Similar or Dissimilar Loves?

*Amoris Divini Emblemata* and its Relation to *Amorum Emblemata*

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*Amoris divini emblemata* (1615) is the religious counterpart to Vaenius’s 1608 *Amorum emblemata*.¹ Rather than featuring Cupid and his mistress, the emblems present Divine Love and the human Soul engaged in a series of symbolic acts. Many of the emblems refer back to the earlier volume. We encounter the sunflower in ‘Superna respicit’ (‘She looks upward’, 16; Fig. 1) the Ouroboros² in ‘Amor aeternus’ (‘Eternal love’, 5), and the watering of plants in ‘In spiritu seminat’ ‘Love sows in the spirit’, 22). But here, rather than to love in its natural sense, the emblems refer to the love between God and the human Soul. The Soul is told to look upwards, as the sunflower does; love should be eternal; and, like ordinary seeds, the seeds of faith grow when being watered by love. It is important to note, however, that most of the emblems are original; less than half of them refer back to *Amorum emblemata*.³ Many of the emblems with more specifically religious meaning have no visual counterpart in the earlier book. Examples are ‘Pietate in parentes potior’ (‘Superior to the piety towards one’s

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² The snake biting its own tail, symbolizing eternity.

parents’, 18) that states that love for God is more important than love for one’s parents, and ‘Una in sede morantur pax et amor’ (‘Peace and love are seated in one place’, 29).

*Amoris divini emblemata*, like Vaenius’s earlier emblem books, was a co-production by several artists. The book’s initial impetus, if we are to believe what Vaenius tells us in its preface, came from its dedicatee, Archduchess Isabella of the Netherlands. As friends had told him, she suggested that Vaenius’s amorous emblems could easily be redirected

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4 Not Queen Isabella of Spain, as Manning would have us believe: see Manning 2002, p. 177.
towards a religious meaning. Vaenius then designed the pictures, selected quotations, and wrote the Dutch epigrams. The French epigrams were written by Carolus Hatronius, the Spanish ones by Alonso de Ledesma. The engravings were made by Cornelis Boel.

It is interesting to note that, in spite of the very consistent structure of the book, both in a formal sense and with respect to content, it is not very easy to point to a single characteristic emblem. Even though all emblem pictures but one show Divine Love and the Soul engaged together in some symbolic activity, there are also important ways in which these pictures are different from each other. Divine Love protects the Soul from evil in ‘A malo tuetur’ (‘Love protects us from evil’, 21), he points her towards the example of the sunflower in ‘Superna respicit’, he lets her smell his fragrance in ‘Iucundum spirat odorem’ (‘Love exudes a pleasant aroma’, 37). But Divine Love is not always the leading actor: sometimes he just draws the viewer’s attention to the activity of the Soul, as when her arrows pierce a breastplate (in ‘Omnia vincit amor’ ['Love conquers all’, 42]) or she is being nourished by Hope (in ‘Animae spes optima nutrix’ ['Hope nourishes the soul best’, 30]). In other emblems Love and the Soul are acting together, as when they chase away sloth (in ‘Odit moras’ ['Love hates delays’, 31]) or when they repudiate riches and set out for heaven (in ‘Omnia spernit’ ['Love spurns all’, 46]). As a consequence, the main thrust of the picture’s action is hard to bring under a single description. Similarly, there is no unifying theme in the setting in which these actions occur. Usually they take place outside, in a hilly and sunny countryside featuring churches, vegetation and water. But the sun is often missing, sometimes the weather is dark and threatening, and the setting may also be a townscape or even the interior of a house or church-like building.

It may be that the book replicates at micro-level the diversity and multiplicity of the emblem that John Manning turned into its defining characteristic. No wonder then that Amoris divini emblemata has been characterized in many different ways: among others as an expression of

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religious Petrarchism, an expression of Christian mysticism, as a humanistically inspired guide to virtue, or as a puppet theatre.\(^7\)

In her contribution to the *Companion to Emblem Studies*, Els Stronks asked for closer inquiry that could ‘reveal on what (abstract) level differences and similarities exist between Vaenius’s two volumes’.\(^8\) Answering that call, what I propose to do in this article is to investigate the relation between Vaenius’s earlier erotic emblem book and *Amoris divini emblemata*. As we saw, Vaenius himself in his preface to the reader quoted Archduchess Isabella’s opinion that the amorous emblems ‘could easily be redirected toward a spiritual and divine meaning, as the effects of human and divine love are almost the same towards the object of love’.\(^9\) Leonard Forster characterized *Amoris divini emblemata* as Petrarchist conceits ‘converted to religious use’.\(^10\) But if this is true, in what sense? In the history of the love emblem, the teachings of secular and religious love have been presented as broadly similar, but also as diametrically opposed: ‘The same Cupid’s charm could work for Vaenius’s secular and then divine emblems, but also for the various needs of a variety of other authors and their often opposing messages’.\(^11\)

