

English Summaries

A Triadic Conception of Imagery

Alchemical Visual Knowledge and Innovation in the Circle around Matthäus Merian the Elder

Berit Wagner

The essay examines the creative foundations of the alchemical imagery in Frankfurt and Oppenheim. Frankfurt's emergence during the 16th century as a center of art production and publishing will be presented as essential for Merian's creative power suddenly beginning in 1617. A first climax was reached in particular with the activity of the publisher Johann Bringer (d. 1613), who was succeeded by the publishing houses of Johann Theodor De Bry and Lucas Jennis along with their engraver Matthäus Merian the Elder in terms of pictorial and alchemical history. Due to a combination of local tradition and supra-regional influences, an ultimate culmination of pictorial ideas was generated within the triad of authors, artists and publishers.

First Page – Novelty or Normality

Remarks on the Cover Design in Merian's *Alchemica*

Stefan Laube

Then as now, the cover or the first page play a decisive role in conveying an impression of a treatise. The tradition of covers for alchemical books goes back to the time of incubula. Around 1500, the main focus was on how-to-tracts on distillation and metallurgy. Symbolic and allegorical alchemy, on the other hand, had not yet found expression in the printed medium in the first half of the 16th century. And even in the decades that followed, this potential was

only sporadically called up visually. All the more striking and in need of explanation are the books published in this sector in Frankfurt am Main and Oppenheim between 1615 and 1625. Using the example of *Alchemica illustrata* by Matthäus Merian the Elder, this article raises the question of how new or conventional this allegorical and symbolic imagery on the first page was. At the same time, the emigrant status and confessional self-image of the bookmakers will be addressed.

Transmutation of Space and Light

Merian's New Imagery of Alchemy

Thomas Hofmeier

For the creation of his *Alchemica illustrata*, Matthäus Merian was able to draw on models that were rather sparse. The allegorical woodcuts and a handful of engravings prior to Merian contain a manageable number of alchemical motifs and, with a few exceptions, are rather simple in terms of composition. The main innovations in Merian's alchemical images concern technique and content. The new printing process of etching facilitated detailed images with landscapes and lighting conditions that made up for the supposed flaw of colourlessness. A closer look reveals that Merian skilfully used details of his backgrounds (surroundings, landscapes) and even the lighting as a vehicle for alchemical allusions. Merian characterised the vocabulary and grammar of alchemy's visual language above all by adding new elements to it – lively use of the background as an information carrier and cinematographic scenes are cornerstones of his new grammar.

Migration of Motifs and Transmutation of Images

From Emperor Rudolf II's Menagerie to Merian's *Alchemical Landscape*

Corinna Gannon

Matthaeus Merian the Elder's alchemical imagery is populated by a diverse fauna. The visual sources that inspired the artist's »alchemical menagerie« were equally manifold. This essay sheds light on a connection between prints produced in RudolFINE Prague, an epicenter of early modern alchemy, and the *Alchemica illustrata* published in Frankfurt, that is, between the imperial engraver Aegidius Sadeler and Merian. Thus, it becomes possible to identify the zoological collection of emperor Rudolf II as a possible reason for the nuanced depiction of animals in alchemical illustrations.

The Manuscript *De technica microcosmi historia*

A Rediscovered Template for Robert Fludd's *History of Both Worlds* in the UB Frankfurt

Ute Frietsch

It has long been assumed that Robert Fludd himself drew drafts for the engravings and etchings in his encyclopaedia *Utriusque cosmi historia*. This article discusses a unique master copy of Fludd's *De technica microcosmi historia* in the Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main that has been largely overlooked by research. It shows that Fludd implemented his visual ideas for the *Utriusque cosmi historia* through careful preparation of the print, providing further evidence of Fludd's artisanal involvement.

The *Spiritus rector* and the Artistic Inventor

Maier's and Merian's Images for the *Atalanta fugiens*

Ivo Purš

Michael Maier's book of emblems *Atalanta fugiens* (1617, 1618) is one of the most important works of alchemical literature from the early 17th century. Its concept of a »multimedia« combination of poetry, music, imagery and commentary followed the earlier tradition of alchemical picture poems. Maier realized it after he had become acquainted with the engraver Matthäus Merian the Elder who could execute the depictions at a high artistic level. In close collaboration with Maier, he was able to imprint his artistic style on a variety of earlier alchemical motifs and thus created an iconographically compact and unified series of images.

