

BARTŁOMIEJ CZARSKI

Coins of Alciato

# COINS OF ALCIATO. REMARKS ON THE RECEPTION OF CLASSICAL NUMISMATIC ICONOGRAPHY IN THE 16TH-CENTURY EMBLEM BOOKS<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Emblem studies has gained immense popularity over the past few years. Research in emblems and emblem books is currently gaining ground among a growing number of scholars of diverse disciplines. This undoubtedly results from the specific nature of the subject matter. Combining texts and images, emblems may be of interest to art historians<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> This text is a part of the project *The reception of classical numismatic iconography in 16th century books of emblems and symbolic treatises* (original title, *Recepcja antycznej ikonografii monetarnej w XVI-wiecznych książkach emblematycznych i traktatach symbolicznych*) funded by Narodowe Centrum Nauki (National Science Centre, Poland). The project was largely based on research conducted in selected libraries in Italy, Belgium, Holland, and Poland. The basic premise was to single out artefacts related to classical numismatic iconography and juxtapose them with ancient patterns. The research was completed in the most part by the author, as well as Dr Piotr Jaworski, an archaeologist and scholar of numismatics. The historical frame of the research was limited to the 16th century, although a few 17th century texts were also considered. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for help in the process of completing this work to Dr Paweł Wojtas and Michał Wielowiejski. I feel much obliged to extend my special thanks to Dr Piotr Jaworski for his expert advice on some parts of this paper. Nevertheless, I take full responsibility for all manner of shortcomings or inaccuracies.

<sup>2</sup> For further reference, see the collection of essays: *Emblems and Art History: Nine Essays*, ed. A. Adams, L. Grove, Glasgow 1996.

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literary scholars<sup>3</sup> alike. Circulating in print and manuscript, they also attract the attention of library scholars.<sup>4</sup> Their massive popularity, extending between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, caught the interest of Renaissance, Baroque and Enlightenment scholars. A new wave of research work has focused on the use of emblems in modern culture, too.<sup>5</sup> Some scholars are extending their research beyond European culture and geography, by studying the history of emblems in the colonies,<sup>6</sup> as well as communities that have nothing in common with the Old World.<sup>7</sup> This includes studies in language, such as Neo-Latin,<sup>8</sup> German,<sup>9</sup> Romance,<sup>10</sup> Polish studies,<sup>11</sup> etc. In a similar manner, edited works – a compilation of original versions of

- 3 See the landmark publication on that matter: P.M. Daly, *Literature in the Light of the Emblem: Structural Parallels Between the Emblem and Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Toronto-Buffalo 1998.
- 4 Consult the following library catalogues of emblem books: *Emblem Books in the Princeton University Library: Short-Title Catalogue*, ed. William S. Hecksher et al., Princeton 1984; H.M. Black, *A Short-Title Catalogue of the Emblem Books and Related Works in the Stirling Maxwell Collection of Glasgow University Library (1499–1917)*, Aldershot 1988; S. Sider, B. Obrist *Bibliography of emblematic manuscripts*, Montreal 1997; A.S.Q. Visser, *Emblem Books in Leiden: A Catalogue of the Collections of Leiden University Library, the "Maatschappij Der Nederlandse Letterkunde Te Leiden", and Bibliotheca Thysiana*, Leiden 1999. This list of publications is not exhaustive. Circulating in large numbers and with new publications being launched regularly, such books offer high quality research on both the textual and visual levels. I. Höpel, U. Kuder, *Mundus Symbolicus 1. Emblembücher aus der Sammlung Wolfgang J. Müller in der UB Kiel*, Kiel 2004.
- 5 P. Rypson, *The Emblematic Mode in Twentieth Century Art*, in: *Emblems from Alciato to the Tattoo. Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference, 18–23 August, 1996*, ed. P.M. Daly, J. Manning, M. van Vaec, Turnhout 2001, pp. 335–355.
- 6 A vibrant interest in that matter is documented in the research project, *10th International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies*. The following presentations deserve particular attention: Hiroaki Ito (*On an Evangelical Illustrated Book Published in Rome in 1573*) and Jean Michel Massing (*Evangelicae Historiae Imagines (1593) in European, Central- and South-American and Japanese Art*); see the conference programme – [www.kunstgeschichte.uni-kiel.de/de/society-for-emblem-studies/programm-und-reader-druckfassung-11.07.2014](http://www.kunstgeschichte.uni-kiel.de/de/society-for-emblem-studies/programm-und-reader-druckfassung-11.07.2014) [24.03.2017].
- 7 This matter was expertly elucidated by Ihediwa Nkemjika Chimee (*The Ikenga, as Emblem of Greatness in the Cosmology of the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria* – [http://arkyves.org/static/misc/kiel\\_ikenga.pdf](http://arkyves.org/static/misc/kiel_ikenga.pdf) [24.03.2017]) during the *10th International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies*.
- 8 See: William S. Hecksher, *The Princeton Alciati companion: a glossary of neo-Latin words and phrases used by Andrea Alciati and the emblem book writers of his time, including a bibliography of secondary sources relevant to the study of Alciati's emblems*, New York 1989; *Mundus Emblematicus. Studies in Neo-Latin Emblem Books*, ed. Karl. A.E. Enenkel, A.Q. Visser, Turnhout 2003.
- 9 See: *The German-Language Emblem in its European Context*, ed. A.J. Harper, I. Höpel, Glasgow 2000.
- 10 See: *An Interregnum of the Sign: The Emblematic Age in France: Essays in Honour of Daniel S. Russell*, Ed. D. Graham, Glasgow 2001.
- 11 See: *Poesis artificiosa. Between Theory and Practice*, ed. B. Milewska-Ważbińska, A. Borysowska, Frankfurt am Main 2013.

texts, including editor's notes – have undergone a marked revival of interest.<sup>12</sup> Since such publications often involve the work of translators, they are often available in bilingual editions.<sup>13</sup> This includes research on the influence of emblem studies on the arts, such as painting,<sup>14</sup> architecture<sup>15</sup> and music.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, multiple possibilities of extending this research to other fields present themselves. It is worth noting that the interdisciplinary approach, which involves research methods characteristic of manifold disciplines or research projects overseen by a team of specialists from diverse fields, is now dominant.

Emblem books contributed to 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century European culture immeasurably. Their veracious popularity and diversity – resulting in the immense commercial success of the published works – best reflect the cultural tastes of the readers.<sup>17</sup> That this kind of work attracted much attention comes down to the diversity of related genres. *Stemmata*,<sup>18</sup> *icones*, *imprese*,<sup>19</sup> *carmina figurate*<sup>20</sup> and *poesis artificiosa*<sup>21</sup> were no less popular in the Renaissance and Baroque. Currently, the proliferation of interrelated verbal and visual forms may pose quite a challenge for the researcher, who risks confusing genres of sorts. The early scholars may offer little remedy in this respect given that their model of genre classification may

12 See the new edition of Andrea Alciato's book of emblems: A. Alciato, *Il libro degli Emblemi secondo le edizioni del 1531 e del 1534*, a cura di Mino Gabriele, Milano 2009.

13 See the English translation of Alciato's book of emblems: A. Alciato, "Emblemata" Lyons, 1550, transl. B.I. Knott, Aldershot 1996.

14 See: S. McKeown, *Emblematic Paintings from Sweden's Age of Greatness Nils Bielke and the Neo-Stoic Gallery at Skokloster*, Turnhout 2006.

15 *The Emblem and Architecture: Studies in Applied Emblematics from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. H.J. Böker, P.M. Daly, Turnhout 1999.

16 *Emblem Books with Songs and Music*, ed. P.P. Raasveld, Leiden 1999.

17 The popularity of books of emblems is confirmed by bibliographical data.

18 *Stemmata*, that is, a poem related to heraldic illustrations, was popular all over Europe, particularly in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. See: F. Pilarczyk, *Stemmata w drukach polskich XVI wieku* [Stemmata in Polish 16th Century Prints], Zielona Góra 1982; W. Kroll, *Heraldische Dichtung bei den Slaven: mit einer Bibliographie zur Rezeption der Heraldik und Emblematik bei den Slaven (16.–18. Jahrhundert)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986; B. Czarski, *Stemmaty w staropolskich ksiązkach, czyli rzecz o poezji heraldycznej* [Stemmata in Old-Polish Books, That is about Heraldic Poetry], Warszawa 2012. On the relations between emblem studies and heraldry, see: P.F. Campa, *The Space between Heraldry and the Emblem. The Case of Spain*, [in:] *Emblem Scholarship Directions and Developments. A Tribute to Gabriel Hornstein*, Ed. P.M. Daly, Turnhout 2005, pp. 51–82.

19 On the origin of *imprese* and its cultural significance, see: D. Caldwell, "Studies in Sixteenth-Century Italian Imprese", *Emblematica. An Interdisciplinary Journal for Emblem Studies*, Vol. 11, 2001, pp. 1–257.

20 D. Higgins, *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature*, Albany 1987.

21 *Poesis artificiosa. Between Theory and Practice*, ed. B. Milewska-Ważbińska, A. Borysowska, Frankfurt am Main 2013.

depart altogether from the present assumptions.<sup>22</sup> Hence, conflicting conclusions proliferate. Far be it from the present author to settle the dispute on the final definition of the emblem, its conceptual limits, and correspondence with related forms, but it may be relevant to mention that the emergence of certain verbal and visual hybrid genres attests to the significance of books of emblems on the culture of the past. Since some collections of emblems emerged from the same background, they became symptomatic of the cultural trends of the day. These two factors may serve to justify the present interest in the studies on the works of Alciato and his followers.

Nevertheless, this study does not intend to touch upon all of the above listed research problems. It should rather be reckoned among more traditional approaches to emblem studies, attempting to trace the origins of the texts under scrutiny. As such, the research is centred around the reception of specific images adopted from ancient Greek and Roman coins. This extends to both iconography and numismatic legends, resonating in mottoes, emblematic compositions (adopted as titles), and epigrams.

In terms of its content, the text is centred on the relationship between *Emblematum liber* [Book of Emblems] by Andrea Alciato and ancient numismatic artefacts. It is assumed that the first collection of emblems serves as an apposite example of this relation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This is confirmed by a proliferation of studies on this work, which testifies to its popularity in academic circles and among general readership. Revered and imitated in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Alciato was an epitome of emblem studies. Since the collective conclusions from the scholarly research on Alciato's work can be extended to the study of emblematic in a broader context, they are in a certain way universal. The Italian jurist is currently the most studied emblem artist by modern scholars. The explosion of publications on his works is a significant point of departure for the purposes of this study, and allows the present author to overlook some general aspects, that – although essential on their own merit – are secondary for this research. As such, these studies facilitate this research immeasurably.

This text is divided into three consecutive parts. The introductory part discusses aspects such as the origin of emblematic works, their relationship with ancient coinage, the reception of ancient coins in modern times, the development of specialised sources on numismatics and its impact

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22 On the formal aspects and difficulties in defining emblems, see: J. Manning, *The Emblem*, London 2004, pp.13–36. See also: R.J. Clemens, *Picta poesis: literary and humanistic theory in Renaissance emblem books*, Roma 1960.

on the explanatory notes in *Emblematum liber*, as well as the reference to coins in Alciato's works. The second part, the most extensive one, comprises a number of chapters orientated at analysing selected works, adopted from Alciato's book of emblems, intended to demonstrate the manifold relationships between the works in question and ancient numismatic artefacts. In some cases the imputed links are fairly obvious, posing little challenge in terms of identification and description. In other cases, the opposite is true. In fact, on a few occasions the author fails to provide a definite answer as to the provenance or sources inspiring certain works. On such rare moments, the author has posited a number of tentative hypotheses. Finally, the closing part offers consolidated conclusions based on the analytical section. Additionally, the final part puts forward some general conclusions, such as an attempt to demonstrate the ways in which Alciato, his commentators and publishers exploited ancient coins for artistic purposes or otherwise.

The body catalogues a number of excerpts adopted from early prints. The author took pains to modernise the spelling and punctuation of these fragments at the expense of a faithful imitation of the original text. The primary source fragments are provided in the original and translation. Unless stated otherwise, all fragments are translated by the author, as well as the translator of the English version of this text, Dr Paweł Wojtas, except for the translations of Alciato's book of emblems, adopted from the English version of the collective project, *Alciato's Book of Emblems. The Memorial Web Edition in Latin and English*, rendered by Bill and Jean Guthrie.<sup>23</sup> This rendition of Alciato's emblems is accurate and faithful to its Latin original. Either way, the original version of each excerpt comes first, as it serves as a basis for textual analysis. All translations are supplementary, calculated to facilitate the reading of the Latin original.

This study heavily depends on illustrative sources, most of which are adopted from early prints. They include the title pages of works under consideration or selected woodcut engravings. Central for the purposes of this study were emblem illustrations adopted from various editions. Another kind of visual component employed below are ancient numismatic illustrations. For technical reasons, high-quality sketches were used in place of photographs to ensure maximum attention to detail. Michał Wielowiejski prepared all the sketches on the basis of visual resources by courtesy of *Classical Numismatic Group*.<sup>24</sup>

23 <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/index.html> [online resources. Accessed: 2017-04-03].

24 <https://www.cngcoins.com/> [online resources. Accessed: 2017-03-04].

The footnoted abbreviations, limited to a bare minimum, are explained at the end of the book. They were mostly used for the oft-quoted numismatic studies, early editions of Alciato's works, classical texts: mainly by the authors of the Antiquity, biblical books, or in some cases popular modern works.

### I.1. A BIRTH OF THE BOOK OF EMBLEMS

What is the origin story of this unusual phenomenon called the book of emblems? What was the driving force behind its immense commercial success? An exhaustive answer to these questions alone requires the space of a sizeable book. For the purposes of this inquiry, some preliminary aspects call for explanation. It is commonly assumed that Andrea Alciato authored the first book of emblems.<sup>25</sup> First published in 1531, this hitherto unknown collection of verbal-visual artworks was available under the rather unimpressive title *Emblematum libellus* [A Small Book of Emblems] (fig. 1). It is widely believed that this publication was issued

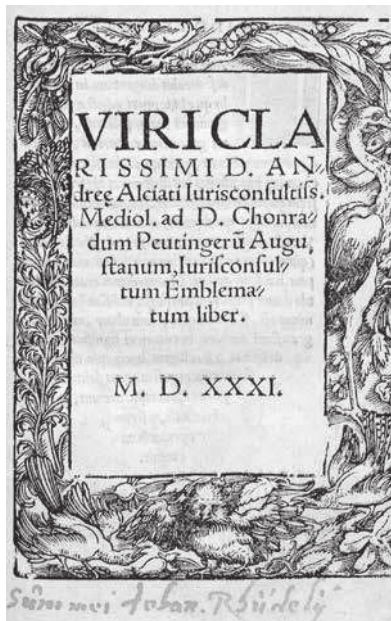


FIG. 1. Title-page of *Emblematum libellus* (Augsburg 1531) by Andrea Alciato. Library of the University of Wrocław, shelf mark: 305086.

25 The Italian counterpart of this name is also *Andrea*, the surname is referred to twofold, as *Alciato* and *Alciati*. The version *Andrea Alciato* will be used consistently throughout this book.

by the Augsburg printer Heinrich Steyner without the author's permission.<sup>26</sup> The question of the origin of the plates included in the work is also rather uncertain. Many scholars posit that they must have been attached by the printer himself, who supplemented the textual part with allegorical illustrations. Under suspicion was also Conrad Peutinger, an imperial counsellor and a high-profile official in Augsburg, to whom the titular small book was dedicated. Others claimed that Alciato was anything but surprised by the attached illustrations, and had known about Steyner's editorial plans to illustrate his poems.<sup>27</sup> What he would not have approved of was ultimately the quality of the woodcuts. Regardless of the origin of the illustrations, the form of the emblem crystallised in the Augsburg edition. Works representing the genre were now to consist of three parts: allegorical, including a motto as its title; symbolic illustration, a representation and depiction of the titular concept; textual part, usually an epigram, which explains both the title and the illustration. This pattern was preserved in the ensuing editions of Alciato's book, as well as other books of emblems compiled by the newly emergent imitators of the genre.

By way of a disclaimer, Alciato did not pioneer the concept of allegorical compositions represented in a verbal and visual form. In fact, the works that preceded *Emblematum libellus*, and hence foreran the genre, were plenty. Alciato's pioneering insight lies in two aspects: the compilation and publication of collected works in a concise book form, and the invention of the name of the genre – the emblem. This word, of Greek provenance, denotes a thing added, attached, pinned. What Alciato probably had in mind was a type of broche available in miscellaneous, often symbolic, forms, which were customarily pinned on hats or other garments. Such sophisticated ornaments were highly fashionable at the imperial court of the Habsburgs.<sup>28</sup> This particular meaning of the word emblem was pointed at by the early commentators of the Italian jurist's book.<sup>29</sup> Although this term had already

26 B.F. Scholz, "The 1531 Augsburg Edition of Alciato's Emblemata: A Survey of Research", *Emblematica* 5 (1991), pp. 213–254. See also H. Miedema, *The Term Emblema in Alciati*, "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes" 31 (1968), pp. 234–250; E. Klecker, "Des signes muets aux emblems chanteurs: les 'Emblemata' d'Alciat et l'emblématique", *Littérature* 1/2007 (No 145), pp. 23–52.

27 This question was explored by Agnes Kusler at the conference: *The Society For Emblem Studies Tenth International Conference*, see: *10th International Conference Society for Emblem Studies. Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel 27 July – 1 August 2014*, ed. L. Walew et al., Kiel 2014, pp. 119–121.

28 D.L. Drysdall, *Occurrences of the word emblema in printed works before Alciato*, "Emblematica" 14 (2005), pp. 299–325; idem, *Devices as "Emblems" before 1531*, "Emblematica" 16 (2008), pp. 253–269.

29 See A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, fol. b5v.



appeared in a related context before 1531, it was never meant to denote a fixed genre.<sup>30</sup> Crediting Alciato with pioneering the genre won him the honourable moniker of *princeps emblematum*. Although in fact he did not devise the first emblem, but authored the first collected book of emblems.

The study of emblems would never have emerged had it not been for a series of events that took place in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> European culture. The readership had been prepared for the emergence of this phenomenon since at least 1419, when then the Italian merchant and traveller Cristoforo Buondelmonti had discovered the manuscript of the so-called *Hieroglyphica* [Hieroglyphs], by the mysterious Horapollo on the Greek island of Andros.<sup>31</sup> This work can be classified as a sort of grammatical treatise in which many symbols, called hieroglyphs, are clarified allegorically, that is, not as written signs but rather as concepts standing for fixed ideas. As this work galvanised the 15<sup>th</sup> century Italian scholars, especially from the Neo-Platonic circles, it circulated as a manuscript, only to be printed later in 1505 by Aldus Manutius.<sup>32</sup> Soon rendered into Latin – first translated by Filippo Fasanini in 1517 – this work undoubtedly popularised the treatise and won him new readership. Many works from *Emblematum libellus* were largely inspired by the symbols discussed by Horapollo.<sup>33</sup> The popularity of the treatise is attested by the fact that at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it had been republished over thirty times.

As set out in *Hieroglyphica*, the concept of a universal language based on visual representations of ideas was adopted by Renaissance artists and writers. The most prominent and widely known example was *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* [Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream] by Francesco Colonna.<sup>34</sup> This work helped expand the range of symbols and motifs

30 D.L. Drysdall, "Préhistoire de l'emblème: commentaires et emplois du terme avant Alciat", *Nouvelle Revue du XVIe Siècle* 6 (1988), pp. 29–44.

31 See *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo*, transl. G. Boas, with a new foreword by A.T. Grafton, New York 1950, pp. XI–XX.

32 On the significance of hieroglyphs in the Renaissance culture, see: K. Giehlow, *The Humanist Interpretation of Hieroglyphs in the Allegorical Studies of the Renaissance: With a Focus on the Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I*, Leiden 2015; on the relationship between hieroglyphs and Alciato's emblems in particular, see: ibidem, pp. 236–289.

33 See: D.S. Russel, "Emblems and Hieroglyphics: Some Observations on the Beginnings and the Nature of Emblematic Forms", *Emblematica* 1 (1986), pp. 227–243.

34 This work was most probably completed in 1467, and published in print in 1499 in the publishing house of Aldus Manutius. For further reference, see the study on this work: H. Barolini, *Aldus and His Dream Book: An Illustrated Essay*, New York 1992; L. de Girolami Cheney, "Francesco Colonna's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: A Garden of Neoplatonic Love", in: *The Italian Emblem: A Collection of Essays*, ed. D. Mansueto, E.L. Calogero, Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2007; as well as a further edition: F. Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, edd., transl., comm. M. Ariani, M. Gabriele, Milan 1998.



35 See: RIC II 112.

36 H.G. Fletcher, *In praise of Aldus Manutius*, New York 1995, pp. 25–34.

37 See: J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, *W cieniu symbolicznego drzewa. O sygnecie drukarskim Macieja Wirzbięty* [In the Shadow of a Symbolic Tree. About the Maciej Wirzbięta's Printer's Mark], "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki" LXXII, 1–2/2010, pp. 93–112.

38 J. Rowlands, "Terminus, the Device of Erasmus of Rotterdam: A Painting by Holbein", *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 67, No 2 (Feb., 1980), pp. 50–54.



**FIG. 2a.** Silver denarius with a dolphin coiled around an anchor. RIC II 112.  
**FIG. 2b.** Emblem *Princeps subditorum incolunitatem procurans* (A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1621, p. 615). Library of the University of Warsaw, shelf mark: 72.1.18/12

35 See: RIC II 112.

36 H.G. Fletcher, *In praise of Aldus Manutius*, New York 1995, pp. 25–34.

37 See: J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, *W cieniu symbolicznego drzewa. O sygnecie drukarskim Macieja Wirzbięty* [In the Shadow of a Symbolic Tree. About the Maciej Wirzbięta's Printer's Mark], "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki" LXXII, 1–2/2010, pp. 93–112.

38 J. Rowlands, "Terminus, the Device of Erasmus of Rotterdam: A Painting by Holbein", *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 67, No 2 (Feb., 1980), pp. 50–54.

coinage,<sup>39</sup> and later employed by Alciato – the emblem *Nulli cedo* [I yield before no one] (fig. 3). As a result of the commercial success of emblems, printer's marks were often supplemented with poems, by which they began to resemble emblems. And yet, this phenomenon followed the publication of Alciato's book.

As stated above, allegorical compositions – in fact no different from the classic tripartite emblem – predated the first 1531 edition of the book of emblems. They usually complemented the proper content of the book, consisting in so-called preliminaries and back matters. An early example of this art form was a poem combined with a woodcut engraving that can be found at the end of *Amores* [Amours] by Conrad Celtes, published in Nuremberg in 1502 (fig. 4). The author of this composition was Celtes's acquaintance and a member of the fellowship that funded the publication, Willibald Pirckheimer (who signed as V.P.). The visual part of the work shows Apollo in pursuit of Daphne, who is metamorphosing into a laurel. Above the illustration there is a title in Greek: *ΔΑΦΝΙΦΙΛΙΟΙΣ*, which translates as "To laurel lovers". The illustration is complemented by a Latin poem that explains the allegorical component of the illustration:



**FIG. 3a.** Silver denarius with Terminus. RIC I 269b.  
**FIG. 3b.** Emblem *Terminus*. (A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1621, p. 667). Library of the University of Warsaw, shelf mark: 7.2.1.18/12.



39 Commonly known from the denarius of Augustus, see: RIC I 269b.



**FIG. 4.** Protoemblem by Willibald Pirckheimer added to *Amores* by Conrad Celtis (Nuremberg 1502, fol. 122r.). Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, shelf mark: Rar. 446.

Per iuga, per scopulos perque alta cacumina silvae  
 Hic sequitur Lauram nudus Apollo suam.  
 Sic quicumque cupit lauri de fronde coronam  
 Dulcisonaeque suae tangere fila lyrae  
 Currat, sub placida tandem requiescat ut umbra,  
 Claudens felici tempora cuncta die.<sup>40</sup>

[Amongst the mountains, hills and towering peaks of trees, the naked Apollo is chasing his Daphne. In like manner, may one who yearns for a laurel wreath hasten to strike the cords of his sweet-sounding lyre. Only then can he rest in a blissful shade and imprison his remaining days in a single day.]

Only after seeing the whole picture can the reader come to realise that the scene of pursuit from the woodcut stands for the poet's craving for fame. The nymph endowed by god with an unreciprocated love, symbolises the laurel wreath – the symbol of fame and glory for Renaissance men of letters. Published thirty years prior to the first edition of *Emblematum*

40 C. Celtis, *Quattuor libri Amorum secundum quattuor latera Germanie [...]*, Noribergae: sub privilegio Sodalitatis Celticae, 1502, fol. 122r.

*libellus*, this composition contains all the possible components characteristic of an emblem. More examples of this sort are available.

A distinctive kind of work was poems describing coats of arms, referred to as stemmata. Such works, which in practical terms are no different from emblems, prove that works consisting of a poem and symbolic illustration formed before the publication of Alciato's book. Indeed, such a complete collection as this could not have emerged in a cultural vacuum, but developed from a rich tradition. Its magnitude and positive reception were secured by the countless reeditions of *Emblematum libellus*, which soon began to go by the more respectable name, *Emblematum liber*. Steyner published Alciato's opus three times.<sup>41</sup> In 1534, the Italian lawyer turned to the Parisian typographer Chrestien Wechel for a new edition of his work. This edition featured a new set of woodcut illustrations, largely modelled on the previous Augsburg editions. Later on, during Alciato's lifetime, the book of emblems would be published by scores of printers.<sup>42</sup> Although there is no room in this study to delve into every separate reprint of the book, two of them may require special attention. The first is known as the second book of Alciato, a collection of 86 emblems published in 1546 in Venice.<sup>43</sup> The other, relevant for the purposes of this study, appeared in 1548 in Lyon. It was published by Guillaume Rouillé and edited by Barthélémy Aneau, who combined two collections of Alciato's emblems, as well as rearranged them according to the moral categories that the works epitomised.<sup>44</sup> This version covered 201 emblems altogether, later extended by eleven in 1550. This reprint was, curiously, the last one to be overseen by Alciato,<sup>45</sup> and departed from the previous ones in terms of a crucial detail that would later redefine the genre, namely explanatory notes. This aspect will be looked into further.

41 In 1531, two editions appeared: 23 February and 6 April, while a third edition was published on 29 July 1534.

42 A bibliography of the editions of Alciato's work was drawn up by H. Green, *Andrea Alciati and his books of emblems: a biographical and bibliographical study*, London 1872.

43 M. Grünberg-Dröge, "The 1546 Venice edition of Andrea Alciato's *Emblemata*", in: *Emblems from Alciato to the tattoo. Selected papers of the Leuven international emblem Conference 18–23. August, 1996*, ed. P.M. Daly, J. Manning, M. van Vaeck, Turnhout 2001, pp. 3–19.

44 D.L. Drysdall, "Classifying Alciato's Emblems: Is there an alternative to Aneau?", in: *Polyvalenz und Multifunktionalität der Emblematik Multivalence and Multifunctionality of the Emblem. Akten des 5. Internationalen Kongresses der Society for Emblem Studies Proceedings of the 5th International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies*, ed. H. Wolfgang, P. Dietmar, Frankfurt/M 2002, pp. 125–132.

45 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1550. This version became a basis for the reprint including English translation and comments: A. Alciati, *Emblemata: Lyons, 1550*, transl. and ed. B.I. Knott, Aldershot 1996.

The commercial success of *Emblematum liber* earned Alciato a considerable following. As a result, a number of influential books of emblems, compiled by many 16<sup>th</sup> century authors, hit the shelves in no time. Among the most notable were *Hecatomographie* by Gilles Corrozet,<sup>46</sup> *Délie* by Maurice Scève,<sup>47</sup> *Theatre des bons engins* [Theatre of Virtuous Devices] by Guillaume de la Perrière,<sup>48</sup> *Devises heroïques* [Heroic Devices] by Claude Paradin,<sup>49</sup> *Emblemata* [Emblems] by Junius Hadrian,<sup>50</sup> and the work by Johannes Sambucus under the same title<sup>51</sup> (fig. 5). Bearing in mind the numismatic aspect informing this study, the latter work begs further scrutiny. The remaining collections are only referred to in passing as selected

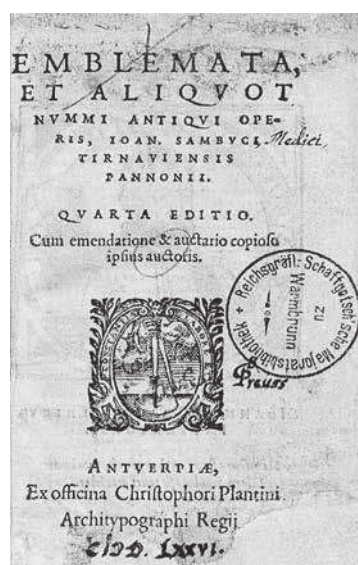


FIG. 5. Title-page of *Emblemata et aliquot nummi antiqui* (Antwerp 1576) by Johannes Sambucus. National Library of Poland, shelf mark: SD XVI.O.4147.

- 46 G. Corrozet, *Hecatomgraphie, c'est à dire les descriptions de cent figures et hystoires, contenant plusieurs appophtegmes, proverbes, sentences et dicttant des anciens que des modernes*, On les vend à Paris: par Denys Janot, 1540.
- 47 M. Scève, *Delie object de plus haulte vertu*, a Lyon: chez Sulpice Sabon, pour Antoine Constantin, 1544.
- 48 G. de la Perrière, *Le Théâtre des bons engingins, auquel sont contenuz cent emblemes moraulx [...]*, de l'imprimerie de Denys Janot, 1544.
- 49 C. Paradin, *Devises heroïques*, a Lyon: par Jean de Tournes et Guillaume Gazeau, 1551.
- 50 J. Hadrian, *Emblemata ad d. Arnoldum Cobelium, eiusdem Aenigmatum libellus ad d. Arnoldum Rosenbergum*, Antverpiae: ex officina Christophori Plantini, 1565.
- 51 J. Sambucus, *Emblemata cum aliquot nummis antiqui operis [...]*, Antuerpiae: ex officina Christophori Plantini, 1564.



examples. The magnitude of the book of emblems in the early modern European culture is reflected in the figures. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, over 3000 books of emblems, authored by around 700 people, had been published in the Old World.<sup>52</sup> Alciato's collection itself – in its Latin original as well as translations into vernacular languages – was then published 171 times. This testifies to the significant role played by this medium as a carrier of ideas and concepts back in the days.

## 1.2. COINS IN EMBLEMS, EMBLEMS ON COINS

As stated above, to identify sources against their complex historical backgrounds is imperative for research into emblems. For Alciato, the foothold from which he composed his works was European culture in a broad sense, and Latin and Greek culture as well as the Bible in particular. Particularly fascinating seems to be the research on the relationship between *Emblematum liber* and the epigrams adopted from *The Greek Anthology*,<sup>53</sup> or the influence of Erasmus's *Adagia*<sup>54</sup> [Adages]. No less important in this context are the sources of Alciato's followers.<sup>55</sup> The notes included in the modern as well as early editions testify to the weight and diversity of resources under consideration. Although ancient numismatic illustrations are a strong component of the work, no monographic study focusing on the relationship between emblems and classical numismatic motifs has appeared. Such links may, in fact, have been noted by the 16<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century authors of classic publications on the comparative study between literature and visual arts,<sup>56</sup> but the contemporary studies chart this territory only superficially. It is fair to say that there are some analytical works orientated at interpreting or elucidating a given case in point.<sup>57</sup> This is best exemplified by the source that sought to in-

52 P.M. Daly, *Literature in the Light of the Emblem...*, p. 106.

53 A. Saunders, "Alciati and the Greek Anthology", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 12 (1982), pp. 1-18; M. Tung, "Revisiting Alciato and The Greek Anthology: A Documentary Note", *Emblematika* 13 (2001), pp. 327-348.

54 V.W. Callahan, "Erasmus's Adages: A Pervasive Element in the Emblems of Alciato", *Emblematika* 9 (1995), pp. 241-256.

55 See: L.A. Wesseling, "Devices, Proverbs, Emblems: Hadrianus Junius's Emblemata in Light of Erasmus's Adagia", in: *The Kaleidoscopic Scholarship of Hadrianus Junius (1511-1575): Northern Humanism at the Dawn of the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. D. van Miert, Leiden 2011, pp. 214-259.

56 See: M. Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imaginery*, Roma 1975, pp. 12, 24, 74.

57 See: R. Amaral jr., "The Reverse of the As of Nîmes: An Emblematic Puzzle", in: *The International Emblem: From Incunabula to the Internet Selected Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies, 28th July-1st August, 2008, Winchester College*, ed. S. McKeown, Cambridge 2010, pp. 47-68.

spect the reception of the illustration of the cap of liberty (*pileus*) and two daggers embossed on the denarius of Brutus commemorating the memorable Ides of March<sup>58</sup> (fig. 6).

The relation between emblems and coins is also explored in the explanatory notes attached to the modern editions and translations, as well documented in the edition of *Emblematum libellus* prepared by Mino Gabriele. The Renaissance emblem studies understood through the lens of classical coinage was most passionately discussed in the works centred on Sambucus's edition – which no doubt has something to do with the form of this publication. This edition features a specific appendix: a set of woodcut numismatic illustrations modelled on the personal collection of the Hungarian humanist scholar.<sup>59</sup> The first edition had twenty-three illustrations, and would go on to eventually top forty-four after a number



FIG. 6. Emblem *Respublica liberata* (A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1621, p. 641). Library of the University of Warsaw, shelf mark: 7.2.1.18/12.

- 58 Crawford 508/3; S. Rolet, "Un pileus et deux poignards: les symboles immuables du tyrannicide, du denier EID MAR de Brutus à l'emblème d'Alciato «Respublica liberata» (1546)", in: *Allégorie et symbole: voies de dissidence? De l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, sous la direction de Anne Rolet, Rennes 2012, pp. 361–389. B. Czarski, P. Jaworski, "Respublica liberata. The Coin of Brutus Commemorating the Ides of March in the Emblematic Interpretation of Alciatus", *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne* 59, 2015, pp. 249–284.
- 59 M. R.-Alföldi, "Zu den frühen Illustrationen numismatischer Werke. Die 'Emblemata' des Johannes Sambucus, 1531–1584", in: *Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Numismatik. Beiträge zum 17.*



of further reprints. Needless to say, Sambucus owned a more impressive number of collectibles. If so, what made him select these particular artefacts? John Cunnally argues that this limited selection of artefacts was to do justice to the diversity of images adopted from reverses, as well as their deep-seated meaning.<sup>60</sup> His opinion is not unjustified, given that the emblem illustrations depict Roman military and marine campaigns, mythical stories, commemorate triumphs, religious ceremonies, magnificent historical buildings, and list multiple allegories and personifications. The most accurate word to sum up such an exclusive selection would be *varietas*. Aside from the numerous reverses, the illustrations contain obverses portraying the Roman rulers. As such, the collection is a sheer festival of antiquity, a sort of museum of the ancient world spread on the paper. Sambucus decided to supplement the emblems with artefacts from his own collection, presumably because both forms depend on symbols for their meaning. The links between numismatic artefacts and emblems were highlighted on the title page of this edition. The title was encapsulated in an ornate frame containing nine coins depicting the Muses. This decoration is modelled on the silver denarius coins of Quintus Pomponius Musa<sup>61</sup> (fig. 7). Every type of these coins portrays the goddess of art and learning. Scholars often point to a unique emblem taken from this collection that was to emphasise the value of ancient coins<sup>62</sup>. For Sambucus, this kind of artefact could communicate more than old books. The emblem in question was *Antiquitatis studium* [Study of Antiquity], where the Hungarian humanist attempted to argue that coins, through their embedded symbolism, could help one become more virtuous and moral. Undoubtedly, the editor thought highly of the value of the ancient coins. Considering the above, it is worth noticing that emblems were a means for teaching moral values.

For fear of exaggerating the importance of Sambucus's *Emblemata*, it needs to be mentioned that his publication of emblems was not the only available source combining classical numismatic iconography with

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*deutschen Numismatikertag 3.–5. März 1995 in Hannover*, Herausgegeben von Reiner Albert (Speyer) und Reiner Cunz (Hannover), Numismatische Gesellschaft Speyer e.V., 1995, pp. 1–95.

60 J. Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious. The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance*, New Jersey 1999, p. 108. On the numismatic supplement of Sambucus, see also: A.S.Q. Visser, *Joannes Sambucus and the Learned Image. The Use of the Emblem in Late-Renaissance Humanism*, Leiden-Boston 2005, pp. 44–46.

61 A.S.Q. Visser, op. cit., p. xxvii. See also: H.A. Seaby, *Roman Silver Coins*, vol. 1, revised by D.R. Sear and R. Loosley, London 1978, pp. 77–79.

62 See: J. Cunnally, op. cit., p. 106.



FIG. 7a–f. Silver denarius coins of Quintus Pomponius Musa portraying the goddess of art and learning. Crawford 410.

emblems. The same subject matter was probed in two editions of *Emblemata anniversaria*<sup>63</sup> [Anniversary Emblems]. This collection contains speeches delivered to celebrate the end of academic year by the students of the University of Altdorf. Each of the speeches focused on a symbolic image placed on a medallion minted specifically for the occasion (fig. 8). In this book of emblems, coins are placed right above the central text, which resulted in a peculiar emblematic structure. Many of these medals were modelled on famous ancient coins, and the motifs adopted from reverses in particular.

A curious case of implementing numismatic artefacts in an emblem book presents itself in the collection of emblems dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII entitled *Delle allusioni, imprese et emblemi* [On Allusions, Devices and Emblems] by Principio Fabricio. All emblems collected in this work revolve around the motif of the snake or dragon. The author intended to bring his compositions close to the coats of arms of the eminent dedicatees. The coat of arms of Gregory XIII portrays a golden dragon set

63 *Emblemata anniversaria Academiae Altorfinae studiorum iuventutis exercitandorum causa proposita et variorum orationibus exposita*, Norimbergae: impensis Levini Hulsi, 1597. The second extended edition was published in 1617. See: F.J. Stopp, *The Emblems of the Altdorf Academy. Medals and Medal Orations 1577–1626*, London 1974.



FIG. 8. Title-page of *Emblemata anniversaria Accademiae Altorfinae* (Nuremberg 1597). Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, shelf mark: Res/4 L.eleg.m. 53 b..

against a red background. With this in mind, Fabricio collected all available coins depicting the reptile and used them for the illustrations to the poem titled *Romanorum numismata principium* [The Coins of the Roman Rulers].<sup>64</sup> This was to imply that the dragon and snake embody Roman rulers. During the Renaissance and further periods, this approach was far from rare. The same thesis is posited by Silvester Pietrasancta in his heraldic works. The crucial part of the armorial *Tessera gentilitia* [Cout of Armas] was prefaced by his analysis of the origin of heraldic symbols. The work focuses on the symbolic representation of the coins commissioned by the Roman emperors. The coin of Augustus showing a Capricorn with a fish tail deserves particular attention.<sup>65</sup> Pietrasancta suggests that the symbols stand for the attributes of the rulers, as in the case of the coats of arms or *impresas* which were popular in his times. In the same vein, the Italian scholar of heraldry further explores the numismatic themes in book two of *De symbolis heroicis*<sup>66</sup> [Heroic Symbols], where the numis-

64 P. Fabricii, *Delle allusioni, imprese, et emblemi [...] sopra la vita, opere, et attioni di Gregorio XIII Pontefice Massimo libri VI*, In Roma: apresso Bartolomaeo Grassi, 1588, p. 316.

65 S. Pietrasancta, *Tesserae gentilitiae [...] ex legibus Fecialum descriptae*, Romae: typis haeredum Francisci Corbelletti, 1638, p. 16.

66 S. Pietrasancta, *De symbolis heroicis libri IX [...]*, Antverpiae: ex officinal Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1634, pp. 70–84.

matic symbols were treated on a par with coats of arms and *impresas*. This testifies to the fact that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century numismatic images were reckoned amongst other symbols, such as emblems, hieroglyphs and coats of arms. Such a collection of symbols crystallised in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, partly as a result of the growing popularity of books of emblems.

The evident influence of numismatic imagery is also registered in *impresas*, related to emblems in terms of form. These art forms were also aligned with numismatic iconography. As mentioned by Pietrasancta, the coin of Augustus showing a Capricorn with a fish tail inspired the *impresa* of Cosimo de' Medici. The artefact was illustrated in *Le imprese illustri* [Illustrious Devices] by Girolamo Ruscelli,<sup>67</sup> as well as the earlier editions of *Dialogo delle imprese militari e amorose* [Dialogue on the Military and Amorous Badges] by Paolo Giovio.<sup>68</sup> Both authors trace the motif back to the ancient traditions. Therefore, Giovio cites other examples of *imprese* modelled on ancient coins. The list includes the aforementioned terminus of Erasmus,<sup>69</sup> as well as caduceus with two horns of plenty, also to be found in Alciato's book (namely, the emblem *Virtuti fortuna comes* [Good fortune attendant on virtue])<sup>70</sup> (fig. 9). The strong influence of numismatic legends as well as illustrations on reverses on the 16<sup>th</sup> century culture



**FIG. 9a.** Dupondius with a winged caduceus upright between crossed cornucopiae. RIC II 757.

**FIG. 9b.** Emblem *Fortuna virtuti comes* (A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. B1r.). Library of the University of Wrocław, shelf mark: 305086.



