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THE THEORY OF THE EMBLEM BY CLAUDE-FRANÇOIS MENESTRIER

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Maria Cristina Trindade Guerreiro Osswald

Licenciatura en Historia - Variante de Historia de Arte, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto. Curso superior de lengua y cultura italianas, Istituto Dante Alighieri, Porto. Maestrazgo en Historia de Arte. Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, Departamento de História de Arte. PHd em Historia y Civilización - Instituto Universitario Europeo, Florencia, con la tesis Jesuit Art in Goa between 1542 and 1655: From Modo Nostro to Modo Goano.

E-mail: osswaldcristina@gmail.com

The leading role of the Jesuits in the creation of a culture of emblems

The first religious emblem books were published at the end of the 16th century. Over the next two centuries, the Jesuits excelled in their production, and commissioned the publication of more than two hundred of such books throughout Europe. Jesuit authors were the more prolific, in terms both of quantity and the great variety of subjects presented.[1] The years between 1630 and 1670 saw the largest production of emblem books. In particular, outstanding theoreticians and emblem books originated in the German, French, and Belgian Jesuit Provinces.[2] During the 17th century a host of Jesuit theorists (including Daniello Bartoli (1608-1685), Théophile Raynaud (1587-1663) and Jakob Masen (1606-1681) engaged in the argument over the so-called 'images spirituelles', that is to say, symbolic images that speak to the mind.

During the same century, the Jesuits applied emblems to a variety of religious purposes. They gained a reputation for the organisation of secular and ecclesiastical festivals, where emblems always played a part in explicating the main themes of the ceremony.[3] A notable example was the account of the canonisation of Loyola and Xavier in 1622 in the

[1] Filippi 1996, p. 69-70.
[2] Dimler 1977, p. 380.
[3] Filippi 1996, p. 67-70.

College of la Flèche, France, as the majority of whose seventy pages of description was conveyed in terms of emblems.[4] From the second half of the 16th century emblem books were also widely and extensively in use amongst Jesuit missions overseas. Moreover, the Jesuits increasingly employed emblems as teaching instruments over the same period.[5]

Jesuit interest in the pedagogical value of emblems dates to the *Ratio Studiorum* (1599). The word *emblema* appeared for the first time in Jesuit official documentation in the section on rhetoric of the *Ratio Studiorum.* This work recommends that teachers of rhetoric sometimes use:

"the day off (…) with erudition in mind (…) to explain less well-known things, such as hieroglyphs, emblems, and questions concerning poetic technique (epigrams, epitaphs, odes, elegies, epics, tragedies); or else the Senates of Rome and Athens, the military institutions of these two peoples, their gardens, clothes, *tricliniums*, their arches of triumph, a. s. o"[6].

Theory was in this way converted to practice and, as remarked by Richard Dimler SJ, "because of their pedagogical value, emblematic forms were used in the religious preparation and training of Jesuit novices"[7]. Jesuit scholars, who were often members of congregations or academies, were given a supplementary education in artistic and literary subjects, including heraldry, and emblems. Indeed, Menestrier was a teacher and directed a confraternity at the College of Vienna. In this latter task, he was charged with the production of various genres of symbolic imagery, such as devices, heraldry, enigmas, and emblems. [8]

The decoding of emblems was a regular practice in Jesuit schools and colleges. As we can read in the *Explication de l'affiche du College Louis-Le-Grand*, Paris, R.J. B. de la Caille, 1683, 4, a picture was often displayed in view of the scholars as an inspiration to the composition of written texts.

Emblems were a compelling ornament of academic festivals held in Jesuit colleges and schools.[9] Emblematic compositions were displayed on school walls every two months and on the occasion of important feasts and holy days such as the annual prize giving.[10] Emblems were taught in lower Rhetoric classes and included in the presentation of theses.

[4] Grove 1999, p. 93.
[5] Saunders 1999, p. 183-184.
[6] Filippi 1996, p. 75.
[7] Dimler 2005, p. 32.
[8] Loach 2002a, p. 35.
[9] Porteman 1996, p. 17.
[10] Filippi 1996, p. 81 and Loach 1996, p.166.

During the 17th century, albums of emblems on specific subjects were created by both the teachers and students at Jesuit educational institutions.[11]

Some comments on the origins of Menestrier's interest in images and "La Philosophie des images" (1682)[12]

Claude-François Menestrier (b. Lyon, 1631 d. Paris, 1705) played a fundamental role in a cultural context that was thus characterised by the proliferation of images. He was the most prolific writer or theorist on images during the 17th century, credited with more than one hundred and fifty books dealing with images, including two works on emblems with the same title *L'Art des Emblèmes* published in 1662 and 1684.[13] He was the author of books or essays on festivals, funerals, hieroglyphs, symbols, devices, heraldry, coins and medals, ciphers, enigmas, rebuses, the ballet, including sixteen of the twenty–five emblem books that were compiled in the Province of Lyon between 1637 and 1726.[14]

Menestrier was the product of a society where images were widely used with a civic and religious function. He grew up in the city of Lyon in the middle of the seventeenth century, at a time when the city was an international printing and publishing centre. Religious authorities would order the decoration of both church interiors and public space with permanent or ephemeral painted emblems (and other symbolic images) in order to explain by graphic means the content of sermons delivered yearly on Trinity Sundays. Menestrier certainly took part throughout the 1640's in the academic festivals at the Collège de la Trinité, in which emblems were the dominant form of ornament.[15] Indeed, it is significant that Menestrier described in his manuscript treatise *Les Resjouissances de la Paix* (1660) the celebratory plays performed by the students of the same college on the occasion of the Spanish - French peace treaty that took place in Lyon in 1640.

