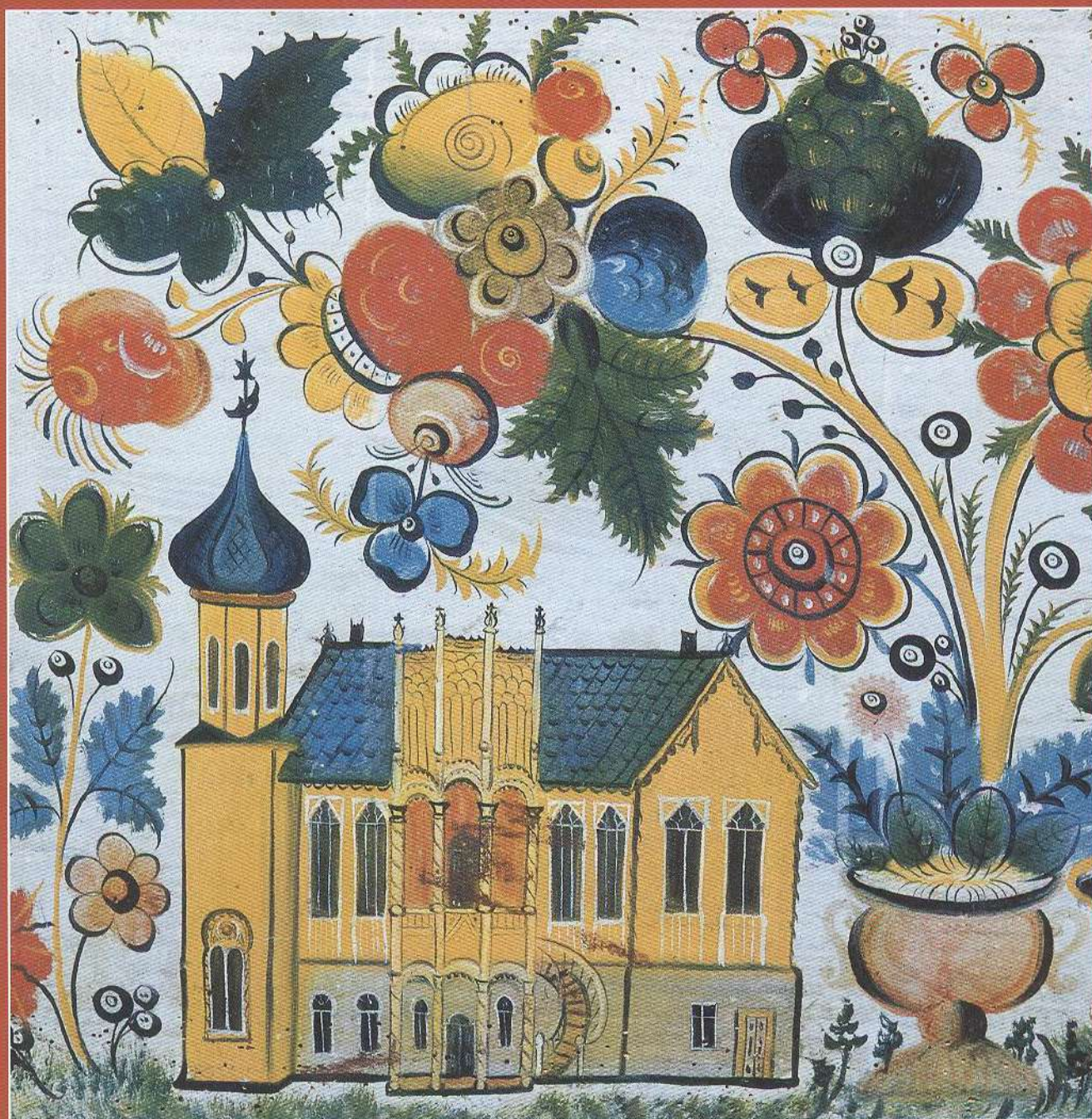


From Academic Art to Popular Pictures

THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL SIEF CONFERENCE





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Brekke Nils Georg (ed.)

FROM ACADEMIC ART TO POPULAR PICTURES

Principles of Representation, Reproduction and Transformation

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Front cover:

*"Villa Lysøen", one of the main romantic monuments in Norway, built in 1873
by the Norwegian violinist Ole Bull. Painted on a bridal chest in 1877
by the local craftsman and 'rose painter' Annanias Tveit from Os, Hordaland.
Privately owned. Photo: Nils Georg Brekke*

Back cover:

*The Calendar "Trés Riches Heures du Duc de Berry", depicting the month
of August and the departure for the falconry from Chateau d'Etampes;
painted miniature by Pol de Limbourg, France 1408 – 1416.
Riding noblesse and bold chevaliers are among the most popular pictorial themes
in folk art in Europe for 400 years.
MUSÉE CONDÉ, CHANTILLY. Photo: GIRAUDON, Paris.*

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From Academic Art to Popular Pictures

PRINCIPLES OF
REPRESENTATION, REPRODUCTION
AND TRANSFORMATION

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Bergen Museum, University of Bergen 2000

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GÁBOR TÜSKÉS
ÉVA KNAPP

CROSS-CULTURAL TEXTS AND PICTURES

The Emblematic Paradigm

Today the emblem is recognised as a major cultural phenomenon and an expression of Renaissance and Baroque life and art. The earlier marginalization of the emblem had much to do with the nineteenth-century organization of knowledge into discrete disciplines. The 1970's and '80's have questioned the traditional division of knowledge, and it is no surprise to find that the emblem, which embraces word and image and informs all aspects of culture, attracts increasing scholarly interest in many disciplines.¹ The emblem helps us to define processes of signification and to understand the epistemological and semiotic conventions of culture.² The emblem is an extremely mobile form of expression which has played an important role in communicating between various cultural strata, art forms and genres. Artistic communication is a common issue of iconography, symbol research and emblematics and has recently been in the focus of ethnological picture research as well.

SOME REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Emblematics was for long a neglected field within art history. Owing to the functional approach, more attention is paid today to the fact that besides their independent sphere, art forms and the individual works of art served as raw materials for new creations, thereby giving rise to various mixed forms. There has been a significant progress in the redefinition of notions of art history (such as, for instance, picture, illustration, symbol, allegory) and in the analytic confrontation of various picture types.³ While the limitations of the iconological method and the concept of art as a form of communication have become obvious, there has been a significant progress in the hermeneutical analysis of the rhetorical determination of the picture notion and of the changes in picture interpretation, picture use and visual rhetoric. Besides issues related to textual sources, production and diffusion, art history tended to neglect esthetic quality and examined more and more frequently popular objects when studying even traditional themes like, for example, Renaissance perspective.⁴

It is of particular significance in the cooperation of art history and ethnological picture research that the former has recently been enriched by certain typological, functional and sociological aspects, while the latter has incorporated the esthetic approach and historical and style historical procedures. In both disciplines there has been a growing awareness of the canonizational processes of the notions of fine art, applied art, provincial art and folk art.⁵ Until the end of the 18th century, the coexistence of different style layers was a common phenomenon in the material culture of higher social strata. Well-known and important patterns no doubt played an important part in the provincialization and trivialization of the so-called high art. In other words, the "popular" is an important element of artistic tradition: it is primarily the popular that becomes traditional.⁶