67 G. Ruscelli, *Le imprese illustri con espositioni et discorsi* [...], in Venetia: appresso comina da Trino di Monserrato, 1572, p. 113.

68 See P. Giovio, *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* [...] con un ragionamento di messer Lodovico Domenichi nel medesimo soggetto [...], in Lione: appresso Guglielmo Rouiglio, 1559, p. 51.

69 Ibidem, p. 135.

70 Ibidem, p. 136.

is attested by *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano.<sup>71</sup> The Italian Renaissance humanist often refers to this collection by either explaining or illustrating certain issues.

The classical numismatic iconography is inextricably intertwined with Renaissance medal art. An artefact heavily drawing on Roman art was a medal coined by Lorenzino de' Medici after he had murdered his cousin Alessandro<sup>72</sup> (fig. 10). The reference to the motif employed by Brutus was calculated to help vindicate Lorenzino. By including the pileus (the symbol of liberation) and two daggers on his medal, Medici intended to make plain that his rather ferocious deed was a necessary measure taken to liberate the country from the tyrannical rule. As such, he usurped the role assigned to Brutus. The motif itself was recurrent in French medal art, used as a cog in the propaganda machine at the court of Henry II.<sup>73</sup> Featuring the inscription VINDEX ITALIAE ET GERMANICAE



FIG. 10. Medal coined by Lorenzino de' Medici after the assassination of his cousin Alessandro.

- 71 S. Rolet, "D'étranges objets hiéroglyphiques. Les monnaies antiques dans les Hieroglyphica de Pierio Valeriano (1556)", in: *Polyvalenz und Multifunktionalität der Emblematik. Multivalence and Multifunctionality of the Emblem*, edited by Wolfgang Harms and Dietmar Peil, vol. 2, Franckfurt am Main 2002, pp. 813–844.
- 72 P. Attwood, *Italian Medals c.1530–1600 in British Public Collections*, London 2003, No 891.
- 73 J.B. Giard, "Images de l'Antiquité romaine et de la Renaissance française", in: *Scripta Nummaria Romana. Essays Presented to Humphrey Sutherland*, ed. R.A.G. Carson, C.M Kraay, London 1978, p. 175.



LIBERTATIS, it was to justify the military invasion of the Apennine Peninsula. Altogether, it may not be entirely clear what directly inspired the author to issue this medal. Was it the coin of Brutus? Lorenzino's medal? Or perhaps Alciato's emblem (*Respublica liberata* [The republic restored to freedom])? By imitating the ancient numismatic motifs, emblems became subjects of imitation in medal art in turn.<sup>74</sup> And so did *imprese*.

Before we diagnose the reason for this high regard of ancient reverses, it may be of help to refer to Mino Gabriele for his opinion on the relationship between classical numismatic illustration and Alciato's compositions. Noticing similarities between the works of *Emblematum liber* and numismatic illustrations, the Italian scholar advises against hasty conclusions about the reputed strong links between the emblems and numismatic iconography.<sup>75</sup> Although Alciato's interest in that matter was unquestionable, it may be worth remembering that numismatic illustrations were considered, among other symbols, as part and parcel of the same tradition and were processed and reworked by artists in many productive ways, such as in book illustrations, visual or medal arts. The possible sources of inspiration could be countless. Another possibility (explored in further parts) comes from ancient and modern descriptions of particular artefacts. That the Greek and Roman numismatic themes were widely known in the Renaissance was probably due to their unambiguous and telling symbolism. Indeed, symbols and personifications embossed on the reverses had to be readable to all money users. How else were they to serve the propaganda purposes of the rulers? One could risk the hypothesis that such underhand practices of the rules could to a large extent define the choice of numismatic motifs.<sup>76</sup> Given the limited space on coins, illustrations had to be reduced to uncomplicated themes, mottoes, hackneyed symbols and allegories. Considering these criteria, the classical numismatic representations offered cut-and-dried and repeatable symbols. Their Greek and Roman provenance surely added to the appeal. As such, they did justice to one of the slogans that defined the Renaissance: *ad fontes*.

Another group of motifs related to the classical numismatic artefacts, and later to emblems, are personifications. In the ancient times, there

74 P. Attwood, "Emblems and Reverses: The Back of the Medal in Sixteenth-Century Italy", in: *The International Emblem: From Incunabula to the Internet Selected Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies, 28th July–1st August, 2008, Winchester College*, ed. S. McKeown, Cambridge 2010, pp. 21–46.

75 A. Alciato, *Il libro degli emblemi...*, pp. 55–57.

76 See: R.J. Rowland, "Numismatic Propaganda under Cinna", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 97 (1966), pp. 407–419.

was a general tendency towards deifying all manner of phenomena and concepts – moral in particular.<sup>77</sup> This trend was not limited to the Roman world, inspired by the Greeks in this respect,<sup>78</sup> but to other civilisations as well.<sup>79</sup> The deification of abstract notions was fully interiorised by the ancients. A catalogue of personifications was comprehensively drawn up by Cicero<sup>80</sup>, among others. The same aspect is pointed to by Pliny the Older, who indicated a number of similar figures in *Historia naturalis*<sup>81</sup> [Natural History]. The cult of various personifications depended largely on a given stage of the formation of the Roman Empire. The most crucial, however, was the period of the principate and rule of Augustus, which inaugurated the tradition of associating a personification of a deity with the ruler, modelled on the practices adopted from Hellenic countries.<sup>82</sup> This, in turn, triggered the cult of the emperor's virtues (*virtutes*). The numismatic personifications play a variety of role,<sup>83</sup> ranging from denoting geographical terms, institutions (e.g. Senate), weather (rain, storm), events (*bonus eventus*, *adventus*), conditions of man (*somnus*, *mors*, *fama*), human personality (*invidia*, *pudicitia*, *clementia*), happiness and prosperity (*pax*, *abundantia*, *felicitas*, *laetitia*, *securitas*). This catalogue could be extended to: military achievements (*disciplina*, *alacritas*, *honor*), physical abilities and health (*salus*, *fecunditas*), and intellect (*sapientia*). A central role was also played by the illustrations of such notions as *patientia*, *indulgentia*, *constantia*, *iucunditas* and *laetitia*, which can be associated with a variety of moral attitudes and philosophical ideas. A separate group of personified concepts are human assets referred to as gifts of god, such as *providentia*, *claritas*, *gloria*, *securitas*. This list, although long, is by no means exhausted. Another unique group that is somehow related to the emblem studies are female virtues. Tomasz Mikocki points to such notions as: *Concordia*, *Pietas*, *Fecunditas* and *Pudicitia*,<sup>84</sup> three of which will be analysed further.

77 J.R. Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 17.2 (1981), pp. 827–948.

78 See: F. Hamdorf, *Griechische Kultpersonifikationen der vorhellenistische Zeit*, Mainz am Rhein 1964; H.A. Shapiro, *Personification of Abstract Concepts in Greek Art and Literature of the End of the Fifth Century B.C.*, PhD. dissertation: Princeton 1977.

79 J.R. Fears, op. cit., pp. 828–832.

80 CICERO, *De natura deorum* 2, 61.

81 PLINIUS MAIOR, *Naturalis historia* 2.7.5.14–17.

82 A. Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and his Virtus", *Historia* 30 (1981), pp. 298–323.

83 Further examples were in large part adopted from: T. Mikocki, *Zgodna, pobożna, skromna, piękna... Propaganda cnót żeńskich w sztuce rzymskiej* [Compatible, Pious, Modest, Beautiful... Propaganda of Female Virtues in Roman Art], Wrocław 1997, pp. 9–10.

84 Ibidem, p. 11.



Greek coinage is no poorer in terms of motifs. In addition to the illustrations of deities and rulers, it was complete with symbols of a given polis.<sup>85</sup> One of the most popular images in this context is the owl, a symbol of Athens, elaborated in the emblem *Magis prudens quam loquax* [Wise Head, Close Mouth] (fig. 11). The rose of Rhodes was yet another commonly recognised symbol. Many coins minted in Ephesus took a deer for its symbol, and other cities preferred to adorn their reverses with turtles, crabs, bees or horses. Mythical figures were no less popular, such as the Minotaur, the Chimaera, Pegasus or Medusa. Sometimes a full mythical scene was depicted, such as the meeting between Europe and Zeus transformed into a bull. The 16<sup>th</sup> century emblem artists were often inspired by various items and symbols, such as the tripod, trident, and thunder. In the limelight was also the symbol of health – the pentagram – imported from Hellenic coinage. All these themes were associated with specific personifications. Rather than showing a particular figure on the coin, it sufficed to substitute it with a theme that he or she represented. As such,



FIG. 11. Emblem *Prudens magis quam loquax* (A. Alciati, *Emblemata* 1621, p. 112). Library of the University of Warsaw, shelf mark: 7.2.1.18/12

85 For visual motifs of Greek coins see: W.G. Sayles, *Ancient Coin Collecting II: Numismatic Art of the Greek World*, F+W Media, Inc, 2007.

the meaning of the image was clear enough for the readers. Therefore, Asclepios or Hygieia were allegorised by the serpent, Hermes by the caduceus, and Hera by the peacock.

### I.3. NUMISMATIC COMPENDIA AND BOOKS OF EMBLEMS

The symbolic resonance of numismatic illustrations was tackled not only by the emblem book authors. Classical scholars and the 16<sup>th</sup> century experts on numismatics were also preoccupied with the theme.<sup>86</sup> Although it is not unlikely that this popularity boils down to the commercial success of books of emblems, it may also have something to do with the fact that the interpretation of allegorical illustrations became the focus of scholarly studies in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. This marks a radical shift in the approach to this kind of artefacts. Early scholarly works on ancient coinage focused on the obverse illustrations. The coins were treated as a sort of gallery of images of ancient figures, kings, rulers and emperors, on which series of woodcut portraits – used as illustrations in chronicles and other historical books – were modelled. *Illustrium imagines*<sup>87</sup> [Images of the Illustrious] by Andrea Fulvio was the earliest study cataloguing countless obverse illustrations. This work contained portrait busts of emperors and members of imperial family against a black background. In practice, only a part of them were based on classical numismatic illustrations. As befits numismatic artefacts, the illustrations were surrounded with rims and supplemented with inscriptions. This was to bring the woodcuts as close as possible to the tradition of numismatic illustrations. Similar aesthetic modifications were applied in further works, such as *Imperatorum Romanorum libellus*<sup>88</sup> [Book of Roman Emperors] by Johann Huttich, and *Le imagini delle donne Augustae*<sup>89</sup> [The Images of Augustae] by Enea Vico. Chronicles, such as *Epitome thesauri antiquitatum*<sup>90</sup>

86 A bibliography of the 16th century numismatic works is compiled by: C.E. Dekesel, *Bibliotheca nummaria. Bibliography of 16th Century Numismatic Books. Illustrated and Annotated Catalogue*, London 1997. See: F. Bassoli, *Antiquarian Books on Coins and Medals From the Fifteenth to Nineteenth Century*, London 2001.

87 A. Fulvio, *Illustrium imagines*, Romae: apud Iacobum Mazochium, 1517. See: F. Ascarelli, *Annali tipografici di Giacomo Mazzocchi*, Firenze 1961, pp. 114–116.

88 J. Huttich, *Imperatorum Romanorum libellus. Una cum imaginibus, ad vivam effigiem expressis*, Argentinae: Wolfgangus Caephalus, 1525.

89 E. Vico, *Le Imagini delle donne auguste [da Marzia sino a Domizia] intagliate in istampa di rame, con le vite et ispositioni [...]* sopra i riversi delle loro medaglie antiche [...], in Vinegia: appresso Enea Vico [...] et Vincenzo Valgrisio [...], 1557.

90 J. Strada, *Epitome thesauri antiquitatum, hoc est, imperatorum Romanorum orientalium et occidentalium iconum, ex antiquis numismatibus quam fidelissime deliniatarum [...]*, Lugduni: apud iacobum da Strada et Thomam Guerninum, 1553.

[Summary of Antiquity] by Jacopo Strada and *Epitome gestorum LVIII regum Franciae*<sup>91</sup> [Summary of the Deeds of 58 Kings of France] based on Fulvio's work, were also replete with portrait illustrations. Enormously influential, these works reached as far as Italian or French institutions, and their impact could be felt in chronicles published in Cracow. The portraits of rulers placed in the chronicles were modelled on the images of emperors adopted from ancient coins and published in the above studies.<sup>92</sup>

Gradually, the focus of attention of classical scholars began to veer towards reverse illustrations. A considerable number of such illustrations were published in *Le imagini con tutti i riversi de gli imperatori*<sup>93</sup> [The Pictures with All the Reverses of Emperors] by Enea Vico, and their meaning was investigated by various scholars. The most prominent in this respect were two disciples of Alciato. The first is Constanzo Landi, who first met the author of the oldest emblem book as a student in Bologna between 1537 and 1541.<sup>94</sup> Landi's reflections on the ancient coins and their illustrations were collected in the popular work titled *In veterum numismatum Romanorum miscellanea explicationes*<sup>95</sup> [Various Explanations of Old Roman Coins]. Although no woodcut illustrations were used in the work, the author's comprehensive comments sought to elucidate selected visual themes. In terms of structure, the work was divided into parts dedicated to artefacts portraying a particular personification (e.g. the coin of Gordian explained in the chapter *Gordiani Securitas*), or a concept (the embodiment of Nature elaborated in the chapter *Naturae imago*). The subject of Landi's considerations are various images embedded in a rich cultural background. The Italian scholar ventures to discuss ancient customs, quotes both classical

91 *Epitome gestorum LVIII. regum Franciae, a Pharamondo ad hunc usque christianissimum Franciscum Valesium [...]*, a Lyon: par Balthazar Arnoullet, 1546. French version: *Epitomes des roys de France en Latin et Francoys avec leur vrayes figures*, Lugduni: Balthazar Arnoullet, 1546.

92 See: P. Jaworski, "Ikongrafia antykizujących wizerunków władców w pierwszym wydaniu 'Kroniki wszytkiego świata' Marcina Bielskiego (1551)" [The Iconography of Antique-Like Images of Rulers in the First Edition of Marcin Bielski's "Kronika wszytkiego świata" (1551)], *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*, 42, 2009 (i.e. 2011), pp. 224–227; idem, "Figurae absurdae et inelegantes? Ikongrafia medalionów all'antica w drugim wydaniu 'Kroniki wszytkiego świata' Marcina Bielskiego (1554)" [Figurae absurdae et inelegantes? The Iconography of all'antica Medallions in the Second Edition of Marcin Bielski's "Kronika wszytkiego świata" (1554)], *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*, 43, 2010 (i.e. 2012), pp. 87–111.

93 E. Vico, *Le Imagini con tutti i riversi trovati et le vite degli imperatori tratte dalle medaglie et dalle historie degli antichi [...]*, [Venice], 1548.

94 S. Benedetti, Landi, Constanzo, [in:] *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 63, 2004, electronic resources: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/costanzo-landi\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/costanzo-landi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/) [accessed: 2017-04-03].

95 C. Landi, *In veterum numismatum romanorum miscellanea explicationes [...]*, Lugduni: apud Sebastianum de Honoratis, 1560.

and modern authors, refers to the opinions of other renowned scholars. The most intriguing parts of his research work are those inspired by Alciato. Landi often quotes directly from Alciato's emblems illustrating selected artefacts under consideration. Such scholarly practices attest to the massive influence of emblems and numismatic allegories in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Of particular interest here are two closing epigrams composed by Landi focusing on the symbolism of coins. Although unillustrated, the poems clearly convey familiar images that the readers of the numismatic work could possibly have seen elsewhere. The character of these epigrams leads one to suppose that both of these texts can be classified as peculiar instances of ekphrasis or *emblemata nuda*. It may be worth considering one of these epigrams alluding to the coin of Trajan, which, as the title implies, is to exemplify bravery (*numisma, quo fortitudo figuratur*):

Insidet capiti generosi clava leonis,  
Traiani, ut referunt, esse numisma boni.  
Clavae signa monent vires has corporis esse  
Atque animo intrepidus indicat esse leo.  
Sic opus est praestare animo sic corpore et illum,  
Qui ducis invicti nomen habere velit.<sup>96</sup>

[The head of the noble lion ought to be accompanied by a mace; such an image is shown on the coin of the honourable Trajan. The mace denotes a strong body, the lion symbolises a fearless mind. Whoever aspires to win the glory of an invincible leader ought to excel in the attributes of the body and mind alike.]

Landi fails to mention whether the coin that inspired him to compose the poem contains any inscription. Therefore, the imputed symbolism of these items might have been the author's own invention. A definite answer as to which coin in particular is at issue here is not to be found in the main part of the study either, nor in any other chapter for that matter. Either way, the coin in question should contain two distinctive pictorial elements: a mace and lion, both of which can be associated with Hercules. With this in mind, the most likely reference to the quoted epigram is the denarius<sup>97</sup> and aureus<sup>98</sup> coined by Trajan between 101–102 AD (fig. 12). The reverse of these coins shows the lion-skin clad Hercules with a club

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96 Ibidem, p. 139.

97 RIC II 49.

98 RIC II 50.



FIG. 12a–b. Denarius and aureus with the lion-skin clad Hercules with a club in his hand. RIC II 49–50.

in his hand and the lion's muzzle resting on the hero's head. Needless to say, these elements match the description in the poem: suffice it to mention the image of the lion skin on Hercules's head that comes dangerously close to the passage: "the head of the noble lion" (*caput generosi leonis*). Nevertheless, other coins issued during Trajan's rule should also be considered. For instance, the bronze of Trajan shows a mace placed vertically on the lion's skin,<sup>99</sup> which also may allude to Landi's epigram. Another variety, with lion skin and a bareheaded Hercules clutching a mace, is embossed on the aureus issued most probably between 107–108.<sup>100</sup> There are a number of other coins that could potentially be taken to symbolise courage. The most fit for purpose is the aureus and denarius with lion-skin clad Hercules holding a mace.

Another epigram authored by Landi could also be considered as an emblem on the virtue of bravery (*Numisma [...] in quo est expressum fortitudinis sigillum*).<sup>101</sup> The Italian scholar refers to the denarius minted by Caius Publicius, son of Quintus (*Quinti filius*). The poem tells of Hercules wrestling with the Nemean lion barehanded accompanied by an arrow and mace sitting on the ground. This description is close to the denarius

<sup>99</sup> RIC II 581.

<sup>100</sup> RIC II 112.

<sup>101</sup> C. Landi, op. cit., p. 140.

issued in 80 BC by the aforementioned minter.<sup>102</sup> Landi explains in his epigram that the scene stands for courage, given that the hero chose not to use weapons in his fight against the deadly beast. Consequently, the Italian scholar of numismatics suggested two emblems on the virtue of *fortitude*. In both cases, the numismatic image of Hercules was used: one, fighting the Nemean lion barehanded; the other, covered with the beast's skin and holding a mace.

The other pupil of Alciato that showed a keen interest in ancient coins was the bishop of Tarragona, Antonio Agustín. Although his works are unaccompanied by any para-emblematic poems modelled on the compositions adopted from the Italian jurist's renowned book of emblems, the author goes to great lengths to provide an impressive collection of woodcut illustrations. Agustín provided a detailed description of the coins he owned in the vastly popular treatise comprising eleven dialogues, first published in Spanish under the title *Diálogos de medallas, inscripciones y otras antigüedades*<sup>103</sup> [Dialogues on Medals, Inscriptions, and other Antiquities]. Soon translated into Italian, the work became widely available. Interestingly, the new rendition was issued by two different printing houses in the same year. The first printing house that offered to its readers a deluxe edition of the numismatic work was owned by Guglielmo Faciotto,<sup>104</sup> the second by the Donangeli brothers.<sup>105</sup> *Diálogos de medallas* was further rendered into Latin, but it was the Italian version that secured its wide acclaim. First published in 1617 in Antwerp, the Latin version was drawn up by Andreas Schoot. Its original version was extended by a twelfth dialogue on Greek and Roman deities. Agustín's work was also cited by Lorenzo Pignoria in his analysis of the shape of plates in his edition of *Emblematum liber*, as looked at in the analytical part of this study.

Apart from Alciato's disciples, numismatics was also pursued by a number of Renaissance intellectuals. Without delving into too many sources, it may be of help to point to some interesting publications informing this study. Some of these works are in many ways connected to Alciato,

102 Crawford 380/1.

103 A. Agustín, *Diálogos de medallas, inscripciones y otras antigüedades ex bibliotheca Antonii Augustini archiepiscopi Tarraconensis [...]*, en Tarragona: por Felipe Mey, 1587. In the 16th century, authors often used the terms "coin" and "medal" interchangeably, more often even using the term "medaglio" or "medalla" for objects that are uniquely identified today as coins.

104 A. Agustín, *Dialoghi [...] intorno alle medaglie, inscrittioni et altre antichità [...]*, in Roma: appresso Guglielmo Faciotto, 1592.

105 A. Agustín, *Discorsi [...] sopra le medaglie et altre anticaglie, divisi in XI dialoghi. tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nell' Italiana, con l'aggiunta di molti ritratti di belle, e rare medaglie [...]*, in Roma: presso Ascanio et Girolamo Donangelli, 1592.

his publishers and commentators. The Lyon-based bookseller Guillaume Rouillé, who was absorbed by ancient coinage, oversaw many editions of *Emblematum liber*.<sup>106</sup> The French typographer revealed his keen interest in numismatics in *Promptuarium iconum insigniorum a seculo hominum*<sup>107</sup> [Collections of Images of Famous People], which contained numerous portraits of figures, both historical and legendary, modelled on numismatic images. Although a good part of these illustrations were counterfeit, they adhered to the aesthetic tenets of numismatic tradition (e.g. rim legends). Rouillé's initial editions counted 828 illustrations. In further editions they increased by about 100,<sup>108</sup> Some illustrations adopted from *Promptuarium* closely resemble some of Alciato's emblems. The chapter of this study entitled "A mysterious metamorphosis of the river god" provides an example of such a relationship.

Not only did Rouillé take a profound interest in ancient numismatics, but he also published works by other collectors and scholars. Among those, Guillaume du Choul, a Lyon nobleman who had strong ties with the royal court, comes to the fore. His best known work was *Discours de la religion des ancêtres Romains*<sup>109</sup> [Discourse on the Religion of the Ancient Romans], an extraordinary treatise on the beliefs of the ancient Romans, which the author illustrates on the basis of classical coins.<sup>110</sup> Most of the examples described in du Choul's books are derived from his private collection of coins. The fact that a single book on ancient beliefs counts around 550 reprints of coins, testifies to the massive size of the collection.<sup>111</sup> It is worth noting that some of the illustrations of woodcut engravings bring to mind some of Alciato's emblems, such as the illustrations of Janus, Pudicitia, or Aeneas rescuing his father Anchises from the burning Troy. This work by the French aristocrat achieved huge popularity, many times reprinted in the French original and translations into other modern languages, such as

106 On Rouillé's scholarly and publishing interests, see: N.Z. Davis, "Publisher Guillaume Rouillé: Businessman and Humanist", in: *Editing sixteenth-century texts: Papers Given at the Editorial Conference University of Toronto October, 1965*, ed. R.J. Schoeck, Toronto 1966, pp. 72–112.

107 G. Rouillé, *Prima pars Promptuarii iconum insigniorum a seculo hominum, subjectis eorum vitis, per compendium ex probatissimis autoribus desumptis [...]*, Lugduni: apud Gulielmum Rovillium, 1553.

108 J. Cunnally, op. cit., p. 206.

109 G. du Choul, *Discours de la religion des ancêtres Romains [...]*, a Lyon: de l'imprimerie de Guillaume Rouille, 1556.

110 For further reference on du Choul's collections and works, see J. Guillemain, "L'exposition chez Guillaume du Choul", in: *Le théâtre de la curiosité*, ed. F. Lestringant, Paris 2008, pp. 167–182.

111 J. Cunnally, op. cit., p. 188.



Italian and Spanish. Rouillé on his part published this treatise nine times altogether, with subsequent French editions being reprinted in 1567, 1580 and 1581. The Italian translation was first published in 1559, only to be reedited in 1569 and 1571. The Spanish edition was published in Lyon in 1579. The above data testifies to the wide readability of du Choul's study, which coincided with the growing interest in the ancient numismatics in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Sebastiano Erizzo was also often cited by the commentators of Alciato.<sup>112</sup> Born in Venice, he completed his two-volume study on numismatics *Discorso sopra le medaglie antiche*<sup>113</sup> [Discourse on the Ancient Coins]. In the first, unillustrated part of the treatise he posited that the Roman coins were not used for payment, but rather for commemorative purposes, much like medals.<sup>114</sup> In so doing, he accepted the symbolic resonance of the Roman numismatic artefacts. In the second volume of his study, entitled *Dichiaratione di molte medaglie* [Notes on Many Ancient Coins], the author unpacked the meaning of 247 artefacts from the period of the empire. All of them were supplemented with illustrations of the reverse, and on rare occasions, the obverse. The oldest cases date back to the times of Augustus, and the latest to Constans. The number of artefacts in the study increased considerably by 200 in the 1568 edition,<sup>115</sup> The 1571 edition included a third volume dedicated to republican coins, as implied by the title *Dichiaratione delle antiche monete consulari* [Notes on the Ancient Consular Coins]. As a result, the reader was treated to a massive collection of illustrations of Roman coins, chiefly reverses, along with explanatory notes. This work no doubt shaped the reader's mindset about the ancient coinage. Since the traces of Erizzo's insight can also be identified in the explanatory comments to Alciato's book of emblems, *Discorso* will be repeatedly referred to in further chapters. In fact, multiple motifs are common to both emblem studies and numismatics.

The ancient numismatic imagery was also popularised by other works, such as a historical treatise of Hubert Goltz, a Flemish historian, who based his historical research on numismatic iconography.<sup>116</sup> Lavishly

112 On life and works of Erizzo, as well as his interest in numismatics, see: G. Benzoni, *Erizzo, Sebastiano*, [in:] *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 43 (1993), online resources: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sebastiano-erizzo\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sebastiano-erizzo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) [accessed: 2017-04-03].

113 S. Erizzo, *Discorso [...] sopra le medaglie antiche, con la particolar dichiarazione di molti reverso [...]*, in Venetia: nella bottega Valgrisiana, 1559.

114 J. Cunnally, op. cit., p. 189.

115 Ibidem.

116 See: Ibidem, pp. 190–195.

illustrated, these works helped popularise the images adopted from voluminous numismatic artefacts, Greek and Latin, alike. However, the author of this paper does not draw up a bibliography of numismatic treatises, or studies that listed the symbols of ancient coins, and this study will rather venture to test the extent to which the popularity of books of emblems might have encouraged the Renaissance scholars to consider allegorical representations adopted from the reverses. Consequently, numismatic compendia may in many ways be confused with studies on hieroglyphs, although they are limited to the motifs adopted from ancient coins. It needs to be stressed that a plethora of such motifs can be traced on architectural ornaments, in vase art and gems, not to mention literary sources. As a result, coins are often discussed in the context of other artefacts or artworks, as in Landi's *Veterum numismatum Romanorum miscellanea explicationes* [Various Explanations of Old Roman Coins].

Speaking of the relationship between emblems and compendia on numismatics, a final aspect calls for attention. John Cunalli posits that, just as studies in numismatics were in many respects informed by the emblem book, the latter might as well have been modelled on earlier studies on ancient coins in turn.<sup>117</sup> What the scholar has in mind is the recurrent pattern that assumes that the illustration be inextricably accompanied by its related text. As an example, he puts forward *Illustrium imagines* by Andrea Fulvio, where the picture along with its legend is placed in the upper part, and a short description of the portrayed figure below. Appealing as it may seem, this idea may not hold. Certain compositions that meet the criteria of the emblem predated not only the first edition of *Emblematum liber* (1531), but also *Illustrium imagines* (1517). Accordingly, one should not exaggerate the extent to which the calculated correspondence between woodcuts and the textual part as applied in Fulvio's work should inspire Alciato to compose his emblems. What could, however, have influenced the Italian jurist was the content of this numismatic study. To back up this claim, one should examine the emblem *Prudentes*, analysed in depth further in this study. Other numismatic compendia certainly affected the understanding of emblems. The interpretations of symbols that such studies offered were often referred to by the commentators of *Emblematum liber*. Additionally, numismatic compendia provide the historical context from which to analyse the intricate relation between emblems and ancient numismatic iconography.

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117 Ibidem, pp. 115–120.

#### I.4. ALCIATO AND COINS

As regards the relationship between numismatic and emblem studies, one should not overlook the fact that Alciato himself was preoccupied with ancient coins. What is more, this interest gave rise to two scholarly studies, one of which was published in the author's lifetime, namely *Libellus de ponderibus et mensuris*<sup>118</sup> [The Book on Weights and Measures]. Intriguingly, the first publication of this study in 1532 nearly coincided with the first edition of his book of emblems. Rather than considering the meanings of symbols in this work, Alciato applied himself to the contested issue of the significance and value of ancient coins. The other publication in question, dedicated to numismatic themes, is *De re nummaria* [On Numismatics] only published in print in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This text had long circulated as a manuscript, until it was finally published as a chapter in a collection of dissertations devoted to Italic numismatics.<sup>119</sup> In this study, Alciato was committed to analysing the relation between the value of ancient coins and those contemporaneous with his own time. Both of these works confirm his familiarity with ancient artefacts.

Although the aforementioned studies do not examine the symbols promulgated by the ancient coinage, or their use in the Renaissance, the allegorical representations from the reverses most likely did not escape Alciato's attention. That the traces of ancient coins are to be found in *Emblematum liber* may be attested by the poetic dedication addressed to Conrad Peutinger, which Alciato placed on the opening pages of his book:

Dum pueros iuglans, iuvenes dum tessera fallit:  
 Detinet, et segnes chartula picta viros.  
 Haec nos festivis Emblemata cudimus horis  
 Artificum illustri signaque facta manu:  
 Vestibus ut torulos, petasis ut figere parmas,  
 Et valeat tacitis scribere quisque notis.  
 At tibi supremus pretiosa nomismata Caesar,  
 Et veterum eximias donet habere manus,  
 Ipse dabo vati chartacea munera vates,  
 Quae, Chonrade, mei pignus amoris habe.

118 A. Alciato, *Libellus de ponderibus et mensuris* [...], Venetiis: per Melchiorem Sessam, 1532.

119 A. Alciato, *De re nummaria antiquorum ad recentiora tempora redacta compendiosa ratiocinatio* [...], [in:] *De monetis Italiae* [...] dissertationes, in lucem prodit Philippus Argelatus [...], Mediolani: in regia curia in aedibus palatinis, 1750.

[While boys are entertained by nuts, and youths by dice, so playing-cards fill up the time of lazy men. In the festive season we hammer out these emblems, made by the distinguished hand of craftsmen. Just as one affixes trimmings to clothes and badges to hats, so it behooves every one of us to write in silent marks. Though the supreme emperor may give to you, for you to own, precious coins and finest objects of the ancients, I myself shall give, one poet to another, paper gifts: take these, Konrad, the token of my love.]<sup>120</sup>

For the purposes of this study, of critical importance is the closing quatrain of the poem that explains the nature of the book and its origin. Alciato mentions that, as a person who was dear to the emperor, Peutinger tended to receive lavish gifts from the ruler, including coins. Although the author of this dedication could not afford such extravagant gifts on a par with the almighty emperor, he humbly offered his emblems, which stand for the literary counterpart of the material artefacts bestowed upon his dear friend by the emperor. Seen as such, Alciato endows his emblems with a new meaning: they are a substitute for ancient items, passionately collected by Peutinger.<sup>121</sup> Should one accept this angle, *Emblematum liber* would be a virtual collection of ancient artefacts,<sup>122</sup> with each emblem standing for a certain item, which could potentially match authentic artefacts. To accept this perspective is to presume that some emblems might actually match their authentic ancient artefacts. Naturally, this necessitates a more pressing question: which emblems should one consider, and, by extension, which coins do they refer to? Reading along the lines of the quoted verses, one can conclude that the actual similarity with ancient Greek or Roman coins was intended.

Another issue that begs explanation is whether the poem actually refers to ancient coins in the first place. To answer the question, one needs to unpack the phrase *pretiosa numismata*. This point has already been considered by early commentators of Alciato. Those who were most committed to unravelling this conundrum were Claude Mignault and Lorenzo Pignoria, who took opposite stances on that matter. Their remarks were compared in the Padua edition of the book of emblems in 1618. These

120 Translation adopted from: *Alciato's Book of Emblems. The Memorial Web Edition in Latin and English*, electronic resources: <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/test1.html> [Accessed: 2017-04-03].

121 H.-J. Künast, J.-D. Müller, "Peutinger, Conrad", in: *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 20, Berlin 2001, pp. 282–284.

122 *Emblematum liber* was analysed from this angle by Robert Cummings: "Alciato's 'Emblemata' as an Imaginary Museum", *Emblematica*, vol. 10 nr 2, Winter 1996, pp. 245–281.

observations were edited by Pignoria himself, though his comments can be considered secondary to the earlier explanatory notes prepared by the French lawyer. The fragment under consideration was interpreted by Mignault as follows:

*pretiosa numismata*: donaria, qualia boni principes conferre solent optimis et fidissimis consiliariis.<sup>123</sup>

[*Pretiosa numismata*: gifts customarily bestowed by generous rulers upon their best and most trusted advisers.]

This explanation implies that the French scholar takes *numismata* to mean commemorative medals or occasional badges conferred to the dedicated officials, as opposed to ancient coins. This interpretation may come as a surprise, because the reference to *numismata* appears alongside other ancient artworks. This might have spurred Pignoria to counter this argument:

*pretiosa numismata*: haec ego vetera numismata interpretor, non donaria: caesares, ut ait Trebazio, signatos aere, argento, solido auro.<sup>124</sup>

[*Pretiosa numismata*: I think that they refer to ancient coins rather than commemorative medals, namely, imperial coins made of bronze, silver and sterling gold, as put by Trebazio].

The Italian commentator linked these two fragments about the coins and medals, and came to the conclusion that both refer to the same thing: ancient artefacts, which the 16<sup>th</sup> century scholars collected avidly. Coins were but one of many collectibles. To argue the point, he deferred to Bernardino Trebazio, the Italian scholar, who had translated into Latin *Hieroglyphica* by Horapollo. The specific point in Trebazio's text that Pignoria has in mind is the translator's preface dedicated to Konrad Peutinger. Intriguingly, the translator's dedicatee was none other than Alciato's patron. In his dedicatory note Trebazio mentions the ancient numismatic illustrations, which the Augsburg official owned in his private collection and was happy to show to others on many occasions. For this purpose, he uses Trebazio's phrase (*Caesares [...] aere, argento solido auro*

123 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, p. 2.

124 Ibidem, fol. b6r.

*demonstras*).<sup>125</sup> This choice is to prove the point of how strongly emblems and hieroglyphs were associated with each other. The excuse for the comparison of Alciato's and Horapollo's prefaces was not only the mutual patron, but also numerous structural similarities between the works dedicated to Peutingger.

Considering the above, Pignoria's argument seems more credible, both in terms of the context in which the word *numismata* was used and Peutingger's penchant for collectibles, which included Greek and Roman coins. Let us now return to the question of which emblems in *Emblematum liber* were meant to replace ancient coins. A useful link is Mino Gabriele's note to his own edition of the book based on the editions of Steyner and Wechel. From 113 emblems in total, the Italian scholar selected 12 compositions that were associated with famous numismatic themes. The following is the very list of emblems based on the 1534 Paris edition: V (*Gratiam referendam*), VI (*Concordia*), XI (*In avaros vel quibus melior conditio ab extraneis offertur*), XVIII (*Virtuti fortuna comes*), XXI (*Princeps subditorum incolumitatem procurans*), XXV (*Tumulus meretricis*), XXVII (*Concordia*), XXXIV (*Spes proxima*), XLVI (*Submovendam ignorantiam*), LXIX (*Pietas filiorum in parentes*), LXXVIII (*In simulacrum spei*), CII (*Consilio et virtuti chimeram superari, id est fortiores et deceptores*). It must be mentioned that Gabriele did not exhaust all the possibilities. Reconsidering the emblems and analysing the early scholarly comments, this list can be extended. From the first book of emblems edited by the scholar, one could add *Ad illustrem Maximilianum ducem Mediolanensem* and *Non vulganda consilia*. The former makes mention of a coin in the epigram; the latter was associated with numismatic iconography by Lorenzo Pignoria. Both cases will be explored further in the analytical part of this study in two separate chapters.

Leaving aside the questionable reliability of Gabriele's remarks on the imputed links between the first book of emblems and ancient coinage, the second book of emblems still awaits such an analysis. Based on the explanatory notes included in the early editions, out of 86 compositions first published in 1546 in Venice, eight emblems relate to numismatic iconography.<sup>126</sup> The emblems follow the order accepted in the edition: *In pudoris*

125 *Editio princeps* was published in 1515, the present author used the following edition: Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica Bernardino Trebatio interprete*, Basileae: apud Ioannem Frobenium, 1518, p. 3.

126 See also B. Czarski, "Concerning Ancient Coins and Emblems: Some Notes on the Second Book of Alciato", in: *Emblems and Impact*, vol. 1, ed. I. Hoepel, S. McKeown, Cambridge 2017, pp. 393–418.

*statuam, Prudentes, Quercus, Salus publica, Respublica liberata, Terminus, Principis clementia* (titled *Contra* and unillustrated in the Venice edition, added as a supplement to the emblem *Maledicentia*) as well as *Prudens sed infacundus* (later titled *Prudens magis quam loquax*). Around ten per cent of all emblems from *Emblematum liber* can be said to be related to ancient coinage on the basis of the similarity of visual themes, similarities between the lemma and numismatic legend, or else the emblem refers directly to a coin that can be easily identified (like *Respublica liberta*) or less so (*Ad illustrem Maximilianum ducem Mediolanensem*).

Several compositions in *Emblematum liber* make a direct reference to an ancient numismatic theme. Initially this aspect attracted little attention from scholars. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the later versions of explanatory notes contain more references, hinting at the relationship between the specific emblems and ancient coins. Nowhere is that more obvious than in Claude Mignault's comments, which were gradually extended until they assumed their final shape in the 1589 Paris edition of Alciato's book of emblems annotated with *Notae posteriores*.<sup>127</sup> However, the notes would not always be published in their complete version following this date of publication. In the 1618 version, edited by Pignoria, Mignault's notes returned to their basic form. Some references to ancient coins are also spotted by the Spanish humanist scholar and professor in Salamanca, Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas. In his annotated edition of the book of emblems, published in Lyon in 1573, the scholar compares some illustrations with his privately owned artefacts, as in his analysis of *Respublica liberata*.<sup>128</sup> The author argues that the plates attached to the emblem hardly resemble the illustration found on the coin issued by Brutus to commemorate the Ides of March. This said, he suggests aligning the illustration with its numismatic prototype. Furthermore, he provides a complete description of the reverse illustration, and claims to own this artefact in his private collection. This is presumably to add reliability to his remark. Elsewhere, when he discusses the emblem *Princeps subditorum incolumitatem procurans*, related to the famous coin of Vespasian depicting an anchor and a dolphin, he maintains that he knows about the coin from Erasmus's *Adagia*, rather than from first-hand experience.<sup>129</sup>

127 D.S. Russel, "Claude Mignault, Erasmus and Simon Bouquet: The Function of the Commentaries on Alciato's Emblems", in: *Mundus Emblematicus. Studies in Neo-Latin Emblem Books*, ed. Karl. A.E. Enenkel, A.Q. Visser, Turnhout 2003, pp. 17–32.

128 F. Sánchez de las Brozas, *Commentationes in Andreae Alciati Emblemata [...]*, Lugduni: apud Gulielmum Rovillium, 1573, p. 432.

129 Ibidem, p. 416.



Such autobiographical references render his account more consistent. Illustrations resonating with the ancient numismatic tradition occupied a fundamental role in Lorenzo Pignoria's output alike. The scholar modified some illustrations in order to bring them closer to their numismatic models. Most of his inspirations were discussed in the author's preface. This is, however, not to imply that the numismatic themes are left unexplained in the explanatory notes. Many coins are also mentioned in Johann Thulius's notes, as a combination of earlier comments completed with references to other texts, e.g. *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano.

