

A collection within a collection

Rediscovered animal drawings from the collections of Conrad Gessner and Felix Platter

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*This article reports on the re-identification of two late-sixteenth-century albums in the University Library of Amsterdam, each containing large numbers of watercolour drawings of animals, pasted on to sheets of paper. Discussing the images, annotations, artists, watermarks, and bindings, as well as the relationships of the images with printed illustrations, the essay demonstrates that these albums were created by the Swiss physician Felix Platter (1536–1614) and that they contain, in addition to many animal drawings collected by Platter, several hundred more that belonged to the Swiss humanist and naturalist Conrad Gessner (1516–65). It emerges that the drawings are, in fact, the long-lost models (Vorlagen) for illustrations in his famous *Historiae Animalium*. Twenty-four folios are reproduced in an online appendix.*

Rediscovered

In the summer of 2010 the author was fortunate enough to rediscover hundreds of the original and long-lost sixteenth-century watercolour drawings of animals on which are based many of the woodcut illustrations of Conrad Gessner's famous *Historiae Animalium* (1551–8). The drawings are to be found in two large albums in the collection of the University Library of Amsterdam.¹

Following Gessner's death in 1565, part of his legacy found its way to the collection of the Swiss physician, anatomist, and naturalist Felix Platter, a friend and pupil of Gessner.² The sheets contained in the two Amsterdam albums formed part of Platter's collection, as will be shown. They comprise hundreds of watercolours, some of which formed the *Vorlagen* or preliminary sketches for Gessner's illustrations, while others were added by Platter (Fig. 1). It is probable, moreover, that the sheets were organized in their present order by Felix Platter himself or by his younger half-brother Thomas II Platter (1574–1628) at some time between the late 1590s and Felix's death in 1614, or shortly thereafter.³

The albums seem to have completely escaped attention in the past. Apart from the manuscript catalogues of the Amsterdam University Library of 1849, 1877, and (most recently) 1923, I know of no single publication or reference which mentions them. Since

at least the early nineteenth century these two albums have formed part of the collection of printed and manuscript texts belonging to the Remonstrantse Gemeente (one of the oldest branches of the Protestant Church in the Northern Netherlands) of Amsterdam, which was given on indefinite loan to the University Library of Amsterdam in 1878. The catalogue description of 1923 provides the following information: the albums are anonymous; the images have been cut out and pasted down; a very large number correspond to the illustrations in Gessner's *Historiae Animalium*; the annotations in German or Latin provide the name of the animal in most cases, occasionally containing dates as well as references to the sender or painter of an image and its provenance; and the annotator was still alive in 1610.⁴

The catalogues offer no clues as to the provenance of the albums. How and when the Remonstrantse Gemeente acquired the albums is a mystery. The origins of the Remonstrantse Gemeente lie in the early seventeenth century, when the movement was strongly opposed by Swiss Protestants. On the other hand, connections between Basel and Amsterdam were particularly strong at this time, given the mutual interest in printing, publishing and the book trade, and the relative ease of transport via the Rhine. Basel University attracted a number of Dutch students from the beginning of the sixteenth century until the



Fig. 1. Cat, MS III C 23, 44. Cf. Gessner *Historiae Animalium*, vol. 1 (1551), p. 345. Reproduced by kind permission of Amsterdam University Library.

second half of the seventeenth century, while many Swiss studied in the Dutch Republic from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards. Given the history of the Platter collection – to which we will turn below – and its final dispersal in the mid-eighteenth century, we may speculate that the albums could have found their way to the Dutch Republic at some time between the later seventeenth and the mid-eighteenth century.⁵

This article presents for the first time (in print and in more detail via the related online digital dossier) a selection of the visual material contained in the

Amsterdam albums as well as the evidence for the identification of these albums as original material from the Gessner and Platter collections.⁶ In the following we shall first briefly look at the relevant aspects of the *printed* illustrations in Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* for which many of these watercolours, I argue, were the *Vorlagen*. A second section presents a summary of the history of Gessner's collection and how parts of it came to be included in that of Felix Platter; Platter's role as collector; and the history of Platter's collection after his death. Thirdly, we shall explore the contents of the Amsterdam albums, and investigate the evidence

of the images themselves; the handwritten annotations; and the paper, watermarks, and bindings. Finally, the issue of relevance will be briefly discussed.

Gessner and the *Historiae Animalium*

The principal volumes of the work that – probably more than any other – ensured the reputation of Conrad Gessner, the *Historiae Animalium*, all appeared in the course of the 1550s: volume I on viviparous animals in 1551; volume II on oviparous animals in 1554; volume III on birds in 1555; and volume IV on fish and other aquatic animals in 1558. They comprise a total of well over 3,000 pages and are richly illustrated.⁷ Much has been written about the complex but successful publishing history and the many editions, translations and reprintings of the *Historiae Animalium*.⁸ ‘Coffee table’ editions (*Icones Animalium* and *Icones Avium*) with a large selection of the illustrations of the *Historiae Animalium* volumes and very little text appeared already in 1553 and 1555 respectively. Expanded editions of these *Icones* volumes appeared from 1560, still produced by the Zurich publisher Froschauer, and soon vernacular editions began to appear that were much abridged in comparison with the original Latin editions but were still richly illustrated. Being more accessible in language, size and price, they were capable of reaching a larger public: the German versions – *Vogelbuch* (1557), *Thierbuch* (1563), and *Fischbuch* (1563) – probably enjoyed the widest distribution.⁹ Gessner himself states that a considerable number of the drawings for his published woodcut illustrations were made by local Swiss artists, and by one or two artists in nearby Strasbourg. Most of the drawings, however, were either commissioned by Gessner during his travels abroad as a young man – a large number of watercolours of fish were, for instance, made for him when he visited Venice – or sent to him by friends and naturalists from all over Europe. Indeed, as most recently explored by Kusakawa, Gessner provides exceptionally detailed information about the provenance of the images on which his woodcut illustrations were based in the prefaces to his *Historiae Animalium* volumes: he meticulously lists the individuals from all over Europe who were the most important donors of information and animal images, but only rarely does he refer to the artists.¹⁰ Gessner wished these drawings to be as accurate as possible – preferably based on

direct observation and made *ad vivum* (a term that could, however, include representations based on dead animals, on other drawings, or even after verbal descriptions) – but if this proved impossible he made do with ‘second-hand’ or ‘third-hand’ material.¹¹

During Gessner’s lifetime the successive editions of his *Historiae Animalium* were promptly updated with new animals, new textual information, and new images. It has been estimated that a total of some 1,200 different woodblocks were used for the illustrations in all of the various Gessner editions.¹² Comparison of the images in the Amsterdam albums with the illustrations in Gessner’s printed works can therefore not be limited to merely the first Latin editions, but should also extend to the successive editions of these first four volumes of the *Historiae Animalium* which appeared during Gessner’s lifetime. In the present article we shall mainly limit ourselves to a discussion of the images of viviparous and oviparous animals, fish and other aquatic animals. The reasons are simple: the Amsterdam albums contain no images of birds; furthermore, the final two volumes of Gessner’s printed works on animals, which discuss the serpents plus scorpions and the insects respectively, came out some decades after his death, and were works of compilation in which the editors combined textual and visual material compiled by others with material originally brought together by Gessner. The illustrations in these two volumes cannot, therefore, be used to identify images of insects or serpents in the Amsterdam albums as Gessner or non-Gessner material without much further research and detailed attributions for each image.¹³

A comparison with the *original* illustrations in the various Gessner editions is all the more crucial given the enormous influence of Gessner’s encyclopaedic works on the history of the knowledge and representation of animals in early modern Europe down to at least the end of the eighteenth century. His texts, which formed a great repository of classical, medieval and sixteenth-century knowledge, permeated early modern élite as well as popular knowledge of animals. His woodcut illustrations influenced European images and representations of animals in perhaps an even more fundamental manner. Before the appearance of the *Historiae Animalium* there had been no printed works in European history depicting such large numbers of animals. The popularity of his printed images was such, from the very earliest years of their publication,

that his printer-publisher Froschauer also sold the woodcuts separately and employed a special painter to colour the woodcuts in the printed volumes by hand. Gessner, however, complained about the sloppy colouring: to keep down costs, the painter apparently worked on a dozen or more copies of the book at the same time, which resulted in a rather schematic and scarcely refined colouring.¹⁴ Some of the printed images in the *Historiae Animalium* have, indeed, become icons of the period, in much the same way as Dürer's rhinoceros (based on the same artist's woodcut of 1515), which derives at least part of its fame from the fact that it was included in Gessner's work.¹⁵ Similarly, Gessner copied the image of the curious animal Su – which carries its young on its back protected by its long and hairy tail – from the work of André Thevet. Su became one of the icons of the continent America.¹⁶

It was not only 'fabulous' animals that Gessner copied. Among the fish, especially, we find many images that go back to the works on natural history (by Pierre Belon and Guillaume Rondelet) that had appeared in Gessner's own lifetime. He also copied from somewhat earlier publications and pamphlets. The giraffe and some other animals, for example, come from Bernhard von Breydenbach's *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (Mainz, 1486); others are taken from works by the Swedish bishop Olaus Magnus and the Swiss-German cosmographer and friend of Gessner, Sebastian Münster.¹⁷ However, a very much larger proportion of Gessner's animal illustrations were specifically made for the *Historiae Animalium* and were based on new drawings that formed part of his collection. One effect of the popularity of Gessner's printed illustrations – whether these were themselves copied after other authors or were produced anew especially for Gessner's works – is that they were copied and recopied in printed works of subsequent centuries. Large numbers of illustrations in John Jonston's *Historiae naturalis* in five volumes (Frankfurt am Main, 1650–53), which remained a standard work on zoology until the advent of Linnaeus, were based on those of Gessner. The bearded elk (Fig. 2) and furry big-eyed cat, his long-legged tiger, the massively round blowfish which fills a whole page, and the curved dogfish (*lamia*) with its wide open jaws, are almost immediately recognizable as Gessner images wherever they occur and whoever re-used them.¹⁸

Gessner's animals entered the domain of emblematics (via Joachim Camerarius, among others) and can

be found on many prints (for instance by Adriaen Collaert), while they also formed the inspiration and model for an almost unlimited range of decorative arts in the early modern period, ranging from embroidery and tapestries to woodcarving, ceiling decoration, and frescoes (for instance in the Villa Medici in Rome). Geographically, some of Gessner's animals – including Su – even reached China: they figured on a rare version of the first edition of Blaeu's world map of 1648, which was used as a source for a world map and illustrated description of the world in Chinese (1674) by the Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest.¹⁹ The social range of their influence was equally wide: animal decorations inspired by Gessner's woodcuts could be found in the palaces of kings as well as the houses of members of the lower middle classes. *Verdure* tapestries with Gessner's animals were woven in Flanders for the royal palaces in Spain and Poland, for instance. His images were used on painted ceilings in Scottish Renaissance country houses, and Mary Queen of Scots personally embroidered the animal Su and various other Gessner animal images on bed hangings.²⁰ A large number of Gessner's images of marine animals and parts of the accompanying (German) text were also copied and commented on by the Dutch fisherman's son Adriaen Coenen (1514–1587) in his manuscript encyclopaedia of marine life.²¹

Almost everyone in Europe, therefore, copied Gessner, whether in print, in paint, on wood, in fresco, on linen and textiles, on ceramics, or in other media. Below, we will establish that the images in the Amsterdam albums are not one more set of copies made after his printed illustrations but are, instead, their models.

