

**Press Release**

Wolfenbüttel, 25.08.2020

## ***Album Amicorum - HAB acquires "das Große Stammbuch" of Philipp Hainhofer***

The Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel (HAB) has made a spectacular new acquisition: For about 3.1 million dollars (2.809.390 euros), it has bought a "friendship book", the "*Album Amicorum*", the "*Große Stammbuch*" of Philipp Hainhofer. Between 1596 and 1647, emperors, kings and princes, diplomats and generals contributed to and signed this richly illustrated album. The 227-page album contains numerous richly illustrated decorative pages, some of which were designed by renowned artists.

The funds for acquiring the manuscript were provided by the Kulturstiftung der Länder, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media, the VolkswagenStiftung (Niedersächsisches Vorab), the Herzog August Bibliothek (Wittchow-Aschoff Stiftung), the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung, the Stiftung Niedersachsen and the Rudolf August Oetker-Stiftung. In addition, the State of Lower Saxony finances a three-year research project at the HAB with 300.000 euros from funds from the VolkswagenStiftung (Niedersächsisches Vorab). It will investigate the origin and history of the *Stamm-buch* and its artistic design.

After having been in private ownership and not available to the public the "*Große Stammbuch*" of Philipp Hainhofer now returns to the place which, in the opinion of the world's experts, is best suited for its presentation and research: the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel. It was exclusively offered to the HAB by a private collector through Sotheby's Auction House.

"The acquisition of the Hainhofer *Stammbuch* is a sensation and a stroke of luck for the preservation of cultural heritage in Germany," says Björn Thümler, Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture. "All those involved have put all their efforts into bringing the art-historical and cultural-historical masterpiece to the HAB in Wolfenbüttel. Duke August the Younger himself had already attempted to do so in 1648 after Hainhofer's death. The return of the *Album Amicorum* to Germany is not only in the interest of the State of Lower Saxony, but of Germany as a whole, for it ensures that this outstanding cultural treasure will be permanently accessible to the public."

Prof. Dr. Peter Burschel, Director of the Herzog August Bibliothek: "The *Album Amicorum* of Philipp Hainhofer is the library's most important acquisition since it bought the Gospel of Henry the Lion and Matilda of England: Historico-culturally, cultural-anthropologically – and of course aesthetically. With this acquisition, the *Stammbuch* will be comprehensively and without restrictions accessible to research for the first time. It provides unparalleled insights into the Early Modern political culture of trade and art trading. By acquiring this book, the

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Herzog August Bibliothek is strengthening its position as one of the most important research libraries worldwide. Exhibitions, which will make the *Stammbuch* accessible to a broader public, are already being planned. This acquisition makes me very happy – and I would like to thank all those who have contributed to it".

Prof. Dr. Markus Hilgert, Secretary General of the Kulturstiftung der Länder: "Philipp Hainhofer's "*Großes Stammbuch*" is exemplary for what the Kulturstiftung der Länder was originally founded for: The newly bought Stammbuch will be integrated in the context of Hainhofer's legacy, researched, digitized and thus made accessible to science and the public. I am particularly pleased that it was bought for the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Lower Saxony, since the 'founding myth' of the Kulturstiftung der Länder is closely connected to the library: When the Gospel of Henry the Lion and Matilda of England for Wolfenbüttel was purchased in August 1983 we realized that we needed an institution that was capable of coordinating, implementing and promoting such outstanding cultural and art-historical acquisitions."

Katharina zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, Senior Director, Office Head, Sotheby's Hamburg, states: "It took 373 years to place the *Album Amicorum* of Philipp Hainhofer in one of the best and historically most important libraries of our time – the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel. It was an honorable task and a special pleasure for Sotheby's to support the Wolfenbüttel library from the very beginning in its plan to include the illuminated manuscript in its collection with the help of the State of Lower Saxony's Ministry of Culture and renowned institutions."

In terms of art and cultural history, the "*Große Stammbuch*" is the most important of Hainhofer's four *Stammbücher*. According to experts, its decor and its political significance outclass all other 25.000 documented *Stammbücher* worldwide. Until 2006 research considered it to be lost. The library owns two of Hainhofer's *Stammbücher* already, alongside the almost complete legacy of Philipp Hainhofer.

In the first half of the 17th century, the Augsburg art dealer and diplomat Philipp Hainhofer was the most important mediator for art as well as political and cultural information north of the Alps. As a "cultural broker" he constantly crossed denominational and political boundaries. Hainhofer was not only a supplier of luxury goods for his princely clients (most famously the so-called "*Kunstschränke*", *Wunderkammern en miniature*), but also an "agent" who provided his correspondents, including Duke August in Wolfenbüttel, with information about political, family and artistic news. The *Stammbuch* was also important to him as a medium of diplomatic exchange: It provided Hainhofer with access to the most important political decision-makers of his time, as it was already considered a sensation in those days.



Image: Daniel Fröschl, portrait of Rudolf II., Holy Roman Emperor

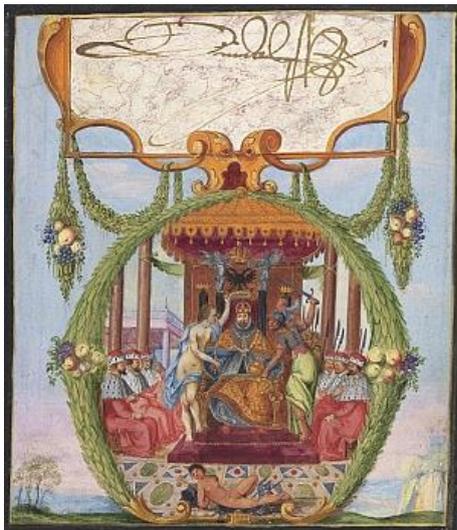


Image: Daniel Fröschl, coronation of Rudolf II., Holy Roman Emperor, surrounded by six electors, with personal signature, before 1612



Image: Unknown artist, coat of arms of Christian IV, King of Denmark and Norway, with personal signature, 1620



Image: Latin poems addressed to the book and the reader, in a painted frame of dancing animals jumping over fruit and flower tendrils, birds above and fish below



Image: Johann Matthias Kager, coat of arms of Elizabeth Stuart, Electress of the Palatinate, with personal signature, 1618



Image: Unknown artist, double-page representation of flowers, shells and insects, within a seashell frame, around 1590/1595