Vaenius indeed uses some of the pictorial conceits of his earlier emblems in a different setting and draws conclusions about religious love that are to some extent comparable to the earlier ones about secular love; but different approaches are possible in the reuse of amorous imagery for religious poetry. A few years later, Jacob Cats was to use another approach when he wrote three different morals to a single set of pictures.\(^12\) There was no suggestion that worldly love was somehow wrong. In the *Antipathia* series of emblem books the two sorts of love were opposed to each other. Later in the century, Jan Luyken would disown his emblematically illustrated book of love poetry and publish instead his *Jesus en de Ziel* (‘Jesus and the Soul’).

Forster’s characterization of *Amoris divini emblemata*, in any case, seems a very limited view at best. Looking, for instance, at the role of fire in *Amoris divini emblemata*, there are indeed a few emblems where

\(^7\) A ‘puppet-theatre [...] that could play out the spiritual fears and longings of the age’: ibid., p. 179.


religious love is compared to fire or flames, but there is nothing of the Petrarchists’ ambivalence about that fire. Where in *Amoris divini emblemata* the fire represents torture, it is not inflicted by the beloved, but by the enemies of Divine Love. Only a small number of the emblems in *Amoris divini emblemata* exhibit the characteristics of Petrarchism that Forster lists in *The Icy Fire*. The characteristics that do appear are the lover being directed to the beloved; love being eternal; the beloved as the sun; the lover being ready to take on the work of love; the lover’s hopes; his willingness to serve the beloved; love’s unwillingness to accept limitations; and the lover being dead without love. In all, less than one quarter of the emblems possibly display Petrarchist influence. But even where the emblem picture or words recall Petrarchist tenets, in the religious book the emotional import has changed very much. The beloved, in the Petrarchist view, is very much the lover’s antagonist. That his world centres on her wishes and fancies turns his life into an ordeal. If, by contrast, the Soul’s life is turned into an ordeal, it is because of her own limitations, perhaps her persecutors, but not because of the beloved (God). Again, the Soul’s spiritual death without the presence of Divine Love (*i.e.*, not being ‘in love’ at all) is very different from the death of the Petrarchist lover, which is conditional upon his being enamoured of the lady.

So even though there is a minority of emblems that, while showing some Petrarchist characteristics, are far removed from its spirit, the great majority of the book’s emblems are not even remotely Petrarchist. There is no Petrarchism in the soul being adopted by Christ, in love being described as a precious treasure, in the concord between lovers.

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13 ‘Crescit in immensum’ (‘Love grows immeasurably’, 17) and ‘Crescit spirantibus auris’ (‘The blowing wind makes love grow’, 45).
14 ‘Constans est’ (‘Love is steadfast’, 35) and ‘Amoris securitas’ (‘The security of love’, 38).
15 Forster 1969, pp. 8-23. Not all of these are actually mentioned by Forster. If one were to formulate his list as a system however (p. 22), ‘the lover being directed to the beloved’ would certainly appear in that system.
16 ‘Amor rectus’ (‘Right love’, 4) and ‘Superna respicit’ (16).
17 ‘Amor aeternus’ (5).
18 ‘Mentis sol amor dei’ (‘The love of God is the sun of the mind’, 6), ‘Superna respicit’ (16), and to some extent all those emblems where the sun appears in the *pictura*.
19 ‘Nihil amanti grave’ (‘For a lover nothing is heavy’, 26).
20 ‘Animae spes optima nutrix’ (30).
21 ‘Nullus liber erit, si quis amare volet’ (‘No one will be free, if he wishes to love’, 40).
22 ‘Verus amor nullum novit habere modum’ (‘True love does not know how to keep measure’, 44).
23 ‘Sine amore mors’ (‘Without love there is death’, 55).
24 ‘Ex amore adoptio’ (‘Adoption out of love’, 3).
25 ‘Amor thesaurus carissimus’ (‘Love is a precious treasure’, 9).
producing virtue, or in the love of Christ being greater than that of one’s parents, etc. It is not even in denial of Petrarchism: it is just a completely different view of the world.