That Alciato's emblems were, at least partially, inspired by ancient coins, was indicated not only by the commentators and publishers of the jurist of Milan. Such references were also to be accessed in numismatic treatises, such as *In veterum numismatum Romanorum miscellanea explicationes* by Constanzo Landi. Since various scholars linked Alciato's emblems to ancient coins for a variety of reasons, it is worth pointing to some examples with an eye to distinguishing the contexts in which emblems can be juxtaposed with numismatic iconography. This should also help chart the changing interpretations of *Emblematum liber*, the readers' expectations, and crucially the reception of ancient themes at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is assumed that a detailed analysis of all works related to numismatic iconography will not be necessary for the purposes of this study. Indeed, in order to probe the complex relationship between Alciato's emblems and ancient tradition, a thorough scrutiny of selected cases in point will suffice, provided that the analytical material is carefully chosen to assure the diversity of forms and relationships mentioned above. To do justice to this organising principle, this study comprises a collection of ten chapters involving analyses of selected compositions. The only exception applies to the notion of *Concordia*, referring to two emblems, analysed in a single chapter in this study. The emblems selected for close-reading were the following, arranged according to the established order of chapters: *In Pudoris statuam*, *Consilio et virtute Chimeram superari, id est fortiores et deceptores*, *Ad illustrem Maximilianum ducem Mediolanensem (Insignia Ducatus Mediolanensis)*, *Salus publica*, *Prudentes*, *Pietas filiorum in parentes*, *Concordiae symbolum*, *Concordia*, *Quercus* and *Non vulganda consilia*. It is hoped that a careful scrutiny of these emblems will illuminate some pressing issues concerning the complicated relationship between *Emblematum liber* by Andrea Alciato and numismatic artefacts, but also between the ancient coinage and numismatics broadly.

## II.1. PENELOPE AND THE ROMAN PERSONIFICATIONS OF MODESTY

Paradoxically, the work that will serve as a starting point for the comparative study of emblematic and numismatic iconography may not be immediately associated with either of these categories. The work in question is the emblem *In Pudoris statuam* [On a statue of modesty]. First issued by the publishing house owned by the beneficiaries of Aldus Manutius in 1546 in Venice, this composition comprises the second group of emblems by Andrea Alciato (fig. 13). In terms of its position within the book, it is one of the opening emblems: it comes third, preceded by a work that was associated with an ancient sculpture (*In iuventam* [On youth]).<sup>130</sup> The Venetian edition included a woman sitting blindfolded, the figure of Modesty (Gr. Αἰδώς; also variously translated as shame, humility).<sup>131</sup> The blindfold most probably stems from the common belief that the sense of

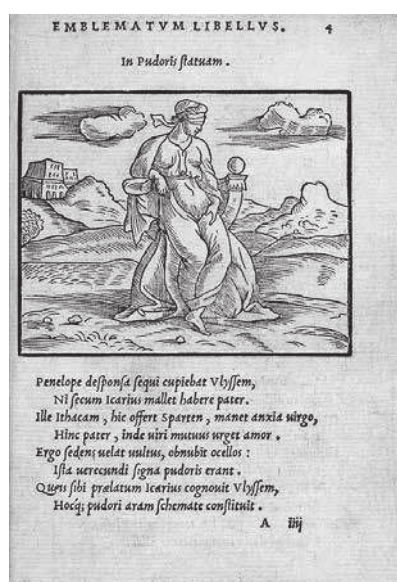


FIG. 13. Emblem *In Pudoris statuam* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1546, fol. 4r). Source: Alciato at Glasgow (<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/>).

130 The illustration attached to the emblem of the Venetian edition of 1546 showed the monuments of Bacchus and Apollo perched on a single pedestal. This illustration would continue to be reprinted in further editions in a slightly modified form: the emblems would no longer appear side by side in the book. *In pudoris statuam* was moved to the part on maternity (*matrimonium*); *In iuventam* to one on nature (*natura*).

131 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1546, fol. 4r.

sight is bound up with shame, modesty and humility, which was referred to in the adage *Pudor in oculis* (Gr. Ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡ αἰδώς) by Erasmus.<sup>132</sup> To exemplify this saying, Erasmus quoted from such Greek prose writers and poets as Aristotle,<sup>133</sup> Euripides<sup>134</sup> and Aristophanes.<sup>135</sup> The Dutch scholar noted that since shame manifested itself in the eyes, Amor – often associated with shame – was habitually represented as blind (*caecus Amor*).<sup>136</sup> The reason may be that Alciato and his publishers were familiar with the adage and the quoted fragments.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, it is conceivable that they influenced the representation of the blindfolded woman as shown on the woodcut. Nevertheless, since the wood engraving is only loosely related to the content of the epigram, it hardly offers an accurate depiction of the events described in the latter:

Penelope desponsa sequi cupiebat Ulyssem,  
 Ni secum Icarius mallet habere pater.  
 Ille Ithacam, hic offert Sparten, manet anxia virgo,  
 Hinc pater, inde viri mutuus urget amor.  
 Ergo sedens velat vultus, obnubit ocellos:  
 Ista verecundi signa pudoris erant.  
 Queis sibi praelatum Icarius cognovit Ulyssem  
 Hocque pudori aram schemate constituit.<sup>138</sup>

[When betrothed to Ulysses, Penelope wanted to follow him, but her father Icarius wished to have it otherwise. The former offers her Ithaca, the latter Sparta. The virgin remains anxious. Her father urges one course, the love of man and woman urges another. Therefore she sits, veiling her face, and covering her eyes – they were the signs of virginal modesty. In them Icarius saw that Ulysses was preferred to him, and built an altar to modesty in the form you see.]<sup>139</sup>

132 ERASMUS, *Adagia* 1070.

133 ARISTOT. *Rhet.* II, 1384a 33–34: Καὶ τὰ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς, καὶ τὰ ἐν φανεροῖς. Ὅθεν καὶ ἡ παροιμία, τὸ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶναι αἰδῶ.

134 EUR. fr. 457 N. (after: STOB. III, 31, 15): Αἰδῶς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι γίνεται, τέκνον.

135 Aristoph. *Vesp.* 446–447: Ἀλλὰ τοῦτοις γε οὐκ ἐνὶ Οὐδ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν αἰδῶς τῶν παλαιῶν ἐμβάδων.

136 See: E. Panofsky, *Blind Cupid*, [in:] *Studies in Iconology*, New York 1962, pp. 95–128. The blindfolded Amor can be also found on Alciato's emblems. See: *In statuam Amoris, Vis amoris, Dulcia quandoque amara fieri, De morte et amore, Potentia amoris, Potentissimus affectus amor*.

137 Notably, the original edition of *Adagia* by Erasmus and the collection of works featuring the work *In pudoris statuam* were first published in Aldo Manutius's publishing house.

138 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1546, fol. 4r.

139 Translation adopted from: <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/test1.html> [online source, accessed: 2017-04-03].

The epigram included the mythical origin story of the legendary monument of modesty that was to be erected near Sparta. The origin of the gesture of covering the face was also provided: it was attributed to shame and modesty characteristic of femininity. However, the image of goddess of Modesty was not an accurate copy of Penelope's pose. With this in mind, in subsequent editions, the image was further modified, as clarified below.

*Description of Greece (Hellados Periegesis)* by Pausanias is accepted as the authoritative source that records this composition. Pausanias, in the part dedicated to Laconia,<sup>140</sup> provided a comprehensive historical background and reasons for the erection of the monument by Icarius. The 2<sup>nd</sup> century traveller and diarist claims that Penelope put on a veil to communicate her decision to the competing men. However, in Pausanias's account the description of the monument is missing; nor is the gesture of covering her face and eyes mentioned by Alciato. As no other records of the monument are available, its precise shape may be impossible to determine. However, many a Greek poet and prose writer alluded to the mythical personification of modesty.<sup>141</sup> In most accounts, however, the figure is only mentioned in passing, and the scarcity of distinctive features renders her hardly distinguishable from other divinities. Aidos is often associated with Nemesis: and both personifications are put together in Hesiod's works.<sup>142</sup> These depictions, however, bear no resemblance to the goddess in question. Some Greek sources include another deity that is thought to personify shame, namely Aeschyne (gr. Αἰσχύνη), as depicted by Aesop<sup>143</sup> and Aeschylus.<sup>144</sup> This character, however, most probably embodies Aidos. For his part, Pausanias points to another monument of modesty that was apparently located in Athens.<sup>145</sup> This source, however, offers no description of the deity whatsoever. Because of this omission, the figure was often depicted with her face veiled, like Penelope, as registered in some artefacts.<sup>146</sup>

140 PAUSANIAS, *Periegesis*, 3.20.10–11.

141 See: PINDAR, *Olymp.* 7, 44–45; *Nem.* 9, 32–34; ANACREONTEA 17.

142 HESIODUS, *Opera et dies* 170–174.

143 AESOPUS, *Fabulae* 528.

144 AESCHYLUS, *Septem contra Thebas* 409–410.

145 PAUSANIAS, *Periegesis* 1.17.1.

146 See: B. Lichocka, "Pudicitia sur les monnaies romaines", *Etudes et travaux* 9 (1976), pp. 159–168; F. Eckstein, "Aidos", in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. I, Zurich–München: Artemis, 1981, p. 35; T. Mikocki, *Zgodna, pobożna, płodna, skromna, piękna...*, pp. 225–259.

The first one to have pointed to the relationship between the emblem and the Greek traveller's account was the Italian scholar and poet Giglio Gregorio Giraldi. In the comprehensive historical compendium *Historia de diis gentium* (editio princeps: Basileae 1548) [The History of the Gods], he touched upon Alciato's emblem, which was used as an illustration of the deity consistently referred to in Latin as Pudor.<sup>147</sup> Faced with the scarcity of the target ancient sources, which might have helped give a clearer picture of the goddess, Giraldi resorted to modernised writings. Interestingly enough, the Italian mythographer posits that Modesty is represented as a woman either as a result of the myth of Penelope, or the grammatical gender of the word Αἰδώς, coded as feminine. This remark was in itself evidence of how little was actually known about the mythical goddess. Giraldi notes that a young boy would pass for a more accurate representation of the deity.<sup>148</sup> Again, the grammatical gender tipped the balance in favour of the Latin equivalent (*pudor*), which Giraldi seems to have preferred to the Greek one. In so doing, the mythographer appears to have thought of the deity merely as an embodiment of an abstract concept and equated it with other notions, such as Occassio (feminine in Latin, masculine in Greek – Καῖρός – which inspired numerous interpretations resulting from the multiple possibilities in which to present this figure<sup>149</sup>). An Alciato reader must have had the same conception of the deity. Notably, the fact that Giraldi made references to the emblem testifies to the immediate reception of Alciato's book, as it appeared in a key study on mythology no later than two years following its first publication. In fact, it was probably Giraldi who inspired some 16<sup>th</sup> century commentators of *Emblematum liber* to link the composition *In Pudoris statuam* with Pausanias's version. Such was the way in which this work was explained by Claude Mignault<sup>150</sup> and Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas.<sup>151</sup> By linking the deity's gender to the myth of Penelope, Giraldi might have contributed to the fact that the gesture described by Pausanias was included in subsequent editions of *Emblematum liber*. Penelope, for her part, turned into the embodiment of modesty. In Macé Bonhomme's and Guillaume Rouille's editions published between 1548–1566 in Lyon, the emblem featured an

147 I used the edition: L.G. Giraldi, *De deis gentium libri siue syntagmata XVII* [...], Lugduni, apud haeredes Iacobi Iunctae, 1565, p. 40.

148 Ibidem, p. 41.

149 Ibidem, p. 37.

150 See: A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1589, pp. 674–675.

151 F. Sánchez de las Brozas, *Comment. in Andreae Alciati Emblemata...*, p. 535.

illustrated woodcut showing the competing Odysseus and Icarius, with Penelope sitting between them, her face buried in her hands<sup>152</sup> (fig. 14). This image comes closer to the scene depicted in the epigram than the 1546 one. Similarly, the face-in-hands image of Penelope can be found in the Parisian edition by Jean Richer.<sup>153</sup> Interestingly, although intended to embody shame and modesty, the woodcut shows Penelope bare-breasted. As the wood engraving garnered immense popularity, it was used in further editions of *Emblemata liber* published by Officina Plantiniana.<sup>154</sup> An illustration that copied this pattern appeared later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century editions, e.g. in a collection published in Najera, Spain.<sup>155</sup>

A key turn in depicting Penelope was registered in the version edited by Lorenzo Pignoria, whose description of the Greek heroine unmistakably resembled the personification of Pudicitia known from Roman coins. Rather than face in hands, this representation shows Odysseus's wife

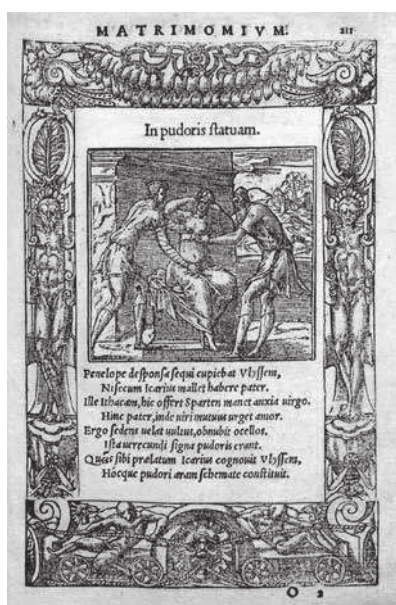


FIG. 14. Emblem *In Pudoris statuam* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1550, p. 211). Silesian Library, shelf mark: 232587

152 See: A. Alciatus, *Emblemata* 1550, p. 211.

153 A. Alciatus, *Emblemata* 1584, fol. 270r.

154 See: A. Alciatus, *Emblemata* 1591, p. 234.

155 A. Alciatus, *Emblemata* 1615, fol. 256r.



with her face concealed under a veil.<sup>156</sup> Notably, the Italian scholar made no reference to this modification in the author's preface, or in the notes that were appended to complement the more comprehensive comments by Claude Mignault. Although he used to make manifest his alterations in his graphic works elsewhere (e.g. *Consilio et virtute Chimaeran superari, id est fortiores et deceptores* and *Non vulganda consilia*), this time he chose not to. It would not have come as a surprise had he included Mignault's complete notes in his edition, together with the notes *Notae posteriores*. In the extra notes, the French scholar pointed to the numerous monetary artefacts depicting the ancient conceptions of female virtue. This observation might have inspired the artists to depart from composing illustrations based on some imprecise interpretations of epigrams in favour of imitating authentic archaeological artefacts. It seems that their Roman, as opposed to Greek, provenance hardly mattered. Mignault, in his reading of the phrase *velat vultus* [to cover face], claimed that Pudicitia was depicted on two coins known to him:

Huc pertinet nummus vetustus in cuius inscriptione legitur SABINA AVGVSTA HADRIANI AVG, cuius in altera parte dea sedet velo faciem operata, indice digito dextrae admoto ad iugulum, cuius inscriptio PVDICITIA. In alio quodam Herenniae sigillum muliebre sedens cum conto in laenam ulnam iacente, dextra velum obducit ante faciem. Huius inscriptio: PVDICITIA AVG.<sup>157</sup>

[It is related to the coin with the inscription SABINA AVGVSTA HADRIANI AVG (*Sabina Augusta Hadriani Augusti*). The other side contains a picture of a seated goddess with her face under a veil and index finger pointing to the neck. It contains the inscription PVDICITIA. There exists another [coin] that shows a sitting woman with a spear leaning against her forearm covered with a coat, and her right hand covering her face under the veil. It is undersigned: PVDICITIA AVG (*Pudicita Augustae*).]

As a result, the Roman monetary iconography attracted considerable attention from the readers of emblems, as the image of the goddess was hitherto unknown in the Greek literary heritage. It is possible that the note by Claude Mignault inspired Pignoria to alter the illustration.

It is worth noting that the references to the Roman personification of modesty and its cult can be found in literary works. Livy mentions two

156 A. Alcianus, *Emblemata* 1618, p. 354.

157 A. Alciano, *Emblemata* 1589, pp. 783–784.

places of worship of the goddess.<sup>158</sup> The first was reputedly located in Forum Boarium at the service of patricians.<sup>159</sup> It was probably an altar situated near to the Temple of Hercules. The other place of worship of Pudicitia was, according to the historian, founded by Verginia, Aulus Verginius's daughter, who married a plebeian consul Lucius Volumnius. In so doing, she was to be excluded from the cult of Pudicitia overseen by patrician matrons. As a response, Verginia dedicated a part of her estate situated in Vicus Longus, where she founded a new altar to the goddess. This one, however, was intended only for plebeian women, to make the point that they were no less virtuous than patrician matrons. Livy's story, however, does not mention whether these altars were inspired by the existing images of the goddess. Therefore, for the 16<sup>th</sup> century scholars, monetary iconography (together with the legend that points to the goddess's name) was used as an authoritative study on the representation of the goddess. These sources served as a template on the basis of which her image could be identified in multiple artefacts, such as sculptures or sarcophagus adornments, with many being extant.<sup>160</sup> Correspondingly, a note included in the extended edition of Alciato's *Emblemata* published in Padua in 1621 testifies to the significance of monetary iconography. Putting together the previously published notes, Johann Thulius extended the catalogue of coins featuring the image of Pudicitia. The scholar adds two more artefacts to Mignault's index:

In eo quoque cuius litterae ab una parte sunt: MARCIA OTACIL SEVERA AVG, ab altera sigillum est, quod velum in faciem praetendit, cum simili inscriptione: PVDICITIA AVG. In altero eiusdem Otacillae cum eadem inscriptione et specie, quae velum eodem modo praetendit, laeva radium tenet, sed nomen ita inscriptum est: MARTIA OTACIL SEVER AVG.<sup>161</sup>

[It is also on the coin that contains the inscription: MARCIA OTACIL SEVERA AVG (*Marcia Otacilla Severa Augusta*). The reverse side shows a figure hiding her face under a veil, signed: PVDICITIA AVG (*Pudicitia*

- 158 LIVIUS, *Ab Urbe condita* 10, 23. See: FESTUS 282; IUVENALIS 6, 308–311; PROPERTIUS II, 6, 25.
- 159 For further reference on the temple of Pudicitia, see: R.E.A. Palmer, "Roman Shrines of Female Chastity from Castle Struggle to the Papacy of Innocent I", *Rivista storica dell' antichità* 4, 1974, pp. 113–159; S.B. Platner, T. Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, London 1929, p. 433.
- 160 See: R. Vollkommer, "Pudicitia", in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. VII, Zürich–München 1994, pp. 589–592; T. Mikocki, op. cit., pp. 197–265.
- 161 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1621, pp. 838–839.

*augustae*). Another coin dedicated to Otacilla with the same inscription and figure, who is hiding her face under a veil in the same way, and is holding a sceptre in her left hand, contains a different signature: MARTIA OTACIL SEVER AVG (*Martia Otacilla Severa Augusta*).]

Not only did Thulius extend the previous numismatic note attached to the emblem, but he also changed its nature. Whereas Mignault placed his comments on the link between Alciato's book and monetary iconography in addition to the main notes, Thulius took them as a starting point for the study of the work. For Thulius, the images of the Greek goddess served as a significant reference point that inspired the illustrations in the emblem book, which were in fact copied from the previous edition by Pignoria in 1618. It could be argued that this tendency confirms the growing interest in numismatics at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with its peak in the first half of 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Curiously, the supplementary note that Thulius added to Mignault's earlier annotation is not entirely of the former's authorship, as he was evidently influenced by the tract *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano (editio princeps: Basileae 1556). The Italian scholar, who specialised in ancient symbols, made multiple references to ancient numismatic iconography in his magnum opus.<sup>162</sup> Hence, the fact that the artefacts featuring the image of Pudicitia did not escape his attention should surprise few. Accordingly, focused on the figurative meaning of garments, Book XL examines the gesture of covering the face under a veil.<sup>163</sup> Alluding to the myth of Penelope, the author defines the gesture as, traditionally, a symbol of modesty. Valeriano hastens to remark that the embodiment of Modesty is engraved on many Roman coins. Hereby the author catalogues the artefacts later listed by Claude Mignault and Johannes Thulius, namely the coins dedicated to Sabina Augusta, Herennia as well as Marcia Otacilla (fig. 15). His work was arguably later used as a source for comparative analysis of the emblem and numismatic iconography.

Although the artefacts mentioned in *Hieroglyphica* are now easily identifiable, the coin of Sabina Augusta may prove more testing. The image of Pudicitia together with the abovementioned inscriptions can be found on

162 S. Rolet, "D'étranges objets hiéroglyphiques. Les monnaies antiques dans les Hieroglyphica de Pierio. Valeriano (1556)", in: *Polyvalenz und Multifunktionalität der Emblematis. Multivalence and Multifunctionality of the Emblem*, edited by Wolfgang Harms and Dietmar Peil, vol. 2, Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 813–844.

163 P. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica, sive, De sacris Aegyptiorvm literis commentari [...]*, Basileae: Michael Isengrin, 1556, fol. 295v–296r.



**FIG. 15a–c.** Roman coins with the embodiment of Modesty. RIC IV 209a, RIC IV 136a, RIC IV 59a.

two silver denarius coins commissioned by Emperor Hadrian. The goddess engraved on the reverse side is shown standing.<sup>164</sup> Naturally, it is conceivable that the author of *Hieroglyphica* made a mistake in presenting her as such. A similar image can be found on other denarius coins minted between 128 and 134 AD. The obverse side shows the image of the empress under-signed: SABINA AVGVSTA HADRIANI AVG P P (*Sabina Augusta Hadriani Augusti Patris Patriae*) – almost indistinguishable from the version known to Valeriano. The reverse presents a seated woman with her face under a veil. Although she is left unidentified, as no inscription is attached, she is presently associated with Ceres given the ears of grain she clutches in her hand.<sup>165</sup> The artefact associated with the wife of Philip the Arab, Otacilla, a sestertius coin minted in 245 AD, shows the seated Pudicitia on the reverse side: one hand hides the face under a veil, the other holds a spectre.<sup>166</sup> The artefacts dedicated to Herennia Etruscilla prove to be a more fertile ground. The wife of Decius features in manifold coins, of both high and low denomination, along with the personification of modesty on the reverse side, as in aureus,<sup>167</sup> antoninianus,<sup>168</sup> double sesterius<sup>169</sup> and sesterius<sup>170</sup> coins. The

<sup>164</sup> RIC II 406, RIC II 407.

<sup>165</sup> RIC II 411a.

<sup>166</sup> RIC IV 209a.

<sup>167</sup> RIC IV 59a.

<sup>168</sup> RIC IV 59b.

<sup>169</sup> RIC IV 136a.

<sup>170</sup> RIC IV 136b.

reverse side of these coins showed the seated goddess with her face covered and spectre in hand. Therefore, it may not be entirely evident which coin in particular Valeriano had in mind when writing his tract. His faithful depiction of numismatic legends (in which he was followed by the scholars of Alciato) and meticulous descriptions of the scenes represented in the coins prove he must have accessed the artefacts first-hand. Similar coins, with Pudicitia as a veil-shrouded woman, abounded. Notably, modesty was reckoned amongst the chief virtues at the time.<sup>171</sup> The embodiment of this virtue can be traced in silver denarius coins portraying Julia Domna, Caracalla's mother, on the obverse side.<sup>172</sup> The same image appears on the sesterius coin of Commodus, minted for his wife Crispina<sup>173</sup> as well as denarius coins of Julia Maesa, Heliogabalus's grandmother.<sup>174</sup>

Given the plethora of numismatic depictions of Pudicitia, it may come as a surprise that the reception of this motif in 16<sup>th</sup> century scholarly publications on numismatics was lukewarm at best. Indeed, none of the above artefacts were mentioned by Sebastiano Erizzo and Enea Vico. This trend would not, however, apply to Antonio Augustin, who in the second dialogue mentions four coins with Pudicitia on their reverse side (tabl. 48, 49) (fig. 16). The Spanish scholar included the illustrations of coins minted for Faustina Augusta, Julia Augusta and Herenia Entruscilla. The Alciato commentators were familiar only with the latter. In *The Dialogues*,



FIG. 16. A. Agustín, *Dialoghi [...] intorno alle medaglie, inscriptions et altre antichità tradotti di lingua spagnuola in italiana [...]*, in Roma: appresso Filippo de' Rossi, 1650, p. 77. National Library of Poland, shelf mark: SD XVII.4.8092

171 T. Mikocki, op. cit., pp. 197–265.

172 RIC IV 385.

173 RIC III 670.

174 RIC IV 268.

Augustin includes an illustration of a figure that resembles the image of Pudicitia on a coin dedicated to Emperor Hadrian. This coin was listed along with other numismatic representations of manifold personifications. The author's note refers to only those representations of Pudicitia that show the goddess sitting or standing.<sup>175</sup> In a closing comment, the author remarks that this virtue was habitually related to another feminine *virtus*, namely Fecunditas [fertility], whose numismatic illustrations are listed alongside those of Pudicitia. Hence, rather than attempting to link the representation of Pudicitia with the myth of Penelope, the author of *Dialogues* offers a succinct description of the quoted artefacts.

The French collector, Guillaume du Choul, referred to the numismatic representations of Pudicitia even before Augustin (fig. 17). In his pioneering tract published in Lyon, the author recounts Roman beliefs and religious customs based on numismatic representations. This work contains a note that may be of interest for the purposes in question.<sup>176</sup> Du Choul did not fail to notice that the personification of Modesty (Chasteté) appears on the coins of Faustina the Younger as well as Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus. This remark is attested by one wood engraving that portrays a silver coin of the former empress. The reverse displays the seated goddess who with one hand covers her face under a veil, while the other holds a sceptre. This work, however, does not attempt to link the



FIG. 17. G. Du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains [...]*, a Lyon: par Guillaume Rouille [...], 1567, p. 120. National Library of Poland, shelf mark: SD XVI.Qu.4014.

<sup>175</sup> A. Agustín, *Discorsi sopra le medaglie...*, p. 40.

<sup>176</sup> The present author used the following edition: G. du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains [...]*, a Lyon, de l'imprimerie de Guillaume Rouille, 1556, pp. 108–109. This edition was first published in 1547. Its popularity, aside from the 1556 reedition, is attested to by the Italian (1556) and Spanish (1579) translations. The Latin version of the tract was published relatively late, in 1685.



numismatic representations to the genesis of the Spartan altar of Modesty described by Pausanias. Finally, the results of du Choul's research were issued by the publishing house of Guillaume Rouille, who, although himself a researcher of numismatic iconography, published Alciato's emblem book that was lacking the numismatic representations of Pudicitia. Therefore, it could be convincingly argued that the myth of Penelope, as well as the gesture of veiling her face referred to in *Description of Greece*, were hardly associated with the popularised representation of the Roman figure for years to come. This may be justified by the non-Greek provenance of the iconography of the veil-faced Pudicitia. Both these motifs were later combined by Pierio Valeriano, who strongly influenced the accepted interpretation of the emblem annotations. This, in turn, resulted in visual modifications of Alciato's emblem, which has been consistently modelled on numismatic representations since 1618. All in all, although the next chapter of this study will delve into the complex relationship between a woodcut emblem and numismatic iconography, an alternative type of reception will be at issue.

## II.2. BELLEROPHON VS CHIMAERA: A NUMISMATIC CLASH

Another emblem by Alciato related to numismatic motifs depicts the clash of the Greek hero Bellerophon (Gr. Βελλεροφόντης) and the Chimaera (Gr. Χίμαιρα). The emblem was first published on 28 February 1531, alongside other compositions issued in Augsburg by Heinrich Steyner.<sup>177</sup> The opening editions were not illustrated. The first edition of *Emblematum liber*, the reprint of 6 April 1531 and the last Augsburg edition, completed on 29 July 1534,<sup>178</sup> featured an epigram with no woodcut.<sup>179</sup> The illustration of the mythical duel between Bellerophon and the Chimaera was added to the poem in the Parisian edition of 1534 by Chrestien Wechel.<sup>180</sup> In the illustration, arriving on Pegasus, Bellerophon spears the Chimaera situated low on the ground. The woodcut was most probably etched by the French engraver Mercure Jollat<sup>181</sup> (fig. 18).

177 A. Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, 28 II 1531, fol. F2v.

178 A. Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, 29 VII 1534, fol. F2v.

179 A. Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, 6 IV 1531, fol. F2v.

180 A. Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, Parisiis 1534, p. 108.

181 See: M. Praz, *Studies in seventeenth-century imagery*, Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1975, p. 249. For further reference on the typography and layout of the complete edition, see: S. Rawles, "Layout, Typography and Chronology in Chrétien Wechel's Editions of Alciato", in: *An Interregnum of the Sign. The Emblematic Age in France. Essays in Honour of Daniel S. Russell*, volume edited by D. Graham, Glasgow 2001, pp. 49–71.



FIG. 18. Emblem *Consilio et virtute Chimeram superari, id est fortiores et deceptores* (A. Alciato *Emblematum* 1534, p. 108). Source: Alciato at Glasgow (<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/>).

In the new edition, the poem's position changed. In Steyner's editions, the emblem was pushed to the end of the book, along with three other unillustrated epigrams.<sup>182</sup> Illustrated, the poem was now placed twelfth last, and nine new emblems that were missing in Steyner's edition were now added.<sup>183</sup> The fact that it was decontextualized might have influenced its reception. The lemmatic title, *Consilio et virtute Chimeram superari, id est fortiores et deceptores* (Wisdom and courage defeat Chimaera (i.e. the powerful and deceivers)), as well as its epigrammatic part, would remain unaltered. In fact, Wechel had the previous edition reprinted almost word for word:

182 *Consilio et virtute chimeram superari, id est fortiores et deceptores* is the opening emblem of this edition, seconded by *In adulari inscientem, Tumulus Ioannis Galeacii Vicecomitis primi ducis Mediolani, Optimus civis*.

183 The differences between Steyner's and Wechel's editions result from Alciato's own decision, as mentioned by the Parisian printer in the preface to his edition. See: A. Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, Parisiis 1534, pp. 2–3.

Bellerophon, ut fortis eques, superare Chimeram<sup>184</sup>  
 Et Lycii potuit sternere monstra soli.  
 Sic tu Pegaseis vectus petis aethera pennis  
 Consilioque animi monstra superba domas.<sup>185</sup>

[As the courageous horseman Bellerophon was able to overcome the Chimaera and slay the monsters of the Lycian land, so you, carried on Pegasean wings, seek the heavens, and by the judgment of your mind, subdue tyrannical monsters.]<sup>186</sup>

The title itself implies that Bellerophon stands for wisdom and courage, while the Chimaera represents cunning and violence. The epigram placed further emphasis on the superiority of mental abilities over physical strength. The latter was commonly associated with unruliness and bestiality, as symbolised by the monstrous hybrid of snake, goat and lion.

The myth of Bellerophon was well-known to Alciato's contemporaries. The Renaissance scholars learned about the story from Homer<sup>187</sup> and the popular Latin mythographer Hyginus.<sup>188</sup> The most popular version of the myth tells of the misfortunes the young hero got himself into after having accidentally murdered either his cousin or the mighty Corinthian, Belleros. Banished, Bellerophon turned for protection to King Proetus and settled in Argolis, where he endeared himself to Queen Antea. After rejecting her advances, the queen accused him of indecent proposals. Although Proetus was set to punish the Corinthian prince, the latter was protected by the law of hospitality. To override the custom, the king asked him to deliver a letter to his father-in-law, Jobates, the king of Lycia. Given that the letter told of the alleged attempted rape, Bellerophon was to meet his doom. Jobates chose not to kill the envoy immediately, but ordered him to fight the Chimaera – a beast that had been wreaking havoc in his dominion. To the astonishment of all, aided by Pegasus, the hero vanquished the beast, through which he ingratiated himself with the king. For this deed, Jobates offered him his daughter Filonoe in marriage. The allegorical representation of this story is not found in Homer

184 In further editions, acknowledged during Alciato's lifetime (Lyon 1550), the Greek desinence was accepted: as in *Chimaeran*.

185 Quoted after: A. Alciato, *Emblematum liber*, Parisiis 1534, p. 108.

186 Quoted after: <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/e014.html> [online source, accessed: 2017-03-28].

187 HOMERUS, *Il.* 6, 155–203.

188 HYGINUS, *Fabulae* 57; 151.

or Hyginus. In fact, it is mentioned by several mythographers that recounted the myth.<sup>189</sup>

To fully appreciate what inspired Alciato, one should study marginalia added to all three editions of *Emblematum liber* published in Augsburg.<sup>190</sup> Placed right next to the epigram, the notes refer to the opening part of the mythological tract by Fulgentius.<sup>191</sup> That the *Mitologiarium libri* held the key to the work's intended meaning was later asserted by Alciato scholars, such as Claude Mignault<sup>192</sup> and Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas.<sup>193</sup> For that reason, Johann Thulius made references to Fulgentius, whose interpretation of the myth was amply commented on in the consolidated note of the 1621 Padua edition.<sup>194</sup>

Writing at the turn of the fifth century, the Latin author explained popular myths by analysing the main characters.<sup>195</sup> His rendition of the myth of Bellerophon and Chimaera was no different.<sup>196</sup> The mythographer based his allegorical interpretation of the plot on the assumption that the name Bellerophon is derived from βουλευφόρος (advice-giver), which he rendered into Latin as *sapientiae consultator*.<sup>197</sup> By doing so, he made the Corinthian hero a patron of those who follow the voice of reason in their struggle against the odds. It is worth noting that this translation is no longer considered authoritative by contemporary scholars, as two alternative interpretations are now offered. One of them has it that the name Bellerophon stems from the combination of words Βέλλερος and φονεύω and should be translated as “the murderer of Belleros”, which is to do justice to the plot.<sup>198</sup> The other, now dominant, reading, suggests that the name of the Corinthian

189 See: APOLLODORUS, *Bibliotheca* 2, 30–33.

190 It is worth noticing that in the Augsburg editions this note was added to only one emblem: *Pax*.

191 The exact phrasing of the inscription is as follows: Vide Fulgen. in Mithologijs lib. 3. in princ. [See *The Mythologies* of Fulgentius, at the beginning of book 3]. In the Paris edition of Chrestien Wechel the explanatory note was not included.

192 See A. Alciatus, *Emblemata* 1589, pp. 75–77.

193 F. Sánchez de las Brozas, *Comment in Andreae Alciati Emblemata...*, pp. 67–71.

194 A. Alciato 1621, pp. 81–85.

195 L.G. Whitbread, *Fulgentius the Mythographer*, Columbus 1971, pp. 15–37; G. Hays, “‘Romuleis Libicisque litteris’. Fulgentius and the ‘Vandal Renaissance’” in: *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique Africa*, ed. A. Merrills, Aldershot, Ashgate 2004, pp. 101–132.

196 For detailed analysis of the fragment in Fulgentius, see: M. Venuti, “La materia mitica nelle *Mythologiae* di Fulgenzio. La Fabula Bellerofontis (Fulg. myth. 59.2)”, in: *Uso, riuso e abuso dei testi classici*, a cura di M. Gioseffi, Milano 2010, pp. 71–90.

197 FULGENTIUS *Mithologiae* 3, 1.

198 See: G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad. A Commentary Volume II, books 5–8*, Cambridge 1990, p. 178.

an prince combines the words βέλος (spear) and φορέω (bear, carry), that is, one that “carries spears”.<sup>199</sup> None of these interpretations exhausts such possibilities of allegoresis as the etymology proposed by Fulgentius. Importantly, the late classical mythographer provided a more comprehensive rendition by explaining the origin of the name Pegasus. The winged stallion was deemed to denote an inexhaustible wellspring – from the Greek word πηγή (spring, fount). Accordingly, Bellerophon on Pegasus may be thought to symbolise the inexhaustible wellspring of wisdom. Fulgentius’s interpretation of the myth of Bellerophon must have been commonly known by the end of 15<sup>th</sup> century. In 1498, the *editio princeps* of his tract, authored by the Bolognese poet and classicist Giovanni Battista Pio, was published.<sup>200</sup> This edition was later followed by a number of reprints. The subsequent edition was published in Augsburg, ten years prior to the first edition of *Emblematum liber*.<sup>201</sup> Therefore, it can be assumed that Alciato, and his readership, could easily access Fulgentius’s tract.

*Mitologiarum libri* was universally approved as the principal source from which to analyse the emblem, and the interpretation of the myth was considered authoritative for 16<sup>th</sup> century scholars of Alciato’s book of emblems. All of these commentators, however, failed to notice the relationship between the composition *Consilio et virtute Chimeram superari id est fortiores et deceptores* and a visual motif found on ancient coins. Such was the case with both Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas and Claude Mignault, who otherwise would not hesitate to point to similar associations in his *Notae posteriores*. It was not until Lorenzo Pignoria’s 1618 Padua edition that the relationship between the representation of the clash of Bellerophon and Chimaera, and the scenes from the reverse of the Corinthian coins was fully grasped.<sup>202</sup> The author added that this image perfectly matches a fragment found in Ausonius. What is more, this remark was included in the reader’s preface rather than in the main part of the note:

199 See: R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Harmondsworth 1960, No 64. 7.

200 *Enarrationes allegoricae fabularum Fulgentii Placiadis*, impressum Mediolani: per [...] Ulderico Scinzenzeler, 23 IV 1498.

201 *Fulgentius Placiades in Mythologiis [...]*, Augustae Vindelicorum: expensis Ioannis Grunerii Ulmani, in officina Sigismundi Grymm Medici atque Marci Wirsung, 1521. In this edition the publisher Jakob Locher (Philomusus) includes eye-catching, extensive comments.

202 Pignoria most probably referred either to the coins minted back in Roman times (See B.V. Head, *Historia Numorum. A Manual of Greek Numismatics. New and Enlarged Edition*, assisted by G. F. Hill, G. McDonald, W. Wroth, Oxford 1911, p. 404) or the coins illustrating the Chimaera that came from Sicyon near Corinth (See ibidem, pp. 409–412). For further reference on the numismatic motif elaborated by Pignoria read below.

Chimerae figuram discimus ex antiquis Corinthiorum nummis, qui mirifice illustrant carmen Ausonium: *Prima leo, postrema draco, media ipsa Chimera*.<sup>203</sup>

[The shape of the Chimaera can be identified on the basis of ancient Corinthian coins, which are a fascinating illustration of Ausonius's poem: *First comes the lion, behind is the snake, and in the middle the Chimaera itself* (i.e. a goat)]

The fragment quoted from the Latin poem was not actually borrowed from Ausonius, but from Lucretius, who described the Chimaera in Book V of *De rerum natura*<sup>204</sup> [On the Nature of Things]. This place, as described by the Roman poet and philosopher, is a faithful rendition of the description passed by Homer.<sup>205</sup> Pignoria's mistake may appear as even more striking, given that this verse was also quoted by the widely read Isidore of Seville.<sup>206</sup> Ausonius, for his part, refers to the Chimaera's appearance only in *Idyllia* [The Pastoral]. Although the account of the Chimaera may differ in this work, the author also points to the tripartite nature of the monster, which was considered alongside other mythical creatures, such as Geryon, Scylla, or Harpies and Erinyes that appear in three.<sup>207</sup>

It is conceivable that, regardless of the actual source of the quoted fragment, Pignoria fashioned a new emblematic work on a numismatic representation. Referring to the reverse of the Corinthian coin together with the aforementioned quote, he pointed out that Alciato's illustration failed to accurately depict the shape of the beast that ravaged the land of Lycia, as it did not show the elements of all three animals: lion, snake and goat, but only selected ones. The author possibly used the numismatic representation to modify the illustrations in keeping with the classical imagery. The ancient provenance of the numismatic artefacts was used to justify the visual modifications. The alteration introduced by Pignoria proved successful, as the 1618 Padua edition featured an illustration depicting the

203 A. Alciato 1618, fol. b3v.

204 LUCRETIVS, *De rerum natura*, 5, 901–906:  
 flamma quidem [vero] cum corpora fulva leonum  
 tam soleat torrere atque urere quam genus omne  
 visceris in terris quod cumque et sanguinis extet,  
 qui fieri potuit, triplici cum corpore ut una,  
prima leo, postrema draco, media ipsa Chimaera  
 ore foras acrem flaret de corpore flammam?

205 HOMERUS, *Il.* 6, 181–182.

206 ISIDORUS, *Etymologiae* 1, 40: *De fabula*.

207 AUSONIUS, *Griphus ternarii numeri* 82–83: *triplet compago Chimerae*.



tripartite beast that matched its numismatic prototype.<sup>208</sup> As a result, it was reprinted along with other illustrations of this edition in the 1621 collected Padua edition by Johannes Thulius, printed by Tozzi (fig. 19).

