

Visions of the Invisible: Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth- Century Emblems in Norway

BY

HENRIK VON ACHEN

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Skulle da icke vi ocsaa haffve lyst til at see Gud/ oc sætte os hannem for
Øyen; der som end icke siunlig/ som de da efter hans Ord oc som i et Speyel?

Edvard Edvardsen, *Guds Bolig hos Menniskene*, 1668.¹

The earliest example of an emblem in a Norwegian context may be the frontispiece of *Superintendent* (bishop) Jens Nielssøn's (1538-1600) *Idyllion*, published in 1586 by the young printer to the university in Rostock, Stephan Möllmann.² It was not a Norwegian emblem—none of the emblems found in Norway seem to be—or even an emblem in Norway; but simply an emblem with a Norwegian context. Above the picture itself the initials of the author appear, 'I. N. A.', that is, Iens Nielssøn Asloensis, and below, in Roman numerals, the previous year, 1585: 'MDLXXXV'. The inscription reads 'Omnis spes in virtute locanda' ('All hope should be put in virtue'), while the picture shows a flaming human heart squeezed in a press, followed by the subscription 'Hostilis mundi subigit pressure pium COR, quod micat et summi flagrat amore DEI' ('The pressure of the hostile world squeezes the pious heart

¹ Referring to the Gospel of John 12: 20-21: 'Should not we, too, want to see God, and put Him before our eyes, even though He is invisible, according to his word doing so like in a mirror?': Edvard Edvardsen, *Guds bolig hos Menniskene. En liden Tractat/ om at et Menniske/ kand hafve GUD hos sig i sit Hierte* (Copenhagen: Nils Andersson Klimb, 1668), p. 229. The topic of the book had occupied Edvardsen since 1654, and the text itself was based upon his sermons delivered between 1661 and 1663 in a church in Bergen. His preface is dated 7th July 1663.

² See Egil Kraggerud, ed., *Johannes Nicolai. Biskop Jens Nielssøns latinske skrifter* (Oslo: Universitetsforl., 2004), pp. 242ff. I am grateful to Dr Henning Laugerud for making me aware of this emblem.

which trembles and burns with love for God, the Highest'). In the text itself, Nielssøn explains the picture: 'Do you see how a device by a great and heavy weight squeezes the kindled heart which burns with lively flames? It signifies all the trials and tribulations in life, exerting a pressure under which the heart withers away and life escapes. However, the pious heart can also be the splendid palace of virtues and the beloved dwelling of God.'³ The inscription of the emblem tells the reader, or spectator, that virtue alone can help the devout. This way of rendering the heart squeezed by its emotions had been introduced a hundred years earlier as a secular symbol of love in a woodcut by Master Casper von Regensburg.⁴ The author might have selected it from a stock of emblems provided by the publisher. Thus, in 1585, this emblem, introducing the most prominent of the Oslo humanists, articulated themes which would appear in most of the emblems found in Norway in the following century: the tension between the Kingdom of God and the world—a basic Christian dichotomy eagerly elaborated in Baroque piety with its love for contrasts—and the role of the human heart caught between them.

Mostly, emblems in Norway appear as applied emblematics, copied from edifying books, often Catholic devotional literature, and painted on the parapet of galleries and on pulpits, found in epitaphs and altarpieces, as glass paintings in church windows, and on cast iron stoves in secular spaces (Fig. 1).

Perhaps the oldest such applied emblem in Norway was painted on glass to be inserted into a window at Gimmeland in Fana outside Bergen. It was donated in 1613 by a Jørgen Nielssøn.⁵ The emblem consists of a dove (or falcon?) on a tree stump, under the inscription 'In silencio et spe' ('In silence and hope'). The text is a quotation from Isaiah 30: 15, which was already popular among Lutherans in the sixteenth century, Luther himself having chosen it as an inscription above his wife's portal in the Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg. This particular inscription is found in Emblem 61 of Gabriel Rollenhagen's *Nucleus emblematum centuria*, published in Arnheim in

³ Kraggerud, *Johannes Nicolai*, pp. 248 and 250: 'Cernis ut incensum flammisque sequacibus ardens/ Cor onerosa graui machina mole premat?! Symbolon hoc vitae causas ortusque obitusque/ signat et instabili conditione vices [...] denique mortis onus rigidae, quo pressa fatiscit/ vis cordis labens et cito vita fugit [...] Cor etenim [...] splendida rursus idem virtutum est aula Deique/ mansion grata pij cor...'

⁴ *Frau Venus und der Verliebte*, hand-coloured woodcut, single broadsheet, 25.7 x 36.5 cm, Master Casper, Regensburg, ca. 1485. Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, cat. no. 467-1908.

⁵ Like other such paintings with an apparently secular provenance, it might originally have adorned some church window. It is now in Bergen Museum.

1611, which indicates how the devout Christian silently awaits his reward, though the emblem expresses this with an image of a monk.⁶ The actual model for our emblem was most likely another late sixteenth-century graphic sheet. The painted emblem has no subscription, but the message conveyed is clear: in this earthly existence all strength comes from the Lord, all life too; He alone can resurrect man and create new life, as indicated by the stump. Hence, in trials and tribulations, the devout Christian must remain silent, hoping that life will be given to him by the Lord.



Fig. 1: Anton Wierix: Engraving no. 8 from the series *Cor Iesv Amanti Sacrvm*, Antwerp 1585-86: Jesus kindles the human heart with flames of love. Model for the painters in both Stavanger and in Tingvoll (Glasgow University Library). Enlarged.

⁶ Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1967), col. 1336. Compare also emblem 48 in *New Poetisch Hoffnungs-Gärtlein* (Tübingen: Gregorio Kerner, 1653), with the inscription 'In spe et silentio fortitudo nostra', the picture showing a woman on whose lips a lock has been placed.

The emblems visualized invisible phenomena and concepts, particularly belonging to the spiritual world, describing and explaining it by putting God before the eyes of the congregation, like in a mirror, as described by the introductory quotation from the con-rector of the Latin school in Bergen.

Though emblems in Norway were rather few and not very sophisticated, the somewhat primitive applied emblematics in the Norwegian context are by no means uninteresting, as they form a factual basis of reflection on some aspects of early modern Lutheran devotion and edification.