Platter's collection and the disappearance of Gessner's drawings

The hundreds of original drawings that Gessner used as models for his woodcuts were collected throughout his life, but with special intensity and concentration during the phase preparatory to the initial publication of the *Historiae Animalium* and later to the updated editions. The drawings disappeared from sight in the seventeenth century, and have been believed lost ever since. What happened to them?

Unlike many other drawings used as *Vorlagen* for woodcut illustrations in early modern publications, most



Fig. 2. Elk, MS III C 23, 20 (detail). Cf. Gessner *Icones* (1560), p. 125. Reproduced by kind permission of Amsterdam University Library.

of Gessner's naturalia drawings were not destroyed immediately after use, nor did they stay behind at the publisher's after printing, to be lost or destroyed in some later phase; instead they remained part of Gessner's collection, which comprised drawings of naturalia as well as naturalia themselves. At his death in 1565 Gessner left the botanical element of his collection, together with his unfinished manuscript notes on plants, to his friend Caspar Wolff, with a request that the latter should complete and publish Gessner's work on plants. When this proved impossible, Wolff sold the material in 1580 to the Nuremberg botanist Joachim Camerarius jnr – another friend of Gessner's. A large part eventually ended up in the Trew collection, comprising some 1,500 plant drawings – many by Gessner himself: it was rediscovered in the

late 1920s by Bernhard Milt in the University Library of Erlangen.²²

The evidence concerning this botanical material from Gessner's legacy and the fragmentary zoological specimens that are thus far known to have survived, suggests that a division was made – perhaps even by Gessner himself, and probably around the time of his death – between the botanical and zoological parts of his collection. No hard evidence seems to be available, however, as to by whom and when such a division was made, nor whether it was really a clear-cut botanical-zoological split. Nor does it seem to be clear in which year Felix Platter, who had been a friend and pupil of Gessner, actually acquired (inherited or bought) the zoological material. But it was known that Platter included some – or as we shall shortly see, most – of

Gessner's zoological drawings in his own large collection of naturalia which, just like Gessner's collection, comprised both drawings of naturalia and naturalia themselves.²³

Platter's expanding collection could be found on the first floor of his house 'Zum Samson' in Basel (at least in the years after 1574, when he bought this property), where he had a study as well as two separate rooms for the collection. It included a distillation oven and glass apparatus; a large collection of minerals and stones; an enormous number of plants (both dried and recorded in paint); eighty-eight paintings; ethnographica (such as shoes and clothing from Asia and a large number of idols); a library; antiquities; and coins.²⁴ Among Platter's images of plants were, as discovered and demonstrated by Walter Rytz in 1933, hundreds of drawings made by the South-German artist Hans Weiditz as models (*Vorlagen*) for one of the earliest and most famous of the sixteenth-century herbals, Otto Brunfels's *Herbarum Vivae Eicones* (Strasbourg, 1530–36).²⁵ Platter was therefore a known collector of *Vorlagen* for famous works on natural history of the sixteenth century. His collection became internationally famous during his lifetime, when it was shown by him to visitors for an entrance fee or a gift. Among these visitors were the Frenchmen Jacques Auguste de Thou (in 1579) and Michel de Montaigne (in 1580, when *en route* for Italy).²⁶

Several inventories were made of the collection during Platter's lifetime, but the only one that still exists is the manuscript catalogue of the material relevant to medicine (which included plants and animals as well as drawings of such specimens), compiled around 1595 by Felix's much younger half-brother Thomas II Platter – the *Suppellex medica Felicis Plateri*.²⁷ This *Suppellex* is a crucial source for identification of the animal drawings gathered in the Amsterdam albums, whether these had originally come from Gessner's collection or were added by Platter himself.

After Felix's death in 1614, the naturalia collection remained in the possession of later generations of Platters until it was finally sold and split up in 1743: both Felix's heir and half-brother Thomas II and the latter's son Felix II (1605–75) were physicians and continued to live in the same house in Basel. For lack of detailed later inventories, no one knows how much of the collection remained together by the mid eighteenth century, but it is certain that parts were sold off

in the course of time. The last moment for which we have reliable evidence that (some of) the albums of animal drawings still formed part of the Platter collection in Basel seems to be in 1664, in which year the French physician and king's counsellor Balthasar de Monconys (1611–65) attempted (so far as known without success) to buy individual animal drawings from Felix II Platter. Monconys speaks of 'three books or albums (*livres*), one of fish, one of birds and animals, and one of insects and in particular of an infinity of butterflies painted after nature . . . which according to him [i.e. Felix II Platter] are the originals of Jonston among which there was one by the hand of Holbein'.²⁸

What remains of the Platter–Gessner collections of naturalia drawings

Apart from Gessner's c. 1,500 botanical drawings as mentioned above in the Trew collection in Erlangen, the only drawings of naturalia from the Gessner–Platter collections until recently known to be still extant were the following:

- A group of seven botanical drawings from Platter's collection, some made by Hans Weiditz (1529).
- One album in which Felix Platter combined the drawings of minerals, fossils and stones from the Gessner legacy with drawings that he had collected himself. All of the figures are watercolours, and have been cut out along the contours and pasted down. Handwritten annotations by Platter written directly on the main sheets accompany most figures.
- One album with drawings of birds of which some thirty-five can be identified as Gessner's *Vorlagen*, and others probably are Platter's additions. These bird figures too have been cut out along the contours, but in this case they have been (re-)pasted at a much later date on to eighteenth-century paper; the captions written by Felix Platter are likewise cut out and pasted down. Unlike the mineral-fossils album, this bird album is therefore an eighteenth-century creation using sixteenth-century material.

All of these belong to the collection of Basel University Library.²⁹ Six further animal drawings have recently been claimed to be original *Vorlagen*

for Gessner's illustrations. It is unclear whether they ever belonged to Felix Platter's collection:

- Two watercolours, the first representing a large crayfish, the second showing several smaller marine animals. They were acquired in the 1960s or 1970s by L. B. Holthuis and donated by him to Naturalis, the Leiden Museum of Natural History. These figures have not been cut out along the contours, but are remarkably similar to several of the woodcut illustrations of aquatic animals in Gessner's printed work and are reversed with respect to the woodcut images. Given that their twin images (cut out and likewise reversed, but always of separate animals and not of a group) can be found in the Amsterdam albums, I agree with the suggestion of Holthuis that one workshop or painter produced many almost identical watercolours of aquatic animals.³⁰
- Four watercolours of birds (eagle, eagle-vulture, osprey, owl) in the collection of the New York Historical Society.³¹

To these we can now add the hundreds of images in the Amsterdam albums. They comprise 369 sheets with animal drawings as well as several blank sheets (to which we shall return below). In quantity and in range of subjects covered, this is therefore by far the largest cache of Gessner–Platter images to have re-emerged since their 'disappearance' in the seventeenth century. Both albums are of the same size: 41.5 × 31 cm. Album III C 22 contains 225 sheets with coloured drawings of fresh-water and salt-water fish and other aquatic creatures, such as shells, whales, corals, sea urchins, crabs and lobsters, besides some sea monsters. The second volume, III C 23, has 144 sheets with coloured drawings of various kinds of animals, which are divided into rough categories: first the four-footed beasts, such as sheep, dogs, tigers and panthers, monkeys, camels, reindeer, deer (and their antlers), and various rodents; second the caterpillars, insects, beetles, and so on; and third the reptiles and amphibians. The category of birds is completely absent. There are neither pictures nor annotations on the verso sides of the sheets.³²

All the images are watercolours; none is printed.³³ The artistic quality of the vast majority of the watercolours ranges from rather amateurish to very high indeed. Given the stylistic differences, a considerable number of artists must have been involved. The number

of figures per sheet varies from one to fifteen, but the larger numbers occur mainly in the cases of butterflies, beetles, and shells. Generally, there are between one and three figures per sheet. With some forty-five exceptions (of which about half belong to one group of fish drawings) all these figures have been cut out closely following the contours of the animal, and pasted down on large sheets of paper.³⁴ Now and then, the cut-out figure includes some shading close to the animal or a small part of its background. In some rare cases the cut-out is rectangular and comprises the animal figure as well as its (sketchy) background. Very occasionally, shading or the suggestion of background has been *added* on the main sheet of paper, and thus after the cut-out animal had been pasted down. From a total of 369 illustrated sheets only six form an exception in this respect: fols 120–25 in album III C 23 are covered with numerous small images of butterflies, all of which are drawn and coloured in one hand and directly on the main sheets. These particular sheets have no annotation, and the style of the arrangement of the figures on the sheets – in rows, or in a symmetrical pattern – suggests that they may be later (although probably still early-seventeenth-century) additions to the collection. If one particular butterfly image in Platter's collection was indeed made by Holbein – as the remark quoted above suggests – this will therefore *not* be one of these series painted directly on the six sheets but rather one of the cut out and pasted down images. Most animal figures are accompanied by short handwritten annotations in Latin or German. Since these are always written directly on the sheets, close to the figures, they must have been made at the stage when the animal figures were cut out and pasted.

The identification of the Amsterdam drawings as the Gessner–Platter collection

Since the Amsterdam albums are anonymous and bear no dating or indication of the place where they were created (except in the annotation of some of the individual images), while the watercolours are cut out, made by many different painters and nearly always anonymous, identification of the albums must rest on information internal to the albums – form and content of images and annotation; and physical characteristics of the albums (paper and binding) – and on comparison with other sources.