His theoretical work shows a profound knowledge, born of acquired practical experience, in the use of all sorts of images in the organisation of religious and secular celebrations. Between 1655 and 1663, Menestrier worked on a decorative scheme running throughout the new town hall and the new Jesuit College, the College de la Trinité, at Lyon.[16] Moreover, he employed emblems widely in the conception and organisation of festivals in

[11] Saunders 1999, p. 184-185.
[12] I consulted the second edition prepared by Stephen Orgel (Menestrier 1979).
[13] Adams, 2012. For a discussion of the diferences and similarities of the two editions, see Graham, 2016.
[14] Loach Adams, 2012.
[15] Loach 2002a, p. 32-34.
[16] Loach 2002b, p. 982 and Loach 1996, p. 4.

Lyon, Paris and Rome between 1658 and 1701. His experience embraced a wide range of forms and institutions, from the reception of kings and the birth of royal babies, to ceremonial portals, firework displays, displays for canonisations, ballets performed by students, painted decoration and architectonic motifs for palaces, churches and private buildings. It is understood that Menestrier reused the plates illustrating his work *l'Art des Emblèmes* from the relation [also published by Benoist Coral], of the festivities he had arranged in spring and early summer that year to celebrate the signing of the Franco-Spanish peace treaty. He completely integrated these images into the text, giving detailed descriptions of those images, and in so doing, exploited them as exemplars of the different sorts or categories of emblems.[17]

Menestrier's interest in images (initially emblems and devices were taken together) originated as early as 1658, when he was commissioned to organise the decorations and entertainments surrounding the visit of Louis XIV to Lyon.[18] While engaged upon this work, Menestrier became aware of the absence of any systematic body of rules concerning the use of images. He thus felt compelled to write a treatise to ensure correct practice. He was especially concerned about the confusion that existed in relation to the "learned images" or "images sçavantes", such as emblems, devices, symbols, hieroglyphs, as well as other erudite images. Accordingly, one of his main concerns was to distinguish among the various sorts of images, in order to establish 'a fixed and defined art' for each of these forms.[19] He thus set out a general framework or systematic plan for a series of treatises called "Philosophie des images", intended to cover all the categories of image.

The kinds and sorts of images (devices, emblems, enigmas, ciphers, hieroglyphs, blazons, and medals) according to Menestrier

For Menestrier, images are compelling instruments to all arts and sciences, owing to the fact that the arts are but copies of nature. The sciences are the figures. All arts and all sciences work through images, as all arts are copies of Nature, and all the sciences represent them, and are thus the ideal expression of the things that we know. In other words, thinking

[17] Loach 2002c, p. 240.
[18] His work "l'Histoire du Roy Louis Le Grand par les médailles, emblèmes, devises, jettons, inscriptions, armoiries et autres monuments publics" that resulted from his experience at the organisation of this festival was published in 1689. (See the edition by Jacquiot 1965)
[19] Menestrier 1981, p. 4.

and learning involve the use of images. This perspective originated in the Aristotelian tradition, which argues that thinking requires visualisation.[20]

As other Jesuit previous emblematists, such as Antonio Possevino (1553-1611), Louis Richeôme (1554-1625), Menestrier stressed the visual element of emblems.[21] Menestrier affirmed that the knowledge that originates in our reflections comes from the faithful mirrors of the eyes. In his opinion, the visual sensation is of the sort that enters more easily into the spirit,[22] thereby creating the images he called spiritual images. Then there are the faculties of the imagination, which fixes images both in the body and the soul, and the judgment, which in turn corrects those images. Understanding and finally will *(voluntas)* organise and synthesise the various images into a unified whole.[23] His conception that images are able to teach the ears and the eyes is traceable to Horace's concept of *delectare et docere* as he himself acknowledged.[24] In this regard, he also compared painting to poetry as forms of art both intended to win the soul without violence.[25] He further argued that the signification of the emblem is or ought to be ingenious, in order to please the audience.[26]

In his theoretical approach, Menestrier correlated images and rhetoric in a typically Jesuit way. In particular, his text *Novae et veteris eloquentiae* dated 1663, analyses images as ornaments for eloquence. The first edition of the work *L'Art des Emblèmes* opens by discussing the nature of learned images (*Peintures sçavantes*).

