Chapter 17

Vera Keller
(University of Southern California, Los Angeles)

Painted Friends: Political Interest and the Transformation of International Learned Sociability

Intimacy and Politics

In his best-seller, *De constantia* (On Constancy, 1584), the Flemish humanist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) painted, as it were, an alluring portrait of intellectual friendship. A young Lipsius paced through a beautiful, enclosed garden in the company of his elder friend and mentor, Langius. Their learned companionship flourished in a secluded nook, shielded from the harsh winds and tempests of a world shaken by rebellion and religious wars. Lipsius suggested that through the rule of one’s own mind and the support of like-minded friends, one might find shelter from the chaos of a wider world out of the individual’s control. The painter Rubens lushly allegorized Lipsius’s intimate neo-Stoic friendships in his *Four Philosophers* (Fig. 1) as a vase of precious tulips snugly lodged in a niche beneath a bust of Seneca and behind the fur-wrapped philosopher and his friends. Lipsian constancy has profoundly shaped our view of learned friendships at the turn of the seventeenth century.¹

Lipsius, however, did not intend this portrait of intellectual friendship to stand on its own. *De constantia* was but one wing of a triptych which eventually included Lipsius’s *Politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (Six Books on Politics or Civil Doctrine, hereafter *Politica*) of 1589 and his *Monita et exempla politica* (Political advice and examples) of 1605 as well. While Lipsius aimed the Neo-Stoic *De constantia* at subjects, he composed the Tacitist *Politica* and *Monita* for rulers. In sharp contrast to the warm, enveloping tones of the *De constantia*, the *Politica* and *Monita* were panels painted in the unforgiving grisaille of *realpolitik*. The cold world of politics necessitated the reason of state, that is, those calculations of interest over affection which could be learned from ancient historians, primarily Tacitus. Tacitists—those cutting-edge political commentators such as Lipsius who drew lessons in the reason of state from the annals of ancient history—revealed a world where honesty was not the best policy, and political interest, rather than justice, was served.3

In such a world, the prudent ruler could not trust in friendship. As Lipsius said in the *Politica*, quoting Pliny, “in the palace of the Prince, only the name of Friendship has survived, a worthless and empty shell.”4 The contrast between the false friendships portrayed in the *Politica* and the sheltering embrace of the learned friend in *De constantia* could not be greater. Such a contrast might serve a political design. Flinging open the triptych of *Constantia*, *Politica*, and *Monita*, we realize the artful composition of *De constantia*’s jewel-like scene. If private men embraced constancy in the face of hardship, they were less likely to rebel. While subjects responded to the troubles of the times through immersion in learning, intellectual companionship, and gardens, they left princes free rein to construct their courtly halls of mirrors. As Peter Burke has suggested, for Lipsius Neo-Stoicism and Tacitism functioned together as “complementary opposites” “like yin and yang,” the former showing subjects how to obey through virtue and endurance, and the latter teaching princes how to rule through skill and dissimulation.5

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sodality in studies of Lipsius. I would like to express my thanks to Hana Takusagawa, John Gagné, Kevin Pask, Anthony Grafton, and the editors of this volume for reading this essay. All errors are, of course, my own.


4 Ibid, Book IV, Chapter 14, 515.

Lipsius, like many others who attempted to harmonize religion and new theories of the reason of state, defended the morality of his political theory. The application of the reason of state might violate moral norms, but it served a higher good by maintaining stability. It was not merely the prerogative of power, but was grounded upon learning and skill, rather than military violence alone, or on *ars* (skill) together with *mars* (war). Such political calculations required both information and individuals skilled in collecting, analyzing, and organizing that information.

Thus, the two worlds of intellectual and political friendships represented respectively by "De constantia and the Politica," were not as separate as they might at first appear. In early modern Europe, information collection was performed through the institution of learned friendship. Pragmatic readers and international agents gathered the learning needed for a new information-based political practice through learned travel (the *ars apodemica*) across the international Republic of Letters. Such information gatherers cast their “knowledge transactions” in the language of friendship, drawing upon the humanist ideal of *amicitia* based on Aristotle’s and Cicero’s teachings to gain information for political ends. The beautifully rendered image of friendship in *De constantia* thus might be stripped away to reveal a design as cold as the *Politica*. Rising absolutism, which Lipsius’s *Politica* and even (one might argue) his *Constantia* served, opened friendly intimacy up to the suspicions of politics.

Politically motivated methodical travel made the utilitarian nature of learned friendship manifest and precipitated a crisis for the ancient models of *amicitia* (friendship) central to practices of learning. Seventeenth-century learned friendship was not the sheltered refuge it appears to be in Rubens’s painting.

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7 Lipsius, 102.


Contemporary critics pointed to the ways statist thinking had invaded all of sociability. Proponents of rival political views prepared guides to “civil conversation,” finding in the minutiae of proper dinner table behavior an important grounding for an alternative politics. Others recommended a prudent retreat into silence as a reaction to the Tacitist politics of the day. Seemingly intimate sociability became a matter of great political moment, because learned friendships were bound by chains of political interest.

Historians have traced a net of *quid pro quo* exchanges fastened onto apparently secluded intellectual friendships. Disruptions in any one relationship, as the story of Lipsius’s friendship with the political theorist and polemicist Kaspar Schoppe (1576–1649) attests, ignited a “chain reaction” amid all these contacts. Such congeries of friendship not only accomplished the intellectual work of collecting, editing, translating, and publishing knowledge, but recruited participants in personal, confessional, and even national rivalries.

The politicized historians who followed Lipsius in collecting information for the service of the state criticized the ways their own practices had transformed scholarship into learned statism. The critique of learned charlatans and Machiavellians operating secretly within a purported Republic of Letters has been seen as an attack launched by eighteenth-century enlightened men of *belles lettres*


upon antiquated and pedantic men of learning. However, the Tacitist historian and master of information collection, Johann Heinrich Boeckler (1611–1672), made this criticism already in the mid-seventeenth century from deep within the ranks of learned men. What Boeckler criticized as a learned statist was not the outmoded pedant who could not evolve into a sociable and worldly *honête homme*, but the all too politically savvy and innovative scholar.

In this chapter, I will show that critiques of the new political nature of learning were made in the seventeenth century by scholars themselves, that such critiques were linked to the practices of methodical travel and its new apparatus, the *album amicorum* (book of friends), and that this seventeenth-century perception of the changed nature of friendship was so fundamental that it might inform our historical category of “late humanism.” In 1931, Erich Trunz devised the term “late humanism” to refer to a perceived shift in learned culture around 1600, at a time when a new literary nobility advanced the status of humanists as a group. The meaning of this term has been hotly debated since then.

For some, the stylistic and political changes introduced by Lipsius and other Tacitists forever changed the Republic of Letters. Richard Tuck saw Tacitism as a “new humanism.” For Wilhelm Kühlmann, late humanism referred to a feeling of “lateness” expressed by humanists themselves, prodded by the complicated

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relations between an international republic of letters and competitive territories.\textsuperscript{20} For others, religious polemics introduced by the Reformation changed the politics, tenor, and dynamics of learning.\textsuperscript{21} Antje Stannek pointed to the importance of methodical travel and the way it transformed both the education of nobles and humanism by emphasizing an empirical, pragmatic politics and the collection of useful ideas and inventions while abroad for the benefit of a particular territory.\textsuperscript{22}

Like most periodizations, the term “late humanism” is vague and contested. By referring to “humanists,” it does not, for instance, account for the majority of learned men in the various professions of the period.\textsuperscript{23} Johann Heinrich Boeckler had explicitly criticized the way political practices had affected not only humanists (“Philologi”), but also theologians, lawyers, doctors, and philosophers.\textsuperscript{24} Despite such difficulties with the category of late humanism, it is clear that the term refers to a period of great expansion in the extent of learning and learned sociability.