First and foremost, the similarity of a very large number of the watercolours (running into hundreds) to the printed illustrations in Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* is striking. But why should we suppose that these images are original *Vorlagen* and not, for instance, coloured copies after the printed works by Gessner? Second, how can we be certain that these are the Platter albums and not some later collection with a compilation of copied (or copied as well as original) material? To answer these questions, which actually involve a double identification – of a collection within a collection, in which the identity of the one is underpinned by the identification of the other – we shall look at the evidence of the various elements in turn.

The evidence of the images

The principal reason to suppose that these are original *Vorlagen* for Gessner's printed illustrations and not copies, is that a very large majority of the printed illustrations corresponding to the watercolours in the Amsterdam albums are reversed – as is normally the case with *Vorlagen* relative to the printed illustrations made after them.³⁵

How large is that majority and what kind of numbers are concerned?

The process of identification and a detailed matching of the hundreds of Amsterdam watercolours with the various editions of Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* – as discussed above – is not yet finished. Given the small size of, for instance, images of shells and the fact that these cannot be identified by colour in the printed works, it may never be possible to give exact numbers of matches or non-matches, reversals or non-reversals. However, a comparison of the images of viviparous animals, and of fish and aquatic animals (but not shells, snails, insects or tortoises) in Gessner's works on the one hand, and in the Amsterdam albums on the other hand, results in the following. Counting each animal image separately, I have found 137 different images of viviparous animals in the printed works by Gessner of which 76 correspond exactly to images in the Amsterdam albums: 57 of these are reversed, 14 images are not reversed, while reversal is unclear in 4 cases because of the symmetry of the image.³⁶ The *Vorlagen* for slightly more than half of the illustrations of Gessner's viviparous animals can thus be found in the Amsterdam albums.

The percentages are lower but the total numbers of images and correspondences are far higher for the fish and aquatic animals.³⁷ Still following the same criteria of selection, I have counted 524 different images of fish in these printed works. Of these, 159 can be found in the Amsterdam albums; 152 of those are reversed; 4 are not reversed: and in 3 cases reversal is unclear on account of the symmetry of the images. The Amsterdam albums thus contain almost a third of the *Vorlagen* for the illustrations of fish and aquatic animals in Gessner's works.³⁸ Taking together viviparous and aquatic animals, we have so far found 235 *Vorlagen* in the Amsterdam albums (209 reversed; 18 not reversed; and 7 unclear in terms of reversal) for a total of 661 printed images in Gessner's works. Preliminary investigations of the complex categories of snails, insects, and shells show that these too comprise *Vorlagen*.

The small number of non-reversals is significant, as is indeed the fact that many of them are related to one particular section of Gessner's printed works: the Addenda in *Historiae Animalium* II (1554).³⁹ Turning back to the issue of originals versus copies, it is already very hard to imagine that even a (presumed) expert copyist would have started painting such large numbers of images in reverse after printed illustrations, and moreover in a range of different styles. But it defies belief that a number of different painters would have done so and moreover that they would have adopted an appropriate range of colours independently of one another. We can therefore exclude the possibility that these albums mainly contain copies after Gessner's printed illustrations. They must be the original *Vorlagen*.

The qualitative results of the comparison between watercolours and printed Gessner images are equally important, as should be evident from the illustrations presented here and in the online dossier. Given the involvement of various painters, the match between *Vorlage* and printed image is not always uniformly close, but generally the similarities between the watercolours and the printed illustrations concern not only the type of animal and exact pose but even the way in which the fur, horns, or expression are rendered. Frequently they apply also to much finer details, ranging from the curve of a horn or octopus arm to the ways in which colour nuances and the patterning of fish-scales are suggested. For instance, both the printed image of a dolphin and the original drawing show a light patch on its dorsal fin and identical lines of

hatching to render the lighter colours of its belly. The eight tentacles of the big-eyed octopus adopt exactly the same (though reversed) position and shape in the watercolour and the printed image, while the body has the same kind of spots and shading. And although only one of the beautiful pair of river fish (spotted burbot), which are painted in an almost Japanese style, is illustrated in print, the woodcutter has almost perfectly rendered the hatching, black spots and

patterning of the fish in the watercolour, which is in yellowish beige and black (Fig. 3). Finally, a small difference between the watercolour and the (reversed) woodcut of the blowfish with its large teeth explains why it has such a weird bump on its back. The painted image (Fig. 4) shows what has been left out by the woodcutter: the hook and a piece of string from which the blowfish had been hanging and which pulled up its dried skin in the middle of its back.



Fig. 3. Burbot, MS III C 22, 44. Cf. Gessner *Historiae Animalium*, vol. IV (1558), p. 714. Reproduced by kind permission of Amsterdam University Library.

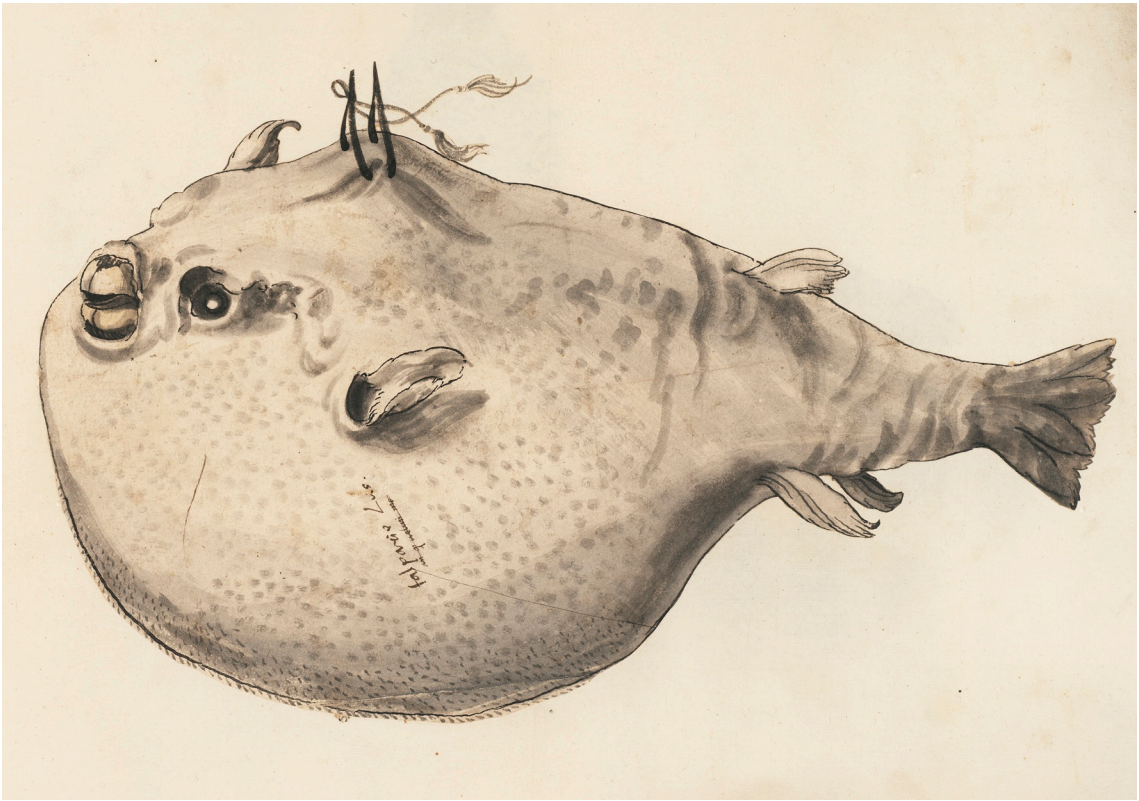


Fig. 4. Blowfish–Orbis, MS III C 22, 130. Cf. Gessner *Historiae Animalium*, vol. IV (1558), p. 746. Reproduced by kind permission of Amsterdam University Library.

Perhaps such a detail provides the most conclusive evidence that these drawings are not copies, but original *Vorlagen*. No painter-copyist would have invented and added such a hook, whereas it is only too understandable that a book illustrator would have left it out.⁴⁰

One *absence* among the images is – if not evidence – at least suggestive. There are neither plants, birds nor minerals, stones or fossils in the Amsterdam albums. As indicated above, a very large number of Gessner's plant drawings has been preserved in Erlangen, while the birds and the minerals and stones are precisely the naturalia of which images have been preserved in Basel as fragments of the Platter–Gessner collection. In this respect – and it is not the only one, as we shall see – the Erlangen drawings, the Basel material and the Amsterdam albums fit together like pieces of a complex jigsaw puzzle.

The evidence of the annotations

Virtually all of the images in the Amsterdam albums that do *not* match Gessner's illustrations must have been collected by Felix Platter – probably from his period of study in Montpellier (1552–57) until his death in 1614. Why is this the case and how can we detect Felix Platter's personal involvement?

The annotations in both volumes are consistent in character, style and handwriting.⁴¹ There are no additions that are clearly of a later date or a completely different character, and we will therefore consider all of the annotations here and not limit ourselves to a particular group of images or animals. Their main characteristics are as follows. They are generally short, only occasionally completely lacking, often limited to the name of the animal, and only rarely longer than three lines per animal. The languages used are Latin and German, including some Swiss or Basel dialect names

and terms.⁴² The handwriting perfectly fits the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century in terms of style and Latin abbreviations. Two types of ink have been used: a dark, almost black one, and a light-brown ink. At first sight, the two different types of ink seem to go together with two different types of handwriting: a more upright one with rather rounded letters for the light brown one, and a more cramped italic handwriting for the black ink. However, in some captions both types of ink are used alternately within one line and one style of handwriting (from black to brown to black to brown). On a number of pages captions in both types of ink and handwriting can be found. And on some pages the handwriting shows characteristics of both types while the shape of a number of specific letters is almost identical in both handwritings (see, for example, Fig. 5).⁴³ In both types of ink and handwriting, dates can be found from the same period (1570s–1580s) as well as remarks in the first person, which are further discussed below. Until information

to the contrary is forthcoming, I therefore assume that there was only one annotator, whose style of writing is sometimes more cursive, sometimes more upright and adapted to the function of a label.

