. People interested in human interaction were trying to find and create perfect languages. Various spoken and written languages, scripts, and visual languages that utilized symbols were discussed, compared, perfected and tested in this European debate.[6] This article aims to shed light on the debates on language as they took place in the early modern Low Countries. Central to these discussions were the search for a perfect means of local and interregional communication and an interest in the particular qualities of each of the languages used in the area, in particular Dutch. Ideas on the purification and standardization of Dutch and other languages were among the topics that were debat-

2   Van den Branden 1967, 65; Van der Wal 1995; Frijhoff & Spies 1999, 220; Burke 2004; Van der Sijs 2004.
3   Dibbets 1992; Van der Wal 1992.
4   Van der Wal 2002, 5; Van der Sijs 2004, 37-39.
5   Van den Branden 1967; Van der Wal 1995, 23-42; Van der Sijs 2004.
6   See, for example, Demonet 1992; Eco 1993; Burke 2004; Van der Sijs 2004, 55-75; Burke 2005; Cohen 2005; Considine 2008; Simon 2011; Ramakers 2012.

ed, but they were accompanied by comparisons between different spoken and writ-
ten languages and assertions on their respective communicative value. Following the
recent developments in the European wide research on the search for a perfect means
of communication in the early modern era, these debates in the Low Countries are
referred to here as the language question.

Many authors refined their mother tongue by writing literary texts in this language
that cultivated its richness and established its authority.[7] They incited their colleagues
to cease neglecting their native vernacular by writing in other languages. Several au-
thors, in the prefaces of their Dutch emblem books, claimed that they had chosen to
compose their work in the vernacular in order to support the Dutch language.[8] On
the other hand, during this time, many poetry collections were published that con-
tained texts in more than one language. Paradoxically, in several cases, these multilin-
gual works were produced by the very same authors who supported and called for
more writings in their native language.[9] One of the genres that exemplify such poly-
glot publications was the emblem book, a collection of meaningful images, accom-
panied by a motto and an epigram. Thus, the popularity of the emblem was on the
rise at a time when discussions on language in the Low Countries also intensified.[10]

One of the writers who called for literary productions in the Dutch tongue was
the Leiden law student Daniel Heinsius, who proclaimed in the preface to his first
emblem book, published in 1601, that it was his wish to teach the Dutch language to
Cupid, the main character of his work:

> Self Venus van dit jaer (het is niet langh' gheleden)
> Quam vroyelick en bly naer Hollandts rycke steden //
> Den silveren dau quam // ghedruppelt hier en daer
> Waer zy gingh ofte stondt // van haer schoon gouden haer
> Zy wou dat haren zoon // by my wat zou Verkeeren //
> Op dat hy onse spraeck van Hollandt mochte leeren /[11]

Heinsius wittily points out that, until then, the little god of love had occupied him-
self far too much with other languages, which is why he had chosen to write a book
with love emblems in Dutch. In 1613, Heinsius, now a professor, published a new ver-
sion of the emblem book combining the earlier Dutch poems with French ones. The
preface claiming that Heinsius wished to support the Dutch vernacular was reused.[12]
Heinsius' multilingual emblem book is an example of the works that supported the
Dutch language and at the same time provided a platform for other languages. And it

7 Van der Sijs 2004, 559-561.
8 See, for example, Gillis 1566, 9; Visscher 1614, f. *2r. Cf. *infra*, 'The emblem book and the defenders of the Dutch
language'.
9 Forster 1961; Forster 1970, 9-50. See, also, Van Hal 2011, 191.
10 Porteman 1977, 75-80; Porteman 1993.
11 'Venus herself this year (not long ago this was) / Came full of glad good cheer to Holland's prosperous towns.
/ Where'er she walked or stood, her lovely golden hair / Left scatterings of silver dewdrops here and there. / She
came with a request, she said: that her young son / Could spend some time with me to learn our Holland tongue'.
Heinsius 1601, f. A2v. Translation: *Emblem Project Utrecht*, http://emblems.let.uu.nl/he1613_introduction.html. Last
accessed 09/09/2014.
12 Heinsius 1613 I, f. A2r-A2v.

was not the only one: around the turn of the century, an increasing number of multilingual emblem books appeared which brought together a variety of languages.[13] They not only contained mottos in several languages, which was relatively common, but they also showed linguistic diversity in the epigrams. There is a general consensus among emblematologists that the sudden appearance of these books was due to marketing reasons. They believe that combining languages was one of the strategies used by publishers to enlarge the possible area of distribution.[14]

However, additional reasons for the publication of multilingual emblem books become apparent when the genre is studied from the perspective of the language question. Using Heinsius' emblem book as a case study, the present article makes the case that a linguistically conscious reception of this popular genre is probable. This type of reception is attentive to the formal aspects and qualities of each of the languages used. This assumption is based on the strong contemporary attention for language, explicit clues found in prefaces, and the various ways in which emblem books were used. Multilingual emblem books demonstrate the main issue at stake in the language question: the ability of language and images to convey meaning. At the same time they provided their audience the opportunity to explore the issue of language and communication for themselves by allowing them to compare epigrams in different languages and their illustrations. Thus, this article proposes a new way to study this corpus of texts. In doing so, it builds on recent trends in emblematology and art history, combined with new insights into the early modern language question.

The development of the emblem book across language borders

The emblem book genre was connected to the early modern European language diversity in every facet of its being. It developed across various linguistic territories and languages through a complex chain of translations and retranslations, which culminated spectacularly in an explosion of multilingual emblem books. The first work corresponding to what is now considered the *Idealtypus* of the early modern emblem book was Andrea Alciato's *Emblematum Liber* (1531).[15] It presents the well-known tripartite structure containing a layered image (*pictura*), joined by an inscription (*lemma* or motto) and a textual interpretation or elucidation on the image and inscription, usually in verse (*subscriptio*).[16] Alciato's publication was a success, especially in France. In 1536, Guillaume de La Perrière produced the first of many emblem books in the vernacular, *Le theatre des bons engins*. Thus, while the tradition originated in Germany with a Latin text written by an Italian scholar, it was France (and also in the French language) that the genre developed further. It became a vernacular tradition, and gained massively in popularity.[17]

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13 Forster 1970, 19-23.
14 Forster 1970, 21; Saunders 2000, 164.
15 Porteman 1977, 160; Westerweel 2003, 5; Enenkel 2014, 167.
16 Porteman 1977, 9; Daly 1979, 16-17.
17 Porteman 1977, 54; Saunders 2000, 1-4.

When the French centres of book production were affected by the growing civil unrest caused by the French Wars of Religion, Antwerp, and more particularly the printer Christopher Plantin (a French native), took over as a producer of luxury editions of emblem works.[18] The Plantin presses brought forth a combined French edition of emblematic texts by Claude Paradin and Gabriele Simeoni in 1561, followed some time later by a Latin translation.[19] Plantin's decision to produce editions in multiple languages more or less simultaneously was a hit.[20] He repeated this formula several times. In 1564 and 1565, he printed the emblem books of Johannes Sambucus and Hadrianus Junius respectively. Both of these Neo-Latin works were reprinted several times, and Plantin decided to have translations made in order to make even more profit from the woodcuts. Jacques Grévin produced a French translation of both texts (1567 & 1567), while Marcus Antonius Gillis created the Dutch versions (1566 and 1567).[21] Both works were thus published in Latin, Dutch, and French and circulated simultaneously.[22]

Plantin was not the only one who used a linguistically complex publication strategy regarding emblem books. It happened more often that works were published in several languages simultaneously or that works were translated from one language into another and back again. Sometimes emblematic works were simultaneously published in several languages with a matching lay-out. This allowed the readers to compare the different versions, which might have been a common practice.[23] The focus of the scholarly tradition on individual authors or specific emblems has somewhat concealed the intertextual networks but they certainly existed. Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert's emblem book *Recht ghebruyck ende misbruyck* (1585) was translated into Latin as *De rerum usu et abusu* (1575) by Bernardus Furmerius, which, however, appeared in print earlier than its source.[24] Some decades later, the Dutch text was once more translated into Latin as the *Emblemata moralia, et oeconomica, de rerum usu et abusu* (1609) by Richard Lubbaeus. Two competing Latin translations of the same Dutch text thus co-existed. Another striking case concerns Jan van der Noot's *Het bosken* (ca. 1570), a Dutch text published in London that contains adaptations of four French translations of Latin emblems by Alciato.[25] The emblem tradition thus consisted of a complex chain of translations, retranslations, and parallel publications in several languages. Language was

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18   Porteman 1993; Saunders 2000, 161; Adams 2003; Visser 2003. For a quantitative analysis of the emblematic production in Antwerp, Leiden and Amsterdam in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Meeus 2000.