Trunz pointed out that the number of the academically educated continually increased as new schools were founded, while the size of personal libraries mushroomed.\textsuperscript{25} Correspondence and expressions of “friendship” exploded as well. New media, such as the \textit{album amicorum} (book of friends) facilitated the practice of friendship. Trunz saw the cold, formulaic friendship of the period as a particularity of late humanism. “Als Gelehrter war man \textit{amicus} und \textit{amicissimus} einer Vielzahl anderer Gelehrter (As a learned man, one was \textit{amicus} and \textit{amicissimus} with many other learned men),” he wrote, and it was not unusual to list thirty or fifty individuals as one’s friends. It was in letters, \textit{alba amicorum}, poems, and printed collaborative works celebrating friendship circles that such relationships found expression. As Trunz said, “... mancher liebte schließlich

\begin{itemize}
    \item Anthony Grafton made this point in a talk, “What was Late about Late Humanism?” presented at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities Conference, Cambridge, UK, 10–11 July 2007. I would like to express my thanks to Anthony Grafton for sharing this piece with me before its publication.
    \item Boeckler, \textit{C. Velleii}, 97.
    \item Trunz, “Deutscher Späthumanismus,” 163 (see note 17).
\end{itemize}
diese Formen mehr als die Freunde und die Freundschaft selbst (many finally loved these forms more than friends and friendship itself).\(^{26}\)

The classical patronage network of amicitia had made friendship a utilitarian institution since ancient Rome. However, while historians describe twelfth-century amicitia as “very much a pragmatic activity founded on mutual self interest,” the truth remains that in the twelfth century there was no discourse of self interest like the one which developed over the course of the seventeenth century.\(^{27}\) The ambiguity of amicitia between affection and a quid pro quo relationship had allowed friendship to flourish for centuries as a central mechanism for interpersonal relationship in everything from international politics to church administration to learned exchange.\(^{28}\) In the late sixteenth century an explicit discourse of reason of state and the “reason of state of the self” or self interest generated a crisis for the institution of amicitia.

The political usefulness of learned friendship generated at first an escalation in utilitarian friendships supported by relatively new media, such as the album amicorum. In the mid-seventeenth century, this escalation stimulated a critique of the state of learning which expanded through the eighteenth century. Simultaneously, the professional deployment of the album by men of learning and politicians declined. Taken at face value, the outpouring of expressions of friendship of the period, from the enormous popularity of Lipsian constancy to the expansion of the album amicorum, might point to a golden age of intellectual fellowship. Viewed in the context of political discussions of friendship and an emerging criticism of the links between learning and politics, such portrayals of learned friendship take on a different hue. Tracing the changing form of the album amicorum alongside political views of learned sociability and methodical travel will throw this context into relief. Such a study will help to show how new political theories transformed the long-lived institution of learned amicitia and thus learning itself, while learned friendship in turn contributed to the emergence of new political practices of information collection.

\(^{26}\) Ibid, 167.

\(^{27}\) John McLoughlin, “Amicitia in Practice: John of Salisbury (c. 1120–1180) and His Circle,” England in the Twelfth Century, ed. D. Williams. Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Wolfeboro, NH: Boydell Press, 1990), 165–81; here 167. The use of the term “interest” increased over the course of the century, replacing or complementing the term “reason of state,” which had achieved currency earlier. See Burke (see note 5).

\(^{28}\) On amicitia as an expression of solidarity beyond both need and personal affection, see Julian Haseldine, “Understanding the Language of Amicitia: the Friendship Circle of Peter of Celle (1115–1183),” Journal of Medieval History 20 (1994): 237–60. See also his contribution to the present volume.
An Honest Man Sent to Lie Abroad for his Country:
Politics in the Book of Friends

It was vital for a politician to recognize that the division between the intimate friendships of De constantia and the utilitarian calculations of the Politica was a mirage. The implosion of the career of Henry Wotton (1568–1639), the English ambassador to Venice, dramatized the dangers of turning a blind eye to the political nature of late humanist friendships. The seeds of scandal were planted on a journey in 1604, when Wotton paused at the home of his old friend Christoph Fleckhammer. There he inscribed in Fleckhammer’s album amicorum the following bon mot concerning the political importance of international deception: “Legatus est vir bonus, peregrè missus, ad sentiendum Reipublicae causa,” that is, “A diplomat is an honest man sent to lie abroad for his country.”

The album amicorum, although ostensibly memorializing the relationship between just two people—the inscriber and the book’s owner—in fact was read and used (both to establish contacts and to defame enemies) within far-flung networks. This meant that Wotton’s joke was far from private. Years after Wotton wrote it, Kaspar Schoppe saw Wotton’s joke in Fleckhammer’s album and seized upon it to attack both Wotton and his master King James, in a work of political and religious polemic aimed at James, his Ecclesiasticus auctoritati serenissimi d. Iacobi Magnae Britanniae regis oppositvs of 1611.

Schoppe made the most of the Sitz-im-Leben in which Wotton’s gaffe had appeared. He cited Wotton’s album inscription word for word. He even had the type laid out on the printed page in exactly the same form in which it would have appeared in the album, signed and dated, with the full title of both Wotton and King James. The typographically simulated album inscription transports the reader instantly from religious polemic to a social setting and back again. “Haec multi primarii viri Augustae non sine admiratone viderunt, quorum est Illustris Marcus Velserus, reipub. Augustanae Praefectus, vir acrimoniam judici, literarum elegantia & morum suavitate nemini secundus (Many of the foremost men of Augsburg saw this inscription, not without amazement, and among them was the illustrious Marc Welser, mayor of Augsburg, a man second to none in the sharpness of his judgment, the elegance of his writing, and the charm of his manners),” wrote Schoppe. Schoppe staged Wotton’s inscription as a shocking blunder committed within a suave and well-connected social network which stretched, via Marc Welser (1558–1614), to Schoppe himself.

29 The inscription was first reprinted by Kaspar Schoppe in Ecclesiasticus auctoritati serenissimi d. Iacobi Magnae Britanniae regis oppositvs (Hartberg [in reality: Meitlingen]: n.p., 1611), 13.
30 Ibid.
Wotton attempted to defend himself in 1613 by printing an open letter to this same Marc Welser, a mutual friend of his and of Lipsius and Schoppe. In writing to Welser, he attacked Schoppe for dragging an intimate inscription into a political and religious polemic. He “had chanced to set down at my Friend’s Mr. Christopher Fleckamor, in his Album of Friends, after the German custome, (a white Paper—Book used by the Dutch for such kind of Motto’s)” his little pun on ambassadors. “Now, what, I pray, think you doth this Scioppius hereupon?” wrote an aggrieved Wotton. Schoppe threw “open the Cabinet of familiarity, after so many years” and dragged a private joke into a public battle.

