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REPRESENTING THE PHLEGM: THE PORTRAIT OF THE PHLEGMATIC IN CESARE RIPA'S *ICONOLOGIA*

Abstract. This article is the second in a series of works which aims to contribute to documenting the success of the medical theory of individual complexions, derived from the theory of the four humours, through the major work which constitutes the *Iconologia* of the Italian humanist Cesare Ripa (1555–1622). We analysed here the figure of the phlegmatic and undertook to determine the reasons which governed the choice of the attributes retained by Ripa (portliness, pallor of the skin, coat in badger furs, tilted head and girded with a black headband, turtle) to offer poets, painters and sculptors the archetype of a character dominated by cold and damp phlegm. To this end, we have been interested in the medical and iconographic sources on which the author was able to rely and have tried to identify the attributes which are part of tradition and those which testify to an *inuentio* of the author in the iconographic art.

Keywords: Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, humoral theory, humors, phlegmatic, iconographic attributes

This article is a direct follow-up to the article that we devoted, in this same journal, to the representation of the choleric temperament in the work of Ripa¹. Will follow, we hope, two other publications dealing respectively with the sanguine and the melancholic by the same author. This cycle of articles aims to contribute to documenting the fortune of the medical theory of individual complexions, derived from the theory of the four humours, through the major work that Ripa's *Iconologia* constitutes for the expression of the arts in the modern era. We therefore continue our study here with the pituitous (phlegmatic) temperament, dominated by the phlegm that is said to be cold and humid. In this regard, the reader will find in our first article a brief presentation of the foundations of this quaternary theory as well as the essential bibliography relating to it.

Let us recall some material elements all the same in order to answer the legitimate questions relating to the edition of the *Iconologia* that we have chosen to use.

¹ M. KOŹLUK, *Représenter la flaua bilis: le portait du colérique dans l'Iconologia de Cesare Ripa*, SCer 12, 2022, p. 633–650.

The princeps edition of 1593², apart from the fact that it is not illustrated, contains no entry relating to individual moods or complexions³. The latter are only introduced in the 1603⁴ edition, which is also enriched with 150 woodcuts from drawings by the Cavalier d'Arpin. The temperaments are grouped under the entry *compassioni* and appear in the following order: *Collerico per il fuoco, Sanguigno per l'aria, Flemmatico per l'acqua, Malenconico per la terra*. The *Iconologia* benefited until the 18th century from a dozen Italian editions. We use the beautiful Padouan edition of 1625⁵ for our work, mainly because of the readability of its layout. It takes up the 1603 text and the new engravings of Cavalier d'Arpin from the 1611 edition. This text also corresponds to the French translation by Jean Baudouin that we have chosen to offer here in addition to the Italian text⁶. Another choice could have been made without consequences on the content of our analyses.

1. The phlegmatic in his indolence: portrait and attributes

Before examining Ripa's text, let us first note that the xylography illustrating the *Flemmatico per l'acqua* hardly abounds in iconographic elements⁷. It presents a man seated on an isolated pedestal (to which the designer has added a roll-up backrest), his legs crossed and his hands adjusting the sides of a heavy coat on his chest as if to close it better. In this desert landscape, only a turtle keeps him company (Fig. 1). Following the engraving, as always, the reader will find a description by the author which provides more information on the attitude of the phlegmatic, on his dress, and on the presence of the animal:

² C. RIPA, *Iconologia ovvero descrittione dell'imagini universali cavate dall'antichità et da altri luoghi*, Roma: per gli heredi di Gio. Gigliotti, 1593.

³ We will indeed find there the allegories of certain passions or certain related states, for example *Ira* (Anger), *Otio* (Idleness), *Pigritia* (Laziness) etc., but the medical, scientific field, to which the four major complexions belong, is absent.

⁴ C. RIPA, *Iconologia ovvero descrittione di diverse imagini cavate dall'antichità, e di propria inventio-ne*, Roma: Lepido Facii, 1603.

⁵ C. RIPA, *Della novissima iconologia*, Padova: per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1625. Later in the text, we will use the abbreviation C. RIPA (It.) whenever we cite this edition.

⁶ C. RIPA, *Iconologie ou Explication nouvelle de plusieurs images, emblèmes, et autres figures hieroglyphiques*, pars II, Paris: chez Mathieu Guillemot, 1644, p. 52–56. Later in the text, we will use the abbreviation C. RIPA (Fr.) whenever we cite this edition. The first French edition by Jean Baudouin dates from 1636 but it is very incomplete; complexions are not included. For Polish' edition cf. C. RIPA, *Iconologia*, trans. I. KANIA, Kraków 2002.

