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### **Citation**

Keblusek, M. (2022). A paper world: the album amicorum as a collection space. *Early Modern Low Countries*, 6(1), 14-35.  
doi:10.51750/emlc12169

Version: Publisher's Version

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Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3719450>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

# A Paper World: The Album Amicorum as a Collection Space

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## Abstract

This essay examines early modern alba amicorum as collections of social and intellectual networks, personal memories, and other textual and visual materials. In what way are these 'paper worlds' related to collections of objects, and to networks of connections? How do they interact with other book and manuscript genres, such as the emblem and the costume book? Taking the album of the Dutch collector Bernardus Paludanus (1550-1633) as a case study, an argument will be made regarding the conceptual and material kinship of alba with other forms of manuscript and print collections. The intermediality and materiality of friendship books will be shown to be crucial aspects for understanding how this medium functioned within early modern cultures of collecting and the communal production of memory and knowledge.

*Keywords:* album amicorum, Bernardus Paludanus, materiality, intermediality, collections

## A Paper World: The Album Amicorum as a Collection Space

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What kind of an object is the album amicorum? And why, exactly, would one bother to have one? What, if any, was its purpose after compilation? These questions were posed to ‘the German’, a minor character in the French satirical play *Sir Politick Would-Be* (c. 1665). A custom of German travellers, he explained, was to bring a blank, beautifully bound book on their journey and request all the ‘savans’ encountered along the way to inscribe their names, and add some wise words, in a variety of languages. Later in life, the album would come in use as a great prop for parties: it could be handed round, and guests would copiously toast the health of every ‘grand homme’ who had once entered his name.<sup>1</sup>

The basic form and characteristics of the early modern album amicorum have been agreed upon by social, cultural, visual, and literary historians – that is, a manuscript or printed book of on average a hundred pages, in which inscriptions (name, date, place), mottoes, and possibly visual additions were gathered as mementoes of social and geographical acquaintances and connections. Yet, as the great album scholar Werner Schnabel has pointed out, it remains doubtful whether we should perceive the album amicorum as an unambiguous genre (*Gattung*) in itself.<sup>2</sup> Concepts such as ‘book’ or ‘manuscript’ can be quite useful to indicate the ‘material composition’ of an album, Schnabel argues, because such categories clarify cataloguing and curating processes. Yet while these labels help bibliographers and cataloguers to identify and group alba amicorum according to their immediate materiality, they are not sufficient at all to understand the *Gesamtphänomen* (‘overall phenomenon’).<sup>3</sup>

In his attempt to determine the common denominator of the contents of an album, Schnabel turns to literary genres – the album as anthology, as a collection of adages, as memorial literature, or even as a general ‘documentation form’ – only to conclude that none of these terms sufficiently captures the essence of the medium.<sup>4</sup> Rather, Schnabel proposes, we should think of the album amicorum as a *Sammelform*: a collection format of

1 Villiers, ‘Sir Politick Would-Be’, 314–315. See also Keller, ‘Forms of Internationality’, 223.

2 Schnabel, *Stammbuch*, 25–35, esp. 24–26.

3 Schnabel, *Stammbuch*, 25.

4 Schnabel, *Stammbuch*, 30–34.

a variety of (mainly) texts.<sup>5</sup> This suggestion indeed allows for a more inclusive understanding of what an album was all about, yet leaves out an essential part of the album-as-object: its materiality. In this essay, I argue that the early modern album should indeed be conceived as a particular collection format – a container of sub-collections of memories, images, texts, and people – and as a material collection in itself. Indeed, this connotation with collecting is exactly what the etymological roots of ‘album’ indicate. Deriving from the Latin *albus*, meaning ‘white’ or ‘blank’, and used to refer to a table on which official ordinations or nominal registers were inscribed, the word surfaced in German in the 1540s in a similar context, but was soon used for the collecting of names.<sup>6</sup> Taking the album amicorum of the famous Dutch collector-physician Bernardus Paludanus (1550-1633) as a case in point, this essay discusses the intermediality of alba and other innovative forms of manuscripts and print collections emerging in the mid-sixteenth-century publishing world, such as emblem and costume books. In addition, I analyse the materiality of early modern friendship books, looking at the way they were assembled, ordered, and bibliographically collated – and I will argue this can inform us about the ways in which such a social medium functioned within early modern cultures of collecting and the communal production of knowledge.

### *Memory Objects*

From its earliest beginnings in the 1540s, the album amicorum was recognized as a semi-public record of social connections with a highly commemorative character; that is, as a collection of textual and visual tokens highlighting particular connections, intended for and designed to provoke remembrance. Quickly gaining popularity as a social medium, particularly in the northern part of Europe, thousands of early modern alba are still preserved in libraries, archives, and museums today.<sup>7</sup>

Allegedly, the German Lutheran Reformer Philipp Melancthon framed the purpose of inscribing an album – in particular those that originated in an academic environment – as two-fold: first, so the owners would remember the past (in terms of what happened where and when), and second, to provide ‘semi-testimony (*certa testimonia*)’ of those they were, or had been, familiar with, and with whom they were connected in ‘true friendship (*vera amicitia*)’.<sup>8</sup> Upon reading a name that belonged to one’s past – years, sometimes decades after an inscription had been entered – memories would come flooding back. The main function of an album amicorum, then, was to keep these memories alive. Indeed, in the

<sup>5</sup> Schnabel, *Stammbuch*, 202.

<sup>6</sup> Kramer and Pelz (eds.), *Album*, 10-11. Dasypodius, *Dictionarium Latinogermanicum*, fol. b2v, translates ‘album’ as a ‘blank register’, elaborating on its contemporary use in the phrase ‘Referam te in album meorum amicorum/Ich wil dich in das register, Darin meine freund stan zeychnen’.