Having said that, one respect in which the two books are alike is in their shared view of love as the force that creates the universe and keeps it together. In *Amoris divini emblemata* that view is expressed on the book’s title page, which under the motto ‘Perfigit et sustinet’ (‘She pierces and supports’) shows the globe which was displayed in *Amorum emblemata*’s emblem ‘Conservat cuncta Cupido’ (‘All is preserved by love’, 18). The globe is pierced by the arrows Cupid has just shot at it. The picture’s meaning is given in the English epigram: ‘The little God of love transpearseth with his darte / The heavens and eke the earth in musicall accord, / For without love it were a chaos of discord, / Thats fastned now in one of well conioyned partes’. The picture was probably borrowed from Georgette de Montenay’s *Cent emblemes chrestiens*, in which under the motto ‘Sublato amore omnia ruunt’ (‘With love gone all collapses’, 45) we see a globe being held by a Cupid-like angel, a clear foreshadowing of Amor Divinus. Montenay’s French epigram sets out in tones very similar to the ones Vaenius was to employ: ‘Par vray amour tout l’Univers est faict, […] Et de luy seul aussi tout soustenu’ (‘By true love the whole universe is created […] and also by it alone everything is upheld’). The epigram ends, however, with an attack on Cupid: whoever recognizes the importance of divine love ‘Reiettera ce fol qu’on bande nu,/ Cause de mal, et de toute ruine’ (‘…will reject this simpleton, naked and blindfolded, the cause of evil and all destruction’). That obviously did not stop Vaenius from doing precisely that.

In *Amorum emblemata*, the next emblem is very similar in meaning. ‘Atlante maior’ (‘Greater than Atlas’, 19) shows Cupid bearing heaven and earth, and reasons why he is stronger than Atlas (who bore heaven only). In *Amoris divini emblemata* the cosmic role of love is confirmed in ‘Carmen de amore’ (‘Song of love’, 5-6), the poem that precedes the book’s emblems. Here, Christ is described as the life-giving love who keeps the universe together, without whom the elements collapse, the

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27 ‘Pietate in parentes potior’ (18).
30 None of the students of Vaenius’s book has apparently felt the urge to delve into this curious text.
bonds between them having been dissolved. The vocabulary is similar to the texts of the emblem from *Amorum emblemata*.

The Cupid that figures so prominently in *Amorum emblemata* fulfils a number of quite distinct roles, as has been noted by Peter Daly. Among others, he identifies emblems where Cupid is indistinguishable from the lover, emblems where Cupid represents the experience of love, and emblems where Cupid (love) is presented as an external force. As we noted above, in *Amoris divini emblemata* too, Divine Love’s role in the various emblems is not quite constant, but it is a much more consistent role than that of Cupid in the earlier book. Divine Love is the protector, guide, teacher, helper of the Soul, and he is also the object of the Soul’s love. He is never an antagonist. (The enemies in *Amoris divini emblemata* are always outside, not inside.) Agnès Guiderdoni-Bruslé and Anne Buschhoff have given the historical pedigree of this character. Apart from those he inherited from the Cupid of *Amorum emblemata*, he derives his characteristics from the pictorial tradition of Jesus as a child and from the cult of the guardian angel, developed in the sixteenth century. But even within the classical tradition, Cupid (or Eros) as the defender of natural love had a counterpart in Anteros, who was sometimes thought of as a virtuous, divine love and became the progenitor of Vaenius’s Amor Divinus.

The fact that, unlike *Amorum emblemata*, *Amoris divini emblemata* has two consistent protagonists recurring in each picture, is what makes it natural to think of the book as an ongoing narrative. Even if there are no ties between the successive emblems, it is natural to think of the book as a drama, as a series of scenes, as noticed by Guiderdoni-Bruslé: ‘[Anima and Amor Divinus] allowed for the dramatization of the spiritual life and the love relationship between the soul and God. [...] Each emblem, as a dramatic nucleus, unveiled a new step of the narrative to the eyes of the meditating reader.’ The evolving story of Anima and Amor Divinus was dramatized by Vaenius and many of the

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33 Buschhoff, *Die Liebesemblematik*, p. 152.

emblems can be viewed as theatre stills.\textsuperscript{35} The parallelism between the theatre and this emblem book is created by the shared characteristic of participants being assigned parts to perform in front of an audience (the readers/viewers). The ongoing narrative also makes \textit{Amoris divini emblemata} a more serious book than \textit{Amorum emblemata}.\textsuperscript{36}

