

The principal manuscript of *Della Pittura*, apparently dating from 1436, bears before the dedication to Brunelleschi an emblematic eagle and the motto *Quid Tum*.¹ The manuscript of *Philodoxeos* which was probably sent to Lionello d'Este in 1438 is marked with another emblem, the winged eye.² This is the *impresa* of Leon Battista Alberti well known from two medallion portraits. In the earlier medallion, usually considered a self-portrait, it is an anatomical eye with splendid wings: one may date this work with reasonable probability to 1438.³ The medallion by Matteo de' Pasti of 1446-50, finally, bears on the reverse a winged eye and the words *Quid Tum* enclosed in a wreath of laurel.⁴

Much attention has been focused on this emblem — partly because it offers a clue to the moral outlook of a great man, partly because it is also an early case, and a model, of hieroglyphical symbolism applied to moral allegory. It is the kind of symbol which became conventional on medallion portraits, frequent in all kinds of decoration, the basis of „emblem literature“. Like the tradition of which it is an early sign, this symbol is hermetic.

Aloys Heiss, in 1883, mentioned two earlier interpretations: „Quid tum? Qu'arrivera-t-il alors? quand l'oeil d'Alberti si exercé aus choses terrestres, jouira de la contemplation des choses divines? Allusion aux vastes connaissances de cet artiste. D'autres ont vu dans cette imprese, la vigilance de l'illustre architecte, son coup d'oeil infaillible, auquel rien n'échappe“.⁵ Karl Giehlow, in his still unsurpassed article on Renaissance hieroglyphs, first suggested that the eye was not Alberti's but God's. On the basis of a possibly decisive source, Diodorus, he also claimed that this was God as *justitiae servator* and that the whole emblem concerned the imminence of the last judgment.⁶ This view was reiterated by Ludwig Volkmann⁷ and re-argued on different, but not, I think, sounder, evidence by Edgar Wind, who tried to link *Quid Tum* to „quid tunc“ in the *dies irae* service.⁸ This group of critics, beginning with Giehlow, denied the reference in the symbol to Alberti's „vastes connaissances“; others, on the contrary, felt that the winged eye was an epistemological symbol exalting precisely these. This is the point of view of Paul-Henri Michel⁹ and of Georg Habich¹⁰, the one a literary, the other an art historian. In their interpretations the words *qui tum* come to mean „what next?“ rather than „what then?“ as is, indeed, quite possible. Thus two schools of critics have based their speculations on various possible classical sources and philosophical orientations, but no one has so far made use of a word from Alberti himself; yet, in his dialogue „Anuli“ he himself explicated the winged eye.¹¹

In this dialogue Philoponus has some allegorical seal rings found in a sacred fountain, and these are explained to him by a personage called Consilium, with the approval of the goddess Minerva. The first of the twelve seal rings is engraved with a *corona* (crown or wreath) in the middle of which is an eye adorned with eagle wings.¹²

„Corona et laetitiae et gloriae insigne est: oculo potentius nihil, velocius nihil, dignius nihil; quid multa? Ejusmodi est ut inter membra primus, praecipuus, et res, et quasi deus sit. Quid quod deum veteres interpretantur esse quidpiam oculi simile, universa spectantem, singulaque dinumerantem? Hinc igitur admonemur, rerum omnium gloriam a nobis esse reddendam Deo; in eo laetandum totoque

¹ Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze II. IV. 38, mentioned in *Hubert Janitschek*, *Kleinere kunsttheoretische Schriften...* (Vienna, 1877), V.

² Cod. Estense, lat. 52 (VI. A. 12) f. I 6, mentioned in *Girolamo Mancini*, *Vita di L. B. Alberti* (Florence, 1911), 139, note 4.

³ Medallion shown in *G. G. Hill*, *Italian Medals of the Renaissance* (London, 1930), 16, pl. 2. The date is suggested by a passage in the probably autobiographical *Vita*, (*Muratori*, R. I. XXV, 299c) „Apud Venetias vultus amicorum qui Florentiae adessent, expressit annum, mensesque integros, postquam eos viderat. ... Suos vultus, propriumque simulacrum emulatus, ut ex pieta fictaque effigie ignotis ad se appellentibus fieret notior“. He probably left Florence in 1436 as a member of Eugene IV's curia; he left it again in 1441 but '38 seems better than '43 for the youthful portrait.

⁴ *Hill*, 161, pl. 30.

⁵ *Aloys Heiss*, *Les médailleurs de la Renaissance italienne* (Paris, 1883), IV, 21.

⁶ *Karl Giehlow*, „Die Hieroglyphenkunde des Humanismus in der Allegorie der Renaissance...“ *Jb. d. Kunsthist. Sammlungen d. Allerh. Kaisersh.* XXXII (1915), 36-7.

⁷ *Ludwig Volkmann*, *Bilderschriften der Renaissance* (Lpzg., 1923), 11.