⁷ However, it is important to point out that *from the Middle Ages, the distinctive traits of the melancholic and the phlegmatic tend to merge. They would eventually become interchangeable, so that in 15th and 17th century illustrations the portraits of the melancholy and the phlegmatic are often interchanged*; L. DEJARDINS, *Le Corps parlant. Savoirs et représentations des passions au XVII^e siècle*, Paris–Québec 2001, p. 48.

Huomo di corpo grasso, e di color bianco, che stando à sedere sia vestito di pelle di tasso, tenendo ambe le mani in seno, e la testa china, laquale sia cinta d'un panno negro, che li cuopra quasi gli occhi, e to canto vi sia una tartaruca⁸.

We thus learn that the man is plump (*di corpo grasso*), that his skin is characterized by a complexion of great pallor (*di color bianco*), and that he is covered with a fur coat of badger (*vestito di pelle di tasso*). His two hands rest on his chest (*ambe le mani in seno*), his head is bowed (*la testa china*) and girded with a black headband (*cinta d'un panno negro*) almost covering his eyes (*cuopra quasi gli occhi*). Finally, a turtle stands near him (*à canto vi si auna tartaruca*).

2. A medical archetype, an allegory of inaction

Each of the four temperaments is defined as the result of the predominance of one of the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, black bile). Despite the multiple associative tetrads that have enriched the theory, the influence of these humors remains cardinal. They are the keystone of any discourse on complexions, whether medical or iconological.

2.1. Phlegm or pituite

Let us begin with the full character of the phlegmatic and the pallor of his skin. According to the humanist, he is plump and corpulent because of the coldness and dampness (two qualities of phlegm) present in his body⁹. Ripa refers here explicitly to Galen and imports into his allegorical proposal the foundations of the quaternary theory as they are still found formulated in the medical treatises that are contemporary to him. Let us cite, by way of example, a fragment of the *regimen sanitatis* of Nicolas Abraham de la Framboisière (1560–1636), a doctor *whose works constitute a veritable sum of medical knowledge of his time*¹⁰; according to him, the phlegmatic patient is easy to identify, he has *a white colour, sometimes livid, the face is puffy, and the whole mass of the body is large and fat, flabby, cold to the touch, not at all hairy*¹¹. Their strong corpulence can thus be explained by a water retention

⁸ C. RIPA (It.), p. 112.

⁹ We read in the comment: *Dipingesi grasso, perche si come la siccità del corpo procede da calidità, così la grassezza deriva da frigidità, e humidità, come dice Galeno nel secondo del temperamento al c. 6*; C. RIPA (It.), p. 88. Cf. C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 54–55: *Il est gras et replet, pource que de la mesme sorte que la / seicheresse du corps procède de la chaleur, la repletion et la graisse sont causes, selon Galien, d'un excez de froideur et d'humidité*.

¹⁰ S. BAMFORTH, *Médecine et philosophie dans l'œuvre de Nicolas Abraham de La Framboisière*, [in:] *Esculape et Dionysos. Mélanges en l'honneur de Jean Céard*, ed. J. DUPÈBE, F. GIACONE, E. NAYA, A.-P. POUÉY-MOUNOU, Genève 2008, p. 177: *ses œuvres constituent une véritable somme des connaissances médicales de son époque*.

¹¹ N. ABRAHAM DE LA FRAMBOISIÈRE, *Le Gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé avec le gouvernement requis en l'usage des eaux Minerales, tant pour la preservation, que pour*

mechanism specific to pituitary but also by the fact that phlegmatics simply like to eat. According to Amboise Paré (1510–1590), a French surgeon and anatomist, phlegmatics *are insatiable, and have a canine appetite*, which, moreover, produces very unfortunate consequences for them:

The predominant pituitary is of the kind called acid, and cook their meats late, from which it follows that they engender a great quantity of cold and pituitous humor, which most often collects in the gut called Colon. Which by this means tense up and make a crawling noise, almost like the cries of frogs, and have great pains, and seem to them that the aching parts pull and come out bandaged, from which follows the colic passion¹².

Let us add that phlegm was considered to be humid and cold in correspondence with the qualities of water, which therefore became the element associated with phlegmatics. This is why they are known to suffer from night-time nightmares related to water, snow and swimming¹³. Moreover, like the intestinal colic mentioned, the majority of the diseases they suffer from find their cause in the very nature of the phlegm. La Framboisière once again tells us that phlegmatic

blow their nose a lot, and spit a great quantity of saliva, and vomit strongly watery, and are very subject to colds and catarrhs, cruditis of the stomach, colic, dropsies, daily fevers, oedemas, and to many other accidents which are engendered by phlegm¹⁴.