Menestrier classifies the various sorts of images, according to their nature and function, starting with theological figures. He also calls these hieroglyphics, or images of sacred subjects, *i.e.*, images that illustrate the mysteries of religion.[27] Hence, the sort of images that were first used by the Egyptians, are for him mysterious paintings that give a sacred character to a person, action or object.[28]

He defined enigmas as obscure and scarcely interpretable paintings, which include both figurative and extravagant figures having a chimerical aspect. Enigmas are images that render secret the things that we want to hide, such as ciphers (interlaced letters of a name of a person as illustrated by the example of King René), figures of the Kabala, magical

[20] Loach 1987, p. 318.
[21] Melion 2016, p. 7.
[22] Menestrier 1981, p. 12-13.
[23] Menestrier 1662, p. 23.
[24] "The meaning of the emblem must be always ingenious in order to have the authorisation and teach with pleasure. This is the last effort of the spirit and the masterpiece of the art, as said by Horace". Menestrier 1662, p. 90.
[25] Menestrier 1981, p. 321.
[26] Menestrier 1662, p. 90.
[26] Menestrier 1981, p. 337 and Deckonick, 2016, p. 81-82.
[27] Menestrier 1981, p. 14 and p.16.
[28] Menestrier 1981, p. 625.

characteristics, talismanic symbols, images that cover the operations of chemistry and the secrets of the Great Work. Due to their hidden and obscure character, enigmas must be counted as having a character the very opposite of emblems. The latter ought properly to be clear and understandable to all, on account of their pedagogical nature.[29]

In the first version of this treatise, he defined blazons (heraldic) as valuable paintings and images proper to the nobility. Blazons have certain colours and constitute a family crest. By contrast, emblems mainly symobolise universal teachings that can be depicted in a variety of colours. However, he also noted that a few illustrious persons adopt emblems in order to express their particular sentiments as well as their temporal and religious powers. For example, Father Pierre Scanton, bishop and prince of Grenoble, chose the Hebrew column as his personal emblem.[30] In 1684, Menestrier wrote that blazons are the marks of nobility that serve to distinguish particular houses, families and communities.[31]

He defined devices as ingenious paintings of natural and artificial objects accompanied by some words that express the heroic feelings of famous people. Among the different sorts of images, devices belonged in the category of the "images sçavantes" that were more closely related to emblems. He drew upon the definition of devices first articulated by Paolo Iovio, whom he considered their creator.[32] Apart from the fact that the number of figures is unlimited in the case of the emblems, devices may also be described as emblems.[33] He claimed that three of the five characteristics of devices are common to emblems, specifically in that both forms must show a correct proportion between the text and the image. Moreover, emblems should be easily understandable, but also be pleasant to see. In his view, the emblem was a sweet artifice, as it enabled better comprehension of the teaching.[34]

Moral images or emblems should teach men virtuous conduct, and it is the proper function of emblems to explain the more difficult subjects. In this way, they differed from devices, hieroglyphics and symbols in not possessing any mysterious or hidden character.[35] However, emblems share a common purpose with hieroglyphics, in the sense that they were

[29] Menestrier 1662, p. 8, p. 16 and p. 20, Menestrier 1981, p. 15-16, and Loach 1995, p. 135.
[30] Menestrier 1662, p. 21 and p. 145.
[31] Menestrier 1662, p. 11 and Menestrier 1981, p. 16.
[32] Paolo Iovio (1483-1552) was an Italian physician, historian, biographer, and prelate. He was the celebrated author of chronicles of contemporary history, such as *Historiarum sui temporis libri XLV*, of a collection of lives of famous men, *Vitae virorum illustrium* (1549-57), and of *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium*, which may be translated as *Praise of Men* primary sources for the period *Illustrious for Courage in War* (1554). Menestrier affirmed: "Paul Iove is considered as the father of devices, as he was the first to collect and reduce them to art". Menestrier 1662, p. 21-22)
[33] Menestrier 1662, p. 21 and 1981, p. 16 and p. 304.
[34] Menestrier 1662, p. 22 and 1981, p. 12-13 and p. 207.
[35] Menestrier 1981, p. 15.

first conceived to teach us the mysteries and maxims of the religion. Emblems can also be inscribed on the reverse of medals, in bas-reliefs on precious stones and on marble.[36]

The historical evolution of emblems according to Menestrier and his main sources of inspiration

Menestrier treated specifically the subject of emblems and devices in five publications between 1658 and 1659.[37] The text "Traité des emblèmes", a chapter of the book *L' Idée de l'Etude de l'honnete homme (1658*), constituted his first coherent approach to the problematic of emblems. It is the later edition of *L'Art des Emblèmes* that provides us with the more meticulous identification and definition of categories, and the uses and contexts of emblems.

He was of the opinion that emblems have been used over a long time, though with different intended meanings. Such a conception as this still stands in opposition to common conviction. Indeed, it remains a matter of common belief that emblems were created *ab origo* by the Italian jurist and writer Andrea Alciato (1492-1550) in his work *Viri Clarissimi D. Andreae Alciati Iurisconsultiss*, usually known simply as the *Emblemata*, Augsburg, 1531.

