NOTES AND DOCUMENTS
Michael van Meer’s Album Amicorum,
with Illustrations of London, 1614–15

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Among the hundreds of surviving sixteenth- and seventeenth-century autograph (or friendship) albums in Germany and elsewhere, the album amicorum of Michael van Meer is exceptional for the abundance and opulence of its illustrations, particularly of Jacobean London. Now housed at the Edinburgh University Library, the van Meer Stamboek was apparently begun in 1613, months before its owner left the Continent for London, and completed some thirty-five (or more) years later. With 527 leaves and 774 indexed entries, the album is a rich compendium of autographs, coats of arms, mottoes, verses, dedications, and watercolor illustrations, many

Reproductions of pages from the album amicorum of Michael van Meer are courtesy of the Edinburgh University Library. I am grateful to Sheila Noble, User Services Librarian in Special Collections, for her assistance. Thanks also to Paul Schlueter and the library staff at Lafayette College.

1. MS., La.III.283. The album came to the Edinburgh University Library in 1878 in the collection of David Laing (1793–1878), whose signature appears in the album with the date 1847.
2. Because the title page of the album, added after van Meer’s death in 1653, uses the Dutch spelling, Stamboek, I have preferred that term over the German Stammbuch.
3. The last dated entry (aside from one posthumous signature) is 1648. The entry that followed van Meer’s death (fol. 286), written in memory of van Meer and signed by Christopher Deichman, chancellor of the city of Hamburg, is dated 23 January 1657.
4. A register offers a comprehensive listing of contributors and a partial listing of illustrations. Entitled “Register Der Personen, Welche Ihre Nahmen In diesem Stambuche Eigenhandich geschrieben” [Register of the persons who themselves wrote their names in this album], it offers a comprehensive listing of male contributors; it is followed by a listing entitled “Frawens Personen Who Ihre Nahmen Eigenhandig hier Inne Geschrieben” [Women who themselves wrote their names herein], then by a list entitled “Ditsyn de Pinturen of Schilderatien In deesen Boeck, die niet onde de Naemenstaen” [Listing of pictures of illustrations in this book that do not have captions]. Although the register of names is in German and the list of illustrations is in Dutch, the seamless sequence suggests that the register was the work of the same early modern hand(s)—possibly that of Jehan (or John) van Meer, Michael van Meer’s brother. The likelihood is strengthened by a six-item index at the end of the register that includes a (playful?) reference to the “Sonderschrift,” or special signature, on fol. 314—the page on which van Meer’s brother signed.
depicting figures and scenes from the album owner’s stay in London in 1614–15. Indi-
vidually and collectively, its pages provide verbal and pictorial documentation of the
early modern period and insights into the character of this early modern genre.

The *album amicorum* flourished in German- (and Dutch-) speaking areas of
Europe, primarily among university students and noblemen. Usually small, often ob-
long, and with a handsome cover sometimes inscribed with the owner’s initials or
name, the autograph album would typically accompany its owner on his travels or was
sent by messenger to a friend, an acquaintance, a nobleman, or a king with an invita-
tion to sign. Owners customized their albums, often relying on the burgeoning print
trade. A person interested in creating an album could, for example, select a published
book and have blank pages interleaved: the album of Johann Osterieghen of Cologne
started with a 1584 edition of Andrea Alciati’s *Emblemata*.5 Or he could cut illustrated
pages from a printed book (of saints, for example) and incorporate them into his
album: Hieronymus Schwab of Nuremberg did it this way.6 Or he could purchase an
album with woodcut borders or cartouches, templates within which contributors
would place their inscriptions: Eberhard von Eltershofen’s album offers such an ex-
ample.7 By the 1570s, as M. A. Katritzky points out, “the commercial possibilities of friend-
ship albums had been recognized, and book publishers were producing prints, print
series and complete illustrated books especially for the album market.”8

Not all album owners, however, were interested in the “ready-made” book. Those who could afford to, and who valued the *album amicorum* as an expression of
status and personal taste, preferred to start with the blank page. Van Meer did it this
way, commissioning numerous full-page watercolors unique to his album. Like other
album owners, van Meer also had bound into his album conventional representations
of people and costumes—a Knight of the Garter, for example (fol. 375v); an English
noblewoman in farthingale dress, fan in hand (fol. 145v); a water carrier, barrel on
shoulder, led by a dog on a chain (fol. 471v)9—from his visit to London. A single artist

