

# THE MARKS OF MONITORY MEMORY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE *SHEPHEARD BUSS* REBUS IN LIGHT OF THE MORAL AGENDA OF CLAUDE PARADIN'S *HEROICALL DEVICES*

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**Abstract:** A preoccupation with virtue was embodied in many literary and aesthetic forms in early modern England, including the popular genre of emblem books. This paper will suggest that a moralizing emblem book, 'The Heroicall Devices of M. Claudius Paradin,' provides key insight into aspects of an obscure embroidery known as *The Shepherd Buss* (c.1570-1600), which borrows many of its images from Paradin's work. In context of the early modern connection of memory and virtue and Paradin's stated goal of cultivating virtue through memorable emblems, this paper suggests that the *Shepherd Buss* might be better understood in part as a monitory memorialization of Early Modern virtue.

In a dimly lit corner of the British Galleries in London's Victoria and Albert Museum, there hangs a blackwork embroidery of a sad shepherd surrounded by bits of verse, emblems, plants, animals, and other miscellany (Figure 1). Titled 'The *Shepherd Buss*' (*buss* means 'kiss'), the piece consists of 44.5 by 38 inches of white silk embroidered with black thread. The embroidery's absence of color might leave an underwhelming first impression were it not for the intense images that pierce the cloth with connotations of death, suffering, loss, and entanglement. Like a more famous piece of art, the *Shepherd Buss* contains powerful emotions that cry out to be understood. What is this embroidery and what was it made for? What might this piece of art communicate? What meanings are intertwined within the intricate threads?



Figure 1: *The Shepherd Buss* in entirety. Photo provided by Dr. Catherine Oakes on 1.31.13 by email.

Unfortunately the museum's information about the *Shepherd Buss*—including display labels, website, archives,<sup>1</sup> and personal knowledge of curators<sup>2</sup> and archivists<sup>3</sup>—is very limited. The embroidery's gallery note merely states that it depicts 'an Elizabethan shepherd mourning his lost lover.'<sup>4</sup> In a similar vein, the *Buss*'s collection record contains more speculation than information: the embroidery is thought to be 'characteristic Elizabethan blackwork,' possibly a cupboard cloth or wall hanging, possibly 'a very personal piece, since the sorrows of the 'shepherd are emphasised repeatedly in numerous forms of words, rebuses (images representing words) and emblems,' seems to depict mourning and romantic loss, and was probably created between 1570 and 1600. This unhelpful description concludes with the apology that 'the subject has never been satisfactorily explained.'<sup>5</sup>

Many facts of this description are shaky at best: for instance, this piece is hardly 'characteristic Elizabethan blackwork'<sup>6</sup> and its dependence on Paradin dates it after 1591 at the earliest.<sup>7</sup> It is also somewhat doubtful that the *Buss* is primarily meant to be a depiction of romantic loss: while it is true that many of the emblems have mournful connotations and two emblems do have connotations of romantic love (Cupid and the pierced heart), as shall be seen, most of the emblems have far stronger connotations of melancholy and morality (or even piety) than romantic or sexual love. Outside the museum's information, very little can be found about the Shepherd *Buss*: it has received almost no scholarly attention other than being mentioned by a handful of articles in relationship to other artifacts or arguments. Even combing the Internet reveals little; there are no clues as to what exactly the *Shepherd Buss* is, let alone what it might be *about*.

This void of information about who embroidered the *Buss*, what it is, its intended use, its subject, and its potential meanings make it difficult to find a starting place for deeper analysis of the shepherd and the images and words which surround him—all of which are clearly meant to be read symbolically rather than literally. The shepherd himself is no help with the interpretive problem because shepherds in late medieval and early modern England were symbolism's blank canvases, standing in for undercover poets, astronomers, lovers, political figures, and clergymen—to name but a few.<sup>8</sup> The only thing that can be accurately assumed is that the shepherd in the embroidery is most likely not an actual shepherd but some other figure in 'disguise.'<sup>9</sup> In the midst of all this uncertainty, one possible key to the enigma of this embroidery is Claude Paradin's emblem book titled 'Heroicall Devices,' the one verifiably traceable source for some of the elements in the *Shepherd Buss*.<sup>10</sup> This paper will examine the embroidery's rebus in light of its connections with Paradin.

