Magdalena Kinga Górska

The Definition of the Emblem: Models and Norms of the Genre. The Polish Perspective

The emblem is regarded as a genre of the early modern period. Thanks to the recognition in recent years of the classical (epigraphy, rhetoric) and medieval (e.g. heraldry, collections of fables and proverbs) sources of emblematics, it is possible to provide a more complete description of both the theoretical awareness of the creators of emblems and the development of their conceptions against the background of late-medieval illumination or Renaissance typography.[1] Yet the question of how the emblem developed, what it used to be and what it is today is not an easy one to answer. The main reason for this is the history of emblematics, which in the pre-theoretical period (as practice preceded reflection upon genre distinctions), gained an individual identity in various parts of Europe, crossing with other fields.[2] The authors of the oldest definitions tried to reconcile the classical meaning of *emblema* with the art they were familiar with, which by the late sixteenth century

---

[1] Cf. i.a. D.S. Russell, *Emblematic Structures in Renaissance French Culture* (Toronto, 1995), pp. 17–38; P.J. Smith, "Arnold Freitag's *Mythologia Ethica* (1579) and the Tradition of the Emblematic Fable," in K.A.E. Enenkel and A.S.Q. Visser (eds), *Mundus Emblematicus. Studies in Neo-Latin Emblem Books* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 173–196; K.A.E. Enenkel and W. Neuber (eds), *Cognition and the Book: Typologies of Formal Organisation of Knowledge in the Printed Book of the Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2004); A. Adams, "La conception et l'édition des livres d'emblèmes dans la France du XVIe siècle," *Littérature,* 145 (2007), pp. 10–22; A. Rolet, "Aux sources de l'emblème: blasons et devises," *Littérature,* 145 (2007), pp. 53–78; D.L. Drysdall, "Devices as 'Emblemes' before 1531," *Emblematica,* 16 (2008), pp. 253–269; S. Plotke, "Pre-Alciato Emblems? Daniel Agricola's *Vita Beati* from the Year 1511," in S. McKeown (ed.), *The International Emblem: From Incunabula to the Internet, Selected Proceedings of the International Conference of the Society for Emblem Studies, 28th July–1st August, 2008* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 69–81.
This article was based on materials assembled during preparation of the book *Teoria emblematyki w Polsce (XVI–XVIII w.)* [*Theory of Emblematics in Poland (16th–18th Centuries)*]. It was necessary to use an abbreviated format for references to manuscript sources and selection of subject literature.
[2] Cf. i.a. M.K. Górska, "Hieroglifik w teorii Rzeczypospolitej (XVII–XVIII w.). Zarys problematyki," *Terminus,* 25 (2012), pp. 15–46; M.K. Górska, "Symbolika heraldyczna a teoria impresy: przykład *Orbis Polonus* Szymona Okolskiego," *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego,* 13 [24] (2014), pp. 35–49.

was already beginning to elude the practice of classification. At times, differentiations of genres were avoided,[3] but the ambiguities that were discerned inspired reflection.[4] Emblem theoreticians patiently pointed to the similarities and differences between related genres. They were aided by the authors of works devoted to the *impresa*/device, hieroglyphic, or symbol who contributed to defining the rules of the *emblema*. Reflections on the distinctions between symbolic genres were characterized to a greater extent by *per analogiam* and *per negationem* presentation than by an independent formula. The accomplishments of theoreticians did not lead to the development of precise rules (viz. a classical formula), as Johann Michael von der Ketten noted in the late seventeenth century, quoting the words of Jacob Masen: "Alciatus omnia exempla sub emblematis nomine proposuit, Paradinus symbolorum, Pierius [Valerianus] hieroglyphicorum titulo donavit. Omnes confuderunt omnia".[5] Polish authors of definitions either relied upon past authorities or selected from the formulas known to them one adequate for lectures and educational practice.[6]

Recent research on the definitions of the *emblema* in old works has discovered diverse variants influenced equally by the linguistic tradition, monastic affiliation and erudition of the writers, as well as the historical context of the source.[7] Emblems meant one thing as the main theme of

---

[3]   See e.g. N. Caussin, *Electorum symbolorum … syntagmata…* (Paris: R. de Beauvais, 1618), f. sign. e3r: "[symbolum, aenigma, emblema, parabola, apologus, hieroglyphicum] differunt tamen nonnihil," D.L. Drysdall, *Claude Mignault of Dijon. Theoretical Writings on the Emblem: a Critical Edition, with apparatus and notes*, http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/Mignault [access: 23 October, 2013], pp. 41–42: "Plerique sunt non satis acuti, qui emblema cum symbolo, cum aenigmate, cum sententia, cum adagio temere et imperite confundant."

[4]   e.g. J. Sambucus, *Emblemata …* (Antverpiae: Ch. Plantin, 1564); H. Estienne, *L'Art de faire les devises …* (Paris: J. Paslé, 1645).

[5]   J.M. von der Ketten, *Apelles symbolicus exhibens seriem amplissimam symbolorum…* (Amstelaedami et Gedani: apud Janssonio-Waesbergios, 1699), vol. 1, n.pag. [f. 6v]. On the basis of J. Masen, *Speculum imaginum veritatis occultae, exhibens symbola, emblemata, hieroglyphica, aenigmata … * (Coloniae: sumptibus J. A. Kinchii, 1650), p. 358.

[6]   Cf. MS, Biblioteka Czartoryskich (hereafter: "BC") 2454 I, p. 165: "Symbolorum tractatio plena est litium apud Authores: nos hic utiliora selegim[us]."

[7]   See inter alia A. Stegmann, "Les Théories de l'emblème et de la devise en France et en Italie (1520–1620)," in Y. Giraud (ed.), *L'Emblème à la Renaissance, actes de la journee d'etudes du 10 Mai 1980* (Paris, 1982), pp. 61–77; D. Sulzer, *Traktate zur Emblematik. Studien zu einer Geschichte der Emblemtheorien*. Hrsg. von G. Sauder (St. Ingbert, 1992), pp. 220–231; P.M. Daly, "The Bibliographic Basis for Emblem Studies," *Emblematica*, 8/1 (1994), pp. 151–175; J. Manning, "Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory: Some Introductory Questions and Problems," in P.M. Daly and J. Manning (eds), *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory 1500–1700* (New York, 1999), pp. XI–XXII; J. Loach, "Menestrier's Emblem Theory," *Emblematica*, 2/2 (1987), pp. 317–336; G.R. Dimler, "Imitatio, Innovatio and Jesuit Emblem Theory," in G.E. Szönyi (ed.), *European Iconography East and West. Selected Papers of the Szeged International Conference, June 9–12, 1993* (Leiden, New York, Köln, 1996), pp. 209–222; J.J.G. Arranz, F.J. Pizarro Gómez, "Teoría y práctica de la imagen de las 'Imprese' en los siglos XVI y XVII," in R. Zafra and J. J. Azanza (eds), *Emblemata aurea. La emblemática en el art y la literatura del Siglo de Oro* (Navarra, 2000), pp. 189–207; D. Caldwell, "Studies in Sixteenth-Century Italian Imprese,"