There are very frequent references in the captions to the fact that the drawing of a particular animal or indeed the animal itself (or part of it) had been donated to Gessner by a friend. For example: ‘A civet cat similar to the first one was sent by Vicentius Valensius to Gessner’.⁴⁴ Or: ‘Orfus, Orft, Elft Germ. Achilles Gassarus sent it to Gessner’.⁴⁵ The names of donors also include the Italian Antonius Musa Brasavola (1500–1555), who was personal physician to many rulers, the English physician John Caius (1510–73), the German physician and naturalist Johannes Kentmann (1518–74), the German apothecary Georg Oellinger (1487–1557), the German-Swiss cosmographer Sebastian Münster (1488–1552), the imperial physician Julius Alexandrinus de Neustain (also Giulio Alessandrini, 1506–90), the German physician Cornelius Sittardus in



Fig. 5. Coati, MS III C 23, 56 (detail). Cf. Gessner *Historiae Animalium*, vol. II (1554), App. p. 22. Reproduced by kind permission of Amsterdam University Library.

Rome, and many others.⁴⁶ Sometimes a place and year are mentioned. The references in the annotations to gifts to Gessner in every respect match the information provided in some detail by Gessner himself in his *Historiae Animalium*. They are probably based on the printed text and the annotator must have been very familiar with Gessner's works.⁴⁷

Internal to these remarks based on Gessner's text are references to certain years within the lifetime of Gessner or earlier in history. The remaining annotations, however, contain various references to dates well after Gessner's death.⁴⁸ These range from 1576 to 1610. Place-names too are mentioned as locations where the annotator had observed or obtained an animal or where a friend or correspondent had done so. All of these places belong to Swiss territory or nearby Southern Germany and the Upper Alsace. Basel is mentioned several times as the place where the annotator saw rare animals. In a number of the captions the annotator writes in the first person about naturalia he has personally seen. During the summer of 1589 and the following winter, for instance, he kept a close eye on a chrysalis from which a butterfly eventually emerged in the summer of 1590.⁴⁹ Various captions start with information that derives from Gessner's printed works, but continue with the annotator's own observations in the first person. For instance, he mentions that Gessner had received an image of the coati (*Mus indicus*) from Antonius Musa Brasavola, and adds: 'In 1603 I saw a similar one in Basel in the month of November, but it was less red in colour, it is also called ichneumon'.⁵⁰ After writing about a special carp depicted by Gessner that had been caught in a pond on 12 February 1554 and had lived for another nine days, he added: 'I bought a totally similar one on the market in Basel in the year 1602, which I have dried'.⁵¹ Concerning a big river fish (*silurus*) described by Gessner, the annotator added: 'I received another one which was very similar to that one and alive, which had been caught in the Rhine in the *Salmenloch* at Crentzach in 1601 in the month of June'.⁵² The annotator also provides information about some exotic wild cats that he had seen on display in Switzerland and Germany. With respect to a beautiful spotted 'Panthera-Leopard', which is depicted with a red collar decorated with some bells or knobs, he writes: 'Perhaps it is the same as the *uncia* covered in spots which Caius sent to Gessner which I saw in Basel . . . I remember seeing one at the market at Speyer with a similar yellowish colour which

Emperor Maximilian II used for hunting'.⁵³ Referring once more to the *uncia* elsewhere, he writes: 'I saw a very similar one in Basel, the size of a farm dog, which was shown around by an itinerant person'. By then he had clearly remembered the date on which he had seen a panther like the one of which Musa Brasavola had sent a picture to Gessner: 'I saw it on 27 March 1610'.⁵⁴

The annotation thus points to a collector-annotator who was very familiar with Gessner's printed *Historiae Animalium* and possibly had known Gessner personally, had access to a large stock of images which were *Vorlagen* for Gessner's illustrations, wrote Latin and German, was a passionate observer and collector of (images of) naturalia himself, was alive until at least 1610, and lived probably in Switzerland, possibly in Basel.⁵⁵ Given the history of Gessner's collection and the Swiss context, the obvious candidate is Felix Platter. But only external evidence could confirm or undermine this hypothesis: Felix Platter's handwriting in other manuscript sources; the contents of the *Suppellex* (the inventory of his collection); and the watermarks of the paper sheets on which the animal watercolours are pasted.

In August 2010 I visited Dr Urs Leu, Head of the Department of Rare Prints at the Zentralbibliothek of Zurich and one of the foremost experts on Conrad Gessner, and Dr Lorenz Heiligensetzer, Vice-Head of the Manuscript Department at Basel. Both immediately recognized the black annotations as Felix Platter's handwriting. Indeed, a comparison of the annotation in the Amsterdam albums with autographs by Felix Platter in the Basel collection leaves no room for doubt that Platter was the author of the black annotations in the Amsterdam albums.⁵⁶ Comparison with Platter's mineral and fossil album in Basel also shows that the annotations in black are identical in form and type with that of the Amsterdam albums. Moreover, on p. 138 of the mineral-fossil album light-brown annotation in a more rounded hand can be found as well, which looks similar to the 'second' type of annotation in the Amsterdam albums.⁵⁷ The annotator is, therefore, Felix Platter.

Comparison with the information in the *Suppellex* resulted in three discoveries that further underpin the role of Felix Platter as collector and creator of the Amsterdam albums. As has been earlier noted by Landolt, Platter's inventory mentions that he owned a drawing of a deer by Hans Holbein the Younger

(c. 1498–1543), who worked in Basel and at the English court. And indeed, the watercolour of an elegant small deer (*Damhirsch*) with beautiful antlers in album III C 23, 23 – cut out and pasted on the main sheet like the others – has the caption ‘*Caprea Platyceros. Holbein pinxit*’, which almost perfectly matches the description in the *Suppellex*: ‘*Caprea platyceros. Damhirsch. Alia pinxit holbein*’.⁵⁸

Furthermore, one of the names of donors of animal images mentioned in the Amsterdam albums and not connected with Gessner recurs in the *Suppellex*. The nobleman Egenolf von Rappoltstein (1527–85) and his son Eberhard (born 1570), who lived in Rappoltswiler (also Ribeauvillé) not far from Colmar in Upper Alsace, were friends, patients and to some extent patrons of Felix Platter. They maintained close connections with Basel and had an explicit interest in naturalia and growing rare plants.⁵⁹ According to the *Suppellex*, Felix Platter received three drawings of birds from the Rappoltsteins, including a pelican. This image of the pelican is one of the images preserved in the Basel bird album, where it has the caption ‘painted by Sr. Eberhard Rapolsteijn 1585 May 24’.⁶⁰ A note accompanying a small image of a cobitis (river fish) in the Amsterdam fish album – ‘Another red one caught in Gemar and sent by Sr. Rappelijstenus’ – shows that one of the Rappoltsteins also provided an image of a fish. A very similar text can be found in the *Suppellex* (fol. 61v): ‘*Alia rubra capta in Gömar, à D Rapolijsht. 79*’.⁶¹

Finally, there is an even more striking parallel between the annotations in the Amsterdam albums and the *Suppellex* involving a seal (Fig. 6). The following longer entry can be found in the midst of the usually short and often abbreviated names of animals in the *Suppellex*: ‘*Phoca. Vitulus marinus. Ad vivum depinxit Brand A° 76 13 Jan. Basil. Quem dux Bavar. Galliarum reginam comitatus secum ducebat, et in vase aq. plen. dedu. et piscibus alebat*’.⁶² The caption in the Amsterdam album which accompanies a very large and beautiful (but not quite accurate, given the weird front paws) drawing of a seal is almost exactly the same: ‘*Phoca. Vitulus marinus. Ad vivum depinxit HBrand A° 76 13 Ian: Basileae quem Dux Bavariae Galliae Reginam comitatus secum ducebat et in vase aqua pleno deducebat piscibusque alebat*’ (‘Seal. Sea calf, painted from life by H. Brand on 13 January 1576 at Basel, which travelled with the Duke of Bavaria accompanying the Queen of France and was transported in a container full of water

and fed with fish’).⁶³ Landolt regards the picture of the seal – of which she, of course, knew only the description in the *Suppellex* – as a work commissioned specifically by Platter from the Swiss painter Hans Brand (1552–c.1577?). And there are a few further naturalia mentioned in the *Suppellex* of which the painter ‘HB’ had made drawings, while in the Amsterdam albums too, there are several other references to the painter ‘HB’, as we shall see shortly. The Duke of Bavaria, William V, the Pious (ruled 1579–97) was indeed, as explained by Landolt, in Basel from 11 to 13 January 1576 as a member of the retinue of the French Queen Elisabeth (widow of King Charles IX), on her way from Paris to her native Austria.⁶⁴ A few days earlier the Queen and her retinue – presumably including the seal – had visited Rappoltswiler!

These detailed correspondences are inexplicable if we assume anyone other than Felix Platter to have been the collector of the Amsterdam albums. Two further aspects are suggestive. As noted by Merian, Platter’s collection comprised several drawers with insects, among which scarabs, butterflies, flies, caterpillars and various indeterminate ‘worms’. Platter had been involved since at least 1595 in the promotion of the cultivation of silkworms in his part of the world.⁶⁵ The Amsterdam albums contain several drawings of silkworms, which are unusual in the sense that they are complete watercolours (not cut out along the contours of the animal) which depict the worms together with their eggs or actively munching mulberry leaves, and a similar one of silk moths mating and dying. Significantly, under the heading *Bombices* (silkworms) one of the entries in Platter’s *Suppellex* describes a picture in his collection as ‘Metamorphosis, textura, coitus, mors’.⁶⁶

Finally, although it was by no means uncommon in Platter’s age to cut out drawings of animals or plants and paste them on sheets that could be collected in albums, Platter was a *collage* expert according to no less a person than Montaigne. When the latter visited Platter in 1580 and saw his collection, he remarked on Platter’s expertise in pasting his dried plants in his herbarium so that they looked natural even after several decades, and that even the smallest leaves and fibres could be observed and did not fall off. This is exactly what we see in the case of the animal drawings, many of which have been cut out with great precision and pasted so carefully that even the thinnest strips of



Fig. 6. Seal—*Phoca* MS III C 22, 133. An image added by Felix Platter. Reproduced by kind permission of Amsterdam University Library.

paper are still in place after four centuries.⁶⁷ After a short discussion of the artists involved in the creation of these images we may turn to the crucial issue of the connection between Felix Platter and the paper sheets that together constitute the albums and on which the images were pasted.

The fact that a large number of the images in the Amsterdam albums can be identified as Gessner's *Vorlagen*, while smaller numbers must have been Platter's own additions, is revealing not only in terms of provenance but also in terms of the history of collections. It suggests that the Gessner *Vorlagen* formed

the principal core of Platter's collection in so far as images of animals were concerned – much as the Brunfels *Vorlagen* probably did for his botanical collection – and that their acquisition must have been a major step in the formation of his own collection.