The place of emblematics within art history was first established by Mario Praz when rediscovering mannerism.⁷ In the 1930's the eminent French art historian Jean Porcher promised a comprehensive study of French emblem literature, but his work was never completed.⁸ The iconographic and iconological approach was marked by studies of the history of motifs and themes, and emblematics plays an important role in the solving of iconographic puzzles. The exploration of emblematics as a field in its own right is due primarily to the unconventional art historian William S. Heckscher.⁹ However, it was not art history that prepared the first major ideal-based inventory of the emblematic source material. The initiative was taken by literary historians Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne.¹⁰ Today the emblem has a growing role in the interpretation of art works that have a symbolic meaning and in the identification of their models. We are also more aware of how this form of expression influenced the emergence of still-life and genre.¹¹ Until recently more the effect of emblematics upon art was in the forefront of attention while the influence of art upon emblematics, which is of utmost significance with a view to our topic, had been rather neglected.¹²

Ethnological picture research paid only passing attention to emblematics. Recently, however, more research is being done about the influence of various stylistic trends on popular art, about borderline genres and themes, questions of peasant picture interpretation and the conveyors of iconographic traditions.¹³ It has become widely accepted that the "popular" is not merely culture made for "the people", nor is it exclusively the culture of peasants, but instead it is a special system of relationship with cultural objects.¹⁴

Page 141:

*'Sine Me Nihil'.
Maglód (Hungary),
Lutheran Church,
The Pulpit: Scene with
a Sower and a Pastor.*

The fact that folkloristics and ethnology had recognised the importance of emblematics is witnessed by the entry of "emblematics" in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* published in 1981.¹⁵ An example from the following period could be the notes of Nils-Arvid Bringéus on the role of the pictures in various editions of *Orbis pictus* as models which reflect the traditionalization of emblematic forms in the case of southern Swedish painted wall-hangings, as well as on the occurrence of imagery and motifs related to 17th century emblematics in popular life cycle iconography.¹⁶ Richard Jeřábek published the emblematically structured pen-and-ink drawings illustrating the Ten Commandments in a Czech popular manuscript prepared in 1831 as a document of the popularization of religious iconography. Gertrud Benker noted emblematics when examining the relationship between picture-text-meaning by way of the history of the owl motif.¹⁷

Emblematics as a synthesizing art form is embedded in the system of fine art and literature. It is a form of expression determined jointly by the picture and the text and is prepared and propagated in large masses. It is a manifestation of the way of thinking which couples the visual motif with an abstract meaning and which had significant role in the 16th-18th centuries in the organization and recording of knowledge, in the formulation, categorization and conveyance of standards of action. Emblematics is basically a syncretic phenomenon which, according to Bernard Scholz, can be described within the frameworks of a complex inductive model as the whole of thematic, formal and functional traits of the infinite number of versions.¹⁸ It is a mistake to define the emblem as a genre of literature or art. Contrariwise, it can be defined as a transitory form of reference where the pictures and texts picked out of their previous contexts become parts of the emblematic structure by means of application and functionalization in the interest of a new objective.¹⁹ Emblematics is not simply peculiar form of allegoric parlance. It is a synthesis of methods of allegorization which plays a cardinal role in the history of Modern Age allegoric thinking and expression as well as in the providing of the passageway from medieval allegory to Romantic symbolism.²⁰

Emblematics is a collection of the iconographic commonplaces of European artistic tradition in which elements derived from the Antique, Medieval and Renaissance symbol systems are authenticated by tradition. Emblem pictures form a part of the widely known iconographic language. One of its basic features is the constant change of the relationship between picture and text, of primacy in the process of production and reception. The use of the *picturae*, the creation of structural, motif, thematic and functional variants and the various techniques of compilation, manipulation and reciprocity give rise to a number of parallels between the so-called provincial art and the so-called popular art and their imagery. The originally simple picture structure starts differentiating from the 17th century on and the thematic shows a specialization, while the role of context and modes of argumentation related to the picture increases.²¹

TENDENCIES OF POPULARIZATION IN THE HISTORY OF PROTO-EMBLEMATICS AND EMBLEMATIC IMAGERY

In the 16th-18th centuries emblematics had an impact on most of the forms of expression in European culture. It appeared in all spheres of applied and fine arts and reached almost all strata of society.²² The early humanist emblem books had

a moral and didactic outlook. Later we find increasing specialization of theme matter and occasion. The social sphere of emblem production and consumption was extended. The history of the impact of emblematics can be interpreted as the history of the popularization of a pattern of representation and of various traditional pictorial and other cultural elements related to it.

As Daniel S. Russel pointed out, the emblematic processing of traditional materials involves two distinct sequential procedures consisting of the fragmentation of well-known allegorical works or traditional sign systems and the subsequent recombination of them into new and striking signifying units. The beginnings of this process can be traced back to the 13th century, when a technique of vulgarization was developed to make the allegories of antiquity and the Middle Ages more usefully accessible to the untutored.²³ The essence of the method is the abbreviation, selection and fragmentation of complex allegoric forms in the interest of communicability. The same attitude was to characterize not only composers of Renaissance floriligia but also the emblematicists, who were very closely related to them in the conception of their craft. It is important to realize in the late Middle Ages these vulgarizations almost always took the form of a moralization, and one of the best examples of the evolution in its full development is the *Ovid moralisé*. By the 16th century the fragmenting and pictorializing process was so fully operative that the Renaissance descendants of the old moralized Ovid closely resembled emblem books, at least by their form. The epigrammatic translations were published with illustrations of the sections recounted. These 16th century illustrated Ovids did not, for the most part retain any moralization, yet they may have served as source books for emblematicists.²⁴

There are many other examples of this kind of reprocessing in the late Middle Ages. Each of them is characterized by a high pictorial quality, by an increasing degree of condensation and by a mode of presentation that moves ever closer to the structure of the emblematic forms as they were commonly conceived in the 16th century. During the 15th century these vulgarizations began to serve on occasion as prefaces to complete works or parts of them, called sometimes *argumenta*. This technique began to produce works that foreshadowed the emblem even more closely around 1500, when artists started to use similar *argumenta* as *tituli*, or inscription. After the publication of the first emblem books similar techniques continued to be used to present Biblical lore, fables, proverbs or Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in popular illustrated versions. Holbein's *Historiarum Veteris Testamenti Icones* served as prototype for the popular *Figures de la Bible*. Their format makes these books look like emblem books, and the presentation is characterized by fragmentation, rhyming *argumenta*, pictorial projection, and the like, in the vulgarization of parts of the Old Testament that lend themselves to such presentation. Parallelling the editions of Holbein's Old Testament prints in this format, and during the same period around 1540 and a little later, the same publishers in Lyons also issued a series of editions of Holbein's illustration for the traditional Dance of Death. Beginning in the 15th century the various versions of the Dance were usually proto-emblematic by their combination of picture and text. The same format continued to find considerable favor during the second half of the 16th century.²⁵

So despite their formal resemblance to emblems, these works more closely resemble Medieval allegory. The emblem has no such original literal source.