WORD AND PICTURE

Even the quite lenient orthodox Lutheran brand of the Reformation was rather sceptical about pictures, tainted as they were by Papist abuse. As *adiaphora*, basically neutral, their value depending on their use, pictures might serve the purpose of visualizing the life of Christ, or setting good examples of faith before the eyes of the congregation; equally, they could be abused when instigating various forms of idolatry. By and large, pictures were immensely less important than the Word, the source of all Protestant theology and instruction being Holy Scripture alone, or, as the term had it, *sola Scriptura*. In the 1560s the dominant position of the word, the book, the text, the sermon, everything, in fact, heard rather than seen, was emphasized by a change of attitude into a more Calvinistic position, and hence more hostile to pictures. As the dual-monarchy of Denmark-Norway officially remained Lutheran, this line of thought has been called ‘crypto-Calvinism’, playing an important role in the Lutheran church from the 1560s to the end of the sixteenth century before being superseded by ‘Lutheran orthodoxy’. The more radical rejection of pictures became manifest in Bergen from around 1570, when a diocesan synod in 1589 recommended that altarpieces in the Diocese of Bergen, which actually covered most of western Norway, should not contain pictures, but instead ‘wonderful passages from Holy Scripture’.⁷ Immediately, the recommendations of the synod were carried out in practice, to which a number of what we call ‘catechism-altars’ in western Norwegian churches testify, all dated to

⁷ Olav Hagesæther, ‘Et blad av Bergens reformasjonshistorie’, in *Bjørgvin bispestol. Byen og bispedømmet*, ed. Per Juvkam (Bergen, Oslo, and Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1970), pp. 219-227. The actual provision or recommendation concerning the texts to be rendered on the altarpieces appeared in article 17 of the *Synodalia statuta proposita Bergis Anno 1589*, Bergen historiske forenings skrifter, nos. 57-58, part 2 (Bergen, 1952), pp. 210-219, art. 17 on p. 217.

the early 1590s and all displaying texts in Danish, visualizing the principle of *sola Scriptura*.⁸

When presenting emblems in Norway, our primary focus will be on the applied emblematics found in churches, since emblems in books are rather unusual; yet it should not be forgotten that we find a considerable number of 'textual emblems' existing in metaphors and a pictorial language describing spiritual things by comparisons and vivid imagery. If we consider, for example, the metaphor from the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, 'You have wounded our heart with arrows of love', it provides the artist with everything needed to make an emblem, as it did, indeed, for Anton Wierix in the *Cor Iesv amanti sacrvm*, no. 3, or the emblem book *Amoris divini et humani antipathia*, published in Antwerp in 1629, in emblems I. 7, 'Competentia amoris' or II. 20, 'Vulnus amoris'. In 1677 Bishop Niels Randulff in Bergen made use of the metaphor in a funeral sermon, the arrows now signifying the Word of the Lord bringing their target to conversion.⁹ The very fact that emblems occurred as combinations of texts and pictures on the one hand made devotional literature an apt source of religious imagery, while, on the other hand, such textual images appeared as verbal editions of emblems already seen. The representation of Jesus knocking at the door of the heart, *Jesus Cordis Pulsator*, as we shall find it in Stavanger and Forr—the Forr subscription even admonishing the soul to stand up from its sleep—thus had its textual parallel in Edvardsen: 'As soon as I sense your knocking at the door of my heart, or when you touch it, immediately, I am awake for you'.¹⁰ The genre of emblems benefited immensely from this relationship between the textual and the visual, which created a familiarity with religious imagery describing spiritual life.

During the sixteenth century the emblem itself emerged as a combination of text and picture which aimed at conveying a spiritual or intellectual message in an indirect, metaphorical, or artificial way. Originally, emblems were meant to convey a spiritual truth to the

⁸ On the catechism-altars, see Ragne Bugge, 'Ikonoklasmen i Norge og de norske katekisme altertavlene', in *Tro og bilde*, ed. M. Blindheim, E. Hohler and L. Lillie (Oslo: Universitets Oldsaksamling, 1991), pp. 85-91; and the recent, very thorough book by Dietrich Diederichs-Gottschalk, *Die protestantischen Schriftaltäre des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts in Nordwestdeutschland* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2005).

⁹ St. Augustine, *Confessiones*, IX. 2, 3: 'Sagittaveras tu cor nostrum caritate tua'; see M. Skutella, ed., *S. Avreli Avgvstini Confessionvm Libri XIII* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1969), p. 181. The motif is found in the work of Master Casper as well: see note 4. On Randulff, see Olav Hagesæther, *Norsk preken fra Reformasjonen til omlag 1820* (Oslo, Bergen & Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1973), p. 129.

¹⁰ Edvardsen, *Guds bolig hos Menniskene*, p. 177: 'Aldrig fornemmer jeg saa snart at du picker paa mit Hiertis Dør/ eller rører ved den/ at jo jeg er strax vaagen til dig'.

learned, their pictures not immediately disclosing their spiritual content, but doing so indirectly, requiring learning and a sharp mind to penetrate the veil and reveal the meaning. Hence, it was a mark of quality that such emblems were ingeniously constructed and therefore a challenge to understand. The classic emblem had three components: the title, or *inscriptio*, offering the main theme; the image, or *pictura*, rendering this analogically or metaphorically; and finally, the explanation, or *subscriptio*, elucidating how this picture might illustrate the overall theme.¹¹ Often emblems were presented to the public in emblem books and books with emblematic illustrations; such books, then, provided applied emblematics with models. Again, words and pictures merged, and thus it was only natural that Otto van Veen in 1615 should address his preface to *Amoris divini emblemata* ‘ad lectorem et spectatorem’. While the *subscriptio* might normally explain the *pictura*, the emblematic motif on a seventeenth-century four-poster-bed headboard demonstrates how the subscription only makes sense if interpreted by the picture: ‘O human, if you are a tree in the woods, fear, if a tree in the plains, flee, if in the garden, rejoice’. The picture shows a tree and a hand coming out from the sky, grasping an axe (Fig. 2). Immediately, it recalls Matthew 3: 10, (‘even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees’), thus offering the key to understanding the rather cryptic text.¹²

In time, various more-or-less complete emblems occurred, pictures with only a title, or an explanatory text, or, indeed, without texts at all. The popular emblems actually used in churches were generally quite simple and easy to understand, more like offering a didactic device than presenting an intellectual challenge. As the catechetical function of pictures demanded an explanatory text, the primacy of the Word, already a

¹¹ Sometimes Greek terminology is used: *lemma*, *icon* and *epigramme*. There is a considerable body of publications on emblems. Here, we shall mention only a few of the more recent ones: Bernhard F. Scholz, *Emblem und Emblempoetik*, Wuppertaler Schriften 3 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2002); Carsten-Peter Warncke, *Symbol, Emblem, Allegorie. Die zweite Sprache der Bilder* (Cologne: Deubner, 2005). For a fairly recent account of the cultural context of the emblems in the Netherlands, see the *Festschrift* for Karel Portemann, ed. Marc van Vaeck, H. Brems and G. H. M. Claassens, *De Steen van Alciato. Literatuur en visuele cultuur in de Nederlanden* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003). Of particular relevance to heart emblems is the topic of love, religious and secular; concerning this, see Anne Buschhoff, *Die Liebesemblemantik des Otto van Veen. Die amorum emblemata (1608) und die Amoris divini emblemata (1615)* (Bremen: H. M. Hauschild, 2004).

¹² The oak bed, now in the Bergen Museum, should be dated to around 1660. The emblems were originally polychrome with golden letters. The Latin subscription flanking the picture reads ‘Arbores, o homo, si sylvana time, si campestris fuge, si hortensis gaude’. I am grateful to PhD-student Sigbjørn Sønnestyn for helping with the translation. The iconographical programme of the bed concerns Creation and Original Sin. On the female side, above the Birth of Eve, we find an arm from heaven with a skull expounded by the text in Norwegian ‘I am adorned by nothing but God’s honour and virtue’.