Wotton distinguished sharply between public, political organs of communication and the intimate, manuscript culture of the album amicorum. While he had made a harmless joke in private about politics, Catholic polemists like Schoppe routinely twisted the words of sacred Scripture itself, “not by the by, nor in jest, or in the Album of Friends, where idle things and truths us’d to be set down with equal security, but on set purpose, and from the Pulpit.” There was a major difference, Wotton contended, between his own playful, amicable album amicorum inscription and what he cast as the printed, polemical, and above all pedantic Ecclesiasticus Schoppe had composed. This “new Ecclesiastic, not in the Album of Friends, but in the 485th Page of his fine Syntagma” pronounced words contrary to Scripture “with a blasphemous and shameless mouth.” Wotton contrasted the unimpeachable album with Schoppe’s flagrant Papist polemics, averring that he should not be faulted for words spoken in the privacy of friends.31

This was hardly persuasive. The album amicorum, although containing deceptively intimate inscriptions, had long served as a tool for international networking on a grand scale. By 1604, there was little that was intimate about it. The album was a tool young would-be politicians used to survey distant lands, as they systematically travelled with diaries, itineraria, maps, and alba amicorum in hand.32 The methodization of travel made international friendship explicitly political. A central part of a new political practice was the collection of information both through the study of history (above all ancient Roman historians such as Tacitus) and methodical travel.

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32 Pietro Canoniero, for example, cited Meier and Rantzau’s list at length in his Dell’Introduzione all’Politica (Antwerp: Trognesius, 1614), 142–43.
Methodical travel through the Republic of Letters was a different affair from travel to lands largely uninhabited by Europeans.\textsuperscript{33} Learned contacts provided passports to the homes and dinner tables of foreign scholars, making methodical travel a series of social encounters. New genres such as the \textit{album amicorum} were designed to foster, collect, and record such moments of intimacy in the course of methodical travel. However, travelers’s re-enactments of the intense amicality exemplified by Lipsius and Langius in \textit{De constantia} occurred in passing and between individuals who were largely strangers. Such facile friendships, however eloquently they were celebrated within the \textit{album amicorum}, were not shelters from the world of politics, but points of encounter on a purposeful survey of foreign lands.\textsuperscript{34}

Theodore Zwinger, who methodized travel as a way to import competitively information home just “Ut ergo è toto terrarum orbe preciosae merces in celeberrima convehuntur emporia” (“as precious goods are transported from the whole world to the most famous emporia”), broke the experience of travel down to that of collecting desirable objects, including people.\textsuperscript{35} Zwinger published lists of men notable for letters, mechanical arts, arms, and so forth, and methodical travelers thereafter approached a foreign destination with a list of individuals in mind whom they wished to collect within a book of friends.\textsuperscript{36} There was thus nothing at all unusual in the utilitarian collection of friends through travel. In fact, it was part of the definition of methodical travel. Only those who travelled with politically utilitarian motives could aspire to the title of “peregrinator.”\textsuperscript{37}

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\textsuperscript{35} Theodore Zwinger, \textit{Methodus Apodemica} (Basle: Episcopii, 1577), preface, translated by Stagl, \textit{A History of Curiosity}, 122.

\textsuperscript{36} For Padua, for instance, Zwinger listed four theologians, twenty-five lawyers and judges, twenty-four philosophers and doctors, fifteen rhetoricians, five warriors, fifteen painters, sculptors, engravers and scribes (with the locations of their works), etc. Zwinger, 275–76.

\textsuperscript{37} Georg Loysius, \textit{Peregrinium Mercurii} (1598; Leiden: Verbiest, 1667), 220. “Est autem peregrinatio nihil aliud quam \textit{studium perlustrandt terras exoticas, & insulas, ab homine idoneo susciendum, ad artem vel ea acqiienda, quae usu & enolumento patriae vel Rei esse publice possunt}. Talem peregrinaturum regionem perlustratorem & diligentem earum rerum observatorem, qui suam peregrinationem non temeritate, sed utilitate motus instituit, Peregrinantem appellare licebit (Peregrination is nothing other than the pursuit of surveying foreign lands and islands, to be taken up by a fit man, for the acquiring of art or those things which can be of use and profit to the fatherland or the republic. One may call the sort of diligent observer of those things and surveyor of foreign lands who set up his journey not moved by rashness, but by utility, a “Peregrinator”)[italics original].”
Across large swathes of Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe, determined collectors of men and things prepared luxuriously bound blank volumes to take on their journey. When they succeeded in making the passing acquaintance of targeted individuals, they asked them to sign the usually hierarchically arranged book on the page which represented the perceived value of the inscriber. This value was determined relative to anyone else the book’s owner was likely to meet. The owner of the album had to have a very lucid idea of his own social place in order to judge how many famous people he could persuade to sign his book and on what page in that book he should ask them to sign. Books with many blank pages to the fore and the inscriptions clustered at the end give away highly ambitious album owners who anticipated, but did not succeed, in collecting many very valuable protestations of friendship.

The encounter with people of diverse ranks and the practice of album inscription helped to clarify social hierarchies in culturally, politically, and geographically complex regions of Europe and beyond. From the beginning, therefore, the inscription was not the same as a letter written from one person to another, as public as letters were in the period. Rather, the page of the inscription represented a carefully defended and eagerly observed status defined, like prices in the emporium, not only between buyer and seller but in relation to all the other available goods. The resulting inscriptions, as saccharine as they often are, should certainly not be read at face value as a refuge from the otherwise competitive nature of learned friendships.  

This was Henry Wotton’s mistake. Wotton’s flimsy defense of friendly intimacy as sacred ground not to be troubled by politics only succeeded in making him an object lesson in imprudence back home. Anything uttered within the garden of De constantia would be instantly reported back to the court of the Politica, especially when the stroll in the garden was but a stop on an information-gathering tour. For his part, Schoppe highlighted his awareness of the political nature of friendship by entitling the narrative of his career as a statist and polemicist the Philotheca, or “treasury of friends” (another term for the album amicorum).  

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The story of Wotton and Schoppe reveals the way the book of friends was linked to vast, combative networks with an electric intensity which at any moment might turn and strike back at a hapless inscriber out of a seemingly blue sky. This energy sprang from the crackling religious and political tensions invading practices of learned sociability in the early seventeenth century, even during a period of relative peace following the bloody religious wars of the previous century. Schoppe himself had converted to Catholicism, as did Justus Lipsius. As linchpins of learned networks turned to Rome, their former co-religionists often correctly surmised that intellectual and social networks had guided them to their new faiths.41

When smoldering hostilities erupted again into the full-blown Thirty Years War, the many sudden defections to Catholicism seemed to strike staggering blows to the Protestant cause.42 These converts were not only important nodes of learned correspondence. They were also key political experts at a time when the knowledge of ancient and modern history was believed to confer distinct advantages in theaters of both war and peace. Their conversions represented a surrender of massive intellectual firepower to Catholic armories.

Tacitism, or the erudite study of reason of state, needed learned men to feed the growing information state. Humanists now were not only valuable as orators who could fulfill diplomatic missions, compose elegant occasional poetry, or gently admonish rulers as to the ideal state. They were sophisticated operatives who scoured the pages of history as well as domestic and foreign lands in search of information useful as precious “secrets of state.”43 A new political culture heightened the value of international networks, at once expanding and methodizing the construction of such networks within the Republic of Letters and opening up such relationships to suspicions of political utilitarianism. The tactic of using international networks to gain the upper hand in bloody political and confessional conflicts by winning converts offered evidence in support of such suspicions.