5. Osterieghen’s album, with signatures dated 1584–92, is in the British Library, MS. Add. 18,108.
Many of the illustrations on the Alciati pages have been watercolored.
6. Schwab’s album, with signatures dated 1606–18, contains three series of engravings from printed
books; the album is in the British Library, MS. Add. 18,711.
7. Eltershofen’s album, with signatures dated 1571–97, is in the British Library, MS. Eg. 1189.
in *European Theatre Iconography: Proceedings of the European Science Foundation Network* (Mainz,
Robert Erenstein, Cesare Molinari; compiled by Maria Chiara Barbieri and Sandra Pietrini (Rome,
2002), 181.
9. The water carrier, who was typically pictured as a blind man, was a favorite among album
owners. Such a painting appears, for example, in the albums of Frederic de Botnia, 1616–18, British Library,
MS. Add. 16,889 (fol. 32); Tobias Oelhafen, 1623–25, British Library MS. Eg. 1269 (fol. 86); and Georg
von Holtzschuher, 1621–24, British Library, MS. Eg. 1264 (fol. 28). Typically, the dog has a bell around
his neck and carries a lantern in his teeth. One such water carrier is reproduced in color in François
i’ th’ Moon—with his lantern, dog, and faggot”).
or picture shop\textsuperscript{10} may well have executed such miniatures, perhaps even preparing a stock of them in advance; but each appears in the album as an original watercolor and, among albums, no two are the same.

Katritzky also makes the point that the inclusion of illustrations of regional dress, common among surviving albums, was a “fashionable and effective means of demonstrating that [the album owner] was a well-educated and widely-travelled man of the world.”\textsuperscript{11} Van Meer’s travels included Northern Europe and London, and examples of costumes from those places are represented in his album, along with watercolors of several locales. Other illustrations that testify to the album owner’s exposure to various cultures and ideas include a diagram of a military citadel (fol. 65); a wind-powered wagon in Holland (fol. 191);\textsuperscript{12} a noblewoman of Brabant (fol. 266v); a falcon hunt, apparently in Hamburg (fol. 448); a polyhedron (an Archimedean solid, a truncated cube, possibly a Zodiac instrument) in a landscape (fol. 437); a crested crane, a wolf, and a pair of shears, alluding, no doubt, to a fable (fol. 464); and an emblematic Virtue standing atop a rock at sea (fol. 223).\textsuperscript{13} The paintings in van Meer’s album make it clear that an early modern album says much about the interests of its owner.

The signatures in an album also provide information about the album owner, inferred from the circle of acquaintances and friends who contribute and from their inscriptions.\textsuperscript{14} Typically, a contributor would write a motto or moral, often in Latin,
that served as advice to the album owner and identified writer and reader as men who were conversant with a classical or contemporary body of wisdom. Religious inscriptions were also common, with abbreviated forms of conventional expressions offered in the expectation of a shared vocabulary among the learned: “M.V.S.I.C.A.,” for example, for “Mea ultima spes in Christo, Amen” [My highest hope is in Christ, amen], appears several times in van Meer’s album, as well as in those of others. Usually the contributor placed his signature at the bottom right, often authenticating the autograph by inscribing some version of “manu propria” or “manu propria scripsit” [written in one’s own hand] in abbreviated form and extending the initials into an individualized, often extravagant flourish. Above the signature, the contributor would write a dedication, naming the album owner and honoring him with words of respect or commendation. Undoubtedly, the album owner accepted such encomia with satisfaction not only because they signaled the successful completion of the task at hand but also because he could now add this dedication to the developing inventory of tributes given him. Moreover, the album owner knew that if he presented bound or bundled leaves to the person whose signature he was seeking, that person could peruse the dedications that others had already written; indeed, the contributor may also have realized that the readership for his entry would reach beyond the owner. Nicolaus Fabri Vilvordiensis’ 28 November 1582 letter to Abrahamus Ortelius suggests the pleasure invitees took in being asked to sign an album page:

This little [Album], which contains the names of your friends, shows how much you favour the arts and those who cultivate them. Would that by these verses I might earn imperishable glory and your friendship; there is no one in your Album who has a greater regard for you than I, though I am unworthy of being in the company of such learned men, whom all posterity will praise. But though I am unworthy of you, still my verses will I hope evince my grateful disposition towards you who are so kind and free from pride. With these verses, which will be to you a pledge of my affection, I pray you to count me among your friends.16


15. Rosenheim, in “Album Amicorum,” offers this insight and presents examples of such flourishes (pp. 260–61). They are legion in van Meer’s album.