Fig. 2: Headboard of a four-poster bed in oak, ca. 1660, 61 x 126 cm. It may have been imported from the Netherlands or from Northern Germany; the emblems, however, probably carved in Norway. Between Christ in the middle and Moses and Aaron, two emblems or emblem-like motifs are inserted above representations of creation of man and woman (Gen 2: 7ff.). Bergen Museum, without inv. no. (Photo: Svein Skare, Bergen Museum).

Lutheran given, meant that the emblem proved popular, since the textual element was already a constitutive part of the genre. In 1617 the subtitle of a German emblem book, *Emblemata nova*, described the nature and purpose of its devices, which were representative of most religious emblems: the book, the title says, is a 'picture book, in which our contemporary world and its essence is painted disguisedly and explained by matching rhymes, exhorting the pious to more devotion and virtue, the evil and reckless to acknowledge the true teachings [of Christianity], and as a warning for them'.¹³ Compared to the classic emblem, it might be argued that many of the images found in applied emblematics are not emblems in the strictest sense of the word; however, we will include such imagery in the present overview.

LUTHERAN DEVOTION

Emblems in Norwegian churches aimed at edifying an average congregation through pictures and texts which were easy to understand, and described spiritual matters, especially the very process of conversion. While dogmatic topics were not presented to the congregations explicitly, of course, devotional themes implied certain basic theological notions. Thus, the Catholic *Cor Iesv* or *Pia Desideria* series of emblems implicitly described the classic *ordo salutis*, as it was defined in the Augsburg Confession of 1530: contrition, faith and a new way of life.¹⁴

This process formed a significant theme in applied emblematics and their articulation of Lutheran piety. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, a certain reaction to dogmatic interests, expressed in the controversial theology of the previous era, seemed to set in. On both sides of the denominational border a devotional piety emerged, literally moving the interest from the head to the heart, promoting a religious heart symbolism and laying the foundation for the heart emblems of the first half of the seventeenth century. The devotional piety of a Lutheran

¹³ Andreas Friedrich, *Emblemata nova; das ist New Bilderbuch: Darinnen durch sonderliche Figuren der jetzigen Welt Lauff vnd Wesen verdeckter Weise abgemahlet/ vnd mit zugehörigen Reymen erkläret wirt: Den ehrliebenden vnd Frommen zu mehrer Anreizung der Gottseeligkeit vnd Tugend: Den Bösen aber vnd Ruchlosen zu trewer Lehr vnd Warnung* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Apud Iacobum de Zetter, 1644). First edition published in 1617.

¹⁴ *Confessio Augustana*, art. XII: 'Constat autem poenitentia proprie his duabus partibus. Altera est contritio seu terrores incussi conscientiae agnito peccato; altera est fides, quae concipitur ex evangelio seu absolutionis et credit propter Christum remitti peccata et consolatur conscientiam et ex terroribus liberat. Deinde sequi debent bona opera, quae sunt fructus poenitentiae.' The third element, a new way of life, was more like a consequence of the former two proper elements, good works or the fruits of penance, in other Lutheran texts called 'nova oboedientia', a new obedience (to the commandments of God).

like Johann Arndt, articulated in his volumes on *True Christianity* from 1606 onwards, presented a spirituality not far from that of St. Francis of Sales and his introduction to devout life published in 1608.¹⁵ The initial phase of the process of conversion, or of salvation as it were, should be contrition, realizing one's sinfulness and repenting of it. Thus, a contrite heart was the prerequisite for embarking on the road to conversion, the necessary awareness being reached through introspection. Hence, the heart, opened to reveal its contents, was an apt way of illustrating the introspective view, visualizing what was hidden to the natural eye.



Fig. 3: Part of the gallery parapet from Stavanger cathedral, ca. 1660, 123 x 125 cm. *Jesus Cordis Inflammator* and *Jesus Cordis Habitator*. Now in Stavanger Museum, inv.no. ST-K.02976 (Photo: Terje Tveit/ Stavanger Museum).

¹⁵ Johann Arndt (1555-1621), *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum* (Brunswick: Duncker, 1606). He died *superintendent* in Celle, Northern Germany. For Francis of Sales (1567-1622), Bishop of Geneva, see *Introduction à la vie devote* (Lyons: n. p., 1608).

As centre of the person, the very seat of emotions, the human heart emerged as simply the religious organ of man, and as a theatre where the drama of Christian life was performed, the outcome being either perdition or salvation (Fig. 3). The point of a number of emblematic sequences was to provide edification by revealing the spiritual process in a Christian heart as a pilgrimage to heaven through the vicissitudes of earthly existence. Well-known metaphors, translated directly into pictures, served the purpose of educating, indeed edifying the average congregation by visualizing the invisible and making the spiritual concrete and tangible. Supported by texts in the native language, pictures ‘spoke’ more easily than mere texts: as Durandus had already stated— and the ensuing Late Middle Ages so abundantly proved— pictures were better than texts in raising emotions, placing before our eyes what had otherwise to be remembered from reading. Thus a representation of the process of conversion truly became an instrument ‘by which your heart is shown to your heart’, or, summing up the didactic advantage of such emblems, talking to the Christian and showing him ‘what no ear had heard and no eye seen’, to quote the text from the initial illustration in *Amoris divini emblemata*.¹⁶ Therefore, a French Jesuit, Father Vincent Huby, argued in 1682, pictures of hearts were most effective catechetical tools, as they really were capable of showing people ‘l’état intérieur de l’homme’.¹⁷ This purpose was far better served by quite uncomplicated emblems using simple heart metaphors than by intellectual challenges demanding extensive erudition. The number of intellectuals was small—a limited circle of vicars and schoolmasters—and so was the number of books by Norwegian authors, let alone those printed in Norway. Some, perhaps not a few, members of an average congregation could read, and subscriptions in simple, rhyming Danish couplets were infinitely more readable than the Latin tercets of *Cor Iesv amanti sacrum*. Depicting the inner condition, the *homo interior*, as an introspective tool, rather straightforward and undemanding heart emblems followed closely the development towards conversion and a virtuous life according to the Will of God (Fig. 4). This was the very purpose of a Christian life, as

¹⁶ Durandus, p. 36: ‘Pictura namque plus uidetur mouere animum quam scriptura. Per picturam quidem res gesta ante oculos ponitur quasi in presenti generi uideatur, sed per scripturam res gesta quasi per auditum, qui minus animum mouet, ad memoriam reuocatur’. The quotation ‘In quo de corde tuo ad cor tuum loquitur’ is from the preface of Benedict van Haefien, *Schola cordis* (Antwerp: Verdussen, 1629). *Amor divini emblemata*, p. 9: surrounded by clouds and beams in the sky, a halo in which these words appear: ‘oculus non uidit, nec auris audivit’.

¹⁷ See Anne Sauvy, *Le miroir du cœur. Quatre siècles d’images savantes et populaires* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1989), p. 158.



Fig. 4: Part of the gallery from Ranes church, 1708, mirrored copies of emblems in *Pia Desideria*, cf. Fig. 6, 109 x 195 cm. Now in Vitenskapsmuseet, NTNU, Trondheim inv.no. T-522 (Photo: Per Fredriksen, NTNU, VM).