Matthäus Merian the Elder and the Images for the Book *Lambſpring*

An Alchemical Emblem Book's Conversion from Manuscript to Print

Katja Lehnert

In 1625, the first illustrated print edition of the late medieval alchemical emblem book *Lambſpring* or *De lapide philosophico* was published in the anthologies *Dyas chymica tripartita* and *Museum hermeticum*. Matthäus Merian the Elder provided fifteen large emblematic illustrations and the title engraving. As models, he used various *Lambſpring* manuscripts from the 16th and early 17th century. Merian demonstrates his technical and alchemical knowledge by not simply copying the manuscripts' illustrations and by modifying or adding elements according to the standards of contemporary book illustrations.

Merian's Juggling with Motifs – Juggling with Merian's Motifs

Iconographical Borrowings in and from Merian's Alchemical Works

Sergei Zotov

This article examines the evolution of alchemical iconography, spotlighting Matthäus Merian the Elder's innovative role. Tracing the origins to early European alchemical treatises with allegorical images, the study illuminates their overlooked influence on subsequent traditions. Merian actively used motifs from older alchemical works, mainly manuscripts, and his reinterpretation of them reshaped alchemical imagery in the following tradition. Consequently, his reimagined iconography underwent reinterpretation in diverse illuminated manuscripts.

An Amphitheatrical Microcosm

Heinrich Khunrath's *Oratorium-Laboratorium*

Peter J. Forshaw

The best-known engraving in the Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom (1595/1609) of the »doctor of both medicines and faithful lover of theosophy«, Heinrich Khunrath of Leipzig (1560-1605) is undoubtedly his circular »Theosophical« figure of the *Oratorium-Laboratorium*, which embodies his insistence on the joint necessity of work and prayer. This essay discusses these two main axes of the image, identifying sources for some of the embedded inscriptions, but also pays attention to the foreground and background of the engraving, locations which provide additional insights into Khunrath's occult practice.

The *Alchemical Landscape* from 1618

On the Synthesis of an Alchemical Icon

Berit Wagner

Whereas the famous image has already been the subject of many interpretations in the history of science, far less has been written about its genesis from an art historical perspective. Yet this focus is particularly purposeful, especially since it vividly illustrates the convergence of different currents typical of the subject matter and assigns alchemical iconography a firm place within European visual and art history dating back to the Christian Middle Ages.

Matthäus Merian the Elder as Etcher-Alchemist

Corinna Gannon

Alchemy once originated in the arts and crafts. Many methods and techniques for processing, imitating and refining different materials were thus developed. Artists often had alchemical knowledge. This short essay intends to sketch in how far the art of etching overlapped with alchemy. A detailed look at the images of creation which Merian etched for Robert Fludd will show that the artist who created such complex imagery for alchemical processes was also well-versed in the »Great Art«.

The Athanor of Heinrich Khunrath

Description, Operating Principle and Contextualization

Rainer Werthmann

Heinrich Khunrath's publication *Warhafftiger Bericht vom Philosophischen Athanore* from 1599 and 1603 is an advertising brochure for a laboratory furnace, full of promotive wording, but describing essential technical details only vaguely. This deficiency is amended by Daniel Sennert, who, a few years after Khunrath's death, gives a detailed and matter-of-fact description of this furnace including illustrations of all its parts in his book *Institutionum*

Medicinae Libri V from 1611. It is a low-maintenance capsuled laboratory furnace fed with spirit of wine, with a wick made from gold filaments or asbestos fibres, working so cleanly that it can even be operated in domestic premises. It is the precursor of the alcohol burners used in chemical laboratories of the 19th or even 20th century.

Golden King and Black Wolf

Alchemical Imagery and Laboratory Practice

Corinna Gannon und Christoph Jäggy

As will become evident in the following contribution on emblem 2.4 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens* (1618), alchemical processes were often masked by an allegorical and mythoalchemical cover in order to encrypt the secret knowledge. The image created by Matthäus Merian the Elder alludes to a frequently performed metallurgical and alchemical process: the purification of gold by antimony. This was also reenacted by the authors which makes the origin of alchemical imagery plausible.