The evidence of the artists

In dealing with the question of the artists, it is crucial to keep in mind that we are confronted here with two interwoven collections made in the course of two dif-

ferent (albeit partly overlapping) periods, while nearly all of the watercolours are anonymous. As discussed above, Gessner not only commissioned many images from artists in Switzerland, in nearby regions and in the Venice area, but he also received many images from his correspondents all over Europe. Many different artists must therefore have been involved.⁶⁸ Less is known of Platter's image collection or his contacts with artists, but it is probable that he too would not have limited himself to local artists and that he would have received images from afar.⁶⁹ Yet, since the two men lived in adjacent Swiss towns, and since their lifetimes overlapped, we may also presume that they would have known at least some artists in common in Switzerland and in nearby Alsace.

Attempts at identifying some of the artists involved would take us beyond the scope of the present article, but we can report some preliminary findings on the basis of the watercolours themselves and their annotations. Although Gessner's impressive botanical watercolours and a few drawings of animals show him to have been a highly competent artist, there is no evidence that he himself created more than a few animal drawings (mainly birds) to be used as *Vorlagen* in his works.⁷⁰ As discussed above, one image (of a deer) was probably made by Holbein: it may originally have belonged to Gessner and been incorporated by Platter. Only one image has an artist's monogram, 'HA', which is accompanied by the year 1547 on the large watercolour of a white goat with a completely black background. More images may have been signed originally, but such signatures, if any, disappeared when the figures were cut out. 'HA' probably refers to Hans Asper (1499–1574), one of the leading artists of Zurich who worked for Gessner's publisher Froschauer between 1531 and 1550. Asper is known to have worked also in Basel and may well have been in contact with Holbein. Asper is also reputed to have made designs for illustrations in Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* and to have painted miniatures, flowers and animals. He is rather better known, however, for his portraits of major figures of the Swiss Reformation, such as Zwingli, Pellikan, and Bullinger.⁷¹ Given the stylistic similarities and use of a similar, totally black background, the illustrations of a horse, a ram, and a white hare in the same Amsterdam album are probably by Asper as well.⁷² The fact that the artist signed and dated the watercolour of the white goat indicates, incidentally, that these images were not meant as

sketches, but were seen as finished works, representative of the artist and worthy to be signed.⁷³

The painters of only a dozen or so other images can be identified on the basis of the annotation. None of those is associated with Gessner; all were directly made for, given to, or commissioned by Felix Platter. The annotation accompanying two Platter watercolours – of a guinea pig, and a kind of mouse with a furry tail – informs us that 'Cluber' painted them.⁷⁴ As observed by Landolt, Hans Hug Klüber (also Klauber, c. 1535–78) of Basel is explicitly mentioned in Platter's *Suppellex* as the painter of the following animal images in his collection: a guineapig, a kind of mouse, and a Bohemian waxwing (denoted as 'Garrulus bohemicus'). Klüber is also thought to be the painter of the heads of a hare and a deer, both in the Kupferstichkabinett in Basel.⁷⁵ Klüber probably trained with Hans Asper in Zurich; few of his works have been preserved and he is best known for his work on the restoration in 1568 of the famous frescoes of the Basel *Dance of Death*. He also made a miniature of a matriculation ceremony, commemorating Felix Platter's appointment as rector of Basel University in 1570.⁷⁶

Holbein, Asper and Klüber are the only painters named in the Amsterdam volume that contains the beasts, insects and amphibians. Their names do not recur in the aquatic album, which contains references (in the annotations) to only two painters, who are again associated with Platter and not with Gessner. The first one figures only once, in the annotation accompanying a painting of a mirror carp in which the sheen of its scales has been enhanced by fine touches of gold: 'Cyprinus specularis Spiegelkarpf Ad vivum depinxit M Joseph A° 89'.⁷⁷ The second is the 'HB' (most probably Hans Brand) discussed earlier, who in 1576 made the drawing of the seal for Platter. It is unlikely that 'HB' here refers to his contemporary, the Swiss painter Hans Bock the Elder (1550–1623), but the latter's involvement in the albums can certainly not be excluded, since he lived in Basel, was a pupil of Hans Hug Klüber, worked for Felix Platter, and even painted the latter's best-known portrait. The younger Von Rappoltstein, moreover, commissioned work by Bock.⁷⁸ 'HB' is mentioned nine times in the Amsterdam aquatic album as having painted naturalia *ad vivum* (the seal) or after naturalia in Platter's collection: a dried and bony fish which the annotator had brought back from Montpellier; a beautiful blue crayfish; and six shells.⁷⁹ The annotation connected with these shells

poses an intriguing question, since the annotator repeatedly writes ‘painted after mine’ (‘ex meo depinxit HB’), but also ‘painted after yours’ (‘de tua pinxit HB’), or ‘de tuis exp. HB’.⁸⁰ Does this perhaps refer to shells owned by respectively Felix and Thomas II Platter, all of which formed part of the Platter family collection in Basel?

The evidence of the paper

One last but crucial piece of the puzzle remains: if Felix Platter collected, cut out and pasted these images on to sheets and annotated them, the paper used in these albums must date from his time or earlier, but certainly not later. So far eight different watermarks have been found in the main sheets of the Amsterdam albums, five of which occur occasionally while three are found regularly throughout both albums.⁸¹ Although detailed further research is needed, the connection with Basel is clear, for all eight watermarks contain the Basel crosier, which is explicitly connected with paper-makers from that city.⁸² All the further visual elements, which are combined in various ways, point to two of the most famous families of Basel paper makers, the Düring and Heusler families: the winged basilisk (a symbol of Basel); a small house (alluding to the Heusler family); three rings or circles sometimes combined with a D (standing for the Düring family); an eagle holding a Basel crosier; and a crown combined with the Dürings’ letter D. These two families produced paper not only in the paper mills of St Albanstal close to Basel, of which one still exists and is a paper museum, but also in other parts of Switzerland and in Upper Alsace. These watermarks also circumscribe the period in which these types of paper were used: while the earliest may date as far back as the 1550s, the main concentration is in the period 1570–1604. The dating of the period of production by these famous Basel papermakers, as evidenced by the watermarks, therefore fits perfectly with the use of this paper by Felix Platter.⁸³

What is more, the watermark with the Basel crosier and small house that occurs very regularly in the Amsterdam albums is also one of the three commonest watermarks in Felix Platter’s herbarium, while the watermarks found there by Walter Rytz with scarcely an exception all likewise point to paper made by the Heusler and Düring families in Basel, and can be

dated to the period between about 1556 and 1603.⁸⁴ A watermark found in Platter’s Mineral-Fossil Album in Basel is identical with one of the most common in the Amsterdam albums.⁸⁵ The single recurring watermark in Platter’s *Suppelleux*, according to Landolt, is datable to the period c. 1579–85 and is closely related to the eagle and crosier watermark in the Amsterdam albums.⁸⁶ Landolt, finally, states that the papers used in the herbarium and Platter’s Mineral-Fossil Album are identical.⁸⁷

The evidence of the paper thus points straight to Basel paper makers, Felix Platter’s lifetime, and indeed to Platter himself. It also suggests the following. Both albums in Amsterdam have several blank pages at the beginning and end, while here and there blank pages have been inserted between the illustrated sheets to demarcate and separate groups of images. In both albums these blank pages seem to separate groups of images (possibly linked by a combination of provenance and style or theme) rather than categories of animals (although both may coincide). The main example is a special group of similar-looking fish images in the aquatic album which are distinguished by painted labels bearing Dutch fish names within the picture itself, and by the fact that the animals have not been cut out along their contours but with the background included. On the blank pages two watermarks have thus far been found. Both occur also on other sheets in the albums (on which figures have been pasted) and, so far as now known, can be dated to the end of the sixteenth century.⁸⁸ This suggests that these blank pages were not inserted at a much later phase, but together with the other sheets. And that in turn suggests that these albums were organized as they are now by either Felix Platter himself (in the course of the late 1590s or not long after the close of the sixteenth century) or by his younger half-brother Thomas II. The latter acted as Felix’s amanuensis in the writing of the *Tagebuch*, wrote the larger part of the *Suppelleux*, and probably helped Felix (re)organize the collection itself.⁸⁹

The evidence of the binding may eventually support this provisional conclusion, but expert advice is needed, and as yet we can present only a short description and one piece of suggestive evidence. Both volumes of the Amsterdam album have paperboard front and back covers, covered (like the spine) with parchment. As established by Dr Jos Biemans, manuscript expert from Amsterdam University Library, this parchment

originally formed part of a medieval manuscript with liturgical chants in Latin, accompanied by a musical notation using square notes (often found in choir-books with Gregorian chants). After binding, the parchment was painted over with a dark-grey or black paint and stamped with an embossed decoration in the shape of a large rectangle several centimetres within the edge of the cover. Smaller stamps were used to mark the corners and the centre of the covers, which are decorated with a lozenge-shaped ornament. Originally, five ribbons served to close the albums: one over the top of the album, one closing the bottom, and three across the leading edge.⁹⁰ It is suggestive indeed that the manuscript of Felix Platter's *Tagebuch* was bound (together with various other manuscripts in German by him) in a very similar (but unpainted) binding, which consists of 'Resten eines prachtvollern mittelalterlichen Antiphonars, d.h. eines liturgische Gesangbuches aus weissem Pergament mit romanischer Quadratnotation'; according to Lötscher such antiphonaries were used in Basel from the 1590s onwards for the binding of books, and he concludes that this was done either by Felix himself or by his younger brother shortly before or after Felix Platter's death.⁹¹

Relevance

Several modern historians have expressed the wish that the original model drawings for Gessner's woodcut illustrations had been preserved. Now that many of these drawings – and thus an important part of Gessner's and Platter's collections – are available once more, what can this material tell us?

In a specific sense Gessner's *Vorlagen* can be expected to clarify certain enigmatic details in his printed illustrations. They will, moreover, throw light on his way of selecting (and rejecting or adapting) images, on relations between text and image and between model drawing and printed woodcut – crucial aspects of book illustration that can only rarely be studied for early-modern works since original drawings were often thrown away after they had been transferred to the woodblocks. This material is all the more pertinent to such issues since Gessner was an author who aimed at a high level of naturalistic representation, and was a model for many others.

In a wider sense both Gessner's *Vorlagen* and Platter's additional images are of great relevance to the early-

modern history of science and early encyclopaedism. If the sheets of the Amsterdam albums were indeed organized during or shortly after Felix Platter's lifetime in the order in which we still find them, this would give us important and rare evidence on how images of naturalia were actually arranged in a late sixteenth-century collection – especially if studied in the respective contexts of Gessner's works, his collection, and Platter's collection. This could open a range of new questions and possible answers on classification and the ordering of nature at this period. The annotations can throw light on issues ranging from the classification of animals to scientific naming and contemporary notions of how to identify and to create 'labels' with authoritative information.

