

EMBLEMS BY MASTER GRAHOVAR IN THE *ALBUM OF THE LJUBLJANA NOBLE SOCIETY OF ST DISMAS*: IMITATION, ADAPTATION, ORIGINALITY

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Abstract

A comparative analysis of Georg Christoph Eimmart's engravings and Masterr Grahovar's miniatures reveals that the painter developed various creative strategies in his adoption and emulation of the prototypes. He never produced an exact copy or a dull imitation. He was also careful to signal a distinction in his claim of authorship, taking the credit for the illumination with the usual "Grahover pinx." or pointing out the fact that he was also the inventor of the composition with "Grahover inv. et pinx." Grahovar's practice of signing the miniatures, however, does not conform to the modern concept of authorship and his criteria remain elusive.

Keywords: Master Grahovar, baroque painting, illuminated manuscript, Slovenia

The *Album of the Ljubljana Noble Society of St Dismas* or the *Theatrum Memoriae Nobilis ac Almae Societatis Unitorum*, as the original title reads,¹ is a memorial book of the Ljubljana Noble Society of St Dismas, or the Academy of the United (*Academia Unitorum*). It is justly considered the most important illuminated manuscript of the Baroque era that survives in Slovenia, as well as a treasury of beautifully painted individual emblems of the Academy members.² The origins of the *Theatrum Memoriae* date back to 1688, when it was decided to establish the St Dismas Society and create a book that would serve as a permanent memorial to the illustrious members and their deeds. Over more than a hundred years, a memorial gallery was created that contains illuminated entries of members with a variety of interesting emblems.³ Among the artists working on emblems for the *Ljubljana Album*, Simon Tadej Volbenk Grahovar (1709-1774) stands out,

- 1 The full title reads: *Theatrum Memoriae Nobilis ac Almae Societatis Unitorum das ist Schau Bühne der Gedächtnuß der Adelichen und Gottseeligen Gesellschaft der Vereinigten zu stätts wherenden Andenken eröffnet in der Uhralten Hautt Statt Laybach 1688*. The manuscript is kept in the Archive of the Republic of Slovenia (AS 1073, I/1).
- 2 Gostiša, *The Album*, 11; Cevc, *The Illuminated Manuscript*, 99-100.
- 3 The Society was founded on May 5, 1688. The first members were inscribed on September 12, 1689 and the final two in 1801.

not only for the quality and subtleness of his miniatures but also for his inventiveness in design. His miniatures attracted the attention of early scholars and connoisseurs already in the 19th century, sparking interest in the *Theatrum Memoriae*.

Grahovar's miniatures in the *Ljubljana Album* were already praised by Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski in his entry on the painter in *Slovník umjetnikah Jugoslavenskih* in 1858.⁴ In 1864, Peter Paul Radics discussed the *Theatrum Memoriae* more extensively in a series of articles published in *Blätter aus Krain*, pointing out the artistic value of folios illuminated by Grahovar.⁵ The enthusiasm for Grahovar and his emblems culminated in 1891 with a short overview of the history of art in the Carniola region, *Architektur, Malerei und Plastik in Krain: Renaissance und Neuzeit* by Janez Flis, a pioneer of Slovenian art history. The text appeared in the famous book series *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild*, which reached a wide international audience in Central Europe and beyond.⁶ Flis's esteem for Grahovar's work is evident in the fact that, among only five illustrations planned by the publisher to represent the entire artistic production of the region from the Renaissance to the 19th century, Flis chose to include the master's miniature from the *Theatrum Memoriae*.

It is not surprising that the authors of the aforementioned publications never addressed the question of the originality of Grahovar's designs or the potential models for his emblems. The very nature of the published texts could hardly allow for an in-depth analysis or critical evaluation of his opus. It took almost another eighty years for the first scholarly study of Grahovar's opus to appear. In 1970, Polonca Vrhunc published an article on Grahovar, evaluating his work and confirming the traditional idea on the originality of his miniatures. She also pointed out that he was the first illuminator of the *Theatrum Memoriae* to have signed his work.⁷

4 Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Slovník umjetnikah*, 107-108. The eminent historian and jurist August Dimitz, who was a secretary of the Carniolan Historical Society, spoke of Grahovar in his public lecture *Das Matrikel Buch der Dismas Confederation in Laibach*, published in the *Mittheilungen des historischen Vereins für Krain* in 1862 (Dimitz, *Das Matrikel Buch*, 6). Even a Slovakian historian, Julius Wallner in his *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Laibacher Maler und Bildhauer in 17. und 18. Jahrh.* published in the *Mittheilungen des Musealvereines für Krain* in 1890, mentioned Grahovar's illuminations in the *Theatrum Memoriae* (Wallner, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 120).