a treatise or as described in the foreword of an emblematic collection, and another in the pages of an encyclopedia, dictionary, or a treatise on poetry or rhetoric—in works that have barely been examined in terms of codification of the genre and yet are the most important from the point of view of the Old Polish theory of emblematics.[8] Research conducted in recent years shows that it is these "non-emblematic" perspectives that in fact reflect the archaic, pre-emblematic meanings of the term *emblema*, which are key to understanding the genre in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[9]

The most important definitions of the genre for the development of emblematic studies in the twentieth century emerged separately from the former theoretical context, with the object of literary emblematics in mind.[10] Today, we can recognize a disparity between the concept of *emblema*

Emblematica, 11 (2001), pp. 1–257; D. Caldwell, *The Sixteenth-century Italian Impresa in Theory and Practice* (New York, 2004); G. Arbizzoni, *"Un nodo di parole e di cose". Storia e fortuna delle imprese* (Roma, 2002); P.M. Daly, "The European Impresa: From Fifteenth-century Aristocratic Device to Twenty-first-century Logo," *Emblematica,* 13 (2003), pp. 303–332; L. De Girolami Cheney, "The Impresa in the Italian Renaissance," in P.M. Daly (ed.), *Companion to Emblem Studies* (New York, 2008), pp. 251–266; A.S.Q. Visser, *Joannes Sambucus and the Learned Image: the Use of the Emblem in Late Humanism* (Leiden, 2005).

[8] T. Michałowska, *Staropolska teoria genologiczna* (Wrocław, 1974); B. Bauer, *Jesuitische "ars rhetorica" im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), pp. 69–132; J. Manning, "Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory: A Provisional Annotated Bibliography of Primary Sources," in *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory*, pp. 239–255; D.S. Russell, "Claude Mignault, Erasmus and Simon Bouquet: The Function of the Commentaries on Alciato's Emblems," in *Mundus Emblematicus*, pp. 17–32; P.M. Daly (comp.) "Selective Bibliography for Further Reading," in *Companion to Emblem Studies*, pp. 535–536; M.K. Górska, "Emblematyka jako źródło staropolskiej erudycji. Geneza i funkcja materiału symbolicznego w polskich kompendiach," in I.M. Dacka-Górzyńska and J. Partyka (eds), *Staropolskie kompendia wiedzy* (Warszawa, 2009), pp. 99–132.

[9] Cf. D.S. Russell, "The Term 'Emblème' in Sixteenth-century France," *Neophilologus,* 59 (1975), pp. 337–351; A. Bagley, "English Dictionary Definition of 'Emblem' and 'Device' from Elyot to Johnson," *Emblematica,* 4/1 (1989), pp. 177–199; D.L. Drysdall, "Emblema Quid? What is an emblem?" in P. Shand (ed.), *Under the Aegis: the Virtues by Megan Jenkinson* (Auckland, 1997), pp. 137–143; D.L. Drysdall, "Occurrences of the Word 'emblema' in Printed Works before Alciato," *Emblematica,* 14 (2005), pp. 299–325; P.F. Campa, "Emblematic Terminology in the Spanish Tradition," in *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory*, pp. 13–26; M. Bath, "Inserts and Suppressions: Seventeenth-century Poetic Usage of the Term 'Emblem'," in M. Bath, P.F. Campa, and D.S. Russell (eds), *Emblem Studies in Honour of Peter M. Daly* (Baden-Baden, 2002), pp. 1–14.

[10] Cf. M. Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-century Imagery. Second Edition Considerably Increased. Offset Reprint of the Edition Published in 1964* (Roma, 1975), pp. 74–75; A. Henkel and A. Schöne (eds), *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1967); A. Henkel and A. Schöne (eds), *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts Taschenausgabe* (Stuttgart-Weimar, 1996); W.S. Heckscher, K.A. Wirth, "Emblem. Emblembuch," in *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 85–228; A. Schöne, *Emblematik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock* (München, 1968); P.M. Daly, *Emblem Theory: Recent German Contributions to the Characterization of the Emblem Genre* (Nendeln, 1979); S. Mödersheim, "Emblem," in G. Ueding (ed.), *Istorisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 2 (Tübingen, 1994), pp. 1098–1108; B.F. Scholz, "Emblematik," in H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds.), *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, vol. 13 (Stuttgart-Weimar 1999), pp. 952–956; S. Mödersheim, "The Emblem in the Context of Architecture," in P.M. Daly (ed.), *Emblem Scholarship directions*

that functioned until the eighteenth century and the one used by scholars of the genre, both those from the second half of the twentieth century and those writing in recent years.[11] It is also thought that the thematic and structural diversity of emblematic works, which it is hard to sort into typological or chronological types, makes it impossible to elaborate a universal formula.[12] Research practice has shown that the basic elements used until recently to define the *emblema*, including in Polish articles[13]—a tripartite character (*emblema triplex*), the precedence of the icon,[14] and the role

and developments. A Tribute to Gabriel Hornstein (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 159–175; J. Manning, *The Emblem* (London, 2002).

[11]   P.M. Daly, "Recent Emblem Theory," in *The Emblem in Early Modern Europe. Contribution to the Theory of the Emblem* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 13–29. Polish issues: M.K. Górska, "Emblematics Towards Visual Poetry. The Example of the *Via triumphalis Polonorum et Svecorum Regem … Vladislaum IV … celebrata … ducens …* (1634)," in *Poesis Artificiosa. Between Theory and Practice*, eds. A. Borysowska, B. Milewska-Waźbińska (Frankfurt am Main, 2013), pp. 83–96; M.K. Górska, "Ut pictura emblema? Teoria i praktyka," in A. Bielak (ed.), *Ut pictura poesis / Ut poesis pictura. O związkach literatury i sztuk wizualnych od XVI do XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 2013), pp. 31–46.