In terms of visual history the albums offer fascinating and abundant material for the study of what may perhaps be called a grey zone between scientific illustration and nature painting. How many of these images were at the time regarded as illustrations meant for a scientific work, as realistic representations of nature, or as art, is as yet an undecided question, even if it is clear that they formed part of two successive collections and belonged to the medical section of Platter's collection. These images may well have served very different purposes depending on their context of the moment and the function for which they were collected and grouped together. Many different painterly styles of representing nature can be discerned in this material. A comparison is all the more interesting since Gessner received his images from all over Europe, and since the collecting activities of Gessner and Platter together cover a large part of the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth century – a phase that comprised not only a botanical but also a zoological Renaissance.

The hundreds of images contained in the Amsterdam albums pose the great challenge of identifying at least a number of the painters involved. Leeman-Van Elck's work of 1935 on the Swiss and Strasbourg artists connected with Gessner is still indispensable. The search will have to be extended from these men, who were mainly involved, however, in the creation of either botanical or bird images, to artists connected with Gessner's correspondents all over Europe who provided him with pictures of animals. Work on the artists connected with Platter too will have to start with Swiss circles and widen from there. Quite a few of the artists will probably remain anonymous, but the fact

that they worked for collectors interested in animals and that this material was clearly exchanged between naturalists and collectors all over Europe should throw some further light on practices of this type, collaboration between collectors and painters, and on European traditions of depicting nature.

The albums, finally, allow us to investigate a particularly fascinating and multi-layered history of collecting by following the way in which Gessner's material was integrated into the collection of Felix Platter, who ordered and annotated it. We can attempt to trace the formation, development and organization of the collections of two physician-naturalists, both of whom enjoyed a Europe-wide reputation. It is exactly the presence of these various historical layers in the albums – of a collection within a collection – that poses some of the most intriguing challenges.

Supplementary information

An online appendix reproduces twenty-four folios from the albums discussed in the text.

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Notes and references

- 1 University Library Amsterdam (ULA), MS III C 22 and MS III C 23; No. 689 in M. B. Mendes da Costa, *De handschriften, krachtens bruikleencontract in de Universiteitsbibliotheek berustende* [Catalogus der Handschriften, vol. vii] (Amsterdam, 1923). I had seen these albums for the first time during the early 1990s, when involved in research on the marine drawings of Adriaen Coenen. Then I had neither the time to explore this material nor the expertise to recognize its significance.
- 2 See Heinrich Buess, 'Conrad Gessner's Beziehungen zu Basel', *Gessnerus* 1–2 (1948), pp. 1–29.
- 3 The best analysis of which drawings and albums from Gessner's collection ended up in Platter's collection is still Paul Leemann-Van Elck, *Der Buchschmuck in Conrad Gessners naturgeschichtlichen Werken* (Bern, 1935), pp. 10–11, 29–30; cf. Elizabeth Landolt, 'Materialien zu Felix Platter als Sammler und Kunstfreund', *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 72 (1972), pp. 245–306.
- 4 See Mendes da Costa, op. cit. (note 1), p. 103. Confusingly, the catalogue of 1877 speaks of three volumes, but the earlier one of 1849 mentions only two.
- 5 The Dutch Remonstrantse Gemeente was founded in 1610 as a result of a schism between so-called *Rekkelijke* (Remonstrantse) and *Preciese* (strict, Counter-Remonstrantse) Protestants, and exists to this day. I am especially grateful to Dr Lorenz Heiligensetzer for information about Swiss – Dutch connections.
- 6 Digitization of the albums at Amsterdam University Library is currently underway, and the complete contents of the albums will be made available online.
- 7 Vol. I, 1,104 pp. (83 illustrated); vol. II, 110 + 27 pp. (43 illustrated); vol. III, 779 pp. (192 illustrated); vol. IV, 1,279 pages (514 illustrated). These numbers refer to the first editions in Latin, published in Zurich by Froschauer. For the annotated bibliography of all of Gessner's works, see Hanan Wellisch, 'Conrad Gessner: a bio-bibliography', *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History* 7 (1975), pp. 151–247. Cf. Alfredo Serrai and Maria Cochetti, *Conrad Gesner* (Rome, 1990).
- 8 See esp. Wellisch, op. cit. (note 7). Studies dealing specifically with the *Historiae Animalium* are Leemann-Van Elck, op. cit. (note 3); Caroline Gmelig Meijling-Nijboer, 'Conrad Gessner's "Historia Animalium": An Inventory of Renaissance Zoology' (diss. Utrecht, 1977); Udo Friedrich, 'Naturgeschichte zwischen artes liberales und frühneuzeitlicher Wissenschaft. Conrad Gessner's "Historia animalium" und ihre volkssprachlicher Rezeption' (diss. Tübingen, 1995); Laurent Pinon, 'Conrad Gessner and the historical depth of Renaissance natural history', in Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi (eds.), *Historia. Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2005), pp. 241–67; Karl Ehenkel, 'Zur Konstituierung der Zoologie als Wissenschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit: Diskursanalyse zweier Grossprojekte (Wotton, Gesner)', in Karl Ehenkel and Paul Smith (eds.), *Early Modern Zoology. The Construction of Animals in Science, Literature and the Visual Arts*, Intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies, vol. VII (Leiden and Boston, 2007), pp. 15–74; Angela Fischel, 'Natur im Bild. Zeichnung und Naturerkenntnis bei Conrad Gessner und Ulisse Aldrovandi' (diss. Berlin, 2009); Angela Fischel, 'Collections, images and form in sixteenth-century natural history: the case of Conrad Gessner', *Intellectual History Review* 20 (2010), pp. 147–64; and Sachiko Kusukawa, 'The sources of Gessner's pictures for the *Historia animalium*', *Annals of Science* 67 (2010), pp. 303–28.
- 9 The first German editions, again all published by Froschauer in Zurich, were edited and abridged by Gessner's friends Cunrat Forer (vols I and II together in the *Thierbuch* of 1563, vol. IV as the *Fischbuch* of 1563), and Rudolf Heusslin (*Vogelbuch*, 1557).
- 10 See the Prefaces of Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* I, III and IV. The best publications on (the sources of) Gessner's

- illustrations are Leemann-Van Elck, op. cit. (note 3); Gmelig Nijboer, op. cit. (note 8), esp. pp. 78-95; Kusukawa, op. cit. (note 8); Rudolf Steiger, 'Erschliessung des Conrad-Gessner-Materials der Zentralbibliothek Zürich', *Gesnerus* 25 (1968), pp. 29-64; and Bruno Weber, "In absoluti hominis historia persequenda". Über die Richtigkeit wissenschaftlicher Illustration in einigen Basler und Zürcher Drucken des 16. Jahrhundert', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1986), pp. 101-46. Steiger and Weber are, surprisingly, not mentioned by Kusukawa.
- 11 On Gessner, the importance of autopsy, and *ad vivum* illustrations, and his critical attitude to visual information, see Weber, op. cit. (note 10), pp. 102, 118-20, 128-9 n. 13; and Kusukawa, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 307-8, 322-4. Cf. more generally Peter Parshall, 'Imago contrafacta: images and facts in the Northern Renaissance', *Art History* 16 (1993), pp. 554-79.
- 12 Leemann-Van Elck, op. cit. (note 3), p. 6.
- 13 *Historiae Animalium*, vol. iv: *de Serpentium natura* (Zurich, 1587) was compiled on the basis of Gessner's notes by his friends Caspar Wolff and Jacob Carron. There was no *Historiae Animalium* vol. vi as such, but via a long and tortuous route a number of Gessner's insect images ended up in Thomas Moffet's *Insectorum sive minimorum animalium theatrum* (London, 1634), which appeared some thirty years after the death of Moffet himself and which also included material collected by the English naturalists Edward Wotton and Thomas Penny. On its complicated history, see Hans Fischer, *Conrad Gessner* (26. März 1516-13. Dezember 1565); *Leben und Werk* (Zurich, 1965), pp. 50-54. Cf. Thea Vignau-Willberg, 'In Minimis Maxime Conspicua. Insektendarstellungen um 1600 und die Anfänge der Entomologie', in Enenkel and Smith, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 217-43, here esp. pp. 219, 237. Moffet knew Felix Platter well and boarded with him in Basel in 1578; see Manfred E. Welti, 'English-baslerische Beziehungen zur Zeit der Renaissance in der Medizin, den Naturwissenschaften und der Naturphilosophie', *Gesnerus* 20 (1963), pp. 105-30, here pp. 120-30.
- 14 The (nameless) painter is mentioned in a letter from Gessner to John Caius, 29 August 1561. See Leemann-Van Elck, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 10-11; and Weber, op. cit. (note 10), pp. 123 and 142-3.
- 15 On the iconicity of Gessner's images, see Weber, op. cit. (note 10), p. 129. On Albrecht Dürer's rhinoceros and other animal drawings, see F. J. Cole, 'The history of Albrecht Dürer's rhinoceros in zoological literature', in E. Ashworth Underwood (ed.), *Science, Medicine and History. Essays on the Evolution of Scientific Thought and Medical Practice written in honour of Charles Singer*, vol. 1 (London, 1953), pp. 337-56; and Gert Unverfehrt (ed.), *Dürers Dinge. Einblattgraphik und Buchillustrationen Albrecht Dürers aus dem Besitz der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen* (Göttingen, 1997), pp. 66-82.
- 16 Su appears in André Thevet, *Les singularitez de la France antarctique* (Paris, 1557). An image of Su decorates the title-page of the 1563 edition of Gessner's *Thierbuch*. On Gessner, Su and New World animals, see Urs B. Leu, 'Konrad Gessner und die Neue Welt', *Gesnerus* 49 (1992), pp. 279-309; Florike Egmond and Peter Mason, 'Armادillos in unlikely places: some unpublished sixteenth-century sources for New World *Rezeptionsgeschichte* in Northern Europe', *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* 20 (1994), pp. 3-52; and Peter Mason, *Before Disenchantment. Images of Exotic Animals and Plants in the Early Modern World* (London, 2009).
- 17 On Gessner's copying of images see esp. Gmelig-Nijboer, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 79-81; and Weber, op. cit. (note 10), pp. 118-24; cf. Kusukawa, op. cit. (note 8); and Sachiko Kusukawa, 'Image, text and observatio: the Codex Kentmanus', *Early Science & Medicine* 14 (2009), pp. 445-75.
- 18 On the influence of Gessner's animal pictures, see esp. William B. Ashworth Jr., 'The persistent beast; recurring images in early zoological illustration', in Allan Ellenius (ed.), *The Natural Sciences and the Arts. Aspects of Interaction from the Renaissance to the 20th Century* (Uppsala, 1985), pp. 46-66; and William B. Ashworth Jr., 'Remarkable humans and singular beasts', in Joy Kenseth (ed.), *The Age of the Marvelous* (Hanover, NH, 1991), pp. 113-44.
- 19 Hartmut Walravens, 'Konrad Gessner in chinesischem Gewand. Darstellungen fremder Tiere im K'un-yü t'u-shuo des P. Verbiest (1623-1688)', *Gesnerus* 30 (1973), pp. 87-98.
- 20 On the Wawel verdure in Krakow, see M. Hennel-Bernasikowa, *Wandteppiche des Königs Sigismund August. Polen im Zeitalter der Jagiellonen*, exh. cat., Schallaburg (Vienna, 1986); and on the Scottish country houses, Michael Bath, *Renaissance Decorative Painting in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2003), esp. pp. 157, 173. On the embroideries by Mary Queen of Scots, see Michael Bath, *Emblems for a Queen. The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 2008). For more examples of the enormous influence of Gessner's images, see Katherine Acheson, 'Gesner, Topsell, and the purposes of pictures in early modern natural histories', in Michael Hunter (ed.), *Printed Images in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Interpretation* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 127-44.
- 21 Adriaen Coenen, *Visboek*, Koninklijke Bibliotheek The Hague, MS 78 E 54 (it can be consulted on <http://www.kb.nl/bladerboek/visboek/index.html>; and *Walvisboek* (1584-85), Library of the Koninklijke Maatschappij voor Dierkunde in Antwerp (Antwerp MS 30.021), which was first published in 2003. See Florike Egmond and Peter Mason (eds), *The Whale Book. Whales and other Marine Animals as described by Adriaen Coenen in 1585* (London, 2003). On Coenen's works and sources, see also Florike Egmond, *Het Visboek. De wereld volgens Adriaen Coenen* (Zutphen, 2005).
- 22 See on this botanical part, see esp. Heinrich Zoller, 'Conrad Gessner als Botaniker', *Gesnerus* 22 (1965), pp. 216-27; Heinrich Zoller (ed.), *Conradi Gesneri historia plantarum. Faksimileausgabe* (Zurich, 1972-80); and Heinrich Zoller (ed.), *Conradi Gesneri historia plantarum. Gesamtausgabe* (Zurich, 1987, 1991). Cf. Fischer, op. cit. (note 13), pp. 134-42.
- 23 See Leemann-Van Elck, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 10-11, 29-30. If Fischer, op. cit. (note 13), p. 53, is correct that the English naturalist Thomas Penny received insects and insect drawings from the Gessner legacy from Camerarius, this would suggest that the division was not clear-cut.
- 24 See for the chronology and contents of Platter's collection Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 249-60. Cf. Peter Merian, 'Nachrichten über Felix Platters Naturaliensammlung', *Bericht über die Verhandlungen der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Basel* 14 (1840), pp. 93-102.
- 25 Walter Rytz, *Das Herbarium Felix Platters: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Botanik des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Basel, 1933).
- 26 Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), p. 246. Michel de Montaigne, *Journal de Voyage en Italie*, in *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris, 1962), p. 1128.