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43 Jessica Wolfe drew elegant links between the sophisticated needs of international diplomacy and espionage and the literary artifice deployed to meet such needs in *Humanism, Machinery and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
The Constant Traveler, or How to use Friends to Collect Information

Through the seventeenth century, methodizers of travel and historico-political writers offered explicit advice on the utilitarian cultivation of friendship. They recommended to travelers how they might use the institution of scholarly exchange—learned friendship—to collect materials for a new information-based political practice. The cosmopolitan mores of international learned friendship were encouraged and exploited as means of acquiring advantages for the benefit of a particular territory. As Johann Heinrich Boeckler advised, friends granted travelers information which was otherwise carefully guarded in archives. They offered access to the arcana (secrets of state) and notitia (information) which methodical travelers with a political agenda sought.

After the return home, international friends continued to remain a crucial source of information for the politician. The body of knowledge gathered in travel could continue to produce fruits useful for the state only if it was constantly updated. Travelers were advised to “plot to have dayly intelligence” about domestic and foreign affairs. By these means, “the observations made in travaile, shal be kept in continuall tilthe.” The traveler ought to find friends who could accurately inform the traveler about political secrets (arcana Reipublicae ac aulae) from abroad. The best way to keep information flowing through the fields of knowledge was to cultivate carefully those friends made while travelling abroad, even after the return home. This must be done, stressed the Tacitist Johann Andreas Bose (1626–1674), not only with empty words and greetings, but through the exchange of favors and benefices. Without this it would be impossible for the traveler to

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44 There was thus not only a conflict between the internationality of the Republic of Letters and the chauvinism of patriotism. On patriotism and the Republic of Letters, see Waquet (1994), 176 and 188 (see note 34).

45 Johann Heinrich Boeckler, “De Peregrinatione Germanici Caesaris,” Dissertations Academicae (Strasbourg: Bockenholer, 1658), 42–43. “Non pacebunt [sic, read as “patebunt’] tibi durae, sed praesertim peregrinis Archivi fores . . . . Sed reperiuntur fortasse ubique viri, omnem suae reipublicae aulae condicionem ingenio usque complexi: qui nefas non putabunt, cum Peregrinatore digno & capace, conciliandisque illustribus amicitias per virtutis indolem apto, serrones de republica accuratiores & secretiores sapientiae plenos caedere (The unyielding doors of the Archive will not open for you, especially as a foreigner . . . . But perchance somewhere men who have skillfully grasped the entire condition of their republic or court are found who will not think it wrong to converse about the republic in a very accurate and informed way with a Traveler who is worthy and competent and apt by nature at acquiring distinguished friendships).”


47 Johann Andreas Bose, Introductio Generalis in Notitiam Rerumpublicarum Orbis Universi (Jena: Krebs, 1676), 75.
maintain his knowledge of foreign affairs, since political matters were always changing. 48

Travel was essential to a new information-based political practice, and the gathering of political knowledge through travel was done in the company of friends. The form of the resulting political works reflected the importance of sociability to empirical politics. Writers who advocated travel as the basis of gathering information cast their political treatises as intimate conversations. Such writers mixed the affective register of Lipsius’s Constantia with the political lessons of his Politica. Jakob Bornitz, for instance, who introduced a discussion of the reason of state to German-speaking lands in his Discursus politicus de prudentia politica comparanda (On Acquiring Political Prudence, 1602), stressed that his work was not a strictly theoretical treatise, but an informal “discourse among friends.” 49 Writers on the reason of state stressed that they did not compose closed, systematic treatises, but informal discorsi and conversations developed in amicable company. 50

The intertwining of intellectual intimacy and vast information gathering tours explains such seemingly contradictions as the works of the Catholic convert Hieronymous Elver (1584–1624), agent to Habsburg Emperors Matthias and Ferdinand II. Elver could publish, on the one hand, a collection of political discourses gathered from his travels to Italy, France, the Netherlands, Britain, Germany, and Poland, and on the other hand, his Spring Walks, praising intimate gardens and Lipsian constancy. These two worlds converged in a third work, his Consuluiia, Hoc est: de Conciliis, Consiliariis et Consiliis, Doctrina Politica (Feast of Consus, or the Political Doctrine of Councils, Counsellors and Counsellors), set at a cozy dinner party in the house of a friend, where Elver paused on his way home from

48 Ibid, 76. “Reverso e Peregrinazione amicitia cum exeris sacita [sic] sollicite & studiose observanda alendaque est, crebris non litteris tantum, & salutationibus, sed etiam officiis & beneficis, si maxime id interdum cum aliquo facultatum, temporis, negotiorumque impendio fieri necesse sit. Nam absque hoc adiumento res Imperiorum, quae saepé intra egressum tempus magnam mutationem subueunt, recte pleneque cognosci non possunt (Upon the return from a journey, friendship with foreigners should be assiduously cultivated and maintained, not only through frequent letters and greetings, but also through services and favors, even if it requires now and then the expenditure of many resources and much time and trouble. For without this, the affairs of empires, which often undergo a great change in an extremely short time, cannot be known properly).”


his English voyage.\textsuperscript{51} Viewed from the perspective of the methodical traveler and political writer, even the most friendly dinner party, walled garden, or sheltered study was but one stop in an information-gathering tour.

\textit{Ars and Mars} in the Book of Friends

The \textit{album amicorum} held an important place in the Northern European politician’s information-collecting tool kit. The \textit{album} began in the last decades of the first half of the sixteenth century as an aid to Reformed sociability in Wittenberg but soon spread across several confessions and countries from Hungary to Scotland.\textsuperscript{52} Despite its popularity in early modern Europe, only in the past few decades has this largely overlooked genre begun to be analyzed as a source for social, educational, and intellectual history.\textsuperscript{53}

In the four and a half centuries of its existence, the \textit{album} has evolved in dramatic ways, pointing to critical changes in the institution it served—friendship. The learned \textit{album} of refined classical, Biblical and patristic inscriptions originally co-existed alongside a quite distinct genre of the nobleman’s heraldic \textit{Stammbuch}. In the late sixteenth century, these two genres merged, pointing to the rise of the nobility of the robe and the integration of \textit{ars} and \textit{mars}.\textsuperscript{54} Over the course of the eighteenth century, the album split away from politics again, morphing into the poetry album associated with women and eventually girls. Distinct women’s

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\textsuperscript{54} See the \textit{album} of notable agents and diplomats such as Philip Hainhofer (Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 210 Extrav), and Axel Oxenstierna. Lotte Kurraas, and Werner Taegert, \textit{Axel Oxenstiernas album amicorum und seine eigenen Stammbucheintrigé} (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2004).
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albums had existed throughout the history of the *album amicorum*, but as the political and learned versions of the album declined, women’s albums emerged as the dominant form at the end of the eighteenth and through the nineteenth centuries. The evolving *album* offers a means to interrogate the intersection of sociability and politics in the early modern period.

In its very structure and genre, the *album amicorum* fits a political culture encouraging cleverness through the collection of sharply pointed observations, clever emblems, and sophisticated *argutiae* (jests or verbal cunning). Several scholars have pointed to the nexus of new political cultures and the *album* genre. Walther Ludwig suggested the use of Lipsius’s *Politica* in the album as a topic worthy of study. The *Politica*, as a loose patchwork of politically useful sentences gathered out of ancient historians, served as a particularly popular source for *album* inscriptions. Werner Wilhelm Schnabel too has suggested that the character of the album as a gathering of *sententiae* and epigrams might be seen in a Lipsian context, particularly among the many students of the Tacitist at the University of Strasbourg and authority on methodical travel, Matthias Bernegger (1582–1640). Like epigrams, emblems too were considered excellent exercises in political cleverness. Emblem books were popular supports for albums, and several collections of political emblems in particular were printed for use as albums, pointing to the *album’s* role in the training of politicians.