[12]   Cf. i.a. I. Höpel, "Das mehrstandige Emblem: zu Geschichte und Erscheinungsform eines seltenen Emblemtypus," in A. Adams, A.J. Harper (eds), *The Emblem in Renaissance and Baroque Europe. Tradition and Variety. Selected Papers of the Glasgow International Emblem Conference 13–17 August, 1990* (Leiden, 1992), pp. 104–112; S. Heckscher and A.B. Sherman, *Emblematic Variants: Literary Echoes of Alciati's Term Emblema: A Vocabulary Drawn from the Title Pages of Emblem Books* (New York, 1995); P.M. Daly, *Literature in the Light of the Emblem* (Toronto, 1998); A. Saunders, "The Long and the Short of it: Structure and Form in the Early French Emblem Book," in B.F. Scholz, M. Bath, and D. Weston (eds), *The European Emblem. Selected Papers from the Glasgow Conference 11–14 August, 1987* (Leiden, 1990), pp. 55–83; D. Graham, "Emblema Multiplex: Towards a Typology of Emblematic Forms, Structures and Functions," in Daly (ed.), *Emblem Scholarship*, pp. 131–158; P.M. Daly, "Emblem Theory: Modern and Early Modern," in Daly (ed.), *Companion to Emblem Studies*, pp. 43–78; D. Russell, "Emblems, Frames, and Other Marginalia: Defining the Emblematic," *Emblematica*, 17 (2009), pp. 1–40; J. Manning, "Emblems and their Contexts: A Generic Overview," in McKeown (ed.), *The International Emblem*, pp. 2–20. See also P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, "Typologia polskich książek emblematycznych," *Barok* 3/1 (1996), pp. 59–75; P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, "The Typology of Polish Emblem Books in the 16th–18th Centuries," in I. Opacki, A. Wilkoń, and J. Żurawska (eds), *Studia slavistica et humanistica in honorem Nullo Minissi* (Katowice, 1997), pp. 92–99.

[13]   See i.a. J. Pelc, "Emblemat," in *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 4 (Lublin, 1983), pp. 929–930; J. Pelc, "Emblematy, książki emblematyczne. Problemy teorii a praktyka twórców," *Barok* 3/1 (1996), pp. 33–50; J. Pelc, "Emblemat," in T. Michałowska (ed.), *Słownik literatury staropolskiej. Średniowiecze – renesans – barok*, 2nd edn (Warszawa, 1998), p. 194; T. Kostkiewiczowa, "Emblemat," in J. Sławiński (ed.), *Słownik terminów literackich*, 3rd edn (Wrocław, 1998), pp. 127–128; R. Krzywy, "Emblemat," in G. Gazda and S. Tynecka-Makowska (eds), *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich* (Kraków, 2006), p. 203.

[14]   A. Schöne, *Emblematik und Drama*, pp. 26, 33. For discussion on the "Priorität des Bildes," among others D. Sulzer, *Traktate zur Emblematik*, pp. 32–40; W. Neuber, "Locus, Lemma, Motto. Entwurf zu einer mnemonischen Emblematiktheorie," in J.J. Berns and W. Neuber (eds), *Ars Memorativa. Zur kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der Gedächtniskunst 1400–1750* (Tübingen, 1993), pp. 351–372; D.L. Drysdall, "Authorities for Symbolism in the Sixteenth Century," in Daly and Manning (eds), *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory*, pp. 112–113; K.A.E. Enenkel and A.S.Q. Visser, "Introduction," in Enenkel and Visser (eds), *Mundus Emblematicus*, pp. iii–iv; P.M. Daly, "Emblems Through the Magnifying Glass or Telescope," *Emblematica*, 18 (2010), pp. 315–337. Discussion of the theory of emblematics of the German school can also be found in: P.M. Daly, *Emblem Theory: Recent German Contributions*, pp. 68–77; I. Höpel, *Emblem*

of conceit[15]—are in fact not normative. This is significant because Polish scholars used twentieth-century syntheses to differentiate, for example, "classical" and "incomplete" emblems, or to criticize ignoring of the tripartite composition,[16] which was not introduced by emblematists, nonetheless.[17] The canonical definition of *emblema triplex* coined by the Jesuit Jacob Spanmüller, alias Pontanus, did not serve as a categorization framework in the Commonwealth. His formulation reflected neither the theory of *ars emblematica* of around the same time, nor the development of the art of the emblem under the patronage of the Society of Jesus.[18]

Since the 1990s a growing knowledge of emblematics has prompted increased criticism of the definitions used in earlier studies, resulting in the adoption of methodology focusing on the description of elements of a composition in the context of the contemporary knowledge in the field of genre studies. Research has come to focus on specific emblems (or collections of emblems), rather than the abstract concept of emblematics and emblematic construction.[19]

The discrepancy between contemporary definitions and former theory and practice is much larger in the case of the Polish source material and subject literature. This is not only because Old Polish literature did not produce any treatise devoted to the *emblema*; and the emblematic prints and manuscripts were not accompanied by theoretical forewords of authors or publishers—such forewords played a key role in forming the genre in Western Europe.[20] Rather, the sources in which the rules appeared are themselves the cause of the observed differences. Theoretical reflection on emblems

---

und Sinnbild, pp. 26–34; B.F. Scholz, "Das Emblem als Gattung, als Textsorte und als Genre: Definitionen und Interessen," in *Emblem und Emblempoetik. Historische und systematische Studien* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 271–302.

[15]   Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-century Imagery*, pp. 1154.

[16]   Cf. e.g. J. Pelc, *Słowo i obraz na pograniczu literatury i sztuk plastycznych* (Kraków, 2002), p. 39; J. Pelc, *Emblematy, książki emblematyczne*, pp. 43–48; D. Chemperek, *Poezja Jana Gawińskiego i kultura literacka drugiej połowy XVII wieku* (Lublin, 2005), p. 224.

[17]   Cf. e.g. M. Pastoureau, "'Arma senescunt, insignia florescunt'. Note sur les origines de l'emblème," in *Figures et couleurs. Études sur la symbolique et la sensibilité médiévales* (Paris, 1996), pp. 125–137; D.L. Drysdall, "Devices as 'Emblemes' before 1531," *Emblematica,* 16 (2008), pp. 253–269; S. Plotke, "Emblematik vor der Emblematik? Der frühe Buchdruck als Experimentierfeld der Text-Bild Beziehungen," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 129/1 (2010), pp. 127–142.

[18]   See G.R. Dimler, "The Jesuit Emblem," in Daly (ed.), *Companion to Emblem Studies*, pp. 99–127; P.M. Daly, "Jesuit Emblems: In the Service of God, Man, or the Society of Jesus?," in *The Emblem in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 185–219.