<sup>7</sup> Exact numbers are hard to give. An indication: the album amicorum collection of the National Library in The Hague contains over 700 alba (1550-1750); the *Stammbuch* collection in the Herzogin Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar has 1600 alba (1550-1950). The online Repertorium Alborum Amicorum (RAA) currently (end of 2021) contains data from over c. 26,000 alba (from 1540 onwards), held in more than 800 heritage institutions.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Fechner, ‘Persönliche Beziehungen’, 412.

album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus we find numerous examples of this memory practice, aiming to include not only its owner, but also the inscriptors themselves. For example, sons are reminded of their fathers' past travels when they are invited to sign the same page, while other friends explicitly relive their previous encounters with Paludanus adding to their previous inscriptions. Thus, on 2 October 1606, Johann Friedrich, Duke of Württemberg, signed the same page as his father had done in 1592 (fig. 1).<sup>9</sup>

The Welsh epigrammist John Owen, however, was quite cynical about the commemorative power of merely inscribing one's name on a page, urging his audience to *actively* keep the flame of friendship burning:

Keep our love in your mind, and don't degrade it:  
In this book you have nothing but a naked name.<sup>10</sup>

Recent scholarship has stressed the ambitions of early modern alba as monumental paper celebrations and memorial collections of friendship. Indeed, as Marissa Bass has argued, alba amicorum were invested in by owners and contributors alike as 'monuments of friendship', both visually and textually referring to the continuity, durability, and indestructibility of friendly love.<sup>11</sup> On 28 April 1579, for example, the young Bavarian noblemen Carl and Hans Christoph II Vöhlin von Frickenhausen signed the album of the medical student Bernardus Paludanus in Padua (fig. 2). Only three months later, while in Siena, the Vöhlin brothers inscribed the same album pages again, referring to this act as a 'monument of love and benevolence that [would] revitalize' their friendship.<sup>12</sup>

Tellingly, the 1596 *Emblemata saecularia* by the Frankfurt publisher Theodore de Bry – often used as an album amicorum – opens with a lengthy Latin introductory essay on love.<sup>13</sup> Tine Meganck has shown how friendship also cemented and underwrote humanist projects and study. One contribution in the album of the cartographer Abraham Ortelius, she points out, is a drawing of a pyramid – a funerary structure – as a symbolic monument of love for a living friend. The album amicorum itself is presented as 'a Monument more Durable than Bronze'; in other words, as the most solid material expression of perpetual friendly love.<sup>14</sup>

Not only are the visual representations of friendship framed as robust architectural structures, but the (paper) object in which they are contained has become a commemorative marker constructed from the most enduring materials. Thus, the album amicorum is not just an object evoking memories through its contributions – of people, places, and

9 The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek (hereafter KB), 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fol. 23r. In Rome, Christopher Schillingus from Silesia celebrated their friendship 'antea in Germania contractam, & postea in Italia confirmatam' on 11 July 1579 (fol. 256v). See also Keblusek, 'Vrienden voor altijd'.

10 Owen, *Epigrammatum Ioannis Owen*, 271. See also Keller, 'Forms of Internationality', 227. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

11 Bass, *Insect Artifice*, 82-108.

12 KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fol. 159v: 'Renovabat idem amoris et benevolentiae monumentum' (Hans); and fol. 160v (Carl).

13 De Bry, *Emblemata saecularia* (1596), 1-7. See for a list of contents of emblems included 'in this *Stambuchi*': De Bry, *Emblemata saecularia* (1596), 10, 14.

