

Ex Libris Tour: how can emblem books inspire new proposals for literary tourism?

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Abstract: This paper aims at discussing how emblem studies can contribute to creating new literary tourism products, by questioning to what extent the selected places fit into the categories of literary destinations. It proposes drawing differentiated routes across Europe, curated by scientific knowledge, showing the potential of Alciato's *Emblemata* (1531) as an inspiring resource for literary tourism. Based on the theoretical research of comparative studies, literary tourism and emblems, this case study shows how the hermeneutic process of decoding meanings can lead people (tourists, guides and stakeholders) to connect with artistic heritage by interpreting its symbolic language and value. The proposal explores a new perspective in literary tourism products through emblem studies, fostering a deeper knowledge of the impact of active reading skills on cultural experiences. It considers that literary expertise encourages people to travel differently and reframes the concept of "emblematic places" on tourist routes.

Keywords: Literary destinations; Alternative tourism; Interpretation; Emblem studies; Heritage

Ex Libris Tour: ¿Cómo pueden los libros de emblemas inspirar nuevas propuestas de turismo literario?

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo discutir cómo los estudios de emblemática pueden contribuir a la creación de nuevos productos de turismo literario, cuestionando hasta qué punto los lugares seleccionados encajan en las categorías de destinos literarios. Propone trazar rutas diferenciadas a través de Europa, curadas por el conocimiento científico, mostrando el potencial de los *Emblemata* (1531) de Alciato como un recurso inspirador para el turismo literario. A partir de la metodología de los estudios comparados, del turismo literario y de la emblemática, este estudio de caso muestra cómo el proceso hermenéutico de decodificación de significados puede llevar a las personas (turistas, guías y actores) a conectarse con el patrimonio artístico, interpretando su lenguaje simbólico y su valor. Esta investigación abre una nueva perspectiva sobre los productos turísticos literarios a través de estudios de emblemas, fomentando un conocimiento más profundo del impacto de las habilidades de lectura activa en las experiencias culturales. Teniendo en cuenta que la experiencia literaria anima a las personas a viajar de manera diferente, este artículo replantea el concepto de "lugares emblemáticos" en las rutas turísticas.

Palabras Clave: Destino literario; Turismo alternativo; Interpretación; Estudios de emblemática; Patrimonio.

1. Introduction

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, touristic recovery urgently demands alternative options to promote socially responsible practices. People seem to be more aware of the negative impact of overtourism and divert from mass tourism to sustainable experiences (Arora and Scharma, 2021). Addressing that challenge, this paper aims at discussing how can emblem books contribute to creating new literary tourism products, curated by scientific knowledge.

Knowing that the consumption of literature influences mobility and motivates the visitation of places that provide cultural experiences whose activities merge the roles of readers and tourists, literary

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tourism has been defined as the practice of visiting places associated with writers and their texts (Watson, 2009) or “associated with places celebrated for literary depictions and/or connections with literary figures” (Squire, 1996: 119). Literary tourism depends on the popularity of the writers/books, although it does not mean that only famous authors/texts can inspire tourist routes. Andrea Alciato, a humanist from the 16th century, is not exactly a popular author in our days. But he composed one of the first best sellers to be printed and was quite famous among artists, writers and Law scholars for centuries. He was responsible for the flourishing of a new literary genre – the emblem book –, which circulated widely all over the world during the Early Modern Period.

Taking these notions into consideration, we will discuss how an emblematic tradition opens a new perspective on the concept of literary destinations and experiences, offering a singular approach to interpret European cultural heritage. Firstly, we will clarify the notions of emblem book, applied emblematics and their relation with cultural heritage. Then, the method of data collection will be explained, discussing the concept of literary spaces and emblematic places. Bearing those principles in mind, we will suggest three literary routes based on Alciato’s *Emblemata*. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn on the potential of *ars emblematica* to inspire alternative touristic experiences, stimulating cultural, heritage and literary tourism.

2. From emblem books to applied emblematics: a new proposal for heritage interpretation through literary tourism

The invention of emblem book as a literary genre is attributed to the Italian jurist Andrea Alciato (1492-1550), who composed a collection of short Latin verse pieces that he called *Emblemata*, from the ancient Greek noun meaning ‘insertion, mosaic and inlay’. The manuscript circulated among his friends and included a dedicatory to Conrad Peutinger (1465-1547), to whom Alciato possibly sent it earlier. Peutinger was a diplomat and humanist scholar, serving as counsellor to the Emperor Maximilian I (d. 1519) in Augsburg. The author addresses the patron “as one poet to another” and claims that “during the holiday season”, he fashioned the emblems “with devices created by the celebrated hand of craftsmen, so that any person may be enabled to fasten cameos on clothes, badges on hats, and write with wordless tokens” (Alciato, 1996: 11).

Alciato’s creation seems to have escaped from his direct control, and in 1531 his emblems were printed in Augsburg by Steyner, with the inclusion of a crude woodcut illustrating each poem, apparently without the author’s consent. Scholars have discussed whether or not Alciato himself did originally intend his verses to be illustrated, in the view that he only delivered epigrams (Daly, 2014: 175). Perhaps the woodcuts were added in order to satisfy the interest for illustrated book in the sixteenth century. Accidental or not, the picture became an integral part of the emblem genre. Alciato severely criticized the first images, but authorized several editions with some different blocks published by the Paris printer Christian Wechel from 1534 onwards.