That the Italian scholar had his serious reservations about the representation of the Chimaera in the earlier versions of the emblem, which indeed departed altogether from the Greek numismatic patterns, is evident in the manner in which he quotes Fulgentius. Whereas other scholars claim that Alciato was heavily influenced by this interpretation of the myth of Bellerophon, Pignoria focuses on the ways in which the Roman mythographer described the monster:

Unde et Fulgentius libro 3 *Mythologiarum* Chimaeram triplicem pingi testatur: leonem videlicet in principio, capram in medio, draconem in fine, quae habet ante Fulgentium Hyginus non uno in loco.<sup>209</sup>

[Hence, in Book 3 of *Mythologiarum* Fulgentius asserts that the Chimaera was represented as a tripartite creature: a lion in front, goat in the middle, snake at the rear. This was confirmed in other sources by Hyginus before Fulgentius.]



FIG. 19. Emblem *Consilio et virtute Chimeram superari, id est fortiores et deceptores* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1621, p. 81). Library of the University of Warsaw, shelf mark: 7.2.1.18/12.

208 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, p. 30.

209 Ibidem, fol. b3v.

The Italian publisher is preoccupied with accurate depictions of scenes etched on emblematic woodcuts. He took pains to faithfully reproduce the ancient texts, be they literary or material. Hence the reference to the Corinthian coin as well as the accounts of the three authors: Ausonius, Fulentius and Hyginus.<sup>210</sup> It is worth noting that the publisher was largely inspired by the aforementioned numismatic illustrations. Many Etruscan and Greek archeological findings show different representations of the Lycian fiend.<sup>211</sup>

By criticising the existing woodcuts in pursuit of more accurate alternatives – also in numismatics – Pignoria claims that his alterations are intended to do justice to the original meaning of the emblems and their authors' intention. This intention is made manifest in the title. The editor maintains that he modified the illustrations appended to Alciato's emblems in compliance with the author's intention (*cum imaginibus plerisque restitutis ad mentem auctoris*). Nevertheless, whether they did mirror Alciato's intention is open to question. After all, the earlier editions criticised by Pignoria were in fact often sanctioned by the author, e.g. the Parisian edition by Chrestien Wechel and the last edition that appeared in Alciato's lifetime. The title embossed on the Lyon edition by Macé Bonhomme dedicated to Guillaume Rouille makes it evident that the author must have perused and accepted the content prior to its publication. (*Emblemata [...] denuo ab ipso autore recognita ac, quae desiderabantur, imaginibus locupletata. Accesserunt nova aliquot ab autore emblemata suis quoque eiconibus insignita*). Accordingly, what Pignoria so robustly modified, was every so often Alciato's writing itself. Such was the case with the emblem *Consilio et virtute Chimeram superari, id est fortiores et deceptores*. In fact, before 1618 the Chimaera had never been modelled on the numismatic iconography referred to by Pignoria. In the woodcut illustrations used in various editions by Chrestien Wechel, the mythical monster is nothing but a lion with a snake-like tail. Since the beast has only one head, the tripartite character of the Chimaera championed by Pignoria is overlooked. Similarly, in Macé Bonhomme's Lyon edition, the Chimaera looks like a snake-tailed lion, completely devoid of goatish

210 For the link between Hyginus and the quoted fragment by Lucretius, see: K.F.B. Fletcher, "Hyginus's Fabulae: toward a Roman Mythology", in: *Writing Myth. Mythography in the Ancient World*, ed. Stephen M.Trzaskoma, R. Scott Smith, Leuven-Paris-Walpole (MA) 2013, pp. 147–149.

211 See: A. Roes, "The Representation of the Chimaera", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* vol. 54, part 1 (1934), pp. 21–25; M.L. Schmitt, "Bellerophon and the Chimaera in Archaic Greek Art", *American Journal of Archeology*, vol. 70, No 4 (Oct. 1966), pp. 341–347. Both works contain numerous representations.

elements.<sup>212</sup> The Lyon reprint edited by Jean de Tournes and Guillaume Gazeau and annotated by Sebastian Stockhamer offers a curious example. The woodcut used by the French typographers to illustrate the epigram is evidently more novel than the previous illustrations.<sup>213</sup> Bellerophon attacks the monster from the left, as opposed to right, as depicted in the previous editions of *Emblematum liber*. Curiously, Chimaera unmistakably resembles a goat, and any likeness to a lion is barely discernible. As in the other edition, Chimaera has only one head. A similar depiction can be found in the illustration adopted from the Frankfurt am Main edition of 1567, where Bellerophon charges at Chimaera from the left.<sup>214</sup> Surprisingly, the beak and wings make Chimaera look like a basilisk. Only the snake-like tail and paws are compatible with a traditional avatar of the monster. It must be mentioned, however, that these illustrations gained wide acclaim and, as a result, helped shape the common conception of the famous battle between the Corinthian hero and the Lycian creature. Their impact is noticeable on a printer's mark included by the Parisian Charles Pérrier. In fact, he faithfully reproduces the scene known from the woodcuts collected by Macé Bonhomme. So does the younger German pressman Christoph Corvin.<sup>215</sup> The fact that the impression of Bellerophon was found on the seal discovered at the Zamoyski Academy<sup>216</sup> upholds the assumption that in 16<sup>th</sup> century Bellerophon was commonly associated with the voice of reason. That the hero's impression was taken as a trademark of many printing houses that sought to establish their academic credentials only testifies to the credibility of the theory.

Considering all these examples, it could be assumed that Pignoria's resolution to model the mythical monster on the Greek and Roman accounts was indeed innovative and original. Certainly, the assumption that the classical conception of Chimaera was unknown in the 16<sup>th</sup> century is hardly sustainable. Moreover, the replicas of coins illustrating the battle of Bellerophon and Chimaera on the reverse were also widely known. The actual coins were also in circulation. In addition to the Greek – chiefly Corinthian – editions, the impression of Bellerophon on Pegasus would appear on Roman coins towards the end of the republic. The issuer that

212 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1550, p. 20.

213 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1556, p. 168.

214 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1567, fol. 24r.

215 J. Kowalczyk, *W kręgu kultury dworu Jana Zamoyskiego* [In the Circle of Culture of the Court of Jan Zamoyski], Lublin 1980, pp. 170–172.

216 K. Krzak-Weiss, *Polskie sygnety drukarskie od XV do połowy XVII wieku* [Polish Printer's Marks from the 15th to the Mid 17th century], Poznań 2006, pp. 173–175.



FIG. 20a–c. Roman coins with Bellerophon and Pegasus. RPC I 1116, BMC 693–695 var., Crawford 395/1

first employed the image was Lucius Cossutius Sabula.<sup>217</sup> The slayer of Chimaera on Pegasus was embossed on the reverse of a silver denarius minted between 74 and 72 BC. This version, however, did not include the monster: one of utmost interest for Pignoria. Likewise, the Corinthian edition issued before the death of Julius Caesar (in 44 or 43 BC) shows the portrait of the dictator on the obverse, and Bellerophon clutching a spear on Pegasus on the reverse.<sup>218</sup> Further Corinthian issues featured the image of the Chimaera placed under the ascending Pegasus. Similarly, the denarius minted during Hadrian's rule shows Aphrodite's head turned right on the obverse, and the clash of the Greek hero and the Chimaera on the reverse<sup>219</sup> (fig. 20). The mythical battle was also immortalised on editions minted during the rule of Augustus, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, Septimius Severus, Geta, and Severus Alexander.<sup>220</sup>

The fact that the Italian issuer chose this particular numismatic representation does not imply he had accessed the Corinthian coin first-hand. It is highly possible that he learned about the coin from a scholarly publication on numismatics. The main source Pignoria might have depended on was Antonio Agustín's dialogues. In his work, the Spanish scholar provides two versions of the battle with the Chimaera.<sup>221</sup> One illustration shows a coin minted in Corinth, the other presents an *intaglio* with an almost identical visual representation (fig. 21). Both artefacts depict the ascending Pegasus mounted by Bellerophon, who is on the verge of spearing Chimaera from above. Most importantly, the monster is three-headed: one head of a lion,

217 See: Crawford 395/1.

218 RPC 1116.

219 BMC 693–95. See also pseudo-autonomous issue under Hadrian: SNG Cop. 284 and 297–298.

220 *A Dictionary of Roman Coins, Republican and Imperial*, comm. S.W. Stevenson, rev. F.W. Madden, completed by Ch. Roach Smith, London 1889, pp. 125–126.

221 A. Agustín, *Dialoghi...*, p. 150.



FIG. 21. A. Agustín, *Dialoghi*..., p. 150. Coin minted in Corinth and another presenting an intaglio with an almost identical visual representation.

a goat on his back, and snake for the tail. Agustín reveals that this representation is faithful to literary sources as proposed by Hesiod<sup>222</sup> and Lucretius.

la Chimera, la quale Esiodo et Lucretio figurarono in questo modo, cioè con la testa di leone e la coda di serpente, nell' estremità della quale era la testa di esso, e da i lombi le usciva un mezo corpo di capra e gettava fuoco per la bocca.<sup>223</sup>

[The Chimaera was represented by Hesiod and Lucretius in the following way: with a lion's head, the tail of a snake tipped with a snake's head, and a fire-breathing goat emerging from the middle of the back.]

Evidently, the features of the mythical creature pointed to by Agustín were later stressed by Lorenzo Pignoria. In doing so, the latter included a quotation wrongly attributed to Ausonius.

The mythical scene quoted in Agustín's *Dialogues* caught the eye of another scholar of classical numismatics. In his tract, Sebastiano Erizzo included a similar artefact dedicated to the emperor Lucius Verus rather

222 See HESIODUS, *Theogonia* 319–325.

223 A. Agustín, *Dialoghi*, p. 150.

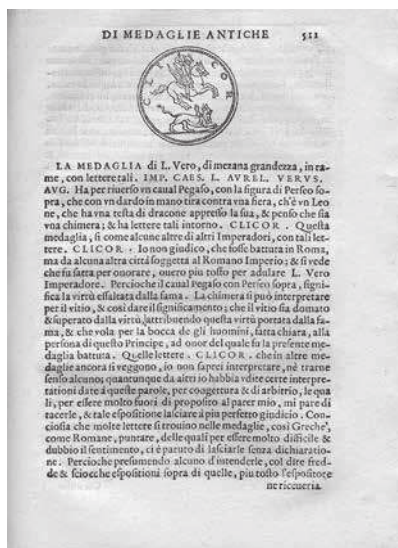


FIG. 22. S. Erizzo, *Discorso sopra le medaglie antiche...*, in Vinegia: apresso Giovanni Varisco et compagni, 1571, p. 511. Coin showing the three-headed Chimaera challenged by a horseman bestriding Pegasus.

than Corinth.<sup>224</sup> Likewise, the reverse of the coin he refers to shows the three-headed Chimaera challenged by the horseman bestriding Pegasus (fig. 22). In addition, the scholar adduced the following legend placed along the rim of the coin: GLICOR. However, apart from the rather unimpressive remark asserting that the author came across the legend whilst researching other ancient coins, no further explanation of the coin is provided. It may possibly come from the misspelling of the verb: *gliscor* (I rise in power). Considering the legend itself, Erizzo seems to have referred to a coin that is unrelated to the one quoted in *Dialogues*. Agustín's account of the scene differs markedly from Pignoria's, too. As the author of *Discorso sopra le medaglie antiche* seems to suggest, the Chimaera is confronted by Perseus rather than Bellerophon, as commonly thought. This alteration may be ascribed to the myth on the origins of Pegasus, who was believed to have emerged from the blood of the Gorgon, killed by Perseus. Since the latter was complicit in creating the winged horse, he was later taken for the horseman, and consequently ousted Bellerophon from the myth of the Chimaera. Erizzo was not the only scholar to subscribe to this version of the myth. In fact, it was not uncommon to consider Perseus as the slayer of

224 S. Erizzo, *Discorso sopra le medaglie antiche...*, pp. 352–353.



Chimaera in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. This account is provided in many a lyrical work and modern mythological tract, as exemplified in *De genealogia deorum gentilium* [On the Genealogy of the Gods of the Gentiles] by Boccaccio.<sup>225</sup> The origins of this alteration can be traced back to the Middle Ages, given that this account is to be found in the popular work *Ovidius moralizatus* by Pierre Bersuire.<sup>226</sup> Sebastian Erizzo's interpretation of the illustration on the coin of Lucius Verus is compatible with the popular conception. Whether his work directly influenced Lorezno Pignoria is, however, far from obvious. It is highly probable that the publisher of Alciato's emblem book from Padua was familiar with one of the Roman editions of Agustín's *Dialogues*. A vital part of Erizzo's account is his elucidation of the Chimaera as a symbol: one that links the work with the emblematic tradition. In keeping with analogous readings of the myth, the author gathers that the beast, which combines the aspects of a lion, goat and snake, stands for sin (*il vitio*), whereas the ascending Perseus allegorises virtue (*la virtù*). Accordingly, since the whole scene is to be read as a triumph of virtue over sin, this fragment comes close to Alciato's composition.

The fact that, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, popular opinion had Perseus rather than Bellerophon featured on the ancient numismatic artefacts illustrating the myth of Chimaera can be attested by Ulisse Aldrovandi's notes. In his tract *Monstrorum historia* [History of Monsters], published posthumously, the renowned naturalist provides an insight into the ancient representations of the Chimaera by adducing some numismatic artefacts as the main source of research. In doing so, the scholar points out that Sebastian Erizzo took the young man on Pegasus for Perseus. For his part, Aldrovandi argues the opposite: the young hero is identified as Bellerophon, who allegorises piety and wisdom (*nomen Bellerophontis virum probum et prudentem ostendat*).<sup>227</sup> It is worth noting that the naturalist claims that the Chimaera was a hybrid of a lion, goat and snake.

As argued and exemplified above, not only were the ancient coins that illustrated Bellerophon and Chimaera commonly known in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but they also served as a not unlikely subject of research on ancient

225 See T.W. Baldwin, "Perseus Purloins Pegasus", *Philological Quarterly*, vol. XX, 1941, p. 363; G.B. Johnston, "Jonson's 'Perseus upon Pegasus'", *The Review of English Studies. New Series* 6, 21 (1955), pp. 65–66; J.D. Reeves, *Perseus and the Flying Horse in Peele and Heywood*, "The Review of English Studies. New Series" 6, 21 (1955), p. 397.

226 J. M. Steadman, "Perseus upon Pegasus and Ovid Moralized", in: *The Review of English Studies. New Series* 9, 36 (1958), pp. 407–410.

227 U. Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum historia cum paralipomenis historiae omnium animalium [...]*, Bononiae: typis Nicolai Tebaldini, 1642, p. 283.

artefacts. Nevertheless, it was only after Pignoria's work that the publishers of emblematic works began to consider the numismatic illustrations of the mythical characters. Those printers, commentators – most probably including Alciato himself – who were conversant with the literary works that depicted the tripartite body of the beast, departed from the classical version of the myth by composing its alternative accounts on their emblem illustrations. Such was the case of another author of emblems, Johannes Sambucus. The Hungarian physician and humanist scholar used the character of the Chimaera in his work *Grammaticae, dialecticae, rhetoricae, historiae differentia* [Differences Between Grammar, Dialectics, Rhetoric and History], where the monster was to serve as an allegory of rhetoric (the emblem was dedicated to the Italian humanist scholar Carolus Sigonius). On the plate that accompanied the Latin poem, the mythical monster is shown as a lioness with a snake-like tail.<sup>228</sup>

As in the woodcuts of Alciato's emblem, the Chimaera has only one head and no goatish elements. Barthélémy Aneau suggested a similar depiction of the monster, which the scholar meant to symbolise sophism. The monster included on the plate of the poem *Sophistae* [Sophists] is characterised by the most extraordinary shape out of all formerly discussed examples. In Aneau's book, Chimaera is a hybrid of as many as five animals: body and head of a lion, tail of a snake, cow udders, one leg of a goat, another of a lion, the remaining two of a bird, with each being distinct. Interestingly, the illustration is incompatible with the description of the creature included in the epigram:

Necnon Chimeram, quae triformis bestia,  
Leonis ore (quo superbius quid est?),  
Salacis Hirco ventre, sed cauda aspidis.<sup>229</sup>

[There is also the Chimaera, the tripartite monster: with a lion's muzzle (is there a prouder creature than this one?), the belly of a lewd goat and the tail of a snake.]

Given the above, Aneau must have been familiar with the classical depictions of the beast. Although he may have even seen its representations on vases and coins first-hand, little did it influence the shape of the plate on

228 J. Sambucus, *Emblemata cum aliquot nummis antiqui operis [...]*, Antverpiae: ex officina Christophori Plantini, 1564, pp. 142–143. Chimaera has a very similar form on coins from Sikyon, e.g. cf. BMC 2 (silver stater, circa 400–330 BC).

229 B. Aneau, *Picta poesis. Ut pictura poesis erit*, Lugduni: apud Mathiam Bonhomme, 1552, p. 40.

which the fanciful image of the Chimaera was embossed. It could be reasonably argued that faithful imitation of mythical creatures, in keeping with the ancient images, was hardly a priority in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Or perhaps a given depiction was contingent on the context in which the image was employed. It is worth adding that in Sambucus's book, the Chimaera reappears in the poem *Partium τῆς οἰκουμένης symbola* [The Symbols of the Parts of the World], dedicated to Hubert Goltzius. In this work, the Chimaera is to symbolise Africa, and its shape resembles the ancient counterparts. The monster is three-headed: one of a lion, another of a goat at the back, and snake at the tail's end.<sup>230</sup> Could it be argued that this classical shape can be attributed to the fact that the dedicatee was well-versed in Roman and Greek numismatics? Notably, Sambucus used to collect ancient coins, and some of his published works were meant as supplements to emblems.

### II.3. THE MYSTERY OF THE COIN OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Whereas the previous chapters attempted to look more closely at the relationship between emblems and numismatic illustrations on the basis of woodcut engravings, this part will investigate the textual component of the work under scrutiny. The opening emblem of *Emblematum liber* about the coat of arms of Milan is a notable work referring to an an-



FIG. 23. Emblem *Insignia Ducatus Mediolanensis* (A. Alciano, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. A2r.). Library of the University of Wrocław, shelf mark: 305086.

230 J. Sambucus, *Emblemata...*, p. 113.

cient coin (fig. 23). As early as in Wechel's edition published in Paris, the emblem served as an additional inscription dedicated to Maximilian Sforza, as indicated by the title: *Ad illustrem Maximilianum ducem Mediolanensem* [To the Illustrious Maximilian, Duke of Milan].<sup>231</sup> Since, in the first three editions published in 1531 and 1534 in Augsburg, the lemma featured the inscription *Insignia Ducatus Mediolanensis* [The Coat of Arms of Duchy of Milan],<sup>232</sup> the reader's attention was diverted to an abstract heraldic representation rather than a specific person. The original version of the title was, however, modified in the 1534 Parisian edition. Since Wechel's version was adopted in further editions as a sort of dedication, it was placed on the book's opening pages. It is worth noting that the work was first printed on 28 February 1531, after the dedicatee, Maximilian Sforza had died, on 4 June 1530. Furthermore, having been captured by the French, he had already lost his dukedom in the publisher's motherland, in 1515. The choice of an emblem dedicated to the dispossessed duke may bear testimony to Alciato's political sentiments as well as his patriotic proclivities, reflected in the longing for the past times, when Milan was controlled by the local aristocracy.

The coat of arms of the city of Lombardy, and one of its ruling dynasty, seems a far cry from the illustrations found on the ancient reverses. In all reprints of Alciato's book of emblems, the illustrations were fashioned in accordance with the principles of heraldry. The woodcuts featured the coat of arms placed on the shield: a snake clutching a human figure in its jaws. Only the apparently insignificant and decorative background was subject to change. The shield was also variously represented. More often than not, the shield was placed on a tree branch, following the established convention of depicting coats of arms and other related symbols (such as house marks) in books. This practice was to be followed in the composition of seal rings. The emblem itself has a clear laudatory resonance, and puts across the author's concern for his motherland. Other works of this sort are *Mediolanum*, *Federa Italarum* and *Tumulus Ioannis Galeacii Vicecomitis primi ducis Mediolani*. All of them are inextricably linked with matters of Milan or its ruling family. One of them, however, is related to the ancient numismatic iconography.

Although it is not the graphic component of the work that is of interest here, it does play a significant role in further considerations. The work was reckoned among other emblems in question due to its epigram, which quotes the mysterious coin minted by Alexander the Great. Alciato states

231 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1534, p. 5.

232 See A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. A2r.

in no uncertain terms that the coat of arms of the house of Sforza matches the description engraved on the coin:

Exiliens infans sinuosi e faucibus anguis  
 Est gentilitiis nobile stemma tuis.  
 Talia Pellaeum gessisse nomismata regem  
 Vidimus hisque suum concelebrasce genus.  
 Dum se Ammone satum, matrem anguis imagine lusam,  
 Divini et sobolem seminis esse docet.  
 Ore exit – tradunt sic quosdam enitier angues.  
 An quia sic Pallas de capite orta Iovis.

[An infant springing from the jaws of a curling snake is your family's noble device. We saw the Pellaeian king had made such coins, and had celebrated with them his own descent. It teaches that while he was sown from the seed of Ammon, his mother was fooled by the image of a snake, and that he was the offspring of divine seed. He comes forth from the mouth. Is it because in this way, some claim, certain snakes bear their young, or because Pallas sprang that way from the head of Jupiter?]<sup>233</sup>

According to Alciato, the aforementioned coin was used by the Macedonian ruler as propaganda, as well as to foreground his divine provenance. As the legend embossed on the coin would have it, the real father of Alexander was Zeus-Amon – who metamorphosed into a snake and liaised with the great conqueror's mother, Olympias – rather than Philip II. Promulgated by Plutarch, this version was all too familiar in ancient times.<sup>234</sup> The story of an infant emerging from reptilian jaws was to resonate with the birth of Athena, who sprang from Zeus's head likewise.<sup>235</sup> As such, the myth tacitly implied Alexander's descent from the Greek goddess of wisdom. It goes without saying that Alciato incorporates the ancient elements into the emblem in order to honour the new ruling family of Milan. By doing so, the author puts forth a notable interpretation of the coat of arms (hailed *Biscione* after the reptile it illustrates). Since the aforementioned links with the ancient coinage were not to be found in

233 Translation adopted from <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/test1.html>, accessed: 2017-03-28].

234 PLUTARCHUS, *Vita Alexandrii* 3, 37.

235 The popular myth of the birth of Athena springing from Zeus's head is confirmed by many authors, e.g. see OVIDIUS, *Fasti* 3, 841–842; APOLLONODORUS, *Bibliotheca* 1, 20. When it comes to birth through the jaws, Alciato probably has in mind cases of vivipary, in which cubs of snakes come from the inside of the mother's body, exploding her internal organs, rather than hatch from an egg; for reference see PLINIUS, *HN* 10, 82; AELIANUS, *De natura animalium* 1, 24; ISIDORUS, *Etymologiae* 12, 4, 10.

the legends about the reception of the Visconti coat of arms, they may as well be read as the author's own interpretation of the story.

Interestingly, given that no ancient coin is known to contain an illustration matching the family crest of the house of Sforza, it is not entirely clear which coin is alluded to by Alciato in the poem.<sup>236</sup> The former commentators of the Italian lawyer's work, such as Claude Mignault and Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas are of little help here also, as they fail to identify the enigmatic artefact. Nor is the coin to be found in Pignoria's notes or Sebastian Stockhamer's rather pithy and superficial comments. The only reference can be traced in De las Brozas's comment stating that Alexander issued the coins illustrating a snake as a symbol of his divine provenance.<sup>237</sup> In so doing, the author only copied the inscription from the epigram, offering no explanation. Mignault, for his part, concluded that Alciato did not refer to any coin at all. The word *numisma* was to be used as a synecdoche for various symbols customarily placed on shields and banners in a general sense:

Symbola in nummis, signis militaribus, in templis locisque publicis expressa, sic enim hic accipi "nomisma" συνεκδοχικῶς interpretor.<sup>238</sup>

[I believe that *nomisma* appeared as a synecdoche for symbols on coins, military signs, as well as those placed on temples and public places.]

Lorenzo Pignoria took issue with Claude Mignault's statement by insisting that the emblem refers to an ancient coin:

Ego sane arbitror hic 'nomismata' nummos veteres esse. Vidimus enim, quod sequitur in carmine omnem dubitationem tollit. Alciatus autem vetustatis fuit observantissimus.<sup>239</sup>

[I am fully convinced that *nomismata* stands for ancient coins. Evidently, the subsequent part of the poem helps disperse any doubts about it. What is more, Alciato was impressively conversant with antiquity.]

236 Even the comprehensive list of motifs and representations of the Macedonian ruler drawn up by Karsten Dahmen in *The legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins* (London-New York 2007, pp. 39–55) failed to make it clear as to which coin representing Alexander the Great had inspired Alciato directly.

237 *Francisci Sancti Brocensis [...] Comment. in And. Alciati Emblemata [...]*, Lugduni: apud Guliel. Rovillium, 1573, p. 10.

238 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, p. 4.

239 Ibidem, fol. b6r.

The fact, that none of the scholars mentioned above paid much attention to the artefact in question, or else were unable to identify it, is notable and thought-provoking, given that this aspect was, in all probability, as unclear for the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century readership as it is now. As will be explained below, it proves particularly challenging for the present-day scholars.

The linking of this heraldic motif – widely known all over Europe as it was – with the ancient coin seems fairly surprising. To the extent that not all present-day scholars are in agreement as to whether to read the term *nomisma* in accordance with the basic meaning (namely a coin) of its lexeme. Such an approach was proposed by Mino Gabriele, who in the Italian translation of the epigram suggests that the term be rendered as *coat of arms* or *symbol (insigne)* of Alexander the Great, and ought not be associated with any coin issued by the Macedonian ruler.<sup>240</sup> Claude Mignault shared this opinion. In fact, this interpretation is not entirely ungrounded, given that the meaning of the term *nomisma*, accepted in various 16<sup>th</sup> century texts, corresponded with one suggested by Gabriele, namely, as a synecdoche. It is very telling that the examples that help confirm this theory are to be found in tracts discussing the mottos linked with the emblems. The term *nomisma*, as a synonym of *coat of arms* or *symbol*, is included by Achille Bocchi in the title of the emblem *Hoc Bocchiani symbolum est numismatis: Matura festiantio*.<sup>241</sup> In this work, the author refers to, among other works, Alciano's emblem, which, in turn, also mentions his coat of arms (the composition *Nunquam procrastinandum*). This reference should not be ignored considering that the coins – or more precisely, the illustrations engraved on them – were soon incorporated into the comprehensive and diverse collection of symbols and hieroglyphs. The very word *coin* was often taken as a synonym of related notions, such as *symbol*, *hieroglyph* and, as it turns out, *coat of arms*. Silvester Pietrasancta considers numismatic illustrations as heraldic symbols, which the author relates to in his two influential works: *De symbolis heroicis*<sup>242</sup> and *Tesserae gentilitiae*.<sup>243</sup>

240 For the annotated Italian translation of the emblem, see: A. Alciano, *Il libro degli emblemi...*, pp. 21–25.

241 A. Bocchi, *Symbolicarum questionum de universo genere, quas serio ludebat, libri quinque*, Bononiae: apud Societatem Typographiae Bononiensis, 1574, p. CLXXV.

242 S. Pietrasancta, *De symbolis heroicis libri IX [...]*, Antverpiae: ex Officina Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1634, pp. 70–84.

243 The Jesuit heraldry scholar prefaces the armorial *Tesserae gentilitiae* with remarks on the provenance of heraldic symbols. The author lists the numismatic illustrations of Roman emperors, and particularly their symbolic representations on the reverse, which he took



However, it seems incontestable that Alciato, in his composition, referred to a coin, and that Gabriele's rendition of the word as *insigne* was incorrect. This issue is further determined by the *princeps emblematum* himself in his other work, *De singulari certamine* [On Dueling], where he recounts a duel between Otto Visconti and a Saracen. This event is actually inspired by a heraldic legend and explains the origin of the coat of arms of the Italian dynasty. Alciato relates this story as follows.<sup>244</sup>

Celebre est in annalibus Othonis vicecomitis cum quodam Sarraceno in Asia certamen, quem ille manu caput confossumque galeae ornameto privavit idque gentilitiis insignibus suis addidit, hoc est vipera vix natum et adhuc manantem sanguine infantem ore evomens, nimirum ab Alexandro Magno acceptum emblemata. Si quidem in eius antiquis nomismatis idem sigillum reperire est, quo Iove se natum rex ille per ambages ostendebat. Etenim serpentis forma pluribus Graeciae locis Jupiter colebatur. Suntque in Asia genera serpentum, quos ore parere hominum opinione receptum est.<sup>245</sup>

[The chronicle relates the famous duel of Viscount Otto with a Saracen in Asia. The former singlehandedly decapitated his opponent and tore off an embellishment from his helmet, and incorporated it into his own family crest. The embellishment depicted a snake spitting out a newborn blood-drenched baby: in point of fact, the emblem was endorsed by Alexander the Great. This image is to be found on the ancient coins of the ruler, who in this roundabout way attempted to show that he was a king born from Jupiter. Jupiter was many a time venerated as a serpent. In Asia there are some types of snakes that, according to a popular opinion, were born through the jaws.]

Regrettably, the author of the book of emblems fails to specify the chronicle he refers to in the extract. Mino Gabriele postulates that Alciato was familiar with the work *De magnalibus Mediolani* [The Marvels of Milan] by the local poet and chronicler Bonvesin Della Riva, composed around 1288.<sup>246</sup> The scene set by the Italian jurist can be found in the printed

for heraldic signs. The author pays particular attention to the coin of Augustus depicting a Capricorn with a fish tail. See S. Pietrasanta, *Tesseræ gentilitiae a Silvestro Petra Sancta Romano Societatis Iesu ex legibus Fecialum descriptae*, Romae: typis haeredum Francisci Carbelletti, 1638, p. 16.

244 This fragment, as well as its relationship with the emblem, was quoted by Denis L. Drysdall in "Devices as 'Emblems' before 1531", *Emblematica. An Interdisciplinary Journal for Emblem Studies*, vol. 16, 2008, p. 259.

245 The present author used the edition, A. Alciato, *De singulari certamine*, Lugduni: apud Iacobum Giuntam, 1544, p. 81.

246 (A. Alciato, *Il libro degli emblemi...*, p. 22). In fact, it may be difficult to judge the influence the work had on Alciato, given that the text was available as a manuscript until 1898.

edition of *Antiquitates Vicecomitum* [The History of the Visconti] (editio princeps: Milan, 1499–1500) Giorgio Merula (Giorgio Merlani), which outlines the history of the house of Visconti. The Milan-based translator claims that *Biscione* was acknowledged as the family crest of the house of Visconti as a result of a duel between the progenitor of the house with the ruler of Samaria, a giant Saracen known as Vortex.<sup>247</sup> This encounter was reported to have taken place in 1099 during the First Crusade. Alciato may have recounted the story either from memory, or used Merula's chronicle. As a matter of fact, this legend was well-known during the Italian Renaissance as recorded in various works that relate to the Visconti coat of arms. The legend was mentioned by Ariosto in *Jerusalem Delivered*. Listing Italian knights, the poet stops to study the image from Visconti's shield.<sup>248</sup>

Although the story of the confrontation between the Italian knight and the giant Saracen was adopted by Alciato from a different source, the reference to the symbol procured from the defeated as being used by Alexander the Great seems to have been originally proposed by the author of the first book of emblems. Merula, on the other hand, makes no such reference. Nor is it to be found in any other sources outlining the provenance of the family crest of the house of Visconti and the life of Alexander the Great.<sup>249</sup> It may therefore be vital to determine which artefact the author of *Emblematum libellus* had in mind in particular, and which sources he used. It needs to be mentioned that in one of his notes Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas refers to a mediaeval coin depicting St. Ambrose on one side, and the coat of Arms of the Visconti of Milan – possibly employed as

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It was later discovered by Francesco Novati in the national library of Spain and published in print (Bonvesin de la Riva, *De magnalibus urbis Mediolani*, a cura di F. Novati, "Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano", 20, 1898). It is worth noting that the version of the legend endorsed by Alciato was one of the two key sources that attempted to establish the origin of the coat of arms of the house of Visconti. The other story recounts the duel of Otto Visconti with a giant serpent traversing a lake in Lombardy. The monster had a habit of swallowing children. When the knight came to vanquish the beast, he saw the monster clutching his son in its jaws. This image was incorporated into the coat of arms after the defeat of the serpent.

247 The author used the following edition as a source: G. Merula, *Antiquitatis Vicecomitum libri X*, Mediolani: apud haeredes Melchioris Malatestae, 1630, p. 31.

248 TASSO, *Gerusalemme liberata* 1, 55.

249 Similarly, no contemporary scholarly works on heraldry link the origin of the Visconti family crest with the symbol illustrated in one of the coins minted by Alexander the Great. Merula's version of the genesis of the crest is still commonly accepted. The authoritative source on that matter, penned by Emilio Galli, is titled *Sulle origini araldiche della Biscia Viscontea*, "Archivio Storico Lombardo. Giornale della società storica lombarda" 1919 set, Serie 5, Fascicolo 3, pp. 363–381.

a symbol of the city – on the other<sup>250</sup> (fig. 24), of which a silver coin issued by Gian Galeazz Visconti is a fine example. The obverse of the coin reveals the patron of the city holding a whip in one hand, and a crosier in the other; the reverse presents the coat of arms of the Visconti.<sup>251</sup> Although this artefact may be inextricably bound up with the city itself, in that it refers to the coat of arms of its rulers and the local patron saint, it is in no way related to the ancient ruler. Hence, it is doubtful whether the author meant this particular coin.

A noteworthy attempt at elucidating the mystery of this numismatic pattern has recently been made by Stéphane Rolet in her review of Gabriele's edition.<sup>252</sup> The French scholar concludes that the emblem refers to a coin – showing Opheltes being devoured by a serpent – issued during the rule of Domitian. Needless to say, the scene in question is part of the myth of the foundation of the Nemean Games, as well as the Seven Argive generals marching against Thebes. Such an alternative interpretation had already been proposed by Adrien Blanchet in her research from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>253</sup> Since the aforementioned coin shows the massive body of a serpent and the considerably smaller Opheltes standing right in front of the animal on the reverse, the proposed thesis calls for



FIG. 24. Silver grosso with the coat of arms of Milan and Saint Ambrose.

250 See A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1621, p. 10. Many coins from Milan describes Francesco and Ercole Gnecci: *Le monete di Milano da Carlo Magno a Vittorio Emanuele II*, descritte ed illustrate da Francesco ed Ercole Gnecci con prefazione di Bernardino Biondelli, Milano 1884; see p. 34.

251 *The L. Biaggi Blasys collection of Roman gold coins and medallions*, (Anon. Untitled photographic plates), s.l.: s.n., ca 1999, No 1475.

252 *Andrea Alciato, Il libro degli Emblemi, secondo le edizioni del 1531 e del 1534*, ed. Mino Gabriele, by Stéphane Rolet, "Emblematica. An Interdisciplinary Journal for Emblem Studies", Vol. 19, 2012, p. 373.

253 This theory was adopted from: A. Blanchet, *Note sur la guivre des Visconti*, "Rivista italiana di numismatica e scienze affini" 21 (1908), p. 10.

serious attention.<sup>254</sup> Although not a perfect match with the coat of arms of Milan, the scene bears a resemblance to its image. Coins with this, or similar, illustration were minted in Corinth during the rule of several emperors. In addition to the aforementioned Domitian, some of these numismatic artefacts trace back to the rule of emperors Hadrian and Septimus Severus.<sup>255</sup> A similar scene is displayed on the diassarion coin minted during the rule of Lucius Verus. The reverse presents one of the heroes marching against Thebes attacking a serpent. The reptile is rising over the body of the strangled Opheltes, next to him stands Hypsipile, the nursemaid of the luckless child.<sup>256</sup> A limitation to Blanchet's theory lies in the fact that the aforementioned coins do not refer back to the times of Alexander the Great, and are in no way related to the ruler himself, which would make it particularly difficult to account for the reason why Alciato ascribed any of them to the Macedonian ruler. Unfortunately, no other available theories come any closer to unravelling the titular mystery.

Another thought-provoking attempt at establishing which coin was referred to by Alciato was made by Rubem Amaral.<sup>257</sup> The scholar posits that, rather than focusing on a faithful numismatic representation of the coat of arms of Milan, one should look into artefacts that validate Alexander's descent from Amon, some of which can indeed be found. Amaral argues that Alciato might have been mistaken to attribute the bronze coins minted by the peoples of Koinon in Macedonia between 231 and 244 AD to Alexander the Great. The obverse shows the ruler's head turned left; the reverse, a serpent crawling out of a basket, which brings to mind the so called *cista mistica* (a box used for mystical practices by the Egyptians, and later by Greeks and Romans). The Egyptian origin of the box is to imply that the serpent stands for the god Amon, who, metamorphosed into the reptile and seduced Olympias. Another group of coins considered by Amaral feature the profile of Alexander's face on the obverse, and a sitting woman feeding a serpent on the reverse. This figure is thought to personify the ruler's mother, and the scene to resemble, as above, the story of his birth.<sup>258</sup> As proposed by the scholar, another type of numismatic

254 RPC I 201.

255 M.E. Hoskins Walbank, "The Coinage of Roman Corinth", in: *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. S. Friesen, D.N. Schowalter, J. Walters, Leiden 2010, p. 190.

256 *Coins of Peloponnesos. The BCD Collection. Catalogue of public auction 96, 8–9 May 2006*, LHS Numismatics, Zurich 2006, No 1196.

257 R. Amaral jr, *Alciato's Emblem I and Some Coins of the Koinon of Macedon: An Essay of Association*, "Society For Emblem Studies Newsletter" 56 (I 2015), pp. 30–33.

258 Ibidem, p. 32.

representation linked with the emblem depicts Athena standing next to a serpent ensnaring an olive tree.<sup>259</sup> This reference, however, concerns the closing fragment of the epigram that details the birth of Athena from Zeus's head, which brings to mind the parallel way some types of snakes are born. Amaral's intuitions are in fact very refreshing. Their particular insight lies in the view that, looking for an artefact that bears a close resemblance to the coat of arms from the woodcut emblem is counter-productive. Nevertheless, although this theory opens up some research possibilities, it may hamper the accurate identification of the coin that Alciato intimated seeing as the serpent was an immensely popular motif in the ancient Greek and Roman coinage.

Among the coins connected with Alexander the Great, the artefacts that depict the ruler's mother Olympias half-lying down and a serpent may prove relevant for considerations in question, as this representation draws near to the one pointed out by Amaral. Karsten Dahmen catalogued numerous examples of such numismatic artefacts.<sup>260</sup> These coins show Alexander's head wearing a diadem on one side, and Olympias lying down next to the snake on the other. This picture comes close to other artefacts that feature, again, the diadem-adorned head of Alexander on the obverse, and Olympias sitting on the throne and feeding the snake to mirror the goddess Hygieia on the reverse.<sup>261</sup> Recurrent in the Roman coinage as well, this motif was embossed on a medal featuring the bust of Caracalla in armour on its obverse (with the inscription: ANTONIVS PIVS AVG), and Olympias lying on a bed with a snake on the reverse (inscription: REGINA).<sup>262</sup> A similar image can be found on a Roman contorniate from the times of Nero, presenting Olympias lying down and a snake eating from her hand.<sup>263</sup> These images, however, bear little resemblance to the picture of a reptile spitting out a child, or else clutching a human figure in its jaws.<sup>264</sup> Therefore, whether this type of presentation could have inspired Alciato is debateable.

259 Ibidem, p. 33.

260 See K. Dahmen, op. cit, pp. 140–141. The author lists a number of coins showing a woman in a sitting position, feeding a snake. This image, however, corresponds with traditional representations of goddess Hygieia.

261 For further reference on the representations of goddess Hygieia, see Chapter 4 below.

262 See K. Dahmen, op. cit, pp. 152–154; A. Alföldi, E. Alföldi, *Die Kontorniat-Medaillons I-II*, Berlin-New York 1976/1990, np. 410.2.

263 A. Alföldi, E. Alföldi, *Die Kontorniat-Medaillons...*, No 55, 9.

264 Similar representations of Olympias were discussed in the following sources: E. Carney, *Olympias. Mother of Alexander the Great*, London 2006, pp. 104–124.

For fear of over-quoting the examples of numismatic illustrations matching the emblem, let us only add, on a final note, that the motifs corresponding to the Visconti and Sforza coat of arms can be traced in the Roman regional coinage. Take diobols minted in Alexandria in the times of Antonius Pius (dated 145/146 AD) showing the image of Agathodaemon, incarnating a rising snake, occupying the full space of the reverse<sup>265</sup> (fig. 25). A similar illustration was embossed on tetradrachma coins minted in Alexandria during the rule of Emperor Hadrian, between 120–121 AD. In this edition, Agathodaemon is also reminiscent of one of the snakes known from the coat of arms of the rulers of Milan, and both sides of the coin contain a small-sized staff of Hermes and ear of grain<sup>266</sup> (fig. 26). Another artefact that has the earmarks of this heraldic representation is the coin of Heliogabalus dated 218–222 AD,<sup>267</sup> which has a curling serpent on its



**FIG. 25.** Diobol showing the image of Agathodaemon.



**FIG. 26.** Tetradrachma showing Agathodaemon and a small-sized staff of Hermes and an ear of grain.

265 *Monete imperiali greche. Numi Augg. Alexandrini. Catalogo della collezione by Dattari, compilato dal proprietario, Cairo: Tipografia dell' Instituto francese d'archeologia orientale, 1901, No 3065–3067.*

266 K. Emmett, *Alexandrian Coins*, Lodi (Wisconsin) 2001, No 803.

267 B. Pick, K. Regling, *Die antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien*, band I, part I, Berlin 1898, No 2001.