14 Meganck, *Erudite Eyes*, 210-213.

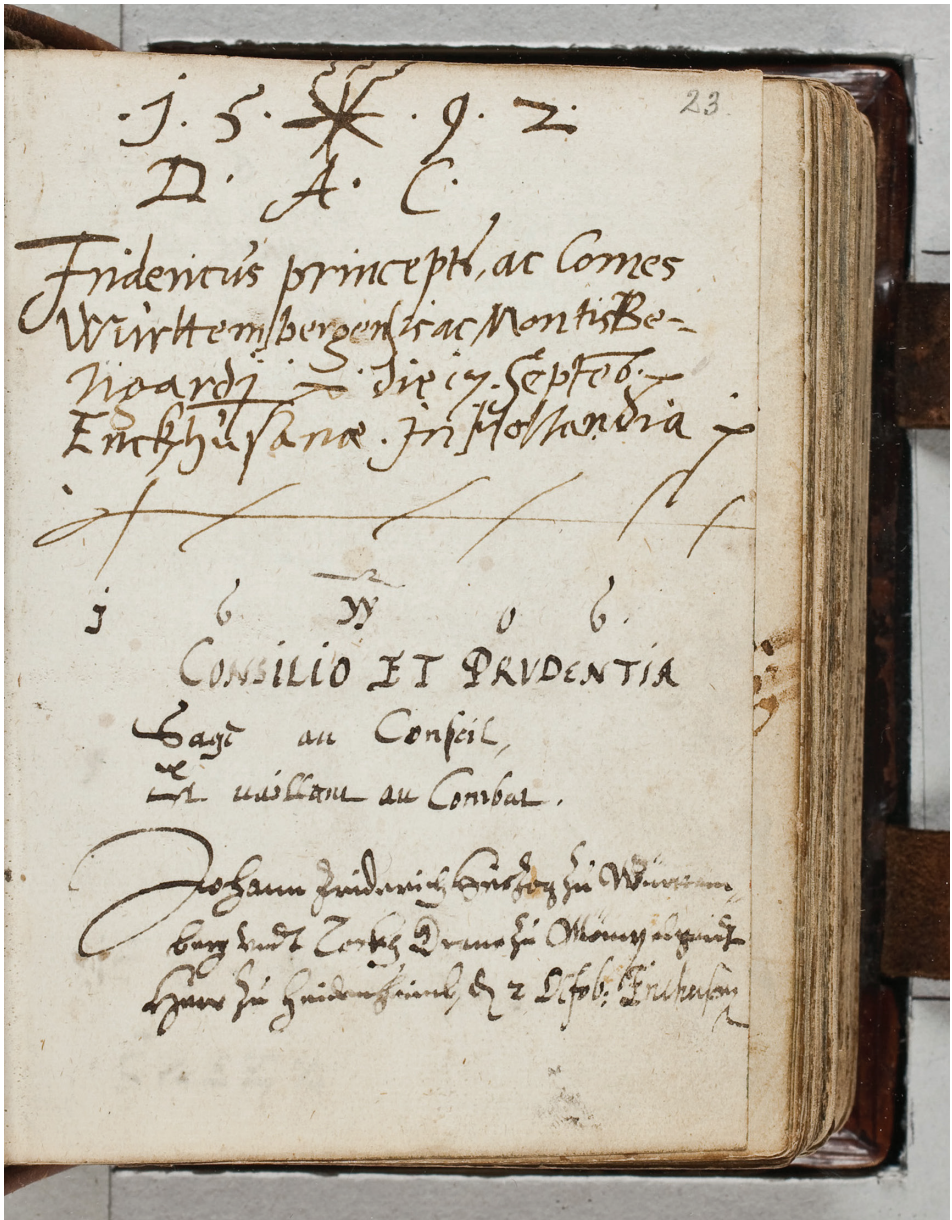


Fig. 1 Signatures of Friedrich, Duke of Württemberg (17 September 1592), and his son Johann Friedrich (2 October 1606), in the album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, pen on paper, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.



past experiences – but functions as a technology for the production of memory and as a social practice in the dynamics of memory-making.<sup>15</sup> It is, perhaps, the utmost literal materialisation of what cultural historians, most importantly Bernd Roeck, have labelled the ‘memory box’ (*Erinnerungsschachtel*): an object which functions as a container already full of ‘legacies of the past’ when it was produced.<sup>16</sup>

Cultural theorists such as Annette Smelik and Liedeke Plate have recently emphasized the entanglement of memory and materiality in contemporary society and its relationship to objects. The acts of remembering (and forgetting) can, they argue, only take place through the medium of the material world, in which objects are invested with meaning because of the ‘memory practices centred on them’.<sup>17</sup> Yet this interrelation is also pertinent to our understanding of the early modern album amicorum: like the modern souvenir or monument, the album was not only capable of producing ‘memory effects’, but functioned, through its materiality, as an essential factor in the whole process of remembering.<sup>18</sup> As Marius Kwint has noted, objects can ‘serve’ memory in three different ways: in furnishing recollection, in stimulating remembering, and as records of the past themselves (by storing information on that past).<sup>19</sup> Certainly, the early modern friendship book served memory in exactly this way – an aide-mémoire for the double act of remembrance and remembering, as Melanchton’s words seem to implicate.<sup>20</sup> As such, these alba formed semi-public archives of social networks, personal relationships, and places travelled.

### *Alba Amicorum and Notebooks*

Melanchton also underlined the educational value of inscriptions as ‘memory tools’ – as admonitions for students to always remain studious, and to become acquainted with lesser-known authors through the mottoes and quotations provided.<sup>21</sup> This passage obliquely refers to the academic practice of creating commonplace books, in which students and scholars organized their reading and lecture notes under thematic keywords or sentences. Indeed, conceptually and practically, early modern alba amicorum, especially those kept by owners with academic affiliations, owe much to the process of collecting and ordering information, and thus to knowledge production and archiving.<sup>22</sup>

15 Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 9–10, invoking Michel Foucault’s notion of ‘technology as a social practice implicated in power dynamics’.

16 Roeck, ‘Introduction’, 11. Roeck coined the concept to explain the particular dynamics of cultural exchange. Other cultural historians have applied his concept to other objects and situations: Aali, Perämäki, and Sarti (eds.), *Memory Boxes*.

17 Muntéan, Plate, and Smelik (eds.), *Materializing*, 1–3. On the difference between ‘things’ and ‘objects’ (which I will not address here), see Brown, ‘Thing Theory’.

18 Schlunke, ‘Memory and Materiality’, 253.

19 Kwint, ‘Introduction’, 2.

20 See for a critical reading of Melanchton’s *Iudicium*: Heinzer, ‘Album Amicorum’, 111, n.54.

21 Cited in Fechner, ‘Persönliche Beziehungen’, 413. See also Schnabel, *Stammbuch*, 244–274, for a detailed discussion of Melanchton’s words.

22 On early modern notebooks and note-taking: Berger, *Art of Philosophy*; Blair, *Too Much to Know*; Vine, *Miscellaneous Order*.

The connection between alba and notebooks has, of course, been commented on by some scholars, mostly in relation to the genesis of the friendship book as more or less emerging from the practice of keeping commonplace books.<sup>23</sup> Ann Blair's observations on early modern note-taking practices as 'less temporary tools than as long-term ones' could easily apply to the motivation for keeping an album.<sup>24</sup> Whereas compilations of notes were thematically ordered for future use as reference tools and thus functioned as intellectual capital, alba likewise were invested in as (future) social capital, in their inclusion of individuals of high social standing.<sup>25</sup> More importantly here, the various visual and textual contents that could be found in alba beside or as part of contributions – such as quotations, meditations, mottoes, and 'wise sentences' – constituted a form of intellectual capital as well. Similarly, the functions of notebooks and alba amicorum as archival and mnemotechnic technologies reveal their crucial importance for the preservation of the past.

The materials not related to inscriptions that we find in many alba – ranging from series of costume images (often hand-painted by the same artist who produced the album's coats-of-arms) and pasted-in engravings, to samples of paper types – also point to the fluidity that existed between commonplace books, notebooks, and alba amicorum. As Claudia Swan has shown, the series of *Adversaria* notebooks kept by the Harderwijk burgomaster Ernst Brinck was linked to his three alba amicorum through, for example, his lists of various languages.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the album of Brinck's friend, Bernardus Paludanus, contained samples of non-Western text, including a piece of paper with Chinese block printing on it. Specimens of Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, and Abyssinian writing were pasted in as mementoes of people encountered on his travels in the Holy Land.<sup>27</sup> In the multi-volume series of notebooks kept by the Bolognese collector and natural historian Ulisse Aldrovandi and his team of amanuenses, we find copious notes arranged under thematic, commonplace-like headings: similar lists of languages, of plants, people, and observations, copied out correspondence, and (poetic) testimonies to Aldrovandi and his cabinet of natural history. These function much like contributions to an album amicorum.<sup>28</sup> Aldrovandi's card catalogue of people 'who have visited my collections' was also pasted into these notebooks, while on other pages the cards were transcribed; here the early modern visitor's book becomes literally merged with notes, observations, and inscriptions.<sup>29</sup>

23 Most recently Bass, *Insect Artifice*, 82; Berger, *Art of Philosophy*, 147.

24 Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 63.