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<sup>1</sup> Clare Browne, 'Shepherd Buss', 20 February 2014. In her email, Clare Browne, the present curator of the embroidery notes that the Archives contains no additional information other than the fact that the *Buss* was purchased for 50 pounds from two women in 1953 and that the original curator and conservator has since retired from the museum.

<sup>2</sup> Browne.

<sup>3</sup> James Sutton, 'RT14807 Response to Your Research Enquiries Question', 28 March 2014.

<sup>4</sup> '#13 "The Shepherd Buss."' T.219-1953. Gallery notes, *Birth, Marriage, and Death in Elizabethan Taste*. Victoria and Albert Museum. February 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Shepherd Buss Museum Record' <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78790/shepherd-buss-picture-unknown/>>.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Gostelow, *Blackwork* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1977).

<sup>7</sup> The date when 'Heroicall Devices' was translated into English.

<sup>8</sup> R.S. Bear, 'Introduction to Edmund Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender', in *The Shepheardes Calender* (The University of Oregon, Oregon) <<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rbear/shintro.html>>.

<sup>9</sup> Bear.

<sup>10</sup> Patricia Wardle, *Guide to English Embroidery*. (London: HMSO, 1970), p. 12.

Claude Paradin's emblem book is most likely the source of all but four emblems in the embroidery. Many emblems in the *Buss* are so exactly Paradin's that it seems certain that the embroiderer had access to *The Heroicall Devices*. In his opening letter to Theodot of Marze, Paradin explicitly states that the mission of his emblems is 'to stir up diverse men to the apprehension and love of virtue.'<sup>11</sup> Emblems, he continues, are able to cultivate virtue because they provide 'an express pattern and image of virtue,' thus engraving in his readers a 'perpetual memory' of these images when just the principle or idea of virtue would easily 'decay or be forgotten.'<sup>12</sup>

Somehow, Paradin believes, his book will nurture virtue in the person who studies it; this book, almost like an icon, sacred text, or relic, will have a transforming *moral* effect on the person using it. 'The profit and commodity that is reaped from [these emblems] is not to be held in little regard or estimation, forasmuch as by the use of them vexations both of body and mind (which are otherwise intolerable) are easily mollified and assuaged.'<sup>13</sup>

Paradin is not unique in his belief that emblems exert powerful moral influence on the readers of emblem books. Many authors of emblem books and devotional literature such as Jan Van der Noot,<sup>14</sup> Henry Hawkins,<sup>15</sup> John Brinsley,<sup>16</sup> Daniel Featley,<sup>17</sup> Hugh Plat,<sup>18</sup> and the author of *Ashbrea*<sup>19</sup> (to name but a few) share Paradin's belief that the purpose of emblems is—at least in part—to cultivate virtue.<sup>20</sup> Emblem writers also seem to share the understanding that emblems impart virtue by means of the memory,<sup>21</sup> a faculty which was generally thought to be an essential component of morality since the early middle ages.<sup>22</sup> As Paradin writes in his opening letter, it is because emblems are 'an express pattern and image of virtue' that they 'hereby continued a perpetual memory of the same.'<sup>23</sup> Paradin's use of mnemonic narrative images to instill virtue in

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<sup>11</sup> Claudius Paradin, *The Heroicall Devises of M. Claudius Paradin Canon of Beauieu. Whereunto Are Added the Lord Gabriel Symeons and Others. Translated Out of Latin into English* by P.S., p. 2  
<[http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full\\_rec?SOURCE=config.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99854716&ECCO=undefined](http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=config.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99854716&ECCO=undefined)>.

<sup>12</sup> Paradin, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Paradin, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Jan van der Noot, *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings, 1569*. (New York, 1936).

<sup>15</sup> Henry Hawkins, *Parthenia Sacra. Or The Mysterious and Delicious Garden of the Sacred Parthenes; : Symbolically Set Forth and Enriched with Pious Devises and Emblemes for the Entertainment of Deuout Soules; Contriued Al to the Honour of the Incomparable Virgin Marie Mother of God; for the Pleasure and Deuotion Especially of the Parthenian Sodalitie of Her Immaculate Conception*. (Rouen: Printed by John Cousturier, 1633).

