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Stronks, Els, project lead. Emblem Project Utrecht. Database

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The Emblem Project Utrecht is a website featuring a digital library of seventeenth-century Dutch love emblems hosted by Utrecht University and developed in the early to mid-2000s. It exists under a Creative Commons license. As the “Project Info” section explains, the website is meant to expand the geographic range of available corpora of easily searchable emblem books to include the Low Countries. This project’s corpus encompasses 28 books containing love emblems that were published in Dutch-speaking areas between 1601 and 1724. The specific geographic and thematic focus of this database allows for an internal coherence useful to scholars wishing to explore the nuanced differences among the books in the collection. For instance, Emblem Project Utrecht could be utilized to track how discourses of love differed between Protestant and Catholic areas of the Low Countries. Above all, Emblem Project Utrecht is a practical resource that lets scholars leverage carefully indexed data from the books in its digital library, while also containing materials that would allow even neophytes to gain a firm grounding in the subject of emblem studies.

While Emblem Project Utrecht’s interface is clearly from the 2000s, it is clean and easy to read. The website header has a navigation bar with the five main sections of the site: “Emblem Books,” “Search,” “Compare,” “Bibliography,” and “Project.” There is also a sidebar on the left of the page that contains navigation information for whichever section one is currently visiting. The heart of the website is the first section, “Emblem Books,” which contains the digital library. The left-hand sidebar for each book in this section contains the subsections “Introduction,” “Concordance,” “All Picturae (This Book),” “All Facsimile Images (This Book),” and, depending on the book, subsections like “Introduction in Dutch,” and “Petrarchist Motives.” Under these subsection headers, users can scroll through thumbnails of the *picturae* (emblematic images that make up the visual component of an individual emblem) contained in that particular emblem book along with the book’s motto (a pithy phrase, usually in Latin, that sums up the moral of the emblem). This last feature is very helpful in gaining a quick overview of the contents of a book.

As stated above, each of the website's emblem books is prefaced with an introduction by the project team explaining the history of the book, its author, and the specific edition with which the project team worked. Also included is information on principles used by the team in transcribing and normalizing the book for digitization, as well as links for further reading and a hyperlinked notes section at the end. Additionally, three of the books have such introductions in Dutch. Every book also has a "Concordance" subsection, which links every instance of a particular word—at least every Dutch and Latin word—used in the book.

The "All Picturae" subsection contains a menu of *picturae* thumbnails. Upon clicking on one of these images, users see an enlarged version of the *pictura*, along with transcriptions of the motto and *subscriptio* (a usually epigrammatic commentary on the other two emblematic parts). Each *pictura* is also downloadable as an enlarged JPEG file. Under these main sections, users can find facsimile images of the above parts, translations of the motto and *subscriptio* in English and Dutch, a list of books that refer to the emblem, a hyperlinked list of sources and parallels, references to the emblem on the project website, hyperlinked Iconclass classifications, as well as any further notes the project team wanted to make about the emblem.

The website's consistent use of Iconclass classifications and other data standards, such as following TEI guidelines in enhancing the site's HTML architecture with XML, means that scholars can easily incorporate Emblem Project Utrecht's contents into their work with other similar websites. Of particular note, the site's adherence to data standards meant that it was later incorporated into the larger Emblematica Online project (emblematica.library.illinois.edu) hosted at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and containing materials from the collections of other institutions such as the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, making it especially useful in comparative studies.

The final subsection of the "Emblem Books" section is "All Facsimile Images," which allows one to see a facsimile version of each page of the current book and a link to download a TIFF image of the page.

The "Search" section of the site provides two methods of searching, the first of which is a global search where users can type in their own parameters. Users can also adjust for if they want to see results from the whole site, from specific parts of the emblems, or from the notes or Iconclass descriptors. This

search method potentially brings up results from both the emblem books themselves and from the bibliographic record. This is a useful method for pre-defined research questions but is not the best for simply browsing the collection. The second method of searching, "Browse Pictorial Motives," better serves initial searches by using Iconclass for thematic searches, which allows users to drill down into the Iconclass classifications associated with the images on the website. Since Iconclass is arranged hierarchically, users can find other images indexed under the same category, or navigate the taxonomic ranks to discover unexpected connections. Searches by Iconclass notation can be made in English, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese. This ingrained multilingualism is another advantage brought to the website by the adoption of Iconclass to index the subject of the *picturae*. Between these two search options, there are many different ways one can be creative in accessing the database's contents.

The third main section of the site, "Compare," allows one to see the "Emblem Books" entries for two books at once. This feature allows users to creatively explore the corpus and further enhances the website's ability to foster comparative studies. The "Bibliography" section contains all of the reference materials used by the creators of Emblem Project Utrecht, which can be sorted by author/editor or title/author/year. These reference materials contain the bibliographic information for each item used on the site, which is potentially useful to scholars in and of itself, since users can take advantage of the legwork done by the project team in gathering works relevant to the emblem books.

The final section, "Project," contains three subsections: "Project Info," "Editorial Procedures," and "Help." The first subsection explains the scholarly context of the site and its contents and contains information about the project team and the software used in building the site. It also contains an introduction to the related *Pia desideria* project, highlighting the contributions of the project team members in providing research and resources on one of the books hosted by the Emblem Project Utrecht: Herman Hugo's *Pia desideria* (1624). "Editorial Procedures" explains the project's selection of the corpus, how transcription standards were decided, and includes a note on the website's bibliography—an explanation on how to use the search functions, technical guidelines used by the site, and downloadable files of each of the emblem books in either XML or DTD format. Finally, the "Help" subsection contains information on how to navigate the site. This "Project" section is useful for anyone who wants to know about the scholarly and technical background of the project.

Much of the information contained on the site and the tools it provides will be best leveraged by scholars. While the website is very user friendly, emblems are a relatively arcane subject that requires multilingual abilities to appreciate fully, though the project team's translations go a long way in making this richly symbolic art form more accessible to a general audience. The scholarly orientation is furthered by a link on the home page to PDF files of all the papers presented at the Learned Love conference that was held in Utrecht in 2006 to celebrate the completion of the Emblem Project Utrecht. Seeing the project team's research output can help other scholars to learn more about the project and its context, as well as to see how others have used the resources provided by the Emblem Project Utrecht.

Despite this overall emphasis on the needs of scholars, the website also hosts an educational site in both Dutch and English that allows students and teachers to learn more about emblems in general, and Dutch love emblems in particular. Users reading through the pedagogical introduction can answer multiple choice questions on the site's content to test their understanding. This image-rich crash course lets every interested user learn about emblems in a hands-on way.

Overall, Emblem Project Utrecht provides both scholars and general audiences all the tools necessary to glean insights about the culture of seventeenth-century learned love in the Low Countries.

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