

# The Eighth International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies - « Word and Image, 1500-1900 : Figure, Form and Function »

Winchester College, Angleterre, 28 juillet – 1 Aout 2008

## Premier panel

**Emblematics, *Figura* and Diagram: the *Physicae et Theologicae Conclusiones*, by Vaenius (1621).**

Organisation : Group for Early Modern Cultural Analysis (F.N.R.S. – Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgique)

Président : Anne-Elisabeth Spica

In 1621, Otto van Veen publishes a short theological treatise on free will and predestination, under a fictive publisher's address (Orsellis). The book contains 20 chapters composed each of two facing pages: on the right page, a geometrical and diagrammatic figure with letters, and on the left page the "caption" of the image, a description and explanation of the letters and figures, followed by a few authoritative quotations. The format used recalls the one that Vaenius used for the *Amoris divini emblemata*. These three papers will address three different aspects of this enigmatic book.

### Definition of the figura in Vaenius's emblematic works

Agnès Guiderdoni-Bruslé, FNRS, UCL

In his address to the reader and beholder, Vaenius roots his *Conclusiones* in a so-called Platonic and mathematical tradition, which used figures to formalise its knowledge. Further on, he links his project to the alchemical world. In this paper, I will study how Vaenius used an array of rhetorical notions and historical traditions – philosophy, allegory, theology – in order to explain his project. I will try to understand what a figure is for him, and, comparatively with his other emblem books, establish a tentative definition of the notion of figure.

## **The Visual Demonstration between Science and Emblematics in Vaenius' *Conclusiones***

Ralph Dekoninck, FNRS, UCL

If the layout of the *Conclusiones* seems, at first, quite unusual, it is worth examining how it shares some dispositional logic with other illustrated publications of the same time. We would like to address the question of the visual modalities of demonstration, at the intersection of emblematics and science, each fields borrowing from the other some visual processes in order to convey an abstract message.

## **Emblematic and Graphic Processes in Vaenius' *Physicae et Theologicae Conclusiones* (1621): Semiotic Observations.**

Andrea Catellani, UCL

This paper will try to develop a semiotic analysis of some aspects of the O. Vaenius *Physicae et Theologicae Conclusiones*. In his preface to this short text, the author says that he “shows and demonstrates by figures” (figuraliter ostendo & probo) his thesis on predestination and free will. But how exactly this combined act of showing and demonstrating is pursued? Which kind of “figures” are involved, and how do they interact with the verbal texts? I will focus the analysis on some chapters, in order to differentiate some types of visual elements, like iconic, graphic (for example, diagrammatic) and abstract figures, in order to show how images becomes “cognitive operators”. I will analyse briefly the semiotic nature of graphic elements, like diagrams and web, starting from the contributions of C. S. Peirce, N. Goodman and J. Bertin. I will propose the concept of “graphic process”, as a specific type of information elaboration and textual expression through elements like diagrams and webs: this concept is useful to understand the semiotic organisation of the *Conclusiones*. I will study the relation between this process and the textual and discursive aspects of emblems, as they appear in the Vaenius' book: in particular, I will focus on the interaction and co-presence of the graphic and of the emblematic processes, and the exploitation of an emblematic textual organisation. From this point of view, it will be clearer how Vaenius wants to “show and demonstrate” his conclusions, and why this short text is an interesting example of how emblematics is transformed and adapted to an original theological and scientific discourse.

## Deuxième panel

### Emblematics in the Public Sphere : Hagiography and Propaganda

Organisation : Group for Early Modern Cultural Analysis (F.N.R.S. – Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium)

Président : Agnès Guiderdoni-Bruslé

### Corneille, l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ et l'emblématique

Anne-Elisabeth Spica, Université de Metz, Institut universitaire de France

Entre 1651 et 1656, Corneille a traduit l'*Imitation de Jésus-Christ*. Si Fontenelle insista sur la proximité du dramaturge et des jésuites, André Stegmann rappelle à juste raison que ce genre de traduction remporte le plus grand succès dans la France des années 1650 : on songera à Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin et à sa traduction de Scupoli comme de l'Office de la Vierge (aussi traduit par Corneille). Cette traduction, Corneille l'a accompagnée d'emblèmes, qu'il a lui-même composés : comment interpréter le parti-pris de l'auteur du *Cid* ? Sans doute, les motivations « mondaines » sont indéniables, car il s'agit de plaire à un public amateur d'ouvrages gravés. Pour autant, l'examen doit se poursuivre plus avant, non seulement parce que Corneille est un ami des jésuites, grands producteurs d'emblèmes devant l'Éternel au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, mais aussi parce qu'il veut faire œuvre de spiritualité et pas seulement œuvre de traduction.

Nous avons dès lors un excellent cas d'espèces, pour comprendre les rapports entre emblématique, littérature et spiritualité dans le cadre d'une analyse des processus emblématiques : du côté de l'intentio auctoris, comment s'organisent les grands ensembles de l'inventio emblématique spirituelle ? Comment Corneille conçoit-il les rapports du texte et de l'image, qu'il assume tous deux ?

Du côté de l'intentio textus, quel gain de lisibilité l'*Imitatio* reçoit-elle ? Quels passages sont mis en valeur, ordonnant quelle lecture du texte ?

Du côté de la réception et de l'intentio lectoris, pourquoi, comment l'emblème assure-t-il un surcroît d'identification « spirituelle » de cette traduction d'un texte bien connu et médité au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France ?

### **Jesuit colleges' celebrations for princes' births in the mid-seventeenth century.**

Aline Smeesters, UCL

During the seventeenth century, the numerous Jesuit colleges that covered all catholic Europe frequently took part in the glorification of the great events affecting the reigning families: births, marriages, deaths, enthronements, victories... My paper will focus on colleges' celebrations around the birth of the French crown prince in 1661 as well as the birth, one year later, of Maximilian Emanuel, the future Elector of Bavaria. Various forms of happiness' s demonstration were adopted by the schools: decoration of the colleges façade or courtyard, performing of plays and ballets, publication of commemorative books... Emblems or emblematic structures were often included in the decorative program and in the scenery; two cases of printed emblem collections are known, respectively due to the colleges of Munich and Cologne. These productions were far more than didactic exercises for the college students: directed towards a large audience, they played their part in the good reputation of the Society of Jesus as well as in the ideological message the Society wanted to send, as being involved in the political life of its time. With the aid of one or two case studies, I will try to define the nature and function of the emblems in those birth celebrations as well as the stakes of their use in their literary, cultural, political and ideological contexts. As a Neo-Latinist, I will pay special attention to the language chosen (Latin or vernacular) and to the classical literary references.

### **The political propaganda through the emblematic production of the students in the Brussels Jesuit College under the Archduke Leopold William (1647-1656)**

Grégory Ems, UCL

Since its creation at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Brussels Jesuit College had a privileged and intense relationship with the political power, especially under the Archduke Leopold William (1647-1656), a member of the Spanish royal family. My paper will focus on the celebration of Leopold William by the Jesuit College through the emblematic production of the Poetry and Rhetoric students, the so-called affixiones, exhibited once a year and which were constructed around the Archiduke and dedicated to him. Thanks to these productions, I will study how the students expressed in a verbal and visual way their patriotism to the Spanish power during a time full of international problems between Spain, France and Northern Netherlands. Then, I will examine how this visual and verbal propaganda was received on the one hand by the Archduke himself, who frequently visited the exhibitions and who had shown more than once his favour to the Jesuits, and on the other hand by the Brussels' dwellers. In doing so, I would like to uncover the political function of the emblematic students' production and its influence on the people's conception of the established political power.