FIG. 27. Coin of Heliogabalus with a curling serpent on its reverse.

reverse (fig. 27). Although similar instances abound, none of them can be traced back directly to Alexander the Great, which makes the opening remark of Alciato's emblem book so resistant to interpretation. In fact, no coin has been found to match the emblem completely up to now. It is not unlikely that the jurist of Milan may have come across a rare, lost counterfeit. If this is the case, this investigation may well be futile. Either way, it can be confidently argued that the artefact in question is a coin. It is, however, far from obvious whether the coin was issued during the rule of Alexander the Great, and the misidentification of the coin in question is all too likely. Even minor damage or poor condition of the artefact may influence the results. Whatever the odds, the emblem dedicated to Maximillian Sforza is a vivid example of the significant role the ancient reverses played. Even if they did not serve as templates for emblematic depictions, they helped probe the meaning and scope of other symbols, such as heraldry and crests.

#### II.4. SAFE AND SOUND

The early scholars of Alciato discerned the relationship between his works and numismatic artefacts based on graphic representation of emblems. However, the casus studied in the previous chapter attempted to prove that, in order to fully grasp the numismatic tradition in *Emblematum liber*, one must look into the poems just as closely. What is more, it may also happen that numismatic artefacts can find their correspondence in the



word pattern of some lemmas, for which *Salus publica* [The Healthy State] offers itself as an example. The titular phrase – as will be explained in detail below – appears recurrently on Roman coins illustrating the personification of Health on the reverse.<sup>268</sup> This poem features in the second part of the book of emblems printed in Venice in the publishing house owned by the benefactors of the Renaissance typographer Aldus Manutius. In this edition, the poem precedes the emblem – mentioned in the introduction – inspired by numismatic iconography *Respublica liberata* [The Republic Restored to Freedom]. By foregrounding the symbols of national emancipation, freedom and wellbeing, both compositions are bound up thematically. Whereas *Respublica liberata* refers to the historical events revolving around the murder of Julius Caesar, the propagandistic action and subversion of the disgruntled senators that had caused it, *Salus publica* draws on the mythical legends of the god of medicine, the son of Apollo – Asclepius. Narrating the treachery of Brutus and other plotters, the composition relies on numismatic representations in its epigrammatic and graphic part.

At first glance, the link between the poem and ancient coins may be far from obvious. It was not until the work of some Alciato scholars that the relationship presented itself more vividly. What may appear as surprising is that they initially paid little attention to the title, derived directly from numismatic inscriptions. Instead, they zeroed in on the visual part of the emblem that foregrounded Asclepius (Gr. Ἀσκληπιός) incarnating a serpent. Although in the original version of the myth Asclepius stands for physical fitness and health, his role in the emblem goes beyond these typical attributes.<sup>269</sup> Accordingly, as shown in the quoted lemma, Alciato chose to depict the mythical physician as a saviour of the republic. This quality should be understood in a more general sense, and may refer to protection from a military invasion or deadly plague decimating the nation. Represented as such, Asclepius not only allegorises a miracle healer, but assumes the role of a universal tutelary deity, taking an active part in social and political matters. This interpretation is also sanctioned by the poem's distinctive place within the book, i.e. right next to the thematically related poem *Respublica liberata*.

268 See E. Manders, *Coining Images of Power. Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, A.D. 193–284*, Leiden–Boston 2012, pp. 205–220.

269 For further details on the myth of Asclepius in general, see: P. Grimal, *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, transl. A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1966, pp. 62–63. For ancient accounts of Asclepius as a symbol of medicine, see: *Asclepius. A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, by Emma J. Edelstein, Ludwig Edelstein, Baltimore 1998, pp. 267–271. For reference on Asclepius as a saviour, see: *ibidem*, pp. 264–266.



FIG. 28. Emblem *Salus publica* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1546, fol. 25v).  
Source: Alciato at Glasgow (<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/>).

The 1546 edition features an emblem illustration depicting a column with a snake on its top, and a pedestal capped with a dragon (fig. 28). This double illustration does not reflect the textual content of the epigram, which refers to only one figure. Instead, it may result from the ambiguity of the Latin word *draco*, which signifies both snake and dragon. Possibly the illustrator was confused as to which animal was at issue, or else attempted to do justice to the ambiguity of the term. In the epigram, however, one finds the more unequivocal word *anguis* in place of *draco*:

Phoebigena erectis Epidaurius insidet aris,  
Mitis et immani conditur angue deus.  
Accurrunt aegri veniatque saluter orant.  
Annuit atque ratas efficit ille preces.<sup>270</sup>

[The Epidaurian, son of Phoebus, occupies the lofty altar and this gentle god takes the form of a huge serpent. The sick hasten there and implore him to come as healer. The god acquiesces and sees that prayers are answered.]<sup>271</sup>

This double presentation of Asclepius might also have resulted from the plural form of the word *aris*. Consequently, the illustration features not

270 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1546, fol. 25v.

271 Translation adopted from <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/test1.html> [electronic source, accessed: 2017-04-03].

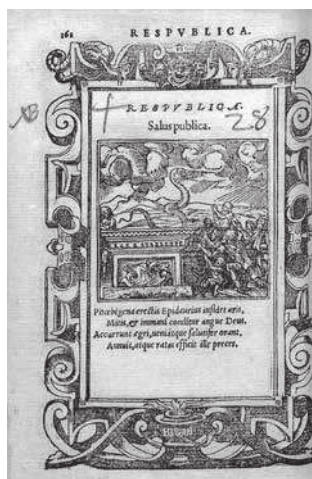


FIG. 29. Emblem *Salus publica* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1550, p. 162).  
Silesian Library, shelf mark: 232587 I.

one, but two altars, each depicting a different version of the deity. Apollo's son was represented primarily as a physician. People who prayed to him were the sick (*aegri*) in need of alleviating their physical torment. The social and political resonance of the poem makes itself manifest in the title, which tells of the god's patronage over the whole nation and its inhabitants.

Since the woodcut employed in the Venetian edition failed to reflect the textual content of the epigram, it was modified in further editions. No longer illustrated twofold, Asclepius was now represented as a serpent perched on an altar. Also added was the image of believers praying for a miracle cure. Unaltered in almost all further reprints of *Emblematum liber*, this version was found in the Lyon editions of Macé Bonhomme and Guillaume Rouille<sup>272</sup> (fig. 29). Jean Richer did not subscribe to the accepted layout. His edition, reprinted in Paris, illustrates the altar in the foreground, over which the smoke of the burning sacrifice is billowing, and the massive serpent placed nearby.<sup>273</sup> Nevertheless, the reptile seems to stand for an epiphany on Asclepius, rather than a representation of the god's image. Configured as such, the woodcut is to imitate the scene of the god's coming, invited by the imploring believers (*aegri veniatque salutifer*

272 See A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1550, p. 162.

273 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1584, fol. 206r.



FIG. 30. Emblem *Salus publica* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1621, p. 637).  
Library of the University of Warsaw, shelf mark: 72.1.18/12.

orant). After all, the latter were also included by the illustrator, with their silhouettes looming in the background. This alteration must have gained wide acclaim amongst its readers, as it was reprinted seven years later in the famous printing house in Leiden run by the benefactors of Christoph Plantin.<sup>274</sup> Given the multiple reprints of the emblem book, considerable modifications to the symbolic illustration were not uncommon. As an example, one should reach for the 1615 French edition (Geneva–Cologne).<sup>275</sup> Here, the altar is missing in the woodcut, and Asclepius incarnates a dragon, standing, it seems, before the temple, accompanied by the faithful in prayer. The Padua editions by Tozzi, however, restore the pattern authorised by Bonhomme i Rouille,<sup>276</sup> which would remain authoritative in the subsequent editions that included annotations on the 16<sup>th</sup> century sources (fig. 30).

The authors of explanatory notes to Alciato's book of emblems point to the mythical qualities of Asclepius, who was taken for the son of Apollo and either the nymph Coronis<sup>277</sup> or the Messenian princess Arsinoe.<sup>278</sup>

274 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1591, p. 179.

275 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1615, p. 207.

276 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, p. 268.

277 See PINDAR, *Pyth.* 3, 5; APOLLONODORUS 3, 118; PAUSANIAS 2, 26, 1; HYGINUS, *Fabulae* 202; OVIDIUS, *Metamorphoses* 2, 596; *Fasti* 1, 292.

278 See APOLLONODORUS 3, 118; PAUSANIAS 2, 26, 1.

He was thought to have been raised by Chiron, a famous educator of heroes, who was the first one to teach him the art of healing. To the extent that Asclepios was believed to be able to raise the dead, for which he was eventually killed by a lightning strike dealt out by Zeus and transformed into the constellation of Ophiuchus.<sup>279</sup> This figure is also associated with the symbol of the serpent, as represented in Alciato's emblem, which may result from the hero's myth itself. As the legend would have it, the young Asclepios saw a serpent carrying a mysterious life-saving herb. The hero strangled the reptile to steal the herb, which he now began to use for his medical practices. It should be remembered that since snakes were traditionally believed to have healing powers in the Greek culture, they were part and parcel of many myths.<sup>280</sup> And such was their key role, as observed by Sánchez de las Brozas.<sup>281</sup> The Spanish scholar goes on to clarifying that the fragment from Macrobius' *Saturnalia* – in which the author linked the art of healing with the powers of the moon that, in turn, are represented by the serpent – served as an original source of inspiration for Alciato's work.<sup>282</sup> Hence, the sick prayed to Asclepios incarnated in reptilian form. Another possible source of inspiration for Alciato pointed out by Sánchez de las Brozas are anecdotes by Valerius Maximus,<sup>283</sup> who introduced the legend of the cult of Esculap to the Romans after the outbreak of plague in 291 BC.<sup>284</sup>

The aforementioned fragment from *Saturnalia* best exemplifies the scene of prayer to the monument of the serpent. What Macrobius fails to mention is that Asclepios's power extends to the patronage of the whole country. Claude Mignault does not depart from this interpretation of the composition *Salus publica*. Except that his reading is palpably more Christian in terms of expression, in that on multiple occasions the author defers to the authority of the Church Fathers. This Christian resonance is doubly strengthened by the juxtaposition of the image of Asclepios as serpent with the biblical bronze snake made by Moses at God's command, which the prophet put on a pole in order to heal the Israelites bitten by

279 HYGINUS, *Astronomica* 2, 14.

280 See L. N. Pedrini, G. T. Pedrini, *Serpent imagery and symbolism: a study of the major English romantic poets*, New Haven 1966, pp. 7–8.

281 F.S. de las Brozas, op. cit., pp. 428–429.

282 MACROBIUS, *Saturnalia* 1, 20.

283 VAL. MAX. 1, 8, 2.

284 This event was described by many authors. See: OV. *Met.* 15, 620; LIV. 10, 47; 29, 11; SUET., *Claud.* 25.

reptiles on the desert.<sup>285</sup> Unlike the Spanish scholar, Mignault stresses – as stated above – the relationship between the emblem and ancient coins illustrating the personification of Salus.<sup>286</sup> The author opens his reflections on the link between Alciato's work and classical numismatics with a mysterious silver coin attributed to Antiochos I Soter, a king of the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire. Although its legitimacy is heavily contested, this coin enjoyed massive popularity in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. That its authenticity was open to question was based on the conflicting accounts of its commentators of the age, who may not have come across any of the original coins first-hand. Mignault, on his part, confused the coin with Roman artefacts, which is reflected in the following comment:

In nummo Antiochi Soteris SALVS dea Romanis habita pingebatur forma mulieris, habitu regio, sedentis, pateram tenentis, iuxta quam erat ara et ad aram involutus anguis caput attollens.<sup>287</sup>

[On the coin of Antiochos Soter, the goddess Salus, venerated by the Romans, was depicted as a sitting woman attired in royal garment, holding a patera. Next to her stood an altar on which a curled snake with a raised head was perched.]

The description raises serious suspicion as to its legitimacy. The assumption that the ruler of the Hellenistic Empire, between 281–261 BC, commissioned a coin with a Latin inscription (as indicated by the manner – imitating epigraphic convention – in which the name Salus was put together) simply does not hold water. The choice of a Roman goddess is just as unlikely – although it is possible that Mignault may have employed the Latin equivalent of the name of the Greek goddess Hygieia (Gr. Ὑγίεια). His account of the reverse of the coin eludes descriptions of all known numismatic artefacts minted during the rule of Antiochos I Soter.<sup>288</sup> The commentator possibly referred to a Roman coin depicting the goddess Salus, which he wrongly attributed to the Greek king.

Artefacts that match the quoted fragment abound. Nevertheless, Mignault's mistake may strike as surprising given that the coin of Antiochos containing symbolic motifs related to health is described at length by

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285 Lb 21, 5–9

286 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1589, p. 531.

287 Ibidem.

288 Some similarity, however, can be found in the coins depicting the sitting Apollo, who may bring to mind a female figure (See BMC 7). However, it seems unlikely that the similarity should be prominent enough to account for Mignault's mistake.

Constanzo Landi. The third chapter of his disquisition on numismatics was titled *Antiochi Soteris Salus* [Salus of Antiochos Soter].<sup>289</sup> The description of the artefact passed on by the Italian numismatics scholar differs markedly from the one found in the explanatory notes to Alciao's emblem, which goes as follows:

In argenteis Antiochi numismatibus, illis quidem vetustis, vidimus Antiochi ipsius imaginem signumque ex altera parte huiusmodi: cum notis erat triplex triangulus inter se quinquelinearis, in quo Ὑγίεια erat inscriptum et SALVS, quod etiam Lucianus Samosatensis *De compellationis errore* notavit τριπλοῦν τρίγωνον δι' ἀλλήλων τὸ πεντάγραμμον<sup>290</sup>, quod est idem quod triangulus triplex inter se quinquelinearis, hoc autem symbolum Graece πεντάγωνον dicitur, verba autem illa ὕγεια salutem, seu sanitatem designant.<sup>291</sup>

[The old silver coins of Antiochos feature an illustration of the ruler himself, alongside the following sign on the reverse: a triple triangle with five mutual lines and the inscription Ὑγίεια and SALVS. In his *A Slip of the Tongue in Greeting*, Lucian of Samosata described this figure as follows: τριπλοῦν τρίγωνον δι' ἀλλήλων τὸ πεντάγραμμον, meaning a triple triangle with five mutual lines. In Greek this symbol is referred to as a pentagon [πεντάγωνον]. The word ὕγεια signifies health or wellbeing.]

The coin suggested by Landi is no less contentious seeing as, again, the Latin inscription SALVS features on a Seleucid coin. The Latin scholar cites Lucian of Samosata as a main reference. This, however, is incorrect. All that can be found in the Greek writer's account is the legend of a revelation experienced by Antiochos before the battle against the Galatians.<sup>292</sup> According to the tale, Alexander the Great appeared to the king and had him command his soldiers to utter the slogan ὕγεια in the battle, which was to ensure victory. This revelation proved prophetic, as Antioch vanquished the adversary. Nevertheless, the reference to the coins minted to commemorate this event is missing from Lucian's account. His text only makes mention of a pentagram symbolising goddess Hygieia quoted by Landi.<sup>293</sup> Furthermore, contemporary scholarship knows of no coin that contains Antioch's

289 C. Landi, *Selectiorum numismatum expositiones...*, pp. 12–19.

290 The exact fragment from Lucian goes as follows (*Laps.* 5): τριπλοῦν αὐτοῖς τρίγωνον, τὸ δι' ἀλλήλων, τὸ πεντάγραμμον.

291 C. Landi, op. cit., p. 12.

292 LUCIANUS, *Laps.* 9.

293 LUCIANUS, *Laps.* 5.



head on the obverse, and the pentagram with the inscription “health” in Greek and Latin on the reverse. The description of this coin must have been accessed by the Italian scholar from an unrelated source.

In all probability, the source in question was none other than the celebrated tract on Kabbalah by Johann Reuchlin, one of the earliest Renaissance Hebrew scholars, also known as Capion (Gr. Καπνίων). Reuchlin is mentioned by Constanzo Landi, who claimed that the former had seen the pentagram-adorned coin. The German-born humanist scholar is therefore the only eye-witness attesting to the existence of the contentious artefact. This coin is described at length towards the end of the third book of *De arte cabbalistica* [On the Art of Kabbalah] (editio princeps: Haguenau 1517), where the author recounts the legend of Antiochos’s revelation and cites Lucian as a source (later referred to by Landi). Indeed, the scholar claims to have seen the coin first hand:

Ego ipse perfecto illud pentagoni symbolum saepe in Antiochi argentea moneta percussus vidi, quo resolutum in lineas ostendit vocabulum ὑγίεια, id est sanitas.<sup>294</sup>

[I happened to see in person the pentagram minted on the silver coin of Antiochos many a time. Each line featured the word ὑγίεια, namely health.]

This note implies that the coin contained the legend in Greek only, which is confirmed by the rather formulaic description of the pattern under discussion included in the marginal notes of the 1517 edition. The Latin version, added by Landi, may have resulted from the author’s misreading of his predecessor’s text. Reuchlin is silent about the obverse featuring the face of the Seleucid ruler, too. If Landi relied on the German humanist’s account alone, he evidently enriched it, and in doing so, distorted the original description of the coin. Such distortions resulted in imprecise explanatory notes provided by Claude Mignault.

Reuchlin’s version, however, seems fairly accurate. The pentagram is indeed one of the symbolic figures appearing on Hellenic coins, the most widespread of which were silver drachmas minted in Ionia (Colophon) by Lysimachus between 301 and 297 BC. The obverse shows lion-skin clad Hercules to right; the reverse, Zeus seated left on a throne.<sup>295</sup> On the god’s

294 J. Reuchlin, *De arte cabalistica libri tres Leoni X dicati*, Haguenau: apud Thomam Anshelmum, III 1517, fol. LXXVIIIv.

295 Price 1836.



**FIG. 31.** Silver tetradrachma with pentagram minted by Seleucus I Nicator. Price P229.



**FIG. 32.** Macedonian coin with a pentagram placed under a horse's belly. SNG ANS 858.

hand there is an eagle, in front of the throne an image of the lion's head, under the throne the pentagram under discussion. The same pattern recurred on coins minted by Alexander the Great. The coins were issued in large quantities and manifold versions, with only minor differences. The pentagram, however, remained unaltered. The above pattern was also copied by other Hellenic rulers, such as Seleucus I Nicator on his silver tetradrachmas minted between 300 and 281 BC,<sup>296</sup> which testifies to the widespread popularity of the artefact (fig. 31). The pentagram itself had already been in use on Macedonian coins during the rule of Philip II of Macedon. It is embossed on artefacts that show Apollo's head girt with a diadem on the obverse, and a horseman with a pentagram placed under the horse's belly on the reverse<sup>297</sup> (fig. 32). This figure is also typical for coins issued in Pitane (Mysia).<sup>298</sup> On their obverse there was Zeus-Am-

296 Price P229.

297 SNG ANS 858.

298 SNG France 2349–55.



FIG. 33. Pitane coin with a full size pentagram on its reverse. SNG France 2349-55.

mon's head; the reverse presented a full size pentagram with the name of the city in it (fig. 33).

As regards Alciato's emblem, Mignault seems to attach cardinal importance to the Roman coins illustrating the goddess Salus and the legends she is associated with. As a reminder, the French scholar mentions the goddess in an explanatory note, thus doing justice to the epigraphic tradition. By doing so, the author demonstrated that the name appeared on ancient coins. This was later confirmed by Johann Thulius, who in his extended Padua edition added other numismatic artefacts to Mignault's note. The scholar puts forth three examples.<sup>299</sup> The first was to contain the inscription SALVS ANTONINI AVG (*salus Antonini Augusti*). The description of this coin is scarce, as it only mentions the image of a curled serpent (*est ille nummus in spiram collectum serpentem habens*). Another artefact detailed in the notes presented a serpent wrapped around a cane (*serpens est tractu sinuoso tortilique obrepens virgae*). Whether the legend went with the illustration was left unsaid. Another coin depicted the goddess Salus holding a cane in her left hand and a cup pointing at the serpent in the other (*Dea ipsa laeva virgam gerit, dextra poculum angui porrigit*) with the inscription: SALVS AVG COS III (*salus Augusti consuli III*). Thulius asserts that there are other artefacts depicting the goddess seated, holding a patera, from which the serpent is eating. The scholar adds that the illustration contains the legend: SALVS AVG (*salus Augusti*). The last on the list of Roman numismatic artefacts – and one that is of utmost importance here – is the coin containing a legend compatible with the title of the emblem: SALVS PVBLICA. Commissioned by Alexander Sever, the coin presented the ruler's profile as well as goddess Salus with a patera extended towards the serpent.

299 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1621, p. 641.



**FIG. 34.** Silver denarius with the seated goddess Salus. RIC IV 84.



**FIG. 35.** Silver denarius with Salus seated and holding two ears of grain. RIC II 20.

The author assumes that the serpent stands for salvation, just as in Alciato's version. All the same, since the numismatic context was further stressed in one of the last editions of the book, it may be crucial to determine the sources accessed by Thulius on the Roman coins illustrating the serpent and goddess Salus. Curiously enough, he did not use the earlier notes that mentioned the coin of Antiochos Soter alone: one that was wrongly referenced by Claude Mignault. (In his explanatory notes, Thulius for some reason copied this ungrounded information<sup>300</sup>). Because such artefacts proliferated, it is likely that the scholar had come across the coins first hand.

Coins depicting the goddess Salus feeding a serpent were popular across various periods of the Roman Empire. The figure was presented either seated or standing. Silver denarius coins minted by Macrinus have the goddess seated: the reverse shows the goddess accompanied by the inscription: *SALVS PVBLICA*<sup>301</sup> (fig. 34). The standing goddess appears on sestercius coins of Philip the Arab with the legend *SALVS AVGV*.<sup>302</sup> The inscription *SALVS PVBLICA*, used to complement the image of the goddess of health, appears not only on the coins of Macrinus and Septimus Severus,<sup>303</sup> but also on the artefacts from the time of Emperor Nerva: the goddess was then placed on silver denarius coins<sup>304</sup> (fig. 35). The image, however, differs markedly from the one under discussion. On the coins minted during the rule of the emperor, the goddess is seated, too, but

300 Ibidem.

301 RIC IV 84.

302 RIC IV 187a.

303 RIC IV 178.

304 RIC II 20.



FIG. 36. Silver medal based on a sestercus of Commodus, minted by Giovanni da Cavino.

rather than feeding Asclepius, she is holding two ears of grain. The rich variety of artefacts representing the image associated with Alciato's emblem and its description implies that the commentators of *Emblematum liber* might have come across one of the aforementioned coins in person. Furthermore, the artefacts in question exerted an enormous influence on the Renaissance medal art. The figure of Salus feeding the serpent can be found on a silver medal minted in Padua by Giovanni da Cavino (based on a sestercus of Commodus<sup>305</sup>), completed in 1550<sup>306</sup> (fig. 36).

It may be worth pointing out that, apart from the authentic coins, Thulius also had at his disposal numismatic commentaries, which were widely available in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Artefacts that portrayed the goddess Salus were discussed by many scholars, such as Constanzo Landi, among others. The Italian commentator makes mention of this motif alongside an analysis of the coin of Antioch in a single chapter. Among the examples of serpents as symbols of health or salvation, Landi cites Alciato's emblem followed by a reference to a coin of Faustina the Younger: an item in the scholar's private collection presented by his friend from Como, Giuseppe Benzi. The coin was made from copper and illustrated Salus seated, extending a patera to the serpent (*mulier sedens, quae pateram angui in arula porrigebat*<sup>307</sup>). The coin contained the inscription: SALVTI AVGVSTAE SC (*saluti Augustae senatus consulto*). This inscription is easily identifiable today. Fully compatible with Landi's account,<sup>308</sup> the artefact in question is most probably a sestercus coin minted between 161 and 164 AD.

305 BMC 556.

306 G.F. Hill, G. Pollard, *Reviewed Work: Renaissance Medals from the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the National Gallery of Art.*, London 1967, No 409.

307 C. Landi, *Selectiorum numismatum expositiones...*, p. 13.

308 RIC III 1668.

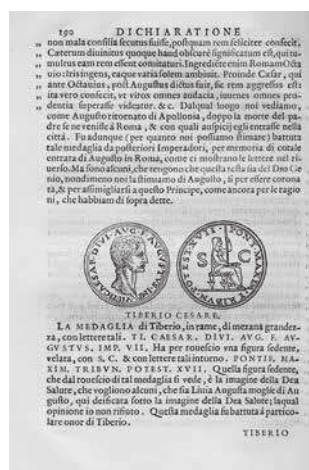


FIG. 37. S. Erizzo, *Discorso sopra le medaglie antiche...*, in Vinegia: apresso Giovanni Varisco et compagni, 1571, p. 190. Woodcut showing the reverse with a seated woman covered with a veil.

Examples of similar objects were scrutinised by Sebastiano Erizzo. In his *Discorso sopra le medaglie*, the scholar included the image of a coin attributed to Tiberius<sup>309</sup> (fig. 37). In the author's account, the woodcut shows the reverse with a seated woman covered with a veil (*Ha per verso una figura sedente, velata*). She is holding a long sceptre in her hand, surrounded by the inscription: PONT MAXIM TRIBVN POTES XVII (*pontifex Maximus tribunicia potestate XVII*). Seeking to identify the figure, Erizzo proposed two possibilities: one of the goddess Salus (*Dea Salute*); the other, Livia, the wife of Emperor Augustus, represented as the goddess Salus following her deification.<sup>310</sup> The artefact under Erizzo's scrutiny is merely one of many representations of Salus: one curiously overlooked in the lengthy catalogue of related objects compiled by Johann Thulius. The main reason for this lack of reference to the artefact is possibly the missing serpent: an element that is germane to grasping the meaning of notes to Alciano's emblem. Three coins of Salus accompanied by the serpent are, however, reproduced by Guillaume du Choul. The French collector ascribes the items to Antonius Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Manius Acilius Aviola.<sup>311</sup>

309 S. Erizzo, *Discorso sopra le medaglie...*, p. 158.

310 For further information on representations of Livia as Salus, see: N. Kokkinos, *Antonia Augusta: portrait of a great Roman lady*, London–New York 1992, p. 91.

311 G. du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains...*, pp. 106–107.



In completing the previous explanatory notes, Thulius refused to cite the aforementioned numismatic tracts. One of his key sources was *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano, who for the purpose of analysing the symbolism of the serpent attempted to account for its popularity on Roman coins.<sup>312</sup> Interestingly enough, although Thulius makes no mention of using the work of the renowned scholar of ancient symbols, it is from *Hieroglyphica* that the scholar accessed the artefacts missing from Mignault's and de las Brozas's research, at times quoting the work verbatim. This is to prove the point that symbolic representations modelled on the Roman coins were well-known in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as exemplified in the scholarly works on numismatics and the famous opus by Valeriano. Finally, the reflections on numismatics were being gradually introduced to the emblematic tradition at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. This, however, does not belittle the fact that Alciato collected numismatic artefacts himself, which had a profound impact on his work, as further explained below.

## II.5. TWO FACES OF THE EMBLEM *PRUDENTES*

A curious case in point for the present study, the composition *Prudentes* (*The Wise Men*) calls for closer scrutiny. A crucial factor that testifies to its relevance is that the work is related to the tract *In veterum numismatum Romanorum miscellanea explicationes* by Constanzo Landi. First published in 1546 in Venice, it continued to be reprinted under its original title in further issues of Andrea Alciato's emblem book. The artwork of the composition was, however, considerably modified. Its first edition, issued in the publishing house owned by the beneficiaries of Aldus Manutius, included the nude figure of Janus seated on a stone chair<sup>313</sup> (fig. 38). One of his faces is young; the other, covered in thick stubble. Between the god's legs is a key: presumably a token of his supremacy over of the symbols of beginnings and transitions, like doors or gates. In its further editions, the image was limited to the Italic god's head. The illustrations showed Janus's upper parts alone: the two heads looking to opposite directions. The image was usually suspended over the ground against the backdrop of variously portrayed landscapes. In some editions, the landscape was rural;<sup>314</sup> others depicted either urban constructions,<sup>315</sup> or the remains of

312 P. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica*..., f. 117 v.

313 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1546, fol. 6 v.

314 See A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1550, p. 24.

315 See A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1567, p. 33.



FIG. 38a. Emblem *Prudentes* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1546, fol. 6v.).

Source: Alciato at Glasgow (<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/>).



FIG. 38b. Emblem *Prudentes* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1621, p. 84). Library of the University of Warsaw, shelf mark: 7.2.1.18/12.

ancient buildings.<sup>316</sup> Either way, the background plays a decorative role at best, with little bearing on the work's overall meaning. Notably, unlike the Venetian edition, all reprints of *Emblematum liber* presented Janus as an old man, with his both faces bearded, as a symbol of advanced age. Another interesting version of the image can be found on the plate of the Parisian edition issued in Carolus Rogerius's printing house.<sup>317</sup> In terms of style, this image, featuring Janus's bust on a pedestal, comes close to the other version that presented only the god's head. As in the latter, so also here both faces are unmistakably bearded.

In the first Venetian edition, the emblem *Prudentes* was placed between the works *Antiquissima quaeque commentitia* (The oldest things are all invented) and *In fraudulentos* (Against Deceivers). Vaguely related only to the former of these works, such a position within the collection appears as all but arbitrary. By foregrounding the changeable Proteus as a symbol of the past, *Antiquissima*, much like the emblem depicting Janus, takes as its focus ancient matters.<sup>318</sup> According to Alciato, Classical antiquity

316 See A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1577, p. 115.

317 See A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1583, p. 89.

318 For further information about this emblem, see A. Rolet, "Le Protée d'André Alciat et les Protée d'Achille Bocchi (dans le «Symbolum» à Renée de France et les manuscrits): variations emblématiques, entre philologie et théologie", in: *Protée en trompe-l'oeil. Genèse et survivances d'un mythe, d'Homère à Bouchardon*, Rennes 2010, pp. 429–499.

exists as an idea that takes on an individualised form.<sup>319</sup> In both works, the mythical figures associated with old age played a symbolic role. Interestingly, while Proteus is of a distinctly Greek origin,<sup>320</sup> Janus is an Italic god that can hardly claim a Hellenic lineage.<sup>321</sup> Although Plutarch was one of the few who traced Janus's provenance back to Ancient Greece,<sup>322</sup> this diagnosis might have been biased by the author's own Greek origin. Janus does not allegorise the past itself. He is rather a symbol of a sage, endowed with the knowledge of things past, as well as those still to come. (However, clairvoyance was also attributed to Proteus). The reference to this can be found in the following epigram (unmodified in all editions):

Iane bifrons, qui iam transacta futuraque calles,  
 Quique retro sannas sicut et ante vides,  
 Tot te cur oculis, tot fingunt vultibus? An quod  
 Circumspectum hominem forma fuisse docet?<sup>323</sup>

[Two-faced Janus, you who know the things that have already passed and the things to come, and who can see the grimaces behind you just as well as those before, why do they fashion you with so many eyes and why so many faces? Is it because your image teaches men to have kept an eye open all around them?]<sup>324</sup>

Even if one were to accept that both emblems relate to matters of the past, there is little to link them together. By combining both books of the Italian jurist – meaning the Lyon editions – the emblem in question changed position within the collection accordingly. Arranged by theme, the emblem was placed in the section on the concept of wisdom (*prudentia*).

To put *Prudentes* together with emblems related to numismatic iconography may strike as unexpected at first glance. Although the motif of

319 A. Alciato 1546, fol. 6 r.

320 See *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman biography and mythology*, ed. W. Smith, Boston 1867, pp. 553–554.

321 Notably, Janus was a subject of keen interest of Greek mythographers, who modified his myth. cf. e.g.: R. Schilling, "Janus, dieu introducteur, dieu des passages", in: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 72 (1960), p. 97.

322 PLUTARCHUS, *Quaestiones Romanae* 22.

323 A. Alciato 1546, fol. 6 v. Some differences in graphics and punctuation between the versions of both texts in selected editions were listed by Mason Tung (Variorum Edition of Alciato, electronic resources: <http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/tung/alciatotungedition-018.pdf> [accessed 2017-04-03]).

324 English translation of fragments from Alciato's book of emblems accessed from: <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/test1.html> [accessed: 2017-04-03].

two-faced Janus was commonly illustrated on Roman coins, especially during the times of the Republic,<sup>325</sup> it goes without saying that the deity is simply reckoned amongst the top most popular figures of the classical canon overall. As a result, it should come as no surprise that the image is to be found on a plethora of ancient material artefacts: architectural works, remains of sculptures, and engraved gems, to list but a few. Since the motif also often inspired modern artists likewise, Janus was included in many 16<sup>th</sup> century works.<sup>326</sup> With all this in mind, it is far from conclusive whether the numismatic pattern might have had any bearing on the emblem's composition. Furthermore, the image was also often employed in literary works.<sup>327</sup> That such influences permeate Alciato's emblem is exemplified in the epigram that refers to Persius's first satire. The Roman poet mentions the two-faced god in a manner later imitated by Alciato:

O Iane, a tergo quem nulla ciconia pinsit,  
nec manus auriculas imitari mobilis albas,  
nec linguae quantum sitiatis canis Apula tantae.  
Vos, o patricius sanguis, quos vivere fas est  
occipiti caeco, posticae occurrere sannae.<sup>328</sup>

[O lucky Janus, never to have a stork's bill pecking at your behind – or a hand that can imitate by its motion a donkey's white ears, or a length of tongue protruded like an Apulian dog's in the dog-days! But you, my aristocratic friends, whom Nature has ordained to live with no eyes behind you, turn round and face this back-stairs gibing.]<sup>329</sup>

Naturally, Persius is not alone in referring to Janus. The Roman god was in fact invoked by many prominent poets, whose works might have directly inspired Alciato. For instance, Janus is described by Macrobius as the first king of Latium.<sup>330</sup> More often than not, however, Janus is depicted

325 B.E. Woytek, *The Denarius Coinage of the Roman Republic*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. W. Metcalf, Oxford–New York 2012, pp. 325–326.

326 *The Classical Tradition*, ed. A. Grafton, G.W. Most, S. Settis, Cambridge (MA)–London 2010, pp. 495–496.

327 V. Gasperoni Panella, M. G. Cittadini Fulvi, *Dal mondo antico al cristianesimo sulle tracce di Giano: il simbolismo della porta e del passaggio in relazione al dio bifronte*, Perugia 2008, pp. 15–31.

328 PERSIUS 1, 58–62.

329 *The Satires of A. Persius Flaccus*, with a translation and commentary by J. Conington [...], edited by H. Nettleship [...], Oxford 1872, pp. 19–20.

330 MACROBIUS, *Saturnalia* 1, 7, 20.

as a god of beginnings and endings, hence he was thought of as a patron of transitions, such as gates, and the inauguration of the calendar year.<sup>331</sup> Considered as such, the deity was amply depicted by Ovid in his *Fasti*.<sup>332</sup> Janus can also be traced in Book XIV of *Metamorphoses*, which gathers all the Italic myths.<sup>333</sup> The god is characteristically described as a two-faced figure, regularly included in emblematic illustrations in all reprinted editions of the work, and no less so in literary works. Janus addresses himself as *bi-frons* [two-faced], which leaves no doubt as to the way in which the readers should imagine the deity. The god goes by this name in Alciato's work, too.

It is worth noting that Janus's popularity in modernity could be attributed to his associations with the biblical Noah. According to this reading of the story, the biblical patriarch settled in Italy after the flood, where, having adopted the name of Janus, he became the founding father of the Etruscan civilisation. He founded numerous cities, invented the Etruscan language, and introduced various inventions that revolutionised daily lives of inhabitants of the Italian Peninsula. The origins of this legend can be found in mediaeval sources, such as the popular guidebook for pilgrims visiting Rome, *Graphia aurea urbis Romae*<sup>334</sup> [Account of the Golden City of Rome]. This work was reedited and popularised by the 15<sup>th</sup> century Dominican historian Annio da Viterbo (Giovanni Nanni), which exerted an enormous influence on the 16<sup>th</sup> century state of knowledge. Known for numerous counterfeits,<sup>335</sup> the scholar sought to identify Janus with Noah in his 1498 printed edition of *Commentaria super opera diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus loquentium* [Comments on the Works of Various Authors Writing about Antiquity]. A similar thesis was attributed to the Chaldean chronicler Berosus, whose works – regularly reprinted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century – were published and commented on by Annio da Viterbo. The chronicler was reputed to have dedicated book three of his historical work to unravelling the question of the identity of Janus and Noah. In its earlier editions, the book is titled *Berosi de antiquitate Iani patris, quem Noam nominat, liber* [Book of Berosus Concerning the Forefather Janus,

331 See: AUGUSTINUS, *De civitate Dei* 7, 9; SERVIUS Aen. 1, 449; FESTUS, *De verborum significatu* s.v. Chaos.

332 OVIDIUS, *Fasti* 1, 89–293.

333 OVIDIUS, *Metamorphoses* 14, 320–396; 772–804.

334 See: I.D. Rowland, *The Scarith of Scornello: A Tale of Renaissance Forgery*, Chicago 2004, pp. 32–33.

335 R. Fubini, "NANNI, Giovanni (Annio da Viterbo)", in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 77 (2012), electronic resources accessed from: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-nanni\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-nanni_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/) [date of access: 2017-03-29].

Known as Noah].<sup>336</sup> Interestingly, one of the arguments in favour of the theory to equate these two characters of different lineage – the Italic mythology and the Bible respectively – were the republican coins of Janus. Many of these artefacts showed a prow of a ship, variously interpreted as an ark.<sup>337</sup> Roman scholars claim that the prow is to commemorate Saturn's arrival in Italy, hosted by Janus.<sup>338</sup> Others posit that the illustration is a tribute to Janus, who was believed to have invented the ship.<sup>339</sup> Either way, the fact that the artefacts were commonly available can be attested by Macrobius's account of a popular game played by the local boys of his time. The game resembles the popular pastime of coin-tossing. Back in the days, the coins illustrating the Italic god and the ship were used specifically for the purpose of this game, referred to as *capita aut navia* [heads or ships].<sup>340</sup> The tradition of linking Janus with Noah was also looked into by the Alciato commentators, who cite Berosus as a source of information on the subject, mindful of the questionable legitimacy of the legend.<sup>341</sup> None of them makes any mention of the ship as being in any way related to the biblical flood.

It is worth mentioning – if only in passing – that Janus, for his part, was associated with the rather singular temple located in the Roman Forum. The building consisted of two doors, opened upon the commencement of war, and closed during peacetime. The 16<sup>th</sup> century reader accessed this account from many ancient authors.<sup>342</sup> The lost temple was also depicted on numismatic images, such as a bronze sesterce minted by Nero<sup>343</sup> (fig. 39). Although these artefacts did not serve to popularise the god's image itself, they helped raise awareness of its significance in the Roman tradition.

The proliferation of sources flies in the face of the assumption positing that the emblem *Prudentes* should be inextricably intertwined with

336 See: *Berosi sacerdotis Chaldaici Antiquitatum libri quinque cum commentariis Ioannis Annii Vitebensis [...]*, Antverpiae: in aedibus Ioannis Steelsii, 1545, fol. 22v.–27v.

337 G. Stanley Faber, *The Origin of Pagan Idolatry Ascertained from Historical Testimony and Circumstantial Evidence*, vol. 2, London 1816, pp. 371–373.

338 MACROBIUS, *Saturnalia* 1, 7, 21–23.

339 ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae* 15, 46.

340 MACROBIUS, *Saturnalia* 1, 7, 22.

341 F. Sanches de las Brosas, op. cit., pp. 87–88.

342 This subject is discussed in depth by Ronald Syme: *Problems about Janus*, “The American Journal of Philology” vol. 100, No 1 (A Special Issue in Honor of James Henry Oliver), spring 1979, pp. 188–212.