5 Radics, *Die Dismas-Brüder*, VIII/9, 34.

6 Flis, *Architektur, Malerei, Plastik*, 470.

7 Not all Grahovar's miniatures are signed: his first illuminated folios, made around 1740, are neither signed nor dated. The first signed miniature is the one made for Flödnig (fol. 203r) and the first that was both signed and dated is the one painted for Moscon (272r) in 1741.

Moreover, the master obviously had a clear idea about the uniqueness of at least some of his designs: besides the usual *Grahovar pinx.*, he used the formula *Grahovar inv. et pinx.* to indicate that he not only painted the emblem, but also invented it.⁸ Nevertheless, Vrhunc does not explore the possible visual sources or models for Grahovar's emblems, stating only vaguely that his allegorical compositions may have been influenced by books from his private library.⁹

Unfortunately, Vrhunc's pioneering study remained without an echo in Slovenian art history, and not even the authors of studies that accompanied the facsimile edition of the *Theatrum Memoriae* picked up the thread and continued her work.¹⁰ They acknowledge the results of her research, praise Grahovar's miniatures and his artistic genius, but show almost no interest in the search for the potential prototypes of Grahovar's emblems in the *Theatrum Memoriae*. Only Emilijan Cevc made a tentative step in this direction by expressing an opinion that popular Renaissance emblem books incited the *Academici Uniti* to include emblems in their memorial book. Cevc never pursued the topic further nor did any art historian take up the challenge.¹¹ The most probable reason seems to be the perception that the genesis of emblems in the *Theatrum Memoriae* does not require any special scholarly attention: it is well known that the first secretary of the Noble Society of St Dismas, Janez Gregor Dolničar, himself created original designs for the individual emblems of the members. Quite a number of the emblems painted for the album in the early period (1689-1719) actually originate from Dolničar's *Concept Book*.¹² In

8 Grahovar signed his miniatures in various forms, most often as a combination of his family name, which he spelled as *Grahovar*, and the abbreviation *pinx.* (*Grahovar pinx.*), occasionally supplemented with *inv.* (*Grahovar inv. et pinx.*). The combination *Grahovar del. et pinx.* appears as well. Quite often, he used only his name or initials. Cf. Vrhunc, *Simon Grahovar*, 115.

9 Vrhunc points out a popular text by the learned Austrian preacher Abraham a Sancta Clara, *Hui and Pfui der Welt* (Vrhunc, *Simon Grahovar*, 126).

10 Together with the Facsimile, two scholarly volumes have been published: Vol. I contains a transcription of the original text, a translation, commentaries, and complementary materials; Vol. II includes studies and an iconographical catalogue.

11 Cevc, *The Illuminated Manuscript*, 100.

12 The *Concept Book* (*Konceptna knjiga*) with Dolničar's original sketches of the emblems is preserved in the Seminary Library in Ljubljana (sign. Rokopis 6). The manuscript is undated, but most likely it was created between 1689 and 1719. The folios with emblem sketches are probably the oldest part of the book. See: Baraga, *Dolničarjeva Konceptna knjiga*, 235.

the later period, Grahovar dominated the production of illuminations for the *Theatrum Memoriae*, and because he signed most of them, apparently there was no interest in digging deeper.

Only recently, the first attempts were made to address the question of the sources of inspiration and potential models for the emblems in the *Theatrum Memoriae*, resulting in identification of several popular emblem books that might have served as a source for the emblems in the *Ljubljana Album*.¹³ Dolničar himself, in his sketches, often leaned heavily on the existing prototypes (mostly on Alciato's *Emblematum liber* and Filippo Picinelli's *Mundus Symbolicus*).¹⁴ The same is true of Grahovar, who obviously consulted a broader selection of emblem books to find the appropriate models. This comes as no surprise at all: copying popular emblems and including them in new emblem books or some other media was a common enough practice in the Early Modern Period.

Grahovar invenit et pinxit – Master's emblems between originality and imitation

The wide span between artistic ingenuity and various degrees of imitation in the emblems created by Simon Tadej Volbenk Grahovar is most clearly visible when they are compared to the prototypes published in the book *Lust- und Artzeney-Garten des Königlichen Propheten Davids* by the German polymath and poet Wolfgang Helmhart von Hohberg (Regensburg, 1675). It was Grahovar's favourite source of inspiration, and he obviously admired the beautiful engravings by Georg Christoph Eimmart.¹⁵ The book was equally popular among the members of the *Academia Unitorum*, who often modelled their personal emblems on Hohberg. Before we address the analysis of Grahovar's emblems painted for *Academici Uniti* and the ones in Hohberg's book, we should stress once more: Master Grahovar made a series of original emblems that are undoubtedly his own invention. This holds true regardless of the various ways he signed

13 Germ, *The Emblems*, 149-170.

14 Both works (together with some other emblem books) were available to the members of the St Dismas Society. See: Germ, *The Emblems*, 151-152.