25 For the social order in alba, see for example Reinders, *De mug en de kaars*, 16-18. A particular example is the series of alba belonging to the Augsburg merchant and art agent Philipp Hainhofer. He planned to have his collection of inscriptions on loose leaves bound in separate alba for 'Princes, authorities and regents' and for 'Noblemen, patricians and friends': Seibold, *Hainhofers 'Freunde'*, 91.

26 Swan, 'Memory's Garden', 12-13.

27 KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fols. 393r-394v, 410v. Above each script, Paludanus wrote its name, adding a separate note that these were a 'memento' from two brothers he met on his way to Jerusalem.

28 Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 30; Haxhiraj, *Ulisse Aldrovandi*, 22-27. Aldrovandi's notebooks are kept in Bologna, Bologna University Library (hereafter BUL), Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi. Examples of poems on Aldrovandi as a friend and collector may be found in BUL, MS 136/15, Miscellanea, fol. 274; BUL, MS 136/19, Miscellanea, fol. 170; and BUL, MS 136/20, Miscellanea, fol. 48.

29 BUL, Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, MS 110, Catalogus virorum qui visitarunt Musaeum nostrum, fols 1-82. See for another visitor book: BUL, MS 41, Liber in quo viri nobilitate, honore et virtute insignes, viso musaeo quod

In particular, travelling scholars and students on their *peregrinatio academica* found specific instructions in theoretical treatises on the art of travel, that is, the *ars apodemica*, to record anything of note and to visit great men, whose moral and intellectual lessons should be carefully noted.<sup>30</sup> In 1587, Albrecht Meier issued his *Methodus describendi regiones* with elaborate questionnaires for travellers, specifying exactly what they had to register in their notebooks *en route*.<sup>31</sup> Thus, notebooks and alba were brought along, and may well have consisted of easily transportable blank booklets of only a few quarto or octavo quires, gathered together in a provisional binding of light parchment. These could later be taken apart, and once given a more decorative binding, would become a more enduring monument (a ‘memory box’) to these travels.

### *Emblematic Alba*

The categorical fluidity between alba amicorum proper and notebooks invites us to think about matters of categorization. What, exactly, constitutes an album? With the album amicorum practice becoming a fixture in student and aristocratic life, this blurring of lines is even more evident. Printers and publishers soon saw a commercial opportunity and started producing prefabricated alba – that is, semi-blank books with printed decorative borders, outlines of heraldic devices, and/or inspirational epigrams and emblems.<sup>32</sup> Before 1558, the Lyon publisher Jean II de Tournes issued his *Thesaurus amicorum*, containing ‘wise’ sentences in Latin and Greek, blank pages with three types of highly decorative woodcut borders, and several portrait medallions of ancient and contemporary famous men. By adding one’s name on a given page, an inscriber would become part of a virtual portrait gallery, associated with the likes of Erasmus, Pythagorus, Socrates, and Plato. These innovative printed media were used alongside the blank paper books turned into alba. Illustrated books similarly were selected to perform a parallel function as an album amicorum. In the 1580s and 1590s, for example, the lawyer Homme van Harinxma used an interleaved copy of Johan Bockspergern von Saltzburg’s *Neuwe Livische Figuren* (Frankfurt 1573) to collect the contributions of his friends.<sup>33</sup>

Keen commercial publishers included keywords like *Stammbuch* or *Wappenbuch* in the titles of these illustrated book genres, thus pointing prospective buyers to the

Excellentissimus Ulysses Aldrovandus Illustriss. Senatui Bononiensi dono dedit, propria nomina ad perpetuam rei memoriam scribunt. For the lists of visitors or pasted in cards: BUL, MS 21/2, Miscellanea, fols. 43-814; BUL, MS 136/8, Miscellanea, fols. 173-175; BUL, MS 136/17, Miscellanea, fols. 14-18; BUL, MS 136/19, Miscellanea, fols. 236v-242; BUL, MS 136/24, Miscellanea, fols. 21v-35; BUL, MS 136/25, Miscellanea, fols. 9v-105.

<sup>30</sup> On these treatises, see most recently Enenkel and De Jong (eds.) *Artes Apodemicae*. Indeed, sometimes pages of these books made it into alba amicorum. The album of Zacharias Strubius, for example, contained Georgius Loysius’s *Pervigillum Mercurii de peregrinantis virtutibus* (1600). See Repertorium Album Amicorum, [https://raa.gf-franken.de/de/suche-nach-stammbuechern.html?permaLink=1605\\_straube](https://raa.gf-franken.de/de/suche-nach-stammbuechern.html?permaLink=1605_straube) (Accessed on 10 May 2022).

<sup>31</sup> Stagl, *History*, 127. See also Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, 186-187.

<sup>32</sup> One of the earliest ones is the album kept by Jean Durand, in a blank book with printed typographical borders: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rothschild 3368, Album amicorum of Jean Durand.

<sup>33</sup> Kuiper and Thomassen, *Banden*, 125 (no. 4).

multi-functionality of these works. The Frankfurt publisher Sigmund Feyerabend reissued a previous manual for artists, compiled by his firm's engraver, Jost Amman, as a *Stamm oder Gesellenbuch* ('Book of companions', 1579). A couple of years earlier, Feyerabend had already ventured on this blooming market with his *Bibliorum utriusque Testamenti icones* (1571), which could be personalised by (and for) individual owners, adding illustrations and bound with signatures of friends and acquaintances.<sup>34</sup> Such publications seem to have been produced for the German market in particular, but more systematic research is needed to evaluate the use of these books by non-German album keepers.