Clearly, the inscriptions in an *album amicorum* aligned the album owner with a particular stratum of society. An album of signatures of noblemen and royalty, such as the one left by van Meer, further reflected on the album owner as one who himself held membership in their circle, or at least was granted admission to it for the occasion.

But who was Michael van Meer? Van Meer’s name, in any of its variant spellings, does not appear in standard encyclopedia of German or Dutch biography. Nor does the Calendar of State Papers[^17] for 1614 or 1615, his years in London, name van Meer. In 1916, Edinburgh University librarian David Cuthbertson proposed that the owner may have been of German origin.[^18] Indeed, the album suggests this: a sequence of early entries indicates that van Meer was in Hamburg in 1613, months prior to his departure for London. Although Groningen was almost certainly his port of embarkation, as reflected by a 7 February 1614 entry from that city, all of the earlier dated pre-London entries were written in Hamburg or nearby Lüneburg. Following the latest dated entry in London—28 July 1615[^19]—the next dated and sited entries are from Leiden in late March 1616, and a 17 April 1616 entry indicates that van Meer was back in Hamburg then. Moreover, all of the late sited entries in the album, from 1633 to 1648, are from this Hanseatic city, where van Meer apparently spent the final years of his life.

Further presumptive evidence of van Meer’s residence in Hamburg occurs on folio 313–313v of the album. The recto page contains a splendid watercolor of the van Meer coat of arms, along with the signature, in a cartouche at the bottom of the page, of Joachim van Meer, who wrote a motto, in Latin, and a dedication to his son, Michael. The verso page contains a similar watercolor beneath a scrolled banner, signed by Adriana Montens. The album’s register, compiled after van Meer’s death and sometimes annotated,[^20] notes that these are the family arms of van Meer’s mother. Both entries were signed in Hamburg, hers bearing the date 4 October 1613. Van Meer’s father and mother, then, were among the first van Meer invited to sign his *album amicorum.*[^21]

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[^19]: The earliest dated and sited entry for London is 10 February 1614.

[^20]: Because the entry made after van Meer’s death is included in the alphabetical register, it is safe to conclude that van Meer was not the compiler.

[^21]: Two other van Meer autographs appear in the album: Jehan van Mer (fol. 314), identified in the register as “Jochim’s sohne” (i.e., the album owner’s brother; see n. 4 above), and Johan Adolff d’Imstenralt Sr. de Meehr (1630; fol. 95v). Four other Montens autographs also appear: Catharina Montens (fol. 130v), Cornelis Montens, Johans sohn (fol. 161), Doucette Montens, M. Jans daughter (fol. 161v), Catharina Montens—Weyl. M. Barth d’Conjnut (fol. 166).
Further evidence of van Meer’s residence in Hamburg is in a cover page for the album created after van Meer’s death. It contains a crudely drawn coat of arms that generally resembles the one on van Meer’s own cover page, and, in Dutch, identifies the arms as van Meer’s and the owner of the album as the late honorable Michael van Mer, a lieutenant in Hamburg, who died on 13 October 1653 and was buried in St. Catherine’s Church on 20 October: “van Mers Wapen / Stam Boeck van den Salig: Heer Michiel van Mer geweesen Luytenant Hier In Hambortgs gestorven Ao 1653 don 13 October in St Catriner Kercks begraven den 20 October.” A record in the Staatsarchiv Hamburg confirms van Meer’s death date and identifies him as the son of Joachim van Meer from Antwerp, who married Margareta Bosen (born 14 May 1570 in Antwerp, died 25 December 1603 in Hamburg), then Adriana Montens (the woman who signed the album). The connection to Brabant explains not only the Dutch name but also the Dutch cover page.

