



3. Thomas Anshelm (d. c. 1523), Strasbourg, Pforzheim, Tübingen, Hagenau

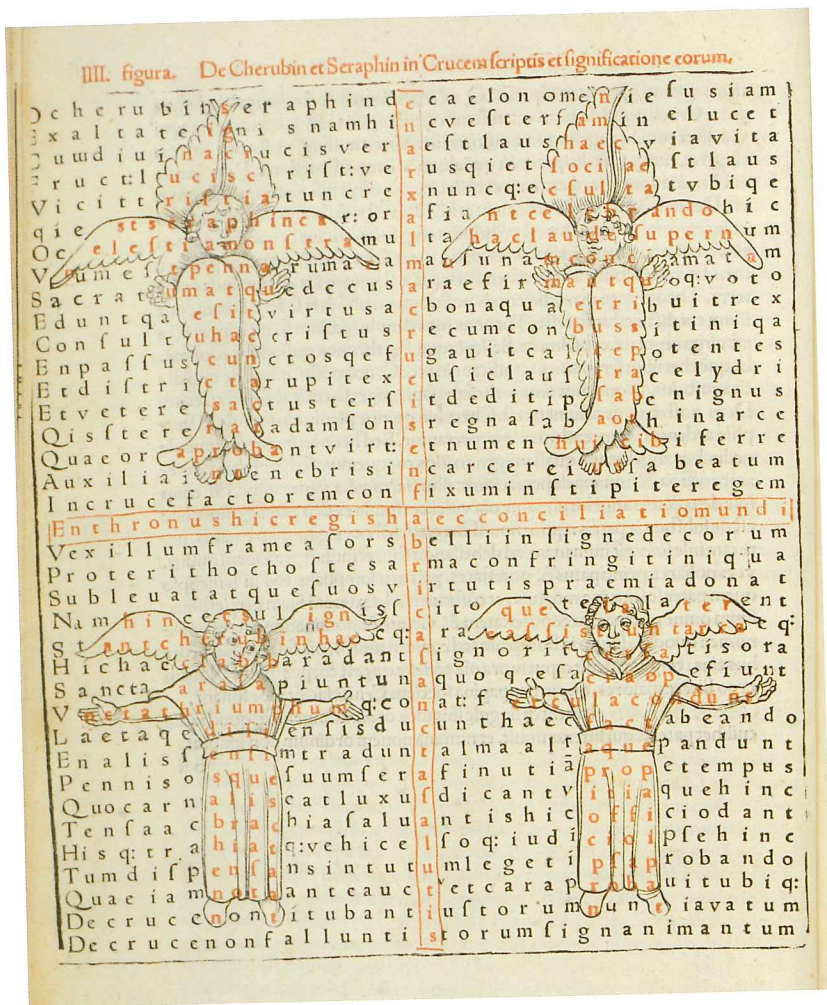
Like his Swiss successor in the printing trade, Johann Froben (no. 8), Thomas Anshelm appears to have emerged into prominence from rather modest circumstances. The German-born printer, though he took no degree following his matriculation in 1485 to the newly founded University of Basel, reappeared several years later in Strasbourg as a member of the book trade. Over the ensuing years Anshelm quickly flourished, relocating serially to the provincial printing center of Pforzheim, thence to Tübingen, and finally to Hagenau. He would produce well over two hundred titles in that time, perhaps the best known of these his editions of the work of his most celebrated friend, the native Pforzheimer and leading Hebraist, Johann Reuchlin.

Anshelm's reputation was most fully secured through the publication, and republication, of his friend's correspondence within the wider European "republic of letters." It was a culture of epistolary exchange that tightly bound Renaissance humanists and printers together, despite their physical distance from one another, through the medium of print as never before. In a letter of July 1517, for example, the Greek scholar Johannes Caesarius had recommended to the legendary Desiderius Erasmus the just published edition of Reuchlin's *Ars cabalistica* (1517), produced by "Thomas Anshelm, whose types I rather like." In fact, Reuchlin had ordered a copy of this very book to be sent by Anshelm directly to Erasmus months earlier. So tightly bound was this network of letters that months earlier, Erasmus's compatriot Dutch scholar, Gerardus Listrius, spoke of "rumors" of the very same book as early as December 1516: "I hear . . . that Reuchlin is having his *Ars cabalistica* and *Philosophia Pythagorica* printed by Thomas Anshelm." The presumed intimacy of such exchanges sometimes seems profound, for immediately after his bruited about rumors of Anshelm's latest Reuchlin imprints, Listrius added: "It is strange, master Erasmus, yet perfectly true: not a night passes without my finding myself in your company. All last night we were together in Basel [i.e., presumably in printed form], if I may even tell you my dreams. So deeply are you implanted in my heart."