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The collision within the *album* between a new politics of cunning and the celebration of friendship, however, raised serious queries concerning the honesty of affection. In the seventeenth century, rulers and politicians did not hide the fact that dissimulation had become the new foundation of politics. Duke Heinrich Julius of Braunschweig-Lüneburg even selected the aphorism of Louis XI, *“qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare* (He who cannot dissimulate, cannot rule)” as his inscription within the *album amicorum*, in other words, within a volume dedicated to memorializing and diluting upon friendship.\(^{59}\) Such odd juxtapositions between deceit and affection posed an immense problem for early modern friendship. Who could be called a true friend in a world where friendship was a political matter and dissimulation a matter of course? This was a question raised by many in their writings within and about books of friends.

Explicit views of the album are difficult to trace, since the album was not a heavily theorized or codified genre. The first systematic treatment of the genre, a dissertation entitled *Schediasma critico-literarium de philiothecis varioque earundum usu et abusu* (A *critico-literary Account of Albums and their Use and Abuse*) was defended by Michael Lilienthal at Königsberg only in 1711 and printed in 1712.\(^{60}\) Some album owners did, however, preface their volumes with their own preferences for their album, and such prescriptive prefaces might also be printed separately.

One such writer was Peter Ailber, who printed several pages of directions for his album within a collection of his poetry.\(^{61}\) Ailber emphasized the popular theme of *ars et mars*, a new political ideal merging skill and war. Since *mars* was the *de facto* requirement for political leadership, discussions of this ideal often served as defences of the newer virtue of *ars* and its equality with or even superiority to *mars*.\(^{62}\) This was a debate illustrating the rise of the nobility of the robe and the new emphasis on political knowledge rather feudal hierarchy alone, two phenomena which broke down the distinctions between the noble *Stammbuch* and the learned *album*. *“Ars et mars”* justified the political use of the learned *album* as the fulfillment of an ideal.

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61. Peter Ailber, *Centuria anagrammatum prima cum genio mensae, gratiarum thecalis, & carmina ac epigrammatum primitii; additae sunt orationes solennes de deo & intelligentiis: Item de eloquentia cum praecriptiones philiothecae & trophaeo* (Leipzig: Lantzenberger, 1611), 537–44.

62. As was the case in a dissertation on the topic, Jacob von Bruck-Angermundt, *Ars et Mars, sive discarum politicis de literis et armis* (Brieg: Sigfried, 1612).
Ailber was an imperial poet laureate, a Lutheran preacher, a client of the Saxon court, and a teacher in the newly founded Lutheran school in the old city of Prague. He stressed that his volume welcomed “Magni, minuti, maximi, medioximi, / Verea pietatis sanctitate nobiles, / Virtutis altae claritate nobiles, / Avita vel patrita sit, Sudore molto vel labore parta sit, / Armata vel togata sit (The great, the least, the greatest, and the middling sort, nobles through the sanctity of true piety, nobles through the lofty renown of virtue, whether ancestral or from one’s father, whether born from much sweat or labor, whether armed or wearing the toga)." This endorsement of all sorts, including the learned who gained nobility through the trials of scholarship rather than the fields of war permitted Ailber shameless references to his own careerist aspirations and potential quid pro quo exchanges. He unabashedly requested inscriptions which would commend him and commanded his inscribers, “Manu Clientem auxilii / Sublevate, promovete (Lift and promote [your] client with a helping hand).” Such favors would obligate him to serve them in return, “nodoque stricto me vobis sic obligo (and thus I bind myself to you with a tight knot)."

Many other album owners and inscribers echoed Ailber’s stress on the political usefulness of both ars and mars. Christiane Schwarz has studied the album of the politician Nicolaus von Vicken, who prefaced his volume with extensive remarks preferring ars to mars, a preference reflected thereafter in many of the inscriptions in the album. “Sunt duo quae faciunt ut quis sit nobilis, Ars, Mars: / Maior ab arte venit gloria, Marte minor (There are two qualities which ennoble an individual, ars and mars, yet more glory comes from ars and less from mars),” wrote Vicken. Ars, especially the ars apodemica (the art of methodical travel), offered a surer path to political fortune than mars; “Homo verò in multis regionibus versatus, astutiam acquirit (a man who travels in many lands acquires cleverness).”

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64 Ailber, Centuria anagrammatum, 1611, 538 (see note 61)
65 Ibid, 539.
68 Schwartz, 80.
Von Vicken’s remarks on the greater glory accruing to *ars* than to *mars*, could, like Wotton’s inscription in the album of Fleckhammer, be understood in an innocent and a less than innocent fashion. What precisely did *ars* mean in these verses? Learning? Skill? Art? Or cleverness? Tricks? Deception? The emphasis upon cleverness, dissimulation, and networking within politics raised questions about the often overwrought declarations of undying love filling many an album page. A popular album illustration of the ideal of “*ars et mars*” showed a man split down the middle, half arrayed for battle and half dressed in scholarly robes fit for the library. While heralded as a new political ideal, such a split between scholar and soldier could also be interpreted as a form of hypocrisy. The same, very striking image was deployed in a book of political emblems by Jakob Bornitz not to symbolize *ars* and *mars*, but to convey the idea that learning or theology might serve to justify political or military ends. The man divided between soldier and scholar held an open book upon which were written the words “Re(li)gionis Amor” (“Love of Re(li)gion”) to show that “Der Soldat list Religion / Und doch nur meint die Region” (“The soldier reads religion / and yet means only the region”).

Men divided between *ars* and *mars* might say one thing and mean another.

The massive expansion of the album also encouraged doubts about the sincerity and motivations of album owners. Those who valued the intimacy of humanist sodalities criticized this escalation in learned friendship. As early as 1613, the rector of the Herborn academy and encyclopedist Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638) deplored the rapid mushrooming of books of friends. In a dissertation on the ethics of friendship, Alstead argued that true friendship took time and care to cultivate. He criticized those who collected too many names within their *alba amicorum*, for he who was at the beck and call of too many friends must constantly either dissimulate his true intentions or conform himself to their wills. With so many friends, it would be practically impossible to be true to everyone. Such advice, however, did not prevent Alsted from signing the shockingly enormous *album amicorum* of Joachim Morsius (on page 774!) as a token of his “sincere friendship” in 1619. Alstead’s treatment of friendship as a topic in ethics was a far cry both from his own practice of *album* inscriptions and from the instrumental view of friendships found among political writers.

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71 Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Disputatio ethica de amicitia* (Herborn: Johannes Portmann, 1613), 36–37 and the Album of Joachim Morsius, Staatsbibliothek Lübeck Ms. 4a 25, 774.
Those who signed such massive books of friends were transparently not generally on intimate terms with the book’s owner and curator. Rather, they sought to join a broad network of contacts collected in the album. This is clear from a story one Bernegger student, the poet Daniel Czepko, recounted to another, the poet Christoph Coler, in 1626:

Adiit me Praestantissimus iste Vir Iuvenis, et una manu album porrigebat, alterâ commendatitias petebat. Persuadebat ille sibi amicos ibi vivere non de vulgo, quibuscum necessitudo et familiaritas mihi intercederet maxima, et officium amicitiae tantum, ut, quod peterem, facilè consequar . . . .

