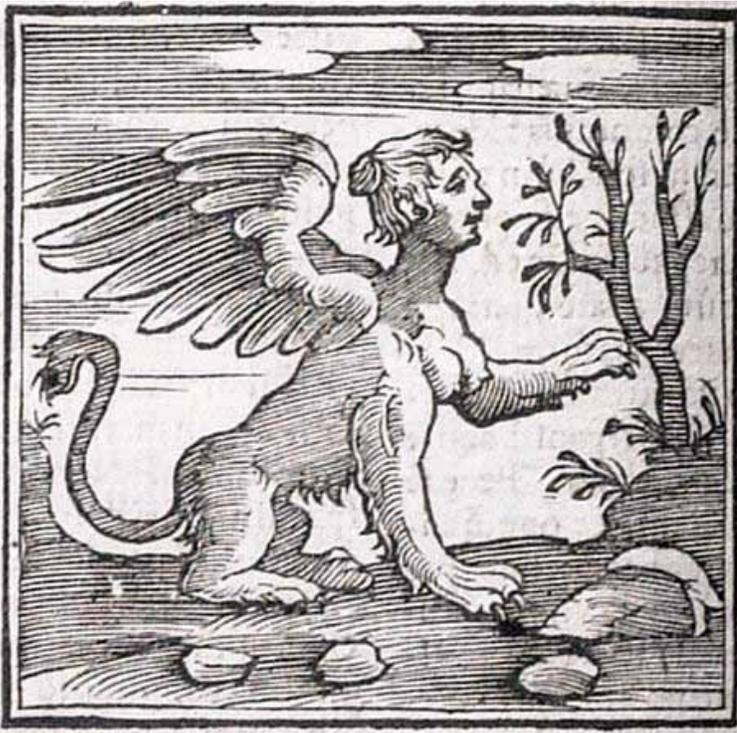


# Society for Emblem Studies

Newsletter 63  
October 2019 (revised)



## Letter from the Chair

Dear members,

I am happy to add some words to our newsletter. After our last conference in Nancy in 2017 some of our national branches have been very active organizing lectures, meetings and excursions. First of all I would like to name the Great Britain and Ireland branch. At the University of Glasgow the Stirling Maxwell Centre regularly organizes Seminar Series with emblem lectures, book launches and more. It's a great pleasure to watch what sort of unique and various events are going on in Glasgow.

In Poland at the University of Warsaw there has been held a two-day conference on emblems in May 2019, under the title: "Seminarium Emblematyczne", with ten very interesting lectures. Also in May some emblem colleagues met in Stetten im Remstal near Stuttgart in Germany to visit the extraordinary chapel of the castle of Stetten. In October at the University of Kiel a lecture will take place by a Polish colleague about emblems in Lublin in Poland. Great thanks to all involved persons. That's all I know about, but I am sure that many more emblem events will have taken place in the last two years after our last meeting in Nancy - dear members, please send us information on all events you get to know about.

Our next international SES Conference will be held in Coimbra, Portugal. The University of Coimbra is one of the oldest Universities in Europe. It was founded 1290 in Lisbon and moved to Coimbra in 1308. We are very proud to be invited by this venerable and dignified University. Our hosts are planning, preparing and organising the conference very intensely and carefully. I am sure we will have a great conference in 2020, thanks in advance to the organizers Filipa Medeiros Araújo, Manuel Ferro, José Pereira and their team. Please have a look at the Call for Papers – the deadline is extended till November 15.

Please have a look at our website. You will find a lot of changes there, concerning conferences and events. Last but not least I want to thank my colleagues of the Executive Board Elizabeth Black, David Graham and Pedro Germano Leal for our friendly and effective cooperation. Together with our webmaster we have a lot of plans to enrich the website. Please don't hesitate to send us your ideas and proposals for the website. We also would be happy to receive all sort of information concerning local events, lectures or excursions.

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## Submission Deadline: Coimbra

Please note that the deadline for submission of proposals for the 12th International Conference of the Society has been revised to 15 November 2019. Please address your submissions to: [sescoimbra2020@gmail.com](mailto:sescoimbra2020@gmail.com).

Below: Society members (including Society President Michael Bath) enjoying dinner and conversation at the elegant Hôtel de Ville in Nancy during the 11th International Conference in 2017.



## 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies

University of Coimbra, June 2020

“Muda Poesia, pintura que fala, pintura que varia”  
 “Mute poetry, speaking painting, changing painting”  
 Taking as its motto the inspiring dialogue between literature and visual arts in Renaissance and Baroque Europe, the Interuniversity Centre for Camonian Studies presented a proposal to organize the 12th International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies to be held at the University of Coimbra. The event will take place in Portugal for the first time and aims to look in both directions: past and future. On the one hand, it pays an historical debt to Stockhamer’s work; on the other, it intends to foster emblem studies and related issues in the lusophone universe. In 1546, king João III officially invited Andrea Alciato to become a Law Professor at the University of Coimbra. The jurist did not accept, claiming the lack of physical vitality, but sent one of his disciples, Ascanio Scoto, and soon arrived another Law master, Fabio Arcas, accompanied by Sebastian Stockhamer, the German author of the first commentaries on Alciato’s *Emblemata*. Satisfying the request of a local nobleman, to whom he dedicated the work, Stockhamer wrote his notes to the first book and signed them ex Lusitaniae inclitya Conimbricensi Academia Kalendas Martii 1552. Published in Lyon, four years later, Stockhamer’s work seems to have been forgotten, but it paved the way for the extended commentaries which would progressively be added in subsequent editions. Even if Alciato’s *Emblemata* were never printed in Portugal, they were widely known and the concept of “mute signs” (*tacitis*

*notis*) was quite familiar to Luís Vaz de Camões (c. 1524–1580), the most famous Portuguese poet, who inspired the following generations and clearly became a model for national literature.