His theoretical approach on emblems has historical import, in that he attempted to chart the development of the art form from its origins to his own time. He ascribed the origin of emblems to the dawn of time. In antiquity, emblems were expressed in words rather than by visual images.[38] In his opinion, the Greek Anthology, the Tablet of Cebes of Thebes (c. 390 a. C), the *Eikonos* by Flavious Philostrates and Egyptian hieroglyphs together constituted the first attempts to create emblems.[39]

The fundamental role attributed by Menestrier to Ancient Greek culture must to be seen within the context of a century characterised by the rise of the Attic movement that began in the 16th century. As a matter of interest, the *Tabula* by Cebes of Thebes had been published in several editions since the 15th century. Within the francophone context, Gilles Corrozet brought out the first translation of the work by Cebes of Thebes in French language in 1543 with his *Tableau de Cebes*. This edition comes very near to the format of an emblem-book. The plates include a figure, a single line explanation and a longer explanatory text. Finally, the French edition of the *Tabula* book is illustrated with a series of emblems by Corrozet. As to the *Eikonos*, a French readership most probably came across it in its more

[36] Menestrier 1981, p.17.
[37] Loach 1997, p. 318 and p. 330, note 4.
[38] Menestrier 1662, p. 7.
[39] Menestrier 1662, p. 4.

recent French version entitled *Les images, ou tableaux de platte peinture des deux Philostrates sophists Grecs* and issued 1578. As with the French edition of the *Tabula*, the latter resembles an emblem book. More precisely, each figure has an epigram beneath and is followed by a commentary explaining it.[40]

Indeed, Menestrier further argued that the words enigma and emblem were created or developed by the Greeks.[41] The contemporary conception of the word emblem as an image of instruction had first been introduced by the Greeks. Aristotle had already recognised that a correct pedagogy involved a combination of image and sentence (emblem).[42] Moreover, the Greeks further gave to posterity those compilations of explanations by their poets called epigrams. Menestrier saw another origin of emblems in the inscriptions that accompanied roman statues, bas-reliefs decorating public buildings (temples and altars), and pictures.[43]

Menestrier further held that the Chaldeans ranked among the creators of emblems, as they were the first to name the stars and constellations and to create a cosmology that was later transmitted to the Arabs, Egyptians and Greeks.[44] Accordingly, Menestrier often went back to Ancient visual and theoretical sources in his treatises. For instance, close to the end of his treatise he mentions that the *Florilegium magnum* facilitated the invention of emblems, as this book includes beautiful religious sentences[45].

Nevertheless, he found the main inspiration for his theory of emblems in the *Canochiale Aristotelico* by Emanuele Tesauro and first published in Turin in 1654. This author had likewise distinguished himself in the organisation of festivals. Hence, Menestrier's idea that all pomp is nothing but devices, emblems, and inscriptions recalls a sentence by Tesauro, that feasts, carrousels, ballets and masquerades are nothing but vivid *imprese* (devices)[46].

Like Tesauro, Menestrier conceived of emblems as a kind of symbolic image that could be a principal element in the construction of festivals or decorative schemes. Thus, for him, images are a component of a culture of spectacle.[47]

The organisation of images by Menestrier into three categories is based again on the definition of *argutezza* by Emanuele Tesauro. According to the latter, *argutezza* can be manifested in terms of metaphor. For him, a metaphor is a meaning that can be variously

[40] Loach 2003, p. 230 -231.
[41] Menestrier 1662, p. 13.
[42] Menestrier 1662, p. 4. (Menestrier called this form metaphor and other symbols)
[43] Menestrier 1981, p. 11-12 and p. 339-340.
[44] Menestrier 1662, p. 91 and Menestrier 1981, p. 8-9.
[45] Menestrier 1981, p. 412.
[46] Loach 1986, p. 170.
[47] Graham, 2016, p. 119.

expressed though words (*parole*), material things (*obietti*) and actions (*attioni animate*).[48] For both Tesauro and Menestrier the picture is a metaphor *di fatto* as firstly defined by Tesauro.

Menestrier also absorbed the new thomist theory, *i. e.*, a theory based on the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas which, during his lifetime, had become widely diffused within Jesuit circles. Firstly, he studied at the Jesuit College of la Flèche, well-known as a neo-thomist institution. Secondly, he was a student and assistant of the leading neo-thomist author Théophile Raynauld. More importantly, his first translation from Latin into French was of the devotional work *Les devoirs de la Ville de Lyon envers ses Saints*, Lyon, Chez Guichard Iuilleron, 1658 by Thomas Aquinas.[49] Finally, the growing emphasis he put on practice in an order that it is theologically correct is clearly a neo-thomist conception.[50]

The program that Menestrier devised in 1658 for the decoration of the town hall and the Jesuit college in Lyon was directly drawn from the work dealing with different representations of the House of God by Théophile Raynauld.[51] The concept of spiritual images as employed by him can be also related to this theory. The neo -theomists considered that fantasy or spirit converted corporeal images (*especes*) into artificially produced images (*phantomes*). Along the same lines, the stress put on the role of the senses by Menestrier should be seen as filiated to the neo-thomist theory which held that people were taught by human senses alone.[52]

Menestrier illustrated both the works *Philosophie des images* (1682), and the second edition of his *L' Art des Emblèmes* (1684) with emblems that were inspired by those from a lost edition of the *Delie* by Maurice Scèves (1544) and by the prodigious figures provided from the *Histoires prodigieuses* published in Paris by Denyse Cavellat in 1597 and 1598. More precisely, in his *Philosophie des images* refers eleven times to the *Delie*, whereas only seven emblems were actually taken from it.[53] For instance, he attributes the triple form of the emblem to an engraving that in 1598 illustrated one chapter of the first volume of the *Histoires prodigieuses*. He also transformed the vignette that shows eighteen men and fifteen women dancing for a whole year in a cemetery into an emblem that is intended to represent all the ages of life.[54] The book *Peinture des moeurs* by Monsieur de Gomberville constituted a further source for Menestrier.

