

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

cordially invites you to a workshop on

Manuscript Albums: Collecting & Compiling Handwritten Items

Friday, 29 October 2021, 02:00pm–05:35pm CEST
Saturday, 30 October 2021, 02:00pm–06:15pm CEST

Zoom-Meeting

Registration:

<https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/en/register-workshop13>

In various cultural contexts, it has been common practice to collect and compile in one ‘codicological unit’ handwritten items that are of various origins. The contributions to such manuscripts were usually selected in accordance with a thematic focus and can comprise text, musical notation, images, or pieces of decorative arts. These ‘one-volume’ collections are often named ‘albums’. Sometimes this naming goes back to their original context, as in the case of *alba amicorum*; sometimes it was used by later researchers, as in the case of Persian or Ottoman albums. Regarding their material composition and production, manuscript albums are not homogeneous: On the one hand, items can enter the collection by being written directly on the blank pages of a book or on loose sheets of paper that are prepared for this purpose. On the other hand, single folios, cut-outs from book pages, and other handwritten pieces can be mounted onto blank pages or inserted into new page margins. And collections of loose album leaves can be bound to a codex, kept in a box, or connected in some other way.

In the workshop, we want to focus on manuscript albums compiled to collect knowledge and memoirs as well as artistic and/or authentic handwriting of more than one individual. By assessing examples from various manuscript cultures that meet the criteria described above, we aim at a comparative view on the material aspects of these written artefacts, their production and use.

Programme

Friday, 29 October 2021, 02:00pm–05:35pm CEST

02:00–02:25: *Welcome and Introduction*

Session 1: 02:25pm–03:35pm CEST

Chair: Uta Lauer (Hamburg)

02:25–03:00 Ilse Sturkenboom (Munich): *‘Chinese’ Paper in the Istanbul Albums H. 2153 and H. 2160: Evidence for Fifteenth-Century Appreciation and Appropriation of Foreign Aesthetics in North-Western Iran*

03:00–03:35 Hans Bjarne Thomsen (Zurich): *The Tekagami and the Japanese Album Culture*

03:35–03:50 Break

Session 2: 03:50pm–05:35pm CEST

Chair: Thies Staack (Hamburg)

03:50–04:25 Henrike Rost (Berlin): *Nineteenth-Century ‘Musik-Stammbücher’: Variety of Material and Contexts of Use*

04:25–05:00 Sabine Kienitz (Hamburg): *From Church Wall to Paper Work: On Interpreting Intercession Books as Albums*

05:00–05:35 Gwendolyn Collaço (Los Angeles): *Traces of Market Trends: Mapping the Image Corpus and Codicology of Ottoman Costume Albums*

Saturday, 30 October 2021, 02:00pm–06:15pm CEST

Session 3: 02:00pm–03:45pm CEST

Chair: Andreas Janke (Hamburg)

- 02:00–02:35 Friederike Weis (Berlin): *Emperors, Women, Saints, Angels: Images in Indian Albums and their European Titles*
- 02:35–03:10 Oliver Huck (Hamburg): *Album Amicorum, Commonplace Book, and Lute Book*
- 03:10–03:45 Deidre Lynch (Cambridge, MA): *Bugs in Books*
- 03:45–04:00 Break

Session 4: 04:00pm–05:45pm CEST

Chair: Janina Karolewski (Hamburg)

- 04:00–04:35 Robyn Dora Radway (Budapest/Vienna): *Caspar von Abschatz's Album Amicorum: Collecting (in) the Ottoman World*
- 04:35–05:10 Janine Droese (Hamburg): *Albums as Monuments: On the Production and Use of Public Albums in 19th-Century Europe*
- 05:10–05:45 Stephanie Bung (Duisburg/Essen): *Collecting Handwritten Items in Seventeenth-Century France*
- 05:45–06:15 *Final Discussion* – Moderator: Oliver Huck (Hamburg)

Abstracts and Contributors

Ilse Sturkenboom (Munich): *'Chinese' Paper in the Istanbul Albums H. 2153 and H. 2160: Evidence for Fifteenth-Century Appreciation and Appropriation of Foreign Aesthetics in North-Western Iran* (29 October, 02:25pm–03:00pm CEST)