19   Saunders 2003, 1006-1008.

20   Smith forthcoming.

21   Porteman 1993; Adams 1995; Saunders 2003, 1006-1008.

22   Paul J. Smith has characterized these publications by Plantin as a single multilingual corpus based on individual monolingual publications. Smith forthcoming.

23   Anthoni Smyters, for example, translated a work with emblematic poems by Peeter Heyns and Étienne de Walcourt (1595), which was already a translation itself. Smyters' work (1612) was printed in such a manner that it presented the text in the exact same fashion as Heyns's, thus making comparison possible. This probably suited educational purposes, as has been suggested by Paul J. Smith: Smith forthcoming. Furthermore, in 1632 Adriaen van de Venne published his own emblem book, in which he printed poems written by himself next to those of Étienne Perret. This was done in such a way that his audience could compare them. Van Vaeck 1993, 37; Smith 2006, 47.

24   Becker 1936, 18-22; Puhlmann 2007.

25   Porteman 1977, 80.

often used as a commercial asset, such as in the case of Plantin's Junius and Sambu-cus editions: a new language meant a larger profit margin for the woodcuts. This does not exclude the possibility that a part of the audience was interested in the linguistic variety itself. Moreover, sometimes the choice for a particular language had a deeper meaning, which in some cases can be linked to the discourse concerning linguistic purification, standardization, and the overall support of the mother tongue tradition-ally connected to the language question.

The emblem book and the defenders of the Dutch language

It is striking how many of the advocates of the Dutch vernacular were involved in the emblem genre in some way. Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert and Hendrik Laurensz. Spiegel, who composed several emblems, are well-known examples of emblem au-thors who were actively engaged in the Dutch language question by standardizing and purifying this vernacular.[26] Other defenders of the Dutch language who pro-duced emblems included the author of several famous dictionaries of the Dutch ver-nacular, Cornelis Kiliaan, who wrote a preface to a Latin emblem book, and Antho-ni Smyters, a purist schoolteacher and author of orthographical texts.[27] Both Smyters and his colleague Peeter Heyns, who like Smyters pursued a pure Dutch language, have provided translations of emblematic texts.[28] Furthermore, the aristocrat author Jan van der Noot, who wished to embellish the Dutch vernacular, translated sever-al individual emblems in *Het bosken* (ca. 1570).[29] His acquaintance, the painter-poet Lucas d'Heere, also called for an appreciation of the Dutch tongue. In the dedication of his compilation of poetry, *Den hof en boomgaerd der poesiën* (1565), he called his fel-low poets to compose in their mother tongue.[30] He wrote an introductory poem for an emblematic fable book, Eduard de Dene's *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (1567), and produced *picturae* for one of the first emblem books to be produced in the Low Countries, that of Johannes Sambucus.[31]

The language used in some emblem books became increasingly purified in nature, avoiding the use of loanwords from foreign languages, thus following recent trends in lexicography. In a laudatory poem written by the engraver Jan Gerritsz. Swelinck for a multilingual emblem book by Jacob Cats, the poet and legal expert was glorified as a *suyver* [pure] Dutch poet.[32] Cats made pure language his goal, as is apparent from his replacing of the Latin term 'emblem' by the purist neologism *sinnebeelden* in the title of the text. The same can be seen in a work by the merchant-poet Roemer Visscher,

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26 Van den Branden 1967, 68-92, 168-187. The 1694 edition of Spiegel's *Hert-spiegel* (1614) contains eight individual emblems, gathered under the title *Verderf-traps beeld-schrift, ofte heilighe letteren*. Porteman 1977, 80.

27 *Viridarium moralis philosophiae*, 1594; Van der Sijs 2004, 376-377.

28 Van den Branden 1967, 48-50; Smith 2006, 27-32, 37-39.

29 Friedland 1956; Van den Branden 1967, 147-151; Daly 1988, 57; Waterschoot 1997.

30 D'Heere 1565, 4-5.

31 However, the majority of his engravings would not be used in the final edition. De Dene 1567, 3; Van den Branden 1967, 36-38; Visser 2005, 227.

32 Cats 1627, f. 3r.

who entitled his emblematic piece *Sinnepoppen* (1614), because *het onse suyvere Moeders tale is, die wy ghenegen zijn te volgen, en na ons vermogen te verrijcken*.[33] Half a century earlier Marcus Antonius Gillis, in his first Dutch translation of a Latin emblem book, had also used his work to praise his mother tongue and those who adorned the Dutch language with their writings.[34] A similar appreciation for the Dutch tongue is voiced by the filologist Petrus Scriverius in his dedication for Daniel Heinsius' emblem book *Nederduytsche Poemata* (1616). He lamented that the Italians, French, and even the Spaniards had shifted their attention from a unique focus on Latin to a more fair treatment of their own mother tongue. Only the Dutch seemed to lag behind: *Wy alleen ondancbaer tegen ons landt, ondancbaer tegen onse sprake, hebben tot noch toe meest al […] de selfde veracht*.[35] Apparently, the already existing corpus of Dutch texts did not suffice.[36] Through works such as Heinsius' emblem book, the Dutch language would receive the attention it deserved. In their emblem books, these authors called for Dutch as a purified and authoritative language with its own literature, thus taking part in the language question through this genre.

Multilingual emblem books

The fact that Heinsius supported the Dutch mother tongue did not, however, impose on the author an exclusive attention for this language. The same can be said for Jacob Cats, who was praised for his use of Dutch in a publication uniting multiple languages. Multilingualism had been a trait of several emblem books from the onset of the tradition, but in the Low Countries it really flourished in the beginning of the seventeenth century.[37] The multilingualism of many emblem editions originated in the translation of the text in question, which often maintained the original next to the translation. As the sixteenth century progressed, more and more languages were used and more works were truly multilingual from the outset. According to Leonard Forster, the polyglot emblem book was 'one of the characteristic literary products of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'.[38] It has been argued that the emblem tradition became 'European' in nature rather than tailored to the population of its country of provenance because of its increasingly multilingual character.[39] The Low Countries, and specifically Antwerp, are areas where this 'Europeanization' can be witnessed.[40]

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33 'it is our pure Mother tongue, that we are inclined to follow, and enrich to our ability'. Visscher 1614, f. ★2r. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

34 Gillis 1566, 9.

35 'Only we, ungrateful towards our country, ungrateful towards our tongue, have until now mostly despised it'. Heinsius 1616, 6.

36 See, for a discussion of sixteenth-century texts claiming that a literature in Dutch did not yet exist, Rutten 2013, 260–261.

37 The first French translation of Alciato's work retained the Latin version, and both languages faced each other when the book was opened. An emblematic work by Aneau was also on the market in a bilingual edition, while a work by de La Perrière was even published from the outset in a bilingual form. Saunders 2000, 6.

38 Forster 1970, 19–23.

39 Saunders 2000, 7; Westerweel 2003.

40 Porteman 1993, 160; Saunders 2000, 7.

Truly polyglot works stemming from the Low Countries would not appear until the late sixteenth century, when Theodoor de Bry, an engraver from Liège, published his *Emblemata Saecularia* (1597). Other early examples are Otto Vaenius' *Quinti Horatii Flacci* (1607) and *Amorum emblemata* (1608). The *Quinti Horatii Flacci* appeared first in a Latin version. It was then published in an edition containing the same Latin mottos and *subscriptiones*, but the latter were now accompanied by Dutch and French translations. In 1612, an even more polyglot version that contained Italian and Spanish texts was issued. In the preface, the painter Vaenius declared that this polyglot format allowed everyone to read his text, regardless of linguistic background.[41] The *Amorum emblemata* has a complicated printing history, in which monolingual and multilingual editions containing varying combinations of languages alternated.[42] It was initially published in three separate polyglot editions, one containing Latin, Italian and French (and Spanish),[43] one combining Latin and French with Dutch, and one in Latin, Italian and English.[44] Two editions contain French texts, two comprise the Italian epigrams and all of them contain Latin. This incites reflection on the possible advantages of this combined multilingualism, as opposed to printing monolingual editions.