Arndt wrote in the first book of *True Christianity*, it was the conversion of the heart from the world and to God, the ‘change of heart’ on which salvation itself depended, a change which the applied emblematics of that age helped to instigate, explain, describe, accompany, and support.¹⁸

MODELS FOR APPLIED EMBLEMATICS

If the bulk of the rather few emblems found in Norway appears in the form of applied emblematics, one must ask how the painter and printer got hold of his models? Some such emblems might have been accessible to the workshops in series of single sheets; in 1634, a regular ‘koopman van prenten’ was active in Antwerp, and, as in Denmark, Dutch sellers may have travelled to Norway to sell engravings.¹⁹ In other circumstances the models were provided by emblem books, other illustrated books, or simply bound collections of engravings.

Even if few books were actually published in Norway, or by Norwegian authors in cities such as Copenhagen or Rostock, it was possible to obtain mainly unbound books from visiting booksellers. A more established trade in books was probably introduced when a German bookseller, Friedrich Richter, was granted a royal license to establish a public bookshop in Bergen in 1622, a city which, until well into the nineteenth century, was by far the biggest and most important in Norway. During the seventeenth century, connections between Amsterdam and Bergen were easy and frequent, a period when almost one thousand Norwegians lived in and around the Dutch capital. The grant for Richter specified that he was allowed to sell books ‘in all languages’. Three years later, Jens Lauritssøn Wolff obtained a similar grant allowing him to open a bookshop with ‘several necessary, inoffensive Augsburgian theological and philosophical matters in all languages’.²⁰ For a long time illustrations had to be copied from foreign books: the earliest illustrated book printed in Norway was Niels

¹⁸ Arndt, *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum*, Book I, ch. 7.

¹⁹ E. Duverger, ‘Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de artistieke betrekkingen tussen Antwerpen en de noorderlijke Nederlanden tussen 1632 en 1648’, in *Festschrift. Miscellanea Jozef Duverger* (Ghent: Vereniging voor de Geschiedenis der Textielkunsten, 1968), pp. 352 and 354; and Karel Porteman, ‘Nieuwe gegevens over de drukgeschiedenis, de bronnen en de auteur van de embleembundel *Amoris Divini et Humani Antipathia*’, *Ons Erf*, 49 (1975), 193-213. See also Hugo Johannsen: ‘Graphic Art of Hendrick Goltzius as Prototype for Danish Art during the Reign of Christian IV’, in *Art in Denmark 1600-1650*, Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek, vol. 2 (Delft: Delftsche Uitgevers, 1984), pp. 85-110.

²⁰ Anton M. Wiesener, *Bidrag til bokhandelens historie i Bergen* (Bergen: Eget, 1919), pp. 10ff.

Thomesøn's *Cestus Sapphicus*, published in Christiania in 1661. It was illustrated with rebus pictures, however, not emblems.²¹

The grant of permission for Wolff in 1625 explicitly demanded that the books offered for sale should be in line with official Lutheranism; one did not want Papist teachings or other heresies introduced to people through questionable books of various kinds. This hampered the import of illustrated Catholic devotional books. Such books, however, could probably quite easily be purchased in Amsterdam. Books of more sound Lutheran doctrine might also be illustrated, thus making their emblems directly accessible to their audience. Interestingly, in 1695 the estate of Abigael Lem, widow of a customs officer in Bergen, contained a large number of named books in Danish, Dutch, and German.

The larger part of seventeenth-century religious art in Norway was produced by painters copying German, Dutch or Flemish graphic sheets, and such models were also used when it came to adorn parapets or windows with emblematic motifs.²² In 1739, the estate of the Norwegian artist Magnus Berg comprised more than a thousand copper engravings and a considerable number of books, among which were found Joachim Camerarius' *Vier Hundert Wahl-Sprüche Vnd Sinnen-Bilder* in a German edition (Mainz, 1671), and the second illustrated edition of Johann Arndt's book on *True Christianity* (Riga, 1681).²³ As we shall see, such engraved models and illustrated books were definitely accessible, and actually used by painters decorating Norwegian churches with emblems. Even if somewhat isolated, Norwegians did have contact with motifs and ideas from the continent.²⁴ The extensive use of engraved models from the Netherlands actually seems to characterize Norwegian church art; if this is the case, it obviously reflects the intensive trade connections with that area during the seventeenth century, particularly concerning western

²¹ Actually, motifs from a collection of such rebuses, translated into Danish and published in Copenhagen in 1710, were copied onto the walls of Nore church: see Sigrd Christie, *Den lutherske ikonografi i Norge inntil 1800*, 2 vols. (Oslo: Land og kirke, 1973), p. 239.

²² See in general Christie, *Den lutherske ikonografi i Norge inntil 1800*.

²³ Åshild Paulsen, *Magnus Berg (1666-1739). En kunstner ved kongens hoff* (Oslo: Dreyer, 1989), p. 217ff. and pp. 227-236. The first edition encompassing all of Joachim Camerarius the Younger's (1534-1598) emblems was published in Nuremberg in 1605; later editions appeared in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1654 and in Mainz in 1677. The copy in the estate must have been from either 1654 or 1677. The first illustrated Arndt edition of *True Christianity* was published in Riga as late as 1679. It must be remembered that Berg spent his life at the royal court in Copenhagen.

²⁴ Maren-Sofie Røstvig, 'Motiver på vandring. Renaissance-emblemene i Bø gamle kirke', *Foreningen til norske fortidsminnesmerkers bevaring, årbok 1953* (Oslo, 1953), 85-110.

Norway.²⁵ Religious motifs were by no means confined to church interiors: Christopher Ridder (1630?-1695), the leading sculptor in eastern Norway in the later part of the seventeenth century, used both Wierix and Bolswert engravings as models for his cast-iron stove plates. Johan Kontrafejer may be responsible for the Tausan epitaph in Tingvoll; if so, he must have had some engraved emblems in his possession.

Accordingly, emblems in Norway appear as applied emblematics in churches, first and foremost meant for the congregations, and hence rather straightforward and uncomplicated. By and large the procedure was to substitute Latin subscriptions with texts in the native language, which was, in effect, Danish. A few emblems seem to be personal statements, meant for more erudite spectators. The models were provided by mainly Dutch, Flemish, and German copper engravings, and the emblems themselves functioned as devotional instruments, assisting or creating a pious awareness of the necessity of conversion, a true change of heart, so it was no longer a 'den of thieves', but 'a temple of the Lord' (cf. Matthew 21: 13), and '[t]he dwelling of God among men', to quote Edvardsen.²⁶

Having introduced the Norwegian situation, we now focus on the actual monuments still extant. There are larger emblematic sequences in, or from, seven churches in all four seventeenth-century Norwegian dioceses. In addition, we have some isolated seventeenth-century glass paintings that copy various emblems; a few more emblems appear in books or on secular furniture; and a larger number are found on room heaters such as cast-iron box stoves. Though scarce, these occurrences testify to the fact that emblems, often with a moral or religious meaning, were not totally unknown on objects and furniture belonging to the higher strata of Norwegian society.