Alciato’s *Emblemata* was, in fact, the first printed emblem book and the most frequently reprinted over the next century. There were more than 100 editions, published in Germany, France, the Spanish Netherlands and Italy before the 1620s (see *Alciato at Glasgow Project*). Geoffrey Whitney’s *Choice of Emblems* (1586) translated a significant number of the emblems into English and full versions were published in French, German, Italian and Spanish. Alciato’s editions set the template commonly associated with the emblem, joining a motto (*inscriptio*), a picture (*pictura*) and a verse text or epigram (*subscriptio*). Many emblems, on the contrary, consist only of a picture and a motto, so a tripartite structure cannot be taken as a mandatory feature. Alciato’s model served to inspire many emblematicists in different countries, although there was freedom to innovate.

Using poetic words to draw “mute signs that everyone would understand”, Andrea Alciato inaugurated, thus, a new literary type that widely circulated among erudite elites and provided motifs to writers and artists. The cultural impact of this work is enormous and disseminated throughout Europe and the New World in the Early Modern period. Emblems were so widely known that settled a common symbolic language with a global impact, so they stimulate reflection on strongly shared cultural values and connections, contributing to current discussion on globalization. The emblematicists adapted meanings and *topoi* from Antiquity and the Middle Ages into a humanistic format that flourished in the Baroque. Technological developments in printing made possible the combination of letterpress with woodblock, and later copperplate. The attractive images ensured that the emblem spread rapidly through printed books, paintings and sculptures, around Europe and beyond. Emblem compositions came to influence

designers working in the decoration of ephemeral art, buildings, furniture, pottery, metalwares, glass, and numerous household, devotional and political objects (Hoepel and McKeown, 2017).

Interpreting the precise meaning, intention and message that emblems conveyed demands therefore a complex and interdisciplinary process. This scientific area crosses boundaries between literature and art-history, history of Renaissance and Baroque cultures, comparative literature and visual arts, architecture and semiotics, iconology and iconography. That interdisciplinary dialogue can enable a particular type of experience for visitors, stimulating the interpretation of tangible historic buildings through intertextual and cultural literacy.

In spite of their popularity from the 16th to the 18th century – as far as we know – emblem books have never been considered among the wide range of texts that promote touristic products, motivating the construction of itineraries. Recent practice has shown that destinations can be “produced”, in order to make people apprehend places through a specific way of seeing them (Crang, 2011: 212). Besides, literary tourism is commonly placed in the realm of cultural and heritage tourism, reinforcing the dynamic relation among them (Magadán Díaz and Rivas García, 2011). In the last decades, emblem studies have been investigating the connections that link literature, arts, history, heritage and patrimony so we believe that this scientific area can contribute to stimulate innovative approaches to cultural tourism. The definition of cultural tourism highlights the purpose of the visitors whose main motivation is “to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination” (UNWTO, 2017: 18). And literary tourism, in particular, is a “niche of cultural tourism that implies the movement towards literary places” (Baleiro e Quinteiro, 2018: 21).

This innovative approach intends to be an initial contribution towards a theoretical framework on emblem books within literary and heritage tourism, establishing some preliminary considerations. First of all, it is important to highlight the relationship between emblems (as a literary typology) and applied emblematics (as an artistic manifestation). Emblem books used texts and images to promote learning and understanding, at the same time they amused the readers. So, painters and artists applied the same efficient (and popular) strategy to impress, communicate and stimulate emotion. According to that perspective, this paper claims that emblems can contribute to the promotion of alternative tourism in cities by developing interpretative experiences through literature and arts. The previous knowledge of emblem books can therefore enhance heritage interpretation, since the routes based on *ars emblematica* encompass tangible and intangible heritage, specifically providing access to intangible culture through its material productions (sculptures, paintings...).

3. Research methods

Our first step was to search for other studies that pursued the purpose of approach literary tourism through emblem books, but we could not find a similar attempt. Over the recent decades, research on emblematics met a significant increase. Bibliographical catalogues by Landwehr (1970-1976), Campa (1990), Adams *et al.* (2002), Daly and Dimler (1997-2007), in addition to the Spanish Encyclopedia (Bernat and Cull, 1999), were keystones to digital databases. Among them, a special mention to Alciato Project at Glasgow (<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk>) and OpenEmblem Portal (<http://emblematica.grainger.illinois.edu>). Considering Portuguese emblematics, the main contributions were the issues edited by Gomes (2008) and Amaral Jr. (2017). Over the recent years, applied emblematics has caught the researchers' attention and many scattered studies have been published. There are some projects ongoing to divulge this area (such as *An Inventory of Applied Emblems in Switzerland*, www.emblemata.ch), but not with touristic purposes.

Then, we made a diagnosis of the cultural and literary tourism products on offer in Portugal and in Europe, in order to know options eventually available in the market (consulting websites such as www.visitportugal.com/en/content/literary-tours and <https://visitworldheritage.com/en/home>, among others). The development of routes and itineraries has shown to be one of the most successful ways to guide tourist flows through the territory and to stimulate the visits to less-known places. Besides, it contributes to a sustainable model of tourism, connecting a higher number of different points all over the territory and challenging the communities to discover (and support) their local culture and historical figures.