343 See: RIC I 283 (with the reverse legend: PACE P R TERRA MARIQ PARTA IANVM CLVSIT).



FIG. 39. Janus's temple on the bronze sestertius minted by Nero. RIC I 266.

numismatic iconography: one put forward in a 16<sup>th</sup> century commentary to Alciato's book. Claude Mignault was the first one to comment on the coins depicting Janus, with an eye to linking the woodcut engraving that illustrated the lemma and epigram with the familiar image of the god known from numismatic artefacts. It seems unlikely, however, that this attempt should hold a key to unpacking the meaning of the composition. The French scholar makes a curious observation towards the end of his commentary:

Imago Iani bifrontis, sed corona spicea, in nummis etiam nunc conspicitur, tributa Pompeio ob curam annonae, de qua Erisius in *Nomismatibus*. Qua similitudine deceptus Theodorus Canterus eandem effigiem Iano tribuit libro ultimo *Variarum lectionum*.<sup>344</sup>

[The coin illustrates the two-faced Janus wearing a wreath made from ears of grain, which was offered to Pompey to commemorate his patronage of the supply of grain, as detailed by Erizzo in his work on numismatics. Struck by the similarity, Theodor Canterus attributed the same appearance to Janus in the final book of *Variarum lectionum*.]

In this note, Mignault does not claim to have seen the coin in person, but refers to two studies on the artefact. First, the aforementioned *Discurso sopra le medaglie antiche* by Sebastiano Erizzo; second, published only in 1574 *Variae lectiones* [Various Lessons], authored by the eminent aficionado of antiquity, mayor of Utrecht, Dirk Canter. This implies that

344 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1589, p. 94.



the fragment had not been added to the commentary until after the date of the above edition, which makes the French jurist himself a late-comer to studies in numismatics.

In his work, Erizzo dedicates little attention to representations of Janus. They are only brought up in the part discussing the invention of money and one on ancient coinage.<sup>345</sup> That the coin was minted by Pompey was mentioned by the author only in passing.<sup>346</sup> The Roman emperor is reckoned amongst other issuers: Marcus Antonius and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. The scholar adds that such eminent figures abound, hence attesting to the popularity of Janus as a numismatic motif of the times of the Republic. Curiously enough, it is far from evident from Erizzo's account that the deity shown on the obverse was adorned with a wreath to commemorate the supply of grain to Rome (*cura annonae*). Therefore, Mignault's remark that for further reference on that matter the reader should see Erizzo's work, may appear as all too confounding. To make matters worse, the Italian scholar of numismatics failed to include any images of the artefacts under scrutiny.

More information concerning the note in question can be found in the work of the other scholar cited by Mignault. Dirk Canter dedicated all of paragraph XXIII of the third book of his work to the coin of Janus,<sup>347</sup> where the latter is believed to have invented writing, ships, agriculture, and many other achievements of civilisation. His greatest accomplishment was, however, the invention of money, as indicated in the extended title of the introduction to this part of the work: *Ianum primum omnium aëros nummos cudisse auctoritate antiqui cuiusdam scriptoris confirmatum, eiusque nummi figura e tenebris eruta* [Janus was the first to mint coins from bronze, as demonstrated by a notable author of antiquity, as well as the image of his coin recovered from the darkness].<sup>348</sup> The passage dedicated to Janus was largely based on the works of Macrobius and Athenaeus. Interestingly, however, the argument proper develops from a tribute to Johannes Sambucus and his impressive library. Dirk Canter stresses his indebtedness to the Hungarian scholar for including the coins of the Italic two-faced god. The numismatic image under consideration

345 S. Erizzo, *Discorso sopra le medaglie...*, pp. 21–30.

346 Ibidem, p. 35.

347 D. Canter, *Variarum lectionum libri duo [...]*, Antverpiae: ex officina Christophori Plantini [...], 1574, pp. 125–127.

348 Ibidem, p. 125.



FIG. 40. Coin with the two faces of Janus in Sambucus's *Emblemata et aliquot nummi antiqui* (Antwerp 1576, p. 293). National Library of Poland, shelf mark: SD XVI.O.4147.

features in the third edition of Sambucus's book of emblems,<sup>349</sup> which is, in all probability, the source that Canter refers to (fig. 40). The woodcut does match the description derived from Alciato's commentary. The medallion shows two laureate heads of Janus on one side, and three prows with the inscription ROMANI VIRI on the reverse. It is worth pointing out that the printer Christoph Plantin used the same woodblock to illustrate Cramer's work. With the exact illustration matching the attached description now available for the reader, Sambucus's emblems published in the same house seemed dispensable at best. And it is interestingly the only illustration to be seen in Canter's book. It is worth noting that this numismatic supplement helped promote Sambucus's work. Its popularity further influenced the spread of numismatic illustrations found in the works of the Hungarian scholar. One of which was cited by Claude Mignault as a source for analysing Alciato's work.

Mignault's preoccupation with the ancient Roman coin in an attempt to scrutinise Alciato's poem arises from the development of classical studies, including ancient numismatics. It is unlikely that the commentator

349 J. Sambucus, *Emblemata et aliquot nummi antiqui operis [...], tertia editio [...]*, Antverpiae: ex officina Christophori Plantini 1569, p. 293.

himself ever came across the coin of Janus first-hand: his knowledge was limited to the image accessed from Dirk Canter's work. This is, however, no evidence that Alciato drew on the ancient coin to complete *Prudentes*. Ironically, Mignault overlooked a crucial source that makes it evident that the Italian jurist was familiar with the coin, and the image embossed on it was interpreted in keeping with the emblem *Prudentes*. The work in question is *In veterum numismatum Romanorum miscellanea explicationes* by Constanzo Landi. The first chapter of this book is fully committed to the Janus coins. Not only does Landi examine their symbolism and historical and cultural background of the numismatic artefacts, but he also discusses his own and Alciato's collections. The author begins his argument as follows:

Fuit apud me, iam sunt aliquot anni, nummus argenteus perantiquus, quem postea Alciato magno cum nonnullis aliis prope centum antiquissimis in sacculo fune argenteo adligato dono dedi, ubi ex altera parte fuit imago Iani bifrontis cum hac inscriptione: IANVS BIFRONS. In altera vero fuit prora navis [...].<sup>350</sup>

Erstwhile, many years have passed since I owned an ancient silver coin, which I later – along with nearly hundred other ancient artefacts – presented to the great Alciato in a pouch bound with a silver ribbon. One side showed Janus with the inscription IANVS BIFRONS: the other one a prow ...]

As indicated, Alciato was presented with the coin under consideration along with other artefacts of this sort by his former disciple. Regrettably, Landi failed to provide any account of the coins mentioned in passing. It is not unlikely that the collection listed other coins echoed in Alciato's works. Unfortunately, it is far from clear when exactly the author of *Emblematum liber* was given the silver coin, and whether it happened before 1546. Either way, that the coin was of the utmost interest to Landi is reflected in the subsequent part of the work, in which he relates his conversation with Alciato on the subject of the artefact. This fragment implies that the Italian jurist entertained an informed personal opinion on the matter. It is possible that he had learned about the motif from elsewhere. The following comment on the image sails very close to the meaning of the emblem:

350 C. Landi, *In veterum numismatum Romanorum miscellanea explicationes*, Lugduni: apud Sebastianum de Honoratis, 1560, p. 1.

[...] interpretabamur Alciatus et ego tunc ideo sic effictum fuisse numisma illud, quia priscos Latinos olim efferum genus, cum pastoritiam vitam egeret, e fera agrestique vita et legibus et omnium rerum affluentia, quae illuc terra marique importabantur, a Iano, qui cultioris vite modum invenit, excultos denotaret.<sup>351</sup>

[Together with Alciato, I believe that the coin's shape owes to the fact that the ancient barbarian Latins, who made a living as shepherds, became civilised and liberated from their savage ways and severe conditions on the land and sea alike by Janus, who invented ways of organising the cultural life].

Alciato and Landi posited that Janus was included on the Roman coins to commemorate his contribution to the Italic culture and civilisation, which in effect laid the foundations of the future Roman Empire to come. The god is, in a sense, a founding father of the empire that extended across the Mediterranean: a powerful argument that may have inspired Landi to commence his work with an analysis of the artefacts related to the motif. Not least did he touch on the invention of money – which, as stated above, was attributed to Janus – but also detailed the foundation of the Italic civilisation. One can be forgiven for thinking that the Janus coins go some way to opening up a vast array of motifs taken from the artefacts minted during Roman times. Landi goes as far as to give priority to the Italic god over Aeneas. The coin depicting the Trojan prince carrying his father Anchises on his shoulders away from the burning Troy was described later in the second chapter.<sup>352</sup> It is worth noticing that Janus's accomplishments are not military ones.<sup>353</sup> His legacy is defined by wisdom and inventiveness, rather than spectacular conquests. This reading is compatible with the one found in the emblem, in which he was allegorised as a wise man. Accordingly, it appears that linking the work in question with numismatic illustrations is fully justified. Landi's account implies that numismatic references were crucial for the author of *Emblematum liber*, despite the enormous popularity of the motif of Janus both in classical and Renaissance culture.

Nevertheless, to determine the exact coin that Landi had in mind may be insurmountably challenging. The only references on this subject registered by the Italian scholar of numismatics concern the material from

351 Ibidem.

352 Ibidem, pp. 6–11. More on Aeneas carrying his father as an embodiment of virtue (*pietas*), see Chapter 6.

353 That Janus was not a warrior is stressed by Plutarch: *Quaestiones Romanae* 21.

which the coin was made, as well as the illustrations on the obverse and reverse. Silver coins illustrating Janus and ships are associated with the Republic in particular. The ancient writers underscored the popularity of this sort of numismatic artefacts in times preceding the rule of Augustus, with which the artefacts were identified during the Renaissance, as pointed by Erizzo and Landi. Therefore, the author of *In veterum numismatum Romanorum miscellanea explicationes* most probably refers to one of the objects originated in this period. Coins illustrating the two-faces of Janus on the obverse, and either a prow of galley, or Jupiter holding a sceptre and thunder, placed on a quadriga driven by Victoria on the reverse, were already commonplace back in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The latter illustration appeared on Roman silver coins, referred to as quadrigatus. The deity pictured on the artefact is accompanied by the legend: ROMA.<sup>354</sup> Depictions of this sort were later beginning to be used on coins with different value numerals. This illustration can be found on extant drachmas and didrachmas from 225–212 BC.<sup>355</sup> The image of Janus on the obverse enjoyed vast popularity in the subsequent years. The pattern on reverse, on the other hand, was altered. In 119 BC, a series of denarius coins with Janus's laureate head on the obverse, with the inscription M FOVRI L F (*Marcus Furius Lucii filius*),<sup>356</sup> and the reverse featuring Roma erecting trophy, with Gallic arms around, were minted. The most popular representation of the reverse was presumably the prow of a galley. After it had first appeared on asses from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC,<sup>357</sup> it remained a recurrent numismatic theme both during the golden age of the Republic (e.g. the asses of Lucius Cornelius Cinna, father of the famous leader of Populares,<sup>358</sup> from 169–158 BC) and its demise (the coins of the sons of Pompey: Sextus Pompey<sup>359</sup> and Gnaeus Pompey the Younger<sup>360</sup>). The artefact owned by Alciato is probably a denarius minted between 114 and 113 BC by Gaius Fonteius.<sup>361</sup> In keeping with Landi's description, the silver coins showed the familiar two faces on the obverse, and the prow of a galley with a steersman and oarsmen on the reverse, with the inscrip-

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354 Crawford 28/3.

355 Crawford 31/1.

356 Crawford 281/1.

357 Crawford 35/1.

358 Crawford 178/1.

359 See: Crawford 479/1, RPC I 671.

360 See: Crawford 471/1, RPC I 486.

361 Crawford 290/1.



FIG. 41. Silver denarius showing faces of Janus on the obverse, and the prow of galley with a steersman and oarsmen on the reverse. Crawford 290/1.

tion: C FONT (*Caius Fonteius*) (fig. 41). Present day scholars, however, argue that the laureate head is not one of Janus, but his son, Fonteius, from whom the minter's family house descended (*gens Fonteia*).<sup>362</sup> In Alciato's times, the image was thought to represent the more famous and commonly illustrated on coins god of beginnings and transitions – hence Landi's interpretation.

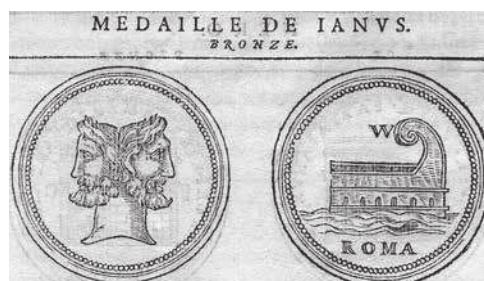
Alciato was surely also influenced by the trailblazing catalogue of ancient figures by Andrea Fulvio. The author opens his index with none other than Janus.<sup>363</sup> The woodcut showed a traditional depiction of two bearded faces. In accordance with the accepted convention, this portrait was styled on ancient coins. In the succinct description placed right below the illustration, one reads that this model was to be found on the versions with a ship on the reverse. Fulvio explains, which could be of particular interest to Alciato, that the two faces were to ensure that Janus was the wisest of rulers, who could tell the future and the past: *rex prudentissimus extiterit, ut qui praeterita cognosceret et futura prospiceret*.<sup>364</sup> This first verse of the emblem echoes this phrase resoundingly.

To cap it all, the aforementioned numismatic artefacts attracted considerable attention from 16<sup>th</sup> century scholarship. This part attempted to chart scholarly voices on that matter, such as Landi's and Erizzo's tracts. Likewise, references to woodcut illustrations in Sambucus's work and Dirk Canter's classical compendium were discussed. Guillaume du Choul and Enea Vico debated the matters under consideration in keeping with the above scholars of Roman and Greek coinage. The former owned a notable coin in his private collection which he published as a woodcut

362 Ibidem.

363 A. Fulvio, *Illustrium imagines...*, fol. Vr.

364 Ibidem.



**FIG. 42.** A. Agustin, *Dialoghi [...] intorno alle medaglie, iscrizioni et altre antichità tradotti di lingua spagnuola in italiana [...]*, in Roma: appresso Filippo de' Rossi, 1650, p. 9. National Library of Poland, shelf mark: SD XVII.4.8092.

illustration. The artefact contained the bearded faces of Janus, and a ship with the inscription ROMA<sup>365</sup> (fig. 42). The precise identification of the coin still poses a considerable challenge. Its description and illustration point towards the bronze asses minted by Aulus Caecilius between 169 and 158 BC.<sup>366</sup> The French collector copies the abovementioned achievements of the Italic god in the illustration note, citing Plutarch and Ovid as the main sources. Much like du Choul, Vico<sup>367</sup> adds that coins depicting beardless Janus were also in circulation.<sup>368</sup> This avatar of the deity brings to mind the original version of the emblematic illustration from the Venetian edition, showing Janus with one of his faces old and bearded, and the other young and beardless. This may have resulted from two different traditions of depicting the deity on Roman coins. Nevertheless, it has been recently assumed that the illustrations of the beardless figure may represent the Dioskouri rather than Janus.<sup>369</sup> This version may as well show Fonteius, patron of wells and springs, often made to resemble his father. It was also not uncommon for the numismatic illustrations to be made in the image of their issuers. Such was the case with Sextus Pompey, whose beardless two faces were embossed on coins marking his rule.<sup>370</sup> Nevertheless, the bearded version was more widespread, as attested by the 16<sup>th</sup> century illustrations and descriptions. This may be the reason why, in the

365 G. du Choul, op. cit., p. 18.

366 Crawford 174/1.

367 E. Vico, op. cit., pp. 23–25.

368 Ibidem, p. 46.

369 W.G. Sayles, *Ancient Coin Collecting. Vol. III: The Roman World: Politics and Propaganda*, Iola (Wisconsin) 2007, p. 212.

370 J. Pollini, “Man or God. Divine Assimilation and Imitation in the Late Republic and Early Principate”, in: *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, ed. K.A. Raaflaub, M. Toher, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1993, p. 340.



subsequent editions of *Emblematum liber*, the illustration was altered to match the more popular image: one to be found on the coin presented by Constanzo Lanzi to Alciato.

This study seeks to demonstrate that sources seemingly unrelated to Andrea Alciato's work may play a central role in tracing the links between the ancient numismatic iconography and the emblems he authored. The most valuable for this purpose are the notes of Mignault, de las Brozas, and the later comments adopted from the editions of Lorenzo Pignoria and Johannes Thulius. Constanzo Landi's account confirms that Alciato stayed in contact with his disciples, who were no less preoccupied with numismatics. Their memoirs may at times reflect the ideas put forward by the author of the celebrated emblem book, as well as help elucidate the origin of some of his works. It may so happen, as in *Prudentes*, that such relationships eluded the authors of comments to *Emblematum liber*, still waiting to be explored.

## II.6. WITH ANCHISES ON AENEAS'S SHOULDERS

Mentioned in the previous chapter, the coin of Aeneas passes for another artefact that is tied to the work of Alciato, particularly to his emblem *Pietas filiorum in parentes* [Honour of Children Towards Parents]. By way of a disclaimer, the link was left unaccounted for in the explanatory notes to *Emblematum liber*. They are to be found, however, in other 16<sup>th</sup> century studies, largely scholarly tracts on numismatics. The link between the emblem and the Roman coin was marked by Mino Gabriele, who included in his work a woodcut illustration adopted from *Discorso sopra le medaglie* by Sebastiano Erizzo.<sup>371</sup> Still, the lack of references in the 16<sup>th</sup> century sources to the artefact depicting Aeneas rescuing his father may come as no small surprise to the reader. Recurrent on emblematic illustrations, the scene comes very close to the version characteristic of ancient coins. On such occasions, some commentators tended to point to the relationship between the emblem and numismatic iconography.

Published by Heinrich Steyner in 1531,<sup>372</sup> *Pietas filiorum in parentes* belongs to the earliest category of emblems, and the ensuing reeditions faithfully imitated the pattern of this symbolic illustration accepted in this early edition<sup>373</sup> (fig. 43). Each new woodcut reprint showed the Trojan prince carrying his

371 A. Alciato, *Il libro degli Emblemi...*, p. 372. See also: S. Erizzo, op. cit., p. 313.

372 A. Alciato, *Embleamta* 1531, fol. D5r.

373 Woodcuts from selected editions are listed by Mason Tung: *Variorum Edition of Alciato*, online resources: <http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/tung/alciatotungedition-195.pdf> [date of access: 2017-04-03].



Per medios hosteis patriae cum ferret ab igne  
 Aeneas humeris dulce parentis onus,  
 Parcite, dicebat, vobis sene adorea raptio  
 Nulla erit, erepto sed patre summa mihi.<sup>379</sup>

[As Aeneas carried the precious burden of his father on his shoulders from the flames of his native city through the midst of the enemy, he said: “Spare him – you will get no honour for capturing an old man, but I will have the highest honour for having saved my father.”]<sup>380</sup>

It is evident that the illustrations described above are fully compatible with the textual part of the emblem: all of which faithfully depict the scene in question. The only missing link that may catch the eye of an attentive reader is that the Greek invaders mentioned in the epigram, who Aeneas was to challenge and address, are overlooked.

The choice of Aeneas as a symbol of *pietas* is anything but unexpected. Owing to the veneration of his father and gods, the hero was often seen as an embodiment of the virtue.<sup>381</sup> In fact, Aeneas was defined by this particular trait in many sources. It is worth mentioning that Alciato’s indebtedness to ancient texts is evident in this emblem. The poem that is integral to the emblem paraphrases an anonymous epigram from *The Greek Anthology*:

ἐκ πυρὸς Ἰλιακοῦ δοράτων μέσον ἤρπασεν ἥρως  
 Αἰνείας, ὅσιον παιδὶ βάρος, πατέρα:  
 ἔκλαγε δ’ Ἀργείοις: μὴ ψαύετε: μικρὸν ἐς ἄρη  
 κέρδος ὁ γηραλέος, τῷ δὲ φέροντι μέγα.<sup>382</sup>

[Through the hail of spears from flames of Troy, the hero Aeneas bore off his father, a holy burden for a son, calling the Argives: “Hands off! The old man is no great gain in war, but a great gain to his bearer.”]<sup>383</sup>

It is interesting that the epigram was also included in the collected edition of Greek poems titled *Selecta epigrammata Graeca latine versa*<sup>384</sup>

379 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. D5r.

380 Translation adopted from: <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/test1.html> [online source, accessed: 2017-04-03].

381 N. Moseley, “Pius Aeneas”, *The Classical Journal* vol. 20, No 7 (April 1925), pp. 387–400.

382 AG 9, 163.

383 *The Greek Anthology*, with an English translation by W.R. Paton, vol. 3, London, New York 1925, p. 85.

384 *Selecta epigrammata graeca latine uersa, ex septem Epigrammatum Graecorum libris [...]*, Basileae: ex aedibus Ioannis Bebelii, VIII 1529, pp. 137–138.

[Selected Greek Epigrams Translated in Latin]. Every Greek poem of this edition is seconded by a number of Latin translations or paraphrases compiled by various authors. Although Alciato is reckoned among such scholars, this passage was translated by others. The anonymous epigram, which was supplemented by its four Latin renditions was provided by Michael Tarchaniota Marullus, Caspar Ursinus Velius, Ottmar Luscinius and Janus Cornarius. It goes without saying that the Italian jurist was all too familiar with all of the above translations, which might have inspired him to compose this emblem. It needs to be mentioned, however, that Alciato, for his part, was well-versed in Greek and could do without translations.

The scene depicted in the emblem passed for a popular theme in the ancient poetry. Its most widely held description is an episode from book two of *The Aeneid*.<sup>385</sup> The scene of rescuing Anchises was taken up by other popular Renaissance poets, such as Ovid,<sup>386</sup> or mythographers like Hyginus.<sup>387</sup> It is therefore another example of a well-studied story, accessed from various sources. The fact that the theme was widely-known may account for the lack of references to numismatic iconography in the early commentaries. After all, the episode of rescuing Anchises from burning Troy was also referred to by Renaissance scholars of ancient mythology, such as Boccaccio, who recounted the story in his famous tract *De genealogia deorum gentium*.<sup>388</sup> A description that could potentially inspire Alciato was included in the first book of epigrams by Jacobo Sannazaro in the poem *In gemmam suam* [On my Jewel]. The Neapolitan poet described an engraved gem he claimed to have discovered personally, on which Aeneas leading his family out of Troy was placed. The stone-cut illustration showed a hero carrying Anchises on his shoulders and holding Ascanius by the hand. Sannazaro claims that the scene includes all three characters:

385 VERGILIUS, *Aeneis* 2, 701–748; verses 707–711 match the depiction provided in the emblem:

Ergo age, care pater, cervici imponere nostrae;  
ipse subito umeris nec me labor iste gravabit.  
Quo res cumque cadent, unum et commune periculum,  
una salus ambobus erit. Mihi parvos Iulius  
sit comes et longe servet vestigia coniunx.

386 OVIDIUS, *Metamorphoses* 13, 623–630.

387 HIGINUS, *Fabulae* 254.

388 Editio princeps 1472; The present author used the following edition: G. Boccaccio, *Peri genealogias deorum libri quindecim cum annotationibus Iacobi Micylli [...]*, Basileae: apud Ioannem Heruagium, IX 1532, p. 163.

Cuius in exiguo ductor stat Troicus orbe,  
Anchisesque senex Ascaniusque puer.<sup>389</sup>

[The small-sized object shows the Trojan leader, the old Anchises and the young Ascanius.]

Overlooking this rather pithy description, the interpretation of this scene as such is of vital importance. Sannazaro links the image with *pietas* in the punchline of the epigram: *Haec est Iliacos pietas spectata per igneis* [Such love arose amongst the Trojan flames].<sup>390</sup> This example proves the point that the scene presented in Alciato's emblem must have been known, not least from literary sources and numismatic iconography. Other artefacts, like antique gems, as indicated by Sannazaro, must have paved their way from the Age of Antiquity to Renaissance. That Aeneas, with his father on his back, had become a common symbol of *pietas* is attested to by the 16<sup>th</sup> century visual arts. As an example, let us consider Raphael's fresco *The Fire in the Borgo*, completed in 1514 in the Vatican. The young man in the foreground carrying an old man on his back – much like the Trojan hero did – is a strong reference to the ancient myth.<sup>391</sup> It seems likely that Alciato relied on sources other than literary texts for inspiration. In his own time, the theme had already captured the popular imagination, and the mythical scene under consideration evoked specific cultural associations.

The motif of Aeneas with his father on his back caught the eye of the Renaissance scholars of the Roman coins, as pointed out by Mino Gabriele. Sebastiano Erizzo, cited by the scholar, included in his *Discorso* a numismatic illustration of the reverse of the coin minted by Antoninus Pius. The Italian scholar of numismatics describes the coin as “large, well-made and composed of a precious metal” (*grande, di bel metallo et di eccelente artefice*).<sup>392</sup> The reverse showed an armed person carrying an old man and holding a boy by the hand (*Ha per reverso una figura in piedi armata, che porta spora le spalle un' altra figuradi un' huomo di gran età et tiene per la mano un fanciullo*). Its inscription (COS III) was to mark the emperor's third office as a consul. Predictably, in Erizzo's account

389 The present author refers to the edition: J. Sannazaro, *Opera omnia* [...], Lugduni: apud Sebalum Gryphum, 1536, p. 150.

390 Ibidem.

391 *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art.*, ed. H.E. Roberts, Chicago 1998, p. 439.

392 S. Erizzo, op. cit., p. 313.



FIG. 45. Aureus depicting Aeneas rescuing his father and son from the Greeks. RIC III 91.

the scene depicts Aeneas rescuing his father and son from the Greeks, and, as such, symbolises *pietas*: a virtue attributed to the ruler himself and reflected in his moniker, *Pius*.<sup>393</sup> Consequently, the artefact was little more than a product of state propaganda calculated to promote a positive image of the emperor. The coin Erizzo referred to was an aureus<sup>394</sup> minted in 140 AD in Rome, or a related artefact (fig. 45). The obverse shows the emperor, bare head facing right, with the inscription: ANTONINVS AVG PIVS P P (*Antoninus Augustus Pius pater patriae*). The illustration shown on the obverse is fully compatible with the description and image included in *Discorso*. The only difference is to be found in the extended inscription: TR POT COS III (*tribunica potestas consul III*), which, besides the emperor's third office as a consul, brings to light his function of a tribune. Made of gold, the coin is a perfect match to the one detailed by Erizzo. The difference in the inscriptions can be put down to a damaged copy of the artefact used by the Italian scholar, or that the coin contained an abridged version of the full description, limited to the emperor's most notable functions. It is conceivable that the description from *Discorso* was modelled on another related artefact. After all, Aeneas and his entourage featured on many other coins issued by Antoninus Pius, including lower value numerals, e.g. a bronze sestertius minted in a Roman mint presumably between 141 and 143 AD.<sup>395</sup> As above, the obverse shows the emperor

393 This moniker was given to the emperor after he had commanded the Senate to recognise his predecessor Hadrian as a god. See: CASSIUS DIO, *Historia Romana* 70, 1–2.

394 RIC III 91.

395 RIC III 627.



FIG. 46. Bronze sestertius showing Aeneas with Anchises on his shoulders and holding Ascanius by the hand. RIC III 627.

or's head facing right; the reverse – Aeneas with Anchises on his shoulders and holding Ascanius by the hand. The inscription placed around the illustration of the family goes as follows: SC (*senatus consulto*) (fig. 46).

As a matter of fact, Antoninus Pius was not alone in employing the theme of Aeneas salvaging his father as a symbol of *pietas*. No sooner had the motif inscribed itself as standard than it began to be used by other rulers and statesmen.<sup>396</sup> The virtue allegorised by the Trojan prince is one of central assets inextricably linked to the official model of a Roman ruler. And coins, for their part, served as the most propitious medium through which to channel collective notions. Hence the plethora of various extant versions of the composition.

The oldest coins known to scholars that illustrate the scene of the escape from Troy of the whole family are tetradrachmas from the Greek city of Aenea, dated 500 BC.<sup>397</sup> Consequently, the Romans were slow off the mark in using Aeneas for propaganda purposes. By placing the image of the Trojan hero on their coins, the authorities of Aenea referred to the legend about the origin of their *polis*, founded by the eponymous hero of *The Aeneid*. Aeneas and his family featured on the coins of other Greek cities as well. Take the example of a coin minted in Segesta in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, illustrating the personification of the city (as a woman with towers on her head) on its obverse, and Aeneas with a sword

396 J. DeRose Evans, *The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus*, Ann Arbor 1992, pp. 35–58.

397 C. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins*, Berkely-Los Angeles 1976, pl. 26 No 469; p. 362.





**FIG. 47.** Coin minted in Segesta illustrating the personification of the city on its obverse, and Aeneas with a sword in his hand and father on his back on the reverse.



**FIG. 48.** Silver denarius showing Aeneas carrying Anchises and holding the Palladium. Crawford 458/1.

in his hand and father on his back on the reverse<sup>398</sup> (fig. 47). This motif was later adopted in Roman times during the rule of Augustus. Artefacts dating back to this period show Aeneas fleeing from Troy with his father on his back and holding the Palladium.<sup>399</sup> This scene clearly alludes to the earlier coins of Caesar. Although the escape from the burning Troy was employed in other art forms too, such as ancient pottery,<sup>400</sup> it was characteristic of the coinage of the late Republic and Empire. Commonly known in this context was a silver denarius – still extant in large quantities – produced in an itinerant mint of Julius Caesar between 48 and 46 BC, during a military campaign in North Africa.<sup>401</sup> This silver denarius contains the wreathed head of Venus in profile on the obverse; the reverse shows Aeneas carrying Anchises and holding the Palladium (fig. 48). Both of these images alluded to the divine descent of the *gens Julia*. Since the virtue of *pietas*, ascribed to the mythical progenitor of the family, was deemed he-

398 R. Calciati, “La monetazione di KAINON. Problemi tipologici, metrologici e cronologici”, in: *Ermanno A. Arslan Studia Dicata*, ed. R. Martini, N. Vismara, vol. I, Milano 1991, p. 304.

399 RPC I 652.

400 K. Schauenburg, “Äneas und Rom“, *Gymnasium* 67 (1960), pp. 176–190.

401 Crawford 458/1.

reditary, it was often paraded. It must be mentioned that Caesar's coin is richer in terms of representation than the aureus of Antoninus Pius. The former contains Aeneas bearing not only his father, but also the sacred statue of Athena. Seen as such, the virtue of *pietas* was now extended to parents and gods. In the latter artefact, *pietas* was presented as a feeling for family members, which is strengthened by including the young Ascanius.

That this motif was recurrent can be attested by some artefacts issued during the period of the Flavian dynasty.<sup>402</sup> It is worth noting that, during the republican period, *pietas* was represented by another illustration strikingly similar to the one of Aeneas. The scene in question depicts Amphinomus carrying his father on his back.<sup>403</sup> This illustration refers back to the legend of two brothers, Amphinomus and Anapis, who saved their parents at their own peril from the flames of Etna after the eruption of the volcano. This scene was placed on a silver denarius issued by Marcus Herennius between 108 and 107 BC.<sup>404</sup> The obverse contains the diademed head of Pietas right, including the legend that leaves no question as to who is represented: PIETAS. The reverse depicts one of the brothers bearing his father on his shoulders (fig. 49). This motif was, however, nowhere near as widely received as the Aeneas coin. In Alciato's time the reception of this version remained as lukewarm as ever. Nor was this illustration of particular interest to the aforementioned early scholars of ancient numismatics, with a notable exception of Guillaume du Choul, who considered the coin of Herennius alongside the denarius of Julius Caesar as artefacts exemplifying *pietas*. The coin depicting Aeneas, on the



FIG. 49. Silver denarius depicting Amphinomus or Anapis bearing his father on his shoulders. Crawford 308/1b.

402 RPC II 895.

403 See: VALERIUS MAXIMUS 5, 4.

404 Crawford 308/1b. Both brothers are shown on some bronze coins minted in Catnia ca. 187–170 BC, cf. CNS III 97–100; Puglisi 2009: 150–151.

other hand, attracted the attention of many scholars, Sebastiano Erizzo among others. Interestingly, as regards other examples, one can come across some attempts to link this numismatic illustration, with Andrea Alciato's emblem under scrutiny.

As stated, du Choul stands out as the only scholar to have included the denarius minted by Marcus Herennius.<sup>405</sup> The scholar placed the coin right next to a related woodcut showing the reverse of Julius Caesar's coin. The French collector posited that both representations of *pietas* were strongly related. His attention was, however, excited by the aspect of family. Pointing to alternative ways of expressing this virtue, du Choul catalogues a number of illustrations depicting the mother-child relationship, including manifold illustrations of these artefacts.<sup>406</sup> Ironically, *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains* does not list the coin of Antoninus Pius analysed by Sebastiano Erizzo, which in many ways exposed the emperor's family relations.

Constanzo Landi wrote more extensively on Aeneas and Anchises than his counterparts.<sup>407</sup> Rather than focusing on specific artefacts, as did du Choul and Erizzo, the Italian scholar was preoccupied with the type of representation itself. This can be gathered from the title, which gestures towards the symbolism of the scene and provides no information about the coin, or its issuer for that matter: *Aenae parentem gestantis pietas* [The Pietas of Aeneas Carrying his Father]. This was to make evident that the artefacts depicting the scene of rescue are to allegorise this virtue. Following this logic, Landi was determined to cite all the coins listed above, each commented on in turn. The denarius of Julius Caesar depicting Aeneas bearing Anchises on his shoulder and holding the Palladium was of particular interest to the scholar, who characteristically availed himself of numerous ancient and modern, mostly lyrical, sources to reconstruct and explain the scene. One of these was an epigram from *The Greek Anthology*, quoted above. Landi cited the original version of the poem, as well as its translation by Michael Tarchaniota Marullus and Caspar Ursinus Velius. As a matter of fact, both translations were mentioned alongside Alciato's emblem, considered as a rendition of the Greek poem. Landi went as far as to assess the quality of the translations. And the following excerpt states in no uncertain terms that the winner was Alciato, who *omnium felicissime sic vertit ac expressit in Emblematis* [translated it better than

405 G. Du Choul, op. cit., p. 123.

406 Ibidem, pp. 123–124.

407 C. Landi, op. cit., pp. 6–11.

all and included it in *Emblemata*].<sup>408</sup> It was the first time that Landi had linked the motif with Alciato's emblem. In doing so, however, the scholar skips the visual part of the composition, focusing on the text alone, as he did in his analysis of Janus. With the notable difference being that in the chapter discussing the flight from Troy, Landi does not claim to have ever debated the matter with his mentor. Either way, the fact that the scholar chose to cite Alciato's poem, favouring it over the other renditions of the Greek text, implies that he did reckon with the latter's opinion. In any case, the emblem, among other sources, proved useful for the analysis of the coin of Julius Caesar rather than one of Antoninus Pius, (presumably on account of the missing Ascanius, in both cases). Therefore, had Gabriele suggested Landi as a point of reference to his readers, rather than Erizzo, he would have better identified the original numismatic artefact to match the emblem. Since the former failed to place any illustration of the artefacts under discussion, he must have appeared as less relevant for Gabriele.

The coins of Pius are also mentioned in passing in *In veteram numismatum Romanorum miscellanea explicationes*. Although Landi does not discuss them as extensively as the denarius of Caesar, he puts forward the following interpretation of the scene it undertakes:

In quibusdam nummis Antonini Pii Augusti signum esse Aeneae patrem in humeris gestantis, quem nummum ille cudi iusserit, ut pietatem in socerum eius a se habitam ostentaret, ille enim languidum socerum humeris sublatum in senatu, vel quo opus fuisset pii Aeneae instar ferebat.<sup>409</sup>

[On certain coins of Antoninus Pius, Aeneas carrying his father on his shoulders was presented. He had this coin minted to display his veneration for his father-in-law – when the latter had fallen ill, he carried him on his shoulders to the senate. Thereby he announced that his effort was to imitate the deed of the pious Aeneas.]

Further considering the motif of Aeneas carrying his father, Landi adds another coin, but refuses to acknowledge the issuer. Taking into account the description, it becomes plain that the coin in question is a denarius of Marcus Herennius or a related artefact, depicting either Amphinomus or Anapis rescuing his father:

408 Ibidem, p. 8.

409 Ibidem, p. 9.

Sed et aliud numisma argenteum memini me vidisse, in quo cuiusdam imago fuerat, qui patrem gestabat, non tamen eo modo vel more, quo Aeneas et Antoninus, sed alio modo. Nam in humero tantum uno sesistabat, qui portabantur pedibus ad imum prominentibus.<sup>410</sup>

[I remember seeing another silver coin showing a person carrying his father. The manner in which he did it was different from one of Aeneas or Antoninus. The person who was being carried was shown seated on the shoulder with his legs dangling.]

Landi does not describe the legend placed on the coin. Nor does he refer to the obverse. Left unaccounted for, the scene proves resistant to identification, with republican coins referring to *pietas* – associated with Amphinomus and Anapis – as a possible source. This excerpt shows, however, that artefacts of this kind were in circulation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and were every so often included in the collections of that time. The illustration adopted from *Discours de la religion des anciens* allows one to assume that at least one copy of the artefact was stored in du Choul's collection. Landi's uncertainty as to its provenance helps determine that the artefact was considerably less recognisable and accessible than the artefacts depicting Aeneas.

As a final point, although the chapter's title points to Aeneas as the sole subject of Landi's inquiry, the scholar mentioned other ways of representing the virtue of *pietas*. In so doing, the scholar followed the footsteps of du Choul, who discussed other artefacts of this sort in a similar manner. Since the artefacts are not tied to the emblem under consideration in this study, this matter will play no part in the inquiry that follows.

The ancient tract by Constanzo Landi and the casus of *Pieas filiorum in parentes* bear testimony to the fact that emblems that may bring to mind some numismatic motifs, gradually became a means to deciphering some numismatic artefacts. Even if Alciato's composition may not be directly linked to numismatic iconography, it was associated with Greek and Roman artefacts in terms of visual representation. This may result from the fact that in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, emblems – together with lemmas and plates – and images adopted from ancient coins were part and parcel of a single wide-ranging group of symbols. The chronological anteriority of numismatic iconography – inspiring as it often was for the authors of books of emblems – did not always play the first fiddle in scholarly considerations. Such was the case of *Pieas filiorum in parentes*.

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410 Ibidem, p. 9.

In fact, no early commentator seriously considered the influence of the denarius of Caesar or the aureus of Antoninus Pius, which – considering Alciato’s avid interest in numismatics – cannot be ruled out. A version of the allegory the scholar subscribed to had already been accepted in ancient times, of which the Roman coins are ample testimony.

## II.7. IN PURSUIT OF THE SYMBOL OF CONCORD

Among Alciato’s emblems, there are pairs of artefacts that allegorise a similar, if not identical, idea. This involves two emblems that denote the universal notion of concord (*concordia*). One of them depicts a crow as an embodiment of the concept. In the other, concord is represented by the gesture of squeezing or joining of hands (*dextrarum iunctio*). Both elements found their place in the Augsburg *editio princeps* of 1531. Originally titled *Concordia*,<sup>411</sup> the first work – tackling the symbolism of a crow – was changed into *Concordiae symbolum* over time:<sup>412</sup> an alteration that was to differentiate both emblems, as explored further. Although the other emblem was also first published in the Augsburg edition as *Concordia*,<sup>413</sup> its title remained unchanged and continued to be reprinted as such in further editions of *Emblematum liber*. Aside from the common title and concept, both compositions were thought by some to have been originally inspired by ancient numismatic artefacts. Some evidence to corroborate this claim was offered by Alciato’s commentators in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and Mino Gabriele in his impressive edition of the emblems.<sup>414</sup>

The first work listed above offers less distinct, though more stimulating, links with the Roman coinage. The emblem, however, does not directly cite any artefact of this kind. Nor do the variously edited epigram illustrations bring to mind any allegorical representations found on the reverses. The first three Augsburg editions contained a woodcut depicting a flock of walking crows, led by their crowned leader (fig. 50). This illustration was then considerably modified in the first Parisian edition by Chrestien Wechel: it showed a sceptre and two crows on either side, standing on a tomb-like pedestal.<sup>415</sup> This visual pattern was preserved in all subsequent editions (fig. 51). Only minor details were subject to change, such as the

411 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. A4 r.

412 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1550, p. 45.

413 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. B4 r.

414 A. Alciato, *Il libro degli emblemi...*, pp. 53, 171.

415 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1534, p. 10.





The crows are shown as a close-knit community, defined by adherence to common principles, committed to established order and mutual trust. Such harmony allows them to live in peace and replace their leaders peacefully. These defining traits turned the birds into a universal embodiment of concord, understood as a social phenomenon. Like others before him, Alciato followed the accepted tradition and available sources, rather than his own good judgement, in depicting the birds. In the same context, Claude Mignault makes some political assumptions based on the work. He gathers that the emblem lends itself as a useful reminder for rulers to promote peace and harmony between people in order to avoid discontent that might, in turn, lead to revolution.<sup>419</sup> The commentators of the above fragment remarked that the jurist of Milan was largely inspired by an excerpt from *De natura animalium* [On Nature of Animals] by Aelian.<sup>420</sup> Writing in Greek, the author depicted crows as birds of harmony that help each other in many situations.<sup>421</sup> Unlike Alciato, who posited that power was granted to kings by the people,<sup>422</sup> the author did not offer any political reading of the birds' customs. With harmony as its organising principle, the community of crows sets an example of a peaceful electoral system that people should aspire to.

