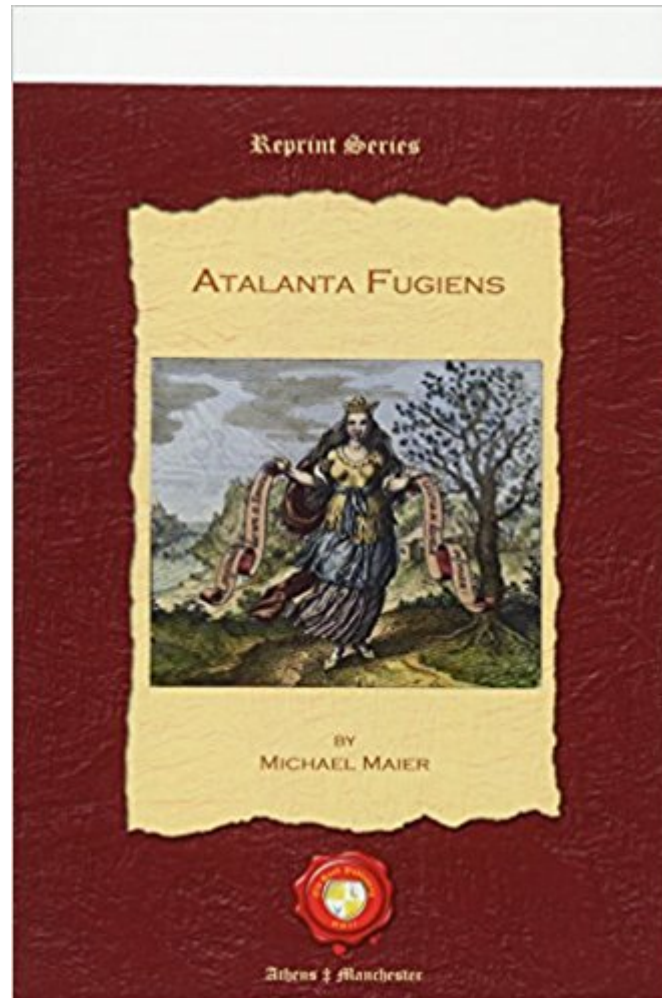




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Synopsis

One of the finest alchemical emblem books and unique in its own right. Michael Maier's work is richly illustrated with original prints by M. Merian; each of the 50 emblems presented consists of a motto, print, epigram, and a three-part musical setting of the epigram, followed by an exposition of its meaning.

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Michael Maier (1568â€“1622) was a German physician and counsellor to Rudolf II Habsburg, a learned alchemist, epigramist and amateur composer. Maier was born in Rendsburg, Holstein, the son of a specialist in beadwork in embroidery named Peter Maier. He studied philosophy and medicine at Rostock (1587â€“1591), Frankfurt (Oder) (M.A. 1592), and Padua (1595â€“1596). Maier left Padua abruptly after getting involved in a fight, injuring the other party, and being arrested. He went on to Basel, where he attained a doctorate in medicine in October 1596. His doctoral thesis, *De Epilepsia* was dedicated to Matthias Carnarius. Maier then returned to Holstein to practice medicine. Around 1599, he became interested in alchemy and attempted to create an alchemical concordance, synthesizing the works of different authors. In 1608, he went to Prague, and on 19 September 1609, he formally entered the service of Rudolf II as his physician and imperial counsellor. Ten days later, Rudolf raised him to the hereditary nobility and gave him the title of Imperial Count Palatine. Around this time, Maier published an extremely limited print run of *De Medicina Regia et vere Heroica*, *Coelidonia* (1609), including in it his autobiography. The interest of the emperor in the occult was the reason of his high esteem for Maier. Nonetheless, in April 1611, Maier left Rudolf's court and went in search of a new patron. He corresponded with Moritz of

Hessen-Kassel, and visited Hessen-Kassel's brother-in-law, Count Ernst III of Holstein-Schauenburg. He was also a guest of Christoph Reinhard, Doctor of Laws and town syndic of Mhlhausen, to whom he later dedicated his book *Atalanta Fugiens*. Between 1611 and 1616, Maier spent time in England at the court of James I. His first well-known book, *Arcana Arcanissima*, was published in London in 1613 or 1614, and he dedicated copies to a number of notables, including the Bishop of Ely and Sir Thomas Smith of the East India Company.

Musicians and history buffs of this period will both appreciate this work, but it's a bit of a difficult read in places.

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