Whether van Meer identified more fully with his origins in Antwerp or with Hamburg, where he lived for at least forty years, the album attests that this citizen of northern Europe was a man of learning who was at home in noble circles. Many of the more than seven hundred contributors are recognizable, by title or name, as noblemen or, indeed, royalty. Within the album are the autographs of numerous well-known Continental figures. Between 1618 and 1632, for example, when van Meer was apparently stationed in The Hague and environs, he obtained the signatures of, among others, Maurice, Prince of Orange, Count of Nassau (1567–1625) (signed 1620; fol. 24v); Frederick V, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, the “Winter King” of Bohemia, 1619–20, now exiled (husband to Elizabeth, James’s daughter) (1596–1632) (1621; fol. 9); Louis Philippe, Prince Palatine (Frederick V’s brother) (1602–55) (1621; fol. 11); Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange (1584–1647) (1629; fol. 13v); Amalia of Solms, Princess of Orange (1602–75) (1629; fol. 14); and Ernst Casimir, Count of Nassau (1573–1632) (1628; fol. 31v); as well as several others who signed at the Siege of Breda in 1625.

The inventory of British signatures in the album is similarly impressive. Three are dated: Thomas Howard (1561–1626), Earl of Suffolk (1614; fol. 27); Ludovic Stuart (1574–1624), Duke of Lenox (1614; fol. 29); and Robert Stewart (before 1593–after 1615) (1615; fol. 101v). Thomas Howard signed in the first year of his disastrous four years as Lord High Treasurer, a position that led to charges of embezzlement and his imprisonment in the Tower. A Knight of the Garter, he was Lord Chamberlain of the Household

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22. The cover page to van Meer’s album is a watercolor of his family coat of arms, positioned between two columns with two angels at the base of the plinths supporting a scroll with his autograph: “Michael Van Mer.” At top are the initials “W.G. G.M.G.,” possibly “Willes Gottes,” “Gnaden mir Gott” [God’s will, God have mercy on me].

23. I am grateful to Dr. Peter Gabrielson at the Staatsarchiv Hamburg for this information, which appears in the unpublished manuscript “Genealogien von Johann Behrenberg [1674–1749]” (Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Genealogische Sammlungen 5, 515–17 [Film Nr. S 4587 Teil 1]).

24. The album’s register cites fol. 8; the page itself is numbered 9.
until July 1614. When Ludovic Stuart, also a Knight of the Garter, signed in 1614, he was Lord High Admiral of Scotland. Robert Stewart signed in 1615, the year that Earl Patrick Stewart and his son Robert were convicted of treason and executed. The page is of special interest, for it provides a contemporary record of Robert Stewart’s claim to membership in the royal Scottish clan. The elder Earl Robert, an illegitimate son of King James VI of Scotland, was known for his tyrannous rule over Orkney, as was his son Patrick, who succeeded his father in 1593. The album entry for Robert includes a characteristic identifying description, in a seventeenth-century hand (van Meer’s?), which notes that the contributor is the true brother of Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney.

Three other signatures, those of Robert Sidney (fol. 46v), John Ramsay (fol. 48), and James Hay (fol. 78), lend support to the supposition that van Meer collected the signatures of British Peers during his stay in London. Robert Sidney (1563–1626) signed not as the first Earl of Leicester, a dignity he received in 1618, but as Viscount L’Isle, which he was created in 1605. (Like van Meer, Robert Sidney served in the wars in the Netherlands and Brabant and was in command of a troop of horse there in 1596–97; from 1588–1616, he was Governor of Flushing.) John Ramsay (c. 1580–1626) signed not as Lord Ramsay of Melrose (Scotland), a title he received in August 1615, but as Viscount of Haddington, which he was created in 1606. (John Ramsay has been credited with killing the brothers Gowrie in 1601.) James Hay (c. 1580–1636) signed not as Viscount of Dancaster, which he became in 1618, or Earl of Carlisle, which he was created in 1622, but as “Baro-Britanno-Scotus,” Baron Hay of Sawley, the title he acquired in June 1615. James Hay was a Gentleman of the Bedchamber at the time as well as Master of the King’s Wardrobe.

Among other signatures of British Peers probably collected during van Meer’s year and a half in London are Charles Howard (1536–1624), Earl of Nottingham, who was Lord High Admiral at that time (fol. 30); Edward Somerset (c. 1550–1628), Earl of Worcester, Master of the Horse, in 1614 a Commander of the Treasury, and in 1615 Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal (fol. 31); William Herbert (1580–1630), Earl of Pembroke, made Lord Chamberlain of the Household in 1615 (fol. 35); and Philip Herbert (1584–1650), Earl of Montgomery and a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber (fol. 46). All were Garter Knights.