A work that is often believed to be among the sources that inspired the emblem is *Hieroglyphica* by Horapollon.<sup>423</sup> In the second book of this influential work, crows are to epitomise Mars and Venus, and, by extension, marriage.<sup>424</sup> In the explanatory note, the author mentions that this symbolism comes from the exceptional unity that defines the birds. This remark echoes the tradition of Aelian, as stated above, alongside other towering figures of antiquity, such as Plutarch<sup>425</sup> or the anonymous author of *The Physiologus*.<sup>426</sup> The birds were also associated with marriage in Renaissance literature, as noted by Erasmus,<sup>427</sup> Caelius Rhodiginus<sup>428</sup>

419 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1589, pp. 171–172.

420 F. de las Brosas, op. cit., p. 160.

421 AELIANUS, *De natura animalium* 3, 9.

422 See: A. Alciato, *De verborum significatione libri IIII* [...], Lugduni: apud Antonium Gryphum, 1572, p. 210: *Unde principio rerum non divina iussione, sed ex populi consensu reges adsumpti sunt* [...].

423 See: A. Alciato, *Il libro degli emblemi*..., p. 52.

424 The present author used the following edition: Horapollon, *De saris notis et sculpturis libri duo* [...], Parisiis: apud Iacobum Keruer [...], 1551, pp. 11–14.

425 ps-PLUTARCHUS, *Bruta animalia ratione uti* 989a.

426 *Physiologus* 61.

427 ERASMUS, *Adagia* 275 (*Cornicum oculos configere*).

428 The present author used the following edition: C. Rhodiginus, *Lectionum antiquarum libri XXX* [...], Basileae: per Hieronimum Frobenium et Nicolaum Episcopium, 1550, p. 1131.

and Alessandro Alessandri.<sup>429</sup> The crow as a symbol of concord was also endorsed by Alciato himself. Suffice it to look at the printer's marks modelled on the emblem, with the most notable example being the logo of the printing house owned by Jean Stelsius, printed in Antwerp. The seal contained two crows occupying two sides of a sceptre on a pedestal. As such, the image was a faithful copy of an illustration adopted from *Emblematum liber*, and went together with the maxim *Concordia res parvae crescunt* [with concord, small things increase]. This printer's mark was also used by the beneficiaries of Stelsius. An instant hit among European printers, the symbol was adopted by the Cracow-based Siebeneicher family,<sup>430</sup> though it may be harder to determine whether they imitated Stelsius's trademark or Alciato's emblem.

Furthermore, Mignault stated that the crow, as a symbol of concord, was placed on Roman coins. As an example, the scholar cites the following artefact: *Sed cornicis imago videtur Faustinae Augustae nummis cum inscriptione CONCORDIA* [The image of a crow was used on the coins of Faustina Augusta with the legend: CONCORDIA].<sup>431</sup> This reference was to serve as yet another argument in favour of the choice of a crow as a symbol of concord. The fact that the ancient people had believed that this virtue was embodied by a stork – as documented by Mignault<sup>432</sup> – may also have, by extension, influenced the later choice of a crow for the same purpose. The artefact cited by Mignault may suggest that the bird chosen by Alciato is best suited for this role. It remains unclear whether the French scholar saw the coin first hand. It seems unlikely, considering that the artefact – meant to symbolise concord – was described in *Miscellanea* by Poliziano. The Italian classical scholar dedicated Chapter 67 of this notable work on ancient philology to that matter. He also seemed to be in two minds about whether to include a crow or a stork to better illustrate the concept of concord. It appears that the scholar eventually subscribed to the assumption that the Romans had used the bird chosen by Alciato. Poliziano, for his part, recounts his dealings with the artefact as follows:

429 The present author used the following edition: A. Alessandri, *Genialium dierum libri sex* [...], Parisiis: apud Nicolaum Chesneum [...], 1575, fol. 57v.–58r.

430 P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, "Emblematyczne koneksje sygnetu Mateusza Siebeneichera" [Emblematic Connections of Mateusz Siebeneicher's Printer's Mark], *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej* t. 31, Nos 1–2 (1981), pp. 109–112.

431 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1589, p. 173.

432 Ibidem.

Sed et in nomismatis aureis duobus Faustinae Augustae manifestam prorsus imagunculam nuper mihi Laurentius Medices ostendit cum titulo ipso concordiae.<sup>433</sup>

[The illustration described above, along with the inscription referring to concord, is placed on both golden coins of Fautina Augusta, as formerly shown by Lorenzo de' Medici.]

It is intriguing that Poliziano should be indebted to Lorenzo de' Medici for seeing the two coins in question, seeing as the present day interpretation of the bird placed on the numismatic artefacts differs markedly from this account. There are two kinds of aureus that might be taken for the coins that the author of *Miscellanea* claims to have discussed with the ruler of Florence. The coins look similar, and both were minted in Rome, commissioned by Antoninus Pius at roughly the same time, probably between 147 and 150 AD (fig. 52). The reverse contains the inscription: CONCORDIA, and an almost identical illustration of a bird turned right, presently understood as a dove.<sup>434</sup> The obverse presents the head of the emperor's daughter, Faustina



**FIG. 52a–b.** Two kinds of aureus containing an illustration of a bird turned right, presently understood as a dove. RIC III 503a–b.

433 A. Poliziano, *Miscellaneorum centuria*, Florentiae: impressit [...] Antonius Miscominus, 1489, fol. k6v.

434 RIC III 503a and RIC III 503b.

the Younger, with her hair worn in a bun. The first coin contains the empress's head facing right; the other facing left. Both artefacts show the inscription: FAVSTINA AVG PII AVG FIL (*Faustina Augusta Augusti Pii filia*).

Poliziano's account proved immensely influential given that his reading of the artefact was later cited by future authors, as demonstrated by Claude Mignault. From the current perspective, the most important aspect is the transformation of a dove into a crow, in keeping with Aelian's tradition. It is highly probable that the passage on concord excerpted from *Miscellanea* was read by Alciato, and consequently, could have inspired him to complete the emblem. It can be argued that another fragment from Poliziano's work influenced the aforementioned *Respublica liberta*, which heavily depended on the numismatic artefact for its composition.<sup>435</sup> Such could also be the case here. Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas recommends Poliziano's work to the readers of emblems as a key source of interpretation of *Concordia*.<sup>436</sup> Curiously, the coin of Faustina is left unmentioned by the Spanish scholar, who in so doing may have implied that the reader should find the answer for themselves in the indicated source.

It is, nevertheless, difficult to argue the extent to which the aureus of Faustina the Younger affected Alciato's work. There is ample evidence to assume that Poliziano's work did serve as a possible source of inspiration. Although the jurist of Milan was never acquainted with the cited coin, its description provided by the Italian classical scholar contributed to a more favourable reception of the image of the crow. Additionally, it is hardly debatable that the illustration left an indelible mark on Pierio Valeriano's work, *Hieroglyphica*. This influential compendium of symbols listed the crow as a symbol of concord, among other things.<sup>437</sup> Valeriano adds that the coin of Faustina dispels any doubts as to whether the notion of concord should be symbolised by a crow or stork. The scholar states that the bird presented on the numismatic illustration in no way resembles a stork: if anything, it is quite clearly a crow. Consequently, Valeriano's reading follows on from Poliziano's and Lorenzo de' Medici's interpretations. The numismatic illustration can also be found in *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains*.<sup>438</sup> In a similar vein, du Choul echoes the author of *Miscellanea* by pointing to a crow.

435 See: B. Czarski, P. Jaworski, "Respublica liberata. The Coin of Brutus Commemorating the Ides of March in the Emblematic Interpretation of Alciatus", *Wiomości Numizmatyczne* 59, 2015.

436 F. de las Brosas, op. cit., p. 160.

437 P. Valeriano, op. cit., fol. 140 r.

438 G. du Choul, op. cit. pp. 26–27.

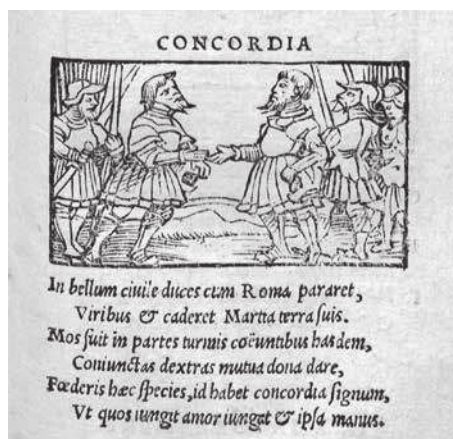


FIG. 53. Emblem Concordia (A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. B4r.). Library of the University of Wrocław, shelf mark: 305086.

The other emblem brought up in the opening lines of this part poses yet new challenges. If the emblem discussed above could be linked to two specific coins, this piece, resonating with the popular Roman numismatic motif, cannot be linked to any specific artefacts. Widely used in Roman art, the motif in question is the gesture of joining of hands, which was – and continues to be – customarily held to denote agreement.<sup>439</sup> The emblematic illustration of the Augsburg edition showed two leaders standing in front of the army line and joining hands<sup>440</sup> (fig. 53). The same image is included in Chrestien Wechel's reprint.<sup>441</sup> Although the Parisian printer utilised a new woodcut to illustrate the epigram, the pattern remained. The following editions, in keeping with the previous reprints, contained the variously represented two leaders squeezing hands: be they bare-headed or wearing helmets. Usually, rather than ahead of the army, the figures were placed against the backdrop of army tents. The titular motto would remain unaltered, too. Unlike the previously analysed work, the epigram content would not be subject to changes:

In bellum civile duces cum Roma pararet,  
Viribus et caderet Martia terra suis:

439 On the motif of joining of hands in art, see: B. Kötting, "Dextrarum iunctio", in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. III, ed. Theodor Klauser, Stuttgart 1957, pp. 881–86; L. Reekmans, "La 'dextrarum iunctio' dans l'iconographie romaine et paleochrétienne", *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 31 (1958), pp. 69–73.

440 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. B4r.

441 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1534, p. 31.

Mos fuit in partes turmis coeuntibus easdem  
 Coniunctas dextras mutua dona dare.  
 Foederis haec species. Id habet concordia signum,  
 Ut quos iungit amor, iungat et ipsa manus.

[When Rome prepared its leaders for civil war and the land of Mars fell by its own powers, it was the custom, troops coming together into the same place, to offer right hands be joined in mutual giving. This is the sign of alliance: harmony has this as a sign, that whom love unites, the hand itself may also bring together.]<sup>442</sup>

It becomes obvious that the visual modifications were not to reflect the description included in the poem. The following editions focused on the foreground: the woodcut now showed the leaders joining hands, set against the empty camp and unaccompanied by the army.

The commentators of *Liber emblematum*, both early and contemporary, argue in concert that the authoritative source informing the emblem is a passage from Tacitus's *Annales*, which tells of the custom of joining hands by the leaders as a gesture of making peace.<sup>443</sup> This reference is substantiated by the fact that Alciato commented on this particular fragment in his explanatory notes on Tacitus's work. The phrase *et cupere renovari dextras*,<sup>444</sup> excerpted from the work, was referred to as follows:

Tacitus XVIII ostendit dextras concordiae signa ultro citroque destinari ab exercitibus solitas.<sup>445</sup>

[Tacitus shows in Chapter 18 that the soldiers joined their hands as a sign of peace.]

In all probability, the passage was a decisive factor for the commentators of *Emblematum liber* to refer the emblem back to *Annales*. The gesture of joining of hands as a sign of alliance is, however, brought up in other literary works, seeing as similar scenes are mentioned by numer-

442 Translation adopted from: <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/test1.html> [online source, accessed: 2017-04-03].

443 TACITUS, *Annales* 2, 58.

444 For a detailed comment on the quoted passage by Tacitus, see: E.H. Barker, "Critical Remarks on Detached Passage of Tacitus", *The Classical Journal* vol. 5 (March and June 1812), pp. 358–360. The author focused on the relationship between the passage and numismatic illustrations.

445 The present author used the following editio: *In Publium Cornelium Tacitum Annotationes Beati Rhenani, Alciati ac Beroaldi [...]*, Lugduni: apud Sebaldum Gryphium, 1542, p. 200.

ous writers and poets, with such literary giants as Virgil<sup>446</sup> and Ovid<sup>447</sup> among them. Pliny, for his part, speculates that the right hand (*dextra*) was the location within the human body of the virtue *fides* (that is, trust that builds unity).<sup>448</sup> Similar assumptions can be traced in modern encyclopaedias on Antiquity. The gesture of joining hands as a symbol of peace was also elaborated by Alessandro Alessandri,<sup>449</sup> as well as Lodovico Ricchieri in a slightly different context.<sup>450</sup> A significant point of departure for Alciato was also *Hieroglyphica* by Horapollo, where the sign of concord was allegorised by two men dressed as officials.<sup>451</sup>

It is also hard to overestimate the role of numismatic artefacts in general, and the reverses of Roman coins in particular, as alternative sources of inspiration. Claude Mignault stands out as the only Alciato scholar to have examined this aspect in depth. His explanatory note on the links between the emblem and numismatic iconography is included in *Notae posteriores*, where the French lawyer postulates that the gesture of joining hands is recurrent in numismatic illustrations, and the inscription explains that it stands for a sign of mutual trust:

In permultis veteribus nummis duae manus iunctae ostenduntur, additis inscriptionibus: FIDES EXERCITVVM, nonnumquam etiam: FIDES ROMANORVM.<sup>452</sup>

[A number of ancient coins show two joined hands followed by the inscription: FIDES EXERCITVVM, as well as: FIDES ROMANORVM in certain cases.]

In actual fact, as registered in many 16<sup>th</sup> century studies on numismatics, such artefacts, including a modified inscription, are far from a rarity.<sup>453</sup> Constanzo Landi again deserves due attention in this respect, given that he dedicated a good part of his chapter *Vitelli fides exercituum*

446 VERGILIUS, *Aenēdis* 1, 408.

447 OVIDIUS, *Metamorphoses* 6, 505–506.

448 PLINIUS MAIOR, *NH* 11, 103.

449 A. Alessandri, *Dies geniales*, Romae: in aedibus Iacobi Mazochii, fol. 65r.

450 L. Ricchieri, *Lectionum antiquarum tomus tertius* [...], Lugduni: apud Sebastianum Honoratum, 1562, p. 121.

451 Horapollo, *De sacris notis*..., p. 108.

452 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1589, p. 735.

453 Mino Gabriele suggests a number of other examples (A. Alciato, *Il libro*..., p. 170), citing for this purpose the 16th century authors of numismatic tracts.



[Loyalty of Vitellius's army] to the motif of joining hands found on Roman coins.<sup>454</sup> The scholar saw the gesture as an indication of mutual trust, which breeds agreement, also in political terms. This interpretation was chiefly inspired by numismatic inscriptions, often cited in the work. The author intuitively felt that the illustration can be supplemented by another inscription suggesting that the gesture symbolises agreement. One example put forward to substantiate this claim is a coin that the author received in Padua, and, in turn, presented to a promising young man from Venice. The artefact was apparently minted by Augustus and contained the following description on the reverse:

[...] a tergo autem erant duae imagines, quae manus coniunctas habebant, cum cornucopia his litteris: CONCORDIA AVGVSTI.<sup>455</sup>

[there were two figures on the back, shown with their hands joined and holding the cornucopia, with the inscription: CONCORDIA AVGVSTI.]

Alciato's emblem is referred to by Landi as an illustration of the gesture of joining hands as a symbol of agreement. He quoted his mentor's work on other occasions too, e.g. for the analysis of the image of Janus written about above.

The description of this artefact provided by the Italian scholar of numismatics poses a considerable challenge, as it is hard to point to its perfect match. It is not impossible that the author, in his attempt to memorise the artefact, confused two related coins, hence describing a non-existent artefact. It is worth pointing out that Augustus commissioned a series of silver quinarius coins commemorating the alliance with Marcus Antonius. These coins were most probably minted in Gaul between 40 and 39 BC (fig. 54). The obverse of the coin contains a personification of Concordia, facing right, her head covered by a veil; the reverse shows two hands holding a caduceus.<sup>456</sup> Although this version does not correspond to the version suggested by Landi, the latter representation can be found on other related artefacts. Among them a silver antoninianus minted by Balbinus in 238 AD. The reverse showed two joined hands along with the legend: CONCORDIA AVGG (*concordia augustorum*).<sup>457</sup> The artefact was

454 C. Landi, op. cit., pp. 64–66.

455 Ibidem, p. 65.

456 Crawford 529/4b.

457 RIC IV 10.



**FIG. 54.** Silver quinarius commemorating the alliance between Augustus Octavian and Marcus Antonius. Crawford 529/4b.



**FIG. 55.** Coin of Nerva containing two clasped hands with a legionary standard resting between them. RIC II 15.

to commemorate the coalition between the joint emperors, Balbinus and Pupienus, in power for just 99 days. The inscription *CONCORDIA AVG (concordia augusti)* is set against a personification of Concordia, represented as a seated woman with the horn of Amalthea leaning against her arm or a chair. This image can be identified on the aureus coins of Gordian dated 239 AD.<sup>458</sup> Since the motif was widely popular, it was placed on many artefacts from various periods of the Roman Empire. It is worth noticing that the image of two persons joining hands, usually a man and woman, was coded as an epitome of female virtue, particularly preferred in marriage.<sup>459</sup> Hence, this image was a likely choice if the purpose was to show the imperial family as a role model for the people to follow. As it is unlikely that such examples escaped Landi's notice, it remains arguable to what extent they influenced his work.

As proposed above, the concept of joining hands in agreement can be found on other artefacts, such as one put forward by Sebastiano Erizzo. It is a coin of Nerva that contains two clasped hands with a legionary standard resting between them,<sup>460</sup> and the inscription: *CONCORDIA EXERCITVVM* (fig. 55). This artefact is easily identifiable these days as a silver denarius minted in 97 AD.<sup>461</sup> Elsewhere, the scholar points to a coin containing the inscription: *CONCORDIA AVGVSTI*, without providing

458 RIC IV 41.

459 T. Mikocki, *Zgodna, Pobożna, płodna, skromna, piękna...*, pp. 20–43. For a detailed analysis of a personification of Concordia in numismatic iconography, see: T. Hölscher, "Homonoia/Concordia", in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. V, Zürich-München 1990, pp. 478–498.

460 S. Erizzo, op. cit., p. 213.

461 RIC II 15.

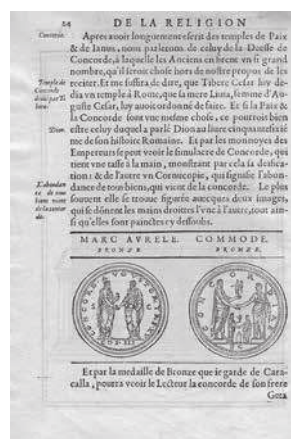


FIG. 56. G. du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens* [...], a Lyon: par Guillaume Rouille [...], 1567, pp. 24. Illustrations that depict shaking hands as a sign of concord.

any description of visual elements.<sup>462</sup> Enea Vico's account of this group of artefacts is no less pithy. In his analysis of the coins featuring the description: *CONCORDIA AVGV*<sup>463</sup> and *CONCORDIA AVGVSTORVM*,<sup>464</sup> the scholar limits the scope of his inquiry to listing the names of the issuers, without going into the visual and symbolic components. More related examples can be found in *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains*, where du Choul puts forth a range of numismatic artefacts illustrating the gesture of joining hands,<sup>465</sup> among which there are illustrations that depict the hands alone, as well as those that show a host of characters, including military (fig. 56). The French collector of antiques included a woodcut presenting a quinarius of Augustus, attributed to Marc Antonius. He also added the example of Concordia as a female virtue. The reader was therefore treated to a vast spectrum of representations of the virtue, also used for propaganda purposes in the Roman coinage.

The other artefact, titled *Concordia*, although not directly related to any specific coins, seems to have its roots in the tradition they represent. This is reflected in the visual part of Alcato's emblem, as well as its title used on numismatic artefacts that depict characters, such as soldiers, joining hands. Unlike Constanzo Landi, the other commentators of *Emblematum*

462 S. Erizzo, op. cit., p. 17.

463 E. Vico, op. cit., p. 60.

464 Ibidem, p. 99.

465 G. du Choul, op. cit. pp. 22–28.

*liber* did not seem to grasp the correlation between the Roman numismatic iconography and Alciato's emblem. With this in mind, it would not be unjustified to argue that the former student of Alciato read his mentor's works through the lens of the illustrations of ancient coins, and that epigrams could inform some numismatic artefacts. Although it is far from certain whether numismatic symbolism directly inspired Alciato's emblems, the approach of his commentators should affirm just that. Some accounts of these scholars reveal that Alciato was familiar with or even owned some ancient coins, such as ones depicting Janus.

Both of the works under consideration in this chapter show the significance of symbols present on the Roman coins. Although the emblems in question tackle the same concept, both of them are indebted to the tradition of numismatic iconography, as Alciato did not seem to look for models elsewhere. Numismatic iconography, as argued, was a serious competition to other sources, such as fables or myths, hence constituting one of the most alluring and useful sources of allegories and symbols. The central role the coins occupied was secured by their sheer diversity. Indeed, all manner of concepts, such as virtues, geographical areas, mythical and historical characters, were expressed in manifold ways. This variety of concepts animated Alciato to compose two emblems illustrating the concept of concord, referring to two distinct numismatic illustrations. Such artefacts provided food for thought by offering diverse patterns.

## II.8. ON THE INSCRIPTION IN THE WREATH OF OAK-LEAVES

The penultimate example of possible correlations between Alciato's emblems and the ancient coinage is the composition *Quercus*. This work was first published, along with other emblems about trees, in 1546 in Venice.<sup>466</sup> Its defining characteristic is that the symbolic illustration is set against two epigrams (fig. 57). The illustration itself was anything but impressive. The woodcut contained the image of an oak, which – although systematically modified in small detail from edition to edition – was not substantially altered until 1618. Lorenzo Pignoria, for his part, so as not to show the tree in isolation, chose to place two distinct illustrations under its branches<sup>467</sup> (fig. 58). First, and central for further considerations, is the oak wreath with a Latin inscription placed inside it. The other component is Jupiter's face in profile. Mason Tung argues that these two con-

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466 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1546, fol. 18v.

467 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, p. 360.



FIG. 57. Emblem Quercus (A. Alciato Emble-mata 1546, fol. 18v.). Source: Alciato at Glasgow (<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/>).



FIG. 58. Emblem Quercus (A. Alciato Emble-mata 1621, p. 852). Library of the University of Warsaw, shelf mark: 7.2.1.18/12.

sist in images adopted from two sides of a coin.<sup>468</sup> This theory, however, does not entirely hold, given that links to numismatic iconography can be traced in the first representation only, namely, the oak wreath. The face of Jupiter, on the other hand – as can be gathered from the rim – is associated with ancient gems depicting images of gods and heroes.<sup>469</sup>

The combination of two different elements was presumably used by Pignoria to better illustrate these two epigrams comprising the emblem. The first of these representations touches on the aspect of *corona civica*, a wreath composed of oak leaves, awarded for saving the life of a Roman citizen:<sup>470</sup>

Grata Iovi est quercus, qui nos servatque fovetque.  
Servanti civem querna corona datur.

[The oak tree is pleasing to Jupiter, who protects and nurtures us: an oaken crown is given to one who saves a fellow-citizen.]<sup>471</sup>

468 M. Tung, *Variorum Edition of Alciato...* [online resources accessed: 2017-04-03: <http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/tung/alciatotungedition-200.pdf>].

469 The gem, as a form of ancient artefacts that influenced Alciato was pointed to by Mino Gabriele. See: A. Alciato, *Il libro degli emblemi...*, p. 241.

470 For further reference on *corona civica* and the established meaning of the motif in the Roman culture, see: P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Ann Arbor 1990, pp. 92–94.

471 Translation adopted from: <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/test1.html> [Online source, accessed: 2017-04-03].

Given the stress placed on the reward for saving the life of a Roman citizen, it seems probable that the image of the wreath, along with the inscription, was composed to match this particular couplet. A gem depicting Jupiter was then modelled on the other epigram, although the king of the Roman gods was mentioned in both.

Glande aluit veteres, sola nunc proficit umbra,  
Sic quoque sic arbor officiosa Iovis.

[With its acorn it nourished those of old; now it serves by its shade alone.  
Even in this way Jupiter's tree is of service.]<sup>472</sup>

Characteristically, considering the content and shape of woodcuts of the editions published in his lifetime, Alciato most likely did not intend to draw a parallel between the emblem and numismatic iconography. This correlation was in fact unravelled in Claude Mignault's later comments. Undoubtedly, the driving force behind it was a reference included in an epigram on *corona civica*. The French scholar noticed in his *Notae posteriores* that Romans had used coins illustrating oak wreaths along with other inscriptions surrounding it.<sup>473</sup> Before the commentators pointed to this motif on the ancient coins, they referred to a passage from *Historia naturalis* by Pliny the Older, who characterised the custom of honouring the most deserving citizens.<sup>474</sup> Another popular source from which to understand the emblem was *Noctes Atticae* by Gellius, who in Book V described the use and origin of a number of wreaths used in Rome.<sup>475</sup> Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas referred to Plutarch's *Quaestiones Romanae* as a useful reference on that matter.<sup>476</sup> The custom of awarding with an oak wreath is inextricably linked to ancient literature, such as the poetry of Lucan.<sup>477</sup> As a matter of fact, in his first epigram: *Servanti civem querna corona datur*, Alciato seems to have imitated the poet. With this in mind, there is no hard evidence to sustain the claim that the emblem under consideration was chiefly inspired by numismatic iconography. Alciato most likely drew on the accepted tradition that takes the oak to be an attribute of Jupiter,

472 Ibidem.

473 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1589, p. 785.

474 PLINIUS MAIOR, *HN* 16, 3.

475 AULUS GELIUS, *Noctes Atticae* 5, 6, 11.

476 F. Sánchez de las Brozas, op. cit., p. 542; PLUTARCHUS, *Questiones Romanae* 92.

477 LUCANUS, *De bello civili* 1, 358: *servati civis referentem praemia quercum*

and consequently the oak wreath as the most prestigious award in Roman culture. Influenced by the growing popularity of ancient numismatics, Claude Mignault proposed, in the last edition of his explanatory notes to *Emblematum liber*, that the reader should read *Quercus* in the larger context of the numismatic tradition. This remark referred to the first epigram mentioned above:

Is igitur honos quia in maximis esset, eum affectarunt principes Romani, non probi modo, sed et scelerati, adeoque suis numismatis exprimi curarunt. Ut enim de iis taceam, quibus merito is tributus honos fuit, in Cai Caligulae nummo civica cum glandibus spectatur, cum litteris his: SPQR PP OB. CIVES SERVATOS. Nummus vero Galbae imperatoris civicam habet cum inscriptione SPQR OB CS. Eadem in Vitelli Germanici, in cuius medio hae litterae SPQR OB. CIV SER. In nummo aureo et aliis quibusdam civica etiam Neroni ex SC dedicata.<sup>478</sup>

[Being the highest honour awarded only to the most distinguished, many influential Romans, be they worthy or disgraced, competed for this distinction. They considered it of utmost importance to commemorate the wreath by issuing coins presenting the image. Aside from those who were deservedly awarded this honour, *corona civica* with acorns can be seen on the coin of Caligula with the inscription SPQR PP OB CIVES SERVATOS (*Senatus populusque Romanus pater patriae ob cives servatos*). The coins of Galba, on the other hand, show an oak wreath with the inscription SPQR OB CS (*Senatus populusque Romanus ob cives servatos*). The same illustration is found on the coin of Vitellius, with the centred inscription: SPQR OB CIV SER (*Senatus populusque Romanus ob cives servatos*). On the golden coin of Nero, and many others, there is a wreath of granted by the senate: *senatus consulto*.]

This description must have influenced Lorenzo Pignoria, considering that he modified his earlier version of the image: a bare tree was now supplemented with the image derived from the ancient reverses.

The artefacts described in the comment are easily identifiable these days. It is intriguing that Mignault chose to provide examples of coins minted by those who, in his opinion, did not deserve the honour of wearing the oak wreath. Or else, he considered them potentially attractive to the reader. The first object described in the passage, the coin of Caligula, is probably a bronze sestertius minted between 40 and 41 AD.<sup>479</sup> The

478 A. Alciatus, *Emblemata* 1589, p. 785.

479 RIC I 53.





**FIG. 59.** Bronze sestertius containing an oak wreath with the inscription inside the illustration, quoted by Mignault. RIC I 53.



**FIG. 60.** Silver denarius depicting an oak wreath with the three-line inscription: SPQR OB CS. RIC I 167.



**FIG. 61.** Sestertius illustrating an oak wreath with the inscription cited by Mignault. RIC I 159 var.



**FIG. 62.** Aureus showing a wreath with the inscription inside it: EX SC. RIC I 14.

obverse shows the laureate head of the emperor, to the left; the reverse contains an oak wreath with the inscription inside the illustration, quoted by Mignault (fig. 59). The coin of Galba is probably a silver denarius issued between August and October 68 AD.<sup>480</sup> The obverse traditionally shows the emperor bareheaded, facing right. The reverse depicted an oak wreath with the three-line inscription: SPQR OB CS (fig. 60). Also in this case the object matches the description faithfully. The third artefact was presumably a sestertius minted in Rome, commissioned by Vitellus. The obverse contains a bust facing right with the evocative inscription: VITELLIVS GERMAN IMP AVG P M TR P (*Aulus Vitellius Germanicus imperator augustus pontifex maximus tribunicia potestate*).<sup>481</sup> The reverse illustrates an oak wreath with the inscription cited by Mignault (fig. 61). The final examples depart from this pattern. Although the coins commissioned by Nero also refer to the symbolism of *corona civilis*, their inscriptions were quite unlike those quoted in *Notae posteriores*. The artefact that would best match the golden coin containing the wreath granted by the senate is the aureus dated 57–58 AD.<sup>482</sup> The obverse depicts Nero's head right, no wreath; and the reverse shows a wreath with the inscription inside it: EX SC (*ex senatus consulto*) (fig. 62). Similar golden coins minted during his rule can be found a plenty, which makes it particularly testing to determine which coin is specified in the explanatory notes.<sup>483</sup> On top of Mignault's account, the motif of an oak wreath with the inscription EX SC was placed on other coins of lesser value, such as a denarius.<sup>484</sup>

It needs to be mentioned that all the examples listed in *Notae posteriores* were in fact copied from *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano.<sup>485</sup> It is no secret that Mignault quoted from this source on other occasions, too. This secondary nature of Mignault's comments testifies to the great influence that the Italian scholar of symbols exerted on scholars back in those days. Quoted not only by Mignault, but Thulius as well – as shown above – Valeriano profoundly influenced the reception and interpretation of emblems in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Borrowed from *Hieroglyphica*, the remarks on the symbol of lifesaving placed on ancient coins encour-

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480 RIC I 167.

481 RIC I 159.

482 RIC I 14.

483 See: RIC I 8, 11, 13, 16, 19.

484 RIC I 17–18.

485 P. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica*..., fol. 375r.

aged Pignoria to modify the illustration. Curiously enough, the author did not copy from any of the artefacts described above when supplementing the woodcut with the illustration from the Roman reverse. The legend placed on the illustration of the 1618 edition is as follows: EX SC PP OB CIVES SERVATOS (*ex senatus consulto pater patriae ob cives servatos*).<sup>486</sup> The author leaves the inscription unexplained. It is worth noticing that the edition contains an abridged version of Mignault's comments, which overlooked numismatic connotations of the emblem in question. There is some evidence to suggest that Pignoria imitated the inscription from an unspecified coin that he himself owned, or had come across incidentally. Either way, no available numismatic compendia quote the inscription. Hence, it is highly unlikely that the Italian could draw on any woodcut illustration.

The artefact that he did chance upon and was inspired by was the coin of Emperor Claudius. This ruler was said to have been awarded with the oak wreath by the senate for having pardoned or revoked the banishment of those condemned by Caligula.<sup>487</sup> The event was immortalised on various coins.<sup>488</sup> The inscription quoted above, phrased the same way as on the emblem illustration, can be found on sestertius coins issued between 41 and 50 AD.<sup>489</sup> The obverse contains the head of the ruler facing right, with the inscription: TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG P M TR P IMP P P (*Titus Claudius Caesar Augustus pontifex maximus tribunica potestas imperator pater patriae*). The reverse features the legend mentioned above placed inside a wreath of oak leaves (fig. 63). It needs to be mentioned that Claudius did not fail to include his distinction on coins of other values. That these artefacts contained a rephrased version of the inscription implies that the woodcut could not have been modelled on them. The sestertius, on the other hand, is fully compatible with the woodcut.

Since coins with an oak wreath were of great interest to the 16<sup>th</sup> century scholars of ancient coinage, their illustrations feature in some scholarly works on numismatic iconography. None of which, however,

486 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, p. 360.

487 M. Barden Dowling, *Clemency and Cruelty in the Roman World*, Ann Arbor 2006, p. 191; W.H. Smyth, *Descriptive Catalogue of a Cabinet of Roman Imperial large-brass Medals [...]*, Bedford 1834, p. 34.

488 On technical aspects of the coins of Claudius showing the *corona civica*, see: K. Butcher, M. Ponting, *The Metallurgy of Roman Silver Coinage: From the Reform of Nero to the Reform of Trajan*, Cambridge 2014, pp. 195–198.

489 RIC I 112.



FIG. 63. Sestertius of Claudius with *corona civica*. RIC I 112.

mentions the sestertius of Claudius, used by Pignoria as a model. In the same context, Sebastiano Erizzo provides a comprehensive list of coins that contain the *corona civica* on the obverse.<sup>490</sup> His catalogue includes artefacts from the time of Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Galba. Although *Discorso* does not contain reverse illustrations of these coins, the author draws up a comprehensive index of inscriptions. This may lead one to conclude that the coin of Claudius was the one Pignoria used as a model. However, Erizzo's version of the inscription (OB CIVIS SERVATOS) was most probably misspelled. Although this version can be found on a number of Roman coins, especially those commissioned by Augustus,<sup>491</sup> this was certainly not the case for the artefacts of Claudius. This can be explained as a simple typographic error on the part of the author or printer.

Although Enea Vico did not include the coin illustrating the oak wreath either, he, much like Erizzo, did refer to the motif in passing.<sup>492</sup> None of the examples cited in his work seemed to match the illustration of the Padua edition. If Antonio Agustín also mentioned the motif of *corona civica* in his *Dialogues*,<sup>493</sup> his interpretation of the motif was rather terse. The main difference between his and other works is that the tract of the bishop of Tarragona includes the woodcut illustration of an artefact from his collection.<sup>494</sup> The form of this coin, however, does not remotely resemble the sestertius of Claudius, which Pignoria drew on. In this case, the influence of *Dialogues* on Pignoria's edition should not be overestimated

490 S. Erizzo, op. cit., p. 107.

491 See: RIC I 75, 77, 345.

492 See: E. Vico, op. cit., p. 55, 59, 76, 106–108.

493 See: A. Agustín, op. cit., pp. 210, 228, 281.

494 Ibidem, p. 6.



FIG. 64. A. Agustin, *Dialoghi [...] intorno alle medaglie, inscriptions et altre antichita tradotti di lingua spagnuola in italiana [...]*, in Roma: appresso Filippo de' Rossi, 1650, p. 256. National Library of Poland, shelf mark: SD XVII.4.8092.

(fig. 64). And yet, the Italian publisher was fully acquainted with the tract, as will be shown in the next chapter, dedicated to the image of Minotaur on the legionary standard.

All things considered, the emblem *Quercus* is an interesting case in point that shows the changing role and significance of symbolic imagery represented on ancient reverses. Even compositions that initially had little in common with numismatic themes were gradually being linked with them, which in turn lead to the modifications of woodcut illustrations. This can be put down to the fashions of the day, as well as the general propensity towards faithful imitation – rather than creative emulation – of ancient patterns.

## II.9. A MYSTERIOUS METAMORPHOSIS OF THE RIVER-GOD

Modified in terms of its visual representation, *Quercus* is not Pignoria's only emblem that resonates with the numismatic tradition. As set out above, the author was no less animated by the illustration of the fight between Bellerophon and the Chimaera. Since the catalogue of inspirations is not exhausted by these two works, it may be worth considering yet another emblem that, although quite unlike the two above, became a subject of Pignoria's examination and is tied to numismatic illustrative works. The work will constitute the final object of analytical inquiry on the relationship between *Emblematum liber* and ancient numismatic iconography.

The evolution of Alciato's emblem illustrations has been thoroughly researched and elaborated on: with particular emphasis on the earliest works, such as the emblem of Bellerophon.<sup>495</sup> There are, however, a few

<sup>495</sup> This evolution has been charted and described in the comprehensive editorial notes of *Il libro degli Emblemi* by Alciato. The illustrations of selected, considered authoritative, editions were also collected and expanded on by Mason Tung (*The Variorum Edition of Alciato's Emblemata...*).

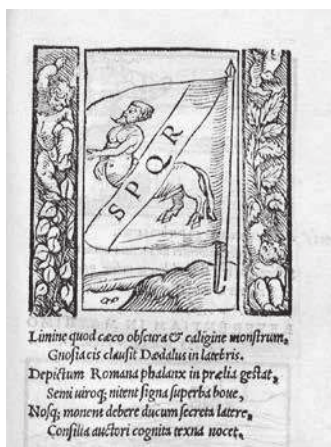


FIG. 65a. Emblem *Non vulganda consilia* (A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. A5r.). Library of the University of Wrocław, shelf mark: 305086.



FIG. 65b. Emblem *Non vulganda consilia* (A. Alciato *Emblemata* 1534, p. 108). Source: Alciato at Glasgow (<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/>).

emblem illustrations that call for examination in terms of their shape and the context from which to interpret them. One such work was an emblem entitled *Non vulganda consilia* [Keep Counsels Secret] included in Heinrich Steyner's Augsburg edition,<sup>496</sup> as well as the Paris edition of 1534 by Chrétien Wechel,<sup>497</sup> placed eighth in a row (fig. 65). The emblem in question may appear as a rather paradoxical and unexpected editorial choice, as its illustration departed altogether from the textual part. The epigram makes it certain that the illustration should contain a banner or the Roman *labarum* with the Minotaur.

Limine quod caeco obscura et caligine monstrum  
Gnosiacis clausit Daedalus in latebris,  
Depictum Romana phalanx in praelia gestat.  
Semiviroque nitent signa superba bove  
Nosque monent debere ducum secreta latere  
Consilia, auctori cognita techna nocet.

[In the dark lairs of Cnossus with their hidden threshold and thick darkness, Daedalus shut up the monster. This image the Roman phalanx carries into battle, and these standards, with bull that's half a man, shine forth splendidly.

496 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1531, fol. A4v.

497 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1534, p. 12.



They warn us too that the secret plans of leaders ought to lie hidden. A plan that's known harms its author.]<sup>498</sup>

In the first two editions there were two almost identical illustrations to go with the epigram, which contained a banner with the diagonal inscription SPQR and a figure resembling the Minotaur described in the textual part. The monster has an unusual shape and may as well be taken for a centaur: its lower body is one of a bull or horse, with no front legs, and a human upper body. In the original editions, the beast had only two legs; in subsequent ones, four, which meant it was even more centaur-like.<sup>499</sup> The half-man-half-horse image was more pronounced on the woodcuts from the 1547<sup>500</sup> and 1577<sup>501</sup> editions. This problematic image did not escape the early commentators' attention. Lorenzo Pignoria remarks:

Minotaurum hactenus in *Emblematibus* qui nobis exhiberunt, illi nobis centaurum pro Minotauro supposuerunt et quidem in ea vexilli specie, quam veteres nusquam agnoverunt<sup>502</sup>.

[Those who tried to depict the Minotaur only managed to illustrate a centaur. Additionally, the figure was placed on a banner that was never used by the ancient people.]

The Minotaur pictured on the emblem illustration is unlike any other classical literary depictions, where the monster is customarily shown as a bull-headed man. Diodorus Siculus claims that the upper body up to the shoulders should be animal-like, with the remaining part being human.<sup>503</sup> A similar representation of the monster was put forward by the popular mythographer Pseudo-Apollodorus:

ἡ δὲ Ἀστέριον ἐγέννησε τὸν κληθέντα Μινώταυρον. οὗτος εἶχε ταύρου πρόσωπον, τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ἀνδρός.<sup>504</sup>

[She (Pasiphae) gave birth to Asterion, called the Minotaur. It had the head of a bull and the rest of the body of a human.]

498 Translation adopted from: <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/e012.html> [electronic source, accessed: 2017-04-03].