Each emblem is constructed from a fragment of one of the various sign systems, available to Renaissance artists. These systems include Horapollo's Hieroglyphics, bestiary lore from Pliny and the Physiologus tradition, astrological symbolism and the store of commonplace and proverbial wisdom. In the 16th century these systems were consolidated in the iconologies of Valeriano, Ripa and others; the emblemist read the chosen fragment in some variant sense that runs sufficiently counter to the reader's usual expectations in a given situation to produce a mild, but pleasurable and even memorable surprise. This technique of shifting from system to system in the construction of allegorical signs began to develop in the second half of the 15th century at the same time as syncretism was becoming more self-conscious. Like a good workman, the emblemist "is using old materials to build a new house; his contribution lies in variation, in adaption and a kind of personalized *mise en valeur* of older materials".²⁶

The popularization of emblematic forms continued in the 17th century. The significance of humanistic civilizational elements decreased, the esoteric and universal character together with use of Latin was pushed gradually in the background. At the same time of a thematic, functional specialization, moral learning, didactics and the playful element comes into the foreground. The sphere of addressees is becoming wider, and contrary to first editions, emblem books published in vernacular, new editions, translations and polyglot texts dominate. Emblematic structures penetrate into the religious sphere. In the 18th century, there is hardly any new, original publication appearing. At the same time, the number of encyclopedic works collecting already known emblems and those of treatises expanded by emblems increases. Parallely with this process, the use of the emblem prevails in other areas as well, primarily in decorative arts. When considering the allegoric and symbolic motifs used in emblematics we should not always think of the application of the emblematic expression and its role as a conveyor or communicator. For example, the occurrence of the pelican and siren motifs, or the *homo bulla* representation of transience in 18th century peasant art cannot be evidently traced back to the mediatory role of emblematics within or without literature, as these topics could reach popular art in a different way as well.²⁷

Sources and objects containing emblematic combinations of picture and word can be classified according to various, sometimes overlapping aspects. The process of popularization can be retraced not only in the history of objects relating to different social strata, but very often within a single ensemble of sources. Opinions differ as to the number of emblem books published in the 16th-18th centuries. On the basis of the narrower definition of the emblem book, there are about a thousand titles with over two thousand editions and more than a million copies. Some books with over fifty or hundred editions have proved remarkable successful and influential. The various works had a significant influence on one another in terms of both text and picture. About one-third of the books were published in German-speaking territories. For example, in England about 50 emblem books were published prior to 1700 in over 130 editions. The role of the picture in the propagation of emblem books has been very important since the beginnings. While Alciatus himself made no mention of pictures, his publisher argued in favour of adding xylographs by saying that these would illustrate the meaning to even less educated readers.²⁸ The 17th century emblem books are often compilations of previous editions, while the pictures are copies or variants of

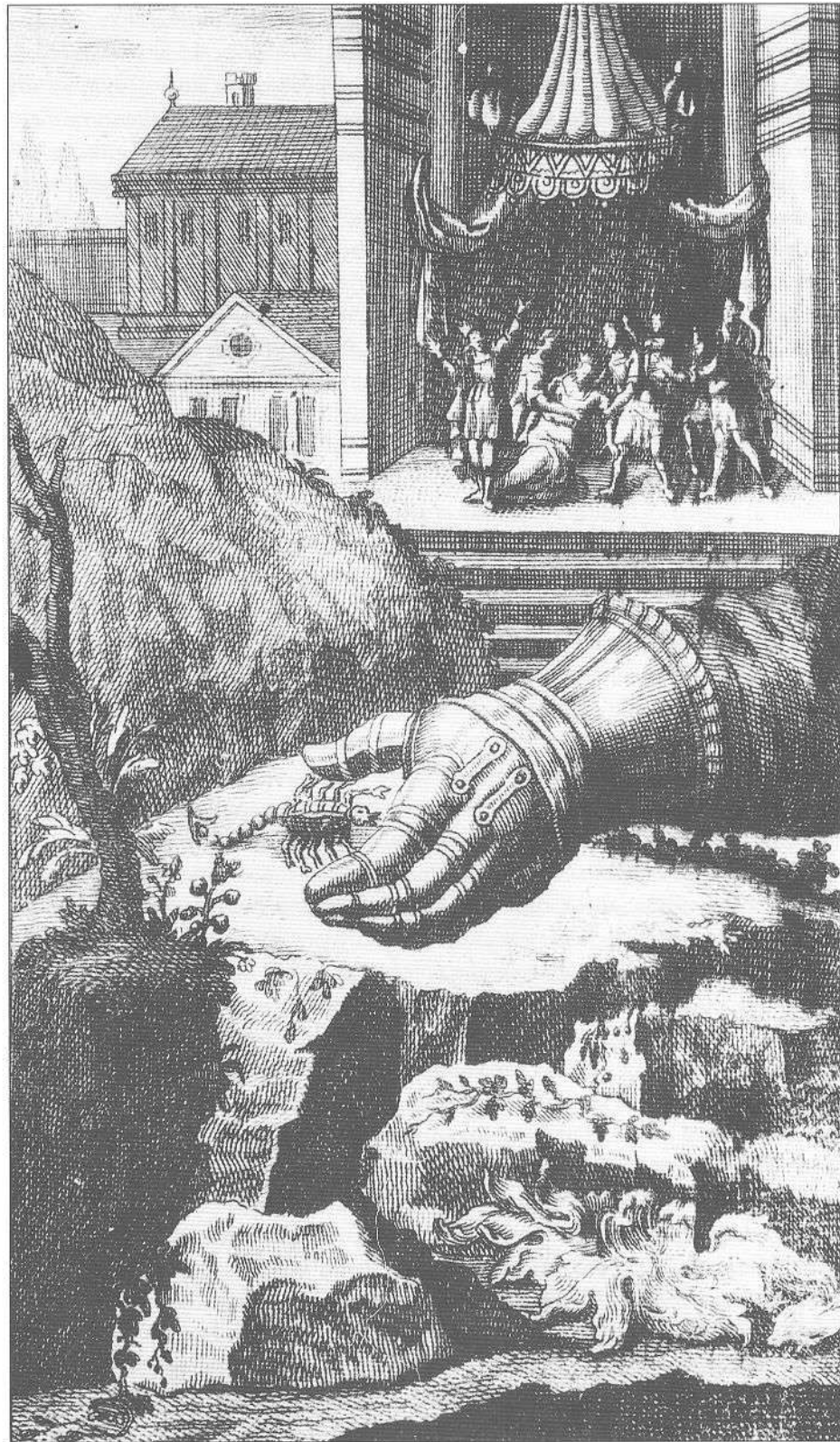


Fig. 2.
János Barklajus
 (John Barclay): *Argenis*,
 vol. 2, Eger, 1792,
 before p. 241: Illustration
 to book III, part XIX.

representations in earlier works and adaptations. Translations have differing emphases depending on the language and the religious denomination and the illustrative material is in conformity of this emphasis.²⁹

One of the last stages of the instrumentalization, marginalization and popularization of the form is the fact that in the 19th century the emblem book appears in children's literature. The impact of some emblem books has gone far beyond literary emblematics and the books indeed have been used as manuals. For instance, the emblems of Joachim Camerarius appeared on the medals of the Altdorf academy as well as on the political memorial medals of Heinrich Julius, prince of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, the series of emblems in the conference hall of the Nuremberg City Hall, the wooden ceiling of the smaller knights' hall of the Dillingen palace, the Teutonic Knights' church in Lucklum, on glass chalices, broadsides and in sermons.³⁰ Some of the etchings made by Christoph Murer to illustrate his drama *Edessa* could be completed with text by the editor only after the death of the author, in a conscious effort of following emblematic traditions. A part of the etchings, which partly drew from emblematic sources also appeared on broadsides and served as a model for various works of art, for example glass paintings and ceramic tiles until the 18th century.³¹

The expansion of emblamatics in reproduced graphics is indicated by the appearance of emblematic illustrations in 17th century hymn-books and collections of meditations. It occurred several times that originally non-illustrated works were published with emblematic illustrations decades after the production or first edition. For example, some editions of John Barclay's famous novel *Argenis*, Johann Gerhard's *Meditationes sacrae* and Johann Arndt's *Vom wahren Christentum* were decorated by emblematic illustrations.³² The emblematically illustrated editions of *Argenis* were published in Nuremberg from 1673 on and the series of illustrations can be traced right up to a 1792 Hungarian translation.³³ (Fig. 2). The reverse case is not an infrequent phenomenon of popularization either. Due primarily to financial reasons, the illustrations disappear or their number decreases in new editions. An example is Benedictus van Haefen's *Schola cordis* (1629), a collection of emblematic meditations that was published a number of times and whose engravings were used as models for the illustrations of translations. While Christopher Harvey's English translation (*The school of the Heart*, 1647), which was published several times, reproduced the full material of the Latin publication, an 18th century Hungarian translation only has two pictures which show greater or lesser differences compared to the original source.³⁴