Typically, either before or after he solicited the signature, van Meer—or, more likely, a commissioned artist—prepared a page neatly decorated with the family coat of arms and crest; next to some of the arms of British nobility, he or the artist provided a clearly penned biographical description, in Latin. Judging from the dignitaries who signed, the album owner had no difficulty acquiring autographs. Indeed, the leaf immediately following the cover page, fol. 2 (see plate section, figure 1), bears the name of King James himself, who affixed his bold signature—“Jacobus R”—in 1614, below the date, the Latin inscription “Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos” [To spare the humble and subdue the haughty], and a small cross. The next leaf, fol. 4 (following a blank leaf), was for Anna of Denmark. In a handsome hand, James’s queen, in 1614, provided an Italian inscription: “La mia grandezza dall’eccelso” [My greatness comes from the
Lord], above a small cross and her bold signature: “Anna R.” Following another blank leaf is the undated signature of Charles (fol. 6), his “Ich Dien” impresa prominently displayed. Above his large signature—“Carolus”—he wrote: “Si vis omnia subjiciere subjici te rationi” [If you would make all subject to you, subject yourself to reason]; like his parents, he drew a small, plain cross. Christian IV, King of Denmark (Anna’s brother), also signed (fol. 15), probably during his 1614 “sudden” seven-day visit to Somerset House, the queen’s residence, recorded in the Calendar of State Papers (pp. 250–51). During his week-long stay, the Danish king “entertained the time in hunting, hawking, running at ring, bear-baiting, and fierworkes; and was also entertained with Plaies by night.”

By the time the album was complete, van Meer had collected over three hundred watercolors of coats of arms, some drawn as described and others apparently executed by the contributors or their commissioned artists. Most who signed van Meer’s Stamboeck wrote dedications to van Meer, some confirming that he himself was a nobleman and paying tribute to their “friend” and “brother.” A Dane named Vincent Steno, for example, writing in London on 1 February 1615, addresses van Meer, in Latin, as a man of noble character and virtue, and of great learning (fol. 283). An entry dated 24 November 1614, London, by Michael Maier (fol. 229), in Latin, offers praise for the nobleman, then lists his own credentials: doctor of philosophy and medicine and a mounted officer (a horseman) commissioned by the most exalted Palgrave. That van Meer was likely a horseman as well is confirmed by the use of the term “Equiti Brabanto” (horseman of Brabant) in reference to van Meer in a later (1622) entry (fol. 484v), when van Meer was in The Hague. Another page, written at the Siege of Breda on 2 April 1625 by Adolff van Padberch, inscribed, in French, to his friend and fraternity, references the “noble” Michael de Meere (fol. 175v); the entry also tells us something about van Meer’s political commitments: van Padberch’s message begins “Vive la Quene, et le Prince d’Orange, Contre le Pape, et le Roy d’Hispange” [Long live the queen, and the prince of Orange, against the Pope and the king of Spain.] (Breda fell to the Spanish in 1625.) Another, whose inscription plays with permutations of van Meer’s name, refers to the album owner as a polyglot, expressing admiration for this virtuous gentleman and lieutenant at arms (fol. 475). (Entries in the album are in several languages: German, Latin, and, less frequently, English, French,

25. The calendar entries speak of the king’s arrival on 28 July 1614 and his departure one week later:

“July 28. Croydon. 70…. Sudden arrival of the King of Denmark at Somerset House, the Queen’s residence. The cause of his visit much wondered at, but it is only one of kindness. He leaves on Monday, the King going with him to Gravesend” (p. 249). …

“Aug. 4. London… Departure of the King of Denmark. He had hunting, bear-baiting, fencing, or other amusements, daily. Whispers about the cause of his coming are, that had the Earl of Northampton lived, he would have complained of him for un-reverent usage of the Queen, or that he wished the King to help Brandenburg in the attempt on Cleves. Plate value 5,500l. presented by His Majesty to him and his followers.” (Pp. 250–51)

Italian, Dutch, Spanish, Greek.) One contributor, Adam Gall von Kreckwitz, who penned a motto in Italian—“Se il tutto perdie almen[o] fama conserva [sic]” [If you lose everything, at least your reputation remains]—and a dedication in German, presents a watercolor of van Meer wearing the stylish (white) costume of a nobleman and standing alongside a couple fashionably dressed in mint green, presumably the contributor and his wife (fol. 142). Kreckwitz dated the entry 1 June 1615 and labeled the depiction of the album owner “Mons. Mer.”