[19]   This phenomenon was highlighted by D. Russell, "Nouvelles directions dans l'étude de l'emblème français," *Littérature,* 145 (2007), p. 148. Cf. Daly, *Emblem Theory: Modern*, pp. 43–78; P.M. Daly, "Emblem Studies: Achievements and Challenges," in McKeown (ed.), *The International Emblem*, pp. 523–532.

[20]   See P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, *Emblematy w drukach polskich i Polski dotyczących XVI–XVIII wieku. Bibliografia* (Wrocław, 1981).

was a marginal concern in Poland, chiefly occupying a place in discourse on rhetoric. The strong influence of the writings of Nicolas Caussin (especially *Electorum symbolorum … syntagmata*, 1618) and other Jesuit theoreticians encouraged the view of the *emblema* as being an inferior form to hieroglyphics and symbols. In Old Polish theoretical sources, references to *emblemata* appeared in connection with rhetoric more often than poetics, and the definitions of the *emblema* were incorporated into discourse on other genres (such as epigrams or symbols).[21] The same person would often deliberately repeat expressions given in discourse on rhetoric while lecturing on poetics.[22]

While the definitions were mostly brief and condensed; sometimes, especially in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, model foreign works were identified, or practical remarks and examples were added. The earliest Polish theoretical comments come from the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The increase in the numbers of sources (mostly manuscripts) is dated from after the middle of the century until the 1740s. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Polish theoreticians were certainly less interested in the genre of *emblema* than in the *hieroglyphicum* and *symbolum*, while discourse on symbolic genres in the following century was dominated by the symbol.

As with Western European theories, Old Polish definitions were not characterized by uniformity,[23] even within the same monastic or academic community. From the point of view of genre distinctions, therefore, it seems more important to reflect upon the origins of the genre present in the Polish theory of the *emblema* than to reproduce multiple definitional variants. What is significant is the consequences of historical perspectives as well as comprehending the emblem in the context of other genres, especially based upon seventeenth-century sources. By using *emblemata* as *fontes inventionis*, analogously to *symbola*, *hierogliphica*, *apophtegmata, exempla*, *sententiae*, *adagia,* or *apologi* amongst others, rhetoric blurred the distinctions between genres.[24] We should add that *emblemata* as *ornamenta* of speech appeared in early modern rhetoric

---

[21]   Cf. i.a. B. Nadolski, "Wokół nauki o stylach w jezuickich retorykach," *Pamiętnik Literacki,* 54/3 (1963), pp. 86–87; B. Otwinowska (ed.), *Retoryka a literatura* (Wrocław, 1984); E. Ulčinaitė, *Teoria retoryczna w Polsce i na Litwie w XVII wieku. Próba rekonstrukcji schematu retorycznego* (Wrocław, 1987); J.Z. Lichański, *Retoryka od średniowiecza do baroku. Teoria i praktyka* (Warszawa, 1992); M. Korolko, "Retoryka w polskich kolegiach jezuickich," in L. Grzebień and S. Obirek (eds), *Jezuici a kultura polska. Materiały sympozjum z okazji Jubileuszu 500-lecia urodzin Ignacego Loyoli (1491–1991) i 450-lecia powstania Towarzystwa Jezusowego (1540–1990), Kraków, 15–17 lutego 1991 r.* (Kraków, 1993), pp. 121–142.

[22]   e.g. MS, Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich (hereafter: "Oss."), 736/I, p. 65.

[23]   Cf. Daly, *Emblem Theory: Modern*, p. 65: "the terminology is not constant. 'Emblem' has meant different things at different times to different emblematists."

[24]   Cf. N. Caussin, *De eloquentia sacra et humana libri XVI* (Coloniae: sumptibus Ioannis Kinchii, 1634), pp. 146–147; MS, BC 2455 I, p. 536; MS, L'vivs'ka nacional'na naukova biblioteka Ukraïnu imeni V. Stefanyka (hereafter: "LNNBU") Fond 45, opys 1, 219, f. 3r.

only after the rhetorical adaptation of hieroglyphs.[25] The *emblema* gained in rhetorical stature as a result of quotations from Cicero's *De oratore* (44, 149–150) and Quintilian's *De institutione oratoria* (IX, 4, 112), in which its mosaic nature was a figure of the *loci communes* and of excessively elaborate speech.[26]

Polish authors did not show much interest in the ancient beginnings of the *emblema*[27] and the genre's historical context. They derived the concept from the Greek term for "mosaic" (ἔμβλημα), which was a view popularized by Guillaume Budé's dictionary (*Commentarii linguae graecae*, 1529).[28] They also noted the intricacies of the technique (*mosaic*, *opus mosaicum*), repeating the words of Claude Mignault, the author of the introduction to editions of the works of Alciatus (1573, 1577).[29] In Polish theoretical sources, reflection upon the subject of the *emblema* as an artistic subject and ornament frequently occupied a significant part of the account.[30] The most common description of emblems is *tessellata*—a decoration made from *tesserae* for flooring. Definitions also mentioned *segmentata* (here intarsia or decoration in wood), *vermiculata* (here decoration of walls and vaults), *caelata* or *caelaturae* (here symbols engraved in seals, vessels and shields), *acu picta* ("painting by needle"—a decoration of clothing and fabrics), and *frustrata* (here incrustations in stone and metal).[31] These had equivalents in the definitions of *emblema*, focusing on the merits of craft, published in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century linguistic dictionaries.[32]

---

[25] P. Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380–1620* (Oxford, 2011), p. 10. See Górska, *Hieroglifik*.

[26] E. MacPhail, "The Mosaic of Speech: A Classical Topos in Renaissance Aesthetics," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 66 (2003), pp. 249250. Cf. A. Moss, "Emblems into Commonplaces: The Anthologies of Josephus Langius," in Enenkel and Visser (eds), *Mundus Emblematicus*, pp. 1–16.

[27] Cf. i.a. H. Miedema, "The Term Emblema in Alciati," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 31 (1968), pp. 234–250; D.L. Drysdall, "Alciat et le modele de l'emblème," in *Le modèle a la Renaissance. Études réunies et présentées par C. Balavoine, J. Lafond, P. Laurens* (Paris, 1986), pp. 169–182; D.L. Drysdall, "Andrea Alciato, Pater et Princeps," in Daly (ed.), *Companion to Emblem Studies*, pp. 79–97; D.L. Drysdall, "Joannes Sambucus 'De emblemate' (Text and Translation, Commentaries)," *Emblematica,* 5/1 (1991), pp. 111–120; V. Hayaert, *Mens emblematica et humanisme juridique. Le cas du Pegma cum narrationibus philosophicis de Pierre Coustau (1555),* Préface d'O. Christin (Genève, 2008), pp. 13–18.