Taking these arguments into consideration, we propose the creation of touristic routes based on the nuclear concept of literary places somehow connected with Alciato's work, using the categories systematized by Mansfield (2015: 44-45). The author distinguishes three groups: group A includes categories based on the text (places associated to characters or mentioned within the book); group B

focuses on categories based on the author (birthplace, houses, grave...) and, finally, group C concerns categories based on mediation and promotion (literary festivals, libraries, filming locations, exhibitions). According to these categories, we collected the information necessary to draw thematic itineraries. We carried out an extensive bibliographical research that focused on Alciato's biography, catalogues of the *Emblemata* editions, essays on emblem theory and studies on applied motifs. This exploratory study revealed a significant number of physical places that intersected with Alciato's life or the history of his emblem book. We organized them in three sections: 1) places related to the author; 2) places related to the *Emblemata* editions; 3) places that display Alciato's emblematic motifs on the decoration. We are aware that some of the literary places that we identified do not match perfectly the categories described by Mansfield. This means that the routes here proposed suggest a flexible interpretation of the categories, in order to fit the specific features of literary places related to emblem books. After all, emblems are interweaving devices that mix materials, codes and theoretical models, demanding therefore an interdisciplinary confluence to redefine concepts such as literary place and literary tourism practices and products.

From this point, we looked for existent touristic, cultural and educational activities that could complement the literary routes based on Alciato and his book. We also propose new experiences that promoters and organisations could implement to explain how the printed emblems were transported, adapted, and embedded in new functional contexts, determined by architectural and regional art historical templates. Emblems synthesize humanistic concepts and symbolic language that prevailed in the Early Modern period, so they offer a good opportunity to discuss how European literature intersect with national arts, promoting intellectual engagement with the issues facing today's global society.

4. Potential literary routes based on Alciato and his *Emblemata*

Andrea Alciato is far from being a popular name to the readers of the 21st century, but enjoying a literary tourism experience does not necessarily require prior knowledge of the texts and the authors. On the contrary, the lack of previous acquaintance can mean a good opportunity to expand cultural horizons. Information can be provided to the tourist before or during the visit, through guides, brochures or digital supports. The first step to foster the interest of the future visitors would be explain the concept of emblem and its literary origin.

Even those who never heard about emblem books can easily recognize an emblem as a symbolic representation, frequently used by universities, cultural associations, political institutions and sports clubs. These compositions usually combine visual elements (images) and linguistic components (words) to convey the identity of the represented entities.

4.1. Route I: *Traveling with Alciato through the cities of Humanism*

This route combines places associated to characters or mentioned within the *Emblemata* (categories from group A defined by Mansfield, 2015: 44-45) and literary places based on the author, such as birthplace, grave, institutions where he worked (categories from group B, Mansfield, 2015: 44-45).

Alciato's family lived in Alzate (currently Alzate Brianza), whence their surname derives. The son of Ambrogio, a wealthy merchant, was born in 1492 (8 May) and soon went to Milan, where he attended Greek and Latin classes. In 1507-1508 he moved to Pavia and began legal studies. In 1512, Andrea was studying in Bologna and finally obtained his Phd in civil and canon law at the University of Ferrara (1516). Thanks to the impressive works that he immediately published, Alciato quickly became a well-known jurist and was then invited to take the humanistic teaching method (*mos italicus*) to the University of Avignon. In 1521, the teacher returned to Milan, where he would spend some years dedicated to writing and translating Greek epigrams from the *Anthologia Planudea*. This work was in the origin of the emblems, since many of them transcribe those translations published within the *Selecta* (1529) organized by Cornarius.

Milan was under the power of Charles V, following the dismissal of Francesco II Sforza, so Alciato returned to teaching in Avignon, escaping from the political and social conflicts that disturbed his homeland. In 1529, François I invited him to teach in Bourges and the legal humanist seized the opportunity to develop his own interpretation of Roman law, using the original texts in Latin. In the 1530s, Alciato returned to Italy, and taught in Pavia, Bologna and, finally, Ferrara, accepting a position offered by the duke Ercole II. In 1546, Alciato returned to the University of Pavia, where he lived the last years tormented by gout. On the 12th January 1550, the Milanese teacher passed

away. His heir, Francesco Alciato, commissioned a huge mausoleum in the Church of S. Epifanio. In 1773, the remains and the funeral monument were transferred to the cloister of the University of Pavia (Abbondanza, 1960).

Regarding the biography of the author, it is possible to draw an itinerary that connects many cities whose culture flourished in the 16th century. This route would therefore invite tourists to experiment a journey to French and Italian Renaissance, meeting places less popular among tourists – such as the cities of Avignon and Bourges – or even little villages, such as Alzate, near the lake of Como. The suggested route would also enable a different reason to rediscovering very popular destinations, namely the universities of Bologna, Ferrara and Pavia. Alciato contributed to the history of those institutions and simultaneously crossed the path of important contemporaneous personalities.