15 The full title of the book reads: *Lust- und Artzeney-Garten des Königlichen Propheten Davids. Das ist Der gantze Psalter in teutsche Verse übersetzt, sam[m]t anhangenden kurtzen Christlichen Gebetlein. Da zugleich jedem Psalm eine besondere neue Melodey, mit dem Basso Continuo, auch ein in Kupffer gestochenes Emblema, so wol eine liebliche Blumen oder Gewächse, sam[m]t deren Erklärung und Erläuterung beygefügt worden...* (Regensburg, 1675). The book has 150 inserted velum folios with engravings by Georg Christoph Eimmart on both sides: emblems on the *rectos*, and pictures of herbs with verses on the *versos*. See: Schöne, *Hohbergs Psalter-Embleme*, 30-46.

Fig. 1:
Simon Tadej Volbenk
Grahovar, Emblem of
Krištof Ottheim, 1737,*
*Album of The Ljubljana
Noble Society of St Dismas*,
Archive of the Republic
of Slovenia, Ljubljana, AS
1073, I/1, fol. 270r.



his miniatures (or did not sign them at all, actually). An analysis of the emblems and their genesis in relation to the patron, his family background, position, work, special interests etc., proves the point.

One of the most illustrative examples that should serve as a *pars pro toto* for Grahovar's originality is the emblem made for Baron Krištof Ottheim (fol. 270r). A picturesque pastoral with an angler sitting on the bank of a river is actually a unique landscape portrait of the river Sava near Ljubljana, with Šmarna gora and the Grmada hills on the left, both easily identified by their characteristic outline (Fig. 1). The fisherman, who has just caught a fish, symbolically represents the Baron himself – his academic nickname, *Der Fischende* (A Fisherman), is proudly written under the *pictura*. In the river, we can see an otter swimming towards the left bank, holding a fish in its teeth. It is (as in many emblems by Grahovar) not only the animal protagonist of the *pictura*, but the key figure in understanding the emblem's allegorical message: an otter is a skilled fisher, and Baron Ottheim should follow its example to achieve mastery. The fact that an otter with a fish is the Baron's heraldic device (demon-

* The date in captions represents the year of the member's inscription in the album.



Fig. 2:
Simon Tadej Volbenk
Grahovar, Emblem
of Anton Tadej Janez
Nepomuk Taufferer, 1749,
Album of The Ljubljana Noble Society of St Dismas, Archive of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana, AS 1073, 1/1, fol. 327r.

strated also by the coat of arms painted in the centre of the illuminated page) gives credit to the interpretation. It is obvious that the otter also alludes to Ottheim's family name.

Playing with words, allusions, heraldic animals, and symbolic meanings was dear to the learned members of the St Dismas Society and Grahovar often meticulously expressed it in a visual form. A tiny inscription, *Errando discit* (*Learn from your mistakes*), beside the figure of the angler additionally underlines the symbolic connection between him and the animal, renowned for its mastery of catching fish. There can be no doubt: the emblem of Krištof Ottheim is a custom-made masterpiece, created according to the specific demands of the patron, revealing his character and wit. The game of allusions is playfully set in a distinctive landscape, a vista well known to people living in Ljubljana and its surroundings; while to a stranger, it is but an idyllic scene with a fisher. Gra-

hovar signed the emblem with *inv. et pinx.*, stating clearly the authorship of both the painting and the idea for the composition.

The concept of the *pictura* made for Baron Anton Tadej Janez Nepomuk Taufferer (fol. 327r) is very close to the one painted for Ottheim: the landscape is an actual view of the Višnjica valley (near today's Višnja gora) with the Turn Manor,¹⁶ owned by Baron Taufferer (Fig. 2). Here too, an animal protagonist is the centre of the composition and the key to understanding the allegoric message of the *pictura*. A wounded ibex eats an unidentified herb that stands out from the grass in the meadow – the painter thus calls attention to the fact that the plant has a special meaning. The motto: *In vulnera quaero medelam* (*I seek cure for the wounds*) and the patron's academic name *Der Verletzte* (*The Wounded One*) reveal the allegoric message of the emblem: the ibex who when wounded, knows how to find the cure by eating the healing herb dittany, symbolically represents the patron himself.¹⁷ The allegorical interpretation of a wounded ibex (or a deer in some cases) eating dittany is well established in Renaissance emblematics. Grahovar and Baron Taufferer were certainly familiar with the story and could have found it in quite a number of emblem books.¹⁸ Obviously, Grahovar's miniature with masterly rendered landscape and an almost zoological depiction of an Alpine ibex has little in common with simple woodcuts or engravings in most Renaissance emblem books. The more so, because Grahovar's *pictura* is framed in a decorative cartouche and incorporated into a whole-page miniature together with the coat of arms and some basic data of the member, as well as the allegories of Justice and Science.