⁸ *Edgar Wind*, *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance* (Yale, 1958), 187.

⁹ *Paul-Henri Michel*, *La Pensée de L. B. Alberti* (Paris, 1930), 181. „Avertie par les sens, l'intelligence doit en élaborer les données“.

¹⁰ *Georg Habich*, *Die Medaillen der Italienischen Renaissance* (Stuttgart, 1924), 45.

¹¹ *Opera Inedita et Pauca Separatim Impressa*, ed. *Mancini* (Florence, 1890), 224-25.

¹² *Ibid.* 228, „Hoc in anulo corona insculpta est quam mediam complet oculus alis aquilae insignis“.

animo virtute florido et virenti amplectendum praesentemque, videntemque nostra omnia et gesta et cogitata existimandum. Tum et alia ex parte admonemur pervigiles, circumspectosque esse oportere, quantum nostra ferat animi vis, indagando res omnes quae ad virtutis gloriam pertineant, in eoque laetandum si quid labore et industria bonarum divinarumque rerum simul assecuti¹³.

(The wreath is the symbol of joy and glory: and the eye is more powerful than anything, swifter, more worthy; what more can I say? It is such as to be the first, chief, king, like a god of human parts. Why else did the ancients consider God as something akin to an eye, seeing all things and distinguishing each separate one. By this we are reminded that we must render praise for all things to God, rejoice with the whole spirit in him, fulfill a flourishing and manly ideal of excellence, knowing that he sees everything we do and everything we think. Then, on the other hand, we are reminded to be wide-awake, all-embracing as far as the power of our intelligence allows, in order to find out all things that lead to the glory of excellence, delighting to pursue with labor and persistence what is good and divine.)

The passage from „Anuli“ shows that the ambivalence of critical interpretation is based on a real ambivalence in the mind of the creator himself, but that the notion of judgment and guilt which an overly Christian interpretation brings with it must be ruled out. It suggests a combination of humanistic pride and reverence before an all-embracing deity.

The problem of arrogance or humility or a particular kind of intellectual pride also arises with regard to the chosen name Leone. Kurt Badt, who, in his most recent discussion of the medallion portraits took note of both interpretations of the emblem and chose for himself the self-glorification theory, did so partially it seems, because the self-portrait not only shows features filled with stern self-confidence but also alludes in a subtle way to the name, Leone.¹⁴ The hair on this portrait, Badt points out, is treated in a manner not traditional for hair but conventional for the mane of the lion, Alberti's symbol of „courage and pride“. The passage cited above indicates that, on the whole, Alberti's presentation of himself is meant to convey a kind of courage and pride, but one limited by the notion of labor and anxious aspiration. With regard to the name, Leone, Alberti's numerous allegorical uses of the lion in his „Apologhi“ lead to a more delicately shaded appreciation of its significance.

„Cum leoni cuidam aditum in coelum patuisse Leo quidam intellexisset: cupiditate gloriae flagrans difficilima omnia ita exequabat ut leonibus omnibus facile perstaret. Et nam quidem insanis inquit invidia. Qui nam huic generi animantium locus debeatur iam pridem merenti consignatus est. Respondit Leo: Sat nobis erit quo meruisse“.

(When Leo heard that at one time another lion had been vouchsafed a place in the heavens: driven by the desire for glory he did all he could to make himself easily first among lions. You are crazy, that's all, said Envy, for that place which belongs to this kind of action has already been awarded long ago to one who deserved it. Leo replied: we shall be satisfied also to deserve it.)

Opera, Massainus ed. 1499, g3^v

„Rogatus Leo quodam ita vehementer pallio in se coniecto perterreferebat: respondit — Et quis mostrum hoc cui neque caput adsit, neque pectus in aethera sublatum intuens non horrescat?“

(When someone asked Leo why he was so terrified of a ball being thrown at him, this was his answer: who would not shudder seeing one with no head or heart lifted up so high in the air?)

Ibid.

„Leo illae celeberrimus amicus¹⁵ hominis a suo illo hospite Romae pertabernas ductus loro rogantibus quid ita ageret ut cum in arena pegaseos cursu, saltu pardos, viribus tauros, humanitae homines exuperasset, cunq̄ue inter leones forme et dignitate esset nulli secundus, Idem tamen se loro ductari et canes latrantes post se insanire pateret respondit eiusdem esse animi et prodesse amicis et latratores despiciere“.

(The famous lion that was friends with a man was walking through the streets of Rome led by him on a rope, and was asked why, seeing that he could outdo horses on the racetrack, leap higher than the leopard, outfight the bull, and surpass man in humanness of spirit, being, moreover, second to no lion in beauty and dignity, he yet let himself be led and let the dogs bark at his heels. This, he said, was his nature, to be kind to his friends and to despise the barkers.)

Ibid. g3^v-4^r

¹³ *Ibid.* 229-30.