- 27 MS J I 5, Universitätsbibliothek Basel (UBB). See on the collection and inventories Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 246–7. To my knowledge the *Suppellex* has never been published, although many authors refer to it and quote short sections.
- 28 Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), p. 256. This refers to the above mentioned Scottish-Polish naturalist John Jonston (1603–75).
- 29 MS K IV 1 (botanical drawings); MS K I 2 (minerals-fossils-stones album); MS K I 1 (bird album), all UBB. With special thanks to Dr Lorenz Heiligensetzer in Basel, who also made digital images available to me. For the number of thirty-five (birds, from Gessner's collection) I rely on Baudouin van den Abeele, 'Les albums ornithologiques de Jacques de Dalechamps, médecin et naturaliste à Lyon (1513–1588)', *Archives internationales d'histoire des sciences* 52 (2002), pp. 3–45, here p. 38. About Gessner's work on birds see Katharina B. Springer and Ragnar Kinzelbach, *Das Vogelbuch von Conrad Gessner (1516–1565): ein Archiv für avifaunistische Daten* (Berlin, 2009).
- 30 L. B. Holthuis, 'Original watercolours donated by Cornelius Sittardus to Conrad Gesner, and published by Gesner in his (1558–1670) works on aquatic animals', *Zoologische Mededelingen* 70 (1996), pp. 169–96; cf. Kusukawa, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 313, 316. I have seen the watercolours in Naturalis but could not inspect their reverses.
- 31 Roberta M. J. Olson, and Alexandra Mazzitelli, 'The discovery of a cache of over 200 sixteenth-century avian watercolors. A missing chapter in the history of ornithological illustration', *Master Drawings* 45 (2007), pp. 435–521, here pp. 440–42, 447, 450–52, and catalogue entries on pp. 497–8, 505. The authors make the same claim for the drawing of a bird of paradise, which, however, does not look remotely like Gessner's printed image as illustrated by them; nor does it follow from its caption 'Manucodiata. ex Gesn. et Dalec.' that the bird came from Gessner's collection (cf. pp. 440–42, 497).
- 32 The single instance of a short text on a verso side (III C 22, 187v) repeats another caption (for the *Cuniculus indicus* from III C 23), which suggests that this sheet was reused.
- 33 With the possible exception of the lamprey on III C 22, 45, which may be a hand-coloured woodcut.
- 34 As a consequence it is very hard to detect signs of tracing on the backs of the pasted images, but this needs further attention.
- 35 For reversals, woodprinting techniques, and the various stages from original drawing to printed woodcut, see (for Gessner's works) Leemann-Van Elck, op. cit. (note 3); and in general for early prints David Landau and Peter Parshall, *The Renaissance Print 1470–1550* (New Haven and London, 1994). When several original watercolours exist which closely resemble each other and are all reversed with respect to the printed illustrations (cf. the above mentioned Holthuis watercolours), the assumption is that one painter or workshop produced several originals after one model or animal.
- 36 For the viviparous animals I have consulted the first Latin edition of *Historiae Animalium* vol. I of 1551, the addenda in the 1554 volume (II), and the additional images in the 1560 edition of the *Icones*. Examples of non-reversals are III C 23, 56 (coati); and III C 23, 16 (baboon).
- 37 The percentages are lower because Gessner re-used very large numbers of images of aquatic animals that had previously been printed by Rondelet; those re-used images can not be found in the albums in Amsterdam.
- 38 For fish and aquatic animals I have used the first Latin edition of the fish book (*Historiae Animalium* vol. IV) of 1558, as well as the *Nomenclator Aquatilium* of 1560.
- 39 Most of the latter appear to be images that were copied for Gessner after other original watercolours, while several of them are, according to his printed text, composite images.
- 40 Dolphin: MS III C 22, 102 and *Historiae Animalium* vol. IV (1558), p. 1276; Octopus: MS III C 22, 193, and *Historiae Animalium* vol. IV (1558), p. 870; Burbot: MS III C 22, 44, and *Historiae Animalium* vol. IV (1558), p. 714; Blowfish: MS III C 22, 130, and *Historiae Animalium* vol. IV (1558), p. 746.
- 41 Using a lamp, very occasionally brief annotations on the back of the pasted images can be discerned which show through the paper. This looks like scribbled names to identify the animals, but further research is needed.
- 42 This aspect needs to be investigated by Swiss experts in the light of what Lötscher writes about Platter's use of Basel dialect in his *Tagebuch*; see Valentin Lötscher (ed.), *Felix Platter, Tagebuch, 1536–67* (Basel and Stuttgart, 1976), pp. 36–40.
- 43 For examples, see III C 22, 56 (coati); III C 23, 113 (butterflies) and 147 (shrimps etc.); III C 23, 119 (papilio) and III C 22, 133 (phoca).
- 44 III C 23, 47 'Catus zibethi priori similis Vicentius Valensius Ges. misit'.
- 45 III C 22, 12 'Orfus, Orft, Elft Germ. Achilles Gassarus Ges. misit'. The reference is to the German physician, geographer and astrologer Achilles Pirmin Gasser (1505–77).
- 46 See Kusukawa, op. cit. (note 8), and op. cit. (note 17).
- 47 The huge task of checking all annotation in the albums against all printed texts concerning these animals in the various Gessner editions has only been started as yet. In the several dozens of cases checked so far I have not found any example in which the annotation contains more information than the printed texts.
- 48 In III C 23 these are: 1610, Basel (p. 10); 1603, Basel (p. 56); 1582 (p. 82); 1589–90 (p. 113); 1582 (p. 142). And in III C 22: 1589 (p. 7); 1602 (p. 8); 1601 (p. 36); and 1576, Basel (p. 133).
- 49 III C 23, 113: 'Matrix eruae thyrimali in qua papilio inclusus in mense iunio A° 89 per totam aetatem et hyemem quoque saevissimam vivus A° 90 eodem mense iunio exclusus, talis fuit, qualis hic pictus est papilio, qui tamen uti aliae eruae non diu in sua matrice inclusus eruperat'.
- 50 III C 23, 56: 'Basileae A° 603 mē. Nov. similē vidi, sed colore minus rubebat, vocatur qq icheumone'.
- 51 III C 22, 8: 'Cyprinus Nazarethi in Burgūdia in stagnu captus A° 1554 12 Febr. Vixit dies novem. Gilbertus cognatus Ges. misit. Similem omnino in foro Basil. emi A° 1602. quē siccātū servo'.
- 52 III C 22, 36: 'Aliū dōd huic similē vivū ad me missū accepi, captū in Rheno im Salmenloch zu Crenzach. A° 1601. mē Iunio'. Grenzach lies just east of Basel, on the German side of the Rhine.
- 53 III C 23, 8: 'Forte eadem cū illa quam unciae nomine Caius Ges. misit cum maculis dōd representat ēā quā Basileae vidi ... Memini me Spirae in comitiis similē vidisse colore admodū luteo, qua Imp. Maxim. II ad venationē utebatur. A° Do.' Maximilian II ruled as emperor from 1564 until his death in 1576.