[28] MS, Biblioteka Naukowa Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie (hereafter: „BPAU"), 1332 II, f. 51r. Cf. J. Pelc, *Słowo i obraz*, pp. 30–31.

[29] MS, Vilniaus universiteto biblioteka (hereafter: "VUB") F3-2126, f. 3v.

[30] MS, BPAU 1332, f. 51v; MS, Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka (hereafter: "LMAVB") F41-612, p. 8.

[31] MS, BPAU 1332, f. 51v; MS, LMAVB F9-19, f. 36r; MS, Oss. Pawl. 77, f. 7r; MS, Biblioteka Narodowa (hereafter: „BN") I 6881, f. 30r; MS, Biblioteka Kórnicka Polskiej Akademii Nauk (hereafter: "BK") 1121, n.pag. [f. 4r].

[32] See i.a. A. Calepinus, *Dictionarium undecim linguarum* (Basileae, 1558), p. 474; J. Mączyński, *Lexicon Latino-Polonicum* (Królewiec: J. Daubmann, 1564), f. 102r; *Dictionarium nominum, verborum que latino-polonico-bohemico-germanicum* (Breslae: typis G. Baumanni, sumpt. Daw. Muelleri, 1620), f. K3r; P. Dasypodius, *Dasypodius Catholicus …* (Dantisci: Cura, Impensis et Typis Andreae Hünefeldij, 1642), n.pag.

The understanding of the *emblema* attributed in theoretical sources to Antiquity was limited to decoration of gold or silver vessels and mosaics (*vermiculatum opus*), which adorned the domiciles of important figures (*magnates*) and rulers.[33] Emblems were viewed as a Greek and Roman legacy.[34] From these classical origins came the themes suggested in definitions. Old Polish theory (until the mid-seventeenth century) tended to cite the motifs of ancient history, and the examples mentioned by the authors of definitions confirmed the existence of the emblem without a verbal component.[35] Such perspectives are manifested by *emblemata* understood as an image/ornament appearing on the pages of Polish prints from the late sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries.[36]

No less important are the approaches that imitate Caussin's work by combining the classical, medieval, and early modern traditions.[37] A script from 1651 cites the authority of Homer and Virgil in claiming that *emblemata* initially decorated shields and flags.[38] In later sources, enumeration of the "emblems" of the Babylonians, Persians, or Athenians concluded with the insignia and coats of arms of popes, emperors, and princes.[39] A reading of the works of Jesuit theoreticians other than Caussin— Silvestro Pietrasanta (*De symbolis heroicis*, 1634) and Jacob Masen (*Elogia sacra*, 1664)—revealed in the late seventeenth century that the custom of painting or engraving victories on shields, related by Homer, Herodotus, Plutarch, and Pausanias, had turned into the depiction on them of the symbols of distinguished statesmen, heroic deeds, and noble intentions.[40] The origins of heraldry continued to be seen in the ancient understandings of the hieroglyphic and emblem in Poland at least until the second quarter of the seventeenth century.[41] *Stemmata* were viewed as a result of the transformations of hieroglyphics and emblems into symbols, while in emblematics were seen the origins of "Pontificu[m], imperatoru[m] ac pr[inci]pu[m] insignia et stemmata."[42] Inherent in the

---

[33] MS, BC 2455 I, p. 299; MS, Biblioteka Jagiellońska (hereafter: „BJ") 6092, f. 68v.

[34] MS, LNNBU, Fond 4, opys 1, 463, f. 25r.

[35] e.g. MS, BJ 7200 I, p. 80.

[36] e.g. T. Bucius, *Eucharistia Polonae Stobnicaea … Ioanni de Zamoscie … tum quartum sponso a Thoma Bucio dicata* (Kraków: Drukarnia Łazarzowa, 1592), f. sign. A3v ("Trophae I. Emblema"); *Logion episcopale… Simonis Rudnicki… episcopi Varmien[sis] a luctuosa morte convolutum a studiosa iuventute Collegii Brunsbergen[sis] Societ[atis] Iesu in funere eiusdem …* (Brunsbergae: typis Schönfelsianis, 1621) (*Emblema* I–XII: names of precious stones).

[37] N. Caussin, *De eloquentia sacra et humana*, p. 147. Cf. Z. Rynduch, "Nauka o stylach Mikołaja Caussina i jej znajomość w Polsce XVII w.," *Gdańskie Zeszyty Humanistyczne,* 12 (1964), pp. 205–220; S. Conte (ed.), *Nicolas Caussin: rhétorique et spiritualité à l'époque de Louis XIII. Actes du colloque de Troyes (16–17 septembre 2004)* (Berlin, 2007).

[38] MS, LNNBU, Fond 4, opys 1, 463, f. 25r.

[39] e.g. MS, LMAVB F41-608 f. 74v; MS, BK 1121, f. 5r.

[40] e.g. MS, VUB F3-2188, f. 77r.

[41] Cf. MS, LNNBU, Fond 4, opys 1, 457, f. 31v: "ex hieroglyphicorum, et emblematum usu, accepisse originem stemmata."

[42] MS, VUB F41-608 f. 74v. Cf. MS, LMAVB F255-1469, f. 33v: "Quasi virorum illustrium ornamenta clipeis inserta."

definition was the title of Ottavio Strada and Jacobus Typotius' work *Symbola Divina et Humana Pontificum Imperatorum Regum…* (1601), used in Poland as a compendium of model examples of symbolic genres.

This connection with heraldry was probably further reinforced by the links between the *emblema* and honor and decoration, or—as was thought as early as in the 1660s—the royal or magnate's court.[43] There is significant evidence dating from the last quarter of the seventeenth century of equating the terms *emblemata* and *stemmata*, as well as of presenting a coat of arms embellished with a sentence as an emblem.[44] The antique *emblemata* that are described, etched into seals or engraved in shields and medals, reflected the penchant of Old Polish emblematics for *emblemata politica*, *symbola heroica*, and exemplification borrowed from collections of *impresas*/devices. In discourse on rhetoric from the 1640s onwards, the emblem was linked to the political and legal context.[45] Despite the popularity in Poland of preachers' emblematic collections (especially those of Paolo Aresi and Heinrich Engelgrave),[46] theoretical sources rarely mention the use of emblems in preaching.