The *Liber amicorum* of Stoltzius von Stoltzenberg

Sebastian Cöllen

During his travels through Europe from 1622 to 1628, the young physician Daniel Stoltzius von Stoltzenberg (born 1600, died after 1644) carried with him a draft version of his alchemical work *Viridarium chymicum*, published 1624. This version not only contained alchemical engravings and verses, but also served as a so-called *Stammbuch* (*album amicorum*, in English often ›autograph album‹) in which Stoltzius's acquaintances – a palette of the then scholarly class – inscribed brief dedications and quotations. The complex manuscript thus documents both the networking and the lively search for knowledge in the early modern period.

Painting and Science

Philipp Uffenbach's Entry in the *Liber amicorum* of Stoltzius von Stoltzenberg

Ursula Opitz

In the early 17th century, Philipp Uffenbach was one of the most respected artists in Frankfurt. In addition to painting and printmaking, he was interested in the natural sciences. As the author of two books in which the strictly Bible-believing Uffenbach dealt with astronomy, astrology, geography and mathematics, he showed that such sciences are not in conflict with Christian culture. This also corresponded to Stoltzius's attitude, because he sought the acquaintance of Uffenbach during his stay in Frankfurt in 1622 and exclusively presented his ›Stammbuch‹ to him and to the publisher Lucas Jennis, who was acquainted with both of them. Uffenbach supplemented his dedication text in the ›Stammbuch‹ with a carefully composed drawing that illustrates a verse from the so-called Epistle of James.

Magic and Mythology

Symbiotic and Artistic Relationships in the

Calendarium naturale magicum perpetuum

Laura Etz

Matthäus Merian the Elder's print of the *Calendarium naturale magicum perpetuum* deals with natural magic and alchemy in the form of a schematic table. In the sense of conveying knowledge in alchemy, the content is encoded. Based on a manuscript by Grossschedel, the printed pictures were created anew by Merian and also given a special aesthetic appeal. As a pictorial medium, they do not only serve as a purely illustrative addition to the text, but also convey the encoding and decoding of scientific content in a different form and at the same time combine it with an aesthetic-artistic visual language.

Georg Keller

A Previously Unknown Designer for
Matthäus Merian the Elder

Lena Konrad

The title page for Johann Daniel Mylius's *Antidotarium*, published by Lucas Jennis, bears two signatures, indicating Georg Keller as the inventor and Matthäus Merian the Elder as the engraver. The title page occupies a special position, as it is the only known frontispiece engraved by Merian so far that has both the designer's and the engraver's signature. This, as well as Keller's many years of activity in Frankfurt and his relationship with Eberhard Kieser, Matthäus Merian the Elder, Lucas Jennis, and Theodor De Bry, suggest a key position within Frankfurt's artistic community. The rather unknown and little-researched inventor, engraver, and artist from Frankfurt could thus have contributed to far more templates and designs than previously assumed.

The Reception of the Emblems from the *Atalanta fugiens* in Painting

Sonja Gebrisch

This paper uses two very different examples to show how certain image types and sometimes entire *picturae* from emblem books were reused in other emblematic works or even in painting – sometimes directly transferred, sometimes slightly modified, sometimes in the same context, sometimes detached from the original subject matter. To illustrate this process of motif transformation, two cases are examined in more detail: two paintings from the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica* in Amsterdam based on Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens* and the title page of the *Museaeum Hermeticum*.

An Alchemical Medal and its Iconographic Sources in Printed Books

Ivo Purš

The production of alchemical medals was popular in the 17th and first half of the 18th century based on reports of several spectacular transmutations of base metal into gold. The alchemical medal from the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg (16th/17th c., inv. no. Med 5830) does not intend to commemorate a specific event of transmutation but its iconography refers to this goal of alchemy and to the importance of divine favor for the successful outcome of laboratory work. The so-called *Seals of Philosophers* from Johann Daniel Mylius's *Opus medicochymicum* (Frankfurt, 1618/20) were used as templates.