Portuguese Baroque authors were, in general, well acquainted with the emblematic genre and its models. Many *artes poeticas* dedicated a full chapter to logo-iconic compositions and they were also cultivated within Jesuit institutions such as the flourishing College of Jesus in Coimbra. There are few Portuguese emblem books, but painted ceramic tiles, other decorative arts, and festival books offer many splendid examples of applied emblematics, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, not only in Portugal, but also in different territories of its empire, from Brazil to Goa.

The call for papers will therefore be open to a wide range of areas, and will interest literary scholars, art historians, librarians, archivists, historians of Renaissance and Baroque culture and scholars interested in the broader relationship between literature and the visual arts. The conference will continue the thematic directions pursued at previous conferences, involving all areas related to emblem studies.

### Suggested topics for 2020

1. *Ars emblematica*: theoretical and critical approaches
2. Emblem books: production and reception in Portugal
3. The art of mute signs: Camões and emblematics
4. Emblematic marks, heraldry and numismatics
5. Emblems and festivals
6. Jesuit Emblems and visual culture
7. Emblems and the arts
8. New approaches to text/image cultures

**NB: Submission deadline now November 15, 2019!**

## Tulips and the Phenomenon of Heliotropic Plants in Early Emblematics

Vendula Sramkova

This note investigates the beginning of tulip symbolical representation in the example of tulips early employment in emblematics. Because the focus lies on the moment, when the new plant was incorporated into already existing floral symbolism, the studied period is prior to 1600, as afterwards tulips seem to lose their novelty in the intellectual circles.

It is difficult to determine when the exotic tulip arrived in Europe from the distant massifs of the Pamir and the Tian Shan. We can more confidently state that the tulip was first referenced in European literature in 1553, in Pierre Belon's account of his scientific travels into the East.<sup>1</sup> Belon writes about *lis rouges*, which are different to lilies in Europe but so common in the Ottoman Empire that they appear there in every garden. Moreover, he goes on to mention a lucrative trade with beautifully flowering plants - foreign boats bringing roots from various countries, and putting them on sale. A second report on tulips followed eight years later, and was written by Conrad Gesner.<sup>2</sup> He visited the extensive garden of patrician and businessman Johann Heinrich Herwart in Augsburg in the spring 1559, where he, for the first time, studied a red flowering tulip. From this point onwards, tulips secure their place in botanical treatises. Rembert Dodoens, Matthaeus Lobelius, Carolus Clusius, Andrea Cesalpino, Castore Durante, Jacques Dalechamps, Joachim Camerarius, John Gerard,<sup>3</sup> all included tulips in their herbals. What was it they found interesting? Which information did they want to pass on? All of them essentially echoed Gesner's text. They described the plant, informed about the origin of its name, suggested attribution to several plants from classical literature and even listed different varieties; however, they failed to find any useful feature. The tulip became, with Camerarius words, "*peregrine et ante aliquot annos demum cognita apud nos planta, quae ob eximiam florum varietatem et elegantiam diligenter à studiosis rei Herbariae iam passim colitur.*"<sup>4</sup>

Emblematic tulips entered Vincenzo Ruscelli's addition to *Le imprese del illustri*, in the emblem of Carlo Gonzaga (fig. 1). It seems a bit surprising that twenty three years after Gesner's record, Ruscelli opens his commentary on Gonzaga's emblem thus, "*Se bene il fiore, ..., non è generalmente conosciuto da moderni, per non esserne stata fatta menzione da gli antichi scrittori.*"<sup>5</sup> He dwells on "bellissima, et notabilissima proprietà" of tulips, claiming that they

not just turn with the course of the sun, but mostly they open their blossoms only into the sunrays. When clouds roll up and hide the sun, tulips shut their blossoms and languish. It is interesting that contemporary naturalists did not focus on transmitting those particulars.<sup>6</sup> This heliotropic feature is essential for the symbolical meaning of Gonzaga's motto, *Syn sus rayos, mys desmayos*. According to Ruscelli, the author of the impresa express his single devotion and offers his affectionate service to a duke. He is the flower following his master - the sun; being productive in the duke's kindness and languishing when deprived of it. Ruscelli adds another possible employment. With a slightly altered motto, *Senza i suoi raggi io resto smarrito*, the tulip stands for a gentleman and the sun for his beloved. He, following her everywhere, begs her not to conceal the beauty of her nature in the clouds of jealousy and cruelty. Yet, Ruscelli also advises his colleagues to find alternative applications complying with nobility and greatness of mind or with Christianity.



Fig. 1. Device of Carlo Gonzaga. Ruscelli, IV, 21  
(Image courtesy of archive.org).

It was Joachim Camerarius who accepted this challenge.<sup>7</sup> After his introduction, where he claims that, "*pulcherrimus flos, et si quis alius intra omnes insigni varietate colorum admirandus,*"<sup>8</sup> he repeats Ruscelli's symbolism of dependence on the good will of "*magni Principi*", but leaves out the amorous interpretation. He explains his motto, *Languesco sole latente*, as our reliance on God, and as the true enlightening, "*Marcidus ut flos his languescit sole latent, Cœlesti sapimus sic sine luce nihil.*"<sup>9</sup> Since, he says, tulips unfold themselves in the sunshine very quickly and fold their petals back and decline, when rainy weather

1. Belon 2001, 525.

2. Gesner 1561, 213-214.

3. Dodoens 1568, 196-198; Lobelius 1571, 52; Clusius 1578, 510-515; Cesalpino 1583, book X, 402; Durante 1585, 466; Dalechamps 1586, 1528-1531; Camerarius 1588, 173-175; Gerard 1597, 120.

4. Camerarius 1588, 173.

5. Ruscelli *Le imprese*, 21.

6. Only Carolus Clusius briefly remarked, "*sole illustrati sese explicant,*" in his *Atrebat. Rariorum aliquot stirpium ...* from 1576.