The authors of definitions occasionally distinguished between earlier understandings of the *emblema* and the ones contemporary to them. In a manuscript from the second half of the seventeenth century, we read that before becoming an artistic genre (i.e. featuring lemmas, "symbola virtuti[s] maiorum"), the *emblema* initially lacked an inscription (*nuda*) and could be seen on shields and flags, and subsequently on noble seals and signets.[47] The past significance was noted (i.e. ornament), as well as the contemporary one, for example, heraldic.[48] The Greco-Roman context of emblematics in the second quarter of the seventeenth century became an argument for the *emblema* without a verbal component. In both theoretical texts and emblem books themselves we can find examples of an emblem being identified as an image (*imago/pictura*).[49] Notably, Alciatus was mentioned in the context of the description of *imagines* on the walls of a Roman house.[50] Around the

---

[43] e.g. MS, BPAU 1332, f. 51r; MS, VUB F3-2217, f. 91r.

[44] e.g. MS, LNNBU, Fond 45, opys 1, 219, f. 3r; G. Knapiusz, *Thesauri polonolatinograeci … Tomus secundus latino germano polonicus … Editio nova correctior* (Posnaniae: Typis Collegij Societatis Iesu, 1698), p. 300.

[45] Cf. MS, LNNBU, Fond 4, opys 1, 457, f. 112r.

[46] Cf. W. Pawlak, *Koncept w polskich kazaniach barokowych* (Lublin, 2005); M. van Vaeck, "The Use of the Emblem as a Rhetorical Device in Engelgrave's Emblematic Sermon Books," in R. Dekoninck and A. Guiderdoni-Brusle (eds), *Emblemata sacra. Rhétorique et herméneutique du discours sacré dans la littérature en images. The rhetoric and hermeneutics of illustrated sacred discourse* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 535–551.

[47] MS, LMAVB F41-612, p. 8.

[48] I. Krzyżkiewicz, *Attica Musa Thitoream et Hyampeum Parnassi colles ultro et citro seu epitome artis poeticae* (Cracoviae, 1674).

[49] e.g. MS, VUB F3-2132, f. 3r; MS, LNNBU, Fond 4, opys 1, 478, f. 259v.

[50] S. Kobierzycki, *De luxu Romanorum Commentarius …* (Lovanii: Typis Philippi Dormalii, 1628), p. 170.

mid-seventeenth century, the historical meaning of the *emblema* was identified with inserted decorations, and the metaphorical one with verses explaining images, sculptures, or theatre decorations.[51] Apart from the definition "emblemata, apud poetas" popularized by the dictionary of Grzegorz Knapski (starting with the 1644 edition), taken from the aforementioned introduction by Mignault,[52] Old Polish texts featured a definition of the *emblema* connected with school—formed on the basis of Pietrasanta's work[53]—that contrasted with the historical meaning ("vermiculatum opus et insignia").

Little information is available in Polish sources on the history of emblematics. Alciatus was once given prominence, yet he was regarded as a creator of emblems and symbols.[54] Elements that were of use for specifying the genre or its application were selected from emblematic tradition. The meaning of an *emblema* was identified using the verb *inserere* and its synonyms (including *inferere*, *interponere*). An *emblema*, according to this, meant something that had been added or inserted. The insertion (*insertio*) was synonymous with the acquired meaning.[55] As a result, many sources contain the definition: "Emblema est insertio certarum figurarum in arte factis, operibus."[56] The concept of *insertio* was occasionally used to explain the composition of Alciatus' emblem book, while the idea of the mosaic was called upon in presenting the complex construction of the *emblema*.[57]

Alongside the artisanal intricacy, Polish definitions of the *emblema* were also characterized by post-classical moral issues and the associated praise of virtues and merits. Based upon what we know about sixteenth-century, pre-Jesuit symbolism in Polish literature and art, we can venture the claim that the oldest theoretical perspectives were adapted to the previous reception of symbolic genres (in keeping with the tradition of the *impresa*).

In Polish sources, as in theory from elsewhere, genres related to the *emblema* were *epigramma*, *aenigma*, *adagium*, and *sententia*, while the *hierogliphicum* and *symbolum* remained constant references until the eighteenth century. In

---

[51]   See MS, VUB F3-2126, ff. 3v–4r.

[52]   G. Knapiusz, *Thesauri polonolatinograeci … Tomus secundus … Editio secunda correcta et aucta* (Cracoviae: sumptuet typis Francisci Caesarij, 1644), p. 259: "Emblemata, apud Poetas sunt Poematia quibus imagines, simulacra, pegmata scite inuenta, acute et erudite explicantur. Tria autem requiruntur ad Emblema. 1. Sententia breuis scita et acuta ceu rei totius anima. 2. Pictura vel imago. 3. Poesis picturam explicans."

[53]   e.g. MS, BK 624, f. 104v: "sed in scholis emblema e[st] suavis expositio rei vera[e] vel ficta[e] constans pictura[m] lemmate a metro." Cf. S. Pietrasanta, *De symbolis heroicis libri IX …* (Antverpiae: ex Officina Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1634).

[54]   e.g. MS, BJ 1332 II, ff. 49v, 52r.

[55]   Cf. e.g. MS, BJ 7200 I, p. 79: "Emblema idem significat quod insertum seu insitum"; A. Szulc, *Orbis quod vult in obiectis centum scientiarium …* (Danzig: David Friedrich Rhete, 1682), p. 151: "Emblema significat insertionem, quod insertum sibi sensum habeat."

[56]   e.g MS, LNNBU, Fond 4, opys 1, 477, f. 14v.

[57]   MS, LNNBU, Fond 4, opys 1, 457, f. 30v.

theoretical terms, the emblem was also linked to the elogium and fable (*apologus*, *fabula*), as well as being adapted for the needs of epitaph, epithalamium, panegyric, sermons, and small genres of *poesis artificiosa* (griph, logogriph). The analogies and differences between genres indicated in the definitions show that for the theoreticians of the past the construction of the *emblema* was less important than the function and subject matter.