Contrary to the perception that the wounded ibex in a panoramic landscape is Grahovar's original invention, he actually did use a model published in the book by Hohberg (fol. 51r). Evidently, the painting by Grahovar is more refined and complex in detail, yet the original compo-

16 The Turn Manor was depicted after the illustration in the famous topography by Valvasor (Valvasor, *Die Ehre*, XI, 627).

17 The emblem refers to a well-known story of the healing powers of dittany (*Origanum dictamnus*). According to ancient medical lore, the herb cures the wounds and even ejects arrows that have pierced he body. The main source of the story is Aristotle, who wrote that Cretan wild goats, when wounded by hunters, ate dittany in order to heal themselves (*Historia animalium*, IX, 6). The motif was popular in emblem books, although more often with a wounded deer as the protagonist.

18 For example, in Girolamo Ruscelli's *Le imprese illustri con espositioni, et discorsi* (Ruscelli, *Le imprese*, 219-223), which is documented in the first public library in Ljubljana (today's Ljubljana Seminary Library) established in 1701 by the donations of the private libraries of *Academici Uniti* and *Academici Operosi*.



Fig. 3:
Georg Christoph Eimmart,
Emblem with a Wounded
Ibex, Wolfgang Helmhard
von Hohberg, *Lust- und
Artzeney-Garten des
Königlichen Propheten
Davids*, Regensburg, 1675,
fol. 51r.

sition is only slightly changed. Grahovar transformed the landscape into a bucolic view of Taufferer's domain in the Višnjica valley, but the basic outline of the countryside still resembles the one in Eimmart's engraving. His ibex is virtually a portrait of the Alpine ibex with its characteristically impressive horns. The posture of ibex, however, remains very close to the one designed by Eimmart (Fig. 3).

How to explain this curious situation? The fact that many entries in the album feature emblems modelled on Eimmart's prototypes in Hohberg's book shows how popular it was. Baron Taufferer obviously liked the *pictura* by Eimmart so much that he asked Grahovar for minor changes only – the inclusion of his family domain in the first place. Taufferer accepted the motto of the emblem without any changes and even chose his academic nickname in accordance with it. There is little doubt that he also embraced the additional allegoric message provided by Hohberg's epigram: the wounded animal is an image of man, plagued by moral lapses or sins, who seeks help and solace in God just like an ibex searches for remedy in the healing herb. As in the case of Baron Ottheim's emblem, the interpretation is additionally confirmed by the fact that the ibex is Taufferer's heraldic animal and features prominently in his coat of arms painted on the same folio. In Grahovar's miniature, the message appears

slightly modified in the context of humanism and early modern academic societies. The figures of Justice and Science flanking Taufferer's coat of arms indicate the shift: a prudent man is able to find remedies for various misfortunes not only in faith, but also in virtue and erudition.

To summarize: Grahovar used and transformed the existing model according to the patron's wishes, upgraded and personalized it not only by the landscape background with the patron's domain, but also by adding a new dimension to the emblematic message with the figures of Justice and Science. It should be mentioned that our master signed the miniature with *Grahovar pinx.*, not with *inv. et pinx.* This suggests that he consciously used this type of signature to mark the difference between the emblems painted for Ottheim and Taufferer, to claim the full authorship (i.e. the invention and realization) of the first miniature while acknowledging the derivative character of the second. However, the analysis of other emblems painted by Grahovar shows that such interpretation may be oversimplified and that things are far more complicated, as the following examples will show.