The general physiognomy of the figure must therefore be understood as the expression of the clinical signs of the predominance of phlegm. The purpose of the remaining elements of description is to paint the moral portrait of the phlegmatic,

la guerison des maladies rebelles, Paris: Charles Chastellain, 1608, p. 156. Cf. A. PARÉ, *L'Introduction à la chirurgie*, [in:] *Les Œuvres*, Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1599, p. 14: *Ils on la couleur de la face blanche, et quelquesfois plombine, et livide, ou bouffie, la masse du corps est grasse, et molasse, et froide au toucher.*

¹² A. PARÉ, *L'Introduction à la chirurgie...*, p. 14.

¹³ N. ABRAHAM DE LA FRAMBOISIÈRE, *Le Gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé...*, p. 156. Cf. A. PARÉ, *L'Introduction à la chirurgie...*, p. 14: *ils songent souvent qu'il pleut et neige, et pensent nager et noyer.*

¹⁴ N. ABRAHAM DE LA FRAMBOISIÈRE, *Le Gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé...*, p. 156. Cf. A. PARÉ, *L'Introduction à la chirurgie...*, p. 14: *They are subject to diseases made of phlegm, such as oedemas, soft tumors and insensitive to dropsies, daily fevers, alopecia, frequent distillations, and colds, were the trachea artery and lungs [...] they vomit a lot of phlegm and aquosities often spit large quantities of saliva, and throw similar excrement through the nostrils they have a very white and moist tongue.* Note also that the Galenic tetrad designating the correspondence water/phlegm/phlegmatic was imagined in an original way in the emblem of Louis de Caseneuve entitled *Phlegmaticus* (Fig. 3). The phlegmatic is there a nymph staying in a fountain; L. DE CASENEUVE, *Hieroglyphicorum et medicorum emblematum DWDEKAKROUNOS*, [in:] IOAHNES PIERIUS VALERIANUS, *Hieroglyphica*, Lugduni: Paulum Frelon, 1626, p. 70. For details, cf. A. ADAMS, S. RAWELS, A. SAUNDERS, *A Bibliography of French Emblem Books*, vol. II, Genève 2002, p. 519–520 and M. KOZŁUK, *Une imagotheca curieuse: les emblemata medica de Louis de Caseneuve (A Strange Imagotheca by Louis de Caseneuve)*, HSM 50.3, 2016, p. 277–288.

to give the character traits that make him unique. First of all, he proceeds by means of the posture: the man is seated, huddled up on himself, with his eyes closed or half-closed. Ripa specifies that the phlegmatic is represented seated with an inclined head (*con il capo chino*), which must symbolize his natural laziness (*perche egli è pigro*). This laziness affects not only his body, but also the exercise of his reason (*negligente tardo si nell'operationi dell'intelletto, come in tutte l'altre del corpo*)¹⁵; this is moreover the whole meaning of the piece of black cloth that Ripa places on the forehead of his face (*si cinge il capo di panno negro*)¹⁶. Next, he traditionally resorts to an allegorical bestiary; Ripa associates two animals with a phlegmatic complexion: the tortoise (*tartaruca*), placed without artifice alongside the human figure, strolling at his feet, and the badger (*tasso*), present through the coat made of his fur¹⁷.

2.2. The dozing badger

Ripa explains to us that the phlegmatic is dressed *in the fur of a Badger, to show that the Phlegmatic is no less lazy nor less drowsy than this Animal*¹⁸ (*si veste di pelle di tasso, perche si come questo animal è sonnacchioso e pigro*)¹⁹. By the importance of the attribute, we can argue that the author thus makes laziness the major trait of the character of the phlegmatic, an indolence that he also links to a lack of intelligence (*pochi spiriti*)²⁰. The weakness of his mental faculties is explained, once again, by the effects of phlegm and more particularly by the coldness which governs the actions, or rather the inactions, of his body and his mind (*quelli oppressi da molta frigidità, che in esso predomina, onde avviene ch'è anco poco atto agli studi i havendo l'ingegno ottuso, e addormentato*)²¹. The phlegmatic is therefore not able to think, which would nevertheless be of great benefit to him in keeping him away from vile and low things (*non habile a meditare quello che sarebbe cagione di sollevarlo dalle cose vili e basse*)²². If we turn again to the medical literature, we unsurprisingly find the characteristics adopted by Ripa. Let us quote, once again, Nicolas Abraham de La Framboisière in whom the unattractive external aspect of the phlegmatic is manifested by *the narrow and dark veins and arteries, the small*

¹⁵ C. RIPA (It.), p. 112. Note that in the French translation of the *Iconology*, the inclination of the head is not indicated.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 55.