From a Polish perspective, the hieroglyphic was particularly important, as it paved the way for the emblem in theoretical reflections.[58] Polish theoreticians saw a similarity between the *hierogliphicum* and *emblema* in the structure, characterized by the non-identity of image and meaning. Both were distinguished by *ingeniosae picturae*, as well as the way an idea was captured in an image,[59] but the inscription made the enigmatic message of the *emblema* more understandable than that of the hieroglyphic.[60] With time, there was greater emphasis on the thematic distinctiveness of the *emblema* (this referred to both sacrum and profanum) compared to the *hierogliphicum*; this was regarded as more significant than the lack of inscription and the rule of similarity (*similitudo*) in the genre of pseudo--Egyptian provenance.[61]

Enigma was connected with emblematics by the context of the presentation (genres of pattern poetry), the aspect of playing with the reader and the veiled meaning, also expressed in words.[62] Yet the mystery and ambiguity of *aenigma* was different from emblematics, which concentrated on customs, works of virtues, and decency.[63] *Obscura significatio* was supposed to characterize only the hieroglyphic and enigma.[64]

The relationship between the *emblema* and *symbolum* in theoretical thought resulted from using the same sources, especially the works of Caussin and Pietrasanta's *De symbolis heroicis* (1634). In the definition of the symbol, the separateness of the lemma was stressed, although in both cases the source

---

[58]   See i.a. R. Cavell, "The Emblem as (Hiero)glyph," in, B.F. Scholz, M. Bath, and D. Weston (eds), *The European Emblem* (Leiden, 1990), pp. 67–185; A. Rolet, "Aux sources de l`emblème: blasons et devises," *Littérature,* 145 (2007), pp. 53–78; E. Klecker, "Des signes muets aux emblèmes chanteurs: les Emblemata d'Alciat et l`emblématique," *Littérature,* 145 (2007), pp. 34–36, 41; A. Guiderdoni-Bruslé, "Les 'figures extraordinaires' ou le savoir énigmatique de l'emblématique et de la symbolique humanistes," in D. Martin, P. Servet, and A. Tournon (eds), *L'énigmatique à la Renaissance: formes, significations, esthétiques. Actes du colloque organisé par l'association Renaissance, Humanisme, Réforme (Lyon, 7–10 septembre 2005)* (Paris, 2008), pp. 15–26; Górska, *Hieroglifik* (here subject literature).
[59]   e.g. MS, VUB F3-646, p. 55; MS, VUB F3-2087, f. 334r.
[60]   MS, VUB F3-2209, I, f. 13r.
[61]   e.g. MS, Oss., 9510/I, pp. 8-9; MS, VUB F3-2188, f. 77v; MS, LMAVB F255-1469, f. 34r.
[62]   e.g. F. Grodzicki, *Theatrum eloquentiae … seu dissertatio de magna arte rhetoricae per dialogismum proposita …* (Leopoli: typis Collegii Soc. Jesu, 1745), p. 265.
[63]   MS, Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, Sucha 230/272, p. 37.
[64]   e.g. MS, LNNBU Fond 4, opys 1, 414, p. 59; MS, VUB F3-2126, f. 4r. Cf. T. Michałowska, *Staropolska teoria*, p. 158.

of the development of part of the *scriptio* was in epigram theory. Early sources stated that the *emblema*, not the symbol, lacked an inscription,[65] and that the addition of lemmas turned the emblem into a *symbolum*.[66] In Polish theory, the symbol held a superior position to the *emblema* in terms of function and artistry. The difference in the genres was dictated by the meaning, which was outward-facing and more general for emblems, and more detailed and personal in symbols (inspired by impresas).[67] Unlike an *emblema*, a *symbolum* was supposed to present a specific truth, and thus *fabula* (*fictio*) and *apologus* were excluded from its sources.[68] The image of a symbol was to be simpler and thematically limited,[69] and complete human figures could not feature in its icon. An emblematic inscription, as opposed to the short lemma of a symbol, could contain allusions to the *imago*.[70] The emblem was therefore treated as a more accessible genre, partly because of the explicatory function of the inscription.[71]

Only the authors of the oldest sources were interested in the emblem's relationship with the adagium (n.b. the works of Alciatus were cited as examples of adagia in the first half of the seventeenth century)[72] and sentences. In the former case, the *emblema* was characterized by the author's invention, and in the latter by the fragmentary nature of the verbal part, conditioned by a verbal–pictorial construction.[73] A rhetorical manuscript from 1612 refers to *emblemata* as figures of sentences giving authority and grace to speech.[74] It seems that the inclusion of a sentence in an *emblema* resulted from thematic correspondence—a *sententia* was distinguished by seriousness (*gravitas*)[75] and truth (*veritas*).[76]

The *emblema* was assigned the role of moral teaching, presenting doctrine, judgement, praise, censure, mores, or reflection, thus making the genre similar to fable (*fabula*). The task of the emblem was to use the principle of similarity (*comparatio/similitudo*) to present claims in true stories or fables (i.e. fictional

---

[65] MS, BJ 6092, f. 67v. Cf. J. Sokolski, *Słownik barokowej symboliki natury. Tom wstępny. Barokowa księga natury* (Wrocław, 2000).
[66] MS, LMAVB F41-612, p. 8.
[67] MS, BPAU 557, f. 8r; MS, LNNBU, Fond 4, opys 1, 414, f. 57r.
[68] MS, BC 2365, p. 139; MS, BPAU 557, f. 8r. Cf. Michałowska, *Staropolska teoria*, p. 187.
[69] e.g. MS, Oss. 3724, f. 101v.
[70] e.g. MS, LMAVB F9-295, f. 24r; MS, Oss. 5333/I, p. 164.
[71] Cf. e.g. MS, VUB F3-2267, f. 64v–65r.
[72] Examples of the works of Alciatus were placed among adagia or analogously to hieroglyphical fables and similarities. See MS, LMAVB F41-612, pp. 311–333 (Adagia), 368–382 (*Hieroglyph*[icae] *fabulae et similitudines nec non emblemmata*).
[73] MS, VUB F3-2126, f. 4r.
[74] Cf. MS, BJ 2465, f. 56v: "Emblem[m]ata seu gemmae potius multiplicem commoditatem adferunt, orationi fidem et autoritatem, dignitatem, iucunditatem, et cerimoniam."
[75] MS, LMAVB F41-612, p. 8.
[76] MS, VUB F3-1067, p. 144; MS, BJ 6780 II, f. 108r.

narratives),[77] serving the pleasure of young people (*delectatio*).[78] After all, the *emblema* was *genus jocosum*, and thus became an element of *poesis artificiosa*.[79]

The source of the emblem's inclusion in *poesis artificiosa* lay in its treatment as a sub-genre of the epigram.[80] Such works as those of Johannes Dantiscus and Krzystof Kobylieński[81] illustrate the Polish context of the connections between the *emblema* and the tradition of the epigram.[82] In Old Polish theory, the emblem was largely considered to be part of *poesis epigrammatica*. Only in the poetics of the eighteenth century did the two genres become independent. The close relationship was underlined by the parts of the definition referring to the *epigramma* as an element of the *emblema*. This refers particularly to the principle of *brevitas*, adapted to the verbal part (lemma) and the image (*pictura*), as well as clarity (*claritas*) and ornateness (*exornatio*). Occasional consideration was also given to the epigrammatically inspired *emblema–conceptus* relationship.[83]

The definition and rules of emblematics were simplified in Poland, mostly as a result of making them more accessible for students and due to integrating academic *praxis* with the tradition of symbolism. Before the mid-seventeenth century, the *emblema* was above all a historical formula, which reflected a traditional (post-classical) understanding—close to the *symbolum*—more than the definitions formulated in treatises on emblematics.