Apart from the coats of arms, the album contains over sixty illustrations. In some cases, these appear to have been drawn or commissioned by the contributor as a complement to his inscription or autograph: instead of a simple coat of arms, for example, several contributors provide a picture of a knight, usually on horseback, displaying the arms (fols. 106, 221v, 444v, 455v). Next to his armorial bearings, Jörg Springer, “Obrist Leutnant” (chief second lieutenant), presents a barmaid holding a glass of beer (fol. 515). Charles Rich’s signature includes a depiction of a young woman playing a lute (fol. 103). A picture dated The Hague, 1619, shows a woman and a retriever holding a bird in its mouth (fols. 194v–195); another is of a nobleman walking in the woods with a “Hollandtse Bergersvrouw” (a female Dutch citizen) and a dog (fol. 267v). An emblematic painting dated The Hague, 1622, shows Vanitas, his left arm resting on a skull, his right hand holding a reed for blowing soap bubbles, four of which float above (fol. 477v). One entry, dated 1619 and captioned “Etiam amor castris habitat” [Love still dwells in an encampment], depicts a lady visiting a soldier at a military camp (fol. 137v). A battle scene dated The Hague, 3 May 1624, pictures armored riders, including one in golden equestrian armor, firing a pistol, his coat of arms branded on the flank of his white horse (fol. 205v).

These scenes of northern Europe are suggestive of the life of a military man during the turbulent years of the Thirty Years’ War. The illustrations that are most abundant, however, and of most interest to scholars of early modern England, are those of London. Three of the views among the more than thirty paintings are familiar: Windsor Castle (fol. 169), London Bridge (fol. 408v), and the Tower of London (fol. 346)—all

27. J. L. Nevinson, in “Illustrations of Costume in the Alba Amicorum,” Archaeologica 106 (1979): 166–76, references the van Meer album several times. He describes this illustration as van Meer’s farewell to his hostess (p. 169). I believe he misreads the June 1615 date as January 1615. But on either date, van Meer would not yet have been leaving London, and there is no support for the assumption that the woman was his hostess.

28. Laroque, in Age of Shakespeare, reproduces in color the battle scene (p. 55) but dates it (probably erroneously) c. 1615, undoubtedly because the final line of the Latin inscription beneath the illustration was half lost in the trimming.

29. All are reproduced in color in Laroque, ibid., pp. [4–5], 47, and [6–7]. Cuthbertson points out that the painting of Windsor Castle, which carries the caption “made by Carl v. d. Linden while he was in England,” resembles George Hoefnagle’s in Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg’s Civitates Orbis Terrarum (c. 1575). For a reproduction of that view, see Robert Richard and James Edward Davis,
places that van Meer was certain to have seen on his visit. Each offers considerable detail. Windsor Castle, for example, viewed from the north (plate section, figure 2), includes a section of the Little Park, with a deer hunt underway: six dogs, two men on foot, and one man on horseback chase a deer, whose antlers are prominently displayed. The view of London Bridge (plate section, figure 3) pictures two rowers in a skiff carrying elegantly dressed passengers—two men and a woman—across the Thames. The Tower of London watercolor (plate section, figure 4), dated 1615, includes a stretch of the London cityscape and an anchored merchant vessel. All three prospects bear captions in a neat Dutch hand, as do a number of other unsigned illustrations.\(^3\)

One that is especially familiar to theater historians is a view of a cockfight, labeled “Het Haene gefecht In Engelandt” [a cock fight in England] (fol. 378v; plate section, figure 5).\(^3\)

Within the theater-like structure, with brick foundation and tiled roof held up by columns, are two rings of well-dressed spectators seated or standing around the table. Gold coins are in front of them and two cocks are in the middle, fighting. A figure to the left, the only one wearing a hat and seated in a chair, is almost certainly King James.