A combination of heraldry and emblematics, Claude Paradin's *Les devises heroiques* – published in many editions from 1551 onwards, first in Lyon and later in Antwerp by the Plantin press – seems to have been particularly popular in the Low Countries as an alternative album format. Cornelis van Blyenburgh had a copy of a recent Paradin edition (Antwerp 1562) bound with blank pages interleaved to collect inscriptions during his travels in 1563, as did the student Seino Mulert in 1563-1566.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, a later edition of Paradin (Antwerp 1567) was used to hold inscriptions by the young student Jan van der Meyen (also known as Jean de la Ramée) during his academic travels in the 1570s.<sup>36</sup>

Emblem books constituted by far the most popular print publications functioning as alternative *alba amicorum*.<sup>37</sup> In particular, the *Emblemata* of Andrea Alciato (the inventor of the genre) was often singled out to double as a friendship book: upon binding, several copies were interleaved with added blank pages to be filled by inscribers.<sup>38</sup> Theodore de Bry motivated the publication of his 1592 *Emblemata nobilitati et vulgo scitu digna* – a small oblong book – by arguing that:

I have observed that the use of *Wappen-* and *Stammbücher* has not only become popular amongst members of the aristocracy, but also with [ordinary] men and women. [...] I have spared neither costs nor trouble to produce this work, which I think will greatly serve the nobility as well as other social classes.<sup>39</sup>

The emblematic mottoes and images in his augmented edition of 1593, a large quarto with decorative borders around the emblems and embellished blank coats of arms, were carefully chosen by De Bry 'because I have observed that all kinds of *Stambücher*, fashionable in both upper and middle class, are partly filled with scandalous sayings'.<sup>40</sup>

34 Schlueter, *Album Amicorum*, 13; Wilson, 'Social Networking', 209; O'Dell, 'Jost Amman'.

35 KB, 130 E 28, *Album amicorum* of Cornelis van Blyenburgh; KB, 1900 A 178, *Album amicorum* of Seino Mulert. I am grateful to Jeroen Vandommele for this information.

36 Schepper, Fabri, and Van de Velde, *In vriendschap verbonden*, 9-10.

37 Schnabel, 'Druckwerke als Stammbücher'; Wade, 'Women's Networks'.

38 On Alciato as an album, see Musvik, 'Word and Image'.

39 De Bry, *Emblemata* (1592), fol. A8v: 'Denn als ich vernommen, dass der gebrauch der Wapen und Stammbücher nicht allein under hohes und nidriges Standes [...] im schwang gehet [...]. Hab also weder Kosten noch Mühe oder Arbeit angesehen, biss so lang ich diss Werck verfertiget, welches ich fürnemlich für die Adels Personen, so wol auch andere Stände also zugerichtet'. For an example of the use of this publication as a friendship album see Verhaak, 'Emblemata'. A copy held in Leiden's University Library functioned as *album amicorum* of the Walloon minister Johannes Bultellus: Leiden University Library (hereafter UBL), BPL 2563A (missing its title page).

40 De Bry, *Emblemata* (1593), fol. A3v: 'Denn [...] ich [habe] wargenommen, dass aller art Stambücher, welche beyde bey hohen und nidern Ständen im schwang gehen, zum theil mit unhöflichen Bildnissen, zum theil

These words, incidentally, echo his colleague Sigismund Feyerabend's admonitions that most *Stammbücher* should be called *Schädtbücher*, leading to mischief and misconduct especially amongst students – which the use of his own printed models, offering moral guidance, could prevent.<sup>41</sup>

Emblem books were deemed an excellent choice to communicate enduring friendship, while simultaneously aiding the contributors with appropriate moral lessons, images, quotes, and mottoes. In the second edition of his *Choice of Emblemes* (Leiden 1586), Geoffrey Whitney explained that he had included (printed) names of individuals, having

written somme of the Emblemes, to certaine of my frendes, to whome either in dutie or frendship, I am diuers waies bounde: which both were wanting in my firste edition. [...] For my intitulinge them to some of my frendes, I hope it shall not bee misliked, for that the offices of dewtie and frendship are alwaies to be fauored [...] dedicating some to such persons, as I thinke the Emblemes doe best fitte and pertaine vnto.<sup>42</sup>

As we can see here, the material and conceptual boundaries between emblem books and alba were blurred, and the hybridity of these 'memory objects' was well understood and played out. As ideal technologies for commemoration, both print and manuscript genres often took on the material form of the other. Popular emblem books contained handwritten inscriptions: the Walloon minister Johannes Bultellus, for example, used a copy of Theodore de Bry's *Emblemata nobilitati* (1593) as his personal album amicorum.<sup>43</sup>

Emblematic imagery was regularly copied into alba. Clippings from emblem books – indeed, even whole series – were sometimes pasted in.<sup>44</sup> This we can see in the case of Bernardus Paludanus, at the end of whose album a complete series of thirty-two emblems was bound in (one image is missing, due to an excised page).<sup>45</sup> The original pages containing the copper engravings of the individual emblems were at some point used for album inscriptions, carefully written above, next to, or under the image – the oldest dating back to 1593-1594, others to 1617-1618. These dates imply that the series was printed before 1593, possibly as a collection of emblems or even an emblem book. However, the *subscriptions* (explanatory texts), after all an essential part of emblem publications, are missing in the engraved leaves bound into the Paludanus album. This series has been linked to an emblem book published by the Amsterdam bookseller Dirck Pietersz Pers in 1614, *Bellerophon or lust tot wysheyd*, in which the original copperplates were re-used and combined

aucg mit schandbaren Sprüche erfüllet werden'. For a comparison on the contents of both editions: Groesen, *Representations*, 83. See also Lavoye, 'À propos'.