It is noteworthy that the Law teacher was noticed by powerful rulers of his time, namely François I, king of France, and his rivals, the dukes of Milan. This means that the journey with Alciato can lead us to the magnificent rooms of the Sforzesco Castle, for instance. Paying homage to his birthplace, Alciato dedicated the first emblem of his book to the “most illustrious” Massimiliano Sforza (1493-1530), who ruled during a brief period, from 1512 to 1515. When the book was published, the Duke had already died, after having spent long years imprisoned by the French troops. Alciato was then teaching at the University of Bourges, invited by François I, who banished the Milanese dynasty, but the volume surprisingly contains another reference to the local rulers.

There is an emblem representing the tomb of Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351-1402), first duke of Milan, which also mentions the family coat of arms (Alciato, 1550: 323). It was during the reign of Galeazzo that the castle, the largest of those built by the Visconti, was adopted as the family’s official residence. In the 15th century, Francesco Sforza decided to enlarge the former military building and erected a modern palace, now home of a fine art collection. Along the visit to this architectural masterpiece, people can admire the Room of Ducal Heraldry and observe that the vault of this room is adorned with the coats of arms of Galeazzo Maria Sforza upon a blue background accompanied by the initials, “GZ MA” and the title “DVX MLI”, shorthand for Galeazzo Maria Duke of Milano. As mentioned before, Alciato’s life and professional choices were clearly influenced by the political circumstances and, therefore, knowing the places and the history of the city in the 16th century is essential to understand the author and his context.

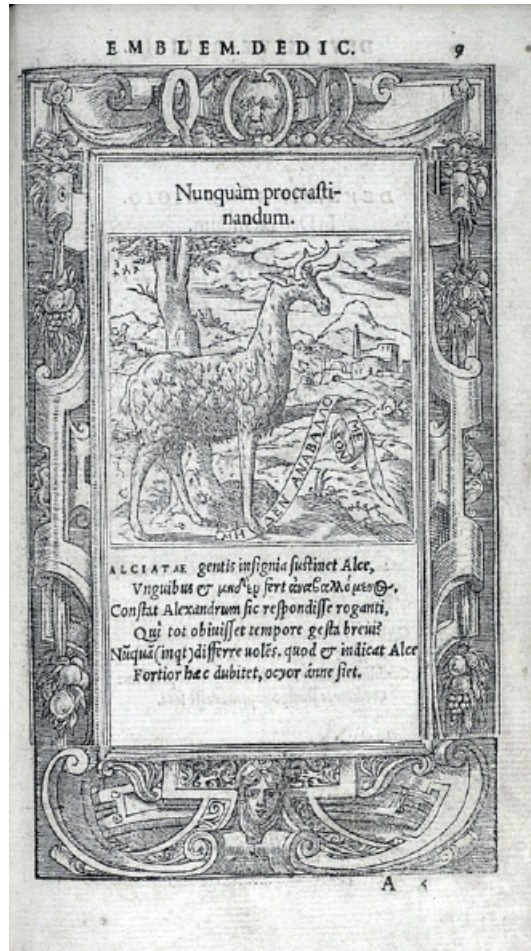
Continuing the tour through the places where Alciato lived, the route would take the visitors to Ferrara, the City of the Renaissance, classified by UNESCO as World Heritage. The humanist concept of the ‘ideal city’ came to life there, giving birth to the modern town planning, according to the new principles of perspective. The court of Ercole II welcomed artists and poets such as Leon Battista Alberti, Titian, Boiardo, Ariosto and Tasso. On the outside, the castle essentially presents the appearance given to it by Girolamo da Carpi in the second half of the 16th century. So, it is still possible to visit a significant part of the buildings that Alciato saw during his stay as student, and later as teacher, imagining how did he experience the city five centuries ago.

Pavia offers a similar challenge to the tourists, invited to walk around the historical centre, discovering the several colleges and academies dated from the 1500s. Ludovico il Moro assigned a building in Strada Nuova to the *Università degli Studi* and it still hosts the Faculty of Law. At the Courtyard of the Statues, students and visitors can admire Alciato’s marble mausoleum. The monument praises the memory of the late teacher, combining an inscription with a statue and four symbolic images. On the inferior part, there are two logo-iconic compositions. On the left, the coat of arms of Alciato’s family, bearing the motto attributed to Alexander – ΜΗΔΕΝ ΑΝΑΒΑΛΛΟΜΕΝΟΣ (*Never procrastinate*) – which inspired the emblem *Nunquam procrastinandum* (Fig. 1). On the right, the herald’s staff, attribute of Mercury, under the motto ΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΚΑΡΠΟΣ ΟΥΚ ΑΠΟΛΛΥΤΑΙ. These symbolic elements generally copy the emblem *Virtuti fortuna comes* (*Good fortune attendant on virtue*), indicating how material wealth blesses men of powerful intellect, skilled in speaking (Alciato, 1550: 130).

These examples demonstrate, thus, how would the route based on Alciato’s life guide visitors through a journey to the 16th century, in order to understand the humanist spirit that characterized the Renaissance and influenced the development of the Early Modern culture. After all, Alciato’s emblem book is the result of his own intellectual and personal itinerancy, in a specific time and dealing with the contemporaneous social circumstances. Guided by Alciato’s eloquent real-life testimony, it would be much more appealing for visitors to understand how did Humanistic agents circulate through different countries and how did teachers contribute to the reformation of the university methods. Finally, we believe that the route would also persuade the visitors to take some thoughts on the extraordinary role played

by Alciato, wondering how could a single man – today almost forgotten – reformulate the method of Law teaching and have such an impact on European arts and humanities. According to this perspective, we claim that this route could engender a connection between the places being visited and other places, by activating cultural and literary memory and creating opportunities for personal development, by generating enriching experiences. Travelling with Alciato means, after all, a differentiated journey to a time in the past that can make us read the present differently.