Abstract: 'Chinese' paper is a broad terminology used by historians of Islamic art to refer to a specific kind of paper found in fifteenth-century manuscripts from the Persianate world. This paper is typically very heavy, brightly coloured on both sides, and embellished with gold on only one side of the paper. Research conducted together with scientists and conservators has recently been able to demonstrate that this paper is, indeed, highly likely to have been produced in East Asia. Once exported to greater Iran, large sheets of 'Chinese' paper measuring at least 120 × 55 cm were cut up for the production of manuscripts' folios and were subsequently written upon, illuminated and bound into codices. Other parts of the long, coloured and gold-decorated sheets were preserved in albums. Especially the albums H. 2153 and H. 2160 in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul are rich in specimens of 'Chinese' paper. They contain dedications and a large number of signatures by prominent calligraphers that provide evidence for this paper's availability at the Aq Qoyunlu court at Tabriz under Sultan Ya'qūb (r. 1478–1490), but most probably also in Baghdad during the reign of the Qara Qoyunlu ruler Pīr Būdāq (between 1461 and 1466). The general hypothesis underlying this talk is that 'Chinese' paper was deemed a highly valuable, exotic and courtly commodity under the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu confederations. By analysing the texts written upon the pieces of 'Chinese' paper in the albums and the biographies of the signing calligraphers, this talk's first aim is to gain greater understanding of the appreciation and the meaning of 'Chinese' paper under the two Turkman confederations. The second aim of this talk is to demonstrate that 'Chinese' paper changed the aesthetics of the arts of the book in greater Iran and, in the second half of the fifteenth century, caused local artists to produce their own versions of 'Chinese' paper.

Hans Bjarne Thomsen (Zurich): *The Tekagami and the Japanese Album Culture* (29 October, 03:00pm–03:35pm CEST)

Abstract: The Japanese *tekagami* (literally 'a mirror of hands') was a tradition that started in the early seventeenth century and continued into the twentieth century. It was a collection of calligraphic fragments of various types: snippets of letters, documents, sutras, and almost any kind of handwritten fragment. What made the collection unusual was

that none of the fragments were anonymous; all fragments were attributed by experts to famous people from various historical periods of Japan. Moreover, the ordering of the fragments in the album was based on Chinese prototypes with a strict sequencing of persons according to status, rank, profession, and sex. The talk will introduce this unusual type of album and discuss their histories, inner meanings, and functions.

Henrike Rost (Berlin): *Nineteenth-Century 'Musik-Stammbücher': Variety of Material and Contexts of Use* (29 October, 03:50pm–04:25pm CEST)

Abstract: In nineteenth-century Europe, the practice of collecting autographs was widespread and very popular. In its personally motivated form, the custom's purpose was both a documentation of one's own contacts with celebrities of the time and a private memory of friends and acquaintances. Collecting autographs in a book, as a habit of higher social classes, dates back to the late sixteenth century. This era saw the rise of so-called *Stammbücher* or *alba amicorum*, particularly in German academic circles. These books contain handwritten lines of friends and colleagues as well as precious autographs of influential clerics and scholars. Apart from some developments and adaptations in order to align with the respective contemporary fashion, the *Stammbuch* tradition remained intact for the major part of the nineteenth century and became a European phenomenon.

Especially since the 1820s, nineteenth-century musical elites and their social surroundings cultivated a very specific variation of the *Stammbuch* – creating albums which featured a particular emphasis on music. These albums, to which I refer as *Musik-Stammbücher*, often combine musical notation, drawing, and poetry (*Mischalben*). Furthermore, the focus on music resulted in albums which almost exclusively comprise musical autographs, individualised by a personal dedication with signature, date and place. Looking at their materiality, *Musik-Stammbücher*, in general, can be found as bound volumes or as loose album leaves, integrated in an album context. As examples – taken from my recent study on the production, use, and materiality of these sources – I will discuss in my paper, among others, the albums of Ignaz Moscheles, Eliza Wesley, and Ferdinand Hiller.

Sabine Kienitz (Hamburg): *From Church Wall to Paper Work: On Interpreting Intercession Books as Albums* (29 October, 04:25pm–05:00pm CEST)

Abstract: The presentation deals with the so-called request or intercession books and discusses the question of how this kind of written devotion fits into the given understanding of the album. Intercession books consist of handwritten texts or even small

drawings, created and compiled as one-volume collections e.g. as books with blank pages, spiral-bound notepads or file folders with loose leafs. Today these intercession books are still available on site in churches, sanctuaries, and even motorway chapels. Parishioners and church visitors of all kinds and even tourists write their texts on the spot during their visit there and usually spontaneously by using the writing material provided by the church. In contrast to the pious requests, which are addressed as real letters to the saints and are usually deposited at the grave with an indication of the sender, the entries in intercession books are usually anonymous and short. Most of these are prayers, wishes for or commemorations of deceased family members and descriptions of private emergencies with requests for help from God, Jesus or the Virgin Mary, but also expressions of gratitude for help given, similar to the ex-Voto text panels. Beyond the religious concerns, the contents often resemble very private diary entries, which seem out of place in the public space. However, there are also statements on current political events or tourists' comments on the cultural-historical value of the church building or the spiritual quality of the stay.