[48] Loach 2002c, p. 251.
[49] Backer 1894, vol. V, p. 906.
[50] Loach 2002c, p. 274.
[51] Loach, 2002a, p. 42-43.
[52] Loach 1999, p. 170-171.
[53] Buhlmann 1975, p. 431.
[54] Campangne 2000, p. 694.

Comments on structure (figures and words) and production practices

Menestrier argued that the emblem was composed of motifs similar to those of painting, such as landscapes, architecture, heaven, and fountains.[55] He continued to uphold the traditional triple division of emblems. In their structure the emblems consisted of, at least, a picture (*pictura*), and two verbal elements (a short motto or *lema* [sentence] that can be written in vulgar language and a longer explanatory text of epigram [verse]).[56]

This was actually the standard pattern for emblems that evolved in France between 1534 and 1560[57]. By contrast, Menestrier distinguished two main parts to the emblem. These are the figures, and their signification, or their moral sense, and the form that gives the emblem all its beauty. The sentence and the verse, having an accidental character, interpret this signification.[58]

These words can be presented as simple titles or teachings, in sentences or in words similar to the devices forming a whole text.[59] These two elements could be translated into matter (signification or soul) and form (body) together. Such a conception as this was in all likelihood borrowed from the theory by Paolo Iovio, who was probably the first theoretician to distinguish between the body *(res significans)* and the soul *(res significata)* of an image.[60] However, the picture was for Menestrier the main feature of the emblem, so that "emblems can be exclusively composed of figures, as it is done for most of the time"[61]. The primacy of image (painting) *vis a vis* the discursive practice as defended by Menestrier was inserted into a Jesuit tradition established by writers such as the French Jesuits Louis de Richeôme and Pierre Le Moyne (1602-1671).[62] In the treaty of 1662, Menestrier argued that emblems were nothing but simple figures for the older people. Some words were later added so to explain them more clearly.[63] Furthermore, he recognised that for many observers, images will have a different meaning from the object represented. Emblems are, however, always drawn from proverbs, well-known sentences, apologies and allegories.[64]

[55] Menestrier 1981, p. 306.
[56] Menestrier 1662, p. 50, Menestrier 1981, p.168 and Graham 2005, p. 132.
[57] Porteman 1996, p. 14.
[58] Menestrier 1962, p. 50 and Graham 20005, pp. 132-133.
[59] Menestrier 1981, p. 35 and p. 309.
[60] Dimler 1999, p. 286-287 and Loach, 2002a, p. 31.
[61] Menestrier 1662, p. 50 and Menestrier 1981, p. 19.
[62] Groulier 1988, p. 112.
[63] Menestrier 1662, p. 54.
[64] Menestrier 1662, p. 51.

In his opinion, the emblem is an artifice in which poetry comes to the aid of painting in order to win over the soul trough the eyes. Or, as he expressed it in 1662, "the signification is the thought that the author wants to express through its figures, and through its lines of verse.[65] Such a viewpoint clearly demonstrates his zeal in establishing a comparison between painting and poetry, in particular, as concerns the art of emblems.[66] Menestrier, however, considered only the sonnet, the madrigal, & the epigram as suitable forms of poetry, as all the other poetical forms were for him too long.[67]

The text obviously served to explain the expressed message, or as Menestrier put it:

"Si la peinture est une Poësie muette, & la Poësie une Peinture parlante, l'Emblème qui a les beautez de l'un & de l'autre, merite aussi ces deux noms. Il est une Peinture d'instruction, & les vers qui lui servent de truchement, contribuent beaucoup à render ses enseignements efficacies"[68].

The various sorts of emblems according to the subjects represented (natural, artificial, historic, fabulous, chimerical, symbolical and allegoric emblems)

In the first edition of *L'art des emblèmes* of 1662 Menestrier spoke of various subjects that can be illustrated by emblematists. Some represent natural objects, including the four elements. Others would include the expressions of the soul and of its parts and qualities. More precisely, emblematists represent supernatural feelings (grace, inspiration, glory, faith, hope and charity), moral virtues (vices, virtues and passions), political systems (monarchy or tyranny), ideal sentiments (honour, respect, authority), notional subjects that depend on arts and sciences, natural actions (sleeping, eating and drinking), political actions (reward and punishment), events of ceremonial import (sacrifices, funerals, triumphs) or military nature (fights, war councils), and academic life (lectures, disputes).[69]

Accordingly, in the same text he listed emblems under headings concerning seven separate "species" (natural, artificial, historic, fabulous, chimerical, symbolical and allegorical) and a mixed category of emblems that can be listed under more than one

[65] Menestrier 1662, p. 87 and Filippi 1996, p. 68.
[66] At least three reasons explain the rehabilitation of poetry in form of epigram or eulogy that took place at the second half of the 17th century. These are the needs of a literary teaching at Jesuit colleges where poetry remains central to academic program; the attempt to avoid the decline of epigram through the reinforcement of the use of French language at court; the attempt to direct the artists to draw to the collectanea by Ripa and Cartari. (Groulier, p. 110-111).
[67] Menestrier 1662, p. 80 and Menestrier 1981, p. 323.
[68] Menestrier 1981, p. 320.
[69] Menestrier 1662, p. 61-62.

species.[70] In 1684, he reduced this list to the four categories of natural, symbolic, poetic, and allegoric emblems.