<sup>16</sup> John Brinsley, *Two Treatises. I. Three Sacred Emblems ... Ii. Tears for Jerusalem, or, The Compassionate Lamentation of a Tender-hearted Saviour over a Rebellious and Obdurate People*. (Lond, 1656); John Brinsley, *The Mystical Brasen Serpent: With the Magnetical Vertue Thereof. Or, Christ Exalted Upon the Cross, with the Blessed End and Fruit of That His Exaltation ... : In Two Treatises ... : Whereunto Is Added a Treatise of the Saints Joint-membership ...* (London Printed by Thomas Maxey for Ralph Smith, Printed for Ralph Smith, 1653).

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Featley, *Clavis Mystica: : a Key Opening Divers Difficult and Mysterious Texts of Holy Scripture; Handled in Seventy Sermons, Preached at Solemn and Most Celebrious Assemblies, Upon Speciall Occasions, in England and France*. (London; Printed by Robert Young for Nicolas Bourne, at the south entrance of the royall Exchange,, 1636), pp. 498–536.

<sup>18</sup> Hugh Plat, *The Jewell House of Art and Nature* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum; Norwood, NJ, 1979).

<sup>19</sup> E. M., *Ashbrea, or, The Grove of Beatitudes, Represented in Emblemes [signed E.M.]*. (Lond, 1665).

<sup>20</sup> Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books*. (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), pp. 198–210.

<sup>21</sup> William E Engel, 'Mnemonic Emblems in the Humanist Discourses of Knowledge', in *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory 1500-1700*, ed. by Peter M Daly and John Manning, pp. 125–142 (p. 1).

<sup>22</sup> Mary Carruthers, 'Inventional Mnemonics and the Ornaments of Style: The Case of Etymology', *Connotations*, 2 (1992), 103–114 (p. 1).

<sup>23</sup> Paradin, p. 2.

his readers stands in a millennia-long tradition that was preoccupied with virtue and the relationship between memory and virtue.<sup>24</sup>

Through examining a host of traditions and texts that use emblems for the purpose of internalizing and memorizing moral, ethical, or pious concepts, Mary Carruthers,<sup>25</sup> Frances Yates,<sup>26</sup> William Engel,<sup>27</sup> and to some degree Rosemary Freeman<sup>28</sup> have shown that, on the whole, early modern art and literature leaned heavily upon emblematic images—via the power of memory—to reveal deep moral truths hidden within the subject matter and internalized through the reader's meditation upon the emblem.<sup>29</sup> This type of memory was considered to have a certain transformative power by which virtue was not only understood but embodied by the person viewing the mnemonic image. Engel names this transformative type of remembering 'monitory memory': remembering the past in order to be 'admonished' about the future, which would necessarily impact actions and decisions in the present.<sup>30</sup> 'Monitory memory' is perhaps best exemplified by the *momento mori*, a token (usually in the form of a skull) kept or worn to daily remind the owner of his own future death as an admonition to live virtuously in the present.<sup>31</sup> Remembering, training, and stocking (with mnemonic images like emblems) a copious and skilled memory was seen as inherently foundational to being a virtuous person.<sup>32</sup>

The fact that the *Buss* borrows heavily from Paradin's emblem book, which is so explicitly an instance of 'monitory memory'—furnishing mnemonic images for admonition—may be a doorway into a better understanding of the Shepherd Buss. In all, eleven of the *Buss*'s twenty emblematic images seem to be copied fairly directly from Paradin: the tortured hand (see Figures 2 and 3), lure, harp, star, sun, wheel, and rose (from the rebus) as well as the four larger emblems inside the rebus. Additionally, the urn, cup, cross, siren, Cupid and death are likely derived at least in part from Paradin. Of the three emblematic images that cannot be definitely traced back to Paradin (the heart, lute, and bones) the heart and bones seem to be the embroiderer's inventions, designed, as we shall see particularly for their roles in the rebus, leaving only the lute with a source originating in another source (most likely Alciati).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Frances Amelia Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> Mary Carruthers, 'Inventional Mnemonics and the Ornaments of Style: The Case of Etymology'; Mary Carruthers, 'Collective Memory and Memoria Rerum: An Architecture for Thinking', in *Grasping the world: the idea of the museum*, by Donald Preziosi and Claire J. Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 112–128; Mary J. (Mary Jean) Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: a Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed.. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Mary J. (Mary Jean) Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>26</sup> Yates.