Reasons for multilingualism

In their attempts to explain the existence of multilingual emblem books, most emblematologists focus primarily on the commercial aspect. More languages means a larger area of distribution because more people would be able to read the book, as was also suggested by the emblem author Vaenius. Alison Saunders, for example, sees a direct connection between the incorporation of the French language in a work and an intended French audience.[45] She is supported by Alison Adams, whose comparative studies of the content of French and Latin versions of emblem books have led her to conclude that Latin epigrams were destined for a well-educated, scholarly public, while the translations in the vernacular were directed towards an unlearned monolingual audience.[46] The content of the emblems would be adapted to the expected level of education of the public.

Indeed, differences in content between emblems in different languages are a frequent phenomenon in emblem books. However, they occur not only in cases where Latin and a vernacular are involved, but also when two vernacular languages are used. John Manning, in his overview of the emblem tradition in early modern Europe, was confronted with the existence of a large corpus of polyglot works, often presenting

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41 Vaenius 1612, 5.
42 Saunders 2000, 166; Smith forthcoming.
43 One surviving copy of this edition contains inserted pieces of paper on which Spanish epigrams were printed. Porteman 1996, 5-6.
44 Saunders 2000, 171.
45 Saunders 2000, 164.
46 Adams 1995.

textual differences between each language.[47] His explanation of this phenomenon originates from a prioritization of the visual element of the emblem, the *pictura*:

> […] the polyglot emblem book, where the same cut is anchored by various visual cues to different vernacular texts, each of which might take a slightly different interpretative stance. These visual-verbal analogies, depending as they often do on jokes, allusions and puns that are linguistically and culturally specific, do not necessarily readily translate from one language to another.[48]

According to Manning, the discrepancies between the contents of the epigrams in different languages can be explained through a process which is often called cultural translation, that is, the adaptation of a text to its new linguistic and cultural environment.[49] Manning conceives of the image as offering a large (if not endless) number of possible interpretations. By adding an explanatory epigram, one of these meanings is assigned to the *pictura* and the ambiguity of the image is resolved.[50] With regard to multilingual emblem books, Manning, driven by the commercial paradigm, envisions a monolingual audience that would be unaware of the discrepancies between the languages.

   An often studied author whose works have incited other theories is Jacob Cats. His 1618 *Silenus Alcibiadis, sive Proteus* contains Dutch, Latin, and French epigrams. Cats is credited with writing the texts in all three languages.[51] Both the Dutch and Latin poems are made up of eight verse lines, while the French one spans only four lines (see ill. 1). In the following discussion of Cats' book by Alison Saunders, the emblematologist struggles to interpret the differences in the number of verses in each language:

> An unexplained curiosity concerning Cats's trilingual text in the *Silenus Alcibiadis* lies in the relative lengths of the verses in the various languages. Where the Latin and Dutch verses all contain eight lines, the French verses are only half the length. It might have been expected that the Latin version would be shorter than the two vernacular versions in which more words are normally needed to convey the same message.[52]

Leonard Forster, in his discussion of Cats' *Silenus Alcibiadis*, took a position very close to that of Saunders and Adams, ascribing its polyglot character to practical convenience, which assured a wide circulation and thus profit.[53] Forster accepts the existence of differences in content, but states that these variations are in no way related to the chosen languages:

> In considerations of this kind the different languages have no specific part to play; they are just vehicles, and one language is as good as another for expressing the allegorical concepts – whether Dutch, French or Latin.[54]

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47 Examples of studies that have tried to incorporate the variety of content presented in multilingual emblem books are Porteman 1983, 148, 162-164; Saunders 2000, 169-170; Montone 2003.
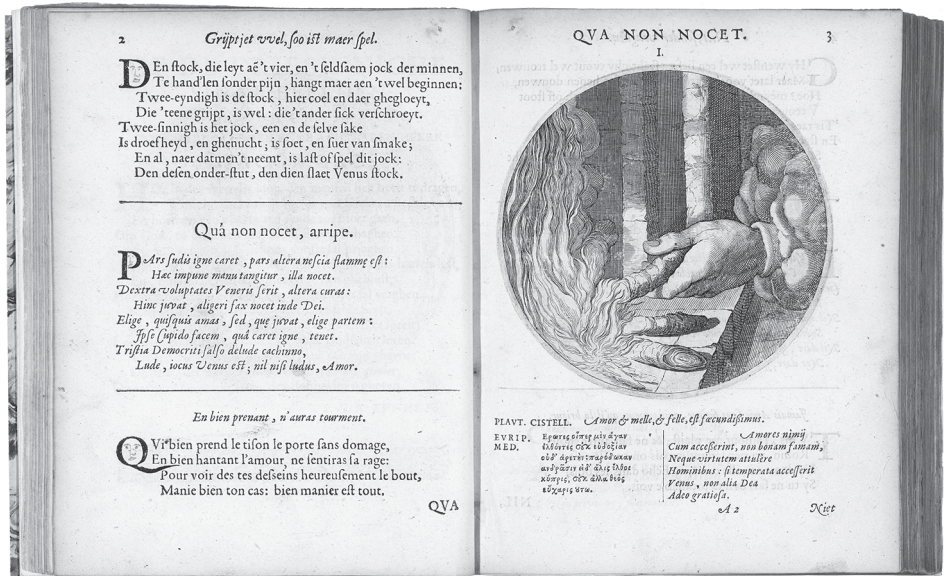**48** Manning 2002, 86.
49 Burke & Po-chia Hsia 2007.
50 Manning 2002, 86.
51 Forster 1970, 21.
52 Saunders 2000, 165-166.
53 Forster 1961; Forster 1970, 21.
54 Forster 1970, 21.

Ill. 1   Jacob Cats, *Sinn'- en minnebeelden: of, Emblemata, amores moresque spectantia, = Emblèmes, touchant les amours et les moeurs*, Middelburg: J. Hellenius, 1618, 2-3. Amsterdam, University Library, Special Collections, OTM O 90-32.

According to Forster, the choice for a specific language has no meaning in this work. His statement that 'one language is as good as another' contradicts Manning's point of view and minimizes the importance of the linguistic medium itself.

In his treatment of Otto Vaenius' *Quinti Horatii Flacci*, Forster suggests another explanation for the variation in content in the different languages used in this polyglot work:

> The circumstance that different languages are used as variations in itself presupposes that many readers of the book would be expected to be able to appreciate one or more of the variations.[55]

Here, Forster puts forward the idea of a multilingual readership appreciating the linguistic variation as a form of *copia*, the predilection for a manner of writing that takes a small topic as point of departure and strives to generate as much meaning as possible around it.[56] Although the commercial paradigm continues to dominate emblematological research, this concept of *copia* provides an additional explanation for the discrepancies in these multilingual books.