Reinforcing this evolving story is the fact that the collection is framed by opening and closing emblems that present the activities of the Soul and Love as the narrative of a spiritual journey. The opening emblem, ‘Deus ante omnia amandus’ (‘God is to be loved above all’, 1), is visually very different from the other emblems: it is the only one having a \textit{pictura} where Divine Love and the Soul do not appear. The picture shows a glory of clouds with a text, ‘Oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit’ (‘the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard’, 1 Corinthians 2, 9). The emblem promises heaven to those that love God above all: they will get to see and hear what eye or ear have never seen or heard. The next emblem, ‘Incipiendum’ (‘To start with’, 2), shows the Soul in her fallen state and Divine Love helping her to rise up and pointing her towards heaven. One half of the \textit{pictura}’s background shows the danger that the Soul finds herself in, visualized as a ship tossed upon the waves in a storm at sea. The other half of the background shows a church, calm weather and a radiant sun, symbolizing God’s loving protection of the faithful. Love’s invitation to rise up is repeated in the textual part of the emblem that quotes from the Song of Songs: ‘Rise up, quickly, my girl, my dove, my beauty, and come. The winter has passed now, the rain has left us and is now gone. Flowers have appeared on our land. The time of pruning has come. The sound of a dove is heard in our grounds’.\textsuperscript{37} The opening sequence is continued in ‘Ex amore adoptio’, which shows Christ adopting the Soul, recommended by Divine Love. The vernacular texts again promise heaven to the persevering Soul: ‘Car l’Ame qui garde en la vie/ De son Pere la volonté;/ Doibt au Pere es cieux estre unie/ (Comme fille) en eternité’ (‘For the soul that during life follows the will of its father must be eternally united with its father in heaven’).

The three closing emblems stress the eternity of love, the need for the Soul to become one with God, and love being the fulfilment of the law. In the first of these, ‘Vivet ad extremum’ (‘Love will live to the very last’, 58), the Soul holds a burning circular wick that is said to burn forever. The circular form echoes the already mentioned Ouroboros of

\textsuperscript{35} Peter Boot, ‘Playing and Displaying Love. Theatricality in Otto Van Veen’s \textit{Amoris Divini Emblemata} (Antwerp 1615)’, \textit{Emblematica} 16 (2008), 339-364. Also included in Boot 2009.
\textsuperscript{36} To cite Manning: ‘Vaenius does not simply re-run his erotic emblems in decent costume. There is a new emotional charge in seeing these slightly chubby children play out the mysteries of the faith’: see Manning, \textit{The Emblem}, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{37} The Song of Songs 2, 10.
'Amor aeternus'. The second, ‘Finis amoris ut duo unum fiant’ (‘The end of love is that two become one’, 59), shows the Soul and Divine Love together on top of a term. What in the previous emblems was the nimbus of Love now surrounds the heads of both. Finally, ‘Plenitudo legis est’ (‘Love is the fulfilment of the law’, 60) shows Love and the Soul contented in front of a race-track winning post.\(^ {38}\) Their elbows are resting on a book—this emblem book?—and behind them we see the glory of clouds that appeared in the book’s first emblem. The French epigram also refers back to the first emblem: ‘Reste de l’aymer & le suivre/ Avec entiere affection,/ Laquelle commença ce livre,/ Et en est la conclusion’ (‘What remains then is to love and follow Him with all your love, which is what opened this book and is also its conclusion’). The journey has ended well.

This presentation of the Soul and Amor Divinus’s exploits as a journey is what may have impelled many scholars to view Amoris divini emblemata as a description of the mystical ascent of the soul towards God.\(^ {39}\) Santiago Sebastián López was the first to consider Amoris divini emblemata in the context of Christian mysticism.\(^ {40}\) He relates Vaenius’s emblems both to the Counter-Reformation mysticism of Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross and John of Ruysbroeck’s bridal mysticism. Sebastián discusses the emblems in three groups: one group that gives charity’s general characteristics, one group that describes the lower grades of the mystic experience (divided into the stages of the penitent life, the contemplative life and the scale of perfection), and finally, the emblems that depict the last stage of the mystical ascent, the unitive life. Among the emblems in the first group are the three opening emblems and also, for example, ‘Sitim extinguit’ (‘Love quenches thirst’, 39). In the second group, describing the penitent life of active purification is, for example, ‘Naturam vincit’ (‘Love conquers nature’, 20), where love pushes Nature away in order for the Soul to carry off the palm of victory. ‘Par pari’ (‘Like to like’, 56) belongs to the contemplative life of passive purification, still in the second group, and argues that, as God gave Himself to mankind, the Soul should give herself in return. To the third group belong the two closing emblems and also, for example, ‘In unitate perfectio’ (‘Perfection lies in unity’, 11), where Divine Love and the human Soul hold up a medallion with the number ‘1’, trampling a plate with higher numbers.