<sup>27</sup> William E Engel, *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).

<sup>28</sup> Freeman.

<sup>29</sup> Engel, 'Mnemonic Emblems in the Humanist Discourses of Knowledge', p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Engel, *Mapping Mortality*, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Engel, *Mapping Mortality*, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Mary J. (Mary Jean) Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 141.

<sup>33</sup> These seem to come from Andrea Alciati, *A Book of Emblems: the Emblematum Liber in Latin and English* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2004).



Figure 2: The tortured 'hand' from *The Shepherd Buss*.  
Photograph by author, February 2014. London



Figure 3: The tortured hand in *Paradin*. From page 125 of the EEBO image<sup>34</sup>

Since most of the *Buss*'s emblems come from *Paradin*, it is no surprise that most also bear strong characteristics of 'monitory memory' in keeping with *Paradin*'s stated goal of providing memorable images to cultivate virtue. Like traditional examples of the *momento mori*, most of the *Buss*'s emblems have characteristics both of warning and of memory. Firstly, the *Buss*'s rebus contains a real *momento mori* in the middle of the top row (Figure 4). Directly above the shepherd—looking down over his right and left shoulder—are the 'bones' and 'death' emblems. The 'bones' emblem is made of three bones, reminiscent of the common *momento mori* figure minus the skull (which is found on the figure of death, the next emblem in line).<sup>35</sup> A connection seems intended between 'bones,' the figure of 'death,' and the rebus's first emblem, 'Cupid,' which parallels 'death' from the other side of the urn—a little visual inclusio that infuses a spirit of *momento mori* into the whole rebus.<sup>36</sup> 'Death' is the second to last emblem of the rebus when read from beginning to end (see Figure 1), but also precedes 'Cupid' (the first emblem of the rebus when read in order), separated from the love-god only by the urn. The rebus begins, uncharacteristically, in the upper *right* hand corner rather than the left corner, deepening the connection between love and death and reinforcing the mythical blending of the two by hinting that death flows into love as love leads ultimately to death. This mingling of love and death is reinforced by the myth behind the emblems. According to the legend, Cupid and death are traveling together, fall asleep, and upon awakening inadvertently pick up arrows belonging to the other.<sup>37</sup> In keeping with this story, in the *Buss* both Cupid and death carry one arrow (in opposite hands) in addition to their weapon of choice (a bow for Cupid and a spade for death), reinforcing the warning that Cupid and death can deliver the same blow. This blow seems to have met its mark in the hand (see Figure 2) and the heart, both of which are pierced with arrows similar to the ones carried by 'love' and 'death.' The heart seems to be an invention of the embroiderer's which is tellingly shot through with two arrows, presumably the one from 'Cupid' and the other from 'death.' The hand (Figure 2) is an exact replicate of a *Paradin* emblem (Figure

<sup>34</sup> [http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full\\_rec?EeboId=99854716&ACTION=ByID&SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ID=V20154&FILE=&SEARCHSCREEN=param%28SEARCHSCREEN%29&VID=20154&PAGENO=87&ZOOM=100&VIEWPORT=&CENTREPOS=&GOTOPAGENO=&ZOOMLIST=100&ZOOMTEXTBOX=&SEARCHCONFIG=param%28SEARCHCONFIG%29&DISPLAY=param%28DISPLAY%29](http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?EeboId=99854716&ACTION=ByID&SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ID=V20154&FILE=&SEARCHSCREEN=param%28SEARCHSCREEN%29&VID=20154&PAGENO=87&ZOOM=100&VIEWPORT=&CENTREPOS=&GOTOPAGENO=&ZOOMLIST=100&ZOOMTEXTBOX=&SEARCHCONFIG=param%28SEARCHCONFIG%29&DISPLAY=param%28DISPLAY%29)

<sup>35</sup> The 'bones' emblem cannot be traced to an emblem book and thus seems to be the embroiderer's own creation, tailored for this spot on the rebus in connection with the death emblem; the top two diagonal bones of the emblem are slanted with the same lines as Death's spade and arrow.