Figure 1: Emblem *Nunquam procrastinandum*. Alciato, *Emblemata*, Lyon, 1550, p. 9.



Source: https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/facsimile.php?id=sm265_A5r
by permission of University of Glasgow, Archives & Special Collections.

4.2. Route II: Alciato's Emblemata: a journey through the history of the printing press

Although the places where the books were published are not specifically included among the three groups of categories defined by Mansfield (2015: 44-45), we argue that the very complex editorial history of Alciato's *Emblemata* justifies, by itself, a dedicated route. It is noteworthy that the number of emblems continuously increased from the first edition in 1531 to the last one reviewed by the author, in 1550. Besides, by 1621, the work had been printed more than a hundred times in different languages, involving the main printing centres of the Early Modern period. So, the editorial itinerancy of the book recommends a specific itinerary including Augsburg (1531), Paris (1534, 1536), Venice

(1546), Lyon (1549, 1550, 1556), Franckfurt (1567), Leiden (1591), Najera (1615), Geneva (1615) and Padua (1621), to mention only the most significant editions, available and described at *Alciato at Glasgow Project*.

The second route would, therefore, connect a significant number of cities with a magnificent 16th century patrimony. The majority of them already offers a variety of tourism products and cultural infrastructures that would perfectly complement the literary tourism experience related to Alciato's *Emblemata*. For instance, the city of Augsburg welcomed the first edition of the book, on the 28th February 1531. Further editions would follow in April of the same year, and another in 1534. It is important to mention that Augsburg hosted the court of the Holy Roman emperor, Maximilian I (1459-1519). To know more about the history of the city and its cultural ambiance in the Renaissance, the route would propose a visit to the Maximilian Museum. It is a large public institution, housed in a palatial building erected in 1546, which displays a notable collection of decorative arts. Augsburg was the leading German centre of sculpture, painting, and, especially, of fine work in gold and silver from the late Middle Ages until the Modern Period. Henrich Steyner established there his successful printing, active from 1522 until he had to file for bankruptcy in 1547. Printing an illustrated book in 1531 required a huge investment to buy appropriate equipment and represented a technical challenge, so the first edition of the *Emblematum liber* was really a milestone. The volume contains only 104 emblems, of which 97 are illustrated with woodcuts believed to be by Hans Schäufelein (on account of the monogram featured on the colophon page of the second edition), after the Augsburg painter Jörg Breu.

From 1534 onwards, publishing of Alciato's *Emblemata* shifted to France and remained there for the next thirty years, benefiting from the active collaboration of the author. Chrestien Wechel at first produced Latin editions and he is said to have set the standard for clear presentation of emblems, meaning that each emblem appeared on a fresh page, featuring the motto, the *pictura* below that, and then the *subscriptio* (poetic text). The same printer brought into light the first French version of Alciato's emblems, by Jean Lefevre, and also a similarly conceived German/Latin edition. The main focus of publication for emblems moved to Lyon, with editions of Alciato by Jacques Moderne (1544, pirated), by the celebrated Lyons printer Jean de Tournes, and finally, by Guillaume Rouille and Macé Bonhomme from 1548 onwards.

The team of Rouille and Bonhomme planned an ambitious programme of editions, including not only a French translation, but also versions in Italian and Spanish. At the same time, the total number of Alciato's emblems had increased, integrating the 86 new emblems published in Venice in 1546 and many others. The 1550 Latin edition by Rouille is the first to have 211 emblems (the whole corpus, apart from the so-called obscene emblem *Adversus naturam peccantes*) illustrated, in octavos, with elaborate frames. The evolution of those editions thus reflects the historical improvement of the printing process, which attained an amazing development in Lyon. The city was once the European capital of printing. So, it is not surprising that the Museum and historic Rue Mercière printing district were designated UNESCO World Heritage area in 1998. In order to know more about the process of making the book, Alciato's readers can now visit the didactic Museum, housed in a building erected in the 15th century as a private home and passed through the hands of the city's ruling merchant families.

This route would not be finished without a visit to the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp, also a UNESCO world heritage site. The original residence and workshop of the publishing dynasty enables a unique historical experience. The oldest printing presses in the world can be found there and the institution regularly organizes active guided tours, creative workshops and many other educational experiences. Among his impressive collection of rare books and printing equipment, visitors can see the original plates that Plantin ordered for his first Alciato's *Emblemata* edition, in 1565. It included a revised and accurate version of the Latin commentaries by Sebastian Stockhamer, written at the University of Coimbra (Portugal) around 1552 and firstly printed by Jean de Tournes (Lyon, 1556).

The exemplification here exposed aims at demonstrating that a travelling route with the places where Alciato's *Emblemata* were printed would supply a great opportunity to know – and experience – the history of the printing press in the 16th century with an extraordinary guide. Conceiving a literary place as “a fraction of space in which tourist-readers identify a literary marker” (Baleiro and Quinteiro, 2018: 50), we believe that this route based on the process of making the book could complement the other two here proposed. Besides, it would bring an alternative to the massive tourism usually offered by UNESCO world heritage areas. Even if it does not fit the typical categories of literary places, it could be compared to literary museums, libraries or bookshops tourism landmarks.