EMBLEMATIC SEQUENCES AND PROGRAMMES

As stated above, seven churches that we know of were decorated with several emblems. Due to a thematic relationship between the individual motifs, they may actually be conceived as programmes. Two of these sequences consist of glass paintings, and it stands to reason that several more may originally have decorated Norwegian church windows. By their very nature, such glass paintings were fragile, constantly

²⁵ As compared with, for example, Sweden; see Mereth Lindgren, *Att lära och att pryda. Om efterreformatöriska kyrkmålningar i Sverige cirka 1530-1630* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1983), p. 225.

²⁶ Edvardsen, *Guds bolig hos Menniskene*, in his title.

threatened by the rough, stormy climate of western Norway. Other emblematic programmes on church furniture may have been lost as well.

The change of heart

Serving as a model for an emblematic programme rendering the process of conversion, the series of copper engravings entitled *Cor Iesv amanti sacrum*, executed by Anton Wierix in Antwerp in 1585-1586, was copied in at least three Norwegian churches: Stavanger, Norddal and Forr. In addition, illustrating the same topic, the sequence on the Ranegallery was copied from Hermann Hugo's *Pia Desideria* first published in Antwerp in 1624. As the iconography of the altarpiece was usually rather fixed, galleries, windows, and epitaphs offered themselves to a more varied pious imagery.

The original series by Wierix became widespread when used in some Jesuit devotional books and copied again and again in both Catholic and Protestant contexts.²⁷ Clearly, such books, or at least some of the engravings, were copied in Norway. While the original had no inscriptions, its subscriptions being Latin tercets, the Norwegian copies have their subscriptions in Danish, and in the case of Stavanger, with Latin inscriptions.

In the years around 1660, the parapet of the gallery in the cathedral of Stavanger was decorated with motifs copied from the *Cor Iesv* series (Figs. 1 and 3). From the gallery in Stavanger three fragments containing six motifs are now preserved in Stavanger Museum: *Jesus Cordis Pulsator*, and Jesus as *Perlustrator*, *Expiator*, *Inflammator*, *Modulator*, and *Habitator*. Each motif appears as an emblem: a Latin inscription above an image, and below a Danish couplet as subscription. The representation of Jesus living in the 'house' of the human heart seems to be a local variation, not found in the original series. Below the *inscriptio*, 'Jesus Cordis Habitator' ('Jesus, Inhabitant of the heart'), the *pictura* shows the familiar metaphor of the 'house' of the heart. Directly translated into a picture, it is found in the Late Middle Ages and, obviously more closely related to our example, in one of the contemporary subscriptions from Norddal church. In the subscription, Jesus comments on the spiritual meaning of the picture: 'I Hiertit vill

²⁷ The entire series is depicted in Marie Mauquoy-Hendrickx, *Les estampes des Wierix. Catalogue raisonné*, 3 vols. (Brussels: Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er, 1978-1983), vol. 1, nos. 429-446. Relatively late examples are the pictures by Heinrich Irnsinger illustrating Christian Hoberg's *Lebendige Hertzestheologie*, published posthumously in Leipzig and Frankfurt-am-Main in 1691.

Jeg bygg' oc boe/ Oc trøste dig I all U-roe' ('I will dwell [*verbatim*: build and live] in the heart, and comfort you in every distress').

In Norddal church in Sunnmøre, north of Bergen, in the then Diocese of Bergen, copies of the Wierix series were placed in at least five of the windows, four of which are still extant, now preserved in Bergen Museum. Some of them are dated 1663, and the donors' names are identifiable, including a local vicar. The glass painter in Bergen chose to render the motifs *en grisaille* with silver-yellow framing, a feature frequently found in the emblems painted on glass and not illogical if copied from an engraving. In Norddal the motifs were Jesus illuminating the heart, educating it, feeding it, teaching it to sing, and, finally, crowning it.²⁸ As in Stavanger, the programme in Norddal encompasses a motif not found in the original *Cor Iesv* series, namely Christ feeding the heart (Fig. 5). Sitting in a chair, He offers bread and wine, an act repeated by the angels. However, this need not be a local invention since a very similar variant appeared in Hoburg's *Lebendige Hertzens-Theologie* of 1691, suggesting a pre-1663 model for this particular deviation.²⁹ The subscription draws a distinction between body and soul (that is, heart), a typical Baroque contrast: 'Vell maa det Jordisch brød, mit legem meget stÿrche,/ Men Jesus hiertet mit, bespis oc lesch dets tÿrche' ('Sure, earthly bread may greatly strengthen my body; but Jesus, feed my heart and quench its thirst'). In feeding the heart, the emblem expresses the notion of the heart as the true spiritual organ, the seat of religious emotions. As science had relegated the heart to a mere physical function, its role as the spiritual and religious organ *par excellence* was underlined, and therefore, the human heart retained its position in pious imagery. In addition, the motif alludes to the old Lutheran service, which, despite the prominent role of the Word, at that time was still conceived of as a communion service. Hence, it was only natural that the communion elements should be presented as spiritual nourishment, in contrast to ordinary food for the body.

A sequence of Wierix copies was painted on the gallery parapet in Førr church, Nord-Trøndelag in the Diocese of Trondheim. It is now preserved in the Vitenskapsmuseet in Trondheim. It must date from the first decades of the eighteenth century. At this point in time Pietism dominated religious life in the double-monarchy, influencing Danish-Norwegian Lutheranism. Naturally, the figure of the heart was very

²⁸ On the Norddal windows, see Henrik von Achen, 'Det indvortis menniske. Barokkens hjertesymbolikk i glassmaleriene fra Norddal kirke', in *I balansepunktet, Sunnmøres eldste historie, ca. 800-1660*, ed. S. U. Larsen and J. Sulebust (Oslo: Sunnmørsposten, 1994), pp. 420-430.

²⁹ Hoburg, *Lebendige Hertzestheologie*, p. 58, Emblem 14.



Fig. 5: Glass painting from Norddal church, Sunnmøre, 1663. Jesus feeding the human heart with bread and wine, probably copying some already existing variant of motif no. 11 in the *Cor Iesv*-series. An almost identical motif was used in *Lebendige Hertzens-Theologie*, Frank. a. M., 1691. The pane with the male donator has been lost. Now in Bergen Museum, inv.no. X 114.16d, 24,2 x 17 cm (Photo: Bergen Museum, University of Bergen).

well suited to express Pietist emotionalism, and well suited also to describe the phenomenon of conversion which played a major role in Pietist devotion. Apart from some local inventions concerning the figures above the hearts, the motifs from Forr are copies of the first motifs in the *Cor Iesv* series: the title page, the heart liberated from the world, and Christ knocking at the door of the heart and illuminating it.³⁰ The physical structure of the surviving parts of the Forr gallery is somewhat complex, as the motifs were painted on pieces of canvas, then glued to the wooden surfaces within each frame. There are no inscriptions, and the original subscriptions have been subsequently covered with paint, so faint traces are left barely visible to the eye. However, X-rays have revealed at least some of these subscriptions, documenting that they were kinds of tail-rhymes in Danish, and thus much longer than the texts in Stavanger and Norddal. Below Jesus illuminating the heart, the following subscription can be discerned: 'I must fear, mild Jesus, the light and lantern of Your eye; You see that my heart is like maggots of death and worms of sin. Yes, the adder does strangely attack the feather of Your grace and....'³¹

In 1708 the parapet of the gallery in Ranæs church, Nordmøre, then in the Diocese of Trondheim, was decorated with motifs copied from a popular Catholic devotional book, *Pia Desideria*, by the Jesuit Hermann Hugo, illustrated with engravings by Boëthius a Bolswert. These engravings, depicting the interactions between *Amor divinus* and *Anima humana*, presented the congregation with the story of individual conversion and salvation, *Amor divinus* definitely playing the more active part. Like the gallery from Forr, the rather worn and damaged Ranæs gallery is now in the Vitenskapsmuseet in Trondheim. Seven quite simple motifs are painted in a painted blind arcade measuring over six metres wide; they are mirror images of emblems in *Pia Desideria*, indicating that third- or fourth-generation copies of the original served as models for the painter in Ranæs.³² One motif depicts the *anima*

³⁰ In the emblem showing Christ knocking on the door of the heart (Matthew 24: 33), the sun overhead has been substituted by an eye flanked by two ears, copied from the first illustration in *Pia Desideria*.