In the two versions of Menestrier's treatise, we read that natural emblems comprise images of natural objects that are easily recognisable, such as an eagle, a lion, or a river. Moreover, he argues that the natural emblems are based on the conjoining of the qualities of the natural bodies together with the manners, vices and virtues.[71] This sort of emblem differed from the device in the sense that devices featured single figures. Emblems were by contrast general teachings.[72] In order to represent natural emblems in a correct manner the emblematist had simply to observe the properties of the objects, for instance, the instincts of the animals or the lightness of the stars.[73]

Menestrier considered that the difference between artificial and natural emblems consists in the fact that artificial emblems include the instruments and inventions of art.[74] Artificial emblems study the relation between the use of the mathematic instruments or artificial objects and political and moral teachings.[75]

Emblems can be considered historic when they narrate the illustrious actions of virtuous persons, thus having a pedagogic character.[76] For instance, the image of Alexander cutting the Gordian knot shows that nothing is impossible.[77]. Therefore, historic emblems can be also called heroic emblems.[78] Heroic emblems often decorate the portals of princes, triumphal arches, galleries, the reverse-side of medals and funerary decorations.[79] Among this category, Menestrier emphasised the emblems that Monsieuer Perrin had made for Cardinal Mazarin. The figures of those emblems were all taken from fables and are explained by sonnets.[80].

Historic emblems may also constitute reflections on an event or represent scenes of the everyday lives of people[81]. When historic emblems serve to express a heroic event, they are based on the comparison and the relationship of an action with a virtue or another action. The piety of Alexander, who burns incense on the altar, represents the piety of the kings.[82]

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[70] Menestrier 1662, p. 153-154 and Loach 2002c, p. 229.
[71] Menestrier 1662, p. 30 and Menestrier 1981, p. 335.
[72] Menestrier 1981, p. 34-35 and p. 46.
[73] Menestrier 1981, p. 395.
[74] Menestrier 1662, p. 31 and Menestrier 1981, p. 335.
[75] Menestrier 1981, p. 335.
[76] Menestrier 1662, p. 23, p. 31 and p. 37.
[77] Menestrier 1662, p. 135-136.
[78] Menestrier 1662, p. 88.
[79] Menestrier 1981, p. 133.
[80] Menestrier 1662, p. 37.
[81] Menestrier 1662, p. 31 and Menestrier 1981, p. 335.
[82] Menestrier 1662, p. 37 and p. 86 and Menestrier 1981, p. 334.

Fabulous emblems distinguish themselves from natural emblems, because the latter are taken from real history. By contrast, the first refer to the fables or ancient theology of pagan people applied to the customs and mysteries of Christianity.[83] Accordingly, in 1662, Menestrier illustrated the category of fabulous emblems with a representation of Hercules, as this figure is often a subject of emblems. Underlying this, his mysterious character is given by the fable, so that his history is full of marvellous episodes.[84]

Under the category of chimerical emblems, Menestrier included emblems taken from apologies or fables, such as the ones by Aesop or La Fontaine. There is a therefore a certain difficulty in distinguishing fabulous emblems from chimerical emblems. he further argued that chimerical emblems "speak of plants, animals and of other natural or artificial objects and have always a moral instruction connected to the discourses and actions of the animals"[85]. Fables, as emblems, are of everyday application.[86] Moreover, heclaimed that most of the more common bodies in emblems were figures taken either from history or from fables.[87]

Symbolic emblems are the most common sort, according to Menestrier. Under symbolic emblems, he includes the emblems that represent monstrous or fabulous figures, such as the Cyclops, the chimneys, harpies and horns of plenty.[88] He considered that symbolic emblems partook of the same nature as the hieroglyphs in having some hidden meaning. Among the various examples, he includes Emblem 118 of the book by Alciato showing the Caduceus and abundance in order to express the idea that fortune attended the virtuous. Moreover, symbolic emblems have also an enigmatic character as shown in Emblem 120 of the same book.[89] Menestrier illustrated this sort of emblem with an image expressing the idea that work and adversity ultimately produce happiness, as they are recompensed by eternal repose (trees and leaves).[90]

Allegoric emblems, such as the compilation of images by Cesare Ripa or the emblems by Monsieur de Gombreville and Tesauro, show figures that are created by the authors in order to represent their teachings. They represent abstract beings in the form of human figures, and give to them a symbolic character through the representation of human virtues, vices, passions and qualities.[91] However, Menestrier warned that the representation of

[83] Menestrier 1662, p. 32 and p. 88.
[84] Menestrier 1662, p. 141-142.
[85] Menestrier 1662, p. 32 and Menestrier 1981, p. 27-28.
[86] Menestrier 1662, p. 53.
[87] Menestrier 1981, p. 46.
[88] Menestrier 1981, p. 46 and p. 55.
[89] Menestrier 1662, p. 32-33.
[90] Menestrier 1662, p. 139.
[91] Menestrier 1662, p. 33 and p. 89 and Menestrier 1981, p. 334-335

allegoric emblems ought not to be over-complex in order to avoid their misinterpretation as enigmas.[92]

In 1684, Menestrier illustrates the poetic emblems with the eulogies by Virgil that propose enigmas. Poetic emblems are simultaneously the more ingenious sort of emblems and the more difficult to invent. Menestrier spoke of two types of poetic emblems. The first comprised those poetic figures that represent natural objects, such as the elements, the day and night, the horizon and the seasons. This sort of emblem was widely diffused during the classical period, in the form of statues, medals or bas-reliefs. A second group comprised poetic emblems illustrating vices, virtues, passions and other moral, civil and spiritual conditions or states of the soul.[93]

For Menestrier those emblems representing concepts or ideas are the more difficult to represent. Emblems render arts and sciences visible through the visualisation of their instruments. For instance, rustic life is illustrated through shepherds, whereas the globe and the sphere are amongst those instruments used to illustrate mathematics[94]. By contrast, is easier for the emblematist to represent actions, since actions are able to represent themselves. For instance, a person with an open book illustrates the action of reading[95].