The miniature painted for Count Marija Ignac Engelshaus (fol. 375r) is one of the best examples of Grahovar's creativity and inventiveness: it is an "open emblem"¹⁹ with a complex figural composition, typical of the master's late period. In the upper part of the miniature, in a clouded sky, the angels carry the house of the Holy Family (*Santa casa*) from Nazareth (Fig. 4). Below them is a stormy sea with sailing ships and a man on a tiny raft who directs his gaze towards the skies. Standing in the foreground, there are five beautifully dressed women, some of them easily recognizable by their attributes as allegories of virtues. On the far right stands Prudence with a mirror and a snake, next to her Hope with an anchor, and Justice with scales and a sword. On the other side of the cartouche with the Count's name and data, topped with his coat of arms, we can see two more personifications: Wisdom with a book and an oil lamp, together with a young maiden, who has not been identified in earlier publications.²⁰ The figure does not seem to have any specific attribute (the crane depicted between the two allegories more probably belongs to Wisdom). However, she almost certainly represents another personification of Hope. In visual arts, the allegory of Hope appears in various forms – a woman with an anchor is only one (and the most common)

19 The "open emblem" is an atypical form, where the whole miniature is composed as an emblem with the motto (and sometimes a short epigram) inscribed in it.

20 Kastelic names the four virtues without trying to identify the fifth one. He also wrongly describes the crane as a heron. More important still, he writes that it is *Sapientia* who speaks the words "*Dum spiro*," which is evidently not the case (Kastelic, *Iconographic Catalogue*, 255).



Fig. 4:
Simon Tadej Volbenk
Grahovar, Emblem of
Marija Ignac Engelshaus,
1762, *Album of The
Ljubljana Noble Society
of St Dismas*, Archive of
the Republic of Slovenia,
Ljubljana, AS 1073, 1/1,
fol. 375r.

of them. Another well-established image is a figure of a young maiden lifting her gaze towards the skies. Her hands can be joined in prayer or lifted upwards in the direction of her gaze. Sometimes, however, one hand (or both hands) may lay on her breasts. Cesare Ripa in his *Iconologia* describes a similar image as a personification of *Speranza Divina & certa*.²¹ The main reason for the interpretation of Grahovar's maiden as

21 Ripa describes *Speranza Divina & certa* in a way that fits perfectly into the context of Engelshaus's emblem: *Giovanneta, vestita nel modo detto di sopra, con le mani giunte verso il cielo, & gli occhi alzati. Come il Mondo, & gli huomini, che sono mortali, & incerti della duratione di se stessi non possono partorire effetto di ben certo, & sicuro, così Iddio, che è datore di tutti i beni, & il vero fondamento delle speranze humane li dona, & li possiede in se stesso perfettamente. Et però si dipinge questa Figura con gli occhi, & con le mani alzate al Cielo, dicendo ancora il Pro-*



Fig. 5:
Georg Christoph
Eimmart, Emblem
with a Crane (detail),
Wolfgang Helmhard
von Hohberg, *Lust- und
Artzeney-Garten des
Königlichen Propheten
Davids*, Regensburg,
1675, fol. 77r.

an image of Divine Hope is her interaction with the “classical” personification of Hope on the right side of the picture: both figures are looking towards the angels in the skies and both share the same message. The Divine Hope on the left speaks the first half of the sentence “*Dum spiro,*” while the second finishes the sentence with “*spero*”: *Dum spiro, spero* (*As long as I breathe, I hope*). The message clearly relates to the image of the storm, the ships tossed by the high waves and especially to the man on the tiny raft, who also gazes at the skies and with his whole body expresses the idea of hope to be saved. The close connection between the two allegories of Hope is evident on the compositional level as well: they occupy the most eminent position next to Engelshaus's cartouche and his coat of arms. They are in a well-balanced juxtaposition and united by the decorative white band with the Count's motto. There is another detail showing their special relationship. Grahovar presents the virtues as “speaking figures” with short inscriptions: the words of Wisdom, Justice, and Prudence are written in small letters beside their heads, while the inscriptions of the twin allegories of Hope are treated differently. The words are written in larger capitals and outlined by bright red colour. They are also coming straight from their mouths, visually outlined by the depiction of their breath.

Nothing similar is to be found in Hohberg's book. It is impossible to expect an image of such complexity among Eimmart's engravings, which are framed by an oval cartouche, limited by both its format and dimen-

feta, È beato colui, che non hà fisi gli occhi alle vanità, & alle false pazzie, ma con la mente, & con l'intentione nobilita se stesso, desiderando, & sperando cose incorrotibili, non soggette alla mutatione de' tempi, nè sottoposte à gli accidenti della vita mortale (Ripa, *Iconologia*, 471).

sions. Nevertheless, Grahovar's miniature clearly points to Hohberg with an interesting detail: a crane with a pebble standing guard next to the personification of Wisdom is borrowed from Eimmart's emblem on fol. 77r. (Fig. 5). A watchful bird is so popular in emblematics that Grahovar could have easily found a model in various emblem books. Certainly, he did not even need a model, because he was more than able to paint the bird by himself. Still, a closer look reveals that Grahovar's crane is a mirror image of Eimmart's bird: our master faithfully recreated the head of the crane with an unusual feather crest, and the posture of the bird is almost identical.²² Moreover, the words "Oneror ne onerer" in Grahovar's handwriting beside the bird clearly point to Hohberg's emblem, where the image of the crane is accompanied by the same motto. The words "Caeca pericula cavet" spoken by the allegory of Wisdom (written on the left side of her head) represent another direct link between the two emblems, because they are part of Hohberg's epigram.²³ The words also explain the role of the crane in the emblem of Count Engelshaus: wisdom and constant vigilance can save us from peril.