Emblematic frontispieces, decorative title pages, publisher's signets and title labels of books and periodicals also served for grasping the reader's attention.³⁵ The role of the picture in the so-called *album amicorum* (Stammbücher) increased gradually. Here the use of various textual and illustrative traditions often takes place in an emblematic structure.³⁶ Emblems were frequently used in university theses in different iconographic and intellectual contexts.³⁷ An important channel of the popularization of the emblem is the illustrated broadside which from the turn of the 16th-17th centuries addressed to primarily the urban public. The two major types of emblematic representation on broadsides are the emblematic structure (the coupling of picture and word) and the updated reinterpretation of emblematic motifs, mottos and entire emblems.³⁸ A broadside published on the occasion of the occupation of Augsburg by the Swedes in 1632, for instance, shows the emblematic representation of virtues of the Swedish king in the four corners.³⁹ The emblem also appeared on play cards and small devotional pictures with primarily a decorative and entertaining function on the former and with a



Fig. 3.
Johannes Weber:
Janus Bifrons, Lócse,
1662, before fol. D3/a:
Emblematic illustration
of the fable "Asinus vulgi".

didactic function on the latter.⁴⁰ The lowest level of popularization is marked by the emblematic illustrations of the publication that appeared on the anniversary of the transfer (*translatio*) of the picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary to which miraculous qualities are attributed in Stephansdom in Vienna,⁴¹ and by the so-called fable emblems, for instance the illustration of the well-known *asinus vulgi* story by joining narrative picture structure with emblematic form⁴² (Fig. 3).

The so-called non-literary emblematics can be divided simplistically into forms connected to the royal court and high nobility, the church and nobility and bourgeoisie. Favoured themes of the court and high nobility sphere included medals minted to commemorate major political events, such as coronations or peace treaties. On one side of the medal, an emblematic composition related to the particular event could be seen.⁴³ These events were often depicted graphically as well, similarly to splendide ceremonies of the royal court and their ephemeral architectural representations (e.g. arches for royal entries).⁴⁴ For example, the engraving of the horse parade in the Viennese Burg on the occasion of the imperial wedding in 1667 shows emblems decorating the place of entry of the empress.⁴⁵ Of the emblematic compositions of stately homes we can quote the frescoes of the Lobkowitz palace in Prague painted to the pattern of Fammiano Strada's

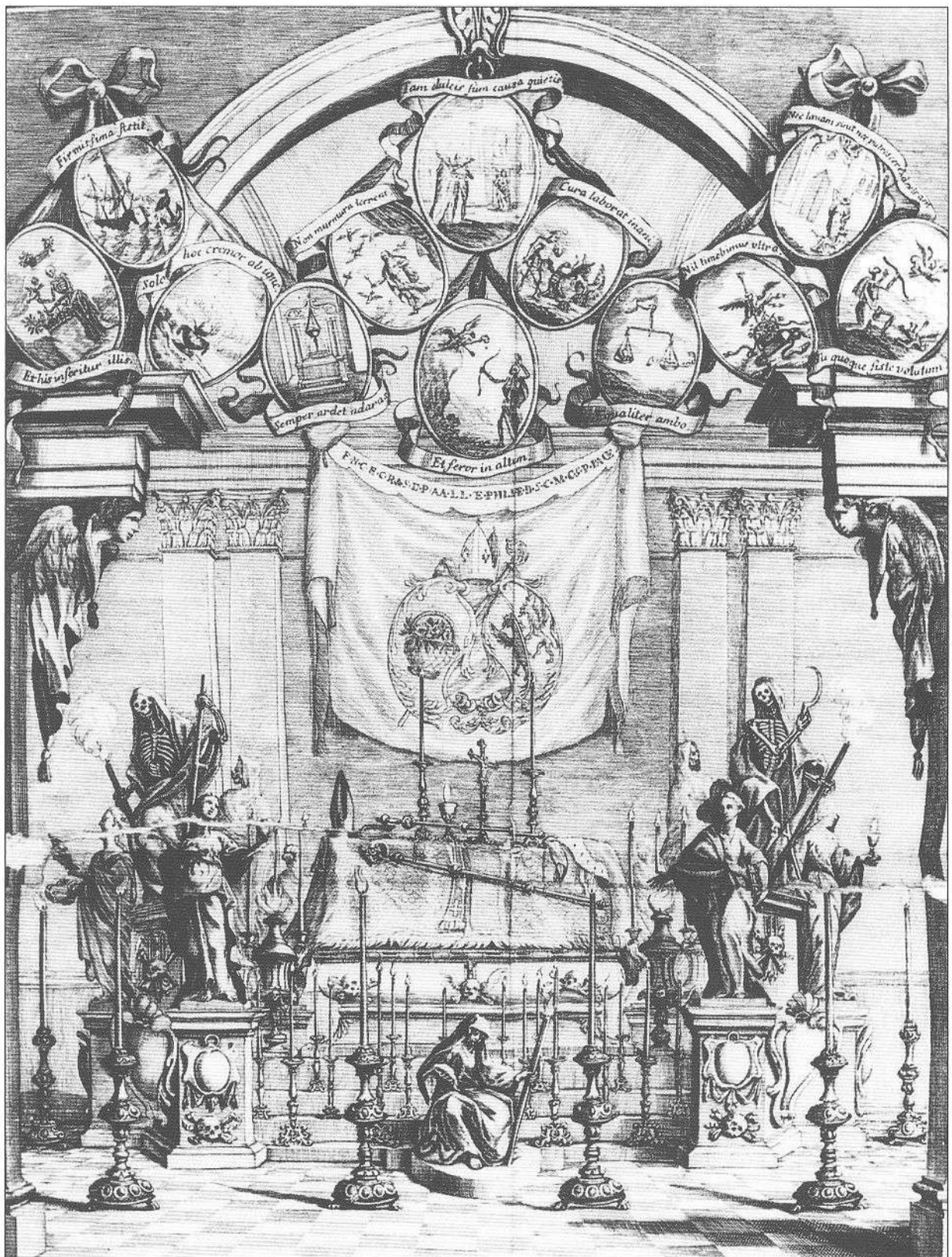


Fig. 4.
 Hieronymus Übelpacher: *Drachma perditā*, Wien, 1712, frontispiece: *Castrum doloris* of Ferdinandus Nolthaeus, prelate of Vienna, with emblems.

Fig. 5.
Andrea Alciato:
Emblemata cum
commentariis Claudii
Minois, Patavi, 1621,
p. 828. Emblem CXCv:
Aeneas carrying his father
from the burning Troy.



emblems, the decoration of the Eggenberg palace in Graz showing the impact of Saavedra Fajardo as well as the series in the Bunte Kammer of the Ludwigsburg castle. The latter contains altogether 170 emblems taken from 18 different emblem books.⁴⁶

The narrow scale church representation was served by the emblem series in libraries and refectories, for example, in the Benedictine monasteries of St. Lambrecht's in Steyr and St. Peter's in Schwarzwald as well as in St. Martin's in Pannonhalma, Hungary.⁴⁷ Contrariwise, a larger scale effect is aimed at by emblems and emblem series placed in various points of church space, such as the pulpit, the gallery and the ceiling⁴⁸ (Fig. on p. 141). For example, there are more than three hundred painted emblems on the ceiling of the Holy Mary's Chapel built by the Kapuziner monks in Hergiswald, and dozens of stuccoed emblems of the Virgin Mary decorate the chapel of the Jesuit church of Luzern.⁴⁹