And it would be compelling to establish a dynamic interaction with existent resources, promoting more active and participatory visits, usually associated with creative tourism, and a more immersive and self-enriching experience for tourists. Visitors familiarized with Alciato's emblem book would feel able to imitate the model and create their own compositions, thanks to workshops organized by the printing museums, for instance. This practice would offer opportunities for personal creative development, increase engagement by enabling visitors and their hosts to be creative together; and link the creative activities to the destination (Richards, 2018). According to this perspective, the experience of the route would contribute to change tourists' perception of the illustrated books in particular and printing process in general.

4.3. *Route III: Alciato's Emblemata: an interarts journey*

The third option here proposed connects a considerable group of places that display Alciato's motifs on their decorative programme. The emblem book provided inspiration to many painters, sculptors and artisans, from different periods, and it would be possible to link those works in a wide route. Once again, this concept does not match exactly the categories of literary places previously established by Mansfield (2015: 44-45), although the points of this third route somehow correlate to categories based on mediation and promotion (group C). The places here considered are obviously related to Alciato's *Emblemata* and that literary source is fundamental to interpret their meaning.

This route gathers, therefore, research inputs from comparative and interarts studies, history of art, iconography, architecture, political and social history, among others. It really demands an interdisciplinary work, which is one of the essential features of literary tourism, since it implies the conciliation of methodological approaches from different areas, in order to stimulate innovative contributions (Hart, 2011: 16). The route based on the artistic reception of Alciato's *Emblemata* would include, at least, touristic destinations in Europe (Portugal, Spain, France, Switzerland and Scotland) and America (Colombia, see Sebastián 1982), as far as research has shown. There isn't a strict order to follow, so each visitor would customize his own itinerary.

Among the places to be considered in Portugal, it is important to mention the Gardens of the Palace of the Fronteira Marquis, in Lisbon. There is a U-shaped structure, encasing a rectangular pond, that supports an open gallery decorated with a series of marble busts representing the Portuguese Kings, ending with Pedro II (1649-1706). On the top of a high portico, at the very centre of the Gallery, there is a statue of a feminine figure with winged feet and a razor in her hand (Fig. 2). There is a lock of hair on her brow and the back of her hair is bald. The central position of the representation, placed around 1675, indicates that it brings the key to interpret the whole structure. The emblem *In occasionem* teach us that it represents "the moment of seized opportunity that governs all", so that if any person once lets her depart on her winged feet, she may not thereafter be caught by having her hair seized (Fig. 3). Knowing that the base of the Gallery is decorated with *azulejos* depicting equestrian portraits of the founder's Mascarenhas family, it seems that they support the Portuguese Monarchy. In fact, João de Mascarenhas (1633-1681), who commissioned the building, put his life in the service of the Braganza dynasty, during the war of Restoration against Spain (1640-1668). In recognition to his loyalty, the future Pedro II made João de Mascarenhas the first Marquis of Fronteira, in 1670. So, the statue seems to celebrate the good opportunity seized by the nobleman, following the tradition of the family (Moura Sobral, 2008: 109-116).

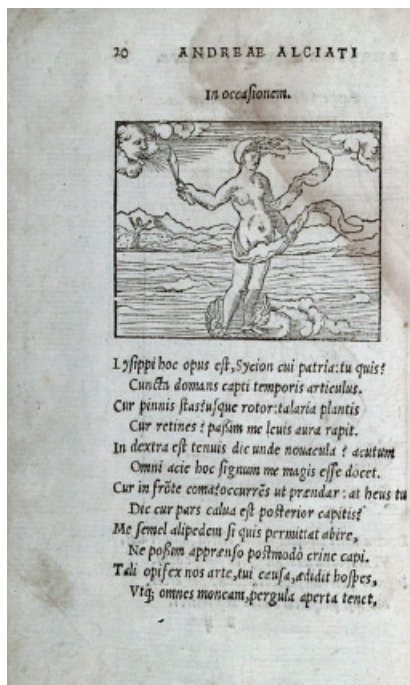
It is also relevant that the description of *Occasio* was not Alciato's invention, since his emblem is based on a free Latin version of the Greek epigram by Posidipus (*Anth. Plan.* 16.275). The wide circulation of Alciato's book in Portugal from the 16th to the 18th centuries reinforces the conclusion that not only writers but also painters and sculptors made use of that source to create their own works (Araújo, 2014). One of the earliest manifestations of applied emblematics in Portuguese arts is probably a medallion now at the Machado de Castro National Museum, in Coimbra (Fig. 4). It has been attributed to the famous sculptor and architect Jean de Rouen (c. 1500-1580), working in Portugal from c. 1528. The piece represents *Occasio* holding a phylactery with the inscription "pera a vida e para a morte" (for life and death), suggesting that men need to know how to seize opportuning during his life and also when facing death. It is said to have come from a house in the historic part of the city, next to the Old Cathedral and not far from the University where Stockhamer wrote his commentaries on Alciato's *Emblemata* in 1552. These two elements provide evidence of the presence of the book in Coimbra and would certainly guide an alternative touristic experience through the city, showing the visitors how pioneering was Renaissance art there. And, once again, it could be combined with visits to other places awarded UNESCO World Heritage in 2013.