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\(^ {38}\) The motif of the winning post also appears in the last emblem of Vaenius’s Emblematum Horatiana.

\(^ {39}\) Another reason for this tendency may have been a look at Amoris Divini Emblemata through the lens of Hugo’s Pia Desideria.

The view of *Amoris divini emblemata* as primarily engaged in representing the mystical ascent of the soul was continued by Buschhoff and Margit Thøfner. Building on Sebastián’s analysis, Buschhoff has argued that the first eight and the last ten emblems in the book form small series that follow the mystical ascent of the soul. Unlike Sebastián, she assumes a threefold division of the mystical path into purification, illumination and unification. The assignment of the emblems to the categories, however, sometimes seems arbitrary. ‘Ex amore adoptio’ is assigned to the stage of purification on the evidence of the uphill path to the chapel in the picture background. ‘Mentis amor sol dei’ is assigned to the unitive stage, while the illuminative stage would seem much more appropriate to the metaphor of love as the sun of the mind. And why should ‘Sine amore mors’, which associates love with life and the absence of love with death, refer to the stage of purification—or to any stage? It is not quite clear why *Amoris divini emblemata*, of which the central theme is ‘die Tugendfördernung der individuellen Seele’ (the improvement in virtue of the individual soul), according to Buschhoff’s later book, should show so strict a conformity to the traditional divisions of the mystical path.

Thøfner argues Vaenius’s book may be part of a campaign waged from the Brussels court for the canonization of Teresa of Ávila. She claims Sebastián and Buschhoff have been insufficiently specific in relating Vaenius to a supposedly coherent tradition of Christian mysticism. She argues Vaenius should definitely not be associated with a monistically conceived mysticism (characterized by the soul’s self-effacement in the desire for union with an abstract Godhead, where the senses and the body have no role to play) but rather with the theistic strand of mysticism of which Teresa of Ávila was one of the main proponents. Characteristic of Teresa’s mysticism, according to Thøfner, were the devotion to Christ as the incarnation of God on earth and an emphasis on the senses, more specifically on vision, as aids in devotion. In her view, Vaenius closely aligns himself with Teresian mysticism, among other things, in his use of embodiment as a means of communicating the abstract. The authority of Divine Love in the emblems is derived from his being seen as the incarnate deity. Thøfner also argues Vaenius agrees with Teresa in according great importance to sight and in ranking love above thought. Finally, Thøfner claims that in presenting

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the soul as a female being, Vaenius espouses a specifically feminine form of mysticism, characterized by the desire to see God, something which was one of Teresa’s main injunctions to her nuns.

That the painter Vaenius should have set great store by communicating abstractions through embodiment (that is: personification in a pictorial setting) is entirely convincing. Thøfner’s account, however, seems to conflate embodiment as essentially an artistic device with embodiment in the sense of God’s incarnation on earth (94), thereby creating perhaps a greater affinity between Vaenius and Teresa than is warranted. Thøfner is also less than convincing when she maintains that the emblem ‘Nec vidisse sat est’ (‘It is not enough to have seen’, 47) teaches the soul it should desire to see God. In fact, it explicitly states that seeing is not enough.44

If we focus our attention then on the emblems in Amoris divini emblemata that have parallels in Amorum emblemata, first of all there are the twenty-odd cases where the central conceit in the pictura in Amoris divini emblemata is shared with an emblem in Amorum emblemata. These are the well-known cases of two sunflowers looking at the sun, the protagonists trying to outdo each other in love, and the snakes of envy appearing with the shadows of the lovers’ heads. I will not review them. But that is not the whole story. In a number of ways, the religious emblem book’s connection to the secular love emblem is stronger than that number of pictorial parallels suggests.

First of all, there are a number of emblems that show strong, if non-pictorial, connections with the earlier book. For example, the second emblem, ‘Incipiendum’, the emblem that opens the voyage the Soul and Divine Love are embarking on, shows the Soul in her fallen state, Divine Love helping her to rise. In Amorum emblemata, in ‘Cupids epistle to the yonger sorte’, Cupid asks about the man without a wife: ‘For who will help him up if hee doo chance to fall?’.45 This is one more respect in which natural and religious love do agree.46 Two other examples are the