The attachment of bourgeois and gentry strata is reflected by the emblematic decoration of stately homes, town halls, theatre sets and *tableaux vivants*. Characteristic pieces of the material culture are glass chalices, enamel boxes, painted chests and targets.⁵⁰ They may include compositions which bear a hidden political meaning as well. For instance, in the Upper Austrian town of Scheibbs, the local Society of Archers used for its iconographically rich targets the designs of the nearby Carthusian monastery called Gaming. Until 1775 these targets still had the appearance of being loyal to the Emperor, but they acquire more

and more anti-Joseph and pro-clerical elements in a target of 1782 criticising the new sciences of the Enlightenment.⁵¹

To illustrate that emblematics can be grasped within the same form of tradition from the top to the bottom most strata, we quote sources related to funerals. The *castrum doloris*, an integral part of the funeral of the high priests and high nobility was often decorated with emblems. It also appeared in graphic illustrations which was added to the printed funeral sermon⁵² (Fig. 4). The decoration of the tomb with emblematic elements was favoured among both high nobility and burgers in the 17th-18th centuries.⁵³ Hand-painted and printed death notices (serving at the same time as invitation to the funeral) were prepared of deceased members of noble and bourgeois families of Transylvania which depicted the non-personalized, so-called ancestral coat of arms of the family and the data of the deceased below. These coat of arms often used motifs favoured in emblematics as well.⁵⁴ In some of the Calvinist villages of the Great Hungarian Plain, church records including funeral registers were illustrated with emblematic compositions in the 18th century.⁵⁵

A special chapter in the history of impact of emblematics is Jesuit emblematics. The popularization process can be grasped in the theory and practice of Jesuit emblematics. Emblem and impresa treatises were themselves part of popularizing literature and this holds even more to the treatises of Jesuits, who always attempted formulate and disseminate their ideas of images and symbols. At the turn of the 16th-17th centuries, depiction and with it, emblematics became important elements of the canonizing efforts of the Jesuits.⁵⁶ The Jesuits modified the joined humanistic impact of *obscuritas-claritas* as well. They warned against too much *obscuritas* and made people aware that the emblem could not carry an overly hidden meaning due to the need of popularity and understandability.⁵⁷

As a consequence, the humanist world of artistic expression was adapted to a functionally determined form in line with the expectations of the Jesuits. The number of Jesuit emblem books is indicated by the 500-some volumes registered by research in additional 1200 editions and translations.⁵⁸ This also shows that the history of emblematic imagery has a direct relationship with processes of confessionalization and social discipline. The peak of Jesuit emblem book production in the southern German and Austrian provinces coincided with the reinforcement of the absolutist state authority and dynasty and with the increase of counter-reformation.⁵⁹

The Jesuits tried to make the emblem commonly understandable and recognizable in practice as well as in theory and eliminated esoteric features. The title in prose separated from the motto became common. It spelt out the subject matter depicted, thereby giving way to the practice of multiplication of the *explicatio* in different forms. The humanist emblems were deformed in the Jesuits' hands, their motifs were coupled and compiled in an associated way, the original structures of picture and meaning were dissolved and contaminated. Folkloristic elements and ideas were also used occasionally, for instance in the egg emblems of Georg Stengel.⁶⁰ The emblematics of Jesuit saints illustrates the emergence, propagation and decline of the form of expression as well as the process in the course of which this mode of representation grew far beyond the frameworks of the order.

Jesuit emblematicists used various scenes of Antique mythology to glorify their saints. For example, the motif of "The child Hercules killing the snakes in the cradle", a favoured theme of 16th-18th centuries art and secular emblem tradition,⁶¹ used among others by Saavedra Fajardo and Zingref, or by Antonius Maurisberg to glorify the merits of Stanislaw Kostka.⁶² Another frequently used mythological scene was "Aeneas carrying his father from the burning Troy", which appeared in Alciatus' and other emblematicists' works⁶³ (Fig. 5-6). In an emblem of Ignatius Loyola by Ignatius Querck, this represents the moment in the saint's life when the people assembling to attend his Eucharist saw flames around his head.⁶⁴ Every author interprets the two mythological scenes differently. Their occurrence, however, is a clear indication of the functionalization of humanist literature and art of Antique origin and their transmission to wider audience.

THE INFLUENCE OF EMBLEMATICS UPON ART

The reception of emblematics in fine arts is a peculiar case of the expansion of emblematic forms. It is important to see that attempts to pinpoint an emblem as the sole source of a detail of a work of art are often misconceived. In the majority of cases, emblematics participates in the traditions of allegoric interpretation conjointly with other artistic elements. At the beginning of this century, Mary F. S. Hervey discovered the Alciatus-inspired motif of the lute in Hans Holbein the Younger's painting of 1533 *The Ambassadors*.⁶⁵ William S. Heckscher has called our attention to the importance of this discovery that makes the painting "the first major work of art influenced by an emblem".⁶⁶ At the same time this picture is perhaps the most famous *memento mori* in Western art and a classic example of anamorphosis. It stands as a metaphor of the emblematic process insofar as it is such a blatant statement of the importance, indeed the essentiality, of point of view in the formation of meaning in Western art from that time forward.⁶⁷ Another famous emblematic work by Holbein is his portrait of *Erasmus of Rotterdam with the Renaissance Pilaster* (dated 1523) at Longford Castle. Although the painting was made in the decade preceding the emblems of Alciatus, Heckscher argued convincingly for the role of this painting in the rise of the form of expression.⁶⁸ Lubomír Konečný has suggested some years ago that the second instance of the adaptation of the *Foedera* emblem of Alciatus is Mathieu Le Nain's sophisticated masterpiece, *L'accord interrompu*, dated 1650, in the Louvre.⁶⁹ Konečný pointed out that Le Nain took the *Foedera* emblem as a source of his painting.

The most important examples of the impact of emblematics in art are the *impresa* portraits. These are exercises in Renaissance self-fashioning where emblematic details are included in the portrait in order to project a public image of the subject. They are strictly emblematic where the icon is accompanied by a text or motto, expressing a particular political or ideological message in which the aspiration or moral intention of the sitter is defined. Well-known English examples include the *Rainbow Portrait* where Queen Elizabeth I is depicted holding a miniature rainbow, with the motto *Non sine sole iris*, or Nicholas Hilliard's miniature of the Earl of Cumberland in tilting armour, with his *impresa* in the sky behind his right ear consisting of a stormy sky with lightning, and the motto



Fig. 6.
Vranov nad Dyjí
(Czech Republic), Castle:
Aeneas Carrying his Father
from the Burning Troy.

Fulmen asquasque fero. Though such portraits may offer conventional images of public virtue, they often hold more surprising and enigmatic messages.⁷⁰

The list of 17th-18th centuries painters and graphics who were influenced by emblematics is rather long. It contains names like Rembrandt, Maarten van Heemskerck, Jan Sanders van Hemessen, Rubens, Cosmas Damian Asam, Hogarth and Goya.⁷¹ It is indispensable to have recourse to emblematics if we try to interpret some of their works. In 17th century France, the biblical scenes of Raphael's loggias in the Vatican as well as Poussin's paintings of the life of Moses were used for the painted enigmas which have a close functional and structural relationship with the emblem. Between 1678-1681, the periodical *Mercure galant* published such enigmas in almost each issue and also published the right



Fig. 7.
Albrecht Dürer:
Amor, The Honey Thief
(Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Vienna).

solution along with the guesses submitted by the readers. In this way, making enigmatic allegories became popular social entertainment from an educational practice and influenced the activity of Academie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture: the subject set for the prize competitions, the works proposed as diploma pieces, and the discourses given monthly on a work of art.⁷² Noted examples are Edwaert Collier's famous vanitas still lifes with the favoured motif of different emblem books. In the painting in the Tate Gallery, a volume of George Whiter's *Emblemes* can be seen, while in the version kept by the Rheinisches Landmuseum of Bonn, we can see *Amorum emblemata* by Otho Vaenius, among objects entertaining human senses and a human skull.⁷³ The emblematic concept is latently carried in the monumental historical painting of the 19th century as well, as we can see, for example, in the series of paintings in the conference room of the town hall of Hildesheim.⁷⁴

EMBLEMATICS AS A TRANSMITTER OF ARTISTIC TRADITION

In the following we attempt to outline not only the effect of art on emblematics, but the complex process in which emblematics played a role in the popularization of Renaissance and Baroque artistic tradition. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the emblem was raised to the rank of art in the hands of excellent engravers and representations with autonomous illustrative value were created. Another important attempt in the wake of high art works was to create emblems by borrowing or use as model. As a result, emblematics became a part of the history of effect of the artistic works.