<sup>37</sup> Alciati, p. 164.

3), with the one exception being that its fingernails are pierced with feathered arrows, like the ones from 'love' and 'death,' rather than the nails or staves originally shown in Paradin.<sup>38</sup> Like death's arrows which spread to other emblems in the rebus, the monitory tone of *momento mori* pierces the rebus which encompasses the whole embroidery.

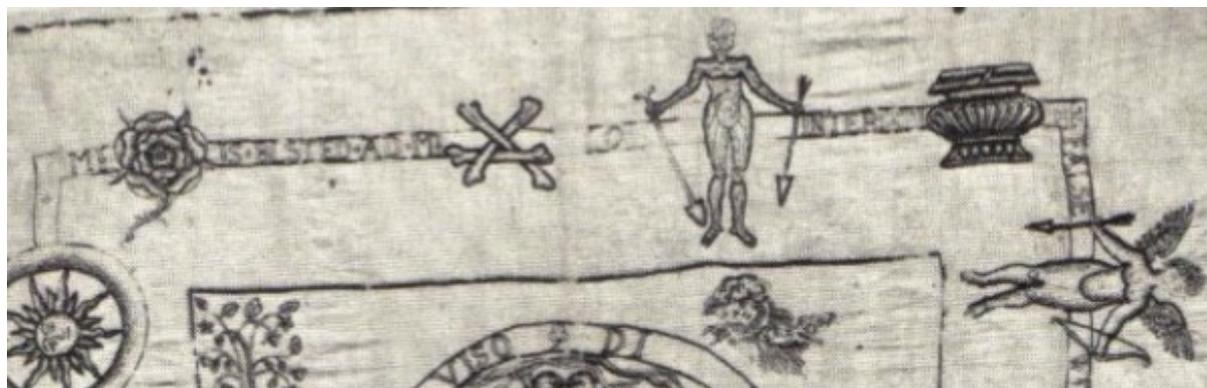


Figure 4: The fourth, final, top row of the rebus including the emblems 'rose,' 'bones,' 'death,' 'urn,' and 'Cupid.'  
 Photograph by author, February 2014. London.

In addition to being pierced with the arrows of death, the hand contains other characteristics of monitory memory. As an image of horrific torture, it is definitely 'monitory': Paradin's gloss links the emblem to the story of women who were tortured to death for being raped—a terrible memory and warning indeed.<sup>39</sup> The hand is also one of the most fundamental symbols of memory arts.<sup>40</sup> Hands were well-known and convenient mnemonic devices in which the palm and five fingers were used as separate stations in locational memory systems.<sup>41</sup> Possibly in part because of their importance as monitory and mnemonic symbols, a high number of hands (ten total) are present in the embroidery and all are engaged in very intense activities, whether clutching dangerous objects or pointing sharply, as the shepherd's left hand is doing.

The *momento mori* tone is continued in many other emblems in the rebus. 'Fortune's wheel' is a symbol commonly associated with both fate and memory.<sup>42</sup> In particular the wheel ('rota') was a universal organizing principle of memory arts; our modern term 'rote memory' derives from this metaphor.<sup>43</sup> Paradin's gloss of this emblem is monitory as well, warning that it is 'very hard' to achieve 'riches and desired happiness.'<sup>44</sup> Likewise the mermaid-woman encapsulates one of the most monitory tales of classical mythology, Homer's tale of Odysseus and the sirens. The siren is one of the most recognizable symbols of danger and warning wherever it appears in literature and arts. Even today the word 'siren' means the blaring noise that warns of impending danger. Similarly, the 'lure' is well known, like the hand, as a metaphor for memory.<sup>45</sup> The lure is also monitory; Paradin's motto warns that 'the world delighteth us with vain hope,' and the gloss explains that 'the sweet baits of worldly things, if they be seen afar off, do promise great things to men and lift them up to a wonderful hope, but if they be considered near hand thou shalt find they are but mere vanities and deceits . . . .'<sup>46</sup> This is definitely a

<sup>38</sup> Paradin, p. 55.