A follow-up study in which the idea has been further explored is Tina Montone's treatment of Otto Vaenius' *Amorum Emblemata* (1608). Montone concluded that combining French, Dutch, and Italian mottos and *subscriptiones* has indeed allowed Vaenius to explore the principles of variation and *copia* both in form and content:

55 Forster 1970, 21-22.
56 Cave 1979.

> Attempting to reach as large a public – and as international a public – as possible through poly-
> glot editions has guided Vaenius' choices […] but his choice responds to the principles of copia
> and variatio, so central to the genre.[57]

Montone sees the polyglotism as a commercial asset, as the variation would have been
valued by contemporary audiences that were able to understand more than one lan-
guage. In an article from 2013, Demmy Verbeke has pointed out that a difference in
number of verses per language ensures a certain level of variation from language to
language and could thus have had an aesthetic function.[58] A similar opinion has been
expressed by Philip Ford: 'the ideal target audience is not a monolingual, but a poly-
glot one'.[59]

This assertion about the desired linguistic capabilities of the users is true for at
least one of the uses of the emblem book. Emblematic works were often implement-
ed in (humanist) education, conveying moral lessons through a combination of text
and image, while at the same time allowing the students to practice their linguistic
skills.[60] Especially within Jesuit schools, emblem books were used to teach pupils the
art of rhetoric through Latin mottos and epigrams. In this didactic process reception
and production were often combined.[61] The pupils were stimulated to engage active-
ly with the emblematic material and practice their Latin writing skills while reflect-
ing on the moral scenes portrayed. It is very likely that works with an emblematic
background have also been used in the Low Countries in order to teach French to
Dutch-speaking children.[62] In these cases, the ideal audience of the emblem book is
indeed a polyglot one, actively engaging with the language(s) present in the work.

The emblematic game

A recent discussion in the field of emblem theory, focusing on the way emblem books
might have been used by their early modern readers, could be combined with the
ideas put forward by Ford, Montone and Forster to further increase our understand-
ing of how such texts could affect their audience. In 2012, Karl Enenkel argued that
the emblem book was meant as an enigmatic work that presents its users with picto-
rial and textual clues that allow them to reflect on the meaning or possible meanings
of the emblem.[63] As sixteenth-century emblem author Johannes Sambucus stated,
emblems should be *itaque tecta, argute, iucunda et varie significantia*.[64] A particular type of
use that became possible because of this enigmatic character is what Enenkel calls the
'emblematic game'.[65] A group of people would collectively study a *pictura* and motto

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57 Montone 2003, 56.
58 Verbeke 2013, 82.
59 Ford 2013, 158.
60 Saunders 2000, 109-160; Manning 2002, 141-165; Frank-Van Westrienen 2007, 204-211.
61 Porteman 2007, especially 11, 22-23.
62 Smith 2006, 38-39. See above, n. 23.
63 See also Daly 1979, 26-29.
64 'veiled, ingenious, and pleasing with a variety of meaning'. Translation: Enenkel 2012, 2.
65 Enenkel 2012, 10-11.

and then guess their true meaning based on the conventions of both textual and pictorial significance, after which they could verify their answer by reading the *subscriptio*. The information provided by the *subscriptio*, however, did not reveal the whole story, leaving further room for interpretation.[66] Hadrianus Junius describes such a game, in which the person whose explanation of the emblem most resembled the solution given in the *subscriptio* would be rewarded with a palm leaf.[67] It seems that Jacob Cats referred to this type of playful reception when he wrote in a preface to one of his emblematic works that *men gemeenlijck altijt meer leest, alsser staet; ende noch meer denckt, alsmen siet*.[68] Indeed, evidence can be found in certain emblem books that they were destined for parlour games, such as the presence of a lottery wheel pointing at the numbers of the emblems in George Wither's *Collection of emblemes* (1635).[69] A similar wheel exists in a Dutch-Latin-French emblematic text entitled *Christeliiken waersegg-her* (1603) (see ill. 2).[70] The emblem book was a genre that could thus demand an active, reflexive and playful attitude from its readers and incite discussion and conversation.[71] The text of the motto would be compared with the visual clues in the *pictura*, and both were then collated with the *subscriptio*.

However, in multilingual emblem books such as Daniel Heinsius' Dutch–French work, more than one *subscriptio* was present. Instead of offering one answer to the riddle created by the motto and *pictura*, the multilingual emblem book becomes an extension of this game by increasing the number of *subscriptiones*. The game is not solved, but enlarged and maintained by the presence of multiple solutions that sometimes even contradict one another; the game does not come to an end and there is no single solution to the riddle. Enenkel does not take this type of emblem into account, but a recent publication, not in the field of emblematology but of art history, touches on a very similar issue and proposes a theory that, in combination with the suggestions by Forster and Enenkel, forms a useful tool for the study of the multilingual emblem book. In an analysis of an engraving by Maarten de Vos, Stephanie Porras has come up with an interesting approach to multimedial and multilingual works from this period.[72] Her study focuses on a depiction of the proverb 'The big fish eat the small'. Below the image, explanations are provided by a Latin, French, and Dutch text which all generate a slightly different meaning. According to Porras, this use of multilingual inscriptions, and typically the combination of Latin, Dutch and French, was characteristic of sixteenth-century Antwerp print production. It was in this same environment that an important stage in the development of the genre of the emblem book took place, primarily connected to Plantin's printing house. While Porras ac-

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66 De la Fontaine Verwey 1973, 295; Daly 1979, 29; Enenkel 2012.

67 'et alteram quasi operis partem ipsum facere commentarium: qui hariolandi coniectandi palma prius in medio posita aut bene iudicantibus deinde succinat, aut minus assequentibus facultatem intelligendi subministrat'. Enenkel 2012, 11, n. 1.

68 'one usually reads more than is written and imagines more than one sees'. Cats, quoted by Stronks 2007, 3. Translation: Stronks 2011, 71-72, n. 51.
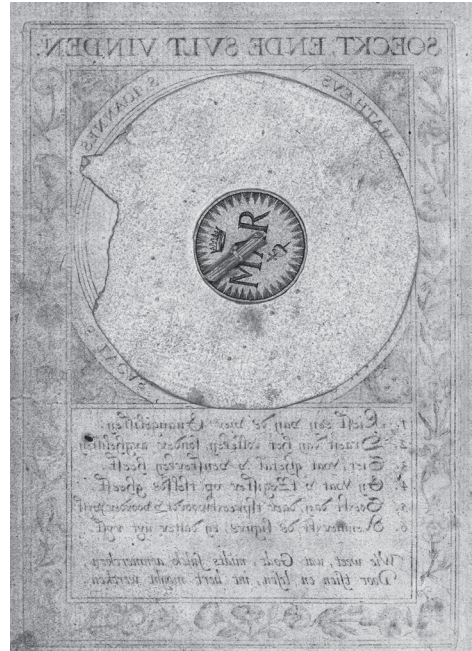
69 Wither 1635, 279; Browning 2005, 61-62.

70 David 1602, 373-374. My attention was drawn to this wheel during a lecture given by Professor Hubert Meeus.

71 Geirnaert & Smith 1999, 24-25.

72 Porras 2014.

Ill. 2   Joannes David, *Christeliicken waerseggher, de principale stucken van t'Christen geloof en leuen int cort begrijpende*. Antwerp: Jan Moerentorf, s.a., 373-374. Amsterdam, University Library, Special Collections, OTM O 61-2801.

knowledges the importance of the international market for the metropolis, she claims, like Ford and Montone have done for multilingual (emblematic) literature, that the ideal intended audience of such publications was not just monolingual, but polyglot:

> The presence of multiple, multilingual inscriptions do not, however, merely respond to a linguistically diverse audience. They encourage the multilingual viewer to compare texts and to assess their equivalence.[73]

The multilingual reader obtains a far more diverse and complex insight into the depicted scene than the monolingual reader, for whom, as Manning and Enenkel have suggested, the meaning of the *pictura* is revealed in one of the texts. Because of the variety of languages, and thus meanings, in a multilingual work, the polyglot public is faced with a much more complex work of art.

Ultimately, the discrepancies between the different texts may reveal themselves as being incompatible with each other, thus obstructing the possibility of extracting a single coherent interpretation out of the multilingual and multimedial whole. In the engraving studied by Porras, for example, the different *subscriptiones* and the image support various interpretations of who is represented by the big fish and who by the small fish. Without the ability to establish a particular meaning, the different explana-

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[73] Porras 2014, 258-259.

tions provided by the three texts eventually lead to 'an ongoing process of negotiation between the viewer, inscriptions and image'.[74] The emblematic game described by Enenkel is thus extended *ad infinitum*. When played in a group, the discussions which the multilingual emblem book triggers are endless and invite reflection not only on the moral implications of the content of the poems and the *pictura*, but also on the differences between linguistic and pictorial ways of conveying meaning, and between the different languages. Through the emblematic parlour game, the nature of both language and image as carriers of meaning could be tested, assessed and discussed.