7. Camerarius 1590, 98.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid..

comes. Seven years later Martin Mylius merely copied Camerarius's thoughts in his extensive publication *Hortus philosophicus*.<sup>10</sup> He did not omit Camerarius's comments on the beauty and heliotropism, nor the note on common understanding of flowering as an image of a vigour and a life itself

Antonio Ricciardo, commenting on Gonzaga's emblem, did not exclude the idea of a lover gazing up toward his

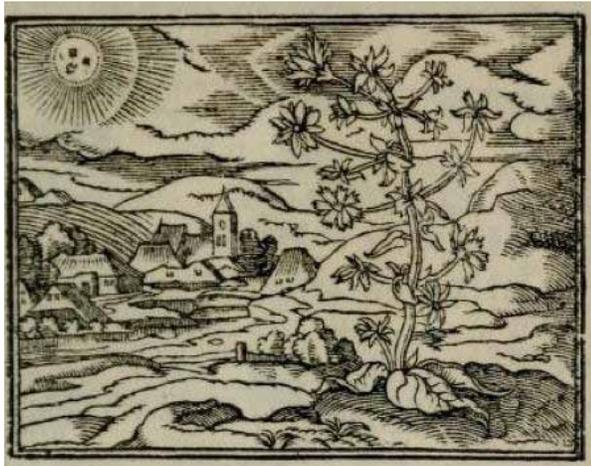


Fig. 2. "Mens eadem". Camerarius 1590, 82.  
(Image courtesy of archive.org).

lady, but reflected more on flourishing when valued by a prince.<sup>11</sup> The tulip of beauty and elegance does not close itself and wither when missing the sun eternally, it recovers again with the sun's reappearance. Joris Hoefnagel, a man of many talents, employed tulips to illustrate one of plates in *Archetypa*. They accompany the text: *Nil mihi cum tenebris, si nox, si nubile, claudor: Soli me pando, sol mihi solus amor*.<sup>12</sup> Two tulips flank a page filled up with columbine, pansy, physalis, fritillary, pears, peaches, butterfly, moth and other insects, all of them contributing with their own symbolic meanings to the same message.<sup>13</sup> Opening one's heart to the true light in darkness, contemplating the sweet life in Jesus Christ.

We could notice, in the very few examples of tulip applications in emblematics, that the romantic aspect was not predominant in its symbolism. Still we might expect that tulips were used that way. As we can see in the anonymous poem from the last decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which Robert Tyas included into his book *Flowers and heraldry*.<sup>14</sup> In the second stanza we read,

*"And all between three Tulips red,  
Tulips which tell of love declared;*

10. Mylius 1597, 577–578.  
11. Ricciardo 1591, 236.  
12. Hoefnagel 1592, plate 12.  
13. Levi d'Ancona, 1977.  
14. Tyas 1851, 105.

*And Thorn of hope it well hath sped  
With one who would his life were shared  
With one so fair.*<sup>15</sup>

Although we cannot exactly see on what foundation this metaphor stands, we know that love and heliotropism had been common allies for a long time. In Ovid's collection of metamorphosis myths there is a story of Clytië, a nymph desperately in love with Apollo. She "*est in parte rubor, vio-laeque similimus oral flos tegit. Illa suum, quamvis radice tenetur, vertitum ad solem, mutataque servat amorem.*"<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, from that description, it is impossible to decide which plant Ovid meant. In later translations appeared both heliotrope and sunflower, and Paradin talks even about marigold.<sup>17</sup>

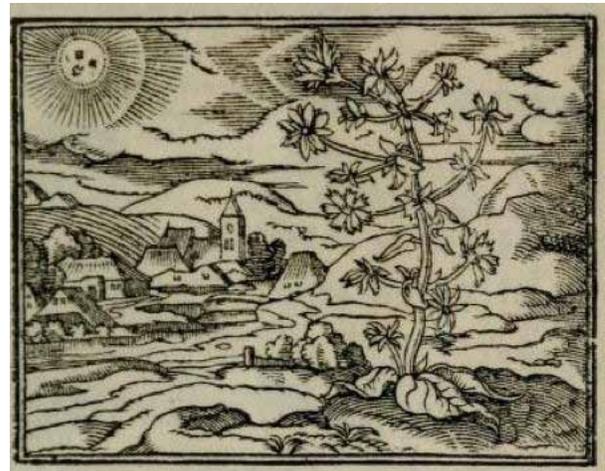


Fig. 3. "Nutu benefacta respondit"; Taurello 1602, 106.  
(Image courtesy of archive.org).

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there seems to be a well-established group of plants, based on heliotropic principles. This criterion varied greatly, from turning towards the sun to dropping blossom when cloudy or following the sun even when cloudy, calling on popular authorities such as Pliny, Theophrastus, Varro, etc. Yet, all of those heliotropic plants had one crucial feature. Those flowers interacted with the sun consciously and willingly. For example, Dutch Jesuit theologian Maximilian van der Sandt included among heliotropes not only *Heliotropium maius* or *Heliotropium vulgare* (heliotrope europaeum), *Heliotropium minus* or *Tornasole gallorum* (*Chrozophora tinctoria*), but *Chrysanthemum peruvianum* (sunflower), peony, narcissus, calendula, goat's beard, tulip, lupine, and so on.<sup>18</sup>

Regrettably, there are not many examples of heliotropic emblems accompanied by a visual complement. From the 14 cases I know, there are just six with images of the flowers.<sup>19</sup> In the instance of Camerarius (fig. 2) and Girolamo Ruscelli,

15. Ibid.  
16. Ovidius 2004, IV, 184.  
17. Paradin 1557, 46.  
18. Sandt 1629, 310–314  
19. Sebastián de Covarrubias, in *Emblemas morales*, writes about lotus but calls it "el heliotropio." The picture depicts a plant growing from water, resembling a peony.

we can be positive that we are looking at one of the species of heliotrope, Taurellus's picture shows a chicory (fig. 3), Felice's sunflower and Camilli's, together with Pittoni's (fig. 4), in all probability, a lupine. Except Felice, each one of those authors mention the name of Clytië.