[An outstanding young man came to me, holding out in one hand an album and begging with the other a letter of recommendation. He was convinced that in a certain place I had friends, with whom I was connected with such a strong bond, intimacy, and obligations of friendship that whatever I asked, I would easily obtain . . . .] 72

Through the album inscription, one sought to ally one’s self to a network of well-connected people through a public letter of recommendation, rather than to develop an intimate friendship between the album inscriber and owner alone.

Many read albums seeking to trace networks and uncover connections. Knowing who had befriended whom fell among the “arcana Notitiae Authorum” (“secrets of information about writers”), and, pointed out Michael Lilienthal, album inscriptions were often a means to discover this useful information. Those who wished to demonstrate (or perhaps claim) a particularly close friendship with an individual would inscribe an album on the page following, or even on the same page as the inscription of their friend. 73 The album was not the intimate, secluded genre which Wotton claimed it to be, but a node connecting far-flung networks often composed of near or total strangers seeking information, contacts, and favors.

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73 Lilienthal, Scholium critico-literarium, 6 (see note 60): “Inter arcana Notitiae Authorum merito re Cort, nosse quinquam ex Viris doctis arcto amicitiae & familiaritatis vinculo invicem fuerint conjunct. . . . Facile vero ista e Philothecis cognoscere possimus utpote in quibus observare licet, Doctorum quosdam, ad testandum suam animorum & sententiarum harmoniam, vel in una eademque libri pagina nomina sua scripsisse, vel certe in vincino folio” (Among the secrets of information concerning authors rightly belongs knowing which learned men are joined by a tight bond of friendship and familiarity. . . . We can learn this easily from friendship books in which one may observe that certain learned men have written their names either on the same page or on the next . . . .)


** Ars and Mars in a Time of War **

The theater of war raised the stakes for the machinations of politics within the world of learning. Matthias Bernegger, in his 1620 *Proaulium Tubae pacis, occentae Scioppiano belli sacri* (Clarion of Peace Sounded against the Schoppean Trumpet of Holy War), warned against the Tacitean arts threatening mankind. Bernegger accused not only Schoppe but also the Jesuits of fomenting inter-confessional strife for political ends. Their political arts hid beneath a sanctimonious façade. Such duplicity threatened the bonds of human society which were woven of trust. The Jesuits, experts in the study of reason of state and the *arcana imperii*, were suspected of infiltrating and manipulating international learned networks through their superior coffers, organization, and collections of books and curiosities.

While Jacob Soll has argued that the reason of state served to “master the passions of the religious wars,” many in the seventeenth century held such calculations of interest accountable for the Thirty Years War, as did the eirenical Bohemian Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670). For other like-minded Protestants such as John Dury (1596–1680) and Samuel Hartlib (1600–1662), the dissensions of the Thirty Year War were a sign of the impending apocalypse brought on by the reason of state. According to Dury and Hartlib, the reason of state spilled out of the second vial of *Revelations* as it poured destruction and mayhem over the fourth monarchy (the Holy Roman Empire). For them, the reason of state triggered a massive shift in human relations, sending shockwaves across Central Europe, and initiating the final downward slide of civilization.

The reason of state distilled, as it were, the essence of discord. According to Dury and Hartlib, the self-serving statists who poured the acid of interest upon

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74 Matthias Bernegger [published under the pseudonym, Theodosius Berenicus], *Proaulium Tubae Pacis, Occentae Scioppiano Belli Sacri* (Strasbourg: Wyriot, 1620), A3v.


mankind dissolved the ties that bound society and unleashed the end of days. “Politique reasonings of men” formed “the beast” which the false church “rideth upon,” they wrote in their political interpretation of Revelations.78 Dury blamed the difficulties of making peace among Christians in part upon the “reason of state as some Politicians [sic] who find out and foment differences betwixt parties that they may rise or stand in the midst of their divisions.”79

Reason of state threatened the foundations of Christian fellowship and thus the world. The paranoia the reason of state induced in such writers can be linked to the very real violence wreaking havoc in their lives and hometowns. Lipsius and other political writers often advocated pursuing a military prudence in times of war and a learned, civil prudence in times of peace.80 With the increasing political urgency accorded to men of letters, however, prudentia togata (toga-wearing, or civil) and sagata (cloak-wearing, or military) merged, with destabilizing consequences for international scholarly networks, especially when intellectual friendships were the means by which opposing sides sought converts in a politico-religious war.

Johann Balthasar Schupp (1610–1661), a preacher, satirist, University of Marburg professor and agent of the Swedish crown, framed a book of political advice as a guidebook intended for a young man about to set off on his methodical travels.81 He advised Philanderson that one can sometimes serve the state more with a quill than with a sword, even in a time of war. He gave the example of a member of the Swedish army who said,


[The pillage I practice in Germany is a pillage of letters. Whenever the army reaches a town with a cloister or a Jesuit college, I go immediately to their archive and take all their letters. When I have time, I read them through, and I find so many secrets there, that you would not believe it].82

79 Ibid, Dury, 31 March, 1634, 1/9/1B.
80 Lipsius, Politica, 387 and Hippolytus à Collibus, Princeps (Frankfurt a. M.: Corner, 1658), 370.
81 On Schupp see Hildegarde E. Wichert, Johann Balthasar Schupp and the Baroque Satire in Germany. Columbia University Germanic Studies, 22 (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1952), and Kühlmann, Gelehrtenrepublik und Fürstenstaat (1982), passim (see note 56).
82 Johann Balthasar Schupp, Salomo (Hamburg: Pleißen, 1657), Ev-Evi. For the Swedish takeover of the postal system and thus the control of political information during the Thirty Years War, see Paul Ries, “The Politics of Information in Seventeenth-century Scandinavia,” The Politics of
Whether or not statists, Jesuits, or other secret manipulators were in fact abusing learned networks to the extent feared is beside the point. The distrust alone of international learned friendship generated by a political practice founded upon scholarly dissimulation would have profound consequences for the future of learning.

Scholars Behaving Badly: the Critique of Learned Statism

Johann Balthasar Schupp continued to trace the adventures of his young would-be politician in his 1657 *Der Freund in der Not (A Friend in Need)*. Set against the backdrop of war between Denmark and Sweden, the work began as Philander sent his son Ascanius off on his travels. Before he departed, Ascanius visited the friends of his father and asked them to sign his *album amicorum*. They filled the volume with bombastic expressions of friendship, claiming to be his friends and patrons “amore, more, ore, re, ad ultimum aetermitatis punctum, und noch 25 Jahr drüber (in love, in behavior, in speech, and in fact, until the end of time, and for 25 years after that).” Ascanius was very pleased to be enriched with so many promises and thought he was now supplied with a great deal of “Capital.” “Sohn, du bist nicht klug (You are not clever, my son),” said his father, shaking his head. “Du weist noch nicht, was für ein Unterscheid sey, zwischen einem Freund, und einem Auffschneider, oder Complement-macher (You do not yet know the difference between a friend and a fibber or a brown-noser).” Philander went on to recount to Ascanius stories of the many false friendships in the world, citing to him the principle, “Ratio Status, non agnoscit patrem aut matrem, non fratres aut sorores” (reason of state does not recognize mothers or fathers, sisters or brothers). The calculation of interest had rendered the bonds of affection not only negligible but downright detrimental to the new politics.