Figure 2: Statue of *Occasio* at the Garden of the Fronteira Palace.



Source: Foundation Marquesa e Alorna/Jorge Maio photographer.

Figure 3: Emblem *In occasionem*. Alciato, *Emblemata*, Paris, 1534.



Source: https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/facsimile.php?id=sm53_B2v
 by permission of University of Glasgow, Archives & Special Collections.

Figure 4: Emblematic medallion, attributed to Jean from Rouens, 16th century. Machado de Castro National Museum (Coimbra).



Source: <http://www.matriznet.dgpc.pt/>

The route based on applied motifs copied after Alciato should also include the Church of Saint Peter, in the south of the country. The temple located in the historic city of Elvas (UNESCO World Heritage) was erected in 1227, remodelled probably in the late 16th century and partially rebuilt after the earthquake in 1877. The Mannerist reform added the octave dome that covers the main chapel. It displays an exquisite decoration, having as central point a series of eight embossed white stucco figures on a brick coloured background, among labels and bows (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: Dome in the Church of Saint Peter, late 16th century, Elvas.



Source: photo by the author.

There is no information on the artists involved, neither about the commissioner (Mendonça, 2011). The visitor acquainted with Alciato's *Emblemata* can immediately recognize the printed source of that iconographic programme, whose figures copy the *picturae* of eight emblems. Although the resemblances are evident, it remains unclear which editions were used as reference, regarding the fact that many of them (specially printed in Lyon) used the same plates. Even so, the comparison allows the identification of Geryon, Acteon, Agamemnon, Minotaur, Peace, Happy Ending and Terminus (twice, perhaps copying *picturae* of two different editions). The literary source is essential to propose an interpretation of the message there conveyed, making use of the mythological tradition in the most important space of the catholic church. The presence of applied emblems in this context suggests that they would be easily understood since people would be familiarized with them. So, nowadays visitors need to access the same code to decipher the ideas there represented. It is noteworthy that Death appears twice, besides two negative concepts (Furor and Treachery), opposing four positive ideas (Faith, Peace, Success and Concord). In the end, human life is all about the fight between Good and Evil, in order to choose the right way to reach Eternal life.

In articulation with the eloquent Portuguese examples of how Alciato's emblem book can help contemporary visitors to interpret artistic patrimony, the third route would present many other places across Europe, namely the El Escorial library, founded by Philip II and erected in 1584. Part of a magnificent monastery (UNESCO World Heritage), the library houses a rare collection of manuscripts and printed book, so it could be, by itself, a literary place to visit. It is decorated with frescoes by Tibaldi depicting an iconographic programme that shows allegorical representations of the Liberal Arts and Sciences. Among them, Rhetoric is figured by Hercules the Gaul. His tongue has light chains passing through it, which are attached to men's pierced ears, and by them the hero draws them unresisting along. As far as we know, previous studies have not noticed that it reproduces an image described by Alciato in his emblem *Eloquentia fortitudine praestantior* (1550:194), based on Lucian's essay, *The Gallic Hercules*. Considering the unquestionable popularity of emblems in Spain, Alciato could have been the source for this fresco, although further research on this topic is needed to support our personal interpretation. Anyway, we believe that his emblematic composition would be very useful to help visitors understand the scene.

Scholars have studied the impact of the first emblem book on decorative arts, identifying a significant number of places that could be part of this route. Among them, a special mention is due to Michael Bath (2018), who gathered a noteworthy *corpus*, including, for instance, the presence of Alciato's motifs at the Castle of Dampierre-sur-Boutonne. The former medieval structure was rebuilt in the 16th century, adding a gallery decorated with stone coffers, representing allegorical logo-iconic compositions (c. 1558). Some of them clearly copy Alciato's emblems, keeping the image and the motto (Fig. 6).

Figure 6: Emblem *Virtuti Fortuna comes* at Castle of Dampierre-sur-Boutonne.



Another impressive example pointed by Bath is hosted at the Abbey of St Gall (UNESCO World heritage since 1983). The Cistercian convent located in Magdenau (Switzerland), one of the most important in Europe, is a perfect example of a great Carolingian monastery. Its library is among the richest and oldest in the world and contains precious manuscripts. The dormitory exhibits a series of emblematic compositions – with picture and motto – depicted on the ceiling. The first of them bears the date 1656, but there is no further information available. One of the devices presents the motto *A minimis timendum* with the accompanying image of an eagle and a scarab (Fig. 7).

Figure 7: Emblem *A minimis quoque timendum*. Alciato, *Emblemata*, Lyon, 1556, p. 92.



Source: https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/facsimile.php?id=SM36_f6v
by permission of University of Glasgow, Archives & Special Collections.

