

## PREFACE

### **The Variorum Edition of Alciato's *Emblemata***

by Mason Tung.

The purpose of this edition is to provide art historians, Neo-Latinists, and emblem scholars with a convenient research tool. In it, they will find (displayed on the right, assuming a two-page PDF display) variant illustrations of each of Alciato's 212 emblems from nine major Latin editions of *Emblemata*, and—on the —textual variants of its motto and epigram, and my own commentaries on pictorial variants of its illustration. The chronological order of the nine editions is as follows. The *editio princeps* of 1531, *Emblematum liber* (with 104 emblems but only 96 woodcuts by Jörg Breu; Green 2, Tung 1), was printed in Augsburg by Heinrich Steyner without Alciato's approval. Dissatisfied with the many illustrations that were unfaithful to their texts, Alciato initiated the printing in Paris by Christian Wechel of the 1534 edition, *Emblematum libellus* (113 emblems with woodcuts by Mercure Jollat; Green 7, Tung 4), which will be used as one of the base editions. Next came in 1546 the Venice Aldine edition, another base edition, in which Alciato gave to the world 86 new emblems (with 84 woodcuts; Green 28, Tung 20). In the following year, Jean de Tournes and Guillaume Gazeau in Lyons incorporated emblems from the 1534 and 1546 editions into book one and book two respectively of the new *Emblematum libri duo* (198 emblems but only 113 woodcuts in book one, Green 29, Tung 21; edition used in the Variorum is that of 1556, Green 59, Tung 42). Before his death in 1550 Alciato saw another edition of *Emblemata* through the press at Lyons by Matthew Bonhomme and Guillaume Rouille, who printed the first edition in 1548. Between 1548 and 1551, the number of emblems increased from 201 to 211 and that of woodcuts from 128 to 209 (the 1551 edition is chosen to represent this long and successful series in the Variorum Edition, Green 47, Tung 35). Bernard Salomon (Le Petit Bernard) was the renowned artist who illustrated the 1547 de Tournes / Gazeau edition; his influence is visible among the remaining editions in the Variorum Edition. Two more famous artists (Joost Amman and Vergil Solis) illustrated *Liber Emblematum*, the 1567 Feyerabend / Hüter edition printed by Georg Corvin at Frankfurt am Main (210 emblems but only 128 woodcuts, Green 77, Tung 61). In Antwerp, Christopher Plantin produced 211 woodcuts designed by Pieter van der Borcht and engraved by Arnaud Nicolai and others in a 1577 edition of *Omnia Andreae Alciati Emblemata* (Green 93, Tung 72; edition used in the Variorum is that of 1591 in Leyden by Raphelengius, Green 117, Tung 90, except the fourteen trees). The same title was used in the highly derivative 1583 edition in Paris by Jerome de Marnef and Guillaume Cavellat's widow; it copied the same 113 wood-blocks from the 1547 edition and the rest of its 97 cuts from either the 1551 or the 1577 editions (Green 104, Tung 80). The *editio optima*, *Emblemata cum Commentariis*, with the so-called "monster commentary" by Joannes Thuilus, was printed in Padua by Peter Paul Tozzi in 1621 (Green 152, Tung 111); it also restored the offensive emblem no. 80, raising the total to 212. Most of the preceding information is based on my "A Concordance to the Fifteen Principal Editions of Alciato" in *Emblematologica* 1 (1987), 319-339. For recent updates of the Concordance and the Census of Alciato's editions, see [<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/MasonTungTable.pdf>].

The text of each emblem appears on the left hand page. On its top left is the emblem number (based on the 1621 edition), on the right is a chronological list of editions in which this emblem may be found. The last two digits in bold of the year of each edition are used to identify it in the

list of textual variants and in the commentaries of pictorial variants. The year of the base edition for that emblem is bolded in toto. Numbers following the year denote pages, except those enclosed in parentheses, which refer to emblem numbers. Although the list of textual changes is valuable, it takes a second seat in comparison to the variant illustrations on the facing page. It should be noted that the images are not produced to scale, nor in proportion to one another.

In the past, emblem scholars tended to base their conclusions on the woodcuts of one or two editions, and sometimes the lack of a more explicit illustration led them to erroneous interpretations. For instance, puzzled by the details of the background scene in the 1551 woodcut of emblem no. 196, the author consulted an art historian for help. The latter suggested that the scene appeared to be of Vulcan with a sledgehammer, about to strike a figure lying on a slab [see "Some Emblematic Marriage Topoi in the French Renaissance," *Emblematica* 1,2 (1986), n.9, p.258]. Had we seen the more explicit woodcut in the 1567 editions, we would have realized that the depiction in question was of Phidias, the legendary sculptor, fashioning Venus out of a block of stone, as the fourth verse in the text clearly states. Here is a case where both the text and the variant illustrations of an emblem are indispensable to a more nearly correct interpretation. This Variorum Edition, if consulted by scholars, should prevent such errors from occurring again. Moreover, it will enable historians of book illustrations to delineate the reception of Alciato's emblems and to resolve such problems as the lack of cooperation between authors and publishers or between authors and artists, while Neo-Latinists may inquire into the textual transmission of this popular emblem book during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Accordingly, I believe that it will place the study of Alciato's emblems on a footing firmer than it now possesses.

The edition, though entirely my own responsibility, is being published in the 'related material' section of the Alciato at Glasgow website, and appropriate links are provided to the main site (see below) My edition is, however, both independent of and distinct from the project.

#### Links:

Each emblem in the Variorum Edition is linked to the corresponding emblem in the 1621 Tozzi edition in the Alciato at Glasgow Website, and vice versa. Use of the related emblem function in the Alciato at Glasgow Website also allows linkage to further editions.

#### Viewing:

To view each emblem of the Variorum Edition on the web, the reader should use her or his PDF file viewer's two-page viewing option (implementations differ, but will usually be found in that section of the menu items devoted to view options) so that he or she may better appreciate the commentary on the left hand page while confirming evolving changes among relevant images on the right hand page.

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