As it is known, one of the manuscripts of Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica*, the most

important source of emblematics, was illustrated by Dürer.⁷⁵ Some of these drawings prompted various emblematic representations by the mediation of Valeriano's comment on Horapollus (1556). Several other works by Dürer can also be related to emblematics, for example his drawing dated from 1514 depicting Amor, the honey thief in the company of Venus (Fig. 7) (Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna). This drawing is not only the starting point of a widespread of Renaissance and Baroque art tradition, but could have an indirect influence on the emblematic application of the motif started by Alciatus.⁷⁶ We could also mention Dürer's portrait of Emperor Maximilian I (1519). The Emperor is holding a split pomegranate, which he chose as an attribute while still young and which was used by Dürer several times (*Ehrenpforte*, *Triumphwagen*). In emblematics and in impresa, the pomegranate occurs as a frequent symbol of immortality.⁷⁷

Several emblem books made use of the works of high art as models. A comparatively simple example is that of Achille Bocchi's *Symbolicarum questiorum... libri quinque* (Bologna, 1555). The book is graced by interesting but not distinguished engravings by Giulio di Antonio Bonasone. The artist made ample use of Renaissance compositions, ranging from Raphael and Michelangelo to Hieronymus Bosch. In the second edition of 1574 the copperplates were retouched by Agostino Carracci. As William S. Heckscher remarked, in view of the fact that Bocchi's emblem book made High Renaissance compositions easily accessible to the members of the Accademia degli Incamminati (since 1582), its importance as a transmitter of the very substance that went into the making of the Bolognese Baroque will be appreciated.⁷⁸

The pictures of *Emblemata secularia* (1596) by Johann Theodor and Johann Israel de Bry were taken from Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel, among others. In the 1611 edition, a total of 18 graphics were taken over, eight of them from Bruegel. Bruegel was the source of the seven and in another edition, eight graphics taken over from contemporary Karel van Mander, which, similarly to most of the Bruegel copies, illustrate proverbs and adages.⁷⁹ Johann Theodor de Bry's *Emblemata nobilitati*, a Stamm- und Wappenbuch, or *album amicorum*, some of the illustrations were prepared on the basis of the famous Landsknecht engravings by Hubert Goltzius.⁸⁰ In the early 17th century Stammbücher of Andreas Bretschneider and Peter Rollos, the effect of Crispijn de Passe's erotic illustrations and those depicting university life can be observed.⁸¹ It is commonly known that the most significant manual on Baroque iconography and emblematics, Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* has important Antique, Medieval, Renaissance and contemporary works of art as sources.⁸²

The number of renowned graphics and engravers who worked for emblem books as well or whose works were used in emblem books is rather high. Besides Agostino Carracci, Crispijn de Passe, Jörg Breu and Peter Rollos, we could mention Jost Amman, Matthäus Merian, Virgil Solis, Tobias Stimmer, Otto van Veen, Adriaen van de Venne, Jacques Callot and Jan Luiken. Luiken, for example, prepared sketches without text for his book describing human occupations in an emblematic framework. These sketches can be considered as artistic works in their own right. The addition of moralistic and didactic texts to the pictures is not unrelated to the form of publication required. There are lesser or greater differences between the drawings and the etchings published as a book in 1694.⁸³ Some of the etchings were used in different contexts by the Nuremberg engraver

Fig. 8.
Stephanus Tarnóczy:
*Philosophia, quam
authoritate et consensu,
Cassoviae, 1665,*
title page: Ferenc Rákóczi
I as Hercules.



and publisher Christoph Weigel after re-etching. The history of impact of these plates continues to date, as Luiken's pictures with or without texts appear frequently in Holland on various objects for everyday use (for instance, wall-picture,

packing material, illustration of newspaper article and visiting card).⁸⁴ Another series by Luiken, *Ethica naturalis* (1700) were used by Weigel to illustrate a compilation of texts by several authors published under the name of the popular court orator Abraham a Sancta Clara. The plates were placed in an emblematic structure. The book containing prose including fables unites different styles, literary and art techniques and genres, and gives way to various interpretations and tendencies of artistic expression and folklorization.⁸⁵

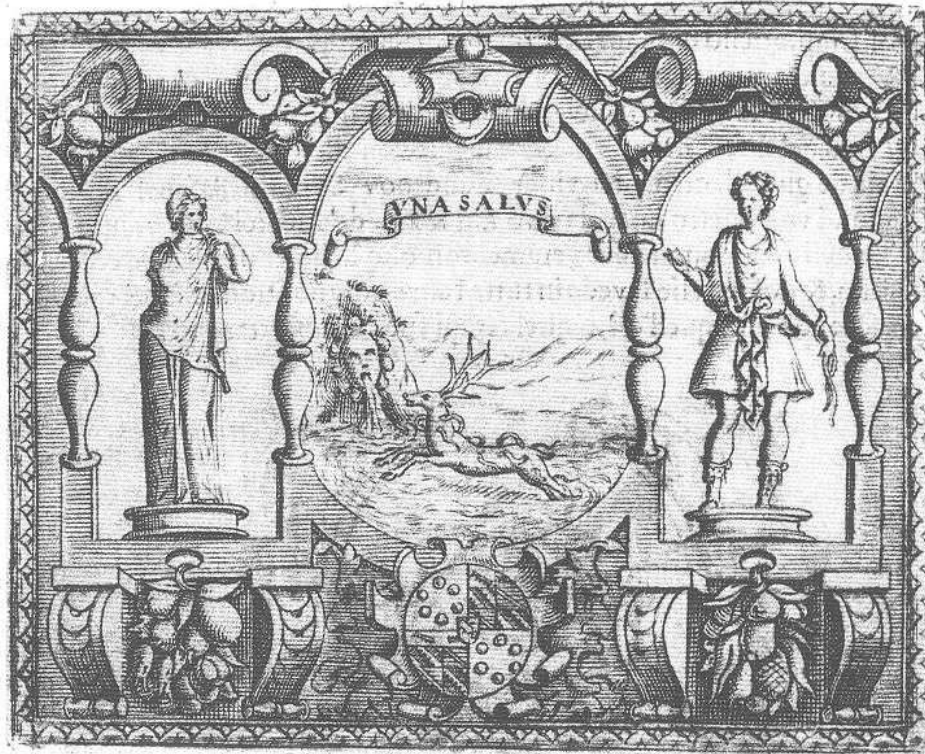
TRANSFORMATION TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES

One of the basic characteristics of emblematics stemming from the essence of the form of expression is the wide scale and multifarious application of transformation. Our examples are taken from reproductive graphics, since this genre addresses to wide audience. Owing to its easy propagation and mobility, it has played a significant part in shaping the common language of art.