44 The motto is taken from Ovid, Tristia 3, 10, where the poet walks on the frozen sea, rather than just trusting his eyes.
45 Incidentally, of the secondary pictorial motifs, the peacock (feathers), the ship in a storm at sea, and the purse all occur in pictures in Amorum emblemata.
46 As in the earlier discussion of the cosmic role of love, we will not see this parallelism if we limit ourselves to the emblems only. There is one more example of such a connection: the motto of Amoris divini emblemata’s Emblem 42, ‘Omnia vincit amor’ (‘Love conquers all’) is a quotation from the title page of Amorum Emblemata and was used before as the motto of Heinsius’s first emblem (‘Daniël Heinsius - Quaeris Quid Sit Amor (c.1601) - A Web Edition’, [Web], <http://emblems.let.uu.nl/v1608.html>, accessed 2010-10-01). The Amoris divini emblemata emblem, of course, also has a parallel among the emblems proper of Amorum emblemata, ‘Nihil tam durum et ferreum, quod non amoris telis perfringatur’ (‘Nothing is so tough and made of iron that it is not fractured by love’s weapons’). This motto in turn is an adaptation of Augustine’s ‘Nihil est
emblems ‘Amor (‘Love teaches’, 8)’ and ‘Nec vidisse sat est’: there may not be visually similar emblems in *Amorum emblemata*, but there are at least two that clearly state love to be a teacher, and the subject of seeing comes up repeatedly in *Amorum emblemata*.

Secondly, the correspondences between the two books are not one to one. Many emblems in *Amoris divini emblemata* are related to *Amorum emblemata* in multiple ways. An example is given by ‘Nullus liber erit, si quis amare volet’. The most prominent feature in that emblem’s picture is the yoke, and with respect to content the emblem is most closely related to ‘Gratum amanti iugum’ (‘A lover loves the yoke’, 37) in *Amorum emblemata*, which celebrates the ‘sweet slavery’ of love. However, the yoke in *Amorum emblemata* also figures prominently in ‘Pedetentim’ (‘Slowly’, 14), which is visually more similar to the emblem in *Amoris divini emblemata* (in *Amoris divini emblemata* Anima wears the yoke, while in *Amorum emblemata* it is a bull), though its meaning is quite different. Another example is the emblem ‘Amor aeternus’. The Ouroboros motif is borrowed from the emblem with the same motto in *Amorum emblemata*. However, one of the quotations (‘Amor qui desinere potest, nunquam verus fuit’ [‘Love that can end was never true’]) links the emblem to another in *Amorum emblemata*, where that text serves as motto. That emblem in turn has its own parallel in *Amoris divini emblemata*, ‘Constats est’.

Thirdly, the originals of two of *Amoris divini emblemata*’s emblems that refer back to earlier secular love emblems are in fact not in *Amorum emblemata* but in the collections of Daniel Heinsius and Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft. ‘Crescit in immensum’ (‘Love grows immeasurably’, 17), which shows Anima holding a mirror that creates a fire by reflecting the rays of the sun, is based on Hooft’s ‘Unius splendor alteri ardor’. The emblem ‘Micat inter omnes amor virtutes’ (‘Love shines
tamen tam durum atque ferreum, quod non amoris igne vincatur’ (‘Nothing so tough and made of iron that isn’t conquered by the fire of love’: *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manichaeorum*, 22). There is thus a religious subtext to the secular emblem as well as a secular subtext to the religious emblem. (I owe the reference to Augustine to Jan Bloemendal).

47 ‘Amor facit esse disertum’ (‘Love makes eloquent’, 41) and ‘Amor addocet artes’ (‘Love teaches the arts’, 42).

48 Love originates in the eyes of the beloved according to ‘Amor, ut lacryma, ex oculis oritur, in pectus cadit’ (‘Love, like a tear, rises in the eye and falls on the breast’, 76). The English epigram declares ‘Lookes are loues arrowes’. In ‘Quo pergis, eodem vergo’ (‘I incline to where you go’, 38), the Dutch epigram declares that ‘om haer altijdt te sien is meest al sijn verlanghen’ (‘The lover always wants to see the beloved’).

49 Emblem 93 in *Amorum emblemata*.

50 ‘Splendour of one is heat for the other’ (‘Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft - Emblemata Amatoria (1611) - A Web Edition’, [Web], <http://emblems.let.uu.nl/v1608.html>, accessed 2010-10-01). About this emblem and the role of mirrors in *Amoris divini emblemata*, see also Claude-Françoise Brunon,
among all virtues’, 41) is a parallel to ‘Inter omnes’ in Heinsius’s Emblemata amatoria.\textsuperscript{51} This is interesting to note, because it suggests that Amoris divini emblemata is not just the counterpart to a single book: it is the counterpart to a genre.

\textsuperscript{51} Heinsius, ‘Daniël Heinsius - Quaeris Quid Sit Amor (c.1601) - A Web Edition’, Emblem 10, ‘Among all’.