41 O'Dell, 'Jost Amman', 31; Schnabel, 'Über das Dedizieren'.

42 Whitney, *Choice*, fol. \*\*3v. Whitney connected ('dedicated') specific emblems to people like Sir Philip Sidney (38) and Sir Robert Jermy (43).

43 UBL, BPL 2563A, Album amicorum of Johannes Bultellus. The album contains 136 inscriptions.

44 On the early modern practices of clipping and pasting, thus creating hybrid genres: Smyth, 'Cutting'; Fleming, Sherman, and Smyth (eds.), 'Renaissance Collage'.

45 KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fols. 509r-527r. Emblem 10 (mentioned erroneously by Van Selm, 'Licht', 102, as no. 9), between fols. 517r and 518r. The foliation, entered in pencil at a later date, does not signal the missing leaf, or, for that matter, any of the other missing pages that were cut or ripped out. This example shows the importance of careful bibliographical and material analysis of alba for the interpretation of these sources.

with new explanatory poems by Pers.<sup>46</sup> A comparison of the *Bellerophon* and the series in the Paludanus album has revealed that the latter must have belonged to the first original edition, probably published in Antwerp between 1580-1590 by the printseller Joos de Bosscher.<sup>47</sup> Why Paludanus chose to include the entire series in his album is not clear.

### *The Paludanus Album as a Collection of Images*

The complex entanglement between alba amicorum, emblem collections, and other illustrated book types (such as heraldry and costume books) as well as their hybrid materiality – fusing manuscript and print – comes into focus when we consider the Paludanus album in closer detail.<sup>48</sup> The ambiguity between manuscript and print is not a unique feature of the object, for we know of more alba containing print items, but its sheer size makes it a remarkable case.<sup>49</sup> This magnification can help us see more closely the categorical fluidity and intermediality in other examples, such as the alba and notebooks of Aldrovandi and Brinck.

Born in 1550 as Berent ten Broecke in Steenwijk, Paludanus studied medicine in Heidelberg, before moving to Padua, where he continued his studies and received his doctorate in 1580. Between 1580 and 1582, he went to Sienna, Venice, Rome, Naples, and Bologna (where he visited the famous collections of Ferrante Imperato and Ulisse Aldrovandi), then travelled on to Malta and Sicily, and spent some months in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Alexandria. In 1580-1581 he toured extensively in the German territories, moving from Strasbourg, Augsburg, and Innsbruck to Jena, Leipzig, Braunschweig, and Bremen. On his return to the Dutch Republic, Paludanus moved first to Zwolle, then to Enkhuizen, where he established a large, encyclopaedic *Wunderkammer* filled with *naturalia* and *ethnographica*. Such objects were supplied to him by VOC captains whose ships moored in the town's harbour.<sup>50</sup>

In Padua, Paludanus became a member of the German Nation, one of the many geographically organised student corporations, where he most likely picked up the habit of carrying an album amicorum. During his travels between 1570-1585, some five hundred

<sup>46</sup> Van Wijk, 'Album amicorum'; Van Selm, 'Licht'; Van Straten, 'Oorsprong'; Daemen-de Gelder, 'Damman'.

<sup>47</sup> Although no copy of this particular edition is known, the engraved pages in the Paludanus album suggest there might even have existed two versions of this original printing: one with, and one without *subscriptions*. Daemen-de Gelder, 'Damman', 164, suggests that this edition may originally have been conceived as 'an already existing album amicorum [...] turned into an emblem book'. Including this 'edition' in his album amicorum, using the engraved pages for contributions dating from 1593 onwards, Paludanus unknowingly (?) reversed the engravings' history. The order of leaves in the Paludanus album follows the engraved numbering of the plates; the order in the printed *Bellerophon* does not.

<sup>48</sup> The only lengthy study of the album is Van Wijk, 'Album Amicorum'. I am currently writing a monograph on Paludanus's album and collections, under the working title *The Four Parts of the World*.

<sup>49</sup> Systematic research into the numbers of (surviving) alba containing print is needed to understand the importance of this (material) hybridity.

<sup>50</sup> On the Paludanus *Wunderkammer*, see Keblusek, 'Four Parts of the World'. For a biography of Paludanus: Hunger, 'Bernardus Paludanus'.

people inscribed this album, presenting their names, mottoes, dedications, coats of arms, and emblematic illustrations. Like Aldrovandi (who signed the album when Paludanus visited him in Bologna on 12 July 1579), Paludanus reused his album when, years later, he wanted records of the many visitors who came to see to his famous collection – their names fill the remaining blank spaces. The traditional album amicorum from Paludanus's travelling years thus developed in something else, an evolution which again points to the overlap in genre and object. Mostly manuscript, this unusually fat volume of almost six hundred leaves (or twelve hundred pages) also includes much printed material – either cut out and pasted in, or with the original printed leaf an integral part of the album's collation. It features some 1660 inscriptions in numerous languages (including Latin, Greek, Arabic, French, Italian, Dutch, Spanish, English, and Hungarian), over 140 hand-coloured heraldic images, bound-in series of engravings, an emblem book, portraits of ancient and contemporary rulers, and about 145 gouaches depicting emblematic scenes or examples of foreign dress.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, as we have seen above, emblematic imagery is used throughout his album: either painted as part of certain contributions, as stand-alone *picturae*, or as a cross-over between emblematic, genre, and costume imagery. The gouache of a lobster carrying the world on its back (fol. 427r), for example, was contributed on 25 September 1580 by the Nuremberg lawyer Christophorus Cressius, with a lengthy motto ('Miraris, Canceri dorso consurgere Mundum? / Desine, sic hodie vertitur Orbis Iter') that was possibly inspired by the emblem in Joachim Camerarius's manuscript *Symbola et emblemata* (1587) (fig. 3).<sup>52</sup> An enigmatic image of a young man with a cockerel on his back and a full glass of wine in his hand, sitting cross-legged on a wine barrel floating in water (fol. 421r) seems imbued with emblematic qualities, but cannot be related yet to a similar print or woodcut.