I start with Camillo Camilli's commentary on Giovanni Battista Leoni's emblem, *Soli, et semper*.<sup>20</sup> He states, in 1586, when his book was published, that the motive of heliotrope

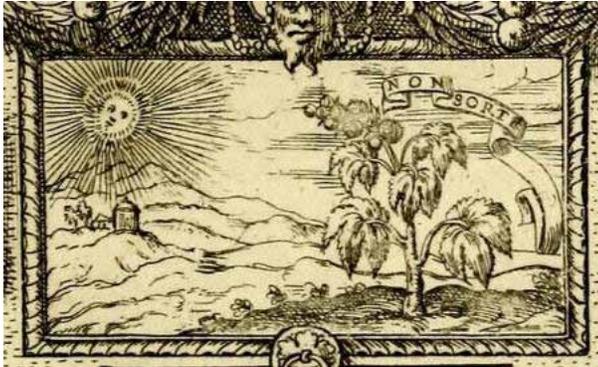


Fig. 4. "Non sorte". Pittoni 1583.  
(Image courtesy of archive.org).

was common. Nonetheless, for Camilli, it brings the opportunity to show exceptional skills of mind when coming up with new meanings, as Leoni did. Building on the heliotropic movements, Leoni fixed his sight on his loved one, permanently. "*Benche privo della vista della cosa amata, tener in lei sissi di continuo gli occhi del pensiero*".<sup>21</sup> Turning into her beauty and not losing her from his mind, he expresses the quality of



Fig. 5. "Non inferiora secutus". Camerarius 1590, 49.  
(Image courtesy of archive.org).

his love. Similarly, Gulio Cesare Capaccio created emblem *Si despicias aspicio*.<sup>22</sup> Even though the sun hides in clouds, the plant still follows it, thus an unfortunate lover still follows his

lady. These two were the profane touches to the application of heliotrope.

Going back to the beginning of emblematic literature, Valeriano listed heliotrope as a symbol of a mutual agreement, and as a symbol of inclination to a ruler as well as inclination to a higher union.<sup>23</sup> There is an obvious connection to Neoplatonic ideas, which were again reviving in the Renaissance. Hence, Girolamo Ruscelli could explain the emblem *Mens eadem* on the example of transformed Clytië. As she was stripped of human sensuality and earthly corporality by following her heart to pursue the only source of the pure light, so the human mind, leaving behind every low thought, desires to follow the sun of justice to receive its light and perfection. Ruscelli also illustrated his interpretation with Pietro Bembo's Rime XXXVII, "*L'alta cagion, che da principio diede/ a'le cose create ordine e stato*". Even if no author lingers here on sympathies with celestial bodies, emanation of intellect, sparks of divinity and seeds of virtues, there is a recognizable concept of love as the true comprehension and the power enabling us to reach God. With the help of light, our mind is turned to God to satisfy its inner appetite for God, for the divine light.<sup>24</sup> Camerarius sees the sun as a guide directing and leading us towards the higher light.<sup>25</sup> Battista Pittoni interprets the heliotrope in the emblem of Girolamo Roccabruno as a person who never failed to contemplate the divine sweetness. It seems that Cesare Ripa alone works with negative emotions and low intentions, which one could read in Clytië's story too, associating heliotrope with jealousy.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Capaccio points at the movement of heliotrope, and of lupine, as the movement of flatterers always mirroring a royal want.

Lupine, by its nature, stays very close to heliotrope in emblematics, but does not reach any significant popularity. We might find the reason in Ricciardo's record, "*Lupinum enim coli non vult, et ipsa negligentia sit fertile*".<sup>27</sup> The plant simply did not have enough qualities to become symbolic. Its only feature that everyone mentioned, in this case Mylius, Capaccio, Ricciardo, and Valeriano, was copied from Pliny, who wrote that farmers used the lupine to tell the time on cloudy days. Another plant uncommon among emblems is a marigold, concerning which Claude Paradin states that there is no flower having stronger affinity with the sun. It does not only follow the trajectory of the sun and open its blossom to the sun's rays, but itself looks like the sun.<sup>28</sup> Probably for this reason, Camerarius applied a new exotic plant, *Chrysanthemum peruvianum*, the sunflower (fig. 5), with Paradin's motto *Non inferiora secutus*. These words, originally from the *Aened*, used Mar-

23. Valeriano 1556, II, 384.

24. Kristeller 1964.

25. Camerarius 1590, 82.

26. Ripa 1593, 102.

27. Ricciardi 1591, 368–69.

28. Paradin 1557, 45–46.

20. Camilli 1586, 63–65.

21. Ibid..

22. Capaccio 1592, II, 126.

guerite de Navarre of Orleans in her personal device to manifest that her thoughts, affection and acts are all the time aimed towards the sun of justice.<sup>29</sup> Yet, Camerarius digs deeper into Neoplatonism, the flower reveals our true origin, because we are the celestial seedlings longing for union with the liberal giver of everything good.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps for its exclusivity, there is no other emblem with sunflowers.<sup>31</sup> Even the marigold, being a well-established flower in Europe, appears in just one other emblematic text of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, specifically in *Phytognomia* of Giambattista della Porta, as the picture of “*amica solis*”.<sup>32</sup>

The most common heliotropic plant in emblematics in this period is the lotus. Its popularity may be explained by Valeriano’s statement, “*Inter arborum significare nulli apud Ægyptios maior honos habitus quam Loto.*”<sup>33</sup> Although referring to the lotus tree, Valeriano is most likely writing about the blue lotus (*Nymphæa caerulea*), which frequently took part in Egyptian stone carvings and wall paintings.<sup>34</sup> Used for its psychoactive powers, the lotus used to be basically a cult symbol in the ancient Egypt – the sun god Ra rose from the lotus blossom, marking thus the beginning of the world, hence the start of every new day. Here we could see a clear connection to Valeriano’s text, “*magnum cum cœlestibum consensum habeat, quam sit veluti nostraum rerum ad superos internuncia.*”<sup>35</sup> Lotus is the mediator between God and humanity. The flower comes up from the muddy waters afresh every morning, opening its blossom to the sunrays and folding up its petals again in the evening. Worshipping the only sun, protecting itself from the corrupt darkness, it would be seen as a metaphor of sunrise or of the power of God. Valeriano also carries on with the image of a pagan god being born from the flower. In his interpretation, an infant sitting on a lotus stands for the eternal divine mind.