Fig. 2: OttoVaenius, Amoris divini emblemata, Antwerp, 1615, p. 109, ‘Amoris felicitas’ (University of Glasgow, Library). Reduced.

Having seen these agreements between the two books, we should also note the differences between them. The most important is no doubt that, even though there is broad agreement as to the effects of love and a shared view of its cosmic importance, on a secondary level *Amoris divini emblemata* also argues against natural love. The most significant and unambiguous statement of the inferiority of secular love is perhaps ‘Amoris felicitas’ (‘The happiness of love’, 51; Fig. 2). The picture shows Divine Love and the Soul happily looking into each other’s eyes, sitting in front of a church, provided with the attributes of the virtues, Anima repudiating the world. They have no need for secular love, symbolized by a strolling couple in a garden at the other side of the river. The texts argue that we should love nothing besides heaven: ‘Quand quittans ce qui est des hommes/ Nous n’avons l’amour que des cieux,/ c’Est à ceste heure que nous sommes/ Vrayement amoureux & heureux’ (‘When we leave the human domain, nothing remains except heavenly love; it is then that we are truly in love and happy’). What this emblem rejects is both natural love and love of the world. This view is repeated in a number of emblems, most clearly in ‘Naturam vincit’. ‘Ceste-là [Nature] au mourir nous laisse,/ Celuy-cy nous conduit aux cieux’ (‘Nature lets us die. Love leads us to heaven’), as the French epigram declares, and in the picture Divine Love pushes away Nature. And in the emblem ‘Conscientia testis’ (‘Conscience is a witness’, 52) the Soul has to choose between religious and secular love. Picture and texts make it quite clear which of these two she is to choose.

Some further differences between secular and religious love appear in the two opening texts on page 7. The Augustine quotation there mentions how religious love is not envious of others and can be freely shared. In that respect it is very different from secular love, which, as mentioned in *Amorum emblemata*’s emblem ‘Nec regna socium ferre, nec tædæ sinunt’ (‘Nor throne nor bed can brook a partnership’, 91), is unwilling to share: ‘Loue wil alone enjoy his ladies loving harte’. The Spanish poem on the same page in *Amoris divini emblemata* agrees with the Augustine quotation and says that the sea of love, even if divided, is still a sea. By contrast, in secular love, ‘A streame disperst in partes the force thereof is maymed’, as is stated in *Amorum emblemata* with ‘Perfectus amor non est nisi ad unum’.

Yet other differences between the two books appear when we look at the emblems that do show parallels. Often, the presence of a pictorial or other parallel does not imply much agreement in meaning. In *Amoris divini emblemata*’s ‘Virtus character amoris’ (‘Virtue is the hallmark of love’, 14) the picture is very similar to *Amorum emblemata*’s ‘Amoris iusiusurandum poenam non habet’ (‘The oath of love has no penalty’, 71): Divine Love replaces Venus and Anima Cupid. But in the secular book,
the moral of the emblem is that a lover’s false oaths are easily forgiven. In the religious book, the moral is that true religious love is proven by a virtuous life. The example shows another difference between the books: while *Amorum emblemata* is light-hearted and often not quite serious, *Amoris divini emblemata* is always serious, sometimes perhaps even tiresome. This contrast in tone between the two books was the reason for Mario Praz to dismiss *Amoris divini emblemata* in stark terms: ‘Now we find ourselves among the bare bones of hills crowned by grim monastery walls, by squat pyramids and cubes of stone, and by gaunt, austere churches [...] the sky is a pall of leaden clouds sometimes shot through by livid flashes to remind sinful humanity of the omnipresent and vigilant eye of the Eternal Judge.’

Though Praz was no doubt unjust in his judgment of *Amoris divini emblemata*, he was right in remarking on the decrease in playfulness between the two books.

A similar distance in meaning in parallel emblems can be observed in the pair of ‘In spiritu seminat’ (*Amoris divini emblemata*) and ‘Plantae rigatae magis crescent’ (*Amorum emblemata*: ‘Watered flowers will grow better’, 40). Love grows when favoured by the beloved, says *Amorum emblemata*, while *Amoris divini emblemata* says Divine Love waters good works with love. The focus is here again on virtue. This overriding concern with practical piety was seen by Arnoud Visser as perhaps the defining characteristic of *Amoris divini emblemata*. Virtue in this sense is also characteristically absent from *Amorum emblemata*: where virtue appears in this volume, it is either as courage or as something that, unlike love, is fit mostly for old men.