King James plays a prominent role in the London pages of van Meer’s Stamboeck. One illustration, spread across the verso and recto pages (fols. 43v, 44; plate section, figures 6a and b), shows a royal procession of thirty: chaplains, choirboys, heralds, Knights of the Garter, the Usher of the Black Rod, the Registrar, the Garter King of Arms, the king (beneath a canopy), and others. The caption, again in Dutch hand, along with the conspicuous display of blue garters on the king and others, confirms this is a St. George’s Day procession of the Knights of the Garter: “Op deese Mannier Gincks Coninks Jacobus In Engeland In Processies met de Ridderen van de Gartierre of Kaufebandt dat noch Jaer leyex op St. Jores dach gehaen wordt” [In this manner King James of England goes in procession with the Knights of the Garter each year on St. George’s Day]. The procession, held on 23 April, continues the tradition described by Roy Strong in *The Cult of Elizabeth* and is evocative of Robert Peake’s (?) “Procession Painting” of Elizabeth, c. 1601, and Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder’s engraving of the procession of the Knights of the Garter (1576).\(^3\)

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\(^3\) It would appear that the Dutch captions (some erroneous) were added soon after van Meer’s death, possibly by the person who compiled the register (see nn. 4 and 20 above). Curiously, they appear on illustrations listed in the register as not having captions, suggesting that the compiler may have made the list, then proceeded to identify those he recognized.

\(^3\) The illustration is reproduced, in color, in Laroque, *Age of Shakespeare*, 66–67. There may have been a second illustration of a cock fight in van Meer’s album: the register notes that “een Hase Facht” (a cock fight) appears on fol. 447, but the leaf is now missing from the album, and Cuthbertson, writing in 1916, does not mention it.

The album also contains a view of King James in elegant royal robes and crown, on horseback, accompanied by three noblemen (fol. 149v; a detail of this image is on the cover of this issue). A super-caption reads “Op deese Mannierie Reyde de Kon- inghen van Engelandt In het Parlemend” [In this manner the King of England rides to Parliament]. A sub-caption reads “Jacobus Coning van Engeland Schodtland Eryer- land” [James, King of England Scotland Ireland]. James did, indeed, ride to Parlia- ment while van Meer was in London, with the Duke of Lenox, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and the Earl of Darby. It proved a momentous ride, for the two-month-long 1614 session, only the second since James assumed the throne in 1603, was to be the so- called “Addled Parliament,” the last to convene until 1620.

There is also a unique watercolor of the King in the House of Lords (fol. 154v; plate section, figure 7). At the side of the painting is this inscription: “Alsoo hout de Koning In Englant Raet in de vorgadering van het opper Parlem” [Thus the King in England holds counsel in the gathering of the upper Parliament]. The illustration shows the crowned King James seated on the throne, scepter in hand, left leg, with garter, exposed. Prince Charles sits to his left, and to the prince’s left are the Sword Bearer, the Lord Treasurer, the Lord Chamberlain, and, in colorful tabard, the Garter King of Arms. To the king’s right are a peer bearing the Cap of Maintenance, the Lord Chancellor, the Earl Marshall with his wand of office, and the sergeant at arms bearing the mace. The Lord Chancellor’s seat, a woolsack, is in front, between the king and the clerk of the Parliament, and there are rows of judges, lawyers, bishops, earls, and barons. In the foreground are three figures in black facing the body, the central figure presumably the prolocutor. A fuller illustration than those in the 1604 engraving by Renold Elstrack or the 1623/24 anonymous engraving, the watercolor in van Meer’s album complements the familiar Elstrack(?) depiction of Queen Elizabeth in the House of Lords; unlike the powder treason engraving by Michael Droeshout, however, it does not merely replace the enthroned Elizabeth with James.

In his 1979 study of costume illustrations in alba amicorum, J. L. Nevinson ob- serves that “the foreign visitor to London wished to obtain a pictorial record of what impressed him most.” This appears to have been the case with van Meer. Although

whom signed van Meer’s album)—continued in the Order under James. If this is the 23 April 1615 cele- bration of St. George and not a generic rendering, the figures may be intended to depict those two noble- men as well as Thomas Viscount Fenton and William Baron Knollys, who were admitted into the Order of the Garter that day (Nichols, Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, 3:79).

33. The illustration is also reproduced, in color, in Laroque, Age of Shakespeare, 110, and on the Web site of the Edinburgh University Library.