<sup>39</sup> Paradin, p. 125.

<sup>40</sup> Engel, *Mapping Mortality*, pp. 33–36.

<sup>41</sup> Engel, *Mapping Mortality*, pp. 33–36.

<sup>42</sup> Freeman, p. 332.

<sup>43</sup> Mary J. (Mary Jean) Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 324.

<sup>44</sup> Paradin, p. 205.

<sup>45</sup> Mary J. (Mary Jean) Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 78.

<sup>46</sup> Paradin, p. 195.

moral—perhaps even a religious—admonition. The lure and the siren alike are warnings of something that seems attractive but is actually a death-snare. Likewise both emblems rely on—and perpetuate—the viewer’s memory of the narrative mnemonic lore that infuses the images with their meaning.

Paradin’s glosses help show that the religious connotations intensify in the warnings of the cross, chalice, star, and sun emblems on the left side of the rebus (see Figure 1). In its early modern context, the chalice would have obvious Eucharistic connotations, which include themes of admonition, impending death, and memory (‘do this in remembrance of me’), making the chalice another *momento mori* of sorts. The cross emblem (Figure 5) is linked to an identical emblem in Paradin emblem (Figure 6) that adds a gigantic ring encircling the cross. This emblem is titled ‘the pledges of her remembrance’ and glossed as ‘concerning the cross of our savior Christ the redeemer of the world and the mystery of his body and blood,’<sup>47</sup> which gives the cross, like the chalice, a sacramental and specifically Eucharistic connotation with all the accompanying associations of monitory memory.<sup>48</sup> Like the chalice and cross, Paradin’s book contains variations of the ‘star,’ both accompanied with pious warnings regarding pointing someone away from the wrong path and toward the right one.<sup>49</sup> The sun in Paradin is likewise linked to God and glossed as a warning to stay on the right path.<sup>50</sup>

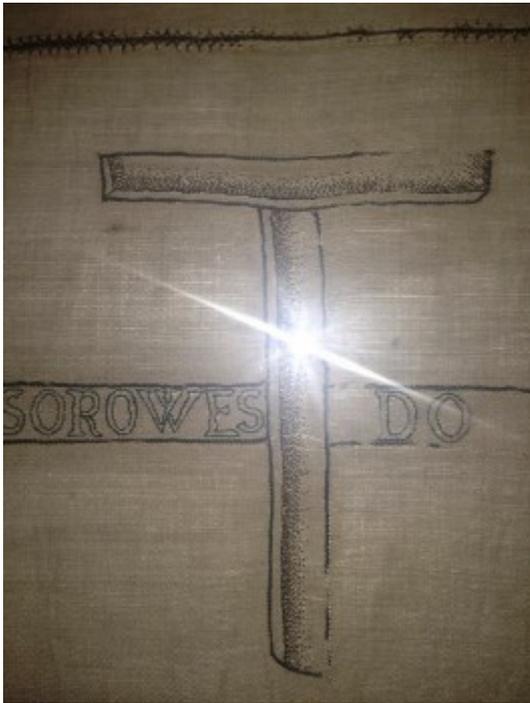


Figure 5: The ‘cross’ from *The Shepheard Buss*. Photograph by author, February 2014. London.

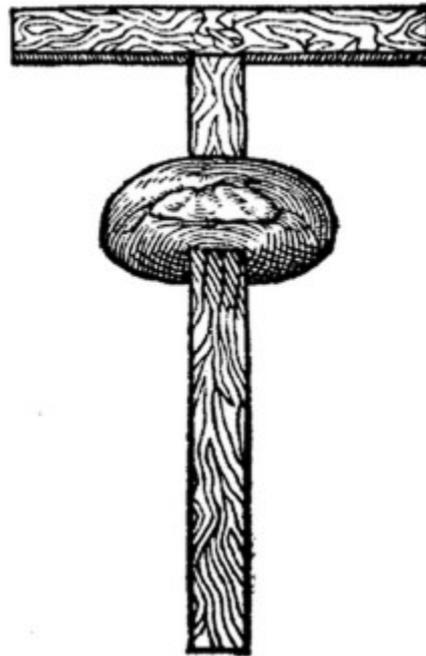


Figure 6: The ‘cross’ from Paradin. From page 11 of the EEBO image<sup>51</sup>

The rebus’s last remaining emblem, the rose, is the first emblem on the final (and, counterintuitively, the top) row of the rebus. The rose was another common emblem in early

<sup>47</sup> Paradin, p. 253.