¹⁹ C. RIPA (It.), p. 112.

²⁰ *Ibidem*. Cf. C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 55: *qu'il n'a que fort peu d'esprits*.

²¹ C. RIPA (It.), p. 112. Cf. C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 55: *ce qui procède de ce qu'il n'a que fort peu d'esprits, encore sont-ils estouffez par la froideur extraordinaire qui predomine en luy. D'où il arrive que les Phlegmatiques ne sont guère propres à l'estude, à cause qu'ayant l'esprit émoussé, ils ne peuvent comprendre rien de sublime et de grand*.

²² C. RIPA (It.), p. 112.

and slow pulse, the white hair, the heavy, coarse and stupid spirit²³. The description of the character of phlegmatics does not contain a single positive assessment. They are, concludes the doctor, cowardly, sluggish, lazy, broody, late in action, fearful, pusillanimous, sleepy²⁴.

If phlegmatics present in Ripa distinctive traits identical to those developed in the scholarly medical literature of the time, the adoption of the badger (“taisson”) as an attribute characterizing the pituitous complexion is unexpected. Indeed, the oldest representations of temperaments testify to animal-complexion pairs that are already quite well established²⁵. In Guyot de Marchand’s *Calendar of the Shepherds* (1493), for example, the sanguine is accompanied by a falcon and a monkey, the angry by a lion, the melancholic by a pig and the phlegmatic by a lamb, not a badger or a turtle. From antiquity (Dioscorides²⁶, Isidore of Seville in his *Etym.*, XII, 2, 40)²⁷, naturalists note that the “taisson” is very fat (*animal is ualde pingue*), which is why it is associated with the plump man (*hinc uulgo hominem corpulentum, taxi instar obesum esse dicitur*)²⁸, but Ripa was no doubt inspired

²³ N. ABRAHAM DE LA FRAMBOISIÈRE, *Le Gouvernement necessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé...*, p. 156.

²⁴ *Ibidem*. Cf. A. PARÉ, *L’Introduction à la chirurgie...*, p. 14: *ils ont l’esprit lourd, grossier et stupide: il sont fort paresseux, et dorment profondement* or J. TAXIL, *L’astrologie et physiognomie en leur splendeur*, Tournon: R. Reynaud, 1614, p. 30: *le phlegmatique, lequel ayant le cerveau par trop humide, et les esprits trop grossiers, et mal temperez, il n’est propre à la contemplation d’un affaire important*.

²⁵ Cf. the representation of the phlegmatic in GUYOT DE MARCHAND, *Le Calendrier des bergers* (Angers-BM-SA 3390), http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Wave/savimage/enlumine/irht1/IRHT_042824-p.jpg [27 II 2023]. The phlegmatic is second from the right with the lamb at his feet. The attribution of the lamb to the phlegmatic occurred thanks to the analogy of the characters. Guy de Terrvarent reminds us that according to the laws of astrology, the phlegmatic is of the nature of water and of the nature of a lamb; G. DE TERRVARENT, *Attributs et symboles dans l’art profane. Dictionnaire d’un langage perdu (1450–1600)*, Genève 1997, p. 22. Let us note that in medicine, there was an analogy between the highly humidifying qualities of lamb meat and the properties of pituite (coldness and humidity). Cf. J. DU CHESNE, *Le Pourtraict de la santé où est au vif représentée la Reigle universelle et particuliere, de bien sainement et longuement vivre*, Paris: Claude Morel, 1606, p. 417: *young lamb is a viscous, excremental, and very moist meat or flesh: the ordinary use of it is harmful even to the phlegmatic, and gives them stomach pains*. In the symbolic explanations of Valerian we find the analogy between the character of the lamb (*Those who want to express in hieroglyphic terms the peaceful, simple, good-natured man, without blemish and without acule, open and frank of heart, have been accustomed to painting a Lamb*); J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques*, Lyon: Paul Frellon, 1615, p. 121. Cf. H. KOOLMA, A.M. VAN DREVEN, *Representation of the Impulsive Temperament in Arts, Literature and Science: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, IJLA 9.2, 2021, p. 79–93.