- 54 The latter two quotations are from MS III C 23, 10.
- 55 It seems too far-fetched to assume that someone copied all of the annotation including the first-person remarks.
- 56 I have looked at the manuscript of Felix Platter's *Tagebuch* (MS A λ III 3); additions by him to the *Suppellex* (MS J I 5); Platter's Mineral-Fossil Album (MS K I 2), and two letters by Felix Platter (1558, Ki. Ar. 18a, 281, bl. 344; and G II 33, 225), all at UBB. With special thanks to Dr Lorenz Heiligensetzer. On the different styles of handwriting in the Platter family, see Lötscher, op. cit. (note 42), pp. 34–35.
- 57 No annotation in the albums looks like Thomas II Platter's hand (in light brown ink) as found in the main body of the text of the *Suppellex*. On p. 137 of the manuscript of Felix Platter's *Tagebuch* the handwriting of both men can be seen together (MS A λ III 3, UBB). If it should turn out that the rounded annotation in light brown in both the Amsterdam albums and the Basel Mineral-Fossil Album was *not* made by Felix after all, the dates contained in it, the combination of both types of handwriting on one sheet, and the organization of text and images on the pages in all of these albums suggest that the 'second annotator' was a contemporary and collaborator of Felix, but not his half-brother Thomas.
- 58 Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), p. 257. *Suppellex*, fol. 53. Obviously, stylistic comparison will be necessary to confirm this attribution. Landolt suspects that the Holbein drawing already belonged to Gessner.
- 59 See Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 255, 280–82, also on Eberhard's garden with rare plants, 1611.
- 60 'A D. Eberhard Rapolsteijn depictus 1585 Maij 24'; see Merian, op. cit. (note 24), p. 102.
- 61 MS III C 22, 3: 'Alia rubra capta in Gemar & a Dnō Rappelijsteno missa'; and *Suppellex*, fol. 61v. Guémare is a village close to Rappoltswiler/Ribeauvillé in Upper Alsace.
- 62 *Suppellex*, fol. 61.
- 63 MS III C 22, 133.
- 64 Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), p. 285.
- 65 Merian, op. cit. (note 24), p. 99.
- 66 MS III C 23, 106, 107, 108; *Suppellex* fol. 65v.
- 67 Montaigne, op. cit. (note 26), p. 1128. By this time Platter's herbarium comprised material that had been pasted-in some twenty years earlier. A detailed comparison with the pasted drawings of plants from Platter's collection might be interesting.
- 68 For the donors of images among Gessner's correspondents and friends see esp. Kusakawa, op. cit. (note 8). On Gessner's network and exchanges see also Candice Delisle, 'Accessing nature, circulating knowledge: Conrad Gessner's correspondence networks and his medical and naturalist practices', *History of Universities* 23 (2008), pp. 35–58. Leemann-Van Elck, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 8–10, 13–14, 19, 24–6, mentions the following painters as having worked for Gessner: Lucas Schân of Strasbourg (birds); Grosshans (Johann) Thomann of Zurich (plants); Jos Murer of Zurich (plants); Hans Asper of Zurich; and possibly Jacob Clauser of Basel and Jost Amman of Zurich (both plants). Nearly all later publications rely in this respect on information provided by Leemann-Van Elck; e.g. Marianne Naegeli *et al.*, *Zürcher Kunst nach der Reformation, Hans Asper und seine Zeit*. exh. cat., Helmhaus (Zurich, 1981); Christa Riedl-Dorn, *Wissenschaft und Fabelwesen: ein kritischer Versuch über Conrad Gessner und Ulisse Aldrovandi* (Vienna, 1989); and Fischel, op. cit. (note 8).
- 69 See Landolt, op. cit. (note 3).
- 70 See esp. Zoller, op. cit. [*Gesamtausgabe* and *Faksimileausgabe*] (note 22), who has carefully identified which of those botanical drawings are by Gessner himself. Only a handful of extant drawings of animals can be attributed with certainty to Gessner (some are dated 1563, all are in the Zentralbibliothek at Zurich). See Naegeli *et al.*, op. cit. (note 68), pp. 138–41; cf. Fischel, op. cit. (note 8), p. 23.
- 71 For the printed illustration based on this drawing see Gessner, *Historiae Animalium*, vol. 1 (1551), p. 302. On Asper, see Leemann-Van Elck, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 13–14; P. Boesch, 'Der Zürcher Apelles', *Zwingliana* (1949), pp. 16–43; Heinrich Geissler, 'Die Zeichenkunst von Hans Asper', *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 2 no. 42 (1985), pp. 145–8; Mary G., Winkler, 'A divided heart: idolatry and the portraiture of Hans Asper', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987), pp. 213–30, esp. p. 215; and Naegeli *et al.*, op. cit. (note 68), pp. 45–6.
- 72 Respectively MS III C 23, 1; MS III C 23, 32; and MS III C 23, 48.
- 73 Cf. Dagmar Eichberger, 'Naturalia und artefacta: Dürer's nature drawings and early collecting', in Dagmar Eichberger and Charles Zika (eds), *Dürer and his Culture* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 13–37, here p. 27, who argues the same for signed and dated drawings of animals by Dürer.
- 74 MS III C 23, 49, 'Cuniculus indicus Cluber pinxit' – definitely not the same guineapig as the one illustrated by Gessner, *Icones Animalium* (Zurich, 1553), p. 63, which is known as one of the earliest printed illustrations of this American animal; and MS III C 23, 57, a 'Muris genus quod valde cicurat. Habuit Dominus Vinc Schulthes, pinxit Cluber'.
- 75 Landolt op. cit. (note 3) p. 284. Cf. *Suppellex*, fols 54v and 55.
- 76 On the *Totentanz*, see Franz Egger, *Basler Totentanz* (Basel, 1990; 2nd edn 2009), pp. 28–29. The miniature is depicted in Lötscher op. cit. (note 42), Taf. 53.
- 77 MS III C 22, 7; cf. MS III C 22, 148. If the name M. Joseph refers to a Meister Joseph rather than a painter with the surname Joseph, a possible candidate would be Joseph Heintz the Elder (Basel 1564 – Prague 1609), a painter-architect and son of a Basel architect who learned his painting from Hans Bock the Elder, must have known Felix Platter, and travelled and worked for several years in Venice and Rome during the second half of the 1580s. See Eliška Fučíková *et al.* (eds), *Rudolf II and Prague. The Imperial court and Residential City as the cultural Heart of Central Europe* (Prague, London and Milan, 1997), catalogue section pp. 35–6.
- 78 On Brand, Bock and Platter see Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 278–86. Bock also painted other members of the Platter family as well as other Basel notables.
- 79 See MS III C 22, 54 (crayfish), 86 (the dried fish), 133 (seal), and 208, 210, 218, 219, 224, and 232 (shells).
- 80 See MS III C 22, 208, 210, 219, 224, and 232.
- 81 Thus far, it has not been possible to inspect the paper of the cut-out and pasted figures of the animals themselves, as the glue and paint obscure possible watermarks.
- 82 No. 1 is a Basel crosier with a cross and three rings at the bottom, of which a larger version occurs occasionally and a smaller one appears throughout the albums. Paper with these watermarks was produced by Basel paper-makers of the Düring family (the three rings are their family mark). There

are various watermarks with the smaller Basel crosier and the rings, of which the dates of use range between the mid 1550s and the 1590s; paper with the large version of this watermark was in use in the 1570s and 1580s. No. 2 is the Basel crosier with five pearls and a little house (one version with three upper windows in the front façade, the other with only one top window; both versions were made by Basel paper-makers of the Heusler family – referenced by the small house – and its use is documented for the period c. 1590–1603. No. 3 is a large Basel crosier with a vertical line, a thickly outlined cross and a capital W or M, made again by the Heusler family and with a documented use in 1603.

The further five watermarks that are only incidentally used in the albums include the Basel crosier without any further additions and a large Basel crosier with a cross at bottom, some letters and three rings (both as yet undated, but the latter of these certainly produced by the Düring family); a winged basilisk with a crosier and a small house, produced by the Heusler family; an eagle with a Basel crosier, three rings and a letter, produced by the Düring family; and finally a large crown with a shield and several letters including a D, likewise a Düring product. With the advice of Martin Kluge, paper expert at the St Albanstal Paper Museum in Basel, all (still provisional) identifications have been made with the help of the standard works by C. M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes. Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, facsimile of the 1907 edn with supplementary material, ed. Allan Stevenson (Amsterdam, 1968); W. Fr. Tschudin, *The Ancient Paper Mills of Basle and their marks* (Hilversum, 1958); and the Gravell Watermark Archive: <http://www.gravell.org/>.

- 83 Felix's father Thomas Platter I was involved in the printing business in Basel during Felix's youth (1535–44) and must have owned stocks of paper made by local producers, but he

sold his printing house and at least some of his stocks: see Lötscher op. cit. (note 42), pp. 10, 12, 79.

- 84 See Rytz, op. cit. (note 25), pp. 15–22, esp. 20.
- 85 This is the Basel crosier with the little house with three top windows. See Platter's *Mineral-Fossil Album*, fols 41 and 53. As might be expected, the watermarks of the sheets with bird drawings in Basel (on which the figures were re-pasted, probably in the eighteenth century) are completely different. Cf. Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 247–8.
- 86 An eagle with a crown, crosier and Düring-mark. See Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), p. 247 n. 11.
- 87 Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), p. 248, n. 14.
- 88 These are the same watermarks described above as the winged basilisk with crosier and small house, and the large (uncrowned) eagle with crosier and Düring-rings.
- 89 This fits well with Landolt's conclusion that the *Suppellex* was probably made at the same time that the collection was (re)organized; see Landolt, op. cit. (note 3), p. 248 n. 14. A new organization of Platter's herbarium has been proven for the same period (c. 1595–1603) by Walter Rytz, op. cit. (note 25), p. 22. The exact order, number and identity of the listed images in the *Suppellex* and those of items in the Amsterdam albums still have to be compared. The albums contain fewer items but appear to follow a similar grouping and order.
- 90 I am very grateful for this information to Dr Jos Biemans, Amsterdam (September 2010).
- 91 Lötscher, op. cit. (note 42), p. 29. Dr Lorenz Heiligensetzer, Basel (May 2011), kindly informed me that Platter's *Tagebuch* has been rebound since Lötscher's publication; Platter's *Suppellex* and *Pestbericht* have a cover of marbled paper; the stamps on the cover of the *Hausbuch* (A λ v 9) need to be compared.