<sup>48</sup> Paradin, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> Paradin, p. 258.

<sup>50</sup> Paradin, p. 199.

<sup>51</sup> [http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full\\_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=V20154&FILE=&SEARCHSCREEN=param\(SEARCHSCREEN\)&VID=20154&PAGENO=11&ZOOM=FIT&VIEWPORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=param\(SEARCHCONFIG\)&DISPLAY=param\(DISPLAY\)&HIGHLIGHT\\_KEYWORD=\)](http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=V20154&FILE=&SEARCHSCREEN=param(SEARCHSCREEN)&VID=20154&PAGENO=11&ZOOM=FIT&VIEWPORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=param(SEARCHCONFIG)&DISPLAY=param(DISPLAY)&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=)

modern England, typically associated with goodness, virtue, and morality, and sometimes associated with English politics or romance as well.<sup>52</sup> This rose (Figure 7) is almost the exact mirror of the Paradin rose emblem (Figure 8) including the precise curve of the thorny stem. The one significant difference between the Buss's rose and the two in Paradin is that the *Buss*'s rose lacks a beetle invading its center. Like the other emblems, Paradin's rose is accompanied with a warning; the beetle represents the lover of the vices of 'carnal pleasure' who will flourish in 'horse dung' but who will be destroyed in the midst of the rose of 'virtue.'<sup>53</sup> Paradin uses this emblem to contrast vice and virtue and warn that the fruit of vice is death. Why the meticulous embroiderer of the *Buss* chose to stitch an insect-free rose is unclear, especially given the prevalence of the beetle-infested rose emblem even in other emblem books beyond Paradin. Perhaps the 'cross' of suffering experienced earlier in the rebus has 'blasted' the vice from this rose. Perhaps in context of the rebus's top row, which is thoroughly dominated by death, the beetle of vice has already destroyed in the process of sanctification inspired by remembering death, which is exactly the work of a *momento mori*. Perhaps, if this is the case, the beetle-free rose provides a glimmer of hope that growth in virtue is possible through heeding the warnings of memory. It is significant that the unspoiled rose occupies the upper left hand corner spot of the rebus—the place where the story would begin if it were following the typical pattern of reading in English. Perhaps the embroiderer merely forgot to include the beetle or left it off at a whim (unlikely suppositions given that the rose's center has been so carefully finished), or perhaps this rose symbolizes more hope than is apparent at first glance.



Figure 7: The 'rose' from *The Shepheard Buss*. Photograph by author, February 2014. London.



Figure 8: The 'rose' from *Paradin*. Photograph by author, February 2014.

As we have seen, the images of the rebus are dominated by themes of moral admonition and features of memory. This is just as Paradin says emblems should be in order to impart critical moral truths to their viewers via mnemonic narrative images. Not only do the individual emblems—like 'death,' the 'lure,' and the 'siren,' function as individual warnings, but the rebus as a whole (Figure 1) tells a cautionary tale: 'False [CUPID] with misfortvnes [WHEEL] hath wonded [HAND] and [HEART]. Who [SIREN]-like did [LURE] me with [LUTE] and charmed [HARP]. The [CHALICE] of care and sorrowes [CROSS] do clips mi [STAR] and [SUN]. My [ROSE] is blasted and my [BONES] lo [DEATH] inters in [URN].'<sup>54</sup> The form and narrative content of the rebus make use of traditional memorization techniques in order to (like the emblems) maximize the memorability of the rebus's message. The rebus as a form was originally invented for the specific purpose of engraving things in the memory by substituting certain

<sup>52</sup> Gostelow, p. 27.