³¹ The X-ray photos were taken in 1996. The texts belong to the pictures, as the X-rays reveal that the top line was written partly on the canvas immediately below the oval. It reads in Danish: 'For dit øies lius og lycte/ Milde Jesu maa ieg frygte/ du seer i mit hierte er/ døds=madicker sýndsens orme/ Ja, hug=ormen sælsom storme/ mod din naade=fier og...'. The last line is difficult to decipher. The text seems to have been written as a subscription to the picture since it is not found anywhere else in the printed material of the period. The last line refers to the conventional notion of the eagle (Christ) battling with the serpent (devil).

³² The 1682 Cologne edition has the same, simpler motifs compared to the original. The sequence in Ranæs copies motifs found in this edition from south to north: pp. 22, 72, 120, 138, 123, 42 and 35. As one can see, the order according to *Pia Desideria* is not maintained.

kneeling before the tablets of the Law, that is, the law of love, and presenting the *Amor divinus* with her heart. Her gesture signifies her rejection of the world, represented by a table loaded with precious things (Figs. 4 and 6).



Fig. 6: The soul obeying the Law of Divine love while rejecting the world, and offering Jesus her heart, just as the sunflower bends to the sun. Engravings from the Köln 1682 edition of Herman Hugo, *Pia Desideria*, book II, p. 72, subscription: Psalm 119, v. 80, and book III, p. 120, subscription: Canticles 7: 10. Mirrored copies served as models for the painter in Raner, cf. Fig. 4 (Glasgow University Library). Reduced

Already in 1660, illustrations from *Pia Desideria* had provided a painter in Norway with models for edifying imagery (Fig. 7). On the epitaph in Tingvoll church, Nordmøre, commemorating the Tausan family, the main picture shows a variation of a *Pia Desideria* motif: the soul, accompanied by a winged heart and eye, but chained to the world, attempts to rise from earth to heaven; an angel is poised ready to cut the chain with an axe. Above this, *Anima* kneels before Christ on the cross, holding a chalice up as protection against an armoured angel threatening with a sword. The topmost painting shows a motif from the

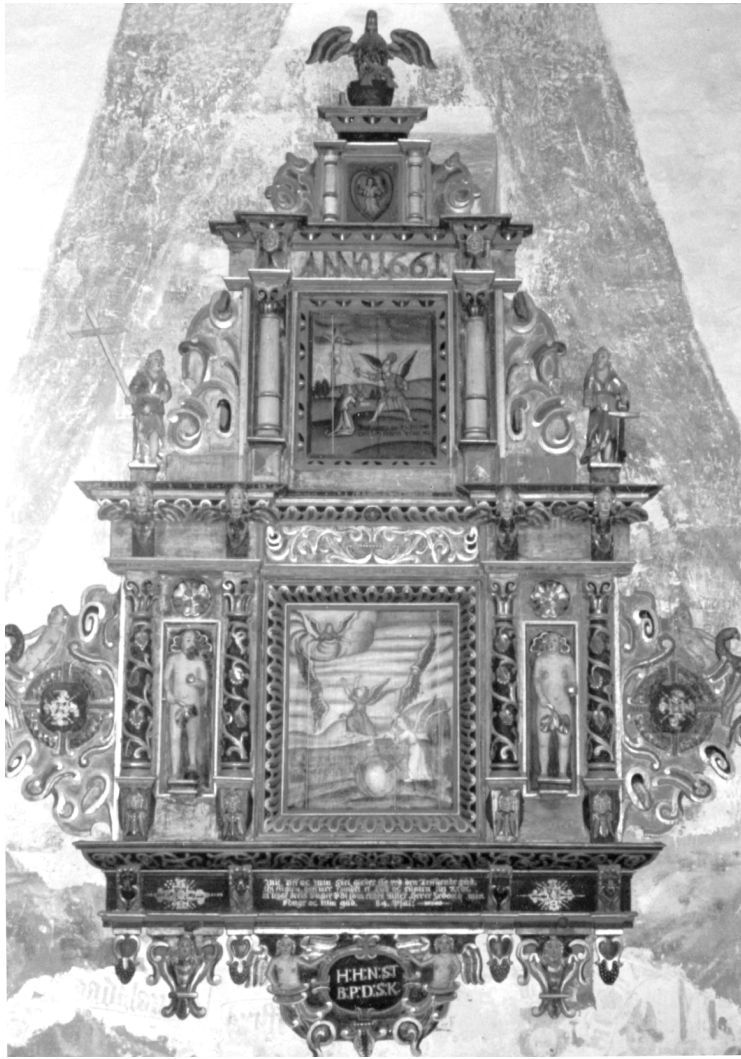


Fig. 7: Epitaph for the Tausan-family in Tingvoll church, Nordmøre, dated 1661
(Photo: Riksantikvaren, Oslo).

Cor Iesv series, with Jesus standing in the heart with flames in His hands. These three pictures, copied from emblems, offer the spectator a representation of the *ordo salutis*: the soul is captured by the splendour of the world, yet its heart longs for God and its eye is turned towards heaven; hence an angel is ready to liberate the soul. Having realized the foolishness of being drawn towards sin, the heart, threatened by just punishment, has no other hope than trust in salvation by the blood of Christ crucified; then, by the Grace of God, Jesus ignites the heart with love for Him so that the conversion may last. These are the articles of contrition, faith and new obedience. A traditional symbol of Christ, the pelican feeding her chicks with her own blood, crowns the monument, commenting on the entire theme. Appearing on an epitaph, such a sequence of emblems might speak about confidence in the God's mercy, face to face with Him on Judgement Day.³³ Quotations from the Psalms serve as subscriptions in the two lower pictures, the first from Psalm 84: 3-4, where the soul rejoices like a bird that has found shelter in the Lord; then, in the middle picture, a quotation from Psalm 143: 2, imploring God not to punish His servant, for no man alive is righteous before God.