The "open emblem" created for Engelshaus illustrates Grahovar's inventiveness on other levels, as well. One should not overlook the fact that the motif of the Holy House transported by angels actually alludes to the patron's family name (Engelshaus: German "Engel" for angel and "Haus" for house). The crane standing guard next to the personifications of Wisdom and Hope finds its full *raison d'être* in the context of the Count's motto: *A custodia matutina usque ad noctem speret Israel in Domino* (Ps 130:6), which explicitly mentions the vigilant guard. The two personifications of Hope joined with the highlighted words *Dum spiro, spero* clearly point to Engelshaus's academic nickname "Der Hoffende" (*The Hopeful One*) etc. Indeed, our master had every reason to sign the miniature with *Grahover invenit et pinxit*; the incorporation of the crane from Hohberg's emblem displays his true ingenuity and wittiness.

One can find an identical signature on the illuminated entry page of Franc Anton Moscon (fol. 272r), who decided on a more traditional form of emblem (Fig. 6). The *pictura* framed in a decorative oval shows a panoramic view of a maritime landscape with wide sea and a picturesque coastland. In the foreground, there is a halcyon (a kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*) in his nest floating on the sea waves. The motto *Mens immota inter motus* (*Untroubled spirit in time of trouble*) as well as Moscon's member name *Der beständig Bleibende* (*The Constant One*) clearly allude to constancy and integrity even in times of trouble and distress. Just as

22 The feather crest is significant because the common crane (*Grus grus*) actually does not have one.

23 "Ungibus hic Palamedis avis, de nocte lapillum continent et vigilans Caeca pericula cavet..." (Hohberg, *Lust- und Artzeney-Garten*, fol. 77r).

Fig. 6:
Simon Tadej Volbenk
Grahovar, Emblem of
Franc Anton Moscon
1739, *Album of The
Ljubljana Noble Society
of St Dismas*, Archive
of the Republic of
Slovenia, Ljubljana, AS
1073, 1/1, fol. 272r.



according to the tradition, the halcyon remains undisturbed while laying eggs in its nest on the waves, so a man of moral integrity should not fear the storms of life, but stay tranquil and firm, trusting in God and constant in his beliefs and deeds regardless of the circumstances. Due to the fact that Grahovar with his signature claimed full authorship of the miniature, I did not question it at first.²⁴ Later on, however, I was able to prove myself wrong, because in Hohberg's book there is an emblem with an almost identical *pictura* created by Eimmart (Hohberg, fol. 16r). A comparison shows that, beside a subtle metamorphosis of an engraving into a painted miniature, our master hardly changed anything (Fig. 6a). The composition is practically the same; only the coastline with the ruins of some fanciful architecture and a distant view of the city are slightly changed (Fig. 7). The bird is painted more realistically – one can assume that Grahovar was familiar with the kingfisher's appearance. Another minor change is visible in the open sea: Eimmart's tiny boats are gone. Grahovar's panoramic image in the cartouche is, of course, just part of a

24 Germ, *Iconography of Emblematic Animals*, 308; Germ, *The Emblems*, 160-162.



Fig. 6a:
Emblem of Franc Anton
Moscon (detail).



Fig. 7:
Georg Christoph
Eimmart, Emblem with
a Halcyon (detail),
Wolfgang Helmhard
von Hohberg, *Lust- und
Artzeney-Garten des
Königlichen Propheten
Davids*, Regensburg,
1675, fol. 16r.

bigger composition with virtues (Justice and Fortitude) and mythological figures (Mars and Heracles). However, according to the modern concept of authorship, the signature *Grahover inv. et pinx.* is at least disputable.