This mélange of content between religious intentions and purely secular orientation had the consequence that this type of written devotion was disregarded or even devalued as 'secondary alphabetic scrawl'. In contrast, my research deals with the materiality of these objects and their location in the spatial and religious setting of the church. It also addresses the relationship between earlier forms of inscriptions and graffiti on church walls and the later disciplined form of book entries. Furthermore, I analyse the specific forms of writing and literacy, layout and visual features, of local traditions as well as the communication between the anonymous scribes.

Gwendolyn Collaço (Los Angeles): *Traces of Market Trends: Mapping the Image Corpus and Codicology of Ottoman Costume Albums* (29 October, 05:00pm–05:35pm CEST)

Abstract: Costume albums hold a significant place as one of the most recognizable and long-running genres to emerge from the Ottoman market for illustrated manuscripts, which garnered consumers among European travellers and later Ottoman buyers. Yet the study of their production has often focused on case studies rather than larger market trends for these distinctive compilations. Each album consists of methodically chosen paintings, reproduced from a shared corpus of models, though the extent of the relationships between each compilation has often remained unexplored. In this paper, I aim to unpack the complex relationships across seventeenth-century costume albums by systematically harvesting data from their painted models to construct a nuanced history that traces how the commercial production of their paintings responded to changing collecting trends among consumers on Istanbul's market. I apply digital approaches of

network mapping to track the profuse repetitions in their painted models, thereby yielding crucial information on the changing image corpus. I then bring this data to bear upon the construction of costume albums as books, whose complex material realities have remained notably absent from studies of the genre.

The closely intertwined relationship between the factors above work in tandem to highlight just how adaptable costume albums became in form and reception. Though many models made their way into dozens of costume albums over their shelf lives, I argue that part of their appeal was the delight in taking home a unique matrix of characters, tailored to an owner's particular interests. Yet these collections reveal that consumer interests shifted based on political dynamics of the Ottoman empire, and the changing demands of European patrons whose increasingly diverse commissions transformed the face of what a costume album could embody. In short, the genre captures how consumer choice sculpted the history of the commodified image on a readily expanding market.

Friederike Weis (Berlin): *Emperors, Women, Saints, Angels: Images in Indian Albums and their European Titles* (30 October, 02:00pm–02:35pm CEST)

Abstract: In the latter half of the eighteenth century – a period marked by the rise of British and French colonial power in Mughal India – many European officers, officials, and self-styled “Orientalists” collected and commissioned albums produced by Indian artists. These albums generally followed long-established compilation principles of Mughal albums, which are characterized by paintings alternating with calligraphic panels; nevertheless, they exhibit European preferences. This is not only evident from the recurrent choice of certain subject-matter in the paintings – such as the portraits of famous Persian and Mughal conquerors and emperors (Timur, Akbar, Nadir Shah), harem women watching fireworks, scenes from the life of ascetic saints, and female angels interpreted as “houris” – but also from the titles that the European patrons themselves wrote underneath the paintings, on their verso, or in inventory lists. In some cases, these titles are quite precise; at other times, they attach new meanings to the conventional poetic or religious iconography of Persian and Indian art.

This paper will focus on albums assembled for three prominent European collectors: the Franco-Swiss engineer and British East India Company officer Antoine-Louis Henri Polier (1741–1795), who spent several years in the service of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II (r. 1759–1806); the French officer and military advisor of the Mughal governor of Awadh, Jean-Baptiste Joseph Gentil (1726–1799); and the Chief Justice of Bengal, Sir Elijah Impey (1732–1809). The recurring motifs, title attributions, and specific compilation patterns raise questions about the intended audiences of these albums and about their role in the European acquisition of Indo-Persianate knowledge.

Oliver Huck (Hamburg): *Album Amicorum, Commonplace Book, and Lute Book* (30 October, 02:35pm–03:10pm CEST)

Abstract: When the lute became a popular instrument in the sixteenth century, amateur lute players had to find a place to store the music for their instrument. Beyond the development of lute books as a new manuscript type defined by ruling the pages for the tablature, this music found its place in some English commonplace books and in some German and Dutch *Stammbücher*. The latter continue a practice established already in song books adding dedications and devices to the musical pieces. This practice has been adopted in German student's lute books of which many show an organization of the music by genres in separate 'books' resembling methods of organizing knowledge that have been taught for commonplace books.