The multilingual emblematic work and the language question

The issues raised through multilingual emblem books lay at the core of the language question. The link is already present in the production side of the emblem book. Placing different languages side by side on the same page is an implicit statement about their status as equals. If an emblem book, such as that of Jacob Cats, brings together Latin, French and Dutch to comment on a specific *pictura*, this implies that the classical languages and both vernaculars are all seen as literary languages capable of commenting on a multi-layered image. Putting the languages in an adjacent position suggests a certain level of reflection on the part of the creator. He could, moreover, experiment with all languages.

The translators of emblem books were confronted with the choice of whether or not to translate the mottos. Because of their concise and pun-like nature, mottos were seen by some as language-specific. Those who decided to translate them sometimes reported the difficulty of this task. Among them was the Dutch translator of the famous Latin emblem book by Johannes Sambucus, Marcus Antonius Gillis. In his introduction, he writes:

> De woorden oft sententien bouen de figuren gestelt (welcke t'samen d'Emblema maken, so voorscreuen is) hebbe ick meest al ouergheset na luyt der Latijnscher voorde, de welcke daerom dicwils veel van haer gratie verliesen: want het gemeynlick gebuert, dattet ghene dat in d'een sprake wel luyt oft een gemeyn spreecwoort is, in een ander sprake van woorde tot woorde ouergeset zijnde, qualijc luyt ende gansch onbekent is, waer tegen wel weder een ander in die sprake is, d'welc met soo goeden gratie onder ander woorden t'selue bediet: maer want daer in by ons eenen grooten cuer is, die dicwils van lande tot lande, ia van stede tot stede verandert, so heeft my t'beste gedocht te volgen t'ghene dat ick voor my hadde, latende allen verstandigen lesers vrijlijcken toe, na datse de meyninge ende leeringe wel verstaen hebben, sulcken woort daer by te voegen, alst hen sal duncken alder bequamelics daer toe te dienen, om den aenschouwers haestelick t'verstant vander schilderien te gheuen […].[75]

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74 Porras 2014, 266.
75 'The words and maxims one finds above the picturae (as prescribed, both constitute the emblem) I have translated most literally, which makes them often lose much of their grace. For it happens more often than not that what sounds correct in one language and is a familiar saying, sounds badly and is unknown in another, while in the latter language another saying is available which is equally graceful and means the same with other words. But because of these there is among us such a great choice, which may vary from one area to another or indeed from town to town that I have deemed it preferable to follow the text as it lay before me. In doing so I freely allow all

In this fragment Gillis calls for the participation of his audience, inviting them to reflect on his translations and to add possible improvements to their copy of the text. Once again, this points to an intended readership that takes a very reflexive and engaged stance on language. While Gillis feels that some mottos are language-specific and thus actually untranslatable, his printer, Christopher Plantin, professed a somewhat more positive attitude towards translation. In the preface to the French version of Sambucus' emblem book, composed by Jacques Grévin, he concluded that, in comparison to the Latin text, *la françoise n'est moins propre a traicter tel argument*.[76]

The linguistic faculties of the speaker could also determine the value of a particular language. Paolo Giovio wrote a treatise on the art of the *impresa*, a sort of personally adopted emblem, in which he argued that the motto chosen by the author of the *impresa* should be in a different language than his mother tongue: *Vuole essere communemente d'vna lingua diuersa dall'Idioma di colui, che fa l'impresa, perche il sentiment sia alquato più coperto*.[77] The reason for the linguistic difference desired by Giovio was the fact that it made the motto more difficult to construct and would thus pose an additional challenge to the author.[78] In the creative phase of the emblem, language was just as much an issue as it could be for the reader.

For the audience, the emblem becomes the ultimate conversation piece if regarded in the light of the theories proposed by Enenkel and Porras, by allowing the public to discuss the work and engage in lengthy parlour games on its content, images, and languages. The emblem book thus illustrates the culture of discussion that, according to Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, was characteristic of the seventeenth-century Low Countries. Their central thesis is that the habit of debating was a core practice in society.[79] Arjan van Dixhoorn has argued that such discussions were already common in public spaces in the sixteenth century – and perhaps even earlier.[80] A small 'community of interpretation', sharing a set of texts for debate, could be formed around a single emblem book.[81] It would bring people together to discuss not only the moral issues presented by the work, but also the linguistic and pictorial media gathered in it. Debates, representing the general language question on a microscale, could take place within such groups or, of course, within the mind of the individual reader. The level of competence in the languages presented by the emblem book was of little importance for these discussions, since part of the game could have been to try to decipher, for example, certain text fragments by comparing them with others. Such a practice would have been stimulated especially in an educational environment, where

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intelligent readers, after they have understood properly the meaning and the moral instruction, to add thereunto such a word (of their own) that seems to them very suitable to lead the observer quickly to the understanding of the pictura.' Gillis 1566, 7. Translation: Porteman 1990, 46. The writing of 'vv' in citations and titles has silently been replaced by 'w' here and elsewhere in this article.

76 'the French one is no less able to convey such argumentation'. Voet 1982, 34.

77 Giovio 1559, 9.

78 'This motto should be in a different language than that which the inventor of the *impresa* 'sucked out' when he imbibed his wet nurse's milk. In this way the meaning is more concealed.' Translated relatively freely by Manning 2002, 31.

79 Frijhoff & Spies 1999, 218-224.

80 Van Dixhoorn 2009, 30-33.

81 Fish 1980, 171.

comparison of the epigrams in different languages enhanced the students' skills in all of these languages. In a later stage, they could take the instructive game even further by using their creativity in order to elaborate on the emblems and practice the art of rhetoric, especially the appreciated notion of *copia*. A reflexive attitude towards the languages in emblem books was perhaps more common than is visible to the modern researcher.

The language question not only concerned spoken and written languages, but also the images found in emblem books. These also conveyed meaning, through symbols that could in theory be understood or at least interpreted by everyone, regardless of linguistic ability. In emblem books, the combination of pictorial and textual conveyers of meaning could thus trigger an additional reflection on suitable non-spoken forms of communication. Several scholars in emblem studies have made the connection between the popularity of this genre and the rising interest in hieroglyphs in this period.[82] Hieroglyphs were seen as symbolic transmitters of wisdom that offered an alternative to the alphabet as a carrier of meaning.[83] Moreover, rhetoricians were experimenting with the possibilities offered by the rebus.[84] The combination of text and image in the emblem book could be seen as a further exploration of the ability of the pictorial to convey the same ideas as the written text.

The possibilities offered by the emblem for reflection and debate on textual and pictorial forms of communication concern its appearance in books, but also its popular extraliterary use. Especially during the seventeenth century, emblems were frequently used to adorn walls, ceilings, tapestries, clothing and tableware.[85] Particularly in its architectural manifestations, the use of emblems stimulated conversation by inviting guests to guess the meaning of these decorative elements.[86] The decorative use of emblems resembles that of Pieter Brueghel the Elder's painting *Netherlandish proverbs* (1559). It likely acted as a conversation piece that stimulated guests to discuss and point out the many depicted proverbs.[87] In present day Germany, several rooms that were embellished with emblematic images and mottos during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are still intact. Strikingly, in some cases these mottos were present in a variety of languages. The most famous example of architectural emblematics can be found in Ludwigsburg palace. It contains a seventeenth-century *bunte Kammer*, of which the walls and even the doors have been decorated with emblematic images accompanied by mottos in Latin, Dutch, French, German, English, Italian and Spanish. The multilingual character of the emblematic decoration added another element to the discussions. The guests would probably have to work together in order to decipher even the literal meaning of each of the mottos, given their linguistic variety. Perhaps the central motto of the room, *Non omnia possumus omnes* (We cannot all do everything), could also have referred to the broad linguistic competences that were

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82 P. Van der Sluijs, for example, has traced the importance of hieroglyphs and emblematics in the work of Jan van der Noot. Van der Sluijs 1984.
83 Russell 1986; Cavell 1990; Simon 2011, 320 et seq.
84 Génard 1897, 13; Van Dixhoorn 2015, 57.
85 Harms et al. 1999.
86 Marquardt 1975, 77; Harms 1999, 6.
87 Meadow 2002, 153-154; Richardson 2011, 65-76; Goldstein 2013.

necessary to understand all the emblems in the room. It has been suggested that the multilingual character of the *bunte Kammer* is the result of the variety of sources that were used for the decoration. The original language of each of the mottos would have been preserved. If this is indeed the case, it could indicate that the creators of this chamber considered the mottos, which are often proverbs, to be untranslatable. They would thus lose some of their meaning in another language.[88] This would certainly have been the case for some of the mottos that make use of alliteration.[89] However, in another example of such a room, which can be found in the *Kügelgenhaus* in Dresden, only Latin mottos are present on the adorned ceiling. The sources that have been used did contain a variety of languages, but the Latin version was systematically chosen in order to guarantee linguistic coherence.[90] This decision is just as purposeful as that of the linguistic variety found in the Ludwigsburg palace.