If we look at the emblems in *Amoris divini emblemata* that have no parallel in *Amorum emblemata*, it is probably no coincidence that these include both the opening and closing emblem (as we saw, they frame the


53 Praz’s lack of sympathy with the book appears in his misreading of the sunflower emblem. He describes the sunflower as ‘the drooping sunflower sucked dry by the implacable sun’ (p. 35), missing the fact that the sunflower is turned towards the sun (not ‘drooping’) because she receives her life from the sun, and in doing this she sets an example to the soul. The sun is not ‘implacable’ or ‘devouring’, but both illuminating and nourishing.


55 In ‘Virtutis radix amor’ (‘Love is the root of virtue’, 17) and ‘Virtute duce’ (‘Under the guidance of virtue’, 27).

56 The book was made ‘Not yet for aged men who rather do devyse,/ On honor, virtue, welth, or to bee demed wyse’: see ‘Otto Van Veen, *Amorum Emblemata* (1608) - A Web Edition’.
collection in a way that is specific to the characters of Divine Love and the Soul), both pictorial occurrences of Christ, the one occurrence of Mary, and six out of seven crucifixes in the book. Without, of course, suggesting that the emblems with parallels in *Amorum emblemata* are not Christian, it is clear the more specifically Christian content of the book is located in the emblems without parallel. This is confirmed by the fact that 31 out of the 47 times the word ‘God’ appears in the Dutch epigrams, it occurs in the emblems without parallel. Similarly, most of the pictorial references to the virtues (the reins of temperance, the mirror of prudence, *etc.*.) are localized in the emblems that have no parallel. Finally, among the emblems without parallel are also most of those that (as we saw before) argued against natural or worldly love.

In search of differences between the emblems that have parallels in *Amorum emblemata* and those that have not, I also counted the numbers and sources of the quotations, distinguishing biblical, patristic, and other quotations. The total number of quotations in both groups is similar, as is the number of patristic quotations. Though the number of biblical quotations is also roughly similar (on average, one per emblem) the emblems without parallel in *Amorum emblemata* use the Old Testament and New Testament in equal measure, the emblems with parallel favour the New Testament and especially the Epistles. The emblems without parallel favour the Psalms. What may be more significant is that in the emblems without parallel, all but one of the quotations refer to the Bible and the Church fathers (the exception being a quotation attributed to Petrarch). The emblems with parallel quote Seneca twice and Thomas à Kempis three times. This may confirm the impression that the emblems without parallel are slightly more orthodox than the others.

In conclusion, we can say that the relation between *Amoris divini emblemata* and its predecessor has up to now been described in rather simplifying terms. Some of these simplifications may be due to taking into account just the emblems and not the non-emblematic material in both books (for example, title-pages and introductory poetry). Whatever Petrarchist influence was present in *Amorum emblemata* (not much) was thoroughly removed in *Amoris divini emblemata*. *Amoris divini emblemata* is a much more serious book than *Amorum emblemata*. It tells a

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57 Interestingly, or not, the word ‘soul’ occurs predominantly in the emblems that do have a parallel in *Amorum emblemata*.

58 Both Bloemendal and Buschhoff argue that Vaenius must have taken many of the quotations from Langius’s *Polyanthea*. This does not imply that the quotations’ original sources are irrelevant. The reference to a source is not merely a reference. It is also an indication of the sort of texts that one considers authoritative. See Jan Bloemendal, ‘Een emblematicus en zijn inspiratie. De bronnen van Otto Vaenius’ *Amoris Divini Emblemata*, Antwerpen 1615’, *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde* 118.4 (2002), 273-287.
story with something of a beginning and an ending that has two more or less consistent protagonists. Scholarly commentators have, not very convincingly, presented this story as a tale of mystical ascent, but practical piety and virtue are the dominating themes of the collection. Both books refer to ideas about the cosmic force of love, and in that sense they argue for the unity of love. The more obvious parallels between the books’ emblems can be supplemented with textual and thematic correspondences, sometimes to multiple emblems. Some of these correspondences point to love emblems that Vaenius did not invent himself, showing to what extent the love emblem genre was seen as a coherent tradition. However, there are also contradictions between *Amoris divini emblemata* and its predecessor. Most importantly, a number of emblems expressly argue against secular love. The opening texts of *Amoris divini emblemata* describe differences between the two sorts of love. And in many of the parallel emblems, however similar the pictures may be, the meanings expressed are very remote indeed. When looking at the emblems in *Amoris divini emblemata* that have no parallel in the earlier book, we find these are the emblems that are most explicitly Christian and that are set against secular love. To present a consistent picture of the two sorts of love as having ‘almost the same effect towards the object of love’ must have been a difficult assignment for Vaenius.