In the frame of this article, it is impossible to present a complete comparison between the emblems published in Hohberg's book and the ones painted by Grahovar for the *Ljubljana Album*. These few examples should suffice to show that Grahovar used various strategies in his adaptations of Hohberg's emblems and that his concept of authorship differed considerably from modern standards. By summarizing the results of our comparative analysis, we can say that two variants prevail: the first option was to take over Eimmart's composition with only slight modifications, together with the original motto by Hohberg; the second was to adapt Eimmart's composition with more significant changes while the

original motto by Hohberg remained unchanged. In the first group, there are eight emblems made for Andrej Evzebij Gallenfels (fol. 255r), Anton Franc Possareli (fol. 257r), Franc Anton Moscon (fol. 272r), Volf Kajetan Kušlan (fol. 277r), Karel Jožef Valvasor (fol. 294r), Karel Ignac Jurič (fol. 316r), Franc Anton Schmittoffen (fol. 329r), and Ferdinand Apfaltrer (fol. 337r). In the second group, there are six emblems painted for Janez Jožef Schulnerpach (fol. 240r), Kajetan Avguštin Wildenstein (fol. 285r), Marko Ferdinand Lichtenberg (fol. 287r),²⁵ Karel Jožef Flödnig (fol. 296r), Anton Tadej Janez Nepomuk Taufferer (fol. 327r), and Janez Tomaž Garzarolli (fol. 355r). Occasionally, Grahovar used other, less frequent approaches to the model, which are nevertheless interesting and should at least be mentioned.²⁶ Regardless of the minor or major changes of the original prototype, the adapted composition is incorporated into the much broader context of Grahovar's whole-page miniature, designed by himself according to the wishes of the patron. Grahovar usually also took over the traditional form of the *pictura*, framed in an oval cartouche. Only exceptionally, when the patron decided on a less typical form of the so-called "open emblem", the selected part of Eimmart's engraving was freely interpolated into a newly designed composition. It is necessary to stress again that it was the patron who suggested the concept of his emblem, not only by the choice of his academic nickname and motto, but also with some basic notion of the visual part. The painter usually conformed to the client's demands or offered some alternative visual solutions that he believed would appeal to him.²⁷

From the perspective of originality and inventiveness, a modern observer might expect that Grahovar would use the *inv. et pinx.* form of signature only in the emblems of the second group (as well as in particular emblems where he incorporated a specific element in a newly designed emblem). Such reasoning is evidently in contradiction with

- 25 Lichtenberg's emblem stands out because the original motto of the prototype ("*Imparibus, impar*," Hohberg, fol. 119r) is replaced with the motto from another emblem ("*Hoc sydere laetor*," Hohberg, fol. 89r).
- 26 These include the adoption of Eimmart's composition with only slight modification and a new motto of the academic member (Anton Jožef Auersperg, fol. 259r), adaptation of the composition by Eimmart with various changes and a new motto (Lovrenc Krištof Flachenfeld and Kajetan Baltazar Pettenegg, fols. 265r and 341r respectively) or taking over of a specific element from Eimmart's composition, which Grahovar interpolated in a newly designed emblem (Nikolaj Rudolf Raab and Marija Ignac Engelshaus, fols. 300r and 375r respectively).
- 27 The established practice of the *Academici Uniti* to ask for a specific emblem, already published in one of the popular emblem books and modified according to their wishes, goes back to the very beginnings of the *Theatrum Memoriae* (Germ, *The Emblems*, 149-170).

the concept of authorship in the Early Modern Period and Grahovar's case fully proves it. The whole idea that Grahovar should have claimed the authorship over his miniatures, based on the modern criteria of his design in relation to the model, is inconsistent with the artistic practice of the period. Let us just point out that many compositions by Eimmart, which served as a model to Grahovar, were themselves modelled on pre-existing prototypes. Some of them even go back to various editions of Alciato, the father of Renaissance emblem books. There is another argument that helps to explain why both painter and his patron found the authorship of miniatures in the *Theatrum Memoriae* undisputable: Grahovar always designed and painted the whole entry page of the academy member. He realized every single detail of his miniatures, from purely decorative elements to complex figural compositions.²⁸ The majority of his miniatures based on Hohberg's emblems are indisputably his own creation, regardless of the fact that he used (more or less transformed) compositions by Eimmart and (occasionally) a view of the patron's manor modelled after illustrations in the famous topography *Die Ehre des Herzogthums Crain* by Valvasor. As already shown, Grahovar's adoptions of prototypes found in Hohberg's book are never exact copies or dull imitations. Last but not least: even in the cases when Grahovar's compositions lean heavily on Eimmart, with his great skill the painter transformed relatively simple black and white illustrations into miniature masterpieces, a true poetry of colour and light.