²⁶ [DIOSCORIDES], *Commentaires de M. Pierre André Matthiolo sur les six livres de Ped. Diosor. Anazarbeen de la matière Medicinales*, Lyon: Guillaume Rouillé, 1579, p. 252: *the stud, the short tail, the very sharp claws: they accumulate so much fat in winter that sometimes they are monstrously large*.

²⁷ L. BODSON, *Les paradoxes du témoignage d’Isidore de Séville sur les chiens (Étymologies, XII, 2, 25–28)*, [in:] *Milieus naturels, espaces sociaux. Études offertes à Robert Delort*, ed. F. MORENZONI, É. MORNET, Paris 1997, p. 177–188.

²⁸ *Conradi Gesneri medici Tiguri Historiæ animalium lib. 1–4: Lib. 1. de quadrupedibus viuiparis. Opus philosophis, medicis, grammaticis, philologis*, Tiguri: apud Christ. Froschouerum 1551, p. 779.

more by what all the authors consider the badger to be the greatest sleeper in the animal kingdom (*haec bestia somniculosa ab omnibus*)²⁹; it sleeps during the cold periods of the year (*hyberno tempore*)³⁰, especially in winter (*tota hyeme dormit*)³¹. Moreover, in his representation of *Sleep (Sonno)*³², Cesare Ripa wanted us to paint a fat, serious man dressed in badger skin. He also had to stand on a poppy bed, another symbol of sleep³³. The badger certainly reflects the naturalist tradition, but perhaps also a lesser-known allegorical tradition, for in a variant of his *Sleep* figure, Ripa draws on another source: *Il Doni* [Anton Francesco Doni – M.K.] *finse per lo sonno, un'huomo, che dorme tra du Tassi, con alcuni ghiri appresso, i quali sono animali inclinatissimi à dormire*³⁴. It is regrettable that this entry has not benefited from any illustration in the various editions of *Iconologia*.

2.3. The Tardigrade Tortoise

The turtle (*tartaruca*), the second animal invoked, appears, on the other hand, with more evidence, in the iconographic sense and because of the qualities that are readily attributed to it in this context. First of all, it reinforces the physical weakness of the phlegmatic, his lack of energy, but also his intellectual weakness (*the Tortoise, which only walks heavily and with slow steps*)³⁵. It then condenses, according to Ripa, all the features of the phlegmatic elegantly synthesized in the mnemonic verses of the School of Salerno with which he concludes his text (*il che tutto vien ottimamente espresso dalla Scuola Salernitana ne i versi che seguono*):

Phlegma dabit vires modicas, latosque brevesque.
Phlegma facit pinguet, sanguis reddit mediocres,
Otia non studio iradunt, sed corpora somno

Cf. ULYSSIS ALDROVANDI, *De quadrupedibus digitatis oviparis libri duo*, Bononiae: sumptibus M. Antonii Berniae, 1637, p. 273.

²⁹ ULYSSIS ALDROVANDI, *De quadrupedibus digitatis oviparis libri duo*..., p. 268.

³⁰ *Conradi Gesneri medici Tiguri Historiae animalium*..., p. 779.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² M. Wiedemann has proposed a semiological study of the allegorical bestiary in Ripa and Baudouin in which he classifies and lists the various symbolic units. He notes only one occurrence for the badger (phlegmatic); however, even if its meaning is strictly the same, the fur of the animal appears a second time in the allegory of *Sleep (Sonno)* and a third time in that of the *Seventh Hour of the Night (Hora Settima, C. RIPA (It.), p. 300*). In addition, this article can be used to complete in its detailed table the textual sources relating to the Badger; M. WIEDEMANN, *Les animaux allégoriques de l'Iconologie de César Ripa et Jean Baudouin*, FA.REE 8, 2004 (*Animaux d'artistes*), p. 71–99.

³³ C. RIPA (It.), p. 623: *Homo corpulento, grave, vestito de pelle di Tasso, stando sopra un letto di papaveri, et una vite carica d'una matura gli fara ombra, et haverà una grotta vicina, ove se veda un zampillo d'aqua.*

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 55.

Sensus habet, tardos, motus pigritia somnus
 Hic somnolentus, piger in sputamine, plenus
 Est huic sensus habet pinguis facie color albus³⁶.