The use of emblematic compositions on decorative paintings was also a trendy technique imported to Renaissance Scotland (Bath, 2018). A significant testimony of that practice can be found at the ceiling of the Rossend Castle, in Burntisland (Fife). The ancient building was extended in the late 16th century with a new wing. It was possibly in 1617 that a magnificent painted wooden ceiling was installed in the main hall of the existing tower. Re-discovered under a later plaster cover in 1957, the structure is now preserved in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. The decorative project features a complex arrangement of patterns and symbolic devices, copied from Simeoni, Paradin's *Devises Heroïques*, and Alciato's *Emblemata*, intertwined with grotesque patterns motifs from Hans Vredeman de Vries. Although the *inscriptiones* are absent, it is possible to recognize as model the *picturae* of the emblems *Virtuti fortuna comes* and *In eum qui sibi damnum apparat* (Alciato, 1550: 72).

Considering this brief list of literary places suitable to the literary route based on applied emblematics, it would be possible to create an international itinerary, including many countries in Europe and America (Colombia), taking as departure point the data already available by existent studies. It is also important to highlight that this initial *corpus* offers an impressive variety of buildings (religious

and civil) and techniques (sculptures, stucco, wooden paintings, stone coffers...) from different periods. Guided visits and workshops could be specifically focused on the decorative elements copied from Alciato and their semantic contribution to the iconographic programme, discussing hypothesis and suggesting readings. This interactive experience would enable to compare emotional responses and cognitive attitudes towards the selected literary places before and after the pedagogical experience, analyzing the eventual self-transformation caused by the apprehension of knowledge stimulated by the encounter with cultural heritage (Herbert, 2001).

The routes here proposed allow, thus, different types of experiences for families, groups or individuals, including guided visits to places where Alciato lived and worked, workshops in printing museums, thematic walks, reading sessions, creative activities... The participants would be invited to reflect on cultural traditions and productions in comparison with each other, not merely in a nation-based approach. Many different connections between literary points related to Alciato's *Emblemata* can be drawn, according to thematic, artistic, geographical or functional criteria. So, in a certain way, each tourist could build his own itinerary and enjoy a customized experienced taking as reference the suggested route.

5. Conclusions

Following decades of relative neglect, academic research seems to have rediscovered emblem studies in the recent years and this study suggests a new way to approach emblems and their cultural value.

In response to the main question, this research plan demonstrates the potential of Alciato's *Emblemata* by proposing three different touristic options. It is obviously a first step to develop further research on this topic, which would be fundamental to draw a sustainable project in the future. This approach is innovative because: 1) promotes an international network focused on European heritage and culture; 2) applies an interdisciplinary method, combining comparative studies, interartes studies, digital humanities and tourism techniques; 3) explores a new perspective on emblem studies, testing the impact of emblems to improve heritage interpretation and cultural literacy.

Being aware that literary tourism is not limited to travelling in search of authors or books widely popular – on the contrary, it also creates opportunities to discover lesser-known texts and writers – this proposal addresses those who want to travel within the universe of European literature, arts and culture from the Antiquity to the 18th centuries. Exploring the interactive process of reading and travelling, the routes here outlined would reframe the concept of emblematic places, opening an alternative way to show how literary tourism can interact with culture and heritage.

Accompanying the increase of cultural tourism market in recent years, this proposal stimulates the development of niche tourism, as a differentiated cultural tourist product able to divert tourists from the sites that are overcrowded or enable a different way to visit World heritage patrimony (UNWTO, 2018). This model attracts growing number of visitors to a variety of destinations and facilitates sustainable practices (Novelli and Benson, 2015: 248). Although many of the literary places here considered have a UNESCO classification, our research presents a less conventional perspective that provides opportunities for alternative itineraries, which could be developed into different and more enriching experiences, consistent with social and community values (Lanfant and Graburn, 2016). Massification of traditional tourism brought dissatisfaction and the pandemic circumstances will certainly foster niche tourism, demanding differentiated products for smaller groups. The experience post-Covid 19 pandemic has demonstrated that “alternative tourism not only contributes to the growth of tourism in both popular and remote destinations but also makes sure that destinations get their fair share in income distribution of the country” (Ifiazoglu and Can, 2021).

Finally, it is relevant to highlight that the alternative option here presented not only explores the “natural partnership” between tourism and culture over the years, but could also stimulate connections with the authentic experiences provided by the destinations. This is a relevant detail, taking the future sustainability of the emblematic routes into consideration, being aware that “the authority of high cultural institutions will be eroded as tourists increasingly seek authenticity in the culture of everyday life and the ‘local’” (Richards 2020). It is obviously that the alternative routes here proposed – as alternative tourism in general – require a wider range of indicators of success, not focused on economic criteria and competitiveness. Including factors such as community and environmental well-being should be considered, in order to evaluate their real impact using an appropriate method (Butler, 2022).

It is important to mention that the routes initially drawn could be altered to incorporate new places as the research is carried out. The scientific results of this project would be at the disposal of potential

partners and stimulate similar initiatives based on many other emblem books. So, it would contribute to the transfer of knowledge, literary education, and appreciation of heritage, by engaging people with local communities and European culture. Consequently, it would enhance community participation and alert official identities for the recovery of built heritage. Responding to that challenging call, this paper claims that emblems can contribute to approach literary tourism differently and inspire alternative routes. Our proposal is however based on a conceptual exploration and further research is required to test the ideas here presented in more detail. Even so, the reply to the initial question has already been given. Emblem books can inspire new proposals for literary tourism by driving the visitors through many alternative, differentiated tours literally taken *ex libris* (from books).

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