Carrafa Ferrante turned Valeriano’s truly Christian understanding of lotus metaphors into a love affair. The motto *Sic lux alma mihi* conceals a lover who strives for the divine light of his beloved.<sup>36</sup> And he did not stop there. His own emblem *Sic diva lux mihi* expresses his intentions and thought to always follow his donor and master, Charles V.<sup>37</sup> It appears that emblems, founded on the image of lotus, manifesting the essentiality of patronage and the gratitude of beneficiaries were the most popular throughout the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

29. Ibid.

30. Camerarius 1590, 59.

31. Except for Mylius, who repeated text of Camerarius.

32. Porta 1591, 478.

33. Valeriano, LII, 384

34. With “*arborum*”, he might refer to Homer’s lotus tree (perhaps date-palm or *Ziziphus lotus*), but his description does not touch on anything else than *nymphaea* family.

35. Valeriano, LII, 384

36. Ammirato 1562, 150.

37. Ruscelli 1566, 216–218.

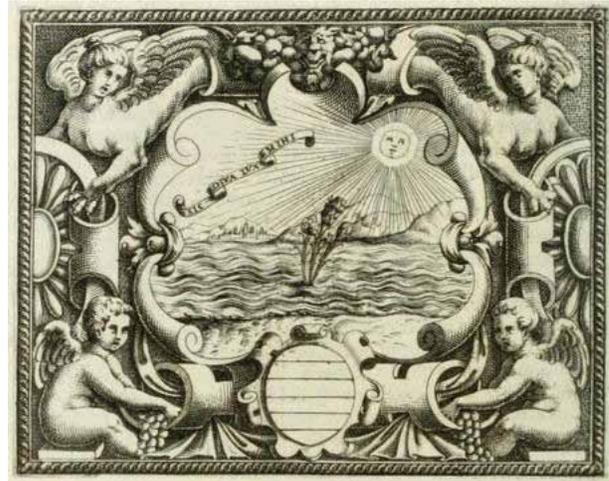


Fig. 6. “*Sic diva lux mihi*”. Ruscelli 1584, 176.  
(Image courtesy of archive.org).

Thus, Lelio Lucarini shows his gratefulness to Francesco Medici with the emblem *Dum respicis detegor*,<sup>38</sup> Giovan Battista d’Alessandro to the Neapolitan nobility with motto, *Te sine quid moliar?*, and Cardinal Lodovico Madruccio with *Emergo Lucente sole*.<sup>39</sup> Though Ruscelli (fig. 6) encouraged writers to apply lotus for devices of love, virtues and military, other authors seem to adhere to Valeriano’s vision. With the emblem *Dum respicis egrigor* Camerarius confesses the human absolute dependence on the rays of the eternal sun.<sup>40</sup> Covarrubias correlates with his motto *Si te vas bolvermee al llanto*.<sup>41</sup> A bit on its own stands Percivallo Bernardino’s contribution. Once more, he writes about “*arbore detto lotto*,” and referring to Ovid and Petrarch, adds the motto, *E ciò che non è lei odia e disprezza*.<sup>42</sup> The only author who significantly draws on Platonism is Johannes Goropius.<sup>43</sup> In his very individual approach, he sees the lotus as a symbol of the true cause of creation, as well as a reminder of the high principle. The lotus rises up and turns towards that principle, recognizing God. It is an example of continuous memory, an intimate revelation, proving that everything is related to God by blood.<sup>44</sup>

Without doubt, Neoplatonism seems the most logical source of inspiration for emblems that work with plants’ heliotropic disposition, yet this symbolism is very complex, as the sun has the most central position in human reasoning and beliefs throughout history. Valeriano takes us back, through Horapollo, to the Egyptian hieroglyphs. Some authors relate to Jewish traditions and even to “Indian” philosophy, others rely on biblical texts. In references, we can see a blend of classical and post-classical literature reaching from natural history

38. Camilli, 100–102.

39. Capaccio 1592, II, 134–35.

40. Camerarius 1590, 80.

41. Covarrubias 1610, 112–13.

42. Percivallo 1588, 220–21.

43. Goropius 1580, VI, 82–90.

44. Goropius touches upon a mineral heliotrope, which may have been widely known in society at that time. For instance, Dante includes heliotrope in his *Rime petrose*. Yet, in emblematics it appears very rare. I know only one more example, from *Phytognomia* by Giambattista della Porta.

treatises through philosophy to poetry - from Theophrastus, Varro, Pliny, and Plotinus, Lactantius, Proclus with Boethius to Callimachus. Among the most influential works from the Early Modern period were those of Ficino, Petrarch and Bembo.

As we have seen, there were three heliotropic plants used in emblematics before the tulip's appearance: lotus, heliotrope and marigold. Lotus and heliotrope expressed the delight of following generous patron or lover. All of them signified the true satisfaction in reaching toward God. Tulips smoothly slipped in, not replacing but enriching the botanical variety of the emblematic world. At this point, beautiful tulips did not come with new meanings; they took on the existing ones. They referred to happy patronage with one blossom unfolding itself under the sun. They referred to deep love with its elegance and delicacy. They referred to our relation with God, with its tall, upright stem, stretching as high as possible. Perhaps because marigold was too common, lotus too remote, heliotrope too plain and sunflower too rare, tulips dramatically strengthened their position at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were fashionable, they were loved and hated, but mostly they were enthusiastically planted and passionately cultivated. From this close and active contact new symbolism arrived, and tulips set off on very interesting journey which would last through the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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#### Submission Deadline: Coimbra

Please note that the deadline for submission of proposals for the 12th International Conference of the Society has been revised to 15 November 2019. Please address your submissions to: [sescoimbra2020@gmail.com](mailto:sescoimbra2020@gmail.com).