499 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1551, p. 18.

500 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1547, p. 10.

501 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1577, p. 93.

502 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, fol. b3v.

503 DIODORUS SICULUS 4, 77.

504 Pseudo-Apollodorus 3, 1, 4.



The Roman writer Gaius Iulius Hyginus included a parallel image of the monster in his compendium of the Roman myths entitled *Fabulae*.<sup>505</sup> Aside from the aforementioned examples, the 16<sup>th</sup> century reader was also profoundly influenced by the works of Ovid, although he did not provide such an unproblematic account. The famous poet described the monster as a half-bull-half-human and emphasised its twofold nature taken after both the human mother and animal father in equal measure:

Dedalus, ut clausit conceptum crimine matris  
semibovemque virum semivirumque bovem,  
'sit modus exilio', dixit, 'iustissime Minos'.<sup>506</sup>

[When Daedalus had imprisoned the monster, half-man, half-bull, that his erring mother had conceived, he spoke to Minos saying, "O thou who art so just, set a term to my exile."]<sup>507</sup>

The above quotation blurs the whole picture. It is indeed far from clear which body parts were supposed to be human, which animal. In the same vein, Isidore of Seville,<sup>508</sup> a great contributor to the existing state of knowledge on ancient history and Middle Ages, fails to deliver a straightforward picture of the monster killed by Theseus: one possibly based on an imprecise source.

All of these descriptions fail to explain not only the origin of the illustrated image, but also the military symbolism of the Minotaur and the labyrinth described in the emblem. The theme adopted by Alciato in his composition was most likely accessed from one of the two sources included in the epigram. The first one was a tract by Vegetius known as *De re military*,<sup>509</sup> which contained a detailed analysis of the symbolism of the half-bull-half-man creature, illustrated on the *labarum*:

505 Hyginus, *Fabulae* 40: Pasiphae Solis filia uxor Minois sacra deae Veneris per aliquot annos non fecerat. Ob id Venus amorem infandum illi obiecit, ut taurum [...] amaret. In hoc Daedalus exsul cum venisset, petiit ab eo auxilium. Is ei vaccam ligneam fecit et verae vaccae corium induxit, in qua illa cum tauro concubuit; ex quo compressu Minotaurum peperit capite bubulo parte inferiore humana. Tunc Daedalus Minotauro labyrinthum inextricabili exitu fecit, in quo est conclusus.

506 OV. *Ars.* 2, 23–25.

507 Translations adopted from: *The Love Books of Ovid*, transl. J. Lewis May, New York 1930, pp. 125–126.

508 ISIDORUS, *Ethymologiae* 11, 3, 9.

509 The manuscript of this tract circulated in mediaeval Europe in numerous copies and is considered as one of the most popular ancient texts of its time. See: Vegetius. *Epitome of Military Science*, ed. N.P. Milner, Liverpool 1996, p. XIII. The *editio princeps* of the tract was published in Utrecht in 1475. Its reeditions soon followed in Cologne (1476), Paris (1478), Rome (1487), Pisa (1488). Therefore, Alciato was most probably familiar with the tract.

Sed cautelae caput est, ut, ad quae loca uel quibus itineribus sit profecturus exercitus, ignoretur; tutissimum namque in expeditionibus creditur facienda nesciri. Ob hoc veteres Minotauri signum in legionibus habuerunt, ut, quemadmodum ille in intimo et secretissimo labyrintho abditus perhibetur, ita ducis consilium semper esset occultum.<sup>510</sup>

[The key is to keep a secret, to keep the aims of the army, as well as the paths it follows, confidential. It is considered dangerous to disclose the plans of war campaigns. For this very reason, the ancient people included the Minotaur as part of their legionary symbols, to keep the leader's command secret, just like the beast was kept hidden in a separate and inaccessible labyrinth.]

The above fragment offers an accurate account of the emblem's origin. This assumption was also noticed by the early Alciato scholars, who initially quoted Vegetius as a source.<sup>511</sup> A similar description can be found in the encyclopaedic treatise *De verborum significatu* [On the Meaning of Words] by Sextus Pompeius Festus, a grammarian of the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>512</sup>

That the Minotaur used to be placed on the Roman military standards was attested to by Pliny the Older, who in so doing overlooked all manner of symbols the creature connoted. He did mention, however, that legionary symbols had been variously modified by the consulate of Marius, who accepted the image of the eagle in light of reforms.<sup>513</sup> It is worth mentioning that the Minotaur as a symbol of keeping a secret was also referred to in *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano.<sup>514</sup> That the symbol was included in this work testifies to its popularity in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. But the multiple references to a centaur-like figure in Alciato's emblems come as a real surprise.

The question of the odd shape of the Minotaur on the emblem banner was tackled by Mino Gabriele.<sup>515</sup> The publisher of the first edition of Alciato's book of emblems argued that in medieval accounts of the Minotaur, the human and animal parts became reversed: the monster was believed

510 VEGETIUS, *De re militari* 3, 6.

511 See: F. Sánchez de las Brozas, op. cit., p. 58.

512 Festus. *De verborum significatu cum Pauli epitome*, ed. W.M. Lindsay, Studgardiae et Lipsiae 1997, p. 135: Minotauri effigies inter signa militaria est, quod non minus occulta esse debent consilia ducum, quam fuit domicilium eius labyrinthus. Translation: "Among the military symbols there is an image of the Minotaur due to the fact that the decisions of military leaders must remain as impenetrable as the labyrinth in which he dwelled."

513 PLINIUS MAIOR, *Historia Naturalis* 10, 16.

514 P. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* 1556, p. 30.

515 A. Alciato, *Il libro degli Emblemi...*, p. 67.

to have a human upper body, and the lower parts of an animal. This description is compatible with an image registered on a plate from Steyner's and Wechel's editions, except that in both editions the animal body was pictured without the front legs. To substantiate his version, Gabriele cited the manuscript *Liber floridus* [Book of Flowers] by Lambert di Saint-Omer (ca 1060–1123) composed at the turn of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, in which the beast was shown as a bull with a human torso and head.<sup>516</sup> Furthermore, the editor of the emblem book discovered a banner miniature that depicted a labyrinth with the Minotaur at the centre, shaped as described in *Liber floridus*. This item is to be found in the 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript *De re militari* [On Military Matters] by Roberto Valturio (1405–1475)<sup>517</sup> and is placed along the allegorical comment similar to the one by Vegetius. Although this reference was pointed to by Raimondo Sassi, the illustration itself was modelled on an illumination from another manuscript, also showing the Minotaur, whose shape brings to mind a centaur placed in the middle of the labyrinth.<sup>518</sup>

It is not impossible that the reversal of the human and animal parts in presenting the Minotaur were inspired by Ovid's and Isidore of Seville's accounts quoted above. It is more likely, however, that it was influenced by iconographic representations hitherto overlooked by scholars. Some 16<sup>th</sup> century *exempla* can also be considered among the possible influences. The plate attached to Ariadne's letter to Theseus from Ovid's *Heroides*, published in 1501 in Venice, is a curious case in point in the context of Alciano's emblem in question. The illustration shows the Athenian hero wrestling with the Minotaur: one with a human torso and a bull's lower body.<sup>519</sup> The 1541 edition of *Heroides*,<sup>520</sup> published after the first edition of Alciano's book of emblems, contains a similar illustration. The plate was adopted in this edition as a visual representation of Hermione's letter to

516 Ibidem. See: H. Kern, *Labirinti: forme e interpretazioni*, Milano 1981, p. 143. The manuscript is kept in Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel (Cod. Guelf. 1 Gudianus latinus 2°, f. 19v).

517 Ibidem, p. 66. See: H. Kern, op. cit., p. 232. This manuscript is kept in Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (cod. lat. 23467, f. 158v).

518 See: R. Sassi, "Percorsi lineari e peregrinatio archeologica: i Quaedam antiquitatum fragmenta di Giovanni Marcanova", in: *Linea II Giochi, metamorfoi, seduzioni della linea*, a cura di M. Faietti e G. Wolff, Milano 2012, pp. 110–111 (Reference citation of the illustration: Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Ms. a L. 5.15 Lat. 992, fol. 189v).

519 *Epistole Heroides Ouidii diligenti castigatione exculpte aptissimis figuris ornate [...]*, Venetiis: per Ioannem Tacuinum de Tridino, 1501, fol. 12 r.

520 *Publii Ovidii Nasonis [...] Heroides epistolae cum omnibus commentis [...], his nos adiunximus emblemata argumenta ac varias lectiones ex optimis quibusque auctoribus collectas [...]*, Venetiis: apud Hieronymum Scotum 1543, p. 81.

Orestes (Elegy VIII). Another example of this sort is an *impresa* traced in Girolamo Ruscelli's edition, as stated by Gabrielle, among others.<sup>521</sup> The symbol in question is attributed to Consalvo Perez, a secretary to Philip II of Spain.<sup>522</sup> The visual part of the *impresa*, showing the Minotaur with its lower body of an animal, and upper body of a man, was supplemented with a lemma adopted from the Book of Izaiah, entitled *In silentio et spe*,<sup>523</sup> which closely resembles Alciato's emblem in question. In his explanatory notes to the *impresa*, Ruscelli quotes Vegetius's opus and Alciato's emblem as sources. The same *impresa* that escapes Gabrielle's attention, appears in an earlier publication edited by Battista Pittoni, titled *Imprese di diversi prencipi* [Badges of Various Noblemen]. The *impresa* was again attributed to Consalvo Perez and provided with the same motto. The only aspect in which this version departs from Ruscelli's edition is a poem placed under the plate, characteristic of classical emblems in terms of structure.<sup>524</sup>

The emblem plates in Steyner's and Wechel's editions most probably paved the way for the evolution of representations of the Minotaur. As a result, in Macé Bonhomme and Guillaume Rouillé's editions, the beast resembles a centaur. Other Lyon printers, such as Jean de Tournes and Guillaume Gazeau, followed the pattern: their emblem illustration featured a centaur-like figure.<sup>525</sup> Considering the 1584 Paris edition,<sup>526</sup> the image of the centaur, which again supplanted the Minotaur, was not exclusive to the Lyon publications. Indeed, the annotations to this edition counterintuitively point to the Minotaur. As such, the illustration departs altogether from its description. The 1591 Leiden edition suffers from the same ambiguity, as it contains an illustration that almost perfectly matches its Paris counterpart.<sup>527</sup> It is worth noting that the annotations gesture again towards the Minotaur. With this in mind, it is safe to conclude that, as regards the late 16<sup>th</sup> century emblem standards, the Minotaur metamorphosed into the centaur, devoid of all bull-like elements.

521 A. Alciato, *Il libro degli Emblemi...*, p. 67.

522 *Le imprese illustri del senior Ieronimo Ruscelli aggiuntovi nuouam il quarto libro da vincenzo Ruscelli da Viterbo, al serenissimo principe Gulielmo Gonzaga duca di Manova et Monteferrato*, in Venetia: appresso Francesco de Francesczi Senesi, 1584, p. 383.

523 Iz 30, 15.

524 *Di Battista Pittoni, pittore Vicentino, Imprese di diversi prencipi, duchy, signori e d' altri personaggi et huomini letterati et illustri, con privilegio di Venetia per anno XV. Con alcune stanze del dolce che dichiarano i motti di esse imprese*, Venetia: s.n., 1568, No 21.

525 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1556, p. 18.

526 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1584, fol. 18v.

527 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1596, p. 29.

These French editions so baffled Lorenzo Pignoria that he put forward an alternative pattern to account for the mysterious shape of the plate. Unlike Gabriele, the 17<sup>th</sup> century publisher did not rely on mediaeval sources for unravelling the precursor of the unorthodox depiction of the Minotaur. The scholar did, however, suggest an ancient coin as a source, as registered by Antonio Agustín:

Porro de Minotauri figura adeant qui cupiunt *Dialogos* A. Augustini, archiepiscopi Tarraconensi, qui Alciatum praeceptorem ita premit, ut secundus, sed alter ab eo fit.<sup>528</sup>

[Those who wish to learn about the shape of the Minotaur should read *Dialogues* by the archbishop of Tarragona, Antonio Agustín, who so faithfully imitated his mentor that rather than second to Alciato, he became the second Alciato.]

According to Pignoria, *Diálogos de las medallas, inscripciones y otras antigüedades* may help identify the model for the emblem illustration under consideration. Amongst the coins illustrated by Agustín, there was a curious artefact that showed a bull with a human head, referred to by the author as the Minotaur (fig. 66). The Spanish scholar claims that the coin was used in the area around Naples, and the creature is described as follows:



**FIG. 66.** A. Agustín, *Dialoghi* [...] intorno alle medaglie, inscriptions et altre antichità tradotti di lingua spagnuola in italiana [...], in Roma: appresso Filippo de' Rossi, 1650, tab. XI. National Library of Poland, shelf mark: SD XVII.4.8092.

528 A. Alciato, *Emblemata* 1618, fol. b3v.

il Minotauro con tutto il corpo di toro, solamente con la faccia e barba grande di uomo, se bene con le corna e con le orecchie di bue.<sup>529</sup>

[The Minotaur's body is of a bull, the face and prominent beard are human, the horns and ears are bull's.]

Nevertheless, the Spanish scholar misidentified the numismatic illustration. In actual fact, the artefact was merely one among many coins depicting the local river deities, in circulation in the south of Italy as well as Sicily. For example, minted in Naples, the silver didrachma portrayed a nymph's or the Siren Parthenope's head in profile on the obverse, and a bull with a human bearded face, laureated by Nike on the reverse<sup>530</sup> (fig. 67). A similar representation can be found on the obol dated 275–250 BC, with a notable difference: on the obverse there is Apollo to the left in place of the female figure.<sup>531</sup> It seems fascinating that this representation of a bull-like creature captured special attention during Napoleonic times, to the extent that the image was embossed on the medallions of Napoleon I<sup>532</sup> and Caroline Bonaparte.<sup>533</sup>

Most extant coins of this sort show the river-god Gelas, a patron of Gela, a polis in Sicily.<sup>534</sup> Bearing in mind Alciato's emblem, this numismatic



FIG. 67. Silver didrachma portrayed a bull with a human bearded face, laureated by Nike. Sambon 436.

- 529 A. Agustín, *Dialoghi di Antonio Agostino intorno alle medaglie [...]*, in Roma: apresso Guglielmo Faciotto, 1592, p. 160.
- 530 A. Sambon, *Les monnaies antiques de l'Italie*, t. I, Paris: Bureaux du «Musée», 1903, No 436; *Historia Numorum. Italy*, ed. N.K. Rutter, London 2001, No 571.
- 531 *Historia Numorum. Italy...*, No 589.
- 532 L. Bramsen, *Médailleur Napoléon le Grand ou description des médailles, clichés, repoussés et médailles- décorations relatives aux affaires de la France pendant le Consulat et l'Empire [...]*, Paris 1904, No 516. Bramsen's catalogue of medals can be accessed online at: <http://www.napoleonicmedals.org/coins/bramsen.htm> [accessed: 2017-04-03].
- 533 Ibidem, No 772.
- 534 See G.K. Jenkins, *The Coinage of Gela*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970, Nos 28, 34A, 35, 42, 54, 91, 96, 104, 110.1, 110, 113, 124, 189v, 190, 203, 225, 238, 241, 241, 244ff, 245, 278, 332, 351, 354, 362, 362cf, 364, 374, 382, 389, 396, 398, 400, 401, 405, 468, 470, 472.1, 472.2, 472, 483, 486.

symbol has come to be associated with the Minotaur in modern times, rather than a river-god. That the Sicilian coin was believed to represent the Minotaur as opposed to Gelas can be demonstrated by Agustín's work, as well as two earlier publications. The first one is a celebrated treatise by Hubert Goltzius, *Graecia sive historiae urbium et populorum Graeciae ex antiquis numismatibus restitutae libri quattuor*<sup>535</sup> [Greece or about the History of Greek Cities and People Restored from Ancient Coins]. Table XI of this work contains numismatic illustrations of Gelas featuring the inscription confirming the river-god's name.<sup>536</sup> However, the author's remark about the ancient city of Gela may be potentially misleading. In fact, its origin goes back to the settlers of Crete. Furthermore, Goltzius adds that the coins used in the Sicilian city contained the Minotaur.<sup>537</sup> This information is supported by the distinctive description of the dweller of the labyrinth:

Minotaurum autem biforme monstrum fuisse fabulantur, facie humana, corpore taurino, ut in numismatibus adparet [...].<sup>538</sup>

[The Minotaur is believed to be a beast of two shapes: a human face, and bull's body, as shown on the coins.]

An image that matches up with Goltzius's description can be found on the silver tetradrachma from Gela dated ca. 480–470 BC<sup>539</sup> (fig. 68). These artefacts show the front body of the river-god as a bearded bull with a human head on the reverse. This figure can be identified in the inscription ΓΕΛΑΣ. The full representation of Gelas used to be placed on the bronze tetras dated 420–405 BC.<sup>540</sup> This version presents the full body of the human-headed bull, followed by the same inscription (fig. 69).

The coin of Gelas was also linked to Minotaur in interesting ways by Guillaume Rouillé in his treatise *Promptuarium iconum insigniorum*

535 *Graecia sive historiae urbium et populorum Graeciae ex antiquis numismatibus restitutae libri quattuor* Huberto Goltzio [...] auctore et sculptore, Brugis Flandrorum: apud Hubertum Goltzium, 1576.

536 Ibidem, fol. B2 r.

537 Ibidem, p. 134: Gelenses originem suam etiam ad Cretenses referre argumento esto. Minotaurus in ipsorum numismate signatus. Translation: "The inhabitants of Gela claim their descent from Cretians, and their coins showed the Minotaur."

538 Ibidem.

539 G.K. Jenkins, op. cit., No 172.

540 Ibidem, No 499.





**FIG. 68.** Silver tetradrachma from Gela showing the front body of the river-god as a bearded bull with a human head. Jenkins 172.



**FIG. 69.** Bronze tetradrachma presenting the full body of the human-headed bull. Jenkins 499.

*a seculo hominum*.<sup>541</sup> Although the illustration of the coin from Gela included by the scholar and publisher of Alciato was not particularly intriguing, its inscription certainly was. The name of the water deity: ΓΕΛΑΣ was replaced by: MINOTAVRVS. To believe that the modification was caused by the misreading of a blurred copy of the coin would be pushing it and the alteration must be accepted as deliberate. Irrespective of the author's intentions, the modification testifies to the fact that the image of the coin from Gela was perceived as the Minotaur in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It may, if partly, explain the uncommon shape of the monster embossed on Alciato's emblem illustration. Either way, such was Lorenzo Pignoria's reading of the artefact, and, admittedly, the linking of the Cretan beast from the emblem with the Sicilian coin seems justifiable.

Should one accept that the coins described above contributed to the transformation of the Minotaur into the half-man-half-horse creature, the alterations that the emblem illustration underwent chart the gradual

541 G. Rouillé, *Prima pars promptuarii iconum insigniorum a seculo hominum, subiectis eorum vitiis per compendium ex probatissimis auctoribus desumptis*, Lugduni: apud Gulielmum Rovillium, 1553, p. 43.



these works were set in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century is more fruitful than it may seem at first glance. What is more, the relationship between works from *Emblematum liber* and numismatic iconography is multi-layered, with their differences coming down to the singularity of individual cases in point. All the works under consideration were carefully selected with an eye to doing justice to the sheer complexity of the relation between emblem studies and numismatics. The works that have been well-discussed, and hence relatively exhausted by numerous scholars, were deliberately overlooked. As a result, such compositions as *Respublica liberata* (coin of Brutus), *Princeps subditorum incolumitatem procurans* (anchor with dolphin from the coin of Vespasian and Titus) or *Terminus* (the motif derived from the coins of Augustus) were not discussed in the analytical part. Another work that was intentionally left unexamined was *Virtuti fortuna comes* – linked to the caduceus and the horns of Amalthea – as it can be found on the dupondius of Vespasian in 74 AD.<sup>543</sup> Instead, this inquiry focused on fairly obscure and hitherto unexamined works (such as *Non vulganada consilia*) or those considered controversial (e.g. *Ad illustrissimum Maximilianum, ducem Mediolanensem*). Some of the texts under scrutiny prove that Alciato was deeply influenced by numismatic symbols. This thesis, however, may not apply to all the selected works. In this context, scholars such as Mignault and Pignoria pointed to some links between these texts and specific coins, or else with popular themes of the ancient coinage. Therefore, the present study attempted to chart some transformations in the process of the analysis of *Emblematum liber*, rather than offer an interrogation of the origin of the work. The relationship between emblem studies and numismatics has proved rich and productive, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The consolidated conclusions listed below will hence concern a variety of aspects. The following part will venture to inspect more general conclusions.

### III.2. NUMISMATIC SYMBOLISM IN THE HANDS OF EMBLEM ARTISTS

The symbolism of ancient coins crystallised before the birth of emblem book. More often than not, some symbols had already assumed their full meaning back in ancient times. This is to suggest that neither Alciato nor his followers assigned new meanings to the numismatic symbols of given artefacts. The value of those symbols resulted from their high popularity and embeddedness in the European culture, and as such, they

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543 RIC II 757.

hardly posed a challenge to interpretation. Some modifications, which were, however, rare and rather minor, resulted in certain motifs assuming a more universal expression. As an example, one may consider the pileus and two daggers known from *Respublica liberata*. For Brutus, this composition was to stand for the murder of Julius Caesar, which, in his opinion, was an act of liberation of the country from tyrannical rule. Alciato, for his part, attached a more general meaning to this representation. In his emblem, the symbol denotes the liberation of a country from dictatorial rule at large. The same applies to the carrying of Anchises from burning Troy. This telling gesture was to remind the ancients of the significance of respecting one's parents (*pietas erga parentes*). Nevertheless, back in the day, the myth was to put across a more definite message. The coins of Antonius Pius, for instance, referred to the personal accomplishments of the emperor, and in so doing sought to equate him with Aeneas. This pattern was maintained on the coins of Julius Caesar, who attempted to make evident his lineage by referring to the escape from Troy. By borrowing this mythical story, the ruler implied that *pietas* is a hereditary virtue, emblematic of the descendants of the eponymous hero of Virgil's *Aeneid*, that is, by extension, Julius Caesar himself. Characteristically, Alciato returned this scene to its more universal meaning. Rather than telling of virtues attributed to a specific family or person, the emblem takes as its focus the love of children towards their parents: one that sometimes requires heroic deeds and devotion. Therefore, although such modifications of numismatic symbols are by no means radical, they do call for careful attention. The study of emblems rendered the themes it appropriated more universal, and considered them away from any specific historical events. Such was the case of numismatic iconography.

### III.3. SOURCES

Another aspect that proves germane for the considerations in question concerns the sources of information on the ancient coins. These sources were in many cases widely known. Numerous coins were to be found in sizable, and those less impressive alike, private collections. The wealthy and educated elites would indulge in building all sorts of collections, typically keeping their ties with libraries. The Renaissance humanist scholars would indeed keenly collect this sort of artefact. Those who could afford it, like Antonio Agustín, kept extensive collections, which they could later publish as woodcuts or copperplate engravings. Alciato himself owned a substantial collection of ancient coins, as confirmed by his pupil Constanzo Landi. Seen as such, numismatic artefacts could be thought of as

natural sources of knowledge on ancient numismatic iconography in the Renaissance. That their symbolism absorbed Alciato immeasurably can be attested by Landi's comments that recount his conversation with his former mentor on the coin of the two-faced Janus.

It appears that the scholarly works, typically manuscripts, were no less important in promoting numismatic symbols. Some ancient scholars, such as Cassius Dion, passed down and interpreted many interesting numismatic themes. So did some 15<sup>th</sup> century humanist scholars, whose research on classical antiquity inspired the scholars of the following century. Among them was the aforementioned Angelo Poliziano, who successfully promulgated the crow motif as a symbol of concord. Indeed, the bird might not have anchored itself so firmly in the European tradition had it not been for the scholar's intervention. As argued above, Poliziano's choice of the crow was informed by the coin of Faustina the Younger as a source. Nevertheless, seeing as the artefact showed a dove rather than a crow, Poliziano's interpretation proved misguided. His mistake was then a turning point in the history of the crow motif. Not only did Poliziano put forward his own interpretations of certain numismatic illustrations, but he also cited other scholars to substantiate his claims. Furthermore, the author popularised the aforementioned interpretation of Dion's pileus and daggers. It is not unlikely that Alciato was inspired by Poliziano's version rather than its Greek original.

It remains uncertain whether the numismatic motifs placed on emblems resulted from the author's first-hand encounter with the coin, or were based on some scholarly work with an annotated interpretation of the symbol. Numismatic compendia were also a crucial source of information for scholars at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In fact, scholarly studies containing illustrations of coin reverses could spare one the hassle of visiting a private collection in person. By way of the wide circulation of printed books, people could gain an insight into the collections of, say, Guillaume du Choul or Johannes Sambucus. This allowed the reader access to many rare items, as well as their expert interpretations. One such source was *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano, which offered descriptions of many coins, along with their inscriptions. The influence of numismatic studies is not limited to the 16<sup>th</sup> century works and further. It is worth noting that the traces of these influences are present in Alciato's oeuvre, who evidently alludes to Andrea Fulvio in his emblem *Prudentes*. This implies that the collections of numismatic illustrations are germane to the production of emblems overall, as they successfully substitute real-life collections.

### III.4. WHAT THE READERS MADE OF THE EMBLEMS

As to the relationship between collections of emblems and numismatics, one should not overlook comments on Alciato's works, which in a sense mirror the ways in which the 16<sup>th</sup> century readers interpreted the texts. The erudite explanatory notes and extensive literary and cultural references adumbrated by Claude Mignault and Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, influenced the reception of *Emblematum liber* for further generations of readers. Multiple allusions to various coins in those notes are indeed very telling. Whereas earlier sources focused on original artefacts, which the publishers of Alciato's works owned personally, the later ones were full of references to scholarly books and studies. The latter comprised first and foremost the works of the 15<sup>th</sup> century humanist scholars and, secondly, numismatic compendia, which began to systematically grow in number. In some cases, the authors of the explanatory notes failed to acknowledge the original sources. They would cite a second-hand study, often quoted verbatim with no cross-reference to the target text. This practice reached its crescendo in the 1621 Padua edition. Studying its title, one might justifiably expect from Johannes Thulius's work a number of comments by Claude Mignault, Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, Lorenzo Pignoria, as well as minor explanatory notes by Frédéric Morel. In reality, it contains more references to authors other than those listed above. Analysing fragments that refer to the numismatic motifs, it becomes apparent that extensive passages were taken from Pierio Valeriano's work – as one would expect – unreferenced. This attests to a new hierarchy of sources on ancient coins. The latter became gradually replaced as a basis from which to study numismatic themes and arguments with compilations of numismatic illustrations or other studies. This is, however, less surprising than it may seem, since the compendia and treatises on the figurative meaning of some symbols usually focused, if only partially, on the symbolic character of Roman and Greek numismatic artefacts. In effect, they became the ground on which to consider and comment on the emblems.

The growing interest in the ancient coinage – gathering from the explanatory notes to Alciato's book – attest to the tastes of the readers. The linking of emblems with numismatic iconography testifies to the unremitting interest in Antiquity. On the other hand, it proves that particular importance was given to hidden meanings, expressed through symbols, verging on mysticism. Familiar with this group of symbols, the late 16<sup>th</sup> century readership could easily identify numismatic themes embossed on emblematic illustrations. Considering the bulk of studies, as well as their multiple reprints, it is safe to say that such themes appealed to many

readers. And yet, a lot of symbols were introduced to emblem studies by Alciato. Admittedly, many links with Greek and Roman coinage may not have been pointed out by the author of *Emblematum liber*. Although this question may never be fully answered, one may attempt to adumbrate a systematic structure of relations between Alciato's emblems and ancient numismatic iconography. This could potentially help distinguish certain types of emblems defined by their relation to the coins in question.

### III.5. TYPES OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EMBLEMS AND NUMISMATIC ICONOGRAPHY

The most easily identifiable links between emblems and ancient coins are those that can be recognised in the visual part of the emblem: that is, one that contains an illustration that draws on ancient iconography. This sort of visual association can be traced in the following emblems examined in this study: *In pudoris statuam*, *Prudentes* or *Pietas filiorum in parentes*. Their emblem woodcuts immediately bring to mind ancient coins. The figure of Janus embossed on the 1546 emblem illustrations has two faces: bearded and youthful without a beard. As such, the illustration refers to two kinds of representation of the Italic god in the numismatic tradition. This version was, however, soon replaced by its ancient counterpart found on some republican coins elaborated in the chapter "Two faces of the emblem *Prudentes*". This kind of emblem illustration entered its classical phase by drawing on ancient patterns. By the same token, on the woodcut from the first edition of *In pudoris statuam*, the personification of shame vaguely alluded to the gesture found on Roman coins. Whereas in the following reeditions the image was accurately and faithfully imitated. Other emblems that can be considered among this type of work are *Virtuti fortuna comes* and *Princeps subditorum incolumitatem procurans*, mentioned in this study in passing.

Along the same lines, there are a number of emblems that underwent more or less pronounced editorial alterations calculated to imitate numismatic patterns. As regards Alciato's output, this group of emblems includes *Consilio et virtute Chimaeram superari, hoc est fortiores et deceptores*, *Quercus*, and *Non vulganda consilia*. All of these modifications took place in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and developed from the work of Lorenzo Pignoria, who took pains to bring the woodcut engravings closer to their classical prototypes. If an emblem only faintly alluded to numismatic iconography, the Italian publisher was only too keen to align it with the representation adopted from the numismatic artefact. A most prominent example at this point is



the composition describing the oak. By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was no reason to link the emblem with Roman numismatic iconography. It was not until the very end of the century, when Mignault published his *Notae posteriores*, that coins with *corona civica* on the reverse started to appear in the broad context of the work. Pignoria needed no more encouragement to radically modify the form of the illustration and add the numismatic inscription. In the case of Bellerophon and Chimaera, Pignoria adjusted the shape of the mythical beast to fit the pattern found on the ancient coins. Likewise, when it comes to the representation of the Minotaur, the Italian publisher criticised the centaur-like image of the beast, and suggested the version adopted from Agustín's *Dialogues*. What he failed to notice was that, ironically, the coins minted in *Magna Graecia* did not illustrate the mythical labyrinth dweller, but a local river deity, best represented by the Sicilian Gelas. The other type of emblems relates to numismatic motifs only conditionally. In the editorial process, however, the links were emphasised only in the visual part. Another editorial practice was to annotate the text with explanatory notes about individual emblems. As a result, the compositions that according to Alciato were not related to ancient numismatics, became accepted by the readers as examples of classical tradition adopted in Renaissance culture. Unlike in the first group, the author's intention as to the approach or concept he had in mind was far from clear here. In further reprints, especially the 1621 Padua edition, the compositions assigned to the first two groups are easily distinguishable, which helps chart their evolution across all the 16<sup>th</sup> century editions.

Yet another group is represented by emblems that refer directly to a specific coin. Considering Alciato's oeuvre, the group counts only two works. The first one, *Respublica liberata*, attests to the fact that the study of emblems can be directly inspired by numismatic iconography. Given the abundance of existing scholarly works on that matter, intended to interrogate the reception of the motif of pileus and two daggers placed on the coin minted by Brutus in 42 BC, this study discusses the work only parenthetically. Instead, an emblem that is seemingly unrelated to ancient coinage is examined in depth. The work in question is the opening emblem, focusing on the Sforza coat of arms. In both cases, Alciato distinctly pointed to a coin that contained a symbol illustrated in the composition. Such examples extend to two epigrams by Constanzo Landi, discussed in the first part of this book, which should be classified as *emblemata nuda*. Both emblems are literary interpretations of the Roman coins. If enriched by plates, their structure would be indistinguishable from the one of *Respublica liberata*. Like the emblems that imitate numismatic reverses in

terms of visual illustration, these works can be fairly straightforwardly tied to the numismatic tradition.

The third group of emblems, which in turn can be connected to another one, includes works that contain phrases adopted from Greek and Roman coins, such as Alciato's *Salus publica*. The first constituent part of this emblem was modelled on inscriptions around the rim in the interior of certain coins. This may suggest that Alciato came across the artefacts personally. Not only does the title faithfully imitate the one from its numismatic prototype, but it is also alluded to in the visual part. The artefacts with the legend *SALVS PVBLICA* contained the image of Asclepius as serpent, in keeping with the emblem. Given that goddess Salus is inextricably intertwined with the legend, it could be argued that numismatic iconography was not accepted unconditionally. This legend was also echoed in some emblems about the motif of concord. Both of these emblems imitate the scene from the coins. In the first case, it is a bird (originally a dove, and a crow in numismatic tradition). The other shows the gesture of joining hands. Both images contained inscriptions that matched those of their numismatic prototypes, namely *CONCORDIA*.

The division proposed above can be rounded up to two more general groups of emblems: one in which links with numismatic tradition are more pronounced in the visual component, and the other in which these influences can be traced in the textual part. In practice, however, these types are rarely unmixed, and the works they consist of can be ascribed to more than one group indicated above. The emblem modelled on the coin of Brutus refers to the artefact in its epigram and contains its numismatic illustration. The emblem *Quercus* by Pignoria imitates the scene from the reverse and copies its inscription. The same applies to *Concordia*. Two emblems that describe this concept refer to the numismatic representation in the visual part and the title. Similar instances abound. At this point it could be argued that numismatic artefacts influenced not only the visual part of emblems. They were considered as complex symbolic compositions, representing fixed concepts able to be put into words or represented by visual images.

### III.6. CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY IN LIGHT OF THE BOOK OF EMBLEMS

The study of the relations between emblems and classical coinage may extend to considerations associated with certain cultural transformations emerging at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. When charting changes registered across different reprints of illustrations inspired by numismatic artefacts, interesting conclusions come to the fore. The earliest editions

of emblems drew on the numismatic motifs in creative ways. Rather than just copying the images on the reverses, the woodcuts only loosely alluded to these elements. A creative redoing of – or even resistance to – the accepted numismatic patterns is indeed symptomatic of this historical stage of the book of emblems, shown in *In pudoris statuam*. The figure of Penelope in the foreground does not immediately evoke the gesture of the personification of shame known from some coins. If anything, the gesture is loosely mimicked at best. Initially the heroine covered only her eyes, then the whole face. It was not until the editions published at the turn of the century that the mythical figure started to cover her face with a cloth, as registered on some Roman coins. *Respublica liberata* shows a related example. The plates used in a number of early editions of the emblems referred to the denarius of Brutus alone. Although another series of medals faithfully emulating the ancient motif of the pileus and two daggers around it was being issued concurrently, this image did not raise any suspicions. It was Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas who first postulated that the illustration should imitate the illustration placed on the coin. Unheeded until 1618, this proposition came to fruition thanks to Lorenzo Pignoria, who was apt to align emblem illustrations with numismatic patterns. It is highly likely that Alciato's book of emblems constituted a shift in the approach to classical antiquity that developed at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. At a certain point, the creative emulation of ancient patterns seemed to go out of favour as a tendency for more faithful imitation began to catch on. Therefore, focusing on the plates from the Padua edition, rather than the earlier versions of *Emblematum liber*, allows one to better recognise the influence of Roman and Greek coins

### III.7. RAISING AWARENESS OF NUMISMATIC ICONOGRAPHY

It needs to be mentioned that emblem books not only depended on numismatic symbolism, but also popularised it. Many motifs exploited by Alciato were in turn adopted in other texts. Additionally, the annotated version of *Emblematum liber* achieved a new status, as now the book could be used as a compendium or florilegium, also known in English as a commonplace book.<sup>544</sup> In a way, Alciato's work in its original form lost

544 On the transformation of emblem books into commonplace books, see: A. Moss, "Emblems into Commonplaces: The Anthologies of Josephus Langius", in: *Mundus Emblematicus. Studies in Neo-Latin Emblem Books*, Ed K.A.E. Enenkel, A.S.Q. Visser, Turnhout 2003, pp.1–16; D.S. Russel, "Claude Mignault, Erasmus and Simon Bouquet: The Function of the Commentaries on Alciato's Emblems", in: *Mundus Emblematicus...*, pp. 17–32.

its appeal. The reason that it did not go out of the readers' favour altogether comes down to the fact that it comprised a set of comprehensive *loci communes*. It turned into a sort of guidebook or anthology of universal or occasional symbols. It was also used for occasional speeches, such as jubilee or funeral speeches, or some highly specialised scholarly works, such as rolls of arms. The influence of Alciato's book extends across the whole of Europe and its peripheries. Popularised by emblem books, allegorical representations of classical coins were considered inextricable from the ancient culture. Alongside other motifs related to emblems, they became widely used in architecture, book illustrations, occasional art, or other kinds of commercial art. Had they not been present in the emblem books, they would not have made such a glittering career.

It is hoped that the results of the present research on the links between numismatics and emblem studies opens up the space for further inquiry into the matters under discussion. Such an examination, including the proposed research methods, could be extended to other related books and collections. It may be of interest whether other scholars and authors exploited the numismatic motifs that Alciato did not refer to in his work. If so, how many such symbols were added to the ever expanding collection of universal symbols. Research on the 17<sup>th</sup> century florilegia, as an alternative to books of emblems, would also contribute to the field immensely, as they would help draw up a catalogue of most celebrated or popular works. Another category of the subject matter that calls for attention – although in many ways is reminiscent of commonplace books – are notes by pupils of early Jesuit schools, where verbal or visual compositions were highly acclaimed. A thorough examination of this sort of sources could help establish which numismatic motifs entered the school curriculum. By extension, it could be possible to spot the ways in which classical antiquity was perceived across Europe. With its long and established tradition, as well as a recent revival of interest, emblem studies is a vibrant discipline for all those keen to chart its territories. It also constitutes a promising point of departure for further research on classical antiquity.

*translated by Paweł Wojtas*

#### SUMMARY

Research into emblems and emblem books is currently gaining ground among a growing number of scholars of diverse disciplines. The present work should be reckoned among more traditional approaches to emblem studies attempting to trace the origins of the texts under scrutiny. As such,

the research has been centred around the reception of specific images adopted from the ancient Greek and Roman coins. This extends to both iconography and numismatic legends resonating in mottoes, emblematic compositions (adopted as titles), and epigrams. In terms of its content, the research is centred on the relationship between *Emblematum liber* by Andrea Alciato and ancient numismatic artefacts. It is assumed that the first collection of emblems serves as an apposite example of this relation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This is confirmed by a proliferation of studies on this work, which testifies to its popularity in academic circles and among general readership. Revered and imitated in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, *Emblematum liber* by Alciato was an epitome of emblem books. Since the collective conclusions from the scholarly research on Alciato's work can be extended to the study of numismatics in a broader context, they are in a certain way universal.

The text is divided into three consecutive parts. The introductory part discusses such aspects as the origin of emblematic works, their relationship with the ancient coinage, the reception of ancient coins in modern times, the development of specialised sources on numismatics and its impact on the explanatory notes in *Emblematum liber*, as well as the reference to the coins in Alciato's works. The second part, the most extensive one, comprises a number of chapters orientated towards analysing selected works adopted from Alciato's book of emblems, intended to demonstrate manifold relationships between the works in question and ancient numismatic artefacts. In some cases the imputed links are fairly obvious, posing little challenge in terms of identification and description. In other cases it is the opposite. In fact, on a few occasions it failed to provide a definite answer as to the provenance or sources inspiring certain works. At such rare moments, the author posited a number of tentative hypotheses. Finally, the closing part offers consolidated conclusions based on the analytical section. Additionally, the final part puts forward some general conclusions, such as an attempt at demonstrating the ways in which Alciato, his commentators and publishers exploited ancient coins for artistic purposes or otherwise.

Neither Alciato nor his followers really assigned new meanings to the numismatic symbols of given artefacts. The value of those symbols resulted from their high popularity and embeddedness in the European culture, and as such, they hardly posed a challenge to interpretation. Modifications, rather rare and minor, resulted in some motifs assuming a more universal expression. Although such alternations of numismatic symbols are by no means radical, they do call for careful attention. The study of

emblems rendered the themes it appropriated more universal, and considered them away from any specific historical events. Such was the case of numismatic iconography. It still remains uncertain whether the numismatic motifs placed on emblems resulted from the author's first-hand encounter with the coin, or were based on some scholarly work with an annotated interpretation of the symbol. Numismatic compendia were also a crucial source of information for scholars at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In fact, scholarly studies containing illustrations of the coin reverses could spare one the hassle of visiting a private collection in person. Through the wide circulation of printed books, people could gain an insight into the collections of, say, Guillaume du Choul or Johannes Sambucus. This allowed the reader access to many rare items, as well as their expert interpretations. One such source was *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano, which offered descriptions of many coins, along with their inscriptions. The influence of numismatic studies is not at all limited to the 16<sup>th</sup> century works and further. It is worth noting that the traces of these influences are present in Alciato's oeuvre.