The back-stabbing deceptions of a new political culture infiltrated ancient learned practices and called into question protestations of friendships. The recommendation letter, for instance, was and remains the omnipotent voice of authority within the Republic of Letters. Within the *album*, such letters were not

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84 See also the discussion of the fourteenth-century Spanish writer Don Juan Manuel by Albrecht van Classen in the introduction to this volume.

signed and sealed, but appeared in the form of an open claim to friendship. However, as Christian Georg Bessel, the writer of a political guidebook, warned, false friendship and deception flourished in this genre. Many could cleverly compose a letter that at first glance appeared to be a recommendation, but was in fact a condemnation. Bessel devoted an entire chapter of his *Schmiede des politischen Glücks* (*Smith of Political Fortune*) to the false recommendation and proffered several unsavory examples.  

Such cleverly damning protestations of friendship generated many criticisms of the learned Machiavellism infecting the world of learning. The most famous of these critiques is Johann Burckhard Mencke’s *De charlataneria eruditorum declamationes duae* (*Two Orations on the Charlatantry of the Learned*) of 1713 and 1715, yet the theme was by no means original to Mencke. Satires upon political charlatans had abounded since Traiano Boccalini’s *De’Raggaugli di Parnaso* (*Advertisements from Parnassus*) of 1612, considered the apotheosis of reason of state literature. Boccalini cast his novel work as a series of journalistic reports from a mythical state of the learned. There “Letterati” and “Vertuosi” such as Tacitus and Lipsius stood trial in the court of Apollo for their various faults, deceptions, and trespasses. The *Advertisements* attacked reason of state and the world of learning as one of a kind. Subsequent critics of learned *moeurs* would continue to bring a political perspective to their satires.

Johann Heinrich Boeckler (1611–1672), a student and the successor of Matthias Bernegger at Strasbourg, wrote on this theme long before the more famous eighteenth-century critiques of learned *moeurs*. Boeckler himself would suggest that the traveler should attempt to wheedle secrets of state from their influential, foreign friends (discussed above). No doubt his own intimacy with practices of information collection through friendship informed his account of learned statism. Boeckler’s critique of learned sociability may have evaded modern scholarly attention due to its location; Boeckler embedded his ten page diatribe upon “learned statists” (“litterarios statistas”) deep within his 1642 commentary on Velleius Paterculus’s Roman history. The seemingly obscure location of this very

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topical digression, however, was no accident. The practices of information collection fostered by Bernegger through both travel and commentaries upon ancient history trained the would-be politician to dig through the particulars of experience and history in order to learn lessons of political prudence. Tacitists routinely incorporated discussions of politically pertinent contemporary phenomena in their fine-print commentaries upon the classics of Roman history, and well-trained readers knew to look to the commentary for engaging discussions of the topics of the day.  

Writing during the on-going hostilities of the Thirty Years War, Boeckler blamed self-love in the republic of letters upon the new statist politics wreaking havoc across Europe in all arenas. His digression was triggered by the Roman historian’s suggestion that sometimes the envy of scholars can advance learning by promoting competition. It was true, Boeckler conceded, that learning had progressed to its acme throughout Europe. He reviewed the state of learning in Spain, Italy, France, England, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Poland, the Netherlands, and Germany, where in particular learning had miraculously sprung forth from the ashes of war. Libraries had flourished everywhere.

Despite the advancement of learning, hidden political maneuvering had dissolved the bonds of friendship between learned men of different nations and professions, as party politics invaded the Republic of Letters. “Theologi, Jurisconsulti, Medici, Philosophi, Philologi, nomina sunt non tam artis & scientiae, quam saluberrimae societatis & amicæ pro rep. conjunctionis: sed ratio illa status, quæ cum ambitione in studia irrepsit, factionum & partium titulos facit (Theologians, Doctors, Philosophers, and Philologists are not so much the names of different arts and sciences as of a benevolent joint pursuit and a friendly association on behalf of the res publica, but that ratio status, which has insinuated itself into studies, has made them into the names of factions and parties).”

By fighting with each other, these factions weakened the whole, degenerating the natural links and friendship between parts of study. “Studia in mutuas operas nexe naturali denuncia, in amicitiam proprio instituto ordinata; in consensu salutis publicae Christiana religione consecrata, tantum à se ipsis degenerare, ut in diffidiorum, aemulationum, causas & artificia non raro valeant (Studies bound to each other’s care through a natural tie, arranged for friendship according to its own principle, and consecrated for the harmony of the public good by the Christian religion, have degenerated so much from those very things, that not

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88 For Boeckler’s views on travel, including the importance of learned sociability in travel, see his de Peregrinatione, cited above.
89 Johann Heinrich Boeckler, C. Velleii Paterculi Libri Duo . . . cum annotatis Ioannis Henrici Boecleri (Strasbour: Mülb, 1642), 97.
infrequently they serve as the origins and tools of suspicions and rivalries)."90 A new spirit of self-serving ambition splintered the Republic of all learned men into jealous cliques and antagonistic specialties. Boeckler wanted to see less courtly politicking and more republicanism return to the governance of the Republic of Letters.91

To Boeckler, the threat to knowledge lay not in the actions of military men, but in the undermining of German learning by scholars themselves. Despite the ravages of the Thirty Years War, Boeckler believed that learning had reached previously unscaled heights. He did not observe that scholarship had been decimated by the violence, as one might expect, but rather that social relationships among the learned had become hopelessly politicized.

Boeckler was far from alone in this ambivalent view. In 1639 Johann Balthasar Schupp had delivered an oration “On the happiness of the age” at the University of Marburg, although his view of seventeenth-century felicity was notably equivocal.92 Two decades later in a “melancolischer Discours” on reason of state within the church in 1662, Schupp admitted that learning had never progressed as far as at the present time, especially in theology. The universities were teeming with young Magistri. And yet, despite the intellectual boom, being an excellent scholar was no longer sufficient. One had to learn a “ratio status” in order to achieve a position in the church.93

Scholarship might well have become more sophisticated and clever over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, yet such sophistication might also be a sign of moral decline, as a virtuous simplicity gave way to new techniques of information collection. Tacitists such as Matthias Bernegger, and his students Boeckler and Bose were notable in their time as indexers, bibliographers and collectors of notitia (information) concerning learning, as well as experts on methodical travel and critics of character.94 We have already heard the advice of Boeckler and Bose on how to use friends to gain information. These students of Matthias Bernegger turned their critical gaze, honed by the utilitarian study of

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90 Ibid, 98.
92 Johann Balthasar Schupp, De Felicitate Huius Seculi XVII (Marburg: Chemlin, 1639). See Kühlmann (1982), 150–51 (see note 56).
93 Johann Balthasar Schupp, Ratio Status in Promotione Ministrorum Ecclesiae Lutheranae (s.l.: n.p., 1662), 3.
human nature, onto *historia literaria* (the history of learning) as well as onto the world of politics. Pragmatic information collection, born out of Tacitism, went hand in hand with a critical, politicized view of learning. This was why the late seventeenth-century bibliographers discussed by Martin Gierl cast their new manuals of learned sociability as guides to political and courtly behavior.95 Such writers simultaneously suggested how to act politically and decried the politicization of learning.