Blemmyes in Emblems

Rubem Amaral Jr.

Since the most primitive times, the human imagination has been haunted by monstrous beasts and teratological beings, originating from sheer ignorance, fear, or the misleading perception of images and phenomena, like the appearance of men or the habits and aptitudes of irrational animals. Many such beliefs, including dragons, hydras, and other fabulous contrivances, come from Greco-Roman and other ancient mythologies, having been inherited and adapted in the Christian Era and having endured until our time, transmitted by ancient writers such as Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny The Elder, and Aelian, and popularized by medieval bestiaries, Epiphanius' *Physiologus*, hagiologies, and the plastic arts.

Emblemists were quick to incorporate many of these superstitions for their own moralistic, doctrinal, didactic or edificatory purposes, as demonstrated, for example, in the repeated use of such motifs as the centaur, the ever-reviving phenix, the pelican in her piety, the stork carrying the parent on its back, the never-landing bird of paradise, the crane holding a stone in its foot, the grouse holding a stone in its bill, the iron-eating ostrich, and the basilisk.

Several humanoid aberrations were supposed to live in remote regions of the globe, such as headless, dog-headed, large-eared individuals, monopods with a single large foot, one-eyed cyclops and other deformities. Images of most of these imaginary beings were variously described and depicted in collections of wonders like Albertus Magnus' *Thierbuch* and the artist's model book *Viellerley wunderbarlicher Thier des Erdrichs, Mehrs und des Luffts, allen anfabenden Malern und Goldtschmieden nützlich, Sampt andern Künstnern* (Frankfurt: Jacob Cyriacus, 1545 and 1546 respectively), Giovanni Battista de' Cavalieri's *Opera nela quale vi e molti Mostri de' tutte le parti del mondo antichi et moderni...* (Rome: 1585) with engravings by the author, the Supplement of Giovanni Botero's *Delle relationi universali* (Venice: Alessandro de Vecchi, 1618) with woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair, Georg Stengel's *De monstris et monstrosis* (Ingolstadt: Gregorium Haenlin, 1647), and Gaspar Schott's *Physica curiosa* (Würtzburg: Johannis Andreae Endteri & Wolff, 1662).

In the age of the great navigations and discovery of new lands, this fauna was further enriched and reinforced by tales of their native inhabitants transmitted to European voyagers or simply invented by the latter. Among them, we find Pigafetta's Patagonian giants and Carvajal's Amazons.

Emblem 34 in Anna Roemers Visscher's *Het Derde Schock van de Sinnepoppen* (1614), with engravings by Claes Janszen, shows the *pictura* of a standing headless naked man holding a long stick and a seated one behind him, with a *subscriptio* in Dutch, of which I supply below the English translation (fig. 1):



Fig. 1. Anna Roemers Visscher. *Sinnepoppen*. Amsterdam: Willem Ianszen, 1614. (Image courtesy of archive.org).

Hy leut/die't leut/ick en ghelooft naet

This is an excellent saying of Waterland which means: **He believes/that one believes/I don't believe**. For this reason I wished to use it in the part of the monstrous animals in the eighth map of Asia, dealt with by Ptolemy in his Geography. It is surprising that Antiquity inexplicably maintained that for such a long time: but our present-day sailors and the navigators who today know about all dangers find no signs or traces of it.<sup>45</sup>

Visscher is in all probability referring to the map in Sebastian Münster's *Geographia Universalis*, first published in 1540, based on Ptolemy's *Geographia*, which contains, on its borders, woodcuts attributed to Hans Holbein the Younger depicting several monsters, including two headless men, though very different from the ones in Visscher's emblem. Previous versions of Ptolemy's map apparently do not contain such images.

In volume 2, part 5, of Daniel Meissner and Eberhard Kieser's book of urban emblems *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus* (1630), emblem 5 contains the *pictura* of a headless standing man before the background of a view of Bergzabern, in Alsace, probably engraved by Johann Eckhard Löffler (fig. 2). The man is copied after the one in Visscher's emblem, with the sole addition of a prudish loincloth. The *inscriptio* "Credat qui volet" ["Let him believe it who wishes to"], the verse *subscriptio*es in Latin and German and the *explicit* in German deal with the subject in the same spirit of rational incredulity as the previous emblem.

In free English translation, the *subscriptio*es in the bottom of the engraved plate read as follows:

It is said that America generates men deprived of a head.  
Let him believe it who wishes to; I deny it. (Latin distich)

It is said that in the new world  
There are persons lacking heads,

45. For the translation from the Dutch I counted on the help of my son, Rubem G. C. F. Amaral.

Let him believe it who wishes to,  
I absolutely do not believe it myself. (German distichs)

The *explicit* on page 8 reads like this:

“Wherefrom comes the idea of a region of the world where there be headless men or with their head on their breast; what they say about Guiana in the New World does not enter my head, because it is too far away to check out.”

The reference to the new world and Guiana shows that the authors had in mind not hominoids of ancient myths but the

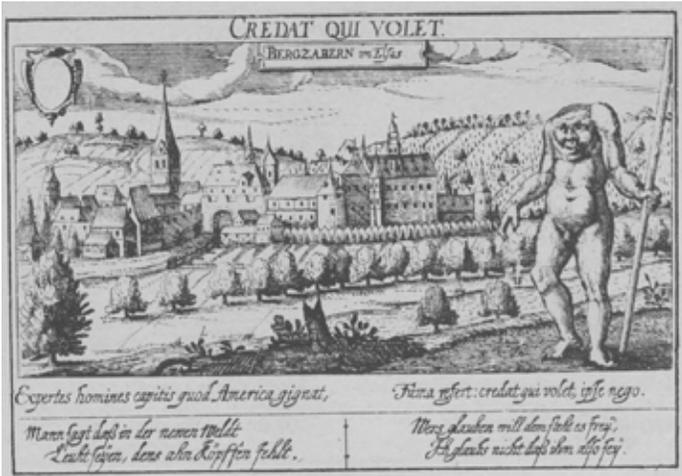


Fig. 2. Daniel Meissner and Eberhard Kieser, *Thesaurus Philo-Politicus*. II, 2, 5. Frankfurt am Main, 1630. (Image courtesy of archive.org).

legendary Ewaiponoma who, according to Sir Walter Raleigh’s account to which I refer below, presented that physical characteristic.