---

[77]   MS, BJ 7200 I, p. 79: "emblema est pictura proponens aliquam veritatem sub comparatione historiae verae v[ul]g[o]: fabulae, hominis veri."

[78]   Cf. MS, BJ 3630, f. 9r; K. Porteman, "The Emblem as 'Genus Jocosum': Theory and Praxis (Jacob Cats and Roemer Visscher)," *Emblematica,* 8/2 (1994), pp. 243–260; P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, "Emblematy jako *genus jocosum*," in I. Opacki, cooperation B. Mazurkowa (eds), *Dzieło literackie i książka w kulturze. Studia i szkice ofiarowane Profesor Renardzie Ocieczek w czterdziestolecie pracy naukowej i dydaktycznej* (Katowice, 2002), pp. 75–83.

[79]   Michałowska, *Staropolska teoria*, pp. 139–140, 169. Cf. T. Michałowska, "Poezja 'kunsztowna' (poesis artificiosa)," in Michałowska (ed.), *Słownik literatury staropolskiej*, pp. 718–723.

[80]   e.g. E. Fridvalski, *Opusculum institutionum poeticarum …* (Lesnae: Mich. Buk [Buck], 1684), p. 25.

[81]   J. Dantyszek, "In emblema Gattinarae," in *Epitaphia epigrammata et elegiae aliquot illustrium virorum in funere Mercurini Cardinalis, Marchionis Gattinariae, Caesaris Caroli Quinti Augusti Supremi Cancellarii* (Antverpiae: ex officina I. Graphei, 1531); K. Kobylieński, *Christophori Kobilienski equitis Poloni variorum epigrammatum ad Stanislaum Rozimontanum libellus* (Kraków: Łazarz Andrysowic, 1558), f. a1r. Cf. D.L. Drysdall, *Occurrences of the Word "Emblema,"* pp. 306–307, 323–324.

[82]   Cf. A. Saunders, "Alciati and the Greek Anthology," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies,* 12/1 (1982), pp. 1–18; B.F. Scholz, "From Illustrated Epigram to Emblem: The Canonization of a Typographical Arrangement," in W. Speed Hill (ed.), *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts. Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985–1991* (Binghamton, NY, 1993), pp. 149–157; D. Russell, "The Genres of Epigram and Emblem," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 3, *The Renaissance*, ed. G.P. Norton (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 278–283; P. Laurens, "L'invention de l'emblème par André Alciat et le modèle épigraphique: le point sur une recherche," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres,* 149/2 (2005), pp. 883–910.

[83]   e.g. MS, VUB F3-2087, f. 71r: "Emblema e[st] opus aliquod sculpturae v[el] picturae elegantis, exprimens aliquis ingeniose animo conceptum, cum inscriptione."

Later on, Polish theory was encumbered by rhetorical practice. The rules of writing an *emblema* given by theoreticians do not explain the diversity of emblematic constructions in literary output.[84] However, elements of other genres' definitions within the *emblema* explain the "inconsistencies" and "fusions" of it and other genres, which are discerned by researchers in literary texts.[85] The equation of *emblemata* and *stemmata* as well as *emblema* and *symbolum heroicum* resulted from theoretical indications, and there is therefore no justification for any assertions of failure to abide by the rules or a parting of the ways of *praxis* and *theoria* in Old Polish emblematics.[86] On the contrary, textbook recommendations were adhered to faithfully, and the consequence of the scholastic reception of the theory of symbolic genres was *varietas*. From the point of view of knowledge on the theory of symbolism in Poland, we can also be critical of ahistorical statements regarding the vagueness of definitions and stemmatization of Polish emblematics. The boundaries between related genres (emblem, hieroglyphic, symbol) were unclear, yet common elements helped the genre to adapt, a quality that is today recognized as having had a larger impact on the shaping of the *emblema* than definitions taken from treatises and textbooks.[87]

Research on genres acts as a corrective to contemporary attempts to describe the *emblema*, which are afflicted by the danger of ahistorical purity.[88] The fundamental methodological postulate resulting from Old Polish definitions of the *emblema*, but also from the titles of emblematic prints—reflecting theoretical awareness of the authors and the transformations of the genre—comes down to the precise handling of both the comparative material and the conclusions drawn from works on Western European emblematics. Taking into account the theoretical awareness of Polish authors is likely to contribute to a more precise and cognitively more interesting description of Polish symbolic writing.

Translated by Benjamin Koschalka

---

[84]   Cf. É. Knapp and G. Tüskés, "The Emblem in Hungary," in Daly (ed.), *Companion to Emblem Studies*, p. 227: "It is clear that, in Hungary, practice cannot be viewed merely as something dependent on theory. Theories may contain the foundations of a whole variety of practical applications, but the theories themselves never give us an accurate description of actual practice."
[85]   See i.a. P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, "Emblematyka w późnobarokowych drukach polskich," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 92/3–4 (1980), no. 3/4, pp. 401–412; P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, *Emblematy w drukach polskich*, pp. 10–11; P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, "Na pograniczu emblematów i stemmatów," in A. Morawińska (ed.), *Słowo i obraz. Materiały Sympozjum Komitetu Nauk o Sztuce PAN. Nieborów 29 IX–1 X 1977* (Warszawa, 1982), pp. 73–95; Pelc, "The Emblem in Poland," in Daly (ed.), *Companion to Emblem Studies*, pp. 291–307.
[86]   Cf. i.a. Pelc, *Emblematy, książki emblematyczne*, pp. 33–50; Krzywy, *Emblemat*, p. 203.
[87]   Cf. i.a. Daly, *Emblem Theory: Modern*, pp. 46–47; Russell, *Emblems, Frames*, pp. 1–40.
[88]   Daly, *Emblem Theory: Modern*, p. 65: "historical accounts are valuable correctives to modern attempts to characterize the whole genre, which always carry with them the danger of ahistorical tidiness."