By the time of these correspondences, Anshelm was in fact already known to Erasmus and had been perhaps even three years earlier after producing an edition of the humanist's best-selling *Adages*, much as Froben and Aldus had

Device: Traditional interlocking monogrammatic "TAB" (Thomas Anshelm Badensis, the latter denoting birthplace of Baden-Baden). Banderole above expands the traditional Hebrew name of God, the tetragrammaton (Yahweh) into a pentagrammaton intended to include reference to the Hebrew name of Jesus (Jehoshua, or "Yahweh is salvation"). The result, ironically, is a false orthography adopted by the printer from an edition he produced for his Hebraist friend, Johann Reuchlin, *De accentibus et orthographia linguae hebraicae* (Hagenau, 1518). That seminal work on Hebrew accents and orthography—rooted in Reuchlin's controversial interaction with Jews and desire to lend greater authority to Hebrew sources of Christian history—is one of the earliest examples of Hebrew text printed with corresponding musical notation, documenting centuries-long continuities within cantillation traditions in medieval and early modern European Jewish liturgical practice.

Figure 11. Rabanus Maurus, *Magnencij Rabani Mauri de laudib[us] sancte crucis opus* (Phorzheim, 1503), letterpress and woodcut, printed in red and black ink, illustration of crucifix with angelic orders of cherubim and seraphim.



done to great success in recent years (nos. 8, 11). They had both, in fact, earned eternal praise from the celebrity of Erasmus's pen within the very text of the latter's "festina lente" essay in which Aldus's printer's mark was described in minute detail. So, too, would Anshelm be showered by Erasmus with comparable gifts and laudatory attestation in the front matter of Johannes Nauclerus's ambitious history of the world, *Memorabilium omnis aetatis* (1516).

Fortunate in his scholarly relations, as well as in the commercial print trade, and interested to publish ancient as well as modern books, Anshelm hired for a time his philologist nephew, Philip Melanchthon, as a press corrector. It is somehow not difficult to imagine, in this tightly knit realm of so many scholarly interstices, that Europe's foremost apologist of Lutheran evangelical theology would have cut his teeth, at least in part, at a bench in his uncle's printing shop. Anshelm's abiding personal connections to so many of the greatest scholars of his era, Melanchthon being just one of many, assured that his imprints steadily filled the shelves of libraries throughout Europe, commanding a reputation all over Renaissance Latinate culture that was nearly always also extremely good for business.

A humanist through and through, Anshelm is well remembered for his publications of both Greek- and Hebrew-language texts, especially his edition of

Johann Reuchlin's groundbreaking study of Hebrew orthography and accentuation of 1518, which would also inform Anshelm's personal selection of a printer's device. Anshelm's use of rubrication in print was also extremely resourceful and aesthetically masterful. This was evident early on in his virtuoso printed version of the famous *De laudibus sanctae crucis* (1503), one of his earliest Pforzheim imprints, and one of the first printed books ever to combine alternating red and black ink rendered by a dynamic combination of xylographic (i.e., woodblock, not letterpress) and typographic impressions. Anshelm's imaginative facsimile of the ninth-century archbishop of Mainz, Rabanus Maurus's celebrated manuscript "carmina figurata" on the cross, is simply a tour de force of early printing history (fig. 11). The beauty of alternating printed rubrication was expressed just as well nearly two decades later in Anshelm's 1521 Greek New Testament, which he based closely on Erasmus's first edition of 1516, printed by Froben (fig. 12).

The Correspondence of Erasmus, 15 vols. (Toronto and Buffalo, NY: Toronto University Press, 1974-2012), 3:302-3; 4:164-65; 5:35-37; 6:156-59; Davies, *Devices*, 57, 189-90; Ilse Guenther, "Thomas Anshelm," *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 1:61; Heiko Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation: The Emergence of a New Intellectual Climate in Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 17-18; David Price, *Johann Reuchlin and the Campaign to Destroy Jewish Books* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. 23-24.

Figure 12. *Nouum Testamentum Graece* (Haguenau, 1521), printed in red and black, first small-format separate edition of New Testament in Greek, imitation of the new edition of Desiderius Erasmus.