Emblematic works thus allowed people, in groups or individually, to explore the assumptions made about languages in the debates related to the language question. They could compare languages, often both vernacular and classical, and the pictorial forms of conveying meaning, and then decide on their own position within the discussions that were conducted in learned circles all over Europe. Cornelis Kiliaan, who was involved in the creation of an emblem book, but is best known for his lexicographical work, produced a polyglot dictionary that had this specific purpose. As he explained in the preface: *Cuivis tamen liberum esto nostratium Dictionum propinquiorem originem a Graecis, Arabibus, Hebrais, & alijs antiquis petere, atque Babylonicum omne chaos discutere.*[91] The debates about language concerned everyone, and through studying dictionaries and works such as multilingual emblem books, people could begin to form their own well-founded opinion.

Daniel Heinsius and his *Afbeeldingen van minne*

The aforementioned *Afbeeldingen van minne. Emblemata amatoria. Emblemes d'amovr* (1613), composed by the scholar Daniel Heinsius, provides an example of how the issues central to the language question also shaped the production of multilingual emblem books and how these collections subsequently stimulated their readers to reflect on these issues. The origins of this particular text lie in Heinsius' 1601 emblem book, the *Quaeris quid sit amor*, which contained love emblems with Latin, Italian, or French mottos, followed by Latin captions and Dutch *subscriptiones*.[92] Its mottos were thus already present in more than one language, but the epigrams were not. For his first emblem book, Heinsius primarily used French sources, such as Maurice Scève's *Délie* (1544) and Guillaume de La Perrière's *Le theatre des bons engins* (1539).[93] It is interesting

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88 Freytag 1975, 34; Schilling 1975, 43.

89 Harms 1999, 6.

90 Schilling 2001, 17.

91 'Anyone should be at liberty to search for the closer derivation of our words from Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, and other ancient ones, and to discuss the whole Babylonian confusion'. Translation: Considine 2008, 148.

92 More information on the dating and printing of this work can be found in Breugelmans 1973.

93 Praz 1975, 88-99; Saunders 2000, 166-168.

to note that earlier scholars have suggested that this work might have come into being as the result of what Enenkel would call an 'emblematic game'. This would have been played by Heinsius and his fellow scholars in Leiden, namely Petrus Scriverius, Joseph Scaliger and Hugo Grotius, and resulted in Heinsius writing the Dutch verses.[94]

   Already in 1601, Heinsius' emblem book had an interesting link with the language question, since in the preface, the author expressed the wish to celebrate his native Dutch vernacular by writing in it and by teaching his language to Cupid. In a new edition published in 1613, it was decided to add French *subscriptiones*. In many cases, these were retranslations or readaptations, passing from the French sources used by Heinsius for the 1601 text into Dutch, and back into French in 1613.[95] It is unknown whether Heinsius or another author was responsible for writing these French poems.[96] Apparently, the author or editor of the work followed the example of Otto Vaenius and Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, whose works had already appeared in editions with epigrams in multiple languages.[97] According to Alison Saunders, adding the French quatrains meant writing for a native French audience, and thus enlarging the possible market of the work.[98] The 1613 *Afbeeldingen van minne* was an extension of the 1601 version with twenty-four additional emblems.[99] All the Dutch poems, which consisted of eight verses, now received a French counterpart that spanned only half the number of lines of the Dutch version (see ill. 3). An array of aesthetic or literary motives could have been at the basis of this choice, which was also made by Jacob Cats in his 1618 emblem book. Perhaps halving the number of lines in the French version was considered a guarantee for variation or perhaps it was done for the lay-out or to approach a specific lyrical genre. Quatrains were, in fact, used regularly for captions accompanying pictorial works.[100] The French verses were maintained in the 1615 re-edition, but disappeared for unknown reasons in 1616.[101] Later editions, such as those of 1619 and 1650, did contain the French texts next to the Dutch ones.

   An online edition of the *Afbeeldingen van minne* has been made available by researchers of the Emblem Project Utrecht, which ran from 2003 to 2006 and which has increased the accessibility of early modern Dutch love emblem books through digitization.[102] On the project's website, transcriptions of both the Dutch and French texts have been provided, accompanied by a commentary explaining the link between text and image. As stated by Els Stronks, the coordinator of the project, the 'Franse subscriptio legt in 1613 aan de lezer uit hoe hij verband tussen de Nederlandse tekst en de afbeelding kan leggen (…) wat in 1601 onbesproken blijft, wordt in 1613 ver-

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94 De la Fontaine Verwey 1973, 295.
95 Becker-Cantarino 1983, 70; Saunders 2000, 166. See also the website of the Emblem Project Utrecht, which has digitized emblem books by Daniel Heinsius, Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, Jacob Cats and others: http://emblems. let.uu.nl.
96 Becker-Cantarino 1983, 68-74.
**97** Stronks 2007, 9.
98 Saunders 2000, 166.
99 These twenty-four emblems precede the pre-existing ones and are referred to in this article as series I, whereas the second set is referred to as II. This is in agreement with the system used by the *Emblem Project Utrecht*.
100 Warners 1947, 74-83.
101 Stronks 2007, 9, n. 28.
102 *Emblem Project Utrecht*, http://emblems.let.uu.nl. Last accessed 09/09/2014.
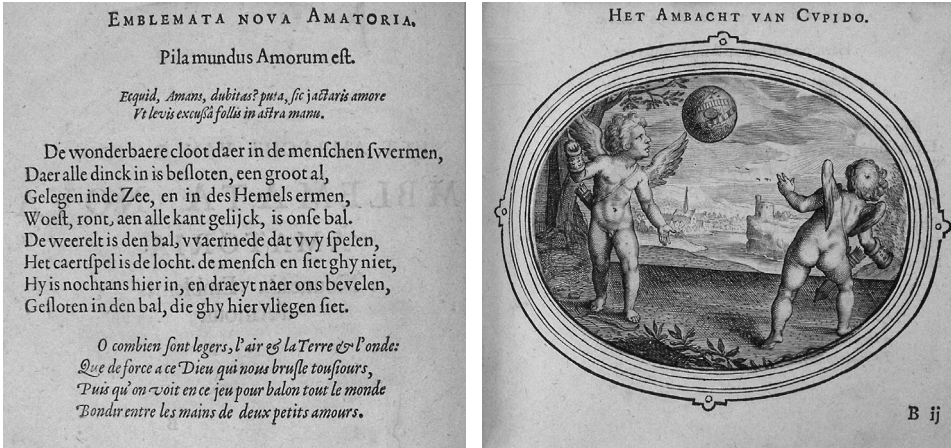
Ill. 3   Daniel Heinsius, *Afbeeldingen van minne. Emblemata amatoria. Emblemes d'amovr.* Leiden: Jacob Marcusz. Boeckvercooper, 1613. Emblem Project Utrecht, http://emblems.let.uu.nl/he1613.html. Last accessed 06/01/2015.

duidelijkt'.[103] Indeed, the French texts often name the object represented in the *pictura* explicitly while the Dutch texts do not. In most of these cases, the Dutch *subscriptio* recounts the actions and feelings of the lover metaphorically. In emblem II.8, for example, the Dutch poem reads:

> Als ick ben by 't verderf, so schijn ick te ghenesen.
> Ick vliegh' rontom het vyer, ick blijf in eenen standt
> Ten zy dat ick my self' vind ganschelick verbrandt.[104]

Here, the fire refers to the beloved who makes the lover lose himself as soon as he gets too close to her, but he keeps being drawn to her. He is thus like the insect depicted in the *pictura* and described explicitly in the French lines:

> Credule mouscheron, qui aimant ton domage
> Recherche la lueur, qui te doibt consumer.[105]

The French lines connect the *pictura* with the Dutch *subscriptio*, which in many cases cannot be understood without relating its content to the image. The French texts often seem less dependent on the *pictura* because of their explicitness. Furthermore, seemingly unavoidably, in some emblems the content of the French poem is less extensive because the text comprises only half the lines of the Dutch text. In emblem I.14, the lover is compared to a hoop. Each line of the explanatory *subscriptiones* gives one analogy, and the French text only presents half as many similarities as the Dutch one.