<sup>53</sup> Paradin, p. 274.

images for words or ideas.<sup>54</sup> This particular rebus has connotations of monitory memory embedded in its grammar and syntax as well as in its images. The word ‘lo,’ (see Figure 4) for example, is significantly unnecessary, especially given that the entire narrative must unfold in the space of three short sentences. ‘Lo,’ is a monitory interjection, a warning to ‘look out,’ with connotations of ‘beware,’ or ‘behold’<sup>55</sup> and it is especially appropriate here in between ‘bones’ and ‘death,’ the emblems which bear the strongest direct similarity to a stereotypical *momento mori*.

In addition to the theme of monition, the rebus’s grammar emphasizes the theme of memory as well. The first sentence describes an event in past (perfect) tense—something that remains now only in the embroiderers’ memory to be reified emblematically in the embroidery: ‘False cupid with misfortune’s wheel *bath wounded* [present-perfect] hand and heart, who siren-like *did* [past-perfect] lure with lute and charmed harp.’ After the harp in the bottom left hand corner, the tense changes to present, shifting further into future-present tense by the last line: ‘The chalice of care and sorrow’s cross *do* [simple-present] *clips* my star and sun; my rose *is blasted* [simple-present] and my bones lo death *inters* [future-present] in an urn.’ As the rebus wraps around the shepherd, it moves grammatically from memory of something that has happened in the past to the present impact of that past by an impending death (‘lo!’—i.e. ‘look out for it’) that is presently about to inter ‘my bones’ in an urn. This final sentence can thus be read as yet another *momento mori*. In fact, because the parallelism between death and Cupid extends the themes from this top row through the rest of the rebus, the whole narrative can be read as a *momento mori*.

The suggestion that the rebus is likely an instance of ‘monitory memory’—a *momento mori* stitched large—is supported by many elements of monition and memory that mark the rest of the embroidery. Like an individual emblem, the *Buss* has a Latin motto: ‘mihi et musis’ (*for me and the muses*) which invokes the tradition of memory as the mother of the muses. This same motto can be found in Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*.<sup>56</sup> In Burton, a shepherd (which closely resembles the shepherd of the *Buss* in both dress and posture) is chosen to depict one kind of melancholy addressed in Burton’s comprehensive tome.<sup>57</sup> This connection with Burton, the shepherd’s archetypically melancholic pose, and the embroidery’s overall tone of grief, warning, and loss strongly characterizes the embroidery as melancholic, and melancholy, as Engel has shown, is yet another trademark of monitory memory.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the four larger emblems (all from Paradin) just inside the rebus are all admonitions to follow God and seek virtue or warnings of the death and suffering that result from following ‘all kinds of fleshly lusts.’<sup>59</sup> These four emblems serve as warning signs intended to motivate the viewer to carefully consider the moral path and to remember it through the powerful mnemonic properties of these emblematic images.

Reading the *Shepherd Buss* in light of Paradin’s goals for his emblem book suggests a starting place for decoding the identity, purpose, and meaning of the *Buss*. In context of Paradin, it seems the *Buss* was shaped in part by the agenda of monitory memory, and that like other early

<sup>54</sup> Mary J. (Mary Jean) Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 160.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Lo, Int.1’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109401>> [accessed 28 March 2014].

<sup>56</sup> Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy [electronic Resource]: What It Is, with All the Kinds Causes, Symptomes, Prognostickes, & Senerall Cures of It. In Three Partitions, with Their Severall Sections, Members & Subsections. Philosophically, Medicinally, Historically, Opened & Cut up. By. Democritus Iunior. With a Satyricall Preface, Conducing to the Following Discourse.*, The fift edition, corrected and augmented by the author.. (Oxford: Printed by Robert Young, Edinburgh?, by Miles Flesher, London, and by Leonard Lichfield and William Turner, Oxford for Henry Cripps, 1638), preface.

<sup>57</sup> Burton, frontispiece.

<sup>58</sup> Engel, *Mapping Mortality*, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Paradin, p. 288.

modern *momento mori* artifacts, it invoked the memory of death to inspire virtue in the present. Perhaps it was intended itself in part as a *momento mori*, designed to cultivate virtue or piety in its viewers through mnemonic narrative images. Even if nothing else is certain, the *Bus*'s application of Paradin's emblems illustrates how the practices of connecting virtue and memory reached even to the most obscure corners of the art and aesthetics of early modern England.

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