Like an imperative, Ripa still and always follows the ancient medical tradition and makes no mystery of the texts he used to compose his figure. His use is otherwise consistent with that we find in Valerian: the animal symbolizes laziness linked to slowness in actions. The heaviness of the step is particularly developed and illustrated by three mentions of authorities (Pacuve, Plautus and Ammian). We read:

Otherwise to mean a lazy and nonchalant; or the languor of something, a tortoise was painted walking; which Pacuve calls with a gallant composition *Tardigrade*³⁷, because it moves with such a slow pace that it has become a proverb against lazy people and revelers. For what Plautus said to Aegie, *If I grab a stick, I will hate you for that Tortoise step*. So we read in Ammian a very nice epigram touching this weight of the Tortoise:

*Sooner the Raven will become white,
 he Tortoise will sooner have the feather in the air stretched out,
 What to see in Capadocia from a good Rhetor.*

It is even said that the laziness of this animal is so contagious that if you carry your right foot in a ship, you believe that you are retarded, which the Magi have noticed³⁸.

The presence of the turtle here seems highly intelligible but, in practice, its use by artists can prove tricky because of the various allegorical traditions it carries³⁹.

³⁶ C. RIPA (It.), p. 112. In the French translation of the School of Salerno we read in Chapter XC, entitled *De la température phlegmatique et pituituse: Le phlegme amoidrit moult la force, et l'homme fait / Estre large de corps, petit et bien refaict, // Le sanguin mediocre, et rend moins studieux / Le phlegmatique aussi hebeté et oyseux. // Endormy, et pesant, rempli de salive, / De gros esprit et lourd, de couleur blanche et vive; Retardement de la mort par bon regime ou conservation de santé, jadis envoyé par l'escolle de Salerne, au Roy d'Angleterre, traduit de Latin en rythme françoise par Geofroy le Tellier advocat, présenté et dedié au Duc de Savoye*, Paris: Martin le Jeune, 1561, f° F2 r°.

³⁷ Note that this allusion to Pacuve is transmitted at the time by indirect sources, such as for example: *Testudines tardigradae et domiferae [...] Vere e eleganter illas descripsit Pacuuis: quadrupes tardigrada, agrestis, humilis, aspera, capite breue, ceruice anguinea, aspectu truci; Francisci Marii Grapaldi De partibus aedium verborum explicatione [...] uariarum rerum*, Parmae: per [...] Octavianu[m] Saladu[m] et Franciscu[m] Ugoletu[m], 1516, p. 37.

³⁸ J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 351.

³⁹ *Ibidem*. We leave out other symbols of the turtle like the “reduce under the dominion of the mightiest”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 350; the “contempt of adversities”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 350; the “bewareness of women”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 350; the “bulwark or [the] defence”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 352; the “difficult word”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 352; the “mud-slinging”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 352; “es Peloponesiens”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 352. Cf. G. Tervarent, *Attributs et symboles...*, p. 443–445.

It can in particular be the symbol of a virtuous prudence, a wise slowness, when it is associated with the sail of a ship or with wings as in the figurative motto of Cosimo I de Medici (*Festina Lente*). It is uncertain whether the tortoise most often appears in the arts to symbolize laziness, let alone phlegmatics. A study would certainly be necessary but it seems above all to respond to Ripa's need to add a sufficiently characterized animal to his figure.

* * *

We have already underlined in the conclusions of our study on *Choleric* Ripa's fidelity to Galenic medicine. It is no different here. Moreover, complexions are valid only from medical sources, which gives them a rather special status within the *Iconologia*, because these figures are not quite allegories. The medical tradition was primarily responsible for producing coherent portraits of temperaments, drawn from observation and scientifically justified. Everything is offered to Ripa, the appearance and colour of their skin, their figure and their natural inclinations, whether vile or virtuous. The work is very different from that required to represent abstract notions such as *Dignity* (*Dignità*)⁴⁰, phenomena such as the *Spring Equinox* (*Equinottio della primavera*)⁴¹ or rivers such as *The Nile* (*Nilo*)⁴². The human figure is already given to him and it is in a second time that he reinforces its features by means of attributes.

We have also previously highlighted the editorial constraints that Ripa faced because of the very objectives of his work. He undertook to compose hundreds of allegories distinct from each other, with a limited number of elements, to submit them to the *inventio* of artists who most often retained only a few of the attributes proposed. This raises the question of the own *inventio* of Ripa and of emblem-makers in general. In this matter, we should not expect great revolutions: the Greek and Latin literatures offer copious common material from which it is difficult to deviate. Originality is expressed by details, substitutions or marginal additions, more or less notable. The semi-lethargy of the badger has acquired a proverbial dimension since antiquity, but the introduction by Ripa of this animal into the pituitous complexion is indeed one of these original details. By proposing the badger in his allegory, Ripa, in our opinion, wanted to highlight the torpor of the phlegmatic. The usual lamb is symbolically the bearer of its adipose corpulence and the passivity of its character, but these traits are already supported by the explicit description of the human silhouette. The badger is certainly considered a fairly fat animal, but above all it allows Ripa to present the phlegmatic as a pathological sleeper. By the use of fur, and not of the animal in the flesh, he even cleverly transforms the man

⁴⁰ C. RIPA (It.), p. 171.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 203.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 247.

described into a monumental *tasso*, a human badger who only needed fur to disappear all winter long, and singles him out in a way perhaps more effective than the representation of a badger at his feet would allow.