The Dutch Jesuit Johannes Kreihing, in emblem 115<sup>46</sup> of his *Emblemata Ethico-Politica* (1661) (fig. 3), also moved away from classic animal topics to one of those bizarre human monstrosities, and this to illustrate the close interaction between the heart and the face for the external manifestation of inner feelings: two headless men whose eyes and mouth are situated in their chests, engraved by an unknown artist.

The emblems analyzed in this note depict the legendary acephalous beings known generally in literature as “Blem-myes”, a name derived from an ancient nomad Nubian tribe that inhabited the region corresponding approximately to present day Sudan.

Herodotus writes that “the part of Libya which is situated [...] towards the West, the country of those who till the soil, is exceedingly mountainous and thickly wooded and full of wild beasts: for in the land of these are found both the monstrous serpent and the lion and the elephant, and bears and venomous snakes and horned asses, besides the dog-headed men, and the headless men with their eyes set in their breasts (at least so say the Libyans about them), and the wild men

46. This emblem, on pages 166–67, is erroneously numbered above the plate as CXXVI [126], but correctly CXV [115] on the plate’s bottom border.

and wild women, and a great multitude of other beasts which are not fabulous like these.” (4.191).

A report of people with like appearance as the Blem-myes reappear in the 14th century in *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, although this author does not name them likewise. Mandeville, who sets them not in Africa but rather in a distant land in Asia, describes these creatures as “folk of foul stature and of cursed kind that have no heads. And their eyes be in their shoulders”. In the 16th/17th century Walter Raleigh also provides an account of creatures called Ewaipanoma, who supposedly lived in the region of the Guiana in South America, had their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts, and that a long train of hair grew backward between their shoulders.

Some attribute the legend of the acephaly of these divers peoples to the fact that their heads were hidden between their shoulders by hoisting those up to an extreme height. Others think that warriors possibly employed the tactic of keeping the head close to the breast while marching with one knee on the ground or had the custom of carrying shields ornamented with faces, or perhaps that bonobos, a kind of chimpanzees, were misidentified as a race of men.

Images of headless men abound in old manuscripts, maps and printed books, but I conclude that the model imitated by Kreihing was not among those that depict the



Fig. 3. Johann Kreihing, *Emblemata Ethico-Politica*. Emblem 115. Antwerp: Jacob Meurs, 1661. (Image courtesy of archive.org).

African or Asian ones but rather an engraving by Jodocus Hondius in Raleigh’s *Brevis & admiranda descriptio regni Guianae, auri abundantissimi, in America* (1599),... showing two individuals of the Ewaipanoma (fig. 4). Although the emblem’s *pictura* is not an exact reproduction of that engraving and is much simpler, the disposition and



Fig. 4. Sir Walter Raleigh, *Brevis & admiranda descriptio regni Guianae, avri abundantissimi, in America*. Nuremberg: Levinus Hulsius, 1599. (Image courtesy of archive.org).

postures of the persons, the surrounding vegetation and the hilly landscape in the background are very alike. The figure on the right side, which in the model is seen from behind, now is seen facing, with the hair that hang from his shoulders turned into a face with a thick beard. Both are now deprived of their weapons, which were of no use in the context of the emblem.

In a prose translation of Kreihing's Latin elegiac distichs, emblem 115 reads as follows<sup>47</sup>: "The face is the index of the soul / Hearts are revealed in the face."

Nobody can conceal what happens in one's silent mind. There are those who show it with undeniable signs. When the tongue remains silent, the facial expression and the eyes will reveal the secret feelings. If you plan in your bosom some shameful action, or devise some offense, your face and eyes will allow anybody to read them. Whenever a fate you do not deserve torments your entrails, immediately the inner pain acquires voice on the face. In the same way, if the festive joys relax your mind and your threads are guided by the gold spinning wheel, immediately will appear on your face the evident sign which announces them; the mind is happy and does not suffer pain. In short, any action that you conceal in your silent heart, the countenance itself will denounce its secret. Notice how big clouds there are on an uneasy face when the winning anger takes hold of the seat of the will. Notice, on the contrary, how a calm face shines when the sorrows of the heart have completely ceased. When your wicked mind is aware of a terrible crime, does not it spread on your bloodless face an eloquent paleness? What then? When a countenance blushes as if it were painted, do not we all say: "This colour is the expression of an embarrassed

47. I thank Dr Beatriz Antón, of the University of Valladolid, for her assistance in the translation of the subscriptio. For the two *inscriptions*, I relied on G. Richard Dimler's translation in the list of mottoes of the Brepols edition.

heart"? Do not beggars ask just by means of their face? Perchance their face does not have the power of a clamant voice? Doubtlessly, the countenance always reveals the good and the evil, and is mirror and image of its own soul.

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### Membership Information

The SES invites anyone interested in emblem studies to join the Society. The Society exists to foster the study of emblem books and related materials in literature and the visual arts, their origins and influence on other cultural forms, in all periods, countries and languages. The current membership includes

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teachers and students of literature, art-historians, librarians and archivists, collectors of antiquarian books, historians of Renaissance and Baroque cultures, students of comparative literature, and scholars interested in the wider relationship between literature and the visual arts, theories or representation, iconology and iconography.