Although some images may at first glance seem to originate from an emblem book, many of them seem to have a closer relationship to the tradition of costume books. The full-page gouache of a man and a woman, both clad in ornate black cloaks, looking up to a buxom woman opening her window (fol. 170r), seems to serve as the *pictura* to accompany the Dutch motto on the opposing page (fol. 169v): 'Who knocks will be let in.' The image was actually based on popular representations of Italian courtesans circulating at the end of the sixteenth century, harking back to well-known *commedia dell'arte* scenes.<sup>53</sup> Some other visual elements in the album similarly depict Italian theatrical scenes, and are not included as emblematic imagery, but rather form a sub-series within the album's larger collection of costume depictions (for example the Turkish, Italian, and Maltese dress types).

<sup>51</sup> I am working on a research project about visual materials in friendship alba, provisionally entitled *Images on the Move*.

<sup>52</sup> The motto in Camerarius's manuscript is formulated exactly as in the album. Since Paludanus was a friend of Camerarius, he may have seen this manuscript and have ordered the emblem to be copied. The motto in the Paludanus album translates as follows: 'Are you surprised that the World rides the Cancer's back? Don't be: thus is the pace of the world nowadays.' See Siltz, *Music*, 295.

<sup>53</sup> KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fol. 169v: 'Wir clopt wordt inghelaten'. See also Tylkus, 'Women', 337.



Fig. 3 Contribution by Christophorus Cessius in the album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, 25 September 1580, pen and gouache on paper, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

Much like emblem collections and alba, costume books were another innovation in the mid-sixteenth-century world of illustrated manuscript and print media. Occasionally, alba amicorum would be adorned with illustrations taken from these overviews of local dress – either cut out and pasted in, or copied by artists as (part of) contributions.<sup>54</sup> Even though the presence of five to ten sartorial images in friendship books was quite common, the Paludanus album contains an exceptionally large number of them (over 140), in which various sub-series (or collections) and artistic hands can be identified.<sup>55</sup> Eight pages feature clippings of printed French dress types, cut out and pasted onto blank pages, which were afterwards used for inscriptions – and these may well have been added to complement the album's painted costume collections.<sup>56</sup>

Costume images also often included elements associated with other visual genres. Stock depictions of local dress, copied from printed costume books, were translated into emblematic ones through the addition of symbolic details such as a burning heart, which signified eternal love and friendship.<sup>57</sup> Heraldic devices were incorporated in emblematic imagery, like the famous pictorial representation of the motto *Arte et Marte* in a man dressed partly as a soldier, and partly as a scholar.<sup>58</sup> The Paludanus album (like other alba of the time) features many illustrations that are a hybrid form of illustration born from costume and heraldic imagery. Several pages sport depictions of women and men, holding a shield with the inscripitor's coat of arms, or pointing to the family crest painted on the same page, with a caption by Paludanus identifying the locality of their sartorial style. Thus, we find a *gentildonna ferrarese*, holding the coat of arms of James Randolph, *consiliarius* of the English Nation in Padua, who entered his inscription at the foot of the image (fig. 4).<sup>59</sup> A series of women and men from various Italian cities, all painted by the same artist and with captions in Paludanus's hand identifying their urban provenance, has small coats of arms painted in the top right corner.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the depictions of ships in his album all have heraldic devices in the top corner – even though an inscription by its owner is not always present. Indeed, some of these (such as the gondola with a Venetian bride) combine elements of costume imagery with depictions of local traditions and customs.<sup>61</sup>

54 Note that many engravers and publishers involved in the production of emblem books were also active in costume book projects, such as Abraham de Bruyn, Hadrianus Damman, and Joos de Bosscher. A complete survey of alba amicorum with imagery from costume books is a desideratum.

55 See for example the costume images in the alba of the two German students Werner Ladings and Burchard Grossman, or in the album of Jacob II van Bronckhorst van Batenburg, respectively KB, 130 E 27, 133 C 14, and 135 K 26. These alba each contain less than ten costume images.

56 KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fols. 487–504, all on recto side. These engravings were cut out of Boissard's *Habitus variarum*.

57 See for instance the women holding up a burning heart in KB, 135 K 26, Album amicorum of Jacob van Bronckhorst van Batenburg, fols. 67r, 74r, 91v.

58 Paludanus's album features two of these images, both with a heraldic device in the top corner: KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fols. 104r and 390r.

59 KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fol. 135r.

60 KB, 133 M 36, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fols. 110–119, all on recto side.

61 KB, 133 M 36, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fols. 132r, 133r (depicting the gondola with bride), 149r, 327r, 329r.



Fig. 4 Contribution by James Randolph, with image caption by Paludanus, in the album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, 14 June 1578, pen and gouache on paper, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

That Paludanus indeed considered his album to be an accumulation of various sub-collections is evident from his numeration of connected images – much like the consecutive numbers engraved in (emblem) prints. Thus, the ‘series’ of coats of arms has been assigned numbers in Paludanus’s hand, as have the depictions of dress and of the ships.<sup>62</sup> This function of the Paludanus album as a *Sammelform*, to borrow Schnabel’s term, is also alluded to in the inclusion of the entire *Vita, Passio et Resurrectio Iesv Christi* (c. 1598), a series by the engraver Adriaen Collaert, who was well-known at the time for his print collections of four-footed animals, flowers, and sea creatures. Unlike the other folios with printed material, these pages were not used for contributions by others, but annotated with religious comments by Paludanus himself – both on the engraved recto-side and its verso.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, the portrait gallery of European secular and religious rulers, included in the Paludanus album, as well as the series of Roman emperors by Joos de Bosscher (again, a selection of cut-out engravings pasted in), may be interpreted as part of Paludanus’s ambition to collect such materials within the context of his album.<sup>64</sup>

### *The Album as Sammelband*

In fact, when we focus on this album as a material object of itself and in particular the way it has been collated and bound together, we cannot but conclude that it was consciously constructed as a collection of collections. Parts of his album, notably the signatures collected during his travels and the costume imagery connected to the exotic places he visited, seem to function as a personal index to his object collections, as do signatures of visitors who are known for having presented Paludanus with collectables, such as the Duke of Württemberg. In this sense, the album was the paper equivalent of the large wooden cabinets in Paludanus’s house, neatly sub-divided in shelves, boxes, and drawers holding all kinds of objects, grouped as sub-collections according to provenance, material, or category – for example a large drawer with ‘diverse costumes and foreign things from Syria, Persia, Armenia, the East and West Indies, Turkey, Arabia, and Moscow, several hundreds of them’.<sup>65</sup>

But whose collection? First, we should determine its ‘author’; that is, the person who ordered the pages to be bound, thus fixing the collection(s) in this shape, form, and order.