Thus, these series of emblems render how the penitent heart is cleansed by Christ, and made into a dwelling befitting Him and filled with His presence; thus, all fear and distress are substituted by a rejoicing, burning love for Him and the state of Grace which obtains the Crown of Life. By providing a literal introspection in depicting the *homo interior* and the conversion from the world to God, the Wierix series, (even though Anton Wierix himself was probably a Lutheran dissident), articulated basic Christian views, reflecting a devotional character found on both sides of the denominational border. In this way the programmes in Stavanger, Norddal, Forr, Raner, and Tingvoll expressed the emotional and confident piety which was established as a complementary feature in the age of Lutheran orthodoxy; a kind of religious subculture, edifying the congregation by mildness and comfort, rather than by threats. This devotional piety recognized humans as basically sinful, hence conversion was necessary for all people; the seriousness of the human condition could never be doubted. Yet, literally painting the picture of a gentler God doing His utmost to lead people to salvation, inspired trust and presented the congregations with a comforting Christianity, not necessarily opposed to, but complementary with, the harsh and threatening tenors of official orthodox

³³ In a portrait of the vicar, Hans N. Tausan, painted in the 1650s and in a painted epitaph still to be seen in the church, Tausan points to a skull with the text 'ecce homo', and with a prayer book aloft 'sursum cor', thus anticipating the iconography of the family epitaph.

Lutheranism. As the roots of the Pietist movement undoubtedly are to be found in the development of Lutheran devotional piety from Johann Arndt to Philipp Jakob Spener, it was only natural that religious heart symbolism and the phenomenon of conversion should be included in typical early eighteenth-century Lutheran iconography. The very title of the 1624 *Pia Desideria* reminded every local vicar of the identical title of Spener's book from 1675 which had provided Pietism with its veritable breakthrough.

Christian virtues

Three oval *grisaille* glass paintings in the collections of Bergen Museum appear to belong to the same sequence of emblems, their provenance being the windows of some church in western Norway. Most likely copied from engravings, they may have been painted in the 1660s. In a narrow sense they do not form a programme, but visualize various moral attitudes befitting a true Christian: contrition, forgiveness and generosity. Of course, more ovals conveying additional messages might originally have formed part of the sequence. The process of distillation is depicted, while the inscription reads 'Hinc illæ lacrymæ' ('From this, these tears'). The subscription, a Norwegian couplet, explains that the fire of the cross makes the eyes run with tears.³⁴ This process, where one evaporates a liquid with fire and condenses its vapour, became a popular way of describing the lover's pain. In the seventeenth century, the Baroque love of contrasts, such as fire and water, and the notion of something being purified by the extraction of its essence, made this into a perfect picture of the fire of faith and love making the devout weep. Thus, the subscription explains the spiritual equivalent of this process, demonstrating an aspect of Christian contrition. The inscription of the second motif is a quotation from Matthew 18: 35, 'Sic et pater cælestis faciet vobis', which is an exhortation to forgive others if you wish yourself to be forgiven. The subscription explains the spiritual meaning of the two swords: 'From heaven God will revenge if you do not forgive your neighbour'.³⁵ The third motif shows a water container which God fills up with a running tap. The inscription, 'Date et dabitur vobis', quotes Luke 6: 38, the message being essentially similar to the previous motif, yet through the subscription directed towards concrete *bona opera*, such as giving alms:

³⁴ In Norwegian: 'Det volder Korsens ild saa heed/ At Øynens taarer drøypper ned'.

³⁵ In Norwegian: 'Aff himlen gud dig heffne vill/ Om du din Næst ey giffuer till'.



Fig. 8: Part of the panelling on the northern wall of the sanctuary in Bø church, Lower Telemark, ca. 1670. From left the rebus-emblems, picture in parentheses: 'Iustus ut (palma) florebit'; The righteous shall blossom like the palm tree: 'Virtus (magnificat) etiam post (mortem)'; Virtue sings praise even after death: 'Matth. 10: 16.'; Be wise as (serpents) and innocent as (doves); 'Splendeat (lumen) tuum', May your light shine (Photo: Riksantikvaren, Oslo).

‘Give willingly to your poor friend: God will refill your cup to the brim’.³⁶

Apart from the Tausan epitaph, the only emblematic programme still *in situ* is found in nine painted emblems on the panelling of the sanctuary in the medieval Bø church in Lower Telemark, in the then Diocese of Christiania. The panelling is Renaissance, but the emblems may have been painted later, perhaps around 1670, or as early as ca. 1650.³⁷ Most of the emblems are presented as what we might call ‘rebus emblems’, the *pictura* being part of the Latin *inscriptio* by substituting a word. Facing the congregation in the nave, two emblems present both death and victory in the cross as the inevitable outcome of this life and the hope celebrated by Christianity. On the narrow walls flanking the apse and facing the nave, two candles are shown, their inscriptions indicating the Light of God on the north side, reflected or shining in the Christian soul on the south side. On the north side, between death and the candle, are three emblems: a palm tree, a draped coffin, and a dove sitting upon a snake forming a circle. They convey the following message: the righteous shall bloom like a palm even if they suffer in this life; their virtues will shine forth even after death; for they have obtained eternity by being innocent as doves and wise as serpents (cf. Matthew 10: 16) (Fig. 8). On the south side, between the candle and crowned cross, two emblems of a rose and a serpent on an anchor tell the viewer that even if humans, like the rose, must wither and die, they may hope that Christ will save them by the cross. Indeed, death and suffering is but a road to heavenly glory on which a human being shines with the splendour of Him who suffered on the cross, winning eternal life for mankind. As one can see, the entire programme articulates a seventeenth-century notion of the Last Things, admonishing spectators to live with their end in mind, yet also confident that for the true Christian, God’s mercy will remove the sting of death. The models were selected from various collections of emblems by the vicar, their message and Latin inscriptions neither easy to see nor easily accessible to the local congregation: the rebus-emblems in Bø are thus more in line with the classic function of emblems.³⁸

Thematically related to the 1613 emblem from Gimmeland, another polychrome glass painting displaying an emblem was donated sometime around 1630 by the *superintendent* in Bergen, Niels Paasche, to some church in Sunnmøre, western Norway. The learned bishop chose an obelisk crowned with a cross on the plinth of which is the

³⁶ In Norwegian: ‘Giff gjerne till din fattig ven/ fuld skuddet maal gir gud I gien’.

³⁷ Røstvig, ‘Motiver på vandring’, p. 94.

³⁸ For the inscriptions of various related models, see Røstvig, ‘Motiver på vandring’.

monogram 'I. H. S.'. There is no inscription, but what must be perceived as a subscription reads 'I am protected by standing firm, even though surrounded by wind, waves, and fire'.³⁹ Thus, the obelisk, made into a symbol of Christian faith, offers a representation of the Christian virtue so important in early seventeenth-century concepts of religious life: that is, *Constantia*, or constancy.⁴⁰ People in western Norway sorely needed such constancy as great epidemics, bad climate, and crop failure repeatedly hit the country in the first decades of the seventeenth century. Reflecting the notion of humans in constant need of punishment, a glass painting from the church of Fresvik or Feios, in Sogn, probably dating from the 1660s, shows an emblem with the inscription 'Vita trochvs', and a hand with a whip coming down from the sky to set a top spinning. Usually the whirligig symbolized the fact that humans are only able to do something by being whipped; in the church window, however, its spiritual meaning suggests that only by the whip of the Lord are humans kept from falling into sin.⁴¹

APPLIED EMBLEMS IN SECULAR CONTEXTS

Even if applied emblematics in Norway mainly decorated church furniture, a number of emblems found their way into homes on pieces of furniture and other fixtures, such as box stoves. Of course, such emblems were not so much parts of programmes as isolated messages of a religious and moral nature.