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103 'The French *subscriptio* explains in 1613 to the reader how he can relate the Dutch text and the image (…) what remains unspoken in 1601, is clarified in 1613'. Stronks 2007, 9, n. 28.
104 'When I am near the cause of my destruction, I seem to heal / I fly around the fire, I stay in one position / Unless I find myself completely burned'. Heinsius 1613 II, f. 7v.
105 'Naïve mosquito, which, loving your misery / Searches the glow, that will consume you'. Heinsius 1613, f. 7v.

However, the relationship between the texts in these two languages is often far more complex.[106] In several cases, the French poem shifts the perspective of the Dutch epigram to another actor in the story. In emblem II.24 for example, the Latin caption warns young girls not to marry old men: *Noctua ut in tumilis, super utque cadevera bubo Talis erit: Virgo nubere parce, seni.*[107] The Dutch poem focuses not on the girl, but on the old man, who was too late with falling in love and will now not have much time to enjoy his happiness. The French poem turns the focus back on the young woman, addressing her directly. In the very first emblem of the work, two Cupids are shown using the world as a toy, depicted as a ball they are tossing around (see ill. 3). The Latin caption, following the motto *Pila mundus Amorum est*, encourages the lover to put his faith in the hands of love: *Ecquid, Amans, dubitas?*[108] In the Dutch subscriptio, the Cupids make their voice heard: *De weerelt is den bal, waermede dat wy spelen.*[109] While the Latin text addresses the lover and the Dutch text voices the opinion of the little god of love himself, the French poem has been written from the point of view of the lover: *Que de force a ce Dieu qui nous brusle tousiours.*[110] All three languages thus shed light on a different side of the story depicted. At work is not only the rhetorical principle of *copia*, but also the concept of *in utramque partem*, showing various sides of the same coin. It takes into account the various possible positions concerning the topic displayed.[111]

In multiple emblems, the French text actually seems to provide a different interpretation of the image; it complements the Dutch poem, but simultaneously leaves out some of the information. Sometimes it is even incompatible with or antipodal to the Dutch *subscriptio*. The fourth emblem, carrying the motto *Exitus in dubio est*, offers such conflicting viewpoints.[112] In the *pictura*, Cupid is depicted rolling dice with another child, who in the Latin caption and the French and Dutch verses is identified as the God of marriage, Hymen. According to the Dutch explanation, they gamble over whose heart they will strike with Cupid's arrow. It is never certain whether the beloved will fall for her lover:

> Siet toch eens Venus kindt, en die sich daer beneven
> Gevoecht heeft op der aerdt, een Godt en oock een kindt,
> Die Hymen wordt genaemt: wiens ambacht is te geven
> De man zijn soete lief, die hy wel heeft gesint.
> Het is een wonder werck: zy dobbelen met steenen,

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106 The fact that this complex relationship has been overlooked by the executors of the project is probably due in large part to the fact that the project mainly focuses on the Dutch texts. Virtually no commentary mentions the content of the French verses, which have often been erroneously transcribed, sometimes obstructing comprehension. Furthermore, the project's editors failed to notice that the French poems of the emblems II.17 and II.22 have been mistakenly switched around in this 1613 edition of the work.

107 'As a nightowl in burial chambers and an eagle owl over dead bodies, thus she will be. Girl, do not marry an old man'. Heinsius 1613 I, f. 23v. Translation: *Emblem Project Utrecht*, http://emblems.let.uu.nl/he1601024.html.

108 'The world is the ball (plaything) of love'. Heinsius 1613 I, f. 1v. 'Why, lover, would you hesitate?' Heinsius 1613 I, f. 1v.

109 'The world is the ball with which we play'. Heinsius 1613 I, f. 1v.

110 'What force this God possesses, who always burns us'. Heinsius 1613 I, f. 1v.

111 Ramakers 2007.

112 'The outcome is uncertain'. Heinsius 1613 I, f. 4v.

Of zijt oock wesen zal, dat zeer onseker is.
Want als ghy meent te zijn seer vast en op de beenen,
De steen die keert noch om, de saecke gaet noch mis.[113]

Even when it seems that the heart of the beloved is secured, the die may roll over and Cupid will make her love another: *de saecke gaet noch mis*. While the dice may be interpreted here as fate in general, they could also represent, as the scholars connected to the Emblem Project Utrecht have argued, the capricious nature of womankind. In the French *subscriptio*, both the viewpoint and the interpretation of the *pictura* have shifted. The speaking agent is not an outsider, but the lover himself:

Hymen & Cupidon iovent ensemble a la chance,
A qui aura l'honneur de me rendre content:
L'un m'entretient d'espoir, & l'autre d'asseurance,
Mais i'atten que le dé vuide leur different.[114]

This poem offers a more positive outlook. It is not a question of whether the lover will be happy, but of who of the two children, Hymen or Cupid, will perform the job. Will he be loved or married? One of the two fills him with hope and the other with confidence. However, the lover wants to wait until Hymen and Cupid have an even score, so he will have both love and marriage. This *subscriptio* adds several new topics for discussion to the emblem as a whole. These are firstly of a moral nature: do love and marriage indeed belong together like a horse and carriage? Apparently the chances are far greater that one does not end up loving or being loved by a spouse. This might stimulate the reader to return to the image, to the outcome of the game played by the children (the faces indicating the numbers four and one are facing upwards). The choice between hope and assurance, respectively love and marriage, is also a possible topic for debate. It seems to refer simultaneously to the Latin caption, which states that for one who hopes for love, marriage offers no assurance. Linguistic questions now arise: what is the relationship between the Latin and French equivalents for the terms 'hope' and 'assurance'? Do they have the same meaning? Is translation possible, or not? And might that be the reason why the Dutch epigram does not contain this element? The 'emblematic game' might spin out of control, and lead to an endless series of questions regarding the nature of the text and the success (or lack of it) of the treatment of the theme in each language and in the image.

Another good illustration of the variation between languages can be found in emblem II.19, with the French motto *Ni mesme la mort*.[115] The following Latin caption reads: *Nec plantani lethum vitem, nec tollet amorem / Nostrum, quæri tollit cætera, summa*

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113 'See Venus' child, which has down there, / Moved to the earth, a God and also a child, / Which is called Hymen: whose craft is to give / Man his sweet beloved, whom he has pleased. / It's a wonderful piece of work: they roll dice, / Whether she will be the one, is very uncertain. / Because when you believe to be on very steady ground, / The die rolls over, and the matter fails'. Heinsius 1613 I, f. 4v.
114 'Hymen and Cupid gamble together, / Over whom will have the honor to make me happy: / One filled me with hope, and the other with confidence, / But I wait until the die undoes the discrepancy'. Heinsius 1613 I, f. 4v. The *Emblem Project Utrecht* gives 'dévuide'. http://emblems.let.uu.nl/he1613004.html. Last accessed 09/09/2014.
115 'Not even death'. Heinsius 1613 II, f. 18v.

dies.[116] The image shows a dead tree, on which a vine blossoms. The explanation given by the Dutch text reads:

> Het een is gantsch vergaen, het ander staet noch schoone,
> End' spreyt zijn rancken uyt seer rijckelick ten toone,
> Altijdt zijnd' even groen: soo gaet het oock met dy,
> O Venus lieflick kindt, die altijt woont in my.
> De doodt neemt wech den mensch', maer laet de liefde leven,
> Zy wordt noch door den doodt noch door den tijdt verdreven,
> Zy blijft alst al vergaet, zy bloeyt oock in den noodt,
> De doodt verwint het al, maer Venus oock de doodt.[117]

A lover comments on the dead tree and the vine, comparing it with love's ability to continue even in the face of death. He addresses Cupid and states that he will always live inside him, because death takes people away, but not their feelings. Whether those who stay behind maintain this love or whether the deceased can continue to love in the afterlife is not clear from the poem. The *pictura* of a dead tree on which a vine grows might suggest that the beloved has passed away but that the lover continues to love her even after she has gone. The French text is more specific but seems to point in a different direction:

> Comme a la plane on voit la vigne suruiuante,
> Mon amour, suruiuera a l'iniure du sort.
> Mesme forcant l'arrest du fatal Radamanthe,
> Je taimeray la bas, en despit de la mort.[118]

This time, the poet addresses his mistress and not Cupid, stating, it seems, that he will continue to love her even after his own death. The act of loving is thus attributed to the deceased, even though the fourth line remains slightly ambiguous; who is *la bas*, the lover or the beloved? Matters of ambiguity were important issues in the language question. Most participants in the discussions aimed for a clear, practical means of communication, and ambiguous phrases were not appreciated. In this emblem, the opaque meaning of each of the epigrams would definitely have caught the attention of people interested in comparing the usefulness of individual languages as carriers of meaning.

The French text interestingly introduces a mythological figure not mentioned in the Dutch and Latin texts. This *fatal Radamanthe*, according to classical mythology, was

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116 'Death does not take away the vine from the plane-tree, and thus the last day, that takes away everything else, will not take away our love'. Heinsius 1613 II, f. 18v. Translation: *Emblem Project Utrecht*, http://emblems.let.uu.nl/he1601017.html. Last accessed 09/09/2014.

117 'One is completely perished, the other still stands beautifully, / And displays its vines abundantly, / Always equally green: this will also happen to you, / O Venus' sweet child, who will always live inside me. / Death takes away the human, but allows love to stay alive, / She is repelled neither by death nor by time, / She stays when everything perishes, she flowers even in misery, / Death conquers all, but Venus also (conquers) death'. Heinsius 1613 II, f. 18v.

118 'Like on the plane-tree one sees the surviving vine, / My love, will survive the inflictions of fate. / Even fighting the interruption of the fatal Rhadamanthus, / I will love you down there, despite death'. Heinsius 1613 II, f. 18v. The *Emblem Project Utrecht* omits the 'a' in the first line. http://emblems.let.uu.nl/he1613043.html. Last accessed 09/09/2014.

appointed as judge in the underworld. He would thus force the dead lover to take a place in his realm in the afterlife. However, a curious thing to note about Rhadamanthus is that he was presumably married to Alcmene, mother to Heracles, in the underworld.[119] He therefore, like the lover in the poem, was able to love in the realm of death. But then what is the meaning of the invocation of his name? And why is he described as a fatal figure? What is actually the meaning of the word *fatal* here? Once more, ambiguity and multivalence could give way to discussions on moral issues as well as on the precise or imprecise nature of particular languages.

Apart from this case, the French text for several emblems in the work refers to a mythological event or person not mentioned in the Latin motto and caption nor in the Dutch epigram. Examples include references to Apollo (I.9), the three Graces (I.25), Phyllis (II.10), the *faux Acherontide* (II.14);[120] and Cupid is described as *l'archer Paphien* (II.1).[121] Clearly, vernacular translations were not always easier to understand than the Latin ones and, in some cases, referred to rather obscure classical figures such as Rhadamanthus. This conflicts with the thesis of Alison Adams that vernacular epigrams contain fewer references to classical mythology than Latin ones. The fact that they are present here is revealing of the attitude of the author towards each of the languages. Apparently, the French language could function just as well as a conveyor of such mythological references and its readers were deemed informed enough to be able to understand them. Moreover, the variety in content in each of the epigrams is certainly not always caused solely by cultural differences. In this work the Dutch and French texts often offer a different perspective on the emblem, both alternately showing the viewpoint of the lover and of a speaker not related to the story. They regularly present both complementing and conflicting explanations of the *picturae*.

Alison Saunders, who briefly discusses the co-existence of the French quatrains and Dutch poems, does not establish a correlation; proceeding from her viewpoint that the Dutch texts appealed to a Dutch-speaking audience and the French ones to a Francophone audience, she has only contrasted the French texts with Heinsius' French sources. She assumes that the presupposed French audience would have been familiar with those texts, which would interact intertextually with the French epigrams in the *Afbeeldingen van minne*.[122] For a multilingual audience, however, the epigrams in the different languages in the *Afbeeldingen van minne* would also interact with each other. In the Low Countries a large possible multilingual audience was present, due to the relatively large number of speakers of both local languages, French and Dutch. Because of their juxtaposition, the epigrams could be immediately compared. These intertextualities within emblems should be taken into account in the research on multilingual emblem books, even if not all readers of the work understood the subtleties they present. The content differs so that the riddle of the emblematic game cannot be solved.

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119 Harder 2014.
120 'false Acherontic', probably referring to the infernal river Styx. Heinsius 1613 II, f. 13v.
121 'the Paphian archer'. Heinsius 1613 II, f. Bi v.
122 Saunders 2000, 168-169.

Conclusion

Multilingual emblem books are suitable both for monolingual and multilingual users, but their multilingual character undeniably adds a 'metamedial' aspect to the reading and viewing experience. The emblem book not only contains a visual and a textual medium, inciting reflection on both forms of transferring content, but also the presence of different languages, each with their particular specificities, stimulates reflection on language as a shaper of meaning. As such, the polyglot emblem book is indeed, as Forster mentioned, 'one of the characteristic literary products of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', a period that was marked by a growing interest in the phenomenon of language and the differences between languages.[123] The proliferation of different kinds of meaning generated by different languages thus responds not only to the general attention to language, but also to the humanist rhetorical ideal of *copia*.

   These multilingual emblem books were produced in the great centres of book production, such as Antwerp and Lyon. These were places of linguistic encounter, where the active international trade brought with it a cacophony of languages and plurilingual individuals. These locations stimulated people to discuss the language question. Of course, the commercial side of the multilingual works cannot be neglected, especially in cases where expensive engravings were involved. However, the numerous cases of emblem books printed in alternating combinations of languages indicate that something else was occurring as well. The growing interest in languages shines through in this linguistically complex literature of the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Its questions were explored on the production side, but more importantly, these works allowed their audience to experience the linguistic diversity for themselves. Through multilingual emblem books, they did not just read what others wrote about the language question, but personally explored the issues at its core.

Samenvatting

Het zestiende- en zeventiende-eeuwse embleemboek was een zeer populair genre in de Nederlanden dat zich via een complexe keten van vertalingen en hertalingen heeft gevestigd en vervolgens een belangrijke meertalige component kreeg. De behandeling van deze meertalige embleemboeken in de bestaande onderzoekstraditie doet tekort aan de complexiteit van het polyglotte geheel. In dit artikel wordt betoogd dat dit teksttype beter begrepen kan worden als het beschouwd wordt in relatie tot de zogenaamde taalkwestie. Parallel aan de groeiende populariteit van het embleemboek in de zestiende eeuw namen de discussies over taal in de Nederlanden in hevigheid toe. Men zocht naar een geschikte taalvorm voor communicatie tussen de inwoners van de Nederlanden. Hoewel sommigen een bepaalde (dialectale) vorm van de Nederlandse vernaculaire taal naar voren schoven als perfecte kandidaat, nam de aandacht

123 Forster 1970, 19-23.

voor andere talen niet af. Via het meertalige embleemboek kon men gezamenlijk of alleen reflecteren op de centrale problematiek van de taalkwestie en zo visies op taal en taalverschillen vormen en uitwisselen.

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Afbeelding voorzijde: De bouw van de toren van Babel. London, British Library, MS Royal 17 II, f. 8.