The classification of emblems according to their meaning, *e.g.* moral teaching (sacred, moral, political, chemical, doctrinal, heroic, and satirical emblems)

Menestrier distinguished six sorts of emblems according to their meaning, *i.e.*, moral teaching. In this process, he drew from Alciato, who had organised emblems into historical, physical or natural, moral, allegoric, and love emblems.

Menestrier deals first with emblems having a sacred or divine character. The emblem for him can be an important aspect of religion or the ingenious expression of mysteries. Sacred emblems include religious sentences from the Old and the New Testament or from the pagan mysteries.[96] He gives the emblems of the *Pia Desideria* by Hermann Hugo pride of place in this context, since this collection represents a progress of mystical life.[97] The figures that were for the Jews mysteries or enigmas are for Menestrier emblems. The Son of God spoke of the major mysteries of religion through the parables, in order to make them

[92] Menestrier 1662, p. 71.
[93] Menestrier 1981, p. 235-236.
[94] Menestrier 1981, p. 284-285.
[95] Menestrier 1981, p. 287.
[96] Menestrier 1662, p. 34 – 36 and p. 86 and Menestrier 1981, p. 61-67 and p. 331.
[97] Menestrier 1662, p. 34-35 and Menestrier 1981, p. 73-85.

emblems.[98] Sacred or theological emblems can be created in all the modes in which moral and political emblems are made, such as natural bodies. Menestrier exemplified this point with the image of the pelican that opens his breast and that is emblematic of Christ giving his blood and life for the sinners.[99] Sacred emblems can also be made up of symbolic, poetic, historical and fabulous figures. Moreover, he authorised the emblematists to use images taken from the profane sphere, and also fables in the production of sacred emblems, with the proviso that they did not use these images in the decoration of sacred spaces.[100]

Moral emblems have the more universal and natural character, as they were created mainly to inculcate good habits.[101] All emblems by Alciato have this character as well as the book *Peinture des Moeurs* by Monsieur de Gomberville. From his viewpoint, the moral function of emblems was their first function.[102] In ancient times, *i.e.*, the Greeks and Romans used to decorate their public spaces and buildings (temples) for didactic purposes. Political emblems propagated the maxims of government and of state policy.[103]

Menestrier devised the term 'chemical emblems' to designate those that symbolised the search within Nature for the secrets of gold and other metals and which are determined by fire and water.[104] He certainly gave great importance to science when he asserted that doctrinal emblems served to explain the principles of an art or a science conveyed in terms of figures.[105]

The doctrinal emblems include a series of chemical emblems (the correct combination of the three natural elements: air, earth and water), as the alchemists use images in order to render more mysterious the dark sides of the imagination.[106] Doctrinal emblems can represent elements extracted from ancient fables. The latter belong as much to the category of symbols and enigmas as emblems. However, it is the inclusion of verses that distinguishes doctrinal emblems from symbols and enigmas.[107]

Satirical emblems are for him emblems with an injurious character. For instance, he represented ignorance with an emblem showing a child with donkey's ears, as this animal is often considered the more stupid animal on earth.[108] Such were often employed by painters

[98] Menestrier 1662, p. 71 and Menestrier 1981, p. 208.
[99] Menestrier 1981, p. 263.
[100] Menestrier 1981, p. 69.
[101] Menestrier 1662, p. 36 and p. 85 and Menestrier 1981, p. 86 and p. 331.
[102] Menestrier 1662, p. 92.
[103] Menestrier 1981, p. 97.
[104] Menestrier 1981, p. 122 and p. 128.
[105] Menestrier 1662, p. 40 and Menestrier 1981, p. 111, p. 116 and p. 121.
[106] Menestrier 1981, p. 122 and p. 126.
[107] Menestrier 1662, p. 42.
[108] Menestrier 1981, p. 151.

when they wanted to scoff at their colleagues. They called burdens to these grotesque pictures.[109] Furthermore, these emblems were produced by Protestants and Catholics and also by warring states.[110]

Political emblems, such as many of those collected and included by Jean Baudoin his work *Receuil d'emblemes*, Paris, 1638-1639, explain government maxims and state policy.[111]