Members of the Society receive a twice-yearly Newsletter, and are entitled to attend the various meetings, colloquia, and other activities organized by or for the Society. Since the study of emblem books is a highly interdisciplinary field, the Society aims to provide a channel of communication for students and scholars seeking collaborative assistance from specialists with expertise in different fields than their own. The languages of the Society are the recognised languages of international scholarship, and the Newsletter publishes notes and queries in French, German or English as appropriate. The Society holds its major international conference at three-yearly intervals, which always includes a general call for papers. Membership is required to attend the international conference. The society also organises one or more sessions at the annual Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

The Society is affiliated with the Renaissance Society of America, and sponsors sessions at the Society's annual conference, in addition to a number of occasional symposia each year in Europe, North America and elsewhere. Local groups which carry out programs of research, or institutions with a particular interest in emblem books may apply for affiliation to the Society.

### Subscription rates

The current subscription rate for the Society is US \$40.00, with a discounted rate of US \$15.00 for students, untenured, and independent scholars. For more information or inquiries, please contact the Treasurer, Elizabeth Black at [elizabethowens@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethowens@gmail.com). Subscriptions can be paid by using PayPal here: [www.emblemstudies.org](http://www.emblemstudies.org). Just press the 'donate' button on the website.

## Conference Information

### Sociedad Española de Emblemática

Del 2 al 4 de diciembre de 2019, tendrá lugar el XII Congreso Internacional de la Sociedad Española de Emblemática, en la Facultad de Letras de la UPV/EHU, sita en la ciudad de Vitoria-Gasteiz.

En esta ocasión celebraremos la figura de Andrea Alciato, pionero del género de la literatura emblemática, los orígenes del mismo y su desarrollo práctico y teórico posterior, con el título de *En la senda de Alciato. Teoría y práctica de la Emblemática*. Bajo este ámbito tienen cabida las diversas

líneas de investigación desarrolladas por los miembros de la Sociedad y otros interesados en nuestra arte multidisciplinar. El programa se lee al <https://congresosee.com>.

[The twelfth conference of the Spanish Emblematic Society will be held from 2 to 4 December 2019 in Vitoria Gasteiz, Spain, on the campus of the Universidad del País Vasco. It will commemorate the pioneering figure of Andrea Alciato and will be devoted to emblematic and theoretical developments in the emblem by those following in Alciato's footsteps. The program may be found at <https://congresosee.com>.]

### **Sixteenth-Century Studies Conference St. Louis, MS: October 17–20, 2019**

The conference program includes sessions on “Emblems as Instruments of Political Argument”, “Emblems and the Religious Imagination” (both organized by Sabine Mödersheim), and “Emblems, Metaphors, and Health” (Andrew Spicer). The Society for Emblem Studies is an affiliated society of the Conference.

### **Renaissance Society of America Philadelphia, PA: April 2–4, 2020**

The conference program is not yet available, but as always can be expected to include a number of papers in various areas of emblem studies. The Society is affiliated with RSA: our representative is Elizabeth Black. William E. Engel is the discipline representative for Emblems.

### **55th International Congress on Medieval Studies Kalamazoo, MI: May 7–10, 2020**

The congress program will be available in February 2020, and can be expected to include the usual number of sessions devoted to various aspects of emblem studies. The congress will be held, as always, on the campus of Western Michigan University. The 56th Congress will take place May 13–16, 2021, and participant information for that meeting will be available in July 2020. The organizer for emblem sessions is Sabine Mödersheim, University of Wisconsin (smodersheim@wisc.edu).

### **Andrea Alciato giurista umanista Dipartimento di Scienze Giuridiche, Università di Verona: held September 26, 2019**

This colloquium featured a paper by Society member Valérie Hayaert, currently a Visiting Research Fellow at Universität Bonn.

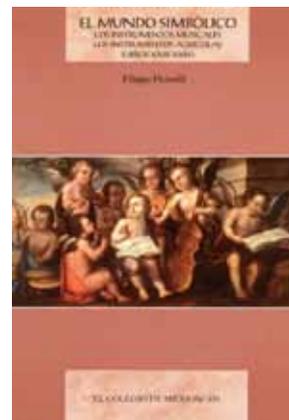
## Newsletter Editorial Policy

In an effort to make the newsletter both relevant to the interests of members and easily digestible, the Executive Committee asks that members limit the length of their submissions. Research notes should run to no more than 1500 words and no more than three figures (please note that it is essential to provide acknowledgement for all figures and that it is the author's responsibility to ensure that their use is permitted); announcements, calls for papers, and the like should be limited to 150 words wherever possible; reviews, to 750 words. Submissions may be edited for length and style and reformatted to fit the overall style of the newsletter. Authors are solely responsible for ensuring accuracy.

Members who submit research notes may also send a longer version, to be placed on the Society's website; in such cases, a link will be placed in the newsletter to direct readers interested in knowing more about the topic.

All submissions should be sent to the interim Newsletter Editor, David Graham <[dgqc@mac.com](mailto:dgqc@mac.com)>. Questions and concerns regarding the policy may be addressed to the Chair, Ingrid Hoepel <[ihoepel@kunstgeschichte.uni-kiel.de](mailto:ihoepel@kunstgeschichte.uni-kiel.de)>. **Please note that the position of Newsletter Editor will need to be filled during the Coimbra conference! Volunteers are welcome.**

## Publication of vol. 16 of the Spanish translation of Filippo Picinelli's *Mondo Simbolico*



El Colegio de Michoacán in Zamora, Mexico, has recently published, in its Colección Clásicos, volume 16 of the project for the Spanish translation of Filippo Picinelli's *Mondo Simbolico*, comprising books 23, “The Musical Instruments”, and 24, “The Agricultural Instruments”. The 236-page volume is edited by Rosa Lucas González and Bárbara Skinfill Nogal (Centro de Estudios de las Tradiciones), and contains translations by Eloy Gómez Bravo and Heriberto Moreno García, with an introductory study for each book by Lucero Enríquez Rubio (Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) and Salvador Álvarez (Centro de Estudios Rurales, El Colegio de Michoacán), and obituaries in memoriam of both translators by the editors. [Information kindly supplied by Rubem Amaral Jr.]