In 1626, the physician Louis de Caseneuve in turn proposed a collection of emblems in which the phlegmatic is surprisingly personified by a nymph lying in the basin of a fountain alongside the torpedo fish (electric ray)⁴³.

In his Latin epigram Caseneuve does not hesitate to recall that the nymph has just been bitten by this fish, which also explains her drowsiness. In the commentary, using multiple anecdotes, the doctor describes the paralysing power of the torpedo; we learn among other things that whoever touches it (sometimes it is even enough to inadvertently feel the net with which the fish was caught), inevitably becomes paralysed and, consequently, remains in a state of insensitivity similar to that of the constant numbness of the phlegmatic⁴⁴.

This woman with the torpedo-fish is indeed found in Ripa, but in her figure entitled *Accidia*⁴⁵ (Fig. 4), that is to say the biblical laziness which figures among the number of deadly sins and which is expressed by negligence at the regard to God and its own interior life. He proposes an ugly old woman, badly dressed, seated, her head bowed and girded with a black cloth, her cheek resting on the left hand from which hangs a cartouche on which is written *Torpet Iners*; finally, she holds the famous fish in her right hand. A second variant suggests a seated woman holding a rope in her right hand and a snail or tortoise in her left hand. Finally, a third depicts a woman lying on the ground alongside a donkey itself on its side. Ripa also writes of the most ordinary *Pigritia (Sloth)*⁴⁶ with a dishevelled

⁴³ On this genre, see G. MATHIEU-CASTELLANI, *Emblèmes de la mort. Le dialogue de l'image et du texte*, Paris 1988. On the Jesuits and *l'ars emblematica*, cf. *The Jesuits and the Emblem Tradition. Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference, 18–23 August, 1996*, ed. J. MANNING, M. VAN VAECK, Turnhout 1999; R. DEKONINCK, *Imaginer la science: la culture emblématique jésuite entre Ars rhetorica et Scientia imaginum*, [in:] *Transmigrations. Essays in Honour of Alison Adams and Stephen Rawels*, Glasgow 2011, p. 99–114; G.R. DIMLER, *Jesuits Emblem Books. An Overview*, [in:] *Emblems Studies in Honour of Peter M. Daly*, Baden-Baden 2002 [= SSpI, 41], p. 63–122. On the emblems of Caseneuve see in particular S.L. POZA, *Los emblemas y jeroglíficos médicos de Louis de Caseneuve*, CAI 6.12, 1993, p. 9–21.

⁴⁴ M. KOŻLUK, *Une imagotheca curieuse...*, p. 280–281: *Dans son épigramme latine Caseneuve n'hésite pas à rappeler que la nymphe vient d'être mordue par ce poisson, ce qui explique d'ailleurs sa somnolence. Dans le commentaire, à l'aide de multiples anecdotes, le médecin décrit le pouvoir paralysant de la torpille; on y apprend entre autres que celui qui le touche (parfois il suffit même de palper par inadvertance le filet avec lequel le poisson a été pêché), devient immanquablement paralysé et, par conséquent, reste dans un état d'insensibilité semblable à celui de l'engourdissement constant du flegmatique.*

⁴⁵ C. RIPA (It.), p. 6: *Donna vecchia, brutta, mal vestita che stia a sedere, e che tenghi la guancia appoggiata sopra alla sinistra mano, dalla quale penda una cartella con un motto, che dichi; Torpet Iners, et il gomito di detta mano sia posato sopra il ginocchio, tenendo il capo chino, e che sia cinto con un panno di color nero, e nella destra mano un pesce detto Torpedine.*

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 516.

woman dressed in rags, her hands covering her breasts, her feet crossed and near whom is a lying donkey or a tortoise (this donkey could therefore have replaced the tortoise of the phlegmatic). He also qualifies winter laziness because the cold leads to a general slowing down. The literary references are particularly numerous in these cases of *Accidia* and *Pigritia*. The authorities differ from one to the other but the ideas expressed are on the whole identical.