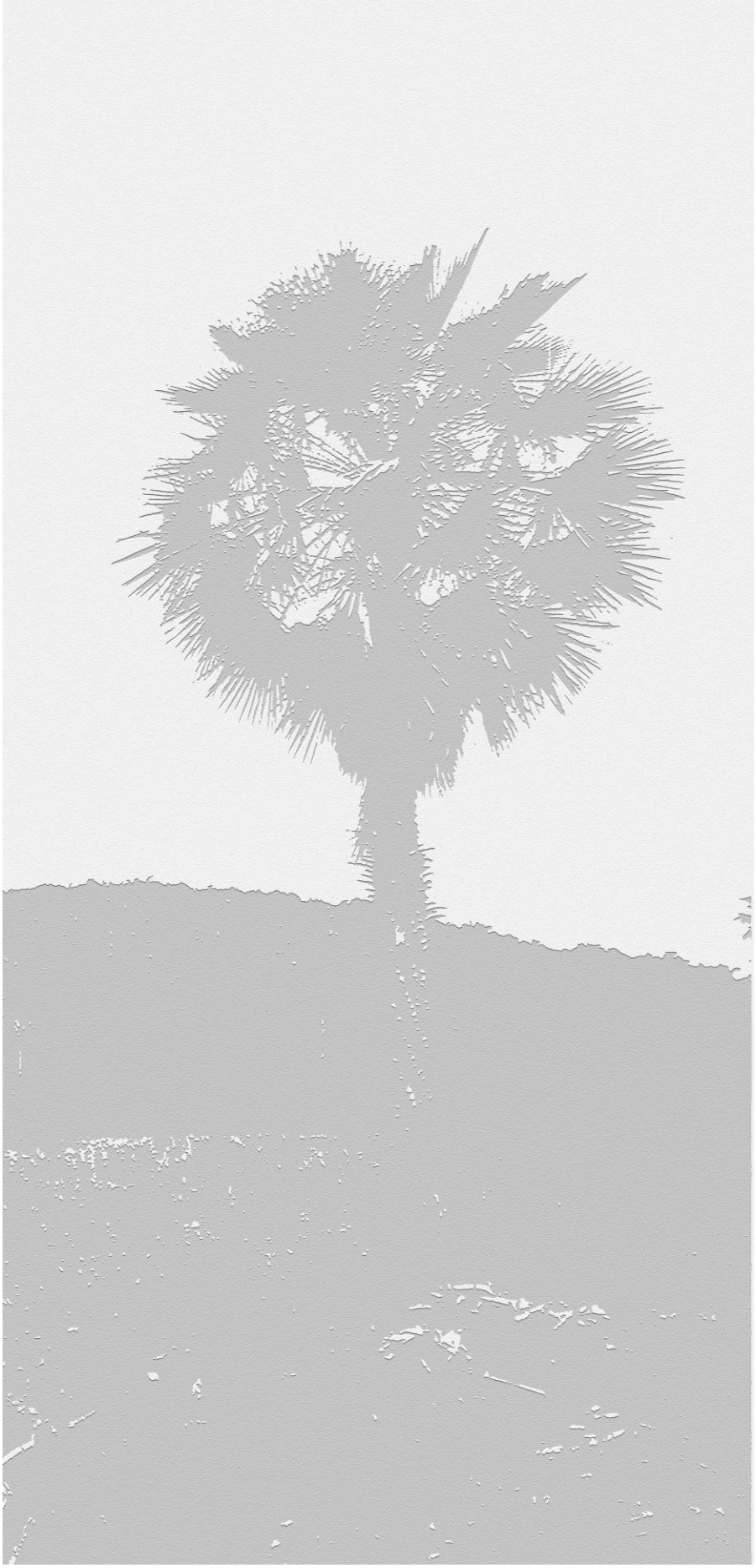
Love was for Menestrier the most beautiful and ingenious sentiment. Often this sentiment also inspires the more interesting emblems. Those featuring the allegorical image of Amor, are also known as amorous emblems or emblems of passion, and serve to discover passion in others. They would often be displayed during tourneys, masquerades, and ballets.[112] They are similar to the moral emblems, when they intend to moderate our passions or warn of the effects.[113] Love or amorous emblems have often an ambiguous character in order that only the direct addressee can understand them at first glance.[114] In this, they contrast with all the other categories, in particular doctrinal emblems, since the latter are supposed to be immediately comprehensible.[115]

Conclusions

To conclude, Claude-François Menestrier must be acknowledged a leading role in the coeval trend for emblems. His interest for this sort of images was fostered by the Jesuit context. Members of the Society of Jesus were indeed at the forefront in the spread of emblems during the 16th and the 17th centuries.

He was the most prolific writer or theorist on images during the 17th century. His theoretical work shows a profound knowledge, born of acquired practical experience, in the use of images in the organisation of religious and secular celebrations. In his theoretical work, he conceived a systematic plan or "Philosophie des images", intended to cover all the categories of image. He moreover organised the emblems according to the subjects (natural, artificial, historic, fabulous, chimerical, symbolical and allegoric emblems) represented and their meaning (sacred, moral, political, chemical, doctrinal, heroic, and satirical emblems).

[109] Menestrier 1662, p. 44 and Menestrier 1981, p. 150.
[110] Menestrier 1981, p. 154-157.
[111] Menestrier 1662, p. 36, Menestrier 1981, p. 97 and Baudoin 1647.
[112] Menestrier 1662 p. 43 and p. 86 and Menestrier 1981, p. 159.
[113] Menestrier 1981, p. 159.
[114] Menestrier 1662, p. 90.
[115] Menestrier 1662, p. 90 and Menestrier 1981, p. 337-338.



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