<sup>62</sup> These images were not always on consecutive pages, hinting at a later collation of the album, as discussed below. The ships are numbered 1 to 5: KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fols. 132r (no. 1), 133r (no. 2), 149r (no. 3), 327r (no. 4), and 329r (no. 5).

<sup>63</sup> KB, 133 M 63, Album amicorum of Bernardus Paludanus, fols. 32–55, all on recto side – a total of twenty-five engravings, including the title page to the series.

<sup>64</sup> Indeed, we can link both the emblem genre and the album amicorum to the humanist tradition of publishing portrait series in book format, not only in terms of their respective content, but also through the associated, overlapping networks of their publishers, authors, and engravers: Rave, ‘Paolo Giovio’. The Frankfurt firm of Theodore de Bry, for example, closely cooperated with the antiquarian Jean Jacques Boissard on his *Icones virum illustrium* (1597), a series of portrait engravings in book format, of which individual parts also surface in alba as cut out and pasted in illustrations: Van Groesen, *Representations*, 82.

<sup>65</sup> Rathgeb, *Wahrhaftige Beschreibung*, unpaginated, between fols. 43r and 55r.

In Paludanus's case, although the album's binding is contemporaneous and bears his name in golden lettering, it is not at all certain that it was indeed bound on his command. There are in fact indications to suppose quite the opposite – that the material for the album was gathered by someone else who was not immediately concerned with the correct order of pages; perhaps even shortly after Paludanus's death in 1633. His heirs tried to sell off his large collections of natural and ethnographic objects in 1634, and his impressively bound paper collections of alba, costume series, and engravings, may have been presented as an integral constituent of this part of the estate.<sup>66</sup>

Two examples from the album's collation suffice to illustrate this. Contemporary alba did sometimes contain various types of decorated paper, by way of embellishment. We find this in the case of Paludanus, with several quires of very smooth, blue-marbled paper at the beginning and end of the album. These quires must originally have belonged together, perhaps were even provisionally bound together; the dates of their inscriptions also corroborate that assumption. There is no reason why Paludanus – who was well-known as a serious collector – would have opted to split them up like this. The manner in which they have been split appears rather to be the result of the ad hoc assembly of the album material by someone other than the notoriously exact Paludanus.

Secondly, a full-page drawing of a Moscovite on folio 84r is 'looking' to the page opposite him, that is, folio 83v.<sup>67</sup> His female counterpart, again a full-page drawing in the same hand, is only to be found much further on in the album, however, on folio 324v. The collation shows that folio 84r is in fact an extra leaf, almost invisibly pasted onto folio 83v, whereas folio 324v (situated in the middle of a quire, according to the collation) should have a following leaf attached to it – but the following leaf is missing. Only a small fragment of paper is left where this has been cut out. This is the leaf that now forms folio 84, which must have been glued back later – something Paludanus himself surely would never have done in this way, since the original costumed pair has now been separated. From other visual 'series', such as the ships or heraldic devices, which were carefully numbered by Paludanus, we know that he certainly valued images that belonged together, even if their (numerical) order was subsequently disturbed upon collating and binding. Given Paludanus's highly organized and structured object catalogues, it is unlikely that he would have allowed these forms of derangement in his paper collection.

Be that as it may, this does not take away from the fact that Bernardus Paludanus did not only collect inscriptions during his academic travels (the album amicorum) and from the visitors to his large collections (the visitor's book), but also used emblematic materials on which to record these names. There is much material evidence that the object we now identify purely as his album amicorum, with its decorated and personalised binding, is, literally, a collection of collections – a container of images, texts, and the records of his social and intellectual relationships. The order of quires and leaves (the album's collation), as well as the different types and sizes of paper, indicate that the album was in fact composed of various blank and engraved sets of paper, such as notebooks, an emblem series, and

<sup>66</sup> Hunger, 'Bernardus Paludanus', 263.

<sup>67</sup> The images are copied after Desprez, *Recueil de la diversité des habits*, unfoliated, 'La Moscovide/Le Moscovide'.

images of foreign dress. As individual, smaller objects, these were likely already gathered with a few stitches and a provisional binding: a smudge of paint on one page proves that the gouache on the opposite one was still wet when the pages were closed (as would indeed happen in a notebook format).

A counterpart to Paludanus's object collections, this 'paper world' literally served as a visual re-collection of people, places, dress, and traditions: an autobiographical memory box and identity kit, a self-promoting overview of his networking skills, and a testimonial to the importance of his collections. The Paludanus album may thus be conceived of as a composite volume, as a so-called *Sammelband* – a bibliographical concept which connotes a binding that holds various related or even unrelated, separately printed or manuscript, *material* items.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, it is precisely its materiality, I would argue, which helps us to understand this album as a site where quite diverse collections were purposefully constructed and stored.

However extreme an example, the material hybridity and intermediality of the Paludanus album points to the widespread early modern phenomenon of paper media manipulation. It raises important questions about categorical fluidity, and about the relationship of such paper collections with early modern cultures of collecting and the communal production of memory and knowledge. The album amicorum, then, originally born out of a mixture of separate print and manuscript genres, may not have been intended as a hybrid format, but it quickly developed into a social medium which attracted or even demanded hybridity in materiality, form, and use.

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<sup>68</sup> See for example Watson, 'Sixteenth-century *Sammelband*'.

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