To summarise, Ripa draws his various *Lazinesses* from the classical literary horizon and then reuses for his phlegmatic the expressive elements (the seated body, the legs crossed, the head tilted, the hands brought back to the chest, the black fabric on the forehead, the turtle) which agree with what medicine says. Then he matches the coldness of the phlegm to the torpor of winter, which leads him to import from his *Sonno* the fur of the lethargic badger. Caseneuve prefers, with his nymph, his fountain and his torpedo fish to consider the phlegmatic by the humidity of pituite, by water, and thus produces an emblem even more original and perhaps more striking. Baudouin himself brings a marginal enrichment by placing broken distaffs at the feet of *Sloth* (which corresponds to Ripa's *Accidia* and not *Pigritia*), to show that she naturally abhors Work⁴⁷.

As for the engine of this emblematic *inventio*, it is undoubtedly to be sought in the art of memory as described by Quintilian after Cicero and the anonymous author of the *Ad Herennium*. This art is that of a memory of places and things, which relies on the associative and eidetic faculties of the mind. Quintilian tells us that to memorize speech or knowledge, *therefore, imaginary or real locations are needed, and images or signs, which are always forged*⁴⁸, then he quotes Cicero (*De Orat.*, II, 358): *numerous, clear, distinct places are needed, at moderate intervals; expressive, salient, characteristic images that can come to mind and strike it quickly*⁴⁹. Painters, sculptors and poets also need striking and effective signs to articulate the rhetoric of their compositions, to facilitate understanding and, incidentally, memorization. Quintilian doubts, however, that we can find distinct and eloquent signs for each of the words or each of the ideas of a discourse⁵⁰. Such an inflation even seems counterproductive to him and one can venture to think that he would have been critical of the encyclopedism of the *Iconologia*. We perhaps understand in this way why Jean Baudouin has always delivered only a moralized selection.

⁴⁷ C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 168.

⁴⁸ QUINTILIEN, *Institution oratoire*, vol. VI (livres X et XI), ed. et trans. J. COUSIN, Paris 1979, p. 211.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 212.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 213–214.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1. C. RIPA, *Della novissima iconologia*, Padova: per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1625, p. 111.



Fig. 2. C. RIPA, *Iconologie ou Explication nouvelle de plusieurs images, emblèmes, et autres figures hyeroglyphiques*, pars II, Paris: chez Mathieu Guillemot, 1644, p. 52.

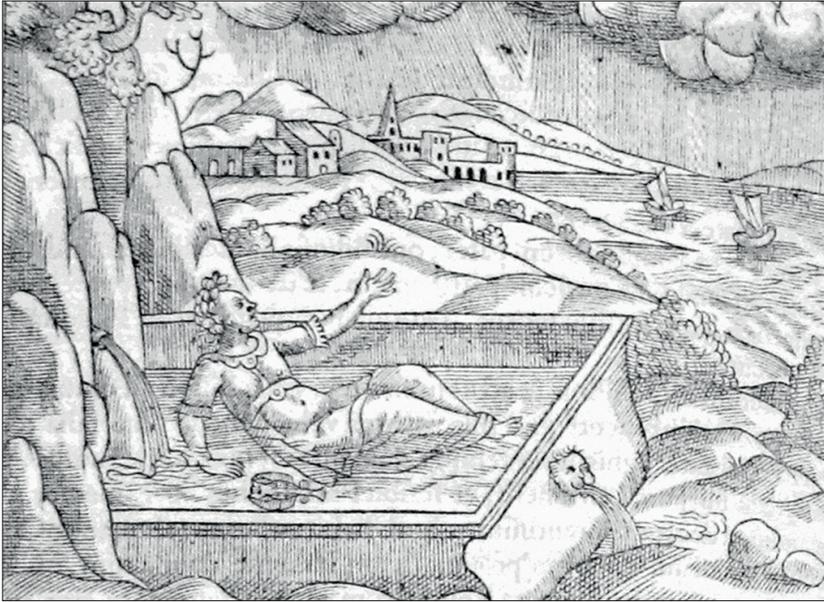


Fig. 3. L. DE CASENEUVE, *Hieroglyphicorum et medicorum emblematum DWDEKA-KROUNOS*, [in:] IOAHNES PIERIUS VALERIANUS, *Hieroglyphica*, Lugduni: Paulum Frellon, 1626, p. 70: emblema VII Phlegmaticus.



Fig. 4. C. RIPA, *Della novissima iconologia*, Padova: per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1625, p. 6.