34. Nichols, Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, 3:2.

35. See Thomas L. Moir, The Addled Parliament of 1614 (Oxford, 1958). Noting that no legislation resulted from the 1614 session, Moir observes that the “nickname ‘added’ for this parliament must have been in common use shortly after the dissolution” (p. 146). The parliament convened on 5 April 1614 and was dissolved 7 June 1614.


we may never learn his purpose in traveling to London, we can infer from his album that he was more than moderately interested in London life. Not only did he collect signatures of the most important men in London at the time; so also did he commission illustrations that recorded the movements and the habitual dress of several strata of society. Among the album leaves are watercolors of a baron (fol. 377), a bishop (fols. 151v, 363v), a yeoman of the guard and a page (fol. 224), English noblewomen (fols. 145, 145v), the Lord Mayor (fol. 150v), the Lady Mayoress (fol. 211), the Lord Mayor in a feast day procession (fols. 89v–90), horse-drawn carriages with drivers, passengers, and attendants (fols. 148, 256v), a couple pillion riding (fol. 381), three women walking home from market (fol. 146v), porters carting and carrying their wares (fol. 494v), a farmer and his wife (fol. 147v), and the water carrier (fol. 471v). Some are conventional depictions that may be found, in slightly varied form, in costume books or in other albums of the period. And some appear to be unique to the van Meer album: the cock fight, King James in Parliament, the St. George’s Day procession, an American Indian at the Zoological Garden in St. James’s Park (fol. 254v), a woman nursing a child (fol. 283v), and a statue of Ceres, Bacchus, and Venus (with Cupid) (fol. 475) painted by van Meer’s friend Martin Droeshout (a name familiar from the engraved title page of the 1623 Shakespeare Folio). During his year-and-a-half stay in London, van Meer may or may not have seen the subjects of the watercolors he commissioned. But he surely thought that each of the figures and views was important to the construction of the album that was to evidence his experience abroad.

Clearly, the albums of van Meer and others are important both as records of individual lives and as representations of early modern culture, and scholars of the

38. The Dutch hand that has inserted captions on several of the illustrated pages erroneously identifies the figure as the queen. But similar illustrations in other albums—e.g., those of de Botnia (fol. 26), Oelhafen (fol. 28), and von Holtzschuher (fol. 26), cited above—identify the woman as the Lady Mayoress.

39. The procession appears on fol. 90. Fol. 89v is now missing from the album, but the register references the signature of Thomas Hayes, Mayor of London. Hayes was Lord Mayor in 1614.

40. On fol. 256v, the reader must lift a small paper flap to see the passengers in the cab: two ladies and a gentleman. Paper flaps occasionally appear in other albums as well, e.g., that of Niclaus Keppall, which features a gondola in Venice (fol. 13: one must lift the flap to peek at the lovers within. The Keppall album is at the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, MS. W.477.


42. For a reproduction and discussion of this painting, see my “A ‘Retronursing’ Woman in an Early Modern Album Amicorum,” Notes and Queries 250, n.s., 52, no. 3 (September 2005): 296–98.

43. For a reproduction of this painting and a discussion of the two Martin Droeshouts, see my “Martin Droeshout Revividus: Reassessing the Folio Engraving of Shakespeare,” Shakespeare Survey 60 (2007).
early modern period would find them worth examining, aesthetically and historically. Substantial listings of surviving albums may be found in the work of Wolfgang Klose, Kees Thomassen, M. A. E. Nickson, Eva Dillman, Vello Helk, Lotte Kurras, and others\(^{44}\) and in the online catalogues of German, Dutch, Belgian, Swedish, Danish, British, and other European libraries. An indispensable source is W. W. Schnable’s *Repertorium Alborum Amicorum*, a comprehensive international online catalogue of *alba amicorum* and fragments of *alba amicorum* in public and private collections.\(^{45}\)

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**ABSTRACT**

Among the hundreds of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century autograph (or friendship) albums surviving in Germany and elsewhere, the *album amicorum* of Michael van Meer (?–1653) is exceptional for the abundance and opulence of its illustrations, particularly of Jacobean London. In this note, June Schlueter provides a description and analysis of the van Meer album, of interest for its verbal and pictorial representations as well as the insights it provides into the generic features of the *album amicorum*. Reproductions of several illustrations of Jacobean London are included.

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