Deidre Lynch (Cambridge, MA): *Bugs in Books* (30 October, 03:10pm–03:45pm CEST)

Abstract: In early nineteenth-century England Samuel Taylor Coleridge called his sprawling, untidy collection of notebooks his "fly-catchers." He may have been joking about his intellectual flightiness. But his epithet also registers a persisting association during his lifetime between blank books, insect life, and insect death; an association, that is, between the entries inscribed or pasted or painted into those books and the transience and fugitivity of ephemerae – insects born (as another nineteenth-century poet, George Crabbe, wrote in a poem on "The Newspaper") "To die before the next revolving morn." Many of those who kept albums, for instance, wrote out over again onto their pages James Montgomery's printed poem from 1829 (whose title flags its manuscript origins) "Epitaph on a Gnat, found crushed on the leaf of a Lady's album." Brightly-coloured hand-painted butterflies and moths were frequent ornaments of album pages. Painted at life-size, they fluidly traversed the ontological boundary between object and image, specimen and illustration (these painted flies carry on, that is, the work of the insect images the art historian Janice Neri analysed in her 2011 monograph; in this context, however, they supply a meta-commentary on the affordances of books and paper pages). In this talk I consider what the frequent appearance of insects as subjects of poetry or painting in the nineteenth-century manuscript album can tell us about the understandings of time and durability and preservation that informed this book-type's making. Following the trail of the bugs in these books can, I contend, give us new insights into the self-conscious mode of playing at permanence that defined the manuscript album and give us new insights into what it meant in the nineteenth century to *keep things* in books.

Robyn Dora Radway (Budapest/Vienna): *Caspar von Abschatz's Album Amicorum: Collecting (in) the Ottoman World* (30 October, 04:00pm–04:35pm CEST)

Abstract: In the fall of 1584, the Silesian nobleman Caspar von Abschatz traveled along the Balkan diplomatic corridor from Vienna through Ottoman Buda, Belgrade, Sofia, and Plovdiv to Constantinople. He documented the journey with entries gathered in a collection of loose folios, some of which included blank heraldic shields designed by Jost Amman. This *album amicorum* is today held in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg (Cod. in scrin. 198a). Upon his arrival, Abschatz joined the retinue of the Habsburg resident ambassador to the Ottoman court. He dramatically expanded the *album* over the next three years, adding an extraordinary collection of Ottoman decorated papers and acquiring over 90 professions of friendship from the diverse Central European household in which he lived. In 1587, Abschatz returned to Central Europe, continuing his voracious collecting endeavor for several years before abruptly setting down the *album* on a shelf. Until 1607, Abschatz sporadically picked up the *album* and used it again. This paper uses codicological details, the texts of entries in this and several contemporary albums, and archival documents to examine how Abschatz compiled, used, and transformed his *album* with a focus on his years in Constantinople. I argue that both Abschatz's rare collection of papers and his documented social networks point to his intimate relationship with Ottoman decorative arts, the city of Constantinople, and the imperial context that brought him there.

Janine Droese (Hamburg): *Albums as Monuments: On the Production and Use of Public Albums in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (30 October, 04:35pm–05:10pm CEST)

Abstract: Most European albums of the nineteenth century are personal manuscripts. These are friendship albums (also known as keepsake albums, *alba amicorum* or *Stammbücher*), which usually belong to one album owner or a small group of album owners, whose social networks they document. The planned talk, however, will focus on another type of albums which has, until now, received very little attention: Albums that, like friendship albums, contain entries written by different people, but are made to serve as a kind of monument, being a material emanation of collective (public) memory. These albums mostly appear in printed form to ensure a wide dissemination. But there are at least some albums of this type that are manuscripts. Taking one of them, the Weimar Schiller-Album, as an example, the production and use of this kind of albums will be traced and discussed. Special emphasis will be placed on the differences, but also the similarities of these albums with the much better researched friendship albums.

Stephanie Bung (Duisburg/Essen): *Collecting Handwritten Items in Seventeenth-Century France* (30 October, 05:10pm–05:45pm)

Abstract: Does the study of French “salon-writing” (J. DeJean) automatically lead to the discovery of handwritten “Salonalben” (M. Zimmermann)? From my experience, such albums are surprisingly rare in a century that is often considered the cradle of salon-culture. In seventeenth-century France, the possession of a manuscript does not necessarily mean to own something more valuable than its printed version. There are of course handwritten books – *manuscrits d’apparat* such as *La Guirlande de Julie* (1641) – that represent social status and therefore value. Still, the meaning of handwriting differs from our modern understanding of authenticity. But in which way? Is there no ideological claim at all to be linked to the manuscript? In this paper I will argue that the reasons for collecting handwritten items in seventeenth-century France are multifarious and that it is exactly this diversity that brings us closer to the understanding of early salon-culture in France.