Since the middle of the seventeenth century, a considerable eastern Norwegian production of solid cast-iron stove plates provided the secular environment with a varied, but by no means exclusively religious, iconography, as it included both religious and secular emblems. Forms for casting the iron were carved in wood, and graphic sheets and medals lent themselves easily as models for such motifs in low relief.⁴² Thus, Christopher Ridder copied motifs from the *Cor Iesv* series by Wierix and from Hermann Hugo's *Pia Desideria*. On stoves from the Hassel foundry, dated 1674 and 1686, motifs from both series

³⁹ 'Stans tegor in solido vent' sepat ignis et vnda.'

⁴⁰ In 1616 a Latin inscription was placed on a pew in the sacristy of Stange church, south of Hamar: 'Rebus in adversis paties, terit omnia virtus, in domine si vis vince, disce pati...' ('Endure hardship, virtue overcomes everything, if you wish you will gain victory in the Lord; learn to suffer...'). See Christie, *Den lutherske ikonografi i Norge inntil 1800*, vol. 1, p. 28.

⁴¹ Hence the inscription should be translated: 'the top concerning life', or—if the painter simply forgot an 'e' in *vita*—'the toy of life'. A *Trochvs* was originally a child's hoop whipped by a stick.

⁴² Arne Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, 2 vols. (Oslo: Cappelen, 1944), particularly vol. 1, pp. 123ff.

are combined.⁴³ Other plates, however, display secular emblems, such as the one dated 1668 from the foundry at Nes, showing the vice of pride, explaining the theme and picture with German texts;⁴⁴ or from Eidsvold in 1695, the main plate of which copies a medal from the 1680s showing Saturn drawing riches from a mine ('Sic veniunt'), pouring them into a well, and spending them ('Sic abeunt'). The short side of the same stove depicts an armoured forearm from the sky touching a hedgehog, the inscription reading 'with knowledge and hand' (Fig. 9). The German subscription explains: 'He who makes a mine and plays chess needs reason and the ability to think through his actions in advance'.⁴⁵ From around 1700 comes a plate produced by the Hassel foundry depicting Hercules shooting down a Stymphalic bird; the Danish subscription reads 'It is not easy to flee from an angry man'.⁴⁶ In addition to a number of biblical and, eventually, classical scenes, allegories, personifications of virtues, and so forth, emblems or emblem-like combinations of pictures and texts continued to be displayed on stoves. In 1730 a tender meeting between Christ and the human soul was rendered on a plate from the Holden foundry, offering a version of the theme from devotional books such as *Pia Desideria*. The text might be said to contain both inscription and subscription in one: 'The soul, having part in Christ has (therefore) part in salvation'.⁴⁷ From the same year, a personification of Christian faith appeared as an element in an emblem with the inscription 'Strong in adversity'. As late as 1761, an emblem decorated a plate from the foundry at Eidsvold, showing God blowing down upon a large tree with the Latin inscription

⁴³ Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 543 and 544. A later copy of the 1674 Wierix-motif, Jesus as King of the heart, was made in 1702; see vol. 1, p. 228. In the manor of Egeskov in Denmark, a Norwegian stove from Kongsberg ironworks and dating from the 1690s displays a further such combination: see Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 1, p. 164, and vol. 2, no. 643.

⁴⁴ Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 1, p. 178; vol. 2, no. 670, showing a man falling off stilts.

⁴⁵ Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 1, p. 157; vol. 2, no. 281: the Italian inscription reads 'Col senno e con la mano', and the German subscription 'Wer bergwerck bawt vnd spielt im schach der bravck vers(t)andt auch thu gemach'. I am grateful to Professor Werner Koller (University of Bergen), for his assistance in translating the German text.

⁴⁶ Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 1, p. 129; vol. 2, no. 33. A stove from 1702 made by the Dikemark ironworks shows emblems based upon the theme of fire with Latin inscriptions. A picture of a volcano with the inscription 'Piu dentro' ('Deeper within') was copied later by other ironworks, see Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 1, pp. 225 and 232; and vol. 2, no. 375. Such a motif was well suited for display on a stove.

⁴⁷ Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 1, p. 244; vol. 2, no. 606. 'Anima. Socia Christi socia salutis'. The short side shows a woman singing and reading, offering a Baroque play on contrasts: 'pia otia, pingua negotia' ('A pious rest is fruitful labour').



Fig. 9: Short side of a cast iron plate from a box stove, produced by the foundry at Eidsvoll, Akershus 1695. Norsk Folkemuseum, inv.no. 458-05, detail: 51 x 41 cm (Photo: Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo).

‘You bend or break’. Interestingly, it was copied from a medal celebrating the Siege of Brunswick in 1615. However, as the plate omits the city, the emblem simply becomes a pious exhortation to bend to the Will of God, lest one breaks.⁴⁸

Even if the cast-iron box stoves did not appear in public spaces in the way that church furniture did, they constituted a varied iconography of some impact, since each motif could be produced in numbers and spread to the homes of the middle and upper classes.

CONCLUSION

In the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries, emblems appear in Norway not only, although primarily, on furniture and windows in churches, but also in secular spaces, particularly on cast-iron stoves produced in Norway. They were not Norwegian emblems as such, but emblems in Norway, by and large copied from German, Dutch, and Flemish graphic sheets and emblem books. Quite often, however, the continental models were subject to minor local inventions, combinations, and variants.

Applied emblems in Norway reflect the fact that they were meant to nourish the spiritual life of congregations. Hence, most of them are not academically sophisticated, but rather primitive in execution and straightforward in their messages. With their meanings not particularly disguised, they aimed at conveying a religious message which the average congregation could actually perceive. By and large, the function of emblems in Norway was didactic and edifying: to present matters pertaining to spiritual life in an understandable and somewhat entertaining way, thereby enlightening the people. In this respect, the emblems both shaped and expressed an almost popular piety.

Most of the emblems encountered in Norway are not tripartite in the idealized form, though the three glass paintings of unknown provenance do represent the emblem in its classic form. Yet, even if many of the emblems appear more like pious illustrations than actual emblems, they do provide combinations of pictures and texts that can be defined as ‘emblematic’. While the rather few emblems in Norway cannot compete with their continental models in visual and academic quality, they certainly afford an interesting account of important features in the

⁴⁸ ‘In adversis fortis’, Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 1, p. 248; vol. 2, no. 607. The short side with another emblem shows a female bust being crowned from the sky under the motto ‘Operis victoria finis’ (‘The end of the work is victory’), meaning: the work shall be crowned by victory. The year 1730 might indicate a bicentennial commemoration of the *Confessio augustana*. On the plate from the Eidsvold foundry, the inscription reads ‘Flecteris an frangeris’: see Nygård-Nilssen, *Norsk jernskulptur*, vol. 2, p. 20.

piety of Lutheran orthodoxy as well as offer testimony of the close 'sub-dogmatic' relationship between Lutheran and Catholic piety and imagery in a period otherwise defined by seemingly incompatible terms like 'Lutheran Orthodoxy' and 'Counter-Reformation'.