What about the issue of various types of Grahovar's signature in the context of originality of his work? Considering the lack of archival sources, the question on what criteria Grahovar might have decided whether to sign his work with *pinxit* or *invenit et pinxit* remains open. The more so because any plausible conclusion can only be drawn from the limited number of nineteen miniatures that undoubtedly relate to a direct model in Hohberg's book. (They represent approximately one fourth of Grahovar's miniatures painted for the *Ljubljana Album*.) Polonca Vrhunc, who pays special attention to different forms of Grahovar's signature, does not discuss the potential reason behind the painter's choice of signature and neither does any other author. Until recently, not even the exact number of signed folios was precisely established.²⁹ To a modern

28 Although the great majority of Grahovar's miniatures are painted by his own hand, it is probable that his daughter Marija Nikolaja Grahovar, who was an illuminator herself, occasionally assisted her father. However, it is difficult to say on which folios she actually collaborated with her father (Cevc, *The Illuminated Manuscript*, 77).

29 Cevc gives a vague estimation that Grahovar signed more than 30 miniatures (Cevc, *The Illuminated Manuscript*, 107). According to Kastelic, Grahovar signed 60 miniatures, only one of them with *invenit et pinxit*

scholar, the challenge to find an explanation is compelling; however, we should proceed with caution.

In his signed opus for the *Theatrum Memoriae*, Grahovar claimed full authorship of both invention and execution in twenty-four cases only, although he is undoubtedly the sole author of a much bigger number of painted folios in the *Ljubljana Album*. Among the nineteen miniatures inspired by Eimmart's engravings, he claimed full authorship over six. Only one of them (the emblem of M. I. Engelshaus) falls into the category of miniatures that are almost entirely Grahovar's own invention. Another one (the emblem of J. T. Garzarolli) falls into the second group (adaptation of Eimmart's composition with significant changes). The remaining four (emblems of A. F. Possareli, F. A. Moscon, F. Apfaltrer and K. I. Jurič) belong to the first group with only slight modification of Eimmart's composition. The result empirically proves that Grahovar's decision on how to sign his miniatures does not conform to the modern concept of authorship.

What then could have influenced the master's choice of signature? At the present state of research, any answer is highly hypothetical. Still, based on Vrhunc's research on the periodization of Grahovar's work and a detailed re-examination of his miniatures enabled by the new high-resolution digital scans, we could suggest a possible explanation. In his early period (ca. 1740-1745), Grahovar was less consistent in signing his work than in his later years, and he seldom used the type of signature with both *inv. et pinx.* In later years, his miniatures were regularly signed and he claimed full authorship more often. It seems safe enough to conclude that after the first years of work for the members of the St Dismas Society, Grahovar did not become only more consistent in signing his work, but more audacious and self-confident as well.

Conclusion

Our research on the genesis of emblems painted by Simon Tadej Volbenk Grahovar for the *Album of the Ljubljana Noble Society of St Dismas* shows that contrary to the firmly established belief, the miniatures signed by Grahovar are not always original creations invented entirely by himself. It is clear that in his work for the *Academici Uniti* he occasionally used already existent emblems not only as a source of inspiration, but as an actual model, as well. At present, we are able to identify at least one important direct source – Wolfgang Helmhard von Hohberg's *Lust- und*

(Kastelic, *Iconographic Catalogue*, 179-261). A detailed examination of the folios shows that 63 of them were signed by Grahovar (or at least the signature is still visible), 24 of them with both *invenit et pinxit*. Some miniatures by Grahovar are not signed. According to a stylistic analysis, it seems probable that he painted at least 12 more miniatures.

Artzeney-Garten des Königlichen Propheten Davids with engravings by Georg Christoph Eimmart. A comparative analysis of Eimmart's engravings and Grahovar's miniatures reveals that the painter developed various creative strategies in his adoption and emulation of the prototypes. He never produced an exact copy or a dull imitation. He was also careful to signal a distinction in his claim of authorship, taking the credit for the illumination with the usual "Grahover pinx." or pointing out the fact that he was also the inventor of the composition with "Grahover inv. et pinx." Grahovar's practice of signing the miniatures, however, does not conform to the modern concept of authorship and his criteria remain elusive.

How does the knowledge of the fact that Grahovar adopted compositions (or parts of compositions) by Eimmart affect our evaluation of Grahovar's opus? Does it in any way call into question the established image of the most creative and inventive master among the illuminators of the *Theatrum Memoriae*? Certainly not. The variety, imaginativeness, accomplishment, and mastery of his miniatures speak for themselves. He certainly gained appreciation among the members of the St Dismas Society, who were his faithful clients for more than three decades. From the perspective of modern art history, there is no doubt: the scholars of the past two centuries have justly praised Grahovar's artistic genius. What does change, though, is the scholarly perspective, because recent research provides a better understanding of Grahovar's work, as well as clearer insight into the genesis of emblems in the *Theatrum Memoriae*.

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