To illustrate the fact that the emblem book very often transmitted to larger groups of people a programme prepared originally for a narrower audience, we quote the history of the emblems in the city hall of Nuremberg. Created in 1613, this emblematic programme is connected to the ideals of the painting planned by Dürer, which depicted Hercules and Athena as the personification of Strength and Wisdom. The emblems of the programme laying down the principles of patrician rule in the service of public good in Nuremberg was drawn primarily from the emblem books of Rollenhagen and Camerarius, the *impresa* collection of Typotius, from the emblems of Alciatus, Junius, Bocchius, Reusner and others as well as from the emblematic medals of Altdorf. The painted emblems were etched and published by Peter Isselburg and Georg Rem in 1617. In the publication, the emblems lost their connection with a particular historical locality and political function.⁸⁶

It can be observed frequently that the same motif or pattern of composition appears in different contexts and in publications aimed at various social strata. For instance, the columns of Hercules are transformed into obelisks and bear the emblems of virtues and vices in an anti-imperial broadside printed in 1621 and on the title page of a publication describing the principles of the ideal town management.⁸⁷ The same iconographic topos appears on the title page of a doctoral thesis dated from 1665 and depicts the Transylvanian governor Ferenc Rákóczi I as Hercules.⁸⁸ (Fig. 8). The *remora* (Hemmfisch), the mysterious sea creature of ancient Greek mythology which hindered the passage of sea vessels was a favoured motif of humanist emblematics. It appears with a similar structure but different mottos and meaning (for instance, power, strength, the omnipotence of God) in the works of for example Alciatus, Zsámboky, Camerarius and Ferro de Rotary. In the emblematic biography of Ignatius Loyola by the Jesuit Bovio, the supernatural power of the saint's words converting the heathen was represented.⁸⁹ Another favoured motif of emblematics is the ant. It occurs frequently in different visual and textual contexts and with different meanings from Zsámboky onwards.⁹⁰ The primary meaning is continuous labour and diligence. This is the content that is used in an emblematic *Fürstenspiegel*, a guidance of rulership for royal use dated from 1615 to symbolize royal virtue and in a 1725 manual on moral philosophy to illustrate civil virtue.⁹¹

Fig. 9.
Girolamo Ruscelli:
Le imprese illustri, Venetia,
 1584, p. 90: *The stag at*
the stream.
 (Imprese of Cardinal Carlo
 Borromeo).



The process of transforming into emblems the Renaissance impresas which are connected to an individual is illustrated by the motif of Diana's temple in Ephesus. According to Ruscelli, the motif represented the tenacity, strength and invincibility of the Italian noble lady Ersilia Cortese de Monti. The same picture and motto was used by Typotius in connection with another Italian consort of the prince. By changing the motto, Pietrasanta used the motif to illustrate the sanctity of Aloysius Gonzaga. Then Bovio added a new motto and used it for illustrating the scene of Stanislaw Kostka's life when the saint refreshed his heart inflamed by the love of God by immersing in icy water.⁹²

It would be surprising if the emblem writers had not picked up such a strongly established topic as that of the serpent-eating or thirsting stag. Michael Bath has recently analysed the Renaissance iconography of this topic, a topic so strongly rooted in classical as well as patristic bestiary sources.⁹³ Among the emblematisers, Camerarius gives one of the fullest renderings of the iconography of the stag into emblem. His third emblem shows the stag fleeing across a river toward a fountain flowing from a rock, its body covered with snakes.

Camerarius's emblem of 1595 goes back to Ruscelli's *Imprese illustri* (1566). Here we find the topic as an impresa of Cardinal Carlo Borromeo. (Fig. 9). His description of the impresa offers another example of the collective and assimilative habits of Renaissance emblematisers. What is remarkable about Ruscelli's commentary on this impresa is the way it imports into some of the familiar Christian stag topic a number of discrepant secular traditions. We find the stag-at-the-stream topic as an emblem among others with Zsámboky, Reusner, Whitney, Peacham, Hugo, Whither and Quarles. It is connected with the Cardinal Borromeo with Typotius and Pietrasanta in the wake of Ruscelli, while with Vincartius, the motif is coupled with a new motto and is shifted to Aloysius Gonzaga.⁹⁴ The long



Fig. 10.
János Gerhard
(Johann Gerhard):
Liliomok völgye, Posony,
1774, p. 43:
The stag at the stream
("Here is the medicine").

afterlife of the motif as well as its adaptability is shown by the fact that it appeared as an emblematic illustration of a 17th century funeral Éloge and an 18th century collection of meditations.⁹⁵ (Fig. 10). These examples demonstrate also the extreme interdependence of the various images and topics that came down to the Renaissance.

To show what complicated visual transformation processes an emblem book may trigger or participate in, we quote the example of the most popular 17th century Jesuit emblem book, Hermann Hugo's *Pia desideria* (1624). The book

is known in 124 various editions and translations.⁹⁶ It was not only translated by English and German Protestants; its influence can be traced in the books of Lutheran emblem writers like Dilherr and Saubert, and emblem sequences from *Pia desideria* were put up in Lutheran churches. The majority of the engravings shows *Pia Anima* (the spirit) represented as a little girl in the company of *Amor Divinus* (Christ) shown as a boy. The direct source of the cherubic allegoric figures are the putti of two emblem books by Otto van Veen. Their wide circle of associations also includes non-emblematic secular elements (for instance, the story of Amor and Psyche). Boethius a Bolswert, one of the most prominent Flemish artist of the period, made the plates on the basis of the text by Hugo. Bolswert's contribution in the interpretation is remarkable. There are many examples of Bolswert's influence on the production of meaning in the work.⁹⁷

A special adaptation of Hugo's book is Francis Quarles' *Emblemes* (1635). As Karl Josef Höltgen pointed out, this is one of the most important and most successful English emblem books with more than fifty editions up to the 19th century.⁹⁸ Hugo's plates were copied with some loss of quality and a few significant alterations, mainly due to doctrinal, conceptual and iconographic reasons. An interesting case of an adaptation is the plate which represents God the Father as *Amor Divinus*, enthroned in the open Heaven, surrounded by angelic choirs playing musical instruments. Quarles did not find it necessary to alter the plate but apologizes for his "bold attempt" in the text. The image of God and the open Heaven was retained in the second edition of 1639. Only for the next edition (1643), Heaven was closed and the presence of the deity was symbolised by the tetragrammaton. However, not Quarles but the Cambridge printer must have been responsible for the change. It took place only after the Civil War had begun and Cambridge had come under Puritan domination. Since 1643 this emblem has always been reprinted with the tetragrammaton. Significantly, the story does not end there. This plate and other plates from the 1643 edition were then used by English Benedictines from Douay for a Recusant edition of Scupoli's *Spiritual Conquest*, published in 1651 in London. From Jesuits to Anglicans to Puritans to Benedictines – the wheel has turned full circle.

In the second emblem book of Quarles, *Hieroglyphikes* (1638) one of the emblems shows the well-known scene of the *altercatio* or debate between Time and Death.⁹⁹ This emblem appears in a prominent position as frontispiece to the second part of the Recusant book, *The Christian Pilgrim in his Conflict and Conquest* (London, 1651-1652). About twenty-two plates from the 1643 edition of Quarles's *Emblemes and Hieroglyphikes* were used for this work and it is instructive to see how the plates, only by a change of motto, could easily be adapted to a new literary and denominational context. The motif returns in an early document of the Victorian emblematic revival, *Divine Emblems* (1838) by Jonathan Birch, the translator of Faust. The twelve new designs are skilful combinations of several of Quarles's *picturae*. In a vaguely neo-gothic interieur, to the figures of Time and Death, the artist has added two cherubic children, *Amor Divinus* and *Anima*, and made Time the main personification. Quarles's plate was the source for a simplified woodcut imitation, which was inserted in the 1868 "reprint" of a sixteenth-century broadside ballad. The last occasion for this *picturae* to appear in a book of emblems seems to be the small Victorian gift book *Sermons in Candles* (London, 1890) of the celebrated Baptist revivalist preacher and author



Fig. 11.
Herman Hugo:
Pia desideria, Gedani,
1657, fig. 1: "Anima mea
desideravit te in nocte".

Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Here the picture is combined with a motif of seven candles in a row, decreasing in length, represent the Seven Ages of Man.

Our last example will in itself reflect the close interrelationship between emblematics and art; in other words, the intertwining of various iconographic traditions, the emblematic use of graphic representations which originally did not have an emblematic intent, as well as the circulation of pictures and motifs between academic art and popular art. The famous Flemish engraver Antoine Wierix's

Cor Jesu amanti sacrum, a series of pictures issued in Amsterdam around 1600 were copied by several contemporary engravers. Later on, prayers and meditations were added to the pictures and the whole thing was published in an emblematic framework as a book. The series consisting of eighteen, then twenty pieces travelled along with the texts, primarily with the translations of the version by Etienne Luzvic and Etienne Binet. It gave an impetus to religious heart emblematics and some of the pieces were models to a number of works of the 17-18th centuries schola cordis iconography. In England, the Wierix emblems seem to have influenced some of the cardiomorphic imagery of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Bunyan and other seventeenth-century authors. On the continent they became immensely popular, not only with Catholics.¹⁰⁰

Two plates of the series shows the themes "Jesus knocks at the door of the heart" and "Jesus examines the heart of the sinful man". (Fig. 11). Both themes go back to biblical texts with sporadic Medieval iconographic antecedents. However, they became popular as a result of the light and heart symbolic, which was fashionable in the first half of the 17th century. Wierix's motif of the lantern illuminating the heart has always been present in emblematics. The heart and the lantern are connected in an emblem of Daniel Cramer, showing a lantern placed on a heart which is resting on a book (1617).¹⁰¹ It is possible that the light appears in the hands of *Amor Divinus* as an effect of Wierix's work in one of the pictures of Bolswert's series.¹⁰² The plates of the Wierix series including the motif "Jesus knocks at the door of the heart" were re-etched in the English adaptation of Luzvic's and Binet's work, in *The Devout Heart* (1634) by Henry Hawkins.¹⁰³ Christ holding a light in front of the human heart illustrates the sermon for the 19th Sunday after Trinity in the collection of sermons by Philipp Ehrenreich Wider titled *Sinn-Bilder* (Nuremberg 1662), a book that was published several times.¹⁰⁴ One of the chapters of Johann Michael Dilherr's epistle gloss is also introduced by Christ crossing the gate of the heart.¹⁰⁵ From 1684 onwards, a Lutheran pastor in Helmstedt, Johann Rittmeyer, adopted ten of the pictures of the Wierix series in numerous editions of his *Himmlisches Freuden-Mahl*.¹⁰⁶ One of these shows the motif "Jesus durchsucht das Herz". A simple early nineteenth-century version of the Wierix series by the Catholic priest Johannes Gossner, *Das Herz des Menschen*, is still being published in German and English for Protestant Pietist communities in Germany and the United States.¹⁰⁷

The most spectacular case of a pictorial motif from the Wierix series to be revived is William Holman Hunt's Pre-Raphaelite painting *The Light of the World*.¹⁰⁸ (Fig. 12). It depicts Christ knocking at the door of the heart. In this context, what is interesting is not the artistic qualities of the picture, nor the well-documented circumstances of its creation but the process by means of which popular iconographic motifs found a way into high art, towards the typological symbolism of Hunt integrating various visual and verbal elements. On the other hand, the afterlife of the painting is likewise interesting.¹⁰⁹ After initial controversy, the painting was widely accepted as a Protestant icon by the nation and the Empire and *The Light of the World* became the best-known British religious painting in the world. The original version, painted between 1851 and 1853 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1854, is now at Keble College, Oxford. A smaller version is probably almost entirely the work of a friend of Hunt. A third and nearly life-size version was painted between 1900 and 1904, now in St. Paul's Cathedral. It caused



Fig. 12.
William Holman Hunt:
The Light of the World
(Keble College, Oxford).

a sensation when sent shortly after completion on a tour of the British Empire, where it was seen by some seven million people. The almost astonishing popularity of this picture in nineteenth-century England and America appears not only in the fact that many (e.g. John Ruskin) took it to be the single most important contemporary portrayal of Christ but also in its influence upon popular poetry and book illustration.¹¹⁰

The Light of the World succeeded in reaching a large audience, eventually becoming an element of popular culture. The picture became known beyond the confines of the art world by means of its engraved versions, and it was popularized even farther through Easter postcard, sermons and devotional poetry. Most of the poems which demonstrate the influence of Hunt's painting do not even rise this far from the ordinary, and they are of more interest as examples of popular culture than powerful influences of painting upon her sister art. *The Illustrated Book of Sacred Poems* (1867), an Anglo-American venture, exemplifies the way *The Light of the World* had an influence upon popular doctrinal works and hymnals, and through them became known to members of the lower and middle classes. In the decades following the first exhibition and engraving of *The Light of the World* poets continued to draw upon it for imagery. Equally revealing is the fact that Hunt's painting enters the realm of popular religious illustration. In each case, it was Hunt's representation of Christ standing outside the door of the human heart or outside man's earthly dwelling which attracted the illustrator, and one must be careful not to draw the conclusion that each one of them understood all the details of his iconography. Further details of this interesting afterlife can be found in the books by Jeremy Maas and George P. Landow.¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

We attempted to give a glimpse to the complicated network of connections tying emblematics to other forms of expression. Just as the mottos of emblems convey a number of humanist adages, proverbs and *loci communes*, the emblem pictures are in close connection with the iconographic topics of artistic common language which are also used in high arts. They apply and convey this visual vocabulary in a popular formulation. The mechanisms of this transmission deserve a close scrutiny from the point of view of both art history and ethnology.

The most prominent representatives of art history have always considered it obvious that the so-called applied art, provincial art and popular art are organic parts of art history. However, this joint treatment in theory could not always be applied persistently in practice. Art history and ethnological picture research has for a joint practical task to examine the semantic of emblematics as one "dialect" of artistic language. In this respect, special attention should be paid to the role of emblematics in social communication, the connection of the artistic monument with the object for everyday use, the relationship between utilitarian function and representative function, the problem of individual expression, the type of work, its variants and the modification of meaning.

During the past ten-fifteen years, emblem research has become increasingly interdisciplinary and has paid a growing attention to historical and social contexts of the period, to semiotic and communicative aspects, the different ways of interpretation and to the modes of "visual intertextuality".¹¹² As an organizer of

various symbolic structures the emblem lends a hand when we try to trace the traditionalization of visual motifs and changes of meaning, and gives an opportunity to study the influence of a special visual vocabulary on the common language of art in a given period. The approach from the side of history of effects cannot be satisfied with demonstrating direct adoption; it has to explore the nature and extent of the impact and more complex and hidden forms of reception. By means of the history of effects it will be easier to find the answer to special questions such as the relationship between emblematics and modern illustrated advertisements and allegoric caricatures.¹¹³

The approach of emblematics as a popularization process of a pattern of representation allows us to analyse the interrelationship between and transformation of artistic and literary traditions and motifs that have so far been handled separately, to follow the assimilation of Antique, Medieval and Renaissance themes. It will be possible to examine the forms and degrees of transmitting towards various social groups, the appearance, composition, changes and network of emblematic forms aimed at different social strata. A special field is the formation of motifs, the relationship between picture and text, the so-called enigmatic character, the didactic intent and the function of propaganda in the various groups of objects. In this, the relationship between the authors as well as the connections of emblematics within and without literature should also be observed. Supposed and actual models should be separated and the possibilities of the transmission of iconographic traditions outside emblematics should be taken into consideration.

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