The critique of learned mores was not an Enlightenment, *belles-lettres* riposte to an outmoded world of learning, but a part of the very erudite, yet also very politically informed genre of *historia literaria*. It was in this context that the political role of the *album amicorum* first attracted a systematic, critical treatment. We have already encountered Michael Lilienthal’s *Schediasma critico-literarium de philothecis varioque earundum usu et abusu* of 1711. This work had followed close on the heels of a work on the history of learning of 1710, and Lilienthal placed his critical survey of the *album amicorum* squarely in the discipline of *historia literaria* in his introduction.96 He also looked forward to his next work. When describing how inscribers of albums write in many foreign languages, which they themselves do not even understand, he commented that “Sed haec & similia ad Machiavellismum Literarium... pertinent, quod de forte alio tempore scribendi dabitur occasio (but these and similar things belong to the Machiavellism of the Learned... and an opportunity for writing about this will arise perhaps at another time).”97

The year after publishing his critical survey of the album, Lilienthal indeed found occasion to print his *De Machiavellismo literario* (*On Learned Machiavellism*) of 1713. Lilienthal pointed out in his introduction that he had turned to his systematic study of learned tricks after finishing his study on the *album amicorum* in 1711, and his study of the abuses of the *album* contributed to his critique of learned behavior. One of the “secrets of state” deployed by the learned was the advertisement of false friendship. As Lilienthal wrote, those who wished to glorify themselves would rattle on about their friendships with famous men whom they had in truth barely met once. These boasters of friendship would publish (without permission) their letters with famous men as a way to publicize their relationship

97 Ibid, 23.
to the entire world. This was a topic, Lilienthal pointed out, with which he had already dealt in his book on the album.\textsuperscript{98} Lilienthal’s *De Machiavellismo literario*, which grew from his critical survey of all learning and the *album amicorum* in particular, was the immediate precursor to Johann Burckhard Mencke’s more famous *De charlataneria eruditorum declamations duae* (Two Orationes on the Charlatanry of the Learned) delivered in 1713 and 1715, as Mencke himself acknowledged.\textsuperscript{99}

The album continued as a theme in the continuing criticism of academic mœurs. In 1728, Johann Christoph Koechner quoted Lilienthal on abuses of the album in his *On Learned Superstition*.\textsuperscript{100} From Zacharias Conrad Uffenbach’s perspective in 1713, the venerable practice of album inscription, although still useful, had mostly degenerated to collections of scurrilous sayings and obscene pictures. In a pastoral golden age, the ancients had simply carved the names of friends in the barks of trees; the sophistication of modern times had debauched even the memory of friends.\textsuperscript{101} Scholarly critics of learning saw themselves as degenerates who advanced themselves and learning at the expense of social mores.

\section*{Conclusion}

Despite the rise of scholarship and the expansion of friendship in the seventeenth century, learned men compared their own age unfavorably with an earlier generation. This was the obverse of early humanists’ flattering comparisons between themselves and the generations preceding them. Learned men of the seventeenth century often expressed the idea that theirs was a time of degeneration, rather than renaissance.\textsuperscript{102}

The decline was not perceived to be in learning, but in mores. It was clear to Boeckler, for instance, that during the period of “learned statists,” learning of all kinds (not only philological, or humanist) had reached its acme. While modern learning had achieved a level of sophistication as never before, the degeneration of morals threatened to be the first sign of the downward swing of knowledge

\begin{footnotes}
\item[98] Michael Lilienthal, *De Machiavellismo literario, sive de perversis quorundam in Republica Literaria inclarescenti aribus Dissertatio historico-moralis* (Leipzig: Heinrich Boye, 1713), 45.
\item[99] Johann Burckhardt Mencke, *De charlataneria eruditorum declamationes duae* (Amsterdam: n.p.,[1715] 1725), preface (n.p.).
\item[100] Johann Christoph Koechner (Gratianus Aschpanius), *De superstitione erudita seu litteraria libellus* (Cologne: n.p., 1728), 30–33.
\item[101] Zacharias Conrad Uffenbach, *Commercii Epistolarii Uffenbachiani* (Ulm and Memmingen: Gaum, 1753), 280–81. The letter to Johann C. Langius was dated 7 Dec, 1713.
\item[102] Kühlmann (1982), 17 (see note 56).
\end{footnotes}
too. Tacitists tackled the idea that “non fide, non amicitiam inter homines, non rebus integritatem esse (there is no faith, no friendship between men, no integrity in affairs)” as one of the major arguments for the decline of man. They often argued that social life among the ancient Romans had been just as corrupt, making Tacitus a particularly useful guide to their own times. Modern man had succeeded in reviving ancient culture, and it was not a pretty sight.

Scholarly writers on learned Machiavellism suggested that the rise of learning and the decline of mores were connected. A new emphasis on information collection in politics encouraged the expansion of learned friendship, thus thinning the strength of affective bonds and suggesting a coldly utilitarian view of all relationships. As good policy encouraged the collection of archives and libraries, political writers discussed how to curry favors with learned friends as sources of information. Deception was not only condoned but to some extent recommended by many political writers, including Lipsius. Bloody religious war, sudden defections and conversions, and a shockingly overt defense of deception and dissimulation in politics made the politicization of friendship a matter of the utmost concern. Watching in horror as they themselves capitated to the politicization of learning, seventeenth-century observers blamed the reason of state for an irrevocable break with the past.

As learned and political networks intersected, political practices challenged the idea of friendship. It was not, of course, the case that false friends had never existed, that the Republic of Learning had been previously undisturbed by strife, or that learned men did not toady to patrons before the reason of state. Rather, a political practice grounded upon both deception and the systematic capture of information raised new concerns about the relationship between sociability and politics. This tension explains the expansion of the language of love precisely in the period when the sheer numbers of contacts collected through methodical travel undermined the affectiveness of such relationships. Sometimes considerations of the reason of state, rather than the pure pursuit of neo-Stoic right reason, motivated the maintenance of learned friendships.

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103 Such critics of modern times did not necessarily champion ancient over modern learning. They opposed the entire practice of taking a party line, and the debate of the ancients and moderns was but one more example of the party politics invading the world of learning. Lilenthal (1713), 18–35.


105 See Johann Heinrich Boeckler’s criticism of Lipsius for supporting within the *Politica* a “perverse” reason of state, while claiming to oppose it. Johann Heinrich Boeckler, *De Politicis Justi Lipsii* (Strasbourg: n.p., 1642), 62.
The popularity of Lipsian constancy through the seventeenth century is undeniable. Yet what did constancy really mean?\textsuperscript{106} If we take the beautiful portrait of friendship painted by Lipsius in \textit{On Constancy} at face value, then we will believe that the rich, intimate friendships of late humanists protected them from the violence and strife of politics in the world outside. We might think, as Henry Wotton did, that what was written in an \textit{album amicorum} stays in the \textit{album amicorum}. In reality, the language of affection often concealed and mediated literary and political espionage within the painted world of seventeenth-century intellectual life.

\textsuperscript{106} David G. Halsted in \textit{Poetry and Politics in the Silesian Baroque: Neo-Stoicism in the Work of Christophorus Colerus and his Circle.} Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung, 26 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996) argues that constancy was flexible enough to refer to almost any social and political dynamic, including the far-flung networks of exchange operating in Central and Eastern Europe. Both Bernegger and Schoppe promoted Stoic constancy, for instance. See also Harris, “The Practice of Community,” 316.
Fig. 1: Peter Paul Rubens, “Peter Paul Rubens, Philip Rubens, Justus Lipsius and Johannes Woverius” (“The Four Philosophers”), no. 117, Florence Palazzo Pitti.