¹⁴ Kurt Badt, „Drei plastische Arbeiten von Leon Battista Alberti“, *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz VII* (1958), 81.

¹⁵ The story referred to is in *Aulus Gellius*, *Noct. Att. V, XIV*, the story of Androcles and the lion.

„Theatrum non mediocri admiratione detinebatur Leonem spectatando qui modo discum in altum perquam belle iactare modo immanem orbem marmoreum maximis viribus voluere modo ovo lepidissime ludere perdoctus esse. Et quidnam inquit Invidus levia haec sunt : ac videntur quidem diversa : sed ea unum sunt : nam illorum quidque volubile quippiam est. Respondit Leo, Fateor o rex peritissime istuc esse ut asseris : sed te id nolo fugiat: ovum esse hoc fragile quod volvo mi homo non pilam“.

(The audience was stunned with admiration as they watched Leo throwing up a disk, rolling a heavy ball of marble with great force, playing debtly with an egg. But this is easy, Envy said, though these tricks seem to be different they are all one: they all have something to do with rolling things. Yes, replied Leo, I confess, oh King, that this is as you so astutely say : but I would not have you unaware that this which I am rolling, man, is a fragile egg and not a ball.)

Ibid. g4^r

Leo as the astrological symbol of the sun, as the fairy tale and heraldic bearer of majesty suggests power, pride, even similarity to God ; but all was not self-assurance. Alberti particularly felt the sharp glance of envy, and perhaps in self-defense, curbed his assertion of power by a certain mournful stress on the laboriousness and isolation of his spiritual mission. His concept of the lion is of power, but of power in and through self-discipline, odd as this interpretation of the great beast may seem. Alberti's lion suffers in a hostile world, and transcends suffering through pride.¹⁶ Social bitterness concerning the fools who govern and those who adulate, no less than faith in himself and in nature, finds expression in the name Leone.

¹⁶ *Diog. Laertes, Vitae* (Greek and Latin, T. Aldobrandinus, ed. Rome, 1594), 155, relates the saying of Diogenes the Cynic that a lion owned by a man can never be regarded as a slave, „for it is a slave's part to be afraid, but wild beasts are fearful to men“. He draws the parallel to himself, a man of superior spirit, sold into slavery. This story may have influenced the concept of Alberti, whose sayings as quoted in the *Vita anonyma* certainly show the influence of this biography of Diogenes the Cynic, though Alberti put pride and wisdom of a kind in the place of fearfulness.

RÉSUMÉ

Leon Battista Albertis Emblem, das geflügelte Auge, ist bisher auf verschiedene Weise ikonographisch erklärt worden: als Symbol des eigenen Genius oder des Geistes Gottes und — spezieller — als das des Jüngsten Gerichtes. Das Problem scheint durch eine Stelle in Albertis Dialog „Anuli“ seine Lösung zu finden, wo, mit einer Anspielung auf die Hieroglyphik, das geflügelte Auge einerseits als Symbol der Allwissenheit und Allmacht Gottes erläutert wird und andererseits als Symbol der menschlichen Erkenntnis, der beschieden ist, Gott nachzueifern und zu verehren. Es handelt sich folglich um eine kühne Umdeutung von Traditionen im Sinne einer individuellen Konzeption.

Albertis selbstgewählter Vorname *Leo* ist wahrscheinlich von einer sehr persönlichen Vorstellung her zu verstehen : in seinen allegorischen Fabeln, den „Apologhi“, begegnet der Löwe als ein mächtiges und nobles Tier, das von der Menge missverstanden wird.

Anna Maria Crinò : RINTRACCIATA LA DATA DI MORTE DI ORAZIO GENTILESCHI.

Nella filza 4199 del fondo Mediceo dell'Archivio di Stato di Firenze ho trovato la data esatta della morte di Orazio Gentileschi in mezzo al carteggio di Alessandro Antelminelli, che sotto lo pseudonimo di Amerigo Salvetti fu Residente del Granduca di Toscana alla Corte di Londra dal 1618 fino alla sua morte nel 1657. In un inserto diretto al Granduca Ferdinando II, dopo aver dato notizie rassicuranti sulla decrescente mortalità per la peste a Londra, il Salvetti comunica in data 11 febbraio 1638 *ab Incarnatione: Morò quattro giorni fà il Gentileschi famoso pittore, regrettato molto da Sua Maestà et da ogn'altro amatore di quella sua virtù.*

Quindi, secondo il nostro calendario, la data di morte di Orazio Gentileschi può ormai fissarsi con certezza al 7 febbraio 1639.

RÉSUMÉ

Das bisher unbekanntes Todesdatum Orazio Gentileschis wird durch einen von der Verfasserin im Florentiner Staatsarchiv aufgefundenen Bericht des Amerigo Salvetti an Ferdinando II. überliefert; demnach starb Gentileschi am 7. Februar 1639.